

Distinctives of PCA Polity

(that vary from the RCA)

PREFACE

The Constitution Defined

The Constitution of the PCA “consists of its doctrinal standards set forth in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, together with the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms*, and the *Book of Church Order*, comprising the Form of Government, the Rules of Discipline and the Directory of Worship.

PART I – THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Particular Church

- 4-1 A local congregation is called a particular church.
- 4-3 The Session (= Consistory) is comprised of its pastor(s) and ruling elders.

Church Officers

- 7-2 The officers of a congregation are its teaching (pastor) and ruling elders, and its deacons.
- 7-2 The elders rule. Deacons serve, but do not rule.
- 7-2 The offices of the church are open to men only.

The Elder

- 8-1 The following titles may be used interchangeably: bishop, pastor, presbyter, elder, or teacher.
- 8-4 Teaching elders report to the Presbytery at least once per year.

The Deacon

- 9-2 Deacons are under the supervision of the session.
- 9-4 The officers of the Board of Deacons are: chair, secretary, treasurer.
- 9-4 The Board of Deacons must meet at least quarterly.
- 9-4 The Board of Deacons should meet jointly with the Session at least quarterly.
- 9-5 Deacons may serve on the higher courts of the denomination.
- 9-5 The Board of Deacons may serve as the trustees of the congregation's funds.
- 9-7 The Session may select and appoint assistants to the Board of Deacons.
- 10-2 The courts (=judicatories) of the church are: Session, Presbytery, General Assembly.
- 10-3 The pastor is the moderator of the Session.

The Presbytery

- 13-1 The Presbytery consists of all its teaching elders, and two (or more) ruling elders.
- 14-1 The Permanent Committee of the General Assembly are:
 - Administrative Committee of the General Assembly
 - Committee on Discipleship Ministries
 - Committee on Mission to North America
 - Committee on Mission to the World
 - Committee on Reformed University Fellowship
- 14-1 The General Assembly has a Theological Examining Committee for first and second level administrative officers of committees, and boards and agencies.
- 14-2 Delegates to the General Assembly are: all teaching elders, and two (or more) ruling elders from each congregation.

Election of Ruling Elders and Deacons

- 24-1 The Session receives nominations from congregational members.
- 24-1 All nominees are examined for eligibility.
- 24-1 Nominees are placed before the congregation for at least 30 days before a vote.
- 24-1 25% of the membership being present establishes a quorum.
- 24-1 The election of ruling elders and deacons is by a simple majority.
- 25-6 Trustees may be elected by the congregation to manage the corporation.
- 25-9 Particular churches are entitled to hold property without reversion to the Presbytery.

PART II – THE RULES OF DISCIPLINE

Special Rules Pertaining to Process Against a Minister

- 34-1 If a Presbytery refuses to act against a teaching elder, two other Presbyteries may request the General Assembly to handle the matter.

OTHER

Assessments

The PCA does not assess (tax) its member congregations. Each congregation is asked to voluntarily contribute to the mission and administrative expenses of the denomination.