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General Assembly Meets in Dallas Alabama Printer Elected Moderator

It was hot in Dallas, as the 29th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America met in big "D." But inside the air-conditioned facilities of the Adams Mark Hotel and its conference center, tempers did not flair. It was, almost without exception, a cool and quiet Assembly.

A total of 1290 commissioners attended the June 19-22 meeting. This marked the second time that the PCA General Assembly was held in the Lone Star State.

Elected as the Moderator was Mr. Steve Fox, who is in the printing business. Given the voluminous amount of printed paper consumed, and often waited for, by the court, there was plenty of jocular humor during the week, both by him and others, about his trade.

Mr. Fox is a ruling elder from Trinity Presbyterian Church, Montgomery, Alabama. This marks the third time that a ruling elder from that congregation has been elected Moderator of the Assembly.

Although a relatively quiet Assembly, several significant matters were decided. The court decided not to re-open the John Wood matter. The commissioners counseled Westminster Presbytery to reconsider its resolve to withdraw from the denomination. They also re-affirmed that lower courts have the prime responsibility to interpret the Confessional phrase, "in the space of six days."

At this meeting, a new attempt to make explicit



Sunflower clocks grace the trolley station adjacent to the Adam's Mark Hotel.

that women may not preach was approved as a *Book of Church Order* amendment and sent to the presbyteries for ratification. Four new presbyteries were erected, and one was dissolved, bringing the total number of presbyteries to sixty-three. New judicial procedures were approved; and the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) was given yet more authority. A denominational agency, Reformed University Ministries (RUM), was elevated to the status of a permanent committee. The Assembly expressed its confidence in Covenant Theological Seminary, while also declaring that an article in *P&R News* was "unfortunate and unfair." And the Women in the Military Committee was held over for another year, as the men continued to fight over whether the issue of women in combat was a matter merely of wise counsel or of Biblical command.

The Assembly recessed around 11:00 AM on Friday, June 22nd. The cavernous Lone Star Ballroom resonated with the singing by hundreds of men, and a few women, of the words of Psalm 133: "Behold, how good a thing it is, And how becoming well, Together such as brethren are In unity to dwell."

Those responsible for General Assembly arrangements had adopted as its theme, "Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace." With a few rare exceptions during the course of the week, they appear to have achieved their goal.



The Dallas Metroplex is criss-crossed by freeways and other busy highways.



The Adam's Mark takes its place among the skyscrapers of Dallas.

Full General Assembly coverage inside

Steve Fox Elected Moderator

Ruling Elder Calls for Assembly to Come Together and Glorify the Lord Jesus

Dallas, Texas (June 19, 2001)—Ruling Elder Steve Fox was elected Moderator of the 29th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America. The Alabama churchman was chosen by the commissioners by a vote of 492-401 over Howard “Q” Davis.

As he assumed the chair, Mr. Fox stated that he was “humbled by your selecting me as Moderator.” Saying that he was “a printer by trade,” he noted that many errors occur in the printing business. However, “we don’t dwell on what errors were made or who made them.” Rather, the emphasis is to “get the ox out of the ditch and get the

job done on time.” He candidly admitted, “I will make a lot of errors.” But the important thing regarding “this Assembly and our Church” is that “it’s about Jesus. It’s not about you and it’s not about me.” Rather, the question is “how can we together, as one, glorify the Lord Jesus.”

Nominating the successful candidate was the Moderator of the First PCA General Assembly, the Honorable Jack Williamson. The Greenville, Alabama, lawyer noted that his nominee had attended every PCA Assembly since the initial one in 1973, except for one. He called attention to the fact that he had served two full terms on the

denominational Christian Education and Publication Committee and two full terms on the Mission to the World Committee, as well as on the Board of Great Commission Publications. His business, Walker Publishing Company of Montgomery, Alabama, has been used to print many of the denominational publications. Among his civic responsibilities have been serving as President of the Lions Club in the state capital, and President of the Blue-Gray Football Classic.

Nominating Mr. Davis was the Rev. John Stodghill. The pastor from Waynesboro, Mississippi, noted that he had known “Q”

for forty years. Mr. Stodghill stated that his candidate had attended every PCA Assembly except for three. Besides being a lawyer, the Indianola, Mississippi, ruling elder is a sitting judge in Mississippi’s Fourth Circuit.

In an interview, the new Moderator was asked if he agreed with his predecessor regarding the state of the denomination. Mr. Fox responded, “I’m more on the positive side. The world’s in trouble. . . . But I think our church is healthy. I think God’s hand is on it. This is a crucial hour. But every hour’s a crucial hour. . . . I wouldn’t disagree with him, but it’s not a banner I would wave.”

Retiring Moderator Calls for Revival

Morton H. Smith States that PCA is Still Seriously Divided

Dallas, Texas (June 19, 2001)—Retiring Moderator Dr. Morton H. Smith, in his communion sermon, called for the Presbyterian Church in America to seek revival. But he also warned, as he did upon assuming the Moderator’s chair last year, that the denomination remains “seriously divided on what we mean by our ordination vows”; adding, “History would suggest that unless we come to agreement on these matters, we will face division.”

Using passages from II Chronicles 6 and 7 as a take-off point, the Dean at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary went to Philippians 3:1-16 in order to preach Jesus and the necessity of knowing Him and the power of His resurrection. Dr. Smith decried the politicization of the subscription issue in the denomination, which has led to one “side” or another seeking to impose its will through political power. He admitted that “there is a general distrust of each other regarding the type of church we are trying to build”; and proclaimed that “the only remedy for this is for there to be a spiritual awakening.”

Dr. Smith confessed his own failures in the nascent days of the PCA, when he “did not press the matter of subscription.” The PCA’s original Stated Clerk said: “I was naïve to believe that our confession would be that of the Southern Presbyterian Church” in her best days. “I failed to press the matter . . . assuming that all

conservative Presbyterians of the 20th century would agree with conservative Presbyterians of the 19th century.” He underscored his remorse regarding his failure, by saying, “I repent of that.”

The Moderator made an evangelical appeal for his listeners experientially to know Jesus Christ. “It’s not just knowing about Him, or knowing facts about Him.” Rather, it is an “intimate kind of knowledge.” Quoting theologian Leon Morris, “Eternal life is simply knowledge of God,” Dr. Smith pointedly asked: “Are you increasing today in the knowledge of Christ?” He later stated: “Brethren, if you do not see in your life evidence of sanctification, then you need to see if Jesus is really your Savior. . . . Our lives [as Christians] should be markedly changed.”

The patriarch offered pastoral advice to the pastors in the Assembly. He urged them to catechize their young people, as he alluded to the beauty of the Catechism’s answers and questions. He also urged the church’s ministers not to hesitate “to give the invitation to come to Jesus. . . . I would urge you to invite people often to come to Jesus.” In his view, “I think we all need to go back to these simple doctrines of the gospel.”

After Dr. Smith turned the gavel over to his successor, the Assembly expressed its appreciation by giving him a standing ovation. Ruling Elder Bingy Moore also presented to him the customary plaque from the Administrative Committee.



Steve Fox (left) receives the gavel from his long-time friend Morton Smith.

Happy Birthday, Mr. Moderator!

The final day of the Assembly was Moderator Steve Fox’s sixty-second birthday, and the proceedings of the day began with the presentation of a cake as the commissioners sang, “Happy birthday, Mr. Moderator!”

As he accepted the cake, Steve Fox noted the great honor which the Assembly had bestowed on him by electing him to the high post. He asked forgiveness for the mistakes he had made during his moderatorship. He also stated that he honestly did not see that there were divisions in the Assembly, despite the disagreements that had come to expression.

And then, with a boyish grin on his face, he blew out the candles!



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One Yes, One No, One Maybe

Dallas, Texas (June 20, 2001)—Stated Clerk Roy Taylor reported to the 29th Presbyterian Church in America General Assembly that only one of the three proposed amendments to the *Book of Church Order (BCO)* that had been sent down to the presbyteries over the past year had received the requisite ratification by two-thirds of the lower courts. One amendment had been defeated, and one had been neither defeated nor ratified as several presbyteries, which could decide the outcome, had withheld their votes.

The proposal which had garnered almost unanimous approval by the presbyteries was an amendment which establishes Reformed University Ministries (RUM) as a new permanent committee. The only judicatory to vote against the amendment was Presbytery of the Ascension, where presbyters argued against increasing denominational bureaucracy.

Previously, RUM had been under the auspices of the Mission to North America (MNA) Committee. But as RUM and its budget have grown, continuing as an agency of MNA became increasingly unwieldy.

The amendment which failed would have made explicit that women may not preach. Only 31 presbyteries supported the measure, while 23 opposed it. Several presbyteries which normally would have been expected to support the amendment—such as New Jersey and Ascension—voted “no.” A number of presbyters in those courts expressed concern over the wording of the amendment.

The amendment which is still pending is a change to *BCO* 32-19, with regard to counsel in an ecclesiastical trial. Presently, when a trial is held by a local Session, a defendant may employ only someone who is a member of that congregation as his counsel. (When a trial is held in a presbytery, any member of that court may serve as counsel.) The amendment would enable any communicant member of the denomination to serve as counsel in a trial,

wherever it is held. The amendment also would clarify that the prohibition on employing “professional” counsel in a church court case does not mean that a defendant may not reimburse normal travel and other expenses.

Only 36 presbyteries were reported as voting in favor of the proposal, with 18 opposed. Per the suggestion of the Stated Clerk, and in accord with the *BCO*, the Assembly urged the presbyteries which had not reported a vote on the matter to do so by the time of the 30th General Assembly. If a sufficient number of presbyteries vote in the affirmative, then the amendment will be before next year’s Assembly for final ratification.

The delinquent presbyteries are Korean Capitol, Korean Eastern, Korean Northwest, Korean Southern, Korean Southwest, and Nashville.

If precedent is a guide, the three newly-erected presbyteries presumably will not figure in the voting on this amendment. In 1992, the Assembly ruled that Rocky Mountain Presbytery, whose members had been in Southwest Presbytery the previous year, was disqualified from voting in a similar circumstance.

[Editor’s Note: Although the matter was not raised on the floor of the Assembly, it is possible that one of those in the negative column regarding the amendment to BCO 32-19, Siouxlands, may be switched to the “Yes” column. The vote in Siouxlands was 8-6-4. For many years in the PCA, abstentions were figured as part of the total vote, thus mandating that an amendment had to receive a majority of the total number of affirmative votes, negative votes, and abstentions. However, in 1997, when this practice was challenged, the Assembly ruled that abstentions should not be considered as votes. According to that ruling by the 25th General Assembly, if a presbytery reports more affirmative votes than negative votes, that presbytery would be considered to have ratified the amendment, no matter how many abstentions there may have been.]



RUM Coordinator Rod Mays



Moderator Fox consults with one of his assistant parliamentarians, Sam Duncan, moderator of the 25th General Assembly.

Overtures and Resolution Regarding Women’s Roles Defeated

Dallas, Texas (June 21, 2001)—Two overtures and one personal resolution, all taking a conservative stance with regard to women’s roles, were defeated today by the 29th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America.

The first overture, from Grace Presbytery (south Mississippi), asked 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.” This overture was adopted by Grace Presbytery in September, 2000, long before the recent controversial appearance of Dr. Diane Langberg at Covenant Theological Seminary.

The Bills & Overtures (B&O) Committee, by a near unanimous vote (33-0-2), recommended a negative answer to this overture, stating: “Our constitution addresses the issues sufficiently (*BCO* 7-2), and we do not believe our assembly should by majority vote make a statement defining constitutional principles.” The Constitutional reference (*Book of Church Order* 7-2) declares that ecclesiastical office is open to only men.

The second overture was entitled by the Stated Clerk, “Call for PCA to Repent for Abandonment of Covenantal Patriarchy.” The overture had been rejected by Central Carolina Presbytery, but forwarded to the Assembly by its author, the Rev. Dan Bartel, Burlington, North Carolina. The document stated: “That cultural reality which reflects the glory of God and offers the glory and honor due to God alone (Covenantal Theonomy) might be summarized in the phrase, Covenantal Patriarchy which stands in opposition to Secular Patriarchy. Prior to 1860 many churches in the Northern States abandoned Covenantal Patriarchy due to liberalism and other influences. Many churches in the Southern States abandoned Covenantal Patriarchy after 1860 due to the calamities of the American Civil War.” The overture asked that the Assembly “call the Presbyterian Churches in America to repentance for abandonment of Covenantal Patriarchy.” Covenantal Patriarchy was defined in the overture as entailing male headship in all spheres of human endeavor.

The B&O Committee, by a vote of 28-2-3, recommended a negative answer, giving two grounds: “While affirming biblical concepts of the covenant and of the family, we do not agree with all the reasonings of and definitions in this overture”; and “No evidence is presented in this overture to support the accusation against the PCA.”

The personal resolution was offered by the Rev. H. Timothy Miessler of Calvary Presbytery. It asked that the Assembly clarify the position taken by last year’s Assembly with regard to the role of women. The resolution stated: “Whereas, the 28th General Assembly (2000) declared that “godly men and women [may] give presentations even though they are not elders, but who in God’s providence may have insights and experiences which may prove helpful and instructive to those who lead in ministry” . . . ; and Whereas, we do not want anyone to think that the Presbyterian Church in America has taken a position that would allow women, in the presentation of their insights and experience, to expound, exhort, preach, apply, lecture on, or give an address from or based in part on

Scripture, particularly to a mixed audience; and Whereas, recent events may have given that impression; and Whereas, it is important that we be as clear as possible in our positions.” The “be it resolved” part of the resolution asked “that the 29th General Assembly clarify the position taken by the 28th General Assembly by declaring that Scripture prohibits a woman, under any circumstance, from publicly expounding, exhorting, applying, or preaching the Word of God.”

In recommending a negative answer to this resolution, the B&O Committee, by a vote of 34-0-0, stated, “The phrase ‘under any circumstances’ . . . prohibits women from teaching other women and children (*Titus* 2:2-4; *2 Timothy* 1:5 with *2 Timothy* 3:15).”

Constitutional Amendment Affirming Men- only Preaching Sent Down to the Presbyteries

Dallas, Texas (June 21, 2001)—By a large margin, the Presbyterian Church in America General Assembly decided to try again to amend her *Book of Church Order* so as to make explicit that only men may preach. The Assembly voted to send down to the presbyteries an amendment which would add to the duties of Sessions the following language: “to ensure that the Word of God is preached only by such men as are sufficiently qualified (*cf. BCO* 4-4; 53-2; *1 Tim.* 2:11-12).”

Adoption of the motion approving the amendment was not totally expected, as the Bills & Overtures (B&O) Committee had voted, 22-9-2, to answer Philadelphia Presbytery’s Overture 27 in the negative. Presenting the



Ruling Elder Andrew Webb

minority report, to answer the overture in the affirmative, was Philadelphia’s representative on the B&O Committee, Ruling Elder Andrew Webb. Aiding the passage of the proposal was perfecting language offered by Dr. Robert Ferguson, which took out “negative” language that would have specified that women are prohibited from preaching the Word, and couched the matter in more positive terms.

A similar *BCO* amendment sent down to the presbyteries last year was defeated, when 23 presbyteries, or 3 more than the one-third necessary to defeat the measure, voted against it. A total of 31 presbyteries had approved that proposal. Several of the 23 presbyteries that had opposed the amendment did so apparently because of objections to the way in which it had been worded.

This latest proposal will have to be ratified by at least 42 presbyteries (as there are now 63 presbyteries in the denomination), and by a majority vote at next year’s Assembly, in order to become part of the PCA Constitution.

Westminster's Request Turned Down

Assembly Offers Pastoral Counsel Instead

Dallas, Texas (June 21, 2001)—The 29th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America this morning voted down the request of Westminster Presbytery to establish a new presbytery in the same geographic bounds. By a significant margin, the court voted instead to offer pastoral counsel in an effort to urge that the judicatory in southwest Virginia and northeast Tennessee reconsider its stated intention to withdraw from the denomination.

The action came after a long and spirited floor discussion, which had lasted for an hour the previous evening and continued this morning.

The recommendation from the Mission to North America (MNA) Committee of Commissioners raised questions about the integrity of the process by which Westminster Presbytery had achieved a majority in favor of withdrawal. (If the presbytery does finally withdraw, as it is slated to do in January 2002, the expectation is that the vast majority of churches and ministers will remain with the Presbyterian Church in America, while only a few—perhaps as few as two churches and two ministers—would remain with an unaffiliated Westminster Presbytery outside of the denomination.) Because of those concerns, the Committee recommended to advise the lower court that the General Assembly cannot countenance the basis upon which the request for a new presbytery arose.

The Rev. David Coffin, Pastor of New Hope Presbyterian Church, Fairfax, Virginia, presented the recommendation from the MNA Committee of Commissioners. The Committee had initially voted 22-8-0 to recommend that the overture be denied and that Westminster Presbytery be urged to reconsider its action and to reverse its judgment. The final tally on that recommendation was 16-4-0, the different vote total being due to a



Henry Johnson

modification of the initial recommendation.

While recognizing the legal and ecclesiastical right for the Presbytery to withdraw, the Committee argued that the manner in which a majority was attained to pass the motion, lacks integrity. The response proposed by the Committee states that those who voted with the majority to withdraw but who did so with no intention of withdrawing "have apparently voted on a proposal of great moment . . . out of mere expediency. Surely this is unworthy of the solemn privilege and responsibility of voting." Furthermore, they are duty bound "to submit to *this* decision of Westminster Presbytery, and withdraw from the PCA."

There are also questions of integrity raised by those who supported the measure with the intention of withdrawing. The document declares: "You have allied your cause with

brothers whose actions are at odds with their true intentions, and at odds with your purpose, and in so doing you have made your cause dependent upon behavior of questionable integrity."

The Committee recommended that the overture be answered in the negative because, among other reasons, "this Assembly cannot countenance the action which gave rise to the request, without expressing our deepest concern for the integrity of the Presbytery in so acting, and sustaining a hope that our counsels may well be heeded by our brothers." The proposed response concludes by saying that "for the sake of those who may find their insurance coverage threatened by P r e s b y t e r y ' s withdrawal," the Presbytery, should it remain determined to withdraw, "change the effective date of the action to withdraw, until the conclusion of the 30th General Assembly so that those who desire to remain members of the PCA may immediately be admitted as a presbytery of the PCA."

That final paragraph of the Committee's recommendation was a last-minute modification, added in order to alleviate concerns regarding the potential loss of insurance by PCA ministers who might otherwise lose their insurance coverage.

Moving as a substitute motion the recommendation of the Permanent MNA Committee, that the overture be answered in the affirmative, was the Rev. Bill Leuzinger, current Moderator of Westminster Presbytery. The Abingdon, Virginia, pastor argued that the "package" adopted by the Presbytery honored the Constitutional right for every congregation to choose whether to remain with the PCA or not. He also appealed to the resolution adopted by Westminster Presbytery in 1974, when it formally affiliated with the denomination, in which the lower court specifically reserved to itself the right to withdraw at any time for any reason it deemed sufficient.

Arguing against the substitute was the Rev. Larry Ball, a charter member of Westminster Presbytery and its stated clerk from 1976 to 1999. "Nobody knows Westminster Presbytery better than I know Westminster Presbytery," he averred. "There are things General Assembly is not aware of. There are three groups, not two. I represent the third." Mr. Ball brought the house down in laughter as he added: "I am theonomic, postmillennial, presuppositionalist, paedocommunionist, reconstructionist, and believe it or not I'm considered a middle of the roader—in Westminster Presbytery."

The Kingsport, Tennessee, pastor distinguished himself from some of the other brethren in the Presbytery by saying, "I have a high view of the church, and I don't think we should leave until it becomes apostate." The Presbytery's overture was not so much a withdrawal as "a cover-up for schism." It was a compact between two parties, one of which "cannot stay any more", the other of which is saying to the other, "we want you to leave as soon as possible." He also pointed out that only about ten percent of the Presbytery would actually intend to leave the PCA at this time.

And he noted that he had filed a complaint which had not been adjudicated at a called meeting which was held just over a week ago (June 12th).

Another pastor from Kingsport, the Rev. Brent Bradley, spoke in favor of the substitute motion. "This is a difficult time for all of us," he said. In his view, "We really do have differing views about certain presuppositional principles. . . . The main point is that I'm having a hard time

seeing what the lack of integrity is. Men have come together and now recognize that the denomination does not share these principles." He stated: "Our Presbytery has been drawn along by those who want to be in step with the denomination. . . . The other side has said that they recognize that they are taking us in a direction where we don't want to go, and we've said that we're holding them back from going where they want to go. . . . We got together and said, How can we reach a peaceful resolution to these

things? . . . We're not saying that the PCA isn't Presbyterian or Reformed. We're saying that we're a little bit different, that we're a different variety. We don't want to be constantly battling against you, but fighting our common battles with you, but as long as we're in the same denomination, we're constantly fighting on what we consider to be different."

Dr. Joseph Pipa, though not in favor of the substitute, proposed an amendment to it, which would have provided that "No minister or church that voted to leave may be certified to be a part of the new presbytery." But the chair ruled that motion out of order because it would interfere with the right of a presbytery to determine its own membership.

At that point, the order of the day had been reached (10:15 PM). On a closely-divided vote, the chair ruled that the order of the day was not extended, and the Assembly recessed for the night, to resume the debate in the morning.

When debate resumed this morning, the Rev. Trevor Downie, who had just joined Westminster Presbytery out of the Presbyterian Church (USA), indicated to the Moderator that he had changed his mind overnight, from being in favor of the substitute to opposing it. The Moderator pro tem, Tom Leopard, ruled that he had therefore lost his right to speak, since speakers were being recognized in the order they had gone to a microphone and according to an alternating pattern between those in favor of the substitute and those in favor of the main motion.

Dr. Don Clements, Stated Clerk of the adjacent New River Presbytery, did speak in favor of the substitute. He posited that the substitute was superior to the main motion for three reasons: 1. it acknowledges the absolute right of Westminster Presbytery to leave; 2. it acknowledges the real reasons behind the contemplated withdrawal, unlike the so-called pastoral letter which, in his view, reads more like a prosecutorial indictment; and 3. "it just makes good sanctified common sense." Also arguing in favor of the substitute were Dr. Rob Stuart, and the Rev. Henry Johnson. Mr. Johnson, pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Tazewell, Virginia, said: "My fellow brothers in Westminster Presbytery are men who love Jesus." However, "for the sake of the gospel," the brethren had to

be in separate ecclesiastical fellowships in order to get on with the work of planting churches.

In favor of the Committee proposal was the Rev. Scott Reiber. The Mississippi pastor appealed to the Westminster Larger Catechism regarding the fifth commandment, as he declared: "I believe we are bound as ministers of the gospel to do all that we can to put down scandalous division in the church."

The Rev. David Coffin, who presented the Committee recommendation, closed the debate by noting that: 1. the Committee's recommendation honors absolutely the commitments made to the Presbytery; 2. the motion attempts to speak pastorally; and 3. the motion does not attempt to question the integrity of the conscience. Mr. Coffin also argued that the present era of the church—that of the church militant—"is full of pain and suffering." However, there is the confidence that out of all that turmoil, the Lord is working His purposes.

The substitute failed, 411-484. The main motion then carried by a hefty margin.

But that did not end the matter. A commissioner posed a question regarding whether churches and ministers not desiring to leave, would automatically constitute a continuing Westminster Presbytery within the denomination. Stated Clerk Roy Taylor seemed to answer affirmatively as he responded: "I have great sympathy for rights of secession. However, I am bound by the Constitution, and I believe the original resolution [adopted by Westminster Presbytery in 1974 when she formally joined the denomination—Ed.] is contrary to the Constitution."

Mr. Coffin, by means of a point of order, objected to the line of questioning, because to offer different interpretations of the Constitution is to continue the debate.

Dr. Clements raised another point of order, and asked that a Constitutional inquiry be directed to the Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB) as to whether the action just



Brent Bradley

taken is in accord with the Constitution. But Mr. Coffin objected, urging that CCB had already made its ruling, which ruling the court had when it made its decision. The Assembly voted not to refer the Constitutional inquiry.

After a few minutes, the Rev. Brent Bradley, pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Kingsport, Tennessee, rose to thank the MNA Committee of Commissioners and to express appreciation "for the care and for taking the time" to deal with the request from Westminster Presbytery.

The onus now rests with the lower court, which may still withdraw, but which must now contemplate its action in light of the General Assembly decision.

Westminster Presbytery Stays on Course Toward Withdrawal from PCA

Larry Ball's Complaint Denied on Roll Call Vote of 32-19

Kingsport, Tennessee (July 21, 2001)—Westminster Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) today voted to deny a complaint by the Rev. Larry Ball which sought to nullify the court's previous determination to withdraw from the denomination. The defeat of the complaint means that, at least for the present, Westminster Presbytery remains on track to leave the PCA effective the Presbytery's January 2002 stated meeting.

The vote, which was ordered to be done by roll call, was 32 in favor and 19 against.

Mr. Ball's complaint had been slated to be adjudicated at the June 12th called meeting of the Presbytery. However, a procedural motion by the Rev. Dr. Steve Meyerhoff at that meeting provided for Mr. Ball to present his complaint that evening, but for the court to take no action until today's stated meeting, a month after the meeting of General Assembly. Because of the press of other business at the June meeting, the hour was late when the matter of the complaint came up. Accordingly, the court adjourned, in order to consider the matter at today's gathering.

Consideration of the complaint commenced shortly after the lunch break. By an overwhelming margin, the court determined not to have Mr. Ball read through his complaint. In lieu of reading the document, he thereupon moved that the complaint be sustained "with the understanding that it [the court] is only adopting the amends and receiving [points] 1-8 as information."

Almost immediately, a substitute was moved—"that the complaint be denied and that a report be heard from the committee appointed to deal with the ramifications of withdrawal." In conjunction with that substitute motion, which was moved by Dr. Meyerhoff, several pages of material, ostensibly from that committee, were distributed. A point of order was raised, viz., that that committee had not been authorized to formulate a response. Moderator pro tem John Thompson answered that anyone or any group of people could author a proposed response to a complaint; so that the document was legitimately before the court, but not as a committee report.

A Divisive Issue

Larry Ball began the debate by stating, "One of my objections is not necessarily that it divides churches, but that it will divide sessions. . . . That, my friends, is divisive. I speak from personal experience."

The pastor of Kingsport's Bridwell Heights Presbyterian Church contended that "the Constitution is unclear as to what a Presbytery is. . . . The *Book of Church Order* defines a Presbytery in two ways—one of them being in terms of representation to a court, the other in more substantive terms (viz., as the ministers and churches within a prescribed district). Mr. Ball believes that since when the Presbytery joined the PCA, it did so with the consent of all her ministers and churches, it is requisite for the same consensus among the ministers and churches to be manifest for the court to withdraw as a body.

Reacting to quotes from Robert Lewis Dabney regarding church unity, which had been presented in the multi-page document which had just been distributed, Mr. Ball said, "He was not referring primarily to Presbyterians. . . . He's not talking about dividing a church court."

Appealing to the Bible

The Kingsport pastor appealed to Luke 5:12-14 as a Biblical basis for his opposition to the move to leave the PCA. "In everything we've said, we've heard very little argumentation from the Word of God. . . . The only thing we've heard from the Word of God is [the example of] Paul and Barnabas. . . . [That] is not a division of the

church." He chided those who appealed to the example of Paul and Barnabas going their separate ways as being "a manifestation of first deciding what you want to prove, and then go[ing] and find[ing] a justification for it."

"If this Presbytery divides, I believe we will be violating the Word of God," the preacher declared. He then proceeded to exegete the Lucan passage, in which "Jesus said [to the healed leper] to go to the priest. These are the same priests that Jesus later called snakes. . . . He was recognizing their authority. They were covenant-breaking people. But Jesus did not say, 'We need to build a new church.' 'We need to build a new temple.'

"I fear that many modern disciples would have conversed with Jesus as follows: 'Yes, but Jesus, Israel has gone too far. Why send this man to men who lack integrity and seek nothing but power in the church? Yes, Jesus, but all hope of revival is lost. Yes, Jesus, but Israel has broken covenant with God. Yes, but Jesus, would we not better serve God with our own temple and priesthood since they are covenant-



Bill Leuzinger at General Assembly

breakers? We would then re-establish the religion of old and be a more pure church. And for God's sake, don't ask us to send our money to them, because it is our God-given right, when we are angry with the preacher, to withhold our tithes."

Submission, Not Schism

The churchman continued: "You are called to suffer for the body of Christ, not to divide His body."

To those who would leave the denomination, he said: "Not only do you leave the PCA, you leave me. . . . You leave the members of the PCA, you declare them to be covenant-breakers."

Alluding to the action of the General Assembly, which had questioned the integrity of the vote to withdraw, he declared: "I don't believe you men lack integrity. I believe you lack wisdom. . . ."

"The General Assembly warned us that there was danger in the manner in which we did this. . . . We gave to the church and the world a false impression. . . ."

"The General Assembly detected error at this point, and I believe they were right on the money." He added: "I ask you to submit to the General Assembly, to submit to a higher court."

Besides the notion of "conscience," there is also the Biblical notion of "submission." "We seem to have heard much about the first, but not

much about the second."

Mr. Ball pleaded: "Let those who want to leave Westminster Presbytery just leave—I've said that from the beginning. . . ."

"It was a lack of charity to put my Session in this position [of having to vote on the matter]. . . ."

"Some of us are willing to stay and fight and even to be persecuted in this church. . . . Those of you who cannot find it in yourself [to do the same], . . . use the Constitution and leave the PCA, and leave the rest of us alone."

Henry Johnson Responds

The Rev. Henry Johnson, who has been in the forefront of those wishing to leave the PCA, responded to Mr. Ball's speech. He stated that his "premise proves too much," and that there are two problems with the appeal to Luke 5. The first is that "there were believing priests"; the second is that the analogy vis a vis Luke 5 fails to take into account the unique Old Covenant situation. "Larry would be forced to go back to Rome, or at least the PC(USA)."

Mr. Johnson stated: "There are no denominations in Scripture. Therefore, there is no Scripture regarding denominations." Instead, the issue of ecclesiastical affiliation and/or separation must be decided on other grounds, such as the principle of the family headship of the father, who must take responsibility for associating with a congregation which is the most compatible with his beliefs.

A Plea for Charity

The next speaker was the Rev. Frank J. Smith. The pastor of Coeburn (Va.) Presbyterian Church broke down Mr. Ball's argumentation into two categories: Constitutional/parliamentary and moral/theological.

With regard to the Constitutional and parliamentary issues, there were two points. The first was that "A presbytery may not dismiss churches without their consent. Changing the provision to specify that a church must vote on being dismissed from the Presbytery would significantly change the carefully-crafted compromise; but, there may be no way around this." The second was that "the standing rules (Manual) of the Presbytery must first be amended before withdrawal can be effected." He stated that one of the reasons for having standing rules is in order to prevent precipitous action, especially by a temporary majority. The matter could be resolved simply by giving notice in July "that a vote will be taken on the matter at the October stated meeting."

With regard to moral and theological concerns, five points were mentioned. The first referred to the fact that the withdrawal resolution requires all Sessions and elders which remain in the PCA to do all within their power to change the direction of the denomination which they cannot wholeheartedly support. That, said the Coeburn pastor, "is a call to arms. Modifying the language, however, denies the logic which drives the proposal—an all-or-nothing perspective which does not allow for the exercise of patience." He stated that "my computer has a lot of capacity and I have a lot of energy."

Secondly, picking up on a theme from Larry Ball's complaint, that "all of the churches involved would need to give their consent," he stated that "apart from any consideration of any Constitutional requirements, it is a moral and theological concern that the action does not bring along all of the churches and ministers in a way of building consensus on such an important matter."

Thirdly, "the action was taken without giving any rationale for withdrawing from the PCA. This is discourteous; it is also un-Biblical, not to bear testimony against apostasy."

Fourthly, "there was no warrant for the action, in that a mass withdrawal such as this should only be done if the PCA is regarded as apostate, or if the majority cannot in conscience continue in the denomination. . . . There really is no way around this point—it is part of the 'all-or-nothing' logic."

Finally, "the testimony of the Reformed faith will be negatively affected for years to come. Good intentions will not overcome negative consequences to this action; to engage in this action without reasonable prospect for success and blessing is sinful."

A Founder's Voice

The original Moderator of the Presbytery, Clynard Belcher, next spoke. He said: "We were pretty sound back in those days," when "we left the PCUS." The father-in-law of two ministers in the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States (RPCUS), Dr. Joe Morecraft and the Rev. Wayne Rogers, Mr. Belcher opined: "I think that those that are intent to leave . . . just quietly or noisily, just go ahead and leave."

The Notion of Submission

The Rev. Rick Searles, Associate Pastor at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Johnson City, Tennessee, said: "I agree. . . . that submission is important but I don't think we have a history of submission in this Presbytery of submitting to pastoral letters." [Mr. Searles agrees with the pastoral letter adopted by the Second General Assembly regarding charitable gifts, while Westminster Presbytery historically has taken a more strict view.—Ed.] "I want to submit to my brothers, [to whom] that name, Westminster Presbytery, is important."

No Biblical Mandate

Larry Ball again sought the floor, as he stated: "Just the level of disagreement ought to bring doubt, about what the Scriptures teach. . . . We don't have a clear mandate. . . . Our applications and analogies differ. . . . You'd better have a clear Biblical mandate. . . . I haven't heard it yet. . . ."

'Can Two Walk Together . . . ?'

The Rev. Dr. Ed Crook next rose to speak. "I really agree with my brother Larry [Ball] regarding desired solutions to the problems of this Presbytery. . . . [However,] we're not talking years, we're talking decades here. . . . One of my ruling elders on my Session was mentioning that he was hopeful that some other solution could be found, and I agree. . . . I don't agree with the argumentation offered in Larry's complaint. . . . I'm still left with, 'Can two walk together, unless they be agreed?'" Alluding to an illustration used by a previous speaker, the pastor of Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church, Bristol, Tennessee, said: "We still have two cats hanging over the clothes line pole." Dr. Crook concluded: "I wish there were a better solution."

'This is not honorable'

Conrad Friede spoke against the substitute motion. A ruling elder at Bristol's Eastern Heights Presbyterian Church, he declared: "I don't have the eloquence, but I have the forthrightness. Guys, this is not honorable."

"You married with the intention of divorce. . . . Brent Bradley and Henry Johnson have stated that they're not dissatisfied with Westminster Presbytery, they're dissatisfied with the PCA. . . ."

"We have wasted hour upon hour upon hour" dealing with this matter. If anyone wants to leave, Mr. Friede urged, "Be honorable, be forthright."

Two Covenants

Ruling Elder Dan Witcher of Kingsport's Westminster Presbyterian Church offered his opinion: "We find ourselves where we are because we don't agree. . . . We refused to go to the Word of God. . . ."

"John Murray many decades ago claimed we were not in a creed-making age. I don't think we're in a creed-reading age."

Referring to the resolution adopted by Westminster Presbytery on April 10, 1973, in which she professed belief in the "sixty-six canonical books [as] Christ's all-embracing and infallible rule for governing His church," Mr. Witcher declared: "Brethren, I don't think there are many people in the PCA who believe that." He then referred to the resolution adopted by the Presbytery a couple of years ago, in which she denied that the Scriptures give detailed instructions regarding the governance of the church. [This was in conjunction with the Presbytery's formally approving of the denominational methodology regarding church planting.—Ed.] Mr. Witcher stated that this statement adopted in 1999 by Westminster Presbytery goes contrary to the teaching of II Corinthians 10:4-5, which proclaims that every thought is to be brought into captivity under the Lordship of Christ.

"Gentlemen, we've diverged from where the denomination is going. Now, there are nine theories of creation [acceptable]." The PCA differs on the subscription issue, along with the question of which system of doctrine to which to adhere. He summed up his thoughts by saying: "I think we find ourselves as a Presbytery torn between two covenants."

Sowing and Reaping Separation

Terry Jones, a ruling elder at Midway Presbyterian Church, Jonesborough, Tennessee, stated: "Brother Ed [Crook], I disagree that there's no solution to our problem here, because that's limiting the power of the Holy Spirit working through the body of Christ."

Mr. Jones read from Philippians 2:1-8, and he applied the text: "Here's the Lord acting in His humility . . . and we're admonished to be of the same mind."

He expressed concern "about hearing that because we have a precedent of not submitting to pastoral letters," the Presbytery should therefore act contrary to the pastoral letter which the General Assembly just sent to the Presbytery.

Mr. Jones warned: "If you sow separation, you're going to reap separation."

Not Married to the PCA

The Rev. Brent Bradley of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Kingsport, declared that everyone is agreed that there is a problem. "What we're disagreed about is what to do about it."

"It's far better for us to say we agree to disagree. . . . I do not view that as a divorce. I did not marry Westminster Presbytery, I did not marry the PCA."

Appearance of Evil

The Rev. Trevor Downie, who just became a member of the Presbytery out of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in January, referred to Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount regarding one's speaking (Matthew 5:33-37). "At the General Assembly, everybody . . . asked me, 'What's really going on? What did you really do?'" In his view, the very confusion engendered by the Presbytery's action demonstrates that it was not forthright.

"I'm especially concerned about those who voted to withdraw with no intention to withdraw. We ought to be plain-spoken men."

"Is the PCA an apostate church? Has the General Assembly of the PCA forced you to do anything that is sin?" If not, then there is no Biblical justification to leave.

"This is not a mere separation. . . . It's illogical, discourteous. . . . I would be forced to leave against my will. Some of your churches would be forced to leave. I don't think that's morally right."

Mr. Downie urged those who wanted to leave to take the name "Westminster Presbytery

Continuing," even as certain ministers and churches which have left the Free Church of Scotland recently are calling themselves, "Free Church of Scotland Continuing."

Divisions Were Already There

Joe Reynolds, who had made the motion at the April meeting of the Presbytery to withdraw from the denomination, rose to state: "I thought this was an honorable way to deal with the divisions among us. . . . The division is already present in our Presbytery. The division that Larry [Ball] mentions in his Session was already present."

He again maintained that this is "a very honorable way of doing it. I see nothing un-Biblical of separating from one body to [join] another body."

Are We All Covenant-Breakers?

Mr. Ball then queried Brent Bradley regarding the notion of covenant-breaking. "By definition of the word 'covenant' what is true of the body is also true of each member. If the PCA is a covenant-breaker, then Westminster Presbytery is a covenant-breaker, and every member of Westminster Presbytery is a covenant-breaker. Would you agree?"

Mr. Bradley responded by saying that



Arcadia Presbyterian Church

everyone is a covenant-breaker. He also stated: "I don't think the PCA has lived up to its [1973] letter [i.e., its "Message to All Churches Throughout the World," in which she declared herself to be committed to Southern Presbyterian principles—Ed.]. In his view, "the covenant-breaking is becoming more apparent."

Ramifications

In response to a question about the ramifications of not sustaining the complaint, the Stated Clerk, Dr. Meyerhoff, said that "churches and ministers will have to inform me" as to their wishes. He elaborated that the present vote was "a response to a complaint, not the final action."

Mr. Downie opined that it is not clear what the status would be of those ministers and churches which wish to remain in the PCA. He referred to the penultimate paragraph of the Assembly's pastoral letter, which states that the Assembly declines to countenance the withdrawal of Westminster Presbytery by establishing a new presbytery. "That seems to me to be clear. . . . Now, in the next paragraph, to muddy the waters," the Assembly stated that if Westminster Presbytery were to wait until June 2002 to withdraw, the Assembly may establish a new presbytery. "It says 'may,' it doesn't say 'shall.'" Therefore, said Mr. Downie, "I'm not clear" as to what the status would be.

Mr. Ball noted that "if the complaint is denied and we do nothing else," there will be no PCA presbytery in this area; he and others would be without insurance coverage; and every minister

and church would have to request to be admitted. He later stated: "I'm not sure I can get into another presbytery. I resent being put in that position. I would ask charity not to be examined by another presbytery."

Dr. Crook responded by saying, "I do not think these scenarios would develop." And Henry Johnson expressed sympathy for Larry Ball and Trevor Downie because of their physical ailments which might preclude them from acquiring another insurance carrier. "I will either vote to rescind what we're doing, or vote to change the date [of withdrawal]." He also stated that "there's a political party that tries to use fear" to motivate people to vote a certain way.

A Question of Ethics

Dayton Owens, a ruling elder from Seven Springs Presbyterian Church, Glade Spring, Virginia, inquired regarding the ethics of the vote. He wanted to know why he should not agree with the General Assembly's assessment, that the vote to withdraw manifested a lack of integrity on the part of the majority.

Mr. Bradley responded that "what governs us as a Presbytery is [its] adopting act in 1973. . . . I think if people had taken the time to read our proposal, there would be no ambiguity."

He continued: "We're disagreed on many

and that the Presbytery rescind its action of May 15th to withdraw from the denomination. After the chair ruled that the first part of the motion was being handled by means of the motion on the floor, Mr. Howell was informed that he could move the second part of the motion after the present matter was concluded.

Voting by Roll Call

Early in the proceedings, the court had voted, decisively, to conduct the final vote on the matter by roll call. Just prior to that final vote, Dr. Meyerhoff moved to reconsider the procedural vote.

Speaking against reconsideration was Frank J. Smith, who had initially proposed the procedure. He appealed to the fact that the presbyters' great-grandchildren will be talking about this, and historians will be discussing this vote two centuries from now. He urged the commissioners to be men, and not to be ashamed of however they voted. He also stated that the solemnity of the occasion called for a roll call vote.

Mr. Ball also spoke against reconsideration. He noted that the men who voted for the Declaration of Independence signed their names to the document.

By an overwhelming margin, the vote for reconsideration failed.

The Complaint is Denied

At 4:21 PM, the dramatic vote began, as the Clerk called the roll in alphabetical order according to names of churches. For the first half of the roll call, the "ayes" and "noes" ran practically neck-and-neck. But by the second half of the roll call, the outcome became evident.

The roll call was completed within a couple of minutes. Dr. Meyerhoff excused himself from the court so that he could add up the votes. At 4:26 PM, he returned in order to announce the outcome.

But It Ain't Quite Over

At this point, Mr. Howell declined to make the motion to rescind the prior action. But Mr. Downie did make such a motion. He subsequently withdrew that motion, in order to give notice that a motion to rescind would be presented to the next meeting of the Presbytery. Frank J. Smith also gave notice to amend the motion to withdraw. [By giving prior notice, either of these motions could be carried by a simple majority, rather than requiring a two-thirds vote.—Ed.]

Mr. Ball officially notified the Presbytery that he would be taking his complaint to the General Assembly. The court appointed Messrs. Bill Leuzinger, Brent Bradley, and Henry Johnson as respondents, with the Moderator being authorized to appoint any replacements.

Presbytery also re-appointed the committee which had reported in May regarding ramifications of withdrawal, to investigate the question of what can be done if there is a change in insurance for the ministers of the Presbytery.

Overview

The historic Arcadia Presbyterian Church, located in the farming community of Arcadia outside of Kingsport, hosted today's stated meeting and its momentous vote. The votes cast by the Arcadia Session reflected the divided nature of the Presbytery: Pastor John Irwin voted "no," while the two ruling elder representatives voted "yes." Other Sessions—Grace Reformed of Greeneville, Tennessee; Midway Presbyterian of Jonesborough, Tennessee; Bridwell Heights of Kingsport, Tennessee—also split their votes.

The complaint now goes on to the denomination's Standing Judicial Commission (SJC), where one or more officials have pledged to try to ensure a swift adjudication.

Meanwhile, the Presbytery may take up at its October stated meeting either a vote to rescind and/or a vote to amend the withdrawal motion. A broad consensus appears to be developing to modify the withdrawal resolution so that the secession would not become effective until the adjournment of the 30th General Assembly in June 2002.

issues," including doctrinal subscription and the application of Scripture. There are "two views in the General Assembly" regarding these matters. "Our adopting act is much narrower than that which is practiced in the PCA. . . . I have come to the recognition that what is de jure and de facto are two different things."

What is unethical, he asked rhetorically, with men deciding that it would be better for them to work apart rather than together?

Mr. Bradley also intimated that those who wished to remain with the PCA do not adhere to Westminster Presbytery's original resolution, committing her to a strict subscriptionist view of the Confessional Standards.

The Substitute Carries

As the afternoon wore on, the air inside the quaint church building, in spite of air conditioning, took on some of the sultry character of the summer day outside. After two and a half hours of debate, interrupted briefly for the singing of the Twenty-third Psalm and prayer led by Ruling Elder Willard Dugger, the court was about ready to vote.

Just prior to that vote, however, a ruling elder asked for a moment in order to consult with his pastor. The Moderator pro tem eventually granted a five minute recess so as to allow for others to consult.

On a show of hands, the substitute became the main motion.

The Rev. Carl Howell at that point moved a substitute motion, that the complaint be denied

Assembly Declines to Revisit John Wood Matter

Dallas, Texas (June 21, 2001)—By decisive margins, the General Assembly declined to revisit the John Wood matter. The action came as opponents to that decision by the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) made several efforts to have the Assembly express its disapproval of the outcome and the process.

However, the controversy regarding the Wood matter did result in other action. The Assembly did “direct the SJC to draft and present to the 30th General Assembly procedures to be placed in the SJC Manual for examining concurring and dissenting opinions to be sure such opinions are in temperate language before they are added to SJC reports.” Adoption of this provision came in the context of the unanimous finding (34-0-0) by the Bills & Overtures (B&O) Committee that there was “intemperate language in the first concurring opinion to SJC Case 99-1”; that “the SJC did not make a determination as to whether the language in the first concurring opinion was temperate”; that “there is no present procedure for making determination of temperance prior to publication of concurring opinions”; and that “it is important to protect the names of our brothers.”

By a unanimous vote (34-0-0), the B&O Committee had recommended that an overture from Western Carolina Presbytery, which was asking that the concurring opinion be removed, be answered in the negative, with reference to the action of the Assembly placing a communication from Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary at the end of the SJC report on the matter. That communication contested several points made in the concurring opinion, including the allegation that the Seminary had been directly involved in the controversy with regard to Mr. Wood.

The court also heard from the Honorable Jack Williamson, author of that concurring opinion. In consultation with the other five signers of the opinion, he offered, for the sake of unity and peace, to remove from the document a statement that *Presbyterian & Reformed News* had “fanned the flames with misinformation and without thorough investigation.” He stated that “there was no intention of any language being intemperate.” However, one of the members of the B&O Committee had come to him and asked him to remove the offending language.

Ruling Elder Andrew Webb responded that “it was not simply that remark that we found intemperate,” as he also referred to statements regarding Dr. Joseph Pipa, Dr. Morton H. Smith, and the 28th Assembly.

After some points of order and parliamentary wrangling, Mr. Williamson finally withdrew his request for a personal privilege and simply asked the forgiveness of the Assembly for any intemperate language he may have used. His asking for forgiveness was spread on the minutes of the court.

Mr. Williamson then challenged a motion from the B&O Committee, which recommended “that the first concurring opinion . . . be removed on the basis of justice and fairness (Micah 6:8; Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Timothy 5:19; and James 3:5-6).” This recommendation, which had been approved by a vote of 23-9-2, was ruled unconstitutional by Moderator pro tem Wilson Benton, who was sustained, overwhelmingly, upon challenge of his ruling.

Supporting that understanding of the Constitution was the Committee on Constitutional Business (CCB), which

opined, 4-3-0, that according to the SJC Manual, “the time for a determination of the temperateness of the language is prior to the concurring opinion being appended to a decision. If a concurring opinion has been appended to a decision, the opportunity to assess or reassess temperateness has lapsed.” The CCB continued: “Therefore, the status of such an SJC concurring opinion, which has been reported to the General Assembly, remains valid regardless of subsequent concerns about temperateness.” The four members of the CCB supporting that position were its Chairman, Dr. Craig Childs, of Evangelical Presbytery (north and east Alabama); Karl McCallister and John Ward Weiss of Southeast Alabama Presbytery; and Mark Rowden of North Georgia Presbytery.

Three members of the CCB—Morton H. Smith (Western Carolina), Jay Neikirk (Ascension), and Richard Springer (New Jersey)—filed a minority report on the matter, in which they state that “the requirement of temperate language cannot be left solely to the author(s) of a document. The precedent of the General Assembly in dealing with documents which must be ‘couched in temperate language: . . . is that the court itself must determine the question of whether the language is temperate. Since the SJC, as a Commission of the General Assembly, is the court, the SJC must itself act to determine if concurring and/or dissenting opinions meet that standard.

“It is, therefore, the position of the Minority that an SJC concurring and/or dissenting opinion that has been reported to the General Assembly and that has not been found by the SJC to be temperate in language fails to meet the requirements of SJC Manual 14.7. It is not properly a part of the report of the SJC and should not be included in the minutes of the General Assembly. The only mechanism currently available for determining whether the SJC has so acted (i.e., has acted to determine that the opinion is temperate) is the CCB’s review of the SJC’s minutes which occurs prior to the meeting of the General Assembly.”

This is not the first time that the question of temperateness has been raised at a General Assembly. In 1995, the CCB, in handling an assignment as to whether a formal objection was in order, stated that “rearguing [a] case within an objection is a violation of parliamentary decorum and appears to be a maneuver designed to achieve continued debate, after debate has been closed. For this reason, the Objection should be ruled as ‘not temperate in language and respectful to the court’ (BCO 45-5), not by virtue of inflammatory word choices, but by inflammatory procedure.” A minority report argued that the avenue of Dissent, Protest, and Objection (“DPO”) has been misused. “DPOs have been transferred into mechanisms that inflame conflict and continue to promote disunity on issues, after the court has made its decision.

“A DPO should be a simple, concise, and humble declaration that one disagrees with the decision of the court. [The] so-called ‘Objection’ is in fact an attempt at further argument of the case, acts as a subterfuge to violate the BCO, and should not be received or printed in the Minutes.”

Chairing the CCB in 1995, as this year, was Dr. Craig Childs.

This year’s CCB also found that “it is not constitutional for the GA to amend the SJC report on Case 99-1 (the John Wood Matter) by deleting any or all concurring opinions.” The CCB also declared its view

that once the SJC “is assigned a matter, the SJC may render an opinion even as to the legitimacy of an action in which the GA refers business to the SJC.”

A unanimous Committee (7-0-0) advised that the General Assembly may not suspend the provisions of any of its documents which do not allow for suspension of those rules. “The presumption that we need to suspend our rules in order to obey Christ is an opinion that the CCB is not willing to affirm. If our standards are shown to be out of accord with Scripture, then there are proper procedures to follow, at each level, in order to change those standards.” The CCB also

stated that “Private concerns between individuals should be handled according to Matthew 18.” This opinion was in response to a Constitutional inquiry from the Rev. John (Arch) Van Devender, which asked, “What is the motion, or procedure to live by and obey God’s Word when we are fenced in by our Standing Rules?”

[The communication from Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary was signed by Chairman of the Board, John Van Voorhis, who in the past has served on the Standing Judicial Commission. The full statement is available on this newspaper’s web site.]



Jack Williamson, moderator of the First General Assembly

General Assembly Decrees Newspaper Article to be 'Unfortunate and Unfair'

Dallas, Texas (June 20, 2001)—By an overwhelming margin, the 29th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America voted to find that an article in *Presbyterian & Reformed News* was “unfortunate and unfair.” The article, which appeared in the March/April 2001 issue, centered on Covenant Theological Seminary and the availability of tapes from Dr. Diane Langberg’s messages on campus.

Moved by Dr. Charles McGowan, Moderator of the 1996 General Assembly, the motion followed a presentation by President Bryan Chapell of the Seminary. In his address, Dr. Chapell affirmed the St. Louis school’s

commitment to “male eldership and the restriction of the office of preaching to that”—a point he demonstrated by means of a stack of books written by present and former faculty members which presented those views.

Dr. Chapell maintained that the Seminary had announced that Dr. Langberg was not going to be preaching. He did concede that there were forty seconds of sermonic material in her first message held in the seminary chapel, and some applicatory material also.

The President stated that the school became aware that *P&R News* was going to be doing a story on Dr. Langberg’s appearance on campus because “a student’s family

received—quite literally—dozens of unsolicited calls over a two-day period from unknown persons who did not identify their purposes but were asking about Dr. Langberg’s being at Covenant. When the young wife got scared, her husband reported the calls to our Dean of Students.” He indicated that since the time of reporting this matter to the Board, the school had become aware of a second family that had been subjected to the same treatment.

He decried the fact that the newspaper had not cited “a single named witness among the hundreds of students that could have been talked to.” He concluded: “We must rise above

this. We have more important things to do. . . .” His remarks were greeted by a prolonged standing ovation.

Speaking in opposition to Dr. McGowan’s motion was the Editor of *P&R News*, who stated that the news service had not harassed students and had no idea who had. He urged that representatives of the news organization and the Seminary be instructed by the Assembly to sit down with an ad hoc committee to mediate any differences. The court, by an overwhelming margin, later rejected a formal proposal to that effect.

PCA Now Will Have 63 Presbyteries

Dallas, Texas (June 20, 2001)—With very little controversy and no debate, the 29th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America established four new presbyteries, dissolved another, and adjusted the boundaries among several of the lower judicatories. The net gain of three presbyteries brings the total number of presbyteries to sixty-three.

The new presbyteries are as follows: Iowa, which is being formed out of Heartland Presbytery; Ohio Valley, which is carved out of Great Lakes Presbytery; Triad of North Carolina, formed from Central Carolina; and Chesapeake, a daughter of Potomac Presbytery. The erection of these four courts marks a recent trend toward smaller presbyteries.

The new Iowa Presbytery will have less than the ideal number of ten churches. However, it will come closer to another of the ideal guidelines adopted by the 1984 General Assembly, viz., that travel time should be no more than two and a half hours.

The Ohio Valley Presbytery, which will cover eastern Kentucky, southern Ohio, and southern Indiana, boasts twenty-one

churches. (The remaining Great Lakes Presbytery will be left with thirteen churches in southern Michigan, northern Indiana, and northern Ohio.)

Triad Presbytery of North Carolina will be centered in the Winston-Salem/Greensboro/Burlington area of the Tar Heel State. It will have six churches and two mission works.

The new Chesapeake Presbytery will be in the Baltimore and Annapolis area, as well as the eastern shore of Maryland. Its mother presbytery, Potomac, has been one of the larger presbyteries, with a total of 52 organized churches and two missions.

Despite the unusual nature of the vote to dissolve Mid-America Presbytery, its overture attracted no debate on the floor of General Assembly. The court, which had covered much of Oklahoma, will now be absorbed by North Texas Presbytery.

General Assembly gave its blessing to the request of New York State Presbytery that several counties in upstate New York be transferred from Ascension Presbytery. The move means that the city of Rochester will now be under New York State’s jurisdiction.

General Assembly also approved the transfer of one county and a portion of another in Virginia from Westminster Presbytery to New River Presbytery. Two churches—Draper’s Valley in Draper, and Pulaski (Va.)—had requested the change.

The only controversy which had arisen regarding these changes revolved around the request of North Hills Presbyterian Church, Salisbury, North Carolina, to go with the new Triad Presbytery, rather than remain with Central Carolina. The North Hills Church is in the northern part of Rowan County, which stays with Central Carolina; but demographically the church felt closer to the new presbytery. The church accordingly had requested that it be allowed to be under Triad Presbytery, although still in the geographical bounds of Central Carolina. However, when the Mission to North America Committee of Commissioners raised concerns about the matter, and was about to send a Constitutional inquiry to the Committee on Constitutional Business, the North Hills Session, so as to avoid any controversy, withdrew their request.

In the past, churches have been allowed to operate within the geographical bounds of

one presbytery, but jurisdictionally under an adjacent presbytery. Examples include: the Frank and Fellowship Presbyterian Churches in western North Carolina, which until 1986 were in Westminster Presbytery rather than in Western Carolina; the late Trinity Presbyterian Church, Elberton, Georgia, which was under Central Georgia Presbytery despite being within the geographical bounds of North Georgia Presbytery; Christ Presbyterian Church, Vero Beach, Florida, which transferred to Central Florida Presbytery despite being within the bounds of Southern Florida Presbytery; Grace Presbyterian Church, Hudson, Ohio, which was allowed by Ascension Presbytery to transfer to Great Lakes Presbytery without a change of border; Mt. Carmel and Locktown Presbyterian Churches in New Jersey, which were allowed to remain with New Jersey Presbytery rather than to become part of the new Metropolitan New York Presbytery in 1997; and the Portuguese mission work in Danbury, Connecticut, which though within the bounds of Northeast (now Southern New England) Presbytery, is under Metropolitan New York.

General Assembly Votes Down All Four Overtures on Creation Court Affirms Role of Lower Courts in Handling the Doctrine

Dallas, Texas (June 21, 2001)—Following the advice of its Bills & Overtures (B&O) Committee, the 29th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America voted down all four overtures from presbyteries with respect to the days of creation.

The issue of the days of creation has been before the last several Assemblies. The net result has been that the high court has determined that the Confessional phrase, “in the space of six days,” can cover a variety of views, none of which should be considered to be outside the bounds of orthodoxy as long as the historicity of the Genesis account is affirmed.

Calvary and Mississippi Valley Presbyteries, using similar overtures, this year proposed a re-visiting of the issue. These judicatories asked that the phrase, “in the space of six days,” be interpreted as meaning six calendar days; and also asked that, in the future, anyone being examined for office or licensure who could not affirm that view of creation take an exception to the confessional standards.

New River Presbytery petitioned the Assembly to affirm that lower courts have the explicit right and responsibility to make determinations regarding what does and does not constitute an exception in the matter, with the understanding that their actions are subject to review by the higher courts.

Taking an opposite position from Calvary and Mississippi Valley was North Georgia Presbytery, which overtured the Assembly to re-affirm the decision of the 2000 Assembly. That overture also wanted the church to seek, through the light of natural revelation, to determine the correct interpretation of the

special revelation of Genesis 1.

In recommending a negative answer to the North Georgia overture, the B&O Committee gave as one of its grounds that natural revelation should not be allowed to interpret special revelation. One



David Hall

commissioner expressed concern about that rationale, and asked the Moderator if the grounds were considered part of the motion. The chair stated that the grounds were not part of what the Assembly would be adopting.

The North Georgia overture, which had been rejected almost unanimously by the B&O Committee (34-0-1), was turned down by an overwhelming vote on the floor of the Assembly.

The other three overtures had been lumped together in one motion by the B&O Committee, which had voted 23-8-1 to vote them down. And, there was much greater

discussion regarding whether to follow the B&O recommendation or not.

A minority report signed by ten commissioners—five ministers and five ruling elders—respectfully disagreed with that conclusion, and recommended that “the 29th General Assembly of the PCA acknowledge, with charity toward all our members, and with integrity regarding our Confessional Standards, that the Westminster Standards’ phrase ‘in the space of six days’ means that the six days of creation were days of normal duration with evening and morning.” The minority also asked “that, for the peace of the church, any man who holds to a view which may differ with the above meaning of the phrase ‘in the space of six days’ shall inform the court of original jurisdiction of such view for its consideration and determination”; and that “courts of original jurisdiction make all determinations on the acceptability of a man and his views with care, charity, honesty, and impartiality.”

Speaking in favor of the minority report was the Rev. David Hall, pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church, Oak Ridge, Tennessee. In the past, the Covenant Foundation, which is affiliated with his church, and Mr. Hall himself, have offered two hard-to-get baseball tickets to anyone who can demonstrate at least one participant in the Westminster Assembly who held to a different view than that of six calendar days. (To date, the tickets have remained unclaimed.) Mr. Hall has become an

authority on the views of the Westminster divines regarding the days of creation.

Critics of his position have posited that the mere fact that participants in the Westminster Assembly may have held to a “literal” view of “day” in Genesis 1 does not mean that they meant to exclude other views. Specifically, critics have maintained that the Westminster Standards should not be used to address the question of the length of the days of creation, since that was not an issue in the mid-seventeenth century.

In his speech to the Assembly, Mr. Hall said that he really had not intended to make a career of this. However, he again noted, as he has done in at least two prior Assemblies, that no there is no evidence that the authors of the Westminster Standards intended to signify anything other than a “literal” view of the days of Genesis 1.

Opposing Mr. Hall’s viewpoint was the Rev. Dr. Frank Barker, pastor emeritus of Briarwood Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Alabama. Dr. Barker, who had moved the motion at the 2000 Assembly that declared great liberty on the doctrine of creation, warned that if the Assembly adopted the substitute, it would simply be the prelude to an effort to drive out of the denomination anyone who does not hold to a “literal” view.

The trio of overtures was rejected by about a two to one margin. Even though New River’s overture was turned down, the effect of the Assembly’s action was to answer it in the affirmative, in that deference is being paid to lower courts to make the determinations regarding the interpretation and application of the Constitution.

GA Increases SJC's Authority

Dallas, Texas (June 20, 2001)—The 29th Presbyterian Church in America General Assembly this morning increased the authority of the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC). With no debate, the Moderator declared the passage of a major change in the Rules for Assembly Operations (RAO). From now on, any requests for original jurisdiction over a minister will go directly to the SJC, and will no longer be considered by the General Assembly.

The question of how to handle requests for original jurisdiction arose at last year's General Assembly in the John Wood matter. Chairman of the 2000 Bills & Overtures (B&O) Committee, Dan Carrell, argued successfully that under the rules of the Assembly, the SJC had no jurisdiction with regard to determining whether to accede to the request of several presbyteries to assume jurisdiction over the embattled Knoxville pastor with regard to the issue of women preaching.



Daniel Jarstfer

Mr. Carrell, an attorney from Richmond, Virginia, carried the day against strong opposition from the SJC, the Committee on Constitutional Business, and several former Assembly moderators.

The SJC, which was instructed to handle again the John Wood matter, investigated it, and decided not to proceed to trial.

Part of the motion which was proposed by the B&O Committee and adopted by the Assembly last year was an instruction to the SJC to formulate a procedure for handling requests for original jurisdiction. The SJC's answer was to mandate that all such requests would be handled by itself.

The SJC's proposal was not made available in the Commissioners' Handbook, nor in the Supplement. Rather, it was handed out on the floor of the Assembly just prior to its being voted on. General Assembly Stated Clerk Roy Taylor had announced the night before that the vote on this matter would be considered in the morning.

Adoption of the rule had to be by a super-majority vote of at least two-thirds of the registered commissioners. Assembly Moderator Steve Fox did not ask for a rising vote, but merely asked if there was any discussion or opposition. Seeing none, he declared that the measure had carried.

Shortly thereafter, Ruling Elder Daniel Jarstfer, Concord, North Carolina, inquired as to what had been adopted. Upon learning that the change had indeed been enacted, he moved that the matter be reconsidered. The Assembly, by a huge margin, voted down the motion for reconsideration.

Facilitating the RAO change were proposed amendments to the SJC Manual, which were

adopted with the motion to amend the RAO. A new chapter 18, "Procedures for Assuming of Original Jurisdiction over a Minister (BCO 34-1)", constituted the most significant of those amendments to the SJC Manual.

SJC Manual Change Regarding 'Memorials' Delayed

Dallas, Texas (June 20, 2001)—Proposed amendments to the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) Manual with regard to the handling of "memorials" were delayed. Like the amendment to the RAO which increased the authority of the SJC, the proposed Chapter 16 of the Manual was also handed out on the floor shortly before being considered. However, questions as to the Constitutionality of the new provisions prevented their enactment.

Chapter 16 has remained vacant since 1997, when the SJC, under pressure, withdrew it from the Manual. In 1996, the General Assembly adopted a package of reforms; part of the package was that the Manual was adopted by the Assembly, and was to be amended only by a super-majority vote of the Assembly rather than by the SJC (as had been in the past). The adoption of the package was made contingent upon the amending of the *Book of Church Order*. Between the 1996 and 1997 Assemblies, the SJC made sweeping changes to the Manual, and presented the modified document to the 1997 Assembly as if it was that which had been previously adopted by the Assembly. At the 1997 Assembly, concerns were voiced privately to key members of the SJC regarding both the substance and procedure. The result was that most of the modifications were allowed to go through without contest, in exchange for the withdrawal of the most controversial, with regard to memorials. The current proposal is essentially the same as that which was adopted by the SJC in four years ago.

A "memorial" is not specifically defined in the church's Constitution. The term appears in Chapter 40 of the *Book of Church Order* ("General Review and Control"), and refers to an extraordinary method for petitioning a higher court to investigate alleged irregularities of a lower court.

One of the points of contention regarding the Constitutionality of the SJC's proposal is an apparent contradiction between BCO 40-6 ("In process against a lower court, the trial shall be conducted according to the rules provided for process against individuals, so far as they may be applicable") and this wording found in the proposed Chapter 16: "Any hearing on a Memorial shall **not** be conducted as in a formal judicial case but in accordance with BCO 40-5" (emphasis added).

In delaying consideration of this new chapter in the Manual until next year's Assembly, the court specifically invited comments from interested parties.

GA Gives Blessing to World Reformed Fellowship

Dallas, Texas (June 20, 2001)—The 29th Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) General Assembly gave its blessing to a newly-named ecumenical organization. The World Reformed Fellowship (WRF), the new name of the World Fellowship of Reformed Churches (WFRC), represents an expanded fellowship. The new moniker was assumed after the International Reformed Fellowship (IRF) was assimilated into WFRC in October 2000.

Founded in 1992 by three denominations—the PCA, the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico, and the Presbyterian Church of Brazil—the WFRC was formed under the World Evangelical Fellowship, the international arm of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). The IRF, comprised mostly of Asian churches, was organized in 1994.

The doctrinal standards for the WRF are the Scots Confession of 1560, the Gallican Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Westminster Catechisms, the Savoy Declaration, the Second Helvetic Confession, and the London Confession of 1689, as well as the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Chalcedonian Definition. As noted in the PCA's Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC) report, "On this basis virtually all Evangelical and Reformed branches of the Church could participate, that is, Presbyterian, Continental Reformed, Congregational, Reformed Baptist and Reformed Episcopal." Also expanded was membership eligibility, to include "not only denominations but also local churches, educational institutions, ministry agencies and individuals." The criteria for membership consist of commitment to the "full inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture"; the "ancient universal creeds (Apostles', Nicene, Chalcedon)"; and adherence "to one or more of the historic expressions of the Reformed faith."

By expanding membership to include not only denominations, but local churches, individuals, etc., the WRF mirrors the NAE, which also has membership by individuals and local churches as well as denominations. And like the NAE, the expanded membership means that individuals and local churches that are members of liberal denominations, including those that are part of the World Council of Churches and/or the National Council of the Churches in Christ, could also belong to the WRF.

The IRC report stated: "The WRF is a fellowship, not a council. A council issues position documents, certifies member church actions, and aims at eventual organic union of member churches.

"A fellowship provides a context in which churches, ministries, and institutions may develop friendships with each other leading to more extensive and effective ministry, influencing each other toward greater consistency in biblical faith and witness."

The WRF Bylaws, which were approved by the PCA General Assembly, have a weighted system of voting, whereby larger denominations are given more votes. Also, there is a bicameral aspect, in which each of two classes of voters—(1) denominations, and (2) single congregations, agencies and institutions, and individual members—must approve for any matter to be adopted.

The WRF has a twenty-six member Governing Board, which includes an eleven member Executive Committee. The organization's General Assembly is to meet once every four years, while the Executive Committee is to meet at least annually.

Among the members of the PCA who are on the Governing Board are: Dr. K Eric Perrin, Chairman; Dr. Paul Gilchrist, Executive Secretary; Dr. Luder Whitlock, Executive Committee member; Dr. L. Roy Taylor, Governing Board member; and Dr. Woody Lajara, Treasurer.

GA Hears Reports on NAE and NAPARC

Dallas, Texas (June 20, 2001)—The 29th Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) General Assembly heard reports on two of the ecumenical organizations of which it is a member: the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC).

Last year, the PCA Assembly had expressed

concern over the change in NAE rules which allows for denominations that are part of the National Council of the Churches in Christ (NCCC) to belong also to the NAE. The NAE had been formed in the early 1940s as a counterbalance to the liberal NCCC.

The PCA's Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC) reported that it had met on September 19, 2000, via conference call with Dr. Kevin Mannoia, NAE President; Dr. Edward Foggs, Chairperson of the NAE Board; and Mrs. Dianne Knippers, Chairperson of the Membership Committee; and had discussed the bylaw change for about an hour. The change had been made as a result of a request from the Reformed Church in America (RCA), whose Western Synod is a member of the NAE.

After the March 5-7, 2001, meeting of the NAE, Dr. Mannoia issued a statement that the rule would be re-studied to honor the PCA's request, but that he did not expect it will result in the deletion of the bylaw. The issue has been referred to the NAE's Bylaws Committee, which is to report to the 2002 NAE Convention.

IRC also reported regarding NAPARC, with focus on two major items. First, at the November, 2000, NAPARC meeting in Los Angeles, each member denomination presented its distinctives. The presentations of the similarities and differences were made with a view toward possible organic union.

The second item had to do with the status of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) in the conciliar body. In 1995, the PCA General Assembly, when it last met in Texas, had voted, unanimously, to instruct its Committee to seek the expulsion of the CRC from NAPARC at the 1996 meeting if the CRC did not repent of its decision to allow women into ruling and teaching office. In 1996, the IRC moved that the CRC be suspended, not expelled, from NAPARC. That proposal, which was introduced at the last minute by means of a handwritten motion, was postponed until the 1997 NAPARC meeting. At that time, the delegation of every member denomination, except for the CRC, voted in favor of the suspension; and that decision was made effective when every member denomination, except the CRC, ratified the suspension via votes at the highest judicatories of each member church.

The 1997 PCA General Assembly instructed the IRC that "if the CRC does not reverse the action of Synod 95 regarding women in office within a year of being suspended by NAPARC, at the next meeting of NAPARC the IRC shall introduce a motion that the CRC be expelled from NAPARC."

The CRC was suspended in 1998, which would mean that the IRC should have introduced a motion to expel the CRC at the 1999 NAPARC meeting. That, however, was not done, as the IRC waited until the CRC's Synod 2000, at which time the largely-Dutch denomination was slated to re-visit the issue.

At Synod 2000, the CRC declined to reverse its decision, thereby continuing to allow women to serve as ministers and elders. Accordingly, the PCA delegation at the 2000 NAPARC made the motion that the CRC be expelled.

To the surprise of some observers, the other NAPARC delegations were apparently not prepared to take the step immediately. A substitute motion was passed, that the matter be delayed until the 2001 meeting so that more detailed specifications could be presented.

NAPARC membership is limited to churches which adhere to either the standard Presbyterian or Reformed creeds. With regard to church office, the Belgic Confession makes mention of "the rule prescribed by St. Paul in his epistle to Timothy." In the words of the IRC report, "We regard this as a matter of constitutional integrity."

Presenting the IRC report was the Rev. Irfon Hughes, its Chairman. [Editor's note: Mr. Hughes, who was nominated for a second term on the IRC, was defeated the next day by Dr. Paul Gilchrist, Stated Clerk of the PCA for ten years (1988-1998), Dr. Gilchrist was an ex officio member of the IRC during that time, and participated in much of the discussion regarding NAPARC.—Ed.]

Pre-Assembly Seminar Explores the Nature of Theological Subscription

Dallas, Texas (June 19, 2001)—A pre-Assembly seminar, featuring four well-respected churchmen from throughout the Presbyterian Church in America, explored the nature of theological subscription to the denomination's confessional standards. Moderated by Dr. Will Barker, retired seminary professor and former General Assembly moderator, the panel consisted of Dr. Joseph Pipa, Dr. Bryan Chapell, Dr. Tim Keller, and the Rev. David Coffin.

Dr. Pipa made the first presentation. The President of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary argued for full subscription to the church's standards.

President Chapell of Covenant Theological Seminary argued for "good-faith" subscription, in which the church courts would determine what views are acceptable.

Dr. Keller, Senior Pastor of Manhattan's Redeemer Presbyterian Church, stated: "My

difference with my full-subscription brethren may be tiny. There are hundreds of doctrines in the Westminster Standards. . . . I'm arguing against full-subscription because I don't think it will solve our problems."

Mr. Coffin, Pastor of New Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fairfax, Virginia, contended that everyone is a strict subscriptionist, in that everyone has a set of doctrines on which he will not compromise.

Each panelist had fifteen minutes in which to make his presentation. That hour was followed by thirty minutes of rebuttal, and then an hour of receiving comments from various commissioners. A half-hour break was followed by forty-five minutes of questions and answers.

Tapes of the presentations, and the gentlemen's full written materials, are available (www.tnpc.org/ga).



David Coffin



Tim Keller



Moderator Will Barker and Joseph Pipa



Tim Keller and Bryan Chapell

Heard at the General Assembly . . .

"I've been trying to be recognized at General Assembly for 12 years—I finally figured out it's by going to microphone #1. . . . I have a new definition of the Christian life—it's a combination of amnesia and déjà vu: 'I know I've forgotten this before.'"—Dr. D. Clair Davis.

"I'm Associate Pastor under Roland Barnes, so anything he says, I agree with."—Chris Hutchinson.

"Mr. Moderator, I didn't understand myself to be making a motion."—David Coffin.

"Try to leave no hanging chads."—Morton H. Smith regarding the ballots for Moderator. After announcing the results of the election, Moderator Smith said, "and four of them we couldn't figure out—Florida style!"

"I want to be sensitive about comments about the printer this week. And I'm sure they have a good reason for not being here yet. And if they say the ink is still wet, don't believe them."—Moderator Steve Fox, a printer by trade.

"The report is not yet back from the printer's."—David Moon, Chairman of the MNA Committee of Commissioners. "He had to say that, didn't he?"—Moderator Steve Fox. "We only beat the deadline by 15 hours, I believe."—David Moon. Later in the Assembly: "Mr. Moon and I have made up—at this time we do have a printer's problem."—Steve Fox.

"I am parliamentarily-challenged. If someone could hold my hand through this . . ."—Dan Bartel.

"It's written in Australian English."—Roy Taylor, trying to decipher Robert Ferguson's handwriting of a motion. [Dr. Ferguson is a native of Australia.]

"My name is 'Moon,' so I can't pronounce hard names."—Ruling Elder David Moon, Chairman of the Nominating Committee. "And my name is 'Fox,' so we're really in trouble."—Moderator Steve Fox.

"I apologize, I didn't call for a negative vote. . . . If there were a minority, if you would just whisper that to your neighbor, and tell me later. . . . My daddy always used to say, 'Never swap when wearing spurs.'"—Moderator Steve Fox.

"Mr. Moderator, I didn't realize it until this morning when I heard it on NPR—and we know that they always tell the truth—that this is the longest day of the year."—David Moon.

"I did vote to affirm you, sir."—Joseph Pipa. "I noticed that—that's why you're continuing to speak."—Moderator pro tem Wilson Benton.

"I'm not sure what the reason is, but I've been advised that you are out of order."—Moderator pro tem Tom Leopard.

"Have you written that [motion] out?"—Moderator Steve Fox. "No, sir, that's oral tradition."—John Kelley.

"I'm just confused . . ."—Jay Nelkin. "I would commend you to Acts 19:32."—John White. [Acts 19:32 says, "Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together."]

"Mr. Moderator, I have prepared my feelings for being ruled out of order, as well."—David Coffin.

"I would have hoped that we would have had a delegate from the Welsh church, and then I could have interpreted for him."—Irfon Hughes, Chairman of the Interchurch Relations Committee, and a native of Wales.

"Last night, there was someone at microphone 8 who was in favor [of the motion]."—Moderator pro tem Tom Leopard. "That was me—but I've changed my mind."—Trevor Downie. "Well, that's unfortunate, because you've lost your right to speak."—Tom Leopard.

As time had expired on the motion: "Brother, I know that you've been waiting patiently at microphone 1, and I hope the exercise has done you good. . . ." Then: "The time has been extended 10 minutes, and microphone #1, your patience has been rewarded."—Moderator pro tem Tom Leopard.

". . . saying something forcefully doesn't add to the truth of a matter. . ."—David Coffin.

"I support this motion 100 per cent—and if Counsellor [Dan] Carrell had returned his email in time, they [various amendments] would have been included in the Presbytery overture."—Howie Dunahoe.

"Now we will hear the report of the Committee . . . on Women in the Church—I mean, Women in the Military. . . . My pappy also said, 'Never miss an opportunity to shut up.'"—Moderator Steve Fox.

"Are you for or against the motion?"—Moderator Steve Fox. "Mr. Moderator, I think I am against."—Charles Morrison. "Well, I think I'm going to let you talk."—Steve Fox.

"Mr. Moderator, with all due respect, I believe you are more confused than the rest of us."—Tom Leopard. "That wouldn't be hard."—Moderator Steve Fox.

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Assembly Encourages Prayer for Religious Liberty

Dallas, Texas (June 21, 2001)—The 29th Presbyterian Church in America General Assembly voted today to encourage prayer for religious liberty around the world. The action came in response to an overture from Philadelphia Presbytery, home of the Liberty Bell.

The adopted resolution noted that the United States of America is celebrating its 225th anniversary this July 4th; and that the Continental Congress recognized its dependence upon God for civil and religious rights and liberties. The resolution notes the Continental Congress' alarm at Parliament's "establishing the Roman Catholic religion and the French laws in that extensive country now called", said act being "dangerous in an extreme degree to the Protestant religion and to the civil rights and liberties of all America; and therefore as men and protestant Christians, we are indispensably obliged to take all proper measures for our security . . ." Also quoted is the American version of the Westminster Confession of Faith with regard to liberty of conscience and freedom of religion; and reference is made to William Penn's *Charter of Privileges*, written on October 28, 1701, which guaranteed religious liberty.

Adoption of the resolution was not automatic, as several speakers rose to express concern about the appearance of civil religion, and about the purported "Americanized" perspective. But other speakers contended that it was entirely appropriate to refer to the blessings which America has enjoyed, in the hopes that other parts of the world which are under persecution may also have religious freedom.

As adopted, the resolution reads:

Therefore be it resolved that the Philadelphia Presbytery humbly overtures the Twenty-Ninth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, assembled in Dallas Texas in the 300th year of religious

liberty in America, to once again "Proclaim Liberty Throughout All the Land Unto All The Inhabitants Thereof" by adopting the following recommendations:

1. To have a brief season of prayer and thanksgiving at our 29th General Assembly for the freedom of Americans, and the religious freedom enjoyed by our denomination in the United States of America.
2. To request the Stated Clerk to include a summary of this overture in his letter to the churches and sessions of the PCA wherein he reports on the actions of the 29th General Assembly.
3. 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 often offered for the persecuted church worldwide) in order to thank God for His gracious gift of religious liberty in the United States of America and to intercede for the persecuted Church worldwide that continues to face religious persecution often 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.
4. To inform our related churches and agencies through the NAE [National Association of Evangelicals], WRF [World Reformed Fellowship], and NAPARC [North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council] of this call for worship, thanksgiving and intercessory prayer, encouraging them to join with us in their own communions and communities in an appropriate season of prayer and thanksgiving.

Recommendations Regarding Women in Combat Recommitted to Committee

Dallas, Texas (June 21, 2001)—The 29th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America recommitted several key recommendations to the Ad Interim Study Committee on Women in the Military. The action postpones for at least a year a decisive vote on issues such as women in combat and women being subject to the draft.

The Ad Interim Committee itself had been divided between those who believe that the prohibition on women in combat rises to the level of a moral duty, and those who believe that it is more a matter of wise counsel. Despite those differences, the Committee had been able to formulate a consensus statement, containing a dozen recommendations.

Among the items on which consensus was reached, and which were agreed to by the Assembly, were these:

"That the PCA continue to recognize that the 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."

"That the PCA believes that military service is a just and godly calling; however, that it presents special and difficult moral challenges in light of the integration of women into the armed services."

"That the women of the PCA be 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."

"That individual believers as citizens be urged to exercise their godly influence to bring about authentic spiritual and moral reformation in the armed services."

"That the PCA chaplains be

encouraged in their continued ministry to all male and female personnel in their spheres of ministry."

"That pastors and sessions be informed of this report and be encouraged to instruct their people in the matters it presents."

"That the NAPARC [North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council] and NAE [National Association of Evangelicals] churches be informed of the PCA's position on this matter."

The controversy arose over whether to adopt the majority's position, "That this Assembly declare it to be the biblical duty of men to defend women, and therefore that it opposes the service of women in military combat positions, as well as any conscription of women into the Armed Services of the United States"; or the consensus statement, "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 informed by the Word of God." Those statements, along with two others (which were also part of the consensus position), were referred back to the Committee for report to the 2002 Assembly. The other two statements also referred were: "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"; and "That the General Assembly of the PCA is formally on record as opposed to the assignment of women to offensive combat roles."



The 29th floor at the 29th Assembly affords a bird's-eye view of Pearl Station on the DART line.



Commissioners register their formal disagreement with the position of the Assembly.



Moderator pro tem Tom Leopard is flanked by the assistant parliamentarians, John White and Sam Duncan.



Commissioner Jonathan Inman



Chairman Wally Tinsley presents the Covenant College Committee of Commissioners report.

Grass Roots Concerns Get Mixed Review

Dallas, Texas (June 21, 2001)—Grass roots concerns, raised via presbytery overtures, got mixed reviews at the 29th Presbyterian Church in America General Assembly. The concerns ranged from the issue of ruling elder participation at General Assembly and presbytery levels, to the matters of the use of executive session by permanent committees, to the question of whether denominational employees should serve on the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC).

Heartland Presbytery, concerned over the fact that far fewer ruling elders than teaching elders are attending General Assembly, asked 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." The overture noted 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."

The Administrative Committee of Commissioners, by a vote of 20-4-0, recommended passage of the overture; and the Assembly agreed.

A second overture sought to amend the *Book of Church Order (BCO)* so that at least two ruling elders would be allowed to represent each congregation at the presbytery level. The Ellisville (Miss.) Presbytery, whose overture had been turned down by Grace Presbytery, carried its concern directly to the General Assembly. By a vote of 22-10-0, the Bills & Overtures (B&O) Committee had recommended passage of this Constitutional amendment, and the Assembly concurred, thereby sending it down to the presbyteries for advice and consent.

At present, in every presbytery that has fifty per cent more ministers than churches on the roll, a church may send at least two ruling elders; and it is a rule that applies in virtually every PCA presbytery. However, in a handful of presbyteries, including Grace, Warrior, and Louisiana, the rule does not apply.

As currently worded, the *BCO* is ambiguous regarding representation at the presbytery: when a presbytery has fifty per cent or more ministers than churches, the provision does not clearly specify if churches between 351 and 850 communicants are entitled to two or three ruling commissioners. The proposed amendment would clarify that matter by specifying that "[e]ach congregation is entitled to two (2) ruling elder commissioners for the first 350 communing members or fraction thereof, and one additional ruling elder for each additional 500 communing members or fraction thereof."

At least two-thirds of the presbyteries must give their consent, and a subsequent Assembly must approve by a majority vote, before the amendment would take effect.

Not faring as well were two overtures that would have curtailed certain privileges being exercised at the General Assembly level. Grace Presbytery had sought to set forth the conditions under which a permanent committee could invoke executive session. In the past, at least one permanent committee has met behind closed doors, barring ruling and teaching elders from observing the discussion, while allowing non-members of the permanent committee to remain in the room. Among those allowed to stay were "co-opted" (advisory) members of the committee, including at least one woman.

Grace Presbytery's overture specifically appealed to the grass roots nature of the denomination, including the concept "that the meetings of the committees of the church were assumed to be open to all members of the church (*M3GA*, p. 90)." The overture also noted that the PCA's liberal counterpart, the Presbyterian Church (USA), "has adopted strict guidelines for when its boards may go into executive session, so as to guarantee openness in the deliberations" and "we in the PCA should not be less open and honest than our liberal counterpart." The Presbytery wanted the Assembly "to reaffirm that all General Assembly committees, both permanent and ad interim, committees of commissioners, and agencies

"will operate in open session." The Presbytery also wanted "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"; and "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."

By a vote of 24-2-2, B&O Committee had recommended a negative answer to the overture, and gave as grounds: "It is imprudent to restrict the use of executive session to the cases enumerated in this overture." When the matter came on the floor of the Assembly, a substitute motion was made to answer the overture in the

affirmative; but this attempt was overwhelmingly defeated.

In one of its last actions as a presbytery, Mid-America Presbytery had overtured the Assembly, asking that denominational employees be prohibited from serving on the SJC. The B&O Committee, 25-6-2, recommended a negative answer to this proposal, stating: "Permanent employees of the denomination may bring useful gifts and perspectives to SJC matters. Professional and personal integrity should lead men to recuse themselves appropriately from deliberations and votes on various matters. It is unfair to exclude gifted men from serving simply because they hold specific professional positions." By an overwhelming margin, the Assembly agreed with the B&O Committee.

At present, four of the twenty-four members of the SJC are denominational employees. They are Dr. Frank Brock, President of Covenant College; Dr. Dominic Aquila, Editor of PCANEWS.COM; Chaplain David Peterson, head of chaplains for the PCA; and Dr. Paul Kooistra, Coordinator of Mission to the World.

GA Declines to Require ECFA Membership for MNA

The 29th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, by answering in the negative an overture, declined to require that its Mission to North America (MNA) Committee join the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA). Reflecting the position taken by the Permanent MNA Committee, the MNA Committee of Commissioners, unanimously (32-0-0), declared that "current accountability standards are sufficient to sustain the credibility of the ministry. Its annual audit by an independent accounting firm is reviewed by the MNA Committee and the General Assembly.

"All aspects of MNA's work are subject to the review of the General Assembly annually. MNA believes that any value gained from ECFA accreditation is more than offset by the time and expense required to maintain such accreditation."

The Committees also noted that as of January 1, 2000, "MNA discontinued the practice of assessing fees on project funds. Since that date, it has been the practice to apply 100% of every designated dollar to the project for which it is designated."

Rejected by Northern California Presbytery, the overture was sent on to the Assembly by its author, the Rev. Andrew Lee, a church planter in Honolulu, Hawaii.

GA Gives Blessing to Five Year Terms on Program Committees

Dallas, Texas (June 21, 2001)—The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America today gave its blessing to the concept of five year terms for denominational program committees. The proposed amendment to the *Book of Church Order* now goes to the presbyteries, two-thirds of which must likewise approve the measure. Next year's Assembly would also have to vote, by simple majority vote, the amendment before it becomes Constitutional.

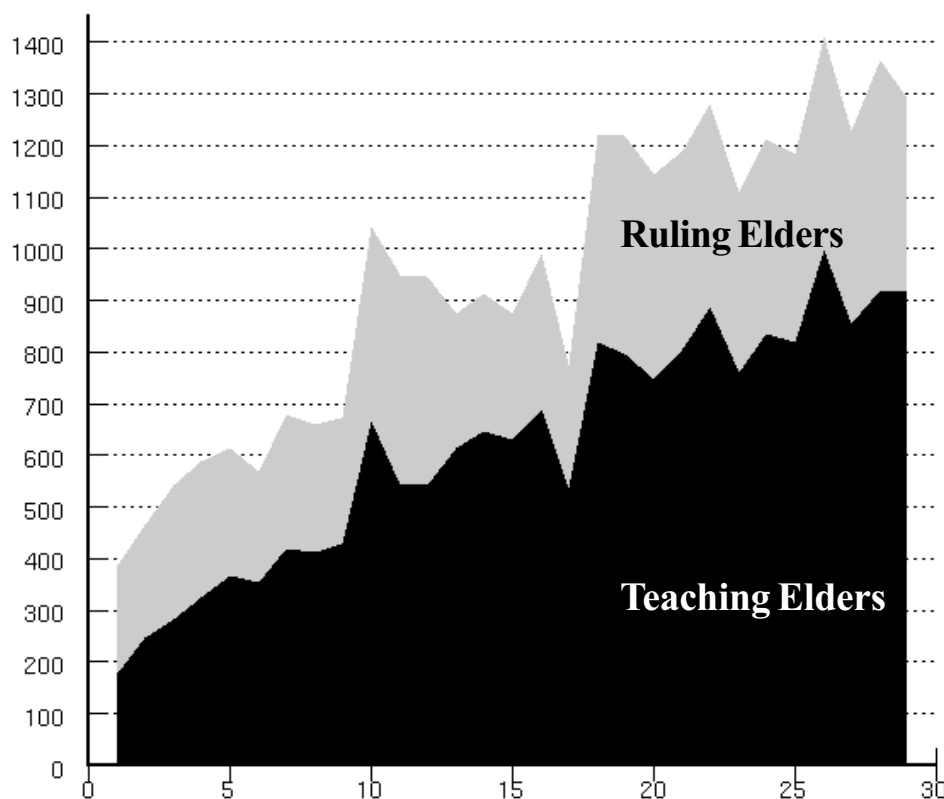
Currently, terms of service for the permanent committees are four years in length. Each permanent committee has fourteen members, plus two alternates.

The proposal came from Missouri Presbytery, which expressed concern about the "frequent turnover of Committee members coupled with the increased size and complexity of Committee operations [which] tends to place more power in the hands of the permanent staff which is opposed to the intent of the founders of our denomination." The overture stated that "it is very difficult for newly elected Committee members to function effectively until their 4-year term is almost half over"; and noted that Committee members "are

only eligible for re-election after a year has lapsed."

The committees which will be affected by the change are Christian Education and Publications, Mission to North America, Mission to the World, and Reformed University Ministries. The Administrative Committee, which has twenty members (eleven at-large and nine from program committees and agencies), would not be affected by the amendment; nor would denominational agencies and special committees. At-large members of the AC serve four year terms, as do members of the boards of Covenant College, Covenant Theological Seminary, and the PCA Foundation (although the members of these boards are eligible to serve two consecutive terms). The members of the Assembly's special committees serve three year terms, except for the Constitutional Business Committee, which has four year terms. The Directors of Ridge Haven, Inc., serve five year terms, and are eligible for election to a consecutive term.

As adopted by the Assembly, the switch to five year terms, if approved by next year's Assembly, would not go into effect until 2003.



At the first PCA General Assembly, there were more ruling elders than teaching elders. However, ever since that time more ministers than elders have attended. At this year's Assembly, 71% of the commissioners were ministers.

GA Defeats Attempt to Make Confessional Revision Easier

Dallas, Texas (June 21, 2001)—Responding to an overture from Evangel Presbytery, the 29th Presbyterian Church in America General Assembly defeated an attempt to make confessional revision easier. The Bills & Overtures (B&O) Committee, which had considered the proposal, recommended by a vote of 23-10-0 to answer the overture in the negative; and the Assembly overwhelmingly agreed.

Evangel's overture asked that the Confessional Standards—the Confession of Faith, the Larger Catechism, and the Shorter Catechism—be amended by a two-thirds vote in the General Assembly, a two-thirds vote of the presbyteries, and a two-thirds vote by a subsequent Assembly. Currently, the confessional documents may be amended only by a three-fourths vote at each stage of voting.

The overture appealed to Dr. Tim

Keller's paper, "The Original PCA Contract," which "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 Alabama presbytery's rationale included argumentation that the "high jump bar as it now stands . . . is too high. Pragmatically the Confession is unamendable. There has never been passed and only rarely has there been suggested 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." The overture argued that the proposed amendment "will encourage debate where it belongs, i.e. the perceived differences between Scripture and Confession."

Unleavened Bread Overture Goes Flat

Dallas, Texas (June 21, 2001)—The Presbyterian Church in America General Assembly today answered in the negative an overture that would have required, in all except for extraordinary circumstances, the use of unleavened bread for communion. The overture, which came from New Jersey Presbytery, noted the connection between the Lord's Supper and Passover (which definitely employed unleavened bread); and

also argued that "'leaven' is sometimes used in the Bible to denote sin . . . and Jesus Christ is sinless."

The Bills & Overtures Committee, which unanimously (32-0-0) recommended a negative answer to the overture, said: "There are no Scriptural grounds sufficient to mandate the exclusive use of unleavened bread in Communion."

Overtures Regarding Pastoral Relationships Turned Down

Dallas, Texas (June 21, 2001)—The Presbyterian Church in America General Assembly today voted down two overtures with regard to pastoral relationships. One overture dealt with the dissolving of a pastoral relationship, while the other was concerned with the call of an assistant or associate pastor.

Eastern Carolina Presbytery had sent a lengthy overture, asking for a change in the procedure for the dissolution of a pastoral relationship. In explaining its proposed amendment to *Book of Church Order* 23-1, the presbytery stated: "This change in the BCO is needed to make clear that a movement for dissolution on the part of a pastor or a congregation must come in the form of a request to the Presbytery and, as such, it is to be carefully weighed in the light of all the circumstances. Dissolution of a pastoral bond is within the power of the Presbytery only and is not a 'rubber stamp' action based solely on the will of either the congregation or the pastor.

"Especially in regard to congregational requests for dissolution, there is a growing sentiment in the PCA that the will of the majority of a congregation should prevail regardless of the issues that led to the request. In other words, a congregation, like a democracy, is entitled to be relieved of its pastor simply if a majority wishes 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 in Israel wished to be relieved of Moses and return to Egypt, but they were clearly in error. Had a majority returned to Egypt, Moses no doubt would have continued to pastor the faithful minority and lead them on to the land of promise. A majority of the elders, and presumably the people, wished to be relieved of Jeremiah's ministry and challenged his authority. 'Thou speakest falsely: the Lord our God hath not sent thee . . . (Jer. 43:2); but our sympathy and support would have been with Jeremiah and the remnant who were faithful to his ministry."

The overture argued: "To say that the majority of the congregation is entitled to its wish without regard to the circumstances and without evaluating the cause of the

majority in the light of Scripture, is neither wise nor safe. To 'save' a church by yielding to a majority in rejecting a faithful pastor without legitimate grounds may be to sacrifice a faithful minority to an unfaithful majority. This is not to save a church in the true sense of the word, for the blessing of God may be withdrawn from a church in such circumstances. . . .

"This is not to suggest that the Presbytery should never dissolve the pastoral bond between a faithful pastor and a congregation in cases of contested requests for dissolution. There may be circumstances in which a pastor not accused of any personal fault in life, doctrine or ministry should step aside. Such actions warrant Presbytery's most careful deliberation in the light of Scripture and sound reason."

Eastern Carolina's proposal specified that any contested dissolution requests could be handled only by a presbytery itself, not a commission, since the matter is "too weighty . . . to be handled by a commission." As worded presently, the Constitution specifies that a commission may handle uncontested requests for dissolution; but does not specifically authorize a commission to handle requests that are contested.

The Bills & Overtures (B&O) Committee, on a very close vote (16-14-2), recommended that the overture be answered in the affirmative. However, the General Assembly voted to answer it in the negative.

Susquehanna Valley Presbytery had overtured the Assembly to amend *BCO* 20-2 to include the senior pastor of a congregation as a member of the search committee for an associate or assistant pastor. The overture noted that "for the peace and unity of the church it is vital that there be harmony among the pastoral staff of a church" and "any new assistant or associate pastor must be agreeable to and compatible with the senior pastor."

The B&O Committee, by a vote of 28-3-1, had recommended that the overture be answered in the negative, and gave as grounds: "There are many ways for a church to involve a senior pastor in the search process. It is not wise to mandate a specific BCO procedure regarding senior pastor involvement in calling an assistant or an associate pastor." The Assembly agreed with its Committee, and voted down the overture.

Evangel's Proposals Defeated Regarding Original Jurisdiction

Dallas, Texas (June 21, 2001)—Proposals from Evangel Presbytery regarding the assumption of original jurisdiction by a higher court were soundly defeated today. The overtures from the Alabama presbytery had sought to clarify when original jurisdiction over a minister (by the General Assembly) or over a church member (by a Presbytery) could occur.

The overtures come in a context of the handling of the John Wood matter at the 2000 Assembly. The Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) had ruled that Tennessee Valley Presbytery had "acted" in the matter, when it had (purportedly) investigated the views and practice of the prominent Knoxville pastor with regard to women preaching. The Evangel proposals would have codified the notion that a judicial

investigation by a presbytery (in the case of a minister) or a Session (in the case of a church member) would be regarded as having "acted," and thus would have precluded a higher court from assuming original jurisdiction in the matter.

The Bills & Overtures (B&O) Committee, however, by a vote of 24-10-1, disagreed with Evangel's perspective. The Committee stated: "The concept of original jurisdiction is strong and dear to the denomination and must be preserved. However, the proposed changes to the BCO lead to the possibility of the court of original jurisdiction becoming the court of exclusive jurisdiction. The details of the proposed administrative procedures produce more difficulties than benefits in dealing with spiritual problems."

GA Approves New Judicial Procedures

Dallas, Texas (June 21, 2001)—The 29th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America today answered in the affirmative several overtures from Central Carolina Presbytery, as the high court approved new judicial procedures. Some of these procedures are being sent down to the presbyteries as amendments to the *Book of Church Order*, while others will not be enacted as Constitutional amendments, but rather will be printed as an appendix to the *BCO*.

If approved by two-thirds of the presbyteries, and given approval by a subsequent Assembly, the *BCO* will be amended to mandate the recording of all testimony in a trial, whether via "transcription, audiotape, videotape, or some other electronic means." Such recording will become "part of the Record of the Case. However, in order to be referenced in written or oral briefs, such recording must be transcribed and the transcription authenticated by the trial court. The court of final appeal may assess the cost of transcription equitably among the parties."

At present, the *BCO* provides that a question put to a witness "shall, if required, be put to a witness. When answered, it shall, together with the answer, be recorded, if deemed by the court or by either party of sufficient importance, and the testimony of the witness shall be read to him for his approbation and subscription."

The Central Carolina proposal asked that "[t]he cost of transcribing [the testimony] is the responsibility of the requesting party." However, the Assembly's Bills & Overtures (B&O) Committee modified that provision so as to allow for an equitable distribution of costs.

In another overture, Central Carolina

had also asked that a presently-vacant chapter (44) of the *BCO* be filled with new provisions, titled "Presbytery Judicial Commission Acting as Appellate Courts." Instead of recommending that this new material be made a part of the Constitution, the B&O Committee recommended that this material become suggested guidelines for when a presbytery commits a case to a commission. The suggested guidelines are accompanied by a flow chart, which was also proposed by Central Carolina Presbytery.

By means of a third overture, Central Carolina asked that the *Book of Church Order* be amended so as to allow that a person who takes an appeal in a judicial case could still be allowed to complain the matter if the appeal were ruled out of order, withdrawn, or abandoned. His complaint, however, would still have to be timely-filed in order to be considered.

Presently, the *BCO* prohibits a complaint in a judicial case in which an appeal has been taken. Previous General Assemblies have ruled that even if an appeal is ruled out of order or withdrawn, a complaint is out of order.

The proposal from Central Carolina, which was approved by the General Assembly and goes down to the presbyteries for advice and consent, still does not allow for anyone other than an appellant to issue a complaint in a judicial case after he has filed an appeal. A personal resolution from the floor of the Assembly, which had sought to close that loophole, was answered in the negative, with the ground given that it was better for any further amendments on the matter to come through the usual process of presbytery overture.

Administrator Salaries Go Up, Again RANGES ESTABLISHED BETWEEN \$88,026 AND \$161,205

Dallas, Texas (June 21, 2001)—The compensation for denominational administrators went up, again. The 29th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America approved a four per cent increase for the top management of committees and agencies.

The compensation includes “any income, or form of income, from the employer which the IRS considers taxable and all forms of non-taxable benefits, such as but not limited to, housing allowance, insurance premiums, and retirement plan contributions. Moving expenses are not included in the definition of compensation.”

The actual compensation packages for these various administrators are not revealed. Instead, the Assembly approves a range of compensation, from

high to median to low.

Topping the list is Mission to the World, with a range between \$161,205 and \$119,148. Next comes the PCA Foundation (\$160,144 to \$118,368), followed by Covenant College (\$152,846 to \$117,156), Covenant Theological Seminary (\$152,646 to \$110,334), Mission to North America (\$144,206 to \$106,584), Insurance, Annuities, and Relief (\$138,086 to \$102,066), Administrative Committee [i.e., the Stated Clerk] (\$135,886 to \$100,443), Christian Education and Publications (\$130,796 to \$96,678), and Ridge Haven (\$119,090 to \$88,026).

The decision to raise these salaries did not come uncontested. The Committee of Commissioners for Administration voted 16-7-0 to recommend the increase.

GA Counsels North Florida Regarding Its Minutes

Dallas, Texas (June 22, 2001)—In one of the final actions of the 29th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, the court counseled the Presbytery of North Florida to reconsider whether it should have placed an email in its minutes. The email had been sent a year ago by a minister in the presbytery to Dr. Frank J. Smith, Editor of *Presbyterian & Reformed News*, and recorded in the minutes of North Florida at its May, 2000 stated meeting.

The matter was raised by means of a personal resolution introduced by the Rev. Bill Leuzinger, Moderator of Westminster Presbytery, who explained that an overture to the same effect had been adopted by his presbytery but had not been forwarded to the Assembly. The reason the overture had not immediately been sent to the Assembly was because the presbytery first communicated with North Florida, waiting to see if the Florida court would take corrective action.

The resolution stated: “WHEREAS, that email attacked the character of a minister who is a member in good standing of Westminster Presbytery; and

“WHEREAS, among the things said in that email were strong suggestions that the minister under attack lacked integrity; and

“WHEREAS, at the end of that email, the author quoted Titus 3:10, and stated that he would have no further contact with the minister until he ‘repented’; and

“WHEREAS, the Presbytery of North Florida has declined to honor the minister’s request for an official extract from the minutes; and

“WHEREAS, the Presbytery of North Florida did not grant the minister’s request that the action of recording the email be rescinded and the document expunged; and

“WHEREAS, it is unseemly and unrighteous for a church court thus to allow the character of a minister to be attacked; and

“WHEREAS, for a church court to spread such a malicious document on its minutes is itself a violation of the ninth commandment; and

“WHEREAS, the General Assembly has already ruled on a similar issue, in that the high court took exception to the minutes of Mid-America Presbytery (‘Records indicate a TE was denied

constitutional protection in that the charge against him was printed in the minutes without being received by presbytery according to BCO 32-3 and was distributed publicly for a period of six months. Furthermore steps of BCO 32-3 were not followed: the charges were not expunged from minutes . . . , and the accusers were not informed how they could pursue judicial process’ [M16GA (1988), p. 234];

“NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that [Westminster Presbytery hereby overtures] the General Assembly [to] take exception to the minutes of the Presbytery of North Florida, in accord with BCO 40; and to instruct the Presbytery of North Florida to expunge the offending document from its minutes and to issue an apology to the minister who was attacked.”

The Committee on Review of Presbytery Records, to which the resolution was referred, recommended that the matter be made a notation rather than an exception, and that the Clerk of North Florida respond to the Assembly regarding it. When the matter came on the floor, Dr. Morton H. Smith, the immediately-prior Moderator, moved a substitute motion, that the resolution be answered in the affirmative. Dr. Smith suggested that if the Presbytery of North Florida had grievances against the Editor, it could bring charges in Westminster Presbytery; or invoke the provision in *Book of Church Order* 34-1, as was done in the John Wood matter, if Westminster Presbytery did not act. However, placing this email on the public record was not appropriate.

Speaking in opposition to the substitute was the Rev. Rod Whited, a minister in North Florida, who claimed that he had been subjected to treatment in *Presbyterian & Reformed News* that bordered on the libelous. He also mentioned how difficult it was to pursue a matter through the church courts.

Offering a substitute for the whole was the Rev. David Coffin, who moved that the Assembly counsel the lower court that it reconsider the wisdom of placing the email in its minutes and whether it should issue an apology. The substitute for the whole became the main motion, and carried on an overwhelming vote.

Rules Amended Regarding Extraordinary Arrangements for General Assembly

Dallas, Texas (June 21, 2001)—The 29th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America this morning amended the Rules of Assembly Operations (RAO) by adding a paragraph with regard to extraordinary arrangements affecting the meeting of the General Assembly. The new rule provides that in case of “extraordinary events occurring or unusual circumstances arising that make it impractical for the General Assembly to hold its annual stated meeting on the dates or at the site previously approved by the Assembly, the Moderator in conjunction with the Administrative Committee and Stated Clerk shall be authorized “to make alternative arrangements.”

The rule change was prompted by the change in venue mandated at this year’s meeting. The Assembly had been slated to meet at the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport in Grapevine, Texas; but airport construction led to the cancellation of the agreement with the hotel there. The Stated Clerk’s Office scrambled to find a suitable alternative for the same dates, and the Adam’s Mark Hotel, along with its adjacent convention center, in downtown Dallas, fit the bill.

The original proposal from the Administrative Committee would have

authorized the Administrative Committee, “upon the recommendation of the Stated Clerk and Moderator, to make alternative arrangements.” A point of order from the floor challenged the Constitutionality of the proposal, based on *Book of Church Order* 10-3, which states, in its second paragraph: “The moderator has all authority necessary for the preservation of order and for the proper and expeditious conduct of all business before the court, and for convening and adjourning the court according to its own ruling. In any emergency, he may by circular letter change the time or place, or both, of meeting to which the court stands adjourned, giving reasonable notice thereof.” The speaker raising the point of order stated that the reason why the Moderator was given such authority in the Constitution was because of the duty and dignity of the office of Moderator.

The immediately-previous Moderator of the General Assembly, Dr. Morton H. Smith, came up with the compromise solution for the wording of the RAO amendment, in which the Moderator would share power with the Stated Clerk and Administrative Committee with regard to any such contingency.

In Other AC Action

In other action with regard to the Administrative Committee, the General Assembly:

—Amended the Corporate Bylaws to provide that the ten members of the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church in America Foundation, Inc., will now be elected to serve four terms in four classes. Directors shall now “be eligible for reelection to a second four-year term after which there must be a one-year interval before further election.” Previously, the Board was composed of six at-large members, plus one representative each from Covenant College, Covenant Theological Seminary, Mission to the World, and Mission to North America. The new bylaw also allows the Board of Directors to “nominate specific men for election as Directors, and may submit to the Assembly Nominating Committee letters of recommendation concerning particular nominees for election as Directors of the Presbyteries.” Another change enacted through this amendment is that deacons will now be allowed to serve along with Ruling and Teaching Elders.

—Ordered that “joint equity” in the PCA Office Building be distributed to the various committees and agencies which use the building. Among the rationale given for this action is that Covenant College, Covenant Theological Seminary, Mission to the World, and Ridge Haven are permitted by the Assembly “to carry their real estate on their financial records,” and the fact that “[t]his financial expression counters any notion that AC wishes in any way to ‘lord it over’ sister ministries.”

—Answered an overture from Heritage Presbytery, which asked for a hardback publication of newly edited versions of the Westminster Standards, by noting that “AC is currently preparing a new edition of the [Westminster Confession of Faith] for publication.”

—Set the commissioner registration fee for the 2002 Assembly at \$200, \$30 of which

goes to pay for the expenses of the Standing Judicial Commission. (The Committee of Commissioners recommended this motion by a vote of 19-6-0.)

—Accepted invitations for the 2005 Assembly to be held in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and the 2006 Assembly to be held in Jacksonville, Florida, both invitations being “subject to suitable facilities being available.”

—Amended the Corporation Bylaws so as to allow the Ridge Haven Board to “make request to presbyteries to nominate specific men to the board” and to “submit to the Assembly Nominating Committee letters of recommendation concerning particular nominees from presbyteries.”



Mrs. Laurel De Bert was honored by the Administrative Committee and by the General Assembly for her 18 years of gracious service in the Stated Clerk’s office. Here, she is pictured with Stated Clerk Roy Taylor as the General Assembly gives her a standing ovation. The two previous Stated Clerks, Morton H. Smith and Paul Gilchrist, also took the opportunity publicly to thank her for her tireless efforts.

Women Preachers, Covenant Seminary and the PCA

By Roger Schultz

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) met in Dallas, June 19-22, and one of the hot issues was women preaching. The issue has troubled the church over the last two years and raises serious questions about the role of women, the definition of preaching, and the extent of cultural compromise in the PCA.

The issue first surfaced at Cedar Springs PCA in Knoxville, in August of 1998, when a woman on the church staff preached at some evening worship services. The church's pastor gave mixed signals about the event, but appeared to believe that

disagreement is about whether or not CTS was trying to engineer a cover up.) *Presbyterian and Reformed News* (March-April, 2001) eventually ran an article with the bold headline, "Covenant Seminary Shrouds Itself in Mystery." Many commissioners went to the Assembly wondering about what was happening at Covenant.

I was on the Committee of Commissioners for Covenant Theological Seminary at the General Assembly. It was clear from the start the Seminary president, Bryan Chapell, was "loaded for bear." Our meeting room was packed with CTS people—faculty, alumni, and administrators. Chapell proposed that the

never be guilty of allowing a woman to preach. It's the same definitional double-speak used at Cedar Springs. In the end, the General Assembly voted to affirm CTS and to label the *P&R News* story "unfortunate and unfair."

The whole issue seemed to revolve around two basic questions. First, did a woman preach at a CTS chapel in March? I met a commissioner at our committee meeting who said that he'd heard a tape of the sermon. "Did it quack?," I asked, thinking of things that look, walk, and quack like ducks. "It's a duck," he replied, "there is even a benediction at the end."

I picked up a copy of the tape at the General Assembly and decided to give it the "Wally test" when I got home. Walter Machen Schultz is my seven-year old son. He is oblivious to General Assembly issues, and I knew he would give an impartial and objective response. "Wally," I said, "listen to this tape and tell me if the nice lady is preaching." "She's preaching," he affirmed. But then, realizing that women shouldn't preach and no doubt expecting a trick, he asked, "or is it teaching?" I can visualize the same confusion on the CTS faculty. Was that woman preaching or teaching? Chapell, a homiletics expert, would only say that there were "sermonic elements."

Second, was there a cover-up at CTS? President Chapell did give an accounting of events, though I don't know if that would have occurred without the *P&R News* story. I still have some questions about the length of time it took to release the tapes, the explanation for releasing of tapes "in house," and the "missing fax." The *P&R News* story seemed accurate, though it was certainly deeply suspicious of CTS. CTS seemed to withhold information from *P&R News*, apparently because of some Board policy. The seminary isn't required to give information to the press, I suppose, but it shouldn't be surprised if negative stories follow their refusal to cooperate. In the end, I don't know if there was a cover-up or not. But as I told one commissioner, "if

the mainstream of the church, Chapell responded; it can't cater to the "fringes." "How do you like being consigned to the 'fringes'?", the commissioner asked me later. Who knows, maybe having that woman speak at CTS is a new diversity initiative.

I have concerns about the whole women preaching issue, and the issue of women's ordination was the reason I left the UPCUSA. Some in the PCA have resorted to coy explanations and disingenuous definitions. Women may read, exposit, and apply scripture—but it isn't really preaching because women can't be ordained. Women may speak in chapel—but those chapels really aren't worship chapels. I'd like to hear denominational leaders say: "Women may not preach. Scripture forbids it. Our constitutional standards do not allow it. When it happens it's wrong. We are thankful that brothers hold us accountable. And we won't let it happen again." Instead, denominational leaders prefer to circle the wagons and shoot the messengers.

Frankly, I wouldn't be surprised if there was some retribution against the *P&R News*. In churches that are growing weak theologically, the most important orthodoxy is institutional loyalty, and the greatest heresy is criticism of the denominational hierarchy. (Indeed, the General Assembly tote-bags had the motto: "Unity and Peace!") A surprising slogan, considering the departure of Cedar Springs, one of the PCA's largest congregations, and the pending secession of Westminster Presbytery, its most conservative presbytery.) When institutional loyalty is more important than Biblical and theological fidelity, a church is in trouble.

The PCA was organized in 1973 as a conservative church, opposed to the cultural and theological liberalism in the PCUS. So far the church steadfastly limits ordination and the office of preaching to men, but some are proposing new definitions of preaching and advocating an expanded



Bryan Chapell makes his case to the General Assembly.

women could preach in a "non-authoritative" fashion. The argument goes this way: only ordained men can officially and authoritatively preach; women cannot be ordained in the PCA; therefore by definition women cannot "preach." Women may read, exposit, and apply the Word in services, this line of thinking continues, but it just isn't official preaching.

In 2000 the General Assembly directed the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) to investigate the matter. The SJC report, received at the Assembly this year, noted that the events at Cedar Springs "crossed the line," but declined to proceed further against the pastor. (A concurring opinion, issued by some members of the SJC, further exacerbated tensions by alleging that the 2000 General Assembly erred and by attacking those who had raised concerns about the issue of women preaching.) In the meantime, the Cedar Springs congregation voted to withdraw from the PCA and join the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, a denomination that allows the ordination of women.

The issue was kept alive at the 2001 General Assembly by overtures from presbyteries concerning women preaching and the poor handling of the matter by the SJC. The strongest overture came from Philadelphia Presbytery, which proposed an amendment to the PCA's *Book of Church Order*. The Assembly eventually passed an amendment which, with reference to I Timothy 2:11-12, would guarantee that only "men as are sufficiently qualified" would be allowed to preach. The message of the Assembly seemed clear: only men should be permitted to preach.

Special fireworks were reserved for Covenant Theological Seminary (CTS). In March, 2001 a woman spoke at a CTS chapel service. (This much everyone agrees on; what they disagree about is whether she was speaking, preaching, or, I guess, preaching "non-authoritatively.") Those investigating the incident had difficulty receiving information and chapel tapes. (Again, everyone agrees on this much; the

committee suspend its normal rules (according to Rules of Assembly Operation the Committees of Commissioners may only deal with assigned business) and hear his response to the *P&R News* story. The Committee declined to do this, but it did allow Chapell to informally raise some concerns, which he also did on the floor of the General Assembly.

Chapell was angry about the *P&R News* story and claimed that it was inaccurate. He conceded that he felt uncomfortable with the style of the woman's address at the CTS chapel service, knew that it would create problems, and took steps to make sure further speeches wouldn't cross the line. Under questioning, he admitted that her address had "sermonic elements." But Chapell absolutely denied that there was cover-up. It was the Board's policy not to release information to *P&R News*. Tapes weren't mailed out as promised, only because CTS hadn't received a legal release from the speaker. (The speaker insists that she had faxed the legal release, but the CTS explanation is that the fax in question got lost.)

Chapell really caught our attention with a clever show-and-tell illustration. He produced a big pile of books, written by Covenant professors, which argued against the ordination of women. Then he laid a single copy of *P&R News* on the table and asked, "which stack is bigger?" (I had my own idea for a cute illustration. I would have liked someone to produce a stack of books by CTS professors in favor of the day-age theory, the framework hypothesis, or whatever other trendy theories are being broadcast about Genesis 1. Then I wanted my speaker to pull out a copy of the Bible and the Westminster Confession of Faith and to ask, "which stack is taller?") I thought that Chapell's illustration was a clever bait-and-switch maneuver. *P&R News* never claimed that CTS was advocating women's ordination, only that a woman may have preached at a CTS chapel service. At CTS, apparently, if you formally oppose women's ordination, then you can



Rayburn Chapel graces the campus of Covenant Theological Seminary.

someone throws a beer bottle down a dark alleyway and hears yelping, you can assume he's hit something."

Furthermore, I found other elements of Chapell's presentation to the CTS Committee of Commissioners fascinating. He spoke of recruiting minority faculty and students, for instance, hoping to encourage diversity and a broader outreach. One commissioner, noting the zeal for diversity, asked about the lack of Old School strict subscriptionists at CTS. "When I look at the CTS faculty," he noted, "I don't see many Old School Southern Presbyterians looking back at me." CTS was there to serve

role for women. It remains to be seen if this is a mere aberration or the beginning of a slippery slope.

This article was written for the Christian Observer magazine, and is printed here by kind permission. Dr. Roger Schultz is a ruling elder in the PCA who has served two terms on the Assembly Theological Examining Committee. He is a professor of history at Virginia Interment College, Bristol, Virginia, where he has thrice won the professor of the year award.

Editorials and Letters

It Really Wasn't a Bad Assembly

The 29th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America has come and gone. With the perspective of a couple of months time, we have decided that our initial reaction—that it really wasn't a bad Assembly—is still correct.

Oh, it's not that there weren't things that we wish had gone differently. That, of course, is going to be true for any ecclesiastical meeting. But, overall, some progress toward reformation was made, while at the same time real disasters were avoided.

On the positive side, we would note that the Assembly, overwhelmingly, voted for a Constitutional amendment which will make abundantly clear that only men are to preach. That vote, alone, was worth the price of a ticket to Dallas.

Another positive note was sounded when the Assembly, by a hefty margin, voted to deny Westminster Presbytery's overture and instead sent a pastoral letter, counseling the lower court to reconsider its plans to withdraw from our fellowship.

With regard to creation, even though the overtures from Calvary and Mississippi Valley Presbyteries were defeated, we note with approval the fact that the Assembly clearly indicated that it is in the lower courts where that debate is going to have to take place—and we have said all along that it is at least a fifteen or twenty year discussion.

On the less-than-positive side, we are disappointed that the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) has now been given virtually plenipotentiary power, in that any request for original jurisdiction will now be handled by the SJC rather than the General Assembly.

We are also disappointed that the Assembly did not see fit to mandate that no

denominational employee can serve on the SJC. The fact that four of the twenty-four SJC members are also in the employ of the General Assembly—without any necessary comment on any of those four gentlemen—to us bespeaks of an elitist attitude. It is much better, we believe, to spread responsibility about just a bit.

With regard to the women in combat report, we believe that the consensus recommendations, which we support, would have passed with at least eighty to ninety percent of the vote. Hopefully, by next year, any remaining confusion and controversy will be gone, and the PCA will be firmly on record in opposition to involuntary military service by women.

As our readers might expect, we were less than thrilled with the finding by the Assembly that an article in this newspaper regarding the Covenant Seminary controversy was “unfortunate and unfair.” To the contrary, we believe that the manner in which the matter was handled at the Assembly was itself “unfortunate and unfair.” But even in that matter, no permanent damage was done. We accept the wound as a battle-scar, as we remain fully confident that we will eventually be totally vindicated in the matter.

So, it was a relatively quiet Assembly, and that's not necessarily all bad. Sometimes the Church needs to take a breather from some of the fierce internecine fighting.

This does not, of course, mean that those of us that are concerned about the health of our beloved denomination should abandon our on-going efforts toward reform. Not at all. We remain convinced that the unity and peace which the General Assembly Arrangements Committee adopted as the theme for this year's meeting will never truly be achieved apart from unity in doctrine and purity in worship—elusive goals, as one looks across the PCA landscape.

But that kind of genuine reformation is going to have to occur first at the grass roots level, before it can be enforced from the top down.

In the meantime, we continue to hope for even better General Assemblies in the days ahead. But in these days of the church militant, we can live with an Assembly that really wasn't all that bad.—FJS

We Stand by the Story

Whenever a newspaper gets attacked for an article, it behooves that publication to step back and consider whether the article was accurate and fair. The action by our General Assembly with respect to the article we ran on the Covenant Theological Seminary controversy in the March/April edition has forced us to re-think it.

Let us say up-front how much easier it would be simply to admit that we were wrong. We could show appropriate humility, as we acquiesced in the judgment of our denomination's highest judicatory.

The only problem is that, at this point, we cannot do so. Having weighed the facts, and having listened to Bryan Chapell's speeches to the Covenant Seminary Committee of Commissioners and on the floor of the Assembly, we believe more strongly than ever that the facts of the article are accurate.

However, we do remain subject to correction. We will retract any statement shown to be inaccurate or untrue. We invite rebuttals from those who believe the story is inaccurate or unfair.

Indeed, perhaps an anticipated face-to-face meeting with Covenant Seminary officials will be able to convince us of the error of our ways; and should such be the result of such a meeting, we will willingly renounce anything in the prior article of which we need to repent.

In the meantime, precisely because we are committed to the truth, we cannot and will not repent of our current understanding of what the truth is. And so, unless facts come to light which would undermine the accuracy and fairness of the article, we stand by the story.—FJS

Looking for a Few Good Men (and Women)

Did you ever wonder what you could do for the sake of the kingdom? Look no further! And wonder no more! We have just the job(s) for you!

P&R News, in order to expand its ministry, needs a few good men—and women—to assist us in this endeavor.

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We are also looking for some folks who can help us with some of the local stories, including news from the presbyteries and community news.

By the way, the “pay” is great—you'll receive double the salary of the editorial staff. And the fringe benefits involve rewards that are out of this world.

So, if you would like to join the PINS team, just let us know. We'll be awaiting your call (540-395-7467)!—RS

Letters

Dear Mr. Shapiro,

I am usually not the writing kind, but your editorial in the Jan/Febr. *P&R News* “A Wholly Unholy Worship” was very stirring, to say the least.

To use your own words, “One of the most appealing aspects of the Reformed faith is its unabashed and constant focus on the centrality of the Word of God and the rejection of novelty and man-centered practices.” My heart aches to see how so many are deceived into confusing worshipping our only true God with self-pleasing side shows. Christian, when will you wake up?

However, my main reason for contacting you is the following request. Is it possible to recognize two youngsters in your paper for memorizing the child's catechism? To give you a little background on our church, we are the only PCA church, serving the military community overseas. We are located in Ramstein Germany, and I'm proud to report, our focus is on the centrality of the Word of God! No, we don't have “programs”, we have no one bowing down to a “live nativity” (coming from a catholic background, this one got a little under my skin).

I would greatly appreciate your response in this matter.

Thank you and God bless,
Gertie Hudson

[Editor's Note: We are always happy to publicize the “good news” about our denomination, including stories on catechism memorization. Please see the photo and caption on page 22 for the story about the two young people mentioned in this letter.—Ed.]

To the Editor:

I want to congratulate you on the success of your newspaper. Certainly, one can safely say that it is true to its name and motto. However, I must say that I have grave concerns about the tone of some pieces.

It disturbed me deeply when I read “The View from the Ghetto” (*P&R News*, March/April 2001). The writer states that his treatment by members of the faculty of Covenant Seminary made him “feel like I had been told to go to the back of the bus.”

It is one thing to be given the cold shoulder by a brother in Christ and a fellow-laborer in the Gospel ministry. I have felt the same treatment by both fathers and brothers during the 20 years of ministry as a Teaching Elder. Sometimes, frankly, I needed to feel it. The question that I faced in those earlier days of ministry was, “Why did my actions elicit such a response from someone I want to respect?” I would invite your staff to think about these concerns when they find themselves in arrears.

The writer raises an important topic as racial integration in PCA churches, or reformed churches in general. How are we fulfilling the *panta ta ethne* [“all the nations”—Ed.] clause of the Great Commission in our home churches? This is a good question, and it is worthy of your best investigative genius. I might even have a few thoughts to “Prime the pump”, should you need it.

However, to my dear brothers of Indo-European descent, we have **no idea** about how it feels to be Rosa Parks in the early days of the civil rights era. Tongue in cheek humor about racial discrimination is entirely inappropriate, and it has no place in your paper. Racial discrimination is a fact of

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American life, and it is a most serious offense before the living God. Please think about that when you are attempting to be humorous. It just isn't very funny to me; rather, it makes me sick.

Sincerely,
Rev. Strother Gross, M.Div., B.C.C.
Chaplain, Ross Correctional Institution
Chillicothe, Ohio

I am writing concerning your article about Covenant Seminary and the chapel tapes of Dr. Langberg. First, let me emphasize, if women are preaching in any institution of the PCA, great energy should be used to investigate the matter.

I suggest that the information you have gathered be swiftly sent to your session with a recommendation that they take this to the floor of presbytery. I would hope that the pastors cited would likewise bring the information they have to the floor of their presbyteries.

The presbyteries could bring a motion at the General Assembly to form an ecclesiastical committee to investigate the procedures and behavior of the seminary.

Working energetically to support the church courts to uphold their responsibility to guard the church from error and heresy upholds the biblical doctrine of the church and is God's appointed way of dealing with controversies in the church.

The Christian church has always had controversies. It is our responsibility not only to deal with these issues, but to handle them as Christians.

Sincerely,
David R. Schulze
Fountain Inn, South Carolina

Dear Editor,

I am concerned by the manner in which you covered the Westminster Presbytery's actions regarding the controversy at Meadow Creek Presbyterian Church, in Greeneville, TN. The article seemed to imply that Pastor Thornton had sinned in his actions, due to the public rebuke he apparently received from the Moderator of the Presbytery. Someone reading the article would be lead to accept the erroneous (and possibly slanderous) implications that Pastor Thornton and the other member of the Session (one of the PCA's founding fathers) were at fault in the situation.

I know practically nothing about the case, and hope to remain as ignorant as my Lord—who condemns gossip—can keep me. Let me simply share the following historical facts: Meadow Creek PCA has had 35 Pastors since its organization in 1812. During many time periods the church stood vacant and only had occasional supply pastors. The average stay for a Pastor at Meadow Creek works out to be about three years. That's three years per Pastor, on average, for the past 189 years!

I want your readers to know that Pastor Jim Thornton faithfully served Meadow Creek for over 8 years. I think this speaks volumes. My hat is off to Jim Thornton. He stayed for 8 years. I lasted less than the average three.

Sincerely,
David E. Longacre
34th Pastor of Meadow Creek PCA

[Editor's note: We try very hard simply to report the facts as they occur. We believed it to be extraordinary that the rebuke which was noted in the story did occur. Furthermore, apart from the rightness or wrongness of the moderator's call to repentance, it is something which did happen in a very public meeting of a church court; we were accordingly of the opinion that it was worthy of reporting. Finally, the reader's attention is called to the news story on this matter, found on page 20.]

Dear Mr. Shapiro:

I am writing respectfully to ask that my name be removed from your publication's mailing list. Because I take seriously the efforts of *Presbyterian and Reformed News* to present a responsible and candid editorial position within the PCA, I believe that you, as editor-in-chief, deserve an explanation of my reasons for this request. While there are occasional areas of agreement (for instance, dismay at the general drift of worship from being Christ-centered to man-centered), I find that in general, I am at odds with the perspectives that your publication espouses. You would agree, I trust, that the editorial position of *P&R News* is a more-or-less militant assertion of the strict subscriptionist position relative to our confessional standards. The purpose statement printed in *P&R News* indicates that its aim is "to advance fellowship, piety, and orthodoxy." However, both the militancy and the strict subscriptionist position itself, seem to run squarely in the face of those aims.

Legalism is a greater threat to the gospel than anything else facing the PCA today. Such circumstances are not new. It is clear in both Christ's responses to the Pharisees and Paul's letter to the Galatians, that legalism was regarded as a menace to truth and practice. In that vein, Charles Hodge made very clear his opinion of strict subscriptionism: He opposed it. He did so very nearly equating strict subscription with legalism. Hodge wrote, "The men who begin with making the tithing of anise and cummin of equal importance with justice and mercy, are sure in the end to cling to the anise, and let the mercy go" ["Adoption of the Confession of Faith," *Princeton Review* (October, 1858), 691-692]. One could hardly accuse Charles Hodge of being a compromiser, much less a threat to orthodoxy. Yet, here he is, warning of the dangers of being overstrict in our view of the standards.

Those of us who adopt his view are frequently treated in your pages to unflattering caricatures, at best, if not to the implication of being unfaithful to the gospel. The Cedar Springs case, as well as the furor over the meaning of "in the space of six days," are both pertinent examples. For purposes of this letter, let me focus on Cedar Springs.

Before I say anything more, allow me to interject quickly that I commend you for printing Mr. Wood's sermon to the congregation of Cedar Springs. It was informative and helpful to hear from him how this whole debacle has influenced the Session of Cedar Springs to seek fellowship elsewhere. Nevertheless, the editorial bias with regard to John Wood and the Session of Cedar Springs has been unmistakable: Their use of Christian liberty is viewed as a threat to fidelity to our standards. The flurry of overtures and the language of those overtures in response not only to Cedar Springs, but now to General Assembly's actions, is evidence of an uncharitable and intolerant spirit within our denomination.

I use those two terms in their biblical, not cultural context: It is *disobedient* to be uncharitable and intolerant toward brethren in Christ when the orthodoxy of their faith is not in question. I see no one accusing Mr. Wood or Cedar Springs' Session of heresy—unless, of course, a perceived violation of our order is equated with heresy. Indeed, some of our number do seem to equate order with gospel, precision with faithfulness. Such thinking is a grave mistake. It is the mistake Rome made and continues to make to this day. One need not agree with Cedar Springs' actions; one may even go so far as to articulate that disagreement. One can do so charitably and tolerantly. Their actions, however, fall so

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far short of requiring discipline, that it is mind-numbing to see the ongoing conflict we endure in our denomination over their actions.

When the editorship of *P&R News* changed in the recent past, I postponed my decision to ask that my name be removed from your mailing list, hoping that the publication would indeed serve to disseminate news about the PCA in an edifying way. I had hoped that *P&R News* would become a forum for discussion of important theological principles which have an impact on *how*, not *if*, we remain focused on the weightier matters of the law, much as *PCANews.Com* seeks to do. Unfortunately, while it may be true that the overall tone has been tempered, the focus on scruples and minutiae has remained.

In some ways, given the PCA's origins, this focus is understandable. As a casualty of the old Northern Church, I know as well as many others in our denomination, the consequences of waiting too long to speak to the issues that lead many astray. Hence, I understand the desire of some within the PCA not to repeat that error, in the face of what they perceive as a drift away from foundational truths. That desire, however, somehow metamorphoses into the "slippery slope" fallacy: If we concede on the small matters, it is only a matter of time before the large matters will fall. Yet, here again, those who are thus affected have confused order with gospel. Their response is more characteristically reactionary and litigious than thoughtful and influential. Instead of relying on God to preserve His Church, as they speak to their concerns, they choose to go on the offensive, as though they are the sole remaining champions of orthodoxy, politicizing and polarizing our courts in the process. The tragic consequence of this course of action is that they make the gospel a secondary concern of the church.

Thus, one wonders at what point vigilance turns into paranoia; when does zeal for truth turn into an inquisition? Left unchecked, attention to scruples and minutiae not only does *not* "advance fellowship, piety, and orthodoxy," it positively hinders those aspirations. Becoming reactionary is never a legitimate response for Christians. It was illegitimate in the old mainline church when so many of us were allies; and it is illegitimate now when many of us seem increasingly estranged. Would that, instead of reacting with anger and self-righteousness, those who are fearful of drift would humble themselves before God's throne and ask how their own dispositions toward pride and condescension contribute to our current failures.

I realize that no one's hands are clean in this mess; yet, I am persuaded that the militant tendencies evidenced both in this periodical and among its supporters, bear substantial blame for fomenting the current crisis in the PCA. The concerns raised in your publication would likely be resolved far more quickly and easily if those concerns were more obviously conformed to your publication's professed purpose.

In any case, as things stand, the editorial bias of *P&R News* does not serve to awaken me, so much as simply to raise my ire. As I wish *P&R News* and its supporters were not so reactionary, so also I desire not to succumb to that response myself. It is for that reason more than any other that I no longer wish to read its pages: They tempt me to sin. If, in the future, you can find a way to present your concerns more graciously, with less vituperation; much more to the point, if you can lead this publication to the place where it really does focus on the weightier matters of the law, I may reconsider. For now, however, both the topics your publication addresses and the way they are addressed, serve only to

distract me from the ministry of the gospel; they do not spur me on toward "love and good deeds."

Let me close by acknowledging that I know my words have been hard. I confess that in fact I have had to repent of yielding to anger in response to numerous articles in your publication. As nearly as I can know my own motives, however, I have here soberly presented my views to you in the spirit of "the blows of a friend." I hope I have been able to speak the truth in love—and that you can receive my words with love. Where I have failed, I ask the Lord's and your forgiveness; and where you fail to receive them in that same spirit, I hope you will pray in like manner. I do not wish you or your readers ill; quite the contrary: I yearn for the day when we will all be better able to throw off the sins that have so entangled us and keep us from running the race marked out for us. I long to see all of us who are leaders, repent of our failures in both doctrine and love—not just concede grudgingly that (perhaps) we have "merely" been unwise or unkind. I hope we will see that we have all indulged a pattern of rebellion against God in one way or another, and *repent*, with broken hearts at the harm we have done to each other and to Christ's name. Then we will know joy in His forgiveness of our sins and provision of His Son's righteousness to our accounts. Then we really will be able to advance fellowship, piety, and orthodoxy—together, no less. Then we will be able both to forgive and to forbear each other. Then we will be better able to discern the battles worth fighting, as against those worth ignoring. For the sake of that hope, I am, and do remain—

Sincerely yours in Christ,
David B. Wallover
Pastor, Harvest Presbyterian Church
Medina, Ohio

Response from the Editor-in-Chief:

Thank you for your sincere admonishments to us over the tone of the *P&R News*. I want to assure you we take your counsels quite seriously and will once again re-examine our articles for tone as well as content. When you serve as great a God and Savior as we have, who is truth itself, we tremble at the thought of defaming Him of glory by not advancing His cause or causing shame to His name.

While I appreciate the quotations from Charles Hodge and respect his stand for the truth, Dr. Hodge, as all who love Christ, wrote for a particular audience, as obviously did you in your letter. And as you saw a parallel between his warnings to not be legalistic that he gave to his audience (I suspect this was written for a very conservative audience) so also consider Dr. Samuel Miller's counsel, speaking of the Confession of Faith when he wrote: "Will you suffer one article after another to be nullified, in fact, by reckless subscription, until its whole dignity and authority shall perish together?" When I hear the President of our denominational seminary referring to Old School Presbyterianism as a fringe group and I see our standards vitiated concerning items such as images of Christ, respect for the weekly Sabbath, historicity of six day creation, the practice of having women delivering sermon-like addresses, etc., I become alarmed at the health of the Body.

There are signs of legalism as there are of doctrinal laxness. Both legalism and neo-orthodoxy are cancerous to the gospel. On that I hope we both agree. I recently heard, presented in a sermon on the Sabbath day, detail requirements for modest dress for our wives and daughters and intemperate railings for those who did not comply. I have also heard a minister of the gospel of our denomination express futility at being able to reconcile the teachings in a

passage in the book of Acts. Neither of these is edifying.

You mentioned by way of example minutiae and scruples, and perhaps you had things not mentioned in mind, but the matters used as illustrations are, in my way of thinking, some of the pivotal issues of our Church today. While we have repeatedly requested contributions from those who would take issue with us (and to the extent that you can encourage this dialogue we welcome your encouragement and support) we hear but deafening silence. Now, lest you think that we are self-absorbed or paranoid, I personally have witnessed secretive and postured actions against *P&R News*. I have had conversations with friends (who disagree with me on some of the issues I cover but with whom I maintain both a healthy respect and warm personal feelings) who confirm that *P&R News* is seen as a pariah. I agree with your assessment that no one's hands are clean in this regard. We have, on occasion, been petty and personally involved rather than objective. For that we seek forgiveness and a determination to improve our coverage. But improvement cannot be effected by increased isolation.

I have a brain-damaged 22 year old daughter. She has a tendency to retreat when she has done or said something that doesn't turn out the way she prefers. It is our commitment to her as our child that prevents my wife and me from allowing that to happen. We don't threaten her judicially. We don't shun her. We don't destroy her reputation or keep her from gaining employment until she improves. We try and dialogue with her and bring her back into the discussion or family activity. That is what love does. I would encourage you to love *P&R News* in a similar fashion and I will commit to you to try and love those who disagree with us in a similar manner.

I hope you will reconsider your request to be removed from our mailing but if not, we trust that our Lord, who will resolve all of us perfectly in the truth, will continue to bless you, your family, your ministry in Medina and your service in His Kingdom generally.

In Christian affection I remain
Bob Shapiro, Editor-In-Chief
Presbyterian & Reformed News
770-781-8811

This is for the editors of Presbyterian and Reformed News, and writer Mark Rooze,

I regret that I have nothing positive to begin this letter with. I was completely disgusted upon reading the front page article of the March-April 2001 issue of your paper. It was so clear that your purpose in printing such an article was *solely* for the purpose of stirring up trouble among brothers in Christ. It was so extremely contrived that I could come to no other conclusion. I ask you to consider, and pray on, the following Scripture: Proverbs 16:28, "A perverse man stirs up dissension;" Proverbs 28:25, "A greedy man stirs up dissension;" Proverbs 29:22, "An angry man stirs up dissension;" Galatians 5:19, 20, "The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, etc." (Notice that discord and dissensions are on par with witchcraft). Also, please read the following, James 1:26, "If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless;" James 3:9, 10, "With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be!"

You may make the argument that you

are merely attempting to maintain purity within the PCA denomination. If that is your stance, then you need to take a very long, hard look at your true motives with this paper. Ask the Lord if this is the direction He wants for you, and earnestly seek His counsel, through His Word. Do not rely on the counsel of others who think the same as you. The story of Rehoboam in I Kings 12 shows us the reliability of that counsel.

Consider the alternative: Romans 12:18, "As far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone;" I John 4:7, 8, "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God;" John 13:35, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

You see, people who are unbelievers look at us to decide whether there is anything at all attractive in the lives of Christians. Ask yourself, if an unbeliever were to get a hold of this paper, would he want to look any further into the faith. Would he say, "I want to know what's the driving force in that guy's life, and I want to have it for myself."

If you do not care about unbelievers, then you need the Gospel yourself. If you have even the smallest concern for the lost, then you need to know that what you are doing is a stumbling block to evangelically-minded Christians who are trying to serve God by spreading His Gospel, and preparing others to do the same. It is a distraction from the work these people are called to do. Please ask God if He has called you to this purpose.

I do not really care if you respond in writing to this letter, as long as you are willing to examine yourself in this matter. Please be willing to consider what God Himself tells us clearly about stirring up dissension among the brothers.

Thank you for your time in reading what I have to say.

Concerned for the sake of Christ,
Nancy Lee, Manassas, Virginia

[Editor's Note: We want to thank Mrs. Lee for taking the time to share her thoughts and concerns with us. Let me just briefly respond to two points. First, we take those Scriptural injunctions regarding stirring up dissensions very seriously. However, in a dispute of this sort, one must always ask the question, Who is truly at fault? In the present matter, was Covenant Theological Seminary, with its policy of refusing to cooperate with members of its governing denomination, acting righteously? If that is a righteous policy, then one might conclude that we are indeed troublemakers of Israel. But if that is not a righteous policy, then one might draw a different conclusion. Secondly, I was privileged to serve in one of the early PCA church plants, in a difficult mission field in New York. Over a 22 year period, during which my father and I served in that church, virtually half of the people who joined did so upon profession of faith, and another one-fourth by reaffirmation of faith. About a year ago, I did door-to-door visitation in a poor black area near Decatur, Georgia, in an effort to raise up a gospel witness there. So, yes, we are concerned about the gospel. Specifically, regarding the question as to the reaction of an unbeliever to this paper, we would like to think that an unbeliever would very much "want to know what's the driving force in that guy's life," and would want to have it for himself. We believe that unbelievers are looking for a Christianity that is real. We would like to think that they would indeed be attracted to a newspaper that is not afraid to expose what is really happening in the church. Indeed, one of the reasons that we are engaged in this journalistic enterprise is precisely because we are deeply passionate about the evangel, and how the church appears to a watching world.—FJS.]

Open Letter to the PCA

Dear Brothers In Christ:

This year at our 29th General Assembly held in Dallas, Texas. I was discouraged to see a trend continuing and perhaps accelerating, that I have observed and regretted for several years. Perhaps it was the loci under which this trend was manifested this year or perhaps it was the rhetoric that accompanied the manifestations that prompts me to speak out now rather than in the past. I am not sure. I know that something must be said.

At this General Assembly, [1] under the protection of Standing Judicial Commission reports which were exempt from modification or deletion, brother members were spoken of and about in a manner which severely impugned their integrity, [2] we heard a master rhetorician openly proclaim that neither he nor the seminary he represents, would consent to discuss a conflict with another brother because he perceived that the brother would deliberately misrepresent his views, [3] a vicious tone was advanced during debate on the sensitive topic of the role of women, one essentially deriding opposing views as being motivated by worldly concerns, and [4] an entire presbytery sought to be removed from our fellowship because opposing brothers could not figure out how to love and respect each other sufficiently to maintain fellowship. Perhaps the most disturbing of all illustrations was the manner in which an almost gleeful delight was taken when one side or the other was seen to "squash" or "put-down" the opposing groups. In side-line conversations and in rising to "standing ovations" for provocative statements, the enthusiasm for Christ in our assembly seemed to be lost in the desire to celebrate victory over an opponent. Combine these with the often un-loving confrontational stance taken by brothers who write editorials and news reports in widely distributed newspapers, and we must conclude that the opposing partisan positions are a serious threat to any claim of greatness on the part of the PCA. As long as such attitudes prevail, we will offer, at best, a mediocre witness to our Lord before the eyes of the watching world.

No individual congregation of Jesus Christ and certainly no denomination of his visible church should be satisfied with mediocrity. It should be the earnest desire of every Christian community to seek after excellence in worship, service and witness to our risen Lord. Thus we can say that every

communion should strive for greatness both for impact on the community and the world around us and more importantly, because our Lord deserves excellence in service from those who follow him. The question then arises, by what standard do we measure greatness? How does an individual congregation or assembly monitor itself such that it avoids censure from our Sovereign such as occurs to some of the churches in Revelation 2 - 3.

There are, of course, many such standards that may be advanced, and all contain a certain merit. **"By the way we love Jesus Christ!"** is a vehement response often advanced. However, this particular standard itself requires measurement—a means by which the love for Jesus Christ must be expressed and hence this criterion fails as a final answer.

Some say, **"By the way that we evangelize the lost."** This Great Commission emphasis is essential to the mission of the church. But Jesus, speaking to the pre-Christian church of the Pharisees, said, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" [Matt. 23:15], because their zeal of evangelism was not unto true doctrine and true love of God. Thus, even evangelism must be secondary as an absolute measurement for greatness within the Kingdom of God.

Then some will say, **"By the way we love one another."** The biblical warrant for this statement is so strong [John 13:35, *et al*], that it must be at least close to the primary measure. Yet even here, I believe a further narrowing must occur.

In another context Jesus spoke of the idea of loving each other, specifically as it pertained to being distinctively different than the world around us. In Matt. 5:46-47, Jesus told his hearers that loving those others in your company who love you, who are your brothers in fellowship and convention, is not ultimately distinct from those outside the Kingdom of God who do the same. Rather Jesus commanded his followers that they were to **"love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who spitefully use you and persecute you, THAT [then] YOU MAY BE SONS OF YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN."** In Jesus' teaching the distinctiveness of his followers will be particularly noticeable by their attitude, concern and behavior toward those who opposed them. Here lies a foundational distinctiveness in Christian thought and service that can be developed

and measured, separating the church from the world to which it bears witness.

Combining John 13:35 and Matthew 5:46 ff., I believe a specific measure of the greatness of any element of the visible church of Jesus Christ can be readily ascertained in the manner by which, within that congregation, presbytery, or General Assembly, overt respect, concern and prayerful solicitation are extended toward those who, within the body, would be characterized as "enemies." It is foolish for us to deny that such partisan positions, such "enemies," are not present. Our Lord commands us to love our enemies and to show that love in measurable and tangible ways. Within our denomination, we will rise to greatness or remain mediocre, based upon our embracing of this command. We cannot love our Christ and hate our brother. We cannot retreat behind superficial platitudes such as, **"I don't really hate them."** Jesus had no use for such hypocritical statements then or now. We must relearn the underlying premise behind Paul's incredible statement, **"Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather allow yourself to be cheated?"** [1 Cor. 6:7].

The witness to our Lord Jesus Christ is more important than our individual agendas. We must respect each other, even when the other person's actions anger us. We must listen to each other, even when we presuppose the other to be wrong. We must extend courtesy to each other, even when courtesy is not extended to us. We must go the extra mile even when the other is not apparently willing.

Quite frankly, it is the "fathers" of our church and the ones in visible positions of

authority who bear the greatest responsibility to set this tone. It is painful to see those who are in positions of leadership failing in their first calling. If Jesus could wash his disciples' feet, knowing that Peter would deny him and Judas would betray him, how much more should those whom God has called to guide other pastors and seminary students, those who have such influence in church proceedings, and those chosen to conduct judicial proceedings, embody that same heart and willingness. **"For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required"** [Luke 12:48].

As one of the face-less multitude, the ones sitting in bleachers, as a working pastor and concerned presbyter, I call upon my beloved PCA to forego the call of the world; to deny that form of politics better suited to "dog-eat-dog" business venture than to the church of Christ; and to return to the distinctive measure of greatness that only a Spirit-led and Spirit-filled church can attain. Let us love each other always, but most blatantly and explicitly, when we are opponents.

TE John A. [Arch] Van Devender
Severn Run Evangelical PCA
Millersville, Maryland

Editor's Note: This open letter dated July 11, 2001, was sent to the General Assembly Stated Clerk, the Chairman of the Standing Judicial Commission, the President of Covenant Theological Seminary and the President of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, as well as PCANEWS.COM, where a modified version of it appeared.



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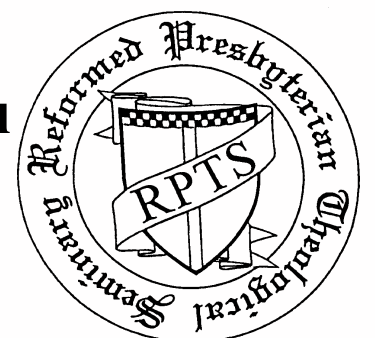
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News From The Presbyteries

Calvary

January Stated Meeting

The sixty-ninth stated meeting of Calvary Presbytery was hosted by Woodruff Road Presbyterian Church, Simpsonville, South Carolina, on January 27, 2001. The Moderator, the Rev. Richard Thomas, called the meeting to order. The call to worship was performed by the Hand Bell Choir of the host church. The Men's Choir of the host church sang a musical special, which was followed by a message from Acts 15:36-41, delivered by the Rev. Curt Rabe.

The Rev. Robert Baxter was granted permission to labor out of bounds as interim pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Dothan, Alabama. The pastoral relationship between the Rev. Bill Thrailkill and Powell Presbyterian Church, Spartanburg, South Carolina, was dissolved, so that he could accept the call of Back Creek Presbyterian Church, Mt. Ulla, North Carolina. The pastoral relationship between the Rev. John O. Crawford, Jr., and the Center Point Presbyterian Church, Moore, South Carolina, was dissolved.

The following changes in call were approved: Rev. John R. Fastenau, Liberty Springs Presbyterian Church, Cross Hill, South Carolina, to a total of \$42,400; Rev. Rick Brawner, Reformed University Fellowship International, to a total of \$70,266 and programming expenses to \$21,633; Rev. Stephen Speaks, Clemson RUF to a total of \$44,616 and associated and programming expenses to \$18,575; Rev. Rob Hamby, Furman RUF, to a total package of \$41,172 plus associated and programming expenses of \$17,420.

The Rev. David Oliphant was approved as stated supply at the Philadelphia Presbyterian Church, Landrum, South Carolina, for another year.

Presbytery approved an overture to General Assembly from Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, South Carolina, regarding the doctrine of creation.

The Bills & Overtures Committee, to which a personal resolution from Dr. Joseph Pipa regarding the John Wood matter had been committed from last stated meeting, reported a negative recommendation. The court voted to approve the resolution as an overture to General Assembly. The following ministers recorded their negative votes: Peter Spink, David Oliphant, Jim Stephensen, Ray Helling, and Randy Smith.

Upon examination, the Rev. Robert Cathcart was transferred from Palmetto Presbytery to become Pastor of Friendship Presbyterian Church, Laurens, South Carolina. His package totals \$43,414.

Presbytery approved a loan from its Revolving Building Fund in the amount of \$25,000 to the Honea Path Church Plant.

Among those giving reports to the Presbytery were the Rev. John Oliver (Reformed Theological Seminary), the Rev. Henry Hope (Mission to India), and Mr. Dan Boyles (MTW missionary to Peru).

April Stated Meeting

The seventieth stated meeting of Calvary Presbytery met on April 26, 2001, at Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, South Carolina. Mr. Ron Creech, a licentiate of Westminster Presbytery, preached at the opening worship.

The Presbytery concurred with the request from North Georgia Presbytery that the transfer of the Rev. Richard G. Cain be nullified without further action. [Mr. Cain had been examined and approved by Calvary Presbytery; but he later declined

the call—Ed.]

The pastoral relationship between the Rev. Tim Lane and the Clemson (S. C.) Presbyterian Church was dissolved, and he was given permission to labor out of bounds at the Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The court approved the call issued to the Rev. Fred Thompson to be Stated Supply at the Powell Presbyterian Church, Spartanburg, South Carolina, for one year.

On a first reading, a change in the Presbytery manual was approved. The manual currently provides that the quorum of Presbytery "may be set at each Stated Meeting of Presbytery; but may not be less than provided in the Book of Church Order." The amendment would establish the quorum as being "at least twenty five (25) members, representing at least one third (1/3) of the Churches of Calvary Presbytery."

Presbytery approved the commission to install the Rev. Robert Cathcart as Pastor of Friendship Presbyterian Church, Laurens, South Carolina.

The Stated Clerk, the Rev. Charles Champion, led the Ministerial Obligations ceremony.

The Presbytery received under care as a ministerial candidate Mr. Elijah Lovejoy, a member of the Greenwood (S. C.) Presbyterian Church. Messrs. Joseph Wright and Tripp Lehn were removed from the roll of candidates, as they have been received as candidates in Central Florida Presbytery.

Upon examination, Mr. Ron Creech was licensed to preach; and Mr. Michael Hall was approved for ordination as Assistant Pastor at Clemson (S. C.) Presbyterian Church. His salary package totals \$41,800, with four weeks of vacation.

Recommendations by the Sessional Records Committee regarding review of records were referred back to the Committee. The court voted that "copies of the minutes to be reviewed be sent to the Chairman of the Sessional Records Committee two weeks before the scheduled meeting of Presbytery, so they can be reviewed by the Committee."

Mr. David Hall reported on the church plant in North Greenville County. The Rev. Stephen Speaks from Reformed University Fellowship at Clemson gave a report concerning the work on campus.

Miss Debbie Richards, a Mission to the World missionary to Japan, gave a report.

Mississippi Valley

The Presbytery of Mississippi Valley (PCA) met at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Vicksburg, Mississippi, May 1, 2001.

Ruling Elder Sonny Peaster opened the meeting with prayer at 9 AM. The Stated Clerk established that there was a quorum present. Teaching Elder Dan Gilchrist was elected Moderator and he again opened in prayer. The adoption of the docket was approved, visitors were introduced, and the welcome from the host church was given by Teaching Elder Scott Reiber.

During the Stated Clerk's report several commission reports were given on the installation of Rev. Michael Philliber at Pickens (Miss.) Presbyterian Church; Rev. Dale Hollenbeck as missionary to Uganda; Rev. Joe Easterling at First Presbyterian Church, Yazoo City, Mississippi; and Rev. Robert Lane at First Presbyterian Church, Madison, Mississippi. Following the Treasurer's report and several short reports

from a few committees, Fred Marsh gave the MNA report. It was a particularly good report. He cited the desperate need within MNA for chaplains and church planters. Mr. Sonny Peaster then led us in worship preaching from 1 Timothy 4:4-16. His message was entitled, "A Stern Warning from God," and it was. Mr. Peaster emphasized the importance of men ruling their families well and observing the Sabbath.

The following men were examined and approved as candidates: Peter Wang at 2nd Presbyterian Church, Memphis, Tennessee, Steve Benson at RTS Jackson, and Chris McCune at RTS Jackson.

The following men were examined and approved for internships: Peter Wang at 2nd Presbyterian Church, Memphis, Tennessee [a congregation of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church—Ed.] and David Stormant at Helena Presbyterian Church, Moss Point, Mississippi.

Mr. Jay Harvey and Mr. Sonny Peaster were examined and approved for licensure after each preaching a sermon before Presbytery. Jay Harvey was approved as Student Supply to the Lebanon Presbyterian Church in Leaned, Mississippi, for a period of one year.

After setting the arrangements for the next Presbytery meeting to be held at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Jackson, Mississippi, on August 7, 2001, the meeting was closed with prayer.—*Guy Richard, Correspondent*

Westminster

Kingsport, Tennessee (July 21, 2001)—Westminster Presbytery met today for its summer stated meeting at Arcadia Presbyterian Church. The Rev. Bill Leuzinger, pastor of Abingdon (Va.) Presbyterian Church, was re-elected as Moderator.

Mr. Todd Overby preached at the opening communion service as part of his trials for licensure. He was examined and licensed to preach. A member of Eastern Heights Presbyterian Church, Bristol,

Tennessee, he has been filling the pulpit at Princeton Presbyterian Church, Johnson City, Tennessee.

Received under care as a ministerial candidate was Mr. Mark Pearson, a member of Johnson City's Westminster Presbyterian Church. He is slated to attend Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte.

Much of the morning's business was taken up with a complaint lodged against the failure of the Presbytery to discipline a minister who confessed, as a case without process, to the sin of adultery several years ago. The court eventually approved a substitute motion offered by the Rev. Dion Marshall, which retroactively imposed a definite suspension, from the June 12th called meeting to today. The court also approved the man's request to demit from the ministry without censure.

[For other business transacted at this meeting, see stories on pp. 5-6 and 20.]

Quotes from the Quorums

Heard on the floor of Westminster Presbytery at its July stated meeting...

"I don't know if I'm speaking in favor or against anything."—Ruling Elder Dayton Owens. "But you have such a beautiful purple coat!"—Moderator pro tem John Thompson. "My wife said this was fine!"—Dayton Owens.

During a candidacy examination: "Do you have a wife and do you have a family?"—Joe Reynolds. "Yes and no. I do have a wife, but the Lord has not blessed us with children. I have a yellow Labrador retriever that thinks she's our daughter."—Mark Pearson.

"You know Babe Ruth had the record for strikeouts; he also had the record for home runs. Maybe I'll get one with this one."—Jim Thornton, making a point of order regarding the charges preferred against him.

Westminster Presbytery Continues Judicial Proceedings Against Minister

Kingsport, Tennessee (July 21, 2001)—Westminster Presbytery today continued judicial proceedings against the Rev. Jim Thornton, former pastor of Meadow Creek Presbyterian Church, Greeneville, Tennessee. In charges processed originally at a called meeting of the Presbytery on June 12, 2001, Mr. Thornton was charged with having displayed an attitude of lording over his flock.

The trial itself did not get underway today, although it was on the agenda. After forty-five minutes of challenges by Mr. Thornton to the proceedings, the court did grant him relief by postponing the trial until August 21st.

Mr. Thornton was cited to appear today relative to the charges. However, the minister objected that he had been cited only to hear and receive the charges, as he insisted that he did not know that a trial would be held today. He accordingly noted that he had not provided for his witnesses to be summonsed.

Other objections were also lodged by the defendant, including that Presbytery had not come to a strong presumption of guilt (in that it had not itself conducted a preliminary investigation); that no witnesses were named by the prosecution; that scandalous charges ought not to be received on slight grounds; that no counsel was assigned at the previous meeting; that the indictment itself was not voted on; and that he was charged with an attitude and with appearances rather than with actual acts.

The Moderator pro tem, Ruling Elder John Thompson, ruled against all of Mr. Thornton's challenges, and the chair was sustained upon challenge.

At one point, Stated Clerk Steve Meyerhoff moved that the Shepherding Committee be authorized to conduct an investigation. But Henry Johnson objected that that motion was out of order, "because the court has already appointed a prosecutor and the trial has already begun." The chair sustained the point of order, and the motion was ruled out of order.

After three-quarters of an hour of legal wrangling, the court entertained a motion for a delay. Mr. Thornton pleaded that "fairness, justice, and charity" argued for a delay, since he "did not come for a trial today." Dr. Meyerhoff and Ruling Elder Charles Newland spoke in favor of a delay, as did Ruling Elder Hugh Belcher, who said he favored the motion "for the sake of Pastor Thornton." He added: "I don't want there to be any... rush to judgment."

The Presbytery approved the motion to postpone the trial by a vote of 20-18.

Hell's Bell's 2: The Dangers of Rock 'n' Roll: The Toll Continues.....

In 1989, Eric Holmberg, founder and director of Reel 2 Real Ministries, produced *Hell's Bell's: The Dangers of Rock 'n' Roll*. Selling almost one hundred thousand copies, *Hell's Bell's* became the definitive critique on rock music and its connection to culture and values. As a result, Mr. Holmberg was invited to speak to this issue on numerous radio and television programs including *The John Ankerberg Show*, *Truths that Transform* with D. James Kennedy, as well as programs hosted by Marlin Maddox and Dr. James Dobson. Now, more than a decade later, Reel 2 Real is back with a newer and fresher look at the contemporary music scene.

Hell's Bell's 2 (HB2) is six and a half hours long and is divided into eight parts. In my estimation, it is the most eye-opening presentation of one of the most overlooked forms of indoctrination, music. What is the methodology of *HB2*? First, let me tell you what it does not do. This presentation does not judge individual Rock musicians, nor is it a sweeping condemnation of rock music as a form. Instead, the video simply views the lyrics and the life-styles of the artists against the backdrop of the holiness of God and this is what makes it so effective.

Part one, the Introduction, lays the Foundations for Cultural Analysis. It deals with objections that may surface as a result of this video. The producer makes it plain that he is not denying anyone's right to freedom of speech or expression, nor is he promoting the dubious practice of record labeling or record burning. Further he deals with the inevitable outcries from numerous rock artists who have the habit of quoting the Bible in their defense, "judge not lest ye be judged". Mr. Holmberg, in very exegetical form, demonstrates that this passage is used out of context. He explains that the Lord Jesus did not intend for this passage to be used to turn away from "righteous judgement." In fact, he

explains, "righteous judgement is commanded by Scripture." And though we do want to judge peoples hearts, we must inspect their fruits and make good judgements about those fruits based upon what God has revealed in His Word.

Part two, called Sound and Fury, is an examination of the power of music. From Plato and Aristotle to Corporate America and leading musicologists, this section shows that music can have a profound impact on one's belief system. You will hear modern record producers and the artists themselves who, on the one hand state that their music cannot in anyway be responsible for someone's behavior and on the other contradict themselves by stating that their music can change the world. Evidence is presented from advertisements that encourage the purchasing of a specific product, to fundraisers in order to feed the world, to revolts against unpopular wars. This section tears down the illusion that is so often promoted by music apologists, "hey, its only music." Mr. Holmberg demonstrates that music, by its sheer pervasiveness and intrinsic power has the ability to shape and mold character and values.

Part Three, entitled Heartbeats - Music Spiritual Connection, shows that music, as given by God, is to be used as Bach stated, "to [His] glory and the refreshment of the human spirit." Mr. Holmberg, using Scripture as well as history, demonstrates that if music is used outside of God's intent, i.e., to promote sex, violence and the occult, it can tear down the very fabric of a society. That is why Plato stated, "when modes of music change, the fundamental laws of the state change with them," and Aristotle believed that music should be regulated by the State. (A position that the producers are NOT in favor of.)

Part Four deals with the Occult History of Rock and is titled Notes from the

Underground. Starting from the Enlightenment this section shows how Christian culture came to be undermined by philosophers such as Hegel, Nietzsche, Kant and others on the one hand, and by the surrender of the culture by the Church on the other. It demonstrates how these men and their ideas filtered down to the college and university professors who then preached these ideas to their students who later became the doctors, lawyers, businessmen and government school teachers. It gives an understanding of how and why so many of today's popular rock groups embrace and promote through their lyrics and life-styles an occult worldview. This is the longest section, approximately seventy minutes, and ends up being a primer on anti-Christian philosophy.

Part Five, The Heart Of Darkness, explains that many of rock's more influential groups embrace and promote rebellion, nihilism and death. You will hear songs that encourage rebellion, the murder of parents and peers, and the promotion of homosexuality and other unspeakable perversions. Included are many commentaries from the artists themselves who explain what they are trying to accomplish through their music.

Part Six, called Mojo Rising, deals with the controversial subject of satanic sex, which is defined as "sex outside of God's covenantal marriage." In this section Mr. Holmberg goes to many college campuses and asks the students to "name one song on the popular scene that encourages young people to remain sexually pure before marriage." Met with silence, he then explains why there aren't any.

Part Seven, properly named Antichrist Superstars, shows those artists who are epistemologically self conscious of their rebellion and hatred of the Lord Jesus. Included are Marilyn Mason, Korn, Insane Clown Posse and Tori Ames and many others. These are people who desire to see

Christianity collapse and their main vehicle for making this a reality . . . Rock music.

Part Eight, titled Knocking at Heaven's Door, is a call to our culture to wake up before there is nothing left. In this section, Mr. Holmberg gives a clear presentation of the gospel by grace alone through faith alone. He further explains that it is the duty of the Christian to "bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" including the arts. The video then closes with testimonies from some who were involved in the rock music scene but now declare the gospel.

Mr. Holmberg explains, "This eight-part, six and a half hour series was designed to work on a number of levels and address any number of needs—both for Christian and non-Christian alike. We tried very hard to produce a documentary that, within the limits inherent in the medium, would be 'all things to all men, that (we) might by all means save some.'" Asked why he created *HB2* he responded, "First and foremost, this presentation was created to explode the lies of 'the world, the flesh, and the devil' and present the gospel of the Kingdom of God to those yet in darkness and second to convict those who claim to be members of God's household but who feed from the trough of pop culture.

After watching all six and a half hours of this well-presented, thoroughly-documented video, I am compelled to give it "two thumbs up" and would encourage churches, youth groups and parents, especially if you have your children in government schools to order this video series. Although it retails for \$99.95, a set can be purchased from the home office of Reel to Real for \$69.95 plus shipping. (To order, call toll free 877-701-9279.)

Mr. Jerry Johnson, who penned this review, is a member of Providence Presbyterian Church, a PCA preaching point in Wytheville, Virginia.

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Community News

George Calhoun Dies

Called "one of American Calvinism's most influential laymen," George Calhoun died July 28, 2001, in Mt. Olive, Mississippi. A rural letter-carrier, Mr. Calhoun whiled away the lonely driving-hours of his delivery route south of Jackson by playing tapes of prominent Reformed speakers.

According to Christian Observer News Service, "To feed his intellectual habit, Calhoun began to collect master tapes from across North America and the United Kingdom. As the Continuing Church developed in the Presbyterian Church (US), Calhoun recorded the conferences and eventually the assemblies of the Presbyterian Church in America. The collection acquired first hundreds and then thousands of hours of sermons and lectures ranging from Martin Lloyd-Jones to R. J. Rushdoony and Joel Beeke. The largest and most diverse collection of its kind in the world emerged. Over the last two decades, Calhoun replicated the core collection for redistribution to tape libraries around the world.

"A Southern Presbyterian partisan, Calhoun also distributed books on theology, history, economics, and literature in the Agrarian tradition. A side collection served the conservative Calvinist wing of the Southern Baptist Convention as well. An unwritten partnership developed with Sprinkle Press in Virginia to match tapes and books.

"Thousands of people first learned of Calhoun and the Mt. Olive Tape Library through the *Christian Observer*, according to published statements by Calhoun.

"A careful observer of trends in the Reformed family, Calhoun developed an interest in Central Europe and sparked the recent republication of J.H. Merle d'Aubigne's history of the Reformation in Hungary."

Surviving George Calhoun is his widow, Grace, of Bassfield.

Mt. Olive Tape Library, Inc., PO Box 422,
Mt. Olive, Mississippi 39119

Mrs. Gracie Calhoun, PO Box 142,
Bassfield, Mississippi 39421

Another Presbyterian Preacher Gets Married

The Rev. Mark O'Neill, pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church, Lufkin, Texas, was wed to the former Miss Natalie Rich on April 28, 2001. Vows were exchanged at Faith Presbyterian Church, San Antonio, Texas. The Rev. Dr. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr., presided at the wedding ceremony.

The new Mrs. O'Neill, a registered nurse, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Peter A. Rich, III, of San Antonio. Mr. O'Neill is



The Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Mark O'Neill

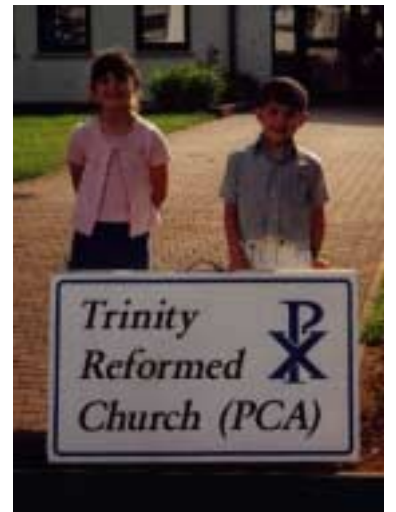
the son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul O'Neill of Gasport, New York.

Pastor O'Neill is a graduate of Cornell University and Westminster Theological Seminary in California. He was ordained in 1996 by South Texas Presbytery to become pastor of the church in Lufkin.

[The astute observer will note that South Texas Presbytery meets the last weekend in April. Rumor has it that the Presbytery did grant Mark an excused absence, so he could attend his own wedding.—Ed.]

Reformed Catechists in Germany

Katie and Luke Ehrlich have memorized the "First Catechism" (*Children's Catechism*) in its entirety (145 questions)! For the past three years, these two young people have been living in the Ramstein area in Germany with their parents and big brother Jake. They are members at Trinity Reformed Church (PCA), the only reformed work



Luke and Katie Ehrlich

ministering to the American military community overseas. Katie and Luke are both attending a German school in their village.

Not being able to read wasn't going to hold Luke (a first grader) back from keeping up with his older sister Katie (a third grader) in memorizing the catechism. If she knew the answer to ten questions every Lord's Day, so did he. Congratulations, Luke and Katie, for honoring our Lord by your efforts. Keep up in His work.

Gertie Hudson, wife of Pastor Douglas Hudson, comments: "Also, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to their parents, Judy and Mike Ehrlich, for taking 'catechism time' with their children. God will bless."

Westminster Lecture Series

Emmanuel Orthodox Presbyterian Church continues its Westminster Lecture Series this year with Dr. Joseph Pipa, President of Greenville Theological Seminary. Dr. Pipa is the latest in a long list of past speakers at Emmanuel OPC, including Prof. R.B. Kiuper, Dr. Cornelius Van Til, Dr. Robert Letham, Prof. John Murray and Dr. David Freeman. Dr. Pipa's subject will be Biblical Creation. There will be three lectures, the first starting at 7:30

p.m. on Friday, September 14th. The series will then continue on Saturday at 9:00 a.m. with a break at 10:00 a.m. and finishing at noon. After each lecture, there will be a question and answer period.

Visit the church's web site at www.opcnj.org for more information. Emmanuel OPC is located at Whippany Road & Park Avenue, Whippany, NJ 07981; phone number (973)539-1171; Email: BrianMHanley@opcnj.org.

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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

CALVIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (OPC)†
4150 Acoma Road/Phoenix
S.S., 9:15 AM; Worship, 10:30 AM/6 PM
Wednesday Bible Study, 7 PM
(602)992-4454

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., 11:30 AM; Worship, 9:30 AM
(714)526-3153

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., 9:30 AM;
Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM
(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., 9:30 AM; Worship, 8:15 AM/10:45 PM (318)478-5672	WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Highway 74/Cashiers S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM Wednesday, 7:00 PM Prayer Meeting (828)743-2122	SOUTH CAROLINA REEDY RIVER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 46 Main Street/Conestee S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:30 PM (864)277-5455	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
WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 146 E. Cherry Street/Opelousas S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 10:45 AM (318)948-9339	WHITE OAK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 699 Polly Watson Road/Fremont S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM (919)284-4196	GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1955 Riverside Drive/Conway S.S., 9:30 AM/Worship, 10:45 AM (843)347-5550	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
MARYLAND CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Elkton High School/Elkton S.S., 11:15 AM; Worship, 9:15 AM (410)398-3192	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	FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1800 Third Loop Road/Florence S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (843)665-9235	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
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	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	BEECH STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1403 Beech Street/Gaffney S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (864)489-2014	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
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	NEW COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 10301 Old Creedmoor Road/Raleigh S.S., 11:00 AM; Worship, 9:30 AM/6:00 PM (919)844-0551	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	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
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	TRINITY REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 3701 South College Road/Wilmington Worship 10:30 AM (910)395-1252	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	TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 108 Hill Street/Tazewell S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00/7:00 PM (540)988-9541
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	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	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	WASHINGTON WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 2700 Andresen Road/Vancouver Worship, 10:00 AM Sunday Bible Study, 6:30 PM (360)254-1726
ST. PAUL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 5125 Robinson Road/Jackson S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 10:55 AM/6:00 PM (601)372-7497	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	TENNESSEE BRAINERD HILLS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 6388 East Brainerd Road/Chattanooga S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 10:45 AM/6:30 PM (423) 892-5308	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
COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 625 N. Church Ave./Louisville Worship 11:00 AM and 6:00 PM 2nd Sunday, Fellowship Meal, 12:15 PM, Evening Studies at 1:00 PM. Wed Supper 6:00 PM; Prayer Mtg, 6:30 PM (601)773-5282	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	MIDWAY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 4011 Old Jonesborough Road/Jonesborough S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship 11:00 AM/7:00 PM (423) 753-941	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
PEARL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 2933 Old Brandon Road/Pearl S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (601)939-1064	OKLAHOMA BEAL HEIGHTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 614 SW Park/Lawton Worship, 10:45 AM and 6:00 PM (580)355-4702	BRIDWELL HEIGHTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 108 Bridwell Heights Drive/Kingsport S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (423)288-3664	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
TCHULA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 109 E. Main Street/Tchula S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/5:00 PM Wednesday Prayer Meeting, 7:30 PM (601)924-7334	PENNSYLVANIA NEW LIFE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP 2795 Patterson Drive/Aliquippa S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM (724)378-4389	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	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
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 600 Main Street/Woodville S.S., ?; Worship, ? (601) 888-4837	LEHIGH VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 31 S. 13th Street/Allentown S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (610)797-8320	WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 900 Watauga Street/Kingsport S.S., 10:00 AM Worship, 11:00 AM/7:00 PM (423)247-7341	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
SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1926 Grand Avenue at 20th/Yazoo City S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/5:00 PM Wednesday, 7:30 PM (601)746-8852	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	
NEW JERSEY LOCKTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 197 Locktown-Flemington Road/Flemington S.S., 10:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM (908)996-7707	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	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	
MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH† 350 Franklin Blvd./Somerset S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (732)846-8777	ROCKY SPRINGS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 123 Rocky Springs Road/Harrisville S.S., 10:00 AM Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (724)735-2743	CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1620 E. Common Street/New Braunfels S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 10:45 AM (830)629-0405	
NEW YORK AFFIRMATION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Routes 100 and 139/Somers S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM (914)232-0546	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	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	
NORTH CAROLINA DILLINGHAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 16 Stoney Fork Road/Barnardsville S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM (828)626-3668	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	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	
COUNTRYSIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 127 Ponderosa Road/Cameron S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM (919)499-2362			

We are pleased to have congregations and organizations join us as cosponsors of this venture. If you would like to become a sponsor, just let us know: PINS Financial Office, P. O. Box 60, Coeburn, VA 24230. Checks should be made payable to Presbyterian International News Service.

† Indicates a non-PCA church.

Summer of 2002 Mission Opportunities



Are you a college student or recent college graduate that is wrestling with how you might use your God given gifts to serve Christ? Would you like to sharpen your abilities to defend the faith and proclaim the gospel? Are you be interested in working shoulder to shoulder with established congregations around the world so that you might better understand the way your gifts might be incorporated into the life of Christ's Church? If so, please prayerfully consider whether a summer with RP Missions might help you in your growth and stir within you the desire to actively serve Christ wherever He may lead. This organization operates under the oversight and authority of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. RP Missions seeks to provide college students with an introduction to missions from a Biblical and Reformed perspective. We seek to work with established congregations so that participants will better understand the ins and outs of the life of the Church and learn to appreciate and utilize the form of Church government that God has prescribed in His Word.

Participants should expect to spend three hours each week during the spring in training/preparation for the upcoming missions. Below you will find brief descriptions of each of the upcoming trips.

Australia (Four weeks in June/July)

The summer of 2001 will be our second opportunity to travel to Melbourne, Australia to work with a congregation on the outskirts of the city in Geelong. This team will be helping a small congregation to carry out several tasks. First, they will be doing some door-to-door work to establish contacts in the community. They will also plan to hold a Holiday Bible Club (VBS) for children in the community. Young people will also be interviewed on local Christian radio stations, where they will give their testimonies and present the gospel and describe their work in Australia. This team will also carry out some ministry in the ports around Melbourne. This team will also have opportunity to work in two Christian Schools. While at the schools they will teach in some classrooms as well as lead in the daily assemblies. We will be seeking to encourage our host congregation by participating in the activities and outreach of their congregation. This team is open to college age young people and there is a limit of 12 participants on this mission.

Cyprus (Four weeks in June/July)

For the second year, RP Missions is sending a team to Larnaca, Cyprus. This team of four or five young people will carry out some needed improvements on the Church building and will help organize and implement an English Vacation Bible School. Team members will also be responsible for developing Sunday School lessons for the children of the host congregation. This congregation is heavily involved with ministry to refugees and this team will do what it can to aid in that ministry. Much time will be spent in the establishment of relationships with the members of the congregation and with local children who participate in the Vacation Bible School. A joint outreach effort, distributing pamphlets, will be carried out with another local congregation.

Japan (Four weeks in July/August)

For the fourth year, RP Missions will be sending a team to Kobe, Japan. This team will work with six congregations in the Kobe area. They can expect to lead English language lessons by using Bible lessons, and they will help each congregation carry out their Vacation Bible Schools. Some manual labor can be ex-

pected on some of the Churches. Again, much time will be spent establishing relationships with the members of the congregations for the purpose of encouraging them and better understanding the worldwide nature of Christ's Church. Participants will carry out door-to-door ministry, pamphlet distribution, organizing Bible Studies, giving their testimonies, and will participate in a youth conference. This team is limited to 4-6 participants.

Northern Ireland (Two weeks in December/January)

This team will work with two Presbyterian congregations in the towns of Moneydig and Belfast, Northern Ireland. This team will lead some Soccer camps and lead in devotions. They will also help to organize and lead some Vacation Bible Schools. This team is limited to 21 young people.

Scotland (Six weeks in June/July)

Ministry opportunities abound and the need for the gospel is great. Team members can expect to present the gospel in several public schools, distribute several thousand tracts, survey communities and make invitations to these congregations, organize Vacation Bible Schools, and participate in a two week course on Reformation history in England and Scotland. Participants will travel to London and throughout the south central parts of Scotland during that course. This course can be taken for graduate credit from the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary and several other colleges have given credit to students who have successfully completed the course.

Suriname (Two weeks at end of May/June)

This small team of four or five young people will travel to this tropical nation to work with five mission churches that are interested in learning how to sing the Psalms *a cappella*. Applicants for this team should be able to read music and should be familiar with and love the Psalms. Participants will hopefully represent all four parts (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass) to better instruct these congregations in the beauty of *a cappella* singing. Team members will also examine the psalms and prepare some short psalm meditations before teaching the psalms.

If you would like more information, please visit our website, write or call using the information below. Applications are available by mail or by visiting our website. *The application deadline is January 1, 2002.*

RP Missions

3004 Fifth Avenue
Beaver Falls, PA 15010

(412)901-3553 day

(724)891-6993 evening

E-mail: rmissions@netscape.net

MSN IM: MatFilbert@hotmail.com

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