

Summary of General Assembly actions

In 2022, three overtures/recommendations came to the General Assembly that led to the establishment of a committee to write a new confession. These were sent to the GA committee on Theology, Worship and Education (TWE) for consideration:

- 1) **TWE-01** (from GA Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations [GACEIR])
 - This overture states “we believe that, in light of false doctrines promulgated in both society and in church with regard to **racism and racialized supremacy**, God is calling the PC(USA) to develop a new confession that speaks directly to the North American situation.”
 - The current situation is “**a threat to the integrity of the gospel of Jesus Christ**,” because “the sovereignty of God has been warped into a pro-European white doctrine of discovery.”
- 2) **TWE-08** (Presbytery of Arkansas)
 - This overture states, “An underlying question for our time is: **what does it mean to be human in the 21st century?** Oppressive theological anthropologies have elevated particular groups and **reduced the humanity of those deemed ‘other’** because of their race, gender, nationality, sexuality, or socioeconomic status.”
 - It goes on to say, “These worldviews are not consistent with God’s vision of humanity revealed in Jesus Christ.”
- 3) **TWE-13** (Synod of the Northeast), including “**A Confession for Such a Time as This**”
 - “For Such a Time as This” was written by a group of young leaders in the Synod of the Northeast in 2018 and adopted by that Synod as a confession in 2020. This overture asked the General Assembly to **prayerfully consider this confession** in the development of a new confession for the entire PC(USA).
 - The positive statement at the heart of this confession is: “Through all things, Christ continues to be our only source of hope—in life and in death—for we belong, body and soul, to our Lord and Savior.” Based on this, the church is called to **reject that which seeks to divide Christ’s body**, to affirm all that makes for wholeness, unity, and justice, and to **affirm our unity in Christ**.
 - This confession names the pressing problems of “**economic, gender, and social divisions**” and “the intolerance for different ideas and theological beliefs, the articulated hatred for anyone seen as ‘other,’ and the physical violence” that have become threats to our society in recent years.
 - In response, the confession explicitly **rejects the sins** of white supremacy, racism, colonialism, LGBTQIA+ discrimination, gender discrimination, ableism, xenophobia, corporate capitalism, the marketing of fear, and “**the abuse of power in any form**.”

These overtures envision that a new confession would “**strengthen the witness of the PC(USA) in the world** as we walk faithfully in ministry as one part of the family (people) of God.” (TWE-01 and TWE-08). The General Assembly answered these overtures by voting to “form a special committee to write a new confession for the PC(USA) to be considered for inclusion in the Book of Confessions.”

The committee is reflecting on these documents, as well as the movement of God’s Spirit in the wider world, to **discern what God might be calling the church to declare in this particular *time and place***.

May 28, 2024

The Special Committee to Write a New Confession

-a quick overview-

In 2022, the 225th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) convened to discuss the business of the church.

That business generally comes to the General Assembly in the form of overtures, documents suggesting or requesting changes to the governance of the church. In 2022, at least three different overtures came to the General Assembly indicating that some parts of the church desired that the church consider adopting a new confession of faith, one that would “strengthen the witness of the PC(USA) in the world as we walk faithfully in ministry as one part of the family (people) of God.”

In response, the Assembly voted to form a Special Committee to Write a New Confession. That committee was to be formed no later than December 31, 2024.

The Committee’s Task:

To discern what constitutes a *status confessionis* for our denomination today. *Status confessionis* means something that requires the church to take a stand – to confess the faith --on behalf of the gospel.

To write a confession that speaks clearly and thoughtfully to the faith of the church for this present age.

To present to a future general assembly (possibly the 227th) a confession for consideration by the entire Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.).

From Committee to Book of Confessions

The work of the committee does *not* automatically become a part of the book of confessions. If the assembly accepts the work of the committee, it will appoint a separate committee of no fewer than 15 persons to study the document and report its findings to the next General Assembly.

If that next General Assembly votes that the confession be considered for inclusion in our constitution, every presbytery will then have to discern whether it concurs with the action of the General Assembly.

If two-thirds of the Presbyteries concur, the following General Assembly would also have to vote to concur with the actions of the Presbyteries. Only then would a new confession be added to our Book of Confessions.

The Committee's Members:

The Co-Moderators of the 225th General Assembly appointed the Special Committee. They made every effort to create a group that reflects the full diversity of the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.), in gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, education, ordination, and geography.

The Special Committee

Teaching Elder Edwin Aponte, (Co-Moderator), Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky

Teaching Elder Margaret Aymer, (Co-Moderator), Mission Presbytery

Teaching Elder Jess Cook, Presbytery of the James

Nagwa Fokunang, Church Member, Presbytery of Utah

Teaching Elder Jack Haberer, Mission Presbytery

Ruling Elder Matt Hartley, Presbytery of Philadelphia

Teaching Elder Craig Howard, Presbytery of Chicago

Teaching Elder Byungil Kim, Presbytery of Philadelphia

Ruling Elder Magalene McClarrin, Presbytery of Long Island

Teaching Elder Kai Moore, New Castle Presbytery

Teaching Elder Martha Moore-Keish, Presbytery of Greater Atlanta

Ruling Elder Kristy Rodgers, Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery

Teaching Elder Jeniffer Rodriguez, Hudson River Presbytery

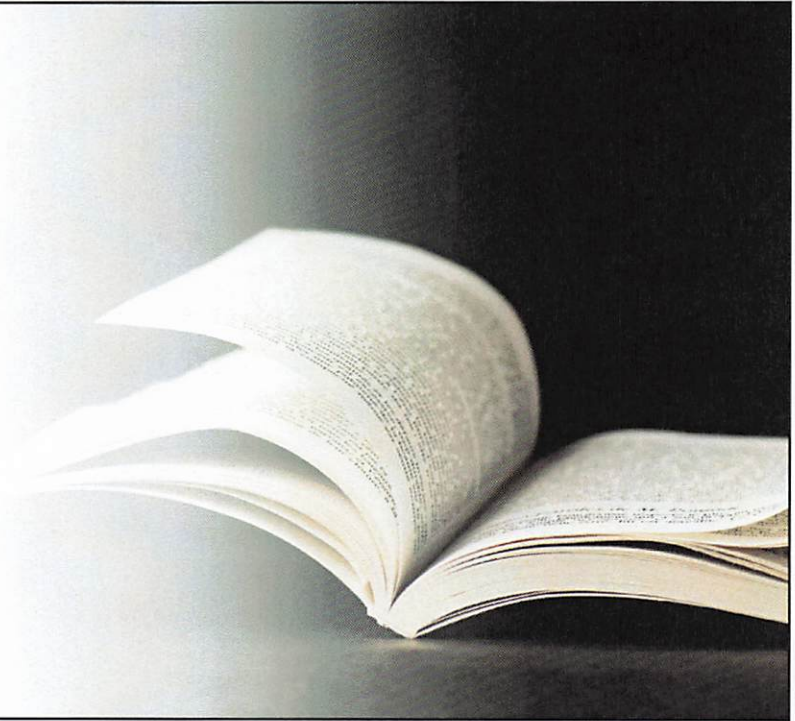
Anthony Trujillo, Church Member, Presbytery of New York City

Ruling Elder Mirna Wasef, Presbytery of San Diego

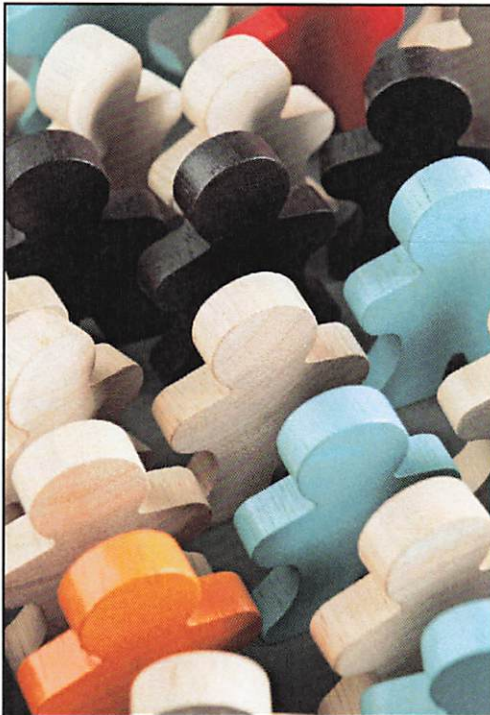
Teaching Elder Charles Wiley, Presbytery of Greater Atlanta



The Special Committee to Write a New Confession for the PC(USA)



1



Identity Markers

Who is the
church?

What is
the
church?

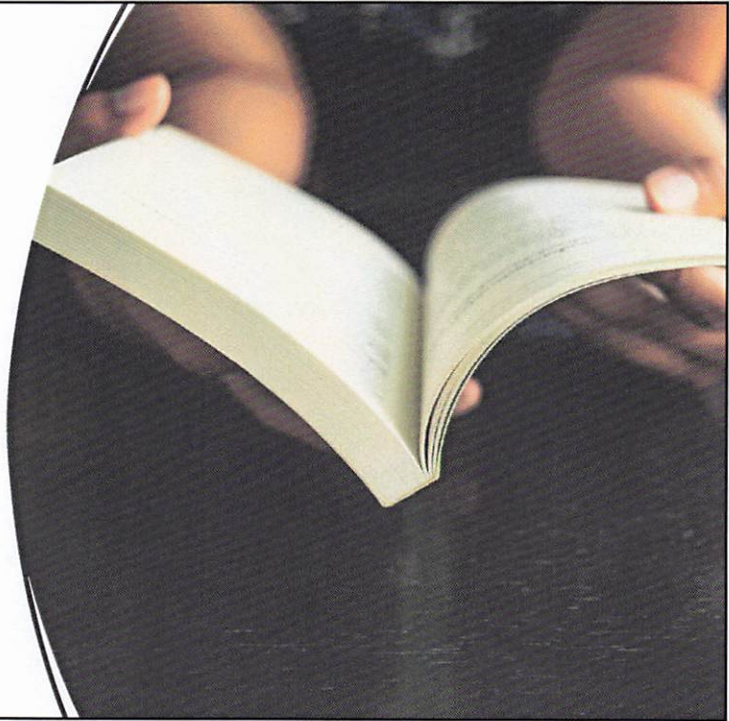
What does
the church
believe?

What does
the church
resolve to
do

2

Confessions and Authority

- Subordinate to the Scriptures
- Standards that may not be ignored



3

CW1

Why Write a Confession?

To claim the truth of the Gospel at those points where ... that truth [may] be at risk

Status confessionis

4

Slide 4

CW1 Introduce polling/engagement from the very beginning instead of a lot of content followed by feedback.

Charles Wiley, 2024-05-03T17:44:30.609

The 225th General Assembly (2022) Actions



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Naming and
confessing
idolatry

*the heretical worship of
power and money, and its
concentration among the
few, an idolatry that
equates money and power
with the divine and the will
of God.*

6

Structured like the Eucharistic Prayer



7

The New Confession

Image of the
Triune God

Turning Away
from God's
image

God's
Response

Returning to
God's image

8



Image of the Triune God

God as "Lover, Beloved, and Love, overflowing and boundless."

Humanity as

Called to manifest God's image and likeness:

in our love for God,

in our love for neighbors and strangers as ourselves,

and in loving communion with all creation.

9

Turning Away from God's Image

Across the ages,
we have all forsaken the love of the triune God,
following instead gods of our own making.
Although we are created in God's image and
likeness,
to reflect God's love for neighbors, strangers, and
selves,
we have given our hearts to wealth and property
as if they were our refuge and strength.
This is idolatry.



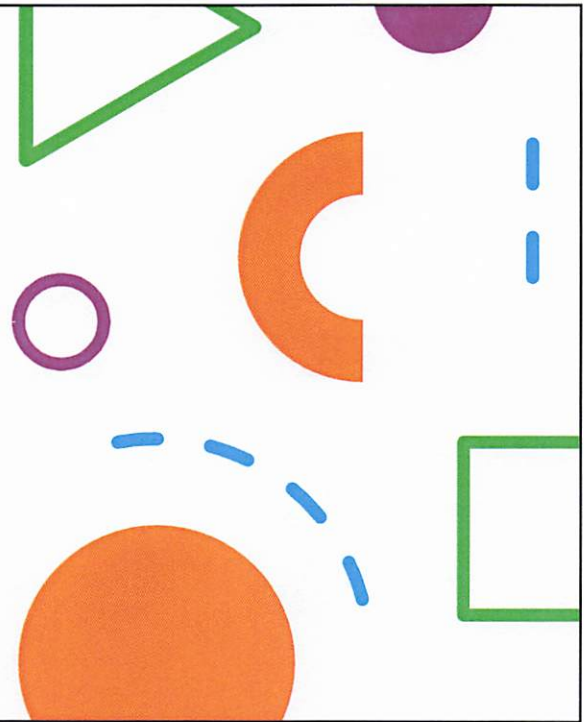
10

God's Response

...God has sent witnesses to testify to the truth

...As the ultimate act of love, in Jesus
God became flesh and walked this earth with us

...Through this Spirit, Jesus' followers
recognized
the heart of the law: to love God and to love
our neighbors as ourselves.



11

Returning to God's Image

...remember who we are

...live in community

...freed to love fearlessly

...break down boundaries

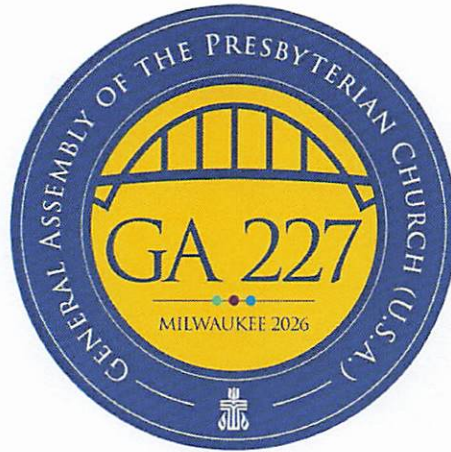
...name and denounce false gods

...repair and nurture the earth we have harmed



12

Actions of the Assembly



13

Using this Confession

1. Study the confession
2. Pray the confession
3. Try parts of it as liturgy
4. Write the new Special Committee

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Questions and thoughts?