

Sovereign Grace Churches Council of Elders Meeting Minutes
Indianapolis, Indiana, October 26, 2015

1. Mark Prater, executive director of Sovereign Grace Churches, called to order the fifth meeting of the Council of Elders on Monday, October 26, 2015, at the Indianapolis Marriott East, IN.
2. Mark Prater warmly welcomed the Sovereign Grace Churches delegates and read God's Word. The text was 1 Timothy 6:15-16. Bob Kauflin led the singing of "Come Thou Fount." Cedric Moss prayed for the proceedings.
3. Mark Prater recognized two new churches joining Sovereign Grace. The churches are CrossHaven Church (Belleville, IL) and Lord's Grace Church (Seoul, South Korea).
4. Mark Prater held a roll call to establish a quorum. 68 of 70 possible delegates, representing 68 Sovereign Grace Churches, were present. As 36 delegates were necessary, a quorum was confirmed.
5. **Approval of Agenda.**
Mark Prater presented the proposed agenda for the meeting (see below) that was approved by unanimous consent.
 - a) Recognize new churches that have joined SGC since the last Council of Elders meeting.
 - b) Roll call. Confirm we have a quorum.
 - c) Motion to approve the meeting agenda.
 - d) State of the Union for Sovereign Grace Churches
 - e) Recognize the Rules Committee. Brief review of the Roberts Rules of Order.
 - f) Conduct the vote for the Executive Committee candidates (3 seats to fill)
 - g) Conduct the affirmation vote for the Polity Committee candidate (1 seat to fill)
 - h) Discuss and affirm the proposed amendments to the Book of Church Order.
 - i) Update from the Theology Committee regarding the SG Statement of Faith.
 - j) Global Missions Strategy and Structure
 - k) Present and affirm the Sovereign Grace budget for fiscal year 2015-2016.
 - l) Other Business.
 - m) Motion to establish the date for the next Council of Elders meeting.
 - n) Motion to adjourn.
6. **State of the Union of Sovereign Grace Churches**
Mark Prater gave the annual State of the Union of Sovereign Grace Churches.
7. **Recognize the Rules Committee**
The rules committee has three members chosen from the polity committee. The members for this meeting are Eric Holter, Aaron Law, and Marty Machowski. Eric Holter gave a brief overview of Robert's Rules of Order.
8. **Vote for Executive Committee Members**
Mark Prater conducted the vote for three open executive committee positions. Mark Prater

made an incidental motion to allow for only five candidates to be considered (instead of six as required by the BCO). The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.

- a) The nominees were:
 - i. Mark Alderton, Aurora, CO
 - ii. Warren Boettcher, Marlton, NJ
 - iii. Jimmy Cannon, Abingdon, MD
 - iv. Jon Payne, Round Rock, TX
 - v. Rob Saathoff, Williamsville, NY
- b) The following were elected to serve:
 - i. Mark Alderton, Aurora, CO
 - ii. Warren Boettcher, Marlton, NJ
 - iii. Jon Payne, Round Rock, TX

9. **Affirmation Vote for Polity Committee Member**

Mark Prater conducted an affirmation vote for Shawn Powers, Bloomington, MN, to replace Aaron Law, Jacksonville, FL, on the Polity Committee. Shawn received unanimous approval by voice vote.

10. **Proposed Amendments to the Book of Church Order (BCO)**

Phil Sasser, chair of the Polity Committee, presented the attached proposed amendments to the Book of Church Order (attached). Amendments to the BCO are governed by Section 15.3.3 and require a simple majority vote to be adopted. All amendments were approved by either unanimous consent or unanimous voice vote.

11. **Statement of Faith Update and Vote**

Jeff Purswell, Theology Committee chair, presented an update on the development and status of the Statement of Faith. Nick Swan, Theology Committee member, explained the approval process. The Council of Elders approved the process unanimously by voice vote.

12. **Global Missions Update**

Rich Richardson presented our global strategy and structure, including testimonies by Nathan Smith (England), Carlos Contreras (Mexico), and Dave Taylor (Australia).

13. **Present and Affirm the Sovereign Grace Churches budget for fiscal year 2015-2016.**

Mark Prater presented the budget which was approved by the executive committee for affirmation by the Council of Elders. Jon Payne made an appeal for churches to strengthen their financial support. The budget was affirmed unanimously by voice vote.

14. **Motion to establish date for the next Council of Elders Meeting**

No longer necessary because this has been assigned to the Executive Committee.

16. **Motion to Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned in the evening unanimously by a voice vote.

BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER
APPROVED AMENDMENTS
October 26, 2015

AMENDMENT 1

BCO SECTION: 9.3.9

INTRODUCED BY: Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: Change the first paragraph to read as follows:

Current wording:

Local church elders will be present at the ordination service, as well as the Regional Leader (or his representative) who will officially commend the candidate.

Proposed wording:

Local church elders will be present at the ordination service. Further, whenever possible, the Regional Leader or his representative will also be present to commend the candidate.

RATIONALE: Though there is great benefit in having the Region represented in a local church ordination, it seems overly stringent to require the presence of an outside person. Since local churches ordain men and the region has already approved them, it seems inconsistent to require the presence of the Regional Leader (or representative). Further, travel and schedule difficulties might make it a hardship to require this of the ordination.

AMENDMENT 2

BCO SECTION: 13.2.7.1.b

INTRODUCED BY: Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: Change term length from 3 to 6 years for RJRC.

RATIONALE: 6 years was the original intent, 3 years was mistakenly written into the original BCO.

AMENDMENT 3

BCO SECTION: 13.2.9 and 15.4.4

INTRODUCED BY: Executive Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: Change the relevant paragraphs to allow the Executive Committee to finalize the minutes of the Council of Elders.

Current wording:

BCO SECTION: 13.2.9 Minutes

At all official business meetings of the Regional Assemblies of Elders, Regional Committees, the Council of Elders, committees of the Council of Elders (including the Executive Committee), and of the Sovereign Grace Court of Appeals, minutes must be taken. These need not be word-for-word transcripts, but they should include at least (1) the official agenda, (2) decisions made and votes taken, (3) a summary of the major points brought up in debate or discussion, and (4) any statement, especially of dissent or protest, that a member requests be included in the minutes. The minutes must be approved by everyone in attendance at the meeting and responsibly archived.

BCO SECTION: 15.4.4 – Nothing currently. Add section on CoE minutes.

Proposed wording:

BCO SECTION: 13.2.9 – Minutes for Official Business Meetings

Minutes must be taken at all official business meetings of the Regional Assemblies of Elders and of the Regional Committees. These need not be word-for-word transcripts, but they should include at least (1) the official agenda, (2) decisions made and votes taken, (3) a summary of the major points brought up in debate or discussion, and (4) any statement, especially of dissent or protest, that a member requests be included in the minutes. Minutes for Regional committee meetings will be approved by the members of the respective committee. Minutes for the Regional Assembly of Elders Meetings must be approved by the Regional Judicial Review Committee and be responsibly archived.

BCO SECTION: 15.4.4 - Minutes for the Council of Elders and Its Committees

Minutes must be taken at all official business meetings of the Council of Elders and of its attendant committees (including the Executive Committee) and of the Sovereign Grace Court of Appeals. These need not be word-for-word transcripts, but they should include at least (1) the official agenda, (2) decisions made and votes taken, (3) a summary of the major points brought up in debate or discussion, and (4) any statement, especially of dissent or protest, that a member requests be included in the minutes. Council of Elders minutes will be approved by the Executive Committee. Minutes for other committee meetings will be approved by the members of the respective committee. All minutes will be responsibly archived.

RATIONALE: The Executive Committee's role is to represent and optimize the function of the Council of Elders. It will be more efficient to assign approval of the minutes of the Council of Elder meetings to the Executive Committee.

AMENDMENT 4

BCO SECTION: 15.2.1

INTRODUCED BY: Executive Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: Replace current 15.2.1 to allow the Executive Committee the ability to set the date of the annual Council of Elders meetings.

Current 15.2.1:

At each meeting of the Council of Elders, the last item on the agenda will be setting the date of the next meeting. The date will be suggested by the Executive Director (the Moderator of the Council of Elders) based on the most amenable date for the next Pastors Conference. A simple majority will carry the vote.

Proposed 15.2.1:

The Executive Committee, on behalf of the Council of elders, will schedule and approve future Council of Elders meetings. The dates will be suggested by the Executive Director (the Moderator of the Council of Elders) based on the most amenable date for the next Pastors Conference.

RATIONALE: Moving this responsibility from the Council of Elders (15.2.1) to the Executive Committee (proposed 17.2.9) will allow the Leadership Team to plan future Council of Elders meetings and Pastors Conferences further into the future giving them more leverage in negotiating contracts with hotels and conference centers.

AMENDMENT 5

BCO SECTION: 15.3.2.7-15.3.2.8 and 15.3.3.7-15.3.3.8

INTRODUCED BY: Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: In places where we refer to things already mentioned in Robert's Rules, we should remove our language to prevent confusion. Thus, we should remove the current BCO-15.3.2.7-15.3.2.8 and BCO-15.3.3.7-15.3.3.8.

RATIONALE: It is redundant and confusing to have the BCO refer to specific aspects of motions and debate when all of this is covered by our decision to use Robert's Rules for our business items.

AMENDMENT 6

BCO SECTION: 18.3.3.3 (18.3 defines the Leadership Team's responsibilities)

INTRODUCED BY: Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE:

Current 18.3.3.3:

To develop and maintain Sovereign Grace Ordination Standards and Examinations;

Proposed 18.3.3.3:

In conjunction with the Theology Committee, the Leadership Team develops and maintains Sovereign Grace Ordination Standards and Examinations;

RATIONALE: It seems wise to articulate who is clearly responsible for our Ordination Standards, and if the Theology Committee (Amendment on 15.3.1.4) has this task they should be mentioned here.

AMENDMENT 7

BCO SECTION: 9.3.6

INTRODUCED BY: Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: Rewrite with clearer, chronological steps. Also rewrite with a clearer procedure for the vows (one set of the vows will be signed *before* the vote on the candidate, but the vows will be changed to capture that state in the process).

Current wording: See BCO-9.3.6

Proposed wording:

9.3.6.1 Only the eldership of a local church can ordain new elders (BCO-1.3). Therefore, the local eldership bears primary responsibility for selecting candidates for pastoral ministry and examining their life and doctrine in order to determine whether the candidate meets the biblical character qualifications (BCO-3) and fully agrees with the Sovereign Grace Statement of Faith.

However, since the quality and unity of our elders is fundamental to the nature and health of our union, a common commitment to the standards for elders necessitates that all elders in Sovereign Grace churches be approved according to the standards of this Book of Church Order through the agency of the Regional Assembly of Elders (BCO-1.9). Ordination and discipline in any Sovereign Grace church is valid in and recognized by all other Sovereign Grace churches.

9.3.6.2 The pastoral candidate must complete all of the Sovereign Grace requirements for ordination before his actual ordination. These include (1) completing all work required in the current Sovereign Grace ordination standards, (2) passing the written and oral ordination exams administered by the Regional Ordination Committee, and (3) and approval by a simple majority of the Regional Assembly of Elders, after any necessary and relevant questioning. Certain of these aspects are further defined below.

9.3.6.3 After the candidate has passed the ordination exams he must affirm in writing the statement below. The candidate will sign two copies of this statement and make two additional photocopies (one signed statement kept by candidate and one sent to Sovereign Grace; one photocopy given to Regional Ordination Committee and one to the Director of Church Development):

“I declare sincerely before God that I believe that all the articles and points of doctrine contained in the Sovereign Grace Statement of Faith fully agree with the Scriptures, and I own that Statement as the statement and confession of my faith. These are doctrines I promise to teach and defend in public and in private. I promise further that if in the future I come to have reservations about any of these doctrines, I will share these reservations with my eldership and the Regional Assembly of Elders.

If ordained I will submit without exception to the explicitly mandated polity practices of the Sovereign Grace Book of Church Order. I affirm that the form of government contained in the Sovereign Grace Book of Church Order is a wise and suitable application of Scriptural principles.”

If the candidate has any reservations about or takes any exceptions to either the Statement of Faith or the Book of Church order, he must inform his local eldership and the Regional Assembly of Elders. These exceptions must be submitted in writing, and each elder’s exceptions shall be kept on record with the local eldership, the Regional Assembly of Elders, and Sovereign Grace.

The local eldership shall first investigate the exception before presenting the candidate to the Regional Assembly of Elders. If required the Regional Assembly of Elders shall then determine the significance of the candidate’s scruples. If the exception is a trivial semantic scruple and not a substantive difference with any doctrine in the Statement of Faith, then the candidate may sign the above statements and be put forward for a vote on his ordination. However, if it is determined that the candidate substantially disagrees with any of the doctrines of the Statement of Faith, he may not be approved for ordination. The Ordination Committee shall recommend to him a course of study on the relevant doctrines, if the candidate is willing, in the hopes that his scruples might be overcome.

9.3.6.4 The above statements having been signed, the candidate will then be presented to the Regional Assembly for a vote on his ordination. The local eldership shall publicly commend the gifting and character of the candidate. The Regional Ordination Committee shall testify that the candidate has passed all required ordination exams. The Regional Assembly shall then question the candidate as they see fit to validate that there is no heterodoxy or scandalous sin present in the candidate that would prohibit the candidate from being approved for ordination.

9.3.6.5 The Regional Assembly then votes on whether to approve the candidate for ordination. Approval requires a simple majority vote. As stipulated by the Book of Church Order (13.2.1.5), the Regional Elders must demonstrate just cause to reject a candidate who has been previously vetted by his local church and has passed the required ordination examinations. Just cause consists exclusively of heterodoxy (i.e., deviation from the Sovereign Grace Statement of Faith) or scandalous or serious sin.

9.3.6.6 The above steps having been completed, the candidate is now ready to be ordained by his local church eldership.

RATIONALE: The current BCO-9.3.6 is confusing at certain points and there is a need to know all reservations about the Statement of Faith and Book of Church Order *before* the candidate is presented to the Regional Assembly.

AMENDMENT 8

BCO SECTION: 13.1.3

INTRODUCED BY: Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE:

Change language of 13.1.3 to remove "global regions" and "a global church."

*Current wording:**Global Regions may be formed. This will be facilitated by the Leadership Team. In cases where a Global church desires to join a North American Region due to relationship or geographic isolation, it may do so with the approval of a majority of the pastors in that Region.**Proposed wording:**New regions may be formed in North America and around the world. This will be facilitated by the Leadership Team.*

RATIONALE: The purpose is to clearly establish the ability to create regions (not currently in the BCO). Additionally, the Leadership Team is in the best position to facilitate the regional participation of churches outside of North America so the proposal removes alternative language.

AMENDMENT 9

BCO SECTION: 13.1.5 (inserted after current 13.1.4 and section renumbered)

INTRODUCED BY: Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: Require that Regional Assemblies meet annually:

*Proposed wording:**Regional Assemblies shall meet at least once per year. When possible, this meeting shall occur with a majority of regional elders present in person.*

RATIONALE: There is too much business for Regions to meet less often than annually. It is also important for these meetings to take place in person when this is not a hardship for regional elders.

AMENDMENT 10

BCO SECTION: 13.1.6 (refers to 13.1.5 in the current BCO, but this becomes 13.1.6 if the amendment above is approved)

INTRODUCED BY: Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: We need to define what "present for all binding votes" means:

Current wording of 13.1.5:

A quorum consists of at least half of the voting members of the Regional Assembly of Elders. A quorum must be present for all binding votes.

Proposed wording of 13.1.6:

A quorum consists of at least half of the voting members of the Regional Assembly of Elders. A quorum must be present for all binding votes. Being "present" means individual members participate either in person or via telephone/teleconference.

RATIONALE: We want to both allow for teleconferencing and also not open up official Regional business to votes by email, etc.

AMENDMENT 11

BCO SECTION: 13.1.7

INTRODUCED BY: Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: Define what business must be in person/teleconference and what business can be by email.

Proposed wording:

Regional Assemblies must conduct their business in person or teleconference when it concerns their essential functions: BCO-13.2.1-13.2.8. Yet, for certain trivial business items they may conduct matters through email. Such trivial items include approval of minutes, setting meeting dates and times, and approving a budget. It is also allowable to conduct matters by email if the Regional Assembly decides to do so by unanimous consent.

AMENDMENT 12

BCO SECTION: 13.2.1.4

INTRODUCED BY: Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: Insert the following at the end of the current 13.2.1.4:

Current 13.2.1.4:

If the candidate passes the written and oral exams, the Ordination Committee shall present the candidate to the Regional Assembly of Elders with its recommendation. The Regional Elders may question the candidate concerning his doctrine or life as the Assembly deems necessary. After questioning, the Regional Assembly will vote on whether the candidate may be ordained. A simple majority is sufficient for approval (BCO-9.3.6).

Proposed 13.2.1.4:

Once the candidate passes the written and oral exams he must affirm in writing that he fully subscribes to the Statement of Faith and that he will submit without exception to the Sovereign Grace Book of Church Order. If he has exceptions to either he must declare those in writing to the Regional Assembly of Elders (BCO-9.3.6). Once these steps are completed the Ordination Committee shall present the candidate to the Regional Assembly of Elders with its recommendation.

The Regional Elders may question the candidate concerning his doctrine or life as the Assembly deems necessary. After questioning, the Regional Assembly will vote (according to 13.1.6 if approved) on whether the candidate may be ordained. A simple majority is required for approval (BCO-9.3.6).

RATIONALE: We want to protect the integrity of the voting process and make it easy for Regional elders to address candidates before a vote is taken. We also want Regional Assemblies to be clear about what their responsibilities are.

AMENDMENT 13

BCO SECTION: 13.2.2.1

INTRODUCED BY: Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: Replace current 13.2.2.1 with the following:

Current wording of 13.2.2.1:

Each Regional Assembly of Elders will appoint a qualified sitting Judicial Review Committee that is trained and equipped in ecclesiastical law and procedure. This Judicial Review Committee has its prescribed authority detailed in BCO-25.

Proposed wording of 13.2.2.1:

Each Regional Assembly of Elders will appoint a qualified sitting Judicial Review Committee that is trained in ecclesiastical law and procedure by the Sovereign Grace Polity Committee. This training must be completed within 18-months of being appointed to the Regional Judicial Review Committee.

RATIONALE: It is imperative that our RJRC members be adequately trained for situations that can and will arise in the future. It seems sensible that the Polity Committee would handle this training for now.

AMENDMENT 14

BCO SECTION: 13.2.5

INTRODUCED BY: Ian McConnell and Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: Replace the existing 13.2.5 with what follows:

13.2.5 CHURCH ADOPTIONS

13.2.5.1 Overview: The Regional Leader, the Regional Church Planting Committee, the Regional Ordination Committee, and the Regional Judicial Review Committee, have the joint responsibility to coordinate church adoptions according to the guidelines of *The Book of Church Order*.

13.2.5.2 Role of the Leadership Team and the Director of Church Planting and Mission: As an extension of the Leadership Team, the Director of Church Planting and Mission will assist the work of the Regional Leader and Regional committees. The Director of church Planting and Mission will maintain a Guidelines & Best Practices document to serve Sovereign Grace in the adoption process. This document will provide the basis for an assessment and recommended path for all adoptions. An initial self-assessment and interview with the church adoption candidate by the Director of Church Planting and Mission or his delegate will take place to provide preliminary information. A report will be sent to the Regional Leader, Regional Church Planting Committee, and the Regional Ordination Committee indicating strengths, weaknesses, and potential concerns. The authority to approve or reject the church adoption rests solely with the Regional Assembly of Elders.

13.2.5.3 Role of the Regional Church Planting Committee: The Regional Church Planting Committee, facilitated by the Regional Leader, will conduct a full assessment of the church's compatibility with our theology, mission, values, and polity based on the process laid out in the Guidelines and Best Practices for Adoptions document. They will submit their assessment and recommendations to the Regional Leader.

13.2.5.4 Role of the Regional Ordination Committee: The Regional Ordination Committee, facilitated by the Regional Leader, will assess the doctrine of the candidate church elders. The elder(s) of the candidate church must be reviewed for transfer and confirmation of ordination by the Ordination Committee. The Ordination Committee will make a recommendation to the Regional Assembly of Elders for or against the transfer of each elder's ordination status. The Regional Ordination Committee may recommend to the Regional Assembly of Elders that the elder(s) of the candidate church pass the Sovereign Grace Ordination Standards and Exams if it judges this prudent. The candidate church elder(s) must each sign the following statements:

"I declare sincerely before God that I believe that all the articles and points of doctrine contained in the Sovereign Grace Statement of Faith fully agree with the Scriptures, and I own that Statement as the statement and confession of my faith. These are doctrines I promise to teach and defend in public and in private. I promise further that if in the future I come to have reservations about any of these doctrines, I will share these reservations with my eldership and the Regional Assembly of Elders.

If ordained I will submit without exception to the explicitly mandated polity practices of the Sovereign Grace Book of Church Order. I affirm that the form of government contained in the Sovereign Grace Book of Church Order is a wise and suitable application of Scriptural principles."

If the candidate has any reservations about or takes any exceptions to either the Statement of Faith or the Book of Church order, he must inform his local eldership and the Regional Assembly of Elders. These exceptions must be submitted in writing, and each elder's exceptions shall be kept on record with the local eldership, the Regional Assembly of Elders, and Sovereign Grace.

The local eldership shall first investigate the exception before presenting the candidate to the Regional Assembly of Elders. The Regional Assembly of Elders shall determine the significance of the candidate's scruples. If the exception is a trivial semantic scruple and not a substantive difference with any doctrine in the Statement of Faith, then the candidate may sign the above statements and be put forward for a vote on his ordination. However, if it is determined that the candidate substantially disagrees with any of the doctrines of the Statement of Faith, he may not be approved for ordination. The Ordination Committee shall recommend to him a course of study on the relevant doctrines, if the candidate is willing, in the hopes that his scruples might be overcome.

The report of the Committee, which will include the recommendations of the Regional Ordination Committee, the signed statements from the candidate elder(s), and any exceptions discovered in this process, will be delivered to the Regional Leader and the Regional Church Planting Committee.

13.2.5.5 Role of the Regional Judicial Review Committee: The Regional Judicial Review Committee, facilitated by the Regional Leader, will assess whether the candidate church's governing documents are in compliance with the Book of Church Order. They will submit their assessment and recommendations to the Regional Leader and the Regional Church Planting Committee.

13.2.5.6 Reports to the Regional Assembly of Elders: The Regional Church Planting Committee will gather the assessment reports of the Regional Church Planting Committee, the Regional Ordination Committee, and the Regional Judicial Review Committee and then submit these to the Regional Assembly of Elders. These must be submitted *at least 30 days prior to a vote on the ordination(s) and adoption of the candidate church.*

13.2.5.7 Role of Regional Assembly of Elders: Before there can be a final vote on the ordination of any candidate elder(s) the Regional Assembly may have to rule on issues raised by the Committee Reports. They must also rule on any exceptions that the candidate elders took to the Statement of Faith and the Book of Church Order (cf. BCO-9.3.6). If all such matters are resolved, then they move to vote on the ordination transfer of the candidate elders. Adequate discussion is required before any vote. Transferring the ordination of these elders requires a simple majority. The Regional Assembly then votes on whether to adopt the church, which requires a two-thirds majority.

13.2.5.8 The adoption is finalized when the Partnership Agreement is signed by all necessary parties (Executive Director, Regional Leader, Elders of the Partner Church).

13.2.5.9 If a church without elders seeks adoption in Sovereign Grace and the Region votes to adopt it, then the church will come under the pastoral care of the Regional Assembly until elders can be found (as described in BCO-9.6).

RATIONALE: The 2014 Council of Elders commissioned the Director of Church Planting and the Polity Committee to draft a proposal for church adoptions.

AMENDMENT 15

BCO SECTION: 14.2.5 (inserted after current 14.2.4 and section is then renumbered)

INTRODUCED BY: Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: Insert the following as another piece of the Regional Leader's job description:

14.2.5 Facilitates the work of regional committees as needed. He can delegate this task as he sees fit;

RATIONALE: There are a lot of places where multiple committees are involved in a given task. This can become extremely burdensome unless there is someone to coordinate their efforts. The Regional Leader is the logical person to do this.

AMENDMENT 16

BCO SECTION: 15.3.1.1

INTRODUCED BY: Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: Add language that enables the Council of Elders to create committees that do not require the involvement of the Nominating Committee. We would expect that these are NOT standing committees (e.g., committee that drafted the child protection statement). Add the following sentence at the end of the current 15.3.1.1:

The Council of Elders may decide to create ad-hoc committees that do not require the involvement of the Nominating Committee. This will be done according to Robert's Rules of Order.

RATIONALE: It can be overly burdensome to create committees that involve the Nominating Committee for time-sensitive matters. This delays those committees for one-year (next Council of Elders). 15.3.1.2 gives the impression that *all* committees must be established by Nom Com.

AMENDMENT 17

BCO SECTION: 15.3.1.4

INTRODUCED BY: Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: This is the first of several amendments connected to Ordination and Standards and the Director of Theology and Training (18.3.3.3 and 18.4.5 are the other two). In this one we (1) make the Director of Theology and Training the permanent chair of this committee and (2) add the "Ordination Standards" to the basic responsibilities of the Theology Committee.

Current 15.3.1.4:

The Council of Elders will also create a Theology Committee. It shall consist of 7 members whose terms will be 3 years each. There will be no limit on the number of terms that an elder may serve. If a committee member is unable to complete his term, then upon the recommendation of the Sovereign Grace Nominating Committee, the Sovereign Grace Council of Elders shall elect another to fulfill his office and term. The mandate of the Theology Committee will be to review the Statement of Faith, to propose amendments to it if necessary, to advise the Council on amendments to the Statement of Faith which may be proposed by other Council members (cf. BCO-15.3.2) and to fulfill whatever theological needs that Sovereign Grace Churches may have, as deemed so by the Council of Elders.

Proposed 15.3.1.4:

The Council of Elders will also create a Theology Committee. This Committee will be chaired by the Director of Theology and Training and shall consist of 6 additional members whose terms will be 3 years each. There will be no limit on the number of terms that an elder may serve. If a committee member is unable to complete his term, then upon the recommendation of the Sovereign Grace Nominating Committee, the Sovereign Grace Council of Elders shall elect another to fulfill his office and term. The mandate of the Theology Committee will be to review the Statement of Faith, to propose amendments to it if necessary, to advise the Council on amendments to the Statement of Faith which may be proposed by other Council members (cf. BCO-15.3.2), to propose and amend Ordination Standards, and to fulfill whatever theological needs that Sovereign Grace Churches may have, as deemed so by the Council of Elders.

RATIONALE: The Ordination Standards are important enough that we should make it explicit who has primary responsibility to oversee them.

AMENDMENT 18

BCO SECTION: 15.3.3.4 (inserted after 15.3.3.3 and section is then renumbered)

INTRODUCED BY: Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: Clarify that the Executive Committee can introduce BCO amendments:

Proposed wording:

15.3.3.4 The Executive Committee may initiate potential changes to the Sovereign Grace Book of Church Order.

RATIONALE: This function is implicit in BCO-15.3.3 because of the review function handled by the Executive Committee and the presence of ordained elders on the Committee, many of whom are Council of Elder delegates. It seems best to clarify this.

AMENDMENT 19

BCO SECTION: 15.3.3.11 (to be added after current 15.3.3.10)

INTRODUCED BY: The Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: In order to streamline the process of incorporating changes to the BCO while also allowing that not all stylistic and incidental mistakes will be caught in the amendment approval process, the following will be added after BCO-15.3.3.10:

*The Polity Committee is responsible to incorporate newly approved amendments into the Book of Church Order. They have the ability to **copy** edit these amendments to (1) adjust incorrect grammar and (2) make the style consistent with the rest of the Book of Church Order, but (3) they cannot change the meaning of an amendment. These copy edits become an official part of the Book of Church Order and can be changed by an amendment at a later Council of Elders.*

RATIONALE: We want a process that makes changes to the BCO difficult, but not exasperating to our elders. Thus, we need a common sense approach to this kind of editing of amendments.

AMENDMENT 20

BCO SECTION: Replace the current 15.3.8

INTRODUCED BY: Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: Enable certain committees or any three members of the CoE to propose changes to the Ordination Standards:

Current 15.3.8: See BCO-15.3

15.3.8 Approval of the Ordination Standards and Exams

15.3.8.1 The Leadership Team has the responsibility to submit the Ordination Standards and Examinations for the Council of Elders' approval.

15.3.8.2 The Council of Elders must confirm Ordination Standards and Exams and changes thereto by a three-fourths majority vote of those present and voting.

15.3.8.3 Ordination Standards and Exams must then be affirmed by three fourths of the Regions.

Proposed 15.3.8:

15.3.8 Changes to the Ordination Standards and Exams

15.3.8.1 Changes to the Ordination Standards and Exams can be proposed by the Leadership Team, the Theology Committee, the Executive Committee or any three members of the Council of Elders.

15.3.8.2 Potential changes must be submitted to the Executive Committee ninety days in advance of the annual Council of Elders meeting in order to give time for the proposed change to be studied and to get it on the Council's agenda.

15.3.8.3 Sixty days in advance of the Council of Elders meeting, the proposed change must be sent to every member of the Council.

15.3.8.4 The Theology Committee will be charged with the responsibility to study the proposed changes and give their reasoned input at the next Council meeting.

15.3.8.5 The Council of Elders must confirm Ordination Standards and Exams and changes thereto by a three-fourths majority vote of those present and voting.

15.3.8.6 Ordination Standards and Exams must then be affirmed by three fourths of the Regions.

RATIONALE: We need to allow for elders outside of the Leadership Team to propose changes to the Ordination Standards.

AMENDMENT 21

BCO SECTION: 15.4.4 (added after current 15.4.3)

INTRODUCED BY: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (or Jon Payne, Paul Buckley, Wayne Brooks, Dave Taylor)

PROPOSED CHANGE: Add the following new section in the BCO under 15.4 Procedures for Council of Elders Meetings:

15.4.4 Others Participating in Council of Elders Meetings but not Voting

Executive Committee Members, Leadership Team Members, Theology Committee, Polity Committee, Court of Appeals, and Regional Leaders who are not Council of Elders delegates from their local church may participate in the Council of Elders by making statements or asking questions but may not vote or make motions from the floor.

Rationale: It is wise for these elected leaders, who exercise significant responsibility in the Sovereign Grace Churches, to be able to share their perspective in the COE, though not to disrupt the balance of church representation through voting or making motions.

AMENDMENT 22

BCO SECTION: 18.4

INTRODUCED BY: Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: Replace the current 18:4 with the following:

Current 18.4:

The Executive Committee determines which positions will comprise the Leadership Team and who will fill these positions. At a minimum, the Leadership Team must include an Executive Director. The rest of the Leadership Team should be staffed sufficiently to fulfill its designated function. The positions listed below seem wise, and the Executive Committee should consider them.

Proposal for 18.4:

The Executive Committee in consultation with the Executive Director determines which positions will comprise the Leadership Team and who will fill these positions. At a minimum, the Leadership Team must include an Executive Director. The rest of the Leadership Team should be staffed sufficiently to fulfill its designated function.

Further, the Executive Committee in consultation with the Executive Director may rename any of the titles of the other leadership team officers except the Executive Director at their discretion. If it does so, any changes to those titles will be made by the Polity Committee in the next edition of the Book of Church Order without a formal amendment process.

Should the Executive Committee rename or alter positions presently written into the Book of Church Order it is the committee's responsibility to ensure that the Leadership Team will continue to operate in full compliance with the Book of Church Order requirements vis-à-vis the Leadership Team.

RATIONALE: This better reflects the nature of the current leadership structure.

AMENDMENT 23

Withdrawn. Not necessary after approval of Amendment 22.

AMENDMENT 24

BCO SECTION: 18.4.5

INTRODUCED BY: Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: Make Director of Theology's job description clearer in the BCO.

Current 18.4.5:

Oversees Pastors College, stewards Statement of Faith, and coordinates theological reviews (e.g., Ordination Exam).

Proposed 18.4.5:

Dean of the Pastors College, chair of the Theology Committee, and facilitates theological training for Sovereign Grace pastors.

RATIONALE: More clarity on this director position in our BCO.

AMENDMENT 25

BCO SECTION: 25.1

INTRODUCED BY: Polity Committee

PROPOSED CHANGE: Add the following the sentence at the end of the third paragraph under 25.1:

If necessary, Regional Judicial Review Committee members may be shared between regions and serve on Adjudication panels (BCO-13.2.2.6), if approved by the receiving Regional Assembly of Elders.

RATIONALE: There will likely be times when we need to share RJRC members between regions to guarantee that trained elders are the ones handling a hearing.

SOVEREIGN GRACE CHURCHES
FY 2016 BUDGET
SCHEDULE OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES

	Program Services						Supporting Services			Combined Total
	Church Missions DOM	Church Missions INTL	Pastors College	Conferences	Resources	Total	Fund Raising	General and Administrative	Total	
Revenues										
CONTRIBUTIONS - CHURCHES- GENERAL						\$0	\$1,006,700		\$1,006,700	\$1,006,700
CONTRIBUTIONS - CHURCHES - REGIONS	290,000					290,000			0	290,000
CONTRIBUTIONS - INDIVIDUALS						0	390,000		390,000	390,000
SALES					280,000	280,000			0	280,000
TUITION & FEES			80,500			80,500			0	80,500
CONFERENCE RECEIPTS				90,100		90,100			0	90,100
INVESTMENT INCOME						0		1,000	1,000	1,000
OTHER INCOME				162,000	187,000	349,000		29,400	29,400	378,400
TOTAL REVENUES	290,000	0	80,500	252,100	467,000	1,089,600	1,396,700	30,400	1,427,100	2,516,700
Expenses										
COMPENSATION & BENEFITS	379,130	27,000	241,090	128,850	261,740	1,037,810		184,290	184,290	1,222,100
EDUCATION & TRAINING	31,500		5,900	1,100	1,300	39,800		1,900	1,900	41,700
COST OF GOODS SOLD					127,000	127,000			0	127,000
GIFTS & GRANTS	190,700	55,800	2,700	5,000	900	255,100	400	1,000	1,400	256,500
TRAVEL & HOSPITALITY	106,000	65,900	36,400	58,700	9,900	276,900	3,800	16,900	20,700	297,600
OFFICE EXPENSE	7,700		5,200	3,000	18,200	34,100	23,200	11,500	34,700	68,800
INSURANCE		6,000			3,400	9,400		22,300	22,300	31,700
PROMOTION	600				18,000	18,600	12,500		12,500	31,100
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	6,700			10,100	30,700	47,500	9,000	43,650	52,650	100,150
SOUND, VIDEO & LIGHTING	400			2,500	3,000	5,900			0	5,900
BUILDING MAINTENANCE & UTILITIES			43,400	1,000	12,600	57,000		98,500	98,500	155,500
BUILDING OCCUPANCY	1,500		400	2,000		3,900			0	3,900
INTEREST EXPENSE						0		450	450	450
OTHER EXPENSE	15,000			1,500	35,000	51,500	5,400	37,400	42,800	94,300
TOTAL EXPENSES	739,230	154,700	335,090	213,750	521,740	1,964,510	54,300	417,890	472,190	2,436,700
NET INCOME	(\$449,230)	(\$154,700)	(\$254,590)	\$38,350	(\$54,740)	(\$874,910)	\$1,342,400	(\$387,490)	\$954,910	\$80,000