

# Ordination Standards

**Items:** 06-02, 06-03, 06-04, 06-05, 06-06, 06-07, 06-08, 06-09, 06-10, 06-11, 06-12, 06-13, 06-14, 06-15, 06-16, 06-17, 06-18., plus concurrences.

**GA Committee Assignment:** 06 Church Orders and Ministry

## **Summary of business and what it wants the Assembly to do:**

- Delete and/or change G-6.0106b in a way that removes “fidelity-chastity” standard from the BoO (19 overtures and concurrences; some presbyteries have done overtures both to strike G-6.0106b and to strike and replace G-6.0106b; at least one presbytery passed two overtures suggesting two slightly different wordings for G-6.0106b. So the way PC-Biz shows these is not consistent.
- Retain G-6.0106b and restore the Authoritative Interpretations that were made “of no further force or effect” by the 218<sup>th</sup> GA: 06-04 from San Diego plus 12 concurrences.
- Improve the language of G-6.0106b to retain “fidelity-chastity”: 06-11 Beaver-Butler
- Improve and update the language of Authoritative Interpretation previously made “of no further force and effect” so that Authoritative Interpretation remains in place to complement G-6.0106b: 06-05 Shenandoah.
- Defer action on changing G-6.0106b at least for this GA – Two overtures so far: 06-02 and 06-03.

## **Background**

Where to begin? At the last GA several actions were taken intended to modify the effect of G-6.0106b in the PC(USA): first, the Authoritative Interpretations of 1978 through 1996, including those made in the church courts regarding homosexual ordination rights, were made “of no further force or effect.” Second, an amendment to remove “fidelity-chastity” from G-6.0106b was sent to presbyteries where it lost again, this time by the narrowest margin since its adoption. Third, a modification (John Knox Overture) to the previous Authoritative Interpretation of G-6.0108 (PUP-2006) was adopted to patch the previous AI so that presbyteries would now certainly have the right to ordain those who refused to comply with express requirements of the constitution like G-6.0106b. Whether the GA PJC will permit that even under the newest AI remains in the process of being tested and may depend on who are members of the GA PJC at the time when the cases actually get to their court.

Of course the history of this struggle over ordination standards is voluminous. Perhaps it is worth noting that the biblical ordination standards now codified in the BoO did not originate with the “definitive guidance” of 1978. Those who wrote that policy had the conviction that they were saying nothing new, but that the church’s “calling and charter in Scripture” had always called on those who were engaging in activity Scripture calls sin to renounce their sin and repent of it in order to meet the requirements for leadership in the Church including the PC(USA). Refusal to repent of sinful sexual practice is not different from refusing the repent of sexism or racism, sins which also currently preclude ordination in the PC(USA).

**An Advisory on Business to the 219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2010)**

*From the Joint Renewal GA Team*

**Pertinent Resources:**

See the Coalition Website: <http://www.presbycoalition.org/ordstandards> ; *Historic Principles, Conscience and Church Government* <http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/historic-principles.pdf> .

**Action by GA that would help the church:**

- Restore reasonable authoritative interpretation that clarifies and supports the historic sexual standards of the whole church and the PC(USA);
- Suggest to the PC(USA) that the uninterrupted conflict over sexuality standards is costly and counterproductive, perhaps by calling attention again to our “*Historic Principles, Conscience and Church Government*” paper and policy.
- Disapprove overtures to amend or delete G-6.0106b.