

[OVT-012] On Amending G-2.0503 to Change the Designation Honorably Retired to Retired

Source: Presbytery
Committee: Unassigned

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Sponsor: Miami Valley Presbytery
Type: General Assembly Full Consideration

[OVT-012]

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Recommendation

The Presbytery of the Miami Valley overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

1. Amend the first paragraph of G-2.0503 as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through.]

“A minister of the Word and Sacrament is a member of a presbytery and shall be engaged in a ministry validated by that presbytery, a member-at-large as determined by the presbytery, or ~~honorably~~ retired.”

2. Amend G-2.0503c as follows:

“c. ~~Honorably~~ Retired

“Upon request of a member of presbytery, the presbytery may designate the member ~~honorably~~ retired because of age, or physical or mental disability, or *other factors satisfactory to the presbytery.*”

G-2.0503의 “명예은퇴”라는 말을 삭제하고 “은퇴” 단어를 삽입함으로써 수정하는 안건 -- Miami Valley 노회에서.

마이애미 밸리 노회는 224차 총회(2020)에 헌의하여 정서기에게 다음과 같이 제안된 수정안을 찬성 또는 반대 투표로 노회에 보내도록 지시합니다:

1. G-2.0503의 첫 번째 단락을 다음과 같이 수정합니다. [삭제할 텍스트는 취소 선으로 표시됨]

“말씀과 성례전의 목사는 노회 회원이며, 그 노회 인준을 받은 목회 활동을 하거나, 그 노회가 결정하는 대로 보통회원이 되거나 명예은퇴 회원이 되어야 한다.”

2. G-2.0503c를 다음과 같이 수정합니다:

“c. 명예은퇴

“노회는 노회 회원의 요청에 의해, 고령이나 신체적 또는 정신적 장애 또는 노회가 만족하는 다른 요소가 있는 회원을 명예은퇴 목사로 지명할 수 있다.”

Rationale

The only designation of retirement for ministers of the Word and Sacrament allowed in the current *Book of Order* is “Honorably Retired.” That designation may be perfectly fitting for many Presbyterian ministers as they retire from active pastoral roles, but presbyteries sometimes face situations in which a minister’s service has been marked by difficulties and challenges that do not rise to the level of formal disciplinary charges and censure, but which are hardly worthy of the label “Honorable.”

An example of such a situation might be when a pastor has acted inappropriately but no disciplinary charges are brought because of the belief that the damage to a particular church or harmed person would be more devastating than just letting a pastor leave. Victims are then revictimized when that pastor is granted the status of “Honorably Retired.” Another factor might be that church members or others mistrust or do not understand the processes to bring charges. A third example is when a pastor commits boundary violations after honorably serving and leaving a congregation to move to other endeavors. There may also be situations that occurred during a pastor’s membership in a previous presbytery that could be unreported during a transfer process and only later come to light following retirement in a different presbytery.

So how do presbyteries today respond when ministers with service marked by difficulties or challenges on their records seek retirement? Some may maintain those ministers as members-at-large or in other in-between statuses rather than offering retirement, to avoid characterizing the minister’s service as “Honorable.” Other presbyteries may go ahead and honorably retire ministers of all types regardless of the quality and faithfulness of their service. In doing so, however, the term “Honorably” loses its meaning for anyone. Such a retirement may confuse or, as noted above, revictimize people who have been harmed by a troubled pastorate and who may feel that the presbytery is praising the pastor’s service despite the gravity of its problems.

The proposed amendment would maintain the “Retired” category but remove the mandatory designation of “Honorably” that now applies to all retirements. The new designation of “Retired” would be effective for retirements approved by presbyteries on or after the effective date of the amendment under G-6.04e of the *Book of Order*.

This proposed amendment would have no impact whatsoever on a minister of the Word and Sacrament’s access to Board of Pension retirement benefits. That Board of Pensions process is completely separate from a presbytery granting “Retired” status to a minister on its rolls.

Advocates