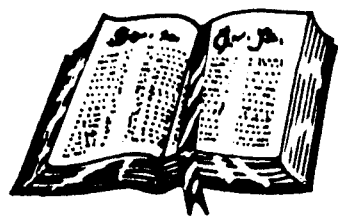


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*"The Only Infallible Rule
of Faith and Practice"*

The Concerned Presbyterian

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

BULLETIN NUMBER 36

PAGE ONE

AN INVENTORY OF VITAL STATISTICS IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH US

by Willis H. Owens

Many came away from the last General Assembly (115th) with the impression that the leftward movement of our leaders had slowed down a little. The evaluation of the 115th General Assembly has been covered in Bulletin No. 35 very ably. Even though that last General Assembly had some appearance of reconciliation between the liberal and conservative viewpoints, what are the real issues which are cause for concern to Bible-believing, reformed Christians?

The foremost problem that we still have to face is the presentation to the next General Assembly of a proposed Book of Confessions. Another revision of that document is to be presented to the congregations of our church in January. Of course, we have not seen it and examined it for comparison with the historical Westminster Confession of Faith which our church has held as that system of Doctrine to which we subscribe, but we know that there is going to be proposed a Book of Confessions including one that could be subscribed to by one of any faith.

Back of the reason for a new Book of Confessions is the question of merger with the UPUSA (Northern Church). Unless we adopt a Book of Confessions that is not in conflict with the Northern Church's Confession of '67, the PCUS could not merge with the UPUSA because our constitution requires merger only with a church that has a doctrine in harmony with our own. Therefore, to unite with the UPUSA requires adoption of a new Book of Confessions.

"Men and brethren, what must we do?"

The proposed Book of Confessions must not be adopted by the 116th General Assembly. If the presbyteries fail to ratify it, it will be defeated. If presbyteries ratify the action of 116th GA and accept the new Book of Confessions, final action of the 117th GA will merely be a rubber stamp action.

The question now is what can be done?

Commissioners to the 116th GA have already been elected. Contact the commissioners from your presbytery and let them know how you feel about the Confession and merger questions. No com-

missioner to a General Assembly is bound to any position; he is to vote his conscience.

What are the other concerns that are still with us? The PCUS is still committed to the National and World Council of Churches and COCU. We know of very few good proposals coming from either of these organizations. The PCUS is still taking the official position of approving abortion for social and economic reasons and handles funds for that purpose, as well as counseling people desiring same. Our PCUS Church is trying hard to get our General Assembly to advocate unconditional amnesty for draft dodgers. The GEB form of government is not Presbyterian. That board has proven that it is irresponsible in the matter of handling our financial affairs. These are just a few of the concerns of Bible-believing Christians in the PCUS.

If our leaders who have control of the government and theological affairs of our denomination continue the course on which they have been steering for years, we can expect that our membership will continue to decline. Benevolence giving will continue to drop and merger with the UPUSA and abandonment of our Confession will be the finish of the Presbyterian Church US. Maybe our Lord has already written "Ichabod" over its doors. We still feel there is hope.

The GEB, on October 1, 1975 approved giving \$25,800 to these projects: Judeo-Christian Coalition Clinic, Tampa, Florida \$9,000---Social-Medical; Health Education Project, Memphis, Tennessee \$7,200+-Social-educational; Licking Valley Child-care-Health care Component, Rowan County, Kentucky \$7,000---education and health care; Neighborhood Medical Clinic, Charlotte, NC \$2,600 ---health services. These may be commendable charities, but in view of the financial "crunch" as it is called, it seems that the GEB has cut salaries of missionaries radically and reduced the missionary force to give to projects that have nothing to do with carrying the Gospel of salvation to a lost world, including our materialistic, humanistic society which is fast heading for judgement.

It seems the PCUS leadership as well as that of most of the old-line, large Christian denominations

have lost their bearings. Whatever happened to the "Great Commission" in the thinking of our leaders? You can be sure that the thinking person in the pew does not want social and health issues to replace the main purpose of Christ's Church---getting sinners saved!

In the last week of October, 1975 there was an Ecumenical Conference held at Hendersonville, NC. For this conference the GEB appropriated \$10 thousand to cover expenses. In view of the numerous Ecumenical get-to-gethers that have been held, one wonders if this one could add anything to what has already been decided upon. Counting the above donations to charity programs outside the work of the Great Commission of the PCUS, the total for October, 1975 amounts to \$35,800. This kind of fiscal irresponsibility in time of deficit spending cannot be justified.

Concerned Presbyterians, Inc. has been reluctant to advocate cutting off benevolent giving to GA causes because in so doing we may deny support to some causes that we desire to support. Under the Central Treasury system which our PCUS is operating, it appears impossible to designate gifts to a particular cause without having that amount taken from the regular budget for that cause. Therefore, the equalization process is still operative. It appears that the GEB has abandoned most of its interest in any cause except it be a Social, Political, or Medical cause.

As long as money is poured into the coffers of the General Assembly agency (GEB), it appears that it will be used for causes other than the concern for lost sinners. Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners, His own words, not to make sinners happy in their sins.

There can be no Christian relationship between those church members who reduce missionary effort and substitute human means of reaching lost sinners. Substituting human effort for the work of the Holy Spirit; for example, taking a human derelict out of the gutter, bathing him, putting new clothes on him and money in his pockets, but leaving his heart the same old heart with the same old appetite, and you will have to pick him out of the gutter again and again.

THE MERGER QUESTION

By Willis H. Owens

Theology, not the Civil War or racism was the cause of the split between the Southern Church (old-school theology) and the Northern Church (new-school). Had the theology of both churches remained the same after the Civil War, reunion would have been an accomplished fact long ago. But a definite stand on New-School Theology by the Northern Church in 1869 made reconciliation impossible. Then the Confession, 1967, adopted by the Northern Church made reunion unconstitutional to the PCUS. If the attempt by the new-school theologians in the Southern Church, PCUS, to a-

dopt a Book of Confessions that will not be in conflict with new-school theology is successful then, under our Constitution we could merge with the Northern Church. The result; all will be "new-school" theologically. Those in the Southern Church who do not believe that new-school theology adheres to the teaching of God's Word, the Holy Bible, must separate themselves from unbelief individually, by congregations, or by presbyteries; for there will be no more "old-school" teaching in the PCUS and, in fact, there will be no more Presbyterian Church U. S.

CHURCH PROPERTY

Anon

✓ As a P. C. U. S. Elder, I have been quite upset over the actions of our church in claiming ownership of the property of churches whose majority or entire congregations voted to leave the PCUS.

Did the Presbytery or Synod furnish the money to build these churches? It appears to me that in all cases the congregation paid for their church.

This fact is causing much concern and desire of other churches to leave PCUS with or without their property.

The present setup does not represent a democracy. Majority rule has always been our precedent, such as occurs in the General Assembly. The PCUS should not allow itself to use this as a whip and go to court to force the giving to them property which they do not own except through some misguided rules of applying power. This is unforgivable. It is my belief that if we were more forgiving, many churches would desire to remain in PCUS.

Why not have the majority that voted to leave repay those in the minority what they paid on the church property?

It is my feeling that we should not take something we did not pay for, especially church property, on which PCUS Presbytery or Synod paid nothing. It seems to me that we are not acting in Christian love to the dissenting brother who desires to leave when we are holding over his head that if he leaves we take his property. Legal ramifications have nothing to do with it. We have a moral obligation to uphold. This we have not done.

Was the Book of Church Order changed specifically in order to use the power of the church to force the dissenting brother to stay with PCUS and support it against his will?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

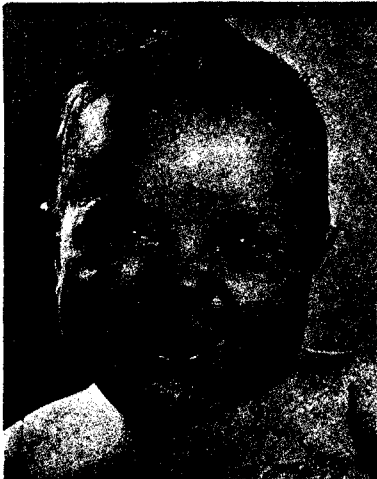
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MORE LEVEL HEADS THAN OURS SPEAK OUT ON THE NEW BOOK OF CONFESSIONS.



Why worry about the new confession when they don't know the old one yet.



I trusted them, see what we wound up with.



Forget it-lets work on the unsaved for awhile.



If we approve it and destroy the Church what does it profit us?



Equal rights yes. But I just can't see this new confession at all.



Look, we've been working on it eight years leave it alone.



Approve it Dr. Winn, before they find out what's in it.



Need a new confession? You must be kidding.



I've had it. I'm going to move my membership.

**"IMPLIED TRUST" RULED;
CHURCH PROPERTY LOST**
Reprinted from the Presbyterian Journal,
December 3, 1975

JACKSON, Tenn.--The Chancery Court of Madison County has awarded the property of the Johnson Memorial Presbyterian Church here to a group recognized by the Presbytery of Memphis of the Presbyterian Church US as the "true congregation."

There will be great rejoicing in Presbyterian US denominational circles over the decision of Judge Brooks McLemore in the case of the Johnson Memorial Presbyterian Church of Jackson, Tenn. If this incredible decision by the lower court is allowed to stand, a presbytery will be able to assemble any group of people, whether or not they can be certified as members of the church, and designate them the true church against a unanimous vote of a bona fide congregation. Consider the following as it came out in the actual trial:--The vote of the Johnson Memorial congregation was unanimous. There was no minority at the time of the vote and no appeal or protest registered against the vote.

The list of people presented to Memphis Presbytery several months later as the "loyal minority" and designated by the presbytery as the "true church" was not examined by the presbytery to see if the people listed were, indeed, bona fide members. Some, it seems, were not.

Among the leaders of the so-called loyal minority were leaders of the movement to separate from the PCUS who had voted for separation.

**SOME ACTIONS OF THE 1969 GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

- A. Voted to have a committee appointed to draft a new Confession of Faith.
- B. Voted to have the moderator appoint a committee of 12 to meet with a similar committee in the UPUSA Church to develop a plan of merger.
- C. Adopted a statement to the effect that there is no contradiction between the theory of evolution and the Bible--reversing the time-honored position of our church on evolution.

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