



901 Allegheny Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15233-1701
Phone: 412-323-1400
Fax: 412-323-2256
www.pghpresbytery.org

January 31, 2008

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

A new year has begun! It is filled with challenges and possibilities. God, however, remains in control of all things both seen and unseen. Therefore, let us begin the new year with a confident hope that God is working out divine purposes through us to the glory of Jesus Christ.

On February 7, 2008 at 1:00 pm, the presbytery will meet at Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church. It is a full docket so I encourage all presbyters to set the day aside so that our full attention can be given to the important matters before us without distraction, a sense of hurry, or with many absent. The wisdom of the whole body is needed so that as the Spirit works in and through us we might become the covenant community God desires to be.

At this meeting we will be considering many important issues that may stir strong feelings and convictions within us. I encourage all presbyters to read "Seeking to be Faithful Together: Guidelines for Presbyterians During Times of Disagreement." (It is downloadable from the website along with the presbytery packet.)

Here are a few highlights of our upcoming meeting.

- The new Moderator, Kears Pollock, and Senior Vice Moderator, the Rev. Don Ewing, will be installed.
- Black History Month will be celebrated as is the tradition in Pittsburgh Presbytery. The nationally known preacher and author, the Rev. Dr. Tony Campolo, will speak at 4:00 pm and share insights from his book on racial reconciliation.
- Many GA overtures will be debated and discussed. (i.e. seven GA overtures and one related specifically to Pittsburgh Presbytery.) The Presbytery will decide whether each overture will be sent on to General Assembly for consideration at the June GA meeting in San Jose, California. Every presbyter will find it helpful to read each overture before coming to the presbytery meeting. Be informed!

Since we last met in December other events have occurred that have been reported in the media. It is important for you to know that an Administrative Commission appointed by the Moderator to engage the Memorial Park Presbyterian Church leadership is diligently and faithfully working while keeping Christ at the center of their actions and work. I ask all pastors and congregations to be in prayer about these matters. Pray for the presbytery. Pray for Memorial Park Presbyterian Church. Pray that God will find a way to resolve these matters in a way that gives glory to Jesus Christ and the mission to which we are called. I have seen God's hand at work. I remain hopeful that, with your prayers, 2008 will not only be a year of facing and overcoming challenges, but will also be a year of moving into new opportunities for mission, spiritual growth, and a new awareness of what God would have us be about.

Blessings,

Rev. Dr. Doug Portz

DOCKET
for the
MEETING OF THE PITTSBURGH PRESBYTERY
including a
Celebration of Black History Month

February 7, 2008
Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church

Elder Kears Pollock, Moderator, Presiding

Presbytery's Mission: To serve the congregations so they are healthy and vital as evidenced by: † success in bringing others to Christ † vibrant worship † active participation in the mission of Christ's church

A...THE CONVENING OF PRESBYTERY

1. Presbytery Constituted with Prayer Order of the Day 1 p.m.
2. Announcement of a Quorum and Completion of the Roll

B...OUR GATHERING IN WORSHIP

The Rev. Judi Slater, Preaching

C...MATTERS FROM THE MODERATOR

1. Installation of the Moderator and Vice Moderators ...2008
2. Special Announcements
3. Introduction of Visitors and Seating of Corresponding Members
4. Greetings from Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church

D...ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

1. Adoption of the Docket
2. Adoption of the Consent Agenda (Including the Minute Reading Committee Report)
3. Announcement of Intention to introduce new business Order of the Day 2 p.m.

E...DEBATE ON OVERTURES TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. *On the Heidelberg Catechism*
A Presentation
Debate
2. *Three Overtures on Abortion-Related Matters*
3. *On Concurring with the Mississippi Overture on Delaying a Form of Government Implementation*
4. *On Amending G-6.0108b "Freedom of Conscience within Certain Bounds"*

F... MATTERS FROM THE COUNCIL

1. Report of the Chair
2. On Amending the Structure of the Administrative Commission on Transformation
3. *Debate on Amending the Presbytery Manual re Per Capita*

G...MATTERS FROM THE STATED CLERK

1. Stated Clerk's Report
2. Equalization of Elders

H...MATTERS FROM THE BODY

1. **1st Reading**, Overture to General Assembly 218th (2008)
In Support of Universal Health Care Reform
2. Report of the Pastor to Presbytery
The Rev. Kay Day
3. Nominations Committee Report
4. Report of the Committee on Preparation
5. Report of the Committee on Ministry

I...IN CELEBRATION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Order of the Day 4:00 p.m.

The Reverend Tony Campolo

J...NEW BUSINESS

Taking up of New Business

Order of the Day 5 p.m.

THE DISPERSING OF PRESBYTERY

1. Committee on Leave of Absence and Report of the Enrollment Clerk
2. Resolution of Thanks
3. Ending with Prayer

Seeking to be Faithful Together
 Guidelines for Presbyterians During Times of Disagreement

In a spirit of trust and love, we promise we will . . .

<p><i>Give them a hearing ... listen before we answer.</i> John 7:51 and Proverbs 18:13</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Treat each other respectfully so as to build trust, believing that we all desire to be faithful to Jesus the Christ: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we will keep our conversations and communications open for candid and forthright exchange, • we will not ask questions or make statements in a way which will intimidate or judge others. 2. Learn about various positions on a topic of disagreement. 3. State what we think we heard and ask for clarification before responding, in an effort to be sure we understand each other.
<p><i>Speak the truth in love.</i> Ephesians 4:15</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Study the Bible together to better understand what God’s Word says to us in our disagreement. 5. Share our concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom we have disagreements in a spirit of love and respect in keeping with Jesus’ teaching. 6. Focus on ideas and suggestions instead of questioning people’s motives, intelligence or integrity; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we will not engage in name-calling or labeling of others prior to, during, or following the discussion. 7. Share our personal experiences about the subject of disagreement so that others may fully understand our concerns.
<p><i>Maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.</i> Ephesians 4:3</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Indicate where we agree with those of other viewpoints as well as where we disagree. 9. Seek to stay in community with each other though the discussion may be vigorous and full of tension; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we will be ready to forgive and be forgiven. 10. Follow these additional Guidelines when we meet in decision-making bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • urge persons of various points to speak and promise to listen to these positions seriously; • seek conclusions informed by our points of agreements; • be sensitive to the feelings and concerns of those who do not agree with the majority and respect their rights of conscience; • abide by the decision of the majority, and if we disagree with it and wish to change it, work for that change in ways which are consistent with the Guidelines. 11. Include our disagreements in our prayers, not praying for the triumph of our viewpoints, but seeking God’s grace to listen attentively, to speak clearly, and to remain open to the vision God holds for us all.

CONSENT AGENDA

February 7, 2008

Council and all Committees and Ministry Teams of Presbytery are listed below in the order in which their reports appear on the Docket of Presbytery. All consent items listed for each group are the same as the Consent Motion items which appear in their reports and which are indicated by an asterisk. The word "None" listed after a particular group on this Consent Agenda does not mean that they do not have Items For Action in their reports, but only that they have no Consent Motion items. At the time the motion to approve the Consent Agenda is made any Commissioner may request the removal of any Item from the Consent Agenda for debate by the Body. If an item is removed from the Consent Agenda, it will be considered at the regularly docketed time for the report of the group to which it belongs.

Items For Consent Action

Organization of the Meeting

Item 2...Report of the Minute Reading Committee

Matters from the Council

Item 2...Financial Statement

Item 3...Request for Exemption...Hebron Presbyterian, Clinton

Item 4...Request to Encumber....Parkwood United Presbyterian

Item 5...Request to Purchase and Encumber...Hot Metal Bridge

Matters from the Stated Clerk

Item 2...Commissioned Elders

Item 3...Elder Commissioners by Church Rotation

Item 4...Ecclesiastical Administrative Commissions to Ordain, Install or Receive

Matters from the Body

Nominations Committee

None

Committee on Preparation

Item 2...Annual Consultations

Item 4...Appointment of Commission for Reception

Item 5...Appointment of Commission for Ordination

Committee on Ministry

Item 2....Calls

Item 3....Appointment of Administrative Commissions to Install

Item 4....Dissolutions

Item 5....Letter of Dismissal

Item 6....Interim Supply

Item 7....Temporary Supplies

Item 8....Stated Supply

Item 9....Moderators

Item 10..Members-at-Large

Item 11..Permission to Labor

Item 12..Permission to serve Communion

Item 13..Honorable Retirement

**REPORT OF THE MINUTE READING COMMITTEE
(Included/approved, in the Consent Agenda)**

The Minute Reading Committee met on Thursday, December 6, 2007 at the First Presbyterian Church, Tarentum at approximately 6 p.m. immediately following the Presbytery meeting, and read the minutes of said meeting. A quorum was present. .

	P	A	E		P	A	E
Elder David Green	√			Rev. Douglas Portz	√		
Elder Kears Pollock	√			Rev. Jay W. Lewis	√		
				Rev. Eric Ewing Dennis	√		
				Rev. Carmen Cox Harwell			√
Also present: --							

The Committee also subsequently reviewed the minutes of such meeting as they were substantially completed. The Committee recommends approval of the Minutes of the Presbytery Meeting of Thursday, October 18, 2007 at Mt. Hope Community Presbyterian Church. **For the Committee:** *The Rev. Eric Ewing Dennis, Chair.*

The next meeting of the Minute Reading Committee will be held Thursday, February 7, 2008 at Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church immediately following the Regular meeting of Presbytery. **Any commissioner present at that Meeting is invited to attend.**

**Overture Submitted to Pittsburgh Presbytery
by East Liberty Presbyterian Church, The Community of Reconciliation, and Sixth
Presbyterian Church**

12/07

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**An Overture to the 218th General Assembly
of
The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
To Restore the Heidelberg Catechism to Its Historic Form**

In accordance with G-18.0200, the Pittsburgh Presbytery herewith overtures the 218th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in San Jose, California to take appropriate steps toward the following amendment of The Book of Confessions, and to appoint a committee to fulfill the requirement of G-18.0200b.:

To restore The Heidelberg Catechism to an authentic and reliable English version of the historic document by replacing the 1962 translation, *The Heidelberg Catechism, 1563-1963. 400th Anniversary Edition. Copyright 1962. United Church Press*, with a translation that more faithfully renders the original text.

Rationale

The Heidelberg Catechism was formally adopted as a confessional document of the UPCUSA when the denomination adopted *The Book of Confessions* in 1967. The version of the Heidelberg Catechism approved at that time was a 1962 translation prepared for and published by United Church Press. However, according to the later recollections of Professor Edward Dowey of Princeton Theological Seminary, who chaired the committee of the General Assembly that drew together the confessions, thorough checking of this version was never undertaken and certain “illicit” changes made to the text of the Heidelberg in this translation went undetected.¹ A comparison of the text of the Heidelberg Catechism in the version included in The Book of Confession with the original German and the early Latin version reveals five passages in which the original text is not faithfully rendered and key theological meanings are obscured:

1. **4.019**:: “...the holy gospel, which God himself revealed in the beginning in the Garden of Eden, afterward proclaimed through the holy patriarchs and prophets and foreshadowed through the sacrifices and other *rites of the Old Covenant*, and finally fulfilled through his own

¹ The Special Committee on a Brief Contemporary Statement of Faith presented a report to the 1965 General Assembly of the UPCUSA to include the 1962 translation of the Heidelberg Catechism in a Book of Confessions. Presumably the committee chose this translation because it was the most recent edition. Professor Dowey acknowledged (in a letter to Professors Christopher Elwood and Johanna Bos of Louisville Seminary, dated October 21, 1996) that both he and the committee as a whole were “guilty of negligence”: “there should have been thorough editorial work on all the documents” but, because of time pressures, the committee settled for some brief spot-checking of the translation.

wellbeloved Son” (emphasis added). The phrase “rites of the Old Covenant” is a loose translation which is not well supported by either the German or the Latin; “ceremonies of the law” is a traditional rendering which is well supported by the German (*ceremonien des gesetzes*) and the Latin (*ceremoniis legis*).² This flawed rendering is significant for three reasons. First, substituting “Old Covenant” for law obscures a traditional Reformed interest in biblical law *per se*. Second, it misleadingly suggests to readers and students that the catechism’s writers invoked here an explicitly covenantal image. Third, it suggests that the writers were working with a scheme of biblical interpretation that contrasted Old Covenant to New Covenant, a hermeneutic which is not very well represented in the Reformed theological tradition and not supported by the text of the catechism in its original form.

2. **4.033**: “Christ alone is God’s *own* eternal Son, whereas we are *accepted* by God for his sake as children of God by grace” was traditionally rendered “Christ alone is the eternal *natural* Son of God, but we are *adopted* to be children of God through grace for His sake” (emphasis added). The significance of this change is that it obscures the authors’ use of the image of adoption—an important theme in Reformed reflection on Christ, Christ’s work, and the justifying and regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. The translation “adopted” is very well supported by the original German (*angenommen*) and the Latin (*adoptati*).

3. **4.055**: “...believers one and all, as partakers of the Lord Christ, and all his treasures and gifts, *shall share* in one fellowship” (emphasis added): The future tense is not indicated in the original text, which has the present tense. This translation differs from traditional versions which indicate that sharing or fellowship with Christ is a present reality.

4. **4.074**: “This was done in the *Old Covenant* by circumcision. In the *New Covenant* baptism has been instituted to take its place” (emphasis added). The original German supports “Old Testament” and “New Testament.” The Latin has *in Veteri foedere* and *in Novo foedere*, which could support “Old Covenant” and “New Covenant,” although the German has generally been preferred as the text from which translations are to be made. (The German text was the basis of the translation of 1962.) The difference between “covenant” and “testament” may seem subtle or insignificant to some readers. But in fact there was a significant difference in connotation through theological use in the sixteenth century. The Reformed tended to emphasize the singularity and antiquity of God’s covenant with God’s people; thus they tended not to emphasize a distinction between two *covenants*. On the other hand, they emphasized that a single covenant had somewhat different applications in two distinct *times* or epochs: the time of the law and the time of the gospel, or (to use an alternative designation) the time of the Old Testament and the time of the New Testament. The use of the word “Testament,” then, resonates with other Reformed allusions to a distinction in times, which is not the same thing as a distinction in covenants.

² All references to the German and Latin texts come from *Catechismus oder Christliche Unterricht, wie der Kirchen und Schulen der Churfürstlichen Pfaltz getrieben wirdt* (Heidelberg: Johannes Mayer, 1563) and the first Latin edition of 1563: *Catechesis religionis Christianae : quae traditur in ecclesiis et scholis Palatinatus*. These have been published together in a facsimile edition published by Theologischer Verlag of Zurich in 1983. The German original has been compared with the modern critical edition by Wilhelm Niesel in *Bekennnisschriften und Kirchenordnungen der nach Gottes Wort reformierten Kirche* (Zurich, 1938).

5. **4.087**: two elements in the answer to question 87 are supplied by the translators and do not appear in the original text (nor in any translations produced prior to 1962). Neither the original German nor the Latin have texts corresponding to the following phrases:

“Surely you know that the unjust will never come into possession of the kingdom of God. Make no mistake:”

and

“or of homosexual perversion.”

The remaining items in the vice list supplied in the answer to question 87 have equivalents or rough equivalents in the original text (although some singular nouns have been rendered as plural nouns). This innovation was created by the translators’ decision to ignore a portion of the Heidelberg Catechism answer 87 and instead to replace it with the New English Bible translation of 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. In 1997, one of the translators, Professor Eugene Osterhaven, disclosed that this replacement was entirely intentional. In light of the sexual revolution of the 1960s, “it would be well to be more specific [about sexual practice]... than [the author of the Heidelberg Catechism] had been in his day.”³ This “amendment” to a traditional Reformed document was the creation of two translators and was never deliberated upon by a body of the church before *The Book of Confessions* was adopted.⁴

Every ordained minister, elder and deacon is required to answer in the affirmative the following question: “Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do?” G-14.0207c, G-14.0405b(3). In so doing, church leaders trust that the translated versions of the historic confessions are, as far as humanly possible, authentic transmissions of the faith of our forbearers and reliable expositions of what they understood Scripture leading them to believe and do. That the 1962 translation of *The Heidelberg Catechism* has proven to be unreliable casts a shadow on all the translations in *The Book of Confessions*. Trust in all these historic documents can be restored by replacing that translation of *The Heidelberg Catechism* with a version that is more authentic and reliable. The 1988 translation in *Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions* (CRC Publications) is one such version.⁵

³ Professor Osterhaven’s letter to the editor of *Monday Morning*, dated November 25, 1996, which appeared in edited form in *Monday Morning*, vol. 62, no. 4.

⁴ Professor Dowey expressed in 1996 that he was “dumbfounded that I and such careful scholars as [Leonard J.] Trinterud, [George S.] Hendry, [James D.] Smart, et al. failed to discover the illicit change.”

⁵ Other reliable English translations may be found in the following texts: *The Heidelberg Catechism in German, Latin and English, with an Historical Introduction* (New York: Scribner, 1863); *Reformed Standards of Unity*, ed. Leroy Nixon (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Society for Reformed Publications, 1957); Thomas F. Torrance, *The School of Faith* (London: James Clark, 1959).

Overture of the Pittsburgh Presbytery to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

It is my honor and pleasure to assist the Pittsburgh Presbytery in its deliberations about the translation of the Heidelberg Catechism in the Book of Confessions. I have been asked to comment primarily on the linguistic issues that the overture to the General Assembly points out. In order to do so, I will first give a brief summary of the pertinent passages based on my reading of the German and Latin versions of the catechism and then focus on the specific problems that the overture states.

Ad 4.019

Question 19 plays a crucial role in the soteriology of the HD catechism. The focus here is on the question, from where do we have knowledge that Jesus Christ is the savior in whom we have redemption and justice (compare Question 18)? The answer that the catechism provides is the following: such knowledge comes to us through the holy gospel that one finds in different Scriptures of the Bible. God *revealed* the gospel for the first time in the paradise garden, he *proclaimed* it through the patriarchs and prophets, and he gave it a concrete, though still provisional, *form* in the ceremonial rites of the law. Eventually, God *fulfilled* the gospel through his own son. The point of this answer is to summarize the manifold ways in which knowledge of the gospel becomes tangible. The Book of Confessions puts a different spin on the depiction of the various instantiations of the gospel when it translates “rites of the *Old Covenant*” rather than “rites of the *law*,” which would be closer to the original German (“Zeremonien des Gesetzes”). The problem here is that the Book of Confessions employs covenantal language that is not found in the text itself. Although the distinction between the Old and the New Covenant certainly has played and continues to play a critical role in the biblical hermeneutics of the Reformed tradition, such a categorical distinction does not seem to be intended in A 19.

A further note of explanation may be in order. Otto Weber, editor of the German HD catechism, comments on A 19 as follows: “All the reformers agree that the gospel is not only voiced in the New Testament. Although law and gospel are fundamentally different ways of divine self-revelation, it would be inadequate to conclude that the Old Testament was seen only as law and the New Testament only as gospel. The HD catechism even goes beyond this common conviction: it sees in the Old Covenant already ‘proclaimed’ and ‘prefigured’ what was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Along this line ... the so-called ‘federal theology’ developed that understands the entire Bible as a testation (‘Bekundung’) of several divine covenants.”

Ad 4.074

A related issue surfaces in Q 74 (“Are infants also to be baptized?”). In the original German, the catechism talks about “the (one) covenant” in which elders and infants are equally included. The sign of this covenant in the Old Testament was circumcision whereas in the New Testament baptism took this place. The idea is that the covenant between God and his people comprises both Old and New Testaments. It is therefore confusing and even misleading when the Book of Confessions translates “Old and New *Testament*” as “Old and the New *Covenant*.”

Ad 4.033

Here the HD catechism addresses the question why Jesus is called God's *only-begotten* son, although we, too, are children of God. The catechism explains that God the father and the son share the same nature (literally translated, Christ is God's "eternal natural son"), whereas this is not the case with human beings, who are, as the Book of Confessions renders it, "*accepted* as children of God." A problem with the German in this case is that the term "angenommen" is fairly general and can be translated as "accepted" or "adopted." The Latin version of the HD catechism uses "adoptati" and thus supports the idea that we are God's *adopted children*.

Ad 4.055

The answer to Q 55 ("What do you understand by 'the communion of saints?') states that, as partakers of Jesus Christ and of his treasures and gifts, we also share fellowship with each other. According to the HD catechism, sharing in the salvific gifts of Christ is a present reality that shapes the communion of saints already in the here and now. The original German expresses this through the present tense ("Die Gläubigen ... haben Gemeinschaft"). The Book of Confessions, however, employs the future tense ("believers ... shall share in one fellowship"), thus suggesting that the communion of the saints is a future goal that has yet to be accomplished.

Ad 4.087

It seems advisable in this case to give a literal translation of the German version of the catechism's answer to the question whether those who remain in their ungrateful and impenitent ways can be saved:

"By no means! Because Scripture states that no idolater, adulterer, thief, drunkard, or slanderer will inherit the kingdom of God." The biblical passages that are mentioned in A 87 as reference texts are 1 Cor 6:9-10, Eph 5:5-6, and 1 John 3:14. It is clear that the Book of Confessions does not provide a translation of the original catechism but replaces the text of the catechism with the so called 'vice catalogue' of 1 Cor 6:9-10. In other words, the question in this case is not whether the Book of Confession is truthful to the original version of the catechism, because the wording here seems to have been changed quite intentionally.

A second set of issues emerges when one looks at the translation that has been chosen for 1 Cor 6:9-10. Although the language in this catalog is quite explicit, a synopsis of the different translations in major editions of the Bible reveals that there is no consensus about what the terms that are used here mean more specifically. In concluding it seems appropriate to indicate that with regard to both the original catechism and the Greek text of 1 Cor 6:9-10 the Book of Confessions offers a version of A 87 that makes it susceptible to questions and criticisms.

Andreas K. Schuele
Aubrey Lee Brooks Professor of Biblical Theology
Union Theological Seminary &
Presbyterian School of Christian Education

SUBMITTED BY NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

11/07

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OVERTURE - Cease paying for abortion as a covered benefit in the Board of Pensions Medical Benefits Plan

Recommendation

The Presbytery of Pittsburgh overtures the 218th General Assembly (2008) to direct the Board of Pensions to:

- 1. Cease paying for abortion as a covered benefit in its Medical Benefits Plan [unless a physician documents that it is necessary to preserve the life of the mother].**
- 2. To devise an optional abortion coverage provision consistent with the restraints of the 1992 policy document *Problem Pregnancies and Abortion and the 2006 statement approved by the 217th GA on late-term abortion* and make it available to churches who wish to provide this coverage for their pastors and their families.**

Rationale

The Church ought to value human life from a Biblical and not a cultural perspective. The intrinsic value of the unborn comes from God, who created us in His own image. From that unique designation human beings derive a worth conveyed by their Creator and affirmed by the love extended to us through Christ's death on the cross to redeem us from the penalty of death that we deserve as a natural result of our sin. (Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:4,5; Psalm 139:13-16; Isaiah 49:16; John 3:16).

The Church ought to protect, nurture, and cherish human life as beloved by God. From the moment of fertilization, each embryo is a genetically separate, totally unique, and distinctly human life. Dependant on the mother and helpless during her development in the womb, the child is no less valuable because of her vulnerable state. The unborn child is known to God while in the womb and called by God before birth to a unique plan and purpose for his life. Each unborn life ought to be nurtured and protected and not aborted. (Psalm 22:9,10; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:15; Luke 1:41,44; Galatians 1:15,16)

Abortion is an "elective" procedure. Health insurance policies routinely contain paragraphs rejecting "elective surgery". In Sec. 13.9, The Medical Benefits Plan outlines procedures for which it does not provide coverage. Among those items not covered is any procedure that is "not Medically Necessary". "Medically Necessary" is defined on pages 47-48 in the Medical Benefits Plan booklet as:

(k) MEDICALLY NECESSARY. Services or supplies provided or prescribed by a Hospital, Physician, or other provider licensed to diagnose, treat or prevent a sickness or bodily injury that the Board, in its sole discretion, determines are:

- (1) Appropriate to the symptom and diagnosis or treatment of the sickness or injury;
- (2) Not custodial or for the convenience of the patient, Physician, or other provider;
- (3) Not educational, experimental or investigational in nature;
- (4) Of demonstrated medical value; and
- (5) The most appropriate standard or level of services which accord with sound medical practice and can be safely provided to the patient. When applied to hospitalization, this further means that acute care as an inpatient is required and appropriate to the nature of services or condition of the patient and that the care cannot be rendered safely or adequately in another treatment setting. (p. 33)

The Board of Pensions Medical Benefits Plan currently covers all abortion claims requested. It does not limit coverage for reasons of the restraints called for in the 1992 Abortion policy document, *Problem Pregnancies and Abortion*. The 1992 policy document although not limiting legal access, clearly distinguishes that abortion should not happen for "elective" purposes. It named specific situations when abortions were not acceptable: i.e. "abortions that seem to be elected only as a convenience or to ease embarrassment"; abortions used "as a method of birth control" or "for gender selection" or "solely to obtain fetal parts for transplantation." The policy document also states that abortions early in the pregnancy are preferable to late term abortions. The 217th General Assembly (2006) stated clearly that viable babies in late-term pregnancy, "those able to live outside the womb" ought not to be aborted. The Board of Pensions Medical Benefits Plan coverage of abortions reflects none of these restraints approved by General Assemblies of the PC(USA).

Pregnancy is not a sickness and abortion is not a medically necessary treatment. 92% of abortions are for reasons that are economic or social, for the convenience and comfort of the mother and not the result of any threat to her physical health or life.

Excluding coverage of abortion would not prohibit anyone for obtaining an abortion. The Board of Pensions could make available a separate rider for abortion coverage for those churches who wished to provide that coverage for their pastoral staff. Excluding coverage of abortion does however, place the Medical Benefits Plan in balance with the current policy of the PC(USA) on abortion.

Board of Pensions Medical Benefits Plan

<http://www.pensions.org/library/publications/publications/pln-100.pdf>

Board of Pensions Benefits Administration Handbook

<http://www.pensions.org/library/publications/publications/pln-100.pdf>

SUBMITTED BY NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 11/07

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OVERTURE – Board of Pensions to provide an annual Relief of Conscience Plan Report

Recommendations

The Presbytery of Pittsburgh overtures the 218th General Assembly (2008) to direct the Board of Pensions to provide annually a Relief of Conscience Plan Report, and to confirm annually with particular churches their participation in the Relief of Conscience Plan.

The General Assembly further directs the Board of Pensions that:

- 1) Beginning no later than June 2009, the BOP provide an annual **Relief of Conscience Plan Report** that includes:
 - a) Specific details of the Relief Of Conscience (ROC) plan
 - b) An explanation of the process for participation in the ROC plan
 - c) An accounting of the total number of churches participating in the ROC plan in the previous calendar year
 - d) An accounting of the total dollar figure spent on abortion procedures in the previous calendar year
 - e) An accounting of the total dollar figure placed into funds to cover medical costs for adopted newborns in previous calendar year
 - f) An accounting of the total dollar figure distributed for medical costs of adopted newborns in the previous calendar year
 - g) The specific process of application for plan members to request funds to cover medical costs of adopted newborns
- 2) This **Annual Report** be distributed to all PCUSA congregations and Plan members, and posted on the BOP website.
- 3) Beginning no later than June 2009, the BOP send annual notification to each particular church participating in the ROC plan, confirming their inclusion in the Plan.
- 4) Beginning with GA 2010, the BOP include the Relief Of Conscience Plan Report with their annual report to the General Assembly.

Rationale

The current ROC Plan went into effect in 1998, without a process to assure implementation.

Many pastors and sessions are unaware of the plan and how to request the Relief of Conscience process of dues separation for their congregation. A single page in the Benefits Handbook gives little detail about the plan (see Appendix below).

Remembering Paul’s admonition in matters of conscience to “Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor” (I Cor 10:24), We ought to be more thorough and more consistent in our communication on the ROC plan. There are always new pastors and new sessions, unaware of the ROC plan. It is questionable whether a single reference in the handbook gives enough visibility to the availability of ROC dues separation.

There is no process established across presbyteries to provide consistency in the handling of session resolutions regarding ROC. Because this is a matter of deeply held conviction for pastors and congregations requesting the Relief of Conscience process, churches need to receive communication from the Board of Pensions acknowledging their request has been received and that indeed their dues are not being used to cover abortions.

Churches participating in the ROC plan are seeking evidence of the Plan's implementation, and contact with the BOP provides unclear information. (For example, a member of a church participating in the plan had several phone conversations with the BOP, seeking simple bookkeeping statistics of the plan for Session discussions. No information was asked that

would have breached any confidences, as names or localities were not requested. BOP staff stated that specific financial statistics of abortion coverage are not even known, and are not directly related to the adoption funds.)

APPENDIX

Dues separation for Relief of Conscience employing organizations

The Board of Pensions distinguishes between employing organizations that have not sought relief and those certified by their presbyteries of jurisdiction to be Relief of Conscience employing organizations. Through the Relief of Conscience process, the Board makes sure dues contributed by employing organizations that object to any medical coverage for abortion related expenses will never be used to reimburse such expenses.

Relief of Conscience

The Board of Pensions has a process that recognizes differing views among participating employing organizations about the appropriate response to problem pregnancies. The intent is to make sure dues contributed by employing organizations that object to any medical coverage for abortion-related expenses will never be used to reimburse such expenses.

At the same time, reflecting the church's affirmation of each woman's right to make a moral choice when confronted by a problem pregnancy, the Medical Plan provides coverage for abortion-related services, funded by the dues of those employing organizations that have not requested relief.

Established in 1992 and revised in 1998, the Relief of Conscience process separates the incoming dues stream between employing organizations that have not sought relief and those certified by their presbyteries of jurisdiction to be Relief of Conscience employing organizations. Medical claims for abortion procedures are paid from the non-Relief of Conscience dues stream. A dollar amount equal to the cost of abortion claims from the prior year is set aside from the Relief of Conscience dues stream and helps to fund the Board's Adoption Assistance Grant program. Then, the dues streams are merged and all other medical claims and costs are paid from the merged dues stream.

The presbytery of jurisdiction grants Relief of Conscience to the employing organization and notifies the Board of Pensions to implement it. Sessions representing their congregations as employing organizations and minister members of presbyteries who are self-paying Benefits Plan members may seek Relief of Conscience. Relief of Conscience is granted to the organization that pays the dues.

The action continues for any succeeding incumbent of the church granted Relief of Conscience. If the pastor of a Relief of Conscience church changes service, the Relief of Conscience status does not follow to the new position.

The full coverage protection of the Medical Plan is available to all Plan members whether or not the church of service is a Relief of Conscience church.

For more information, please call the Board of Pensions.

Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Benefits Administration Handbook, p. 42

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On Advocating and Funding either both sides of the abortion issue or neither

Recommendation

The Presbytery of Pittsburgh overtures the 218th General Assembly (2008) to direct all PC (USA) entities in both funding and in publications to reflect balance and equality in advocating both sides of the abortion issue so that any advocacy is in full compliance with our 1992 Abortion Policy.

Therefore, we direct our national offices to uphold this policy in any and all of their communications with both church and society.

Rationale

The 1992 Abortion Policy states that “we as Presbyterians hold both Position A (“pro-life”) and Position B (“pro-choice”) positions”.

Recommendation III.B. (page 16) states “We recommend that future publications of the denomination and its ministry units reflect the diversity of positions about problem pregnancies and abortion found herein.”

Recommendation III.D. then states “We recommend that the General Assembly acknowledge the prerogative of Presbyterian entities to participate in ecumenical and interfaith organizations that represent different points of view concerning abortion. We also urge the General Assembly Council and the presbyteries to affirm procedures by which particular churches may be assured that their mission funds will not be used in violation of conscience on this issue.”

However, the only groups that receive funding or produce material or advocate on behalf of the PC(USA) are Presbyterians Affirming Reproductive Choice (PARO), the Washington Office, Women’s Ministries, and the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP). All of these organizations produce material and advocate specifically and diligently *only* for the “pro-choice” position.

Thus not only do publications not reflect Position A found in the 1992 Policy (but only Position B), but in addition the Washington Office, ACSWP, and Women’s Ministries are funded with undesignated funds, thus violating the call to see that churches be assured that their mission funds not be used in violation of their conscience on this issue.

There is currently no organization advocating a pro-life position that is funded by the PC (USA). This one-sidedness is not in compliance with our 1992 Abortion Policy, thus violating the 1992 Policy's call for the ecumenical and interfaith organizations to "represent different points of view concerning abortion." While Presbyterian entities have joined and pay dues to RCRC, an entity which supports all abortions, no entity funded by the PC(USA) has joined or pays dues to the National Pro-Life Religious Council. (Presbyterians Pro-Life is totally funded by the contributions of individuals and some individual Presbyterian churches but is not funded by undesignated PC(USA) mission funds and is not part of the Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA) or any other PC (USA) entity).

If the PC (USA) cannot comply with the 1992 policy and be equitable and even handed in its funding, advocacy, and published materials, then funding in support of any one side of this critical issue should cease immediately. This fairness would then be in compliance with the 1992 Abortion Policy and would affirm the policy's statement that the church provide for freedom and exercise of conscience on this matter which so clearly divides us.

Examples for consideration by sessions and presbyteries:

- The Washington Office has advocated to Congress on behalf of the PC (USA) in support of all abortions including late-term abortions.
- The PC(USA) is a member of Religious Coalition of Reproductive Choice (RCRC), We support them with non-designated money. None of their literature or advocacies reflects the current 1992 Abortion Policy, including their 2006 Late-Term Abortion statement.
- The PC(USA) is a member of Clergy for Choice.
- The PC(USA) is a member of Progressive Religious Partnership.

The Session of Round Hill Presbyterian Church asks Pittsburgh Presbytery to concur with the Overture of the Presbytery of Mississippi, to entrust the proposed FOG Revision to the Church for at least a two-year period of study, discernment and consideration.

Gayle Larcinese

Gayle Larcinese, Clerk of Session

December 10, 2007

On Entrusting the Proposed FOG Revision to the Church for at Least Two Years—From the Presbytery of Mississippi.

The Presbytery of Mississippi overtures the 218th General Assembly to:

Receive the report and recommendations of the Form of Government (FOG) Task Force, and

Entrust the proposed FOG revision to the church for at least a two-year period of study, discernment, and consideration of the advisability of further action.

Rationale

The Form of Government Task Force was established by the 217th General Assembly to prepare a revised Form of Government (FOG) for the church's consideration. The Task Force was directed to issue its report to the church no later than September 1, 2007, to allow sessions, presbyteries, and synods ample time to study the proposed FOG and, if necessary, suggest amendments to it. This simply has not provided enough time for governing bodies to comprehend fully, let alone critique effectively this lengthy and important document before the deadline for introducing business related to constitutional changes.

For example, the Mississippi Presbytery Council met on September 27, and appointed a committee of four to study the proposed Foundations and FOG. The committee was instructed to make a recommendation to the presbytery which met on October 25. During their necessarily swift study of the proposed Foundations and FOG, different members of the committee came to widely disparate conclusions, ranging from a desire to vote down the whole project, to a desire to significantly rework the documents. More time to study both documents would probably have yielded greater agreement, but more time was not available if the presbytery was to be able to take action in October.

There is simply no need to rush the acceptance of what even the members of the Task Force recognize to be a radical change in our church's governance. A period of study and discernment of at least two years in length will cost us nothing, and will undoubtedly result in a stronger Form of Government that will serve the church well for years to come.

**REPORT OF COUNCIL
To the Meeting of Presbytery February 7, 2008**

Pittsburgh Presbytery Council met in a regularly called meeting on Tuesday, January 22, 2008. The meeting was opened at 7 a.m. with joys, concerns and prayer offered by the Chair, Elder Carol Hunley. A quorum was present.

Items for Information

1. Chairs of Council Committees...2008

Council approved the following persons as respective Chairs of the following committees of Council for calendar year 2008:

Ecclesiastical: The Rev. Eric Dennis
Property: The Rev. Dr. Bebb Stone
Personnel: Elder Tom Bice
Finance: The Rev. Douglas Dorsey

2. 2008 Minute Reading Committee

Council confirmed the following persons as the Minute Reading Committee for the calendar year: The Revs. Eric Dennis, Donald Ewing, Jay W. Lewis, and Douglas Portz, and Elders David Green and Kears Pollock.

3. Lebanon Church Per Capita Overture Review

Council was informed that the Ecclesiastical Committee had received from the Moderator of the Presbytery, and reviewed, an overture submitted to the Presbytery by Lebanon Presbyterian Church to amend the *Presbytery Manual* concerning per capita. After detailed discussion and review, the Committee recommends that Presbytery *not* approve an amendment to the *Presbytery Manual* as requested Lebanon Presbyterian. The *Manual* as presently written correctly states current ecclesiastical law, i.e. that the Presbytery is obligated to pay its full *per capita* whether or not a constituent congregation of the Presbytery withholds *per capita*; to amend the *Manual* as requested by the Overture to read Presbytery will pay only such *per capita* as its congregations in fact pay would put the Presbytery in violation of its obligations under the Book of Order and would be, in the Committee's view, an ecclesiastically unlawful and untenable position.

4. New Members of Ecclesiastical Committee

Council elected the following persons to the Ecclesiastical Committee of Council: The Rev. James Craig and Elder Patricia Kistler (Bethany).

5. Acceptance of Invitations to Host Presbytery Meetings in 2009

Council accepted with the thanks of the Presbytery the following invitations to meet during **2009**:

February 5...Pleasant Hills Community Presbyterian Church
April 16...Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
June 4...Lebanon Presbyterian Church
September 3...Crestfield Camp and Conference Center
October 15...Bethany Presbyterian Church
December...**Open**

6. Sacrament of the Lord's Supper During 2008

Council authorized all ministry teams, commissions, committees, task forces of Presbytery, organizations, camps and conference centers affiliated with Presbytery to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at meetings during 2008.

7. Established Task Force on Abortion Discernment and Education

Council approved the establishment of ***The Task Force of Pittsburgh Presbytery to Study the Issue of Abortion.***

8. Synod of the Trinity Networks Participation for 2008

Council approved the Presbytery's 2008 participation in the following Synod of the Trinity Networks for 2008: **Peacemaking Network; 2008 Trinity Youth Conference; Resource Center Network.**

9. Banking Authorization for Open Door Faith Community with Dollar Bank

Council approved the Open Door Faith Community opening an account with Dollar Bank.

Items for Action

1. Consent Motions

Council recommends that the following items **##2, 3, 4** and **5** be adopted by Consent.

***2. Financial Statements...November, 2007**

Council recommends Presbytery receive and file for audit the Presbytery financial statements for November, 2007.

***3. Waiver/Exemption...Election of Men/Women...Hebron Presbyterian (Clinton)**

Council granted Hebron Presbyterian Church (Clinton) an exemption/waiver for the election of men/women on its Board of Deacons Class of 2010.

***4. Request to Encumber...Parkwood**

Council granted the request of Parkwood Presbyterian church to encumber its property in an amount not to exceed \$890,000 for renovation and expansion of their facility, subject to Parkwood obtaining a commitment from a lending institution.

***5...Purchase and Encumber...Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community, (HMB)**

Council approved the request of HMB to buy and encumber property in the South Side. The congregation, a new church development collaboration with the Methodists, is buying the property as a "corporation being formed." The purchase price of \$550,000 will be funded by cash on hand, a contribution from the Western Conference of Methodists to be approved, and a mortgage in an amount not to exceed \$150,000. Council approved HMB's request to buy property and encumber it in an amount not to exceed \$150,000, subject to it obtaining the funding from the Methodists and a commitment from a lending institution.

6. Nominee for Committee on Representation

Council nominates the Rev. Cynthia Jackson for membership on the Committee on Representation, and recommends Presbytery elect such nominee.

7. Nominee for Nominations Committee

Council nominates Elder Nancy Clifton (Mt. Washington) for election to the Nominations Committee, recommends Presbytery elect such nominee.

8. Term of Rotation of Members of Administrative Commission for Transformation

Council approved the following proposed rotation for member terms of the Administrative Commission for Transformation, and recommends Presbytery so approve:

2008

Marsha Sebastian (M) A
Mary Yearsley (E) A
Marge Smith (E) A

2009

Mark Plumb (E) A
Larry Ruby (M) A
Karl McDonald (M) A

2010

Elizabeth Broschart (M) A
Jeff Potter (M) A
Jane Gieske (E) A

BELLEFIELD-SUBMITTED OVERTURE

Overture: On Amending G-6.0108b, “Freedom of Conscience within Certain Bounds,” to Include a Freedom of Ordaining Bodies within Certain Bounds

Recommendation

The Presbytery of Pittsburgh overtures the 218th General Assembly (2008) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall G-6.0108b (“Freedom of Conscience Within Certain Bounds”) be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

“b. It is to be recognized, however, that in becoming a candidate or officer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) one chooses to exercise freedom of conscience within certain bounds. His or her conscience is captive to the Word of God as interpreted in the standards of the church so long as he or she continues to seek or hold office in that body. The decision as to whether a person has departed from essentials of Reformed faith and polity is made initially by the individual concerned but ultimately becomes the responsibility of the governing body in which he or she serves. *This responsibility does not give the governing body constitutional grounds to define essentials in ways that ignore clear indicators in the Book of Order regarding what is essential. These indicators include standards specified in ordination vows in the Book of Order; standards singled out in the Book of Order for compliance from amongst other standards; and standards oft repeated in diverse contexts in the Book of Order.*”

Rationale

A summary of the rationale is as follows:

- The controversial, narrowly adopted (57%) 2006 Authoritative Interpretation of G-6.0108b (“Freedom of Conscience within Certain Bounds”) encourages local and regional ordaining bodies to ignore clear indicators in the *Book of Order* itself that certain standards are essential for ordained officers.¹
- Three such indicators are when a particular standard is *specified in ordination vows* (the affirmation Christ as Savior and Lord), *singled out from amongst other standards* for special compliance (the standard for sexual purity), or *repeated*

¹ The AI states that “ordaining and installing bodies ... have the responsibility to determine ... whether any departure [from standards] 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.”

often in diverse contexts (acceptance of the ministry of women).² These contexts create a reasonable expectation among reasonable readers that the particular standard must be essential. Otherwise, there would be no reason for including it in an ordination vow, singling it out from amongst other standards, or repeating it in diverse contexts.³

- Yet the rationale for the 2006 AI states that an ordaining body can judge non-compliance with the sexuality standard in G-6.0106b not to violate essentials,⁴ despite the fact that G-6.0106b clearly *singles out* from “among” “the historic confessional standards of the church” the “requirement” that ordained officers confine sexual intercourse to “the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman.”⁵
- If an ordaining body can ignore such a clear literary indicator of what is essential,⁶ then an ordaining body could just as easily judge a departure from the first ordination vow requiring trust in Christ as one’s “Savior” and “Lord of all” (W-4.4003) or the declaration of a scruple with regard to the acceptance of women’s ordination not to violate the essentials of Reformed faith and polity.⁷

² While not an exhaustive list, these three indicators do have great relevance for current debates in the recent history of the PCUSA.

³ The necessity of accepting women’s ordination is repeated in diverse contexts throughout the Form of Government of the *Book of Order*. G-6.0105 makes clear that “Both men and women *shall* be eligible to hold church.” Likewise, G-14.0221 states: “Every congregation shall elect men and women from among its active members . . . to the office of elder and to the office of deacon.” G-9.0105a (“Committee on Representation”) mandates: “Each governing body above the session shall elect a committee on representation, whose membership shall consist of equal numbers of men and women.” A specific duty of this committee is to “advocate for the representation of . . . women” (c). According to G-13.0111a, “Consideration shall be given to the nomination of equal numbers of ministers (both women and men).” G-1.0100b (“Christ calls the church into being”) refers to Christ “exercising his authority by the ministry of women and men.” G-3.0401b (“Called to Openness”) states: “The Church is called . . . to a new openness” about “becoming in fact as well as in faith a community of women and men.”

⁴ The text of G-6.0106b is as follows: “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” (emphasis added).

⁵ According to the *Final Report* of the Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church: “If an ordaining or installing body determines that an officer-elect has departed from G-6.0106b, . . . [and judges this departure] not to violate the essentials of Reformed faith and polity . . . then there is no barrier to ordination” (*A Season of Discernment*, pp. 40-41, ll. 1222-29).

⁶ If a teacher or parent should say, “Among all my requirements I want to point out this particular requirement as something that must be complied with,” then a student or child, respectively, who contended that the requirement was not “essential” would be in obvious, even perverse, error.

⁷ An example of how this might happen occurred on May 16, 2007 when the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Trinity ruled in case no. 06-09 that the Pittsburgh Presbytery could not define *any* essentials prior to specific cases and then must redefine essentials for each new ordination examination: “Essentials of the faith . . . cannot be predetermined. . . . [D]epartures from essential tenets, must be determined on a case by case basis within the ordination process.” The problem with this reasoning is that if an essential has to be determined on a case by case basis then it is not “essential” as a churchwide standard. It can only be an essential for the particular case of a particular person. By this decision the

This is especially so since the Task Force rationale cites the Adopting Act of 1729 as establishing a virtual absolute right on the part of local and regional ordaining bodies to determine for themselves what standards are essential.⁸

- Inasmuch as the spin given by 2006 AI on G-6.0108b runs counter to the purpose for which it was formulated—namely to protect a *national* standard (i.e. women’s ordination) from candidates who might declare a contrary scruple—it is necessary to reassert the freedom of the collective conscience of the denomination as a whole, especially as enshrined in its constitutional documents.⁹

As to answering possible objections to the amendment the following may be noted:

(1) Someone might counter that the 217th General Assembly (2006) added to the Task Force’s AI a safeguard; namely, that higher governing bodies may review “whether the examination and ordination and installation decision comply with the constitution of the PCUSA.” Even so, this addition did not offer the courts themselves any guidelines for determining essentials in the *Book of Order* that would safeguard against excessive judicial activism (as can be seen from the recent decision of the PJC of the Synod of the Trinity; cited in n. 7 above).

(2) Someone might contend that not all “requirements” or “mandated” practices are essential and that consequently failure to comply with the “mandatory” sexual “requirement” in G-6.0106b is not a necessary bar to ordination. While such contentions regrettably make words mean what they do not normally mean and nullify clear distinctions in the *Book of Order’s* Preface between mandated practices on the one hand and practices merely recommended or permitted on the other hand, they are nevertheless beside the point here. We can all agree that the implicit literary force and effect of *singling out* for compliance a particular requirement from amongst all other standards is to establish the essential status of the requirement. The same holds true for inserting a standard in an ordination vow (so the affirmation of Christ as Savior and Lord) or repeatedly citing a standard in diverse contexts (the validity of women in ministry).

(3) Some may fear that this amendment establishes too much certitude in interpreting texts or creates a detailed litmus text of orthodoxy. Such a fear would be misplaced. The purpose of this amendment is *not* to contend that *all* texts are equally obvious or to define what *all* the essentials are as regards ordination standards. Rather the purpose is to prevent arbitrary or ideologically-based circumventions of some obvious essentials.¹⁰ Put differently, the purpose of this

presbytery could not “predetermine” that believing in Christ as Savior and Lord or accepting the validity of women’s ordination is an “essential” for ordination. The ordaining body would have to revisit the question of whether this is an essential at each and every ordination examination.

⁸ In point of fact, the Adopting Act of 1729 addressed finer points of Calvinist doctrine contained in a voluminous, undifferentiated document like the Westminster Standards. It was certainly never intended to allow local or regional ordaining bodies the autonomy to ordain someone who denied the lordship of Jesus Christ or who engaged in sexual intercourse outside the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman.

⁹ What was the point of the majority of the presbyteries in voting to incorporate this sexuality standard in the *Book of Order* in 1996-97 and then to deny by ever greater margins vigorous attempts to remove it in 1997-98 and 2001-2002 if not to communicate this: “Failure to comply with this singled-out standard would be a *necessary* barrier to ordination”? If the majority of presbyteries had only wanted to have a standard that could be viewed as nonessential, there would have been no reason to single it out for compliance in the Form of Government.

¹⁰ The Presbyterian Church operates on a principle of connectionalism. This includes the right to establish on a national level some minimal beliefs and practices for officers of the church that, when met with

amendment is to establish that *some* standards in the *Book of Order* are clearly presented as essential (i.e. necessary barriers to ordination when not fulfilled by the candidate) even though the precise word “essential” is not used.

A related purpose is to reassert that, despite some radical postmodernist views to the contrary, the communication symbols that constitute the written text of the *Book of Order* and the literary conventions that accompany their use must be given their normal agreed-upon sense if church members are to have any confidence in the process of discernment. Certain literary moves such as placing a given requirement in the context of an ordination vow, singling it out to make a special point about the necessity of compliance, or citing it repeatedly in diverse contexts create an implicit contract of meaning with reasonable readers interpreting reasonably and contextually. Not to draw the obvious conclusion that such contexts establish the ordination requirement as *essential* is to violate that contract of meaning and engender distrust and cynicism regarding process.¹¹

In short, there is nothing radical about this amendment. It simply reinstates the practice of reading literary indicators of meaning in the *Book of Order* reasonably—a practice that had generally operated before the passage of the 2006 AI on G-6.0108b.¹²

noncompliance, become necessary barriers to ordination. For example, the national governing body today could not, and would not, allow the ordination of avowed racists, participants in loving adult-consensual incest or polyamory, persons who declared Jesus to be delusional, or even persons who rejected the validity of women’s ordination.

¹¹ The alternative is a way of reading texts where there are no generally accepted conventions for expected meaning. This would render all texts, including every standard expressed in the *Book of Order*, as meaningless. Then there would be no point to reading, interpreting, citing, adjudicating by means of, or amending the Constitution of the PCUSA except as an exercise of raw, arbitrary power. And then there would be no point to the existence of the PCUSA as a denominational entity.

¹² At the time of the writing of this overture, it is unclear whether the proposed extensive revisions of Form of Government will replace the current version. If it does, then the appropriate adjustments in the proposed amendment are to be made. Based on the draft of the proposed new FOG retrieved from <http://www.pcusa.org/formofgovernment/pdfs/form-of-government.pdf> on 1/7/08, “G-6.0108b” would have to be replaced with “G-2.0104”; “Freedom of Conscience within Certain Bounds” with just “Freedom of Conscience”; and “governing body” with “council.”

**Pittsburgh Presbytery
Revenue & Expense Report
As of November 30, 2007**

Prior Year Comparison

	Annual Budget 2007	Revenue Expense To Date	Annual Budget Remaining	% of Budget Used	Previous Year to Date	Variance Favorable (Un favorable)	
Revenues							
Benevolence Giving-Presby.	616,000.00	388,913.80	227,086.20	63%	434,601.40	(45,687.60)	Note 3
Benevolence Giving-GA & Synod	184,000.00	116,057.91	67,942.09	63%	189,838.60	(73,780.69)	Note 3
Presbyterian Women	25,000.00	12,801.25	12,198.75	51%	20,774.30	(7,973.05)	
Per Capita Income	910,000.00	726,565.70	183,434.30	80%	764,657.29	(38,091.59)	
Trust Income	470,000.00	440,155.83	29,844.17	94%	415,268.98	24,886.85	
Short-term Invest. Income	80,000.00	69,778.63	10,221.37	87%	71,802.57	(2,023.94)	
Other Income	30,000.00	39,961.84	(9,961.84)	133%	24,775.24	15,186.60	
Camp Program Income	459,050.00	374,071.29	84,978.71	81%	436,827.26	(62,755.97)	Note 4
Directed Pledges from Congs.	14,000.00	209,060.15	(195,060.15)	1493%	198,482.37	10,577.78	Note 3
Use of Reserve Funds	372,000.00	235,159.55	136,840.45	63%	384,337.05	(149,177.50)	
Total Revenues	3,160,050.00	2,612,525.95	547,524.05		2,941,365.06	(328,839.11)	Note 5
Expenses							
Mission to Our Congregations							
Crestfield Camp & Conf. Center	491,550.00	442,514.33	49,035.67	90%	418,989.75	(23,524.58)	Note 6
Disciplemaking/Spirit.Growth	10,000.00	7,025.24	2,974.76	70%	3,907.02	(3,118.22)	
Enhancement Grants	135,000.00	137,083.32	(2,083.32)	102%	150,933.42	13,850.10	Note 7
Pastor Ministry Accounts	18,000.00	10,176.67	7,823.33	57%	17,331.62	7,154.95	
Personnel	447,830.00	366,140.68	81,689.32	82%	394,982.46	28,841.78	
Resourcenter Expense	19,000.00	18,842.57	157.43	99%	15,188.96	(3,653.61)	
Stewardship/Mission Interp.	5,500.00	1,535.83	3,964.17	28%	2,261.00	725.17	
Surfing the Edge	0.00	10,480.89	(10,480.89)	0%	6,296.30	(4,184.59)	Note 8
Transformation Commission	115,000.00	100,241.80	14,758.20	87%	137,195.65	36,953.85	Note 9
Sub-Total	1,241,880.00	1,094,041.33	147,838.67		1,147,086.18	53,044.85	
Mission Beyond Our Congregations							
Ecumenical Partnerships	40,000.00	37,416.74	2,583.26	94%	38,083.37	666.63	
GA & Synod Benevolence	184,000.00	116,057.91	67,942.09	63%	189,838.60	73,780.69	Note 3
Malawi Partnership	8,000.00	4,745.07	3,254.93	59%	3,039.46	(1,705.61)	
Mission Agencies	210,000.00	368,610.26	(158,610.26)	176%	355,908.18	(12,702.08)	Note 10
New Church Development	127,000.00	105,437.75	21,562.25	83%	192,935.70	87,497.95	Note 9
Personnel	156,220.00	127,723.49	28,496.51	82%	125,676.23	(2,047.26)	
Racial & Social Justice Issues	30,000.00	12,317.44	17,682.56	41%	14,374.82	2,057.38	
Urban Interns	40,000.00	29,480.00	10,520.00	74%	27,950.00	(1,530.00)	
Sub-Total	795,220.00	801,788.66	(6,568.66)		947,806.36	146,017.70	
Being the Presbytery							
Non-Ecclesiastical Costs	100,250.00	68,313.85	31,936.15	68%	75,871.48	7,557.63	
Administrative/Office Expense	73,250.00	66,710.87	6,539.13	91%	56,643.38	(10,067.49)	
Council Expense	84,850.00	42,954.13	41,895.87	51%	3,214.58	(39,739.55)	Note 11
Ministry	28,125.00	19,560.72	8,564.28	70%	29,847.41	10,286.69	
GA & Synod Per Capita	341,630.00	256,222.83	85,407.17	75%	258,121.86	1,899.03	
Personnel	437,422.00	357,625.79	79,796.21	82%	377,028.69	19,402.90	
Property Expense	51,100.00	34,957.34	16,142.66	68%	39,376.91	4,419.57	
Stated Clerk Expenses	6,323.00	3,257.44	3,065.56	52%	1,175.14	(2,082.30)	
Sub-Total	1,122,950.00	849,602.97	273,347.03		841,279.45	(8,323.52)	
Total Expenses	3,160,050.00	2,745,432.96	414,617.04		2,936,171.99	190,739.03	
Net Total:	0.00	(132,907.01)	132,907.01		5,193.07	(138,100.08)	Note 12

**November 2007 Summary Financial Statement
Treasurer Notes and Comments on Variances**

General Notes

- Note 1. This statement includes the approved amendment of the 2007 budget by \$112,000. The increased revenue was added to Use of Reserve Funds. The increased expense adjustments are as follows: \$22,000 to New Church Development; \$10,000 to Racial and Social Justice Issues (Lazarus Fund); and \$80,000 to Council Expense (Transition Costs).
- Note 2. This statement is a summary of only the operating budget funds of Pittsburgh Presbytery. It does not include \$97K proceeds from the sale of McNaugher or \$85K loss from the National City phishing incident.

Revenue Notes

- Note 3. Mission giving from congregations directly to validated mission causes is up \$73,781 as compared to last year. However, support for GA, Synod and the Presbytery mission budget is down \$119,468. Therefore, total mission giving is down \$45,687 compared to 2006.
- Note 4. Camp income is down slightly in nearly every area, contributing to the \$62,756 decline in income.
- Note 5. Removing Directed Pledges from Congregations and use of Reserve Funds, actual income for 2007 is \$2,172,756 and \$2,366,176 for 2006. Therefore income is actually down \$193,420 compared to last year.

Expense Notes

- Note 6. This variance is due mainly to increased Kitchen and Housekeeping Personnel costs of \$17,385 and an increase of \$10,097 in Food and Kitchen Supplies.
- Note 7. The 2007 Enhancement Grant expenses of \$137,083 consist of \$121,083 budgeted support and \$16,000 in designated giving from congregations.
- Note 8. Surfing the Edge expense in 2007 is the cost of the congregational surveys approved by Council.
- Note 9. Even with the \$22,000 increase to NCD mentioned in Note 1, Use of Reserve Funds for NCD and ACT is down \$124,452 compared to last year.
- Note 10. The 2007 Mission Agencies expenses of \$368,610 consist of \$183,500 in budgeted support of validated mission agencies and \$185,110 in support of validated mission agencies directly from congregations.
- Note 11. 2007 Council Expense includes \$38,628 for costs related to the denominational property issues, Transition and Listening Team expenses that were not part of the 2006 budget.
- Note 12. Removing Directed Giving from Congregations and use of Reserve Funds, actual expenses for 2007 are \$2,305,663 and \$2,360,983 for 2006. Therefore expenses are actually down \$55,320 as compared to last year.

Dorothy Winter
Financial Secretary

LEBANON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OVERTURE
Per Capita Issues
April 17, 2007

The Session of the Lebanon Presbyterian Church, West Mifflin, Pennsylvania meeting at a specially called Session Meeting on April 17, 2007 respectfully submits to the Pittsburgh Presbytery the following overture, to substitute for the overture previously submitted by the session, in order to more clearly explain the desired action.

The above governing body requests that Pittsburgh Presbytery approve the following:

Change “Manual of Pittsburgh Presbytery” by replacing the second sentence of section 13.140 from, “Presbytery is obligated to pay its full per capita assessment to the General Assembly and Synod whether or not it collects the full amount from the particular church”, to “All churches are responsible for full per capita payment. Churches choosing to designate or undesignate Presbytery, Synod or General Assembly per capita will have their designations honored when written requests are received from the session. If a church is intentionally withholding funds, a letter will be sent to either General Assembly or Synod indicating the protest and funds will not be sent. The Presbytery will equalize per capita receipts for all other congregations and, together with undesignated funds as long as they are available, pay the full assessment for those congregations.”

Pittsburgh Presbytery adopts the practice of honoring donor intent and designated gifts in relation to per capita payments, specifically not passing along per capita payments to higher governing bodies when a church session so designates and written notice of that donor intent is given. It interprets the Constitution to mean that when a church so designates its funds that those funds “are not available” to be transferred higher governing bodies and so there is not “equalization” made, equalization being a process whereby undesignated funds elsewhere in the presbytery operating budget are used to make up unpaid per capita balances of intentionally withholding churches. The Presbytery is unable to provide funds when a church has specifically restricted its gift and deems that restricted gift to mean that funds are not available and therefore the Presbytery is unable to pay

The wording of this overture was unanimously and enthusiastically approved by the Finance Committee of Pittsburgh Presbytery at its November 16, 2006 meeting, when requested by the Presbytery Council to review per capita issues and other overtures on per capita matters. Council then rejected the advice of its own Finance Committee at its November 21, 2006 meeting. The Session of Lebanon Presbyterian Church, West Mifflin, believes that this is such an important overture with a high degree of likelihood of bringing reconciliation to the churches of Pittsburgh Presbytery that it brings the overture directly to the floor of Presbytery.

RATIONALE

The issue of per capita is an ongoing and divisive issue that undermines the strength of mission funding in Pittsburgh Presbytery. To find a compromise in which the long-standing principles, on the one hand, of the necessity of payment of per capita as part of the connectional church are balanced, on the other hand, with the integrity issue of honoring donor intent, is essential to enable the Presbytery to move on and not to continually debate and re-debate this issue. Each time this divisive issue is re-debated it undermines mission funding and reduces our connectional church.

A projection of total per capita that will not be paid in 2007 is \$70,000. Of that it is estimated that at most \$30,000 is intentionally withheld. Or in other words, the impact on funds that would then not be forwarded to Synod and General Assembly is approximately \$10,000. This is approximately 1% of all Ecclesiastical Costs in Pittsburgh Presbytery and less than .3% of the Pittsburgh Presbytery total operating budget (\$3,048,050). The overture has small negative impact in per capita funding for higher judicatories.

If these estimated projections are correct, under the proposed overture what would not be forwarded to Synod and General Assembly is \$10,000 out of a Presbytery Operating Budget of \$3,048,050; the General Assembly's operating budget is +\$9,000,000.

This overture is neither a liberal nor a conservative one. A church under this overture could just as likely designate all of its per capita for the General Assembly as a church might designate all of its per capita for the Presbytery. It affirms that the basis of mission funding are biblical stewardship principles of choice, free-will gifts, and of cheerful, willing givers. One never forces a donor to give to something with which they disagree. Per capita payments are deemed by the Permanent Judicial Commission of the General Assembly to be "voluntary", a Presbytery cannot penalize a church for withholding its per capita payments or designating them in any way.

Under this overture, for example, a church, paying all of its per capita, might designate it in it's entirely to the presbytery and none would be equalized and no money forwarded to higher judicatories when so designated in writing to the Presbytery.

Under this overture, for example, a small, struggling congregation that cannot afford to pay its per capita but was not intentionally withholding, would have its per capita payments "equalized" and the Presbytery would make per capita payments out of undesignated funds, in order to help the small and struggling congregation fulfill its Book of Order obligations. At present there is estimated to be at least \$423,000 of undesignated funds available for equalization that are not earmarked in any way for mission.

Under this overture, for example, a church, paying all of its per capita, might designate all of it to the General Assembly and none would be equalized and no money forwarded to other higher judicatories when so designated in writing to the Presbytery.

This overture affirms what surveys on generational giving patterns have known for years, that younger donors are less inclined to give to unified mission and more inclined to designate their gifts. In other words the current generation of leaders in the PC (USA) are less inclined than earlier generations to give blanket and unrestricted pledges to things like shared benevolence and per capita. When this change in giving patterns is acknowledged and embraced studies clearly indicate that giving INCREASES not decreases when donor intent is honored. Address the underlying generational giving patterns and we address what really is going on in the area of declining mission funding.

To not honor donor intent is to undermine financial integrity in the Presbytery. It brings into question whether or not the Presbytery is also honoring donor intent in other non-per capita areas as well. If churches are absolutely certain that when they contribute for a certain designated purpose that all of the money without question will go for the purpose for which it was intended, then donor confidence and trust will rise. When donor confidence and trust rise, then contributions rise. By honoring donor intent there is a very real likelihood that receipts would rise. For with the adoption of this overture there is no reason, theological or otherwise, for a church to withhold its per capita payment. Designation takes away the rationale for withholding.

Lastly, this overture interprets the Constitution in this manner. When a church designates its full per capita payment exclusively for one higher governing body, and the Presbytery honors that donor intent, then the Presbytery interprets the Constitution to mean that funds for equalization are quite literally “not-available” and funds will not be advanced to the higher governing bodies not so designated because the Presbytery is “unable” to pay.

To honor donor intent through this overture has the very real likelihood of diffusing a divisive issue at an important time in the life of the Presbyterian Church (USA), honoring donor intent, affirming the integrity of the financial processes of the Presbytery, and even INCREASING funds available for ecclesiastical and mission work of the Presbytery,

Since the Presbytery Council has not yet acted on a previous overture made by the Session of Lebanon Presbyterian Church dealing with per capita issues, we hope that his substitute overture will address the concerns raised, and meet with the approval of both Council and Pittsburgh Presbytery.

For these reasons we respectfully request Pittsburgh Presbytery adopt this overture and change Pittsburgh Presbytery Manual Provisions to further the Peace, Unity and Purity of the church. **By action of The Session of Lebanon Presbyterian Church, West Mifflin Pennsylvania, unanimously approved, meeting in a Session meeting, April 17, 2007.**

Attested to:

Robert Titus
Moderator

Virginia Slater
Clerk of Session

**REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK
February 7, 2008**

Items For Information

1. Permanent Judicial Commission... Expired Terms Roster

In accordance with **D-5.0206b** of the *Rules of Discipline*, the Stated Clerk is required to maintain a current roster of the members of the Permanent Judicial Commission whose terms have expired within the last six years and to report those names annually to the Presbytery. The following are the members of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Presbytery whose terms have expired within the last six years and who, therefore, would be available to fill a quorum in the event that current members of the Permanent Judicial Commission are unable to attend hearings in a particular case:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Term Expired</u>
Kears Pollock	2007
Joan Humphrey (E)	2005
Garland McAdoo (E)	2005
Catherine Purves (M)	2005
Mark J. Krauland (E)	2004
Frank DeLuce (M)	2003
Justin M. Johnson (E)	2003

2. Correspondence

During the reported period since the last regularly stated Presbytery meeting, all correspondence that was received was responded to and/or appropriately routed for review and response in due course.

3. Clerks of Session Training Event - Reminder

First and second year clerks of session are encouraged to attend the Presbytery clerks' of session training from 9 a.m. until noon at the Presbytery Center, **Saturday, February 16th, 2008.**

4. Charges Filed

The Stated Clerk reports that formal charges have been filed against a Minister member of Presbytery and transmitted to the Moderator of the Presbytery's Permanent Judicial Commission.

5. Renunciations of Jurisdiction

The Stated Clerk reports that the Rev. Dr. D. Dean Weaver and the Rev. Kevin Gourley respectively renounced the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in writings received by the Stated Clerk and effective January 22, 2008.

6. Elder Equalization

The membership of Pittsburgh Presbytery as reported to the Stated Clerk as of December 31, 2006 was:

Minister Members	323
Less non-commuters	<u>(31)</u>
Minister Members	292

Elders

Elders by Congregation Membership Size	181
Plus Elder Officers/Committee Service	62
Plus Serving Commissioned Lay Pastors	4
Plus Elders by Rotation	<u>45</u>
	292

7. Committee of Counsel Formed

Pursuant to Section 2.126 of the *Presbytery Manual* on January 8, 2008 the Moderator appointed the following two (2) persons as Committee of Counsel in the matter of ***Memorial Park Presbyterian Church vs. Pittsburgh Presbytery*** (Court of Common Pleas, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania), to wit: Elder David Green (Bower Hill), and the Rev. Dr. Jack Lolla (Plum Creek).

8. Administrative Commission *in re* Memorial Park Presbyterian

On January 8, 2008, the Moderator of the Pittsburgh Presbytery made the following appointment under provisions of the *Presbytery Manual* Section 2.127, creating an ***Administrative Commission*** with full authority vis-à-vis the disruption, disorder and unrest at our Memorial Park congregation (as witnessed, among other matters, by the filing of a civil suit), that Commission's authority to include the ability to inquire into and settle the difficulties therein, including the authority of the Presbytery to remove, replace, restructure or dissolve the Pastor's relationship with the congregation and all assistant and associate pastor relationships, and the relationships of the staff, the Clerk of Session and the Session itself. Those Administrative Commission members are as follows:

Elders

Joe Schewe (Parkwood)
David Henderson (Ben Avon)
Margaret Miller (Sixth)
Audrey Murrell (Bidwell)

Ministers

Lance Chapman (Hamilton)
Stevens Lytch (At Large)
Phil Beck (First, Tarentum)

9. Committee of Counsel in the Bush et. al vs. Pittsburgh Presbytery GAPJC Appeal

By reason of the resignation of Elder James Belliveau (Memorial Park) from the Committee of Counsel defending the Presbytery in the Bush et. al vs. Pittsburgh Presbytery appeal to the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, on January 14, 2008 the Moderator appointed Elder Susan Dobbins to that Committee of Counsel.

- 10. Administrative Commission in re First United Presbyterian Church, Leetsdale**
On January 15, 2008 the Moderator appointed following persons as an administrative commission with full authority for the purpose of overseeing the closure of the First United Presbyterian Church, Leetsdale:

Ministers

Carol Roth (Ben Avon)
Deborah Warren (Wilkenburg)
Stu Lawrence (HR)
Scott Hoffman (Sewickley)

Elders

Judith Yeck (Sharon)
Don Birnie (Sewickley)
Ross Dillon (Ben Avon)

Items for Action

1. Consent Motions

The Stated Clerk recommends the following items be approved by consent: **# 2, 3 and 4.**

***2. Commissioned Elders**

The Stated Clerk recommends that the following elder officers and committee members of Pittsburgh Presbytery be commissioned as Elder Presbyters for the year 2008 to redress an imbalance of minister and elder Presbyters (See, Book of Order, G-11.0101b) :

ELECTED OFFICERS OF PRESBYTERY: **Moderator,** Kears Pollock (Parkwood); **Assistant Clerk,** Carolyn Wood (Brookline UP).

FORMER MODERATORS:

David Green (Bower Hill) ; Justin M. Johnson (East Liberty); Nancy Lee Cochran (Memorial Park); William Pohlmann (Southminster); Ronald Curry (Grace Memorial); Mark J. Krauland (Hiland); Jean C. Kennedy (East Liberty); Jane Sampson (East Liberty); Harry Edelman III (Fox Chapel).

PRESBYTERY COUNCIL: Daniel Beckstrom (Mt. Lebanon); Thomas Bice (Heritage); Rebecca Coger (Bidwell Street); Thomas Graham (Sewickley); Carol Hunley (Southminster); Robert Lichy (Bakerstown, First); Dean Marlin (Oakmont); Christopher Martin (East Liberty); David Morgans (Lebanon); Thelma Morris (Grace Memorial); Alfreda Overton (Bidwell Street).

PRESBYTERY STAFF ; Betty Angelini (Hampton U. P); Evelyn Moulton (Bidwell Street); Sharon Stewart (Pleasant Hills); Jeffrey Walley (Hamilton); Vera K. White (Hiland).

CHAIRS/VICE CHAIRS/ELDERS OF...COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY: Joanne Best (Elfinwild); George Craig (Sewickley); Kip Campbell (Northmont); Michael Carney (Lebanon); Kenneth Eber (Lebanon); M. Elinor Fleming (Southminster); Gary Gallo (Westminster); Leslie Kaplan (Sixth); Evelyn Koschik (Jefferson United); Will Morris (Westminster); Daniel Paul (Westminster);

Marilyn Sharp (Round Hill); Roger Stuart (Sunset Hills); Linda Williams (Hiland); Earle Wooding (Pleasant Hills). **COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY:** Ramona Bosse (Beulah); Marcia Brent (Dormont); Doris Calian (Fox Chapel); Jane Fox (Sixth); Thomas Fox (Lebanon); Debra Hagan (Parkwood); Harry Lentz (Round Hill); Robert Lindeman (Elfinwild); Joyce Matthews (Grace Memorial); Arthur McAra (Wexford); Nancy Merrill (Sewickley); David Miller (Sixth); James Morrissey (Sewickley); Verna Robinson (Sixth); Walter Seigfried (Pittsburgh, First); Leon Williams (Mt. Lebanon); Andrew Wilson (Forest Hills); Peggy Wolstoncroft (Bethany). **NOMINATIONS :** Susan Dobbins (Sewickley); Dorothy Geary (Bellevue).

SERVING COMMISSIONED LAY PASTORS: Robert Henry [Elder, Logans Ferry] @ Logans Ferry; Kenneth Love [Elder, Kerr] @ Kerr; Mark Plumb [Elder, Pleasant Hills] @Lebanon; Paul Nigra [Elder, Forest Hills] @Hawthorne.

***3. Authorize Additional Elder Commissioners by Church Rotation**

The Stated Clerk recommends that the following churches be authorized to commission one additional elder for 2008: Aspinwall; Bellefield ; Bethel, Bethel Park; Bethesda, Elizabeth; Bower Hill; Brighton-McClure; Brookline Blvd.; Carnegie; Central, McKeesport.; Cheswick; Coraopolis; Covenant-Comm.; Cross Roads, Gibsonia.; Cross Roads, Monroeville.; Deer Creek; Dormont; Duquesne; East Liberty; Elfinwild; Emsworth; Forest Avenue; Forest Hills; Gladden; Hawthorne Avenue; Hebron, Clinton; Hiland; Hoboken; Jefferson; Knoxville; Logans Ferry; Mt. Lebanon; Northminster; Northmont; Pittsburgh, First; Plum Creek; Riverview; Sampson's Mills; Sharon Community; St. Andrews; Third, Pittsburgh; Union, Robinson; Verona; Westminster; Wexford Comm.; Whitehall.

***4. Ecclesiastical Administrative Commissions to Ordain, Install or Receive**

to Receive Sarina Meyer as a Candidate Under Care

Meyer The Administrative Commission elected by Pittsburgh Presbytery on September 6, 2007 to receive Sarina Meyer as a Candidate by the Presbytery, consisting of the Moderator Elder David Green to moderate: the Revs. Paul Roberts and John Burgess; together with Elders Nancy Merrill of the Presbyterian Church, Sewickley and Barbara Pryor of the Eastminster Presbyterian Church, met by appointment on September 16, 2007 at 9:00 a.m. at the Eastminster Presbyterian Church.

There being a quorum present, the Commission was convened with prayer by the Rev. Paul Roberts. All things being prepared in advance, decently and in order, the Commission approved the Service of Reception and voted to proceed to receive Sarina Meyer as a candidate of Presbytery according to the direction of Presbytery and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Commission moved to the Sanctuary at 9:30 a.m. and received Sarina Meyer as a candidate of Presbytery. Elder David Green propounded the constitutional questions to the Inquirer. (Form of Government, Chapter XIV, Section 3, 14.0305F), which she answered in the affirmative.

The Minutes of the Commission were read and approved. Upon motion duly made, the Commission moved to adjourn at the conclusion of the Service of Reception with the pronouncement of Benediction.

to Ordain Heather Tunney

Tunney The Administrative Commission elected by Pittsburgh Presbytery on December 6, 2007 to ordain Heather Tunney as a minister of the word and sacrament, consisting of the Moderator Elder Kears Pollock or his designee to moderate: the Reverends Randall Bush, Dana Gold, Linda Ruby and DeNeice Welch together with Elders Leon Williams of the Mt. Lebanon United Presbyterian Church and Damon Bethea of the East Liberty Presbyterian Church, met by appointment on January 6, 2008 at 2:40 p.m. at East Liberty Presbyterian Church.

There being a quorum present, the Commission was convened with prayer by the Rev. Randall Bush. All things being prepared in advance, decently and in order, the Commission approved the Service of Ordination and voted to proceed to ordain Heather Tunney as a minister of the word and sacrament according to the direction of Presbytery and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Commission moved to the Sanctuary at 3:00 p.m. and ordained Heather Tunney as a minister of the word and sacrament. Elder Kears Pollock asked the constitutional questions (Form of Government, Chapter XIV, Section 4, 14.0305), which she answered in the affirmative. The Sermon was delivered by Rev. Connie Dunn. Rev. Richard Szeremany offered the prayer of ordination. The Minutes of the Commission were read and approved. Upon motion duly made, the Commission moved to adjourn at the conclusion of the Service of Ordination with the pronouncement of Benediction by the Rev. Heather Tunney.

to Ordain Kevin Long

Long The Administrative Commission elected by Pittsburgh Presbytery on December 6, 2007 to ordain Kevin Long as a minister of the word and sacrament, consisting of the Moderator Elder Kears Pollock or his designee to moderate: the Reverends Craig Barnes, and Christopher Taylor; together with Elders Mary Hamilton of the Beulah United Presbyterian Church and Timothy Engelman of the Shadyside Presbyterian Church, met by appointment on January 6, 2008 at 3:30 p.m. at Shadyside Presbyterian Church.

There being a quorum present, the Commission was convened with prayer by Rev. Andrew Purves. All things being prepared in advance, decently and in order, the Commission approved the Service of Ordination and voted to proceed to ordain Kevin Long as a minister of the word and sacrament according to the direction of Presbytery and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Commission moved to the Sanctuary at 4:00 p.m. and ordained Kevin Long as a minister of the word and sacrament. Elder David Green asked the constitutional questions (Form of Government, Chapter XIV, Section 4, 14.0305), which he answered in the affirmative. The Sermon was delivered by Rev. Craig Barnes. Rev. Christopher Taylor offered the prayer of ordination. The Minutes of the Commission were read and approved. Upon motion duly made, the Commission moved to adjourn at the conclusion of the Service of Ordination with the pronouncement of Benediction by the Rev. Kevin Long.

to Ordain Emily Miller

Miller

The Administrative Commission elected by Pittsburgh Presbytery on December 6, 2007 to ordain Emily Miller as a minister of the word and sacrament, consisting of the Rev. Gail B. King to moderate: the Reverends Lance Chapman, and Daniel B. Merry; together with Elders Peggy Wolstoncroft of the Bethany Presbyterian Church and Walter Young of the Hamilton Presbyterian Church, met by appointment on December 9, 2007 at 3:30 p.m. at Hamilton Presbyterian Church.

There being a quorum present, the Commission was convened with prayer by Rev. Lance Chapman. All things being prepared in advance, decently and in order, the Commission approved the Service of Ordination and voted to proceed to ordain Emily Miller as a minister of the word and sacrament according to the direction of Presbytery and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Commission moved to the Sanctuary at 4:00 p.m. and ordained Emily Miller as a minister of the word and sacrament. Rev. Gail B. King asked the constitutional questions (Form of Government, Chapter XIV, Section 4, 14.0305), which she answered in the affirmative. The Sermon was delivered by Rev. Dr. Pat Albright. Rev. Dr. Daniel B. Merry offered the prayer of ordination. The Minutes of the Commission were read and approved. Upon motion duly made, the Commission moved to adjourn at the conclusion of the Service of Ordination with the pronouncement of Benediction by the Rev. Emily Miller.

OVERTURE TO PITTSBURGH PRESBYTERY
Submitted by the Rev. Bill Thomas and the Rev. Bebb Stone.
Concurred in by the Session of the Presbyterian Church of Mt. Washington

An Overture to the 218th General Assembly 2008 in support of Single Payer Universal Healthcare Reform

PHEWA working group: Elder Hal Sanders; Elder Tom Graham; Elder Claudia Detwiler; Ken Love, CLP; Rev. Darcy Hawk; Rev. Bill Thomas, Rev. Bruce Mounts, Rev. Don Dutton Rev. Bebb Stone, Staff: Rev. Karen Battle.

January 2008

Whereas Jesus Christ, who has reconciled us to God, healed all kinds of sickness (Matthew 4:23, par) as a sign of God's rule;

Whereas Isaiah speaks God's word to say 'No more shall there be....an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime' (Isaiah 65:20a).

Whereas we, as Reformed Christians, bear witness to Jesus Christ in word, but also in deed;

Whereas as followers of our Great Physician Jesus, we have a moral imperative to work to assure that everyone has full access to health care;

Whereas our nation is in a crisis in health care which presents an unprecedented opportunity for our nation to provide healthcare affordable for all;

Whereas in this country there is a baby born every 51 seconds to a family with no health insurance;[1]

Whereas in this the wealthiest nation in the world our infant morality rate is second highest in the industrialized world;[2]

Whereas 47 million Americans are uninsured[3] (50% employed; 25% children; 20% out of labor force as students, disabled, et.al.; 5% unemployed);[4]

Whereas the US spends nearly twice as much per capita as than any other country on health care, but we rank poorly in the 37 categories of health status measured by the World Health Organization;[5]

Whereas the rise in childhood obesity, asthma, diabetes, and other chronic diseases indicates that the overall health status of people of this country is declining;[6]

Whereas we are warned by the prophets not to heal the wounds of God's people lightly; yet in 2006 the aggregate profits of the health insurance companies in the United States were \$86 billion. During that same year more than 15,000 families were forced into bankruptcy because of medical expenses.[7]

Whereas our business employers operate at a competitive disadvantage internationally because health care costs are assumed by the governments of other industrialized nations;

Whereas the General Assemblies of the PCUSA and its predecessors since 1971 have called for reform of health delivery systems in the United States to make them accessible to the entire population;[8]

Whereas our federal government already operates efficiently and with low overhead[9] the health delivery programs of Medicare and Medicaid; and yet at the same time insurance companies spend nearly 1/3 of every premium dollar on marketing and other administrative costs and in fact, several such companies spend less than 60% of premium dollars they receive on health care services.

Whereas the American College of Physicians, the nation's second largest physician group, has endorsed a single payer healthcare system;[10]

Whereas only a single-payer system of national healthcare coverage (privately provided; publicly financed; not socialized medicine) can save what is estimated to be \$350 billion wasted annually on medical bureaucracy and redirect those funds to expanded coverage;[11]

And Whereas single-payer universal healthcare reform would increase coverage from the 60% of Americans already covered by Medicare (over 65) or Medicaid (severely limited wealth) to 100% of Americans, a net increase of only 40%:

Therefore be it resolved that Pittsburgh Presbytery overture the 218th General Assembly to advocate for, educate about, and work toward single-payer universal health care reform through national health insurance that is privately provided (improved Medicare for all in principle) and publicly financed;

Be it further resolved that the General Assembly through its Council actively pursue the goal of obtaining legislation that enacts single-payer, universal national health insurance as the program that best responds to this moral imperative of the gospel; and that the General Assembly Council monitor progress made toward this goal without regard to political party and report back to the church through its National Ministries Division on an annual basis;

Be it further resolved that the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly send a copy of this resolution to the appropriate committee chairs of the U.S. Congress and to the

Washington and United Nations offices of the PCUSA;

Be it further resolved that \$25,000 be directed from the Mission budget of the PCUSA to the PACT Network of PHEWA for the purpose of holding ten regional, one-day seminars supporting single payer universal healthcare reform, monies to be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

[1] Healthcare Now Conference, Chicago, Illinois, November 10, 2007, Elder Hal Sanders.

[2] Chuck Pennachio, PhD, Executive Director, Health Care for All Pennsylvania.

[3] "The Uninsured, A Primer: Key Facts about Americans Without Health Insurance," Kaiser Family Foundation, October 2007.

[4] Himmelfarb & Woolhandler tabulation, p. 13 "Medicare for All! A Guide to Single Payer National Health Insurance, B.S. Rosen, Chicago, Illinois.

[5] Healthcare Now Conference, Chicago, Illinois, November 10, 2007, Elder Hal Sanders.

[6] Elder Hal Sanders, Presbytery meeting, September 2007 at Camp Crestfield.

[7] Ibid.

[8] 1971 General Assembly of the PCUSA called for a national health insurance 'single payer' plan; and "the 200th General Assembly challenged the church by adopting 'Life Abundant: Values, Choices, and Health Care—the Responsibility and Role of the Presbyterian Church (USA)' in which the church was called to act upon the basic values of compassion, caring love, community wholeness and well-being, and justice that we hold to be fundamental in understanding and addressing the health issues and crises that confront the church and the nation." Health E-News, National Health Ministries, December 21, 2007.

[9] Report of The National Bipartisan Commission on the future of Medicare, 2002, cites Medicare administrative costs at 3% of payments to providers for services to Medicare beneficiaries.

[10] Philadelphia Inquirer, December 5, 2007.

[11] New York Times December 15, 2007.

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY
TO PRESBYTERY**

February 7, 2008

The committee met on January 30, 2008, at 4:00 p.m. at the Pittsburgh Presbytery Center. A quorum was present.

Part I - Items for Information

1. **Permission to take Ordination Examinations** The committee reports that it has given approval to the following persons to take the Ordination Examinations:
 - a. Megan Manas - Bible Exegesis, Church Polity, Theological Competence, Worship & Sacraments

2. **Removal of Candidate** The committee reports that it will remove the following Candidate from its care:
 - a. Kenneth Love (removed)
 - b. Betsy Rumer (withdrew)

Part II - Items for Action

1. **Consent Motion** The committee recommends that the following recommendations be adopted by consent: #2, 4, 5

- *2. **Annual Consultations** The committee recommends that the following annual consultations be approved and that the Inquirer (I)/Candidate (C) be continued under the care of Pittsburgh Presbytery:
 - a. Clara Brown (I)
 - b. Michael Gehrling (C)
 - c. Sean Hall (I)
 - d. Lisa Kerestesi (I)
 - e. Megan Manas (I)
 - f. Donald Polito (C)
 - g. Christopher White (I)
 - h. Anthony Youlton (I)

3. **Examination to be Received as a Candidate** The committee recommends that the following Inquirer be received as a Candidate:

Sean Hall Sean Hall, a member of the Hampton United Presbyterian Church since 2006, is a 2005 graduate of the Presbyterian College and is currently a student at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, has been an Inquirer since 2007.

***4. Appointment of Commission for Reception to Candidacy** The committee recommends approval of the following commission to receive as "Candidate Under Care." The first named minister after the moderator shall be the clerk.

Sean Hall Sunday, February 10, 2008 at 11:00 a.m. at the Hampton United Presbyterian Church. The Moderator Elder Kears Pollock or his designee, The Rev. Theodore Martin, The Rev. Brian Wallace, Elder Stan Maitland (Hampton United Presbyterian Church), Elder Dave Harding (Riverview United Presbyterian Church).

***5. Appointment of Commission for Ordination/Installation** The committee recommends that the following commission be appointed to ordain the following person, with full authority to arrange and conduct the service subject to the requirements of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The moderator, or his appointee, shall be moderator of the commission and the first named minister after the moderator shall be the clerk:

Joshua Brown *If the way be clear, Joshua Brown will serve as Pastor of the Bethel Presbyterian Church, Washington Presbytery and previously stood for his Oral Parts of Trial at the January 19, 2008 meeting of the Washington Presbytery.*
Sunday, February 10, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. at the Hebron United Presbyterian Church. The Moderator Elder Kears Pollock or his designee, The Rev. Dr. Douglas Rehberg, The Rev. Frank DeLuce, Elder Daniel Brown (Hebron United Presbyterian Church), Elder Barbara Gettes (Unity United Presbyterian Church).

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY TO PRESBYTERY

The Committee met in the conference rooms of the Presbytery Center on January 29, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

Part I - Items for Information

1. **Positions Available** The Committee lists the following positions within the Presbytery that are thought to be available. If the position is for **pastor or associate pastor**, listing here indicates that the Church Information Form has been filed with Louisville and the church is receiving PIF's:

Pastor	Bellefield Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh
Pastor	First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh
Pastor	Pleasant Hills Community PC, Pleasant Hills
Pastor	The Community Presbyterian Church, Ben Avon
Assoc. Pastor	Southminster Presbyterian Church, Mt. Lebanon
Assoc. Pastor	Westminster Presbyterian Church, Upper St. Clair
Temporary Supply (FT)	Olivet Presbyterian Church, West Elizabeth
Temporary Supply (PT)	Cross Roads Presbyterian Church, Gibsonia
Temporary Supply (PT)	Hebron Presbyterian Church, Clinton
Youth/Adult (FT)	First United Presbyterian Church, Tarentum
Youth/Family (FT)	Linway United Presbyterian Church, North Versailles
Youth (PT)	Fountain Park Church, Cranberry Twp.
Youth (PT)	First Presbyterian Church, Rennerdale

For other church related opportunities, please visit our website at www.pghpresbytery.org and click on "About Us."

2. **Triennial visits** The Committee on Ministry reports that a triennial visit was made to Mt. Vernon Community Presbyterian Church in December 2007.
3. **Overture Recommendations** The Committee on Ministry makes the following report to Presbytery on three abortion related overtures that were referred to it:
- Overture - Cease paying for abortions as a covered benefit in the Board of Pensions Medical Benefits Plan. **Recommend: NOT CONCUR.**
- Overture - Board of Pensions to provide an annual Relief of Conscience Plan Report. **Recommend: CONCUR.**
- Overture - On Advocating and Funding either both sides of the abortion issue or neither - **NO RECOMMENDATION.**

Part II- Items for Action

1. **Consent Motion** The Committee recommends that the following recommendations be adopted by consent: #'s: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13.

2. Calls

The Call of the First Presbyterian Church, Bakerstown for the services of **Rev. Daniel Muttart** as Pastor effective February 18, 2008. Annual terms of call are Salary and Housing \$ 77,500; Full Pension; Travel Allowance \$ 3,600; Expense allowance \$ 2,500; Study Allowance \$ 1,500; Dental Allowance \$ 540; Medical Expenses \$ 1,550; Full moving cost; 4 weeks vacation and 2 weeks study leave.

The Call of the Hampton United Presbyterian Church for the services of **Rev. Brian Wallace** as Associate Pastor effective February 15, 2008. Annual terms of call are Salary and Housing \$ 44,339; Full Pension; Expense Allowance \$ 2,500; Medical Expenses \$ 887; Study Leave \$1,500; 4 weeks vacation and 2 weeks study leave.

(Because this person has served as a temporary supply in this position, this requires a 2/3 vote of the Presbytery).

CALLING CHURCH	A	B	WOMEN				RACIAL/ ETHNIC				DISABLED				OVER AGE 50				SINGLE				TOT
			PIF	HP	INT	POS	PIF	HP	INT	POS	PIF	HP	INT	POS	PIF	HP	INT	POS	PIF	HP	INT	POS	PIFS
Bakerstown, 1 st	X	X	42	1	1	0	6	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	106	10	10	1	4	1	1	0	256
Hampton UP	X	X			2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		1	2	1	5

Column A - Affirmative Action visit made. Column B - EEO commitment signed by PNC and Session

PIF - Number of Personal Information Forms received

HP - Number heard preach in person

INT - Number interviewed

POS - Number offered position

TOTAL - Total PIF's considered

*3. Administrative Commission

The election of the following ministers and elders of Pittsburgh Presbytery to serve as an Administrative Commission to install the **Rev. Todd Leach** as Associate Pastor of Shadyside Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh on March 9, 2008 at 11:00 a.m. Elder Kears Pollock to moderate; Revs. James Tinnemeyer and Craig Barnes; together with Elders Laurel Schultz of the Fox Chapel Presbyterian Church and Robert Hoehl of the Shadyside Presbyterian Church.

The election of the following ministers and elders of Pittsburgh Presbytery to serve as an Administrative Commission to install the **Rev. Theodore Martin** as Pastor and **Rev. Brian Wallace** as Associate Pastor of Hampton United Presbyterian Church on March 16, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. Elder Kears Pollock to moderate; Revs. Andrew Purves, John Welch and Paul Becker together with Elders Bart Roberts of the Northmont United Presbyterian and Gene Baur of the Hampton United Presbyterian Church.

- *4. Dissolutions**
- The dissolution of the pastoral relationship between the **Rev. David Diercksen** and the Heritage United Presbyterian Church effective January 31, 2008.
- The dissolution of the pastoral relationship between the **Rev. David Dunderdale** and the Northminster Presbyterian Church effective January 8, 2008.
- The dissolution of the pastoral relationship between the **Rev. Daniel Muttart** and the Hillcrest United Presbyterian Church effective February 18, 2008.
- *5. Letters of Dismissal**
- The request of the **Rev. John McCall** to be dismissed to Kiskiminetas Presbytery to serve as Interim pastor of the Oakwood Presbyterian Church effective November 1, 2007.
- *6. Interim Supplies**
- The request of the Waverly United Presbyterian Church for the services of the **Rev. Rebecca Hickok** as interim pastor for one year effective November 1, 2007.
- The request of the First Presbyterian Church, Bakerstown for the services of the **Rev. David Antonson** as interim pastor for one month effective January 16, 2008.
- The request of the First Presbyterian Church, Bakerstown for the services of the **Rev. Page Creach** as interim associate pastor for six months effective January 1, 2008.
- *7. Temporary Supplies**
- The request of the Immanuel Presbyterian Church to renewal for the services of the **Rev. Darrell Knopp** as temporary supply, for one year effective January 1, 2008.
- The request of the Brighton-McClure Presbyterian Church for the services of **Mr. Matt Haberman** as half-time temporary supply effective March 2, 2008, if the way be clear.
- *8. Stated Supply**
- Renewal of the Stated Supply contract for the **Rev. Robert Humes** and the Moon Run Presbyterian Church for one year effective January 1, 2008.
- *9. Moderators**
- The appointment of **Rev. Douglas Dorsey** as Moderator of Northminster Presbyterian Church effective January 15, 2008.
- The appointment of **Rev. William Paul** as Moderator of Heritage Presbyterian Church effective February 1, 2008.
- The appointment of **Rev. Darrell Knopp** as Moderator of Immanuel United Presbyterian Church effective January 1, 2008.
- The appointment of **Rev. Vance Torbert, III** as Moderator of Hillcrest United Presbyterian Church effective February 18, 2008.

- *10. Member at Large
- Approve the request of the **Rev David Diercksen** to be enrolled as a member-at-large in Pittsburgh Presbytery effective February 1, 2008.
- Approve the request of the **Rev. David Dunderdale** to be enrolled as a member-at-large in Pittsburgh Presbytery effective January 8, 2008.
- Approve the request of the **Rev. Walter Pietschmann** to be enrolled as a member-at-large in Pittsburgh Presbytery effective January 28, 2008.
- *11. Permission to Labor
- The **Rev. Douglas Ronsheim** be granted permission to labor outside the bounds of Pittsburgh Presbytery as Executive Director, American Assoc. of Pastoral Counselors within the bounds of National Capital Presbytery.
- *12. Permission to Serve Communion
- The authorization for all chaplains of Pittsburgh Presbytery to celebrate the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, during the year 2008, in accordance with W-2.3011b and W-2.4012b:
- Authorization be given for **Elder Dale Craig** to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper for the year 2008 at the Ross Community Presbyterian Church.
- *13. Honorable Retirement
- The request for the **Rev. William R. Myers** for honorable retirement, effective January 31, 2008.

DIRECTIONS TO GRACE MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1000 Bryn Mawr Road

Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Phone 412-681-0229

NORTH, WEST AND SOUTH: Take Bigelow Boulevard from Downtown to Centre Avenue (Schenley High School) right - 1 block to Bryn Mawr Road. Make a sharp right onto Bryn Mawr and Iowa Street. The Church is on the corner.

EAST: Take Centre Avenue to Bryn Mawr Road, make a sharp right onto Bryn Mawr Road and Iowa Street. The Church is on the corner.