



*"The Only Infallible Rule
of Faith and Practice"*

THE CONCERNED PRESBYTERIAN

*Dedicated to the Formation of a Continuing Church
True to God's Word and Loyal to Historic
Presbyterian Doctrine and Polity*

BULLETIN No. 25

NOVEMBER, 1972

Constitutional Grounds for Withdrawal

CHAPTER II of the Preface to the Book of Church Order defines the Constitution as follows:

"The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States consists of its doctrinal symbols, embraced in the Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, together with the Book of Church Order, which comprises the Form of Government, the Rules of Discipline, and the Directory of Worship."

Any pronouncement made or action taken by courts of the Church which violates the rules set forth or contradicts the doctrinal positions upheld in any of these documents violates the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church U.S..

In April, 1966, two Savannah, Ga., churches renounced the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church U.S. and withdrew from the denomination. When an Administrative Commission appointed by Savannah Presbytery threatened to remove the minister and ruling elders the churches obtained an injunction to prevent the presbytery's commission from taking over the churches. The Superior Court of Chatham County held that the two churches had a right to withdraw and the Georgia Supreme Court upheld this verdict. After two appeals to the Supreme Court of the United States the case was decided in favor of the Savannah churches. The congregations retained their properties.

It is believed that the deciding factor in the Savannah case was their showing that the Presbyterian Church U.S. had violated its Constitution when the General Assembly approved civil disobedience.

Since this landmark decision there have been so many additional instances where boards and agencies, presbyteries and the General Assembly have violated the Constitution of the Church that it hardly seems possible that any court of equity would rule that a church does not have a legal and constitutional right to withdraw and retain its property.

Here are some of the more flagrant violations:

1. The 1968 General Assembly violated the Constitution of the Church when it adopted the new chapter 32 permitting presbyteries to form union presbyteries with presbyteries of other Reformed bodies and sent this chapter down to the presbyteries *for approval by a simple majority vote*. The Assembly's own Permanent Judicial Commission (appointed by the liberals in control) had advised the Assembly that a 3/4ths vote of the presbyteries was required to make the action "strictly constitutional."

2. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church U.S. requires that ministers seeking ordination or installation in a presbytery vow that they "sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms

of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures." There have been numerous instances where ministers who refused to affirm this belief in cardinal doctrines of the Presbyterian Church U.S. were accepted by presbyteries. To cite two examples:

a. **When the Rev. Hardin W. King was being examined by Kanawha Presbytery in 1963 he was asked to state unequivocally that he accepted the Virgin Birth in a physical sense. He refused to do so but the presbytery approved his examination by a voice vote.**

b. **On April 14, 1970, Kanawha Presbytery examined a candidate — John McNeel — who stated that he did not believe in the Virgin Birth or Christ's resurrection. The presbytery voted about 2 to 1 to accept him.**

3. A number of presbyteries have refused to allow
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Vanguard Presbytery

ON September 7th, 16 persons representing 10 churches which have already withdrawn or were planning to sever their connection with the Presbyterian Church U.S. met at Eastern Heights Presbyterian Church in Savannah, Georgia.

In a unanimous vote they adopted this resolution:

WHEREAS, We, the undersigned have met together to study the situation in the Church of Jesus Christ, and

WHEREAS, We are agreed that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and

WHEREAS, We are agreed that the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms set forth the system of Doctrine declared in the Scriptures, and

WHEREAS, The Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (1934 edition) sets forth a reasonable and practical formulary for church organization, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED,

1. That we the undersigned do covenant together to form an Association to be known as VANGUARD PRESBYTERY, INC., a provisional presbytery for Southern Presbyterian and Reformed Churches uniting, and

2. That this Association shall have as its pur-
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Withdrawal Grounds . . .

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churches to call ministers who are known to be conservative in their theology. The Book of Church Order (Chapter 27-5) requires presbyteries to examine ministers on their Christian experience, their views on theology, the Sacraments and the Government of the Church. The Book of Church Order does not authorize presbyteries to reject ministers because they have signed the Declaration of Commitment and are members of Presbyterian Churchmen United, because they are sympathetic to the goals of Concerned Presbyterians, Inc. and are opposed to union with the United Presbyterian Church, or because they are graduates of Reformed Theological Seminary. Presbyteries which have rejected ministers for these reasons have violated the Constitution of our Church.

4. The Book of Church Order (Chap. 1-3) says, "The sole functions of the Church are to proclaim, to administer and to enforce the law of Christ revealed in Scripture." Our Westminster Confession of Faith (Chap. XXXIII-4) says, "Synods and councils are to handle or conclude nothing but that which is ecclesiastical; and *are not to intermeddle with civil affairs* which concern the commonwealth unless by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary."

Scores of violations of this section of the Constitution could be cited. Here are just a few:

In 1968 the chief executives of all four program boards called on the Church to assist Poor People's Campaign March on Washington. Orange Presbytery held a mass rally in support of the marches.

In 1968 the Board of National Ministries sent \$5,000. to aid striking garbage collectors in Memphis, Tennessee.

In 1968 the Board of World Missions endorsed Project Equality—a "boycott" movement against American businesses. The Board of World Missions' Executive Secretary became vice president of Project Equality for Tennessee.

In 1969 the Board of Christian Education approved participation of staff members in marches and demonstrations in support of striking hospital workers in Charleston, S.C..

The Moderator of our 1970 Assembly and other radical leaders helped to organize the "Set the Date Now" to get the United States out of Vietnam by the end of 1971. They went to Paris to consult with the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese. The Board of Christian Education contributed \$500. to help set up the "Set the Date Now" lobbying office in Washington.

In 1971 the Office of Church and Society distributed materials to encourage and to help young

people to evade the draft.

In the spring of 1972 the Board of Christian Education contributed \$1,500. to Gov. Askew's fund to defeat the Florida anti-busing amendment.

These and scores of similar actions by boards and agencies, presbyteries and General Assemblies violate the provision in the Constitution which forbids the Church to "intermeddle in civil affairs."

5. The Rules of Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (101-3) require that "every court should show its constant concern that the conduct of members, officers, churches and courts under its care be in accordance with the laws of Christ." Paragraph 102-1 says, "An offense, the proper subject of judicial process, is anything in the principles and practice of a church member professing faith in Christ which is contrary to the Word of God, as understood through Holy Scripture and interpreted in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. *The Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms . . . are accepted by the Presbyterian Church in the United States as standard expositions of the teachings of Scripture in relation to both faith and practice.*"

In 1972 there have been very flagrant cases in which presbyteries have refused to discipline erring ministers.

a. **Guyandotte Presbytery has taken no action to discipline the Rev. G. Duane Smith — minister of the Sattes Presbyterian Church, Nitro, W. Va. — who in July, 1972, reportedly officiated at the "wedding" of two homosexuals — both men — at a church in Washington, D. C.**

b. **Mecklenburg Presbytery has taken no action to discipline the Rev. David E. Wilkinson of Charlotte who stated on the floor of our 1972 General Assembly that he could not accept the "contention" that without faith in Jesus Christ men are lost. He said, "Maybe the Assembly will want to defrock me here and now because I cannot buy that idea."**

The Rev. Mr. Wilkinson's statement contradicts the clear teaching of our Lord Who said: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36).

It contradicts our Confession of Faith which states: "but the wicked who know not God and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ shall be cast into eternal torments and punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." (Chapter XXXV-2).

It contradicts the answer to question 29 of the Larger Catechism which states: "The punishments of sin in the world to come are everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in hell-fire forever."

c. **On May 14, 1972, the "Louisville Courier Journal" reported that Terrence H. Davis had filed with the Secretary of State as an Elector for the Communist Party. Davis is minister of Grace-Hope Presbyterian Church, Louisville. On May 22, Louisville Presbytery-Union instructed its Department of Ministerial Personnel to consult with Davis and report back to presbytery. On September 26 the presbytery voted not to reprimand Davis. Presbytery by a vote of 62 to 47 refused even to "express its regrets to its churches" that Davis registered as an Elector for the Communist Party and refused even to state that the pres-**

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of

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bytery disapproved of his registering.

Many other cases could be cited. By their failure to censure or to defrock ministers who have openly violated their ordination vows, presbyteries have violated the Constitution of the Church (Rules of Discipline 101-3). By their failure to require presbyteries to obey the rules and censure erring ministers, our General Assemblies have violated the Constitution.

The Supreme Court of the United States has held that civil courts have no authority to decide cases involving church doctrine. If those in control resort to legal action to try to keep conservative congregations from withdrawing from the denomination with their properties, it will be the constitutional violations, not the doctrinal ones which will decide the issue. In our opinion, the violations listed in this article provide ample justification and legal and constitutional grounds for the withdrawal of any congregation from the Presbyterian Church U.S..

The Steering Committee for the Continuing Presbyterian Church is organizing Legal Committees composed of competent judges and attorneys familiar with the laws of their respective states to guide churches as they prepare for withdrawal and to defend them if our brethren elect to bring suit in the civil courts. Sessions, congregations and presbyteries that need help should contact W. J. (Jack) Williamson, Box 467, Greenville, Alabama 36037, Secretary, Concerned Presbyterians, Inc.

Vanguard . . .

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pose to perpetuate the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as it was proclaimed in the Southern Presbyterian Church prior to the year 1938.

Read at the meeting was a letter which the Rev. Arnie Maves, a Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship evangelist, wrote to the Rev. Todd Allen who convened the meeting:

" . . . This is to confirm our telephone conversation on Monday evening concerning the upcoming meeting in Savannah, Georgia. I want to say on paper what I said on the phone, that I stand ready and willing to become a part of the Vanguard Presbytery which hopefully will be formed very soon. I want to be counted as one of the charter members of that Presbytery as soon as it is officially formed.

"I am presently a member of Cherokee Presbytery of the P.C.U.S. and have never changed in my beliefs as first stated some years ago upon my ordination. I still believe the Bible to be the Word of God written, the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and I still adhere to the Westminster Confession with the Shorter and Larger Catechisms as the best interpretation of the Scriptures that I know.

"I feel that my denomination has changed and left me. I have not changed my views . . . nor my vows. Therefore, I can no longer hold to nor adhere to what the PCUS is now doing. I am in disagreement with them in most points . . . although I love them and do pray for them.

"Therefore, as you gentlemen come to do an historic work . . . I simply want to say, I am with you . . . and I want to become a part of this continuing Presbyterian work called Vanguard Presbytery. I don't know who chose that name . . . but it's a good one. Praise the Lord."

Vanguard Presbytery was formally organized at a meeting held in Tabb Street Presbyterian Church, Petersburg, Va., on November 14, 1972. It is reported

that they plan to adopt the Confession of Faith and Book of Church Order which were in effect in 1933 (before the liberals started tampering with them) except for one very significant change: i. e., the Book of Church Order will provide explicitly that the local congregation has *sole* ownership and control of its property.

The Rev. Todd Allen, who was elected Moderator of Vanguard Presbytery, is now serving on the Steering Committee for the Continuing Church. Chester B. Hall whose church, First Presbyterian Church of Louisville, Ky., renounced the jurisdiction of Louisville-Union Presbytery earlier this year, was elected Clerk and Treasurer.

Personal Evangelism TRAINING COURSES

DURING the last two years Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., has underwritten 50% of the cost of lay training courses in Personal Evangelism conducted by the Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship. These courses, led by a dedicated layman, Henry S. Thigpen, have proved a blessing to the many churches which have sponsored them.

The following report on the course held in Westminster Presbyterian Church, Roanoke, Va., April 12-16, 1972, was included in the September, 1972, issue of COME, published by P.E.F.:

"Approximately 75 persons attended on Wednesday for the opening session. A fine group of six teams composed of about three persons each followed the Master's command to 'Go' on Friday evening.

"Fruits of the harvest were evident as the first ten Gospel presentations were made in the community. One young man made a profession of faith and three others recognized their need but postponed the encounter with Christ until 'they felt right' or 'could give up something.' Two high school students made first-time commitments and the team leader was 'flabbergasted' at the ease in which the Gospel was received. A father yielded his life to Christ in the presence of his son and his daughter and there was rejoicing in that family.

"Some of the teams visited in situations where they were able to share Christ with those who were already believers. This reminds us anew that personal evangelism not only introduces the lost to the Saviour but it encourages the Christian visited to be more yielded to Him. Some situations made it possible to share information just learned so that Christians visited were strengthened in their faith.

"All of the above resulted from some 25 visits where the Gospel was presented about 15 times. How would you like for your church to have the average of one commitment for each scheduled visitation period as God granted in this brief weekend?

"Reverend Charles McNutt skillfully prepared the prospect cards to assist in efficient visitation. This gave evidence of his compassion for the needs of his community and his tireless efforts to be the best shepherd possible for the flock at Westminster Church."

Crucial Issues

IN a recently taped message, Kenneth S. Keyes, president of Concerned Presbyterians, Inc. provides an overall incisive review of *Why a Continuing Church Is a Must for Faithful Presbyterians*. Recorded at 3¾ speed, the tape is available to members free on loan up to two months; for non-members its price is \$5. As the supply is limited, orders will be filled according to date of receipt.

"Jesus — a Nobody"

ONE of the most radical church publications which has come to the attention of the editors of *The Concerned Presbyterian* is a tabloid newspaper self-described "for youth and adult planners and leaders." It is planned by the youth staff of the United Church of Christ "in cooperation with the youth staffs of The Disciples of Christ, The Episcopal Church, The Reformed Church in America, the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the United Presbyterian Church (USA) . . . to give stimulation, vision and support for the new ministry." The publication is titled *Focus*.

The lead article in *Focus*' November, 1970, issue, written by a Methodist minister, defended and supported the use of drugs. The March, 1971, issue featured an article entitled "How to Form an Underground High School Newspaper."

The front page article in the March, 1972, issue was entitled "The Gospel According to St. Irving," written by a high school senior. Here are five chapters quoted verbatim from this article:

Chapter 1

And it came to pass in those days that a child was born unto Mary in a small stable in the town of Bethlehem. And the child was named Jesus. And the father of the child was a carpenter named Joseph, who was poor and could not afford proper lodging. And the father was a nobody. And the mother was a nobody. And the child, named Jesus, was a nobody. And it came to pass that they took the child to the temple, as was the custom, and in the temple was one Simeon. And this man was just and devout, waiting for the coming of the Savior, for it was revealed to him that he should not die until this thing should come to pass. And when the parents of the child brought him to the temple, this Simeon held the child in his arms and sighed sadly that such a child should be brought forth into a world with so little, because the child was a nobody. And this man Simeon lived for many years afterward, still waiting for the Savior, until he died in sad despair. So it goes.

Chapter 3

And it came to pass that the years turned by and the child grew. And when he had reached the age of thirty there was a marriage in Cana, and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus was there also with her. And after a while there was no more wine to drink. And the mother of Jesus said unto him: They have no more wine to drink. And Jesus said to her: Woman, what am I to do about it? And his mother told the servants: Do whatever he tells you. There were there six waterjars, and Jesus said unto them: Fill the waterjars and bring them unto me. And this was done, and when they were before him Jesus said: Fetch the head steward and tell him to taste it. And when the head steward had tasted it, and knew not where it had come from, he called the bridegroom and said to him: What manner of trickery is this, that you would offer water for wine? And Jesus spoke unto his mother saying: Have I not told you Woman, who am I to be working miracles.

Chapter 5

And three years passed. And Jesus went out into the land, and cried to the people: Listen my

people, I cannot offer you miracles. I can only offer you love, for what little worth that is. And if you will only come with me, we will put our love together, and the miracles will come. And the scribes and the Pharisees said: Who is this Jesus? And they answered: A nobody. And they said: Let the people have their fun, for they will see what comes from such rabble-rousers who cry: I have love, love, love. And someone asked Jesus the nobody: What can you do with your love? And he answered: Nothing. And therefore they asked him: Why then? And he answered: Why not? And the scribes and the Pharisees said: Look at us, we have built great cities from work, and not from love. And Jesus said unto them: Build your great cities. With both.

Chapter 6

And Jesus' reputation grew. And he began to draw an audience. And there were those, having heard great things of him, who began to believe that he would work miracles. And they brought him their sick and said: Cure them. And Jesus said: I cannot. I am a nobody. And others brought him their dead and said: Bring them back to life. And he said: I cannot, I am a nobody. And the dead remained dead. So it goes. And these same people said: He is a nobody. And there were others who said: Yes, he is a nobody. And so are we. But together we are a somebody. And these same people when they had sick, brought them to the others and said: Help us with our sick. And they all helped them with their sick. And some of

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Financing the Continuing Church

ON August 24th Concerned Presbyterians, Inc. received its first unsolicited contribution — a check for \$5,000 — earmarked for the Continuing Presbyterian Church. The money was invested in a Certificate of Deposit so that it will be earning interest until it will be needed to provide operating capital for the Church which will be formed soon.

In September another Concerned Presbyterians member transferred a \$50,000 Certificate of Deposit to Concerned Presbyterians, Inc. designated for the same purpose.

Sessions of conservative churches will soon be preparing their 1973 budgets. The Sessions of those hundreds of churches which are opposed to union with the United Presbyterian Church and which prefer to be a part of the Continuing Presbyterian Church may want to give serious consideration to eliminating General Assembly benevolence causes from their 1973 budgets, allocating funds previously given to support PCUS denominational causes to the Undergirding Fund for the Continuing Church.

Individual Presbyterians whom the Lord has blessed with more material wealth than they can possibly spend on themselves may want to consider making substantial gifts this year to provide operating capital for the Continuing Church which will become a reality at an early date.

Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., Presbyterian Churchmen United, Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship and the Presbyterian Journal Foundation will be glad to receive gifts of cash, securities or real estate to be held by them in trust for the undergirding of the Continuing Church. All such gifts will be tax deductible.

STEERING COMMITTEE FOR A CONTINUING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

True to the Bible, the Reformed Faith and Obedient to the Great Commission

How the Steering Committee Came To Be

WHEN the presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in the United States voted down union with the more liberal Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in 1954, those who were determined to have union at any cost began working to effect union by varied, and sometimes unconstitutional, means.

These radical ecumenists greatly deflected the teachings of the four seminaries of the denomination away from commitment to the Bible as the verbally inspired Word of God and from the defense of the Westminster Standards of our church. Mostly by a faulty interpretation of the seventeenth chapter of John, young ministers were taught organic union of church organizations as a great Christian ideal and that the changing of the social and political order is the mission of the church. The radical ecumenists by 1960 had taken control of most of the church and were continuing a steady, well-planned drive towards a "watered down" theology and radical church union as expressed in the Constitution on Church Union (a kind of American "super church").

There were, however, those within the denomination who still believed that the Bible was the Word of God, and in constitutional church government and the great Reformed doctrines as set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith. The Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Journal has constantly stood for the faith "once delivered unto the saints."

About sixteen years ago ministers and lay people, recognizing that the denomination had forsaken its mission in evangelism, organized the Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship. Having more than one dozen evangelists, PEF has constantly furthered the spiritual mission of the church.

Christian laymen, concerned because the church had deviated from the faith, organized Concerned Presbyterians approximately seven years ago. This great lay organization is dedicated to the formation of a continuing church true to God's Word and loyal to historic Presbyterian doctrine and polity.

Approximately four years ago, more than six hundred ministers signed a Declaration of Commitment pledging themselves to do whatever was necessary to maintain their Reformed faith. They were joined by the sessions of many churches. These ministers and church sessions organized themselves as Presbyterian Churchmen United.

Thus, over a period of time God raised up a witness for His Word and the Reformed Faith in these four conservative groups.

Since they had the same beliefs and goals, it was quite natural for these four groups to join hands in coalition. They organized, in 1971, a Steering Committee for a Continuing Presbyterian Church. The Steering Committee consists of three representatives from each of the member organizations.

Recognizing that the radical ecumenists have divided the church and are determined to liquidate the Presbyterian Church U.S., the Steering Committee is determined with God's help to continue in America a

Presbyterian Church faithful to Scripture and the Reformed Faith and obedient to the Great Commission.

Any ministers or laymen who feel in their hearts a like dedication are invited to contact the Office of the Administrator, Post Office Drawer 1024, Perry, Georgia 31069.

The Mission of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee for a Continuing Presbyterian Church believes that God has given it a specific mission. This mission is to be the instrument of God in calling together all individual believers and judicatories that God wishes to be a part of a continuing Presbyterian Church. We recognize the challenge to serve Christ in and beyond a denomination that has been grievously divided by the radical ecumenists.

The Committee has no ecclesiastical authority, but a deep sense of interest and pastoral concern for the individuals and groups who are steadfast in their allegiance to the Presbyterian faith and order, and who would continue a Presbyterian Church faithful to the Scriptures and the Reformed Faith and obedient to the Great Commission. The position of the Steering Committee with such individuals and groups is that of advisor and friend.

We recognize that those who have fellowship and communication with us vary in their motivation, situations, and concerns. It is quite natural, therefore, that the Holy Spirit will move these people to speak and act at different times. So it is to be expected that the emerging Continuing Church may come to fruition over a considerable period of time. Some have already been moved by their zeal for the purity of the church and against apostasy in the present denomination. Some are gradually coming to realize that they cannot bear faithful witness for Christ as a part of an increasingly apostate denomination. Some are not willing to have their churches and judicatories restructured and their votes gerrymandered. Some cannot tolerate being merged with non-Reformed bodies, and those steadfast to the Westminster Standards cannot accept the proposed New Confession.

God, the Holy Spirit, works when and where He will and Christian people are moved to vote and act according to their conscientious understanding of the Scriptures. So it is that from various motivations and at sundry times and places over the next many months those who are dedicated to a continuing Presbyterian Church will come forth and at God's appointed time will be united in a truly Reformed and Evangelical fellowship. To all of these believers, whenever they act in the schedule of events, the Steering Committee extends its fellowship, counsel and love.

Seeing things from this perspective, we have continually declined to set dates or mark particular times for the rebirth of the Continuing Church. Like the Kingdom of God, it has come, is coming now, and will come in the future.

“Jesus — Nobody”

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the sick got better. And some of the sick died. So it goes. And these same people, when they had died, went to the others and said: Help us to bury our dead. And they helped them to bury their dead, and cried with them. And when they asked Jesus who he was, he replied: I am a nobody. And he was.

Chapter 9

And it came to pass that the Passover came on. And Jesus went into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. He could not afford a horse. And the twelve went with him also. And they went into a house and there they had supper. And when they were at supper, Jesus spoke to them saying: I have told you that I am a nobody, and verily you see that I am. The only thing that I have to give you is my love. And that is nothing. And the only thing you have to give me is love. And that is nothing. But somehow, together they are something. Soon I shall leave you. The world has little patience with nobodies. And when I leave you, do not try to remember me. Only, try to love. And through your love, try to work. And with your work try to build, that nobodies can all be somebodies some day.

That the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church U.S. should sponsor the publication of this blasphemous article denying the deity of and ridiculing our Lord clearly shows the depths of degradation to which this important program board has sunk. When our 112th General Assembly refused to order this Board to withdraw its sponsorship of this tabloid it revealed that the officialdom of our once great Church has indeed reached a new low.

A copy of the March, 1972, issue containing this article can be obtained by sending 25¢ in coin to Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., 100 No. Biscayne Boulevard, Miami, Florida 33132. For a one-year subscription, \$1.25 should be sent to Central Distribution Service Balcony, 1505 Race Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102.

This tabloid should help to convince uninformed Ruling Elders and other members of your congregation that the time has come to protect our young people from a Church controlled by men and women who apparently are attempting to undermine the faith and morals of our children and our grandchildren.

More About Church Property

ONE of the latest and well researched reports on church property is a part of the Journal Day message by Attorney W. Jack Williamson, Secretary of Concerned Presbyterians, Inc. Copies though selling for \$1.50 per dozen are available to sessions and church groups free if a request is sent to Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., 100 No. Biscayne Blvd., Miami, Florida 33132.

Tapes and Cassettes

W. J. (JACK) WILLIAMSON'S excellent address at Journal Day, 1972, "Where We Go From Here" and the Rev. Donald B. Patterson's fine statement following Williamson's message have been combined in a tape that could well be played to sessions, adult classes or congregations. The tape can be obtained for \$2. from

Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., 100 No. Biscayne Blvd., Miami, Florida 33132.

Williamson's talk is also available in cassette form for \$1.50.

The Man God Did Not Use

By **THE REV. WILLIAM E. HILL, JR.**
Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship
Hopewell, Va.

A UPUSA minister said to me one day just after the '67 Confession had been adopted, "I don't like it, but I can live with it." Four thousand years ago in Sodom, a good man by the name of Lot also said to himself, "I don't like what goes on here, but I can live with it." The Bible tells us that "Lot vexed his righteous soul" over the sins of Sodom. But why would Lot want to live with it when he could just as easily be elsewhere and not have to "vex his righteous soul" with the sins of his neighbors. No doubt, Lot said to himself, "Sodom is a wicked city—Sodom is an unbelieving city—perhaps I can do something to help these people of Sodom. Perhaps I can witness to them! Maybe I can change Sodom."

Mixed Motives

Actually, however, Lot's real reasons for being in Sodom were different from these which he gave to himself. Lot was in Sodom in order to make a living. He wanted to make a good living and he saw that he could do it in Sodom. That's the reason he went there and that is the reason he stayed.

Lot's purpose in being in Sodom, also, was to enjoy the good things of civilization. He didn't like being separated from them. He had left Ur of the Chaldees with his Uncle Abraham when he was a young man. He missed all of the conveniences and pleasures of civilization. He had seen possibilities in being with his Uncle Abraham and had prospered out in the wide open spaces. But still he craved the pleasures, benefits and social contacts of civilization.

Lot was in Sodom, too, because he wanted not only a living, but wealth. He was in Sodom and he was going to have his part of it. Just making a living wasn't satisfying to him. He wanted to make a killing. He knew that Sodom was the place to do it.

In the fourth place, Lot went to Sodom because he wanted to rise on the ladder of success, to become prominent, to become well-known, to become a leader. This he could not do out in the wide open spaces. His Uncle Abraham delighted more in communion with God than in attaining success and becoming powerful. Not Lot. It was all right to communicate with God and in wicked Sodom he could do that, he said to himself. Why not enjoy communion with God here since God was anywhere and you could worship as well in the atmosphere of Sodom as out in the wide open spaces. So "Lot chose Sodom." Though the sins of his neighbors vexed him greatly, he stuck with Sodom. He was the kind of man who said, "I don't like it, but I can live with it." In spite of the wickedness of his neighbors, he went on living with it.

Now this is something which every missionary has to do, but he is doing it for a different purpose. He is not doing it to make a living. He is not doing it to make a killing. He is not doing it to enjoy the benefits of civilization, nor to rise high on the ladder of success. He is doing it to bring Christ to people who are in

darkness, to obey his Lord's command. So he, too, has to "Vex his righteous soul" with the wickedness around him. His main business is, however, to replace that wickedness with righteousness rather than to make money or to make a success out of it for himself.

A true Christian today works out in the world, has to face a degree of the same thing that Lot had to face. Oftentimes his righteous soul is vexed by things that are done on the job and among his neighbors. But if he is a dedicated Christian, he is not there to make a living, not there to make a killing, not there to find success, not there to get the gadgets and comforts of life. A true, witnessing Christian seeks to bring Christ to others wherever he is and to turn wickedness into righteousness wherever he goes. He is there because he feels God has placed him there to do a job. Lot had no such motive, at least judging from all the indications that are given to us in Scripture. While he maintained his integrity, did not join in with the wickedness of his neighbors and was very much upset by what they did, yet his witness to them, if there was any, was not effective because they knew that his main reasons for being in Sodom were the same reasons that they had for being in Sodom. So they were not impressed by his righteousness or his religion.

"Lot Lingered"

There came a time when Lot had to leave Sodom, but he did not leave very willingly, only reluctantly. His wife left more reluctantly. When Lot left Sodom, she would not look toward the Lord. She looked toward Sodom, just as Lot had led her to do in his original decision. And though she got out of Sodom, she perished with Sodom because her heart was there. Lot's children, also, most of them, perished in Sodom where they had, no doubt, learned the wickedness of the Sodomites and had participated fully in the wicked life of that wicked

city. They had no idea of leaving. Even when they had a chance, most of them scoffed at it, with the exception of the two daughters, who, though they left, had become so thoroughly brainwashed in the wickedness of Sodom that they still acted like Sodomites.

Such is the price that a man pays when he sets his heart on the wrong things, even when he sets his heart on ANYTHING except the righteousness of God.

When a man finds himself in the midst of a wicked, unbelieving atmosphere, sometimes God comes to him and says, "The time has come for you to leave. This thing has gotten too rotten. You no longer have a mission here." "But," a man says, "my investments are here, my home is here, my friends are here." God says, "Go." The attachments, however, blind him, and his roots run too deep, so he rationalizes. He still clings to the delusion that he can do some good there. Even though God says "Go," he hesitates.

Increasingly, today, Christians and particularly ministers, are faced with such a crisis. The organized church is becoming more and more corrupt. In many of our major denominations much of the leadership is in the hands of unbelievers. Lies of Satan are being propagated from pulpits. They are being taught in the colleges and seminaries. People of God are being brainwashed with the propaganda of Satan. There comes a time when God is saying to a man, "Get out!" Sometimes the man's hesitancy arises not out of concern for his witness within, but out of minor concerns such as, how can I get along in my old age without my annuity. How will I get along in a strange denomination? Suppose I can't get a church? All the prestige I have built up in my ministry will be lost. Some of my best friends will turn against me, I'll be called a fool, a fanatic. Finally, he reasons, maybe after all the situation is not hopeless.

continued on back cover

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Maybe Sodom will change. Maybe things will be better a little later. Is this really the right time to be making a move? So he hesitates. As these things loom a little too largely in his thinking, like Lot, he "lingers!"

It is hard to make a break. It was hard for Abraham to pick up and leave Ur of the Chaldees with all of the comforts and security that he enjoyed there to go out "not knowing where he went." It was hard for Saul of Tarsus to leave the comforts, prestige and power of his position as a Jewish Rabbi, launch out in a despised sect, to be persecuted from city to city, to suffer all kinds of indignities and slander, to be deserted by his friends. God said "Go," and he went.

Perhaps Lot might have even reasoned, "I'll stick here until they kick me out. If they kick me out, then I'll have to go. Until then, I'll stay." So he stayed on and "vexed his righteous soul," made his own witness ineffective and ruined his family. A man's family does not come first, but a man ought to consider what happens to his family if he stays where he is. Lot vexed his soul, but he did nothing about it. Many good men will sit by and say, "I don't like it but I can live with it. It is not for us to judge. At least we can stay." It just could be, such men will wake up one day to realize the price they have paid, in their own families and the sheep God has given them to tend, to say nothing of the little lambs coming on, is too great.

Future Generations at Stake

When we say, "I don't like it, but I can live with it," and we stay in a church that is blaspheming the name of God and continually mouthing the talk of Satan, we may be doing irreparable damage to our own children, our own congregations and to their children. The great danger is that we get increasingly accustomed to unbelief and sin until it no longer stirs our righteous indignation. Something dead smells and the longer it

stays, the worse it smells. But if you stay around it long enough, you can get to the place where you don't smell it at all. We'll "deplere." We'll "regret." We'll say we don't like it, but still we stick with it. This is what Lot did.

Compare for a moment the situation of Abraham and the situation of Lot. Abraham chose communion with God. Lot chose money, prestige, power, the comforts of civilization and approval. Abraham stayed in fellowship with God. The blessing of God went down from generation to generation to his descendants to bless the whole world. Lot, indeed, "vexed his righteous soul," but he stayed with Sodom. And in the end, his household was lost in shame and ignominy. Most perished, two girls lived to curse the world with their bastard seed.

Do we not today need to take solemn warning from this tragic example of a good man who lived in the midst of wickedness because it was profitable to him, kidding himself into thinking he was doing some good? He didn't even change ten souls in Sodom! There is a lot of loose talk about going out into the world and being "one of them." This needs to be qualified! Lot tried it and lost his family without winning even ten men in Sodom!

Let us beware that in this day when Sodom is all about us, when Sodom is infiltrating the church, when Sodom is even being brought into the church by church leaders, when Sodom has the control of many church organizations and even whole denominations, we dare not make Lot's mistake of saying, "I don't like it, but I can live with it." Let every minister, every dedicated Christian face in his or her own heart the question, "Why am I where I am? Am I bearing effective witness for Jesus Christ or am I here for some other reason or purpose? Is my Christian witness being muted by my compromise in *being where I am?*"

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