



*"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 30

THE GENERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD TIGHTER CONTROL OVER MINISTERS

In the previous Bulletin the recommendations and suggestions of the Ad Interim Committee on the Church's Use of Her Ordained Ministry, particular attention was paid to those recommendations which centered around the particular provisions which lightened the grip of the presbytery and synod over the local church, not only in regard to financial matters but even to what kind of a ministry the smaller churches should have and it was suggested that the General Assembly establish a policy of requesting all pastors in churches of over 750 members who had served in the church for five years, or more, to consider retiring at the age of 60. It is obvious that in this, and other similar suggestions, the wishes of the particular congregation to return the services of a beloved pastor would be disregarded in the interest of what the *GEB believes to be administrative efficiency. *(The General Executive Board)

It is true that since the appearance of our last Bulletin the Committee announced that it would make some more rather sweeping changes in its final report because of the severe criticism which some parts of the report had already received. But it did not reveal which parts were the most criticized and would be changed.

Conservatives in the church should be very wary of such pronouncements by General Assembly committees. Too often in the past these committees have promised to make certain changes and when the amended reports reached the floor of the General Assembly some had been changed only in their wording with little or no change in their basic content. Others have been changed and have actually been made worse than were the original provisions.

In its report to the 113th General Assembly this committee made a great many suggestions toward what is called a more effective ministry. But beneath this reassuring title there exists a very great danger to the constitutional form of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, for this part of the report boldly demanded that the GEB be given

a great deal of power over the ministry of the church. In other words, ministers in the church will feel the heavy hand of the GEB possibly even to a greater extent than the churches. Some of these recommendations were accepted by the 1973 General Assembly. The GEB was given the power to make regular surveys to determine the future needs of the church, to determine the needs of the church for ordained ministers and other professional personnel for all purposes, the first survey of which is to be made no later than 1975. While some of the proposals already accepted seem to be designed to really help a young man come into close contact with his sponsoring presbytery and receive adequate assistance financially, there are other aspects of this program not yet approved but to be presented to the 1974 General Assembly which are little more than a bold frontal attack on the historic concept of the power of the presbytery. After graduating from a seminary the candidate for ordination would serve for a period of two years in a church under an experienced minister. During this period he would be licensed but not ordained, and during such a period he would be empowered to carry out all of the duties of an ordained minister. At the end of one year of service, the licensed candidate and his supervising minister would have to attend an extended conference sponsored jointly by the GEB serving that particular area of the church in order to review his work for that year.

It does not take too much imagination to see what this Committee really has in mind. It is obvious that during these first two years the candidate, before he is ordained, will be under the very close supervision of the hierarchy and it is also quite obvious that he will be scrutinized very carefully as to his theological attitudes and his willingness to cooperate with his presbytery in all of its activities. Under the guise of aiding these young men in their ministerial development, the Committee is placing them under the closer control of

(Continued on page 2)

the hierarchy, the GEB and those in the presbyteries who represent the hierarchy, although these recommendations have not yet been enacted it is quite certain that they will be even if the wording should be changed, or even some specific parts of the recommendations deleted or greatly modified.

SOCIOLOGY INSTEAD OF THEOLOGY

Underlying all of these proposals is one basic idea which is quite effectively kept in the background. It is quite obvious that the real purpose of this plan is to see to it that the young men being trained in our seminaries will be manipulated during this training into sociologists so that they, in turn, will be able to sociologically manipulate their congregations. True enough this design, or aim, is not spelled out. To make a public announcement of this basic idea would alert too many people in the church as to what the Ad Interim Committee has in mind for the future of the Presbyterian Church, US. The framers of the report have been very careful to retain the present curriculum in the seminaries and to retain the present educational requirements for ordination in the present Book of Church Order. On the surface at least, the report at this point, gives the appearance of being careful to maintain Presbyterian doctrine. But what it does not reveal is the fact that in the seminaries sociology, psychology and even psychiatry have replaced the historic content of the seminary curriculum and the graduates will be, to a great extent, sociologists rather than ministers of the Word of God. Many congregations which call these young men will be in for a very rude awakening.

The full impact of the report of the Ad Interim Committee is also somewhat obscured by the fact that at some points it does make some recommendations which would be very good and useful if they were to be carried out in a conservative context. These helpful suggestions have attracted the attention of some conservatives who seem to have failed to grasp the essential point that in a liberal context these good suggestions actually become all the more dangerous. The adoption of this report along with the deletion of the "escape clause" from the proposed plan of union with the Presbyterian Church, USA should cause conservative congregations to take immediate action to withdraw from the Presbyterian Church, US because the report of this Committee is really an attempt to bring into the denomination the basic content of COCU. In fact, this report is little more than an attempt to get the Southern Presbyterian Church to be accustomed to the idea of being a part of COCU.

"THEOLOGICAL CHICKENS FIND AN ECCLESIASTICAL PLACE TO HATCH"

There is under way among the liberal leaders of Presbyterian Church US a gigantic power struggle

which rose to the surface to mar the placid scenery of the Presbyterian Church US. The signal that all is not well within the liberal camp came in the form of a demand, made by a group of teaching and ruling elders, for a special meeting of the 1973 General Assembly to consider political activities of the Washington Office, created by the General Executive Board. The obvious political activities of this Office were such flagrant violations of the instructions given to it when it was created by the GEB that an unprecedented action seemed to be necessary. Never before in the history of the Presbyterian Church US has such a demand been made for the reconvening of the General Assembly.

These radical activities on the part of the Washington Office are symptomatic of the serious malady which has the PCUS in its grip. It is also a very clear indication that the chickens hatched by theological liberalism have come home to roost with a vengeance.

When the General Executive Board was created by the 1973 General Assembly many thoughtful observers pointed out that the very liberals who had created it would live to rue the day - and that day has come. It is most unlikely that the 1973 General Assembly will be reconvened. There are two obvious arguments against such an action; the expense involved and the timing.

The meeting would be very close to the time of meeting of the 1974 General Assembly.

We suspect that the Moderator, and his allies, are hoping that somehow the forthcoming 1974 General Assembly will be able to handle the situation. It seems most unlikely that this dream will be realized. The so-called moderate liberals in the PCUS do not seem to realize that the social, economic and political radicalism of the leadership of the General Executive Board and the Washington Office is the logical and almost inevitable product of their own so-called moderate liberalism. A recent Moderator of the church has issued a statement as to what he does not believe. What he apparently does not realize is in exercising this privilege he has opened the door wide for the radicals to go much further, not only in their more complete and logical rejection of the Westminster standards but also in their acceptance of the social, political and economic implications of their theological radicalism.

It is for this reason that the 1974 General Assembly promises to be the most explosive in the history of the church for if the radicals win, the real issues will become increasingly clear, so clear that the evangelicals will see the tragedy in its proper light. It will no longer be possible for evangelicals to live in hope that somehow the PCUS will be recalled to her historic purity, which alone can make her peace a reality.

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NO PAY CUT

The following is from an
Elect Lady of Perlington, MS.
Mrs. Grace Pope:

“The wages of sin is
death” (Romans 6:23a)
“Legalizing SIN does not
reduce the wages”,

“.....because.....unbelief.” Hebrews 3:19a

“I do not believe that all scripture is to be taken
literally. . . . I do not believe that it is necessary
that we accept the story of Noah and the ark liter-
ally”. (Ben L. Rose, Moderator of the 111th Gen-
eral Assembly)

The 114th General Assembly is going to take up
the property issue. . . .How do you think it will
be decided?
Better INCORPORATE.

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Our problem has always been:

Getting the members informed. If you need literature we can supply it. A request will bring it promptly. As long as our members support our efforts and we can be of assistance to any congregation still in the PCUS, we feel that there should be a conservative voice.

Concerned Presbyterians, Inc. is the only conservative voice in the PCUS since the Presbyterian Churchmen United ceased operation. The Journal and PEF are not linked with us, but they are conservative and are with our work.

All officers and workers with Concerned Presbyterians, Inc. are still members of the PCUS. Our

main goal is: Keeping the members of the PCUS informed on all of the actions of our denomination that are contrary to our Constitution, our Ordination vows, the Scriptures to which we have all subscribed as being the only rule and guide of Faith and practice, and to contend for Presbyterian Doctrine and Polity. Praying always that our Lord will revive our Church and turn it around from Socialism, Universalism, and all the wrong actions of our highest court and to turn our efforts to carrying out the great Commission.

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Why is it necessary to take two years to study Universalism? Or abortion? Those two issues should not require study.

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