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December 16, 2009

Dear Stated Clerk and General Presbyter of the Presbytery:

As a Minister Member of the Presbytery of San Francisco, I am asking for your moral support in a Remedial Case that is being filed with the Synod of the Pacific Permanent Judicial Commission (SPJC) against San Francisco Presbytery.

The story goes back a few years, but the immediate situation dates to an irregular action of the Presbytery to approve the ordination of Ms. Lisa Larges, a self-avowed and unrepentant lesbian woman, on November 10, 2009. In a four-page declaration presented during her examination for ordination, Ms. Larges refused to abide by the “fidelity and chastity” ordination standard of G-6.0106b. In effect, she cannot answer “yes” to the fifth ordination question, “to be governed by our church’s polity.” By a vote of 156 to 138, the Presbytery approved her ordination anyway, but a protest was filed and a Stay of Enforcement has been secured until the matter can be adjudicated.

The Complainants (ministers and elders of San Francisco Presbytery) believe the action is so outrageous—and so out-of-covenant with our fellow presbyteries—that other presbyteries might wish to add their voices to the protest. As their representative, I am asking if you would be willing to guide a process through your presbytery to act before the 90-day filing period expires (D-6.0202a[5]) to become, basically, a co-complainant. Because the Stay of Enforcement accompanied by a formal complaint must be filed within 45 days, our deadline is December 25 (D-6.0103a); but presbyteries have until February 8 to file the equivalent of a joinder.

I am asking for help from your presbytery specifically, for two reasons: You have a consistent voting record in support of G-6.0106b, and your next meeting is set for January or very early February, before the February 8 deadline. I realize that presbyteries are becoming increasingly pluralistic, especially on this issue, and that your presbytery’s support is not guaranteed. But I am hoping, if you think it worth the effort, you would try to act in concert with us. To help your governing body deliberate, I or one of my

colleagues would be happy to make a presentation to your Mission Council or the Presbytery to explain the situation and our need more fully. This action would not require you to do any legal writing, but merely to sign our complaint on behalf of your Presbytery, if it concurs.

My request is not primarily a request for financial support of the effort, but if you feel you want to contribute funds, we would be most appreciative. A separate letter specifically addressing the financial realities is included in our materials, and you can gain an appreciation for what it costs normal Presbyterians to accomplish a fair hearing within the PCUSA system. But even if you cannot donate to the kitty, your moral support in the form of a concurrence would go miles in getting the message to our Synod—and the GA-PJC—that this isn't just the complaint of a few disheartened individuals who lost a vote but the lament of a significant segment of the church.

In the web packet we have developed, you will find documentation that should help in your deliberations. All our materials are available at [www.PCUSASStandards.org](http://www.PCUSASStandards.org), under the “Resources for Presbyteries” tab, for this purpose. If you need anything else, please ask and we will do our best to provide helpful information.

Yours sincerely, in Christ,

(The Rev.) Mary Holder Naegeli  
Counsel for the Complainants