

CONTACT

PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCHMEN
UNITED

NUMBER 27 — SEPTEMBER 1973

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHMEN UNITED

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AN OPEN LETTER

TO ALL P. C. U. MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

Dear Friends in Christ:

At long last, God has brought to fruition the diligent efforts and fervent prayers of thousands of His people -- the Continuing Presbyterian Church will be formally constituted on December 4, 1973!

This means that the task of Presbyterian Churchmen United is completed. Our purposes have been fulfilled. Our functions now can be assumed by the provisional committees of the Continuing Presbyterian Church.

With this in mind, the PCU Executive Committee has voted unanimously to:

1. Redesignate the PCU office in Montgomery, Alabama, as the Administrative Office for the Continuing Presbyterian Church;
2. Turn over to the Continuing Church all the funds, pertinent records, furniture and equipment belonging to PCU;
3. Release the Executive Secretary, the Rev. Paul Settle, and his staff to the Continuing Church;
4. Recall PCU's representatives to the Steering Committee for a Continuing Presbyterian Church;
5. Store all PCU records and files until they can be deposited with an appropriate historical foundation;
6. Encourage our financial supporters to redesignate their PCU gifts toward the Continuing Presbyterian Church Fund, 100 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami, Florida.

It is impossible to adequately thank you for your faithful support of Presbyterian Churchmen United. Your prayers and gifts have been used by God in a marvelous way to undergird this organization's brief but significant service to Christ and His Church. Thank you, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Of course, in a sense, the task has only begun. Now that our goal is in sight, we must turn from the battle and begin to build. The walls of faith and practice in a new denomination must be erected. Please -- continue to pray for God's guidance. Continue to provide generously for the financial support necessary if we are to carry on an immediate ministry of worldwide evangelism and Christian education.

Again, we thank you, and praise God for you. May He richly bless you in these exciting days of opportunity.

Cordially in Christ,



Robert J. Ostenson
Chairman

CONTINUING . . .

- With this issue the publication of CONTACT ceases. It has been a genuine delight to edit this occasional newspaper, and we are grateful for the dozens of complimentary and appreciative letters we have received from readers all over the country. True, some of the letters have not been of the pat-on-the-back kind, but we are thankful for them, too. Keeps us humble, you know.
- Now that Presbyterian Churchmen United has phased out of existence (see the letter on page 1), you are encouraged to continue your support of its foundational principles and goals by praying for the Continuing Presbyterian Church movement. Already, more than 220 congregations have withdrawn from the PCUS and are a part of the movement toward a "reborn" church. It is estimated that, when the first General Assembly convenes in Birmingham, December 4, at least 300 churches will be involved.
- Conservative fellowship across denominational lines will be encouraged and assisted by such organizations as the National Presbyterian and Reformed Fellowship, the Geneva Fellowship, and the Fellowship of Reformed Christian Educators. It is hoped that conservatives in the PCUS and those who have left the denomination will unite their witness through participation in organizations like the ones listed. Concerned Presbyterians is also planning to maintain its vital ministry for conservative laymen in the PCUS.
- Up-to-date news of the Continuing Church will be reported as often as possible in a new newsletter, "Continuing Toward . . .", which is published from the Administrative Office in Montgomery. Churches that would like to receive copies of this almost-weekly paper for distribution, should send their name and address to us at 3436 Wellington Road, Montgomery, Ala.
- The Executive Secretary of PCU reported to the Executive Committee that in the eleven months beginning September 1, 1972 and ending August 1, 1973, he had traveled about 41,000 miles on PCU business. He held 112 meetings in 14 states and addressed over 10,000 people concerning the issues dividing the Church. His two year combined totals climbed to about 70,000 miles traveled to almost 200 meetings before nearly 20,000 people.
- A new organization for Christian educators will be constituted, the Lord willing, in Jackson, Miss., October 4-5, 1973. With the purpose to facilitate communication and united efforts for Reformed educators across denomination lines, the organizers pray for a wide and enthusiastic response from DCE's, teachers, youth workers, and ministers across the country. Dr. Norman Harper of Reformed Theological Seminary, and the Rev. Paul Settle, of Montgomery, Ala., will speak to the gathering in October. Persons wishing more information may write Miss Linda Barlow, 3436 Wellington Road, Montgomery, Ala. 36106.
- The Birmingham Extension Seminary of the Briarwood Presbyterian Church has announced its

Fall course schedules, beginning September 7. The courses offered for full seminary credit are: Old Testament Prophets, Introduction to the Old Testament and Pentateuch, Systematic Theology, and Beginning Greek.

- Minutes of the Advisory Convention held in Asheville, N. C., August 7-9, 1973, are now available from this office. The book of minutes was sent to all representatives to the Convention, plus other ministers and churches who are part of the Continuing Church movement. Further copies may be purchased at .50c each. Anyone interested in the early "shape" of the new denomination will find the minutes quite enlightening.
- Dr. Morton Smith's splendid documentation of the PCUS, HOW IS THE GOLD BECOME DIM, is now available from this office as follows: 1-10 copies, \$2.00; 11-50 copies, \$1.75; 51-100 copies, \$1.25; over 100 copies, \$1.00.
- Our sincere thanks is expressed publicly to Mr. Gary Herring, student at Mississippi Southern University, for his enthusiastic assistance in the PCU office this past Summer.

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 syn-

od boundaries, COLLOQUY magazine, reports of 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 1971-72 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.

Simply put, discipline no longer can and will be consistently exercised in the PCUS (except by liberal courts acting against conservatives). When General Assemblies over the years have gone on record as endorsing or condoning practically every degree of heresy imaginable, how can lower courts or subsequent Assemblies be expected to cast out heretics and repudiate their teachings?

The conservative's position, then, is clear. He must exercise discipline, according to the Scriptures, by withdrawing from the larger body. In this way, discipline is brought to bear on the erring denomination.

THE CONSTANT WOMAN

(Editor's Note: the following remarks are excerpted from an address by Mrs. Rene Schmidt (Virginia) to the gathering of women during the Advisory Convention, Asheville, N. C.)

At this time in the history of the world, in the life of His church, we are, I believe, needed as women, as never before. But we are needed as women in the reality of circumstances, not only being pleasing to the eye, and sweet to the ear, and friendly to the face — as we spend so much time and effort trying to be. We're not to try to MAKE ourselves the prototype of what we believe a Christian woman should be — moulding and shaping ourselves. We're to GIVE ourselves to Him — to Jesus Christ, our Savior, who paid the dearest price possible for the likes of such as us — for Him to make of us what *He* has planned, so that these bodies and these hearts are His to live and work through, in order to bring His completed church to His Father. We are to give ourselves for whatever task, great or small, sweet or bitter He has for us at home, or in this church. And this group — you are the heart of the continuing church, to continue on in the *faith* and in the *faithfulness* to our King,

as we all together continue on toward the goal of the completed church.

What a challenge is yours! What a responsibility!

These dear men of ours have awesome responsibilities and tasks before them of laying foundations and establishing leadership and preserving steadfastness. We, as God's women, their helpmeets, in the home and in the church, have the awesome responsibility of keeping the heart beating — keeping this part of the body of Christ warm, active, vital, aglow with health, and comforted.

It is vital for your heart to stay tuned into and open to Jesus Christ just as Mary's did — so that you will be "fast of heart," as she was, every day of your life.

But it will stay that way only as you remain *faithful* to your Master, as Mary did, in every situation of your life; *firm* in your purpose, as she was, in serving Him no matter what the cost; and *fixed* in your affections and loyalties, as she was, in spite of every unpleasant, heart-breaking circumstance. And there's only one way that you can be faithful and firm and fixed — only one. This way is by consistently meeting with Him, as Mary did, all alone, being quiet before Him in order to hear Him call your name. And, as you listen, you will hear His desires for your life.

Our days are usually so filled with busyness and activity and going and coming and planning and doing and meeting and sharing, that we allow no time in our day for quietly meeting with Him. Just think — if Mary had rushed away in a flurry of activity and busyness to meet needs as she saw them, she would have missed the most precious of all encounters with Him. She would have missed hearing all of His love wrapped up in the speaking of her name. And she would not have been there to receive from Him the tremendous responsibility that He entrusted her with. As your responsibilities as women in this Continuing Church increase, your time will be more and more taken up with new tasks and new demands.

But as we are faithful in daily meeting with Him, to hear Him speak to us through the wonderful means which He has provided — His Bible — His love letter to you — the same great joy that filled Mary's heart will fill yours, and the same assurance of His purpose for you will permeate your life.

The result will be a constant woman — constant in your love and devotion and dedication and service, and, yes, even in suffering, if need be — suffering, perhaps, in an agony of waiting and watching, in a turmoil of events you can't understand, in the need for courage from outside yourself to offset the "fear and trembling" that looms so darkly in the days ahead.

It's then, and only then, that you will be His Constant Woman in His Continuing Church, on the way to being His Completed Woman in His Completed Church.

THE CONSTANT WOMAN

Dear Lord, I am a woman, it's how You
fashioned me,
And Lord, You are my Savior, You died to
purchase me.
Oh, Lord, how much I love You, but so
inconstantly —

But hear my heart, feel it beat for You
Know it reaches out, wants to follow You.
Oh, Lord, I pray to be Your constant woman.

Dear Lord, I am Your handmaid, that's what
You've made of me,
And, Lord, You are my Master, That's just how
it should be.
Oh, Lord, I long to serve You, but so inconstantly.

But hear my heart, feel it beat for You,
Know it reaches out, wants to follow You.
Oh, Lord, I pray to be Your constant woman.

Lord, I'm an elect lady because You've chosen me,
And, Lord You are my Sovereign
You own all rights to me.
Oh, Lord, I bow before You, but so inconstantly.

But hear my heart, feel it beat for You
Know it reaches out, wants to follow You
Oh, Lord, I pray to be Your constant woman.

(Editor's note: The poem was written by Mrs. Rene Schmidt, set to music by Mrs. Gail Smith, and was sung during the Advisory Convention by Miss Glenda Delmar. All the ladies are from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.)

CREREDENTIALS FOR THE FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Advisory Convention which called for the first General Assembly of the Continuing Presbyterian Church to be convened on December 4, 1973, in Birmingham, Alabama, determined the following credentials for congregations and ministers:

CREREDENTIALS FOR A CHURCH

A Session shall be entitled to send, as its duly chosen commissioners to the constituting General Assembly, one Ruling Elder for each 500 communicants or fraction thereof provided:

I. Such congregation has:

- (a) renounced jurisdiction of, or withdrawn or separated from, or been dismissed from the Presbyterian Church in the United States; or some other denomination in the Reformed tradition. No pending civil or ecclesiastical contest of any such action shall invalidate the right to representation;
- (b) or, is independent of any ecclesiastical connection but desires now to relinquish this independent status and become a part of the Continuing Presbyterian Church;

(c) or, is a member of some provisional Presbytery committed to the Continuing Presbyterian Church;

and

II. Such Congregation has, by due Congregational action, signified its desire to be a member of the new denominational fellowship formed on the basis of the Constitutional Documents recommended by this Convention;

and

III. Such Congregation has certified compliance herewith and such Session has certified the names of its commissioners, in writing, to the temporary office of the Continuing Presbyterian Church at 3436 Wellington Road, Montgomery, Alabama, two weeks prior to the constituting General Assembly.

CREREDENTIALS FOR MINISTERS

Any minister shall be eligible to be a commissioner to the constituting Assembly who is a member of a provisional presbytery which is committed to the new denominational fellowship to be formed on the basis of the Constitutional Documents recommended by this Convention;

and

The clerk of his presbytery so certifies in writing to the temporary office of the Continuing Presbyterian Church at least two weeks prior to the constituting General Assembly.

* * *

Please note that such credentials must be certified in writing to the Administrative Office, 3436 Wellington Road, Montgomery, Ala. 36106, at least two weeks before the Assembly.

So that congregations and ministers may make the necessary connectional arrangements before the deadline, we are printing the names and addresses of the clerks of the provisional presbyteries:

Calvary Presbytery

Clerk: Rev. H. T. Schutte
3100 Covenant Rd.
Columbia, SC 29204

Central Georgia Presbytery

Clerk: Mr. Walter Worsham
First Presbyterian Church
682 Mulberry St.
Macon, GA 31201

Covenant Presbytery

Clerk: Rev. Robert Mabson
3741 Jackson Ave.
Memphis, TN 38108

Evangel Presbytery

Clerk: Mr. Ralph Langford
109 Dalehaven Place
Gadsden, AL 35901

Gold Coast Presbytery

Clerk: Rev. Don Esty
4101 SW 107th Ave.
Miami, FL 33165

Grace Presbytery
Clerk: Rev. Norman Bagby
Rt. 2
Magee, MS 39111

Gulf Coast Presbytery
Clerk: Mr. James Thrasher
611 Parker Circle
Pensacola, FL 32504

Mississippi Valley Presbytery.
Clerk: Dr. Morton Smith
5422 Clinton Blvd.
Jackson, MS 39209

North Georgia Presbytery
Clerk: Mr. Ross L. Jerguson
442 School Dr., SE
Atlanta, GA 30315

Presbytery of Texas
Clerk: Mr. A. H. Burton
Rt. 1
Brookston, TX 75421

Vanguard Presbytery
Clerk: Mr. Chester Hall
Room 300
100 E. Liberty St.
Louisville, KY 40202

Warrior Presbytery
Clerk: Rev. Charles Wilson
Rt. 2
Aliceville, AL 35442

Westminster Presbytery
Clerk: Rev. Frank Smith
804 N. Hills Dr.
Johnson City, TN 37601

WHY I MUST LEAVE

(Editor's Note: the following are the concluding paragraphs of a veteran missionary's statement to his presbytery, given on the day he requested dismissal to the Continuing Church.)

Then why do I not stay in our Church (and help cut out the cancer of unbelief?) There are several reasons why:

1. For many years I have been trying to do this very thing. Six years ago I tried to get this presbytery to recognize certain symptoms of this cancer present in the Covenant Life Curriculum and to take appropriate steps in regard to them. But the matter did not seem important enough to require much or immediate attention. This letter is a further attempt to bring the increasing danger within our Church to your attention. All that I could add after this would be calling attention to new symptoms.

2. Continuing in our Church I would not be able to work effectively, for I am unable to support any of its official programs or institutions without reservation, and I believe that aiding some would be opposing Christ. I cannot take part in the ordination of a woman to ruling or teaching office. I cannot condone the use of our official literature, nor can I urge anyone to join our Church or to continue in it and so be exposed to such Scripture-denying instruction.

This does not mean that I do not recognize that there are many ministers, missionaries, congregations and members who are holding to our standards and opposing deviation from them, nor do I wish to cast any reflection on them or discourage anyone from supporting them. I would rather ask God's blessing upon them as they stand for His truth.

3. "An Affirmation Concerning the Unity of the Church", made by this presbytery at its last meeting, "calls on her ministers to make personal reaffirmation of their ordination vows". I can do so in regard to the doctrinal standards of our Church (with the reservation already mentioned above and declared when I was received into this presbytery), but I cannot say that I approve the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. The reason for this difference is that I can hold to our constitutional doctrinal standards without agreeing to others that have been brought in without being constitutionally adopted, but I cannot be under anything except the totality of the government of our Church so long as I am in it, no matter how different it may be from what it was when I took my ordination vows.

4. The Church of Jesus Christ is not **only** the Presbyterian Church in the United States, but it is the whole Church catholic. It is not the leaving of a denomination that is schismatic, for then every one of the hundreds of denominations in the world would be schismatic. But in the New Testament **schism** and **division** in connection with the Church always refer to spiritual division within the Church. These exist within our denomination already, and will necessarily arise eventually in every one that is founded

I believe that our duty is to the whole Church catholic, and that under present conditions I can serve it better, carrying out its mission more freely and fully, in a

DEMANDS TOTAL COMMITMENT

The Reformation had three mottoes under a guiding watchword. The guiding watchword was "Sola Deo Gloria" (Glory to God Alone). The three mottoes were "Sola Scriptura" (Scripture Alone), "Sola Gratia" (Grace Alone), and "Sola Fide" (Faith Alone). The use of these phrases was meant to underline the specific DOCTRINAL CONTENT of the Bible. Unless you have the Jesus Christ of the inerrant Scripture, the Christ who saves men Himself, without their assistance, who grants us faith and repentance to believe on Him, you have an anti-Christ. Yes, the doctrinal content of the Bible, as the Holy Spirit writes it on our hearts, is the vital source of our spiritual life and vitality. We should thoroughly understand and be able to communicate to others the Scripture's teaching about God as Trinity: Father, Son, Holy Spirit; the universe as created and thus wholly dependent upon the Creator for its sustenance and governing; man as created in God's image, composed of soul and body, now ruinously fallen and corrupt; Christ as fully God and fully man, dying for His people and rising for their justification; the Holy Spirit as effectually calling and regenerating all of God's elect; the final state of every man being either eternal hell or eternal heaven.

— John M. Batteau

denomination committed without reservation to those doctrines and that form of church government to which I was committed by my ordination vows.

5. Churches that have left the Presbyterian Church in the United States are, by coming together and organizing according to their beliefs and principles held in common, opening an effectual door for service, and I wish to enter it with them. I have already seen the joy and renewed vigorous life and activity in some of these congregations.

I shall continue to pray that in the Presbyterian Church in the United States and in all of the Presbyterian and Reformed churches of our land there will be brought about through our Lord's gracious blessing full adherence to the faith and practice from which we derive our names, so that we shall yet become more truly united and one than we ever have been in the past, and so serve with all of the saints in the Church catholic, whose only Head is the Lord Jesus Christ, the written word of God its standard, and the Holy Spirit its Guide, to the glory of God the Father.

W. A. McIlwaine

CHRIST RULES BY HIS WORD

"For Calvin, Christ alone, the heavenly King, rules His people by the scepter of His word so that the Holy Spirit is only known to be present where the Church cultivates unity in the teachings of the Word."

— William Childs Robinson

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Issued from the office of the Executive Secretary, Paul G. Settle, 3436 Wellington Road, Montgomery, Alabama 36106.

CLOSET CALL

"And when thou prayest, enter into thy closet . . ."
Matthew 6.6

Praise the Lord for His powerful presence during the Advisory Convention! Many of those who attended have testified concerning the spiritual uplift they received during the meetings.

Pray for the many pastors and congregations who face ecclesiastical and/or civil court litigation because of their desire to withdraw unto the Continuing Church.

Remember the members of the new provisional committees for the General Assembly, the Organizing Committee, and Jack Williamson, Chairman. ~~The burdens of leadership are heavy . . .~~

Pray for the ministers and congregations who are planning to separate from the PCUS before the General Assembly. Pray for unanimous votes and a spirit of love in every situation.

As the officers and members of the Briarwood Presbyterian Church prepare to host the first General Assembly, they will be in need of prayer. Let us keep them before the Lord!

Intercede for John Richards and Paul Settle and their office staffs as they grapple with the hundreds of details of administration and organization in the Continuing Church movement.

"The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth."

— Psalm 145:18

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