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Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Allow “Flexibility” in Ordination of Active Homosexuals

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Meeting for its [General Assembly](#) in Birmingham, Alabama, the [Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\)](#) moved Tuesday to retain its church standards limiting ordination to those who limit sexual relations to heterosexual marriage, but then granted local presbyteries “flexibility” in applying the standards to specific circumstances and candidates.

The measure adopted was known as the [Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and the Purity of the Church Report](#). Recommendation Five of that report attempted the logically impossible feat of affirming the church’s ordination standards while allowing the same standards to be subverted.

As Peter Smith of the [The Courier-Journal](#) [Louisville] reported:

The practical effect of the measure is that some homosexuals could be ordained. Churches and regional presbyteries could ordain such candidates if they believed that their noncompliance did not amount to a violation of one of the essentials of the faith.

[Dr. Mark D. Roberts](#), Senior Pastor of [Irvine Presbyterian Church](#) in Irvine, California, got to the heart of the issue in an essay published at [MarkDRoberts.com](#):

I’m sad to say I believe this vote is the beginning of the end of the PCUSA. I’m not saying this only because I believe that ordaining people who intend not to practice fidelity and chastity is wrong, but also because any institution that says “Here are the rules but you can decide whether the rules have to be followed or not” is doomed. Consider what would happen if the United States acted like the PCUSA. Under the Constitution, people are guaranteed the freedom of speech. But what would be left of our national union if states had the authority to decide whether or not to allow their residents to speak freely, and in what circumstances. We’d soon find ourselves in unending conflicts and general anarchy. This is where the PCUSA is heading, I fear. Of course some would say, given what has happened today, we’re already there.

Today’s vote to approve the Peace, Unity, and Purity Report has begun to rupture the fragile peace of the PCUSA. It has begun to shatter our institutional unity. It has given tacit approval to the tarnishing of our purity. I’m not suggesting that the people who voted in favor of the PUP Report believe what I just said. On the contrary, they believe that their vote will further the Peace, Unity, and Purity of the PCUSA. I wish I agreed. But I don’t. Even though people I deeply respect have supported the PUP Report, I fear they’ve made a grave mistake.

So, in light of the General Assembly vote to accept the PUP Report, is it time for biblically-committed Christians to leave the PCUSA?

Dr. Roberts promises to answer that question in coming days.

