



June 14, 2010

Dear Friend,

At the General Assembly meeting in Minneapolis (July 2 - 10), commissioners from our 173 presbyteries will make decisions of serious import to the Church -- decisions which will impact the future of our denomination as well as the Church's witness to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We encourage you to be in prayer for the General Assembly, for commissioners, for those who come to bring witness to the truth, and for those who come to serve as resources to commissioners. To enable your prayers, and the prayers of your congregation, we've prepared a summary list of critical matters before the assembly, by committee.

The Big Issues: For each of these issue areas, we are providing a link to an advisory paper offered by the Presbyterian Renewal Network.

Committee 6: Church Orders and Ministry

[Ordination standards](#) will be the primary business of this committee. Pray that the outcome upholds the standard of "fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman or chastity in singleness."

Committee 7: Form of Government

Replacing or maintaining our current [Form of Government](#) in the Book of Order is the sole item before this committee. We are recommending against this sweeping and wholesale replacement of our form of government, too mammoth for anyone to clearly understand the implications of. Pray for the GA's wisdom in recommending specific changes to the Book of Order.

Committee 8: Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

The core of Christian faith will be considered in this committee as commissioners consider whether [Christianity and Islam](#) are different avenues to the same God. Pray for affirmation of Jesus' words: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except by me."

Committee 12: Civil Union and Marriage Issues

This committee will consider overtures to change the definition of [Christian marriage](#) from "a man and a woman" to "two people" or "a couple." They also will have before them a report from a special committee that gives them opportunity to uphold a biblical and confessional understanding of marriage. Pray that the assembly adopts a strong reaffirmation of marriage and encourages pastoral ministry to strengthen marriage.

Committee 14: Middle East Peacemaking Issues

Will the PC(USA) continue to roil the church with a one-sided advocacy on the trouble in the [Middle East](#), or bring its message into reasonable balance? Pray that commissioners turn from a position of political advocacy to more pastoral concern for the souls of all in the Middle East struggle.

Committee 16: Theological Issues and Institutions

The addition of the [Belhar Confession](#) and the approval of continuing to pursue a rewrite of the [Heidelberg Catechism](#) in our Book of Confessions are before this committee. According to PC(USA) Research Services, an overwhelming majority of Presbyterians are unfamiliar with the Belhar. There is no congregational interest in it and it has serious problems in content. Pray that this assembly will leave the [Book of Confessions](#) in its current state, and that Presbyterians will make good use of it for the edification of our congregations.

Committee 18: Board of Pensions, Foundation, and Presbyterian Publishing

The committee will consider asking all churches to support the provision of [medical benefits to same-sex spouses](#) of denominational employees, a serious breach of the Church's conscience on the morality of same-sex relationships. Pray that the GA will decline to require the use of our contributions in this way, and instead urge pastoral ministry and help for those in same-sex relationships.

Committees 11, 12, 18 and 19: Places of opportunity to uphold the value of human life

Pray that the GA take opportunities in these committees to uphold the value of [human life](#), including the scriptural teaching that God's love and calling extends to persons [even before they are born](#).

Committee 3: GA Procedures

This committee has a number of items before it that would change the way in which General Assemblies operate in the future. Some may be helpful; others may result in removing or diminishing the rights of participants. Pray for the protection of [the voice of our sessions and presbyteries](#) in the work of the General Assembly.

Committee 4: Middle Governing Bodies

The committee will consider options for reconfiguring [middle governing bodies](#), including approving a commission. Pray for a measured and accountable approach to any plan for change.

Visit the [Coalition website](#) for resources and information. On our [GA 2010 page](#), you'll find links related to the General Assembly: issues resources, moderator candidate information, ways you can make a difference, and much more! If you plan to be in Minneapolis during the GA, please [let me know](#). Plan to come and give testimony before a committee, or to help in other ways. If you can't be at the GA in person, we understand that you will be able to watch the assembly develop through internet streaming, via a link from [this page](#).

Yours in Christ,

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