



NOTE: It is extremely unusual for us to send out THREE e-letters in a single week, but we decided that this week's topics were simply too time-sensitive to postpone. Blessed Advent and Christmas to you all!

It's Time for Action in Your Presbytery!

December 4, 2009

Dear Sarah,

Even before the close of 2009, it's not difficult to anticipate the critical business coming to the General Assembly in 2010. I'm writing to urge you to play a part in the outcomes of that meeting. Your intervention could change the course of events for the good! But you will need to act quickly.

The General Assembly will meet in July. That may seem to be a long way off. But in fact, there is only a little time for congregations to take important actions. Please consider two areas especially, even before the end of this year:

- 1. Elect biblically faithful commissioners.** If your presbytery has not yet elected commissioners, get involved in the process. Recommend yourself or someone you know who shares your biblical orthodoxy to serve as commissioner. See that your session sends a full complement of representatives to the presbytery meeting at which commissioners are elected.

If your presbytery has already elected commissioners, please let me know who they are and give me contact information.

- 2. Send up an overture to General Assembly.** This year there is business coming to GA to remove the "fidelity and chastity" requirement for ordination in G-6.0106b. There will be an effort to change our denomination's definition of marriage from "a man and a woman" to "two persons." There will be another effort to adopt a new Form of Government that would provide for a radical inclusivity, in which "all persons or groups" -- regardless of what they believe or how they behave -- are guaranteed full participation and representation in church ...*governance*....

It's not hard to put business before the General Assembly. You can influence the assembly by posing alternatives and opportunities for action that will be pleasing to God and obedient to His Word.

Overtures that affect the constitution -- the Book of Order or the Book of Confessions -- need to be in the Office of the General Assembly by March 5, 2010. That means that first your session and then your presbytery need to approve an overture by March 5. Since some presbyteries require two meetings for such matters, there is no time to lose! (Overtures that do not affect the constitution have later deadlines, which we have listed [here](#).)

The Coalition website has overture drafts for a number of the most [significant issues](#) that your session can consider sending to GA. We also have posted overtures already adopted by presbyteries. Your

session can ask your presbytery to concur with one or more of those overtures, provide your own rationale, and send an overture advocate with special opportunities to argue a biblical position before the committee at G.A.

If you are new to the overture process, it can seem daunting. I would be happy to talk with you about topics, wording, and process, as well as to recommend resources. Every good and strategic idea presented to G.A. has begun in a church session and presbytery much like yours!

These two avenues -- electing faithful commissioners and sending up necessary overtures -- are among the most important actions you can take to bring reform and renewal to our denomination through the G.A. process. But you need to put this high on your list of priorities.

Please contact me for assistance if you need it. The Coalition has people and written resources to help you.

Yours in Christ,

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