

Where Were You In '82?

A History of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Part 3 of 4 Parts

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Welcome back from lunch – I trust that you are all “carbed-up” and ready to settle back to a quiet afternoon of peaceful relaxation ... and ... quiet, ... soothing ... tones ... with ... no ... loud ... noises.

Well, we can do that – if you can learn by osmosis during REM sleep!

APA LEVEL II Certification Course (Required)

PC (USA) HISTORY SINCE REUNION (1983) (5 hours)

- The Structure of the General Assembly, its units and other Entities
- The Structure of Presbyteries and Synods and their duties in the newly constituted church
- The Creeds/Confessions of our new denomination as well as important Policies established since 1983
- Names of current Stated Clerk, Moderator and other leaders of our Church
- Rationale for Reunion. What has reunion produced that was impossible without Reunion?
- Negative aspects of Reunion, i.e., losing churches and membership
- Other items as deemed necessary by the instructors
- Leader of this seminar should be “clergy” – sorry, you got me, instead.

With our context built and our foundation laid this morning (having covered two millennia in brief and the last two centuries in detail) – we pick up the pace a bit (!) – well, ok - on this chart at least -- now covering these important topics in the first block of the afternoon.

Schedule / Overview

- 8:15 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

HIS story – in the Context of YOUR story

- 9:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. *Break*
- 9:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

How did we get to wherever we are?

- 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. *Lunch on your own*
- 1:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.

Where are we now? -- and -- Who's Who in the Zoo?

- 2:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. *Break*
- 2:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

Where are we going? -- and -- What does it mean to me?

The Final Exam

Here is the schedule again – and “you are here.”

Overview 3

HIS story – in the Context of YOUR story
How did we get to wherever we are?

Where are we now? -- and -- Who's Who in the Zoo?

- The Constitution – *Book of Confessions*
- PCUSA Structure
- The VIPs
- 2:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. *Break*

Where are we going? -- and -- What does it mean to me?

The Final Exam

We will begin with that ever-popular, excitement-generating, crowd-pleaser – the 417-page Constitution of the PCUSA! Well, its racy first part – the *Book of Confessions*, anyway.

That should make your post-lunch blood boil and keep us all awake – eh?

Then on to the structure and personalities of our denomination – using my church, presbytery, and synod as examples.

And we will introduce some of the denominational VIPs (at least, as far as you are concerned) – beyond me, of course.

I already see you eying the break – so lets get started!

So -- What is the Church??

In **organizational terms**, the best short description of any organization is an integrated expression of these most fundamental statements –

“We are (**our values**) sent to (**our market**) to accomplish (**our mission**) *so that* (**God’s vision of the future**) is achieved* by (**His goal**).”

* By the way ... His vision **will** be achieved – this is the Church’s part in it.

In real life, I tell my clients that ... in **organizational terms**, the best short description of any organization is an integrated expression of these most fundamental statements – Values, Market, Mission, Vision, and Goal – like this:

“We are (**our values**)
sent to (**our market**)
to accomplish (**our mission**)
so that (in our case - **God’s vision of the future**)
is achieved by (**His goal**).”

Let me assure you ... His vision **will** be achieved – this statement is simply descriptive of the Church’s part in His work.

Such a statement could be made for any type of organization (modified a bit to suite its specific needs) ...

... and when so done, formally, the organization itself has a far better self-understanding about what its owner wants to get out of its very existence, let alone its operation – and what its members are to do and why.

I also tell my clients that making these foundational statements is the singular responsibility of the owner of the organization – who has some purpose, some

objectives, something in mind to get out of the organization – by some date or event in the future.

By the way, every organization can be described in this format. Done clearly and accurately, this statement will describe exactly how - and will predict *how well* - the organization works and will work -- in terms of its owner's purpose for it.

Sadly, most churches screw these statements up entirely – mistaking vision for mission, mission for vision, ignoring market entirely or addressing it over-broadly, ignoring values, and over-focusing on time goals rather than event goals. Our results show how badly we fumble this ball -- from the very start.

This last observation might have been a note-taking moment.

Well, so much for the free consultation – lets see how this statement describes the church.

Formally done or not, done well or not, good or bad, clear or unclear, unified or scattered, this statement will diagnose how and whether any organization will produce what the owner wants from it.

Lets look at “The Church” ...

We are ...

- Called out of the World
- Saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church
- Transformed by the renewing of our minds
- Conformed to the image of God
- Given gifts - for building up the body *and* for accomplishing its mission
- Witnesses to the love of God for His creation
- Accompanied by God Himself

We are ...

(Read the slide)

Do these elements capture who the church is – and what it dearly values?

Could you add elements to improve this?

... sent to ...

- A lost and dying world
- ... rebellious against God, their Creator
- ... imprisoned by their sin
- ... hungry for salvation - and
- ... thirsting for reconciliation with their Creator

... sent to ...

(Read the slide)

Do these elements capture who the church is sent to serve – its “market?”

Could you add elements to improve this?

... our Mission...

(what we are sent to **do**)

- **Proclaim the gospel** for the salvation of humankind;
- **Provide shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship** of the children of God;
- **Maintain (and practice) divine worship**;
- **Preserve the truth**;
- **Promote social righteousness**; and
- **Exhibit the Kingdom of Heaven** to the world

... our **Mission** (or, what we are sent to **do**) is to ...

(Read the slide)

Do these elements describe what the church is sent to **do**?

These are the Great Ends of the Church:

In 1910, our Scottish-seceder predecessor, the United Presbyterian Church in North America (1858–1958) adopted a constitutional statement (**F-1.0304** of the current Book of Order) declaring the six great ends of the church. These are:

- The proclamation of the Gospel of the salvation of humankind;
- The shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;
- The maintenance of divine worship;
- The preservation of the truth;
- The promotion of social righteousness; and

- The exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.

Could you add elements to improve this?

... God's Vision and Goal

(**why** we do it – **when** we will be finished)

...*so that* at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

-- The Apostle Paul, writing to the Philippian Churches 2:10-11

-- and to the Roman Churches 14:11

-- all the while, quoting God's prophet, Isaiah 45:23

And here is why this all makes sense to us humans (who are created in God's intellectual image) ...

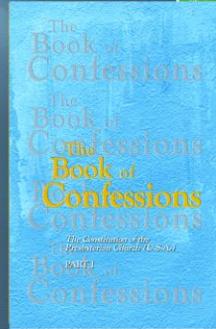
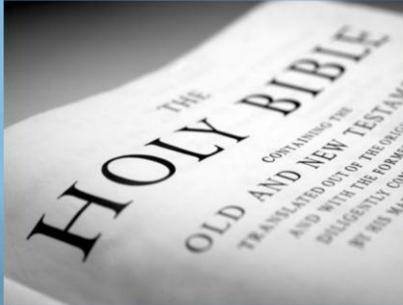
... God's **Vision and Goal** (**why** we do it – **when** we will be finished)

(Read the slide)

Do these elements capture why the church is sent to do its mission?

Could you add elements to improve this vision?

Where is this all written down?



That's nice.

How has that worked out for us?

So – where is all this written down?

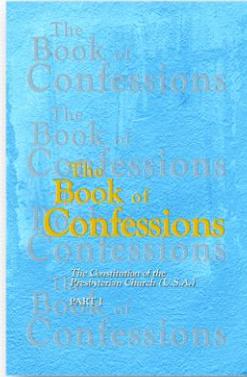
(Absorb the screen...)

... well – in the Holy Bible, actually. Not very systematically, though.

Being systematic (or “topical”) about what the Bible tells us about God and His relationship to us – and how we should do what He commands us to do - is the work of our Constitution, which is in two books: *The Book of Confessions* and the *Book of Order*.

Let's look into our confessed beliefs -- as they are described in our Constitution ...

The PC(USA) Constitution



Part One

The Nicene Creed – A.D 325
The Apostles' Creed – A.D. 1st - 8th Cent

The Scots Confession – A.D. 1560
The Heidelberg Catechism – A.D. 1563
The Second Helvetic Confession – A.D. 1566

The Westminster Confession of Faith --
The Larger Catechism 1647 /
The Shorter Catechism 1729

The Theological Declaration of Barmen 1934
The Confession of 1967
A Brief Statement of Faith—Presbyterian
Church (USA) A.D 1983

The Book of Confessions, the general “beliefs” part of our constitution – is a collection of eleven creeds, confessions, and statements and their accompanying explanations and notes, which together define our theological heritage as Reformed and Presbyterian Christians.

These confessions stretch from the earliest ones, the Nicene Creed of 325 and the Apostles Creed (actually developed beginning in the first century – through the eighth century -- to the form we have today) ...

Through the three Reformation-era confessions of the mid-1500s ... and the great Westminster Confession and its companion catechisms of a hundred years later.

To the three confessional statements made within living memory – including the last which marks the creation of our denomination from its “Northern Strand” and “Southern Strand” predecessors in 1983.

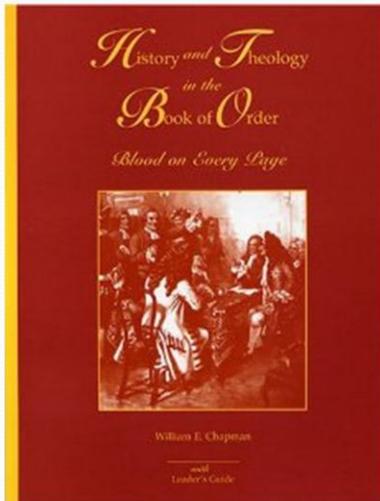
By the way, the comments that I made this morning about our Virginia City Church surviving the Great Fire of 1895 largely due to the saloon keepers, prostitutes and drunks who manned the bucket brigade because they regarded it as their church – those comments aside, most of these confessions are *named for the place or town* in which they were written – not by or for whom, or in whose interests, they might have been written -- a trivia fact that may greatly disappoint your expectations about the

content of the 1934 Declaration, if you haven't yet read it.

Review the slide

Well, let's tour the confessions ...

Threats to ... the integrity of witness



- from *internal confusion* about core matters of faith,
- from *the culture's rival accounts of truth and morals*,
- or from *threats to the church's freedom*.

Please appreciate that this tour is of a battleground – both in the church and in the world surrounding it.

Those who have studied the confessions have observed that churches typically make confession out of necessity, not simply because they think it would be a fun thing to do. Indeed, one commentary on our *Book of Confessions* is sub-titled: **Blood on Every Page.**

Necessity comes in many forms, but most often, the church is compelled to express its faith when it experiences threats to the integrity of its witness coming from:

- ***internal confusion*** about core matters of faith,
- from ***the culture's rival accounts of truth and morals***,
- or from ***threats to the church's freedom***.

The shape of confessions has been determined not only by the historical situation in which they were written but also by the uses for which they have been intended (or to which they have been put), which include: ***Worship, Defense of orthodoxy, Instruction, Rallying-point in times of danger and persecution, and Church order and discipline.***

Reform of the church—whether in the fourth century, the sixteenth century, or the twenty-first century—grows from response to the gracious action of God; the church

is always ready *to be reformed* by God.

Nicene Creed – A.D 325

- The church was under civil threat and internal chaos
 - Get your act together!
- Council of Nicea
- Still dissention – issue remains about the Trinity



Icon depicting Emperor Constantine (center) and the Fathers of the First Council of Nicaea of 325 as holding the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381

The Nicene Creed

In its first three centuries, the church found itself in a hostile environment.

On the one hand, it grappled with the challenge of relating the **language** of the gospel, developed in a Hebraic and Jewish-Christian context, to a Graeco-Roman world. On the other hand, it was threatened not only by **persecution**, but also by **ideas** that were in conflict with the biblical witness.

In A.D. 312, Constantine won control of the Roman Empire in the battle of Milvian Bridge. Attributing his victory to the intervention of Jesus Christ, he elevated Christianity to favored status in the empire. “One God, one Lord, one faith, one church, one empire, one emperor” became his motto.

Imagine his surprise when he turned around to face this solid empire – only to find ... that “one faith and one church” were fractured by theological disputes, especially conflicting understandings of the nature of Christ, long a point of controversy.

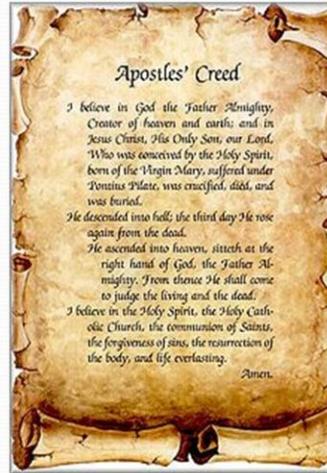
To counter a widening rift within the church on this issue, Constantine convened a council in Nicaea in A.D. 325. A creed reflecting the position of Alexander and Athanasius was written and signed by a majority of the bishops. Nevertheless, the two parties continued to battle each other. In 381, a second council met in

Constantinople. It adopted a revised and expanded form of the A.D. 325 creed, now known as the Nicene Creed – as we saw on the first line chart this morning.

The Nicene Creed is the most ecumenical of creeds – and a corporate creed, beginning: “We believe...”. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) joins with Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and most Protestant churches in affirming it.

Apostles' Creed – A.D. 1st - 5th Cent

- A catechism - and statement of personal belief
- Grew over time as needs matured



The Apostles' Creed

Although not written by apostles (sorry to disappoint), the Apostles' Creed reflects the theological formulations of the first century church. The creed's structure may be based on Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – which, according to Acts, the first century church did – wholesale!

In a time when most Christians were illiterate, oral repetition of the Apostles' Creed, along with the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, helped preserve and transmit the faith of the western churches. (The Apostles' Creed played no role in Eastern Orthodoxy.)

But this is not just a first century creed growing out of a first century need.

In the early church, although Christians confessed that "Jesus is Lord" they did not always understand the biblical context of lordship. The 2004 GA action we saw in the second block's timeline this morning on "Hope in the Lord" indicates that this misunderstanding endures even today.

The views of Marcion, a Christian living in Rome in the second century, further threatened the church's understanding of Jesus as Lord (Marcion read the Old

Testament as referring to a tyrannical God who had created a flawed world!). But Marcion believed that Jesus revealed, in contrast, a good God of love and mercy.

For Marcion, then, Jesus was not / could not be the Messiah proclaimed by the prophets, and so, the Old Testament was not / could not be Scripture. Marcion proposed limiting Christian “Scripture” to Luke’s gospel (less the birth narrative and other parts that he felt expressed Jewish thinking) and to those letters of Paul that Marcion regarded as anti-Jewish. Marcion’s views developed into a movement that lasted several centuries.

Around A.D. 180, Roman Christians developed an early form of the Apostles’ Creed to refute Marcion. They affirmed that the God of creation is the Father of Jesus Christ, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, was buried and raised from the dead, and ascended into heaven, where he rules with the Father. They also affirmed belief in the Holy Spirit, the church, and the resurrection of the body.

Candidates for membership in the church, having undergone a lengthy period of moral and doctrinal instruction, were asked at baptism to state what they believed. They responded in the words of this personal creed – which begins: “I believe....”

But, it didn’t stop there -- the Apostles’ Creed underwent further development in the face of later centuries’ needs:

- In response to the question of readmitting those who had denied the faith during the persecutions of the second and third centuries, the church added, “I believe in the forgiveness of sins.”
- In the fourth and fifth centuries, North African Christians debated the question of whether the church was an exclusive sect composed of the heroic few or an inclusive church of all who confessed Jesus Christ, leading to the addition of “holy” (meaning “*belonging to God*”) and “catholic” (meaning “*universal*”).
- In Gaul, in the fifth century, the phrase “he descended into hell” came into the creed.
- Finally, by the eighth century, the creed had attained its present form.

We jump ahead a millennia and a half - to the Reformation...

Scots Confession – A.D. 1560

- Both a faith and organizing statement
- Defines the “true kirk”
 - Preaching
 - Sacraments and
 - Discipline



Three documents from the Reformation are included in our *Book of Confessions*, each originating in a different country: Scotland, Germany, and Switzerland. These three centers of the Reformation remain significant in Reformed and Presbyterian thought to this day.

The Scots Confession

The Scots Confession was written at a turning point in the history of the Scottish nation. When the Queen Regent Mary of Guise died in her sleep in 1560, the Protestant nobility of Scotland was able to secure English recognition of Scottish sovereignty in the Treaty of Edinburgh. To the Scots, this favorable conclusion to the civil war with Mary’s French-supported forces represented a providential deliverance.

The Scottish Parliament, having declared Scotland a Protestant nation, asked the clergy to frame a confession of faith. Six ministers, including John Knox, **completed their work in four days**. In 1560, the document was ratified by Parliament as “doctrine grounded upon the infallible Word of God.”

Beginning with a pledge of unconditional commitment to the triune God who creates, sustains, rules, and guides all things, the first eleven chapters of the Scots Confession narrate God’s providential acts in the events of biblical history. The kirk (church) of the present and future is continuous with the kirk of God’s people going back to

Adam. While affirming that the Bible is the norm by which the kirk judges itself, the Scots Confession also sees the Scriptures as a sacred history in which the present day church, through the Holy Spirit, participates until the end of time. God's providential deliverance is a continuing, not merely a past, reality.

The Scots Confession sets forth three marks of the true and faithful church:

- "the true preaching of the Word of God,"
- "the right administration of the sacraments of Christ Jesus," and
- "ecclesiastical discipline . . . whereby vice is repressed and virtue nourished."

Remember that criterion phrase I asked you to note this morning when we were talking about the churches with whom we are in full communion? This confession is where it came from.

"Cleave, serve, worship, trust" are key words in this document. As a call to action in a turbulent time, the Scots Confession reflects a spirit of trust and a commitment to the God whose miraculous deliverance the Scots had experienced firsthand.

Heidelberg Catechism – A.D. 1563

- Teaches belief

Deals with:

- Our sin and guilt
- God in Jesus Christ frees us
- Express gratitude



1563's edition.

The Heidelberg Catechism

The Reformation was not a singular movement. Soon after Luther posted his ninety-five theses on the door of the church at Wittenburg, reform movements sprang up throughout Europe. As Lutheran thought moved down the Neckar River, Reformed thought traveled up the Rhine from Switzerland. They met at Heidelberg, seat of the oldest university in Germany and capital of the province known as the Palatinate. Tension between Lutherans and Reformed Christians was intense. Because the Reformed Christians did not believe in the real, bodily presence of Christ in bread and wine, Lutherans believed that they were desecrating the Lord's Supper.

Acting to end the controversy, Frederick the Elector, ruler of the Palatinate, asked two young men of Heidelberg—Zacharias Ursinus, professor of theology, and Kaspar Olevianus, preacher to the city—to prepare a catechism acceptable to both sides.

Don't you just love it when someone, whose goal is "order," thinks that if they just get both sides to sit down together, they will work things out? Remember how that worked out for Constantine? How is it working for you today?

Well, anyway – Zac and Kaz revised an earlier catechism that Zac had written, using its outline and some ninety of its questions and answers. Completed in 1562, the Heidelberg Catechism was published in January of the following year.

The Heidelberg Catechism opens with two questions concerning our comfort in life and death. The knowledge that our only comfort is Jesus Christ frames the remainder of the catechism. Each of its three parts corresponds to a line of Romans 7:24–25 (NRSV), where Paul cries:

“Wretched man that I am;
Who will rescue me from this body of death?
Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord;”

Thus, questions 3–11 deal with our sin and guilt, questions 12–85 with the way in which God in Jesus Christ frees us, and questions 86–129 with the manner in which we express gratitude to God for redemption.

Question 87 is what all the fuss was about in 2008 when GA entertained the new translation of this confession – can anyone see why? Who can quote Question 87 for us?

Q. 87. Can those who do not turn to God from their ungrateful, impenitent life be saved?

A. Certainly not! Scripture says, “Surely you know that the unjust will never come into possession of the kingdom of God. Make no mistake: no fornicator or idolater, none who are guilty either of adultery *or of homosexual perversion*, no thieves or grabbers or drunkards or slanderers or swindlers, will possess the kingdom of God.”

I told you that this book is the racy part of the Constitution!

This phrase “*or of homosexual perversion*” is not in the German version of this confession – but the translator into the English version that is included in the Book of Confessions in 1967 said that he just felt that it “belonged there” – and his English translation is the language that was approved for our Book.

Each question of the catechism is personal, addressed to “you.” Each answer draws as much as possible on biblical language. The catechism’s tone is peaceful and conciliatory, showing nothing of the controversy that called it forth. Its theology is both catholic, universal in appeal, and evangelical, setting forth the gospel of Jesus Christ. Providing a basis for peaceful coexistence between Lutheran and Reformed Christians, the catechism denied that the bread and wine become the very body and blood of Christ but affirmed that “by this visible sign and pledge . . . we come to share in his true body and blood through the working of the Holy Spirit . . .” (paragraph 4.079).

The influence of the Heidelberg Catechism in the church's preaching and teaching continues to be felt in Germany, Austria, Holland, Hungary, parts of Eastern Europe, Scotland, Canada, and the United States.

Second Helvetic Confession – A.D. 1566

- Intended as a will – used as a defense
- Authority of scripture in government and reformation
- Theological and practical



Heinrich Bullinger preacher, educator, ecumenical, pastor, and the confessor.

The Second Helvetic Confession

The word “Helvetic” is Latin for “Swiss.” The setting of the Second Helvetic Confession is Swiss-German Reformed Protestantism.

After the great Reformer Ulrich Zwingli died in battle in 1531 (defense of the faith is a messy, messy thing), Heinrich Bullinger succeeded him as minister of the church in Zurich.

Bullinger was a model Reformed minister. A preacher, he expounded Scripture at least twice a week. A scholar, he wrote Latin commentaries on many books of the Old Testament and on every book of the New Testament except Revelation. An educator, he initiated a system of schools for Zurich and was rector of the Carolinum, a theological academy. A person with ecumenical and political concerns, he was in correspondence with leaders of the Reformation and with rulers throughout Europe. A pastor, he welcomed religious refugees into his own home. When the plague swept through Zurich in 1564, he insisted upon ministering to the afflicted, even though he knew he might become infected and die.

In 1561, Bullinger composed the document that later became known as the Second Helvetic Confession. He intended to attach it to his last will and testament to the Zurich church, but events in Germany soon brought it into the public arena.

The publication of the Heidelberg Catechism created trouble for the man who had ordered its preparation. Lutherans considered it too Reformed in spirit, and they demanded that **Frederick the Elector, governor of the Palatinate**, be brought to trial for heresy.

So – how did his: “lets sit down together and work this out” – work out for him?

Not a theologian himself, Frederick turned to Bullinger, who offered Frederick this confession as the basis for his defense. When the Imperial Diet (the ruling body of Germany) met for trial in 1566, Frederick was exonerated.

Meanwhile, the churches of Switzerland adopted Bullinger’s confession as their new confession of faith. Soon finding wide acceptance throughout Europe and beyond, it was translated into French, English, Dutch, Polish, Hungarian, Italian, Arabic, and Turkish.

Reflecting the theological maturity of the Reformed churches, the Second Helvetic Confession is moderate in tone and catholic in spirit. From the opening paragraphs it emphasizes the church and its life and affirms the authority of the Scriptures for the church’s government and reformation.

By including an article on predestination, the confession asks the church to trust in God’s free and gracious election of its membership in Jesus Christ. At the same time, the confession addresses the practical life of the gathered community, detailing matters of worship, church order and conflict, ministry, the sacraments, and marriage.

Westminster Confession of Faith -- 1647 / 1729

The Larger Catechism
The Shorter Catechism

- Another faith and organization statement
- Truth and authority of the Scriptures
- Implications for political thought and practice
- Duties to God and to each other



Herbert, John Rogers, RA (ca. 1844), *The Assertion of Liberty of Conscience by the Independents at the Westminster Assembly of Divines* (painture)

The Westminster Standards

Now lets hop a hundred years later -- in 1643, here we are in the democratic monarchy of sunny England.

The English House of Commons adopted an ordinance calling for the “settling of the government and liturgy of the Church of England in a manner most agreeable to God’s Holy Word and most apt to procure the peace of the church at home and nearer abroad.”

After the ordinance passed the House of Lords, an assembly to accomplish this work convened in Westminster Abbey. The Parliament nominated one hundred fifty-one persons to the assembly. Thirty were members of Parliament; the others were “learned, godly, and judicious divines.” Five Scottish clergymen were in attendance and had the right of discussion but not vote. Churches in Holland, Belgium, France, Switzerland, and the American colonies were invited to send delegates, though none came. The assembly held 1,163 sessions, finally concluding six years later -- in 1649.

Sunny, peaceful England – right? Not exactly!

The Westminster Assembly conducted its work in a crisis atmosphere.

Internal conflicts had nearly torn apart both England and the English church – and they were not resolved. Political and religious problems were inseparable: Who should rule the church? Who should rule the state? What power should the king have? What power Parliament, local councils, and assemblies?

- The Anglican party stood for royal rule in England with the sovereign also head of the church's government.
- The Presbyterian party sought to vest authority in elected representatives of the people, both in Parliament and in church presbyteries.
- An emerging third party, soon led by Oliver Cromwell, wanted local autonomy for churches and limited powers for both king and Parliament.

A classic, English three-way pub brawl! Even before the assembly met, civil war broke out between these contending parties.

But the assembly went to work and eventually completed the "Form of Presbyterian Church Government," a "Directory of Public Worship," "The Confession of Faith," "The Larger Catechism," and "The Shorter Catechism." Each document was approved by the wartime English Parliament; but, it then asked the assembly to add scriptural proofs! Not a bad idea – but really bad timing.

- Cromwell's ascendancy in battle precipitated the end of the assembly.
- In 1648, Pride's Purge forcibly excluded Presbyterian members from Parliament.
- And with the execution of King Charles I in 1649, English Puritanism itself split into
 - "Presbyterians," who protested the regicide, and
 - "Independents," who supported it and aligned themselves with Cromwell.

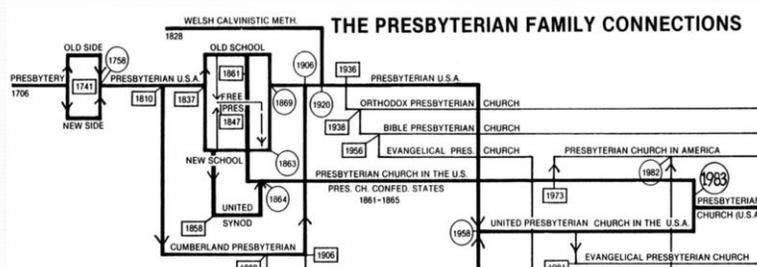
The Westminster Standards were never adopted in England -- the land of their origin.

In 1647, the Scottish General Assembly adopted the Westminster Standards for use in the kirk, replacing the Scots Confession of 1560 and the Heidelberg Catechism. And American Presbyterianism either brought them with – or adopted them in 1729 (albeit somewhat loosely).

The standards lift up the truth and authority of the Scriptures, as immediately inspired in Hebrew and Greek, kept pure in all ages, and known through the internal witness of the Holy Spirit. Divine sovereignty and double predestination are also emphasized. In appealing to Scripture to formulate a covenant theology, the standards had important implications for political thought and practice, reminding

both ruler and people of their duties to God and to each other – and they work out in the practice of governing the church.

Westminster Confession of Faith – 1789 - 2011



The 1789 American Revision

1903 PCUSA Revision

The Doctrinal Deliverance of 1910

Presbyterian Church in America

Evangelical Presbyterian Church

American Presbyterian adoption and revisions

Recall -- The first American Presbyterian ministers were

- New England Congregationalists, whose congregations originated with the migration from England to the Dutch colony in America as early as the 1640s, and
- Presbyterian immigrants from Scotland, Ireland and Wales in the middle coastal and southern states.

The first American presbytery, uniting some of these independent congregations and those of the British immigrants, was formed in 1706. This body grew large enough to form the first synod in Philadelphia in 1716.

The standards came to New England with the Puritans (Independents) and to the Middle Atlantic states with the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. In 1729, the standards were adopted as the confessional position and form of government of the newly organized Presbyterian synod in the colonies and have played a formative role in American Presbyterianism ever since. The Westminster Standards represent the fruits of a Protestant scholasticism that refined and systematized the teachings of the Reformation.

Prior to 1729, some presbyteries required candidates for the ministry to profess

adherence to the Westminster Confession.

When the Synod of Philadelphia met in 1729 to adopt the Westminster Confession as the doctrinal standard, it required all ministers to declare their approval of the Westminster Confession of Faith and catechisms. At the same time, the Adopting Act allowed candidates and ministers to scruple articles within the Confession. Whether or not the article scrupled was essential or nonessential was judged by the presbytery with jurisdiction over the candidate's examination. This allowance implied a difference, *within the standards themselves*, between things that are essential and necessary to the Christian faith, and things that are not.

This compromise left a permanent legacy to following generations of Presbyterians in America, to decide what is meant by "essential and necessary", resulting in permanent controversies over the manner in which a minister is bound to accept the document; and it has left the American versions of the Westminster Confession more amenable to the will of the church to amend it. Let's look at the major ones ...

The 1789 American Revision

The American revision of 1787–1789 removes from the Confession and the Catechisms mention of certain duties of the civil government in relationship to the church. Lee Irons suggests this was done "in light of the new relationship between church and state in America." The revision also removes explicit identification of the Pope as the Antichrist.

1903 PCUSA Revision

In 1903, the PCUSA adopted revisions to the Westminster Confession of Faith that were intended to soften the church's commitment to Calvinism. These revisions paved the way to the partial re-merger of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church with the PCUSA - a division which had persisted since 1810.

The Doctrinal Deliverance of 1910

In 1910, the "northern strand" PCUSA attempted to specify that a supernatural perspective is *necessary and essential*, according to the Bible and the Westminster standards. This perspective was articulated in terms of five Fundamentalist doctrinal issues:

- The divine inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible.
- The pre-existence, deity, and virgin birth of Jesus.
- The satisfaction of God's justice by the crucifixion of Christ (substitutionary atonement).
- The resurrection, ascension and intercession of Jesus.
- The reality of the miracles of Jesus.

The Doctrinal Deliverance of 1910 marks the beginning of the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy in the PCUSA, which would ultimately result in the 1930s exodus of a significant minority of the denomination's conservatives, including J. Gresham Machen, who went on to found the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Presbyterian Church in America

Similar movements in the southern PCUS away from strict interpretations of the Westminster Confession, culminating in its eventual merger into the PCUSA in 1983, led to the creation of the Presbyterian Church in America in 1973. The PCA holds the 1789 American revision of the Westminster Confession as its standard "with two minor exceptions, namely, the deletion of strictures against marrying one's wife's kindred (XXIV,4), and the reference to the Pope as the antichrist (XXV,6)." In general, the PCA allows greater leeway than the OPC for elders to take personal exception to some articles in the Confession.

Evangelical Presbyterian Church

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, which broke from the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in 1981 in order to provide a conservative alternative to the older denomination, holds to the Westminster Confession of Faith composed of a combination of different editions, but based on the American version of the 1647 text. The EPC holds to the Westminster Confession in light of a brief list of the essentials of the faith as drafted at its first General Assembly at Ward Church outside of Detroit, Michigan.

Westminster Confession of Faith -- 2011

PCUS Version - 1983

UPCUSA Version - 1983

Today – the Las Vegas Deal!

Two for the price of one!

THE WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF FAITH		6.090-093
<small>Presbyterian Church in the United States</small>	<small>The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America</small>	
<small>4. They, who in their obedience, attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life, are so far from being able to supererogate and to do more than God requires, that they fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do.¹³</small>		6.090
<small>5. We cannot, by our best works, merit pardon of sin, or eternal life, at the hand of God, because of the great disproportion that is between them and the glory to come, and the infinite distance that is between us and God, whom by them we can neither profit, nor satisfy for the debt of our former sins;¹⁴ but what we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants;¹⁵ and because, as they are good, they proceed from his Spirit;¹⁶ and as they are wrought by us, they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection that they cannot endure the severity of God's judgment.¹⁷</small>		6.091
<small>6. Yet notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him,¹⁸ not as though they were in this life wholly unobscured and unrepentable in God's sight;¹⁹ but that he, looking upon them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.²⁰</small>		6.092
<small>7. Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others;²¹ yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith,²² nor are done in a right manner, according to the Word;²³ nor to a right end, the glory of God;²⁴ they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God.²⁵ And yet their neglect of them is more sinful, and displeasing unto God.²⁶</small>	<small>7. Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and in themselves innocency and useful, and although the neglect of such things is sinful and displeasing unto God; yet, because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner, according to his Word, nor to a right end, the glory of God, they come short of what God requires, and do not make any man meet to receive the grace of God.²⁷</small>	6.093

We are in the perfect setting to explain what we have in our version of the Westminster Confession in our *Book of Confessions* – the quintessential Las Vegas Deal: “Two for One!”

At the merge, the northern strand and the southern strand accommodated their differing views of the confessions by simply keeping both of their versions.

Two chapters are uniquely southern, and some chapters have parallel passages, as shown here; but, different treatment in each.

The key to the source is the top margin – the chapter and paragraph numbering are as they were was before the reunion.

OK – so much for ancient history – lets jump to the three confession in our *Book* that were written within living memory (well, my 94 year old Mom’s living memory, anyway) ...

The Theological Declaration of Barmen 1934

- Separation of Church and State – on steroids
- Six scriptural propositions
- Jesus Christ is Lord of every area of life



German stamp: 50 years of the "Barmen Declaration"

The Theological Declaration of Barmen

The Theological Declaration of Barmen was written by a group of church leaders in Germany to help Christians withstand the challenges of the Nazi party and of the so-called "German Christians," a popular movement that saw no conflict between Christianity and the ideals of Hitler's National Socialism.

As our parents or grandparents lived it, in January 1933, after frustrating years in which no government in Germany was able to solve problems of economic depression and mass unemployment, Adolph Hitler was named chancellor. By playing on people's fear of communism and Bolshevism – both threats of the rumbling Russian Bear to the east, he was able to persuade the Parliament to allow him to rule by edict. As he consolidated his power, Hitler abolished all political rights and democratic processes: police could detain persons in prison without a trial, search private dwellings without a warrant, seize property, censor publications, tap telephones, and forbid meetings. He soon outlawed all political parties except his own, smashed the labor unions, purged the universities, replaced the judicial system with his own "People's Courts," initiated a systematic terrorizing of Jews, and obtained the support of church leaders allied with or sympathetic to the German Christians.

As would most Eastern Europeans, Western Europeans, and Britons of the day

(remember separation of church and state is a distinctly American thing), most Germans took the union of Christianity, nationalism, and militarism for granted, and patriotic sentiments were equated with “Christian truth.” Hitler’s Germany; however, was a bit overboard. The German Christians ended up exalting the racially pure nation and the rule of Hitler as God’s will for the German people.

Nonetheless, some in the churches resisted. Among those few determined church leaders who did oppose the church’s captivity to National Socialism were pastors Hans Asmussen, Karl Koch, Karl Iraruer, and Martin Niemoller, and theologian Karl Barth. Following a number of regional meetings, these men assembled representatives of Lutheran, Reformed, and United churches in the Gemarkte Church, in the **Barmen** district of the city of Wupperthal, May 29–31, 1934. Among the one hundred thirty-nine delegates were ordained ministers, fifty-three church members, and six university professors.

The chief item of business was discussion of a declaration to appeal to the Evangelical churches of Germany to stand firm against the German Christian accommodation to National Socialism.

The Theological Declaration of Barmen contains six propositions, each quoting Scripture, stating its implications for the present day, and rejecting the false doctrine of the German Christians. The declaration proclaims the church’s freedom in Jesus Christ who is Lord of every area of life. The church obeys Him as God’s one and only Word who determines its order, ministry, and relation to the state.

The declaration was debated and adopted without amendment, and the Confessing Church, that part of the church that opposed the German Christians, rallied around it.

The Confession of 1967

- First new confession of faith in three centuries
- Grace, Love, Communion of the Trinity
- Reconciliation – mission of the church
- Fulfillment – God’s vision

- Book of Confessions



The Confession of 1967

In approving the Confession of 1967, the “northern strand” United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America adopted its first new confession of faith in two centuries.

The turbulent decade of the 1960s challenged churches everywhere to restate their faith.

While the Second Vatican Council was reformulating Roman Catholic thought and practice, Presbyterians were developing the Confession of 1967 – decently and in order!

- The 168th General Assembly (1956) of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPCUSA) received an overture asking that the Westminster Shorter Catechism be revised.
- The 170th General Assembly (1958) proposed instead that the church draw up a “brief contemporary statement of faith.”
- A committee labored at the task seven years.
- The 177th General Assembly (1965) (UPCUSA) vigorously discussed the committee’s proposal and sent an amended draft to the church for study.
- Sessions, congregations, and presbyteries suggested changes and

- additions.
- In response, a newly appointed Committee of Fifteen made revisions.
 - The 178th General Assembly (1966) (UPCUSA) debated this draft, accepted it, and forwarded it to the presbyteries for final ratification.
 - After extensive debate, more than 90 percent of the presbyteries voted approval.
 - Final adoption came at the 179th General Assembly (1967) (UPCUSA).

Modestly titled, the Confession of 1967 is built around a single passage of Scripture: “In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself. . .” (2 Cor. 5:19, NRSV). The first section, “God’s Work of Reconciliation,” is divided into three parts:

- The first deals with the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.
- The second section, “The Ministry of Reconciliation,” has two parts: the mission of and the equipment of the church.
- The last section, “The Fulfillment of Reconciliation,” affirms the church’s hope in God’s ultimate triumph.

The Confession of 1967 addresses the church’s role in the modern world. Responsive to developments in biblical scholarship, it asks the church to “approach the Scriptures with literary and historical understanding” (paragraph 9.29). It calls the church to obedient action, particularly in response to social problems such as racial discrimination, nationalistic arrogance, and family and class conflict. It sees the life, death, resurrection, and promised coming of Jesus Christ as the pattern for the church’s mission today, and calls on all Christians to be reconciled to God and to one another.

With the Confession of 1967, the UPCUSA also adopted a *Book of Confessions* - unique in American Presbyterianism - that placed creeds from the early Christian church (the Nicene and the Apostles’ Creeds) and from the Reformation (the Scots Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Second Helvetic Confession) alongside the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, adding two documents from the twentieth century (the Theological Declaration of Barmen and the Confession of 1967).

A Brief Statement of Faith - A.D 1983

- For use in worship

Emphasizes:

- Jesus ministry
- Gender-inclusiveness
- Concern for God's creation
- We belong to God – in life and in death



A Brief Statement of Faith

In 1983, when the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was formed by the reunion of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States, integral to the reunion was the preparation of a brief statement of faith common to the new church. While recognizing realities of diversity and disagreement in both the church and the world, members of the drafting committee sought to articulate Presbyterians' common identity.

Early in its discussions, the committee decided to write a statement of faith that could be used in worship. The committee drew extensively on the documents in the *Book of Confessions* and on Scripture for its formulations, and arranged them within a trinitarian framework.

The Brief Statement of Faith (statement) is distinctive in several respects:

- Unlike the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, which move directly from Jesus' birth to his death, the statement emphasizes the significance of Jesus' ministry in Judea and Galilee.
- The Brief Statement of Faith emphasizes gender-inclusiveness. It underscores the role of both men and women in God's covenant, uses feminine as well as masculine imagery of God, and affirms ordination of both women and men.

- The statement also expresses concern for the integrity of God’s creation.
- Affirming at its beginning that “In life and death we belong to God” (10.1, line 1) and, at its end, that “nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord,” (10.05, lines 78, 79)

The Brief Statement concludes liturgically with the church’s familiar doxology of praise and thanksgiving.

Proposed; but, defeated – The Confession of Belhar – A.D. 2012

- Unity is both a gift and an obligation
- The Holy dichotomy of reconciliation and the justice of God
- Segregation is sin - always leads to enmity and hatred



SA Gestig, where the Belhar Confession was adopted in September 1986

The **Belhar Confession** is a Christian statement of belief originally written in Afrikaans in 1982. It was adopted (after a slight adjustment) as a confession of faith by the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) in South Africa in 1986.

The confession was originally written by Professor Dirkie Smit of the Theological Faculty of the University of the Western Cape, with inputs from Professor Jaap Durand of the same faculty, Rev Gustav Bam of the DRMC and Doctor Allan Boesak, who was president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches at that time. The confession was named after Belhar, a suburb of Cape Town, South Africa, where a general synod of the DRMC was held in 1982.

The confession was a catalyst in the formation of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) in 1994, which was formed by the union of the DRMC (the DRCSA's division for coloured people) and the DRCA (Dutch Reformed Church in Africa, the DRCSA division for black people). The confession was never formally adopted by the DRCA.

Apart from the URCSA, the Belhar Confession was also adopted by the United Protestant Church in Belgium.

The Reformed Church in America (RCA) adopted the Belhar Confession as a fourth doctrinal standard (or confession; alongside the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg

Catechism, and the Canons of Dort) at its 2010 meeting of the General Synod, having adopted it provisionally in 2007.

The 2009 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA) proposed to the 2012 Synod that the Belhar Confession be adopted as their fourth confession of faith.

The confession was also instrumental in the RCA's efforts to found the Reformed Church in the Dominican Republic.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) just considered adopting the Belhar Confession. As two-thirds (116 of the 173) of the Presbyteries failed to affirm the adoption of the Belhar Confession by 10 July 2011, it was not approved.

According to the Belhar Confession, unity is both a gift and an obligation for the church. This unity originally referred to non-segregation between Christians of different races, but after the formation of the URCSA in 1994, the word "unity" came to refer to administrative unity within the managerial structures of the URCSA.

Another key theme of the Belhar Confession is the dichotomy of reconciliation and the justice of God. According to the confession, God is the God of the destitute, the poor, and the wronged, and for this reason the church should stand by people in any form of suffering. It claims that individual, racial and social segregation is sin, and that all forms of segregation always lead to enmity and hatred.

A little more detail ...

- **Beliefs**

... and ...

- **Organization**

Well, we addressed the **beliefs** of the Presbyterian church as they are described in the constitution of our church – specifically in the *Book of Confessions* (Constitution, Part I) ...

Before we go on, let me emphasize: -- these beliefs – confessions – are NOT SCRIPTURE! They are what the church of the day confessed that scripture teaches on the threats to the integrity of its witness coming from:

- **internal confusion** about core matters of faith,
- from **the culture's rival accounts of truth and morals**,
- or from **threats to the church's freedom**.

Let's be clear:

- Scripture is our authority, **the Word of God**, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.
- The confessions are our "pretty good guidance" (extracted from scripture) on the specific issues they address.

Now let's turn to the corporate **organization** of our church – again as described in our Constitution, this time -- Part II, the *Book of Order*. And again (we believe), extracted from scripture to address the issues we face in organizing the church visible to do God's work.

Don't worry, this is a non-threatening class today -- I will stick to our *corporate organizational practices* and avoid the personal practices of Presbyterians, like:

- sitting only in the back row in church and other public places,
- remaining detached from whatever is going on lest we be sucked into the emotion of the moment and actually raise our hands in prayer or praise, sing with full voice, or display our closet Republican leanings outside of the voting booth. (... come on -- in your heart you know its right...)

Rest assured -- today, we will proceed "decently and in order."

BTW: I have teased you with this phrase several times today - does anyone know where it comes from?

Google finds it in 0.099 seconds as its first page, top natural search entry – along with about 518,000 other hits for *decently and in order* .

"Let all things be done decently and in order." The Apostle Paul's first letter to the Corinthian churches, chapter 14, verse 40 [King James Bible \(Cambridge Ed.\)](#)

The lesson: Don't play bible-bingo with Google.

So on to our corporate organizational practices ...



Lets get *personal*

Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church

In the Presbyterian Church (USA) ...

YOU are a member of a
CONGREGATION, which is a member of a
PRESBYTERY, which is organized into a
SYNOD, which is a regional division of the
DENOMINATION – the Presbyterian Church (USA)

-- The **PRESBYTERY** is the center of the PC (USA) --

But first -- let's get personal!

Jesus Christ is the Head of our church (give me an Amen?) – and I hope that you have a direct and personal relationship with Him.

The church does not stand between you and Jesus.

The church does not hold a bucket of Holy Spirit for you to wash in each Sunday.

The Holy Spirit should be dwelling in you – all the time.

The church does not provide the seat for the Father into whose lap we can crawl only on Sunday morning during the prayers of confession in intercession.

We can crawl into his lap at any time and address Him directly as His beloved children, saying: “Abba, Daddy, Father ... forgive me ... give us this day ... your kingdom come to me ...”

Our Father can sit any where He wants (anywhere you need Him to sit) – after all He made “all!”

Instead, the church helps you build your relationship with Him – and organize for you

and with others -- your accomplishment of His work.

(Read the slide)

Note the relationships between and among these parts of the larger body.

Note, too, the last point – this is the fundamental structural power / authority principle in our American Presbyterian church polity.

Lets look at each of these corporate structures in turn and see what our **polity** is and how it is reflected in them – their interrelationships, standards, and functions.

The Congregation

BOO, Form of Government, Chapter 1:

Organized by Presbytery

Six great ends – for neighborhoods

Both congregation and corporation

Elect Elders / Form Session

Call clergy / fix terms

Decide Real Estate matters

Affirm organization for mission

The Diaconate is a *ministry arm*

(Absorb the slide)

G-1.01 THE CONGREGATION

G-1.0101 *The Mission of the Congregation*

The congregation is the church engaged in the mission of God in its particular context.

The triune God gives to the congregation all the gifts of the gospel necessary to being the Church. The congregation is the basic form of the church, but it is not of itself a sufficient form of the church. Thus congregations are bound together in communion with

one another, united in relationships of accountability and responsibility, contributing their

strengths to the benefit of the whole, and are called, collectively, the church.

Through the congregation God's people carry out the ministries of proclamation, sharing the Sacraments, and living in covenant life with God and each other. In the life of the congregation, individual believers are equipped for the ministry of witness to the

love and grace of God in and for the world. The congregation reaches out to people, communities, and the world to share the good news of Jesus Christ, to gather for worship,

to offer care and nurture to God's children, to speak for social justice and

righteousness,
to bear witness to the truth and to the reign of God that is coming into the world.

G-1.0102 The Fellowship of the Congregation

The polity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) presupposes the fellowship of women, men, and children united in covenant relationship with one another and with God through Jesus Christ. The organization rests on the fellowship and is not designed to work without trust and love.

G-1.0103 Governed by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

A “congregation,” as used in this Form of Government, refers to a formally organized community chartered and recognized by a presbytery as provided in this Constitution. Each congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall be governed by this Constitution. The members of a congregation put themselves under the leadership of the

session and the higher councils (presbytery, synod, and General Assembly). The session

is responsible to guide and govern the life of the congregation. The session leads the congregation in fulfilling its responsibilities for the service of all people, for the upbuilding

of the whole church, and for the glory of God.

*** Mission: Book of Order - G-1.0200 2. The Great Ends of the Church:**

The great ends of the church are the ***proclamation of the gospel*** for the salvation of humankind; the ***shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship*** of the children of God; the ***maintenance of divine worship***; the ***preservation of the truth***; the ***promotion of social righteousness***; and the ***exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven*** to the world.

Lets see how this works out in an example congregation...

A Christ Centered Family...

- At least two mission attempts from 1905 – about 1912.
- Deliberate planting in 1953 by Nevada Presbytery
- Grew from 47 first meeting to 537 in 1955 to 1620 in 1987
-- *A history of fire and water – and schools* --
- The Reverend Jim Houston-Hencken officiated at the 50th Anniversary dinner 2003 -- off-site on the strip

www.fpcvegas.org

Let's use the church where I am a member with my family as an example to illustrate.

First Presbyterian Church, Las Vegas is 58 years old and has today a membership of about 800 people.

There were at least two mission attempts to begin a Presbyterian church in Las Vegas from as early as 1905 – to about 1912. These were the personal vision of the first moderator of presbytery, the Reverend J. Mortimer Swander – whose personal interest is attributed to having kept the records of this work open as long as they did.

In 1953, the Nevada Presbytery made a deliberate planting effort in Las Vegas – announced on the radio and in the newspapers.

This time it worked!

The church grew from 47 first meeting and was organized in that year. It grew to 537 members in 1955 – and to 1620 by 1987.

The original building, masonry laid by its members, burned in the mid-eighties. The new sanctuary building had just opened and all church functions including Sunday School and the nursery transferred into its narthex ! (and a the few ancillary rooms). Can you imagine that in your church?

Its replacement became the multi-purpose building of today – sized for Sunday school classes of the late 80s. Sadly the roof leaked and so did the walls – the rain and the grass sprinklers doing as effective a job by the mid-90s as the fire had a decade before. By then, the day school and the pre-school had begun to crowd out the church activities – but with the water damage (mold) they were spun off to other churches, not to return.

All of the Presbyterian witness in the valley grew out of this mother church – one way or another.

Newly called, the Reverend Jim Houston-Hencken officiated at the 50th Anniversary dinner 2003 -- off-site on the strip because the facility would not hold all who wanted to attend!

At dinner, he observed...



The header of the church website features a logo on the left with a cross and the text "A Christ centered family" and "First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas". Below the logo is a navigation menu with the following items: Home, Praising, Growing, Loving, Serving, and About Us. To the right of the menu are several small photographs showing church members engaged in various activities, including a man at a podium, two women in purple and blue, a group of children, a man holding a child, and a large cross on a building.

- At least two mission attempts from 1905 – about 1912.
- Deliberate planting in 1953 by Nevada Presbytery
- Grew from 47 first meeting to 537 in 1955 to 1620 in 1987
-- *A history of fire and water – and schools* --
- The Reverend Jim Houston-Hencken officiated at the 50th Anniversary dinner 2003 -- off-site on the strip
“Whenever two or three Presbyterians are gathered ...
... a chicken dies.”

(read the slide)

But enough about us...

The Session

BOO Chapter G3.02:

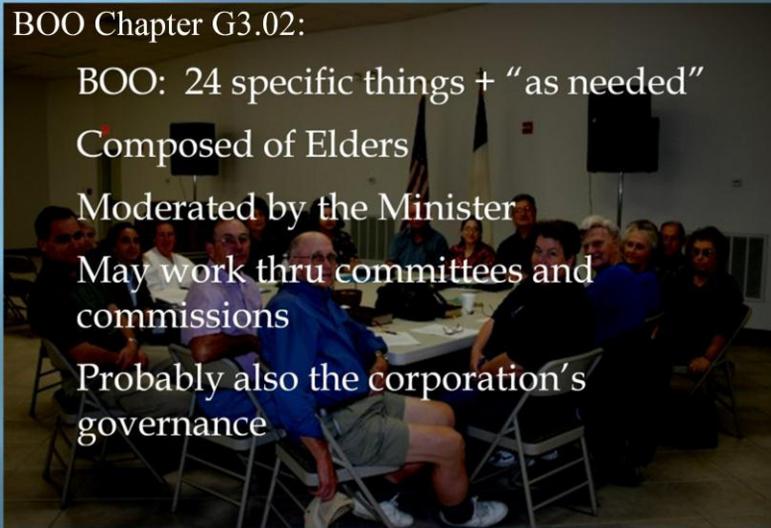
BOO: 24 specific things + “as needed”

Composed of Elders

Moderated by the Minister

May work thru committees and commissions

Probably also the corporation’s governance



Let's turn to the governance of the congregation ...

The lists of councils' responsibilities used to actually be lists – now a bit harder to read, they are in paragraph form – and have some address in the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity, Chapter 3.

G-3.02 THE SESSION

G-3.0201 Composition and Responsibilities

The session is the council for the congregation. It shall be composed of those persons elected by the congregation to active service as ruling elders, together with all installed pastors and associate pastors. All members of the session are entitled to vote. The pastor shall be the moderator of the session, and the session shall not meet without the pastor or designated moderator. If there is no installed pastor, or if the installed pastor is unable to invite another moderator, the presbytery shall make provisions for a moderator. Presbyteries shall provide by rule for moderators when the session is without a moderator for reasons of vacancy or inconvenience.

The session shall have responsibility for governing the congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that the congregation is and becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of the congregation, the session shall keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed congregations have

identified themselves throughout history (F-1.0303) and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304).

The session shall hold stated meetings at least quarterly. FPC session meets on the 4th Monday of each month.

Since 1955 the northern strand churches have been directed by the Book of Order to incorporate as a civil non-profit where state laws permit.

Who does what?

- The pastors – moderate Session, sit with the Deacons
- Stated Clerk – maintains the records of Session, Deacons

The Corporation / Nominating Committee of the Congregation

Spiritual Growth Commission of Session

Worship Commission of Session

Congregational Life Commission of Session

-- The Board of Deacons

Support Commission of Session

-- Personnel Committee of Session

To illustrate:

The Congregation – and the Corporation - of the First Presbyterian Church here in Las Vegas meets at least annually and had two standing committees for its work – the corporation’s board and the nominating committee, as required by the *Book of Order*. When the congregation calls a pastor, it prepares for the call with another congregation committee - the pastor nominating committee.

Its Session meets monthly and is organized into four commissions – each charged to dispose of the work within its purview. The Session disposes of all work outside these commission’s charters – and all that overlaps two or more of them.

Recall, our book of order defines a commission with the power to dispose – the committee with only the power to propose – its establishing body then reviews and disposes.

We used to govern through 12-16 committees, and session became overwhelmed reviewing and disposing (which means discussion it all over again).

In addition the Session is supported by a personnel committee which oversees the employees of the church – our administrators, Christian Educators, and custodians.

The PC (USA) Presbytery

- 173 Presbyteries composed of over 10,000 congregations
- BOO Chapter 3:
 - 27 enumerated powers + *all* not enumerated elsewhere.
 - Composed of Minister-members and its Churches (represented by session-elected, Elder-Commissioners)
 - Moderator is an elected member (minister or elder)
 - Stated Clerk is an elected member (minister or elder)
 - Work “as the whole,” thru committees, commissions, etc.
 - Officers: Moderator and Clerk (plus others)
 - May call / hire staff

So, lets turn to the next “higher court” – or “council” – to the body whose existence, by the way, makes our church “Presbyterian.”

G-3.03 THE PRESBYTERY

G-3.0301 Composition and Responsibilities

The presbytery is the council serving as a corporate expression of the church within a certain district and is composed of all the congregations and teaching elders within that

district. The presbytery shall adopt and communicate to the sessions a plan for determining

how many ruling elders each session should elect as commissioners to presbytery, with a goal of numerical parity of teaching elders and ruling elders. This plan shall require

each session to elect at least one commissioner and shall take into consideration the size of congregations as well as a method to fulfill the principles of participation and representation

found in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103. Ruling elders elected as officers of the presbytery shall be enrolled as members during the period of their service. A presbytery

may provide by its own rule for the enrollment of ruling elders serving as moderators of committees or commissions.

The minimum composition of a presbytery is ten duly constituted sessions and ten teaching elders.

Must meet twice a year, can meet more often – and can meet when specially called.

F-3.0209 General Authority of Councils

Councils possess whatever administrative authority is necessary to give effect to duties

and powers assigned by the Constitution of the church. **The jurisdiction of each council is limited by the express provisions of the Constitution, with powers not mentioned being reserved to the presbyteries.**

Nevada Presbytery meets in the Spring and in the Fall – in the “south” of our state - and in the “north” - respectively.

The Nevada Presbytery



30 Congregations and specialized ministries

1 new church development – Mesquite NV

CA churches – 2 in Bishop, 1 in Lee Vining, 1 in Truckee, and 1 in South Lake Tahoe.

1 NV church in Boise ID Presbytery

Governed by 53 minister members and 53 + 1 elected elder commissioners (at least)

Here is the Nevada Presbytery:

Actually 31 – Congregations, new church developments, worshipping fellowships, and specialized ministries:

- Amazing Grace – presbytery’s outreach to the homeless in Las Vegas (truth be told one of the larger bodies in our presbytery! – routinely performing weddings and the sacraments for its members),
- Hispanic, Sudanese – two ethnic worshipping fellowships under presbytery’s care and support
- 1 – now 3 new church developments – the one in Mesquite NV, just up the road about an hour away – and the new two here in the valley since I made this slide as our Tai-Laotian and Philippine worshipping fellowships have become NCDs by presbytery action this September. We installed one of their pastors a week ago last Sunday.
- 2 Korean-language congregations – we installed one of their pastors last Sunday!
- 5 Congregations in Eastern California congregations –2 in Bishop, 1 in Lee Vining, 1 in South Lake Tahoe, and 1 federated Presbyterian-Lutheran church in Truckee.

Note: there is 1 Nevada church dismissed to the Boise (ID) Presbytery in 1989, having tired of their 12 hour drive to presbytery when it met in the south: Owyhee

Presbyterian Church, Owyhee, NV which celebrated its one hundredth anniversary this summer (the church of Rousas Rushdoony, during its missionary days – for those of you in the Dominion Movement) – and a “would be” in Jackpot (if there was a church still there) – which has long been dismissed to Kendal Presbytery.

Most of our churches are not supported well with air travel – it’s a driving presbytery. When presbytery meets (our stated meetings are twice a year) – no matter where we meet -- someone drives eight hours to the meeting and eight hours back home again.



Presbytery of Nevada

775-852-1551

- Pre-organization (1861-1907)
 - 21 churches / 7 societies
- Organized in 1907 Incorporated 1909
 - 18 churches, 11 mission-funded works
- New School ministers / “Northern Strand”
- Various Synod(s) of California
 - Mission Area: Sierra Mission Partnership
- Active in Social Justice Issues
- Active in GA issues

<http://www.nevadapresbytery.org/>

Again, to illustrate:

Nevada is a mining state –

- open pit mining where the minerals lie close to the surface,
- placer mining where there is flowing water,
- hard rock mining where the treasure is found way underground, and
- especially here in Las Vegas, our own, highly-specialized form of strip-mining – where the deep pockets of tourist wallets abound.

Since the early 1800s in Nevada, prospectors searched, miners came, cities sprang up, stores, schools, and churches were established, rich ore veins produced for a time – and then played out. The prospectors moved down the road, the miners and the cities followed – and the cycle repeated.

Today, there are 108 cities and towns in Nevada, with populations from 50 to over a half million . And there are also over 1300 ghost towns – some of which were populated for less than a year.

Over the last 200 years, 28 of these lasted long enough to have a Presbyterian Church established in them – only for it to be dissolved with the changes in their community.

But today, there are another 28 vibrant churches within the bounds of presbytery in

the communities that have survived –

- from one celebrating its 150th anniversary this last June in Carson City – the state’s capitol (the oldest, continuously-operating church in the state, by the way)
- to three new church developments all within Clark County along with three more worshipping fellowships / specialized ministries.

Across our presbytery, in one or another of these, God is worshipped each week in eight of the world’s languages.

Presbytery was organized in 1907 – and incorporated 1909 – with 18 churches and 11 mission-funded works. The pastors who organized these were primarily New School ministers – but from the “Northern Strand.” No surprise there, Nevada was brought into the union as a Northern State in the Civil War. Our Motto: “Battle Born” (although “skirmish borne” might be more appropriate to the actual level of fighting).

Various Synod(s) of California were the movers – we were the mission field from the west! So thinly populated and so few were our churches and their members, we (along with many other presbyteries) were formed into “Mission Area Units” who shared presbytery-level resources. Our’s, the Sierra Mission Partnership, was the last of the four of these to dis-assemble in our Synod – and it did this at the end of this last year.

The Presbytery has a long history of civil and ecclesiastical activism – in both: Social Justice Issues and GA issues – which we detailed before lunch.

Who does what?

- Moderator (plus Past and Vice) – moderates Presbytery
- Stated Clerk – maintains the records of Presbytery

Council - Trustees

Committee on Representation

Nominating Committee / Personnel Committee

Committee on Ministry

Committee on Mission Outreach

Committee on Equipping Ministries

Committee on Preparation for Ministry

Presbytery Permanent Judicial Commission

The Presbytery – and its Corporation meets at least twice, annually, in hosting churches in the north in the fall and south in the spring - on a pre-determined hosting schedule. It is composed of our 28 churches and its 53 pastor-members – but it meets with only the pastors and *commissioners* from its churches. Traditionally, the Presbyterian Women organization across our churches also meets at the same time/place.

The officers are as shown – and the Moderators (past, present, and vice) chair several of these committees, the Stated Clerk is the recorder for these several, as well.

The Council and its financial sub-committee, the Trustees, integrate the business aspects of Presbytery. The Trustees are the Corporation's Board.

The Committee on Representation ensures even and ratioed representation in the Presbytery's governance structure (a role specified in the PCUSA Constitution). Please note that several of the 17 items we voted on this summer change the constitutional ratios for committees – to a more practical “as evenly as possible” – rather than a hard goal, never possible to hit in small-number committee populations!

The nominating and personnel committees propose election of members / hire or contract persons to the governance and operating structure.

The mission work of Presbytery is done in the four “**bolded**” committees.

The only permanent commission has little work to do (we hope!).

Note that there is no “staff” or office -- as you might find in other presbyteries. We are still inventing ourselves – and have decided that staff – and an office, per se, may not be so important to our work.

The officers and committee members primarily work from their homes or home churches – and over the phone and internet! If we add a General Presbyter or presbytery executive, it will be simply an inbox/re-router of information to the committee or persons who do the work. When we invent our presbytery pastoral function (required in the constitution) we may distribute that among the pastors - active and Honorably Retired – adding professional counselors and counseling organizations, as needed, for specific problems as may arise.

The PC (USA) Synod

- 16 Synods composed of 173 Presbyteries
- BOO Chapter 3:
 - 19 enumerated powers + as granted by their presbyteries.
 - Composed of Presbytery Commissioners and staff
 - Moderated by an elected member (minister or elder)
 - Stated Clerk is called (minister or elder)
 - Work “as the whole,” thru committees, commissions, etc.
 - Officers: Moderator and Stated Clerk (plus others)
 - May call / hire staff

Lets go up another step, to another “council” – the synod.

G-3.04 THE SYNOD

G-3.0401 Composition and Responsibilities

The synod is the intermediate council serving as a corporate expression of the church throughout its region. It shall consist of not fewer than three presbyteries within a specific geographic region.

When a synod meets, it shall be composed of commissioners elected by the presbyteries.

Each presbytery shall elect at least one ruling elder and one teaching elder to serve as commissioners to synod. A synod shall determine a plan for the election of commissioners

to the synod, as well as the method to fulfill the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103; both plans shall be subject to approval

by a majority of the presbyteries in the synod. The commissioners from each presbytery

shall be divided equally between ruling elders and teaching elders. Each person elected

moderator or other officer shall be enrolled as a member of the synod until a

successor is
elected and installed.

Synod is responsible for the life and mission of the church throughout its region and for supporting the ministry and mission of its presbyteries as they seek to support the witness of congregations, to the end that the church throughout its region becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of the church throughout its region, it shall keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed communities have identified themselves through history (F-1.0303) and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304).

Synods must meet twice a year, can meet more often – and can meet when specially called.

The Synod



11 presbyteries in Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, and northern California

(3 presbyteries in Sierra Mission Partnership)

Governed by fifty two Elder/Minister Commissioners, elected by the eleven presbyteries within its boundaries.

Here is our synod - the Synod of the Pacific: 11 presbyteries in Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, and northern California.

Our Synod is composed of fifty two Commissioners elected by the eleven presbyteries within its boundaries – though at the plea of our smaller presbyteries, we agreed to reduce to 39 commissioners because of their shortage of qualified commissioners.

The Synod of the Pacific extends its personnel and benefits system to many of the member Presbyteries – becoming both the accountable body for these employees who serve the presbyteries – and the administrator of the “human resources” aspects of their employment. These aspects are managed at the policy level by the standing Mission Personnel Committee – of which I am a part.

Synod meets for about two days, semi-annually, as both its ecclesiastical and civil bodies.



A “Mission Support” Synod

- This Synod is structured to provide comprehensive support services for its presbyteries.
- It provides:
 - Administrative and Personnel Services
 - Financial Investment and Loan Opportunities
 - Health & Benefit Opportunities
 - Mission Treasury Services
 - Multi-Presbytery gatherings & workshops
 - Ecclesiastical functions as required by the Book of Order

This Synod is not a programmatic body – at the historic insistence of its Presbyteries.

Rather, it is a supportive body – providing the Presbyteries and their congregations with the resources and services they need to do the Mission of the Church.

The presbyteries are very happy with the synod and its operations – despite the recent and entirely mis-guided suggestions of the Middle governing body commission of GA this month to merge the 16 synods into five regional commissions of the GA – a move that we will vigorously oppose.



Who does What?

- The Synod Body is divided into three permanent committees for the mission purposes of the Synod (each commissioner on one committee): (SAM 3.1)
 - **Mission Finance Committee**
 - **Mission Partnership Committee**
 - **Mission Personnel Committee**
- And three other committees (smaller)
 - Nominating Committee
 - Committee on Representation
 - Coordinating Committee
- Synod Permanent Judicial Commission

The work of synod is guided by its committees. It is all pretty well detailed in the Synod of the Pacific Administrative Manual (SAM)

Here is our “SAM, SAM, SAM - I AM” introduction to the incoming commissioners ... (apologies to Dr Suess’ Cat in the Hat)

All of the commissioners are a member of one of the three biggies:

Mission Finance:

Part of our work is to run a bank! / This works for all to gain
Interest on investments makes / Good sense, it’s very plain!

Mission Partnership:

Still don’t know what part you’ll play? / There’s yet another group that’s
here to stay
Our Partnership Committee’s fun / And they stick around ‘til the work is
done.

Mission Personnel:

Personnel policies in SAM / Are found in section eight
They help with many situations / And we are told they’re really great

Some commissioners are also members of the “smaller committees” – and here is their introduction ...

Nominating:

Too many women / Or too many men
Then we have to / Start over again!

Representation:

COR stands for Representation / They meet with Nominations
To make sure that representation / Is each groups configuration!

Coordinating :

Finally, we have a Council / To coordinate it all
Reps from Presbys and chair-folk / Step forward and answer the call.

They do the agendas / And plan the day
To keep us timely / 'fore we go away

And a few commissioners are on the *Permanent Judicial Commission:*

Their meetings are infrequent / But long and hard they slave
Three days for a hearing / And unanimity they crave.

But cases come, and cases go / All the while they strive
And sometimes disagreements come / But love, in the end, will thrive!



Synod Staff

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Rob Brink



Wendy Warner



Ani Lele'a



Ann Butterfield



Kendra Fraser



Melinda Durham



Del Howley



Patrice Alshuth

Of course, the day-to-day work is done by the staff ...

Rob Brink – Synod Executive

I serve our Synod / lots of ways
In committees near / and far away

I have the vision / for the work we do
Evolving, / adapting / and keeping us new!

Wendy Warner – Stated Clerk (1/3 time)

The Clerk’s job varied / across a wide span
With judicial cases / to manage and then

Our Synod Assemblies, / no matter who’s here,
I have the job of / order (to appear)!

Ann Butterfield – Business Services Director

I direct our Business Services / And manage the office, too.
From audits / to budgets / and all the reports -
I give info / that’s true.

Ani Lele’a - Treasurer

When a church has money to invest
I find a good return is best!

I'm just the one you'll want to call
For I'm your Treasurer, after all!

Kendra Frazer -

Loans and our website are an important part
Of our Synod operation.

So I am just the one to call
If your church needs renovation!

Melinda Durham -

I'm new around here, / but I still see
About the health / of each employee.

You should not / hesitate to call
I'd like to an- / swer questions all!

Dell Howley –

Dell assists / part-time each week
Handles all / the jobs we seek
When her help / is sought each day
She's ready, / and willing, / and says OK!

Patrice Alshuth -

Your mission check / to Synod
Will put your mind / at ease.

And if you have some / questions
You should call me / please!

... and that is our Synod! SAM , I AM!

The PC (USA) General Assembly

- Composed of 173 Presbyteries (in 16 Synods)
- BOO Chapter 3:
 - 24 enumerated powers + as granted by the presbyteries.
 - Composed of an equal number of Minister and Elder Commissioners from the Presbyteries
 - Moderated by an elected member (minister or elder)
 - Stated Clerk is elected (minister or elder)
 - Work “as the whole,” thru committees, commissions, etc. – and the GA Council, Office of the GA, four \$\$ corporations
 - Officers: Moderator and Stated Clerk (can have others)
 - May hire staff – and lots of it!

Finally we get to the highest council – the General Assembly of the denomination.

G-3.05 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

G-3.0501 Composition and Responsibilities

The General Assembly is the council of the whole church and it is representative of the unity of the synods, presbyteries, sessions, and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It shall consist of equal numbers of ruling elders and teaching elders elected by the presbyteries and reflective of the diversity within their bounds (F-1.0403 and G-3.0103), to serve as commissioners.

Each person elected Moderator shall be enrolled as a member of the General Assembly until a successor is elected and installed.

The General Assembly constitutes the bond of union, community, and mission among all its congregations and councils, to the end that the whole church becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of the whole church, it shall keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed communities have identified themselves through history (F-1.0303) and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304).

Meets every two years (now - to save \$\$), can meet more often – and can meet when specially called.



Here are the officers of the 219th General Assembly – (our latest) held in Minneapolis in early July, 2010.

See slide.

They were joined by 710 commissioners – evenly divided between Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and Elders (now Teaching and Ruling Elders) – and a host of advisors and observers!

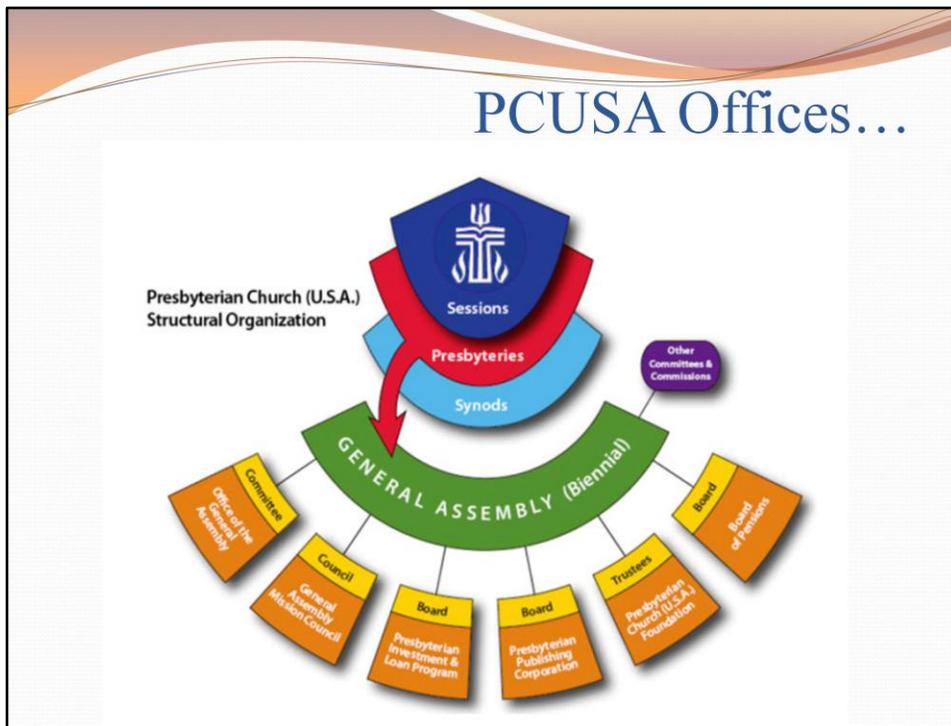
Although 85% of GA commissioners have never been to a GA before – and will never return to a subsequent one, most will have served in one of the other councils of our church: the session, presbytery, or synod.

The welcome and announcements for this GA were all expertly and informatively made by my brother, the Reverend Greg Ritter, a member of the hosting, Twin Cities Presbytery.

The commissioners met from the 1st to the 10th in the center of the five-county mosquito-control district, considered many issues and overtures, and then went home – having taken a number of actions – and having sent 17 questions to the presbyteries for their vote:

- Part 1 of the package they sent was a complete revision of the form of our government – removing the procedural stuff leaving the principles of government – which was passed by the majority vote of the presbyteries.
- Part 2 - A new Confession of faith – which was rejected by the presbyteries.
- Part 3 - Fifteen miscellaneous but specific paragraph revisions to the *Book of Order* – which were all passed by the presbyteries.

Only one of all of these actions and questions to hit the national news – and because of its misinterpretation by both the news media and both of its “sides” within our own denomination (!) - can you guess which one?



The day-to-day work of our denomination is coordinated from headquarters in Louisville, KY. (Right next to the newly-built Yum Center for you sports buffs). I toured the headquarters during the moderators conference a year ago, November.

The **GAMC** offices are in the headquarters. All voting members of the GAMC also serve as the board of directors of the **Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation** (the principal legal corporation of the denomination), which receives, holds, and transfers property, and facilitates the management of the church's corporate affairs. The GAMC advises and responds to the General Assembly on priorities, programs, and strategies for addressing matters of concern for the Ministries of our church – its primary purpose is to lead and coordinate the total mission program. (<http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/gamc/about-gamc/>)

The **OGA** offices are also in the Louisville headquarters; but some are the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This office serves as the ecclesiastical arm of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). One of the six agencies of the PC(USA), it offers support in the areas of governance and structure. It is directed by the [Stated Clerk of the General Assembly](#), with a 70-member staff. (<http://oga.pcusa.org/whoweare.htm>)

The **Presbyterian Foundation** is charged by the General Assembly with the responsibility and accountability for raising money, and today, through New Covenant

Trust Company, providing trust and investment management services, for the mission of the entire denomination. With assets of \$1.6 billion, the Presbyterian Foundation stands as one of the largest religious foundations in the United States. The Foundation is located in offices just across the river from Louisville – in Jeffersonville, IN. My brother, The Reverend Greg Ritter (you remember “the Voice of the 219th GA”) was the Vice President for Development in the Foundation – and gave them several of their best fund raising years. Although the Foundation is reorganizing itself (“to better serve its clients ...”), you might find yourself interfacing more with a regional representative nearer your office. (http://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/about_us/1/about_us.aspx)

The **Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc.** is a nonprofit corporation of [The Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\)](#) that was created to provide low-cost loans to churches, governing bodies and related entities of the denomination for capital projects. Funds for these loans come from two sources – endowment funds of PC(USA) and money invested by Presbyterian members, churches and governing bodies. It is located in the headquarters in Louisville. (<http://pilp.pcusa.org/>)

The **Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC)** is the denominational publisher for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), but the materials it issues under its [Westminster John Knox Press](#) imprint cover the spectrum of modern religious thought and represent the work of scholarly and popular authors of many different religious affiliations. PPC's Geneva Press imprint is for a specifically Presbyterian audience. Again, offices in the Louisville Headquarters. (<http://www.ppcbooks.com/>)

In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), **the Board of Pensions** is the board responsible for benefits. The Board of Pensions is governed by an independent thirty-three member board of directors nominated by the General Assembly Nominating Committee and elected by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Their principal offices are located in Philadelphia, PA where they have been since before the reunion – but you may interface with them, or a regional representative. (<http://www.pensions.org/portal/server.pt>)

So, when you say “Louisville” you are pretty much talking about the denominational headquarters.

GAMC offices

	PC(USA) Agencies	Mission & Ministry	Periodicals	Tools
 <p>PC(USA) Home Copyright PC(USA) Privacy Policy Contact Web Staff</p>	PC(USA) Home	1,001 New Worshiping Communities	Call to Worship	Curriculum
	Board of Pensions		Horizons	Find a congregation
	General Assembly Mission Council	Compassion, Peace and Justice	Mission Crossroads Magazine	Find a ministry
	Office of the General Assembly	Evangelism and Church Growth	Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study	Make a gift
	PC(USA) Foundation	Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries/PW	Presbyterian Planning Calendar	Manage subscriptions
	Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program	Stewardship	Presbyterians Today	Presbyterian 101
	Presbyterian Publishing Corporation	Theology Worship and Education	Racial Ethnic Torch	Presbyteries and synods
		Vocation		Research Services
		World Mission		Work for the church

The **General Assembly Mission Council** (third entry down in the left column – and the whole of the middle column) is the ministry and mission agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Six ministry areas carry out our missional work: Compassion, Peace and Justice; Evangelism and Church Growth; Racial Ethnic and Women’s Ministries/Presbyterian Women; Theology, Worship and Education; Vocation; and World Mission. Together with Shared Services, and Communications and Funds Development, these ministry areas work to inspire, equip, and connect all Presbyterians for the church’s work.

The point of this slide really is to show you the access to the headquarters – at the bottom of nearly every page on the PCUSA website – click away to the office of your need!

GAMC Vocation – ministry partners

- **Vocation ministry partners**
 - Administrative Personnel Association of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
 - The Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities
 - Association for Retired Ministers, their Spouses or Survivors
 - ...
- **Vocation Ministries**
 - Christian Educators
 - Christian Vocation
 - Church Leadership Connection
 - Commissioned Ruling Elders
 - Financial Aid
 - ...



Linda Valentine,
Executive Director

And here is where you all plug in organizationally!

Linda is your headquarters contact as a vocation ministry partner through the APA.



So - here again is another view of our denomination in whole in 2010:

(under the watchful eyes of John Calvin and John Knox)

2+ million members in 10,751 congregations.

From a “council” perspective, that is: 10,751 Sessions, 173 Presbyteries, 16 Synods, and General Assembly.

Overview 3

HIS story – in the Context of YOUR story
How did we get to wherever we are?

Where are we now? -- and -- Who's Who in the Zoo?

- The Constitution – *Book of Confessions*
- PCUSA Structure
- The VIPs
- **2:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Break**

- **2:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.**

Where are we going? -- and -- What does it mean to me?

The Final Exam

So in this 75 minutes, today -- we covered:

- The Constitution – *Book of Confessions*
- PCUSA Structure
- The VIPs

Well, its time to fight those mid-afternoon sags – take a 15 minute break!

See you back at 2:30, though wait till you see what I have for you then.