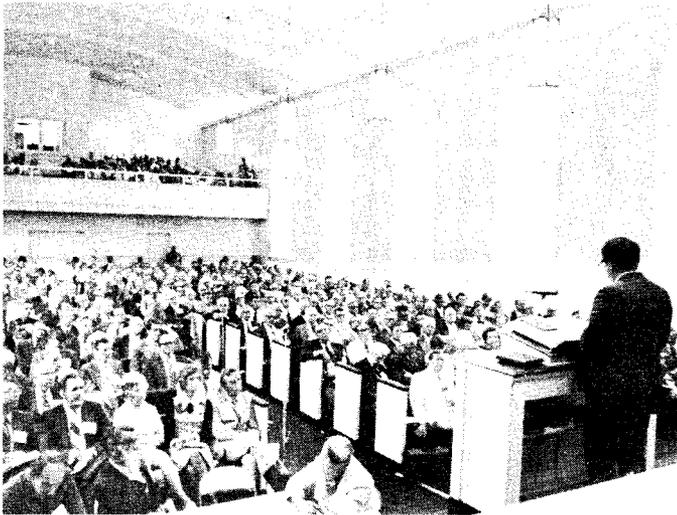


CONTACT

PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCHMEN
UNITED

NUMBER 25 — JUNE 1973

THE CONVOCATION OF SESSIONS



A new Pentecost? No, for that outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the early disciples was a once-for-all, never-to-be-repeated event.

A great moving of the Holy Spirit? Yes, for His sovereign Presence was almost tangible. From the most mundane logistical details, such as setting up tables in the registration room, to the stirring expositions of God's Word from the pulpit, God was there — guiding, encouraging, moderating, inspiring — having His way.

God's gracious working was the secret of the resounding success of the Convocation, meeting May 18-19 in the lovely facilities of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Atlanta. More than 450 Sessional representatives from 260 Southern churches gathered at the invitation of 30 Sessions and the Steering Committee for a Continuing Presbyterian Church to discuss future steps in the continuing Church movement.

The representatives voted on Saturday morning to "call for the establishment during 1973 of a Continuing Presbyterian Church, loyal to Scripture, the Reformed Faith, and committed to the spiritual mission of the Church as Christ commanded in the Great Commission." The tally was 349-16.

After Friday afternoon presentations by members of the Steering Committee, and Friday night debate and discussion by the representatives, the Convocation elected Mr. Jack Williamson, Attorney at Law, from Greenville, Ala., to the post of Chairman Pro Tem. Dr. Morton Smith, professor at Reformed Theological Seminary, was chosen Clerk, Pro Tem.

Mr. Williamson presided over the Saturday morning business meeting. During this period, the representatives (1) Adopted the contents of the Reaffirmations of 1973, (2) Adopted the resolution calling for the establishment of the reborn Church this year, (3) Called for an Advisory Convention for August 7-9, to lay the groundwork for the first General Assembly, and (4) Elected a forty man Organizing Committee to prepare for the Convention and bring recommendations concerning the General Assembly.

The Organizing Committee's first stated meeting is scheduled for Atlanta, June 1-2. In a preliminary meeting, held before the Convocation adjourned, the Committee set the time and place of the Advisory Convention: August 7-9, Grove Park Inn, Asheville, N. C.

Thus, the Steering Committee's faithful planning and working has borne fruit. Now, with the leadership of a broader and more representative Organizing Committee, the continuing Church movement nears its climax in the Advisory Convention, and its completion — in the formation of a Church that will be true to the Scriptures and the Faith of the Westminster standards.

KEEPING POSTED

- Two more churches voted Sunday, May 20, to separate from the PCUS. They are the Westminster, Tallahassee, Florida, and the Madison, Florida congregations. According to our records, this raises to 60 the number of churches that have withdrawn from the PCUS in recent months.

- Pulpit Nominating Committees are urged to write us for names of conservative ministers who may consider a call at this time. Let us hear from you soon!

- The Synod of Florida has adopted a stringent resolution which instructs presbyteries to appoint Administrative Commissions to deal with churches that may withdraw. Included in the high-handed action is the stipulation that Sessions may not call a congregational meeting to withdraw without first giving 90 days' notice to the presbytery.

- The Presbytery of Central Mississippi adopted Guidelines which permit churches to be dismissed with their property if the congregational majority is as high as 75% when the vote is taken.

• A slide presentation with cassette tape accompaniment, portraying the historical and contemporary roots of the continuing Church movement, premiered at the Convocation of Sessions, will be available for local church showing by June 2, the Lord willing. The presentation is offered on a free loan basis. Get your orders in soon.

• Dr. Morton Smith's book, **HOW THE GOLD HAS BECOME DIM**, may be ordered now at the pre-publication price of \$1.25. After June 10, the cost will go to \$2.00. The book documents PCUS General Assemblies' departures from the church's constitution.

• The functions of the Steering Committee have been assumed by the Convocation-elected Organizing Committee of 40. Communications concerning the continuing Church may still be sent, however, to Dr. John Richards, P. O. Drawer 1024, Perry, Ga. 31069, or to the PCU office.

• The Kentucky Supreme Court reversed the District Court's earlier ruling which allowed the Cynthiana church to keep its property.

• If you're not on our PCU mailing list, send us your name and address — we'll be happy to include you!

• Jack Williamson's Convocation address, "Law and Procedure," will soon be available in folder form, as will Morton Smith's presentation of excerpts from his book. Order from PCU.

WHAT NOW?

You are a Minister — a Ruling Elder — a member — of a conservative Church that wishes to be a part of the continuing Church movement. What do you do now?

1. **PRAY.** Seek God's guidance in every decision, every action.

2. **INFORM** the congregation concerning the issues that have forced many conservatives to act.

3. **ELECT** official representatives to the Advisory Convention for the Continuing Presbyterian Church, August 7-9, 1973, Grove Park Inn, Asheville, N. C.

4. **WORK** with other conservative churches in your area and move together as God leads and enables. Carefully study the "Manual for Separation" and its necessary supplement, "Separation, 1973."

5. **SECURE** a competent local lawyer to assist you with interpretation of property titles and deeds and to give counsel concerning local and state laws in relation to ecclesiastical law.

6. **ASSIST** in the financial undergirding of the reborn Church by giving generously to it through any of the four organizations in the conservative coalition.

As you educate your people, use literature published by: Concerned Presbyterians, 100 N. Biscayne Blvd., Miami, Fla. 33132, Presbyterian Churchmen United, 3436 Wellington Rd., Montgomery, Ala. 36106, and get the *Presbyterian Journal* into the hands of every person.

Have information meetings for the congregation — to answer questions, allay fears, give honest appraisals of the situation.

Ask the minister to deliver a series of messages on the crisis in the denomination.

Be faithful in your personal devotion to Jesus Christ — pray, meditate upon His Word, share the Gospel, worship with His people at every opportunity.

CONVOCATION CANDIDS

THE KOREAN GIRLS' CHOIR — a singing bouquet of some of God's loveliest blossoms of grace.

A LATE NIGHT SESSION OF PRAYER with 700 persons huddled in small groups, lifting hushed voices to God, asking for His will to be done in Saturday morning's voting.

FRIDAY DINNER ON THE LAWN, with gigantic oaks splashing cool shadows over hundreds of finger lickin' Presbyterians.

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A HUSH — of tension? expectancy? fear? — in the halls, around the snack tables, in the overflow rooms, on the lawn, as the critical vote on the establishment of the new church was taken.

CONVOCATION STATS

For the "statistics nuts" here are a few figures that might be of interest:

- 260 Sessions sent representatives
- 452 elected representatives registered
- About 1000 persons filled the Westminster Presbyterian Church sanctuary and flowed over into three rooms set up with closed-circuit TV
- The 260 officially represented churches reported about 70,800 members last year
- 40 volunteers, besides the Session and Diaconate, and the office staff, from the Westminster church provided splendid assistance through-out the two-day period
- 650 of Colonel Sander's best were consumed for Friday dinner

- Press coverage was extensive, with about ten papers represented by on-the-spot reporters and at least another ten in touch via telephone
- 13 hours of Convocation business were captured on five large reel-to-reel tapes
- A video tape was made of the entire proceedings
- The Organizing Committee of Forty includes 20 Teaching Elders and 20 Ruling Elders
- \$1,300.00 was collected in the only offering received. The entire amount will go to the relief of suffering in Bangladesh.

- **Reformed Youth Conference**
JUNE 18-23
Sardis, Miss.
Write: Rt. 1, Box 197, Coeburn, Va. 24230
- **Camp Westminster Junior I Camp**
(ages 8-11)
JUNE 26-JULY 7
- **Pensacola Youth Crusade**
JULY 8-14
Write: 1120 E. Blount St., Pensacola, Fla.
- **Reformed Youth Conference**
JULY 9-14
Bristol, Tenn.
Write: Rt. 1, Box 197, Coeburn, Va. 24230
- **Camp Westminster Pioneer Camp**
JULY 10-21
- **Tampa Youth Conference**
JULY 16-20
Write: 6101 N. Habana St., Tampa, Fla. 33614
- **Camp Westminster Junior II** (ages 7-11)
JULY 23-AUGUST 3
- **Camp Westminster Family Bible Conference**
AUGUST 5-12
- **P. E. F. Evangelism Conference**
AUGUST 9-14
Montreat, N. C.
Write: P. O. Box 808, Hopewell, Va. 23860
- **Pensacola Theological Institute**
AUGUST 12-19
Write: 1220 E. Blount St., Pensacola, Fla.



Moderator Pro Tem Jack Williamson

SUMMER CONFERENCES FOR YOUNG AND OLD

Members of your family will be blessed with sincere Christian fellowship and sound doctrine at the following conferences:

- **Christian Studies Center, Summer Institute**
JUNE 11-JULY 7
Warren Wilson College, Swannanoa, N. C.
(Choose one or all of four weekly institutes.)
Write: P. O. Box 17122, Memphis, TN 38117
- **Camp Westminster Senior Camp**
JUNE 12-23
Near Conyers, Ga. Rt. 5, 30207



The Korean Girls' Choir

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CLOSET CALL

"And when thou prayest, enter into thy closet . . ." — Matthew 6:6

Praise God for the gracious outpouring of His Spirit upon the Convocation of Sessions.

Give thanks that the Convocation adopted the Reaffirmations of 1973, calling for the establishment, this year, of a new ecclesiastical entity — a denomination that will be true to Scripture, to the Reformed faith, and obedient to the Great Commission.

Pray for the scores of Pastors, Sessions, and congregations who will be separating from the PCUS during the next few weeks.

Keep praying for missionaries who wish to participate in the continuing Church movement and who must make critical decisions concerning their course of action.

Pray for the Organizing Committee of Forty, charged with the responsibility of guiding the movement toward the Advisory Convention in August, and the General Assembly later in '73.

Keep Jack Williamson and Morton Smith in your prayers as they provide leadership for the Organizing Committee.

Give thanks to God for the clear testimony to Christ lifted this year by out-going PCUS Moderator L. Nelson Bell.

Praise the Lord for the dedicated, sincere leadership of the Steering Committee for a Continuing Presbyterian Church that has brought us to this time of accomplishment and success in the conservative movement.

"For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him." — Romans 10:12b

COMMITMENT

(Ed. Note: the following paragraphs, calling for a reborn Presbyterian Church in 1973, were adopted by the Convocation of Sessions.)

"Believing that unless two be agreed they cannot walk together, the Convocation of Sessions, with profound sorrow and many tears, has concluded that there is a separation of those holding different ideologies within the PCUS. We commit ourselves to the rebirth and continuation of a Presbyterian Church in the United States in accord with these reaffirmations, praying our Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit to be our leader and helper. We believe that acknowledgement of the separation and the inevitable rebirth cannot and should not be delayed, and therefore call for the establishment during 1973 of a Continuing Presbyterian Church, loyal to Scripture, the Reformed Faith, and committed to the spiritual mission of the Church as Christ commanded in the Great Commission.

"We pledge our love and fellowship as brothers in Christ with all those who know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord but may, in this present time and situation, follow a different course of action, thus committing ourselves to continued fellowship in love with all men of good will and like conviction of the truth —all for the glory of God and the unity of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"To God be the glory. Amen."

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHMEN UNITED "CONTACT" is an occasional publication of Presbyterian Churchmen United, Inc., an organization of ministers and sessions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. Issued from the office of the Executive Secretary, Paul G. Settle, 3436 Wellington Road, Montgomery, Alabama 36106.

CONTACT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHMEN UNITED
3436 Wellington Rd., Montgomery, Ala. 36106
NUMBER 25 — JUNE 1973

Non-Profit
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Montgomery, Ala.
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