

## **RESPONSIBILITY FOR WORSHIP SERVICES AT GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

The 2002 General Assembly took the following action regarding the worship services at the General Assembly:

“That the Administrative Committee through the local Host Committee be responsible for all services at General Assembly (RAO 10-3).”

### Regarding Worship

- See Worship Service Guidelines (attached)
- Select proposed speakers
  - non-PCA speakers must be approved by the Administrative Committee at its October meeting
- Arrange for special music (soloists, instrumentalists, choirs, etc.)
  - Traditionally there is a pre-worship music time (30 minutes) prior to the beginning of the each worship service

This and other responsibilities are further detailed in the Host Committee Manual. If your presbytery has any questions regarding the Host Committee manual or has interest in hosting a General Assembly, please contact the Administrative Committee by phone at 678-825-1000 or by e-mail at [events@pcanet.org](mailto:events@pcanet.org).

## WORSHIP SERVICE GUIDELINES

- Worship services shall be included as approved by the Assembly. The Administrative Committee must approve any non-PCA speaker. (RAO 10-3)
  - Speakers must be compatible with Reformed theology
  - Speakers are expected to respect PCA distinctives in theology, polity and worship
  - Speakers may not use the General Assembly worship services as a platform for promoting their own enterprise
  - For planning purposes, the Speaker must be approved at or before the October AC meeting prior to that General Assembly.
- **Worship is to be conducted within the theological parameters of the *Westminster Standards*** (WCF I.6; XX; XXI; XXVII; XXIX; WLC Qq. 107-100; Qq. 154-196; WSC Qq. 45-56; Qq. 89-93; 96-107).
  - Citations regarding the Sabbath are omitted because the Assembly does not meet on the Lord's Day.
  - Citations regarding baptism are omitted because baptism is not administered at the General Assembly.
- Though only *BCO* Chapters 56, 57, and 58 in our *Directory of Worship* have full constitutional status, **the principles of our Directory of Worship should be honored.**
- **Remember that Reformed worship is** neither Prescribed (with a required detailed liturgy, such as Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, or Lutheran), nor Free-Style (with no binding parameters, such as Quaker, charismatic, or Baptist), but rather **Directed** (bound by biblical and theological principles, yet allowing freedom within those biblical and theological parameters). The biblical-theological parameters are:
  - Reformed worship is **biblical**
    - Obeying and following biblical commands prohibitions, principles
    - Considering biblical precedents
  - Reformed worship is **God-centered**
    - Adoration of God, by the people of God, in accordance with the word of God
    - God is the audience
  - Reformed worship is **participatory**
    - The congregation is to participate in worship. Participation includes: congregational singing, common prayer, corporate confession of faith, responsive readings, unison readings, corporate confession of sin, giving offerings, or receiving communion.
    - Congregation should not merely observe the “worship leaders”
  - Reformed worship is **historically informed**
    - Filter all of Church history through the grid of Scripture
    - Do not dismiss or feel bound by historical worship practices
  - Reformed worship is **culturally appropriate**
    - The first four principles (above) may be legitimately and differently expressed in various cultural settings and at different times
  - *Within our biblical-theological parameters, there is liberty and variety*

- Be considerate of the reality that **there is a spectrum of worship practices in the PCA** within the parameters of our constitution.
- **Avoid unnecessary offense.** Do not push the envelope in either extreme
  - High Church - choral selection sung in Latin, using only fermented wine in communion, or calling the assurance of pardon an “absolution”
  - Too Contemporary - liturgical dance, religious drama, or hard rock music
- **Adhere strictly to the allotted time frame for services. Start on time; end on time!**
  - The Assembly docket all worship services on Wednesday and Thursday, and generously allots 1½ hours (90 minutes) as the not-to-exceed time limit. The Assembly also docket a 30-minute devotional on Friday.
    - It is the General Assembly itself that decides the time allotted for worship services, by adopting its own docket, not the Host Committee
    - *All* who lead in *any* parts of the worship service (prayer, reading scripture, music, preaching, administering communion, etc.) should be aware of the time limitations.
  - Following the worship services:
    - Wednesday - the election of the moderator
    - Thursday - frequently the Assembly reconvenes for business
    - Friday – the Assembly will reconvene for business if needed
    - There is usually a 10-15 minute period of time between the ending of the service and the reconvening of the Assembly.

### The Structure of the Services

An accepted principle of worship is that the structure of the service (order of worship, or shape of the liturgy) should itself be a proclamation or re-presentation of the Gospel.

In his “Gospel Worship Seminar,” Bryan Chapell cites a common flow, looking across the historic structures in Western Christianity:

- Recognition of God’s character
- Confession of our character
- Affirmation of God’s grace
- Instruction for personal transformation
- Responding in Covenant faithfulness

In his worship course at Reformed Theological Seminary, L. Roy Taylor advocated a similar flow:

- God’s Glory – Adoration
- Our Guilt
- God’s Grace - Combining the affirmation of God’s grace and biblical instruction for personal transformation
- Our Gratitude

The various components of the service may then be included in an order of worship that represents the Gospel. For example:

- God's Glory - Adoration
  - Call to worship
  - Doxology, Psalms, Hymns or spiritual Songs of Adoration
  - Prayers of Adoration
  - Scripture readings focusing on God's character
  - Confession of Faith [Apostles Creed, Nicene Creed, biblical confessions of faith such as I Timothy 3:16, Philippians 2:9-11, or *Westminster Standards*]. There are also musical settings of the Apostle's Creed, see new Trinity Hymnal, 741, 742.
- Our Guilt.
  - Corporate confession of sin via adapted scripture readings (ex. Psalm 51, 32, etc.), common prayer of confession read or sung, a litany of confession, Ten Commandments and/or Two Great Commandments read or sung, see new Trinity Hymnal, 724.
  - Individual, silent prayers of confession.
- God's Grace - Combining the affirmation of God's grace and biblical instruction for personal transformation.
  - Assurance of pardon, appropriate passages of scripture read, declaration by minister.
  - Congregational Response – a doxology, Psalms, Hymns or spiritual Songs of thanksgiving, prayers of thanksgiving (extemporaneous, directed, litany, collect, or common prayer).
  - Prayers of supplication (for ourselves) and intercession (for others) [a.k.a. "Pastoral prayer," "the long prayer," "prayers of the people"].
  - Scripture reading(s) - OT & NT (written word of God).
  - Prayer for illumination - understand of Scripture
  - Sermon, (proclaimed word of God), exposition and application of the word of God, biblical instruction for personal transformation
  - Psalms, Hymns or spiritual Songs of response to the word of God.
- Our Gratitude.
  - Giving - tithes, gifts, offerings, alms
  - Offertory
  - Communion - if administered, see details on Communion Service Guidelines
  - Benediction

#### **Worship Speaker Deadlines**

- One month prior: **Speaker Release Form** (provided by AC)
  - If the release form is not provided the sermon will not be recorded or webcast
- Three weeks out: **Sermon Title and Scripture Reference**
  - Needed for worship program publication and recording sales preparation

## Music Team Tips

- Coordinate with AC for move-in, rehearsal, and sound checks
- Traditionally there is a pre-worship music time (30 minutes) prior to the beginning of the each worship service
- Provide all riders that include necessary audio-visual equipment – two months prior
- Submit Talent Release Form – one month prior
  - This release form is required for webcast
  - If there is a choir or musical group, one person may complete the release form for the whole group.
- Worship Music – we must abide by all copyright and webcasting regulations.
  - When printing lyrics in the worship bulletins or on PowerPoint slides, please include the PCA General Assembly CCLI number 79205.
  - We must report all song used to CCLI. Please provide:
    - The CCLI song number
    - Song Name
    - Writer or Composer
    - Publishing Company
    - Year the Song was Published
    - Please indicate if the song is public domain
- PowerPoint slides of worship lyrics and sermon notes:
  - The AC will provide the needed technical specs
  - Provide slides at least one month prior to the General Assembly