

Overture to Heartland Presbytery from the Grace Covenant Session

RE: Amending G-6.0106b

The Session of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, Overland Park, Kansas, respectfully request Heartland Presbytery to send the following overture to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

The Presbytery of the Heartland respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following amendment of the Book of Order to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

To delete the current text of G-6.0106b and to substitute the following:

b. Standards for ordained service reflect the church's desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life (G-1.000). The governing body responsible for ordination and/or installation (G-14.0240; G-14.0450) shall examine each candidate's calling, gifts, preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of office. The examination shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the candidate's ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003). Governing bodies shall be guided by scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates.

Rationale:

Currently some church members believe that homosexuality is sinful; however, homosexuals are members of the church, a church which is composed entirely of sinners. All church members are subject to the Great Commission which commands the followers of Christ to make disciples of all nations. (**Matthew 28:16-20**) The ability to completely fulfill the Great Commission requires the capacity to exercise all of the gifts of the Spirit, including ministry. (**1 Corinthians 12**) Therefore homosexual church members, if called by God, should be allowed to serve in ordained offices, thereby empowering these church members with the ability to fulfill the Great Commission.

Currently some church members believe that homosexuality was considered sinful by the early church and consequently homosexuals should be prohibited from the current practice of ordination. However, the practices of slavery and the prohibition against women serving in ordained leadership positions in the church appear to have been condoned by the early Church, but these practices and prohibitions have since been recognized as being an obstruction to God's will.

Currently some church members believe the role of the Church is to discern God's will primarily through the love and grace of Jesus Christ. To say that the Spirit cannot move the church to revise its stance on the ordination of homosexual church members who are called by God to service and who are gifted with abilities to serve in ordained offices would be to impugn the sovereignty of God.

Currently some church members believe that homosexuality is not a sin, but is a part of God's created order and should be celebrated as such. God testifies to the inherent goodness of creation

(Genesis 1:31) and states that all of us are wondrously made; therefore the church should not bring reproach upon God's own creation. **(Psalm 139:14)** God has always known us, God formed us, and God sets us apart for service. **(Jeremiah 1:5)** Those who abide in God do not face condemnation from God, nor should they be censured by human standards, nor be condemned by the church. **(Romans 8:1)** Accordingly, any church member who is called by the Spirit should be allowed to serve in ordained ministry.

Currently some church members deny homosexual Christians the opportunity to be ordained to serve in Christ's name, thereby denying Christ's authority. (Matthew 28:18b) Such action causes the church to commit the corporate sin of disobedience by blocking paths to the fulfillment of the Great Commission.