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Some of the latest news in the PC (USA) is the PUP (Peace, Unity and Purity) Report that was written by a task force and received by the 2006 General Assembly (GA). Its reception by the GA means that presbyteries across the nation are called to read and interpret this.

The Shenango Presbytery appointed a committee of five (CF) of its own to review the report. The committee met and held an open forum for all Presbyterians and provided a one page summary and response to send to GA from our Presbytery. The (CF) determined that the PUP report did not change the national standards for ordination. The CF's response at this time is *to remind the national church of the ordination standards and to continue to uphold all of them including the obvious standards dealing with moral chastity.*

Included in the PUP report is mention of the word "scruple". A scruple is a moral or ethical consideration that may restrain action or behavior. A scruple is an old word most likely associated today with a Danielle Steel novel rather than Presbyterian polity. Nevertheless, the word scruple in the language of the church refers to a conviction that one, most likely an ordinand has that may deter or prevent him from being ordained to office in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Now, the PUP report maintained the standards with regards to moral chastity and other controversial issues contained in G-6.0107b. But within the recommended maintenance of the standard, the PUP report noted the considerations of essential or non-essential scruples with regards to said standards. *For what the PUP report does suggest or remind its readers is that while all Presbyterians are subject to the national standards for ordination, an ordinand may have a "scruple" with regards to any one of those standards and may state said scruple aloud. Upon revealing said scruple, then the local governing body for ordination (i.e. the Presbytery) may determine that the scruple is either a required or a non-essential standard for ordination and then recommend ordination or not for the candidate accordingly.*

Here is an example of how the process works under the PUP report. Suppose a candidate had a "scruple" with the doctrine of predestination. This candidate might reveal this during an examination of theology in the course of his meeting with the Committee on Preparation or during an examination on the floor of Presbytery. At that time, the Presbytery would determine through its discussion and subsequent voting for or against that candidate if indeed that scruple was a deemed to be required standard for the candidate in that Presbytery. As always, the candidate may appeal the presbytery's ruling and then the judicial process of the PC (USA) begins. The PUP report indicates that this procedure is one that may be executed with decency and order with regards to the historic principles of local autonomy and the ongoing debate on ordination standards. Further, the PUP committee members believe that this procedure will maintain the unity of the church even as it is faithful to its historical principles.

Of note for Shenango Presbytery is that our CF will follow the continuing national debate and report any judicial cases to determine if indeed the national church intends to undermine adherence to the standards as set out in G-6.0107b. In which case, our Presbytery through a report and recommendation from the CF may adopt a harder line with the national church than the statement they have recommended to date.