210. Call to Order and Opening Devotion

Commission Chairman Dr. George Gude called the commission’s meeting to order with all members present, except for Rev. Bode, who arrived Friday. Dr. Gude offered opening devotions on Acts 1.

211. Changes to the 2019 Council of Presidents Policy Manual (19-2909)

The commission, having reviewed routine changes to a variety of sections in the Council of Presidents Policy Manual, noted no constitutional or bylaw concerns and thanked the Council of Presidents for sending its policies for review.

212. Texas District Bylaw Changes (19-2911)

The commission reviewed the Texas District Handbook, noting that the district has requested an exception for its noncompliant articles of incorporation from the Board of Directors of the Synod.

The commission suggested that references throughout to the “current Handbook of the Synod” would better be stated more simply as “the Handbook of the Synod,” to relieve any possible confusion about whether the current Handbook at time of reading applies, or that at time of bylaw adoption. It was noted that District Bylaw I does make this clear.

The commission notes that the changes proposed to Bylaws 1.027 and 1.031 would result in an installation preceding assumption of office, which is an unusual course of events; ordinarily, installation (as to a parish, for example), would be contemporaneous with or, failing that, as immediately as possible following, assumption of office. It was noted, for example, in the rite of installation (Agenda, p. 333), the newly installed district president immediately functions—apparently as such—to install other officers. However practical, the proposal to perform the installation significantly prior to assumption of office would seem unusual and inconsistent with our common understanding of an installation. This could lead to confusion as to who is the district president in the period between installation and assumption of office (e.g., whether he ought perform the subsequent installations of other district officers in Bylaws 2.006 and 4.037), and may lead to confusion about the meaning and practice of installation in general, which is a function treated in the Bylaws, e.g., Bylaw 4.4.3. A similar problem is noted with regard to the office of district secretary (Bylaw 4.037). It also seems inconsistent that other officers assume office earlier than Sept. 1, at the close of the convention at which elected.

Also noted, relative to Bylaw 1.031, is that the installation of the district president elected is to be by the President of the Synod or his representative (cf. the Agenda installation rite, which is obligatory under Bylaw 4.4.3 [c]).

The commission notes that the district intends to submit further changes and will respond to the district’s further work with these bylaws in connection with a subsequent review.

213. Southeastern District Articles of Incorporation (19-2912)

The commission notes in Article III, Membership, that the sentence, “Membership for ministers…shall be for so long as they are assigned to a congregation that is a member of the Corporation,” does not properly account for candidate and emeritus members, or those actively serving in a non-parochial call. This sentence is not necessary, in light of the sentence previous, and should best be removed.
The commission approves the text, with the noted sentence removed, for presentation to the 2021 district convention. The district is thanked for seeing to this necessary change and for providing the documents for the commission’s review.

214. Pastoral Delegate Takes a Call within Circuit (19-2913)

A pastoral delegate wrote the Secretary of the Synod with the following situation: His circuit properly and timely elected a pastoral delegate and a lay delegate from different congregations. Subsequently, the pastoral delegate received a call from the congregation of the lay delegate and accepted it. The question thus arose, whether the pastoral and lay delegates might both continue to represent the circuit, although having become, after their election, connected with the same congregation.

The Secretary responded with his impression that the restrictions on congregations/parishes supplying more than one delegate or alternate (Bylaws 3.1.2.1 [d][3], [h]) apply at the time of election. Provided both delegates were validly nominated and elected under the bylaws, a pastoral delegate’s change of position subsequent, which would leave him otherwise eligible to serve (i.e., in the same circuit), would not impact the validity of that election or the resulting service of delegates elected. Both the pastoral and lay delegate can serve, although the pastor has, subsequent to the election, come to be the lay delegate’s pastor.

The Secretary having brought the matter to the attention of the commission for its review, the commission ratified the reply of the Secretary.


The Secretary presented the overtures submitted to the 2019 convention to the commission for study and reflection, and the commission discussed those with constitutional or bylaw implications.

209. Future Meetings and Adjournment

After a joint working lunch with the Commission on Handbook, this commission provided its support to the several floor committees. The commission will next meet July 18–19, 2019, in conjunction with the 67th Convention of the Synod in Tampa, FL.

John W. Sias, Secretary