

**MINUTES**  
**of the**  
**FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**of the**  
**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**  
**VOLUME 2 of 2**

PLEASE NOTE:

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

**VOLUME 1, pp. 1-505**

PART I: Directory of General Assembly Committees and Agencies

PART II: Daily Journal

PART III: Appendices A-P

**VOLUME 2, pp. 506-1,082**

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## **PART III**

### **APPENDICES (Continued: Q-X)**

**NOTE:** Appendices A-P are included in Volume 1 of these Minutes.  
Appendices Q-X are found in Volume 2.  
See a Table of Contents for the Appendices on the previous page.

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

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

The PCA Committee and Agency budgets, as approved by the Assembly, are found in Appendix C, Attachment 2, beginning on p. 208, Vol. 1.

## APPENDIX Q

### REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REVIEW OF PRESBYTERY RECORDS TO THE FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA June 2023

- I. **A list of Presbytery Minutes received by the Committee (See VI below)**
  
- II. **A list of Presbyteries that have not submitted approved responses to exceptions of previous General Assemblies:**
  - Korean Eastern
  - South Coast
  - South Florida
  - South Texas
  - Tennessee Valley
  
- III. **A list of Presbyteries that have submitted Minutes after the March 15 deadline required by RAO 16-4.d:**
  - Catawba Valley - (Printed)
  - Chicago Metro - (Printed)
  - Columbus Metro - (Digital, Standing Rules, Directory, Printed Minutes not submitted)
  - Georgia Foothills - (Printed)
  - Grace – (Printed)
  - Gulfstream (Digital and Printed)
  - Iowa – (Printed)
  - Korean Capital – (Digital and Printed)
  - Korean Eastern – (Printed)
  - Korean Southern (Printed)
  - New River – (Printed)
  - North Texas – (Printed)
  - Northern Illinois – (Printed)
  - Piedmont Triad – (Printed)
  - Rio Grande – (Printed)

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South Coast – (Printed, missing Standing Rules and Directory)

South Florida – (Digital and Printed)

South Texas – (Minutes)

Tidewater – (Printed)

### IV. Citations

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

Metropolitan New York

Northwest Georgia

Note: All members of the Standing Judicial Commission who are serving on CRPR abstained from discussion and all votes with regard to Metropolitan New York and Northwest Georgia Presbyteries, as well as abstaining from discussions regarding Catawba Valley and James River Presbyteries.

### V. General Recommendations

1. Thank Dr. Bryan Chapell, Margie Mallow, Ashley Davis, Karen Frey, Priscilla Lowrey, Angela Nantz, Karen Cook, Heidi Harrison, TE Billy Park, and the rest of the AC staff who covered their responsibilities in addition to their attentive support, friendly welcome, and support to the officers. 45-0-0
2. Commend the 2023 Committee on Review of Presbytery Records officers, TE Hoochan Paul Lee, TE Chris Wright, TE Jon Anderson, TE Eddie Lim, and TE Freddy Fritz for their work. 45-0-0
3. Commend all presbyteries for submitting minutes for review; only 3 presbyteries have not submitted physical copies in addition to their submitted digital copies. [Columbus Metro, Gulfstream, and South Coast.] 45-0-0
4. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly send a letter to the Presbyteries through the stated clerks of the presbyteries:
  - a. Commend those Clerks who sent records for their hard work to create, keep, and submit their records, and every

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- presbytery who sent delegates to serve on the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records. 45-0-0
- b. Encourage Presbyteries to establish commissions to review their records early in the year so that the records may be sent in by the deadline. 45-0-0
  - c. Urge those who failed to send reports or delegates to do so in the future. Note that 79 of 88 presbyteries had representatives appointed to the committee this year, with 61 attending the meeting (including 49 TEs and 12 REs). 45-0-0
  - d. Remind Presbyteries that records (both hard-copies and digital) must be submitted by the deadline of March 15 of each year. 45-0-0
  - e. Remind Presbyteries that records must be submitted in one of two formats: (1) four bound, paginated hard-copies or (2) two bound, paginated hard-copies and one paginated digital copy (preferably as a single document). 45-0-0
  - f. Urge Presbyteries, when recording an examinee's stated differences to the Confessional Standards, to record judgment on each stated difference using the wording of one of the four categories explicitly spelled out in *RAO* 16-3.e.5.a through d. 45-0-0
  - g. Remind Presbyteries that when GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes. Furthermore, remind Presbyteries to follow the guidelines for responding to GA in *RAO* 16-10. 45-0-0
  - h. Remind Presbyteries that responses to GA's exceptions must be approved by the presbytery, and such approval and the responses must be recorded in their minutes. 45-0-0

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- i. Request that Presbyteries approve their responses to GA exceptions in the same calendar year in which the exceptions were taken and to request that clerks state when such approval occurred when providing responses to CRPR. 45-0-0
- j. Remind Presbyteries that some actions must be taken annually, including review of session records, receiving reports from TEs without call, receiving reports from TEs laboring out of bounds, receiving reports from candidates under care, and that record of such reports should be included in their minutes. Additionally, reports of interns must be received at each stated meeting. 45-0-0
- k. Remind presbyteries to ensure that their minutes and appendices include page numbers. 45-0-0
- l. Request Presbyteries to encourage candidates to clarify their stated differences to the standards when writing them in their own words to accurately reflect their view as presented to Presbytery and to allow the candidate to amend as needed based upon examination on the floor. 45-0-0
- m. Remind Presbyteries to be attentive to making the appropriate edits to the ordination/installation template according to the particular context when creating minutes of these services. 45-0-0
- n. Remind Presbyteries that candidates coming under care are required to be examined “on experiential religion and on his motives for seeking the ministry” (*BCO* 18-3); licensure requires a “statement of his Christian experience and inward call to preach the Gospel,” which seeks greater scrutiny than to come under care (*BCO* 19-2.a); ordination requires “his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9)”

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(BCO 21-4). These examinations are not interchangeable, but require increasingly close examination of the character of the candidate. 45-0-0

- o. Remind Presbyteries to include statements in their minutes demonstrating necessary requirements were provided, including membership and endorsement requirements for candidates, concurrence of Sessions or congregations with dissolution of calls, and petitions for particularization. 45-0-0
- p. Remind Presbyteries that, while calls need not be attached to the minutes, minutes must demonstrate that the specific arrangements of the call were approved, with additional requirements specified in *BCO* 8-7 and *BCO* 20-1 for out-of-bounds calls. 45-0-0
- q. Remind Presbyteries that *RONR* [12th ed.] 48:15 provides a procedure for correcting old minutes by the motion to Amend Something Previously Adopted. 45-0-0

5. Encourage presbytery stated clerks to attend the annual presbytery clerks' meeting in December. 45-0-0

6. Amend *RAO* 16-3.e.6):

Minutes of presbytery relating to ministerial calls shall record that the specific arrangements (*BCO* 20-1, and *BCO* 8-7 as applicable) ~~and of~~ the call were found to be in order. The call document need not be attached to the minutes. 45-0-0

7. Amend *RAO* 16-3.e.5):

Minutes of presbytery relating to examinations must list all specific requirements and trials for licensure and/or ordination which have been accomplished, including that each candidate being examined for ordination was required to "state the specific instances in which he may differ with the *Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms* in any of their statements and/or propositions" (*BCO* 19-2; 21-4). This does not mean that a separate vote on each item must be recorded. Presbytery minutes shall record ministers' and



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ministerial candidates' stated differences with our Standards in their own words. Each presbytery shall also record whether:

- a) the candidate stated that he had no differences; or
- b) the court judged the stated difference(s) to be merely semantic; or
- c) the court judged the stated difference(s) to be more than semantic, but "not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine" (*BCO 19-2; 21-4*); or
- d) the court judged the stated difference(s) to be "out of accord," that is, "hostile to the system" or "strick[ing] at the vitals of religion" (*BCO 19-2; 21-4*). 45-0-0

### 8. Amend *RAO 16-3.e.8*:

Minutes of presbytery dealing with judicial cases shall not be dealt with by Committee on Review of Presbytery Records (~~*BCO 40-3*~~) when notice of appeal or complaint has been given the lower court (*BCO 40-3*), ~~but still~~ Nevertheless, minutes of judicial cases must always be submitted for review as part of the record of presbytery.

45-0-0

### 9. Amend *RAO 16-10.a*:

Presbyteries shall be advised of exceptions of form; however, they shall take note in their minutes of exceptions of substance taken by the Assembly, together with their responses adopted by the presbytery to these exceptions. These responses should normally be adopted by Presbytery in the same calendar year as the exceptions were taken by the Assembly. Regardless, responses must be filed ~~no less than one month prior to General Assembly in~~ accordance with *RAO 16-4.d*.

45-0-0

## VI. Report Concerning the Minutes of Each Presbytery:

1. That the Minutes of **Arizona** Presbytery: 54-0-1
  - a. Be approved without exception: **None.**
  - b. Be approved with exception of form: **Directory; Jan 28, 2022; Apr 29, 2022; May 26, 2022; Jun 16, 2022; Aug 26, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exception of substance:

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1. **Exception: Jan 28, 2022; Apr 29, 2022; May 26, 2022; Jun 16, 2022; Aug 26, 2022** (*BCO* 8-7) – No record of annual report(s) of TE(s) laboring out of bounds.
2. **Exception: Apr 29, 2022; Jun 16, 2022; Aug 26, 2022** (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.
3. **Exception: Apr 29, 2022** (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of the reasons why Presbytery considers an out-of-bounds work to be a valid Christian ministry.
4. **Exception: Apr 29, 2022** (*BCO* 8-7) – No record that the Presbytery is assured that an out-of-bounds TE will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church.
5. **Exception: Apr 29, 2022** (*BCO* 8-7) – No record that out-of-bounds TE is engaged in preaching and teaching the Word.
6. **Exception: Apr 29, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Incomplete record of ordination exam.
7. **Exception: Apr 29, 2022** (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of examination of TE transferring into Presbytery.
8. **Exception: Apr 29, 2022; Aug 26, 2022** (*BCO* 15-2) – Presbytery’s “Administrative Commission” does not meet the minimum requirement for a commission.
9. **Exception: Apr 29, 2022; Aug 26, 2022** (*RONR* (12th ed.) 8:1-10; 9:31-36; *Standing Rules*) – Presbytery’s “Administrative Commission” conducted business and effectively approved a summary of multiple electronic videoconference sessions over a several month span, but without adhering to the rules of an official meeting.
10. **Exception: Apr 29, 2022; Aug 26, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1) – No record of quorum for commission meetings.
11. **Exception: May 26, 2022; Jun 16, 2022** (*BCO* 13-12; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – Purpose of called meeting not recorded verbatim in the minutes.
12. **Exception: May 26, 2022** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of exam for minister seeking admission from another denomination.
13. **Exception: Jun 16, 2022** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of exam for minister seeking admission from another denomination.

- 14. Exception: Aug 26, 2022** (*BCO* 15-2) – Commission appointed to respond to CRPR report does not meet the minimum requirement for a commission.
- 15. Exception: Aug 26, 2022** (*RAO* 16-10.a) – No record in minutes of exceptions taken by GA.
- 16. Exception: Aug 26, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Incomplete record of ordination exam.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Apr 22, 2021; Aug 20, 2021; Nov 11, 2021** (*Standing Rules*) – No record of  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote to amend *Standing Rules*.

**Response:** We were negligent to not record the  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote to amend our Standing Rules in the minutes. Actions ratified at January 2023 Presbytery by  $\frac{2}{3}$  votes: page 67.

**Exception: General** (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions.

**Response:** We directed mandatory reporting at our August Presbytery meeting and appointment of a committee to review. Monitoring progress.

**Exception: Jan 23-24, 2020** (*BCO* 13-11; *RAO* 16-3.e.7) – Minutes of executive session not included.

**Response [2022]:** We apologize that minutes for this executive session were not taken and no record of these minutes can be found. We will improve this behavior and be more watchful in the future.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to summarize the action that was taken during Executive Session (*RONR* 9:26, 27) and record it in their minutes.

**Response [2023]:** Minutes of Executive Session summarized and recorded in August 2022 Presbytery minutes: page 68.

**Exception: Jan 23-24, 2020** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam from another denomination for TE [name omitted].

**Response [2022]:** We did not specify in our minutes that TE [name omitted] had been examined on all requirements for transfer. However, we are certain that these requirements for transfer were met by the candidate and approved by presbytery. We apologize for not providing a full and accurate record and will be more watchful going forward.

**Rationale [2022]:** No record that Presbytery corrected its records (*RAO* 16-10.b.1).

**Response [2023]:** Record corrected at August 2022 Presbytery: page 68.

**Exception: Jan 23-24, 2020** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for TE [name omitted].

**Response [2022]:** We did not specify in our minutes that TE [name omitted] had been examined on all requirements for transfer, including Sacraments and church government. However, we are certain that these requirements for transfer were met by the candidate and approved by presbytery. We apologize for not providing a full and accurate record and will be more watchful going forward.

**Rationale [2022]:** No record that Presbytery corrected its records (*RAO* 16-10.b.1).

**Response [2023]:** Error on transfers IAW *BCO* 13-6 noted at January 2023 Presbytery meeting. Note: TE is no longer in Presbytery and part of PCA, transferred to EPC.

**Exception: Apr 24, 2020** (*BCO* 13-12) – Business transacted outside the purpose of called meeting.

**Response [2022]:** We humbly admit that we conducted business that was outside of the stated purpose of the called meeting. We will be more diligent to conduct only stated business going forward.

**Rationale [2022]:** In a called meeting any action taken outside the stated purpose of that called meeting is invalid and unconstitutional and must be readdressed appropriately at a subsequent meeting. The Presbytery needs to produce records of the extraneous business having been ratified at a subsequent meeting (*BCO* 13-12).

**Response [2023]:** Extraneous business of called meeting of Ordination Team outside called purpose noted at January 2023 Presbytery meeting where purpose was changed and ratified to include extraneous business of changes to Standing Rules.

**Exception: Apr 24, 2020** (*Standing Rules*) – No bylaw/standing rule provision for electronic meetings.

**Response [2022]:** [1] On August 20, 2021, Presbytery approved an amendment to the Standing Rules of the Arizona Presbytery as follows:

C. 1.

- a) While matters of Presbytery are generally understood to take place in person, Presbytery may authorize a meeting to be conducted by electronic means, such as videoconferencing or teleconference, when necessary or preferred due to matters of health and safety, including pandemics or dangerous weather conditions.
- b) If a meeting is done by electronic means, such as videoconferencing or teleconference, the meeting must be conducted by a technology that allows all persons participating to

hear each other at the same time (and, if a videoconference, to see each other as well).

- c) The right to vote in meetings done by videoconferencing or teleconference is limited to the members who are actually present on the call (or video) at the time the vote is taken.
- d) All voting members must be participating in the same method of attendance.

**Rationale [2022]:** No record that Presbytery corrected its records (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). (Ratification of actions at proper meeting would be satisfactory).

**Response [2023]:** Ratification at January 2023 Presbytery.

**Exception: General 2020** (*BCO* 13-9.b) – No annual review of records of church Sessions.

**Response [2022]:** Annual review did not take place. Presbytery will be diligent to establish a program of regular review of records of church Sessions. This will be assigned to our administrative commission and we will conduct a proper review going forward.

**Rationale [2022]:** No record that Presbytery corrected its records (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). Session minutes from 2020 must be reviewed.

**Response [2023]:** Direction given to all churches at August Presbytery and appointment of a committee to review minutes from 2020-2021.

**e. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Aug 20, 2020** (*BCO* 38-1) – Full *BCO* 38-1 statement not recorded in minutes.

**Response:** We were negligent to not record the statement in the minutes. We will be more watchful in the future.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). Presbytery has not yet submitted the full *BCO* 38-1 statement.

**Exception: Jan 21, 2021** (*BCO* 19-2.b.3) – Candidate licensed after *BCO* exam expressly not sustained.

**Response:** We were negligent to not record the candidate's eventual passage of all aspects of his exam, including on the *BCO*, in the minutes. We will be more watchful in the future. As a note, the then-candidate is no longer part of the Presbytery.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO* 16-10.b.1).

**Exception: Jun 15, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the minister's own words.

**Response:** We were negligent to not record his own words in the minutes. We will be more watchful in the future.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO 16-10.b.1*). Presbytery has not submitted the candidate's stated differences in his own words for review.

**Exception: Nov 11, 2021** (*Standing Rules I.C.1; BCO 13-12; RAO 16-3.c.1*) – Meeting improperly classified as stated instead of called; purpose of called meeting not recorded verbatim in the minutes.

**Response:** We were negligent to improperly classify this meeting. We will be more watchful in the future and explicit in our purposes for called meetings.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its actions (*RAO 16-10.b.1*). Presbytery has not recorded the purpose verbatim and ratified the work of the meeting.

**Exception: Jun 15, 2021** (*BCO 13-6*) – Incomplete record of examination of TE transferring into Presbytery.

**Response:** We failed to observe the requirements of *BCO 13-6* for transfers and will correct going forward. Many apologies.

**Rationale:** No indication that Presbytery corrected its record or its actions (*BCO 13-6; RAO 16-10.b.1*).

2. That the Minutes of **Ascension** Presbytery: *52-0-1*
- a. Be approved without exception: **Jan 29, 2022; Jan 29, 2022 ES; April 30, 2022; July 30, 2022.**
  - b. Be approved with exception of form: **None.**
  - c. Be approved with exception of substance:
    1. **Exception: April 23, 2022** (*BCO 15-1; RAO 16-3.e.4*) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.
    2. **Exception: Nov 5, 2022** (*BCO 38-3.a.*) – Presbytery may not permit TE to withdraw if he is not in good standing; furthermore, it may not “withdraw from him all authority to exercise his office” if the Presbytery does not judge the branch the TE has affiliated with “as failing to maintain the Word and Sacraments in their fundamental integrity” (*BCO 38-3.b.*).
  - d. **No response to previous assemblies required.**

3. That the Minutes of **Blue Ridge** Presbytery: 54-0-0
- a. Be approved without exception: **Sep 27, 2022.**
  - b. Be approved with exception of form: **Jan 28-29, 2022; May 25, 2022; Aug 13, 2022; Nov 4-5, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exception of substance:
    1. **Exception: Jan 29, 2022; Apr 22-23, 2022 (BCO 23-1)** – No record that congregation concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations.
    2. **Exception: Apr 22-23, 2022 (BCO 18-2)** – No record of endorsement by candidates’ Session.
    3. **Exception: Apr 22-23, 2022 (BCO 18-2)** – No record of six-months membership for candidates.
  - d. **That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Apr 23-24, 2021 (BCO 34-10)** – No record of divested ministers receiving and responding to notice of divestiture.

**Response:** The Stated Clerk of Blue Ridge Presbytery notified Mr. [name omitted] by email and USPS of his notice of divestiture. Mr [name omitted] chose not to respond to Presbytery. Presbytery will be careful to note the notice of divestiture in the minutes.

**Exception: Apr 23-24, 2021; Nov 5-6, 2021 (BCO 23-1)** – No record that congregation was cited to appear by its commissioners to give a statement about pastor’s resignation.

**Response:** Presbytery agrees with the exception and will seek to be more careful in the future.

**Exception: Apr 23-24, 2021 (BCO 13-10)** – No record of transfer of membership from dissolved church.

**Response:** Blue Ridge Presbytery disagrees with this exception as the only mention of dissolution on page 8 is for a TE and [church name omitted] Church.

**Exception: Apr 23-24, 2021 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5)** – Stated differences not recorded in the candidate’s own words.

**Response: Please see the following from page 8:**

*“Mr. [name omitted] was asked to state his exceptions to the Westminster Standards. Mr. [name omitted] stated that the church and the kingdom are conflated in the Standards, but he holds the kingdom is greater and larger than the church. M/S that the difference is merely semantic. M/S/P to amend the motion that the exception is more than semantic but is not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine. The new motion passed.”*

These were Mr. [name omitted]'s own words. Presbytery respectively disagrees with the exception of substance.

**Exception: Jun 8, 2021** (*BCO* 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order; 10-day notice, verbatim meeting call, etc., not indicated/recorded.

**Response:** Notice of the Called Meeting was sent out May 25, 2021. The Clerk will be careful to attach the call of the meeting to the minutes. Presbytery agrees with the exception.

4. That the Minutes of **Calvary** Presbytery: *49-0-1*
- a. Be approved without exception: **Jul 23, 2022; Oct 27, 2022.**
  - b. Be approved with exception of form: **Jan 22, 2022; Apr 28, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exception of substance: **None.**
  - d. **That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Jan 23, 2021** (*BCO* 21-5.8; 21-9) – No record of commission to install TE [name omitted] in change of call from assistant to associate pastor.

**Response:** We agree that an installation commission was not recorded. Though presbytery advised the congregation to submit an installation commission and hold the service for the TE in his role as Associate Pastor, this step was never taken. Therefore, TE [name omitted], in effect, remained installed as Assistant Pastor. He was then elected Senior Pastor of the church on June 11 and was duly installed on August 22, 2021. Therefore, this final action would take precedence over the one in question. The presbytery regrets this oversight and will be more careful in the future regarding changes of call.

**Exception: Apr 22, 2021** (*BCO* 13-4) – No record of quorum for installation.

**Response:** We would argue that this is an exception of form, not of substance. While the record doesn't explicitly state that a quorum for the installation was met, the presence of 2 TEs and 2 REs does meet the quorum threshold of *BCO* 15-1.

**Exception: Jul 24, 2021** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of  $\frac{4}{5}$  majority vote of congregation or  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote of Presbytery for change in call for TE [name omitted] from associate to senior pastor.

**Response:** We agree with these exceptions of substance. The clerk of session has provided written testimony that TE [name omitted]' election was unanimous. This should have been recorded in the minutes and they were amended to reflect that the  $\frac{4}{5}$  majority was attained per *BCO* 23-1 at the October 27, 2022 meeting of presbytery. The presbytery also testifies that our



approval of TE [name omitted]'s call was without objection and the minutes have been amended to reflect the  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority per *BCO* 23-1 at the October 27, 2022 meeting of presbytery.

**Exception: Jul 24, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in minister's own words.

**Response:** The presbytery is confused by this exception because the candidate's views are recorded in the July 24 docket on p. 18. The minutes for this meeting, including Mr. [name omitted]'s differences, were approved at the Oct. 28 meeting of presbytery. Therefore, we ask that this exception of substance be removed.

**Exception: Jul 24, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in minister's own words. Dr. [name omitted]'s own words are not present.

**Response:** The presbytery is confused by this exception because the candidate's views are recorded in the July 24 docket on p. 24. The minutes for this meeting, including Dr. [name omitted]'s differences, were approved at the Oct. 28 meeting of presbytery. Therefore, we ask that this exception of substance be removed.

**Exception: Oct 28, 2021 [p. 14]** (*BCO* 34-8) – No record of  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote of presbytery to remove censure of deposition.

**Response:** We agree with this exception of substance. Though the motion passed unanimously, it was not recorded as required by *BCO* 34-8. The minutes were amended to reflect the  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority at the October 27, 2022 meeting. We regret this error and will be more careful in the future.

**Exception: Oct 28, 2021 [p.13]** (*BCO* 13-11; *RAO* 16-3.e.7) – Presbytery did not have authority to approve as satisfactory [church name omitted]'s reason to not turn in executive session minutes.

**Response:** Presbytery agrees with the exception of substance. The Calvary Presbytery Sessional Records Committee reviewed the minutes and found no exceptions at the Autumn meeting of Calvary presbytery.

5. That the Minutes of **Canada West** Presbytery: 53-0-0
  - a. Be approved without exception: **Mar 4, 2022 ES; Sep 30, 2022 ES.**
  - b. Be approved with exception of form: **Directory; Mar 3, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exception of substance:
    1. **Exception: Mar 3, 2022** (*BCO* 19-2.d, f) – Incomplete record of licensure exam.
    2. **Exception: Mar 3, 2022; Sep 30, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4.c (2) and (3)) – Incomplete record of ordination exam.

**3. Exception: Sep 30, 2022** (RAO 16-10.a) – Responses to CRPR by the presbytery not included in the minutes.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Mar 5-6, 2021** (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded (Christian experience).

**Response:** The Candidate was examined during the previous Presbytery in October of 2020 when he was approved for Licensure which did include his reporting on, and being examined in, his Christian Experience. In the March 2021 Presbytery meeting the Presbytery was reminded of this and the details of his Christian Experience and he did give a summary of the same once more, however the Clerk did not record that this issue was revisited at the March 2021 meeting. The Clerk regrets the oversight and apologizes for not being thorough in recording all the necessary information and will endeavor to ensure it does not happen again.

**Exception: Oct 1, 2021** (BCO 13-11; RAO 16-3.e.7) – Two sets of minutes of executive sessions not included.

**Response:** This was an oversight by the Clerk. I think the “hard” copies sent in to RPR did include these Minutes but were inadvertently excluded in the electronic submission uploaded to the portal. These sets of Minutes are attached with this response and will also be uploaded if possible to the portal. The Clerk apologizes for the administrative oversight.

**Exception: Oct 1, 2021** (BCO 21-4) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.

**Response:** The Candidate examined had no stated differences with the confession. This element was reported on by the Chair of the Credentials Committee and affirmed by the Candidate however the Clerk neglected to record this vital piece of information in the Minutes. The Clerk regrets and apologizes for the oversight and will endeavor to ensure all elements of examination are accurately recorded in the Minutes in the future.

**Exception: Oct 1, 2021** (BCO 13-9.b; 40-3) – Results of review of records of church Sessions not stated.

**Response:** The results of the Review of Session Records was reported by the Administrative Sub-Committee at the meeting as having no exceptions of substance but all churches having some exceptions of form. The Clerk apologizes for the error in only reporting that the review was completed and not what the results of the review were. The Clerk is sufficiently reminded that these results are to be recorded for future Minutes.

**Exception: Standing Rules** (*BCO* 20; Preliminary Principle 6) – The *BCO* doesn't provide for a second vote to confirm the election of a pastor after Presbytery deliberations. *BCO* 20-10 states in part: “The Presbytery, having heard all the parties, may, upon viewing the whole case, either recommend them to desist from prosecuting the call; or may order it to be delivered to the minister to whom it is addressed.”

**Response:** The Presbytery will review its Standing Rules and amend them such that they are in compliance with the *BCO*. The Presbytery will hold this clause as “out of order” until it has had the opportunity to address and approve the necessary change and will have a clause that is in compliance with the *BCO* in its 2023 submission of its court records.

**Exception: Sep 18, 2020** (*BCO* 21-4.d) – Reason for use of extraordinary clause not explained.

**Response [2022]:** The use of the “extraordinary clause” was used only for the issue of PCA church governance. As the TE being examined was for the purposes of Stated Supply and would not be made a part of nor be attending Session meetings or moderating or attending any official church governance functions, it was felt that this particular issue could be exempted from the examination under this clause. The Presbytery apologizes for not making this distinction at the time of original writing.

**Rationale [2022]:** Ordination does not include different classes of ordinands such as, for example, one type who will serve as a pastor of a church and another who will serve as stated supply. The Presbytery's rationale for omitting parts of the exam was stated in their response as “for the issues of PCA church governance” and that the TE “would not be made a part of nor be attending Session meetings or moderating or attending any official church governance functions, it was felt that this particular issue could be exempted from the examination under this clause.” However, the rationale from the Presbytery is an improper reason for omitting parts of the trial for ordination.

**Response [2023]:** Rev. [name omitted] is an ordained TE in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and was being examined for Licensure to serve as Stated Supply in one of the churches. The Presbytery confused the requirements for Licensure and Ordination in the examination in the area of church government and sought to exempt him from the examination requirement found in *BCO* 21-4 c) (1) h) requiring “a careful examination as to...the principles and rules of the government and discipline of the church” which would require having a full and substantial demonstrated knowledge of church government. However, that examination requirement is for Ordination and not Licensure. As part of a Licensure examination the need

was to examine him as per *BCO* 19-2 b) “3. basic knowledge of the government of the Presbyterian Church in America as defined in *The Book of Church Order*.” He has this basic knowledge and demonstrated it sufficiently to the Credentials Committee and the Presbytery as a whole to be approved for Licensure but it did (does) not meet the requirements for Ordination. However, since he was only going for Licensure the Presbytery had no need to seek the exemption. The Clerk apologizes for the confusion and the errors made, including on the PCA Web Portal in which the Candidate was listed as “TE- Stated Supply” when he should have been listed as “Other” since he is a TE in another denomination and only licensed for our Presbytery. I have corrected the Portal information and the Candidate does not require any examination exemption since he was not and is not being put forward for Ordination. Our Presbytery regrets the error and will endeavor to be more precise and correct with our process in the future.

**e. That the following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Mar 5-6, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4.f; 40-2) – Presbytery granted a doctrinal exception that may be hostile to our system of doctrine (*WCF* 1.1-10). More information or clarity is needed on the exception.

**Response:** The Candidates expressed view is that, the gifts of tongues and prophecy, though no longer normative, still occur in a manner that can be defined by such terms. There have been individuals who have reportedly received, in a miraculous manner, the gift of knowing (speaking and/or reading) a language they have had no previous experience or training in. He believes these gifts can be given as a means of grace from God and would categorize this in the realm of the “gift of tongues”. Also, individuals may at times be blessed with extraordinary insight on a certain issue for which they may have not previously demonstrated any particular knowledge, expertise or have no training in. The Candidate defines such situations as being in the realm of the “gift of prophecy”, using its wider definition. “Prophecy” being looked at as per 1 Corinthians 14:3-4 as speaking to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation... (to) build up the church.” It would be defined as: “the gift of communicating and enforcing revealed truth”. Though such situations could also come under the definition of being gifts of “wisdom”, “knowledge”, and/or “discernment”, the definition of “prophecy” as an over-arching term for such is also acceptable for such circumstances. The Candidate agrees that “prophecy” defined as new revelation from God to a person that is “extra-Biblical” or outside of God’s revealed and complete Word, does not exist.

**Rationale:** Presbytery does not acknowledge any biblical support for the continuation of such gifts, nor does it provide any rationale as to how a person can meaningfully differentiate between modern day “prophecy” and Scripture.

6. That the Minutes of **Catawba Valley Presbytery:** 48-0-2
- a. Be approved without exception: **Sep 27, 2022.**
  - b. Be approved with exception of form: **Directory.**
  - c. Be approved with exception of substance:
    1. **Exception: Jan 22, 2022 (BCO 43-8)** – Four timely and orderly complaints dismissed without a hearing.
    2. **Exception: May 24, 2022 (BCO 46-8)** – No record that divested minister was assigned to a particular church.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Jan 23, 2021; May 25, 2021 (BCO 15-1; RAO 16-3.e.4)** – Minutes of commission not entered into Presbytery minutes.

**Response:** We assume these exceptions refer to the Minutes of the Commission Acting as the Session for the [church name omitted] Mission, which met 14 times from 9/24/19 to 5/15/21.

[Minutes of the Commission were submitted as part of Presbytery’s response and are omitted in the report to the 50th GA.]

Also, it is noted that in the 5/23/21 minutes, Presbytery did not formally receive the entire [church name omitted] Commission report or approve its minutes on motion. CVP corrected this error on 9/27/22 by approving a motion that the entire report and minutes of this Commission are received as actions of presbytery.

**Exception: Sep 28, 2021 (BCO 13-11)** – No record of complaint sent to Presbytery (clerk states case will be adjudicated in 2022).

**Response:** While CVP found this complaint to be in order and assigned it to a Commission (Minutes of 9/28/21, Admin Committee Recommendation H.), we assume that the RPR/GA finds this explanation not to be a full account of the proceedings as required by BCO 13-1, presumably expecting CVP to print the Complaint in the Minutes (although there is no explicit requirement to do so in BCO 43). Due to the sensitive matter of the complaint, it was assigned to a Commission, which adjudicated it until it was withdrawn by the complainant. At the stated meeting of Sept 24, 2022, it will be recommended that CVP receive the Complaint in executive session and print it in sealed minutes so as to give a full account of our proceedings.

7. That the Minutes of **Central Carolina** Presbytery: *51-0-1*
- a. Be approved without exception: **Feb 26, 2022; Nov 15, 2022.**
  - b. Be approved with exception of form: **May 24, 2022; Aug 27, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exception of substance:
    1. **Exception: May 24, 2022 (BCO 21-4)** –  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote for ordination candidate sermon given to committee not recorded.
  - d. **No response to previous assemblies is required.**
8. That the Minutes of **Central Florida** Presbytery: *52-0-1*
- a. Be approved without exception: **Jan 25, 2022 ES.**
  - b. Be approved with exception of form: **Directory; General 2022; Jan 25, 2022; Apr 26, 2022; Aug 23, 2022; Nov 15, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exception of substance:
    1. **Exception: General 2022 (BCO 8-7)** – No record that the Presbytery is assured that out-of-bounds TEs will be engaged in preaching and teaching the Word and will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church.
    2. **Exception: General 2022 (BCO 8-7)** – No record of annual report from some TEs laboring out of bounds.
    3. **Exception: Jan 25, 2022; Apr 26, 2022; Aug 23, 2022; Nov 15, 2022 (BCO 18-2)** – No record of endorsement by candidate’s Session or six-months membership for candidate.
    4. **Exception: Jan 25, 2022; Apr 26, 2022; Aug 23, 2022; Nov 15, 2022 (BCO 19-9)** – No record that Presbytery received statement of inward call to the ministry of the Word from internship applicants.
    6. **Exception: Jan 25, 2022; Apr 26, 2022 (BCO 15-3)** – Presbytery did not vote to approve judgments of judicial commissions.
    7. **Exception: Apr 26, 2022 (BCO 39-2; 45-1)** – Protest admitted by a member who did not have a right to vote in a case.
    8. **Exception: Apr 26, 2022 (BCO 21-4)** –  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote for extraordinary clause for ordination candidate not recorded.
    9. **Exception: Apr 26, 2022 ES (BCO 31-8)** – Presbytery policy that accusations from a specific communing member be “automatically denied” on the basis of BCO 31-8 exceeds the scope “great caution” permitted.

- 10. Exception: Aug 23, 2022** (BCO 5-2; 13-1; 13-9) – Presbytery assigned oversight of mission churches within its bounds to a different Presbytery.
- 11. Exception: Aug 23, 2022** (BCO 5-9) – All specific requirements of particularization of church not recorded.
- 12. Exception: Nov 15, 2022** (BCO 25-11; Preliminary Principle 6) – Presbytery approved the withdrawal of a church from the PCA, when withdrawal is not conditional on Presbytery approval.

**d. That the following response to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Jan 26, 2021** (BCO 13-6) – No record of examination of TE transferring into Presbytery.

**Response:** We agree and acknowledge our error in not conducting a full exam of an Honorably Retired brother. Subsequently, we have assurance that HR [name omitted]’s Christian experience, his views on theology, the Sacraments and church government are in order.

He has stated: *“I totally subscribe to the Westminster Confession and have no exceptions. I also have not changed any of my views since my Ordination.”*

To correct the record the following motion was M/S/C at the 186<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting November 15, 2022.

M/S/C That the Presbytery approve the Clerk’s “Responses to Exceptions of the 49th General Assembly” as circulated with the docket on November 8, 2022, which includes the following statement by HR TE [name omitted], which will be inserted as a notation in the Minutes of January 26, 2021 *I totally subscribe to the Westminster Confession and have no exceptions. I also have not changed any of my views since my Ordination.*

HR [name omitted]’s Christian experience, his views on theology, the Sacraments and church government were found in order.

- 9. That the Minutes of **Central Georgia** Presbytery: 48-0-0
  - a. Be approved without exception: **Jan 21-22, 2022; Sep 13, 2022.**
  - b. Be approved with exception of form: **None.**
  - c. Be approved with exception of substance:
    - 1. Exception: General 2022** (BCO 13-9.b; 40-1) – No record of review of records of church sessions.
    - 2. Exception: May 10, 2022** (BCO 21-4) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.
  - d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Apr 9, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

**Response:** The Presbytery agrees with RPR Committee that, although the minutes stated the exception was deemed acceptable, they did not cite the prescribed category per *RAO* 16-3.e5.

The Presbytery apologizes for the error and will correct the minutes to state that *RAO* 16-3.e5(c) applies: “The stated difference is more than semantic, but not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine.” The Presbytery promises to be more careful in the future.

**Exception: May 11, 2019** (*BCO* 22-3) – Terms of call do not specify the pastoral relation.

**Response:** The Presbytery respectfully disagrees with RPR. RPR cites *BCO* 22-3 as the violated rule; however, the Presbytery’s minutes comply with this provision. The minutes state clearly that the pastoral relation for each of the candidates is assistant pastor and the minutes name the churches which issued their calls.

**Exception: Sep 14, 2021** (*RONR* 15:5) – No record of  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority vote to limit debate.

**Response:** The Presbytery agrees with RPR and apologizes for the error. The presbytery promises to be more careful in the future.

10. That the Minutes of **Central Indiana** Presbytery: 49-0-1

a. Be approved without exception: **Feb 11, 2022 ES; Mar 9, 2022; Apr 7, 2022; May 13, 2022; May 13, 2022 ES; May 25, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exception of form: **Feb 11, 2022; May 23, 2022; Dec 9, 2022.**

c. Be approved with exception of substance:

1. **Exception: Sep 9, 2022** (*BCO* 13-11; *RAO* 16-3.e.7) – Minutes of executive session not included (Rationale: Stated Meeting Minutes reflect actions taken in executive session. No executive session minutes recording those actions were submitted.)

**d. That the following response to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Jan 8, 2021; Mar 5, 2021; Jun 22, 2021; Jul 7, 2021; Jul 12, 2021; Jul 30, 2021; Oct 21, 2021** (*BCO* 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order; 10-day notice not reported.

**Response:** The presbytery acknowledges that it did not include the 10-day notice in its minutes. The presbytery affirms after review that all meetings did in fact occur with proper notice. Presbytery was unaware that meeting



notice was required within the minutes, and understands that this has been disputed among various members of the Review of Presbytery Records. Presbytery will be diligent in the future to include mention of meeting notice as a notation in its minutes.

**Exception: Feb 14, 2020 (BCO 15-1)** – The full record of the minutes of a commission are not included in the Presbytery minutes.

**Response [2022]:** We apologize for the oversight. We will be sure to enter the minutes of future commissions into Presbytery minutes.

**Rationale [2022]:** The minutes of the commission must be submitted for review.

**Response [2023]:** We acknowledge this error and have attached these commission minutes as requested. Minutes of the commission were taken and approved; they were mistakenly omitted in our submission.

**Exception: Jul 10, 2020 (BCO 13-11; RAO 16-3.e.7)** – Complaint sent to Presbytery not recorded in minutes.

**Response [2022]:** We acknowledge this error and will be sure to include any future complaints within the minutes of the meeting where they are presented.

**Rationale [2022]:** Complaints must be submitted for review.

**Response [2023]:** We acknowledge this error and have attached these commission minutes as requested. Minutes of the commission were taken and approved; they were mistakenly omitted in our submission.

**Exception: General (BCO 13-9.b)** – No record of reviewing session minutes.

**Response [2020]:** We acknowledge and apologize for our tardiness in reviewing session minutes for 2018. We have recently changed our process for reviewing session records, hoping this will produce a more timely review.

**Response [2022]:** We apologize for not remedying this in 2020. A committee has begun a review of session records from 2018-2020. This committee will give a partial report on their review progress at our February 2022 Stated Meeting.

**Rationale [2022]:** The presbytery has still not begun the process of reviewing sessional records. Although there is a committee to work on it, it has made no progress.

**Response [2023]:** Central Indiana Presbytery acknowledges its error in allowing the review of Session records to lapse. Presbytery formed a new Standing Team, which has completed a review of ten churches in presbytery, which is included as an attachment to this response; the report regarding the

remaining four churches is docketed for discussion and approval at our next Stated Meeting.

**Exception: General 2020** (*BCO* 13-9.b *Bylaws* III.B.i) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.

**Response [2022]:** We apologize for not reviewing session records in 2020. A committee has begun a review of session records from 2018-2020. This committee will give a partial report on their review progress at our February 2022 Stated Meeting.

**Rationale [2022]:** The presbytery has still not begun the process of reviewing sessional records. Although there is a committee to work on it, it has made no progress.

**Response [2023]:** Central Indiana Presbytery acknowledges its error in allowing the review of Session records to lapse. Presbytery formed a new Standing Team, which has completed a review of ten churches in presbytery, which is included as an attachment to this response; the report regarding the remaining four churches is docketed for discussion and approval at our next Stated Meeting.

**e. The following responses to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Feb 8, 2019** (*BCO* 29-1; 31-2) – A committee of Presbytery gave a report concerning the Christian character of a TE without the Presbytery initiating a *BCO* 31-2 investigation or determining whether a strong presumption of the guilt existed.

**Response [2022]:** We apologize for the error. We have amended our bylaws to formalize a new process to handle any allegations concerning the Christian character of a TE. This new process requires the formation of a 31-2 investigative committee with a time limit for how long such an investigation can take.

**Rationale [2022]:** The Presbytery needs to indicate how it disposed of the report concerning the TE's Christian character.

**Response [2023]:** The presbytery acknowledges its error, again. The presbytery disposed of this report through pastoral conversations with the teaching elder, who remains without call after his pastoral relationship with the church in question was dissolved. Our Leadership Development and Pastoral Care teams have been and continue to follow up with this teaching elder regularly.

**Rationale [2023]:** No explanation of the use of 31-2 investigation committee in follow-up reporting.

**Exception: Feb 8, 2019; May 10, 2019** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered into Presbytery minutes.

**Response [2022]:** We apologize for the oversight. We will be sure to enter the minutes of future commissions into Presbytery minutes.

**Rationale [2022]:** Minutes of commission must be submitted for review.

**Response [2023]:** We acknowledge this error and have attached these commission minutes as requested. Minutes of the commission were taken and approved; they were mistakenly omitted in our submission.

**Rationale [2023]:** Minutes of commission must be submitted for review.

11. That the Minutes of **Chesapeake** Presbytery: 53-0-0

a. Be approved without exception: **May 10, 2022; Jul 23, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exception of form: **Jan 18, 2022; Mar 8, 2022; Nov 8, 2022.**

c. Be approved with exception of substance:

1. **Exception: Sep 13, 2022** (*BCO* 19-2.d; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Incomplete record of licensure exam.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Jan 12, 2021; Mar 13, 2021** (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions. (In General, 2019 records were reviewed but many were not, and only a few 2020 minutes were reviewed).

**Response:** Chesapeake Presbytery apologetically acknowledges this deficiency and is earnestly working to remediate the situation. As of November 2022, only three sets of 2020 minutes and one full and one partial set of 2019 minutes remained unreviewed. The remaining partial set of 2019 minutes is not recoverable due to an abrupt loss of a pastor and an entire session due to a serious and untimely church crisis (*i.e.*, no elders are available to reconstruct the proceedings of a portion of its 2019 business and all efforts have been made to track them down). At the direction of Chesapeake Presbytery at its 93<sup>rd</sup> Stated Meeting, under the *General Review and Control* provisions of *BCO* 40-1, the Stated Clerk was directed to send citation letters to the remaining three delinquent churches. Moreover, Chesapeake Presbytery will be providing more careful oversight to resolve the outstanding delinquencies now and in the future.

**Exception: Feb 13, 2021; Jul 10, 2021** (*BCO* 13-12; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – Purpose of called meetings not recorded verbatim in the minutes.

**Response:** The Stated Clerk apologizes for this unintended oversight and has corrected pp. 716 and 734 of the Feb. 13, 2021 and Jul. 10, 2021 minutes to provide a verbatim purpose of the called meetings, respectively as follows: In the Feb. 13, 2021 minutes (p. 716), the minutes have been corrected as follows:

[Minutes of called meeting were submitted by Presbytery as part of their response and have been omitted from the report to the 50th GA].

**Exception: Mar 13, 2021 (RAO 16- 3.e.1)** – Reason for a moderator’s ruling on a point of order not given.

**Response:** The Stated Clerk has updated section 11.B on p. 722 of the Mar. 13, 2021 minutes to, in accordance with RAO 16-3.e.1, reflect the Moderator’s reasoning as follows:

B. During floor debate, a presbyter attempted to speak without being recognized by the Moderator while RE [name omitted] was speaking. RE [name omitted] continued his speech. Another presbyter raised a point of order, was recognized by the Moderator, and alleged that RE [name omitted] was using intemperate language. The Moderator ruled against the point of order since, in the Moderator’s opinion, RE [name omitted]’s speech was pointed but not intemperate. RE [name omitted] requested that his objection to the allegation of intemperate speech be recorded in the minutes.

12. That the Minutes of **Chicago Metro Presbytery:** 48-1-1

- a. Be approved with exception: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exception of form: **Feb 16, 2022; Feb 16, 2022 ES; May 18, 2022; Aug 17, 2022; Nov 16, 2022.**
- c. Be approved with exception of substance:
  - 1. **Exception: Jan 19, 2022; Sept 29, 2022 (BCO 13-12)** – Notice for called meeting not in order (no record of 10-day notice, no verbatim meeting call).
  - 2. **Exception: Feb 16, 2022 (BCO 19-2)** – Use of extraordinary clause for licensure candidate not explained.
  - 3. **Exception: Feb 16, 2022 ES (BCO 18-2)** – Use of extraordinary clause for licensure candidate not explained.
  - 4. **Exception: May 18, 2022 (BCO 19-2.e; 19-2.f)** – Ordination candidate’s stated difference appears to make a separation between the Old Testament Sabbath and the Lord’s Day that seems to be out of accord with our system of doctrine. Further clarification is needed.

5. **Exception: May 18, 2022** (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of the reasons why Presbytery considers an out-of-bounds work to be a valid Christian ministry.
6. **Exception: May 18, 2022** (*BCO* 38-3.b) – Presbytery erred when they invoked 38-3.a to divest without censure a TE pursuing membership at Holy Cross Antiochian Church of Grand Rapids, MI.
7. **Exception: Aug 17, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2) – No record of endorsement by the candidate’s Session.
8. **Exception: Aug 17, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2) – Use of extraordinary clause for individual taken under care not explained.
9. **Exception: Aug 17, 2022** (*BCO* 13-10) – No record of transfer or dismissal of members upon dissolving a church.
10. **Exception: Aug 17, 2022** (*BCO* 19-2.e; 19-2.f) – Presbytery granted an exception for a stated difference on the grounds that the stated difference was more than semantic but not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine. Candidate’s stated difference with *WLC* 109 claims that it “can be spiritually helpful for our children in particular, to allow God the Son to be represented for the purpose of illustration.” Presbytery needs to provide further clarification as to how the quoted material is not hostile to our system of doctrine.
11. **Exception: Aug 17, 2022; Nov 16, 2022** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record that Session concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Feb 17, 2021** (*RAO* 16-3.e.1) – Reason for a chair’s ruling on a point of order not given.

**Response:** The chair ruled the point of order not well taken on the grounds that he believed the election was valid. We failed to record the chair’s exact wording, and it has been 18 months since that meeting, but to our best recall the chair ruled that the election had been a replacement for the earlier election and thus not in conflict. The ruling was challenged and overturned by a majority of the assembly. The confusion stemmed in part from the cancellation of the 2020 General Assembly. We erred in not recording the reasons for the chair’s ruling and will be mindful to record such rulings in the future.

**Exception: Feb 17, 2021** (BCO 18-2) – Use of extraordinary clause for candidate not explained.

**Response:** We erred in not recording the explanation for the use of the extraordinary clause in 8.1.4.5. As noted in 8.1.4.1.2. and 8.1.4.2.2., the candidates had not been members of their churches for at least six months but were both endorsed by their sessions as well as their previous presbyteries. As noted in 8.1.4.3.2., the candidate was not a member of a PCA church but had been endorsed by a session of Chicago Metro Presbytery. He had previously been a member of a PCA church prior to relocating to the area for doctoral studies. A Chicago Metro Presbytery pastor was willing to mentor him. Requiring six months of membership would have unduly delayed their ability to move forward in the ordination process. We will be more careful to note the reasons for using the extraordinary clause in the future.

**Exception: May 19, 2021** (BCO 21-4.f; 40-2) – Presbytery granted a doctrinal exception that may be hostile to our system of doctrine (candidate claims a stated difference with the Westminster Larger Catechism 109 but does not explain what exactly that stated difference is). More information or clarity is needed on the exception.

**Response:** The candidate had stated his difference with WLC 109, but we erred in not including it in the minutes and will now include them in the record. The candidate's full statement of differences was this:

*I take exception to the Larger Catechism's statement that one of the sins of the second command is: representing any of the persons of the Trinity, inwardly in the mind or outwardly in any kind of image.*

*Inward Representation*

*I do not think that it can be expected of Christians, nor should their consciences be bound against, brief visualizations of the incarnate Jesus Christ in their minds when reading the Scriptures. For example, it is quite difficult to read the Crucifixion accounts of Matthew 27 or John 19 without an image of our Lord's broken and crucified body coming to mind. This, in my estimation, is not a sin. It is not wise to meditate on, pray to, or worship a visualized image of Christ. This could, perhaps, be called a sin. But I take exception to calling any internal representation of Christ in our minds a sin.*

*Outward Representation*

*I wholeheartedly agree with our Standard's prohibition of any representations of God for the purposes of worship. This is why I prefer the language of the Shorter Catechism on this, 'The second commandment forbiddeth the worshiping of God by images, or any other way not appointed*

*in his Word.’ (Q. 51) It is clear from Scripture that God is invisible (John 1:18), and he forbids us from worshiping him by images (Exodus 20:4-6; Deuteronomy 5:8-10). With this being said, I do not believe that it is a sin, and, rather, can be spiritually helpful for our children in particular, to allow God the Son to be represented for the purpose of illustration. A children’s Bible such as the Jesus Storybook Bible, or others, that are not used in worship, can be a helpful tool in illustrating the fact that God became man in Jesus Christ.*

**e. That the following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Aug 18, 2021 (BCO 19-2.e; 19-2.f)** – Licensure candidate’s stated difference makes a separation between the Old Testament Sabbath and the Lord’s Day that seems to be hostile to our system of doctrine.

**Response:** The Presbytery respectfully disagrees. While we agree that the candidate’s position is indeed a difference with our standards, we interpret the candidate’s position to be consistent with the Continental or Calvinistic view of the Sabbath (as expressed in the Heidelberg Catechism Q&A.103, which the candidate affirms) and do not believe this view is hostile to the system or strikes at the vitals of religion.

**Rationale:** Presbytery stated how they believed that this view was consistent with other confessional traditions but not how it was consistent with our doctrinal standards.-Candidate’s stated difference appears to make a separation between the Old Testament Sabbath and the Lord’s Day that seems to be out of accord with our system of doctrine. Further clarification is needed. (BCO 19-2.e; 19-2.f)

**f. That a response shall be submitted to the following GA as no response was received in 2023:**

**Exception: Aug 18, 2021 (BCO 21-4.f; 40-2)** Presbytery granted a doctrinal exception that may be hostile to our system of doctrine. More information or clarity is needed on the exception, wherein the candidate expresses his belief that images of Christ may be suitable “for purposes of instruction and (with great care) **public worship**” (emphasis added).

13. That the Minutes of **Columbus Metro** Presbytery: 48-0-2
- a. Be approved without exception: **Mar 15, 2022.**
  - b. Be approved with exception of form: **Nov 15, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exception of substance:
    1. **Exception: Directory (RAO 16-4.c.1)** – No Directory provided.

2. **Exception: Standing Rules** (RAO 16-4.c.2) – No *Standing Rules* provided.
3. **Exception: General 2022** (BCO 13-9.b; 40-1) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.
4. **Exception: May 17, 2022; Aug 18, 2022** (BCO 13-11; RAO 16-3.e.7) – Minutes of executive session not included.
5. **Exception: Aug 18, 2022** (BCO 13-11) – Minutes of called meeting not included.
6. **Exception: Nov 15, 2022** (BCO 15-1; RAO 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Apr 20, 2021; May 18, 2021** (RONR 25:10; 40:6-10) – Quorum was not present – by declaration of the moderator. By failing to immediately adjourn, and instead to continue to conduct business without a quorum, the Presbytery put itself at risk that a future meeting would fail to ratify their actions. Actions taken at a meeting without a quorum are by themselves null and void.

**Response:** We agree with this exception and will improve our conduct. We do note that the actions of these meetings were reviewed and ratified at the next stated meeting at which a quorum was present.

**Exception: Apr 20, 2021; May 18, 2021** (BCO 13-4) – *Standing rules* cannot be suspended without quorum, cannot suspend *BCO* requirements for quorum.

**Response:** We agree with this exception and will improve our conduct. We do note that the actions of these meetings were reviewed and ratified at the next stated meeting at which a quorum was present.

**Exception: Jan 15, 2019; Nov 19, 2019** (BCO 38-2; 46-8) – *BCO* 38-2 requires two meetings. The presbytery acted at the first meeting based on a letter. There was no motion to assign membership per 46-8.

**Response:** We agree with the exception to Presbytery's acceptance of TE [name omitted]'s request for resignation on receipt of his letter, without waiting for the subsequent stated meeting of April 2, 2019. While we cannot undo that action, we note that TE [name omitted] had already relocated for work at time of our January 2019 action and we do not believe any deleterious effects resulted. We will improve our process in the future. We note with respect to actions concerning TE [name omitted] at the November 19, 2019, meeting that the minutes reflect:



3.5. Motion: to divest TE [name omitted] without censure, in accordance with *BCO* 38-2. This is second Stated Meeting in which TE [name omitted] has presented this request (per *BCO* 38-2). After deliberation, the Columbus Metro Presbytery voted to divest him of his office without censure. Mr. [name omitted] approached the front and prayers were offered for him and his family.

Approved 12-0-0

**Exception: Apr 2, 2019** (*BCO* 19-16) – Presbytery committee recommended approving previous experience as equivalent to internship; however, no motion or vote to do so is recorded (requires 3/4).

**Response:** Our review of minutes from April 2, 2019, indicates that no actions concerning candidates occurred at this meeting.

In reviewing all of the minutes from 2019 we note in the September 17, 2019, minutes, in a licensure examination, that “Dr. [name omitted]’s internship experience is attached. The committee moves that the Presbytery receive and approve Dr. [name omitted]’s experience as having met the standard for internship in accordance with *BCO* 19-7...” and that the vote was not recorded.

Presbytery asserts that the next unanimous vote recorded in the minutes was intended to be inclusive of the internship requirement. In the event that this was the excepted action noted by RPR in 2019, we agree with the exception and have improved our minutes. If this is not the excepted event, we invite further clarification and at the same time are grateful to improve our minutes from September 17, 2019.

**Exception: Sep 18, 2018** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam.

**Response [2021]:** [Adopted, 12-0-0] The description of this exception is unclear to Presbytery. The record of the exam is included below, and after further review—to the eyes of Presbytery—the exam is in fact complete in accordance with *BCO* 13-6 and 21-4. The transfer exam from outside of our denomination included knowledge, views and exceptions as required by these two articles in the *BCO*.

1. Transfer/Ordination Exam, *BCO* 13-6 with 21-4
  - TE [name omitted] invited Rev. [name omitted] ([church name omitted]) to introduce himself to the men of presbytery and share his sense of call and experience of Christian religion
  - TE [name omitted] then proceeded to ask the Rev. [name omitted] questions about any exceptions he might have with

the Westminster Confession and the Catechisms, and then his views in theology, the Sacraments, and church government, in accordance with the examination requirements set forth in *BCO* 13-6

- Rev. [name omitted] Exception: [name omitted] declared his exception with *WLC* 109 that “the use of images of Jesus contained in pedagogical resources is not in conflict with this doctrinal statement.” In regard to Rev. [name omitted]’s exception on *WC* 109, the court judged the stated difference(s) to be more than semantic, but “not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine” (*BCO* 21-4).
- 2. TE [name omitted] continued the examination by asking questions of the candidate in his knowledge and views as set forth and required in *BCO* 21-4, as stated in 13-6.
- 3. TE [name omitted] opened the examination to receive questions from the floor of \_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery.
- 4. Motion: to arrest the exam and dismiss the ordinand. MSA
- 5. Motion: to sustain Rev. [name omitted]’s examination. MSA

TEs [names omitted] and Rev. [name omitted] were invited to the floor. TE [name omitted] read the questions from 21-5 to the three men and each answered in the affirmative. TE [name omitted] then prayed for the men and the right hand of fellowship was offered to each by the members of presbytery.

**Rationale [2021]:** Clarification: *RAO* 16-3.e.5 specifies: “Minutes of presbytery relating to examinations must *list all specific requirements* and trials for licensure and/or ordination which have been accomplished, ...” The minutes should list out the various areas of examination, not just reference the overarching *BCO* sections.

**Response [2022]:** [Adopted, 12-0-0] The description of this exception is unclear to Presbytery. The record of the exam is included below, and after further review—to the eyes of Presbytery—the exam is in fact complete in accordance with *BCO* 13-6 and 21-4.

The CMP submits this response to the 2022 RPR Committee to be received as satisfactory:

Having done a full review of the minutes of September 18, 2018, the Presbytery affirms that the TE in question was in fact examined by both Committee and Presbytery by touching on his views in theology, the Sacraments, and church government (*BCO* 13-6).

## APPENDIX Q

In addition, the Presbytery affirms again—after full review of the minutes of September 18, 2018—that the candidate for transfer, [name omitted], was in fact examined by both Committee and Presbytery for ordination in accordance with *BCO* 21-4, *specifically* in the areas of:

- 1) his Christian experience, personal character and family management
- 2) his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages; (see exception below)
- 3) English Bible
- 4) Theology, including basic knowledge of Bible content as described in
  - a) the Westminster Confession of Faith and
  - b) the Larger and Shorter Catechisms
- 5) the Sacraments
- 6) History of the Church
- 7) History of the PCA
- 8) The principles and rules of the government of the church: the Book of Church Order, and the government of the PCA
- 9) He shall prepare a thesis on some theological topic assigned by Presbytery. (see exception below)
- 10) The candidate shall prepare an exegesis on an assigned portion of Scripture, requiring the use of the original language or languages. (see exception below)
- 11) He shall further be required to preach a sermon before the Presbytery or committee thereof, upon three-fourths (3/4) vote. (see exception below)
- 12) **Exception:** In regard to the requirements listed in 21-4.c.2-4, the Columbus Metro Presbytery voted unanimously to grant an exception to [name omitted]’s requirement for knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, theological paper, exegetical paper and sermon preached with regard of his many years in pastoral ministry.
- 13) CMP asked if Rev. [name omitted] had any exceptions to the Standards in regard to *BCO* 21-4.f. The candidate for transfer, [name omitted], declared his exception with WLC 109 that “the use of images of Jesus contained in pedagogical resources is not in conflict with this doctrinal statement.”
- 14) In regard to Rev. [name omitted]’s exception on WC 109, the court judged the stated difference(s) to be more than

semantic, but “not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine” (*BCO* 21-4).

The Columbus Metro Presbytery requests that the 2022 RPR Committee finds this answer sufficient and satisfactory. [Adopted: 13-0-0]

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery has not demonstrated that their minutes are in conformity with *RAO* 16-3.e.5, either by showing where in the minutes these “specific requirements” are shown to have been individually listed or by amending their minutes to list the specifically required areas of examination. Section 2.3 indicates that the candidate was examined “in his knowledge of and views as set forth and required in *BCO* 21-4, as stated in 13-6,” but the minutes do not list these requirements individually as required by *RAO* 16-3.e.5. Furthermore, the September 18, 2018 minutes of Columbus Metro Presbytery do not contain any record of a motion to “grant an exception to [name omitted]’s requirement for knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, theological paper, exegetical paper and sermon preaching with regard of his many years in pastoral ministry.”

**Response [2023]:** Columbus Metro Presbytery identifies that Rev. [name omitted], already ordained as a teaching elder in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, was examined in accordance with *BCO* 13-6 and 21-4:

1. TE [name omitted] introduced Rev. [name omitted], ordained in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, as a candidate for the pastoral ministry at [church name omitted].
2. Because Rev. [name omitted] was already ordained, TE [name omitted] moved that Presbytery grant an exception to the required examination for knowledge in Greek and Hebrew, theological paper, exegetical paper, and sermon preached in view of Rev. [name omitted]’s seminary degree and long tenure in ministry. MSA, unanimously.
3. TE [name omitted] invited Rev. [name omitted] (Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church) to introduce himself to the men of presbytery and share his sense of call and experience of Christian religion (*BCO* 21-4.c.1a).
4. TE [name omitted] continued the examination by asking questions of the candidate in his knowledge and views as set forth and required in *BCO* 21-4, as stated in 13-6. The areas of examination included questions in the following topic areas:
  1. Bible Content
  2. Theology
  3. The Sacraments

4. Church history
5. PCA history
6. Principles of government and discipline. Rev. [name omitted] identified several differences between ARP polity and PCA polity.

MSA to arrest the views exam. **Approved unanimously**

5. TE [name omitted] then proceeded to ask the Rev. [name omitted] questions about any exceptions he might have with the Westminster Confession and the Catechisms.  
Rev. [name omitted]’s exception, in his words:  
Rev. [name omitted] stated one difference with *WLC* 109: “the use of images of Jesus contained in pedagogical resources is not in conflict with this doctrinal statement.”  
**By unanimous vote**, The court judged Rev. [name omitted]’s stated difference(s) to be more than semantic, but “not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine” (*BCO* 21-4).
6. TE [name omitted] opened the examination to receive questions from the floor of Presbytery.
7. Motion: to arrest the exam as a whole and dismiss the candidate..  
MSA, unanimous.

**e. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Apr 20, 2021** (*BCO* 13-12) – Requirements for called meeting not shown to have been met.

**Response:** We agree with this exception. We reviewed minutes and electronic correspondence. We identified that the call for the meeting was issued at the March 16, 2021 meeting, with the concurrence of the 3 TEs and 3 REs from four churches. This action was one month prior to the actual called meeting. We will improve our record keeping.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). Presbytery has not provided proof of correction of minutes clarifying that requirements were met.

**Exception: Apr 20, 2021; Jun 8, 2021** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of congregational vote to dissolve pastoral relationship.

**Response:** We agree with this exception. With respect to the April 20, 2021, meeting, no action to dissolve a pastoral relationship was taken at this meeting. With respect to the June 8, 2021, meeting, please see below:

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“Session representatives from [church name omitted] verbally present... We will improve our record keeping in the future.”

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). Presbytery has not provided proof of corrected minutes.

**Exception: Jun 8, 2021** (*BCO* 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order; 10-day notice, verbatim meeting call, etc., not indicated/recorded.

**Response:** We agree with this exception. We reviewed electronic communications. We note that a request for a called meeting from the stated clerk was emailed on May 28, 2021, and that the request was supported by three teaching and ruling elders from three churches.

The notice of the call issued by the Moderator follows:

“On behalf of [church name omitted] Church, I request a Called Meeting of the Columbus Metro Presbytery on June 8 for the following business:

- Motion to dissolve TE [name omitted]’s relationship with [church name omitted].
- Motion to approve TE [name omitted]’s request to labor out of bounds.
- Motion to approve TE [name omitted]’s call and terms of call by 3/4 vote contingent upon [church name omitted]’s 4/5 affirmation.
- Motion to form a CMP Commission for TE [name omitted]’s Installation as Pastor of [church name omitted] on TBD contingent upon [church name omitted]’s affirming vote.”

Session representatives from [church name omitted] verbally presented the results of the congregational meeting to dissolve TE [name omitted]’s pastoral relationship. The vote was unanimous to dissolve the relationship. We regret that the minutes of the June 8, 2021, meeting do not reflect that. The call for the meeting included matters relative to TE [name omitted], but these matters were not discussed at the June 8, 2021, meeting. We will improve our record keeping in the future.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). Presbytery has not provided proof of concurrence of call for meeting from 3 TEs and 3 REs from at least three different churches (*BCO* 13-12).

**f. That responses shall be submitted to the following GA as no responses were received in 2023:**

**Exception: Sep 4, 2021** (*BCO* 20-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.6) – Specific arrangements of call not shown to be approved.

**Exception: General** (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.

14. That the Minutes of **Covenant** Presbytery: 50-0-0
- a. Be approved without exception: **June 22, 2022.**
  - b. Be approved with exception of form: **Directory; Feb 1, 2022; May 17, 2022; Oct 4, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exception of substance:
    1. **Exception: Feb 1, 2022; May 17, 2022 (BCO 23-1)** – No record that Congregation/Session concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations.
    2. **Exception: Feb 1, 2022 (BCO 15-1)** – Commission must consist of at least two TEs and two REs.
    3. **Exception: May 17, 2022 (BCO 8-7)** – No record that the Presbytery is assured that an out-of-bounds TE will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church.
    4. **Exception: October 4, 2022 (BCO 21-4.f.; RAO 16.3.e.5)** – Candidate did not state the specific instances in which he may differ with the Confession of Faith and Catechisms in any of their statements and/or propositions.
    5. **Exception: October 4, 2022 (BCO 15-1)** – Committee acted as commission without authorization.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: May 18, 2021 (BCO 19-16)** –  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote for waiving internship requirement not recorded. Candidate’s internship was approved after 3.5 months with no citation of extraordinary circumstances or a recorded  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote.

**Response:** Covenant Presbytery acknowledges that it failed to report the unanimous vote to allow the candidate’s previous work on the mission field combined with the 3.5 month formal internship to count towards the completion of the internship requirements per *BCO* 19-6.a-c. The minutes have been corrected with 152-16.6 now reading “The motion was seconded and unanimously approved that [name omitted]’s previous work experience on the mission field combined with his formal internship training in Covenant Presbytery be approved as fulfilling the internship requirements of *BCO* 19-16.”

**Exception: May 21, 2019 (BCO 23-1)** – No record of congregation/session meeting requesting Presbytery to dissolve the call of TE [name omitted] with [church name omitted].

**Response [2022]:** Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the exceptions of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes for May 21, 2019, and will endeavor to comply with *BCO* requirements.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

**Response [2023]:** Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the exception of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes of May 21, 2019: the failure to comply with *BCO* 23-1. The minutes have been corrected with the notation after 146-18.4 as follows: [Note – These minutes failed to properly report the request of TE [name omitted] to have the pastoral relationship dissolved and the concurrence of the congregation of [church name omitted], Cleveland, MS, per their action at a duly called congregational meeting on April 28, 2019]. In the future we will strive to be more careful to record in our minutes that the requirements of *BCO* 23-1 have been met.

Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the exception of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes of May 21, 2019: the failure to comply with *BCO* 23-1. The minutes have been corrected with the notation after 146-18.5 as follows: [Note – These minutes failed to properly report the request of TE [name omitted] to have the pastoral relationship dissolved and the concurrence of the congregation of [church name omitted] PC, per their action at a duly called congregational meeting on May 26, 2019]. In the future we will strive to be more careful to record in our minutes that the requirements of *BCO* 23-1 have been met.

**Exception: Oct 1, 2019** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of congregation/session meeting requesting Presbytery to dissolve the call of TE [name omitted] with [church name omitted].

**Response [2022]:** Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the two exceptions of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes for October 1, 2019 and will endeavor to comply with *BCO* requirements.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

**Response [2023]:** – Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the exception of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes of October 1, 2019: the failure to comply with *BCO* 23-1. The minutes have been corrected with the notation after 147-20.3 as follows: [Note – These minutes failed to properly report the request of TE [name omitted] to have the pastoral relationship dissolved and the concurrence of the Session of [church name omitted] Church per their action at a duly called session meeting.] In the future we will strive to be more careful to record in our minutes that the requirements of *BCO* 23-1 have been met.



Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the exception of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes of October 1, 2019: the failure to comply with *BCO* 23-1. The minutes have been corrected with the notation after 147-20.4 as follows: [Note – These minutes failed to properly report the request of TE [name omitted] to have the pastoral relationship dissolved and the concurrence of the Session of [church name omitted] Church, Cleveland, MS per their action at a duly called session meeting.] In the future we will strive to be more careful to record in our minutes that the requirements of *BCO* 23-1 have been met.

**Exception: May 19, 2020** (*BCO* 38-2; 46-8) – No record of TE divested of offices (at his request) being assigned to membership in some particular church, subject to the approval of the Session of that church.

**Response [2022]:** Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the exceptions of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes for May 19, 2020 and will endeavor to comply with *BCO* requirements.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

**Response [2023]:** - Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the exception of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes of May 19, 2020: the failure to comply fully with *BCO* 38-2 and 46-8. The minutes have been corrected with the notation after 149-16.3 as follows: [Note – These minutes failed to properly report that TE [name omitted]’s membership was assigned to [church name omitted] Church in Tuscaloosa, AL pending reception]. In the future we will strive to be more careful to record in our minutes that the requirements of *BCO* 38-2 and 46-8 have been met.

**Exception: Feb 4, 2020** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – No record of ordination commission report for candidate.

**Response [2022]:** Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the exceptions of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes for February 4, 2020, and will endeavor to comply with *BCO* requirements.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

**Response [2023]:** Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the exception of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes of February 4, 2020: the failure to properly document the report of the ordination commission for TE [name omitted]. The report is on file with the Stated Clerk’s office but was unintentionally left out of the whitebook. The commission report was noted at the October 2022 meeting for the record and the minutes of February 4, 2020 were corrected with a notation after 148-

17.2.15 as follows: [Note – The commission report noting these actions failed to be recorded in the 2020 minutes. The report was received and noted on October 4, 2022.]

**Exception: Oct 6, 2020 (BCO 21-4)** – No record of two ordination candidates stating their differences with the Standards.

**Response [2022]:** Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the exceptions of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes for October 6, 2020, and will endeavor to comply with *BCO* requirements.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

**Response [2023]:** Covenant Presbytery does not believe it erred in failing to record candidates stating that they had no differences with the Standards. These minutes recorded that both candidates were licensed in Covenant Presbytery (150-16.2). The recorded differences to the standards, of which there were none, were properly recorded at the time of their respective licensure exams in 2018 (144-16.2.3) and 2019 (145-17.3.3). Covenant Presbytery does acknowledge that it failed to indicate in the minutes that the candidate’s views had

**e. That the following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Oct 1, 2019 (BCO 13-11; RAO 16-3.e.7)** – Complaint sent to Presbytery not recorded in minutes (“full and accurate record”).

**Response [2022]:** Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the two exceptions of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes for October 1, 2019 and will endeavor to comply with *BCO* requirements.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

**Response [2023]:** Covenant Presbytery acknowledges the exception of substance noted in the RPR report regarding the minutes of October 1, 2019: the failure to note a complaint being sent to Presbytery. The complaint was sent to the judicial commission hearing the complaint on behalf of presbytery on October 10, 2019, posted to the members only page of Presbytery’s website prior to the meeting on October 1, 2019, and available to any.

**Rationale [2023]:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). Presbytery has not submitted the complaint for review (*BCO* 13-11).

15. That the Minutes of **Eastern Canada** Presbytery:

53-0-1

a. Be approved without exception: **Feb 25, 2022.**

- b. Be approved with exception of form: **Oct 21, 2022.**
- c. Be approved with exception of substance:
  1. **Exception: Apr 22, 2022** (*BCO* 13-12; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – Purpose of called meeting not recorded verbatim in the minutes.
  2. **Exception: Apr 22, 2022** (*RAO* 16-3.e.1) – Reasons for a chair’s ruling on a point of order not given.
  3. **Exception: Jun 3, 2022** (*BCO* 18) – Potential candidate not a member of PCA church; presbytery voted to “waive” requirement, but *BCO* 18 makes no such provision for waiving this requirement.
  4. **Exception: Jun 3, 2022** (*BCO* 8-7; 20-1) – No record that the Presbytery is assured that an out-of-bounds TE will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church; presbytery approved a call not from a church, Presbytery, or General Assembly without making “a record of the reasons why it considers the work to be a valid Christian ministry.”

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Feb 26, 2021** (*BCO* 20-1) – Presbytery approved a call not from a church, Presbytery, or General Assembly without making “a record of the reasons why it considers the work to be a valid Christian ministry.”

**Response:** We failed to record the fact that we did consider the call and found that it was a legitimate and valid call, because it assured that TE [name omitted] would have the full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrines of our church, according to *BCO* 8-7 and 20-1. We will correct the minutes

**Exception: Nov 19, 2021** (*BCO* 38-1) – In a case without process under *BCO* 38, the minutes do not record that the statement of facts was approved by the accused as required by *BCO* 38-1.

**Response:** We agree. Our minutes failed to record that the accused approved the statement of facts. We confirm that the statement of facts was indeed approved and signed by the accused. We will correct the minutes.

**Exception: Nov 19, 2021** (*BCO* 21-5; 27-1, 5) – Presbytery erred in instructing a Session that “they may not impose discipline of any sort upon a TE” when the constitution of the church defines discipline to include “the whole government, inspection, training, guardianship and control which the church maintains over its members, its officers and its courts”, cites scripture to specify steps of discipline such as admonishment and instruction in the

## MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Word prior to judicial process, and requires teaching elders to vow to submit to their brethren.

[Following an event where a church Session reprimanded a pastor, recommended coaching, and recommended a week of time off from preaching and pastoring for reflection Presbytery incorrectly instructed the Session of [church name omitted] Church that they “may not impose discipline of any sort upon a TE.” *BCO 27-1* makes clear that the term “discipline” has two senses. *BCO 27-5* demonstrates that discipline includes steps prior to judicial process such as admonishment and instruction in the Word. *BCO 21-5* requires a vow for teaching elders to submit to their brethren in the Lord. Together these requirements illustrate that while Sessions may not enter formal process or issue formal censures on Teaching Elders, it is incorrect to say that they may not impose discipline of any sort on teaching elders. Ruling elders may instruct a teaching elder in the Word, admonish him, and call witnesses, but they may not proceed into formal judicial process (*BCO 27-5*). Sessions are charged with maintaining the spiritual discipling of the church (*BCO 12-5*) and thus have some authority over the work of pastors as their employers. They may direct a teaching elder to pursue training or to devote a week to additional study. Previous communication with the PCA Stated Clerk’s office supports this interpretation Roy Taylor, 4/17/2019 email: “Pastors, associate pastors, and assistant pastors are civil employees of the church they serve. So, for example, if a minister spends more time on his hobby than time on his job, the Session may require him to devote himself to his pastoral work more. If it gets to the point that the Session believes that the minister is violating his ordination vow to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of his duties (*BCO 21-5* q. 7), the Session may refer the matter to Presbytery for discipline. So there is an overlapping of employer-employee relationships by the Session and ecclesiastical oversight by the Presbytery regarding ministers.” Bob Hornick, 8/25/2018 email: *Must the church continue to employ the assistant pastor until Presbytery dissolves the pastoral relation? In my opinion the answer is yes. The minister’s call continues until presbytery takes action. From BCO 23-1 “. . .the minister must not physically leave the field until the presbytery or its commission empowered to handle uncontested requests for dissolution has dissolved the relationship”... Must the church provide ongoing meaningful work commensurate with the office of assistant pastor until Presbytery dissolves the pastoral relation? In my opinion, the Session has the authority to alter his duties or place the*

*assistant pastor on administrative leave until presbytery takes action on the request.]*

**Response:** We agree that we erred when we made the statement, “the Session may not impose discipline of any sort upon a teaching elder.” We should have written “the Session may not impose formal discipline upon a teaching elder.” When the review committee reviewed the minutes of the [church name omitted] Session, it determined that the Session did indeed impose formal censure upon TE [name omitted] in the form of an admonition. And it was this act that the Presbytery took exception to. We will re-issue an instruction to the Session of [church name omitted] Church in light of the RPR exception.

**e. That the following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Jun 4, 2021 (BCO 19-1)** – Presbytery permits a church’s pulpit to be regularly filled by an unlicensed minister from another denomination.

**Response:** We agree; we failed to uphold this particular mandate. We will assign a pastoral committee to investigate the nature of the relationship between [church name omitted] Church, [name omitted], and the Presbytery

**Rationale:** Presbytery has not yet demonstrated that it has remedied this situation.

16. That the Minutes of **Eastern Carolina Presbytery:** 55-0-0

a. Be approved without exception: **Mar 26, 2022; Jul 16, 2022; Oct 15, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exception of form: **Jan 22, 2022; Apr 23, 2022.**

c. Be approved with exception of substance:

**1. Exception: Apr 23, 2022 (WCF 29-4; BCO 58-3, 4)** – Error to conclude that celebration of Lord’s Supper by the Session of [church name omitted] Church without congregation present was not an exception of substance.

**d. That the following response to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Apr 17, 2021 (BCO 13-9.b, 40-1)** – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions.

**Response:** The Presbytery agrees that we failed to record the review status for [church name omitted] Church (Mission). A notation will be added to the April 17, 2021 Minutes that reads: “There were no minutes received from [church name omitted] for 2020. The Provisional Session for [church name

omitted] Church was not established until October 17, 2020 and it did not meet until 2021, so there were no minutes for 2020.”

17. That the Minutes of **Eastern Pennsylvania** Presbytery: 54-0-1

- a. Be approved without exception: **Apr 26, 2022.**
- b. Be approved with exception of form: **None.**
- c. Be approved with exception of substance:
  1. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – No record of review of records of church sessions.
  2. **Exception: February 12, 2022** (*BCO* 19-1) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.
  3. **Exception: February 12, 2022 [p. 3-4]** (*BCO* 21-4) – Incomplete record of ordination exam.
  4. **Exception: September 10, 2022 [p.40]** (*RONR* 9-34) – Presbytery conducted business via email, which does not constitute a deliberative body.
  5. **Exception: November 15, 2022 [p.75]** (*RONR* 9-34) – Presbytery approved a change in standing rules to allow for “non-controversial” business to be done via email, which does not constitute a deliberative body.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Feb 13, 2021** (*BCO* 19-2; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not listed.

**Response:** All the requirements for licensure, including the preaching of licensure sermon were completed. The minutes of the Feb 13, 2021 will be amended to specifically state this, and care will be taken in future minutes to ensure that they fully reflect the actions of Presbytery regarding exams

**Exception: Apr 20, 2021; Sep 11, 2021; Nov 16, 2021** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination (no record of individual items or that his knowledge as well as views were examined).

**Response:** All the requirements for the transfer exams cited were met. The minutes of the Apr 20, 2021 and Nov 16, 2021 will be amended to specifically state this, and care will be taken in future minutes to ensure that they fully reflect the actions of Presbytery regarding exams.

**e. That the following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Sep 11, 2021; Nov 16, 2021** (*RONR* 9:34) – Motion approved at assembly lacking opportunity for simultaneous aural communication (minimum requirement for a deliberative meeting, not met by email).

**Response:** We agree that business requiring deliberation should not be conducted via email. There are however noncontroversial matters that arise which require no discussion. When such matters arise and require timely action by the Presbytery, it has been our practice to attempt a vote by email. Presbyters are informed that a single “no” vote or a request for discussion will nullify the process and demand a face to face meeting. Since there is no provision for this practice in *RONR*, we will amend our Standing Rules to formally adopt this practice for our presbytery.

**Rationale:** Every motion by its nature requires a deliberative meeting, which an email vote does not permit. The Presbytery continued the practice of e-mail voting in 2022 and made changes to their Standing Rules to permit email voting. This cannot correct the error of not allowing a deliberative meeting.

18. That the Minutes of **Evangel** Presbytery: 55-0-0

a. Be approved without exception: **Aug 9, 2021 ES; Nov 9, 2021 ES; Aug 9, 2022 ES; Nov 15, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exception of form: **May 10, 2022.**

c. Be approved with exception of substance:

1. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – No record of review of records of church Session [Mentioned in 2/8/22, but nothing noted that it was completed.]
2. **Exception: Feb 8, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4.a.1; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Incomplete record of ordination exam.
3. **Exception: Mar 31, 2022** (*BCO* 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order (10-day notice)
3. **Exception: Mar 31, 2022** (*BCO* 13-12; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – Purpose of called meeting not recorded verbatim in the minutes.
5. **Exception: Aug 9, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.

d. **That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: General 2019** (*BCO* 13-9.b) – Session minutes not reviewed by Presbytery (committee only).

**Response [2022]:** The presbytery agrees with this exception. While the minutes were reviewed by the committee as required in *BCO* 13-9.b, those

actions were not reported to and approved by the presbytery. The presbytery will correct this action in the future.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to approve its review of Session records and report its action to the Assembly.

**Response [2023]:** The presbytery agrees with this exception. At the 176th Stated Meeting (Feb 14, 2023), presbytery approved the Administrative Committee of Evangel Presbytery's review of presbytery records for 2019.

**Exception: General 2020 (BCO 13-9.b)** – Minutes of church session not reviewed by Presbytery (committee only).

**Response [2022]:** The presbytery agrees with this exception. While the minutes were reviewed by the committee as required in *BCO* 13-9.b, those actions were not reported to and approved by the presbytery. The presbytery will correct this action in the future.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to approve its review of Session records and report its action to the Assembly.

**Response [2023]:** The presbytery agrees with this exception. At the 176th Stated Meeting (Feb 14, 2023), presbytery approved the Administrative Committee of Evangel Presbytery's review of presbytery records for 2020

**Exception: Aug 10, 2021; Nov 9, 2021 (BCO 13-11; RAO 16-3.e.7)** – Minutes of executive session not included.

**Response:** The presbytery agrees with this exception. Minutes of executive session will be included in submission of 2022 presbytery records to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

**Exception: Nov 9, 2021 (BCO 9.b; 40-1)** – Incomplete record of review of session records.

**Response:** The presbytery agrees with this exception. The motion was approved but the minutes did not reflect that approval. The minutes have been amended to accurately reflect presbytery's actions

**e. That the following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Sep 14, 2021 (BCO 13-12)** – Minutes of called meeting not submitted (see Nov 9, 2021 [2.1.c.ii]).

**Response:** The presbytery agrees with this exception. We approved the minutes of the Sept 14, 2021 called meeting at our November 2021 stated meeting but neglected to submit those minutes to RPR.

**Rationale:** Minutes were not submitted and need to be submitted for review (Sep 14, 2021).

19. That the Minutes of **Fellowship** Presbytery:

53-0-1



- a. Be approved without exception: **Feb 5, 2022; Mar 10, 2022.**
- b. Be approved with exception of form: **General 2022; Apr 23, 2022.**
- c. Be approved with exception of substance:
  - 1. **Exception: Sep 22, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1, 15-2; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – No record that congregation/session concurred with the dissolution of the pastoral relationship.
- d. **That the following response to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Sep 23, 2021** (*BCO* 19-1) – Candidate “regularly fills pulpits in Fellowship Presbytery” while not being licensed.

**Response:** Fellowship Presbytery acknowledges that its Stated Meeting Minutes of September 23, 2021 recorded that “[candidate] ... regularly fills pulpits in Fellowship Presbytery.” It is the practice of some of the churches of presbytery to invite presbytery’s ministerial candidates and interns to fill their pulpits when their own pastors are on vacation or need to be absent. The candidate was, from time to time, being invited to serve in such a capacity. Presbytery recognizes that *BCO* 19-1 requires that anyone preaching “regularly” must be licensed by presbytery but does not consider that this candidate’s occasional service as pulpit supply was so frequent as to require licensure. Presbytery regrets its use of the term “regularly” and has amended its September 23, 2021 Minutes to say “occasionally.”

20. That the Minutes of **Georgia Foothills** Presbytery: *54-0-1*
- a. Be approved without exception: **None.**
  - b. Be approved with exception of form: **Directory; General 2022; Jan 22, 2022; Sep 20, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exception of substance:
    - 1. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 8-7) – No record of annual reports of TEs laboring out of bounds.
    - 2. **Exception: Jan 22, 2022** (*BCO* 21) – No record of appointment of commission to install (which later reported).
    - 3. **Exception: Jan 22, 2022; Apr 19, 2022** (*BCO* 5-2.c; 13-10) – No record of transferal or dismissal of members upon dissolving a church.
    - 4. **Exception: Jun 10, 2022** (*BCO* 13-12; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – Purpose of called meeting not recorded verbatim in the minutes, nor a record of 10-day notice.

5. **Exception: Jun 10, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged according to prescribed categories [Some language is present; some is missing].
6. **Exception: Sep 20, 2022** (*Preliminary Principle* 6) – No record that members of provisional session were approved by the congregation.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Apr 20, 2021; Sep 21, 2021** (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions. [Less than half reviewed or noted].

**Response:** The Clerk and the Chair of the Review of Sessional Records Committee have exhorted our churches to bring their minutes for review. I believe we have done some catch up but several of our churches are behind in getting the minutes to the Committee.

**Exception: Sep 21, 2021** (*BCO* 13-10) – No record of transfer or dismissal of members upon dissolving a church; no record of 60-day notice to the local church.

**Response:** The Clerk failed to record this information. The Chair of the Church Planting Committee (the Committee providing oversight to this mission) did confirm that the Committee followed *BCO* 13-10 when handling the dissolution of this mission.

**Exception: General** – No record that Presbytery’s responses to the 49th GA were approved by the Presbytery.

**Response:** The clerk failed to include our responses in the minutes. The clerk will endeavor to do this moving forward.

**Exception: General 2019** (*RAO* 16-10a) – No record in minutes of exceptions taken by GA.

**Response:** The clerk sent the Response to Exceptions to the 48<sup>th</sup> General Assembly as an email to the Stated Clerk’s office but failed to include the Response to Exceptions in the complete minutes sent to RPR. Here was the response: *The clerk takes responsibility for this mistake. Given that the only “Response to Exceptions” in 2019 was a clerical error, I didn’t bring it before the Presbytery. The clerk will endeavor to follow RAO 16-10a*

**Exception: Jan 26, 2019; Sep 17, 2019** (*BCO* 13-11, 14-6.c, 40-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.7) – Minutes of executive session not included.

**Response:** The clerk sent the Response to Exceptions to the 48<sup>th</sup> General Assembly as an email to the Stated Clerk’s office but failed to include the Response to Exceptions in the complete minutes sent to RPR. Here was the

response: *In both situations, the clerk failed to execute the appropriate process associated for taking minutes in Executive Session. The clerk made the evaluation that since the actions taken during the executive session were reported in the regular minutes, then minutes of the executive session were not needed. The clerk has since realized this error and is generating minutes for all executive sessions.*

**Exception: General 2020 (BCO 13-9b)** – No record of review of records of church Sessions.

**Response:** The clerk sent the Response to Exceptions to the 48<sup>th</sup> General Assembly as an email to the Stated Clerk’s office but failed to include the Response to Exceptions in the complete minutes sent to RPR. Here was the response: *The clerk apologizes for not communicating the events of 2020 that caused us to not be able to review the session records. Our Spring Meeting of 2020 was cancelled due to Covid recommendations at the time for large gatherings in the state of Georgia. Session records for 2019 and 2020 were reviewed in 2021 and that is communicated in our minutes.*

**Exception: Sep 15, 2020 (BCO 25-11)** – No record of congregational vote to withdraw from the PCA.

**Response:** The clerk sent the Response to Exceptions to the 48<sup>th</sup> General Assembly as an email to the Stated Clerk’s office but failed to include the Response to Exceptions in the complete minutes sent to RPR. Here was the response: *The clerk received a letter from the Stated Clerk of the Church and it was placed it into the September 15, 2020 minutes [p. 13] where the stated clerk said: “the congregation of [church name omitted] Church voted unanimously to withdraw affiliation with the PCA ....”*

**e. That the following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Jun 11, 2019; Sep 17, 2019 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5)** – Stated differences not judged with prescribed categories.

**Response:** The clerk sent the Response to Exceptions to the 48<sup>th</sup> General Assembly as an email to the Stated Clerk’s office but failed to include the Response to Exceptions in the complete minutes sent to RPR. Here was the response: *The clerk acknowledges his mistake and will record the Presbytery’s evaluation of the difference using the exact language of RAO 16-3.*

**Rationale:** Still no record of presbytery’s evaluation being made, or being recorded in minutes.

21. That the Minutes of **Grace** Presbytery:

59-0-0

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- a. Be approved without exception: **May 10, 2022; Jun 13, 2022.**
- b. Be approved with exception of form: **Jan 11, 2022; Sep 13, 2022.**
- c. Be approved with exception of substance:

- 1. **Exception: Jan 11, 2023** (BCO 21-6) – In ordination/installation of assistant pastor, vows propounded to congregation instead of to session.
  - 2. **Exception: Sep 13, 2022** (BCO 21-1) – No record that congregation concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations.

**d. No response to previous assemblies required.**

**e. That the 50th General Assembly:**

Find that the March 10, 2023 letter from TE [name omitted] et al. (referred to CRPR on decision of the SJC, Case No. 2023-03) is not a “credible report” of an “important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceedings” (BCO 40-5).

**Rationale:** The 40-5 letter from the Session of [church name omitted], is premature. The letter concerns ongoing judicial cases being tried by that Session. The presbytery has also appointed both a committee and a commission to address issues involving this church. The Session takes issue with actions of the Presbytery commission. The underlying issues are complex, but they need not overly concern us at this point. Simply put, the Session’s 40-5 letter is premature because other avenues of redress remain available. The presbytery as a whole can address its commission’s actions, if it so chooses. No such pathway has been pursued by the [church name omitted] Session. Furthermore, the commission’s minutes will be submitted to CRPR for review, at which point the General Assembly will have an opportunity to address the commission’s actions via CRPR. It is also possible for future appeals and/or complaints to be filed regarding the currently underway judicial process, if the Session or its members believe that justice is not served. For these reasons, the [church name omitted] Session’s 40-5 letter is premature, and the GA should not cite Grace Presbytery to appear before the SJC.

22. That the Minutes of **Great Lakes** Presbytery: 53-0-1

- a. Be approved without exception: **Jan 8, 2022; Jun 4, 2022.**
- b. Be approved with exception of form: **None.**
- c. Be approved with exception of substance:
  - 1. **Exception: Apr 30, 2022; Sep 15-16, 2022** (BCO 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: May 1, 2021** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination.

**Response:** Presbytery agrees with the exception, corrects its records, and will strive to more carefully document these exams in the future. Note: the candidate did receive the full transfer examination which was sustained in its entirety.

**Exception: General** (*BCO* 13-9.b) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Session.

**Response:** Presbytery agrees with the exception and will strive to sufficiently review and record yearly the records from every church Session within its bounds moving forward.

23. That the Minutes of **Gulf Coast** Presbytery: *50-0-0*

a. Be approved without exception: **Mar 1, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exception of form: **General 2022; Feb 7-8, 2022; Mar 15, 2022; May 10, 2022; Oct 11, 2022.**

c. Be approved with exception of substance:

1. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 15-1) – No reports of commissions, including commissions to install.

2. **Exception: Feb. 7, 2022; May 10, 2022** (*BCO* 18-7; 46-6) – TEs and a candidate are received from other PCA presbyteries but no evidence of action of other Presbytery.

3. **Exception: Feb. 7, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2) – No record of endorsement by candidate's Session nor of six-months membership for candidate.

4. **Exception: Feb. 7, 2022; March 1, 2022; March 15, 2022** (*BCO* 32-3, 4, 5) – No evidence of an indictment, no copy of a citation to the man being charged, and no verification that the indictment and citation were delivered to the individual.

5. **Exception: May 10, 2022** (*BCO* 8-7; 13-2; 13-5; 20-1; 21-1) – Presbytery accedes to a request from another PCA Presbytery that a TE member of the other Presbytery be allowed to labor in the bounds of Gulf Coast Presbytery in a non-PCA work. There is nothing in the minutes about why this arrangement is necessary. No record that the Presbytery is assured that the TE will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our

Church. No record of the reasons why Presbytery considers an out-of-bounds work to be a valid Christian ministry.

6. **Exception: May 10, 2022; Oct. 11, 2022** (*BCO* 23-1; 46-6) – The minutes record that a man has been transferred to another Presbytery. No record that congregation concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations, that Presbytery dissolved the pastoral relation, nor that Presbytery voted to release the TE to a different Presbytery.
7. **Exception: Oct. 11, 2022** (*BCO* 23-1) – The minutes report that a pastoral relationship is dissolved. There is no evidence that either a commission or the Presbytery voted on this, nor that Presbytery heard from the Session the man was serving.
8. **Exception: Oct. 11, 2022** (*BCO* 13-2) – No evidence of annual reports for TEs without call.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Feb 9, 2021** (*BCO* 13-10) – No record of transfer or dismissal of members upon dissolving a church.

**Response:** Gulf Coast Presbytery acknowledges with regret our failure to ensure a record of formal dismissal and transfer of the members of [church name omitted] Church. Upon review, over an extended period of time the Sessions of nearby PCA congregations have shepherded willing members into other congregations

**Exception: May 11, 2021** (*BCO* 13-11) – Presbytery recorded the particularization of a church while the previous meeting’s minutes indicate the motions to particularize were not approved. (Feb 9, 2021 [p. 5, 21-10, Items A, B, and C] – No record items A, B, and C were approved by the Presbytery. “Not approved today” suggests that these motions did not carry.)

**Response:** Gulf Coast Presbytery Response to Exception Noted Regarding Particularization of [church name omitted] Church in Minutes of May 11, 2021, and Feb 9, 2021.

We regret the ambiguity of the “not approved today” language in the February 9, 2021 minutes. A better wording would have been “approved pending the anticipated decently and in order congregational vote of [church name omitted]”. Note that on the same page (p.5) of the February 9, 2021, minutes, the Executive Committee was appointed to serve as a commission to act on the pending actions of the [church name omitted] congregation.

The [church name omitted] congregation did meet and vote on February 21, 2021. The particularization service was conducted on February 28, 2021, with a representative of Gulf Coast Presbytery serving as the Moderator. We regret that these intervening actions were not detailed in the May 11, 2021, minutes.

**Exception: Jun 22, 2021** (*BCO* 13-12) – Business transacted other than that named in the notice of call meeting (minutes of a commission found in order and printed in the minutes).

**Response:** Gulf Coast Presbytery acknowledges an exception of substance in its minutes of June 22, 2021, regarding its failure to state the purpose of said called meeting. The presbytery regrets this error of omission and determines going forward to be more circumspect in this regard,

**Exception: Oct 12, 2021** (*BCO* 18-3) – All specific requirements of a candidate exam not recorded (no mention of examination on experiential religion or call).

**Response:** We regret not being more detailed in the recording of the examination of Mr. [name omitted] and Mr. [name omitted], both of which were examined according to (*BCO*)18-3 regarding their motives for seeking a call and experiential religion.

Note: the minutes from Oct 12, 2021, reads: “That Gulf Coast Presbytery examine [name omitted] and [name omitted] according to *BCO* 18-3 to come under care of Gulf Coast Presbytery as candidates of the gospel ministry. Both were examined and approved.”

24. That the Minutes of **Gulfstream** Presbytery: *51-0-0*
- a. Be approved without exception: **Apr 26, 2022.**
  - b. Be approved with exception of form: **General 2022; Jan 18, 2022; Oct 18, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exception of substance:
    1. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 8-4) No record of annual reports received from TEs doing work needful to the Church.
    2. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions.
    3. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 13-2) – No record of annual reports received from TEs without call.
    4. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.
    5. **Exception: Jan 18, 2022** (*BCO* 19-2; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.

6. **Exception: Jan 18, 2022** (BCO 18-2) – No record of six-months membership for candidate.
7. **Exception: Jan 18, 2022** (BCO 22-4) – No record of request from congregation to a change of call from assistant pastor to associate pastor.
8. **Exception: Oct 18, 2022** (BCO 23-1) – No record that Congregation/Session concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: General** (BCO 13-9.b; 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of records of church sessions.

**Response:** Gulfstream Presbytery regrets its incomplete record of review of records and church sessions. The Administrative Committee has tried to gather these records, but some churches in our presbytery have failed to submit their records. We will continue to pursue them

**Exception: General** (BCO 13-9b; 40-3) – Results of review of records of church sessions not stated.

**Response:** Gulfstream Presbytery regrets its incomplete record of review of records and church sessions and results. The Administrative Committee has tried to gather these records, but some churches in our presbytery have failed to submit their records. We will continue to pursue them.

**Exception: Standing Rules 6-8; 6-5** (BCO 15-2, RAO 16-3.e.4) – Power of commission not constitutionally prescribed for Credentials Committee to allow TEs to move onto field prior to presbytery approval. Quorum of commission must be 2 more than half membership AND at least 2 TEs and 2 REs. Criteria not met by rules for committee and so cannot act with power of commission.

**Response:** BCO 15-2 notes the requirements of a commission “shall consist of at least two teaching elders and two ruling elders, and the quorum shall be one more than half its membership unless otherwise determined by the Presbytery.”

By-law 6-5 is Gulfstream Presbytery of determining otherwise the quorum and power of commission for its Credentials Committee

BCO 15-2 also lists some matters that are among those which may be properly executed, but it does not seem to restrict the power of commission to those matters only.

**Exception: Apr 20, 2021** (BCO 21-4.f) – Presbytery did not require the candidate to state specific instances in which he may differ from the



Westminster Confession and Catechisms. (Unclear how recreations are permitted if “men...are taken up, the whole time, in the public and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.”

Exception should be taken to *WLC* 117 and 119 *WSC* 60 and 61 as well.)

**Response:** Presbytery did ask the candidate to share how he may differ from the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, as we do with all candidates. The minutes show the candidate’s response.

Presbyters asked questions about specific instances in which his exception may apply, as is our custom. Having read his response and heard his explanations, the court deemed his exception more than semantic, but not out of accord.

**Exception: Apr 20, 2021** (*BCO* 24-6; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Presbytery approves candidate exception whose stated difference with *WCF* 24.3. appears to be “out of accord,” that is, “hostile to our system” or “stik[ing] at the vitals of religion” by stating that “In regard to the Biblical prohibitions on marriage, I believe the standards go too far in forbidding marriage to ‘Papists’.” More specificity is needed from the candidate regarding the future practice of the potential spouse, the raising of children, and family worship.

**Response:** Presbyters asked questions about specific instances in which his exception may apply, as is our custom. In this specific instance, the candidate defined papists as “anyone belonging, even nominally, to a Roman Catholic church.”

Having read his response and heard his explanations, the court deemed his exception more than semantic, but not out of accord

**Exception: Oct 19, 2021** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record that congregation concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations.

**Response:** TE [name omitted] was an assistant pastor to a mission church, [church name omitted] in PSL. Thus, his dissolution was approved by the governing session of [church name omitted]

**Exception: Oct 19, 2021** (*BCO* 23-3) – No provision for elder emeritus in case of TE. Only “pastor emeritus” for TE (*BCO* 23-3) or “elder emeritus” for RE (*BCO* 24-10).

**Response:** Gulfstream Presbytery acknowledges the semantic error and has amended its minutes to designate TE [name omitted] as Pastor Emeritus.

**Exception: General 2020:** (*BCO* 13-9.b) – No record of review of church session.

**Response [2022]:** Gulfstream agrees that there was no review of church session records during 2020. Sadly, some important activities were not achieved in the midst of the pandemic. Gulfstream has begun to catch up on

the review of minutes. We acknowledge that CRPR will want to see progress in this activity before this exception is cleared, however, we do request your patience as we move forward

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to correct the inadequacy in their minutes and submit for review.

**Response [2023]:** Gulfstream agrees that there was no review of church session records. We are endeavoring to correct this.

**e. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Jan 19, 2021 (BCO 34-10, 38-2)** – No record of 2/3 vote and requires two stated meetings.

**Response:** [name omitted] was notified and given a written letter according to BCO 34-10 and this was noted in previous minutes.

**Rationale:** No mention of whether a 2/3 vote was recorded at the previous meeting. Review of the October 20, 2020 meeting minutes (previous stated meeting) does in fact record there was a motion passed, however there is no record there of a 2/3 vote.

**Exception: Jan 19, 2021 (BCO 34-10, 38-1, 38-3.b)** – The court did not make full record of the matter and did not notify the offender of its action.

**Response:** TE [name omitted] was given an opportunity to “be heard in his own defense,” but chose not to do so and even made an effort to note to the court that he does not object in any way.

**Rationale:** Presbytery should have treated this as a case without process (BCO 38-1, 38-3.b) and does not indicate whether the church the TE transferred to maintains Word and Sacrament in fundamental unity.

**Exception: Jan 19, 2021 (BCO 19-2.d, 21-4.c.(4))** – Candidate is required to preach a sermon before the Presbytery or committee thereof, upon ¾ vote.

**Response:** This motion does not negate the BCO requirement of a candidate to preach a sermon before the presbytery or a committee of the presbytery. This motion ensures the presbytery hears and reads a sermon prior to the meeting.

**Rationale:** Distributing recordings of a candidate’s sermon prior to the meeting of presbytery in order to evaluate it contradicts the BCO requirement to preach a sermon in the presence of the presbytery or a committee thereof. [The motion, as worded “to evaluate the sermon of candidates before the presbytery” implies the sermons will only be evaluated based on the recordings. If it were worded along the lines of “Motion to *help* evaluate the sermon of candidates *before being presented before the presbytery...*” that would seem to not contradict the BCO requirement.

*BCO 19-2.d* “Provide his written sermon on an assigned passage of Scripture embodying both explanation and application, and present orally his sermon or exhortation before Presbytery or before a committee of Presbytery.”

*BCO 21-4.c.4* “He shall further be required to preach a sermon before the Presbytery or committee thereof, upon three-fourths (3/4) vote.”

*BCO 21-4.c* “No Presbytery shall omit any of these parts of trial for ordination except in extraordinary cases, and then only with three-fourths (3/4) approval of Presbytery.”

**Minutes text was:** “Motion to evaluate the sermon of candidates before the presbytery by distributing a written manuscript along with an audio and/or video recording of the whole sermon to the presbytery (*BCO 19-2-d; 21-4-c-(4)*). APPROVED”]

**Exception: Oct 19, 2021** (*BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5*) – Unclear record of ordination exam.

**Response:** Gulfstream Presbytery regrets this omission from its records. The candidate did complete a written exam, which was disseminated to the presbytery for review, as well as an oral examination of all areas noted in *BCO 21-4*. The minutes have been amended accordingly.

**Rationale:** Minutes of presbytery relating to examinations must list all specific requirements and trials for licensure and/or ordination which have been accomplished, including that each candidate being examined for ordination was required to “state the specific instances in which he may differ with the Confession of Faith and Catechisms in any of their statements and/or propositions” (*BCO 21-4*).

**Exception: Oct 19, 2021** (*BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5*) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

**Response:** Gulfstream Presbytery regrets this omission from its records. The candidate did complete an ordination exam that covered all areas noted in *BCO 21-4*. The minutes have been amended accordingly.

**Rationale:** Minutes of presbytery relating to examinations must list all specific requirements and trials for licensure and/or ordination which have been accomplished, including that each candidate being examined for ordination was required to “state the specific instances in which he may differ with the Confession of Faith and Catechisms in any of their statements and/or propositions” (*BCO 21-4*).

**Exception: Oct 19, 2021** (*BCO 21-4*) – Use of extraordinary clause for ordination candidate not explained.

**Response:** Gulfstream Presbytery regrets this omission from its records. Presbytery noted this irregularity and discussed the reason for it, but it was not noted in the minutes. The minutes have been amended accordingly.

**Rationale:** Minutes of presbytery relating to examinations must list all specific requirements and trials for licensure and/or ordination which have been accomplished, including that each candidate being examined for ordination was required to “state the specific instances in which he may differ with the Confession of Faith and Catechisms in any of their statements and/or propositions” (*BCO* 21-4).

**Exception: Jan 21, 2020** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements for ordination exam not recorded; seminary degree, thesis paper/ examination on knowledge of Greek and Hebrew; did not preach a sermon.

**Response [2022]:** Gulfstream regrets the inadequacy of its minutes. In preparing its minutes, Gulfstream has always relied upon *Form 039-Checklist for Ordination*, as found in the Clerks Handbook. The specific omissions named in this exception have always been examined as part of the preliminary checklist, and may not have been included in the minutes. Nor have some other elements of the preliminary checklist. Gulfstream will endeavor to include these details in future minutes.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to correct the inadequacy in their minutes and submit for review.

**Response [2023]:** Gulfstream has amended its minutes accordingly.

**Rationale [2023]:** Minutes of presbytery relating to examinations must list all specific requirements and trials for licensure and/or ordination which have been accomplished, including that each candidate being examined for ordination was required to “state the specific instances in which he may differ with the Confession of Faith and Catechisms in any of their statements and/or propositions” (*BCO* 21-4).

**Exception: Oct 20, 2020** (*BCO* 19-2.d) – Licensure exam with no mention of written sermon.

**Response [2022]:** Gulfstream regrets the inadequacy of its minutes. Gulfstream will endeavor to include this detail in future minutes.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to correct the inadequacy in their minutes and submit for review.

**Response [2023]:** Gulfstream has amended its minutes accordingly.

**Rationale [2023]:** Minutes of presbytery relating to examinations must list all specific requirements and trials for licensure and/or ordination which have been accomplished, including that each candidate being examined for

ordination was required to “state the specific instances in which he may differ with the Confession of Faith and Catechisms in any of their statements and/or propositions” (*BCO* 21-4).

**Exception: Oct 15, 2019** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4.c.2-3) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination. No record of thesis, no record of exegetical paper.

**Response [2022]:** Gulfstream regrets the inadequacy of its minutes. In preparing its minutes, Gulfstream has always relied upon *Form 041-Checklist for Reception of Minister From Another Denomination*, as found in the Clerks Handbook. The two specific omissions have not previously been itemized on the checklist form. Gulfstream will endeavor to include these details in future minutes.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to correct the inadequacy in their minutes and submit for review.

**Response [2023]:** Gulfstream has amended its minutes accordingly.

**Rationale [2023]:** Minutes of presbytery relating to examinations must list all specific requirements and trials for licensure and/or ordination which have been accomplished, including that each candidate being examined for ordination was required to “state the specific instances in which he may differ with the Confession of Faith and Catechisms in any of their statements and/or propositions” (*BCO* 21-4).

25. That the Minutes of **Heartland** Presbytery: 51-0-1
- a. Be approved without exception: **Mar 26, 2022.**
  - b. Be approved with exception of form: **Apr 22-23, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exception of substance:
    1. **Exception: Apr 22-23, 2022; Nov 4-5, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2) – No record of six-months membership for candidates.
    2. **Exception: Nov 4-5, 2022** (*BCO* 18-7) – Insufficient reason given for removing candidate from the roll.
  - d. **No response to previous assemblies required.**
26. That the Minutes of **Heritage** Presbytery: 50-0-1
- a. Be approved without exception: **Sep 10, 2022; Nov 19, 2022.**
  - b. Be approved with exception of form: **May 10, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exception of substance:
    1. **Exception: Feb 4, 2022** (*BCO* 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Jan 30, 2021; May 11, 2021 (BCO 25-11)** – Record unclear as to when congregation withdrew from the PCA and whether 30-day notice was given.

**Response:** [church name omitted] Church withdrew from the Heritage Presbytery, and PCA, at their Congregational Meeting on March 31, 2019 and notified us in a letter dated June 18, 2019. In all of the communications from [church name omitted] Church, we were not informed whether the 30-day notice was given by the [church name omitted] Session. I reached out Rev. [name omitted] at [church name omitted] Church, for documentation by email on 11/4/22, and followed up by text on 11/8/22. In a phone conversation he said the congregation had a two-week notice in his recollection. He said he would research and get back to me. As of the Heritage Presbytery 131<sup>st</sup> Stated Meeting on 1/28/23 and the acceptance of this response, [name omitted] has not responded again to our requests. [church name omitted] Church withdrew from the Heritage Presbytery, and PCA, at their Congregational Meeting on March 14, 2021. The current pastor at [church name omitted] Church reported that the announcement for the March 15, 2021 Congregational Meeting was provided to the congregation more than 30 days prior to the meeting. Below is the documentation the he sent to verify this timeline was met.

**e. That the following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: May 11, 2021 (BCO 38-3)** – No determination of a judgment by presbytery as to the withdrawal of a minister from the PCA to another body.

**Response:** The Heritage Presbytery moved/seconded and approved the motion [p.1] to accept the resignation of then TE [name omitted], at the May 11, 2021 (124<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting). This action was predicated on the email we received from the TE documented on page 18 of the approved Minutes from the May 11, 2021, 124<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting, resigning from the Heritage Presbytery and the PCA.

This report was approved at the 131<sup>st</sup> Heritage Presbytery Meeting on January 28, 2023.

**Rationale:** Presbytery needs to judge the matter under *BCO* 38-2 or the appropriate section of *BCO* 38-3.

27. That the Minutes of **Highlands** Presbytery: 53-0-2

a. Be approved without exception: **Aug 6, 2022; Dec 15, 2022.**

- b. Be approved with exception of form: **Directory.**
- c. Be approved with exception of substance:
  - 1. **Exception: Feb 26, 2022 (BCO 21-4)** – No record of requiring a statement of differences with our Standards.
  - 2. **Exception: Feb 26, 2022 (BCO 20-1)** – No record of the reasons why Presbytery considers an out-of-bounds work to be a valid Christian ministry.
  - 3. **Exception: May 3, 2022 (BCO 23-10)** – No record that the Congregation/Session concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations.
  - 4. **Exception: May 3, 2022; Nov 1, 2022 (RAO 16-3.e.1)** – Reasons for chair’s ruling on a point of order not given.
- d. **That the following response to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Jan 13, 2021 (BCO 13-12)** – Notice for called meeting not in order; 10-day notice not indicated or recorded.

**Response:** At its November 1, 2022, Stated Meeting, the Highlands Presbytery took the following action:

MSC: Respond to the Review of Presbytery Records Committee regarding the exception of substance from the Jan 13, 2021, minutes as follows:

*The Presbytery agrees with the exception and regrets not including the notice for called meeting. The notice was properly sent on December 23, 2020, but regretfully not included in the minutes. Presbytery will be more careful in the future.*

- 28. That the Minutes of **Hills and Plains** Presbytery: 53-0-0
  - a. Be approved without exception: **None.**
  - b. Be approved with exception of form: **General 2022; Directory; May 10, 2022; Oct 1, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exception of substance:
    - 1. **Exception: General 2022 (BCO 12-7; 40-1)** – No evidence of review of Session records in 2022 or from outstanding sessional records from 2017 to present.  
**Exception: Feb 25, 2022; May 10, 2022 (BCO 19-9)** – All specific requirements of internship not recorded (inward call to the ministry of the Word).
    - 2. **Exception: Mar 5, 2022; Dec 10, 2022 (BCO 13-12)** – Notice for called meeting not in order (10-day notice not recorded).

3. **Exception: Mar 5, 2022; May 10, 2022; Oct 11, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commissions not entered in Presbytery minutes.
4. **Exception: May 10, 2022** (*Standing Rules*, 6-2.b; *RONR* [12th ed.] 23:6.(e); 25:10) – Rule protecting fundamental rights of absentees suspended (requirement of notice for amendment to standing rules).
5. **Exception: May 10, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2; 18-3) – All specific requirements of coming under care not recorded (six-months membership; experiential religion and motives for seeking the ministry).
6. **Exception: May 10, 2022** (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of examinations of TEs transferring into Presbytery (views in theology, the Sacraments, and church government).
7. **Exception: May 10, 2022** (*BCO* 21-1) – Unclear whether call had been finalized (“pending changes”) when approved by Presbytery.
8. **Exception: Oct 11, 2022** (*BCO* 15-2) – Membership and scope of authority for commission not recorded.
9. **Exception: Oct 11, 2022** (*BCO* 19-2; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded (inward call to preach the gospel).
10. **Exception: Dec 10, 2022** (*BCO* 13-12) – Business conducted that exceeded the scope of notice (appointment of temporary Session commission).
11. **Exception: Dec 10, 2022** (Preliminary Principle 6) – Temporary Session appointed over a congregation without record of consent of congregation.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Oct 1, 2019** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4.f) No record that candidate for transfer from another denomination was required to state his differences with the Westminster Standards in his own words.

**Response:** The presbytery respectfully disagrees. There was no candidate transferring denominations on Oct 1, 2019, and every candidate who was transferring PCA presbyteries had their exceptions recorded in their own words in the minutes and approved. In one instance a candidate’s stated difference was lacking quotation marks, an error on the part of the stated clerk, so it is possible RPR did not recognize that as Mr. [name omitted]’s own words.



**Exception: Mar 26, 2019** (*BCO* 15-3; 31-2; 32-2, 3) – The Presbytery received a report from the Judicial Commission that had been formed to “investigate” a matter per *BCO* 31-2. There was, at the point this commission was formed, no “judicial case” per *BCO* 15-3 for it to adjudicate (i.e., no charges had been laid, no prosecutor has been appointed, etc.).

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges that the minutes where these charges were laid, etc. have been lost. This is a grave oversight that is irremediable. However, there is a thorough email and other paper trail that shows charges were made, prosecutors appointed, and the case was handled decently and in order. The presbytery vows to never let such a grave oversight occur again.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to record in their minutes the specific matters of the judicial procedure such as the charges that were filed, who the prosecutor was, what the outcome was. (See *RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** As noted above, Charges were brought by the Pastoral Care committee of Hills and Plains Presbytery on behalf of the session of [church name omitted] Church and a *BCO* 15-3 commission was formed to adjudicate the case.

The charges had been made by the staff and a deacon of [church name omitted] Church originally, and the commission formed then assigned prosecutors as indicated in the executive session minutes and commission report, however the accused, TE [name omitted], confessed guilt before a trial ever ensued, also contained within the report.

**Exception: Feb 13, 2021; May 4, 2021; Oct 12, 2021** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

**Response:**

Meeting Dates: Feb 13, 2021 - The missing minutes of the commission are attached.

Meeting Dates: May 4, 2021 - The missing minutes of the commission are attached.

Meeting Dates: Oct 12, 2021 - The missing minutes of the commission are attached.

**Exception: Feb 13, 2021** (*BCO* 13-6) – All specific requirements of transfer exam not recorded for honorably retired TE.

**Response:** On February 13, 2021 TE [name omitted] was received as a minister honorably retired (*BCO* 13-5) after being examined on Christian experience, and also touching their views in theology, the Sacraments, and church government. (*BCO* 13-6)

**Exception: Oct 12, 2021** (BCO 23-1) – No record of congregational concurrence in the dissolution of pastoral relationship.

**Response:** The stated clerk received a request of the congregation of [church name omitted] (including the minutes of the congregational vote) to dissolve the pastoral relations between [church name omitted] and TE [name omitted] on August 29, 2021 by email.

**Exception: Oct 12, 2021** (BCO 21-2; 18-2) – No approval of completed internship for ordination candidate.

**Response:** Mr. [name omitted]’s internship was approved by the presbytery for ordination. (BCO 21-2; 18-2)

**Please see the additional PDF attachments that are mentioned.**

**Exception: Feb 9, 2019** (BCO 13-6; 21-4.c.1) – No record of all of the parts of examination having been conducted for a man transferring in from another denomination.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and the record will be amended.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the actions taken at the earlier meeting.” (RONR, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** At the presbytery meeting of Feb 9, 2019, TE [name omitted] was examined in the areas of:

- (a) his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9),
- (b) his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages,
- (c) Bible content,
- (d) theology,
- (e) the Sacraments,
- (f) Church history,
- (g) the history of the Presbyterian Church in America, and
- (h) the principles and rules of the government and discipline of the church.(BCO 21-4.c.1) and the examination was sustained for transfer into the presbytery from the ARP (BCO 13-6).

**Exception: Feb 9, 2019; Oct 1, 2019** (BCO 13-6; 21-4.f) – No record that candidate for transfer from another denomination was required to state his differences with the *Westminster Standards* in his own words.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and the record will be amended.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the actions taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** At the presbytery meeting of Feb 9, 2019, in order to transfer from the ARP (*BCO* 13-6) TE [name omitted] was required to state his stated differences with the Westminster Standards in his own words, as follows (*BCO* 21-4.f):

*“I hold to a “continental” view, holding that certain forms of recreations are permissible. I stated that Isaiah 58:13, “doing your pleasure on my holy day” is referring to business dealings – that is seeking business profit on the Sabbath.”*

The court judged the stated difference(s) to be more than semantic, but “not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine” (*BCO* 21-4).

**Exception: Feb 9, 2019** (*BCO* 19-2) – No record of all of the parts of a licensure exam having been conducted.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and the record will be amended.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the actions taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15).

**Response [2023]:** On February 9, 2019, [name omitted] was examined in all areas required for licensure in *BCO* 19-2, and the examinations were sustained for the following:

- a. Give a statement of his Christian experience and inward call to preach the Gospel in written form and/or orally before the Presbytery (at the discretion of the Presbytery):
- b. Be tested with a written and/or oral examination by the Presbytery (at the discretion of the Presbytery) for his:
  1. basic knowledge of Biblical doctrine as outlined in the Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church in America.
  2. practical knowledge of Bible content.
  3. basic knowledge of the government of the Presbyterian Church in America as defined in The Book of Church Order.

**Exception: Feb 9, 2019; May 4, 2019; Oct 1, 2019** (BCO 19-2.f) – Candidate for licensure’s stated differences not recorded in his own words.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and the record will be amended.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the actions taken at the earlier meeting.” (RONR, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** Feb 9, 2019 (TE [name omitted]) (BCO 19-2.f) TE [name omitted] did state his differences with the Westminster Standards as follows: “WCF 4.1 – “*space of six days*”: I suppose this may not be a difference, but as noted above, I understand “the space of six days” to be a general framework, which is an acceptable view according to the PCA’s Creation Study Committee.

*WCF 21.8 – Sabbath requires public and private worship “the whole time”: Perhaps it depends upon how one defines worship. If worship is all our lives (as Paul indicates in Rom 12.1-2), then I am fine with the language. But if something more explicit and specific is in mind, then I take an exception. I believe rest (which can occur in a number of ways: nap, playing Uno, or ball) can be a legitimate way of honoring God on the Sabbath (who rested on the seventh day).*

*WLC 109 – No representation of any person of the Trinity. I believe that no representation of the Trinity should be worshipped, however, it seems that the New Testament (1 John 1.1ff, eg) actually invites us to represent Jesus (at least in our minds) for teaching purposes or non-worship purposes.”*

The court judged the stated difference(s) to be more than semantic, but “not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine” (BCO 21-4). May 4, 2019 (TE [name omitted]) (BCO 19-2.f) TE [name omitted] did state his differences with the Westminster Standards as follows:

*“WCF 21.8, WLC 117, 119, WSC 61, 62 the language of rest all the day, from works and recreation go beyond the guidelines given in scripture in Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15 celebrated in our day on the Lord’s day should be a combination of worship, rest, and mercy. It should be noted that in taking this view I still hold a high view of Sabbath marked by preparation, worship, rest and mercy. My objection to excluding recreation from the Sabbath I view from scripture does not take away from the other important function of the sabbath day. The sabbath recreation I am in favor of should be limited, simple in form (example pickup games) and avoid interference with corporate worship. Club and organized sports should still*

*be avoided but a simple pick up game or shooting some hoops does not in my view dishonor the sabbath.*

*WLC 109 According to the second commandment it is a sin to make any representation of God, or of any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever. I believe the second commandment Ex 20:4 forbids the making of idols or images to which we would bow down and worship. The Scriptures speak of the form of Jesus e.g. Isaiah 53 which is why I believe that the Catechism goes beyond the prohibitions of Scripture on this point.”*

The court judged the stated difference(s) to be more than semantic, but “not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine” (BCO 21-4). Oct 1, 2019 (BCO 19-2.f) The presbytery respectfully disagrees. There were several candidates that day, and all of their exceptions were recorded in their own words in the minutes, though in a couple of cases the Stated Clerk failed to apply quotation marks clearly demarcating this.

**Exception: Feb 9, 2019** (BCO 15-3; 31-2) – Presbytery formed a commission (which it calls a ‘Council’) to conduct a 31-2 investigation (referencing both 31-2 and 15-3) of a TE regarding whom the minutes state that a committee of Presbytery has met with “many parties” and “believe there is a ‘strong presumption of guilt.’” This is in contradiction to both 15-3 (which establishes a judicial commission to adjudicate a trial) and 31-2 (the purpose of which is to determine if there is a strong presumption of guilt).

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges that this was not recorded correctly and will amend the minutes to rightly reflect the actions taken.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the actions taken at the earlier meeting.” (RONR, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** On Feb 9, 2019, a BCO 15-3 commission was formed to try a case against TE [name omitted] that was requested by the pastoral care committee of Hills and Plains Presbytery on behalf of some staff and a deacon of [church name omitted] PCA who had made accusations against TE [name omitted] (BCO 31-2) which warranted an investigation. The staff and a deacon of [church name omitted] PCA had made accusations and brought charges against TE [name omitted], which led the PCC to request a trial and the presbytery then formed the BCO 15-3 commission to adjudicate the trial.

**Exception: Feb 9, 2019** (BCO 13-11) – No record of the moderator having appointed the “Special Judicial Council”.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges to oversite in recording this, and the record will be amended.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the actions taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** The moderator appointed the following to the *BCO* 15-3 commission re: [name omitted]: TE [name omitted], TE [name omitted], TE [name omitted], RE [name omitted], RE [name omitted], RE [name omitted], RE [name omitted]

**Exception: Mar 26, 2019** (*BCO* 13-11) – Per the purpose of the called meeting, a “full statement of the case and the judgment rendered” not attached to the Executive Session minutes.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not included and will amend.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the actions taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** The judgment rendered is attached to the email that contained these responses (original response said “attached to the 2022 minutes, but that became confusing and so I made an administrative decision that it would be more prudent to attach them with this email).

**Exception: Mar 26, 2019** (*BCO* 15-3; 32-15) – Presbytery approved of the judgment of its commission without there being any declaration of guilt on the part of the accused.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges that the declaration of guilt was not recorded correctly. The party did plead guilty.

**Rationale [2022]:** Minutes need to be amended and approved by Presbytery to reflect this declaration of guilt and resubmitted.

**Response [2023]:** As indicated in the missing commission report (attached to this email (originally said “attached to the 2022 minutes” for reason cited above) the accused party confessed guilt on March 7, 2019. This is recorded in the report, as noted above.

**Exception: May 4, 2019** (*BCO* 19-2.a) – No record of candidate for licensure giving a statement of his Christian experience and inward call to preach the Gospel (written or oral).

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** Mr. [name omitted] appeared before the Presbytery in person, and was examined by the Presbytery on experiential religion and on his motives for seeking the ministry. (*BCO* 18-3)

Mr. [name omitted] answered affirmatively to the questions of *BCO* 18-3:

1. Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a becoming Christian character, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for the sacred ministry?
2. Do you promise to submit yourself to the proper supervision of the Presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for the ministry?

RE [name omitted] examinations were arrested and approved for licensure and ordination in the areas of:

- (a) his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9),
- (b) his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages,
- (c) Bible content,
- (d) theology,
- (e) the Sacraments,
- (f) Church history,
- (g) the history of the Presbyterian Church in America, and
- (h) the principles and rules of the government and discipline of the church.

Also given were his a statement of his Christian experience and inward call to preach the Gospel (*BCO* 19-2.a)

Mr. [name omitted]'s examinations were arrested and approved for licensure and ordination in the areas of:

- (a) his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9),
- (b) his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages,
- (c) Bible content,
- (d) theology,
- (e) the Sacraments,
- (f) Church history,

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- (g) the history of the Presbyterian Church in America, and
- (h) the principles and rules of the government and discipline of the church.

Also given were his a statement of his Christian experience and inward call to preach the Gospel (*BCO* 19-2.a)

**Exception: May 4, 2019** (*BCO* 21-4.c.1) – No record of examination of a candidate for ordination in Bible content or theology.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** Mr. [name omitted] was examined in the following areas:

- (a) his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9),
- (b) his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages,
- (c) Bible content,
- (d) theology,
- (e) the Sacraments,
- (f) Church history,
- (g) the history of the Presbyterian Church in America, and
- (h) the principles and rules of the government and discipline of the church.

The examinations were sustained and approved

**Exception: May 4, 2019; Oct 1, 2019** (*BCO* 21-4.g) – No record that Presbytery appointed a day for ordination.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** May 4, 2019 (TE [name omitted]) – The moderator appointed a commission of TE [name omitted], RE [name omitted], TE [name omitted], RE [name omitted] TE [name omitted], RE [name omitted], TE [name omitted], TE [name omitted] to proceed with the ordination and installation at [church name omitted] Church on May 19.



Oct 1, 2019 ([name omitted]) – The moderator appointed a commission of TE [name omitted], TE [name omitted], TE [name omitted], REs: [name omitted], [name omitted], and [name omitted] for the ordination and installation service of [name omitted] on September 8, 2019.

**Exception: Oct 1, 2019** (*BCO* 21-4.c.1) – No record of examination of a candidate for ordination in Theology, knowledge of Greek/Hebrew, or Polity.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** Mr. [name omitted] was examined in the following areas:

- (a) his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9),
- (b) his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages,
- (c) Bible content,
- (d) theology,
- (e) the Sacraments,
- (f) Church history,
- (g) the history of the Presbyterian Church in America, and
- (h) the principles and rules of the government and discipline of the church.

The examinations were sustained and approved

**Exception: Oct 1, 2019** (*BCO* 13-6) – No record of all parts of a transfer exam of a man ordained in the PCA.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** TE [name omitted] was examined for transfer from Platte Valley Presbytery on Christian experience, and also touching his views in theology, the Sacraments, and church government. (*BCO* 13-6). His examinations were sustained and approved

**Exception: Feb 8, 2020; Jun 30, 2020** (*BCO* 21-4.f; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the candidate’s own words.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** TE [name omitted] did state his differences with the Westminster Standards as follows:

“I have a stated difference with Chapter 21 Section 8 of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Specifically, I believe that recreation is allowed on the Sabbath, rather than the whole day being taken up with the exercise of worship and the duties of necessity and mercy.

1. Colossians 2:16 – “Therefore let no one pass judgement on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.”
2. Romans 14:5 – “One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.””

The court judged the stated difference(s) to be more than semantic, but “not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine” (*BCO* 21-4).

**Exception: Feb 8, 2020; Jun 30, 2020** (*BCO* 21-2; 18-2) – No approval of candidate for ordination’s completed internship.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** Feb 8, 2020 – Mr. [name omitted]’s internship was approved by the presbytery for ordination. (*BCO* 21-2; 18-2)

Jun 30, 2020 – Mr. [name omitted]’s internship was approved by the presbytery for ordination. (*BCO* 21-2, 18-2)

**Exception: Feb 8, 2020; Jun 30, 2020** (*BCO* 21-4.g) – No record that Presbytery appointed a day for ordination and/or installation or established a commission for ordination and/or installation.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** (For [name omitted]) Feb 8, 2020 – The moderator appointed a commission of TEs [name omitted], [name omitted], and [name omitted], REs [name omitted], [name omitted], and [name omitted] to proceed with the ordination and installation at [church name omitted] on 2020.3.15 at 6 PM.

([name omitted]) Jun 30, 2020 – The moderator appointed a commission of Rev. [name omitted], Rev. [name omitted], Rev. [name omitted], Elder [name omitted], Elder [name omitted], Elder [name omitted] to proceed with the ordination and installation at [church name omitted] on August 2, 2020.

**Exception: Feb 8, 2020** (*BCO* 13-11) – Individual is examined and preaches a sermon with no indication in the minutes as to what he was examined for or why his sermon was arrested and sustained. (Individual is listed as a candidate and an intern, but not as a licentiate).

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** Mr. [name omitted] was examined for licensure according to *BCO* 19-2.a-b:

The examination for licensure shall be as follows:

- a. Give a statement of his Christian experience and inward call to preach the Gospel in written form and/or orally before the Presbytery (at the discretion of the Presbytery):
- b. Be tested with a written and/or oral examination by the Presbytery (at the discretion of the Presbytery) for his:
  1. basic knowledge of Biblical doctrine as outlined in the Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church in America.

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2. practical knowledge of Bible content.
3. basic knowledge of the government of the Presbyterian Church in America as defined in The Book of Church Order. (*BCO* 13-11)

**Exception: Feb 8, 2020; Jun 30, 2020** (*BCO* 18-3) – Man is received as a candidate without being examined on experiential religion or his motives for seeking the gospel ministry.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** Feb 8, 2020 – Mr. [name omitted] was examined with regards to his experiential religion and his motives for seeking the gospel ministry, and so received as a candidate under care. (*BCO* 18-3). The candidate answered in the affirmative to the questions of *BCO* 18-3:

1. Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a becoming Christian character, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for the sacred ministry?
2. Do you promise to submit yourself to the proper supervision of the Presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for the ministry?

Having given testimony to his inward call to ministry, he was also received as an intern.

Jun 30, 2020 – Mr. [name omitted] was examined with regards to his experiential religion and his motives for seeking the gospel ministry, and so received as a candidate under care. (*BCO* 18-3). The candidate answered in the affirmative to the questions of *BCO* 18-3:

1. Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a becoming Christian character, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for the sacred ministry?
2. Do you promise to submit yourself to the proper supervision of the Presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for the ministry?

Having given testimony to his inward call to ministry, he was also received as an intern.

**Exception: Feb 8, 2020; Jun 30, 2020** (*BCO* 19-9) – Man is received as an intern without giving statement regarding his inward call to the ministry.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the actions taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** Feb 8, 2020 – Mr. [name omitted] was examined with regards to his experiential religion and his motives for seeking the gospel ministry, and so received as a candidate under care. (*BCO* 18-3). The candidate answered in the affirmative to the questions of *BCO* 18-3:

1. Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a becoming Christian character, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for the sacred ministry?
2. Do you promise to submit yourself to the proper supervision of the Presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for the ministry?

Having given testimony to his inward call to ministry, he was also received as an intern.

Jun 30, 2020 – Mr. [name omitted] was examined with regards to his experiential religion and his motives for seeking the gospel ministry, and so received as a candidate under care. (*BCO* 18-3). The candidate answered in the affirmative to the questions of *BCO* 18-3:

1. Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a becoming Christian character, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for the sacred ministry?
2. Do you promise to submit yourself to the proper supervision of the Presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for the ministry?

Having given testimony to his inward call to ministry, he was also received as an intern.

**Exception: Jun 30, 2020** (*BCO* 18-3) – Charge not given to candidate for ministry.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** A charge was given to the candidate by TE [name omitted]

**Exception: Jun 30, 2020 (BCO 23-1)** – Presbytery approves a new call for a TE within the same presbytery without first dissolving the previous call by following the steps in *BCO 23-1*.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded correctly and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** A request to dissolve the pastoral relations (assistant pastor) between [church name omitted] (the session) and TE [name omitted]. TE [name omitted]’s call to [church name omitted] was dissolved. The session was cited to appear and did appear. (*BCO 23-1*)

**Exception: Jun 30, 2020 (BCO 21-3)** – Presbytery ordains a man to the gospel ministry without a call to a specific work (the man is listed as an assistant pastor in the next meeting’s roll).

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded correctly and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** RE [name omitted] was approved for ordination and his call as associate pastor of [church name omitted] was approved. The moderator appointed a commission of Rev. [name omitted], Rev. [name omitted], Rev. [name omitted], Elder [name omitted], Elder [name omitted], Elder [name omitted] to proceed with the ordination and installation at [church name omitted] on August 2, 2020.

**Exception: Jun 30, 2020 (BCO 23-1)** – Presbytery dissolves the call of a TE without following the steps in *BCO 23-1*.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded correctly and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** The presbytery received a request from both TE [name omitted] and the session of [church name omitted] to dissolve the pastoral relationship between them. The session was cited to appear. The dissolution of the relationship was approved. (*BCO* 23-1)

**Exception: Jun 30, 2020** (*BCO* 13-9.c) – TE is approved as a “planting Pastor” of a mission work without the approval of a new call to that work and without approving the specific terms of the call.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded correctly and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** TE [name omitted]’s call and terms of call was received, reviewed, and approved by the presbytery. (*BCO* 13-9.c)

**Exception: Aug 4, 2020** (*BCO* 23-1) – Pastoral relation is dissolved without citing the church to appear.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** The session of [church name omitted] was cited to appear by email, and did appear. (*BCO* 23-1)

**Exception: Aug 4, 2020** (*BCO* 38-3) – Presbytery transferred a TE to a denomination with whom we do not have fraternal relations without following the steps in either 38-3a or 38-3b.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded properly and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** TE [name omitted] requested to be dismissed from the presbytery in order to affiliate with ECO Rivers of Life Presbytery. Being a member in good standing and being satisfied that this was the right move for him, prayer was offered for his future ministry in ECO and his name was removed from our rolls as requested. (*BCO* 38-3.a)

**Exception: Oct 13, 2020** (*BCO* 18-3) – Man is received as a candidate without being examined on his motives for seeking the gospel ministry.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** RE [name omitted] was examined with regards to his experiential religion and his motives for seeking the gospel ministry, and so received as a candidate under care. (*BCO* 18-3). The candidate answered in the affirmative to the questions of *BCO* 18-3:

1. Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a becoming Christian character, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for the sacred ministry?
2. Do you promise to submit yourself to the proper supervision of the Presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for the ministry?

Having given testimony to his inward call to ministry, he was also received as an intern.

**Exception: Oct 13, 2020** (*BCO* 5-9.c, d) – No record of the nomination, training, examination, or election of Ruling Elders for a mission church being particularized.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** The presbytery has received the record of the election of [name omitted] as pastor as well as the REs of [church name omitted], along with the commission’s report of the training, examination, and approval of the ruling elders. (*BCO* 5-9.c, d)

**Exception: Oct 13, 2020** (*BCO* 5-9.f.1) No indication of a congregational meeting to elect a pastor.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its



current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** The presbytery has received the record of the election of [name omitted] as pastor as well as the REs of [church name omitted], along with the commission’s report of the training, examination, and approval of the ruling elders. (*BCO* 5-9.f.1)

**Exception: Oct 13, 2020** (*BCO* 5-9.h) – Church approved to be particularized without the establishment of a commission to organize the church.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** The moderator established the following commission, to organize [church name omitted] on Sunday, October 25, 2020 at 5:00 pm at [church name omitted]: [name omitted], TE ([church name omitted]) [name omitted], RE ([church name omitted]) [name omitted], TE ([church name omitted]) [name omitted], RE ([church name omitted]) [name omitted], TE ([church name omitted]) [name omitted], RE ([church name omitted]) [name omitted]

**Exception: May 8, 2018** (*RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences were approved but not recorded.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this error and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** Mr. [name omitted]’s stated differences with the Westminster Standards were as follows: (*RAO* 16-3.e.5)

“*WCF* 4.1 states that creation occurred “in the space of six days” (cf. *WLC* 15, *WSC* 9). I do not take exception to this statement if it is merely a quotation of Biblical language. If, however, this phrase is meant to strictly limit the time of creation to six literal 24 hour periods then I would wish to register my reservations. While I heartily affirm the very real possibility of 6-24 creation, I find the framework interpretations of Genesis 1:1-2:3 the most exegetically satisfying. In any case, the account is coherent and historical not mythical. Given the historical context of the text (presuming

Mosaic authorship)--a nascent Israelite nation just redeemed from slavery--the account seems to emphasize God's power and agency in creating the cosmos ex nihilo by his word in direct juxtaposition to pagan Egyptian or Mesopotamian accounts of creation.

*WCF* 21.8 points out that the keeping of the Sabbath requires "holy rest" not only from one's "worldly employments" but also from his "recreations" (cf. *WSC* 60, *WLC* 117). Instead one is to be taken up "the whole time in public and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy." While the one-in-seven principle features prominently in Scripture (Gen 2:2, Ex 20:8, Is 58:13-14), the emphasis of the fourth commandment is upon rest from work. Recreational activities do not impinge upon what is required in the fourth commandment, nor do they necessarily keep one from the exercise of private worship. Perhaps royal recreational prescriptions during the era of the Westminster Assembly motivated the spirit behind these statements. Put more positively, Matt 12:1-14 not only sanctions acts of mercy and necessity but acts of goodness. The emphasis of v 8 is upon celebration in Jesus the Lord of the Sabbath. Mark 2:27 also points out the fact that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." The Sabbath is God's loving provision for the flourishing and good of his creation. This is perhaps best captured in *WLC* 121 which speaks of "the two great benefits of creation and redemption." Recreational activities which promote the good flourishing of our selves, families, and neighbors ought to be considered lawful on the Sabbath in my view.

*WLC* 109 states that the second commandment forbids "the making of any representation of God, of all or any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever...." Indeed, we should not make idols or worship the things of our hands or of creation as God. However, Christ is the very "image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15) and the "radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature" (Heb 1:3). Since the incarnation, God has chosen to reveal himself in Christ, the God-Man. As such, in reading the New Testament one cannot help but picture him inwardly. In fact, the celebration of the Lord's Supper seems to bid us picture him in remembrance of his death and resurrection (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). "

The court judged the stated difference(s) to be more than semantic, but "not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine" (*BCO* 21-4).

**Exception: Oct 9, 2018** (*BCO* 19-2, *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – No specific requirements of licensure exams recorded.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this error and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]:** [name omitted] was examined for licensure and ordination in the areas of: (*BCO* 19-2, 21-4):

- (a) his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9),
- (b) his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages,
- (c) Bible content,
- (d) theology,
- (e) the Sacraments,
- (f) Church history,
- (g) the history of the Presbyterian Church in America, and
- (h) the principles and rules of the government and discipline of the church.

The examinations were arrested and sustained. The candidate was approved for ordination.

The candidate answered the following questions for licensure in the affirmative (*BCO* 19-3):

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scripture?
3. Do you promise to strive for the purity, peace, unity and edification of the Church?
4. Do you promise to submit yourself, in the Lord, to the government of this Presbytery, or of any other into the bounds of which you may be called?

A prayer was offered.

At [church name omitted], the 9th day of October, the Hills and Plains Presbytery, having received testimonials commending [name omitted], proceeded to submit him to the prescribed examination for licensure, which was met to the approval of the Presbytery.

Having satisfactorily answered the questions for licensure, [name omitted] was licensed by the Presbytery to preach the Gospel within the bounds of this Presbytery.

[name omitted] was examined for licensure and ordination in the areas of: (*BCO* 19-2, 21-4):

- (a) his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management (based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9),
- (b) his knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages,
- (c) Bible content,

**Exception: Feb 8, 2020; Jun 30, 2020** (*BCO* 18-3) – Questions for candidacy not shown to have been asked or answered in the affirmative.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery acknowledges this was not recorded and will amend the record.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to take action to approve the amendment(s), and either resubmit those minutes or include a motion in its current minutes “all information required to construct an accurate record of the action taken at the earlier meeting.” (*RONR*, 12th Ed., 48:15)

**Response [2023]: Feb 8, 2020** - Mr. [name omitted] was examined with regards to his experiential religion and his motives for seeking the gospel ministry, and so received as a candidate under care. (*BCO* 18-3). The candidate answered in the affirmative to the questions of *BCO* 18-3:

1. Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a becoming Christian character, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for the sacred ministry?
2. Do you promise to submit yourself to the proper supervision of the Presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for the ministry?

Having given testimony to his inward call to ministry, he was also received as an intern.

**June 30, 2020** - Mr. [name omitted] was examined with regards to his experiential religion and his motives for seeking the gospel ministry, and so received as a candidate under care. (*BCO* 18-3). The candidate answered in the affirmative to the questions of *BCO* 18-3:

1. Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a becoming Christian character, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for the sacred ministry?

2. Do you promise to submit yourself to the proper supervision of the Presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for the ministry?

Having given testimony to his inward call to ministry, he was also received as an intern.

**Exception: General 2019; General 2020; General 2021 (BCO 13-9.b)** – No record of review of Session records having been conducted.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery agrees that no review has been conducted. This will be rectified with a review of all session minutes from 2017 to 2021

**Rationale [2022]:** The minutes of Presbytery in 2021 indicate no action to fulfill its responsibility to review Session records not yet reviewed.

**Response [2023]:** This continues to be true. We have formed a review of session record committee at the October 2022 presbytery meeting. They have been given a special mandate to complete the review 2017 through 2022 by the end of 2023. The meeting is where this exception will finally be rectified. This is the best we can do, presbyterians are notoriously slow.

**e. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Feb 13, 2021 (BCO 15-1; 21-5)** – No record of appointment of an ordination commission.

**Response:** In a severe oversight, no commission was ever established and Rev. [name omitted] never had an installation service. He has been in the service of the presbytery as chaplain and TE since 2020. He has recently been hired as a part-time assistant within the presbytery (in addition to his current duties) and we will administer all the formalities at that installation service. Those records will be included in the 2022 minutes.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its actions (RAO 16-10.b.1).

29. That the Minutes of **Houston Metro** Presbytery: 54-0-1

- a. Be approved without exception: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exception of form: **Directory; General 2022; Jan 21, 2022; Apr 11, 2022; Aug 19, 2022; Nov 14, 2022.**
- c. Be approved with exception of substance:
  1. **Exception: General 2022 (BCO 13-9.b; 40-1)** – No record of review of records of church Sessions.
  2. **Exception: General 2022 (BCO 8-7)** – No record of annual reports of TEs laboring out of bounds.
  3. **Exception: Jan 21, 2022 (BCO 13-11; RAO 16-3.e.7)** – Minutes of executive session not included.

4. **Exception: Jan 21, 2022; Aug 19, 2022** (*BCO* 21-1) – No record that Congregation/Session concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations.
5. **Exception: Jan 21, 2022; April 11, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1, *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in presbytery minutes.
6. **Exception: April 11, 2022** (*BCO* 5-9.a.i) – Incomplete record of particularization service.
7. **Exception: April 11, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2) – No record of six-months membership for candidate or record of endorsement by candidate’s session.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Jan 15, 2021** (*BCO* 19-2) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded. No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.

**Response:** The licentiate had no stated differences with the Standards. We will correct our minutes to state: “The licentiate offered no stated differences, therefore no statement of differences is recorded.” We will include a similar reference in our minutes in the future when men have no stated differences with our Standards.

**Exception: Apr 12, 2021** (*BCO* 13-11) – Complaint sent to Presbytery not recorded in Presbytery’s minutes.

**Response:** We will correct our minutes by publishing a copy of the Complaint in the minutes.

**Exception: Apr 12, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4) – No record of stated differences in transfer exam.

**Response:** The Teaching Elder had no stated differences with the Standards. We will correct our minutes to state: “The Teaching Elder offered no stated differences, therefore, no statement of differences is recorded.” We will include a similar reference in our minutes in the future when men have no stated differences with our Standards.

**Exception: Nov 8, 2021** (*BCO* 18-3) – No record of questions proposed to candidate.

**Response:** The Constitutional questions listed in *BCO* 18-3 were asked of the candidate. We will correct our minutes to reflect that and be more diligent in the future.

**Exception: Jan 17, 2020; Aug 21, 2020** (*BCO* 18-3) – Candidates not examined on their “motives for seeking the ministry.”

**Response:** The Candidates were examined on their “motives for seeking the ministry.” That was subsumed under our notion of “the examination in Christian Experience.” We will amend that in the future to note: “Approve the examination in Christian Experience, including motives for seeking the ministry.”

**Exception: General 2020** – No record of January 2020 Minutes being approved by the Presbytery.

**Response:** We inadvertently failed to approve those minutes due to the disruption of our normal meetings due to the pandemic. We approved those minutes at our November 2022 meeting. Please note that the approval was postponed on May 18, 2020 instead of August 21, 2020.

**Exception: Aug 20, 2021** (*BCO* 20-9; 38-3; 46-6) – TE mentioned as moved to Georgia and removed from directory without transfer or action to remove.

**Response:** The TE in question was removed from the Stated Clerk’s directory at the time he moved to Savannah, Georgia (Savannah River Presbytery) but was not officially transferred by Houston Metro Presbytery until January, 2022. His name was mentioned in both the August, 2021 minutes and in the November, 2021 minutes merely as information. Our January 2022 minutes reflect the actual transfer of the TE and his designation as honorably retired (*BCO* 23-2).

**e. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: General** (*BCO* 13-9.b) – No record of review of records of Session completed and approved by action of Presbytery.

**Response:** Our Review of Sessional Records Committee has reviewed records of Sessions, but has not brought a report in some time. We will include such a report in our next set of minutes and endeavor to be more diligent about reporting in the future

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery has corrected its actions (*RAO* 16-10.b.1) and provided a report. The Presbytery has been cited again this year for not reporting the status of its reviews.

30. That the Minutes of **Illiana** Presbytery: *52-0-1*

a. Be approved without exception: **Oct 22, 2022; Dec 3, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exception of form: **General 2022; Apr 9, 2022.**

c. Be approved with exception of substance:

**1. Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.

**2. Exception: General 2022 (BCO 8-7)** – No record of annual report(s) of TE(s) laboring out of bounds.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Feb 28, 2019 (RAO 16-3.e.5)** – Candidate’s differences not stated in his own words.

**Response:** This called meeting was held to transfer TE [name omitted] from Illiana Presbytery (PCA) to Lakes & Rivers Presbytery (EPC), this was not an examination. No other action was docketed or proposed. The transfer of ministry was amicable and Illiana had appreciated TE [name omitted]’s ministry.

**Exception: Nov 16, 2019 (BCO 13-12)** – No evidence of proper call for meeting and reason for called meeting not stated.

**Response:** It is duly noted that the particulars for calling this meeting were not detailed in the minutes, but the reason is stated clearly in the Motion offered by TE [name omitted].

**Exception: Jan 18, 2020 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5)** – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded (Hebrew/Greek).

**Response:** The C&C committee reported their acceptance of his Hebrew and Greek studies, the clerk is reminded to include this in the minutes.

**Exception: Jan 18, 2020 (BCO 21-4)** – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.

**Response:** No exceptions to the Standards were taken, therefore no record was included, the clerk is reminded to include this in the minutes.

**Exception: Jan 18, 2020; May 23, 2020; Oct 17, 2020; Jan 16, 2021 (BCO 13-9.b; 40-3)** – Results of review of records of church Sessions not stated.

**Response:** Review of Session minutes shown in the minutes. I will make sure to include wording that no exceptions were found.

**Exception: Jan 18, 2020; Oct 17, 2020 (BCO 5-9)** – All specific requirements of particularization of church not recorded.

**Response:** This petition following SR 121 was judged to be insufficient and returned for improvement.

**Exception: Feb 18, 2020; Jul 21, 2020 (BCO 13-12)** – Notice for called meeting not in order.

**Response:** Duly noted, I will make every effort to include the notice appropriately in the future.

**Exception: Feb 18, 2020 (BCO 13-12; RAO 16-3.c.1)** – Purpose of called meeting not recorded verbatim in the minutes.



APPENDIX Q

**Response:** Duly noted, I will make every effort to include the purpose of the called meeting, verbatim in the minutes.

**Exception: May 23, 2020** (*BCO* 13-11; *RAO* 16-3.e.7) – Minutes of executive session not included.

**Response:** I acknowledge that this was an error on my part. I failed to submit the minutes from the Executive Session along with the regular minutes. When Presbytery arose from Executive Session they reported in the regular minutes and the Commission was established.

**Exception: General 2020 & 2021** (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions.

**Response:** Review of Session minutes shown in the minutes. I will make sure to include wording that no exceptions were found.

**Exception: May 23, 2020; Oct 17, 2020** (*BCO* 15.1; *RAO* 16- 3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

**Response:** Commission had met on 2/21/20, it is possible that MNA Chairman did not submit minutes to Presbytery and therefore were not included

**Exception: May 23, 2020** (*BCO* 5-3) – No record of temporary system of government appointed for mission church.

**Response:** [church name omitted] Mission would be established upon installation of TE [name omitted], MNA had not finalized the establishment of the temporary Session at this stage. Per *BCO* 5-3.c a Temporary Session was established at 5/23/20 meeting.

**Exception: Oct 17, 2020** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16- 3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

**Response:** The differences held by TE [name omitted], offered by the candidate in his own words, were included in the appendix and were found to not be differences and as such judged accordingly. I would be thankful for language which communicates this adequately. TE [name omitted] did not take any exceptions as is noted in the minutes.

**Exception: Oct 17, 2020** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16- 3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded (PCA History exam).

**Response:** In both cases both Church and PCA History were examined, Clerk, using *BCO* 21-4, is reminded to incorporate wording accordingly in future minutes.

**Exception: Oct 17, 2020** (*BCO* 15-2) – Commission appointed with fewer than two teaching elders and two ruling elders.

**Response:** In order to properly examine both candidates, Presbytery divided into two equal parts. I will endeavor to identify two TEs and two REs for each group for the minutes in the future.

**Exception: Oct 17, 2020** (*BCO* 5-9.h; 15-1) – No organizing commission appointed for particularization of a church.

**Response:** Duly Noted. Report of the Commission was received but not entered into the official record.

**Exception: Jan 16, 2021** (*BCO* 15-1, 3) – There was a judicial commission formed at the 7/21/2020 meeting, but there was no report concerning its “full statement of the case and the judgment rendered” in 2020 or the present meeting. There is mention of the judicial commission concluding its work and the accused appealing the decision in the Stated Clerk’s Report (p. 6), but there is no record of the Presbytery’s judgment on the case.

**Response:** The Investigative Commission reported on 7/21/2020 recommending that Illiana proceed with Process. No written report was submitted. Illiana established a Judicial Commission to proceed with Prosecution of the case. The case was tried on 10/24/2020. The judgment of the case was presented on 11/21/2020. The Judicial Commission submitted their report to Illiana at that time. The resulting conviction was appealed to the SJC which took up the case and a final judgment rendered on 10/21/2021.

**Exception: Jan 16, 2021** (*BCO* 42-6) – Motion made pursuant to *BCO* 42-6, but there is no record of a continuing judicial process in the court’s record aside from the Stated Clerk’s Report (p. 6).

**Response:** Per lines 51-52, continuing judicial process follows in the motion. The Illiana Judicial Commission submitted their report on 11/21/2020. No comment was made in the minutes as the resulting conviction was under appeal to the SJC which took up the case and a final judgment rendered on 10/21/2021. The item in the Clerk’s report was related to transcription costs initiated in the appeal process.

**Exception: Jan 16, 2021** (*BCO* 42-6) – Sufficient reasons for preventing a TE from exercising all functions of office not recorded.

**Response:** This vote was taken after Presbytery reviewed the outcome of the case at the 11/21/2020 meeting. TE [name omitted] at that time appealed to SJC.

**Exception: Jun 28, 2021** (*BCO* 13-2) – Notice for called meeting not in order (no record of 10-day notice).

**Response:** Details of when the notice is sent, have not been a normal part of the Presbytery's minutes. I will try to include that in future Called Meeting minutes.

**Exception: Jun 28, 2021 (BCO 13-6)** – No record of Presbytery from which TE is transferring within the PCA.

**Response:** Duly noted, Clerk will seek to include this information in future minutes. This information was included in the Clerk's e-mail of 6/10/21, but not included in the minutes

**Exception: Jun 28, 2021 (BCO 18-2, 3)** – All requirements for bringing a candidate under care are not recorded (e.g., endorsement of Session, experiential religion)

**Response:** Candidate's Personal Testimony is noted in the minutes including a sense of call. The candidate comes forward with an endorsement by the Session, but I recognize this was not noted in the minutes.

**Exception: Oct 16, 2021 (BCO 15.1; RAO 16-3.e.4)** – Minutes of judicial commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

**Response:** This vote was taken after Presbytery reviewed the outcome of the case at the 11/21/2020 meeting. TE [name omitted] at that time appealed to SJC.

**Exception: General (BCO 13-9)** – No record of review of session minutes.

**Response:** Meeting dates are unknown and neither Called Meeting in 2019 was related to review of Session Minutes. Clerk would appreciate additional information in order to provide a response.

**e. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Oct 17, 2020 (BCO 21-4)** – Use of extraordinary clause for ordination candidate not explained, and  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote not recorded.

**Response:** Vote to approve extraordinary clause was unanimous.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (RAO 16-10.b.1). The  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote was explained by an unrecorded unanimous vote, but not the reason for using the extraordinary clause (BCO 21-4.d).

**Exception: Oct 17, 2020 (BCO 22-5; Preliminary Principle 6)** – No record of Sessions' approval of men serving as Stated Supply.

**Response:** Clerk does not understand this exception. If the man is approved by Presbytery to serve as Stated Supply it is assumed the Session requests his ministry, what is additionally required to indicate their approval?

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its actions (RAO 16-10.b.1). It cannot be assumed that the Session approves of the Stated Supply solely on the basis of the Presbytery's approval.

**Exception: Jan 16, 2021** (*BCO* 19-9) – No record of examination for internship.

**Response:** This was simply a procedural matter, required by the timing for internships.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its actions (*RAO* 16-10.b.1).

**Exception: Jan 18, 2020** (*BCO* 13-9.c; 23-1) – No record of congregational meeting to consider pastoral resignation.

**Response:** The resignation and dissolution of the pastoral relationship came from the [church name omitted] Session to Presbytery. Congregational meeting details were not provided by C&C.

**Rationale:** Presbytery should ensure that the congregation's voice was heard in the dissolution of pastoral relationship (*BCO* 23-1).

**f. That responses shall be submitted to the following GA as no responses were received in 2023:**

**Exception: General** (*RAO* 16-4.c.2) – *Standing Rules* not included.

**Exception: General** (*RAO* 16-10.a) – No record in minutes of exceptions taken by GA, and no responses to the Assembly concerning disposition of an exception of substance.

31. That the Minutes of Iowa Presbytery: 52-0-1

- a. Be approved without exception: **Nov 12, 2022.**
- b. Be approved with exception of form: **Directory.**
- c. Be approved with exception of substance:
  1. **Exception: Feb 15, 2022** (*BCO* 13-12; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – Purpose of called meeting not recorded verbatim in the minutes.
  2. **Exception: Feb 15, 2022** (*BCO* 13-4) – No record of three TEs and three REs calling meeting.
  3. **Exception: Feb 15, 2022; Mar 12, 2022; Jul 9, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.
  4. **Exception: Jul 9, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4) – No record of exam in PCA History.
  5. **Exception: Jul 9, 2022** (*BCO* 19-16) –  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote for waiving internship requirement not recorded.
  6. **Exception: Jul 9, 2022** (*BCO* 19-1) – No record of licensure exam in body of the minutes.
- d. **That the following response to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: General** (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-3) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions.

**Response:** Regarding the exceptions of substance that there was an incomplete recording of review of records of church sessions, during the time frame represented by these minutes Iowa presbytery had such a high number of churches looking for pastors that the Ad. Nom. Committee of Iowa Presbytery consisted of one teaching elder, our clerk. Recognizing the insufficient number of TE's available, our clerk was not able to sufficiently deal with reviewing Session Minutes.

That committee size continued until near the end of 2022 so you will find some of the same empty spots in our 2022 minutes. However, with many of those pastoral vacancies being filled, that committee now has sufficient ruling and teaching elders to begin this task with renewed determination to carry out this task effectively. Thank you for your patience

**Exception: May 8, 2021** (*BCO* 13-6) – 10-day notice requirement was not stated for the called meeting.

**Response:** Upon reviewing email messages sent to those within the presbytery, email records show that notice of the meeting was indeed sent out to those of the presbytery on Sunday, April 11, 2021 at 8:50 p.m. We apologize for not noting that in the minutes of that meeting.

**Exception: Jul 10, 2021; Nov 13, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

**Response:** The minutes of July 10 do specifically say that “[name omitted] was examined by the presbytery for ordination in all areas specified in *BCO* 21-4 and *RAO* 16-3.e.5.” Having said that, be assured that indeed, we did examine [name omitted] in all areas. We recognize we did not include the checklist we normally do and apologize for that. We will seek to do that more faithfully in the future.

Being reminded of that again regarding p.56 of our minutes, we assure you again of our desire to record this more fully and faithfully in the future.

Having said that Mr. [name omitted] has not been examined for ordination, p.55 is in reference to a licensure examination and appointment to stated supple. and therefore should not fall under the ordination examination requirements. Though we do recognize we did not include the checklist for licensure and normally do and apologize for that. We will seek to do that more faithfully in the future.

**e. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Jul 10, 2021** (*BCO* 42-1.e; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with prescribed categories.

**Response:** Brothers, as noted in the minutes cited, while the clerk was not present at the meeting, he did contact the man who had been examined to have from him a written recording of his own words regarding any exceptions he might have. The clerk sought to make clear to the presbytery (and to RPR) that we do recognize the importance of listing such differences and that the exception was included verbatim in the minutes.

However, since the clerk could not be certain of the exact language shared at the presbytery meeting, it did not seem either truthful nor wise to put words into the mouth of the presbytery such as “*merely semantic*” or “*more than semantic, but “not out of accord”*”.

If you were to read minutes of previous years you would know that that has been and remains our normal recording of this part of examinations. Yet, not wanting to record an unusual event as if it were “normal” the minutes were recorded as they were. We cannot change what was recorded and remind RPR that we will seek to return to our “normal” method of recording such things just as we have sought faithfully to do since the beginning of this presbytery.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its actions (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). Presbytery has not reconsidered the stated differences in order to judge with prescribed categories.

32. That the Minutes of **James River** Presbytery: 53-0-1

- a. Be approved without exception: **None**.
- b. Be approved with exception of form: **General 2022**.
- c. Be approved with exception of substance:
  1. **Exception: Jan 15, 2022** (*BCO* 19-7; 19-16) – Internship less than one year, with no record of  $\frac{3}{4}$  affirmative vote.
  2. **Exception: Jan 15, 2022; April 9, 2022; July 21, 2022; October 8, 2022** (*BCO* 13-4) – Quorum declared but attendance sheet records no REs present.
  3. **Exception: Jul 21, 2022** (Preliminary Principle 6; *BCO* 16-2) – No record that members of temporary Session were approved by congregation.
- d. **No response to previous assemblies required.**

33. That the Minutes of **Korean Capital** Presbytery: 55-0-1

- a. Be approved without exception: **None**.

- b. Be approved with exception of form: **Apr 4, 2022; Oct 3, 2022.**
- c. Be approved with exception of substance:
  1. **Exception: Apr 4, 2022; Oct 3, 2022** (RAO 16-10.a) – No record in minutes of exceptions taken by GA.
  2. **Exception: Apr 4, 2022** (BCO 19-2; RAO 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.
  3. **Exception: Apr 4, 2022** (BCO 19-16) – ¾ vote for waiving internship requirement not recorded.
  4. **Exception: Apr 4, 2022** (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Incomplete record of ordination exam.
  5. **Exception: Apr 4, 2022** (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.
  6. **Exception: Apr 4, 2022** (BCO 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.
  7. **Exception: Apr 4, 2022** (BCO 13-6) – No record of examination of TE transferring into Presbytery.
  8. **Exception: Apr 4, 2022** (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.
  9. **Exception: Apr 4, 2022** (BCO 18-2) – No record of endorsement by candidates’ Sessions.
  10. **Exception: Oct 3, 2022** (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Incomplete record of ordination exam.
  11. **Exception: Apr 4, 2022; Oct 3, 2022** (BCO 20-1; RAO 16-3.e.6) – No record that call was approved.
  12. **Exception: Apr 4, 2022** (BCO 18-2) – No record of six-months membership for candidates.
- d. **That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Apr 5, 2021** (BCO 23-1) – No record of congregation involvement when presbytery dissolved TE’s call.

**Response:** TE [name omitted] was an assistant pastor of the church and his resignation was approved at the session before being requested to the presbytery. We will note the minutes accordingly.

**Exception: Apr 5, 2021** (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

**Response:** We apologize for not fully stating the specific category title “more than semantic but not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine” and just using a shorthand. We will not the minutes accordingly

**Exception: Apr 5, 2021** (BCO 15-1; RAO 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission to install not entered in Presbytery minutes.

**Response:** A blank minutes form was attached by mistake instead of the actual filled out report. We will attach the actual report and note the minutes accordingly

**Exception: Oct 4, 2021** (BCO 25-11) – Improper approval of withdrawal of church from the PCA.

**Response:** We did hear on the floor of the congregational meeting which approved their withdrawal from PCA. We apologize for not recording the matter on the minutes. We will be more diligent on checking such matters in the future and note the minutes accordingly

**Exception: Oct 4, 2021** (BCO 15-2) – TE improperly installed as assistant minister. No record of formation of a commission to install.

**Response:** The installation commission was not appointed at Oct 4, 2021 meeting. The Action Commission, on behalf of the presbytery according to our bylaw 4.2.2.1, did form, on its Oct 29, 2021 meeting, an installation commission for TE [name omitted], which properly oversaw the installation at the church on Nov 14, 2021. The report of the installation commission, dated “11/16/21” was attached to April 4, 2022 minutes, which is submitted to the 2023 RPR

**Exception: Oct 4, 2021** (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

**Response:** We apologize for not recording the presbytery’s judgment, which was “more than semantic but not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine” in all three cases. We will note the minutes accordingly.

**e. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Oct 4, 2021** (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of transfer exam not recorded.

**Response:** We apologize for not recording all the details fully. TE [name omitted] was ordained at the Evangelical Church Alliance. We will note the minutes accordingly

**Rationale:** Presbytery has not demonstrated that the specific requirements were fulfilled.

**Exception: Apr 5, 2021** (BCO 13-11) – No Record of the February 26, 2021 Presbytery meeting.

**Response:** The “2/26/2021 meeting” mentioned in the middle of p. 5 is not referring to a regular presbytery meeting but an action commission meeting. Our bylaw allows the action commission to act on the matters of member



resignation and other non-controversial nature on behalf of the presbytery (note below), which calls for a timely decision. The action commission includes at least two teaching elders and two ruling elders so that it can act as a commission.

Korean Capital Presbytery ByLaws

#### 4.2.2 The Action Commission

4.2.2.1 It shall resolve on the petitions which was received from the stated clerk and the matters submitted by the Presbytery, and it shall submit them to the Presbytery for an approval. Especially, when a pastor who has to leave his field before the next stated presbytery meeting requests for a dissolution of the pastoral relations, the commission may, within its judgment, decide to take up and resolve on the petition.

**Rationale:** The Presbytery has not provided the commission's minutes for review.

34. That the Minutes of **Korean Central Presbytery:** 55-0-1
- a. Be approved without exception: **None.**
  - b. Be approved with exception of form: **Directory.**
  - c. Be approved with exception of substance:
    1. **Exception: Oct 12-13, 2021; Apr 5-6, 2022** (*BCO* 24-1, 40-4, 11-4; *BCO Preface* II-6) – Minutes contain several references to men having passed ‘the examination for ruling elders.’ This appears to be the presbytery exercising oversight over who may be elected as a ruling elder.
    2. **Exceptions: Oct 12-13, 2021; Apr 5-6, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the minister's/candidates own words.
    3. **Exceptions: Oct 12-13, 2021** (*RAO* 16-4.c.1; *BCO* 40-4) – A number of TEs are named to be investigated but no record or explanation of their connection to the Korean Central Presbytery or the PCA can be found in the minutes or directory.
    4. **Exception: Oct 12-13, 2021** (*BCO* 8-7; 20-1; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – TEs laboring out of bounds with missing information as to how and where they are serving.
    5. **Exception: Apr 5-6, 2022** (*BCO* 24-1, 40-4; Preliminary Principle 6) – Agenda item 10 indicates that the presbytery voted to add 2 new ruling elders to Vineyard Presbyterian Church. This is out of order and in conflict with the *BCO*. Each congregation decides how many ruling elders to elect.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: General** (*Standing Rules* 2-4.2) – Presbytery did not convene two stated meetings OR minutes not submitted if Fall stated meeting convened. (Oct 13-14, 2020 meeting minutes were submitted for review but these minutes were reviewed by the CRPR of the 48th GA).

**Response:** Korean Central Presbytery appreciates the Committee of Review of Presbytery Records attention to this matter but respectfully disagrees with this exception. Our stated meeting normally held in April of each year was cancelled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We view this as a singularly extraordinary circumstance. We held our stated meeting the following October, and the minutes for this meeting were viewed by the CRPR of the 48<sup>th</sup> GA (as noted in the exception).

**Exception: General** (*BCO* 13-9.b, 40-1) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.

**Response:** Korean Central Presbytery agrees with this exception and apologizes for our error. As noted elsewhere in the amended CRPR report for the 49th GA, receiving session records seems to be a perennial challenge for many Korean-language presbyteries (see pp. 1259, lines 37-41; p. 1261, lines 10-11, 36-37; p. 1263, lines 12-13; p. 1270, lines 40-41; and especially p. 1266, lines 7-16). Having said this, we will make every effort to be more diligent about requesting and reviewing these session records in accordance with *BCO* 13-9.b.

**Exception: Standing Rules** – No provision in Standing Rules to allow for virtual Presbytery meetings.

**Response:** Korean Central Presbytery agrees with this exception. Like many other Presbyteries, we conducted our meetings online in 2020 and early/mid 2021 due to the COVID pandemic. But we are seeking to correct this defect by proposing some changes in our Standing Rules at our October 2022 stated meeting. If adopted by a 2/3 majority vote, these changes will make provisions for the Presbytery to hold virtual meetings under specific circumstances. **[Note from Stated Clerk: We were not able to discuss this proposed revision our Standing Rules because this agenda item was postponed to a future meeting.]**

**Exception: Apr 13-14, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Incomplete record of ordination exam. (Bible, Greek and Hebrew not included).

**Response:** Korean Central Presbytery agrees with this exception and apologizes for our error. We failed to record in our minutes that the Presbytery had accepted the candidate's ([name omitted]) seminary degree

which included study in Biblical Hebrew and Greek “in lieu of an oral examination in the original languages” (*BCO* 21-4.c.1). In addition, Korean Central Presbytery usually tests candidates for their knowledge of Bible content during the licensure exam in accordance with *BCO* 19-2.b.2. We have corrected this omission in these minutes through a motion to amend something previously adopted at our October 2022 stated meeting. [**Note from Stated Clerk: Due to time constraints, the motions to amend something previously adopted were postponed to our next stated meeting.**]

**Exception: Apr 13-14, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specifics requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

**Response:** Korean Central Presbytery agrees with this exception and respectfully refers the CRPR to our response to the previous exception

**Exception: Apr 13-14, 2021** (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.

**Response:** Korean Central Presbytery agrees with this exception and apologizes for our error. The candidate, [name omitted], had received a call to serve as a pastor at the [church name omitted]. We have corrected this omission in our minutes through a motion to amend something previously adopted at our October 2022 stated meeting. [**Note from Stated Clerk: Due to time constraints, the motions to amend something previously adopted were postponed to our next stated meeting.**]

**Exception: Apr 13-14, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4) – Stated differences not recorded in the minister’s/candidate’s own words.

**Response:** Korean Central Presbytery respectfully disagrees with this exception. Our minutes from this meeting note that the candidate, [name omitted], took no exceptions to the Westminster Standards (p. 7).

**Exception: Apr 13-14, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specifics requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

**Response:** Korean Central Presbytery agrees with this exception and apologizes for our error. The minutes from this stated meeting note that the candidate, [name omitted], successfully completed the requirements for “a theological paper, exegesis of New Testament, sermons, Westminster Confession of Faith, and PCA history,” and he also preached a satisfactory sermon. The other requirements for the ordination exam were waived since the candidate had successfully completed them as he was undergoing the process in North Texas Presbytery, but we failed to note these specific requirements in our meeting minutes. We have corrected the above mistakes in our minutes through a motion to amend something previously adopted at

our October 2022 stated meeting, and we will be more careful in the future. **[Note from Stated Clerk: Due to time constraints, the motions to amend something previously adopted were postponed to our next stated meeting.]**

**Exception: Apr 13-14, 2021 (BCO 20-1)** – No record of call to a definite work.

**Response:** Korean Central Presbytery respectfully disagrees with this exception. Our minutes from this stated meeting note that the candidate, [name omitted], received approval to serve out of the boundaries of the Presbytery as a military chaplain (p. 8).

**Exception: Apr 13-14, 2021 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5)** – Stated differences not recorded in the candidate’s own words.

**Response:** Korean Central Presbytery agrees with this exception. The candidate, [name omitted], had the following exception to the Westminster Standards:

*WCF 4.1: Six Days of Creation: I do not undermine or deny the historicity of creation. With the respect to the length of the “days,” I support the Analogical Day view. Genesis 1:1-2 starts with “in the beginning,” and it represents unknown length of beginning “day.” Therefore, our (human) workdays are different from God’s workdays. The Scripture does not provide a specific information to examine the specific length of the “day.” Analogical Day view claims that creation day sets the pattern of the work and rest. Therefore, the night and day description explains the pattern of the rest and the recovery from the work.*

We apologize for not recording this exception in the candidate’s own words, and we will be careful to do so in the future. We have corrected this omission in our minutes through a motion to amend something previously adopted at our October 2022 stated meeting. Note: The minutes from our April 2021 meeting note that the Presbytery judged that this stated difference was more than semantic, but “not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine” (p. 8). **[Note from Stated Clerk: Due to time constraints, the motions to amend something previously adopted were postponed to our next stated meeting.]**

**Exception: Apr 13-14, 2021 (BCO 21-5)** – No record that the Presbytery or a commission of the Presbytery would be convened for candidate’s ordination.

**Response:** Korean Central Presbytery agrees with this exception. The ordination service for this candidate, [name omitted], was held on May 9, 2021 at the [church name omitted]. The following were in attendance to lead

this service: We apologize for our error in omitting these names in our meeting minutes. We have corrected this mistake through a motion to amend something previously adopted at our October 2022 stated meeting, and we will be more careful in the future. **[Note from Stated Clerk: Due to time constraints, the motions to amend something previously adopted were postponed to our next stated meeting.]**

**Exception: Apr 13-14, 2021** (*BCO* 13-11; *RAO* 16-3.f.1) – Motions and recommendations approved not completely recorded.

**Response:** Korean Central Presbytery appreciates the CRPR’s concern for this matter, but we are unclear as to whether the committee is referring to any specific motion(s), or our general approach to recording motions and recommendations in our minutes. If the committee is referring the Presbytery’s handled of some accusations against some of our members, we would refer CRPR to our responses to those exceptions above. We would also respectfully request the committee’s understanding that due to the composition of our membership, some motions are presented in Korean and others in English. This presents a unique challenge for our secretary to record the motions verbatim. Having said this, we will strive to do the latter as best as we are able.

**Exception: Jul 13, 2021** (*BCO* 13-12; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – Purpose of called meeting not recorded verbatim in the minutes.

**Response:** Korean Central Presbytery agrees with this exception and apologizes for our error. The purpose of this called meeting was to consider a complaint filed by nine members against the Presbytery’s action at its April 2021 stated meeting. We have corrected the above mistakes in our minutes through a motion to amend something previously adopted at our October 2022 stated meeting, and we will be careful not to repeat this mistake for future called meetings. **[Note from Stated Clerk: Due to time constraints, the motions to amend something previously adopted were postponed to our next stated meeting.]**

**Exception: Oct 13-14, 2020** (*BCO* 21-4) – Stated difference not recorded in candidate’s own words.; not judged according to prescribed categories (Mr. [name omitted]; Mr. [name omitted]).

**Response [2022]:** All the candidates of KCP are required to submit the difference in written form. KCP will attach candidate’s written form from now on. KCP believes that we judged according to prescribed categories.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery must submit the stated differences for review.

**Rationale [2023]:** Korean Central Presbytery agrees with this exception and apologizes for our error. We will be more careful in the future to record any

## MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

exceptions to the Westminster Standards in the candidates' own words (RAO 16-3.e.5). We have corrected this omission in our minutes through a motion to amend something previously adopted at our October 2022 stated meeting. The candidate for licensure, [name omitted], noted the following exception to the Westminster Standards:

*I have a different view of the "Sabbath" than WFC Chapter 21-8. I affirm with the Westminster statement that man needs to "observe a holy rest" on the Sabbath or Lord's day. This means that man is to be separate from work, so that the Sabbath day looks different from other days. I affirm that man is not good at resting, there are many activities that one may consider resting that in fact is "profaning the day by idleness" (WLC 119). I believe that the specific definition of "holy rest" being that one should rest from "their works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations" goes too far in its prohibitions. The statement "spend the whole time in public and private exercises of worship" fails to allow for creational rest and refreshment that can include such recreational activities as running, walking, and other God-glorifying, family nurturing activities as WLC 121 affirms. To do Sabbath worship and duties "all the day" and "the whole time" would seem at tension with the great significance Scripture also teaches on rest.*

The minutes from this stated meeting record that the Presbytery's Candidates and Credentials Committee judged this exception to be "more than semantic but "not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine" (page 7). **[Note from Stated Clerk: Due to time constraints, the motions to amend something previously adopted were postponed to our next stated meeting.]**

**Exception: Oct 13-14, 2020 (BCO 21-14)** – Stated difference not recorded in candidate's own words.; not judged according to prescribed categories (Mr. [name omitted]).

**Response [2022]:** All the candidates of KCP are required to submit the difference in written form. KCP will attach candidate's written form from now on. KCP believes that we judged according to prescribed categories.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery must submit the stated differences for review.

**Rationale [2023]:** Korean Central Presbytery agrees with this exception and apologizes for our error. We will be more careful in the future to record any exceptions to the Westminster Standards in the candidates' own words (RAO 16-3.e.5). We have corrected this omission in our minutes through a motion to amend something previously adopted at our October 2022 stated meeting.

The candidate for licensure, [name omitted], noted the following exception to the Westminster Standards

*I confess that I subscribe to everything provided in the Westminster Confession of Faith, except for the listed below:*

*XXI.8, regarding the keeping of the Sabbath day holy. I do not think that Scripture forbids a strict refraining from recreation, and that partaking in any form of recreation does not violate the keeping of the Sabbath day as holy. Therefore, I think that things such as having fellowship with other brothers and sisters in Christ through meals, conversing, reading a good book, playing sports, are things that don't restrain the Sabbath, but help us worshipfully rest.*

The minutes from this stated meeting record that the Presbytery's Candidates and Credentials Committee judged this exception to be more than semantic but "not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine" (page 8). We apologize for this omission, and we will be more careful in the future to record any exceptions to the Westminster Standards in the candidates' own words (RAO 16-3.e.5). **[Note from Stated Clerk: Due to time constraints, the motions to amend something previously adopted were postponed to our next stated meeting.]**

**Exception: Oct 13-14, 2020** (BCO 21-4) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded (Mr. [name omitted]).

**Response [2022]:** KCP acknowledges the mistake, and we will be careful next time.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to submit amended minutes reflecting all specific requirements of ordination exam were administered.

**Rationale [2023]:** Korean Central Presbytery agrees with this exception and apologizes for our error. We failed to record in our minutes that the Presbytery had accepted the candidate's ([name omitted]) seminary degree which included study in Biblical Hebrew and Greek "in lieu of an oral examination in the original languages" (BCO 21-4.c.1). In addition, Korean Central Presbytery usually tests candidates for their knowledge of Bible content during the licensure exam in accordance with BCO 19-2.b.2. The candidate also successfully validated his knowledge for PCA History during his licensure examination in October 2018. We have corrected these omissions in these minutes through a motion to amend something previously adopted at our October 2022 stated meeting. **[Note from Stated Clerk: Due to time constraints, the motions to amend something previously adopted were postponed to our next stated meeting.]**

**Exception: Apr 18-19, 2017; Oct 10-11, 2017** (*BCO* 20-1; 20-6; *RAO* 16-3.e.6) – No record that calls to TEs were examined and approved by Presbytery.

**Response [2022]:** KCP believes that there is no TEs who were not examined and approved by Presbytery. We will keep making sure that all TEs who wants to transfer to KCP will be examined properly.

**Rationale [2022]:** The exception addresses the TE's call to a definite work and not their examination. Presbytery must examine and review the call to a definite work.

**Rationale [2023]:** Korean Central Presbytery agrees with the exception and apologizes for our error. The Presbytery examined and approved the call by [church name omitted] as the candidate, [name omitted], was undergoing his licensure exam. We have corrected this omission in our minutes through a motion to amend something previously adopted at our October 2022 stated meeting. [**Note from Stated Clerk: Due to time constraints, the motions to amend something previously adopted were postponed to our next stated meeting.**]

**Exception:** (*BCO* 20-1; 20-6; *RAO* 16-3.e.6) – No record that calls to TEs were examined and approved by Presbytery.

**Rationale [2023]:** Korean Central Presbytery agrees with the exception and apologizes for our error. The Presbytery had examined and approved the calls for the following candidates for who applied to transfer from other denominations:

Rev. [name omitted], called by [church name omitted]

Rev. [name omitted], called by [church name omitted]

Rev. [name omitted], called by [church name omitted]

Rev. [name omitted], called by [church name omitted]

We have corrected this omission in our minutes through a motion to amend something previously adopted at our October 2022 stated meeting. [**Note from Stated Clerk: Due to time constraints, the motions to amend something previously adopted were postponed to our next stated meeting.**]

**Exception: Oct 10-11, 2017** (*BCO* 21-4) – Use of  $\frac{3}{4}$  extraordinary clause not explained for ordination exam.

**Response [2022]:** KCP acknowledges its mistake, and we will be careful next time. There were three (3) transfer candidates at the October 2017 meeting. They came from another denomination (Presbyterian Church in Korea – *Hapdong*). Ordinarily, a transfer candidate takes written exams on all subjects, but for these three (3) candidates, we conduct a part of the exam



in *viva voce*. Also, KCP allowed a recorded sermon substituting the floor sermon.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to provide an explanation as to why it chose to omit these parts by use of the extraordinary clause.

**Response [2023]:** Korean Central Presbytery agrees with this exception and apologizes for our error. The 3/4 clause was used for these four transfer candidates due to the fact that our Presbytery’s standing rules at the time waived some of the exam requirements for transfer candidates from denominations that have a fraternity relationship with PCA. We also realized at this time that this provision unfortunately contradicted the requirements of *BCO* 18-8 and 19-2. Given these circumstances, the Presbytery passed a motion to use the 3/4 extraordinary clause for the four transfer candidates, and then we amended our standing rules at the following stated meeting to bring them in line with the *BCO*. (The minutes from this meeting shows that two of the four candidates did not meet the 3/4 threshold and had to undergo further examination by our Candidates and Credentials Committee—see page 8.)

**e. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

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

**Response:** Korean Central Presbytery appreciates the Committee of Review of Presbytery Records attention to this matter but respectfully disagrees with this exception. The minutes from our October 2020 stated meeting specifically record our decision to form an ad-committee to investigate the accusations against these Teaching Elders and report their findings at the next stated meeting (see page 10 under agenda item 8).

**Rationale:** Presbytery misunderstands the nature of the exception. The accusations from the October 13-14 meeting list several ministers as accused, and while an ad interim committee is formed, the April 2021 meeting says that there was a “session of court” against only one of the TE’s in question, but makes no mention of any of the other previously mentioned TEs. Presbytery records have no indication as to what happened to those members, nor are they listed in their directory.

**Exception: April 13-14, 2021** (*BCO* 13-11, 31-2, 32-2, 32-3, 32-4, 32-5, 36-1, 36-5, 37-3) – There is insufficient record in the minutes of actions taken by the Presbytery (as well as documents in support of those actions) pursuant to their handling of an ecclesiastical trial against TE (Name Omitted), such

as, but not limited to the allegations against him, the recommendations from an ad interim committee appointed to consider these allegations, the indictment of the prosecutor, the imposition and removal of censure, and several additional motions related to this situation. These missing items need to be either recreated or collected and submitted to the 50th General Assembly.

**Response:** Korean Central Presbytery agrees with this exception and humbly apologizes for our oversight in this matter. We are submitting the following documents to the 50<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in response to this request by CRPR: (1) the original allegations against the TE as submitted to the Presbytery; (2) the findings and recommendations of the ad-interim committee as summarized in their report as received by the Presbytery; and (3) the minutes from this stated meeting, which summarizes our actions on the committee's recommendations. In addition, some of the actions from this April 2021 were the subject of a complaint that was adjudicated by the Standing Judicial Commission in June 2022 (SJC Case 2021-11). While the SJC sustained the complaint against some of Presbytery's procedural errors in this matter, it also ruled that many of these defects were no longer correctable, including the absence of an indictment from the prosecutor.

**Rationale:** Though Presbytery acknowledges their error and has sent some documents, the report from the interim committee seems to be missing their respective and referenced appendices (see: *RAO* 16-3.e.8), in addition to a letter of confession from the confessing TE.

**Exception: Jul 13, 2021** (*BCO* 13-11) – Complaint sent to Presbytery not recorded in Presbytery's minutes.

**Response:** Korean Central Presbytery respectfully disagrees with this exception. The original complaint was not included with the minutes for this called meeting due to our understanding of *BCO* 40-3: "Proceedings in judicial cases, however, shall not be dealt with under review and control when notice of appeal or complaint has been given the lower court." At the time CRPR held its meeting in June 2021, this complaint was being adjudicated by the SJC. Now that the SJC has issued its final decision on this case, we have submitted the complaint to the 50<sup>th</sup> General Assembly for review.

**Rationale:** While the CRPR does not have any judicial authority in cases being adjudicated by a higher court such as the SJC, a full and accurate record of minutes (including all referenced appendices, etc.) has not yet been submitted for review. (see: *RAO* 16-3.e.8)

35. That the Minutes of **Korean Eastern** Presbytery: 55-0-0
- a. Be approved without exception: **None.**
  - b. Be approved with exception of form: **Directory; General 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exception of substance:
    1. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.
    2. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 8-7) – No record of annual report(s) of TE(s) laboring out of bounds.
    3. **Exception: May 15, 2022; Sep 13, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2; 18-3) – No record of endorsement by candidate’s Session; no record of six-months membership for candidate; no record of charges administered to candidate.
    4. **Exception: May 15, 2022** (*BCO* 15-2) – Presbytery formed a commission to oversee a church with fewer than two teaching elders and two ruling elders.
  - d. **That the following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**  
**Exception: Mar 18, 2018** (*BCO* 13-6) – Received as a member but no record of mechanism how it happened.  
**Response:** The TE’s membership status was discussed on the floor and the KEP approved to grant him a continual membership with the promise of attending stated meeting and pay membership fee as required by the presbytery.  
**Rationale:** A teaching elder must have a call to a definite work or be received as Without Call (*BCO* 13-5; 20-1).  
**Response [2023]:** The TE’s membership status was discussed on the floor and the KEP approved to grant him a continual membership with the promise of attending stated meeting and pay membership fee as required by the presbytery.  
**Rationale [2023]:** A teaching elder’s membership status must be recorded in the Presbytery’s minutes when he is received. A teaching elder must have a call to a definite work or be received as Without Call (*BCO* 13-5; 20-1). Presbytery’s response does not address the previous rationale.
  - e. **That responses shall be submitted to the following GA as no responses were received in 2023:**  
**Exception: Mar 10, 2020** (*BCO* 20-1) – No record that teaching elder transferring into the presbytery has a call to a definite work.  
**Exception: Mar 10, 2020; Sep 15, 2020** (*BCO* 15.1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in subsequent Presbytery minutes.

**Exception: Mar 10, 2020** (BCO 13-8) – No record of examination of elders for a church that has petitioned to join the PCA.

**Exception: Sep 15, 2020; Sep 14, 2021** (BCO 8-7; 20-1) – Teaching Elders approved to minister out of bounds but with no record of a call to a definite work where they will be “engaged in preaching and teaching the Word ... [and] will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our church.”

**Exception: Sep 15, 2020** (BCO 13-6) – Details of transfer exam not recorded.

**Exception: Sep 15, 2020; Mar 16, 2021** (BCO 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.

**Exception: Sep 15, 2020; Mar 16, 2021** (BCO 21-4) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.

36. That the Minutes of **Korean Northeastern** Presbytery: 55-0-1

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Sep 27, 2022.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
  1. **Exception: Mar 8, 2022** (BCO 8-7; 20-1) – No record that Presbytery is assured that an out of bounds TE will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church or why Presbytery considers the out of bounds work to be a valid Christian ministry.
- d. **No response to previous assemblies required.**

37. That the Minutes of **Korean Northwest** Presbytery: 48-0-0

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **General 2022; Apr 18, 2022.**
  1. **Exception: General 2022** (BCO 13-12) – Presbytery did not meet at least twice OR minutes not submitted (if Fall 2022 meeting happened).
  2. **Exception: Apr 18, 2022** (BCO 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of exam for minister seeking admission from another denomination.
  3. **Exception: Apr 18, 2022** (BCO 21-4) – Incomplete record of ordination exam
  4. **Exception: Apr 18, 2022** (BCO 21-4) – Incomplete record of

ordination exam

5. **Exception: Apr 18, 2022** (*BCO* 12-5b) – The church Session has power to examine, ordain, and install ruling elders.
6. **Exception: Apr 18, 2022** (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work for two ordination candidates and one transfer candidate
7. **Exception: Apr 18, 2022** (*BCO* 19-2; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.
8. **Exception: Apr 18, 2022** (*BCO* 24-1) – No record of complete RE exam for three candidates.
9. **Exception: Apr 18, 2022** (*BCO* 18-6) – Annual reports of candidates not included.
10. **Exception: Apr 18, 2022** (*BCO* 18-6) – No record of intern reports.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: General** (*BCO* 13-12) – Presbytery did not meet at least twice OR minutes not submitted.

**Response:** The presbytery meeting was canceled due to strict regulation regarding gathering during pandemic in the State of California. There was no time and resource for the presbytery to prepare for alternate option. The fall presbytery meeting decided to allow the virtual meetings in case of emergencies.

**Exception: *Standing Rules*** – No provision in *Standing Rules* to allow for virtual Presbytery meetings.

**Response:** This issue was addressed during the presbytery meeting and the presbytery pass the motion to modify the *Standing Rules* of the presbytery to allow the virtual meetings in case of the emergency like pandemic.

**Exception: Oct 11, 2021** (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.

**Response:** The reviews will be reported and submitted this spring presbytery in April.

**Exception: General** (*BCO* 13-9b) – No record of review of records of church sessions.

**Response:** This issue has been noted and the reviews will be reported and submitted this spring presbytery in April.

**Exception: Apr 24, 2017; Oct 9, 2017** (*BCO* 12-5) – Power to examine, ordain, and install ruling elders belongs to the Session.

**Response:** This issue has been addressed and the presbytery passed the

motion to accept the request for the delegation from the sessions to examine the ruling elders. This issue has been addressed and now the Examination Committee has been recording all specific requirements of ordination exam and it has been recorded in the minutes.

**Exception: General 2019 & 2020** (*BCO* 13-9.b) – No record of review of church Session records.

**Response:** This issue has been noted and the reviews will be reported and submitted this spring presbytery in April.

**Exception: Apr 8, 2019** (*BCO* 13-11) – Inaccurate record of attendance. No list of excused/unexcused absences, no list of churches represented.

**Response:** This issue has been addressed and the attendance has been specified in the presbytery minutes.

**Exception: Apr 8, 2019; Sep 30, 2019** (*BCO* Preliminary Principle 6; *BCO* 24-1) – Improper exercise of Presbytery authority. Presbytery may not require churches to request Presbytery permission to elect Ruling Elders.

**Response:** This issue has been addressed and the presbytery no longer requires churches to request presbytery permission to elect Ruling Elders.

**Exception: Apr 8, 2019; Sep 30, 2019** (*BCO* 12-3) – No record that interim moderators were approved by Sessions.

**Response:** This issue has been noted and the future minutes will include the recording from the sessions of the approval of the interim moderators.

**e. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Apr 24, 2017** (*BCO* 21-4) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

**Response:** This issue has been addressed and now the Examination Committee has been recording all specific requirements of ordination exam and it has been recorded in the minutes.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible). Please correct the minutes from this meeting.

**Exception: Apr 24, 2017; Oct 9, 2017** (*BCO* 21-4) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.

**Response:** This issue has been noted and to be addressed from the fall presbytery of 2022.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible). Please correct the minutes from these meetings by providing the statement of differences.

**Exception: Apr 24, 2017 (BCO 20-1)** – No record of call to a definite work.

**Response:** This issue has been noted will be addressed in the future minutes.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible).

Please correct the minutes from this meeting.

**Exception: Apr 24, 2017 (BCO 19-13)** – Approval of internship for ordination not recorded.

**Response:** This issue has been noted will be addressed in the future minutes

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible).

Please correct the minutes from this meeting.

**Exception: Oct 9, 2017 (BCO 13-6)** – Incomplete record of transfer exam – no indication of transferee’s previous denomination

**Response:** This issue has been noted will be addressed in the future minutes.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible).

Please correct the minutes from this meeting.

**Exception: Apr 9, 2018 (BCO 20-1)** – No record of call to a definite work.

**Response:** This issue has been noted will be addressed in the future minutes

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible).

Please correct the minutes from this meeting.

**Exception: Apr 9, 2018 (BCO 21-4)** – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

**Response:** This issue has been addressed and now the Examination Committee has been recording all specific requirements of ordination exam and it has been recorded in the minutes.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible).

Please correct the minutes from this meeting.

**Exception: General (BCO 40-1)** – No record of review of session minutes.

**Response [2018]:** We have a committee that reviews them each presbytery meeting. Many times, churches forget to bring them. We will be more diligent in this matter to ensure that sessional records are reviewed under *BCO* 40-1.

**Rationale [2018]:** Please supply a record of presbytery action reviewing 2014 Session minutes.

**Response [2023]:** It has been too long to review of the 2014 Session minutes, while apologizing about this issue, the presbytery noted issue will

record the review of the session minutes annually.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO 16-10.b.1* notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its actions (if possible) and correct its record (if possible). Please review the 2014 session minutes, if possible. If this is no longer possible, please include the response from the sessions in the Presbytery's minutes.

**Exception: General (RAO 16-10.a)** – No response to the Assembly concerning disposition of any exceptions of substance.

**Response [2018]:** We apologize for not responding on time. It is not the attitude of the presbytery and its members to rebel or disrespect. It was the fault of the clerk and he apologizes and asks for forgiveness.

**Rationale [2018]:** Please provide responses to presbytery exceptions of substance for 2014, 2013, and 2011.

**Response [2023]:** Again, it has been too long to provide responses to presbytery exceptions. While apologizing about this issue, it can be assured that we will submit the proper exception of substance in the future.

**Rationale [2023]:** Respectfully, *RAO 16-10.b.1* notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible) and correct its actions (if possible). Please provide responses to previous exceptions.

**Exception: Apr 13, 2015 (BCO 21-4)** – No record of candidate meeting all qualifications for ordination.

**Rationale [2018]:** Please provide a record of the revised minutes and the record of presbytery's revision including statement of stated differences in candidate's own words and presbytery's categorization of the differences.

**Response [2023]:** It has been too long and I am not authorized to revise the minutes (especially as a newly elected stated clerk); as far as I know, once approved minutes cannot be revised. However, the presbytery addressed this issue and has been recording of candidates meeting all qualifications for ordination.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO 16-10.b.1* notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible).

**Exception: Apr 13, 2015 (RAO 16-3.e.5)** – All specific requirements of exam not recorded.

**Response [2018]:** Our examination committee keeps record of all the parts and details of the exam and just gives final report to the presbytery. We will do better job of recording requirements in our minutes in the future. We have revised our minutes to show required parts are approved and that the exam as a whole was approved.



**Rationale [2018]:** Please provide a record of the revised minutes and the record of presbytery's revision including statement of differences in candidate's own words and presbytery's categorization of the differences.

**Response [2023]:** It has been too long and I am not authorized to revise the minutes (especially as a newly elected stated clerk); as far as I know, once approved minutes cannot be revised. However, the presbytery addressed this issue and has been recording the all specific requirements of exam.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible).

**Exception: Apr 13, 2015** (*BCO* 21-4, *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – No record of candidate's stated differences, if any.

**Response [2018]:** We will keep clear record of statement of differences with standards in the future.

**Rationale [2018]:** Please provide a record of the revised minutes and the record of presbytery's revision including statement of differences in candidate's own words and presbytery's categorization of the differences.

**Response [2023]:** It has been too long and I am not authorized to revise the minutes (especially as a newly elected stated clerk); as far as I know, once approved minutes cannot be revised. However, the presbytery addressed this issue and has been recording the candidate's stated difference according to their own wording.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible).

[*RONR* (12th ed.) 48:15 also allows a deliberative body to correct its minutes through a motion to Amend Something Previously Adopted.]

**Exception: General 2019** (*BCO* 13-5) – TEs on roll without explanation.

Apr 8, 2019 meeting listed 32 total TEs and Sep 30, 2019 meeting listed 36 total TEs.

**Response:** This issue has been addressed and the rolls has been specified in the presbytery minutes.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible).

[*RONR* (12th ed.) 48:15 also allows a deliberative body to correct its minutes through a motion to Amend Something Previously Adopted.] Please include record of ordination(s) and/or reception of transfer(s), if applicable.

**Exception: Apr 8, 2019; Sep 30, 2019; Oct 13, 2020** (*BCO* 20-1; 13-7) -

No record of call to definite work for ministers transferring from another denomination.

**Response:** This issue has been noted and began to be addressed from the fall

presbytery of 2022

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible). [*RONR* (12th ed.) 48:15 also allows a deliberative body to correct its minutes through a motion to Amend Something Previously Adopted.] Please correct the minutes from these meetings.

**Exception: Oct 11, 2021** (*BCO* 5-3) – No record of temporary government for organizing a mission church.

**Response:** A local church's session was acting as a temporary government for organizing a mission church but it was not recorded in the minute. This issue has been noted and will be addressed from the future presbytery meetings.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible). Please correct the minutes from this meeting.

**Exception: Oct 11, 2021** (*BCO* 19-2; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.

**Response:** The presbytery has been taking licensure exam according to guidelines of *BCO* 19-2 but it was not recorded in the previous minutes. This issue has been noted and will be addressed from the future minutes.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible).

**Exception: Oct 11, 2021** (*BCO* 19-3) – No record of questions for licensure.

**Response:** This issue has been noted and will be addressed from the future presbytery meetings.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible).

**Exception: Oct 11, 2021** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination.

**Response:** The presbytery has been taking transfer exam according to guidelines of *BCO* 21-4 but it was not recorded in the previous minutes. This issue has been noted and will be addressed from the future minutes.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible).

**Exception: Oct 11, 2021** (*BCO* 20-1, 20-9; 21-1) – No record of a call to a definite work for ministers transferring from another denomination.

**Response:** This issue has been noted and will be addressed from the future presbytery meeting.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with

an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible).

**Exception: Oct 11, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16- 3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the candidate’s own words.

**Response:** This issue has been noted and began to be addressed from the fall presbytery of 2022.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible).

**Exception: Oct 11, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

**Response:** This issue has been noted and began to be addressed from the fall presbytery of 2022.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible).

**Exception: Oct 13, 2020** (*BCO* 13-8) – No record of commission of Presbytery meeting with church ruling elders before receiving the church into its membership.

**Response:** This issue has been addressed and now the Examination Committee has been recording all specific requirements of ordination exams for the ministers transferring from another denomination and it has been recorded in the minutes.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible). Please submit the commission report for review.

**Exception: Apr 8, 2019; Sep 30, 2019; Oct 13, 2020** (*BCO* 21-4; 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer exams for ministers transferring from another denomination.

**Response:** This issue has been addressed and now the Examination Committee has been recording all specific requirements of ordination exams for the ministers transferring from another denomination and it has been recorded in the minutes.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible). Please correct the minutes from these meetings.

**Exception: Apr 24, 2017; Oct 9, 2017** (*BCO* 21-4) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.

**Response:** This issue has been noted and to be addressed from the fall presbytery of 2022.

**Rationale [2023]:** *RAO* 16-10.b.1 notes that when a Presbytery agrees with an exception of substance, it should also correct its record (if possible).

Please correct the minutes from these meetings.

**f. That a response shall be submitted to the following GA as no approved response was received in 2022.**

**Exception: Oct 9, 2017 (BCO 19-2)** – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.

38. That the Minutes of **Korean Southeastern** Presbytery: 56-0-1

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Apr 4, 2022; Jun 28, 2022; Aug 16, 2022; Oct 3, 2022; Oct 31, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; General 2022.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

**1. Exception: Standing Rules (BCO 34-10)** – The process outlined in the *Standing Rules* is at variance with the process outlined in *BCO 34-10.*

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Oct 4, 2021 (BCO 13-9; 40-1)** – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions.

**Response:** KSEP apologizes for the incomplete record. Our Session Records Review Committee has reviewed the records of Sessions that have submitted their records. However, a number of church Sessions have not submitted their records as they have been asked to. Again, we apologize for the incomplete record but we are working on complying per *BCO 13-9* and *40-1.*

**e. The following responses to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Oct 4, 2021 (BCO 38-3.a, b)** – No record of whether departing TEs were categorized according to *BCO 38-3.a* or *b.*

**Response:** KSEP apologizes for this error and agrees with CRPR. We have amended our minutes to reflect that the withdrawing TEs were members in good standing per *BCO 38-3.a* as follows:

3. Removal from Presbytery roll

a. The following members of KSEP in good standing have requested to withdraw from the PCA to affiliate with other denominations: [names omitted]

**Rationale:** The issue in *BCO 38-3* is not the standing of the TEs in the Presbytery but the nature of the denomination with which they are affiliating.

39. That the Minutes of **Korean Southern** Presbytery: 55-0-0

a. Be approved without exception: **None.**

- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
  1. **Exception: *Standing Rules* (BCO 34-10)** – The provision of Article 2 Section 7 appears to have the effect of *BCO 34-10*, but without process. It automatically cancels the membership of a supported TE laboring abroad who does not report for more than three years.
  2. **Exception: *Standing Rules* (BCO 24-1, Preliminary Principle 6)** – The provision of Article 13 Section 54 appears to conflict with *BCO 24-1*. It states, “The elected ruling elder shall be guided by the Session to be examined by the Presbytery and be installed within one year after passing the Presbytery’s examination.”
  3. **Exception: Jul 6, 2020 (BCO 13-12; RAO 16-3.c.1)** – Purpose of called meeting not recorded verbatim in minutes.
  4. **Exception: Oct 18-19, 2021 (BCO 13-4)** – No record of quorum for meeting.
  5. **Exception: Apr 18, 2022 (BCO 13:9.b; 40-1)** – No record of review of records of church Sessions.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Oct 19, 2020 (BCO 20-1)** – No record of call to a definite work.

**Response:** A non-PCA church with some members but no church building joined PCA church with very few members and church building. So the two congregations decided to be united with two pastors together. The united congregation approved for the two pastors to work as one pastor. For example, for one week, one pastor leads Sunday morning worship and the other Wednesday evening worship, then they exchanged the duty each other for the next week. Therefore, the Presbytery did not record the call of the non-PCA pastor because of his same call of ministry even though the situation was not an ordinary case. Anyway we understand that the record of a call should be done even in this case. In the future, we will be more careful for not missing record of call.

**Exception: Oct 19, 2020 (BCO 13-6, 21-4)** – No record of requiring statement of differences with our standards.

**Response:** We tested and checked but found no differences with our standards. However, we failed to record the results in the minute. We are sorry about it. Next time, we will record the results even though there are no differences.

**Exception: Oct 19, 2020** (*BCO* 21-5) – No record that Presbytery installed pastor following approved exam.

**Response:** We assumed and recognized the installation of the pastor in a joint ministry. However, we did not record the installation because of his continuous ministry only in the different place with nearly almost same members in the united congregation.

**Exception: Oct 19, 2020** (*BCO* Part II) – Unclear record of a judicial matter.

**Response:** We dealt this matter by holding the 78<sup>th</sup> Special Presbytery Meeting on July 6, 2020. We attach the minute for your reference. We are very sorry for not having submitted that minute by mistake

**Exception: Oct 19, 2020** (*BCO* 23-1) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

**Response:** We recorded only the results of “Preaching Tests” and “Floor Tests”. We should record the exam subjects but failed. Before these two tests, we tested 7 subjects of Bible, Theology, Sacraments, Church History, PCA History, *BCO*, and Thesis and all candidates passed all of these 7 subjects. So we did preaching tests and floor tests. In the future, we surely will record the complete exam subjects in the minute.

**Exception: Oct 19, 2020; Apr 19, 2021** (*BCO* 13-8) – Presbytery received a new church into its membership without examining its ruling elders.

**Response:** The concerned Ecclesiastical Committee tested and interviewed the ruling elders of that church. However the report made on April 19, 2021 by the Committee missed the RE exam results. We will not make such a mistake again. By the way, this church is not the non-PCA predecessor of [church name omitted] which had no ruling elder.

**Exception: Oct 19, 2020** (*BCO* 13-10) – No record of transfer or dismissal of members upon dissolving a church.

**Response:** This case is that [church name omitted] Church was united to [church name omitted] Presbyterian Church. All the members of [church name omitted] Church joined [church name omitted] Church. Therefore, there was neither dismissal of members nor dissolving of a church. Just the two churches unified under the one existing name of [church name omitted].

**e. That the following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Oct 19, 2020; Apr 19, 2021** (*BCO* 13-9.b, 40-3) – Results of review of records of church Sessions not stated.

**Response:** Although we strongly recommend member churches to make their Session Minutes be checked by the Presbytery, the results are not good yet. Because some churches submit their Session minutes annually, every

Presbytery minute can not contain the record of the review results. Anyway, we will continue encouraging the member churches regarding this matter.

**Rationale:** Presbytery needs to approve its review of 2020-21 Session records and report its actions to the Assembly.

**Exception: Apr 19, 2021 (BCO 34-10)** – Presbytery adopted a rule that ministers without call for three years are “automatically removed by the decision of the Presbytery,” contravening the process required by *BCO* 34-10, including the requirements for a  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote, an inquiry into the cause of his dereliction, notification following the initial vote, and a second vote at the subsequent stated meeting.

**Response:** We just put some limitations for the period of TE’s no call situations. Surely, the decision of the Presbytery should follow the *BCO* 34-10. Clearly, we referenced *BCO* 34-10 in the Article 2, Section 5 in Presbytery *Standing Rules*.

**Rationale:** While Presbytery’s diligence is commendable, the rule as presently worded is in conflict with the required process of *BCO* 34-10 in that it contains the phrase “shall be automatically removed.”

**Exception: Oct 21, 2019 (BCO 13-9, 24-1)** – Examination of RE is not under the purview of the presbytery’s jurisdiction, rather the local session.

**Response [2022]:** Although the minute records the results of the RE tests in the “Report of Examination Committee” on page 10 at the item# 20, the test areas were not recorded. We are very sorry for not recording in detail. But in the future, we will pay more attention for this matter. The RE installation was not administered by the local session.

**Rationale [2022]:** It is unclear how this is a response to the exception. Why was this RE reviewed by Presbytery and the installation not administered by the local Session? [**p. 4, Credential Committee**]

**Response [2023]:** At that time, the church was a mission church which had not her own Session to test a ruling elder. According to Article 13, Section 49 in Presbytery *Standing Rules*, “Examinations for a ruling elder shall be done by the church’s petition”, the church requested to do that work on behalf of her. So Presbytery answered to the request.

**Rationale:** *BCO* 5-3 provides several forms for temporary government for mission church and a mission church must have a temporary government, and that government must examine ruling elders.

**Exception: Oct 19, 2020 (BCO 21-6)** – No congregation present at ordination/installation service of its pastor. No questions asked of the congregation.

**Response:** We ordained not a pastor but an assistant pastor of a local member church at the Presbytery Meeting not at the local church. There was no congregation to give questions. Later, the assistant pastor started to work at that church.

**Rationale:** There remains no evidence that congregation or Session was asked the questions of *BCO* 21-6.

**f. That a response shall be submitted to the following GA as no response was received in 2023:**

**Exception: Oct 19, 2020** (*BCO* 13-6) – All specific requirements of transfer exams not recorded.

40. That the Minutes of **Korean Southwest Presbytery:** 52-0-0

a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General 2022; Mar 15, 2022; Jul 7, 2022; Sep 13, 2022.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

1. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 8-7) – No record of annual report(s) of TE(s) laboring out of bounds.
2. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 13-9) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.
3. **Exception: Bylaws** (*BCO* 24-1) – Ruling elders are called by the local church and trained per session requirements. Presbytery does not have jurisdiction to dictate length of training.
4. **Exception: Bylaws** (*BCO* 24-1) – Presbytery does not have jurisdiction to dictate a vote of confidence for elders/session members in a particular church.
5. **Exception: Mar 15, 2022; Jul 7, 2022** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record that Congregation/Session concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations.
6. **Exception: Mar 15, 2022** (*BCO* 24-1) – The church session has jurisdiction concerning examining RE's. Presbytery does not have jurisdiction to review and approve RE written exams.
7. **Exception: Mar 15, 2022** (*BCO* 19-2; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) ) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded. [Missing Christian Experience/Inward Call Yuma Takei, Jakyung Koo]
8. **Exception: Mar 15, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4) ) – Incomplete record of ordination exam.
9. **Exception: Mar 15, 2022; Sep 13, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.



10. **Exception: Mar 15, 2022; Sep 13, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4) – No record of call to a definite work.
11. **Exception: Mar 15, 2022; Sep 13, 2022** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of exam for minister seeking admission from another denomination.
12. **Exception: Mar 15, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1) – Referred to as a committee and not a commission.
13. **Exception: Jul 7, 2022** (*BCO* 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order.
14. **Exception: Sep 13, 2022** (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of examination of TE transferring into Presbytery.
15. **Exception: Sep 13, 2022** (*BCO* 34-10) – No record of process to remove TE's from the roll.
16. **Exception: Sep 13, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.
17. **Exception:** (*BCO* 8-7) – No record that the Presbytery is assured that an out-of-bounds TE will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church.
18. **Exception:** (*BCO* 8-7) – No record that out-of-bounds TE is engaged in preaching and teaching the Word.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: General** (By Laws, Article 9, *BCO* 8-9) – Presbytery shall not restrict eligibility for office to teaching elders only. Ruling elders possess the same authority and eligibility.

**Response:** At 78th presbytery meeting, the by-laws was revised as follows:

Before amendment

Article 9: The Credentials Committee and the Examination Committee shall include one or more former Moderators. The membership of the Examination Committee shall be limited to Teach Elders.

After amendment

Article 9: The Credentials Committee and the Examination Committee shall include one or more former Moderators

**Exception: Bylaws - [pp. 13-14, 23.1]** (*BCO* 24-1) – Ruling elders are called by local churches and examined by their session. Presbytery is not the court of original jurisdiction.

**Response:** From the 2022 year, the local churches have taken all the procedure for ruling elder installation.

**Exception: Jan 19, 2021** (*BCO* 13-4) – No quorum present; moderator does not have the authority to change *BCO* requirements for a quorum. Quorum declared with only two RE's present.

**Response:** We have erred to include the details of quorum in the meeting minutes. We will correct the error from now on.

**Exception: May 25, 2021** (*BCO* Preliminary Principle 6; 24-1, 3) – Church shall have authority to elect elders. Presbytery may not set limit of how many elders the church can have.

**Response:** From the 2022 year, the local churches have taken all the procedure for ruling elder installation.

**Exception: May 25, 2021** (*BCO* 15-1) – No record of quorum for commission meeting.

**Response:** We have erred to include the record of quorum for commission. We will do our best correct error from now on.

**Exception: May 25, 2021** (*BCO* 21-5-8) – Referred to as a committee and not a commission.

**Response:** We have erred to as a committee, not as a commission. We will correct this error from now on.

**Exception: May 25, 2021** (*BCO* 21-5-8) – No record of commission being appointed by presbytery at previous meeting.

**Response:** Commission was appointed by previous presbytery meeting. We have erred not to record it. From now on, we will do our best to correct error.

**Exception: May 25, 2021** (*BCO* 21-5-8) – No record of required portions of ordination service.

**Response:** Ordination service was done according to *BCO*. We have erred not to record it. From now on, we will do our best to correct error.

**Exception: May 25, 2021** (*BCO* 21-9; 21-10) – No record of *BCO* 21-9 and 21-10 questions being asked and answered in the affirmative.

**Response:** During Ordination service, *BCO* 21-9 and 21-10 questions being asked and answered in the affirmative. We have erred not to record it. From now on, we will do our best to correct error.

**Exception: May 25, 2021** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

**Response:** We have erred not to include presbytery meeting minutes. From now on, we will do our best to correct error.

**Exception: Sep 14, 2021** (*BCO* 46-6) – Teaching elder did not remain under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery until received by the other.

**Response:** It was not jurisdiction. It is document review for application. We will do our best to keep *BCO*.

**Exception: Sep 10, 2019** (*BCO* 22-2) – No record of congregational meeting and call, no record of terms of call being approved, no record of installation.

**Response [2022]:** The church of concern is not a PCA church, therefore it was not under our jurisdiction. The minister was serving out of bounds.

**Rationale [2022]:** Although the church is out of bounds, the terms of the call still need to be approved by the Presbytery (*BCO* 8-7).

**Response [2023]:** We have erred. From now on, even the church is out of bounds, the presbytery will approve the call. we will do our best to follow *BCO*.

**e. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: General** (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.

**Response:** We have erred in failing to include review of records of church session. We will do our best to include review of records of church session as soon as possible.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its actions (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). Presbytery has not reviewed session records from the year in question.

**Exception: Mar 10, 2020 [p. 4, Credential Committee]** (*BCO* 5-3) – No establishment of a temporary system of government for Mission Church.

**Response:** We have erred not to include the records of commissions. In future minutes, we will try to include the commissions.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). Presbytery has not submitted the record for review.

**Exception: Jan 19, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4, *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.

**Response:** In presbytery meeting docket, all the records are included. But, in the meeting minutes, it is not included. We will try to include from now on.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). Presbytery has not submitted the record(s) for review.

**Exception: Jan 19, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16- 3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the minister’s/candidate’s own words.

**Response:** In presbytery meeting docket, all the records are included. But, in the meeting minutes, it is not included. We will try to include from now on.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). Presbytery has not submitted the record(s) for review.

**Exception: Jan 19, 2021** (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.

**Response:** In presbytery meeting docket, all the records are included. But, in the meeting minutes, it is not included. We will try to include from now on.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO 16-10.b.1*). Presbytery has not submitted the record(s) for review.

**Exception: Jan 19, 2021** (*BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5*) – Unclear record of ordination exam.

**Response:** In presbytery meeting docket, all the records are included. But, in the meeting minutes, it is not included. We will try to include from now on.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO 16-10.b.1*). Presbytery has not submitted the record(s) for review.

**Exception: Jan 19, 2021** (*BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5*) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

**Response:** In presbytery meeting docket, all the records are included. But, in the meeting minutes, it is not included. We will try to include from now on.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO 16-10.b.1*). Presbytery has not submitted the record(s) for review.

**Exception: Jan 19, 2021** (*BCO 20*) – No record of congregational votes of election of pastor(s).

**Response:** In presbytery meeting docket, all the records are included. But, in the meeting minutes, it is not included. We will try to include from now on.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO 16-10.b.1*). Presbytery has not submitted the record(s) for review.

**Exception: May 25, 2021** (*BCO 15-1; RAO 16-3.e.4*) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

**Response:** We have erred not to include presbytery meeting minutes. From now on, we will do our best to correct error.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO 16-10.b.1*). Presbytery has not submitted the record(s) for review.

**f. That responses shall be submitted to the following GA as no responses were received in 2022:**

**Exception: Jan 19, 2021** (*BCO 19-2; RAO 16- 3.e.5*) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded. (No record of Sermon and Statement of Christian experience and inward call (*BCO 19-2.a, d*).

**Exception: Jan 19, 2021** (*BCO 21-4; RAO 16- 3.e.5*) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

41. That the Minutes of **Korean SW Orange County** Presbytery: 55-0-0

a. Be approved without exceptions: **None**.

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; General 2022; Mar 15, 2022; Sep 13, 2022**.

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

## APPENDIX Q

1. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 13-2) – No evidence of annual reports from many of the TEs who are without call.
2. **Exception: Mar 15, 2022** (*BCO* 8-7; 13-5; 20-1) – A TE has begun to minister out of bounds. No record that Presbytery followed the appropriate *BCO* provisions to approve that.
3. **Exception: Mar 15, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1; 13-8) – A commission must be appointed by Presbytery, not a committee.
4. **Exception: Mar 15, 2022** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – No evidence that men transferring in from other denominations met the educational, original language, or paper requirements.
5. **Exception: Mar 15, 2022; Sep 13, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2, 3) – No record of endorsement by candidates' Sessions, six-months membership for candidates, nor of charge given to candidates.
6. **Exception: Mar 15, 2022; Sep 13, 2022** (*BCO* 46-6) – TEs are received from other PCA presbyteries but no evidence of action of other Presbyteries.
7. **Exception: Mar 15, 2022** (*BCO* 19-7, 8, 9, 10) – Presbytery uses candidacy examination procedures for internship, so various steps are missing, including determination of the nature of the internship.
8. **Exception: Mar. 15, 2022** (*BCO* 20-1; 8-7; 13-5) – No record of calls to a definite work.
9. **Exception: Mar. 15, 2022** (*BCO* 19-2.d, e, f) – No sermon and no statement of differences with the Standards for one being licensed.
10. **Exception: Mar. 15, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4) – No evidence of educational requirements, required papers, or sermon for one being ordained; and no evidence the man was asked to state differences with the Standards.
11. **Exception: Mar. 15, 2022** (*BCO* 5-9) – Presbytery particularizes mission works with no evidence that all required procedures were followed – specifically no evidence of congregational meeting or petition.
12. **Exception: Mar. 15, 2022; Sept. 13, 2022** (*BCO* 8-7; 21-2; 23-1) – TEs are reported as resigning from or having left current calls from churches of Presbytery and/or are recorded as taking new calls, but no evidence that Presbytery dissolved pastoral relations, nor acted on the new calls, nor is there evidence that 8-7 and 21-1 were followed for out of bounds calls.

13. **Exception: Mar. 15, 2022** (*BCO* 46-6) – The minutes record that a man has transferred to another Presbytery. No record that congregation concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations, that Presbytery dissolved the pastoral relation, nor that Presbytery voted to release the TE to a different Presbytery.
  14. **Exception: Sept. 13, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1) – Minutes show that commissions met and who was present, but there are no reports showing what the commissions did.
  15. **Exception: Sept. 13, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated difference not recorded in the candidate’s own words.
  16. **Exception: Sept. 13, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.
  17. **Exception: Sept. 13, 2022** (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.
  18. **Exception: Sept. 13, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Incomplete record of ordination exam. Men are approved for ordination but no evidence of education requirements, required papers, or original languages.
  19. **Exception: Sept. 13, 2022** (*BCO* 13-6) – No record of written credentials of dismissing Presbytery (not specified) for TE transfer.
  20. **Exception: Sept. 13, 2022** (*BCO* 19-2; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of three licensure exams not recorded. Further, those seeking licensure are not required to be examined in sacraments and church history.
  21. **Exception: Sept. 13, 2022** (*BCO* 38-3) – Presbytery does not follow *BCO* 38-3 for men who have joined other denominations.
  22. **Exception: Sept. 12, 2022** (*BCO* 46-6) – The minutes record that 2 TEs have been removed from the roll because they joined another PCA Presbytery. No record that congregations concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations, that Presbytery dissolved the pastoral relations, nor that Presbytery voted to release the TEs to the different Presbyteries.
  23. **Exception: Sept. 13, 2022** (Preliminary Principle 6; *BCO* 3-1; 16-2) – Presbytery appoints an interim pastor with no evidence of congregational request or concurrence.
- d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Mar 16, 2021** (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of examination of TEs transferring into Presbytery.

**Response:** We apologize for the clerical mistake of not recording the complete examination for these three ministers. As transfers, they were thoroughly examined, as stated in the *BCO*. We will make sure to be more precise in keeping notes and minutes.

**Exception: Mar 16, 2021** (*BCO* 13-6) – TE was transferred into Presbytery as an “Associate Member.” No such designation exists in the PCA.

**Response:** We apologize for the wrong designation for the Teaching Elder. As a retired pastor, he was admitted as a “guest” or “associate,” which included only joining us for worship, observing presbytery proceedings from the visitor’s section, and having fellowship with fellow presbytery members. He did not vote, nor was he given any authority to speak on the floor. We will ensure to record the correct designations of guests in the future.

**Exception: Mar 16, 2021; Sep 14, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements for ordination exam not recorded.

**Response:** We apologize for not specifying the exact requirements for ordination. As candidates, we are certain they were completely examined as stated in the *BCO*. We will be more watchful moving forward.

**Exception: Mar 16, 2021; Sep 14, 2021** (*BCO* 11-4; 24-1) – Presbytery appointed ruling elders to a church; which it has no authority to do.

**Response:** We understand that the presbytery has no authority to appoint ruling elders to a church. In the past our presbytery assisted churches in training and qualifying ruling elders who were elected by the congregation. However since 2021, we have changed this policy to be in line with the *BCO* 11-4, 24-1.

**Exception: Sep 14, 2021** (*BCO* 19-2; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.

**Response:** We apologize for not specifying the exact requirements for licensure. As candidates, we are confident they were thoroughly examined as stated in the *BCO*. We will be more watchful moving forward.

**Exception: Sep 14, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.

**Response:** We apologize for not recording the candidate’s stated differences. We did, however, ask the question, and the minister said he had no stated differences. We will be more observant in recording these in the future.

**Exception: General 2019** (*BCO* 13-9.b) – No record of review of records of church sessions.

**Response:** We apologize for not reviewing this at this time. As of our 14<sup>th</sup> Stated Clerk meeting (2021), sessions have been submitting their records, and our Credential Committee has been diligently reviewing them.

**Exception: Mar 12, 2019** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4.c; 21-4.f) – Incomplete record of transfer exams, specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded. No record of asking for differences with Standards.

**Response:** We apologize for this clerical error. We examined the licensure candidates according to the requirements outlined in *BCO* 19-2 however, we failed to record it in detail. We will make sure to register the specific requirements for exams. We also apologize for the failure to record if candidates had any differences with the Standards. We understand that the differences must be included in the minutes in the candidate's own words and the Presbytery's judgment of those stated differences. While these candidates had no stated differences with our standards, we failed to record them as such

**Exception: Mar 12, 2019** (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of calls to definite works.

**Response:** We apologize for not including a record of calls to definite works. All candidates were called to actual works (which included a call letter from their respective churches) however, we failed to include this in our minutes

**Exception: Mar 12, 2019** (*BCO* 19-2, 19-9) – Specific requirements of licensure exam not listed, included differences with Standards.

**Response:** We apologize for our clerical error. This was a mistake in failing to record the requirements for licensure exams. We examined the candidates listed in *BCO* 19-2 but did not record them in detail. We will make sure to document all specificities for examinations.

**Exception: Mar 12, 2019** (*BCO* 18; 19-9) – Incomplete record of internship. No record of session endorsement, six-months membership, details of exam for candidate.

**Response:** We apologize for the incomplete record. This internship was prior approved by the Credential Committee, which included a detailed documentation requirement of the session endorsement and six months of membership in a PCA church. We will ensure to include this in the future as well as details each candidate did for exams

**Exception: Mar 12, 2019** (*BCO* 13-10) – No record of member transfer or dismissal upon dissolution of the church.



**Response:** Sadly this is not a pattern in the past for our presbytery. We will try to record better and make sure in the future any members transfers are well taken care.

**Exception: Sep 10, 2019** (*BCO* 15-01; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commissions not entered in minutes. Incomplete record of Session internship, endorsement, six-months membership.

**Response:** We apologize for not including the minutes of commissions in the minutes. Each candidate was required to submit thorough documentation, including a session endorsement and six-month membership in a PCA church. We will ensure to include this in the future as well as details each candidate did for exams

**Exception: Sep 10, 2019** (*BCO* 21-4; 13-6) – No record of requirement to state differences with standards. No record of *BCO* Exam. No record of details of transfer exam.

**Response:** We apologize for this clerical error. We examined the transfer candidate according to the requirements outlined in the *BCO*; however, we failed to record it in detail. We will make sure to register the specific requirements for exams. We also apologize for failing to record if candidates had any differences with the Standards. We understand that the differences must be included in the minutes in the candidate's own words and the Presbytery's judgment of those stated differences. While the candidate had no stated differences with our standards, we failed to record it as such

**Exception: Sep 10, 2019** (*BCO* 19-2) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.

**Response:** We apologize for not specifying the exact requirements for licensure. As candidates, we are sure they were examined entirely, as stated in the *BCO*. We will be more watchful moving forward

**Exception: Sep 10, 2019** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

**Response:** We apologize for not specifying the exact requirements for ordination. As candidates, we are confident they were thoroughly examined, as stated in the *BCO*. We will be more watchful moving forward

**Exception: Sep 10, 2019** (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of calls to definite works.

**Response:** We apologize for not including a record of calls to definite works. All candidates were called to definite works (which included a call letter from their respective churches) however, we failed to include this in our minutes.

**Exception: Mar 10, 2020** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

**Response:** We apologize for not specifying the exact requirements for ordination. As candidates, we are sure they were wholly examined, as stated in the *BCO*. We will be more watchful moving forward

**Exception: Mar 10, 2020** (*Preliminary Principle* 6) – Interim pastors appointed without call/vote of congregations.

**Response:** We failed to note that in order to serve as a pastor who is a member of the session, a congregational vote is necessary. We understand that an interim pastor must be first voted by the congregation or serve in an advisory capacity to help the church.

**Exception: Mar 10, 2020** (*BCO* 20-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.6) – Specific arrangements of call not shown to be approved.

**Response:** We apologize for not including a record of calls to definite works. All candidates were called to definite works and the presbytery approved each call

**Exception: Mar 10, 2020** (*BCO* 21-4) – No report of requiring statement of differences with Standards.

**Response:** We apologize for not recording the candidate's stated differences. However, we did ask the question, and the minister said he had no exceptions. We will be more observant in recording these in the future

**Exception: Mar 10, 2020** (*BCO* 19-2) – All specific licensure exam requirements not recorded.

**Response:** We apologize for not specifying the exact requirements for licensure. As candidates, we are sure they were wholly examined, as stated in the *BCO*. We will be more watchful moving forward

**Exception: Mar 10, 2020** (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of call to definite work.

**Response:** We apologize for not including a record of calls to definite works. All candidates were called to definite works (which included a call letter from their respective churches) however, we failed to include this in our minutes.

**Exception: Sep 15, 2020** (*BCO* 23-1) – No Presbytery action taken on resignation/dissolution of pastoral relationship.

**Response:** We did take action by hearing the report of the resignations and approving the resignations as noted in the minutes. We will try to put more details of this process in the future.

**Exception: Sep 15, 2020** (*BCO* 5-12) – No record of call to or Presbytery establishment of pastoral relationship.

**Response:** We failed to record the details of the call though it was verbally presented during the examination of the candidates. We will record these details in the future

**Exception: Sep 15, 2020** (*BCO* 38-1) – No record that deposed minister appeared before the court.

**Response:** This concerns a very sensitive issue regarding a teaching elder who was being investigated by a committee of the presbytery. He met with the investigative committee but refused to appear before the presbytery. The committee with the agreement of the teaching elder involved recommended his deposition from ministry. The presbytery approved the committee's recommendation to depose him. There was no formal indictment or trial because the teaching elder did not want to appear before the presbytery.

**Exception: Sep 15, 2020** (*BCO* 13-11; 38-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.8) – The minutes approved by the presbytery and submitted to CRPR do not include a full and accurate record of investigation, confession and deposition of a TE, including a written statement of confession recorded in the TE's own words, or a statement of facts as required by *BCO* 38-1.

**Response:** *BCO* 34-4 states that "a. When a minister accused of an offense is found contumacious (cf. 32-6), he shall be immediately suspended from the sacraments and his office for his contumacy. Record shall be made of the fact and of the charges under which he was arraigned, and the censure shall be made public. The censure shall in no case be removed until the offender has not only repented of his contumacy, but has also given satisfaction in relation to the charges against him.

b. If after further endeavor by the court to bring the accused to a sense of his guilt, he persists in his contumacy, he shall be deposed and excommunicated from the Church."

Our presbytery was going through a case like this for the first time so we were unaware of all the proper proceedings. However, the "deposed minister" was clearly contumacious in not cooperating with the investigative committee and refusing to appear before the presbytery. We should have taken two steps according to *BCO* 34-4 by first suspending him and at a future meeting deposing him. We conflated the process because it seemed clear that the person wanted nothing to do with the presbytery or heed its discipline.

**Exception: Sep 15, 2020** (*BCO* 46-8) Presbytery did not assign a deposed TE membership in a local church with concurrence of the receiving Session.

**Response:** The investigative committee recommended the deposed teaching elder to be involved in a local PCA church, however, he was uncooperative and wanted to cut off all ties with the presbytery. He has ever since changed his phone number and contact information and we have not been able to keep in touch with him.

**Exception: Sep 15, 2020** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination.

**Response:** We apologize for the clerical mistake of not recording the complete examination for the transfer candidate. As transfers, they were thoroughly examined, as stated in the *BCO*. We will make sure to be more precise in keeping notes and minutes.

**Exception: Sep 15, 2020** (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer exam.

**Response:** We apologize for the clerical mistake of not recording the complete examination for the candidate. As a transfer, we comprehensively examined the candidate as stated in the *BCO*. We will make sure to be more precise in keeping notes and minutes.

**Exception: Sep 15, 2020** (*BCO* 19-2; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Requirements of licensure exam not recorded.

**Response:** We apologize for not specifying the exact requirements for licensure. As candidates, we are sure they were examined entirely, as stated in the *BCO*. We will be more watchful moving forward.

**e. The following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Mar 10, 2020** (*BCO* 13-11) – Complaint sent to Presbytery not recorded in minutes. (“full and accurate record” *RAO* 16.3.e.6).

**Response:** This complaint was deemed to be a private matter and it was not dealt with in the presbytery other than noting the complaint. Due to the sensitive nature of this private matter, it would be difficult to redress this issue and include the specifics in the minutes.

**Rationale:** The complaint and the response of the Presbytery must be included in the record of the Presbytery (*BCO* 43-3, 6) and submitted for review (*BCO* 40-1).

42. That the Minutes of **Lowcountry** Presbytery: 54-0-0

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Apr 26, 2022.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General 2022.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

1. **Exception: General 2022** (*RAO* 16-10.a) – No record in minutes of exceptions taken by GA.

2. **Exception: Feb 5, 2022; Jul 23, 2022** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record that Congregation /Session concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations.
3. **Exception: Jul 23, 2022; Nov 3, 2022** (*BCO* 22-2, 3) – No record of calls from the session/Congregation for Pastoral relations.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Feb 16, 2021** (*BCO* 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order; 10-day notice not indicated/recorded.

**Response:** Notice was sent to all presbyters on Feb 4, 2021 per *BCO* 13-12 by the Moderator, TE [name omitted]. We apologize that this was not recorded, this has been duly noted for future specially called meetings.

**Exception: Apr 27, 2021** (*BCO* 15-1) – No record of quorum for commission meeting.

**Response:** This was simply an oversight of recording. Duly noted, we will be sure to include the quorum requirement when future commissions are established. The commission did meet the requirements of *BCO* 15-2.

**Exception: Apr 27, 2021** (*RAO* 16-3.c.8) – No record of approval of minutes of Feb. 16, 2021 called meeting.

**Response:** The approval minutes of the Feb 16, 2021 called meeting and the executive session were done by an appointed commission. We have noted that we did not properly report the results of that commission and we will correct that oversight at our next Stated meeting.

43. That the Minutes of **Metro Atlanta** Presbytery: 38-17-1

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; Jan 25, 2022; Sep 20, 2022.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
  1. **Exception: Jan 25, 2022** (*RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Presbytery minutes misstate licentiate’s stated difference.
  2. **Exception: Jan 25, 2022** (*RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in minister’s/candidate’s own words.
  3. **Exception: Jan 25, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Presbytery granted a doctrinal exception that needs further clarity for proper review. While exceptions on the application of the 4th Commandment are common (e.g. recreation clause), it is quite another thing to say that the Sabbath has been fulfilled and

is to be celebrated everyday instead of weekly. This would seem to be out of accord with our system of doctrine in that it appears to radically redefine one of the Ten Commandments in a way that is contrary to our confessional standards and God’s creation ordinance.

- 4. **Exception: May 3, 2022; Sep 20, 2022 (BCO 8-7)** – No record that TE laboring out of bounds will be allowed full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of the church.

**d. That the following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Jan 28, 2020 (BCO 13-6)** – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination (see also BCO 21-4).

**Response [2022]:** It is unclear what RPR is taking an exception to here. “Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination.”

We are attaching the full transcript below from the January 28<sup>th</sup> meeting:

Transfer into MAP - [name omitted] – [church name omitted]

*TE [name omitted]: from The Presbytery of the East of the EPC to [church name omitted]*

*MSP to accept Mr. [name omitted] as a transfer from The Presbytery of the East of the EPC upon confirmation of his release from said Presbytery.*

*TE [name omitted] was examined by the Committee on his Christian experience and his views on theology, the Sacraments and church government and was recommended by them to the court. Presbytery had the opportunity to examine him in all the areas according to BCO 13-6.*

*TE [name omitted] expressed differences with the WCF (documented in Appendix D) were judged by the Court as more than semantic but not out of accord. MSP*

*MSP to find Mr. [name omitted]’s call to be in order. The call was placed in Mr. [name omitted]’s hands and was accepted and received by him. (Copy of call in Appendix E)*

*MSP to find Mr. [name omitted]’s transfer and request to be in order.*

*Mr. [name omitted] signed the Metro Atlanta Presbytery Book of ministerial obligation.*

*MSP to approve a commission to install Mr. [name omitted] on April 19, 2020, at [church name omitted]. The commission is to consist of:*

Teaching Elders:	Ruling Elders:
[name omitted] (Moderator)	[name omitted]

[name omitted]	[name omitted]
[name omitted]	

**Perhaps RPR is alluding to BCO 21-4** *“If applicants come from other denominations, the Presbytery shall examine them thoroughly in knowledge and views as required by BCO 21-4 and require them to answer in the affirmative the questions put to candidates at their ordination. Ordained ministers from other denominations being considered by Presbyteries for reception may come under the extraordinary provisions set forth in BCO 21-4. Presbyteries shall also require ordained ministers coming from other denominations to state the specific instances in which they may differ with the Confession of Faith and Catechisms in any of their statements and/or propositions, which differences the court shall judge in accordance with BCO 21-4 (see BCO 21- 4.)”*

MAP believes that requirement was met with the Credentials Committee, his time on the floor and his installation. Please clarify.

**Rationale [2022]:** Minutes do not indicate the transfer candidate was examined in both knowledge and views, as well as the areas of Greek and Hebrew languages, church history, and the history of the PCA, as required by BCO 21-4.

**Response [2023]:** Candidate was examined in knowledge and views by the Credential Committee and on the floor and MAP failed to record.

**Rationale [2023]:** Minutes do not indicate that all areas of examination noted in the 2022 response rationale were completed. Presbytery response should indicate that these corrections have been taken and properly recorded in their minutes.

44. That the Minutes of **Metropolitan New York** Presbytery: 52-1-3
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Sep 20, 2022 ES; Nov 8, 2022 ES.**
  - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Jan 11, 2022; Mar 8, 2022; Sep 20, 2022; Nov 8, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
    1. **Exception: Mar 8, 2022 (BCO 21-1)** – TE left one field before dissolution by Presbytery and moved onto another field before approval of Presbytery.
    2. **Exception: May 10, 2022 (BCO 37-1)** – Presbytery did not restore TE to office for three years beyond term of definite suspension.
    3. **Exception: Sept 20, 2022 (WCF 21-5; WLC 158; BCO 4-4; 8-5; 40-5; 58-4)** – Presbytery delinquent to redress a Session who

admitted to unconstitutional proceedings of: (1) permitting a woman to expound the Scriptures during a worship service on the Lord's Day; (2) holding many worship services without preaching; and (3) serving the Lord's Supper at many services without a preceding sermon.

4. **Exception: Sept 20, 2022** (*BCO* 13-2) – No record of TE laboring out of bounds with concurrence of Presbytery within whose bounds he labors.
5. **Exception: Jan 11, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2) – No record of endorsement by candidate's Session.
6. **Exception: Sep 20, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4.f) – Presbytery granted a doctrinal exception that needs further clarity for proper review (*WLC* #183).
7. **Exception: Nov 8, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: General** (*BCO* 13-9.b, 40-3) – No record of review of church Sessions.

**Response:** Presbytery agrees with GA and has corrected this by reviewing and approving church session minutes for 2021.

**Exception: Mar 9, 2021** (*BCO* 13-6) – All specific requirements of transfer exam not recorded; no record of examination on Christian experience.

**Response:** Presbytery agrees with GA in that the examination was not recorded in the minutes, but the examination did take place before the Leadership Development Committee and before presbytery. The minutes have been amended to show this.

M/S/C to amend the March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021, minutes to state that all 3 candidates (TE [name omitted], TE [name omitted], and TE [name omitted]) were examined on Christian experience (approved unanimously).

**Exception: Dec 27, 2020** (*BCO* 21-6) – Presiding minister did not propose questions to the Session as required by *BCO* 21-6.

**Response:** Presbytery agrees with GA. The report was amended, and the minutes updated to clarify what took place.

- a. The original commission minutes incorrectly stated that pastor [name omitted] had been ordained and installed instead of [name omitted].
- b. M/S/C to approve the corrected Commission minutes from December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 (the installation/ ordination of [name omitted])



APPENDIX Q

(approved unanimously) (Appendix 9)

**Exception: May 11, 2021** (*BCO* 23-1) – Presbytery must dissolve the call before a minister leaves the field or take some other action if he leaves the field prior to Presbytery dissolving the call other than retroactively dissolving the call.

**Response:** Presbytery agrees with GA and the exception is noted. Presbytery will work to avoid this mistake in the future.

**Exception: Sep 21, 2021** (*BCO* 38-2) – Presbytery did not consider a minister’s request to be divested of office at the subsequent stated meeting as required by *BCO* 38-2.

**Response:** Presbytery agrees with GA that the discussion was not recorded in the minutes of the September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, stated meeting. The discussion did take place and the request of the minister was denied because of an ongoing investigation by presbytery’s judicial commission. The minutes have been amended.

M/S/C to amend the September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, minutes under the Facilitation team report to include the sentence: The request of TE [name omitted] to demit from the ministry was denied because of the ongoing judicial commission investigation. (Approved unanimously).

**Exception: Sep 21, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded. Minutes do not record that the candidate preached before presbytery, and minutes do not record a  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote to approve preaching before a committee.

**Response:** Presbytery agrees with GA that the minutes did not record a unanimous approval of [name omitted]’s sermon preached before presbytery. [name omitted]’s sermon preached before presbytery was approved unanimously by presbytery. The minutes have been amended.

M/S/C to amend the September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, stated meeting minutes to show that [name omitted]’s sermon was approved unanimously by presbytery. (approved unanimously)

**Exception: Sep 21, 2021** (*BCO* 23-1) – Presbytery must dissolve the call before a minister leaves the field or take some other action if he leaves the field prior to Presbytery dissolving the call.

**Response:** Presbytery agrees with GA and the exception is noted. Presbytery will work to avoid this mistake in the future.

**Exception: Sep 21, 2021** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of congregation having approved the dissolution of call of the former pastor.

**Response:** Presbytery agrees with GA and has amended the minutes to include minutes of the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between [name omitted] and [church name omitted].

M/S/C to amend the September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, minutes to include the congregational meeting minutes showing the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between TE [name omitted] and [church name omitted] (approved unanimously) (Appendix 10)

**Exception: Sep 21, 2021 (BCO 22-5)** – Temporary pastoral relation established without Presbytery’s approval. [name omitted], on Presbytery’s role as honorably retired, began serving as interim pastor of [church name omitted] in September 2021 without the establishment of a stated supply relationship approved by Presbytery.

**Response:** Presbytery respectfully disagrees. Rev. [name omitted] did not begin to serve as interim pastor for [church name omitted] in September 2021. He began to guest preach on a somewhat regular basis, but he has not served the church in any other capacity. Additionally, there have been significant seasons when he has not preached and the pulpit has been filled by other guest preachers or assistant pastors of the church. In other words, he has served as a guest preacher while remaining honorably retired.

**Exception: Sep 21, 2021 (BCO 8-7, 20-1)** – Presbytery recorded a TE’s call to an organization outside the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in America without approving the call, without receiving assurance that he will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church, and without making “a record of the reasons why it considers the work to be a valid Christian ministry.”

**Response:** Presbytery regrets not recording the approval of the call to be in order and acceptable to the TE. The call letter was attached to the minutes, but the clerk failed to record the information. The TE also had the full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church. Presbytery did not record the reason why this work is considered a valid Christian ministry because City to City (a global church planting organization) has been an intricate part of this presbytery since it was founded by TE Tim Keller in 2001. It has been recognized as a valid Christian ministry by MNYP since its inception.

M/S/C to amend the September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, minutes to approve the call to be in order and acceptable to TE [name omitted]. [name omitted] has full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church with City to City. (Approved unanimously).

**Exception: Sep 21, 2021** (*BCO* Preliminary Principle 6; 5-9; 13-9.f) – Presbytery established a new particular church without first establishing a temporary government, without receiving either a petition or from members of the proposed church or a request for division from an existing church, without interviewing nominated ruling elders, without forming an organizing commission, and without holding a service of organization.

(Presbytery passed a motion that divided [church name omitted] into [church name omitted] and [church name omitted] “pending a vote of the members” and designated teaching elders, ruling elders, and deacons for each. The congregation passed a similar motion on 12/5/21 and proceeded as two particular churches. According to *BCO* 13-9.f Presbytery has the power “to unite or divide churches, at the request of the members thereof”. However, no request is recorded. Instead Presbytery preemptively performed these tasks “pending a vote.” Further, dividing a church does not entail selecting its pastor or its government, each of which must be chosen by members of the church according to Preliminary Principle 6 and multiple sections of the *BCO*. Separately, *BCO* 5-9 lays out the steps prescribed for organizing a new church, including the establishment of a temporary government necessary to interview officer candidates.)

**Response:** Presbytery agrees that it was in error to pass a motion to divide [church name omitted] into two churches, [church name omitted] and [church name omitted], prior to a congregation vote. We commit to improving our process in the future. In response, at our March 14, 2023 meeting, Presbytery adopted the following motion: “Presbytery must deal with the division of a multisite congregation after the members have requested such according to *BCO* 13-9.f.”

M/S/C Presbytery must deal with the division of a multisite congregation after the members have requested such according to *BCO* 13-9.f

Further explanation: The records of Presbytery did not fully represent the process that was followed. We recognize the lack of clarity this produced. A petition was signed by [church name omitted] members who were attending the [church name omitted] site at the time and desired to join [church name omitted] with its particularization. The temporary government of [church name omitted] was the [church name omitted] session which included two elders who attended [church name omitted] and a [church name omitted] associate pastor (TE [name omitted]) who served as a commission of the [church name omitted] session assigned the responsibility of primary oversight and shepherding of the [church name omitted] site. These elders were elected unanimously by [church name omitted] members that included

members who were attending the [church name omitted] site at the time of their election. One of the items approved unanimously by the [church name omitted] members (that included members who were attending the [church name omitted] site at the time) was the call and election of TE [name omitted] as the pastor of [church name omitted] with its particularization.

**Exception: Sep 21, 2021** (*BCO 5-9, 13-9.f*) – Presbytery transferred members to a different church without their consent or request. (Presbytery did not receive a request from members or request their consent before assigning members to Redeemer East Harlem.)

**Response:** Presbytery agrees that it was in error to pass a motion to divide [church name omitted] into two churches, [church name omitted] and [church name omitted], prior to a congregation vote. We commit to improving our process in the future. In response, at our March 14, 2023 meeting, Presbytery adopted the following motion: “Presbytery must deal with the division of a multisite congregation after the members have requested such according to *BCO 13-9.f*.”

Further explanation: The records of Presbytery did not fully represent the process that was followed. We recognize the lack of clarity this produced. A petition was signed by [church name omitted] members who were attending the [church name omitted] site at the time and desired to join [church name omitted] with its particularization. The temporary government of [church name omitted] was the [church name omitted] session which included two elders who attended [church name omitted] and a [church name omitted] associate pastor (TE [name omitted]) who served as a commission of the [church name omitted] session assigned the responsibility of primary oversight and shepherding of the [church name omitted] site. These elders were elected unanimously by [church name omitted] members that included members who were attending the [church name omitted] site at the time of their election. One of the items approved unanimously by the [church name omitted] members (that included members who were attending the [church name omitted] site at the time) was the call and election of TE [name omitted] as the pastor of [church name omitted] with its particularization.

**Exception: Sep 21, 2021** (*BCO Preliminary Principle 6; BCO 5-9, 24-1*) – Presbytery assigned ruling elders to a church without the consent of the congregation.

**Response:** Presbytery agrees that it was in error to pass a motion to divide [church name omitted] into two churches, [church name omitted] and [church name omitted], prior to a congregation vote. We commit to

improving our process in the future. In response, at our March 14, 2023 meeting, Presbytery adopted the following motion:

“Presbytery must deal with the division of a multisite congregation after the members have requested such according to *BCO* 13-9.f.”

Further explanation: The records of Presbytery did not fully represent the process that was followed. We recognize the lack of clarity this produced. A petition was signed by [church name omitted] members who were attending the [church name omitted] site at the time and desired to join [church name omitted] with its particularization. The temporary government of [church name omitted] was the [church name omitted] session which included two elders who attended [church name omitted] and a [church name omitted] associate pastor (TE [name omitted]) who served as a commission of the [church name omitted] session assigned the responsibility of primary oversight and shepherding of the [church name omitted] site. These elders were elected unanimously by [church name omitted] members that included members who were attending the [church name omitted] site at the time of their election. One of the items approved unanimously by the [church name omitted] members (that included members who were attending the [church name omitted] site at the time) was the call and election of TE [name omitted] as the pastor of [church name omitted] with its particularization.

**Exception: Sep 21, 2021** (*BCO* Preliminary Principle 6; *BCO* 5-9, 20-2) – Presbytery assigned teaching elders to a church without the consent of the congregation and without receiving a call.

**Response:** Presbytery agrees that it was in error to pass a motion to divide [church name omitted] into two churches, [church name omitted] and [church name omitted], prior to a congregation vote. We commit to improving our process in the future. In response, at our March 14, 2023 meeting, Presbytery adopted the following motion: “Presbytery must deal with the division of a multisite congregation after the members have requested such according to *BCO* 13-9.f.”

Further explanation: The records of Presbytery did not fully represent the process that was followed. We recognize the lack of clarity this produced. A petition was signed by [church name omitted] members who were attending the [church name omitted] site at the time and desired to join [church name omitted] with its particularization. The temporary government of [church name omitted] was the [church name omitted] session which included two elders who attended [church name omitted] and a [church name omitted] associate pastor (TE [name omitted]) who served as a commission of the [church name omitted] session assigned the responsibility of primary

oversight and shepherding of the [church name omitted] site. These elders were elected unanimously by [church name omitted] members that included members who were attending the [church name omitted] site at the time of their election. One of the items approved unanimously by the [church name omitted] members (that included members who were attending the [church name omitted] site at the time) was the call and election of TE [name omitted] as the pastor of [church name omitted] with its particularization.

**Exception: Sep 21, 2021** (BCO 5-9) – Presbytery did not approve the particularization of [church name omitted] prior to organization of the church and following petition by congregation.

**Response:** Presbytery regrets our failure to attach the request from [church name omitted] to particularize in our September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, minutes. The request was received by the commission overseeing this process but was not entered into our minutes. We have amended the minutes to show this.

M/S/C to amend the minutes of September 21, 2021, with the attached request from [church name omitted] to particularize and to approve [church name omitted]'s request to organize as a particular church within MNYP.

**Exception: Sep 21, 2021** (BCO 15-1) – Presbytery's commission exceeded the powers delegated to it.

**Response:** Presbytery respectfully disagrees with GA. We regret the confusion of language, but the presbytery intended to give the commission all powers to handle the transfer of [church name omitted], save the power to examine and transfer the teaching elders. This was clear in presbytery discussion. We regret that the language did not capture presbytery's intent. The main power that presbytery wished to reserve to the presbytery as a whole was the power to examine and transfer the teaching elders.

**Exception: Nov 9, 2021** (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the minister's own words.

**Response:** Presbytery agrees with GA and has corrected its record by recording in the minutes the stated differences to the WS.

M/S/C to amend the November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020, minutes to include TE [name omitted]'s stated differences with the WS. (approved unanimously)

*I take exception to the Westminster Confession, chapter IV, Section 1; and the corresponding Larger Catechism Question 15; where it says God created "in the space of six days." If the Divines intended this phrase to mean God created everything in six, twenty-four hour" days, then I believe it is one of many interpretations of Genesis 1 and 2. I hold to a Framework View that allows for an old earth perspective for creation. This means that the six days could be six, twenty-four days or the events of creation could*

*have happened over a long period of time. I interpret Genesis 1 as describing history and is truthful in all that it describes, but I interpret Genesis 1 as revealing who, God, as the Creator of all that is, and why he created all that is, bringing order to chaos and filling the void with all that is for his glory and called it all good. I understand that Metro New York does not consider my view as an exception according to its position paper, but I leave that to presbytery to decide. I offer it here for transparency.*

***I take exception to the Westminster Confession, chapter XXI, Section 8; and the corresponding Larger Question 119, where it says the Sabbath “the whole day is a holy rest from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations;” and that we are forbidden to do “all needless works, words, and thoughts, about our worldly employments and recreation.” The Fourth Commandment (Exodus 20:8-11) does call us to keep the Sabbath holy, dedicating one day for worship and rest from our work to reflect the new heavens and new earth whereby all eternity will be marked by the worship of our Savior and rest in his finished work on our behalf. If the Divines meant that Christians could not ever think about our work or engage in any form of recreation with our family and friends, then I think they went further than Scripture and bound the consciences of believers (Romans 14). Also, Jesus’ disciples harvested for food on the Sabbath. Jesus also said, “man was not made for the Sabbath but the Sabbath was made for man” (Mark 2:27). I do believe the whole day is to be devoted to the Lord in worship (corporate and private) and rest from our work, but some recreations can be restful and needful. Again, I understand this view is not an exception in Metro New York’s according to its position paper on the Sabbath, I offer this for transparency.***

***I take exception to the Westminster Confession, chapter XXIV, section 3, where we are commanded to “marry only in the Lord.” In defining “in the Lord, it forbids marriages between reformed believers and “infidels, papists, or other idolaters.” Though I agree with the command, “marry only in the Lord,” I cannot and do not lump all Catholics (referred to here as papists) with all unbelievers (referred to as infidels, papists, and idolaters). I understand the historical context during which the Divines wrote the Confession, Catholic clergy and governments were persecuting reformed believers and it would not have been consider that a Catholic could be part of the Roman Catholic Church and believed the gospel. But I have met many Catholic believers and would not oppose a reformed believer marrying a Roman Catholic believer, especially if they decided to attend a Protestant***

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*Church. I just do not hold that all Roman Catholics are unbelievers. I do see how, even a believing Roman Catholic but wants to remain in the Roman Catholic Church and if he marries a Protestant believer have that spouse convert to Catholicism can potentially be unequally yoked.”*

M/S/C to approve his exception to the Westminster Standards as more than semantic, but not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine (approved unanimously)

**Exception: General 2019 (BCO 13-9b)** – No record of review of church Sessions found in presbytery minutes.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery agrees with the exception and promises to be more careful in the future. The committee that has this responsibility has struggled in the past few years to complete these tasks. We are working on rectifying this situation.

**Rationale [2022]:** As of 2021 minutes, there is still no record of review of church Session found in Presbytery minutes.

**Response [2023]:** Presbytery agrees with GA and has corrected this by reviewing and approving church session minutes for 2018, 2019 and 2020.

**Exception: Jan 8, 2019 (BCO 18-3)** – No record that the candidate was examined in experiential religion and the motives for gospel ministry.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery agrees with the exception and promises to be more careful in the future. Presbytery is working with our LDT committee to remind them of the BCO requirement of candidate ordination and floor examination.

**Rationale [2022]:** When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

**Response [2023]:** Presbytery agrees with GA in that the examination was not recorded in the minutes, but the examination did take place before the Leadership Development committee and before presbytery. The record has been amended.

M/S/C to amend the January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019, minutes to show that TE [name omitted] was examined in Christian experience and motives for the gospel ministry (approved unanimously)

**Exception: Jan 8, 2019 (BCO 23-1)** – No record of congregation having approved the dissolution of call of the former pastor.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery agrees with the exception and will correct its record and promises to be more careful in the future.



**Rationale [2022]:** When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

**Response [2023]:** Presbytery agrees with GA and has amended its record to include the congregational minutes showing the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between TE [name omitted] and [church name omitted].

M/S/C to amend the January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019, minutes to include the congregational meeting minutes showing the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between TE [name omitted] and [church name omitted] (approved unanimously) (Appendix 11)

**Exception: May 14, 2019 (BCO 18-3)** – No record that the candidate was examined in experiential religion and the motives for gospel ministry.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery agrees with the exception and promises to be more careful in the future. Presbytery is working with our LDT committee to remind them of the *BCO* requirement of candidate ordination.

**Rationale [2022]:** When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

**Response [2023]:** Presbytery agrees with GA in that the examination was not recorded in the minutes, but the examination did take place before the Leadership Development Committee and before presbytery. The record has been amended.

M/S/C to amend the May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019, minutes to show that candidate [name omitted] was examined in experiential religion and the motives for gospel ministry. (Approved unanimously)

**Exception: Sep 17, 2019 (BCO 18-3)** – No record that the candidate was examined in experiential religion and the motives for gospel ministry.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery agrees with the exception and promises to be more careful in the future. Presbytery is working with our LDT committee to remind them of the *BCO* requirement of candidate ordination.

**Rationale [2022]:** When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

**Response [2023]:** Presbytery agrees with GA in that the examination was not recorded in the minutes, but the examination did take place before the Leadership Development Committee and before presbytery. The record has been amended.

M/S/C to amend the September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019, minutes to show that candidate [name omitted] was examined in experiential religion and the motives for gospel ministry. (Approved unanimously).

**Exception: Jan 7, 2020 (BCO 13-11)** – Complaint sent to Presbytery not recorded in minutes ('full and accurate record').

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery agrees with the exception and in the future will properly record a complaint in the minutes. The ROC has the complaint listed with the judicial commission that was formed.

**Rationale [2022]:** When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

**Response [2023]:** Presbytery agrees with GA. The minutes of the Jan 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Stated Meeting were amended to include the complaint sent to presbytery. (Appendix 6)

M/S/C to amend the Jan 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Stated Meeting minutes to include the complaint sent to presbytery. (Approved Unanimously)

**Exception: Jan 7, 2020 (BCO 23-1)** – No record of a congregation meeting to dissolve pastoral relationship.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery agrees with the exception and in the future will properly record the action by noting the session or congregation approval of the dissolution in the minutes.

**Rationale [2022]:** When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

**Response [2023]:** Presbytery agrees with GA and has amended its record to include the session minutes showing the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between TE [name omitted] and [church name omitted].

M/S/C to amend the January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020, minutes to include the session meeting minutes showing the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between TE [name omitted] and [church name omitted] (approved unanimously) (Appendix 12).

**Exception: Nov 20, 2020** (*BCO 20-1*) – No record of approval of new call to TE laboring out of bounds.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery agrees with the exception and promises to be more careful in the future.

**Rationale [2022]:** When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

**Response [2023]:** Presbytery agrees with GA and has amended its record to show the approval of TE [name omitted] terms of call which were found to be in order and acceptable.

M/S/C to amend the November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020, minutes to approve the terms of call for TE [name omitted] which were found to be in order and acceptable to him. (Appendix 15)

**Exception: Nov 20, 2020** (*BCO 23-1*) – No record of congregational meeting to dissolve pastoral relationship.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery agrees with the exception and will correct its record. Presbytery promises to be more careful in the future.

**Rationale [2022]:** when GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

**Response [2023]:** Presbytery agrees with GA and has amended its record to include the minutes showing the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between TE [name omitted] and [church name omitted].

M/S/C to amend the November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020, minutes to include the congregational meeting vote to dissolve the pastoral relationship between TE [name omitted] and [church name omitted] (Appendix 13).

**Exception: Nov 20, 2020** (*BCO 23-1*) – No record of a session meeting to dissolve pastoral relationship.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery agrees with the exception and will correct its record. Presbytery promises to be more careful in the future

**Rationale [2022]:** when GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

**Response [2023]:** Presbytery agrees with GA and has amended its record to include the session minutes showing the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between TE [name omitted] and [church name omitted]. M/S/C to amend the November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020, minutes to include the session meeting minutes showing the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between TE [name omitted] and [church name omitted] (approved unanimously) (Appendix 13)

**Exception: Nov 5, 2016 (BCO 21-4.b)** Candidate not “asked to indicate whether he has changed his previous views concerning any points in the *Confession of Faith*, *Catechisms*, and *Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America.

**Response [2022]:** Presbytery agrees with the exception and promises to be more careful in the future.

**Rationale [2022]:** When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

**Response [2023]:** Presbytery agrees with GA and has corrected its record by recording in the minutes the stated differences to the WS.

M/S/C to amend the November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016, minutes to include TE [name omitted]'s stated differences with the WS. (Approved unanimously)

*I take exception to the Westminster Confession 21.8 where the Confession states “This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe an holy rest, all the day, from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations, but also are taken up, the whole time, in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.” I believe that Scripture does not teach the sabbath as something to be observed as strictly as it is stated in this section, specifically in regards to recreation being prohibited as part of keeping the sabbath. While it is clear that God prohibits work on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8 - 11) except for works of mercy (Matthew 12:11 - 13) and gathering for worship (Leviticus 23:3), there is no clear passage of Scripture to my knowledge that prohibits recreation. Therefore, my conscience cannot be bound by the part of this section that does not seem to have clear grounds in Scripture. Mark 2:27 states that “the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath”. Seeing Jesus’ response to the*

*pharisees who rebuked him for eating and drinking during the Sabbath affirms my conviction in regards to this section.*

M/S/C to approve his exception to the Westminster Standards as more than semantic, but not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine (approved unanimously).

**e. That the following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Mar 9, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the minister’s own words.

**Response:** Presbytery agrees with GA and has corrected the record to clearly record the stated differences which were stated but recorded incorrectly. The minutes have been amended to reflect this.

- a. The record of the March 9th, 2021, stated meeting recorded the candidates responses in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person.
- b. M/S/C to amend the March 9, 2021, minutes with this response from the candidates: TE [name omitted] states that ‘I take an exception to recreation on the Sabbath.’ TE [name omitted] states that ‘I take an exception to recreation on the Sabbath.’ TE [name omitted] states that ‘I take an exception to *WCF* 21:8 regarding recreation on the Sabbath.’ (Approved unanimously)
- c. M/S/C to approve TE [name omitted], TE [name omitted] and TE [name omitted] exceptions to the Westminster Standards as more than semantic, but not out of accord with any fundamentals of our system of doctrine (approved unanimously)

**Rationale:** The stated exceptions do not give any information as to the specific nature or the biblical rationale for the exceptions (*BCO* 21-4.e).

**f. That the 50<sup>th</sup> General Assembly:**

- a. Find that the minutes of Metropolitan New York Presbytery (September 20, 2022; pp. 69–71) constitutes a “credible report” of “an important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceedings” (*BCO* 40-5) in Presbytery’s delinquency to redress a Session who admitted to unconstitutional proceedings of: (1) permitting a woman to expound the Scriptures during a worship service on the Lord’s Day; (2) holding many worship services without preaching; and (3) serving the Lord’s Supper at many services without a preceding sermon. Furthermore, Presbytery was delinquent in failing to redress the views of a Teaching Elder who stated his approval of said proceedings.

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- b. Cite Metropolitan New York Presbytery to appear, per BCO 40-5, before the PCA's Standing Judicial Commission which the 50<sup>th</sup> GA constitutes its commission to adjudicate this matter, by representative or in writing, at the SJC's fall stated meeting, to "show what the lower court has done or failed to do in the case in question," following the Operating Manual for the SJC, particularly chapter 15; and
- c. Direct the CRPR Officers to appoint one or more representatives of the GA and Report (OMSJC 15.2) to present this case to the SJC.

**Rationale:** There are two major reasons for citing the Presbytery to appear before the SJC to redress the delinquency of the Presbytery. Pages 69-71 of Presbytery Minutes contain the following language:

*As requested by the Presbytery, the Shepherding Team followed up with [church name omitted] in response to concerns raised from outside the Presbytery about a recent female guest speaker at their church.*

*[Church name omitted] reports that they invited [a female minister of another denomination] to speak in their worship service on Sunday, October 31, 2021. Her remarks were presented as a Bible study, not as a sermon. Before the invitation to the Lord's Table, an authoritative word of exhortation was given by the Senior Pastor, setting the sacrament in the context of the Word.*

*[Church name omitted] reports that a mistake was made in posting Dr. [name omitted]'s talk on their church website. Because of website presets, when the talk was initially posted it was inadvertently identified as a sermon. This error was quickly rectified, and the recording is now identified as a Bible study.*

*TE [name omitted] stated that while he believes that what happened was within biblical bounds, he does apologize for the confusion caused and will strive to operate with more wisdom as a session and church.*

The first reason the presbytery should be cited to appear before the SJC deals with the egregiousness of the issue. The cultural zeitgeist of egalitarianism continues to exert pressure on the church, and it is vitally important for the purity and peace of the church that we honor and implement the Biblical prohibition on women teaching (1 Tim 2:12).

The second reason reflects the reality that the Presbytery fully investigated this incident, discovered a number of grossly unconstitutional proceedings, and took no action to redress the situation after the investigation.

During the investigation, the following grossly unconstitutional proceedings were reported and recorded in the minutes:

- A woman read and expounded the Scriptures in a “Bible study” (listed in the bulletin as a “message”; pp. 69, 70) during a Lord’s Day worship service, contrary to *BCO* 4-4, 8-5; *WCF* 21.5; *WLC* 156, 158.
- While the church attempted to distinguish the “Bible study” from a “sermon,” the church also acknowledged that they celebrated the Lord’s Supper after the “Bible study,” which was preceded by “an authoritative word of exhortation was given by the Senior Pastor, setting the sacrament in the context of the Word” (pp. 69–70). This is contrary to the constitutional requirement that the Lord’s Supper should follow a sermon (*BCO* 58-4).
- Furthermore, the church admitted that the church has “had many services without a ‘sermon’ by an ordained minister. We have had many different people speak during the service at various times: seminary students, visiting missionaries..., etc....Our practice, since we celebrate Communion weekly, is that one of our pastors always ‘adds’ an additional word of biblical exposition just before we come to the Lord’s Table” (p. 70). In addition to the issue named above, requiring a sermon to precede the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, this general neglect of preaching is contrary to the constitutional requirements for worship services, as reflected in *BCO* 4-4; *WCF* 21.5; *WLC* 35, 108.

After these facts were ascertained during the investigation, the Presbytery found “no further reason to pursue this matter” (p. 71). In this finding, they became delinquent in failing to redress grossly unconstitutional proceedings from a church in the Presbytery and the views of the Teaching Elder who stated his approval of said proceedings.

Ultimately, Presbytery’s failure to take remedial action on this matter should be referred to the SJC.

45. That the Minutes of the **Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley**: 57-0-0

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Feb 1, 2022; May 3, 2022; Aug 2, 2022; Nov 1, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**

**d. That the following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Feb 2, 2021; May 4, 2021 (RONR 9:34)** – A commission conducted business by email, which does not constitute a deliberative assembly.

**Response:** The Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley expresses our thanks to RPR for their careful work and for correcting us in regard to the proper practice of commissions appointed to do the work of presbytery. We regret our error and reminded commissions and committees that are tasked with commission responsibilities that they are to be sure that such work is done in a deliberative assembly per *RONR* 9:34. Again thank you.

**Rationale:** Presbytery should ratify actions taken outside the deliberative assembly.

46. That the Minutes of **Missouri** Presbytery: 57-0-0

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 18, 2022; May 21, 2022; Jun 14, 2022; Jul 19, 2022; Dec 6, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; Apr 19, 2022.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

**1. Exception: Oct 22, 2022 (BCO 23-2; 13-1)** – A minister who is honorably retired was released to the care of a church session.

**d. That the following response to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Jan 21, 2020 (BCO 21-4.f; RAO 16-3.e.5)** – Explanations not recorded in candidate's own words – two candidates describe their exceptions in precisely the same words (need clarification).

**Response [2022]:** We apologize for this error, which was simply an error in copying/pasting the wrong exceptions for the wrong man, which resulted in the duplication. We have the correct exceptions for each man, which were presented to the body and prosecuted. This was an error in the creation of the minutes. We have amended our minutes to reflect each man's correct exceptions.

**Rationale [2022]:** The corrected minutes including the candidate's stated differences should be submitted for review.

**Response [2023]:** We apologize for this error, which was simply an error in copying/pasting the wrong exceptions for the wrong man, which resulted in the duplication. We have the correct exceptions for each man, which were presented to the body and prosecuted. This was an error in the creation of the



minutes. We have amended our minutes to reflect each man's correct exceptions. The amended minutes are attached.

47. That the Minutes of **Nashville** Presbytery: 53-0-1

a. Be approved without exception: **Mar 4, 2022; Aug 9, 2022; Sep 28, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Nov 8, 2022.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

1. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – No record of review of records of church sessions.
2. **Exception: Feb 8, 2022; Apr 12, 2022; Jul 18, 2022** (*BCO* 19-16) –  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote for waiving internship requirement not recorded.
3. **Exception: May 3, 2022; Jul 18, 2022** (*BCO* 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order; no record of 10-day notice.
4. **Exception: Nov 8, 2022** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record that Congregation/Session concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Feb 8, 2021** (*BCO* 23-1) – Dissolution of pastoral relations with no reference to congregational meeting or appearance of representatives.

**Response:** Nashville Presbytery agrees with this exception and will make sure we ask churches to appear in the context of 23-1 and record that action in our minutes. The church documents showing the needed approvals for the dissolution are reviewed by our committee before recommending dissolution of pastoral relationships to presbytery. However, the body of our minutes does not record congregational votes for the two pastoral relationships that were dissolved. We have adjusted our recording to bring our minutes into compliance.

**Exception: Apr 13, 2021** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of Session meeting to dissolve pastoral relation.

**Response:** We agree with the exception. The body of our minutes does not record session action for the two assistant pastors who were called to a newly particularized congregation. We have adjusted our recording to bring our minutes into compliance.

**Exception: Apr 13, 2021** (*BCO* 13-10) – No record of transfer or dismissal of members upon dissolving a church.

**Response:** Nashville Presbytery agrees with this exception and will act in accord with *BCO* 13-10 in the future. There were follow-up meetings for the

congregation, and all the members were contacted by the provisional Session. The Session provided members with information concerning churches to which the members could transfer. There were a relatively small number of members, and this process was handled informally by the provisional Session in cooperation with the Presbytery's Church Planting Committee. We will be more careful in the future to make sure the provisions of *BCO* 13-10 are followed when a member church is dissolved.

**Exception: Jun 25, 2021** (*BCO* 13-12; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – No record of notice for a called meeting; purpose of called meeting not recorded verbatim in the minutes.

**Response:** We agree with the exception. Notice for the meeting was provided on June 14 and clearly stated the purpose for the meeting, but the call for the meeting was not recorded verbatim in the minutes. We will modify our practice to conform to the requirement.

**Exception: Aug 31, 2021; Sep 21, 2021; Dec 13, 2021** (*BCO* 13-12) – Notice for Called Meeting not in order; no record of 10-day notice.

**Response:** We agree with the exception. Notice for the meetings listed was provided on August 20, September 9, and December 3 and clearly stated the purpose of each meeting, but our minutes do not record the fact. We will modify our practice to conform to the requirement.

**e. That the following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Feb 8, 2021; Aug 10, 2021** (*BCO* 18-7) – No reasons given for removing candidates from rolls.

**Response:** We agree with the exception. In each case our committee recommended removal for valid reasons, but this fact is not recorded in our minutes. We have since modified our practice to comply with the requirement.

**Rationale:** Presbytery has not yet recorded the reasons for the removal of these candidates from its rolls (*BCO* 18-7).

48. That the Minutes of **New Jersey** Presbytery: 57-0-0

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Mar 19, 2022; May 21, 2022; Sep 17, 2022; Nov 19, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**

**d. No response to a previous assembly is required.**

49. That the Minutes of **New River** Presbytery: 57-0-0

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; General 2022; Jan 29, 2022; Mar 5, 2022; Aug 6, 2022; Nov 5, 2022.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
  1. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.
  2. **Exception: General 2022** (*RAO* 16-10.a) – No record in minutes of exceptions taken by GA.
  3. **Exception: General 2022** (*RAO* 16-10.a) – No response to the Assembly concerning disposition of an exception of substance.
  4. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 13-11; 40-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.7) – Minutes to called meeting not included.
  5. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 8-7) – No record of reports of TEs laboring out of bounds.
  6. **Exception: Jan 29, 2022** (*BCO* 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order.
  7. **Exception: Jan 29, 2022** (*BCO* 13-12; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – Purpose of called meeting not recorded verbatim in the minutes.
  8. **Exception: Aug 06, 2022** (*BCO* 19-2; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.
  9. **Exception: Aug 06, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.
  10. **Exception: Nov 05, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2) – No record of six-months membership for candidate.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Aug 7, 2021; Nov 6, 2021** (*BCO* 46-6) – Teaching Elder did not remain under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery until received by the other.

**Response:** Regarding the first part of this exception—Aug 7, 2021 [p. 2, F.3]—we apologize for not including a “pending reception” clause in our minutes in TE [name omitted]’s transfer from the New River Presbytery. We will pay more careful attention to this detail in the future.

Regarding the second part of this exception—Nov 6, 2021 [p. 2.G.2] (*BCO* 46-6)—our minutes should have been more specific to convey that, though his pastoral relationship was dissolved on December 5, 2021, TE [name omitted]’s membership still resided with NRP until he was officially accepted into Tennessee Valley Presbytery on December 13, 2021.

**Exception: Aug 7, 2021** (*BCO 23-1*) – There is no record that presbytery received report that the congregation concurred with the dissolution of the pastoral relation.

**Response:** You are right: [church name omitted]’s congregation/session did not appear (in person or in writing) to address TE [name omitted]’s tender of resignation. However, *BCO 23-1* says that “if the church fails to appear,...[the minister’s] resignation shall be accepted and the pastoral relation dissolved.” Therefore, though NRP should have cited [church name omitted] “to appear by its commissioners,” the dissolution of our relation with TE [name omitted] is still constitutionally valid.

**Exception: Aug 7, 2021** (*RAO 16-3.e.5 BCO 19-2.d*) – Incomplete record for a licensure exam.

**Response:** We apologize for not noting in our minutes that we received a copy of the sermon. Although the written sermon was provided to the C&C committee, it was not noted in the minutes.

**Exception: Nov 6, 2021** (*BCO 13-2*) – No record of TE laboring out of bounds with concurrence of Presbytery within whose bounds he labors.

**Response:** We respectfully disagree with this exception. *BCO 13-2* does specify that a minister laboring out of bounds (“or in a work not under the jurisdiction of” the presbytery) requires “the full concurrence of and under circumstances agreeable to his Presbytery.” We do not believe that this rule has been broken, however, since NRP’s approval of the ministries of TE [name omitted] and TE [name omitted] were both given at previous presbytery meetings, and relevant excerpts of those meetings are recorded in

## **APPENDIX 1.**

### **APPENDIX 1**

1. An excerpt from the minutes of the 135<sup>th</sup> stated meeting of NRP, held on March 2, 2019. This excerpt proves that TE [name omitted] was approved for ministry out of bounds.

After inviting [name omitted] and [name omitted] to return, their Calls from [church name omitted] and [church name omitted] (respectively) were presented to the body, and the candidates were asked if they believed their packages to be sufficient to their needs, which he answered in the affirmative. Therefore, it was **MSC to approve the Calls to** [name omitted] **and** [name omitted], and the calls were placed in their hands.

2. Excerpts from the minutes of the 127<sup>th</sup> stated meeting of the NRP, held on August 6, 2016, confirming that TE [name omitted] was approved for ministry out of bounds.

**127-10** Moderator TE [name omitted] called for the report of the Candidates and Credentials Committee. TE [name omitted] opened the report with prayer. He then gave a short history of TE [name omitted]’s call to [church name omitted] of Huntington, WV as an Assistant Pastor.

**127-19** TE [name omitted] stated the call is out of bounds, however the Candidates and Credentials Committee find it to be in order, per *BCO* 8-7 (See also *BCO* 20-1, 21-1).

**127-20** MSC that [church name omitted], Huntington, WV is a valid ministry, a true Church of God and a valid congregation of the church of Christ.

**127-21** MSC to approve the examination of TE [name omitted], and to transfer his membership to New River Presbytery effective immediately.

**127-22** TE [name omitted] was invited to return to the meeting room. The call from [church name omitted] of Huntington, WV was placed in TE [name omitted]’s hands by TE [name omitted]. TE [name omitted] then prayed for TE [name omitted]’s call, and the Presbyters extended the right hand of fellowship to TE [name omitted].

**e. That the following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: General** (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.

**Response:** We apologize for the delays regarding our churches’ minutes— both in reviewing and in approving them. We are in the process of reviewing the minutes for both 2021 and 2022

**Rationale:** No report on progress provided or included in minutes.

50. That the Minutes of **New York State** Presbytery: 58-0-1

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jul 18, 2022.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **May 21, 2022.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
  - 1. Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 8-4) – No record of annual report by TEs called to “needful work.”
  - 2. Exception: Feb 26, 2022** (*BCO* 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order (10-day notice, verbatim meeting call, etc., not indicated/recorded).
  - 3. Exception: Feb 26, 2022** (*BCO* 34-10) – 2/3 vote for divestiture of office requirement not recorded.
  - 4. Exception: Feb 26, 2022** (*BCO* 34-10) – Notice for grounds for proceeding against TE not in order (not indicated/recorded).

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5. **Exception: May 21, 2022** (BCO 13-10) – No record of transfer or dismissal of members upon dissolving a church associated with 60-day notice.
  6. **Exception: May 21, 2022** (BCO 8-7) – No record that the Presbytery is assured that an out-of-bounds TE will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church.
  7. **Exception: Sep 16-17, 2022** (BCO 25-11) – No record that Presbytery confirmed that a 30-day notice was given by Session for congregational meeting to withdraw from the denomination.
- d. **No response to previous assemblies is required.**

51. That the Minutes of **North Florida** Presbytery: 56-0-1

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Feb 10, 2022; May 12, 2022; Aug 11, 2022; Nov 17, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**

d. **That the following response to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: May 13, 2021** (BCO 19-2.d) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.

**Response:** We agree with this exception. While the candidate did preach a sermon before the Presbytery, there is no record that a written sermon was provided, although it was clear at the time that written sermon notes were utilized. Presbytery has taken steps to ensure that candidates submit a written sermon. We will be more careful in the future.

52. That the Minutes of **North Texas** Presbytery: 57-0-1

a. Be approved without exceptions: **May 6-7, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; Appendices; Aug 12-13, 2022.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

1. **Exception: Feb 18-19, 2022** (BCO 21-4.c; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Incomplete record of ordination exam.

2. **Exception: Aug 12-13, 2022** (BCO 21-4.f) – Presbytery judged a stated difference as “merely semantic.” This decision needs further clarity. At a minimum the difference appears to be an exception.

3. **Exception: Aug 12-13, 2022** (BCO 13-6) – Incomplete record of a transfer exam for a TE coming from a different Presbytery.

4. **Exception: Aug 12-13, 2022** (*BCO* 18-3) – No record of candidate exam recorded.
5. **Exception: Sep 17, 2022** (*BCO* 13-4; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – Purpose of called meeting not recorded verbatim in the minutes.
6. **Exception: Sep 17, 2022** (*BCO* 43-10) – Presbytery remanded a complaint to a lower court expressing its opinion rather than giving instructions for a new hearing.
7. **Exception: Nov 4-5, 2022** (*BCO* 18-3) – No record of candidate exams recorded.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: May 7-8, 2021; Aug 13-14, 2021** (*BCO* 13-11; *RAO* 16-3.e.7) – Minutes of executive session not included.

**Response:** The minutes of the executive session of May 7-8, 2021 are attached.

The minutes of the executive session of August 13-14, 2021 are attached.

**See PDF documents.**

**Exception: Aug 13-14, 2021** (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.

**Response:** We do not understand the substance of this exception as we believe this is in fact recorded in our minutes.

Regarding [name omitted], the action to approve a call to a definite work as Associate Pastor at [church name omitted] is recorded on page 91 of the minutes, and the call to a definite work as Associate Pastor is recorded on page 142 of the minutes as a supporting document.

53. That the Minutes of **Northern California** Presbytery: *55-0-1*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Aug 11, 2022.**
  - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Feb 4, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
    1. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 13-9b) – No record of Presbytery reviewing Session minutes.
    2. **Exception: Feb 4, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4, *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Incomplete record of ordination exam. Approval of theses and sermon not recorded.
    3. **Exception: Feb 4, 2022** (*BCO* 38-3) – No record of following *BCO* 38-3 for two ministers withdrawing to another denomination.

4. **Exception: Feb 4, 2022; May 6, 2022** (BCO 18-2) – No record of six-months membership for candidate.
5. **Exception: Feb 4, 2022; May 6, 2022** (BCO 23-1) – No record that Congregation/Session concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations.
6. **Exception: Oct 7, 2022** (BCO 8-7) – No record that the Presbytery is assured that an out-of-bounds TE will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church.

**d. That the following response to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: General 2020** (BCO 13-9b) – No record of Presbytery reviewing Session minutes.

**Response [2022]:** The Presbytery had a system for the inspection of minutes outside of the Stated Meeting times in place, but neglected to include record of the oversight of this system in the minutes. We will be more diligent in the future in recording such work.

**Rationale [2022]:** While the presbytery committed to be more diligent in the future, the minutes of 2021 include an incomplete record of inspection of Session minutes (BCO 13-9.b; 40-1).

**Response [2023]:** We note with regret that we failed to properly address the review of session minutes in 2021 even after committing to be more diligent in the future. In 2022, although we made progress in asking churches to exchange session minutes with another church and to review each other's records, the presbytery did not review the results of those inter-church reviews. The 2022 presbytery minutes will not reflect a presbytery review of session records. At the February 2023 presbytery meeting, we have approved a plan with a timeline each year for the interchurch review of session minutes, for the sessions to submit reports of the session minute reviews to presbytery, for the presbytery to review the reports and for the presbytery to vote on exceptions of substance. Our Recording Clerk is overseeing this process. We attach a document with the plan

**See PDF documents**

54. That the Minutes of **Northern Illinois** Presbytery: 57-0-0

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 8, 2022; Mar 1, 2022; Mar 1, 2022 ES; May 10, 2022; Jul 26, 2022; Sep 10, 2022.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General 2022.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**



**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: May 11, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with prescribed categories.

**Response:** “We are thankful for the assistance the Review of Presbytery Records committee gives us in recording our meeting minutes properly. We understand that we were not as clear as we might have been to show that both of Mr. [name omitted]’s stated differences were judged with prescribed categories. However, both stated differences were, in fact, were judged by the presbytery, as our minutes state, to be ‘more than semantic, but not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine. (*RAO* 16-3e5c)’ However, we do understand that we can be clearer in the form of our record in these matters and have clarified the form within our minutes of May 11, 2021. We will be more careful in such situation in future minutes of our meetings.”

[Approved September 10, 2022, at Stated Meeting of Presbytery of Northern Illinois]

**Exception: Dec 15, 2021** (*BCO* 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order; 10-day notice not indicated or recorded.

**Response:** “We thank the Review of Presbytery Records Committee for its diligence in helping us keep our presbytery records in line with the Book of Church Order. We have discovered the exception (10-day notice for called meeting not given). We had mistakenly thought that we were indicating that a 10-day notice had been given by saying that ‘the called meeting was found to be in order (*BCO* 13-12)’ since paragraph 13-12 states the 10-day notice requirement. The meeting was called 14 days ahead on December 1<sup>st</sup>. We have corrected the records to reflect the date the meeting was called. We will be more careful in the future to make sure the date of calling a called meeting is properly recorded.”

[Approved September 10, 2022, at Stated Meeting of Presbytery of Northern Illinois]

55. That the Minutes of **Northern New England** Presbytery: *59-0-0*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Feb 5, 2022; May 21, 2022; Aug 6, 2022; Oct 15, 2022.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
- d. **No response to previous assemblies required.**

56. That the Minutes of **Northwest Georgia** Presbytery: 57-0-2
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 15, 2022; Jun 9, 2022.**
  - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
  - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
    1. **Exception: April 5, 2022** (*BCO* 43-8) – Timely and orderly complaints (3) denied without a hearing.
    2. **Exception: Aug 20, 2022** (*BCO* 13-11) – Complaint sent to Presbytery not recorded in Presbytery’s minutes.
  - d. **That the following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**  
**Exception: Apr 13, 2021** (*BCO* 43-8) – If a complaint is properly filed, it shall be heard by the Presbytery. A complaint may not be denied without a hearing except on narrow administrative grounds.  
**Response:** At the April 13, 2021 meeting of Presbytery, there was an indication that the complainant intended to withdraw his complaint and that he would not pursue it any further nor elevate it to a higher court. The complainant communicated such in an email to Presbytery’s Stated Clerk on April 16, 2021. The Stated Clerk regrets the failure to record this in the minutes.  
**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its actions (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). Presbytery has not rescinded the unconstitutional denial of the complaint.
  - e. **That the 50<sup>th</sup> General Assembly:**
    - a. Find that the February 14, 2021 letter from RE [name omitted] et al. is a “credible report” of “an important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceedings” (*BCO* 40-5): specifically, there is evidence that (1) the calls to the three candidates were constitutionally deficient, so implementing them was unconstitutional, and (2) the Presbytery acted improperly in approving the calls and installing the three candidates;
    - b. Cite the Northwest Georgia Presbytery to appear, per *BCO* 40-5, before the PCA’s Standing Judicial Commission which the 50<sup>th</sup> GA constitutes its commission to adjudicate this matter, by representative or in writing, at the SJC’s fall stated meeting, to “show what the lower court has done or failed to do in the case in question,” following the Operating Manual for the SJC, particularly chapter 15; and
    - c. Direct the CRPR Officers to appoint one or more representatives of the GA and Report (*OMSJC* 15.2) to present this case to the SJC.

**Rationale:** This matter was referred to CRPR on the decision of the SJC, Case No. 2021-02, and recommitted to CRPR by the 49th GA. There are a number of constitutional reasons that necessitate citing Northwest Georgia Presbytery to appear before the SJC to respond to these credible reports. During the previous year's General Assembly, there was confusion as to whether this issue had already been addressed by the SJC. In SJC Case No. 2021-12 (*Complaint of Christian Michelson and Stuart Michelson v. Northwest Georgia Presbytery*, M49GA, 822–825), the SJC ruled that a *complaint* was not in order concerning the proceedings of a congregational meeting, on the grounds that a congregational meeting did not constitute the action of any court (BCO 43-1).

Then, the SJC suggested at least three other ways in which this concern could be addressed by the higher courts: (1) “one with standing could complain against the action of the Congregation at the point a court of the Church sought to implement the alleged unconstitutional decision,” such as “the action of the Presbytery in approving the call”; (2) the “Presbytery could take note of a Constitutional deficiency in a congregational meeting in their review of the records of the Session”; or (3) “any Constitutional irregularity at a congregational meeting, credibly brought to the attention of Presbytery, may be investigated, and upon a finding of error, may be redressed by the Presbytery,” per BCO 13-9.f. (M49GA, 823).

Two points should be observed about these suggested options. First, at least some (and possibly all) of the authors of the letter did not have standing in Presbytery to file an action against Presbytery's actions to approve the call or installing the associate pastors (option #1). Second, the letter contends that the Presbytery not only failed to take note of the Constitutional deficiency in this congregational meeting (option #2), but that the Presbytery also failed to redress the issue (option #3).

Therefore, issuing a BCO 40-5 citation is a necessary action for redressing the concerns of these ordinary, non-officer members. Indeed, in a similar case handled this past year (*Derek Wilson et al. v. Pacific Northwest Presbytery*, SJC Case No. 2022-20, 50GA Commissioner Handbook, 2112–13), the SJC specifically noted that another recourse is that “The members could have informed Presbytery, under BCO 13-9(f) [*sic*] and 40-5, of what, in their view, was an unconstitutional limitation on voting in the Congregational Meeting” (50GA Commissioner Handbook, 2112). In the case of the letter from RE [name omitted] et al., the members have reported to the General Assembly multiple ways in which, in their view, the Presbytery has engaged in unconstitutional proceedings.

Next, we should note that there are possible issues that could be redressed. While two of the three associate pastors have subsequently taken other calls, one associate pastor is still installed and serving as a voting member of the Session of the church.

Finally, *BCO* 40-5 says:

When any court having appellate jurisdiction shall receive a credible report with respect to the court next below of any important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceedings of such court, the first step shall be to cite the court alleged to have offended to appear before the court having appellate jurisdiction, or its commission, by representative or in writing, at a specified time and place, and to show what the lower court has done or failed to do in the case in question.

Presbytery has acknowledged their error, but General Assembly did “receive a credible report...of [an] important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceedings” of a Presbytery. Our constitution requires that “the first step *shall* be to cite the court alleged to have offended.” The “shall” language requires that this Presbytery must be cited to appear before the Standing Judicial Commission.

While some time has passed so that not everything can be redressed, this is an important issue to adjudicate for the peace, purity, and unity of the church.

**f. That the 50th General Assembly:**

1. Find that the June 1, 2022 letter from [name omitted] is not a “credible report” of an “important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceedings” (*BCO* 40-5).

**Rationale:** To the extent that unconstitutional actions are alleged, they are being redressed through the constitutional process of review and control (*BCO* 40-3), particularly through CRPR’s recommendation that NWGA Presbytery be cited with an exception of substance for improperly handling three complaints (see 56.c.1 above).

2. Find that the June 10, 2022, letter from RE [name omitted] is not a “credible report” of an “important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceedings” (*BCO* 40-5).

**Rationale:** No unconstitutional actions are alleged in the report.

3. Find that the April 24, 2023, letter from [name omitted] is not a “credible report” of an “important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceedings” (*BCO* 40-5).

**Rationale:** To the extent that unconstitutional actions are alleged, they are being redressed through the constitutional process of review and control

(BCO 40-3), particularly through CRPR’s recommendation that one of NWGA Presbytery’s responses to an exception of substance be found unsatisfactory (see 56.d above).

57. That the Minutes of **Ohio** Presbytery: 54-0-0

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; Feb 5, 2022.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
  1. **Exception: Feb 5, 2022** (BCO 21-1; RAO 16-3.e.6) – No record of Presbytery approving the call to a TE [name omitted] whose status was changed.
  2. **Exception: May 7, 2022** (BCO 19-2.a, d) – Incomplete record of a licentiate examination.
  3. **Exception: Sep 30 - Oct 1, 2022** (BCO 21-4.c.4) – Incomplete record of ordination examination.
- d. **No response to previous assemblies required.**

58. That the Minutes of **Ohio Valley** Presbytery: 55-0-0

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 29, 2022; May 17, 2022; Jul 30, 2022; Oct 18, 2022; Dec 13, 2022.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
  1. **Exception: Feb 15, 2022** (BCO 19-2.d) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.
- d. **No response to previous assemblies required.**

59. That the Minutes of **Pacific** Presbytery: 55-0-0

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **May 17, 2022; Oct 4, 2022.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; Feb 5, 2022.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
- d. **That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: May 4, 2021** (BCO 19-2.d) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.

**Response:** “The Stated Clerk, TE [name omitted], erred in not recording that Mr. [name omitted], who was licensed at the May 4, 2021, Stated Meeting of Pacific Presbytery, had submitted his written sermon to the presbytery, as confirmed by the Credentials Committee, per the requirements of BCO 19-2.d. The Clerk apologizes for this error and will exercise greater precision in

the future. The minutes in question have been amended to reflect the submission of Mr. [name omitted]'s written sermon.”

**Exception: Oct 5, 2021** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

**Response:** “The Commission formed at the October 10, 2020, Stated Meeting of Pacific Presbytery, consisting of TE [name omitted], TE [name omitted], RE [name omitted], and RE [name omitted], in the event necessary ‘to approve a potential call for a church planter to work in the San Fernando Valley,’ proved unnecessary as TE [name omitted]'s call was prosecuted at a subsequent stated meeting (October 5, 2021). Accordingly, the established commission never took any action.

“The October 5, 2021, Stated Meeting minutes record on page 10, paragraph 3, that “while they had not reported since their inception, their work is now complete.” This was an error in the recording what actually happened. The minutes should have reflected that the commission never acted, and that they were dismissed having been unnecessary. The minutes in question have been amended to reflect that this commission never acted before dismissal because action was not needed subsequent to its formation. The Clerk apologizes for this error.”

60. That the Minutes of **Pacific Northwest** Presbytery: 56-0-1

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Feb 3-4, 2022; Jun 3, 2022; Oct 13-14, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

1. **Exception: May 19-20, 2022** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record that Congregation/Session concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Feb 5, 2021** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

**Response:** It's unclear to which commission (singular) the citation refers. Below is an excerpt from PNW's 2021 Records Package, p. 29.

- The Commission on Complaint against [church name omitted]'s work is completed; report included in meeting package.
- The Commission on Complaint against [church name omitted]'s work is completed; report included in meeting package.

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- Commission established at the November called meeting to write to the State of Washington has completed its work and is dismissed with thanks.
- Ordination Commissions have completed their work for: [name omitted], [name omitted].
- Installation commissions have completed their work for: [name omitted], [name omitted], [name omitted]

We have attached those Commission reports/minutes to our October 2022 Minutes as well as to this Response. Several of the Ordination/Installation Commission reports were omitted because the Ordination/Installation took place in 2020. In future, we will include all Commission reports referenced in Presbytery minutes.

**Exception: Feb 5, 2021** (*BCO* 18-3) – Incomplete record of candidate's examination.

**Response:** Presumably the citation of *BCO* 18-3 (candidacy exam) refers to this excerpt from PNW's 2021 Records Package (p. 31): "[name omitted] at [church name omitted]. Mr. [name omitted] gave a brief description of his call to the ministry. *Recommendation:* That Presbytery accept Mr. [name omitted] as a candidate for ministry. *Adopted.* RE [name omitted], moderator, administered and Mr. [name omitted] affirmed the questions from *BCO* 18-3. Prayer for the candidate from TE [name omitted]."

Mr. [name omitted] was indeed examined, though the Minutes might not be sufficiently clear. The February 2021 Minutes have been amended to clarify Mr. [name omitted] was "examined by the Presbytery on experiential religion and on his motives for seeking the ministry."

**Exception: May 20-21, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

**Response:** It's unclear to which exam this citation refers. At this meeting, there were two ordination exams, two licensure exams, and a transfer exam. Below are the entries for each regarding judgment on confessional differences. (Records Package, p. 36 ff.)

- a. [Transfer exam of PCA minister, p. 43.] That Presbytery judge the differences of [the transferring PCA minister] to be more than semantic but not out of accord with any fundamental or our system of doctrine (because the differences are neither hostile to the system nor strikes at the vitals of religion.)
- b. [Ordination exam, p. 49.] That Presbytery judge the differences of [a candidate] to be more than semantic but not out of accord with any fundamental or our system of doctrine (because the

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differences are neither hostile to the system nor strikes at the vitals of religion.) *Adopted*

- c. [Ordination exam of previously licensed, p. 49.] [The licentiate] has expressed no additional differences with the Westminster Standards since the time of his licensure in October 2020.
- d. [Licensure exam, p. 51.] That Presbytery judge the differences of [the Candidate] to be more than semantic but not out of accord with any fundamental or our system of doctrine (because the differences are neither hostile to the system nor strikes at the vitals of religion.)
- e. [Licensure exam of PCA minister for stated supply, p. 47.] Presbytery approves his exception to the word "recreations" found in *WCF* 21.8 as not striking at the vitals. *Adopted*

We can only assume the exception of substance citation was regarding the language used in the motion adopted in the last exam - (e) Licensure for stated supply. While we think the *RAO* judgment was sufficiently clear, Presbytery has amended its May 2021 Minutes to record the following: "Presbytery approved [the transferring PCA minister's] stated difference to be more than semantic but not out of accord with any fundamental or our system of doctrine. (*RAO* 16-3.e.5.c.)"

**Exception: May 20-21, 2021; Oct 14-15, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination not recorded.

**Response:** The citation does not indicate what requirements were omitted or not recorded. Presbytery believes all were completed and recorded.

At the May 2021 meeting, Mr. [name omitted] and Mr. [name omitted] were examined for ordination. Minutes indicate all parts of *BCO* 21-4 were accomplished, and listed them (completed internship, sermon, theological and exegetical papers, stated confessional differences, judgment on those differences, examination in original languages, doctrine, Bible, church government, sacraments, church history, history of the PCA, and approval of call.). Terms of Call were approved earlier in the meeting during the report of the Ministers & Churches Committee. (PNW 2021 Records, pp. 48-50) The only ordination exam at the October 2021 meeting was for Mr. [name omitted]. Like the May exams for [name omitted] and [name omitted], all requirements were completed and listed. (PNW 2021 Records, pp. 67-69)

**e. That the following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Feb 5, 2021** (*BCO* 20, 21) – No record that TE, whose call changed from Assistant to Associate, was installed as Associate Pastor.



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**Response:** Presumably the citation refers to the excerpt below from PNW's 2021 Records Package (p. 30): "Recommendation: To approve TE [name omitted] change from Assistant to Associate Pastor at [church name omitted]. Adopted."

TE [name omitted] was installed as Associate Pastor at [church name omitted] on Sunday morning, April 18, 2021. The Commission included TEs [name omitted] and [name omitted], along with REs [name omitted] and [name omitted]. We have attached those Commission minutes to our October 2022 Minutes as well as to this Response.

**Rationale:** Response says that the Commission minutes were attached to their October 2022 Minutes and also attached to this report. Minutes were not included for review. (RAO 16-10.b.1)

**Exception: May 20-21, 2021 (BCO 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer exam.**

**Response:** Respectfully, Presbytery disagrees with the citation, and we regard the entry in our May 2021 Minutes (below) to be an adequate record of the transfer exam, which was the only such exam at the May 2021 meeting. However, in the future PCA transfer exams, we will record verbatim: "The transferring PCA minister was examined on Christian experience, and also touching his views in theology, the Sacraments, and church government." Hopefully, that addresses the concern in the GA citation.

Here is the excerpt from p. 43 of PNW's 2021 Records:

Transfer Exam: [name omitted]. Bio ...

Mr. [name omitted] holds a BA from Covenant College and an MDiv from RTS Orlando. He is a member of New Jersey Presbytery and has served most recently as RUF minister at Rowan University in Glassboro, NJ.

*Motion:* to examine Rev. [name omitted] on his experience and views, per BCO 13-6. *Adopted*

*Motion:* to arrest the exam. *Adopted*

Rev. [name omitted] expressed the following difference from the Westminster Standards: ...

*Recommendation:* That Presbytery judge Mr. [name omitted]'s difference to be more than semantic but not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine (because the difference is neither hostile to the system nor strikes at the vitals of religion). *Adopted*

In accordance with Standing Rule 2.51, the Presbytery entered closed session for the completion of Rev. [name omitted]'s transfer exam.

*Recommendation:* To approve the call of Rev. [name omitted] [to] [church name omitted].

*Adopted,* on the condition that the terms of call be changed to 4 weeks of vacation.

**Rationale:** All specific requirements of transfer exam have not been listed (RAO 16-3.e.5).

61. That the Minutes of **Palmetto** Presbytery: 55-0-0

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Feb 10, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; General 2022; May 12, 2022; Aug 11, 2022; Nov 11, 2022.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

1. **Exception: General 2022 (BCO 8-7)** – No record of annual report(s) of TE(s) laboring out of bounds.

2. **Exception: May 12, 2022; Aug 11, 2022 (BCO 23-1)** – No record that Congregation/Session concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations.

3. **Exception: Aug 11, 2022 (BCO 21-7)** – Incomplete record of ordination exam: no record of sermon preached to presbytery.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Feb 21, 2021; May 13, 2021 (BCO 13-6)** – No record of examination of TE transferring into Presbytery.

**Response:** T. E. [name omitted] was received on the basis of his prior licensure exam by Palmetto Presbytery (November 8, 2018) which included theology, the sacraments, and church government, as reflected in the Palmetto Presbytery minutes of February 11 (not February 21), 2021. This was the motion passed under the Candidates and Credentials Committee report: “21-10. That TE Dr. [name omitted] be received by transfer of ordination into Palmetto Presbytery, pending his release from Savannah River Presbytery, based on the approval of his prior examination in Christian Experience and views touching on Theology, Sacraments, and Church Government (See Palmetto Presbytery Minutes, Nov. 8, 2018, Motions 12-54 to 12-61), and that he sign the ministerial obligation form. (Committee Vote: Unanimous, 7-0-0) MSC. (The vote of the Presbytery to transfer his ordination was unanimous.)

T. E. [name omitted] was examined in the required areas for acceptance of a previously ordained teaching elder from another Presbytery, as reflected in the Palmetto Presbytery minutes of May 13, 2021. There was also this

motion as part of the Candidates and Credentials Report, “That TE [name omitted] be received by transfer of ordination into Palmetto Presbytery, pending his release from Blue Ridge Presbytery, and that he sign the ministerial obligation form.”

**Exception:** Aug 12, 2021 (BCO 23-1) – No record of a church being cited to appear by its commissioners to dissolve pastoral relation.

**Response:** In the case of T.E. [name omitted], the Church and Ministerial Health committee, having received the minutes of the congregation of [church name omitted] in which it was moved, seconded, and passed that T. E. [name omitted] be released from his call as assistant pastor, dissolved the pastoral relationship as allowed by the Presbytery bylaws in undisputed resignations. However, Presbytery erred in not citing the session to have a commissioner to vouch for the release by the congregation. In the future we will summon the session to send a commissioner to vouch for the release of the teaching elder by the congregation.

**e. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Feb 21, 2021** (BCO 15-3; 31-10; 34; 36) – Censure inflicted by a judicial commission without process being instituted or a judgment approved by the Presbytery.

**Response:** In the judicial case concerning T. E. [name omitted] he consented to the recommendation made by the Judicial Committee for definite suspension. He has pleaded neither guilty nor not guilty to the charges made; the Presbytery is waiting for the decision of the civil court before it deals decisively with this case. However, Presbytery should have made clearer in its minutes of the executive session that “MSC” means that the motion was made, seconded, and carried by Presbytery.

**Rationale:** Presbytery’s response does not address the issue. A Presbytery may suspend a minister from office following the conclusion of judicial process; or, under 31-10, he may be suspended from his official functions while under process. Presbytery has not indicated that the minister is under process.

**Exception: May 13, 2021** (BCO 19-1) – No record of licensure exam.

**Response:** Mr. [name omitted] was examined for licensure. Because he had been previously examined in Christian Experience and Call to the Ministry as part of his examination for candidate status, he was not reexamined in these two areas. His exam included Bible knowledge, theology, and church government.

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The minutes of May 13, 2021 of the Licensure exam of [name omitted] do show examination in the three areas of English Bible, Theology, and Church Government. See below:

- 22-22. That [name omitted]'s examination in English Bible be sustained. MSC.
- 22-25. That [name omitted]'s examination in Theology be sustained. MSC.
- 22-26. That [name omitted]'s examination in Church Government be sustained. MSC.
- 22-27. That [name omitted]'s written sermon be approved. MSC.
- 22-28. That [name omitted]'s preached sermon be approved. MSC.
- 22-29. That [name omitted]'s examination for licensure in all its parts and be sustained and he be granted licensure by Palmetto Presbytery and added to the roll of licentiates of the presbytery. MSC.

**Rationale:** The examination on Christian experience and inward call in *BCO* 19-2 is not the same as in *BCO* 18-3.

**Exception: May 13, 2021** (*BCO* 15-2) – A commission to ordain and install must have a minimum of two TEs and two REs for a quorum.

**Response:** (In approving the installation commission for [name omitted]) Presbytery erred in approving the commission with only 1 ruling elder. We will make sure that each commission in the future has at least 2 ruling elders and 2 teaching elders

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery took any action to ratify the actions of an improperly constituted commission.

**Exception: May 13, 2021; Aug 12, 2021; Nov 11, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16- 3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

**Response:** It has not been the practice of reexamining those who have been licensed by this Presbytery in the specific areas already covered. When the licensure and ordination exams for each of these three men: [name omitted], [name omitted], and [name omitted], are compared, our minutes demonstrate that each was examined and approved in Christian experience, Greek and Hebrew (by seminary transcript), Bible content, theology, sacraments, Church history and the history of the PCA, Church Government and Discipline, the writing of a theological thesis, the writing of an exegesis paper, a preached sermon, and their accord with the Westminster standards. We did not mention their undergraduate degrees which were presupposed by their seminary or graduate degrees. We mentioned [name omitted]'s successful completion of Greek at Hebrew in seminary but should have made

it clear that he is a graduate of RTS. It was noted that each had successfully completed the internship requirements.

**Rationale:** Presbytery has not demonstrated that each candidate for ordination was examined in experiential religion, with an emphasis on personal character and family management, as required by *BCO 21-4(c)(1)(a)*.

**Exception: May 13, 2021** (*BCO 21-4*) – No record (or unclear record) of ordination exam.

**Response:** The Presbytery minutes state clearly that Mr. [name omitted] was examined in the three areas which are required for ordination after one has been licensed.

22-30. That Mr. [name omitted]’s examination in Sacraments be sustained. MSC.

22-31. That Mr. [name omitted]’s examination in Rules of Discipline be sustained. MSC.

22-32. That Mr. [name omitted]’s examination in Church History and the History of the PCA be sustained. MSC.

22-36. That Mr. [name omitted]’s examination for ordination in all its parts and as a whole be sustained and he be instructed to sign the ministerial obligation forms and proceed to ordination. MSC.

The RPR has not cited our Presbytery previously for assuming that the approval of an examination implies that he was examined in the particular area.

**Rationale:** Licensure requires a “statement of his Christian experience and inward call to preach the Gospel” (*BCO 19-2.a*). Ordination, requires “A careful examination as to...his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management (Based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1–7, and Titus 1:6–9)” (*BCO 21-4.c.(1).(a)*). Thus, questions for ordination are different from questions for licensure, requiring a higher level of Presbytery’s scrutiny. Furthermore, “No Presbytery shall omit any of these parts of trial for ordination except in extraordinary cases, and then only with three-fourths (3/4) approval of Presbytery” (*BCO 21-4.c*).

62. That the Minutes of **Pee Dee** Presbytery:

54-0-1

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 27, 2022; Apr 28, 2022; Jul 28, 2022; Oct 27, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; General 2022.**

- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
- d. **No response to previous assemblies required.**

63. That the Minutes of **Philadelphia** Presbytery: 55-0-0

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Nov 1, 2022.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; Sep 17, 2022.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
  - 1. **Exception: General 2022 (BCO 8-7)** – No record of reports of TEs laboring out of bounds.
  - 2. **Exception: Standing Rules (BCO 10-3)** – *BCO* only allows for moderator of Presbytery to be elected for a period of up to one year.
  - 3. **Exception: Jan 15, 2022 (BCO 13-9.b; 40-1)** – Presbytery did not fulfill its constitutional duty to review session records when it declined to review 2019 and 2020 minutes.
  - 4. **Exception: Mar 19, 2022 (BCO 19-2; RAO 16-3.e.5)** – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.
  - 5. **Exception: May 21, 2022; Sep 17, 2022 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5)** – Incomplete record of ordination exam.
  - 6. **Exception: Sep 17, 2022 (BCO 20-1)** – No record of the reasons why Presbytery considers an out-of-bounds work to be a valid Christian ministry.

d. **That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Jan 16, 2021 (BCO 13-6)** – No record that minister transferring into the presbytery was examined on his views in theology, the sacraments, and church government.

**Response:** The Philadelphia as a whole examined the man in question in areas of theology, sacraments and church government. This was simply an omission of recording the action of examination, not of omitting the actions themselves. We apologize for omitting this statement from the minutes.

**Exception: Sep 18, 2021 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5)** – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

**Response:** The minutes state, “The Philadelphia Presbytery considered his exceptions to the Standards.” RPR is correct in that the minutes should have rightly stated, “Presbytery deemed the Candidate’s differences with the Westminster Standards as exceptions of substance that nonetheless do not strike at the vitals of religion, nor are out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine.”

**Exception: Sep 21, 2019** (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3e.5) – Candidate [name omitted]’s exceptions noted, but not recorded in his own words.

**Response [2022]:** We apologize for the oversight. Mr. [name omitted] has since transferred to Eastern Pennsylvania Presbytery (and thus his exceptions should be in their minutes when he was received). He was contacted to provide his exceptions in his own words as a result of this exception which we now have on file. We will put the candidate’s exceptions in his own words, as submitted to the Credentialing Team, in the future.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to submit the candidate’s stated differences in his own words for review.

**Response [2023]:** The Clerk was able to contact and secure from Mr. [name omitted] the following written response:

[name omitted]

Exceptions to Westminster Standards

1/26/21

WCF 4:1, WSC 9, WLC 15

*I do not insist on a six 24-hour day view but lean towards the analogical-day view.*

*The analogical-day view holds that the days of creation in Genesis 1 are analogical to that of the workdays and sabbath rest as given in Exodus 20:8-11. In this passage it states that man is to work six days and rest on the seventh, which follows the pattern of God’s creative work and rest in Genesis 1. God’s work-days are analogous to that of man’s, but this does not necessarily mean they are the same length of time.*

*Genesis 2:1-3 states that God rested on the seventh day and made it holy.*

*This implies that God rested from the creative works he was previously engaged in during the first six days. This does not mean God has become inactive, as Scripture shows that God continues to uphold creation by his providence (Daniel 4:35), but he did cease from his creation works. This rest from creating goes on forever, which shows that this seventh day of rest is not identical to a 24-hour day, but it will go on. This shows that this seventh day is an extended period of time, and it would logically follow that it is possible that the other six days are an extended period of time as well.*

*WCF 21:8, WSC 60, WSC 61, WLC 117, WLC 119*

*I believe recreation to be acceptable on the Sabbath.*

*Exodus 20:8-11 makes it clear that man is to labor for six days and rest on the seventh. It states that no work is to be done on that day. From my understanding of the fourth commandment as given in this passage there is nothing clearly stated that would prohibit recreation. It shows that the*

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*Sabbath is to be sanctified, holy, and set apart. It should be different from the other days in many ways, and one of the ways it is different is that the individual is freed to rest from work and engage in other activities, all of which should have an aim of rest and reflection upon the goodness and love of God. I believe recreation can be used to this end.*

*Isaiah 58:13-14 makes it clear that the Sabbath is to be delighted in and it is a day to be used in taking pleasure in the Lord and not seeking our own pleasures. This text should inform the way in which we do recreation on the Sabbath, and any recreational activities should lead to the end that we are delighting in the Sabbath and taking pleasure in the Lord. There are many activities that one can engage in that will help one to take pleasure and delight in the Sabbath and in the Lord. There are also many recreational activities that will take one far from this place and they should be avoided according to each person's conscience.*

**e. That the following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Mar 20, 2021** (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Licensure candidate stated that he disagrees with the “strictness” of the Westminster Standards’ view of the Sabbath but is not clear on what his stated difference is.

**WCF 21.8, WLC 117, 119 WSC 60, 61**

*“I take exception to WCF 21.8 in that I don’t think that Scripture requires as strict of an observance of the Sabbath as the confessions seem to portray. Taking Matthew 12 as exegetical support, Jesus healed, and told the healed to pick up and go home. Also, to carry the spirit of Mark 2:27, Sabbath should be focused on spiritual rest and corporate worship, not mere outward action. But of course the two affect each other. I take exception to the strictness of the confessions.”*

**Response:** The Philadelphia Presbytery, in considering the entirety of the candidate’s fully enumerated exception provided above, deemed his differences with the Westminster Standards as exceptions of substance that nonetheless do not strike at the vitals of religion, nor are out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (RAO 16-10.b.1). Presbytery has not clarified what the candidate means by “I take exception to the strictness of the confessions.” (WCF 21.8, WLC 117, 119 WSC 60, 61.)

64. That the Minutes of **Philadelphia Metro West** Presbytery: 52-0-0

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Feb 26, 2022; Mar 22, 2022; May 7, 2022; Jun 28, 2022; Oct 4, 2022; Sep 17, 2022; Oct 19, 2022.**



- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General 2022.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
  - 1. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions.
- d. **No response to previous assemblies required.**

65. That the Minutes of **Piedmont Triad** Presbytery: *53-0-1*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 22, 2022; Jun 9, 2022; Aug 13, 2022.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
  - 1. **Exception: May 14, 2022** (*BCO* 13-10.3) – No indication 60-days notice was given before dissolution of [church name omitted]; minutes also do not indicate a commission was formed to care for the members who were received into the care of the presbytery as required by *BCO* 13-10.
  - 2. **Exception: Nov 12, 2022** (*BCO* 13-10) – No indication 60-days notice was given before dissolution of mission church.
- d. **That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Oct 24, 2020** (*BCO* 13-6) – All specific requirements of transfer exam not recorded.

**Response:** Respectfully, there was no transfer exam at our Stated Meeting on October 24, 2020. The exception of substance in question is referring to the transfer exam at the July 25, 2020, meeting, for which we already answered the General Assembly (see 49<sup>th</sup> GA minutes, page 1299, line 22).

**Exception: Oct 23, 2021** (*BCO* 34-10, 38-2) – No record of why a minister was divested.

**Response:** Please forgive our oversight. The minister in question was divested without censure after indicating he would no longer be pursuing a new call to ministry after three years without call

**Exception: Oct 23, 2021** (*BCO* 46-8) – No record that divested minister was assigned to membership in a particular church.

**Response:** Please forgive our oversight. The membership of the minister in question was assigned to [church name omitted], Winston-Salem.

66. That the Minutes of **Pittsburgh** Presbytery: *54-0-1*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 29, 2022, Apr 2, 2022; Jul 23, 2022; Oct 15, 2022**

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- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **May 31, 2022.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
  - 1. **Exception: May 31, 2022 (BCO 21-4.f)** – Presbytery judged a stated difference to be “merely semantic,” and that decision needs clarification in light of the candidate’s own words as recorded in the minutes.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Oct. 16, 2021 (BCO 13-9.b; 40-1)** – Incomplete record of review of records of church Session.

**Response:** At its Stated Meeting of October 15, 2022, Pittsburgh Presbytery adopted the following response:

Pittsburgh Presbytery assumes that this exception refers to the 2020 records of church Sessions since it is cited for the 2021 Presbytery minutes and churches do not submit their 2021 minutes to Presbytery for review until 2022. At the October 16, 2021 Stated Presbytery Meeting, the Presbytery’s Administrative Committee reported that there were six churches who had not submitted 2020 minutes for review. The committee provides a written report to Presbytery for each stated meeting which is included in the Presbytery’s minutes. These reports make note of churches who have failed to submit minutes to Presbytery for review. Any 2020 records that were not reviewed was the result of individual churches’ failure to submit their 2020 minutes and not due to negligence of the Presbytery or its Administrative Committee. The purpose of highlighting negligent sessions is to facilitate the review of all session minutes. All 2020 records that were submitted were reviewed, and by the January 29, 2022 Stated Presbytery Meeting there were only two churches who still had not submitted their 2020 records. It is presbytery’s intention to review all minutes every year, and our Administrative Committee works diligently to that end.

**Exception: Jul 25, 2020 (BCO 21-4 c.1.a)** – Incomplete record of exam – no record of ordination candidate being examined in experiential religion.

**Response:** On October 16, 2021, Pittsburgh Presbytery adopted the following response:

*“TE [name omitted] was most certainly examined in experiential religion as part of his ordination exam, and the stated clerk is mystified by his oversight in not reporting this fact, other than perhaps by distraction from his exuberance at finally having, after 34 years of ministry, an associate pastor, and one of such godly character, to share in his ministry. He promises to do better in the future recording of ordination exams.*”

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67. That the Minutes of **Platte Valley** Presbytery: 55-0-1
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Aug 13, 2022; Oct 29, 2022; Oct 29, 2022 ES.**
  - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Feb 5, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
    1. **Exception: General 2022** (BCO 13-9.b; 40-1) – Incomplete Record of review of records of church Sessions.
    2. **Exception: Feb 5, 2022** (BCO 19-9) – Specific requirements of internship exam not recorded.
  - d. **No response to previous assemblies is required.**
68. That the Minutes of **Potomac** Presbytery: 56-0-1
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Mar 19, 2022; Nov 19, 2022.**
  - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
  - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
    1. **Exception: Jan 25, 2022; Sep 20, 2022** (BCO 21-6) – No installation commission appointed for associate pastor.
    2. **Exception: Jun 7, 2022** (BCO 13-6) – Minister from another denomination (EPC) was examined as if he were a transfer from within the PCA rather than as one who was coming from outside the denomination.
    3. **Exception: Jun 7, 2022** (BCO 21-4) – No record of transfer or dismissal of members upon dissolving a church.
  - d. **No response to previous assemblies is required.**
69. That the Minutes of **Providence** Presbytery: 55-0-1
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
  - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Feb 1, 2022; Aug 2, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
    1. **Exception: Feb 1, 2022** (BCO 8-7) – No record that the Presbytery is assured that an out-of-bounds TE will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church. No record that out-of-bounds TE is engaged in preaching and teaching the Word.
    2. **Exception: Feb 1, 2022** (BCO 19-1, 13-6; RAO 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of licensure views exam not recorded for TE from another Presbytery being licensed.

3. **Exception: May 3, 2022; Nov 1, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.
4. **Exception: May 3, 2022** (*BCO* 34-7; 30-3) – No record of trial or case without process prior to suspending member from sacraments.
5. **Exception: Nov 1, 2022** (*BCO* 19-2; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.
6. **Exception: Nov 1, 2022** (*BCO* 15-3) – No record of full statement of the case and the judgment rendered by Judicial Commission.
7. **Exception: Nov 1, 2022** (*BCO* 46-8) – No record of Presbytery assigning deposed minister to membership of some particular church.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory;**

**Exception: Feb 2, 2021; Aug 3, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

**Response:** Our Candidates & Credentials Committee reviewed the sermon and knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew for each of these candidates, presenting their recommendations to the Presbytery for a vote on these specific requirements. Each candidate received a greater than 3/4 vote on the sermon portion, whether during Licensure (where applicable) or Ordination. This response serves to update our records to reflect what was done during these candidates exams and we are endeavoring to keep diligent and faithful records in the future to specify all *BCO* requirements have been met.

**Exception: Aug 3, 2021 [p. 25]** (*BCO* 13-6) – All specific requirements of transfer exam not recorded.

**Response:** TE [name omitted] was examined in each of these areas on the floor of Presbytery, but the Minutes unfortunately reflected a short-hand description of what took place. This response serves to update our records to reflect what was done during TE [name omitted]'s transfer exam and we are endeavoring to keep diligent and faithful records in the future to specify all *BCO* requirements have been met.

70. That the Minutes of **Rio Grande** Presbytery: 56-0-0
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
  - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; Apr 25-26, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

1. **Exception: Jan 31, 2022; Apr 25-26, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2) – No record of six-months membership for candidate.
2. **Exception: Sep 26-27, 2022** (*RAO* 16-10.a) – No response to the Assembly concerning disposition of exceptions of substance approved in Presbytery’s minutes.
3. **Exception: Sep 26-27, 2022** (*BCO* 13-5, 23-2) – Presbytery adopted a policy requiring honorably retired ministers to transfer their membership upon relocation to another Presbytery.

**d. That responses shall be submitted to the following GA as no approved responses were received in 2023:**

**Exception: Jan 27-28, 2020** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not properly recorded.

**Exception: Sep 21, 2020** (*Standing Rules*) – No provision in the standing rules for conducting a meeting in this manner. The meeting may be invalid.

**Exception: Apr 26-27, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Exception not properly recorded.

**Exception: May 21, 2021** (*BCO* 13-12; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – Notice and purpose and those calling the called meeting not recorded.

**Exception: May 21, 2021** (*BCO* 18-19) – No record of candidate coming under care, licensure or ordination exams, or internship.

**Exception: General** (*BCO* 13-9.b) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.

**Exception: Apr 29-30, 2019** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam of TE transferring into presbytery.

**Exception: Sep 23-24, 2019** (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer for minister. Type of transfer from a Korean language presbytery or another denomination not specified.

**Exception: Sep 23-24, 2019** (*BCO* 21-4) – No record of requiring a statement of differences with our Standards.

**Exception: Sep 23-24, 2019** (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer for minister from another presbytery.

**Exception: Sep 23-24, 2019** (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination.

71. That the Minutes of **Rocky Mountain** Presbytery: *56-0-1*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Sep 20, 2022.**
  - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; General 2022; Jan 27, 2022; Apr 21, 2022; Oct 6, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

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1. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 8-7) – No record of annual reports of TEs laboring out of bounds.
2. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 13-9.b; 40-1) – No record of review of records of church Sessions.
3. **Exception: Jan 27, 2022; April 21, 2022; Oct 6, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2) – No record of endorsement by candidate’s session or six-months membership for candidate.
4. **Exception: Jan 27, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1, *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in presbytery minutes.
5. **Exception: Jan 27, 2022** (Preliminary Principle 6) – No record that members of interim/provisional Session were called by the congregation.
6. **Exception: Jan 27, 2022** (*BCO* 18-3) – No record of examination of candidates in experiential religion and motives for seeking the ministry.
7. **Exception: Jan 27, 2022** (*BCO* 8-6) – Presbytery acted to move TE from Evangelist to Church Planter with temporary Session, then acted to renew terms as Evangelist.
8. **Exception: Jan 27, 2022; April 21, 2022; Oct 6, 2022** (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of examination of TE transferring into presbytery.
9. **Exception: Jan 27, 2022** (*BCO* 19-2,3,4, *RAO* 16.e.5) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.
10. **Exception: Jan 27, 2022** (*BCO* 19-3, 19-4) – No record of licensure questions, response, prayer, or declaration.
11. **Exception: April 21, 2022** (*BCO* 13-6, 21-4) – Incomplete record of exam for minister seeking admission from another denomination
12. **Exception: April 21, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4, *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Incomplete record of ordination exam.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Oct 1, 2020** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4.c) – Incomplete exam for transfer from another denomination.

**Response [2022]:** Rocky Mountain Presbytery agrees with the exception and will correct our record (if possible), will correct our action (if possible), and promises to be more careful in the future

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

**Response [2023]: Minutes corrected as indicated below:**

CORRECTED MINUTES: Authorized at Oct 6, 2022 Stated Meeting.

According to the Credentials Committee, Mr. [name omitted] was examined and approved as detailed in *BCO* 21-4, but each element of the exam was not appropriately listed in the process nor in the minutes.

**Exception: Oct 1, 2020** (*BCO* 13-5) – Minister transferring from another denomination with no call to a definite work without deeming the transfer necessary.

**Response [2022]:** Rocky Mountain Presbytery agrees with the exception and will correct our record (if possible), will correct our action (if possible), and promises to be more careful in the future.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

**Response [2023]:**

CORRECTED MINUTES: Authorized at Oct 6, 2022 Stated Meeting.

The Credentials Committee mistakenly used language of transferring Mr. [name omitted]'s ordination from another denomination. The intent was to examine him according to *BCO* 19-2 for licensure. Error attributed to COVID restrictions, temporary chairman of Credentials Committee, and temporary Stated Clerk due to unexpected resignation of previous Stated Clerk. Mr. [name omitted] is approved as a licentiate

**Exception: Oct 1, 2020** (*BCO* 21-4.c; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the minister's own words (the minister said, "it is possible that I have a scruple or exception in connection with the language about 'recreations'" but never said what that scruple is).

**Response [2022]:** Rocky Mountain Presbytery agrees with the exception and will correct our record (if possible), will correct our action (if possible), and promises to be more careful in the future.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO* 16-10.b).

**Response [2023]: Minutes corrected as indicated below**

CORRECTED MINUTES: Authorized at Oct. 6, 2022 Stated Meeting.

Difference #2 use of word "scruple" clarified and approved on the floor of presbytery Better defined as indicating a view open to a variety of recreation on the Sabbath.

**Exception: Jan 23, 2020; Oct 1, 2020** (*BCO* 21-4.a, c) – Incomplete ordination exam (no Hebrew/Greek requirement completed; no internship completed).

**Response [2022]:** Rocky Mountain Presbytery agrees with the exception and will correct our record (if possible), will correct our action (if possible), and promises to be more careful in the future.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery has not corrected their minutes to address the exception and submitted for review (*RAO 16-10.b*).

**Response [2023]: Minutes corrected as indicated below:**

RE: Jan 23, 2020

CORRECTED MINUTES: Authorized at Oct. 6, 2022 Stated Meeting. 1) Hebrew/Greek requirements verified by seminary transcript - Denver Seminary; 2) Internship verified - Rocky Mountain Presbytery at [church name omitted]

RE: Oct 1, 2020

CORRECTED MINUTES: Authorized at Oct. 6, 2022 Stated Meeting. 1) Hebrew/Greek requirements verified by seminary transcript – Greenville Presbyterian Seminary; 2) Internship verified - Calvary Presbytery at [church name omitted].

**e. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Jan 24, 2019** (*BCO 21-4.c.(1)(g)*) – All specific requirements of ordination examination not recorded. (No record of examination in history of PCA.)

**Response:** Rocky Mountain Presbytery agrees with the exceptions and corrects its record (if possible), corrects its action (if possible), and promises to be more careful in the future. (*RAO 16-10, b, 1*)

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO 16-10.b.1*). The Presbytery should act to include appropriate documentation in its record.

**Exception: Apr 25, 2019; Apr 22, 2021** (*BCO 21-4.c.(1)(g)*) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded. (Apr 25, 2019 - No record of written sermon; Apr 22, 2021 - No record of approval of sermon)

**Response:** Rocky Mountain Presbytery agrees with the exceptions and corrects its record (if possible), corrects its action (if possible), and promises to be more careful in the future. (*RAO 16-10, b, 1*)

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO 16-10.b.1*). The Presbytery should act to include appropriate documentation in its record.

**Exception: Apr 22, 2021** (*BCO 13-6*) – No record of Transfer being examined on views touching sacraments or church government.

**Response:** Rocky Mountain Presbytery agrees with the exceptions and corrects its record (if possible), corrects its action (if possible), and promises to be more careful in the future. (*RAO 16-10, b, 1*)



**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). The Presbytery should act to include appropriate documentation in its record.

**Exception: General** (*BCO* 13-9.b, 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions. (Received and reviewed 7 churches. At Spring Stated Meeting, Session record of churches north of Denver are reviewed. (SR1.072) No report of reviewed records at Fall Stated Meeting. At Fall Stated Meeting, Session records of churches in and south of Denver are reviewed. (SR 1.072)

**Response:** Rocky Mountain Presbytery agrees with the exception and will correct our record (if possible), will correct our action (if possible), and promises to be more careful in the future.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). The Presbytery should act to include appropriate documentation in its record.

**Exception: Oct 3, 2019** (*BCO* 21-4.d) – Apparent use of ¾ clause during transfer exam of minister from the OPC not explicitly demonstrated in the minutes.

**Response:** Rocky Mountain Presbytery agrees with the exceptions and corrects its record (if possible), corrects its action (if possible), and promises to be more careful in the future. (*RAO* 16-10, b, 1)

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). The Presbytery should act to include appropriate documentation in its record.

**Exception: Feb 1, 2018; Apr 26, 2018; Oct 4, 2018** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of congregational concurrence in dissolution of pastoral relations.

**Response:** Rocky Mountain Presbytery agrees with the exception and will correct our record (if possible), will correct our action (if possible), and promises to be more careful in the future

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). The Presbytery should act to include appropriate documentation in its record.

72. That the Minutes of **Savannah River** Presbytery: *55-0-1*

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 22, 2022; Apr 19, 2022; May 24, 2022; Jul 15-16, 2022.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
  - 1. Exception: Oct 17, 2022** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of congregational meeting dissolving pastoral relation or presbytery approval of dissolution.

2. **Exception: Oct 17, 2022** (BCO 25-11) – No record that Presbytery confirmed that a 30-day notice was given by Session for congregational meeting to withdraw from the denomination.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Jan 23, 2021; Apr 20 2021** (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

**Response:** Although not specifically stated, the examination of Church History included the History of the PCA. The three candidates (two in January and one in April) examination included the History of the PCA. Future presbytery minutes will more accurately include all specific requirements.

**Exception: Oct 15, 2019** (BCO 41) – No constitutional basis for declaring a non-judicial reference out of order.

**Response [2022]:** The Moderator did not believe a “constitutional basis” was needed since the full court, by vote, agreed with him.

**Rationale [2022]:** Declaring a constitutionally allowed practice out of order without giving a constitutional basis is out of order.

**Response [2023]:** The Moderator in October 2019 (and current Stated Clerk) does not recall the specifics for ruling the Request to Refer out of order. The Savannah River Presbytery understands that a constitutional basis is required to declare a constitutionally allowed practice out of order and will strive to ensure it does not occur again. It should be noted that the action taken by the Moderator to appoint an Ad-Hoc Committee to provide counsel to the two churches actually addressed the Request to Refer.

73. That the Minutes of **Siouxlands** Presbytery: 52-0-0

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Apr 28, 2022.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Sep 22-23, 2022.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
  1. **Exception: Jan 28-29, 2022** (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the candidate’s own words.
  2. **Exception: Jan 28-29, 2022; Sep 22-23, 2022** (BCO 13-6, 19-2) – TE was examined for licensure when it appears it was a transfer from another PCA Presbytery.
  3. **Exception: Sep 22-23, 2022** (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the candidate’s own words.
  4. **Exception: Sep 22-23, 2022** (BCO 19-16) –  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote for waiving internship not recorded.

**5. Exception: Sep 22-23, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2) – No record of six-months membership for candidate.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Sep 23, 2021** (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer exam from another Presbytery.

**Response:** The Presbytery acknowledges its typographical error in omitting the sustaining of the examination on Church Government for the transferring Teaching Elder from another Presbytery. We have amended the minutes of the 122nd meeting on September 23, 2021 by adding the following: Sustain examination on Church Government.

Furthermore, we failed to record the administering of the 18-3 vows put to the candidate coming under care of the Presbytery. The candidate was, in fact, asked and subsequently affirmed the questions following the sustaining of his examination. We have, therefore, amended the minutes to record this fact and will be careful in the future to record all the areas of examination.

**e. That the following response to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore a new response shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Jan 22, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16.3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

**Response:** Presbytery had previously examined the candidate on two separate occasions, once for licensure (Sept 2019) and once to complete the portions of the ordination exams not recorded on Jan 22, 2021 meetings minutes (the 120th meeting of Siouxlands Presbytery). We acknowledge the lack of clarification in our meeting minutes and have amended them by adding the following information to the minutes of January 22, 2021:

At the 117th Meeting in September 2019, the candidate was examined and sustained in the following areas for licensure: Christian experience, English Bible, theology, *BCO* church government, any stated exceptions to our Constitution, and a sermon preached by the candidate before the presbytery. At the 119th Meeting in September 2020, the licentiate was examined and sustained in the following areas as a partial exam for ordination: theological paper and sacraments

**Rationale:** The relationship between the examinations at the September 2019 and September 2020 meetings remains unclear, and there is no evidence of examination in church history, PCA church history, or exegetical paper.

74. That the Minutes of **South Coast** Presbytery:

53-0-0

a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Jan 25, 2022.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
  - 1. **Exception: Jan 25, 2022; Apr 26, 2022; Sep 27, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the minister’s/candidate’s own words.
  - 2. **Exception: Jan 25, 2022** (*BCO* 19-16) –  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote for waiving internship requirement not recorded.
  - 3. **Exception: Jan 25 2022; Mar 12, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.
  - 4. **Exception: Mar 12, 2022** (*BCO* 13-12; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – Purpose of called meeting not recorded verbatim in the minutes.
  - 5. **Exception: Apr 26, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.
  - 6. **Exception: Apr 26, 2022** (*BCO* 20-1) -- No record of call to a definite work.
  - 7. **Exception: Apr 26, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.
  - 8. **Exception: Sep 27, 2022** (*BCO* 5-9.B.g, h, i) – No record of members of the mission church petitioning Presbytery to proceed to organization. No record of Presbytery appointing an organizing commission. No record of an organizing commission or that the service of organization included the necessary elements.
  - 9. **Exception: Sep 27, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our Standards.
  - 10. **Exception: Sep 27, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2, 18-3, 19-9, 19-10) – No record of endorsement by candidate’s Session. No record of six-months membership for candidate. No record of charge given to candidate. No record of Examination for internship. No declaration of Internship by Moderator recorded.

**d. That responses shall be submitted to the following GA as no responses were received in 2023:**

**Exception: General** (*RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Commission minutes not provided.

**Exception: General** (*BCO* 13-9.b, 40-1) – Incomplete record of review of records of church Sessions.

**Exception: Apr 24, 2021** (*BCO* 34-4) – A minister was found contumacious, but Presbytery did not make “record... of the fact and of the charges under which he was arraigned.”

**Exception: Apr 24, 2021** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of the congregation having approved the dissolution of the call of the former pastor.

**Exception: Aug 14, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

**Exception: Aug 14, 2021** (*BCO* 13-6) – All specific requirements of transfer exam not recorded.

**Exception: Jan 26, 2019; May 4, 2019; Sep 24, 2019** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.2.4) – Minutes of commission not entered into Presbytery minutes.

**Response [2022]:** These minutes were received by our administrative commission and reported to the presbytery, but we failed to enter them into the minutes. We will revise our processes to include them in the future.

**Rationale [2022]:** When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

**Exception: Jan 25, 2020** (*BCO* 19-2.a) – No exam/statement of Christian experience and inward call.

**Response [2022]:** Our ordination team has historically received a statement of Christian experience and inward call when candidates come under care in the presbytery. In the future, we will make sure this is added to licensure candidates as well.

**Rationale [2022]:** When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

**Exception: Jan 25, 2020** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete transfer exam (no theology, Bible content or Sacraments).

**Response [2022]:** Our ordination team recognizes and agrees with this error and will remedy it in future transfer exams.

**Rationale [2022]:** When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

**Exception: July 23, 2019** (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer exam (no record of questions on views of sacraments or church government).

**Response [2022]:** Our ordination team recognizes and agrees with this oversight and will work to conduct a complete transfer exam in the future.

**Rationale [2022]:** When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

**Exception: Jan 25, 2020 (BCO 19-7)** – No indication of Mr. [name omitted] having completed his presbytery internship prior to ordination.

**Response [2022]:** Our ordination team agrees with this oversight and will work to insure it is completed in the future.

**Rationale [2022]:** When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

**Exception: Jan 25, 2020 (BCO 21-4)** – No record that theological thesis or exegetical papers submitted.

**Response [2022]:** Our ordination team agrees with this oversight and will work to insure it is completed in the future.

**Rationale [2022]:** When GA takes exception to a Presbytery's minutes for failure to record or take a required action, and Presbytery agrees with the exception, a satisfactory response should indicate that they have taken the required action, if possible, and properly recorded the same in their minutes, amending and resubmitting relevant portions of past minutes if necessary.

75. That the Minutes of **South Florida** Presbytery: 58-0-0

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Dec 15, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; May 10, 2022; Nov 8, 2022.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

1. **Exception: Feb 8, 2022 (BCO 13-6)** – Incomplete record of examination of TE transferring into Presbytery.

2. **Exception: Feb 8, 2022 (BCO 13-11)** – Motions not fully recorded.

3. **Exception: May 10, 2022 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5.)** – Stated differences not judged with prescribed categories.

4. **Exception: May 10, 2022 (BCO 24-4.f.)** – Presbytery implicitly granted a doctrinal exception that needs further clarity for proper

review. Mr. [name omitted] appears to advocate for paedocommunion (*WLC* 177).

5. **Exception: May 10, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5.) – No record of ordination exam.
6. **Exception: May 10, 2022; Aug 8, 2022** (*BCO* 38-1) – *BCO* 38-1 Confession for a case without process not recorded in minutes.
7. **Exception: May 10, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4.) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.
8. **Exception: May 10, 2022; Nov 8, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2) – No record of endorsement by candidates' Session.
9. **Exception: May 10, 2022; Nov 8, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2) – No record of six-months membership for candidates.
10. **Exception: May 10, 2022; Nov 8, 2022** (*BCO* 13-11) – Presbytery failed to provide a full and accurate record of judicial cases.
11. **Exception: Aug 8, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5.) – Incomplete record of ordination exam.

**d. That responses shall be submitted to the following GA as no responses were received in 2023:**

**Exception: General** (*BCO* 13-9.b, 40-1) – No record of review of Session minutes.

**Exception: Directory** (*BCO* 15-1, 21; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – No record of ordination for a man who is listed in the 5/18/21 and 8/17/21 minutes as licensed, but in 11/9/21 minutes as ordained.

**Exception: Feb 9, 2021; Nov 9, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in minister's own words.

**Exception: Feb 9, 2021** (*BCO* 19-5) – No record that the examination for transfer of licensure was completed.

**Exception: Feb 9, 2021** (*BCO* 13-6) – No record of transfer exam from another Presbytery.

**Exception: Feb 9, 2021; May 18, 2021; Aug 17, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded

**Exception: May 18, 2021** (*BCO* 18-5; 22-5) – Student supply approved without licensure.

**Exception: May 18, 2021** (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of transfer exam from another Presbytery.

**Exception: May 18, 2021** (*BCO* 13-6, 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination.

**Exception: Aug 17, 2021** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes from commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

**Exception: Feb 11, 2020; Aug 11, 2020** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

**Exception: Nov 10, 2020** (*BCO* 15-1) – Minutes of commission not entered into Presbytery minutes.

**Exception: Nov 10, 2020** (*BCO* 13-6, 21-4) – Unclear record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination.

**Exception: Feb 13, 2018; May 8, 2018** (*BCO* 21-4, *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Differences of three candidates not judged to prescribed categories.

**Response [2022]:** Agreed. Categories now being used for all determinations of exceptions to the standards.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery’s judgment of stated differences using the prescribed categories need to be submitted for review.

**Exception: Feb 13, 2018; May 8, 2018** (*BCO* 21-4, *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Differences not stated in candidates’ own words.

**Response [2022]:** Agreed. Candidate’s words now being recorded in the minutes.

**Rationale [2022]:** The candidate’s own words must be recorded and entered in the minutes and submitted for review.

**Exception: May 9, 2017; Aug 8, 2017** (*BCO* 18-2; *BCO* 21-4) – Stated difference not recorded in the minister’s/candidate’s own words (*RAO* 16-3.e5).

**Response [2021]:** Actually, it was. If the candidate says he is taking the “Continental Exception to the Sabbath per 21-8” then that is what he said in his own words.

**Rationale [2021]:** Candidate must state “specific instances in which he” (*BCO* 19-2.e) differs from *WCF*, *LC*, *SC*; not simply name a view.

**Response [2022]:** Agreed; candidate’s actual words now being recorded.

**Rationale [2022]:** The candidate’s own words must be recorded and entered in the minutes and submitted for review.

76. That the Minutes of **South Texas** Presbytery: *50-0-1*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 28-29, 2022; Aug 12-13, 2022; Oct 28-29, 2022.**
  - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Jan 28-29, 2022; Apr 29-30, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:



## APPENDIX Q

- 1. Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – No minutes of any committee empowered as commissions submitted for GA review.
- 2. Exception: Jan 28-29, 2022; Aug 12-13, 2022; Oct 28-29, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2) – No record of endorsement by candidate’s Session, and/or no record of six-months membership for candidate.
- 3. Exception: Jan 28-29, 2022** (*BCO* 40-2.1) – Minutes state that the presbytery voted to receive the commission report to ordain and install [name omitted], but referenced Attachment speaks only of a report to Commission to Ordain/Install a Mr. [name omitted]. Minutes make no mention of Mr. [name omitted].
- 4. Exception: Apr 29-30, 2022; Oct 28-29, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1) – It appears committees are empowered to act as if they were commissions.
- 5. Exception: Apr 29-30, 2022** (*RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Minutes do not indicate which areas transfer candidates were examined in.
- 6. Exception: Apr 23, 2022; Aug 20, 2022** (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of examination of TE transferring into Presbytery.
- 7. Exception: Apr 29-30, 2022** (*BCO* 13-1) – Minutes indicate honorably retired TE is a member of a church.
- 8. Exception: Apr 29-30, 2022** (*BCO* 8-7; 20-1) – No record of the reasons why Presbytery considers an out-of-bounds work to be a valid Christian ministry. No record that the Presbytery has full assurance that the TE will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church.
- 9. Exception: Apr 29-30, 2022** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record that Congregation/Session concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations.
- 10. Exception: Apr 29-30, 2022** (*BCO* 19-2; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.
- 11. Exception: Apr 29-30, 2022** (*BCO* 13-6) – Incomplete record of examination of TE transferring into Presbytery.
- 12. Exception: Apr 29-30, 2022; Aug 12-13, 2022; Oct 28-29, 2022** (*BCO* 46-6) – No record of dismissal from original presbytery.
- 13. Exception: Aug 12-13, 2022; Oct 28-29, 2022** (*BCO* 15-3; 36-7; 38-1; 40-2; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes provide an incomplete record of cases of discipline, and complaints received. Minutes indicate commission received confession of a TE and imposed

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censures of deposition from office and indefinite suspension from the sacraments. This may have been a *BCO* 38-1 case without process but there is no indication; it appears from the AC report that this commission was retroactively authorized and therefore had no authority to conduct the case or impose censure; also no indication procedures in *BCO* 36-7 were followed; also not clear if accused was a church officer; confession is not in minutes.

14. **Exception: Aug 12-13, 2022** (*BCO* 21-2) – Presbytery did not find extraordinary circumstance or record super-majority vote to waive six-month requirement to be taken under care.
15. **Exception: Oct 28-29, 2022** (*BCO* 21-1) – No record that transfer candidate received a call or that the presbytery approved the call.
16. **Exception: Oct 28-29, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1) – Committee cannot deliberate and conclude the business referred to it. It can only examine, and make recommendations in its report to the Presbytery.
17. **Exception: Oct. 28-29, 2022** (*BCO* 21-1) – No record that candidate received a call or that the presbytery approved the call.

**d. That responses shall be submitted to the following GA as no responses were received in 2023:**

**Exception: Apr 23-24, 2021** (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of call to a definite work.

**Exception: Apr 23-24, 2021; Aug 13-14, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

77. That the Minutes of **Southeast Alabama** Presbytery: *54-0-1*

a. Be approved without exceptions: **None**.

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General 2022; Jan 25, 2022; Mar 31, 2022; Apr 26, 2022; Aug 23, 2022**.

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

1. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 8-4) – No record of annual reports received from TEs doing work needful to the Church.
2. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 13-2) – No record of annual reports received from TEs without call.
3. **Exception: Jan 25, 2022** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record that Congregation (/Session) concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations.

4. **Exception: Jan 25, 2022; Apr 26, 2022; Aug 23, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2) – No record of six-months membership for candidate.
5. **Exception: Jan 25, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2) – No record of examinations (Under Care / Internship).
6. **Exception: Mar 31, 2022** (*BCO* 13-12; *RAO* 16-3.c.1) – Notice for called meeting not in order and purpose of called meeting not recorded verbatim in the minutes.
7. **Exception: Apr 26, 2022** (*BCO* 19-1, 22-6) – Stated supply is not listed in directory or minutes as an elder or licentiate.
8. **Exception: Apr 26, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Incomplete record of ordination exams.
9. **Exception: Apr 26, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.
10. **Exception: Apr 26, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4, *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Candidate’s stated difference appears to be incompletely recorded.
11. **Exception: Apr 26, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – No record of requiring statement of differences with our standards.
12. **Exception: Apr 26, 2022** (*BCO* 21-5, 10-4) – Incomplete record of ordination and installation.
13. **Exception: Oct 25, 2022** (*BCO* 13-10) – No record of transfer or dismissal of members upon dissolving a church.
14. **Exception: Oct 25, 2022** (*BCO* 13-10) – At least 60-day notice to presbytery to dissolve a church not in order. (Not indicated/recorded).

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: General** (*BCO* 13-9.b, 40-3) – Incomplete record or review of records of church sessions.

**Response:** We agree with this exception and will try to make a more diligent effort to get our churches to send in their minutes. We review all the minutes that are sent to us, but many of our smaller churches do not send in their minutes. In the future, we will reflect in the minutes of Presbytery which churches did not submit records and follow up with those churches to correct their actions

**Exception: Oct 26, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16.3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded.

**Response:** We agree with this exception. These portions of the exam did take place, but we failed to record them in our minutes. At our January 24,

2023 meeting, we will amend the previously approved minutes of October 26, 2021 to show that Mr. [name omitted] preached a sermon before the committee on October 12, 2021 on Psalm 42; and that he was examined on the floor of Presbytery in the area of PCA history.

**Exception: Apr 23, 2018** (BCO 21-4) – Stated differences not judged with prescribed categories, and not recorded in candidates’ own words.

**Response [2022]:** We agree with this exception and will correct our actions in the future.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to correct their minutes to include the judgment of stated differences with prescribed categories.

**Response [2023]:** Presbytery did not meet on April 23, 2018 so we will assume that the minutes in question are from April 28, 2018. If this is the case, we agree with the exception. While the candidates did state their differences in their own words, the minutes do not make this clear. At our January 24, 2023 meeting we will amend the previously approved minutes of April 24, 2018 with the following amendments:

B.2.i - TE [name omitted]’s ~~stated differences with the standards are as follows~~ the following differences with the standards in his own words:

B.3.ii - TE Carmichael’~~s-stated differences with the standards are as follows~~ the following differences with the standards in his own words:

B.4.ii.a. - Mr. [name omitted]’~~s stated: differences with the standards are as follows~~ the following differences with the standards in his own words:

B.5.i. Moved and approved that TE [name omitted]’~~s stated differences as stated and that he is allowed to teach said differences~~ are more than semantic but “not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine” (BCO 21-4).

B.5.iii. Moved and approved that TE [name omitted]’~~s stated differences as stated and that he is allowed to teach said differences~~ are more than semantic but “not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine” (BCO 21-4).

B.5.v. Moved and approved that Mr. [name omitted]’~~s stated differences as stated and that he is allowed to teach said differences~~ are more than semantic but “not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine” (BCO 21-4).

**Exception: Jun 2, 2020** (BCO 13-10) – Dissolution of church occurred without designation of members to Presbytery’s care or another Session.

**Response [2022]:** We agree with this exception and will correct our actions in the future.

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to submit minutes indicating that the members of the dissolved church have been designated to Presbytery's care or another Session.

**Response [2023]:** We agree with this exception and are sorry for this oversight. Since some time has passed since those churches were dissolved and those members have dispersed to other churches, we are uncertain of how to respond to this exception. The members of [church name omitted] were transferred to the care of the Session of [church name omitted] initially. The members of [church name omitted] have moved to various churches within the Presbytery and beyond.

78. That the Minutes of **Southern Louisiana Presbytery:** 55-0-1
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jun 18, 2022.**
  - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; General 2022; Apr 23, 2022; Aug 2, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
    1. **Exception: General 2022 (BCO 8-7)** – No record of annual report(s) of TE(s) laboring out of bounds.
    2. **Exception: General 2022 (BCO 13-9.b; 40-1)** – No record of review of records of church Sessions.
    3. **Exception: Jan 22, 2022 (BCO 19-2)** – Incomplete record of licensure exam: no statement of Christian experience and inward call.
    4. **Exception: Apr 23, 2022 (BCO 21-4)** – Incomplete record of ordination exam: experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management; history of the PCA.
    5. **Exception: Apr 23, 2022 (BCO 15-1)** – Commission minutes not recorded in Presbytery minutes.
    6. **Exception: Jun 18, 2022 (BCO 21-5, 6, 7)** – Incorrect ordination procedure.
    7. **Exception: Aug 2, 2022 (BCO 23-1)** – Presbytery did not act to dissolve a TE's call and place him on the rolls without call after his church left the denomination and he left the field.
    8. **Exception: Aug 2, 2022 (BCO 23-1)** – No record that Congregation concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations.
    9. **Exception: Aug 2, 2022 (BCO 21-4; RAO 16-3.e.5)** – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.
    10. **Exception: Oct 22, 2022 (BCO 5-9)** – Presbytery organized a church that had not elected ruling elders or called a pastor.

**11. Exception: Oct 22, 2022** (BCO 21-9) – Presbytery installed a pastor without having received or approved a call.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Jan 23, 2021** (BCO 25-11) – No record of 30-days notice to dismiss congregation from the PCA.

**Response:** Southern Louisiana Presbytery apologizes for failing to have this record in our minutes. We reached out to [church name omitted] and requested written conformation but received only verbal confirmation from the pastor. It was with that verbal confirmation that we acted as a presbytery. At a later presbytery meeting we recognized the difficulty that this presented and our member churches agreed that if they decided to leave the PCA that they would send in written confirmation of their actions. We recognize that this does not remedy the situation in regards to [church name omitted], however, we have taken steps to make sure that it doesn't happen again.

**Exception: Jan 23, 2021** (BCO 25-11) – No record of congregational vote to leave the PCA.

**Response:** Southern Louisiana apologizes for failing to have the congregational vote recorded in our minutes. We would like to answer this exception with reference to the above exception as they are related. We have taken steps to ensure that this doesn't happen again.

**Exception: Jun 23, 2021** (BCO 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order; 10-days notice of meeting not indicated or recorded.

**Response:** Southern Louisiana Presbytery apologizes for failing to indicate in our minutes that the required 10 day notice for the called meeting held on June 23, 2021 was given. Please find the attached email correspondence dated June 9, 2021 which informs the Presbytery of the meeting called by the Moderator on June 23, 2021.

**Exception: Jun 23, 2021** (BCO 5-9.g) – No record of petition to particularize.

**Response:** The Clerk of Southern Louisiana apologizes for failing to include the petition in the 2022 RPR report. Please find it attached to this document.

79. That the Minutes of **Southern New England** Presbytery: 56-0-0

a. Be approved without exceptions: **None**.

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Jan 15, 2022; Mar 5, 2022; Apr 29, 2022; May 21, 2022; Jun 11, 2022; Sep 17, 2022; Dec 17, 2022.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None**.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Sep 18, 2021** (*BCO* Preliminary Principle 6) – No record that members of interim/provisional Session were called by the congregation of a particularized church.

**Response:** Southern New England Presbytery agrees with the exception and promises to be more careful in the future. SNEP is also pleased to report that the [church name omitted] has been particularized and has its own session.

**Exception: Sep 18, 2021** (*BCO* 15-2) – No record of quorum for commission meeting. (2 TEs required for commission with power to install a TE.)

**Response:** Southern New England Presbytery agrees with the exception and promises to be more careful in the future. The minutes of the Commission listed one Teaching Elder as being present but there were two additional Teaching Elder commissioners present who were not listed. This mistake was not caught by the Presbytery when it approved the minutes of our September 2021 meeting.

The clerk of the Commission has submitted minutes with the full list of commissioners reflected. SNEP has approved these commission minutes at their September 2022 stated meeting and submits them for the Assembly's reference.

80. That the Minutes of **Southwest Florida** Presbytery: 56-0-2

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Feb 12, 2022; May 10, 2022; Nov 8, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **General 2022.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

1. **Exception: Sep 10, 2022** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record that Congregation/Session concurred with dissolution of pastoral relations.

**d. No response to previous assemblies required.**

81. That the Minutes of **Suncoast Florida** Presbytery: 56-0-0

a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; General 2022; Feb 8, 2022; May 10, 2022; Sep 13, 2022.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

1. **Exception: Feb 8, 2022** (*BCO* 8-4; 20-1) – No record that the Presbytery is assured that an out-of-bounds TE will have full

freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church. No record of the reasons why Presbytery considers an out-of-bounds work to be a valid Christian ministry.

2. **Exception: May 10, 2022** (*BCO* 13-9a; 46-6) – No record of vote to dismiss TEs called to other Presbyteries. Further, there is no evidence that the men were received by these other presbyteries.
3. **Exception: May 10, 2022; Sept. 13, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1) – Report of Commission established at the May Stated Meeting to install 2 TEs is not noted or included in subsequent minutes.
4. **Exception: May 10, 2022** (*BCO* 20-1) – No record of the reasons why Presbytery considers an out-of-bounds work to be a valid Christian ministry.
5. **Exception: May 10, 2022** (*BCO* 46-6) – TE is received from another PCA presbytery but no evidence of action of other Presbytery.
6. **Exception: Nov 9, 2022** (*BCO* 19-1) – Presbytery gives permission to a man to preach in a pulpit on a regular basis without proper licensure.

**d. No response to previous assemblies required.**

82. That the Minutes of **Susquehanna Valley** Presbytery: *57-0-0*

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Feb 12, 2022; Mar 22, 2022; Jul 20, 2022; Sep 30, 2022; Nov 1, 2022; Nov 19, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

1. **Exception: May 21, 2022** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4) – Incomplete record of transfer exam for minister from another denomination.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Jun 15, 2021** (*BCO* 13-6; 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of transfer exam from another PCA presbytery not recorded; no mention of examination on Sacraments and Govt and Discipline of PCA.

**Response:** We examined TE [name omitted] in the areas of Theology, Sacraments, and Church Government but did not specify each category thoroughly in our presbytery minutes. We apologize for our negligence and will be diligent to record these exams in better detail in future presbytery minutes.



**Exception: Sep 21, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of transfer exam from another PCA presbytery not recorded; no mention of examination on Theology, Sacraments and Govt and Discipline of PCA.

**Response:** We examined TE [name omitted] in the areas of Theology, Sacraments, and Church Government but did not specify each category thoroughly in our presbytery minutes. We apologize for our negligence and will be diligent to record these exams in better detail in future presbytery minutes.

**Exception: Nov 20, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – All specific requirements of transfer exam from another PCA presbytery not recorded; no mention of examination on Theology, Sacraments and Principles Govt and Discipline of PCA.

**Response:** We examined TE [name omitted] in the areas of Theology, Sacraments, and Church Government but did not specify each category thoroughly in our presbytery minutes. We apologize for our negligence and will be diligent to record these exams in better detail in future presbytery minutes.

83. That the Minutes of **Tennessee Valley** Presbytery: *50-0-0*
- a. Be approved without exception: **None.**
  - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; General 2022; Jan 8, 2022; Apr 9, 2022; Jul 12, 2022; Oct 18, 2022.**
  - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
    1. **Exception: General 2022** (*BCO* 40-1; *RAO* 16-10) – Report of review by GA of 2021 minutes not included in the minutes of Presbytery, and no response to the Assembly concerning disposition of the exceptions of substance.
    2. **Exception: Jan 8, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1) – Commissions are formed to install previously ordained TEs but no commission reports are found in subsequent minutes.
    3. **Exception: Jan 8, 2022** (*BCO* 8-7; 20-1) – No record that the Presbytery is assured that an out-of-bounds TE will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church. No record of the reasons why Presbytery considers an out-of-bounds work to be a valid Christian ministry.
    4. **Exception: Jan 8, 2022; Apr 9, 2022; Jul 12, 2022; Oct 18, 2022** (*BCO* 46-6) – TEs are received from other PCA presbyteries but no evidence of action of other Presbytery.

5. **Exception: Apr 9, 2022** (*BCO* 19-7-10) – Presbytery “forms an internship” for a candidate, but does not approve the nature of the internship, does not examine the man, and does not address the intern as required.
6. **Exception: Apr 9, 2022; Jul 12, 2022; Oct 18, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2; *RAO* 16-6.c.2) – No record of six-months membership requirement and one month application deadline for man coming under care. This was an Exception of Form also in the report on the 2021 minutes.
7. **Exception: Apr 9, 2022** (*BCO* 8-7; 15-1; 20-1; 21-1) – A TE’s status is changed from Honorably Retired to Out of Bounds, but specific arrangements of call not shown to be approved. No record that the Presbytery is assured that an out-of-bounds TE will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church. No record of the reasons why Presbytery considers an out-of-bounds work to be a valid Christian ministry.
8. **Exception: Apr 9, 2022; Oct. 18, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1; 23-1) – A commission dissolves men’s call, but no evidence of congregational (or sessional) concurrence, and sometimes the matter is not included in the minutes of Presbytery.
9. **Exception: Jul 12, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2, 3) – No record of endorsement by candidate’s session, six-months membership, charge given to candidate, nor of his answering the required questions.
10. **Exception: Jul 12, 2022** (*BCO* 5-9; 15-1; 24-1) – There is no report in the October meeting of the commission to organize the mission work and to show that *BCO* 5-9.i was followed even though the work is listed in the Directory as being organized.
11. **Exception: Oct 18, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1; 13-6; *RAO* 16-1.e.5) – Report and minutes of Theological Examining Committee, acting as a commission to conduct a transfer exam not included.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Jan 12, 2019** (*BCO* 23-1; 22-4) – Presbytery approved the dissolution of pastoral relations with no record of congregational meeting or any record of the church commissioners appearing before Presbytery.

**Response:** The Tennessee Valley Presbytery acknowledges and apologizes for the lack of record in our minutes. This was a recording error made by the stated clerk. We have updated our minutes.

**Exception: Jul 9, 2019** (*BCO* 21-6) – TEs installed as assistant pastors, but constitutional questions were addressed to the congregation instead of the session.

**Response:** The Tennessee Valley Presbytery acknowledges and apologizes for this mistake. The constitutional questions were correctly addressed to the session, however the minutes were incorrectly recorded by the installation commission.

**Exception: Jul 9, 2019** (*BCO* 13-6) – The commission record indicates that presbytery re-ordained a minister transferring from another denomination.

**Response:** The Tennessee Valley Presbytery acknowledges and apologizes for this mistake. The stated clerk has spoken with the members of the commission and with the Presbytery about this mistake and we will endeavor to not make this mistake in the future.

**Exception: Jan 11, 2020** (*BCO* 19-2) – Stated differences with standards not recorded in licensure examination.

**Response:** The Tennessee Valley Presbytery acknowledges and apologizes for the lack of record in our minutes. This was a recording error made by the stated clerk, the stated differences will be updated in our minutes and resent to the RPR staff.

**Exception: Jun 13, 2020** (*BCO* 13-12) – Committee report given that was not included in the purpose of called meeting.

**Response:** The Tennessee Valley Presbytery acknowledges and apologizes for the mistake. We will endeavor to not make this mistake in the future.

**Exception: Jul 14, 2020** (*BCO* 13-11) – Complaint appealed to Presbytery not recorded in the minutes.

**Response:** The Tennessee Valley Presbytery acknowledges and apologizes for the lack of record in our minutes. This was a recording error made by the stated clerk. The complaint has been updated in our minutes and submitted the complaint to the RPR staff.

**e. That responses shall be submitted to the following GA as no approved responses were received in 2023:**

**Exception: Jan 9, 2021** (*BCO* 22-5; 20-1) – Improper status granted to TE who has no pastoral call but is stated supply, pending approval from other presbytery.

**Exception: Jul 13, 2021** (*BCO* 15-1, 2) – An individual may not take an action on behalf of a court; a commission is required.

**Exception: Oct 19, 2021** (*BCO* 19-1) – Candidate under care preaching regularly in PCA pulpits without a license.

84. That the Minutes of **Tidewater** Presbytery: 59-0-0
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **May 16, 2022; Oct 6, 2022.**
  - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**
  - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
    1. **Exception: Feb 5, 2022** (*BCO* 15-3) – Action of Presbytery judicial commission was not approved or disapproved by vote of Presbytery.
    2. **Exception: Feb 5, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Two stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories; one stated difference not judged at all.
    3. **Exception: Feb 5, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – One stated difference not judged with the prescribed categories; and a difference the candidate did not state or was not recorded was judged.
    4. **Exception: Feb 5, 2022** (*BCO* 15-2) – Commission established to take action on behalf of Presbytery without meeting minimum membership requirement.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Aug 1, 2019** (*BCO* 19-5) – Incomplete record of a licensure transfer exam.

**Response [2022]:** The Presbytery disagrees with this exception. We suggest that the language of 19-5 is confusing at best.

In the first sentence we read, “the latter Presbytery may, at its discretion, on his producing proper testimonials from the former, repeat any portion of the previous Presbytery’s examination it desires.” The following sentence then reads, “The Presbytery into whose bounds the licentiate is moving, however, must at least examine the man concerning: a. his Christian experience, b. his call to preach the Gospel, c. his views in theology, d. Bible content, e. church government.” We erred in the favor of the “at its discretion” finding the examination of the previous presbytery and the documentation provided to as sufficient and decided to only repeat his testimony and views.

**Rationale [2022]:** *BCO* 19-5 mandates a minimum exam that must be given to licentiate transfers. The whole *BCO* 19-2 exam need not be repeated, but the 19-5 elements must be.

**Response [2023]:** The Presbytery understands its error and has taken every step to correct this for the future. The membership committee has been apprised of the requirements of *BCO* 19-5 and moving forward a minimum

exam will be given. The Tidewater Presbytery approved these actions in our 2/4/2023 Stated Meeting.

**Rationale [2023]:** No record that Presbytery corrected its actions (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). Presbytery has not properly resolved the examination of the licentiate through proper examination. If the man seeks to have his license renewed BCO 19-5 must be followed.

**Exception: Feb 1, 2020** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission (to ordain and install) TEs [names omitted] not entered into presbytery minutes.

**Response [2022]:** The Presbytery agrees with this omission. This was purely an oversight of the Clerk. The Sessional Oversight Commission was appointed to ordain and install and I failed to note that in the minutes

**Rationale [2022]:** Presbytery needs to submit the commission minutes for review.

**Response [2023]:** While I failed to record the make up of the commissions to ordain the two candidates, the minutes of these commissions were not approved until a later Stated Meeting. At the Feb 1, 2020 meeting the candidates were examined and approved for ordination, the dates and times were not set at that meeting. One candidate left the PCA before his ordination, and the other did have his ordination commission at a later date.

**Rationale [2023]:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). Presbytery has not submitted the commission minutes for review.

**Exception: Feb 6, 2021** (*Bylaws* 7.2.1) – Taking action at virtual meeting expressly prohibited by Presbytery bylaws.

**Response:** Due to extraordinary circumstances of that week, the Executive Committee had to make a meeting decision. The meeting was scheduled to meet in a school, which closed due to a Covid outbreak. The local gas prices shot up and many stations were closed due to shortages, so the Executive Committee agreed that on the short notice of a change, rather than cancel the meeting, to hold it virtually. The Presbytery was in the process of making the Bylaws Change to allow this but had not had all the necessary readings. The Bylaws have since been amended, Covid shut downs are a thing of the past, and this will no longer be an issue.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its actions (*RAO* 16-10.b.1). Presbytery has not ratified the actions taken without proper authority.

**Exception: Feb 6, 2021; Oct 7, 2021** (*BCO* 15-1, 2) – An individual may not take an action on behalf of a court; a commission is required.

**Response:** In the Feb 6 Minutes [p4] recommendation 3 reads; “Recommendation 3 – refer to admin committee and clerk to develop a plan

of action – MSP. The Admin Committee and the Clerk were to serve together to develop the plan of action. As can be seen in the “Report of the Commission,” a commission was appointed to adjudicate the case and Recommendation 3, from the Commission, was for the Admin Committee with the clerk to handle one aspect of the resolution. At no time was an individual taking action on behalf of the court.

**Rationale:** The original exception related to the item on ll. 11–12 on p. 4 of the Feb 6, 2021 minutes and ll. 33–34 on p. 4 of the Oct 7, 2021 minutes. Presbytery did not respond to the identified exception of substance.

**Exception: Feb 6, 2021 (BCO 15-3)** – Presbytery took action on a recommendation from a judicial commission without receiving a full statement of the case.

**Response:** During the verbal report to the TWP, a full statement was made of the case. Due to the sensitive nature of the case, the Commission and the TWP concurred that a printed copy would not be distributed but the summary with the report. We will, in the future, make sure we clearly follow 15-3.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (RAO 16-10.b.1). Presbytery has not provided the statement in written form to the Presbytery or submitted the record for review.

**Exception: Oct 7, 2021 (BCO 13-11)** – Complaint and Appeal sent to Presbytery not recorded in Presbytery’s minutes.

**Response:** We were in error for not including all of the email correspondence as the majority of the complaint and appeal were handled via email conversations. We have since cleaned up our process for receiving and handling complaints and appeals.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (RAO 16-10.b.1). Presbytery has not submitted the records for review.

85. That the Minutes of **Warrior** Presbytery: 58-0-1

a. Be approved without exceptions: **Jan 25, 2022; Apr 19, 2022; Jul 22, 2022.**

b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **None.**

c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

1. **Exception: General 2022 (BCO 8-7)** – No record of annual report(s) of TE(s) laboring out of bounds.

2. **Exception: Oct 18, 2022 (BCO 15-1; RAO 16-3.e.4)** – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Jan 26, 2021** (*BCO 21-4.e; RAO 16-3.e.5*) – Stated differences not recorded in the minister’s own words.

**Response:** Warrior Presbytery apologizes for failing to follow appropriate procedures for recording a minister’s exceptions. The minister in question stated, “I take exception with WCF 21 regarding the Sabbath. I disagree with the idea that all recreation is forbidden on the Sabbath. The Sabbath is intended as a day of rest, worship, and acts of mercy. In so far as the recreation does not interfere with the other aspects it should be permissible, especially when these activities foster family and community. In addition, I take exception with WLC 109. I disagree that all mental or material images of Jesus are violations of the second commandment. I am uncertain how we can totally avoid any mental image of Jesus ever being formed in our minds, especially as we read the narrative accounts of His life. So far as material images, I believe the core issue is in the use of images for worship. While we should always be cautious, I believe we fail to address the heart of the second commandment when we put icons and a cartoon depiction of Jesus in children’s literature on the same level.” This failure has already been addressed and exceptions are now being recorded in the presbytery minutes in the minister’s own words.

**Exception: Jan 26, 2021** (*BCO 21-4.e; RAO 16-3.e.5*) – Stated differences not judged with the prescribed categories.

**Response:** Warrior Presbytery apologizes for failing to utilize the correct categories when judging stated differences. As relates to the stated differences of this minister, the court judged them to be merely semantic. This error has been brought to the presbytery’s attention and we will use the correct categories moving forward.

**Exception: Jan 26, 2021** (*BCO 22-5*) – Mr. [name omitted] is regularly preaching in a local church but is specifically noted as not being licensed.

**Response:** Warrior Presbytery recognizes and apologizes for its failure to provide appropriate oversight for this church. This church does not currently have a pastor or stated supply and Mr. [name omitted] agreed to provide assistance to them. Mr. [name omitted] was familiar to the church and had worked in Christian ministries for many decades. The church and Warrior Presbytery have addressed the situation and are working together to ensure it does not happen again. The church leadership acknowledges the necessity of regular preaching being handled by men who have been examined by the presbytery. Warrior Presbytery is working to assist them in finding

appropriate pulpit supply. Both this church and Warrior Presbytery regret that this situation occurred and are striving to improve communication and processes so that nothing like this occurs again.

86. That the Minutes of **West Hudson Presbytery:** *56-0-1*
- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Nov 17, 2022.**
  - b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory; Sep 9, 2021.**
  - c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:
    1. **Exception: General 2021; General 2022 (BCO 8-7)** – No record of annual reports of TEs laboring out of bounds.
    2. **Exception: May 3, 2021 (BCO 23-1)** – No record if presbytery determined “the dissolution of the pastoral relationship with the senior pastor was brought about in Christian love and good order on the part of the parties concerned.”
    3. **Exception: May 3, 2021 (BCO 15-2)** – No record of commission members or a motion to empower anyone to appoint members.
    4. **Exception: Sep 9, 2021 (BCO 8-7)** – No record of presbytery determining that a TE laboring out of bounds will “be assured he will have full freedom to maintain and teach the doctrine of our Church.”
    5. **Exception: Nov 18, 2021 (BCO 40-4)** – Presbytery failed to “deliberate and judge in the whole matter” regarding a report received according to *BCO 40-4*. (“Whether [church name omitted] erred by sustaining [name omitted] as Youth Director”—the committee chose not to make a recommendation because the person in question was no longer employed, and presbytery approved this recommendation).
    6. **Exception: Feb 10, 2022 (BCO 23-1)** – No mention that the pastoral relationship was dissolved “in Christian love and good order on the parties concerned.”
    7. **Exception: Apr 26, 2022 (BCO 13-6)** – No record of which presbytery TE is transferring from and whether he is a member in good standing.
    8. **Exception: May 9, 2022 (BCO 21-4)** – Presbytery granted a doctrinal exception that needs further clarification for proper review.
    9. **Exception: May 9, 2022 (BCO 19-1, 5)** – Presbytery transferred a licentiate without a proper examination.



**10. Exception: May 9, 2022** (*BCO* 38-2) – Divesting a TE takes two meetings of presbytery. No record that he made the request at a previous meeting of presbytery.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: May 6, 2019** (*BCO* 23-1) – No record of congregational meeting requesting Presbytery to change TE [name omitted] from senior pastor to associate and TE [name omitted] from associate to senior at [church name omitted] or a record of the requisite 80% congregational vote by secret ballot.

**Response:** West Hudson agrees with the exception. At the thirteenth stated meeting, the following motion was approved: to amend the minutes of the second stated meeting to include [church name omitted] congregational meeting minutes changing the calls of TE [name omitted] and TE [name omitted] as Attachment 2. Presbytery promises to be more careful in the future.

**Exception: Nov 12, 2020** (*BCO* 12-7; 13-9.b; *RAO* 16-3.e.6) – Record does not indicate that all 2019 Session records were reviewed by Presbytery in 2020.

**Response:** West Hudson Presbytery agrees with the exception. At the thirteenth stated meeting, the following motion was approved: to docket the review of Session records from 2019 to 2021 for the September 2022 stated meeting. West Hudson promises to be more careful in collecting and reviewing Session minutes in the future.

87. That the Minutes of **Westminster** Presbytery: 57-0-1

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **Mar 12, 2022; Aug 13, 2022; Nov 12, 2022.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Directory.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance: **None.**
- d. **No response to previous assemblies required.**

88. That the Minutes of **Wisconsin** Presbytery: 59-0-0

- a. Be approved without exceptions: **None.**
- b. Be approved with exceptions of form: **Jan 22, 2022; Jan 22, 2022 ES; Apr 23, 2022.**
- c. Be approved with exceptions of substance:

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. **Exception: Jan 22, 2022; Apr 23, 2022** (*BCO* 21-5) – Constitutional vows for ordination not propounded to an ordinand. (Vows given were installation only - *BCO* 21-9).
2. **Exception: Jan 22, 2022; Jul 23, 2022; Oct 22, 2022** (*BCO* 19-2.a) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded. (Christian experience; Inward call to preach the gospel.)
3. **Exception: Mar 8, 2022** (*BCO* 13-12) – Notice for called meeting not in order (10-day notice).
4. **Exception: Apr 23, 2022** (*BCO* 38-3) – Teaching elder removed from the rolls without specifying nature of removal, and without including either the “irregularity” (*BCO* 38-3.a) or the “full record of the matter” (*BCO* 38-3.b).
5. **Exception: Apr 23, 2022** (*BCO* 18-2) – No record of six-months membership for candidate or of endorsement by candidate’s Session.
6. **Exception: Apr 23, 2022; Oct 22, 2022** (*BCO* 19-9) – All specific requirements of internship not recorded (inward call to the ministry of the Word).
7. **Exception: Apr 23, 2022; Jun 3, 2022; Oct 22, 2022** (*BCO* 21-4) – Incomplete record of ordination exams. (Experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management.)
8. **Exception: Jul 23, 2022** (*BCO* 15-1; *RAO* 16-3.e.4) – Minutes of commission not entered in Presbytery minutes.

**d. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found satisfactory:**

**Exception: Jan 23, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Presbytery policy as described does not require ministers/candidates to state differences in their own words.

**Response:** The first motion adopted by the Presbytery under item 21-11 during this meeting was in no way intended to restrict or require ministers/candidates to state anything other than “differences in their own words.” It was merely a recommendation to its candidates and credentials committee on how certain interpretations or views of the creation account, when expressed by a candidate in the candidates own words, could be handled. All candidates are required, and only ever have been required, to submit exceptions in their own words.

**Exception: Jan 23, 2021** (*BCO* 5-2.c.; 5-3; 13-11) – Unclear why members were added to a provisional Session when the mission church was dissolved.

**Response:** Because certain members of the existing temporary government needed to resign from the commission and other members were willing to serve during the remaining sixty-day period the Presbytery wanted to give members of the mission church notice and an opportunity to transfer, in accordance with *BCO* 13-10.

**Exception: Apr 24, 2021** (*BCO* 13-2) – All specific requirements of admitting ministers without call not recorded.

**Response:** There are no requirements for acknowledging that a minister that had a call, no longer has a call. In this case an RUF minister was replaced, due to his transitioning to a Call into the Anglican Church in North America, but he was not yet transferring out of the Presbytery (that has since happened and he has been removed from the rolls in accord with *BCO* 38-3 at the April 2022 Stated Presbytery Meeting).

**Exception: Sep 25, 2021** (*BCO* 18-2) – No record of six-months membership for candidates.

**Response:** The Presbytery apologizes for now specifying that their membership exceeded six months, but all three men had been members of their respective churches longer than six months: [name omitted] since November 10, 2020, [name omitted] since 2016, and [name omitted] since August 2020.

**Exception: Jan 23, 2021 [pp. 7-9]; Apr 24, 2021 [p. 6]; Sep 25, 2021 [pp. 11-12]** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16- 3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded. (No Hebrew and Greek; No Approval of Theological/Exegetical Papers; Personal Character; Family Management.)

**Response:** All candidates were examined, thoroughly, in these areas. The Presbytery apologizes if this is not clear in its recorded minutes. It will do a better job in the future of noting acceptance of a thesis on some theological topic, exegesis on the assigned portion of Scripture, acceptance of a seminary degree that included the study of original languages in lieu of an oral exam in his knowledge of Greek and Hebrew languages, and the examination of a candidate's character and family management during the acquaintance with experiential religion portion.

**Exception: Aug 7, 2021** (*BCO* 13-1) – Notice for called meeting not in order; 10-day notice not indicated.

**Response:** The Presbytery apologizes for failing to note when the notice was sent out. Said notice was sent out on Tuesday, July 27, 2021, well before the 10-day requirement.

**e. That the following responses to the 50th GA be found unsatisfactory, therefore new responses shall be submitted to the following GA:**

**Exception: Jan 23, 2021** (*BCO* 19-2.a) – All specific requirements of licensure exam not recorded.

**Response:** As noted in the minutes, both Mr. [name omitted] and Mr. [name omitted] had been examined in the area of the “inward call to the ministry,” which included their inward call to preach the gospel, during their exams for coming under care. Mr. [name omitted] had been examined at the Stated Presbytery meeting on September 26, 2020, and Mr. [name omitted] had been examined at the Stated Presbytery meeting on April 27, 2019.

**Rationale:** Candidates coming under care are required to be examined “on experiential religion and on his motives for seeking the ministry” (*BCO* 18-3). Licensure requires a “statement of his Christian experience and inward call to preach the Gospel,” which seeks greater scrutiny than to come under care (*BCO* 19-2.a). Furthermore, “No Presbytery shall omit any parts of examination except in extraordinary cases; and whenever a Presbytery shall omit any of these parts, it shall always make a record of the reasons therefore, and of the trial parts omitted.” (*BCO* 19-2).

**Exception: Jan 23, 2021** (*BCO* 19-7) – All specific requirements of internship not recorded.

**Response:** Mr. [name omitted] was a candidate under the care of the Presbytery since being examined at the Stated Presbytery meeting on September 26, 2020. He had given an oral statement of his inward call to the ministry of the Word during that Stated Presbytery meeting and the Presbytery did not choose to re-examine him in this area at the Stated Presbytery in January, but accepted his statement from September 26, 2020. The internship program was presented and approved, he was given the requisite charge, and he was prayed for. It is unclear what further requirements need to be recorded.

**Rationale:** Candidates coming under care are required to be examined “on experiential religion and on his motives for seeking the ministry” (*BCO* 18-3). The process for becoming an intern requires a statement “of his inward call to the ministry of the Word” (*BCO* 19-10). These questions are different, and a single candidate must be examined on both questions.

**Exception: Jan 23, 2021** (*BCO* 19-2.f; *RAO* 16-3.e.5) – Stated differences not recorded in the candidate’s own words.

**Response:** Actually these are exactly the words the candidate submitted. Attached as Exhibit A is the document the Presbytery received from Mr. [name omitted] in preparation of this meeting.

**Rationale:** Presbytery had adopted a motion classifying the Framework Interpretation as “an allowable exception” (Jan 23, 2021, p. 4), and the

candidate declared, “I humbly submit my exception to the phrase ‘in the space of six days’ as I personally hold to a Framework Interpretation.” Stating one’s differences from our confessional standards in one’s own words requires more than citing a different doctrine; a candidate must give his own biblical rationale for exactly what he believes, since “it is the right and responsibility of the Presbytery to determine if the candidate is out of accord with any of the fundamentals of these doctrinal standards and, as a consequence, may not be able to in good faith sincerely to receive and adopt the *Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms* of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures” (*BCO* 21-4.e).

**Exception: Apr 24, 2021** (*BCO* 21-5) – Constitutional vows for ordination not propounded to two ordinands.

**Response:** The Presbytery apologizes for this typo in its Commission’s Report. The actual questions asked and vows taken were the ones from *BCO* 21-5, not 21-9.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO* 16-10.b.1).

**Exception: Apr 24, 2021** (*BCO* 5-9) – All specific requirements for the organization of a particular church not recorded.

**Response:** The Presbytery apologizes for failing to note the reception of petitions from each of the three churches. Petitions were received from the members of all three missions and can provide copies of the same upon request.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO* 16-10.b.1).

**Exception: Aug 7, 2021** (*BCO* 21-4; *RAO* 16- 3.e.5) – All specific requirements of ordination exam not recorded. (No Approval of Theological/Exegetical Papers; Personal Character; Family Management.)

**Response:** Mr. [name omitted] had been examined in the area of his acquaintance with experiential religion, personal character, and family management at the Called Presbytery meeting in July 2019, and was not re-examined in these areas. As noted in the minutes, it was acknowledged that Mr. [name omitted] submitted the necessary theological papers, which includes the Theological and Exegetical Papers required under *BCO* 21-4(c)(2) and (3). The Presbytery does not see where *BCO* 21-4 requires it to approve of said papers, only that preparation by the candidate is necessary.

**Rationale:** Licensure requires a “statement of his Christian experience and inward call to preach the Gospel” (*BCO* 19-2.a). Ordination, requires “A careful examination as to...his acquaintance with experiential religion, especially his personal character and family management (Based on the qualifications set out in 1 Timothy 3:1–7, and Titus 1:6–9)” (*BCO* 21-

4.c.(1).(a)). Thus, questions for ordination are different from questions for licensure, requiring a higher level of Presbytery’s scrutiny. Additionally, all parts of the trials of ordination must be approved, including submitted theological and exegetical papers, since the Presbytery must be “fully satisfied of his qualifications for the sacred office” (*BCO* 21-4.g). Furthermore, “No Presbytery shall omit any of these parts of trial for ordination except in extraordinary cases, and then only with three-fourths (3/4) approval of Presbytery” (*BCO* 21-4.c).

**Exception: Sep 25, 2021** (*BCO* 5-4) – The nature of provision for pastoral ministry for a mission church not clearly defined.

**Response:** The Presbytery apologizes that this is not clear in its minutes, but Rev. [name omitted] was hired as the Prospective Church Planter for [church name omitted].

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO* 16-10.b.1).

**Exception: Sep 25, 2021** (*BCO* 21-5) – Constitutional vows for ordination not propounded to an ordinand.

**Response:** The Presbytery apologizes for this typo in its Commission’s Report. The actual questions asked and vows taken were the ones from *BCO* 21-5, not 21-9.

**Rationale:** No record that Presbytery corrected its record (*RAO* 16-10.b.1).

## VII. Officers Elected for 2023-2024

Chairman: TE Jon Anderson

Vice-Chairman: TE Eddie Lim

Secretary: TE Jacob Gerber

Assistant Secretary: TE Thomas Rickard

## VIII. Roster of Members Present

### *Presbytery*

Arizona

Ascension

Blue Ridge

Calvary

Catawba Valley

Central Carolina

Central Florida

Central Georgia

Central Indiana

Chesapeake

Chicago Metro

### *Representative*

TE Joshua Harp

RE Jay Neikirk

TE Jon Anderson

TE Robert Cathcart

RE Steve Stout

RE Flynt Jones

TE Kevin Gardner

RE Elliot Everitt

TE Mike McBride

TE Donald Dove

TE Caleb Hughes

APPENDIX Q

Columbus Metro	TE Chris Mabee
Covenant	RE Bob Barber
Eastern Canada	RE Mark Hare
Eastern Pennsylvania	RE Terry Carnes
Evangel	TE Greg Poole
Fellowship	TE Branden Williams
Georgia Foothills	RE Marty Moore
Great Lakes	TE Elliot Pinegar
Heartland	TE Dale Thiele
Heritage	TE Jonathan Hatt
Highlands	TE Jim Curtis
Houston Metro	TE Dennis Hermerding
Illiana	TE Harris Adams
Iowa	TE Brian Janssen
James River	RE Matt Fender
Korean Capital	TE David Bae
Korean Central	TE Brian Park
Korean Northeastern	TE Paul Lee
Korean Southeastern	TE Eddie Lim
Metro Atlanta	TE Rush Hill
Metropolitan New York	TE Jim Fredere
Nashville	TE Matt Bradley
New Jersey	TE Stephen O'Neill
New York State	TE Tim LeCroy
North Florida	TE Tommy Park
North Texas	RE Randall Gradle
Northern California	TE Brad Mills
Northern New England	TE Tom Powell
Northwest Georgia	TE Robbie Baxter
Pacific	TE Nicholas Whitaker
Pacific Northwest	TE Jerid Krulish
PeeDee	RE Paul Goodrich
Piedmont Triad	TE Derek Radney
Pittsburgh	TE David Schweissing
Platte Valley	TE Jacob Gerber
Potomac	RE Mark Doehbert
Providence	TE Adam Tisdale
Rocky Mountain	TE Del Farris
Savannah River	TE Ken McHeard

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

South Texas	RE Joshua Torrey
Southeast Alabama	TE Reed DePace
Southern Louisiana	RE Ken Kostrzewa
Southern New England	RE Patrick Sewell
Southwest Florida	TE Freddy Fritz
Suncoast Florida	TE David Stewart
Tennessee Valley	TE Sean Morris
Warrior	TE Michael Perry
West Hudson	TE Christopher Diebold
Westminster	TE Thomas Rickard



**APPENDIX R**

**REPORT OF THE  
THEOLOGICAL EXAMINING COMMITTEE  
TO THE FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
June 2023**

**I. Introduction to the Committee’s Work**

**A. Purpose and Scope of Examinations**

According to our *Book of Church Order*, Teaching Elders should seek office “out of a sincere desire to promote the glory of God in the Gospel of his Son.” In this same spirit, the Theological Examining Committee (comprising 3 Teaching Elders, 3 Ruling Elders, and 2 alternates) serves the General Assembly by ensuring that candidates for positions of influence in our denomination are both gifted for and committed to promoting the glory of God by promoting the biblical gospel of Jesus Christ. Our task, according to *The Book of Church Order*, chapter 4, section 1.14, is to examine “all first and second level administrative officers of committees, boards, and agencies, and those acting temporarily in these positions who are being recommended for first time employment.”

**B. Nature of Examinations**

The examinations we administer resemble those for the ordination of Teaching Elders in the PCA, covering the following areas: Christian experience, theology, the sacraments, church government and the *BCO*, Bible content, church history, and the history of the PCA. Our standard procedure is to administer a written examination covering theological views, followed by an intensive oral examination, which entails not only views but knowledge in these areas.

**II. Summary of the Committee’s Work**

In the past year, the committee has conducted three (3) examinations.

1. On **August 4, 2022**, the committee examined **TE Murray Lee** for the

position of **Executive Coordinator, Mission to North America**. All areas of the exam were sustained and unanimously approved by the committee.

The committee reviewed the nominee's written statement of personal differences with the Westminster Standards, included below, and, per RAO 8-3 and 16.3.e.5, deemed the differences to be more than semantic but neither hostile to the system of doctrine nor striking at the vitals of religion.

*WLC 109 – “If the Divines meant that there should be no creation of images of God to be used in Worship, I take no exception. I do believe, however, that since God has revealed himself in various ways in Scripture:*

*Smoldering Cauldron and a flaming torch: Gen. 15; Pillar of Fire: Ex. 13; and the physical person of Jesus, it may be, at times, impossible when praying not to have images in your mind of God. These images, I agree (according with Ex. 20:4; Deut. 5:8) are not to be used in worship in any way. But it is at times, impossible to not see your own depictions of what Jesus looks like in your mind.*

*I would also make the distinction between a piece of art and a worship context. If not used in a worship context (such as Catholic icons: Ex. 20:4; Deut. 5:8), art can be enjoyable and admired for its own beauty.*

*Biblical pictures, even of Jesus when not in a worship context can also aid children in their understanding of Biblical stories. These pictures are appropriate when explained that we really don't know what Jesus looked like.”*

2. On **October 13, 2022**, the committee examined **TE Chris Vogel** for the position of **Church Planting Coordinator, Mission to North America**. All areas of the exam were sustained and unanimously approved by the committee.

The committee reviewed the nominee's written statement of personal differences with the Westminster Standards, included below, and, per RAO 8-3 and 16.3.e.5, deemed the differences to be more than semantic but neither hostile to the system of doctrine nor striking at the vitals of religion.

WCF 21.8, WLC 117,119, WSC 60,61 – *“I affirm along with the Westminster Confession (WCF 21.8) that the Sabbath is to be kept holy unto the Lord. I likewise affirm setting aside one day in seven, and that day is now the first day of the week in light of the Resurrection. (WLC 116). The Sabbath is a time to find pleasure in God and not in ourselves (Isaiah 58:13-14). This day is to be given over to public and private worship. I do take an exception to the Standards as they frame the Sabbath solely in cultic terms and neglect the larger creation ordinance by its focus on redemption. While I agree that one must not profane the day by idleness and certainly not by doing that which is sinful, I believe (WCF 21.8, WLC 117,119, WSC 60,61) confines the Sabbath in too great a fashion, unnecessarily binding the conscience of believers to determine that their words, works or thoughts may be needless.”*

3. On **April 20, 2023**, the committee examined **TE Cameron Anderson** for the position of **Executive Director, Ridge Haven**. All areas of the exam were sustained and unanimously approved by the committee.

The committee reviewed the nominee’s written statement of personal differences with the Westminster Standards, included below, and, per RAO 8-3 and 16.3.e.5, deemed the differences to be more than semantic but neither hostile to the system of doctrine nor striking at the vitals of religion.

WLC 109 – *“I believe any religious worship not instituted in Scripture is forbidden including the use of any images of God. Additionally, the making of any representation, whether physical or in our minds, of the deity of God the Father, God the Son or God the Holy Spirit is prohibited in the second commandment. Pictures or images of Jesus Christ in the uniqueness of his full human nature (Col 1:15, 2:9, Phil 2:7-8) that he assumed at his conception and still maintains in the heavenly places today, as revealed in Scripture, made for the use of instructing someone, particularly children, in the incarnational life and ministry of Christ, are acceptable. Likewise, images our minds may conjure, or artistic expressions one may produce as they reflect on the Biblical story of Christ in the flesh (e.g., Rev 1:13-16, John 1:14) are reasonable when explicitly focused on his human nature and*

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

*in no way used for, or eliciting a desire to, worship in any form. No visual representation of God should be present in gathered worship. These visual depictions of Christ's earthly ministry are merely profitable for teaching us of the Son assuming human nature and his life revealed in Scripture."*

Respectfully submitted,  
RE Richard Leino, Chairman

RE Edward Currie, Secretary

## APPENDIX S

### ATTENDANCE REPORT FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
<b>Arizona</b>			
Chandler, AZ	Desert Palms	Kelley Hand	
Flagstaff, AZ	Church/Resurrection	Joshua Walker	
Goodyear, AZ	King of Kings	Joshua Harp	
Peoria, AZ	Fellowship of Grace	Jonathan Foster	Dave Price Keith Shull
Queen Creek, AZ	Hope Community	JC Baysinger	
Sun City West, AZ	Covenant	Paul Muresan	
Tucson, AZ	Desert Springs	Steven Cavallaro	
	Rincon Mountain	Mark Lauterbach	
		Matt Esswein	
		DH Henry	
		Justin McLendon	
		Tom Troxell	
<b>Ascension</b>			
Aliquippa, PA	New Life	Jared Nelson	
Beaver, PA	Chapel	Tom Stein Jr.	
Beaver Falls, PA	Christ	Scott Moreland	
Ellwood City, PA	Berean	Cody Hooper	
Erie, PA	Faith Reformed	David Hills	
	West Erie	Marc Miller	
Harrisville, PA	Rocky Springs	Scott Fleming	
Seneca, PA	Christ Covenant PCA	Jeremy Coyer	
Valencia, PA	Gospel Fellowship	David O'Leary	Bill Hohman Dale Hohman Curt Starr Steven Morley Jay Neikirk
Volant, PA	Hillcrest	Stephen Richman	
		Walt Coppersmith	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Blue Ridge</b> Charlottesville, VA	Grace Community Trinity	Jon Anderson Jesse Robinson	John Collmus Michael Martin Bill Porter Craig Wood
Crozet, VA Draper, VA	Hope Draper's Valley	Todd Johnson	Mark Zollinhofer Michael Cooper Stuart Pratt
Floyd, VA	Harvestwood Cov		Don Craighead Charlie Nave
Harrisonburg, VA	Covenant	Tim Frost Burress McCombe Todd Pruitt Aaron Roberts	
Lynchburg, VA Martinsville, VA Roanoke, VA	Mercy Hope Christ the King Providence Westminster	Tony Myers Matthew Pinckard John Pennylegion Jake Hooker Kyle Ferguson	Stephen Hobson
Waynesboro, VA Winchester, VA	Tabernacle Eagle Heights	Essen Daley Clenton Ilderton  Michael Bauer Tom Breeden Josiah Carey John Carroll Dave Gilleran Doug Hart Mick Leary John Pearson Drew Trotter Jr.	
<b>Calvary</b> Abbeville, SC	Lebanon New Hope	John Butler James Norris	John Cook Pat Hodge
Anderson, SC Clemson, SC	New Covenant Clemson	Tom Buitter Bryan Counts	Mark Dodd Will Huss Jr.

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<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Calvary, continued</b>			
Clinton, SC	Westminster	Chad Reynolds	
Easley, SC	Covenant	David Preston	
Fountain Inn, SC	Fairview	Jonathan Williams	
Greenville, SC	Downtown	Brian Habig Jeff Heiser Chandler Machemehl Sam Taaffe	Scott Hultstrand
	Eastside	Mark Auffarth	
	Grace & Peace	Joe Dentici Timothy Udouj	George Koontz
	Horizon	Joseph Franks IV	
	Mitchell Road	Andy Lewis Scott Puckett Neel Skelton	Jon Barkman Bob Caldwell Philip Temple
	Redeemer	Nick Turner	
	Resurrection	Jonathan Davis	
	Second	Brendon Branigin Jeff Early Rick Phillips	Melton Duncan Ron McNeely Kevin Mobley
Greenwood, SC	Greenwood	Paul Patrick	
Greer, SC	Antioch	Zachary Groff	
	Fellowship	Marty Martin Andrew Newman	Terry Richards
Laurens, SC	Friendship	Robert Cathcart Jr.	
Reidville, SC	Reidville		Larry Bradley
Roebuck, SC	Mount Calvary	Jim Stephenson Richard Thomas	Josh Killen
Seneca, SC	Crossgate	Jay Brown	
Simpsonville, SC	Christ Community	Paul Sanders	James Compton Dale Olsen
	Palmetto Hills	Josh Martin	
	Woodruff Road	Scotty Anderson Dan Dodds Taylor King Carl Robbins	Derek Scott Stephen Wilkinson
		Todd Buchner Mike Cuneo Jonathan Master	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Calvary, continued</b>			
		Rod Mays Joey Pipa Jr. Roy Taylor Jr. Jeffrey Windt	
<b>Canada West</b>			
Calgary, AB	Woodgreen	Don Hulsey	Paul Mandry
Langley, BC	Christ Covenant	Garry Vanderveen	
Lethbridge, AB	Westminster Chapel	Adam Harris	
		Yuji Iwata	
<b>Catawba Valley</b>			
Charlotte, NC	Prosperity StoneBridge	Bruce Brown Kevin Burrell	Keith Lewis
Harrisburg, NC	Grace	Eugene Oldham	Jay Krestar Daniel Nicholas
Mooresville, NC	Harbor	Michael Colvard Tyler Spry	
Mount Ulla, NC	Shearer Back Creek	Steve Stout Bill Thrailkill	Corey Wing
		Will Faires Jr. Andrew Goyzueta	
<b>Central Carolina</b>			
Albemarle, NC	Second Street	John Black	Rob Rawls
Charlotte, NC	Christ Central Hope Community	Josh Kim Matt Guzi Andrew King Trip Smith III Mark Upton	
	South Charlotte	Josh Creason Dean Faulkner	George Kurz Joe Spencer
	Sovereign Grace	Bill Barclay Ben Thomas	Jason McArthur Jerry Youngblood
	Uptown	Jordan Olshefski	Tim Shorey
Ellerbe, NC	First	Stan Layton	
Fayetteville, NC	Cross Creek	Michael Mock	Steve Bennett



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<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Central Carolina, continued</b>			
Indian Trail, NC Locust, NC	Church/Redeemer Carolina	Matt Harris Salatiel Chuc Cory Colravv	Johnny Surles Blair Burke Dave Eddy Shane Everts
Matthews, NC	Christ Covenant	Kevin DeYoung Tom Groelsema Joel May	Brent Andersen Curt Johnson Flynt Jones Jim Sutton
Mount Gilead, NC Sanford, NC Southern Pines, NC	Lake Tillery Christ Redeemer	Chip McAulay Ralph Johnston Bob Owen III  Monty Kirk III Drew Martin Matt Moynihan Will Ross	
<b>Central Florida</b>			
Casselberry, FL DeLand, FL Dunnellon, FL Eustis, FL Kissimmee, FL Lake Mary, FL Lecanto, FL Maitland, FL	Chinese Evan Christ Immanuel Springs New Hope Kissimmee Fell River Oaks Seven Rivers Orangewood	Moses Han Tyler Kenney Keeth Staton Richard Burguet Heath Zuniga David Camera Michael Hart Chuck Berry Joe Creech Tyler Groff	James Miller David Moore
Melbourne, FL Minneola, FL Ocala, FL	Northside New Life PCA Good Shepherd	Jeffrey Godwin John Bopp Michael Rauls	Bob Mattes  Tommy Craggs Mike Whitaker
Orlando, FL	Grace Redeemer Comm Christ United Fell	Theo van Blerk Chuck DeBardeleben Michael Aitcheson	Gregory Hersey Chris Luciano
Oviedo, FL	Lake Baldwin St. Paul's University Covenant	Brian Lum Shue Chan Justin Borger Rick Gilmartin Randy Greenwald	John Maynard

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Central Florida, continued</b>			
Palm Bay, FL	Covenant	Jonathan Culley	
Port Orange, FL	Spruce Creek	Josh Owen	Vic Headley
Sanford, FL	Saint Andrews	Don Bailey Jr. Kevin Struyk	John Cleninden Michael Crotty Steven DeLoach Andrew
St. Cloud, FL Augenstein	Lake Nona	Angel Roman	Kevin Chase
Titusville, FL	Christ Community	Daniel Levi	
Vero Beach, FL	Christ the King	Seth Wallace	
		Michael Allen Levi Berntson Zachary Cole Kevin Gardner Aaron Garriott Michael Glodo Richard Greete Jonathan Iverson Patrick Lennox Don Mountan Robert Rothwell Benjamin Shaw Scott Swain Mike Tilley John Tweeddale	
<b>Central Georgia</b>			
Columbus, GA	Westminster	Mitch McGinnis	
Eatonton, GA	Lake Oconee	Jeff Birch Mike Palombo	Bill McCartney George Rountree
Forsyth, GA	Dayspring	David Martin	Lloyd Strickland
Kathleen, GA	Houston Lake	Paul Bankson	Keith Duvall
Macon, GA	First	Elliott Everitt	Christopher Marks Jerome Strickland William White
	North Macon	Hunter Stevenson	Thomas James III Paul McCommon Rob Morton
	Strong Tower Fell	Brett Barbee	

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<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Central Georgia, continued</b>			
Midland, GA	St. Andrews	Grant Gilliam	John Mitchell Chris Schuster
Milledgeville, GA	Covenant	Kreg Bryan	Richard Jacobs Doug Pohl
Perry, GA	Perry	Parker Agnew	Daniel Peterson
Thomasville, GA	Christ Community	Trey Jackson Mike Davis Bill Douglas Tim Grider	
<b>Central Indiana</b>			
Fishers, IN	Crossroads Comm	David Peters	
Indianapolis, IN	Fountain Square Grace	Pat Hickman Nicholas Davelaar John Peoples Jr.	Dan Barber III
	Midtown New City Redeemer	Taylor Bradbury Charles Anderson Sam Haist Jeff Nottingham Ben Reed	KJ Drake Nathan Partain Bill Taft
Noblesville, IN	Living Branch	Keith Doane	
Richmond, IN	Christ	David Chambers Rich Hawkins David Young	
Yorktown, IN	New Life	Bob O'Bannon  Jared McClain	
<b>Chesapeake</b>			
Annapolis, MD	Evangelical	Drew Wilkins	
Arnold, MD	Broadneck Evan	Brian March Jon Pickens	
Baltimore, MD	Faith Christian Fell	JB Watkins	
Columbia, MD	City of Hope	John Song	
Davidsonville, MD	Grace	Jerry Straight	
Dundalk, MD	Inverness	Michael Weltin	
Forest Hill, MD	Aisquith Forest Hill	John Ceselsky Jason Van Bommel	
Havre de Grace, MD	Living Hope	Donald Dove	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Chesapeake, continued</b>			
Lutherville, MD	Hope Chapel Valley	Sebastian Kim Mark Tippin	George Anderson
Marriottsville, MD	Chapelgate	Steve Dallwig Mike Khandjian	Ed Wright
Millersville, MD	Han-Sarang Evan Severn Run Evan	Benjamin Kim Jesse Crutchley	Brad Chwastyk Jeremiah Horner
Owings Mills, MD	Liberty	Arch Van Devender	Chuck Klein Jr. Steven Madden
Parkville, MD	Loch Raven	David Milligan	
Pasadena, MD	Severna Park Evan	Dan Smith Michael Stephan	
Reisterstown, MD	Covenant of Grace	Mark Samuel	
Severn, MD	Grace Point	Josh Sillaman	
Stevensville, MD	Safe Harbor	Mark Robertson	
Westminster, MD	Deep Run	Brian LoPiccolo	
		Daniel Iverson III Stan Long	
<b>Chicago Metro</b>			
Chicago, IL	Covenant	Dan Adamson Aaron Baker David Salsedo	
Crown Point, IN	Living Hope Grace	Taylor Franchuk Brad McMurray John Rogers	
Frankfort, IL	Peace Community	Kurt Kruger	Gary Enguita Steven Jellema
Hinsdale, IL	Trinity	Geoff Ziegler	
Lansing, IL	First		Donald Kooy
Naperville, IL	Naperville	Davy Chu	
Oak Park, IL	Boulevard	Jeff Schneider	
Roselle, IL	Christ	Joe Cristman Pablo Herrera Caleb Odell	Gary Templin
Tinley Park, IL	Redemption	Caleb Hughes	
Vernon Hills, IL	Lakeview	Bo Collins III	
		Ian Hammond	

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<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Columbus Metro</b>			
Dublin, OH	Northwest	Chris Mabee Dave Schutter	Chip Crickard
Gahanna, OH	Walnut Creek	Jonathan Robson	
Granville, OH	The Granville Chapel	Dan Layman	
Westerville, OH	Story	Justin Grimm  Mike Ross	
<b>Covenant</b>			
Aberdeen, MS	Faith	David Harrell	Dunlap Catledge
Charleston, MS	First	Paul Long Jr.	
Clarksdale, MS	First	Ryan Dean	Travis Larson
Cleveland, MS	Covenant	Bill Berry Ben Ratliff Tim Starnes Hunter Brewer	Matthew Mullins David Robinson Jacob Taylor
Collierville, TN	Trinity		
Columbus, MS	Main Street		Justin Harris John Russell
Cordova, TN	Grace Community	Ashley Dusenbery	Rick Hall Frank Riley
Corinth, MS	Trinity	John Windham	
Dyersburg, TN	First	Gage Jordan	
Eads, TN	Hickory Withe	Doug Barcroft	Lou Cardamone Stephen White
Fort Smith, AR	Covenant	John Clayton	Greg Bailey Jon Hendrickson
Germantown, TN	Riveroaks Reformed	Kyle Dillon Tommy Lee Jr. Drew Turberville	
Greenville, MS	Covenant	David Frierson	Collins Brent
Greenwood, MS	Westminster	Richard Owens Josh Reagan	
Hernando, MS	Christ Covenant	Jim Plunk	Bob Barber Shaun Sipe
Horn Lake, MS	Christ Fellowship	Mike Winebrenner	
Hot Springs, AR	Hope	Scott Davis	Billy Eddy
Indianola, MS	First	Duncan Hoopes	Jason Conner Q. Davis Jr. Erik Lessmann

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Covenant, continued</b>			
Jackson, TN	Covenant	Steven Wright	Keith Posey Rod Staton
Little Rock, AR	Grace	Scott Floyd	Charles Hawkins
	Central Hope	Daniel Anderson	Blake Reap Jordan Washington
Memphis, TN	Covenant	Derek Coyle Tim Reed	
	Independent	Robert Browning Sean Lucas Ed Norton Brad Robson Ronnie Rowe Parker Tenent	Cannon Allen David Caldwell Rob Mitchum Melvin Payne Jack Stokes Peter Winterburn
	Redeemer	Matt Howell Austin Lenox Ben Winkler	Jake Vargo
Olive Branch, MS	Christ	Logan Almy Daniel Stanphill	Dick Butler Jim Yates
Oxford, MS	Christ	Les Newsom Curt Presley III	
Russellville, AR	College Hill		Micah Everett
	Covenant	Jonathan Sargent	
Saltillo, MS	Redeemer		Jeremy Foster
Sherwood, AR	Trinity Fellowship	Brad DeVries	
Somerville, TN	Christ	Tyler Kenyon	Mike Atkeison Bill Rhea
Starkville, MS	Grace	Seth Starkey	Jonathan Barlow
Tupelo, MS	Lawndale	Bill Bradford	Jamey Finley
Water Valley, MS	First	Harold Spraberry	Barron Caulfield Clyde Herron Jr.
		Alan Cochet John Crosby Bryant Hansen Sr. Steve Hill Samuel Husband Don Locke Tom Mirabella Don Riley John Sartelle	

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<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Covenant, continued</b>			
		Jim Shull Clint Wilcke Randy Williams	
<b>Eastern Canada</b>			
Bedford, NS	Bedford	Bill Radford	
Gatineau, QC	Grace Gatineau	Frank Garcia	
Halifax, NS	Christ	Michael Chhangur	
Ottawa, ON	Resurrection	Ben Jolliffe	
Toronto, ON	Christ	Kyle Hackmann	Rick Swagerman Wilson Wong
<b>Eastern Carolina</b>			
Cary, NC	Peace	Doug Domin Chris Florence Ken Langley	Dan Prins
Clayton, NC	Christ	John Musgrave	
Dunn, NC	Christ	Tim Inman	
Durham, NC	Christ Central Church/Good Shep	Evan Marbury Bob Burns Chris Garrett Chuck Jacob	Glen Berkel
Jacksonville, NC	Harvest		Tom Phillips
Knightdale, NC	Reconciliation	Russell McCutcheon	
Morrisville, NC	Trinity Park	Corey Jackson	
Princeton, NC	Progressive	Shawn Willis	
Raleigh, NC	Christ The King Redeemer	James Sutton Ross Jelgerhuis Dan Seale	Bruce Narveson Michael Newkirk
Wake Forest, NC	Christ Our Hope	Timothy Sharpe Gabe Sylvia Jr.	
Wilmington, NC	Christ the King	Wes Strebeck	Tim Pattison Ron West
Wilson, NC	Wilson	Andy Raynor  Skylar Adams Andy Jones	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Eastern Pennsylvania</b>			
Allentown, PA	Lehigh Valley	Matt Franchetti	Ken George
Center Valley, PA	Cornerstone	Matt Bostrom	
Dresher, PA	New Life	Clint Estes	
		Dave Hopping	
Easton, PA	Bridge Community	Tim Gorbey	
Hatfield, PA	Lansdale	Brian Hand	
		Chris Kennedy	
Moosic, PA	Hope	Taylor Bradley	Bill Barnes
Quakertown, PA	Providence	Jonathan Kuciemba	
Warminster, PA	Christ Covenant	Mark Herzer	Terry Carnes
Willow Grove, PA	Calvary	Angel Gomez	
		Jonathan Eide	
		David Green	
<b>Evangel</b>			
Alabaster, AL	Evangel	Alex Goodsell	Levoy Bankson
Birmingham, AL	Altadena Valley	Brad Allison	Karl Poythress
		Blake Harris	
	Briarwood	Jim Alexander	Billy Ball
		Max Bunn	Doug Haskew
		Kotaro Hamamatsu	Mark Hess
		Stephen King	Matt Moore
		Rob Looper	Loring Muir
		Dave Matthews	Drew Ricketts
		Saeyoung Park	Mike Sanders
		Jay Shaw	Bob Sproul Jr.
		Sunghoon Shin	Bryan Wintersteen
		Ray Tucker	Charles Woodall
		Michael Wichlan	
		Benny Youngblood Jr.	
	Cahaba Park	John Pearson	
		Jamie Peterson Sr.	
	Covenant	David Driskill	Bill Bennett
		John Fountain	Nathan Collums
		Robby Holt	John Pickering
		Josh Johnson	Steve Stigler
		Henry Morris	
	Faith	Carl Smith	Johnny Johnson
		Martin Wagner	



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<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>	
<b>Evangel, continued</b>				
	Oak Mountain	Bob Flayhart PD Mayfield Tom Patton III Greg Poole Chad Walker	Tim Bennett Nathan Kirkpatrick	
	Red Mountain	Matt Clegg Charles Johnson	Cole Gresham Miles Gresham	
	Third	Michael Brock Anton Ivanov Hunter Twitty		
Homewood, AL	Homewood Comm	Tom Franklin	Brandon Robbins	
Hoover, AL	Cross Creek	Chris Peters		
Jacksonville, AL	Hope Community	Steve Mayes		
Jasper, AL	First	Scott Pierce		
Moody, AL	Community	Robby Grames III	Matthew Duke Joe Ellis	
Pell City, AL	Lakewood	Daniel Leavengood	Thomas Crawford Wade Hooper Michael McMillan	
Pinson, AL	Mount Calvary	Philip Rich		
Rainbow City, AL	Rainbow			
Sylacauga, AL	Knollwood	Mark Jessup		
Trussville, AL	Christ	Michael Davis James Dickson		
		Mark Cushman Howard Eyrich Murray Lee Alex Sarran Ken Stuart III		
<b>Fellowship</b>				
Chester, SC	Trinity	Richard Wheeler		Steven Palecek Neil Allen Steve Britt
	Zion	Al Ward Jr.		
Clover, SC	Bethel	Trent Thomas		Chad Cureton Dwight Hazard
Fort Mill, SC	Christ Ridge	Michael Dixon Branden Williams	Gordon Kerr Chris Arnold	
Lake Wylie, SC	Redeeming Grace	Devin Kahan		
McConnells, SC	Olivet	Chip McArthur Jr.		
Rock Hill, SC	Hopewell	Jason Anderson		

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Fellowship, continued</b>			
	Westminster	Caleb Blow	Bill Cranford Jr.
Van Wyck, SC	Trinity	Chris Sewell	Joe Bilbro
York, SC	Filbert	Jeff Bryant	Dan Hall
	Temple	Dave Hall	
		Greg Marshall	Jeff Gott
		Mark Ashbaugh	
		Michael Lee	
		Wallace Tinsley Jr.	
<b>Georgia Foothills</b>			
Alpharetta, GA	Open Door Comm	Joshua Cho	
Athens, GA	Redeemer	Wes Andrews	
		Matt Siple	
Blairsville, GA	Grace	Christian Brewer	
Chestnut Mtn, GA	Chestnut Mountain	Travis Brown	Marty Moore
		Ben Phillips	James Zeller
Clarksville, GA	Christ	Hobie Wood	
		Steve Woodworth	
Dacula, GA	Restoration		Richard Dolan
Duluth, GA	Old Peachtree	Joe Deighton	Owen Malcolm
		Alan Johnson	Jack Wilson
Gainesville, GA	Westminster	Barr Overcast	
Monroe, GA	Haynes Creek	Jeff Morgan	Josh Fuller
Watkinsville, GA	Faith	Steven Brooks	Jerry Norris
		Nathan Parker	
Winder, GA	Northside	Tim Weldon	
		Dwight Dunn	
		Ed Dunnington	
		Stephen Estock	
		Alan Foster	
		Bruce Owens	
<b>Grace</b>			
Centreville, MS	Thomson Memorial	Eric Greene	
Collins, MS	Collins		Ronnie Eaves
Crystal Springs, MS	First		Bob Lee
Gulfport, MS	First	Gardner Fish	Bryan Kelly
		Toby Holt	John Kitch

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<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Grace, continued</b>			
Hattiesburg, MS	Bay Street	Brian Davis	Sam Duncan Mike Smith
	First	Knox Baird Zeek Dean	Randy Henderson Arrington Rhett
	Woodland	David Irving	Troy Gibson
Hazlehurst, MS	First	James Logan	
Mize, MS	Calvary	Jackson Lin	Ricky Allen
Natchez, MS	New Covenant	John Franklin	Tommy Ellett
Picayune, MS	First		Dick Ulerich
Summit, MS	New Covenant	Brian McCollough Danny Ruth	Chris Bird
		David Jussely Randy Kimbrough Larry Mills	
<b>Great Lakes</b>			
Ann Arbor, MI	Christ	Jeremy Byrd	Jim Lopez
Brighton, MI	Pathway Community	Andrew Chesebro	
Dearborn, MI	Grace	Jerry Riendeau	
Detroit, MI	Redeemer	DeMyron Haynes Jon Saunders	Jerome Gorgon
East Lansing, MI	University Reformed	Jason Helopoulos Kevin Phipps Devon Rossman Nick Settingrington	David Hinkley Allan Knapp Scott Zeilstra
Fenton, MI	Tyrone Covenant	Lawrence Bowlin David Groendyk	
Ferndale, MI	New City	Matt Luchenbill	
Ft. Wayne, IN	Providence	Tony Garbarino	Ross Harris
Grand Rapids, MI	Christ		Bryan Burke Bob La Fleur Jerry Stutzman
	Gracehill	Ben Seneker	
Granger, IN	Michiana Covenant	Peter Wallace	Mark Hanson Jacob Stoltzfus
Harrison Tnship, MI	Knox	Doug Graham	
Holland, MI	Redeemer	Chip Byrd	
Hudsonville, MI	Trinity	Jeremy Visser	
Kalamazoo, MI	Good Shepherd	Ryan Potter Neil Quinn	Steve DeVries

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Great Lakes, continued</b>			
Traverse City, MI	Redeemer	Austin Reed	
Valparaiso, IN	Good Shepherd	Andrew Gretzinger	Chris Erickson Jim Martin
		Shiv Muthukumar Elliott Pinegar Timothy Wilson	
<b>Gulf Coast</b>			
Cantonment, FL	Pinewoods	David Balzer	Don Roe
Destin, FL	Safe Harbor	James Calderazzo	
Fairhope, AL	Eastern Shore	Pat Davey	Mike McCrary
		Kyle Parker	John McMenamin
Foley, AL	Grace Fellowship	Rick Fennig	Rick Sullivan
Ft. Walton Beach, FL	Westminster	Chad Watkins	Jason Belcher Mike Neill Joel Holston
Gulf Breeze, FL	Concord	Jonathan Becker	
Gulf Shores, AL	Gulf Coast	Bill Bennett	
Lillian, AL	Lillian Fellowship	Dean Conkel	
Loxley, AL	Loxley	Andrew Colbert	Jay Colbert Doug Vermeulen
Mobile, AL	Christ Christ Redeemer Grace Community	Joshua Sparkman Ben Nelson Dustin Belue Jim Bryars	
Niceville, FL	First	Joe Grider	Hank Jackson Shawn Mitchell
Panama City, FL	Covenant First	Stephen Tipton Heath Taws	Jonathan Hayes Matt Teplicek
Pensacola, FL	Fairfield	Ralph LaGuardia	
Quincy, FL	New Philadelphia	Matthew Creamer	
Tallahassee, FL	CenterPoint Westminster	Brian Douglas Sean McGowan	George Close Brett Doster
	Wildwood	David McNeely	
		Gary Cox Jonathan Craig Kelly Jackson Dennis Shackelford	

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<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Gulfstream</b>			
Boca Raton, FL	Spanish River	Al Barth David Cassidy	Mike Veitz
Jupiter, FL	Sand Harbor	Andrew Jacobson	Bob Brunjes
Palm Beach Gard, FL	Cornerstone	Mark Murnan	Warren Kendrick David Lauver
Port St. Lucie, FL	Christ the King	Jason Paugh	
Stuart, FL	Grace	Bernie van Eyk	
	Treasure Coast	Rob Edenfield	
Wellington, FL	Christ Community	Peter Bartuska	
<b>Heartland</b>			
Andover, KS	Kirk of the Plains	Rick Franks	
Lawrence, KS	Grace	George Boomer	Scott Rask
Lees Summit, MO	Christ the Redeemer	Billy Hastings	Steve Campbell
		Aaron Suber	Jim Slocomb
Olathe, KS	New Hope	Jim Baxter	Vernon Dekker
		Tim Elliott	Larry Hauck
Overland Park, KS	Redeemer	Nathan Currey	Lance Kinzer
		Tony Felich	
Shawnee, KS	Oak Hills	John Lee	
		Dale Thiele	
Wichita, KS	Evangel	Tim Rackley	
	Heartland Comm	Jonathan Whitley	Randy Brock Morten Vigilius
		Tom Johnson	
		Craig Sheppard	
<b>Heritage</b>			
Dover, DE	Grace	Kenny Foster	
Elkton, MD	Fair Hill	Steve Coward	
		Peter Lamme	
Kemblesville, PA	Cornerstone	Billy Haines	Ralph Jarrell George Pauley David Crossan
Middletown, DE	Crossroads		
	The Town (PCA)	Scott Winchester	
Millsboro, DE	East Gate	Kevin Gladding	
Newark, DE	Evangelical	Chad Barber	Bill Zinkand
Salisbury, MD	Providence	Peter Render	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Heritage, continued</b>			
Smyrna, DE	CenterPoint	Dave Dorst	
Wilmington, DE	City Faith Hope	Israel Ruiz Ore Michael Yurik Jonathan Hatt	
		Rick Gray	
<b>Highlands</b>			
Arden, NC	Arden	James Buckner Jr.	David Livernois
Asheville, NC	Covenant Reformed	Jim Curtis Sean McCann	
	Grace & Peace Trinity	Jonathan Inman Joe Mullen III Robert Recio	Rob Patete Brandon Ray Stephen Todd
Boone, NC	Grace Highlands	Graham Svendsen	
Elizabethton, TN	Memorial	Tim Mindemann	Robert King
Franklin, NC	Emmanuel	Tim McQuitty	Keith Hester
Mills River, NC	Grace Mills River	Patrick Lafferty	
Morganton, NC	Faith	Danny Beck	
Sylva, NC	Redeemer	Steven Hansen	
		Andy Adams Cameron Anderson Lonnie Barnes Craig Bulkeley Scott Hill Andrew Shank	
<b>Hills and Plains</b>			
Bartlesville, OK	Hope	Shane Pennington	
Bentonville, AR	Christ	Aaron Raines Chris Taylor	
Edmond, OK	Heritage	Wes Martin Michael Philliber	Allan Wehe
	King's Cross	Casey Shutt	
Fayetteville, AR	Christ Community Covenant	Andrew Brill Jay Bruce Paul Sagan	Jeff Chewning Matthew Lee
Grove, OK	Three Rivers	Mark Kuiper	
Joplin, MO	Christ the King	Levi Bakerink	

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<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Hills and Plains, continued</b>			
Norman, OK	Christ the King	Mike Biggs	Dewayne Taylor
Oklahoma City, OK	City	Jason Hsu	
Owasso, OK	Trinity	Blake Altman	Barry Blades
Rogers, AR	Trinity Grace	Chris Miller	Noel Henley
		Brandon Van Marel	Stephen Rowe
Siloam Springs, AR	Redeemer	Ted Wenger	
Stillwater, OK	Grace	Jason Averill	Eddy Moore
Tulsa, OK	Christ	Jason Bobo	Heath Kirkeby
	Grace & Peace	Jeremy Fair	
	New City Fellowship	Shane Hatfield	
	RiverOaks	Caleb Long	
		Jonathan Dorst	
		Ricky Jones	
		Wilson Van Hooser	
<b>Houston Metro</b>			
Beaumont, TX	Reformed	Mark Blalack	Ryan Bowling
	Riverside	Josh Rieger	Chuck Heare
Bellaire, TX	Southwest	David Wakeland	Eric Manthei
Houston, TX	Advent	Taylor Leachman	Winston Dollahon
	Christ	Richard Harris	Markus Berger
			Keith Pendergrass
			Ken Wynne
	Christ the King	Clay Holland	Tim Brown
		John Trapp	Ronny Cuenod
		Andres Zelaya	David Durin
	Cornerstone	Blake Arnoult	Neal Wade
			Philip Whitley
	Covenant	Lou Veiga	Andy Edwards
			Jeremy Thomas
Huntsville, TX	Christ	Nolan Williamson	Clint Allen
			Mark Fullerton
Katy, TX	Christ	Fred Greco	Mike Burns
		Curt Mire	Neal Hare
		Jason Wegener	
Lufkin, TX	Covenant	Mark O'Neill	Kirk Fearing
Spring, TX	Spring Cypress	Ben Duncan	Justin Chandler
			Erik Haaland

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Houston Metro, continued</b>			
The Woodlands, TX	Grace	Kyle Bobos Bradley Wright	
		Brooks Harwood	
<b>Illiana</b>			
Carbondale, IL	Grace	Harris Adams	Keith Phillips
Cutler, IL	Reformed	Curt Rabe	Keith Boyce
Edwardsville, IL	Center Grove	Ryan Diehl	Andre Kok
Evansville, IN	Providence	Bill Hill Jr.	
Godfrey, IL	Westminster		Charles Martin
Marissa, IL	Marissa	James Ryan	Rollie Canning
Owensboro, KY	Christ	John Birkett	
Sparta, IL	Bethel Reformed	Alex Eppstein	
Terre Haute, IN	Living Hope	Chris Rufener	
Troy, IL	Providence	Scott Edburg	Scott Lollar Larry Rodgers
Waterloo, IL	Concord	Brian Sandifer	
		Will Hesterberg	
<b>Iowa</b>			
Des Moines, IA	Redeemer	Wayne Larson	
Holland, IA	Colfax Center	Luke Wolfe	
Hospers, IA	Hospers	Brian Janssen	
Iowa City, IA	One Ancient Hope		Chris Sutton
Ledyard, IA	Bethany Evan & Ref	Colin Andrade	
North Liberty, IA	Hope Evangelical	Lincoln Larsen	
Urbandale, IA	Westkirk		Mark Bakker
<b>James River</b>			
Fredericksburg, VA	Evident Grace Fell New City Fellowship	David Fischer Bob Becker	Matt Murray Doc Murdoc Eugene Rivers Doug Bergen
	New Life in Christ	Sam Capitano Robert Rumbaugh Sean Whitenack	
Hopewell, VA	West End	Eric Dugan	Sam Couch



APPENDIX S

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>James River, continued</b>			
	West Hopewell		Pat Maddox Eric Wagner
Midlothian, VA	Iglesia Hispana Spring Run Sycamore	Arnold Lavaire Andrew Conrad Sean Sawyers	Brian Kaman Robert Adams Matt Fender Rick Hutton
Powhatan, VA	Evergreen Comm	Nick Krauss	
Richmond, VA	All Saints Reformed	Dennis Bullock	
	Church Hill City	Steve Moulson Erik Bonkovsky Harrison Ford	
	Crown and Joy Stony Point Ref	Stanley Morton Dan Carrell	
Stafford, VA	West End Hope of Christ	Joe Brown Leonard Bailey	
		Leonard Liu Harry Long Jim Pulizzi	
<b>Korean Capital</b>			
Baltimore, MD	Harris Creek Comm	Hansoo Jin	Young Ho Chang Yong Chong
Centreville, VA	Christ Central	Peter Kim Sam Kim Bobby Suh Albert Young	
	Korean Central	Eung Yul Ryoo	Phillip S. Cho Sang Choi Charles Gill Jack Kim John Park Guang Yon
Weon			Han Song Yang
Chantilly, VA	Korean	Yong Ho Cha	
Clarksville, MD	Harvest	Walter Lee Brian Shim Steve Yoon	
Fairfax, VA	Korean	Paul Bang	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
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**Korean Capital, continued**

Laurel, MD	Covenant	Dong Woo Kim	
		Daniel Baeq	
		Mark Oh	

**Korean Central**

Ann Arbor, MI	Korean	Jae Joong Hwang	
Columbia, MO	Korean First	Han Joo Park	
Glenview, IL	First Korean	Stephen Jon	
Grayslake, IL	Cornerstone	Joseph Kim	
Indianapolis, IN	Eunhye Korean	Paul Cho	
Nixa, MO	First Korean	Ju-Heon Lyu	
Palatine, IL	Bethel	Anson Lee	
St. Ann, MO	First Korean	Shinkwon Lee	
St. Louis, MO	Korean	Luke Kim	
		Taejin Park	
St. Robert, MO	Calvary	Youngjin Moon	
		Samuel Kang	
		Sagar Mekwan	
		Sungwoo Nam	
		Chang Kwon Suh	

**Korean Eastern**

Ambler, PA	Sarang Nanum Comm	Seogwoo Sun	
Dillsburg, PA	First Korean	David Kim	
Lansdale, PA	Cornerstone	Andrew Kim	
State College, PA	State College Korean	Kyu Hong Yeon	
		Jonathan Kim	

**Korean Northeastern**

Tenafly, NJ	Glory Community	Sam Sung	
		Paul Lee	

**Korean Northwest**

Aloha, OR	Oregon Eden	Joshua Kim	
Anchorage, AK	Anchorage New Life	Yong Dok Pak	

APPENDIX S

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
<b>Korean Northwest, continued</b>			
Honolulu, HI	Hawaii Central	Daniel Jung	
Lacey, WA	Olympia One Light	Choon Sik Park	
Sacramento, CA	CrossPoint	Ezra Kim	
		Chun Ho Oh	
Walnut Creek, CA	Heavenly	Jeremiah Kim	
<b>Korean Southeastern</b>			
Charlotte, NC	Charlotte	Sungkyun Na	
Ft. Walton Beach, FL	FWB International	Joshua Jea	
Jackson, MS	Korean American	Ki Won Jang	
Knoxville, TN	Korean Sarang	Jin Eun Jung	
Macon, GA	Macon Korean	Changwon Choi	
Norcross, GA	Atlanta Siloam	Kevin Kim	
Ocala, FL	Ocala Korean	Sam Kim	
Ocoee, FL	Him	Juseong Paek	
Orlando, FL	Orlando Korean	Jae Lee	
Panama City, FL	Panama City Korean	Zadok Hong	
Peachtree Crnrs, GA	New		Yoonho Kang
Pike Road, AL	Montgomery Open	Kyung Jae Seo	
Sharpsburg, GA	Saebit Korean	Ik Joon Park	
Suwanee, GA	Christ Covenant	Young Choi	
	Grace Community	Eddie Lim	
		Billy Park	
Temple Terrace, FL	Chodae Comm	Injib Kim	
		Terence Ng	
		Bill Sim	
		Daniel Song	
<b>Korean Southern</b>			
Carrollton, TX	Dallas Dream	Sung Eun Yoon	
	Hope	Gu Kwang Lee	
Corpus Christi, TX	Korean Grace	Sunggu Won	
Friends Wood, TX	Houston	Soo Dong Kim	
Houston, TX	Korean Faith	In Seung Lee	
Katy, TX	Global	Peter Suk	
	Zion Christian	Sang Do Lee	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Korean Southwest</b>			
Diamond Bar, CA	Global	Daniel Chin Daniel Kim Kenny Lee	
San Fernando, CA	Gateway	Sang Kim	
Torrance, CA	Redeemer	James Han	
Valencia, CA	Jesus Family	Seongryong Kwon	
<b>Korean Southwest Orange County</b>			
Fullerton, CA	New Life	Will Chang  James Suh	Alex Jun
<b>Lowcountry</b>			
Beaufort, SC	First Scots	Alex Mark Steven Walton	Mark Senn Ron Woernle
Bluffton, SC	Grace Coastal	Jason Crenshaw	
Charleston, SC	Church Creek	Nick Batzig Michael Walters	David Walters Jr.
Goose Creek, SC	Metro North	John Schley	Nate Arnold
Hilton Head Is, SC	Hilton Head	Michael Craddock William McCutchen Harrison Spitler	Earl Crown
Mount Pleasant, SC	Christ Church	Jon Payne	George Carter Tom Clark
Orangeburg, SC	Eastbridge	Daniel Cohee	
Summerville, SC	Trinity	John Mark Patrick	
	Hope Community	Nathan Francis Brandon Hawkes	
		Sam Joyner Jr.	
<b>Metro Atlanta</b>			
Alpharetta, GA	Living Fellowship	Andrew Harwell	
Atlanta, GA	Atlanta Westside	Walter Henegar Nagib Hermes Woonny Kim	John Gunter Byron Johnson
	Brookhaven		David McNay
	ChristChurch	Peter Jackson	Chris LeCraw Randy Stair
	Church/Redeemer	Bob Brunson	Chuck Francis

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<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Metro Atlanta, continued</b>			
	City Intown Community	Scott Armstrong Jimmy Agan III	Jason Kang Jim Wert Jr.
	Ponce Westminster	Tolivar Wills Rush Hill Aaron Messner Carlton Wynne	Russell Berry Chet Lilly John White Jr.
Covington, GA	Trinity	Matt Abel Rob Rienstra	
Cumming, GA	GracePointe	James Nichols	David Vogelpohl
Dahlonega, GA	Creekstone	Rich Good	
Fayetteville, GA	Covenant	Jamie Lambert John Sutton	Terry Starr
	Redemption Fell		Frank Brown
Franklin, GA	Salem	Bill Heard	
Johns Creek, GA	Joy of All Nations Perimeter	Tony Thomas Howard Brown Bob Cargo Bob Carter Caleb Click Herschel Hatcher Matthew Means Randy Pope Eric Ryan Randy Schlichting Jerry Schriver Chip Sweney Jr.	James Christerson Simon Cole Tino Imbesi Darryl Jackson Gordon Moore John Morris Brad Nelson John Purcell III Randy Renbarger Bryan White Bill Wood
Lawrenceville, GA	New City	Brandon Dean Ryan Johnson James Martin	
Lilburn, GA	Parkview	Tim Locke	Francois Longeiret
Marietta, GA	East Cobb	Drew Archer	
Newnan, GA	Christ	Timothy Gwin	Vic Gaylor
Peachtree City, GA	Carriage Lane	Sam Hogan	Greg Janos Greg Rosser
Stockbridge, GA	The Rock	John Stovall	
Tucker, GA	Tucker	Erik Veerman  John Burch McKay Caston George Hamm	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

City/State	Church	Teaching Elder	Ruling Elder
<b>Metro Atlanta, continued</b>			
		Stephen Maginas Guy Richard James Saxon	
<b>Metropolitan New York</b>			
Astoria, NY	Astoria Community	David Ellis	
New York, NY	Emmanuel	Scott Strickman	
	Exilic	Aaron Chung	
		Jay Harvey III	
	Redeemer	Gene Joo	
		Drew Field	
		David Lee	
		Rich McCaskill III	Bruce Terrell
	Hector Sanchez Jr.		
	Jeffrey White		
	Redeemer E Harlem	Justin Adour	
		Abraham Cho	
	Redeemer Lincoln Sq	Michael Keller	
		Bruce O'Neil	
	Storefront Church	David Plant	
	Uptown Community	Peter Rhee	
Oyster Bay, NY	North Shore Comm	John Yenchko	
Water Mill, NY	Grace	Mark Middlekauff	
		Jim Fredere	
		Wei Ho	
<b>Mississippi Valley</b>			
Bailey, MS	Bailey	Eric Mabbott	
Clinton, MS	Pinehaven		Larkin Chapman
	Providence	Bryce Davis	
		Ian Kayser	
Delhi, LA	Delhi	Chris Wright	
Flowood, MS	Lakeland	John Revell	William Sutton
Jackson, MS	First	Billy Dempsey	David Cleland
		David Felker	Ned Currie
		Wiley Lowry III	Craig Flowers
		Scott Miller	Bill Stone Jr.
		Jamie Peipon	Tim Threadgill
		Gary Sinclair	Alan Walters
		David Strain	

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<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Mississippi Valley, continued</b>			
	Redeemer	Brian Gault Zack Owens	Tu Combs
Kosciusko, MS	First		Micheal Holman Sr. Hugh Potts Jr.
Louisville, MS	First	Heath Cross	Steven Holman Mike Triplett
Madden, MS	Carolina	Perry McCall	
Madison, MS	First	Weston Lauver	
Meridian, MS	Northpointe	Mason Kiple Kevin Vollema	
Monroe, LA	Ouachita	Harris Bond	Chuck Murphy
Pearl, MS	Pearl	Joey McLeod Jr.	
Philadelphia, MS	First	David Stormont	
Raymond, MS	Raymond	Zach Byrd	
Ridgeland, MS	Highlands	Joseph Wheat III	Hap Farber Kevin Russell
	Pear Orchard	Caleb Cangelosi Carl Kalberkamp Jr. Dean Williams	Ken Haynes John Moran Tom Young
Ruston, LA	Covenant Reformed	Chris Stevens	
Tchula, MS	Tchula		Samuel Hutton
Union, MS	First	Christopher Shelton	
Vaiden, MS	Blackmonton	Philip McRae	
Vicksburg, MS	Westminster		Gordon Sluis
Winona, MS	First	Andy Coburn	
Yazoo City, MS	First Second	Charles Wingard	Rob Coker Jamie Peaster
		Ligon Duncan III Robert Hays Wayne Herring Haruaki Odate Bob Penny John Prabhakar Jim Stewart Guy Waters Richard Wiman	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Missouri</b>			
Ballwin, MO	Twin Oaks	David D. Barnes Russell St. John	Dwayne Ter Maat Bob Wilkinson
Chesterfield, MO	Chesterfield	Hugh Barlett Tony Howard Justin Huensch	John Ranheim
Columbia, MO	Midtown Redeemer	Ross Dixon Ryan Speck	
Eureka, MO	Heritage	Jesse York	Ken Leslie
Kirkwood, MO	Trinity	Chris Polski Pablo Rosales	Thomas Schmidt
Maplewood, MO	Crossroads	Josiah Green	Kyle Keating
Owensville, MO	Redeem Grace Fell	Charles Stover	
Park Hills, MO	Grace	Tyler Hendley	
St. Charles, MO	Grace	Mike McLaughlin	
St. Louis, MO	Covenant Kirk of the Hills	Christopher Smith	Jason Groves Lowell Pitzer Phil VanValkenburg Marcus Whitman
	Midtown New City Fell New City West End	Mark Tucker Parker Loveless Steve Schaper Thurman Williams	
	Restoration Comm	Jon Eagin Daniel Song	
	South City	Logan Ford	
Union, MO	Trinity	Curtis Crumpecker Jr.	
Webster Groves, MO	Old Orchard	Ryan Sparks	Matt Philip
Wentzville, MO	New Creation	Loren Bell	
		Cartee Bales David A. Barnes John Chung Ben Hoemann Brad Matthews Tim Price	
<b>Nashville</b>			
Brentwood, TN	All Saints	Matthew Bradley	Jay Hollis JD Stuart



APPENDIX S

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Nashville, continued</b>			
Clarksville, TN	Christ	Richard Schwartz	
Columbia, TN	Zion	Paul Joiner Keaton Paul	
Cookeville, TN	Grace	Step Morgan	Daniel VandenBerge
Franklin, TN	Christ Community Cornerstone  Parish	Randy Lovelace Tony Giles Nathan Shurden Jamie Crampton Mike Fennema George Grant Brian Phillips	Steve Kuhn Ron Moffat Jim Payne Brandon Herrenbruck Michael Mastroberti
Goodlettsville, TN	Faith	John dos Santos	John Pink
Mt. Juliet, TN	Hickory Grove	Kenny Silva	Al Williams
Murfreesboro, TN	Trinity	Mitchell Carter Ryan Hudson	
Nashville, TN	Christ	Stacey Croft David Filson Russ Ramsey Todd Teller	Jeff Creasy Tom Drury LeeEric Fesko Buz Graham Doug Korn Bill Mooney
	City Covenant	David Richter Ryan Anderson	John Bryant Alan Lynch Bryce Sullivan Jack Watkins
	Midtown Fellowship	Matt Avery Elliott Cherry Darrell Jones Jeremy Kemp	
	Parks West End Comm	Eric Ashley Greg Davis	Chuck Merritt
Nolensville, TN	Southpointe Comm	Monte Starkes	
Primm Springs, TN	Mercy	Ryan Doyle	
Rockvale, TN	Redeemer	Paul Boyd	Greg Brinkmann
Tullahoma, TN	Covenant	Will Young	
		Will Cote Chase Daws Weston Duke	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Nashville, continued</b>			
		Charles McGowan Pete Mitchell Jr. Steve Robertson Kevin Twit	
<b>New Jersey</b>			
Allenwood, NJ	Calvary	Tom Harr Jr.	
Atlantic City, NJ	New City Fellowship	Peter Eck	
Cherry Hill, NJ	Covenant	Bob Orner	
Glassboro, NJ	Mercy Hill		Ric Springer
Lawrenceville, NJ	Hope	Stephen O'Neill	David Keddie
Mount Laurel, NJ	Grace	Ted Trefsgar Jr.	
Northfield, NJ	Hope Community	Don Waltermeyer Jr.	
<b>New River</b>			
Buckhannon, WV	Grace	Alan Hager	
Dellslow, WV	Mercy	John Downs	
Hurricane, WV	Redeemer	Barrett Jordan	
Nitro, WV	Covenant	Josh Bailey	
		Peter Green Mike Hall Michael VanDerLinden	
<b>New York State</b>			
Buffalo, NY	Christ Central	Christopher Jhu	
Duanesburg, NY	Reformed	Anthony Gorsuch	
Ithaca, NY	New Life	Tim LeCroy	
Rochester, NY	Grace	Marc Swan	
	New City Fell Beech	Chris Holdridge	
Schenectady, NY	First	Mark Dunn	Matt Abbatiello
		Matthew Mierski	
Watertown, NY	Grace	Frank Ellis Jr.	
<b>North Florida</b>			
Gainesville, FL	Christ Community	Brian Thomas	
	Faith	Kevin Nelson	
Hilliard, FL	Grace Covenant	Jesse Pickett	
Jacksonville, FL	Christ	Willie Addison Jr.	Hal Wilkening
	Christ Church	John Lawler	

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<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>North Florida, continued</b>			
Middleburg, FL	Ortega	Joshua Hinson	
	Westminster	Stephen Spinnenweber	
	Pinewood	J.D. Funyak Ren Zepp	Ron Diamond Jay Funyak Jason Henning Rick Roberts
St. Augustine, FL	Good News	David Aucremann	
St. Johns, FL	Cross Creek	Keith Snow	
Yulee, FL	Grace Community	David Bradsher  Tommy Park Jr. Larry Roff	
<b>North Texas</b>			
Amarillo, TX	Redeemer	Tyler Taber	David Gatz Jack Robinson
Anna, TX	Grace and Peace	Matt Wood	Brian Heise James Poteet
Arlington, TX	Redeemer Arlington		Stephen Wolters
Carrollton, TX	Metrocrest	Bill Lovell	Paul Hartgrove Larry Perry
Celina, TX	New City	Jake Patton	
Dallas, TX	Bethel	Anton Heuss	Ed Kim
	El Buen Pastor	Jahaziel Cantu	
	Lakewood	Brad Denton	Randall Gradle
	Mercy	Doug Tharp	David Nelson Tim Swindell
	New St. Peter's Park Cities	Alex Dean Mark Davis Paul Goebel Bill Lamberth Jr.	Jim Pocta Brad Bradley Kyle Manley Gregory Morris Rick Owens Bill Thomas Blake Woodall
Denton, TX	Denton	Robert Wagner	
Fort Worth, TX	Fort Worth	Brandon Eggar	
	Grace Community	Andrew Sarnicki	
Frisco, TX	Trinity	Andy Wood	Lee Tyner
	Christ Community	Patrick Poteet Joe Womack	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>North Texas, continued</b>			
	Cornerstone	Mark Evans	
Killeen, TX	Hill Country PCA	Peter Dietsch	
Lubbock, TX	Providence		Peter Griffith
McKinney, TX	Redeemer	Seth Miller	Shawn Arthur
		Mark Trigsted	Allen Hunter
			Matt Linebarger
Midland, TX	Providence	Dagan Mayfield	
Midlothian, TX	Christ the King	Mark Husband	Greg Gorman
		Dave Lindberg	
Plano, TX	Trinity	Jeff Morrow	Scott McNeill
		Jake Yohannan	Eric Wallace
Prosper, TX	Zion	Mark Belonga	Marcus Minich
Richardson, TX	Town North	Imad Aubrey	David Schlimme
		David Rogers	
Shreveport, LA	Grace	Quinn Hill	
Southlake, TX	Lakeside	Donny Friederichsen	Sean Bentel
		Sterling Tyler	Ben Thompson
Tyler, TX	Fifth Street	Drew Pressoir	John Covington
		Steve Simmons	Chris Wiesinger
Weatherford, TX	Weatherford		Wes Hammond
			Robert Looper
		Keith Berger	
		Lou Best	
		Pete Deison	
		Ben Dunson	
		Richey Goodrich	
		Ben Graber	
		Bradford Green	
		Paul Miller	
		Chris Morrison	
		Colin Peters	
		Julian Russell	
		Doug Shepherd	
		Davis Sweatt	
<b>Northern California</b>			
Brigham City, UT	Brigham City Bible	Alex Ford	
Elk Grove, CA	New City Fellowship	Lance Lewis	
Fresno, CA	Grace Fresno	Brad Mills	Ray Sanchez

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<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Northern California, continued</b>			
Honolulu, HI	The City	John Kim	
Lawai, HI	Kahikolu	Jonas Patterson	
Layton, UT	Grace	Nick Winder	
Mililani, HI	Trinity	JC Cunningham	
Palo Alto, CA	Grace	David Jones	Jason Greene
		Iron Kim	
		Ben Melchers	
Roseville, CA	Valley Springs	Matt Mobley	
San Anselmo, CA	Grace	Jeremiah Hill	
		Rod Miles	
San Jose, CA	Grace South Bay	Steven Chitty	Matt Cabot
		Bob Crossland	
San Luis Obispo, CA	Trinity	Bryce Hales	
Santa Rosa, CA	Redeemer		Randy Gallegos
St. George, UT	All Saints Reformed	Ben Kappers	
Sunnyvale, CA	Revive	Soo Sang Park	
West Jordan, UT	Jordan Valley	Jon Stoddard	
		Stephen Baldwin	
		John Kong	
<b>Northern Illinois</b>			
Aledo, IL	Trinity	Daren Dietmeier	Troy Young
Champaign, IL	Covenant Fellowship	KJ Kim	
Freeport, IL	Grace Fellowship	Justin Coverstone	Larry DeVries
			Dean Kuper
Hanna City, IL	Hanna City	David Keithley	Ben Harding
			Fred Winterroth
Normal, IL	Christ	Bob Smart	
Paxton, IL	Westminster	Steve Jones	
Peoria, IL	Grace	John Cherne III	Lee Gerrietts
		Zach Rogers	Thom Simpson
	Redeemer	Mark Henninger	
Springfield, IL	Exodus	Stephen Lawrence	
Urbana, IL	All Souls	Luke Herche	
		Ethan Brown	
		Bryan Chapell	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Northern New England</b>			
Exeter, NH	Exeter		Ernie Shipman
Lewiston, ME	Free Grace	Per Almquist	
Nashua, NH	Christ	James Pavlic	
Pembroke, NH	Christ	Ian Hard	
Portland, ME	Christ the Redeemer	Sean Roberts	
		Tom Powell	
<b>Northwest Georgia</b>			
Canton, GA	Cherokee	Clif Daniell	Daryl Lipham Chuck Lokey Stephen Murphy Kirk Swanson
	Grace	Robie Hembree	
Carrollton, GA	King's Chapel	Andrew Hendley	
Cedartown, GA	Grace	Matthew Rabe	
Dallas, GA	Grace Covenant	David Donovan	Daniel Stout
Douglasville, GA	Grace	David Gilbert	Justen Ellis Jeff Turner
Kennesaw, GA	Christ Community	Robby Baxter	
Marietta, GA	Hope	Martin Hawley	
Powder Springs, GA	Midway	Chad Bailey David Hall Cilas Menezes	Rick Griffin Wes Richardson Bob Whitaker
Rome, GA	Seven Hills Fell	Jeff Summers	
Smyrna, GA	Smyrna	Danny Myers Joel Smit	Jim Stratton
Villa Rica, GA	First	Thomas Myers	
Woodstock, GA	Christ Covenant	Job Dalomba	
		Thomas MacGregor	
<b>Ohio</b>			
Hudson, OH	Grace	Rhett Dodson	Mark Bailey
	Redeemer	Justin Salinas	Gregg Gorzelle
		Jason Piland	Jim Parkin
		Scott Wright	Mark Van
Drunen			
Kent, OH	Christ	Jacob Piland	
Mayfield Heights, OH	Story	Jeremy King	

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<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Ohio, continued</b>			
Medina, OH	Harvest	David Wallover Seth Young	
North Canton, OH	Trinity	Lee Hutchings  Nate Bower	Scott Wulff
<b>Ohio Valley</b>			
Bellevue, KY Centerville, OH	Grace and Peace South Dayton	Lee Veazey Michael Littell	Chuck McNeil Bruce Page
Cincinnati, OH	Faith New City	Ryan Broadhurst Brian Ferry Zach Meyer Michael Previterra Ryan Zhang	
Danville, KY Elizabethtown, KY Lexington, KY	Redeemer Grace PCA Grace Hope Tates Creek	Marc Champagne Shane Terrell Monty Hershberger Marshall Wilmhoff Mark Randle Will Witherington	Kevin Dilbeck
Louisville, KY	Community		Matt Dielman Herb Melton Shay Fout
Ludlow, KY Richmond, KY Springboro, OH	Trinity Covenant Comm King's Cross Comm	Charles Hickey Travis Stephens Casey Cramer  Nick Bratcher Robert Cunningham Larry Hoop Paul Hurst Walter Wood Jr.	
<b>Pacific</b>			
North Hills, CA Santa Barbara, CA	Valley Christ	Ron Svendsen Kyle Wells Nicholas Whitaker	
South Pasadena, CA	The Way	Timothy Lien  Jeffrey Choi Johnathan Keenan Sun Kwak	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Pacific Northwest</b>			
Anchorage, AK	Faith	Jerid Krulish	Jeff Banker Bill March
Beaverton, OR	Evergreen	Adam Parker	Larry Lake Micah Meeuwsen
Bellevue, WA	Hope	Martin Hedman	Christopher LaBonte Jim Sherwin
Bellingham, WA	Christ	Matt Boffey Nate Walker	
Boise, ID	Boise		Howie Donahoe
Everett, WA	Westminster	Brent Kilman	
Harrah, WA	Hope Fellowship	Tomo Ito Joshua Tsavatewa	
Mill Creek, WA	Trinitas	Brant Bosserman	Scott Hedcock
Newberg, OR	Chehalem Valley	Michael Awtry	
Poulsbo, WA	Liberty Bay	Patrick Severson	Everett Henry
Puyallup, WA	Resurrection	David Scott	
Seattle, WA	Christ/Cornerstone Trinity	Timothy Teopilus Michael Kelly Luke Morton	Donny Amalo
Spokane, WA	Coram Deo	Matt Allhands	
Tacoma, WA	Faith	Steven Nicoletti	
Vancouver, WA	Westminster	CR Wiley	Camden Spiller
Walla Walla, WA	Covenant	Ron Gonzales	
Yakima, WA	St. Andrews	Craig Harris	
		Drew Burdette	
<b>Palmetto</b>			
Aiken, SC	Grace New Covenant	Trent Still Brad Rogers	Andrew Rutherford
Batesburg, SC	Leesville, SC Christ Community	Kent Suits	
Blair, SC	Salem	Richard Hodges	
Chapin, SC	Chapin	Scott Dinkins	
Columbia, SC	Christ Covenant Columbia Cornerstone	Justin McGuire Devin Coleman Tim Burden	
	Eau Claire	Adam Shields	
	Northeast	Joshua Desch	
	St. Andrews	Andrew Davis	Larry Mack
		Marc Rattray	Bryan Patterson



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<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Palmetto, continued</b>			
Irmo, SC	Faith	Karl McCallister	
Lexington, SC	Lexington	Andrew Whitaker	Stephen Baarendse Bob Howell James Inman Joe Wright
	Watershed Fell	Nate Robbins	
North Augusta, SC	N Augusta Fell	Jason Cornwell	
Winnsboro, SC	Lebanon	Matthew Coplin	Jimmy Joyner
		Jeff Dillard Craig Wilkes	
<b>Pee Dee</b>			
Andrews, SC	Andrews	Mark Horne	
Cheraw, SC	Faith	Joe Arnold	
Conway, SC	Grace	Kyle Brent	
Dillon, SC	First	Matt Adams	Michael Brown
		Don Stager	
Florence, SC	Faith	Jordan Gallo	Jack North
	Good Shepherd	Stacey Severance	Tim Bell
Hartsville, SC	Hartsville	James Robbins	
Kingstree, SC	Kingstree	Robert Jolly	Arthur Bass Mike Brown
	Mouzon	Michael Brown	
Manning, SC	New Covenant	Daniel Miller	
Myrtle Beach, SC	Faith	John Irwin	
	Surfside	Brian Peterson	Paul Goodrich Larry Horinbein
New Zion, SC	Sardinia	Zach Simmons	
Sumter, SC	Westminster	Stuart Mizelle	
		Jim Carter	
<b>Philadelphia</b>			
Chestnut Hill, PA	Cresheim Valley	Jonathan Richardson	Lindsay Brooks
Philadelphia, PA	Northeast Community Tenth	Maranatha Chung John Park Carroll Wynne	
Wynnewood, PA	Phil Bible Reformed		Hengjiang Zhao
		SJ Lim	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Philadelphia Metro West</b>			
Coatesville, PA	Olive Street	Timothy Brindle	Nathan Carlson
Harleysville, PA	Covenant	John Muhlfeld	
Royersford, PA	Grace & Peace	Bill Mayk	Tom Albrecht
Upper Darby, PA	Crossroads Comm	David Van Meerbeke	
		Dave Garner	
		Peter Lillback	
<b>Piedmont Triad</b>			
Burlington, NC	Northside	Jim Mitchell	
Clemmons, NC	New Hope	Benjamin Tietje	
Greensboro, NC	Covenant Grace	Tom Brown	
		Mack Strawbridge	
High Point, NC	Immanuel	Jacob Morrison	
Lexington, NC	Meadowview Ref	Pablo Ayllon	Kevin Miller
		George Sayour	
Winston-Salem, NC	Salem	Austin Pfeiffer	
	Trinity	Joel Branscomb	Trevor Laurence
		Derek Radney	
		Brian Deringer	
		Palmer Robertson	
		Douglas Stelzig	
		Darin Stone	
<b>Pittsburgh</b>			
Bovard, PA	Laurel Highlands	Adrian Armel	
East Liverpool, OH	First Evangelical	Gregory Mead	
Eighty Four, PA	View Crest	Shaun Nolan	
Harrison City, PA	New Life	Matthew Fisher	
Indiana, PA	Resurrection Indiana	David Schweissing	
LaVale, MD	Faith	Lee Capper	
Leechburg, PA	Kiski Valley	Matt Stevens	Michael Myers
Ligonier, PA	Pioneer	David Kenyon	
Murrysville, PA	Murrysville Comm	Seth Gurley	
Pittsburgh, PA	City Reformed	Matt Koerber	Joe Stehle
	Redemption Hill	Roddey Caughman	
Robinson Tshp, PA	Providence	Rick Appleton	David Auman
		Ray Heiple Jr.	Jim Stuart
Washington, PA	Washington	Philip Amaismeier	
		Mike Bowen	

APPENDIX S

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Pittsburgh, continued</b>			
Wexford, PA	Covenant Comm	Alejandro Martinez Jon Price  Derek Bates Gavin Breeden Frank Moser Mark Robinson	Dave Johnson
<b>Platte Valley</b> Fremont, NE Lincoln, NE Omaha, NE	Grace Grace Chapel Harvest Community	Kyle McClellan Isaac Terwilleger Jacob Gerber Andrew Lightner  Michael Gordon	Bob DeYoung
<b>Potomac</b> Annandale, VA Arlington, VA	One Voice Fell Christ	Chris Sicks Billy Boyce	Robert Bristol Mark Doehnert
Bowie, MD	Emmanuel Reformed	Scott Seaton Chris Calvi Stephen Fix	
Burke, VA California, MD	Christ Cornerstone	Porter Harlow Dae Gyu Kim Joo Young Kim Walt Nilsson	Scott Hatch Chris Lardner Doug Leepa
Centreville, VA College Park, MD Fairfax, VA	Mout Zion Wallace New Hope	Jegar Chinnavan Ryan Moore David Coffin Jr. Paul Wolfe	
Falls Church, VA Frederick, MD Fulton, MD Gainesville, VA Germantown, MD Herndon, VA	Chinese Christian Faith Reformed Good Hope Gainesville Christ Grace Christian	John Tan John Armstrong Jr. Jack Waller Jack Lash  Zhongming Chen Arthur Hsu Zhiyong Wang Dave Silvernail Jr.	Rich Rochford Jr.    Matt Pickens Jei-show Yueh
Leesburg, VA	Potomac Hills		

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Potomac, continued</b>			
Lusby, MD	Harvest Fellowship	Barry Noll	Cal Metz
Manassas, VA	Spriggs Road	Matt Bowles	Bo Deane
McLean, VA	McLean	Michael Mang	Tom Pilsch Matt Stone
		Terence Little	
		Timoteo Sazo	
		JT Tarter II	
Silver Spring, MD	Mosaic Community	Rob Yancey Jr.	Matthew Hutchison Christopher Olderog
		Joel St. Clair	
		Dan Doll	
Springfield, VA	Harvester	Dan Warne	
Warrenton, VA	Heritage		
Washington, DC	Grace	Glenn Hoburg	
Woodbridge, VA	Crossroads	Joel Littlepage	Joshua Kiihne Greg Mourad
		Andrew Russell	
		Russell Whitfield	
		Alex Young	
		Cyril Chavis	
		Chris Garriott	
		Irwyn Ince Jr.	
		Tommy Keene	
		Joseph Ko	
		Timothy Mountfort	
		Nathan Newman	
		Don Sampson	
<b>Providence</b>			
Albertville, AL	Grace Fellowship	Jackie Gaston Jr.	Brian Rodgers Blake Temple
Scottsboro, AL	Redeemer	Dieter Paulson	
Cullman, AL	Christ Covenant	Jason Ellerbee	
Decatur, AL	Decatur	Scott Phillips	
Florence, AL	Redeemer	Rick Stark	James Thigpen
		Nathan White	
		Matthew Duraski	
Fort Payne, AL	Grace	Matt Patrick	
Huntsville, AL	All Saints Cornerstone	Wilson Shirley	John Bise Frank Cohee
		Hope City	
		Amos Williams	
	Southside	Adam Venable	

APPENDIX S

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Providence, continued</b>			
	Southwood The Village Westminster	Will Spink Alex Shipman Duncan Cantrell David Hammond Stephen Hooks Stephen St. John William Plott	Robert Johnson Ken Shipman
Madison, AL Meridianville, AL	Valley North Hills	Jacob Hale Adam Tisdale Dieter Paulson	
Scottsboro, AL Tuscumbia, AL	Redeemer First	Randy Thompson	Hal Hughston Jr. Rusty Trapp
		Ron Clegg Jim Simoneau	
<b>Rio Grande</b>			
Albuquerque, NM Las Cruces, NM Santa Fe, NM White Rock, NM	City University Christ Bryce Avenue	Jordan Huff John Standridge Zachary Garris Charlie Fiorillo Daniel Herron	Charlie Bursi
<b>Rocky Mountain</b>			
Billings, MT Castle Rock, CO Cheyenne, WY Colorado Springs, CO	Rocky Mtn Comm Cornerstone Northwoods Cheyenne Mtn Forestgate	Rolf Meintjes Shawn Young Blake Denlinger Matthew Capone Stephen Baran Matt Giesman	Bruce Olson Timothy Anderson Brit Hopper
	Grace and Peace Village Seven		Steve Kammer David Kliever EJ Nusbaum Bill Petro
Denver, CO	Westside Denver	Davis Morgan Ronnie Garcia Jason Walch	
Ft. Collins, CO Gillette, WY	Grace Church Harvest Reformed	Gavin Lymberopoulos Caleb Nelson	Joshua Ooms

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Rocky Mountain, continued</b>			
Lafayette, CO	The Table	Brad Edwards	
Lander, WY	Covenant	Scott MacNaughton	Doug Duncan
Littleton, CO	Deer Creek Comm	Chad Donohoe	Tim Ringquist
		Daniel Nealon	
		David Rapp	
Longmont, CO	Redeemer Longmont	Justin Chappell	
		Paul Ranheim	
Montrose, CO	Trinity Reformed	Cristian Garcia	Dave Vanden Hoek
Pueblo, CO	Covenant Reformed	Matt Eide	James Solis
Westminster, CO	Rocky Mountain	Shane Waldron	Chris Jorgensen
			Cliff Olson
Wheat Ridge, CO	Covenant	Brad Irick	
		Dominic Aquila	
		Mark Bates III	
		Jonathan Clark	
		Duane Cory	
		Cody Janicek	
		Doug Lee	
		Andy Pynch	
		Kurt Schimke	
<b>Savannah River</b>			
Augusta, GA	Cliffwood First	Geoff Gleason Mike Hearon Ken McHeard Chris Williams	Jon Thompson Julian Battle
	Lakemont	Dave Vosseller	
Brunswick, GA	Redeemer	Jim Shaw II	
Dublin, GA	Covenant	Jonathan Rowe	
Evans, GA	Christ Church	Robbie Hendrick	Glynn Dyer Mel Jewett
	Redeemer	Charlie Stakely IV	
Pooler, GA	First	Greg Salazar	
Richmond Hill, GA	New Covenant	Dave Senters	Travis Peacock
Savannah, GA	Grace		Mark Board David Roulo Tom Taylor Jr.
	The Kirk	Philip Ryan Peter Whitney	

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<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Savannah River, continued</b>			
St. Simons Isl., GA	Golden Isles	Jonas Brock Alex Brown	
Statesboro, GA	Trinity	Henry Beaulieu  Roland Barnes Evan Gear Terry Johnson Nathanael Miller Timothy Shaw	
<b>Siouxlands</b>			
Duluth, MN	Grace	Nathan Lee	
Hinckley, MN	First	Dan Brendsel	Ben Wiener
Minnetonka, MN	Good Shepherd		Blake Pool
Rapid City, SD	Black Hills Comm	Art Sartorius	
Rochester, MN	Trinity	Steve Johnson	Lee Aase
Sioux Falls, SD	Grace	Mark Bertrand	
Spearfish, SD	New Covenant	Luke Bluhm	
Sturgis, SD	Foothills Community	Jeffrey Neikirk  Bill Carr Brennan McCafferty Matt Ryman	
<b>South Coast</b>			
Aliso Viejo, CA	Aliso Creek	Nick Locke	
Encinitas, CA	Redeemer	Paul Kim	
Escondido, CA	New Life	Peter Jones Julius Kim Won Kwak Robin Lee	
Irvine, CA	New Life	Jeffrey Suhr	
La Mesa, CA	New Life	Connor Underseth Joel Wood	Dean Abbott
Palm Desert, CA	Providence	Danny Dalton	Marty McCullah
Poway, CA	North City	David Nutting	
San Diego, CA	North Park		Jordan Dahl
	Servant	Chris Sandoval	
Santa Ana, CA	Trinity	Eric Kapur	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>South Coast, continued</b>			
		Ray Call III Karl Dahlfred Lloyd Kim	
<b>South Florida</b>			
Caguas, PR	Iglesia Comunion	Juan Jose Cotto	
Coral Gables, FL	Granada	Worth Carson James Drake	
Coral Springs, FL	First	David Barry John Moore	Greg Misesyko Wills Ryan
	New Springs	Gavin Felix	
Cutler Bay, FL	Pinelands	Aldo Leon	Richard Closius
Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Coral Ridge	Caleb Koornneef Robert Pacienza Andrew Siegenthaler	
Hollywood, FL	St Andrews Park Rd	TJ Campo	
Homestead, FL	Redlands Community	Lee Mashburn	
Miami, FL	El Redentor	Carlos Salabarría	
Palmetto Bay, FL	Old Cutler	Michael Campbell	
San Juan, PR	Iglesia La Travesía	Yamil Alejandro	Wilfredo Muriel Gerson Santos
	Trinity	Zachary Lutz	
		Jameson Abidoye Woody Woodham	
<b>South Texas</b>			
Austin, TX	All Saints	Brent Baker Craig Chapman Tim Frickenschmidt Josh Keller Adam Radcliff David Vilches	
	Christ the King	John Weller	Bob Hardister Larry Laine
	CrossPointe Emmanuel	Steve Johnson Greg Ward	



APPENDIX S

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Sount Texas, continued</b>			
	Redeemer	Jon Herr Danny Morgan	Bret Mercer Randy Scott Joshua Torrey
Boerne, TX	Trinity	Kevin Witten	
Bryan, TX	Westminster	Wade Coleman	
College Station, TX	Redeemer	Ben Hailey	
Corpus Christi, TX	Southside Comm	Johnny Cotten	
Harlingen, TX	Covenant	Italo Furieri	
Kerrville, TX	Christ	Billy Crain	Tuan La
New Braunfels, TX	Christ	John Bennett Berdj Tchilinguirian Derek McCollum	
San Antonio, TX	Hope Redeemer	Matt Beham Paul Hahn Jr. Victor Martinez Bryant McGee	Jeremy Whitley
Victoria, TX	Trinity Grace Christ	Michael Novak Mike Singenstreu  Titus Bagby Tom Gibbs Austin McCann Gama Pozos Lee Wright	
<b>Southeast Alabama</b>			
Auburn, AL	Christ	Josh Shideler Eric Zellner	
Auburn, AL	Covenant	Jere Scott Bradshaw	Steve Dowling David Rouse
Brewton, AL	First	Parker Johnson	
Clanton, AL	Grace Fellowship	Kevin Corley	
Dothan, AL	First	Rusty Milton	
Enterprise, AL	First	Chris Thomas	
Eufaula, AL	Covenant	Brewer Ames III	
Greenville, AL	First	Rob Fossett	
Millbrook, AL	Millbrook	Brannon Bowman	
Monroeville, AL	Monroeville	Roger McCay Jr.	
Montgomery, AL	Eastwood	Ross Hodges Barton Lester	Milton Hodges Rick Pass

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Southeast Alabama, continued</b>			
	Trinity	Michael Howell	Mark Anderson Thomas Danielson John Steiner John Weiss
Opelika, AL	Trinity	Jared Collins	
Prattville, AL	First	Allan Bledsoe	
Stuttgart, GER	Covenant Fellowship	Nicholas Bullock	Sammy Rothfuss
Stavanger, NOR	First	Matthew Stanghelle	
Troy, AL	First	Rick Holbert	
Wiesbaden, GER	Christ	Phil Gelston	
		Braden Benson Samuel Bratt Bill Clark Joe Harrell James Williams	
<b>Southern Louisiana</b>			
Baton Rouge, LA	South Baton Rouge	Kelly Dotson Charles Marchman	
	Westminster	Brandon Bernard	
Clinton, LA	Faith	Tony Pyles	
Lake Charles, LA	Bethel	Thiago Silva	
Metairie, LA	Grace	Richard Davies	
New Orleans, LA	Redeemer	Ray Cannata	Ken Kostrzewa John Spivey Aaron Collier
Zachary, LA	St. Roch Community Plains	Jason Davison Ricky Glenn Campbell Silman	
		Matt Roelofs Brian Sleeth	
<b>Southern New England</b>			
Boston, MA	Citylife	Benjamin Bae Daniel Paik	
Cambridge, MA	Christ The King	Travis Drake	
Charlestown, RI	Christ Our Hope	Daniel Jarstfer	Chris Shoemaker
Concord, MA	Redeemer	Matthew Kerr	Mike Leigh Rob Steele

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<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Southern New England, continued</b>			
Dorchester, MA	Christ the King	Moses Park	David Daniel Patrick Sewell
Groton, CT	Covenant	Rodney Henderson	
Milford, CT	Christ	Curran Bishop	
New Haven, CT	Christ	Benjamin Sheldon	
Newton, MA	Grace Fell	Bruce Cooke	
	Christ the King	Nathan Barczy Bradley Barnes Troy Albee	
North Pembroke, MA	Grace		
Providence, RI	Trinity		Nick Angert Andy Norquist
Somerville, MA	Seven Hills	Matt Owens	
Springfield, MA	Grace	Stephen LaValley	
Wallingford, CT	Christ	Mike Brunjes	
West Hartford, CT	Christ Community	Rob Gray	
West Springfield, MA	Covenant Comm	Robert Hill	Ron Heald
		Travis Hutchinson Solomon Kim Richard Lints	
<b>Southwest Florida</b>			
Bartow, FL	Oak City	Taylor Clark	
Brandon, FL	Westminster	Jeremy Fuller	Jim Eggert
		Wes Holland Jr. Jimbo Mullen	Dakota Ivey
Clearwater, FL	Christ Community	Bob Brubaker	
Dade City, FL	Christ the King	Chuck Williams	
Lakeland, FL	Christ Community	Lyle Caswell Jr.	
	Covenant	Jeff McDonald	Scott Robinson
	Redeemer	Dave Martin	Rich Cali
	Strong Tower	Ben Turner	
	Trinity	Brown Peterson Tim Rice	Frank McCaulley
Mulberry, FL	Greater Hope	Tim Brown	Ben Arnold
		Stan McMahan Jr.	Ryan Choate
Riverview, FL	Redeemer	Josh Gilman Craig Swartz	
St. Petersburg, FL	City	Justin Woodall	
	St. Petersburg	David Harding	Bob Berry
		Alex Woods	

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Southwest Florida, continued</b>			
Tampa, FL	Christ Central	John Keen	Ed Jordan Ken Pothoven
	Tampa Bay	Freddy Fritz	
	University	Wright Busching	
Wauchula, FL	Westtown	Morgan Lusk	
	Faith	Brook Larrison	
Winter Haven, FL	Redeemer	Drew Bennett	
		Tony Elswick	
		Jonathan Winfree	
		Aldo Mondin	
		Wade Savant	
		Jeff Skipper	
<b>Suncoast Florida</b>			
Bonita Springs, FL	Bay	Patrick Womack	Michael Levenhagen Randy Bibby Andy Mitchell
Cape Coral, FL	Providence Christian	Brent Lauder	
Lake Suzy, FL	Grace	David Stewart	
Marco Island, FL	Marco	Gary Goodrich	Dmitriy Polishuk
Naples, FL	Covenant	Paul May	
North Ft. Myers, FL	North Ft. Myers	Dann Cecil	
North Port, FL	Covenant of Grace	Aleksey Zhuravlev	
Sarasota, FL	Word of Life	Arnie Brevick	
	Covenant Life	Steve Jeantet	
<b>Susquehanna Valley</b>			
Alexandria, PA	Christ Reformed	Angelo Valle	Edward Lankford  Jon Sneller Rick Frey Robert Hayward Jr. John Mwaura James Ressler
Carlisle, PA	Carlisle Reformed	Matt Purdy	
		Decherd Stevens	
Chambersburg, PA	Redeemer	Jeff Cottone	
Cochranville, PA	Manor	Daniel Henderson	
Harrisburg, PA	Second City	Peter Rowan	
	Trinity	John Hayward	
		Michael Wolcott	
Hummelstown, PA	Hershey	David Kertland	
Lancaster, PA	Harvest	Jim Furey	
	Westminster	Tucker York	

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<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Susquehanna Valley, continued</b>			
	Wheatland	Luke Le Duc Keith Winder	
Mechanicsburg, PA	New Covenant Fell		Nathan Scheidler
Mount Joy, PA	Proclamation	Troy DeBruin Collin Gingrich	Peter Miller
Oxford, PA	Bethany	Drew Belden	
Quarryville, PA	Faith Reformed	Michael Brown	
State College, PA	Oakwood	Dan Kiehl	Douglas Sharp Jr.
York, PA	New Life	Erik Swanson	Joe Heidler
	Providence	Vince Wood	Jay Hassinger
		Paul Hyunkook Kim	Darryl MacPherson
		Ron Zeigler	
<b>Tennessee Valley</b>			
Athens, TN	Redeemer	Curt Stapleton	
Chattanooga, TN	Covenant	Jake Bennett	Jason Coffey
	First	Dick Cain Gabe Fluhrer Mike Haberkorn Randy Nabors	Adam Sanders Loren Hartley Mike Kramer Bart Rolan
	Mosaic Fellowship	Corby Shields	
	New City Fell	Kevin Smith	
	New City Fell E Lake	Gustavo Formenti	
	North Shore Fell	Jason Hood John Tomberlin	John Forman
Cleveland, TN	Restoration Southside Trinity	Mark Gregory Sam Brown Philip Caines	Ben Christmann Todd Trew
Crossville, TN	First	Andy Aikens	Bill Hoover Jim Sparks
Dalton, GA	Grace	Adam Brokaw Wes Parsons	
East Ridge, TN	East Ridge	J.R. Caines Jr.	Chris Marr
Flintstone, GA	Chattanooga Valley	Roger Collins Dennis Louis	David Marr
Ft. Oglethorpe, GA	First	Ryan Biese	Wil Davis

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Tennessee Valley, continued</b>			
Hixson, TN	Hixson	Thad Davis Steven Edging Robert Johnson	
Jasper, TN	Grace		Dustin Crider
Knoxville, TN	Christ Covenant Redeemer	Seth Hammond Shawn Slate	John Wood Josh Hurst
Knoxville, TN	Resurrection	Lucas Dourado	
LaFayette, GA	Highlands		Bill Browne
Lookout Mtn, TN	Lookout Mountain	Frank Hitchings III Chad Middlebrooks Wil Nettleton IV Brian Salter	Bill Davis Gill Jeong Don Kent Keith Michaels John Wingard
Louisville, TN	Christ the King	Nate Xanders	Casey Coykendall Jeff White
Maryville, TN	Trinity	Jonathan Brooks	
Morristown, TN	Lakeway	Chris Talley	
Oak Ridge, TN	Covenant	John Blevins III Sean Morris	Brad Isbell Kurt Schmidt
Ooltewah, TN	Grace+Peace	Benjie Slaton	
Rising Fawn, GA	Rock Creek Fell	Eric Youngblood	Scott Jones
Signal Mountain, TN	Mountain Fell Wayside	David Payne Brian Cosby	Aaron Gould David Moss
Sweetwater, TN	Christ	Wes Alford	
Trenton, GA	Grace Community	Hutch Garmany	
		Andrew Baxley Carl Ellis Jr. John Herberich Corey Pelton Jim Richter John Mark Scruggs David Stoddard	
<b>Tidewater</b>			
Chesapeake, VA	Grace	Bob Willetts	
Hampton, VA	Calvary Reformed	Jeff Ferguson	Jim Rogers
Norfolk, VA	Calvary		Ron Rice

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<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Tidewater, continued</b>			
	Trinity	Jack Howell Ben Lyon Clay Warden	
Smithfield, VA	Hope	Blake Wingfield	
Suffolk, VA	Westminster Ref	Brett Carl Ross Turner	
Virginia Beach, VA	Eastminster New Covenant New Life	David Zavadil Jeff Elliott Ken Christian, Jr.	Kurt Nelson
Williamsburg, VA	Grace Covenant	Dennis Griffith  Bryan Fowler Peter Lyon Ben Robertson	Timothy Nargi Jr.
<b>Warrior</b>			
Aliceville, AL	First	Derrick Brite	Lawrence Lavender Donny Sanders
Eutaw, AL	Pleasant Ridge	Tom Kay Jr.	
Selma, AL	New Covenant	Michael Perry	
Tuscaloosa, AL	Trinity	Pace Holdbrooks Richard Vise Jr.  Paul Kooistra John Robertson Ron Smith	
<b>West Hudson</b>			
Montclair, NJ	Redeemer	Daniel Ying	
Short Hills, NJ	Covenant	Christopher Diebold	
Somerville, NJ	Crossroads Comm	Daniel Liu Rob Maeder	
West Orange, NJ	Covenant Fellowship	Paul Ham  Joe Fischer John Hanna	Dan Yang
<b>Westminster</b>			
Bristol, TN	Edgemont	Aaron Bartmess	
Cedar Bluff, VA	Covenant	Carl Howell Jr.	Bill Alicie

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

<b>City/State</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Teaching Elder</b>	<b>Ruling Elder</b>
<b>Westminster, continued</b>			
Coeburn, VA	Coeburn	Steve Baker	
Glade Spring, VA	Seven Springs	Thomas Rickard	
Greeneville, TN	Meadow Creek	Richard Steele	Jerry Neas
Johnson City, TN	Christ Community	Bill Leuzinger	AJ Babel
	Westminster	Jim Powell	
		Bobby Roberts	Andrew Darlington
		Andy Wyatt	Larry Steuck
Kingsport, TN	Westminster	Rob Dykes	Daniel Witcher
		Steve Warhurst	
		Larry Ball	
<b>Wisconsin</b>			
Appleton, WI	Emmaus Road	Daniel Breed	Luke Friemark
		David Ehmke	Mark Frost
Cedar Grove, WI	Faith Reformed	Zachary Tarter	
Delafield, WI	Cornerstone	Jamie MacGregor	
		Clay Smith	
Eau Claire, WI	Clear Water	Ben Leatherberry	
Green Bay, WI	Jacob's Well	David Gallagher	
		Dan Jackson	
		Spencer Thomas	
La Crosse, WI	Christ Covenant	Michael Bowman	
Madison, WI	Harvest	Michael Vogel	
	Lake Trails	Rich Verano	
Merrill, WI	Bible	Andy Perry	Bruce Heldt
Milwaukee, WI	Friend of Sinners	Dan Quakkelaar	
Oshkosh, WI	Living Stone	Joshua Golackson	Chris Mott
		James Lima	
Wausau, WI	New Hope Comm	Tony Lombardo	
		Cam Brown	
		Kalan Spencer	
		Chris Vogel	
Teaching Elders:	1608		
Ruling Elders:	693		
Total:	2301		
Churches:	1061		



**APPENDIX T**

**REPORT OF THE  
STANDING JUDICIAL COMMISSION  
TO THE FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
April 21, 2023**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Since our 2022 Report and Supplemental Report to the 49<sup>th</sup> GA the SJC has had five meetings:

June 2, 2022 videoconference Called Meeting  
August 15, 2022 videoconference Called Meeting  
October 20-21, 2022 in-person Fall Stated Meeting  
March 2, 2023 in-person Spring Stated Meeting  
April 5, 2023 reconvened Spring Stated Meeting

Below is the SJC's membership this past year.

**Class of 2023**

TE David Garner, <i>Phil Metro W</i>	RE Daniel Carrell, <i>James River</i>
TE Carl Ellis, Jr., <i>Tn Valley</i>	RE Bruce Terrell, <i>Metro NY</i>
TE Charles McGowan, <i>Nashville</i>	RE John B. White, Jr., <i>Metro Atlanta</i>

**Class of 2024**

TE Hoochan Paul Lee, <i>Korean NE</i>	RE Howie Donahoe, <i>Pacific Northwest</i>
TE Sean Lucas, <i>Covenant</i>	RE Melton Duncan, <i>Calvary</i>
TE Mike Ross, <i>Columbus Metro</i>	RE Samuel Duncan, <i>Grace</i>

**Class of 2025**

TE Paul Bankson, <i>Central Georgia</i>	RE Steve Dowling, <i>SE Alabama</i>
TE David Coffin, Jr., <i>Potomac</i>	RE Frederick Neikirk, <i>Ascension</i>
TE Paul Kooistra, <i>Warrior</i>	RE R. Jackson Wilson, <i>GA Foothills</i>

**Class of 2026**

TE Art Sartorius, <i>Siouxlands</i>	RE John Bise, <i>Providence</i>
TE Fred Greco, <i>Houston Metro</i>	RE James Eggert, <i>Southwest FL</i>
TE Guy Waters, <i>Mississippi Valley</i>	RE John Pickering, <i>Evangel</i>

**II. JUDICIAL CASES**

On the date of this Report, seven cases were still in various stages of process:

2022-21	Senters et al. v. Savannah River
2022-22	Turner v. South Florida
2022-23	Woodham v. South Florida
2023-01	Hann v. Pee Dee
2023-02	Reynolds v. Pee Dee
2023-04	Biese et al. v. Tennessee Valley
2023-05	Hyland v. Chicago Metro

Since our 2022 Report & Supp. Report, the SJC rendered decisions or rulings in the 24 cases listed below. For ease of reference, the list is in numerical case order, which sometimes differs from the order in which they were decided. The date of each Decision is shown.

Abbreviations:

S = Sustained	C or D = Concurring or Dissenting Opinion(s)
NS = Not Sustained	A = SJC Answer to C or D
OOO = Out of Order	O = Objection
W = Withdrawn	

<b>Case #</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date Decided</b>	<b>Decision / Other</b>
2021-06	Herron et al. v. Central Indiana	06/02/22	NS / C
2021-11	Park et al. v. Korean Central	06/02/22	NS / 2C, D, A
2021-14	Herron et al. v. Central Indiana	04/05/23	ref to 2022-10
2021-15	Barber et al. v. Central Indiana	04/05/23	ref to 2022-10
2022-01	Eagle et al. v. Savannah River	06/02/22	OOO
2022-02	Herron & Baysinger v. Cent IN	04/05/23	ref to 2022-10
2022-03	Klett et al. v. Philadelphia	10/20/22	S
2022-04	Sheppard v. Highlands	10/20/22	S / 2D
2022-05	Crouse v. Northwest Georgia	03/02/23	OOO

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2022-06	Biese et al. v. Tennessee Valley	10/20/22	W 7-18-22
2022-07	Appeal of Harrell et al. v. Cov	03/02/23	S / C
2022-08	Snoke v. Pittsburgh	10/20/22	OOO
2022-09	Benyola v. Central Florida	10/20/22	OOO
2022-10	PCA v. Herron (trial)	04/05/23	Not Guilty
2022-11	BCO 34-1 Petitions re: Cent IN	04/05/23	ref to 2022-10
2022-12	BCO 34-1 Petitions re: Missouri	03/02/23	OOO
2022-13	Miller v. Hills & Plains	10/20/22	OOO
2022-14	Oh v. Korean Southeast	10/20/22	W 8-29-22
2022-15	Murdock v. South Florida	03/02/23	OOO
2022-16	Michelson et al. v. NW Georgia	03/02/23	OOO
2022-17	Benyola v. Central Florida	03/02/23	OOO
2022-18	Benyola v. Central Florida	03/02/23	OOO
2022-19	Benyola v. Central Florida	03/02/23	OOO
2022-20	Wilson et al. v. Pacific Northwest	03/02/23	OOO / C, D, O

### III. REPORT OF THE CASES

#### CASE No. 2021-06

*COMPLAINT OF TE DANIEL HERRON et al.*

v.

*CENTRAL INDIANA PRESBYTERY*

#### DECISION ON COMPLAINT

June 2, 2022

#### SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The genesis of this case is a *BCO* 31-2 investigation of TE Daniel Herron on various reports concerning his Christian character. The *BCO* 15-1 non-judicial commission, appointed by CIP on September 13, 2019, met with the TE in question and his accusers over a period of months in the fall of 2019 and made a full report to CIP's Church Planting team in January 2020. The report concluded: "The Commission does not believe there is a 'strong presumption of guilt of the party involved.'" The Commission added, "[I]t is the judgment

of the commission that there is enough weight to the allegations that pastoral, corrective measures are in order.”

Presbytery “received” an edited version of the full report containing the two recommendations. A complaint was ultimately filed with the SJC against CIP’s not finding “a strong presumption of guilt” regarding the accused and for not receiving the full report. The SJC referred the matter back to CIP with instructions to appoint a committee to conduct a *BCO* 31-2 investigation of reports concerning the TE and to “pursue whatever other lines of investigation may be prudent.”

The Investigative Committee (IC), appointed by CIP on March 5, 2021, reported on May 14, 2021, finding a strong presumption of guilt regarding TE Herron and recommending that six charges be brought against him. CIP 1) approved the report and approved a motion to try the case as a committee of the whole, 2) suspended TE Herron per *BCO* 31-10 and, 3) released a public statement about actions taken by CIP. After the suspension, CIP denied TE Herron access to meetings and minutes from subsequent meetings of CIP. TE Herron, joined by four others, complained against CIP’s actions.

## **I. SUMMARY OF THE FACTS**

- 07/02/19 Five former members or attenders of a PCA Mission Church sent a letter to Central Indiana Presbytery (CIP) accusing a Teaching Elder (TE) of alleged sins.
- 09/13/19 CIP appointed a non-judicial commission to begin a *BCO* 31-2 investigation.
- 11/21/19 Having met with the accusers of the TE as well as the TE himself over the past two months, CIP’s Commission decided to interview more witnesses.
- 01/20 CIP’s Commission submitted a full report to the CIP Church Planting Team: “The Commission does not believe there is a ‘strong presumption of guilt of the party involved’ (*BCO* 31-2) with regard to the accusations sexual harassment, intimidation, and bullying, or that the TE is guilty of an offense as defined in *BCO* 29 (no violation of divine law, heresies, or immoralities).”

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They then observed, “It is the judgment of the commission that there is enough weight to the allegations that pastoral, corrective measures are in order.”

- 02/14/20 The initial report of the Commission was presented to CIP. After objections were raised to the Commission’s initial report, the Commission met during lunch and decided to withdraw their initial report and present an edited report. This edited Commission report was received by CIP. The full report of the Commission was never presented to CIP.
- 02/27/20 TE Marusich filed a complaint against the actions of CIP. This complaint had four allegations: (1) CIP erred in not finding a “strong presumption of guilt” against the accused; (2) CIP’s Commission erred by exceeding its mandate and taking up business not referred to it; (3) CIP’s Commission erred by not submitting a full record of its proceedings to the court appointing it; (4) CIP’s Commission erred in not delivering the full report of their findings to the Presbytery, the accused’s court of original jurisdiction.
- 07/10/20 CIP met to address the complaint from TE Marusich. The presbytery sustained items (2) and (3) and denied items (1) and (4).
- 07/20/20 TE Marusich carried his complaint regarding items (1) and (4) to the General Assembly. The Case was designated as Case No. 2020-04.
- 12/01/20 The proposed panel decision for Case No. 2020-04 was sent to the parties. The CIP moderator called a meeting to determine how CIP would proceed with the requirements sent down with the SJC’s preliminary panel decision.
- 01/08/21 At the called meeting, and following representations from TE Marusich, CIP voted to rescind the original commission report (vote 23-0-1). CIP moved to dismiss the committee formed to rewrite the commission report (voice vote). CIP approved

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referring the case back to the SJC contingent on the full court's acceptance of the proposed panel decision (vote 18-5-2).

- 02/04/21 The SJC issued the final ruling for Case No. 2020-04.
- 02/10/21 TE Marusich filed charges against TE Herron, citing violations of the 5th and 7th Commandments, *BCO* 21-4.1a, and violations of his ordination vows.
- 02/12/21 CIP met in executive session to consider the charges brought by TE Marusich. The presbytery voted to move to trial (27-0-1). First date of trial was set for 03/05/2021.
- 02/18/21 CIP called a meeting for 03/05/2021 to discuss CIP contracting with Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment (GRACE) to investigate charges against TE Herron. This meeting was scheduled to precede the start of the trial on 03/05/2021. Prior to this meeting of the CIP, a series of social media posts going back to December 2020 were posted by one of the accusers. Also, certain highly sensitive and privileged executive session materials were posted on social media
- 03/02/21 CIP Stated Clerk distributed documents of motions intended to be made at the 03/05/2021 Called Meeting.
- 03/05/21 At the called meeting a letter from TE Marusich was read in which he communicated his desire to "rescind" his charges against TE Herron. A point of order was raised challenging the motion made in the letter. Moderator Passwater ruled that the motion was in order and his ruling was challenged. The ruling was challenged, and the vote (13-15-3) was mistakenly ruled by the Moderator as a vote that sustained his ruling. Eventually, CIP voted to "endorse the dismissal of the charges by TE Marusich by a vote of 25-6-1.

CIP also passed a motion to form a new IC "to consider evidence of a strong presumption of guilt of a chargeable offense with regard to allegations against the Christian character to TE Dan Herron, concerning accusations of sexual harassment and intimidation pursuant to *BCO* 31-2, and Bylaws, IV and in accordance with the

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directive of the Standing Judicial Commission in case 2020-04...” committee to investigate the matter and report back to CIP (24-6-2).

- 03/23/21 TE Herron reached out to the *BCO* 31-2 Committee chair TE Josh Hollowell to provide his email address and expressed willingness to provide any needed information to the committee.
- 04/18/21 TE Hollowell reached out to TE Herron to update him on the proceedings of the Committee and communicated, in part, “...I wanted to reach out to you and let you know that we are continuing to process all the information provided to us by the record of the case for the SJC and investigating any new information. At this point we do not plan to reinterview anyone that the prior commission had interviewed unless we have a clarifying question. We don't want to go over the same ground that the previous commission did nor subject anyone to more questioning than is necessary. If, however we receive new information we may reach out to ask you some questions regarding anything new. If you have information that you would like to pass on to the Committee please contact me by email or phone and provide a short summary of the information you would like to pass along so that we can discuss how we want to proceed...”
- 05/12/21 *BCO* 31-2 Committee chair TE Josh Hollowell emailed TE Herron requesting limited responses to questions from the Committee. TE Herron emailed his responses.
- 05/14/21 CIP Stated Meeting. 31-2 Committee presented its report describing that they believed there was sufficient evidence for a strong presumption of guilt. CIP also approved a motion to suspend TE Herron from office (*BCO* 31-10) and to publicly distribute an official statement that included information about the charges, suspension, and eventual trial of TE Herron. CIP declared that the statement was “releaseable [sic] to all TE’s and RE’s of CIP and releaseable [sic] to the public upon request. The Stated Clerk emailed TE Herron the results of the meeting

## MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 05/16/21 Information about the actions taken by CIP appeared on social media.
- 05/20/21 TE Herron requested minutes of the 05/14/2021 Stated Meeting and a copy of the report from the committee that conducted the *BCO 31-2* investigation. The State Clerk denied his request.
- 06/18/21 Complainants (TE Herron, et al) filed with CIP a Complaint against the action taken on 05/14/2021.
- 07/07/21 CIP called meeting to consider the complaint of the actions taken on 05/14/2021. The CIP denied all parts of the Complaint.
- 07/13/21 TE Herron and others bring their Complaint to the Standing Judicial Commission.
- 11/23/21 Case assigned to original Panel REs John White, Mel Duncan, and E. J. Nusbaum (Alternate) and TEs Sean Lucas and Paul Lee (Alternate)
- 12/21/21 The Panel was expanded. RE E. J. Nusbaum and TE Paul Lee were designated to be primary members. RE Howard Donahoe and TE Mike Ross were added as alternates.
- 01/17/22 Panel conducted a Hearing to perfect the Record of the Case.
- 03/21/22 Panel conducted Hearing. Hearing was conducted by GoToMeeting. Panel members RE White (chairman), RE Nusbaum (secretary), RE M. Duncan, TE Lucas, TE Lee, RE Donahoe (alternate) and TE Ross (alternate) were present. The Complainant, TE Herron was present and accompanied by RE Huber and TE O'Bannon. The Respondent was represented by TE Holroyd and RE Barber.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES

- A. Did CIP err when they proceeded to process after hearing the report of the Investigative Committee (IC)?



- B. Did CIP err when they suspended TE Dan Herron per *BCO* 31-10?
- C. Did CIP err when they restricted TE Herron from receiving the report of the *BCO* 31-2 Investigative Committee and the minutes and attachments from meetings of CIP?
- D. Did CIP err when they approved and issued a public statement that communicated the decision made by CIP on May 14, 2021?

### III. JUDGMENTS

- A. No
- B. No
- C. Yes
- D. No

### IV. REASONING AND OPINION

**Specification A** - Proceeding to Process after hearing the Report of the IC.

In this specification of error, the Complainants raise the Constitutional issue of what constitutes “due diligence and great discretion” and “satisfactory explanations” concerning an accused in a *BCO* 31-2 investigation. The *BCO* provides neither detailed standards for such investigation nor for what is required to determine “a strong presumption of the guilt of the party involved.” Those matters are left to the judgment of the court, which is subject to review by a higher court.

In reviewing actions of a lower court, “A higher court should ordinarily exhibit great deference to a lower court regarding those matters of discretion and judgment which can only be addressed by a court with familiar acquaintance of the events and parties.” (*BCO* 39-3)

In this case, we note that all the documents and interviews of the first non-judicial commission that investigated TE Herron were provided to the IC. The IC also conducted additional interviews and received additional documentation. This additional evidence collected by the IC contained 19 statements in support of TE Herron and 8 statements providing evidence against him. In total, the IC reviewed nearly 300 pages of documentation. The documentation included a seventeen-page letter from the accused, a 56-

page transcript of an interview of the accused and an email response from the accused.

The Complainants argue that the IC 31-2 investigation, in demanding “satisfactory explanations” concerning the Christian character of the accused, should have “elicit[ed] appropriate exculpatory communications and conversations with TE Herron...” Since the *BCO* is silent on what constitutes “satisfactory explanations,” it is left to the discretion of the lower court to judge what constitutes those explanations. Yet, the primary purpose of a *BCO* 31-2 investigation is to determine whether the threshold of “a strong presumption of the guilt of the party” is met.

Dr. Morton Smith, in his *Commentary on the PCA Book of Church Order*, notes, “The Court may, even when believing that there is no guilt, institute process for the purpose of vindicating the innocent party. Thus, the Court has unlimited discretion, except when a strong presumption of guilt has been raised by investigation.”

A trial allows both the prosecutor and the accused to present their cases under oath so that those sitting in judgment are able to weigh point-by-point the totality of the testimony and other evidence. It is for those who sit in judgment at the trial to be impartial and view the competency of witnesses testimony and evidence, discounting “accusations from any person who is known to indulge a malignant spirit towards the accused; who is not of good character; who is himself under censure or process; who is deeply interested in any respect in the conviction of the accused; or who is known to be litigious, rash or highly imprudent.” (*BCO* 31-8) *BCO* 32-13 also provides, “In order that a trial be fair and impartial, the witnesses shall be examined in the presence of the accused...” and also allows for cross-examination by the parties.

Because the Record does not show evidence that clear error was committed by CIP, the complaint concerning this specification of error is denied.

**Specification B** - Suspension of TE Herron per *BCO* 31-10.

*BCO* 31-10 - “When a member of a church court is under process, all his official functions may be suspended at the court’s discretion; but this shall never be done in the way of censure.”

The Complainant contends the imposition of his suspension from official functions violated *BCO* 31-10. However, absent some censure statement from the original court, the intention to censure is difficult to demonstrate or for the higher court to notice. The Record did not sufficiently demonstrate evidence warranting finding that Presbytery violated the final clause of *BCO* 31-10.

We understand a minister's suspension from "all his official functions" would certainly feel like a censure, and very likely have a similar effect. The *BCO* does not stipulate a deadline for commencing a trial after a prosecutor has been appointed. And the appeal process takes many months. Furthermore, unless his church can afford to pay him and his temporary replacement, the non-disciplinary suspension would likely impact his salary and his family's finances (unlike ruling elders under similar non-disciplinary suspensions). And a non-disciplinary suspension could eventually result in the minister losing his job, even if he eventually was acquitted or prevailed on appeal. Therefore, courts should be careful to ensure this is "never" done in the way of censure.

In the Judgment for Issue C, we note that access to presbytery meetings and minutes is not ordinarily to be treated as one of a minister's "official functions" covered in *BCO* 31-10. He ordinarily still retains those rights even when the non-censure suspension of *BCO* 31-10 is imposed.

Because the Record does not show evidence that CIP clearly erred in the application of *BCO* 31-10, the Complaint concerning this specification is denied.

**Specification C** – Restricting the Complainant from receiving the report of the *BCO* 31-2 investigative committee and other minutes and attachments from meetings of CIP.

While judicatories are allowed to suspend those under process from their official functions, following *BCO* 31-10, this suspension is administrative in nature. Such suspensions do not have the effect of removing someone as a member of the body; as a result, as a member of that court, Complainant would have the same rights to the minutes and reports of the Presbytery as any other member would have. In this regard, the SJC sustains Complainant on this point.

By restricting his access to the minutes of the Presbytery, including executive session minutes, Presbytery demonstrated a “refusal of reasonable indulgence” to a person against whom process was beginning (BCO 43-2). And by restricting his access to called meetings, which are themselves public meetings, Presbytery also created an unreasonable burden on Complainant in understanding fully what the action of the Presbytery against him was. While there might be reasons where it would be appropriate to ask Complainant to recuse himself from executive session meetings where matters of his disciplinary process would be discussed, Presbytery went too far and created a potential future ground of appeal if they continued down this path.

That said, the SJC does not agree with the Complainant that he would necessarily have the right to “the minutes and documents of the *BCO* 31-2 Committee.” An investigative committee might interview several people who may or may not have ended up being significant for determining whether there was a strong presumption of guilt in a certain matter. Likewise, a committee might collect a range of documents that are not germane to their investigation. Surely it would be inappropriate to disclose each witness, all testimony, and every document to an accused individual upon his request. Those witnesses, documents, and evidence that are germane to the charges and specifications will be made known in the indictment; at that point, the accused should have access to those materials to prepare a defense (*BCO* 32-4, 5, 8).

**Specification D** – Approval and Release of a Public Statement that Communicated the Decision Made by CIP on May 14, 2021.

Once again, this issue turns on *BCO* 39-3(3): “A higher court should ordinarily exhibit great deference to a lower court regarding those matters of discretion and judgment which can only be addressed by a court with familiar acquaintance of the events and parties.” While other judicatories may have handled the matter differently based on their own local circumstances, CIP decided to approve and authorize a “public statement, releasable to all TEs and REs of CIP and releasable to the public upon request”.

Because this matter was already public, and because the Presbytery needed to care for the peace, purity, and unity of the Church at large and the churches of the Presbytery, they exercised their judgment to make a statement on the

matter. Because this is a matter of discretion and judgment, the SJC exhibits deference to CIP in this matter and rules that it did not err in approving a public statement in this matter.

**Conclusion** - In several recent complaints arising from this Presbytery, procedural confusion has come from allowing people to file *BCO* 43-1 complaints against some aspect of the judicial process *after* the court has found a strong presumption of guilt, and thus, after process has commenced. Allowing and adjudicating such pre-trial *BCO* 43-1 complaints could significantly delay a trial, especially if adjudication of each complaint needs to wait for the next meeting of presbytery or wait for an SJC decision. For example, an accused person might seek to file complaints against:

1. the investigative procedures (as in this Case)
2. the appointment of a particular prosecutor
3. the wording of the indictment
4. the appointment of a particular member of the trial commission
5. the date of the trial
6. any pre-trial rulings of the trial court (allowable defense counsel, witness citations, length of briefs, scheduled length of trial, length of closing arguments, etc.)

Allowing such pre-trial *BCO* 43-1 complaints could also ping-pong matters indefinitely. For example, an accused person might file a *BCO* 43-1 complaint against the appointment of a particular prosecutor. If Presbytery sustains it, then some other presbyter might file a *BCO* 43-1 complaint against that decision. And either of those complainants might take their complaint to the SJC. Theoretically, the matter might never get to trial if objections are handled as *BCO* 43-1 complaints rather than as objections the trial court addresses via *BCO* 32-14.<sup>1</sup>

**Amends** - The SJC instructs the Presbytery to proceed to a trial, given that Presbytery found a strong presumption of guilt on certain allegations on May 14, 2021, and the SJC has declined to sustain the Complaint against those

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<sup>1</sup> *BCO* 32-14. “On all questions arising in the progress of a trial, the discussion shall first be between the parties; and when they have been heard, they may be required to withdraw from the court until the members deliberate upon and decide the point.”

findings. Absent a confession or the dismissal of all charges, Presbytery does not have the option to decline to institute process. This is clear in the 1898 F. P. Ramsay quote below. (Emphasis added throughout.)

And after an investigation is once originated, the court *no longer has discretion not to institute process* if the investigation results in raising a strong presumption of guilt of the accused. It appears, then, that, after an investigation, the court *must always institute process*, except where the court judges that the investigation fails to result in raising a strong presumption of guilt, and, of course, the court may institute process, even when the members of the court believe that there is no guilt, if they are persuaded that this is desirable for the vindication of innocence or for other reasons. The sum of the matter is, that the court has unlimited discretion (subject, as in all matters, to the review of higher courts), only that *it has not discretion to raise by investigation a strong presumption of guilt and then not institute process*. A strong presumption means a belief by the members of the court that evidence as then known to them would indicate that guilt probably exists, unless evidence to the contrary can be produced not then known to them. Ramsay, *Exposition of the Book of Church Order* (1898, pp. 185-86), on RoD, V-2.

The Record indicates Presbytery adopted the motion below on January 8, 2021, by a vote of 18-5-2, which read:

Pending the acceptance of the panel decision by the full SJC [in Case No. 2020-04 *Marusich v. CIP*], per *BCO* 41-2 we refer the case [trial] back to the SJC for it to conduct the case with process. Out of concern for the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of those involved, we ask the SJC to please expedite this process.

If Presbytery had filed that Reference, things would have been far simpler. In addition to this present Complaint, there have been three others filed with regard to this matter (one prior and two pending), and this matter has been in various levels of adjudication since 2019. The Records of these Cases total over 2500 pages. The Record and the Hearing on this present Case indicated countless pages of comments and accusations have regularly appeared on social media and in the Bloomington press. Indeed,

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the entire Record of the Case for the previously decided SJC Case 2020-04 has appeared on a social media platform - including Presbytery executive session minutes. The peace and purity of the Church has been disrupted as the resolution of these issues has been delayed.

Finally, the SJC temporarily suspends all decisions relating to censures against TE Herron until after the completion of the judicial process growing out of Presbytery’s *BCO* 31-2 findings of 05/14/2021.

The SJC notes it has postponed consideration of all pending (i.e., Case Nos. 2021-14, 2021-15, & 2022-02) and future Complaints on any matter related to TE Daniel Herron or related judicial matters until the completion of the judicial process growing out of Presbytery’s *BCO* 31-2 findings of 05/14/2021 and the adjudication of any subsequent appeal.

The proposed decision was drafted by the Panel and amended by the SJC. The SJC approved the final Decision by vote of 18-0 on the following roll call vote. Ruling Elders are indicated by an <sup>R</sup>.

Bankson	<i>Concur</i>	M. Duncan <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Neikirk <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
Bise <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	S. Duncan <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Nusbaum <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
Cannata	<i>Recused</i>	Ellis	<i>Concur</i>	Pickering <sup>R</sup>	<i>Absent</i>
Carrell <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Greco	<i>Concur</i>	Ross	<i>Concur</i>
-- vacant	---	Kooistra	<i>Concur</i>	Terrell <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
Coffin	<i>Concur</i>	Lee	<i>Absent</i>	Waters	<i>Concur</i>
Donahoe <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Lucas	<i>Absent</i>	White <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
Dowling <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	McGowan	<i>Absent</i>	Wilson <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>

TE Cannata recused himself because of his relationships with the parties and their representatives. *OMSJC* 2.10(d).

**CONCURRING OPINION**

**Case 2021-06: *TE Herron, et al. v. Central Indiana***

RE Howie Donahoe

I concurred with the Judgments on Issues A, B, & C but believe further reasoning is warranted in A & B. I dissented on the Judgment for Issue D (regarding Presbytery’s press release).

However, before addressing those, it's worth revisiting a significant procedural problem. As the Decision implies, much of the procedural congestion in related cases in this Presbytery arises from what's known in the civil courts as "interlocutory appeals." Seven years ago, I expressed concern about allowing interlocutory appeals in a concurring opinion in *Marshall v. Pacific*. (Case 2013-03, M43GA, p. 547 ff.) And in that Case, a fellow judge's dissenting opinion expressed confidence this scenario would be unlikely, or at least easily managed. But the several complaints out of Central Indiana this year demonstrate otherwise. To avoid this in the future, perhaps BCO 43-1 could be revised to further restrict such complaints, using something like what's shown below:

43-1. A complaint is a written representation made against some act or decision of a court of the Church. It is the right of any communing member of the Church in good standing to make complaint against any action of a court to whose jurisdiction he is subject, ~~except that no complaint is allowable in a judicial case in which an appeal is pending.~~ However, in matters related to judicial process, no complaint is allowable after process has commenced (i.e., after the court has directed the appointment of a prosecutor - BCO 31-2; 32-2). If a complaint is filed after process has commenced, adjudication shall be delayed until after the judicial case has been completed or, if an appeal is filed, after it has been adjudicated or withdrawn.

In this present Case, 13 months elapsed between when Presbytery voted to commence process and the SJC denied the accused minister's Complaint against investigative procedures. Would a trial be suspended again if someone filed a pre-trial BCO 43-1 complaint against the appointment of a particular prosecutor, the trial date, the final wording of the indictment, or the appointment of some member of the trial commission? <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> In U.S. law, an "interlocutory appeal" is the appealing of a lower court ruling to an appellate court prior to the final judgment of the lower court (which is essentially what the Complainant did in this present Case.) U.S. civil courts sometimes allow such "appeals," but only if they meet very narrow requirements. For example, the U.S. Supreme Court delineated requirements for U.S. federal courts, holding that a pre-judgment appeal would be permitted only if:

1. the outcome of the case would be conclusively determined by the issue;
2. the matter appealed was collateral to the merits (i.e., of a secondary nature to);



No party – neither the defendant nor some third party - should be granted appellate review of a decision of a court or its commission via a *BCO* 43-1 complaint *while the judicial case is in process* unless there is some clear demonstration of impending, irreparable harm. The SJC made a similar ruling in 2015 in *Marshall v. Pacific*, where an accused person filed a complaint prior to his trial alleging the indictment was incomplete. The SJC ruled as follows:

The Complaint is Judicially Out of Order, because it has to do with matters in a judicial case that an accused should reserve for proper disposal in an appeal, not through a complaint (*BCO* 32-14; 42-3), ...<sup>3</sup>

We'll now address Issues A, B and D

### Issue A – Investigative Procedures

*Limited Guidelines* - This Case is one of many that have come to the SJC where there is disagreement about investigative processes. Because the *BCO* says little about how to conduct investigations, presbyteries might consider adopting something in their standing rules like that employed by another PCA Presbytery, in which a five-man standing committee has rules and guidelines for how it commences, conducts, and concludes investigations.

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nJVTcgBLzuw-tqnD9hI\\_SItD5XyVFKQ6/edit?usp=sharing&oid=110515225575322482419&rtopf=true&sd=true](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nJVTcgBLzuw-tqnD9hI_SItD5XyVFKQ6/edit?usp=sharing&oid=110515225575322482419&rtopf=true&sd=true)

*“Reports”* - Part of the confusion with investigations probably arises from an overly-broad interpretation of the noun “reports” in *BCO* 31-2.

31-2. It is the duty of all church Sessions and Presbyteries to exercise care over those subject to their authority. They shall with

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3. and the matter was effectively unreviewable if immediate appeal were not allowed. (*Lauro Lines v. Chasser*, 1989)

<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/490/495/case.html>

And interlocutory appeals are even rarer in criminal cases. A defendant’s petition for permission to appeal a trial court’s pre-verdict ruling usually must demonstrate he will be irreparably harmed if he must wait until the end of the trial to appeal.

<sup>3</sup> See also a concurring opinion two years after *Marshall*: Case 2015-04: *Thompson v. S. FL.*, M44GA, p. 515.

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due diligence and great discretion demand from such persons satisfactory explanations concerning *reports* affecting their Christian character. (Emphasis added.)

In the history of American Presbyterianism, the *BCO* word "reports" has ordinarily referred to widely known accusations, public "reports," or allegations of "common fame." It has not referred to every accusation presented to a Session or a Presbytery. In this present Case, it was not public rumors that generated the initial investigation, but rather, a letter from five people. Thus, the letter was more like what's described in *BCO* 34-3 (below) rather than the "reports" of *BCO* 31-2.

*BCO* 34-3. If anyone knows a minister to be guilty of a private offense, he should warn him in private. But if the offense be persisted in, or become public, he should bring the case to the attention of some other minister of the Presbytery.

*Who is the "aggrieved" person of BCO 31-2?* - While not paramount to Issue A in this Case, the parties differed in their interpretation of the italicized clause below in *BCO* 31-2 and even addressed the question in both of their Briefs.

*BCO* 31-2. It is the duty of all church Sessions and Presbyteries to exercise care over those subject to their authority. They shall with due diligence and great discretion demand from such persons satisfactory explanations concerning reports affecting their Christian character. This duty is more imperative when *those who deem themselves aggrieved* by injurious reports shall ask an investigation. (Emphasis added.)

The Complainant (rightly) argued the aggrieved person in view is the subject of the "reports" in the second sentence. But the Respondent (mistakenly) argued the italicized clause refers to the authors of those reports. The "injurious reports" are those alleging something negative about the accused and not reports of injuries felt by accusers. The reports are "injurious" to the accused's character unless investigated and either dismissed or prosecuted. And for that reason, the investigation is "more imperative" if the *accused* (the aggrieved) asks for it.

**Issue B** - *BCO* 31-10 contains an important and often disregarded prohibition regarding administrative (non-censure) suspensions.

*BCO* 31-10 - When a member of a church court is under process, all his official functions may be suspended at the court's discretion; *but this shall never be done in the way of censure.* (Emphasis added.)

It is difficult to determine whether a purported non-censure suspension is, instead, improperly imposed as an unofficial censure. Thus, higher courts will ordinarily be reticent to overrule such. However, presbyteries should realize non-censure suspensions will very often have the same *effect* as a censure, especially if the accused minister loses his job prior to the conclusion of process. Presbyteries should heed the 1879 counsel of F.P. Ramsay: "This is a particular application of the principle that one may have the exercise of his official functions suspended without censure; but the court should be slow to do this, unless prudence requires it, lest it work to the prejudice of the accused or make the court appear precipitate." Unfortunately, rather than being "slow to do this," these non-censure suspensions have seemed to become the rule rather than the exception in many recent Cases that have come to the SJC.

*BCO* 31-10 does not require a presbytery to record a reason for why it administratively suspends a minister pre-trial, and it only requires a simple majority to do so. However, we note an inconsistency between *BCO* 31-10 and *BCO* 42-6 (which requires such recording).

*BCO* 42-6. Notice of appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment of the lower court until the case has been finally decided in the higher court. However, the court of original jurisdiction may, *for sufficient reasons duly recorded*, prevent the appellant from approaching the Lord's Table, and if an officer, prevent him from exercising some or all his official functions, until the case is finally decided (cf. *BCO* 31-10; 33-4). This shall never be done in the way of censure. (Emphasis added.)

It's unclear why the *BCO* would require reasons to be "sufficient" and "duly recorded" when administratively suspending a *convicted* minister during an appeal, but not require the same for a minister who is simply *accused* and

awaiting trial. It seems those should, if anything, be reversed. The legislative history might explain how we got this inconsistency.<sup>4 5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *BCO* 31-10 - The current text dates to PCUS 1879, differing from subsequent editions only in the capitalization of the word "Church."

<sup>5</sup> *BCO* 42-6 - The first sentence of our current *BCO* 42-6 was added in 1990 (M18GA, p. 49). The second was added in 1996 (M24GA, p. 60). Here is the legislative history.

1879 If the infliction of the sentence of suspension, excommunication or deposition be arrested by appeal, the judgment appealed from shall nevertheless be considered as in force until the appeal be issued.

1925 Notice of appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment of the lower court until the case has been finally decided in the higher court. If, however, the censure is suspension or excommunication from the sealing ordinances, or deposition from office, the court may, for sufficient reasons duly recorded, put the censure into effect until the case is finally decided.

1973 Same text as PCUS Book of 1925. (M1GA, p. 153.)

1990 Notice of appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment of the lower court until the case has been finally decided in the higher court. If, however, the censure is suspension from the sacraments, and/or his office, or excommunication from the ~~sealing ordinances~~ sacraments, or deposition from office, the court may, for sufficient reasons duly recorded, put the censure into effect until the case is finally decided.

1996 Notice of appeal shall have the effect of suspending the judgment of the lower court until the case has been finally decided in the higher court. ~~If, however, the censure is suspension or excommunication from the sealing ordinances, or deposition from office, the court may, for sufficient reasons duly recorded, put the censure into effect until the case is finally decided.~~ However, the court of original jurisdiction may, for sufficient reasons duly recorded, prevent the appellant from approaching the Lord's Table, and if an officer, prevent him from exercising some or all his official functions, until the case is finally decided (cf. BCO 31-10; 33-3). This shall never be done in the way of censure.

The 1996 change to *BCO* 42-6 was in omnibus package of 11 changes regarding disciplinary procedures recommended to the 17<sup>th</sup> GA by the Committee of Commissioners on Judicial Business. The package was approved and sent down to the presbyteries, which approved it by a vote of 37-6. (Changes were made to *BCO* 30-1, 30-3, 34-7, 34-8, 36-4, 36-5, 37-1, 37-2, 37-3, 37-7 and 42-6). The 1996 change (our current version) was recommended by the Ad Interim Committee on Judicial Procedures in 1995 and approved by the presbyteries on a 40-14 vote. (M23GA, p. 85). The AICJP had provided the following as its reason for the proposed change: "In the [*BCO* 42] chapter as written there is a conflict between the treatment of an appealing party, where censures may be enacted before the final

**Issue D** – I dissenting in this Judgment because I consider Presbytery’s post-indictment, pre-trial press release to have been a clear error of discretion and judgment (*BCO* 39-3.3).

The Record contained Presbytery’s Bylaws, which included the following provision common in many presbyteries: “Rules of Order: The edition of Robert’s Rules of Order used in the General Assembly will govern Presbytery during the business portion of its meetings unless it is in conflict with the Book of Church Order or these by-laws.” Robert’s Rules contains an important provision that requires a degree of confidentiality that Presbytery did not follow:

A society has the right to investigate the character of its members and officers as may be necessary to the enforcement of its own standards. But neither the society nor any member has the right to make public any information obtained through such an investigation; if it becomes common knowledge within the society, it may not be revealed to anyone outside the society. Consequently, a trial must always be held in executive session, as must the introduction and consideration of all resolutions leading up to the trial. *RONR* (12<sup>th</sup> ed.) 63:2<sup>6</sup>

Rather than clarify or calming things, Presbytery’s press release seems to have resulted in greater misunderstandings, as Presbytery actions were interpreted

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resolution of the appeal, and other provisions of *BCO*, where a temporary suspension of privileges is permitted while an appeal is processed, but never by way of censure. The amendment applies the latter principles consistently.” (*M23GA*, p. 85)

<sup>6</sup> A similar restriction would also apply to any post-conviction press releases: “If (after trial) a member is expelled or an officer is removed from office, the society has the right to disclose that fact - circulating it only to the extent required for the protection of the society or, possibly, of other organizations. Neither the society nor any of its members has the right to make public the charge of which an officer or member has been found guilty, or to reveal any other details connected with the case. To make any of the facts public may constitute libel. A trial by the society cannot legally establish the guilt of the accused, as understood in a court of law; it can only establish his guilt as affecting the society’s judgment of his fitness for membership or office.” *RONR* (12<sup>th</sup> ed.) 63:3

differently by various press sites and blogs. And the Complainant demonstrated how these negatively impacted him.

Our *BCO* does not explicitly prohibit a presbytery from publishing a press release related to an investigation or an indictment. But it seems the *BCO* implies that doing so would be, at best, irregular. *BCO* 36-2 provides: “In the case of public offenses, the degree of censure and *mode of administering it* shall be within the discretion of the court ...” *BCO* 36-3 stipulates: “If the offense is public the Admonition should be administered by the moderator in presence of the court *and may also be announced in public should the court deem it expedient.*” *BCO* 36-4 specifies: “Definite suspension from office should be administered in the presence of the court alone or in open session of the court, as it may deem best, *and public announcement thereof shall be at the court’s discretion.*” (All emphases added.) But unlike our present Case, all those public announcements would *follow* a finding of guilt and imposition of censure, not precede it.

**Concurring and Dissenting Opinions** – Finally, it was troublesome to see in the Record that the Presbytery Clerk made a unilateral and unexplained decision to withhold from Presbytery the February 2021 Dissenting Opinion signed by four SJC judges in Case 2020-04: *Marusich v. Central Indiana*. (M48GA, p. 806) SJC Manual 18.12.a describes concurring and dissenting opinions as “an essential element of the work of the Commission.” In addition, a concurring or dissenting opinion is regarded as an “appendix” to an SJC Decision and is to be “promptly sent to the parties.” (OMSJC 17.8.k) Fortunately, at the upcoming 49th GA, the SJC is recommending a change to its Manual to require all concurring and dissenting opinions to *accompany* an SJC decision (rather than being sent to the parties weeks after the decision has been sent).

**CASE No. 2021-11**

***TE BRIAN PARK et al.***

**v.**

***KOREAN CENTRAL PRESBYTERY***

**DECISION ON COMPLAINT**

June 2, 2022

**SUMMARY OF THE CASE**

This case came to the SJC on a Complaint initially filed by nine Teaching Elders within the Korean Central Presbytery (“KCP”), seven of whom later brought it to the higher court. The case began when Presbytery named an investigative committee to examine allegations of misconduct by a Teaching Elder that had begun many years before – in 2001. The TE was laboring out of bounds as the senior pastor of an independent church, Covenant Fellowship Church (“CFC”) in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. The committee recommended that Presbytery appoint a prosecutor to draw an indictment regarding the Teaching Elder’s conduct. In the same meeting, however, before any indictment was prepared, the Presbytery voted to administer a censure of definite suspension from office. The Complainants allege errors in the process. The matter was adjudicated by the SJC.

**I. SUMMARY OF THE FACTS**

- 08/28/20 Thirteen individuals identifying as former members of CFC submitted a letter to KCP alleging that the senior Teaching Elder/Pastor Joshua Min Chung engaged in improper conduct toward a female member in 2001 and failed to disclose his conduct.
- 10/13/20 KCP formed an Ad-Interim Committee to investigate the allegations against the Teaching Elder
- 04/13/21 The Ad-Interim Committee reported its work and findings in a written report with a number of supporting exhibits and appendices. It recommended that KCP indict the Teaching Elder for his 2001 actions and subsequent conduct. KCP adopted the

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recommendation and appointed a prosecutor. In the same Zoom meeting, however, during its second day, prior to the preparation of any indictment, KCP's minutes record the following action:

“The Presbytery decided to rule as follows... Sexual harassment is unacceptable for Christians. In particular, the sin is aggravated because it is about what the pastor did to a member of his congregation. For such an offense, a certain period of suspension from the office seems appropriate. However, the leadership of CFC suspended his ministry for more than a year. Although this discipline did not comply with the BCO, it is sufficient in its content. Regarding recovery, the pastor reconciled with his victim, and regarding his relationship with God, he recognized his sin before God and relies on the blood of Christ. We judge that his relationship with God is restored as we consider the grace of God. We remind him to abide by the BCO, and we believe that he should return to ministry.”

- 06/5/21 Nine Complainants filed a Complaint against KCP's action of April 14, 2021.
- 07/13/21 KCP met to consider the Complaint. A motion to rescind KCP's action of April 14, 2021 was defeated, falling one vote short of the two-thirds vote required by KCP's rules.
- 07/15/21 KCP issued a written statement indicating that its decision not to rescind its prior action effectively denied the Complaint. In offering a rationale for its action, KCP (and the Complainants) failed to recognize that it had denied the Complaint despite a vote that indicated a majority would have sustained the Complaint, which is all that is required to sustain a complaint.
- 08/09/21 Seven Complainants carried the Complaint to the General Assembly.
- 02/16/22 The Panel conducted the hearing with members TE Paul Bankson, (Chairman), RE Sam Duncan, and RE Jack Wilson (Secretary) in attendance. RE Dan Carrell and TE Fred Greco (alternates) were



also present. TEs Jooho Yoon and Brian Park presented for the Complainants, and TE Kukhun Lee represented KCP.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

Did Korean Central Presbytery err in the manner in which it administered its censure to the Teaching Elder?

## III. JUDGMENT

Yes. The Complaint is sustained, and the action of the lower court is annulled. The matter before the lower court is moot, as there can be no reasonable hope of just proceedings concerning an event twenty one years past and with no cooperating victim. The Complainants' brief virtually acknowledged the same, citing a former CFC lay leader and attorney by profession:

“In my mind there is a version that the victim told Sue Lee right after it happened. That’s the version that Sue later told Janet. I think there is another version that was communicated to you during your investigation. And there are discrepancies. I don’t think anyone is lying. I think it is a product of it happening such a long time ago; the victim wanting it dropped and maybe subconsciously or intentionally minimizing parts so that people will have an easier time letting it go. I experienced this when I prosecuted domestic violence cases.”

## IV. REASONING AND OPINION

BCO 32-3 provides in relevant part:

When a charge is laid before the Session or Presbytery, it shall be reduced to writing, and ***nothing shall be done at the first meeting of the court*** (emphasis supplied), unless by consent of parties, except:

1. to appoint a prosecutor,
2. to order the indictment drawn and a copy, along with names of witnesses then known to support it, served on the accused, and

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3. to cite the accused to appear and be heard at another meeting which shall not be sooner than ten days after such citation.

At the second meeting of the court the charges shall be read to the accused, if present, and he shall be called upon to say whether he be guilty or not. ***If the accused confesses, the court may deal with him according to its discretion. . . .***  
(Emphasis supplied.)

In its first meeting, the Presbytery erred by moving more quickly and summarily than the *BCO* prescribes. Presbytery acted to appoint a prosecutor; however, before the indictment could be drawn, on the same day Presbytery summarily administered a censure. Although Presbytery may have been intending to treat the case as one without process under *BCO* 38-1, its minutes of April 13-14, 2021, do not include any confession on the part of the Teaching Elder or reflect that a confession was offered or received, nor is there any reference to an agreement on a statement of facts.

The Record of the Case includes a three-page statement from the Teaching Elder responding to the findings of the Ad-Interim Committee; however, nothing in the Record of the Case (including the minutes of KCP) indicates that the statement was distributed to voting presbyters or considered in the administration of the censure. While the parties indicate some dialogue or interaction occurred between the Presbytery's decision to appoint a prosecutor and its decision to impose a censure of definite suspension from office, the minutes are silent as to the nature and substance of that interaction.

The above-quoted *BCO* provisions wisely provide for a measured process in a disciplinary matter. The time and consideration required for each step in the process allow for careful analysis and action by the prosecutor, the accused, and the court. Such deliberation is suitable to the weighty circumstances and consequences associated with disciplinary cases.

Once process is formally commenced, if discipline is then to be imposed without a trial, it is essential that the prosecutor, the accused member, and the court understand the scope of the matters being confessed and adjudicated. *BCO* 32-3 contemplates the accused making a confession to particular charges from an indictment. Without charges there can be no specific confession. In proceeding to administer a censure in the absence of charges and a specific

confession based on a statement of facts, Presbytery acted prematurely and erred.

As quoted above, Presbytery’s own ruling on April 14, 2021, admitted its discipline did not comply with the *BCO*. Besides the *BCO*-related procedural error noted above, it also committed procedural errors in the conduct of the April meeting. Having agreed to accept the recommendations of the Ad-Interim Committee and appoint a prosecutor, it later adopted the statement quoted above. But the minutes reveal no motion to rescind the acceptance of the recommendations, let alone a two-thirds vote to rescind.

Further, in stating that “the leadership of CFC suspended his ministry for more than a year,” KCP was relying on a suspension imposed not by a PCA church, but by pastors within an independent church, and the scope of the suspended ministry was never defined. Discipline is a matter for the church court to which a person is subject; in this case, the Teaching Elder in question was a member of KCP, not CFC. Neither CFC nor its staff had any authority to impose any disciplinary action of any kind. *BCO* 30-1 clearly indicates that censures are to “be inflicted by church courts” and then proceeds to describe Constitutional censures as “admonition, suspension from the Sacraments, excommunication, suspension from office, and deposition from office.” KCP did not act in a Constitutional manner when it counted the actions of CFC (vague as they were) as a proper censure under *BCO* 30.

This decision in no way comments on the merits of the allegations. This decision does not mean that charges concerning events that occurred twenty one years ago are always not adjudicable.

The Panel decision was originally written by RE Jack Wilson, RE Dan Carrell, and TE Fred Greco and edited and approved by the Panel 3-0. The Panel’s decision was modified and approved by the SJC by vote of 17-1-1 on the following roll call vote. Ruling Elders indicated by an <sup>R</sup>.

Bankson	Concur	M. Duncan <sup>R</sup>	Concur	Neikirk <sup>R</sup>	Concur
Bise <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	S. Duncan <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Nusbaum <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
Cannata	<i>Concur</i>	Ellis	<i>Concur</i>	Pickering <sup>R</sup>	Absent
Carrell <sup>R</sup>	<i>Abstain</i>	Greco	<i>Concur</i>	Ross	<i>Dissent</i>
-- vacant	---	Kooistra	<i>Concur</i>	Terrell <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
Coffin	<i>Concur</i>	Lee	Absent	Waters	<i>Concur</i>

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Donahoe <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Lucas	Absent	White <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
Dowling <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	McGowan	Absent	Wilson <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>

**CONCURRING OPINION**

**Case 2021-11: *TE Park et al. v. Korean Central Presbytery***

RE Jack Wilson

Joined by TE Paul Bankson, RE John Bise, RE Sam Duncan, and TE Fred Greco. RE Dan Carrell abstained from the vote but agrees with the views expressed in this Concurring Opinion.

We concur in the Commission's Judgment that the Complaint be sustained. The Panel which heard the case proposed to send the case back to Presbytery for further action. For the reasons which follow, we believe the case should have been returned to the lower court for further action. We disagree with the Commission's decision to terminate the case at this time.

The initial allegations against the Teaching Elder stem from events which occurred more than twenty years ago. The incident was not widely known for many years. We acknowledge that prosecuting a case arising from events in the distant past may be extraordinarily difficult. The Record of the Case indicates that the victim may not wish to testify or participate in the case. The passage of time could present challenges in proving multiple aspects of the case. The accused could raise a number of defenses. While these circumstances may make prosecution *difficult*, we do not believe it to be *impossible*.

In addition, the Record of the Case includes other claims and potential offenses (the facts of which are disputed) which could have formed the basis for other charges regarding the Teaching Elder's subsequent conduct in interacting with church members, with his fellow pastors, with Presbytery, and with his wife. Some of those interactions occurred well after the initial events. Some of them are alleged by the Complainants to be ongoing. We believe any offenses occurring, recurring, or continuing after the date of the SJC's decision could form the basis for further investigation and subsequent charges.

In view of these other potential offenses and the procedural errors identified in the decision, we preferred to return the case to the lower court where Presbytery could have completed the process it initiated, with its appointed Prosecutor drafting an indictment. If the accused confessed to the indictment or any part of it, Presbytery could have administered a censure for the matters confessed in accordance with *BCO* 32-3. If the accused pled not guilty, then the case could have proceeded to trial. In the alternative, the accused and Presbytery (if it chose to do so in the exercise of its discretion) could have engaged in the process described in *BCO* 38-1 to attempt to resolve the matters. We believe the Commission erred in its decision to end the case without requiring follow up action in the lower court.

### CONCURRING OPINION

#### Case 2021-11: *Park et al. v. Korean Central Presbytery*

RE Howie Donahoe

While I agreed with the final disposition of this Case, I disagreed with the Statement of the Issue and the Judgment, which ruled Presbytery erred “in the manner in which it administered its censure to the Teaching Elder.” I disagreed because Presbytery did not administer any censure. The Decision further mischaracterized Presbytery’s action by using phrases like those below. (All emphasis added.)

- “Presbytery voted to *administer* a censure of definite suspension” (p. 1)
- “Presbytery summarily *administered* a censure” (p. 3)
- “considered in the *administration* of the censure” (p. 3)
- “decision to *impose* a censure of definite suspension from office” (p. 3)
- “in proceeding to *administer* a censure in the absence of charges” (p. 4)

Presbytery did not “administer” anything. It simply recognized, and regarded as sufficient, a suspension of duties previously imposed by the non-PCA church. And that was Presbytery’s prerogative. At its April 2021 meeting, Presbytery exercised its discretion and judgment (shown below), on a matter that could best “be addressed by a court with familiar acquaintance of the events and parties,” and thus SJC should afford the “great deference” of *BCO* 39-3.3.

Sexual harassment is unacceptable for Christians. In particular, the sin is aggravated because it is about what the pastor did to a member of his congregation. For such an offense, a certain period of suspension from the office seems appropriate. However, the leadership of [the non-PCA church] suspended his ministry for more than a year. Although this discipline did not comply with the BCO, it is sufficient in its content. Regarding recovery, the pastor reconciled with his victim, and regarding his relationship with God, he recognized his sin before God and relies on the blood of Christ. We judge that his relationship with God is restored as we consider the grace of God.

In addition, the Decision indicates the victim wanted the matter “dropped.” In addition, the Record indicated the woman communicated in Oct. 2019: “I adamantly requested the incident [of 18 years prior] to be private and continue to do so. Any rendition of the incident from other sources are not directly from me, so are a misrepresentation of the story and false. Again, I absolutely requested the incident to be completely private and continue to do so.” The recent Report of the GA’s Ad Interim Committee on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault encourages the following: “In addition, an abuse victim will struggle to convey their own desires. Church members and leaders help victims by encouraging them to communicate their thoughts *and make their own decisions.*” (AIC Report, p. 2401. Emphasis added.)<sup>7</sup>

### **DISSENTING OPINION**

#### **Case 2021-11: *TE Park et al. v. Korean Central Presbytery***

TE Michael F. Ross

I dissent in the judgment rendered by the SJC on June 2, 2022, in Case 2021-11, in declaring the matter before the Korean Central Presbytery (KCP) moot, and in effect removing any opportunity for remedy to the lower court. My

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<sup>7</sup> In AIC Report, see esp.: “Responding to an Adult Sexual Abuse Disclosure or Discovery,” pp. 2393-2408.

reasons are simple and straight-forward, and are explained in the following paragraphs.

The majority decision rested upon an erroneous assumption: "...as there can be no reasonable hope of just proceedings concerning an event twenty-one years past and with no cooperating victim." The justification for this erroneous assumption, as stated in the summary of the facts, rests on the opinion of a former member and lay leader of Covenant Fellowship Church (CFC), albeit an attorney. The SJC seems to have ignored the fact that thirteen former members of CFC brought allegations against the TE accused of improper conduct toward a female member (ROC 9-14) and that the accused TE admitted his guilt before the Korean Central Presbytery (KCP) via their Ad Hoc Investigative Committee. He wrote: "I grieve and acknowledge my guilt before God and before you, the Korean Central Presbytery. I will submit to the discipline of their court. All I ask for are fairness and clarity." (ROC 489) Additionally, the SJC stated: "This decision does not mean that charges concerning events that occurred twenty-one years ago are always not adjudicable."

Indeed, our *Book of Church Order (BCO)* clearly deals with incidents that occurred long ago.

**32-20.** Process, in case of scandal, shall commence within the space of one year after the offense was committed, unless it has recently become flagrant. When, however, a church member shall commit an offense, after removing to a place far distant from his former residence, and where his connection with the church is unknown, in consequence of which process cannot be instituted within the time above specified, the recent discovery of the church membership of the individual shall be considered as equivalent to the offense itself having recently become flagrant. The same principle, in like circumstances, shall also apply to ministers.

The clock for this complaint did not begin with the sexual misconduct in 2001, but with the June 5, 2021 complaint against KCP's ignoring the allegations of several witnesses, the misapplication of old discipline administered by a non-PCA church, and KCP's errors in following *BCO* 31-2. There is nothing in the

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remedy sought by the Complainants that could justify the ruling that “there can be no reasonable hope of just proceedings” in this case.

Quite the opposite. By sustaining the complaint, as the SJC panel originally did, and remanding it back to KCP “for action consistent with this decision,” there were several viable options open to KCP to administer justice, remove the public scandal of this affair, and act to reclaim and restore a fallen brother in Christ. All the options are quite “reasonable.” Each option offers a proper application of due process.

- Option 1: The SJC could have referred the matter back to Presbytery on the following grounds: That the matter was not properly before the SJC in the first place. (In the SJC’s “summary of the facts” it was noted that KCP did in fact sustain the original complaint, and only by a mistaken count of the vote was the complaint denied and subsequently brought before the SJC. [Page 1, lines 22-26] )
- Option 2: Presbytery could have revisited the proposal to accept the act of discipline by CFC, adding to it a measure of accountability, counseling and assistance in helping the guilty TE to restore and renew his marriage, ministry and reputation.
- Option 3: In light of the events thus transpired, Presbytery could have applied the compassion and wisdom of the pastoral approach set forth in *BCO* 34-6:

**34-6.** If the Presbytery find on trial that the matter complained of amounts to no more than such acts of infirmity as may be amended, so that little or nothing remains to hinder the minister’s usefulness, it shall take all prudent measures to remove the scandal.

It could have thus gone on record in declaring the improper conduct to be serious sin and moved to aid a penitent brother regain a measure of renewal.

- Option 4: Presbytery could have acted upon the guilty plea of the TE, offered to its Ad Hoc Investigative Committee. They could have then instituted the process outlined in *BCO* 32-3 by charging the offender,



receiving his guilty statement and applying appropriate discipline “according to its discretion.” (*BCO* 32-3)

- Option 5: The Presbytery could have reversed its decision, appointed a prosecutor, prepared an indictment, and proceeded to trial. The fact that they failed to do this the first time does not mean there can be no “reasonable” remedy afforded to all the parties involved. The SJC often remands cases to Presbyteries in order for them to do properly what they initially failed to do.

The SJC’s concern that the female, who was mistreated twenty-one years ago, would not be willing to come forth for trial is not of vital concern in this case. She need not appear as a witness; the TE has already confessed his sin against her. The *BCO* 31-2 process can move forward on the basis of the TE’s confession. (*BCO* 31-3) The guilty TE has stated, in writing, “I will submit to the discipline of the court.” (ROC 489) Thus, at the very least *BCO* 34-7 applies to this case.

**34-7.** When a minister, pending a trial, shall make confession, if the matter be base and flagitious, such as drunkenness, uncleanness, or crimes of a greater nature, however penitent he may appear to the satisfaction of all, the court shall without delay impose definite suspension or depose him from the ministry.

It should also be kept in mind that in the original complaint to KCP the complainants included an appendix of eight allegations. Six of these allegations need not involve the corroborating witness of the offended female. Nevertheless, they were serious enough to warrant investigation and proper action on the part of KCP.

I disagree that this case is somehow “moot.” *Webster’s New World College Dictionary: Third Edition* defines the word *moot*: “(1) subject or open for discussion or debate; debatable; (2) not worthy of consideration or discussion because it has been resolved or no longer needs to be resolved.” There is no debate on the guilt of the accused TE nor of the nature and severity of his offenses. The only debate is over the actions of KCP within the last year. Additionally, this case has not been resolved, and certainly is not in the category of something that “does not need to be resolved.”

## MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The PCA is deeply concerned about the epidemic of sexual assault and physical abuse of women and children in our American society and its rising pattern in the PCA, as is evidenced by the report of the PCA's study committee on domestic abuse and sexual assault. The SJC's own case-load gives portent of an increasing number of sexual misconduct cases coming before the SJC. The SJC's concluding statement that, "This decision in no way comments on the merits of the allegation. This decision does not mean that charges concerning events that occurred twenty-one years ago are always not adjudicable.", indicates the SJC's concern for the protection of its members from any form of sexual misconduct or abuse. This concluding statement reinforces the SJC's commitment to the pursuit of justice in cases of abuse that come before it.

I remain convinced that the SJC was simply attempting to follow due process in this case, something the SJC always attempts to do in all its caseload. I am also certain that each and every SJC member cares deeply about the protection of all PCA members from violence, abuse and any form of injustice. My dissent is in no way intended to impugn either the motives or the character of my fellow judges. But I am also concerned that this decision could leave the SJC and the PCA open to unfair accusation that we found technical grounds for sweeping this vital issue under the rug. Even now the SJC is involved in another case of alleged sexual conduct by a TE, in which the PCA is being charged, on social media, with this untrue accusation. Thus, I am concerned about the honor and good name of both the SJC and the PCA.

While attempting to follow due process, the SJC arrived at a final decision that was too narrow to afford KCP opportunity to bring proper closure to this matter. I believe the panel's original decision to remand the case back to KCP was the proper, wise, and prudent course of action, and would have avoided any unjust accusation that the SJC did not take seriously the issues set forth in this case. For these reasons, I most respectfully dissent.

**SJC ANSWER  
TO DISSENTING OPINION**  
**Case 2021-11: *TE Park et al. v. Korean Central Presbytery***  
October 22, 2022

This Answer addresses the Dissent's assertion below.

The [SJC] decision rested upon an erroneous assumption: "...as there can be no reasonable hope of just proceedings concerning an event twenty-one years past and with no cooperating victim." The justification for this erroneous assumption, as stated in the summary of the facts, rests on the opinion of a former member and lay leader of Covenant Fellowship Church [non-PCA], albeit an attorney.

It is not accurate to contend the SJC's Judgment rests solely on the opinion of a third-party. The woman explicitly asked that this matter not be pursued. For example, below are two of her emails in the Record.

"From the beginning, [the minister] has honored my wishes to keep the situation totally private, respected my desire to restore our relationship, and move forward. I'm very saddened to hear that the story has surfaced into a distorted truth of full out lies which only bring further unnecessary damage. No one had my permission to share what turned into a gross misinterpretation of the truth. Again, I chose privacy and now ask you to also respect my desire." (September 28, 2019, Record p. 322)

"I adamantly requested the incident to be private and continue to do so. Any rendition of the incident from other sources are not directly from me, so, are a misrepresentation of the story and false. Again, I absolutely requested the incident to be completely private and continue to do so." (October 8, 2019, Record p. 330)

The Record indicates the woman clearly wanted the two-decades-old matter dropped. The Complaint did not demonstrate her explicit wishes ever changed. Therefore, the Dissent's concern that "this decision could leave the SJC and the PCA open to unfair accusation that we found technical grounds for sweeping this vital issue under the rug" is without reasonable basis.

**CASE No. 2021-14**

***TE HERRON et al.***

**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 (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. 2021-15**

***RE DAN BARBER et al.***

**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 (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. 2022-01***EAGLE et al.*

v.

**SAVANNAH RIVER PRESBYTERY****DECISION ON COMPLAINT**

June 2, 2022

The Officers reviewed the Complaint and found the case Administratively Out of Order and determined that it cannot be put in order because the Complaint was not timely filed. *OMSJC* 9.2. The Complainants originally filed this complaint with the SJC on December 15, 2020. (then styled as Case 2020-10). The SJC ruled Case 2020-10 administratively out of order as prematurely filed and reset the clock for the filing of that Complaint “so that timing begins on the later to occur of the notification of: (a) this action by the SJC (which occurred on October 21, 2021) or (b) ruling by Presbytery on the Complaint.” Presbytery ruled on the Complaint on October 20, 2020. The Complaint was filed more than 30 days after the later of those two events and is therefore not timely (*BCO* 43-3). For these reasons, the case is dismissed. The SJC approved this decision by a vote of 19-0 on the following roll call vote. Ruling Elders indicated by <sup>R</sup>.

Bankson	<i>Concur</i>	M. Duncan <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
	Neikirk <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	
Bise <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	S. Duncan <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
	Nusbaum <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	
Cannata	<i>Concur</i>	Ellis	<i>Concur</i>
	Pickering <sup>R</sup>	<i>Absent</i>	
Carrell <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Greco	<i>Concur</i>
	Ross	<i>Concur</i>	
- vacant -		Kooistra	<i>Concur</i>
	Terrell <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	
Coffin	<i>Concur</i>	Lee	<i>Absent</i>
	Waters	<i>Concur</i>	
Donahoe <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Lucas	<i>Absent</i>
	White <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	
Dowling <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	McGowan	<i>Absent</i>
	Wilson <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	

**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
- 09/19/20 Schrock, and RE Dennis Blankenbeckler distributed its report to Presbytery.
- 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 [*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).<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the findings of judicial cases have consistently held that the Constitution of the PCA does not allow for "new revelation" from God,

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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> *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.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> 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).

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.”<sup>6</sup>

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.

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<sup>6</sup> 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 <sup>R</sup>.

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

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conduct, after he had departed for Indonesia. As explained below, procedural errors and timeliness considerations have led the SJC to sustain the Complaint.

### II. SUMMARY OF THE FACTS

- 05/05/19 TE Sheppard resigned as Pastor of Arden Presbyterian Church to accept a call with Reformed Theological Seminary in Indonesia. His final day with APC was set for June 30, 2019.
- 06/30/19 In an open congregational meeting following worship, TE Sheppard delivered an apology vetted through the APC Session to “confess sin and repentance” to members he offended or may have offended during the course of his ministry.
- 07/19/19 Members Jill and Kevin Martin met with the APC Session to request “further review and action by the Session” because they considered TE Sheppard’s apology “not sufficiently repentant and too general,” and asserted that TE Sheppard had not attempted to reconcile with them.
- 07/29/19 The APC Clerk of Session signed a letter to TE Sheppard saying, “Simply put, we don’t believe that you fulfilled our request regarding a personal confession of sin and repentance during your closing remarks.” This letter was not mailed until 08/16/19 and not received by TE Sheppard until 08/19/19.
- 08/15/19 The APC Session minutes record a meeting with the Presbytery Shepherding Committee, saying that the Elders shared issues regarding Craig Sheppard while he served as Pastor. They further record that “The Session is not seeking a charge against Craig but asks for help in how to respond to the requests of members that have been hurt by Craig, and, any influence the Committee may have with Craig since he is a member of WCP. After a period of questions and discussion, the Shepherding Committee agreed to meet with Craig and exercise oversight.”
- 02/23/20 APC Session minutes record that the Presbytery Shepherding Committee Chairman met with the Session, where the Chairman is said to have reported that TE Sheppard “would like everything

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to be on good terms” and that “he is willing to meet with anyone from APC.” The minutes further record that after the Shepherding Committee Chairman left the meeting there was further discussion, resulting in a consensus “to move forward and put this issue behind us.”

- 04/16/20 APC Session Minutes record that the day before, Assistant Pastor James Buckner had spoken with “former Pastor Craig Sheppard, who indicates he has not heard anything from the APC Session since January with whom to reconcile.” It was further recorded that the Clerk was asked to write to TE Sheppard, specifically naming five members with whom reconciliation should be sought.
- 05/21/20 APC Session minutes record that the Clerk read his draft of the letter he had been instructed to create during the April 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. It was reported that two members (the Martins) had asked for their names to be removed from the letter, so the Session decided to contact the remaining three members in order to gain their consent for naming them in the letter to TE Sheppard.
- 06/08/20 In an email to the APC Session, Kevin Martin raised an issue not previously asserted about an offense taken by a member of his family having allegedly occurred in the Fall of 2017.
- 06/18/20 The APC Session again reviewed the draft letter to TE Sheppard, and TE Dwight Basham, who had become the APC Pastor, read the Martin email to the Session. It was decided that TE Basham would meet with Kevin Martin to discuss his family’s expectations and the possibility of a trial.
- 07/16/20 During a Stated Meeting of the Session, the Clerk reported that the three members who were to be consulted regarding the letter presented as a draft on May 21 had declined to participate. The Session then decided against sending the letter to TE Sheppard. The Session appointed its Clerk to draft a letter to the Presbytery, include a copy of Kevin Martin’s email, and represent “the Martins’ concerns affecting the Christian character of TE Craig Sheppard.” As a courtesy, a copy would be sent to Craig.

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- 07/17/20 The APC Clerk wrote a letter to the Presbytery Stated Clerk as “a report affecting the Christian character of TE Craig Sheppard” and included a copy of the Martin email. TE Sheppard, then serving as Moderator of Presbytery, received his copy with other material for the forthcoming August 1 meeting of Presbytery.
- 08/01/20 The Shepherding Committee reported to Presbytery on the letter received from the APC Session, which led to Presbytery’s vote “to entrust 31-2 responsibilities - shy of finding any presumption of guilt - to the Shepherding Committee to pursue an investigation of the reports concerning the Christian character of the Teaching Elder in this matter.”
- 08/24/20 The Shepherding Committee met with TE Sheppard and his wife, presenting him with the Martins’ allegations, which he denied.
- 09/29/20 TEs Skip Gillikin and Craig Bulkeley filed a complaint against Presbytery for the action taken on August 1, 2020, citing APC’s and HP’s failure to follow Matthew 18, and contending that *BCO* 32-20 should govern since the alleged offenses took place more than one year in the past (in 2017).
- 10/22/20 The APC Session met with five members of the Presbytery Shepherding Committee at its Stated Session meeting and decided that the “Session should determine and contact witnesses for the Committee to interview.”
- 11/10/20 The Gillikin/Bulkeley Complaint was denied without further explanation at the Presbytery Stated Meeting.
- 01/22/21 TE Sheppard and his wife met via Zoom with the Shepherding Committee and answered further questions regarding the matter alleged by the Martins, again denying those claims.
- 02/02/21 TE Sheppard sent documentary evidence to support his position to the Shepherding Committee.
- 02/15/21 TE Sheppard sent additional supporting material to the Shepherding Committee.

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- 02/26/21 Presbytery Executive Session minutes record that the Shepherding Committee circulated its report detailing its actions to bring about reconciliation between TE Sheppard and the Martin family, concluding that its efforts at reconciliation had failed.
- 05/04/21 The Shepherding Committee presented its report to Presbytery in Executive Session, and Presbytery voted to empower the Moderator to establish a Judicial Business Commission (JC) “to handle everything arising out of this report.”
- 05/27/21 TE Sheppard sent an email requesting that three of the six men on the JC recuse themselves since they were members of churches where the accusers had since moved. This request was denied.
- 06/08/21 TE Sheppard wrote the JC to provide it with material that had been omitted from the Shepherding Committee report to Presbytery.
- 08/19/21 The JC Chairman emailed TE Sheppard asking for a teleconference, during which a “pastoral letter” would be read.
- 08/24/21 In his reply, TE Sheppard expressed concerns about the JC assuming a Pastoral role (as opposed to a Judicial role) in dealing with the accusations against him. He argued that conflating Shepherding and Judicial functions risked self-incrimination, since he could not control the outcome of reconciliation efforts. He further noted that such conflation placed the JC in the untenable situation of trying to negotiate reconciliation while tasked with conducting a judicial investigation.
- 08/25/21 The JC Secretary wrote the Presbytery Moderator and Stated Clerk, informing them of TE Sheppard’s concern with its pastoral motions, indicating that the Commission disagreed with the argument and stating that it intended to proceed with the pastoral letter via email.
- 08/25/21 The Secretary also emailed TE Sheppard regarding his 08/24/21 correspondence, encouraging him to address his concerns to

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Presbytery because the Commission could not change its directive as it understood it. Attached to the email was the pastoral letter.

- 08/31/21 TE Sheppard responded to the pastoral letter, reiterating his constitutional concern with the process the JC was following, and contending that the JC “cannot undertake to move from the ‘judge’s bench’ to the ‘counseling office’ while still wearing judicial robes.”
- 11/01/21 The Chairman of the JC emailed TE Sheppard to notify him that its members had concluded that his concerns were valid, saying that the JC had done “further research and consultation in regard to your concerns about the pastoral role our commission desired to perform in regard to your situation and drew similar conclusions to your own.”
- 11/09/21 Presbytery Stated Meeting minutes record that the JC returned its determination of a “strong presumption of guilt” to Presbytery without providing details, but rather than instituting process, the JC moved that a reconciliation process be instituted by the Shepherding Committee. At the same time, the JC stipulated that if reconciliation could not be achieved by the May 3, 2022 Stated Meeting of Presbytery, it would proceed to process against TE Sheppard. Both elements of the motion were approved.
- 01/06/22 TE Sheppard filed a Complaint against the Presbytery action of November 9, asserting that Presbytery had erred with respect to *BCO* 32-20 by failing to institute process in a timely manner because the matter first came to Presbytery 27 months previously (in August 2019), that the matter was known to the full Presbytery 16 months earlier (July 2020), and that the matter was based on an alleged offense that occurred more than four years prior (in 2017).
- 02/07/22 Presbytery’s Shepherding Committee issued a Report on the Reconciliation Process with TE Sheppard, recording that he “was willing to participate in the process ...with all the persons contacted.” It also reported that of the six people contacted for reconciliation, “All declined to participate in the reconciliation process, except one.” The report further noted that the Martins



were unwilling to meet unless TE Sheppard confessed that the family member's allegations against him were true, but that TE Sheppard would not agree to that stipulation because he asserted his innocence and could not admit to something that had not happened. The Committee concluded that "TE Sheppard was cooperative in the reconciliation process, even though conditions for meeting with the Martins could not be agreed upon by the involved parties."

02/26/22 Presbytery Meeting minutes record that TE Sheppard's Complaint was denied, with no details provided.

03/01/22 TE Sheppard carried his complaint to the General Assembly.

07/26/22 The Complaint was heard via GoToMeeting by a Panel of the SJC composed of RE Steve Dowling, Chairman; TE Paul Bankson, Secretary; RE Dan Carrell; and RE Sam Duncan (as an Alternate). TE Sheppard presented his Complaint with the assistance of TE Dominic Aquila. Presbytery was represented by TE Jonathan Inman.

### **III. STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES**

1. Did Highlands Presbytery err at its Stated meeting on November 9, 2021, by approving recommendations from its Judicial Commission that conflated judicial and non-judicial (pastoral) procedures, thereby failing to institute timely process after determining a strong presumption of guilt as required by *BCO* 31-2?
2. Did Highlands Presbytery err by failing to institute process within one year of an offense, as had been required by *BCO* 32-20?

### **IV. JUDGMENTS**

1. Yes.

2. Yes, and Presbytery is debarred from prosecuting any of the allegations embraced by the subject matter of this case.

## V. REASONING AND OPINION

### Procedural Errors

BCO 31-2 is unambiguous in establishing that process must be instituted upon a court's determination of a strong presumption of guilt, saying:

*If such investigation, however originating, should result in raising a strong presumption of the guilt of the party involved, the court shall institute process, and shall appoint a prosecutor to prepare the indictment and to conduct the case. (Emphasis added.)*

This mandate pre-dates the PCA and has remained unchanged in the Book of Church Order since the inception of the denomination. Explaining this section in his 1898 Exposition of the Book of Church Order, F.P. Ramsay helpfully wrote:

*And after an investigation is once originated, the court no longer has discretion not to institute process, if the investigation results in raising a strong presumption of guilt of the accused. It appears, then, that, after an investigation, the court must always institute process, except where the court judges that the investigation fails to result in raising a strong presumption of guilt, and, of course, the court may institute process, even when the members of the court believe that there is no guilt, if they are persuaded that this is desirable for the vindication of innocence or for other reasons. The sum of the matter is, that the court has unlimited discretion (subject, as in all matters, to the review of higher courts), only that it has not discretion to raise by investigation a strong presumption of guilt and then not institute process.*

The Record for this case is equally unambiguous in documenting that the HP Judicial Commission's investigation raised a strong presumption of guilt and that Presbytery failed to institute process. There can be no dispute that the BCO

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says it must and that the Record says it did not but, perhaps more significantly, the JC knew and understood the constitutional requirement, recording the following in the minutes of its May 15, 2021, meeting:

*Noted that our first main task is to determine if there is a strong presumption of guilt. If we find there is not, we report this to presbytery and are dismissed. If we find there is, we report this to presbytery and simultaneously proceed to a trial, then report the judgment to presbytery.*

Despite planning to follow the process mandated by BCO 31-2, the JC deviated from it, culminating in actions taken at the November 9 meeting that were unfair to the accused. At that meeting, the Commission first made a “Report Regarding Presumption of Guilt,” which contained a timeline and narrative. While that report was arguably consistent with reporting the finding of a strong presumption of guilt, the Commission then proceeded to make the following motion:

*Whereas the Judicial Commission of Highlands Presbytery has found a strong presumption of guilt of TE Craig Shepard [sic], and*

*Whereas the report on these matters from the Shepherding Committee seems to indicate sins have been committed among parties involved, and*

*Whereas it appears that repentance from these sins and reconciliation between affected parties has either not been attempted or has not been achieved, and*

*Whereas it is the hope of the Judicial Commission that repentance and reconciliation can be brought about through a pastoral approach,*

*Therefore, the Judicial Commission moves that Highlands Presbytery charge the Shepherding Committee with the task of attempting to bring repentance and reconciliation between TE Craig Sheppard and the Session of Arden Presbyterian Church and the Martin family,*

*Also, the two members of the Shepherding Committee who are members of the Judicial Commission (TE Russell Harper and RE Gordon Meiners) will recuse themselves from this work of the Shepherding Committee,*

*Also, the Shepherding Committee will report back to Presbytery by the stated meeting in May 2022. If it is determined that repentance and reconciliation are not possible by this time, the presbytery will proceed to a judicial process.*

A motion in accord with the motion presented in the JC Report was adopted by Presbytery.

This motion was inappropriate for two reasons. First, the Judicial Commission should not have made such a motion at all subsequent to declaring its finding of a strong presumption of guilt. Second, the final clause of the motion required resumption of the judicial process if the Shepherding Committee determined that repentance and reconciliation were “not possible” by a specific date. That provision damaged the right of the accused against self-incrimination, while simultaneously making him solely responsible for reconciliation, even though others could make it “not possible” and expose him to judicial action. For these reasons, the motion adopted by Presbytery at its November 9, 2021 meeting was improper.

### **BCO 32-20 Time Bar**

*BCO 32-20* says that “Process, in case of scandal, shall commence within the space of one year after the offense was committed, unless it has recently become flagrant.” This provision, as this Court has previously explained (*SJC 2016-05, Troxell v. Presbytery of the Southwest*) establishes a standard for timeliness while yet allowing church courts the ability to redress more ancient sins if they have only recently become widely known, in order that courts might ensure the purity of the church and the glory of God. As in *SJC 2016-05*, however, the Record in this case does not establish that the alleged offense only recently became flagrant. Instead, it establishes that the alleged offense occurred in 2017, that the parents of the family member who was the object of the alleged offense knew at that time and discussed the situation with TE Sheppard and his wife, that the Session of Arden Presbyterian Church was made aware of the allegation in July of 2019, and that Presbytery was made

aware of it in July of 2020. As of January 6, 2022, when TE Sheppard filed his Complaint, process still had not been initiated. Even the most liberal interpretation would mean that timely prosecution should have commenced by July, 2021. There was, then, no possibility of properly proceeding to process in accord with the action of Presbytery on November 9, 2021.

Though Presbytery argued that the amended version of *BCO* 32-20 adopted at the 49<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in June 2022 applies to this case, the SJC disagrees. Presbytery offered no justification for retroactive application of the amended provision. It would be unreasonable to allow a court to proceed based on a procedural rule that did not yet exist, not to mention that it would constitute a denial of due process.

The SJC is sympathetic to the motives of Presbytery in trying to reach a pastoral solution to a difficult ministry issue, but in this sense the current case is not different from SJC 2016-05 and cannot be decided differently. In its reasoning for that case the SJC opined that the choice to operate for a time “pastorally” rather than “judicially” was within the authority of Presbytery. “Having chosen this path, however..., [Presbytery] could not subsequently reset the timeline to begin prosecution in the absence of some newly evident scandal or flagrancy or a newly committed or continuing offense.” The same holds true in the case before us.

In summary, Presbytery erred when it established a “strong presumption of guilt” but failed to move to process, and it would have been vulnerable to an appeal or complaint even had it moved to process, for it would not have done so within the timeline established by *BCO* 32-20. Thus, Highlands Presbytery is debarred from further prosecution of the offense alleged by the Martins or of any other alleged offense embraced by the subject matter of this case.

The Panel's proposed decision was drafted by RE Steve Dowling and edited and unanimously approved by the Panel. The SJC approved the Decision, as amended, by vote of 16-4 with three Recused and one Absent, on the following roll call vote. Ruling Elders indicated by <sup>R</sup>.

Bankson	<i>Concur</i>	Eggert <sup>R</sup>	<i>Dissent</i>	Neikirk <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
Bise <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Ellis	<i>Concur</i>	Pickering <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
Carrell <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Garner	Absent	Ross	<i>Concur</i>
Coffin	<i>Concur</i>	Greco	<i>Concur</i>	Sartorius	<i>Concur</i>

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Donahoe <sup>R</sup>	<i>Dissent</i>	Kooistra	Recused	Terrell <sup>R</sup>	Recused
Dowling <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Lee	<i>Concur</i>	Waters	Recused
M. Duncan <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Lucas	<i>Concur</i>	White <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
S. Duncan <sup>R</sup>	<i>Dissent</i>	McGowan	<i>Concur</i>	Wilson <sup>R</sup>	<i>Dissent</i>

SJC Secretary's Note: "*Recused*" is used above as a category of disqualification to indicate that the member voluntarily disqualified himself, rather than "*Disqualified*" as used for other instances (e.g., being from the Presbytery from which a complaint arose).

*OMSJC* 2.10.d stipulates: "A member shall disqualify himself in any proceeding in which the member's impartiality might reasonably (see Section 2.5.b) be questioned, including but not limited to the following circumstances ..." *OMSJC* 2.10.e stipulates: "A member subject to disqualification under this chapter shall disclose on the record the basis for the member's disqualification." Below are the statements submitted by these members.

TE Waters - "I have disqualified myself (*OMSJC* 2.10.d) in the Sheppard case because of my particular, professional relationship with Dr. Sheppard (he is a voting professor at RTS who teaches at RTS Jackson, and I serve as Academic Dean at RTS Jackson)."

TE Kooistra - "Mr. Shepherd was an MTW missionary while I was Coordinator of MTW. For the sake of fairness and objectivity I have recused myself from the 2022-04 case."

RE Terrell - "I have recused myself from 2022-04 in the interest of ensuring impartiality because I was serving as chief operating officer at MTW during several years of Mr. Shepherd's tenure as an MTW missionary."

**DISSENTING OPINION****Case 2022-04: *TE Craig Sheppard v. Highlands Presbytery***

RE Jim Eggert, joined by RE S. Duncan and RE Donahoe

I concur with the Commission’s resolution of Issue 1, but because I disagree with the Commission regarding its resolution of Issue 2, I dissent.

Because Presbytery found a “strong presumption of guilt,” the correct amends for the SJC would have been to remand the matter back to Presbytery to proceed with process against TE Sheppard as prescribed by *BCO* 31-2. The Commission did not reach that result because it concluded that further proceedings against TE Sheppard were “debarred” by *BCO* 32-20. This, I believe, was a mistake.

While the Commission did not use the phrase “statute of limitations” in its opinion, the careful reader will find it hard to understand the opinion as treating former *BCO* 32-20 as anything else.<sup>8</sup> The majority explains that previous precedent regarding former *BCO* 32-20 “establishes a standard of timeliness” and refers to the “timeline established by *BCO* 32-20” as well as to “debarment from further prosecution.” By debarring the Presbytery from prosecuting “any of the allegations embraced by the subject matter of this case,” the majority effectively treats former *BCO* 32-20 as though it were a “statute of limitations,” but it was not, nor is that provision material to these proceedings.

Former *BCO* 32-20, properly understood, was nothing more than a tool in the hands of individuals seeking to prompt a delinquent court to accelerate the initiation of process in a “case of scandal” plaguing the Church, yet no party to this case sought to use it that way. Presbytery did not invoke *BCO* 32-20 at all. TE Sheppard, while he at least invoked *BCO* 32-20, only did so to stop formal process against him, not accelerate it. TE Sheppard treated *BCO* 32-20 as if it were a shield to prevent any process from ever being instituted against him, which was not its proper purpose. The Commission’s decision effectively adopted TE Sheppard’s erroneous conception.

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<sup>8</sup> *BCO* 32-20 was substantially amended at the 49<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

**The Former Version of *BCO* 32-20 Is the Only Version That Can Apply to Our Decision.**

Since a new version of *BCO* 32-20 was adopted by the 49th General Assembly in June 2022, it is necessary to ask whether the former version or the new version of that provision should be applied in this case.

The former version applies because we, as a reviewing court, ought not apply an amendment to the *Book of Church Order* which had not been enacted at the time that the court of original jurisdiction considered the question under our review. In our polity, courts of original jurisdiction “are subject to the review and control of the higher courts, in regular gradation.” (*BCO* 11-4). But we would not be exercising “review” of a lower court if we applied a *BCO* amendment not enacted at the time that the lower court considered the question now under scrutiny. “Review” requires the higher court to put itself in the position of the lower court at the time it made its decision, and determine whether, under all the circumstances, the lower court erred in a way that would justify reversing or annulling its decision. The new *BCO* 32-20 was not one of the “circumstances” existing at the time Presbytery made the decision presently under review.

Applying the new version of *BCO* 32-20 to our review would upset the deferential balance of our graded courts, and result in our impinging on the original jurisdiction of Presbytery which would be “more competent to determine” the facts relevant to the application of the new provision particularly “because of its proximity to the events in question, and because of its personal knowledge and observations of the parties and witnesses involved.” (*BCO* 39-3.2). The new version permits an accused to object to bygone offenses and requires the court to “consider factors such as the gravity of the alleged offense as well as what degradations of evidence and memory may have occurred in the intervening period.”<sup>9</sup> Applying the new version of *BCO* 32-20 to TE Sheppard’s case would necessarily involve the consideration of facts and circumstances not properly before the SJC on this record, facts

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<sup>9</sup> If this matter had been remanded to Presbytery for continued process as I propose it should have, TE Sheppard may have raised the objection permitted by new *BCO* 32-20, sought to develop the record along those lines, and if unsuccessful sought higher review on a fully developed record, including the preliminary question of whether new *BCO* 32-20 would properly be retroactively applied to TE Sheppard’s matter. The majority’s decision has cut off the proper development of these issues.



and circumstances that the Presbytery did not develop as the court of original jurisdiction since new *BCO* 32-20 was not in effect at the time of Presbytery's deliberation on the matter now before us. (See *BCO* 11-3 and 11-4).

Therefore, my analysis in this dissent is confined to an interpretation and application of former *BCO* 32-20, the only provision in effect at the time of the Presbytery's decision.

### **The Former Version of *BCO* 32-20 Was Not a “Statute of Limitations”**

The Standing Judicial Commission has previously applied former *BCO* 32-20 to prevent the bringing of an action where there has been delay in the institution of process. See e.g., *Troxell v. The Presbytery of the Southwest* (Case No. 2016-05), M44GA 2017, page 514. The SJC has said that former *BCO* 32-20 “establishes a limitation on the filing of charges in cases of scandal outside of a space of one year.” *Lee v. Korean Eastern Presbytery* (Case No. 2010-26). Also see *The Report of the Judicial Commission to Hear Complaint of TE Vaughn E. Hathaway, Jr., et al. Against Grace Presbytery* (M10GA, 1982, page 109) (referring to *BCO* 32-20 as “the one year statute of limitations”); *Lyons v. Western Carolina*, M39GA 2011, page 594, at 596 (“*BCO* 32-20 establishes a limitation on the filing of charges outside the space of a year”). Similarly, in *Ganzel v. Central Florida Presbytery*, M47GA 2021, page 729, at 743 (Case No 2019-08) the SJC reasoned:

We agree that in the normal pattern *BCO* 32-20 bars a court from prosecuting an alleged offense that occurred more than one year previously. The honor of Christ, the protection of His Church, the cause of justice, and the concern that memories would fade and testimony become unreliable, all support that conclusion.

But this reasoning is in error. The blanket claim that “memories fade” and testimony becomes “unreliable” in 365 days is doubtful at best and comports neither with common sense nor generally accepted conceptions of timely justice. Many civil and criminal statutes of limitations extend four or five years (or longer) or don't even begin running for lengthy periods of time under certain conditions. We may find examples of shorter limitations periods, but they usually arise from other policy considerations, not out of concern for the deterioration of evidence. For serious felonies, there is commonly no statute of limitations at all.

In the civil and criminal arena, a “statute of limitations” has been defined as

A statute prescribing limitations to the right of action on certain described causes of actions or criminal prosecutions; that is, declaring that no suit shall be maintained on such causes of action, nor any criminal charge be made, unless brought within a specified period of time after the right accrued. Statutes of limitations are statutes of repose, and are such legislative enactments as prescribe the periods within which actions may be brought upon certain claims or within which certain rights may be enforced. In criminal cases, however, a statute of limitations is an act of grace, a surrendering by a sovereign of its right to prosecute.

*Black’s Law Dictionary*, (Fifth Edition). We should not interpret old *BCO* 32-20 to have been a *statute of limitations*. And make no mistake; it was a matter of *interpretation*.

Not only were there no compelling reasons to import the civil law of “statutes of limitation” into our ecclesiastical law, but there were also compelling reasons *not* to. Ecclesiastical cases are not rightly understood as “rights of action” in the sense of civil law. The parties to a case of process are always “the accuser and the accused,” and the Presbyterian Church in America, “whose honor and purity are to be maintained,” is always the accuser and the prosecutor “is always the representative of the Church, and as such has all its rights in the case.” (*BCO* 31-3). So yes, the Church has “rights.” But they are not like rights in the secular courts since, after all, “Discipline is the exercise of authority given the Church by the Lord Jesus Christ to instruct and guide its members and to promote its purity and welfare” (*BCO* 27-1), not a “right of action” in the sense of civil law. The Church’s rights are ecclesiastical rights arising out of the *Rules of Discipline*, the ends of which, “so far as it involves judicial action, are the rebuke of offenses, the removal of scandal, the vindication of the honor of Christ, the promotion of the purity and general edification of the Church, and the spiritual good of offenders themselves.” (*BCO* 27-3).

We should not understand that a “statute of limitations” circumscribed and delimited the ecclesiastical “rights” of the Presbyterian Church in America. None of the SJC’s cases invoking former *BCO* 32-20 ever squarely addressed the fact that the phrase “statute of limitation” was never found in

that provision, which merely stated, “Process, in case of scandal, shall commence within the space of one year after the offense was committed, unless it has recently become flagrant.” *BCO* 32-20 did *not* say, “Process, in case of scandal, is barred and prohibited if not commenced within one year after the offense was committed,” yet it has been repeatedly interpreted as though it were written that way.

As stated, the language of former *BCO* 32-20 was *mandatory*, directing the courts of the Church to act promptly toward offenses, enjoining them to address and resolve cases of scandal in a timely manner. But former *BCO* 32-20 does not on its face prescribe a bright line test defining when it is “just too late” to institute judicial process merely because of the passage of time. For example, if a parent directs his teenage son to start his homework by 5:30 p.m., would we suppose that this direction means that the son, if the parent discovers he has failed to start his homework on time, will not be allowed to start it at 7:00 p.m., at 6:00 p.m., or even one minute late? Would such a son rightly surmise that his delay would effectively excuse him from the duty of doing his homework? Not at all. To the contrary, we would expect the parent to require his son to finish his homework, even if he was late. And by analogy, did our fathers in the Church who wrote *BCO* 32-20, directing that process in the case of scandal “shall commence within the space of one year after the offense was committed,” mean that process commenced one year plus six months – or even one day – after the offense was committed was barred? I think not.

Read former *BCO* 32-20 carefully; no line of text informs the reader of the *result* when a court commences an action more than one year after an offense is committed in a case of scandal. The supposition that such action is time barred was only an inference.

Therefore, those authorities that effectively treated former *BCO* 32-20 as a statute of limitations, without further explanation, offered only a textual *inference*, not a textual *proof*. But the SJC both had and has the responsibility to interpret the *Book of Church Order* according to the *BCO*'s own terms. Textual inferences should be scrutinized to ensure that they comport with the *Book of Church Order* in general, and the *Rules of Discipline* in particular. The SJC bears responsibility “[t]o insure that [our] Constitution is not amended, violated or disregarded in judicial process...” (*BCO* 39-3). Misinterpretations of the text of the *Book of Church Order* violate that

principle and should not be instantiated by a presumptive ecclesiastical appropriation of the doctrine of *stare decisis*.

While “Judicial decisions shall be binding and conclusive on the parties who are directly involved in the matter being adjudicated,” they are not, strictly speaking, binding in subsequent cases, even though they “may be appealed to ... as to any principle which may have been decided.” (*BCO* 14-3). But this argument should not prevail if this court’s interpretation of *BCO* 32-20 as a “statute of limitation” was in error. If this court were forever bound to its own prior erroneous interpretations of the Constitution, then our Standards could be corrupted by even a single misguided decision of a simple majority of the Standing Judicial Commission representing a miniscule fraction of the officers of the PCA.

The inference that former *BCO* 32-20 was a “statute of limitations” is exceedingly doubtful. This inference advanced not even one of the *express purposes* of discipline set out in *BCO* 27-3. The express purpose of discipline to “rebuke an offense,” was not served by cutting short the time in which the Church courts may address an offense scandalizing the Church. The express purpose of discipline to “remove scandal,” is not served by arbitrarily preventing the Church from removing scandal while its fire blazes on. The express purpose of discipline to “vindicate the honor of Christ” is not served while a persisting scandal continues to besmirch the honor of Christ. Lastly, the purpose of discipline to “promote the purity and general edification of the Church and the spiritual good of offenders themselves” is not served while the Church does nothing to redress an unsightly blemish on Christ’s Bride and to bring the benefits<sup>10</sup> of church discipline to those bearing the name of Christ drowning in a sea of unrelenting scandal.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *BCO* 27-2: “All baptized persons, being members of the Church are subject to its discipline and entitled to the benefits thereof.”

<sup>11</sup> The question of whether this matter ever became a “case of scandal” is addressed in another Dissent. Since the chief purpose of *BCO* 32-20 is to goad the courts to redress “scandal” on a timely basis, it should be obvious to the Church when a lower court is moving too slowly to institute process, and we should not have to resort to elaborate points of interpretation about what amounts to a “scandal.” Scandal, being what it is, has the quality of capturing, even *commanding*, our attention, and should not be hard to recognize, much like when Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart said that he would refrain from further defining obscenity concluding, “I know it when I see it.”

One may reasonably ask, “If old *BCO 32-20* was not a statute of limitations, then what was it?” The concurring opinion of Howie Donahoe in *Ganzel, supra*, accurately answered this question: “Properly understood, the first sentence of [old] *BCO 32-20* did not shelter an offender in any way, but rather, it is simply meant to spur the court to prosecute a particular offense – something that’s actually bringing public disgrace to the Church,” page 397. After all, the opinion continued, “if the cause of Christ is made scandalous by the Church’s neglect of timely discipline in a case of scandal, how would disallowing prosecution on day 366 repair the matter?” *Id.* at 398.

Simply put, old *BCO 32-20* was a goad for the courts of the Church, a weapon in the hands of those of God’s people courageous enough to fight for the removal of scandal from Christ’s Bride where the courts of the Church failed or refused to do so. The persons empowered by *BCO 32-20* were righteous individuals resolved to require the courts of the Church to redress scandal in a timely manner rather than delay or even abandon the effort. Thus, former *BCO 32-20* empowered a church member to complain against a Session’s failure to prosecute a scandalous offense disturbing the peace of his congregation if no action was taken within one year. Likewise, former *BCO 32-20* empowered a member of Presbytery to complain against Presbytery’s failure to act on a known scandal if Presbytery had lingered more than a year in tolerating a minister’s reproach.<sup>12</sup>

We have another provision of the *Book of Church Order* supporting the “goad” interpretation of former *BCO 32-20*, a provision that likewise distinguishes between time prescriptions *directing* or *compelling* court action from those that *prohibit* further action. *BCO 13-2* provides, “When a minister shall continue on the rolls of his Presbytery without a call to a particular work for a prolonged period, not exceeding three years, the procedure as set forth in *BCO 34-10* shall be followed.” Who can doubt that this provision directs or compels Presbytery to diligently pursue a minister who has habitually failed to be

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<sup>12</sup> One arguably regretful feature of the recent amendment to *BCO 32-20* is that this former tool to spur courts to action is no longer available to the Church. Perhaps *BCO 40-5* might still be used to address a court’s failure to act in case of scandal when it amounts to an “important delinquency.” Of course, *BCO 31-2* is also still available through the avenue of complaint, but now minus the “one year” prescription. Some might even suggest the new situation is an improvement since courts might now be compelled to address scandals without having to wait an entire year before beginning proceedings to compel a delinquent court to act.

engaged in the regular discharge of his official functions for an extended period, and to do so *especially* after three years has elapsed without his having a call? Presbytery is obliged to pay attention to any member without call and “to inquire into the cause of such dereliction and, if necessary, to institute judicial proceedings against him for breach of his covenant engagement.” (*BCO* 34-10). Clearly, these provisions envision that the inquiry should occur *before* three years elapsed since his last call -- hence the imperative phrase *not exceeding three years*. This provision, like former *BCO* 32-20, is a goad to spur the courts of the Church to diligence.

But who could reasonably suppose that this three-year prescription of *BCO* 13-2 *prohibits* Presbyteries from divesting a minister after three years, affording such a minister the right to continue on the rolls of Presbytery forever because, after all, Presbytery exceeded the three-year limit in *BCO* 13-2? No, *BCO* 13-2's three-year prescription is only a *sword* to compel the court to act to divest a minister, not a *shield* in the hands of ministers without call protecting them to remain on Presbytery's rolls indefinitely because of Presbytery's failure to act within the prescribed period.

In the same way, why should we have ever interpreted the one-year period of former *BCO* 32-20 to have provided a shield to forever insulate an alleged offender from process rather than as a sword to goad a court to action where it failed to timely address an open scandal? Indeed, *BCO* 32-20 only *increased* the urgency and necessity of church courts to act after scandal plagued the Church for more than a year without the institution of process to redress it.

I fully recognize that great minds in the history of the Church have disagreed with me on the interpretation set out in this dissent, and I include in that list my currently serving brothers in the majority (and my predecessors) on the SJC, whom I respect immensely. In addition to my fellow servants on the SJC, a figure as renowned as Franklin Pierce Ramsay, widely respected for his late nineteenth century commentary on Presbyterian church polity, also maintained that the predecessor provision to *BCO* 32-20 was effectively a statute of limitation. F.P. Ramsay, *Exposition of the Book of Church Order* (1898, p. 207), on VI-20. Ramsay argued that failure to act within a year "debarred" the court's further action "not to shield the offender, but to incite to the prompt prosecution of such offences." *Id.*

Ramsay supposed that debarment was an *incitement to prompt prosecution*.<sup>13</sup> But such an “incitement” leaves the Church wanting. After all, who is really punished or incentivized by banning formal process in cases of scandal? Certainly not the courts of the Church who have erred by their delay; having delayed, they will remain, as they must, governing the Church even when they have erred. What is worse, with any judicial path forward having been closed by Ramsay’s “debarment,” the courts are rendered impotent to remedy their error and the scandal itself. Thus, Ramsay’s *inducement to prompt prosecution*, rather than incentivizing diligence, serves only to instantiate the scandal now compounded by the error of the court’s undue delay. The Church and the alleged offender -- not the courts -- are punished by this interpretation, for the scandal rages on, debarment notwithstanding. If anything, the scandal is only compounded by the debarment, for the court’s inaction only adds to the misfeasance. *Incitement* not being a sufficient inducement, Ramsay’s is not a reasonable interpretation of former *BCO 32-20*.

We must leave to the imagination what other reasons might justify the inference of debarment from the simple, and now amended, phrase “Process, in case of scandal, shall commence within the space of one year after the offense was committed, unless it has recently become flagrant.” Are we to interpret that phrase to have relieved all in the Church from any fear of being called to account for misconduct beyond one year’s time when, for whatever reason, the church courts were too slow to call offenders to account? Or are we simply to believe that the authors of former *BCO 32-20* surmised that it is more unjust to permit an old offense to be revived than it would be to snuff it out? Such ideas would seem to needlessly minimize not only an offender’s accountability before God and His Church for the open scandal of his offense, but also the corresponding power of Christ’s work of redemption accomplished not by the Lamb slain “within the space of one year” before the scandal became flagrant, but “from the foundation of the world.” (Rev. 13:8). The *Rules of Discipline*, as imperfect as they may be, should be interpreted in such a manner to demonstrate Christ’s redemptive power, his holiness, and His Lordship over the Church in the midst of His people by providing a remedy rather than a dead end, especially in cases of scandal.

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<sup>13</sup> By this logic, we should likewise interpret the three-year period in *BCO 13-2* as an incitement to diligence by Presbyteries to institute proceedings against ministers without call so that a Presbytery’s failure to so timely act means that it may not divest such ministers for that reason for as long as the minister lives.

In the end, debarment does not benefit an accused for as long as scandal rages, for scandal consumes the accused just as it does everyone else, regardless of whether formal process against him is no longer available. And, of course, scandal is the very condition that is *assumed* by former *BCO 32-20*.

### **Is The New *BCO 32-20* Prospective Only or Is It Also Retroactive?**

Neither the majority nor this dissent tells us about the retroactive application of the new version of *BCO 32-20*, but this question is relevant to the relevance of this dissent. If the former provision has no application to any future cases in our courts, then this dissent is merely one last “clearing of the conscience” of one opposed to this court’s prior interpretations of that provision as a “statute of limitations.” On the other hand, if the old version of *BCO 32-20*, under certain conditions, might be interpreted to apply in indictments yet to be filed touching conduct that occurred before the adoption of the new version of *BCO 32-20*, then the principles set forth in this dissent would have equal application to such charges should they arise in the future.

The majority declares that the new version of *BCO 32-20* does not apply to this case because, “It would be unreasonable to allow a court to proceed based on a procedural rule that did not yet exist, not to mention that it would constitute a denial of due process.” If the majority’s invocation of “due process” is understood to cement the premise that former *BCO 32-20* bestowed vested rights in offenders whose offenses were previously “debarred,” then perhaps the majority is breathing life into the idea that the now repealed provision might nevertheless apply to at least some offenses that occurred before the amendment adopted at the 49th General Assembly. For example, an accused person indicted for conduct that would have been debarred by this court’s prior interpretation might argue that he would be materially prejudiced by process under new *BCO 32-20* because he detrimentally relied on this court’s past interpretations of former *BCO 32-20* as a “statute of limitations” and consequently was deprived of fair warning to preserve exculpatory evidence.

I would dismiss such “rights” as misguided, premised as they would be on a false conception of former *BCO 32-20* as a “statute of limitations.” Former *BCO 32-20* afforded no rights to the accused at all. Indeed, it is the new rather than the old *BCO 32-20* that might shelter an accused from the necessity of defending bygone offenses.

I respectfully dissent.



**DISSENTING OPINION****Case 2022-04: *TE Sheppard v. Highlands Presbytery***

RE Howie Donahoe, joined in part by RE Sam Duncan <sup>14</sup>

I respectfully dissent from this Decision because I don't believe *BCO 32-20* applied to this Case and thus disagree with the Judgment and Amends on Issue 2.

*(old) BCO 32-20. Process, in case of scandal, shall commence within the space of one year after the offense was committed, unless it has recently become flagrant. ...<sup>15</sup>*

The Record didn't demonstrate this matter was ever a "case of scandal" or that the offense "recently became flagrant," so *BCO 32-20* couldn't apply. Nor did the Decision explain how there was "clear error" in Presbytery's judgment that it *wasn't* a case of scandal. (*BCO 39-3.3*)

I'm also not persuaded the old *BCO 32-20* was a statute of limitations. And even if it was, it seems to presume the matter became a case of scandal *at the same time* the offense was committed, or soon thereafter, and thus the one-year period would coincide. But if the court is not even aware of the matter until, say, two years after the alleged offense, it couldn't be responsible to prosecute something while it was unknown to them. Fortunately, the statute of limitations question is addressed thoroughly in another Dissenting Opinion.

**Case of Scandal** - The old *BCO 32-20* was expected to spur the court to promptly prosecute a particular kind of case. *BCO 32-20* didn't address a matter that *might become* a case of scandal; it addressed a matter that had *already* become a case of scandal. The *BCO* wording dates to the PCUS 1879 Book. In his 1898 *Exposition of the BCO*, Ramsay defined "scandal."

The principle is that, if the Church neglects to commence process against scandal (which is any *flagrant public* offence or practice

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<sup>14</sup> RE Duncan joins the parts about "Case of Scandal" and "Stare Decisis," but not "Standard of Review."

<sup>15</sup> *BCO 32-20* was revised four months ago by the 49th GA in Birmingham in June 2022. See footnote later.

*bringing disgrace on the Church*) within a year, she is debarred from thereafter doing it. This is not to shield the offender, but to incite to the prompt prosecution of *such* offences. Offences not so serious or scandalous the Church may bear with the longer while seeking to prevent scandal; (Emphasis added.)<sup>16</sup>

For matter to be a "case of scandal" it would need to be something known to the public and, unless adjudicated promptly, would *continue* to bring public disgrace (scandal) on the Church. A case of scandal involves something "causing general public outrage." (Oxford/Lexico) And while a case of scandal often involves shameful behavior, shameful behavior does not always become a case of scandal. Frequently there is alleged behavior unknown to the broader public. Below are some online definitions of the noun *scandal*. All emphasis is added.

- Cambridge Dictionary - an action or event that causes *public* feeling of shock and strong moral disapproval
- Oxford Learners Dictionary - behaviour or an event that people think is morally or legally wrong and causes *public* feelings of shock or anger
- Definition.org - a publicized incident that brings about disgrace or offends the moral sensibilities of *society*
- Definitions.uslegal.com - Scandal refers to disgraceful, shameful, or degrading acts or conduct that brings about disgrace or offends the moral sensibilities of *society*.

Applying these definitions, it's hard to identify a date in the Record - or even a month - when this matter ever became something that "offended the moral sensibilities of society." It doesn't seem the public ever became aware of allegations, which would explain why there's no evidence in the Record of "public feelings of shock or anger." The Record lacks evidence that this was "a situation or event that everyone knows about." (Collins Dictionary) The Record doesn't mention any article in the Ashville Citizen-Times, or any story on the WLOS evening news, or even an appearance on the internet. None of this is a comment on the nature of the allegations. It's simply an observation that this matter never became a "case of scandal." The word "scandal" only

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<sup>16</sup> I disagree with Ramsey on the "debaring," but that's not material to his helpful definition of "scandal."

appears twice in the Decision, and it's only in quotes from *BCO 32-20* and the SJC Decision in *Troxell v. Southwest*. The Decision doesn't define the phrase or explain why we should interpret it differently than commonly accepted English definitions.<sup>17</sup>

It seems clear the Presbytery was trying to *prevent* scandal, i.e., to keep it from ever *becoming* a case of scandal. In June 2020, the Session received the allegations and a month later communicated them to Presbytery's Clerk. The next month, the Shepherding Committee recommended a *BCO 31-2* investigation without naming the TE or the allegations. Presbytery discussed the matter confidentially in executive session at meetings in February, May, and November 2021. At the November meeting, Presbytery's judicial commission recommended Presbytery rule there was a strong presumption of guilt "without providing details" of the allegations. If it were a case of scandal there would be no need to address it in executive session or note that details were not provided. The "scandal" would have been well known.

Neither the Complaint nor the Complainant's Brief attempted to argue that this was a case of scandal, and this important omission was noted in Presbytery's Brief. While the Complaint and the Brief often cite *BCO 32-20*, they never address the word "scandal." It appears that the Complainant thought *BCO 32-20* was a fixed, one-year statute of limitations on *all* alleged offenses, which it was not. Perhaps the Complaint's omission is understandable because it would be unusual for an accused person to claim his alleged offenses became, at some point, a "case of scandal." But that needed to be established before *BCO 32-20* could apply.

The section of the Complaint addressing *BCO 32-20* used the phrase, "timely manner," seven times. But the question is not whether the timeliness of Presbytery's actions was reasonable. The more important question is whether this was ever the type of matter addressed by *BCO 32-20*, and it was not. An accused person is always free to argue prosecution should be barred for lack of reasonable timeliness, and this Dissent does not assert otherwise. But that's a broader issue, and a different one, than the limited situation envisioned in *BCO 32-20*.

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<sup>17</sup> Even though *BCO 32-20* has been revised, the interpretation of the noun "scandal" remains important as it is currently used in eight other places in the *BCO* - 27-3, 30-4, 31-5, 33-1, 34-1, 34-6, 34-8, and 43-10.

**Standard of Review** - More importantly, the Decision did not afford the constitutionally required "great deference" to Presbytery's judgment in a "matter of discretion and judgment." (*BCO* 39-3.3) In such matters, the higher court must refrain from reversing the lower court unless it finds "clear error" in the lower court's exercise of judgment. So, referencing Ramsey's earlier quote, the question is: Which court was in the best position to judge whether this matter was "bringing disgrace upon the Church?" Presumably, it was the original court. And in Presbytery's judgment, it never became a case of scandal. In addition, Presbytery did not have any burden to prove that it was not a case of scandal. It had no burden to prove the *absence* of something. If the Accused/Complainant wanted to contend *BCO* 32-20 applied, it was his burden to demonstrate why the matter should have been regarded as a case of scandal. And if a higher court is to overrule a lower court's judgment in a matter of discretion and judgment, the higher court has the burden to demonstrate how the lower court's judgment was *clearly* erroneous. Neither of those burdens were met.

**Stare Decisis** - Finally, there's an assertion in the Decision that warrants comment. Near the end, the Decision asserts "the current case is not different from SJC 2016-05 [*Troxell*] and cannot be decided differently." But it can. The SJC is not constitutionally bound to forever render the same interpretation of a constitutional provision. Sometimes, a court will realize a prior interpretation was an error. Granted, it would be disruptive if this happened on a regular basis, but even the US Supreme Court is not bound by that extreme view of how *stare decisis* should function. And neither is the Church. *WCF* 31-3: "All synods or councils, since the apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err; and many have erred."

Fortunately, *BCO* 32-20 has been revised. It's my understanding that the old *BCO* 32-20 now has no bearing or relationship to the prosecution of any offense, regardless of the date of the offense. All indictments will now be evaluated by the standards of the new *BCO* 32-20.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *BCO* 32-20 (revised June 2022): "The accused or a member of the court may object to the consideration of a charge, for example, if he thinks the passage of time since the alleged offense makes fair adjudication unachievable. The court should consider factors such as the gravity of the alleged offense as well as what degradations of evidence and memory may have occurred in the intervening period."

/s/ RE Howie Donahoe <sup>19</sup>

**CASE No. 2022-05**

***CROUSE et al.***

**v.**

***NORTHWEST GEORGIA PRESBYTERY***

**DECISION ON COMPLAINT**

March 2, 2023

The SJC finds the above-named Complaint out of order and moot.

The Complaint involves judicial process against three Ruling Elders. On July 23, 2022, the Session dismissed all charges and ended the judicial process, thus removing the action against which complaint was made. Also on July 23, those REs voluntarily resigned from the Session and the Session dissolved their calls per their request. Since the underlying dispute has been settled and the charges dismissed, the Complaint alleging errors in that process is moot.

This Decision was recommended by the SJC Officers and the SJC approved the Decision by vote of 23-0 on the following roll call vote. Ruling Elders indicated by <sup>R</sup>.

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In the 12 months between June 2021 and June 2022, our presbyteries voted 72-13 for the change (an 82% majority of all presbyteries). An 85% majority of the 3,869 individual votes cast in the presbyteries were also in favor (3,305-564). The change was approved and enacted by the 49th GA by vote of 1,179-363 (a 76% majority). All but one of the presbyteries of the 24 SJC members voted in favor of the change, with the commissioner votes in those 24 Presbyteries totaling 1,251-94 (i.e., 93% in favor).

<sup>19</sup> I confess I concurred six years ago in the SJC's October 2016 Decision in *Troxell v. Arizona* (M45GA, 2017, p. 514) That was poor judgment on my part. I regret doing so. I later came to believe I had misunderstood *BCO* 32-20. This new understanding was first reflected in my February 2020 Concurring Opinion in Case 2019-08: *Ganzel v. Central Florida* (M48GA, 2021, p. 750).

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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

**CASE No. 2022-06**

*TE RYAN BIESE et al*

v.

**TENNESSEE VALLEY PRESBYTERY**

October 20, 2022

The Complainants withdrew this Complaint on July 18, 2022 and the SJC noted such on October 20, 2022.

**CASE NO. 2022-07**

*MR. PAUL HARRELL et al.*

v.

**COVENANT PRESBYTERY**

**DECISION ON APPEAL**

March 2, 2023

## SUMMARY OF CASE

The Accused are Paul Harrell, Wesley Hurston, Stephen Leininger, Zach Lott, Jason Satterfield, Lance Shackelford, and Tyrus Teague, seven members of Christ Redeemer PCA in Jonesboro Arkansas, a 38-member mission church, who for various reasons did not want TE Jeff Wreyford, the organizing minister who had served the mission for about four years, to continue as its permanent pastor. They confronted TE Wreyford and the temporary Session with their opinion at the cusp of particularization. The Session, persuaded of TE Wreyford's suitability to the work, made it known to the Accused that it fully supported his election at particularization. After meetings and other communications with the seven Accused, the Session, believing that their opposition was an affront to the Session's authority over the mission church, an encroachment on the authority of the Presbytery, and an implicit slander on the character of TE Wreyford, conducted a trial of the Accused, and censured them with indefinite suspension from the Lord's Supper.

We sustain the appeal and reverse the judgments of the lower courts.

### I. SUMMARY OF THE FACTS

- 2015 In 2015 Covenant Presbytery established Christ Redeemer, a mission church in Jonesboro, Arkansas and appointed a temporary Session to govern it ("the Session"). TE Jeff Wreyford, the organizing minister approved by Presbytery led the congregation from its inception, and by mid-2020 the mission church, with its 38 members, was readying to become a particular congregation, anticipating the Session to call for an election of its officers as prescribed in our *Book of Church Order*.
- 08/03/20 TE Wreyford and a church member met with Stephen Leininger and Wesley Hurston, two representatives of the Accused, who, "speaking for the group," communicated a set of concerns shared by the group. The meeting was recorded, and a transcript is a part of the Record of the case.
- 08/30/20 The Accused met with the entire Session. During the meeting, Stephen Leininger, as a representative of the Accused, read a statement recounting that the seven were "unanimous in their opinion that [TE Wreyford] is not the one to be pastor of [the

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mission church]” and recommended that he “remove his name from consideration.” Like the August 3 meeting, this meeting was also recorded, and a transcript was made a part of the Record of the case.

- 09/09/20 The Session decided on a course of action, approving a form of letter to the Accused, which apparently was sent the next day (the “September 10 Letter”) The Session characterized its letter as a “Letter of Review & Admonition.” The Session explained it had asked TE Wreyford to respond to the concerns raised, and having considered his response, the Session had “voted ... in the affirmative for their ongoing support” of TE Wreyford. The letter alleged that the Accused had violated the ninth commandment and directed the Accused to “prayerfully reflect and consider how you have sinned against Christ, TE Wreyford, or others inside or outside His church by what you have done or left undone,” calling them to repent, and insisting that they appear before the Session to personally reaffirm their commitment to the fourth and fifth vows of church membership. If they failed to do so, they would face the institution of formal process against them. If the Accused provided no written response by a prescribed date, the letter continued, “we will understand this to mean that you are no longer willing to submit to your membership vows.”
- 09/14/20 The Accused responded in writing, denying that they had sinned in expressing to the Session their concerns regarding TE Wreyford.
- 09/16/20 The Session replied in writing, saying that the Accused’s correspondence “fail[ed] to address adequately the citation we gave you as [members] of Christ Redeemer ...” The Session required the Accused to “respond in writing” or the Session “would have no other option but to begin formal church disciplinary action” against them.
- 09/18/20 The Accused filed a five-page complaint against the September 9 and September 16 actions of the Session.



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- 09/22/20 Four days later, the Session summarily denied the complaint. The Accused took their complaint to Presbytery, which assigned it to a commission.
- 09/30/20 The Session wrote to the Accused that it would “defer any further actions on our part at this time,” stopping further judicial process or other action while the complaint was pending.
- 03/30/21 Presbytery’s commission to review the complaint notified the parties of its proposed judgment to sustain the complaint in part.
- 04/13/21 Having received the proposed judgment, the Accused emailed a “proposed way forward” to the Session. The Accused wanted the Session to “encourage Jeff [Wreyford] to remove his name as a candidate for pastor” and “resign his position” before particularization so that he might “seek a call in another church or ministry.”
- 04/21/21 The Session voted to open a *BCO* 31-2 investigation of the Accused.
- 05/04/21 The Session initiated formal process against the Accused. The Session approved a form of Indictment and citation against each of the seven Accused.
- 05/05/21 The Indictments were issued. They were identical (but separate) and were as follows:

In the name of the Presbyterian Church in America the Session of Christ Redeemer PCA charges Mr. [LAST NAME] with violating the peace and purity of the church contrary to your membership vow: "Do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of the church and promise to study its purity and peace?" (BCO 57-5).

That in days leading up to and following August 3, 2020, Mr. [LAST NAME] along with the other named defendants are charged with specifically:

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First, failing to keep the fifth commandment to honor those placed in authority over you at Christ Redeemer by showing contempt of, rebellion against their persons in their lawful councils, commands, corrections, and attempting to bring shame and dishonor to them, their government, and the joyful performance of their duties. These offenses violate scriptures such as Exodus 20:12; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5; 1 Timothy 5:17-19, and also violate the Constitution in places such as Westminster Larger Catechism 124, 125, 128.

Second, failing to keep the ninth commandment in bearing false witness against a neighbor, by failing to preserve and promote truth between man and man, the good name of a neighbor, the ready reception of a good report, and the unwillingness to admit an evil report concerning them. These offenses violate scriptures such as Exodus 20:16; Ephesians 4:29; Titus 3:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Proverbs 16:28; Philippians 4:8; 2 Timothy 2:16; James 3:13-18, and also violate the Constitution in places such as Westminster Larger Catechism 144& 145; These offenses being against the peace, unity and purity of the Church, and the honor and majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the King and Head thereof.

### Witness and/or Documents:

- Session members: (TE Wreyford, TE Mike Malone, TE Norton, RE David Caldwell, RE Bo Mitchum, and RE Matt Olson), TE Overcast, TE Braasch, TE Clint Wilke, Josh Morrison, Shady Francis, and Jon Morgan.
- Official ROC 2020-1.PDF; Email from Paul Harrell to the CR Session, Dated April 13, 2021; Minutes pertaining to the Session's investigation and process.

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The attachments were about 130 pages. The Accused were cited to appear before the Session on May 25, 2021.

- 05/18/21 The parties received notice that Presbytery had approved its “Commission’s decision to partially sustain the complaint,” that is “sustained to the extent that the two letters [September 10 and 16] administered restricted discipline without properly initiating and continuing judicial process as required by the BCO.”
- 05/19/21 Each of the Accused provided the Session identical written responses to the Indictments objecting that they had been “improperly drawn” due to their lack of specificity, making it impossible for them to enter a plea. The response also objected to all the members of the Session sitting as judges in the case since the Indictments listed the entire Session as witnesses. The Accused proposed that the Session drop the charges against them and personally meet to see if they could mend their relationship and find a way forward.
- 05/20/21 The Session concluded that its Indictments had been properly drawn and sent emails to each of the Accused affirming the Accused’s obligation to meet with the Session on May 25, 2021.
- 05/21/21 The Accused wrote a letter to the Session reiterating their objection to the lack of specificity in the Indictments.
- 05/25/21 This was the return date for the first citation. The Session represents that it was present, but apparently none of the Accused appeared.<sup>20</sup>
- 05/26/21 The Session wrote identical letters to all the Accused expressing how “grieved” it was that the Accused had failed to appear at the meeting the night before and cited them to appear a second time on June 3, 2021.
- 05/28/21 The Accused responded and reiterated their prior objection to the lack of specificity in the Indictments.

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<sup>20</sup> The Record contains no minutes evidencing that a May 25, 2021 meeting occurred.

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- 05/29/21 The Session replied that the specificity they asked for was already in the Indictments.
- 06/01/21 The Accused provided another memorandum to the Session again reiterating their prior objection to the lack of specificity in the Indictments.
- 06/03/21 The Accused entered written pleas of not guilty to the Indictments “under protest,” raising again their objection that the Indictments were improper and lacked sufficient specificity. The Accused failed to physically appear at the second citation meeting, but the Session received their written pleas “under protest,” and set the trial for July 12, 2021, in Memphis.
- 06/04/21 The Session notified the Accused of the date and location of the trial. They also denied the Accused’s’ requests to disqualify TE Wreyford and Session member TE Norton as judges in the trial. The notice restated the Session’s position that the original Indictments were in conformity to the Constitution.
- 06/07/21 The Accused sent a memorandum to the Session challenging again the right of TE Wreyford and Session member TE Norton to sit as judges in the case. The Accused also requested that the trial be held in Arkansas rather than Tennessee since “the charges are alleged to have taken place” in Arkansas where the mission church was located. The Accused repeated their request for further specification in the Indictments so that they would be able to prepare their defense.
- 06/08/21 The Session denied the request to disqualify TE Wreyford and TE Norton; denied the Accused’s request to move the trial from Tennessee to Arkansas; and reiterated the sufficiency of the Indictments and pointed them to the documents already mentioned in the Indictments “for further specifics.”
- 06/11/21 The Accused sent another memorandum to the Session asking that the Session refer the trial to Presbytery per *BCO* 41, particularly in light of the fact that many of the Session members were listed as witnesses in the trial.

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- 06/14/21 The Session denied the June 11 request.
- 06/25/21 The Accused sent another memorandum to the Session requesting that the date of the trial be changed.
- 06/29/21 The Session denied the June 25 request.
- 07/05/21 Wesley Hurston, one of the Accused who was hindered from attending the July 12 trial, wrote to the Session that he chose to be represented by Stephen Leininger (another one of the Accused) at the trial.
- 07/12/21 The trial was conducted in Memphis. All the Accused appeared; Wesley Hurston being represented through Mr. Leininger. The minutes show that after the Accused were dismissed, the Session entered executive session that led to unanimous adoption of a motion to “find the defendants guilty on both counts.”
- 07/15/21 The Session met again and decided to impose the censure of indefinite suspension from the Lord’s Table “until satisfactory evidence is given of repentance per *BCO* 36-5.”
- 07/21/21 The Accused sent individual emails to the Session on July 21, 2021, consenting to a written judgment. The Accused received the judgment the same day.
- 07/29/21 The Accused filed a timely appeal of the judgment.
- 11/09/21 The Session sent an email to the Presbytery commission reviewing the appeal and explaining the provenance of a document called “Addendum to the Indictment date [sic] 5 May 2021.” The Addendum added substantial detail describing the “times, places and circumstances” of the alleged offenses, detail that inexplicably was not contained in the Indictments served on the Accused. The Record does not explain why these specifications were not originally included in the Indictments, but only that the Session, without further elaboration, included this document in the Record because it understood the same to be the “response of the lower court” as required by *BCO* 42-5.

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- 05/17/22 Covenant Presbytery “denied in whole” the Appeal by adopting its judicial commission's proposed judgment.
- 05/23/22 The Accused filed a timely appeal to the General Assembly.
- 10/31/22 The Appeal was heard by TE Paul Bankson (Chairman); RE Jim Eggert (Secretary); TE Carl Ellis; TE Guy Waters (alternate); and RE Dan Carrell (alternate). The Appellants presented their appeal represented by TE Dominic Aquila. Presbytery was represented by TE Robert Browning, TE Josh Sanford, and TE Tim Reed.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES

The Appellants identified eight specifications of error which are listed as issues below:

1. Did the Presbytery err in concluding that the Indictments adequately specified the offenses against the Accused in a manner consistent with the *Book of Church Order* and with due process as otherwise required by our Constitution?
2. Did the Presbytery err in finding that the Session, the court of original jurisdiction, properly declined to provide more particulars on the specifications of the Indictments before the trial, even though asked to do so?
3. Did the Presbytery err in sustaining the guilty verdicts against the Accused?
4. Did the Presbytery err in concluding that the members of Session were not disqualified from judging because they were all listed as witnesses?
5. Did the Presbytery err in finding that the TE Jeff Wreyford was not disqualified from sitting in trial of the case?
6. Did the Presbytery err in finding that TE Ed Norton (a member of the provisional Session) was not disqualified to sit in trial of the case?

7. Did the Presbytery err in finding that Session did not refuse a reasonable indulgence by holding the trial of the case in Memphis, Tennessee?
8. Did the Presbytery err in finding that Session did not refuse a reasonable indulgence when it declined the Accused's request to refer the trial to Presbytery?

### **III. JUDGMENT**

1. Yes.
2. Yes.
3. Yes.
4. No.
5. No.
6. No.
7. No.
8. No.

The guilty verdicts are reversed. This Decision addresses Specifications 1 and 2 in Part IV A; Specification 3 in Part IV B; and Specifications 4 through 8 in Part IV C.

### **IV. REASONING AND OPINION**

#### **A. The Indictments Failed to Sufficiently Specify the Charges (Specifications 1 & 2).**

We agree that the Indictments were fundamentally and fatally flawed in that they lacked sufficient specificity.

Because an “offense” arises only out of “anything in the doctrines or practice of a Church member,” an indictment must describe *in what manner* or *by what means* the member in question engaged in the sin charged. (*BCO 29-1*). Therefore, in order to state an “offense” in formal disciplinary proceedings an indictment must reduce to writing the particulars of an accused’s offending

conduct with sufficient specificity: “In drawing the indictment, the times, places and circumstances should, if possible, be particularly stated, that the accused may have an opportunity to make his defense.” (*BCO 32-5*).

Specificity in an indictment is the rule, not the exception, and is mandatory, not optional. *BCO 32-5* states that the “times, places and circumstances *should*” (emphasis added) be set out in the indictment “*if possible...*” (emphasis added). The auxiliary verb “should” in *BCO 32-5* imposes an *obligation* on the court and prosecutor to include the prescribed information in the indictment to the extent it is reasonably available to the court. The qualification “if possible” serves as an exception to the *general rule of specificity*. It is not much of an exception: “possible” means being within the limits of ability, capacity, or realization. Therefore, if the prosecutor has the ability or capacity under the circumstances to include more reasonable specificity, he is obliged to do so, at least to the extent that fairness would require. *BCO 32-5* thus prescribes a very broad duty to include times, places, and circumstances. The prosecutor transgresses *BCO 32-5* if such details of time, place or circumstances are known or can be reasonably ascertained by him, but are not included in the indictment, even if the specification of such matters is inconvenient or tedious. The failure to include sufficient specificity is unfair to an accused and violates basic principles of due process as required by our Standards.

The Indictments in this case are framed in three sections: (1) the Prologue to the Indictments, leading up to and including the phrase, “along with the other named defendants ....” (2) the Allegations, beginning with the words, “are charged with specifically ....” and (3) the Postscript, denominated as “Witnesses and/or Documents.” The Indictments were issued and served separately, one to each of the seven Accused, although they were cited to appear jointly at the same meeting and were tried together in a single proceeding.

The three sections of the Indictments, whether considered individually or combined, fail to meet the standard of *BCO 32-5*. *BCO 32-5* requires that indictments should if possible specify “the times, places and circumstances” regarding the offenses. The sentence, “That in days leading up to and following August 3, 2020,” taken in itself, is wholly inadequate to meet this standard. This phrasing of the Indictment failed to contain the specification of



a “time” required by *BCO* 32-5, and effectively afforded no specification of “time” at all.

Beyond the Prologue, the Allegations are flawed because they are overbroad, invoking, without further specification, violations of the fifth and ninth commandments, repeating wide phrases borrowed from the *Larger Catechism* without specification of any “times, places or circumstances.”

Consequently, the validity of the Indictments hangs entirely on whether the insufficiencies described above were remedied by the Postscript. Was the relationship between the Prologue and the Allegations in light of the Postscript sufficient to have put the Accused on notice of the charges against them so as to satisfy basic due process as required by our Constitution? They did not.

In summary, the failure of the Indictments to include the specificity so obviously available is unjustifiable under *BCO* 32-5, and we find that the broad Indictments were abused to the prejudice of the Accused who were not adequately informed of the charges against them.

The Indictments fail in three further respects.

First, the Accused were put in the unfair position of being required to sift through the approximately 130 pages of material to ascertain exactly how the Session intended to show at trial that they had violated the fifth and ninth commandments. Merely attaching numerous pages of lengthy transcripts of conversations between the Accused and others fails to afford sufficient notice to the Accused. The transcripts did not set out that degree of detail necessary to inform the Accused to adequately prepare for their defense in advance of the trial. After carefully reading these transcripts together with the Allegations, this court is not able to discern exactly what words or actions of the Accused were put at issue by the Indictments, and certainly the Accused were in no better position than this court to resolve that question and thus understand for what actions they would stand on trial.

Second, the Indictments were *identical* for all seven Accused, identifying no unique misconduct of any one of the Accused as distinct from any other. *BCO* 32-5 requires that seven identical indictments prosecuted, as here, in a unified proceeding be interpreted to describe identical offenses as well as identical “times, places and circumstances.” If any of the conduct charged against one

of the Accused is distinguishable or unique as against any of the others, such an Accused is entitled to know that ahead of time so as to prepare his defense as distinguishable from his co-defendants. This is important because the Record shows that not all the Accused said the same things at the two August 2020 meetings. In fact, five of the Accused were not even *present* at the August 3 meeting, and one of the Accused, although present, did not even speak during the August 30 meeting. It cannot be assumed that each of the seven Accused, for example, defamed the minister to others; to do that, incriminating statements of each of the Accused would have to be proven. Only the individual who made the statement could be held accountable under principles of fairness; a statement, if any, of one cannot be imputed to the others.

The Record, however, repeatedly demonstrates that the Session effectively imputed the conduct of one or more of the Accused to others. For example:

- In Clint Wilke’s testimony, the witness said he could “not recall what every single person said or did” at the August 30 meeting, although he remembered “the man in the blue shirt” being asked to “sit down by your group.” The witness never identifies who “the man in the blue shirt” was, so this testimony, even assuming that “asking a man to sit down” is sufficient to convict a man of an offense, is insufficient evidence of an offense against the remaining six.
- In Barr Overcast’s testimony, the witness testified that the August 30 meeting was “contentious” in tone. There were matters raised that were “heartfelt” and “personal,” he explained but which were “not always communicated in a ... helpful way,” and there were times when “tempers flared.” The Prosecutor just leaves that testimony there without having the witness tell who failed to communicate in a helpful way, or whose temper flared. Was it one of the Accused? Two? All of them?
- Barr Overcast later added that Jason Satterfield’s temper “flared.” But how could the other six be held accountable for Jason’s flared temper?
- Barr Overcast, when asked if the seven “spoke as a whole, “denied it, other than the initial statement at the beginning of the August 30 meeting that TE Wreyford should not continue as pastor. In fact, the witness opined that the Accused’s not speaking as a whole “has been one of the issues in this whole process.”

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- Austin Braasch’s testimony touched on only four of the Accused. If he was familiar with activities of only four, how is his testimony relevant to the remaining three, and how can his testimony inform the *identical Indictments*? It cannot.
- RE David Caldwell testified he was the acting moderator of the August 30 meeting, which, he says, began with an attempt to read the three “concerns” identified at the August 3 meeting, but was “quickly interrupted by Stephen” who said, “We don’t wanna do that. We want to read the prepared statement.” Even assuming for the sake of argument that Stephen’s interruption was an offense, Stephen’s conduct cannot be held against the remaining six.

This court has reviewed the Record to determine what can be fairly regarded as the Accused’s manifestly joint action and has concluded that such action was limited to their: (1) communicating with one another about their noted three “concerns” and (2) subsequently communicating those “concerns” to TE Wreyford and then to the Session. But these actions were not “offenses” as we explain in Part B below.

Third, the evidence adduced at trial put at issue conduct of the Accused that occurred only *after* May 5, 2021, the date the Indictments were served on the Accused. This was clear error. For example, in his closing argument the Prosecutor alluded to:

- a May 19, 2021, email response to the Session’s letter and indictment.
- letters of September 10, 2021, September 16, 2021, and September 22, 2021, from the Session to the Accused.
- the Accused’s failure to appear at their first citation, including the failure to provide a courtesy notice to the Session that they would not attend the same.

A court may not consider matters outside an indictment at a trial on that indictment. Conduct and events that occurred after May 5, 2021, the date of the Indictments here, were outside of the scope of the proceedings fairly at issue. Any finding of guilt or censure related to or arising out of such alleged conduct or events is void for lack of the due process our Constitution requires.

**B. The Session Erred in Finding the Accused Guilty (Specification 3).**

Presbytery erred in this case by applying the wrong standard of review, and the Session erred in this case in finding the Accused guilty of the transgressions alleged against them. We will take each of these up in turn.

First, Presbytery erred in this case by applying the wrong standard of review. Presbytery assumed that the applicable standard of review in an appeal is based on *BCO* 40-5. Citing language from that provision, Presbytery reasoned: “In considering this Appeal, the burden of proof lies with the Appellants to show ‘any important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceeding[s]’ of the court alleged to be in error (in this case the Session).” This was incorrect; *BCO* chapter 40 governs cases of “General Review and Control,” not appeals. The standard of review in appeals is governed by Chapter 43 and Chapter 39 of the *Book of Church Order*, not Chapter 40, and does not require a finding of an “important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceeding.”

Presbytery’s error, which assumed that reversal would require a showing that the Session’s judgment was “grossly unconstitutional” or demonstrated an “important delinquency” inevitably and materially influenced Presbytery’s decision, leading it to afford undue deference to the court of original jurisdiction regarding matters both of fact and of Constitutional interpretation, a deference inconsistent with the principles of review articulated in *BCO* 39-3.

Second, for the reasons set out below, the evidence in this case failed to show transgressions of the fifth or ninth commandments, and the assignment of guilt based on the facts presented was either clear error or a misapplication of the Constitution.

**1. There Were No Transgressions of the Fifth Commandment.**

As specified in the Indictments, the fifth commandment required that the Accused give “honor” to those “placed in authority” over them at Christ Redeemer, and prohibited “showing contempt of, rebellion against their persons in their lawful councils, commands, corrections, and attempting to bring shame and dishonor to them, their government, and the joyful performance of their duties.” Two observations are in order.

First, the Session had neither the responsibility nor authority to determine or direct who, if anyone, would stand for election as the pastor of the mission church upon its organization as a particular church.

In the case of a mission church, the right of selecting a minister upon that church's organization as a particular church is, in principle, no different than the right prescribed for an established church, except that the appointment of a pulpit committee is entirely optional for the mission congregation (*BCO 5-9f.*). Consistent with the right of congregational selection of officers, the *BCO* fixes no principle or presumption that the congregation must extend a call to the organizing minister as pastor. Furthermore, the temporary government of the mission church is, contrary to the claims of the Session in this case, under no Constitutional "responsibility" to "offer" the organizing pastor, as claimed by the Prosecutor, nor is such the Session's "job" The calling of a pastor is solely an act and prerogative of the congregation, not an "offer" or act of a Session.

A church member is therefore guilty of no dishonor, contempt, or rebellion against a court to whose authority he is subject merely by virtue of that church member's disagreement with that court concerning a subject about which that court has no authority over the church member.

But the Prosecutor in this case repeatedly asserted (and the Session's verdict presumes) Sessional authority over the selection and suitability of the organizing minister as pastor. Examples of the Session's persuasion abound in the Record:

- The Addendum says, "We charge that [the Accused's] unwillingness to accept the ruling of the session regarding TE Wreyford's call as pastor ... is a violation of the fifth commandment."
- In closing arguments, the Prosecutor said, "The session has continued to voice its support of [TE Wreyford] and believes without hesitation that he should be offered to the congregation as a candidate to serve as its pastor. That's our job. That's our responsibility as a provisional session."
- The Prosecutor at closing argument: "[T]he persistent insistence that [TE Wreyford's] name be removed as a candidate to be pastor of this church reflects a fundamental unwillingness to

fulfill membership vow number five, and is disruptive of the peace of the church.”

These repeated expressions of presumed Sessional responsibility and authority concerning the continuation, eligibility, suitability, and election of TE Wreyford upon the church’s organization as a particular church were erroneous. The Session was not vested with any of the authority the above statements took for granted. Thus, when the Accused opposed the Session’s opinions and overtures regarding these matters, they were not trespassing the fifth commandment.

Second, the Accused did not usurp or attempt to usurp any function of the Presbytery.

The evidence introduced at trial shows unequivocally that the Accused only expressed their “concerns” that TE Wreyford was called to serve their *particular congregation* as minister, not that he was disqualified from the ministry in general. Their concern, as stated, was that TE Wreyford “might not be called to the role of teaching elder within our church.” That did *not* mean that TE Wreyford lacked a call to serve as a teaching elder anywhere. In fact, the Accused’s’ April 13, 2021, email, which the Session advanced as a ground for the guilt of the Accused, asked the Session to consider the possibility that the TE Wreyford “seek a call in another church or ministry,” a statement contradicting the Session’s findings that the Accused had usurped Presbytery’s powers. It was clear error for the Session to conclude from the evidence presented that the Accused had assumed unto themselves any role belonging to Presbytery. There is no Record evidence that the Accused ever represented themselves to the Session or others as if they had legitimate authority to determine TE Wreyford’s qualification to pastoral ministry in general or revoke his ministerial credentials.

## **2. There Were No Transgressions of the Ninth Commandment.**

The Indictments specifically promised that the prosecutor would introduce evidence that the Accused bore false witness against their neighbor by (1) failing to preserve and promote truth between man and man, (2) failing to preserve and promote the good name of a neighbor, (3) failing to readily receive a good report, and (4) failing to be unwilling to admit an evil report concerning a neighbor. We will take up each of these in turn.

First, was there evidence that the Accused “failed to preserve and promote truth between man and man?” Certainly not if the question is whether the Accused misrepresented their opinions about whether TE Wreyford should serve as pastor.

If, on the other hand, we conceive of the question as being whether the Accused’s “concerns” about TE Wreyford were composed of false ideas, it is impossible to judge such a question without first adjudicating the truth of those ideas. In such a case, the burden was on the prosecutor at trial to establish by evidence that the Accused’s “concerns” or ideas about TE Wreyford were in fact false. The representatives who met with TE Wreyford on August 3 defined their “concerns” as (1) that he had “a controlling and unyielding nature,” (2) that they questioned his “philosophy of ministry,” and (3) that they expressed their concern that he “might not be called to the role of teaching elder in our church.”

TE Wreyford himself confessed that he “can be unyielding, dogmatic, and even ‘walk over’ people to complete a task or reach an objective,” and this was something he had “struggled with.” Therefore, the evidence does not support that the Accused failed to preserve and promote truth between man and man in this regard.

The Accused’s remaining “concerns,” namely his philosophy of ministry and whether he was called to be their pastor, were not capable of adjudication by the Session or any other court since they describe matters of opinion that did nothing more than give voice to the reasons why the Accused found TE Wreyford to be unsuitable to become their pastor on particularization.

Furthermore, the minister, responding to the Accused’s “concern” about his philosophy of ministry, stated that after his first year of the planting work, he “began to see our great need to look outward” from the core group, and even though he “tried his best to bring our folks along,” he often “met resistance,” explaining that a “good” philosophy of ministry “challenges the existing flock” and, as a result, becomes “one of the primary reasons why faithful followers of Christ part company, but that doesn’t mean it is wrong or sinful.” Because TE Wreyford himself maintained that differences over philosophy of ministry justified parting ways and were not “wrong or sinful,” the Record evidence did not support the conclusion that the Accused failed to preserve and promote truth between man and man in this regard. Mere disagreement about

philosophy of ministry was not a sin subjecting either party to censure, and where there is no sin, and both parties are entitled to their own opinion on the matter in question, there is no transgression of the ninth commandment merely for advancing one's own idea.

Secondly, the evidence did not support the Indictments' claim that the Accused "failed to preserve and promote the good name of a neighbor." The Prosecutor and the Session made much of the fact that there was no chargeable offense against TE Wreyford, one of the few points concerning which the Session and the Accused agreed, but which also serves to support the conclusion that the Accused did not slander him.

A man's unsuitability to serve as a minister to any particular work is not a mark against his good name. The ninth commandment does not prohibit members of a mission church from expressing their opinions about whether their organizing pastor should continue as pastor. As noted above, no member (or collection of members) of a mission church need accept the temporary government's opinion about the suitability or advisability of the organizational minister's continuing as pastor after particularization.

The only limitation on such expressions is the ninth commandment, but none of the Record evidence in this case showed any transgressing statements made by the Accused. It was simply assumed that because they had spoken to one another about TE Wreyford's suitability to continue that any statements or meetings were ninth commandment transgressions, but that is not necessarily the case, and it was the burden of the prosecutor to prove such by competent evidence, which did not occur.

Rather than reveal transgressions of the ninth commandment the Session only recycled its misconception of the fifth, insisting that the Accused had "arrogated" to themselves the role of Presbytery in determining the qualification of ministers, as if the Accused, proclaiming a supposed usurpation of ecclesiastical power, without bringing any charge of sin, misconduct, or other ground against TE Wreyford's ministerial qualifications, were engaged in a grand campaign of falsehood. But the Accused's' opposition to the minister being elected as their pastor was not, in itself, a form of "bearing false witness." The Accused were only exercising their rights as members of a congregation to select those who would rule over them. The Session's erroneous conflation of the fifth commandment with the ninth was clear error.



Third, the trial produced no evidence that the Accused “failed to readily receive a good report,” if by “receiving a good report” is meant that the Accused had an obligation to accept the Session’s recommendation and “support” of the pastor to serve the church plant at particularization. For the reasons stated above, the Accused, as church members, were entitled to choose the leader of their congregation according to the dictates of their own conscience and were not bound by the Session’s report, which could form no basis for transgression of the ninth commandment.

Fourth, the trial produced no evidence that the Accused “failed to be unwilling to admit an evil report concerning a neighbor.” For the reasons stated above the ninth commandment cannot be construed in such a way that a qualified member’s opinion about the suitability of a minister to serve as his church’s pastor is regarded as “an evil report” and is thus prohibited to be received from another member.<sup>21</sup> Members of churches are free to discuss their convictions regarding the suitability of an officer to serve their congregation without fear of censure from the Session. As noted above, the trial in this case revealed no falsehood or other transgression of the ninth commandment in such conversations, but only the Session’s incorrect belief that the Accused violated their oaths of membership merely by sharing with one another their disagreement with the Session’s judgment about TE Wreyford’s suitability to be their pastor. Such is not the ground of a charge of receiving an evil report or a transgression of the ninth commandment.

### **C. Specifications of Error 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 Are Not Sustained.**

#### **a. Specification 4, 5 and 6 (Disqualification/Prejudice -- Session Members Disqualified to Sit) are not sustained.**

The Accused claims that all the members of the Session were disqualified from judging because they were all listed as witnesses. The mere listing of a Session member as a witness is not a sufficient ground for disqualification. *BCO 35-11* provides that a member of the court “shall not be disqualified from sitting as a judge by having given testimony in the case” unless “the court subsequently determines that such member should be disqualified.” This

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<sup>21</sup> The Record indicates the Accused even explained they reached their conclusions independently: “None of us realized there were others who shared these concerns.”

language does not disqualify a member from sitting as a judge merely by virtue of having been *listed* as a witness.

In this case, only two Session members were in fact called as witnesses: (1) RE David Caldwell and (2) RE Matt Olson. The Record does not present any facts supporting the conclusion that it was clear error for the Session to permit these two Session members to sit in judgment at the trial. *BCO* 39-3.2.

The Appellants challenged TE Wreyford's sitting in judgment of the case because "his name is listed in the narrative underlying the charges preferred against us; as such he is in a personally prejudiced position and would be incapable of rendering an unbiased judgment." The Appellants similarly challenged TE Norton's qualification to sit in judgment "since he was involved in a number of conversations with some of the defendants, including urging Tyrus Teague to remove himself from being a ruling elder trainee and candidate," including allegedly saying, "if Tyrus did not step down from elder training he would not be approved by the Session to stand for election before the congregation." While it was within the discretion of the Session to have disqualified TE Wreyford and TE Norton, we do not find that the Record demonstrates that it was clear error for the Session not to do so (*BCO* 39-3.2).

**b. Specification 7 (Location of Trial) is not sustained.**

The Accused argues that there was a refusal of reasonable indulgence in that the trial should have been held in Jonesboro, Arkansas where the church plant was located rather than in Memphis, Tennessee. The location of the trial is a matter to which a reviewing court should afford great deference to a lower court (*BCO* 39-3.2). This court sees no basis in this Record to conclude that the Session committed clear error in its selection of the location of the trial.

**c. Specification 8 (Failure to Propose a Reference to Presbytery) is not sustained.**

The Session declined the Accused's request to refer the trial to Presbytery, and the Accused maintain that Session erred in that decision. But *BCO* 41-5 places Session under no obligation to make such a reference, and the Record does not demonstrate clear error in Session's refusal to present such a reference to Presbytery.

APPENDIX T

The Panel's proposed decision was drafted by RE Jim Eggert, edited by RE Dan Carrell and TE Guy Waters, and adopted unanimously by the Panel. After amendments, the SJC approved this Decision by vote of 22-0 on the following roll call vote. Ruling Elders indicated by <sup>R</sup>.

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

TE Kooistra provided the following reason for his voluntary recusal: "I recused myself because Jeff Wreyford was a principal in the Case, and he is an assistant pastor in the church plant my wife and I are a part of. Lorie Wreyford, Jeff's wife, is the director of children's ministries at the church."

**CONCURRING OPINION**

**CASE 2022-07: HARRELL *et al.* v. COVENANT PRESBYTERY**

RE Jim Eggert

***Introduction***

I file this concurrence to provide further analysis that I hope might prove helpful to the Church in matters relating to indictments, the standard of review in appeals from Session verdicts, as well as the polity of mission churches regarding the selection of ministers.

***Regarding Indictments***

This case involved indictments that were insufficient in their form, an error that hopefully can be avoided in all cases of ecclesiastical process.

"An offense, the proper object of judicial process," *BCO* 29-1 says, "is anything in the doctrines or practice of a Church member professing faith in

Christ which is contrary to the Word of God.” To “practice” means to “put into effect.” Just as Paul encouraged the Philippians to “practice” his teachings (Phil. 4:9), an “offense” is practicing sin, or *putting sin into effect*, and in this limited sense every particular instance of sin by a believer is therefore a “practice” of sin as contemplated by *BCO 29-1* so that for purposes of committing an “offense” one can only “practice” sin by particular instances of engaging in a particular sin particularly. And because, for purposes of formal disciplinary process, an “offense” is a “practice” our Standards require that an indictment must identify at least one particular instance of the accused “putting sin into effect.” *WCF 15.5* states, “Men ought not to content themselves with a general repentance, but it is every man’s duty to repent of his particular sins particularly.” Since one of the purposes of church discipline is the “rebuke of offenses” and “the spiritual good of offenders themselves” (*BCO 27-3*), *BCO 29-1* prescribes that indictments should be drawn in such a way that states an offender’s particular sins particularly so that the offender may be encouraged to repent with that degree of particularity that our Standards prescribe, or risk standing convicted at trial for a particular and identifiable act or course of malfeasance, not mere vague or generalized declarations of guilt.

Therefore, in order to state an “offense” in formal disciplinary proceedings an indictment must reduce to writing the particulars of an accused’s offending conduct with sufficient specificity. The indictment must set out more than mere conclusory allegations (e.g. “the accused bore false witness”). Our *Rules of Discipline* prescribe, “In drawing the indictment, the times, places and circumstances should, if possible, be particularly stated, that the accused may have an opportunity to make his defense.” (*BCO 32-5*). In other words, the indictment should be drawn in such a way that a particular doctrine expounded, or practice engaged in by the accused (i.e. an instance of sin) is sufficiently identified in advance that it could be fairly proved or *fail* to be proved at trial. Indictments cannot be framed so broadly that the prosecutor can “move the goalposts,” so that the accused arrives at his trial having fairly prepared to answer or defend accusations pertaining to one thing, only to discover that he stands on trial for something else. Consequently, threadbare recitals in an indictment that an offense has been committed, supported by mere conclusory statements, do not suffice.

The requirement of sufficient specificity is “so that the accused may have an opportunity to make his defense” ensuring fundamental fairness and the due

process afforded by our Constitution, the very ground of *BCO* 32-5. For example, no higher court could rightly uphold a conviction on an indictment that alleged, without identifying place, incident, or time, that the accused had “violated God’s law,” or that the accused had “failed to love his neighbor” without reference to any neighbor in particular, or any specific act or omission (i.e. “practice”).

### ***Standard of Review in Appeals***

In our polity, the standard of review applicable to a higher court reviewing a lower court’s decision depends on the nature of the matter being reviewed. A reviewing court owes “great deference” to a lower court’s “factual findings” and “regarding those matters of discretion and judgment which can only be addressed by a court with familiar acquaintance of the events and parties.” (*BCO* 39-3.2 & 3). By contrast “when the issues being reviewed involve the interpretation of the Constitution of the Church,” the reviewing court “has the duty and authority to interpret and apply the Constitution of the Church according to its best abilities and understanding, regardless of the opinion of the lower court.” (*BCO* 39-3.4).

Unlike complaint proceedings, the SJC’s review is plenary in an appeal from a Session’s verdict in a case of process, and thus the SJC owes no deference to Presbytery’s review in such cases. That is because both Presbytery’s and the SJC’s review are governed by the same standard. *BCO* 39-3.2 & 3 describe the deference due to lower courts regarding “factual matters” and “matters of discretion.” But *BCO* 39-3.2 does not restrain the SJC’s review of the Presbytery’s decision in an appeal of a Session’s verdict for the simple reason that a Presbytery, not being the court of original jurisdiction, has no “personal knowledge and observations of the parties and witnesses involved.” Both the Presbytery and the SJC, as reviewing courts, are tasked to review the same record produced by the court of original jurisdiction by the same standard. The Session, in such a case, is the only court due any deference for “factual matters” under *BCO* 39-3.2.

Similarly, the SJC owes no deference to the Presbytery regarding “matters of discretion and judgment” per *BCO* 39-1.3. In evaluating such matters, the Presbytery was limited to the record in the same way the SJC is, facing the same task of determining, solely based on the record, whether the court of original jurisdiction committed any “clear error” in matters of discretion and

judgment. Presbytery, being governed by the same standard as the SJC, is due no deference on such issues because it has no superior position to the SJC “regarding those matters of discretion and judgment which can only be addressed by a court with familiar acquaintance of the events and parties.”

Lastly, *BCO* 39-3.4 indicates that “a higher court should not consider itself obliged to exhibit the same deference to a lower court when the issues being reviewed involve the interpretation of the Constitution of the Church.” Therefore, the SJC owes no duty of deference to either the Session or Presbytery regarding matters of Constitutional interpretation in connection with an appeal.

Thus, in effect, an appeal taken up to the SJC from a Session's verdict in a case of process effectively creates two fresh reviews of the same nature, first by Presbytery then by the SJC.

### ***Minister Selection in Mission Churches***

Vocation to office in the Church is the “calling of God by the Spirit” not only through “the inward testimony of a good conscience,” but also through “the manifest approbation of God’s people” along with the “concurring judgment of a lawful court of the Church.” (*BCO* 16-1). “[T]he right of God’s people to recognize by election to office those so gifted is inalienable” so that “no man can be placed over a church in any office without the election, or at least the consent of that church.” (*BCO* 16-2). Preliminary Principle Number 6 in the *Book of Church Order* underlies this “inalienable right” of church members: “Though the character, qualifications and authority of church officers are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, as well as the proper method of officer investiture, the power to elect persons to the exercise of authority in any particular society resides in that society.” The inalienable right of church members to either elect or consent to those placed over them applies alike to mission churches as it does to settled congregations.

Our polity rightly prescribes the “great deference” owed by higher courts to lower courts when reviewing their acts and decisions. (*BCO* 39-3). But *BCO* 16-1 and 16-2 also prescribe a manner of deference to *congregations* in their selection of officers. No man, however gifted or qualified, may be thrust upon a congregation by a court of the Church without the congregation’s consent. Congregations choose their Teaching Elders, subject only to review

by Presbytery. If Presbyteries may not select ministers for their member churches, then Sessions certainly may not do so, and the fact that the appointees of a provisional Session are not even members of the mission churches they govern serves only to accentuate the encroachment on a congregation's rights if such a provisional Session seeks to exert its preference in selection on members of a congregation. The Session in this case overestimated its role in the ministerial selection process, misapprehending the Accused's' opposition to its ministerial preference as imagined fifth commandment violations.

Since the government of a mission church is temporary and provisional, our polity accommodates to it the axiom of the congregation's exclusive right to officer selection. When members of mission churches take the vows of membership and are received on the rolls of the mission work, they are understood to assent to the call of the organizing minister assigned to that work and to have affirmed to the organizing minister the congregational promises made to a pastor, just as established churches do. (*BCO 5-5.a*). This is because, as noted above, "no man can be placed over a church in any office without the election, or at least the consent of that church." (*BCO 16-2*). In other words, while the mission congregation has not elected the organizing minister, the minister is deemed to have "at least the consent" of the mission congregation to his government at the time of their addition to the rolls and during the continuance of the provisional government of the mission. Similarly, our polity deems the members of a mission church to have "consented" to the government of its provisional Session. Based on these accommodations to its provisional status, the polity governance between the members of the mission church and its temporary government is the same as between any congregation and its officers, but only during the time from the mission church's inauguration to the time of its particularization.

And since the goal of a mission church "is to mature and be organized as a particular church as soon as this can be done decently and in good order" (*BCO 5-1*), the mission congregation has the right to select its government upon particularization just as any Presbyterian congregation does.

When an established church selects a minister, his election is governed by procedures set out in *BCO* chapter 20. The congregation has the right to elect a pulpit committee (*BCO 20-2*), and when the pulpit committee is prepared to recommend a candidate to the congregation, the Session is required to order a

congregational meeting for the purpose of voting on the candidate. (*BCO 20-2*).

In the case of a mission church, the right of selecting a minister at particularization is, in principle, no different than the right prescribed for an established church, except that the appointment of a pulpit committee is entirely optional for the mission congregation. The provisional government “shall call a congregational meeting,” and at that meeting, “the congregation may, by majority vote, call the organizing pastor to be their pastor without the steps of *BCO 20*.” (*BCO 5-9.f*). Thus, whether the congregation of a mission church prefers to call its organizing minister as its pastor or to use a pulpit committee is left entirely to the discretion of the congregation. Consistent with the right of congregational selection of officers, the *Book of Church Order* fixes no principle nor presumption that the congregation must extend a call to the organizing minister as pastor. To the contrary, situations may vary at particularization; the organizing minister, for example, might decide, for whatever reasons, not to stand for election. (*BCO 5-9.f.1*). And in the event the congregation chooses not to call the organizing minister as pastor or the minister withdraws, the Session is obliged to “oversee the election of a pastor according to the provisions of *BCO 20* so far as they are applicable.” (*BCO 5-9.f.1*). Indeed, our *Form of Government* even permits particularization with no pastor at all: “If there is no pastor, the session of the new work may elect as moderator one of their own number or any teaching elder of the Presbytery with Presbytery’s approval,” and “action shall be taken to secure, as soon as practicable, the regular administration of Word and Sacraments.” (*BCO 5-10*).

Because *BCO 5-9.f* prescribes that the congregation “may” call the organizing pastor as its pastor, it follows that the congregation is under no Constitutional *obligation* to do so. It therefore also follows that the temporary government of the mission church is under no Constitutional “*responsibility*” to “offer” the organizing pastor nor is such the Session’s “*job*.” The calling of a pastor is solely an act and prerogative of the *congregation*, not an “offer” or authority of a *Session*.

In short, no view of the facts in this case supported a transgression of the fifth commandment because the Session had no authority to prescribe who should stand for election at particularization; it is only prescribed to “call a congregational meeting.” (*BCO 5-9.f*). It is ultimately the *congregation’s*



prerogative to prescribe the business undertaken at that meeting, not the *Session's*. The Accused's resistance and opposition to the Session's "support" for the organizing minister and their "insistence" that the organizing minister's name be removed as a candidate to be pastor did not "show contempt of" or "rebellion against" the Session's "lawful councils, commands, or corrections" because all attempts by the Session to direct (or redirect) the Accused to support the organizing minister were not authoritative.

Similarly, the Session had no lawful authority to "continue to voice its support" of the minister or assert its "belief without hesitation that he should be offered to the congregation as a candidate to serve as its pastor," at least not in the sense that to oppose the same would be deemed inherently divisive and censurable as against the authority of the Session. Similarly, the Session had no lawful authority to insist that the Accused stop resisting the Session's attempts to "recommend" the minister to the congregation. While members of a Session in an established congregation at least have a right as *individuals* to express their positions about a proposed minister, the members of a provisional Session for a mission church, not being members of the mission congregation, do not even have the right to vote on the question of the call of the minister. A Session, provisional or otherwise, asserting a collective recommendation in its capacity as a court of the Church in favor of a particular candidate and against the recommendation of church members who disagree is acting outside of its function and risks encroachment on congregational prerogative. In this case the Accused's open opposition to the recommendation led to their indictment and censure.

The Accused's opposition to the Session brought no "shame and dishonor" to the Session in "the joyful performance of [the Session's] duties," because the Session was not engaged in any of its lawful duties whenever its exercise of discipline practically functioned to silence what the Session described as the Accused's "dissenting voices." Far from performing its duties, the Session encroached on the exclusive right of these members of the congregation to select their minister, specifically by encroaching on the rights of the Accused to seek to satisfy their own conscience in both selecting and seeking the selection of whomever they deemed suitable, for reasons sufficient to them, to be their pastor. The facts as presented do not describe a violation of the fifth commandment.

Furthermore, if members of a congregation do not believe that a particular minister is suitable to serve as their congregation's pastor, this fact does not in itself obligate them (or the minister) to a Matthew 18 process of reconciliation (or subject either party to charges) because no Scripture clearly obligates a church member to support any particular minister as his pastor, and therefore there is no issue to be reconciled, and one opinion or another on the subject cannot be adjudicated as an "offense." The pastoral relation, like that of all other church officers, is a voluntary relation between the officer and the congregation that elects him.

A disagreement about the perceived unsuitability of a minister to serve a particular work (what we refer to as a minister's "call" to a particular work) is not an *offense* to be resolved. An "internal call" refers to a minister's sense that he is called to a particular work. An "external call" is a congregation's collective sense whether a particular minister is called to serve their particular congregation, followed by the concurrence of the Presbytery of which the particular church is a member. Presbytery putting a call into a minister's hands requires a congruence of both minister and congregation on the question of his call. For example, no minister is required to find himself suited to minister to any particular congregation, and if the congregation disagrees with such a minister about his suitability to them or theirs to him, such is not a matter that must be "reconciled" between them as though one party had sinned against the other. It is only a question of "calling" to which no definitive answer can be given, and members of the congregation persuaded that the man ought to minister among them cannot bind the minister's conscience, nor can he bind theirs. By the same principle, a minister who desires to stand for election despite opposition from some in the congregation does not inherently commit an *offense* against them that must be "reconciled," just as a particular member's desire to vote against the minister commits no offense against him (or the congregation) requiring "reconciliation."

A member's reasons for voting against a man to serve as his pastor (or for desiring the dissolution of the pastoral relationship) will not always seem to the minister, or those who favor him, fair, accurate, or complementary. But despite the disagreement inherent in such situations, the right of a congregation to choose its pastor can only be preserved by a congregational vote, not the conclusion of a Matthew 18 process which would necessarily assume that all the respective parties must agree. It is not the Session's place to effectively make its own support of the organizing minister a ground for process,

discipline, and censure against any members of the congregation who hold a different opinion.

Similarly, no man has a right to serve a particular congregation, and no Session has the right to impose his service. In the case of a mission church, it is not the personal franchise of the organizing minister to continue to labor amongst his planted congregation if at the time of particularization, the congregation elects not to call him, nor is it the franchise of the temporary Session of a mission church to see him installed, no matter how enthusiastically it may "support" him. The only party with a "franchise" (i.e. a vote) to determine the question is the *congregation*.

Because disagreements about the organizing minister's continuance as pastor were not matters to be "reconciled" per Matthew 18, the Session could neither charge nor censure the Accused for declining to participate in a "meeting to help the two parties move towards reconciliation." It was a constitutional error in this particular case for the Session to treat the disagreement between these members and the organizing minister as if it were a matter of "reconciliation" that authorized the Session to summon the Accused, demand the renewal of their membership vows, and effectively require the Accused's agreement with the Session that the organizing minister was the suitable choice for pastor upon pains of suspension from the Lord's Supper and presumably, should the Accused dare to persist, excommunication from the Church.

One might object that the Accused were not "the congregation," but only particular members of it, and not even a majority. Thus, it might be supposed that the Session's interaction with these particular members was not an interference with any *congregational* right as such. Naturally, no one can know the mind of a congregation without a lawfully called congregational meeting and vote.

But this objection does not withstand scrutiny. Congregations are inherently composed of their particular members, each representing an opinion and a vote. Therefore, the rights of any given congregation cannot be considered abstractly from the rights of the individual members that compose it. The right of congregations to select the officers of the church implies a correlative freedom of its individual members to exercise their conscience about those who will rule over them without interference or censure from the courts of the Church. Therefore, it is irrelevant that the Accused represented only a

minority of the mission church's congregation. Their lack of majority would not make their "concerns" or their judgment about the suitability of the minister to rule over them censurable offenses. Nor can it be known that the seven in truth were a minority, since it is possible that other members of the congregation not present would, if asked to vote, agree with the seven Accused.

Lastly, I would note that had the Session put to the congregation at a congregational meeting the question of whether the organizing minister should stand for election as the permanent minister or whether the congregation preferred to appoint a pulpit committee to measure him against other candidates would have been the path most consistent with our *Form of Government*. In that scenario, the congregation would have had an opportunity to voice its preference. As it happened, the matter turned into a sort of showdown between the Session and the Accused. Because no such congregational meeting occurred, the record in the instant case only tells us what the Accused wanted and what the Session wanted, not what the *congregation* wanted, the very matter that ought to be determined in the selection of a pastor.

**CASE No. 2022-08**

***RE DAVID SNOKE***

**v.**

***PITTSBURGH PRESBYTERY***

**DECISION ON COMPLAINT**

October 20, 2022

The SJC finds that the above-named Complaint is Administratively Out of Order and cannot be put in order.

RE Snoke did not have standing to file a Complaint against a Presbytery action taken at its meeting on January 29, 2022 because he was not a commissioner from his church to that meeting.<sup>22</sup> He filed his Complaint with Presbytery in

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<sup>22</sup> This was confirmed by RE Snoke in an email response to the Panel on September 8, 2022 and confirmed by Pittsburgh Clerk TE Capper in an email to the Panel on September 9, 2022.

APPENDIX T

mid-March. Presbytery considered it, and denied it, at its April 2 meeting. At that meeting, there was a motion to "find the complaint in order," which was adopted by a vote of 20-16-3. However, the Complaint should have been ruled out of order at that time for the reason noted above. Below are examples of Cases with similar procedural rulings by the SJC.

- Case 2021-07 *RE Acree v. Tennessee Valley* (March 2022, Report to 49th GA, p. 2144)
- Case 2020-13 *Benyola v. Central Florida* (M48GA, 2021, p. 817)
- Case 2020-01 *Benyola v. Central Florida* (M48GA, 2021, p. 801)
- Case 2012-08 *RE Warren Jackson v. NW Georgia* (M43GA, 2015, p. 568)
- Case 2012-06 *Deacon Don Bethel v. SE Alabama* (M41GA, 2013, p. 614)
- Case 92-9b *Overman v. Eastern Carolina* (M21GA, 1993, p. 223)

The Panel included TE Lucas (chairman), TE Garner, and RE Donahoe. TE Kooistra and RE Dowling were alternates. The SJC vote was 20-1 with three absent.

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

**CASE No. 2022-09**

***PETER BENYOLA***

**v.**

***CENTRAL FLORIDA PRESBYTERY***

**DECISION ON COMPLAINT**

October 20, 2022

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The SJC finds that the above-named Complaint is Administratively Out of Order, and cannot be put in order, because Mr. Benyola is no longer a member of any congregation of the PCA, and thus lacks standing in this case.

This Decision was recommended by the SJC Officers, and the SJC approved the Decision by a vote of 23-0 on a roll call vote, with one absent..

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

**CASE No. 2022-10**

***PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA***

***v.***

***TE DANIEL HERRON***

**DECISION ON TRIAL**

April 5, 2023

**SUMMARY OF THE CASE**

This Case came to the SJC from Central Indiana Presbytery (“CIP”) as a *BCO* 41 Reference (request) for the conduct of a trial. The SJC accepted the Reference at its June 2, 2022 meeting, stipulating the Presbytery would be responsible for the prosecution. Following discussions with the parties and disposition of various pretrial motions, the SJC Chairman assessed which SJC

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members would be available for a week-long trial in Indianapolis and appointed a three-judge panel with two alternates (the “Panel”) to try the Case.

The CIP Prosecutor presented a twelve-page indictment dated May 20, 2022, containing seven charges, each elaborated with numerous specifications (11 of which were deleted, and five amended, by the Prosecutor at trial). A 42-hour trial was held November 15-19, 2022 hosted at Eunhye Korean Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Indianapolis, Indiana. The prosecution presented testimony from 18 witnesses (nine via live videoconference) and the defense presented testimony from 24, including the Accused (four via live videoconference). A total of 640 exhibits were presented by the parties and the trial transcript totaled 1,966 pages. The Panel filed its proposed preliminary verdict with the SJC and at the SJC's Stated Meeting on March 2, 2023, by vote of 22-0, the SJC adopted the preliminary verdict. On April 5, 2023, by vote of 22-0, the SJC adopted the final decision contained herein.

### I. SUMMARY OF FACTS

#### 2012 - 2018

- 2012 TE Dan Herron moved to Bloomington, IN to plant a PCA church ("Hope"). CIP appointed him as an evangelist without a temporary Session.
- 1/2016 Kara Million and husband Chris Baker began attending Hope. Baker began a 3-year internship at Hope.
- 2017 Abigail & Josh Harris started attending Hope; became members about a year later.
- 12/31/18 Chris Baker ceased employment at Hope, and there was a dispute about final pay.

#### 2019

- 7/2/19 Kara Million, Ph.D. & Abigail Harris, former Hope members, sent an 11-page letter to CIP accusing TE Herron of sexual harassment and bullying.

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- 8/15/19 Herron met with group of CIP REs and TEs who interviewed him regarding the allegations. The group declined to provide him with identities of the accusers, contexts, or details of the allegations.
- 9/13/19 CIP appointed a non-judicial investigatory commission ("IC") to begin a *BCO* 31-2 investigation. At the insistence of the accusers, the IC decided not to disclose to TE Herron their identities or the contexts of their allegations.

### 2020

- 1/20 The IC submitted a report to CIP's Church Planting & Outreach team (CPO): "The Commission does not believe there is a 'strong presumption of guilt of the party involved' (*BCO* 31-2) with regard to the accusations of sexual harassment, intimidation, and bullying, or that the TE is guilty of an offense as defined in *BCO* 29 (no violation of divine law, heresies, or immoralities)." They also reported: "It is the judgment of the commission that there is enough weight to the allegations that pastoral, corrective measures are in order."
- 2/14/20 The IC presented its report to CIP.
- 2/27/20 TE Steven Marusich (a member of CIP) filed a Complaint with CIP alleging four errors at 2/14 meeting:
- (1) CIP erred in not finding a "strong presumption of guilt" against the accused.
  - (2) CIP's Commission erred by exceeding its mandate and taking up business not referred to it.
  - (3) CIP's Commission erred by not submitting a full record of its proceedings to the court appointing it; and
  - (4) CIP's Commission erred in not delivering the full report of their findings to the Presbytery, the accused's court of original jurisdiction.
- Spring 2020 IC members met with the accusers to communicate the IC report. The accusers declined the IC's proposal for reconciliation.



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- 7/10/20 CIP met to address the Marusich Complaint. CIP sustained items (2) and (3) and denied items (1) and (4). A Committee was appointed to amend the IC Report.
- 7/20/20 TE Marusich carried his Complaint regarding items (1) and (4) to the SJC. The Case was designated as Case 2020-04 and later assigned to an SJC Panel on 9/17/20.
- 10/5/20 Four CIP members learned the accusers had obtained TE Herron's 18-page letter of defense submitted in confidence to the original IC and given to CIP presbyters in executive session on 2/20/20.
- 11/17/20 The SJC Panel held the Hearing on Case 2020-04: *Marusich v. CIP*.
- 12/1/20 The Panel's proposed decision for Case 2020-04 was sent to the parties. The CIP moderator called a meeting to determine how CIP might proceed, based on the Panel's proposed decision. (The SJC did not render a final decision in the Case until two months later, on 2/4/21.)
- 12/9/20 Kara Million published an article on the website of Christians for Biblical Equality International (CBE). It became *one of the Top 15 CBE Writing Contest winners for 2020*. The article was the first of several actions by the three original accusers and others (and media organizations on social media, print media, and podcasts) that communicated accusations regarding TE Herron, members of Hope PCA, members of the original IC, CIP, the PCA, and the SJC. Among the content used in these actions included accusers' interpretation of content from TE Herron's 18-page response submitted in confidence to the original commission.<sup>23</sup>

## 2021

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<sup>23</sup> The other content included many Twitter and Facebook posts, two blogs: one from the CBE and another from the Wartburg Watch, two articles and updates from media outlets Indiana Daily Student and the Roys Report, and five different podcasts published by "Faith & Feminism," Tears of Eden's "Uncertain" podcasts, and "The Real Women of Church Ministry."

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- 1/8/21 CIP Called Meeting. Three motions were adopted in executive session:
1. To rescind the original commission report received at the February 2020 stated meeting. Approved 23-0.
  2. To dismiss with thanks the committee that was formed at the July 2020 stated meeting “to amend the full report of the commission to reflect those parts of the [Marusich] complaint that were sustained by presbytery.” Approved by a voice vote.
  3. Pending the acceptance of the Panel decision by the full SJC, per BCO 41-2 *we refer the case back to the SJC for it to conduct the case with process*. Out of concern for the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of those involved, we ask the SJC to please expedite this process. Approved 18-5-2. (Emphasis added.)
- 1/11/21 The Search Team, Session, and senior staff of Hunt Valley PCA (Cockeysville, MD;) invited TE Herron to officially candidate as the next Senior Pastor. Herron received an offer letter contingent on a congregational vote.
- 2/4/21 SJC sustained Complaint 2020-04 *Marusich v. CIP* and SJC's Reasoning is below.

The SJC disposes of the complaint (*BCO 43-9*) by sending the matter back to the lower court with instructions to take it up again (*BCO 43-10*). To that end, CIP should appoint a *committee* to investigate reports concerning the TE according to *BCO 31-2*. Such committee may refer to or adopt any papers contained in the Record of the Case in Judicial Case 2020-04, as well as pursue whatever other lines of investigation may be prudent. The committee’s report to Presbytery shall include a narrative of the evidence gathered in the committee’s investigation, and a recommendation with respect to a finding a (*sic*) strong presumption of the guilt of the party in question. Presbytery shall consider the report under regular orders (i.e., the report may be discussed, but not amended; the

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recommendation shall be subject to the ordinary rules governing a main motion) at the next stated meeting of the court, or at a special meeting called beforehand for that purpose. This Decision applies to the specifics of this Case and does not establish a principle for how every *BCO* 31-2 investigation must be conducted. (*M48GA*, p. 803)

- 2/10/21 TE Marusich filed charges against TE Herron, alleging violations of the 5th and 7th Commandments, *BCO* 21-4.1a, and violations of ordination vows.
- 2/12/21 CIP Stated Meeting. CIP considered the charges brought by TE Marusich and voted to move to trial (27-0-1). First day of trial was set for three weeks later - 3/5/21.
- 2/18/21 TE Dawkins, Brice, Marusich & REs Barber, Wynkoop, and Fisher request a called CIP meeting for 03/05/21, to precede the start of the trial on the same day. Prior to this meeting, a series of social media posts going back to December 2020 were posted by one of the accusers. Also, certain highly sensitive and privileged executive session materials were posted on social media.
- 3/5/21 CIP Called Meeting & Trial Day 1 (scheduled) - A letter from TE Marusich was read in which he communicated his desire to “rescind” his charges against TE Herron. The charges were rescinded by vote of 25-6-1. CIP then adopted a motion to rescind its action of going to trial against TE Herron, by vote of 25-5-2. CIP also decided, by a vote of 24-6-2, to form a new Investigating *Committee*

to consider evidence of a strong presumption of guilt of a chargeable offense with regard to allegations against the Christian character of TE Dan Herron, concerning accusations of sexual harassment and intimidation pursuant to *BCO* 31-2, and Bylaws, IV and in accordance with the directive of the Standing Judicial Commission in case 2020-04, and to direct Central Indiana

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Presbytery to enter into an Engagement Agreement with GRACE contingent on a guilty verdict after a trial with process. The 31-2 Investigative Committee shall have at least five members, and we prefer two of those members be attorneys.

The following were approved for the new investigative committee: TE Holowell (convener), TE McKay, TE Holroyd, RE Longbottom (attorney), RE Atkins (attorney), and RE Brumbaugh. The Moderator and Clerk were directed to appoint two female advisory members to the committee who are members of CIP churches.

- 3/6/21 The original accusers and others began social media posts and letter writing regarding Hunt Valley Church ("HVC"), discovering TE Herron had been invited to candidate.
- 3/8/21 TE Herron submitted letter of withdrawal to HVC as a candidate for Senior Pastor.
- 3/29/21 *Faith & Feminism* released podcast of interview with Kara Million & Abigail Harris entitled "Standing up to Pastoral Abuse" with allegations against TE Herron.
- 5/6/21 The *Indiana Daily Student* (IDS) published article entitled "Former members of Hope Presbyterian Church in Bloomington allege abuse, cover-up," in which Million, Harris, and Baker communicated accusations against TE Herron.
- 5/7/21 The *Real Women of Church Ministry* podcast released a discussion between the hosts entitled "On the Road to GA: Presbytery investigations and factions within factions," where they communicated accusations against TE Herron, asserting they were fact.
- 5/12/21 The *Roys Report* published article, "Former Members of Indiana Church Accuse Pastor of Sexual Abuse and Presbytery of Covering it Up" in which Million, Harris, and Baker communicated accusations against TE Herron and CIP.

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- 5/14/21 CIP Stated Meeting. The *BCO* 31-2 Committee appointed nine weeks prior presented a four-page report indicating it believed there was a strong presumption of guilt on six charges, and recommended CIP adopt that finding and commence judicial process. CIP adopted that recommendation and approved a motion to suspend TE Herron from office (*BCO* 31-10) and to publicly distribute an official statement that included information about the charges, suspension, and eventual trial of TE Herron. CIP declared that the statement was “releaseable [sic] to all TE’s and RE’s of CIP and releaseable [sic] to the public upon request.” The Clerk emailed TE Herron the results of the meeting.
- 5/16/21 Information about CIP's 5/14 actions appeared on social media.
- 5/18/21 The *Uncertain* podcast by Tears of Eden released Part 1 of an interview with Million and Harris entitled “Wicked Pastor of the Midwest Part 1: Flying Monkeys,” where accusations were made against TE Herron and members of Hope Church.
- 5/20/21 TE Herron requested minutes of CIP's 05/14 Stated Meeting and a copy of the report from the *BCO* 31-2 Committee's investigation. Clerk Reed denied the request.
- 5/25/21 The *Uncertain* podcast by Tears of Eden released Part 2 podcast of an interview with Million and Harris entitled “Wicked Pastor of the Midwest Part 2: Lions, Tigers, and Bears,” where accusations were made against TE Herron.
- 6/2/21 The *Uncertain* podcast by Tears of Eden released Part 3 of an interview with Million and Harris entitled, “Wicked Pastor of the Midwest: Behind the Curtain,” where accusations were made against TE Herron.
- 6/10/21 Date on Cease & Desist letters to Kara Million, Abigail Harris, and Chris Baker from TE Herron via legal counsel. Letters were served on 6/13.

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6/18/21 TE Herron, along with TEs O'Bannon, Kirk, J. Jones and RE Tanneberger filed a Complaint with CIP against its action taken on 05/14.

6/22/21 CIP Called Meeting. CIP adopted a motion to direct a Statement to TE Herron regarding the Cease & Desist letters. The CIP Statement was emailed to TE Herron by CIP Clerk TE Reed the next day, and contained the following:

We are concerned that the cease and desist letter interferes with the CIP's ability to obtain witness testimony at the upcoming ecclesiastical trial. In your legal counselor's letter he states, "The purpose of this letter is to direct you to refrain immediately, and cease and desist, in any and all defamatory communications, on social media, or otherwise, concerning Mr. Herron."

We ask you to instruct your legal counselor to send a follow-up letter to all recipients of the original cease and desist letter specifying that the CIP trial is excluded from the scope of the cease and desist letter. We ask that this letter be received by those individuals by July 8, 2021.

We are not seeking to infringe on your right to pursue civil litigation where appropriate; instead, we are seeking to preserve the integrity of the ecclesiastical process.

6/24/21 CIP "first meeting" of the court [*BCO* 32-3] in the judicial process of TE Herron, which CIP initiated at its 5/14 Stated Meeting. TE Herron was present and participating over Zoom. A motion was made that CIP refer the present case of *CIP v. Herron* to the SJC with request for its trial and decision by the higher court, per *BCO* 41-3. Moderator ruled the motion out of order, stating it was disallowed at the "first meeting of the court."

CIP adopted TE Holroyd's motion that "items 1-6 serve as the charges reduced to writing." Motion was adopted to "order the indictment drawn by the Prosecutor and a copy served on the accused by the clerk by July 1, 2021." Motion was adopted to

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"allow the prosecutor to consult with the non-court members of the investigating committee in the creation of his indictment. Approved 20-1-2." Initial list of witnesses included: "RE Matthew Brittingham, TE Chris Manley, Colin Elliott, Sadie Elliott, Chris Baker, Abigail Harris, and Kara Million."

TE Josh Hollowell was appointed Prosecutor and women from the BCO 31-2 investigating committee were assigned as assistants. Later, TE Herron was informed that RE Dan Barber had volunteered to be an Assistant Prosecutor.

- 6/27/21 Kara Million and Abigail Harris were served with a civil defamation lawsuit in Monroe County, IN for defamation of character against Daniel Herron.
- 7/1/21 CIP Clerk Reed sent TE Herron the indictment and the citation to appear and plead at the second meeting of the Court.
- 7/2/21 The date Indiana's two-year statute of limitations was to expire on defamation claim against Million & Harris in the 7/2/19 foundational document of alleged defamation.
- 7/3/21 Author Jennifer Greenberg tweeted accusations and hashtagged "#PCAGA" that "...sexual predators like pastor Dan Herron is suing his victims for talking about what he did to them." Greenberg shared CIP's 6/22 Statement sent to TE Herron. Greenberg associated accusers' allegations as "crimes", asserted that TE Herron was a "pervert", that the accusers were "victims", that Herron's filing of lawsuits was "an apparent attempt to shut them up", and that the accusers were victims who needed "physical protection". Greenberg communicated she had "involved law enforcement" and had become "involved in advising" the accusers.
- 7/7/21 CIP Called Meeting to consider the *Herron et al.* Complaint 1 against actions from CIP's 5/14/21 Stated Meeting. CIP denied all parts of the Complaint.
- 7/12/21 CIP Called Meeting to discuss Presbytery's response to the civil defamation lawsuits filed by TE Herron. Assistant Prosecutor RE Barber motioned for the Presbytery to write a letter of demand to TE

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Herron. Discussion and debate were postponed until a meeting called for 7/15.

7/13/21 TE Herron carried Complaint 1 to the SJC, and it was styled as Case 2021-06 and assigned to the Panel that heard Case 2020-04 *Marusich v. CIP*.

7/15/21 CIP's second meeting of the court [BCO 32-3]. Herron pleaded not guilty to all charges. Per instructions from CIP, Clerk Reed sent a letter to TE Herron with CIP's Statement, which included the following:

On June 23, 2021, Central Indiana Presbytery asked you to protect the integrity of the ecclesiastical process against potential infringement from the civil courts. You declined in an email message to the Stated Clerk on July 1, 2021, writing, in part, “The letters themselves fully communicate purpose and motive. Therefore, we will not be sending out any further communication regarding this subject to those individuals.”

This notice today, July 15, 2021, serves as formal warning, according to BCO 31-7 and Matthew 18, that you have infringed upon the integrity of Central Indiana Presbytery’s ecclesiastical proceedings by initiating a civil lawsuit against two sisters in Christ for following the process laid out in our Book of Church Order and writing a letter of complaint to presbytery on July 2, 2019—an ecclesiastical process which you vowed to uphold as a PCA Teaching Elder—and by threatening them with punitive financial damages if they testify in agreement with said letter as witnesses.

Central Indiana Presbytery directs you to withdraw your civil lawsuit or amend it by withdrawing Exhibit A numbers 9, 10, 11, 18, 19, 20, 29, 34, 35, 37, 39, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, and 48 within the next ten days.



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If you decline to withdraw your lawsuit within the next ten days, as directed, you will be deemed to be interfering with valid testimony within an ecclesiastical process. BCO 35-1 states, "All persons of proper age and intelligence are competent witnesses, except such as do not believe in the existence of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments. ... It belongs to the court to judge the degree of credibility to be attached to all evidence." You are required by your vows to adhere to the BCO and cooperate with all lawful proceedings of Central Indiana Presbytery.

We urge you to repent and withdraw this lawsuit as directed with the next ten days.

- 7/20/21 CIP Clerk informed presbyters of dates of the upcoming Herron trial: August 11-14.
- 7/25/21 Herron emailed CIP Clerk and Moderator the following response to CIP's 7/15 letter regarding the defamation suit.

Truth is a complete defense to defamation. No witness should feel intimidated or "interfered with" concerning the providing of truthful testimony to the CIP. I hereby warrant and confirm that all witnesses have complete immunity from any civil court action for giving truthful testimony. I am advised by my civil legal counsel that I would be legally prejudiced if I now withdrew my civil lawsuit. It is unreasonable and unfair for the CIP to make such a demand. Indeed, the current CIP directive to prejudice my legal rights appears unlawful and in violation of our own Constitution, thus I am obliged not to comply.

I twice offered to dismiss the lawsuit without prejudice immediately if the defendants would enter into a tolling agreement. I believe this would benefit all parties, but the CIP has rejected this offer without explanation.

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Consequently, for all the reasons set forth above, I must respectfully decline the CIP directive.

- 7/29/21 TE Herron submitted Complaint 2 to Clerk Reed against CIP's 7/15 action directing him to withdraw the defamation suit, which included reasons why he declined to do so. (The core content of Complaint 2 was later also represented in Complaint 4.)
- 7/30/21 CIP Called Meeting. By vote of 12-8, CIP ruled TE Herron guilty of contumacy for not withdrawing his defamation suit, suspended him from the sacraments, and cancelled his trial that was scheduled for August 11. CIP then issued public communications regarding its interpretations of TE Herron's actions, CIP's contumacy judgment, and the censures.
- 8/3/21 TE Herron emailed CIP Clerk and Moderator his response to CIP's actions of 7/30.
- 8/27/21 TE Herron submitted Complaint 3 to CIP Clerk TE Reed.
- 9/10/21 CIP Stated Meeting. Herron Complaint 2 was sustained by a voice vote and CIP rescinded the finding of contumacy and the suspension from the sacraments. Complaint 3 was sustained in part and denied in part.
- undated After CIP's 9/10 meeting, 18 TEs from other PCA presbyteries signed a letter to CIP asking it to reconsider its actions, contending that 1 Corinthians 6 was being violated.
- 09/2021 TE Marusich filed a Complaint with CIP against its actions of 9/10, including CIP's decision to rescind the contumacy ruling.
- 9/23/21 RE Barber filed three other Complaints with CIP against its actions of 9/10, and proposed CIP "should reverse its action of sustaining the complaints [Herron 2 and parts of Herron 3] and reinstate the finding of contumacy." Five TEs and five REs joined the Complaint: TEs McKay, Brice, Hollowell, Brobst, and Marusich and REs Barber, Wynkoop, Brown, Nagelkirk, and Fisher.

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- 9/26/21 TE Reed communicated to the parties the trial would be delayed again due to the need to find a new trial moderator, the submission of four new complaints the adjudication of which would affect whether there even was a trial, a called meeting request, and the submission of correspondences from various people regarding CIP's 9/10 actions.
- 10/8/21 Herron carried part of his Complaint 2 to the SJC (i.e., the parts not sustained by CIP on 9/10), and it was styled as Case 2021-14, *Herron et al v. CIP*. The Complaint alleged six errors. The Case was assigned to the same five-member SJC Panel.
- 10/21/21 CIP Called Meeting at Redeemer PCA, Indianapolis to consider second Marusich Complaint and three Complaints from RE Barber et al. The Complaints were heard and were sustained in part and denied in part. CIP reversed its 9/10 decision and rescinded its 9/10 rescission of its 7/30 contumacy judgment against TE Herron. The contumacy judgment was reinstated, and the censures of indefinite suspension from office and suspension from the sacraments were imposed. It's unclear how this affected CIP's 7/30 decision cancelling the trial.
- 11/-/21 In weeks following the reinstatement of the contumacy judgment, an informal group of CIP presbyters met together with TE Herron on several occasions. The group recommended TE Herron consider amending his civil lawsuit since this was what the contumacy issue had been based upon since 7/15/21. While TE Herron continued to affirm his prior position on CIP's assessment of the lawsuit, he amended the suit by removing all content referring to the original ecclesiastical complaint/accusations to CIP and reiterated his desire to move to a trial.
- 11/12/21 CIP Stated Meeting. TE Anderson shared with CIP that TE Herron had amended his civil lawsuit. CIP formed a committee to continue meeting with TE Herron regarding his continued attempts to submit to the CIP.

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- 11/17/21 TE Herron and his RE counsel (member of a CIP church) met with this “contumacy” committee to discuss a way forward through the CIP contumacy judgment to proceed to an ecclesiastical trial.
- 11/17/21 Record of the Case received by the PCA Clerk's office for *Herron 2*, Case 2021-14.
- 11/23/21 Case 2021-06 *Herron v. CIP* assigned to the original Panel in 2020-04 Marusich.
- 11/24/21 RE Barber, along with RE Fisher & TEs Marusich, Hollowell, & McKay carry part of their Complaint to the SJC, and it is styled as Case 2021-15: *Barber et al. v. CIP*.
- 12/19/21 TE Herron filed Complaint 4 with CIP against its 10/21 reinstatements of the contumacy finding and the censures of indefinite suspension from office and suspension from the sacraments. (Complaint 4 was not carried to the SJC, possibly due to the final two paragraphs in the SJC's 6/2/22 Decision in Case 2021-06 *Herron 1*. See below.)
- 12/21/21 Two members added to the SJC Panel for Case 2021-14 (*Herron 2*).

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- 1/12/22 Herron Complaint 3 carried to SJC and became Case 2022-02 *Herron et al. v. CIP*.
- 3/21/22 SJC Panel conducted Hearing in Case 2021-06 *Herron 1 v. CIP*
- 4/4/22 SJC Panel rendered a preliminary decision on Case 2021-06 *Herron 1 v. CIP*.
- 5/20/22 Date of the CIP indictment document with seven charges.
- 5/23/22 CIP adopted a motion to Refer the trial to the SJC, with RE Barber as the Prosecutor, along with a commitment of funds.

6/2/22 SJC Called Meeting. Below is an excerpt from the SJC Decision in Case 2021-06 *Herron I v. CIP*.

- A. Did CIP err [on 5/14/21] when they proceeded to process after hearing the report of the Investigative Committee [IC 2]? ..... *NO*
- B. Did CIP err when they suspended TE Dan Herron per *BCO 31-10*? .....*NO*
- C. Did CIP err when they restricted TE Herron from receiving the report of the *BCO 31-2* Investigative Committee and the minutes and attachments from meetings of CIP? .....*YES*
- D. Did CIP err when they approved and issued a public statement that communicated the decision made by CIP on May 14, 2021? ... .....*NO*

The four pages of SJC Reasoning concluded with the following.

Amends - The SJC instructs the Presbytery to proceed to a trial, given that Presbytery found a strong presumption of guilt on certain allegations on May 14, 2021, and the SJC has declined to sustain the Complaint against those findings. Absent a confession or the dismissal of all charges, Presbytery does not have the option to decline to institute process. ...

The Record indicates Presbytery adopted the motion below on January 8, 2021, by a vote of 18-5-2, which read: “Pending the acceptance of the panel decision by the full SJC [in Case No. 2020-04 *Marusich v. CIP*], per *BCO 41-2* we refer the case [trial] back to the SJC for it to conduct the case with process. Out of concern for the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of those involved, we ask the SJC to please expedite this process.”

If Presbytery had filed that Reference, things would have been far simpler. In addition to this present Complaint, there have been three others filed with regard to this matter (one prior and two pending), and this matter has been in various levels of

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adjudication since 2019. The Records of these Cases total over 2,500 pages. The Record and the Hearing on this present Case indicated countless pages of comments and accusations have regularly appeared on social media and in the Bloomington press. Indeed, the entire Record of the Case for the previously decided SJC Case 2020-04 has appeared on a social media platform - including Presbytery executive session minutes. The peace and purity of the Church has been disrupted as the resolution of these issues has been delayed.

Finally, the SJC temporarily suspends all decisions relating to censures against TE Herron until after the completion of the judicial process growing out of Presbytery's BCO 31-2 findings of 05/14/2021.

The SJC notes it has postponed consideration of all pending (i.e., Case Nos. 2021-14, 2021-15, & 2022-02) and future Complaints on any matter related to TE Daniel Herron or related judicial matters until the completion of the judicial process growing out of Presbytery's BCO 31-2 findings of 05/14/2021 and the adjudication of any subsequent appeal.

- 6/2/22 At the same meeting in which the SJC decided Case 2021-06 (*Herron I*), the SJC accepted the *BCO* 41 Reference from CIP wherein CIP requested SJC to conduct a trial of TE Herron, with certain provisions (e.g., CIP to supply the prosecutor and the indictment). The SJC Chairman appointed a Trial Arrangements Committee ("TAC").
- 6/21/22 Overtures 38, 39, & 40 (from Chesapeake, N. CA, and N. New England) requested the 49th GA to assume original jurisdiction over TE Herron. Referred to SJC.
- 7/5/22 TAC and SJC Officers approved a letter to Parties in the yet-to-be scheduled trial.
- 8/15/22 SJC Called Meeting. SJC approved the TAC-proposed 10-point Trial Procedures.

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- 8/29/22 Civil deposition of Kara Million, Ph.D. in Baltimore (approximately 410 pages with 50-page Index, plus Exhibits). Prosecutor Barber was also present.
- 8/31/22 Civil deposition of Mrs. Abigail Harris in Bloomington, IN (approximately 210 pages with 32-page Index, plus Exhibits). Prosecutor Barber was also present.
- 10/4/22 TAC adopts answers to 37 Pre-Trial Motions (28 prosecution & 9 defense).
- 10/21/22 SJC adopts TAC recommendations on Pre-Trial Motions (amending some) and amends previous decision on trial format, deciding to conduct the trial in Indiana using a Panel of three, with two alternates. All was communicated to the parties.
- 10/27/22 Defense emailed another pre-trial motion to the Panel seeking to add the depositions of Million and Harris as Exhibits.
- 11/15/22 Five-day trial commenced in Indianapolis. SJC Panel was RE Pickering (trial moderator), TE Greco, RE Donahoe, RE Dowling (alternate), and TE Lee (alternate). The trial lasted 42 hours, with 42 witnesses - 18 prosecution, 24 defense (including the Accused) - and hundreds of exhibits. It adjourned on 11/19/22. The Panel agreed to permit some of the witnesses listed by the prosecution to testify by live videoconference in a manner by which the witnesses would not be able to see the Accused and for such witnesses to be cross examined only by defense counsel. Kara Million was listed by the prosecution as such a witness, but she did not appear at trial. As a result, the transcript of her deposition in the civil defamation lawsuit was admitted into the trial record by stipulation of the prosecution and the defense.

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- 1/6/23 The 1,966-page trial transcript was delivered to the SJC Trial Panel.

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- 2/13/23 The Panel adopted a proposed decision in the Case and filed it with the SJC.
- 3/2/23 SJC Stated Meeting. The SJC adopted a Preliminary Verdict in the Case.
- 3/27/23 The Prosecutor filed a Supplemental Brief.
- 4/5/23 The SJC considered the Prosecutor's Supplemental Brief and finalized the Verdict.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES

Below are the seven charges from CIP's May 20, 2022 indictment:

1. Failing to use discretion, chastity, and modesty with regard to sexuality, both during the course of his official duties as Pastor and elsewhere.
2. Belittling, demeaning, neglecting, provoking, quarrelling with, intimidating, domineering, lying about, and refusing to be reconciled with both employees and congregation members under his charge during the course of his official duties as Pastor.
3. Lying, slandering, giving false evidence, scoffing, flattering, and otherwise distorting the truth in conversations, ecclesiastical and civil proceedings, oral and written testimony, and elsewhere.
4. Initiating a civil lawsuit against two sisters in Christ, threatening them with punitive financial damages if they testify in ecclesiastical court in accordance with their previously submitted testimony, which resulted in interference with the exercise of jurisdiction of the Central Indiana Presbytery.
5. Refusing to comply with a lawful directive of presbytery given for the preservation of the peace, purity, and unity of the church within an ecclesiastical discipline process; that is, contumacy, according to Ordination Vow Four (BCO 21-5), which requires ministers to “promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord.”



6. Holding and expounding views in conflict with the Westminster Standards, and failing, of his own initiative, to make known his change in views since the assumption of his ordination vows, according to Ordination Vow 2 (BCO 21-5), which requires ministers to sincerely receive and adopt the Westminster Standards and to voluntarily notify the presbytery of any changes in their views.
7. Failing to maintain a life that is above reproach so as to be open to such numerous charges and specifications, and thus no longer meeting the requirements for an officer or minister in the Presbyterian Church in America.

### III. JUDGMENTS/VERDICTS

1. As to Charge 1: Failing to use discretion, chastity, and modesty with regard to sexuality, both during the course of his official duties as Pastor and elsewhere. Not Guilty
2. As to Charge 2: Belittling, demeaning, neglecting, provoking, quarrelling with, intimidating, domineering, lying about, and refusing to be reconciled with both employees and congregation members under his charge during the course of his official duties as Pastor. Not Guilty.
3. As to Charge 3: Lying, slandering, giving false evidence, scoffing, flattering, and otherwise distorting the truth in conversations, ecclesiastical and civil proceedings, oral and written testimony, and elsewhere. Not Guilty.
4. As to Charge 4: Initiating a civil lawsuit against two sisters in Christ, threatening them with punitive financial damages if they testify in ecclesiastical court in accordance with their previously submitted testimony, which resulted in interference with the exercise of jurisdiction of the Central Indiana Presbytery. Not Guilty.
5. As to Charge 5: Refusing to comply with a lawful directive of presbytery given for the preservation of the peace, purity, and unity of the church within an ecclesiastical discipline

process; that is, contumacy, according to Ordination Vow Four (BCO 21-5), which requires ministers to “promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord.” Not Guilty.

6. As to Charge 6: Holding and expounding views in conflict with the Westminster Standards, and failing, of his own initiative, to make known his change in views since the assumption of his ordination vows, according to Ordination Vow 2 (BCO 21-5), which requires ministers to sincerely receive and adopt the Westminster Standards and to voluntarily notify the presbytery of any changes in their views. Not Guilty.
7. As to Charge 7: Failing to maintain a life that is above reproach so as to be open to such numerous charges and specifications, and thus no longer meeting the requirements for an officer or minister in the Presbyterian Church in America. Not Guilty.

#### **IV. REASONING**

At trial, the Panel was presented a twelve-page indictment, containing seven charges, each elaborated with numerous specifications (11 of which were deleted, and five amended, by the Prosecutor at trial). A 42-hour trial was held over five days in Indianapolis, Indiana. The prosecution presented testimony from 18 witnesses (nine via live videoconference) and the defense presented testimony from 24, including the Accused (four via live videoconference). A total of 640 exhibits were presented by the parties, all producing a trial transcript totaling 1,966 pages.

It was the Panel’s judgment that no charge in the indictment was credibly sustained by the testimony of witnesses, evidentiary exhibits, or arguments set forth by the prosecution.

##### **A. Charges 1, 2, 3, and 7**

The Standing Judicial Commission accepted and exercised original jurisdiction in this case (*BCO* 41-3 and *OMSJC* Section 12). So, the SJC’s Panel operated as the finder of fact and not as a court of review, which is the

ordinary function of the SJC. In performing its duties, the Panel considered the oral testimony of 42 witnesses who collectively produced a transcript of 1,966 pages, while reviewing 640 items of documentary and video evidence offered as Exhibits. The Panel noted that some of the evidence was ambiguous and subject to different interpretations. Witnesses for each side sometimes testified to identical or substantially similar events, but with different conclusions.

Where unambiguous digital or documentary evidence existed, however, it strongly supported the arguments of the Accused, providing objective proof against these specific allegations of sin. This fact affected the Panel's assessment of the credibility to ascribe to testimony for which there was no tangible evidence or for which there were no third-party witnesses. After carefully examining all the evidence, the Panel unanimously agreed that the prosecution did not meet its burden of proof in this case.

## **B. Charge 4**

Charge 4 is categorically different from the previous Charges in that it pertains to a civil defamation lawsuit filed by TE Herron against two of his accusers who were posting on the internet and giving interviews about their allegations and experiences with TE Herron, and from TE Herron's attendant interactions with Central Indiana Presbytery. The finding of "not guilty" on this Charge requires elaboration, especially since the fact that TE Herron filed a civil lawsuit against two accusers is not disputed, and since this finding requires Constitutional interpretation.

Charge 4 concerns a civil defamation lawsuit filed by TE Herron. There was no dispute that a lawsuit was filed. The Charge rests on a particular interpretation and application of 1 Corinthians 6:1-8:

<sup>1</sup>When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? <sup>2</sup>Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? <sup>3</sup>Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! <sup>4</sup>So if you have

such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? <sup>5</sup>I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, <sup>6</sup>but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? <sup>7</sup>To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? <sup>8</sup>But you yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers! (ESV)

Some contend 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 prohibits one Christian from ever suing another in civil court, regardless of the circumstances. Others contend the passage has a more limited application and context is important.

### 1. Westminster Standards

It does not seem any verses from 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 are referenced in the Westminster Confession of Faith or Shorter Catechism, but verses from that passage are referenced six times in the Larger Catechism - LC 90, 113, 141 (twice), 142, and 151. The only references directly related to lawsuits are in LC 141 and 142, which describe things required and prohibited by the 8th Commandment (“You shall not steal.” Ex 20:15; ESV). LC 141 teaches the 8th Commandment requires “avoiding unnecessary lawsuits” and LC 142 teaches “vexatious lawsuits” violate the same.

Q 141. What are the duties required in the eighth commandment?

- A. The duties required in the eighth commandment are, truth, faithfulness, and justice in contracts and commerce between man and man; rendering to everyone his due; restitution of goods unlawfully detained from the right owners thereof; giving and lending freely, according to our abilities, and the necessities of others; moderation of our judgments, wills, and affections concerning worldly goods; a provident care and study to get, keep, use, and dispose these things which are necessary and convenient for the sustentation of our nature, and suitable to our condition; a lawful calling, and diligence in it; frugality; **avoiding unnecessary lawsuits**, and suretyship, or other like engagements; and an endeavor, by all just and lawful means, to procure, preserve, and further the

wealth and outward estate of others, as well as our own.  
(Emphasis added.)

Q. 142. What are the sins forbidden in the eighth commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the eighth commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are, theft, robbery, man-stealing, and receiving anything that is stolen; fraudulent dealing, false weights and measures, removing landmarks, injustice and unfaithfulness in contracts between man and man, or in matters of trust; oppression, extortion, usury, bribery, **vexatious lawsuits**, unjust enclosures and depredation; engrossing commodities to enhance the price; unlawful callings, and all other unjust or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbor what belongs to him, or of enriching ourselves; covetousness; inordinate prizing and affecting worldly goods; distrustful and distracting cares and studies in getting, keeping, and using them; envying at the prosperity of others; as likewise idleness, prodigality, wasteful gaming; and all other ways whereby we do unduly prejudice our own outward estate, and defrauding ourselves of the due use and comfort of that estate which God hath given us. (Emphasis added.)

Even though the indictment cites LC 141 and 142, the prosecution did not demonstrate how the defamation lawsuit was either “unnecessary” or “vexatious.” Only one prosecution witness testified on the 1 Corinthians 6 matter, and he did not offer a constitutional interpretation of those adjectives that would warrant a finding of guilt on the Charges related to the lawsuit. No documents were entered into evidence regarding those adjectives.

However, one historical perspective is provided by Thomas Ridgeley (1667-1734), who was a Calvinist minister in London. Ridgeley wrote, *A Body of Divinity*, a 1,300 page commentary on the Westminster Larger Catechism, in 1731. Below are his comments on “Litigiousness” from his commentary section on LC 141 and 142.

A person may be said to break this [8th] commandment, by engaging in unjust and vexatious lawsuits. It is to be owned, however, that going to law is not, at all times, unjust. For it is

sometimes a relief against oppression; and it is agreeable to the law of nature for every one to defend his just rights. On this account, God appointed judges to determine causes, to whom the people were to have recourse, that they might 'show them the sentence of judgment.' Yet we must conclude lawsuits to be in some cases oppressive. They are so when the rich make use of the law to prevent or prolong the payment of their debts, or to take away the rights of the poor, who, as they suppose, will rather suffer injuries than attempt to defend themselves. Lawsuits are oppressive also when bribes are either given or taken, with a design to pervert justice. We may add, that the person who pleads an unrighteous cause, concealing the known truth, perverting the sense of the law, or alleging that for law or fact which he knows not to be so; and the judge who passes sentence against his conscience, respecting the person of the rich, and brow-beating the poor; are confederates in oppression, while their methods of proceeding are, beyond dispute, a breach of this commandment.<sup>24</sup>

Another helpful source for understanding the meaning of "vexatious lawsuits" is the American Puritan, Samuel Willard (1640-1707), from his *Complete Body of Divinity* (probably the most extensive commentary on the Shorter Catechism ever published). The excerpt below is from Sermon 204, preached in 1705, which was part of his exposition of the Eighth Commandment. (Shorter Catechism Q 75: What is forbidden in the Eighth Commandment?)

6. By vexatious lawsuits. Doubtless civil laws are good and necessary; and men are sometimes forced to recover their own by law, or else they would wrong themselves and families. And this ariseth from the iniquity of mankind, whereas if all men were honest, it might be prevented. This forwardness to bring everything to civil courts, which might be ended in a more charitable way, is what the Apostle sharply reproves in them (1 Cor. 6). For men to take the advantage of the law

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<sup>24</sup> In 1695 Ridgely became assistant pastor to Thomas Gouge (son of William Gouge, the chairman of the committee assigned to draft the WCF). Ridgely then succeeded Thomas Gouge in that pastorate after his death in 1699 and served the Three Cranes Independent Church in London for 40 years.

against their neighbours, when their [neighbor's] cause in honesty and conscience is just and good, is oppression and robbery under a pretext of justice. For men to draw out suits, by unreasonable non-suits [baseless], and any other tricks of a like nature, to impoverish their neighbours, is of the same stamp. For attorneys to use tricks to perswade their clients to contention, and protract, and blind, or entangle causes for their own advantage, is a scandal, which such as so do, can never wipe off. For persons, by bribes and friends, to draw such as, concerned in judgment, to have respect of persons so to favour their cause, which in equity would go against them, is also a plain violation of this precept. Thus, may men sin against this precept in their gettings of the things of this life.<sup>25</sup> [Changes made in capitalization.]

Two other confessional sections are pertinent. Westminster Confession of Faith 23:3 teaches that civil magistrates have a duty to protect the "good name of all their people," and Westminster Larger Catechism 144 teaches that some of the duties required by the Ninth Commandment are the "preserving and promoting" of our own "good name" as well as "love and care of our own good name and defending it when need requireth." These sections don't limit our attempts to protect our good name to ecclesiastical courts only.

WCF 23:3 ... It is the *duty of civil magistrates to protect the person and good name of all their people*, in such an effectual manner as that no person be suffered, either upon pretense of religion or infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence, abuse, or injury to any other person whatsoever. (Emphasis added.)

Q 144. What are the duties required in the ninth commandment?

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<sup>25</sup> Samuel Willard was minister at Groton from 1663-76, and then pastor of Third Church, Boston until his death in 1707. He was also acting president of Harvard University from 1701. In 1726, his *Compleat Body of Divinity in Two Hundred and Fifty Expository Lectures on the Assembly's Shorter Catechism* was published. (See p. 718, Sermon 204 preached in 1705); Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership, 2011, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/evans/N02384.0001.001/1:6.204?rgn=div2;view=fulltext>; accessed 2/25/23.

- A. The *duties* required in the ninth commandment are, *the preserving and promoting of truth* between man and man, and *the good name of our neighbor, as well as our own*: appearing and standing for the truth; and from the heart, sincerely, freely, clearly, and fully, speaking the truth, and only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice, and in all other things whatsoever; a charitable esteem of our neighbors; loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name; sorrowing for, and covering of their infirmities; freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces, defending their innocence; a ready receiving of good report, and unwillingness to admit of an evil report, concerning them; discouraging tale-bearers, flatterers, and slanderers; *love and care of our own good name, and defending it when need requireth*; keeping of lawful promises; study and practicing of whatsoever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report. (Emphasis added.)

## 2. First Corinthians 6

The indictment listed three commentaries on 1 Corinthians as supporting Charge 4 - John Calvin (1546), Gordon Fee (NICNT 1987), and Anthony Thiselton (NIGTC, 2000). However, no excerpts were entered at trial as prosecution Exhibits. It was the defense that entered Calvin's commentary as an exhibit. Below are excerpts from Calvin on 1 Cor. 6:1-8.

For my own part, my answer is simply this – having a little before given permission to have recourse to arbiters, he has in this shown, with sufficient clearness, that *Christians are not prohibited from prosecuting their rights moderately, and without any breach of love*. ... Let us therefore bear in mind that *Paul does not condemn law-suits on the ground of its being a wrong thing in itself* to maintain a good cause by having recourse to a magistrate, but because it is almost invariably accompanied with corrupt dispositions; as, for example, violence, desire for revenge, enmities, obstinacy, and the like. I acknowledge, then, that a Christian man is altogether prohibited from revenge, so that he must not exercise it, either



by himself, or by means of the magistrate, nor even desire it. If, therefore, a Christian man wishes to prosecute his rights at law, so as not to offend God, he must, above all things, take heed that he does not bring into court any desire of revenge, any corrupt affection of the mind, or anger, or, in fine, any other poison. In this matter love will be the best regulator.<sup>26</sup> (Emphasis added.)

The prosecution did not seem to consider motive to be much of a factor in the application of 1 Corinthians 6. The defense argued persuasively that TE Herron was *responding* to the social media, podcast, and published accusations of him rather than initiating something out of the blue. The SJC has considered motive as being an issue in some other cases. In SJC Case 2013-10: *Appeal of TE Stuart Latimer v. Chicago Metro*, the SJC unanimously (18-0) sustained the appeal even though the TE filed for divorce first, and without biblical justification for his divorce. The SJC based its decision on its judgment that his intent was to temporarily get the state of Illinois to prevent his wife from taking the children to Alabama, at least for a period. (M43GA, 2015, p. 572). Here is an excerpt from the Reasoning.

There is no indication in the record that TE Latimer ever had “grounds to divorce” his wife. But whether his June 27, 2012, filing constituted sin turns not on whether he had grounds to divorce, but on whether his filing, combined with other evidence in the record, can reasonably be read to indicate an intent on his part to divorce. In other words, was his true objective to get divorced, or was the divorce filing intended for other purposes entirely, such as the protection of his children, as he argued? It doesn’t matter whether the filing was a wise or well-advised means to achieve his objective, or whether the children needed protecting, none of which the

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<sup>26</sup> The prosecution's witness was familiar with Calvin's view and testified as follows: “[Calvin] seems to think that Paul does not condemn lawsuits between Christians on grounds that they're wrong in themselves, though Paul does so condemn them. He wants to say -- Calvin wants to say that the problem is with the internal motivation of the lawsuit that the lawsuit has to be brought without anger, without revenge, without greed. ... Calvin thinks the issue is the motivation and then says that rarely, if ever, could this be brought with the right motivation.” (Transcript 565-66)

SJC can evaluate. What matters is whether TE Latimer's intentions in filing were sinful. We find no conclusive evidence in the record that TE Latimer's intentions were sinful, and Presbytery clearly erred in finding otherwise. (Decision, p. 578)<sup>27</sup>

The defense demonstrated that TE Herron tried to stop the public accusations against him with a Cease and Desist letter first (6/10/21). And the defense demonstrated he would not have filed a defamation lawsuit if the statute of limitations on that matter was long enough to allow the Church to conduct his trial and render a verdict. The defense argued that was the intent of TE Herron's proposal to CIP to offer tolling agreements to the defendants in his lawsuit, which CIP declined.<sup>28</sup> The defense also demonstrated TE Herron was willing to amend the lawsuit as instructed (or suggested) by CIP (or some CIP members). That is what triggered CIP's 9/10 removal of its 7/30 contumacy verdict and suspension from the Lord's Supper.

The prosecution's witness testified that 1 Corinthians 6 did not apply to a Christian who might charge another Christian with a crime, and it would be biblically permissible to go to the state court for such things. We note that while defamation is not a criminal offense in Indiana, at least thirteen other states have criminal libel/slander/defamation laws still on the books. It would seem odd for the PCA to rule TE Herron would have a biblical right to charge the defamation defendants with a crime if they had been in one of those thirteen states but could not file anything regarding alleged defamation with the state of Indiana.<sup>29</sup>

When cross-examining the prosecution's witness on 1 Corinthians 6, the defense questioned whether the two primary accusers should be considered as members of any church, given that both testified under oath they were not attending any church, and had not been for a long time.<sup>30</sup> The prosecution did not provide a persuasive response to that important question.

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<sup>27</sup> The following 12 current SJC members concurred with the *Latimer* Decision: Bise, Carrell, Coffin, Donahoe, S. Duncan, Greco, McGowan, Neikirk, Pickering, Terrell, White, and Wilson.

<sup>28</sup> A tolling agreement is an agreement to suspend a right to claim that litigation should be dismissed due to the expiration of a statute of limitations.

<sup>29</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_defamation\\_law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_defamation_law)

<sup>30</sup> One testified at trial under oath and the other in a deposition under oath.

Most commentaries on 1 Corinthians note several things were present in the Corinthian context which were not present in the Herron suit. For example, commentators note it was ordinarily only the wealthy who initiated the lawsuits addressed in 1 Corinthians 6, and these lawsuits were usually related to money (which might be why the Larger Catechism cites 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 in the section on the 8th Commandment). In addition, the Roman civil courts were relatively corrupt, with rich plaintiffs often bribing judges. Verses 7 and 8 use the term “defrauded” which seems to imply financial matters, and probably references the wealthier plaintiffs. Many translations of 1 Corinthians 6:2 indicate the matter was “trivial,” (ESV, NIV, RSV). The defense demonstrated the word “trivial” did not reasonably apply to TE Herron losing his job and his reputation due to the leaking of confidential information from CIP executive sessions, the many things publicized by the defamation defendants, and the interference with his call to another PCA church.

The Apostle Paul also contends the Corinthian church could easily and quickly render a decision on the 1 Corinthians 6 type (trivial) dispute, which sadly proved not to be the case in CIP. Presumably, this was one of the main reasons the SJC accepted the referenced trial, years after the initial accusations were made. In addition, Paul's comments seem to assume both parties are under the same church jurisdiction.<sup>31</sup> Granted, there is some question about when PCA jurisdiction over the defamation defendants ceased, but it seems CIP had little influence on them at some point prior to the Cease and Desist letter or the defamation suit.

### 3. Other Kinds of Lawsuits

Troubling questions could be raised if 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 is understood as disallowing all civil lawsuits between Christians. For example, unless a contract between Christian A and Christian B contains a clause stipulating that some ecclesiastical body will render a binding arbitration decision for all disputes, the threat of going to the civil magistrate is always implicit in any contract. The PCA and PCA Agencies have involved civil magistrates to settle various matters with people who were not regarded as unbelievers. If civil

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<sup>31</sup> See commentaries by Fee (1987), Winter (1994), Blomberg (1995), Thiselton (2000), Garland (2003), Ciampa & Rosner (2010), Hays (2011), Riddlebarger (2013), Oropeza (2017), and Brookins (2020).

lawsuits between believers are *always* unbiblical, then the following would presumably be prohibited for a Christian if the other party is also a Christian:

1. Civil divorce lawsuit where the plaintiff has biblical grounds
2. Lawsuit for child custody, child support, or visitation rights
3. Filing for an injunction or a restraining order against an abuser
4. Professional malpractice lawsuit
5. Wrongful termination lawsuit
6. Personal injury lawsuit
7. Sexual harassment lawsuit against church officers (not involving criminal offense)
8. Civil lawsuit for damage against child abusers
9. Filing for a protection order for elder abuse, stalking, etc.
10. Churches seeking a no trespassing order from a civil court

#### **4. Summary**

Given the analysis above, we cannot conclude that *all* civil lawsuits filed by Christians against other Christians are sinful. Thus, in a case such as the one before us, the burden of proof is on the prosecution to demonstrate that the particular lawsuit in question was sinful, whether because of the context of the lawsuit or its content. The prosecution did not meet that burden in this Case.

#### **C. Charge 5**

Charge 5 contends TE Herron should be found guilty of contumacy for “refusing to comply with a lawful directive of presbytery” and that his non-compliance violated his fourth ordination vow. However, whether the directive was lawful depends on whether the defamation lawsuit in this instance was sinful. As was shown in the discussion of Charge 4, that was not proven at trial.

In February 2020, the SJC rendered a 16-0 Decision in Case 2019-06: *PCA v. Mississippi Valley Presbytery* (M48GA, 2021, pp. 701-719). The Session of a

church in Mississippi Valley Presbytery had charged a woman with “failing to submit to the government and discipline of the church” because she declined to comply with the Session's directive that she cease pursuing a divorce. She and the Session disagreed as to whether she had biblical grounds for divorce. A trial was never scheduled, and one month after the arraignment, the Session approved a letter telling her she would be removed from the church roll if she continued pursuing the divorce, because doing so would indicate “she has no intention of fulfilling her vows to submit to the authority of the Session.” She was removed from the rolls and sent a BCO 40-5 letter to Presbytery, but Presbytery ruled the Session had not erred, and she carried the matter to the SJC. The SJC forwarded this matter to RPR, which recommended GA refer the case to the SJC. SJC ruled Presbytery erred in this matter, and below was part of the SJC Reasoning.

A member's responsibility is to seriously and respectfully consider the counsel. But there may be instances where a Session advises it regards something as sinful, without the member sinning by not following the advice. (The person's underlying action may be sinful, but his response to the advice is not, in and of itself, sinful.) This might include Session advice on how the Lord's Day should be observed, whether parents should use books with depictions of Jesus, whether parents should baptize their infants (WCF 28:5), whether tithing is morally obligated, the permissible use of tobacco or alcohol, appropriate clothing standards, “undue delay of marriage” (WLC139), “*avoiding unnecessary lawsuits*” (WLC 141), or what constitutes “prejudicing the good name of our neighbor” (WLC 145). And if a Session believed an indictment was warranted in any such situation, the indictment should allege the underlying sin, not the person's decision declining to follow Session counsel. (Emphasis added.)

#### **D. Charge 6**

This Charge alleged TE Herron held views in conflict with the Westminster Standards regarding lawsuits and that he violated his second ordination vow by failing to notify CIP of his alleged change in views on two other matters. Four of the five Specifications related to the lawsuit, which was addressed above under Charge 4. The other Specification was related to an alleged non-

reporting of a change in theological views on the Sabbath and the 2nd Commandment, but the Prosecutor deleted it at trial.

### **E. Conclusion**

The SJC affirms and adopts the Panel's Findings, Decision, and Judgments/Verdicts, and thereby removes all censures and administrative suspensions imposed on TE Herron by CIP and restores him to good standing as a minister in Central Indiana Presbytery and the PCA.

The SJC further notes the following for the edification of the broader church:

The Panel took special precautions to provide a safe and shielded forum for witnesses, as requested by the prosecution, by carefully crafting a trial procedure that included accommodation for testimony via teleconference, stringent limitations on some defense cross examinations (including a prohibition on questioning by the Accused for some witnesses), and other evidentiary controls to ensure that the trial process was especially accessible for reluctant witnesses, protective of alleged victims, and fair to all parties. Some requests for protections that were granted exceeded those set forth in the 2022-2023 pending amendments to *BCO* 32-13, 35-1, and 35-5. These standards were carefully crafted by the Panel, and they were made known to and agreed upon by the parties and their representatives prior to trial, and the parties were responsible to notify their witnesses of these adjustments and accommodations. The Panel conducted the trial in accordance with those adjusted procedures to accommodate the needs and concerns of the witnesses while balancing the Accused's rights to a fair trial.

This case underscores the wisdom of the provisions of our Constitution and the ongoing need for each court of the Church to apply these provisions carefully, especially when facing the sensitive and challenging issues of our day, for the well-being of the Church, and her members, and the glory of God.

The Trial Panel's decision was drafted and unanimously approved by the Panel. The SJC adopted some amendments, and a preliminary verdict was adopted by vote of 22-0 on March 2, 2023, with one member recused and one absent. The SJC approved this Final Decision by vote of 22-0 on the following roll call vote. Ruling Elders indicated by <sup>R</sup>.

APPENDIX T

Bankson	<i>Concur</i>	Eggert <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Neikirk <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
Bise <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Ellis	<i>Concur</i>	Pickering <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
Carrell <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Garner	<i>Concur</i>	Ross	<i>Concur</i>
Coffin	<i>Concur</i>	Greco	<i>Concur</i>	Sartorius	<i>Concur</i>
Donahoe <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Kooistra	<i>Concur</i>	Terrell <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
Dowling <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Lee	<i>Concur</i>	Waters	<i>Concur</i>
M. Duncan <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Lucas	<i>Not Qual.</i>	White <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
S. Duncan <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	McGowan	<i>Recused</i>	Wilson <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>

TE Lucas reported he was not qualified because he was absent from the SJC's March 2, 2023 meeting at which the preliminary verdict was discussed and adopted.

TE McGowan recused from all parts of this Case and provided the following reason for his voluntary recusal: "With reference to all matters before the Standing Judicial Commission related to the judicial matter in Central Indiana Presbytery v. Herron, I am recusing myself for the following reason (SJCM 6.2.e). My decision is grounded in my professional relationship with Mr. Herron which began in March 2020 when he responded positively to my request that he allow himself to be considered by a PCA Pastor Search Committee (PSC) for which I was a consultant in connection with their search for a Senior Pastor of their church. Several months later, when I and the PSC discovered, through a conversation with him, that his Presbytery was being asked to take disciplinary action against him, I suggested that he withdraw his name from consideration by the PSC. He agreed that this would be the proper thing for him to do. I have not had an ongoing relationship with him since he withdrew his name from consideration."

**CASE No. 2022-11**

***BCO 34-1 PETITIONS RE: CENTRAL INDIANA PRESBYTERY***

**DECISION ON PETITIONS**

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 (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 these Petitions was postponed until after the final decision was rendered in Case 2022-10 *PCA v. Herron* (trial). Without objection, the SJC ruled that these Petitions be answered and decided by reference to the April 5, 2023 Final Decision in Case 2022-10.



**CASE No. 2022-12**

***BCO 34-1 PETITIONS RE: MISSOURI PRESBYTERY***

**DECISION ON PETITIONS**

March 2, 2023

This case came before the SJC by way of two Overtures requesting the General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction, under *BCO* 34-1, to address alleged doctrinal errors of TE Greg Johnson, then a member of Missouri Presbytery. Overture 36 came from Southeast Alabama Presbytery, which through a commission voted on April 14, 2022 to submit its request. Overture 37 was submitted by Grace Presbytery, which approved the Overture on May 10, 2022.

At a called meeting of its congregation on November 18, 2022, the Church that TE Johnson serves, Memorial Presbyterian, voted to withdraw from the PCA. TE Johnson and two other TEs requested that their names be “removed from the rolls” of Missouri Presbytery in accord with *BCO* 38-3a.

These actions led to a called meeting of Missouri Presbytery on December 6, 2022, when it acknowledged Memorial’s departure and dismissed it as a member of Presbytery. It also approved the requests of TE Johnson and the other two TEs to have their names removed from the Presbytery rolls, effective immediately. Presbytery further determined not to conduct the case that had recently begun with the appointment of a committee to conduct a *BCO* 31-2 investigation of TE Johnson. (The text of Presbytery’s December 6, 2022 public letter announcing its actions is attached to this Decision.)

In view of these developments, the SJC lacks authority to assume original jurisdiction, for the PCA itself no longer has jurisdiction over TE Johnson. This Decision was recommended by an SJC committee and the SJC approved the Decision by vote of 22-1 on the following roll call vote. Ruling Elders indicated by <sup>R</sup>.

Bankson	<i>Concur</i>	Eggert <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Neikirk <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
Bise <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Ellis	<i>Concur</i>	Pickering <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
Carrell <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Garner	<i>Concur</i>	Ross	<i>Concur</i>
Coffin	<i>Concur</i>	Greco	<i>Concur</i>	Sartorius	<i>Concur</i>

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Donahoe <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Kooistra	<i>Concur</i>	Terrell <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
Dowling <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Lee	<i>Concur</i>	Waters	<i>Concur</i>
M. Duncan <sup>R</sup>	<i>Dissent</i>	Lucas	<i>Absent</i>	White <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
S. Duncan <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	McGowan	<i>Concur</i>	Wilson <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>

**Missouri Presbytery**

December 6, 2022

Dear Friends in the PCA,

On Friday, November 18, 2022, Memorial Presbyterian Church in St. Louis voted to withdraw from the PCA at a duly called meeting of the congregation. Concurrent with this, one of its TEs, Doug Mendis, asked that he be honorably retired by the Missouri Presbytery, while its other three TEs (Greg Johnson, Keith Robinson, and Sam Dolby) requested that their names be “removed from the rolls” of the Missouri Presbytery, according to the provisions of BCO 38-3a.

At a special called meeting of the Missouri Presbytery on December 6, 2022, the presbytery acknowledged the departure of and dismissed Memorial, granted TE Mendis’ request to be honorably retired, and approved the requests of TEs Johnson, Robinson, and Dolby to have their names removed the rolls of the Missouri Presbytery with immediate effect (per BCO 38-3a). In the case of TE Johnson, while the Missouri Presbytery had recently empowered its moderator to appoint a committee to conduct a BCO 31-2 investigation of TE Johnson, it determined after healthy debate “not to conduct the case (BCO 38-3a)” due to concerns regarding the potential impact of a lengthy investigation and how this might affect the long-term purity and peace of the church.

Memorial is still in the process of discerning its future denominational affiliation. For more information regarding Memorial’s specific reasons for departure or its future plans, please contact Memorial Church directly. Questions concerning other pending judicial actions pertaining to Memorial or TE Johnson should be directed to the office of the Stated Clerk.

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As we seek to move forward, we want to underline the varying perspectives within our presbytery concerning Memorial's departure.

First, we want to underline our sadness at Memorial's departure. Setting aside the most recent controversies, Memorial has been a part of the PCA and the Missouri Presbytery for over 40 years and over that time many faithful friends have ministered the gospel from the bosom of this historic congregation. We will miss their partnership in this most central of all enterprises and we wish them well as they seek a new denominational home.

Second, we want to underline our agreement with Memorial that the decision they have taken is in the best interest of all parties, including Memorial, the Missouri Presbytery, and the Presbyterian Church in America.

Over the last several years, tension has grown between Memorial and many of its denominational partners as Memorial sought to reach and disciple people who experience same-sex attraction and/or gender incongruence. These tensions were particularly occasioned by the heavy involvement of Memorial and TE Johnson with the Revoice conference, the church's outreach to the local arts community—including LGBT artists—through The Chapel ministry, and by statements made by TE Johnson in various venues since the conclusion of the previous SJC case (SJC 2020-12).

Over the last two years in particular, leaders of the Missouri Presbytery have been in regular dialogue and prayer with leaders at Memorial, including TE Johnson, concerning many of these issues. While recognizing Memorial's unique position in reaching into the secular LGBT community, many in our presbytery had serious concerns about the wisdom and long-term implications of the strategies employed by Memorial and its leaders, believing that some might not be sufficient to guard and maintain the peace and purity of the church.

As these discussions became more focused, each party concluded that a mutually agreed separation was the only course forward since the deep differences between Memorial and the Missouri Presbytery on the matters in question could not ultimately be reconciled. As a result, we also agreed that it was best for Memorial's TEs to pursue their respective callings outside of the boundaries of the PCA.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

In making the decision to support Memorial and its TEs' withdrawal from the denomination, we pray that many of the tensions that have disturbed the peace of our denomination over the past several years might now begin to dissipate and lead to a season of renewal, during which we can focus on our positive mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ in obedience to our Lord's Great Commission. We also pray that the Lord would give wisdom and grace to the leaders of Memorial Church as they walk forward in faith.

Finally, your brothers in Missouri Presbytery want to underline our continuing desire to actively and eagerly participate in the PCA as we move forward into our 50th year celebrations. In this regard, we heartily affirm the report of the AIC on Human Sexuality and continue to strive to protect the peace and purity of the church to the best of our ability.

The Missouri Presbytery

**CASE No. 2022-13**

***MR. WADE MILLER***

***v.***

***HILLS & PLAINS PRESBYTERY***

**DECISION ON COMPLAINT**

October 20, 2022

The SJC finds the above-named Complaint Administratively Out of Order, and finds it cannot be put in order, because the Complainant filed his Complaint with the Session after the 60-day deadline of *BCO* 43-1.

Reasoning: The Session action complained against occurred on May 19, 2021 when the Session sent Mr. Miller a letter indicating it stood by its previous decision to permit a certain non-church yoga class to meet on church property. That date began the timing requirement of *BCO* 43-1 for Mr. Miller. He did not file his *BCO* 43-1 Complaint to Session until six months later, on November 20, 2021. There was no new Session action identified on this matter in the 60 days preceding Mr. Miller's Complaint filed on November 20, 2021 with the Session.

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See also SJC Decision in Case 2001-32: *Session of Christ Covenant v. Central Carolina*, where the SJC unanimously ruled the matter out of order because the original complaint had been filed with the Session one day after the deadline. The original complaint was filed with the Session two-and-a-half years prior to the SJC ruling and was considered by both the Session and Presbytery despite its untimely filing. (M31GA, 2013, p. 107)

This Decision was recommended by the SJC Officers and the SJC approved the Decision by vote of 22-0 with two absent. Ruling Elders indicated by <sup>R</sup>.

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

**CASE No. 2022-14**

***TE SUNG BOK OH***

**v.**

***KOREAN SOUTHEAST PRESBYTERY***

**DECISION ON COMPLAINT**

October 20, 2022

The Complainant withdrew his Complaint on August 29, 2022.

**CASE No. 2022-15**

***RE TERRY MURDOCK***

**v.**

***SOUTH FLORIDA PRESBYTERY***

**DECISION ON COMPLAINT**

March 2, 2023

The SJC Officers recommended the Complaint be found out of order. The Complainant died on November 15, 2022. No other person joined in the original Complaint; therefore, it is administratively out of order. The SJC approved the Decision by vote of 23-0 on the following roll call vote. Ruling Elders are indicated by <sup>R</sup>.

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

**CASE No. 2022-16**

***MR. STUART MICHELSON et al.***

**v.**

***NORTHWEST GEORGIA PRESBYTERY***

**DECISION ON COMPLAINT**

March 2, 2023

The SJC finds the above-named Complaint out of order and moot.—The Complaint involves judicial process against three Ruling Elders (not the complainants). On July 23, 2022, the Session dismissed all charges and ended the judicial process, thus removing the action against which complaint was

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made. Also on July 23, those REs voluntarily resigned from the Session and the Session dissolved their calls per their request. Since the underlying dispute has been settled and the charges dismissed, the Complaint alleging errors in that process is moot. This Decision was recommended by the SJC Officers and the SJC approved the Decision by vote of 23-0 on the following roll call vote. Ruling Elders indicated by <sup>R</sup>.

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

**CASE Nos. 2022-17, 18, and 19**

***MR. PETER BENYOLA***

***v.***

***CENTRAL FLORIDA PRESBYTERY***

**DECISION ON COMPLAINTS**

March 2, 2023

The SJC finds the above-named Complaints are administratively out of order, and cannot be put in order, because Mr. Benyola is no longer a member of any congregation of the PCA, and thus lacks standing in these Cases.

This Decision was recommended by the SJC Officers and the SJC approved the Decision by vote of 23-0 on the following roll call vote.

Bankson	<i>Concur</i>	Eggert <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Neikirk <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
Bise <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Ellis	<i>Concur</i>	Pickering <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
Carrell <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Garner	<i>Concur</i>	Ross	<i>Concur</i>
Coffin	<i>Concur</i>	Greco	<i>Concur</i>	Sartorius	<i>Concur</i>
Donahoe <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Kooistra	<i>Concur</i>	Terrell <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Dowling <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Lee	<i>Concur</i>	Waters	<i>Concur</i>
M. Duncan <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	Lucas	Absent	White <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>
S. Duncan <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>	McGowan	<i>Concur</i>	Wilson <sup>R</sup>	<i>Concur</i>

**CASE No. 2022-20**

***MR. DEREK WILSON et al.***

***v.***

***PACIFIC NORTHWEST PRESBYTERY***

**DECISION ON COMPLAINT**

**March 2, 2023**

The Case is judicially out of order and is not able to be put in order because the avowed Complaint filed with the Session of Covenant Presbyterian Church was not a complaint “against some act or decision of a court of the Church.” (*BCO* 43-1) [ROC 6-9]. The Complaint alleges errors related to actions taken in a congregational meeting. Under our rules, “. . . a congregation meeting is not a court of the Church, and the *BCO* has no provision that allows a Complaint against congregational actions” (Judicial Case 2021-12 *Complaint of Christian Michelson and Stuart Michelson v. Northwest Georgia Presbytery*, Feb. 1, 2022).

The concerned members were not and are not without recourse. The members could have informed Presbytery, under *BCO* 13-9(f) and 40-5, of what, in their view, was an unconstitutional limitation on voting in the Congregational Meeting. Presbytery’s response to that report would have been an action of a court, which, in turn, could be subject to complaint. Further, since this Complaint is out of order, it is possible that the matter could be raised in the review of the records of Session and/or Presbytery if the issue is raised in their minutes. The Complaint is dismissed.

The Proposed Decision was drafted by TE Coffin and RE Wilson and approved by the Panel. The SJC approved the Decision by vote of 20-2 on the following roll call. Ruling Elders indicated by<sup>R</sup>.



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

RE Donahoe was disqualified because he is a member of the Pacific NW Presbytery.

**CONCURRING OPINION**

**Case 2022-20: *Wilson v. Pacific Northwest Presbytery***

TE Guy Prentiss Waters & RE Frederick (Jay) Neikirk; joined by  
TEs David Garner, Fred Greco, Michael Ross, and Art Sartorius &  
REs John Bise, Steve Dowling, Samuel Duncan, John Pickering, Bruce  
Terrell, and John White.

We concur with the Decision of the Standing Judicial Commission in Case 2022-20. We wish, however, to highlight the importance of the substantive issue raised in this Case, and to reiterate the SJC’s conclusion that such matters are not always beyond the reach of the courts of the Church.

This Complaint was occasioned by an action that was taken in a congregational meeting. Specifically, the moderator of the congregational meeting “limited the vote [on a matter] to communing members age 18 and above” (ROC 33, 36). The particular matter concerned a proposed request to “accept or reject the resignation” of the congregation’s associate pastor (*ibid*). The effect of the moderator’s ruling was to prevent a portion of the congregation’s communing members from voting on a motion put before the congregation, a motion relating to the spiritual governance of the congregation.

What are we to make of this action? The Constitution declares, “Those only who have made a profession of faith in Christ, have been baptized, and admitted by the Session to the Lord’s Table, are entitled to all the rights and privileges of the church” (*BCO* 6-4). The only express provision in the Constitution for the suspension or removal of any ecclesiastical right or privilege is the particular censures imposed upon a church member found guilty of some offense (*BCO* 36). The Record gives no indication that the

communing members who were prevented from voting at this congregational meeting had so been censured as to deprive them of the right to vote in a congregational election. That is to say, the Record affords no evidence that these communing members under the age of 18 were prevented from voting as a result of some formal, Constitutional, disciplinary proceedings.

Rather, the Record indicates that this prevention came from a provision of the church bylaws that limits voting in congregational meetings to those communing members aged 18 and above (ROC 33, 37). But the bylaws of a local congregation cannot be the final word on ecclesiastical matters. This point is clearly stated in *BCO* 25-7, “if a particular church is incorporated, the provisions of its charter and bylaws must always be in accord with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America” (emphasis added). *BCO* 25-7 goes on to say, “All the communing members on the roll of that church shall be members of the corporation” (emphasis added). In light of this provision, no congregation or court of the Church may use its bylaws to set aside the Constitution or violate church law, for whatever reason.

Further, *BCO* 25-11 draws a distinction between “matters ecclesiastical,” where “the actions of such local congregation or church shall be in conformity with the provisions of this *Book of Church Order*” (emphasis added), and other actions, including those dealing with property, or whether the church will affiliate with or withdraw from the PCA, that may be taken in accordance with “applicable civil laws.” Thus, these paragraphs draw an important distinction between ecclesiastical matters where civil laws, including church bylaws, cannot trump the *BCO*, and civil matters where the church can and should follow applicable civil laws. These provisions of the *BCO* lead, in turn, to two critical questions that must drive any analysis of the issue raised by this Complaint: 1) Does a vote to call a pastor or to dissolve a pastoral relationship fall into the ecclesiastical or civil realm? and 2) If such a vote is fundamentally a “matter ecclesiastical,” does the *BCO* allow a local congregation to set qualifications on voting beyond those of being a communing member and being present at the relevant congregational meeting?

These questions are important because to prevent any class of church members from voting apart from the express provisions of the Constitution raises serious questions about the integrity of ecclesiastical membership and the extent and limits of ecclesiastical power. May a congregation, as opposed to its Session, take an action, whether through the church bylaws or a decision at a particular meeting of that congregation, that bars some members from any of the “rights and privileges of the church,” including the right to vote on who shall be spiritual leaders of the congregation? Further, may a communing

member in the Presbyterian Church in America, solely by virtue of age (or gender, or race, or any other defining characteristic not stipulated by the Constitution) be thereby barred from the exercise of any of the “rights and privileges of the church”? Such weighty questions merit the attention of the courts of the Church, acting in accordance with the provisions of review set forth in the Constitution, so as either to vindicate the position reflected in the Church’s bylaws or to vindicate the position reflected in the arguments of Complainants.

The importance of these questions is matched by an attendant challenge. How might the concerns raised in this particular Case come under the review of the courts of the Church? As the SJC’s decision in this Case rightly observes, actions taken in a congregational meeting are not actions of a court of the Church and, therefore, are not properly actions against which Complaint may be made (see *BCO* 43-1). But, the Decision continues, “the concerned members were not and are not without recourse.” What options lie at these members’ disposal? The SJC’s Decision in Judicial Case 2021-12 (*Michelson and Michelson v. Northwest Georgia Presbytery*), referenced in the current Decision, proposes distinct avenues that are pertinent to this Case. It is, therefore, possible for a matter raised in a congregational meeting or in church bylaws to come for review before the courts of the Church. Thus, while one might construe this Judicially Out of Order ruling to say that such a matter could never come before the courts of the PCA, the reasoning in *Michelson* and in this Case in fact indicate that there are ways that an issue of substance can be raised appropriately, even though that was not done in this particular Case.

In closing, we wish to emphasize that this Concurring Opinion in no way adjudicates the matters that Complainants have raised in their Complaint (and, in any case, critical materials are lacking from this Record that are necessary to any such adjudication). We do believe, however, that the issue raised in the Complaint, and the questions that grow out of that issue, merit adjudication, and that higher courts are not barred in all situations from taking up such questions even when they grow out of a church’s bylaws or actions taken at a congregational meeting.

**DISSENTING OPINION**

**Case 2022-20: *Wilson, et al. v. Pacific Northwest Presbytery***

RE Jim Eggert, joined by RE Dan Carrell

**Background**

This case involves a Complaint alleging that minor communicant members of a congregation were deprived of their alleged right to vote at a congregational meeting. The complainants are J. Derek Wilson and others identifying themselves as “Concerned Members of Covenant Presbyterian Church” in Issaquah, Washington (CPC).

The question put to congregational vote was whether to accept the resignation of their Associate Pastor pursuant to *BCO* 23-1. The Complaint states, “The Session disregarded proper procedure for a Congregational Meeting ...infringed on the rights and agency of congregants and violated the government of the Church...by not abiding by the *Book of Church Order*” and specifically “disenfranchising communing members under 18.”

The Congregation elected one of its Ruling Elders as Moderator of the meeting. After the suffrage and other objections were raised, the Complaint continues, “the Moderator called for a recess to consult with the Session,” and “[a]fter consultation, and by agreement with the Session” the “violations were upheld by the Session after which the vote was forced by the Moderator over objection.”

The minutes of the congregational meeting record that “Mr. Wilson [one of the complainants] asked for the opportunity to speak to the matter of the vote,” at which point “a short recess was taken.” The minutes add that “Mr. Wilson objected that the meeting was out of order because we did not allow the resignation to be debated” adding without further elaboration that “Mr. Orth [another one of the complainants] noted that he objected in the manner the meeting was conducted and asked that it be noted in the minutes.” The minutes also record that “Mr. Dedo [another one of the complainants] asked that it be reflected in the minutes that he spoke in the meeting,” although the minutes fail to record what he said.

The Complaint continues:

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The mode of the actions and irregularities of the Session of CPC comprise a heavy hand over the congregation. Pleas for redress were rebuffed at the meeting by the Moderator and the Session by consultation. Concerned congregants, crushed in spirit under the weight of the Session, ceased to have the will to explore procedural remedies that may have been effective had the Moderator or the Session understood them. The actions and attitude of the Session in this matter do not engender purity, peace and unity by any means, but rather disrupt the same ... The Session of CPC has demonstrated a lack of ability to either approve of or submit to the government of the Church through ignorance, misunderstanding and/or willful violations of the *Book of Church Order*....

The vote passed 37-27 in favor of accepting the Associate Pastor's resignation.

The "redresses" requested by the Complaint included the following: (1) invalidating the results of the meeting, (2) distributing a copy of the Complaint to all the members, and (3) calling a congregational meeting to: (a) acknowledge the proper issues highlighted by the Complaint, (b) consider acceptance of the associate pastor's resignation, and (c) establish a committee of congregants to recommend paths forward as a church to be considered at a future congregational meeting.

The Session's answer to the Complaint explained that the CPC Bylaws prohibited minors from voting. While the Session denied that any member of the congregation had "moved to allow the vote of communing members under the age of 18 in contravention of the Bylaws," the Session did not deny the Complaint's allegation that it had agreed with the Moderator's ruling about the prohibition.

After the Session denied the Complaint, the Complainants took that Complaint to Presbytery which found that, although the Ruling Elder Moderator of the congregational meeting acted as a representative of the Session while moderating, the Session nevertheless did not violate the Constitution of the PCA when, following its Bylaws, it limited the vote to communing members 18 and above because the PCA Constitution does not afford suffrage rights to

communicant minor members. The Presbytery concluded that any right of minor communicants to vote under the *Book of Church Order* is not absolute but may be qualified. This question of whether minor communicant suffrage rights under our Constitution may be qualified was the sole issue raised by Complainants for the SJC's consideration.

The Court has found this case to be “judicially out of order,” a technical term for the situation that obtains under SJC rules when, after a case has been assigned to a Panel for review, the Commission, upon the proposal of the Panel, determines, based on the record of a case, that the relevant provisions of the *BCO* have not been followed. (*OMSJC* 9.1.b). One feature of this procedure is that the parties to the case are not afforded the opportunity to brief the case, or even whether the case is justiciable. The Court maintains that *BCO* 43-1 was not followed in this case because, it says, the Complaint “alleges errors related to actions taken in a congregational meeting,” and thus was not “against an act or decision of a court of the church.” Appealing to *Complaint of Christian Michelson and Stuart Michelson v. Northwest Georgia Presbytery* (Judicial Case 2021-12, Feb. 1, 2022, M49GA, Page 822), the Court recounts this Court's prior declaration that the *BCO* “has no provision that allows a Complaint against congregational actions” and suggests other possible procedural remedies by which the Complainants might seek redress.

### ***This Case is Justiciable***

We believe the Complaint should have been decided after the parties had been afforded a full opportunity to perfect the record, brief the issue in the Complaint, and be heard.

The right to complain against “some act or decision” of a court of the Church is, on its face, a broad license, and *BCO* 43-1 even repeats itself in its second sentence, insisting that a complaint may be “against any action of a court to whose jurisdiction [the complainant] is subject.” The phrase “any action” opens an enormous jurisdictional field. An “act” is *the doing of a thing or deed*. A “decision” is *a determination arrived at after consideration*. And it is hard to imagine a more comprehensive adjective than “any” to communicate the breathtaking scope of actions that may be complained against; that industrious (if diminutive) adjective includes *all* or *every* of whatever

kind. Therefore, a complaint may be directed to any determination or deed of a Session, of whatever kind.

The Court's decision rests entirely on the proposition that "the *BCO* has no provision that allows a complaint against congregational actions." But for the reasons detailed above, the Complaint is not even on its face against *congregational actions*; it is against the *Session*'s claimed infringement on the alleged rights of communing members under 18 to vote at a congregational meeting, rights the Complainants maintain are guaranteed by the PCA Constitution.

If such suffrage rights exist, and the Session, as alleged, during the congregational meeting conferred with the Moderator (its "representative") and decided *not* to seek to secure and defend the suffrage rights of its members, then the Session failed to "observe and carry out the lawful injunctions of the higher courts" as set out in our *Form of Government*. (*BCO* 12-5f). We can even grant that, had they tried, they might have been unsuccessful in the effort. But the decision *not* to seek to secure the alleged suffrage rights of the minor members is a justiciable question because it was an "act or decision" of the Session.

The Complaint alleges that the Session merely "followed the church's bylaws," but the CPC Bylaws make no difference to the SJC's jurisdiction over the underlying question.

While it is true that Article VII of CPC's Bylaws state, "the minimum voting age shall be eighteen (18) years," other provisions of the CPC Bylaws draw the enforceability of this declaration into question if it is indeed the case that the Constitution of the PCA guarantees suffrage rights to minor communicants. For example, Article II of the CPC Bylaws declares that "the general purpose of CPC is to proclaim, administer, and uphold the gospel and law of Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, *and in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America*" (emphasis added). Article III provides, "The operation of CPC shall *in all instances* be ... according to ... *the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America*, which consists of ... *The Book of Church Order, as adopted by the Presbyterian Church in America*" (emphasis added). Article VII provides that even meetings considered to be "meetings of the Corporation ... *shall be conducted according to the rules and procedures of the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America*" (emphasis added).

Therefore, if it is the case that minor communicants possess the same suffrage rights as adult communicants pursuant to the PCA Constitution, CPC's own Bylaws already accommodate conformity to this requirement despite their prescription of a minimum voting age. If minor communicant suffrage rights exist, the Session (through the Moderator or otherwise) should have explained the Constitutionally guaranteed suffrage rights of minor communicants to the Congregation and encouraged the Moderator (and Congregation) to interpret the Bylaws to permit such minors to vote according to the operation of *The Book of Church Order*; the Session's declining to do so was an "act or decision" subject to the review of the higher courts.

But even if the CPC Bylaws are interpreted to *prohibit* minor communicant suffrage, and if such suffrage exists, the Session acted wrongly by calling the meeting without recommending a change to the CPC Bylaws. Article VIII of those Bylaws provides that they may be amended "by an affirmative vote of three-quarters (3/4) of the members voting at a Congregational Meeting." Therefore, if such minor communicant suffrage rights exist in the PCA Constitution, the Session, rather than deciding as it did to recommend proceeding to the vote immediately, should have pastorally explained to the Congregation that proceeding further under the circumstances would violate the Constitution. Considering that, the Session should have suggested to postpone the vote on the resignation until another meeting could be called and propose that the Congregation first consider amending the Bylaws to bring them into conformity with the Constitution, before proceeding to the vote on the resignation. Better still, the Session should have included a proposed amendment to the Bylaws when it called the meeting in the first place.

We see no reason why the question of minor communicant suffrage is not susceptible to SJC review pursuant to *BCO* 43-1 in this matter. If minor suffrage rights exist as supposed by the Complainants, the "act or decision" of the Session in this matter was: (1) calling the Congregational meeting in an erroneous manner without including a proposed change to the Bylaws before the Congregation would take up the business of the resignation, (2) continuing its error at the meeting in deciding, through the Moderator, to overrule the objection to the vote rather than encouraging the congregation to postpone the vote until after the Bylaws could be changed to bring them into conformity with the Constitution, and (3) acquiescing in either the Constitutional defect in the Bylaws or its own unconstitutional interpretation of them.



By contrast, the Court apparently supposes that the mere fact the Complaint is “related to actions taken at a congregational meeting” renders the case judicially out of order *per se*. That is not persuasive because it fails to account for the fact that the Session acted *concurrently* and *independently* of the Congregation by acceding to the Bylaws in the ways enumerated above.

***An Unnecessary Curtailment of BCO 43 Jurisdiction***

The Court’s decision potentially leads to a troublesome and needless curtailment of the jurisdiction of the higher courts in *BCO 43* Complaint proceedings regarding questions of congregational suffrage. Furthermore, the Court’s failure to recognize the possibility of Sessional action concurrent with or related to the congregational meeting in this case potentially undermines the very rationale that might support its proposed alternate “recourse” for review by the courts of the Church.

In a real sense, congregations are the ultimate arbiter of voting rights in our polity. If a member challenges the ruling of the Moderator about voting rights, and the Moderator is *sustained* by vote of the Congregation, then the Congregation -- not the Moderator -- has acted. Turn it around, and we find that if the Moderator's ruling is challenged by a member and the Moderator is *overruled* by the Congregation, that is a Congregational action too. Thus, even when no member objects to a Moderator's ruling about who is entitled to vote, the Congregation has tacitly accepted the Moderator's decision, for the Moderator is merely effectively reflecting the will of the Congregation. On this theory, no matter the scenario, the Congregation is always the ultimate decision maker with respect to voting eligibility. But as the Court rightly insists, no congregational decision, whether about voting eligibility or otherwise, is subject to review by Complaint because a congregation is not a court of the Church.

Thus, does a Session or any other court of the Church have authority to secure the rights of church members to vote in cases where a congregation has adopted unconstitutional bylaws? Not directly. The courts of the Church, in this case the CPC Session, whose power is solely ministerial and declarative, could only instruct, encourage, and admonish (but not coerce) its Congregation to correct its bylaws to bring them into conformity to the injunctions of the higher courts. Yet if the CPC Session fails to do so, the SJC’s decision will not deem that failure an “act or decision” permitting review by means of a complaint.

If we assume that a congregation's bylaws are unconstitutional, yet the lower courts of the Church disagree, does our polity afford another method besides complaint proceedings to accommodate both review and redress? The Court, citing *Michelson*, assures us that the "concerned members were not and are not without recourse," but that assurance is doubtful.

*Michelson* describes three ways (*Michelson* at page 823).

*Michelson's* first way, uncited by the Court, is for the member to complain against the action of the Congregation at the point a court of the Church seeks to implement the alleged unconstitutional decision. That, of course is no apparent help in this case since the vote to dissolve the relationship with the minister is merely an informational vote for Presbytery which considers the vote as part of its deliberations in deciding whether to dissolve the minister's call (*BCO* 23-1).

*Michelson* proposes a second way: Presbytery, it is supposed, could take note of a Constitutional deficiency in a congregational meeting in their review of the records of the Session per *BCO* 13-9(b). But, having the record in this case, the Court should already know that such is not a solution here because the minutes of the congregational meeting do not mention anything about minor suffrage at all. Therefore, Presbytery's review of the minutes would not be sufficient to trigger any review jurisdiction sufficient to bring the question of minor communicant suffrage rights into view.

So, turning to *Michelson's* third way, we consider whether *BCO* 13-9(f) which gives Presbytery the power "to visit churches for the purpose of inquiring into and redressing the evils that may have arisen in them" might provide an avenue of review. But that does not appear to be a promising solution when one considers that the Complaint about suffrage in this case, the very Complaint the Court has ruled judicially out of order because it was a "congregational action," was already presented to Presbytery. Having resolved the Complaint *against* the Complainants Presbytery can hardly be expected to come riding in on a white horse to redress an "evil" that it has adjudicated is not an "evil" at all, given that Presbytery decided that minor communicants do *not* have the right to vote under the PCA Constitution that the Complainants suppose. Thus, *Michelson's* "three ways" rubric for avenues of alternate review does not furnish any review jurisdiction that would bring the suffrage question to

bear any more than has already been both realized and rejected in the instant case.

The Court also mentions the Complainants possibly using *BCO* 40-5 to seek the redress of the higher courts, an avenue not expressly mentioned by *Michelson*. Ironically, this suggestion might be helpful, but only if the Court agrees that the Session acted, which means that such review would only duplicate *BCO* 43 Complaint jurisdiction, making *BCO* 40-5 jurisdiction unnecessary. This is because *BCO* 40-5 only grants review jurisdiction where one files with the “court of appellate jurisdiction” a “credible report with respect to the court next below of any important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceeding of such court,” which already supposes that the court in question has *acted* in some way, a proposition that the Court’s decision implicitly denies.

We can follow the Court’s proposed alternate path in some detail. If we assume the Complainants proceed with such a report, the CPC Session (the “court next below”) is the court that was and is responsible for securing the alleged suffrage rights of the members of CPC. (See *BCO* 11-4). Therefore, the court of “appellate jurisdiction” to receive such a “report” would be Presbytery.

But what would be the “important delinquency or grossly unconstitutional proceeding” of the CPC Session that the Complainants might make a “report” about? Our best guess is that such a “report” would look exactly like the Complaint that the Court has already declared is *not justiciable* because it was an act of the congregation, not the CPC Session.

Under the Court theory, why could not the Complainants offer up their Complaint again, only now calling it a “report” under *BCO* 40-5? Even if they modified it in some ways, it is hard to imagine such a report would be materially different from the Complaint the Court has rejected as judicially out of order. And of course, given its failure to sustain the Complaint, we can reasonably expect that Presbytery would refuse to act on such a report, so unless a review of that Presbytery’s decision not to act can be reviewed, the matter would remain settled on exactly the same terms as it is already.

And since it is unlikely that the Complainants have standing themselves to file a complaint should Presbytery deny (as we suspect it would) that the Session

engaged in any “important delinquency” or “grossly unconditional proceeding,” they would need a volunteer, someone with standing, to take up a new complaint on their behalf against Presbytery’s declination to proceed under *BCO* 40-5. And putting aside for a moment that the whole success of this procedural mechanism is likely to depend entirely on the charity of others besides the Complainants, even this does not address a fundamental underlying problem with the Court insistence that the instant case pertains only to “congregational actions” rather than actions of a Session, the only kinds of actions that will support *BCO* 40-5 review in the first place.

We cannot reconcile how the Court believes that this case might reach resolution in the higher courts through *BCO* 40-5 when it has already rejected the position that the CPC Session acted or decided anything in connection with the suffrage question. Both *BCO* 40-5 and *BCO* 43 necessarily involve, as far as we can tell, the same subject matter. If the Session was engaged in an “important delinquency” or “grossly unconstitutional proceeding,” it was certainly already so engaged when the congregational meeting in question occurred. Are not “important delinquencies” and “grossly unconstitutional proceedings” merely a more flagrant species of “acts or decisions”? But if that is the case, how can the Court credibly contend there was no justiciable Sessional act or decision in this Complaint proceeding, yet at the same moment maintain that inauguration of *BCO* 40-5 proceedings would transform this same controversy into a justiciable matter concerning “important delinquencies” or “grossly unconstitutional proceedings” of the CPC Session? We are left wondering why the Court would not agree that those very “delinquencies” and “proceedings” were also “acts or decisions” that this Court could have reviewed *immediately* in these proceedings rather than send the Complainants off to the uncertain hope that they might find redress under *BCO* 40-5.

We hope the Court’s tolerance toward *BCO* 40-5 review can be fairly interpreted to accommodate at least the possibility that some future similar fact pattern might permit higher court review of Sessional acts or decisions concurrent with or related to congregational meetings via *BCO* 43 Complaint proceedings.

*Concerning Remedy*

We would agree that had the SJC taken this case and sustained the Complaint, it could not, as requested by the Complainants, invalidate the results of the congregational meeting. That is because the Congregation is not a court of the Church.

*BCO* 43-10 permits the higher court in complaint proceedings the following remedies: it may “annul the whole or any part of the action of a lower court against which complaint has been made, or to send the matter back to the lower court with instructions for a new hearing.”

The Complainants’ proposed “amends” called for “distributing a copy of the complaint to all the members [of the Congregation]” and calling a congregational meeting to “acknowledge the proper issues highlighted by the complaint” and “establish a committee of congregants to recommend paths forward as a church to be considered at a future congregational meeting,” which might include having the Session encourage the Congregation to revise its Bylaws, seems consistent with a higher court’s authority to “send the matter back to the lower court with instructions for a new hearing.” Therefore, *BCO* 43-10 does not appear to have limited the SJC’s jurisdiction to hear the instant case.

To be clear, we express no opinion concerning whether minor communicants in fact have the suffrage rights under our Constitution asserted by the Complainants. We only maintain that the SJC had jurisdiction to take up that question under the particular facts of this case.

We therefore dissent.

**OBJECTION** <sup>32</sup>

**Case 2022-20: *Wilson v. Pacific Northwest Presbytery***

RE Howie Donahoe

I appreciate the SJC's reason for finding the Complaint out of order. I agree there was no "act or decision" of the Session to complain against, despite the ruling of Presbytery's commission. A congregationally elected moderator of a meeting is not an agent of the Session, regardless of whether he is a member of the Session. But I feel obliged to file this Objection because a Concurring Opinion signed by 12 SJC members seems to insinuate that a congregation *does not* have a right to limit voting age. Because Presbytery was not able to defend its position on that question,<sup>33</sup> and because an Objection may be accompanied with the reasons on which it is founded, I submit the following. Does our *Book of Church Order* prohibit congregations from setting a minimum voting age? No, it does not. And it is reasonable for congregations to conclude that minor communicants possess good, but *irregular* standing, until they have reached adulthood. That conclusion is established by the following:

- I. Communicant membership is a necessary (*BCO* 6-4; 25-1), not a *sufficient* condition for voting.
- II. Congregations have always borne the responsibility to determine whether minors possess the "*regular standing*" necessary to vote in officer elections (*BCO* 20-3; 24-3).
- III. The rights and responsibilities of minor communicants are "irregular" in numerous ways.
- IV. A strong analogy exists between minors and associate members, validating congregations in denying voting

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<sup>32</sup> *OMSJC* 18-12.a: An Objection is only permissible in the case of an otherwise qualified member of the SJC who could not vote due to being a member of the presbytery or a member of a congregation in the bounds of the presbytery from which the case arose. RE Donahoe is a member of a church in the Pacific NW Presbytery.

<sup>33</sup> Presbytery's Representative was the Rev. Dr. Brant Bosserman (BA Northwest University, MAT Fuller Theological Seminary, and PhD in Philosophy of Religion from Bangor University, U.K.). I am greatly indebted to his work.

privileges to the former after the manner of the latter (*BCO* 46-4).

- V. In deferring to civil laws that prohibit minors from voting in congregational meetings, *BCO* 25-11 confirms that minors' standing is irregular and that a minimum voting age is reasonable.
- VI. In its handling of the issue of term-eldership, the PCA has established a *BCO* hermeneutic according to which observation of a minimum voting age is allowable even if not recommended.

**I. Communicant Rights and Privileges.** The first argument in support of congregations' right to specify a minimum voting age is indirect, demonstrating that communicant membership is not a sufficient condition for congregational voting. Instead, communicant membership is but a necessary condition.

*BCO* 25-1. The congregation consists of all the communing members of a particular church, and they only are entitled to vote.

*BCO* 6-4. Those only who have made a profession of faith in Christ, have been baptized, and admitted by the Session to the Lord's Table, are entitled to all the rights and privileges of the church.

Simple substitution examples for those two *BCO* passages render the point clear. *BCO* 25-1 is equivalent to the statement: "The pride consists of all the lions of a particular region, and they only birth lions." *BCO* 25-1 no more states that all communicants are entitled to vote, than the latter implies that all lions are female. Again, "those only who are Olympic athletes are entitled to an Olympic medal," is equivalent to *BCO* 6-4. Yet, it does not mean that all Olympians are medalists; and *BCO* 6-4 does not mean that all communicants possess all church rights. Recognizing that 1879 *BCO* 3:3 (the antecedent of PCA *BCO* 6-4) lays down a necessary condition for church rights, F.P. Ramsey notes that some communicants lack adult competency "to act for themselves," so that "there are some rights and privileges that they are not yet capable of exercising and enjoying."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Franklin Pierce Ramsay, *An Exposition of the Form of Government and Rules of Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States* (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1898), 43.

When read within its wider context, *BCO* 6-4 can only be interpreted as indicating that communicants possess all the rights of the church in collective fashion, as the body possess all five senses, and Christ's church possesses all the spiritual gifts. It cannot be understood in distributive fashion, as if each communicant individually possesses all church rights and privileges. The additional conditions for exercising different privileges cannot be fulfilled by all members. Some conditions, and their corresponding privileges, are mutually exclusive. The church privilege (*BCO* 46-4) to be nominated and elected an officer is suspended on the condition of being male (*BCO* 7-2; 24-1); the right not to testify against someone is suspended on the condition of being his/her spouse (*BCO* 35-2); etc. Nor would it have been appropriate for *BCO* 6-4 to use the quantifier "some" instead of "all," as some suggest would be required if our understanding were correct. Had it done so, the *BCO* would have committed the error of understatement. To indicate, for example, that "lions possess some of the capacities of lions," leaves one wondering which lion capacities belong to another mysterious species. For, it would have been perfectly appropriate to say that "lions possess all the capacities of lions"—even though lion-birthing belongs not to youths, males, those with irregular anatomy, etc.—since all such capacities belong to lions as a collective. The same is true of church rights.

Undue haste to assume the distributive possession of a church right leads to confusion. *BCO* 16-2 declares that the "right of God's people to recognize by election to office those so gifted is inalienable." The PCA Constitution is clear that "God's people" encompasses non-communicant members (*WLC* 166: *BCO* 6-1), those suspended from the Lord's Table (*WCF* 30:3), associate members (*BCO* 46-4), etc. However, these parties are not entitled to elect church officers (*BCO* 20-3; 46-4). In addition to being grammatically possible, and perfectly natural, it is strictly necessary to read *BCO* 16-2 as establishing a church's *collective* right to elect officers, and not a *distributive* right belonging to each one of God's people.

**II. Historical Meaning of "Regular Standing."** The second argument for congregations' right to establish a minimum voting age is that, historically, congregations have always had a right to evaluate minors' standing as "irregular," in the context of congregational meetings.



*BCO 20-3.* All communing members in good *and regular* standing, but no others, are entitled to vote in the churches to which they are respectively attached.

*BCO 24-3.* All communing members in good *and regular* standing, but no others, are entitled to vote in the election of church officers in the churches to which they respectively belong.

“Standing” is a matter of belonging to a congregation or church court. “Good” standing is altered only by formal church discipline. “Regular” standing belongs to those who are active in performing the duties laid down for members in the PCA Constitution. Irregular “means unconstitutional in a minor sense,”<sup>35</sup> and belongs to those who do not or cannot fulfill the duties of membership.<sup>36</sup> As there are multiple member duties, some of which are more relevant to the task of electing officers than others, *BCO 20-3* and *24-3* invite a range of reasonable conclusions as to who may vote. Four considerations validate the conclusion that non-adults fail to meet the condition of “regular standing,” formalized in 1879: (A) its antecedents; (B) its rationale; (C) its context; and (D) its subsequent application.

The word "regular" appears 70 times in our *BCO*. It often means something like recurring at uniform intervals or done frequently. But many other times it means conforming to, or governed by, an acceptable standard of procedure or convention. An example of the first use would be *BCO 19-16*:

19-16. Where circumstances warrant, a Presbytery may approve previous experience which is equivalent to internship. This equivalency shall be decided by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of Presbytery at any of its *regular* meetings.

Two examples of the second use would be *BCO 19-7* and *46-3*:

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<sup>35</sup> Ramsay, *An Exposition of the Form of Government*, 239.

<sup>36</sup> The PCA member who is in the midst of withdrawing to a new Church retains a certificate of “good standing” in his PCA church for up to a year (*BCO 46-7*). Yet, there is an “irregularity” in his standing since he ceases to fulfill ordinary member duties (*BCO 38-3*). His relative failures to attend Lord’s Day worship at his PCA congregation; to be vigilant for the purity and peace of the PCA; to support his PCA minister’s worldly needs; etc. are minor, because he is making a reasonable effort to do these things elsewhere.

19-7. ... The nature of the internship shall be determined by the Presbytery, but it should involve the candidate in full scope of the duties of any *regular* ministerial calling approved by the Presbytery.

46-3. Members of one church dismissed to join another shall be held to be under the jurisdiction of the Session dismissing them until they form a *regular* connection with that to which they have been dismissed. (See also *BCO* 20-6, 20-11, 21-4.a, 21-7, 22-5, 24-7, 24-10, 25-6, 35-8, 35-9, and 42-2.)

*BCO* 20-3 and 24-3 use the phrase "... and *regular* standing" in the second sense, rather than as just a synonym for "good standing." So, what constitutes the "acceptable standard" for participation in congregational meetings? It must be something in addition to merely "*good* standing."

**A. Antecedent Language.** In 1788, the first Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America was ratified. Modeled after a Scottish manual that confined voting to communicant and non-communicant aristocrats,<sup>37</sup> the American Constitution followed suit. Its "Form of Government" defines eligible electors thus:

14:3. In this election, no person shall be entitled to vote, who refuses to submit to the censures of the Church, regularly administered; or who does not contribute his just proportion, according to his own engagements, or the rules of that Church, to all its necessary expenses.<sup>38</sup>

With a low bar for what would come to be called "good standing," a voter had to be willing to submit to church censures. Referencing the antiquated practice of "pew holding," eligible voters were those who made a recurring payment—

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<sup>37</sup> Walter Steuart, *Collections and Observations Concerning the Worship, Discipline, and Government of the Church of Scotland: In Four Books* (Edinburgh: Dickson and Elliot, 1773), 3. The earliest edition of this work was printed in 1709. Cf. John B. Adger, "A Question for Our Church: Who Shall Vote for Pastors?" in *The Southern Presbyterian Review*, vol. 28, no. 4 (Oct, 1877), 689.

<sup>38</sup> *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia: Thomas Bradford, 1799), "Form of Government" 14:3.

set by the “rules of the church”—for a pew to occupy with his family.<sup>39</sup> Only pew-holders possessed what would later be called “regular standing” in congregational meetings. They are called “regular members” in the marginal summary of the 1788 Form 14:3.

The 1788 conditions for voters in a pastoral election were retained exactly in the 1821 and 1832 revisions (although the marginal summary was dropped). In 1855 the “Old School” GA was asked, “What action should be taken with a member of the church, who is in regular standing in the communion of the church, but who does not contribute any or his just and proper proportion...?”

<sup>40</sup> The question presupposes that regular standing is defined with reference to both regular attendance, and regular monetary support. The GA replied that it was up to congregations as to what action should be taken. The same 1855 GA made the curious pronouncement that despite the limitations laid down in the *BCO*, the “spirit of our system” allowed churches to extend voting privileges to all communicants in mere “good standing.”<sup>41</sup> Charles Hodge would report in 1863, that the predominant Presbyterian practice was still for “heads of families, and they only, whether communicants or not, to vote in the choice of pastor.”<sup>42</sup> Hodge lists as two minority practices (a) allowance of all communicants and all non-communicant “contributors” to vote; and (b) confinement of the vote “to adult members.”

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<sup>39</sup> Gilbert Robins Bracket, *Manual for the Use of the Members of the Second Presbyterian Church, Charleston* (Charleston, SC: Walker, Evans, & Cogswell, 1894), 40. *History of First Presbyterian Church in Raleigh*, North Carolina, 1816-1991 (Raleigh, NC: Commercial Printing Co., 1991), 20.

<sup>40</sup> *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America 1855* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Education, 1855), 274. Likewise, an 1860 overture to the PCCS asked whether a man possesses “good and regular standing” if he has “absented himself from the ministration of the word and the ordinances of the church.” *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America 1861* (Augusta, GA: Steam Power Press, 1861), 11. The inquiry must center on whether the man’s standing is “regular” since it would have been obvious whether he had been resistant to a church censure.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 275

<sup>42</sup> Hodge, “Who May Vote in the Election of Pastor,” in *The Church and Its Polity* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1879), 244. Adger reports in 1877 that “fourth-fifths” of PCUS churches allowed non-communicant contributors to vote, and many denied suffrage to female communicants. Adger, “A Question,” 701, 694.

Given this background, it is extremely unlikely that the 1879 GA of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) intended the language of its revised *BCO* —“All communicating members in good and regular standing ...” (Form 6:3:4)—to require that that all communicants regardless of age and contribution be allowed to vote.

**B. Rationale for the 1879 Language.** The language of 1879 Form 6:3:4 was designed to (a) exclude non-communicants from voting, and (b) allow for the range of practice—e.g., confining the vote to heads of household, adults, communicants who could contribute, etc.—then prevalent in the PCUS. Chair of the Committee for *BCO* Revision, John B. Adger, lists the only alternatives considered: (1) extending the vote to non-communicants “regular in attending on the common ordinances and contributing regularly to the support of the pastor;” (2) granting an advisory vote to the same non-communicants; and (3) “Confining the election strictly to members of the church in full communion.”<sup>43</sup> Before and after its adoption, position three is described as “rigid,” and “confining” the vote to communicants,<sup>44</sup> but never as extending the vote to all communicants.<sup>45</sup> How could the first be described as the “liberal” position,<sup>46</sup> if the third were understood to force all PCUS congregations to extend the voting franchise to every communicant? Moreover, alternatives one and two indirectly testify that adult communicants who regularly attended/supported their church were the only undisputed voters and possessors of “regular standing.” For, the alternatives only propose that

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<sup>43</sup> James B. Adger, “The General Assembly at New Orleans,” in *The Southern Presbyterian Review*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (July, 1877), 539.

<sup>44</sup> Stuart Robinson, “The Revised Book of Church Order,” in *The Southern Presbyterian Review* Vol. 30, No. 1, (Jan., 1879), 140. Cf. Adger, “A Question,” 708.

<sup>45</sup> We must respectfully disagree with Morton Smith, who concludes that PCA *BCO* 24-3 requires that minor communicants be allowed to vote, on the ground that if they are able to choose Jesus as Savior then they are competent to choose their minister. Smith, *Commentary on the PCA Book of Church Order* (Taylors, SC: Presbyterian Press, 2007), 257. The 1879 authors of this language did not understand it to require universal suffrage, nor do they offer the rationale supplied by Smith. Unless it can be shown *when* and *how* the same language in the PCA *BCO* assumed this new meaning (and rationale), we must embrace its historical sense.

<sup>46</sup> Adger, “General Assembly,” 539, 540. John B. Adger “A Question for Our Church: Who Shall Vote for Pastors,” *The Southern Presbyterian Review*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Oct. 1877), 702.

non-communicants who approach the same status should be allowed to vote. If the 1879 Form 6:3:4, were understood to require universal suffrage among communicants, it is mystifying that no contemporaneous publication heralded it as such.<sup>47</sup> How could prominent ministers who sat on the Committee for *BCO* Revision—B. M. Palmer, R. L. Dabney, etc.—vocally oppose universal suffrage as contrary to nature, the marriage bond, etc., and hail the church as the “bulwark” against “universal suffrage” in the political sphere, if the PCUS made it the rule in congregational elections?<sup>48</sup>

**C. Literary Context.** Most importantly, contextual considerations alone, which are retained in the PCA *BCO*, are sufficient to yield the conclusion that only a limited class of communicants possess the regular standing necessary to elect a minister. Stated simply: Measured by the constitutional requirement for the congregation to support their minister’s worldly needs, it is reasonable to conclude that many congregants lack the regular standing to vote in congregational meetings. Laid down only two paragraphs after the qualifications for voters (and again in 1879 *BCO* 6:4:5; compare PCA *BCO* 21-6), the church vow to her minister read:

6:3:6—And that you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to pay you the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ in regular monthly payments...[.] In testimony of this we have subscribed our names this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ A.D. (Compare PCA *BCO*, 20-6.)

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<sup>47</sup> Twenty years later, Ramsey exercises careful reserve in limiting his exposition of *Form* 6:3:4 (compare PCA *BCO* 20-3) to stating which persons are unambiguously *excluded* by each condition—“communicating members;” “good...standing;” “in the churches to which they are respectively attached.” He does not advance the conclusion that the PCUS *BCO* extended the voting franchise to all communicants. Ramsey, *An Exposition of the Form of Government*, 129. Ramsey’s lack of commentary on who is excluded by the condition of “regular standing” is perhaps best explained by his prior comments on *Form* 3:3 (cited on page 1 of this brief, and antecedent to PCA *BCO* 6-4). There, he expressly denied that communicants who lack adult competency possess all church rights and privileges. As we have seen congregational voting would have been a typical church right restricted to adults.

<sup>48</sup> Thomas Cary Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney* (Richmond, VA: The Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1903), 419.

Could male dependents and female homemakers sign the aforesaid vow? Would it have been natural for all or even most readers in 1879 to assume that women and minors were expected to do so? A negative answer may be inferred from the fact that upon being ordained, only “the heads of families of the congregation then present, or at least the Ruling Elders and Deacons” are invited to “come forward to their Pastor, and give him their right hand, in token of cordial reception and affectionate regard” (1879 *BCO* 6:5:7; compare PCA *BCO* 21-8).

The question of who possesses regular standing hinges, in part, on how the responsibility to remunerate a pastor is understood to be borne by a congregation. If a congregation understood it to be the exclusive calling of men to provide for their natural and church families, then it is reasonable to infer that only male communicants may possess the requisite standing to elect a minister. Female and minor communicants would still enjoy perfectly “good standing” in that context and contribute to decisions in consultation with their husband/father. If a congregation understood it to be the calling of adult men and women to supply the worldly needs of their minister, then it is reasonable to infer that minor communicants lack the requisite standing to vote. Finally, if a congregation understood minor communicants to bear the burden of supporting their minister conjointly with their parents, then it is reasonable to conclude that all communicants regardless of gender or age, may vote in congregational elections. The pertinent point, however, is that the 1879 *BCO* does not pronounce on exactly how the rule to support a minister comes to bear on a congregation. Nor does the 1879 *BCO* pronounce on how this congregational responsibility comes to bear on which members possess “regular standing” in a congregational meeting. What is clear is that from 1861 to 1922 the adjective “regular” refers most often in GA records to the expected monetary giving of congregants.<sup>49</sup> It is also clear that the same condition is retained in the 1925 and 1933 revisions of the PCUS *BCO*, and all editions of the PCA *BCO*.

**D. Application.** In the decades after 1879, one gathers that voting was often limited to adult men from the prevalent expectation that voters would make monetary “subscriptions” to pay their pastors’ annual salary at the same

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<sup>49</sup> The 1861 five-page report on, “Systematic Benevolence,” is but one case in point. *Minutes of the 1861 General Assembly* (Augusta, GA: Seam Power Press, 1861), 25-29.

meeting in which he was elected;<sup>50</sup> the prevalence of female and youth “auxiliaries,” with smaller subscription fees,<sup>51</sup> where they were allowed to speak, elect, and be elected officers; the comparative rarity of male “auxiliaries,” since adult men were the typical actors in congregational meetings<sup>52</sup>; etc. After the 1920 victory of Women’s Suffrage in the political sphere, it became normative for female communicants to vote in pastoral elections. However, congregations still bore the responsibility to determine which communicants were active/regular in fulfilling member duties. Meyers Park Presbyterian (PCUS) laid down four criteria “whereby an ‘active’ membership was determined.”<sup>53</sup> “Active” members (compare PCA *BCO* 24-1) were those given to “(1) regular attendance, (2) involvement in the church's program, (3) financial contribution, and (4) consistency of Christian character.”<sup>54</sup> To impress these distinct expectations on adult members, “an adult communicant's class was instituted in addition to the regular children's” version.<sup>55</sup> Many of the PCUS churches who joined the PCA in the 1970's had rolls that distinguished between members “active” and “inactive.” One considerable PCA overture in 1977 proposed express recognition of these (and other) membership categories. Proposed *BCO* 6c-2 read: “The Active Roll shall consist of those communing members who are actively participating in the life and work of the church by attending worship services, and/or being involved in other church activities, and/or by supporting the church financially.”<sup>56</sup> On the strictest view of active membership (where the three conditions are conjoined) it is natural for minors to be viewed as less than fully active, failing as they do to supply financial support. The grounds for the overture call attention to the incompleteness of the *BCO* in handling membership statuses that were widely recognized to exist. The GA rejected

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<sup>50</sup> Charles William Sommerville, *The History of Hopewell Presbyterian Church* (Charlotte, NC: The Observer Printing House, 1939), 51, 52, 53.

<sup>51</sup> *Minutes of the 1916 General Assembly* (Augusta, GA: Seam Power Press, 1861), 152-153.

<sup>52</sup> Historical Committee of 1976, *The History of Steele Creek Presbyterian Church* (Charlotte, NC: Craftsman Printing and Publishing, 1978), 166.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas Clark, *History of Myers Park Presbyterian Church 1926-1966* (Charlotte, NC: Kingsport Press, 1966), 175.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* 175

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* 177

<sup>56</sup> *Minutes of the Fifth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America* (Montgomery, AL: Committee for Christian Education and Publication of the Presbyterian Church in America, n.d.), 51.

the vast amendment since certain details undermined church discipline—e.g., it proposed that willful neglect of the church would result in placement on the “inactive roll” (*BCO* 6c-9) rather than erasure (*BCO* 38-4). However, defeat hardly reflects a rejection of the distinction between active and inactive membership. For nominations to the offices of Ruling Elder and Deacon, *BCO* 24-1 instructs congregations to nominate “an active male member” (*BCO* 24-1). It is also evident that an adult who has, for example, lost all soundness of mind should be regarded as an irregular, relatively inactive member, rather than erased from church roles.

PCA overtures in 1984 and 1996 to render the *BCO* explicit in its allowance for a minimum voting age reflect two facts. First, many congregations had long found a minimum voting age appropriate.<sup>57</sup> Second, many had lost sight of how the condition of “regular standing” already safeguarded reasonable restrictions on which communicants may vote.<sup>58</sup> The 1996 overture received approval from 39 out of 50 Presbyteries (a 78% majority of Presbyteries and 70% of all individual votes cast). Thus, its defeat at the 25th GA in Colorado Springs<sup>59</sup> is best credited to the convergence of two streams of thought. One group opposes such overtures as superfluous, since congregations have always had the right to evaluate minors as insufficiently active/regular to vote. Another group is concerned that express disassociation between communicant age and voting age may encourage churches to welcome very young and incompetent children to the Lord’s Table. In any case, a GA vote not to amend the *BCO* with respect to voting age is not equivalent to removing a longstanding constitutional responsibility to (a) limit voting to those with regular standing, and (b) arrive at reasonable conclusions about which communicants possess that standing based on their fulfilment of member responsibilities. The same is true of the 1982 and 1984 answers from the

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<sup>57</sup> In a personal conversation in the early 2000’s between Rev. Dr. Robert Rayburn (Faith PCA, Tacoma, WA) and Ruling Elder, Jack Williamson (one of the principal authors of the PCA *BCO*), the latter confirmed that many congregations had a minimum voting age at the founding of the PCA in 1973. Williamson also indicated that the authors of the PCA *BCO* had no intention of prohibiting that practice.

<sup>58</sup> For example, the 1984 overture reflects no awareness of how the conditions of “good and regular standing” limit eligible voters—“Whereas, the present Book of Church Order establishes that all communing members of a particular church are entitled to vote...” *Minutes of the Twelfth General Assembly*, 59.

<sup>59</sup> *Minutes of the Twenty Fifth General Assembly*, 114.



Permanent Sub-Committee on Judicial Business (hereafter PCJB) regarding the qualifications for voters. The 1982 reply simply repeats the express conditions of *BCO* 20-3, and the 1984 answer accurately reports that the *BCO* does not expressly provide for the setting of a minimum voting age. However, non-provision is not a synonym for disallowance. (The *BCO* does not provide for the holding of session meetings via zoom; employment of church secretaries; the publication of congregational position papers; etc. But they are hardly disallowed. On this point, see Part VI below.) Most importantly, in its 50-year history, the PCA has never denied that congregations may evaluate minors' standing as irregular, nor has any congregation been convicted for doing so. To insist, as some do, that the *BCO* "plainly" entitles all communicants to vote regardless of age and contribution (not to mention mental health, local residency, etc.) is to assert a perceived "spirit" of the Constitution over against its express conditions.

Given its longstanding precedent in American Presbyterianism, its prevalence among PCA churches, and compatibility with *BCO* conditions, it would be most disruptive to the peace and purity of the Church to judge a congregation's observation of a minimum voting age as out of accord with the PCA Constitution.

**III. Irregular Standing of Minor Communicants.** The third argument in support of congregations' right to specify a minimum voting age is based on the numerous irregularities that attend minor communicants' membership. The ground for these differences is minors' relative intellectual and emotional immaturity, combined with their residing under the unique, but constitutional, guardianship of their parents (WLC 118, 124; *BCO* 28-1; 28-5).

1. Minor communicants who neglect the church for one year do not ordinarily receive verbal or written warning from their session (*BCO* 38-4); their parents do.
2. Minor communicants who move are not typically expected to present a certificate of dismission to their new church (*BCO* 46-4); their parents are.
3. Minor communicants are not expected to provide for the "worldly maintenance" of their minister (*BCO* 21-6).
4. Minor communicants can be (for good or for ill) prevented by parties other than session members, namely their parents, from partaking of the Lord's Supper.

## MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

5. Minor communicants can be prevented by their parents from attending congregational meetings, nominating church officers, electing church officers, etc. in the congregation to which they belong. They alone might be allowed by their parents to vote only on the condition that they second their parents' judgment in every matter.
6. Minor communicants cannot be prosecuted for contumacy (*BCO* 35-12) for failure to testify in church courts, if the only reason for their absence is that they were strictly prohibited from doing so by their parents.
7. Minor communicants may be deemed incompetent witnesses in church courts (*BCO* 35-1)
8. Minor communicants may be prevented by the civil government from voting in all matters that pertain to the church in its capacity as a corporation, or a board of trustees (*BCO* 25-11).
9. Minor communicants may be prevented from marrying without parental approval (*BCO* 59-4).
10. Minor communicants must have parental approval before signing a "Christian Conciliation Contract" (*BCO*, Appendix 1).

Considering examples 1-10, it can surely be said that no communicants' standing is so irregular as that of minors. Legitimate circumstances disallow them from fulfilling many Constitutional duties of typical members. The underlying factors in each irregularity listed turns on minors' relative lack of personal sovereignty (see Part IV) and emotional and intellectual maturity (see Part V). Both factors have significant bearing on minors' exercise of voting privileges. It is reasonable, but not required, for congregations to specify a minimum voting age associated with legal adulthood, at which point these irregularities are significantly diminished or generally cease.

One objection is that some of the abovementioned irregularities (1-10) apply to adults, while others do not apply to some minor communicants. Yet, both sorts of exceptions prove the rule that no class of communicants is subject to so many and so stark irregularities as minors. Housewives and retired adults may not be able to furnish the ministry with monetary support. However, the former are "one flesh," and cooperative with a tithing husband in a preeminent way, while the latter have typically been active givers for some season of life. Of those minors who generate income and heed their responsibility to contribute to the church, they are still not ultimately responsible to be providers for themselves, their families, or the church. Others may object that

if minors lack regular standing, then their judicial rights are also in jeopardy. To the contrary, the right to file complaint rests on the lone condition that a member enjoys “good standing” (*BCO* 24-7; 25-2; 43-1; 43-5), while the right to accuse belongs to any “injured party” (*BCO* 31-5). That voting privileges alone are suspended on the additional condition of “regular standing” (*BCO* 20-3; 24:3) implies that a higher bar is required for voting privileges.

Finally, special attention must be given to irregularity number 5 on our list. The fact that minor communicants stand in a unique position to be unduly influenced, or even worse, manipulated in their voting is significant. Only they might have their vote suspended by their parents on the condition that they share their parents’ perspective. Minors who have never been invited by their parents to vote might be required to do so on issues of great controversy. A congregation may wisely take this irregular feature of minor’s membership, arising from their position within a household, as grounds for observing a minimum voting age. For, implied by the democratic process itself is the right to be free from individuals who wield disproportionate influence, not by persuasive arguments, but by mere force. Although a wife may be manipulable by her husband as well, an adult’s ability to transcend such pressure is greater, and the effects of such manipulation measurably less than in the case of minors. For, whereas one spouse may be the victim of forceful manipulation, the votes of multiple children can be wielded by an exploitative father.

**IV. Analogy with Associate Members.** The fourth argument for congregations’ right to establish a minimum voting age is based on the analogy between minor communicants and associate members. Associate members are “believers temporarily residing in a location other than their homes,” who obtain a unique sort of membership in a PCA congregation near their temporary residence, without ceasing to be “communicant members of their home church” (*BCO* 46-4). They are disallowed from voting in their local church on account of their divided commitments.<sup>60</sup> Their standing in their local congregation is manifestly irregular because they cannot furnish it with the full-fledged support typical of members. Analogously, minor communicants’ membership commitments are divided in their own way, between (at least) two decision makers; and of which, the minor is not even

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<sup>60</sup> Some might assert that associates may vote in their home congregation. Yet, it would seem debatable, at the least, as to whether “non-resident” members (as they have historically been distinguished in Presbyterian membership rolls) retain the same “regular standing” as resident members.

the executive. Without his parents' consent and assistance, a minor communicant cannot: attend worship services, ordination services, congregational meetings, committee meetings, the proceedings of church courts; serve as a witness; become married; pursue disciplinary process; partake of the Lord's Supper; etc. Still more, a minor communicant might be forced to sever all relationship to the PCA if its doctrine, officers, and stances become distasteful not at all to the minor, but to his parental guardians alone. Hence, by argument from lesser to greater, if Associates' standing may be regarded as irregular (and their voting privileges suspend) on account of their divided commitments, so too may that of minor communicants.

Some may contest the validity of minors becoming communicants at all, if their member vows are not strictly equivalent to those of adults. However, Presbyterians have never denied that minors can become communicants, nor made the maturity to elect officers a condition for communion. Francis Mackemie, the father of American Presbyterianism,<sup>61</sup> and Samuel Davies, the founder of Hannover Presbytery,<sup>62</sup> both underwent powerful conversions as minors. Even more to the point, *BCO* member vows one through three are qualitatively different from vows four and five. Minors certainly can be executive decision makers in their avowed belief that they are sinners; in their receiving and resting upon Christ alone for salvation; and in their determination to "live as becomes the followers of Christ" (*BCO* 57-5). These vows can be kept regardless of their parents' decisions, and minors who can make them would be received as communicants. By contrast, for the reasons identified above, minors cannot be the executive decision-makers when it comes to the fifth membership vow to, "submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the Church." Thus, it is reasonable for congregations to conclude that minor communicants possess good, but irregular standing, until they have reached adulthood.

One way to appreciate the irregularity of minors' status is by considering the negative precedents that would be set by ruling against congregations' right to regard minors as such. If minor communicants' rights and privileges are identical to those of their adult counterparts, could a minor successfully prosecute his father for preventing him from voting in a congregational meeting? An adult communicant would surely prevail if another church

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<sup>61</sup> Henry Alexander White, *Southern Presbyterian Leaders 1683-1911* (Carlisle PA: Banner of Truth, 2000), 10

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* 44.

member prevented him from doing so. To answer in the affirmative would undermine the leadership that fathers are called to exercise over their families. To answer in the negative, precisely on account of fathers' familial rights, is to tacitly agree that minors lack regular standing in congregational meetings. Again, should a thirteen-year-old communicant nominated to the office of Ruling Elder be able to convict his session for refusing to extend him the training and vetting of other nominees? (Precedents are clear that an active adult nominee may not be so denied.) Or is it appropriate for congregations to evaluate that no minor is sufficiently "active" to be nominated in the first place (*BCO* 24-1)? To answer in the negative would be to force congregations to engage in an unseemly charade, training minors as if they were viable officer candidates. To answer in the affirmative is to concede that congregations have the right to evaluate that minors lack "regular standing," and certain church privileges suspended upon it.

**V. Civil Restrictions on Voting Age.** The fifth argument for congregations' right to establish a minimum voting age is based on the broad *BCO* requirement (25-11) that congregations submit to civil laws that have bearing on the matters discussed in Chapter 25, which include congregational voting (25-1). Some might mistakenly argue that *BCO* 25-11 pinpoints a singular exception to communicant voting rights, supposedly establishing the rule that no other exceptions exist. Yet, the paragraph does not specifically address voting. Its chief purpose is to require that congregations exiting or joining the PCA (and thus jettisoning some prior church constitution) proceed in an orderly fashion, governed at the very least by the applicable civil laws. Nevertheless, the 1984 PCJB correctly concluded that *BCO* 25-11 requires congregations to heed standard civil laws that limit congregational voting. For example, if the civil law prohibits minors from electing board members or corporation officers with financial responsibilities, then they cannot elect church officers (*BCO* 9-4; 5-9).

*BCO* 25-11 indirectly validates two important conclusions. First, it confirms that minor communicants' standing is irregular in a significant respect. Unlike their adult counterparts, minors may be suspended from voting by the civil government. They do not possess the same "inalienable" voting privileges as others (*BCO* 16-2). If they did, their voting privileges could not be restricted. For, an axiom of the PCA Constitution is that the Church cannot make concessions to the civil government in defiance of its own, or Biblical principles (*WCF* 20-1; 23-3). Second, *BCO* 25-11 confirms that the typical civil laws which would restrict congregational voting to adults are inherently

reasonable. For, another constitutional axiom is that no civil law may require “blind obedience,” for such laws “destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also” (WCF 20:3). It hardly needs to be said that the eminently reasonable, highly intuitive, and almost universally recognized ground for such civil laws is that minors lack the requisite maturity and independence to vote. In this connection, it may be observed that the *BCO* recognizes, in a variety of ways, different gradations of maturity among communicants (recall Part III). Although there is a specific “age of discretion” (*BCO* 56-4) at which one may be communed, there are multiple “years of discretion” (*BCO* 56-4) in the advance toward (and beyond) adulthood, with the right to marry typically located at a later year “of discretion” (*BCO* 59-4).

Taken together, the conclusions that follow from *BCO* 25-11—(a) minor communicants possess irregular standing, (b) on account of their relative immaturity—constitute reasonable grounds for congregations to disallow minors from voting, as an application of *BCO* 20-3. Although the knowledge and discernment required of communicants is robust (*BCO* 57-3; 57-5; *WLC* 171-175), the PCA Constitution never describes it as of the same nature or degree as that necessary to assess the fitness of a potential minister. To discern that a prospective pastor possesses careful discretion; courage to take difficult stands; excellent household management skills; empathy to comfort the downcast; etc. may, in the wise judgment of a church, require more life experience than is common to minor communicants. The capacity to thoughtfully engage more complex theological objections raised by others to a potential pastor’s preaching, exceptions to the Westminster Standards, ministry philosophy, etc. may require a more developed intellect than what is necessary to sufficiently understand the Lord’s Supper and make a credible profession of faith. Likewise, the emotional maturity to navigate heated congregational disagreements, and even losses of consequential votes may, in the estimation of a congregation, not be the normal possession of minors. If a congregation is persuaded that the maturity to elect a minister is more like that necessary to become married than to become communed, it will reasonably conclude that minors lack the requisite standing to elect a minister. None of this diminishes the fact that minor-communicants may have meaningful input in congregational matters—even when they lack voting privileges—through conversation with their parents.

**VI. Analogy with Term Eldership.** The sixth argument for congregations’ right to observe a minimum voting age is based on the analogous (and well-

established) congregational right to elect ruling elders for definite terms rather than perpetual service. The PCA's handling of the issue of elder terms:

- 1) Encourages a *BCO* hermeneutic that recognizes congregations' right to establish a minimum voting age;
- 2) Argues that it is unnecessary to amend the *BCO* with respect to minimum voting age; and
- 3) Confirms that bylaws may set reasonable limits on who may vote in the congregations and PCA sessions.

First, with respect to elder term limits, the PCA has embraced a *BCO* hermeneutic according to which non-provision for a practice cannot be construed as prohibition, especially when that practice both (a) has longstanding precedent in Presbyterianism, and (b) has existed in PCA congregations since the denomination's founding. In 1976 a resolution was sent to the Fifth GA declaring that the *BCO* prohibits an elder rotation system and advising all PCA congregations to "bring themselves into conformity with the *BCO*" by abandoning the practice.<sup>63</sup> The resolution accurately calls attention to the fact that the *BCO* "contains no provisions for an automatic rotational system for removing elders." To the contrary, according to *BCO* 24-7 (at the time, *BCO* 25-7), "ordination to the offices of ruling elder or deacon is perpetual..." Without denying either point, the PCJB recommended against adopting the resolution on the ground that the relevant *BCO* passage "was deliberately worded at the First General Assembly so as to allow this system, though not recommending it."<sup>64</sup> In other words, non-provision must not be confused with prohibition. Throughout the centuries, many Presbyterian congregations have specified term limits for ruling elders.<sup>65</sup> In fact, the minutes of the First General Assembly reveal that among the PCA's founding congregations were those with an elder rotation system.<sup>66</sup> Ultimately, the Seventh GA adopted the PCJB's hermeneutic declaring, "This General Assembly believes that the previous General Assembly acted wisely when it adopted Chapter 25 [presently, Chapter 24] in the *BCO* without legislating on the specific matter of the rotation of church officers."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *Minutes of the Fifth General Assembly*, 70.

<sup>64</sup> *Minutes of the Sixth General Assembly of the PCA*, 191.

<sup>65</sup> J. Aspinwall Hodge, *What is Presbyterian Law as Defined by the Church Courts?* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1882), 162-163.

<sup>66</sup> *Minutes of the First General Assembly*, 21-22.

<sup>67</sup> *Minutes of the Seventh General Assembly*, 105.

Significantly, the same hermeneutic argues in favor of congregations' right to observe a minimum voting age. Confinement of voting to adults has vast precedents in Presbyterianism, and it was the practice of congregations at the founding of the PCA. Thus, it should be said that the "General Assembly acted wisely" when it adopted *BCO* 25-1, "without legislating on the specific matter" of a minimum voting age.

Second, the PCA's handling of the term-eldership question reveals that the most expedient way to remedy confusion on a *BCO* matter may not be by amendment, but by church officers better acquainting themselves with historic PCA practice and the careful wording of the *BCO*. Just one year after the GA affirmed that the *BCO* was compatible with term-eldership, a 1980 overture to the 8th GA proposed an amendment that would render explicit congregations' right to embrace the rotation system.<sup>68</sup> Although the overture acknowledged the relevant passages of the *BCO* were "intended to allow, though not to recommend" the practice, it supplied several intuitive rationales for why its allowance should be rendered explicit. In short, the overture reports that many readers still doubted the *BCO* allowance for elder-terms, and it argues that continuation of the practice under such circumstances effectively "erodes the authority of, and respect for" the *BCO*. Nevertheless, the overture was not adopted on the ground that the matter had already been sufficiently addressed.<sup>69</sup> Whatever confusion there may be on the question of term-eldership can be alleviated by church officers who are privy to the PCA's historic practices, and keen to the careful wording of the *BCO*. For example, although a novice reader of *BCO* 24-7 may develop the impression that occupancy of the office of elder is perpetual, a capable minister will be able to explain that the passage only ascribes perpetuity to the officer's ordination. The same can be said for the observance of a minimum voting age. A novice reader may develop the impression from *BCO* 25-1 that every communicant is entitled to vote. However, a capable minister will be able to explain the difference between a necessary and sufficient condition. He will also be able to demonstrate how communicant membership is specified as the former (not the latter) with respect to congregational voting (recall Part I above). Moreover, if the PCA specifically desires to take the nuanced stance that both term eldership and a minimum voting age are allowable without

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<sup>68</sup> *Minutes of the Eighth General Assembly*, 37.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* 118.



recommending or so much as suggesting either practice to congregations, then the ideal way to do so is by retaining *BCO* 24-7 and 25-1 in their current form.

Third, the *BCO* allowance for congregations to embrace a rotation system has significant bearing on the matter of voting. If congregational bylaws may prohibit ordained ruling elders (whose term of service has expired) from voting in the most consequential Church courts, then by argument from greater to lesser, they may specify a minimum voting age which places a reasonable limitation on which communicants may vote in congregational meetings.

**Conclusion.** PCA congregations have the right to adopt a minimum voting age. The *BCO* does not identify admission to the Lord's Supper as a sufficient condition for voting. Instead, it leaves it to congregations to make reasonable determinations as to which communicants possess "regular standing," albeit with reference to their fulfillment of objective *BCO* member duties. One acceptable conclusion is that minors are not regular in fulfilling the relevant membership duties (because they lack the personal sovereignty and/or maturity to do so) to vote in congregational meetings.

#### **IV. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO SJC MANUAL**

**OMSJC 2.12.c.** - Update citation reference to RONR.

2.12.c. To maintain order and decorum at meetings the procedures and sanctions of RONR (12th ed.) 61:6-61:21, shall be available to the Commission, except that the Commission may not suspend the rights of membership or expel a member from the Commission.

**OMSJC 4.2** - Reduce time required for calling a non-physical SJC meeting to 14 days.

4.2 In addition to the stated meetings specified in Section 4.1, the Commission may hold special meetings, provided such special meetings shall be called by one of the following methods, to-wit:

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- a. The Officers of the Commission may call a special in-person meeting at any time upon at least 30 days' notice, or a special phone or videoconference meeting upon at least 14 days' notice.
- b. The Commission, at any stated meeting, may announce a call of a special meeting, provided the time and place is specified in the call. A notice of the call of the special meeting shall be sent immediately by the Stated Clerk to all absent Commission members.
- c. If at least six Commission members request, in writing, a special called meeting, the Chairman and Secretary shall issue a call within 10 days from receipt of the request.

The call of a special meeting shall specify the business to be considered at the meeting, and no other business may be considered except by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those members present and voting, which in no case shall be less than 13 affirmative votes of members of the Commission. Further, no action may be taken on any case not specified in the call. The Officers may amend the call for the consideration of additional business if notice thereof is sent by mail or electronic means to the Commission members no less than 14 days before the date of the meeting.

No special in-person meeting of the SJC shall be scheduled less than 30 days after the date on which the call is issued.

~~Any special called meeting under this Section 4.2 may be held by telephone conference call.~~

**OMSJC 8.4.a and b.** - Increase font size for Preliminary Briefs and increase page length to accommodate it.

- 8.4.a. Any brief filed hereunder must be typewritten or printed on 8-1/2 x 11 inch paper, with no smaller than ~~10~~ 12 point type, with 1 inch margin on all sides, line numbering that restarts on each page, and may be single spaced. Pages must be numbered.
- b. The preliminary brief filed by a party shall not exceed ~~10~~ 12 pages in length. Any supplemental brief filed by a party shall not exceed ~~5~~ 6 pages in length.

**OMSJC 8.4.a - Require briefs to be filed electronically.**

- 8.4.a. Any brief filed hereunder must be typewritten .... All briefs shall be filed by electronic means with the Stated Clerk.

**V. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The Officers of the Standing Judicial Commission elected for 2023-2024 are as follows:

Chairman:	RE Jack Wilson
Vice Chairman:	RE Sam Duncan
Secretary:	RE Howie Donahoe
Assistant Secretary:	TE Fred Greco

**SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT OF THE  
STANDING JUDICIAL COMMISSION  
TO THE FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

**SJC Response to Committee on Constitutional Business  
June 13, 2023**

While not required, the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) offers this response to the Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB) exception noted for the SJC's October 20-21, 2022 minutes.

When the SJC met in October 2022, communications from Missouri Presbytery, along with press and internet reports, indicated that Memorial Presbyterian Church and TE Johnson were considering withdrawal from the PCA. Memorial's congregational meeting was scheduled for November 18, 2022. In view of these reports, the SJC deemed it prudent to empower a committee to confirm those informal reports and to report back with a recommended proper course of action under *BCO* 34-1 and OMSJC 16. The SJC believed that gathering additional information was warranted before

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making a final determination about whether there was “proper receipt” of the matter (OMSJC 16.1); and whether the appointment of a Panel to initiate proceedings under *BCO* 34-1 and OMSJC 16 was reasonable. Thus, the focus of the SJC’s action was to determine if such a course of action or process was warranted or possible. This course of action did not violate OMSJC 16.1, and, indeed, reflected the procedure allowed “in every process” by *BCO* 32-11.

In Case No. 2022-12 referenced by CCB, the SJC committee ultimately determined that the actions anticipated as of October 2022 did, in fact, occur, as Memorial voted to withdraw from the PCA, and Missouri Presbytery dismissed TE Johnson on December 6, 2022, pursuant to *BCO* 38-3(a), ending the PCA’s jurisdiction. The committee reported to the SJC in March 2023, and the SJC’s March 2, 2023 decision in the matter appears on pages 2106-2107 of the Commissioner’s Handbook. The SJC’s vote in that matter was 22-1.

The process employed by the SJC in this matter in its October 2022 meeting did not violate the intention or direction of any provision of the *BCO* or the Operating Manual of the SJC. It allowed the SJC to gather information warranted to determine a prudent course of action in considering events and actions which were anticipated but had not yet occurred.

## APPENDIX U

### RESOLUTION OF THANKS FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA June, 2023

On the banks of the mighty Mississippi, we have been walking in Memphis, where Presbyterian roots go back two hundred years. But this week the number we remember is fifty, and on this golden anniversary we declare together, **“Great is thy faithfulness, O God our Father.”** In December 1973, a group of long-suffering Christians left the old church and by God’s sovereign grace formed a new church. These PCA founders believed with all their heart and mind that the Bible was inerrant and that Reformed theology was its best expression, and they loved the great commission of God’s Son Jesus Christ. These ordained elders knew that the theological liberalism which had gripped the mother church could not be reformed away, though for a generation they had valiantly tried. They preached, they read their *Presbyterian Journal*, and they gathered each year for “Journal Day.” They started new organizations for missions, evangelism, and college ministry, and eventually they would start a new Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi.

Knowing that **“there is no shadow of turning with thee,”** the founders confidently resolved to be a Continuing Church in the glorious tradition of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. They would be a bottom-up Presbyterian church, with a *Book of Church Order* that strengthened presbyteries and sessions to express their Reformed convictions. What a joy it has been to have some original PCA Founding Families with us this week in the Bluff City.

When the first General Assembly of the PCA was called to order at Briarwood Presbyterian Church, our fathers in the faith risked much for King Jesus. What they created 50 years ago has multiplied by God’s grace many times over, and this year we wish to state that we love our fathers in the faith. We honor the bold evangelism of D. James Kennedy, the steadfast courage of Morton Howison Smith, the brilliant churchmanship of Jack Williamson, Frank Barker, Bob Cannada, and Kennedy Smart. In those early years we remember the gracious wisdom of Paul Settle, the journalism of Aiken Taylor, the godliness of James Baird. We remember a host of godly Ruling Elders, most

of them members of the “greatest generation,” who were uniquely used by God to suffer in a Depression, to fight in a second World War, and through much affliction to shape the PCA form in belief, polity, and culture.

After the happy days of Joining and Receiving with our RPCES kindred, we marveled at the biblical exposition of James Montgomery Boice, the logic of RC Sproul, the prophetic voice of Francis Schaeffer. We treasure the memory of Dr. Bob Rayburn and the institutions he founded and shepherded, Covenant College and Covenant Seminary, and we celebrate the way in which these places serve the PCA. In these last few weeks, we have grieved the loss of Steve Smallman, Harry Reeder, and Tim Keller—how thankful we are for the years of faithful ministry these brothers gave to the Lord, and to us.

Our God is a great and gracious God – **“thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not.”** In his mighty goodness many church agencies and committees have grown since that winter day in Birmingham where we began. We marvel at MTW and the 600 strong PCA missionary family force deployed for Christ through the world. We rejoice with the work of MNA and its continent-spanning church planting ministry. We praise God for growing the PCA presence on the university campuses and among international scholars within these lands through RUF. What a joy it was to hear RUF music sung on Wednesday night. We thank him that we are growing again as a church, and that the church is well served by her committees and courts, especially in administration.

We thank our Father for the PCA family here in Memphis, a great river city of the mid-South touched with sadness but renewed by joyful soul. We thank him for the Covenant Presbytery, one of our founding presbyteries. We thank him for host Committee Chairman Robert Browning, Suellen Warren, and a venerable army of PCA volunteers, musicians, helpers, and hosts. The Assembly has received solid expositional preaching from three covenant sons, Randy Thompson, J. Ligon Duncan III, and Les Newsom. We have enjoyed the fair and no-nonsense rulings of our gregarious Moderator Greco, who has served the court with distinction and honor.

The PCA is now fifty years old, and we rejoice that by the Lord’s grace she still is bearing fruit. May he help us never to forget that **“as thou has been, O Lord, thou forever wilt be.”** For the next fifty years, let us as a church renewed continue to bring the glorious gospel of grace to every land in every

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tongue, so that all the nations might be glad and sing with us for joy, **Great is thy faithfulness, O Lord!**

TE Caleb Cangelosi, Mississippi Valley, Chairman  
RE Melton L. Duncan, Calvary, Secretary

## APPENDIX V

### OVERTURES TO THE FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA June 12-16, 2023

#### OVERTURES REFERRED BY THE 49th GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE OVERTURES COMMITTEE OF THE 50th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OVERTURE 2021-41 from Tennessee Valley Presbytery (to 50th GA OC)  
"Amend *BCO* 35-1 to Expand Potential Witness Eligibility"

[Editorial Note: This overture was originally submitted to the 48th General Assembly (2021), which “committed” it “to the 49th GA OC in Birmingham, and in the interim” referred it “to the Ad Interim Committee on Abuse...for them to give advice to the 49th GA OC.” The 49th General Assembly subsequently referred the overture to the 50th General Assembly.]

**Whereas**, the prosecutor and the accused should have the right to seek to call anyone as a witness. Either party may object to any proposed witness and the court would rule on the objection. Even if an objection is overruled, the court would still need to judge the credibility of the witness and his testimony; and

**Whereas**, to exclude those who do not believe in the existence of God or in a future state of rewards and punishments may, in certain cases, hamper the prosecutor or the accused in presenting necessary evidence, or hamper the interest of justice;

**Therefore**, be it resolved to strike the first sentence of *BCO* 35-1 to read as follows:

~~All persons of proper age and intelligence are competent witnesses, except such as do not believe in the existence of God, or in a future state of rewards and punishments. The accused party may be allowed,~~



but shall not be compelled to testify; but the accuser shall be required to testify, on the demand of the accused. Either party has the right to challenge a witness who he believes to be incompetent, and the court shall decide upon his competency. It belongs to the court to judge the credibility to be attached to all evidence.

*Adopted by Tennessee Valley Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 17, 2021  
Attested by /s/ TE Jacob A. Bennett, stated clerk*

### **OVERTURES SUBMITTED TO THE 50<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**OVERTURE 1** from Presbytery of Southwest Florida (to MNA) (to MNA)  
“Restructure Boundary of Presbytery of Southwest Florida”

**Whereas**, a presbytery confined to a smaller geographic region can lead to more efficient oversight, cooperation, and connection between particular congregations in the presbytery; and

**Whereas**, fostering a sense of connectionalism and cooperation of churches, teaching elders, and ruling elders beyond the local congregation is a hallmark of historic Presbyterianism; and

**Whereas**, a presbytery that has greater concentration within a specific geographic region may and should lead to a greater emphasis on church planting within that region; and

**Whereas**, a presbytery that encompasses a smaller geographic region should permit shorter meetings and shorter driving distances for presbyters to such meetings; and

**Whereas**, shorter distances should lead to greater participation in presbytery by ruling elders, thus allowing ruling elders to better fulfill their established calling to “govern the church well;” and

**Whereas**, the Guidelines for Dividing Presbyteries, as adopted by the 26th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, include “regional cohesiveness,” “member churches hav[ing] a potential for shared ministries,” and “member churches hav[ing] a common commitment to the region;” and

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**Whereas** the boundaries of the Presbytery of Southwest Florida currently divide the Tampa Bay metropolitan area unnecessarily; and  
**Whereas**, the Presbytery of Southwest Florida has interest in planting churches in the northern suburbs of Tampa, specifically Pasco County; and  
**Whereas**, the Presbytery of Southwest Florida and Central Florida Presbytery are in accord to move Pasco County into the bounds of the Presbytery of Southwest Florida from Central Florida Presbytery;  
**Now therefore be it resolved**, that the Presbytery of Southwest Florida overture the 50<sup>th</sup> General Assembly to restructure the boundary of the Presbytery of Southwest Florida so that Pasco County will be included in its bounds, effective July 1, 2023.

*Approved at the stated meeting of Southwest Florida Presbytery, November 8, 2022*

*Attested by /s/ TE Freddy Fritz, stated clerk*

**OVERTURE 2** from Covenant Presbytery (to IRC, AC)  
“Request PCA Join International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC)”

**Whereas** the PCA voted at its 49th General Assembly in June 2022 to withdraw from the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE); and  
**Whereas** it is fitting for the PCA to establish and maintain connections with other denominations that share our commitment to the Scriptures, the Reformed faith, and the Great Commission; and  
**Whereas** the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) is a global organization that can help the PCA in establishing and maintaining such connections; and  
**Whereas** the ICRC aligns well with the theology and mission of not only the PCA, but also the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC), of which the PCA is a member; and  
**Whereas** the ICRC already includes several other NAPARC denominations, such as the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC), the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA), and the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA); and

**Whereas** the PCA's projected annual membership dues in the ICRC (estimated at \$9,800 as of August 2022) would amount to approximately half of our previous annual membership dues in the NAE (\$20,000); and

**Whereas** the PCA's membership in the ICRC would enable us to build relationships with, share resources with, and train and equip international Reformed churches in need of spiritual, ecclesial, and material support; and

**Whereas** the Lord Jesus taught us, "Everyone to whom much is given, of him much will be required" (Luke 12:48);

**Therefore be it resolved** that the PCA submit a request to join the ICRC.

*Adopted by Covenant Presbytery at its stated meeting, October 4, 2022*

*Attested by /s/ TE Robert Browning, stated clerk*

**OVERTURE 3** from James River Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
"Amend *RAO* 14-9.h and *RAO* 15-8.g to Limit General Assembly Debate."

**Whereas** recommendations with minority reports from Committees of Commissioners or from the Overtures committee have ample time to present a rationale for the main motion as well as the substitute, and

**Whereas** floor debate, in case of a minority report, is limited to sixty (60) minutes unless extended, and

**Whereas** floor debate on all other recommendations without a minority report is limited to ten (10) minutes unless extended, and

**Whereas** floor debate frequently entails a recapitulation of arguments previously presented during extended debate, and

**Whereas** debate may be extended by a simple majority if desired by the Assembly,

**Therefore be it resolved** that *RAO* 14-9.h, sub-paragraph 3, be amended to limit debate on the main motion and substitute to thirty (30) minutes [strike-through for deletions, underlining for new wording], so the new sub-paragraph reads:

- 3) Debate on the main motion and the substitute shall be limited to a total of ~~sixty (60)~~ thirty (30) minutes unless extended. When the allotted time has elapsed the Moderator shall put

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the question to the Assembly: “Will the Assembly extend the time on the question ten (10) minutes?” A simple majority shall extend the time; otherwise the Moderator shall put the question or questions as the case may be. If time is extended, the question of extension shall again be put every succeeding ten (10) minutes until the matter is concluded. Each Commissioner shall be limited to five (5) minutes on the same question unless the Court by a simple majority grants additional time.

**Be it further resolved** that *RAO 15-8g*, sub-paragraph 3, be amended to limit debate on the main motion and substitute to thirty (30) minutes [strike-through for deletions, underlining for new wording], so the new sub-paragraph reads:

- 3) Debate on the main motion and the substitute shall be limited to a total of ~~sixty (60)~~ thirty (30) minutes unless extended. When the allotted time has elapsed the Moderator shall put the question to the Assembly: “Will the Assembly extend the time on the question ten (10) minutes?” A simple majority shall extend the time; otherwise the Moderator shall put the question or questions as the case may be. If time is extended, the question of extension shall again be put every succeeding ten (10) minutes until the matter is concluded. Each Commissioner shall be limited to five (5) minutes on the same question unless the Court by a simple majority grants additional time.

*Adopted by James River Presbytery at its stated meeting, on October 8, 2022*  
*Attested by /s/ TE Joe Brown, stated clerk*

**OVERTURE 4** from Central Florida Presbytery (to MNA)  
“Transfer Pasco County, Florida, to the Presbytery of Southwest Florida”

**Whereas**, the Presbytery of Southwest Florida has overtured the 50th General Assembly to transfer the territory of Pasco County, Florida, from the

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Presbytery of Central Florida to the Presbytery of Southwest Florida;  
and

**Whereas**, Pasco County is on the western edge of the territory of the Presbytery of Central Florida and adjacent to the northern boundary of the Presbytery of Southwest Florida; and

**Whereas**, Pasco County has cultural and economic affinity with the Tampa Bay region of the Presbytery of Southwest Florida; and

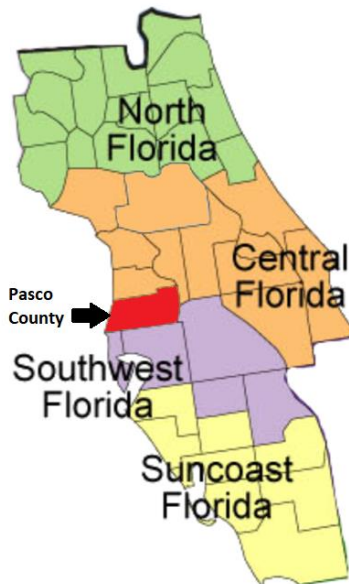
**Whereas**, the Presbytery of Central Florida is willing to transfer the territory of Pasco County to the Presbytery of Southwest Florida;

**Therefore**, the Presbytery of Central Florida overtures the 50th General Assembly to transfer the territory of Pasco County to the Presbytery of Southwest Florida, effective July 1, 2023, and to likewise transfer all existing PCA churches and church plants (if any) in Pasco County to the Presbytery of Southwest Florida.

*Adopted by Central Florida Presbytery at its stated meeting, November 15, 2022*

*Attested by /s/ TE Donald L. Mountan, stated clerk*

**Map of Florida Presbyteries in FCPN**



**OVERTURE 5** from Tidewater Presbytery (to CCB, MNA, OC)  
“Change *BCO* 8-6 Regarding Chaplain Administration of Sacraments”

**Whereas**, a teaching elder feeds the flock by reading, expounding and preaching the Word of God and administering the Sacraments.

**Whereas**, Chaplains are teaching elders called to serve with an organization outside the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in America.

**Whereas**, military Chaplains serve in a wide variety of settings including chapels within the United States, chapels abroad, aboard naval vessels, deployed abroad, and in a multitude of units and training environments both within the continental United States and abroad. Civilian Chaplains serve in a wide variety of settings including, but not limited to, chapels, hospitals, VA centers, jails, prisons, and corporations. In these settings chaplains have the opportunity to preach the Word of God and administer the sacraments.

**Whereas**, *BCO* chapters 56, 57, and 58 have full constitutional authority.<sup>1</sup>

**Whereas**, *BCO* 58-4 allows for open or closed communion. Closed communion is serving communion only to those approved by Session. Open communion is serving communion to those who meet the following two criteria:

- (1) The person confesses the true religion, and
- (2) Is a communicant in good standing at an evangelical church.

**Whereas**, a communicant is a church member who is authorized to receive communion. In the PCA this authorization comes from the Session when the individual is received as a member.

**Whereas**, Chapels are not churches. The difference between a chapel and church is membership. Chapels are not able to receive members and have no formal church discipline.

**Whereas**, the vast majority of those attending military Chapels within the United States are military retirees, or those who have the ability to leave the military base and attend a local congregation, but choose not to.

**Whereas**, most military bases in the United States have a PCA church within a reasonable driving distance.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1981, the 9th General Assembly (GA) adopted a resolution giving full constitutional authority to the *Book of Church Order*, chapters 56, 57, and 58 (available: [https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/ga/9th\\_pcaga\\_1981.pdf](https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/ga/9th_pcaga_1981.pdf), p. 137).

**Whereas**, a Chaplain who serves communion at a military chapel within the United States is serving communion to a group of people that are likely not members at any church, are choosing to not attend a local church, or are choosing not to become members at a local church. There are exceptions to this, but the vast majority of those regularly attending chapels are choosing to act as if the chapel is a church. Chapels have no ecclesiastical discipline, no elders, no session, and no accountability. Many chapels even rotate weekly which Chaplain presides over the service. This means that serving communion at most military chapels within the United States necessarily entails serving communion to a group of people who are not “communicants in good standing at any evangelical church” (*BCO* 58-4). Additionally, closed communion is not an option at a chapel because there is no session to approve those who may participate in the ordinance.

**Whereas**, Chaplains do not have a session to admit people to the Lord’s Table or for baptism. When an adult is baptized, they take vows to the church and become communicant members of the church (*BCO* 57-5). Chaplains administering baptism have no method of receiving the new convert into the visible church through membership.

**Whereas**, *BCO* 56-58 ties accountability, through membership and a session, for admittance to the Sacraments. Because of this, Chaplains are ecclesiastically unable to administer the sacraments without the powers of an evangelist.

**Whereas**, there is currently no requirement that chaplains be appointed to the work of an evangelist. For civilian chaplains, or those who are part-time Chaplains (military reservists, law enforcement, etc.), it is feasible that they do not need the powers of an evangelist because they will never be in a situation where they are called upon to administer the sacraments apart from a Session and a local congregation. However, for an active duty military Chaplain, and some civilian Chaplains, the powers of an evangelist are necessary.

*BCO* 8-6 indicates that the powers of an evangelist must be renewed yearly. The renewal requirement makes sense for a teaching elder planting a church. Eventually the mission church particularizes and forms its own session. Because of this, the powers of an evangelist do not need to continue. However, for a military Chaplain, the renewal requirement is an unnecessary administrative burden on the Presbytery and the Chaplain. By nature of a Chaplain’s call, the

powers of an evangelist should automatically be extended for the duration of the call.

**Whereas**, changing *BCO* 8-6 to include the phrase “isolated military and institutional settings” clarifies that chaplains may administer the sacraments when they operate in locations where there are no other PCA churches within a reasonable distance, or when service members are unable to travel to a local congregation due to military service constraints. This change also clarifies that Chaplains are not to administer the sacraments when there are PCA churches within a reasonable distance, and the attendees are able to attend the local church.

**Whereas**, empowering Chaplains to receive and hold the membership of newly baptized Christians allows them to administer baptism when there are no alternatives. *BCO* 56-1 says “baptism is not to be unnecessarily delayed.” During a military deployment, or some other situation in which there is no way for the new convert to be baptized in a local congregation, the Chaplain is able to administer the sacrament and “receive and hold” the individuals membership, much like a church planter, until it can be transferred to a local congregation. This transfer should happen at the earliest possible time.

**Therefore, be it resolved** that the *Book of Church Order* 8-6 be amended as follows:

**8-6.** When a teaching elder is appointed to the work of an evangelist, he is ministering in a specific setting unique to his call. These settings include ~~in~~ foreign countries ~~or~~, isolated military and institutional settings, places where there is no access to PCA churches, and where there are no other PCA churches within a reasonable distance. Church planters appointed to the work of an evangelist are ~~he is~~ commissioned for a renewable term of twelve months to preach the Word, to administer the Sacraments, to receive and dismiss members of mission churches, and to train potential officers. Chaplains appointed to the work of an evangelist are commissioned for a permanent term lasting the duration of their approved call as a Chaplain. They are empowered to preach the Word, to administer the sacraments, and to receive and hold the membership of newly baptized Christians until they can be transferred to a local congregation. By separate actions the



Presbytery may in extraordinary situations commission ~~him~~ an evangelist to examine, ordain, and install ruling elders and deacons and organize churches.

So that *BCO* 8-6 as amended would read:

**8-6.** When a teaching elder is appointed to the work of an evangelist he is ministering in a specific setting unique to his call. These settings include; foreign countries, isolated military and institutional settings, places where there is no access to PCA churches, and where there are no other PCA church within a reasonable distance. Church planters appointed to the work of an evangelist are commissioned for a renewable term of twelve months to preach the Word, to administer the Sacraments, to receive and dismiss members of mission churches, and to train potential officers. Chaplains appointed to the work of an evangelist are commissioned for a permanent term lasting the duration of their approved call as a Chaplain. They are empowered to preach the Word, to administer the sacraments, and to receive and hold the membership of newly baptized Christians until they can be transferred to a local congregation. By separate actions the Presbytery may in extraordinary situations commission an evangelist to examine, ordain and install ruling elders and deacons and organize churches.

*Adopted by Tidewater Presbytery at its stated meeting,  
October 6, 2022*

*Attested by /s/ TE David Zavadil, stated clerk*

**OVERTURE 6** from South Texas Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
“Amend *BCO* 13-6, 21-4.b, and 24-1 To Require Criminal  
Background Checks of all Minister and Officer Candidates”

**Whereas**, the qualifications for elders and deacons includes being “above reproach” (1 Tim. 3:2 and Titus 1:7), “self-controlled” (1 Tim. 3:2 and Titus 1:8), “not violent but gentle” (1 Tim. 3:3), “not...quick-tempered” (Titus 1:7), and “proven blameless” (1 Tim. 3:10); and

- Whereas**, the qualification of every believer is to “keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable” (1 Pet. 2:12); and
- Whereas**, our confession warns leaders against the “careless exposing, or leaving [those in their care] to wrong, temptation, and danger” (*WLC* 130); and
- Whereas**, the *Book of Church Order* states that church courts perform “a careful examination” including “personal character” (21-4.c; 24-1.a) and “Christian experience” (13-6); and
- Whereas**, the report of the Ad Interim Committee on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault to the Forty-ninth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (the “DASA Report”) says, “Churches protect their members with policies that take into consideration the most vulnerable in the congregation” by, at a minimum, “Presbyteries enacting policies to *require background checks* and abuse training for all ordinands and transfers, and policies to protect whistleblowers against retribution” (emphasis added, DASA Report, *M49GA*, p. 949); and
- Whereas**, the DASA Report recommends: “Candidates for the gospel ministry and others employed for spiritual oversight (Sunday school teachers, youth leaders, etc.) should be examined carefully to determine their godly character. Presbyteries and Sessions are encouraged to carefully investigate a candidate for leadership roles including but not limited to the candidate’s knowledge of theology. *Background checks*, social media checks, and careful reference checks should be used to screen for abusive leadership.” (emphasis added, DASA Report, *M49GA*, pp. 1128, 1159, 1183)); and
- Whereas**, the 42nd General Assembly resolved that churches prevent types of abuse “by screening staff and volunteers” (Overture 6, *M42 GA*, p. 59.); and
- Whereas**, the 42nd General Assembly resolved that churches “must cooperate with those authorities as they ‘bear the sword’ to punish those who do evil ‘in such an effectual manner as that no person be suffered . . . to offer any indignity, violence, abuse, or injury to any other person whatsoever’ (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-14; *WCF* 23.3)”;
- Therefore, be it resolved** that *BCO* 13-6 be amended by adding language as follows (underlining for additions, ~~strike through~~ for deletions):

13-6. When a minister is ~~Ministers~~ seeking admission to a Presbytery from another Presbytery ~~other Presbyteries~~

in the Presbyterian Church in America, or from another denomination, the receiving Presbytery shall cause a criminal background check to be performed on the minister. The results of the background check shall be shared with the members of the receiving Presbytery, with the members of the dismissing Presbytery, and with the calling church or other organization that is calling the minister. He shall be examined on Christian experience, and also touching his ~~their~~ views in theology, the Sacraments, and church government. If applicants come from other denominations, the Presbytery shall examine them thoroughly in knowledge and views as required by *BCO* 21-4 and require them to answer in the affirmative the questions put to candidates at their ordination. Ordained ministers from other denominations being considered by Presbyteries for reception may come under the extraordinary provisions set forth in *BCO* 21-4. Presbyteries shall also...

**Therefore, be it further resolved** that *BCO* 21 be amended by adding a new 21-4.b, and renumbering the succeeding paragraphs (underlining for additions):

21-4.b. Prior to ordination, the examining Presbytery shall cause a criminal background check to be performed on each candidate. The results of the background check shall be shared with the Presbytery and with the calling church.

**Therefore, be it further resolved** that *BCO* 24-1 be amended by adding language as follows (underlining for additions):

24-1. ...set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. The Session shall cause a criminal background check to be performed on each candidate eligible for election. The results of the background check may be shared with the congregation if deemed prudent by the Session. Nominees for the office of ruling elder and/or deacon shall receive instruction...

So that the amended paragraphs will read as follows:

**13-6.** When a minister is seeking admission to a Presbytery from another Presbytery in the Presbyterian Church in America, or from another denomination, the receiving Presbytery shall cause a criminal background check to be performed on the minister. The results of the background check shall be shared with the members of the receiving Presbytery, with the members of the dismissing Presbytery, and with the calling church or other organization that is calling the minister. He shall be examined on Christian experience, and also touching his views in theology, the Sacraments, and church government. If applicants come from other denominations, the Presbytery shall examine them thoroughly in knowledge and views as required by *BCO* 21-4 and require them to answer in the affirmative the questions put to candidates at their ordination. Ordained ministers from other denominations may come under the extraordinary provisions set forth in *BCO* 21-4. Presbyteries shall also require ordained ministers coming from other denominations to state the specific instances in which they may differ with the *Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms* in any of their statements and/or propositions, which differences the court shall judge in accordance with *BCO* 21-4 (see *BCO* 21-4.e,f).

**21-4.b.** Prior to ordination, the examining Presbytery shall cause a criminal background check to be performed on each candidate. The results of the background check shall be shared with the Presbytery and with the calling church.

**24-1.** Every church shall elect persons to the offices of ruling elder and deacon in the following manner: At such times as determined by the Session, communicant members of the congregation may submit names to the Session, keeping in mind that each prospective officer should be an active male member who meets the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. The

Session shall cause a criminal background check to be performed on each candidate eligible for election. The results of the background check may be shared with the congregation if deemed prudent by the Session. Nominees for the office of ruling elder and/or deacon shall receive instruction in the qualifications and work of the office. Each nominee shall be examined in:...

*Adopted by South Texas Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 28, 2023  
Attested by /s/ RE Michael W. Simpson, stated clerk*

**OVERTURE 7** from Southern New England Presbytery (to CCB, AC, CDM, “Amend *RAO* 4-21.d for Committees of MNA, MTW, RUF, Commissioners to Review Committee and CC, CTS, PCAF, Board Compliance and Policies” Geneva, RH)

[Note: The title and reference have been revised since the original posting of this overture.]

**Be it resolved** that *RAO* 4-21.d be amended by adding paragraph (4) as follows (underlining for new section):

- d. The contents of the minutes should include the following items:
  1. The names of persons leading in opening and closing prayers at all sessions;
  2. In the event of a called meeting, the portion of the call stating the purpose of the meeting should be recorded verbatim in the minutes;
  3. A recording of the actions of the Committee or Board, including all motions adopted and business transacted, together with such additional information as the Committee or Board deems desirable for historical purposes. Ordinarily in church courts, motions that are lost are not included in the record unless an affirmative vote for the lost motion is recorded, in which case the lost motion must be shown. Each main motion should normally be recorded in a separate paragraph. Subsidiary and procedural motions may be recorded in the same paragraph with the main motion to which they pertain. Main motions may be recorded in the same

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paragraph, if they are closely related and pertain to the same item of business.

4. A recording of information sufficient to demonstrate the Committee's or Board's implementation of instructions received from General Assembly and of policies adopted by the Committee or Board.

### **Rationale:**

Boards and Committees are creations of General Assembly and are governed by it through the appointment of Board and Committee members, by direct instruction from the Assembly, and by the approval of material policies. Boards and Committees are required to provide their policies to the Assembly annually by *RAO 4-21.j* and to report changes in these policies to General Assembly (as directed by the adoption of Overture 24 at the 47th General Assembly). However, because no requirement exists to document compliance with policies and Assembly instructions, no mechanism exists for responding if there are lapses in these policies or failures to implement them.

Under the current requirements a Board or Committee does not have a requirement to communicate its compliance with policies. If a deviation from policies were to be communicated in discussions with the Board or Committee's respective Committee of Commissioners, the Assembly would have no means to address the deviation until the subsequent Assembly. Under this change, a Committee of Commissioners could instead identify the deviation from adopted policy as an exception of substance under *RAO 14-11*.

These requirements broadly reflect those already imposed upon Presbyteries and Sessions by higher courts. *BCO 12* and *BCO 13* lay out affirmative requirements for lower courts; when these requirements are not demonstrated by lower courts, a higher court may issue an exception to the court's minutes under *BCO 40*. While it would not be appropriate to record all requirements of each Board and Committee in the church's constitution, these requirements are recorded in the manuals and bylaws of each Agency and Committee. This amendment provides a mechanism to ensure that General Assembly maintains the ability to review and control the implementation of these requirements.

*Approved by Southern New England Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 21, 2023*

*Attested by /s/ RE Ron Heald, stated clerk*

**OVERTURE 8** from Arizona Presbytery: (to CCB, OC)  
“Amend *BCO* 31-10 for Non-censure Suspension Option During Investigation”

**Whereas**, the *DASA* Committee Report<sup>2</sup> says, “For leaders in the church, ‘believe victims’ means taking necessary actions to protect *first*. After physical safety is ensured, church courts can then discern the truth in the allegations,” and

**Whereas**, the Report<sup>3</sup> says, that major tasks following an allegation would include, “Relieve any allegedly abusive leaders from duty,” and

**Whereas**, the innocence of the accused is to be assumed, and

**Whereas**, the court is obligated to ensure an impartial investigation, and

**Whereas**, we are called to give thought to what is honorable in the eyes of all men (Romans 12:17b), and

**Whereas**, courts must have discretion in determining how and when to ensure the practice of no conflict of interest,

**Therefore, be it resolved** that *Book of Church Order* 31 be amended by the addition of three paragraphs as follows (underlining for additions):

**31-10.** When a member of a church court is accused of extraordinary moral failing that is public or in which there is an alleged victim (e.g., abuse of any kind, sexual sin, financial misdealing, etc.), and the court has ordered an investigation, the court shall have the option, upon a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote, and in coordination with lower courts, of suspending the accused from all his duties with pay and without censure or prejudice while the accusation is investigated as to its merit (BCO 31-2). If the court so acts it shall record its rationale in the minutes of an executive session. The court shall include in the record any objection from the accused and the court's response to the objection.

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<sup>2</sup> “Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault to the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (2019-2022),” *M49GA*, p. 1001 (emphasis original).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 1065.

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Such non-censure suspension during the investigation may not exceed the same time limits applied to the investigation itself (BCO 31-2). The accused may be directed by the court to have no contact with potential witnesses during the conduct of the investigation.

Even in extraordinary circumstances, the accused shall have no greater access to information from the court or right to speak before the court than his accuser(s).

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

So the amended section would read

**31-10.** When a member of a church court is accused of extraordinary moral failing that is public or in which there is an alleged victim (e.g., abuse of any kind, sexual sin, financial misdealing, *etc.*), and the court has ordered an investigation the court shall have the option, upon a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority vote, and in coordination with lower courts, of suspending the accused from all his duties with pay and without censure or prejudice while the accusation is investigated as to its merit (BCO 31-2). If the court so acts it shall record its rationale in the minutes of an executive session. The court shall include in the record any objection from the accused and the court's response to the objection.

Such non-censure suspension during the investigation may not exceed the same time limits applied to the investigation itself (BCO 31-2). The accused may be directed by the court to have no contact with potential witnesses during the conduct of the investigation.

Even in extraordinary circumstances, the accused shall have no greater access to information from the court or right to speak before the court than his accuser(s).



APPENDIX V

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

*Adopted by Arizona Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 19, 2023*

*Attested by /s/ RE Richard Wolfe, stated clerk*

**OVERTURE 9** from Arizona Presbytery (to CCB, OC)

“Amend *BCO* 7 to Codify the Biblical Standard for Church Officers Related to Human Sexuality”

**Whereas**, the sins of officers are more heinous by virtue of their office (2 Sam.12:7-9; Ezek. 8:11-12; Rom. 2:17-24; Gal. 2:11-14; Jas. 3:1; WLC 151); and

**Whereas**, the preservation of chastity in body, mind, affections, words, and behavior in oneself is an indispensable duty and qualification for office (1 Tim.3:2; Titus 1:5-9); and

**Whereas**, in the beginning God created them “male and female” after his own image and likeness and ordained the first marriage and family consisting of one man and one woman in sexual union, establishing the divine intention for human sexuality (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:24; 4:1); and

**Whereas**, any expression of sexual attraction or sexual intimacy that is not directed toward the fulfillment of a lifelong covenant of marriage between one man and one woman is contrary to nature and to nature's God (Lev. 20:15-16; Rom. 1:26-27; Col. 3:5; WLC28; WLC139; WLC148):

**Therefore, be it resolved** that *The Book of Church Order* Chapter 7 be amended such that a new paragraph, *BCO* 7-4, be added, to read as follows (new words underlined):

7-4. Men who deviate—whether by declared conviction, self-description, lifestyle decisions, or overt practice—from God's creational intention for human sexuality are disqualified from holding office in the Presbyterian Church in America.

*Adopted by the Arizona Presbytery at its stated meeting January 19, 2023*

*Attested by /s/ RE Richard Wolfe, stated clerk*

**OVERTURE 10** from Northern New England Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
"Amend *BCO* 32-19 to Clarify Use of Professional Counsel in Cases of Process"

**Whereas**, *BCO* 32-19 currently dates to the 1925 PCUS *Book of Order*; and  
**Whereas**, *BCO* 32-19 places restrictions on representation for both parties, though a portion of it refers directly to the Accused; and

**Whereas**, the current language uses "counsel" and "representative" interchangeably, which causes confusion; and

**Whereas**, the phrase "as such" is subject to different interpretations; and

**Whereas**, there is currently no codified definition of professional counsel in the *BCO*, and

**Whereas**, the Committee on Constitutional Business of the 27th General Assembly advised that "*BCO* 32-19 forbids professional counsel from formal involvement (that is, acting in an attorney/client relationship)" and otherwise being compensated for their assistance in ecclesiastical cases;

**Whereas**, professional attorneys today may engage in ecclesiastical cases "pro bono," which may unlock firm-wide resources, including access to associates for assistance, may allow significant reimbursement for expenses, may be accounted toward an attorney's annual billable hours requirement, and may have other potential non-monetary benefits; and

**Whereas**, the courts of the Church are comprised of volunteers in their offering of their Christian service to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church; and

**Whereas**, it is a principle of ecclesiastical process, and justice in general, that process be conducted equitably between respective parties, and not advantage one party or another (*BCO* 32-13, "In order that the trial may be fair and impartial"); and

**Whereas**, a professional attorney may gain significant advantages over the other party in the prosecution or defense of a case of process by virtue of the corporate resources available to him;

**Therefore be it resolved** that *Book of Church Order* 32-19 be amended by deleting the current language (indicated by strikeouts) and replacing it with new paragraphs (indicated by underlining), which results in standardized languages and delineates: a) what is forbidden of professional representation and what constitutes such; b) who may

represent respective parties and how; and c) who may assist representatives of said parties and how such assistants are employed.

**Existing *BCO* paragraph:**

~~32-19. No professional counsel shall be permitted as such to appear and plead in cases of process in any court; but an accused person may, if he desires it, be represented before the Session by any communing member of the same particular church, or before any other court, by any member of that court. A member of the court so employed shall not be allowed to sit in judgment in the case.~~

**Proposed *BCO* paragraphs:**

32-19.a. In cases before any church court, no professional representative (attorney admitted to the bar or employee of a law firm) shall be permitted to appear on behalf of any party, assist with oral or written arguments, or engage in communications regarding the case, when

- i. the representative is functioning in an attorney/client relationship; or
- ii. the representative is remunerated in any form, including, but not limited to, fees, billings, reimbursement, or other non-monetary compensation; or
- iii. the representative is engaged as a “pro bono” case;  
or
- iv. the representative is otherwise utilizing corporate resources.

b. Representatives for either party shall be any communing member of the same particular church if before a Session, or before any other court, any communing member of the court of original jurisdiction (*BCO* 11-4) and may continue through appeal until the conclusion of the case. A member of the court so employed shall not be allowed to sit in judgment in the case.

c. Representatives for either party may appoint assistants according to these same requirements.

*Adopted by Northern New England Presbytery at its stated meeting, February 4, 2023*

*Attested by /s/ TE C.S. Per Almquist, stated clerk*

**OVERTURE 11** from Platte Valley Presbytery (to CCB, SJC, OC)  
"Amend *BCO* 15-4, 45-1, and 45-4 to Allow Objections by GA Commissioners to SJC Decisions"

**Whereas**, during the 41st and 49th General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), attempts by commissioners to the General Assembly to record objections to decisions of the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) were ruled out of order since the General Assembly commissioners were not members of the SJC (*BCO* 15-4; 39-2; 45-4; *M41GA*, p. 39; *M49GA*, p. 75–76); and

**Whereas**, dissents, protests, and objections are important parts of Presbyterian polity that allow presbyters to express disagreement peacefully and to protect individual liberty of conscience regarding the purity of the church, while also maintaining unity within the body; and

**Whereas**, since only “those who had a right to vote in the case” may join in a dissent or protest (*BCO* 45-1), dissents and protests of SJC cases may only be filed by SJC members in the course of their duties; and

**Whereas**, permitting objections from all commissioners to the General Assembly, and not from SJC members alone, would better balance concerns regarding the liberty of conscience and the rights of private judgment (*BCO PP* 1) with the practical wisdom of committing “all matters governed by the Rules of Discipline, except for the annual review of Presbytery records, which may come before the Assembly,” to the SJC (*BCO* 15-4);

**Therefore be it resolved**, that the 50th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America to amend the *Book of Church Order* 15-4, 45-1, and 45-4 as follows (underlining for new wording; ~~strike-through~~ for deletions):

**15-4.** The General Assembly shall elect a Standing Judicial Commission to which it shall commit all matters

governed by the Rules of Discipline, except for the annual review of Presbytery records and objections from commissioners to the General Assembly (see BCO 45-4), which may come before the Assembly. This commission shall consist of twenty-four (24) members divided into four classes of three teaching elders and three ruling elders in each class. Each class shall serve a four-year term and each subsequent Assembly shall declare the Standing Judicial Commission as a whole to be its commission. Nominations and vacancies shall be filled according to BCO 14-1(11), with nominations allowed from the floor. No person may be elected if there is already a member of the commission from the same Presbytery; but if a person is elected and changes Presbytery, he may continue to serve his full term. No person may serve concurrently on the General Assembly's Standing Judicial Commission and any of the General Assembly's permanent committees.

- 45-1.** Any member of a court who had a right to vote on a question, and is not satisfied with the action taken by that court, is entitled to have a dissent or protest recorded.

None can join in a dissent or protest against an action of any court except those who had a right to vote in the case.

Any member who did not have the right to vote on an appeal or complaint (see e.g., BCO 39-2), and is not satisfied with the action taken by the court, is entitled to have an objection recorded.

A dissent, protest or objection shall be filed with the clerk of the lower court within thirty (30) days following the meeting of the lower court or with the clerk of the General Assembly before its adjournment.

- 45-4.** An objection is a declaration by one or more members of a court who did not have the right to vote on an appeal or complaint, expressing a different opinion

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from the decision of the court and may be accompanied with the reasons on which it is founded. Any commissioner to the General Assembly may record an objection to a decision of the Standing Judicial Commission reported to that General Assembly, so long as he did not have a right to vote on the appeal or complaint when it came before the Standing Judicial Commission.

So that *BCO* 15-4, 45-1, and 45-4, as amended, would read:

- 15-4.** The General Assembly shall elect a Standing Judicial Commission to which it shall commit all matters governed by the Rules of Discipline, except for the annual review of Presbytery records and objections from commissioners to the General Assembly (see *BCO* 45-4), which may come before the Assembly. This commission shall consist of twenty-four (24) members divided into four classes of three teaching elders and three ruling elders in each class. Each class shall serve a four-year term and each subsequent Assembly shall declare the Standing Judicial Commission as a whole to be its commission. Nominations and vacancies shall be filled according to *BCO* 14- 1(11), with nominations allowed from the floor. No person may be elected if there is already a member of the commission from the same Presbytery; but if a person is elected and changes Presbytery, he may continue to serve his full term. No person may serve concurrently on the General Assembly's Standing Judicial Commission and any of the General Assembly's permanent committees.
- 45-1.** Any member of a court who had a right to vote on a question, and is not satisfied with the action taken by that court, is entitled to have a dissent or protest recorded.

None can join in a dissent or protest against an action of any court except those who had a right to vote in the case.

Any member who did not have the right to vote on an appeal or complaint (e.g., *BCO 39-2*), and is not satisfied with the action taken by the court, is entitled to have an objection recorded.

A dissent, protest or objection shall be filed with the clerk of the lower court within thirty (30) days following the meeting of the lower court or with the clerk of the General Assembly before its adjournment.

- 45-4.** An objection is a declaration by one or more members of a court who did not have the right to vote on an appeal or complaint, expressing a different opinion from the decision of the court and may be accompanied with the reasons on which it is founded. Any commissioner to the General Assembly may record an objection to a decision of the Standing Judicial Commission reported to that General Assembly, so long as he did not have a right to vote on the appeal or complaint when it came before the Standing Judicial Commission.

*Adopted by Platte Valley Presbytery at its stated meeting, February 4, 2023*  
*Attested by /s/ TE Jacob Gerber, stated clerk*

**OVERTURE 12** from Evangel Presbytery (to OC, AC)  
“Petition Government to End Sex-change Procedures for Minors”

**Whereas**, the Scriptures said in the beginning, “God created man in his own image...male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27, 2:7, 2:21-24, 5:2) and as confessed in *Westminster Confession of Faith* 4.2, Larger Catechism Q17, and Shorter Catechism Q10,<sup>4</sup> and;

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<sup>4</sup> Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality to the Forty-Eight General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (2019-2020), Statement 2: Image of God, pg. 5-6, <https://pcaga.org/wp->

**Whereas**, Jesus said, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female...” (Matthew 19:4, Luke 10:6), and;

**Whereas**, David praises God in saying, “For you formed my inward parts, you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.” (Psalm 139:13-14), and;

**Whereas**, God said to Adam and Eve and later to Noah and his sons, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth...” (Genesis 1:28, 9:1, 7), and as confessed in *Westminster Confession of Faith* 24.2, and;

**Whereas**, the Scriptures says, “Children are a heritage from the Lord,” (Psalm 127:4) and Jesus had a high regard for children and their just protection saying, “Whoever causes one of these little ones...to stumble, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.” (Mark 9:42), and;

**Whereas**, the Scriptures says, “A woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD your God.” (Deuteronomy 22:5), and;

**Whereas**, “The Presbyterian Church in America is joyfully and confessionally committed to the Bible’s teaching on the complementarity of men and women. As a denomination, we believe that this teaching is true, good, and beautiful. We affirm the full dignity of men and women as created in the image of God.”<sup>5</sup> and;

**Whereas**, medical and social interventions related to so-called sex change procedures are a rejection of God’s design that will prevent his blessing, grace, and joy to be experienced, and;

**Whereas**, the sex of a person is the biological state of being female or male, based on sex organs, chromosomes, and endogenous hormone profiles, and is genetically encoded into a person at the moment of conception and it cannot be changed. Therefore, so-called sex change medical and surgical interventions are a rejection of science,<sup>6</sup> and;

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content/uploads/2020/05/AIC-Report-to-48th-GA-5-28-20-1.pdf Accessed October 11, 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Report of the AD Interim Committee on Women Serving in the Ministry of the Church to the Forty-Fifth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, [https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/digest/studies/2017\\_WIM.pdf](https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/digest/studies/2017_WIM.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Clayton JA. Applying the new SABV (sex as a biological variable) policy to research and clinical care. *Physiology & Behavior* 187 (2018) 2-5. NIH Policy on



**Whereas**, some individuals, including minors, may experience severe psychological distress called gender dysphoria as a result of feeling a discordance between their sex and their internal sense of identity,<sup>7</sup> and;  
**Whereas**, there has been an epidemic 900% increase in girls diagnosed with gender dysphoria in the past 8 years, primarily driven by social contagion from contemporary social, educational, and cultural influences,<sup>8</sup> and;

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Sex as a Biological Variable Available at <https://orwh.od.nih.gov/sex-gender/nih-policy-sex-biological-variable> Accessed January 30, 2021.

Exploring the Biological Contributions to Human Health. Does Sex Matter? Theresa M. Wizemann and Mary-Lou Pardue, Editors, Committee on Understanding the Biology of Sex and Gender Differences, Board on Health Sciences Policy of the Institute of Medicine. National Academy Press. 2001. Available at

[https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK222288/pdf/Bookshelf\\_NBK222288.pdf](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK222288/pdf/Bookshelf_NBK222288.pdf) Accessed January 30, 2021.

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<https://journals.physiology.org/doi/full/10.1152/physrev.00009.2006> Accessed January 23, 2021.

<sup>7</sup> Jennifer Bauwens, Ph.D., Diagnosing Gender Dysphoria in Children: An explainer, Family Research Council, May 2022, No. IF22E01. Available at <https://www.frc.org/genderdysphoria>; Accessed January 6, 2023.

<sup>8</sup> Jiska Ristori & Thomas D. Steensma, "Gender Dysphoria in Childhood" *International Review of Psychiatry* 28(1):13-20(2016).  
 Jones, JM. (2021). LGBT Identification Rises to 5.6% in Latest U.S. Estimate. Gallup Poll Social Series. February 24, 2021. Available at: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/329708/lgbt-identification-rises-latest-estimate.aspx>  
 The Economist Group Limited. (2020). An English ruling on transgender teens could have global repercussions. *The Economist*, International, December 12, 2020.

Available at: <https://www.economist.com/international/2020/12/12/an-english-ruling-on-transgender-teens-could-have-global-repercussions>

Turner, J. (2022). Special Report: What went wrong at the Tavistock clinic for

**Whereas**, taking a wait-and-see approach with counseling is the best approach, as a substantial majority of children suffering from gender dysphoria come to accept their biological sex as they go through puberty,<sup>9</sup> and;

**Whereas**, some in the medical community are aggressively pursuing interventions on minors that medically alter the child's hormonal balance and remove external and internal sex organs when a child expresses a desire to appear as the opposite sex, and;

**Whereas**, there are no other medical interventions that doctors perform based on the self-diagnoses of a minor child based on their feelings and beliefs, and;

**Whereas**, minor children are not mentally and emotionally developed or capable of making such a life-altering and non-reversible decision,<sup>10</sup> and;

**Whereas**, most minors who have gender dysphoria have underlying mental health issues caused by childhood trauma that is not addressed by medical interventions, and therefore are more likely to suffer more mental unrest and suicidal thinking than those who finally accept their birth sex,<sup>11</sup> and;

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transgender teens? The Times Magazine. June 17, 2022. Available at: <https://segm.org/GIDS-puberty-blockers-minors-the-times-special-report>

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<sup>9</sup> Kenneth J. Zucker, “The Myth of Persistence” *International Journal of Transgenderism* 19(2): 231-245 (2018).

<sup>10</sup> Stephen B. Levine (2018): “Informed Consent for Transgendered Patients” *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*, 22 Dec 2018. DOI.1080/0092623X.2018 National Institute of Mental Health (2001). *Teenage Brain: A Work in Progress*. <https://www.transgendertrend.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Levine-informed-consent-2018.pdf> ;

Mariam Arain, et al., “Maturation of the Adolescent Brain” *Neuropsychiatry Dis Treat.* 2013; 9:449-461.

<sup>11</sup> Riittakerttu Katiala-Heino, et al., “Two Years of Gender Identity Service for

**Whereas**, the long-term risks of medical interventions for so-called sex change purposes in minors are sterility, infertility, cancer, pituitary apoplexy, pseudotumor cerebri, cardiovascular disease, strokes, blood clots, and diminished bone density, as well as changes in appearance and bodily function from hormones and surgery that cannot be reversed,<sup>12</sup> and;

**Whereas**, parents have the right to raise their children according to their belief that God made them male or female. If their child suffers gender dysphoria, no governmental authority has the right to remove that child from his or her parents because they do not support their child transitioning to another gender.

**Whereas**, while we greatly respect the rights of parents to raise their children according to their beliefs, these rights cease when the parents are physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually abusing and harming their children, and;

**Whereas**, we greatly respect the training, knowledge and competence of the medical profession, we must make a stand against them when they violate the Hippocratic Oath where it says, “I will do no harm or

Minors: Overrepresentation of Natal Girls with Severe Problems in Adolescent Development” *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry & Mental Health* 9:9 (2015)

Tracy A. Becerra-Culqui, et al., “Mental Health of Transgender and Gender Nonconforming

Youth Compared With Their Peers” *Pediatrics* 141(5):e20173845 (2018)

Melanie Bechard, et al., “Psychosocial and Psychological Vulnerability in Adolescents with Gender Dysphoria: A ‘Proof of Principal’ Study” *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy* 43(7): 678-688 (2017).

- <sup>12</sup> Jacqueline Ruttiman, “Blocking Puberty in Transgender Youth” *Endocrine News* (January 2013 (“Most transgenders become infertile as a result of the hormonal switching medications”) Alzahrani, Talal, et al. “Cardiovascular Disease Risk Factors and Myocardial Infarction in the Transgender Population”. *Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes*, vol 12, no. 4, (2019)

Alzahrani, Talal, et al. "Cardiovascular Disease Risk Factors and Myocardial Infarction in the Transgender Population". *Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes*, vol 12, no 4 (2019).

Braun, Nash, et al., “Cancer in Transgender People: Evidence & Methodological Considerations” *Epidemiol Rev.* 2017 Jan; 39(1):93-1071

<https://publications.aap.org/aapnews/news/20636/Risk-of-pseudotumor-cerebri-added-to-labeling-for?autologincheck=redirected>

Paul Cruz, Lawrence Mayer, et al., “Growing Pains: Problems in Puberty Suppression in Treating Gender Dysphoria,” *The New Atlantis*, Spring 2017

injustice to them.” Providing medical intervention on minor children for so-called sex change purposes does irreversible harm and injustice to them, and;

**Whereas**, England’s National Health Services recently abandoned gender-affirming trans policy which eliminates “gender clinic,” establishes psychotherapy as the primary protocol of treatment, reinstates the importance of biological sex, asserts that those who choose to bypass this new protocol will not be supported by the NHS, etc.,<sup>13</sup> and;

**Whereas**, *Westminster Confession of Faith* 31.4. confesses: “Synods and councils ...are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth, unless by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary; or, by way of advice, for satisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate.”

**Therefore, Be It Resolved**, Presbytery of Evangel overtures the General Assembly to humbly petition the United States Government and 50 State Governments as below, to be sent by the PCA.<sup>14</sup>

**Humble Petition to Governmental Leaders  
from the Presbyterian Church in America**

God declares in Sacred Scripture that civil government, no less the Church, is a divine institution and owes its authority to God. The Bible is the supreme revelation of God’s will and teaches that God made man in his own image, male and female, and called his creation good; that God blessed man and woman commanding them to be fruitful and multiply; that children are God’s heritage given a special status of just protection by Christ Jesus before they are capable of choosing good

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<sup>13</sup> The NHS Ends the "Gender-Affirmative Care Model" for Youth in England <https://segm.org/England-ends-gender-affirming-care> Accessed October 29, 2022.

<sup>14</sup> The PCA Stated Clerk Office would be responsible for sending the petition to the President of the United States; the majority and minority party leaders in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives; and the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Presbytery Clerks would be responsible for sending the petition to the Governors; the majority and minority party leaders in the State Legislatures; and the Chief Justice of the State Supreme Courts in their regions. This will require coordination where there are multiple presbyteries in one state.

and refusing evil; and that it is scientifically impossible for a male to become a female or a female to become a male. We who love our nation, in the name of God who alone is sovereign in his good and perfect design of men and women, call upon you to renounce the sin of all medical and surgical sex change procedures in minors by the American healthcare system because they result in irreversible harm. The obedience to God, which places us in subjection to your rightful civil authority, requires of us to humbly, boldly and prayerfully proclaim the counsel of God as it bears upon the same God-given authority.

Humbly and respectfully submitted,  
The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America

*Adopted by Evangel Presbytery at its stated meeting, February 14, 2023*  
*Attested by /s/ TE W. Kenneth Stuart III, stated clerk*

**OVERTURE 13** from Northern California Presbytery (to CCB, SJC, OC)  
“Amend *BCO* 35-1 and 35-7 to Allow All Persons as Witnesses in Cases of Process”

**Whereas**, *BCO* 35-1 currently allows disqualification of persons testifying as witnesses in the courts of the church who “do not believe in the existence of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments;” and

**Whereas**, *BCO* 35-6 currently delineates the oath administered by the Moderator to every witness in a case of process, which accords with the requirements of *BCO* 35-1; and

**Whereas**, the report of the Ad Interim Committee on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault (DASA) Committee at the 49th General Assembly recommended that this prohibition be modified to allow inclusion of medical professionals and other persons who may not believe in the existence of God by may often provide testimony, especially in cases of abuse; and

**Whereas**, the 49th General Assembly voted to postpone consideration of such an amendment until the 50th General Assembly; and

**Whereas**, all persons are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), and by virtue of that image and His common grace are generally competent to testify as witnesses; and

**Whereas**, the ARP already recognizes the competence of all persons created in the image of God to stand as witnesses, “All persons generally are competent to testify as witnesses, though the court shall make due allowance for age, intelligence, character, belief in God, possible bias, relationship to the parties involved, and other like circumstances” (Book of Discipline, 4.4J); and

**Whereas**, the OPC already recognizes the competence of all persons created in the image of God to stand as witnesses, “Any person may be a witness in a judicial case if the trial judicatory is satisfied that he has sufficient competence to make the affirmation required of witnesses in this Chapter, Section A, 4, b.” (Book of Discipline, IV.A.4.a); and

**Whereas**, courts of the church are already instructed to judge the relative weight and credibility of all evidence including witness testimony (current *BCO* 35-1; 50th General Assembly proposed *BCO* 35-5);

**Whereas**, the 49th General Assembly unanimously voted to approve proposed changes to *BCO* 35 for the protection of witnesses in special cases, which may result in a renumbering of existing *BCO* 35 paragraphs;

**Therefore, be it resolved** that *Book of Church Order* 35-1 and 35-6 (proposed 35-7) be amended by deleting the current language (indicated by ~~strikethrough~~) and replacing it (indicated by underline), as shown below, comparing both currently approved *BCO* language, as well as proposed language if the amendments from the 49th General Assembly are ratified at the 50th General Assembly.

### Existing

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

**35-6.** The oath or affirmation to a witness shall be administered by the Moderator in the following or like terms:

**Do you solemnly promise, in the presence of God, that you will declare the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, according to the best of your knowledge in the matter in which you are called to witness, as you shall answer it to the great Judge of the living and the dead?**

If, however, at any time a witness should present himself before a court, who for conscientious reasons prefers to swear or affirm in any other manner, he should be allowed to do so.

**Proposed to the 49th General Assembly (Item 8; relevant portions only)**

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

Renumber *BCO* 35-6 (current) through *BCO* 35-14 (current) to read 35-7 through 35-15.

**Proposed to the 50th General Assembly** (additions approved by the 49th General Assembly singly underlined, deletions ~~singly struck through~~; additions proposed to the 50th doubly underlined, deletions ~~doubly struck through~~):

**35-1.** ~~All persons of proper age and intelligence are competent witnesses~~ generally are competent to testify as witnesses, except such as do not believe in the existence of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments ~~though the court shall give consideration to age, intelligence, belief in God, relationship to the parties involved, and other like factors in judging testimony~~

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~~(BCO 35-5). The accused party may be allowed, but shall not be compelled to testify; but the accuser shall be required to testify, on the demand of the accused. Either party has the right to challenge a witness whom he believes to be incompetent, and the court shall examine and decide upon his competency. It belongs to the court to judge the degree of credibility to be attached to all evidence.~~

**35-67.** The oath or affirmation to a witness shall be administered by the Moderator in the following or like terms:

**Do you solemnly promise, in the presence of God, that you will declare the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, according to the best of your knowledge in the matter in which you are called to witness, as you shall answer it to the great Judge of the living and the dead?**

If, however, at any time a witness should present himself before a court, who for conscientious reasons prefers to swear or affirm in any other manner, or with other language, he ~~should~~ shall be allowed to do so, provided such oath or affirmation impresses the solemnity of this duty upon the witness's conscience.

Renumber *BCO 35-7* (current) through *BCO 35-14* (current) to read 35-8 through 35-15.

So that the final text, if all amendments are approved, would read:

**35-1.** All persons generally are competent to testify as witnesses, though the court shall give consideration to age, intelligence, belief in God, relationship to the parties involved, and other like factors in judging testimony (*BCO 35-5*). Either party has the right to challenge a witness whom he believes to be incompetent, and the court shall examine and decide upon his competency.

**35-7.** The oath or affirmation to a witness shall be administered by the Moderator in the following or like terms:



**Do you solemnly promise, in the presence of God, that you will declare the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, according to the best of your knowledge in the matter in which you are called to witness, as you shall answer it to the great Judge of the living and the dead?**

If, however, at any time a witness should present himself before a court, who for conscientious reasons prefers to swear or affirm in any other manner, or with other language, he shall be allowed to do so, provided such oath or affirmation impresses the solemnity of this duty upon the witness's conscience.

*Adopted by Northern California Presbytery at its stated meeting, February 3, 2023*

*Attested by /s/ RE Marcel Weiland, stated clerk*

**OVERTURE 14** from Northern California Presbytery (to CCB, SJC, OC)  
“Amend *BCO* 32-19 Regarding Use of Professional Counsel in Cases of Process”

**Be it resolved** that *Book of Church Order* 32-19 be amended by deleting the current language (indicated by ~~striketrough~~) and replacing it with new paragraphs (indicated by underline):

**Current Language:**

~~32-19. No professional counsel shall be permitted as such to appear and plead in cases of process in any court; but an accused person may, if he desires it, be represented before the Session by any communing member of the same particular church, or before any other court, by any member of that court. A member of the court so employed shall not be allowed to sit in judgment in the case.~~

**Proposed:**

**32-19.** a. No professional representative (attorney admitted to the bar or employee of a law firm), in cases before any church court, shall be permitted to appear on behalf of any party, nor

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assist with oral or written arguments, nor engage in communications regarding the case, when

- i. the representative is functioning in an attorney/client relationship; or
- ii. the representative is remunerated in any form, including but not limited to: fees, billings, reimbursement, or any other non-monetary compensation; or
- iii. the representative is engaged as a “pro bono” case; or
- iv. the representative is otherwise utilizing corporate resources.

b. The Accused may be represented by counsel. Representatives for either party shall be in good standing, and may continue through appeal until the conclusion of the case.

- i. In cases before a Session, a party may be represented by any communing member of that church. If the Session judges that a party will not be well-served by representation from that body, the session may request a representative from its presbytery. The presbytery shall not approve such a representative without concurrence from both the party and the Session.
- ii. In cases before any other court, a party may be represented by any member of that court.

A member of the Court so employed shall not be allowed to sit in judgment on the case.

c. Representatives for either party may appoint assistants according to these same requirements. Assistants so appointed shall not be allowed to argue the case before the Court.

d. Representatives shall not be permitted in cases of complaint before a higher Court (BCO 43);

however, a complainant may be assisted by any person according to these same requirements.

**Rationale:**

1. Much of the current wording has resulted in significant confusion and needs clarification:
  - a. “Counsel” and “representative” are used interchangeably.
  - b. The phrase “as such” is subject to differing interpretations.
  - c. “Professional counsel” remains without a codified definition in the *BCO*.
2. The courts of the Church are comprised of volunteers offering their Christian service to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the church.
3. It is a principle of ecclesiastical process, and justice in general, that process be conducted equitably between respective parties, and not give advantage to one party over another (*BCO* 32-13, “In order that the trial may be fair and impartial”).
4. As currently adopted, *BCO* 32-19 dates (with minor changes) from the 1858 PCUSA Revised Book of Discipline.<sup>15</sup> It places restrictions on representation for both parties (though a portion refers specifically to the Accused), but takes no account of the massive changes in “professional representation” in the last 165 years.
5. The Committee on Constitutional Business of the 27th General Assembly advised the Stated Clerk that “*BCO* 32-19 forbids professional counsel from formal involvement (that is, acting in an attorney/client relationship)” and otherwise being compensated for their assistance in ecclesiastical cases.<sup>16</sup>
6. Professional attorneys today may engage in ecclesiastical cases “pro bono,” which can unlock firm-wide resources, including the possibility of access to associates for assistance, significant reimbursement for expenses, billable hours accounted toward the attorney’s annual requirement, and may have other potential non-monetary benefits or compensation.

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<sup>15</sup> As presented by the *BCO* History Project, part of the PCA Historical Center: <https://pcahistory.org/bco/rod/32/19.html> (accessed 9 January 2023).

<sup>16</sup> *Minutes of the 27th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America*, 1999: 148

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7. By virtue of these corporate resources, a professional attorney may gain significant advantage over the other party in the prosecution or defense of a case of process.
8. The proposed changes provide standardized language that delineates:
  - a. what is forbidden of professional representation and what constitutes such;
  - b. who may represent respective parties and how; and
  - c. who may assist representatives of said parties and how such assistants are employed.

*Adopted by the Northern California Presbytery at its stated meeting, February 3, 2023*

*Attested by /s/ RE Marcel Weiland, stated clerk.*

**OVERTURE 15** from Bryce Avenue Presbyterian Church, (to CCB, OC)  
White Rock, New Mexico  
“Amend *BCO 53* To Disallow Exhortation, Preaching, or Teaching  
by Women in Worship”

[Note: This overture was submitted to Rio Grande Presbytery for its stated meeting, January 23-24, 2023, by the Session of Bryce Avenue Presbyterian Church and rejected by Rio Grande Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 24, 2023 (*RAO 11-10*).]

**Whereas**, preaching—the exposition and application of Scripture by men called, duly *appointed, and lawfully ordained by God to the ministry of Word and Sacrament*—and exhorting—the exposition and application of Scripture by men called, duly appointed, and authorized to supply pulpits or otherwise make trial of their gifts and calling—are ordinary means of God’s grace to His people;

**Whereas**, Scripture at several points plainly prohibits unauthorized men and all women from engaging in exercises of so-called “preaching,” teaching, and exhortation in assemblies of God’s people;

**Whereas**, the congregations, denominational agencies, and educational institutions of the Presbyterian Church in America would benefit from

clear regulations on this matter in the constitutional documents of the Church;

**Whereas**, the *Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Women Serving in the Ministry of the Church to the Forty-Fifth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America* affirmed that the PCA “humbly and happily embrace[s] Scripture’s clear teaching that the eldership is to be composed of qualified men (1 Tim. 2:12; 3:1-7; 5:17), who are entrusted by Christ with the ministry of the authoritative teaching and ruling of the church for the building up of the whole body (Eph. 4:11-13),” and consequently recommended “that sessions consider how to include non-ordained men and women in the worship of the church so as to maintain faithfulness to Scripture;”

**Whereas**, the women (wives, daughters, sisters, and mothers) of our congregations will more fervently love the Church for clarifying what has become a contested issue in the broader church and culture;

**Now therefore**, the Session of Bryce Avenue Presbyterian Church hereby petitions and overtures the General Assembly to amend *BCO 53* regarding preaching with the insertion of a new paragraph bearing constitutional authority in the Presbyterian Church in America’s *Directory for Worship*. The proposed new paragraph *BCO 53-7* would read as follows (new wording underlined):

***BCO 53***

**7. No woman shall preach, exhort, or teach at a public worship assembly, including assemblies or chapel services where men are present in any congregation, educational institution, or gathering overseen by the Church or one of its agencies.**

*Submitted to Rio Grande Presbytery for its stated meeting, January 23-24, 2023, by the Session of Bryce Avenue Presbyterian Church. Rejected by Rio Grande Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 24, 2023 (RAO 11-10).*

*Attested by /s/ TE Dustin Hunt, stated clerk, Rio Grande Presbytery.*

**OVERTURE 16** from Catawba Valley Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
“Amend *BCO 7* to Codify the Biblical Standard for Church Officers  
as Related to Self-Description by Biblical Sins”

**Whereas**, an amendment to *BCO 7* has been sent by the 49th General Assembly to the Presbyteries for consideration, which reads, “Men who describe themselves as homosexual, even those who describe themselves as homosexual and claim to practice celibacy by refraining from homosexual conduct, are disqualified from holding office in the Presbyterian Church in America”; and

**Whereas**, there is concern that this proposed amendment—especially the clause between the commas, “even those who describe themselves as homosexual and claim to practice celibacy by refraining from homosexual conduct”—might tend to confuse the matter even for some who are in complete agreement with the general prohibition of homosexual ordination; and

**Whereas**, if the amendment to *BCO 7* fails to gain the 2/3 requirement of Presbyteries, one can only imagine how it will be publicized that the Presbyterian Church in America actually favors homosexual ordination; and

**Whereas**, the proposed amendment to *BCO 7* assumes biblical support but does not cite any; and

**Whereas**, 1 Cor. 6:9-11 not only forbids identification with many specific sins (including homosexuality) but it adds that whatever sinful inclinations one previously had before justification, now there have been sanctifying changes that establish one’s present identity in the Lord Jesus, by the Spirit of God;

**Therefore be it resolved**, Catawba Valley Presbytery humbly overtures the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America to consider amending *BCO 7* by the addition of a new paragraph, 7-4, as follows (addition underlined):

*BCO 7-4. Men who describe themselves by any biblical sin (such as listed in 1 Cor. 6:9-10, “Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.”) are disqualified from holding office in the Presbyterian Church in America. Instead, they describe themselves by*

1 Cor. 6:11, “And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”

*Adopted by Catawba Valley Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 28, 2023*

*Attested by /s/ TE Scott Deneen, stated clerk*

**OVERTURE 17** from the Session of Meadowview (to CCB, OC)  
Reformed Presbyterian Church, Lexington, NC  
“Amend *BCO 7* To Disqualify from Office Men Describing their Personhood, Being, or Identity by a Sin Struggle”

[Note: This overture was submitted to Piedmont Triad Presbytery for an upcoming meeting by the Session of Meadowview Reformed Presbyterian Church and rejected by Piedmont Triad Presbytery at a called meeting, March 9, 2023 (*RAO 11-10*).]

**Whereas**, God is not the author of confusion but of peace (1 Corinthians 14:33); and

**Whereas**, the world in which we live has confused and rejected Biblical Anthropology and adopted a false conception of personhood, identity, and being; and

**Whereas**, Christians are told not to be conformed to the pattern of this world nor be taken captive by vain philosophies, but to be transformed by a renewed mind, and in doing so to put off the old man and put on the new man (Col. 2:8, Rom. 12:1-2, Eph. 4:22-24); and

**Whereas**, the Biblical Qualifications for a church officer require him to be “above reproach,” therefore candidates for office must conform their lives to Biblical ethics, which include denying and mortifying all sinful passions and desires (1 Tim. 3:1-13, cf. Titus 1:5-9); and

**Whereas**, Churches are commanded that “all sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among them...” (Eph. 5:3); and

**Whereas**, Paul writes “<sup>9</sup>Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, <sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor

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revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup> And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:9-11, emphasis added); and

**Whereas**, the Christian’s identity is rooted in Christ so that he is a “new creation” in Him, his identity cannot be defined by desires or lifestyles that are contrary to the Holy Scriptures; for the Christian there is a clear distinction between self-conception (“this is who I am”) and their remaining indwelling sin (“this is what I must daily mortify”) (Rom. 6:1-14; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 3:1-5); and

**Whereas**, for example, the 47th PCA GA has affirmed the Nashville Statement as a biblically faithful declaration, which states in Article VII, “We deny that adopting a homosexual or transgender self-conception is consistent with God’s holy purposes in creation and redemption.”; and

**Whereas**, the PCA AIC Report on Human Sexuality, Statement 9 explains – “Nevertheless, being honest about our sin struggles is important. While Christians should not identify with their sin so as to embrace it or seek to base their identity on it, Christians ought to acknowledge their sin in an effort to overcome it. There is a difference between speaking about a phenomenological facet of a person’s sin-stained reality and employing the language of sinful desires as a personal identity marker.”

**Therefore, be it resolved** that Meadowview Reformed Presbyterian Church overtures the 50th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America to amend *The Book of Church Order* Chapter 7 such that a new clause, *BCO 7-4*, be added, which reads as follows (new words underlined):

7-4. Men who refer to a particular sin struggle as descriptive of their personhood, being, or identity are disqualified from holding office in the PCA.

*Approved by the Meadowview Reformed Presbyterian Church Session on February 1, 2023.*

*Submitted on February 2 by the Session of Meadowview Reformed Presbyterian Church (MRPC) to Piedmont Triad Presbytery (PTP) for consideration at an upcoming meeting.*



*Rejected by Piedmont Triad Presbytery at a Called Meeting, March 9, 2023, by a vote of 17-17.*

*Attested by/s/ TE Ethan Smith, stated clerk, Piedmont Triad Presbytery.*

**OVERTURE 18** from the Sessions of: (to OC)

Carriage Lane Presbyterian Church, Peachtree City, GA;

Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fayetteville, GA;

East Cobb Presbyterian Church, Marietta, GA;

Tucker Presbyterian Church, Tucker, GA.

“Affirm Christ-Centered Racial Reconciliation and Reject Secular Social Justice and Critical Theory Ideology”

[Note: This overture was adopted by the Sessions of Carriage Lane Presbyterian Church, Covenant Presbyterian Church, East Cobb Presbyterian Church, and Tucker Presbyterian Church, submitted by them to Metro Atlanta Presbytery for its stated meeting on January 24, 2023, and rejected by Metro Atlanta Presbytery at its stated meeting on January 24, 2023.]

**Whereas**, the 44th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) recommitted itself “*to the gospel task of racial reconciliation, diligently seeking effective courses of action to further that goal, with humility, sincerity and zeal, for the glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel*”<sup>17</sup> (italics added); and

**Whereas**, the 46th General Assembly of the PCA received the Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Racial and Ethnic Reconciliation, which includes a Biblical analysis of race<sup>18</sup>, racism, and reconciliation through the redemptive historical lens of creation, fall, and redemption, writing:

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<sup>17</sup> “Minutes of the 44th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America,” June 21-23, 2016, [https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/ga/44th\\_pcaga\\_2016.pdf](https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/ga/44th_pcaga_2016.pdf) (page 76, Overture 43 as amended).

<sup>18</sup> Note: the term “race” as used in the report “is not a scientific classification” but denotes the social use of the word which “not only pertains to the color of skin and other biological factors, but also may include the cultural factors, associations, and assumptions....” “Minutes of the 46th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America” June 12-15, 2018, [https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/ga/46th\\_pcaga\\_2018.pdf](https://www.pcahistory.org/pca/ga/46th_pcaga_2018.pdf), (page 597, “Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Racial and Ethnic Reconciliation”)

### **Creation**

“Adam and Eve as the fountainhead of humanity represent all races in themselves; while they are not identifiable by race or ethnicity, they contain all races and ethnicities. And those races and ethnicities that spring from our first parents bear God’s image. Hence, racism or ethnocentrism—which presumes that one’s race or ethnicity is superior to another—is a denial that all people have been created in the image of God.”<sup>19</sup>

### **Fall**

“...Adam and Eve’s fall into sin happened. And that means that not only is every race contained in Adam and so created in the image of God; every race is contained in Adam and so experiences the effects of the fall (Gen 3). We all participate in the sin of our first parents; we all carry the contagion with us. Hence, no race or ethnicity is more sinful than another.... We all have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory (Rom. 3:23).”<sup>20</sup>

### **Redemption**

Through an exposition of Ephesians 2, the committee writes, “Regardless of racial background reinforced by religious pre-commitments, now in Jesus we have been reconciled to God ‘in one body through the cross’ (2:16). We have a common access to the Father by the Spirit (2:18) and we are fellow citizens of God’s commonwealth (2:19). Whether Jew or Gentile, whether white or black, Asian or Latino, or other races and ethnicities—through the cross of Jesus, we have been and are being reconciled, displaying one new humanity to the watching world”<sup>21</sup>; and

**Whereas**, the “racial and ethnic reconciliation” ad interim report includes practical guidance, pastoral considerations<sup>22</sup> and recommendations for

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 602.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 606.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 610-614.

racial reconciliation,<sup>23</sup> which encourage our elders, churches, and presbyteries to take steps toward cross cultural shepherding and missions and Gospel-driven reconciliation within our churches and in our neighborhoods; and

**Whereas**, a secular ideology involving race and racism is being advocated in public schools<sup>24</sup> and corporations and is becoming commonplace in many churches today<sup>25</sup>. This ideology—referred to at times as “antiracism,” “woke” ideology, or critical social justice (CSJ)—flows downstream from the social philosophy of critical theory, a neo-Marxist (i.e., Gramscian) vision of domination, a movement in legal studies (and beyond) known as critical race theory (CRT), and the postmodern prioritization of subjectivity and power over objective reality and truth<sup>26</sup>. Among its many traits, this layered ideology attempts to define and explain race, racism, and gender in a manner contrary to a Biblical worldview;

**Therefore, be it resolved** that we affirm our desire to seek racial reconciliation in Christ that conforms to the principles of creation, fall, and redemption as taught in the Scriptures and affirmed in our

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 619-625.

<sup>24</sup> "Critical race theory has exploded from a narrow subspecialty of jurisprudence chiefly of interest to academic lawyers into a literature read in departments of education, cultural studies, English, sociology, comparative literature, political science, history, and anthropology around the country." Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (Dev: Darya Ganj, New Delhi, 2017), xvi; Lindsey M. Burke, Jonathan Butcher, and Jay P. Green, eds., *The Critical Classroom: How Critical Race Theory Undermines Academic Excellence and Individual Agency in Education* (Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation, 2022). This volume includes a brief history of Critical Race Theory (CRT); how CRT is being propagated and applied in public schools in America today through school boards, curriculum and instruction; and the impact of CRT in the classroom and on children.

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., Timon Cline, "The 'Critical' Threat of Missions," Patheos.com, August 13, 2020, accessed January 10, 2023, <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/thecantankerouscalvinist/2020/08/13/the-critical-threat-of-missions/>; Neil Shenvi, "Critical Theory Within Evangelicalism," Shenviapologetics.com, accessed January 10, 2023, <https://shenviapologetics.com/critical-theory-within-evangelicalism/>.

<sup>26</sup> Scholarly articles and books explaining and critiquing Critical Social Justice Theory and its derivations are numerous. See, for example, Timothy Keller, "A Biblical Critique of Secular Justice and Critical Theory," Life in the Gospel, accessed January 10, 2023, <https://quarterly.gospelinlife.com/a-biblical-critique-of-secular-justice-and-critical-theory/>

confessional standards, and we recommit ourselves to the practical and pastoral steps involved in biblically based racial reconciliation as recommended by the PCA's ad interim report on racial reconciliation.

Furthermore, we reject secular social justice and critical theory ideology, along with its diverse strands, as antithetical to the Gospel and not the pattern that Scripture gives us for addressing the sin of racism and pursuing a Biblical approach to racial reconciliation. Specifically, we have in mind:

- 1. Its Distinct Use of Classification and Identity in Contrast to a Biblical View of Creation and Union with Christ** – Secular social justice and critical theory ideology interprets an individual's identity according to his/her ethnicity, gender, so-called sexual orientation/preferences, and other traits, many (though not all) of which are immutable and amoral. This categorization feeds into a hierarchical arrangement in which certain groups are said to subjugate others based on their ethnicity, gender, class status, etc. These inter-group divisions and oppressor/oppressed designations reinforce the collective grid by which to measure an individual (their value, worth, or alleged guilt within society), discover social injustices, silence disagreement, and prescribe social change.

By contrast, the Bible teaches that every person is created in God's image, reflects his glory, and bears intrinsic value and worth as such (Gen. 1:27, Col. 3:10). Christians have the additional benefits and blessings of being new creations in Christ, united with him and adopted into the family of God (2 Cor. 5:17, Eph. 2:6, Rom. 6:3-8, Eph. 1:5-10, Gal. 4:5-7). An individual's ethnic background remains spiritually, psychologically, and socially significant, yet fundamentally an individual's identity is either as an image bearer of God redeemed by Christ and united with him, or as an image bearer united to Adam and in need of God's redeeming grace (Rom 8:1-11). This foundational reality about all humanity, and not the oppressor/oppressed designations of the secular ideology identified above, should determine our sense of self and guide our relationships with one another (Eph. 2:13, Gal. 3:28).

**2. A Particular Conception of Guilt in Contrast to a Biblical View of the Fall** – In secular social justice and critical theory ideology, oppressor classes (rather than, say, the individual as a responsible agent, or particular policies—systemic or otherwise—that can be identified, analyzed, and resisted), serve as the locus of culpability within a social system. In other words, an individual’s guilt (defined in terms of the aggrandizement of social goods and power) stems from his/her place within the perceived hierarchy of oppression and identity classification on the basis of skin color, gender, sexual preference or practice, and so on. As a result, genuinely racist or sexist practices and policies tend to be absorbed into, and thereby become undifferentiated from, the collective “guilt” of a perceived oppressor class over against an oppressed class. For example, the color of one’s skin (and/or one’s gender) is said to grant “privilege” and implicate one within a range of supposedly “systemic injustices” in society, as evidenced by unequal outcomes (of capital, education, opportunity, etc.) among racialized groups, regardless of an individual’s particular attitudes, actions, or agency.

The Bible, on the other hand, teaches that all humanity inherits a sinful condition from Adam (original sin) and commits actual sin as individuals and/or as groups of individuals. To be sure, sin can take on “systemic” forms in a society, which must be identified and overturned. But the Bible does not teach a hierarchy of sin and guilt on the basis of ethnicity or other cultural markers. Rather, God indicts all humanity as having sinned in Adam and as having fallen short of his glory (Rom. 3:23). An individual’s color of skin and gender do not carry inherent guilt or grant privilege, but rather reflect the diversity of God’s creation including the creation of every individual as male or female (Gen. 1:27).

- 3. Its Subjective Notion of Knowledge and a Worldly Vision of Redemption in Contrast to a Biblical View of Truth and Redemption** – For secular social justice and critical theory ideology, so-called “lived experience” becomes the main source of prescriptive knowledge, which the ideology then deploys in terms of its matrix of relations of oppression. The remedies envisioned orient to social transformation, deconstruction, reconstruction, and reparations. Reconstruction is envisioned as an inversion of perceived or real present power structures, which happens after a full deconstruction of the deleterious social structures supposedly responsible for experienced oppression. The collective guilt of the oppressor classes does not go away, rather is itself suppressed through these transformations.

For the Bible, knowledge and truth are centered in the self-revelation of the triune God and redemption is centered in Christ and His accomplishment through his cross and resurrection. The final reference point for knowledge, redemption, and all spiritual blessings is external to us (Gen. 1, Jn. 1, Col. 1:15-23). In the Bible, lived experience may be cause for reflection upon foundational truths and their implications, but it is never to be a source of theological or ethical affirmations that contravene biblical truths. Similarly, the remedies proposed by secular social justice and critical theory ideology for the wrongs it identifies do not address, but rather reject, the true source of social ills (the fall, universal depravity, etc.), and they proliferate and amplify our sinful propensities by instigating further division, even by design. This ideology has no concept of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation, which are foundational to the Christian worldview and the only faithful response to the sin present in the world and in each of us, including the sin of racism.

Given the incompatibility of secular social justice and critical theory ideology with Scripture, we believe church leadership should be on guard against (1) beliefs in the church that affirm oppressor classes and minimize the Biblical view of creation and identity, or ways that such beliefs redirect the church’s mission away from a Gospel focus and toward social causes that support and flow from the secular assumptions identified above; (2) views that evidence these secular

falsehoods, such as conceiving of guilt in terms of so-called oppressor classes rather than of the law of God, or interpreting Scripture through a non-theological lens (e.g., perceived experience, secular socio-historical analysis) at the expense of Scripture’s self-witness, hermeneutical supremacy, and Spirit-led intention of the human writer in context; and (3) adoption of secular ideologically-driven remedies for racial reconciliation, even by way of an unholy mixture with Gospel truth, rather than the pursuit of true racial reconciliation in Christ, through the Spirit.

Since this secular ideology and its strands fail to recognize the eternal creator God and the unity of humanity as created in his image; the result of the fall and the character of sin, both individually and corporately; and the redemption and reconciliation that is found in Christ alone, we declare that this ideology’s answer to race and racism is incompatible with the truth of scripture, the PCA’s confessional standards, and our ongoing commitment to *the gospel task of racial reconciliation* and *the furtherance of the gospel*, and therefore disturbs the peace, purity, and unity of the church.

*Adopted by the Sessions of Carriage Lane Presbyterian Church, Covenant Presbyterian Church, East Cobb Presbyterian Church, and Tucker Presbyterian Church and submitted to Metro Atlanta Presbytery for its stated meeting on January 24, 2023.*

*Rejected by Metro Atlanta Presbytery at its stated meeting on January 24, 2023. [The relevant extract of the Presbytery minutes has been provided to the Stated Clerk of the PCA according to RAO 11-10.]*

*Attested by /s/ TE Randy Schlichting, stated clerk, Metro Atlanta Presbytery.*

**OVERTURE 19** from Tennessee Valley Presbytery (to AC)  
 “Request Administrative Committee to Address Questions re  
 Presbytery Jurisdiction and Committee/Agency Employment”

**Whereas** the Tennessee Valley Presbytery (TVP) consists of a number of members who are employed by or serve with an Agency or Permanent Committee of the PCA; and

**Whereas** BCO 8-4 does not address jurisdiction of those who are called to a “needful work”; and

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**Whereas** questions have arisen regarding jurisdiction over Presbytery members when an allegation (such as an abuse allegation) has been made against a member of Presbytery; and

**Whereas** “Every court has the right to resolve questions of doctrine and discipline seriously and reasonably proposed” and “exercises exclusive original jurisdiction over all matters especially belonging to it” (*BCO* 11-4); and

**Whereas** jurisdictional oversight can become complicated when a member of Presbytery is employed by or serves with an Agency or Permanent Committee of the Church which is bound by certain laws or accreditation; and

**Whereas** recent events in other church bodies have demonstrated the need for transparency when allegations of abuse have arisen; and

**Whereas** the TVP requested the Committee on Constitutional Business to give advice on “questions involving the Constitution” (*BCO* 41-2), but the CCB declined to answer since there was no “matter pending before the lower court” (*BCO* 41-1);

**Therefore be it resolved** that the PCA request the Administrative Committee to study and answer the following questions and report back any recommendations to the 51st General Assembly:

1. When a Permanent Committee or Agency of the PCA receives an allegation (such as an abuse allegation) against a Teaching Elder serving with or employed by a Permanent Committee or Agency, must it notify the TE's Presbytery of the allegation?
2. If a Presbytery receives notice from a Permanent Committee or an Agency that it has received an allegation against a Teaching Elder, is the Presbytery required to open a [*BCO*] 31-2 investigation?
3. Is a Permanent Committee or Agency of the PCA, when it has received an allegation against a TE in its service or employ, permitted to conduct and conclude an investigation without informing the TE's Presbytery?
4. Is a Permanent Committee or Agency of the PCA permitted to terminate the service or employment of a TE without notifying the TE's Presbytery of the reasons for termination?

*Adopted by the Tennessee Valley Presbytery at its stated meeting, October 18, 2022*

*Attested by /s/ TE Chris Powell, stated clerk*



**OVERTURE 20** from Potomac Presbytery (to AC)  
“Request Administrative Committee to Research Use of  
Electronic Records for Denominational Purposes”

**Whereas** it is the duty of the clerks of Sessions to record transactions, keep an accurate record of its proceedings, preserve the records carefully, to grant extracts from them whenever properly required, and the duty of Sessions to keep an accurate record of communing and non-communing members, including granting letters of dismissal. “Such extracts under the hand of the clerk shall be evidence to any ecclesiastical court, and to every part of the Church.” (*BCO* 10-4, 12-7) This is all in keeping with the Presbyterian tradition of doing all things decently and in order.

**Whereas** we are in a digital revolution where so much information is now created and maintained in electronic form. Electronic documents and electronic signatures are used for business transactions worldwide, and laws like the Virginia Uniform Electronic Transactions Act provide legal recognition of electronic records, electronic signatures, and electronic contracts. In fact, the Virginia law states, “If a law requires a signature, or provides for certain consequences in the absence of a signature, an electronic signature satisfies the law.” An electronic record can even be electronically created without use of paper.

**Whereas** maintaining electronic records have many benefits, such as ease of searching and communicating, paper reduction, as well as effective storage and preservation (e.g., less prone to loss from fire and flooding), while at the same time there are similar risks as with paper, such as the continued need for maintaining availability, integrity, and confidentiality. Also, there are challenges related to electronic records. One example: one key matter that needs to be evaluated is the kinds of signatures that can be used for electronic documents like Session and congregational meeting minutes.

**Whereas** the denomination still has many processes that do not recognize electronic records or that still require paper records. One example is the “Clerk of Session Handbook” 08/18 which states “All minutes should be typed or legibly written in ink. Since the Session’s records must be archived, minutes should be kept in a bound or lock-type journal.” While at the same time, electronic records are no doubt in use.

**Therefore** be it resolved that Potomac Presbytery hereby overtures the 50th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) for the Administrative Committee and the Office of the Stated Clerk to initiate an effort to identify and make use of records management expertise in the denomination (including the PCA Historical Center) or elsewhere to understand the matter and provide practical and defensible solutions; within two years to provide clerks, churches, and presbyteries with its initial findings and recommendations; and to update the “Clerk of Session Handbook” to address electronic records, to include electronic letters of dismissal to other churches.

*Adopted by the Potomac Presbytery at its stated meeting, March 18, 2023*

*Attested by /s/ TE Joel St. Clair, stated clerk pro tem*

**OVERTURE 21** from the Session of First Presbyterian (to CCB, OC, SJC) Church, Montgomery, Alabama  
“Amend *BCO* 33-1 and 34-1 Specifying Causes and Processes for Original Jurisdiction Requests”

[Note: This overture was submitted to Southeast Alabama Presbytery at its called meeting, March 7, 2023, by TE Reed DePace, commissioner to the Presbytery, on behalf of the Session of First Presbyterian Church, Montgomery, Alabama. It was rejected by the Presbytery at that same called meeting, March 7, 2023 (*RAO* 11-10).]

**Be it resolved** that the 50th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America amend *BCO* 33-1 and 34-1 as follows (strike-through for deletions, underlining for new wording):

**33-1.** Process against ~~all a church members, other than ministers of the Gospel,~~ shall be entered before the Session of the church to which such members belongs, ~~except in cases of appeal.~~ However, if the Session does not indict in either doctrinal cases or instances of public scandal and refuses to act in doctrinal cases or instances of public scandal and two other Sessions of at least five percent (5%) of churches in the same Presbytery (but in no event less than two Sessions) request the

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Presbytery of which the church is a member to ~~initiate proper or appropriate action in a case of process and thus~~ assume original jurisdiction for a case of process and authority, the Presbytery shall do so. The Presbytery may assess the costs thereof equitably among the parties, including the petitioning Sessions and the Session of the church member.

**34-1.** Process against a minister shall be entered before the Presbytery of which he is a member. However, if the Presbytery ~~refuses to act in doctrinal cases or cases of public scandal and two other Presbyteries request~~ does not indict in either doctrinal cases or instances of public scandal, the General Assembly ~~to shall~~ shall assume original jurisdiction ~~(to first receive and initially hear and determine)~~, ~~the General Assembly shall do so.~~, if either: 1) at least five percent (5%) of Presbyteries request the General Assembly do so, or 2) two other Presbyteries request the General Assembly do so and at least one third (1/3) of the Standing Judicial Commission votes in the affirmative to their request. The General Assembly may assess the costs thereof equitably among the parties, including the petitioning Presbyteries and the Presbytery of the minister.

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

**33-1.** Process against a church member shall be entered before the Session of the church to which such member belongs. However, if the Session does not indict in either doctrinal cases or instances of public scandal and Sessions of at least five percent (5%) of churches in the same Presbytery (but in no event less than two Sessions) request the Presbytery of which the church is a member to assume original jurisdiction for a case of process, the Presbytery shall do so. The Presbytery may assess the costs thereof equitably among the parties, including the petitioning Sessions and the Session of the church member.

**34-1.** Process against a minister shall be entered before the Presbytery of which he is a member. However, if the Presbytery does not indict in either doctrinal cases or instances

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of public scandal, the General Assembly shall assume original jurisdiction, if either: 1) at least five percent (5%) of Presbyteries request the General Assembly do so, or 2) two other Presbyteries request the General Assembly do so and at least one third (1/3) of the Standing Judicial Commission votes in the affirmative to their request. The General Assembly may assess the costs thereof equitably among the parties, including the petitioning Presbyteries and the Presbytery of the minister.

### **RATIONALE:**

*BCO 34-1* is a provision that first appears in the PCA *BCO* and has no exact precedent in historical Presbyterian Books of Order. In the few instances in which it has been invoked, there has been great confusion concerning how to apply it. There is no clear standard for “refuses to act” nor is there a clear definition of “doctrinal cases or cases of public scandal,” leading to uncertainty and conflict in applying the provision. The amendment removes these provisions to bring about greater clarity and more precise application.

In our denomination of 88 Presbyteries, a case that requires the assumption of original jurisdiction by the General Assembly should require greater threshold than the current standard of only two Presbyteries (2% of all Presbyteries). The amendment also allows for a flexible standard as the number of Presbyteries increases in the future.

*BCO 33-1* is essentially the same provision as 34-1 at the lower court level, with Sessions requesting a Presbytery to assume original jurisdiction. It has been an anomaly that the language of 33-1 has been different from that of 34-1. The amendment makes changes to bring them into conformity with each other.

*Submitted to Southeast Alabama Presbytery at its called meeting, March 7, 2023, by TE Reed DePace, commissioner to Southeast Alabama Presbytery, on behalf of the Session of First Presbyterian Church, Montgomery, Alabama.*

*Rejected by Southeast Alabama Presbytery at its called meeting, March 7, 2023 (RAO 11-10). Attested by /s/ TE Kevin Corley, stated clerk, Southeast Alabama Presbytery.*

*Approved for submission to the Presbyterian Church in America's General Assembly by the Session of First Presbyterian Church of Montgomery, Alabama, at its stated meeting on March 16, 2023. Attested by /s/ RE Graeme DePace, Clerk of Session.*

**OVERTURE 22** from the Session of First Presbyterian Church (CCB, OC, SJC)

Montgomery, Alabama

“Amend *RAO* 8-4.h; 17-1; and 19-2 to Specify When Minority Reports Are Permitted”

[Note: This overture was submitted to Southeast Alabama Presbytery at its called meeting, March 7, 2023, by TE Reed DePace, commissioner to the Presbytery, on behalf of the Session of First Presbyterian Church, Montgomery, Alabama. It was rejected by the Presbytery at that same called meeting, March 7, 2023 (*RAO* 11-10).]

**Whereas**, the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) decided against allowing a minority report to be presented from members of the Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB) concerning CCB’s examination of the minutes of the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) (*M49GA*, p. 32–33); and

**Whereas**, the PCA has delegated tremendous power to the SJC and retained only CCB’s annual review of the SJC minutes as the sole and exclusive check to ensure that the SJC has not admitted any “prejudicial statements of fact” or committed any “actions which in substance appear not to conform to the Standards of the Presbyterian Church in America, or to be out of accord with the deliverances of the General Assembly” (*RAO* 14-11.d.(2); 17-1); and

**Whereas**, permitting minority reports from CCB to be heard, and allowing a minority report to be moved as a substitute for the report of the committee, is a crucial procedure for the General Assembly to retain in order to make full use of the Assembly’s limited review of SJC proceedings; and

**Whereas**, *RAO* 19-2, as written, requires that minorities from any committee should be given “the privilege of presenting the minority report and moving it as a substitute for the portion of the majority report

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affected,” according to the principles of interpretation outlined in *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (12th ed.) 56:68.(8); and

**Whereas**, nevertheless, the general provision about minority reports in *RAO* 19-2 could be amended to clarify that the rule pertains to all committees, except as specifically provided for elsewhere in the rules; and

**Whereas**, while Committees of Commissioners, Overtures, and RPR already have specific prohibitions and limitations placed on minority reports from within those committees (*RAO* 14-6.h; 15-6.s; 15-8.g; 16-7.h), the Assembly should also specify that minority reports from the Nominating Committee should not be permitted, since any commissioner retains the right to make additional nominations during the General Assembly (*RAO* 8-4.i);

**Therefore be it resolved**, that the 50th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America amend the *Rules of Assembly Operation* 8-4.h, 17-1, and 19-2 as follows (underlining for new wording; strike-through for deletions):

**8-4.h.** The committee shall present its nominations to the Assembly through the *Commissioner Handbook* or *Supplement*. This presentation shall include a brief statement regarding each nominee. A minority report from the Nominating Committee shall not be permitted.

**17-1** (para. 4) The minutes, but not the judicial cases, decisions, or reports, of the Standing Judicial Commission shall be reviewed annually by the Committee on Constitutional Business. The minutes shall be examined for conformity to the “Operating Manual for Standing Judicial Commission” and *RAO* 17, violations of which shall be reported as “exceptions” as defined in *RAO* 14-11.d.(2). With respect to this examination, the Committee on Constitutional Business shall report directly to the General Assembly. If exceptions are taken with respect to a case (whether by the report of the Committee on Constitutional Business, or by a minority report that the Assembly substitutes for the committee report; see *RAO* 19-2), the Assembly may find this a ground to direct the Standing Judicial Commission to retry the case.

**19-2.** Each chairman shall lead the Assembly in a brief prayer before making his report.

Except as otherwise specifically provided in these rules, when  
~~When~~ a minority of a any committee wishes to present a minority report, the member reporting for the minority shall have the privilege of presenting the minority report and moving it as a substitute for the portion of the majority report affected.

So that *RAO* 8-4.h, 17-1, and 19-2, as amended, would read:

**8-4.h.** The committee shall present its nominations to the Assembly through the *Commissioner Handbook* or *Supplement*. This presentation shall include a brief statement regarding each nominee. A minority report from the Nominating Committee shall not be permitted.

**17-1.** ...The minutes, but not the judicial cases, decisions, or reports, of the Standing Judicial Commission shall be reviewed annually by the Committee on Constitutional Business. The minutes shall be examined for conformity to the “Operating Manual for Standing Judicial Commission” and *RAO* 17, violations of which shall be reported as “exceptions” as defined in *RAO* 14-11.d.(2). With respect to this examination, the Committee on Constitutional Business shall report directly to the General Assembly. If exceptions are taken with respect to a case (whether by the report of the Committee on Constitutional Business, or by a minority report that the Assembly substitutes for the committee report; see *RAO* 19-2), the Assembly may find this a ground to direct the Standing Judicial Commission to retry the case.

**19-2.** Each chairman shall lead the Assembly in a brief prayer before making his report.

Except as otherwise specifically provided in these rules, when a minority of any committee wishes to present a minority report, the member reporting for the minority shall have the

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privilege of presenting the minority report and moving it as a substitute for the portion of the majority report affected.

*Submitted to Southeast Alabama Presbytery at its called meeting, March 7, 2023, by TE Reed DePace, commissioner to Southeast Alabama Presbytery, on behalf of the Session of First Presbyterian Church, Montgomery, Alabama.*

*Rejected by Southeast Alabama Presbytery at its called meeting, March 7, 2023 (RAO 11-10). Attested by /s/ TE Kevin Corley, stated clerk, Southeast Alabama Presbytery.*

*Approved for submission to the Presbyterian Church in America's General Assembly by the Session of First Presbyterian Church of Montgomery, Alabama, at its stated meeting on March 16, 2023. Attested by /s/ RE Graeme DePace, Clerk of Session.*

**OVERTURE 23** from Mississippi Valley Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
“Amend BCO 8-2 and 9-3 to Require Officers’ Conformity to Biblical Standards for Chastity and Sexual Purity in Self-description”

**Whereas**, the sins of officers are more heinous by virtue of their office (2 Sam.12:7-9; Ezek. 8:11-12; Rom. 2:17-24; Gal. 2:11-14; Jas. 3:1; WLC 151); and

**Whereas**, the preservation of chastity in body, mind, affections, words, and behavior in oneself is an indispensable duty and qualification for office (1 Tim.3:2; Titus 1:5-9); and

**Whereas**, in the beginning God created them “male and female” after his own image and likeness and ordained the first marriage and family consisting of one man and one woman in sexual union, establishing the divine intention for human sexuality (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:24; 4:1); and

**Whereas**, any expression of sexual attraction or sexual intimacy that is not directed toward the fulfillment of a lifelong covenant of marriage between one man and one woman is contrary to nature and to nature’s God (Lev. 20:15-16; Rom. 1:26-27; Col. 3:5; WLC 20; WLC 28; WLC 139; WLC 148):

**Therefore, be it resolved** that *The Book of Church Order* Chapter 8-2 be amended to insert a new sentence as follows:



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**8-2.** He that fills this office should possess a competency of human learning and be blameless in life, sound in the faith and apt to teach. He should exhibit a sobriety and holiness of life becoming the Gospel. He should conform to the biblical requirement of chastity and sexual purity in his descriptions of himself, his convictions, character, and conduct. He should rule his own house well and should have a good report of them that are outside the Church.

So that the amended *BCO* 8-2 would read as follows (new words underlined):

**8-2.** He that fills this office should possess a competency of human learning and be blameless in life, sound in the faith and apt to teach. He should exhibit a sobriety and holiness of life becoming the Gospel. He should conform to the biblical requirement of chastity and sexual purity in his descriptions of himself, his, convictions, character, and conduct. He should rule his own house well and should have a good report of them that are outside the Church.

**Be it further resolved** that *The Book of Church Order* Chapter 9-3 be amended to insert a new clause as follows:

**9-3.** To the office of deacon, which is spiritual in nature, shall be chosen men of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly spirit, warm sympathies, and sound judgment, conforming to the biblical requirement of chastity and sexual purity in their descriptions of themselves, their convictions, character, and conduct.

So that the amended *BCO* 9-3 would read:

**9-3.** To the office of deacon, which is spiritual in nature, shall be chosen men of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly spirit, warm sympathies, and sound judgment, conforming to the biblical requirement of

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chastity and sexual purity in their descriptions of themselves, their convictions, character, and conduct.

*Adopted by Mississippi Valley Presbytery at its called meeting, March 20, 2023*

*Attested by /s/ TE Christopher Wright, stated clerk*

**OVERTURE 24** from the Chesapeake Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
“Amend *BCO* 8-3 to Include Language from the AIC Report on Human Sexuality for Elder Responsibilities”

**Whereas**, believers united to Jesus Christ are given the privilege and instruction to define and describe themselves in light of their union with Christ and not by their sins (1 Corinthians 6:11; 1 John 3:1-2); and

**Whereas**, believers are to understand themselves as new creations in Christ and different from what they once were (2 Corinthians 5:17); and

**Whereas**, elders and pastors are to be an example to the flock in speech and conduct, and are to watch their life and doctrine closely for the benefit of the flock they shepherd (1 Timothy 4:12, 16); and

**Whereas**, elders are to model in a way that is above reproach giving themselves over as instruments of righteousness to God and mortifying sin (Titus 1:6-7; Romans 6:12-14); and

**Whereas**, elders ought to serve as an example to the flock of how believers should define and describe themselves as new creations in Christ Jesus; and

**Whereas**, the Church of Christ is to be the pillar and foundation of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15) and should speak the truth in love in ways the society understands but not bend to society’s understanding; and

**Whereas**, we and the members of our congregations live in a society where there is a great deal of confusion about and opposition to the truth broadly and narrowly in the area of human sexuality, so that there is an increased pressure to affirm homosexual identity and self-conception; and

**Whereas**, the AIC Report on Human Sexuality was commended by the 48th General Assembly in 2021; and

**Whereas**, the AIC Report<sup>27</sup> says, “Christians are well-served when they can be honest about both their present fallen realities and their hope for sanctification” (p. 906); and

**Whereas**, the AIC Report says, “The goal is not just consistent fleeing from, and regular resistance to, temptation, but the diminishment and even the end of the occurrences of sinful desires through the reordering of the loves of one’s heart toward Christ” (p. 882); and

**Whereas**, the AIC Report says, “Desires that are inconsistent with God’s design are to be resisted and mortified, not celebrated or accommodated” (p. 906); and

**Whereas**, the AIC Report says, “To juxtapose identities rooted in sinful desires alongside the term ‘Christian’ is inconsistent with Biblical language and undermines the spiritual reality that we are new creations in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17)” (p. 884); and

**Whereas**, the AIC Report says, “Christians ought to acknowledge their sin in an effort to overcome it”, and that “we name our sins, but are not named by them” (p. 884); and

**Therefore, let it be resolved** that the Chesapeake Presbytery petitions the 50th General Assembly to amend the *Book of Church Order* 8-3 to read as follows:

**8-3.** It belongs to those in the office of elder, both severally and jointly, to watch diligently over the flock committed to his charge, that no corruption of doctrine or of morals enter therein. They must exercise government and discipline, and take oversight not only of the spiritual interests of the particular church, but also the Church generally when called thereunto. They should visit the people at their homes, especially the sick. They should instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourner, nourish and guard the children of the Church. They should set a worthy example to the flock entrusted to their care by their zeal to evangelize the unconverted, make disciples, and demonstrate hospitality. As those who are to be examples to God’s flock that is under their care, and who are to watch their life and doctrine closely, elders are to

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<sup>27</sup> M48GA, Appendix W, p. 872ff.

understand, describe, and define themselves in light of their union with Christ as justified and holy children of God. They are to guard against setting a damaging or confusing example to the flock by describing or defining themselves by their sinful desires (e.g., from 1 Corinthians 6:9,10 (ESV)... “the sexually immoral, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers,...” etc.), but rather are to endeavor by the grace of God to confess, repent of, and mortify sin and sinful desires, and to present themselves and those entrusted to their care as instruments of righteousness to God. All those duties which private Christians are bound to discharge by the law of love are especially incumbent upon them by divine vocation, and are to be discharged as official duties. They should pray with and for the people, being careful and diligent in seeking the fruit of the preached Word among the flock.

*Adopted by Chesapeake Presbytery at its stated meeting, March 14, 2023*

*Attested by /s/ TE Donald M. Dove, stated clerk*

**OVERTURE 25** from Arizona Presbytery: (to CCB, SJC, OC)  
“Amend *BCO* 31 to Require Expedited and Conflict-free  
Investigations of Cases Involving Moral Failure or Victim(s)”

**Whereas**, the DASA Committee Report<sup>28</sup> says, “For leaders in the church, ‘believe victims’ means taking necessary actions to protect *first*. After physical safety is ensured, church courts can then discern the truth in the allegations,” and

**Whereas**, the innocence of the accused is to be assumed, and

**Whereas**, the court is obligated to investigate any accusations to determine if there is a strong presumption of guilt, and

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<sup>28</sup> “Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault to the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (2019-2022),” *M49GA*, pp. 1000-1001 (emphasis original).

**Whereas**, investigations into theological questions, or into alleged sin without victims, need and can abide significant time to ensure the full depth is probed, but investigations into alleged sin against a victim requires expediency to protect the victim and the accused from undue harm during the investigation, and

**Whereas**, investigations by trained and impartial persons can determine very quickly the credibility of accusations,

**Therefore**, be it resolved that *Book of Church Order* 31 be amended by the addition of the following paragraphs (31-3) as follows (underlining for additions):

31-3. If the report concerns alleged extraordinary moral failing that is public or in which there is an alleged victim (such as abuse of any kind, sexual sin, financial misdealing, etc.), the investigation should be undertaken promptly for the sake of the honor of Christ and the proper pastoral care for the accused and any alleged victims. This investigation shall ordinarily be initiated no more than thirty (30) days from a request to a member of Presbytery, and shall be completed without undue delay.

If such an investigation is initiated for such a report, those investigating will be free from all conflict of interest with the parties being investigated or any parties making accusation. No one may be part of the preliminary investigation who is disqualified according to the standard of SJC Manual 2:10.d.e.

If the court deems it prudent, they shall be permitted to hire professional investigators to ensure impartiality and freedom from conflict of interest.

In cases of alleged criminally chargeable offense, the court and investigation shall show deference to the legal authorities.

So the additional section would read:

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**31-3.** If the report concerns alleged extraordinary moral failing that is public or in which there is an alleged victim (such as abuse of any kind, sexual sin, financial misdealing, *etc.*), the investigation should be undertaken promptly for sake of the honor of Christ and the proper pastoral care for the accused and any alleged victims. This investigation shall ordinarily be initiated no more than thirty (30) days from a request to a member of Presbytery and shall be completed without undue delay.

If such an investigation is initiated for such a report, those investigating will be free from all conflict of interest with the parties being investigated or any parties making accusation. No one may be part of the preliminary investigation who is disqualified according to the standard of SJC Manual 2:10.d,e.

If the court deems it prudent, they shall be permitted to hire professional investigators to ensure impartiality and freedom from conflict of interest.

In cases of alleged criminally chargeable offense, the court and investigation shall show deference to the legal authorities.

**Renumber** *BCO* 31-3 through 31-11 to read 31-4 through 31-12.

*Adopted by Arizona Presbytery at its called meeting, March 30, 2023*

*Attested by /s/ RE Richard Wolfe, stated clerk*

**OVERTURE 26** from Northwest Georgia Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
“Amend *BCO* 7-3 Regarding Titling of Unordained People.”

**Whereas**, the offices of deacon and elder confer titles of dignity and authority in conformity with the Word of God (Acts 6:2, 3, 6; 1 Tim 2:12, 3:1; 1 Peter 5:2-4) and in the *BCO* (8-1, 9-1, 24-6, etc.); and

**Whereas**, God, by the Holy Spirit, makes officers in his church (Acts 20:28); and

**Whereas**, our Standards make clear ordained men should not take on themselves titles that confer inappropriate spiritual weight or preeminence according to *BCO* 7-3; and

**Whereas**, the principles of *BCO* 7-3 apply morally to unordained persons as well (Exodus 20:16); and

**Whereas**, there is harm to the peace and purity of the church by presenting certain people as something they are not by the misuse of biblical titles;

**Therefore be it resolved**, that *BCO* 7-3 be amended by adding the following sentence (underlining for addition):

***BCO* 7**

7-3.No one who holds office in the Church ought to usurp authority therein, or receive official titles of spiritual preeminence, except such as are employed in the Scripture. Furthermore, unordained people should not be referred to as, or given the titles connected to, the ecclesial offices of pastor, elder, or deacon.

So that if adopted it would read:

**7-3.** No one who holds office in the Church ought to usurp authority therein, or receive official titles of spiritual preeminence, except such as are employed in the Scripture. Furthermore, unordained people should not be referred to as, or given the titles connected to, the ecclesial offices of pastor, elder, or deacon.

*Adopted by Northwest Georgia Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 4, 2023*  
*Attested by /s/ TE Robby Baxter, stated clerk*

**OVERTURE 27** from Pacific Northwest Presbytery (to CCB, OC)  
“Amend *BCO* 38-1 re Confessions and Offended Parties”

**Be it resolved** that *BCO* 38-1 be amended. The following shows three paragraphs: the current *BCO* 38-1, then the paragraph with the proposed

amendment annotated, followed by a clean amended paragraph showing the changes incorporated.

**Current** (April 2023)

**38-1.** When any person shall come forward and make his offense known to the court, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded and judgment rendered without process. In handling a confession of guilt, it is essential that the person intends to confess and permit the court to render judgment without process. Statements made by him in the presence of the court must not be taken as a basis of a judgment without process except by his consent. In the event a confession is intended, a written Confession (i.e., a sufficient summary of the facts, the person's specific confession, and any expression or evidence of repentance) must be approved by the accused, and by the court, before the court proceeds to a judgment, and the co-signed document shall be appended to the minutes (regular or executive session). No other information may be presented without written consent from the accused and the court, and this prohibition includes individuals, prosecutors, committees, and commissions. The accused person has the right of complaint against the judgment.

**Proposed** - The amendment proposes to delete the parts shown by strikethrough and add the parts shown underlined. (Footnotes are used only to briefly explain some of these changes, but footnotes *will not* appear in the *BCO*.)

**38-1.** When any person shall come ~~forward and make his offense known to the court,~~ before his court of original jurisdiction<sup>29</sup> and confess to an offense,<sup>30</sup> a full statement of the facts shall be recorded, and judgment rendered without process. The court may assign any or all the following tasks to a commission.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Clarifies that the only court to which this would apply is the court of original jurisdiction.

<sup>30</sup> Clarifies that the person is *confessing* to an offense and not merely "making his offense known."

<sup>31</sup> Reminds the courts that a commission might be a more prudent way to handle *BCO* 38-1 matters.



In handling such a confession of guilt, it is essential that the court<sup>32</sup> be persuaded that the person intends to confess acknowledge the offense and his guilt and permit the court to render judgment without process. The court, with due diligence and great discretion,<sup>33</sup> shall evaluate the accuracy and sufficiency of the statement of facts and confession before it approves the same. Statements made by him in the presence of the court in connection with the provisions of this paragraph shall ~~must~~ not be taken as a basis of a judgment without process except by his the confessor's consent.

In the event a confession is intended, a written Confession (i.e., a sufficient summary of the facts, the person's specific confession, and any expression or The Statement<sup>34</sup> to be recorded (i.e., shall include evidence of repentance) ~~must~~ shall include (1) a summary of the facts, (2) the person's confession as above, (3) any evidence of repentance, and (4) a description of the confessor's efforts to reconcile with any individuals against whom the court deems his offense bears a special relation (BCO 29-3).<sup>35</sup>

The written Statement must be approved by the ~~accused~~ confessor<sup>36</sup>, and by the court, before the court proceeds to a judgment, and the co-signed document shall be appended to the minutes (regular or executive session). No other information may be presented without written consent from the ~~accused~~ confessor and the court, ~~and this~~ This prohibition includes information from individuals, prosecutors, committees, and commissions.

In any instances involving a personal offense (BCO 29-3), the court shall attempt to inform the offended person(s) of that part of

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<sup>32</sup> It is important that the *court* be persuaded of such, and not just the confessor intending such.

<sup>33</sup> Mirrors the wording of *BCO* 31-2 to remind the court of the standards for evaluation.

<sup>34</sup> Because the document will have four parts, including a confession, it's probably more helpful to call it a "Statement" than a "Confession."

<sup>35</sup> Ordinarily, it's important to ascertain what efforts were made at reconciliation. But it should be the court, and not just anyone who believes he was offended against, that ultimately decides who should be invited to provide comment. See also Rationale point 4 on when interaction between offender and offended should be mediated.

<sup>36</sup> It's more accurate to describe the person as the "confessor" rather than as the "accused."

the Statement the court deems pertinent to the offense against him or her. The court shall invite the offended person to provide the court comment on the Statement prior to final approval of the Statement by the confessor and the court. The court shall encourage the offended person to enlist the help of an advisor in preparing any such comments.<sup>37</sup> In all instances, the court shall report the way such offended persons were informed of the parts of the Statement pertinent to them.

The accused person has the right of complaint against the judgment.

**Clean** - Below is how 38-1 would read if the amendment is adopted as shown above.

**38-1.** When any person shall come before his court of original jurisdiction and confess to an offense, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded, and judgment rendered without process. The court may assign any or all the following tasks to a commission.

In handling such a confession it is essential that the court be persuaded that the person intends to acknowledge the offense and his guilt and permit the court to render judgment without process. The court, with due diligence and great discretion, shall evaluate the accuracy and sufficiency of the statement of facts and confession before it approves the same. Statements made in the presence of the court in connection with the provisions of this paragraph shall not be taken as a basis of a judgment without process, except by the confessor's consent.

The Statement to be recorded shall include (1) a summary of the facts, (2) the person's confession as above, (3) any evidence of repentance, and (4) a description of the confessor's efforts to reconcile with any individuals against whom the court deems his offense bears a special relation (*BCO 29-3*).

The written Statement must be approved by the confessor and by the court before the court proceeds to a judgment, and the co-signed document shall be appended to the minutes (regular or

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<sup>37</sup> In many instances, the offended person will be unfamiliar with PCA procedures and should be encouraged to enlist the help of an advisor. The court might even consider recommending one. In addition, apart from BCO procedures, this advisor could be valuable in helping the offended person frame any comments.

executive session). No other information may be presented without written consent from the confessor and the court. This prohibition includes information from individuals, prosecutors, committees, and commissions.

In any instances involving a personal offense (*BCO 29-3*), the court shall attempt to inform the offended person(s) of that part of the Statement the court deems pertinent to the offense against him or her. The court shall invite the offended person to provide the court comment on the Statement prior to final approval of the Statement by the confessor and the court. The court shall encourage the offended person to enlist the help of an advisor in preparing any such comments. In all instances, the court shall report the way such offended persons were informed of the parts of the Statement pertinent to them.

The accused person has the right of complaint against the judgment.

### **Rationale**

1. The amendment should aid courts in taking adequate steps to evaluate the integrity of a confession and have reasonable assurance of both its accuracy and sufficiency.
2. At present, there's no constitutional requirement in *BCO 38-1* for courts (or their commissions) to ascertain, from a person against whom the court deems a personal offense was committed, his or her comment or response to a confession. This amendment would require courts to invite such a person to review and comment on the written Statement prior to its approval by the court and the confessor, but it would be entirely voluntary for the offended person. And the court (or its commission) must record how it informed, or tried to inform, that person.
3. While the court would invite comment from offended persons for whom the court deems comment is warranted, those comments would not ordinarily become part of the final Statement or recorded in the court's minutes. And it would be *unnecessary* when the court authorizes a commission to handle the *BCO 38-1* process to completion, because the voting members of that commission would be fully aware of the comments

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from offended parties when the commission votes on the sufficiency of the Statement, and on any censure thereafter.

4. Regarding reconciliation attempts, we note that in some instances it might not be appropriate for an offender to attempt to reconcile with an offended party without some sort of mediation and guidance, and such efforts to reconcile should not be forced on the offended party. (See, in the 2022 Report of the GA's Ad Interim Committee on Domestic Abuse & Sexual Assault, Appendix 9: *Forgiveness*, pp. 2485-88, and Appendix 10: *Repentance*, pp. 2489-91. [www.pcahistory.org](http://www.pcahistory.org))
5. If an offended person's comments bring into question the accuracy or sufficiency of the written Statement, and the confessor declines to amend it, the court will exercise its judgment and discretion in determining the adequacy of the written Statement. If there are significant differences between facts presented by the confessor and those in the offended person's comments that can't be reconciled, the court might need to consider whether formal judicial process would be more suited to resolve the matter.

In all instances, the confessor should be aware, or made aware, that if the *BCO* 38-1 process does not go to completion, and the matter goes to trial, any statements he made during the incomplete *BCO* 38-1 process might be admissible during judicial process.

6. At the presbytery level, it would seem best for a *BCO* 38-1 matter to be handled by a commission having full authority to render the final decision on adequacy of the written Statement. (At present, that would be a *BCO* 15-1 commission, not a 15-3 commission.) Otherwise, presbyteries run the risk of introducing information additional to what's in the Statement, which could invalidate the *BCO* 38-1 process. (See SJC Decisions in Cases 2019-10 *Evans v. Arizona*, 2019-04 *Williams v. Chesapeake*, and 2020-07 *Wilbourne v. Pacific*. Each of these three complaints were sustained due to additional information being introduced.)

The use of full-authority commissions for *BCO* 38-1 matters might become more common in the future because the amendments proposed to *BCO* 15-1 and 15-3 last year appear to have received sufficient support from our presbyteries. As of April 11, 2023 the unofficial presbytery vote on Item 3 was 66 in favor and 13 against (with nine not yet reported), which means it has been affirmed by 75% of our 88 presbyteries. Last

year, the Birmingham Overtures Committee recommended approval of the amendments by a vote of 126-2 and the 49th GA sent to presbyteries by a vote of 2,062-33 (in the omnibus). If the amendments to *BCO* 15-1 and 15-3 are approved and enacted by the 50th GA, it will allow a presbytery to appoint a commission to adjudicate *any* matters without needing to make *any* final recommendation to presbytery.

7. Note: The 49th GA approved two amendments to *BCO* 38-1 and sent them to presbyteries for a vote. As of April 11, 2023, presbyteries had voted 77-1 & 78-0 in favor. If the 50<sup>th</sup> GA in Memphis also approves them, then the current final sentence in *BCO* 38-1 ("*The accused person has the right of complaint against the judgment*") will be revised to read: "A censured person has the right to appeal (*BCO* 42)." And an additional sentence will be added after it: "The person has the right to be assisted by counsel at any point, in accord with the stipulations of *BCO* 32-19." These two new sentences would not be touched or effected by this Overture.

*Initially considered by Pacific NW Presbytery at its Stated Meeting on February 3, 2023.*

*Approved by a Pacific NW BCO 15-1 Commission on April 12, 2023.*

*Attested by TE Nathan Chambers, Pacific NW Clerk*

**OVERTURE 28** from Calvary Presbytery (to OC, AC)

"Declare Message to All Nations a Faithful Expression of Biblical Polity Shaping the PCA"

**Whereas** it is good for the PCA to remember the reasons for its founding, and there is no more important statement than the 1973 "Message to All Churches of Jesus Christ throughout the World," and

**Whereas** the Presbyterian Church in America has taken her place among the family of Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ, "we take this opportunity to address all Churches by way of a testimony" and to renew our original Message to all Churches (as amended) on the 50th Anniversary of its adoption.

### **Message to All Churches**

We gather as a true branch of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. We affirm our allegiance to Him as the sole Head of the Church and the sole Law-giver in Zion. We remember that “the gates of hell shall not prevail” against His Church.

The constituency of this new denomination for the most part have separated themselves from the Presbyterian Church in the United States. The decision to separate has come only after long years of struggle and heartache on the part of many of us to return the Church to purity of faith and practice. Principle and conviction entered into that decision, reached only after much soul searching and earnest prayer. We have reluctantly accepted the necessity of separation, deeming loyalty to Christ to take precedence over relationship to any earthly institution, even to a visible branch of the Church of Christ.

In much prayer and with great sorrow and mourning we have concluded that to practice the principle of purity in the Church visible, we must pay the price of separation. We desire to elaborate upon those principles and convictions that have brought us to that decision.

We are convinced that our former denomination as a whole, and in its leadership, no longer holds those views regarding the nature and mission of the Church, which we accept as both true and essential. When we judged that there was no human remedy for this situation, and in the absence of evidence that God would intervene, we were compelled to raise a new banner bearing the historic, Scriptural faith of our forefathers.

First, we declare the basis of the authority for the Church. According to the Christian faith, the Bible is the Word of God written and carries the authority of its divine Author. We believe the Bible itself asserts that it has been given by inspiration, or, more literally, has been “God-breathed” (II Timothy 3:16). “No prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit” (II Peter 1:21). We declare, therefore, that the Bible is the very Word of God, so inspired in the whole and in all its parts, as in the original autographs, to be the inerrant Word of God. It is, therefore, the only infallible and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice.

This was the position of the founding fathers of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. We affirm with them in their “Address to All Churches” the application of this principle to the Church and her mission:

Let it be distinctly borne in mind that the only rule of judgment is the written Word of God. The Church knows nothing of the intuitions of reason or the deductions of philosophy, except those reproduced in the Sacred Canon. She has a positive constitution in the Holy Scriptures, and has no right to utter a single syllable upon any subject except as the Lord puts words in her mouth. She is founded, in other words, upon express revelation. Her creed is an authoritative testimony of God, and not speculation, and what she proclaims she must proclaim with the infallible certitude of faith, and not with the hesitating assent of an opinion.

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We have called ourselves “Continuing” Presbyterians because we seek to continue the faith of the founding fathers of that Church. Deviations in doctrine and practice from historic Presbyterian positions as evident in the Presbyterian Church in the United States, result from accepting other sources of authority, and from making them coordinate or superior to the divine Word. A diluted theology, a gospel tending towards humanism, an unbiblical view of marriage and divorce, the ordination of women, financing of abortion on socio-economic grounds, and numerous other non-Biblical positions are all traceable to a different view of Scripture from that we hold and that which was held by the Southern Presbyterian forefathers.

Change in the Presbyterian Church in the United States came as a gradual thing, and its ascendancy in the denomination, over a long period of time. We confess that it should not have been permitted. Views and practices that undermine and supplant the system of doctrine or polity of a confessional Church ought never to be tolerated. A Church that will not exercise discipline will not long be able to maintain pure doctrine or godly practice.

When a denomination will not exercise discipline and its courts have become heterodox or disposed to tolerate error, the minority finds itself in the anomalous position of being submissive to a tolerant and erring majority. In order to proclaim the truth and to practice the discipline which they believe obedience to Christ requires, it then becomes necessary for them to separate. This is the exercise of discipline in reverse. It is how we view our separation.

Some of our brethren have felt that the present circumstances do not yet call for such a remedy.



They remain in the Presbyterian Church in the United States. We trust they will continue to contend for the faith, though our departure makes their position more difficult. We express to them our hope that God will bless their efforts, and that there may come a genuine spiritual awakening in the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

We trust that our departure may cause those who control and direct the programs and policies of the Presbyterian Church in the United States to reexamine their own position in the light of the Word. Our prayer is that God may use this movement to promote spiritual awakening, not only in the new Church, but also in that from which we have separated. If in the providence of God, such were to occur, we would gladly acknowledge that the grounds for separation and division would have to be reassessed.

We declare also that we believe the system of doctrine found in God's Word to be the system known as the Reformed Faith. We are committed without reservation to the Reformed Faith as set forth in the Westminster Confession and Catechisms. It is our conviction that the Reformed faith is not sectarian, but an authentic and valid expression of Biblical Christianity. We believe it is our duty to seek fellowship and unity with all who profess this faith. We particularly wish to labor with other Christians committed to this theology.

We further renew and reaffirm our understanding of the nature and mission of the Church. We have declared that Christ is King and only Law-giver in Zion. He has established the Church. His Church is a spiritual reality. As such it is made up of all the elect from all ages. This spiritual entity is manifested visibly upon the earth.

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The Church visible is found wherever there are those who profess the true faith together with their children. As an assembly of those who do so profess this faith, we have established this denomination in the belief that it is a true branch of the Christian Church.

We believe the Church in its visible aspect is still essentially a spiritual organism. As such, its authority, motivation and power come from Christ, the Head, who is seated at the right hand of God. He has given us His rulebook for the Church, namely, the Word of God written. We understand the task of the Church to be primarily declarative and ministerial, not legislative or magisterial. It is our duty to set forth what He has given us in His Word and not to devise our own message or legislate our own laws.

We declare that the ultimate purpose of the Church is to glorify God. We believe this includes giving top priority to Christ's Great Commission. We reaffirm the substance of the position taken by the founding fathers of our former Church regarding the mission of the Church:

We desire distinctly and deliberately to inscribe on our Church's banner, as she now unfurls it to the world, in immediate subservience to the authority of our Lord as Head and King of the Church His last command: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." We regard this as the great end of our organization, and obedience to it, as the indispensable condition of our Lord's promised presence. It is the one great

comprehensive objective, a proper conception of whose grandeur and magnitude is the only thing which, under the constraining love of Christ, can ever sufficiently arouse our energies and develop our resources so as to cause us to carry on with that vigor and efficiency, which true loyalty to our Lord demands, those other agencies necessary to our internal growth and prosperity at home.”

As a Church, we consciously seek to return to the historic Presbyterian view of Church government. We reaffirm in the words of that earlier “Address to All Churches” the following:

*The only thing that will be at all peculiar to us is the manner in which we shall attempt to discharge our duty. In almost every department of labor, except the pastoral care of congregations, it has been usual for the Church to resort to societies more or less closely connected with itself, and yet logically and really distinct. It is our purpose to rely upon the regular organs of our government, and executive agencies directly and immediately responsible to them. We wish to make the Church, not merely a superintendent, but an agent. We wish to develop the idea that the congregation of believers, as visibly organized is the very society or corporation which is divinely called to do the work of the Lord. We shall, therefore, endeavor to do what has never been adequately done--- bring out the energies of our Presbyterian system of government. From the session to the Assembly, we shall strive to enlist all our courts, as courts, in every department of Christian effort. We are not ashamed to*

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*confess that we are intensely Presbyterian. We embrace all other denominations in the arms of Christian fellowship and love, but our own scheme of government we humbly believe to be according to the pattern shown in the Mount, and, by God's grace, we propose to put its efficiency to the test.*

We agree with the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley who in 2016 declared:

*We rightly own the good Gospel legacy of the movement of Bible-believing, Reformed Christians who brought us into being, and recognize our indebtedness to them, while we also acknowledge the sins and failures of our movement and denomination, including in those areas that have ongoing and significant negative ramifications for the unity, ministry and witness of the church today.*

As this new member of the family of Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ comes into being, we necessarily profess the Biblical doctrine of the unity of all who are in Christ. We know that what happens in one portion of His Church affects all of the Body of Christ. We covet the prayers of all Christians that we may witness and serve responsibly. We desire to pursue peace and charity with love towards fellow Christians throughout the world.

To the Presbyterian Church in the United States, in particular, we express our continued love and concern. You are our spiritual mother, in your arms we were nurtured, under your ordinances we were baptized, in your courts we were ordained to serve our Lord and King, and to your visible organization

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we thought we had committed our lives. We sever these ties only with deepest regret and sorrow. We hope that our going may in some way recall you to that historic witness which we cherish as our common heritage.

We greet all believers in an affirmation of the bonds of Christian brotherhood. We invite into ecclesiastical fellowship all who maintain our principles of faith and order.

We now commend ourselves to God and the Word of His power. We devoutly pray that the Church catholic may be filled afresh with the Holy Spirit, and that she may speedily be stirred up to take no rest until the Lord accomplishes His Kingdom, making Zion a praise in the whole earth.

December 7, 1973, the First General Assembly  
June of 2023, the Fiftieth General Assembly

**Therefore**, be it resolved that the 50th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America declare the “Message to All Nations” a faithful expression of Biblical polity which shaped the founding of the PCA in 1973. And

**Therefore**, the General Assembly directs its Stated Clerk to send this letter to the Presbyterian Church in the USA via its Stated Clerk as a communication from a loving daughter to a prodigal mother.

*Adopted unanimously by the Calvary Presbytery at its stated meeting, January 28, 2023*

*Attested by /s/ RE Melton L. Duncan, stated clerk*

**OVERTURE 29** from Southern New England Presbytery (to PCAF)  
“Direct the Board of the PCA Foundation to Adopt a Policy on Risk Management”

**Be it resolved** to direct the Board of Directors of the PCA Foundation to adopt a policy requiring prudent and conservative management of the risks

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associated with the activities of the Foundation; requiring Board oversight of the Foundation's risk management; and addressing financial, reputational, and legal risks as well as any other risks identified by the Board.

### **Rationale:**

The PCA Foundation benefits the denomination by offering services to donors, such as donor-advised funds. In these funds, which make up most of the Foundation's assets, a donor makes a gift to the Foundation and then typically requests the Foundation donate the funds to a specific organization, which may or may not be related to the Presbyterian Church in America.

While most contributions to the Foundation are straightforward gifts of marketable securities, the Foundation also performs more risky activities, such as the receipt of "complex gifts," including donations of entire businesses. Accepting complex gifts introduces risks to the Foundation, and by extension, to the PCA as a whole. These risks include financial, reputational, and legal risks.

Financial risk is introduced when the Foundation receives gifts that may cause it to incur future losses or liabilities. Reputational risk is introduced when gifts cause moral or ethical concerns or may result in negative publicity. Legal risk is introduced when a transaction puts the Foundation's status as a non-profit public charity at risk. These risks must be carefully managed to ensure the Foundation can continue serving donors and to prevent damage to the denomination.

The Foundation's current policies related to risk management have not been substantially updated since their initial adoption in 1995. In recent years the Foundation has begun to accept complex gifts more often and of a much larger size. The existing policies do not effectively address the range and level of risks associated with these activities.

The Foundation's current policies prevent effective oversight by General Assembly. The current policies generally place responsibility for risk management on the President of the Foundation rather than on the Board, which is accountable to the Assembly. Current policies require the President of the Foundation to seek approval from individual members of the Board when a transaction exposes the Foundation to elevated risk, but the Board itself

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does not have to act. By placing responsibility on individual members of the Board, the risk management activities of the Foundation are outside of General Assembly's review and control. It is inappropriate for individual members of the Board to carry responsibility for the Foundation. Ultimate responsibility for risk management must lie with the Board itself, as designated by General Assembly.

The Board of the Foundation should adopt a policy codifying their oversight of the Foundation's approach to risk management. This policy should require prudent and conservative management of the various risks introduced by the Foundation's activities, including financial, reputational, and legal risks. By doing so, the Board will ensure the Foundation may continue serving the denomination for many years to come.

*Adopted by Southern New England Presbytery at its stated meeting, April 28-29, 2023*

*Attested by /s/ RE Ron Heald, stated clerk*

**APPENDIX W**

**COMMUNICATIONS**  
**TO THE FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

**COMMUNICATION 1** from The Kosin Korean Presbyterian Church  
In Korea to The Presbyterian Church In America

Rev. O. H. Kwon, Moderator  
Presbyterian Church in Korea ("Kosin")  
10-5, Gomurae-ro, Seocho-gu  
Seoul, Republic of Korea, 06593

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Presbyterian Church in America,

As leaders and members of the Presbyterian Church in Korea ("Kosin"), we extend our heartfelt condolences to the families and loved ones affected by the tragic school shooting in Nashville. We are grieved and deeply saddened by this senseless act of violence, and our thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time.

We remember with gratitude the dedication and love of the missionaries sent by the PCA over a century ago. Their tireless work to spread the Gospel has left a lasting impact on our church and the Korean Christian community. In this time of sorrow, we stand with you, our brothers and sisters in the PCA, as one family in Christ.

We pray for healing and comfort for the families of the victims and for our brothers and sisters in the church. May the Lord's love and grace envelop you and provide strength as you navigate through these trying times.

In Christ's love and solidarity,

Rev. O. H. Kwon, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Korea  
("Kosin")  
10-5, Gomurae-ro, Seocho-gu  
Seoul, Republic of Korea, 06593



# APPENDIX X

## THE WORSHIP OF GOD Tuesday, June 13, 2023 • 6:30 p.m.

### THE CHORAL AND ORCHESTRAL PRELUDE (6:00 P.M.)

“Great Is Thy Faithfulness”	arr. Arron Powell
“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”	arr. Mack Wilberg
“And Can It Be?”	Dan Forrest
“Psalm 100”	René Clausen
“Fairest Lord Jesus”	Derek Hakes/Craig Courtney
“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”	arr. Dan Forrest

### THE CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

### THE CHORAL INTROIT

“Great Is Thy Faithfulness”	arr. Dan Forrest
* <i>Congregation joins on last refrain.</i> Words: Thomas Chisholm, 1923	

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see:  
All I have needed thy hand hath provided— Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

### \* THE CALL TO WORSHIP • PSALM 90

The Minister: Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

The People: You return man to dust and say, “Return, O children of man!” For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.

The Minister: Teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom. Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

The People: Let your work be shown to your servants, and your glorious power to their children.

All: Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hand upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands! Amen! Let us worship God!

\* *Please stand as you are able.*

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

\* THE HYMN OF PRAISE

“Our God, Our Help in Ages Past”

ST. ANNE

Words: Isaac Watts, 1719

Our God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,  
Our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home:

Under the shadow of your throne your saints have dwelt secure;  
Sufficient is your arm alone, and our defense is sure.

Before the hills in order stood, or earth received her frame,  
From everlasting you are God, to endless years the same.

A thousand ages in your sight are like an evening gone;  
Short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.

The busy tribes of flesh and blood, with all their lives and cares,  
Are carried downward by your flood, and lost in foll'wing years.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all its sons away;  
They fly forgotten, as a dream dies at the op'ning day.

Our God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come:  
O be our guard while troubles last, and our eternal home.

\* THE PRAYER OF ADORATION

\* THE ASCRIPTION OF PRAISE

FAITHFULNESS

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see:  
All I have needed thy hand hath provided—Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

THE CONFESSION OF SIN

O Lord God, eternal and almighty Father, we confess and acknowledge unfeignedly before your holy majesty that we are poor sinners, conceived and born in iniquity and corruption, prone to do evil, incapable of any good, and that in our depravity we transgress your holy commandments without end or ceasing. We are grieved that we have offended you; and we condemn ourselves and our sins with true repentance, beseeching your grace to relieve our distress. O God

## APPENDIX X

and Father, most gracious and full of compassion, have mercy upon us in the name of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we pray, Amen. — *Communion Liturgy of John Calvin*

### THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. — *Romans 8:38-39*

### \* THE DOXOLOGY

LASST UNS ERFREUEN, arr. John Rutter  
Words: St. Francis of Assisi, ca. 1225

Let all things their Creator bless, and worship him in humbleness, O praise him, alleluia!  
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son, and praise the Spirit, three in one,  
O praise him, O praise him, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

### \* THE STATEMENT OF FAITH • HEIDELBERG CATECHISM, LORD'S DAY 1

The Minister: What is your only comfort in life and in death?

The People: That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven; in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.

The Minister: What must you know to live and die in the joy of this comfort?

The People: Three things: first, how great my sin and misery are; second, how I am set free from all my sins and misery; third, how I am to thank God for such deliverance.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THE PRAYER OF INTERCESSION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. *Amen.*

THE OFFERTORY

“Forevermore” Dan Forrest, Quoting ST. ANNE  
Words: Susan Boersma

*Commissioned by Covenant Presbytery in honor of  
the 50th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA),  
Memphis, Tennessee, 2023, celebrating God's continuing faithfulness to our denomination.*

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Word of God, the Cornerstone,  
Yesterday, today, forever, seated on his heav'nly throne.  
In this world that God created, broken by the fall of man,  
God remains the sure foundation, steadfast and unshakable, forevermore.

*Choir and Congregation:*

O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come,  
Our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.

God will not forget his promise—ever faithful to remain,  
Never to forsake or leave us, by our side both night and day.  
Our tomorrows hold no secrets that the Father does not know;  
We can trust him, ever working for his glory and our good, forevermore.

*Choir and Congregation:*

Under the shadow of thy throne thy saints have dwelt secure;  
Sufficient is thine arm alone, and our defense is sure.

Praise the author of Creation, of the world and all it holds;  
Word eternal, standing firm Our God is God forevermore.

*Choir and Congregation:*

O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come,  
Be thou our guard while life shall last, and our eternal home.

Forevermore, Forevermore, Forevermore!

## APPENDIX X

### THE WAYS TO GIVE

*Text GIVE to (866) 870-6308 or scan the QR code at the front of the worship booklet.*

### THE SCRIPTURE READING • LAMENTATIONS 3:19-24

*The Minister:* This is the Word of the Lord.

*The People:* Thanks be to God.

### THE SERMON • “THIS I CALL TO MIND”

Dr. Randy E. Thompson | Senior Pastor, First Presbyterian Church | Tuscumbia, Alabama

### THE CALL TO THE FEAST

“Rise Up, My Soul”

Alice Parker

Words: George Moses Horton, 1829

Hallelujah, Hallelujah! Rise up, my soul, and let us go up to the Gospel feast;  
Gird on the garment white as snow to join and be a guest.

Hallelujah, Hallelujah! Dost thou not hear the trumpet call for thee, my soul, for thee?  
Not only thee, my soul, but all may rise and enter free. Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

### THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

#### THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

#### THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. — *1 Corinthians 11:26*

THE ELEMENTS SERVED DURING THE LORD’S SUPPER TODAY ARE GLUTEN-FREE.

### THE MUSIC DURING THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS

“There Is a Fountain (Gabriel’s Oboe)”

Karl Diggerness  
(Ennio Morricone)  
arr. Arron Powell

“The King of Love My Shepherd Is”

arr. Dan Forrest

## MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### \* THE HYMN OF RESPONSE

“For All the Saints”

SINE NOMINE

Words: William How, 1864, 1875

For all the saints who from their labors rest, who thee by faith before the world confessed,  
Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thou wast their rock, their fortress, and their might; thou, Lord, their Captain  
in the well-fought fight;  
Thou, in the darkness drear, their one true light. Alleluia! Alleluia!

O may thy soldiers faithful, true, and bold, fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,  
And win with them the victor’s crown of gold. Alleluia! Alleluia!

The golden evening brightens in the west; soon, soon to faithful warriors comes their rest;  
Sweet is the calm of paradise the blest. Alleluia! Alleluia!

But lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day; the saints triumphant rise in bright array;  
The King of glory passes on his way. Alleluia! Alleluia!

From earth’s wide bounds, from ocean’s farthest coast,  
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,  
Singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Alleluia! Alleluia!

### THE CHORAL RESPONSE

“To the Lamb on the Throne”

Dan Forrest

Words: Charles Wesley, 1744

*\*Congregation joins on the last verse.*

Then let us adore and give him his right, all glory and pow’r, all wisdom and might,  
All honor and blessing with angels above, and thanks never ceasing and infinite love.

### \* THE BENEDICTION

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#### WORSHIP LEADERS

Dr. Sean Michael Lucas, *Senior Pastor | Independent Presbyterian Church | Memphis, TN*

Rev. Robert O. Browning, *Associate Pastor | Independent Presbyterian Church | Memphis, TN*

Mr. James A. Brown, Jr., *Director of Worship and Music Ministries | Independent  
Presbyterian Church | Memphis, TN*

Mrs. Jennifer P.K. Velázquez, *Interim Music Associate | Independent Presbyterian Church |  
Memphis, TN*

Mr. R. Arron Powell, *Instrumental Music Coordinator | Independent Presbyterian Church |  
Memphis, TN*

Mr. Thomas R. Horner, *Baritone Soloist | Independent Presbyterian Church | Memphis, TN*

## APPENDIX X

The General Assembly Choir, including members from the following PCA churches:

Briarwood Presbyterian Church, *Birmingham, AL*

Eastwood Presbyterian Church, *Montgomery, AL*

Trinity Presbyterian Church, *Montgomery, AL*

First Presbyterian Church, *Prattville, AL*

Covenant Presbyterian Church, *Fort Smith, AR*

Trinity Fellowship Church, *Sherwood, AR*

Grace Presbyterian Church, *Washington, D.C.*

Christ Covenant Church, *Hernando, MS*

Pear Orchard Presbyterian Church, *Jackson, MS*

Christ Presbyterian Church, *Olive Branch, MS*

Covenant Presbyterian Church, *St. Louis, MO*

Lookout Mountain Presbyterian Church, *Chattanooga, TN*

Faith Presbyterian Church, *Goodlettsville, TN*

Grace Community Church, *Memphis, TN*

Independent Presbyterian Church, *Memphis, TN*

Riveroaks Reformed Presbyterian Church, *Memphis, TN*

Redeemer Fellowship Church, *Nashville, TN*

Park Cities Presbyterian Church, *Dallas, TX*

Denton Presbyterian Church, *Denton, TX*

The Orchestra, including members of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra, contracted by Greg Luscombe

### THE WORSHIP OF GOD

Wednesday, June 14, 2023 • 4:45 p.m.

Call to Worship	From Isaiah 40:28-31
Invocation	
Song of Praise	“O God Beyond All Praising”
Confession of Sin	Adapted from Psalm 119
Assurance of Pardon	John 10:27-28
Song of Assurance	“Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy”
Song of Preparation	“Yet Not I, But Through Christ in Me”
Scripture Reading	Ephesians 1:18-23
Sermon	“Strength for Today”
	Dr. J Ligon Duncan III, <i>CEO and Chancellor, Reformed Theological Seminary</i>
Song of Sending	“Be Thou My Vision”
Benediction	

#### Worship Leaders

*Rev. Matt Howell, Senior Pastor, Redeemer Presbyterian Church | Memphis, TN*

*Dr. J. Ligon Duncan III, CEO and Chancellor, Reformed Theological Seminary*

*Rev. Ashley Dusenbery, Senior Pastor, Grace Community Church | Cordova, TN*

## MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

*Mr. Philip Himebook, Music Director, Grace Community Church | Cordova, TN*  
*Mr. Stephen Gordon, Worship Arts Director, Redeemer Presbyterian Church | Memphis, TN*  
*Ms. Alice Hasen, Violin, Redeemer Presbyterian Church | Memphis, TN*  
*Ms. Samantha Long, Bass Guitar, Redeemer Presbyterian Church | Memphis, TN*  
*Mr. Danny Banks, Drums, Redeemer Presbyterian Church | Memphis, TN*  
*Mr. Tony Thomas, Keys, Redeemer Presbyterian Church | Memphis, TN*  
*Ms. Whitney Winkler, Vocals, Redeemer Presbyterian Church | Memphis, TN*

### **THE WORSHIP OF GOD** **Thursday, June 15, 2023 • 7:30 p.m.**

Call To Worship Psalm 145:1-7, 13  
Hymn of Praise “And Can It Be That I Should Gain”  
Prayer of Adoration and Invocation  
Corporate Affirmation of Faith Adapted from Ephesians 2:14-22  
Hymn “The Church’s One Foundation”  
Call to Confession  
    Corporate Confession of Sin, Silent Confession of Sin  
Assurance of Forgiveness Through Christ 2 Peter 3:8-9, 13-14  
Hymn of Rejoicing “Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery”  
Pastoral Prayer and The Lord’s Prayer  
Scripture Reading Isaiah 28:14-22  
Sermon “Scoffer and The Stone”  
Rev. Les Newsom, *Lead Pastor, Christ Pres. Church, Oxford, MS*  
Hymn of Response “We Will Feast in the House of Zion”  
Benediction

#### Worship Leaders

*Rev. Les Newsom, Lead Pastor, Christ Presbyterian Church | Oxford, MS*  
*Rev. Brian Sorgenfrei, Associate Pastor, Christ Presbyterian Church | Oxford, MS*  
*Rev. Tyler Kenyon, Senior Minister, Christ Presbyterian Church of Fayette County | Somerville, TN*  
*Mr. Randall Bryant, Worship Arts Director, Christ Presbyterian Church | Oxford, MS*  
*Ms. Denease Bishop, Vocals, Christ Presbyterian Church | Oxford, MS*  
*Ms. Noel Childress, Acoustic Guitar, Christ Presbyterian Church | Oxford, MS*  
*Ms. Amanda Fliflet, Percussion, Christ Presbyterian Church | Oxford, MS*  
*Mr. Erik Hom, Violin, Christ Presbyterian Church | Oxford, MS*  
*Mr. Phil Maynard, Bass Guitar, Christ Presbyterian Church | Oxford, MS*  
*Mr. Starkey Morgan, Cello, Christ Presbyterian Church | Oxford, MS*  
*Ms. Molly Singletary, Vocals, Christ Presbyterian Church | Oxford, MS*  
*Mr. Jonathan Watts, Mandolin, Christ Presbyterian Church | Oxford, MS*  
*Mr. John Wilson, Violin, Christ Presbyterian Church | Oxford, MS*



## **PART IV**

### **CORRECTIONS TO PREVIOUS MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

No corrections to previous General Assembly *Minutes* have been reported.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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**PART V**  
**REFERENCES AND INDEX**  
**FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**  
**PRE-ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE AND DOCKET**

Presbyterian Church in America  
Renasant Convention Center  
Memphis, TN• June 12-16, 2023  
(THIRD DRAFT)

**PRE-ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE**

**Monday, June 12, 2023**

- 8:00 a.m.** Commissioner Registration Open  
**10:00 a.m.** Briefing for Overtures Committee (Overtures Committee begins immediately after briefing)  
**11:00 a.m.** Briefing for Committee of Commissioners  
**12:00 noon** Lunch on your own  
**1:00 p.m.** Meetings of the Committees of Commissioners begin:  
Administrative Committee  
Covenant Theological Seminary  
Geneva Benefits  
Reformed University Fellowship  
**5:00 p.m.** Commissioner Registration Closed

**Tuesday, June 13, 2023**

- 7:00 a.m.** Commissioner Registration Opens  
**8:00 a.m.** Briefing for Committees of Commissioners  
**9:00 a.m.** Meetings of the Committees of Commissioners begin:  
Committee on Discipleship Ministries  
Covenant College  
Mission to North America  
Mission to the World  
PCA Foundation

## MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### Tuesday, continued

Ridge Haven

- 10:00 a.m.** Meeting of AC/Board of Directors as needed
- 10:30 a.m.** Meeting of Committee of Commissioners on Interchurch Relations
- 12:00 noon** Interchurch Relations and Fraternal Delegates Luncheon  
*Fraternal Delegate greetings will be offered at this time. Fraternal delegates, members of the Interchurch Relations Committee, and members of the Committee of Commissioners on Interchurch Relations with other GA leaders and moderators invited. These videos are also being shown in various spaces around the Assembly.*

Briefing of Floor Clerks

- 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.** Commissioner Welcome Reception in the Exhibit Hall
- 2:00 p.m.** Committee on Constitutional Business (if necessary)
- 2:30 – 4:25 p.m.** Seminars  
2:30 - 3:20 p.m. First Session  
3:35 - 4:25 p.m. Second Session
- 4:30 – 5:15 p.m.** Pre-Assembly Prayer Meeting
- 6:30 p.m.** Commissioner Registration Closed  
*Commissioner Registration will reopen for 15 minutes at the close of worship.*

## PROPOSED DOCKET

Only the orders of the day and special orders are fixed times in the docket. Other items may be taken up earlier or later in the docket, depending upon the rate at which actions on reports are completed. *Therefore, those who present reports should be prepared to report earlier or later than the docketed times.*

50th Anniversary videos will be offered at the open and close of sessions and reports of the General Assembly.

## DOCKET

### Tuesday, continued

**6:00 p.m.** Musical Prelude

**6:30 p.m.** Opening Session of the General Assembly  
Call to Order by the outgoing Moderator (*RAO* 1-1)  
Worship Service and Observance of the Lord's Supper

**8:10 p.m.** Assembly Reconvenes  
Report on enrollment and determining of quorum (*RAO* 1-2)  
Election of Moderator (*RAO* 1-3, 1-4, 1-5)  
Presentation to Retiring Moderator  
Presentation and Adoption of Docket (*RAO* 3-2, m.)  
Election of Recording and Assistant Clerks  
Appointment of Assistant Parliamentarians (*RAO* 3-2, i.)  
Appointment by Moderator of a Committee of Thanks

Report of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly,  
including:

New Churches Added, Statistics, Overtures (*RAO* 11-4 to 11-11)

Communications (*RAO* 11-1, 11-2, 11-3, 11-11)

Presbytery Votes on Proposed Amendments to *BCO*

Vote on *BCO* proposed Amendments approved by Presbyteries (*if needed, according to BCO* 26-2, saying that amendments to the *BCO* passed by two-thirds of the presbyteries require a majority vote of those present and voting at GA).

Partial Report of the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records on proposed *RAO* Amendments (*if needed, according to RAO* 20, saying that amendments require a two-thirds vote of, at least, a majority of the total enrollment).

Partial Report of the Overtures Committee on proposed *RAO* Amendments (*if needed, according to RAO* 20, saying that amendments require a two-thirds vote of, at least, a majority of the total enrollment).

## MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### Tuesday, continued

Partial Report of the Standing Judicial Commission (*if needed, according to RAO 17-5, saying that OMSJC amendments require a two-thirds vote of, at least, a majority of the total enrollment*).

Cooperative Ministries Committee Report

Committee on Constitutional Business Report

Theological Examining Committee Report

**10:00 pm** Business recess

### Wednesday, June 14, 2023

**7:30 am** Commissioner Registration Open

**8:00 a.m.** Assembly-wide Seminar –  
“Memories and Aspirations of our Founding Fathers and Sons”

**9:30 a.m.** Assembly Reconvenes  
Mayor of Memphis Greeting  
Review of Presbytery Records Committee Report  
*The RPR report may be amended on the floor. Standard rules of debate apply. Minority reports are allowed (RAO 16-7 h.; 19).*

**11:00 am** Informational and Committee of Commissioners Reports  
*Committee of Commissioners’ Reports are not subject to floor amendments. No minority reports are allowed. But alternative proposals passed by a majority of the CoC may be presented. The Assembly votes on the recommendations to approve, disapprove or refer back without instructions (RAO 14-9).*

Interchurch Relations Committee of Commissioners Report (*Fraternal delegates will be introduced to the General Assembly at this time. Fraternal delegate videos and greetings will be made at the Fraternal Delegate Luncheon.*)

DOCKET

Wednesday, continued

Reformed University Fellowship  
Covenant Theological Seminary  
Geneva Benefits

**12 noon** Lunch (on your own)

**1:30 p.m.** Assembly Reconvenes  
Informational and Committee of Commissioners Reports  
*Committee of Commissioners' Reports are not subject to floor amendments. No minority reports are allowed. But alternative proposals passed by a majority of the CoC may be presented. The Assembly votes on the recommendations to approve, disapprove or refer back without instructions (RAO 14-9).*

Ridge Haven Conference Center  
PCA Foundation  
Mission to the World  
Committee on Discipleship Ministries

**3:30 p.m.** Standing Judicial Commission Report

**4:30 p.m.** Deadline for Nominations from the floor to the Nominating Committee (RAO 8-4 i requires submission of floor nominations by the close of the afternoon session of the first "full day" of GA. Forms are available at each microphone or online).

Meeting of the Nominating Committee

**4:45 p.m.** Worship Service  
Commissioner Registration Closed

**5:45 p.m.** Recess for Dinner and Fellowship Time

Meeting of Theological Examining Committee (if necessary)

**7:30 p.m.** Special 50th Celebration Concert (ticket required)

## MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### **Note on Presentation of New Business:**

All personal resolutions are new business (RAO 13-1, 13-2, 11-9) and are to be presented no later than the recess of the afternoon session. A two-thirds majority vote is required for reception of the resolution. If the Assembly receives the resolution, it will be referred by the Stated Clerk to the proper committee of commissioners.

### **Thursday, June 15, 2023**

**7:30 am** Commissioner Registration Open

**8:00 a.m.** Assembly Reconvenes

Informational and Committee of Commissioners Reports

*Committee of Commissioners' Reports are not subject to floor amendments. No minority reports are allowed. But alternative proposals passed by a majority of the CoC may be presented with responses from the permanent Committee or Agency. The Assembly votes on the recommendations to approve, disapprove or refer back without instructions (RAO 14-9).*

Covenant College

Mission to North America

Administrative Committee

**9:30 a.m.** **Special Order:** Nominating Committee Report

Administration of vows to SJC members (RAO 17-1)

Declaration of SJC as Assembly's Commission (BCO 15-4, saying that the GA shall declare the SJC "as a whole" to be its commission).

**10:00 a.m.** Overtures Committee Report

*The Report of the Overtures Committee (OC) may not be amended on the floor. The Assembly either approves, disapproves, or recommits without instructions the recommendations (RAO 15-8 c.). An OC member may not participate in floor debate unless he is the designee of the chairman on a specific recommendation (RAO 15-8 f.). A minority report is permitted (RAO 15-6 s.; 15-8 g.) if signed by at least ten percent (10%) of those voting on the matter in the OC [and this ten percent must be composed of at least four*



DOCKET

**Thursday, continued**

*percent (4%) who are TE's and four percent (4%) who are RE's.]*

**12 noon** Lunch Recess

**1:30 p.m.** Assembly Reconvenes  
Overtures Committee Report continued

**5:30 p.m.** Recess for Dinner

**7:00 p.m.** Musical Prelude

**7:30 p.m.** Assembly Reconvenes for Worship Service

**9:10 p.m.** Reconvene for business if necessary

**9:15 p.m.** Overtures Committee Report continued

**10:00 p.m.** Committee on Thanks Report  
Appointment of Commission to review and approve final version of minutes  
Adjournment (*BCO 14-8, requiring the Moderator to say, “**By virtue of the authority delegated to me by the Church, I do now declare that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America is adjourned, to convene in Richmond, Virginia on the 11th day of June 2024, A.D.”***)

**10:15 p.m.** Sing Psalm 133  
Apostolic Benediction (II Corinthians 13:14)  
*“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”*

**Friday, June 16, 2023**

**8:00 a.m.** Assembly Reconvenes for Business (Optional)  
Facilities are available until noon if agenda requires

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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**QUICK REFERENCE:  
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DAILY JOURNAL  
FIFTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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