

*“The Only Infallible Rule  
of Faith and Practice”*

# The Concerned Presbyterian

*True to God's Word and Loyal to Historic  
Presbyterian Doctrine and Polity*

BULLETIN NUMBER 31

PAGE ONE

## ECCLESIASTICAL LIQUIDATION OF THE PCUS

The long-expected doctrinal and ecclesiastical liquidation of the Presbyterian Church US became an actuality at the 114th General Assembly which recently met in Louisville. The liquidation of our church has been the dream of the liberals for the past thirty years or so, and now it is a virtual reality. True enough, the final union between us and the United Presbyterian Church USA has not formally taken place. But, as some liberals in the General Assembly have openly boasted, the two denominations are so closely intertwined at so many points that it would now be impossible to separate them. The liberal leadership in the PCUS has been so determined to bring about this ecclesiastical union that the condition of the UPUSA church does not alarm them and they are apparently quite willing to hand over our assets of some seven million dollars to the bankrupt northern church. What is even more serious is their lack of concern for the conditions in that denomination which have brought that financial bankruptcy into being. The financial plight of the UPUSA Church is the direct result of its spiritual bankruptcy. It has openly endorsed and supported radical causes of every description including communist type activities and people until the evangelical forces within that church have simply stopped giving to all agencies beyond the local church. It might be well to add that when the Presbyterian Church US reports the full effect of the loss of some three hundred congregations, its agencies, within a year or so, will be in the same financial plight.

### SPIRITUAL LIQUIDATION

There can be no question but that theological liberalism is firmly in the saddle in our Southern Church. It controls the General Executive Board, the seminaries, the synods and the presbyteries. The fact that some conservatives have been given positions of prominence at various levels in the hierarchy of the church should not blind us to what has been going on. The spiritual and theological liquidation of our church receives overwhelming evidence in the **Proposed Book of Confessions** recently presented to the Louisville General Assembly by the Ad Interim Committee on a New Confession of Faith. If anyone has any lingering hope that somehow the evangelicals may continue to

have an influence in either the Presbyterian Church US or the new denomination which results from the union which is now to be studied by the presbyteries, those who indulge in such a hope need only to study **A Declaration of Faith** found on pages 145-165 in the proposed **Book of Confessions**. The deficiencies and heretical character of this so-called Confession greet the reader at the very first. The first statement with its thirty words on what belief in God means is a far cry from Chapter II of the **Westminster Confession of Faith**. The God described in the first article in **The Declaration of Faith** is most certainly not the God revealed in the Scriptures. There is absolutely no mention of the doctrine of the Trinity in this, which should be the very basis of the Christian faith. All the ancient and modern heresies involving the doctrine of the Trinity could easily find a home in this loosely worded and un-biblical statement.

The second statement, which is allegedly a confession that God is greater than our own understanding, has no real meaning in the light of the first statement and since the Declaration lacks any adequate statement of the authority of the Scriptures it has no theological basis.

It is significant that Chapter I dealing with God makes no mention of a doctrine of Scripture. The whole problem of revelation is discussed most inadequately and most dangerously in Chapter 6. Chapter I then goes on to say that God makes Himself known in Jesus Christ but again the treatment of Jesus Christ is a far cry from Chapter 8 of the **Westminster Confession** on Christ the Mediator. The Christ presented in Chapter I of the Declaration is certainly not the Jesus Christ presented to us in the Scriptures. Indeed, it is very hard to know just who this Jesus Christ is. The Christ of this **Declaration of Faith** stands at the center of a story, a story which is never defined, but which is still unfolding. Yet somehow in faith, according to this Declaration, we make this story our own even though we do not know what its final outcome will be.

Section (4) concludes with the unintelligible and irrational affirmation that to retell the story is to declare what we believe. The only problem is that this so-called Confession offers very little to believe and very little that a Unitarian could not accept.

Section (5) should have been left out because it is actually childish and is unworthy of presentation to mature Christian minds.

Section (6) and (7) call upon Presbyterians to praise and enjoy a God who is at best some sort of peripheral Being who is really unknown to them. Chapter II dealing with the doctrine of creation is a mockery of the Biblical view of creation. Presbyterians who have nurtured in Chapters IV and V of **The Westminster Confession of Faith** will wander through these sections of **The Declaration of Faith** with a feeling very much like that which Alice had in Wonderland. Here we are told that God has both created all the worlds that are, somehow He still creates the processes that shape and change the earth and the things upon it. The framers of **The Declaration** make no attempt to solve the problem which they create when they say that God has both created and continues to create the same world. The subterfuge at this point is quite obvious. The Committee at one point pays lip service to the first three chapters in Genesis while it actually sanctions the doctrine of evolution. This whole section is irrational to the point of being ludicrous and confuses God's finished creation of the Universe with some kind of an eschatological recreation promised in Christ.

If an effort to avoid any possibility of accepting any part of Chapters III and V of **The Westminster Confession of Faith**, the framers of **The Declaration** inserted Section (2) under Chapter II which is a thoroughly confused and confusing attempt to sanctify all the modern heretical views of evil. But the net result of their endeavor is to intensify the mystery of evil and to present a Christ who is still working to overcome evil and who somehow encourages us to join Him in His futile crusade.

Section (3) of Chapter II of the Declaration is a monstrous perversion of the Biblical doctrine of the creation of man and begs Presbyterians to admit that they are kin to all other creatures by which it really means all lower forms of animal life. In spite of this fact man, a product of evolution, is somehow trusted to make good use of the world for which he is responsible.

Section (4), the theme of which is that God has made human beings for life in community, is obviously the fruit of contemporary psychology and sociology brought together by a large dose of existentialism with absolutely no Biblical foundations of any kind.

The next Section which treats of the sexes is a futile attempt to preserve some sort of authority for marriage and parenthood. Here again the Scriptural view of the meaning of marriage and the home is submerged in a morass of sociological platitudes.

Chapter II reaches its height of heresy in its pathetic and feeble attempt to explain the fact of sin. This section is perhaps the most heartbreaking

of all in the first two chapters. Here the liberal dilemma becomes very apparent. The problem is how to describe the fruits of sin in human society without ever alluding to sin as such without ever admitting that sin is rebellion against God Himself.

Chapter III dealing with God's relationship to the people of Israel presented another and great challenge to the liberal authors of this Declaration. Their problem is seen in their desire to present God as a loving Father who is faithful and patient with his erring children in such a way that they can safely omit any mention of the doctrine of the Covenant. And so the entire chapter adroitly presents God's choice of Israel through Abraham to be a blessing to all people and in its brief mention of a covenantal relationship it so re-defines the whole idea of the Covenant as to make it virtually meaningless and unbiblical. This section (2) is a far cry from Chapter VII of **The Westminster Confession**. Indeed this new conception of God's dealing with the people of Israel in a covenantal relationship has so little Biblical foundation that Presbyterians who have been reared in the majestic language of **The Westminster Confession** will be almost unable to recognize this new affirmation.

Chapter III dealing with God in Christ can hardly even be called heretical for it is actually apostate. It affirms that Jesus Christ came into this world as a child, "born of a woman as is every child, yet born of God's power as was no other child." This is double-talk. These liberals are bound and determined to deny the doctrine of the virgin birth, yet at the same time they feel compelled to give to this Jesus a superior standing or role above that of other men. What they apparently do not realize is that when they deny the doctrine of the virgin birth and yet insist that He was born of the power of God as was no other child they do not solve a problem, they create one. Also they do not realize that this Jesus is a mystical and mythical character lacking both the deity which He must have to be a Saviour and the humanity which they feel He must have if He is to be relevant in our day. This dilemma means the defeat for the whole liberal cause. The Jesus of this **Declaration of Faith** cannot command the worship, the adoration or the respect of men. Neither will He be able to claim them as His disciples in the cause of the Social Gospel. This first section of Chapter IV in an apparent effort to remedy the deficiencies of this

liberal Jesus affirms that through His life, death, and resurrection initiated the relationship between God and the human race that God always intended. Section (3) is another attempt to strengthen the supernatural aspects of this Jesus. But in its affirmations that Jesus is God it never offers a Biblical foundation. The deity of Jesus Christ in this section depends upon what sinners think of Him, and not what the Scriptures declare Him to be.

In these first four chapters the **Declaration of Faith** offers a testimony which is far from being Biblical, which repudiates the **Westminster Confession of Faith** at many points and it is little more than a confession of a lack of faith on the part of those who framed it. There is no possibility of harmonizing or reconciling the **Declaration of Faith** with the great historic Reformed Confessions. It is impossible to believe what they say; really believe that this **Declaration of Faith** does not repudiate our Presbyterian heritage. It repudiates it in almost every line and it thoroughly spells out in unmistakable terms the liquidation of our historic Presbyterian theology and testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let those evangelical conservatives who still feel that they can somehow influence the course of events in the Presbyterian Church US take careful note of this **Declaration of Faith**. If this Declaration is adopted, and it is almost inconceivable that it will not be, there will be no Presbyterian Church US. The Presbyterian Church US was not merely an ecclesiastical structure, but it was founded and intended to be a vehicle for the proclamation of the whole counsel of God. This new **Declaration** sets aside the whole heritage of Presbyterianism from Calvin to Thornwell, Dabney and Palmer. It is a grotesque parody, a confession of confusion and doubt which looks to psychology and sociology rather than to the Scriptures.

#### PROPERTY TRANSFER PASSES

Orange Presbytery has instructed its trustees to convey the title of two dissenting churches to those churches when presbytery's trustees are advised of the names of the trustees or the correct corporate names of the churches which will hold title, said Mrs. Joyce Bauer, presbytery stated clerk.

Northside Presbyterian Church, Burlington and Fuller Memorial Presbyterian Church, Durham, voted in 1973 to withdraw from the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. (PCUS). A loyal minority to

PCUS was not registered in either vote. Northside Church has 523 members. Fuller Memorial Church has 195 members.

The Rev. David Hamilton is pastor of Northside Church. Fuller Memorial Church did not have a pastor when the withdrawal vote was taken. The Rev. Edwin Worstell is now pastor of that congregation.

----- Presbyterian Survey; June, 1974 -----

In reference to the above there needs to be some more pertinent information.

The membership of these two churches were well informed as to the trends in the Presbyterian Church US by reading literature available for years; by their pastors for years keeping them informed instead of keeping them in the dark. Their members were students of the Scriptures and are jealous for the work of their Lord.

Prior to taking the vote to sever relations with the PCUS denomination, they quietly and quickly went about to secure their property by incorporating; knowing that presbytery could come down by a commission and dissolve those congregations as PCUS congregations. If the property had not been held by a body created by the State of North Carolina, presbytery could have seized it. But the title and deed to the property is held by the Trustees of the Corporation.

In its January meeting, presbytery could not decide how to resolve the dilemma. So in April they would appear charitable and act on brotherly love and give the churches their own property.

Those two properties are valuable. There is doubt what presbytery would have done if they had the legal power.

#### LOCAL CHURCH PROPERTY IN PCUS

A liberal Permanent Judicial Commission at the 114th General Assembly in Louisville, Kentucky (week of June 16-22, 1974) gave its opinion that the Constitution of the PCUS did not mean what it says: BOCO 16: 7-(8) viz: "Presbytery has the power to receive and to dismiss churches." This is plain, unadulterated language; any additions would change it. Comment is not needed: Opinions to the contrary are invalid.

The liberal 114th GA, of course, accepted this opinion because it was the interpretation that it wanted. A few years ago when the membership of Permanent Judicial Commission was different, that commission ruled that in order for presbyteries and

synods to merge with other denominations "... would require the vote of three-fourths of the presbyteries to be constitutional." That General Assembly changed the constitution on the spot and sent the resolution to the presbyteries on a simple majority basis. That failed on the first count and by getting two presbyteries to reconsider and change their votes, the merger was permitted on a one vote majority. (BOCO, par. 30-1)

It is not what the liberal establishment does constitutionally that disturbs us, it is what they do unconstitutionally. The General Assembly erred in the Florida cases in that their ruling passed at the 114th GA is Ex post facto. Presbytery did dismiss these churches. The PJC and GA did not say that presbytery had no right to dismiss—they said it was an error.

While we are on the property issue, here are some further observations of the 114th General Assembly: The Permanent Judicial Commission in its opinion on the Florida dismissal cases, admitted that it went beyond the precise point. (Copy report in *Journal*, Page 8, July 3, 1974) Admitting that it went beyond the precise point judicial notice of the alternative to dismissal which it identified as dissolution under the provision of paragraph 6-3 of the Book of Church Order. In this paragraph it is specified that "When a church has been dissolved or otherwise ceases to exist," the presbytery may take the property. The commission ruled that "dissolution rather than dismissal is the only proper constitutional course" when so many members withdraw that the remainder no longer constitutes a viable congregation. The chairman of the PJC said the opinion was written in order to suggest that presbyteries might dissolve churches in order to gain control of their property. Decisions of the GA do not have the force of constitutional law, but carry weight as interpretations of existing church law.

The following recommendation of the PJC and approved by a standing committee, which would have taken property away from the congregations, was overwhelmingly defeated. The proposed change was to BOCO, paragraph 6-3, which now reads: "If a church ... ceases to exist, and no disposition has been made of its property, those holding title to the property shall deliver, convey, and transfer to the presbytery of which the church was a member, or to the authorized agents of the presbytery, all property of the church; and the receipt and

acquittance of the presbytery, or its proper representatives, shall be a full and complete discharge of such persons holding the property of the church. The presbytery receiving such property shall apply the same or the proceeds thereof at its discretion."

The proposed change would read "... exists as a part of the PCUS, the trustees of the congregation shall convey all property titles to the Presbytery. BOCO, paragraph 6-3; *Presbyterian Journal*, July 3, 1974, pp. 8, column 2.

However, other recommendations on the PJC on related matters of property were passed without objection. One of these, a proposed change in BOCO 16-7-(9) sent down for ratification by the presbyteries will, if approved, declare: "The relationship to the PCUS of a particular church can be severed only by constitutional action on the part of the presbytery." The constitution, as presently written, says nothing about a congregation's right to withdraw.

Another suggested change would authorize dismissal of congregations only to those bodies "whose organization is conformed to the doctrines and order of this Church and which are not schismatic or heretical.

If approved by a majority of the presbyteries, these provisions will become law following final ratification by the 1975 Assembly." (See *Presbyterian Journal*, July 3, 1974, pp. 8., last four paragraphs)

Where does all the above leave churches still in the PCUS? We are still operating under Paragraphs 6-1.2.3., BOCO. The proposed change in words did not pass this GA. This proposed change in BOCO, paragraph 16-7-(9) was passed by this GA and sent down to presbyteries for ratification and final approval by the 115th GA, 1975. To this effect, see above BOCO change, paragraph 16-7-(9), putting control of local church property into presbytery.

Here is where you stand as a local congregation: All that a local church congregation has to do to lose its property and all control over its doctrine and government is just to sit still and do nothing. You have ten months to take whatever action your congregation votes to take to secure your property.

We have been advocating incorporating your church which turns your local church property over to a corporation authorized by your state to hold title. (BOCO 6-1.2.3.) Then if presbytery takes the only action it can under the constitution and

dissolves your church as a PCUS congregation, your property is secure in the corporation. Your congregation can continue to meet on your property as independent or affiliated with another denomination, whether recognized by the PCUS or not.

Some states may not incorporate churches; for example, Virginia is one of those. In that case, operating under BOCO 6-1.3., a non-profit corporation should be formed and the local property deeded to that corporation.

After the next GA, presbytery will control your action. (proposed change in BOCO 16-7-(9) We have models used by churches already incorporated. Request if interested. We will confer with your local attorney if you desire.

Further observation on church property: The Plan of PCUS and UPUSA Union which will be released for study to the churches January 1, 1975, will lock all doors to any form of self-determination by a local congregation. The two denominations are merged already, in fact. As the co-chairmen of the Union Committee put it, "the two churches are so thoroughly intertwined" in several phases, "we could not separate ourselves if we tried."

What we cannot understand is the delay in making the union official. With the "union trance," in which the 114th GA seemed to be locked, all that needed to be done was to approve and send it down to the presbyteries.

We cannot believe that it is conscience! Maybe it is money. Who would want to marry a bankrupt? Why wouldn't a bankrupt want to marry one with \$7 million?

The UPUSA (Northern Church) is \$13 million in the red. The PCUS has \$7 million in assets.

With the PCUS General Board and its many committees and personnel with fat expense accounts, it will not take them long to squander that \$7 million. Then marriage may be more reasonable---two bankrupts.

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We have on hand a limited number of copies of Dr. Morton Smith's last edition of "How Is The Gold Become Dim". These retail at \$5 per copy. Since we are not selling books for profit, we will be glad to send one to you for \$3 plus \$.50 postage.

This book is a complete documentation of the decline of the Presbyterian Church, US as reflected in its assembly actions. Complete appendices.

#### ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE 114th G. A.

1. After studying Universalism by Committee, vote was taken in GA and approved to send it down to the Churches for further study. Of course, propoganda will accompany the material--waste of time and money on a subject that is already answered in The Holy Scriptures.

2. After hearing a report from the abortion committee to the effect that the fund for abortion now amounts to \$100,000.00, \$75,000.00 already loaned out for that purpose, GA voted to continue connection with that work. (C.O.T.A.)

3. A test vote was taken on general amnesty, absolute for all draft dodgers and concientious objectors. It lost 225½ to 142½. This issue was sent back to committee for a revision of the language that would pass next GA. Remarks: Here is an issue that has been publicized in the press. All the commissioners were familiar with the issues; therefore, it was defeated. The same is true of proposed change in the BOCO about property, (BOCO 6:3) defeated.

4. Passed a resolution allowing the GA Moderator to name the members of the Permanent Nominating Committee. GA has elected them in the past. This is another principle of Presbyterian government thrown out the window.

5. This GA was in a Union Trance with the Northern Church. Union was promoted at every opportunity (joint meetings). Commissioners mixed at motels. Both denomination's commissioners being scattered so as to eat together and mix socially. It appeared that there were trained propogandists present to promote the union issue.

6. Of the many resolutions sent to the GA on the political action of the Washington office and the failure of the past moderator to call a special session of the 113th GA to iron out the question, there appears that nothing was done about it at the 114th GA, as promised by Dr. Kraemer. GA took the stand that the Washington office had a duty to become involved in political matters, contrary to the sentiment in the 113th GA.

7. Dr. Clinton M. March (black), retiring UPUSA Moderator gave the revolutionary clinched fist when he finished his address before the joint meeting of the GAS. Lenin in his tomb in Moscow has that clinched fist to his breast.

There is much, much more that is wrong, YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT!

### MEN AND BRETHEREN, HOW CAN THESE THINGS BE?

This report to you of the actions taken by the highest court of the PCUS are so far out in left field that it does not seem possible for an organization which is supposed to carry on the authentic work of Jesus Christ in this world to be guilty of such actions.

If you ask your minister about this report and he tells you that these things are not true, ask him why he is trying to hide this from his congregation. Tell him that these things are a matter of record.

“Men and bretheren, what must we do?”

What would happen if the funds were cut off? That is a drastic suggestion, but it would cure the disease. Secondly: If enough of the grass roots membership of the PCUS would put their names on a petition and demand the resignation of the liberals--just a few at the top. That would require some effort, and the average church member doesn't want to be bothered. So, just sit still and do nothing and GEORGE WILL DO IT-TO YOU.

Certainly, if there ever was a time for followers of Jesus Christ to rise up against the apostasy in the PCUS, IT IS NOW ... “It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy LAW.” (Ps. 119:126)

Four conservative organizations opposing the unscriptural and unconstitutional actions of the leadership of the PCUS; namely, The National Presbyterian Church, The Presbyterian Journal, Concerned Presbyterians, and The Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship, were named as quote: “organizations having interests contrary to the health and growth of this denomination” by the General Assembly of Presbyterian Church U. S. That is the understatement of the year.

The denomination under the control of a few men are responsible for the opposition by these conservative organizations. The PCUS is going down, down, down, and will not grow or prosper until they repent and change course.

### EFFORTS TOWARD DISCIPLINE

From time to time, sincere men question whether or not conservatives should withdraw from a denomination until efforts to exercise discipline have been made repeatedly and consistently in the courts of the church.

Good question. We agree that such disciplinary efforts are necessary.

This very procedure has been diligently followed by conservatives in the PCUS for many years. Every General Assembly in memory has been literally flooded with overtures and resolutions calling for disciplinary action relative to publications, policies, pronouncements and programs of the denomination. Presbyteries and synods have found their agendas crowded with complaints and appeals.

Let's take the 1971 General Assembly of the PCUS, for instance. That Assembly, meeting at Massanetta Springs, Va., was confronted with thirteen (13) resolutions protesting denominational actions or policies or statements concerning FOCUS magazine, abortion, the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, the ordination of women, UPUSA union, union presbyteries, COCU, evangelism, and youth delegates. Added to the resolutions (most of which were introduced by commissioners during the Assembly) were twenty-seven (27) overtures from sessions, presbyteries, or individuals, relating to the same topics, plus restructuring, church property, equalization, the Council on Church and Society, COLLOQUY magazine and the new Confession.

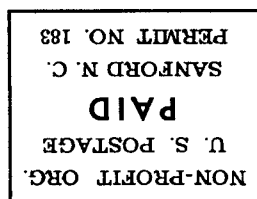
In 1972, the 112th General Assembly handled at least twenty-two (22) overtures and ten (10) resolutions, plus a number of reports and minority reports, calling for the administration of discipline relative to such matters as the restructuring of synod boundaries, COLLOQUY magazine, reports to the Church and Society committee, abortion, equalization, the General Executive Board, the World and National Councils of Churches, the Board of World Mission's gifts to leftist organizations in Africa, universalism, union presbyteries, COCU, UPUSA union, the spirituality of the church, the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, etc., etc.

All of these resolutions and overtures called upon the General Assembly to discipline itself and the denomination by suspending, repudiating, dismissing, or altering heretical and/or non-constitutional actions, policies, and programs. Every effort was denied--answered in the negative--meaning that the highest court in the Church refused to discipline itself according to clear Biblical principles.

Now, multiply the 1971-1972 efforts by the scores--even hundreds--of similar attempts over the past thirty years, and one may begin to understand why the separation has occurred.



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PAGE EIGHT

THE CONCERNED PRESBYTERIAN

### THE WAY OF HISTORIC PRESBYTERIANISM

From the beginning of her life as a denomination, one of the distinctive doctrines of the PCUS has been "the spirituality of the Church."

This Biblical affirmation teaches that the Church, the Kingdom of Christ, is a spiritual body whose jurisdiction extends only to the religious faith and moral conduct of her members. She cannot legislate where Christ has not legislated, nor make terms of membership which He has not made.

It was loyalty to this principle which divided the Presbyterian Church in 1861. Presbyterians living in Southern States protested when the General Assembly declared that only those members could be considered "loyal Presbyterians" who pledged support to the Federal Government. The Old School brethren, protesting that such a statement was a "subordination of Church to State ... a usurpation of the crown rights of the Redeemer ..." left the PCUSA and formed the Southern church, December 4, 1861.

The new Assembly unanimously declared its belief in the Spirituality of the Church: "The provinces of church and state are perfectly distinct, and one has no right to usurp the jurisdiction of the other ... It is the society of the redeemed ... The power of the church is exclusively spiritual ..."

The same distinctive doctrine is clearly defined in the Westminster Confession of Faith, XXXIII-4: "Synods and councils are to handle or conclude nothing but that which is ecclesiastical: and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs ... unless by way of humble petition ... or by way of advice ... if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate."

This does not mean that believers are not to be involved in the civil community. On the contrary, God's people are to declare and strive for God's sovereign rule over every area of life. But this doctrine does mean that the organized Church is not, by pronouncement, policy, or program, to make loyalty to passing political or social theories tantamount to loyalty to Christ.