

SEXUALITY AND ORDINATION: STATUS BEFORE AND AFTER THE 218TH GA, AND IF “B” IS ADOPTED

PRIOR TO GA218	AFTER GA 218	IF AMENDMENT “B” IS ADOPTED
<p>Constitutional Standards in Place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Scripture</i> 2. <i>Confessions</i> 3. <i>Book of Order</i> G-6.0106b: 	<p>Constitutional Standards in Place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Scripture</i> 2. <i>Confessions</i> 3. <i>Book of Order</i> G-6.0106b: 	<p>Constitutional Standards in Place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Scripture</i> 2. <i>Confessions</i> 3. <i>Book of Order, G-6.0106b, Revised</i>
<p>Authoritative Interpretations in Effect:¹</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1978 UPCUSA <i>Definitive Guidance</i>; 1979 (PCUS) 2. 1993 GA <i>Authoritative Interpretation</i> 3. 2006 (PCUSA): <i>Authoritative Interpretation of G-6.0108</i> 	<p>Authoritative Interpretations in Effect:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2006 (PCUSA): <i>Authoritative Interpretation of G-6.0108</i> 2. 2008 (PCUSA): <i>Authoritative Interpretation of G-6.0108</i> 3. 1978, 1979, and 1993 statements declared without further force or effect 	<p>Authoritative Interpretations in Effect:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2006 (PCUSA): <i>Authoritative Interpretation of G-6.0108</i> 2. 2008 (PCUSA): <i>Authoritative Interpretation of G-6.0108</i> 3. 1978, 1979, and 1993 statements declared without further force or effect
<p>PJC Decisions in Effect:²</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>FPC Washington v. Pby of Washington (2008)</i> 2. <i>Buescher, et al. v Pby of Olympia (2008)</i> 3. <i>Bush, et al. v Pittsburgh Pby (2008):</i>. 	<p>PJC Decisions in Effect:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>FPC Washington v. Pby of Washington (2008)</i> 2. <i>Buescher, et al. v Pby of Olympia (2008)</i> 3. <i>Bush et al. v Pittsburgh Pby (2008):</i> 	<p>PJC Decisions in Effect:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>FPC Washington v. Pby of Washington (2008)</i> 2. <i>Buescher, et al. v Pby of Olympia (2008)</i> 3. <i>Bush et al. v Pittsburgh Pby (2008):</i>
<p>Implications for Presbytery and Session Decisions <u>With regard to examination of candidates:</u> Candidates for ordination and/or installation are required to conform their beliefs and behavior to standards expressed in Scripture, the <i>Book of Confessions</i>, and the <i>Book of Order</i>. Among those standards is “fidelity and chastity” as defined in G-6.0106b and W-4.9001.</p> <p>Individual candidates for office may declare objections of conscience (either belief or behavior) to provisions of the church’s Constitution. Sessions and presbyteries are required to determine whether those objections constitute violations of “essentials of Reformed faith and practice” (G-6.0108 and 2006 AI).</p>	<p>Implications for Presbytery and Session Decisions <u>With regard to examination of candidates:</u> Candidates for ordination and/or installation are required to conform their beliefs and behavior to standards expressed in Scripture, the <i>Book of Confessions</i>, and the <i>Book of Order</i>. Among those standards is “fidelity and chastity” as defined in G-6.0106b and W-4.9001.</p> <p>Individual candidates for office may declare objections of conscience (either belief or behavior) to provisions of the church’s Constitution. Sessions and presbyteries are required to determine whether those objections constitute violations of “essentials of Reformed faith and practice” (G-6.0108 and 2006 AI).</p>	<p>Implications for Presbytery and Session Decisions³ <u>With regard to examination of candidates:</u> Candidates for ordination and/or installation would be required to give assent to the questions for ordination/installation in W-4.4003. In so doing, they affirm their adherence to the standards for office expressed in the Constitution. Explicit standards regarding fidelity and chastity in sexual behavior would no longer be part of these standards. However, since the affirmation of the ordination/installation questions include the pledge to “fulfill [one’s] office in obedience to Jesus Christ, under authority of Scripture, and continually guided by our confessions” (W-4.4003d), questions based on scripture and the confessions regarding belief and practice would be appropriate (G-6.0106b, revised).</p> <p>A session or presbytery, when examining a candidate, shall establish whether that candidate’s efforts to adhere to the standards of the Constitution are sincere.</p> <p>Individual candidates for office may declare objections of conscience (either belief or behavior) to provisions of the church’s Constitution. Sessions and presbyteries are required to determine whether those objections constitute violations of “essentials of Reformed faith and practice” (G-6.0108 and 2006 AI).</p>

<p>Sessions and presbyteries are required to examine candidates and deal with objections of conscience on a case-by-case basis, and may not adopt resolutions, policies, or statements that paraphrase or restate provisions of the <i>Book of Order</i> and/or declare them as “essentials of Reformed faith and order” (<i>FPC Washington v Pby of Washington</i> and <i>Bush v Pittsburgh Pby</i>).</p> <p>Sessions and presbyteries are required to view departures from the “fidelity and chastity” requirements of G-6.0106b as violations of an essential of Reformed faith and practice (<i>Bush v Pittsburgh Pby</i>).</p> <p><u>With regard to acts of ordination or installation:</u> A session or presbytery may not ordain or install a person who refuses “to repent of any self-acknowledged practice the confessions call sin...” (G-6.0106b).</p>	<p>Sessions and presbyteries are required to examine candidates and deal with objections of conscience on a case-by-case basis, and may not adopt resolutions, policies, or statements that paraphrase or restate provisions of the <i>Book of Order</i> and/or declare them as “essentials of Reformed faith and order” (<i>FPC Washington v Pby of Washington</i> and <i>Bush v Pittsburgh Pby</i>).</p> <p>Sessions and presbyteries <i>may</i> consider whether a behavioral objection of conscience to any part of the Constitution, including G-6.0106b, constitutes a violation of an essential of Reformed faith and polity; however, they are not <i>required</i> to accept such departures (<i>2008 AI</i>).</p> <p>Nevertheless, the following still applies:</p> <p><u>With regard to acts of ordination or installation:</u> A session or presbytery may not ordain or install a person who refuses “to repent of any self-acknowledged practice the confessions call sin...” (G-6.0106b).</p>	<p>Sessions and presbyteries are required to examine candidates and deal with objections of conscience on a case-by-case basis, and may not adopt resolutions, policies, or statements that paraphrase or restate provisions of the <i>Book of Order</i> and/or declare them as “essentials of Reformed faith and order” (<i>FPC Washington v Pby of Washington</i> and <i>Bush v Pittsburgh Pby</i>).</p> <p>Sessions and presbyteries <i>may</i> consider whether a behavioral objection of conscience to any part of the Constitution constitutes a violation of an essential of Reformed faith and polity; however, they are not <i>required</i> to accept such departures (<i>2008 AI</i>).</p> <p><u>With regard to acts of ordination or installation:</u> Sessions or presbyteries may proceed to ordain and/or install those whom they deem worthy and whose examinations have been sustained. Nevertheless, sessions and presbyteries are themselves required to obey mandatory standards of the <i>Book of Order</i>.</p>
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DOCUMENTS CITED:

2007-2009 *Book of Order*, G-6.0106b

“Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament.”

2009-2011 *Book of Order*, G-6.0106b (Revised, if Amendment “B” is adopted)

~~“Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament.~~ Those who are called to ordained service in the church, by their assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003), pledge themselves to live lives obedient to Jesus Christ the Head of the Church, striving to follow where he leads through the witness of the Scriptures, and to understand the Scriptures through the instruction of the Confessions. In so doing, they declare their fidelity to the standards of the Church. Each governing body charged with examination for ordination and/or installation (G-14.0240 and G-14.0450) establishes the candidate’s sincere efforts to adhere to these standards.”

1978 UPC Definitive Guidance/ 1979 PCUS Definitive Guidance

...To be an ordained officer is to be a human instrument, touched by divine powers but still an earthen vessel. As portrayed in Scripture, the officers set before the church and community an example of piety, love, service, and moral integrity. Officers are not free from repeated expressions of sin. Neither are members and officers free to adopt a lifestyle of conscious, continuing, and unresisted sin in any area of their lives. For the church to ordain a self-affirming, practicing homosexual person to ministry would be to act in contradiction to its charter and calling in Scripture, setting in motion both within the church and society serious contradictions to the will of Christ....*(entire text reprinted in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Minutes, 1986, Part I, pp. 1019-1024).*

1993 PC(USA) Authoritative Interpretation

“In the instance of the General Assembly rendering an interpretation of the Constitution, and particularly the interpretation of G-6.0106 (and in 1978, Section 37.03), the interpretation has the weight of constitutional law of the church until a new interpretation is offered by the General Assembly through one of its various means (e.g. amendment, new interpretation)...”

2006 PC(USA) Authoritative Interpretation of G-6.0108

- a. The Book of Confessions and the Form of Government of the Book of Order set forth the scriptural and constitutional standards for ordination and installation.
- b. These standards are determined by the whole church, after the careful study of Scripture and theology, solely by the constitutional process of approval by the General Assembly with the approval of the presbyteries. These standards may be interpreted by the General Assembly and its Permanent Judicial Commission.
- c. Ordaining and installing bodies, acting as corporate expressions of the church, have the responsibility to determine their membership by applying these standards to those elected to office. These determinations include:
 - (1) Whether a candidate being examined for ordination and/or installation as elder, deacon, or minister of Word and Sacrament has departed from scriptural and constitutional standards for fitness for office,
 - (2) Whether any departure constitutes a failure to adhere to the essentials of Reformed faith and polity under G-6.0108 of the Book of Order, thus barring the candidate from ordination and/or installation.
- d. [Whether the examination and ordination and installation decision comply with the Constitution of the PC(USA), and] [W][w]hether the ordaining/installing body has conducted its examination reasonably, responsibly, prayerfully, and deliberately in deciding to ordain a candidate for church office is subject to review by higher governing bodies.
- e. All parties should endeavor to outdo one another in honoring one another’s decisions, according the presumption of wisdom to ordaining/installing bodies in examining candidates and to the General Assembly, with presbyteries’ approval, in setting standards. **(PC(USA) Minutes, 2006, Part I, p. 514-515.)**

2008 PC(USA) Authoritative Interpretation of G-6.0108

“[The 218th General Assembly (2008) affirms the authoritative interpretation of G-6.0108 approved by the 217th General Assembly (2006). Further, the 218th General Assembly (2008), pursuant to G-13.0112, interprets] the requirements of G-6.0108 [to] apply equally to all ordination standards of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Section G-6.0108 requires examining bodies to give prayerful and careful consideration, on an individual, case-by-case

basis, to any departure from an ordination standard in matters of belief or practice that a candidate may declare during examination. However, the examining body is not required to accept a departure from standards, and cannot excuse a candidate's inability to perform the constitutional functions unique to his or her office (such as administration of the sacraments).” (**PC(USA) Minutes, 2008, Part I, p.380**)

FPC Washington v Pby of Washington, Remedial Case 218-15 (2008)

“Since it is impossible to read the Confessions without encountering allegations of sin for thoughts or actions which may no longer be considered sin, or at least no longer be considered the "serious" departure referred to in the Book of Order, G-6.0108a (such as provisions pertaining to Sabbath observance and interest on loans), Resolution A is in conflict with G-6.0108a and the long-established policy that what is essential must be determined by case-by-case consideration rather than by blanket and unviable prohibitions.

Partial Text of Washington Presbytery Resolution A:

THEREFORE, for the sake of the peace, unity, and purity of the church, the Presbytery of Washington adopts and shall function according to the following resolution: It is an essential of Reformed polity that the Presbytery of Washington comply with and adhere to the standards for ordination adopted by the whole church and expressed in the Book of Order. Therefore, any departure from ordination standards mandated* in the Book of Order, unless repented of, shall bar a candidate from ordination and/or installation by the Presbytery of Washington. (Italics in original text)

[*ordination standards mandated in the Book of Order include those instructions designated by the terms "shall", "is/are to be", "requirement" or "equivalent expression".] (**PC(USA) Minutes, 2008, Part I, p.324**)

Buescher, et. al. v Pby of Olympia, Remedial Case 218-09 (2008)

Headnote 2: “Statements of "Essentials of Reformed Faith and Polity": Attempts by governing bodies that ordain and install officers to adopt resolutions, statements or policies that paraphrase or restate provisions of the Book of Order and/or declare them as "essentials of Reformed faith and polity" are confusing and unnecessary, and are themselves an obstruction to constitutional governance in violation of G-6.0108a.”(**PC(USA) Minutes, 2008, Part I, p.316**)

Bush, et al. v Pby of Pittsburgh, Remedial Case 218-10 (2008)

Headnotes:

“1. No Departures from "Fidelity and Chastity" Requirement: Candidates and examining bodies must follow G-6.0108 in reaching determinations as to whether the candidates for ordination and/or installation have departed from essentials of Reformed faith and polity. Such determinations do not rest on distinguishing "belief" and "behavior," and do not permit departure from the "fidelity and chastity" requirement found in G-6.0106b.

2. Examinations of Candidates: Ordaining and installing bodies must examine candidates for ordination and/or installation individually. The examining body is best suited to make decisions about the candidate's fitness for office, and factual determinations by examining bodies are entitled to deference by higher governing bodies in any review process.

3. Statements of "Essentials of Reformed Faith and Polity": Attempts by governing bodies that ordain and install officers to adopt resolutions, statements or policies that paraphrase or restate provisions of the Book of Order and/or declare them as "essentials of Reformed faith and polity" are

confusing and unnecessary; and are themselves an obstruction to constitutional governance in violation of G-6.0108a.” **(PC(USA) Minutes, 2008, Part I, p.319**

¹ An Authoritative Interpretation is a statement so designated by action of a General Assembly that interprets one or more provisions of the *Book of Order* in a manner binding on the governing bodies of the church (G-13.0103r). AIs interpret but do not change the text of provisions of the *Book of Order*. Any General Assembly may interpret the *Book of Order* by simple majority vote, and the interpretation of a previous General Assembly can be altered or set aside by a subsequent General Assembly by majority vote. For relevant contents, see “Documents Cited” section.

² Decisions of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission also interpret provisions of the *Book of Order* in a manner binding on synods, presbyteries, and sessions. Their decisions may be superceded by action of the General Assembly. For relevant contents, see “Documents Cited” section.

³ Statements in this column are opinion. While the Association of Executive Presbyters believes that they reflect the likely situation if Amendment “B” is adopted, the actual application of such an action is defined by the General Assembly and/or its Permanent Judicial Commission.

**REPORT OF
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FOR
PROPOSED
AMENDMENTS TO THE
BOOK OF ORDER**

February 21, 2009

REPORT OF
BOOK OF ORDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Moderator: John Thompson

Members: Ministers: William Peck, Spottswood Graves, Art Ross, Debbie Osterhoudt, and Connie Button. Elders: Robert Owens, John Thompson, Phyllis Supple, and Susan Mazzara

This committee met on January 9, 2009 and took no formal votes on these amendments but reached consensus on the responses. The committee met by conference call on February 4, 2009 to review the final report and offers the following:

AMENDMENT 08-A Vows of Membership

Arguments in Support of an Affirmative Vote:

- The proposed amendment emphasizes the requirements of membership and the importance of recognizing new members in a service of public worship.

Arguments in support of a Negative vote:

- ♦ Requiring new members to take a vow of membership composed of a public profession of faith is at best redundant and at worst nullifying of the new members' previous public professions of faith in other churches. The effect of this amendment will be not to emphasize the connectional nature of the church but to undercut it by making an assumption that the only valid public profession of faith is the one made before a particular congregation.
- A new member received by profession of faith is to be baptized during a service of public worship and to make vows already described in W-3.3603. This amendment is redundant for such new members.
- New members received by reaffirmation of faith and by transfer of certificate have already made a public profession of faith. To require a public profession of faith to be made again by such members is to negate the validity of their previous profession of faith. If the purpose of this amendment is to emphasize our conventionalism and the universality of the church, then this purpose is better served by acknowledging and upholding new members' previous public professions of faith.
- W-4.2004 already provides for reception of new members in a service of public worship as an opportunity for new members "to reaffirm the commitments made at Baptism, to make public again their profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and to express their intention to participate actively in the worship and mission of the church."
- The difference in language between this amendment ("shall make a public profession") and W-4.2004 ("It is appropriate for them to") is the difference between prescription and permission. The language of the amendment contradicts the language of the Directory for Worship. While W-4.2004 is broad and permissive, the language of 08-A is narrow and prescriptive.

The Consensus of the Committee is to vote no

AMENDMENT 08-B Ordination Standards

The Committee recognized three options for this amendment: Yes, No, and No Action. The Committee recommends Commissioners vote on this amendment.

While no strong voice in the Committee opposed the amendment, the Committee members unanimously agreed that many Christian brothers and sisters will be hurt by passage of this amendment and many Christian brothers and sisters will be hurt by its defeat. Out of painful awareness of this reality, the Committee urges the Commissioners to pray God's blessing upon all of us and to ask God's wisdom in making our decision. We urge all to remember that we are one in Christ. The Committee was unanimous in the opinion that we need to affirm the diversity in our church, regardless of our vote on this issue. We ask for God's Grace in learning how to be Church with diversity.

In that spirit, the Committee urges all today to listen carefully and respectfully to one another, to prayerfully consider your vote, and let Christ guide your conscience in casting your vote."

Arguments in Support of an Affirmative Vote:

- The amendment calls church officers to obedience to Christ as Head of the Church, thus rightly reflecting the church's understanding of where its authority is to be found: in Christ as witnessed to by Scripture as read through the instruction of the Confessions.
- The amendment corrects a previously subverted understanding of the hierarchy of the church's authority. As currently written, G-6.0106b substitutes for our obedience to Christ two concepts foreign to Reformed understanding - "obedience" to Scripture and "conformity" to the Confessions - and elevates the Confessions to an inappropriate standard. It misplaces our obedience, confuses the nature of ordination and has withheld from our church a strong and loving service.
- The amendment reaffirms the church's reliance on the examination of candidates by its governing bodies as the principal means by which to ensure the commitment of its ordained officers to the duties of faith.
- The amendment inserts appropriate language to ensure that each examination of officers includes discussion of the constitutional questions and candidates' readiness to accept their principles and live by them to the extent any of us is able.

Arguments in support of a Negative vote:

- The current language provides a strong moral statement and witness to Biblical standards.
- The amendment covers old ground on issues the denomination has voted on several times in the last few years and on which it has made its position clear. Changing the language now undermines trust and will cause further defection from the PC(USA)

The committee recommends the Commissioners vote on this amendment

AMENMENT 08-C Sympathy or Compassion?

Arguments in Support of an Affirmative Vote:

- The words “compassion” and “sympathy” differ mainly in connotation: one connoting an urge to aid and the other connoting an ability to enter in to another’s experience. The connotation of “compassion” is appropriate to the office of deacon.
- While “sympathy” has a long history as a qualification for deacon and is well-attested Biblically (3 uses), the word “compassion” has an even greater Biblical attestation (12 uses), particularly in stories of Jesus’ compassion for those to whom he ministers.
- The word “compassion” is in more current use among ministries of care because it does not imply condescension, as “sympathy” often does.

Arguments in support of a Negative vote:

- “Sympathy” is a closer translation of the Biblical word used to describe the ministry of deacons, “συμπαθής” (sympathies), which occurs as a noun or verb three times in the New Testament, most notably in the list of Christian virtues in 1 Peter 3:8, and in Hebrews 4:15.
- The difference in connotation of “sympathy” and “compassion” is so slight as to be trivial.

While the committee had no objection, they saw no reason to make the change in wording, supporting a no vote.

AMENDMENT 08-D New name for GAC

Arguments in Support of an Affirmative Vote:

- The amended name more clearly identifies the work of the General Assembly Council.

Arguments in support of a Negative vote:

- ♦ None

The consensus of the committee is a yes vote

AMENDMENT 08-E Non – Geographic Presbyteries.

Arguments in Support of an Affirmative Vote:

- Advances the goal of being a united, multi-cultural church reflecting the diversity of God's human family
- There is a history of non-geographic, language based presbyteries to welcome new immigrant communities.
- Alternative to specific ethnic-language based denominations
- There should be a sunset clause for a specific period of time in order for first-generation immigrants to belong to a church where their native language is used.

Arguments in Support of a Negative Vote:

- This Con is not to argue against Presbyteries voting for this amendment, but to reiterate the cautions expressed by the OGA, ACREC, and ACWC: We should move toward unity, not separate denominations we should see this as a temporary step, not permanent; and we should support the constitutional requirement for the ordination of women.

The consensus of the committee is a yes vote

AMENDMENT 08-F Voice for Educators

Arguments supporting an Affirmative vote

- ♦ The amendment is needed to allow the presbytery to "Determine whom it will enroll" (ACC Language) It also clarifies that enrollment is contingent upon active engagement in educational ministry under jurisdiction of the presbytery.

Arguments in support of a Negative vote:

- Amending G-11.0407 and G-14.0703 would be unnecessarily restrictive of certified Christian educators.
- This change would require more of educators than of elders who have both voice and vote at presbytery meetings and can be commissioners to presbytery whether or not they are in active service on the session.

The committee felt this amendment did not offer a positive direction for the church recommending a no vote.

AMENDMENT 08-G Nominees

Arguments supporting an Affirmative vote:

- Recommended to clarify a 2006 amendment that had unintended consequences from its wording
- Allows committee to be formed to meet the needs of the charge to the committee
- Saves money by allowing smaller committees than 16 minimum members
- Frees synods from having to nominate for each and every committee, Especially when each vacancy requires three names be submitted to GANC to allow appropriate and required diversity and representation.

Arguments in Support of a Negative Vote

- May exclude some synods from equal representation across the spectrum of GA committee.

The consensus of the committee is a yes vote

AMENDMENT 08-H Five Ordination Examinations

Arguments supporting an Affirmative vote

- ♦ The Committee on Preparation for Ministry should do what is needed to be done to define the examinations as recommended by the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations. Many candidates and inquirers take exams before they are ready, or before they have had seminary classes to help in preparation.

Arguments in Support of a Negative Vote

- ♦ It places an extra burden on the Committee on Preparation for Ministry to verify a candidate's or inquirers' adequate preparation before being allowed to take the exams.

The consensus of the committee is a yes vote

AMENDMENT 08-I Voice for Educators – Again

Arguments supporting an Affirmative vote

- ◆ Vote for this if you want to limit voice, and in the case of elder, vote, to Certified Christian Educators as was the case in the old Chapter 14.

Arguments in support of a Negative vote:

- Limiting privilege of the floor to Certified Christian Educators is unnecessarily restrictive
- It is appropriate that a Certified Associate Christian Educator have the same privilege as a Certified Christian Educator
- Presbyteries should be encouraging rather than restricting involvement

The committee felt this amendment did not offer a positive direction for the church recommending a no vote.

AMENDMENT 08-J Alternative Forms of Resolution

Arguments supporting an Affirmative vote

- This is a helpful clarification of a sometimes difficult procedure.
- Makes clear that the accuser does not have veto power over an Alternative Form of Resolution.

Arguments in support of a Negative vote:

- It may seem that the accuser or person being harmed is not accorded a voice under this amendment, even though when properly understood, they are not now a part of the decision-making process.

The consensus of the committee is a yes vote

AMENDMENT 08-K Roman Catholic Church

Arguments supporting an Affirmative vote

- ◆ The ecumenical statements represent incremental steps toward the unity of the Church universal. (Presbyterian Outlook, October 12, 2008)

Arguments in support of a Negative vote:

- None expressed

The consensus of the committee is a yes vote

AMENDMENT 08-L Episcopal Church

Arguments supporting an Affirmative vote

- ◆ This is an important step toward reconciliation with the Episcopal Church (Presbyterian Outlook, October 12, 2008)

Arguments in support of a Negative vote:

- None expressed

The consensus of the committee is a yes vote

AMENDMENT 08-M Korean Presbyterian Church

Arguments supporting an Affirmative vote

- ◆ The successful witness of Presbyterian missionaries beginning 124 years ago enabled the Korean Presbyterian Church to grow, yet to experience linguistic and cultural differences upon their arrival in the USA. This amendment seeks to bridge the gap between these sister churches.

Arguments in support of a Negative vote:

- ◆ None expressed

The consensus of the committee is a yes vote

AMENDMENT 08-N Moravian Church

Arguments in Support of an Affirmative Vote:

- ◆ The Association of Stated Clerks concluded, "in addition to Jesus' desire for unity this agreement allows the PC (USA) to draw closer to a denomination that holds the Lordship of Christ in high esteem." (Presbyterian Outlook, October 12, 2008)

Arguments in support of a Negative vote:

- ◆ None expressed

The consensus of the committee is a yes vote

SAMPLE BALLOTT - Book of Order Amendments 2008

AMENDMENT 08-A	Yes	No	Abstain
AMENDMENT 08-B	Yes	No	Abstain
AMENDMENT 08-C	Yes	No	Abstain
AMENDMENT 08-D	Yes	No	Abstain
AMENDMENT 08-E	Yes	No	Abstain
AMENDMENT 08-F	Yes	No	Abstain
AMENDMENT 08-G	Yes	No	Abstain
AMENDMENT 08-H	Yes	No	Abstain
AMENDMENT 08-I	Yes	No	Abstain
AMENDMENT 08-J	Yes	No	Abstain
AMENDMENT 08-K	Yes	No	Abstain
AMENDMENT 08-L	Yes	No	Abstain
AMENDMENT 08-M	Yes	No	Abstain
AMENDMENT 08-N	Yes	No	Abstain

A-3
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE BOOK OF ORDER
and
PROPOSED ECUMENICAL STATEMENTS
Approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008)
And Recommend to the Presbyteries for their Affirmative or Negative Votes
Comments prepared by D. F. Bickhart, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Eastern Virginia

These comments are intended to provide a synopsis of the proposed amendments. Ministers and elder commissioners should consult the Office of the General Assembly Proposed Amendments Booklet for further comments and in-depth explanations.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS FOR AFFIRMATIVE OR NEGATIVE VOTES

08-A. Vows of Membership – On Amending G-5.0200. Will add a new paragraph that new members, after received by the session, shall be presented to and welcomed by the congregation during a service of worship where they shall make a public profession of their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and savior, as do confirmands. Re-numbers remaining paragraphs. Assembly Committee on Church Polity voted 50/2/0; GA approved by voice vote.

08-B. Ordained Officers - On Amending G-6.0106b, G-14.0240, and G-14.0450. G-6.0106b Proposes changing G-6.0106b which requires church officers to live in “fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman or chastity in singleness” and replace it with: *“Those who are called to ordained service in the church, by their assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003), pledge themselves to live lives obedient to Jesus Christ the Head of the Church, striving to follow where he leads through the witness of the Scriptures, and to understand the Scriptures through the instruction of the Confessions. In so doing, they declare their fidelity to the standards of the Church. Each governing body charged with examination for ordination and/or installation (G-14.0240 and G-14.0450) establishes the candidate’s sincere efforts to adhere to these standards.”*

G-14.0240 Preparation and Examination for Office – Will add phase within the paragraph of “The session shall provide for a period of study and preparation, after which the session shall examine the officer-elect as to their personal faith; knowledge of the doctrine, government, and discipline contained in the Constitution of the church, the duties of the office; *and readiness to assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation*”

G-14.0450 Final Assessment of Readiness to Begin Ordained Ministry – Will add to the requirement of certification ready for examination for ordination, pending a call the requirement to *“demonstration of readiness to assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation.”*

Assembly Committee on Church Orders voted 41/11/0, GA approved 380/325/3.

08-C. Replacing the Word “Sympathy” with the Word “Compassion” – On Amending G-6.0202b and G-6.0401. G-6.0202b – Will change sentence to read “With the deacons the pastor is to share in the ministries of ~~sympathy~~ *compassion*, witness, and service.”

G-6.0401 – Will change paragraph to read “The office of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of ~~sympathy~~ *compassion*, witness, and service after the example of Jesus Christ. Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, of exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, ~~warm sympathies~~ *sincere compassion*, and sound judgment should be chosen for this office.” Assembly Committee on Church Polity voted 54/3/0, GA approved by voice vote.

08-D. General Assembly Mission Council Name Change - On Amending Throughout the *Book of Order*. Will change the name of the “General Assembly Council” to “General Assembly *Mission* Council” throughout the *Book of Order*” to clearly identify the role of the General Assembly Council in coordinating the mission work of the General Assembly.

Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets voted 57/1/3, GA approved with voice vote.

08-E. Non-Geographic Presbyteries – On Amending G-11.0102 and G-12.0102k. Will reduce the minimum number of ministers and churches from twelve to ten and will allow a congregation to join a non-geographic presbytery in another synod when none exists in their current synod.

Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures voted 44/0/1, GA approved with voice vote.

08-F. Presbytery Membership of Certified Christian Educators - On Amending G-11.0407 and G-14.0730. Will limit the privilege of the floor with voice at all presbytery meetings for Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators and voice and vote to certified Christian educators who are ordained elders to that time *during the term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery* Assembly Committee on Church Polity voted 58/0/0, GA approved by consensus.

08-G. Synod Membership on Permanent Committees – On Amending G-13.0107, G-13.0108, and G-13.0202a. Will remove the requirement that each synod will have a member on each permanent committee of the General Assembly; provides for the membership of the General Assembly Committee on Representation; and that the Council include members from each synod of the church. Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets voted 58/0/0, GA approved by consensus.

08-H. Five Ordination Examinations – On Amending G-14.0431. Encourages candidates and inquirers to take Bible Content Examination during first year of seminary but restricts them from taking other four examinations until granted approval by the committee on preparation for ministry which shall attest that the candidate/inquirer has completed adequate academic preparation and adequate supervised experience in the practice of pastoral ministry. Assembly Committee on Review of GA permanent Committees voted 39/3/1, GA approved by voice vote.

08-I. Certified Christian Educators – On Amending G-14.0730. Changes “certified Christian educator” to “Certified Christian Educator” to grant voice, and for those who are ordained elders to the Certified Christian Educators only and not to Certified Associate Christian Educators. If Amendments 08-F and 08-I are both approved their wordings will be merged. Assembly Committee on Church Polity voted 46/12/0, GA approved by voice vote.

08-J. Alternative Forms of Resolution – On Amending D-02.0103 and D-10.0202h. Will clarify what is meant by “all parties” in these paragraphs and identifies them as the accused, the investigating committee and/or the investigating committee and the accused. Assembly Committee on Church Polity voted 58/0/1, GA approved by consensus.

PROPOSED ECUMENICAL STATEMENTS FOR RATIFICATION

The following Ecumenical Statements will be voted as For or Against Ratification. They will not go into effect until ratified by the majority of the presbyteries.

08-K. Ecumenical Statement with the Roman Catholic Church – On Ratifying a Common Agreement on Baptism. This statement basically affirms what is already the PC (USA) practice of recognizing the baptism of persons who have been baptized in the Roman Catholic Church. Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations voted 60/0/0, GA approved by voice vote.

08-L. Ecumenical Statement with the Episcopal – On Adopting an Agreement. This agreement is not a covenant or a full communion agreement. It does make provision for temporary or occasional service of ministers of both denominations in congregations of the other. It will be considered for ratification by the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 2009. Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations voted 60/0/0, GA approved by voice vote.

08-M. Ecumenical Statement with the Korean Presbyterian Church in America – On Adopting a Covenant Relationship Agreement. If this proposal is approved it will provide the same authority for the Korean Presbyterian Church in America and the Korean Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to explore and carry out shared ministries that the Formula of Agreement provides for the four partner churches that adopted it. Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations voted 59/0/0, GA approved by voice vote.

08-N. Ecumenical Statement with the Moravian Church – On Adopting a Covenant Partnership Agreement. The General Synods of the Northern and Southern Provinces of the Moravian Church will meet to vote on this in 2010; the agreement cannot be effective until they meet and ratify. Assuming approval at each step, a Process of Orderly Exchange similar to the Formula of Agreement will be jointly developed, detailing how the process will work. Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations voted 60/0/0, GA approved by voice vote.

G-6.0106

(a) To those called to exercise special functions in the church--deacons, elders, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament--God gives suitable gifts for their various duties. In addition to possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, natural and acquired, those who undertake particular ministries should be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world. They must have the approval of God's people and the concurring judgment of a governing body of the church.

Current b

Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life

in obedience to Scripture

and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church.

Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness.

Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

Proposed b

Those who are called to ordained service in the church,

by their assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003),

pledge themselves to live lives obedient to Jesus Christ the Head of the Church,

striving to follow where he leads through the witness of the Scriptures,

and to understand the Scriptures through the instruction of the Confessions.

In so doing, they declare their fidelity to the standards of the Church.

Each governing body charged with examination for ordination and/or installation (G-14.0240 and G-14.0450) establishes the candidate's sincere efforts to adhere to these standards.