

[OVT-030] On Amending G-3.0104 to Allow Appointment of Ruling Elder Moderator or Moderation of Session Electronically from a Remote Location in Extraordinary Circumstance

Source: Presbytery

Event: 224th General Assembly (2020)

Committee: Unassigned

Sponsor: Southeastern Illinois Presbytery

Type: General Assembly Full Consideration

Recommendation

The Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to G-3.0104 to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

Shall the first paragraph of G-3.0104 be amended as follows: [Text to be added is shown as italic.]

"The pastor of a congregation shall be the moderator of the session of that congregation. In congregations where there are co-pastors, they shall both be considered moderators and have provisions for designating who presides at a particular meeting. If it is impractical for the pastor to moderate, he or she shall invite another minister of the Word and Sacrament who is a member of the presbytery or a person authorized by the presbytery to serve as moderator. If there is no installed pastor, or if the installed pastor is unable to invite another moderator, the presbytery shall make provision for a moderator. Ordinarily, this appointed moderator is expected to be another minister of the Word and Sacrament who is a member of that presbytery. Extraordinary circumstances, such as extreme weather conditions or a lack of available substitutes within a reasonable geographic distance, may require the presbytery to appoint a ruling elder to moderate the session on a one-time basis or to allow a minister of the Word and Sacrament who is a member of the presbytery to moderate a single session meeting electronically from a remote location."

Rationale

In larger metropolitan areas when there is a need for substitute session moderator leadership, there are usually several pools of people from which to draw, such as the pool of retired ministers of the Word and Sacrament or ministers of the Word and Sacrament serving in Presbyterian congregations. The reality is different in presbyteries that have wide geography and very small congregations, many of whom lack full-time pastoral leadership. These congregations are usually able to secure the cooperation of ministers of the Word and Sacrament from other places in the presbytery to moderate their sessions. While it is sometimes personally inconvenient for these individuals to assume such duties, they step up and do so for the good of the church. We thank God for their service. There are times, however, when for unexpected urgencies such as inclement weather or illness, these individuals are not able to moderate a scheduled session meeting and are not able to find a substitute. In such a situation, the session cannot meet and the work of the church grinds to a halt. We propose a modest change in the *Book of Order*, under which presbyteries would be allowed to establish their

own procedures for expeditious one-time appointment of a ruling elder to moderate a session meeting or, alternatively, for the appointment of a minister of the Word and Sacrament to moderate the meeting electronically.

Resource Persons

Advocates

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CRITERIA FOR OVERTURE EVALUATIONS
OVERTURES FOR 224TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Item: 030 – On Amending G-3.0104 to Allow Appointment of Ruling Elder Moderator or Moderation of Session Electronically from a remote Location in Extraordinary Circumstance

1. Likelihood that Presbytery's action will be crucial (are others likely to sign on, whether we do or not?) I assume there will be support for this action.
2. Impact on Presbytery. Does this overture propose a change that will have an effect on congregations in our Presbytery? Yes, if enacted we would need to modify the COM Handbook to allow for this options based on changes made to the Book of Order.
3. Special expertise. Is this a topic on which Presbytery has specialized knowledge or expertise? We certainly have extreme weather on occasion that would make such a rule change very helpful.
4. Significance to the denomination. Is this an overture that has intrinsic value to the denomination, or is it a minor issue that could be pursued in another way, without an overture? It needs to be done in this manner to allow for changes to the Book of Order.
5. Unintended consequences: Is the overture understandable, and does it accomplish its purposes? Yes it is clear.
6. Relation to Presbytery policy. Are any of Presbytery's policies affected by the overture? Yes the COM Handbook would need to provide for this change.

Bob Schulz, Stated Clerk

Date: 2/5/2020

[OVT-031] On the Inclusion of Inclusive Gender Options When Gender Information is Collected by Any Entity in the PC(USA)

Source: Presbytery
Committee: Unassigned

Event: 224th General Assembly (2020)
Sponsor: National Capital Presbytery
Type: General Assembly Full Consideration

Recommendation

The Presbytery of National Capital overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to approve the addition of inclusive gender options when gender information is collected by any entity in the PC(USA). This includes but is not limited to: session annual statistical reports, registration forms for any PC(USA) body or gathering, pastor information forms (PIFs), ministry information forms (MIFs), and other statistical measures.

Rationale

Our faith teaches us that God created all humanity in the divine image. As Genesis 1:26 proclaims, "Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.'"

From that basic conviction about our universal human condition, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the following statement of inclusion of transgender members of our church:

Transgender inclusion is lived out in our congregations and Presbyterian institutions in the following ways:

- Welcoming statements that specifically name transgender and gender non-binary people as included within the life of the church.
- Policies that are inclusive of transgender and gender non-binary people.
- Available facilities such as bathrooms that are either designated as gender neutral, or allow for transgender and non-binary people to use the facility that matches their gender identity.
- Worship, liturgy, and hymns employ language inclusive of all gender identities.
- Transgender and gender non-binary people's pronouns are respected and used appropriately.

(*Minutes*, 2018, Part I, p. 1051)

Therefore, we follow up on this recommendation and state that it is time to enact policies that are inclusive of transgender and people who identify as non-binary by counting them in all our roles across the PC(USA).

Supporting Document A

A sample template for gender options is found below, modified from a UCLA Law School document.

What is your gender identity? (Check all that apply)

Male

Female

trans male/trans man

trans female/trans woman

genderqueer/gender non-conforming/non-binary

different identity (please state): _____

<https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/geniuss-report-sep-2014.pdf>

Advocates 

CRITERIA FOR OVERTURE EVALUATIONS
OVERTURES FOR 224TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Item: 031 – On the Inclusion of Inclusive Gender Options When Gender Information is Collected by Any Entity in the PC(USA)

1. Likelihood that Presbytery's action will be crucial (are others likely to sign on, whether we do or not?) This is a highly charged moral issue. Recent completion of medical forms for doctor visits included such options.
2. Impact on Presbytery. Does this overture propose a change that will have an effect on congregations in our Presbytery? Yes because these individuals will see the additions when filling out PC(USA) questionnaires.
3. Special expertise. Is this a topic on which Presbytery has specialized knowledge or expertise? No, I do not believe so.
4. Significance to the denomination. Is this an overture that has intrinsic value to the denomination, or is it a minor issue that could be pursued in another way, without an overture? This is an issue that will be debated across the spectrum from extremes of conservative to liberal views on the subject.
5. Unintended consequences. Is the overture understandable, and does it accomplish its purposes? I believe that will depend on the persons moral views of the subject.
6. Relation to Presbytery policy. Are any of Presbytery's policies affected by the overture? No.

Bob Schulz, Stated Clerk

Date: 2/6/2020