

# **Formal Protest to the Actions of the 217th General Assembly in Approving Item 06-01, Rec. 5**

## **(Giving Ordaining Bodies the Right to Treat as “Nonessential” the Sexuality Mandate for Officers in G-6.0106b)**

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Today the 217th General Assembly—rather 57% of its commissioners—passed an amendment to the Book of Order in the guise of an “authoritative interpretation.” In doing so, it destroyed the system of checks and balances whereby presbyteries by a plurality national vote can set mandatory national requirements for ordination. Unable to remove the sexuality standard in G-6.0106b by constitutional means, the PUP Task Force and 57% of the General Assembly commissioners subverted the Constitution by imputing a meaning to G-6.0106b that the presbyteries never gave in three successive votes through 1996-2002.

There is no meaningful way in which an ordination requirement singled out in the *Book of Order* among all other confessional standards, explicitly called a “requirement,” and associated with mandatory “shall” language can reasonably be construed as a ‘non-essential requirement’ for ordination. With this GA’s action, language—the normal meaning of words—has taken a postmodernist turn, in which language no longer means what it is commonly understood to mean. And for the first time in the history of the Presbyterian Church the confinement of sexual relations to the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman for all officers has become optional. This action by the 217<sup>th</sup> General Assembly will probably precipitate a constitutional crisis.

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