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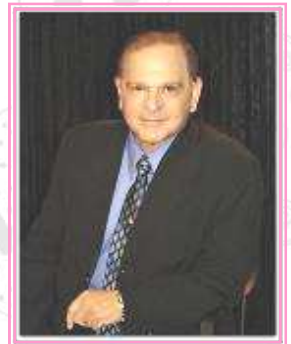
SEQUENCE OF EVENTS SURROUNDING THE RESURRECTION

By Dr. Henry Harbuck, PCAI Int'l General Overseer

Although few Bibles attempt to harmonize the sequence of events surrounding the resurrection, the following resource taken from my New Millennium Commentary on Matthew will help:

1. On the day after the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene was the first woman to visit the grave site. When she noticed the boulder had been rolled away, she quickly went to tell Peter and John (John 20:1-2).
2. The second group of women arrived immediately after Mary Magdalene had left the site. To their amazement, there had been an earthquake (28:2) and they saw an “angel of the Lord” who had rolled the boulder away from the sepulcher’s entrance and was sitting on it (Matt. 8:2). Though they were told to “inform Peter and the other disciples,” they were afraid. So they kept the miracle to themselves and told no one (Mark 16:7-8). (a.) The response of the guards: At the sight of the angel, who probably had a “fiery appearance,” the guards began to shake and tremble uncontrollably with fear recognizing that “God’s Presence” was in their midst (see Mt. 28:3-4); and
3. The third group of women arrived. These women went inside the tomb after they heard what the angel said. The angel told them to carry the news to the disciples, and they quickly left the site of the “empty tomb” afraid, but also filled with joy, and ran to find and tell the disciples what they had seen (28:8-9; Luke 24:1-8). And as they were on their way, Jesus met them and said: “Shalom—peace be to you—keep on rejoicing!” They were overwhelmed with joy; but at the same time, they were awestruck (fearful). They

tried to grab hold of Jesus’ feet as they prostrated themselves on the ground in worship and adoration (28:9). This group eventually reported the resurrection to the disciples, probably with Mary Magdalene being the spokesperson.



Not much has changed in more than 2000 years. Believers continue to await the return of the One who was raised up [alive] from the “empty tomb” while others have grown weary, and turned away as skeptics. But we who believe are reminded of what happened when the disciples were assembled together early in the morning on the second week after the resurrection. Jesus suddenly appeared to them and said to Thomas: “Thomas, come and put your fingers on my hands [and feel My wounds] and put your hand in My side.” After this occurrence, Thomas exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!” The One raised up from the dead was not a mere man, but the God-Man—the Savior of the world! ♥

Revelation 1:5-6 (NLT)

“And from Jesus Christ. He is the faithful witness to these things, the first to rise from the dead, and the ruler of all the kings of the world. All glory to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us. He has made us a Kingdom of priests for God his Father. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.”

Voting at a Church/Ministry Business Meeting

By Sarah E. Merkle, Attorney

Whether you're casting a vote, taking a vote, or calculating a vote at a church business meeting, it is valuable for both members and leaders to understand the voting process and feel confident about how the result of a vote is determined.

To equip you with the skills needed to take and count a valid vote, this article will explain the four primary voting methods and define three important terms.

There are four primary methods for taking a vote: general consent, voice, raised hand or standing, and ballot. No one voting method is inherently better than another although some tend to work better than others in certain circumstances.

First, it is important to understand that no vote *must* be counted or be secret unless a group has decided that a count or a secret ballot should be used for a specific vote or category of votes.

For example, a church's bylaws may include a provision that requires all elections to be conducted by ballot. If so, all election votes will necessarily be counted and secret, even if only one person is running.

Or, a church may decide at a business meeting that it wants (or needs) a record of the number of votes in favor of or opposed to a specific motion rather than simply a record of whether the motion passed or failed.

In that case, the members would need to take a vote directing that the vote on the substantive motion be counted. Unless the members give that type of directive, votes do not need to be counted, even if they are taking a vote by raised hand or by standing. The rationale here is that counting votes takes time, and a group's time shouldn't be used to count votes

unless the group has agreed to it.

Here, then, are the primary methods for voting.

Voting Method #1: General or unanimous consent vote

A general consent or unanimous consent vote is a vote used for decision-making on noncontroversial matters. The goal of taking a vote by unanimous consent is efficiency. This type of vote skips the discussion portion of the motions process and eliminates the need for the chairperson to say, "All those in favor... All those opposed." Instead, the chairperson can simply ask if there are any objections to the action proposed by the motion.

For example, if the proposed action is approval of the meeting agenda, the chairperson would ask, "Are there any objections to approving the meeting agenda as distributed?"

After pausing briefly (three to five seconds) to listen for any objections, the chairperson would then say, "Hearing none, the agenda is approved as distributed," and would move to the next item of business. If there is an objection, the chairperson would say, "There is an objection," and would move to the discussion portion of the motions process [as described here](#).

Voting Method #2: Voice vote

A voice vote asks members to state whether they are in favor of or opposed to a motion by saying "aye" or "no." When taking this type of vote, the chairperson determines the winner by listening to which side is louder.

Sometimes, there is need for clarification of the results of this type of vote.

- If the result is not clear to the chairperson, he or she can retake the vote by asking the members to raise their hands or stand (the next voting method listed in this article). If necessary, the chairperson can take a count of the vote.
- If the result is clear to the chairperson but not to one or more of the members, a member can call out, "Division," which is the parliamentary procedure term for requesting that the chairperson retake the vote by another method that more clearly indicates the result.

This scenario is not uncommon, especially in a large group, because an individual may be sitting in a section of the room in which the side (ayes or noes) that is louder differs from the side that is louder overall. As discussed above, calling out "Division" does not require a counted vote—a raised hand or standing vote can clarify the result.

Voting Method #3: Raised hand or standing vote

A raised hand or standing vote is a good way to take a vote if the results are too close to call through a voice vote, or if a counted vote is needed or required. This is also a helpful method for taking votes when individuals with voting privileges are seated together with individuals who do not have voting privileges.

For example, some churches allow visitors or regular attenders to stay for business meetings or may allow families to attend business meetings even if not all of them are members. Taking a voice vote in this type of setting may not allow for confidence in the result, especially if the result is close. A raised hand or standing vote can provide a good alternative.

A raised hand or standing vote

can be easily counted by having the members count off, starting at the front of the room and working row by row to the back. The chairperson or a [teller](#) (a designated vote counter) can cue the first person in the front row to say "1" and lower their hand or sit down, and then cue the person next to them to say "2" and lower their hand or sit down—working all the way through the room until all votes have been counted.

This may sound time consuming, but it doesn't take much, if any, more time than having a teller go row by row and count all of the votes. The advantage is that the members are involved in the counting and are less inclined to question whether the votes have been accurately tabulated.

Voting Method #4: Ballot vote

A ballot vote is a secret vote by default unless the bylaws require that a ballot be signed. Ballots are generally used for elections and votes on very consequential matters (e.g., a vote to consider a large expense, dissolve a church, merge with another church, or ask an individual to be a pastor, and so on).

When ballot votes are counted, at least two tellers should work together to count them. In the case of an election, each candidate may appoint one representative in addition to the tellers to oversee the counting.

After the ballots are counted, the tellers should prepare a report that includes the total number of ballots cast, the number of votes necessary for election or for adoption of a motion, and the number of votes received by each candidate or votes in favor and opposed to a motion. The tellers should give the report to

Continued on page 4

Taking Minutes at a Church/Ministry Business Meeting

By Sarah E. Merkle, Attorney

What are business meeting minutes and why do they matter?

Business meeting minutes are the official record of a group's action. Taking minutes is important for at least two reasons.

First, the law expects that organizations will keep an official record of the proceedings of a group's members, committees, and governing bodies.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires tax-exempt organizations that file a Form 990 to verify that, as an organization, they have documented their actions. Even though the IRS does not require churches to file a Form 990, state nonprofit laws often include a requirement that nonprofit organizations located in that state keep an official record of actions taken.

Second, and arguably more important on a practical level, properly taken minutes eliminate confusion and disagreement about what occurred at a meeting.

Ask most church members what occurred at a business meeting and the odds are low that they will remember the actions taken with any precision. They may remember topics discussed and comments made, especially if there was any controversy, but their memory of the wording of motions made and adopted will not be reliable. Carefully taken minutes provide clarity when a member cannot remember what happened.

Who should take business meeting minutes?

In general, it is important to have a designated minutes-taker. Most commonly, this responsibility falls to the individual elected or appointed to the office of secretary, and this person may be different

than the individual employed as the church secretary.

The minutes-taker has two important duties:

- 1) to ensure the minutes actually get taken, and
- 2) to ensure that the minutes are stored in a designated place that's easily accessed by those who need them now and in the future.

So, if achieving these goals means that someone other than the elected or appointed secretary takes the minutes, that is completely allowable. It is better to go this route than to have no minutes taken at all or to be unable to find them later.

What should business meeting minutes include?

Very simply, business meeting minutes should include a record of what was done, not what was said. In other words, minutes should include a record of the actions taken on various items of business, but they need not (and should not) include a record of which individuals discussed those items of business or what those individuals said.

Even with the best of intentions, any attempt to summarize the comments made tends to result in inaccuracies or biased presentation. If there's a reason for the church to have a record of the discussion on various items, the best course of action is to hire a court reporter so that you have a reliable transcript.

- If you are the person charged with taking minutes, the first part of the record should include a paragraph containing the following information:
- the type of meeting (e.g., regular, special, continued);
- the name of the group that is meeting;

- the date, time, and place of the meeting;
- an acknowledgement that the person in charge of the group (e.g., chairman, president, pastor) and the secretary were present; and an acknowledgement that a quorum was present, and in a smaller group (a dozen or fewer), a list of the members who were present.

Here's an example:

A regular meeting of the Deacon Board of the One and Only Church was held on January 15, 2022, at 7 p.m. at the church building. Chairman Smith and Secretary Brown were present. A quorum was present.

After the opening paragraph, the minutes should follow the same order as the meeting agenda and should contain a separate paragraph for each item on the agenda.

- If the agenda item is a report, the minutes can state under the report heading that a certain individual presented a report.
- If the agenda item results in a main motion or several, the minutes should state the final wording of the motion as stated just before the vote, and then note whether the motion was adopted, defeated, or otherwise disposed of (e.g., referred to a committee or tabled).
- If the motion was amended before it was put to a vote, the minutes can say as much, but they only need to state the final wording of the motion and do not need to include all the iterations that occurred from the time the motion was initially proposed until the vote. It is generally wise to include the name of the individual who made the motion in the minutes, but there's no

need to include the name of the person who seconded it.

Here's an example of an action recorded in meeting minutes:

After presenting a report on the status of the church property, Deacon Dave, Chairman of the Building Committee, moved on behalf of the Building Committee that the church request proposals from three architecture firms for the design of a new addition to the sanctuary. The motion was adopted as amended.

How are business meeting minutes approved or corrected?

Minutes become the official record of a group's actions when that group approves them. Typically, minutes are presented for approval at the next regular meeting after they were taken, and they are circulated to the group in a reasonable amount of time before the meeting so that the members can review them ahead of the meeting if they choose to do so.

At the meeting where the minutes are presented for approval, there's generally no need to read them aloud to the group unless someone specifically requests that they be read. Instead, the chairperson should simply ask, "Are there any corrections to the minutes from the January 15, 2022, meeting as distributed?" If there is no response after a brief pause (three to five seconds), the chairperson should say, "Hearing no corrections, the minutes are approved as distributed."

If there's a correction to fix the minutes so that they accurately reflect what occurred during the previous meeting, the chairperson should ask if there

Continued on page 4

Voting at a Church/Ministry Business.... continued from page 2

the chairperson for announcement of the results and give the ballots to the secretary or a designated person to keep until the time for ordering a recount has passed.

What do the terms *majority*, *two-thirds*, and *plurality* mean?

Various terms are commonly used within bylaws to describe the number of votes needed for a motion to be adopted or for an individual to be elected. It's important to know the requirements for each vote taken and how to calculate results for that type of vote.

Majority vote

In voting contexts, the term *majority* is defined as more than half. If a church's governing documents or rules use the term *majority* without qualification, the baseline or denominator from which a majority is calculated is the number of votes cast. For example, if 120 individuals are present, but only 100 individuals cast a vote, at least 51 votes would be required for the adoption of the proposal.

Qualifiers can be added to the term *majority*, however, to change the calculation. For example, to adopt any proposal or to adopt proposals on certain topics, governing documents can require a majority of those present or a majority of the entire membership.

Two-thirds vote

In voting contexts, the term *two-thirds* generally means at least two-thirds of the individuals present and voting. But as with the term *majority*, two-thirds can be qualified to mean at least two-thirds of the individuals present or at least two-thirds of the entire membership.

It is also important to understand that two-thirds is not necessarily the same as

66.6 percent or 67 percent. The best way to calculate two-thirds is to multiply the total number of individuals of which two-thirds is needed times 2, then divide that number by 3, and then round the result to the nearest whole number.

Plurality

The term *plurality* means more votes than any other option but not enough votes to constitute a majority. Here's an example of a plurality vote calculation: Three candidates are running for office. There are 100 members present and voting. Candidate #1 receives 40 votes; candidate #2 receives 41 votes; candidate #3 receives 19 votes. If bylaws specify that the winning candidate must receive a *plurality* of the votes, candidate #2, in this case, would be the winner. □

NEW MILEAGE RATE 2023 FROM IRS

Many people use their vehicles extensively for tax-deduction purposes, and it is important to keep good records and to be aware of the most up-to-date guidance from the IRS when this occurs.

Just recently, the IRS announced the 2023 annual update for mileage rates used for determining deductible costs.

- ⇒ Business use of vehicle for 2023: This rate is now 65.5 cents per mile.
- ⇒ Medical use of vehicle: This rate is now 22 cents per mile.
- ⇒ Driving in service to charitable organizations: This rate is unchanged at 14 cents per mile.

Taking Minutes... continued from page 3

is any objection to that correction. If not, the chairperson should state that the correction will be incorporated into the circulated draft.

As long as any requested correction is truly that—meaning, it is an adjustment that fixes the minutes so that they are an accurate reflection of what occurred during the meeting—then, objections to that correction should be rare. But if there is disagreement, the group should take a vote on the proper wording.

Note. It is important to remember that making a correction to the minutes is not a way to change what occurred during the meeting where the minutes were taken. What happened at the meeting is in the past, and changing the action taken there can happen only if the group takes a vote to that effect. Approving the minutes is simply a way to confirm that the record of what happened is accurate. □



*-from the PCAI
Board & Staff*



WHO WE ARE?

“We are (PCAI) PARAGON CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL, INC. - PCAI is officially and legally recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) and holds a "Group Status" in which it has been given the authority by the IRS to issue the 501(c)(3) to qualified religious organizations referred to as "subordinates." Each ministry (subordinate) is autonomous and sovereign operated by its' own governing board.”

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