

# Presbyterians approve ban on gay ordination

Associated Press

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has voted to make its ban on the ordination of homosexuals part of church law.

The ban got the majority it needed yesterday with approvals from regional bodies in Miami and Charlotte, N.C. The Book of Order — the church's constitution — will be changed to require chastity of single ministers.

"It says to the country that Presbyterians are committed to reaffirming their biblical center for faith and practice," said the Rev. Jack Haberer, of The Presbyterian Coalition, a group favoring the amendment.

However, Scott Anderson, of Presbyterians for Gay and Lesbian Concerns, said the change will force more gay and lesbian Presbyterians out of the 2.7-million-member church. "It's one more club that has been used to beat up gay and lesbian people in the Presbyterian church," he said.

An announcement of the vote is not expected for a week or two as votes are sent to church headquarters in Louisville. But advocacy groups said the 172 districts so far have voted 88 in favor and 60 against.

The United Church of Christ is the only major Protestant denomination to permit the ordination of homosexuals.