

## Ovt 020

*On Amending G-3.0500 to Give YAAD's Voice And Vote and to Rename Them to "Youth Adult Commissioners"—From the Synod of the Covenant.*

**The Synod of the Covenant during their October 25-26, 2013 Synod Assembly voted to overtures the 221th General Assembly (2014) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendments to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote.**

**The purpose of this overture is to allow the elected Youth Adult Advisory Delegates to have the right to vote. The implication would also be a name change from Youth Adult Advisory Delegated to Youth Adult Commissioners.**

**The following changes in the Book of Order would be required.**

### ***G-3.0501 Composition and Responsibilities***

**The General Assembly is the council of the whole church and it is representative of the unity of the synods presbyteries sessions and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It shall consist of equal numbers of ruling elders and teaching elder elected by presbyteries and reflective of the diversity within their bounds (F-1.0403 and G-3.0103). *In addition each presbytery shall elect one youth adult commissioner. The ruling elders and teaching elders elected shall serve as commissioners according to the following proportions:***

### ***G-3.0503 Meetings and Quorum***

**A quorum of the General Assembly shall be one hundred-*twenty* commissioners, fifty of whom shall be ruling elders ~~and~~, fifty teaching elders, and twenty youth adult commissioners representing presbyteries of at least one fourth of its synods.**

### **Rationale**

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) states in G-3.0501 that the General Assembly should be "reflective of the diversity within their bounds." Young adults within the ages of 18 and 25 represent an important voice in the church and are important for the future of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Presently the age of YAD's is 17 to 23. This proposal would change that by a few years and would provide in increased possibility that the Young Adult Commissioners could be either a Ruling Elder or a Teaching Elder.

As we work to create 1001 new worshipping communities, young adults should and will be an important part of the success of those communities.

If we want to be true to goals of inclusiveness and representation within the larger church, giving the young adults voice and vote would be a step in that direction. Presently the YAD's do have voice and vote in the committees. This overture would acknowledge those gifts for the Assembly meeting as well.

By creating Youth Adult Commissioners instead of YAD's, we welcome, embrace, and listen to our younger Presbyterian generations. They have been unintentionally disenfranchised and unrepresented on our councils, and hence, we are opening ourselves up to the voices of the future being able to discern and vote in the present.

The sooner we make the young adults in our church voting stakeholders, the more they will feel welcomed and valued. The sooner we recognize their leadership, the sooner our young adults will have ownership in the life and decisions of the church. This overture will say to the young adults in our midst this is your church too. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) needs and values your voice and trusts your discernment.

This proposed overture would change the historic balance of an equal number of Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders. The Youth Adult Commissioners may be Ruling Elders, Teaching Elders, Deacons or lay church members. The current Book of Order is more permission giving than in the past. This overture is consistent with this approach and with our theology and ecclesiology since commissioners are guided by the Holy Spirit, Holy Scriptures, and faith, and not informed by ordination or older age. In addition, Youth Adult Commissioners have unique perspectives and life experiences, which are rarely heard and understood by the church. As we as a denomination move into a more flexible approach, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should acknowledge the need to include the voice and vote of Youth Adult Commissioners who are currently disenfranchised from voting

in church councils while their right to vote in civil elections has been granted and protected by the United States Constitution.

This change will not have added cost and has no Per Capita implications, but will further enhance the General Assembly meetings.