

## Overture

by Alicia Toke (Carteret)  
Commissioner to the 218<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2008)  
January 23, 2010

**The Presbytery of Elizabeth respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the PC (USA) to amend W-2.3005 to strike out the word “and” and add the words “abilities/disabilities” as the following:** (words to be added in *italics*).

**W-2.3005 “The body of Christ is one, and Baptism is the bond of unity in Christ. As they are united with Christ through faith, Baptism unites the people of God with each other and with the church of every time and place. Barriers of race, gender, status, ~~and~~ age, *and abilities/disabilities* are to be transcended. Barriers of nationality, history, and practice are to be overcome.”**

Rationale:

W-2.3005 states that “Baptism unites the people of God with each other and with the church of every time and place.” This is a perfect statement for what we believe in the Reformed faith, but later on in the statement it says that “Barriers of race, gender, status, and age are to be transcended,” this gives a generalized statement of people who are able bodied. This statement does not give people who are disabled a part of it as their own.

Adding ability/disability will add concreteness to this section that is missing. It will show the acceptance of all people not just the able bodied that can do something for the Church Universal. It also forces people to realize that not everyone is able bodied that we have people in our churches that are disabled and should be recognized and shown that yes they are different but yet their uniqueness is a gift from God and should be overcome so they can feel like an equal part of the Church Universal.

+++++

### **On Amending the Book of Order: clarifying notes.**

The amendment process is outlined in G-9. Changes to the Book of Order originate as “overtures.” from presbyteries. When a presbytery wants to make an overture, it has to be on the Stated Clerk’s desk 120 days prior to the opening of General Assembly. That date is March 5, 2010. Thus, if we are going to endorse Alicia Toke’s overture and forward it to the General Assembly, we have to do it today because presbytery does not meet again until after the deadline. If we do not pass it today, and we do not have a special meeting in February, we have to wait two more years for the next General Assembly.

Incoming overtures are assigned to General Assembly committees. If an overture passes through the committee and is approved by the whole General Assembly, it becomes a proposed amendment. Amendments then need to be ratified by a majority of the presbyteries before the change in the Book of Order becomes official.

Paul F. Rack  
Stated Clerk