

The Presbyterian Church Crisis

**THE GAY AGENDA. IT'S COMING TO US SOON.
HERE IS WHAT THEY WANT. WILL WE LET THEM HAVE IT?**

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In September 1997, we began releasing the first of a 13-tract study on the Concordia Crisis [WM-788], an attempted liberal takeover which shook the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod to its foundations and reached its climax in January and February of 1974.

The LCMS battle was waged on whether or not the church needed to believe what the Bible said. That crisis was a mirror of our own, which came strongly to the surface in the early 1980s, and has deepened ever since.

The conservative-liberal war in Christendom is being fought in many denominations and over many issues; ours is not the only one.

As we consider what is taking place in other churches, we learn what is soon to occur in our own. It is for this reason that we will now present you with a battle which, as I write these opening words, is taking place just now in Texas.

In order to prepare this present study, the present writer gathered 55 articles and documents. A sizeable number came from the *Presbyterian Layman*. This is an outstanding publication of godly Presbyterian believers who have staunchly defended Biblical standards in that denomination for years, and continue to do so.

It is because of a strongly conservative reporting agency, which is independent of leadership control, that

the apostasy does not overwhelm that church. The members must be told what is happening!

There was a question whether a digest of this data should be arranged chronologically or topically. Because all these Presbyterian departments and organizations are unfamiliar to us, the decision was made to present the material topically. In this way, you will see most clearly the implications of the threatened liberal takeover.

—But remember throughout what you are about to read: The methods used by liberals to overrun the Presbyterian Church are increasingly being used in our own!

Share this with others. An ignorant laity is already defeated. —vf

REASON FOR THE STUDY

On June 19, 1999, the Presbyterian Church (USA) (referred to as PCUSA) convened its 211th General Assembly (GA) in Fort Worth. Tomorrow, the 26th, its final session will end.

Understanding the heated warfare taking place in Texas will help you better understand what is ahead of our own denomination. All that is required is for leadership to continually appease the liberals—and eventually they take over the church!

Because Presbyterianism reflects its Calvinist roots, a primary doctrine is a belief in predestination. But throughout this study we will primarily deal with an organizational crisis, occasioned by an attempt of homosexuals to subvert that denomination.

A brief review of the governing structure in the Presbyterian Church (USA) would be helpful:

The term, "Presbyterianism," is used for the principle of church organization in which the primary ministry is under the control of regional presbyters. The word applies to all branches of the Reformed Church in which this presbyterian pattern of ministry is followed.

The Reformers, Zwingli and Calvin (in accord with Jerome and Erasmus) held that bishops were elected from the presbyterate and did not constitute

a superior order. This, of course, placed the presbyters—not the bishops—in control. In America, these presbyters are spoken of as "ruling elders" and "deacons." The Scriptural word, "presbyter," is commonly used of both pastors and elders when they meet in gatherings, called presbyteries.

The general structure of Presbyterian churches is that of an ascending order of court judicatory, composed of pastors and elders in equal numbers. These are representative ruling bodies, each having powers which are constitutionally defined.

The result, here in America, is that each local group of Presbyterian churches has the authority to submit resolutions, called "overtures," to the yearly General Assembly.

That is what has brought PCUSA to its present crisis; and, year after year, it is taking our own denomination down the same path.

THE TWO PRECEDING ASSEMBLIES

The 209th General Assembly convened in June 1997 in Syracuse, New York. It was notable for a major theological shift. Principal speakers exalted relationships over theology. Presbyterians for Gay and Lesbian Concerns (PGLC) and other pro-homosexual activists conducted demonstrations in hallways, entrances, and exhibit areas. An amendment was introduced, which prohibited the ordination of self-avowed, practicing homosexuals.

It is of interest that, at that Assembly, the delegates voted to oppose partial birth abortions on moral grounds—the first Protestant denomination in America to do so. (Down to the present day, not one of our own official bodies, *in assembly*, has ever gone on record as opposing abortion in any form.)

The 1997 statistical report showed that, in the previous year, the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) had lost 33,810 members. Since 1983, the PCUSA membership had been reduced by 529,584 members. Conservatives believe that formalism and liberal appeasement has been responsible for much of this loss.

The 210th General Assembly convened in June 1998 in Charlotte, North Carolina. All went well until near the end, when several reductions of church doctrine had been averted.

After hearing citations from literature, published by the National Network of Presbyterian College Women (NNPCW), the commissioners had voted nearly 2-1 to end sponsorship and funding of the Network.

But, as later events revealed, newly elected Moderator, Douglas W. Oldenburg, personally favored the liberals. On the eve of adjournment, he permitted a late-night demonstration by Network members and advocates. They tearfully sang, *“This Little Light of Mine,”*—and the tender-hearted commissioners voted to rescind their previous action and give the Network one more chance. A task force was appointed, to investigate their writings and bring a report to the 1999 Assembly.

Oldenburg and his vice moderator, James Mead, then arranged that funding for NNPCW be fully restored.

Due to the ongoing penetration by liberals, over 21,000 members had left the previous year.

EARNEST PREPARATIONS FOR THE 1999 ASSEMBLY

In preparation for the 1999 Assembly, there was fervent activity by both sides. The faithful were intent on maintaining Christian principles, and the feminists and homosexuals were determined to take control of the church.

On October 9, 1998, a “National Coming Out Day” service was held in the chapel of Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, GA, one of 10 Presbyterian theological schools. The homosexuals at the seminary were publicly celebrating their glorious state. Reading through the service was not a pleasant task. I will not describe it here.

As the months passed, presbyteries all across the nation submitted overtures (resolutions) which they wanted considered at the forthcoming 1999 General Assembly. We will consider the most important of them.

WARNINGS OF SCHISM

An important article appeared in the June 16, 1999, issue of the *Presbyterian Layman*. Written by Robert P. Mills, it darkly warned of an approaching schism in the denomination—if the homosexuals and feminists were given even a part of what they wanted.

“Schism” is a word which church historians use. It means split. **Mills was warning the denomination that it would shatter right down the middle, if the members did not resolutely stand in defense of Scriptural teachings.**

Does the following statement by Mills sound familiar? Such things are happening in our church right now:

“Today, with a congregation voting to install an elder in defiance of the denomination’s constitution, a presbytery telling one of its congregations that it need not obey the *Book of Order*, another presbytery taking under care [hired as a ministe-

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rial intern] a candidate who defiantly does not meet our ordination standards, and a denominational award being given to a woman who told her presbytery that she would no longer work within the PCUSA's polity because she wants to spend her energy subverting it,—it is understandable that these same topics weigh heavily on the minds of commissioners preparing to gather in Fort Worth.”—*R.P. Mills, Unity, “Diversity and Schism,” Presbyterian Layman, June 16, 1999.*

But consider his next paragraph:

“The Fort Worth Assembly will be voting on nominations and proposals that could not only shape the future of the PCUSA, but in fact determine whether the PCUSA has a future as a single denomination.”—*Ibid.*

Mills then quoted from a paper, approved by PCUSA in 1983, entitled *Historic Principles, Conscience and Church Government*:

“Divisiveness and schism are most likely to occur when the church does not follow its own procedures carefully . . . When the presbytery neglects its role by failing to exercise one of its constitu-

tional functions, the other parts suffer.”—*Historic Principles, quoted in ibid.*

(In our church, a “presbytery” would be equivalent to a local conference which is rather small in size.) Do you see the point? **When one local congregation or conference goes in one direction while others proceed in another—the entire denomination will eventually split in two.** The underlying problem is that not all are determined to stand true to the bedrock document of the church: the Word of God.

Some think church problems would be solved if we would all obey the leaders. But it is not a matter of me obeying you or you obeying me. What is needed is for all of us to obey God’s Inspired Writings!

Mills then elaborates on an earlier quoted comment:

“Less than two decades after reunion, Northern New England Presbytery has told one of its congregations that it need not obey a portion of the constitution that it finds troubling. First Presbyterian Church of Stamford, CN, has voted to install an elder in flagrant violation of specific *Book of Order* language forbidding such an installation.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Because we are reading about a totally different denomination, many terms will be new to us. The following list may help. We will most frequently refer to the underlined ones.

Presbyterian Church (USA) (The acronym is **PCUSA**)—This large denomination is in a state of crisis because a sizeable number of its Presbyteries are liberal.

Presbytery—The name of each local group of congregations. The presbyteries are powerful in the church structure (which is why the denomination is called “Presbyterian”). They have authority to recommend resolutions (“**overtures**”) to the yearly **General Assembly (GA)**. The delegates sent by the presbyteries to the GA are called **commissioners**. The **moderator** (equivalent to our General Conference president) is elected for a one-year term. Recent ones have been liberal.

General Assembly Council Executive Committee—A small group of about a dozen people, most of whom are liberal. These are the top leaders of the **General Assembly Council (GAC)**; comparable to our General Conference staff), which carries on PCUSA business in the interim between General Assemblies. The **Book of Order** is equivalent to our *Church Manual*. The **Constitution** is equivalent to our General Conference Working Policy.

National Ministries Division (NMD)—Somewhat equivalent to our General Conference Ministerial Association. It tends to be conservative.

National Network of Presbyterian College Women

(NNPCW)—A strongly pro-feminist, pro-gay, and anti-Bible organization of women. They are strongly supported by some, intensely disliked by others in the church, and treated with indifference by most.

The **United Presbyterian Church (USA)** and the **Presbyterian Church (US)** merged in 1983 to form the present denomination, **Presbyterian Church (USA)** (which they refer to as **PCUSA**).

The Covenant Network—An organization of gays and lesbians, dedicated to promoting the ordination of homosexuals in PCUSA.

Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns—The name describes it. **More Light Churches Network**—Another feminist-gay Presbyterian group. Recently both organizations combined into one: **More Light Presbyterians** (MLP).

Other feminist, lesbian, gay, transsexual activist organizations are also at work to disrupt PCUSA, until they control it. These include **Presbyterians for Gay and Lesbian Concerns**, **Hesed**, **Voices of Sophia** [the goddess Wisdom], **Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns**, **National Association of Presbyterian Clergwomen**, **Association of Presbyterian Christian Educators**, **That All May Freely Serve**, **Re-Imagining God Conferences** (proclaiming God to be a woman), and **Presbyterian Parents of Gays and Lesbians**.

GLARF—“Gay, lesbian and radical feminist activists.” Because they work closely together, this acronym was invented by conservatives.

GLBT—“gay-lesbian-bisexual-transgendered coalition,” another acronym coined by conservatives.

And West Jersey Presbytery has taken under care [hired] as a candidate for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament an individual whose ordination would violate the constitution. In coming under care, the individual declared that the denomination must change to suit *his* lifestyle preferences.

“Technically, such actions constitute schism, a breaking away of one part of the denomination from another . . .

“Unless the [forthcoming] Fort Worth General Assembly takes decisive action to end such divisive activities, more and more congregations and presbyteries are likely to declare their functional autonomy from the PCUSA. As the number of autonomous governing bodies grows, the possibility of denominational unity will quickly recede to the vanishing point.”—*Ibid.*

Liberals in our own church are doing exactly as Mills describes: They persist in removing local churches and conferences from Biblical standards,—when they should get out of the denomination entirely.

“They are insisting on retaining all the rights and privileges of PCUSA membership, while simultaneously demanding the freedom to violate any constitutional standards they choose.

“Freedom of conscience is the rationalization the schismatics offer for their actions. However, the reality is that the PCUSA cannot bind any individual’s conscience. The schismatics are free to leave at any time. They freely choose not to do so.”—*Ibid.*

Such decisive and clear statements of the crisis you will not find in our own church periodicals, even though the liberal attack within our denomination is not far behind PCUSA. In our denomination, everyone is quiet. They say it becomes very quiet just before a tornado. I can believe it.

“With presbyteries and congregations boldly defying a constitutional provision affirmed by two-thirds of the presbyteries, ‘seriously divisive conflict’ hardly does justice to the state in which the PCUSA now finds itself. Various governing bodies have effectively declared themselves to be in schism from the PCUSA. Their actions are not in dispute. [That is, neither side denies the reality of those actions.] The question, ‘Are we two denominations?’ can only be answered in the affirmative. — The real question has become ‘Are we two different religions?’ ”—*Ibid.*

Mills then cites an example of the deceptive principles on which the other side operates:

“The relevance of that question is evident in an address by Barbara Wheeler, president of Auburn

Seminary, published by the Covenant Network, an organization formed to promote the ordination of gays and lesbians, in which Wheeler outlined a strategy by which liberal revisionists could seize control of the PCUSA.

“In her opening paragraph, Wheeler eschews obeying the denomination’s constitution in favor of ‘countenancing actions that are wrong and possibly also making statements that are untrue.’

“Not content to disavow one denomination’s constitution, the Wheeler Doctrine subordinates Scripture to ecclesiastical politics. If lying is required to achieve the desired political objective, the Wheeler Doctrine calls for the ninth commandment to be set aside.”—*Ibid.*

On May 13, 1999, another pivotal article appeared in the *Presbyterian Layman*. Written by John H. Adams, it summarized the approaching conflict at Fort Worth.

“Gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered people have turned to the courts and parliamentary bodies of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to try to accomplish what they could not gain in two national referendums [the 1997 and 1998 General Assemblies].

“In the preliminaries, they are winning. Two court rulings and two presbytery votes have (1) authorized Presbyterian ministers to perform so-called ‘holy unions’ of same-gender couples; (2) given the green light to a congregation to install an openly gay elder; (3) allowed a presbytery to take under care [hire] a gay seminary graduate who declared that the church must change to accommodate his sexuality, and (4) overtured the General Assembly to direct its agencies and ‘strongly encourage’ other governing bodies and educational institutions ‘to refrain from supporting, implementing, or sponsoring therapies or ministries which attempt to alter a person’s sexual orientation.’

“The gay-lesbian-bisexual-transgendered (GLBT) coalition also hopes to deliver a knockout punch to G-6.0106b, the constitution’s standard that requires candidates for ordination ‘to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage . . . or chastity in singleness.’ ”—“*Judicial Crisis Threatens to Split PCUSA*,” *Presbyterian Layman*, May 13, 1999.

The gays are gleeful that they are going to win.

“Those efforts are accompanied by predictions that the Presbyterian ordination standard will crumble under the crush. For instance, Chris Glaser, a gay activist who believes ‘coming out’ should be a sacrament on a par with baptism and commun-

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ion, told a gay magazine recently that ‘the time will come’ when the PCUSA and other mainstream denominations will ‘adjust and change their laws to allow for the full inclusion of gay and lesbian people.’ —*Ibid.*

Think not that the homosexuals are only trying to subvert the Presbyterians! They intend to take over every Christian denomination in America!

“The Presbyterian Church (USA) is not the only denomination under siege. Methodists recently tried and convicted a pastor for conducting ‘holy unions,’ or same-sex marriages, and other cases are pending.

“In the Episcopal Church, a 300-family Brockton, MA, congregation and its pastor have been evicted from church premises because they opposed (by withholding the diocesan assessment) ordination of active homosexuals and diocesan approval for ministers conducting ‘holy unions.’

“Other mainline denominations are being targeted as well by proselytizers from the United Church of Christ and, especially, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, which is in effect a denomination of, to use their own words, ‘gay/lesbian/bisexual/transsexual communities.’ The Universal Fellowship lists 300 congregations, including two with 2,000-plus members, but its full acceptability by the mainline denominations depends on the mainliners accepting a theology compatible with its unbiblical sexual ethic.” —*Ibid.*

Adams then mentions Erin Swenson, an ordained “postoperative male to female transsexual” minister, who was approved and ordained by the Greater Atlanta Presbytery, and spends his/her spare time traveling around the country encouraging other Presbyterians to do what he did.

A third position paper appeared in the May 18, 1999, issue of the Presbyterian Layman, and was also penned by Robert Mills.

“Several years ago, Philip Johnson, a Presbyterian, prominent author and law professor at Berkeley, wrote an article outlining specific goals of gay, lesbian and radical feminist activists. Drawing his acronym from these constituencies, he dubbed this the GLARF agenda.” —*Robert P. Mills, “Overtures Attack Evangelicals’ Motives, Intelligence, and Integrity,” Presbyterian Layman, May 18, 1999.*

The remainder of the article discussed the GLARF agenda, which we will not here take space to quote, since we will overview the battle in this study.

INTRODUCTION TO ISSUES CONFRONTING THE 1999 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

As stated earlier, we will typically consider a number of issues, even though reports on each one may span from its inception in late 1998 on through to the end of the June General Assembly.

As the approach of the 1999 Assembly neared, it was understood that a number of old issues (including ordination standards) would be reviewed and a wide variety of new ones would be discussed during the June 19-26 session in Fort Worth.

More than 60 overtures (proposals) were docketed for the 1999 General Assembly. Several of them, if passed, would water down or eliminate the “fidelity/chastity” standard required for candidates for minister, elder, and deacon in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Can you imagine a motion that church leaders, on all levels, need not adhere to any sexual standards? Yet those proposing these overtures are treated with great sympathy; why? lest a number of local churches leave the denomination. —This is the same situation that is occurring in our own church! They hesitate to consider the concerns of the conservatives while quickly placating the liberals. Instead of a pure church, some of our leaders instead want a big church.

A NEW MODERATOR ELECTED

The “moderator” in PCUSA is equivalent to the General Conference president in our own denomination. Each is elected for a one-year term. **At the 1998 General Assembly, Douglas W. Oldenburg was elected to the position of General Assembly moderator.**

Throughout his year in office, he remained quietly steadfast in his support of both theological diversities—a strongly pro-gay Presbyterian women’s organization and the ordination of practicing homosexuals. Some believe he was elected in 1997 as a fig leaf to appease the liberals and gays who did not get their way in that year’s General Assembly.

At the 1999 General Assembly, the commissioners (delegates) would have to select a new moderator. They elect one on the first night of the Assembly. There were four candidates: Frank Diaz, Freda A. Gardner, Charles Kim, and Walter J. Ungerer. Of the four, one, Freda

Gardner, is openly pro-gay in her sentiments.

On June 19, the commissioners elected Gardner as the moderator for the coming year—in spite of her strongly pro-homosexual comments. She was elected on the second ballot, receiving 270 of the 526 total votes. **Once again, the liberals were being appeased.**

At a press conference following her election, in response to a question whether there was something she said that the commissioners especially liked, she commented, “I would like to think they heard me speaking my truth and that they felt they could live with that and could be led by it.”

As they had done the previous year, once again the delegates had elected a pro-gay leader.

THE ANNUAL WOMEN OF FAITH AWARDS

This is an award that PCUSA gives to three women each year at the General Assembly. The decision as to who will receive it is made in the spring of each year by the Executive Committee of the General Assembly Council.

This year, they shocked the conservatives, in the denomination, by a 9-2 vote to give one of the awards to Jane Spahr, a very outspoken “lesbian evangelist.”—So that tells you that 9 of the 11 members of the Executive Committee are pro-gay.

Spahr is employed by Downtown Presbyterian Church in Rochester, NY. Her job assignment is “lesbian evangelist” for an organization by the name of That All May Freely Serve, which is devoted to the ordination of gay and lesbian Presbyterians as well as other church officers.

Spahr was selected for the award, in spite of strong opposition from the steering committee of the National Ministries Division. Following three unsuccessful conference calls, **the NMD decided to overturn Spahr’s selection** because “the award would make it appear that an entity of the General Assembly was endorsing a position that runs counter to existing General Assembly policy.”

The steering committee’s vote resulted in an internet outrage by homosexual activists. They also sent a list of GAC executive committee voting members, as well as their home addresses and phone numbers to various homosexual organizations across the nation. Along with the list, **the message went out to send “a deluge of letters, e-mails, and phone calls” to leaders on all levels.**

Gene Huff, a pro-gay activist of San Francisco said significantly, “This episode could well be a watershed moment.” He was right; for **immediately afterward, the GAC executive committee voted by 9-2 to override the NMD decision** and “let stand the selections of the Women of Faith awards.”

But think not that Jane Spahr, the “lesbian evangelist,” was the only gay of the three selected. Letty

Russell, a professor at Yale Divinity School, was another equally blatant lesbian.

Russell was the keynote speaker at the fourth (1996) Re-Imagining Conference, where she was quoted as saying, “In my local presbytery last year, I went to the ministerial relations committee and told them . . . I was retiring from the presbytery because of the church’s position on the ordination of homosexuals . . . As a lesbian, I had decided to use my energy on subversion and not on church committees . . . I’ve decided to be in, but not of, the church.

(The Re-Imagining God Conferences are dedicated to proclaiming that the Deity is a woman goddess.)

Russell was also a keynote speaker at the Covenant Network’s organization meeting in 1996. She told the audience that ordaining persons who engage in homosexual behavior is consistent with the Reformed tradition, even though she admitted the Reformers universally condemned such behavior.”

In protest of the awards decision, on June 8, 1999, the local Presbyterian church in Pearland, Texas, voted to no longer send any more funds to the General Assembly. They said they would henceforth send their offerings to independent Presbyterian organizations which were resisting the efforts of the denomination to move toward more liberal positions. While other local churches just wrung their hands, the church in Pearland decided to actively support the right side.

On June 20, at a General Assembly breakfast, the awards were presented. An estimated 400 people were present, including many top-ranking PCUSA staff members and elected officials.

The new moderator, pro-gay Freda Gardener, said, “I am so proud to be sharing this place with the other two recipients of this award.”

Interestingly enough, the third person to receive the award, Jan Douglass, said she fully approved of the giving of the award to two lesbians.

As soon as the awards were given, the Highland Presbyterian Church in New Castle, PA, voted to cut off all per capita and mission funds to the General Assembly. “We’re certain other sessions will follow our lead,” Pastor Tim McQuade said. He added that, in giving those awards, the GAC had virtually said “We know we made people angry with this award, tough; but we’re not going to do anything about it!”

IN-FIGHTING WITHIN THE COVENANT NETWORK

The Covenant Network of Presbyterians (CNP) is one of the homosexual groups actively working to subvert the denomination. They had earlier published abroad an executive committee members’ plan for a liberal takeover of the church.

But, during an Open Forum on Wednesday, June 24, 1999, at the Fort Worth Assembly, the members

were angry because their CNP leaders had agreed to a "sabbatical" (a waiting period) instead of actively lobbying the 211th General Assembly for overtures to end the PCUSA's earlier constitutional prohibition against ordaining homosexuals as deacons, elders, and ministers.

Jane Spahr, who earlier in the week had received a "Woman of Faith" award, received intense applause as she stridently said, "Don't wait for the church to act. I'm going to storm this country until you collapse and say yes! . . . [the sabbatical] is killing us. You cannot take a sabbatical on truth or justice. Everybody wants to be on a sabbatical, but Jesus has said, 'If you are lukewarm, honey, you aren't Mine.' "

The crowd applauded as another speaker declared that, by excluding homosexuals from ordination, the PCUSA had been "out of order for more than 20 years." He also lamented that the Presbyterian Church was not solacing him enough in his grief; for, as a member of the West Hollywood Presbyterian Church, over the last few years he had attended the funerals of 120 West Hollywood members who had died of AIDS.

**OVERTURE 99-46
TEACHING MATERIALS TO BE SCRIPTURAL**

Overture 99-46 would require all PCUSA teaching materials, which dealt with or referred to human sexuality, to be in conformity with Scripture and Presbyterian theology.

One would assume that it would be quite easy for such a resolution to be enacted. But, on June 23, 1999, after a lot of discussion and wrangling over the matter, the Christian Education Committee of the 211th General Assembly provided a watered-down version of this overture by a vote of 28-16-1 (28 to 16, with 1 abstaining).

During the deliberations, the meeting hall was packed and many had to sit on the floor.

James Curtis, the one who presented the overture to the committee, spoke urgently about the many deviations from Scripture and church doctrine in the current material, including recognition of sex outside marriage as something which should not be condemned.

Curtis admitted that it would cost about \$250,000 to make the needed changes, but said it must be done because the teaching materials tell the young people of the church that, while abstinence is preferred, if teenagers choose to engage in sexual relations, they should use contraception.

He said that all Presbyterian materials should stress abstinence and purity instead of the many misleading statements currently in the textbooks.

Public debate and committee discussion lasted for hours.

Several teenage girls said they believed abstinence until marriage was not only God's command, but His blessing. Each declared the current materials to be "deplorable."

Former GA moderator, Patricia Brown, said the materials were fine as they stood and should not be modified.

Suzanne Citron, pastor of the Presbytery of the Grand Canyon, apparently was determined to have full audience attention as she spoke; so she began slowly to undress! Stopping before she crossed the bounds of modesty, she said that no justification existed for using these unbiblical materials in the first place, and that they were wholly inappropriate for the youth of the church.

Ultimately, an amendment was offered which reversed the meaning of the overture; and, in vague language, it called on the Congregational Ministries Division to continue to use the present materials, but "someday" to revise and rewrite the materials in accordance with "biblical, confessional, and Reformed traditions." By appeasing the liberals, once again they had won.

Supporters of the amendment said there were so many out-of-wedlock births, that the teaching materials in their present form might help young people avoid disease and pregnancy when they had sex.

The amendment was finally voted and approved by the Christian Education Committee. The vote was 26-17-1 (26 to 17, with 1 abstaining). **In their view, someday the Presbyterian Church would obey God's Word, but not now.**

The next step was for the entire General Assembly to consider and vote on the matter. On Thursday, June 24, the matter was discussed.

Elder Nancy Cross said the world does a good job teaching about premarital sex, contraception, and promiscuity; and that the present materials do the same—when, instead, they should call our youth to sexual purity.

"We hear about sex everywhere; these materials are too explicit," declared Ellen Larson, a youth advisory delegate. "There are only five sentences in the entire present curriculum materials that deal with sex in the Christian way."

Former General Assembly Moderator, Patricia Brown, urged the Assembly to let the materials stand as they were, declaring that they helped the young people.

Responding to her, Katherine Goyett said, "These curriculum materials lack biblical integrity. We must teach the joy of sexual purity . . . Do not conform any more to the standards of the world!"

The General Assembly then voted on Overture 99-46. By a vote of 330-201-4, **the GA ordered that the sexual education curriculum, published by the denomination, be brought into conformity with church and biblical standards within two years. Before distribution, the new materials "must be approved by the General Assembly."**

This would, hopefully, eliminate the errors, in print, for more than a decade in the Presbyterian Church.

The liberals failed on this overture; but, as we shall

see, they won on others.

The following quotation, from Overture 99-46, is of interest:

“Scripture plainly teaches and warns that sexual immorality is not to be found among the people of God (Ex 20:14; Jude 3-8; Heb 13:4; Rom 13:12-13; 1 Cor 6:9-11; 1 Cor 6:18-20, 1 Cor 5:1-13; Gal 5:16-24; Eph 5:1-17; Col 3:1-10; 1 Thess 4:1-8; Heb 12:14-29; Matt 15:17-20; Matt 19:4-6; Mark 7:18-23; Rev 21:1-8; Rev 22:10-20).”

OVERTURE 99-24 INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

Overture 99-24, introduced by the Western New York Presbytery, would require Presbyterian worship leaders to use inclusive language for the name of God. All ministers in the denomination would henceforth have to use male and female references to God.

This overture would amend W-1.2006b of the *Book of Order* to read, “In its worship the church shall use language about God which is intentionally as diverse and varied as the Bible and our theological traditions.”

The mandatory “shall,” coupled with the plural “our theological traditions” (which includes the Re-Imagining God movement), would make it possible for charges to be filed against any Presbyterian minister who baptizes “in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” or an elder leading worship who began the Lord’s Prayer as “Our Father.” Instead, they must say “our Father/Mother” or “our Father and Mother.”

Judicial proceedings would be required against pastors and worship leaders who failed to use non-biblical names when speaking or referring to God.

Overture 99-60, a companion resolution submitted by the Palisades Presbytery, would add teeth to the inclusive language requirement—by requiring that each presbytery send a report to next year’s Assembly, “disclosing in narrative and/or statistical form about how inclusive language is used and/or studied in that presbytery’s churches.” This would implement active in-church policing.

Penalties are not specified by either overture, but punishments for *Book of Order* violations range up to “removal from office,” which is described as “the highest degree of censure” (D-12.0105).

According to the overture, the masculine-feminine linking (“Father/Mother”) need not be paired each time; but every Presbyterian minister must say each an equal number of times in each sermon (one time “Father God” and the next “Mother God”).

Because the “current traditions” of the Presbyterian Church must be mingled with earlier ones, the minister can say “Christ,” but must also say “Sophia” (or “Christa,” another lesbian goddess) the

same number of times.

Quite an active Department of Inquisition could be started, if this overture had been enacted; but, **on Thursday, June 25, by a margin of more than 3 to 1, the Fort Worth General Assembly rejected the overture.**

OVERTURE 99-74 SAME-SEX BENEFITS REQUIRED

On June 23, in a strongly divided vote, a committee of the General Assembly recommended that the Board of Pensions of PCUSA study into the feasibility of offering medical and pension benefits to lay employees who are engaged in same-sex partnerships. It is astounding that, of the 40 people on that committee, fully one-half of them voted to authorize this study. (The vote was 20-15-5.)

A similar situation is developing in our own denomination. Although many members are not strongly pro-liberal, a growing number of church leaders are.

The original motion, Overture 99-74, was brought before the committee on June 22. It called for extending the benefit plan to all denominational members who are engaged in “long-term committed [homosexual] relationships.” —Yet the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) prohibits the ordination and installation of persons who engage in sex outside of marriage!

Pastor Donald Baird, of Fremont Presbyterian Church, Sacramento, California, added this comment: **“This overture is patently absurd. It proposes subsidizing those who are openly in violation of what the church requires. It would be difficult for me to explain to my congregation that our church says marriage is our sexual ethics standard—but we will provide benefits for those who don’t live up to it.”**

Pastor Robert Henley of Eastminster Presbyterian Church, Wichita, Kansas, told the committee: “This proposal asks the Board of Pensions to do something that the constitution does not allow. This proposal is intended to put the ordination of homosexuals back on the table. If it passes, it will become a major battle ground.”

When supporters of Overture 99-74 saw it might fail to gain committee approval, they came back the next day with an amendment: Let the benefits apply only to non-ordained PCUSA employees. In bringing this amendment, Richard Lundy, of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities, said it would take the ordination controversy out of the debate and concentrate on “justice” for lay employees.

“This is not about ordination standards; it’s about civil rights!” declared Pastor Lauraine LaFon-

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taine, a lesbian minister from Denver.

Lesbian “evangelist,” Jane Spahr, fresh from having received the Woman of Faith Award from the Women’s Ministries Program of the General Assembly Council, told the committee: “Friends, this is about health care and bereavement rights, insurance for loved ones . . . I don’t care what your sexual orientation is. I want you to be able to have a healthy life together.”

At this, Carol Shanholtzer stood up: “Marriage is defined as a relationship between a man and a woman. Our denomination has no policy requiring that we treat same-sex relationships in the same way as we treat marriage.”

Pastor Harold Porter (who noted he has over 100 gay/lesbian/bisexual members in his congregation) said the denomination was “falling behind cultural ethical standards.” Citing employment policies of the Walt Disney Corporation, he said, **“The world is going forward on this, and the Presbyterian Church (USA) is in a taillight position.”**

Pastor James Hazelett of Cascades Presbytery jumped up and replied, **“The church is not in the position of copying culture. Frankly, I don’t care what Coors Beer says about same-sex relationships. When we say no to cultural trends, we become headlights, not taillights!”**

Hazelett significantly pointed out that the phrase, “long-term committed relationships,” is vague and could apply to a variety of situations. “How long is ‘long,’ and what about heterosexual couples in ‘open [common law] marriages’ who say they are in ‘committed relationships’?”

One would think that this amendment would also fail,—but Richard Lundy and Harry Smith pushed it through to success with this astounding argument:

First, Lundy said that General Assembly stated Clerk Clifton Kirkpatrick had already written an official letter on behalf of PCUSA, demanding civil rights to gay/lesbian/bisexual persons in the general public, and that the letter specifically listed “pension rights” of same-sex partnerships as one of those rights. Lundy then argued that Kirkpatrick’s public position placed the denomination in a dilemma. It was advocating equal pension/health care rights for homosexuals in the nation while refusing those rights in the church.

(Here is the background of this: To temporarily satisfy the cries of the liberals, the 1996 General Assem-

bly had voted for “the Office of the Stated Clerk to explore the feasibility of entering friend-of-court briefs and supporting legislation in favor of granting civil rights to same-sex partners” in business and industry; and they did so by “affirming the Presbyterian Church’s historic definition of marriage as a civil contract between a man and a woman, yet recognizing that committed same-sex partners seek equal civil liberties in contractual relationships with all the civil rights of married partners.” It was on that basis, that Kirkpatrick’s letter was sent in 1997 to members of the Hawaii Legislature.)

When Lundy finished, Harry Smith, Chairman of the denomination’s Mission Responsibility through the Investment Committee, expressed his hearty agreement. In January 1999, Smith said, his committee met with representatives of *several other denominations*—to decide which corporations they would target for moral offenses. The *other denominations* wanted to file shareholder resolutions against Exxon, because it has so far failed to provide benefits for its same-sex employees. Smith concluded that PCUSA must “correct this hypocrisy.”

Hearing this, the committee voted to recommend that the General Assembly agree to a feasibility study of medical and pension benefits for lay employees who are living in “long-term, committed same-sex relationships.”

Two points should be noted here: (1) Earlier compromises with the liberals led to later ones—for they never stop pressing for further concessions. (2) A growing number of Christian denominations are giving in to liberal/gay demands.

On June 26, the General Assembly defeated the same-sex benefits study by a vote of 215-304-2. That was a rather close vote.

OVERTURE 99-2

THE “FIDELITY AND CHASTITY” CLAUSE

The “fidelity and chastity” clause in the PCUSA constitution is G-6.0106b. It requires “fidelity and chastity” in marriage. —This is something that homosexuals are very much opposed to!

On Monday morning, June 21, the committee on Church Orders and Ministry held open hearings. Most of the comments concerned efforts to amend G-6.0106b.

Lauraine LaFontaine, the lesbian pastor from the Denver area which we quoted earlier, spoke: “I believe that G-6.0106b is divisive and painful . . . I watch the

session struggle with how to be faithful to the constitution—when the constitution contains bad theology and bad polity . . . I pray you have the courage to do the right thing, to pass Overture 99-2” (which would eliminate that clause).

Bill Moss, an elder from San Francisco, rose and said, “I have been in a loving relationship with my partner, Chris, for 9 years . . . [We have] the extra-Biblical standard of G-6.0106b, which proclaims to the world an ethic of exclusion.”

Jane Spahr, lesbian winner of that special award, told commissioners that G-6.0106b “is killing gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. The church is participating in our death. G-6.0106b is exclusive. It says that we cannot serve. In doing that, it says that we are ‘less than’ . . . And saying that people are ‘less than’ promotes violence.”

“When we ask children ‘Why did you beat up lesbian people,’ they say ‘Because our church told us they are bad.’”

Interesting enough, Spahr added this point: “Thirty-three percent of gay and lesbian people commit suicide . . . We are complicit in their death . . . Many of my friends who want to serve have gone on to other denominations, and so have their families. We want to serve. We want to be in leadership.”

(In another tract study, *Homosexual Fact Sheet [WM-801]*, we printed a remarkable number of facts about the miseries and early deaths which homosexuals experience. There is a price to be paid for eliminating virtue and purity from one’s life.)

Having listened to the discussion from the floor and ignoring a parliamentary ruling that they no longer could take the action, the Committee on Church Orders and Ministries approved Overture 99-2, which required that G-6.0106b (the “fidelity and chastity” clause) be deleted from the PCUSA’s *Book of Order*.

On Friday, June 25, Overture 99-2 came to the floor of the General Assembly.

Sara Simm, from the John Knox Presbytery, told the commissioners that G-6.0106b is saying “that sexual behavior outside of marriage is a sin, not a standard for ordination.”

Douglas Baird, elder from Western North Carolina Presbytery, stated flatly, “If presented with a candidate for ordination who would not qualify under the provisions of the *Book of Order*, I personally would take the risk of condemnation and vote to approve his ordination and installation rather than risk the possibility of excluding someone who is indeed called to office in our church.”

In response to that, it might be asked, “Who called him?”

The Assembly was concerned to placate the liberals and homosexuals; so, in place of the original Overture 99-2, the Assembly adopted a “minority report” which stated that the fidelity and chastity clause would, for the present, remain on the books.

But a two-year study would be started to see how something different could be worked out. The 213th General Assembly, meeting in 2001, would receive a report on the matter and render a decision.

Now it was time to vote on the matter. Would the Assembly approve the compromise, called “the minority report”?

But, before doing so, committee moderator Kathrine Runyeon, a minister from Redwoods Presbytery, urged the commissioners to delete G-6.0106b. “Justice delayed is justice denied . . . The heart of the gospel is Christ’s call to follow him. **Let us remove constitutional restrictions that makes it impossible for certain persons to follow Christ’s call to ordained service . . . Let us live by grace, not law**, removing this section of the constitution and allowing us to ordain all with gifts for ministry.”

After Runyeon spoke, the moderator called for a time of silent prayer. Following the prayer, the vote was taken. The General Assembly voted 293-243-2 to adopt the minority report as the main motion. Then they approved it 319-198-7.

Conservatives left the meeting very concerned. **It was true that the “fidelity and chastity” clause remained on the books, but the liberals would now have two years to pursue their objective of abolishing it.**

So once again the church had compromised. Keep giving a little to the liberals is the plan to be followed. That plan is being carried out in our own church as well.

OVERTURE 99-36 BANNING GAY CONVERSIONS

A cardinal premise of homosexuals is that they are born that way. Added to this, is their contention that it is terribly wrong to attempt to persuade a homosexual to stop being one!

On April 13, the New York Presbytery approved a radical overture that would require repentance by anyone in the Presbyterian Church (USA),—who would dare to convert a homosexual from his ways or even say that homosexual activity is a sin!

This overture would direct “all agencies of the General Assembly . . . to refrain from supporting, implementing, or sponsoring therapies of ministries which attempt to alter a person’s sexual orientation.”

The proposal, Overture 99-36, would in effect substitute the position of the American Psychological Association (APA), in place of that given in the Bible.

The New York overture repeatedly quotes from the APA, including these two statements: “No scientific evidence exists to support the effectiveness of any conversion therapies that try to change orientation.” “Therapy directed specifically at changing sexual orientation is contraindicated . . . since it can provoke guilt and anxi-

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ety while having little or no potential for achieving change in orientation.”

Of course, there are many psychologists, psychiatrists, and pediatricians who maintain the opposite position.

It should be remembered that the *Journal of the APA* recently printed an article, stating that sex between children and adults is not harmful and, in fact, can be a positive experience for the child.

According to organizations which try to convert homosexuals from their problem, a 1997 survey of over 2000 professional therapists offering reparative therapy for 860 homosexuals indicates a documented shift in respondents’ sexual orientation, thoughts, and actions. (Organizations which focus on helping such people out of their problem include Exodus International, National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), Transforming Congregations, and One-ByOne.

Among others, the presbyteries of Genessee Valley and Chicago have concurred with Overture 99-36, and want it enacted. There are a lot of Presbyterians in Chicago, yet that is what they want.

On the last day of the General Assembly, Saturday, June 26, the Assembly rejected Overture 99-36, and in its place approved a compromise statement (recommendation 453-62) which read in part:

“No church should insist that gay and lesbian people need therapy to change to a heterosexual orientation, nor should it inhibit or discourage those individuals who are unhappy with or confused about their sexual orientation from seeking therapy they believe would be helpful.”

RESOLUTION TAKING OVER CHURCH PROPERTIES

This proposal was not submitted in time to be placed as an overture at the Fort Worth Assembly. So it might be presented at next year’s Assembly. But do not underrate its significance!

The Beaver-Butler Presbytery in Pennsylvania considered the resolution on May 17, with the plan of submitting it for placement as an overture. But church rules forbade acceptance of such a late resolution as an overture.

Specifically, this proposal would ask the General Assembly to begin steps toward permitting governing bodies (either presbyteries or local congregations) that refuse to abide by the PCUSA constitution, to leave the denomination and take contested property with them.

The objective was to encourage the liberals to get out of the Presbyterian Church—and go form their own.

Though it would fracture the denomination, both conservatives and liberals could gain from enactment of this proposal. *First, let us view how the liberals*

could use such a ruling:

The liberals, feminists, and homosexuals want to take over the Presbyterian Church. That is their intention, but what if they do not succeed? **The backup plan of the liberals would be to pull local congregations and Presbyteries out of the denomination entirely.**

The problem is that PCUSA owns the properties. So the liberals and fellow travelers need to get an overture passed which will permit them to withdraw while retaining local church buildings, lands, and equipment.

Either takeover or fractionize! If such an overture is enacted, then the homosexuals (generally unencumbered with families) can move to an area, gain control of a local church—and then take it out of PCUSA! An easy way to acquire a lot of property for the gay cause.

Second, let us consider the conservative position:

The two-county presbytery, north of Pittsburgh, which originated this resolution is strongly conservative,—not liberal! The resolution was triggered by growing opposition, in that presbytery, to the selection of lesbian Jane Spahr as one of this year’s three recipients of the PCUSA’s Women of Faith award.

As soon as the Beaver-Butler Presbytery learned that the award would be given to her, they called for a meeting to prepare the resolution; but the deadline for overtures was May 5 and already past.

However, it was decided that the proposed resolution could be considered by the General Assembly as a commissioner’s resolution, for which there is no pre-Assembly deadline.

The conservatives wanted to provide a door by which the liberals could get out!

We deal with essentially the same problem in our own church today. If all the liberals would leave, we could worship and work in our church in full accordance with our 19th century historic beliefs. But they refuse to leave, continue to gain concessions, and are ejecting some of the faithful—while other historic believers leave in disgust. We are having a “shaking,” but it is an upside down one!

“There is a growing conviction that the time has come to tell governing bodies and individuals in the Presbyterian Church that they should leave the PCUSA if they cannot abide by the denomination’s ordinance standards.

“As John Towns, a retired business executive and Beaver-Butler Presbytery leader, says, ‘We are spending so much time on this [dealing with the encroachments of apostasy] that we’re not getting on with the great commission of the church.’

“Another elder, Tom McMeekin, said, ‘It is time that we began a discussion about those who cannot agree, to separate from the Presbyterian Church. I hope it would be an amicable [peaceable] split’

...
“[Pastor Robert] McCrumb said the language of the resolution was intentionally moderate so that

a principled split might occur, with governing bodies that favor ordaining homosexuals allowed to leave the PCUSA peaceably with their funds and assets.”—*“Behind Gentle Phrases, an ‘Amicable Split’ Sought,” Presbyterian Layman, May 14, 1999.*

The resolution ultimately failed to be approved—even in the Beaver-Butler Presbytery. But it is an ominous sign of coming events. The liberals do not intend to relax their efforts, and every year they gain added strength. Just as in our own denomination, trouble is ahead for the Presbyterians.

“[This issue] could be a sleeper that would change the face of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The issue is whether steps should be taken toward a split in the denomination . . .

“There is a precedent. In 1982, the General Assembly approved the reunion of the United Presbyterian Church (US) and the Prebyterian Church and included a provision that allowed dissenting PCUS congregations to leave the denomination with their property and money. There was an eight-year window for withdrawal, ending in 1991.

“Currently, there is no withdrawal option available to congregations. If a congregation does withdraw from the PCUSA, it forfeits its property and money.

“The Proposed overture by Beaver-Butler did not spell out that process. Rather, it asked the commissioners to authorize a study of how a separation could be arranged peacefully.”—*“Commissioners’ Resolution Could Be Sleeper Issue,” Presbyterian Layman, June 8, 1999.*

Whether it comes from the conservatives or the liberals, this issue is not dead. It is indeed sleeping, and will inevitably awaken.

NNPCW FUNDING

The National Network of Presbyterian College Women (NNPCW) is a very respectable title for the most active and powerful of independent Presbyterian lesbian organizations.

As mentioned earlier, NPUSA funding for activities of the NNPCW was cut off at the 1998 General Assembly at Charlotte, North Carolina. But then at its close when, holding hands, the liberals formed a ring around the entire auditorium and tearfully sang a song,—the commissioners voted to continue funding them for another year. **A majority of the delegates were fearful to offend the lesbians and fellow travelers. As in our own church, the fear was that the liberals might leave and take their money with them.**

Investigators for the *Presbyterian Layman* discov-

ered that NNPCW had brazenly placed a link, called “Christian Views on Homosexuality,” on the denomination’s web site in the section, “Resources We Offer.”

On “Resources” was material promoting Re-Imagining God theologies and endorsing homosexual behavior. Also included were links to online lesbian dating services and very hard core pornography.

The objective was to lead ordinary Presbyterian women into pornography, and reorient them to become lesbians. I will not list the items in those links, but the *Presbyterian Layman* description is really bad.

At about the same time, Sylvia Dooling, leader of Voices of Orthodox Women, a Presbyterian women’s group, attended the 1998 Re-Imagining Revival to see what it was like. This is how she described it:

“They took a bit of Christian vocabulary, mixed it together with pagan worship of goddesses and mythology, threw in a pinch of religious science, a teaspoon of native American spiritualism, a crumb of Maryology, and a whiff of the occult. Put them together and what do you have? a new religion that’s not so new. Rather, it is merely a reincarnation of first century Gnosticism.”—*Sylvia Dooling, quoted in “Troubles Mounting for College Women’s Network,” Presbyterian Layman, September 9, 1998.*

As the 1999 General Assembly neared, a task force was presented with the teachings of the NNPCW. It was shocked. At the same time, an overture was presented to stop all denominational funding of NNPCW’s activities. In response, 40 speakers came to the Mission Coordinating Committee and warned it not to stop the funding, or the women would stop contributing to the church.

How did the task force respond to this pressure? It voted to ask the Assembly to give the NNPCW another chance.

Intense pressure was applied and, to make a long story short, the 1999 Fort Worth Assembly voted not to terminate,—but to DOUBLE the amount of money given to the group annually! Henceforth, the NNPCW would be given \$96,000 to spend on its homosexual recruitment activities!

Two things should be noted in connection with this matter:

First, if you wish to know how thoroughly pagan homosexuality is, read the boxes on the bottom of pages 14 and 15.

Second, a document entitled “NNPCW Supporters’ Talking Points” was circulated at the General

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**THE GAY AGENDA. IT'S COMING TO US SOON.
HERE IS WHAT THEY WANT. WILL WE LET THEM HAVE IT?**

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Assembly on the afternoon of Thursday, June 24, 1999. The talking points were organized under subheads, making it easy to rebut any argument that might come up in the debate. Each subhead contained two to seven talking points.

The first talking point on the list was this: "*Rush to a microphone early*. If someone else has already made your points, choose others."

Below that was a list of specific talking points, which consisted of dodges and denials. They totally denied that those web links ever existed.

Third, NNPCW representatives met with Youth Advisory Delegates (YAD) on Wednesday night, June 24,—and denied that they worshiped goddesses, taught anti-Christian sentiments, or had pornography site links.

It is clear that gays and lesbians can be very hardened, untruthful people.

CONCLUSION OF THE FORT WORTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Thus we see that **a number of compromises were made at the 1999 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA). As is happening in our own denomination, PCUSA leadership keeps making concessions in order to appease the liberals, feminists, and gays,—and year by year, more victories are being won.**

Let us briefly consider two other events which occurred that week:

VOICES OF SOPHIA CELEBRATION

Voices of Sophia is another lesbian Presbyterian women's organization. "Sophia" is Greek for a personified feminine person named "Wisdom." It is another name for their mother goddess.

On Monday morning, June 21, about 250 men and women gathered for a Voices of Sophia celebration. They sang praises to Sophia, danced in rings, and held raised hands in a Sophia blessing.

Freda Gardner, General Assembly moderator, appeared briefly and encouraged them in their carnival.

Voices of Sophia has been in the forefront of the controversial Re-Imagining God movement. Apparently they do not want the God of the Bible (because of the standards given therein), so they imagine that they can "reimagine Him" (i.e., make Him into their own image, after their own likeness).

Johanna W.H. van Bijk-Bos, professor of Old Testament at Louisville Theological Seminary, told the gathering that there needs to be a "sabbatical on malespeak," and that women must raise their voices against male domination, sexism, and heterosexism.

The following taped quotations from her talk will help you better understand the message of feminists:

"Men should remain silent . . . There must be a sabbatical on malespeak . . ." We must "crash right through the gender barrier" despite opposition, including "attempts at silencing wisdom from the far right . . . a smear campaign from those who clutch their patriarchal ways" . . . Men should listen to wisdom. "Learn to listen. To whom does 'women-wisdom' [Sophia] call? Men. What is our message? Listen [men] and learn. 'Women-wisdom' does not murmur in a tiny tone. She is a loud woman. She embodies no ideals of femininity that I have ever heard of . . . Learn the rejection of innocence. Innocence does not save women from abuse. We must roar like lions . . . Resistance begins with chaos . . . Men must hear and be healed of the rage of women."

MEETING OF MORE LIGHT PRESBYTERIANS

On Saturday evening, June 19, Mike Brown, pastor of the Christ Church in Burlington, Vermont, spoke to a Celebration Dinner hosted by the More Light Presbyterians. This is another independent Presbyterian homosexual organization! The denomination appears to be riddled with them.

"We're here, we're queer . . . deal with it!" Brown proclaimed—to a standing ovation of the sold-out crowd of more than 200.

Brown was in Fort Worth to receive the group's Inclusive Church Award and to help stage a demonstration the next morning in front of the Convention Center, where more than 10,000 Presbyterians

ans were scheduled to worship.

(Brown's congregation has been told, by the Northern New England Presbytery, that it is not required to obey the ordination standards in the PCUSA's *Book of Order*. It was on this basis that they went ahead and ordained Brown, an open homosexual.)

Claiming that he is "committed to Gospel values," Brown later said quite the opposite: "We could be faithful to our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters, or we could be a scandal to the Gospel."

Why have we presented this lengthy account of what is taking place in the Presbyterian Church? It was done so you can better understand the nature, extent of the ominous threat confronting our own denomination, and more fully grasp the message and tactics of the lesbians, gays, and feminists.

NATIONAL NETWORK OF PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE WOMEN

When researchers from *Presbyterian Layman* checked into the kinds of things that NNPCW advocates were saying and writing, they copied off the complete files and links, and mailed them to the leaders of the denomination.

Here is a sampling of some of the statements. They reveal what these people live for. It also shows they are pagans in theology; they are not Christians.

The following quotations are from *Young Women Speak*, a resource published by the National Network of Presbyterian College Women and recommended by them to Presbyterian young people:

"God is letting me know that it doesn't matter whether I have a relationship with a man or a woman, just as long as I remember that God is the center of the love.

"I view the message of the Bible to be very helpful and relevant to my society. However, I also understand that there are issues of both long ago and today that are uniquely distinct to the particular period of time."—*Young Women Speak*, chapter on "Sexuality and Spirituality."

"Thus it would seem that loving members of the same sex is neither more nor less sinful than loving members of the opposite sex."—*Young Women Speak*, chapter on "Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Life."

"Is it possible that all you need is a good gay lover?"—*Ibid.*

"If you've never been sexual with a person of the

LOWERED CHURCH MORALITY BRINGS LEGAL DANGERS

Amendment A was brought up in earlier Assemblies and, although not enacted, will be introduced as an overture again. **This amendment to the PCUSA constitution would permit the ordination of persons who refuse to limit their sexual behavior to the covenant of marriage.**

Aside from Scriptural reasons for opposing such proposals, lowering the morality standards of the church creates enormous legal exposure!

The following article is by Robert L. Howard, senior partner and chairman of Foulston & Siefkin, a 70-member law firm based in Wichita, Kansas. He has 38 years of experience in the defense of individuals and institutions against claims for civil damages and is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers. Ordained an elder in 1960, he has been active in the teaching and missions ministries of Eastminster Presbyte-

same sex, how do you know you wouldn't prefer that?"—*Ibid.*

These lesbians worship a woman goddess of their own imagining (which they call Sophia or Christa). The following poem is from *Young Women Speak*:

"Who do people say we are?

"Partner to our Sister God . . .

Mothers of mothers who age and die and

"return to our Primeval Mother . . .

"Daughter of the Daughter of God,

"the Christa of the New Creation."

— *A Psalm Affirming Identity*

The following quotations are taken from speeches and books of people who have been recommended as resources by the National Network of Presbyterian College Women.

"We must keep in mind as we go, now and forevermore that the body of Christa cannot be, and should never become, an exclusively or uniquely Christian body."—*Carter Heyward, Touching our Strength: The Erotic as Power and the Love of God*, p. 117.

"We are learning that to be ecumenical is to move beyond the boundaries of Christianity. You see, yesterday's heresies are becoming tomorrow's Book of Order."—*From a speech made by Mary Ann Lundy to Voices of Sophia during the 1997 General Assembly in Syracuse.*

Lundy, former director of Women's Ministries in the PCUSA, established the NNPCW when she was a Louisville staff member. She also got the Presbyterian Church to divert \$66,000 from its Bicentennial Fund to help fi-

rian Church in Wichita. He is vice-chair of the Presbyterian Lay Committee.

Here is the article:

Under standard legal principles, corporations and institutional entities, including churches, are liable for injuries or harm caused by their officers or employees of the entity if their conduct was within the course and scope of their employment or official duties. Sexual misconduct and harassment cases are burgeoning throughout the United States, and plaintiffs' attorneys almost always seek to impose liability on entities above or behind the perpetrator of the offending conduct in order to recover more substantial damages.

Civil damage liabilities—In July of this year, a civil jury in Dallas, Texas, rendered a verdict of \$119.6 million against the Catholic Diocese, finding "gross negligence" in its handling of a priest who allegedly sexually abused boys at three churches. Any church that repudiates previously established prohibitions against sexual misconduct by its ordained ministers and offic-

ers, and substitutes an unclear policy permitting its ministers and officers to determine their own standards, invites costly legal claims, regardless of the ultimate merit of the suits. Creative plaintiffs' lawyers will inevitably claim such church action had the effect of granting actual or apparent authority to its ministers and officers to self-define standards of sexual behavior, bringing any such behavior within the "course and scope" of the duties or church-related activities of the ministers or officials.

Sexual conduct is actionable as "sexual harassment" if perpetrated on employees of the church, or as "sexual abuse" if perpetrated on parishioners and counselees of the church. PCUSA church corporations and entities, from congregations to General Assembly, are liable for civil wrongs committed by its ministers, officers, or employees if their actions are within the actual or apparent scope of authority established by policies of the church. Even if misconduct occurs outside the scope of authority, a church can still be subject to liability if it was negligent in failing to prohibit

nance the first Re-Imagining Conference in 1993. When she resigned from the PCUSA, she became a deputy general secretary of the World Council of Churches.

"I don't think we need folks hanging on crosses and blood dripping and weird stuff."—*From a speech by Delores Williams at the 1993 Re-Imagining Conference (Presbyterian professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York).*

"Jesus in reality was not God . . . Jesus was human like us, and also, like us, he was infused with God, with sacred spirit, and in that sense was divine, and he had a clue."—*From a speech made at the 1998 Re-Imagining Conference by Carter Heyward, a self-described lesbian activist and professor at Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass.*

"In view of the overwhelming patriarchal cast of the Bible, we must ask whether it is possible for feminists to maintain a belief in the centrality of Scripture and its authority."—*Johanna W.H. van Wijk-Bos, Reformed and Feminist, A Challenge to the Church, p. 63 (professor of theology at Louisville Theological Seminary).*

"My understanding of God is not primarily defined by the doctrines and ritualistic practices of Christian churches, Buddhist temples or any other religion. God is found in the life experiences of poor people, the majority of them women and children, and She is giving power."—*Chung Hyun Kyung, Inheriting Our Mothers' Gardens: Feminist Theology in Third World Perspective, edited by Letty M. Russell et al., p. 69.*

"A Marxist view of Jesus gives the Gospels afresh both to Christians and to atheists and so provides

each group with new insights of itself and the other. Such readings contribute responsibly and beneficially to global issues."—*Phyllis Trible, God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality, p. 6 (professor of sacred literature at Union Theological Seminary in New York).*

"Personal growth for either wife or husband may well require intimate friendships besides that with the partner . . . Intercourse cannot arbitrarily be excluded."—*James B. Nelson, Embodiment, p. 146 (professor of Christian Ethics at United Theological Seminary in Minneapolis-St. Paul area).*

"I do not claim Christian spirituality encompasses all truth or the only truth. In my prayer life, I also use devotional material from other faith perspectives."—*Chris Glaser, Coming out to God: Prayers for Lesbians and Gay Men, p. 21 (former moderator of the group, Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns).*

"To advise teenagers against pre-marital sex 'represents an ethic of control . . . of judgment . . . To do that to teenagers one more time because they are teenagers violates what we're trying to do with this whole report.'"—*Sylvia Thorson-Smith, keynote speaker at the August 1998 meeting of the National Network of Presbyterian College Women.*

"But Jesus is not, as dominant Christology has insisted, the possessor of a unique relationship with God."—*Beverly Wildung Harrison, Making the Connections, p. 262 (professor of Christian Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary, NY).*

"Young people living together in 'trial relationships' . . . should be encouraged as positive and ethically appropriate."—*Op. cit., p. 109.*

wrongful conduct. An employer, for example, that knows of sexual harassment in the workplace in violation of its own policy, yet fails to take remedial steps, creates liability for himself.

While it is true that the General Assembly has adopted official policies against sexual misconduct/harassment and, one hopes, all synods and presbyteries have adopted similar policies, Amendment “A” proposes a change in the Constitution that will seriously impair, if not effectively rescind, the validity of such subordinate policies. If the prevailing constitutional standard leaves it to individuals to define the limits of acceptable conduct, an agency of the church may not be viewed as credible in its defense if it relies on subordinate policies.

Ultimate liability is one thing; legal exposure is another. Those who defend Amendment A may argue that, in leaving it to individuals to define for themselves the limits of acceptable sexual behavior, churches move further away from, rather than closer to, responsibility for behavior that individuals choose for themselves. It might also be argued that sexual harassment or abuse is, by legal definition, unwelcome or nonconsensual; whereas, under Amendment A, fidelity and integrity mean mutuality and reciprocity. Such arguments are unlikely to prove successful in court because of the legal theories by which liability can be imposed. One thing is certain: Amendment A clouds the outcome of the litigation it surely invites. And such suits, even if unsuccessful, are costly to defend.

Legal theories of liability—Negligent Failure to Prevent or Remedy. Courts consistently hold employers responsible for sexual misconduct, by those in authority, toward subordinates where the employer has also been negligent. Entities of the church may be found negligent and liable for failing to prevent or remedy sexual misconduct, after it knew or with reasonable care should have known of it. Failure to prevent or remedy after knowledge was the basic theory used by plaintiffs in the recent Texas case.

Abuse of Delegated Authority to Control Work Environment. The United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit recently held that an employer may also be held responsible where it delegated authority to control the work environment to a supervisor who then misuses that authority to aid perpetration of sexual harassment.

Apparent Authority. Where the minister, officer, or supervisor of the church purports to act or speak with authority of the church, the victim need not prove that the church had actual notice or knowledge of the misconduct, or that the church was negligent in some way

in preventing or remedying it. Rather, the victim need only prove that: (a) the harasser/abuser appeared to be acting under the authority of the ordination standards of the church, (b) the victim thought the harasser/abuser had such authority, and (c) harm resulted.

Conclusions—All entities of the PCUSA are subject to the law allowing recovery of damages for sexual harassment in the workplace or sexual misconduct against those who should be protected by the church, such as parishioners and counselees. The law places the burden on the church to monitor voluntary and involuntary sexual relationships involving those whom the church has a duty to protect.

The church cannot close its eyes to such relationships. Legal principles imposing liability for sexual abuse/harassment apply regardless of gender or sexual orientation of the abuser/harasser or of the victim. What is initially deemed a voluntary relationship and claimed holy may become involuntary and hostile, with severe personal psychological damages. An ordained officer of the church often has the power to continue a relationship after sexual contacts are no longer welcome – and the church can find itself responsible for the results.

Most insurance policies do not cover the cost of defense or damage awards incurred in sexual harassment/abuse cases. Such costs can be enormous and will rob the church of funds needed to further its mission.

The existing constitutional policy makes it absolutely clear that the PCUSA does not condone any form of sexual misconduct. With Amendment “B” in place, no victim can reasonably claim that a minister or officer of the church had the actual or apparent authority to engage in sexual relationships that may turn into harassment or abuse. Unfortunately, proposed Amendment “A” does not prohibit sexual misconduct. Rather, it effectively delegates authority to ministers and other ordained officers of the PCUSA to self-define what sexual relationships are acceptable by claiming any relationship is conducted with “fidelity and integrity.” It is a toss-up whether those who engage in sexual misconduct or the lawyers who will seek to impose liability for such misconduct will be the most creative in defining “fidelity” and “integrity.”

In the real world of high-dollar litigation, the only “safe sex” is fidelity in the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman or chastity in singleness. Surely we, as people of “The Book” and the great Reformed tradition, should have standards at least as high as those imposed by the courts of law.

— vf

We must beware, lest evil people become entrenched in our own denomination. God requires of us earnest prayer and continual resistance to wrongdoing.