

[OVT-006] On Establishing a General Assembly Administrative Commission on Mid Councils

Source: Presbytery

Committee: Unassigned

Event: 224th General Assembly (2020)

Sponsor: Synod of the Northeast

Type: General Assembly Full Consideration

Recommendation

The Synod of the Northeast overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to establish a General Assembly Commission on Mid Councils for the purpose of deliberation and approval of mid council business that has significant time pressures such that it cannot wait for action or would suffer severely from having to wait for action until the 225th General Assembly (2022).

By direction of the 224th General Assembly (2020), upon a majority affirmative vote of the affected presbytery or presbyteries or a majority affirmative vote of the presbyteries in the affected synod or synods, the commission is authorized to act as the General Assembly upon requests of synods and presbyteries, with the authority of the General Assembly by “approving the acts of synods to organize, divide, unite, or combine presbyteries or portions of presbyteries” according to G-3.0502e. The actions of the commission shall require a two-thirds majority for approval.

중간공의회에 대한 총회 행정 전권위원회 설립 안건 — Northeast 대회에서

노스이스트 대회는 224차 총회(2020)가 중간공의회에 대한 총회 전권위원회를 설립하여 225차 총회(2022)까지 행동을 기다릴 수 없거나 심하게 고통받을 수 있는 중대한 시간 압력을 가진 중간공의회 사업의 심의 및 승인을 목적으로 조치를 취할 것을 현의합니다.

224차 총회(2020)의 지시에 따라, 영향을 받는 노회들의 다수결 찬성 투표 또는 영향을 받는 대회에서 노회들의 다수결로 찬성 투표를 할 때, 전권위원회는 다음의 요청에 따라 총회 역할을 수행할 권한이 있습니다. G-3.0502e에 따라 “노회들이나 노회들 일부를 조직하거나 분할하거나 연합하거나 합병하는 대회의 결정을 승인하는 일”들을 총회의 권한으로 집행합니다. 전권위원회의 결정은 승인을 위해 3분의 2이상의 찬성을 요구합니다.

Rationale

Since May 2017, members of the seven presbyteries in New Jersey have been meeting to envision new missional communities that remain responsive to the changing contextual realities of the church and presbyteries and to the leading of the Spirit. For decades congregations, and thus presbyteries in New Jersey, have been declining in membership until, like a tiny congregation in a huge old building, time, energy, and resources are spent maintaining outdated and inefficient structures and systems, to the detriment of presbyteries' mission as the body of Christ in the world.

Through listening sessions in each of the New Jersey presbyteries, there was constant confirmation that now is the time to radically change the structure and function of these presbyteries to embrace an understanding of mid councils as spiritual communities rather than legal and administrative organizations. This is not to diminish

the work of the current presbytery structure. The old wineskins have been wonderful containers for the old wine, but the new movement of the Spirit in this *kairos* moment calls for a new sort of structure.

The visioning group discerned that God's provision for ministry is taking a new form: fewer separate entities and greater collaboration, bringing about a new, statewide missional community. The visioning group was commissioned to explore several considerations as they imagined ways of redrawing the boundaries of seven presbyteries. In the end they produced a map of four presbyteries. The boundaries are soft, and presbyteries will have time to determine the final boundaries based on what will maximize health and effectiveness. The group envisions that shortly after the four new presbyteries are initially established, they will cooperate in a New Jersey missional community to accomplish goals no single presbytery can achieve on its own.

Currently, four of the seven presbyteries have voted unanimously to accept the invitation to participate in the New Jersey New Missional Communities. The three remaining presbyteries will be voting over this fall and winter. Once the votes are taken, a design and transition group will be assembled that will consider among other items legal and financial implications of redrawing presbytery boundaries, its impact on restricted funds, particular organizations that currently are within a presbytery, etc. This group will ultimately be authorized as an administrative commission of the synod to work through the issues that need attention before the proposed boundary changes can be brought to General Assembly.*

Clearly, this work will not be completed by the 224th General Assembly (2020). However, given the desire of presbytery members to move into new missional communities as quickly as possible, once the work has been completed it will be to the detriment of the current presbyteries and the dreams and visions of their members to have to wait until the 225th General Assembly (2022) in order to make the changes people eagerly await.

The Synod of the Northeast is aware that other presbyteries and synods around the country are in the midst of transformation and can also benefit from a General Assembly Commission on Mid Councils that allows those who are pressing forward to begin the work they are called to do in the 21st century.*

*Most of the rationale is taken from *Invitation to Participate in New Jersey New Missional Communities*, written by the New Jersey Mission Structures Working Group. It was approved by the Synod Mission and Ministries Commission on September 28, 2019, per the Reverend Nancy Talbot, Synod Stated Clerk.

Concurrence

Grand Canyon Presbytery

Kiskiminetas Presbytery

Newton Presbytery

de Cristo Presbytery

Advocates

