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A PRACTICAL GUIDE  
TO FACILITATE THE USE OF  
THE BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER  
OF THE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

by Donald J. MacNair

COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this book is to facilitate the use of the Presbyterian Church in America's **Book of Church Order**, particularly for the Ruling Elder.

It is not designed to be a statement about the philosophy of the PCA's government, nor does it attempt to provide the biblical support of each statement.

It is not designed to be an exhaustive explanation of every word and phrase of the **BCO**.

It presumes the reader understands the concepts of Presbyterianism.

The book primarily reorganizes the details of the **BCO** in graphic form (the right side of the book) and provides a short commentary to introduce the material (the left side of the book).

Not every chapter is discussed since some do not need the facilitation this book is designed to give.

In all cases, after using this manual to facilitate the use of the **BCO**, read the complete **BCO** text before acting.

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## WHY THE REGULAR AND PROPER USE OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT IS ENCOURAGED

Regular and proper use of church government leads to:

- I. Actual (not merely intellectual) submission to Jesus Christ as the Head of the church by each of its members.
- II. Effective administration under the Holy Spirit of His work of "testifying about me" (John 15:26).
- III. Encouragement to officers to keep their ordination vows (BCO 21-5).
- IV. Natural conditions in which officers may easily be and be perceived to be the servant/leaders.
- V. Establishing the credibility officers need in order to guard the peace, unity, and purity of the church.
- VI. Conclusion:

Church government is not an end in itself. It is an instrument through which the church's life and ministry is most effectively attained. It should be studied, appreciated, and applied in this manner.

By it, the elders can exercise the leadership that the church needs and their office is intended to provide. As they live in subjection to the Holy Spirit, feeding on His Word and saturating themselves in prayer, application of the church's government enables them to lead as servants.

It constantly needs refining. It is not inspired. These who are faithfully using it must share their experience by way of teaching it and participating in the process of refining it.

It should be used!

## PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

### Comments

The next page gives a concise table of motions.

Almost every technical situation relative to making and processing motions is listed.

It should be noted that sessions should follow these procedures, yet the relationship of pastor as moderator is not the same as envisioned by **Robert's Rules**. The pastor must take an active role in many of the session's discussions even though he is moderator.

This is in lieu of the nature of his teaching elder office which includes being called to serve as an equal with the ruling elders in ruling the church.

**PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE  
TABLE OF MOTIONS**

MOTIONS	PURPOSE	WHEN IN ORDER	AMEND- ABLE	DEBATE- ABLE	VOTE	CAN BE RECON- SIDERED
Main Motion	New Business	When No Business Before House	Yes	Yes	Maj	Yes
Postpone Indefinitely	Kill Indirectly	When Main Motion Only before House	No	Yes	Maj	Yes
Amend Main Motion	Perfect Motion	When Main Motion Before House	Yes	Yes	Maj	Yes
Amend Amendment	Perfect Amendment	When Amendment Before House	No	Yes	Maj	Yes
Commit	Delay	When Motion or Amendments Pending	Yes	Yes	Maj	Yes
Postpone to Certain Time	Delay	Take Precedence of Above Five	Yes	Yes	Maj	Yes
The Previous Question	To Stop Debate	Take Precedence of Above Six	No	No	2/3	No
Lay on Table	Delay	When Above Motions Pending	No	No	Maj	No
Take from Table	Resume Consideration	When No Motion Before House	No	No	Maj	No
Divide a Motion	To Separate in Parts	Any Time Before Voting	Yes	No	Maj	No
Objection to Consideration	Prevent Consideration	Immediately After Stating Motion	No	No	2/3 Neg Vote	No
Recess	Dissolve Meeting Pro Tem	Except When Following Motions Pending	Yes	No	Maj	No
Adjourn	Dissolve Meeting	Any Time	No	No	Maj	No
Fix Time For Adjournment	Provide Future of Meeting	When Necessary	Yes	No	Maj	Yes
Reconsider	Discuss Second Time	Same Day As Vote	No	Yes	Maj	No
Rescind	Annul Previous Action	When No Other Motion Before House	Yes	Yes	2/3 (w/out prev.notice, may if prev.notice)	No Yes
Suspend Rules	Permit Unusual Procedure	When Necessary	No	No	2/3	No
Appeal From Decision of Chair	Reverse Decision of Chair	Immediately Following Decision	No	Partially	Maj	No

## CHART OF COMMITTEES AND AGENCIES

### Comments

This chart is based on the charts found on page 362 of the 9th General Assembly (1981) and on page 110 of the 11th General Assembly (1983) minutes.

The graph indicates that all but four committees report through a Committee of Commissioners.

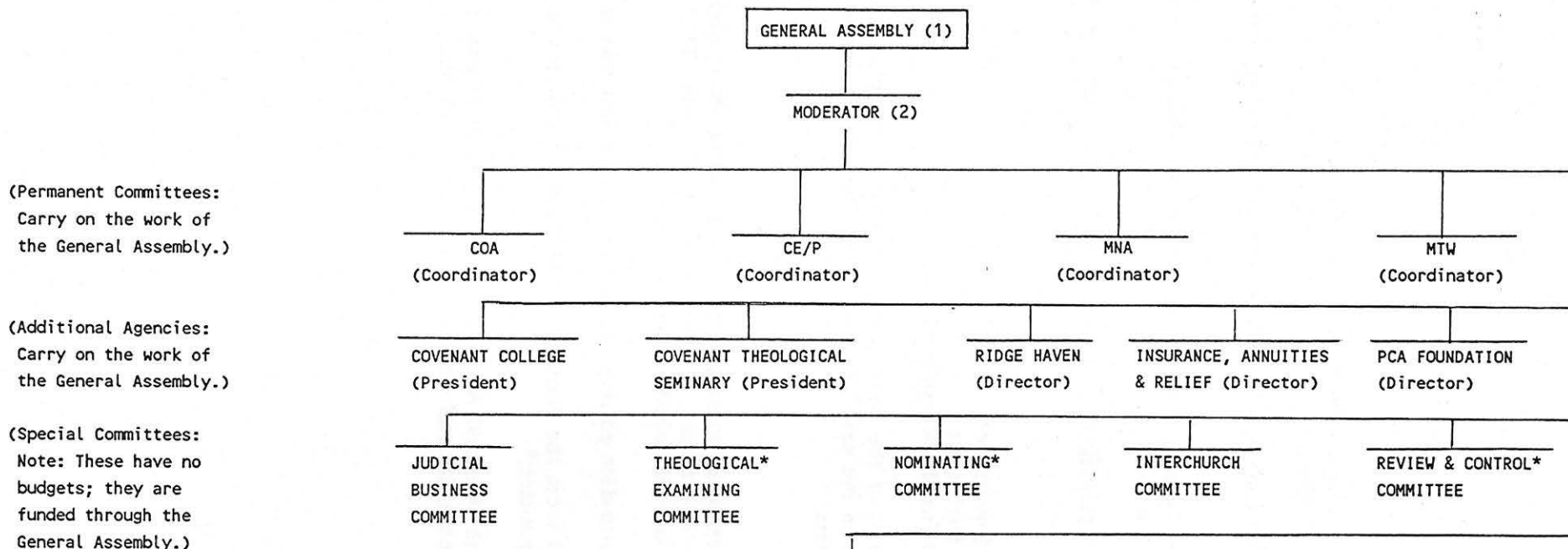
The Committees of Commissioners do three things:

1. Review the reports of the committees/agencies;
2. Evaluate the proposals of the committees/agencies to the General Assembly;
3. Propose to the General Assembly what the committees/agencies are to do.

The four committees that report directly to the General Assembly have special assignments, and the General Assembly has determined it will review and evaluate without a Committee of Commissioners serving between the committee and itself.

# CHART OF COMMITTEES AND AGENCIES

(Note: All committees and agencies report to the General Assembly through Committees of Commissioners except those marked with (\*). These committees report directly to the General Assembly.)

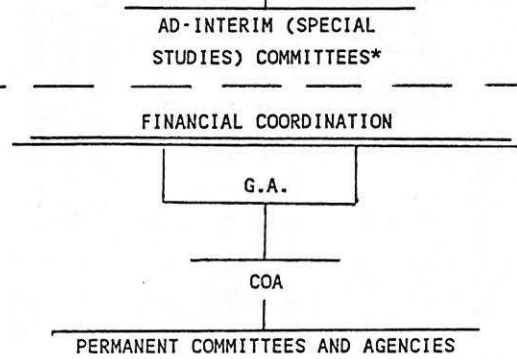


(Permanent Committees:  
Carry on the work of  
the General Assembly.)

(Additional Agencies:  
Carry on the work of  
the General Assembly.)

(Special Committees:  
Note: These have no  
budgets; they are  
funded through the  
General Assembly.)

- (1) Funding: All Permanent Committees and Agencies may raise their own support. Special Committees and Ad-Interim Study Committees are funded through the COA.
- (2) Offices of the G.A.: Moderator, Stated Clerk, Treasurer. Between G.A., Stated Clerk is under direction of the Committee on Administration, but not a part of COA office.



## WHAT IS THE BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER?

The **Book of Church Order** of the Presbyterian Church in America is the statement of the church which it uses to direct its government and worship.

It must be in agreement at all times with the Scriptures and the Confessional Standards of the church.

It is not a codification of every detail of church government, although it contains sections which are written in code form.

It is basically a statement of principles, as indicated by the content of its Preface.

It contains:

The Form of Government  
The Rules of Discipline  
The Directory for the Worship of God.

An outline by subject material of the **Book of Church Order's** Form of Government and Rules of Discipline are on the next page. It should help in finding what the **BCO** says about given subjects.

Your copy of the **BCO**:

It is necessary to have an up-to-date edition of the **BCO**. Note that at the bottom of each page, in a corner, is a "month and year" date. That indicates when that page was last published as the official text.

There, to have an up-to-date edition of the **BCO**, the easiest way is to:

1. Order a new **BCO** from the Permanent Christian Education and Publications Committee;\*
2. Each year, after the General Assembly, order a packet of pages on which changes have been made and which indicate that year's date.

\* P. O. Box 39  
Decatur, GA 30031

## OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER, PCA

### FORM OF GOVERNMENT:

The Church	1-5
Church Membership	6
Church Officers	7-9
Church Courts (and Functions)	10-15
Church Orders	16-24
Church Congregational Meetings and Property	25
Amendments	26

### RULES OF DISCIPLINE:

Nature of Church Discipline	27
Rules for Disciplining Non-Communicant Members	28
Parts of Church Discipline Defined	29-31
Rules Governing Cases with Process:	
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B. Use of censure described	36-37
Rules Governing Cases Without Process	38
Rules Governing Review by Higher Courts	39-45
Rules Determining Jurisdiction	46

## BINDING CHARACTER OF THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF ACTIONS OF THE ASSEMBLY

### Comments

The **Preface to the BCO, Preliminary Principles** (especially #1), starts with the fundamental premise governing all binding by church action. It declares that "God alone is Lord of the conscience and has left it free....anything contrary to His Word." It is not free in matters "...of faith and worship."

The contemporary posture of the church as to its unity and purpose for existence is developed at the General Assembly level (see **BCO 14-1**, first paragraph).

This posture is developed through the use of three documents, all of which must be kept in agreement with the Scriptures, the church's Confessional Standards, and the **Book of Church Order**.

They are:

The Bylaws of the General Assembly;

The Standing Rules of the General Assembly;

the Annual Minutes of the General Assembly.

The importance of them upon each local church and presbytery is described on the next page.

**BINDING CHARACTER OF THE DIFFERENT KINDS  
OF ACTIONS OF THE ASSEMBLY**

1979 SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY - p. 112:

1. Constitutional changes made by the Assembly, in accord with Chapter 27 of the Book of Church Order are binding upon the whole church.
2. Judicial cases, when adjudicated by the Assembly, are binding regarding the matter thus settled.
3. Review and Control of presbyteries and of committees are binding upon the particular presbytery or committee.
4. Adoption of reports on particular subjects give the consensus of an Assembly's opinion on that subject. Such opinions by our Assembly serve as a guideline or pious advice to our constituency on the subject. As such, they should be reported, studied, and taken seriously. They are not binding on the consciences of sessions or individuals who believe on biblical grounds that another position is preferable.

Also:

1. Actions of past General Assemblies are binding.
2. Reports of the General Synods of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, are to serve as resource data.
3. Interpretations by the Permanent Judicial Business Committee of the BCO, between General Assemblies, are:
  - (a) binding on the church until the next General Assembly; and,
  - (b) if ratified by the next General Assembly, they become the practice of the PCA.

## PREFACE TO THE BCO

### Comments

#### I. The King and Head of the Church:

Christ is the Head and King of the entire church.

Christ contains in Himself, by way of eminence, all the offices of the church.

All the benefits of His offices are effectively applied by the Holy Ghost now.

#### II. Preliminary Principles

All eight fit together as a system with the following being the foundation of the PCA:

(1) - freedom of conscience

(7) - church power is only ministerial and declarative (and, therefore, not legislative)

(8) - church discipline must be purely moral and spiritual in nature (and therefore not civil court)

#### III. The Constitution Defined:

Note that the Constitution does not include the rules of the General Assembly, the bylaws of the General Assembly, nor the minutes of the General Assembly (unless they show changes accomplished in accordance with BCO 26.

## PREFACE TO THE BCO

I. The King and Head of the Church

II. Preliminary Principles

III. Constitution Defined

## CHAPTER 3 - THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF CHURCH POWER

### Comments

The five-point outline on page 30 should be so much a part of every PCA elder's thinking that he automatically uses it to evaluate each new proposal.

Chapter 3 declares that the PCA is always to be a "grass-roots" church and uses her officers to maintain that.

It declares, regardless of what proportion of officers represent the people and churches in the courts of the church, they are empowered only for executive and judicial work, not for legislative work.

Chapter 3 therefore requires the General Assembly to consider every overture and proposal brought before it in the light of **The Nature and Extent of Church Power** as well as on the merits of the issue itself.

It must vote for or against them (regardless of their apparent merit) to express itself whether it believes the overture or proposal is an action which:

will cause the church to become a legislative organization (vote must be "No");

will inevitably cause the church to become a legislative organization, even though it is not called for at the present time (vote must be "No");

the contemporary church believes is a limited and controlled use of procedures which, although it might appear to have legislative characteristics, the body believes is necessary (the vote will need at least a majority, and only after ample debate).

This requirement is especially important when the issue is about church property or session oversight and leadership.

### CHAPTER 3 - THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF CHURCH POWER (Continued)

Direction of the church must and will take place. It is an exercise of power.

This exercise of power is described as:

The SOURCE of the power (3-1):

"...vested in the whole body, the rulers and the ruled..."  
and, "This power as exercised by the people, extends to  
the choice of... officers..."

The LIMITATIONS of the power:\*

(3-3) "...to proclaim, to administer, and to enforce the  
law of Christ..."

(3-4) "The power of the church is exclusively  
spiritual..."

The USE of the power (3-5):

"The church ... is for:

- (1) Edification and government of His people;
- (2) Propagation of the faith;
- (3) Evangelization of the world."

---

\* cf. PRELIMINARY PRINCIPLES:

(7) "all church power... is only ministerial and declarative."

(8) "ecclesiastical discipline... must be purely moral and spiritual in its nature."

## CHAPTER 4 - THE PARTICULAR CHURCH

### Comments

The particular church is self-governing. No comment is made whether or not it is self-sustaining (financially).

The pastor always has a vote in session, not just to make or break a tie.

Associate pastors are part of the session and therefore do have a vote in session.

## CHAPTER 4 - THE PARTICULAR CHURCH

Its description:

(4-1) professing Christians with their children

with

(4-2) officers - teaching and ruling elders and deacons.

Its jurisdiction is under:

(4-2) the session.

Its ordinances are limited to those:

(4-4) established by Christ.

## CHAPTER 5 - A MISSION CHURCH

### Comments

Presbytery must be involved in establishing a mission church, and its minutes must indicate when it was enrolled and how it is to be governed.

If the mission church is dissolved, the presbytery must assign the members to particular churches.

The mission church can enjoy IRS tax privileges whether or not it is incorporated in its state. It should contact the Committee on Administration for details of procedure.\*

\* P. O. Box 1428  
Decatur, GA 30031

## CHAPTER 5 - A MISSION CHURCH

Its distinguishing characteristic is that it is not self-governed (5-1).

There are three ways to institute a mission church (5-2):

Presbytery's Committee on Mission to North America;

By a session, in cooperation with presbytery's Committee on Mission to North America;

By the permanent Committee of Mission to North America.

There are three ways to provide temporary government (5-3):

Presbytery evangelist (8-6);

"Mother-Daughter" by a session;

Commission.

Membership means becoming a member at large of the Presbyterian Church in America (5-4).

Mission churches are equal with particular churches in matters dealing with civil government.

## CHAPTER 6 - CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

### Comments

Chapter 28 should be read to expand on non-communing church membership.

Sessions should agree on the standard of evaluation of a **Credible Confession of Faith** before receiving candidates as communing members.

The five questions to be answered for membership are found in 57-5. The answers are oaths taken before God and the church.

Careful record keeping is necessary. See "Appendix A" for a discussion of roll keeping by the session.

## CHAPTER 6 - CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

There are three kinds of church membership:

- (6-1) Non-communing church members;
- (6-2) Communing church members;
- (46-4) Associate members.

The benefits of being a non-communing member (6-4) are that they are entitled to:

- Baptism;
- Pastoral oversight;
- Instruction and government of the church.

Reception of communicant members:

- 6-2 Profession of faith.
- 46-1 Certificate of dismissal\* ("letter"; cf. 12-5).
- 37-3 Restoration of excommunicated person by session action.
- 46-8 Assignment by presbytery of a divested minister who was not censured (subject to the approval of the session to which the assignment is made).

---

\* A refinement often needed is to receive a candidate who has no letter (or has a non-credible letter) but has previously confessed his faith since being born again by reaffirmation of faith. He would be accepted on the basis of his testimony.

## CHAPTER 7 - CHURCH OFFICERS--GENERAL CLASSIFICATION

### Comments

"Parity" of Ruling and Teaching Elders means there is no prelacy possible.

Both classes are:

Equal in power;

Equal in privilege;

Different in function.

Both classes possess the: (8-9)

Same authority;

Same eligibility to office in the courts of the church;

Ruling elders should work to improve their own aptness to teach the Bible. (8-9)

## CHAPTER 7 - CHURCH OFFICERS--GENERAL CLASSIFICATION

(7-1) Extraordinary gifts and offices have no succession after the Apostles.

(7-2) Church officers are elders and deacons.

Elder classes are teaching and ruling:

They have joint government and spiritual oversight of the church. (Note: they differ in function.)

Deacons do not rule - they serve the physical and spiritual needs of the people.

## CHAPTER 8 - THE ELDER

### Comments

By listing the qualifications for eldership by categories (page 24), the people can more readily evaluate a candidate for office.

By listing the job description of the elder by categories (page 25), the work he must do is more clearly evident and the standard against which his work is measured is more usable.

Although 8-3 (page 25) is listed as a codification, it does not claim to be complete (see graphic).

All sessions should annually evaluate:

- (1) if they are spending too much time on administration at the expense of the other parts of their job;
- (2) if they are apparently perceived as doing (1) above.

(8-7) The division of oversight is:

judicial oversight over all the teaching elders always remains the responsibility of presbytery;

by implication: administrative oversight of the pastors of PCA churches is always approved by and initiated by presbytery;

administrative oversight can be a responsibility the presbytery permits to non-PCA congregations, or non-PCA agencies, to carry out.

**CHAPTER 8 - THE ELDER (Continued)**

(8-1) The office is held by a man.

(8-2) General qualifications (see following graphic):

QUALIFICATIONS BY CATEGORIES -			
CHRIST-LIKE LIFE	CHRIST-LIKE FAMILY	KNOWLEDGE & EXPERIENCE	GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT
SCRIPTURE:* I Timothy 3 Titus 1	I Timothy 3 Titus 1	I Timothy 3 Titus 1	I Timothy 3 Titus 1
BCO: Blameless in life  Exhibit sobriety Exhibit holiness of life becoming the Gospel Good report of them outside the church	Blameless in life  Rule his own home well	Competency of human learning Sound in the faith	Apt to teach  (8-4) Special gifts for the teaching elder
*Plus scriptural injunctions in other verses of Scripture.			

## CHAPTER 8 - THE ELDER (Continued)

(8-3) Job Description for Eldership (see following graphic):

JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE ELDER			
EXAMPLE	SHEPHERD	GUARD	ADMINISTER
SCRIPTURE: Acts 20:28	Acts 20:28	Acts 20:28	Acts 20:28
BCO: (Almost everything under shepherding, when carried out, becomes an example)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversight of local congregation and church at large</li> <li>• Visit</li> <li>• Instruct</li> <li>• Comfort</li> <li>• Nourish children</li> <li>• Pray with and for the people</li> <li>• Seek fruit of preached Word</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guard his own life and testimony</li> <li>• Watch over flock to keep it from heresy or immorality</li> <li>• Exercise discipline</li> <li>• Guard children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise government</li> </ul>
Plus: All the duties the individual Christian is to do, the elders are to do. The BCO directives are both to individual elders and the session.			

## CHAPTER 8 - THE ELDER (Continued)

### (8-5) Job Description for the Teaching Elder:

All the tasks of the ruling elders (cf. 19-3)

plus

Feed the flock:

by reading, expounding, and preaching the Word of God,

and

by administering the sacraments.

### (8-6) Presbytery Evangelist:

Serves as a session;

Limited to one year;

In foreign countries or destitute parts of the church.

### (8-7) Cooperative agreements for serving outside the PCA while being a PCA teaching elder.

## CHAPTER 9 - THE DEACON

### Comments

The five parts of the job description encompass a massive amount of work. In the light of the controlling emphasis of the office (sympathy and service) deacons must delegate in order to get all the work done (note 9-7).

All diaconates should annually evaluate:

1. if they are accomplishing all parts of their job description;
2. if they believe they are ministering from hearts of sympathy and service;
3. if they are apparently perceived as doing (2) above.

## CHAPTER 9 - THE DEACON

### Job Description:

A job of sympathy and service (9-1).

1. Minister to those in need. (9-2)
2. Develop the grace of liberality (stewardship):  
    devise ways to collect gifts;  
    devise ways to distribute gifts.
3. Care of real and personal property of congregation:  
    Repair buildings.
4. Elect church treasurer. (9-4)
5. Keep record of proceedings and of all funds distributed.

### Possible Assignments:

- Elected by higher courts to serve on committees. (9-5)
- Appointed trustees of funds.
- Provide counsel in setting up budgets.

### Qualifications:

- (9-1) (by inference): I Timothy 3 (cf.9-3)
- (9-3) Men

### Limitations:

- (9-2, last paragraph) Under the session.
- (9-4) Meet with session upon request.

## CHAPTER 11 - JURISDICTION OF CHURCH COURTS

### Comments

The PCA has a connectional relationship within its structure. It is its definition of Presbyterianism. It is distinct from hierarchial or democratic (independent) government.

It comprehends connectionalism as power which is vested and limited (see chapter 3 and PRELIMINARY PRINCIPLES [7] & [8]).

It guards its connectionalism by defining the only areas in which its courts may act.

It practices its connectionalism by using the three basic premises of 11-4, paragraph 2, coupled with BCO 3-1 and BCO 25-11 (last paragraph) - see page 30.

The exercise of Review and Control is a delicate but necessary cutting edge of the PCA's Presbyterianism. However, like all church power, it is limited to being ministerial and declarative (Preliminary Principles [7]).

It must be exercised apart from:

capitalizing on any misguided actions of the church acting as a legislative body (cf. Chapter 3);

usurping the ownership of the local church's property.

Yet, it is necessary for each Christian and each church court to benefit by biblical submission to the elected officers of the church.

Therefore, Review and Control will always be an area for serious evaluation for the PCA at all its courts. Ultimate use of control would therefore be limited to asking the court in question to leave the PCA.

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## CHAPTER 11 - JURISDICTION OF CHURCH COURTS

The limitations of the courts' jurisdiction:

(11-2) only ministerial and declarative

related to:

doctrines and precepts of Christ;  
the order of the church (meaning the Doctrine of Vocation;  
cf.16-1, 2,3);  
exercise discipline.

The nature of the courts:

(11-3) one in nature;

no referral of disputes re doctrine or order may be exercised at the expense of the lower court's authority.

The sphere of action of the courts:

(11-4) Session - Jurisdiction over one church.

Presbytery - Jurisdiction over what is common to minister, sessions, and churches in a prescribed district.

General Assembly - Jurisdiction over matters of concern to whole church.

The connectionalism between the courts is practiced as follows:

1. The power of the church is vested in the whole body (i.e. the people); (3-1)
2. Each court exercises original jurisdiction over its own business; (11-4, paragraph 2)
3. The lower courts are subject to the Review and Control of the higher courts; (11-4, paragraph 2)
4. The courts are not separate and independent tribunals -- every judicial act of one is an act of the whole; (11-4, paragraph 2)
5. Each elder, presbytery and the General Assembly enter into a solemn covenant promising never to attempt to secure possession of a congregation's property against its will; (25-10) and, Each congregation is recognized as competent to function on its own in matters of church ownership (25-11, paragraph 2).
6. The entire concept of connectionalism is based on mutual love and confidence (25-11).

## CHAPTER 12 - THE CHURCH SESSION

### Comments

An assistant pastor is not part of the session and therefore does not have a vote (cf. 22-3).

The moderating of a session meeting is extensively defined, making it improper to conduct clandestine meetings of the session (elders meeting without notifying the pastor).

## CHAPTER 12 - THE CHURCH SESSION

### Structure (12-1)

Pastor(s), Associate Pastor(s), and Ruling Elders.

### Moderator (12-2)

Pastor

In his absence, or for emergency:

any member of session elected by session to serve.

For prudential reasons:

other teaching elder of presbytery, invited by the pastor, approved by session.

When church has no pastor (12-4):

presbytery appoints a teaching elder and session approves;

session invites teaching elder for particular occasion;

session elects one of its own members.

### Meetings Convened (12-6)

at least quarterly; or,

by pastor;

when requested by two ruling elders;

by two ruling elders when there is no pastor;

when directed by presbytery to convene.

## CHAPTER 12 - THE CHURCH SESSION (Continued)

### PREPARING FOR A SESSION MEETING

#### Comments

The general rules proposed on the next page are directed primarily to the moderator and the stated clerk.

They amount to a checklist which will assure the session of properly accomplishing its work.

It should be used about two weeks before the scheduled meeting.

## CHAPTER 12 - THE CHURCH SESSION (Continued)

### PREPARING FOR A SESSION MEETING

The general rules of preparation are:

- A. Saturate the work in prayer.
- B. Maintain a journal of decisions of principle importance, keep it updated and review it before each meeting in which docketed items are related to previous actions.
- C. Study past minutes of several meetings at least a week before the meeting in order to be sure that all assignments have been made and reports are being prepared.
- D. Think through the ministry of the church, the personnel, and the work of the congregation and the corporation before each meeting. Relate the present progress to the long range and short range goals by assessment and evaluation. Prepare some creative innovations. Then (B), (C) and (D) will be the support material for the agenda.
- E. Always "do your homework" before the meeting. Think through the agenda and sort out all the options for each item; state them; support them or demonstrate why they are not viable; and rethink your data with a "devil's advocate" approach to be sure you've appreciated how the others might react.
- F. Whenever possible, mail out the docket and the supporting data several days in advance of the meeting.
- G. Always have a written agenda prepared and distributed to each man.
- H. NEVER propose a new idea that is of any consequence and permit it to be voted on at that meeting.
- I. Be prepared to start each program immediately after it has been adopted.

## **CHAPTER 12 - THE SESSION (Continued)**

### **12-5: THE POWER OF THE SESSION**

#### **Comments**

The graphic on the next page merely reorganizes the BCO's paragraph into topics.

Each session should occasionally use the topic headings as a checklist to be sure it is fulfilling all its duties.

## CHAPTER 12 - THE SESSION (Continued)

### BCO 12-5: POWER OF THE SESSION

Charged with spiritual government of the church, for which it has accountability and:

Concern for:

1. Individual Member's Spiritual Maturity

- to inquire into knowledge, principles, and Christian conduct of members;
- to censure;
- to see that parents do not neglect to present children for baptism;
- to receive members;
- to remove members;
- to grant letters of dismissal.

2. Proper Administration of the Government of the Church

- to examine, ordain, and install ruling elders and deacons upon election;
- to require these officers to devote themselves to their work;
- to examine records and proceedings of deacons;
- to approve and adopt the budget.

3. Proper Use of Buildings

- to approve actions of special importance re church property;
- to exercise authority over use of buildings.

4. To Insure Proper Corporate Growth and Service

- to call congregational meetings;
- to establish and control Sunday school and Bible classes re children of the church;
- to establish and control MIC, WIC, special Bible study;
- to promote world missions;
- to order collections for pious use;
- to exercise...authority over time and place of preaching of the Word and administration of sacraments, over all other religious services, over music in the services;
- to take oversight of singing in public worship;
- to assemble people for worship when no minister;
- to determine best ways for promoting spiritual interests.

5. To Insure Proper Relationships to Church-at-large

- to observe and carry out lawful injunctions of higher court;
- to appoint representatives.

## CHAPTER 13 - THE PRESBYTERY

### Comments

The PCA wants to keep its presbyteries "local church" oriented. The provisions for the size of congregation and the formula to keep the number of teaching elders in balance are designed to do this.

This means:

each church must make every effort to have its ruling elders at the presbytery meetings;

large churches (especially if there are only one or two within the presbytery) must be careful not to appear to dominate presbytery meetings.

The term "bounds" primarily means geographic boundaries. When used to define "special ministries" the proposed ministry must be carefully considered. If the individual involved will of necessity minister within the boundaries of other presbyteries, even more consideration must be exercised.

## CHAPTER 13 - THE PRESBYTERY

### Definition (13-1):

All teaching elders and accepted churches in its bounds.

### Representation (13-1):

All teaching elders and one ruling elder per church

or:

All teaching elders and one ruling elder for

first 350 communing members

plus

one more for each additional 500 communing members or fraction thereof

or

when there are 50% more teaching elders than churches;

two for first 350 communing members.

### Teaching Elder Limitations (13-2):

Work within geographical bounds of presbytery

or

Be granted permission to work:

outside geographical bounds;

in a work not under jurisdiction of presbytery.

If not called to a particular work for three years, presbytery shall institute procedure to divest him without censure (34-10).

(Ordinarily) each teaching elder must have a call within the presbytery to become a member (13-5).

A previously ordained teaching elder must be examined on Christian experience and in theology, sacraments, and church government to become a member (13-6).

A commitment to his oath of ordination must be recorded as part of record of presbytery (13-7).

### Meetings (13-11):

At least twice a year

or

Moderator calls for meeting when two teaching elders and two ruling elders from at least three different churches ask for it;

or

When directed to do so by the General Assembly.

## CHAPTER 13 - PRESBYTERY (Continued)

### THE POWER OF PRESBYTERY

#### Comments

Chapter 3, *The Nature of the Church*, is the context in which this section is to be used.

A quick survey of the categories and the scope of subject matter under each (shown on page 40) indicates that the presbytery is the "hub" of the presbyterian government. The presbytery is the agency of the church through which the life and direction of the PCA is maintained. Its fundamental design is to do the corporate work of the churches in its bounds, not simply be a "church" for teaching elders.

The PCA, however, has maintained its definition of the nature of the church by using (in the sensitive areas in particular) a "check and countercheck" process to regulate presbytery's power.

In the first place (especially in light of BCO 26) the presbytery is the source of fundamental power for the government of the church. Each teaching elder is subject to the oversight of his presbytery. Each local congregation is subject to the oversight of its presbytery. And, the General Assembly cannot change the BCO without the consent of the specified number of presbyteries.

But, the presbytery, especially in dealing with local congregations, may only process the actions which affect the denominational relationship of the local congregation (unite, divide, dismiss) at the request of or with the consent of the members. And, in the light of BCO 3 and BCO 25, it may not dissolve churches without due regard for the membership of the church and the preservation of the financial assets of the congregation as per the congregation's directive.

Each session, therefore, should make serious effort to be familiar with the particular business agenda of each meeting of presbytery, to express itself through its representatives, to be sure it is represented at each meeting and to report to the congregation at least the major developments of each presbytery meeting.

## CHAPTER 13 - THE PRESBYTERY (Continued)

### THE POWER OF THE PRESBYTERY

Categories defining presbytery's powers are:

#### Preparation of the Teaching Elder:

- to take under care;
- to provide an internship;
- to examine and license;
- to ordain;
- to install.

#### Oversight of the Teaching Elder:

re membership and calling:

- receive;
- establish pastoral relations;
- set apart evangelists.

re evaluation of ministry:

- to dismiss, remove, judge;
- to dissolve pastoral relationship at the request of:
  - the teaching elder;
  - the session;
  - both the teaching elder and the session;
  - where interest of religion imperatively demands;
- to require ministers to devote themselves diligently to sacred calling;
- to censure the delinquent;
- to condemn erroneous opinions which injure the purity of the church.

#### Oversight of the Local Congregation:

- to review records of session;
- to redress anything done contrary to order;
- to see that the PCA Constitution is observed;
- to see that lawful injunctions of the higher courts are obeyed;
- to visit to inquire into and redress evils that may have arisen in the church;
- to unite churches at the request of the members;
- to divide churches at the request of the members;
- to form and receive new churches;
- to give special oversight of churches without pastors;
- to dissolve churches;
- to dismiss churches with their consent.

#### Oversight of the Church-at-Large:

- to seek to enlarge the church within its bounds;
- to do anything necessary for the spiritual welfare of its churches;
- to propose overtures to the General Assembly for common advantage of the Church-at-Large (cf. BCO 26).

## CHAPTER 14 - THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### Comments

The definition of the General Assembly is an extension of Chapter 3 re The Nature of the Church.

The sense of momentum for and the direction of the PCA is developed in the General Assembly meeting more than anywhere else. Therefore, each session should attempt to have the pastor and its ruling elders in attendance each year.

## CHAPTER 14 - THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### Definition (14-1)

It is the highest court... and represents in one body all the churches.

It constitutes (among all its congregations and its courts) the:

bond of union,

peace,

correspondence,

of the denomination.

### Meetings (14-2)

At least annually

or

in an emergency (14-3):

the moderator shall call it if:

20 commissioners (at least 10 teaching elders and 10 ruling elders)  
from the preceeding General Assembly request or concur with the  
call.

## CHAPTER 14 - THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION

#### Comments

These 14 principles are to maintain the purpose for which the PCA was established.

Again - they reflect Chapter 3, The Nature of the Church.

Commissioners should analyze the business of the General Assembly and insist that the work of the Great Commission be the highest priority and consume most of the time and effort. The reports of the four permanent committees are the base upon which this business is presented.

The Rules of the Assembly develop these Principles in detail. Each year they are updated and published in the General Assembly Commissioner's Handbook.

The Rules of the Assembly permit additional written nominations before the end of the Tuesday business session. These nominations must indicate the nominee of the Nomination Committee's list of nominations to be replaced. The General Assembly will conduct a runoff election between the two.

## CHAPTER 14 - THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (Continued)

### PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION

1. The General Assembly is to carry out the Great Commission.
2. Since the initiative belongs to every court, the General Assembly is to encourage and promote its fulfillment.
3. The work of the Great Commission is one work, done on the General Assembly level through equally essential committees.
4. The General Assembly seeks to have every member/congregation support the denomination.
5. The General Assembly is to evaluate needs and resources and act to fulfill Great Commission.
6. Individuals and congregations may work through other agencies.
7. The General Assembly committees are to serve, not direct or establish policy.
8. The General Assembly assigns the committees their duties.
9. Committees include proportionate representation of presbyteries (if possible).
10. Committees - equal ruling elders and teaching elders.
11. The Nominating Committee is to present all nominations for which it is responsible (see Rules of the Assembly, p.43).
12. Permanent Assembly Committees:
  - Committee on Administration
  - Mission to the World
  - Mission to North America
  - Christian Education and Publications
13. The General Assembly establishes personnel salaries of committees.
14. The General Assembly is to screen all committee leadership through its Theological Training Committee.

**CHAPTER 14 - GENERAL ASSEMBLY (Continued)**

**14-6 - THE POWER OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**Comments**

The graphic on the next page simply rearranges this material under subject headings.

These headings are valuable, as a simple expression of the General Assembly's own statement, to evaluate the effectiveness of the General Assembly.

## CHAPTER 14 - GENERAL ASSEMBLY (Continued)

### BCO 14-6 - POWER OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

#### Legal Matters:

- receive and issue all appeals, references, and complaints from lower courts.
- decide all controversies respecting doctrine and discipline.
- redress whatever presbyteries may have done contrary to order.
- to suppress schismatical contentions and disputations according to the rules provided thereof.
- to correspond with other churches.

#### Proclamation:

- bear testimony against error in doctrine and immorality in practice, injuriously affecting the church.
- to institute and superintend the agencies necessary in the general work of evangelization.

#### Guidance:

- give advice and instruction, in conformity with the Constitution, in all cases submitted to it.
- review records of the presbyteries to take care that the lower courts observe the Constitution.
- devise measures for promoting the prosperity and enlargement of the church.
- to superintend the affairs of the whole church.
- in general to recommend measures for the promotion of charity, truth, and holiness through all the churches under its care.
- deliverances, resolutions, overtures and judicial decisions are to be given serious consideration by the lower courts.
- judicial decisions bind those involved and are the principles to be used in similar cases.

#### Determine Size and Structure of the Denomination:

- to erect new presbyteries, and unite and divide those which are erected with their consent.
- to appoint ministers of such labors as fall under its jurisdiction.
- to receive under its jurisdiction, with the consent of three-fourths of the presbyteries, other ecclesiastical bodies whose organization is conformed to the doctrine and order of this church (commonly referred to as the "J & R" process: 14-6).
- to authorize presbyteries to exercise similar power in receiving bodies suited to become constituents of those courts, and lying within the geographical bounds respectively.
- to unite with other ecclesiastical bodies whose organization is conformed to the doctrines and order of this church, such union to be effected by a mode of procedure defined in 26-5 (commonly referred to as the "merger" process).

## CHAPTER 15 - ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSIONS

### Comments

Because of the nature of the PCA, the courts should not use a commission if possible.

Also, the precedent of the PCA is to consider the list given in Chapter 15 as the only areas in which commissions are to be based.

Careful reference should be made to BCO 14-1, principles #1, 2, 3, 5, and 7 in regard to committees.

## CHAPTER 15 - ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSIONS

### Definitions (15-1):

a committee examines, considers and reports.

a commissions is authorized to deliberate on and conclude business referred to it. It submits its report for court approval and entrance into the minutes.

### Kinds of Commissions (15-2):

taking judicial case testimony;

ordination of ministers;

installation of ministers;

visiting portions of church affected with disorder;

organizing new churches;

judicial commision of General Assembly (15-3);

forming a provisional presbytery in a foreign country (15-4).

dissolution of uncontested pastorates (23-1)

receive a church into presbytery (13-8)

## CHAPTER 16 - CHURCH ORDERS - THE DOCTRINE OF VOCATION

### Comments

Local congregation, pastor-elect and presbytery must concur for ordination to any office, not just that of the teaching elder.

Special dispensation is given for the office of military chaplain, since the military will not enlist a chaplain not yet ordained.

Occasionally special calls to ordain a man into the teaching eldership are accepted and processed by presbytery.

**Note:**

8-7: work with an organization outside the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in America. This reference is basically for previously ordained men; however, it can be understood to include a call for qualified but not yet ordained licentiates - of 20-1, 21-11.

**But:**

13-2: a minister may not remain on rolls of presbytery for a prolonged time.

**Therefore:**

each session/presbytery overseeing a licentiate seeking to be ordained to the teaching eldership should be certain that the proposed call permits him to be ordained in conformity to the BCO and be such that it apparently has longevity of service involved.

## CHAPTER 16 - CHURCH ORDERS - THE DOCTRINE OF VOCATION

A call to any ordained office in the church has the concurrence of three parties (16-1):

the individual, through the inward testimony of a good conscience as a calling by the Spirit;

the church declaring it believes the man is called and it wants him to serve it;

the court of the church agrees and is satisfied that he is qualified.

A call to a church office is based on being elected by the congregation (16-2).

No one may be placed over a church as an officer without being elected, or (in special cases) without at least the consent of the church. This makes it mandatory for presbytery to work in cooperation with the congregation to fill an empty pulpit.

Installation to the office is limited to those candidates approved by the court which ordains him. This makes it mandatory for sessions to approve each candidate or to reject him if necessary (16-3).

## CHAPTER 17 - DOCTRINE OF ORDINATION

### Comments

There is no specific "gift of the Spirit" imparted by laying on of hands.

I Timothy 4:14 (cf. II Tim.1:17) shows that the gift (charisma) was given by God; the formal assumption of its use was instituted by giving a prophetic message and the laying on of hands.

Ordination in the PCA is for life, unless the officer resigns his office or is found guilty of charges of immorality or heresy (see BCO 34 for details).

The officer must be installed in order to have the power of voting or of instigating session action. However, he may be assigned any other duty his office warrants even though he is not installed.

## CHAPTER 17 - DOCTRINE OF ORDINATION

**Definition (17-2):**

the authoritative admission to the office;  
accompanied by prayer and laying on of hands;  
extending the right hand of fellowship.

## CHAPTER 18 - CANDIDATES FOR GOSPEL MINISTRY

### Comments

Presbyteries vary in the degree and method of overseeing Men Under Care.

Each session should:

- care for its responsibility for its member(s) who are "Under Care;"

- insist that presbytery carry out its responsibilities.

This state of development in the life of a potential teaching elder may prove in the long run to be the most crucial part of the process.

Many men "Under Care" transfer to other presbyteries. Note:

- the candidate must initiate the transfer;

- his original session must be satisfied that he is properly under the oversight of a sister session.

## CHAPTER 18 - CANDIDATES FOR THE GOSPEL MINISTRY

### Qualifications:

Communicant member of the church (18-1):

believes he is called;

Come Under Care of presbytery (18-2):

needs session endorsement;

member at least six months;

file with clerk of presbytery at least two months before  
presbytery meeting;

may be brought under care and licensed and interned at same  
meeting of presbytery, but must have a year between licensure  
and ordination;

Appear before presbytery and be examined on (18-3):

his experience in Christ;  
why he feels called.

Charge (18-3): By presbytery moderator

Primary Oversight Accountability (18-4):

spiritual walk - his session;  
training - his presbytery.

Ministerial Activity (18-5):

he should be granted opportunity to gain experience but not serve so  
that he begins to develop oversight.

Report (18-6):

once a year to presbytery.

Change of Status (18-7):

any change normally is instituted by the candidate, although  
presbytery may remove his name.

## CHAPTER 19 - LICENSURE

### Comments

The candidate, although often examined by a committee in preparation for presbytery's examination, must be examined by the entire presbytery, even if several candidates are to be examined at the same meeting.

The PCA's precedent about extraordinary cases provides a limited use of this "escape clause." Most cases in which it has been used is that of a candidate for the ministry who is very evidently gifted, has already been used by God, but, because of age or other circumstance, one part (such as facility in the original languages) has been waived.

The clause does not permit exempting a candidate from most or all of the parts of trial.

When it is used, it must be fully documented to display all the details of the specific decision to use it. These minutes will enable the General Assembly's Review and Control Committee to make an intelligent decision about approving or disapproving the decision.

## CHAPTER 19 - LICENSURE

### **To Preach Regularly in a Church (19-1):**

must be licensed by presbytery with jurisdiction over church involved;

the licentiate could be a:

ruling elder;

candidate for ministry;

minister from other denomination;

some other man.

### **Examination (19-2):**

content - see BCO.

extraordinary cases:

may omit parts of trial;

record of reasons listed in minutes of presbytery.

### **Questions and Charge for Licensure (19-3, 4):**

content - See BCO.

### **Transfer (19-5):**

the licentiate is responsible to arrange it;

the new presbytery may retry any portion it desires to.

### **Length of Licensure (19-6):**

4 years.

## CHAPTER 19 - INTERNSHIP

### Comments

The work and oversight of the intern ultimately is the responsibility of the presbytery; not the session under which he works.

His plan must be in agreement with the presbytery plan, adopted by presbytery and approved by the Certification Committee.

The Certification Committee has been constituted by General Assembly action (see G.A. Minutes; 6th General Assembly, 1978, item 13 of CE/P Report; 7th General Assembly, 1978, items 19, 20, CE/P report, page 113; also Appendix, page 189).

Candidates may seek to accomplish their internship in segments during their seminary training. As soon as a man is received under care, this option should be explored.

In a report of the Committee for Christian Education and Publications to the General Assembly in 1986, the following goals were stated:

prepare candidates through field experience for the work of the teaching elder, while under competent oversight;

provide an opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate to the presbytery and to himself that he has been gifted by the Holy Spirit to serve in the office of teaching elder;

help the candidate, when necessary, to be confident that he can sustain an examination in the Uniform Curriculum when he is examined for license/ordination;

provide evidence that the Lord has chosen to use the intern to serve the kingdom productively;

provide evidence that the intern has been developing the necessary skills for ministry;

provide evidence that the intern has sustained healthy human relationships throughout the course of his internship.

## CHAPTER 19 - INTERNSHIP

### Definition (19-7):

preordination trial of their gifts and ability to rule as teaching elders.

### Length (19-7):

for one year.

### Special Provisions (19-7)\*:

presbyteries may cooperate to avoid transfer of the candidate (19-11).

cautious approval of previous experience (19-16).

need not demand license unless the intership involves preaching regularly to a congregation (19-1).

### Examination for Installation (19-9):

a statement of his inward call to the ministry of the Word.

### Declaration of Installation (19-10).

### Examination of Completed Work (19-13):

a presbytery must approve or disapprove.

### Privileges (19-15):

no vote on session.

temporarily moderate session under supervision of pastor.

serve as advisor to session/diaconate.

may conduct funerals.

may not serve sacraments.

may serve on committees.

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\* The "grandfather" clause developed for the "J & R" program re the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, was concluded for most candidates by 1986.

## CHAPTER 20 - THE ELECTION OF PASTORS

### Comments

Presbyteries must decide whether a non-PCA agency extending a call for the ordination of a man is to be considered a valid ministry. One of the major criteria it must take into account is the scope of the proposed ministry and its provision for taking accountability over Christians (Heb.13:17, Acts 20:20).

The number of teaching elders in a presbytery has a direct bearing on:

- how effectively the presbytery does the corporate work of its churches;  
and,

- what percentage of representation the ruling elders have; and,

- how easily (all too often) the ruling elders are dominated by the teaching elders.

Note the impact of Chapter 3 (The Nature of the Church) in keeping in the congregation (not in the session) the power of decision making in the call of its pastor.

Also note that presbytery is to be involved in evaluating the proposed "match" between congregation and candidate and has the power to effect the process.

The steps involved when a pastor seeks another pastorate too often have been poorly executed and therefore have caused undo trauma in the congregation. Appendix "E" is a proposed method which has proved helpful.

## CHAPTER 20 - THE ELECTION OF PASTORS

### A Definite Call in Hand (20-1):

ordinarily the call comes from:

a church;  
presbytery;  
General Assembly;  
other agency which presbytery considers a valid Christian ministry  
(21-1),

and:

is written and in hands of presbytery before action is taken.

### Congregation's Procedure to Elect a Pastor (20-2, 3, 4, 5):

congregation elects a Pulpit Committee at duly called meeting.

congregation elects a pastor at duly called meeting.

ordinarily, the congregation elects a PCA minister to preside.  
if impractical, any male member may be elected to preside.  
all communing members in good standing are entitled to vote.

moderator challenges congregation if it is ready.

majority of all voters present shall be required to elect.

if a large adamant minority, the moderator shall seek to endeavor to  
dissuade the majority; he shall act accordingly.

### Form of Call (20-6):

see BCO.

### Prosecution of Call (20-7, 8, 9, 10, 11):

one or more commissioners appointed by the congregation presents it to  
presbytery.

pastor, to accept, must be:

examined re the pastorate to which he is called;  
released from his present pastorate by his presbytery for transfer.

presbytery may:

recommend not to proceed to extend the call or it may deliver the call to  
whom it is addressed.

## CHAPTER 20 - THE ELECTION OF PASTORS (Continued)

presbytery may: (continued)

give advice.

decline to place the call in his hands.

no minister shall be transferred without his consent.

if the candidate is a member of another presbytery, that presbytery shall furnish him the proper testimonials.

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## CHAPTER 21 - THE ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF MINISTERS

### Comments

See Chapter 19 re: use of the "exception clause."

The answers to the **Questions for Ordination** are the oaths the candidate takes to bind his conscience. Note that he is asked to swear:

Scripture: That "he believes..." (Q.#1);

Confession of Faith and Catechism: That he "sincerely receives and adopts..." (Q.#2);

BCO (Form of Government and Rules of Discipline): That he "approves... in conformity with the general principles of biblical polity."

These questions become the **subscription** taken by the candidate. He can have no reservation unless he indicates beforehand what it is. The presbytery must be satisfied that the candidate has exposed himself sufficiently that it (the presbytery) is satisfied the candidate will maintain the subordinate standards of the church.

The **Questions for Ordination** also serve as a measuring stick over the years as to the teaching elder's accountability before God in overseeing the flock.

## CHAPTER 21 - THE ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF MINISTERS

### Prerequisites for Ordination of an Intern (21-4):

- B.A. or M.A. from approved college/university;
- B.D. or M.Div. from approved seminary;  
or  
testimony that M.Div. work is completed;  
or  
certificate of completion and endorsement from theological study program approved by General Assembly\* and one of the presbyteries;
- Testimony that internship was completed and approved;
- Decision whether to retry part/all of part of trial for licensure;
- Examination on part of trial for ordination;
- Asked whether he has changed his previous views on Confession of Faith and BCO.

### Trials of Ordination (21-4):

- Examination of:
  - His experiential religion;
  - Greek;
  - Hebrew;
  - English Bible;
  - Theology;
  - Sacraments;
  - Government and discipline.
- Papers on:
  - Theological subject;
  - Exegesis - using Hebrew and Greek.
- Preach a sermon.

### Exception Clause (21-4, last paragraph)

### Procedure (21-5)

### Questions of Ordination (21-5):

(Note that provision has been made for ordaining to become an assistant minister.)

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\* Reference is to a program based on the PCA's Uniform Curriculum. Appendix F is that curriculum.

## CHAPTER 22 - THE PASTORAL RELATIONS

### Comments

Note that there is no BCO job description for the Associate Pastor or Assistant Pastor. This again reflects The Nature of the Church (Chapter 3), leaving the decision to the congregation and session.

Ordinarily, the session recommends a job description for an associate pastor to the congregation. However, even for the assistant pastor, a congregational approval of his job description should be given.

The matter of stated supply also reflects a great deal of responsibility resting on the session. It is presumed that only a PCA minister would be chosen by the session to serve as stated supply. If a minister is chosen who is not a PCA minister, the responsibility is on the session to have the presbytery's approval.

In the light of 22-1, it should be remembered that the stated supply is not a member of the session and does not have a vote.

## CHAPTER 22 - THE PASTORAL RELATIONS

### Various Characteristics of the Relationship (22-1, 2, 3, 4):

OFFICE	ELECTED BY CONGREGATION	CALLED BY SESSION	STAFF RELATIONSHIP DETERMINED BY CONGREGATION AND SESSION	DISSOLUTION OF PASTORATE
Pastor	x			23-1
Associate Pastor	x		x	23-1
Assistant Pastor		x	x (Session)	23-1

### Supply for Empty Pulpit (22-5, 6) (temporary):

DESCRIPTION	TITLE	ARRANGED BY	LENGTH OF SERVICE
Minister	Stated Supply	Session	By mutual agreement with approval of presbytery. But: Limited to one year renewable by the session, with the approval of the presbytery.
Student (licensed)	Student Supply	Session with the approval of presbytery	
Ruling Elder	Ruling Elder Supply		

**CHAPTER 23 - THE ROLE OF THE ASSOCIATE OR  
ASSISTANT PASTOR WHEN THE SENIOR PASTOR LEAVES  
AND THE PROCEDURE FOR HONORABLE RETIREMENT**

**Comments**

The historic practice of the PCA is for the associate and assistant pastor(s) to leave after the senior pastor leaves, or, at least shortly after the new pastor is installed. This procedure helps guard against "manipulation" (whether done by design or without forethought) in motivating the senior pastor to leave. It also guards the people from making the decision to call the previous associate or assistant without fully weighing the situation.

The procedure outlined permits an exception to the historic practice, but it makes the action a very difficult one to accomplish.

**CHAPTER 23 - THE ROLE OF THE ASSOCIATE OR  
ASSISTANT PASTOR WHEN THE SENIOR PASTOR LEAVES  
AND THE PROCEDURE FOR HONORABLE RETIREMENT**

**Service of Associate or Assistant Pastor after the Senior Pastor Leaves (23-1):**

He may continue to serve.

He normally cannot succeed the senior pastor without:

Time between.\*

Ministry in a different field.

**But:**

Congregation (by secret ballot with 80% majority vote) may petition presbytery for an exception.

Presbytery may grant it by a 75% majority vote.

But - presbytery must be sure the dissolution of the senior pastorate had no negative innuendos.

**Honorable Retirement (23-2, 3)**

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\* The time frame often is thought to be 9 to 12 months, although some situations have been as little as two months.

## CHAPTER 23 - THE DISSOLUTION OF THE PASTORAL RELATION

### Comments

The graphic on the next pages combines all the parts of the BCO which deal with dissolution.

The pastor or session considering such a move needs only locate which category best describes its situation in Section I and then follow the appropriate procedure outlined in Section II.

## Chapter 23 - DISSOLUTION OF PASTORATE FOR SENIOR PASTOR

### I. SOURCE FOR INITIATING DISSOLUTION:

- A. Pastor Initiated:
- Seeks new pastorate. 23-1
  - Determines he is not called. 38-3
  - Convinced he is not able to serve the church. 38-3
  - Retire. 23-2
- B. Individual (usually a member) Initiated:
- Unacknowledged but provable guilt. 34-3
  - (Note: This would lead to *presbytery initiated* action.)
- C. Session Initiated:
- Dissatisfaction, unrelated to discipline. 23-1
  - Strong presumption of guilt. 31-4, 34-4
- D. Presbytery Initiated:
- Due process for accusation(s) made against the minister. 34-4,6,7,8,9
  - Inquiry into apparent failure properly to attend to his duties. 34-10

### II. PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW:

- A. Non-Discipline cases - Pastor Initiated:
- Minister tenders his resignation to presbytery. 23-1
  - Note #1: Support and guidance for this:
    - 11-2, 4
    - 13-9
    - 20-9
    - 31-1, 2
  - Congregation (at duly called meeting in response to or in anticipation of a summons from presbytery to appear before it) decides what is its reaction to the proposed resignation, elects commissioners to presbytery and instructs them accordingly. 23-1
  - Note #2: Guidance for the congregational meeting:
    - 23-1
    - 25-2, 4
    - 20-3, 4, 5, 8
  - Note #3: Logic and responsibility indicates that the pastor has discussed this with the session and requested them to call a congregational meeting. However, it is possible that the session/ congregation will first hear of the proposed resignation via a summons from presbytery to appear before it.
  - Note #4: If a second presbytery is involved, 13-6 must be satisfactorily completed before the transfer is finalized.
  - Congregation's commissioners appear before presbytery; presbytery decides and carries out the decision with appropriate action. 23-1
- 34-10 (b and c)

**CHAPTER 23 - DISSOLUTION OF PASTORATE  
FOR SENIOR PASTOR (Continued)**

**B. Non-Discipline Cases - Session/Congregation Initiated:**

Session calls a congregational meeting at which the mind of the congregation re the pastoral relationship will be determined.	23-1
Note #4: The session may initiate this meeting or respond to the request for it by church members.	25-2
Session petitions presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relationship.	23-1
Pastor is commissioned to present his position to presbytery.	23-1
Pastor appears before presbytery; presbytery decides and carries out the decision with appropriate action.	23-1 34-10 (b & c) 46-8

**CHAPTER 23 - DISSOLUTION OF PASTORATE  
FOR SENIOR PASTOR (CONTINUED)**

C. Discipline Cases:

Great care must be taken to differentiate between error and heresy and schism.	34-5
Failure to appear before presbytery: after two citations, suspended	34-4
after the third citation, deposed, suspended or excommunicated.	34-4; 34-9
Self-accused, pending trial - suspend or depose.	34-7
Self-accused when no accusation has been made - noted and censured without process.	38-1
Accusation and trial.	31ff.
Lack of action by presbytery on cases of doctrine or public scandal; General Assembly may respond to a different presbytery's plea and assume original jurisdiction over the minister and process the case.	34-1

## CHAPTER 24 - ELECTION, ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF RULING ELDERS

### Comments

The Comments for The Questions for Ordination of Chapter 21 are apropos for the ruling elders.

Many churches are separating the finalizing of the list of nominees from the act of election by several months. During that period all nominees (including candidates for the diaconate, plus those renominated as elders or deacons) are provided a training program. The program at least includes:

Read all the documents of the PCA Constitution.

Study:

- the qualifications for office;
- the job description of the office;
- doctrine as a system, with emphasis on key doctrines;
- system of government;
- history of the PCA;
- history and distinctives of the local congregation;
- organizational/financial structure of the local church.

Examination of the candidates by the session.

## CHAPTER 24 - ELECTION, ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF RULING ELDERS

### Procedure for Election of Ruling Elders and Deacons (24-1, 4, 5):

1. Public notice given of congregational meeting for election.
2. If 25% of eligible voters ask for additional officers, the session shall call the meeting.
3. Notice given at least one month before election.
4. Congregation asked to submit names to session.
5. Session shall examine those nominated.
6. Session shall present list of nominees to congregation.
7. Session recommends, congregation determines the number of officers to be elected.
8. Majority vote of those present needed for election.
9. Moderator asks congregation if it is ready to proceed.
10. Voting is done by private ballot.

### Procedure for Ordination and Installation (24-5):

1. Sermon.
2. Definition of office stated.
3. Character of life to be sustained by officer described.
4. Duties of the office stated.
5. Candidate called on to take oath of ordination by answering ordination questions.
6. Congregation called on (by raising right hand) to yield the candidate honor, encouragement, and obedience in the Lord.
7. Ordination procedure:
  - prayer;
  - laying on of hands of the session;
  - extending the right hand of fellowship;
  - pronouncing and declaring candidate is ordained and installed;
  - congregation given an exhortation.

### Duration of the Ordination (24-6):

perpetual (but not always active) except because of deposition.

### Procedure for Removal From Office Without Censure (24-6):

The congregation, by majority vote at regularly called meeting, may request the session to dissolve a relationship;

then, session decides and reports back.

## CHAPTER 25 - CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

### Comments

The session must follow the bylaws as to the calling of meetings.

It must also prepare its list of resident communing members before the meeting so that the quorum can be determined without difficulty.

## CHAPTER 25 - CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

### Voters (25-1):

All communing members.

### Meetings (25-2, 3, 4, 5):

Session shall decide when a meeting is needed

or

session shall respond to written notice by one-fourth communing members.

### Quorum:

Up to 100 communing members:

1/4 of resident communing members.

Over 100 communing members:

1/6 of resident communing members.

### Moderator:

Pastor, or

if impractical or inexpedient for him:

elder starts meeting, conducts election of PCA minister or male member of the congregation.

### Clerk:

Elected by congregation.

## CHAPTER 25 - TRUSTEES

### Comments

The graphic on the next page is designed to distinguish the characteristic difference between the biblical offices (elder and deacon) and that of the office the state calls for (trustee) when a church is incorporated.

## TRUSTEES

<u>OFFICE</u>	<u>AUTHORITY BASE</u>	<u>DEGREE OF INTRINSIC AUTHORITY</u>
ELDER	BIBLE	EVERYTHING AUTHORIZED BY BIBLE AND SUBORDINATE STANDARDS.
DEACON	BIBLE	EVERYTHING AUTHORIZED BY BIBLE AND SUBORDINATE STANDARDS.
TRUSTEE	STATE	GUARANTEE THAT CIVIL/FINANCIAL PRACTICES ARE IN DECENT AND PROPER ORDER.

### DEFINITIONS:

"TRUSTEES OF THE CHURCH CORPORATION STAND AS THE LEGAL AGENTS FOR THE CORPORATION TO THE STATE AND TO BUSINESS"  
(THE GROWING LOCAL CHURCH, PAGE 121).

CARRY GREAT RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRUE SPIRITUAL WITNESS OF CHURCH TO CONGREGATION, CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, AND  
CHRISTIAN WORLD, AND TO NON-CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND NON-CHRISTIAN WORLD.

## CHAPTER 25 - CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

### THE CORPORATION

#### Comments

25-7 points out that funds for the support and expense of the church and for benevolent purposes shall be controlled and disbursed by the session and board of directors.

**CHAPTER 25 - CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

**THE CORPORATION**

**Trustees For a Congregation NOT incorporated (25-6):**

by election;

power and authority (solely under the instructions of the congregation) to:

Buy, sell, mortgage property;  
Accept and execute deeds;  
Hold and defend titles;  
Manage permanent special funds.

never to infringe upon the powers or duties of the session or diaconate.

**Trustees For a Congregation Which is Incorporated (25-7):**

by election;

power and authority (solely under the instructions of the congregation) to:

Buy, sell, mortgage property;  
Accept and execute deeds;  
Hold and defend titles;  
Manage permanent special funds.

## CHAPTER 25 - THE LOCAL CHURCH'S PROPERTY RIGHTS/OWNERSHIP

### Comments

The graphic on the next page is designed to show the totality of the PCA's commitment to the ownership by the local church of its property. This is the physical expression of **The Nature of the Church** (Chapter 3) and the safeguard of the PCA connectionalism (Chapter 11).

Possibly the most cogent statement is the second paragraph of 25-11. Each local congregation is to be recognized " ...as competent to function and to take actions covering the matters...." This means that neither the presbytery nor the General Assembly may conclude a congregation is incompetent and therefore step in to take control of the local property.

**CHAPTER 25 - THE LOCAL CHURCH'S  
PROPERTY RIGHTS/OWNERSHIP**

**I. Church Property Belongs Exclusively to the Local Church.**

Definitive Statement:

The local church's property belongs exclusively to the local church because no higher church court has any claim on it.

A. The legal position defined:

- 25-8            Local trustees have sole title.  
                  Congregation declared to be sole owner of any real estate equity.
- 25-9            No superior court has the power to change these principles.

B. The moral commitment defined:

Every officer of the PCA is under oath to maintain 25-8, 9 as a solemn covenant.

**II. Denominational Affiliation is Based on the Commitment of the Local Church to the Denomination.**

Definitive Statement:

The commitment by a local congregation to establish or dissolve its relationship with the Presbyterian Church in America is intrinsic only to the congregation itself.

- 25-11 (Paragraph 1): The only laws affecting congregational actions about affiliation are those civil laws which happen to apply.
- 25-11            The local church may act on affiliation as it chooses.
- 25-11 (Paragraph 2): The only laws affecting competency of congregational actions about affiliation are those civil laws which happen to apply.
- 25-11 (Paragraph 3): Affiliation is a voluntary expression of mutual love and confidence.
- 25-11 (Paragraph 3): Withdrawal from the affiliation does not demand superior court approval.

## CHAPTER 26 - AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH

### Comments

The Confession is more difficult to amend than is the BCO. This reflects that the PCA's commitment to doctrinal standards is the hallmark of its distinctives.

There are two ways in which the PCA can unite with another ecclesiastical body:

BCO 14-6 (middle of the paragraph) "to receive under its jurisdiction, with the consent of three-fourths of its presbyteries, other ecclesiastical bodies whose organization is conformed to the doctrine and order of this Church" (commonly referred to as "J&R");

BCO 26-5 ("organic union").

## CHAPTER 26 - AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH

### Amending BCO (Form of Government, Rules of Discipline, and Directory of Worship) (26-2, 3, 4):

Procedure to have the change placed on the General Assembly docket:

- a. Presbytery, or a permanent committee/agency forward an  
overture/request to the office of the stated clerk;
  - b. the overture/request must be received before the beginning of the  
General Assembly;
  - c. the Committee on Judicial Business must find that the overture/request  
is in proper order.
1. General Assembly must approve it by a majority vote of those present and  
voting and recommend it to the presbyteries.
  2. Two-thirds of the Presbyterians must approve it, thus providing their consent of  
agreement and advice to the General Assembly to adopt the change.
  3. General Assembly must vote to approve and enact the change by a majority vote  
of those present and voting.

### Amending the Confessional Standards (26-2):

Proceed as above to have change placed on the docket.

Steps - same as above except each step demands a three-quarters vote.

Controlling Action In Processing Any Amendment:

In all cases, the presbyteries can only vote the General Assembly  
recommendation "up or down;" it cannot be changed (26-4).

### Accomplishing Organic Union With Any Other Ecclesiastical Body (26-5):

Same as changing Confessional Standards (of page 46).

### Extension Clause (26-6):

If some presbyteries have not informed General Assembly of their vote on  
advise and consent, the General Assembly may defer action one year.

**RULES OF DISCIPLINE**  
**GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

**Comments**

This material introduces the **Rules of Discipline**.

It is intended to present the biblical context upon which judicial church discipline is to be administered.

It is also intended to provide guidance about the attitude administrators of judicial church discipline should have, along with several practical guidelines.

Probably the most crucial is point #3 under **Prerequisites**:

".....develop the use of wisdom, mercy and patience...."

Before beginning any judicial process, and throughout its operation, these three characteristics must be operative. Get any and all help you can, so long as it enhances these three characteristics.

**RULES OF DISCIPLINE  
GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

**I. TYPES OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE (BCO 27-1, Second Paragraph):\***

**A. Administrative:**

to initiate and to direct programs for the life and ministry of the church (I Tim.5:17).

**B. Response to Misunderstandings and Differences of Opinions:**

to correct misunderstandings that result from less than adequate administrative/communication practices;

to weigh all possible points of view about differences of opinion, to determine how a decision will be made and to settle the issue.

**C. Response to Offenses:**

to deal with offenses by way of judicial discipline.

**II. CONTEXT FOR CHURCH JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE:**

**A. Biblical: Numbers 15:30**

Deuteronomy 8:2,3,5

Psalms 94:12

Proverbs 3:11-12

Jeremiah 31:18-19

Hebrews 12:5,7,11

Galatians 6:1-2 (Key verses)

I Corinthians 5:1-13

II Corinthians 2:5-11

Matthew 5:23-24

Matthew 18:15-17

**B. Spiritual Attitude:**

"Church discipline is divine love at work!

"it is the work of God that produces '...a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it...' (Heb. 12:11).

"It is a demonstration by God that He loves us as children of His grace, adopted into His family" (Restoration--God's Way, D. J. MacNair, Great Commission Publications - 1987, Chapter 1).

**C. Prerequisites**

1. "...teaching elders must: a) instruct the officers in discipline, b) instruct the congregation in discipline, c) jointly practice it in the context of the congregation and church courts" (BCO 27-4).

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\*Cf. Restoration--God's Way, D. J. MacNair, Great Commission Publications - 1987, Chapter 4)

**RULES OF DISCIPLINE**  
**GENERAL INTRODUCTION (Continued)**

2. Elders must develop a sharing, support network within the church as the first line of natural admonition against sinning (Gal. 6:1-2, Eph. 4:11-15).
3. Elders must develop the use of wisdom, mercy, and patience throughout their entire ministry as the foundation to use when church discipline apparently is needed.
4. Elders must develop and be involved in a content-filled prayer network throughout the church for all the life and ministry of the church and must saturate in prayer situations when church discipline apparently is needed.

**III. DEFINITIONS AND GUIDELINES IN USING JUDICIAL CHURCH DISCIPLINE:**

- A. Definition of an offense: "An offense...is anything in the doctrine or practice of a church member professing faith in Jesus Christ which is contrary to the Word of God" (BCO 29-1).
- B. Guilt is determined through any one of three ways:
  1. self-admitted guilt (see Matthew 5:23-24);
  2. common knowledge, including:
    - (a) an immoral act which has become public knowledge;
    - (b) an immoral act which is condoned because of: (1) fear to offend the apparent offender; (2) church or community support of the apparent offender regardless of the act itself; or (3) lack of unified commitment to the moral standard by the church itself;
    - (c) an heretical position long adhered to and permitted because of: (1) fear to offend the apparent offender; (2) church or community support for the apparent offender regardless of the heresy itself; or (3) lack of commitment by the church itself to the true doctrine.
  3. an offended Christian who, using Matthew 18:15-18 as a means for restoration, seeks the alleged offender to confess or go through trial to determine guilt.  
(NOTE: No trial is needed when guilt is determined by means 1 or 2 above!)
- C. Nature of Repentance:

"Repentance unto life is an evangelical grace, the doctrine whereof is to be preached by every minister of the gospel, as well as that of faith in Christ" (Westminster Confession of Faith, 15-1).

(Note: This definition is cast in language concerning the unsaved. The logical lesson from the context and from passages such as II Corinthians 7:8-11 make it applicable to all situations that need repentance.)
- D. The ministry of church discipline is not complete without a heartfelt and tangible attempt to provide physical/monetary restoration where applicable and to provide spiritual restoration as fundamental.

**RULES OF DISCIPLINE**  
**GENERAL INTRODUCEION (Continued)**

- E. The only purpose of charging anyone with an offense is to vindicate the name of Christ and His Church. It can never be motivated to vindicate the offended party (BCO 31-4).
- F. Key BCO references to use as major guideposts:  
31-2 (cf.12-5)  
31-7  
35-3 (cf.Num.35:30; Deut.17:6; II Cor.13-1)
- G. Some guidelines to keep in mind when a charge is made (see RESTORATION - GOD'S WAY, D. J. MacNair, Great Commissions Publications - 1987, Chapter 10):
1. Stop everything and pray.
  2. Slow down the process - take the time to determine if all alternatives have already been pursued and if all scriptural injunctions are understood and are in place.
  3. Determine as many facts about the case as is possible, including under whose jurisdiction the accused is living. (Remember BCO 31-2.)
  4. Ask these questions:
    - (a) Does it appear that these are at least all the essential facts in order to decide if a charge should be processed into an indictment?
    - (b) If not, in what areas do essential facts seem to be missing?
    - (c) Who could supply that data?
    - (d) What probably would be the consequence of gathering that data?Now before going on:
    - (e) What apparently is the MAJOR cause(s) of the alleged offense?and,
    - (f) What interpersonal relationships appear to be dynamics between the key parties of the charge?and,
    - (g) What church programs/ministries appear to be involved?
  5. Finally, decide if formal action (31-2) should be instituted. Keep in mind the need for proven guilt, followed by repentance and restoration.
  6. Begin to articulate the lessons learned and apply them as soon as is proper to the church body.
  7. Procedure:
    - (a) take the time to write out the answers to all the questions and be sure that the elders agree on the wording;
    - (b) attempt to prioritize the data;
    - (c) attempt to determine from the prioritized list all the issues that do not need immediately to be addressed or that can be dealt with later;
    - (d) address only those issues that cannot be serviced later.

This procedure should make it easier to "attack" the case. It will help in two other ways as well:

1. the parameters of the case will be fairly clear from this study, which in turn will guide the work done in answering question 4,e,f,g;
2. everyone charged with the responsibility of answering question 4,e,f,g will have an agreed upon data base with which to start working.

The answer to questions 5, 6 and 7 will involve the interaction of all the data so far gathered. It will take great wisdom, love, and tenderness, coupled in firm commitment, to even begin to draft answers in many cases. It often will take the advice of an outside, objective authority to develop all the proper steps, in chronological order, necessary to proceed properly.

## CHAPTER 27 - DISCIPLINE--ITS NATURE, SUBJECTS, AND ENDS

### Comments

27-1

Very little is said in the BCO about administrative discipline. Two extremes and their dangers should be noted.

- (a) not practicing it well or faithfully leads to frustration and eventual loss of heart (and loss of the member):
- (b) practicing it by the letter and not the spirit keeps the organization so important that it fails to accomplish its objective--i.e., to properly serve the organism (the body-life factor) to enable it to be responsive to the Spirit of God.

27-1 (second paragraph)

Church discipline can be examined by two "action" criteria: to "initiate and control"; to "respond."

Good administrative discipline initiates and controls the "directing the church well" (I Tim. 5:17). Elders are accountable to see that this is done.

"Responsive discipline" can be best understood when divided into two sets of circumstances:

to redress misunderstandings about or breakdowns of administrative discipline. This normally does not need judicial process. To ignore it almost always leads to a judicial process.

to find an alleged offender guilty, institute censure, and seek repentance and restoration. This is judicial discipline.

27-3

When called on to use judicial discipline, use the first 6-points list of the guidelines (page 86) as a "checklist" to be sure the discipline should be used and that, if so, it is being properly used.

27-4

One of the two greatest detriments to administering judicial discipline is the lack of regularly teaching the proper use of it.

The other is that churches too often build their awareness of organism (body-life) on fellowship as the prime mover for the life and ministry of the church. It should be an important secondary mover. Worship of the living God must be the primary motivating force of the church.

27-5

This paragraph must be coupled with 31-7. Doing so will avoid much of the trauma of taking Matthew 18 to its end of a trial and then censure (if guilt is proven). Note:

- (1) if the prosecution is started by the court, it indicates that the court is already convinced that guilt exists. Therefore, none of the Matthew 18 steps are needed.
- (2) but, in many cases (if guilt is not yet proven) a committee, talking with an alleged offender (after step 2: Matthew 18:16) privately may bring him to an admission of guilt without a trial. (31-7 relates to this practice),

## CHAPTER 27 - DISCIPLINE--ITS NATURE, SUBJECTS, AND ENDS

### Definition (27-1, 2):

...the exercise of authority (given the church by the Lord Jesus Christ):  
to instruct and guide its members;  
to promote its purity;  
to promote its welfare  
to benefit its members.

### Kinds (27-1):

Administrative - referring to the whole government.  
Judicial - dealing with offense, censure, repentance and restoration.

### Recipients (27-2):

All baptized persons (who therefore are members).

### Benefits (27-3):

Discipline (in general), administered for the sake of godliness (I Tim.4-7), maintains:

- (a) the glory of God;
- (b) the purity of His church (i.e. maintenance of godliness in heart and conduct by the individual member and in the life of the corporate body).

Judicial discipline (keeping and reclaiming disobedient sinners) is to:

- rebuke offenses;
- remove scandal;
- vindicate the honor of Christ;
- promote purity;
- promote general good of the church;
- promote spiritual good of the offenders.

### Preparing to Exercise the Authority Christ gave (27-4):

Have the right attitude:

- it is to be used to build up, not to destroy (II Cor.13:10);
- it is to be motivated by mercy, not wrath;
- it is to separate the holy from the profane as a tender mother corrects her children.

It is to be taught:

- provide systematic training from the Scriptures;
- all communing and non-communing members to be included;
- teaching elders must:
  - (a) instruct the officers in discipline;
  - (b) instruct the congregation in discipline;
  - (c) jointly practice it in the congregation and church courts.

### Exercising the Authority Christ Gave (27-5):

- (a) Instruction in the Word.
- (b) Practicing the individual's responsibility to admonish one another (Matt.18:15; Gal.6:1).
- (c) If the admonition fails, call for witnesses (Matt.18:16).
- (d) If that fails, the church must determine guilt, and if proven, proceed with censure(s).

## CHAPTER 28 - DISCIPLINE OF NON-COMMUNING MEMBERS

### Comments

This chapter is the best presentation of the relationship of the church and the family given in the BCO. It should be source material for teaching covenant obligations for all children of the covenant.

For children of church members, 28-3 seems very weak and incomplete. However, the terms of the covenant, binding the parents and the congregation, are referred to by the phrase "use every means to reclaim." The potential of ministry here is great.

As to non-communing members who are adults, the presumption is made that they were children of the covenant who have not rejected the church but have not confessed Christ and joined the church. If they persist in sin, the love of the body to "speak the truth in love" and the openness of presenting the gospel should constantly be maintained.

This chapter does not deal with the Christians who attend regularly, consider this their church, but have not joined it.

If they persist in sin, the love of the body in "speaking the truth in love" should not stop. The session may administer admonition and may refuse to serve them the Lord's Supper as if it were indefinite suspension.

If the sin would call for the excommunication of a church member, the session may place the same restrictions upon them without calling it excommunication.

## CHAPTER 28 - DISCIPLINE OF NON-COMMUNING MEMBERS

### BCO

#### 28-1, 2, 3, 5 Foundation for Discipline of Non-Communing Members (Children:

28-1 Principal duty of the church (is) to promote true religion in the home (cf. Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 6:23). This includes discipline (I Tim.4:7).

28-2 Make special provision for instructing children in the Bible and in the church catechisms.

28-3 Church should maintain constant and sympathetic relations with the children--should encourage to confess Christ and join the church.

28-5 Considered as under the care of church where parents belong.

#### 28-3 Discipline for Non-Communing Members (Children):

Cherish them and use every means to reclaim them.

#### 28-4 Relationship with Non-Communing Members (Adults):

Entitled to special attention; frequently encouraged to join the church and warned of the sin and danger of neglecting covenantal obligations.

## CHAPTER 29 - OFFENSES

### Comments

29-1

Since an offense must be proved from Scripture, every church must permit a degree of diversity about non-offending matters such as an individual's:

interests  
proposals  
methodology.

In the same vein, each individual must realize that hurt feelings, per se, do not constitute an offense against them.

But--the elders (serving as shepherds) must seek to keep all of this kind of circumstance from being elevated into an offense(s).

29:3 re Personal Offense

The two key Scripture passages that explain the method of beginning to deal with an offense are:

1. Matthew 5:23-24 - Someone has been offended by my actions.
2. Matthew 18:15-17 - I feel I have been sinned against.

29-2, 3, 4

In determining the course of action to be taken in any matter of offense, the elders must, in accordance with 34-2 and 36-2:

1. determine the existing combination between Nature and Extent; but, must be aware that:
2. the existing combination can change (especially from private to public); and,
3. must process the case (especially as to the censure) accordingly.

## CHAPTER 29 - OFFENSES

### Definition (29-1):

Anything in the doctrines or practices of a church member...which is contrary to the Word of God.

An offense must be proved to be such from Scripture.

### Premise to direct judicial process (29-2, 3, 4):

The nature of the offense.	<b>Personal</b> Wrongs or injuries to particular individuals.	<b>General</b> Heresies or immoralities not against (or considered apart from) particular individuals
The extent of the awareness of offense.	<b>Private</b> Known only to a few people.	<b>Public</b> Notorious

## CHAPTER 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37 - CHURCH CENSURES

### COMMENTS

30-1: A court seldom should start with the most severe censure. Luke 12:47-48 should guide the court in the degree of severity to be administered. Also, see 36-1, 2; Galatians 6:1.

30-3, 37-1: Indefinite suspension calls for constant shepherding, regular formal review, and possibly (not mandatory) escalation of censure.

34-6: When a minister is tried and the court finds the matter amounts to no more than "such acts of infirmity as may be amended," it shall take "prudent" action. This normally means giving Admonition, not Suspension, Deposition or Excommunication.

36-6: Excommunication is related to Paul's phrase to "hand over to Satan" (I Cor. 5:5, 13; I Tim. 1:20). We do not know everything intended by this phrase. The various contexts indicate the process may be used to redeem the individual. It is not declaring that the "unforgivable sin" (Mark 3:29) has been committed.

34-10 Divestiture of a Minister: This may be done without censure if the church fails to accept his ministry. It must be done by the proper method. The record thus shows that there was no offense and consequent judicial discipline.

## CHAPTER 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37 - CHURCH CENSURES

### INTRODUCTION:

Guide for Administering All Church Censures (36-2):

**Private Offenses:** Administer in the presence of the court alone or by one or more members of the court.

**Public Offenses:** Administer at the discretion of the court (compare graphic on pages 105, 106).

### I. ADMONITION:

**Basic Definition:**

30-2 Formal reproof, including warning and exhortation.

**Causes:**

**Infliction for Anyone Not a Minister:**

36-3 See "Guide" above.

**Infliction for Ministers:**

34-3 Private Offense: Give a warning.

Public Offense: Bring case to attention of another minister.

**Removal:**

BCO has no statement about removal. This implies that the admonition was heeded and the incident is closed.

### II. SUSPENSION: DEFINITE

**Basic Definition:**

30-3 Exclusion from the sealing ordinances for a predetermined time period.

**Causes:**

Offender apparently has repented--censure is given primarily for the honor of Christ. It is part of restoration process.

**Infliction for Anyone Not a Minister:**

36-4 See "Guide" above.

**Infliction for Ministers:**

37-1 Rulers of the church frequently pray and converse with the offender, seeking his repentance; see below.

**Removal:**

37-2 Restoration declared by using formal statement in BCO with prayer and thanksgiving.

CHAPTER 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37 - CHURCH CENSURES (Continued)

**III. SUSPENSION: INDEFINITE**

**Basic Definition:**

30-3 Exclusion from sealing ordinances indefinitely.

**Causes:**

30-3 Offender has been found guilty but has not:  
repented;  
or  
demonstrated his professed repentance.

**Infliction for Anyone Not a Minister:**

36-5 Same as above (36-4), plus reading formal BCO statement, giving  
advice  
or admonition, and praying.

**Infliction for Ministers:**

37-1; see below.

**Removal:**

37-2; see above.

**IV. SUSPENSION: CHURCH MEMBER**

**Basic Definition:**

See either Definite or Indefinite Suspension.

**Causes:**

See either Definite or Indefinite Suspension.

33-2 Refusal to cooperate with session becomes contumacy and brings  
suspension.

**Infliction for Anyone Not a Minister:**

33-1 By session of the member except for appeal.

33-4 During the process, the session may prevent alleged offender from  
taking Lord's Supper.

See Definite or Indefinite Suspension above.

**Infliction for Minister:**

37-1; see below.

**Removal:**

37-2; see above.

CHAPTER 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37 - CHURCH CENSURES (Continued)

V. SUSPENSION: CHURCH OFFICER (NOT A MINISTER)

**Basic Definition:**

See either Definite or Indefinite Suspension.

**Causes:**

See either Definite or Indefinite Suspension.

**Infliction for Anyone Not a Minister:**

30-3 Same as above, plus exclusion from office.

**Infliction for Ministers:**

37-1; see below.

**Removal:**

37-2; see above.

VI. SUSPENSION: MINISTER

**Basic Definition:**

34-2 No scandalous charges may be taken lightly.

**Causes:**

34-4 Refusal to appear after two citations.

34-5 Seriousness of cause and effect of heresy and schism must be taken into account.

34-10 Failure to discharge his functions.

**Infliction for Anyone Not a Minister:**

34-1 By presbytery of minister; if no action is taken, General Assembly may do it.

34-7 Confession of base acts shall cause suspension.

34-9 Presbytery decides if pastoral relations are to be dissolved.

**Infliction for Ministers:**

34-4 The sentence shall be made public.

34-6 Charges only found to be due to infirmities, which may be amended; prudent action to remove scandal shall be taken.

34-10 Pastoral relationship may be dissolved.

**Removal:**

34-8 Only after considerable time.

37-2 Profess his repentance.

Restored to the sacraments.

Read the formal BCO statement.

37-7 Grant privilege to preach on probation.

Take steps to restore him to office.

Prayer and thanksgiving.

CHAPTER 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37 - CHURCH CENSURE (Continued)

VII. EXCOMMUNICATION: CHURCH MEMBER, CHURCH OFFICER (NOT MINISTER)

**Basic Definition:**

Excision of the offender from the communion of the church in order to:  
reclaim the offender;  
deliver the church from the scandal of his offense;  
inspire all with fear by the example of ex-communication.

**Causes:**

30-4 Only because of:  
gross crime;  
gross heresy;  
being incorrigible;  
being contumacious (just plain stubborn, and often being obnoxious in his stubbornness.)

33-3 For the above reasons the court may proceed to inflict excommunication.

**Infliction for Anyone Not a Minister:**

36-6 The moderator of session shall:  
recite the steps taken;  
recite the decision made to excommunicate;  
declare church's authority by reading Matt. 18:15-18 and I Cor. 5:1-5;  
shall explain the design of excommunication: shall read the formal BCO statement;  
pray.

**Infliction for Ministers:**

See below.

**Removal:**

For the former church member:  
37-3 formal BCO questions are asked;  
formal statement of restoration is read; prayer and thanksgiving.  
For the former church officer (not minister):  
Same as above, but he is not reinstated into office.

CHAPTER 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37 - CHURCH CENSURE (Continued)

VIII. EXCOMMUNICATION: MINISTER

**Basic Definition:**

Same as above.

**Causes:**

Same as 30-4 above.

Also: 34-4 Failure to respond to third citation from presbytery.

34-10 Failure to discharge his duties.

**Infliction for Anyone Not a Minister:**

**Infliction for Ministers:**

36-7 Read BCO statement of deposition.

Also, read BCO statement of excommunication.

**Removal:**

BCO does not state any action.

See Graphic: Church Membership After Excommunication is Removed.

IX. DEPOSITION: OFFICER BUT NOT A MINISTER

**Basic Definition:**

30-5 Degradation of an officer from his office.

**Causes:**

**Infliction for Anyone Not a Minister:**

36-7 Read formal BCO statement, using the same degree of solemnity as for an excommunication.

**Infliction for Ministers:**

See below.

**Removal:**

37-5 Cannot be reinstated to office; he must be reelected.

X. DEPOSITION: MINISTER

**Basic Definition:**

30-5; see above.

**Causes:**

34-4 Failure to respond to third citation from presbytery (if Suspension; Excommunication).

34-7 Confession of base sin while trial is pending; suspend from duties or depose.

34-10 Failure to perform his function.

**Infliction for Ministers:**

34-9 Pastoral relationship is dissolved.

36-7 Same as for elder, deacon above.

**Removal:**

34-8 Must have general sentiment of the church, demanding restoration.

37-7 confession similar to that of an excommunicated person's confession (37-3); moderator reads formal BCO statement; prayer and thanksgiving; admit to the sacraments.

## CHAPTER 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37 - CHURCH CENSURE (Continued)

### XI. REMOVING CENSURE:

**Suspension:** 37-2; before court. Congregational involvement is optional.

**Excommunication:** 37-3; restored before court. Congregational involvement is optional.

**Note:** If the congregation is not involved, some communication must be made to them.

**Deposition:** 37-4; 34-8

## CHAPTER 37 - REMOVAL OF CENSURE OF EXCOMMUNICATION

### COMMENTS

The design of excommunication includes:

- reclaiming the offender;
- delivering the church from the scandal of his office;
- inspiring all with fear by the example of excommunication.

Before the censure is removed, all three of these purposes must be considered. Considerable time, especially in the case of the minister, is needed.

For the minister, it is possible that the removal of the censure may not permit him to accept accountability over the spiritual lives of people in the future.

## CHAPTER 37 - CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AFTER CENSURE OF EXCOMMUNICATION IS REMOVED

Remember: 30-4 "...this censure is to operate on the offender as a means of reclaiming him."

### I. For A Former Church Member:

- A. If the offender confesses that he has only now become a Christian:
  - 1. announce his conversion;
  - 2. enroll him in whatever training study all candidates for church membership would be expected to take;
  - 3. receive him by confession of faith, making careful notation by the original minutes about having originally received him.
- B. If the offender is a Christian who has repented, follow BCO 37-3 and pronounce him "restored to the communion of the Church..." Have prayer and thanksgiving.

### II. For a Former Church Officer (Not Minister):

- A. If the offender confesses that he has only now become a Christian, follow A above.
- B. If the offender is a Christian who has repented, follow 37-3 above, but do not reinstate him into office. He may be reelected into office.

### III. For a Former Minister:

- A. No reference is provided for in the BCO.
- B. Therefore:
  - 1. make arrangements for the individual to be received into a church's membership immediately upon the removal of the censure of excommunication;
  - 2. have the individual make his confession before his former church court;
  - 3. his former church court should determine if it wants to record some guidelines to which the individual must make public commitment about:
    - the conduct of his personal life;
    - exposing his experience to any church before he accepts a position of teaching or of accountable oversight of any kind;
  - 4. removal of the censure with public announcement;
  - 5. the local congregation proceed to receive him as per the description above for a former member who admits his sin and has repented.

A presumption has been made throughout this discussion which must be stated clearly at this point. Everything in the process must be bathed in prayer. It is of upmost importance.

CHAPTERS 31, 32, 37 - CASES OF JUDICIAL PROCESS  
STEP BY STEP

Comments

The graphics displaying each of the steps uses the following outline:

Preliminary Considerations

Part I of Process (getting ready)

Part II of Process (step-by-step through a trial)

Part III of Process (removal of censure)

The graphic cross-references the Rules of Discipline and uses the Form of Government as support.

The chronology given cannot display the prayer base so desperately needed during the entire process. Nor can it display the hours of conference needed between the court moderator and the two attorneys in preparation for conducting the trial. (Note: These three often comprise the judicial committee [32-11].) It does not adequately cover the extreme care that the court must take in guarding who can vote, how motions are to be addressed to the court, etc.

Finally, a graphic such as this too easily excites some to seek a trial too soon and too often, so long as all the legal details are properly carried out.

Remember -- a trial may well settle a matter, but it takes the work of the Holy Spirit to bring repentance, restoration and healing. As to the trial itself, no one is ever a "winner."

CHAPTER 31, 32, 37 - CASES OF JUDICIAL PROCESS  
STEP BY STEP  
(Exclusive of Self-Accusation)

STEPS

COMMENTS: CROSS REFERENCES

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. A charge is lodged against an offender-in writing-to the court of original jurisdiction.<br/>32-2,3; 33-1; 34-1</p> <p>2. Often, a committee goes privately to an offender to bring him to a sense of guilt.<br/>31-7</p> <p>3. Elders determine if there is a strong presumption of guilt.<br/>31-2</p> <p>4. The parties in the case will always be the accused and the Presbyterian Church in America.<br/>31-3,4<br/>The prosecutor always represents the church.<br/>31-3</p> | <p>1. 32-2 a charge may be lodged by a person(s) or by the court (for the honor of religion);<br/>31-8 great care must be taken from the beginning as to the credibility of the accuser.<br/>31-9 he must be warned that he may be charged if his accusation fails to show probable cause.</p> <p>2. 31-7 a shepherding function. It is not the "due diligent" demand for explanation as per 31-2.<br/>However, it might result in raising a strong presumption of guilt and thus satisfy 31-2.</p> <p>3. 31-2 as shepherds and guardians, they demand satisfactory explanations.<br/>Note: a) 32-8,9, how to deal with an offense done at a distance from court;<br/>b) 32-20 statute of limitations<br/>c) 33-4 how to deal with time considerations.<br/>Also if the "due diligent" study fails to show probable cause, the court may use 31-7 to institute proceedings against the false accuser. The shepherding admonition should always be used.</p> <p>4. The purpose of proceeding to trial is to bring honor to the Name of Christ and His Church; it is not concerned with vindicating the accuser.<br/>Note safeguards:<br/>a) 31-5 Matt.18:15-16 must have been before prosecution for personal offenses except as per 31-7.<br/>b) 31-5 court may act in behalf of the interest of religion.<br/>c) 31-9 warning as to instituting improper charges.<br/>d) 31-11 the accused may not serve as a judge.</p> |
|--|---|

## STEPS

## COMMENTS: CROSS REFERENCES

### PART I OF PROCESS:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 5. Court shall institute process:<br>a) appoint a prosecutor;<br>b) prosecutor to:<br>1) draw up an indictment and conduct the case;<br>2) serve a copy of the indictment and list of witnesses on offender;<br>3) cite witnesses to appear.<br>32-2 | 5. 31-2 prosecutor to be member of the court; for a church, he may be a member of the congregation;<br>31-4; 32-4,5 description of an indictment;<br>32-6; 33-6; 36-3ff steps to be taken for refusal to obey a citation.<br>35-1ff the evidence in the case must be gathered and prepared so as to comply with these instructions. |
| 6. 31-6 General offense: the case may be prosecuted by anyone or a court appointed prosecutor.   | 6. Care must be taken to distinguish between offense characteristics:<br>Personal or general<br>Private or public<br>29-2,3,4   |

### PART II OR PROCESS:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 7. Without consent of parties, at least 10 days shall elapse between serving the first citation and court action.<br>32-3,7 | 7.  |
| 8. Moderator declares court is to pass consideration on the case and admonishes members.<br>32-12,15                        | 8. 32-1 make reference to Galations 6:1.  |
| 9. The indictment is read and the accused is asked to plead guilty or not.<br>32-3,15                                       | 9. 32-3 a way for the accused to respond in writing when not able to be present.                |
| 10. Before proceeding the court ascertains that the indictments have been served.<br>32-10                                  | 10.   |
| 11. Possible disqualifications to judge.<br>32-17, 35-11  | 11.   |
| 12. The trial proceeds.<br>32-3   | 12. 32-14 when questions arise, parties discuss, then court withdraws, deliberates and decides. |

## STEPS

## COMMENTS: CROSS REFERENCES

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 13. (Probably) a committee is appointed--The Judicial Committee to:<br>a) digest and arrange all papers;<br>b) prescribe the order of the proceedings.<br>32-11 | 13. 32-11 these committee members may judge and vote.   |
| 14. Counsel for the accused may be any member of the congregation or the presbytery.<br>32-19   | 14. 32-19 counsel may not be a professional lawyer nor may he sit as a member of the court  |
| 15. Witnesses for the prosecution shall be examined.<br>32-15   | 15. 32-13 Examination of witnesses<br>a) examined in the presence of the accused;<br>b) may be cross examined by both parties;<br>c) any pertinent question may be asked. |
| 16. Witnesses for the accused shall be examined.<br>32-15   | 16. See above.  |
| 17. The prosecutor shall be heard.<br>32-15   | 17.   |
| 18. The accused shall be heard<br>32-15   | 18.   |
| 19. The prosecutor shall closed the case.<br>32-15  | 19.   |
| 20. The judges may express their opinions about the case in response to a roll call.<br>32-15   | 20.   |
| 21. The judges shall vote.<br>32-15   | 21.   |
| 22. The verdict shall be announced and the judgment entered on the records.<br>32-15  | 22. 36-2 censure should be suited to the nature of the case.<br>(cf.30-1,2,3,4,5; 36-3,4,5,6)   |
| <b>PART III OF PROCESS:</b>   |   |
| 23. Removal of censure when satisfied with the nature of the repentance.<br>37-2 (cf. 37-3ff)   | 23. 37-2 by implication, repentance demands restitution before restoration.   |

**WHEN CENSURE OR ITS REMOVAL MUST BE  
"TOLD TO THE CHURCH"**

**Comments**

Matthew 18:17, I Corinthians 5:4-5, and II Thessalonians 3:14 make clear reference to involving the church in the ministry of discipline.

In one sense, the session stands as the representative of the entire church. As such, for the session to know implies that the church has been told.

However, three matters must be considered in this regard:

1. the "body" has been hurt and should know to pray for the offender and for their own unity and health;
2. one of the purposes of discipline is to act as a restraint for others in the "body" not to fall into the same offense;
3. the body needs to be instructed how to act when they meet the offender under discipline.

I propose the following guidelines:

1. in order to inform the "body," announce on the Lord's Day that, on next Wednesday (or other weekday evening) the members are to meet to be informed of a discipline situation;
2. for cases of suspension, the members should be urged to pray and reach out in love, but not to serve as counselors. That should be done by the session;
3. for excommunication, as per I Corinthians 5:11 ("with such a man do not even eat"), instruct the members to pray for him and, when they meet with the censured offender, have the conversation bear on the claims of the gospel for the lost, not mere fellowship, per se.
4. when the announcement is made, none of the explicit details should be made public.

Note that the only situation that the BCO formally instructs that a public statement be made is that of the minister who has refused three citations.

**WHEN CENSURE OR ITS REMOVAL MUST BE  
"TOLD TO THE CHURCH"**

Note the governing directives:

"Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).

"When any member or officer of the church shall be found guilty of an offense, the court shall proceed with all tenderness and shall deal with its offending brother in the spirit of meekness, the members considering themselves lest they also be tempted" (BCO 36-1).

**I. ADMINISTERING CENSURE:**

**A. Admonition: 36-3**

For private offenses: Censure given by one or a few of the court.  
For public offenses: Censure given by entire court, public announcement is optional.

**B. Definite Suspension: 36-4**

Censure given in presence of court alone or open session of the court; public announcement is optional.

**C. Indefinite Suspension: 36-5**

Censure given in presence of court alone or open session of the court; public announcement is optional.

**D. Excommunication: 36-6**

Censure given in presence of court alone or open session of the court; public announcement is optional. Note: If the censure is not administered publicly, some statement and instruction must be made to the congregation.

**E. Deposition: 36-7**

Censure given in presence of court along or open session of the court; public announcement is optional. Note: If the censure is not administered publicly, some statement and instruction must be made to the congregation.

**F. Deposition Plus Censure: 36-7**

Censure given in presence of court alone or open session of the court; public announcement is optional. Note: If the censure is not administered publicly, some statement and instruction must be made to the congregation.

**G. Church Member Fails to Appear After Two Citations:**

Suspend: 33-2; or Excommunicate: 33-3; public announcement is optional (see above).

**H. Teaching Elder Fails to Appear After Two Citations:**

Suspend: 34-4; public announcement is optional (see above).

**I. Teaching Elder Fails to Appear After Third Citation:**

Deposed, suspended, or excommunicated: 34-3; public announcement must be made.

**II. REMOVING CENSURE**

**SUSPENSION: 37-2**

Before court. Congregation involvement is optional.

**Excommunication: 37-3**

Restored before court. Congregational involvement is optional.

**Note:** If the congregation is not involved, some communication must be made to them.

**Deposition: 37-4, 34-8**

Censure given in present of court alone or open session of the court; public announcement is optional. **Note:** If the censure is not administered publicly, some statement and instruction must be made to the congregation.

**Deposition of Ruling Elder/Deacon: 37-5**

He must be reelected before serving.

**Deposition of Teaching Elder: 37-6; 34-8**

Slowly, great caution and testing of his sincerity is prerequisite along with repentance, before restoration.

## CHAPTER 38 - CASES WITHOUT PROCESS

### Comments

38-1 shows one of the three ways guilt is assigned to an alleged offender (also: common knowledge and by trial).

31-7 should be carefully noted and often followed to bring about (without manipulation) self-accusation.

Trials should be avoided whenever possible.

38-3 - the need to know that officers may leave their office without censure is a facet of the Rules of Discipline that should be used on many occasions.

## CHAPTER 38 - CASES WITHOUT COMMENT

38-1 Self-accusation.

38-3 For minister, ruling elder or deacon. Removal from office (without censure) when God has apparently not blessed his ministry.

## CHAPTER 40 - GENERAL REVIEW AND CONTROL

### Comments

See BCE 11-4 for the relationship of Review and Control to exclusive original jurisdiction and to every judicial act being an act of the whole Church. Together, these three concepts form one part of the fabric of connectionalism in the PCA.

Each of these must be practiced in the context of "mutual love and confidence" (BCO 25-11) in order to complete the fabric of connectionalism.

Chapter 40 simply fleshes out this facet of connectionalism.

## CHAPTER 40 - GENERAL REVIEW AND CONTROL

Instructions for every court above the session to review the records of the court next below.

40-2 Four areas to evaluate:

- (1) correct recording;
- (2) in accordance with the Constitution;
- (3) do they properly promote the welfare of the Church;
- (4) have actions of higher courts been obeyed.

40-3 Corrections can be required for serious irregularities.

40-4,5 The higher court should note and follow up neglect or irregularity, regardless of how it is discovered.

**CHAPTERS 41, 42, 43, 45**  
**REFERENCES, APPEALS, COMPLAINS, DISSENTS AND PROTESTS**

**Comments**

Much confusion will be avoided by distinguishing between appeals and complaints.

CHAPTERS 41, 42, 43, 45

REFERENCES, APPEALS, COMPLAINTS, DISSENTS AND PROTESTS

Chapter 41 - References: A formal request for advice from a lower court to a higher court.

Chapter 42: The offender against whom a court decision has been given may *appeal* to the higher court. If the appeal is accepted by the higher court, that court shall hear the case.

Chapter 43: A communing member may *complain* to the higher court against any action of his court except in a judicial case in which an appeal is taken.

Chapter 45: Ways for those who had a right to vote to record their objection to a decision of his court.

## REMOVING NAMES FROM THE CHURCH ROLL IN THE PCA

### Comments

The various circumstances under which names are removed from the roll are placed under topical headings.

The material is designed to allow the session to locate the details of the procedure to be followed by locating the logical topical heading.

A special category of Routine Circumstances has been added because it occurs so often. It is: **Member stops coming but is not hostile and has not joined another church.** Extensive research has been done in this area. It has been discussed in many General Assemblies. Each action amounted to refusing to take a specific position. Therefore, it is reasonable to advise that sessions may choose to make an administrative decision as per the proposal. A copy of the research is available upon request.

## REMOVING NAMES FROM THE CHURCH ROLL IN THE PCA

### GOVERNING BCO PRINCIPLES:

46-3 The church dismissing a member retains accountability till he joins another church.

46-7 A certificate of dismissal (normally) is valid for only one year.

### GOVERNING PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES:

Always read the wording of the BCO itself to be sure the exact procedure is followed.

also

Always act in love and compassion, taking as much time as seems necessary before finalizing the removal of a name from the rolls.

#### I. AUTOMATIC REMOVAL:

Death of a member.

Ordination of a member to the office of Teaching Elder.

#### II. ROUTINE CIRCUMSTANCES:

##### Member has moved:

too far from church:

46-1 (first paragraph)

Have the member ask for a certificate of dismissal.

from a church unstructured to give a certificate of dismissal:

46-1 (second paragraph) upon notification by church receiving the individual.

close to a sister church:

46-2

Session is to notify:

member to transfer;

other session of his residence;

drop name from roll if he doesn't transfer within a year without special permission.

residence unknown for a year:

46-2

Drop name from roll.

##### Member joins another evangelical church without notification:

38-4

Erase name from roll.

## REMOVING NAMES FROM THE CHURCH ROLL IN THE PCA (Continued)

### Member stops coming but is not hostile and has not joined another church:

As of 1986 - nothing in BCO.

Session: Probably consider this same as member moving close to a sister church but not joining and therefore drop name from roll.

### III. HOSTILE CIRCUMSTANCES:

#### Member willfully neglects church for one year:

(Possible examples and instructions:

- a. because he is mad at someone in the church - session should tell him to follow Matthew 5:23.
- b. because he feels he has been wronged by someone in the church - session should tell him to follow Matthew 18:15-18.
- c. because he doesn't feel the church can meet his needs.)

#### Member has no intention of fulfilling his church vows:

(Possible examples:

- a. he makes it known he is no longer in submission to the elders [57-5, (3), 5];
- b. he makes it known he no longer will support the worship and work of the church [57-5, (3), 4].)

46-5 Session shall:  
determine 27-5 has been used where applicable;  
as an act of discipline remove name from roll;  
record as such.

### IV. DISCIPLINARY CIRCUMSTANCES:

#### Member, under discipline, joins another evangelical church without notification:

38-4 Session shall:  
notify church he has joined;  
erase his name.

#### Officer, under discipline, joins an heretical church without notification:

38-4 Session shall:  
strike his name from roll;  
withdraw authority from this church to use his office.

#### Member has been censured by excommunication:

30-4 Session shall:  
strike his name from roll;  
indicate in its records the censure.

## APPENDIX

### Comments

The various Appendices are for general background in nature. They should be useful for training and referral purposes.

They are:

**The Ministry of Shepherding - For the Elder**

**Applying Accountability**

**PCA's Ministerial Data Form**

**PCA's Uniform Curriculum**

## APPENDIX A

### APPLYING ACCOUNTABILITY

This material is a development of the discussion in *THE CHALLENGE OF THE ELDERSHIP* (D. J. MacNair, Great Commission Publications, p.30ff) with direct reference to Hebrews 13:17.

Accountability must be measured against a standard. The Bible is that standard. More specifically, for the elder, his ordination vows are his statement about the Bible and his relationship to it. Therefore, his ordination vows are a workable measuring tool of his accountability.

In the PCA, this is BCO 21-5 for ministers. The questions for the ordination of elders are in BCO 24-6. Three of the questions for the ordination of ministers will serve to illustrate the depth of commitment needed to be truly accountable to God. The questions for the ruling elder are worded differently; however, the implications are the same. Therefore, the questions for the minister will suffice for this discussion.

- (6) Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

#### "Truths of the Gospel"

This at least includes:

presenting Jesus as THE Truth (John 14:6).

presenting the Bible as the inerrant Word of God and the final authority of faith and life.

presenting the doctrines of the Bible in clear, simple and definite ways.

upholding the church as basic to all of Christianity, as the "...pillar and foundation of the truth" (I Tim.3:15).

developing Christians and Christianity to be *salt* in the sin-cursed world.

#### PURITY

This at least includes:

the Bible and doctrine are taught so as to be in conformity to the Confession of Faith.

worship is vital and in conformity to the regulative principle (WCT 21:1).

holiness in the life of the individual and the corporate body is the essence of the professing church (I Pet.1:14-16).

the concept of oversight/submission as the way best to enjoy the bounty of the Lord is taught and practiced; this includes the practice of church discipline as an act of love for and from God.

### PEACE

This at least includes:

personal peace for the members as they learn to appropriate the promises of God's Word (Rom.5:1). This includes leading the flock into the experience of submission to the sovereign will of God, many times taught most powerfully by example.

developing proper relationships:

foster deep fellowship;

teach the proper use of Matthew 18:15-18;

know the characteristics of the members and work with those who tend to be inflammatory;

use members in decision-making roles, if possible;

teach/disciple leadership;

do long-range planning;

communicate often and well with the congregation;

handle the finances with care and discernment.

**REMEMBER: MUCH OF THE WORK CAN BE DELEGATED ALONG WITH RESPONSIBILITY; BUT NO ACCOUNTABILITY MAY BE DELEGATED.**

(7) "Do you engage to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties... whether personal or relational, private or public; and to endeavor... to adorn the profession of the Gospel... with exemplary piety...?"

This at least includes:

Christ-like life;

Christ-like family;

circumspection as to the use of the Sabbath;

Christ-like use of your finances.

- (8) "Are you now willing to take charge of this church... promise to discharge to it the duties of pastor?"

This at least includes:

committing time and energy to the work;

accepting the task of decision-making;

accepting the task of planning.

(D. J. MacNair,  
March, 1985)

## APPENDIX B

### THE MINISTRY OF SHEPHERDING - FOR THE ELDER

"What is shepherding? The answer could take pages, even books. In few words it can be described as caring for God's people after the manner of Jesus. John 10:1-18 reminds us that Jesus Himself is the Good Shepherd" (THE LIVING CHURCH, p.65).

One way to arrive at a description of shepherding is to determine the pattern described for us by Christ.

The key of that pattern is RELATIONSHIP: The RELATIONSHIP between the sheep and the shepherd.

#### I. The Primary Characteristics of the Relationship are That the Sheep Depend Upon and Trust the Shepherd.

A. In a circumstance needing a decision, the shepherd is there to lead.

- :1. there is a distinct danger present of false leadership;
- :2. the good shepherd has valid credentials:
  - he enters by the gate;
  - the watchman opens the gate for him;
- :2-3. the shepherd enters the gate of his own volition;
  - he calls the sheep out (this is a distinct act of volition);
  - he knows them well enough to use personal names;
  - he leads them out of the present situation;
  - after that, he goes ahead of them.

B. the sheep have learned to trust the calling and leading of the shepherd.

- :3. the sheep are prepared to listen for his voice;
- :4. the sheep follow because they know his voice well enough to distinguish his voice from others;
- :5. the sheep are afraid of other voices (leaders).

#### II. THE PURPOSE OF THE RELATIONSHIP IS TO RELATE THE SHEEP TO THE SHEPHERD.

A. The undershepherd must make the sheep aware of the Good Shepherd as the true Saviour and Lord.

:7-9. only Jesus is the gate.

*Note:* In today's context, this demands presenting Christ as a person in the context of proper doctrine, not presenting proper doctrine in which the person of Christ is involved.

- B. The undershepherd must have the same motivation as the Good Shepherd has.
- :10. he must be motivated by Christ's concern for the sheep, nothing less: to keep the sheep from destruction; to provide security and life to the full for the sheep.
  - :17. he must be motivated by Christ's love for our heavenly Father; he must be seeking the joy of obedience that characterized Jesus (Heb.12:2).
  - :11-13,14. he must be motivated to have the good heart for the sheep that the Good Shepherd had;
    - :11-13. the good shepherd loved the sheep for their sake, nothing less.
    - :11,14,17. the good shepherd laid down his life for his sheep.

### III. THE BENEFITS OF THE RELATIONSHIP ARE HOPE AND FAITH FOR THE SHEEP.

- A. :5,12-13. Safety
- B. :9-10. Life
- C. :16. Unity (cf. John 17).

(D. J. MacNair,  
March, 1985)

APPENDIX C

*Presbyterian  
Church  
in  
America*

MINISTERIAL DATA FORM

PART I — BASIC DATA

(Please type or print)

Office of the Stated Clerk  
P. O. Box 1428  
Decatur, Georgia 30031

1. FULL NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE COMPLETED \_\_\_\_\_

2. HOME ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

3. ORDINATION: Date \_\_\_\_\_ By \_\_\_\_\_  
(Presbytery or Church)

4. CURRENT MEMBERSHIP \_\_\_\_\_

5. EDUCATION: Name of Each Institution Attended Degree Yr. Grad.

(a) College:

(b) Seminary:

(c) Graduate Training:

(d) Other Professional School:

(e) Special Training:

6. EXPERIENCE: (Please list in order since Ordination) Month & Year

Church or Field	City & State	Presbytery	Begun	Terminated
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Other Experience — Professional, Business or other — that contributes to your use — in the Ministry?

7. CURRENT POSITION \_\_\_\_\_

8. Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

9. MARITAL STATUS

(a) Single \_\_\_\_\_; Married \_\_\_\_\_; Remarried \_\_\_\_\_; Widowed \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Wife's Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Marriage \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

PLEASE NOTE: It would be appreciated if you would treat this Ministerial Data Form in a confidential manner. We hope you will assist us in avoiding embarrassment to the minister who submitted this Form and thereby shows his desire to cooperate in the program of our Church.

(c) HAVE YOU EVER BEEN DIVORCED? (If so, please state the circumstances below, briefly, including the attitude of your Presbytery at this time.)

(d) Children:

Names	Ages	Names	Ages
_____			
_____			
_____			

(e) Other Dependents:

\_\_\_\_\_

10. HEALTH STATEMENT:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Your Health _____				
Wife's Health _____				
Children's Health _____				

State any limiting factors:

11. Please be specific in answering the following:

(a) IF YOU ARE NOT NOW A MEMBER OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, DO YOU INTEND TO SUPPORT AND BE ACTIVE IN THE DENOMINATION?

(b) ARE YOU IN AGREEMENT WITH THE SYSTEM OF DOCTRINE, DISCIPLINE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If "No", please explain briefly.

12. (a) PRESENT PASTORATE: \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Members: \_\_\_\_\_

(b) REMUNERATION:

Present yearly cash salary \$ \_\_\_\_\_; Manse provided \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Annuity Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_, Social Security \$ \_\_\_\_\_, Hospital Insurance \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other Allowances — Books \$ \_\_\_\_\_, Car \$ \_\_\_\_\_, Utilities \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Other — (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_, Vacation \_\_\_\_\_ weeks

Do these meet your needs? \_\_\_\_\_

(c) DO YOU OPERATE AN AUTOMOBILE IN YOUR WORK? \_\_\_\_\_ Personal \_\_\_\_\_ or Church Owned? \_\_\_\_\_

13. REFERENCES: List 5 to 6 persons who would be in a position to give an objective evaluation of your training and experience. Include at least three ministers and two laymen (who are not members of your present church).

NAME	ADDRESS (Street, City, State, Zip)	PHONE (With Area Code)
------	------------------------------------	------------------------

**PART II — Summary of Preferences**

(Check all which you are willing to consider.)

<b>TYPE OF CHURCH</b>		<b>TYPE OF POSITION</b>	
Church with Multiple Staff	_____	Pastor (Solo)	_____
Church with Solo Pastor	_____	Senior Pastor	_____
Multiple Churches	_____	Associate Pastor	_____
New Church Development	_____	Assistant Pastor	_____
Non-Presbyterian Church	_____	Interim or Supply	_____
Tent Making	_____	Lay Professional	_____
Overseas Ministry	_____	(e.g., Educator, Musician)	_____
Other	_____	Pastoral Counselor	_____
(Specify) _____	_____	Other Position	_____
No Preference	_____	(Specify) _____	_____
		No preference	_____
<b>SIZE CHURCH</b>		<b>TYPE OF COMMUNITY</b>	
Under 100 members	_____	Inner city	_____
101 - 250 members	_____	Urban (Downtown)	_____
251 - 500 members	_____	Urban (Residential)	_____
501 - 800 members	_____	Suburban	_____
801 - 1,000 members	_____	Small Town	_____
1,001 - 1,600 members	_____	Rural	_____
Over 1,600 members	_____	College	_____
No preference	_____	Retirement	_____
		Resort/Recreational	_____
<b>OTHER MINISTRIES</b>		Agricultural	_____
Presbytery	_____	No preference	_____
General Assembly Agency	_____		
Church Planting	_____	<b>GEOGRAPHICAL AREA</b>	
Foreign Missions	_____	Continental USA	_____
Christian Education	_____	Eastern Canada	_____
Elementary/Secondary School	_____	Western Canada	_____
College	_____	California	_____
Seminary	_____	Pacific Northwest	_____
Homes/Hospitals	_____	Southwest	_____
Prison	_____	Rocky Mountain States	_____
Military	_____	Plain States	_____
Radio Ministry	_____	Texas/Oklahoma	_____
TV Ministry	_____	Upper Mid West	_____
Community Agency	_____	Mid South	_____
Government Agency	_____	Southern States	_____
Other Institutions	_____	Southeast	_____
(Specify) _____	_____	Florida	_____
No preference	_____	Mid Atlantic	_____
		Midwest	_____
In what POSITION in OTHER MINISTRIES		Northeast	_____
do you have a serious interest?		New York	_____
Chaplain	_____	Great Lakes	_____
Executive Director	_____	Other	_____
Other Executive Staff	_____	(Specify) _____	_____
Faculty, Specialist	_____	No preference	_____
Counselor	_____		
Other Positions	_____		

**PART III — PASTORAL ACTIVITIES**

A. On a scale of 1 to 7, evaluate your expertise and weakness in your ministry. (Circle 7 for the areas of greatest strength and circle 1 for the area of least ability.)

	Very Strong	Strong	Slightly Strong	Average	Slightly Weak	Weak	Very Weak
Preaching	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Teaching	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Evangelism	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Discipleship	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Worship Leadership	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Church Administration	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Team Work	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Counseling	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Leadership Training	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Christian Education	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Pastoral Visitation	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Stewardship Ministry	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Diaconal Ministry	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Youth Work	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
College & Career Ministry	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Ministry to Senior Citizens	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Singles Ministry	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Recreational Activities	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Presbytery/General Assembly Involvement	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Community Service	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Other _____	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

## PART III — PASTORAL ACTIVITIES

(Continued)

B. I WOULD BE MORE COMFORTABLE IN A CONGREGATION THAT PLACES THE PRIORITIES ON MY MINISTRY THE FOLLOWING WAY: [Circle 4 for a congregation which would place highest priority on the activity; Circle 0 for a congregation which would place the lowest priority on the activity. Circle 2 or 3 for intermediate priorities. Choose not less than four (4) or more than six (6) of the activities which you place highest priority.]

	Low Priority			High Priority	
	0	1	2	3	4
1. WORSHIP LEADERSHIP (Pastor and Session work to develop a rich worship life, educating the congregation for meaningful participation.)	0	1	2	3	4
2. PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD (The word of God is preached with urgency and conviction, bringing it to bear on the changing needs of individuals, the community, and the world. High priority of pastor's time placed on sermon preparation.)	0	1	2	3	4
3. SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF MEMBERS (Pastor shares members/struggles regarding the Christian faith, with opportunity provided for individuals and groups to reflect on beliefs, concerns, doubts regarding Christian understanding of the spiritual dimensions of life.)	0	1	2	3	4
4. CONGREGATIONAL VISITATION (Church Officers and pastor develop and carry out a systematic plan for visitation of the entire congregation with special attention to prospective members and those with special needs.)	0	1	2	3	4
5. HOSPITAL OR EMERGENCY VISITATION (Those in hospitals or emergency situations are regularly visited; network developed to keep pastor and others informed of crisis situations; needs of ill or bereaved are met.)	0	1	2	3	4
6. CONGREGATIONAL FELLOWSHIP (Emphasis placed in developing fellowship, helping members to know one another; groups encouraged which give members the opportunity to love and support one another.)	0	1	2	3	4
7. COUNSELING SERVICES (A counseling program initiated for assisting those in and outside the Church; appropriate referrals made when needed.)	0	1	2	3	4
8. EVANGELISM (Pastor and congregation share faith in Christ as personal Savior in total lifestyle; seek to lead others within and outside the Church to accept Jesus Christ; congregation is informed, trained, helped to establish effective evangelism programs for the church.)	0	1	2	3	4
9. DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING	0	1	2	3	4
10. ENCOURAGING THE MINISTRY OF THE LAITY (Creative ideas and directions developed together with the Session; many persons with appropriate skills stimulated to become involved in services.)	0	1	2	3	4

11. MISSION BEYOND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY (Awareness of the Church's worldwide mission and opportunities for corporate and individual involvement; specific projects identified; persons challenged to support, study and/or visit mission programs on six continents.)	0	1	2	3	4
12. DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT OF EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING PROGRAM (Session and pastor identify the educational needs of persons of all ages and backgrounds, developing programs to meet needs; church education supported; educational goals are congruent with the total mission of the Church.)	0	1	2	3	4
13. TEACHING RESPONSIBILITY (Pastor accepts an active teaching role, interpreting and teaching the Scriptures, theological concepts, history of the Church and current events; provides instruction for Church Officers, educational leaders, confirmands and new members.)	0	1	2	3	4
14. INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL COMMUNITY PROBLEMS AND ACTIVITIES (Concern for identifying social problems in the community; work done with groups seeking solutions. Time and skills committed to community groups. Information and encouragement provided which enable members to become informed and involved.)	0	1	2	3	4
15. ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH ACTIVITIES (Involvement with other congregations and the denominations in the community in presenting a united Christian witness in the community.)	0	1	2	3	4
16. CONGREGATIONAL COMMUNICATION (Two-way communication encouraged, information gathered and shared that will assist problem solving and decision making; varying opinions elicited and all encouraged to listen to opposing points of view.)	0	1	2	3	4
17. ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP (Pastor accepts appropriate administrative responsibilities, in climate of delegated tasks and shared leadership; volunteers and professional staff encouraged to use their ideas and skills. Work done on developing accountability.)	0	1	2	3	4
18. STEWARDSHIP AND COMMITMENT PROGRAMS (Session and pastor develop a planned stewardship education program to communicate the financial needs of the local church and mission beyond the local church; congregation challenged to commitment to Church's work.)	0	1	2	3	4
19. EVALUATION OF PROGRAM AND STAFF (Systematic procedures used to evaluate programs and staff performance in accord with goals and objectives. Others trained to use these skills. Regular assessment and evaluation.)	0	1	2	3	4
20. CONGREGATIONAL AND DENOMINATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY (Value placed on balance between local church and Assembly responsibilities. Congregation and Session know and are involved in the work of the denomination.)	0	1	2	3	4
21. DIACONAL MINISTRIES (Ministering to the needs of those inside and outside of the Church.)	0	1	2	3	4

**PART IV — PERSONAL VIEWS AND PRACTICES**

Please state briefly, (one or two sentences) your personal views and practices using the following outline. Attach additional paper if necessary.

**A. Theological Conviction — Brief Statement**

View of Scripture

World and Life View

Trinity

Person and Work of Christ

Justification

Sanctification (View of Law)

Covenant Theology

Covenant Baptism

Covenant of Works and Grace

Dispensationalism

Five Points of Calvinism

Gifts of the Spirit

Evangelism

Church Discipline

Personal Views on Smoking

Use of Alcohol

B. Personal Practices

Indicate approximately how much time (per day or per week) you spend on each of the following:

1. Devotional Life
2. Place of Family
3. Sermon Preparation
4. Hobbies and Recreation
5. Pastoral Work
6. Community Activities
7. Church Administration
8. Other studies

On another sheet of paper give your weekly schedule.

C. Personal Lifestyle

Task Oriented

People Oriented

Both

D. Miscellaneous

Recent continuing education

Awards

Published writing

Special evangelism training

Key experience in ministry

Future goals

**APPENDIX D**  
**UNIFORM CURRICULUM**  
**of the**  
**Presbyterian Church in America**

**SCRIPTURE**

**I. Bible Content**

**A. English Bible**

1. Required block courses covering the entire Bible
2. Including areas such as archaeology, history, geography, emphasizing that which is necessary to support the grammatico-historical method of interpretation
3. Required reading of the Bible
4. Scripture memory integrated into course content

**B. Required comprehensive content examination**

**GOAL:** Knowledge and ability to communicate Bible content as outlined above.

**II. Languages**

**A. Hebrew**

1. Grammatical forms
2. Syntactical principles
3. Exegesis

**B. Greek**

1. Grammatical forms
2. Syntactical principles
3. Exegesis

**GOAL:** Ability to use the tools and work directly with the passages in the original language in preparation of sermons and Bible lessons.

III. Methods and Interpretation (should follow language and much of Bible content)

- A. Biblical Theology
- B. Principles of Interpretation
- C. Biblical Criticism (Higher and Textual)
- D. Advanced Principles of Exegesis
  - 1. Old Testament
  - 2. New Testament

GOAL: A comprehensive of principles and problems involved in these disciplines as supplementary to materials already taught in relation to English Bible content.

IV. Supervised Practical Opportunities

- A. Advanced Exegetical (papers of assigned Old Testament and New Testament passages)
- B. Teach papers during practical year
- C. Required block reading and translation of Hebrew and Greek during fourth year
- D. Teach English Bible courses

GOAL: A practical use of all training skills and gifts in working with God's people.

DOCTRINE

I. Church History

- A. Survey of Church History (including a history of Christian thought)
- B. American Church History
- C. History of the Reformation
- D. Presbyterian Church History

GOAL: The study of church history should be conceptual (an understanding of the flow of history, the historical development of theology and the influence upon it of secular history and philosophy, and the progress of ecclesiastical development), and with consideration of the relation of the cultural context to the history of the church.

## II. Apologetics

- A. Introduction to Apologetic Methodology and Practice (to include a survey of various schools of thought in Reformed apologetics)
- B. Survey of Secular Thought (the history of humanistic thought, its contemporary manifestation in various world views; philosophy, literature, drama, popular arts, scientific methodology, the cults, pagan religions, etc.)
- C. Survey of Contemporary Theology (liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, etc.)

GOAL: To provide from a Reformed perspective a sound basis for positive presentation of the Christian faith as well as equipping the minister to deal with the anti-Christian systems of thought in their various contemporary manifestations.

## III. Theology and Ethics

- A. Systematic Theology: A broad understanding of the whole system of theology as derived from Scripture (Prolegomena, Theology, Anthropology, Christology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology), including a specific study of the doctrinal position of the PCA as set forth in the Westminster Standards.
- B. Ethics: An exegetical study of Biblical Ethics (the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.)

GOAL: 1) To obtain a knowledge of, commitment to, and proficiency in communicating the Reformed Faith (including such distinctives as the inerrancy of Scripture, the Sovereignty of God, Covenant Theology, The Five Points of Calvinism, etc.)  
2) A commitment to a biblical life style in both personal and social ethics.

## IV. Polity

- A. Biblical Church Government  
(An exegetical study of the biblical principles of church government)
- B. PCA Church Order and Parliamentary Procedure

GOAL: An understanding of the biblical teaching on the nature and structure of the church, a working knowledge of the PCA Book of Church Order, and Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.

## PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

### I. The Pastor's Personal Life

#### A. His Spiritual Life

##### 1. Growth

2. Call to Ministry

B. Pastor's Communication

1. With the Family
2. With the Church
3. With the Community

GOAL: The goal of this area of training is to develop a comprehensive understanding and application of the regulative principle of public worship, and the basis of the place and practice of preaching within the biblical framework of public worship, as well as to equip the pastor or candidate to lead the congregation in public worship.

III. Evangelism

- A. Theology of Reformed Evangelism
- B. Role of the Pastor in Evangelism

GOAL: An introduction to evangelism in light of the doctrinal distinctives of the Reformed Faith, developing methods, practical experience and training of others in this area.

IV. Missiology

- A. Reformed Theology of Missions at Home and Abroad
- B. Strategy of Missions at Home and Abroad

GOAL: This area should analyze and understand the needs of missions at home and abroad through consideration of cross-cultural communication, relationships with national governments, an anthropological understanding of decision-making patterns, and the indigenization of Christianity, the application of modern linguistic science, and saturation evangelism. The effective use of missionary radio, TV, films, correspondence courses, theological education by extension programs, gospel recordings, Bible translation, and Christian literature production and distribution will also be surveyed.

V. Pastoral Care

- A. Theology of Pastoral Care
- B. Applied Counseling (Gerontology, Pre-Marital, Family, Crisis, Etc.)

GOAL: A study in the understanding and development of the biblical principles of shepherding plus practical experience (e.g., case studies, observing actual counseling sessions, and practical experience in counseling).

## PERSONAL THEOLOGY

### VI. Christian Education

- A. Theology of Christian Education
- B. History of Christian Education
- C. Practice of Christian Education

GOAL: The goal of this area is to understand the biblical basis of Christian Education and its historic development, leading to a practical development of a Christian Education curriculum in the home and in the church, the training of Bible teachers for church related ministries, and the developing of spiritual gifts within the church.

### VII. Pastoral Administration

- A. Theology of Administration
- B. Mechanics of Administration

GOAL: The goal of this area is to develop an understanding of the biblical principles of administration and leadership, understanding the goals, strategy, and oversight (e.g. of time, body life (Eph.4:11-16), correspondence and delegating responsibility.)



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