



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

PRESBYTERY OF CINCINNATI PRESBYTERY OF DETROIT PRESBYTERY OF EASTMINSTER

PRESBYTERY OF LAKE HURON PRESBYTERY OF LAKE MICHIGAN PRESBYTERY OF MACKINAC PRESBYTERY OF MAUMEE VALLEY

PRESBYTERY OF MIAMI VALLEY PRESBYTERY OF MUSKINGUM VALLEY PRESBYTERY OF SCIOTO VALLEY PRESBYTERY OF THE WESTERN RESERVE

July 25, 2019

Patrice Hatley, Brady Radford, and members of the Administrative Commission,

The response of Patrice Hatley to the letter from Aaron Meadows, Moderator of the Synod of the Covenant and Patricia Megregian, Vice-Moderator of the Synod of the Covenant; left some unanswered questions.

Where are the hearings going to be held?

Is the open meeting policy of the General Assembly going to be followed?

“2. It is the policy of the General Assembly: the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board and the entities and work groups related to them, that their meetings shall be open to all interested persons....

3. In certain circumstances, when the confidentiality of the subject matter is impeding the open work of the group, meetings of these entities may be closed. The following requirements apply:

a. Subjects dealt with must be limited to property negotiation, personnel, civil and criminal litigation, including cases under the Rules of Discipline, or security.

b. Closed meetings may be authorized only after serious consideration and by a majority vote of the members present. Such closure must be limited in time and scope to the matters in 3(a) above.” (Manual of the General Assembly p. 55)

In your response you indicated that “we should consider the meetings next week closed.” How does this reflect the open meeting policy? At the General there were open hearings on the Overture from Cincinnati and from the Synod of the Covenant. The “reputational interest of individuals involved” was lost at the hearing before Committee 05 at the General Assembly and in the writing of the Overture from the Presbytery of Cincinnati.

How can the Alternative Resolution “1.b. Share concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom there are disagreements in a spirit of love and respect in keeping with Jesus’ teachings” be followed if the Synod of the Covenant is unaware of the comments?

How can the Synod of the Covenant response to the “inquiring into and settling allegations of disorder” if we are unaware of the allegations?

For GA Mid Council Committee 5 personnel issues were not part of the discussion. In the alternative resolutions, personnel issues are not listed. The list of reasons to move into Executive Session (if that is the intent of the AC) is not covered in the call of the AC or with the indication that there is no Judicial Process that is being used. If Judicial Process were to be suggested it would need to be a Disciplinary Case, the time from for any Remedial Case has passed since the last Synod Assembly.

In addition, item 4 in Seeking to be Faithful Together states “Share our concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom we have disagreements in a spirit of love and respect in keeping with Jesus’s teachings.”

What is the specific irregularity or delinquency that the AC is looking for?

If there is a specific issue, there can be an attempt to answer that issue or question. It is hard to prepare for a 10-minute presentation if the presenter is unaware of what needs to be presented.

Are you wanting a hearing to listen to what a person has to say or are you holding an investigation trying to find something the Synod has done wrong or how the Synod has been wronged?

A hearing sounds like you are moving towards reconciliation, while an investigation sound like you are moving more into Judicial Process or placing blame.

The only official records of the Synod of the Covenant are the Synod Assembly Minutes. The Synod Stated Clerks review each other’s minutes and make a recommendation to the General Assembly. The minutes of the Synod of the Covenant are approved by the General Assembly as the higher Governing Body.

The minutes of the Synod of the Covenant have had one exception approved by General Assembly in the last 15 years. That year there was one Synod Assembly meeting and the previous Stated Clerk forgot to list the last six years Synod PJC members in the minutes. The minutes of the Synod Assembly are the official records of the Synod of the Covenant.

The Synod of the Covenant only approves the Minutes of the Synod Assembly and Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporation. These are included in the Synod Assembly Minutes and also in the annual minute book. No other minutes are reviewed by the Synod Assembly. Nor have I reviewed any other Synod minutes in the four Synod Minute reviews that I have participated in where the Synod Committees or Synod Organizations have their minutes reviewed by the Synod Assembly. Presbytery minutes are reviewed by the Synods and report of that review is part of the Synod minutes.

Please provide some guidance as representatives of the Synod of the Covenant attempt to prepare for their 10-minute presentations.

I am asking for the following in advance of the hearings:

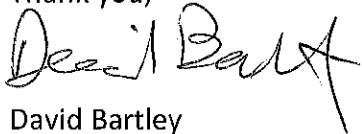
1. Where are the hearings going to be held?

2. Please reconfirm the times of the hearings.

3. We hereby inform the Administrative Commission that the Synod of the Covenant plans for Aaron Meadows, Synod Moderator, Pat Megregian, Synod Vice-Moderator, and David Bartley, Synod Stated Clerk, will be present during the hearings. This request follows the open meeting policy of the General Assembly.

4. We also inform the Administrative Commission that the Synod of the Covenant is planning to have an electronic recording of the hearings. This request is to allow for the Synod to better respond to concerns that may be voiced during the listening sessions.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Bartley". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

David Bartley

Stated Clerk

Synod of the Covenant