

Min Com and the Pastoral Letter

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This past week I tendered my resignation from the position of chair of Ministerial Committee of my Presbytery. Serving in Presbytery on Min Com has been a great delight despite the amount of work. The Leadership Team restructured our three meetings for the year around the Gospel Priorities. I witnessed a wonderful transformation as a result. It was a joy to serve.

However, things changed with the report on same sex attraction (SSA) among candidates for church office. My resignation is the result of this report's implications. Among the three documents being modified by the AIC the Pastoral Letter causes the greatest concern for me.

I look at this document through the lens of a Min Com chair. The current Book of Government and Pastoral Letter are silent on the issue of ordaining SSA candidates coming to our committee. As it stands now, if we were inclined to ordain a SSA candidate, we would be vulnerable to disciplinary charges. These current documents are vague and subject to interpretation either for a SSA candidate's ordination or against it. This does need to change.

The proposed Pastoral Letter in its current form states: *Upon demonstrating godly responses to these and other questions, we believe candidates may be considered for church office.* With the passage of this Letter, as Min Com, we obtain cover for approving the ordination of SSA candidates. If alleged of violating standards in the EPC, the Letter would give us evidence that this practice is permitted.

Make no mistake, I could never approve for ordination a SSA candidate. My point is that the AIC's recommendation does not make the SSA ordination less likely but more likely. There is no Biblical support for Letter's conclusion that *SSA candidates may be considered for church office.* It saddens me to see the EPC suffer this challenge to its purity and unity. These are conditions under which I choose not to devote my efforts.