

Form of Government of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Part 8 of 10

Plan for this morning:

- High-level review of FG 1-19
- Study FG 20-23
- QUESTIONS

Overall Plan for the Class: FG Main Topics

1. Foundational doctrinal commitments and principles for the government of Christ's church (FG 1-4)
2. The Special Offices (FG 5-11)
3. Assemblies (FG 12-19)
4. Ordination and Installation to Special Office (FG 20-26)—
April 27, May 4
5. Good Order in Miscellaneous Matters (FG 27-32)—May 18

REVIEW: Foundational doctrinal commitments and principles for the government of Christ's church (FG 1-4)

- FG 1—**Christ is King**: exalted; offices; word; Spirit
- FG 2—**Church**: visible kingdom; organized as congregations; work is worship, edification, and witness
- FG 3—**Power**: whole body; general office acknowledge special officers.
 - Ministerial and declarative
 - Moral and Spiritual
 - Christians are commanded to submit themselves to this government.
- FG 4—**Unity**: under Christ; under **special officers** of rule; discipline

REVIEW: The Special Offices (FG 5-11)

- FG 5: **Offices** in the Church: New Covenant foundational special offices discontinued; NC **ordinary & perpetual** special offices
- FG 6: **Ministers**: **rule + stewardship in the gospel**; regional church membership
 - FG 7: Evangelists: particular gifts for evangelism/church planting
 - FG 8: **Pastors**: especially suited to congregational ministry of word and sacraments + shepherding/rule with elders in a **local church**
 - FG 9: Teachers: more suited to the seminary, school, or publication
- FG 10: **Elders**: apt to teach but the focus is really on **rule**
- FG 11: **Deacons**: serving and offering **leadership in mercy and mutual service** in the body

REVIEW: Assemblies (FG 12-19)

- FG 12—General Principles: all have *same* rights and powers; “original jurisdiction”; neither “episcopal” (implying *different* power) nor “congregational” (because the act of one is act of all)
- Specific Governing Assemblies
 - FG 13—The Local Church and Its Session
 - FG 14—The Regional Church and Its presbytery
 - FG 15—The Whole Church and Its General Assembly
- Congregations
 - FG 16—Congregational Meetings
 - FG 17—Congregations without Pastors
- Officers of Governing Assemblies
 - FG 18—Moderators
 - FG 19—Clerks

REVIEW: Assemblies, (FG 12-19), cont.

- FG 12—General Principles: all have *same* rights and powers; “original jurisdiction”; neither “episcopal” (implying *different* power) nor “congregational” (because the act of one is act of all)
- **Specific Governing Assemblies**
 - FG 13—The Local Church and Its **Session**
 - FG 14—The Regional Church and Its **presbytery**
 - FG 15—The Whole Church and Its **General Assembly**
- **Congregations**
 - FG 16—Congregational Meetings
 - FG 17—Congregations without Pastors
- **Officers of Governing Assemblies**
 - FG 18—Moderators
 - FG 19—Clerks

Local Church

[illegible]

Session – Standing Governing Assembly of a Local Church

[illegible]

Original Jurisdiction or “First Right to Rule” of a Session (over membership)

[illegible]

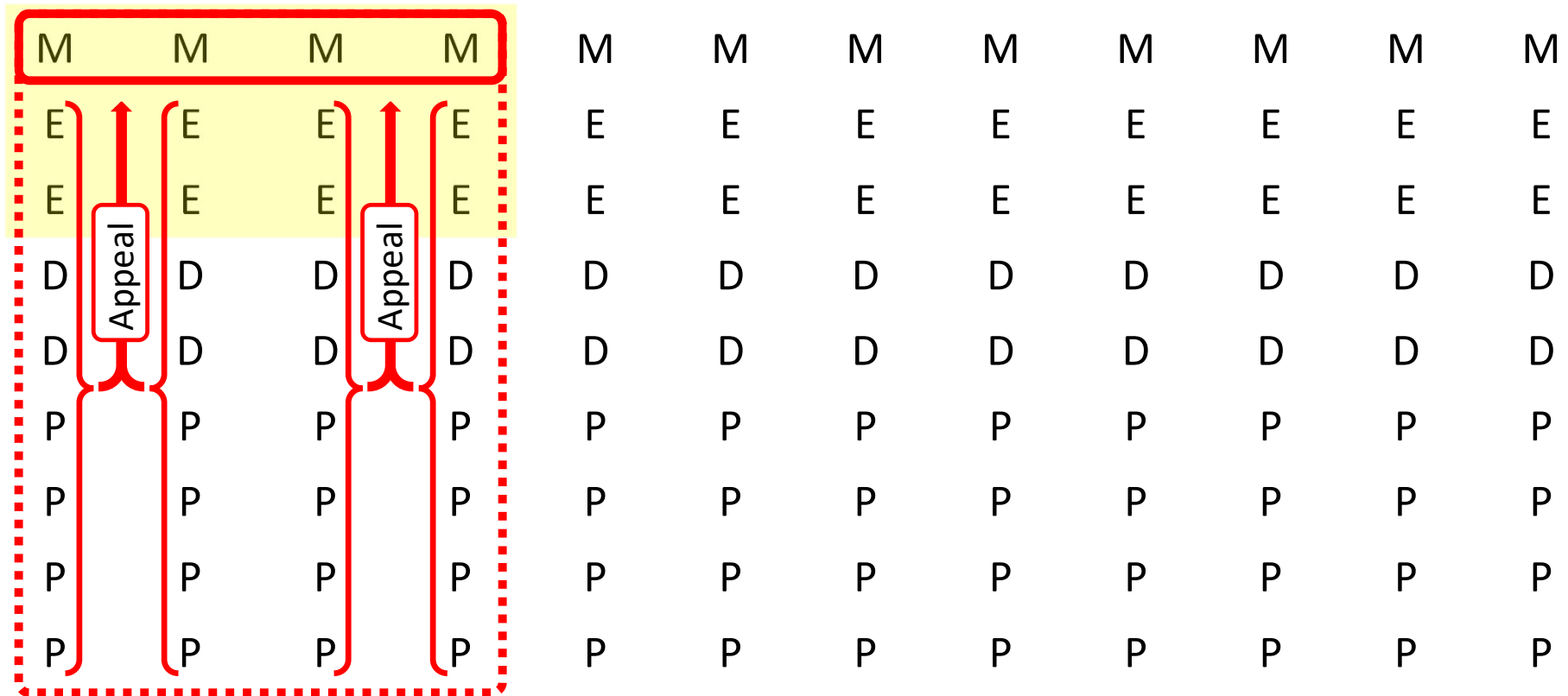
Regional Church

M	M	M	M
E	E	E	E
E	E	E	E
D	D	D	D
D	D	D	D
P	P	P	P
P	P	P	P
P	P	P	P
P	P	P	P

Presbytery – Standing Governing Assembly of a Regional Church

[illegible]

Original Jurisdiction or “First Right to Rule” of a Presbytery (over membership)



Whole Church

M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

West Presbytery

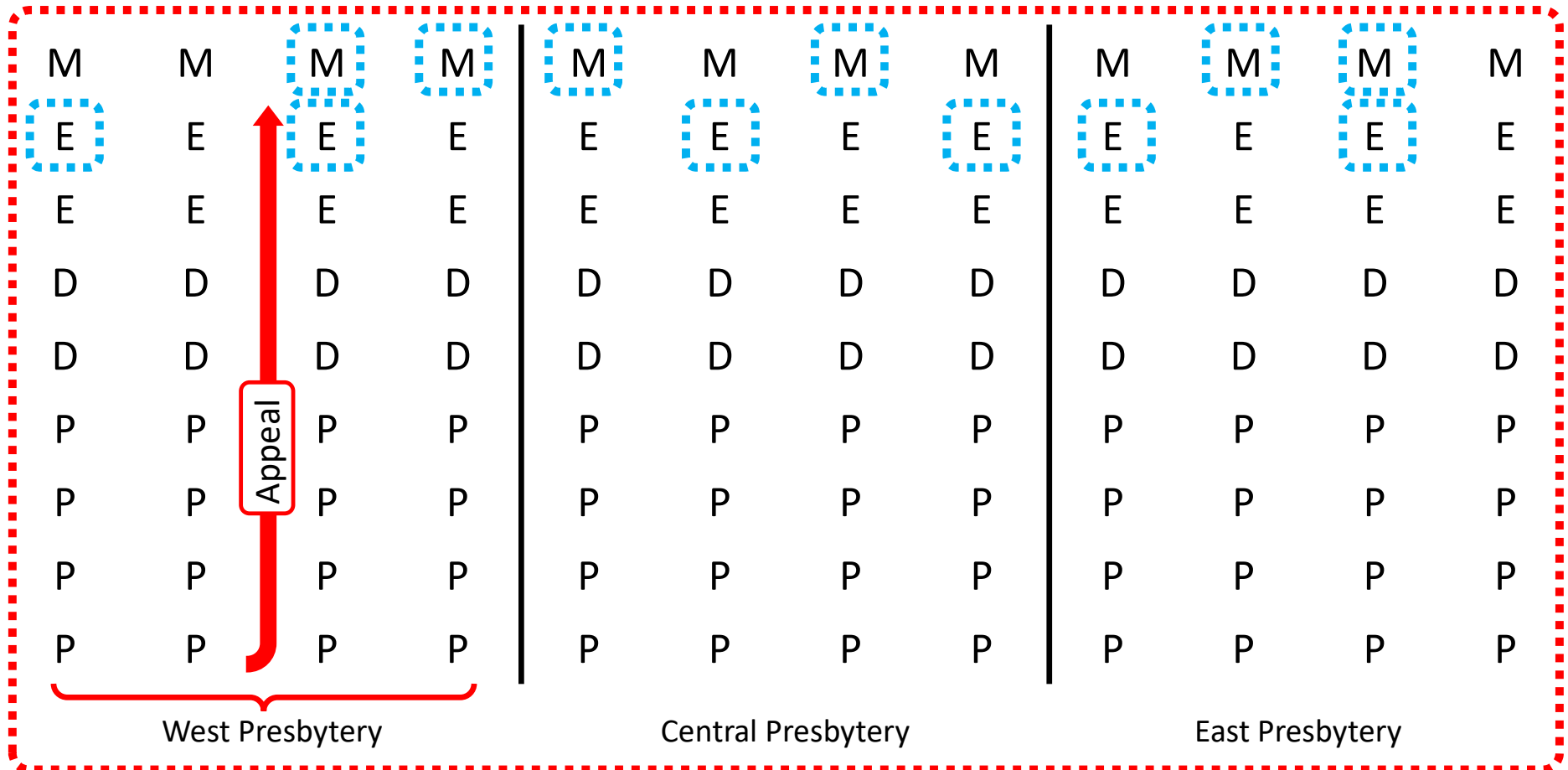
Central Presbytery

East Presbytery

General Assembly – Occasional Governing Assembly of the Whole Church

M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
West Presbytery				Central Presbytery				East Presbytery			

Original Jurisdiction or “First Right to Rule” of a General Assembly (Note: No Membership)



REVIEW: Assemblies, (FG 12-19), cont.

- FG 12—General Principles
- Specific Governing Assemblies
 - FG 13—The Local Church and Its Session
 - FG 14—The Regional Church and Its presbytery
 - FG 15—The Whole Church and Its General Assembly
- Congregations
 - FG 16—Congregational Meetings
 - Called by the session at least once each year
 - Agenda determined/approved by the session
 - NOT a governing assembly
 - FG 17—Congregations without Pastors
- Officers of Governing Assemblies
 - FG 18—Moderators
 - FG 19—Clerks

REVIEW: Assemblies, (FG 12-19), cont.

- FG 12—General Principles
- Specific Governing Assemblies
 - FG 13—The Local Church and Its Session
 - FG 14—The Regional Church and Its presbytery
 - FG 15—The Whole Church and Its General Assembly
- Congregations
 - FG 16—Congregational Meetings
 - FG 17—Congregations without Pastors
- **Officers** of Governing Assemblies
 - FG 18—Moderators: *preservation of order; directing its operations according to the rules of the Church.*
 - FG 19—Clerks: *recording of the transactions, to preserve the records carefully, and to grant extracts*

Overall Plan for the Class: FG Main Topics

1. Foundational doctrinal commitments and principles for the government of Christ's church (FG 1-4)
2. The Special Offices (FG 5-11)
3. Assemblies (FG 12-19)
4. Ordination and Installation to Special Office (FG 20-26)—
April 27, May 4
5. Good Order in Miscellaneous Matters (FG 27-32)—May 18

Ordination and Installation to Special Office (FG 20-26)

- Ordination and Installation (FG 20)
- Ministers (FG 21-24)
 - Licensing Candidates to Preach the Gospel (FG 21)
 - Calling a Minister (FG 22)
 - Ordaining and Installing Ministers (FG 23)
 - Dissolving Ministerial Relationships (FG 24)
- Electing, Ordaining, and Installing Ruling Elders and Deacons (FG 25)
- Divesting from Office (FG 26)

Ordination and Installation to Special Office (FG 20-26)

- Ordination and Installation (FG 20)
- Ministers (FG 21-24)
 - Licensing Candidates to Preach the Gospel (FG 21)
 - Calling a Minister (FG 22)
 - Ordaining and Installing Ministers (FG 23)
 - Dissolving Ministerial Relationships (FG 24)
- Electing, Ordaining, and Installing Ruling Elders and Deacons (FG 25)
- Divesting from Office (FG 26)

We're doing 1/3 of the FG today!!!

Ordination and Installation

Chapter 20

Ordination and Installation (FG 20)

- It is contrary to scripture for men to appoint themselves to office in the church (FG 20:1).
- The church solemnly approves and publicly attests to a man's inward call, gifts, and call of the church by ordaining him to the office of deacon, ruling elder, or minister (FG 20:2). NOTE: this means a man has gifts for extended time before possessing office!
- The church must only ordain a man to office when it is satisfied that he is qualified, and he has actually been called to a work (FG 20:3).
 - Service is in the church for elders and deacons.
 - Service is normally in the church for ministers.
- A body is to be sure a man has been sufficiently trained and tested before ordaining him (FG 20:4).

Ordination and Installation (FG 20), cont.

- The body that ordains a man is the body that examined the man (FG 20:5).
 - Elders and deacons are ordained by the local session.
 - When a mission is being particularized or a church is without a session, elders and deacons are ordained/installed by the presbytery.
 - Ministers are always ordained by the presbytery.
- “Installation” is the act of a governing body that puts a man in a position to actually execute the work of an office. The first time a man is installed he is also ordained (FG 20:6).
- [The application of FG 20:5 is repeated in FG 20:7.]
- An officer retiring due to advanced age or disability can be honored by the body that called him by designating him “emeritus” (FG 20:8).

Licensing Candidates to Preach the Gospel

Chapter 21

Licensing Candidates to Preach the Gospel (21)

- This paragraph provides an overview of the purpose and end of licensure. The purpose of licensure is to provide a season to test a man's gifts and suitability for the gospel ministry so that the office of minister will not be degraded (FG 21:1).
- A man must be taken "under the care" of a presbytery prior to licensing him; requirements for taking a man under care are specified (FG 21:2).
 - OPC member in good standing
 - Recommendation of his session
 - Examined as to "grace of God in him" and holiness of life.
- A man must ordinarily have a Bachelor of Arts degree and have finished half a seminary education to be academically qualified for licensure (FG 21:3).

Licensing Candidates to Preach the Gospel (21)

- The candidate is to be examined by presbytery in the following areas (FG 21:4-5):
 - English Bible
 - Ecclesiastical history
 - Theology (must be done on the floor or presbytery and must pass by a super-majority vote that *exceeds* 75%)
 - Greek
 - Hebrew
 - Deliver a sermon (usually at a meeting of presbytery)
 - A theological paper
 - An exegetical paper based on the Hebrew or Greek text of a passage
 - [OPC Church History (in PNCAN)]

Licensing Candidates to Preach the Gospel (21)

- How to deal with educational exceptions are described (FG 21:6). They must be approved by a super-majority at GA.
- The licensure ceremony is described (FG 21:7-8).
- A provision to continue trials for licensure between presbyteries is described (FG 21:9).
- A licentiate will normally serve within the bounds of the presbytery that licensed him; instructions are given for extended service within a different regional church (FG 21:10).
- Circumstances for recalling a man's license is described (FG 21:11).

Calling a Minister

Chapter 22

Calling a Minister (FG 22)

- A church, presbytery, or general assembly may call a licentiate or minister (FG 22:1).
- Only the presbytery approves a call for presentation to a man, and a man may not be approved for a call without his consent (FG 22:2).

Calling a Minister (FG 22), cont.

The procedure a church should follow when it desires to call a minister is outlined (FG 22:3-9).

- A pastoral search committee is appointed. This committee can be, and often is, the session. [No person can be called without session approval.] (FG 22:3)
- If not the session, the committee reports recommendations to the session. The session decides whether to call a meeting of the congregation. (FG 22:4)
- At the congregational meeting, there is an exhortation, presentation of the report, and then a vote to determine whether to proceed to a call. (FG 22:5)
- There is/are vote(s) whether to call the candidate (complex!). (FG 22:6)
- There is a vote on the terms of the call; certified and presented to presbytery to be found in order and its terms approved. (FG 22:7)
- Miscellaneous details about certifying the call to presbytery. (FG 22:8)
- A standard form for ministerial calls is given. (FG 22:9)

Calling a Minister (FG 22), cont.

- The procedure a presbytery should follow when processing a call is outlined (FG 22:10-13).
 - Presbytery may find the call in order, approve its terms, and "place it in the hands" of the man; may refer back with a recommendation to amend or desist; or may decline to place the call in the man's hands. (FG 22:10)
 - Instructions when the call is from a presbytery or GA. (FG 22:11)
 - Procedures in response to a call are detailed for various scenarios involving OPC ministers, OPC licentiates, and ministers of other denominations. (FG 22:12-13)
 - A call should be responded to within three weeks. (FG 14)
 - When a man accepts a call, he is requesting ordination/installation. (FG 15)
 - Various terms/expression related to chapter 22 are clarified. (FG 16)

Ordaining and Installing Ministers

Chapter 23

Ordaining and Installing Ministers (FG 23)

- A calling body expresses its desire for a minister or licentiate to be installed by issuing a call (FG 23:1).
 - A minister is requesting installation when he accepts a call.
 - A licentiate is requesting ordination and installation when he accepts a call.

Ordaining and Installing Ministers (FG 23) cont.

- The steps a presbytery must follow to ordain and install a licentiate as a pastor are outlined (FG 23:2-10).
 - A licentiate must give sufficient evidence that he has ministerial gifts for instruction and rule. (FG 23:2)
 - Formal education requirements are specified (FG 23:3).
 - The trials for ordination are summarized (FG XXIII:6). Examination in apologetics, BCO, and more nuanced and applied theology are required beyond what was required for licensure.
 - The ordination/installation service is described (FG XXIII:7-10).

Ordaining and Installing Ministers (FG 23) cont.

- Procedures for installing or ordaining/installing in situations other than licentiates being installed as pastors are described (FG 23:11-22).
 - Installing a man who is already an OPC minister (FG 23:11).
 - Installing a minister of another denomination (FG 23:12).
 - Ordaining and installing a licentiate as an evangelist or teacher (FG 23:13-15).
 - Installing an OPC minister as an evangelist or teacher (FG 23:16).
 - Installing a minister of another denomination as an evangelist or teacher (FG 23:17).

Ordaining and Installing Ministers (FG 23) cont.

- Other circumstances (FG 23:18-22)
 - Receiving a minister of another denomination without a call (FG 23:18).
 - Requirements when a minister desires a change of function (FG 23:19).
 - Rules for moving ministerial credentials between presbyteries are explained (FG 23:20).
 - Allowance for a minister to labor out of bounds or in a different regional church is described (FG 23:21).
 - Allowance to receive a retired minister of another denomination without a call or installation is described (FG 23:22).

Questions?