



JUDICIAL STANDARDS COMMISSION  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

**FORMAL ADVISORY OPINION: 2013-01**

September 6, 2013

**QUESTION:**

May a judge solicit members of the judge's church to serve on a steering committee charged with oversight of a Habitat for Humanity house construction project? Service on the steering committee will include fund-raising activities.

**COMMISSION CONCLUSION:**

A judge may ask members of the judge's church to serve on a committee responsible for oversight and management of church activities, even if the committee's activities include fund-raising.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Commission reasoned that the phrase "actively assist such an organization in raising funds", found in Canons 4C and 5B(2) of the Code of Judicial Conduct, does not include the solicitation of committee service from within the membership of a religious organization of which the judge is also a member.

The Commission further reasoned the questioned activity does not "lend the prestige of the judge's office to advance the private interest of" the judge's church, as prohibited by Canon 2B of the Code, nor call into question the independence, integrity and impartiality of the judge or the judiciary as a whole, which a judge is required to promote by Canons 1 and 2A of the Code.

References:

North Carolina Code of Judicial Conduct  
Canon 1  
Canon 2A  
Canon 2B  
Canon 4C  
Canon 5B(2)