

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHMEN UNITED

# Contact

Number 7

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## YE SHALL BE WITNESSES

Less than two years ago 500 ministers of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. signed and published the Declaration of Commitment, by which they declared their steadfast allegiance to the Constitution of our Church, their ordination vows, and the continuance of a Church faithful to the Bible and the Reformed Faith. Almost immediately they were joined by scores of additional ministers and hundreds of Church Sessions.

Now rededicated Church Courts indicate that the Holy Spirit continues to multiply this witness. Fifteen Presbyteries already have passed resolutions indicating a firm stand for our Confession and Polity and against the loss or change of these through church unions.

Other Presbyteries will no doubt follow suit and all across the General Assembly local Church Sessions are declaring themselves for the Faith. It makes you proud of the great Presbyterian Fellowship. In this issue of Contact are printed a few of the many resolutions that have been adopted.

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### THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Osceola, Arkansas

WE, THE SESSION OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OSCEOLA, ARKANSAS being loyal to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and holding in high esteem the great heritage of our denomination, especially in the areas of its Reformed Theology and representative government, express concern over the unrest in our church and are constrained by our consciences in obedience to our Lord, who is the Head of the Church, and to our ordination

vows to take an affirmative stand on behalf of the continuation of a Presbyterian Church loyal to Scripture and to the Reformed Faith.

In order that our position may be well defined on certain critical issues, we do hereby declare that we stand for the historic doctrine and form of government of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. Therefore, for all who are interested and concerned we state specifically:

1. The Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Osceola, Arkansas believes there is a need for a Presbyterian Reformed Witness. We therefore are opposed to the inclusion of the Presbyterian Church in the United States in the proposed Church of Christ Uniting and will not consent to be a part of a merger if and when consummated. Further we will not consent to organic union with the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, which union we believe would inevitably result in merger with the proposed Church of Christ Uniting, a merger now forbidden by the constitution of our Church; and departure from the Reformed faith as set forth in the Standards of our Church, the Westminster confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.
2. We, the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Osceola, Arkansas, reaffirm the validity of the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms as the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. Though there may be some necessity for updating and modifying these standards that they may be more intelligible, understandable to the people of our day, we cannot in good conscience accept any dilution or demeaning of them or of any change in the ordination vows which would no longer bind church officers to adhere to the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.
3. The Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Osceola, Arkansas is for the retention of the present Book of Church Order provision which place local church property ownership and control in the particular congregation and would oppose, through all legal available means, any change in the Book of Church Order which would take control of all local property presently owned from our congregation.
4. We, the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Osceola, Arkansas, do not believe that the present plan for the restructuring of Synods is for the best interest of the Church as a whole and any restructuring should be delayed until some of the divisive issues in our church are resolved.

## MADISON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Madison, Fla.

We, the SESSION OF MADISON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MADISON, FLORIDA, have adopted the following resolution:

WHEREAS we believe that some of the policies, pronouncements, and programs of boards, agencies, and committees of the Church violate the clear teaching of God's Word as revealed in the Holy Scriptures and are dishonoring to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS we are not in agreement with many of the actions of recent General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church in the United States; and

WHEREAS we are constrained by our consciences in obedience to our ordination vows to take an affirmative stand on behalf of the continuation of a Presbyterian Church loyal to Scripture and to the Reformed faith;

NOW THEREFORE, we, the SESSION OF MADISON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, do hereby declare that we have covenanted together henceforth to stand for the historic doctrine and form of government of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. To be very specific:

1. The Session of Madison Presbyterian Church is strongly opposed to organic union with the United Presbyterian Church USA, which union would inevitably result in the disappearance of the Presbyterian Church U. S. and facilitate further non-Reformed mergers such as is proposed by COCU, or Church of Christ Uniting.
2. The Session of Madison Presbyterian Church cannot in good conscience accept any dilution of the Confession by including it in a Book of Confessions; nor will we accept any changes in ordination vows which would no longer bind officers of the Church to adhere to the doctrinal standards of the Church.
3. The Session of Madison Presbyterian Church will refuse to recognize as binding upon our Church any change in the Book of Church Order which would take control of local Church property from congregations and vest it in the presbytery.
4. The Session of Madison Presbyterian Church will not surrender ownership or control of our property to any united, combined, or restructured body if such surrender, in the judgment of this court, would constitute a threat to the spiritual and moral principles elsewhere defended in resolution.
5. The Session of Madison Presbyterian Church considers the primary objective of the Church to be the Lord's command: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." We, do, of course, recognize social implications in the Gospel but we do **not** recognize any objective as being primary to this one or even equal to it.
6. The Session of Madison Presbyterian Church has determined that, in the event that church union becomes imminent, a Congregational Meeting will be called to determine the advisability of withdrawal from the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

## WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Shreveport, Louisiana

WHEREAS, we, the Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Shreveport, Louisiana, being loyal to the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and holding in high esteem the great heritage of our denomination, express concern over the unrest in our church and are constrained by our consciences in obedience to our ordination vows to take an affirmative stand on behalf of the continuation of a Presbyterian Church loyal to Scripture and to the Reformed Faith, and

WHEREAS, we desire that our position on certain critical issues be well defined for all concerned, and that we stand for the historic doctrine and form of government of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

THEREFORE be it resolved that

1. The Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church of Shreveport, Louisiana, will not consent to organic union with the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., which union we believe would inevitably result in merger with the proposed COCU "Church of Christ Uniting" . . . a merger now forbidden by the constitution of our Church.
2. The Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church of Shreveport, Louisiana, cannot in good conscience accept any dilution or demeaning of the Confession of Faith or any change in the ordination vows which would no longer bind church officers to adhere to the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church U. S. as now constituted.
3. The Constitution of our church which we have sworn to uphold vests the right to buy, sell, mortgage or otherwise encumber local church property in our congregation. The Session of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Shreveport, Louisiana believes that no court of the church has a moral or legal right to take this power away from the congregations now existing and through all legal means available would oppose any change in the Book of Church Order which would take control of presently owned local property from our congregation.

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## COLLEGE PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

College Park, Ga.

WHEREAS we believe that many actions of recent General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church in the United States have been contrary to the Constitution and Doctrine of the Church; and

WHEREAS we are convinced that some of the policies, pronouncements and programs of Boards, Agencies and Committees of the Church violate the clear teaching of God's Word as revealed in the Holy Scriptures and are dishonoring to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS we are constrained by our consciences in obedience to our ordination vows to take an affirmative stand on behalf of the continuation of a Presbyterian Church loyal to Scripture and to the Reformed Faith;

NOW THEREFORE, we the Session of The College Park Presbyterian Church do hereby declare that we

have covenanted together to stand for the historic doctrine and form of government of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. To be very specific:

1. The Session of The College Park Presbyterian Church will not consent to organic union with the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., which union would inevitably result in merger with the proposed COCU "Church of Christ Uniting" — a merger now forbidden by the Constitution of our Church.
2. The Session of The College Park Presbyterian Church cannot in good conscience accept any dilution or demeaning of the Confession of Faith or any change in ordination vows which would no longer bind church officers to adhere to the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church U. S.
3. The Constitution of our Church which we have sworn to uphold vests the right to buy, sell, mortgage or otherwise encumber local church property in our congregation. The Session of The College Park Presbyterian Church believes that no court of the Church has a moral or legal right to take this power away from congregations now existing and will refuse to recognize any change in the Book of Church Order which would take control of presently owned local church property from our congregation.
4. Be it further resolved by the Session of The College Park Presbyterian Church that our position and subsequent action on the foregoing items be publicized and that certified copies of this Resolution be forwarded to the clerk of the Atlanta Presbytery and the Moderator of the General Assembly.

### THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Chattanooga, Tenn.

We, the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Chattanooga, being loyal to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and holding in high esteem the great heritage of our denomination, express concern over the unrest in our Church and are constrained by our consciences in obedience to our ordination vows to take an affirmative stand on behalf of the continuation of a Presbyterian Church loyal to Scripture and to the Reformed Faith.

In order that our position on certain critical issues might be well defined for all concerned, we do hereby declare that we stand for the historic doctrine and form of government of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. To be very specific:

1. The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Chattanooga will not consent to organic union with the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., which union we believe would inevitably result in merger with the proposed COCU "Church of Christ Uniting"—a merger now forbidden by the Constitution of our Church.
2. The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Chattanooga cannot in good conscience accept any dilution or demeaning of the Confession of Faith or any change in ordination vows which would no

longer bind church officers to adhere to the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church U. S. as now constituted.

3. The Constitution of our Church which we have sworn to uphold vests the right to buy, sell, mortgage or otherwise encumber local church property in our congregation. The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Chattanooga believes that no court of the Church has a moral or legal right to take this power away from congregations now existing and through all legal means available would oppose any change in the Book of Church Order which would take control of presently owned local church property from our congregation.

### CYNTHIANA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Cynthiana, Ky.

We the congregation of the Cynthiana Presbyterian Church: having before our eyes the honor and glory of God our Father; the advancement of the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; and the peace and harmony of this flock gathered under our particular Christian persuasion,

1. According to the freedom of our consciences as guided by the Holy Spirit through the rule of The Holy Writ, the commendable practices of our spiritual fathers in former times, and after mature deliberation,
2. Have resolved and determined to enter into a mutual and solemn covenant in matters of religion deemed most excellent and precious to promote the power of godliness and the sacred aspirations of the Christian Reformed Presbyterian life.

We swear: that we shall sincerely, really and constantly through the grace of God, endeavor in our several places and callings to preserve the reformed religion of the Presbyterian Church in the United States in doctrine, worship, discipline and government against any and all encroachments of other theological persuasions.

1. That we shall endeavor to maintain that uniformity in religion, Westminster Confession of Faith, Catechisms, Form of Government, Rules of Discipline and Directory of Worship presently possessed as members of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.
2. That we reaffirm our protest against all theological confessions, ecclesiastical offices and assemblies that may support heresy, schism, union, profanity, secularity or what so ever shall be found to be contrary to sound doctrine and order and the power of godliness as set forth under the principle heads of the present constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.
3. That as we declare these matters we do so for the preservation of ourselves and our religion from dilution, deviation or destruction in order that we and our posterity may, as brethren, live in this faith and love and that the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us.

Therefore, we shall promote and defend these matters at every opportunity before all the courts of the church and land, with the help of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## FARMVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Farmville, Virginia

The following resolution was adopted unanimously by the Session at its Stated Meeting on December 2, 1970:

"We, the Session of the Farmville Presbyterian Church of Farmville, Virginia, being loyal to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and holding in high esteem the great heritage of our denomination, express concern over the unrest in our Church and are constrained by our consciences in obedience to our ordination vows to take an affirmative stand on behalf of the continuation of a Presbyterian Church loyal to Scripture and to the Reformed Faith.

In order that our position on certain critical issues might be well defined for all concerned, we do hereby declare that we stand for the historic doctrine and form of government of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. To be very specific:

1. The Session of Farmville Presbyterian Church of Farmville, Virginia will not consent to organic union with the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., which union we believe would inevitably result in merger with the proposed COCU "Church of Christ Uniting"—a merger now forbidden by the Constitution of our Church.
2. The Session of Farmville Presbyterian Church of Farmville, Virginia cannot in good conscience accept any dilution or demeaning of the Confession of Faith or any change in ordination vows which would no longer bind church officers to adhere to doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church U. S. as now constituted.
3. The Constitution of our Church which we have sworn to uphold vests the right to buy, sell, mortgage or otherwise encumber local church property in our congregation. The Session of Farmville Presbyterian Church of Farmville, Virginia, believes that no court of the Church has a moral or legal right to take this power away from congregations now existing and THROUGH ALL LEGAL MEANS AVAILABLE WOULD OPPOSE ANY CHANGE in the Book of Church Order which would take control of presently owned local church property from our congregation.
4. BE IT RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be published in the Sunday bulletin on December 6, 1970. That a copy be sent to the Stated Clerk of Appomattox Presbytery, to the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Virginia and to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church in the United States.

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## PRESBYTERY OF TUSCALOOSA

"Whereas we believe that many of the actions of recent General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church in the United States have been contrary to the Constitution of the Church in matters of doctrine and government, and,

Whereas we are convinced that some of the policies, pronouncements, and programs of the boards and committees of the Church violate the clear teaching of God's Word as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and are dishonoring to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and

Whereas we are constrained by our consciences in obedience to our ordination vows to take an affirmative stand on behalf of the continuation of a Presbyterian Church in the United States loyal to Scripture and to the Reformed faith;

Now therefore, we the Presbytery of Tuscaloosa will not consent to organic union with the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, which union would inevitably result in the disappearance of the distinctive witness of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and would facilitate further non-Reformed mergers such as is proposed by COCU or Church of Christ Uniting.

Further, we the Presbytery of Tuscaloosa can not in good conscience accept any dilution of the Confession of Faith, nor will we accept any demeaning of our Confession by including it in a Book of Confessions, nor do we accept any changes in ordination vows which would no longer bind Church officers to adhere to the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

Further, we the Presbytery of Tuscaloosa will refuse to recognize as binding upon its churches any change in the Book of Church Order which would take control of local church property from the respective congregations and vest it in the Presbytery.

Further, we the Presbytery of Tuscaloosa will not surrender ownership or control of its property to any united, combined, or restructured body if such surrender, in the judgment of this Presbytery, would constitute a threat to the spiritual and moral principles elsewhere defended in this resolution.

And finally, we the Presbytery of Tuscaloosa will not consent to any plan of restructuring the Church which does not require the consent of the Synods involved, as they are now constituted."

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## THE PRESBYTERY OF BETHEL

"WHEREAS we believe that many actions of recent General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church in the United States have been contrary to the Constitution of the Church, in its doctrine and its form of government; and

WHEREAS we are convinced that some of the policies, pronouncements and programs of boards, agencies and committees of the Church violate the clear teaching of God's Word as revealed in the Holy Scriptures and are dishonoring to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; and

WHEREAS we are constrained by our consciences in obedience to our ordination vows to take an affirmative stand on behalf of the continuation of a Presbyterian Church loyal to Scripture and to the Reformed Faith;

NOW THEREFORE, we the Presbytery of Bethel do hereby declare that we have covenanted together henceforth to stand for the historic doctrine and form of government of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. To be very specific:

1. The Presbytery of Bethel will not consent to organic union with the United Presbyterian Church USA, which union would inevitably result in the disappearance of the distinctive witness of the Presbyterian Church US and facilitate further non-Reformed mergers such as is proposed by the COCU or Church of Christ Uniting.
2. The Presbytery of Bethel cannot in good conscience accept any dilution of the Confession of Faith; nor will we accept any changes in ordination vows which will no longer bind officers of the Church to adhere to the doctrinal standards of the Church.
3. The Presbytery of Bethel will refuse to recognize as binding upon its churches any change in the Book of Church Order which would take control of local church property from congregations and vest it in the presbytery.
4. The Presbytery of Bethel will not surrender ownership or control of its property to any united, combined or restructured body if such surrender, in the judgment of this presbytery, would constitute a threat to the spiritual and moral principles elsewhere defended in this resolution.
5. The Presbytery of Bethel will not consent to any plan for restructuring the Church which does not require the explicit consent of the synods involved.

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#### AUGUSTA-MACON PRESBYTERY

“WHEREAS we have taken our ordination vows under a Constitution expressed in specific doctrine and polity;

AND WHEREAS the basic doctrine of this Constitution is expressed in the Westminster Standards;

AND WHEREAS a distinctive and historic tenet of the polity of the Presbyterian Church in the United States places the ownership and control of local church property under the local congregation;

AND WHEREAS we believe that a reversal or denial of these tenets would drastically alter the very nature of the Constitution under which we took our ordination vows so as to make it in reality an essentially different constitution from that under which this presbytery was constituted;

AND WHEREAS having searched the Scriptures and having found no mandate to reverse or deny these basic tenets;

AND WHEREAS, we believe that recent General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church in the United States have taken actions that look toward church mergers which

are illegal under our present constitution and the alteration of the basic doctrine and polity of our Church;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that:

1. The Presbytery of Augusta-Macon opposes any reversal or denial of the basic system of doctrine set forth in the Westminster Standards; and opposes such changes in ordination vows as will no longer bind officers of the Church to our present basic doctrinal standards.
2. The Presbytery of Augusta-Macon opposes organic union with the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, as it no longer binds its Ministers, Elders and Deacons to a definite Confessional Standard, which union would therefore lead to a disappearance of the distinctive witness of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and would facilitate further non-Reformed mergers, such as that proposed by the Consultation on Church Union.
3. The Presbytery of Augusta-Macon will support its churches in their right to hold and control their local church properties.”

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#### KNOXVILLE PRESBYTERY

The Presbytery of Knoxville, being loyal to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and holding in high esteem the great heritage of our denomination, express concern over the unrest in our Church and are constrained by our consciences in obedience to our ordination vows to take an affirmative stand on behalf of the continuation of a Presbyterian Church loyal to Scripture and to the Reformed Faith.

In order that our position on certain critical issues might be well defined for all concerned, we do hereby declare that we stand for the historic doctrine and form of government of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. To be very specific:

1. The Presbytery of Knoxville will not consent to organic union with the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., which union we believe would inevitably result in merger with the proposed COCU “Church of Christ Uniting”—a merger now forbidden by the Constitution of our Church.
2. The Presbytery of Knoxville cannot in good conscience accept any dilution or demeaning of the Confession of Faith or any change in ordination vows which would no longer bind church officers to adhere to the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church U. S. as now constituted.
3. The Constitution of our Church which we have sworn to uphold vests the right to buy, sell, mortgage, or otherwise encumber local church property in our congregations. The Presbytery of Knoxville believes that no court of the Church has a moral or legal right to take this power away from congregations now existing and THROUGH ALL LEGAL MEANS AVAILABLE WOULD OPPOSE ANY CHANGE in the Book of Church Order which would take control of presently owned local church property from our congregations.

## EAST ALABAMA PRESBYTERY

WHEREAS, we hold that recent General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. have taken actions that look toward unconstitutional church mergers and the alteration of the basic doctrine and polity of our church;

WHEREAS, conscience will permit us to do no less than take a clear and affirmative stand on behalf of the preservation and continuation of a Presbyterian church loyal to Scripture and to the Reformed Faith;

WE NOW, THEREFORE, advise the higher courts of the church that we have determined to stand for the historic doctrine and form of government of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. and do herewith declare:

1. The Presbytery of East Alabama will oppose and will not be party to organic union with the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., which union would inevitably lead to a disappearance of our distinctive confessional witness and would facilitate further non-Reformed mergers, such as that proposed by COCU (Church of Christ Uniting).
2. The Presbytery of East Alabama will not accept any dilution of the system of doctrine set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith; nor will we accept the demeaning of our confessional standards by including them in a Book of Confessions; nor will we accept such changes in ordination vows as will no longer require officers of the church to adhere to our present Westminster standards.
3. The Presbytery of East Alabama maintains that the constitution of our church vests in local congregations the sole right to own and control local church property and that no court of the church has a moral or legal right to try to take this ownership and control away from local congregations.

In consequence of the foregoing, the Presbytery of East Alabama will take such actions as it may deem necessary or desirable to protect and preserve the propositions and principles herein set forth.

## PRESBYTERY OF SOUTH MISSISSIPPI

WHEREAS the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States continues to participate in conversations which may lead to unconstitutional mergers with the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. and with the Church of Christ Uniting (COCU; and

WHEREAS the writing of a New Confession for our church continues, the substance of which confession cannot be known; and

WHEREAS repeated efforts are being made to undermine the integrity of our form of government, and the powers of the various courts of the church,

We now therefore as a presbytery do declare that we shall not depart from certain basic aspects of our church's heritage, to wit:

1. We shall not depart from our oath-bound commitment to the system of doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms for any confession or book of confessions less biblical in content than our present confession.
2. We shall not depart from these confessional commitments of our ordination vows for the sake of establishing a broader unity of the church; and specifically will oppose organic union with the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. or with Church of Christ Uniting (COCU), which unions would nullify the confessional witness of our church.
3. We shall not depart from our recognition of the legal and moral claims of the local congregation to its properties, or from our opposition to any efforts to remove these properties from the ownership and control of the local congregation.

By this resolution the Presbytery of South Mississippi hereby notifies the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States that as a presbytery we shall not be moved from our commitment to these particular principles, and will continue to take such actions as may be necessary to preserve our integrity as a presbytery.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHMEN UNITED  
263 Candler Dr., Macon, Ga. 31204

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Resolutions

Declarations

Covenants

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