

## **Session Actions in Response to the 218<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the PC(USA) July 26, 2008**

---

1. The Session of Community Presbyterian Church of Ventura, California denounces as unfaithful, inconsistent with biblical Christianity, and in some cases heretical<sup>1</sup> the recent actions of the General Assembly with respect to the following:
  - i. **Inter-faith Relations: Christianity, Judaism and Islam:** The GA approved a new theological statement that blurs the distinctions of Christianity, Judaism and Islam's understandings of God, implies Jesus is one of several viable ways to know and worship God, and encourages common worship among Christians, Jews and Muslims, suggesting there is no real difference between them. This proposal only makes sense if the Lord Jesus Christ is moved to the sideline in favor of a generic monotheism.
  - ii. **Fidelity and Chastity Standard:** The GA approved proposed amendments to the Book of Order that give sessions and presbyteries freedom to ordain persons in violation of the PC(USA)'s current standards, including the requirement to live in fidelity in marriage between a man and a woman or chastity in singleness. If approved, the Book of Order Section G-6.0106b<sup>2</sup> will be significantly changed. As an amendment to the Book of Order, this proposal requires approval of a simple majority of the 173 presbyteries.
  - iii. **Heidelberg Catechism Amendments:** The GA approved amendments to this part of our church's constitution. These amendments replace the exact words of 1 Corinthians 6:9<sup>3</sup> with just the citation of the verse. We believe that these amendments are an attempt to change the church's teaching and moral standards on the issue of homosexual practice. As an amendment to the Book of Confessions, this proposal requires both approval of a two-thirds majority of the 173 presbyteries and the approval of the 2010 General Assembly.
  - iv. **Knox Overture:** The GA approved the removal of the existing Authoritative Interpretation on homosexual practice which had supported biblical morality—almost 30 years to the day of its being approved in 1978. The Authoritative Interpretation was the guideline used in the ordination process. This is a completed action that takes effect immediately.
  - v. **Ordination Standards:** The GA approved an interpretation of the Book of Order (part of our denomination's constitution) that would allow the ordination of persons who practice sexual lifestyles that violate biblical standards. To be even more precise, it affirmed that no particular behavior or practice automatically precludes a person from ordination. One could read in this new interpretation that each presbytery is free to decide on a case by case basis if a practice or behavior disqualifies a person from ordination.<sup>2</sup> This is a completed action that takes effect immediately.
- Item #1 APPROVED by unanimous vote of Session.**
2. The Session of CPC will work with the Presbytery of Santa Barbara and other renewal partners to find a way to maintain our evangelical influence within the PCUSA and work actively to join in with a group of like-minded churches to work for the reformation and re-shaping of the PCUSA. We are committed to actively participate in this necessary reformation. Additionally, we will engage in diligent investigation of our options, including that of uniting with other denominational bodies in the reformed tradition. As we do, we will seek to ensure the security of our pastors' pensions and benefits and our church property rights. **Item #2 APPROVED by unanimous vote of Session.**
3. As our first act with respect to funding, we will hold back all per capita monies that would normally go to the GA and the Synod. **Item #3 APPROVED by unanimous vote of Session.**
4. The Session of CPC reaffirms our call to preach the gospel to Ventura and the world. We remain committed to our mission **and** our primary focus will continue to be to know, worship and proclaim Jesus as the exclusive Lord and Savior of the world. **Item #4 APPROVED by unanimous vote of Session.**

---

1) heresy – a religious belief opposed to the orthodox doctrines of a church or the rejection of a belief that is part of church dogma (Webster's New World Dictionary, 1974)

2) G-6.106b – Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

3) I Corinthians 6:9-10 – Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders, nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.