

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY CONSENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **What is a consent recommendation?**

The General Assembly gathers prayerfully to discern God's will for the church. Sometimes the court finds itself spending a great deal of time on fairly routine matters leaving less time to focus on issues requiring thought and discussion. As a way of addressing this situation, the General Assembly has introduced the concept of consent recommendations. A consent recommendation is one that is intended to be adopted by the Assembly without discussion. When those preparing reports for the Assembly consider whether a particular recommendation should be a consent recommendation or not, they might be guided by the question, "Is this item self-explanatory and straightforward or does it warrant discussion?" Recommendations that are deemed to be self-explanatory and straightforward are the type that might be proposed as consent recommendations.

### **How are consent recommendations dealt with by the Assembly?**

A report might contain a number of consent recommendations. For example, a report might have seven recommendations but only three of them are marked with a "▶". This symbol indicates that these three recommendations are consent recommendations. Believing these recommendations are "self-explanatory and straightforward" and that the Assembly may not wish to discuss them, the Clerks invited the Assembly to adopt all three with one motion. By adopting a group of consent recommendations simultaneously, time can be redeployed to issues that may require more of the Assembly's prayerful attention. This is not to suggest consent recommendations are unimportant or simply "house-keeping" matters. They may, in fact, be fundamental decisions, but ones that the Assembly has no further need to discuss.

If a report has recommendations, they are listed on the report's first page. The ▶ will clearly indicate which of them, if any, will be proposed as consent recommendations.

### **May a consent recommendation be discussed?**

A commissioner may ask for a recommendation to be lifted from any group of consent recommendations presented to the Assembly. No reason for the request needs to be made. Normally, the request will be granted without question. The recommendation is pulled from the consent items and put before the meeting in the usual way affording opportunity for the recommendation to be discussed before the vote is taken.

### **Commissioner preparation**

It is vitally important that commissioners familiarize themselves with every recommendation in the Book of Reports so that they can vote thoughtfully. It is also important for commissioners to know which recommendations are going to be proposed as consent recommendations so they can be prepared to ask that one be removed from the consent recommendation list if they think it ought to be discussed before the vote is taken.