



*"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 37

PAGE ONE

FINAL WORDS OF EXHORTATION

by Willis H. Owens, Exec. V-President

In this last bulletin from Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., it is our desire to follow the advice given by the Apostle Paul to his son (in the spirit), Timothy. "Till I come give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine": (I Timothy 4-13) He is coming again, you know!

The last General Assembly, the 116th, at Tuscaloosa, Alabama convinced those of us who were present that the liberal forces had complete control of the machinery of government in our church. The adoption of an all inclusive Book of Confessions by a 6 to 1 margin, in spite of the efforts of Concerned Presbyterians and the Covenant Fellowship, convinced us.

The Plan of Union for merger with the U. P. U. S. A. (Northern Church) is now scheduled for presentation to the General Assembly at the 1978, 118th meeting. We have wondered why the plan was put off until that date. We understand that the committee has not made a final draft of the plan and will present the final draft to the 1978 Assembly. That will make the final action for merger take place at the 1979 Assembly.

We have heard that one executive of the General Assembly Mission Board (formerly G. E. B.) has expressed doubt that the merger will ever take place. We do not accept that as being the case. The liberal forces have never changed their plans or purpose in this merger. Failure in 1954 did not discourage them, and, that is and has been their goal since that time.

When the committees of the two denominations in February 1973 eliminated the so called

"Escape Clause" from the Plan of Union, most of the conservative members of the PCUS decided that the situation was hopeless as far as being able to turn our PCUS Church from its liberal course; so they organized the **Presbyterian Church in America**. Concerned Presbyterians, Inc. at that time felt that there was a need to continue to operate in order to keep the churches and members of the PCUS informed as to the developments and trends in our church. This we have done. We have given advice to churches and individuals seeking advice on questions of property, doctrine, etc.

Now the time has come when we feel we could not, with good conscience, ask our loyal supporters to give their money to carry on the work of this office, when we do not believe that we could accomplish anything further toward turning the PCUS around. After merger there will be no PCUS. In fact, at present the PCUS Church does not abide by the doctrinal beliefs upon which it was founded. As far as merger is concerned, the Northern and Southern denominations are so closely knit together already that it is the opinion of those who are promoting the final act, that "We could not be separated now if we wanted to." Therefore, we at Concerned Presbyterians, Inc. do not feel that we should continue to use funds donated for the Lord's work when we do not see how we can use it for the advancement of His Kingdom under the present circumstances.

We realize that we will continue to receive some mail from members and churches in the PCUS, and we will continue, personally, to answer any inquiries that come to us to the best of our ability. It is not possible to terminate an operation of this kind like flipping a light switch, but officially Con-

cerned Presbyterians, Inc. will cease to exist after October 31, 1976. We do not feel that our efforts have been wasted, and we do thank all of our members for their prayers and support these dozen years.

THE PROPERTY ISSUE

We have never been convinced that Civil Courts were correct when they maintained that the denomination had a vested interest in the property of a local congregation.

Paragraph 6:1, 2 of the Book of Church Order plainly states: ".....a congregation, (incorporated or not) can elect trustees or officers of like nature who shall have power and authority to buy, sell, or mortgage property for the church, to accept and execute deeds,.....to hold and defend titles to the same, to manage any permanent special funds entrusted to them..."

Paragraph 6-3 states ".....in case a church is dissolved by presbytery or otherwise ceases to exist, and no disposition has been made of its property....."

The local church has authority under Paragraph 6: 1,2. Why not dispose of the property? Efforts to amend the above stated Par. 6: 3 have failed. Paragraph 4 has been amended by adding sub. par. No. 2. Number 2 states:

"The relationship to the Presbyterian Church US of a particular church can be severed only by constitutional action on the part of the presbytery of which it is a member".

We cannot see where Par. 4: 2 has any relation to Par. 6: 1,2,3. Why should a local congregation not have the right to "dispose" of its property, disband, and organize another congregation, independent or other?

It seems to us that courts have been influenced by arguments originating with denominational officials. Some ministers believe that the denomination owns the local church property. That is understandable because the minister is under the authority of presbytery.

It is our belief that presbytery's purpose is to see that the minister and the congregation adheres to the doctrine of the church. That is an ecclesiastical matter. Church property is a civil matter. But to quote Matthew Henry: "It is ill with a people when their physicians are their worse disease."

Presbyteries have taken local congregations to Civil Court and with such congregations own money, given voluntarily to further the work of Christ's Kingdom, have fought them to deprive them of their property. No one can call that right. It seems to us that the local people who bought, paid for, and have the deed and control of the property are the owners.

In some cases the cost of fighting a court battle to retain local church property would amount to more than the value of the property.

We believe the question of ownership of local church property still is unclear and will have to be decided by the U. S. Supreme Court so as to leave no doubt. If presbytery did not have the funds through benevolences, given by God's people for God's work they could not fight a case in Civil Court.

In conclusion: There would be no dissension in the denomination if the teaching of God's Word was adhered to according to our Confession Faith. There would be no objection to merger with another denomination which strictly adhered to the teaching of God's Word. All of the dissent in our PCUS Church roots back to controversy over the authority of the Scriptures. If there was no apostasy, there would be no division.

Our advice to every church family is: If you want to know what's happening in the Christian Churches, get both sides of the question; subscribe to, read, and support the Presbyterian Journal, P. O. Box 635, Weaverville, N. C. 28787. Also, we hope for each of you God's blessings.

THE CONCERNED PRESBYTERIAN

Published quarterly by
Concerned Presbyterians, Inc.
P. O. Box 1253

Sanford, N. C. 27330
Dr. C. Gregg Singer, Pres. & Editor
Willis H. Owens, Ex. Vp & Co-Editor
Jasper H. Wilson, Secretary
David P. Dean, V-President
Col. Roy LeCraw, Attorney & Director
Mailing Office: Sanford, N. C. 27330

Contributions to National Council of Churches

		1973	1974	1975	Total	Percent	Per-Capita
1. United Methodist Church	A	\$ 159,600	\$ 168,833	\$ 210,680	\$12,504,292	39.76%	\$1.24
	B	2,320,596	3,399,330	6,245,253			
2. United Presbyterian Church	A	132,426	88,485	103,235	6,444,456	20.49	2.41
	B	1,852,620	1,835,098	2,432,592			
3. United Church of Christ	A	49,283	41,791	52,791	3,190,716	10.14	1.73
	B	957,943	1,075,178	1,013,730			
4. Episcopal Church	A	51,807	55,518	81,974	2,543,726	8.09	.87
	B	488,406	670,998	1,195,023			
5. Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	A	22,299	20,619	40,672	1,948,688	6.19	1.48
	B	537,046	597,959	730,093			
6. Presbyterian Church in the U.S.	A	14,875	31,639	28,204	1,665,820	5.30	1.85
	B	465,442	498,647	627,013			
7. American Baptist Churches	A	11,462	9,907	17,658	1,028,806	3.27	.65
	B	257,923	298,059	433,797			
8. Lutheran Church in America	A	57,140	52,120	62,110	995,462	3.16	.33
	B	247,748	287,825	288,519			
9. Reformed Church in America	A	9,254	10,532	15,263	551,554	1.75	
	B	129,430	218,655	168,420			
10. Church of the Brethren	A	7,072	7,163	9,380	363,905	1.16	
	B	101,615	106,231	132,444			
11. Moravian Church	A	1,445	1,170	1,610	39,490		
	B	9,222	17,526	8,517			
12. African Methodist Episcopal Church	A	1,130	2,130	2,500	27,982		
	B	10,431	6,957	4,834			
13. Greek Orthodox Church	A	2,505	(1,100)	3,000	23,545		
	B	4,000	(1,150)	16,290			
14. Friends United Meeting	A	847	395	900	20,834		
	B	3,624	9,130	5,938			
15. African Methodist Episcopal Zion	A	2,550	2,510	2,650	20,581		
	B	2,132	4,010	6,729			
16. National Baptist Churches—America	A	1,000	—	1,600	17,600		
	B	5,000	5,000	5,000			
17. Christian Methodist Episcopal Church	A	1,600	2,000	3,000	17,372		
	B	3,120	1,500	6,152			
18. National Baptist Churches—U.S.A.	A	1,255	750	565	11,445		
	B	500	5,000	3,375			
19. Progressive National Baptist Church	A	1,630	1,785	2,340	11,425		
	B	2,020	2,640	1,010			
20. Friends Philadelphia Yearly Meeting	A	580	580	790	11,125		
	B	3,020	2,945	3,210			
21. Swedenborgian Church	A	560	560	760	4,550		
	B	940	990	740			
22. Armenian Church of America	A	630	650	850	3,930		
	B	650	650	500			
23. Orthodox Church in America	A	390	480	850	2,170		
	B	225	225	—			
24. Patriarchal Parishes	A	190	290	400	1,200		
	B	210	110	—			
25. Polish National Catholic Church	A	250	250	300	900		
	B	50	50	—			
26. Seventh Day Baptist Church	A	330	—	—	822		
	B	492	—	—			
27. Antiochian Orthodox Church—N.Y.	A	200	—	360	560		
	B	—	—	—			
28. Hungarian Reformed Church	A	—	—	100	180		
	B	—	80	—			
29. Serbian Orthodox Church	A	—	—	—	28		
	B	—	10	18			
30. Antiochian Orthodox—Toledo	A	—	—	—	—		
	B	—	—	—	—		
31. Syrian Orthodox Church	A	—	—	—	—		
	B	—	—	—	—		
32. Ukrainian Orthodox Church	A	—	—	—	—		
	B	—	—	—	—		
Totals	A	\$ 532,310	\$ 499,057	\$ 644,542	\$ 1,675,909		
	B	7,404,405	9,043,653	13,329,197	29,777,255		
Grand Total		\$7,936,715	\$9,542,710	\$13,973,739	\$31,453,164	100.00%	

A = For General Operations and General Program
 B = Other Programs and Projects

This table is reprinted from the Presbyterian Layman.
 The Northern Churches Conservative publication.

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 bretheren, 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.

The Concerned Presbyterian

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

P. O. BOX 1253

SANFORD, N. C. 27330

NON-PROFIT ORG. U. S. POSTAGE PAID SANFORD N. C. PERMIT NO. 183
--