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## 30<sup>th</sup> General Assembly to Meet in Birmingham Briarwood Presbyterian Will Host GA for Third Time

The 30<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) is slated to convene in Birmingham, Alabama, June 18-21, 2002. This will be the third time that the PCA Assembly has met in Alabama's largest city.

Host church for this year's gathering will be Briarwood Presbyterian Church, whose large facilities will house the Assembly itself as well as numerous meetings of committees connected with the annual meeting. This will mark the third time that the PCA's second largest congregation will have hosted the General Assembly. The other two occasions were 1973, when the First PCA Assembly met, and 1991, when the 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly was in town.

This year's Assembly promises to be lively. On the agenda for the highest PCA judicatory are issues guaranteed to spark

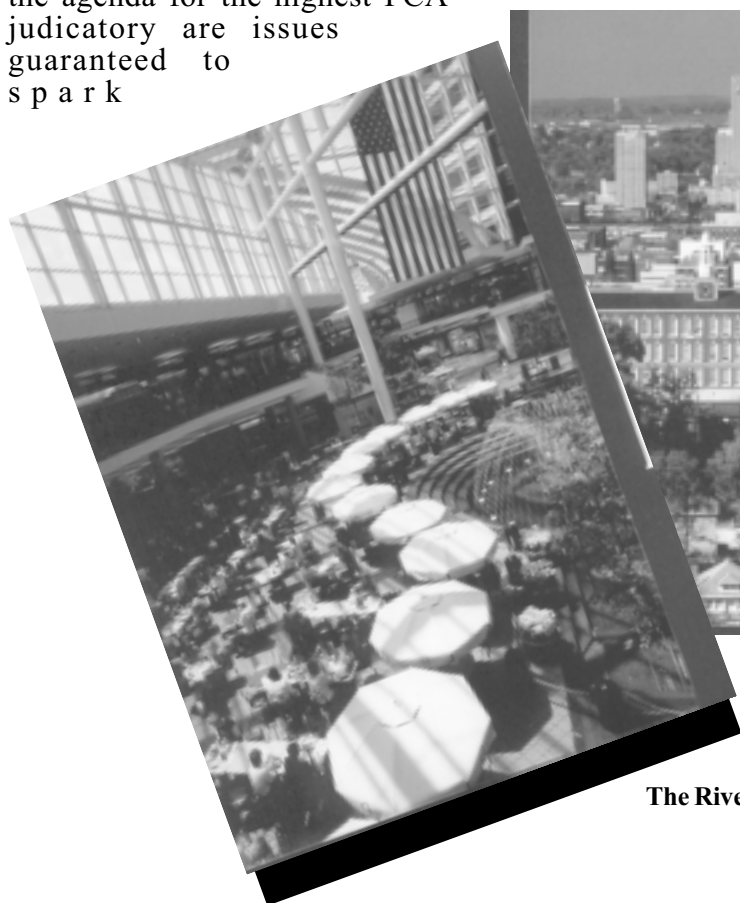
debate, including theological subscription, the proper role of denominational management personnel, and whether individuals have the right to inspect the records of denominational agencies. Other controversial issues include whether to replace the Standing Judicial Commission, and overtures on racial reconciliation.

On Monday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, various committees of commissioners, as well as the Committee on Review of Presbytery Records, will begin their work. On Tuesday, the 18<sup>th</sup>, the remaining committees of commissioners will undertake their tasks. Committees of commissioners, comprised of representatives from the presbyteries, bring most of the motions that will be voted on to the floor of the Assembly.

The Assembly itself will begin on the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup>, with an opening communion service. Bringing the message will be the retiring moderator, Mr. Steve Fox of Montgomery, Alabama. A ruling elder at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Alabama's capital city, Mr. Fox is a printer by trade. His announced message, based on Jeremiah 1:4-19, is entitled, "The PCA . . . A Fortified City,"

After the communion service, a new moderator will be elected. By custom, the PCA alternates between electing ruling elders and teaching elders as moderator, and this is the year for a minister to be selected.

In past years, up to 1400 or more commissioners have attended the General Assembly. With the meeting being held in the heart of Dixie, where most PCA churches are located, a heavy turnout is expected.



The Riverchase Galleria



The skyline of Birmingham



The Art Museum

# Overview of the Overtures

Most of the items of business which will generate the most discussion come in the form of overtures from the presbyteries of the denomination. This year, at least 34 overtures and three communications have been sent to the General Assembly. However, in reality, many more overtures have been received, as several of the overtures dealing with theological subscription and the assumption of original jurisdiction over a minister have been adopted by multiple presbyteries.

## Theological Subscription

Generating the most number of overtures this year is the matter of theological subscription. Arising from the discussion at the pre-Assembly seminar last year, numerous presbyteries are asking that the *Book of Church Order* be amended in order to specify that a candidate for the ministry does not have to subscribe to every statement of the Confessional Standards in order to be in agreement with the system of doctrine.

In meetings in January 2002, Missouri, Evangel (eastern Alabama), Susquehanna Valley, Northern California, and Central Florida Presbyteries adopted the same overture, in order to advocate what is being called "good-faith subscription."

Also in January, Ohio Valley Presbytery sent in its own version of the same overture.

Also in January, North Georgia, Tennessee Valley, Rocky Mountain, Nashville, North Florida, and Heartland Presbyteries adopted a third version of the same overture.

Still in January, Metropolitan New York Presbytery adopted a fourth version of the overture.

Later in January, North Texas Presbytery adopted a fifth version of the overture.

In March, Iowa Presbytery adopted a sixth version of the overture; and Philadelphia Presbytery followed the same month with its particular version of it.

Among the variations found in these overtures from sixteen presbyteries are differences of wording of the proposed change to the BCO, and differences in the WHEREAS clauses. For example, North Texas' overture omits all of the WHEREAS clauses—statements which assert, among other things, that the PCA was not founded as a strict-subscriptionist church.

Countering the proposals promoted by the Presbyterian Pastoral Leadership Network (PPLN) is Overture 29 from Westminster Presbytery. Like the PPLN overtures, this overture would allow for exceptions to the Confessional Standards, but would specify that any deviation from a particular statement or proposition in the Standards would ipso facto constitute an exception. The overture also provides that all exceptions are to be reported directly to the General Assembly, by being included in the Stated Clerk's annual report. A further provision of Westminster's overture is that the presbytery would have to determine what liberty an ordinand would have with respect to his exception.

Ohio Valley Presbytery has also addressed the question of what to do with a man's exception. Overture 4 asks that BCO 21-4 be amended so that a presbytery would specifically determine whether or not an exception could be taught or practiced, publicly or privately.

The Bills & Overtures Committee will consider all of these overtures. In accordance with precedent and

parliamentary procedure, the Committee can accept any of these overtures either en toto or in an amended form. Or, the Committee could recommend that any or all of these proposals be voted down. Or, the Committee could recommend that the matter be studied, perhaps by a special committee appointed by the General Assembly.



Tall office buildings constructed during the early 20th century caused an intersection in Birmingham to be dubbed "the heaviest corner on earth." The city has continued the trend of building skyscrapers.

## Original Jurisdiction

Overture 5 requests that the BCO be amended so that at least ten percent of the presbyteries, rather than only a couple of presbyteries, would have to petition the General Assembly for the assumption of original jurisdiction over a minister when his presbytery has refused to act. Sixteen presbyteries adopted that overture. A similar overture (Overture 30) was sent up by Philadelphia and Iowa Presbyteries.

Potomac Presbytery has sent in its own version, which would specify that at least five percent of the presbyteries would have to petition for jurisdiction. Overture 18 also calls for amending the BCO with regard to a presbytery assuming original jurisdiction over a church member. Under Potomac's plan, at least five percent of the Sessions of a presbytery, rather than the current two Sessions, would have to petition in the matter.

## Open or Closed Records

Westminster Presbytery's Overture 7 focuses on the PCA Foundation and its refusal to allow members of the denominational corporation to "inspect the records." The overture argues that unless individuals are allowed to inspect the

records of controlled corporations, then the General Assembly will have lost effective control of them. The overture petitions that a sunshine policy would apply not only to the Foundation but to all the committees and agencies of the church [see story on page 4—Ed.]

## Politicking

Overture 34 from Westminster Presbytery asks the Assembly to disapprove of denominational management personnel using their posts of prestige and influence in ecclesiastical politicking. Expressly targeting the Presbyterian Pastoral Leadership Network (PPLN), the overture states that denominational personnel were used in order to create the organization's web site, to send emails, and to assist in the meeting in Atlanta. The overture asks the Assembly to counsel said personnel that the use of denominational resources for such political activities is inappropriate.

## Women in the Military Report

In 1998, the General Assembly appointed a study committee on the subject of women in the military, especially in combat. Only a portion of that committee's report was adopted at last year's Assembly. The crucial issue, viz., whether forbidding women to take up combat roles is a matter of Biblical prohibition or merely a matter of prudence and wisdom, was postponed until this year's Assembly. Meanwhile, the report was sent down to the presbyteries for comment.

Western Carolina, Metropolitan New York,

New River, and Potomac Presbyteries have overruled the Assembly to allow for a diversity of views on the matter and to dismiss the Women in Military Committee with thanks. Northern California Presbytery has also sent a communication to the same effect. On the other hand, Mississippi Valley Presbytery has sent its own communication, expressing an affirmation of the Committee's work, particularly the view that women abstaining from combat is a Christian duty.

## Race and Ethnicity

Nashville Presbytery has sent in a controversial overture on racial reconciliation, which calls upon the Assembly to repent "of our pride, our complacency, and our complicity" for the "sins of our fathers." Overture 20 states that "the heinous sins attendant with unbiblical forms of servitude—including oppression, racism, exploitation, man stealing, and chattel slavery—remain among the defining features of our national history." Chesapeake Presbytery has sent Overture 19 calling for a study committee on ministry amidst ethnic diversity.

## Judicial Process

In Overture 6, Westminster Presbytery calls for the replacement of the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) with regionally-based judicial commissions. The overture expresses great dissatisfaction with the present system. Currently, the SJC is comprised of 24 men in four classes of three teaching elders and three ruling elders each, elected directly by the General Assembly. The Westminster proposal would have commissions selected by lot from among the commissioners of the previous General Assembly.

Overture 28, also from Westminster Presbytery, asks that proposed changes to the SJC Manual be rejected. Concern is especially expressed over the way in which the SJC has proposed the handling of Memorials, with the Presbytery suggesting that at least some of the changes may be un-Constitutional. Last year's General Assembly had referred these proposed changes to the presbyteries for comment.

## Concern Over the TNIV

Concern over a new gender-neutral translation of the Bible, "Today's New International Version," prompted Central Carolina Presbytery to send up Overture 33. The overture calls for a study committee of this new version, especially given the fact that many PCA congregations already use the New International Version (NIV). [See story on page 12.]

## The Superiority of Scripture

Everyone in the PCA agrees that Scripture is the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and that the Bible therefore must take precedence over man-made documents. But what should be done when a proposed statement or action seems to contradict the Scriptures, and the church's Constitution appears not to provide a way to redress the situation?

In Overture 27, Eastern Canada Presbytery is seeking a way of handling alleged disagreements between the Constitution and Scripture. Eastern Canada's proposal would require a

## Comparing Presbytery Votes

According to the 2002 Commissioners' Handbook . . .

Of the sixteen presbyteries that had adopted the PPLN language regarding theological subscription, all had adopted the PPLN plan regarding original jurisdiction.

Of the eighteen presbyteries that had adopted the PPLN plan for changing the number of presbyteries necessary to petition for original jurisdiction, all but three—Fellowship, Illiana, and Piedmont Triad—also adopted the PPLN proposal regarding theological subscription.

Of these eighteen presbyteries, seven had voted against the BCO amendment which would require Sessions "to ensure that the Word of God is preached only by such men as are sufficiently qualified . . .", seven had voted in favor, and four had not reported their votes in time for printing in the handbook. The handbook indicates that there were 38 presbytery votes in favor of the amendment, and eight opposed.

supermajority (3/4) vote before the Assembly could overturn an action. The background for this overture was the scenario at last year's Assembly, when many members of the court seemed to be frustrated with their inability to remove offensive language from the SJC's report and a concurring opinion on the John Wood matter.

Popularity Contests

In Overture 17, Eastern Canada seeks redress of what it perceives as a political pitting of one candidate for a post against another candidate. If this overture is approved, floor nominees will no longer be placed in nomination against specific candidates, but the contests will be random.

Male Only

Two overtures (14 and 15) from Rocky Mountain Presbytery seek the amendment of BCO 24-1 so as to make clear that only men shall hold office in the church.

Unity

Western Carolina Presbytery's Overture 1 would add the phrase "and unity" to the sixth ordination vow in BCO 21-5, so that the ordinand would "promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the Gospel and the purity and peace and unity of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?"

Freemasonry

Louisiana Presbytery is asking, in Overture 9, that Freemasons would be prohibited from holding office in the PCA. The Presbytery appeals to the report of an ad hoc General Assembly which 15 years ago reported the incompatibility of Masonry with the gospel.

Augmented Sessions

Ascension Presbytery wants to provide for a Session to be augmented, so that it can continue to function as a church court even if it has lost a quorum. Overture 25 calls for amending the BCO, including adding a new paragraph (12-11), for that purpose and for the purpose of providing procedures in case a Session cannot act.

Presbyteries

New York State Presbytery is asking that all of the Empire State (other than that portion in and around New York City which belongs to Metropolitan New York Presbytery) be given to it. Presently, much of western New York is in the bounds of Ascension Presbytery.

Rocky Mountain Presbytery is asking that the entire state of Montana be included within its bounds. If the Assembly approves Overture 16, the Presbytery will consist of three western states: Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana.

Overtures from New River and James River Presbyteries call for the establishment of a new presbytery in central Virginia, to be known as Blue Ridge Presbytery. Both of the existing presbyteries will cede territory in order to erect this new one.

Coming as a recommendation from the Mission to North America Committee is a proposal to erect a new bi-lingual Korean-American Presbytery. Like the seven existing Korean-language presbyteries, this court would be non-geographical. If the requests to erect both new presbyteries are approved, there will be 65 PCA presbyteries.

MTW Coordinator on Five Month Sabbatical

Mission to the World (MTW) Coordinator Paul Kooistra has been on a five month sabbatical. According to MTW officials, Dr. Kooistra has been on a sabbatical since the beginning of the year, and is slated to return to the office in early June.

According to MTW Chairman Bob Massengill, "We felt that Paul was going so hard. His job is not a nine-to-five job, or even a five or six day per week job, because you never know when something's going to come up on the different fields."

Mr. Massengill continued: "We just wanted him to take a little time to be rejuvenated, to have some time away from the pressure of the job." In his opinion, this was necessary because the Coordinator is "on call all the time." Even during the sabbatical, Dr. Kooistra was available when the staff or the Committee had to get in touch with him, according to Chairman Massengill.

The ruling elder from Brookhaven, Mississippi, stated that the MTW Coordinator has "probably preached every other weekend" while on sabbatical. In Bob Massengill's view, Dr. Kooistra "always represents Mission to the World well. He is an excellent preacher," one who brings a

great love for the Lord and a great love for world missions.

Mr. Massengill stated that besides being preaching, Paul Kooistra has "also been involved in writing." He mentioned the Coordinator's 31-day study entitled, Living in Grace, as being a project that Dr. Kooistra is updating. The Chairman also mentioned Dr. Kooistra's writing on the Faith-Promise, a study paper on church planting, and a work on discerning God's will.

The suggestion for Dr. Kooistra to take a sabbatical came from the MTW Committee, not from the Coordinator. "This was not him coming to us, saying, Hey, guys, why don't I take a sabbatical?", declared the Chairman.

Mr. Massengill also stated that the sabbatical was not granted for the purpose of Dr. Kooistra being involved in the organization known as Presbyterian Pastoral Leadership Network (PPLN). Mr. Massengill said that he was "really not familiar" with that organization, other than through information which Dr. Dominic Aquila, Editor of PCANEWS.COM, sent out on news about the organization.

The MTW Committee is "enthusiastically" recommending that Dr.

Kooistra be re-elected as MTW Coordinator. The Committee says: "We strongly commend his performance during 2001-2002 especially in the following areas:

- His forthright demeanor and management have instilled trust between members of the Atlanta staff, between the Atlanta staff and field missionaries and between MTW and the churches of the PCA.
- His exemplary spiritual leadership of MTW especially in the development and teaching of Living in Grace.
- His encouragement and leadership of the organizational redesign process as the implementation of the results of this redesign resulting in even greater efficiency and unity throughout the entire MTW organization.
- His encouragement and leadership in fund-raising, construction, and move to the new building.

According to General Assembly minutes, Dr. Kooistra's total compensation is \$139,090. The commissioners' handbook for the 2002 Assembly does not list what his total compensation will be for next year.

Ever since its founding, Birmingham has been an industrial center. Pictured at right is the Mercedes-Benz US International Visitors Center.



Photos on pages 1-3 courtesy of Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau. Photo on page 2 by Charles Seifried, ©1997.



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## PCAF Controversy Continues

The Administrative Committee (AC) of the Presbyterian Church in America has weighed in on the controversy surrounding the PCA Foundation. In its report to the 30<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, the AC is recommending a negative answer to Overture 7 from Westminster Presbytery.

In making its recommendation, AC set forth several grounds, as follows:

*The overture is based on an incorrect assumption; i.e. that any commissioner of the General Assembly is analogous to a stockholder in a corporation. The PCA is incorporated under Delaware law as a non-stock corporation, which does not give individuals the right to inspect all records as the overture alleges.*

*All Committees and Agencies are related to the Assembly as committees ("RAO" 4-3). As such their books are audited annually by outside auditing firms and such audits are duly reported to the Permanent Committees or Boards and subsequently reported to the respective Committees of Commissioners of the General Assembly, and subsequently approved by the General Assembly.*

*The General Assembly as a whole, not individual members of the PCA, has oversight of General Assembly Committees and Agencies.*

*The overture is far reaching to include "the records" not only of the Foundation but all Committees and Agencies.*

*It would be illegal to allow individual members to inspect some records, for example, academic records of individual students at Covenant College or Covenant Seminary, or personnel records of any Committee or Agency.*

*It is a common practice of PCA churches that donor records are confidential records and individual donor records are not open for inspection to any*

*church member who is curious as to what another member gave.*

*PCA Committees and Agencies would be severely hindered in raising funds to carry out their respective missions, if the inspection of any and all records, particularly donor records, were allowed.*

Overture 7 was referred to both AC and the PCA Foundation. Accordingly, at least two Committees of Commissioners will deal with the matter.

Westminster Presbytery has requested that the matter be referred also to the Bills & Overtures (B&O) Committee, since the B&O Committee handles general matters and since the overture also asks that if the Assembly is unable to assert its control over separately-incorporated committees and agencies, the Assembly begin the process of divesting itself of them. In response to that communication, Stated Clerk Roy Taylor has publicly asserted that it would be improper for him to refer the matter to the B&O Committee. The public chiding of a lower court by a PCA General Assembly Stated Clerk is apparently without precedent.

Meanwhile, the Session which brought the overture to Westminster Presbytery has circulated a letter to every Session in the denomination, setting forth what it believes are the dangers of the PCA Foundation's position with regard to financial disclosure.

Midway Presbyterian Church, Jonesboro, Tennessee, sent the letter. The communiqué was signed by Pastor Ross Lindley and every ruling elder in the congregation.

Located between Jonesboro and Johnson City, Tennessee, Midway Presbyterian was the first congregation organized by a presbytery of the Continuing Presbyterian Church movement (now the PCA).

## EVALUATION OF AC's RESPONSE

The Administrative Committee's response, first of all, is based on an appeal to Delaware law. It is the position of AC that members of a non-stock corporation do not have the same rights to inspect the records as do stock-holders of a stock corporation.

The Delaware Code, however, does equate stockholders in a stock corporation and members of a non-stock corporation. Title 8, Chapter 1, Section 220 ("Inspection of books and records."), subsection (a), of the Delaware Code, says: "As used in this section, 'stockholder' means a stockholder of record of stock in a stock corporation and also a member of a nonstock corporation as reflected on the records of the nonstock corporation. As used in this section, the term 'list of stockholders' includes lists of members in a nonstock corporation." Subsection (b) provides: "Any stockholder, in person or by attorney or other agent, shall, upon written demand under oath stating the purpose thereof, have the right during the usual hours for business to inspect for any proper purpose the corporation's stock ledger, a list of its stockholders, and its other books and records, and to make copies or extracts therefrom. A proper purpose shall mean a purpose reasonably related to such person's interest as a stockholder. . . ."

The second ground cited by AC is that the books are found in order by outside auditing firms. However, the concern that gave rise to the overture from Westminster Presbytery is not financial malfeasance, but rather the particular organizations to which the money is going.

The third ground is that individual members have no oversight responsibilities with regard to General Assembly Committees and Agencies. This ground represents one of the key philosophical differences between the AC approach and that of Westminster Presbytery. The Presbytery's overture is informed by the doctrine of total depravity, the notion of mutual accountability, and the contention that in a large organization individual investigation is necessary in order to bring to the attention of the whole any matter needing redress. The AC position would totally trust the committees and not allow any digging for information other than through "official" channels.

The fourth ground as to why AC is advocating a negative answer to the overture is that it is "far reaching." This is a point on which all parties agree.

The fifth ground asserts the illegality of allowing certain records to be open to inspection. However, Overture 7 does not contemplate opening any and all records to inspection. The types of records which a "stockholder" is entitled to inspect include "its stock ledger, books of account, and minute books" (Title 8, Chapter 1, Section 224, of the Delaware Code).

The sixth ground appeals to the fact that individual donor records are not open for inspection in a local church. However, Westminster's overture is not aimed at retrieving the information as to who gave money, but rather, where the money is going.

The seventh ground is that PCA agencies would be severely hindered in raising funds "if the inspection of any and all records, particularly donor records, were allowed." However, Westminster's overture is not aimed at "any and all records" but rather at the records which indicate what benevolence causes are being aided and in what amount.

[P&R News would like to thank the attorneys who helped us in our understanding of Delaware law and kindly gave their pro bono assistance for this article.—Ed.]

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# New Group Holds First Public Meeting in Atlanta

Atlanta, Georgia (April 10, 2002)—Intown Community Church played host to 450 churchmen (and a few church women) as the organization now billing itself as Presbyterian Pastoral Leadership Network (PPLN) held its first public meeting here. The day's activities, which started at 10:00 AM and concluded before its scheduled time of adjournment at 4:00 PM, featured sermons, worship, panel and small-group discussion, and old-fashioned ecclesiastical politicking.

The first speaker today was Dr. Bryan Chapell, President of Covenant Theological Seminary, who preached from Ephesians 1. He began his sermon by justifying the workings of the organization: "This is open. And everything we have tried to do has been open to make us as vulnerable as possible for the sake of the church." The thrust of his message was the wonder of the church, as God orders His universe for the church's benefit.

After that address, Dr. Tim Keller gave the organization's vision for the church. He stated that the Vision Statement was "not a legislative document. We didn't go through it word by word." What it represented was "an effort to make the invisible visible." He said that there are "different vision maps" presented by various groups within the PCA. One group's vision is British Puritanism, another frontier evangelism, another Southern Presbyterianism. What PPLN was doing was making its vision map visible, by laying out what this group of churchmen believes should be the direction for the denomination.

Pastor Keller's first point was this: "We believe that it is important for the PCA to relate around a common vision." Secondly, he stated that PPLN believes that its vision is "compelling," particularly as it attempts to hold together three strands which were manifest in the life of Jonathan Edwards: theological, revivalist, and culturalist. Thirdly, the PPLN group is "being vulnerable" by setting forth its agenda publicly. Dr. Keller's challenge to everybody in the denomination who has a vision is to put that vision up on a web site as PPLN. "My challenge to you is, Is your vision as compelling?", he rhetorically asked.

The New York pastor then addressed what he conceded were "hot buttons." "We do resist the idea that there's only way to do Reformed worship." "We are resisting the element in the PCA that wants to shrink what women can do. We would like to exercise our Constitutional freedom." "We resist the elements in the PCA that don't want us to have anything to do with churches that are not like us."

Dr. Chapell then addressed the question of "Why Now?"—why was the PPLN organization being started now? His first reason was "because we love our church," which is absolutely committed to Scripture, the Reformed faith, and world missions. President Chapell averred that "we find ourselves increasingly hindered" by the constant theological tug-of-war. "Our Assemblies and ministries are being diverted by the fears and interests and accusations of the few. These few honestly believe that the PCA and her leaders are not being faithful to historic principles of Reformed tradition. We respectfully disagree." After saying that these concerned brethren are valued and welcome, he continued: "nevertheless, we believe the concerns that they are expressing, and the manner in which they are expressing these concerns, is damaging our church. . . . What increasingly troubles us is that while these few speak of grass roots commitments, these brothers' actions are consistently directed at imposing new and narrow views on the majority of the PCA through legislation, litigation, and committee procedures at the General Assembly and presbytery levels."

"Our Assemblies are now noted more as arenas for arguments and attack rather than

as forums for the promotion of the progress of the church and for the encouragement and equipping of brothers for ministry.

"Our presbyteries increasingly are dividing over philosophical differences." He lamented that the ruling elders participate at only a fraction of former levels, as the elders are "discouraged by the continual wrangling and by the preacher arguments over the *minutiae* that seem to them to have little to do with the gospel priorities that they want to pursue. Ministry-minded pastors in Biblically-vibrant churches increasingly see our corporate gatherings as irrelevant.

"You perceive as mean and petty the preoccupations of the arguers," Dr. Chapell stated, in what is a "caustic atmosphere." He added: "Many of you cannot imagine encouraging your own children to be leaders in our church because you do not want them to risk being damaged by the pain and the polarization that you have felt and that you think characterizes so much of our church."

Speaking of the PPLN Steering Committee, Dr. Chapell claimed: "These are not politicians. They are church leaders," who "have risked their reputations" for the sake of enabling the church to talk about ministry.

Dr. Chapell declared: "We do not want to be consumed by being a church that is *against* things"—a statement which met with applause.

"We can't seem to get past whether a minister or a missionary or an agency or a presbytery is operating according to standards of theological subscription that we can't seem to agree about." He later added that in order to get to the gospel, the PCA must deal with subscription, even though it is an "unpleasant" matter: "Who in his right mind would want to debate an issue as obscure as subscriptionism?"

"We dream of kingdom priorities. . . . We long to unite with like-minded Christians. . . . We dream of addressing the truly difficult issues of race and gender and worship in safe forums where ideas can be expressed and Biblically-grounded innovations tried without fear of being immediately labeled as liberal or legalistic or un-Reformed."

He concluded: "We ask you to dream with us about becoming a leader church for our culture and our world. Is it just a dream? Without your help and without your prayers, it most definitely is just a dream." However, through prayer, sacrifice, and attendance, "A gospel-driven church can be not just a dream—it can be our legacy!"

After Dr. Chapell's presentation, a panel discussion ensued. Participants included Dr. Chapell, Dr. Keller, Dr. Charles McGowan, Terry Gyger, Fred Harrell, John Yenchko, and Ray Cortese as the moderator. After giving their general impressions of the vision of PPLN, they answered written questions which had been submitted from those who had gathered for the meeting.

During the lunch break, the attendees broke up into small groups of ten to twelve people each for discussion.

After lunch, the Rev. George Robertson presented the rationale for the overtures which PPLN is championing. The first overture seeks to amend BCO 21-4 so as to specify "good faith" subscription; the second overture seeks to amend BCO 34-1 so as to increase the number of petitioning presbyteries necessary to force the General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction over a minister in a judicial matter.

The Rev. Terry Gyger then set forth some of the mechanics of accomplishing PPLN's goals. First, he stated that "if we are captured by this vision, we need to establish a vision budget to get our ruling elders and pastors to General Assembly." Secondly, "the better the vision, the less often we would have to meet." He stated that if everyone who was eligible to come to General Assembly did so, there would

be approximately 5,000 commissioners present. He said that "we are having only a very small minority at the General Assembly." He promulgated a five point plan with respect to participation in the Assembly. Read—"We need to get on the web site the material that even a newly-ordained ruling elder can understand." Attend. Stay—"More than attend, we need to stay. I feel that I need to repent of my past sins." Concentrate. Challenge—challenge someone else from one's presbytery to attend. Although it would be nice to have people attend PPLN meetings, "if you had a choice, we'd rather you go to the General Assembly where you can participate."

Mr. Gyger stated: "I hope that these [PPLN-sponsored] amendments . . . will pass by a wide margin. [Otherwise] it will not say to our ruling elders what we hope it to say." While acknowledging that he "can't predict what the votes will be," Mr. Gyger said that "it is easy to imagine that we could have a substantial" vote in favor of the overtures. He also stated that "we need to prioritize our involvement," and encouraged his listeners to let their voices be heard on the floor of the Assembly: "You need to speak."

Three members of the denominational management—Dr. Paul Kooistra (Mission to the World Coordinator), Dr. Frank Brock (President of Covenant College), and Mr. Randy Stair (President of PCA Foundation)—then gave a briefing on the 2002 General Assembly. [NB: In the original agenda, this portion of the program was called "2002 GA Briefing" and "GA Assignments."—Ed.]

Dr. Kooistra urged support for the PCA Strategic Planning process, which has been chaired by Dr. Brock. The Covenant College president picked up on Dr. Keller's theme, as he said: "We [on the committee] definitely had the idea of making the invisible visible." Dr. Brock mentioned the meeting at Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church in Knoxville in 1994, which tried to develop a "consensus statement" for the denomination, adding: "Something truly important is happening today, [too]." He concluded his remarks by saying, "Our dream would be that the spirit that's been here today would continue and would soar."

Dr. Kooistra urged the defeat of several overtures. For example, he argued that Overture 17 from Eastern Canada Presbytery would eliminate floor nominations. He opposed Overture 9 from Louisiana Presbytery, which would forbid Freemasons from holding office. In his view, the Assembly, having already dealt with that issue in adopting what he called "a good [study] paper," should not be bothered with the issue again.

Dr. Kooistra attacked a proposed overture which was going to be considered three days later by Westminster Presbytery which was a substitute for the PPLN proposal on amending

## Mississippi Valley Votes Down PPLN Overture

Mississippi Valley Presbytery has turned down an overture sponsored by the Presbyterian Pastoral Leadership Network (PPLN). The overture regarding theological subscription was brought by the Session of the prestigious First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, Mississippi.

The overture, which called for amending BCO 21-4 so as to specify "good faith" subscription, was defeated by an almost two-to-one margin. Of those voting on the measure, 16 voted in favor and 29 voted against it.

Among those speaking out against the overture on the floor of the Presbytery was Robert Duhs. A retired minister who has been ordained for over fifty years, Dr. Duhs contended that the proposal was a step in the wrong direction and would represent a weakening of the church's Standards. He also stated that the approach was similar to that which he had experienced in the old church—that is, the Southern Presbyterian Church, from which he and many others separated because of theological liberalism.

Also speaking in opposition was the Rev.

BCO 21-4. In urging the proposed overture's defeat, the MTW Coordinator declared: "I think we need to say once and for all we're not a strict subscriptionist denomination. . . . I feel strongly that we never were."

With regard to Overture 7 from Westminster Presbytery, which is asking that individuals be allowed to "inspect the records" of the PCA Foundation and the other Assembly committees and agencies, he deferred to Mr. Stair, who gave reasons for opposing the overture. The Foundation president said that if this overture passed, it would "also allow members of churches to inspect the records of local churches." He concluded his remarks by quoting the summary of the controversy given by *P&R News* in its January-March 2002 edition.

Dr. Kooistra spoke against Overture 6 from Westminster Presbytery, which would replace the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) with regionally-based commissions. He argued that the SJC "is working well. . . . The SJC by definition is going to make somebody unhappy [with its decisions]. . . . The SJC has brought us a lot of peace." [Dr. Kooistra serves on the SJC.—Ed.]

Dr. Kooistra deferred to PPLN Steering Committee member Mike Khandjian to oppose another proposed overture being presented to Westminster Presbytery, which was invoking the Conflict of Interest policy in order to express disapproval of denominational management personnel from being involved in ecclesiastical politicking. The Miami, Florida, pastor stated that this overture "really is kind of a sample of what we're trying to stop," as he stated that those putting forth the overture should have gone to Dr. Kooistra first as in the steps of discipline in Matthew 18. [NB: After the meeting today, the author of the overture approached Dr. Kooistra with regard to the matter.—Ed.]

Dr. Kooistra concluded his presentation by saying: "Somebody has said this is a caucus. . . . I would not deny we are caucusing."

Dr. Chapell capped the discussion by encouraging those present "to vote for the long-range plan" being presented to the Assembly; to support PPLN's overtures regarding amending BCO 21-4 and 34-1; to write to PPLN; and to pray, even for those who oppose the PPLN agenda.

The afternoon program concluded with a sermon by the Rev. Joe Novenson from Acts 15, and a time of singing.

Originally calling itself PCA Pastoral Leadership (PCAPL), the group changed its name after a complaint was lodged with the PCA Administrative Committee over the use of the denominational service mark ("PCA"). No public announcement or explanation was made as to why the name had been changed.

Scott Reiber. Pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Vicksburg, Mississippi, Mr. Reiber stated that adoption of the overture would water down the Standards. In his view, asking an ordinand to subscribe to these Standards is not asking him too much to do.

In favor of the overture was the Rev. Jeff Elliott, associate pastor at Pear Orchard Presbyterian Church, Ridgeland, Mississippi. In an interview with *P&R News*, Mr. Elliott stated that he favored the overture for two basic reasons: (1) Mr. Bob Cannada, who was the driving force behind the overture being adopted by First Church, Jackson, was intimately involved in the formation of the PCA and was therefore in a position to know the original intent of the denomination; (2) the proposal "describes what we functionally are doing in terms of granting exceptions." In the interview, he also expressed his belief that the discussion over subscription was going to be a good and healthy thing for the denomination.

# 1989 Document Reveals Views of PPLN Steering Committee Member Toward Role of Women in the Church

A document written about a dozen years ago reveals the attitude of a member of the Presbyterian Pastoral Leadership Network (PPLN) Steering Committee with regard to the role of women in the church. The document, entitled "Women and Ministry—Redeemer Presbyterian Church," was written in November 1989 by Tim and Kathy Keller. Its conclusions with regard to women's role in public teaching parallel the views of the Rev. John Wood, Pastor of Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church, Knoxville, Tennessee, whose controversial views caused an intense debate in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).

Dr. Keller's paper, which "represents many years of reflection, discussion, experimentation and practice," was designed to "serve as a foundational paper for future patterns of women's ministry in the life of our congregation."

Among the document's controversial statements are the following:

"Women . . . were deaconesses (1 Tim. 3:11; Romans 16:2); this meant they were ministry leaders, initiating and supervising ministries. It is wrong, therefore, to say that women cannot be area directors in parachurch ministries, or to say that women cannot lead evangelistic, discipling, educational, or teaching ministries. Tabitha (Acts 9:30) was a leader of mercy ministry to the poor, while Euodia and Syntyche (Phil. 4:2,3) were Paul's evangelistic associates. Priscilla discipled and instructed Apollos (Acts 18:26) and led a house church (Rom. 16:4,5). As in the Old Testament (Exodus 15), women were prophets and did prophesy. They spoke and prayed in public worship (1 Cor. 11:5).

"It appears from this that there are no ministry gifts nor ministries that are forbidden to women."

"Elders are leaders who admit or dismiss people from the church, and they do 'quality control' of members' doctrine. These are the only things that elders exclusively can do. Others can teach, disciple, serve, witness."

"In a nutshell, our position is this: whatever a non-ruling elder male can do in the church, a woman can do. We do not believe that 1 Timothy 2:11 or 1 Cor. 14:35-36 precludes women teaching the Bible to men or speaking publicly. . . .

"Thus, women at Redeemer will be free to use all the gifts, privately and publically. There are no restrictions on ministry at all. There is a restriction on the office of elder. Why? Because the Bible precludes it, and therein it points us back to the Trinitarian pattern which is strong in marriage and muted in society, but which is practiced in the church."

"We hope to have two boards of officers: elders and deacons/deaconesses."

"The Deaconesses will be women elected by the congregation who will do discipling, counseling, and shepherding in the church, particularly among the women.

. . . They will probably also exercise a teaching ministry in the church, depending on their gifts."

"Together with the deacons, they will equip and guide people into ministry in the church. At Redeemer we want to help laypeople begin and conduct ministries. Deacons and Deaconesses will do this together."



The PPLN meeting broke up into small discussion groups over lunch.

"The church will continue to have broad-based planning and strategizing. Deaconesses will serve on planning/oversight committees (e.g. evangelism, education, worship) with other officers and non-officers. Deaconesses could chair such a committee if the group so elects. Also, the Elders, Deacons, and Deaconesses will meet regularly for strategy and oversight of the church. In matters of discipline and doctrine, the elders have the final say—they have 'tie-breaking authority'! Also, the elders represent the church at denominational meetings. But deaconesses will sit in positions of influence and will have regular part (along with many women on program committees) into the strategizing and decision-making process of the church.

"The real challenge will not be to create a structure, but to create a climate in which men and women truly work together as equal ministry partners in the church, still recognizing the principle of male headship in the eldership. Will we really let women lead ministries? Will we really release women's gifts to witness, nurture, and serve in the church? Will we incorporate the wisdom of all the mature Christians into the planning of the church? Or will we have a paternalistic attitude which in thousands of subtle ways puts women

down and does not listen to their advice or concerns? That remains to be seen! But that is our goal—to create a community that even non-believing feminists recognize as not oppressive, yet one that honors the Biblical distinction between the genders."

The document began by stating that Redeemer Presbyterian Church "is committed to a high view of Scripture." Also on the first page, Tim and Kathy Keller maintained: "For many centuries, the church . . . did not let the Scripture lead it

away from the general oppression of women conducted by society. The church should have seen that the Bible does not teach the inferiority of women. . . .

" . . . Some 15 years ago, we would have entered the Presbyterian Church USA to minister, but we were told that our view of women-in-ministry precluded us from serving there. Though we would have

Among the ministries in which women engage is that of helping to take the offering during public worship, and assisting in the distributing of the elements of communion.

Three years ago, the views of the Rev. John Wood with regard to female preaching came to light. In an interview with *Presbyterian & Reformed News*, Mr. Wood stated that a woman can legitimately do anything that an unordained man can do. This includes being the main speaker in a service of public worship, so long as it was under the authority and at the direction of the elders of the church [see separate box for a comparison of views—Ed.].

Tennessee Valley Presbytery, where Mr. Wood held membership, took no formal action on a request from Western Carolina Presbytery to investigate his views. Subsequently, several presbyteries petitioned General Assembly to assume original jurisdiction over Mr. Wood for the purpose of conducting a trial. The Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) declined to proceed to trial. The 2000 General Assembly ordered the SJC to conduct a full investigation of the matter and to proceed to trial if warranted. The SJC, after a panel investigated the situation, concluded that no trial would be held.

The provision under which the John Wood matter was brought to the General Assembly is found in *Book of Church Order* 34-1, which provides that if two presbyteries petition for original jurisdiction over a minister in a case in which his presbytery has failed to act, the Assembly shall do so. This year, overtures from numerous presbyteries are asking that the requisite number of presbyteries to petition for original jurisdiction be raised from two, to ten percent of the whole (which would currently mean seven). The PPLN organization has been pushing for this change.

## A Comparison of Views

" . . . there are no ministry gifts nor ministries that are forbidden to women."

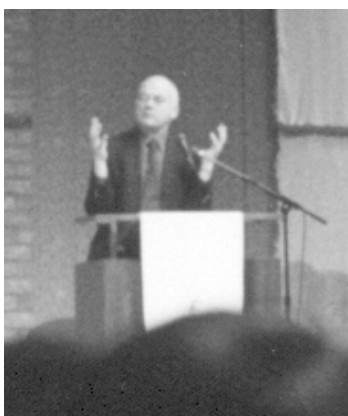
"Elders are leaders who admit or dismiss people from the church, and they do 'quality control' of members' doctrine. These are the only things that elders exclusively can do. Others can teach, disciple, serve, witness."

" . . . whatever a non-ruling elder male can do in the church, a woman can do. We do not believe that 1 Timothy 2:11 or 1 Cor. 14:35-36 precludes women teaching the Bible to men or speaking publicly. . . ."—PPLN Steering Committee member Tim Keller.

*So you think that a woman may do anything an unordained man may do, other than serve as an officer or administer the sacraments? "Yes." That means that a woman may preach (i.e., give a sermon or the main message during a service of public worship, which may include exposition of Scripture and/or exhortation)? "If it was under and at the invitation of the Session."—John Wood, responding to questions, P&R News, March 1999.*

"Our church will create new systems of leadership development for the theological training of the laity (to avoid clericalism) and the practical training of ministers (to avoid scholasticism) . . . Seeking better ways to support and employ the gifts of women for lay and staff ministries in accord with Scripture."—from the PPLN Mission Statement.

*Do you think that Covenant Theological Seminary, and the other theological seminaries which supply the PCA with ministers, should specifically oppose the concept of women leading in public worship? "I would think so. If that's the position that the PCA takes, and Covenant Seminary is a PCA seminary, I would think that they would oppose it." Do you think that anyone who endorses that activity, like women preaching, for example, should remain in the PCA? "I think that anybody in any official capacity who endorses that is subject to discipline. Whether they remain in the PCA would be up to whatever court made that decision."—Jack Williamson, Moderator of the First PCA General Assembly and member of the Standing Judicial Commission, responding to questions, P&R News, March 1999.*



Dr. Tim Keller at the recent PPLN meeting in Atlanta

## PPLN Fosters Its Agenda Through Emails

The Presbyterian Pastoral Leadership Network (PPLN), which has described itself as a non-political organization, has been spreading its message and fostering its agenda through the internet. In an email sent out on May 6, 2002, Dr. Bryan Chapell set forth what he called "concrete things" that can be done "to make the PCA more ministry-oriented and positive in its direction."

Entitled "Steps toward a Gospel-driven Church," the email proposes Eleven Steps toward that end. Among the recommendation actions were the following: attending the General Assembly ("It is *not* too late to register if you have not already done so"); serving on a Committee of Commissioners ("It is especially important that fair-minded representatives register immediately to serve on the Bills and Overtures Committee"); encouraging many other ruling and teaching elders to attend the Assembly; staying on the floor and voting ("Key votes on the Book of Church Order, world mission strategy, racial reconciliation and the future services of PCA agencies will occur throughout the Assembly week"); voting for the Long-range Plan of the PCA Planning Committee; electing ministry- and mission-prioritizing men to the Boards of the Committees and Agencies; holding a pre-General Assembly information meeting in one's area ("Familiarize fellow ruling and teaching elders with the issues our church will face at GA and beyond. Use the PPLN website . . . to get resources and information"); and communicating to one's Session the vision statement of PPLN.

The email was sent from the office of the President of Covenant Theological Seminary.

On April 26, 2002, another email from the President's office was sent, and signed by George Robertson, PPLN Spokesman. That email indicated that the Committee on Constitutional Business had given its blessing to the PPLN-sponsored overtures.

On April 17, 2002, another email from the President's office was sent, once again from Dr. Chapell. President Chapell wrote that audio and written reports of the April 10, 2002, public meeting in Atlanta were now available on the internet.

An email, dated April 12, 2002, was also sent from the President's office, giving a report on the meeting two days earlier. An April 8, 2002, email from Dr. Chapell, also sent from the President's office, reminded people of the upcoming meeting and urged them to register for lunch.

On March 20, 2002, Dr. Chapell's secretary at Covenant Theological Seminary sent an email on his behalf, urging people to sign up for lunch and also that laypeople as well as ministers attend the April 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.



**President Randy Stair of the PCA Foundation presents his agency's perspective on Overture 7.**

## Unanswered Questions

*The following questions were submitted to Dr. Bryan Chapell. He received them on May 6<sup>th</sup>. As of press deadline, about two weeks later, no answers to them had been received.*

What have been your efforts on behalf of this group? How much time have you spent on it? Where have you traveled on its behalf? Who paid for your expenses to attend the meetings in Atlanta? Were you on vacation during the time that you attended these meetings?

Will PPLN plan to interact with denominational committees and agencies, and if so, how? For what ends?

How many folks from Covenant Seminary have assisted in any way, and in what ways have they given assistance? How were these people recruited? Will PPLN continue to use Seminary resources and/or personnel to further its goals? What will be the disposition of those Seminary employees who for conscience sake refuse to support the tasks assigned them?

We saw the Seminary Vice-President and the Dean of Students at the meeting on April 10<sup>th</sup> in Atlanta. Were they on vacation that day, that they could be away from St. Louis in the middle of the week?

Why was only one viewpoint on the subscription debate, viz., your own, featured in Covenant Seminary's official publication *Presbyterion* last year? Who paid for sending that issue to the entire denomination? How much did it cost to distribute it to the entire denomination?

Will PPLN reimburse the ministries whose resources were perhaps improperly used to further PPLN aims?

You spoke of the "timbre" with which women are spoken of in the PCA, and that this "timbre" is the reason why more women did not participate in the Atlanta meeting despite having been invited. Who were the women who were invited? What did you mean by this comment?

## Perspective from a CTS Board Member

The Rev. Bill Spink, a member of the Covenant Theological Seminary Board, said that the political nature of the group in which Dr. Chapell was involved was assumed. "He spoke of the overtures that were going to be brought to the General Assembly. It was clear that the group believed these overtures were for the good of the denomination and consistent with the mission of Covenant Seminary."

When asked if the Board intended for other personnel to be involved in this effort, Mr. Spink said, "No, I never sensed that. I sensed that Bryan wanted to be up front, that he had been approached to help lead this group. [However], I don't think there was any idea that other personnel would necessarily be involved."

When asked if he thought that it is appropriate for Seminary personnel to be involved, Pastor Spink stated: "As long as they were individually desirous of doing that, as long as they were not conscripted."

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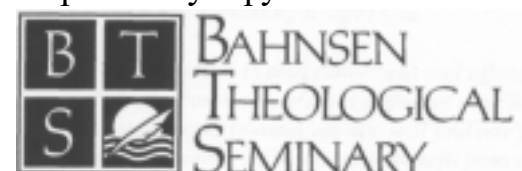
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# Interview with PPLN Spokesman George Robertson

*PPLN spokesman George Robertson is pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, Missouri. He graciously granted us an interview, so that we can help the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) understand the aims and desires of this new organization.*

## How and when did the group get started?

The 'when' I have to think about. I think our first meeting was in November. Our first meeting was November 29-30 in Atlanta. The 'how' was that a group of us who are likeminded and knew each other just as friends decided to get together in Atlanta and try to answer a question that we'd heard thrown about by other people, "What would we like to see the PCA become in the next ten years? And what do we need to do as participants in the church to realize some of those dreams?" It was a very unofficial, kind of casual gathering, among people who were just loosely-connected through various informal networks. And we knew we were similarly-minded.

## What do you mean by similarly-minded?

Similarly-minded in that all of us have been pastors, and most all of us are currently pastors. We are theologically-concerned, we are theologically-conservative, have a love for the Confession. And at the same time we are ministerially- and missionally-zealous. All have ministries that are outreach-oriented. That doesn't mean that our worship services are necessarily seeker-sensitive, but I mean that we have a passion to reach out to those around us.

## I know you have 17 on the Steering Committee. Were there only 17 at the initial meeting in Atlanta, or were there others? How many were there in Atlanta in November?

I don't recall exactly, Frank. I know that there were some—Bill Lyle, for example, was on a missions trip. Joe Wheat was indisposed in some way. I don't remember what it was. I think the only one who joined the group after that meeting might have been Harry Reeder. It was a very small gathering.

## How would you encapsulate the aims of the group?

I think the primary aim is, as churchmen, to try to serve the denomination in helping her to become a servant-leader denomination to the evangelical world. With our Reformed distinctives, with our world-and-life view, with our church government, all of the basic building blocks are in place to be a great leader-church to the evangelical world, leading that church to better places. But we haven't gone to bat with those components in becoming that kind of leader.

## How many people were at the meeting in Atlanta?

If we go by the lunches, there were over 450.

## Do you have any idea how many of those were denominational employees, or where people were from?

No, I don't. I haven't reviewed the registration. That wasn't my responsibility.

## There has been an impression given that the PPLN group's success was largely the result of spontaneous reaction. Can you tell us if there were any efforts made by PPLN steering committee members to drum up support for the passage of the overtures and/or to invite people to come to the Atlanta meeting? If there was, could you please describe those activities?

As far as the meeting in Atlanta, about the only advertising we could give was by

means of the web site. I think each of us on the Steering Committee probably called some of our friends. I certainly did. The fact that we had to scramble and get more lunches at the last minute shows that we were surprised at how many did show up.

## How many had you expected?

The only objective determinant that we had was the registration for lunches. And I think we may have had 200 or so by the time we had the meeting. And at the last minute we had to double it.

## What is PPLN's budget?

We have no budget. Each member of the Steering Committee pitched in. Some people covered the cost initially, mostly Intown initially covered the cost of the lunches, and then each of us sort of pitched in to try to allay those costs incurred, but we have no budget.

## Do you know how many denominational employees have been used to help promote its agenda?

No.

## Who has been employed in order to set forth the agenda of the organization?

No one. We have no employees.

## I was using the term 'employee' in a more general way, not necessarily as a paid employee. For example, who set up the web site?

The web site is set up by, as we published, Brad Hough at the Seminary.

## So, he's a denominational employee, then. He's an employee of the Seminary.

## Were there any other folks from Covenant Seminary that were assisting in any way?

Well, I don't know. You know, all of us may have various vocations, various commitments, but we're volunteering our time. So, whatever is done for PPLN is done voluntarily, not because someone has been conscripted by means of the organization he's a part of.

## Please describe Bryan Chapell's and Paul Kooistra's efforts on behalf of this group.

## Do you know how much time have they spent on it, or even where have they traveled on its behalf?

No, I don't know that.

## Is there any way that we could find that out?

Probably not.

[NB: Mr. Robertson later sent us notice that when we conducted the interview with him, Dr. Chapell had been out of the country. Upon his return, Dr. Chapell offered the following in response to the question about how much time he had spent on PPLN: "I asked my Board of Trustees for permission to be involved in PPLN prior to my involvement. Because the Board recognized the vision of PPLN to be important for the future of the PCA, they unanimously approved my involvement. No seminary personnel outside the president's office have been required to support PPLN. While our Board's approval could grant us greater allowances, we have chosen instead for the efforts of PPLN to be supported by individuals volunteering their own time and resources."]

## You mentioned that there was heavy support from Covenant College, Covenant Theological Seminary, and Mission to the World. I think you said that there were a lot of folks from those organizations that were present at the meeting in Atlanta. Is that correct?

I meant in terms of Board members, certainly, yep.

## Oh, in terms of Board members? Do you know how that support was garnered or came about or anything?

I am a member of the Board of Covenant College, and I talked to the Board about it, and I urged them to be there.

## And that was at a Board meeting you talked to them?

Yes, all kinds of announcements are made at board meetings. Mine was just one of several.



PPLN panel participants

## Is there a membership for PPLN, other than the Steering Committee? Is there a way of joining this organization?

No. The only means of connecting is for someone like you have done yourself to sign up for the correspondence from the web site.

## And will it publish the minutes of its meetings, or make them available, the minutes of the Steering Committee?

Well, we're not keeping minutes. We are that informal. Each of us jots down notes for our responsibilities, like mine is to publish the press release and so forth, but it's not even formal enough to have minutes.

## Who owns the web site then?

I don't know. I don't know how that works. It's registered under us. But I can't even answer that, I'm still ignorant of such things.

## If PPLN is not political, how then will it seek to accomplish its agenda?

We are a group of people who have lots of friends. And each of us talks to those natural networks, and we share our ideas. And those have been largely embraced spontaneously. So, we really haven't had to do any kind of maneuvering to get things passed. Most of the work on the overtures, most of the people who have taken the overtures to their presbyteries, have done so because they have heard about it through their natural network and brought it up in their own sessions and then to the presbyteries.

## So there was no concerted effort by anyone on the Steering Committee to coordinate and to say, We'd like you to be the key person in a particular presbytery?

No, we haven't been that organized. We haven't done that, as far as I know. Each of us I'm sure has called friends to let them know what we are doing, but we have not organized any kind of key-man network, to my knowledge. I mean, I'm the spokesman, so I would think that kind of thing would have to come through me. I certainly served as a resource by phone and I think other people have as well. When they've found out about the overtures, they've called us. We've received mail lately from a number of people who opposed the overtures earlier in their presbyteries because they didn't know out of what context it was coming. They thought at first it was someone's

personal ax to grind only later to discover PPLN and become enthusiastic about our mission. They said, "If I had known that this was part of a larger effort, I would have supported it."

## What presbyteries were those people in?

Well, since that communication was sent to me in private, I don't feel the liberty to share that.

## What will be PPLN's posture to members of the PCA who are not members of PPLN, or, if there's no membership, might not be supportive of its goals?

Our desire is not to foster a party spirit. It is not to be antagonistic. And we really do want to live in unity with others as much as possible. We do not want to single out personalities. We do not want to be argumentative. As I said in my comments at the April 10 meeting, I think there is certainly room in the church for those of strict subscriptionist conviction. I am convinced there is room for that. In fact, I would welcome that. It is just that as the years have rolled on, since the 10th General Assembly, it's more and more the case that while there may be room for strict subscriptionists in our church, there's not room for us in a strict subscriptionist church.

## I know that y'all have maintained that. Have you talked with people like Morton Smith or Joseph Pipa or David Coffin on that particular point?

There have been many conversations. There have been those conversations.

## Can you tell me with whom, from the PPLN side?

No, I don't think so. I know the conversations have occurred, but I'm not sure exactly with whom, other than our Moderator, Bryan Chapell.

## In your remarks, you stated that the group's position is that of system subscription, by which I take it to mean that you believe that there is a general Reformed system of theology contained in the Standards but not co-extensive with the Standards. Is that a fair statement? Or how would you characterize it? I don't want to mischaracterize it.

By "system subscription" or "good-faith subscription," I am thinking more of a methodology of determining subscription rather than a degree of subscription within the system. And the methodology is the one that we currently practice. That is a man is asked what his differences are when he comes for licensure or ordination. His differences are then weighed by the presbyteries to determine if they are indeed exceptions, and whether or not they are inimical to the system. The court that is to determine whether or not that difference is inimical is the presbytery. So, it's the presbytery ultimately that will have to answer the question that you just asked me, I think.

## Right, but I'm just trying to understand what your position is. Are you saying that exceptions are to particular statements of the confessional standards. In other words, if a man has an exception, it's because he has an exception to a particular statement of the Standards. Is that fair?

I think I understand your question better now. I'm saying that a good-faith subscriptionist is one who publishes to the presbytery any and all differences with the Standards—whether those differences be with titles, propositions, statements or doctrines. If the presbytery judges that his



differences are exceptions, then it must weigh if they undermine the system of doctrine comprised by the Standards, but not necessarily coextensive with every proposition, statement, or doctrine in the Standards.

**There were strong intimations during the presentations in Atlanta that people who may not be on board your agenda are not interested in evangelism and missions, and are not concerned about being pastoral. Is that the view of PPLN?**

That’s a good question, and I think it’s something that I would personally be concerned about, if that impression was given. And I think it’s possible for us at times to give that impression, and it’s wrong. It’s wrong to communicate that because someone might have a different view on subscription that he is not concerned about lost souls. And that would be an unfortunate thing to communicate.

**Bryan Chapell spoke of the “timbre” with which women are spoken of in the PCA, and that this “timbre” is the reason why more women did not participate in the Atlanta meeting despite having been invited. Who were the women who were invited? What did Bryan mean by this comment?**

I’m afraid I can’t answer either one, because I don’t know which women were invited, and I’m not as in touch with the whole fabric of the denomination as Bryan is because of his travels and because of the women that are on the campus of the Seminary. And I’m sure that perspective arises out of his listening so much to the women across the denomination. He would have to be asked that question.

**As you know, Covenant Seminary has a policy of not talking to us. Would Bryan as a member of PPLN be willing to answer that question?**  
I will ask it for you.

**George, Tim Keller pointedly did not exclude the possibility of ordaining women as deacons, or, it seems to me, even as ruling elders. What is the goal of PPLN with regard to women’s ordination?**

There is no goal in regard to women’s ordination. In our mission statement, we make a distinction between an ordained male ministry and the use of women’s gifts. We are simply not pushing for women’s ordination.

**And that would be true to all offices of the church, then?**

We’re not pushing for ordination in any direction. I think there are certainly people who would to no one’s surprise have the conviction that the diaconate is open to women. There would be those who would follow the lead of Warfield and others. But we have no agenda for realizing that, and it really is not an interest at this point. We are concerned rather to affirm the gifts that women in our churches have and creatively seek outlets for the use of those gifts, working within the existing structure of our denomination and our Constitution.

**Can you give me some concrete examples of what has been done in your church or in other churches in terms of how you would implement that?**

I couldn’t give you examples of other churches. I will give just one example from our church. In our church, we looked at the historic service of women in the areas of mercy and pastoral care and we asked ourselves how such gifts could be utilized more effectively in our congregation. We determined that we should restructure those ministries of our church to utilize women’s gifts more effectively. So we subdivided the church into folds. Each elder is a fold

elder, and each elder has a fold team that serves with him. Women are on those teams and actively share the mercy and pastoral care needs of the fold. They are called undershepherds as are all the members on the team. We elected not to call them deacons’ assistants, as the *BCO* would allow, because we don’t want to communicate to, in our particular sub-culture, that these are deacons. And we didn’t want to encourage passivity among our men, or our deacons. Now that’s a very small example, but I think that reveals a bit of our heart, that women have gifts of mercy that could be utilized more effectively than they are, and those gifts should be realized to the church.

**George, as you noted, our *Book of Church Order* does allow for women to be employed as diaconal assistants—I think it’s Chapter 9, paragraph 7. The question also arises, however, in terms of women’s participation in public worship. Is the terminology being used by PPLN in terms of the gifts of women or participation by women include things such as women reading Scripture in public worship?**

It could, because, obviously, there are women in churches, as you noted in your article, who read Scripture. We, as a denomination, have not refused that yet. While we do not have women in my church reading Scripture during a morning worship service, there might be other men on the Steering Committee who do practice that. We have not, to be perfectly honest, as a committee sat down and discussed this mission statement and how it would be implemented. This is kind of a culmination of some brain-storming. But what you have is about as specific as we ever got. So I can’t answer you further than that.

**By the way, the General Assembly five years ago did take exception to Southern Florida’s minutes for having a woman read Scripture, and another one lead in prayer in public worship. So I think the Assembly has taken a position on it.**

[NB: Mr. Robertson later offered this statement: *I have had a chance to look at the Assembly’s actions with reference to Southern Florida’s minutes recording a woman’s reading Scripture. The minutes are not clear on what action was taken exactly. Yes, it did take exception to the practice in 1997 and the Committee did not accept Southern Florida’s response in 1998. However, the N-B in brackets indicates that the Committee did not convincingly demonstrate that Southern Florida’s practice constituted a “violation of Scripture” or a “serious irregularity from the Constitution,” nor did it show that it was “out of accord with the deliverances of the General Assembly,” or that it was an “impropriety and important delinquency” (RAO 14-6 C.1). My original answer to your question was that as I remembered it, the Assembly’s action during the presbytery records report did not result in anything of Constitutional significance such that an official position was declared on women reading Scripture. In my review of the minutes as well as my review of BCO 14-7, I would say that I am still correct in that opinion. I would go further to say that there is nothing in our Constitution or in the Scriptures that explicitly forbids a woman to read Scripture without comment in public.]*

**Also, PPLN very explicitly, and also in Dr. Keller’s remarks, wants a diversity of worship within the Reformed tradition. Does that diversity include liturgical dance, liturgical drama, the use of video clips, and alternative rock music? Is that what’s in view by the use of that terminology?**

Again, we don’t know what’s in view

because we haven’t talked about it any more specifically than what we have posted on the web.

**PPLN advocates what it calls a “Reformed ‘Catholicity’”. Does this ‘catholicity’ include cooperation and/or ecumenical services with clergy people from liberal denominations (such as those that belong to the National and/or World Councils of Churches) and/or Roman Catholic priests?**

We intentionally use the adjective “Reformed” in our statement to refer to catholicity among Reformed people.

**Whom particularly would you have in mind there?**

I don’t have anybody particularly in mind—we haven’t discussed it any more than that.

**From your own perspective, would this include the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, or the PC(USA), or the RCA? From your own perspective.**

Well, I don’t know that I’m free to talk about my own perspective. Reformed catholicity is shared values among those who make claim to the same Reformed faith that we treasure.

**No matter what their denominational affiliation.**

Well, I don’t know that we have denominations in view, as much as the kind of informal, organic relationship that we have as a committee.

**But these would all be people from outside the PCA? That’s the whole point of Reformed catholicity, I would presume.**

Right.

**Is there anything I didn’t ask you that I should have?**

There probably was. I do want to point out that the language I was trying to get in our discussion about the use of women’s gifts. We say in the second point of our mission statement that we are seeking better ways of producing culturally-sensitive, practically-trained men to be ministers of the word. And I can tell you that that language was very intentionally chosen in order to communicate that our intention was not to seek the ordination of women to the ministry.

**Correct. But my question was that that leaves open the door for ruling elders and/or deacons to be women.**

And frankly, we didn’t discuss that topic. We didn’t discuss ruling elders. We have no intention of seeking the ordination of women as ruling elders. We did discuss the

past use of women’s gifts in mercy ministry, but we did not discuss the ordination of women as deacons, or even their being set apart as deaconesses.

**One other question. How do you pastorally deal with people who might attend a church, let’s say, pastored by someone on the PPLN Steering Committee, that has women reading Scripture in public worship, who are maybe surprised by that practice, and in his conscience or her conscience doesn’t know whether to continue to sit there or to walk out? How would you counsel a person like that pastorally?**

Well, I would say if someone is offended in his conscience by a practice, then he should follow Paul’s warning that whatever is not of faith is sin, and he should remove himself from the place where he’s being tempted and do it so as not to cause a disturbance.

**But doesn’t this then create a problem, and in a sense become divisive within our denomination? I take it, from your organization’s stated goals, that you are hoping for the unity of the church, and of course that’s the desire of every churchman to seek the unity of the church. How does that fit with the unity of the church, when you have an historic practice and you have that re-affirmed by the General Assembly, and yet the opposite is going on in churches? Again, speak to me pastorally. How does one deal realistically with that situation?**

I’m not sure that you and I would interpret the 1997 action the same way. I’m not sure when we were responding to minutes, I’m not sure that that action determined expressly that women may not read Scripture in public worship. I’m not sure that it became part of our legally-enforceable Constitution.

**Well, the next year the General Assembly interpreted its action with specific reference to Scripture and to Questions and Answers 155-159 of the Larger Catechism. So, the Assembly was saying, We’re interpreting the Standards and applying the Standards in this particular manner, as well as applying Scripture. So, it wasn’t just the ’97 Assembly, it was the ’98 Assembly which not only was taking the same viewpoint, but actually strengthened it.**

Well, I was absent at the ’98 Assembly, so I’ll have to check that. In view of that, you’ve caught me flat-footed, and I’m not prepared to answer in an intelligent way. So I will look at that myself, Frank, and I will try to give a more intelligent answer when you send me the transcript.

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# Westminster Presbytery Sends a Communication to the General Assembly

Abingdon, Virginia (May 6, 2002)—At a called meeting this evening at the Abingdon Presbyterian Church, Westminster Presbytery adopted a formal communication to the General Assembly. The communiqué which was sent to the higher court expressed thanks “for all the time, effort, and energy that you have spent on our Presbytery over the past couple of years.” The letter also thanked the Assembly for their prayers on behalf of the Presbytery.

The called meeting was held primarily in order to consider communication to the Assembly, especially in light of the fact that the Presbytery had not informed the Assembly that it had rescinded its earlier determination to withdraw from the denomination. The motion to rescind carried overwhelmingly at the January 2002 stated meeting.

Westminster's communication employs pastoral-type language. It notes the importance of missions and piety as well as doctrinal purity. And the communication also expresses the desire that the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) be a leader church in the twenty-first century, filling the historic role which has often characterized Presbyterians.

That which was adopted by the court was a greatly-truncated version

of the original proposal. The lengthier version presented some of the rationale for the various overtures which the Presbytery has sent up to the Assembly this year. Among those overtures are the following: to replace the Standing Judicial Commission (SJC) with regionally-based judicial commissions; to instruct the PCA Foundation and all denominational agencies that they must allow members of the denominational corporation to inspect the records; to amend BCO 21-4 with regard to theological subscription; to counsel denominational management personnel that it is inappropriate for them to engage in ecclesiastical politicking; and to recommend that amendments to the SJC Manual not be adopted.

However, a substitute by the Rev. Larry Ball prevailed, which employed only the first five paragraphs of the proposal. The final paragraph was later attached to the communication.

In arguing for his substitute, Mr. Ball stated that although he agreed with almost all of what had been presented, he thought that it was better simply to make the arguments on the floor of the Assembly rather than to argue for the overtures in a separate communication.

The communication will be distributed to the commissioners when they register for the Assembly in Birmingham.

## Westminster Presbytery's Communication

Dear Fathers and Brethren:

Greetings in the matchless name of our Savior, Jesus Christ!

We want to thank you for all the time, effort, and energy that you have spent on our Presbytery over the past couple of years. As you know, we have had a difficult time wrestling with how to deal with theological and ideological differences among us. Although there are numerous issues about which not all of us agree, nevertheless, we are happy to report that there has been a sweeter spirit in our meetings over the past year or so. We believe that this is due to the prayers of God's people, and we thank you for all the prayers which you have offered up on our behalf.

In January of this year, our Presbytery voted to rescind its determination to withdraw from the Presbyterian Church in America. The motion to rescind carried overwhelmingly, with less than a handful of votes against it. This is truly a remarkable occurrence. We appreciate the pleading of the 29<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, as expressed in its pastoral letter to us, that we reconsider our intention to break the ties of fellowship, and we are happy to report that we have indeed determined to continue to walk together with our denomination.

Our determination to remain in the Presbyterian Church in America is reflective of our desire that the PCA become a leader church for our culture in the twenty-first century. We believe that there are tremendous challenges for the Body of Christ in this new millennium, from ethical issues (cloning, for example), to persecution of God's people, to the threat of false religious systems (including Islam and Roman Catholicism). Throughout church history, Presbyterians have always been leaders, and we are hopeful that our beloved denomination can itself fulfill a central role in successfully addressing these challenges.

We believe that in order for us to fulfill this crucial role, we must have a balanced approach in the life of our denomination, so that we would exhibit not only doctrinal purity, but also an evangelistic zeal to reach the lost, and a personal piety that exemplifies the Lord Jesus Christ. Our deep desire is that we in the Presbyterian Church in America, based upon the solid foundation of our Confessional Standards, would be committed to world missions, and would experience the reality of being grace- and gospel-driven in our lives and in our dealings with one another.

We join with you in praying that the Lord of the Church would grant us the grace to be involved in mission, for the transformation of the world. May we give the Lord no rest until He makes Zion a praise in all the earth, and the knowledge of the glory of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the sea.



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**Dr. Peter Leithart**  
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# AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESBYTERIAN PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

Dear Brethren in Christ:

It is with a sense of deep sorrow that I feel called upon to address you in this way. First, I desire to express to you my genuine esteem and love for you as brethren in Christ. A number of you hold high callings by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America. For this, you deserve to be recognized and honored as servants of Christ and of his Church. Others of you hold distinguished pastorates, which is a high honor and great responsibility as servants of Christ. All of you as fellow Christians are to be held in love and respect as brethren in the Lord. I seek to write to you what I view to be the truth "in love" as a fellow Christian.

My concerns are several. First, as a group seeking to offer pastoral leadership in the PCA, it seems to me that on known controversial subjects, you should have acted more pastorally and invited some of those who differ with you to have consulted to see if a genuine consensus could be reached. In fact, such openness and collegiality might have helped avoid certain misstatements (see next paragraph). Your hasty pressing for legislative changes (and that as your initial offering to the church) before consultation with a broad cross-section of leaders—even if that means a greater diversity than you personally might desire—is, to say the least, less than what Christ would expect of us. I plead with you brethren to lessen your efforts to impose your own political vision on the Church on such a major issue as subscription, until the broader church asks or commissions you, or some other group, to do so. As a pastoral leadership group you should lead us by patient and humble persuasion instead of by political maneuvering. A pastoral approach—not an imposed legislative one—is what is needed.

Second, the citation of the statement, which I made at the last Assembly to the effect that I failed to press the issue of subscription at the First General Assembly, did not include the larger context of the statement and my life's work. I ask you as pastors of honesty and integrity to correct or remove your mistaken references to my comments, with apology, or quickly to publish a correction in some clear form as an excellent model of repentance and charity. I indicated that the reason I had not pressed the question of nature of confessional subscription was based on the assumption that all conservative Presbyterians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century would have concurred with the conservatives of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that full subscription was our position. In other words, I presupposed that a Continuing Southern Presbyterian Church would be one that held to historic subscription as the Southern Presbyterian Church did in her early years. To cite someone out of context is less than the best pastoral leadership you might have exhibited. You claim that you want "good faith" subscription. Yet, you have twisted the record of what I attempted to suggest and thus distorted my words to make me appear to say that the PCA did not hold to the received subscription position. I trust that it was done unwittingly, so I sincerely ask that you not harm the PCA with misinformation and that you bear true witness to my sentiments. Please, in the interests of fairness to all and love to me, correct or publish this letter as a clarification from my own hand. The fact is that this is not my position, and never has been, and I certainly did not intend to leave the impression that the PCA did not adopt the historic subscription position of our forefathers.

Third, in the light of a call for "good faith," have you shown good faith when

you suggest in your overture that the PCA has always held to something less than clear subscription? Read the second vow. Professor John Murray, who was customarily precise in his interpretation of language, asserts, "It is not simply the system of doctrine contained in the Confession that is adopted, the Confession is adopted as containing the system of doctrine taught in Scripture." This is all that we who hold to historic subscription desire, that our officers recognize that they are adopting the Confession and Catechisms as the confession of their faith. That this was the position of the PCA is seen in the language of the first Assembly adopting the Confession and Catechisms as the bond of our unity. It is seen in the way that most judicial cases dealing with doctrines were handled earlier, although some recent decisions seem willing to depart from that standard. It is also seen in the answer to questions about the meaning of subscription adopted by the Tenth General Assembly.

Fourth, I ask, why you brethren are seeking to organize and chart a radically different direction for the PCA. The "Address to All Churches" adopted and signed by the members of the first General Assembly sets forth a very different goal than that proposed by the Presbyterian Pastoral Leadership group. This being the case, it seems to this writer that if you are not satisfied by the PCA's goals and direction, then you should use pastoral persuasion to change the Constitution through our normal procedures—not by orchestrating the so called "ground swell" of a number of presbyteries adopting the same overtures, and then seeking to block any amendment to the overtures. You might even humbly submit to other brothers and a church that may not be as convinced of the need to adopt your positions.

One wonders why you men, who have affirmed in your ordination vows the Reformed Faith and conservative Presbyterianism in general, cannot learn from the history of American Presbyterianism regarding subscription to the Standards. During the period from 1801 to 1837 the broad, loose Presbyterianism of the New School group brought about a distinct decline in the doctrinal position of the Presbyterian Church. The result was the major division of 1837 in which the Old and New School groups went separate ways. The vast majority of the Southern Presbyterian Church came out of the Old School Church. It is an historical fact that they clearly identified themselves as Old School Presbyterians and the PCA, in its original formulations, overtly embraced the stance of the First Southern General Assembly.

The Northern Old and New School Churches merged in 1869 on the ground of allowing both views of subscription to the Standards. By 1910 subscription had been reduced from commitment to the Westminster Standards to the adoption of the five points of fundamentalism. In 1923, after the Assembly had reaffirmed the position of 1910, a group of some 1,300 ministers of the denomination signed the Auburn Affirmation, which declared these five points to be theories that Presbyterian ministers did not need to affirm. Nothing was done to them, and this view eventually prevailed in the mainline Church. The result was the separation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church from the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in 1936. It was a terrible day for American Presbyterianism to see a great denomination that had begun with clear adherence to the Standards to allow this requirement to slip from its grasp and to head toward the virtual

apostasy of the mainline Presbyterian Church. It has often been said that if one cannot learn from history, one will repeat the same errors of those who have gone before. Have we forgotten the Auburn Affirmation and its related decline? Is 1973 so far behind us that we have forgotten why we left liberalism?

Surely you do not desire that the PCA go down that same road. Why then should you espouse the very broadening steps that led the PCUSA into liberalism? You may not agree with my understanding of the early history and intent of the PCA, but many will conclude that the adoption of the loose position you espouse is, to say the least, a dangerous step, which cannot help but weaken the present and future testimony of the PCA. Knowing the propensity of sinful human nature, instead of loosening our Standards, should we not be striving to strengthen our commitment to our Standards?

Some of you seem to fear classic subscription, because it may bring on charges of heresy against those who fail to keep their ordination vows. Can you tell us when or how often that has actually happened in the entire history of the PCA? The design of healthy subscription is merely to aid candor and honesty, as much as to require that our officers maintain the ordination vows that they have taken, and to uphold the historic, Biblical Presbyterianism of the Westminster Standards. Failure of the denomination to do this will result in the decline of the denomination's orthodoxy. Jonathan Dickinson, who opposed the original Adopting Act, said that unless discipline is exercised orthodoxy would not be maintained. (Stated in a sermon preached at the opening of the Synod of Philadelphia, September 19, 1722.)

Finally, having heard some very

disturbing rumors about your group, I would ask you, in the spirit of a openness and pastoral candor, either publish all of your other political goals and mailings—including whether you: (a) have circularized a 10-point plan to stack certain key GA committees this year; (b) plan to employ parliamentary tactics to disallow verbal improvements to previously submitted overtures, as if they were unamendable; or (c) hope to eliminate the historic office of deacons (Acts 6) so that women may serve equal to men in an un-ordained capacity—or else for the peace of the church, please unequivocally and publicly disavow that you or your political allies will use such carnal methods or seek such goals.

Dear brothers, my opinion in some areas may not be as far from yours as caricatured. May I challenge you, me, and all members of the PCA as follows: Indeed, I quite agree that we desperately NEED more of a pastoral, patient approach that humbly listens, embraces many, and that waits on God more in prayer than depends on raw political power or the tyranny of the majority. We NEED far less politics and much more openness, true consensus, research, reasoned-discussion, and true concern for flocks. We MUST NOT, even in respect for your impressive, collective accomplishments, follow the agenda that you presently promote so zealously.

I do not believe that the perceived "crisis" is present, nor is the need so pressing, nor are the remedies proposed so sound. Brothers, may we not apply a little patience with one another, a little more honesty and charity to those who sincerely disagree, and not divide the church?? We have time . . . and God's own promises; let's listen more and politicize less.

Yours in Christ,

Morton H. Smith

First Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

## Point and Counterpoint PPLN and Dr. Smith Exchange Responses

On May 14, 2002, Dr. Morton H. Smith submitted his open letter to the Presbyterian Pastoral Leadership Network (PPLN) to several news outlets, including PCANEWS.COM. He was informed by the PCANEWS.COM editor that his letter would not be posted to the denominational web magazine until the following week.

On May 18, 2002, his letter was posted on PCANEWS.COM, along with a solicited response from PPLN.

Below are summaries of and excerpts from the PPLN response and Dr. Smith's response to it.

### PPLN

PPLN's response begins: "Dear Respected Father,

"With love for you and with great appreciation for your noble contributions to the establishment of the Presbyterian Church in America, we seek humbly to respond to the concerns that you have so carefully expressed to us. Out of great regard for you and out of a desire to face squarely issues that have troubled our church for some time, we wrote to you personally (along with other leaders that we felt would be concerned about our efforts) in January 2002 regarding the overtures that we hoped would be moved through normal procedures in our presbyteries. We wrote to you before most others in our church were aware of these overtures to be completely open about our intentions, and

so that you could respond as you believed best. Thus, we welcome the response that we now have from you in this public form even as we have welcomed the private responses of others."

The response then quotes from Dr. Bryan Chapell's January letter. That letter expresses the hope that he "would perceive these proposed changes as a middle-ground position between a strict- and broad-subscription position that would not establish all you desire, but would accomplish much that you wish." The letter acknowledges that it is not to be expected that Dr. Smith would agree to the "whereas" clauses accompanying the overture on subscription. Yet the letter also asks him to "apply your respected leadership to the support of this compromise."

The response states that "to be pastoral we have circulated the overtures broadly and invited reactions just as you ask in the first concern of your 'Open Letter' to us. We have done this because we believe the overtures can help bring peace and progress to our church. We set up a national meeting in April and invited all leaders in our church to attend and give us their input regarding these overtures and regarding a broader Vision Statement for the bright future of the PCA. The overtures took different forms in various presbyteries precisely because particular concerns were voiced, and we urged brothers to amend and improve the overtures in ways that did not destroy their intent. As a result, we have

(Continued on page 15)

# Presbytery of the Dakotas Takes on Doug Wilson and Christ Church, Moscow, Idaho

The Presbytery of the Dakotas of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) has adopted a strong resolution, warning all OPC presbyteries of “some grave dangers in the practices of Douglas Wilson and Christ Church, Moscow, Idaho.” According to the Presbytery, these practices “undermine the discipline of reformed churches and refuse to support it, assuming it is unbiblical without even hearing the case.”

The Presbytery also forwarded the correspondence to its fellow presbyteries, as well as to the 69<sup>th</sup> OPC General Assembly, asking that the Assembly “forward it to churches with whom we have ecclesiastical fellowship.”

At the center of the controversy is Christ Presbyterian Church, Salt Lake City, Utah, an OPC congregation. The Session at the Utah congregation had already taken the Idaho church to task for counseling a former elder in the Salt Lake City congregation that he can refuse to cooperate with the process of church discipline.

The dispute revolves around charges that were brought against one of the original elders of the Utah church. Shortly after organization two years ago, the newly-installed Session tried to prevent the congregation from voting on calling the organizing pastor, Jason Wallace, to be the pastor of the church. One of the objections was that Mr. Wallace was going to be

moderating the congregational meeting which would vote on his call. Twelve members of the congregation forced the calling of a congregational meeting to deal with the pastoral call. Eventually, all three of the original elders left the congregation. One of them joined the Reformed Church in the United States, the denomination in which he was raised. Another one is now attending Hidden Valley Presbyterian Church, a newly-organized Presbyterian Church in America congregation in Draper, Utah. The other elder, Tony Maneri, “resigned” from the church rather than transferring to another church, although he subsequently joined a local Reformed Baptist church.

Under OPC rules, a person may “resign” from the denomination. However, the church court is not obligated to accept the resignation, but may continue with any disciplinary proceedings. According to the Christ Presbyterian Session, Mr. Maneri was confronted individually and before witnesses before he resigned. The Session decided to proceed with formal judicial charges, because of the gravity and persistence of the alleged charges he was making against Mr. Wallace.

Christ Church in Moscow is well-known for its publication of *Credenda Agenda*, and its sponsorship of other ministries, including Canon Press, Collegiate Reformed Fellowship, Greyfriars Hall, and

New St. Andrews College. Its pastor, Doug Wilson, is also well-known for his numerous books, particularly on classical Christian education, courtship, and marriage. One of the faculty members at New St. Andrews College is Dr. Peter Leithart, a minister in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), a sister church to the OPC. Among his several books is *Daddy, Why Was I Excommunicated?*, a defense of paedocommunion.

The Idaho congregation spearheaded the formation of the Confederation of Reformed Evangelicals (CRE), a federation of churches. Founded in 1998, CRE seeks to bring together a variety of people who profess an allegiance to Reformed theology. The spectrum is a wide one, encompassing Reformed Baptists and paedocommunionists. Unlike standard Presbyterian polity, a minister’s membership is held in the local church, not in the broader church.

The CRE corresponded with a PCA presbytery over the discipline of Burke Shade. Illiana Presbytery deposed Mr. Shade in 1999. The Carbondale, Illinois, minister was eventually received by CRE, along with the church which he now pastors, Cornerstone Reformed. The congregation, which was started by members from Evangelical Presbyterian Church, the PCA church in Carbondale formerly pastored by Mr. Shade, practices paedocommunion. (See *P&R News*, May-June 2001).

According to Pastor Wallace, Mr. Maneri was convicted *in absentia* at a trial on August 22, 2001. Appointed as his counsel was Mr. Mark Hausam. Mr. Maneri was convicted of false witness, being found guilty of having charged Pastor Wallace with false witness, with being morally unfit for office, and with being a divisive man according to Titus 3:10. Pastor Wallace indicated that Mr. Maneri had refused to bring these charges for adjudication, and was instead spreading them as gossip.

Mr. Maneri’s position is that he had joined another church and therefore was not subject to OPC jurisdiction. This was also the counsel of Doug Wilson to him.

As explained in a letter last year from Doug Jones of Christ Church, Moscow, to the Clerk of Session of the Salt Lake City church, “The main point of [our position] is the claim that if one is not a member of the OPC, then one isn’t subject to OPC jurisdiction. Surely, your session does not disagree and claim that nonmembers are indeed subject to OPC jurisdiction.” The email went on to say: “we don’t find him [Doug Wilson] making specific judgments against specific persons or courts on your end but instead voicing strong, well-grounded skepticism about general Reformed patterns of litigiousness, along with long-standing confidence in the character of Mr. Maneri. Mr. Wilson explicitly stated that he was making claims about patterns and appearances as an ‘outsider.’ . . . If your session is genuinely interested in dissuading Mr. Wilson of his skepticism in your particular case, we recommend that you send us the trial documents which show that you have risen above the contemporary Reformed norm. We would be glad to read them and return our comments back to you.”

The OPC General Assembly is slated to meet June 12-19, 2002. Among the denominations with which the OPC has ecclesiastical fellowship are the PCA, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, and the Canadian and American Reformed Churches.

## New Jersey Presbytery (OPC) Requests New King James Version to be Used in Educational Materials

### Use of New International Version Questioned

The Presbytery of New Jersey of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) has determined to “request the 69<sup>th</sup> General Assembly to request Great Commission Publications, for the sake of greater unity, to replace the New International Version with the New King James Version in all its educational materials as they undergo revision.”

The communication, which is Communication #17 to the OPC General Assembly, was adopted at the April 23, 2002, stated meeting of the Presbytery.

The Presbytery Stated Clerk, Mr. Richard A. Barker, in sending the communication to the Assembly, noted: “In accordance with another action of the Presbytery, substantially the identical request is being sent to Great Commission Publications and to the Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.”

On April 24, 2002, the Great Commission Publications instructed the Executive Director “to begin with implementation set forth in ‘Procedure on Bible Translations—Step 1’ and report to the fall Board meeting what progress has been made and what are the proposed next steps.” Step 1 is as follows: “GCP staff (including staff, Board members, and others) will begin by reassessing the appropriateness of GCP’s use of the NIV in terms of three criteria: 1) integrity of translation; 2) usage and acceptance within the OPC/PCA; 3) instructional value for the particular materials published by GCP.”

Great Commission Publications (GCP), which was founded by the OPC, became in 1975 a joint publishing effort between the OPC Committee on Christian Education and the Christian Education and Publications Committee (CE/P) of the PCA. Originally located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, GCP moved to Suwanee, Georgia, in 1993. Its executive director is the Rev. Tom Patete, a member of Philadelphia Presbytery (PCA).

According to Mr. Patete, “The action taken by the GCP Board is for the purpose of researching translation options in general and addressing questions raised about the NIV in particular.”

The New International Version (NIV) is based on a translation theory known as “dynamic equivalence.” This approach contrasts with that of older translations (such as the King James Version) which follow a more “literal” translation. According to an article in *Religion Today* by Matt Pyeatt, in recent days, organizations and key individuals have questioned the newest edition of the NIV, Today’s New International Version (TNIV), and its “inclusive language” approach which is designed to be more “gender accurate.” The 1997 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) expressed its agreement with the decision at that time by the NIV Committee on Bible Translation, the International Bible Society, and Zondervan “to not pursue their plans to publish a ‘gender-inclusive’ version of the NIV in the United States, believing that such a version is inconsistent with the Biblical doctrine of divine inspiration.”

Meanwhile, Central Carolina Presbytery has overtured this year’s PCA Assembly to study the propriety of the TNIV.

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# 'Indelible Grace' in Concert

## Group Goes on Tour to Promote Old Lyrics Wedded to New Tunes

Johnson City, Tennessee (April 8, 2002)—The female soloist, her sung words being punctuated by deep percussion and accompanied by guitars, loudly and passionately sang. But this love song was not the type usually heard in a university auditorium. For she was singing, "O, The Deep, Deep Love of Jesus."

fears; the bleeding Sacrifice in my behalf appears."

"The gospel is definitely a mystery," Matthew declares, "that the Judge of all would come to earth to set His prisoners free."

Sounding a theme of eternal deliverance, the group also sings "On

The fifth and final stanza sweetly celebrates the doctrine of justification: "Oh! I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine! He brings a poor vile sinner Into His house of wine. I stand upon His merit, I know no other stand. Not e'en where glory dwelleth In Emmanuel's land."

Samuel Rutherford, of course, was a Puritan, and as such committed to psalm-singing for public worship. Psalmody was also a theme for the evening. "I think it's important to sing the Psalms," Matthew Smith stated. "First of all, because it's in the Word of God. And also, the way the psalmist expresses fear and faith, often in the same Psalm, joy and despair. Men of God in the past have been able to show that they're human." Among the selections heard this evening, at least three were based on canonical psalms (Psalms 62, 73, and 130).

Besides Matthew Smith and Katy Bowser, three musicians played with the group: Paul Eckberg on drums, Steve Miksell on bass, and Jeremy Casella on guitar. Jeremy had begun the presentation this evening with a solo performance which featured songs from his CD recording.

After the concert, Matthew Smith and Cason Cooley, who runs the sound equipment for the group, explained more of what the group is doing. Mr. Cooley emphasized that although the concert was

in order to interest people in the type of music that is possible to utilize with old hymns, what was experienced this evening was indeed a concert, not a worship service. The musicians tonight were giving a performance; in a service of worship, the emphasis would be different, and the congregation would be expected to join in singing.

This tour for 'Indelible Grace' is being funded with a grant from the Calvin Institute of Worship, based at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and with funds provided by Lilly Endowment, Inc. In September, a two-day conference will be held at Belmont University in Nashville, under the sponsorship of RUF at Belmont, to explore ways in which the old hymns can be rediscovered in the contemporary church scene.

For more information, you may contact the Rev. Kevin Twit at [Kevin@indeliblegrace.com](mailto:Kevin@indeliblegrace.com). The web address for the group is [www.indeliblegrace.com](http://www.indeliblegrace.com).

For a lively internet discussion of the pros and cons of the music being performed by 'Indelible Grace', go to [PCANEWS.COM](http://PCANEWS.COM) ([www.Christianity.com/pcanews](http://www.Christianity.com/pcanews)) and search for 'Indelible Grace'.



'Indelible Grace' in concert at East Tennessee State University

It was a love song, to be sure, but not one with romantic overtones. Rather, it was directed to her Savior. And the young vocalist, Katy Bowser, declared, "And if I die while in East Tennessee, sing it at my funeral."

Miss Bowser is a vocalist in a group of five musicians called 'Indelible Grace.' The group, most of whom are members at Christ Community Church, a Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) congregation in the Nashville suburb of Franklin, Tennessee, is on tour, demonstrating their appreciation for the rich words of old, traditional hymns. But their presentation comes with a twist, or, perhaps better, a beat. For most of their music definitely has a contemporary sound and rhythm. Even when the traditional tune is used, as in the case of "O, The Deep, Deep Love of Jesus," the tune ("Ebenezer") has a distinct beat that old-time church goers would not recognize.

The Rev. Kevin Twit, who mentors the group, is College Pastor at Christ Community Church and Reformed University Ministries campus minister at Belmont University in Nashville. As he explains on the group's web site ([www.indeliblegrace.com](http://www.indeliblegrace.com)), "Our hope is to help the church recover the tradition of putting old hymns to new music for each generation, and to enrich our worship with a huge view of God and His indelible grace."

The goal is to deepen one's appreciation of and love for Christ, while conveying that piety by means of contemporary music that "connects" with today's generation.

The overarching theme focuses on the atonement of Christ, and the messages given by group leader Matthew Smith and by Katy Bowser between musical numbers gently, but definitely, hammer home that theme. Our only hope for reconciliation with God is the perfect life and perfect death of Christ, credited to us. That evangelical message is found throughout the old hymns which are sung: "Amazing Love! How can it be That Thou My God should die for me?" "Arise, my soul, arise, shake off your guilty

Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand." The rendition of this old hymn was more mellow than some of the other offerings this evening.

Less-familiar vintage songs are also sung, such as one by William Gadsby. "It's a comfort song, so take comfort," Katy counsels.

One of her favorite songs, "The Sands of Time Are Sinking," reflects the words of 17<sup>th</sup> century Scottish churchman Samuel



Katy Bowser, Matthew Smith, and Steve Miksell

Rutherford. "For years, I've loved Samuel Rutherford's letters," Miss Bowser confides. "He was widowed twice, he lost six children, he lost his pastorate, he saw the church get ripped apart by the government. . . . His letters are romantic—they read like love letters." But, their focus is on a tryst with the Savior. Miss Bowser enthusiastically sings, to a modern rhythm: "The sands of time are sinking, The dawn of heaven breaks, The summer morn I've sighed for, The fair, sweet morn awakes. Dark, dark, had been the midnight But dayspring is at hand. And glory, glory dwelleth In Emmanuel's land." The artist's feelings intensify in the fourth verse: "The bride eyes not her garment But her dear bride-groom's face. I will not gaze at glory But on my King of grace. Not at the crown He giveth But on His pierced hand. The Lamb is all the glory Of Emmanuel's land."

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# Editorials and Letters

## Impressions from Atlanta

The recent meeting of the newly-formed Presbyterian Pastoral Leadership Network (PPLN) in Atlanta gives a lot of food for thought. We were glad that we were able to attend.

There were many positive aspects to the meeting. Who can argue with an emphasis on missions and personal piety? Or, for that matter, with a desire to reach our society with the gospel of Christ?

Moreover, the fellowship, particularly as expressed in the small groups around lunch, was good and genuine.

But there were other, less-happy aspects to the meeting, especially as fostered by those of PPLN who are more interested in political posturing.

In our estimation, in order to give a full evaluation of PPLN and its public meeting in Atlanta, it is important to distinguish several groups who were at the meeting, as well as to distinguish between two different types of churchmen on the PPLN Steering Committee.

At the meeting itself, there were at least two groups of people. First, there were those who are enthusiastically committed to the plan which PPLN has formulated. No matter what PPLN does (within reason), this group is sure to follow. A second group at the meeting, while basically favorable to some of the stated goals of PPLN, is more skeptical, and wants to know the ramifications of the proposed Constitutional amendments before signing on to them, hook, line, and sinker.

Even among the Steering Committee members, we perceive two types of leaders. One group is more political in nature, and has demonstrated a shrewdness in fostering PPLN's political agenda. Another group is less politically-inclined, and is participating in the hope of ensuring peace in the courts of the church, with the result that more ministry can occur, locally, regionally, and nationally.

Quite frankly, we have much sympathy with those who are concerned with getting on and doing the ministry of the church. We sincerely desire the same thing!

The only problem is, there are folks in our midst who don't believe the same things we do, and who accordingly don't practice the same things we do. Of necessity, the inevitable result is going to be on-going theological conflict.

The Southern Presbyterian doctrine of the spirituality of the church; the regulative principle of worship; the traditional understanding of the role of women; and ecclesiastical separation from "churches" which despise the gospel—these are among the critical issues of our day. As long as there are ministers and elders in the PCA who insist on imposing their contrary views on our beloved church, those of us who hold dearly to our Presbyterian distinctives are determined, lovingly yet firmly, to defend against the constant attempts to take our denomination away from what she said she would be.

PPLN has declared that it wants a grace- and gospel-driven church. Amen! Who can disagree with motherhood, apple pie, and piety?

But the difficulty is that those who are the politicians on the PPLN Steering Committee are using that type of language, with which no one can disagree, in order to promote an agenda—an agenda that may very well lead our denomination down the proverbial primrose path. As a matter of fact, as demonstrated by the interview which we did with PPLN spokesman George Robertson, not even the Steering Committee members know where they are going! Notice the number of

times he said that he didn't know what was meant by terminology which the PPLN Mission Statement sets forth. Is it possible that most of those affiliated with the PPLN don't really know what the political leadership is doing?

Moreover, perhaps very tellingly, Mr. Robertson, when he made modifications to the interview transcript (which we invite interviewees to do), amended his answer regarding women's ordination to the diaconate to say that that "really is not an interest *at this point*" (the emphasized words being what he added).

May we respectfully point out that a lack of clarity, historically, has been—well, to put it politely, not helpful in the life of the church?

In sum, then, our impression from Atlanta is that this is another effort to silence, or at least to render irrelevant, those of us who have an historic understanding of the Presbyterian Church in general and of the PCA in particular. There are many good-hearted folks caught up in this effort—folks who have latched onto the many noble themes and sentiments which the PPLN leadership has promulgated. However, we are of the opinion that the vast majority of those at the meeting in Atlanta do not desire that the PCA follow its predecessor bodies into liberalism. The critical issue, therefore, for the future of the PCA is this—will we in the PCA be able to discern the problems with the PPLN approach and distinguish between the gold and the dross? Will we be able to take the good things which PPLN offers, and yet also discard what it offers that is not beneficial?

On that question may rest the future, humanly-speaking, of the PCA. *FJS*

## Not a Tripod, But a Building

Among the themes sounded at the presentations at the PPLN meeting in Atlanta was this: that the church must have a balanced approach, in which doctrine, piety, and missions are all equally ultimate. And that, we believe, is precisely where the difference may lie—a subtle, yet significant difference—between the PPLN folks and those who are trying to keep the PCA the way she is.

All of us believe that piety and missions are critically important. However, how we conceive of their relationship to doctrine is also of crucial significance.

We believe that doctrine forms the necessary foundation for the entire church enterprise and for one's personal piety. We believe that missions and piety flow out of our doctrinal commitment.

In Ezra 7:10, Ezra is described as one who first sought the law of God (doctrine), then sought to do it (piety) and to teach it (missions—à la the Great Commission).

The Apostle Paul sets forth the apostles and prophets as being the foundation of the church, with Christ being the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2). It is on the basis of that theological foundation that the church is built.

We believe that we can trace much of the current controversy in the PCA to what appears to be a contrary conception of how theology relates to the life of the church.

We also believe that unless we get this one straightened out, we are doomed as a denomination to devolve into do-goodism and liberalism.

We understand why making missions and piety on a par with theology would be attractive, and that this three-point plan would seemingly offer stability. But a strong gust of wind can much more easily knock over a tripod than a substantial structure.

We would respectfully submit that the figure of a building is a more solid one, and more Biblical. No, it's not a tri-pod—the church is a building, founded on Apostolic teaching. And as soon as we are able to agree on that, we will have even more common ground on which to discuss the theological and practical differences among us. *FJS*

## Don't Change It!

Ever since 1981, there has been a practice of having the constituent presbyteries conduct the worship services at each General Assembly. In our estimation, this has been a good practice, one which allows the General Assembly to sample what the various presbyteries have to offer.

The Administrative Committee (AC) now wants to change all this, and to have the Local Arrangements Committees to conduct all the worship services.

What the AC fails to note is that the Local Arrangements Committees are subject, in the final analysis, to the General Assembly Arrangements Committee, over which the AC exercises veto power ("Final approval of all decisions regarding the Assembly shall rest in the [Administrative Committee]"—Manual for General Assembly Arrangements).

The recommended change would represent another manifestation of centralization of power. We believe that we ought to keep the present system. We'd like to think that in at least in this small way, we can keep things at the grass-roots level.

In making its recommendation, AC notes that it would take 21 years to go through the entire roster of presbyteries. Of course, if we allow the Local Arrangements Committees to influence (or even to determine, with the blessing of AC) the direction of the worship services, it would take at least 63 years or more for each presbytery to be represented. (Actually, some would never be represented, as they are too small to host a General Assembly.)

However, the AC's entire argument is beside the point. What is important to maintain is the local and diverse flavor which presently obtains, as well as freedom from Big Brother telling us what to preach. Although there is some value to having an overarching theme for the Assembly, we fear that that approach could too easily be manipulated into a politicization of the preaching at the Assembly in order to promote a particular agenda, all in the guise of piety and worship.

Therefore, we recommend that the Assembly "just say no" to this proposed change. The system ain't broke—let's not fix it.

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Sirs:

I am enclosing a check for my subscription to *Presbyterian and Reformed Newsletter* [sic]. This is not an endorsement of your work but payment for services rendered. I still have strong concerns about your editorial bias and agenda. Your full page slobber fest over Rushdoony shows only too well where your biases lie.

I will also state that I am not a Southerner and that I have absolutely no interest in the P.C.U.S. or how the P.C.U.S. did things. I am sick and tired of the slobber fest over how glorious and wonderful the P.C.U.S. was. "How long will ye weep over Saul..?"

I do, however, have a very big interest in the Old School Presbyterianism of the North and its heritage as maintained in the Bible Presbyterian Church and then the late and lamented Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, which was the most wonderful Presbyterian denomination we had in this country. I would welcome the unification of all churches of the Machen heritage under one banner.

Yours sincerely,

W. Aardsma  
Kansas City, Missouri

[The "slobber fest" to which Mr. Aardsma refers in the first paragraph was R. J. Rushdoony's obituary.—Ed.]

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(Continued from page 11)

seen wonderful Gospel fruit of numerous brothers working past caricatures, coming together on these issues and being reconciled.”

The response calls attention to the PPLN web site, which sets forth the organization’s vision for the church and information relating to the overtures. It also states that even people opposed to their efforts have been included on the PPLN email list.

The response continues: “We have tried to be as open and responsive as possible not only to inform our church of our efforts and dreams, but also to try to counter the kinds of rumors that you ask about in your ‘Open Letter.’ Thank you for indicating that they are only ‘rumors.’ As to your questions about them, we can only respond, dear father, please do not believe rumors! The answer to your questions is simply, ‘No, no and no.’ Our impression is that the rumors you cite are the result of persons passing to you negative re-interpretations of what we have clearly stated on our Web site or in widely distributed e-mails made available to everyone. You and all others are welcome to examine directly what we have written. We would also encourage you to address one of us personally, or our spokesman, Rev. George Robertson, if you have questions about any further rumors.

“In our attempt to provide as much information as can reasonably be digested by our church on our Website we can make mistakes. In the second concern you express, you say that we misrepresented you in a comment about your statements at General Assembly this past year. We deeply regret this. We love and respect you. Because your General Assembly statements are referenced in various contexts on our Web site, we may have erred more than once. So, lest there by any mistake repeated, we hereby state as clearly as we are able that we believe Dr. Morton Smith intended for the PCA to be established according to the view of strict subscription that he has long espoused and, further, he believes that this was our history and that this should be our future. We apologize for statements we have made that reflect anything different. If the above clarification is still not an accurate statement of your position, Dr. Smith, please let us know and we will try further to correct ourselves.”

The response quotes from Dr. Smith’s retiring moderator’s sermon at last year’s Assembly, and says: “If we have not here quoted you accurately, or have not given sufficient context, then we invite all to listen to the full content of your message on the PCANews.com Web site.

“We deeply esteem your contributions to our church, Dr. Smith, but are compelled to disagree respectfully with your reading of our history at a number of key points that you cite in your third and fourth concerns. Numerous examples of where we believe current strict subscriptionists have misread our history or misapplied history to our situation are already indicated in the articles on our Website. For example, in your ‘Open Letter’ to us, you cite John Murray to support your position, but we document his well-known publication of a list of his exceptions to the Confession and Catechisms. His words and actions as a whole contradict the present strict subscription position. You cite John Dickinson for support, but he opposes the kind of subscription you advocate.”

The response takes exception to Dr. Smith’s understanding of the actions of the 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly: “The motions the 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly actually passed included much milder wording than the study paper—wording that would be acceptable to those with a ‘good faith’ subscription.”

The response contends: “Numerous overtures and motions through the years have attempted to mandate a strict subscription perspective for our church. All such proposals have failed because, contrary to your fourth concern that we are ‘charting a radically different direction for the PCA,’ the consensus of our church is that the strict view is inconsistent with our church’s heritage and mission. We know that you grieve over our church’s disagreement with you, but this is the position that our constitution has established and that most elders in the PCA have always believed is most biblical. For you simply to assert that we are diverging from the ‘Address to All the Churches’ signed by so many faithful men at the PCA’s founding and, then, for you to give no specifics as to how this is so, we humbly submit does not provide a foundation to your concern.”

The response concludes: “We know that your desire is for the church to maintain her faithfulness to God’s Word, dear father. We love and respect you for this. What we wish you could see is the discouragement so many of us and our fellow elders feel after decades of debate that seem not to have brought us closer together, but rather have entrenched us in unfruitful patterns of argument and suspicion. Yes, liberalism is a constant danger, and so is the danger of losing gospel vitality. Let us resolve by the power of the Spirit to fight both with such rigorous honesty and charitable compromise in our perspectives that we can move forward together in God’s purposes.”

## Dr. Smith’s Response

On May 20, 2002, Dr. Smith responded to the PPLN response, as follows:

“Dear Brothers,

“Thank you very much for several key corrections and the refreshing tone of your response to my open letter. Such true collegiality may provide a needed opening for us to work together in the upcoming General Assembly to do something to put some of these matters behind us. I quite agree that if we could settle this matter, the PCA would be much better positioned to seize its many mission opportunities. Responses like yours certainly model good leadership, and I hope that in the future such opportunities for these kinds of healthy exchanges may be encouraged and available before legislative language becomes codified or finalized. This is, after all, part of the genius of Presbyterianism and its wide basis of counsel. I believe that when we intentionally include those of various viewpoints in the preliminary and on-going discussions, we can avoid politicizing the business of the church.

“As a way to further thank you, to seek further clarity, and to advance the discussion even more, I make the following responses. In so doing, I invite you to offer additional responses and dialogue so that we can all work together to improve our church.

“First, it is true that you wrote to me in January, 2002, but it should be noted that at least two presbyteries had already adopted overtures to the General Assembly, which overtures you have been promoting across the Church, before I received your letter. In other words, you had already started the process of seeking to amend the Constitution prior to your informing me about it. There was no opportunity for those of my persuasion to enter into basic discussion with you about the issues. There was no call for and encouragement to enter into an open pursuit of deliberate consensus, with real give-and-take. For the record, you simply informed me (and others) of your intentions. Had we had such good

faith opportunities, and had you not rushed ahead prematurely, we probably could have spared a great deal of tension and strife that, no doubt, will exist at our next General Assembly.

“As to my second concern, you have provided the kind of repentance and charity that I requested. I publicly thank you for admitting your mischaracterization of my remarks last year and for offering a public retraction in your response to my open letter. I appreciate your willingness to clarify my intent on your web page. Thank you very much for admitting the misrepresentation and apologizing. Nothing else is needed on this score, except for me to thank you again for the sincere repentance expressed.

“As to my third concern, I’ll simply have to leave as a matter of substantive disagreement, whether it is wisest and most pastoral for the future of our church to weaken or strengthen its doctrinal adherence. If, as you suggest, you truly desire to strengthen—not lessen—our doctrinal adherence, may I encourage you not to press your loose subscription view on the church.

“A fourth concern has to do with your citation of the fact that Professor John Murray was not a strict subscriptionist. The article I was citing was his discussion of the ordination vows of the PCUSA. It had nothing to do with his personal practice of subscription. You have failed to grasp the point that I was making in my citation of him. The vow says that we receive and adopt the Confession and Catechisms as containing the system of doctrine. We do not subscribe to the system of doctrine. This is all that the strict subscriptionist desires. It is a declaration that we receive and adopt the Confession and Catechisms as the confession of our faith. Nothing more or less than this is the position of the vow itself. It is with this exegesis of the vow, that I have and will continue to maintain that the subscription of this vow is a subscription to all of the doctrines contained in the Confession and Catechisms. It is not a subscription to every

jot and title of the wording of the Standards, but it is to all the doctrines. On the other side, it is not a subscription to some undefined system of doctrine. The system is defined by all the doctrines set forth in the Confession and Catechisms. It is my position that as long as this is the form of the vow, then it must be understood to be a receiving and adoption of the Confession and Catechisms as containing the system of doctrine. This I understand to be full or strict subscription.

“A fifth concern is that you totally failed to understand my citation of Jonathan Dickinson. I did not claim him as supporting subscription. He was opposed, as I understand it, to any form of it. He held the exercise of discipline to be necessary for the preservation of the purity of the church, with or without subscription. I have the feeling that many fear the exercise of discipline, and thus call for a loose subscription. It is my conviction that without the proper exercise of discipline, we shall not be able to preserve a pure church.

“You indicate that I merely referenced the Address to All Churches, without any specific citations. I attach as an appendix, the Address, with some comments that I published several years ago. It is quite clear that PPLN does not hold to the same view of the nature and mission of the Church, which the PCA affirmed it held in 1973. Without getting into other matters covered in the Address, let the reader peruse the Appendix.

“Let me call for the three P’s of good Presbyterianism: patience, persuasion, and prayer.

“God bless you and I thank you for your sincere and helpful response to my concerns.

“Sincerely in Christ,

“Morton H. Smith”

As indicated, attached to his response was the “Address to All Churches,” along with comments.

The full text of these documents may be found at [www.presbyterianintegrity.org](http://www.presbyterianintegrity.org).



**Graham Bible College graduation ceremony was held on May 10, 2002, at King Memorial Presbyterian Church, Bristol, Virginia.**

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## Metokos Ministries Expands to Include New Congregational Analysis Tool

Dr. Don Clements, founder and Director of Metokos Ministries, was one of three Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) ministers who recently completed a three day training seminar sponsored by ChurchSmart Resources in St. Charles, Illinois. Through this seminar, the attendees became certified coaches and authorized to use the fast-growing Natural Church Development survey. This instrument has been recently developed and provides a statistically accurate way to determine the health of any church in eight major areas of ministry.

Metokos Ministries, currently a part-time ministry affiliated with Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship (PEF), is designed to provide "Encouragement For Small Churches". Dr. Clements is available to conduct a variety of special events in small churches, such as Vision Planning Training, Pulpit Nominating Committee Selection and Operating Training, and Conference Preaching. According to Dr. Clements, "The Natural Church Development tool—which has been used in 30 countries and by tens of thousands of churches—is not only a statistically valid instrument, it also is not 'slanted' towards any particular style of worship, form of government, or even theological position. It is exactly the instrument for which I have been searching for more than 18 months to help me to do church health evaluations."

At the upcoming annual meetings of both the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARP) and the PCA, Dr. Clements will be available to meet with leaders from churches who are interested in pursuing one of these opportunities. Attendees at the ARP Synod should look for him in the hotel registration area on Monday and Tuesday. Those at the PCA General Assembly should look for him at the PEF table in the main Fellowship Hall. Also, Metokos Ministries will be sponsoring an informational breakfast on Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup>. Free tickets are available for the asking.

Information about the work of Metokos Ministries (including an explanation of the interesting name of the ministry) may be found by visiting [www.metokos.org](http://www.metokos.org) online.

Dr. Clements was for many years Stated Clerk of New River Presbytery. He was ordained in 1974, one of only about a dozen of people who have ordination certificates reading "National Presbyterian Church" (the original name of the PCA). He was a Navy chaplain from 1976 to 1985. Since 1994, he has pastored Valley Presbyterian Church in rural Narrows, Virginia.

## Jubilee Celebration in New Jersey! Church Recognizes Elder's Fifty Years of Active Service

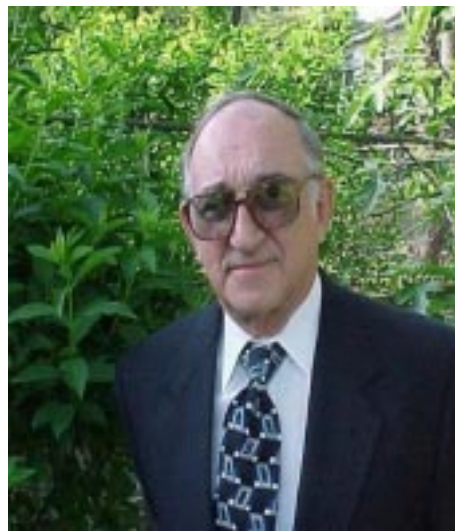
On April 20<sup>th</sup> of this year, Vincent Donato celebrated fifty years of continual active service as a ruling elder in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Mt. Laurel, New Jersey. A resolution to honor Vincent was passed by the Session of the church at its March meeting. At the morning worship service on April 21<sup>st</sup>, Vincent was presented with a plaque thanking him for his half a century of continual dedicated service. He was also presented with a framed copy of the resolution passed by the Session. In addition, a resolution honoring Vincent was presented to and approved by the New Jersey Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) at its meeting on May 18, 2002.

Vincent will be celebrating his 77<sup>th</sup> birthday in June. He and his wife, Betty Jean, will celebrate their 53<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary in July.

Interestingly, Vincent and his sister, Rose Marie, married a brother and sister, William and Betty Jean Born, in a double wedding ceremony in 1949. William was made an elder emeritus, having served 37 years as an active elder in the same church as his brother-in-law.

The Donato couple has three children and nine grandchildren. Both sons are deacons in the Mt. Laurel church. Their wives are active in

found it necessary to relocate to its present property in Mt. Laurel, Vincent was one of the



Vincent Donato

team who was instrumental in finding the necessary land and for working on the many details required in the building of the current facilities. He was the first to cite the verse which became the standard for the congregation as it looked to build the church building: "Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain" (Psalm 127:1).

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church experienced the spiritual reality of the 127<sup>th</sup> Psalm in its nascent days. In 1941, the congregation was formed when four-fifths (100 out of 125 members) of Grace Presbyterian Church left the liberal mainline denomination, the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA), in order to form a new church. Four elders and the trustees resigned their offices and turned the keys of the church building over to the liberals.

In the six decades since the break with the PCUSA, the church has had six pastors. Vincent has served with five of them.

Both Vincent and his sister, Rose Marie, were raised as Roman Catholics, but converted. After someone witnessed to their mother, she began to attend Dr. Carl McIntire's church, the Collingswood (N. J.) Bible Presbyterian Church. Both Vincent and his sister thought their mother was in danger of going to hell because she was attending a Protestant church. However, their mother encouraged them at least to try to attend a service. Subsequently, his mother and sister started to attend a Baptist church and then eventually, through a series of events, all three started to attend the Bible Presbyterian Church of East Camden—now the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Mt. Laurel where Vincent has so faithfully served. He became a member of the church in 1943; his wife Betty Jean was one of the charter members when the church left the PCUSA in 1941.

Vincent enlisted in the United States Army Air Force at the age of 18. He was a bombardier on a B-24 Liberator at the age of 19 with the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force, serving in the European Theater. After the war, he completed his education and graduated with a degree in electrical engineering. He worked for the Westinghouse Corp. for more than 35 years and took early retirement at the age of 61. He has been retired from the work force for the past fifteen years, but not from his service to the Lord.

Recently, Pastor Gary Englestad, who is in his seventeenth year as pastor of the Mt. Laurel church, commented that there was one individual who in all his public prayers consistently prayed that "love would abound in our church." Of course, he was referring to Vincent. In the resolution passed by the Session, it noted that "he [Vincent] has been a faithful and dedicated servant of the Lord in the discharge of his duties and responsibilities; and that he has been faithful in the spreading of the gospel and has been diligent regarding the purity of the Church of Christ." The Session ended the resolution with thanks to the Lord for Vincent's years of service and solicited the Lord's blessing upon Vincent for many more years of service.



The Session in 1952: George Morad, Wilbert Williams, the Rev. Morgan Jones, Harry Frett, Wilbur Cassidy, and Vincent Donato.

the programs of the congregation. The Donato's daughter is a member of the Church of the Good Shepherd, a PCA congregation in Durham, North Carolina, where she provides support for the church's music program. Her husband is an inactive ruling elder.

In addition to his responsibilities as a ruling elder, Vincent Donato has been the church treasurer for almost two decades. He also heads up the crew which maintains the church grounds and facilities. In summer he can be seen mowing the grass each week. If he isn't outside the church building working, you can find him working on the inside. Besides all of these activities, he is the chief cook for dinners held by the Adult Fellowship.

When the Evangelical Presbyterian Church

### A FAITHFUL CONGREGATION

Vincent Donato's half century of faithful service is paralleled by the faithfulness of his congregation. In 1941, the Bible Presbyterian Church of East Camden was formed when the stated supply preacher of Grace Presbyterian Church, a congregation which dates to 1889, was forced out of the pulpit. The issue was the gospel.

Mr. Samuel Warren, who had been preaching at the PCUSA congregation in Camden, New Jersey, for three years, criticized the West Jersey Presbytery for "accepting for ordination a candidate who made the statement that he did not know whether the Bible taught belief in the resurrection or if that is what Paul believed."

The Presbytery met on June 17, 1941, and removed Mr. Warren's license, stating that he was "no longer loyal to the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and that his temperament is not suitable."

Five days later, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, was a Lord's Day. Officers of the church turned their keys over to the Presbytery, and that very day convened a meeting of a new congregation in a funeral home, just down the block from the old church building. Services were held at the funeral home the next week also. On July 6<sup>th</sup>, the service was held in a tent on a vacant lot, between the old church building and the funeral home, which Mr. Warren had purchased for \$800 for back taxes.

On October 12, 1941, the new congregation met in a former Athletic Club building which it had purchased. The building was located diagonally across the street from the PCUSA church which the members had left.

For forty years, the congregation worshipped in that building. In 1981, that building was sold so that the church could relocate outside of Camden. For two and a half years, the church met in a funeral home. In the meantime, land was purchased, and in 1984, a new church building was dedicated.

The congregation was a member of the Bible Presbyterian Church, later called the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, which merged with the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America (General Synod) in 1965 to form the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod (RPCES). In 1982, the RPCES joined and was received by the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).



Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Mt. Laurel, New Jersey

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# News from the Presbyteries

## Fellowship

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of Fellowship Presbytery was held on January 26, 2002, at Scherer Memorial Presbyterian Church, Lake Wylie, South Carolina. The Moderator, Ruling Elder Max Dorsey, opened the meeting with prayer.

Ruling Elder Scott Mosley, an applicant for ordination, read from Isaiah 6:1-8 and preached a message.

The Rev. Dr. Michael Bolus from Hopewell Presbyterian Church, Rock Hill, South Carolina, was elected Moderator. The Rev. Wallace Tinsley was appointed as the Parliamentarian.

Ruling Elder Roy White Johnston of Zion Presbyterian Church, Chester, South Carolina, was memorialized. He passed away November 20, 2001, at the age of 87.

The Presbytery voted to relinquish its time for conducting a worship service at General Assembly.

The Presbytery voted to establish a committee of three ministers and three ruling elders to consider the possibility of putting together a group health insurance policy for the churches in the Presbytery.

Mr. Scott Mosley was examined and approved for ordination. He has been called as Pastor of Christ Cornerstone Presbyterian Church, Fort Mill, South Carolina, with a total package of \$50,000. The Presbytery received letters of thanks and appreciation from Christ Cornerstone congregation and session for the oversight of the Presbytery and the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Dick Belcher, who served as stated supply for over a year. Fellowship Presbytery also extended its own thanks to John (Chip) McArthur, Rick Lindsay, Russell Bowman, Jim Audrey, Shaun Ballard, and Scott Mosley for their sacrificial labor at the congregation. The provisional session for Christ Cornerstone was dissolved.

The Presbytery paused to watch *Celebrate the Glory*, a video from Mission to the World.

The Presbytery unanimously voted in favor of all the *BCO* amendments, except for the amendment to *BCO* 12-5(e) (which would specify that women are not to preach). The court voted against that amendment, 7-30-1.

It was moved, seconded, and failed to adopt the overture to amend *BCO* 21-4 to specify "good faith" subscription. It was moved, seconded, and carried to adopt the overture to amend *BCO* 34-1 to require greater consensus before removing original jurisdiction from presbyteries.

The 2002 budget, totaling \$87,200, was adopted.

Presbytery approved giving \$4,000 in 2002, \$3,000 in 2003, and \$2,000 in 2004 to Barrett and Judy Jordan, church planters in West Virginia.

The Presbytery approved the minutes of the Christian Education and Fellowship Committee, since there was not a quorum present. Presbytery approved the disbanding of the Committee. The Administration Committee is to recommend as to where to reassign oversight of WIC and Men of the Covenant.

Mr. James McManus was received as a candidate for the ministry. He was also made an intern, and will do his internship under the supervision of the Rev. John McArthur.

Presbytery approved changing its Manual to provide for the Membership Committee to act "as a commission in cases where the candidate for the gospel ministry

has satisfactorily completed the ministry internship, has received a call and is awaiting transfer to the presbytery of the calling church, so as not to impede (delay) the ordination and installation of the candidate."

Reports were heard on the Presbytery's interns: Frank Hamrick, Craig Marshall, and Bradley McRee. Mr. Hamrick's completed internship was approved.

## Grace

The 102<sup>nd</sup> stated meeting of Grace Presbytery met at Bay Street Presbyterian Church, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, on January 9, 2002. The Rev. Steve Shuman led the opening worship, and preached from II Corinthians 1:3-11 on the topic, "The God of All Comfort." The Presbytery entered into a season of prayer. Ruling Elder Mel Stegall led the Presbytery in the Ministerial Obligation Form [i.e., in reaffirming one's ordination vows, which in some presbyteries is done annually—Ed.].

The Moderator, the Rev. Michael Ganucheau, called the meeting to order and offered the constituting prayer. The moderator-in-nomination, Ruling Elder John Burnam, was elected Moderator by acclamation.

Presbytery received the reports of the following commissions: to ordain Mr. Clinton E. Wilcke as campus minister at the University of Southern Mississippi under the auspices of Reformed University Ministries; to install the Rev. Norman A. Bagby, Jr., as Assistant Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Hattiesburg, Mississippi; to ordain and install Mr. Stanley E. Layton as Pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Picayune, Mississippi; and to install the Rev. John L. Ford as Pastor of the Northwood Hills Presbyterian Church, Gulfport, Mississippi. The Ford commission noted that the congregations of First Presbyterian Church, Gulfport, and First Presbyterian Church, Biloxi, called off their evening services in order to participate in the service of installation.

The Treasurer's report for the last four months of 2001 was approved. A total of \$4,655.00 was received; disbursements totaled \$4,339.45, with a balance on hand of \$6,909.36 as of December 31, 2001.

The Benevolence Treasurer's report was received as information. Receipts for the last four months of the year were \$5,766.31, disbursements were \$9,568.00, leaving a balance at the end of the year of \$9,401.59. There was also a total of \$15,495.64 in the Presbytery Escrow Account as of December 31, 2001.

The Presbytery received notice that the Sleigo Presbyterian Church had dissolved and merged with the Prentiss (Miss.) Presbyterian Church. The Sleigo Church noted that it had "faithfully served the community of Lone Star for almost 150 years," that it "is the parent church of the Prentiss Presbyterian Church," that the two churches are less than eight miles from each other, that "all active members on the roll of the Sleigo Presbyterian Church have been transferred to the roll of the Prentiss Presbyterian Church," and that "all tangible assets of the Sleigo Presbyterian Church have been properly and legally dispersed." The resolution was signed by the entire active membership of the Sleigo Presbyterian Church, consisting of Leslie E. Benson, Elder and Clerk of Session; Ruby L. Benson; Grace McRaney; and Pearl

Calhoun.

The Presbytery voted in favor of all the *BCO* amendments, except for adding Appendix H, "Suggested Procedures for Presbytery Judicial Commissions Acting as Appellate Courts," to the *BCO*. The court voted in favor of amending *BCO* 13-1 to allow at least two ruling elders to represent each congregation in presbytery meetings. This amendment had been presented as an overture by the Ellisville (Miss.) Presbyterian Church but rejected by Grace Presbytery. The vote to ratify was 28-11-4.

The Advisory Committee reported that it had acted as a commission to the pastoral relationship between the Rev. Paul Honomichl and the Bay Street Presbyterian Church effective January 13, 2002, and to dissolve the pastoral relationship between the Rev. Wilson Smith and the First Presbyterian Church of Crystal Springs, Mississippi, effective December 31, 2001. Mr. Smith was dismissed to North Georgia Presbytery to accept the call from Midway Presbyterian Church, Powder Springs, Georgia.

Mr. Don Admire was examined for ordination and approved. He is being called as Assistant Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, where he is now employed as their youth minister. The Session issued a call of \$42,000 plus health insurance and four weeks of vacation annually.

Mr. David (Andy) Jones, who is youth minister at First Presbyterian Church, Crystal Springs, Mississippi, was examined and licensed to preach.

Presbytery approved the 2002 budget for Reformed University Ministries Mississippi Joint Committee on Campus Work, in the amount of \$693,051.00. This budget had also been approved by the other two presbyteries involved, viz., Mississippi Valley and Covenant.

The Mississippi Joint Committee had also included a recommendation that no changes be made in its current structure. Since this was a motion not to change anything, Grace Presbytery decided not to process it.

The Grace PresWIC Council requested that a letter of thanks be read to the court, which was done. Weesie Megehee was approved to serve as Christian Growth Chairperson, and Ruth Mathis to serve as Historian.

Ruling Elder Bill Sistrunk gave a brief report regarding the church planing effort in McComb, Mississippi.

The Rev. Doug Mallow was granted five minutes to address the Presbytery on the short-term mission projects for this summer.

A five minute report on Harvest Ministries and Presbytery's summer camps was presented by the Rev. Norman Bagby.

The Presbytery determined to continue to provide the pledged support to the Rev. Scot Rich, a church planter in British Columbia, through 2005 from the General Benevolent Funds.

A Memorial Resolution from Covenant Presbyterian Church, Laurel, Mississippi, in memory of Dr. Robert L. Thompson, was approved and spread on the record.

## James River

West End Presbyterian Church, Hopewell, Virginia, hosted the winter stated meeting of James River Presbytery on January 19, 2002. The Moderator, the Rev. John Lindsay, read Psalm 66 on reasons for praising the Lord and led the Presbytery in

a season of prayer. He read I Timothy 2:1 on confession and led the Presbytery in a season of prayer on confession. He read from I Timothy 4:9 and Genesis 3:1-7 on our hope in the living God and led Presbytery in a season of prayer on our hope in Him. The worship service was concluded with a prayer, a hymn, and the benediction.

Ruling Elder Leland Nichols welcomed the presbyters to the West End Church. He announced that today was the Rev. Wayne Good's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. Presbyters recognized the occasion by singing "Happy Birthday." Mr. Good was later approved as stated supply for the West End Church for one year.

The court approved the minutes of the following commissions: to ordain and install Greg Thompson as RUF campus minister at the University of Virginia; to ordain and install Jerry Gill as associate pastor of New City Fellowship, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Presbytery added a new article to its Bylaws, establishing a Committee on Reformed University Fellowship.

The treasurer, Charles Parker, reported that the Presbytery received \$39,247.06 and disbursed \$59,478.89 in 2001. At the end of the year, there was a balance of \$14,219.48.

The court voted to ratify all of the *BCO* amendments sent down for consideration.

The Presbytery considered presbytery realignment, including whether to divide into two or three presbyteries. The court decided to approve a change in boundaries, ceding its westernmost churches and territories to a new Blue Ridge Presbytery. [The boundary change is pending General Assembly approval.—Ed.]

Mr. Joe Varaksa was licensed to preach. Mr. Robert Rink was taken under care as a ministerial candidate.

The Presbytery voted to accept the Bible Content Exam and accept it as a substitute for the present versions of licensure and ordination exam. The court also accepted the proposed sermon criteria for it to be a written 35 page document.

Mr. Chris Copeland was removed as a candidate upon his reception of a call from a particular church.

Mr. Dan Carrell presented the report of the West End Presbyterian Church Commission on Complaints. Several complaints had been presented by members of the West End Church, and several by its former pastor, Dr. Robert Wilson.

The Coventry Church, Yorktown, Virginia, reported that it had requested that the Presbytery dissolve the congregation and place its pastor, the Rev. James C. Allen, on the roll of Presbytery as honorably retired. The church's dissolution was the result of declining membership and the need to undertake major building repairs in order to comply with building codes. It was reported that Mr. Allen and most of the members of The Coventry Church were attending Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, Williamsburg, Virginia. Mr. Allen was honorably retired as of December 31.

The Rev. Mark Kuiper was transferred to Pacific Presbytery pending receipt. The Presbytery granted permission to the Rev. Richard Horner to labor out of bounds as head of a Christian study center in Florida pending the approval of Central Florida Presbytery.

The Chairman of the Ministerial and Church Relations Committee, the Rev. Cal Frett, reminded presbyters that teaching elders must not physically leave the field until Presbytery or an appropriate commission has dissolved the pastoral relationship.

**Southwest**

The Presbytery of the Southwest met for a stated meeting on September 20, 2001, at Fellowship of Grace PCA, Peoria, Arizona. The Moderator, the Rev. Tom Troxell, called the meeting to order and opened with prayer.

The Rev. Bradd Nymeyer of the United Reformed Church, Phoenix, Arizona, and the Rev. Charles Perkins of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Prescott, Arizona, brought fraternal greetings.

The Presbytery approved the report of its Christian Education and Credentials Committee, acting as a commission, to take Messrs. Allen Cooney, Ryan Hughes, and Joshua Moon under care. Also approved was the report of the commission to ordain Mr. Dennis Hermerding as campus minister at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

The court considered an amendment to its Standing Rules which would have provided for two stated meetings, following the third Lord's Day in March and October. Following a request for a division of the house, the Moderator ruled that the motion had been defeated.

The Rev. Tom Troxell read a memorial for the Rev. Donald R. Esty.

Ruling Elder David Moon was elected as Moderator for the year 2002.

Upon the request of the Rev. Tom Johnson, it was moved to replace Mr. Johnson with the Rev. John Pickett as a member of the commission to particularize Christ the King mission church in El Paso, Texas. After some discussion, the motion was defeated.

A commission was appointed to oversee all matters pertaining to organizing Rincon Mountain Mission into a particular church. The associate pastoral relationship between the Rev. Phil Kruis and the Catalina Foothills PCA was dissolved, pending his call to serve as pastor of the Rincon Mountain church.

It was reported that Mr. Bill Inman has a desire to move within Presbytery's bounds in order to pastor the Navajo Bible Church, Crystal, New Mexico. The Rev. Dan Young spoke to Presbytery about a new Hispanic work to which he is being called, forming on the east side of El Paso, Texas.

Mr. Mark McCurdy spoke to the court of the transition taking place in his life. He is currently working with the United Indian Mission, providing aviation support to other missionaries serving in various parts of Mexico.

Mr. Troxell spoke about being a chaplain in the Arizona National Guard, especially in light of the recent terrorist attacks.

Mr. Larry Mills spoke of his work with Leadership Ministry International.

Mr. Peter Boling, a member of Desert Palms PCA, Chandler, Arizona, was introduced. He plans to study at Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. He preached a sermon from Titus 3:1-8; and, after examination, was licensed to preach.

The meeting, which began at 1:04 PM, was adjourned at 5:30 PM.

**Susquehanna Valley**

Susquehanna Valley Presbytery met for a stated meeting on February 16, 2002, at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The Moderator, Ruling Elder Jeff Barrall, called the meeting to order. Mr. Brett Hartman preached from Isaiah 40. The Rev. David Kertland, Assistant Pastor at the host church, administered the Lord's Supper.

It was reported that there was at the end of 2001 \$43,851.75 in the General Fund; and \$163,197.08 in the Investment Fund, \$163,197.08.

The Church Planting and Outreach Committee reported on Harvest Presbyterian Mission, Lampeter/Strasburg, Pennsylvania, which is meeting at the Willow Street Restaurant on Sunday evenings and having a great time. The Rev. William Massey is the organizing pastor, and also Moderator of the temporary Session. The Presbytery approved giving \$50,000 to the mission for the year 2002.

The Presbytery also voted to give \$5,000 to the Hanover Valley Presbyterian Mission for 2002.

The Presbytery approved a Church Planter Recruiting Strategy [see separate box].

Licentiates James D. Tyson and Brett Hartman were examined and approved for ordination. Mr. Tyson was called as Pastor of Christ Reformed Presbyterian Church, Shrewsbury, Pennsylvania, as pastor; and Mr. Hartman was called as Assistant Pastor of New Covenant Fellowship, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.

The license to preach of Licentiate Ed Suthers was extended for four years, until May 2006.

## Susquehanna Valley's Church Planter Recruiting Strategy

1. That the CP&O [Church Planting and Outreach] Committee will conduct all church planter searches for Presbytery Initiated church plants.
2. That the CP&O Committee will identify the top five to eight most viable church planting locations in the Presbytery in consultation with local church sessions.
3. That the CP&O Committee will seek qualified church planters, serving as a search committee as funds are available and will select the site from one of the top locations in consultation with the church planters to become the target area for the plant he will lead.
4. That the CP&O Committee allocate \$2,000 per year from the Presbytery Initiated category of the budget for prospecting and recruiting of church planters.
5. That the CP&O Committee actively encourage our churches to take on apprentices for the purpose of developing the next generation of church planters.
  - (a) CP&O will actively seek churches willing to invest in apprentices.
  - (b) CP&O will actively seek apprentices from the Assessment Center and the seminaries to fill available apprenticeships.
  - (c) CP&O will begin a Church Planter Development Fund to underwrite apprenticeships with an initial goal of raising \$100,000 to fund apprenticeships. CP&O will develop a strategy for raising this additional money and an application process to assess candidates who seek this funding.

The seminary study plan presented by Mr. Matt Irvine was approved.

The Presbytery voted to approve two overtures to General Assembly. One seeks amendment of *BCO* 21-4 with regard to the meaning of theological subscription, and the other seeks amendment of *BCO* 34-1 by raising the number of presbyteries necessary to petition for original jurisdiction from two presbyteries to ten percent of the whole.

Tennessee Valley

The Tennessee Valley Presbytery met for a stated meeting at Covenant Presbyterian Church, Oak Ridge, Tennessee, on January 12, 2002. The Moderator, the Rev. Lea Clower, called the meeting to order and opened with prayer.

Ruling Elder Rob Woodard, serving on the temporary Session of East Ridge (Tenn.) Presbyterian Church, gave an encouraging report regarding the church.

The Rev. Dr. Mike Milton, a member of Central Georgia Presbytery, was examined and approved for reception. He has been called to be Senior Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee [see story in March 2002 edition of *P&R News*.—Ed.].

Ruling Elder Rudy Schmidt reported that the Rev. Randy Nabors, who had been appointed as the prosecutor in the Stuart Merriam case, was unable to attend today because of military obligations. The Stated Clerk reported that he had sent \$2,000 to Dr. Merriam to cover a round trip ticket for him to appear at today’s meeting. He had requested the \$2,000 for the trip but after receiving it, he stated that he would not be able to attend until he resolved a legal suit regarding some property in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. The Stated Clerk also reported that Dr. Merriam had indicated that he is not willing at this time to appear before Presbytery for the purpose of standing trial on the current charges and is only interested in meeting with Presbytery to discuss the previous action taken by Presbytery seven years ago. It was moved, seconded, and carried to cite Dr. Merriam and all witnesses to appear at the spring stated meeting of the Presbytery (April 20, 2002), in order that Dr. Merriam stand trial and answer the charges brought by the Presbytery as recorded in the minutes of the special called meeting held May 31, 2001.

The court spread on its minutes the report of a commission that had examined and taken under care Mr. Kenny Foster.

Mr. Zack Carden, a member of Covenant Presbyterian Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee, and a student at Covenant Theological Seminary, was taken under care as a candidate. Also taken under care was Mr. Matt Novenson, who begins his study at Covenant Seminary next week.

Candidate Robby Holt was examined and

licensed to preach.

Licentiate Eric Youngblood was examined and approved for ordination. He has been called as Pastor of the Rock Creek Fellowship Mission Church.

The Presbytery amended its Standing Rules to divide the Minister & His Works Committee into two committees, viz., Theological Examining Committee and Pastoral Care Committee.

A modified version of the overture proposed by Covenant Presbyterian Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee, was adopted. Also adopted was an overture to increase the number of presbyteries necessary to petition for original jurisdiction over a minister from two presbyteries, to at least ten percent of all the presbyteries.

The Rev. Dennis Griffith reported that the Mission to North America Committee is searching for a new man to take over the ministry at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. The Committee is looking at possible new church planting areas including the former mission work at Morristown, Tennessee, and a Spanish-speaking ministry in Dalton, Georgia.

The Rev. David Zavadil of the Christian Education Committee reported on the Men’s Retreat, the Pastor’s retreat, and the PresWIC. Mr. Dwight Wilkinson presented the work of Christian Camping International. Mr. Matthew Bryant presented the Committee’s plans for the youth Breakaway in March.

The Rev. David Hoover of the Mercy Committee gave a report. It was moved, seconded, and carried that the Presbytery establish an endowment for mercy ministry, “to be established and held by the PCA Foundation and administered by the Presbytery’s Mercy Committee. This endowment will solicit and receive funds from interested churches, individuals, and any other legitimate financial source, so that money might, as God blesses, increase so as to be used for designated ministries and acts of mercy as the Mercy Committee should authorize.”

Westminster

Bristol, Tennessee (April 13, 2002)—Walnut Hill Presbyterian Church hosted the one hundred and seventh stated meeting of Westminster Presbytery. The Rev. Curtis Stapleton preached on the Confession of Faith, Chapter XXX (“Of Church Censures”), and host pastor Dr. Ed Crook administered the Lord’s Supper.

The Moderator, the Rev. Trevor Downie, called the meeting to order. He was re-elected as the Moderator. Mr. Downie read Psalm 133.

The court amended its Standing Rules to add, after a reference to *Robert’s Rules of Order*, the following sentence: “At all times the Word of God is to be the supreme authority in all meetings of this Presbytery.”

The Presbytery also amended its Standing Rules to combine the Mission to North America and Mission to the World Committees into a new Missions Committee.

The final Greene County Commission Minutes were presented approved.

It was reported that Trinity Presbyterian Church, Tazewell, Virginia, had voted to withdraw from the PCA and to join the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States (RPCUS); and that the congregation had been received into that denomination on February 23, 2002. The Rev. Henry Johnson and the Rev. Jeff Black were transferred to Covenant Presbytery of the RPCUS, pending their reception. Mr. Johnson was replaced on the Overtures and Judicial Business Committee by the Rev. Brent Bradley.

The Presbytery approved allocation \$500 each to two ministers with financial need.

The Missions Committee was instructed to work out the details of a meeting with the Rev. Archie Parrish of the denominational Mission to North America Committee, in consultation with the Presbytery Stated Clerk. The action came in response to an overture presented a year ago by the Session of Coeburn (Va.) Presbyterian Church.

It was moved, seconded, and carried that “the churches in Westminster Presbytery, who would be interested in pursuing this, combine their efforts to have tent meetings, use itinerant evangelists (PEF), placement of ads, public relations and use of ministerial interns and seminarians as they attempt to reach out to other areas and communities.”

Presbytery voted to approve an overture proposing an alternative to other proposals with regard to theological subscription. The Presbytery also approved an overture calling on denominational management personnel not to be involved in ecclesiastical politicking such as the Presbyterian Pastoral Leadership Network (PPLN).

The Presbytery suspended its rules by a 2/3 vote in order to consider a new overture. This new overture to the General Assembly communicated the court’s opinion that the proposed amendments to the Standing Judicial Commission Manual should be voted down.

The court declined to suspend its rules in order to consider a communication to the General Assembly [see story on page 10 for the subsequent adoption of a communication at a called meeting.—Ed.]

The Christian Education Committee reported on the Presbytery Camp for this summer. The Committee noted that it is assuming responsibility for approval of camp speakers, and will in the future require camp directors to obtain approval from the Committee before inviting speakers, when men are being considered who are not teaching or ruling elders in Westminster Presbytery. One of the speakers for this year will be the Rev. Wayne Rogers, whose wife, Judy, a well-known musical artist, will be singing at the camp. Mr. Rogers is the son-in-law of Clynard Belcher, the first Moderator of Westminster Presbytery; he is currently a minister in the RPCUS. A motion that Mr. Rogers be instructed not to teach theonomy to the children, died when it did not receive a second.

LOOKING FOR A PASTOR

OPC Congregation in Costa Mesa, CA, has vacant pulpit. Adherence to WCF and Catechisms essential. Congregation well-taught in postmillennialism, theonomic ethics, and 6-24hr creation day positions. Five years + experience preferred. Please inquire to Jim Andruss at 714-528-0174 or e-mail to JimAndruss@aol.com.

(Paid Advertisement)

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

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/6PM  
Wednesday Bible Study, 7PM  
(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 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

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

<p><b>MARYLAND</b> CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Elkton High School/Elkton S.S., 11:15 AM; Worship, 9:15 AM (410)398-3192 <b>CHRIST REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</b> Diplomat Building, 13992 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 300/Laurel S.S., 9:30AM; Worship 10:30AM/6:00PM (301) 498-3700 <b>MINNESOTA</b> 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 <b>MISSISSIPPI</b> MCDONALD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 295 E. Williamsburg Road/Collins S.S., 10:00AM; Worship, 11:00AM/6:00PM Wednesday prayer meeting, 7:00PM (601)765-6437 <b>FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</b> 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 <b>ST. PAUL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</b> 5125 Robinson Road/Jackson S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 10:55 AM/6:00 PM (601)372-7497 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 PEARL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 2933 Old Brandon Road/Pearl S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (601)939-1064 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 <b>FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</b> 600 Main Street/Woodville S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 Wed. Prayer Mtg. (Oct.-May), 6:00 PM (601) 888-4837 SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1926 Grand Avenue at 20th/Yazoo City S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/5:00PM Wednesday, 7:30 PM (601)746-8852 <b>NEW JERSEY</b> LOCKTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 197 Locktown-Flemington Road/Flemington S.S., 10:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM (908)996-7707 MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH† 350 Franklin Blvd./Somerset S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (732)846-8777 <b>NEW YORK</b> AFFIRMATION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Routes 100 and 139/Somers S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM (914)232-0546 <b>NORTH CAROLINA</b> DILLINGHAM PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 16 Stoney Fork Road/Barnardsville S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM (828)626-3668 COUNTRYSIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 127 Ponderosa Road/Cameron S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM (919)499-2362</p>	<p><b>WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</b> Highway 74/Cashiers S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM Wednesday, 7:00 PM Prayer Meeting (828)743-2122 <b>WHITE OAK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</b> 699 Polly Watson Road/Fremont S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM (919)284-4196 HAZELWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 117 E. Main Street/Hazelwood S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:15 PM Wednesday, 7:00 PM (828)456-3912 SHEARER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 684 Presbyterian Road/Mooresville S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/5:00 PM Wednesday, 7:00 PM (704)892-8866 TRINITY REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 3701 South College Road/Wilmington Worship 10:30 AM (910)395-1252 <b>NOVA SCOTIA</b> BEDFORD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 49 Nelson's Landing Blvd./Bedford S.S., 11:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/7:00 PM (902)864-1587 <b>OHIO</b> FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 2540 S. Main Street/Akron S.S., 9:30 AM Worship, 10:45 AM/6:00 PM Wednesday, 7:00 PM (330)644-9654 CHRIST COVENANT REFORMED (PCA) 14787 Palmer Road SW/Reynoldsburg Psalter Service, 9:30 AM/Worship, 10:45 AM Thurs. Bible Study, 7 PM (740)964-0889 <b>OKLAHOMA</b> BEAL HEIGHTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 614 SW Park/Lawton Worship, 10:45 AM and 6:00 PM (580)355-4702 <b>PENNSYLVANIA</b> NEW LIFE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP 2795 Patterson Drive/Aliquippa S.S., 9:30AM; Worship, 11:00AM (724)378-4389 LEHIGH VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 31 S. 13th Street/Allentown S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship. 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (610)797-8320 FAITH REFORMED CHURCH 2953 Saltsman Road/Erie S.S., 9:45 AM/Worship, 11:00 AM (814)899-3037 COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 515 West County Line Road/Hatboro S.S., 9:45 AM (Sum., 9:00); Worship, 11:00 AM (Sum., 10:00) (215)675-9688 <b>ROCKY SPRINGS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</b> 123 Rocky Springs Road/Harrisville S.S., 10:00 AM Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (724)735-2743 <b>HILLCREST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</b> Route 19, three miles south of Leesburg/Volant S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship 10:55 AM/6:30 PM (724)533-4315 <b>SOUTH CAROLINA</b> REEDY RIVER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 46 Main Street/Connestee S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00AM/6:30PM (864)277-5455</p>	<p><b>GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</b> 1955 Riverside Drive/Conway S.S., 9:30 AM/Worship, 10:45 AM (843)347-5550 FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1800 Third Loop Road/Florence S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (843)665-9235 BEECH STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1403 Beech Street/Gaffney S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (864)489-2014 CALVARY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 9201 Old White Horse Road/Greenville S.S. 10:00 AM; Worship 11:00 AM/6:00 PM Wednesday Prayer Meeting 7:00 PM (864)294-0895 SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 105 River Street/Greenville S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM Wednesday, 5:45 PM (864)232-7621 FELLOWSHIP PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1105 Old Spartanburg Road/Greer S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM Wednesday, 6:30 PM (864)877-3267 <b>TENNESSEE</b> BRAINERD HILLS PRESSBYTERIAN CHURCH 6388 East Brainerd Road/Chattanooga S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 10:45AM/6:30PM (423) 892-5308 MIDWAY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 4011 Old Jonesborough Road/Jonesborough S.S., 10:00 AM; Worship 11:00 AM/7:00 PM (423) 753-941 BRIDWELL HEIGHTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 108 Bridwell Heights Drive/Kingsport S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (423)288-3664 FELLOWSHIP PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Highway 25/70/Newport S.S., 9:30 AM/Worship, 11:00 AM/7:00 PM Wednesday Prayer Meeting, 6:00 PM (423)623-8652 <b>WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</b> 900 Watauga Street/Kingsport S.S., 10:00 AM Worship, 11:00 AM/7:00 PM (423)247-7341 <b>TEXAS</b> COLLEYVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 715 Cheek Sparger Road/Colleyville S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM/6:00 PM (817)498-2626 COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 2701 N. 7th Street/Harlingen S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM Midweek service, 7:00 PM Wednesday (956)425-3136 COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SDA Church, 1209 S. John Redditt Rd./Lufkin S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 10:45 AM/5:30 PM (409)637-6043 CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1620 E. Common Street/New Braunfels S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 10:45 AM (830)629-0405 PROVIDENCE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 3510 Austin Parkway/Sugar Land S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM and 6:00 PM (except 1st Sun.) (281)980-2522 <b>VIRGINIA</b> COEBURN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 220 Second Street SW/Coeburn S.S., 9:45AM; Worship, 11:00AM/6:30PM Wednesday Prayer Meeting, 7:00PM (276)395-2866</p>	<p><b>NEW HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</b> 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 CALVARY REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 403 Whealton Road/Hampton S.S. 10:00AM; Worship: 8:30 AM/11:00 AM Evening Gathering: 6:00 PM (757)826-5942 WEST END PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1600 Atlantic Street/Hopewell S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 10:50 AM/6:00 PM Wednesday Prayer Meeting, 7:00 PM (804)458-6765 <b>KNOX REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</b> 4883 Southard Lane/Mechanicsville S.S., 9:30 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM Sunday Evening, 6:00 PM (804)779-7608 IMMANUEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 4700 Colley Avenue/Norfolk Worship, 10:30AM/6:30PM Wed. Christian Education Classes, 7:00PM Sat. Prayer Meeting, 7:00PM (757)440-1100 TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 108 Hill Street/Tazewell S.S., 9:45 AM; Worship, 11:00/7:00 PM (540)988-9541 <b>WASHINGTON</b> WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 2700 Andresen Road/Vancouver Worship, 10:00 AM Sunday Bible Study, 6:30 PM (360)254-1726 <b>WEST VIRGINIA</b> PROVIDENCE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 5865 Davis Creek Road/Barboursville S.S. 11:30; Worship 10:00 AM/6:00 PM (304)736-0487 <b>WISCONSIN</b> CALVARY ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH† 136 West Union Avenue/Cedar Grove S.S., 10:30 AM; Worship 9:00 AM/7:00 PM (920)668-6463 REFORMATION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH† Aurora Medical Center, I-94 at Highway 164/Waukesha Bible Study, 10:00 AM; Worship, 11:00 AM Wednesday Prayer Service, 7:00 PM (262)246-2421 <b>LAKESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</b> Seventh Day Adventist Church, 21380 W. Cleveland Ave./New Berlin S.S., 10:45 AM: Worship, 9:30 AM (262)968-6769  GRIEVING WITH HOPE The Rev. James Alexander PO Box 7100 Florence, SC 29502-7100 (843)664-9759 Website: www.griefwithhope.com Email: griefwithhope@abac.com</p>
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† Indicates a non-PCA church.