



216th General Assembly (2004)

Advisory Delegate Manual

WELCOME!

Congratulations on your election as an advisory delegate to the 216th General Assembly (2004) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

This meeting holds the promise of being an exciting and important event in the life of our church. Your participation is highly valued and I look forward to meeting you in Richmond, Virginia.

As the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, I have the overall responsibility for the arrangements for the General Assembly meeting. Staff of the Office of the General Assembly, (the OGA), assisted by volunteers from across the church, are involved in planning for the upcoming activities in Richmond. Our primary goal in all these arrangements is to enable commissioners and advisory delegates to carry out their responsibilities in the highest governing body of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Staff from the Office of the General Assembly, the Youth and Young Adults Ministries Program Area and the Committee on Theological Education of the Congregational Ministries Division have collaborated in developing this manual for Youth Advisory Delegates and Theological Student Advisory Delegates. It is intended to help you to understand your role, and to assist you as you prepare for the assembly.

This manual will answer some practical questions that you may have about getting ready to go to Richmond, as well as providing more substantive information about the General Assembly and what you can expect during your week in Richmond.

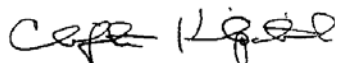
Please read through it carefully, along with the other materials that you are receiving from the Office of the General Assembly.

If you have additional questions, there are resources to help you. Staff in the Office of the General Assembly can assist you with your advance arrangements and answer other questions; contact them at 888.728.7228, ext. 2417, or at gmeetingservice@ctr.pcusa.org.

I have appointed four volunteer assembly assistants who will be in Richmond to help coordinate special activities for youth advisory delegates and to provide assistance on site. Another assembly assistant will serve as a contact person for the theological student advisory delegates. You'll get to know these advisory colleagues much better in June.

I look forward to our time together in Richmond. God's blessings be with you as you prepare for your service there.

Sincerely,



Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

**A GUIDE FOR ADVISORY DELEGATES TO THE
216th GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2004) OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Those Practical Matters	1
Registration	1
Travel and Expense policies	1
Mark Your Calendar	1
Arrange Your Travel to Richmond	2
Reserve Your Hotel Room	2
You Need a Roommate	2
Hotel Payment	3
Do You Want to Order Any Tickets?	3
What About Meals During the Assembly?	3
More About Expenses and Money	4
What to Pack	4
Arriving in Richmond	4
Other Advice	5
What is the General Assembly?	5
Who are the Moderator and Stated Clerk?	5
How Does the Assembly Work?	6
Assembly Committees	6
Business Sessions	7
Who Attends the General Assembly?	7
What is an Advisory Delegate?	8
What is the Role and Function of Advisory Delegates?	8
How Can I Make a Difference?	9
How Can I Best Share My Experience Back Home?	10
What Else is Expected of Me?	11
Anything Else?	11
What Do All These Acronyms Mean?	13

THOSE PRACTICAL MATTERS

The bulk of this manual will be concerned with how the assembly works and how advisory delegates participate in it. But, let's first get the logistical matters out of the way.

By accepting the election to be an advisory delegate to the assembly, you have made a commitment to spend a week in Richmond, Virginia from June 25 to July 3, and you need to take responsibility for making the arrangements for your travel and housing. This should take you only a few minutes if you use the assistance the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) provides, so **DO NOT PUT THIS OFF**.

Registration packet

You should have already received your registration packet and form from G.A. Meeting Service of the OGA. (If not, contact them at 888-727-7228, ext. 2417, or gameetingservice@ctr.pcusa.org.)

The packet includes your Registration Booklet, which contains information on arranging your travel, reserving a hotel room, and other logistics. It also includes a detailed schedule of the assembly. If you haven't already looked at these and completed the form, *do so now*.

Travel and Expense policies

The packet includes a very important flyer titled "Special Information for Commissioners and Advisory Delegates" which outlines the travel and expense reimbursement policies. A separate sheet in that mailing describes some special activities and other information for Youth Advisory Delegates and Theological Student Advisory Delegates. You will want to read these carefully to avoid any unfortunate misunderstandings related to how the assembly will cover your assembly expenses.

Mark Your Calendar

The 216th General Assembly (2004) will take place June 26 to July 3, at the Greater Richmond Convention Center in downtown Richmond, Virginia. There are activities preceding the official opening that affect advisory delegates.

Friday, June 25	4:00pm	YAD Orientation, Sheraton Hotel
Friday, June 25	6:30 pm	TSAD Orientation, Convention Center
Saturday, June 26	9:00am	YAD Orientation, Sheraton Hotel
	1:00pm	216 th General Assembly convenes

The assembly will adjourn by noon on Saturday, July 3. Book your return flight after 1:30pm in order to be able to stay until the end.

You are expected to be present for all business sessions. If you have other commitments that would require you to arrive in Richmond late, or to leave before the end of the assembly, be sure to discuss this with your presbytery stated clerk (and, for Theological Student Advisory Delegates, also with your Seminary contact). Your presbytery or theological school is counting on being represented for the full assembly, and should be informed if you are not able to meet that expectation.

Arrange Your Travel to Richmond

You are responsible for making your travel arrangements to Richmond. The assembly's official travel agency will assist you.

To make airline reservations, contact the **Carlson Wagonlit Travel Agency** at **800-634-5656**. Tell the agent that you are an advisory delegate. The agent will help you find the best schedule and fare from your home or school, and charge the cost of your ticket to the Assembly. Be sure to read the expense reimbursement policies in the Special Information for Commissioners and Advisory Delegates flyer (from your registration packet) before you finalize your travel plans, so you can comply with those guidelines. Note especially that *you will not be reimbursed* if you make your travel arrangements with another travel agency, directly with the airline, or through an on-line service.

Sometimes student participants will want to book a ticket that allows them to depart from their school and return to their home - or vice versa. The Carlson Wagonlit agent can arrange this, but if the ticket costs more than the lowest available round trip fare from either location, you will be expected to pay the difference. The agent will let you know the amount of the additional fare when you book the ticket, and you will pay this amount to the Office of the General Assembly.

Make your airline reservations NOW - or as soon as you are sure of your travel dates. The most convenient flights and best fares sell out quickly.

Reserve Your Hotel Room

The Office of the General Assembly has blocked rooms at hotels in Richmond for assembly participants, *but you must complete the Registration and Housing form that came in your Registration packet to make a reservation.*

It will take only a few minutes to fill in your arrival and departure dates and the roommate information. You may mail or fax your form, or you may register on line. Go to www.pcusa.org/ga216.

We have designated the Sheraton Hotel for YADs and the Radisson for TSADs to make it easier for you to attend caucus meetings and other special activities. Be sure to let us know if there are particular reasons that you feel you need a different hotel assignment.

You will receive a registration and housing confirmation notice from the G.A. Meeting Service a few weeks after you send in your completed form. Contact the G.A. Meeting Service if you don't receive your confirmation within about a month.

You Need a Roommate

You are expected to share a "double" (two-bedded) room at the Assembly. If you do not want to have a roommate, you may request a single room but you will be required to pay for the other half of the room charges, which will total over \$400.

If you have already made arrangements with another participant to be your roommate, list his or her name on your registration form. Make sure your roommate lists you on his or her form and sends it back promptly, as we cannot match up the forms and reserve the room until both forms are received. Most YADs and TSADs do not know other participants with whom they can share a room, so the G.A. Meeting Service will help match you with a roommate. Fill in the information about yourself in that section of the housing form, and return it as soon as possible. We will match YADs with YADs and TSADs with

TSADs whenever possible. But don't wait until the last minute!

Hotel Payment

The Assembly will cover your shared housing costs. We do **not** cover charges for hotel "incidentals," such as telephone calls, meals, parking, laundry, pay movies, etc. If you charge any of these items to your hotel room, you will be expected to pay for them. You will need to have a credit card or cash deposit when you check in as a guarantee for incidental charges you incur during your stay. If you do not have a major credit card to cover this deposit, bring additional cash or travelers' checks (at least \$250) to cover this.

Remember that if you request a single room, you will pay the other half of the room charge. The hotel will expect you to have a credit card or the funds to pay this when you check in, if you do not have a roommate.

Do You Want to Order Any Tickets?

The registration booklet includes a detailed schedule of the assembly, and descriptions of a number of optional events that are sponsored by various agencies and organizations. You may find that some of these sound interesting, but *remember that your primary responsibilities are to participate in the assembly business meetings and committee meetings.*

Some of the optional events conflict with those sessions. On the ticket order form, these are shaded indicating that commissioners and advisory delegates may not purchase those tickets.

If you decide you want to attend some of the optional events that do not conflict with official meetings, you should order those tickets in advance. Send in the ticket order form with your payment as soon as possible, and by June 4.

What About Meals During the Assembly?

There will be several group meals for commissioners and advisory delegates. Unless specifically designated, these meals are for both YADs and TSADs:

Friday, June 25	dinner with the YAD orientation (Sheraton Hotel)
Friday, June 25	dinner with TSAD orientation (Convention Center)
Saturday, June 26	YAD dinner (Convention Center)
Sunday, June 27	Group lunch with the Local Committee event (Richmond Coliseum) Group dinner (Convention Center)
Monday, June 28	GA Breakfast (Convention Center) Group Dinner (Convention Center)
Tuesday, June 29	YAD dinner with the Local Committee sponsored event
Thursday, July 1	Group dinner (Convention Center)
Friday, July 2	Group lunch (Convention Center)

The registration packet that you will receive when you register in Richmond will contain a ticket for the Sunday lunch, and your assembly badge will admit you to the other meals listed above.

You are on your own for other meals, and you must bring enough money (at least \$250) to pay for these meals during the assembly and as you travel to and from Richmond. The assembly will reimburse you for these other meals at the per diem rate of \$38 per day - \$9 for breakfast, \$8 for lunch, and \$21 for dinner.

This amount will be added automatically to your expense reimbursement check, but you will not receive it until *after* you return home. Come prepared with enough cash, travelers' checks or a credit card to get you through the week.

Some of the assembly hotels have restaurants, and there are concession stands and a café at the Convention Center. There is a food court near the Convention Center as well as other restaurants in the area. You will find that your money will go farther if you try these rather than eating all your meals at the hotel restaurants, which tend to be more expensive.

The OGA will provide you with a printed grid to help you keep track of your meal expenses. This will also remind you of the amount of the per diem meal reimbursement. If that amount is greater than what you actually spend, you are asked to send a check for the difference to the Office of the General Assembly. Keep in mind that we are called to be good stewards in all we do.

More about Expenses and Money

A few weeks before the assembly, you will receive an expense voucher from the OGA. You should have it filled out and ready to turn in at the Treasurer's desk in the G.A. Office at the convention center on Saturday, June 26. You will use it to list allowable out-of-pocket expenses you incur to travel to Richmond or participate at the assembly. Staff from the Treasurer's Office will be on site to answer questions about allowable expenses and help you complete your voucher.

What to Pack

Bring clothes for all occasions, both informal and what you would wear to worship. Commissioners and staff will be wearing everything from business clothes (suits, ties, dresses) to casual (walking shorts, polo shirts, sneakers, sandals). Remember that the Assembly is a business meeting, so please dress appropriately. Short shorts, short or revealing tops, old jeans, and faded t-shirts are NOT appropriate for the Assembly.

Bring comfortable walking shoes, light clothing, and a swimsuit. Bring a sweater or jacket; it can be very difficult to maintain a comfortable temperature in all of the rooms at a convention center.

Bring your Bible. Bring ALL materials sent to you by the General Assembly as well as extra paper, pens, highlighter markers, and pencils. Bring the copy of the *Book of Order* you were sent from the Office of the General Assembly. If you chose to receive paper reports, get a 5 inch, 3-ring binder, and use it to sort and hold all the reports (RGAs). You have received index tabs with the first volume of the reports to the General Assembly to organize your papers. Bring that binder of reports with you and bring an extra 3-ring binder (1"-2") for committee reports that are produced on site. If you chose e-reports, be sure to read the reports online (download them if you want) and bring your laptop with you.

Because it will take quite a bit of time to make your way back to the hotel in the middle of the day, plan on being gone from your room for the whole day. You will receive an official assembly tote bag when you register, but some participants bring their own backpacks to carry all their papers and books.

Arriving In Richmond

If you come by air, look for the volunteers from the Committee on Local Arrangements in the airport baggage claim area for help in getting ground transportation to your hotel. There will be assembly-sponsored shuttles to the hotels on Friday and Saturday.

When you check-in at the hotel, there will be more volunteers from the Local Committee to greet you and

answer questions about Richmond and give directions to the Convention Center. You will need to go to the Registration Lobby of the Greater Richmond Convention Center to register for the assembly and receive all of your registration materials.

Other Advice

This comes from veteran advisory delegates. The hours at the General Assembly will be long. Lack of sleep is a chronic problem for all people at the Assembly. The Assembly starts promptly each morning and you are expected to be there. Use the alarm clock in your hotel room and go to sleep at a decent hour. You need enough rest/sleep to function faithfully!

It will also be important for you to bring along a card that indicates your medical insurance carrier, in the unlikely event that it would be needed.

WHAT IS THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY?

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is an interdependent church. It is composed of thousands of congregations that have voluntarily associated themselves together, submitted to a representative form of government, and accepted a constitution (the *Book of Order*) as their law, subordinated to the Word of God. The sessions of these congregations send representatives to the presbytery that, in turn, elect representatives to the synod and General Assembly proportionate to the numbers of communicant members in each particular presbytery.

Presbytery, synod, and the General Assembly meetings are composed generally of equal numbers of clergy and elders. These representatives (commissioners) may not be instructed about how to vote by their electing bodies, but vote according to their own consciences. They participate in a representative governing body with a structure, process, and rules designed to encourage maximum involvement.

The General Assembly is the most inclusive governing body of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its court of final appeal. Since the General Assembly meets only once a year, decisions reached at a given Assembly are final until another Assembly changes them. Although policy made by one Assembly cannot be altered until the next meeting, individual Presbyterians are free to accept, implement, or reject any policy statements made by a General Assembly that directly affects them.

WHO ARE THE MODERATOR AND STATED CLERK?

There are two elected officers of the General Assembly: the moderator and the stated clerk. The moderator, who is either an ordained minister or elder, is elected from among the commissioners at each assembly. She or he presides at the meetings of that Assembly and continues to be the leader of the church until the next moderator is elected. The moderator receives no salary and usually spends most of her or his time during that year traveling in the interest of the church, and serving on various committees and boards. The Reverend Dr. Susan Andrews from National Capital Presbytery is the Moderator of the 215th (2003) General Assembly. (See the *Manual of the General Assembly*, Standing Rule F).

The 216th General Assembly will elect its moderator at the evening meeting on Saturday, June 26.

The stated clerk is a continuing executive officer elected for a four-year term who works full time with salary. The stated clerk gives advisory opinions interpreting Presbyterian law and Assembly actions both during and between General Assemblies. The stated clerk keeps records of each General Assembly and

supervises the publishing of the Minutes each year. (See *Manual of the General Assembly*, Standing Rule G.) Exercising continuing leadership in the church, the stated clerk oversees all arrangements for meetings of the General Assembly and has considerable authority in the areas of General Assembly planning and program, relations with other churches, and Presbyterian witness to the government and society.

The Reverend Clifton Kirkpatrick is completing his second four-year term as stated clerk.

HOW DOES THE ASSEMBLY WORK?

The assembly will consider and act on reports and recommendations from various assembly agencies, and on proposals (overtures) from the presbyteries and synods. This is a considerable volume of material, on a wide range of topics. Some of it is routine; other recommendations will require more interpretation and discussion as the assembly seeks to discern the will of Christ.

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES

In order to manage the volume of business effectively and provide for adequate deliberation, most business of the General Assembly goes through its committees. The Stated Clerk recommends the structure of assembly committees, and the referral of business to each committee. All assembly committees will begin meeting Sunday evening, and continue through Tuesday afternoon, or until they have completed the consideration of all the items of business referred to them.

Committee 01, Business Referrals, consists of the moderators and vice-moderators of all of the other assembly committees. Each commissioner and advisory delegate is assigned to one of the other committees through a random selection process outlined in the *Manual of the General Assembly*. You will be notified of your committee assignment in a separate mailing. Advisory delegates have full voice AND vote in committee.

The committees for the 216th General Assembly are as follows:

01. Business Referrals
02. Bills and Overtures

Ecclesiastical

03. General Assembly Procedures
04. Church Polity
05. Church Orders and Ministry
06. Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

Mission to the Church

07. Mission Coordination and Budgets
08. Theological Issues and Institutions
09. Evangelism and Higher Education
10. National Issues
11. Health Issues
12. Peacemaking
13. International Issues

Services to the Church

14. Pensions, Foundation and PILP

BUSINESS SESSIONS

When the assembly convenes on Saturday afternoon, June 26, it will be in plenary session in the Richmond Convention Center Hall A. In plenary sessions, commissioners and advisory delegates have assigned seating by presbytery. The docket for Saturday afternoon will include an orientation, and a report from the Moderator. On Saturday evening the assembly will elect its moderator.

After the committees complete their work on Tuesday afternoon, the assembly will return to meeting in plenary on Wednesday. From then on, it will spend most of its time considering and acting on the recommendations on the business from each assembly committee.

WHO ATTENDS THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY?

Approximately 3,000 participants will register in advance for the Assembly in Richmond, including:

COMMISSIONERS

Equal numbers of clergy and elders (272 each) elected by 173 presbyteries. These delegates have full rights and privileges. They may speak on the floor of the assembly, introduce motions, vote, and participate in the Assembly committees.

ADVISORY DELEGATES

Persons given the right to speak in Assembly meetings in order to present views that might not usually be represented among commissioners. They have “voice” (advisory privileges) in meetings of the General Assembly, and “voice and vote” in meetings of the Assembly committees. There are four different types of advisory delegates.

YOUTH ADVISORY DELEGATES

Persons who are members of our PCUSA congregations, between the ages of 17 and 23. Each of the 173 presbyteries may elect one youth advisory delegate.

THEOLOGICAL STUDENT ADVISORY DELEGATES

20 students chosen from the ten PCUSA theological institutions

1 each from Union Seminary, New York, and the Evangelical Seminary, Puerto Rico, which have a covenant relationship to the PCUSA

1 each from Fuller and Gordon Conwell Seminaries, which are members of the Committee on Theological Education

1 from Yale University Divinity School in New Haven, Conn. (a rotation system among several schools)

MISSIONARY ADVISORY DELEGATES

Eight persons who are missionaries or fraternal workers from countries where our church is engaged in mission work.

ECUMENICAL ADVISORY DELEGATES

15 persons appointed by the highest ecclesiastical authority of their churches to represent them at General Assembly. They are received by the General Assembly upon recommendation of the General Assembly Council.

CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

Persons who represent entities that report to the General Assembly, such as the General Assembly Council and its program divisions, the Office of the General Assembly, and several permanent and special committees. Former assembly moderators, executives of the 16 synods, and the presidents of the 10 PCUSA seminaries are also corresponding members. They may speak on matters related to the work of the body they represent, but they may not vote.

ASSEMBLY ASSISTANTS

The Stated Clerk invites about fifty Presbyterians to come to the assembly and carry out various functions on a volunteer basis. They assist with Assembly operations, serve on the Communication Center staff, help committees run smoothly, and carry out a variety of other tasks. Four of the assembly assistants are assigned to assist YADs and one is assigned to assist TSADs.

STAFF and ELECTED MEMBERS

People who are employed by assembly agencies, and ministers, elders, and others who are elected to the assembly level councils and committees. They work as support staff and resource people at the Assembly.

Most of the synods and presbyteries are represented at the assembly by one or more of their staff (in addition to their elected commissioners); some of the executives and stated clerks of these “middle governing bodies” also assist the Office of the General Assembly in such roles as parliamentary assistants.

GUESTS / OBSERVERS

Several hundred Presbyterians with no official function in the workings of the General Assembly will come to observe the church in legislative and worshipful action. Ordinarily, these persons may speak only in open hearings of the Assembly committees.

WHAT IS AN ADVISORY DELEGATE?

Advisory delegates advise commissioners in a variety of ways regarding a particular decision or action. The General Assembly recognizes that by its very nature, there are categories of participants who would otherwise be under-represented, but who have valuable contributions to make to assembly deliberations. Since approximately 1970, Youth Advisory Delegates and Theological Student Advisory Delegates have been invited to advise the commissioners from their particular viewpoints, both in committees (with vote also), and by voice in plenary sessions.

WHAT IS THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF ADVISORY DELEGATES?

The basic role and function of an advisory delegate is to participate fully in the General Assembly by making the Assembly aware of issues and ideas they might not otherwise come to know. In order to accomplish this, you should be prepared to:

- Be a full participant in the Assembly committee on which you serve. Study your papers, ask questions, share your concerns and opinions, listen to others, and vote. Get to know the commissioners - eat with them, ask them questions, and make suggestions.

- Actively participate in the deliberations of the plenary sessions by claiming your right to speak in debate. Remember, you represent only YOUR OWN view rather than a group consensus. Exercise this right prudently, as to frequency and viewpoint.
- Express your convictions on issues in the plenary sessions of the General Assembly through an informal poll.
- Participate in other assembly activities such as services of worship, special events and presentations, and other assembly functions.

You were chosen as an Advisory Delegate because your presbytery and/or theological institution consider you to be an articulate spokesperson. General Assembly is a unique and special opportunity for you. Make the best of your time at the assembly. Responsible use of your time and energy is expected. All members of the General Assembly (which includes you) are entitled to complete information on all matters. If you don't understand what's going on, ASK!

HOW CAN I MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

There are several ways that you can be most effectively heard at General Assembly:

- **BE PREPARED.** Attend your presbytery/seminary training meeting. Meet the commissioners from your presbytery. View the Office of the General Assembly training video. Read through the *Manual of the General Assembly*, and organize your reports. Things happen so fast that if you spend too much time looking for a paper, discussion may be closed by the time you find it.
- Organize and read through the papers sent to you from the Office of the General Assembly. The reports are numbered, and should be arranged in your notebook in numerical order, using the tabs that are provided.
- More papers and reports will be given to you when you arrive. Take some time the first evening to skim through them. Each day at the assembly, you will receive additional papers. Taking time each day to review, skim, and organize your papers will help you be prepared.
- **IN COMMITTEES.** The place where advisory delegates have been most effective is in the Assembly committees. Critical decisions are made in these working groups and the potential impact of a single voice is much greater. Since you have both VOICE and VOTE, you can participate fully. This can be one of your most exciting experiences of the General Assembly.
- The committees will usually follow parliamentary procedure. Knowledge of parliamentary procedure will help you introduce, discuss, debate, and vote on motions in the committee and on the floor. (Refer to the publication *Parliamentary Procedure for Presbyterians* that you will receive in advance.) Don't be afraid to speak out in committees. For most commissioners, this is a first time experience, too. Your opinions are welcomed, encouraged, and needed.
- **ON THE FLOOR OF THE ASSEMBLY.** Advisory delegates can and do speak on the floor of the assembly. To speak on the floor:
 - Go to one of the designated advisory delegate microphones. The parliamentary assistant assigned to the microphone will alert the moderator to your presence.

- When recognized, speak to the moderator.
 - Identify yourself by name, as an advisory delegate, and tell the name of your presbytery/seminary.
 - State whether you are speaking for or against the motion or amendment or whether you have a question for clarification.
 - Have your thoughts prepared in a concise, clear manner. Speak to the motion or amendment. Speak loudly and clearly. Written notes are suggested.
 - End with a strong statement such as "I therefore urge the Assembly to vote for (or against) the motion (or amendment)."
- Remember that dozens of commissioners and advisory delegates wish to speak to each issue, and that there is very limited time for debate. Do not wear out your welcome at the microphone. It is noticed when a commissioner or advisory delegate comes to the microphone more than two or three times over the course of the assembly. Be aware that it can be counter-productive if advisory delegates seem to be speaking out of proportion to their numbers, and make sure that commissioners are getting their turns.
 - LISTEN carefully and prayerfully to the words of others as you make your decision.
 - DURING INFORMAL TIMES. Conversations on the floor while the Assembly is in session must be brief and discreet. Meal times provide opportunities for discussion under more relaxed conditions. In some cases, commissioners from your presbytery will meet together to share ideas and perceptions. This is an ideal opportunity to meet with them. There are many opportunities for advocating for your concerns, and for learning from your colleagues.
 - Play it smart. Try to use a question format. Ask commissioners what they think about particular issues. Then ask them why they think that way. Then ask, "What do you think about the possibility that . . ." and then describe your opinion. This is much more helpful than telling a person they're wrong. Effective and meaningful communication always requires time, energy, and hard work!

HOW CAN I BEST SHARE MY EXPERIENCE BACK HOME?

Many of you will be requested to interpret the actions of the General Assembly when you return to your home presbytery, church or seminary. For your presentation to be an effective and interesting one, plan **before** the Assembly to act **during** the Assembly to document information and events that would help people back home understand what the Assembly is about and some of the critical issues that were addressed. The following ideas have been suggested by advisory delegates to previous General Assemblies.

- Keep a diary of your perceptions of the Assembly each day. This will be helpful as you recollect your experiences and your impressions.
- Bring a camera. Take photos as if you were trying to explain to someone what the meeting was all about.
- Collect issues of the *General Assembly News*, the official newspaper of the Assembly. The articles are succinct summaries of the actions of the Assembly and will be helpful in your interpretation of the facts.

- Spend some time in the exhibit area. This is an extraordinary collection of information about the various agencies, offices, and programs of the denomination. Much of the information is free and includes buttons, stickers, and pamphlets!
- Finally, be BOLD and ASSERTIVE in meeting people. There are leaders of Christ's church from around the country and around the world here. Take the time to meet other advisory delegates and talk with them about issues and concerns. What a great opportunity!

WHAT ELSE IS EXPECTED OF ME?

At the 201st (1989) General Assembly, several commissioners were upset by the behavior of some of the youth advisory delegates regarding the use of alcohol. The Assembly concurred with the sentiments expressed by the commissioners and adopted the following resolution:

"That the Youth Advisory Delegate Manual be revised to include a word of caution about the use of drugs and alcohol while in attendance at General Assembly and at any related event occurring during its meeting. This revision should also include the legal drinking age of the state hosting the meeting of the General Assembly."

The legal drinking age in the state of Virginia is 21 years-old.

All advisory delegates are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is reflective of their faith in Jesus Christ, and consistent with the honor and responsibility of being elected by their theological schools and presbyteries.

ANYTHING ELSE?

You are about to embark on an extraordinary experience. You are about to see the church at work for its two and a-half million members. You are invited to PARTICIPATE fully; to capture the moments of frustration and satisfaction.

The General Assembly is, in many respects, a political gathering where people with various views and agendas work to get their ideas enacted. Advocacy groups may especially target Advisory Delegates with lobbying pressures, often hiding their agendas by calling their resources “educational and informative” materials rather than ones that try to persuade you to a particular point of view. Presbyterian value an open exchange of ideas and dialogue and there is no way to prevent advocacy groups from presenting you with their materials or talking to you in an attempt to persuade you to their point of view. Just know that this may happen, and you are encouraged to keep it in perspective as you discern God’s guidance to make your decisions.

Keep this manual handy and get to know those people who will be advising you. They, along with the commissioners and resource people from your presbytery and synod, can form a dynamic support team for you. Other sources of assistance include the Office of the General Assembly, Committee on Local Arrangements, and the GA information booth.

Take special note of the worship services at the Assembly. These are not optional times but rather moments that the Assembly pauses to worship and praise God together.

Take time to pray that God will give you the energy to be attentive, to speak out, to listen. Pray that God will give you wisdom to make decisions, to take stands, to ask questions. Pray that God will move the people of the Assembly to be faithful to the call of the Gospel in word, work, and action.

If it hasn't sunk in by now, the key word is "organize." Keep your papers in order, pay attention, and follow instructions. You are one of more than two thousand people working at the General Assembly. Don't be frightened by that, but do be aware.

Thank you for sacrificing work, vacation, graduation ceremonies, and school days to be a part of the larger church. It is time to dive into this church, to wade through all the paper, and to discover the gifts the Holy Spirit has prepared for you. Enjoy!

WHAT DO ALL THESE ACRONYMS MEAN?

The following is a listing of some of the most common acronyms and programs with a brief definition or explanation of the term. By no means is this a complete list. As Presbyterians, we are famous for slinging our acronyms at each other. Don't be intimidated. If a reference is made which confuses you, ask for clarification.

ACC	Advisory Committee on the Constitution – Elected by the General Assembly, a group of people who prepare recommendations and advice on constitutional amendments. Work closely with the Stated Clerk.
APCE	Association of Presbyterian Church Educators – Professional organization for church educators.
BOP	Board of Pensions – Governing board of the Pension Plan for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Board members are elected by General Assembly.
BPC	Black Presbyterian Caucus – Coalition of predominantly African-American congregations. One of the four racial ethnic constituency groups in the church.
CE	Christian Education – All education that takes place in the church and outside the church that builds our faith in Jesus Christ.
CMD	Congregational Ministries Division – Program division of the General Assembly Council which includes Christian education, stewardship, and theology and worship program areas.
CovNet	Covenant Network - Special interest group which advocates a particular agenda set by their board and membership.
COHE	Committee on Higher Education – Related body reporting directly to the General Assembly. Elected by the General Assembly. Students and others involved in higher education. Set policy and programs for higher education for related institutions.
COGA	Committee on the Office of the General Assembly – Committee elected by the General Assembly to oversee the work of the Office of the General Assembly and to advise the Stated Clerk.
COLA	Committee on Local Arrangements – Committee of the host presbytery formed on site for each General Assembly. They work with the OGA to plan the Assembly meeting.
COM	Committee on Ministry – Committees formed in the presbytery responsible for relating to sessions and pastors around issues of ministry in congregations.
COR	Committee on Representation – Committees formed in presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly to ensure racial ethnic, gender, age, and persons with disabilities representation.
DCE	Director of Christian Education – Title for a person employed in a congregation to work with the education program.
EAD	Ecumenical Advisory Delegate.
GA	General Assembly – You are part of it!
GAC	General Assembly Council – Coordinating body of the mission programs of the General Assembly. Congregational, National, and Worldwide Divisions report to the council. Elder John Detterick serves as the executive director. Members are elected by the General Assembly.
GANC	General Assembly Nominating Committee – Appointed by the moderator, a group of sixteen people, one from each synod, to nominate persons to fill vacancies in General Assembly level committees, boards, and councils.
LA RAZA	Hispanic Presbyterian Caucus – Coalition of predominantly Hispanic congregations and leaders. One of the four racial ethnic constituency groups in the church.

MAD	Missionary Advisory Delegate
MLP	More Light Presbyterians - Special interest group which advocates a particular agenda set by their board and membership.
NACC	Native American Consulting Committee – Coalition of predominantly Native American congregations. One of the four racial ethnic constituency groups in the church.
NAPC	National Asian Presbyterian Council – Coalition of predominantly Asian-American congregations. One of the four racial ethnic constituency groups in the church.
NCC / NCCC	National Council of Churches of Christ (U.S.A.) – National ecumenical council of churches.
NISBCO	National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors Agency based in Washington, D.C. which advocates for the rights of conscientious objectors.
NMD	National Ministries Division – Program division of the General Assembly Council which includes evangelism, social justice, racial ethnic, women's, and churchwide partnership ministries.
OGA	Office of the General Assembly – Stated clerk's office. Plans General Assembly meetings. Provides Constitutional services and relates to ecumenical agencies.
OGHS	One Great Hour of Sharing – One of four special offerings. Funds hunger program and provides funds to combat famine and for natural disasters.
PC(USA)	Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
PFR	Presbyterians for Renewal – Special interest group which advocates a particular agenda set by their board and membership.
PHEWA	Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association – Related body to the General Assembly Council. Composed of several groups carrying out the policy decisions of the General Assembly related to health, education, and welfare.
PILP	Presbyterian Investment and Loan Corporation - one of the four related corporations affiliate with the PCUSA.
PJC	Permanent Judicial Commission – Acts under the Rule of Discipline on disciplinary and remedial cases brought before it by appeal and conducts trials. PJs exist in each presbytery, synod and at the General Assembly.
PLGC	Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns – Special interest group which advocates for a particular agenda set by their board and membership.
PLC	Presbyterian Lay Committee – Special interest group which advocates a particular agenda set by their board and membership.
PL	Presbyterian Layman – Publication of the Presbyterian Lay Committee.
PM	Presbyterian Men – Denominational men's organization.
PPC	Presbyterian Publishing Corporation – Independent publishing corporation for Westminster/John Knox Press, Geneva Press, ecumenical church school curriculum, and other Christian education resources.
PPL	Presbyterians Pro-Life – Special interest group lobbying the General Assembly to change its stance on abortion and reproductive rights.
PW	Presbyterian Women – Denominational women's organization.
RGAs	Reports to the General Assembly – the reports and recommendations from the various entities that you are receiving in advance, and that you will deliberate and act on during the assembly
SDOP	Self-Development of People – General Assembly Council program which provides grants to individuals and groups both domestically and internationally to help persons out of poverty.
SR	Standing Rules – Rules of the General Assembly meeting.
TAMFS	That All May Freely Serve - Special interest group which advocates a particular agenda set by their board and membership.
TSAD	Theological Student Advisory Delegate – See SR A.2.d.

UMHE	United Ministries of Higher Education – An ecumenical coalition of churches who support Protestant campus ministries.
VIM	Volunteer in Mission – An individual who serves in the USA or internationally as mission volunteer. There are a number of categories of volunteers.
VISM	Volunteers in Shared Ministry – The program designed to attract more volunteers to give their time in mission.
WARC	World Alliance of Reformed Churches – Ecumenical international body of Reformed denominations. PC(USA) is an important partner. Headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland.
WCC	World Council of Churches – Ecumenical international body of churches including protestant, orthodox, and others. Largest single council of Christians in the world. Headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland.
WMD	Worldwide Ministries Division – Program division of the General Assembly Council. Includes all global mission and programming.
WS	Witherspoon Society - Special interest group which advocates a particular agenda set by their board and membership.
YAD	Youth Advisory Delegate. See SR A.2.c.