

FIFTEEN CHANGES MOST IMPACTING THE LOCAL CHURCH

ISSUES CREATED BY ADOPTION OF THE NEW “FORM OF GOVERNMENT”

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1. Congregation and Session must provide by rule for their own quorum and process for calling a meeting,
2. Robert’s Rules is no longer required for congregational meetings. If not specified in By-Laws, it needs to be inserted as quickly as possible..
3. Congregation must provide by rule for make-up of Nominating Committee (other than one active Ruling Elder). .[e.g. Nominating Committee was 7 long paragraphs; now one short one.]
4. No more “Inactives”. A member is an Active Member or they are not a member. (Or they are an “Affiliate Member”—which still takes a long paragraph to define.) Problem is folk presently ON the Inactive Roll; are they restored to active membership on July 10—or deleted—or do we keep an Inactive Roll because it’s easier for us? Just because it’s not in the Form of Government doesn’t mean you can’t do it. The key question is why would you do it? Note also that the whole section on Minutes and Records is now three short paragraphs instead of 20 fairly long ones.
5. We’ve joined the Retro movement. We’re back to **Teaching Elders** and **Ruling Elders**—now that’s Presbyterian.
6. “Ruling Elder”. G-2.0301. Explains what “ruling” means. This concept of “discern and measure” has real possibilities for significant new understandings of this office/order.
7. Lovers of linguistic evolution will be pleased to know that **Governing Bodies**, aka **Judicatories**, aka sessions/presbyteries/synods/General Assembly will henceforth be referred to a **Councils**. **F-3.0203-09. and G-3.0101** I have no idea how to distinguish a “presbytery council” from “presbytery as a council”, but I have no doubt but that creative linguists will find a way around this.
8. Presbyters (Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders) and Deacons together comprise “**ordered ministries**”. **G-2.0102**. Not sure if they are “decent” but at least they are ordered.
9. “Duties” of Elders and Deacons eliminated. Details regarding meetings of Deacons eliminated..
10. Entry in to Membership. G-1.0303. four long paragraphs condensed into three short sentences. “No nonsense” definition.
11. There is now an option for interims and associates being called as next installed pastor. However, Interim Pastor Network encouraging presbyteries to continue to include non-

succession clauses in contracts of Intentional Interims. Language in nFoG is that temporary pastors will not be eligible to serve as next installed pastor. In either case, a 3/4th favorable vote by the full presbytery required to grant **exception**. (G-2.0504b & c)

- 12 CPM** Many stages in the process will require presbytery rule as several mandatory sections have been removed. Presbytery of call now examines. See old G-14.1410 where 13 paragraphs are replaced by 5 much smaller ones. Exceptions section reduced from four paragraphs to 1. Whole question of examining and ordaining a candidate is now one short sentence. (G-2.0702). Final assessment and Negotiation for Service is one very short paragraph. **Will require manuals for the CPM process.**
1. No committee structure mandated at presbytery/synod level. (former G-9.0900ff) and no Committee on Ministry per se (old G-11.0501 ff) Doesn't mean you can't have COM (or CPM), just that you don't have to—nor do you have to call them that.
 2. Presbyteries have to create their own formula for equalizing number of Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders.
 3. The insertion of F-1.0303 of language from the Scot's Confession on Proclamation, Sacraments, and Covenant Community. However, you'll find this theme running through the whole revised Form of Government. E.g. F-1.0404 "Marks of the true church". See esp whole new section at G-3.0101 and 3.0201 and 3.0301.

FIFTEEN CHANGES YOU WILL NOT NOTICE/ENCOUNTER BEFORE YOU RETIRE—UNLESS IT IS YOUR OX BEING GORED.

1. Committee on Representation. Used to be 10 long paragraphs and specific quotas. Now two short paragraphs and council can "provide by rule" for a COR. (e.g. how PLR does it now.)G-3.0103
2. The "Purpose of Confessional Statement" F-2.01—but it introduces a great preface to the study of the Confessions.
3. The elimination of most sub-headings (all those "...a(1)(2)(3)" sections.)
4. "Apostolicity" F-1.0302d. The Church sent. "Missional".
5. "Call". Would you believe, we now spell out that a "call" requires the individual, approval of a community of God's people, and concurring judgment of a Council of the Church. G-2.0103.
6. G-1.0103 defines a "congregation". Believe it or not, this is new.
7. G-6.0108a and b are now one paragraph, so that the concept of freedom of conscience is in tension with rather than opposition to it being exercised within bounds.
8. G-6.0201 and 0202a have been combined at 2.0501 to create a more flowing understanding of Teaching Elder.
9. Moderator does not have to sign congregational Minutes.
10. Teaching Elder can no longer moderate at congregational meeting at which their pastoral relationship is being moved to dissolve.

11. Administrative Staff of “Councils”. Used to be 8 long paragraphs. Now one short one.
12. Special Administrative Review is now one short paragraph instead of 4 long ones.
13. There are no longer Parish Associates defined in Form of Government. Presbyteries can keep them by local action.
14. Instead of a long list of responsibilities, the section on presbyteries puts it into the context of relationships and responsibilities per #4 above.
15. The sections on New Immigrant Ministries, Dual Standing, etc. are eliminated but permitted via G-2.0505

FIFTEEN THINGS THAT DON'T CHANGE (THANK HEAVENS)

1. Jesus is still the head of the Church, gives to it its faith and life, and is the Church's authority. And the church is the Body of Christ.
2. The Great Ends of the Church are still the Great Ends of the Church.
3. The Historic Principle of Church Order and of Church Government are the same as before.
4. Ministry of (Responsibilities of) members. G-1.0304. Still a must for new member classes.
5. We are a representative government. G-2.0102 Right of the people to elect presbyters and deacons is inalienable.
6. No person can be denied membership not related to profession of faith.
7. Business that may be conducted at congregational meeting.
8. Presbytery sets minimum terms of call.
9. Former pastors may officiate by invitation only.
10. Responsibilities of sessions and presbyteries. {“Functions”}
11. Pastors, elders, deacons, Christian educators are still Mandatory Reporters.
12. All Councils must still have an annual Full Financial Review.
13. Freedom of conscience within certain bounds. G-2.0105
14. PNC's
15. Each Council shall develop a manual of operations. (present 9.0405). Contrary to some information, Presbyteries, Synods, and GA's already have manuals of operations to which they can add certain items above. Session should have them—and those that do can easily insert most of the changes. Those that don't need to contact presbytery for help.

TWELVE THINGS (SOME) PEOPLE THINK SHOULD/SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN CHANGED

- 1) All property held in trust. No change.
- 2) Language regarding presenting new members to the congregation is gone. Not clear if this action is inferred or simply deleted. Local option whether to do anything.
- 3) Number of people on an Administrative Commission is now flexible.
- 4) You have to be baptized to receive communion.
- 5) There is no longer category of “Designated Pastor”—though the equivalent can be found at G-2.0504.

- 6) The process for “Renunciation of Jurisdiction” now takes 5 long paragraphs instead of 3 short ones. Go figure.
- 7) Terms of Call must be reviewed annually, not required to be annually approved.
- 8) “ **Provide by rule**”. There are multiple sections that were formerly spelled out as mandatory behavior.
- 9) No accreditations policy for CCE’s in new FofG. But CCE’s have voice and vote.
- 10) Presbytery may still unilaterally dissolve a pastoral relationship when “the church’s mission under the Word imperatively demands it”.
- 11) Presbyteries must still pay per capita; clarifies that sessions do not have to pay per capita.
- 12) Chapters 16 (Union Churches—and unifying document of merging denominations) and Union Governing Bodies are gutted.
- 13) “Commissioned Lay Pastors” are now “Commissioned Ruling Elder in Particular Pastoral Service”. Oh well, so much for simplification.