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Westminster Votes to Cut the Tie that Binds

Court Overwhelmingly Supports Withdrawal from PCA

Abingdon, Virginia (May 15-16, 2001)—By a vote of 48-13, Westminster Presbytery voted this evening to withdraw from the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), effective January 2002. The vote came during a two-hour called meeting which was convened after a recessed stated meeting of the court.

Key to the passage of the measure was a four-page report from a special committee of the Presbytery, which had been appointed at the April 21, 2001, stated meeting, in order to explore the ramifications of withdrawal from the PCA. At the April meeting, the court had voted, 35-17, to approve a substitute motion for the whole as a main motion, which would have withdrawn the Presbytery from the denomination effective December 31, 2001.

The complex set of recommendations which was approved calls upon all Sessions to consider whether or not to remain with Westminster Presbytery as it leaves the denomination, but does not require the Sessions to call congregational meetings in order to discuss the matter. Only those congregations which vote to remain with the continuing presbytery will be considered to have left the PCA; congregations which take no action will remain in the denomination.

Part of the package includes the notification of General Assembly of the intention to withdraw, and overtures the Assembly to erect a new presbytery, effective upon the withdrawal date of Westminster Presbytery, with the same boundaries as Westminster Presbytery. The date of withdrawal was set for the January 2002 stated meeting of the Presbytery.

The final tally, which came just after midnight, was overwhelming, but the victory was not automatic. The Rev. Larry Ball, who served as Stated Clerk of the Presbytery from 1976 to 1999, and others, attempted to stop the movement. But all such efforts proved to be ineffective, as pent-up emotions drove people from both sides of the theological spectrum to support the measure.

The Committee Report

The special committee report was presented by the Rev. Bill Leuzinger, pastor of the host church and chairman of the committee. Being Moderator of the Presbytery, he turned the gavel over to the Rev. Dr. Cortez Cooper, Moderator of the 1990 PCA General Assembly, in order to present the report.

As the presentation began, all commissioners were provided with copies of the report, which, by design, only committee members had seen prior to the presentation on the floor. Mr. Leuzinger slowly read the findings and then the recommendations of the committee.

He commented that he had been opposed to the attempt to divide the Presbytery, ostensibly along geographical lines but driven by ideology, which had been proposed at the April 21 meeting of Presbytery, in that that proposal was

ungodly, un-Biblical, and a terrible witness. "How did we get ourselves into this mess and what are we going to do? . . . Is it Constitutional, making decisions without consulting churches? Some churches are not ready to make such a decision. . . . I hate to see some of you brothers depart—I dearly love you. . . . How can we help these men depart in an honorable way", and not restrict other men with different points of view? "My congregation's not ready to handle this." He stated that, as a shepherd, he had to protect his flock.

Henry Johnson's Vision

After that, the Rev. Henry Johnson, Pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Tazewell, Virginia, and a member of the special committee, made an impassioned plea for voting for the proposal. Stating that the Presbytery was at a great

crossroads, he expressed his concern for the many generations of its children which are to come. He laid out what an ideal Westminster Presbytery would look like for him; what the Presbytery would believe; and what the vote would mean.

In Mr. Johnson's view, the Presbytery had been subject to endless reports, spending time on many matters, including raging debates. Meanwhile, congregations are under attack by the evil one and forces of unbelief. "We need to be giving them bullets to put in their 'Gospel Guns.'" His desire is that preaching points would be established throughout the region.

An ideal presbytery would be engaged in a wide array of mercy ministries, including orphanages, Christian counseling centers, hospitals, job rehab, homes for unwed mothers. He envisions outreach ministries, such as radio and TV stations. He also wants a presbytery to apply the Word to every institution of society. The Bible, rather than Robert's Rules of Order, would be the chief book. And the Sessions, a la the New Testament, would be the focal point of power. "If you like executive sessions, power brokers, then you will not like the Westminster Presbytery that I envision. . . . I am not ashamed of the Westminster Standards. I believe that it accurately contains fundamental truths, the Word of God, to be applied to families, individuals, church, and state."

Mr. Johnson said that the PCA has been compromised to a very large degree, afraid to speak out on the issues that are destroying our culture. He gave the doctrine of creation, and the roles of men and women, as examples. He also stated that psychology should not determine whether a man should be a church planter or missionary. "A man should live with an elder for awhile to see if he is qualified" to be ordained.

"On Christian education, you know where I stand, and that I have brought charges against no one. But I've pleaded with my fellow elders to obey the Lord Jesus Christ revealed in His Word, the Bible, and give your children a consistently Christian education based on the Bible and honoring to the Lord Jesus Christ."

Referring to the fact that some have asked him why he doesn't give an "altar call", he declared: "Every time I preach, I give God's altar call." It is to call people to the only altar that can save, viz., the cross of Jesus Christ.

With respect to apologetics, he eschewed appeals to the "light of nature." "But the thing we stand alone on is the Lord God."

Pastor Johnson stated that the church should not be afraid to face the tyrant's sword, nor afraid to say, "Thus saith the Lord." At General Assembly after General Assembly, there has been an unwillingness to take definitive positions on the issues of the day, such as women in combat. This is in contrast to the declaration of John the Baptist to King Herod that it is unlawful to take another man's wife.



Abingdon (Va.) Presbyterian Church,
where the historic vote was held

He stated that a minister had indicated to him that the PCA should remove the "odious Question 191" of the Westminster Larger Catechism. But the continuing Westminster Presbytery, Mr. Johnson said, would take its stand unashamedly upon the Word of God and its proclamation of victory, as enunciated in that question and answer of the Larger Catechism.

Unabashedly, he proclaimed his friendship with ministers such as the Rev. Joseph Morecraft, the Rev. John Otis, and the Rev. Chris Strevel (the first two of whom were at one time members of Westminster Presbytery). All of those gentlemen are currently in the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States (RPCUS); and Mr. Johnson expressed the desire that Westminster Presbytery would adopt the theological distinctives of that group. He also expressed the hope that all of the smaller Reformed denominations could someday come together and bring reformation. "I am afraid that the PCA will be left in the shade."

The heart of the controversy regarding the Presbytery leaving the PCA should not be viewed "as a way of getting rid of Henry Johnson."

"It's not because I hate you, but because I love you, and am tired of fighting you brothers. We've brought overtures asking you to look at the Word of God. We've received hatred, disdain. . . . You don't have to vote for Westminster Presbytery to leave to get rid of me. . . . My conscience is bound before God. I can no longer be part of a presbytery that doesn't look at the Word of God. So, I'm leaving. It may take a little while. . . . There is an integrity issue you must wrestle with after I'm gone. It's stated that Westminster Presbytery is an Old School presbytery. You men aren't Old School. You are part of a presbytery that's out of step with the PCA. . . .

"Many of you came to me, and said, 'Wait, don't go yet. We want to go with you. We think the PCA is in a terrible state.' I believe the cards are on the table. One year, five, ten down the road, as seeds of apostasy grow and are watered, the crisis becomes your crisis and your congregation's, then you decide if this is the kind of presbytery you want to come to." Like Jacob waking up and realizing that he had married Leah rather than Rachel, Mr. Johnson invited the other presbyters, when they wake up, to join the continuing Westminster Presbytery.

"I love you in the Lord. . . . Vote your conscience. . . . You know my love for the Standards of this church. . . . You are men I desire to labor with, . . . to lay a trophy at the feet of our Triune God. If you want to join me in the years to come, I welcome you, however you vote tonight. To those who are angry with me, I forgive you, even for your scathing words and calling me a sinner. For those recently come to this Presbytery, my heart aches for you, as you are caught up in this situation."

He issued a challenge to be "faithful regardless of cost," and a call for "renewed love" for the Lord, "seeing His elect saved and His enemies crushed." He called for strong covenant families to be fostered and multiplied. And he concluded with a vision of all nations coming "to beg us to teach them of His ways."

Mr. Leuzinger moved the report as a whole, with each of the points being considered as a whole rather than *serie atum*.

A Substitute Motion

The Rev. Larry Ball then took the opportunity to move a substitute motion, which would have recognized the right of churches and ministers to re-affiliate into a new presbytery. His proposal explicitly stated that the new group could assume the name of Westminster, and that it would have a proportionate amount of the liquid assets, based upon the number of churches in each

presbytery.

The long-time minister in the Presbytery said that he objected to the procedure proposed by the Committee. He stated that he agreed with ninety-five percent of what Mr. Johnson had said. However, the complicated procedure put churches in a position in which they would be forced to make a choice.

Mr. Ball indicated that someday he may decide to join with the group that leaves, but that that day had not yet come.

He emphasized that his substitute would not only allow the new presbytery to take the Westminster name, but also that it would entail the continuing PCA presbytery assuming a new name: his suggestion was Appalachia Presbytery. The new Westminster Presbytery would even be granted all of the archival material and records, if the substitute passed.

Ruling Elder Neal Smith opposed the substitute, as he noted that Westminster Presbytery had reserved to itself the right to withdraw—similar to the reserving of the right to withdraw from the federal union which New York, Rhode Island, and Virginia had assumed when they ratified the U. S. Constitution. It's important that the Presbytery have the right to pull out as a body.

The Rev. Richard Hicks supported the substitute. He stated that the most expedient method would be to do what the PCA Constitution explicitly provides, *viz.*, for individual churches to withdraw.

Concern for Integrity

The Rev. Brent Bradley opposed the substitute. He stated that the Committee had done a lot of work. The critical thing for him had to do with the documents in the archives, which declared what Westminster Presbytery was intending to be, and also reserving to itself the right to withdraw.

The Kingsport, Tennessee, pastor stated that there had been an effort over the past four or five years to pull Westminster

Presbytery into the "mainstream" of the PCA, where she never was. Both the Presbytery and the PCA have become more consistent in their presuppositions over the years, thus creating tension.

For Mr. Bradley, it was a matter of integrity. He was driven by the fact that he was in covenant with people who do not believe what he believes; as well as by the fact that he wanted to preserve Westminster Presbytery to be what she declared herself to be when founded, *viz.*, an Old School presbytery. He also expressed concern for men on the other side of the spectrum, who had problems of integrity from an opposite perspective, in that they found themselves, as "mainstream" PCA ministers, in a presbytery that is out of step with the rest of the denomination.

He concluded his speech by saying that there was the desire that the last act of the Presbytery would be one in which there could be agreement.

'A wedding destined for divorce'

Speaking in favor of the substitute was Mr. Conrad Friede, a ruling elder at Bristol's Eastern Heights Presbyterian Church. "I wish the good Lord would give me the oratory skills. I love you, Brent, you know that." (Mr. Bradley responded, "I love you.") Mr. Friede continued: "I believe in integrity. I believe the motion made in Draper's Valley and this report is a wedding destined for divorce. The whole idea is to get a group that can leave with a sense of integrity, and let others stay with a sense of integrity. In fact, it's almost a farce, because only two or three or four churches are ready to declare the PCA apostate and leave her. . . . You can't be a presbytery unaffiliated, because that's not Presbyterian. All that we've done is to cover up what was done in Draper's Valley in a more pleasing manner. . . . Henry Johnson stood up and was honest. . . . Anyone who wants to leave should do so in accord with the *BCO*."

Appealing to Dan Graham

The Rev. Jim Reedy, a church planter who is Associate Pastor at the Trinity Presbyterian Church of Tazewell, Virginia, next spoke; and he appealed to the famed evangelist who had founded Graham Bible College, Bristol, Tennessee, fifty years ago. "We keep saying we're out of step with the PCA. I think of Dan Graham years ago, when people would ask him why he was leaving the Southern Presbyterian Church. He said, No, the Southern Presbyterian Church has left me. That's the way I look at it. Westminster Presbytery is seeking to be faithful to what she intends to be. Some of you men took vows to uphold that. It is the integrity issue. It is the vow that we took. That's the issue that we're going to have to deal with tonight."

'Putting the cart before the horse'

The Rev. Frank J. Smith, Pastor of Coeburn (Va.) Presbyterian Church, favored the substitute motion, as he noted that the Committee recommendation was "putting the cart before the horse. Henry Johnson has already conceded the fact that Trinity—Tazewell has not gone on record that it will withdraw." Although it is likely that Westminster—Kingsport will leave the PCA, even that is not a given. A vote for the Committee report is premature, in that "we would be approving it without the guarantee that at least two congregations are ready to withdraw. I agree that Westminster Presbytery, contra CCB [Committee on Constitutional Business], has the right to withdraw," and that if it does, it would "take the whole shootin' match with it." Dr. Smith objected to the statement in the Committee report that the churches and ministers remaining in the PCA would automatically constitute a new PCA presbytery. Rather, General Assembly action would be required for the erection of a new presbytery. He gave

Excerpts from the Motion Adopted by Westminster Presbytery

"To safeguard the integrity of the congregation's right of self-determination, All sessions in Westminster Presbytery are hereby asked to consider calling a congregational meeting . . . for the purpose of voting on whether to leave the PCA and stay with Westminster Presbytery as she leaves the PCA. . . . If they vote to leave the PCA they will declare either their intent to join in the continuation of Westminster Presbytery or go to some other denomination. This action is a plea for a peaceful solution to our gridlock. This information is to be distributed to the churches of presbytery by a letter from the presbytery's Stated Clerk including a copy of this proposal; calling sessions to examine these issues, consider calling a congregational meeting to vote on whether to leave the PCA with Westminster Presbytery and then to respond in writing to presbytery by its January 2002 stated meeting if said congregation has voted to leave the PCA with Westminster Presbytery. It is understood by all parties that only the congregations voting to leave the PCA and stay with Westminster Presbytery shall have ever left the PCA. Those congregations taking no action will be understood to still be in the PCA, in a presbytery yet to be named, with the same geographical boundaries as the present Westminster Presbytery."

"That Westminster Presbytery approve the disbursement of assets between the two presbyteries . . . on the basis of the percentage of churches in each presbytery as of the January 2002 stated meeting. The exception being the MNA funds (which are designated for the ETSU [East Tennessee State University] work) which shall remain in [the new] Presbytery."

"That Westminster Presbytery ask that her sessions discuss the controversies that have raged in our presbytery and GA. The sessions of each congregation shall either commit themselves as elders and a session to: 1) their present covenant obligation as part of the PCA which commits churches, sessions and elders to either support whole-heartedly the official positions, institutions, and programs of the PCA, OR do all within their power to change the official positions, institutions and programs of the PCA that they cannot whole heartedly support. OR 2) Call for a congregational meeting to vote to leave the PCA and continue to covenant together with the other congregations to continue together as Westminster Presbytery as she was originally constituted, to be an old school presbytery committed to the Westminster Standards in the plain sense of the meaning of the words OR to leave to join some other evangelical denomination."

"The following intention is set forth as the intent of some elders wishing to leave the PCA and continue Westminster Presbytery. This intention cannot bind the presbytery (for she alone can make her own self-determination) and will only become the rule when approved by Westminster Presbytery Unaffiliated. But it is the intention of these elders to propose to Westminster Presbytery Unaffiliated to continue Westminster Presbytery in the following terms: Westminster Presbytery will declare herself on the date of the January 2002 stated meeting being no longer affiliated with the PCA, to be Westminster Presbytery Unaffiliated, that she will continue the position stated in Westminster's original founding document to be an Old School Presbytery. She will remain unaffiliated with any other denomination for at least three years."

the illustration of a PCA church withdrawing from the denomination, with a remnant desiring to remain in the PCA. In such an instance, the action of presbytery would be required in order to constitute a new PCA congregation. "If we want to stay in the PCA, we can't simply turn up at General Assembly 2002 and say, Please recognize us. We'd have to have another presbytery take us in."

The Coeburn pastor also noted that, contrary to what was indicated in the Committee report, "We did not authorize a Constitutional inquiry" to the CCB. "That's OK—but under RAO Chapter 7, that advice is for the [General Assembly] Stated Clerk alone." Furthermore, on the substance of the matter, "The Committee [on Constitutional Business] report is seriously flawed."

He continued: "It is absolutely unwise to withdraw the Presbytery for the sake of two churches alone. We can accommodate them," giving them minutes, access to the records, and even a proportionate share of the liquid assets, all in the bonds of love. "But to withdraw Presbytery for the sake of one-tenth of the churches does not make sense."

A Plea for Church Unity

The Rev. Trevor Downie, who was just received in January from the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.), made an eloquent plea for the unity of the church, as he opposed both the substitute motion and the committee recommendation. Citing the writings of John Calvin, various Puritans, John Murray, and Morton H. Smith, Mr. Downie, who pastors the unaffiliated Bellemont Presbyterian Church in Bristol, Tennessee, proclaimed his view that to split the Presbytery or to depart in the present circumstances would be a sin against Jesus Christ. "Jacob and Leah did not separate. He had six children by Leah, including Judah, an ancestor of Jesus Christ. Sometimes separation becomes a duty. [However,] you have to be very cautious not to sin against Jesus Christ, not to sin against His body."

In Mr. Downie's view, those pressing for separation have an "unduly perfectionist view of the church," which is "not to be expected when comprised of sinners—even those who have been saved by grace."

Many of the Reformers and Puritans were forced out of the church, rather than leaving it voluntarily.

The lack of unity and solidarity is "dishonoring to Christ . . . and prejudicial to evangelistic outreach to the world. Having a presbytery that's outside [the PCA] and one that's inside is a bad witness to the outside world. By voting in favor of any one of these views is voting to rend asunder the body of Christ. I do not agree that the PCA does not retain two or three marks of the church. Everybody on both sides of the aisle are still brothers in Christ."

Potential for Damage

Mr. Ball stood up and objected to the fact that the Committee motion would still require Sessions to consider the matter. "Some ruling elders may even leave the church. I beg my brothers to consider the damage that it can do.

"I was there when Westminster Presbytery began. It was not quite as Reformed as you think it was. Documents, yes. Joe Morecraft wrote them up—whatever Joe Morecraft wrote up we agreed with. By the time we had begun in 1972 or 73, we had made great advances. Trevor is right—the world is watching. I encourage you, for the sake of local congregations and Sessions, do what the BCO gives us the right to do."

The substitute was defeated on a show of hands, 17-46.

The Gathering Momentum

After the failure of the substitute, the momentum for the main motion seemed to pick up steam. As the clock hands approached and passed midnight, weary commissioners, who had sat through five hours of meetings, seemingly resigned themselves to the inevitable. But the discussion was not quite over, as two perfecting motions were proposed and carried.

Mr. Joe Reynolds, whose substitute for the whole had cascaded into the proceedings of this evening, moved that the effective date for withdrawal be changed from September 15, 2001, to the January 2002 stated meeting of the Presbytery. This would, he believed, give more adequate time for the churches to consider their options. The change of date carried, 36-27.

Frank Smith moved to strike one of the recommendations, which stated that those ministers and churches in the area which wished to remain in the PCA would automatically constitute a new PCA presbytery. He moved instead that the Presbytery inform General Assembly of its intention to withdraw, and to overture the Assembly to erect a new presbytery with the same bounds as Westminster Presbytery. "If you're going to do it, you better do it right. If Westminster Presbytery withdraws, this will be a destitute part of the church. We'd be in the same position as Montana and Idaho. If we withdraw, there's no presbytery here."

The time finally came for the final vote. The question was called. On a show of hands, the court voted, 48-13, to break the ties that bind it to the denomination.

Last-Minute Gasps

But the opposition was still kicking. Mr. Ball stood to give notice of complaint. And in a dramatic move, Frank Smith stood and said, "Mr. Moderator, I rise to a point of order." He explained that according to Robert's Rules of Order, a motion which violates the governing documents of a body is null and void; and he referred to the fact that Presbytery's Manual explicitly identifies Westminster Presbytery as a part of the Presbyterian Church in America.

Mr. Leuzinger, who had re-assumed the chair, declined to rule the matter out of order. The chair was challenged, and the court, on a voice vote, sustained the chair.

A final attempt to forestall the enactment of the move to depart was made, in the form of asking that by a one-third vote, the court suspend the action just taken pending final adjudication of the matter. But only ten votes—less than half of the needed twenty-one—could be garnered.

A Poignant Close

It was time to adjourn, and Mr. Leuzinger asked Stated Clerk Steve Meyerhoff who was the minister who had been in the Presbytery the longest. The answer was the Rev. John Whitner, who had come into the Presbytery in its nascent days. Mr. Whitner stood and offered a simple prayer, as the court adjourned.

Evaluation

As in the April stated meeting, the motion to withdraw passed because presbyters from both sides of the theological spectrum joined forces to favor it. The more conservative brethren who supported it did so because many of them believe that the PCA is unreformable; and they want to continue Westminster Presbytery as she was founded to be, and also to provide a home for those who may wish to join later. Others of the more conservative presbyters finally voted for the proposal in the belief that the Committee

recommendation was not as objectionable as the original proposal embraced at the Presbytery meeting in April, and also because it would allow for peaceful re-alignment. Many of the less conservative brethren favored it because it was an opportunity to be rid of some of the "Truly Reformed" brethren, as well as to reconstitute a new presbytery in the area not committed to Old School principles.

For the moment, one or two churches, at most, appear ready to continue with Westminster Presbytery outside of the PCA. But to what extent the withdrawal from the denomination will spur other churches to join with the continuing Westminster Presbytery remains to be seen.

NEWS FLASH!!!

A meeting of Westminster Presbytery has been called for Tuesday, June 12, 2001. Among the items on the agenda will be a consideration of a complaint regarding the pending withdrawal from the PCA.

The Rev. Larry Ball's complaint alleges that the "action appears to be a split in the Church" and, in his view, a manifestation of "schism." The complaint also maintains that the action is un-Constitutional, in that it effectively dismisses churches from the Presbytery without their consent. Other possible irregularities are also alleged.

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Dallas, which is playing host to the 29th PCA General Assembly, offers a stunning view at night.

Covenant Seminary Releases Tapes

Recordings Suggest Woman May Have Preached

by Mark Rooze

Tape recordings of Covenant Seminary chapel services may lend credence to initial reports that a woman did in fact preach publicly to a gender-mixed audience at Covenant Seminary.

Dr. Diane Langberg addressed the seminarians on March 14 and 16, 2001, during the chapel hour at Covenant Seminary's Rayburn Chapel. Dr. Langberg is a practicing psychologist who has worked with trauma survivors and clergy for 28 years, a nationally-recognized author and frequent speaker to pastors and pastors' wives, as well as director of Diane Langberg, Ph.D. & Associates.

Dr. Langberg's visit was in conjunction with the "Family Nurture and Counseling Conference," part of the seminary's annual Harrington Counseling Lecture Series. In addition to the chapel appearances, she also spoke in two counseling classes on "Therapy with Survivors of Sexual Abuse" and "Lessons Learned from the Counselor's Chair," and spoke two evenings on "Faithfulness to Your Spouse" and "Church Leadership and the Misuse of Power." Besides these appearances, she spoke at two luncheons on "The Challenges and Opportunities for Pastors' Wives" and "Being Women in a Seminary of Mostly Men." Both luncheons were intended primarily for female audiences.

The chapel session on Wednesday,

March 14, was introduced by a Covenant Seminary official who stated that, consistent with the seminary's "world and life view, that all the world is to be redeemed and under the sovereignty of our Lord, ... our faculty occasionally chooses to intersperse with our worship times in chapel the contributions of those who can give us Biblical perspectives on various areas of life, including their own callings where they have personal expertise."

Dr. Langberg's message was entitled "Preparing Together for the Challenges of Ministry." The text of the message was 1 Timothy 4:16. She introduced her topic by saying that seminary training in doctrine is not enough; those in ministry must also take heed to themselves, lest they be seduced. She believed that those in ministry could be seduced in three ways: by the work of ministry itself luring them away from love and obedience to Christ; by forgetting that they are sheep and becoming prideful in their role as shepherds, and by allowing the work of ministry to crowd out personal worship of God. She concluded by observing that Christ Himself had endured all these temptations and had emerged victorious, and exhorted the seminarians to do the same.

A Covenant Seminary official closed the chapel service with a closing exhortation from 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, by leading the seminarians in singing "Day by Day,

and With Each Passing Moment," and, after a period of announcements, by pronouncing the benediction from Jude 24-25. The recording was halted for the singing, and then resumed.

The chapel session on Friday, March 16 also featured Dr. Langberg. The message was entitled "Profile of a Shepherd-Counselor," and was introduced by a Covenant Seminary official as a preview of her evening lecture on "Church Leadership and the Misuse of Power."

Dr. Langberg began her address with a minute of comment upon the evening lecture, followed by five minutes of personal testimony describing her lifelong development as a counselor.

The hortatory portion of her address consisted of two parts: a shorter section on unfit shepherds, and a lengthier section consisting of four lessons she had learned through the years from the Great Shepherd. It was illustrated with Scriptural allusions and many personal illustrations.

The text for the portion on unfit shepherds was Ezekiel 34, in which the shepherds feed themselves on their flocks. Dr. Langberg mentioned three ways in which this occurred. Illicit sexual relations was the most obvious example, but any perversion of the relationship between shepherd and sheep also qualified. A second way was to encourage others to feed on us rather than Christ; a third was to

misrepresent Christ, as the Pharisees did in the passages preceding John 10.

There followed four lessons Dr. Langberg said she had learned over the years. The first was humility, built upon Philippians 2:5-8. She exhorted her hearers go beyond what was comfortable and follow Christ in identifying with those to whom they would minister, and not to be consumed by building great reputations in the world, but to be faithful in small things. The second was restraint; according to Dr. Langberg, shepherding will occasionally call upon us to restrain our natural abilities and attitudes in order to identify with those in need. The third was service, for which the text was the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25. She gave a detailed exposition of each group to whom the sheep gave comfort. In serving his fellow sheep, the servant serves the Lord. The fourth was leadership, built upon John 10:3. Dr. Langberg exhorted her hearers to live their lives, like Christ, as examples to the flock.

Dr. Langberg closed her message with a strong exhortation to enter into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, inspired by the vision of heaven given in Revelation.

Her address was met with applause from seminarians.

A Covenant Seminary official led the congregation at the close by singing the 23rd Psalm. The recording was halted for the singing, and did not resume.

The Tape of the First Chapel Message

Following is a transcript of the first chapel message which Dr. Diane Langberg delivered at Covenant Theological Seminary. An audio version and a full transcript of both messages will be made available on the PINS website.—Ed.]

CTS Official: As we think about the Harrington Counseling Lecture Series and the Family Nurture time that brings us here together, I have what may seem to be an unlikely question for you, and it is: What does it mean to be Reformed? What does it mean to be Reformed? Now, when I ask that question, almost all of us in such a setting are going to think of certain Calvinistic doctrines of salvation or maybe some historical distinctions of the Reformation. But you know, a very famous and important line from Abraham Kuyper in the Stone Lectures, when he tried to say what it meant to be Reformed, he said it was this: "It is understanding that there is not one square inch of the universe where Jesus Christ does not say, 'This is Mine. Mine.'"

It's with such a world and life view, that all the world is to be redeemed and under the sovereignty of our Lord, that our faculty occasionally chooses to intersperse with our worship times in chapel the contributions of those who can give us Biblical perspectives on various areas of life, including their own callings where they have personal expertise. To that end, we have invited journalists and scientists and archaeologists, authors, educators, economists, and this day, a psychologist, to talk about the claims of Christ in their area of calling.

Today, it's our privilege to hear from Dr. Diane Langberg, whose expertise touches us in lots of ways as we think about preparations for ministry and for people in many areas of our world. She has spent 25 years working in the area of trauma survivors, those particularly who have experienced sexual abuse, but also

working with clergy family: families and clergy in the areas of their own struggles, often finding out that those who are helping and those who are hurting may be experiencing very similar things. She has written Counsel for Pastors' Wives, put out by Zondervan. Some of you are also aware in the counseling program of Counseling Survivors of Sexual Abuse, and On the Threshold of Hope: Opening the Door to Healing for Survivors of Sexual Abuse. My wife and I have heard Diane speak other times, and I will tell you that she knows deeply and well the areas of struggle for those who have been through abusive situations, but also very well the struggles of people who are in ministry—not just the pastors, but their spouses and their families as well. As God calls us to faithfulness, both in areas of ministry to our families, and as God calls us to faithfulness to help those people who are deeply hurting, I think Diane Langberg brings particular expertise this day to help us and to deal with these very deep and important issues. She's here this week for the Family Nurture Conference, the Harrington Counseling Lectures, to help us think about what it means to minister to God's people who may be, to the eyes of the world, having great expertise, and hidden to the eyes of the world, greatly hurting. I'm so pleased that we have with us today Dr. Diane Langberg.

Diane, would you come.

Dr. Langberg: Thank you, and it is a privilege to be here with you. You are here at Covenant Seminary to prepare for a ministry of some kind, and you don't need me to tell you that that preparation requires a great deal of hard work, and much study, pressure, and late night hours. To prepare for something means to get ready for it, to make yourself fit, to equip yourself; and so it should follow that when you leave this seminary, you should be ready to care for the people of God. And I expect that in many ways you will indeed be equipped. This is an excellent seminary, and

you sit under excellent teachers, and you will leave here grounded in the Word of God and full of much knowledge. And all of that is good, and right.

But I would like to suggest to you this morning that what you gain here is not enough.

Now, who would be audacious enough to suggest such a thing? A rather odd sort of individual, one who has never been to seminary and never been in the pastorate. I am a psychologist, certainly not a pastor, and not even really a seminary professor, though I have certainly taught seminary classes. But I have had, however, the great privilege of sitting with many pastors and Christian leaders for over two decades in my counseling office. They have come for many reasons, sometimes depressed and weary, burnt out, slandered, hurt. They have come as couples because of the terrific tensions between marriage and ministry. And many have come, sadly, because they have blown up their lives with affairs, internet pornography, extortion.

With few exceptions, they have all had seminary degrees. What happened to them?

In 1 Timothy 4:16, Paul says something that I think is very significant in his instructions to Timothy. He has already told him to devote himself to teaching and preaching. He has told him not to neglect the gift that is in him, and he urges diligence. And then he says this: "Take heed to yourself and to your doctrine."

Now, the word "heed" means to concentrate on something, to rivet your mind on it, to give it all of your energy. It's a strong word, a powerful word, it's a word that grips. "Take heed to yourself"; watch yourself closely. And that is the phrase that I would like to talk about this morning—I suppose no surprise coming from a psychologist.

Seminary is largely about paying attention to your doctrine. The Word of God calls you to do that, and it is crucial that you do so. But the Word of God calls you to give the same kind of attention to your person, to

your self. You are called by God to be the incarnation of what you teach, the pattern and print of what you preach. So who you are matters as much as what you know and what you do.

There is, I believe, a great seduction inherent in the work of ministry. It is a very subtle seduction, and many do not see it, and are therefore seduced away from their first love. The seduction is this: the work of ministry itself often lures us away from love and obedience to Jesus Christ. We end up in service to the ministry, rather than to the Master. We end up seeing to the success of a ministry or an enterprise or organization, rather than standing true to Jesus Christ. Many times someone enters ministry called by God and gifted by God with a God-given vision for that particular ministry, but somewhere down the road, when the vision has grown and the demands are great and the pressure is on, the minister becomes obedient to the ministry rather than to Christ. Decisions are made based on what will succeed or bring success to the ministry or further growth. The ministry must not be allowed to die, no matter what—and it is then that the life of Christ in the minister begins to die. The worker then is no longer a servant of the Master, but a servant of the ministry. It is a good ministry, it is a work in which God has called him or her, it is a ministry that has born fruit; but I would urge you to beware of anything that competes with love and obedience to Jesus Christ. And oftentimes the greatest competitor of devotion to Jesus is service for Him. When the ministry seems to call you to neglect marriage and home, to neglect solitude and personal study of the Word, or to neglect prayer, you have traded masters. When the demands of ministry shape your character into something other than a reflection of the character of Jesus Christ, you have traded masters. The master of Ministry will push you unrelentingly until you drop. The master of Ministry is not concerned about

your character, and does not care whether you are an incarnation of what you teach, or whether you delight the Father. The master of Ministry only cares that the ministry succeed.

“Take heed to yourself,” lest you be seduced.

I think there is another form that this seduction can take. As you get involved in caring for others and caught up in the dramas of their lives, keenly away of their pressing and real and often critical needs, you can easily be seduced into thinking that you are a shepherd, and you forget that you are also a sheep. If you forget that you are a sheep, you will get twisted up by ministry, focused on getting others to move or change or grow, and failing to seek out the Great Shepherd and the green pastures and still waters that He has for you.

If you care for God’s sheep long enough, you will have plenty of experiences to help you discern why God has called His people sheep. You will watch people do stupid things. You will watch them follow other sheep into ravines and wander off from the flock and get devoured. And you may at times in ministry catch yourself muttering under your breath, “Just a bunch of stupid sheep.” And you will get frustrated and angry and proud, as if somehow you are the Shepherd over all of these stupid sheep.

Has God called you to shepherd His people? Well, if He has called you to any kind of ministry, then absolutely He has called you to shepherd. But do not forget that long before He called you to shepherd, He called you first and foremost to be His lamb: a silly, stupid lamb, who does stupid things, who follows other sheep into ravines, and if wanders away from the flock, will get devoured. You are a lamb who must stay very close to your Great Shepherd, for that is the best and wisest way to lead other lambs, as they will follow you there. Your value as a shepherd depends on your life as a lamb: a weak, dependent, foolish lamb, utterly dependent on the Shepherd. How will such a lamb know anything about shepherding if he does not stay very close to the Great Shepherd? When the work of shepherding leads you to pride or judgment or superiority, you have forgotten that you are a lamb. And a shepherd that is not first a lamb, humble and gracious to other sheep, is a dangerous shepherd, for he or she has ceased to follow the Great Shepherd.

Your primary identity in life, if you are to be of eternal value to our Father, is not that of a shepherd, but rather that of a lamb.

“Take heed to yourself,” lest you be seduced.

Let me give you one final seduction. And I think we might think about these all as ways where the good becomes the enemy of the best. The third seduction is that the work of ministry easily crowds out the worship of God. The measure of the worth of our public work for God is not success, but our private relationship with Him. It is that relationship of worshipping God that is the great essential for fitness in ministry. Have you learned to worship Him? Is worship a thread woven richly into the tapestry of your life? Or have you become so taken up with Christian knowledge and Christian work that you have no time for the Christ whose work it is? No time for Him in the morning, no time for Him at night, because you are so keen on doing those things which are called by His name? The work will compete with your worship of God. What irony! But we must expect it to do so. The very work of God that God calls us to becomes that which seduces and distracts us away from the worship of God. The workshop where you will acquire what is needed is your personal, hidden, worshipping life. Do you want to be equipped for ministry? Prepared? Protected? Then worship God.

Let me tell you something that I have found again and again with those in ministry that have come to see me. It is something which grieves me greatly. In working with many

ministry couples, I have come to see that husband and wife do not pray together. In working with pastors and sessions, I have found that pastors and their elders do not pray together. Often those in leadership pray very little. And through the years, they have said things to me like, “I’m not much of a pray-er.” “I haven’t learned very well how to pray.” In other words, I can lead a church, make it grow, and teach and preach—but not pray? Prayer seems to be considered something done in public service, or perhaps sometimes devotional in nature, but it appears to be impractical and even unnecessary. The work demands to be done, after all, and the programs need to be run, and the people need to be tended—who has time for prayer?

And yet this Lord whom we profess to serve seemed to consider prayer work, rather than simply preparation for work. He says prayer is the way for fruit-producing and fruit-abiding work. And how foolish we are to think that we can carry out the work of God Himself without continually talking to Him and listening to Him! What arrogance! And yet how easily and often unconsciously we fall into this! The work escalates. It demands our focus.

The discipline of daily and ongoing worship in the life of the worker gets swallowed up by the work itself. Do not presume to do the work of God from any other foundation than that of ongoing worship of God Himself. How can we possibly think that we will have wisdom, untiring love for the sheep, or strength to persevere in conflict, unless we sit daily at the feet of the Savior who said to us, “One thing is needful”; only one, not two, not several, not sometimes, not as a nice addition, but only one is needful or necessary—and getting the work done is not that one thing. Worshipping, listening, learning at the feet of the Master is the one thing necessary.

“Take heed to yourselves,” lest you be seduced.

So what have we said? We have said that we must take heed to ourselves, and not just our doctrine. We have said that there are seductions in ministry that can lead us away from love and obedience to Jesus Christ: that ministry itself can woo us away from the master, that we can get so caught up shepherding we forget we are sheep, and that the work can swallow up worship of God.

I would like to put another point out before you this morning, and it is this: the God whom you came here to serve and to study and learn about—He came in the flesh to minister. He knows what ministry is like. He understands its seductions, its pulls, its lures. This God who came in the flesh has ministered before us, and He lived utterly devoted to His Master. He lived as a lamb who followed His Shepherd, and He has shown us how to walk this earth worshipping the Father rather than the work. He has done what He has called us to do. He has gone before you in the work of ministry.

You all know the story of the great crowd of people in great need; and they had followed Jesus, and they were very hungry—all 5000 of them. And he fed them, and there were twelve baskets left over. I think we might call that a successful ministry! The people certainly did. They deemed Him the Prophet, and they wanted to make Him King. Now Jesus is King, and ultimately He will be established as King over all forever. He will sit on the throne, and all will bow down. So what the people wanted was something that God also wants: Jesus as King. And how easy at that juncture to have been fooled and let the ministry dictate. The people seemed ready. They seemed to desire what God ultimately wanted. But Jesus’ response was to withdraw by Himself to a mountain and pray. It would appear that He had lost His opportunity. It looked like everything was set up to accomplish God’s goal, and He walked away. Why? Because He served His Master more

than the ministry. His choices were not dictated by opportunity or need or even the goodness of the goal.

Just because something is good does not mean it ought to be done. When the day comes, and the people you serve push toward a goal that appears to be God-honoring, remember Jesus. He is your master, not the ministry. The goal must be His, the way the goal is achieved must be His, the timing must His—and you, you must be wholly His. Do not be owned by the goals of ministry, no matter how lofty they are, but by the Master alone.

You also know, of course, that Jesus describes Himself to us as the Good Shepherd. “I am the Good Shepherd,” He says. And you who would shepherd the people of God follow in His steps. And God’s Word says that you who would desire to be shepherd desire a good thing. But look carefully at the One you follow. When you look at His entrance into ministry, you find it heralded not with the words, “Behold, the Shepherd,” but, “Behold, the Lamb of God.”

This is a Shepherd who is first like His sheep. He leads by demonstrating for them how to be a lamb, obedient to the Father. His leadership as a lamb led Him to suffering, darkness, and death. This was a lamb forsaken by His Shepherd. Those are hardly glamorous results in a ministry. In fact, He looked something like a stupid sheep. Sheep who follow their shepherd are supposed to be protected; this Sheep was submissive, and He was led to death.

If the Great Shepherd became a lamb in order to care for the sheep of God, then you and I must never forget that that is who we are. We are first and foremost lambs. Any shepherd who forgets that he or she is a lamb in need of constant care by the Great Shepherd is a very dangerous undershepherd.

Secondly, good shepherds sometimes look like stupid sheep when they follow the Great Shepherd. Following Him will sometimes lead you to places of suffering and darkness and death. Do not let people lead you to think that following God in ministry always looks successful or glamorous. Look what God’s hand did to the Lamb of God! But at the same time, when you find yourself in ministry in those places of suffering and darkness and death, never forget that because the Lamb of God was abandoned and forsaken by God

Himself, you will never ever be abandoned in your ministry. So no matter how dark it is, you will always have a Shepherd and never be alone.

In Matthew 4, we see the battle between work and worship. The Spirit has led Jesus up into the desert to be tempted by the Devil, and the Devil in the end took Him up to a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. And Satan said to Him, “I will give all of this to You, I will give You the world, if You will bow down and worship me.” Now, if you think about that, he offered Jesus what His heart wanted—the world.

The Scriptures tell us that God so loved the world. He offered Jesus what He loved. He wanted the world for His own. It was a good and holy, God-given desire, and the enemy offered it to Him. But He did not allow the work to swallow up His worship of God. He let go, in that moment, of what he longed for, and stood grounded in the worship of God and God alone. And that principle is demonstrated in His life for us again and again. His worship of God is always protected. It is alive and active all the way through His ministry. The tremendous needs of suffering people, the press of the crowds, the criticism of the leadership, the death of His beloved cousin John—again and again we see in the Scriptures that He went apart to pray and to listen and to obey. And what He practiced throughout His three years of ministry was tested on the cross—that place where even when He was forsaken by God, He cried out, “My God.” So that even the work of His death for you and for me did not swallow up His worship of God.

Students, it is a good and noble work that you desire to do. And you are here because God by His Spirit has called you to shepherd His people in various ministries. It is a good work, but it is a dangerous work, and it is a work that tried and tested the One that you serve, and it will test and try you. Do not be surprised when that is so. Love your Master more than your ministry, love your Shepherd more than your sheep, and worship your God more than your work. Paul, to Archippus: “Take heed to the ministry that you have received in the Lord, and see that you fulfill it.” Paul, to Timothy: “Take heed to yourself.”

Press Release Regarding the Recent Story on Covenant Theological Seminary

[Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (GPTS), which was mentioned in our lead story in the March-April issue, sent out a press release in an effort to distance itself from the article. GPTS sent its press release not only to us, but also to PCANEWS.COM, which featured it as a lead item. However, the official denominational website chose to print only excerpts from our press release, leaving out, for example, the first and last paragraphs. Printed below is our response in its entirety.—Ed.]

A recent front-page story in *Presbyterian & Reformed News* highlighted the apparent cover-up by Covenant Theological Seminary with respect to the appearance in chapel of a woman speaker. As detailed in the article, written by Mr. Mark Rooze, the official denominational seminary of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) has refused to cooperate with the independent church press with regard to the story, and has also refused to release the audio tapes of her chapel messages.

One paragraph of the article mentions Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary; and officials of that institution have now formally objected to the linkage between their school and the story.

The purpose of the reference to Greenville Seminary was merely to demonstrate that reports regarding the woman’s speaking, and allegedly preaching, in chapel at Covenant Theological Seminary, had already gained widespread currency, including at a sister theological school. There was no intention to imply that Greenville Seminary was directly involved in the matter, nor is it legitimate to infer such.

However, in retrospect, we can appreciate how the reference could be misleading, and we accordingly apologize to Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Although we believe the article is factually accurate, it would have been better to have left out the reference.

We are also sorry because the reference to Greenville Seminary could be used to deflect readers from the real controversy, which is that of the apparent cover-up by Covenant Theological Seminary. In contrast to how Greenville Seminary deals with the press, Covenant Seminary has deliberately chosen to stonewall the press. This does not reflect well on the St. Louis school. We hope that the PCA’s official denominational seminary will follow the example of Greenville Seminary by being more forthright in its dealings with the public and the church.

PCA Heads for the Big D

For Second Time, General Assembly Will Be Held in Texas

Big oil, big money, big cars, big dreams. All can be found in the city called the Big D.

And in mid-June, Dallas will play host to the 29th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). This will mark the second time that the PCA Assembly will have been held in the Lone Star State. Six years ago, the 23rd Assembly met in Grapevine, at the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport.

Being in Dallas will allow commissioners and their families to take advantage of many of the tourist attractions available, including the museum dedicated to telling the story of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, and the Dallas Zoo.

Hosting the June 19-22 meeting will be North Texas Presbytery. Thanks to the expansion of its territory granted two years ago, North Texas is one of the larger PCA presbyteries geographically, as it stretches from the rolling hills of East Texas, through the Dallas-Fort Worth area, across the midland section of Texas towards El Paso, and up into the northern panhandle. For the past two years, North Texas has also enjoyed a gerrymandered boundary, reaching its way up the I-35 corridor to Oklahoma City. And, if an overture from Mid-America Presbytery is approved at this year's gathering, North Texas will acquire the rest of the Sooner State as well.

The North Texas judicatory also boasts the third-largest congregation in the PCA, Park Cities Presbyterian Church, pastored by the Rev. Skip Ryan, with a total membership of approximately 5200. Park Cities was formed in 1991 by members of

the Highland Park Presbyterian Church, a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA), who desired no longer to remain in the liberal mainline denomination.

The Presbytery was founded in 1985 when Texas Presbytery was divided into South Texas and North Texas Presbyteries. At the time, North Texas Presbytery had about 1800 members, 16 churches and

missions, and 28 ministers.

Commensurate with the population growth of Texas, the Presbytery has grown tremendously. Total membership in the presbytery, according to the 2000 PCA Yearbook, was 8066, with 20 churches and missions and 40 ministers.

Members from North Texas Presbytery have been serving on the General Assembly

Arrangements Committee, which has worked for several years to ensure a smooth-running Assembly. Among the problems encountered was having to find a new meeting place, after the hotel and conference center at the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport cancelled in the fall. Committee members and Administrative Committee staff in Atlanta scrambled to find accommodations, finally securing them at the Adams Mark Hotel in downtown Dallas, where all of the meetings will be held.

Preaching the retiring Moderator's sermon will be the Rev. Dr. Morton H. Smith. The first Stated Clerk of the PCA, Dr. Smith helped to found Reformed Theological Seminary and Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

Among the highlights of the perennial meeting will be a pre-Assembly discussion on the meaning of theological subscription to the doctrinal standards of the church. On one side of the debate will be the Rev. Dr. Timothy Keller and the Rev. Dr. Bryan Chapell; on the other side will be the Rev. Dr. Joseph A. Pipa and the Rev. David Coffin.

The Assembly itself could offer its own lively debate. Close to 40 overtures will be coming before the court, some dealing with rather mundane items, some with matters which focus on the issues which divide the denomination ideologically and theologically.

Whatever the outcome, this Assembly should prove to be interesting. It could also be decisive—with a capital D—with respect to the on-going discussion in the denomination as to what kind of a church the PCA will be.



Dallas is one of the top business convention destinations in the nation.



Hosting the General Assembly will be the Adam's Mark Hotel located in the arts and financial district of downtown Dallas.



White Rock Lake, just five miles from downtown Dallas, may provide a tranquil setting in between Assembly sessions.



If the General Assembly is not exciting enough, commissioners can get their thrills on the Shock Wave at Six Flags Over Texas.

Overview of the Overtures

Each year, about forty overtures make their way to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). Each overture must first either be approved by a presbytery, or at least presented to a presbytery for adoption: if an overture is denied by a presbytery, then the document may be sent on to the Assembly for its consideration.

The overtures this year center mostly



Photo by Lloyd Poissone/Stock Studios

The Old Red Courthouse in the downtown historic district houses Dallas's Tourist Information Center.

around several themes: the continuing controversy regarding the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) and its handling of the John Wood matter; the doctrine of creation; the women preaching issue; internal governmental matters, including various amendments being proposed to the *Book of Church Order*; and the establishment of new presbyteries.

Wood). Overture 19 from Ascension overtures the Assembly for the CCB to examine the minutes of the SJC regarding original jurisdiction in the John Wood matter.

The CCB has already taken upon itself to answer the Ascension overture, as Stated Clerk Roy Taylor assigned the overture to the Committee. The Rules for Assembly Operation (RAO) does not provide for the CCB to handle overtures; the Bills & Overtures Committee is the committee which the RAO specifies should receive overtures of a general nature.

Meanwhile, Western Carolina, which had been the first presbytery to petition in the Wood matter, had committed to a committee the task of looking into allegations that SJC members had not behaved properly in the Wood matter, in that one or more members had allegedly lobbied to protect Mr. Wood prior to the 2000 General Assembly. After

investigation, the committee recommended, and the Presbytery adopted, a communication which called for peace. Simultaneously, Western Carolina also overtured the Assembly to find the concurring opinions offered in the Wood matter out of order, and to order that they not be printed in the General Assembly minutes (Overture 35).

non-binding.)

At this year's Assembly, Calvary and Mississippi Valley Presbyteries, using language employed by David Hall, are overtureing that any view other than that of creation in six twenty-four days constitutes an exception to the Standards (Overtures 7 and 23).

New River Presbytery is taking a somewhat different approach. Instead of prescribing a uniform view of the Standards, New River would allow each lower court some latitude in interpreting the phrase, "in the space of six days." For those courts which do view any other than the six twenty-four day view as an exception, they would be counseled to treat it is any other exception. Furthermore, New River is asking that, for the time being, no one be denied ordination solely on the basis of not agreeing with the calendar day view (Overture 20).

North Georgia Presbytery, on the other hand, is taking an opposite position (Overture 30). The home court of many of the denominational employees wants to reaffirm the position of last year's Assembly; while at the same time seeking for uniformity of teaching. That quest for discovering the true meaning of Genesis 1, according to North Georgia, must entail the light of natural revelation illuminating special revelation.

The Women Preaching Issue

The issue of women preaching continues to be of concern throughout the

PCA. Grace Presbytery's Overture 25 asks the Assembly "to affirm that a woman may not preach or teach in the corporate worship of any church or in the corporate worship conducted by any church court or by any committee, board, and/or agency of a church court"; and "to reaffirm that the Presbyterian Church in America believes that the Scripture teaches that the offices of Elder and Deacon are open to men only." The overture states that "the Word of God and the confessional standards of the Presbyterian Church in America declare without ambiguity that a woman shall not teach or exercise authority over a man"; that "this prohibition is proclaimed as a result of the creation ordinance and not for the reason of first century cultural expediency"; that "no ecclesiastical body of the Presbyterian Church in America (be it congregation, session, presbytery, or assembly) may, under any assumed authority, set aside the clear teaching of God's Word or the *Westminster Standards*"; and that "a contrary view to both Scripture and the Standards is being taught and adopted, specifically, that a session may allow the instruction of men by women in ecclesiastical assembly under the 'authority and oversight' of the elders."

Overture 27 from Philadelphia Presbytery would amend *BCO 12-5* (with regard to the authority of the Session) by adding these words: "to ensure that the Word of God is preached only by such as are sufficiently gifted, and also duly approved and called to that office (cf. *WLC 158*) and in accordance with this to prohibit women from preaching the Word of God as

John Wood and the SJC

The most high-profile judicial matter in the history of the denomination was the John Wood matter. A total of five presbyteries petitioned the General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction over the Pastor of Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church, Knoxville, Tennessee, after Tennessee Valley Presbytery did not act judicially with regard to allegations that he had allowed a woman to preach from his pulpit.

In 2000, the SJC declined to proceed in the matter, on the basis that Tennessee Valley had "acted." However, last year's Assembly overturned the advice of both the SJC and the Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB), and instructed the SJC to proceed.

In October 2000, the SJC reported that it had again declined to proceed on the basis that Mr. Wood's views were allowable in the PCA; and on the basis that he was not personally responsible for Dr. Linda Eure's appearance in the pulpit.

Six members of the SJC subsequently filed a "concurring opinion," in which they attacked the integrity of the General Assembly, and also took shots at the current Moderator, Dr. Morton H. Smith (the first Stated Clerk of the denomination), Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and its President, Dr. Joseph Pipa.

Both Calvary and Ascension Presbyteries, two of the presbyteries which had petitioned for the Assembly to assume original jurisdiction, adopted overtures in response to the SJC's failure to proceed. Overture 8 from Calvary asks that the General Assembly condemn the action of the SJC in Judicial Matter 99-1 (re. John

The Doctrine of Creation

For at least four years, the doctrine of creation has been front and center in the theological debates that have been raging in the PCA. The 1997 General Assembly refused to take exception to the minutes of a presbytery which had not regarded any other view than creation in six calendar days as an exception to the Confessional Standards. In 1998, the Assembly denied a complaint against New Jersey Presbytery dealing with a similar issue. The same Assembly erected a Creation Study Committee (CSC).

The 1999 Assembly approved a statement, originally offered by Dr. Joseph Pipa, which was designed to build a "consensus" within the denomination. The document specifically ruled out evolution, and specifically affirmed the historicity of Adam and Eve and the first eleven chapters of Genesis.

At the 2000 Assembly, the CSC gave its final report, which it proposed to receive as information. The Rev. David Hall, a former member of the SJC, moved as a substitute that the Assembly declare that any view other than that of creation in six calendar days is an exception to the Standards. The Assembly turned down that substitute, and instead adopted one offered by the Rev. Frank Barker, Pastor Emeritus of Briarwood Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Alabama. The successful substitute declared that any of the views touched upon in the CSC report was acceptable, so long as the historicity of the creation account could be affirmed. (Dr. Barker had been the one who had amended the motion creating the CSC in 1998, to the effect that any report of the CSC would be

part of the corporate worship of the church (cf. *BCO* 4-4; 53-2), as this is forbidden in Scripture (I Tim. 2:11-12).” This proposed amendment resembles an amendment which was sent down to the presbyteries in response to the reports of female preaching in the PCA. It appears that that amendment will be defeated. At least part of the reason

Overtures 9 and 11, also from Evangel, would amend the procedures by which a higher court may assume original jurisdiction over those normally subject immediately to a lower court. The amendments would specify that as long as a lower court had conducted a judicial investigation, then that lower court had

“considered part of the minutes, regardless of the form of the recording.” Currently, only written documentation is considered part of the official record.

Overture 13 would amend *BCO* 32-3 to require that there be at least three meetings of a court before proceeding with a trial. This would give the accused at least fourteen days after hearing the indictment (at the second meeting) in order to prepare for the trial.

Overture 14 would amend *BCO* 32-4 so as to ensure that “a record exists of the date a citation is received.”

relieved of Jeremiah’s ministry and challenged his authority. ‘Thou speakest falsely: the Lord our God hath not sent thee. . .’ (Jer. 43:2), they said; but our sympathy and support would have been with Jeremiah and the remnant who were faithful to his ministry.”

As noted in the overture, the proposed amendment would require, in the matter of a pastoral dissolution, “Presbytery’s most careful deliberation in the light of Scripture and sound reason.”

Proposed *BCO* Amendments Regarding the Pastoral Relationship

Overture 3 (Susquehanna Valley Presbytery) asks that *BCO* 20-2 be amended so that the pastor of a church be included in a search committee for an assistant or associate pastor. In the opinion of the CCB, this amendment would be in conflict with other provisions of the Constitution, in that a pastor, who is not a member of the congregation, could not serve on a congregational committee.

Overture 4 (Eastern Carolina Presbytery) wants *BCO* 23-1 to be more explicit regarding the dissolution of a pastoral relationship. Eastern Carolina’s concern is that dissolution of the pastoral bond should be regarded as being “within the power of the Presbytery only and is not a ‘rubber stamp’ action based solely on the will of either the congregation or its pastor.” The overture takes exception to the view that “a congregation, like a democracy, is entitled to be relieved of its pastor simply if

Requiring Unleavened Bread in Communion

New Jersey Presbytery (Overture 2) wants *BCO* 58-5 changed so that the bread to be used in communion would be specified to be unleavened bread. The proposed modification would allow that if unleavened bread is not available, “bread with leaven (yeast) may be used, but this is not to be the usual or normal practice of a congregation.” In support of the change, New Jersey noted that the Passover celebration used unleavened bread; and that leaven “is sometimes used in the Bible to denote sin.”

Extending Terms of Office on Program Committees to Five Years

In Overture 1, Missouri Presbytery is asking that *BCO* 14-1(12) be changed to increase the number of men on program committees from fourteen to fifteen; and to



The Mesquite Rodeo features bucking broncos

for its defeat will be objection to the particular wording. The proposal from Philadelphia is designed to perfect the language, in the hopes of winning approval by a sufficient number of presbyteries.

However, the Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB) is recommending that the overture be remanded to Philadelphia for clarification, since it is “unclear” as to how the Presbytery’s proposal would fit into *BCO* 12-5.

Proposed *BCO* Amendments Regarding Judicial Process

As is customary, there are several proposed changes to *the Book of Church Order* which will be coming to the Assembly by way of overture.

Evangel Presbytery proposes the most radical changes. Overture 10 seeks to make amending the Confessional Standards easier: instead of a three-fourths vote at each of two General Assemblies, with approval by three-fourths of the presbyteries, the overture would have the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the church changed with a two-thirds vote of two General Assemblies and approval by two-thirds of the presbyteries. The overture states that Dr. Timothy Keller’s 1999 paper, “The Original PCA Contract,” “accurately demonstrates the cause of the tension in the PCA today and brilliantly suggests that the solution may be found in the amending of our confession. . . . The high jump bar as it now stands in the present *BCO* . . . is too high . . . pragmatically the Confession is unamendable. There has never been passed and only rarely has there been an amendment to the Confession. This results in two erroneous postures: A. Ignore the teachings of the Confession or B. Believe that the Confession equals the Scriptures and treat it accordingly.”

“acted” and any request for the assumption of original jurisdiction would therefore not be allowed. In Evangel’s view, “The controversy at our 28th General Assembly surrounding the John Wood matter engulfed our Standing Judicial Commission, our GA Stated Clerk, our Committee on Constitutional Business, our Bills and Overtures Committee of Commissioners, and our floor of the General Assembly in a constitutional quagmire because the existing *BCO* 34-1 does not adequately answer several questions: 1. What does ‘refuses to act’ mean? 2. Who gets to decide what ‘refuses to act’ means? 3. Does the Stated Clerk of the GA give this *BCO* 34-1 matter to the SJC for adjudication or route it directly to the GA via the Bills and Overtures Committee of Commissioners? 4. How can we balance the concerns between the need to protect the doctrinal purity of our church and the need to protect our principle of original jurisdiction which serves in turn to protect our ministers from judicial charges from those who may not necessarily have access to all of the facts or access to the right of investigation?”

Central Carolina Presbytery has offered five perfecting proposed amendments regarding judicial process.

Overture 16 would amend *BCO* 43-1 so as to allow a complaint with regard to a judicial matter after an appeal is ruled out of order, withdrawn, or abandoned. Current wording does not allow a complaint if an appeal has been “taken” in a judicial case. [In the past, the General Assembly ruled that an appeal had been abandoned; however, since the appeal had been timely filed, a complaint touching on the same matter had been ruled out of order.—Ed.]

Overture 17 would take the currently-vacated Chapter 44 of the *BCO*, and fill it with detailed information as to how a presbytery will handle a complaint or appeal when it commits such to a commission. Accompanying the proposed amendment to the Constitution is a flow chart, which Central Carolina suggests should be added as an appendix to the *Book of Church Order*.

Overture 15 would amend *BCO* 35-7 to require the electronic recording of trials, with the recorded testimony being



The Texas chuck wagon symbolizes the variety of Texas cuisine available in Dallas.

a majority wished it to be so, whatever the circumstances. Such a view may be congregational, but it is not Presbyterian. The majority of a congregation may have faulty, erroneous or unbiblical grounds for wishing the removal of its pastor, and in such cases the Presbytery may deny their request in favor of a minority in the congregation who wish to continue under the ministry of a faithful pastor. A majority of Israel wished to be relieved of Moses and return to Egypt, but they were clearly in error. . . . A majority of the elders, and presumably the people, wished to be

change their terms of office from four to five years. The rationale given includes that “the responsibility and complexity of our Program Committees have grown as our denomination has grown”; that “it is very difficult for newly elected Committee members to function effectively until their 4-year term is almost half over”; “this frequent turnover of Committee members coupled with the increased size and complexity of Committee operations tends to place more power in the hands of the permanent staff which is opposed to the intent of the founders of our denomination.”

Grass Roots Concerns

Heartland Presbytery's Overture 6 asks the Administrative Committee to provide options for lower costs and greater ruling elder participation at General Assembly. The overture states that the disparity "between Ruling Elders and Teaching Elders has grown to as many as 2½ Teaching Elders to 1 Ruling Elder (2.5 to 1) at some Assemblies"; "the rising costs associated with attending GA has become a burden for many churches; therefore they send only one Commissioner and he is the pastor"; "the perception of congregations is that General Assembly is a time for Teaching



DART features a new 20 mile light rail system.

Elders to renew friendships rather than being on the floor and participating in the business of the Church"; "Ruling Elders do not have the advantage of knowing others attending; in comparison to Teaching Elders who have developed friendships in seminary and other ministry opportunities"; and "many of the Ruling Elders are frustrated by parliamentary, maneuvering and/or debate over semantics and technical points." The overture acknowledges that "previous Assemblies indicated their desire for facilities with Air Conditioning and other amenities" and that "the opportunity for the Administrative Committee to negotiate contracts with motels etc to host GA is limited; therefore adding to the rising costs." The overture asks that the Administrative Committee report to next year's Assembly "with recommendations and possible options how the General Assembly can have greater parity, between elders while keeping the costs of GA as low as possible," with the understanding that "options before us may require the Assembly to approve significant changes so that costs may be reduced and greater involvement of Ruling Elders achieved."

Overture 21, offered by Ellisville (Miss.) Presbyterian Church, but turned down by Grace Presbytery, wants the Constitution to allow at least two ruling elders to represent each congregation in presbytery meetings. Presently, if there are fifty percent more ministers on the roll of a presbytery

than there are churches, each congregation may be represented at presbytery by two ruling elders for each 350 communicant members or fraction thereof. In almost all PCA presbyteries, that rule is in play. However, Grace Presbytery is one of the few where it is not.

Overture 24 from Grace Presbytery would ask the General Assembly "to reaffirm that all General Assembly committees, both permanent and ad-interim, committees of commissioners and agencies will operate in open session"; and "to require that said bodies may go into executive session only for the following reasons: property negotiations, discussion of active or pending criminal matters or civil litigation, discussion of personnel performance, personal safety, or approval of reports if required to be done in executive session." The overture also asks the Assembly "to declare that whenever a committee or agency enters executive session, only the elected members and ex-officio members of that committee or agency may remain in the room, the only exception to this policy being that a person may be invited to stay if he has specific information, is otherwise involved in the matter under consideration, or not otherwise available to the committee or agency"; and "to declare that any decisions made in executive session must be reported in public and access to said decisions guaranteed to any member of the church, and that all members are guaranteed access to the minutes and official records of all committees and agencies." The overture also requests that this not simply be declared as General Assembly policy, but that the Rules for Assembly Operation be changed to reflect this policy.

Among the grounds given is an appeal to the Presbyterian Church (USA), which has a "sunshine policy"; and that the PCA "should not be less open and honest than our liberal counterpart... especially.

... since we self-professedly operate with committees rather than boards, as is done in the PC(USA)." Precipitating this overture were the reports that advisory members of committees, and staffers, including women, have been included in executive session by the Mission to North America Committee, while ordained men were excluded.

Mid-America Presbytery's Overture 31, like Overture 24, makes specific appeal to the denomination's "grass roots" nature, in asking that the General Assembly declare that no denominational employee may simultaneously serve on the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC). The overture notes that currently four of the twenty-four SJC members are employed by the denomination.

New Presbyteries and New Boundaries

If the various overtures before the Assembly are approved, there will be a net gain of three PCA presbyteries, bringing the total to 63.

Heartland Presbytery (Overture 5) is petitioning that its Iowa territory and churches be formed into its own presbytery. This would leave Heartland with Nebraska, Kansas, and northwest Missouri.

Central Carolina Presbytery (Overture

12) wants a new Triad Presbytery of North Carolina formed, in the Winston-Salem/Greensboro/Burlington area. The North Hills Presbyterian Church of Salisbury, North Carolina, though in Rowan County (which is slated to remain with Central Carolina), is asking that it be allowed to cross presbytery lines in order to affiliate with the new presbytery (Overture 36).

Great Lakes Presbytery (Overture 22) is asking that its territory in Kentucky, southern Ohio, and southern Indiana, be formed into a new Ohio Valley Presbytery. This would leave Great Lakes with southern Michigan, most of northern and central Indiana, and most of northern and central Ohio.

Potomac Presbytery (Overture 37) has agreed to divide, with a new Chesapeake Presbytery encompassing much of Maryland, including the Annapolis and Baltimore areas. Potomac would continue with the District of Columbia, its Maryland and Virginia suburbs, and the eastern panhandle of West Virginia.

Meanwhile, Mid-America Presbytery (Overture 32) has agreed to be absorbed by North Texas Presbytery, thereby reducing the net increase of presbyteries to three.

Westminster Presbytery has communicated its intention to withdraw as a presbytery from the denomination, effective in January 2002. Westminster accordingly has sent up Overture 38, which asks the Assembly to erect a new presbytery, with the same boundaries as Westminster Presbytery, effective upon the date of withdrawal.

Westminster Presbytery is also requesting that its boundaries be changed, so that one county and a part of a county in Virginia be transferred to New River Presbytery (Overture 34).

New York State Presbytery is asking that several counties in western New York, presently in Ascension Presbytery, be transferred to itself (Overture 26). Included in this territory is Rochester, where several families are desirous of a PCA church under the auspices of New York State Presbytery.

Miscellany

Overture 28 from Philadelphia Presbytery asks the General Assembly to pray for religious liberty. The overture makes reference to the First Continental

to "request all the churches and agencies of the PCA to have a special season of prayer and worship with thanksgiving in their churches and institutions either around July 4th of this year, or around October 28th, or early in November (when prayers are offered for the persecuted church worldwide) in order to thank God for His gracious gift of religious liberty in our American nation and to intercede for the



The Age of Steam Railroad Museum is located in Dallas's Fair Park.

persecuted Church worldwide that continues to face religious persecution resulting in the loss of property and personal civil liberty, including even torture and martyrdom due to their faithful conscientious convictions for Christ and His Word."

Overture 29 would direct the Mission to North America (MNA) Committee to report administrative fees. The overture notes that Mission to the World and Covenant Theological Seminary are members of the Evangelical Council for

Financial Accountability, but MNA is not. This overture was presented to Northern California Presbytery, but rejected by that court; and is being carried to the Assembly by the Rev. Andrew Lee, a church planter in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Overture 18 from Heritage Presbytery asks that the PCA version of the Westminster Standards be edited to correct the "numerous typographical errors, omissions and other mistakes both in the text and in the citations which are a distraction to those who use it"; and

that a hardback edition be printed of the newly-edited version. Ironically, as noted in the printing of the overture in the Commissioners' Handbook, the overture contains about a dozen typographical errors.



Photo by Lloyd Poisenor/Stock Studios

The McKinney Avenue Trolley shuttles shoppers and diners from downtown to a number of shops and restaurants in the McKinney Avenue/Uptown neighborhood.

Congress (1774), to the Scriptural inscription on the Liberty Bell ("Proclaim Liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof"—Leviticus 25:10), and to various historical and theological writings. The Assembly is being overture

Mid-America Votes to Dissolve

Presbytery Will be Absorbed by North Texas

Mid-America Presbytery, impoverished through the loss of some of its Oklahoma churches through the years, and through the loss of territory two years ago to three adjacent presbyteries, finally decided to call it quits. At its stated meeting on April 20, 2001, the court voted 10-2 to dissolve and to be absorbed by North Texas Presbytery, its neighbor south of the Red River.

Understanding how the Presbytery got to this point can be a challenge. Indeed, trying to trace out the path by which the Sooner State lost its own presbytery almost would require an Indian guide.

In 1999, a majority of Mid-America voted to petition the General Assembly to cede its territory in northwest Arkansas back to Covenant Presbytery, its territory in southwest Missouri to Missouri Presbytery, and the I-35 corridor counties up to Oklahoma City to North Texas Presbytery. The result was a presbytery left with four organized churches, and a communicant membership of about 430—one of the smallest PCA presbyteries in terms of communicant strength and number of churches. Just as significantly, with the transfer of the Oklahoma City area to North Texas, much of the population of Oklahoma was off-limits to the tiny judicatory, thereby limiting its opportunity for growth.

In the intervening two years, the presbytery coped with its small size by erecting a Committee of the Whole. In essence, all the elders of the presbytery would meet as a committee prior to each of the two stated meetings per year, in order to formulate the recommendations when the court itself met.

Shortly after the gerrymandered boundaries were approved at the 1999 General Assembly, First Reformed Presbyterian Church, Minco, Oklahoma, expressed a desire also to join with North Texas. Efforts by men in Mid-America Presbytery prevailed upon the Minco church to relinquish their wish for the time being.

Then, last year, Christ Presbyterian Church of Tulsa, the largest congregation in the presbytery, also expressed a desire that Mid-America merge with North Texas. The elders of the congregation had the year before not necessarily been in favor of that proposal; but now, with the prospect of significant funding from the Southwest Church Planting Network for starting new churches throughout Oklahoma, Christ Church was ready to sign up.

At the October 2000 stated meeting of Mid-America, the Presbytery voted begin the process of amending its By-Laws in order to dissolve into North Texas Presbytery. An attempt in 1999 to effect the same proposal had failed in that it could not garner the requisite two-thirds at two successive meetings.

At last fall's meeting, the proposal did receive the necessary two-thirds vote, thus placing the matter on the docket for consideration at the April 2001 stated meeting. Joining the Tulsa and Minco commissioners in favor of the amendment were those from Christ Presbyterian Church in Claremore, Oklahoma, while the commissioners from Beal Heights Presbyterian Church, Lawton, Oklahoma, led by the Presbytery Stated Clerk, the Rev. John Owen Butler, were opposed.

In the meantime, the folks from Claremore became wary of joining with the large body of North Texas. By the time of the April meeting, it appeared that there would not be a sufficient number of votes to change the By-Laws.

When the matter was first considered, it was defeated by a vote of 7-5-0 (thus not securing the necessary supermajority).

However, immediately after that vote, another overture from the Tulsa congregation was considered. This resolution would have

asked the General Assembly to place Christ Presbyterian Church, Tulsa, and "other churches of the Mid-America Presbytery as wish to join with it," along with the "appropriate counties within the State of Oklahoma into and under the jurisdiction of the North Texas Presbytery."

During the debate on this overture, the Presbytery moved into a Committee of the Whole in order to facilitate discussion. That was at 4:07 PM. After about fifteen minutes, the body recessed for five minutes.

During that five minute break, the three commissioners from Beal Heights—Pastor Butler, and Ruling Elders Bob Nauman and Mike Rogers—huddled with the two commissioners from Claremore (Pastor David Schwenk and Ruling Elder Neil Thielen) and looked at the options. If this second overture were to pass, and the General Assembly were to approve it, Mid-America would be left with two organized churches, and three ministers—one of them without call and living in Vermont. The Presbytery would barely be able to function; and, because of the *Book of Church Order* requirements, would not be able to call for a called meeting should any emergency arise.

More importantly, the men from Lawton were concerned that their preaching point in Tulsa, Westminster Chapel, would be swallowed up and not allowed to continue, since it would be within North Texas territory.

Their fears were not without warrant. Within the past two years, the Beal Heights Church had asked permission of the home missions committee of North Texas to conduct a Bible study less than half a mile inside North Texas' territory in the Oklahoma City area. The Bible study was merely to facilitate the start of a potential new church that would be located in one of the adjoining counties which had remained in Mid-America Presbytery. There was no desire on the part of the Lawton folks to compete with any works which North Texas might have planned in Oklahoma City; the selection of the site within Oklahoma County was simply because there was no other feasible location in which to get started. Nevertheless, the North Texas committee refused to grant permission.

Several years prior, the Beal Heights Church had conducted a Bible study just over the border in Wichita Falls, Texas. While North Texas had granted permission for that activity, Beal Heights was told that it would not be allowed to oversee a mission work in Wichita County. The group which developed approached North Texas Presbytery, but received no encouragement. Eventually, an Orthodox Presbyterian Church was organized in Wichita Falls from those people to whom the Beal Heights Church had faithfully ministered for an extended period.

Given this history, there was great apprehension that the preaching point in Tulsa would be sacrificed on the altar of ecclesiastical politics. Accordingly, Mr. Butler, after the body reconvened and came out of the Committee of the Whole, moved to reconsider the vote on amending the By-Laws.

John Owen Butler had been the strongest opponent of the proposal to be absorbed by North Texas, and his motion purportedly stunned the proponents of the merger. When asked why he was moving for reconsideration, he explained the concern that the Beal Heights Church would lose its budding mission work.

The motion for reconsideration carried, and the By-Laws were subsequently amended, 10-2, with the three commissioners from Beal Heights having swung the vote.

At that point, by common consent, the second overture from Christ Presbyterian, Tulsa, regarding redrawing the Presbytery boundaries, was withdrawn.

But there were still some details to be

worked out. It was moved and seconded to amend the resolution regarding the disposition of records, assets, and personal property by giving two-thirds of the money currently in the Church Extension Committee Funds to Westminster Chapel, with the balance to be given to North Texas Presbytery for the purpose of defraying travel expenses. The Moderator ruled the amendment out of order because those moneys had been given to the Presbytery for church planting. (The bulk of the funds had come from the late Calvary Presbyterian Church, Stilwell, Oklahoma, for church planting in Oklahoma.) A substitute motion, to delete the item regarding Church Extension Committee Funds from the resolution, was moved and seconded, but failed. The resolution then carried.

Later in the meeting, however, it was moved and seconded to give three-fourths of the Church Extension Committee Funds to Westminster Chapel, for church planting. It was moved and seconded to amend the amount to one-third. Finally, it was moved, seconded and carried to divide the moneys in that account equally between the Westminster Chapel and an

anticipated Reformed University Ministries work in Tulsa.

Other financial arrangements in the resolution included transferring the money in the Presbytery's Ministerial Relief Fund to the denominational Committee on Insurance, Annuities, and Relief "for the designated purpose of the relief of ministers and widows of ministers in need of assistance." After expenses are paid, the balance of the Presbytery's General Fund is to be transmitted to North Texas Presbytery "with the stated intention that such funds are to be utilized for the defraying of the legitimate expenses of the members and commissioners from Oklahoma for attendance upon the meetings of North Texas Presbytery."

With the approval of the merger by the General Assembly, all of Oklahoma will once again be in the same presbytery. Like the Sooners of 1907, the race will now be on to see what kind of churches are staked out in the State of Oklahoma; for what kinds of churches are planted will determine what kind of presbytery will exist in the state when there is sufficient strength to resurrect a presbytery there.

Committee on Women in the Military will report to this GA Will Recommend Against the Practice of Drafting Women or Using Them in Offensive Combat Roles

The Ad Interim Study Committee on Women in the Military will present its final report to the 29th Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) General Assembly. Among its recommendations will be that "the General Assembly of the PCA is formally on record as opposed to the drafting of women into military service, in time of war or peace, under any and all circumstances, for the reason that such governmental actions would violate individual consciences as informed by the Word of God." The Committee also asks the Assembly to go formally on record "as opposed to the assignment of women to offensive combat roles."

The report comes five years after Philadelphia Presbytery overtured the Assembly to condemn, protest, and request the repeal of the national policy allowing women to serve in combat. The Philadelphia overture also requested that elders, military chaplains and other church officials "communicate with their members God's teaching concerning women in combat."

The 1996 Assembly adopted a statement that expressed "grave concern about the practice of sending women into combat," and asked Philadelphia Presbytery to bring a more-detailed recommendation.

In 1997, the Assembly, citing concerns with regard to the church not becoming politically involved, answered the overture from Philadelphia in the negative. The Assembly also said that it was not Biblically persuaded by the arguments presented by Philadelphia.

But Philadelphia Presbytery persisted; and in 1998, the Assembly acquiesced to the lower court's request for a privately-funded Ad Interim Committee. The 1999 Assembly received the Committee report as information, and added three members to the Committee. In 2000, the Committee asked for and was granted another year in which to complete its work.

This final report gives a review of military service of women, including various problems of morale and readiness that have been caused by the feminizing of the American military services. The report notes the honor of a military calling. And the report notes that Reformed Church in the United States, the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, the Southern Baptist

Convention, and the Bible Presbyterian Church, have all gone on record in opposition to women in combat.

The report then carefully considers the church's spiritual nature and the propriety of the church as a body addressing the question of women in military service. The Committee appeals to the fact that there are extraordinary cases in which the church may directly address the civil magistrate (Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter XXXI). The Committee states that "there is precedent in the practice of our church for the Assembly to address matters of moral principle that are being flagrantly transgressed in a national violation of Biblical law"; and offers the matter of abortion as an example.

The Committee affirms the sufficiency of Scripture as the moral basis for addressing the questions raised. And, in dealing with Scriptural premises, the report adduces the creation order of male headship, and the motherly nature of women. Furthermore, "By calling the woman a weaker vessel, Scripture indicates that there is a greater vulnerability attendant to womanhood, and calls upon her husband to be considerate of this fact. This vulnerability of the woman and the duty of the man are further confirmed by Scripture's command that a husband serve and lay down his life for his wife."

Other recommendations include affirming that "individual conscience, guided by the Word of God and responsive to the counsel of the Church, must decide concerning the propriety of voluntary service in the military." The PCA is called upon to recognize that military service today "presents special and difficult moral challenges in light of the integration of women into the armed services." The women of the denomination are "warned of the many difficulties and moral and physical dangers involved in serving in the military in secular America, due to their inherent greater vulnerability." And the Committee is recommending the adoption of a statement that if women "choose voluntarily to enter military service, they should do so advisedly, with the recommendation that they seek supportive, rather than active, combatant roles."

Louisiana Presbytery Receives Baptist Church

Pastor of New PCA Congregation to Have His Covenant Children Baptized

Out in the hot, marshy flatlands of southwest Louisiana, where the Cajuns roam, where oil derricks punctuate the countryside amidst old sulphur mines, and where the religious landscape is dominated by Roman Catholicism and Baptist theology, an unusual event is about to take place. An entire Baptist congregation in Sulphur, Louisiana, is becoming Presbyterian.

Founded in 1972, Fellowship Baptist Church was at one time a member of the Southern Baptist Convention but later became an independent Baptist church. Then, in November 1994, William R. "Bill" Smith, II, became its pastor.

A graduate of Louisiana College and Mid-America Baptist Seminary in Memphis, Mr. Smith had been trained in seminary in the doctrines of grace, often referred to as the Five Points of Calvinism. As he recalls, within a couple of years of his ministry, "Issues concerning the doctrines of grace came up at our church. I was called on the carpet for believing the doctrines of grace. . . . Somebody . . . put the label 'Calvinist' on me. . . . The deacons called me in and wanted me to preach through those doctrines. I got to 'Unconditional Election' and there was a blow-up and a lot of people left. . . . About fifty people left at that time."

During the time of this turmoil, one of the deacons of Fellowship Baptist, who worked with Kenny Andre, a deacon at Bethel Presbyterian Church in nearby Lake Charles, Louisiana, wanted to encourage Pastor Smith. It was arranged for him to speak to a meeting at Bethel Presbyterian. That occasion prompted an ongoing series of book discussions among the officers of the Baptist church in Sulphur and the Presbyterian church in Lake Charles, about fifteen miles away.

One of the first books studied was Randy Booth's *Children of the Promise*. Pastor Smith recalls that, at seminary, "No one had adequately explained covenant theology"—but he was soon to become immersed, so to speak, in it.

The next volume on the list was O. Palmer Robertson's *Christ of the Covenants*. "Robertson's book was where everything really started pulling together." Also helping him in his understanding was the lecture series by R. C. Sproul, Jr., in January 1999 at the Winter Culture Conference at the Lake Charles church.

It took another two years before both he

and the church were ready to take the final step into Reformed theology. But the deal was sealed at the April stated meeting of Louisiana Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), when Bill Smith was received as a ministerial member and a commission was erected to examine the two men who would become Presbyterian ruling elders.

Pastor Smith indicated that although he is familiar with some of the problems currently in the PCA, it was still an attractive option for him and his church. This is especially because of "the strength of the Presbytery. I observed them for about a year. . . . And we saw that they're not going to lie down and let everything roll by. . . . I saw men of character and we wanted to be connected to men like that." He particularly credits the friendship and close relationship with the Rev. Dr. James A. Jones, Jr., and the Bethel Presbyterian Church, which he pastors. And, Pastor Smith stated that he likes the Southern Presbyterian flavor of the PCA.

Dr. Jones, who also serves as the Stated Clerk of Louisiana Presbytery, said that his friend stood a good exam. He did, however, have two exceptions to the Presbyterian standards: he has accepted paedocommunion, and he cannot at this point affirm the doctrine of exclusive psalmody.

It has been a difficult spiritual pilgrimage for Bill Smith and his flock. He notes that he comes from Baptist stock in Louisiana, and "they're not taking it that well" that he's become a Presbyterian. No one from his extended family will be present when the congregation is formally received into Louisiana Presbytery, and his four young children (ages 6, 4, 2, and 5 months) are baptized, on May 27, 2001. However, his father-in-law, who is a Baptist minister in Miami, Florida, has taken the news in stride. According to Pastor Smith, he has said, "Well, it's not like they're joining a cult or anything."

Bill Smith is looking forward to his first General Assembly, to be held just a few hours away in Dallas, Texas. And he is glad that he, his family, and his flock were predestined to become Presbyterian.

[In the next issue of the newspaper, we hope to feature a photo or two from the reception of Covenant Presbyterian Church of Sulphur, Louisiana. Pastor Smith may be contacted at (337)528-2025; email: wrs2@earthlink.net. —Ed.]

Briarwood Associate Pastor Becomes a Baptist

According to a story in the *Birmingham (Ala.) News*, the Rev. Mr. Tom Caradine, a minister in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), has become Pastor of First Baptist Church. Mr. Caradine had been on staff at Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham for twenty-five years. He was ordained in 1984, serving for one year as an assistant pastor before becoming an associate in 1985.

The May 7, 2001, story, written by Greg Garrison, quotes Mr. Caradine as saying, "I wasn't looking to leave—I love Briarwood, I loved my job." The article says, "Being tapped as a candidate by a Baptist church surprised him. 'That really did catch me off guard,' he said."

The article also states that Pastor Caradine "said he has committed himself to working within the Southern Baptist way of doing things."

"It's a wonderful denomination, especially with the new Baptist Faith and Message statement," [Mr.] Caradine said. "I'm in line with the Southern Baptist Convention theologically."

The article notes the differences in church polity between the PCA and the Southern Baptist Convention, the former having a representative form of government including higher courts; the latter being congregationalist.

The sacramental difference focused on baptism. "Presbyterians generally baptize infants by sprinkling, while Baptists baptize by immersion only those old enough to make a faith decision."

"Presbyterians also often baptize adult believers, sometimes by immersion if the individual chooses. 'I didn't have a problem participating in believers' baptism,' [Mr.] Caradine said."

With respect to theology, the article states that the only question on Calvinism that came up during his exam at First Baptist Church was with regard to double predestination. "Did God elect people to hell?" The Presbyterian minister said that he did not believe that. According to the article, Mr. Caradine said that "his view of salvation was compatible with the view expressed in the Baptist Faith and Message statement."

The story goes on to say: "With denominational labels removed, [Mr.] Caradine said he believes he offers what Baptists want: solid, biblical preaching, explaining the meaning of Scripture and the importance of salvation."

The article concludes by quoting the new Pastor of First Baptist Church: "'I'm a conservative evangelical,' he said. 'My approach is a kingdom approach. I feel called to build the kingdom of God.'"

REMEMBER:

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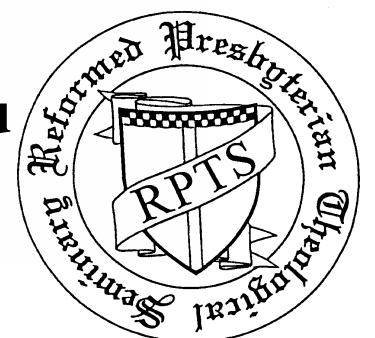
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A Picture of God's Amazing Grace

[P&R News is pleased to present inspiring stories of members of the Presbyterian Church in America. In this issue, we present the autobiography of Kim Estrada—an account which not only testifies of God's amazing grace, but which also offers a glimpse into the not-so-pretty world of Mormonism.—Ed.]

I stood there looking in the mirror actually crying, "Oh no, not again. Not another pimple!" My mother simply replied, "Well, Kimmy, you are never going to be beautiful." I felt horrible about myself. To make things worse, I did not have a sense of respecting myself, nor keeping myself pure as God desired, and so, there I was at 16 dating a young guy, suddenly finding myself pregnant, and now having to become a high school drop-out after completing only my sophomore year of high school.

Born in Salt Lake City, Utah, January 18, 1964, I was quickly exposed to the Mormon culture of Granger (now "West Valley"), Utah. Actually, I did not really have much interaction with the Mormon church through my parents. Many town-folk attended church; it was the common denominator as folks were expected to do the sociable thing and attend the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (often referred to as the LDS Church). I vividly recall being in the Primary class on Wednesday or Thursday afternoon and subsequently being baptized into the Mormon church. I was eight years old, and I was now publicly accepted into the church.

They sure aimed to teach us well. I was taught to memorize the presented material, and it was made clear that their program had a level of expectation for us children. We were to work at it; and we would be rewarded as well. Thus, I proudly received my CTR ring. I can still see that ring. My CTR ring was designed with a shield, the small letters CTR and the color green provided the background. This reminded me that when a woman of the Mormon church was to be buried, she would be in her white garment, being partially covered by her apron—her green apron. The men as well were to be buried in their sash, which was also green. I had memorized the necessary material; it was a big deal. I was a delighted eight-year old. I had my ring.

Mom was raised in the Mormon church, but as an adult, had married a man who had a Methodist background. It would become more and more obvious to me, neither Mom nor Dad was going to be extremely committed to the Mormon church.

It was now time for me to move forward and be baptized into the church. Mom allowed this, and my uncle, who had been sealed in the temple when he was married, actually was the one to baptize me. Mom was happy for me, but very offended. You see, Dad did not want to have any part of the Mormon church, so he did not attend my baptism. The following Sunday was the day for my confirmation into the Mormon church. Dad did relent and attend, and you know, I think that was the only time my entire family has attended church together. Looking back, I have to thank God that my father stood up and was critical of the Mormon church.

In Sandy, Utah, during my junior high years, I regularly attended the church programs and services, although my family did not. You see, the Mormon church has a great networking system. The neighborhood is guided by a Bishop, and all the children in the neighborhood are encouraged to attend (the bishop even lives in the neighborhood). All in our neighborhood were assigned the same time to attend the weekly teen gathering on Tuesday evenings from 7-9 PM. All my friends in the neighborhood attended,

and I did as well. In addition a woman from across the street (Karen) was my teacher and she could always provide needed transportation.

In high school I enrolled in the four-year church study program. It was a very serious term, and we were graded. I was assigned to read the *Book of Mormon*. Ironically the program was entitled, "Seminary". Working hard in the program, I was "an A student". However, I took note that when a student responded to questions or raised their own, our teacher quickly responded, "No, that is wrong, this is what that means." No discussion—the matter was settled.

Subsequently, upon being interviewed for application to be baptized for the dead (the Mormon church promotes a baptism for those who have already departed), I was in for a surprise. The bishop conducting the interview began asking me very inappropriate questions (sexually related). It was determined my Sunday attendance was not quite good enough to meet the requirements, so I was not permitted to be baptized for the dead. This turned me off to the Mormon Church, as I was aware that some of the girls admitted to the ceremony, were actually not (shall we say) proper in some areas of their behavior. I did a 180! I got away from the church completely.

Within a year, I looked in the mirror and found myself a 17 year old, mother of a little boy (born November 5, 1980) and divorced. I recall having approached my aunt informing her of my being pregnant. She laid out before me my options (including abortion). That was never an option for me; I never considered it. Looking back, I remember the rate of teen pregnancy in the church was higher than one would normally think. Reminds me of the saying I heard in those days, "The bishop's daughter is always the easiest".

To support my son, I worked full-time, earning \$4.80/hour, and lived in an assisted living facility (government subsidized apartment). My "former" avoided paying child support by refusing to keep a steady job. Life was tough and it crushed me to put my child in full time day-care.

An aunt and uncle invited me to their home, and introduced me to the coach of the AAA Salt Lake Gulls. I learned he had played shortstop and second base for the Chicago White Sox and Seattle Mariners. We dated during the summer of 1982. He talked to me of his faith and gave me a Bible and asked me to read the gospel of John, while he was on the road. Upon his return and inquiry, I simply responded, "I don't need this. I already heard stories like these in the Mormon church, and I also read stories like it in the *Book of Mormon*."

Jerry Lewis (not the comedian) was the pastor for a wonderful program known as Baseball Chapel in the Salt Lake City area. My newly acquainted friend/baseball player (Manny Estrada) invited me to go to their non-denominational church and Bible study. The church was studying Revelation and the pastor was so kind to me. Upon visiting the pastor in his office one day, I shared my struggles and questions. Breaking down in tears, I acknowledged that I was depending on this new guy and was learning of Christ as well. That very day I prayed in his office to receive Christ, and

the following Sunday, August 8, 1982, I was baptized.

Within Pastor Lewis' conservative non-denominational church, I began learning about God's designs for parenting. The pastor gave me tapes to help me in my child-rearing of Michael, and I listened to them. At that time Michael and I were living with my parents (both loving grandparents, yet unbelievers) and new struggles arose as they did not understand this "discipline thing".

Another difficult encounter was the environment at my new church. There were married women, older women, single women, but no other single teen moms. Only the pastor went out of his way to show I was wanted in his church. I don't know why others did not. Maybe they were simply afraid; maybe they were thinking, "That girl must be bad news", or "I really don't want my children associating with her." With no one else being in the same life-situation, there were times I felt so out of place.

Manny proposed to marry me in July, 1983. I had gone to Las Vegas where his team was playing a series of games. However, Manny argued that he was ejected from the game. It was later that very evening he proposed. He received a three game suspension, resulting in his having to sit in the stands the next three games played in Salt Lake City. While in the stands, he struck up a conversation with a scout (Gary Hughes) from New York, who later became the Scouting Director for the Montreal Expos.

Manny and I married in September 1983, and baseball moved us to Arizona. God directed my paths to cross with Melodie Floyd whose husband, Bobby Floyd, worked for the same organization as Manny. She invited me to church services and Wednesday morning Bible Study. In the early summer our little family moved to Montana for the rookie league season as Manny was the manager for the Butte Copper Kings. Late in August, our son Justin was born.

We moved to Washington, only to have the Mariners inform Manny he was needed in Columbia, South Carolina, for winter ball. I was in the state of Washington with two small boys, and away from my friends who had helped me to grow in the Lord. I recall visiting a church, and they were having a time of corporate prayer; suddenly a woman jumped up and began speaking in tongues. When she had finished, she began to interpret what she had earlier spoken in tongues. But God brought me guidance; my sister-in-law, Anna, became a spiritual mother. I called her and she would often say, "Put on the coffee, I'll be right over." We would open the Bible and she would teach me and guide me in my walk.

Manny was released, and by God's grace, Gary Hughes, the scout with whom Manny talked during his three game suspension, called, offering Manny a job in Mesa, Arizona, to work in the Montreal Expos organization. God had allowed Manny to bump the umpire a few years earlier, to give Manny the job in Mesa, and God placed us in the church he desired for us.

That church was a PCA congregation called Word of Life. (It has since merged with Hope Presbyterian Church, Gilbert, Arizona; the new congregation is now called Emmanuel Presbyterian.)

After the baseball season, Manny and our pastor at Word of Life, Jerry Heitz, really struck up a friendship. He invited Manny to come to his house once a week for discipleship. The change was unbelievable. As we grew spiritually, we found our relationship really grew. Our family grew again as God blessed us with our third child, a beautiful daughter, Kalie. Being introduced to Reformational Theology, we thus had our three children baptized. Later, I began teaching Sunday Bible School, and found teaching children's Sunday Bible School contributed wonderfully to my continued growth.

Manny accepted a position with the Baltimore Orioles in late '91 which required a move to Brandon, Florida. While looking for houses in the area we searched the phonebook for PCA churches. We took a drive and found Westminster Presbyterian Church (WPC). We drove onto the property and they were having a meeting of some of the men. We met and talked with one of them, Bill Belcher, and we have been here ever since.

While here in Brandon, I was approached regarding an open spot in Sunday Bible School, and was asked if I might teach the 3-5 grade class. You have to get into the Word, and children ask questions, seeing things from their perspective. Sometimes we pass over things that really make a big impact. In this last year I have begun teaching the senior high class and it is many of the same children I taught when they were in grades 3-5.

When I look back, I can't believe the things God has permitted me to do in service for His Kingdom. To increase my learning, I have attended three Ligonier conferences; though I still haven't read all the books. I always enjoy the teaching of R. C. Sproul and really enjoy hearing tapes of John Gerstner. I recall here at WPC, an adult study in the life of Joseph. Going through Genesis was a lot of work, but I learned how God worked through the sins of the people, and God made good of evil.

I wish I were a prayer warrior. I have seen the power of prayer, and I try to impress upon my family how important prayer is, and not to simply give it lip-service.

I recall one time, at a church gathering, one of my children was "acting up" and I turned to one of our senior women and asked, "Does it ever end?" She smiled and said quietly, "Oh, yes, when they move out." Seriously, I think the senior women, here at WPC, have had an impact on me. I am thankful God allowed me to be taught by them.

"Well, Kimmy, you are never going to be beautiful." But who would have imagined that some 20 years later, I would now have a BA from South Florida University, and an MBA and a JD from Barry University. God has blessed me so much with Manny and our three children. I attempt to instill in my kids the truth of Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." If it is truly God's will that you do something, He will accomplish it—I am proof He will open those doors. My husband always says, "Who would have thought this little girl (Mormon) from Salt Lake City, would be where she is now?" Who would have thought I would have such a blessed life?

Manny, Kim, Justin and Kalie continue to reside in Brandon, Florida, and worship with the congregation of Westminster Presbyterian Church (PCA). Their son, Mike, is serving in the United States Air Force. Associate Pastor Ivan Lambert transcribed the account found above.

If you have a first-person account you would like to share with us, please contact us at: Presbyterian & Reformed News, PO Box 60, Coeburn, Virginia 24230; 540-395-7467; email: pins@journalist.com.



Kim Estrada

An Old Warrior Carries on the Fight in France

The old streets of the ancient town still resonate with the sounds of traffic and commerce. But now, in the twenty-first century, the traffic consists of motorcycles and Citroens; and the commerce includes not only food markets, but computer stores and internet services.

And amidst the hustle and bustle and the mix of old and new in southern France, one old warrior continues on his mission. It is a religious mission. But unlike the Crusaders of the Middle Ages, he goes about on his crusade not with



Always at work and ever the scholar, the evangelist can now be called Doctor Boyer: Westminster Theological Seminary awarded him an honorary doctorate in 2000.

swords loud clashing, but with deeds of love and mercy, as he seeks to bring the heavenly kingdom to the homeland of his ancestors.

For more than half a century, Eugene Boyer has been preaching the gospel in France. A transplant from Pennsylvania, Gene is now more comfortable in the land of his forebears than he is in his native America.

It was 1949. Just four years after the end of World War II, the young man found himself in France. In those early days of the Cold War, before the Iron Curtain descended, he was headed for Czechoslovakia. But while on his way to Prague, he passed through Paris. And in a railroad dining car, a mysterious French businessman challenged him, in perfect English, with these words: "Sir, there is much work for you to do in France."

Gene never knew that fellow-traveler's name, and he never saw him again. He often thought about this providential meeting, and wondered if the Macedonian-type call was the result of an angel having been sent (cf. Hebrews 13:2).

But whoever he was, Gene was sure that God had sent that Frenchman to call him to minister in France. For the next six months, Gene worked with the French team of the Youth for Christ organization, then headed by a young evangelist by the name of Billy Graham.

It was hard and challenging work. Paris was still reeling from the devastation of the War, and there was much suffering in post-war Europe. Eugene shared in that suffering—he wept with those who wept, and he slept with those homeless who slept in the cavernous Le Gare Du Nord—the North Railway Station in Paris. He eventually found shelter in a hotel of dubious sanitary condition, as he lived on \$45 dollars a month.

That ministry in and around the French capital was followed by work in southern France, in the Cevennes area. This rugged region was where the persecuted Huguenots made one of their last desperate stands; and, even long after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, the area remained a Protestant stronghold. During the Second World War, many of these French Protestants risked their lives to hide and protect Jews from the Nazis.

Gene's ministry was shared by his beloved wife, Charlotte. Accustomed to a comfortable lifestyle, she graciously adjusted to the deprivation and poverty, as she provided a home for Eugene and their two young daughters, Carole and Elizabeth.

In 1955, Gene's brother, Gerald, an accomplished musician, arrived in France to work with Gene. Their musical ministry became legendary, as Gerald on the piano or organ would direct the choir while Gene played the trumpet and led congregational singing. The brothers would often sing duets—Gerald the tenor and Gene the baritone—to packed tents or meeting halls. They became well-known as they hosted some of the largest Protestant gatherings in the French-speaking world—not only in France, but in Belgium, Switzerland, Quebec, the Antilles, Guyana, the Belgian Congo (now Zaire), and North Africa. And Eugene's Francophone ministry was heard on TV and radio in twenty countries.

He returned to Pennsylvania in 1964, to pastor a thousand-member congregation which his late father had pastored. But Eugene's heart was still in France. In 1968, he returned to that nation.

The next year, pastors of the Evangelical Reformed Church of France—a more conservative group than the "mainline" French Reformed Church—asked him to save their old Seminary at Aix-en-Provence, near Marseille. That venerable school, which had fallen under



Samuel Foucachon, a native Frenchman, is a PCA minister who assists Eugene Boyer.

liberal influences, had practically ceased all theological activities. With the Lord's blessing, the board of directors was reorganized, the liberal element was diminished, and a sound faculty was secured.

Among the distinguished faculty members were Paul Wells and Peter Jones. It was Dr. Jones' father-in-law, Dr. Edmund P. Clowney, then President of Westminster Theological Seminary, who had met Gene Boyer in the late 1960s. That "chance" meeting propelled Dr. Clowney into founding the Huguenot Fellowship, dedicated to rekindling the fires of Reformation in Calvin's native land.

Three decades after the quiet revolution at Aix, more than 200 former students are pastors

and over 80 percent of all graduates are in some kind of full-time Christian work.

Eugene Boyer's passion has been for the revitalization of the Reformed Church in France. That passion manifest itself not only in his work with the Seminary at Aix, but also in his care for numerous churches.

Presently, he ministers with a flock in Lafitte-sur-Lot, in the Cevennes mountains. As the full name of the town indicates, Lafitte is located on the Lot, a river which cuts its way through deep valleys as it meanders toward the wine-growing region around Bordeaux.

It is a small congregation. But it has a big vision. It recently sent Eugene to Turkey as part of its investigating the possibility of having its own outreach to that Muslim nation. There are many young people with Islamic backgrounds in France who are turning to Christ, and this little flock in southern France wants to assist these young people to take the gospel with them as they return home.

Eugene Boyer's widespread ministry is well-known throughout France, especially among the religious (and anti-religious) leaders. Nuns, Jesuit priests, and atheists all come to him, believing him to be someone they can trust.

Perhaps his most unique ministry is among gypsies. Years ago, he would visit gypsy camps, and entertain them around the campfire by playing a trumpet and an accordion—simultaneously. But he would also preach the gospel. The seeds that were planted continue to bear fruit, as caravans of gypsies still call upon him to preach to budding churches that have sprung up in their midst.



Children wait for the start of Sunday School.

Through the years, Eugene Boyer has continued to be a faithful servant of Jesus Christ. Though approaching seventy-five

years of age, he looks like he's in his fifties, and he has the idealistic heart and energy of a thirty-year old.

However, he cannot fulfill his dreams without adequate resources. And he is in desperate need of funding for office space and for a church/resource building, in order to have a base of operations from which to minister.

But it was just as he was hoping to accomplish yet more for the kingdom in France, that news came from his mission agency, the PCA's Mission to the World



One of the satellite churches where Eugene Boyer ministers

(MTW), that the administrative costs assessed by MTW in Atlanta now amount to \$1055 a month. Out of a total salary and ministry budget of about \$50,000, twenty-five percent was going to the Atlanta bureaucracy.

Eugene's already-meager salary was barely enabling him to make ends meet—especially as his dear wife has been institutionalized for Alzheimer's disease for about a decade. The fact that \$12,660 a year is being taken out of his income is a devastating blow. The reason which Atlanta has given for the withholding is that missionaries are now charged a flat fee (\$700 per month for single missionaries, \$1025 for couples) rather than a percentage of their income, for administrative costs.

Relatives of his, including his daughter Carole and cousins Karen and Gerry Dockstader, have helped to found First Fruits, Inc., to assist the beloved evangelist in getting the funding he needs. Gerry, a business executive for a major corporation, recently flew to France in order to understand the ministry and to formulate a business plan.

According to Gerry, Gene lives in deplorable conditions. His apartment is Spartan-like. And in the itinerant aspect of his ministry, he speeds along the highway in an ancient Citroen which, Gerry says, appears unsafe.

But like his Huguenot ancestors, the old warrior soldiers on. He has given fifty years of his life to carry the gospel to France. His vision, like that of the prophet Isaiah, is that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord would cover this part of the earth as the water covers the sea.

Battling the culture, overcoming fatigue, dealing with personal grief, and trying to understand bureaucratic ways, he remains one of the great lights of the Protestant faith in the French-speaking world.

For those who wish to support Eugene Boyer's ministry, you may contact First Fruits, Inc., 6009 Hansen Circle, Frederick, Maryland 21702. (800)456-0992

Editorials and Letters

The SJC Report

Every year, it seems, we are having to take umbrage with respect to the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) report. We really don't want to have to do this. However, we feel duty-bound to point out certain inconsistencies.

Consider, for example, the SJC decision in *Black vs. Eastern Carolina*, which is being reported to this year's General Assembly. Apart from the actual judgment, which again enforces the notion that the Confessional and Catechetical phrase, "in the space of six days," has virtually no meaning, we would note a couple of curiosities in the reasoning.

The Commission declared: "There is no Constitutional requirement or any judicial precedent requiring the original court to have the complainant present when his complaint is considered." And, the SJC also decreed: "If the Complainant believed the Presbytery had erred in procedure by considering his complaint without him present, he needed to complain to the Presbytery against that alleged procedural error. . . . That complaint would have been fundamentally different than the complaint considered by Presbytery. . . . The SJC cannot consider any such procedural complaint because it was not first filed with the lower court (BCO 43-2). (See *Lachman vs. Philadelphia*, Case 94-5, M23GA and *Watterson vs. PCA*, M13GA)."

First of all, we wish to commend the SJC in correctly noting that there is indeed no Constitutional requirement that the complainant be physically present when the court of original jurisdiction considers a complaint.

The problem, however, is when the SJC goes on to say that there is no "judicial precedent requiring the original court to have the complainant present when his complaint is considered." Just four years ago, in *Jupiter Session vs. Southern Florida*,

the SJC ruled that the Presbytery erred in not allowing the complainants said right, and returned the case to Southern Florida "with instructions for a new hearing assuring the complainants the opportunity of presenting their case before Presbytery or its Commission" (M25GA, p. 65).

Please note at this point two things. First, it is patently false to say that there was no judicial precedent for the view that a complainant has the right to be heard before the court of original jurisdiction. Secondly, please note that sending the matter back to Southern Florida on procedural grounds is also contradicted by what the SJC has just ruled in the *Black vs. Eastern Carolina* case!

With regard to this second point, at least three more things need to be said. One is that the SJC, by its ruling, is inviting litigation; for if it is necessary to issue a separate complaint for procedural irregularities, then what we will see in the future is complaint piled upon complaint. Historically in Presbyterianism, a complainant was always allowed to "add" allegations of procedural irregularities to the original complaint, so that the entire matter could be disposed of at the same time. But now—at least until the SJC changes its mind yet again—we can contemplate an increased case load for the SJC.

The second observation with regard to this second point is that the *Lachman* and *Watterson* cases to which reference is made have no apparent relation to the contention that procedural irregularities must be handled only by separate complaint.

And the third observation with regard to this second point is that what the SJC has done is to create great uncertainty as to the law of the church. This, of course, plays into the hands of those who believe in power religion. For by making the rules arbitrary, rather than fixed, one can never know what the rules are or will be. The creation of a permanent judicial commission was

supposed to guarantee a body of fixed law. But instead, it has only helped to foster a political-type atmosphere, where who you know may be more important than whether your cause is just.

We also disagree with another case being reported to this year's Assembly, *Erwin Morrison et al. vs. Philadelphia Presbytery*. In this case, the SJC agreed with Philadelphia Presbytery was correct in having a local session record a memorial, even though the memorial was directed to the Presbytery in an effort to have the higher court exercise appropriate review and control. This action, which is now accompanied by the approval of the SJC, virtually enervates the whole notion of using the route of memorialization laid out in *Book of Church Order* Chapter 40. For it mandates that only the court whose actions are alleged to have been grossly unconstitutional, would ever have to see the memorial.

A third case upon which we would like to comment is *Philip J. Adams vs. Northeast Presbytery*. First, we would agree with the SJC in ruling the case "out of order because it is a complaint about a matter that is the subject of an appeal in another case (BCO 43-1)." But the second ground given for its being found out of order—viz., "because the complainant requests the relief that an accused be retried on matters he has been acquitted of by his presbytery"—goes completely contrary to precedent and to the PCA Constitution. BCO 40 provides that review and control may not be used to overturn a judgment in a judicial case, and that said judgments may be overturned only by means of appeal or complaint. If one were to follow the SJC ruling in this case to its logical conclusion, it would mean that there would never be a way for a lower court which engaged in a whitewashing of charges against someone, to have that injustice redressed.

These three cases come in a context, as demonstrated by overtures from Calvary and Ascension Presbyteries, of some dubious dealings by the SJC with regard to the John Wood matter. What is important to note is that the John Wood matter merely is an illustration (albeit the most visible and notable one) of the conduct of the SJC in a wide variety of cases.

We believe that the honorable men serve on the SJC. And we don't like to have point out these problems with the Commission report. But we are compelled to do so, in order that the denomination as a whole may, hopefully, come eventually to a realization that the system is still broken, and desperately needs fixin'.

—Frank J. Smith

We'd Like to Support It

Western Carolina Presbytery, one of the presbyteries which petitioned the Assembly in the John Wood matter, has communicated to the Assembly a call for peace. We are fairly certain that a substantial majority of the denomination would applaud that call for peace, and wholeheartedly support it.

We, too, would like to do the same. It is never pleasant to mount an opposition to the "powers that be"; and, quite frankly, we would like to see the whole controversy placed behind us.

But we're still not satisfied that the full truth has been told in the whole matter.

Particularly, we are still troubled by the fact that in November 1999, the SJC Officers set forth a "Statement of Facts," and that

the full SJC changed at least one of those "facts," viz., with regard to whether Tennessee Valley Presbytery (TVP) appointed an investigative committee at the spring 1999 meeting of the Presbytery.

With regard to this discrepancy, there are, it seems to us, three possibilities and only three. Either (1) the SJC Officers invented the statement that TVP had appointed an investigative committee in spring 1999; or (2) an official of TVP made it up; or (3) the SJC Officers received information from an unofficial source.

If (1) is correct, then the SJC Officers, in the most high profile judicial matter in the history of the denomination, were extraordinarily sloppy, at best. (And if they're sloppy when everyone's watching, what are they doing with regard to the other matters?) If (2) is correct, then why wasn't the TVP official taken to task? And if (3) is correct, then the SJC Officers apparently violated their oath of office, in that they improperly received and acted upon information not officially before them and used it in order to decide the matter.

The fact that these sorts of troubling underlying issues have never been dealt with forthrightly has engendered suspicion in many quarters of the PCA that the SJC did not handle the John Wood matter appropriately. It is therefore understandable that when further reports surfaced of other alleged improprieties, Western Carolina would want to investigate the reports.

Western Carolina's committee appointed to investigate the recent reports was satisfied that nothing was done amiss—a judgment affirmed by the Presbytery itself. And, absent any credible evidence to the contrary, we have no reason to question their findings.

But that still doesn't answer the other issues which, over a period of more than a year, created an atmosphere of suspicion.

So, while we would very much like to support the call for peace, we are reminded that peace can only be built upon unity; and that a genuine unity comes only through purity.

If we can get our questions answered openly, honestly, and satisfactorily, then we would be glad to join Western Carolina in its desire that the matter finally be laid to rest.

—Frank J. Smith

Letters

Dear Editor,

It seems that the first mistake Covenant Seminary made was referring to their Chapel services as "worship services." Would they allow the Lord's Supper to be shared during Chapel? Would they allow a Baptism to be performed? If not, then there should be no shame in allowing a woman to instruct the student body in her field of expertise (and for Christians of both genders this may include some use and application of Scripture). President Chapell, release the tapes and admit only to erring in referring to the Chapel service as a worship service. Having Dr. Langberg teach your students is not wrong. Having Dr. Langberg use Scripture in her presentation is not wrong. This was not a worship service, despite the wording in the catalogue.

Making this mole hill into a mountain of controversy is another matter. If Mrs. Langberg is so willing to talk to the press, why didn't *P&R News* ask her what she said? I'm sure that she had some notes that she could have given to the newspaper to help clear up the "scandal" that she caused by speaking in Chapel. Vice-President Wicker should admit that when confronted with a potentially volatile situation he made

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several errors of judgment that unfortunately escalated the situation to its current level. Mr. Rooze's op-ed piece (which, following an "impartial" news story seems a bit unprofessional) unnecessarily escalated the situation even further by comparing his plight to those of the African-American community during the civil rights struggle. Let's tone down the rhetoric, shall we?

We need to be consistent in our understanding of the place of women in the church, especially since this is such a controversial topic in our fellowships. If we would allow an unordained man to speak in a seminary chapel setting and use Scripture in his presentation, then we should also extend the same freedom to a woman. This was not a church service and thus the same rules should not apply here as they would during a called service of the church. A little common sense will go a long way toward resolving the tensions that threaten to divide our denomination. A little common courtesy should go a long way toward resolving this relatively minor misunderstanding. A better definition of what constitutes a worship service would be an important step forward in solving this present difficulty.

Sincerely,
Eric Landry
Escondido, California

Dear Mr. Shapiro,

I was impressed with your efficient spin wielded against "Sonship" in your March/April article, "Hundreds Attend Conference on Sanctification." You made a strawman from Dr. Williams' presentation, flogged him with [Dr.] Pipa's critique, turned [Dr.] Williams' response into a confession, and then finished him "off-the-stage" with a volley from moral high ground. You have to fight for truth with zeal. You can be but so courteous to those in error.

But here you have engaged a fight that will hurt the church rather than purify her. Spend your spin on issues that really compromise truth—like creation and qualifications of preachers. Christians-in-the-pew want to believe the Bible, and we will be better for that fight. But destructing "Sonship" goes to the gospel of grace that

has brought hope to many an ex-Pharisee. Are we so wrong to say that saving faith is "... resting upon Christ alone ... for sanctification ... by virtue of the covenant of grace"? Rushdoony's line, "Justification is by grace through faith, sanctification is by the law," sounds more dangerous. Still, I can allow for the help ex-antinomians have found in theonomy. Can you reciprocate and make your Sonship critiques constructive?

Respectfully,
Richard M. Neville
Newport News, Virginia

[Frank J. Smith responds: Mr. Shapiro wanted me, as the one who wrote the article on the Conference on Sanctification, to respond to Mr. Neville's letter. First of all, let me say that I have no particular animus against Sonship, and I certainly have no particular animus against people associated with that movement. I would think that the favorable review I wrote of John Miller's book, which appeared in the November-December 2000 issue of this newspaper, would help to underscore that fact. Moreover, I myself appreciate the emphasis upon grace which is characteristic of Sonship. That is not to say that I would necessarily agree with everything that Sonship has taught: for example, I believe that there may indeed be an anti-nomian streak in at least some of its teaching. But I have certainly not been on a crusade against Sonship. Secondly, I believe that we accurately reported what transpired at the conference. Dr. Pipa did launch what was viewed by everyone with whom I spoke as a devastating critique; and Dr. Williams did, in the estimation of everyone with whom I spoke, make major concessions. The article is not an example of a "strawman". It is simply a straightforward reporting of the facts. Third, it is newsworthy when the man chosen by the movement to be its spokesman at a major conference makes these admissions of theological weaknesses in the program. Moreover, it is precisely through this iron sharpening of iron that we in the Reformed faith will come to a better understanding of the doctrines and practice of grace.]

First Presbyterian Church of Rowlett, Texas, is pleased to announce that Dr. Frank J. Smith will be preaching at the Lord's Day morning worship service on June 17, 2001. The congregation meets at 8210 Schrade Road, Rowlett. From downtown Dallas, proceed east on I-30 to exit 64 (Dalrock Road); proceed north one and a half miles to Schrade Road; turn left; the church building is immediately on the left. Those wishing to partake of communion should plan on meeting with the elders fifteen minutes prior to the 10:30 AM service. Visitors are invited to lunch, which is followed by an afternoon service at 2:00 PM. You may contact the Rev. Dr. Richard Bacon, Pastor, at (972)475-5414.

OPC Pastor Addresses Greenville Seminary Graduates

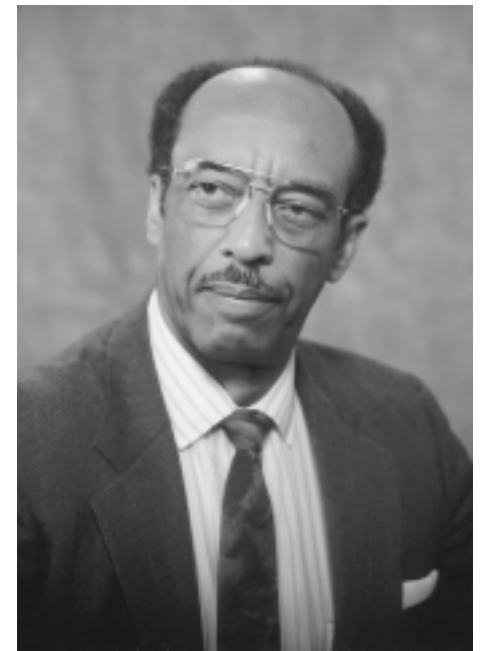
At Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary's Commencement exercises on May 18, Dr. Robert Cameron, pastor of Mount Carmel Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) in Somerset, New Jersey, and GPTS Trustee, addressed the assembly. He preached on the text 1 Timothy 4:16, "Take heed to yourself . . .," encouraging the graduates to look on this occasion as the beginning of a life of study and self-examination.

"The ministry is a life of study," said Dr. Cameron. "God's people are not sanctified on junk food." He also warned the nine graduating men and the 250 people gathered in the Greenville Seminary Chapel to take heed not to fall into gross or secret sins. Quoting a study in *Christianity Today*, Dr. Cameron pointed to the rise in internet-based pornography and its grip on ministers in the evangelical church. "Don't think that you have achieved victory in your sanctification. You haven't. You have only arrived at the point where the battle is intensifying," said Dr. Cameron.

This was the 11th Commencement at Greenville Seminary. Of the nine graduates, three are entering ministry in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). Hugh Acton will be pursuing ordination after completing an internship at Center Point church in Moore, South Carolina; Stephen Dufresne is currently pursuing licensure and working with Providence church in Spartanburg, South Carolina; Josh Martin will be working as the PCA's Reformed University Fellowship campus minister to Delta State College in Cleveland, Mississippi. Four of the graduates are entering the ministry in the OPC, one graduate is continuing his ministry as a Ruling Elder in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARP), and one

graduate is pursuing a higher theological degree.

Dr. Joseph Pipa, president of Greenville Seminary, reflecting on the occasion, said, "Graduation means many different things in modern culture, but for a seminary committed to proclaiming the sovereignty of Jesus Christ over all things, the things to which we are committed are diametrically opposed to that culture. The spirit of modern culture has captured the Church as well. So our men are graduating to fight a war."



Dr. Robert Cameron

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Meadow Creek's Three Complaints Are Denied

Moderator Warns That Charges Will Be Filed Against Former Pastor

Abingdon, Virginia (May 15, 2001)— At a recessed stated meeting this evening, Westminster Presbytery denied three complaints which had been brought by the Session of Meadow Creek Presbyterian Church (MCPC), Greeneville, Tennessee. And in a dramatic moment at the beginning of this evening's session, the Moderator of the Presbytery, the Rev. Bill Leuzinger, warned Meadow Creek's former pastor, the Rev. Jim Thornton, that he would be bringing judicial charges against him.

The three complaints all revolved around the intervention of the Presbytery into the turmoil at the Meadow Creek Church. Serving as counsel for the complainants was the Rev. John Irwin, Pastor of Arcadia Presbyterian Church, Kingsport, Tennessee. The Rev. Jim Thornton, who was Pastor at MCPC when the complaints were lodged, also spoke.

The first complaint alleged that the Presbytery had "failed to 'condemn erroneous opinions which injure the purity or peace of the church' as BCO 13-9(f) says. The Session of MCPC pointed out to the Presbytery that a Diotrophes, in the church had spread the opinion that a Session couldn't cite people to appear before the Session without charging them. He furthermore said that his counsel had informed him of this, and that his counsel was Perry Mason."

The first complaint also maintained that the provision of the *Book of Church Order* which mandates that courts "demand from . . . persons satisfactory explanations concerning reports affecting their Christian character" means that "citations" may be issued apart from charges having been filed. And the complaint stated that the Presbytery neglected to observe the "obvious bias" on the part of the Rev. Larry Ball against the Session and Pastor of MCPC, and neglected to recuse or remove him from the Shepherding Committee in this matter.

Mr. Irwin read from Philippians 4:10-14, as he argued: "We did not share fully in their struggles." Admitting that the specifications of error in the complaint may not have been "the best worded," the advocate noted that "Jim Thornton has lost his job. . . . This is a man who until this very night has never been brought up on charges." He also stated that Mr. Thornton and Mr. Ivan Ward, the remaining ruling elder at MCPC, "feel they have not been allowed to get the truth out. . . . The truth has not been made known."

Mr. Ball, who was Pastor at Meadow Creek from 1973 to 1977, gave an answer to the various allegations, both with regard to the Constitution and the matter of his involvement. He noted that the word "cite" has a technical meaning, in that it is used in a judicial and legal context, and that it was improper to use it apart from the proceedings of a trial. He also stated that he was not biased in the matter.

The Rev. Dr. Cortez Cooper argued for sustaining the complaint, stating: "It is my conviction that the court has erred in several significant ways. . . . Do you really believe in your heart that this court has handled this matter in its integrity? . . . We as a court did not act totally correctly."

The court denied the complaint, 34-21,

and spread Mr. Ball's written statement on the record as an adequate response.

The second complaint was against the action of the Shepherding Commission which had been appointed at the February 20, 2001, called meeting of Presbytery. That Commission had moved to suspend the trials of various individuals who had been charged by the Session, based on the Commission's understanding that the Session had agreed that there would be no further investigations while the Commission was investigating the turmoil at the church.

The Rev. Richard Hicks, Chairman of the Commission, presented the perspective of the Commission, answering the complaint point by point. The Presbytery denied the complaint, and spread Mr. Hicks' written statement on the record as an adequate response.

The third complaint focused on the setting aside of the judgments in the trials conducted by the Session in early March. The Presbytery, at a called meeting on March 15, 2001, voted to set aside those judgments, on the basis that the Session had illegally proceeded after the February 20, 2001, meeting of Presbytery with those judicial matters. Again, the Presbytery voted to deny this complaint.

This court activity came in a context in which the Presbytery Moderator stated that as he had mulled over the possible threat of Mr. Thornton taking civil action against the Meadow Creek Church or members thereof, he had concluded that even the very threat was sinful. He asked Mr. Thornton if he would repent of that sin.

Mr. Thornton stood and answered that, first of all, the possibility of civil action had been mentioned by the Session (which at the time consisted of himself and a ruling elder—Ed.), not by himself individually; secondly, a former Stated Clerk of the General Assembly had advised him that it was proper to seek civil relief with regard to a matter of slander; and thirdly, a well-respected member of the Presbytery had informed him that the PCA General Assembly had taken the position that a Christian could take another Christian to civil court. When Mr. Thornton would not indicate his change of mind on the matter, Mr. Leuzinger, with emotion, said, "I will be filing charges against you."

The Meadow Creek Church voted on April 15, 2001, 30-11, to dissolve the pastoral relationship with Mr. Thornton. The request for a congregational meeting, which had been demanded by the requisite number of church members, was denied by the Session. The meeting was finally held only after a complaint made its way to Presbytery. At the hearing, Mr. Thornton, representing the Session, indicated that the Session was withdrawing its opposition to the complaint, and the Shepherding Commission sustained the complaint and ordered that a congregational meeting be held.

On April 21, 2001, Westminster Presbytery dissolved the pastoral relationship. Upon the same occasion, the court warned Mr. Thornton that the bringing of civil action in the matter could subject him to judicial charges. Mr. Leuzinger took that one step further, by stating that even the threat of such action constituted a chargeable offense.

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Another Church Court Vindicates Burke Shade

As reported in *P&R News*, in spring 1999, Illiana Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) voted to depose and suspend from the Lord's Supper the Rev. Burke Shade (see "Illiana Deposes Carbondale Pastor," March 1999, pp. 25-26). He had been charged with erroneous views on baptism and evangelization; spreading injurious reports against two of the church's ruling elders; failure to be in subjection to church authority; and "countenancing activity on the part of both some members and some officers of the congregation . . . that disrupted the peace of the church and divided it" (see "Trial of Illinois Pastor Being Held in Executive Session; Illiana Lifts Gag Order, But Still Keeps Trial Closed," June 1999, pp. 26-27). At the time of the discipline, Mr. Shade had been the Pastor of Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Carbondale, Illinois.

Before the conclusion of his trial, he was examined and received by the Federation of Reformed Churches (FORC), a denomination which adheres to historic Reformed creeds but which also practices paedocommunion. The FORC presbytery, after hearing from a presbyter who had personally talked extensively with both sides in the matter, vindicated Mr. Shade. Subsequently, the elders of Covenant Reformed Church of Harrisonburg, Virginia, a FORC congregation, sent a communication to the 1999 PCA General Assembly, asking some pointed questions about the manner in which the Shade case was conducted by Illiana Presbytery.

A significant portion of the congregation of Evangelical Presbyterian Church peacefully left and formed Cornerstone Reformed Church, a congregation which eventually affiliated with the Confederation of Reformed Evangelicals (CRE). This confederation was founded by Christ Church, Moscow, Idaho, which is associated with the magazine *Credenda/Agenda* and New St. Andrews College. When Cornerstone Reformed Church, which is pastored by Burke Shade, applied for membership in the CRE, the elders of Christ Church looked into the matter. As is clear from their report, that church court also has vindicated the minister deposed by the PCA.

What follows is the initial report from the Christ Church elders; a reply from Illiana Presbytery; and a response from Christ Church. Indications are that Illiana has decided not to issue a further response, thereby effectively closing the matter.

Report on the PCA vs. Burke Shade Trial for CRE Evaluation

(Adopted August 17, 2000 by the Elders of Christ Church, Moscow, Idaho)

THE ELDERS OF CHRIST CHURCH, MOSCOW, IDAHO HAVE DETERMINED TO COMMEND Cornerstone Reformed Church, Carbondale, Illinois to the Confederation of Reformed Evangelicals (CRE) for admission into membership. This commendation is noteworthy because the pastor of Cornerstone Reformed Church, Burke P. Shade, was "deposed and indefinitely suspended from the sacraments" by Illiana Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). Our respect for that body compels us to publish this explanation of our commendation of and support for Pastor Shade. To our brothers in the Illiana Presbytery, we continue to extend the right hand of fellowship. We desire to strive for like-mindedness with that body and to pursue the purity and peace of the whole Church of Jesus Christ. We do so especially in regard to the present matter.

We thank Illiana Presbytery for giving consideration in their January 2000 business meeting to our request for the PCA vs. Shade trial documents and for forwarding those documents to us. Among the materials we

received were the transcript of the whole trial and all exhibits that were introduced during the course of the trial. Illiana Presbytery delivered these materials to us in good faith, understanding that we would use them "only for the purpose of adjudicating Cornerstone's entry into the CRE Denomination." It was for this very purpose that we studied these documents. In November 1999, Cornerstone Reformed Church asked Christ Church, Moscow, Idaho, to consider recommending them for membership in the CRE. To answer that question, we had to evaluate the trial record. Since we have no formal governmental connection to the Illiana Presbytery of the PCA, we could neither remand the case to them or serve as an appellate court. With that lack of connection, we had to answer the question on the basis of basic principles of biblical justice which all presbyterians share. And since the PCA is a faithful presbyterian church, we began evaluating the case by assuming the correctness of the Illiana decision, with Shade having the burden of proof.

And yet, after examining the case, we do recommend affirming Pastor Shade's qualifications as a minister of the Gospel. This we could never do had Shade been justly tried and convicted by a legitimate ecclesiastical authority, one such as Illiana Presbytery. But the trial of Shade before Illiana Presbytery fell well short of scriptural standards of justice, as we shall explain below.

We continue in peace with the Illiana Presbytery and with the whole PCA communion, so far as it depends upon us. This bond includes but is not limited to the fact that we accept baptisms performed by PCA ministers, we admit new members on the basis of transfer from the PCA, and we invite PCA members in good standing to sit with us at the Lord's table and partake of the bread and cup. Yet, we have had to conclude that the Illiana Presbytery of the PCA judged Shade unjustly in its trial of him from December 1998 through April 1999, so we cannot support their judgment in that instance.

Note the following background summary followed by our particular criticisms of the case:

Summary of Events Leading to the Trial

In broadest terms, this trial grew out of a large theological paradigm difference within the session of EPC. On one side stood the pastor, Burke Shade and ruling elder, Mark Akin; on the other stood ruling elders Randy Moore and Joe Kesler. As in most such paradigm conflicts, at various points along the way, both sides started losing personal trust in the other and started reading in or began noticing more malicious motives and moral failings.

For some time before the trial, various disagreements simmered on the session, including a counseling case (January-February 1998) and pay concerns (April 1998), but most of the developing disagreements stemmed from a creeping suspicion with Moore and Kesler that Shade was leading the church away from a more Scottish, regulativist presbyterianism toward a more Roman Catholic/Episcopal expression. From the Shade-Akin angle (though not expressly stated by them), the disagreements stemmed not from a creeping Roman Catholicism but from an attempt to be more richly biblical within the Westminster Confession tradition in contrast to a more intellectualistic, gnostic-leaning American presbyterianism.

Within this broad clash of paradigms, two doctrinal issues finally stood out by the time of the trial, namely, the nature of baptism and eldership. In the session's attempt to sort through some of these issues in mid-1998, the air between them became especially charged. After the Moore-Kesler side moved to require more ruling elder involvement in worship or exclude the pastor from parts (June 10, 1998), Shade filed a formal complaint against the session which was denied

and appealed to presbytery (September 1998). Subsequently, the presbytery denied the complaint (October 17, 1998). In the sessional discussion that ensued on this complaint, the Moore-Kesler portion of the session asked Shade to address the Roman Catholic/Episcopal drift that they perceived. Shade preached a sermon on baptism in July 1998, and Moore-Kesler viewed this as Shade's response to their questions. This sermon later provoked parts of the final charges.

Drawn into the midst of this controversy were two other teaching elders of the Illiana presbytery, namely, Wyatt George, former pastor of EPC, and Brian DeJong, an EPC-sponsored church-planter in Marion, Illinois. By October, several members of the EPC congregation, with Shade's knowledge, compiled a petition seeking to ask the EPC session to call a congregational meeting (in their perspective, something in accord with the PCA Book of Church Order) to consider the removal of Randy Moore as a ruling elder of EPC (October 20, 1998). In the midst of all this, George and DeJong became allied with Moore and Kesler, and they all claimed Shade had committed several personal sins which warranted formal charges against him. George and DeJong finally formulated and filed two specifications of sin against Shade. The Illiana presbytery formally received these on November 9, 1998 and proceeded in closed session. By the next meeting, DeJong expanded the initial two specifications into four charges (1. "doctrinal views" in "violation" of presbyterian standards, 2. "spreading injurious reports," 3. "failure to be in subjection to lawful church authority" [dropped], and 4. "countenancing" schismatic activity) with sixteen specifications.

At the next meeting, November 30, 1998, Pastor Shade pled "guilty" to two of the sixteen specifications, the two dealing with speaking injuriously about a fellow elder. He did this, he claimed, because he had already repented of those sins at a private meeting with another elder and Randy Moore (August 31). At that meeting, according to Shade, Moore declined to grant Shade forgiveness, or according to Moore, Shade "offended in his excuse."

The actual consideration of testimony for the charges began at the presbytery meeting of December 18, 1998. And there, after denying a complaint from Shade that objected to the presbytery including specifications he had already sought to rectify, the presbytery censured Shade for the specification he pled guilty to by imposing an indefinite suspension from the sacraments and his pastoral office until a commission of presbytery could be convinced of his repentance.

The trial continued through six meetings, ending on April 17, 1999. In the end, the Illiana presbytery, with DeJong as prosecutor, found Shade guilty of ten specifications, acquitted him of one, and dropped the remaining five. Though the prosecution sought stronger language concerning Shade's view of baptism, the presbytery declined to convict him of theological error, and in effect altered Charge One, saying that Shade "does not presently appear to hold heretical views about the efficacy of baptism." Nonetheless, they "admonish him for the way in which he has upset the peace and purity of the Church by his teaching in a manner in which he approached the teaching of that doctrine." After the guilty verdicts, the presbytery imposed the censure of deposition from office of teaching elder.

Critical Failings of the Case

1. The Illiana Presbytery never kept formal minutes of any of the six trial meetings.

Carefully approved minutes provide a publicly agreed upon basis by which outsiders can examine specific authoritative judgments of a group. Minutes specify such things as the roll

of legal voters and the means by which a higher court can review specific judgments, citations, etc.

The PCA Book of Church Order explicitly states that "*Minutes* of the trial shall be kept by the clerk, which shall exhibit the charges, the answer, written record of the testimony, as defined by BCO 35-7, and all such acts, orders, and decisions of the court relating to the case, as either party may desire, and also the judgment. The clerk shall without delay assemble the Record of the Case which shall consist of the charges, the answer, the citations and returns thereto, and the *minutes* herein required to be kept" (BCO 32-18; *emph. added*).

Though the PCA BCO requires minutes as a distinct part of the "Record of the Case," the Illiana Presbytery and/or its trial judicatory did not do so (or include the required witness citations), though the clerk of presbytery has replied to us that "the trial was conducted per PCA/BCO 32." Instead of minutes, the presbytery received poorly corrected and incomplete transcripts. But incomplete transcripts are not publicly approved minutes. Moreover, due to technical problems, the transcripts omit various court actions, several testimony blocks, attendance records, many speaker identities, etc. They also reveal a lack of familiarity with some of the basic theological vocabulary in contention (the defendant, for example, is several times accused of tending toward a "sasserodialist" position, rather than "sacerdotalist"). Nevertheless, the presbytery itself received the record of the case and approved it for distribution (January 2000).

Without the protection and authority of publicly approved minutes, an accurate history of the case is simply nonexistent. Even if the defendant had wanted to appeal the case, the higher court would not have had a specific, clear record by which to judge irregularities or even the attendance roll to examine who was voting on the charges.

2. The Prosecutor and the Illiana Presbytery acted in gross haste in bringing and receiving charges of theological error (Charge One).

The charges concerning doctrinal errors (baptism/eldership) show up at presbytery for the first time at the November 30, 1998 meeting, with adjudication and testimony to follow only three weeks later. The presbytery had no precedent or easy familiarity available to categorize the alleged errors. In addition, the trial testimony revealed that other leading PCA teachers held similar views, views grounded in the language of the Confession, Charles Hodge, and John Calvin. Moreover, the errors were not blatant, such as a denial of God's omniscience or the reality of hell, and the accused embraced the teaching of the Westminster Confession and openly denied that he held to baptismal regeneration or evangelism-by-pastors-alone.

The charges involved far more subtle background and historical knowledge than any normal individual could grasp in several years, let alone adjudicate within weeks. In fact, the trial testimony revealed a clear lack of historical and theological breadth needed to evaluate the doctrinal questions involved (even the key expert witness admitted as much under cross-examination; see below).

Before rushing to adjudicate such charges, the presbytery ought to have instituted a broad commission to evaluate the claims far more carefully and report back to presbytery before receiving any charges. "Where no counsel is, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Prov. 11:14).

3. The Illiana presbytery acted rashly at the first trial meeting (December 18, 1998) in imposing the sentence of indefinite suspension from the sacraments as a response to the

defendant's claim that he had already repented for the two specifications in question.

The trial testimony reveals that the defendant confessed his sin (of saying that an elder had "run off" the former pastor) and sought forgiveness from the elder concerned, as well as those to whom it was relayed. But the presbytery determined that Shade had not given "satisfactory evidence of repentance" and suspended him from the sacraments indefinitely.

The presbytery made this determination upon hearing the prosecutor's own assertions which failed biblical standards of evidence. It allowed the prosecutor to represent the words of others rather than calling these others to speak for themselves (Joe Kesler, Randy Moore, Wyatt George, Tom Jones, Moore's and George's representation of Tom Jones, a tape recording, and even unidentified "reports"). After this, the presbytery heard the prosecutor, who had yet called no witnesses, conclude, "I offered you not merely my personal private opinion, unsubstantiated. That would be inappropriate. I brought this with the testimony of two witnesses, myself, TE George, and in some respects TE Tom Jones" (T2-6).

Instead of accepting Shade's attempts to seek forgiveness or even investigating the issue more thoroughly before censure, the presbytery immediately suspended him from the sacraments and then from office in January.

4. The prosecutor and the Illiana presbytery permitted unwieldy specifications and testimony of a vast array of events that no court could justly adjudicate, including petty events tangentially related to the specifications, including but not limited to piano playing, movie attendance, church check policy, and sexual annulment.

By allowing such broadness of testimony and specifications, the presbytery showed such unreasonable sloppiness that it could not have sufficient knowledge to adjudicate all the facts and charges justly—"In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise" (Prov. 10:19). At the same time, the judicatory members repeatedly complained about the lack of time, even though they approved such broad array of evidence. Wisdom would have required narrow, specific charges and precluded multiplying the charges just prior to the trial. Even assuming the prosecutor of this case is innocent of "padding the charges," the presbytery should have been very wary and protective of his reputation, since it is common in conservative Presbyterian circles to file as many charges as possible so that at least some will stick.

5. The prosecutor and presbytery acted confusedly in calling church members to testify as to their understanding of Burke Shade's understanding of various theological points.

In one of the more bizarre turns in the trial, the prosecution called, and presbytery permitted, numerous witnesses to testify about their understanding of the beliefs of Shade. At times, several presbyters noted the oddness of this process, but it continued and was allowed as evidence in a trial of theological error. Since Shade was the focus, the prosecution needed to limit his proof to relevant testimony, namely, Shade's testimony and writings, not lay interpretations of the same.

In response to questions from our trial committee, the prosecutor (Brian DeJong) explained that the doctrinal charge "was not about what TE Shade believed but what he taught (past tense). . . . Did he teach it? Yes he did: the fact is established by the testimony of more than two witnesses." But this response clearly fails to answer the objection of witnesses speaking for the defendant. Whether regarding belief or some "belief-absent" teaching, the lay witnesses are still being asked to explain the subtleties of Shade's views.

6. The prosecutor and presbytery erred in allowing the trial to turn into a debate over words and individual interpretations of words.

In charge after charge, the trial descends into a debate over personal meanings and the scope of a word's meaning. And yet this course was evident upon reading the initial charges. When this becomes the central focus of a trial, the judicatory is forced into countless subjectivities that remove it from sound judgment. A wiser court would demand, up front, better evidence than the testimony of conflicting personal interpretations. Adultery, theft, and property are charges more easily adjudicated in the public realm. A court should only agree to delve into the more vaporous world of words when the case can be made not on the basis of conflicting subjective interpretations but on more easily verifiable patterns of public documentation (not single statements, letters, or sermons). The Illiana presbytery needed to heed the scriptural warning: "charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit" (2 Tim. 2:4; cf. 1 Tim. 6:4).

7. Everyone in the trial assumed that there was no ethical problem in unreflectively subsuming any and all civil rules into an ecclesiastical court.

The civil realm operates under assumptions of power and the sword. The ecclesiastical realm operates within the context of service in faith, hope, and love. Each realm is important in its place, but to mix them without careful thought invites injustice. To assume civil rules without biblical reflection in a church court allows assumptions of raw civil power into Christ's courts. Both sides in this trial, along with presbytery, regularly intruded civil principles into church court questions.

For example, at one point (T7A-B), Shade's counsel objects to the ongoing hearsay evidence, and the prosecutor responds by invoking civil rules about hearsay without any biblical context. Nothing official is done. Similarly, the prosecution invokes the civil rules concerning witnesses to answer a presbyter's objection (T21A-B). More relevantly to questions of truth versus power, the prosecutor defends his use of deceptive questioning of opposing witnesses by declaring that civil rules admit leading questions (18A-B). Power over truth also comes into play during a deposition of Robert Reymond, the key theological witness for the prosecution. In that deposition, after questioning by Shade, Dr. Reymond says to Shade that "just by the reading of the one sermon, I have not had, I was not given sufficient material to, uh, just your total views and I am, and I was passing judgment simply on the basis of that one sermon. Do you understand that?" This in itself would be quite an admission in a civil court. Shade replies, "Yes, sir, and I appreciate that and I know you have no personal animosity against me." Immediately both the prosecutor and Wyatt George object and ask to have the last comment from the defendant stricken from the record. But they didn't object to prior irregularities in questioning, only this one which was closer to determining truth.

These sorts of civil-rule invocations are quite common in conservative Presbyterian circles, but it is time to begin challenging this entire paradigm because it is not honoring to Christ's Church. Much work needs to be done to rethink these power rules, tossing out unbiblical assumptions. It would be better to do that than allow cases of this sort where issues of truth and justice turn on the rules in use. Christ told us not to exercise power but service, and this applies when we unthinkingly assume that civil rules and power plays can automatically work in the courts of Christ: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20:25-27).

8. The prosecutor and presbytery acted hypocritically in condemning Shade for spreading injurious reports about an elder (Charge Two) but allowing witnesses and evidence to do the same to Shade without constraint.

Charge Two (specifications II.A.3.4, and II.B) accuses Shade of spreading injurious reports about ruling elders Moore and Kesler (which included negative comments to the effect that these elders were trying to discredit him and/or were holding views of eldership similar to his). Part of the defendant's defense was that these comments were made as part of a legal response to a complaint-response given to presbytery by these elders. The presbytery declined to see any special protection for speech in legal documents, thus saying that such language was impermissible even in trial situations. And yet, not only does the Moore paper to which Shade replied contain negative observations about Shade (e.g., suggesting that Shade was unsubmissive, dishonest, stubborn, disingenuous, and tending toward heretical views), but the trial testimony of these two elders is full of very strong negative comments about Shade. Kesler and Moore testified that Shade was a liar, belligerent, destructive, crushing, circumventive, heretical, sacerdotal, and a "hydroheaded monster"[sic](T25A-B,1-22). This language was also in an unprotected legal context and highly negative, but no member of presbytery objected to these elders' charges or brought them up on charges. Shade's language was much milder, and yet he was brought up on charges and censured for saying far less than his accusers did.

Again, consider that point in the trial when the presbytery indulged Moore as he grossly imputed motives to Shade: "One can look at what was the purpose of these statements [of Shade], and one can then draw the conclusion that there is no repentance because he retains the fruit of his sin, . . . which is namely, [speaking for Shade] I want this elder out of the church so that I can proceed with my doctrinal agenda. And, uh, in order to do so I am going to malign his name and engender this petition against him." Given the charges received against Shade, we should expect charges to be brought against Moore for this "injurious report" about the defendant. And yet, just a moment later (same page in the transcript), presbytery heard Moore speak with a chilling lack of self-awareness, "Some have reached false conclusions, and I don't know where they get their information. I have totally, I have tried to be very circumspect and keep my mouth shut. . . . I have said nothing bad about Burke" (T3A-B,3).

When our committee asked the prosecutor about such blatant hypocrisy in bringing this charge, the prosecutor responded, "Mr. Shade at no time brought up any of the substance of RE Moore's response. He did not address him about any sins committed by RE Moore in the paper." But Shade's response to this question is quite irrelevant to the issue of biblical justice. The fact that he did not object to being called a "hydra-headed monster" among other things does not remove the reality of the hypocrisy. Those who do the very same thing as the one they charged ought, at least, to be denied their day in court. The Illiana Presbytery failed to rectify a grossly hypocritical injustice.

The presbytery acted in hypocritical incompetence in receiving such charges, and especially in demanding repentance from Shade while the trial participants were freely allowed much more grievous declarations of "injurious reports" against Shade. "So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her'" (John 8:7). And similarly, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" (Matt. 7:1-3).

9. The prosecutor, witnesses, and several

presbyters failed to comprehend basic literary genre in arguing for Charge Four (schism) when they declared a satirical "smoking gun" essay to be advocating church splits, when it does just the opposite.

At a key turning point in the trial, the prosecutor turned witness and declared that Shade followed a James Jordan essay, "The Effective Church Splitters Guide," in destroying the EPC. This is a satirical essay written against jobless pastors seeking to divide a church and gain new employment. The prosecutor/witness declared his misreading openly: "it is hard to see the marks of satire. And in reading it you'll see that this is the agenda and the game plan that was used to try and take out Randy Moore and end up splitting the congregation of EPC" (T31A-B). Kesler and Moore were convinced of this reading, as are several presbyters.

The misreading of this essay is so sophomoric that not only do the accusers fail to see the essay mocking church splitters and jobless pastors on the prowl (Shade was not seeking a church but already served in theirs), but they also fail to see that, at several key points, the essay would indict them. Most ironically, the essay suggests that the would-be church splitter should complain about the church being inclined to Roman Catholicism and that the view of eldership was too tyrannical. These are in fact the two doctrinal charges that the accusers bring against Shade. According to their reading of the essay, they could fit the church splitter portrait well. And yet, this essay (though not listed as supporting evidence under the received charges) is allowed to capture the imagination of the presbyters in such a way that Shade is found guilty on Charge Four. Wisdom demands meditation and careful judgment; Proverbs warns us: "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?" (Prov. 1:22).

10. The prosecutor and presbytery failed to show that the heart of Charge Four was illegal or schismatic, namely that what petitioners followed was the permissible BCO means of seeking the removal of a ruling elder by petition.

Charge Four, specifications IV.A.3-6, focus on the proposed congregation petition of October 20, 1998 in which several families ask the elders to call a congregational meeting to consider removing Moore as a ruling elder. Because Shade was aware of the petition and "countenanced" it, the presbytery found him guilty of schism. The petitioners, however, sought to follow a perfectly legal procedure within the PCA Book of Church Order (24-6): "The ruling elder or deacon, though chargeable with neither heresy nor immorality, may become unacceptable in his official capacity to a majority of the church which he serves. In such a case the church may take the initiative by a majority vote at a regularly called congregational meeting, and request the Session to dissolve the official relationship between the church and the officer without censure. . . ."

The petitioners followed this procedure and had more than the requisite number of signatures, and yet Shade is charged with schism for allowing this BCO procedure to proceed. Under the presbytery's adjudication of this charge, no congregation would ever be able to follow the PCA BCO without falling into the sin of schism. Shade, in other words, is being tried for allowing members to follow the Book of Church Order.

Wyatt George testified that the session ruled the petition "unconstitutional on the grounds that it attempted to remove a ruling elder without process even though charges were in the petition" (T29A-B). Even if there were some technical error in the petition, the elders ought to have returned it for correction instead of leaning on legal technicalities to deny the voice of a legally petitioning body. Nonetheless, the petitioners didn't believe the petition contained charges of the sort noted by the BCO. They did not charge the ruling elder in question with "heresy or

immorality." But they did find him "unacceptable" enough that they sought help from the elders in the form of a congregational meeting. This perfectly legal process was denied and turned against the petitioners and pastor.

In reply to our committee's question about this, the prosecutor stated, "If the petition had simply quoted 24-6 without citing the chargeable offenses, it would have been constitutional." Rather than justifying the session's action, we find this a direct admission of allowing a technicality to override a legitimate request, a technicality that ultimately helped depose a pastor. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matt. 23:23).

Summary and Exhortations:

In sum, the elders of Christ Church find the PCA vs. Burke Shade case of the Illiana presbytery to involve serious biblical failings, serious enough to reject this particular trial as an expression of legitimate ecclesiastical adjudication honoring to Christ. If we were in such a legal position to have such a case appealed to us, we would recommend a complete overturning of all charges and specifications on the grounds of the very basic biblical principles of justice listed above. This case should be seen as an embarrassment to conservative presbyterians across the nation, the CRE included.

Though one would think that such a case should have almost automatically been appealed to the General Assembly, the current state of most presbyterian denominations, including the PCA, precludes the sort of swift decision-making characteristic of biblical justice (Eccl. 8:1; Ezra 7:26; Ps. 31:2, 69:17, 102:2). Appeals to the highest presbyterian courts often take more than a year, while (in this case) denying the appellant any means of family support during that time. Moreover, the higher court will often remand a case back to the presbytery for a retrial, extending the process further in a court that had already shown incompetence on several fronts.

And yet for all the Illiana Presbytery's failures in basic justice as outlined above, it's very important to note that we do not find the principal people involved to be malicious or evil. Quite the contrary. We believe the Illiana Presbytery and the prosecutor to be men motivated by godly zeal in protecting Christ's Church. We can gladly assume that they are wonderful husbands and fathers, with faithful children. We view the men of the Illiana presbytery as those who had tried to be faithful and had grown "weary in well doing" (Gal. 6:9).

But all sides seemed naïve about the power of paradigms to turn opponents into demons, where minor sins get blown into vast proof of malicious conspiracies. Both sides in this clash have demonized the other, and both can tell stories about extra-trial injustices perpetrated by the other. But this is sadly the characteristic of almost every ecclesiastical trial. Anyone who has lived through numerous ecclesiastical trials can see the same patterns repeated over and over, especially in presbyterian circles.

The participants in the trial obviously know much more about each other than a distant third party does (and we can see things that those too close can't). But like any evaluating body, our committee needed to keep its focus on the trial documents, despite their limits. And in those documents, the Illiana presbytery easily failed to make its case justly. Providence may show our judgment wrong. Providence may show that the Illiana Presbytery was right about the man, but it was certainly wrong in the trial. Both Burke Shade's current pastorate, as well as future Illiana trials could lend support one way or another. But this trial failed to do that in a just manner.

Our brotherly exhortations to the Illiana Presbytery are found in their failings listed above, well-motivated as that body was. But we need to conclude with three exhortations for Burke Shade

(though applicable to all involved in the trial), especially if the CRE receives Shade and Cornerstone Reformed Church into formal fellowship.

Despite the injustices that have occurred to Burke Shade in these events, the fact remains that these things took place "on his watch" as pastor, and so he bears covenantal responsibility for these events, even though he doesn't bear the guilt for others' sins.

1. We exhort Burke Shade to walk ever more circumspectly and sensitively when dealing with brothers and sisters (especially those in authority) who have very different paradigms than his. In answer to our questions on this point, Shade explained that he "did not believe that there were large paradigm differences before the summer of 1998." But paradigm differences show themselves not only in open conflict, but even among friends. And it is in the time of friendship that we must walk more carefully than ever. These paradigm differences should have been seen even before coming on as pastor of that church in 1992. In response to related questions, Shade has said, "I have convictions in most areas, but where they are not direct commands, then I have to be pastoral in my care of others and allow them freedom to grow into those convictions and be happy with them until they do, or if they never do. I am also willing to be patient while teaching, knowing that God brings people along at different rates, even as He has me."

2. In a related concern, we exhort Burke Shade to train any congregation under his charge in the lifelong wisdom of striving toward oneness. This involves creating an environment where people instinctively bear with one another, don't take offense so quickly, or impute evil motives.

3. We exhort Burke Shade before coming into the CRE to resist the habits so common in certain conservative circles to resort so quickly to legal solutions for church problems. Biblical wisdom shows us that a "soft answer" (Prov. 15:1), not a formal complaint, turns away wrath. Even in response to legal injustices, a legal reply is almost always hopeless among brothers. It would be better to be oppressed in most cases than to turn to legal solutions. In response to questions related to this, Shade has said, "I do not believe the adversarial model of reconciliation is appropriate between brothers, except for cases of unrepentant objective trespassing. . . . [O]ne of the reasons the F.O.R.C. [Federation of Reformed Churches] appealed to me was their insistence on limiting the content in the BCO so that members automatically have to work from the Scriptures to resolve their disputes, in wisdom and love, rather than from the cold and hard facts of procedure."

In the end, our prayer is that God's grace would prevail for His glory and mercy upon us and all those involved in the trial of the PCA vs. Burke Shade.

Illiana Replies

January 7, 2001

Dear Elders of Christ Church,

In response to your report on the PCA vs. Burke Shade trial, we will attempt to heed the words of Proverbs 10:19 that in the multitude of words there is sin and therefore keep our response brief. It is not our intent to question point by point your decision to disregard our discipline of Mr. Shade. We acknowledge the care with which you studied the trial transcripts and the detail of your response. However, we do disagree with many of your conclusions. We will limit our responses to page 2, the first actual page of your analysis.

In paragraph 2 on page two, your analysis leads us to conclude that you received much of your information from Mr. Shade and Mr. Akin since your analysis could not have been gleaned from the court records alone. We wonder why you did not consult the Session before making your recommendation? In every issue, there are obviously at least two sides (Proverbs 18:17).

Furthermore, paragraphs 2 and 3 do not really capture the essence of the dispute. Since the trial, further information has come to light that shows covert efforts to undermine and circumvent the elders were well under way as early as 1996. Failure to submit to the brethren has always been at the heart of the dispute (Ephesians 5:21).

Paragraph 4 sentence 2 does not represent the facts accurately. The petition took place with more than just Mr. Shade's knowledge. Sometime before the petition was circulated, Mr. Shade contacted Dr. Morton Smith, perhaps the foremost authority on our book of Church Order, as to its appropriateness. Dr. Smith told him in no uncertain terms that the petition, as worded, was not appropriate, yet Mr. Shade continued to encourage its circulation. Instead he should have followed the Biblical pattern given in Matthew 18:15-17.

Paragraph 5 on page 2 makes it appear that Mr. Shade's guilty plea and claim of repentance should have sufficed to warrant his forgiveness and restoration. However, the committee appointed on December 18, 1998 to work with Mr. Shade on repentance and reconciliation discovered that Mr. Shade continued to spread injurious reports about the two elders after November 30 and December 18. The committee found that his equivocations and semantic arguments were not characteristic of genuine repentance. (II Corinthians 7:10-11)

Now, if the first page of your analysis contains these many possible questionable conclusions, we would hope you might revisit your entire analysis and decision. You have intimated that Illiana Presbytery failed to provide an objective trial for Mr. Shade. The presbytery attempted to conduct as judicious a trial as we knew how given our human limitations. Whether serving as witnesses, prosecutor, juror, or defense counsel, each presbyter was fully aware of his accountability before God. Although time restraints were occasionally put in place, they were imposed in such a manner that neither position was given an advantage. It should be noted that at no time did Mr. Shade complain that we were being unfair. If we have unfairly judged Mr. Shade, he had the right, until he withdrew from the PCA, to appeal to the General Assembly. Instead he chose to examine routes of escape even during the trial. Please understand our own concern about your objectivity when we have discovered that at least two leaders from Christ Church were in communication with Mr. Shade about his reception into the CRE as early as February 22, 1999, halfway through the trial. If the CRE was already interested in talking with Mr. Shade about his reception into the CRE then, how are we to conclude that you were able to objectively evaluate our records since then?

It is possible to find discrepancies in any trial and we are confident that given the hindsight that you and we now have, we could have done better in some ways. Where we have erred, we are certainly willing to receive correction. Indeed, as James 2:2 states, "We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says (and does), he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check." We do not claim to be perfect and we certainly hope to learn from our mistakes, but we do not believe that we erred in our final larger conclusions concerning Mr. Shade.

In Luke 17:3 Jesus says, "If a brother sins, rebuke him and if he repents, forgive him." Our presbytery found Mr. Shade guilty of injuring the purity and peace of the church. As far as we can tell, Mr. Shade has not repented but is in fact enjoying the fruits of the division by leading a group that is more to his liking. We would like nothing better than to restore Mr. Shade upon his genuine repentance and bring unity in the Church, all to the glory of God. We had hoped that our sister reformed churches would honor our discipline of Mr. Shade and help him come to repentance rather than offer him escape.

We would note the truth of your statement on Page 9 that "The participants in the trial obviously know much more about each other

than a distant third party does." Indeed, since the trial much more information has come to light that you are not aware that only serves to confirm our discipline. We doubt though that debating those points will be of much value for the broader kingdom to which God has called the PCA or the CRE. Because we are concerned that your fellowship of churches not face the same debilitating division and trail we went through, we encourage you to reconsider receiving into your midst someone who encouraged and worked toward the division of a body of Christ that has damaged the cause of Christ in the community of Carbondale (Titus 3:10). We regard you as brothers in Christ and desire only God's blessings on our fellowship of churches. Indeed we shall wait to see what Providence will show about our actions and those of Mr. Shade.

For God's glory by His grace,
L. William Hesterberg, Chairman of the Illiana Commission appointed to Respond

Idaho Responds

April 10, 2001

Illiana Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America

Attention: L. William Hesterberg, Moderator
Concord Presbyterian Church

835 N. Market St.

Waterloo, IL 62298

Attention: Dale Eisenreich, Clerk

2314 Briarcliff Dr.

Alton, IL 62002-6909

Dear Gentlemen,

Greetings from Idaho. Thank you for your recent response to our report on the PCA vs. Burke Shade trial. We're are sincerely grateful, as well, that through you the Illiana Presbytery declares that "we regard you as brothers in Christ and desire only God's blessings on your fellowship of churches." Our own desire from the outset has been to approach these matters in good fellowship with you, and we have genuinely sought to uphold your discipline so far as the scriptures will permit us. Nonetheless, we had hoped for a better explanation of the ten critical failings we pointed out. Instead you chose just to direct several questions against us based on assumptions for which you have no basis:

1. You say that we unfairly gleaned information for our page two, paragraph 2, from Mr. Shade and Mr. Akin regarding the ideological clash in this dispute between regulativist vs. nonregulativist perspectives, since our "analysis could not have been gleaned from the court records alone."

But this is quite false. Our committee did not contact either of these men in formulating anything in that paragraph. You can find the sources for this paragraph in Randy Moore's "Response to Complaint" (7/7/98) and throughout the trial (see, for example, Meeting March 13, 1999, pages 4 and 10). A more careful look at the record will show you that this was a pervasive feature in the trial.

2. You say that we failed to consult the Session "before making your recommendation." In fact, before finalizing our report for the CRE we sent it to the men who had brought the charges and had been representing the EPC session in correspondence. In a letter of August 28, 2000, Mr. DeJong declined to make any factual corrections though he was provided with the opportunity.

3. You claim that paragraphs two and three of the same page "do not really capture the essence of the dispute" since "further" post-trial "information has come to light that shows covert efforts to undermine and circumvent the elders."

Please note that your own Book of Church Order forbids an appellate court from considering anything not in the record. Moreover, we hope that before you spread such reports, you confirm such new charges in accord with the strictures against talebearing. The Presbytery's admitting of unconfirmed accusations and yet prosecuting
(Continued on page 22)

News From The Presbyteries

James River

The One-Hundred and First Stated Meeting of James River Presbytery was held at River's Edge Bible Church, Hopewell, Virginia, on January 20, 2001. The Moderator, the Rev. Bob Hobson preached on the sanctity of life.

Presbytery approved the reports of the Commission to ordain and install C. James Watson, III, as Pastor of Centralia Presbyterian Church, Chester, Virginia; and of the Commission to ordain and install Ewan Kennedy as Assistant Pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Charlottesville, Virginia.

The treasurer's report for 2000 was received. The beginning balance in 2000 was \$44,753.40; the ending balance was \$34,451.31.

Ruling Elder Dan Carrell had presented a communication, requesting that all lost motions be recorded in the minutes. The Court Duties Committee recommended the following response: "According to the PCA Stated Clerk, the Book of Church Order and the Rules of Assembly Operations supersede Robert's Rules of Order in this manner. Neither the BCO nor the RAO require the recording of lost motions (RAO 13-13). Until such time as the RAO is changed to require the recording of lost motions we will continue our current practice. A mechanism already exists for recording lost main motions. Any elder who has voted for a lost motion can request that his affirmative vote be recorded. This request mandates the recording of the lost motion. Motions deemed historically important should be handled in this manner." A substitute motion, however, prevailed, as follows: "In view of the requirements of Robert's Rules of Order to include in the minutes of a meeting a record of all main motions, whether sustained or lost; and in view of our Presbytery's Bylaws (Section I.F.) that require compliance not only with Robert's Rules of Order but with the Rules for Assembly Operation when they apply; and in view of the fact that the RAO does not require a departure from Robert's Rules of Order in the recording of minutes, be it resolved that, effective immediately, the James River Presbytery shall adopt the practice of recording all main motions, whether adopted or not."

Presbytery unanimously adopted an overture from the Session of Calvary Reformed Presbyterian Church, Hampton, Virginia, that proposed to amend the Bylaws to change the four stated meetings from being on the second Saturday of January, April, July, and October, to the third Saturday.

The Rev. Dr. Robert Wilson had posed two questions to the Court Duties Committee (CDC). Presbytery approved the Committee's answers, as follows. Regarding the inquiry as to the public nature of Session meetings, the CDC "advised him that with the exception of executive session, the meetings are open to the public." Regarding the inquiry as to the Session minutes being made public and to whom, the CDC advised that "with the exception of executive session meeting minutes, all other session minute records are available to the church members upon request."

Ruling Elder Dennis Morgan was granted a mission scholarship in the amount of \$1500 to pursue mission work in Europe. Presbytery increased the mission scholarship fund from \$3000 to \$4000 in the 2001 budget.

Presbytery approved the report of the Commission to organize Grace Community

Church. Besides organizing the Charlottesville mission, the Commission had ordained and installed five ruling elders and installed the Rev. Don Ward as Pastor.

The Rev Greg Thomson, campus minister at the University of Virginia, presented a brief report. It was reported that a call has been extended to Mr. John Pearson to serve as campus minister at Washington & Lee University, Lexington, Virginia. He will be examined in April by the Presbytery.

The Ministerial and Church Relations Committee reported on a previously-ordained minister who had been a member of the Presbytery. He had become involved in sin and was deposed and excommunicated twenty years ago. However, he had repented and asked to be restored. The excommunication was subsequently lifted. He continues to minister to Koreans in North Korea. He continues to preach, but has refrained from administering the sacraments. He has requested that his ministerial credentials be restored. The Committee reported that it saw no reason why it should not interview and examine him "with the view of removing the deposition and restoring his credentials." Presbytery concurred with the recommendation of the Committee to request that the Candidates and Credentials Committee examine him in accordance with the various provisions of the *Book of Church Order*.

Ruling Elder John Morgan reported that the Session of West End Presbyterian Church, Hopewell, Virginia, had requested assistance from the Committee to resolve some problems. A subcommittee had met with the Pastor and the Session. The entire Committee is planning to present its report to the Session and meet with the elders in March.

The Committee had also been asked by the Session of New Life in Christ Church, Fredericksburg, Virginia, to assist in resolving some problems there. A subcommittee has met with the Pastor and the Session and a member of the Committee attended a congregational meeting. The Committee shared its report with the presbyters. "A motion was defeated to close discussion and to ask the . . . Committee to meet at a later date so that any interested Presbyter could meet with the committee to address any questions they may have concerning the report."

The Candidates and Credentials

Committee reported that it had acted as a commission to dismiss Mr. Lance Lewis, a man under care, to Philadelphia Presbytery.

A joint ad hoc committee consisting of members of the Candidates and Credentials Committee and the Mission of Presbytery Committee, which had been established at the July 2000 stated meeting, had been directed to meet with Mr. Fred Sloan concerning his desire to be ordained in the PCA. The ad hoc committee was also directed to meet with his congregation, Huguenot Presbyterian Church, Montpelier, Virginia, to explore the possibility of its joining the PCA. Some members of this small church do not appear to be interested in joining the PCA, but Mr. Sloan is. The committee requested more information from Mr. Sloan before considering his ordination.

The annual under-care and licentiate reports from Rick Hutton, and the quarterly intern reports from Dennis Bullock, Jerry Gill, and Ken Christian, were accepted.

The internship plan of Mr. Scott Wells, a student at Reformed Theological Seminary—Orlando, was approved. He will be working at St. Paul's PCA, Winter Park, Florida, under the oversight of Ruling Elder Russell Kapusinski.

Mr. Carrell was nominated as the moderator in nomination.

Louisiana

The sixty-fifth stated meeting of Louisiana Presbytery was held at Pineville (La.) Presbyterian Church (OPC) on January 20, 2001. The meeting was called to order at 9:40 AM by Ruling Elder Dale Peacock. Pastor Bill Smith of Fellowship Baptist Church, Sulphur, Louisiana, led the court in the singing of Psalm 1. The Moderator, Ruling Elder Hewitt Carter, brought an exhortation from Matthew 16:13-18; and the Session of Bethel Presbyterian Church, Lake Charles, Louisiana, led in the administration of the Lord's Supper. A total of sixteen commissioners was present.

Presbytery approved the request of the Rev. Eric McQuitty that he be honorably retired.

The Presbytery budget for 2001, totaling \$16,776, was approved. Included in this figure is \$6,000 in church assistance for the DeRidder (La.) Presbyterian Church, and \$6,000 for the Rev. Wes Baker, a

Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship missionary and a member of Mississippi Valley Presbytery, who labors in Peru. The budget was later reconsidered, and amended to fund the chaplain fees up to \$25 per month per chaplain.

It was reported that the work in Bossier City, Louisiana, has come to a standstill: only two families are left, who have not moved away. The Rev. Jeff Steel has stopped going weekly as a result. A man has been found who is interested in carrying on this work, and talks with the Mission to North America Committee are underway.

Pastor Bill Smith will be coming before Louisiana Presbytery for ordination at the April stated meeting. He reported that the congregation is slated to vote on February 4, 2001, to move in the direction of joining the PCA.

The Rev. Jessie Jacobs, a member of Mississippi Valley Presbytery, will be coming for licensure in April. He reported on his work at St. Joseph, Louisiana, which began with a Bible study and now has developed into Sunday School classes and morning worship. Mr. John Hogue reported on his interest in this mission.

The Rev. Dr. Jim Jones, Presbytery's Stated Clerk, brought the closing devotional from Matthew 28:16-20, and closed in prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 12:28 PM.

Mid-America

The fortieth—and what may be the last—stated meeting of Mid-America Presbytery was held on April 20, 2001, at First Reformed Presbyterian Church, Minco, Oklahoma. The retiring Moderator, the Rev. David O'Dowd, called the meeting to order at 1:20 PM. He preached from Matthew 23:1-8 on the theme, "The Right Model of Leadership." Host pastor Mark Horne administered the Lord's Supper.

By common consent, Ruling Elder Doug Seewald was elected Moderator.

The court approved the report of the Commission to Install TE Mark Horne as Pastor of First Reformed Presbyterian Church, Minco, Oklahoma.

After extensive debate, the Presbytery finally decided to dissolve and to be absorbed by North Texas Presbytery [see related article in this issue, p. ??—Ed.].

A memorial resolution regarding the late William P. Shows was spread on the record [see *P&R News*, March-April 2001, p. ??].

The Presbytery withdrew the licensure of Mike Philliber, as he has been ordained by Mississippi Valley Presbytery.

It was voted that the membership in the Presbytery of the Rev. Geoff Andress would be continued on a stated meeting-to-stated meeting basis. He has been without call since April 1998. Currently residing in Vermont, and working as a public school teacher, he has preached in various churches, but has been denied entrance by Northern New England Presbytery and by its predecessor court, Northeast Presbytery, as he is without call.

Presbytery also continued the membership of the Rev. E. Lad Heisten, a minister who has been without call for more than three years. He indicated that he would more likely be useful for teaching rather than pastoral ministry at this point.

Mr. Barry Noll's candidacy was transferred from Philadelphia Presbytery; and Mid-America approved his completed internship in Philadelphia as meeting the internship requirements of Mid-America.

Mr. Doug Shepherd was approved as

AN EXPRESSION OF THANKS FOR A JOB WELL-DONE

Whereas, Mr. Butler has faithfully served as Stated Clerk for the Mid-America Presbytery since 1992 through the present; and

Whereas, Mr. Butler has faithfully spoken for, represented, and defended the concerns, causes and churches of Mid-America Presbytery during this time locally, at presbytery and General Assembly; and

Whereas, He has served above and beyond the normal requirements of this office; and

Whereas, He has consistently demonstrated his heart-felt and thoughtfully-considered principles through humble and gracious, faithful and consistent Christ-reflecting service to us all via this office, its many varied and often unseen tasks, careful and precise record and account keeping, and otherwise holding our presbytery to decent and orderly proceedings through these years,

Therefore, let this resolution of thanks be entered and spread across the minutes of the Mid-America Presbytery and presented to Mr. Butler in an appropriate form; and

Furthermore, We move the Mid-America Presbytery, to demonstrate its appreciation to both Teaching Elder Butler and his wife, by allocating a token gift of \$100 for their personal use and enjoyment of time together.

the recipient of the full amount of the Presbytery's Covenant Theological Seminary Presbytery Scholarship Program for Academic Year 2001-2002. Prayer was requested for his work for the MTW Ukraine Project.

Presbytery commended to its churches the General Assembly Stated Clerk's *Biblical Conflict Resolution* "as an excellent resource for building more mature approaches to resolving personal, organizational and other conflicts and

disputes which inevitably occur in our churches as we all grow towards maturity in Christ."

Presbytery voted, 9-0-2, to suspend the By-Laws regarding the provision to audit its books for fiscal 2000 and 2001.

A resolution of thanks for the work of John Owen Butler, who was retiring as Stated Clerk, was spread on the minutes (see separate box).

No arrangements were made for the forty-first stated meeting, it being

anticipated that the General Assembly would act favorably on the request for "joining and receiving" with North Texas Presbytery.

By common consent, it was agreed that discussion on adopting a pro-life ministry as a presbytery was moot.

The minutes of the court were read and approved. At 8:30 PM, it was moved and carried to adjourn. Ruling Elder Gene Overton of Minco closed the meeting with prayer.

(Continued from page 20)

Mr. Shade for the same was the prime hypocritical failing of that case (see our Critical Failing #8). In other words, are you sure that you are not guilty, even in your recent response to us, of doing the very thing for which you deposed a teaching elder? The Illiana Presbytery should be most concerned to clear its name concerning this charge of blatant trial hypocrisy.

4. You suggest that paragraph four, sentence two "does not represent the facts accurately" since it says that Mr. Shade had knowledge of the petition, when in fact Mr. Shade had contacted Dr. Morton Smith and been told that the petition was inappropriate.

First, since the claims do not conflict, there is no distortion of the facts; the one includes the other. Second, the declaration of any individual teacher has no binding authority in the Presbyterian system. Dr. Smith is a presbyter, not an archbishop. Third, the prosecutor's language cited in our report (Critical Failing #10) reveals that the charge was based on an unjust technicality.

5. You claim that paragraph five of the same page suggests that Mr. Shade's guilty plea should have sufficed, but in fact that paragraph does no such thing. It is a summary of the claims of either side in the dispute. In fact, our report does not make any claim about the sufficiency or insufficiency of the repentance in question; instead we questioned the deeper assumptions that got the Presbytery to that question in the first place (see Critical Failing #3,4,6,7,8).

6. You say that you have "concerns about our objectivity" since "two leaders from Christ Church were in communication with Mr. Shade about his reception into the CRE as early as February 22, 1999." As this is false on several fronts we'd be glad to discuss it if it would be any help (e.g., the content of the discussions had nothing to do with

Community Announcement

Faith Presbyterian Church invites the community to join them for their 10 AM worship service in their NEW FACILITY on June 3rd at the Barney Road Clubhouse in Clifton Park, New York. Childcare provided. Faith Presbyterian Church offers a wide range of activities for the whole family with Pioneer Clubs for children, Bible studies for adults, Womens studies, Christian Education classes for children and adults, and Summer Vacation Bible School. For more information, call the church office and study at (518)383-8464.

the CRE and/or the unnamed persons are not elders here). But even if your charge were true, we have fifteen elders on our session, and none of the elders on our report committee had such contacts (half of the committee had never even heard Burke Shade's name). In fact, the committee was more disposed to side with the Illiana Presbytery until we read your transcripts. And of course, your attempt to discount our persons does not answer the objective failings we set before you; it only evades them.

For the sake of the national reputation of the Illiana Presbytery, we ask it to formulate some sort of reply to the claims that it (1) never kept the required minutes, (2) acted in haste in receiving charges of theological error, (3) acted rashly in imposing a censure, (4) permitted unwieldy specifications, (5) confusedly called members for subjectivist evidence, (6) allowed the trial to turn into a debate over words, (7) assumed civil rules in an ecclesiastical court, (8) acted hypocritically in receiving testimony which itself was guilty of the charges leveled, (9) failed to comprehend basic literary genre, and (10) failed to show that obeying its own BCO petitionary process was illegal.

Brothers, this is a scar upon your reputation, and your response does not do your name justice. Instead, it tends to confirm our report. We were hoping otherwise. We would sincerely love to be wrong in our analysis, but your reply to us is merely a string of inverted accusations against us. A court of Christ's church needs to do much better.

For the Christ Church elders,
Doug Jones

Will There Be a Revival of Presbyterian Tent Meetings?

At its recessed stated meeting on May 15, 2001, Westminster Presbytery approved by common consent the following resolution. It was presented by the Rev. Frank J. Smith, Pastor of Coeburn (Va.) Presbyterian Church, and signed also by the Rev. John Whitner, the Rev. Dion Marshall, and the Rev. Richard Hicks, all of Dickenson County, Virginia.

WHEREAS, from its beginning, Westminster Presbytery has been committed to reaching this area of southwest Virginia and northeast Tennessee with the gospel; and

WHEREAS, one of the methodologies which was early endorsed by the Presbytery was the use of tent meetings; and

WHEREAS, this area of southern Appalachia has seen tent meetings used to great effect in the past; and

WHEREAS, we should be culturally-sensitive in our presentation of the gospel, and employ methods which, so long as they do not compromise Scriptural teaching (including doctrine and worship), are relevant to the culture in which we find ourselves; and

WHEREAS, even in urban areas, tent meetings have been used by God in past years; and

WHEREAS, as has been documented in secular media, the use of tent meetings has been on the increase over the last few years around the country; and

WHEREAS, we, as a Presbytery, have only begun to reach this area for Christ; and

WHEREAS, there are numerous cities, towns, and communities in our area which have no genuine Reformed witness;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Westminster Presbytery hereby instructs its Mission to North America Committee to investigate various ways in which the gospel can be promoted in southwest Virginia and northeast Tennessee, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. the use of tent meetings;
2. the use of itinerant evangelists, such as those from Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship (PEF);
3. the placement of ads in local newspapers and/or other public relations efforts;
4. cooperation with churches of this Presbytery as they attempt to reach out to other areas and communities;
5. the use of ministerial interns and/or seminarians;

and that the Mission to North America Committee report its findings at the July stated meeting of Presbytery.

SUPPORTERS

ALABAMA

EBENEZER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2478 Hobbs Island Road/Huntsville
S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM
Bible Study, Wednesday, 7:00 PM
Fellowship Supper, 2nd Wednesday, 6:30 PM
(205)883-7298

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1400 Evangel Drive/Huntsville
S.S., 11:10 AM; Worship, 9:30 AM/6:00 PM
(205)830-5754

TALUCAH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2374 Talucah Road/Valhermoso Springs
S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 10:45 AM
(205)778-8288

ARIZONA
DESERT SPRINGS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1555 W. Overton Road/Tucson
S.S., 9:20 AM; Worship, 10:30 AM
(520)742-8990

CALIFORNIA

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH†
Meeting at Costa Mesa 7th Day Adventist Church, 271 Avocado St./Costa Mesa
S.S., 11:30AM; Worship, 9:30AM
(714)526-3153

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
940 East Valley Parkway, Suite G/Escondido
S.S., 11:00 AM; Worship, 9:00 AM/5:00 PM
(760)480-4373

NEW LIFE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
500 Manhattan Beach Blvd./Manhattan Beach
S.S., 9:30 AM/Worship, 10:30 AM
(310)372-8455

CONNECTICUT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF COVENTRY
55 Trowbridge Road/Coventry
S.S., 10:45 AM; Worship, 9:30 AM/6:30 PM
(860)742-7222

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MANCHESTER
43 Spruce Street/Manchester
S.S., 9:15 AM; Worship, 10:30 AM
(860)643-0906

FLORIDA

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1875 N. W. Britt Road/Stuart
S.S., 9:30AM;
Worship, 11:00AM/6:00PM
(561) 692-1995

SHARON ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH†
17680 NW 78 Avenue/Hialeah
S.S. 11:20; Worship 10:00 AM/5:00 PM
(305)821-5761

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH†
44 Southview Avenue/Valparaiso
S.S., 9:15 AM/Worship, 10:30 AM
Third Sunday Service and Supper, 6:00 PM
(850)678-0060

GEORGIA

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
One Harker Road/Ft. Oglethorpe
S.S 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM
(706)866-2521

SOUTH LIBERTY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Sharon Barnett Road/Sharon
S.S., 10:00 AM;
Worship, 11:00 AM (1st/5th Sun.)
(706)456-2377

CHEROKEE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
5549 Hwy. 92E/Woodstock
S.S., 9:35 AM; Worship, 8:00/10:45 AM
(770)928-2051

LOUISIANA

AUBURN AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
224 Auburn Avenue/Monroe
S.S., 9:15 AM
Worship, 10:30 AM/6:00 PM
(318)323-3061

BETHEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2040 East McNeese Street/Lake Charles
S.S., 9:30AM; Worship, 8:15AM/10:45PM
(318)478-5672

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
146 E. Cherry Street/Opelousas
S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 10:45 AM
(318)948-9339

MARYLAND

CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Elkton High School/Elkton
S.S., 11:15 AM; Worship, 9:15 AM
(410)398-3192

<p>CHRIST REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Diplomat Building, 13992 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 300/Laurel S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship 10:30 AM/6:00 PM (301) 498-3700 MINNESOTA GOOD SHEPHERD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 15321 Wayzata Blvd./Minnetonka S.S., 11:15 AM; Worship, 9:30 AM Sunday Evening Bible Study, 6:00 PM (952) 835-6358</p>	<p>HAZELWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 117 E. Main Street/Hazelwood S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:15 PM Wednesday, 7:00 PM (828)456-3912 SHEARER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 684 Presbyterian Road/Mooresville S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/5:00 PM Wednesday, 7:00 PM (704)892-8866 NEW COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 10301 Old Creedmoor Road/Raleigh S.S., 11:00 AM; Worship, 9:30 AM/6:00 PM (919)844-0551 TRINITY REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 3701 South College Road/Wilmington Worship 10:30 AM (910)395-1252</p>	<p>FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1800 Third Loop Road/Florence S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (843)665-9235 BEECH STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1403 Beech Street/Gaffney S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (864)489-2014 CALVARY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 9201 Old White Horse Road/Greenville S.S. 10:00 AM; Worship 11:00 AM/6:00 PM Wednesday Prayer Meeting 7:00 PM (864)294-0895 SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 105 River Street/Greenville S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM Wednesday, 5:45 PM (864)232-7621 FELLOWSHIP PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1105 Old Spartanburg Road/Greer S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM Wednesday, 6:30 PM (864)877-3267</p>	<p>CALVARY REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 403 Whealton Road/Hampton S.S. 10:00 AM; Worship: 8:30 AM/11:00 AM Evening Gathering: 6:00 PM (757)826-5942 WEST END PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1600 Atlantic Street/Hopewell S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 10:50 AM/6:00 PM Wednesday Prayer Meeting, 7:00 PM (804)458-6765 KNOX REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 4883 Southard Lane/Mechanicsville S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM Sunday Evening, 6:00 PM (804)779-7608 IMMANUEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 4700 Colley Avenue/Norfolk Worship, 10:30 AM/6:30 PM Wed. Christian Education Classes, 7:00 PM Sat. Prayer Meeting, 7:00 PM (757)440-1100 TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 108 Hill Street/Tazewell S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00/7:00 PM (540)988-9541</p>
<p>MISSISSIPPI MCDONALD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 295 E. Williamsburg Road/Collins S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM Wednesday prayer meeting, 7:00 PM (601)765-6437 FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH East Beach Blvd. at 24th Ave./Gulfport S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM Wed., Family Dinner (6:00)/Bible Study (6:30) (228)863-2664 ST. PAUL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 5125 Robinson Road/Jackson S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 10:55 AM/6:00 PM (601)372-7497</p>	<p>NOVA SCOTIA BEDFORD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 49 Nelson's Landing Blvd./Bedford S.S., 11:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/7:00 PM (902)864-1587 OHIO FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 2540 S. Main Street/Akron S.S., 9:30 AM Worship, 10:45 AM/6:00 PM Wednesday, 7:00 PM (330)644-9654 CHRIST COVENANT REFORMED (PCA) 14787 Palmer Road SW/Reynoldsburg Psalter Service, 9:30 AM/Worship, 10:45 AM Thurs. Bible Study, 7 PM (740)964-0889</p>	<p>TENNESSEE BRAINERD HILLS PRESSBYTERIAN CHURCH 6388 East Brainerd Road/Chattanooga S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 10:45 AM/6:30 PM (423) 892-5308 MIDWAY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 4011 Old Jonesborough Road/Jonesborough S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship 11:00 AM/7:00 PM (423) 753-941 BRIDWELL HEIGHTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 108 Bridwell Heights Drive/Kingsport S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (423)288-3664 FELLOWSHIP PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Highway 25/70/Newport S.S., 9:30 AM/Worship, 11:00 AM/7:00 PM Wednesday Prayer Meeting, 6:00 PM (423) 623-8652</p>	<p>WASHINGTON WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 2700 Andresen Road/Vancouver Worship, 10:00 AM Sunday Bible Study, 6:30 PM (360)254-1726 WEST VIRGINIA PROVIDENCE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 5865 Davis Creek Road/Barboursville S.S. 11:30; Worship 10:00 AM/6:00 PM (304)736-0487 WISCONSIN Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church† 136 West Union Avenue/Cedar Grove S.S., 10:30 AM; Worship 9:00 AM/7:00 PM (920)668-6463 REFORMATION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH† Aurora Medical Center, I-94 at Highway 164/ Waukesha Bible Study, 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM Wednesday Prayer Service, 7:00 PM (262)246-2421</p>
<p>NEW JERSEY LOCKTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 197 Locktown-Flemington Road/Flemington S.S., 10:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM (908)996-7707 MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH† 350 Franklin Blvd./Somerset S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (732)846-8777 NEW YORK FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 209 Union Street/Schenectady SS, 9:30 AM; Worship, 8:15/11:00 AM/6:00 PM (518)374-4546 AFFIRMATION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Routes 100 and 139/Somers S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM (914)232-0546</p>	<p>OKLAHOMA BEAL HEIGHTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 614 SW Park/Lawton Worship, 10:45 AM and 6:00 PM (580)355-4702 PENNSYLVANIA NEW LIFE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP 2795 Patterson Drive/Aliquippa S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM (724)378-4389 LEHIGH VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 31 S. 13th Street/Allentown S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship. 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (610)797-8320 FAITH REFORMED CHURCH 2953 Saltsman Road/Erie S.S., 9:45 AM/Worship, 11:00 AM (814)899-3037 COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 515 West County Line Road/Hatboro S.S., 9:45 AM (Sum., 9:00); Worship, 11:00 AM (Sum., 10:00) (215)675-9688</p>	<p>TEXAS COLLEYVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 715 Cheek Sparger Road/Colleyville S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (817)498-2626 COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 2701 N. 7th Street/Harlingen S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM Midweek service, 7:00 PM Wednesday (956)425-3136 COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SDA Church, 1209 S. John Redditt Rd./Lufkin S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 10:45 AM/5:30 PM (409)637-6043 CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1620 E. Common Street/New Braunfels S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 10:45 AM (830)629-0405 PROVIDENCE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 3510 Austin Parkway/Sugar Land S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM and 6:00 PM (except 1st Sun.) (281)980-2522</p>	<p>REFORMATION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH† Aurora Medical Center, I-94 at Highway 164/ Waukesha Bible Study, 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM Wednesday Prayer Service, 7:00 PM (262)246-2421 LAKESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Seventh Day Adventist Church, 21380 W. Cleveland Ave./New Berlin S.S., 10:45 AM; Worship, 9:30 AM (262)968-6769</p>
<p>NORTH CAROLINA DILLINGHAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 16 Stoney Fork Road/Barnardsville S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM (828)626-3668 COUNTRYSIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 127 Ponderosa Road/Cameron S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM (919)499-2362 WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Highway 74/Cashiers S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM Wednesday, 7:00 PM Prayer Meeting (828)743-2122 WHITE OAK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 699 Polly Watson Road/Fremont S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM (919)284-4196</p>	<p>ROCKY SPRINGS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 123 Rocky Springs Road/Harrisville S.S., 10:00 AM Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (724)735-2743 SOUTH HILLS REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 110 Hays Road/Upper St. Clair/Pittsburgh S.S., 9:15 AM; Worship, 10:30 AM; Wednesday, 7:30 PM (412)941-3480 HILLCREST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Route 19, three miles south of Leesburg/ Volant S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship 10:55 AM/6:30 PM (724)533-4315</p>	<p>VIRGINIA COEBURN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 220 Second Street SW/Coeburn S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:30 PM Wednesday Prayer Meeting, 7:00 PM (540)395-2866 NEW HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Fairfax Fire Station #3 (Williams Memorial Hall), 4081 University Blvd./Fairfax S.S., 11:15 AM Worship, 9:30 AM/5:30 PM (703)385-9056</p>	<p>RON HAYNES Disaster Response and Mercy Ministries Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship 1003 Hollyleaf Court Ballwin, Missouri 63021 (314)227-2612 GRIEVING WITH HOPE The Rev. James Alexander PO Box 7100 Florence, SC 29502-7100 (843)664-9759 Website: www.griefwithhope.com Email: griefwithhope@abac.com</p>

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