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General Assembly Media Guide

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Time Line of Presbyterian History

1562 French Huguenots, first Protestants in America, arrive in Florida and South Carolina.

1629 Presbyterian puritan colony arrives at Massachusetts Bay.

1630 First Presbyterian minister reaches America: the Rev. Richard Denton settles in Wethersfield, CT.

1683 Chief founder of the Presbyterian Church in America, the Rev. Francis Makemie, arrives in Maryland and establishes Rehoboth Church, the oldest Presbyterian church in the nation.

1706 First presbytery organized in Philadelphia.

1717 First synod organized in the Philadelphia area.

1789 First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. held in Philadelphia, May 21.

1810 Cumberland Presbyterian Church separates from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (partially reunited in 1907).

1812 First theological seminary established at Princeton, NJ.

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commissioners
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delegates

1838 Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. divides into old and new schools.

1858 United Presbyterian Church of North America established by union of Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church and Associate Synod of North America.

1861 Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America established as offshoot of members from both the old and new schools of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

1865 Name of Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America changed to Presbyterian Church in the United States.

1870 Old and new schools reunited in Presbyterian Church USA.

1907 Portion of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church reunites with Presbyterian Church USA.

1920 Welsh Calvinist Methodist Church unites with Presbyterian Church U.S.A.

1956 Ordination of first woman minister by the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (northern stream) - the Rev. Margaret Towner.

1958 Consolidation of United Presbyterian Church of North America and Presbyterian Church U.S.A. into United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (Presbyterian Church in the U.S. participated in these talks but voted against union).

1964 Rev. Edler G. Hawkins elected first African American moderator of the General Assembly of United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

1965 Ordination of the first woman minister by the Presbyterian Church in United States (southern stream) - the Rev. Rachel Henderlite.

1967 The Confession of 1967, a major creed written in contemporary language and touching upon contemporary issues under the overall theme of reconciliation, given final approval by the United Presbyterian Church in the USA General Assembly. The same action made official a Book of Confessions as part of the church's constitution, along with the Book of Order.

1969 Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. cast necessary votes for union with the Reformed Church in America, but Reformed Church votes against the union.

1969 Presbyterian Church in the U.S. General Assembly invites the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to join negotiations aimed at reunion; a Joint Committee on Presbyterian Reunion is formed.

1971 Elder Lois H. Stair elected first woman moderator of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

1973 Some 250 churches and 50,000 members separate from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. and form the National Presbyterian Church, later changed to the Presbyterian Church in America.

1974 The Rev. Lawrence Bottoms elected first African American moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.

1977 General Assemblies of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. agree to

meet in the same cities at the same time every other year.

1978 Elder Sara B. Moseley elected first woman moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.

*

The United Presbyterian Church in the USA General Assembly adopts a "definitive guidance" that "self-affirming, practicing homosexuals" are not eligible for ordination to church office.

*

1979 The Presbyterian Church in the U.S. adopts a similar policy on ordination of gay and lesbian Presbyterians to church office.

1980 Joint Committee on Presbyterian Reunion votes to send a plan for union to the General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. and the United Presbyterian Church in the USA in 1982 with ratification by presbyteries proposed during 1982-83, and final General Assembly approval sought in 1983.

1981 Joint Committee on Presbyterian Reunion completes plan for reunion and recommends vote.

1982 General Assemblies in Columbus, GA. (PCUS) and Hartford, CT. (UPCUSA), call for the presbyteries to vote on reunion.

1983 Presbyteries of the UPCUSA approve reunion 151-0 and presbyteries of the PCUS approve reunion 53-8.

Presbyterian Church (USA) born June 10 resulting from reunion ratification by the General Assemblies of the former Presbyterian Church in the U.S. and the United Presbyterian Church in the USA.

The Rev. J. Randolph Taylor of Charlotte,

NC, co-chair of the Joint Committee on Presbyterian Reunion, is elected the first moderator of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

1984 Elder Harriet Nelson of Napa, CA., is elected moderator.
The Rev. James E. Andrews, stated clerk of the former PCUS, is elected first stated clerk of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

1985 Elder William Wilson of McAllen, TX, is elected moderator.

1986 The Rev. Benjamin Weir, former hostage in Lebanon, is elected moderator.
The Structural Design for Mission for the Presbyterian Church (USA) approved.

1987 Elder Isabel Rogers of Richmond, VA, is elected moderator.

Elder S. David Stoner is elected to a four-year term as executive director of the General Assembly Council.

Louisville, KY selected as site for new national offices of the Presbyterian Church (USA) as commissioners reject a site selection committee's recommendation that the offices be located in Kansas City, MO.

1988 The Rev. C. Kenneth Hall of Beaver, PA, is elected moderator.

The Rev. James E. Andrews is reelected to a second four-year term as stated clerk of the General Assembly.

A year-long celebration of the Bicentennial of the Presbyterian Church in this country begins.

Relocation of national offices to Louisville

from Atlanta (PCUS) and New York (UPCUSA) is completed.

1989 The Rev. Joan Salmon Campbell of Philadelphia is elected moderator.

Meeting in Philadelphia, site of the first General Assembly, the Presbyterian Church (USA) celebrates its bicentennial.

1990 Elder Price H. Gwynn III of Charlotte, NC, is elected moderator.

1991 The Rev. Herbert D. Valentine of Baltimore is elected moderator.

The General Assembly mandates a balanced General Assembly budget, beginning in 1994.

1992 The Rev. John Fife of Tucson, AZ, is elected moderator.

The Rev. James E. Andrews is reelected to a third four-year term as stated clerk of the General Assembly.

The Rev. James D. Brown is elected to a four year term as executive director of the General Assembly Council after S. David Stoner declines to seek a second term.

1993 The Rev. David L. Dobler of Anchorage, AK, is elected moderator.

An Organization for Mission to replace the Structural Design for Mission is approved, a restructuring of the General Assembly brought on by budget shortfalls and staff reductions.

*

A three-year moratorium on voting about issues related to human sexuality and the ordination of gay and lesbian Presbyterians to church office is declared and the church

is urged to engage in study and dialogue about those issues.

1994 The Rev. Robert W. Bohl of Forth Worth, TX, is elected moderator.

1995 Elder Marj Carpenter of Big Spring, TX, is elected moderator.

1996 The Rev. John M. Buchanan of Chicago is elected moderator.

The Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, former director of the Worldwide Ministries Division, is elected to a four-year term as General Assembly stated clerk, succeeding the Rev. James E. Andrews, who retired.

The assembly refuses to confirm the Rev. James D. Brown for a second four-year term as executive director of the General Assembly Council. A search committee is elected by the Council to find a successor.

* Amendment B – the commonly called “fidelity and chastity” amendment – requiring “fidelity within the covenant of marriage of a man and a woman or chastity in singleness,” is approved by the assembly and submitted to the presbyteries for ratification.

1997 Elder Patricia G. Brown of Cincinnati is elected moderator.

“A Formula for Agreement” establishing full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the United Church of Christ and the Reformed Church in America is approved and sent to the presbyteries for ratification.

* Amendment A, the commonly called “fidelity and integrity” amendment requiring “fidelity and integrity in marriage

or singleness" rather than "fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman or chastity in singleness" (the constitutional language of the now-ratified Amendment B), is approved by the assembly and submitted to the presbyteries for ratification.

1998 The Rev. Douglas W. Oldenburg of Decatur, GA, is elected moderator.

Elder John J. Detterick, president of the Board of Pensions, is unanimously elected to a four-year term as executive director of the General Assembly Council.

*

Amendment A is declared lost by a more than 2-1 margin in voting by the presbyteries. An informal sabbatical on further amendments on sexual standards for ordination is called for by a broad range of church leaders and the assembly goes along by not approving any such amendments.

1999 Elder Freda M. Gardner of Princeton, NJ, is elected moderator.

"Churches Uniting in Christ," the latest COCU proposal, is adopted.

*

A move to delete G-6.0106b ("fidelity and chastity") from The Book of Order is defeated.

Major papers on church growth strategy and racism are adopted.

2000 The Rev. Syngman Rhee of Richmond, VA, is elected moderator — the first moderator of Asian descent.

*

Amendment O — which would specifically prohibit same-sex unions in the Presbyterian Church (USA) — is narrowly approved and sent to the 173 presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes (the proposed amendment was subsequently

rejected).

The Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick is reelected to a second four-year term as General Assembly stated clerk over token opposition.

By an overwhelming margin, the assembly defeats an overture that would have declared an "irreconcilable impasse" in the denomination over such issues as Biblical authority and interpretation, Jesus Christ and salvation, ethics, leadership, sanctification and the nature of the church.

2001 Rev. Jack Rogers of Pasadena, CA, is elected moderator.

*

By a 60-40% margin, the assembly sends a proposed amendment to the presbyteries that would delete G-6.0106b (the commonly called "fidelity and chastity" provision) from the Book of Order (the amendment is subsequently defeated).

*

The assembly creates a Theological Task Force on the Peace, Unity and Purity of the Church to find a way out of the theological disputes wracking the denomination. It is given four years to do its work.

2002 The Rev. Fahed Abu-Akel, of Atlanta, is elected moderator, the first moderator of Arab descent.

The assembly votes to meet biennially in even-numbered years, beginning in 2004.

The assembly adopts "Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ" by a vote of 497-11, resolving a two-year dispute over the denomination's Christology.

Elder John J. Detterick is almost

unanimously reelected to a second four-year term as executive director of the General Assembly Council.

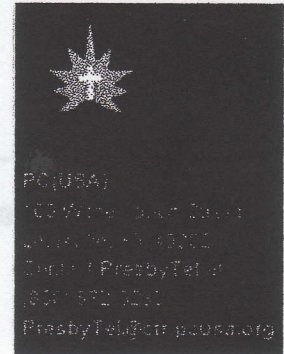
2003 The Rev. Susan R. Andrews of Bethesda, MD, is elected moderator.

The assembly reaffirms the previous year's decision to hold biennial meetings of the General Assembly.

The assembly reaffirms the PC(USA)'s participation in the World Council of Churches.

The assembly reaffirms the PC(USA)'s commitment to and engagement in Africa.

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