

## REPORT OF THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION

The Rivers and Lakes Presbytery overtured the 46<sup>th</sup> General Assembly to amend Section 19-3 of the *Book of Government* (the “***PRL 19-3 Overture***”). The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (the “***PJC***”) subsequently examined the proposed amendment for clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, in each case as required by Section G.21-3D.2.a.

The PJC understands the categories “clarity,” “consistency,” and “compatibility” to have particular meanings. *Clarity* asks whether the language of the amendment is sufficiently precise that a reasonably informed reader of the Constitution could determine what the provision requires, permits, or forbids without reference to the debate that produced it.<sup>1</sup> *Consistency* examines whether the amendment employs language in a manner consistent with the vocabulary, terminology, and logic used in the Constitution and within the amendment itself. *Compatibility* asks whether the amendment integrates coherently into the broader constitutional framework without creating conflict with other provisions or with the structure of the Constitution as a whole.

After due consideration, the PJC determined as follows regarding the PRL 19-3 Overture:

Question Presented	PJC Determination
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of clarity of language?	Yes. Vote: 8-0, with one abstention.
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of consistency of language?	Yes. Vote: 8-0, with one abstention.
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of compatibility with other provisions of the EPC Constitution?	Yes. Vote: 8-0, with one abstention.

The Permanent Judicial Commission respectfully and prayerfully reports these findings to the 46th General Assembly and recommends that it accept and adopt the PRL 19-3 Overture.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In many instances, constitutional language is designed to confer discretion on church courts. In such cases, a provision does not fail the clarity test merely because it allows a range of outcomes, since the granting of discretion is the very function the text is intended to serve. The clarity concern arises only where the language does not make clear, in the mind of a reasonably informed reader, the scope or object of that discretion.

<sup>2</sup> See G.21-3D.2.b.