

**THE JOURNAL OF THE
218TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2008)**

Saturday, June 28, 2008, 8:30 A.M.

The 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was reconvened at 8:30 a.m. with Moderator Bruce Reyes-Chow presiding. Moderator Reyes-Chow recognized Clara Sanders, youth advisory delegate from the Presbytery of Indian Nations, who led the assembly in the opening prayer.

REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BILLS AND OVERTURES

Moderator Reyes-Chow recognized Adebisi Shofu, vice-moderator of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures, for a report from the committee.

Shofu reported that the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures examined the minutes of the General Assembly of Thursday, June 26, 2008, and found them in order. The assembly approved Item 02-05. (See page 137.) Shofu reported that the minutes of Friday, June 27, 2008, and Saturday, June 28, 2008, would be mailed to a subcommittee of the Assembly Committee on Bills and Overtures for approval.

Protests found to be in decorous language are recorded in the *Minutes* as follows:

Protest of Item 05-12—From Ron Oldenkamp, commissioner from the Presbytery of Sacramento: “I protest against the action taken on Item 05-12, as I believe the action is a de facto amending of our *Book of Order* without going through the constitutional amendment process (sending an amendment to the presbyteries for their ratification).”

Protest of Item 07-02—From Rebecca Lee, commissioner from the Presbytery of Boise: “I was prepared to offer an amendment to 7-02. I had waited by the microphone for a considerable time, my number was entered, the amendment form submitted & sent to the podium. The item was announced and I was overlooked, a quick vote taken and the next item announced. I found that there was a failure of the machinery so that my number did not appear on the podium and of course being a short woman it is easy to not see me. Once the GA moved pass the item it is almost impossible to garner interest again in a prior item. An oral vote to take up 7-02 was defeated perhaps by 1/3 to 2/3 of the house. My amendment would have clarified 2 things: 1) Affirm our Stated Clerk’s Oct. 15, 2007 letter on the subject and 2) (“receive” the Invitation to dialogue Common Word in lieu of “supporting” the document. This would have generated notice that response to a 132 Cleric document of 28 pages with one sentence might be more appropriately answered by affirming (and being consistent with) S.C. Kirkpatrick’s letter.”

Protest of Item 13-06—From Anne Weirich, commissioner from the Presbytery of Lake Michigan: “Minority report for Heidelberg Confession was allowed even though it was a report that recommended maintaining the status quo. I proposed a similar minority report on a completely different overture and was told – quite correctly – that it was not allowed to submit a minority report recommending the maintenance of the status quo. Therefore, I’m registering a complaint and would like this minuted and addressed.”

Protest of Committee 16 process—From Robert Austell, commissioner from the Presbytery of Charlotte; John Barlow, commissioner from the Presbytery of Carlisle; Christine Bohn, commissioner from the Presbytery of Detroit; LaVerne Davenport, commissioner from the Presbytery of Blackhawk; David Grove, commissioner from the Presbytery of Cherokee; David Jenkins, commissioner from the Presbytery of Coastal Carolina; William Teng, commissioner from the Presbytery of National Capital; and Saunda Thomas, commissioner from the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse: “We, members of Committee 16 (Worship and Spiritual Renewal) are deeply concerned about certain erroneous process information and action by the leadership team including the associate stated clerk, Gradye Parsons, which we believe made our work together as a committee ineffective. Three examples: a) We were specifically told by the associate stated clerk that we could not generate new business even in the area of worship and spiritual renewal but discovered Wednesday that there is a process to do that as evidenced by comm. 17’s report. b) We were told we could not add comment reflecting the effectiveness of the communal discernment process and discovered Wednesday during Com 17’s report that there is a procedure to do this. c) There were numerous occasions where the body itself was denied the opportunity to decide its own way forward and that decision was made for it by the leadership team and in many cases, the resource personnel.”

Protest of 08 GA—From Steve Aeschbacher, commissioner from the Presbytery of Seattle; Lisa Baker, commissioner from the Presbytery of Southern New England; Laureen Bodnar, commissioner from the Presbytery of Pittsburgh; Jean Boisubin, commissioner from the Presbytery of New Covenant; George Bones, commissioner from the Presbytery of New Covenant; Bruce Bush, commissioner from the Presbytery of Stockton; Deena Candler, commissioner from the Presbytery of Missouri River Valley; Greg Carter, commissioner from the Presbytery of Inland Northwest; Maurice Caskey, commissioner

from the Presbytery of San Diego; Nancy Cormack-Hughes, commissioner from the Presbytery of Utah; LaVerne Davenport, commissioner from the Presbytery of Blackhawk; Bob Davis, commissioner from the Presbytery of San Diego; Leslie Day-Ebert, commissioner from the Presbytery of Los Ranchos; Sylvia Dooling, commissioner from the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks; Mark Evans, commissioner from the Presbytery of Beaver-Butler; Paul Fandl, commissioner from the Presbytery of Stockton; Jack Foley, commissioner from the Presbytery of Cherokee; David Freehling, commissioner from the Presbytery of Pueblo; Douglas Garrard, commissioner from the Presbytery of Riverside; Paul Granstrom, commissioner from the Presbytery of Nevada; David Grove, commissioner from the Presbytery of Cherokee; John Hamilton, commissioner from the Presbytery of Blackhawk; Kenneth Hetzel, commissioner from the Presbytery of Lake Huron; Jay Hull, commissioner from the Presbytery of Nevada; Mark Hunt, commissioner from the Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic; Tim Hunt, commissioner from the Presbytery of San Francisco; Erma Jones, commissioner from the Presbytery of Cherokee; Mike Lambert, commissioner from the Presbytery of Los Ranchos; Conway Lanford, commissioner from the Presbytery of New Hope; Freda Lawther, commissioner from the Presbytery of Lake Huron; Rebecca Lee, commissioner from the Presbytery of Boise; Charlie Little, commissioner from the Presbytery of Santa Barbara; Jesse Mabanglo, commissioner from the Presbytery of Seattle; Steven Matthies, commissioner from the Presbytery of Whitewater Valley; Catherine McGowen, commissioner from the Presbytery of South Louisiana; Henry Meeuwse, commissioner from the Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic; James Moelk, commissioner from the Presbytery of Lake Erie; Todd Mulford, commissioner from the Presbytery of South Louisiana; Louis Paradise, commissioner from the Presbytery of San Joaquin; James Park, commissioner from the Presbytery of San Gabriel; Doris Pate, commissioner from the Presbytery of San Diego; Mark Patterson, commissioner from the Presbytery of Santa Barbara; Gary Pichon, commissioner from the Presbytery of Cherokee; Gene Price, commissioner from the Presbytery of New Covenant; Terry Simm, commissioner from the Presbytery of Prospect Hill; Ben Ray, commissioner from the Presbytery of Southern Kansas; David Reimer, commissioner from the Presbytery of Newark; Won-Jong Rhee, commissioner from the Presbytery of Eastern Korean; Stephen Roosa, commissioner from the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks; Lawrence Ruby, commissioner from the Presbytery of Pittsburgh; Frederick Seay, commissioner from the Presbytery of South Louisiana; John Sheldon, commissioner from the Presbytery of West Jersey; Archie Smith, commissioner from the Presbytery of San Joaquin; Betsy Straeter, commissioner from the Presbytery of San Gabriel; Thomas Straeter, commissioner from the Presbytery of San Diego; William Teng, commissioner from the Presbytery of National Capital; Paul Terry, commissioner from the Presbytery of Southern New England; Burfoot Ward, commissioner from the Presbytery of Lake Erie; Bob Welsh, commissioner from the Presbytery of Central Washington; and Warren Wilkewitz, commissioner from the Presbytery of Mid-South: “We, the undersigned, protest and grieve the decision of the majority of our fellow commissioners at this General Assembly. This body has inflicted deep wounds on the Presbyterian Church (USA) that threaten to undo us. This General Assembly told our congregations and the world by its actions here that it rejects the Scripture’s teaching and our Reformed confessions’ affirmation that sexual relations outside the covenant of marriage of a man and a woman does not comport with Christian faith. The majority of the General Assembly has recommended the removal of the requirement that our pastors and elders commit themselves either to a lifelong union of a man and a woman or chastity in singleness, and has acted to strip the church of its ability to set any binding standards for the behavior of its officers. We, the undersigned, mourn and protest the affront to the Church’s Savior that suggests that God blesses forms of sexual behavior which he has clearly said are sinful. We stand against these decisions and vow to join with the many thousands of our fellow Presbyterians who will resist these actions and remain faithful to the Lord of the Church, in whom we put our trust and our hope.”

Protest of Debate on Belhar Confession—From David Hicks, commissioner from the Presbytery of Grand Canyon: “The debate for the Belhar Confession was glossed over. The chair of the committee was waiting to speak to the overture but was ignored by the Moderator. Thus, the GA was unable to discuss this important legislation.”

Protest of Action of the GA—From Jon Faraone, commissioner from the Presbytery of Western Kentucky: “It is tragic that this stacked deck G.A. did what it did. They have split the church wide open leaving no hope at this time for any Peace Unity & Purity in our church which truly saddens & breaks my heart.”

Protest of Confrontation after Committee Testimony—From Gary Green, commissioner from the Presbytery of Grand Canyon: “Following my testimony before committee 11 on the evening of Tues. June 24th, 2008, I was followed out of the committee conference room and confronted by a Mr. Glenn Dickson and verbally assaulted with charges of being a liar, but no specifics as to what he thought was a lie were mentioned. I believe that this needs to be brought to the attention of the Stated Clerk.”

Protest of Action Taken on Item 05-09 and 05-12—From Betsy Straeter, commissioner from the Presbytery of San Gabriel; and Tom Straeter, commissioner from the Presbytery of San Diego: “I protest the action taken by the 218th General Assembly as it pertains to actions 5-09 and 5-12 as in my opinion they are in violation of our vows as elders and ministers of the word and sacrament. These actions, though they may be in order according to our polity, violate our vow to be guided by scripture. In my opinion that sets up a situation where by, as a church, we will begin to act in violation of the scripture principles regarding the ordaining elders, ministers and deacons. As such they also set one portion of our constitution (our Book of Order) against another (our Confessions and Scripture). If ratified by our presbyteries our constitution will be significantly different than the one my church and I initially volunteered to follow.”

Protest of 08 GA—From Lisa Lani Esterling, commissioner from the Presbytery of South Louisiana: “We, the under-

signed, protest and grieve the decision of the majority of our fellow commissioners at this General Assembly. This body has inflicted deep wounds on the Presbyterian Church (USA) that threaten to undo us. This General Assembly told our congregations and the world by its actions here that it rejects the Scripture's teaching and our Reformed confessions' affirmation that sexual relations outside the covenant of marriage of a man and a woman does not comport with Christian faith. The majority of the General Assembly has recommended the removal of the requirement that our pastors and elders commit themselves either to a lifelong union of a man and a woman or chastity in singleness, and has acted to strip the church of its ability to set any binding standards for the behavior of its officers. We, the undersigned, mourn and protest the affront to the Church's Savior that suggests that God blesses forms of sexual behavior which he has clearly said are sinful. We stand against these decisions and vow to join with the many thousands of our fellow Presbyterians who will resist these actions and remain faithful to the Lord of the Church, in whom we put our trust and our hope. To approve an AI to prevent the local churches to fully study and discuss this does a disservice to our polity. In addition how this was seemingly 'railroaded' by leadership is unconscionable. It was apparent that little or no thought was given to the wounds this will inflict in presbyteries who are struggling to find a path toward unity."

Protest of 08 GA—From Frederick Seay, commissioner from the Presbytery of South Louisiana: "We, the undersigned, protest and grieve the decision of the majority of our fellow commissioners at this General Assembly. This body has inflicted deep wounds on the Presbyterian Church (USA) that threaten to undo us. This General Assembly told our congregations and the world by its actions here that it rejects the Scripture's teaching and our Reformed confessions' affirmation that sexual relations outside the covenant of marriage of a man and a woman does not comport with Christian faith. The majority of the General Assembly has recommended the removal of the requirement that our pastors and elders commit themselves either to a lifelong union of a man and a woman or chastity in singleness, and has acted to strip the church of its ability to set any binding standards for the behavior of its officers. We, the undersigned, mourn and protest the affront to the Church's Savior that suggests that God blesses forms of sexual behavior which he has clearly said are sinful. We stand against these decisions and vow to join with the many thousands of our fellow Presbyterians who will resist these actions and remain faithful to the Lord of the Church, in whom we put our trust and our hope. To approve an AI to prevent the local churches to fully study and discuss this does a disservice to our polity. In addition how this was seemingly 'railroaded' by leadership is unconscionable. It was apparent that little or no thought was given to the wounds this will inflict in presbyteries who are struggling to find a path toward unity. Agreed-I am deeply disturbed that the 1978 'AI' was discussed with no opportunity for the presbyteries and local churches to study, pray, discuss, and discern. These actions work against fostering a climate across the PCUSA for prayerful discernment of God's will for the church in this matter."

Protest of 08 GA—From William Stepp, commissioner from the Presbytery of Tropical Florida: "We, the undersigned, protest and grieve the decision of the majority of our fellow commissioners at this General Assembly. This body has inflicted deep wounds on the Presbyterian Church (USA) that threaten to undo us. This General Assembly told our congregations and the world by its actions here that it rejects the Scripture's teaching and our Reformed confessions' affirmation that sexual relations outside the covenant of marriage of a man and a woman does not comport with Christian faith. The majority of the General Assembly has recommended the removal of the requirement for ordination that our pastors and elders commit themselves either to a lifelong union of a man and a woman or chastity in singleness. We, the undersigned, mourn and protest the affront to the Church's Savior that suggests that God blesses forms of sexual behavior which he has clearly said are sinful. We stand against these decisions and vow to join with the many thousands of our fellow Presbyterians who will resist these actions and remain faithful to the Lord of the Church, in whom we put our trust and our hope."

Protest of Report of the Church Orders and Ministry Committee—From Bruce Bush, commissioner from the Presbytery of Stockton; Paul Fandl, commissioner from the Presbytery of Stockton; Paul Granstrom, commissioner from the Presbytery of Nevada; Kenneth Hetzel, commissioner from the Presbytery of Lake Huron; Jay Hull, commissioner from the Presbytery of Nevada; and Terry Simm, commissioner from the Presbytery of Prospect Hill: "We the undersigned protest the action of the 218th General Assembly during the report of Committee 5, Church Orders and Ministry. Our conscience was violated by the procedure employed to change the PC USA practice and governance regarding ordination without the participation of the larger church through presbytery action."

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS UPDATE REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

Moderator Reyes-Chow recognized George Kimm, moderator of the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures, for a report from the committee. Kimm reported that the total financial implications of actions approved by the assembly are \$53,330 for 2008; \$341,385 for 2009; and \$118,595 for 2010. In order to accommodate those actions, the assembly approved amendments to the previously approved Item 03-16, Recommendations 5(a) and 6 as follows (see pages 164, 167-68):

"5(a). approve the proposed 2009 expenditure budget totaling ~~\$12,308,884~~ \$12,650,269 and a proposed 2010 expenditure budget totaling ~~\$15,310,620~~ \$15,429,215.

6. The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council approve and recommend

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that the 218th General Assembly (2008) approve an increase in the per capita apportionment rate from \$5.79 to ~~\$6.04~~ \$6.15 per active member for 2009, and that the same rate be effective for 2010, without change.”

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS UPDATE
REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MISSION COORDINATION AND BUDGETS**

Moderator Reyes-Chow recognized Kears Pollock, moderator of the Assembly Committee on Mission Coordination and Budgets, for a report from the committee. Pollock announced that the total financial implications of actions approved by the assembly are \$8,378 for 2008; \$233,512 for 2009; and \$56,238 for 2010. The assembly approved Item 08-1NB (see page 750).

INTRODUCTION OF THE 219TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2010) COMMITTEE ON LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS

Moderator Reyes-Chow recognized Sandra Hawley and Manley Olsen, co-moderators of the Committee on Local Arrangements Committee for the 219th General Assembly (2010), to bring greetings to the assembly.

**INTRODUCTIONS OF CHAIRS-ELECT OF
GENERAL ASSEMBLY COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Moderator Reyes-Chow recognized Allison Seed, chair of the General Assembly Council, and Catherine Ulrich, chair of the Committee on the Office of General Assembly, to introduce chairs-elect of the committees.

Seed introduced Carol Adcock, chair-elect of the General Assembly Council, and Ulrich introduced Dennis Hughes, moderator-elect of the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly.

**THANKS TO THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE
FROM THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES**

Moderator Reyes-Chow recognized Marlena DeGroot, youth advisory delegate from the Presbytery of Glacier, and Dale Utt, youth advisory delegate from the Presbytery of Twin City Area, to offer thanks to the Committee on Local Arrangements from the Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures.

Moderator Reyes-Chow recognized Deborah Davies, Assistant Stated Clerk, and Kerry Rice, Assistant Stated Clerk, to make a presentation to the representatives from the Presbytery of San Jose, the Presbytery of San Francisco, the Presbytery of the Redwoods, and the Synod of the Pacific.

PRESENTATION FROM YOUTH ADVISORY DELEGATE CAUCUS

Moderator Reyes-Chow recognized Brian Bivin, youth advisory delegate from the Presbytery of Pueblo, and Courtney Payne, youth advisory delegate from the Presbytery of the Western Reserve, for presentations to Moderator Reyes-Chow, Vice-Moderator Byron Wade, and Stated Clerk-elect Gradye Parsons.

THANKS TO STAFF

Moderator Reyes-Chow recognized Stated Clerk Clifton Kirkpatrick, who offered thanks to the staff and volunteers who labored at the General Assembly.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND THANKS

Stated Clerk Kirkpatrick made several logistical announcements. Stated Clerk-elect Gradye Parsons offered a word of thanks to Stated Clerk Kirkpatrick.

WORSHIP

Moderator Reyes-Chow and Vice-Moderator Wade led the assembly in a closing service of worship.

RECESS

Moderator Bruce Reyes-Chow declared the 218th General Assembly (2008) in recess to be adjourned and dissolved

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upon the convening of the 219th General Assembly (2010) on July 3, 2010, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The assembly was recessed at 10:40 a.m.