

Overview of the Conflict:

My name is Tony Monaghan, and I am a ministerial member of the presbytery of the PMA and formerly Pastor of Providence Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville Virginia (now retired). I was introduced to this conflict when the Presbytery asked me to be convener for an ad-hoc committee to examine a complaint which had been filed against the New Hope Session by Ruling Elder Jason R., at that time a member of the New Hope Session, and to bring recommendations to the PMA.

I have assembled a large collection of primary source documents, from which I will be quoting, and which I will reference. I will be making those documents available as needed. I have also redacted names to initials, and added first names for clarity. Not because those in our circles do not know who these individuals are, but because I do not want to provide fodder for search engines. This includes redacting external documents, such as minute excerpts and the many documents created during process as this conflict made its way through the PMA.

The purpose of this narrative is to give an orderly account of the aftermath of a conflict at New Hope Presbyterian Church (OPC Frederick MD) between Mrs. Amiee B. and New Hope Ruling Elder Jason R. This account fits into the larger narrative of the actions regarding Mrs. Aimee B. which occurred in the Presbytery of the Southeast and the 2021 and 2023 General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. While those actions are worth considering in themselves, the focus of this narrative is those actions with which I am most intimately familiar, which are the actions of the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic of the OPC (henceforth PMA) and the New Hope session, as those actions made their way through the judicatory process of PMA. My primary concern, and the reason for this extraordinary document is the profound breakdown of Presbyterianism evident in these proceedings.

It should be noted that from the very beginning the two sides in the conflict (the New Hope Session and Mr. Jason R.) offered distinctly contrasting reasons for the conflict. Those contrasting narratives are described most clearly in the opening statements of the second trial of Mr. Jason R.¹

The narrative promulgated by the session is that this was entirely about “character issues” with Mr. Jason R. and how those “character issues” made Mr. Jason R. unfit to be an elder. RE Dave M., speaking for the session in the opening statement of the second trial says the following:

In this whole process it was not our goal to remove you from being an elder and we never wanted your family to leave New Hope. Are [sic] earnest desire was to work through the character issues causing harm to the church. So that we could continue working together and many of us earnestly plead with you not to resign but work with us to bring about positive resolution. There is a history that predates and sets a context for this process and these particular charges as they have not occurred in a vacuum. We failed as a session to collectively and consistently recognize and address long-standing group and personal dynamics that may have helped avoid where are we now find ourselves.²

In contrast Mr. Jason R. promulgated a different narrative. His narrative was that this conflict was essentially driven by his disagreements with Mrs. Aimee B., Speaking in his own defense at the second trial Mr. Jason R. said the following:

¹ See document “The Second Trial” for a discussion of that trial more broadly.

² New Hope minutes 1/16/2021 p 287. The minutes include a transcript made from a recording of the trial. The transcript is sometimes awkward.

Sadly this is not a surprise that this is where we are and I believe I spoke to this to Mr. Francis VanD. and Mr. Dave M. about this a year-and-a-half ago. So I stated that I don't see any way that this doesn't end, that Mrs. Aimee B. would not be satisfied unless I was removed from office. To which they somewhat agreed to at that meeting. And so we are in a place that sadly I saw coming a long time ago.³

Mr. Jason R.'s position was that the conflict began when he pushed back against the session's position allowing women (specifically Mrs. Aimee B.) to teach mixed sex adult Sunday School classes.⁴ As the process moved through the judicial system of the New Hope Session and the PMA, these competing narratives remained. Both could not be correct. As with many competing narratives, there can be elements of truth on both sides. However, the record shows, in my opinion, that Mr. Jason R.'s narrative was significantly closer to the truth.

Some evidence is necessary to back up that claim, and so I present the following.

1) The session had, by the time of the opening statements of the Second Trial, already determined that it would not accept any outcome other than Mr. Jason R. being removed from office. In an email to me from Mr. Francis Van D., Mr Van D. wrote the following:

We were serious when we all asked him to resign - we do not think he should be an elder. That has strengthened with time. We pursued divestiture because of the same reasons. I don't know why he doesn't see this -we've been trying to say it for a long time, but I think somehow procedure questions/issues blocked out our real concerns to him somehow.

Jason seems to see the procedural question answered by the PMA as a bridge back. But he hasn't leaned in to our real concerns for 8+ months, and instead has minimized it, and made it about us and our errors. Our main concerns remain and I'm quite sure all the elders are in the same place - it would be best if Jason resigns. He should not be an elder.⁵

2) There was significant involvement from men outside the PMA and the New Hope Session in pressing the charges and essentially driving the conflict forward.

These men were:

a) The Rev. Scott W., ministerial member of the Presbytery of the Southeast (PSE) and pastor of Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church, Mt. Airy NC. Rev. Scott W. was an advisor to Mrs. Aimee B. Mr. Scott W.'s involvement in the record begins in December 24, of 2019.

"Mr. [Francis VanD.] sends email to session to schedule meeting with to have Mrs. [Aimee B.] present her concerns to session with Mr. [Scott W.] present. Mr. [Jason R.] responds."⁶

There are other entries which show the involvement of Mr. Scott W., as he advised the Session on how to proceed.⁷

3 New Hope minutes 1/16/2021 p 290.

4 Public testimony PMA meeting 9/2020. As a side note, this position of the New Hope Session was adjudicated (on appeal of a complaint) in the 2024 GA and overturned.

5 Private email from Mr. Francis VanD. to me 9/29/2020.

6 Timeline for appeal of complaint against the New Hope Session by Mr. Jason R., as that timeline was presented to the PMA by the ad hoc committee assigned to examine that appeal. I was convener of that committee. There are other entries which show the involvement of Mr. Scott W.

7 See for example Mr. Scott W.'s guidance to the session in how to address Mr. Jason R.'s "sins" apart from regular process. That guidance is described in the document entitled "Actions of New Hope and the Complaint Against It."

b) The Rev. John Van M., ministerial member of the Presbytery of Central Pennsylvania, and acting moderator of the OPC's General Assembly. Rev. John Van M. was significantly involved in the broader issue, having brought charges against members of the PSE for their comments about Mrs. Aimee B. and her work.⁸

c) The Rev. John M., ministerial member of the Presbytery of the Northwest of the OPC (PNW) and pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Newberg Oregon. Rev. John M. was a public supporter of Mrs. Aimee B. in the broader conflict.⁹

d) The Rev. Glenn J., ministerial member of the PSE (retired). Rev. Glenn J. was intimately involved in the charges in the PSE against members of the PSE, including complaining against the PSE's disposition of those charges.¹⁰

Given the commitments of the men involved with the session, and their public actions regarding the broader dispute, it is extraordinarily difficult to believe that the charges were at heart about general "character issues" only peripherally related to the broader Aimee B. controversy. People simply don't fly across the country to get involved in general session conflicts.

3) The specifications accompanying the charges adjudicated in Trial #2 were about the broader conflict regarding Mrs. Aimee B. For as much as the session claimed that the issue was "character issues," there were no specifications which dealt with "character issues" outside the conflict with Mrs. Aimee B.

4) When the session found Mr. Jason R. guilty on all counts in Trial #2, the session proposed as censure not only divestiture from office, but suspension from the Lord's Supper. This action cannot help but describe the session's thinking. Their action displays that to them his "sin" was not only about whether Mr. Jason R. has "character flaws" which prevented him from being an elder, this was about whether Mr. Jason R. had "character flaws" which displayed that he was a false Christian.

For those reasons, my opinion is that the session's assertion that this conflict was at heart an issue of "shepherding character flaws" mostly unrelated to the conflict with Mrs Aimee B. is simply not believable.

Below is a basic timeline:

1) 1/26/2020, 2/2/2200 and 2/9/2020: Following conflict between Mrs. Aimee B. and Mr. Jason R. at New Hope, the Session sent out three communications to the congregation and regular attenders accusing Mr. Jason R. of sin. Rev. Francis VanD. makes public announcements accusing Mr. Jason R. of sin.

2) 3/25/2020: Mr. Jason R. complains to the New Hope Session about these communications.

3) 4/7/2020: New Hope Session hears the complaint.

8 Rev. John Van M.'s involvement is broader than the first trial, though it is most noticeable there. See the document titled "The First Trial." The charges in the PSE were filed 9/1/2020.

9 Rev. John M. would end up being the "first counsel" for the session in Trial #2.

10 Rev. Glenn J. would end up being the "second counsel" for the session in Trial #2.

- 4) 4/18/2020: New Hope Session denies the complaint and drafts a response.
- 5) 5/27/2020: Mr. Jason R. carries complaint on appeal to the PMA.
- 6) 9/19/2020: The PMA adjudicates the appeal and sustains the complaint.
- 7) 10/10/2020: The New Hope Session admits charges against Mr. Jason R. from two members, conducts a preliminary investigation, suspends Mr. Jason R. from the right of performing the functions of his office and holds the first meeting of Trial 1.
- 8) 11/1/2020: The New Hope Session (along with Rev. John Van M., ministerial member of the Presbytery of Central Pennsylvania, and acting moderator of the OPC's General Assembly) meet and draw up a second set of charges against Mr Jason R.
- 9) 11/2/2020: The New Hope Session files charges against Mr. Jason R. (Trial 2)
- 10) 11/3/2020: The New Hope Session (along with Rev. Van M.) hold the second meeting of Trial 1. The trial is completed and at the end of the trial the session votes to dismiss the charges.
- 11) 11/7/2020: The New Hope Session meets. Present, along with the session and numerous observers, are the Rev. Glenn J. ministerial member of the Presbytery of the Southeast (retired) and the Rev. John M. ministerial member of the Presbytery of the Northwest of the OPC and pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Newberg Oregon. Rev. John M. was appointed primary counsel and Mr J. secondary counsel for the session. Mr. Jason R. is suspended from the right of performing the functions of his office.
- 12) 11/14/2020: The New Hope Session holds the first meeting of Trial 2.
- 13) 1/6/2021: The New Hope Session holds the second meeting of Trial 2.

NOTE: Up to this point I have been working off the minutes of the New Hope Session. From this point forward I do not have access to the minutes of the Session. Nevertheless I have access to considerable documentation.

- 14) 2/6/2021: Trial #2 concludes. Mr. Jason R. is found guilty on all counts, with the Session proposing a censure of indefinite suspension from the Lord's Supper together with deposition from the office of ruling elder.
- 15) 3/16/2021: Appeal of conviction filed with the PMA by Mr. Jason R.
- 16) 3/22/2021: Charges are filed in the PMA against Mr. Van D. as well as all the members of the New Hope Session by four member of New Hope OPC.
- 17) 5/1/2021: PMA meeting: The PMA dismisses all charges against individual session members. The PMA fixes charges against Mr. VanD. and concludes preliminary investigation against Mr. VanD. PMA does not finish docketed business.
- 18) Between 5/1/2021 and 6/26/2021: The Rev. Bryan E., ministerial member of the PMA calls the moderator expressing concern that "the minutes were not clear as to whether the charge against Mr.

VanD. had been found to be serious enough to warrant a trial, and that this could be used as a basis of appeal if the accused should subsequently be convicted.”¹¹

19) 6/26/2021: PMA meets in adjourned meeting. PMA passes the following motion: “On motion, Presbytery determined that it did not satisfy the requirement to determine “whether the charge, if proved true, would constitute an offense serious enough to warrant a trial” BD III, 7.b(6) with respect to the charges against Mr. VanD. in the May meeting.”

Presbytery begins to hear the Appeal from Mr. Jason R. Presbytery does not complete adjudicating the appeal and completion of the matter is postponed until the next stated meeting.

21) 6/28/2021: The Rev. Stu J., ministerial member of the PMA (retired), and member of the ad hoc committee to review charges against Mr. Van D. and Session members files a complaint against the action of the PMA which determined that presbytery had not satisfied the requirement of BD III, 7.b(6).

22) 9/18/2021: PMA stated meeting: Presbytery continues hearing Mr Jason R.’s Appeal. All specifications of sin are thrown out, with the exception of 2, regarding Mr. R’s communication with the congregation. One charge remained, of violating the 9th commandment by “failing to protect the good name of others,” with two specifications. The presbytery did not complete its docket and continued in an adjourned meeting.

23) 10/9/2021: PMA adjourned meeting: Presbytery determined that the charge against Mr. VanD., of violating the 9th commandment by “failing to protect the good name of others” “did *not* [my emphasis] constitute an offense serious enough to warrant a trial.” Mr. Bryan E. makes speech accusing those bringing charges against Mr. Van D. and New Hope Session of sin. Those bringing charges held harmless for their accusations.

24) 10/14/2021: Protest filed by Mr. Stu J. against the action of presbytery to find 9th commandment charge not serious enough to warrant a trial.

25) 10/25/2021: Complaint filed by Mr. Stu J. (and signed by two others) against action protested against (above).

26) 12/4/2021: An Ad Hoc Committee to Consider Two Complaints and One Protest Filed by Mr. Stu J. reports.

Presbytery upholds June 28 complaint and acknowledges its error in not finding the two motions (that preliminary investigation was not done; and that 9th commandment offense was not serious enough to warrant a trial) out of order.

Presbytery determines to send an apology to those bringing the charge and to the charged to apologize for its errors.

Moderator rules that “the actions taken by Presbytery following the May 1, 2021 meeting regarding the case to be null and void.” 2nd complaint is withdrawn following this ruling.

11 Private correspondence from clerk of Presbytery.

Presbytery votes to dismiss the charges against Mr. Van D. finding “the charge not readily prosecutable or profitable to the best interests of the church, and that the amends to Complaint (#2) withdrawn be considered as a series of independent motions.”

27) 2/2/2022: Complaint filed by the Rev. Tony Monaghan against the action of presbytery to dismiss the charges against Mr. Van D.

28) 5/7/2022: Stated meeting of the PMA: Ad hoc committee to examine Monaghan complaint reports. Presbytery denies the complaint.

29) 5/14/2022: Notice given to PMA that Mr. Monaghan intends appeal to GA.

30) 5/26/2022: Appeal filed with clerk of GA.

31) Appeal heard at GA. The General Assembly of the OPC denies the appeal.

It should be noted that this document (Overview of the Conflict), along with a second document (The charges brought against the Rev. Francis VanD.), were presented to the OPC’s standing committee on appeals and complaints. The standing committee did not recommend to the Clerk that they be presented to Advisory Committee 10 and these documents were never seen by that committee or the Assembly. Their reasoning was that these documents were “extraneous to the complaint.”¹²

The above timeline gives the barest sketch of the full story. To properly understand what happened, it is necessary to read the fuller accounts and the documents of the case.

What is evident, as you work your way through these documents is the extraordinary amount of influence in the process from OPC officers outside the PMA, especially within the New Hope Session.

There are a series of actions which describe the conflict more fully. I have arranged them as follows, each with a sketch of the most troubling aspects.

- 1) The actions of the New Hope Session to accuse Mr. Jason R. apart from regular process.
- 2) The subsequent complaint against the New Hope Session by Mr. Jason R.

The New Hope Session “accused” Mr. Jason R. outside of normal process. This line was suggested to them by Mr. Scott W., ministerial member of the PSE and member of the OPC’s standing committee on appeal and complaints.¹³ Mr. Jason R. complained against the actions of the New Hope Session, and prevailed. Mr. John Van M., ministerial member of the Presbytery of Central Pennsylvania, and acting moderator of the General Assembly was actively involved with the session and urged the session to appeal the PMA’s ruling, which urging the session initially did heed (in part) and then changed its mind.

The session deliberated on the complaint in executive session. The session’s use of executive session is common throughout the different stages of the complaint, trials and appeals. It is at best unclear what “ends of discipline seem to require” this extensive use of executive session.

¹² Email from Mr. John M., as chairman of the Standing Committee on Appeals and Complaints 5/19/2023.

¹³ The reading of the Book of Church order proposed by Mr. Scott W., and adopted by the session was in essence that actions of the Session are only actions if the Session records them. Unrecorded actions may not be complained against. This is further described in the document: “Actions of New Hope and the Complaint Against It.”

Actions 1 and 2 are summarized in the document titled “Actions of New Hope and the Complaint Against It.” There is a corresponding document “Some notes regarding the summary of Mr. Jason R.’s initial complaint” which goes into further detail.

3) The first trial against Mr. Jason R.

After the PMA sustained the complaint brought by Mr. Jason R., the New Hope Session received charges against Mr. Jason R., for not attending church during the period when they had wrongfully accused him and church was remote because of COVID. Mr. Jason R.’s family, feeling betrayed, had begun attending another nearby Presbyterian church.

The session invoked a provision in the OPC’s book of church order to deny Mr. Jason R. the right of performing the functions of his office at the first meeting of the trial (see BOD 4.1.d), and then, having heard the entire case, dismissed the charges. The language of the BOD is that unusual circumstances “require” this action. It stretches credulity to believe that such an action was “required” in a case so flimsy that the session dropped the charges.

Mr. John Van M. was granted privileges of the floor during that trial, and participated in argumentation.

The session did session business in private, without invoking executive session. “The moderator called a recess for 10 minutes to confer together. In private deliberations within the trial judicatory, ...”¹⁴ Again, there are session actions and deliberations done in secrecy.

Simply put, there are three serious errors here. 1) Mr. John Van M. had no standing to participate as he was not a member of the judicatory.¹⁵ 2) Even more egregiously, the session suspended a man from duties of office, citing the “requirement” forced by unusual circumstances, and then dropped the charges. That is, very simply, an abuse of the Book of Church Order’s provision. 3) Not necessarily as egregious, but quite concerning, the session continued to act in secret, deliberating apart from the observation assumed in Presbyterian polity.¹⁶

This action is summarized in a document titled “The First Trial.”

4) The second trial against Mr. Jason R.

5) The appeal by Mr. Jason R. against conviction on the set of charges of trial 2.

Almost immediately after dropping the previous charges the session filed a series of charges themselves against Mr. Jason R., essentially arguing that Mr. Jason R. had defamed Mrs. Aimee B. and

¹⁴ New Hope minutes 11/3/2020

¹⁵ BOD IV.C.3 describes the instructions for deliberation at the conclusion of the trial. Paragraph a states “The trial judicatory, after deliberation, shall vote...” Paragraph b states “When the trial judicatory has concluded its deliberations...” There is no provision for those outside the trial judicatory to enter into deliberations. One of the major questions raised in this and the subsequent case is the role of the Book of Discipline. Is the Book of Discipline determinative, or advisory? It was argued vigorously by supporters of the session that there is no “regulative principle” regarding the book of church order. Rather those supporters argued that what the BCO does not forbid is legitimate. This is such a serious question that it must be argued and determined by the General Assembly. This thesis regarding the BOD is even more prominent in the second trial.

¹⁶ BOD IV.A.1.b describes the requirement that the judicatory sit with open doors. The provision for closing doors is limited by “where the ends of the discipline seem to require it...” It is hard to imagine that the ends of discipline required this step, as Mr. Jason R. opposed the step.

defamed the session by publicly defending himself against the accusations of the New Hope Session against him. There were 4 charges and a total of 18 specifications.

The session invoked BOD 4.1.d again, and again suspended Mr. Jason R. from “the rights of performing the function of his office.”

The Session again requested men outside their judicatory to participate. Mr. John M., ministerial member of the Presbytery of the Northwest and Pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church, served as questioner on behalf of the session, with privileges of the floor granted also to Mr. Glenn J., ministerial member of the Presbytery of the Southeast, retired. While there is provision in the BCO for defense counsel, there is no provision for prosecuting counsel.

The session took the unusual move of entering into executive session for deliberations at the end of the trial. While the BCO describes the ability of a judicatory to enter into executive session, the BCO is clear that this is “when the ends of discipline seem to require it.” It is hard to imagine what “ends” required deliberations to be done in private, but not the rest of the trial.

The session found Mr. Jason R. guilty on all counts of all charges, proposing not only deposition, but also suspension from the privileges of membership. Mr Jason R. appealed to the PMA. That appeal was heard at the May meeting of the PMA 2021. On appeal the PMA tossed 16 of 18 specifications, retaining two specifications of one charge (the same act), and overturned the session’s proposed censure, reducing the entirety of the censure from deposition and suspension from the Lord’s Table down to admonition.

At this point Mr. Jason R. and his family left the OPC. It should be noted that a considerable number of New Hope members left New Hope. They did not seek Presbyterian churches when transferring. A number of ex-members declared that they never want to be a member of ANY church ever again.¹⁷

Actions 4 and 5 are summarized in a document titled “The Second Trial.”

6) The charges brought against Rev. Francis Van D. and the New Hope Session.

At the PMA meeting of May 2021 (the same meeting at which Mr Jason R. presented his appeal) charges were presented to Presbytery by *four* members of the New Hope Congregation. One member was Mr. Billy R., brother of Mr. Jason R. The charges were brought against all the members of the session, for both corporate actions and individual actions. The charges were in form nearly identical to the charges the session had brought against Mr. Jason R., using nearly the exact same language, though obviously with different specifications.

Those bringing the charges were convinced that the session had not merely erred in they way they handled Mr. Jason R., but that they had sinned and were hypocritical in their actions. In their conversations with the session, the session had made it clear that complaints were for errors, but charges were for sin. The exact language of the communication from Rev. Francis Van D. to Mr. Billy R. is as follows:

¹⁷ Testimony of Jason and Billy Rundell. This was confirmed by the Visitation committee of the PMA. Exact numbers are hard to discern. When I sought the minutes of New Hope in order to confirm the total numbers of those who departed, they refused to provide their minutes.

"If you believe that Session, or individual members of Session, have acted sinfully and are unrepentant, you can file charges. Every Session member is accountable to the Session as a whole, and to Presbytery. The Session as a whole is accountable to the Presbytery as well. While a complaint can only be filed regarding an error of officially recorded Session actions, charges of sin function differently."¹⁸

At the PMA meeting of May 1, 2021, the presbytery voted to find all the charges based on corporate acts out of order. The individual charge against Rev. Francis Van D., having been put in proper form,¹⁹ was found in order²⁰, and the request to have the presbytery assume responsibility for prosecution was granted.²¹

At this point the presbytery "moved to adjourn the current discussion and consider the report of the Ad Hoc Committee to examine the Appeal²² in a special meeting, after which it will appoint prosecutors and determine the first date of trial."²³

Following this was a series of actions by the PMA which were so bizarre and extraordinary that a trial was never held.

In short:

6/19/2021: The presbytery reconsidered its previous actions (without a motion to reconsider) and declared that it had not held a preliminary investigation, despite the evidence of its own minutes.²⁴

6/19/2021: The presbytery also passed a motion at that meeting²⁵ finding that the charges against Mr. Francis VanD. were "not serious enough to warrant a trial."²⁶ This is despite the fact that it had already done the preliminary investigation,²⁷ and again without a motion to reconsider.

6/28/2021: A complaint was filed against this action by Rev. Stu J.²⁸ The complaint was specifically against the action of the PMA "...that Presbytery in its May 1, 2021 did, in effect not fulfill the requirement of the Book of Discipline in its process of finding a charge in order against a certain ministerial member of Presbytery."²⁹

Further, the charge against Rev. Francis VanD. was exactly the same, word for word, as the charge against Mr. Jason R. brought by the New Hope Session which the New Hope Session found *WAS* serious to warrant a trial. That finding by the New Hope Session was upheld by the PMA, and was the basis for the lone remaining charge and specifications which stood after the PMA had overturned the New Hope Session on 16 of the 18 specifications against Mr. Jason R.

18 Email from Francis Van D. to Billy R.

19 BOD 3.7.b

20 PMA Minutes of May 1, 2021

21 PMA Minutes of 1, 2021

22 Mr R.'s appeal of his conviction by the New Hope Session was docketed to be heard at this meeting, however time constraints led to the appeal being pushed back to a special meeting called for that purpose.

23 PMA Minutes of May 1, 2021

24 PMA Minutes of June 19, 2021

25 PMA Minutes of June 19, 2021

26 The motion was raised June 19, 2021 and consideration was postponed until October 9, 2021. The motion passed at the October (adjourned) meeting.

27 PMA Minutes of May 1, 2021

28 This complaint was filed June 28, 2021

29 Report of ad hoc committee to consider the two complaints. Report delivered December 3, 2021.

It should be noted that there were many postponements of business until adjourned meetings. Many adjourned meeting had low attendance.

10/25/2021: A protest and a complaint against the action of the PMA to find the charge “not serious enough to warrant a trial” was filed by Rev. Stu J., with others in the PMA signing on, myself included.³⁰

The protest notes that Rev. Stu J. made “semi-public” attempts to get both parties to drop the charges against each other. These efforts “were undertaken with a view to ending a conflict involving all parties that the undersigned believes was unnecessary, unhelpful, and injurious.”³¹

Those bringing the charges against Rev. VanD. were willing to agree to Rev. Stu J.’s proposal, the session was not.³²

12/4/2021: When the complaints were adjudicated the presbytery reversed its previous decisions, declared a large amount of work null and void and then immediately moved again to dismiss the charges against Mr. Francis Van D.³³

9/22/2022: The Presbytery admitted that it botched the prosecution very badly and instructed the clerk to publish an apology to be delivered to all involved.

The motion in Presbytery was:

“On recommendation from the [Visitation] committee Presbytery instructed the clerk to communicate an apology to the parties involved for the delays caused by its significant errors in processing the charges against Mr. VanDelden.”³⁴

The apology was drawn up 11/2/2022, and delivered (to those who would receive the Visitation Committee).

This action to dismiss the charges without even ever deposing a single witness was complained against (by me) which complaint was denied and appeared on appeal at the 2023 GA of the OPC. At the 2023 GA the appeal was denied.

It should be noted that the General Assembly’s Standing Committee on Appeals and Complaints received this document as well as other documents you are now reading and considered them not germane to the complaint. The recommendation of the Standing Committee was that the documents not be forwarded to the GA’s Advisory Committee.

The member of the General Assembly’s Standing Committee (the Rev. Scott W.) did not recuse himself from that vote, despite being named in these documents, and having given the advice to the session to accuse Mr. Jason R. without due process.³⁵

30 The Protest was filed 10/11/2021, the complaint 10/25/2021

31 Protest filed by Rev Stu J. 10/11/2021

32 Public testimony in PMA meeting of 9/18/2021

33 PMA minutes of 12/4/2021

34 PMA minutes of 9/22/2022

35 Testimony of John Mallin, chair of GA’s Standing Committee, during the hearings of AC 10.

The documents were never forwarded to the General Assembly Advisory committee (AC 10), and the committee, without ever seeing them, voted not to read them. Further, at the 2023 GA, Mr. Ken B., clerk of the PMA (and for full disclosure member of the Session on which I served) attempted to bring the PMA's apology letter to attention of Mr. John M. (chair of the GA's Standing Committee on Appeals and Complaints). Mr. John M. was not interested in the apology letter.³⁶

36 Private testimony from Mr. Ken B.