

WCF.30 The Church Cleans Up Her Own Messes.

[Falls Church – An OPC Family Watch Your Life and Doctrine Course 2020]

Westminster Confession of Faith , Chapter 30, Church Censures

30.1 - The Authority Behind Censures. Christ appointed that there will be church officers. 1 Cor.12:28-29 Eph.4:11-12

30.2 - The Power of Censures. The assumption is that the sin between people would be brought to the church body through its leadership. Matthew 18:17. John 20:23. Isaiah 9:6. Ephesians 2:20. 1 Peter 1:10-12 The authority of Christ is seen in the administration of this authority by elders or bishops. Acts 16:4. 1 Timothy 5:17. Acts 20:17-18, and verse 28.1 Peter 5:1-2

Three types of government or forms of leadership in churches.

Principles of Bible	Hierarchical form	Congregational form	Presbyterian form
Christ is only Head	No, another head.	Yes	Yes
Elders chosen by the people	No, chosen by a higher-up.	Yes	Yes
Officers equal	No, whole structure.	Yes	Yes
Must have multiple elders	No, one pope, archbishop, priest,etc.	No	Yes
Officers ordained by outside body of elders	No.	? Sometimes yes, sometimes no.	Yes
Smaller group can appeal to assembly	No.	No	Yes

“The Power of the Keys” – the Keys of the Kingdom . Matthew 16:18-19. Matthew 18:17-18. John 20:21-23. 1 Corinthians 1:18. Titus 3:10 2 Corinthians 2:6-8.

30.3 - The Necessity of Censures.

Why is church discipline necessary? Because we love people and because people are like wandering sheep needing shepherding care. Jesus commanded it. Matthew 18:12-14 A little sin and error can spread through a church. 1 Corinthians 5:6-7. 1 Timothy 5:20.

30.4 - The Administration of Censures.

How must church discipline be carried out? Carefully, like shepherds gentle with sheep. Galatians 6:1. The purpose of church discipline is to remove sin from the sinner, not to remove the sinner from the church.

We must carry out church discipline in the way that Jesus explained as the proper plan for it in Matthew 18:15-20.

WCF.31. Larger assemblies are good and necessary for the life of the church.
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Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 31, Church Synods and Councils

31.1- The Appointment of Assemblies

Acts 15:2

The issue is the relation between church and state. Can the secular government call a church meeting? No.

The OPC has changed this paragraph to reflect our belief that the state should not interfere with matters of the church.

The church of Jesus Christ has absolute spiritual independence from all civil authority.

But there is another principle of Presbyterianism at work here: the whole Church of Christ on earth is one in such a sense that a smaller part is subject to a larger, and a larger to the whole. The Church is one, and has one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

31.2- The Duties of Assemblies

Acts 15:27-31 and Acts 16:4. The work of the church is spiritual only. The work of pastors, elders and deacons is ministerial and declarative. We do and say what the Bible shows.

31.3- The Fallibility of Assemblies

Any decree of any synod or council or session or presbytery or General Assembly must be consonant with the Word of God in order to be received. Church courts make mistakes. 1 Corinthians 2:5.

Don't do things just because the GA said to do them. Do things because God says to do them. There is a big difference.

31.4 - The Scope of Assemblies

Secular officials should not interfere in the church.

The opposite is true.

Churches should not interfere in civil affairs!

John 18:36. Matthew 22:21. Luke 12:13-15.

If there are issues vital to the church or ethics, the church may speak to it.

WCF.32. We need the facts about the afterlife.

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Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 32, The State of Men After Death

32.1 Until The Final Resurrection

At death, the physical bodies of all people return to dust and see corruption. Genesis 3:19, “dust you are, and to dust you shall return.” Acts 13:36, King David was buried and his body decayed. Why? Because we learn in 1 Corinthians 15:26, “the last enemy to be destroyed is death.”

At death, there are two separate situations for the souls of Christians and non-Christians. The temporary situation for the physical bodies of Christians and unbelievers is the same – decaying. But the spirits of believers right away become sinless and perfect and enter into the joy of the presence of God. Hebrews 12:23. 2 Corinthians 5:8. Philippians 1:23. John 5:24 Ephesians 2:5-6. Colossians 3:3

There is no purgatory. Our salvation is already accomplished. No further punishment is necessary for any of our sins. We are welcomed right away as perfect children of God. Hebrews 10:14, “...by one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.”

32.2 The Reunion of Souls and Bodies

There will be a general resurrection.

Those living on that day will be changed without the process of death and decay.

The same body that you had when you died will be resurrected and changed.

This same body will be re-united to your soul forever.

This resurrection will be different for believers and for unbelievers.

2 Thessalonians 1:7b-8. Job 19:26 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, and verse 55.

32.3 The Future for All Bodies.

John 5:25-29, “I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself. And He has given Him authority to judge because He is the Son of Man. Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out – those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.”

Philippians 3:21, “...by the power that enables Him [Christ] to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body.”

WCF.33 How will it all end?

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Wesminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 33, The Last Judgment

33.1 The Last Day is Set

God has appointed a day of general judgment. Acts 17:31, “For He [God] has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the Man He [God the Father] has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

Christ is the judge.

All angels and men will appear before Him.

33.2 The Reason God Set The Day

God’s reason in appointing this day is showing both His justice and His grace.

The righteous and the wicked will enter into their eternal reward.

33.3 God’s Purpose in Revealing The End

The great day cannot be predicted ahead of time.

We must be ready.

2 Peter 3:10-13, “...the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.”

Mark 13:35-37, “Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back – whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If He comes suddenly, do not let Him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’”

Discipline	OK/Not	My 3 worst	My Actions
1. Godliness			
2. Purity			
3. Marriage			
4. Fatherhood			
5. Friendship			
6. Mind			
7. Devotion			
8. Prayer			
9. Worship			
10. Integrity			
11. Tongue			
12. Work			
13. Perseverance			
14. Church			
15. Leadership			
16. Giving			
17. Witness			
18. Ministry			