

On Restoring Authoritative Interpretation of the Constitution

The Presbytery of _____ overtures the 219th General Assembly to restore the definitive guidance of 1978-79, adopted as authoritative interpretation of the constitution by the General Assembly in 1993 and affirmed by General Assemblies and specific decisions of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission, that was declared to have “no further force or effect” in 2008.

Rationale

Declaring the authoritative interpretation (AI) of 1978-79 to have “no further force or effect” leaves the church without a clear response to the question of whether ordination of self-affirming, practicing homosexual persons remains “an act in contradiction to its charter and calling in Scripture” and “to the will of Christ,” as the wording of the AIs say. While both the Old and New Testaments speak clearly on the matter, and the PC(USA) constitution in Part I speaks explicitly to this matter, the authoritative interpretation has been of great benefit and guidance to the church’s life and witness.

Further, the authoritative interpretation addresses many helpful aspects of the church’s relationship with persons in homosexual relationships, correctly advising Christians to love and care for their brothers and sisters and giving explicit authoritative counsel on the church’s proper pastoral role. The church is poorer for the removal of that guidance.