

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY/ELECTED OFFICERS

I. REFERRALS

Referrals to this committee were as follows: The Report of the Moderator, The Report of the Stated Clerk, The Report of the Permanent Committee on Judiciary, The Report of the Place of Meeting, The Memorial from Nashville Presbytery, The Memorial from Reverend Donny Acton, Grace Presbytery to General Assembly Instructing Presbyteries to Declare Their Position on the Issue of Marriages and Ordinations and Correct Errors of Immoral Practices, The Resolution on Nomination Process for All General Assembly Boards, The Commissioner's Resolution submitted by Reverend Cliff Hudson, Tennessee-Georgia Presbytery and The Resolution Regarding Ministers Officiating Same-Sex Weddings submitted by Elder Andy Holloway, Presbytery of East Tennessee.

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

Appearing before the committee were: Reverend Mitch Bolton, Past Moderator; Reverend Michael Sharpe, Stated Clerk; Mr. Bill Tally, member of the General Assembly Judiciary Committee; Reverend Corey Cummings, member of the General Assembly Judiciary Committee; Reverend Donnie Acton, Grace Presbytery, Elder Andy Holloway, Presbytery of East Tennessee; and Reverend Linda Snelling, Red River Presbytery. Mr. Jaime Jordan, Legal Counsel, submitted remarks but did not appear before the Committee.

We wish to express our appreciation to the persons of counsel for their presentations.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRALS

A. REPORT OF THE MODERATOR

The committee reviewed the Report of the Moderator and recommendation as printed in the Preliminary Minutes.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That the 193rd General Assembly exercises its authority to interpret the constitution (Const. 9.4c) by clearly answering the following questions regarding the oaths taken during the ordination of elders/deacons (2.92) and ministers (6.36) and adding the assembly's interpretive rulings to the Cumberland Presbyterian Digest.

Question 1: Regarding sections 2.92 and 6.36, questions I-VII, must a licentiate seeking ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament or a layperson seeking ordination as a deacon or elder within the Cumberland Presbyterian Church answer in the affirmative to each of their respective constitutional questions?

Question 2: Regarding sections 2.92 and 6.36, question II: is the entire Confession of Faith sections 1.0 through 7.08 "essential doctrines" for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in faith and practice, or are some portions of the Confession of Faith "essential" and some portions "non-essential"? If some of the Confession is non-essential, which portions are essential? Who or what has the authority to determine which portions are essential?

Question 3: If a minister, elder, or deacon duly ordained in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church willingly and openly preaches and teaches against our doctrine, should they be subject to disciplinary action by their proper judicatory?

RECOMMENDATION 1: That Recommendation 1 in the Report of the Moderator (stated above) be approved and the following be adopted in response to the questions it poses;

Question 1. The Constitution already states that the questions must be answered in the affirmative before ordination and we concur with the Constitution.

Question 2. We assert that the Confession of Faith and the Constitution do not contain nonessentials.

Question 3. According to the Constitution this question is addressed by the Rules of Discipline. 4.104.

B. REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK

The committee reviewed the Report of the Stated Clerk.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Stated Clerk, "that the 193rd General Assembly encourage all churches, presbyteries and denominational ministries to work towards the implementation of the Vision of Ministry and Strategy Action Plan for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church," be adopted.

CHURCH CALENDAR 2024-2025

July-2024

- 7-12 CPYC at Bethel University
- 8 Summer Session - 2nd term begins Bethel University
- 8-12 D.Min. Residency Memphis Theological Seminary
- 13 Program of Alternate Studies Graduation, 1st CP Church, McKenzie, Tennessee
- 13-22 PAS Summer Extension School, Bethel University
- 20 Children's Fest at Bethel University

August-2024

- 1-Sept 30 Christian Education Season
- 12 Bethel University Fall Semester Begins
- 18 Seminary/PAS Sunday
- 20 Bethel University Commencement
- 26 MTS Fall Semester Begins

September-2024

- 8 Senior Adult Sunday
- 15 Christian Service Recognition Sunday

October-2024

- Church Paper Month Clergy Appreciation Month
- Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- 6 Worldwide Communion Sunday
- 8 A Day at the Park
- 13 Pastor Appreciation Sunday
- 27 Native American Sunday

November-2024

- Any Sunday Loaves and Fishes Program
- 1 All Saints Day
- 3 World Community Day (Church Women United)
- 3 Bethel University Sunday
- 3 Stewardship Sunday
- 10 Day of Prayer for People with Aids and Other Life-Threatening Illnesses
- 24 Bible Sunday
- Loaves and Fishes Offering

December-2024

- Any Sunday Gift to the King Offering
- 1-Dec 24 Advent in Church and Home
- 23 Gift to the King Offering
- 24 Christmas Eve
- 25 Christmas Day

January-2025

- 6 Epiphany
- 6-7 Stated Clerks' Conference
- 7 Human Trafficking Awareness Day
- 15 Deadline for receipt of 2024 Our United Outreach Contributions
- 21 Family Sunday
- 22 MTS Classes Begin

February-2025

- Black History Month
- 1 Annual congregational reports due in General Assembly office
- 2 Denomination Day
- 2 Historical Foundation Offering
- 11 Our United Outreach Sunday

March-2025**Women's History Month (USA)****5-Apr 20 Ash Wednesday Lent to Easter****7 World Day of Prayer (CWU)****18-20 Preaching Conference****25 National Farm Workers Week****April-2025****13 Palm/Passion Sunday****17 Maudy Thursday****18 Good Friday****20 Easter Sunday****22 Earth Day****May-2025****1 National Day of Prayer****4 Bethel University Commencement****11 MTS Closing Convocation & Graduation****Stott-Wallace Missionary Fund Offering****World Mission Sunday****25 Memorial Day Offering for Military Chaplains & Personnel for USA churches****June-2025****8 Pentecost****16-21 General Assembly, Knoxville, Tennessee****30 Cumberland Presbyterian Church Ministries Sunday**

RECOMMENDATION 3: That Recommendation 2 of the Report of the Stated Clerk, “that the 193rd General Assembly approve the following dates for the 2024-2025 Church Calendar,” be adopted:

RECOMMENDATION 4: The Judiciary Committee recommends that a Committee be formed to explore the appropriate next steps in trademark registration of the words “Cumberland Presbyterian”. (see page 49, Preliminary Minutes)

C. REPORT OF THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

RECOMMENDATION 5: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Permanent Committee on Judiciary, “that the Guidelines for Changes in Congregational Affiliation (see Appendix A, Preliminary Minutes page 83),” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 6: That Recommendation 2 of the Report of the Permanent Committee on Judiciary, “that the permanent judiciary committee schedule a zoom meeting with members of Cauca Valley presbytery within 60 days of the close of the 193rd General Assembly. The Permanent Judiciary Committee can meet with Cauca Valley Presbytery as a whole committee, or with select members of the Committee along with the Missions Ministry Team Leader and the Director of Global Missions,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 7: That Recommendation 3 of the Report of the Permanent Committee on Judiciary, “that The Rules of Discipline, Section 2.5 be amended to read:

Each presbytery shall have a standing commission which shall be called the “disciplinary commission.” Each judicatory above the session shall have a standing commission which shall be called the “judiciary committee.” Notwithstanding that these bodies may be called “committees,” each of these standing commissions shall exercise the powers and responsibilities entrusted to it under these Rules and shall be authorized to deliberate upon and conclude any business submitted to it pursuant to these Rules. A judicatory may assign other duties and responsibilities to its judiciary committee or its disciplinary commission, with or without the authority to act upon or to conclude such other the matters,” be received favorably and referred to the Joint Committee on Amendments.

D. REPORT OF THE PLACE OF MEETING COMMITTEE

Interested Presbyteries are encouraged to contact the Stated Clerk to offer an invitation to host General Assembly.

E. MEMORIAL FROM NASHVILLE PRESBYTERY

WHEREAS when a Cumberland Presbyterian elder or deacon transfers membership from one Cumberland Presbyterian Church to another Cumberland Presbyterian Church, should that elder or deacon be elected to the diaconate or session at the subsequent Cumberland Presbyterian Church the previous ordination is recognized and accepted and the member is not re-ordained but is installed after appropriate election; and

WHEREAS when a Cumberland Presbyterian minister transfers from one presbytery to another the ordination is recognized and accepted by the receiving presbytery; and

WHEREAS the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America have the same Confession and the same Constitution:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Nashville Presbytery memorializes the General Assembly to add to the Constitution a new section (2.97), to wit:

“The Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America, having the same Confession and Constitution, shall recognize and accept the ordinations of ministers, elders, and/or deacons should a person ordained to one of these offices transfer from one Cumberland Presbyterian denomination to the other.”

I certify that this is a true copy of a memorial adopted by Nashville Presbytery on April 27, 2024.

Signed,
Keith Vanstone
Nashville Presbytery Stated Clerk

RECOMMENDATION 8: That the Memorial from Nashville Presbytery be received favorably and referred to the Joint Committee on Amendments.

IV. REFERRALS FROM GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A. MEMORIAL FROM COMMISSIONER REVEREND DONNY ACTON, GRACE PRESBYTERY TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTING PRESBYTERIES TO DECLARE THEIR POSITION ON THE ISSUE OF MARRIAGES AND ORDINATIONS AND CORRECT ERRORS OF IMMORAL PRACTICES

WHEREAS, The General Assembly has passed various memorials related to LGBTQ+ marriages and ordinations (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, queer, and “+” which includes other sexual practices often involving sexually promiscuity or homosexual practices) stating that the position of the CP Church is that the homosexual lifestyle is incompatible with the Christian lifestyle and that homosexuality as a practice is not in keeping with Christian marriage or the ordination of church leaders,

AND, WHEREAS, the church’s position is posted on the denominational website, both the 1996 and 2022 statements, Cumberland.org, Office of the GA, Statement Homosexuality,

AND, WHEREAS, CP leaders continue to state that the Confession of Faith clearly states marriage is between a man and a woman (CF 6.17),

AND, WHEREAS, The CP Constitution states that General Assembly is to “Bear testimony against error in doctrine and immorality in practices, injuriously affecting the church” (9.4 b.), thus, in keeping with its directive, the GA has given guidance and interpretation by approving memorials related to the homosexual lifestyle, marriages and ordinations,

AND, WHEREAS, The 1996 disclaimer found at the bottom of the memorial which states, “This statement [against the marriage and ordination of practicing homosexuals] is to be understood as a theological and social statement and not to be understood as a rule or principle for ordination but never to usurp the authority of presbytery or session to ordain/” is probably in error, because the statement is out of context, outside the body of the memorial, and does not follow normal protocol, memorial statements always follow WHEREAS or THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, and therefore the disclaimer appears to be something someone added that was not part of the original 1996 memorial,

AND, WHEREAS, the promotion and practice of marriages and ordinations of practicing homosexuals within the CP Church is a divisive practice, a cause for accusations and charges against ministers and sessions, a cause for division and

potential dissolution of the CP Church,

AND, WHEREAS, ministers, local churches and presbyteries are the only persons and judicatories that can conduct ordinations and marriages, General Assembly does not have direct oversight of ministers or churches, therefore, they need oversight from the presbyteries,

AND, WHEREAS, unity is found in a shared history and in shared values and theology, and Presbyterianism is a system of judicatories (congresses) where unity is found when the minority respects the decisions of the majority,

AND, WHEREAS, the guidance given by the General Assembly, based on prior approved memorials of GA concerning conducting marriages and ordinations of practicing homosexuals must be applied by presbyteries,

AND, WHEREAS, if a presbytery is unwilling to follow GA directives and guidance, and permits pastors and churches to conduct marriages and ordinations of practicing homosexuals, it will result in disunity, destroy connectionalism, and break apart the global family of the CP Church, similar to what other denominations are now experiencing,

AND, WHEREAS, the General Assembly's guidance and directives on marriage and ordination of LGBTQ+ persons is rejected by a minority of churches in the presbyteries and a minority of our pastors, and by some leaders in our denomination,

Section 1: Declarations

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that for the sake of giving clarity to all CPs as to where things stand in the CP Church, that each presbytery be instructed to vote in the next regular meeting of presbytery and clearly state the presbytery's position with respect to the ordination of LGBTQ+ persons (i.e. persons who are proclaiming they are sexually promiscuous and/or practicing homosexuals) as deacons, elders and ministers, and if ministers are authorized by their presbytery to conduct weddings for LGBTQ+ persons,

AND, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that each presbytery answer these questions thus making it clear the position of each presbytery, 1. Will Presbytery allow ministers to conduct/officiate LGBTQ+ weddings? 2. Will Presbytery allow churches and presbytery to ordain deacons, elders and ministers who are professing and practicing LGBTQ+ persons? And by doing so pastors and churches in the presbytery and in other presbyteries know the condition of the CP Church with respect to this issue,

Section 2: Accommodations

AND, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that presbyteries need to clearly state their position so that pastors know if they should accept a pastorate or not accept a pastorate in a church in that presbytery, if called, and likewise, pastors and churches might desire to transfer out of a presbytery because of a presbytery's position on marriage and ordinations,

AND, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that in the short-term, GA ask synods to give pastors and churches every consideration to move to another presbytery if that presbytery votes to allow LGBTQ+ marriages and ordinations, and after a synod's ruling, if not in agreement with the church's request to transfer to another presbytery or form a new presbytery, said churches and pastors may appeal to GA, either the GA's Permanent Judiciary Committee (Rules of Discipline 2.5, and see Committee explanation found on the GA Office's Website) or if so desired GA itself,

Section 3: Accountability and Correction

AND, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that GA's Permanent Judiciary Committee determine what steps should be taken by synods with respect to presbyteries that vote to approve allowing ministers to conduct weddings and churches and presbyteries to allow ordinations of LGBTQ+ persons, and what steps General Assembly should take if a synod permits its presbyteries to conduct such weddings and ordinations, by the next General Assembly,

Section 4: Correct the 1996 Memorial

AND, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the GA's Permanent Judiciary Committee examine the 1996 memorial about the Homosexual lifestyle being incompatible with the Christian life style and determine if the unusual tag-line disclaimer at the end of the memorial is out of order, and if determined the disclaimer is out of order strike the disclaimer from the GA website and only post the 2022 memorial and a correct and unadulterated version of the 1996 memorial.

RECOMMENDATION 9: That the Memorial submitted by Commissioner Reverend Donny Acton, Grace Presbytery, be denied.

B. RESOLUTION REGARDING MINISTERS OFFICIATING SAME-SEX WEDDINGS SUBMITTED BY ELDER ANDY HOLLOWAY, PRESBYTERY OF EAST TENNESSEE

The committee reviewed the following Resolution:

The content of this resolution was approved by the Synod of the Southeast at its general meeting in Scottsboro, Alabama, on Saturday, May 4, 2024. Unfortunately, that was past the deadline of April 30, 2024, to be included in the Preliminary Minutes of this General Assembly; therefore, it is being presented as a resolution by a duly elected commissioner.

WHEREAS, the CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH was organized in 1810 and the CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Confession of Faith was the Westminster Standards with exceptions;

AND, WHEREAS, Chapter 24 of the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) was not part of the texts rejected by our founding fathers;

AND, WHEREAS, the WCF clearly stated in Chapter 24, “Marriage is to be between one man and one woman: neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband, at the same time.”;

AND, WHEREAS, the 1883 edition of the CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Confession of Faith also clearly stated in Article 95, “Marriage is to be between one man and one woman: neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband, at the same time.”;

AND, WHEREAS, The Presbyterian and Reformed Review, Volume 13, 1902, pp. 417-427 notes all the changes made to the WCF by the CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1810-1901, not one change was to the definition of a marriage (one man and one woman);

AND, WHEREAS, during all the revisions of the CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Confession of Faith up to 1984, no changes were made to the chapter dealing with marriage, especially stating, “Marriage is between one man and one woman.”;

AND, WHEREAS, the 1984 CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Confession of Faith clearly states, “Marriage is between a man and a woman” [6.17];

AND, WHEREAS, in 2024 the CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Confession of Faith still states, “Marriage is between a man and a woman” [6.17];

AND, WHEREAS, the CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Confession of Faith states clearly, “The scriptures are the infallible rule of faith and practice, the authoritative guide for Christian living.” [1.05];

AND, WHEREAS, the Bible teaches us the following in Romans 1:21-32 (ESV):

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.;

AND, WHEREAS, the Bible teaches us the following in Romans 1:21-32 (NIV 1984):

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way, the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.

AND, WHEREAS, the Bible teaches us the following in Romans 1:21-32 (RSV):

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing

shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to improper conduct.

AND, WHEREAS, the Bible teaches us the following in Romans 1:21-32 (NKJV):

For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting.

AND, WHEREAS, the Bible teaches us the following in Romans 1:21-32 (NASB):

For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged natural relations for that which is contrary to nature, and likewise the men, too, abandoned natural relations with women and burned in their desire toward one another, males with males committing shameful acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a depraved mind, to do those things that are not proper.;

AND, WHEREAS, Romans 1:26-28 (Greek):

δια τουτο παρεδωκεν αυτους ο Θεος εις παθη ατιμιας αι τε γαρ θηλειαι αυτων μετηλλαξαν την φυσικην χρηση εις την παρα φυσιν ομοιως τε και οι αρρενες αφεντες την φυσικην χρηση της θηλειας εξεκαυθησαν εν τη ορεξει αυτων εις αλληλους αρσενες εν αρσεσιν την ασχημοσυνην κατεργαζομενοι και την αντιμισθια ην εδει της πλανης αυτων εν εαυτοις απολαμβανοντες Και καθως ουκ εδοκιμασαν τον Θεον εχειν εν επιγνωσει παρεδωκεν αυτους ο Θεος εις αδοκιμον νουν ποιειν τα μη καθηκοντα; (The intent of quoting the same Scripture passage from several references is to show that all modern English academic translations are in agreement with the Koine Greek.)

AND, WHEREAS, the plain reading of the biblical texts show same-sex sexual relationships and activities are contrary to the teaching of scripture;

AND, WHEREAS, the Bible teaches us the following in Revelation 2:12-17 (NASB):

And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this: I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold firmly to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you, because you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality. So you too, have some who in the same way hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will wage war against them with the sword of My mouth. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows except the one who receives it.

AND, WHEREAS, all ministers in the CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH took the following vows before God and those in attendance (COF 6.36):

I. Do you believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired word of God, the authority for faith and practice?

II. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of faith of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church/Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America as containing the essential doctrines taught in the holy scriptures?

VI. As God may enable you, do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the church, irrespective of any opposition that may arise to you on that account?

VII. Do you promise to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, and endeavor to so conduct yourself both privately and publicly as not to give offense to Christ and his church?

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2024 General Assembly clear up the 1996 and 2022 statements dealing with homosexuality and declare once and for all that same sex lifestyle and the LGBTQ+ lifestyle are contrary to the plain teaching of the Bible;

AND, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2024 General Assembly clear up the 1996 and 2022 statements dealing with homosexuality and declare once and for all that same sex lifestyle and the LGBTQ+ lifestyle are contrary to the plain teaching of the CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN Confession of Faith;

AND, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2024 General Assembly remind each minister of the vows taken at the time of ordination;

AND, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2024 General Assembly remind each presbytery that any minister performing same sex marriages shall be charged with violation of their ordination vows and dealt with under The Rules of Discipline;

AND, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that ministers who are non-repentant of the violation of their ordination vows be charged with contumacy (stubborn refusal to obey or comply with authority) and stripped of their ordination;

AND, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the General Assembly Office send a communication to every Presbytery and every Cumberland Presbyterian congregation declaring our view on the same sex lifestyle and the LGBTQ+ lifestyle both being contrary to the plain teaching of the Bible and contrary to our Confession.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Holloway, Elder Commissioner from the Presbytery of East Tennessee
Synod of the Southeast

RECOMMENDATION 10: That the aforementioned Resolution from Elder Andy Holloway, Presbytery of East Tennessee, be denied.

Our intent in denying this Resolution is to affirm that relationships between ministers and sessions and ministers and presbyteries remain in keeping with our standing Rules of Discipline, and to uphold our Confession of Faith and our Constitution. We believe that the Resolution is not in keeping with the existing Rules of Discipline. We would hope that sessions and presbyteries always address discipline with Christian charity and love.

RECOMMENDATION 11: The committee recommends the following statement:

IN 1996 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT ON
HOMOSEXUALITY (General Assembly Minutes, page 313)

Whereas, in our society today, there are many issues which concern the people of God, one such issue being the rise in acceptance of and openness toward homosexual activity, and we, of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, believe there is a need to state clearly our understanding of the Biblical teaching about homosexual activity, and

Whereas, it is also our desire to set forth our position regarding the appropriate response of Christians and the church to this critical issue, especially in light of the trend in some Christian bodies toward the ordination of practicing homosexuals, and

Whereas we believe the scripture of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired word of God, the source of authority for faith and practice, and therefore, contemporary sexual attitudes and behavior are to be judged in the light of the Bible rather than the Bible being reinterpreted, modified, or overturned by current cultural trends in thought and behavior,

Be it resolved that the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church go on record affirming that Biblical teaching makes it clear that the practice of homosexuality is a sin, yet with the understanding that while God loves the sinner, He hates the sin, and His grace is available to all, "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him" John3:17

Be it further resolved, that since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with a Christian life style and since officers of the church must be "examples to the flock" the General Assembly go on record stating that the Cumberland Presbyterian Church does not condone the ordination of practicing homosexuals as Deacons, Elders or Ministers of Word and Sacrament; and

Be it further resolved, that the General Assembly state as its position that we, as Christians who are ourselves sinners redeemed by the grace of God, must reach out to those persons who are struggling with homosexuality, offering them Christian love, education, friendship, therapy and intercession to the end that they and we may experience true wholeness through the freeing, renewing grace of God in Jesus Christ.

As with any statement from General Assembly, any disciplinary actions arising from the interpretation of this statement must be conducted according to the Rules of Discipline. We request that this statement be transmitted by the clerk of the session for distribution to all churches and ministers.

C. COMMISSONER'S RESOLUTION FROM CLIFF HUDSON

WHEREAS, Jesus said, "And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand." Mark 3:25 ESV and,

WHEREAS, Charles Wesley once said, "Though we can't think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without all doubt, we may." And,

WHEREAS, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church finds herself at a crossroads after a set of Constitutional Amendments were not ratified, thus leaving the Confession of Faith and Constitution standing intact and unchanged and,

WHEREAS, there are voices within the church proclaiming that now is the time for continued division, the parting of ways, and permanent schism upon theological and ideological lines and,

WHEREAS, it is always better, by far, to think, pray, plan, reflect, and discern strategies and pathways moving forward,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the 193rd General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church that a two-year moratorium, or “cooling off period” be imposed upon congregations, church Sessions, presbyteries, and Synods before any scenarios discussed in the Report of the Judiciary Committee Appendix A “Guidelines for Changes in Congregational Affiliation, Preliminary Minutes, 2024 General Assembly shall occur, for the following purposes:

1. So that prayerful discernment may take place without impediment or interference.
2. So that Cumberland Presbyterians might realize that we are better together, despite our differences, and that we all agree that Jesus is Lord and we all wish to serve Him.
3. So that the Boards and Entities of the church may have time to prudently and patiently flesh out the best ministry outcomes if and when division occurs and that we change our thinking from “do it right now regardless of the consequences” to thinking about five, ten, and fifteen year outcomes that a new, younger generation of leadership will be left to deal with.
4. So that all Cumberland Presbyterians may find common ground in all of the wonderful ministries that God has given us, cultivating the fact that no matter what our differences, we agree on far more than we disagree.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Cliff Hudson, Commissioner, Tennessee-Georgia Presbytery

RECOMMENDATION 12: That the Commissioner’s Resolution submitted by Reverend Cliff Hudson, Tennessee-Georgia Presbytery, be denied.

The intent is laudable, and we hope that the members of our CPC congregations consider these items before reaching any decisions.

D. RESOLUTION ON NOMINATION PROCESS FOR ALL GENERAL ASSEMBLY BOARDS SUBMITTED BY REVEREND LINDA SNELLING, RED RIVER PRESBYTERY

WHEREAS, the 2012 General Assembly adopted Recommendation 12 of the Report Number 2 of the Committee on Judiciary (2012 GA minutes pages 366 and 381) “Recommendation 12: That Recommendation 8 of the Report of the Evaluation Committee, ‘that we recommend that the endorsement by a presbytery would be required for a nominee to be elected to serve on a Ministry Team, and the endorsement should include a form whereby the presbytery provides information about the nominee’s qualifications to serve on a ministry team’ be adopted. “

WHEREAS, the 2014 General Assembly adopted Recommendation 3 of the Nomination Committee Report (2014 GA pages 103 and 271) “Recommendation 3: That the requirements for endorsement process currently in place for Cumberland Presbyterian nominees filling vacancies on the Ministry Council, be utilized for all General Assembly boards and agencies.”

WHEREAS, General Assembly bylaws, Article 11.03.04 Committee on Nominations states “Presbyteries and synods and their moderators and stated clerks are requested to assist the Committee on Nominations by recommending persons for any position by providing the name and qualifications of the potential nominees to the Stated Clerk no later than February 1 on a form to be provided by the Stated Clerk. Nominations from the Floor shall also be in order.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the General Assembly bylaws Article 11.03 Committee on Nominations be amended by adding 11.03.06 to read as follows: All persons nominated will be required to have a Personal Data Form and General Assembly Nominating Endorsement Form on file with the General Assembly Stated Clerk prior to being nominated by the Committee on Nominations or nominated from the Floor.

RECOMMENDATION 13: That the resolution on nomination process for all general assembly boards submitted by Reverend Linda Snelling, Red River Presbytery, be denied.

The Judiciary Committee finds that there was insufficient notice for changes to be made to bylaws according to Tennessee law, which governs amendments to our General Assembly Corporation bylaws. Also, our Presbyterian form of

government allows for the spontaneity to nominate from the floor those who will serve on Boards and Agencies. Also, the selection process allows for Clerks of Sessions and Stated Clerks to endorse those candidates. Since the General Assembly has already accepted these changes, they should be added to the bylaws.

Respectfully submitted,
The Committee on Judiciary/Elected Officers