

OFFICE OF THE STATED CLERK

ACTIONS OF CALVARY PRESBYTERY Spring 2021

Woodruff Road Church, Carl D. Robbins, pastor hosted the (149th) stated meeting beginning at 9am in the church's sanctuary. It was a clear but cold spring day for the quarterly meeting of our Upcountry PCA Family. There were 86 commissioners (38 RE's / 48 TE's) from 30 churches in attendance. Dr. Richard W. Winston (Roebuck) served with distinction as Moderator. The senior Teaching Elder present was Joseph Pipa (GPTS) and the senior Ruling Elder present was David Woodard (Clemson). 25 visitors were honored, including Tim Townsend, President of the PCA Foundation who gave the order of the day on the PCA's donor directed investment and advisory fund. A delicious lunch of BBQ with fixins' complemented by outstanding hospitality was enjoyed by all. The Presbytery loves coming to the Five Forks region in Greenville County where the most stated meetings have been held by a church. It was one of the longest presbytery meetings in recent history.

John Owen Butler (Lebanon) gave a fine exhortation from Psalm 100; the Lord's Supper was (again) not observed because of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) concerns.

3 men were licensed to preach within the blessed bounds of Calvary Presbytery;
Jay Brown from Downtown, Ezekiel Dean from Second, Neel Skelton from Mitchell Road.

4 men were received into the membership of Presbytery
Kenny Maple (by ordination) serving as an Assistant, Fairview
Jonathan Master (from Presbytery of Philadelphia OPC) serving as President, GPTS
Tim Pitzer (from Palmetto Presbytery) serving as an Assistant, New Covenant
Chad Reynolds (from Second Presbytery ARP) serving as Senior Pastor, Westminster

2 men were dismissed to other Presbyteries
Jason Cornwell to Palmetto Presbytery, church planting in North Augusta
David Hart Sanders to Pee Dee Presbytery, New Harmony

2 men had change in calls
Joe Dentici from Assistant to Associate at Grace and Peace.
Jim Stephenson was recognized for his many years at Horizon. He has gone to "without Call."

Overtures

Two overtures from sessions were narrowly denied. The first an overture from Woodruff Road Session asking the presbytery to forbid "teaching of exceptions (to the Westminster Standards) within Calvary Presbytery." Debate on the overture produced a dozen speeches lasting over an hour from commissioners. Beginning with RE Bill Johnson (WRPC) the Presbytery heard arguments on the importance of upholding Confessional standards and concerns over a broadening attitude towards "exceptions" or stated differences with the Westminster Standards.

A second Overture was received from the Downtown Session asking the Presbytery "that Calvary Presbytery erred in its judgment to designate the view that nonordained persons may lead elements of corporate worship which differs from the *Westminster Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms* and requires an exception per RAO 16-3e-5... And furthermore "that the decision regarding who should lead the elements of worship should be considered in accordance with Scripture and decided by the Session of each particular church." This matter also produced a season of debate beginning with Rod Mays (RUF) but ultimately failing. A study committee was formed on the question of how ministers with existing exceptions should relate to the presbytery. It will report back in the Autumn.

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Elements of the Debate

An Exception is a Stated Difference to the Confessional Standards of the PCA. When a candidate is examined for admission his theological differences with the PCA must be submitted in writing to the presbytery which “judges” whether his exceptions are (or are not) in accord with the Westminster Standards. In 2002 the PCA approved the following classifications to judge these differences by:

- a) the candidate stated that he had no differences; or
- b) the court judged the stated difference(s) to be merely semantic; or
- c) the court judged the stated difference(s) to be more than semantic, but “not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine” (BCO 21-4); or
- d) the court judged the stated difference(s) to be “out of accord,” that is, “hostile to the system” or “strick[ing] at the vitals of religion” (BCO 21-4)

In 2018 Calvary Presbytery in an attempt to foster clarity on the issue approved the following statement, “Ministers in Calvary Presbytery are to be required to teach the Scriptures faithfully. Where their views differ from the stated doctrinal standards of the PCA, they are to teach the Scripture, and to explain what Westminster teaches and the Scriptural basis for it, and they may explain other interpretations and the Scriptural basis for them but must submit to the denominational holding to the Westminster Standards as the accepted system of doctrine. The presbytery may declare certain exceptions unteachable.”

Young Mary Duncan, a 10-year-old communing member of Second (in good standing) who received special permission to attend the afternoon portion of the meeting, commented to her father afterwards “I was a little confused, but I think I got most of it.”

There was also an overture received for the 48th General Assembly. It **resolved** that the Calvary Presbytery hereby overtures the 48th General Assembly and ask it to declare the Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Human Sexuality as a biblically faithful declaration and refer it to the Committee on Discipleship Ministries for inclusion and promotion among its denominational teaching materials.

It was approved unanimously on the grounds that “The PCA Ad Interim Committee Report on Human Sexuality,” is a biblically faithful work by gifted churchmen within the PCA. It is a most useful resource concerning the apologetic and pastoral task surrounding gender and sexuality confusion within the PCA and the broader culture. The matter has been referred to the PCA’s highest court in St Louis.

Presbytery adjourned late afternoon to meet next (DV) at Second Greenville on 24th July 2021

For the Church,



Melton L. Duncan

Stated Clerk, Calvary (since 2016)

Standing Judicial Commissioner (Class of '24)

Ruling Elder (ordained 2002)

Advisor, PCA History Center (since 1992)

Charter Member of the PCA (1973)

Past Member, PCAGA/CP Committee on Thanks