

**Sovereign Grace Churches Council of Elders Meeting Minutes
Orlando, Florida. October 29, 2013**

1. Mark Prater, executive director of Sovereign Grace called to order the third meeting of the Council of Elders in 2013 at 9am on Tuesday, October 29, 2013 at Rosen Shingle Creek in Orlando, FL. 66 of 68 delegates, representing 63 churches who signed the letter of intent to establish Sovereign Grace Churches (according to the newly approved Book of Church Order).
2. **Approval of Agenda.** Mark Prater presented the proposed agenda for the meeting (below) that was approved unanimously by voice vote:
 - a. *Recognize new churches who signed the Letter of Intent since last Council of Elders meeting.*
 - b. *Roll call.*
 - c. *Approve Old Council of Elders Meeting Minutes.*
 - d. *Conduct vote for the nominees for the Executive Committee.*
 - e. *Conduct affirmation vote for 6 elders nominated to serve on the Grace Court of Appeals.*
 - f. *Conduct affirmation vote for 7 elders nominated to serve on the Polity Committee.*
 - g. *Conduct affirmation vote for 7 elders nominated to serve on the Theology Committee.*
 - h. *Present and affirm Sovereign Grace budget for fiscal year 2013-2014.*
 - i. *Discuss and affirm proposed amendments to the Book of Church Order.*
 - j. *Discuss and approve motion to change a section of the SG Statement of Faith.*
 - k. *Follow up on motion to form Missions Committee affirmed in the May 2013 Council of Elders meeting.*
 - l. *Motion to publish the Council of Elders meeting minutes*
 - m. *Motion to establish date for the next CoE meeting.*
 - n. *Other Business.*
 - o. *Motion to adjourn.*
3. **Approval of Prior Minutes.** Mark Prater presented the official minutes from the May 2013 meeting and the July 2013 meeting for approval. Both sets of minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote and are available on request by all current delegates.
4. **Vote for Executive Committee Members.**
 - a. Mark Prater conducted the vote for six new executive committee members. The nominees were:

i. Ricky Alcantar. El Paso, TX	vii. Bill Kittrell. Knoxville, TN
ii. Warren Boettcher. Marlton, NJ	viii. Jon Payne. Round Rock, TX
iii. Wayne Brooks. Winter Garden, FL	ix. Pete Privatera. Millersville, PA
iv. Brian Chesemore. Louisville, KY	x. Rich Richardson. Gilbert, AZ
v. Keith Collins. New Orleans, LA	xi. Steve Teter. Franklin, WV
vi. Andy Farmer. Glen Mills, PA	xii. Eric Turbedsky. Irvine, CA
 - b. The following were elected to serve:

i. Warren Boettcher. Marlton, NJ	iv. Andy Farmer. Glen Mills, PA
ii. Wayne Brooks. Winter Garden, FL	v. Jon Payne. Round Rock, TX
iii. Keith Collins. New Orleans, LA	vi. Rich Richardson. Gilbert, AZ
5. **Affirmation votes for Sovereign Grace Committees.** Mark Prater conducted affirmation votes for the following committees. The following candidates for committees were all affirmed by the delegates by a majority or greater vote.

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- a. Sovereign Grace Court of Appeals
 - i. Rob Flood. Glen Mills, PA
 - ii. Jon Hansel. Bloomington, MN
 - iii. Cedric Moss. Nassau, Bahamas
 - iv. Trey Richardson, Gilbert, AZ
 - v. Steve Teter. Franklin, WV
 - vi. Grady VanWright. Pearland, TX
- b. Polity Committee
 - i. Daniel Baker. Apex, NC
 - ii. Paul Buckley. Haverhill, MA
 - iii. Bruce Chick. Roanoke, VA
 - iv. Eric Holter. Durham, NC
 - v. Aaron Law. Orlando, FL
 - vi. Marty Machowski. Glen Mills, PA
 - vii. Phil Sasser(Chair). Apex, NC
- c. Theology Committee
 - i. Josh Blount. Franklin, WV
 - ii. Rick Gamache. Bloomington, MN
 - iii. C.J. Mahaney. Louisville, KY
 - iv. Jared Mellinger. Glen Mills, PA
 - v. Jeff Purswell(Chair). Louisville, KY
 - vi. Nick Swan. Charlotte, NC
 - vii. Matthew Wassink. Lenexa, KS

6. **Motion to change the Statement of Faith (SoF).** Nick Swan (NC) presented a motion to submit a proposed change to the statement of faith (pursuant to BCO Section III.B.3.b) regarding the paragraph on Christology. If approved by $\frac{1}{4}$ of the delegates, this proposal would be sent to the theology committee for review over the next year and then submitted to the council of elders with its recommendation for change to be considered. The original proposed motion is included as Appendix 6-1.

- a. Paul Buckley (MA) proposed an amendment to the motion adding “a request that the theology committee also provide a comprehensive review of the statement of faith in its entirety and to bring a report back to the council of elders as soon as possible.” The motion to amend the proposal passed with a 36-30 vote (a majority).
- b. A call to vote was then made for the proposed motion as amended (needing $\frac{1}{4}$ affirmative votes). The motion as amended passed 65-1.

7. **Motions to amend the Book of Church Order.** Phil Sasser, chair of the polity committee presented the proposed amendments to the Book of Church Order as follows. Amendments to the Book of Church Order are governed by the BCO (Section III.B.c.) and require a simple majority vote to be adopted. The original proposed amendments to the BCO are included as Appendix 7-1.

- a. Section A, amendments pertaining to CoE procedures.
 - i. Eric Holter (NC) proposed an amendment to motion A.1. to allow the CoE to suspend the proposed rules for New Business Motions with a vote of $\frac{2}{3}$ majority. The amendment carried unanimously.
 - ii. As amended, all proposed amendments in Section A were approved unanimously.
- b. Section B, amendments “cleaning up” some of our language.
 - i. All proposed amendments in Section B were approved unanimously.
- c. Section C, amendments to improve our Rules of Discipline.
 - i. Ed O’Mara (MD) proposed an amendment to motion C.1. to require any changes to the procedural manual be sent to the CoE 60 days in advance of the CoE meeting. The amendment carried unanimously.
 - ii. As amended, all proposed amendments in Section C were approved unanimously.
- d. Section D, amendments pertaining to *Ex Parte* Sharing of Evidence.
 - i. All proposed amendments to Section D were approved with a vote of 64-2.

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- e. Section E, amendments based on our rewrite of the Sovereign Grace Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.
 - i. All proposed amendments to Section E were approved unanimously.

- 8. **Motion to Publish the October 29, 2013 Council of Elders meeting minutes.** Phil Sasser (NC) presented the following motion.
 - a. *I move that the Council of Elders make public the minutes of its Fall 2013 meeting. The responsibility to record the minutes of the CoE falls to the Leadership Team's Executive Director. He may delegate the task to a qualified assistant. The minutes of the CoE Meeting must be submitted via email to the CoE members who attended the meeting for their approval no later than two weeks following the meeting. CoE members then have two weeks to approve the minutes after they receive them. A two-thirds majority of the CoE is required for the approval of the minutes. After their approval, the minutes of the meeting will be posted on the Sovereign Grace website. The Council of Elders may, if it deems it necessary, hold an Executive Session. Only the members of the Council of Elders, The SG Leadership Team, or those approved by the Council of Elders may attend an Executive Session. The Council of Elders is not required to make public those minutes but may do so if it deems it wise and appropriate.*
 - b. Nick Swan (NC) proposed an amendment to allow all executive committee members to attend executive sessions as well. This amendment was passed unanimously.
 - c. Nick Swan (NC) proposed an amendment to require only a 2/3 majority of CoE members who actually respond to the email for approval. This amendment passed on a 64-2 vote.
 - d. The proposed motion as amended was approved by a vote of 65-1.

- 9. **Presentation and Affirmation of Budget for FYE August 31, 2014 and Annual Budget Procedures.**
 - a. Mark Prater and Tommy Hill (Finance Director) presented the proposed annual budget for affirmation by the Council of Elders which had been previously approved by the Executive Committee in August 2013. The proposed budget including proposed budget procedures is included as Appendix 11-1.
 - b. The CoE unanimously approved the FYE August 31, 2014 budget and annual budget procedures.

- 10. **Motion to establish date and location for the 2014 CoE Meeting.** Mark Prater presented a proposal to hold the next CoE meeting on October 21, 2014 in conjunction with the Pastors Conference being held October 21-23, tentatively at the Maxwell House Hotel in Nashville, TN. The motion passed unanimously.

- 11. **Motion to Adjourn Meeting.** The meeting was adjourned in the afternoon on October 29, 2013 by a unanimous vote.

Proposal to Change the Sovereign Grace Statement of Faith

One of the privileges, prerogatives, and responsibilities given to the Counsel of Elders is the stewardship of the Sovereign Grace Statement of Faith. (BCO III.B.3.b) In accordance with the Sovereign Grace Book of Church order, we (Counsel of Elder Members Phil Sasser, Walt Alexander, Eric Holter, and Nick Swan) propose the following changes to the Sovereign Grace Statement of Faith.

We propose, that the following section of the Sovereign Grace Statement of Faith:

Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was the eternal Word made flesh, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. He was perfect in nature, teaching, and obedience. He is fully God and fully man. He was always with God and is God. Through him all things came into being and were created. He was before all things and in him all things hold together by the word of his power. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, and in him dwells the fullness of the godhead bodily.

be replaced with, or with language similar to, the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 8, Sections III and VII.

The Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.

Christ, in the work of mediation, acts according to both natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to itself; yet, by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in Scripture attributed to the person denominated by the other nature.

Reasons for replacement.

1. The relevant section of the current Statement of Faith not only omits the historic orthodox teaching of the two natures of Christ in one person, but appears to deny it by asserting that Christ "was perfect in nature [singular]." The excerpts from the Westminster Confession contain a robust and concise elaboration of historic orthodox Christology.
2. The Statement of Faith largely reproduces the Scripture without comment or explanation. The mere reproduction of statements of Scripture, without interpretive comment, does not help us to distinguish our doctrine from that of the heterodox. The heterodox also affirm the statements of Scripture, although they interpret it differently.

Westminster gives us the language by which the orthodox have distinguished their Christology from that of the heterodox.

3. The shift in tenses in the section of the Statement of Faith is a bit awkward. Christ *was* the eternal Word, always with God, before all things; he *is* God, fully God, etc. It almost seems to suggest that Christ became fully divine at some point in time.

Process of Approval at Fall 2013 Council of Elders Meeting (BCO III.B.3.iv-v)

The Council of Elders will vote on the merits of pursuing the proposed change. If one fourth of the Council of Elders votes in favor of pursuing this change in language, the change will be sent to the Theology Committee for consideration. The Theology Committee will study the change over the next year and will send its report and recommendation to the Council of Elders ninety days in advance of the Council's next meeting (likely Fall 2014) See BCO III.B.3.b for further details.

For Further Study and Consideration

Sections of creeds, confessions, and Systematic Theologies that pertain to the proposed change in language.

Reference Material

The Westminster Confession - Chapter 8: Of Christ the Mediator, in particular Sections 2 and 7

The Belgic Confession - Article 19: The Union and Distinction of the Two Natures in the Person of Christ

The Second Helvetic Confession - Chapter 11: Of Jesus Christ, Being True God and Man, and the Only Savior of the World

The Chalcedonian Creed

Grudem *Systematic Theology* Chapter 26 *The Person of Christ* - in particular pg. 554 ff.

Calvin *Institutes of the Christian Religion* Book II Chapter XIV *How the Two Natures of the Mediator Make One Person*

Bavinck *Reformed Dogmatics: Sin and Salvation in Christ* Volume Three, Chapter 6 *The Person of Christ* - particularly 298 ff.

Berkhof *Systematic Theology Part Three The Doctrine of the Person and Work of Christ III The Unipersonality of Christ* pgs. 321 ff.

Hodge *Systematic Theology Volume II: Anthropology* Part III, Chapter III, *The Person of Christ* pgs. 378 ff.

Proposal Written by Nathan Sasser and Nick Swan

Proposal Submitted by Council of Elders Members Phil Sasser, Walt Alexander, Eric Holter, and Nick Swan (BCO III.B.3.ii)

Proposed Amendments to the SG Book of Church Order

August 30, 2013

(Prepared by Phil Sasser and approved by the SG Executive Committee for the agenda of the Fall 2013 SG Council of Elders meeting)

A. Amendments pertaining to our Council of Elders Procedures based upon our last meeting:

1. New Business Motions.

- a. A New Business Motion is any motion that requires the CoE to take any substantive decisions or actions, such as, but not limited to, the appropriation of funds not already in the budget, the formation of new committees, the issuing of opinions and public statements on behalf of the CoE, public censures, and commendations.
- b. Proposed Amendment: Any New Business Motion must be submitted to the Executive Committee 40 days prior to the CoE meeting. This will give the Executive Committee 30 days to review such a motion, if necessary refer it to an appropriate existing committee, and/or to interact with the elder making the motion with its recommendation. The new motion will, either in its original form or with modifications *agreed to by the elder making the motion*, be sent to every CoE member 30 days prior to the CoE meeting. This will give each CoE member the opportunity to give due consideration to the motion and to discuss it with the other elders in his church.
- c. Exception: Procedural motions on business items are not subject to this procedure. Procedural motions include, but are not limited to, 1) motions concerning points of order, 2) motions to open or close debates, 3) motions to table business items to a future meeting, 4) motions to refer an item to a committee for further study, and 5) changes made to the motion as a result of dialogue and debate by the CoE.
- d. New Heading: Procedures for Council of Elders Meetings III.B.4
- e. Placement of the in the BCO: If this amendments is adopted it would be III.B.4.a (New Business Items) in the BCO.

2. Rules Committee:

- a. Amendment: The Polity Committee shall supply three of its members to serve as the standing Rules Committee. The Rules Committee will give rulings on any questions concerning what the BCO stipulates, allows, or prohibits during CoE meetings if a point of order is made during the meeting. A ruling of the Rules Committee may be appealed by any member of the CoE and voted on by the Council.
- b. The Polity Committee shall determine beforehand which of its members serve at each CoE meeting.
- c. If this amendment is adopted it would be III.B.4.c

3. Public Statements by the CoE : This amendment would be an addition to the Responsibilities of the CoE in the BCO (III.B.3).

- a. Amendment: The CoE may, as a body, make public statements on any issue that it wishes to speak to, issue opinions, or publicly censure or commend any individual person, church, denomination, public official, or human government that it deems advisable and for the good of our ecclesiastical union. Public statements on behalf of the CoE must be approved by no less than a 2/3-majority vote of the elders present and voting in a CoE meeting.
- b. Placement: If this amendment is adopted, I propose that it be III.B.3.j in the BCO.

4. Rules of Order for CoE Meetings:

- a. All CoE meetings will be governed by the Sovereign Grace Book of Church Order and the most recent edition of the Robert's Rules of Order except where the Roberts Rules of Order is inconsistent with the SG BCO.
- b. Placement: If this amendment is adopted, it will be III.B.4.b in the BCO.

5. Special Meetings of the CoE:

- a. Amendment: A special meeting may not be called for the purpose of further debating a past decision by the CoE or in order to impede an action already decided on by the CoE. Once a decision has been made it stands and must be acted on accordingly. A Special Meeting on a previous decision may only be called if conditions or circumstances have significantly changed. The Executive Committee has the authority to rule on whether a change is serious enough to warrant a Special Meeting. The Executive Committee may pursue counsel from whomever it deems advisable including the Polity Committee and Rules Committee.
- b. Placement: III.B.2.b.i
- c. Note of clarification: A point of order raised on an action by the CoE that is questionable based on what SG BCO does or does not stipulate (as was at our Special Meeting in July) *is* justifiable grounds for calling for a Special Meeting.

B. Amendments “cleaning up” some of our language.

1. Amend the sentence in section III.A.3.a (p. 40)

- a. The BCO currently says: “He [the Regional Leader] also becomes their representative in the election of the members of the Executive Committee.”
- b. Amendment: Change to “He also becomes their representative in the election of five members of the SG Nominating Committee from among the Regional Leaders.”

2. Amend heading in section III.B.3.a (pp.41-42)

- a. The heading currently reads:

“The Appointment of Committees”
- b. Amendment: Change heading to read:

“The Creation and Confirmation of Committees.”

C. Amendments based upon our discussions with Ted Kober to improve our Rules of Discipline and developing procedures of adjudications.

1. Addition to III.B.3.a.iii (p. 42):

Amendment: The Polity Committee shall also exercise oversight over the *Rules of Procedure for Adjudications* (cf. III.B.3.c.xi). The Polity Committee may change the Rules of Procedure as it deems wise, and such changes are immediately binding without being subject to any further vote by the Council of Elders. Such changes must however be consistent with the Book of Church Order. The Council of Elders may nullify changes to the Rules of Procedure by simple majority vote.”

a. An explanation for this provision will follow.

2. Addition to III.B.3.c.xi (p. 43)

Amendment: “All adjudications shall proceed according to the *Rules of Procedure for Adjudications* (cf. III.B.3.a.iii).”

3. Amendment to IV.C (p. 57).

a. The final two sentences of the section now read as follows: “A disciplined member may appeal the elders’ decision and the church’s action to their Regional Judicial Review Committee. Appeal must be made within 30 days.”

b. Amendment: We propose that the material preceding the final two sentences be placed under a new subpoint IV.C.1, “Excommunication,” and that the final two sentences be placed under a new subpoint IV.C.2, “Appealing an Excommunication,” with additional material added.

The new IV.C.2 would read as follows:

- a. A disciplined member may appeal the elders’ decision and the church’s action to their Regional Judicial Review Committee. Appeal must be made within 30 days. The Regional Judicial Review Committee is required to hear the appeal of any excommunicated church member; the Committee may not decline to take up the case.
- b. The Regional Judicial Review Committee may not reverse the decision of the local eldership, but they may recommend that the eldership reverse or reconsider its decision.
- c. If the Regional Judicial Review Committee does not recommend a reversal or reconsideration of the original excommunication, the excommunicated member may appeal to the SG Court of Appeal, but the SG Court of Appeal is not obliged to hear the case.
- d. If the Regional Judicial Review Committee recommends that the eldership reverse or reconsider the excommunication, the local eldership may appeal the decision to the SG Court of Appeal. Otherwise, if the local eldership does not reverse or reconsider

the excommunication, the Regional Judicial Review Committee may censure the local eldership.

4. Amendment to to IV.E.2.i.v.2 (p. 71)

- a. The BCO currently reads: “A censure will only be issued at the result of a trial (IV.D.7), etc.”
- b. Explanation: In the situation contemplated above, the eldership has not exactly been charged or put on trial.
- c. Amendment: The following codicil should be added to IV.E.2.i.v.2 (p. 71):

“If however an eldership does not follow the recommendation of a Regional Judicial Review Committee regarding an appealed excommunication (see IV.C.2.d), no new trial is necessary. The censure may be issued as soon as the Judicial Review Committee determines that its recommendation has been rejected.”

5. Amendment: Addition to IV.D

The following new material should be added:

- a. First, a new subpoint IV.D.2.c, “Counsel for the Plaintiff,” shall be added, stating: “It is likely that a congregant will talk to one of their elders about the possibility of bringing a charge against another elder. Under such circumstances, the elder shall recommend to the congregant a godly advisor (such as a small group leader, or perhaps a member of the Regional Judicial Review Committee) who can serve as a confidant and counselor during this difficult and confidential process. If the congregant cannot or does not wish to talk with one of the local elders about the possible charge, then the congregant should contact the Regional Judicial Review Committee. The Committee will then recommend a counselor.”
- b. The current subpoint IV.D.2.c, “Submitted in Writing,” shall become IV.D.2.d. The first sentence currently says “A charge must be submitted in writing by a member or fellow elder within SG and should detail the following:” This sentence shall be amended to the following:

“A charge must be submitted in writing by a member or fellow elder within SG. The charge shall be submitted first to the defendant and secondly to uncharged members of the local eldership. If there are no other uncharged members of the local eldership, then the Regional Judicial Review Committee has original jurisdiction in the case (cf. IV.B.1) and the charge should be submitted directly to the Regional Judicial Review Committee. The charge should detail the following: [etc., as currently]”

- c. Then, there should be a new subpoint IV.D.2.e, “Preliminary Hearing,” with the following content.

“The uncharged local elders who have received the charge shall recuse themselves if necessary. If there are only one or two local elders remaining to hear the case, they shall request from the Regional Judicial Review Committee the involvement of enough Committee members to constitute a three-person Panel (as per IV.B.1.a). If there are no local elders left after recusals, then original jurisdiction of the case passes to the Regional Judicial Review Committee as per IV.B.1.a.”

6. Amendment: Addition to IV.D.5.a (p. 61). After the second sentence, add “(N.B.: Victims of physical or sexual abuse are neither required nor advised to meet face-to-face with their abuser in this way).”

7. Amendments to IV.D.7 (On p. 63)

a. The heading of IV.D.7 should be amended to say simply “**Trial Proceedings.**”

b. The following sentence shall be added as the first sentence in the section:

“The following trial procedures shall be followed by Regional Judicial Review Committees and the SG Court of Appeal when they have original jurisdiction in trial proceedings. However, whereas local Panels are required to reach a binding decision within ten days (IV.D.8.a), the Regional Judicial Review Committees and SG Court of Appeal may have up to thirty days to reach a decision.”

8. Amendment to IV.D.7.d (p. 65-66). Strike out everything after the first sentence, and add the following:

“A recording of the hearing must be made. Only the Panel and adjudicators which review the case on appeal may have access to the recordings or to any transcript kept by a court reporter. These records of the proceedings will be kept on file by SG for at least 20 years.”

9. Amendment to IV.D.7.f (p. 66). Delete the first paragraph (two sentences) and replace with the following:

“The Panel shall review preliminary information and indicate to the parties the anticipated length of the hearing. Parties are responsible for notifying their respective advisors and witnesses. The plaintiff and defendant will face each other during the hearing.”

10. Amendment to IV.D.11 (p. 69)

a. The heading of IV.D.11 should be changed from “Appeal to the Judicial Review Committee” to simply “**Appeals.**”

b. The following content should be changed to read:

“Either the plaintiff or defendant may appeal the Panel’s judgment to the Regional Judicial Review Committee within 30 days. The plaintiff or defendant may further appeal the decision of the Regional Judicial Review Committee to the SG Court of Appeal within 30 days. If the decision of a Panel is overturned by a Regional Judicial Review Committee, the local elders on that Panel also have the right to appeal the decision to the SG Court of Appeal.”

11. Amendment: Addition to IV.E.2.c (p. 70): “The Judicial Review Committee must hear the appeal of any excommunicated member, if it is made within the allotted time frame.”

12. Amendment to IV.E.2.e (p. 70). Delete the second sentence and replace it with the following: “The Regional Judicial Review Committee must hear the appeal of any trial decision regarding an elder at the local level (if the appeal is made within the allotted time frame).”

13. Amendment to IV.E.2.h (p. 70): Under IV.E.2.h, the following should be added prior to the final sentence in the section:

“Any elder may bring such charges and submit them to the body with original jurisdiction. Furthermore, any member of the Council of Elders may move to bring such charges against Executive Committee members or Leadership Team members. If the motion is carried by a simple majority vote, the SG Court of Appeal must try the charges.”

14. Amendment to IV.E.2.i.i: The bullet points on p. 71 under IV.E.2.i.i should be rewritten to say:

“Each eldership is under the jurisdiction first of the elders of their region as represented by the Regional Judicial Review Committee, and then secondarily to the SG Court of Appeal.”

15. Amendments under IV.E.2.j (p. 72), several matters of numbering and organization need to be fixed.

a. Above the second paragraph (beginning “If the Judicial Review Committee proposes the disavowal,” etc.), a heading should be inserted:

“ii. Procedure for the Disavowal of an Eldership.”

b. The current subpoint v. (“Communication of Disavowal”) should be re-numbered as subpoint iii. The current subpoints *iii.* and *iv.* do not need to be numbered, since their content falls properly under the scope of the proposed subpoint ii, “Procedure for the Disavowal of an Eldership.”

c. The sentence “If the ruling is overturned by majority vote, the Judicial Review Committee can do the following” should be re-phrased more clearly as “If the Judicial Review Committee’s proposal of disavowal fails to obtain the support of a simple majority of the Regional Assembly, the Judicial Review Committee can do the following:” The thought here is that the JRC has not actually made a “ruling” which can be “overturned,” but has rather made a “proposal” that does or does not obtain adequate support.

16. Amendment to IV.F.1 (p. 72). Add the following sentence at the end of the paragraph: “Members of the SG Court of Appeal are called Appellate Elders.”

17. Amendment to IV.F.1.d (p. 73):

a. This section currently says: “When a case is appealed, five Appellate Elders will be assigned to determine whether they will hear the case.”

b. Amendment: “When a case is appealed, **three** Appellate Elders will be assigned to determine whether they will hear the case.”

- c. Amendment: On p. 73, IV.F.1.e, the statement shall be amended to say “A blind draw will be used to assign three Appellate Elders to each case.”

18. Amendment to IV.F.2.c-d (p. 73):

- a. Delete these points, and simply add the following sentence to IV.F.a:

“Any decision of a Regional Judicial Review Committee may be appealed up to the SG Court of Appeal by either party to the decision, or by a Panel whose judgment has been overruled.”

19. Amendment to IV.F.2.a (p. 73). Add a sentence which says

“However, in any case where the Regional Judicial Review Committee has assumed original jurisdiction and conducted a trial (see e.g. IV.B.1.b, when not enough local elders are available to constitute a Panel), the SG Court of Appeal must hear the case if it is appealed. The SG Court of Appeal may not decline to hear the case.”

20. Amendment to IV.F.2.e.iii (p. 73) The statement will be amended to the following:

“If the SG Court of Appeal decides to hear charges brought against a region, then after any necessary recusals, a blind draw will be used to assign five elders to the case. If less than five Appellate Elders remain after recusals, then all of them shall try the case.”

21. Amendment to IV.D.2.b: The BCO currently limits charges of misconduct to “Within two years of the alleged offense.” Add to that:

“The two year limitation will be waived if the charge concerns sexual misconduct or criminal behavior.”

D. Proposed BCO Amendments Pertaining to Ex Parte Sharing of Evidence. As was the last section, these amendments followed a lengthy consultation between two members of the Polity Committee (Phil Sasser and Matthew Wassinck, along with Nathan Sasser) and Ted Kober. Ex parte issues are those that arise when only one of the parties in a legal matter is being engaged. Great care must be taken to insure that no injustice is committed to the other party during such engagement. In this case it is the sharing of evidence without the other party being able to hear or see it (and perhaps refute it). It is for the purpose of a pre-trial hearing with a Moderator who will not be involved in the actual trial, but who will rule on admissibility of evidence and otherwise give counsel to the party making the charge.

1. Amendment to IV.D.2.C (p. 60), “Submitted in writing.”

- a. Currently the BCO says:

“1st. The precise nature of the alleged offense. Description of the alleged offense should include as many relevant details as possible in terms of date, time, place, circumstances, description of events and conversations, and the names and contact information of any witnesses present.”

b. Proposed amended version:

“1st. The alleged offense. A brief and simple description of alleged offense suffices.”

(This is not the place to detail the evidence in support of the charge.)

c. Currently the BCO says:

“5th. The specific evidence for the charge...”

d. This point shall be stricken, and the following numbers changed accordingly.

e. Currently the BCO says:

“6th. Why the evidence and charge carries sufficient weight for a trial...”

f. In the proposed amended version, the words “evidence and” shall be stricken.

2. Amendment to IV.D.3 (pp. 60-61),

a. Currently “Just Cause - Requirements for Admitting a Charge,” reads as follows:

“A decision will be made by the Panel about whether this charge calls for a trial, dismissal, personal reconciliation (e.g., Matt. 18:15- 20), or some other process. It is recommended that the Panel pursue counsel from a representative of the Judicial Review Committee to ensure that the procedures of adjudication are properly followed. If the decision is made not to adjudicate a charge, the Panel will respond in writing (electronic communication is not sufficient) with a biblical and clear rationale about why they have decided in this way.”

b. The proposed amended version is:

“A decision will be made by a Moderator about whether this charge calls for a trial, dismissal, personal reconciliation (e.g., Matt. 18:15- 20), or some other process. The Moderator is a member of the Regional Judicial Review Committee who reviews charges before they are adjudicated by a Panel.”

“First, the local elders who received the charge should immediately forward it on to the Regional Judicial Review Committee, who will assign it to one of their number for review. This Moderator will contact the plaintiff. The plaintiff shall submit in writing to the Moderator a description of all of the evidence that the plaintiff plans to bring forward in support of the charge. The written description should include information regarding witnesses: their name(s), local church affiliation, description of their role in the hearing, a brief description of what they will share, and an estimation of how much time each will need to give their testimony. The written description should also include the names and local church affiliation of any advisors to be present during the hearing.

“At this point, the Moderator may dismiss the charge on the grounds that it lacks sufficient weight for a trial. The Moderator will respond in writing (electronic communication is not sufficient) to the plaintiff and the local eldership with a biblical and clear rationale about why he has decided in this way. The Moderator shall

then guide the person bringing the charge in the use of other biblical processes for pursuing relational reconciliation and the resolution of material issues. If the Moderator decides that the charge has merit and should go to trial, he shall advise the plaintiff on procedural matters such as how to precisely formulate the charge and present the relevant evidence.”

3. Amendment to IV.D.4

a. Currently IV.D.4, “Plaintiff May Appeal,” states the following:

“If the Panel decides not to admit the charge, the plaintiff may then appeal this decision within 30 days. An appeal is made by writing a letter of no more than five pages to the Regional Judicial Review Committee about why the Panel has wrongly rejected this charge. The original written charge, the response to the charge by the Panel, and the written appeal will be mailed to chairman of the Judicial Review Committee. Members of the Regional Judicial Review Committee who served on the Panel will be recused from deciding upon appeals related to the case. The Judicial Review Committee will decide if the decision of the Panel is appropriate, if the charge should be heard, or if there is a third option for further action (such as mediation by a third-party, etc.). The response of the Judicial Review Committee will be mailed to the Panel and the plaintiff, postmarked within thirty days. If the plaintiff is dissatisfied with the decision and action of the Judicial Review Committee, he/she has recourse of final appeal to the SG Court of Appeal.”

b. The proposed amended version would read:

“If the Moderator decides not to admit the charge, the plaintiff may then appeal this decision within 30 days. An appeal is made by writing a letter of no more than five pages to the Regional Judicial Review Committee about why the Moderator has wrongly rejected this charge. The original written charge, written description of supporting evidence, the written response to the charge by the Moderator, and the written appeal will be mailed to chairman of the Judicial Review Committee. The member of the Regional Judicial Review Committee who served as the Moderator will be recused from deciding upon appeals related to the case.”

“The Judicial Review Committee will decide by majority vote if the decision of the Moderator is appropriate, if the charge should be heard, or if there is a third option for further action (such as mediation by a third-party, etc.). The response of the Judicial Review Committee will be mailed to the plaintiff, postmarked within thirty days.”

4. Amendment to IV.D.6.a

a. The current IV.D.6.a says “The Panel must still determine if there is just cause for admitting the charge (IV.D.3 above).”

b. In the proposed amended version, “Moderator” shall replace “Panel.”

5. Amendment to IV.D.7.b.ii (pp. 64-65)

a. The current IV.D.7.b.ii says:

ii. Submission of Evidence Preparation for the trial hearing

1) If the Panel deems, in a preliminary fashion, that the requirements for admitting the charge and establishing just cause (see IV. D.2-3) have been met, the plaintiff will present the following to the Panel:

- a.) The official charge
- b.) Document evidence
- c.) Information regarding witnesses: their name(s), local church affiliation, description of their role in the hearing, a brief description of what they will share, and an estimation of how much time each will need to give their testimony
- d.) Names and local church affiliation of any advisors to be present during the hearing

All evidence against the defendant should be submitted 30 days prior to the Panel hearing the case. Additional evidence or witnesses will not be allowed after this thirty-day period unless it can be shown to the Panel's satisfaction that it was not possible for them to be submitted earlier.

2) Upon considering the more detailed evidence and the witnesses required for trial, the Panel has the prerogative of dismissing any charges they believe are either frivolous or do not meet the requirements for admitting the charge and establishing just cause.

3) If the Panel deems that the requirements for admitting the charge and establishing just cause have been met, the defendant will present the following to the Panel:

- a.) A statement of reasonable length responding to the charge A plea in response to the charge (i.e., "Guilty" or "Not guilty").
- b.) Document evidence
- c.) Information regarding witnesses: their name(s), local church affiliation, description of their role in the hearing, a brief description on what they will share, and an estimation of how much time each will need to share their testimony
- d.) Names and local church affiliation of any advisors present during the hearing.

4) The Panel can decide to refuse certain evidence if it is not seen to be relevant or is too weak to make the intended point. The Panel may also reduce the amount of time to be given to a witness if it is excessive and would extend the trial unnecessarily.

b. The **proposed amended version** would read as follows:

ii. Preparation for the Trial Hearing

1) If the Moderator deems, in a preliminary fashion, that the requirements for admitting the charge and establishing just cause (see IV. D.2-3) have been met, the plaintiff will present the following to the Panel:

- a.) The official charge
- b.) Information regarding witnesses: their name(s), local church affiliation, and an estimation of how much time each will need to give their testimony

during

c.) Names and local church affiliation of any advisors to be present the hearing

2) The defendant will present the following to the Panel:

- a) A plea in response to the charge (i.e., “Guilty” or “Not guilty”).
- b) Information regarding witnesses: their name(s), local church affiliation, and an estimation of how much time each will need to share their testimony
- c) Names and local church affiliation of any advisors present during the hearing.

3) The Panel may reduce the amount of time to be given to a witness if it is excessive and would extend the trial unnecessarily.

- 6. Amendment: The current IV.D.7.b.iii (p. 65) can be entirely deleted. No evidence shall be requested or shared prior to the trial hearing, and all evidence will be shared with both parties at the trial hearing.
- 7. Amendment to the second paragraph of IV.D.7.f (p. 66). The following sentence shall be added after the first sentence of the paragraph: “The Panel can decide to refuse certain evidence if it is not seen to be relevant or is too weak to make the intended point.” This sentence currently occurs at IV.D.7.b.ii.4 (p. 65). But decisions about the admissibility of evidence should be made during the trial, not prior to it.
- 8. Amendment to IV.E.2.d (p. 70): “Panel” should be replaced by “Moderator,” and a parenthetical reference to IV.D.4 added. The second sentence shall be amended to say, “The Judicial Review Committee will determine whether or not the case shall be heard by the local Panel.”
- 9. Amendment: Add a new III.A.2.b.iii (p. 36) (the following subpoints will have to be re-numbered accordingly):

“The Judicial Review Committee will supply a Moderator who will review the plaintiff’s charge and evidence when a charge is brought against an elder (as described in IV.D.3-4). The Moderator may dismiss the charge if he deems that it does not warrant a trial.”

E. Amendments based upon our rewrite of the SG Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

- 1. Amendment (addition): With the exception of the Executive Director, any member of the Leadership Team may be terminated from his position by a majority vote of the Executive Committee. Similarly, the Executive Committee may suspend with or without pay any member of the Leadership Team at its sole discretion.
 - a. If adopted this would become III.E.4.f
- 2. Amendment (addition): The Executive Director may be suspended with or without pay at the sole discretion of the Executive Committee. However, he may not be permanently removed from his position without the approval of a majority of the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may reinstate the pay of a suspended Executive Director at its discretion.

- a. If adopted this would become III.E.4.g
3. Amendment (addition): Each SG church whose elders have signed the Partnership Agreement (or letter of intent) and has been accepted and approved by its Regional Assembly of Elders is a qualified member of the SG Churches and may send its representative elder(s) to the CoE.
 - a. If adopted this would become III.B.1.a
 4. Amendment (addition): To qualify as a representative to the CoE, the representative elder must be an ordained SG elder in good standing with his Regional Assembly of Elders.
 - a. If adopted, this would become III.B.1.b
 5. Amendment (addition): An elder who has been disavowed by either the Regional Judicial Review Committee or SG Court of Appeals may not serve as the representative to the CoE neither may he participate in any SG Regional Assembly of Elders.
 - a. If adopted, this would become III.B.1.c
 6. Amendment (addition): A church whose eldership has been disavowed and who does not follow the disavowed eldership may continue as a member of the SG Churches but will have no voting representative on the CoE until a duly qualified elder is appointed.
 - a. If adopted, this would become III.B.1.d
 7. Amendment (addition): A church may be removed as a member of the SG Churches if its members continue to follow the leadership of a disavowed eldership
 - a. If adopted, this would become III.B.1.e
 8. Amendment (addition) to IV.E.2.j.iii (this section also needs some editing on the numbering)

“The Removal of a Church”

When a congregation or portion of a congregation continues to recognize as its pastors men who have been disavowed, or who have never been approved by the Regional Assembly of elders for ordination, by the judicatories of Sovereign Grace, it ceases to be a Sovereign Grace church. Under such circumstances, if necessary, the Regional Judicial Review Committee may officially declare the removal of the church from the Region and hence from Sovereign Grace. In case of such a declaration, the church forfeits all rights and responsibilities of membership in Sovereign Grace.

Sovereign Grace Churches FY14 Budget Package

The Executive Committee approved the FY14 Budget and the following related policies to be presented to the Council of Elders for a vote of affirmation.

- 1. FY14 Budget with deficit of \$329,400. Accompanying package includes:**
 - a. FY14 Budget by Functional Category.
 - b. FY14 Budget by Dept. and Cash/Inv. Summary.
 - c. Chart depicting FY14 Budget by Dept.
 - d. Comparative Income Statement for FY09 - FY14.
 - e. Draft Balance Sheet for August 31, 2013.

- 2. Financial Operating Policies affecting FY14 budget and future years.**
 - a. Contingency Expenditures. The executive director and/or finance director (ED/FD) can approve up to \$40K in non-budgeted expenditures. A summary of amounts approved must be presented to the executive committee (EC). The executive committee can approve up to \$200K if requested by the ED. A summary of amounts approved by the executive committee must be presented to the Council of Elders (CoE) with reasons for approving the exception.
 - b. Designated Contributions. The ED/FD can approve acceptance and expenditure of unbudgeted designated contributions of up to \$40K each. The EC must approve acceptance and expenditure of any designated contributions in excess of \$40K.
 - c. Budget Variances. Budget Variances will be measured by department, not line item or project. The ED can shift up to \$40K of budget between departments to better manage the budget.
 - d. Budget Approval. The EC can give preliminary approval of annual budget for operation purposes and expenditures prior to affirmation of budget by the CoE if the date of affirmation is after the beginning of the budget year. Adjustments to budget and operations will be made accordingly if changes are made as a result of the affirmation process.

SOVEREIGN GRACE MINISTRIES, INC.
Summary of All Units
 FY 2014 BUDGET BY FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY

09/23/13
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	Program Services						Supporting Services			Combined Total
	Church Missions DOM	Church Missions INTL	Pastors College	Conferences	Resources	Total	Development	General and Administrative	Total	
Revenues										
CONTRIBUTIONS - CHURCHES						\$0	\$1,218,000		\$1,218,000	\$1,218,000
CONTRIBUTIONS - INDIVIDUALS						0	480,000		480,000	480,000
CONTRIBUTIONS - DESIGNATED SALES		5,000			352,000	5,000	0	0	0	5,000
TUITION & FEES			71,200			71,200	0	0	0	352,000
CONFERENCE RECEIPTS				281,500		281,500	0	0	0	71,200
INVESTMENT INCOME			1,500	172,500		174,000	0	5,600	5,600	281,500
OTHER INCOME					174,000	348,000		30,200	30,200	5,600
TOTAL REVENUES	0	5,000	72,700	454,000	526,000	1,057,700	1,698,000	35,800	1,733,800	2,791,500
Expenses										
COMPENSATION & BENEFITS	450,233	2,000	277,761	139,342	278,237	1,147,573		187,911	187,911	1,335,484
EDUCATION & TRAINING	31,300		8,900	1,600	1,600	43,400		3,100	3,100	46,500
COST OF GOOD SOLD					150,600	150,600		0	0	150,600
GIFTS & GRANTS	292,900	65,800	4,050	9,100	1,500	373,350		1,550	1,550	374,900
TRAVEL & HOSPITALITY	133,700	96,600	38,100	145,200	9,000	422,600	2,200	35,600	37,800	460,400
OFFICE EXPENSE	16,700	600	5,920	27,600	35,300	86,120	22,000	20,300	42,300	128,420
INSURANCE		8,100	1,600		2,750	12,450		26,100	26,100	38,550
PROMOTION	6,900			4,600	19,000	30,500	42,000		42,000	72,500
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	400			9,300	55,950	65,650	8,800	56,100	64,900	130,550
SOUND, VIDEO & LIGHTING				19,700	2,000	21,700			0	21,700
BUILDING MAINTENANCE & UTILITIES			43,900	41,100	12,600	97,600		105,100	105,100	202,700
BUILDING OCCUPANCY	7,600		370			7,970			0	7,970
OTHER EXPENSE	17,200			8,800	47,600	73,600	5,400	71,626	77,026	150,626
TOTAL EXPENSES	956,933	173,100	380,601	406,342	616,137	2,533,113	80,400	507,387	587,787	3,120,900
NET INCOME	(\$956,933)	(\$168,100)	(\$307,901)	\$47,658	(\$90,137)	(\$1,475,413)	\$1,617,600	(\$471,587)	\$1,146,013	(\$329,400)

SOVEREIGN GRACE CHURCHES
FY14 Budget by Department and Cash Summary

	<u>FY14 Budget</u>	<u>% EXP</u>
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	<u>\$1,698,000</u>	84%
Expenditures (Net of Revenue)		
ADMIN	\$471,600	23%
DEVELOPMENT	\$80,400	4%
EVENTS	(\$47,700)	-2%
MEDIA-COMM/WEB	\$125,000	6%
MEDIA-RESOURCES	(\$34,800)	-2%
PASTORS COLLEGE	\$307,900	15%
CHURCH GENERAL	\$357,600	18%
CHURCH PLANT	\$300,600	15%
CHURCH CARE	\$298,700	15%
GLOBAL MISSIONS	\$168,100	8%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	<u>\$2,027,400</u>	100%
NET INCOME(LOSS)	<u>(\$329,400)</u>	-16%

SGM Cash/Investment Summary

Projected 8/31/13 Cash/Investments	1,300,000
FY 2014 Budgeted Cash Flow	(329,400)
Projected 8/31/14 Cash/Investments	<u>970,600</u>

Sovereign Grace Churches FY14 Budget

