

**ACTIONS ON ORDINATION STANDARDS
by the 218th GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2008)**

Authoritative Interpretation of G-6.0108 (effective immediately)

Affirmed the action taken by the 217th General Assembly (2006) on the Report of the Theological Task Force and resolved three critical debates arising out of that Assembly, including overruling a problematic portion of the GAPJC decision in *Bush v. Presbytery of Pittsburgh*. Deepened the church's renewed commitment to our centuries-old tradition of respect for the freedom of biblically formed conscience.

- Candidates for office can declare scruples on matters of both belief and practice.
- All ordination standards (including the 'fidelity and chastity' clause of G-6.0106b) are treated equally and can be scrupled.
- Scruples "cannot excuse a candidate's inability to perform the constitutional functions unique to his or her office (such as administration of the sacraments)."

Authoritative Interpretation Concerning Ordination of Persons Involved in "Homosexual Practice" (effective immediately)

Declared that certain 1978-79 GA statements (that "unrepentant homosexual practice does not accord with the requirements for ordination") and "all subsequent affirmations thereof," whether by GAs or the GAPJC, are of "no further force or effect."

- Wiped the slate clean of all statements that might categorically exclude persons in same-sex relationships from ordained service.
- Left in place other more inclusive statements from 1978-79 – that examinations should be conducted with sensitivity and discretion, seminaries should apply non-discriminatory standards of admission, Presbyterians should reject their own homophobia and challenge that of others, the church should work to end discrimination and stereotyping in civil law and society.

Proposed Amendment of G-6.0106b (Amendment 08-B, must receive the approval of at least 87 of the 173 presbyteries)

Proposed a replacement of current G-6.0106b with a paragraph emphasizing the constitutional questions posed to candidates for office.

- Reaffirms the preeminent authority of Jesus Christ in the church and restores the hierarchy of authority reflected in other parts of the PCUSA Constitution.
- Broadens an excessively narrow focus on one contested sexual ethic.
- Would not require acceptance of LGBT candidates by any ordaining body, but would remove the presumption of many that they are exceptions to the rule.