



*"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. 27

JULY, 1973

## *Law and Procedure* or **How and Why in 1973**

Message delivered by W. J. (JACK) WILLIAMSON,  
Secretary, Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., at  
Convocation of Sessions held in Atlanta,  
May 18-19, 1973

THE *Law* is the law of love; and the *Procedure* is to the rescue of the perishing. As our Lord Jesus walked the streets of Jerusalem on his way to Golgotha to the greatest demonstration of that law and to enable that procedure, He turned to those following and said:

**"For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry." (Luke 23:31)**

When God thus saw Jesus in the sinner's place, He did not spare Him; and where He finds the unregenerate without Christ, He will not spare them. Yet it is not His will that any should perish. We are called to declare this law of love and to proceed to rescue those perishing: "for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. 10:13)

This *Law* and this *Procedure* is foolishness to an unbelieving world; but it is the commission and the compulsion of these who have been truly reborn into the true church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here is the nature and mission of that church.

Over 25 years ago a group of men from *The Presbyterian Journal* met at the Biltmore Hotel in Atlanta. They came to preserve a Presbyterian Church in America true to that nature and that mission. We gather again in Atlanta today, a product of their original initiative. Most of us on this program are novices in this battle compared to those veteran defenders of the faith. We were recruited by them, trained by them, directed by them, and sent out to the battlefield by them. Although they may not all agree with us now as to best course for the immediate future, we *all* are committed to these same basic principles as to the nature and mission of the Church. We honor and respect these men; and we give thanks to Almighty God for their gallant faithfulness. They have led us to this place and this hour. Praise God for each of them.

As this Convocation of Sessions comes to consider the possible procedure of forming a new ecclesiastical entity in 1973, the question is often and properly asked, "Why 1973?" Or as one has put it, "If I could work in the PCUS in 1972, why must I not continue to do so in 1973, when there is no development radically changing the picture of

things?" Why '73, instead of '70, '72, '74 or '80? Let us address ourselves to this issue of procedure. In a word, my reasoning is that my vows of ordination as a Ruling Elder, as I understand them, require me to separate from my beloved church. It is with genuine sadness, many tears, and much soul-searching that I have come to thus see my duty before my God. On ordination, I promised to study the peace, unity, edification and purity of the Church. For a decade now I have diligently sought to fulfill this vow at various levels in our Church. I have reluctantly concluded that I

**(a) Can find little PEACE in a structure that in its official acts and doings is constantly and consistently contradicting my faith.**

**(b) Can find little UNITY in a structure that advocates a pluralism and diversity that tolerates unbelief—for me "two cannot walk together less they be agreed."**

**(c) Can find little EDIFICATION in a structure that continues to embarrass me in its official acts and doings and forces me to spend most of my time in negative reaction and apology.**

**(d) Can find little hope for PURITY in a structure that permits unbelief to run rampant and has lost its will and ability to discipline.**

Thus as I see my duty, it is not that I wish to go but that I must. Others may see their duty differently. We must respect their views as "God alone is Lord of the conscience;" and we ask them to respect ours. But, why 1973?

I believe I can best answer this question by summarizing the history of this movement in the past decade. It was at this point in time that some of us were recruited from our comfortable positions in our local churches to enter the battle on a broader scale in Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly. At this time, these aforesaid gallant warriors had won a great victory in the Union fight of the mid-50s. But they had been unable to stem the tide of modernism, liberalism, and radical ecumenism in our Church. The situation continued to get worse rather

than better; and they realized it. The Church had already violated its faith and order on several constitutional issues; but they hoped we could return the Church to her former faith and order through a concerted effort by Ruling and Teaching Elders. This we undertook to do; but after about 5 years of much intensive effort, it became obvious to us that humanly speaking it would be impossible to recapture our church. Instead of being able to stop the trends, they seemed to get worse as the liberals intensified their efforts in reaction to our opposition. During this period many more serious constitutional violations of our faith and order were officially adopted and practiced by our Church. (Dr. Morton Smith of Reformed Theological Seminary has documented these in his book "How Is thy Gold Become Dim," now on the press.) Suffice it to say that it became clear that the historic witness of our beloved Church was gradually being liquidated; and for those who felt a duty to preserve it, division became the only answer. From that point on the issue of division has been settled; and the only issue was timing and procedure. It was then we sought a method of peaceful realignment hoping that men of good will would prevail. Not the only but the best method for such peaceful realignment seemed to be an acceptable escape clause in the Plan for Union with the UPCUSA. Our liberal friends promised us this method; and we accepted their promises in good faith. We chose and recommended this method as the best constitutional procedure for such a division. We warned that unreasonable delays would be taken as a breach of good faith. We made preparation for the division we humanly saw as inevitable. But, in February, 1973, our liberal opposition in the PCUS succeeded in closing this door for peaceful realignment by discarding the Plan of Union and delaying its presentation for vote indefinitely. Even though strenuously requested by me as the conservative representative thereon, this Union Committee refused to commit itself to any "escape" clause. Thus this best method for constitutional division became no longer a viable possibility in the foreseeable future. The abandonment of this method by the liberals was an act of pure ecclesiastical political expediency. They broke faith with us in 1973 and have forced us to move to an alternative procedure. **One of their frank leaders said to me in Dallas, "We will force you conservatives to do what you must and after you have done it we will regroup and reevaluate our position; and in the meantime we will push for more union Presbyteries and more de facto union at the administrative level of the Boards and Agencies; and after you have gone we will redraw the Presbytery lines so that we won't have any trouble passing any plan we want. It may take 10 years but we can wait."**

This is what has happened; and this is why 1973. We have never contended that the use of the "escape" clause in the Plan of Union was the *only* constitutional issue for division or *only* constitutional method for realignment. We have always felt and maintained that many constitutional breaches exist that justify division; but we thought the "escape" clause was the best method to accomplish it. We now feel that method has been taken away by the liberals for this decade, at least, and perhaps forever. This happened in 1973. We have always maintained that we who agree in *principle* should move together. We are convinced that if we wait longer, major fragmentation will occur. In order to maintain the significant corporate witness of a Church loyal to Scripture and the Reformed Faith, we must move now in 1973. Perhaps it is important for some of you that we document this historical progression. Let me summarize my statements published in *The Presbyterian Journal* as documented proof of the truth and consistency of our position.

1. Almost a decade ago, we began by trying to return our beloved Church to its primary mission. In 1965 we wrote:

**"To my mind the Church being the Bride of Christ has as her primary mission to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the salvation of the souls of sinners and thereafter to nurture them in the faith. But there seems to be designed a deliberate effort in the Church to change the attitude of the average church member toward this fundamental message and mission . . ."**

**"There is great danger that the Church will become just another social agency with tremendous potential for good community service but with only an incidental relationship to salvation of souls through faith in Jesus Christ . . ."**

**"It has been my observation that wherever and whenever the inspiration and authority of the Word Inscripturated is attacked, the person and work of the Word Incarnated is demeaned. The work of Jesus Christ in the world becomes equated with all the other noble causes laid before society. The zeal for the Gospel of Jesus Christ is lost and the temper of the times dictates the religious cause for the day . . ."**

**"Our principal effort should be toward the development of a constructive program of inspiration, information and instruction which the Holy Spirit may rightfully use to pour out a real spiritual revival in the pew . . ."**

2. But by time of the General Assembly in 1969 it was obvious that we would not be able so to return our Church. We wrote then that this Mobile Assembly with its change in our position on evolution, its unconstitutional enactment of the union presbyteries amendment, its authorization of a committee to draft a new Confession of Faith, its appointment of a Committee on Union with UPCUSA, and its endorsement of our continued participation in COCU made these facts clear:

**"It is capitulation not reconciliation they offer..."**  
**"They do not understand that we cannot and will not negotiate some things . . ."**

**"They are determined to force their program even at the cost of a split in the Church . . ."**

**"Their ecclesiastical, political machinery will be organized for this final hammer blow . . ."**

**"The result of all this will be to force a decision by each minister, each member, each congregation in our Church . . ."**

3. By 1970 a number of major constitutional violations had been enacted; and we were forced to look for the best method for peaceful realignment. We suggested such a unique method at the Memphis Assembly that year in the form of the creation of provisional bodies for those who wanted to remain in the Church for the time being and preserve their right to vote and yet be guaranteed the right to withdraw with their property. During the Assembly we were called into conference in the minister's study at this great Second Church in Memphis by the two co-chairmen of the union committee. They promised such a method of peaceful realignment through an acceptable escape clause in the plan for union. We agreed to wait, but wrote:

**"The scoffers of our day are the radical, determined ecumenists who have a timetable for the liquidation of the historic witness of the Presbyterian Church in the United States . . ."**

**"In my judgment, our timetable should be flexible because we are committed to a PRINCIPLE rather than to a STRUCTURE. We are committed to the preservation of a corporate witness to the truth as**

# Whom to Contact for Help

IF you need literature to inform members of your congregation regarding the issues, write to Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., 100 No. Biscayne Blvd., Miami, Florida 33132.

If you need someone to meet with your Session or speak to your congregation, write or phone Kenneth S. Keyes, Box 40, Highlands, N.C. 28741 (phone: (704) 526-2662); the Rev. Paul G. Settle, 3436 Wellington Rd., Montgomery, Alabama 36104 (phone: (205) 262-5126); or Dr. John E. Richards, Drawer 1024, Perry, Georgia 31069 (phone: (912) 987-3133).

If you need someone to counsel with your Session regarding the steps to be taken in separating, contact our Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., Field Director nearest you or one of our Synod Trustees. Here are their names, addresses and telephone numbers:

ALABAMA — Joseph B. Nalls, Rte. 4, Box 1059, Huntsville, Ala. 35803 (phone: (205) 881-3770).

APPALACHIA — (Abingdon, Holston, Asheville Presbyteries) — Robbins E. Wampler, Box 511, Bristol, Tenn. 37620 (phone: (615) 764-9627).

(Knoxville Presbytery) — Ben M. Powell, Jr., Rte. 2, Cove Road, Chickamauga, Ga. 30707 (phone: (404) 375-3270).

ARKANSAS, OKLAHOMA, MISSOURI, TEXAS — L. L. Langford, Apt. 126, 2000 Magnolia, Little Rock, Ark. 72202 (phone: (501) 663-2123).

FLORIDA — Judge W. Kenneth Barnes, Box 453, Dade City, Fla. 33525 (phone: (305) 567-5582).

GEORGIA — Warren R. Wilson, 160 Robin Hood Dr., Atlanta, Ga. 30309 (phone: (404) 876-3255).

KENTUCKY — Chester B. Hall, 100 E. Liberty St., Louisville, Ky. 40202 (phone: (502) 589-9121).

LOUISIANA — Sidney J. Crump, 501 E. Washington, Shreveport, La. 71104 (phone: (318) 861-1206).

MISSISSIPPI — H. S. Williford, Box 1183, Jackson, Miss. 39205 (phone: (601) 352-3857).

NORTH CAROLINA: (Orange, Albemarle, Fayetteville, Wilmington Presbyteries) — Willis H. Owens, RFD 3, Box 438, Sanford, N.C. 27330 (phone: (919) 775-3019).

(Mecklenburg, Kings Mountain, Concord, Winston-Salem Presbyteries) — Jasper H. Wilson, 852 Fairbanks Dr., Charlotte, N.C. 28210 (phone: (704) 523-5198).

SOUTH CAROLINA — John M. Barnes, Box 470, Rock Hill, S. C. 29730 (phone: (803) 327-9052).

TENNESSEE — W. C. Anderson, 920 No. 14 St., Nashville, Tenn. 37206 (phone: (615) 227-9111).

VIRGINIA (except Winchester Presbytery) — Capt. James H. Campbell, 1913 Lynn Cove Lane, Virginia Beach, Va. 23454 (phone: (703) 464-5877).

WEST VIRGINIA (and Winchester, Va., Presbytery) — Col. Reed H. Flow, Rte. 2, Shenandoah Retreat, Bluemont, Va. 22012 (phone: (703) 955-3242).

revealed in the holy Scriptures. This involves us in several possibilities:

"1. The possibility of revival within the present structure does exist . . .

"2. Peaceful realignment might be accomplished as the existing structure is divided among men of good will . . .

"3. Finally, it is always possible that a sufficient number of the issues proposed in the timetable of the radical ecumenists will be defeated and they will then leave us with our existing structure . . ."

4. After the 1971 Assembly, in evaluating our position a consensus was reached and published as follows: "We accept the apparent inevitability of division of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, a division caused by the program of the radical ecumenists, and agree to move *now* toward a continuing body of congregations and presbyteries loyal to Scripture and the Westminster Standards." But to implement this consensus we suggested guidelines dictated by Christian statesmanship, to-wit:

(1) We must move only as God's Holy Spirit moves us. "For it is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

(2) We must curb our human impatience and impetuosity and not take precipitous and premature action.

(3) We must move together.

(4) We must move with honor.

But in suggesting that we wait on the promised "escape clause" in the plan of union, we wrote:

"I am aware of the tactic of unreasonable delay. Those in control have said that a plan would be presented to the 1973 General Assemblies. I will accept the good faith of those who have so promised until they have proven otherwise. But all these considerations are mere speculations on the future. Only God can control that door. Until He closes it

or permits it to be closed through unreasonable delays, I believe Christian statesmanship requires us to wait, for when we move, we must move with honor.

"We must prepare for the move. We would still hope and pray that God would bring a great revival or give us victory in this present structure; but Christian statesmanship requires us to prepare for the alternative of a new structure . . ."

And so the Steering Committee was appointed to make such preparation.

5. By 1972 we had suggested a plan for a continuing Church. It was to support any plan of union with the UPUSA which contains an acceptable escape clause permitting local congregations and ministers to elect not to enter the union. We supported the plan as *the* most effective constitutional method for peaceful realignment. And we still believe it was the best method for the reasons we cited. But we were careful to write:

"Notice we say 'A' plan and not 'THE' plan, and we use the indefinite article for several reasons:

"We recognize that the Sovereign Holy Spirit may be pleased to so revive our Church that revisions in this plan may be necessary . . ."

"If proponents of union were to seek to defeat us with unreasonable delays, our plan would need to be changed . . ."

6. In August 1972, we wrote of a deliberate effort to postpone indefinitely the vote on the plan of union. We restated our often announced position on such a delay, as we wrote of the plan:

"It can be ready and presented to the respective General Assemblies in May and June, 1973. In my judgment to do otherwise would be breaking faith with the people . . ."

In view of this possibility we outlined alternatives to the plan such as General Assembly walk-out, Presbytery

withdrawal, Presbytery dismissal of individual churches, and individual church withdrawal.

7. And so we came to the meeting of the Committee on Presbyterian Union in Dallas, Texas, in February, 1973. We came after spending 6 days in the preceding six weeks with a sub-committee on drafting. We came with a plan ready to be presented to the 1973 General Assemblies for vote. In its three-day session in Dallas the Committee never discussed the substance of the plan they had been working on for a'most four years. Instead they voted to cast aside this plan and start anew writing another plan. This new plan will not be presented until 1974 and then "for study only." The members of the Committee from the PCUS had succeeded in getting an indefinite delay. Before the vote to delay, I made it clear to the Committee that I felt that you would consider such a delay as a breach of faith. They voted the delay with only two dissenting votes — mine and that of Mr. William Thompson, Stated Clerk of the UPCUSA. Next morning, in full open session, Mr. Thompson stated to the Committee that he thought the Committee had been "dishonest" and "betrayed the confidence placed in you by the conservatives in the PCUS." These were his words — not mine. He then spent 30 minutes chastising the Committee for their conduct and particularly blaming the PCUS members. Other members of the Committee from the UPCUSA privately apologized to me for what they felt was unfair conduct by the PCUS members and a breach of good faith by them.

We had accepted the promises of these PCUS leaders, both overt and covert, and trusted them in good faith as men of good will. They have broken that trust and confidence. We cannot put our faith in them again, for they admit candidly that their decisions are not motivated primarily by *principle* but by *expediency*. And those who wait for the constitutional issue of union with UPCUSA wait at the whim and the mercy of the liberals as expediency dictates, both as to timetable and the probability of an acceptable escape clause.

Some say they will be with us but must wait on the UPCUSA union issue. They reason that they feel a justifiable division requires such a grave constitutional issue. They say that such a union would raise a major theological issue, as it would require them to be united with a group with whom they cannot agree as to doctrine. They cite the Confession of 1967 as a major theological, doctrinal deviation by the UPCUSA; and they say they cannot be linked in union with a body which subscribes thereto. To those who so reason, I would respectfully suggest that such a judgment is a matter of *degree* rather than a matter of *principle*. I would suggest two reasons:

**1. Most of us would admit that the PCUS has violated its Constitution on numerous occasions in the past 20 years. So it is not a matter that UPCUSA**

## Manual for Separation

THE Manual for Separation mentioned in our last Bulletin is now off the press. It contains specific suggestions regarding the procedure to be followed by conservative congregations in separating from the PCUS; it includes preparing congregations for the vote and conducting the meeting at which the vote is taken. It also contains *The Reaffirmations of 1973* which reveal in sharp contrast the liberal position taken by those who control the Church to the biblical and constitutional position held by those who are separating.

Copies of the Manual may be obtained from Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., 100 No. Biscayne Blvd., Miami, Fla. 33132, or from Presbyterian Churchmen United, 3436 Wellington Rd., Montgomery, Alabama 36106.

union would be the **ONLY** constitutional deviation. It would be only one among many. For you it might be "major" enough to justify division. But the mere fact that you use the adjective "major" proves to me that you are relegating these other constitutional breaches to the "minor" category. And when you thus begin to reason between "major" and "minor" constitutional violations, I suggest that your conclusion must be based on the degree of the violation and not the **PRINCIPLE** of constitutional breach.

**2. The constitutional change of the Book of Church Order which permits Union Presbyteries has already violated the principle of our union with a body with whose doctrine we do not agree. UPCUSA union would not change that PRINCIPLE; it would only change the DEGREE of the UNION. Our BCO 18-6 (13) provides that our General Assembly can receive under its jurisdiction ONLY those "other ecclesiastical bodies whose organization is conformed to the doctrine and order of this Church." In approving the Union Presbyteries Amendment to the BCO, our Church has constitutionally concluded that we agree in doctrine and order with the UPCUSA. This would include the Confession of 1967. We are as fully linked in constitutional principle with the UPCUSA now as we would be under a full plan of union. The difference is only a matter of degree. We now have only 9 presbyteries united and then we would have them all. But as a constitutional principle, we sit with them as fully and duly elected representatives in the courts of the Church — General Assembly, Synod and Presbytery. Without any further constitutional change, every single presbytery in our Church could be united with the UPCUSA. Union with the UPCUSA is already a constitutional fact. Now you say that you will leave when three-fourths of the presbyteries adopt a plan of union with the UPCUSA. To be logically consistent would you not have to leave when three-fourths of the presbyteries become united as union presbyteries? Then do you not see that your conclusion is not based on the violation of the PRINCIPLE of constitutional union with UPCUSA but on the DEGREE thereof.**

Thus I would contend that in constitutional principle we are already united with the UPCUSA. And those, who see this union as intolerable, have *now* every constitutional principle violated which will be violated with full organic union. You may be reluctant to move now because the degree of union is not sufficient for you; but you cannot logically argue that the principle of constitutional union has already been settled.

Now let us turn to consider alternative procedures for those who are ready *now*, in 1973, to raise the banner for a new Church loyal to Scripture and the Reformed Faith. We can eliminate a General Assembly walk-out; for most conservative commissioners have decided not to even attend this General Assembly. This leaves three alternatives: (1) withdrawal of entire Presbytery, (2) Presbytery dismissal of individual churches, and (3) unilateral withdrawal of individual churches by congregational action. Presbytery withdrawal still remains a good method; but since few Presbyteries have any real possibility of such an action, we feel it better to discuss the details of this method directly with these Presbyteries. A Presbytery can dismiss a church with its property; but the present attitude of the liberals poses problems with this method. They have taken the hard line; and I predict will even get tougher. It is difficult for me to understand how men, who bear the name of Christ, can display to a watching world such a harsh, mean and vindictive attitude toward their brothers in Christ. A few months ago they seemed willing to heed the

# Organizing Committee of 40

THE Organizing Committee of 40 held its first meeting in Atlanta on June 1-2. These are the men to whom the Convocation committed the important task of planning the organizing of the Continuing Church:

**ALABAMA** — **Ministers:** Rev. Frank Barker, Birmingham; Rev. Kenneth Ironside, Montgomery; Rev. Cecil Williamson, Selma. **Ruling Elders:** Ralph Langford, Gadsden; John Glasser, Birmingham; William Joseph, Montgomery.

**FLORIDA** — **Ministers:** Rev. Robert Ostenson, Coral Gables; Rev. Richard Watson, Tampa. **Ruling Elders:** Hugh Cunningham, Gainesville; Murdoch Campbell, Sr., Pensacola; Kenneth S. Keyes, Miami.

**GEORGIA**—**Ministers:** Rev. Ben Wilkinson, Decatur; Rev. Todd Allen, Savannah; Rev. Charles Dunahoo, Smyrna; Rev. James Baird, Macon. **Ruling Elders:** Don Sherow, Augusta; Earl Bolton, Forest Park.

**LOUISIANA** — **Minister:** Rev. Michael Schneider, Alexandria.

**MARYLAND** — **Ruling Elder:** Robert Mumper, Baltimore.

**MISSISSIPPI** — **Minister:** Rev. Donald Patterson, Jackson. **Ruling Elder:** Judge Leon Hendrick, Jackson.

**NORTH CAROLINA**—**Ministers:** Rev. John Neville, Hendersonville; Rev. Harold Borchert, Waynesville; Rev. Lewis Baker, Princeton. **Ruling Elders:** Jasper Wilson, Charlotte; Robert Wilcox, Denver; Roland Parton, Burlington.

**SOUTH CAROLINA** — **Ministers:** Rev. Gordon Reed, Greenville; Rev. Harry Schutte, Columbia. **Ruling Elders:** Douglas Patton, Mauldin; John Barnes, Rock Hill; John Hunter, Jr., York.

**TENNESSEE** — **Ruling Elders:** W. C. Anderson, Nashville; William Houston, Chattanooga.

**TEXAS** — **Minister:** Rev. Dan McCown, Tyler.

**VIRGINIA** — **Ministers:** Rev. Kennedy Smartt, Hopewell; Rev. E. C. Cooley, Norfolk; Rev. Peter Hurst, Coeburn. **Ruling Elder:** Capt. James Campbell, Virginia Beach.

**WEST VIRGINIA** — **Ruling Elder:** Oliver Blake, Charleston.

**Minister Alternates:** Rev. Charles McNutt, Roanoke, Va.; Rev. Erskine Jackson, Kosciusko, Miss.; Rev. Ron Seigenthaler, Tusculumbia, Ala.; Rev. Henry Mueller, Bristol, Tenn.; Rev. Fred Manning, Jr., Jackson, Tenn.; Rev. Donald Dunkerley, Pensacola, Florida.

**Ruling Elder Alternates:** H. S. Williford, Jackson, Miss.; Henry Voss, New Orleans, La.; David Lewis, Lancaster, Texas; John Ward, Montgomery, Ala.; Terry Gyger, Coral Gables, Fla.; H. E. Swann, Atlanta, Georgia.

**Chairman:** W. J. (Jack) Williamson, Greenville, Alabama.

**Clerk:** Prof. Morton Smith, Jackson, Mississippi.

**Advisors:** Rev. John E. Richards, Perry, Ga.; Rev. Paul Settle, Montgomery, Ala.; Rev. G. Aiken Taylor, Asheville, N. C..

advice of our beloved Moderator, Dr. L. Nelson Bell. In speaking to the Committee on Presbyterian Union in Charlotte last year, in his first public appearance as Moderator, Dr. Bell said he favored the "escape" clause because he thought it "unchristian" and "immoral" to try to coerce a congregation to remain in a voluntary organization as the church when they could not in good conscience support it. But as time disclosed that this movement was of mammoth proportions and thus threatened the power and purse of the liberals, their attitude began to harden under the advice of their leaders. Their public voice, *The Presbyterian Outlook*, actually chastised their followers for being fair with us. Can you imagine Christians being criticized for being "fair" with other Christians? Well in its April 9, 1973, issue this voice of the liberals wrote for the world to read these words —

**"Some Presbyterians who appear to be taking a casual attitude toward the dismissal of church property . . . need to be reminded of their pledged obligations . . ."**

**"In some cases we have heard that presbytery executives under a distorted understanding of fair play or their own responsibilities, have actually counselled dissidents as to courses to pursue . . ."**

**"It is folly to permit the alienating effort to move ahead unchallenged . . ."**

Following this line of advice, we have seen liberals across the Church begin to adopt this tough, harsh, and vindictive tack. Hence, even in a Presbytery that feels that it is "unchristian" and "immoral" to try to coerce a congregation to remain against the conscience of its majority membership; and even if such a Presbytery votes to dismiss such a congregation with its property, there is always one or more liberal minister in that Presbytery who will file a complaint against such a Presbytery dismissal. The "ruse" reason is used that it is to protect the rights of the loyal

minority in that congregation. We know it is a "ruse;" because we have been the loyal minority in the PCUS for years, and they have never shown any inclination to even listen to, much less to protect, our rights and positions. It is obvious that such malicious tactics are designed to discourage congregations from taking such action for dismissal, and to put such congregations on notice that they will be tied up in the church courts for years if they take this procedure. Hence if this procedure is used, we suggest that once the Presbytery acts dismissing the local church, any complaints to higher church courts be ignored. Just take the position that you have been legally dismissed and no longer subject to any ecclesiastical court jurisdiction. And if the liberals want to take it to a civil court to try to get your property, let them bear the public onus of carrying Christian brothers to a civil court against the injunctions of the Bible.

But probably for most congregations, the third alternative is the best present procedure. Just call a congregational meeting and vote to withdraw and so notify your Presbytery. Thereafter, politely refuse to entertain any commission or committee on the principle that you are no longer subject to ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Once again this procedure could bring a civil lawsuit over your property. But again the liberals would have the public onus of beginning the lawsuit against the express will of the majority of the congregation. Many constitutional lawyers feel that this right is preserved to the local congregation under the First and Fourteenth Amendments to our U. S. Constitution.

You will readily recognize that there are perils in all three alternative procedures. You may end up in a civil court battle for your church property. It begins to be quite obvious that it is your church property that most interests the liberals. In this same April 9, 1973, issue of the *Presbyterian Outlook* they gave their motive away when

it was written:

**"It would appear that a presbytery would be better advised to take the initiative to dissolve the pastorate, and, where required, dissolve the church..."**

Why "dissolve the church"? Because under our BCO when a church has been dissolved and no disposition has been made of its property, the property goes to presbytery (BCO 6-3). Thus they have clearly announced that they want your property. This is further proven by their willingness to let small congregations without much property go without protest; but they usually contest the dismissal or withdrawal of a church that owns choice property, particularly if it is free of debt. Now, we have an obligation to preserve and protect the property that has been purchased with the gifts and sacrifices of our God-fearing forefathers; and if forced to do so, we serve notice here and now that we shall fiercely battle them for it. But, do not let us be like them. We declare here and now that property is not the main issue. If we are forced by our convictions to risk the loss of all property, no matter how dear, for the sake of the honor and integrity of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, such a risk we are fully prepared to take. We prefer it not; but we will not shrink from it, if God requires it of us. We will not put our pew ahead of our Lord.

So the die is cast. To me our course is clear. Some may say, "Why 1973?"; but I say "Why wait?" If conscience dictates that it is your duty to wait, then you must wait, you should wait, you dare not do otherwise. But if not, why wait? Now I suggest that the decision for a minister and the decision for a congregation is somewhat different. A minister may go at any time without much peril — now or 5 years from now — but if you are responsible for a congregation and for those yet unborn, what will be preached and taught in your church 5, 10, 20 years from now should be of real concern to you. What then can a congregation gain by waiting? If yours is a congregation that does not use PCUS literature, and does not support the PCUS program, then you have already, in effect, separated. What can you possibly gain by waiting? Surely you don't believe that you can reform the PCUS? What then do you gain by waiting? But, you may lose by waiting. You may lose the only chance you will ever have to leave and take your property. Do you really believe there will ever be a Plan of Union with an acceptable escape clause? Are you willing to wait 5 to 10 years on that speculative chance? Is it not true that as your conservative brothers leave, your position in your presbytery is weakened? What is going to be your position when your presbytery is restructured as it is surely going to be? Is there not less chance of civil lawsuits when churches go in mass rather than later decide to go in isolated situations? — Is it not better to join with your Christian brothers of like mind and raise now the Standard in our beloved Southland of a new church loyal to Scripture and the Reformed Faith? To me the answers are loud and clear. Move now, together, toward a Church reborn.

And as we move, our attitude to others is most important. We move with determination and resolve, but with tears, sorrow and mourning for the necessity that is laid upon us. Regardless of the attitudes or actions of others, we will remember that we represent the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the King and Head of the Church. As His ambassadors to the watching world, we must let this mind be in us which was in Christ Jesus. Let men everywhere notice in us the three effects of nearness to Jesus—humility, holiness and happiness. To those who would be unfair and harsh toward us we hear Him say:

**"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and**

**persecute you."**

To those who agree with us in principle but disagree as to procedure, we extend our hand of continued fellowship and good will and our open invitation and plea to join us soon. For you we hear Him say:

**"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word."**

To you who may be called upon to suffer for this cause, we hear Him say:

**"Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad; for great is your reward in heaven . . ."**

And as we move, let there be a great outpouring of prayer. Let us remember the people of God in the wilderness when Joshua fought in the valley and Moses prayed on the mountain. The prayers of Moses discomfited the enemy more than the fighting of Joshua. Yet both were needed. It is remarked that Joshua never grew weary in fighting, but Moses grew weary in praying. It is far easier to fight than to pray. The more spiritual an exercise, the more difficult it is for flesh and blood to maintain it. Intermittent supplication will avail little as we move. We must wrestle all day every day and hold up our hands "until the going down of the sun."

Let me close with a statement made by Charles Hadley Spurgeon about 80 years ago. Listen carefully to the exhortation of that great man of God as he so aptly describes our present opportunity:

**"We admire a man who was firm in the faith, say 400 years ago . . . but such a man today is a nuisance, and must be put down. Call him a narrow-minded bigot, or give him a worse name if you can think of one. Yet imagine that in those ages past, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and their compeers had said, 'The world is out of order; but if we try to set it right we shall only make a great row, and get ourselves into disgrace. Let us go to our chambers, put on our nightcaps, and sleep over the bad times, and perhaps when we wake up things will have grown better.'**

**"Such conduct on their part would have entailed upon us a heritage of error. Age after age would have gone down into the infernal deeps, and the pestiferous bogs of error would have swallowed all. These men loved the faith and the name of Jesus too well to see them trampled on . . ."**

**"It is today as it was in the Reformers' days. Decision is needed. Here is the day for the man, where is the man for the day? We who have had the Gospel passed to us by martyr hands dare not trifle with it, nor sit by and hear it denied by traitors, who pretend to love it, but inwardly abhor every line of it . . ."**

**"Look you, sirs, there are ages yet to come. If the Lord does not speedily appear, there will come another generation, and another, and all these generations will be tainted and injured if we are not faithful to God and to His truth today. We have come to a turning point in the road. If we turn to the right, mayhap our children and our children's children will go that way; but if we turn to the left, generations yet unborn will curse our names for having been unfaithful to God and to His Word."**

The law is the law of Love; and the procedure is to rescue the perishing. Godspeed!!! Amen.

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