

MINUTES

SEVENTEENTH STATED MEETING NEW RIVER PRESBYTERY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA Nov. 9-10, 1979

Lebanon Presbyterian Church, Craigsville, VA

Opening Worship: Moderator James Gay presided as the worship service began at 7:30 p.m. November 9. Following an opening prayer and the singing of a hymn, Rev. Linwood Wilkes preached from II Corinthians, chapter 4. An offering was then received for Presbytery.

Call to order: The moderator called Presbytery to order. Teaching elders present were George B. Alder II, Michael Bolus, John Dodd, Norman Evans, William Fitzhenry, William Hill, Jr., Rod Mays, Linwood Wilkes, and David Williams.

Ruling elders present were Curtis Carroll and Robert Miller (Westminster), James Eades (Covenant), John P. Jenkins (Rebecca Littlepage), Ralph Harris (Kanawha Salines), Garner Byram (Lebanon), Charles Kennedy (Little River), and Jerry Martin (Faith).

A quorum was declared present by the clerk.

First-time elders and visitors were recognized. There were 29 visitors including Dr. William Russell, moderator of the Mid-Atlantic Presbytery and three men from Indian Valley, Virginia where a new church might be formed. Many of the visitors were women who came to attend the WIC meeting.

Election of Moderator: Nominations for moderator were requested. Rev. Rod Mays nominated Rev. Michael "Mickey" Bolus. No other nominations were made and it was moved that nominations be closed, and that Mr. Bolus be elected unanimously. Motion passed and Mr. Bolus was elected moderator. Mr. Mays escorted the new moderator to the podium and Mr. Bolus assumed the office of moderator.

Minutes: One need for correction in the minutes was noted. The action to receive a special offering by each church for the Princeton work was made as an amendment to the report of the MUS Committee rather than as a part of the report. With that change, the minutes were approved.

Docket: One change was made to the docket, allowing time for a report on Ridgehaven by Alex Keleman, member of the GA Ridgenaven Committee. The docket was then approved.

Rod Mays and Jerry Martin were appointed to a Committee on Thanks.

Alex Keleman spoke on the work being done at Ridgehaven. All financial help comes from churches and individuals and is not part of the GA budget. More help is needed and \$1.65 per family was the figure that would get the job done.

Testimonies from the various churches were given. At Westminster Bible studies led by Jack Scott have just been concluded. That church is excited over

the prospect of new churches at Martinsville and Indian Valley. South Ruffner has attracted some new young families, a children's church has been started, and twelve U. of Charleston students are being served. At Rebecca Littlepage the Lord has greatly blessed the congregation in its experience with the family from Laos which it has sponsored. Four are in the family with s even more expected. Lebanon's physical improvements were obvious to all present. Rev. Hill will begin an evangelistic meeting the Sunday following Presbytery. Mr. and Mrs. Sam Roane will handle the music. The pastor of Kanawha Salines and his wife are being sent by the church to Mexico in January to minister in a newly-established church, the fruit of PCA missionaries in Acapulco. Rev. Dodd used his chalk-art talent there several years a go and will be working with some of the same people. Faith is thankful for its pastor's recovery from an accident and for that pastor's leadership. Covenant reported several adult conversions, a Christian kindergarten, a radio ministry weekdays and a Bible study in Huntington which attracted twenty-five. The new Francis Shaeffer films dealing with abortion and euthenasia will be shown Sunday night, December 30, and New Years Eve. At Princeton the area served is growing. David Williams concluded the testimonies with a report on the Atlanta School of Biblical Studies and his grandson's improved health.

Presbytery recessed at 9:30 p.m. following which committee meetings were held.

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Presbytery reconvened at 8:30 a.m., November 10.

Teaching elder, James Fishel, had arrived during the night and brought the opening devotions.

There were no requests to be excused. Several communications were received as information. An appeal from 38 members of the South Ruffner Church was referred to New Business upon the motion of Rev. Fitzhenry.

Committee Reports: Mission to the U.S. - Chairman Dodd invited George Alder to report on the Princeton Mission. Rev. Alder presented a petition with seven names representing five families requesting a church be organized on February 3. He moved its acceptance which was seconded and approved. A Commission will be appointed to assist Rev. Alder. The chairman then moved that the financial support of the Princeton work be continued as before. Seconded and approved.

A Presbytery MUS Conference, led by Coordinator J. Philip Clark, was recommended for April 19, 1980. Details will be worked out by the MUS Committee and be ready by the March meeting. All churches would be encouraged to guard the date and participate in the Conference. A motion to this effect was approved.

Concerning Mt. Hope, the key people there presently feel led to increase their support of their home church so the meetings with them are at least temporarily discontinued.

With a request that a work at Blacksburg, Va. be the object of prayer, Rev. Dodd moved the approval of the report as a whole. Motion seconded and carried.

Mission to the World - Norman Evans gave this report for the absent chairman. A successful missions conference was held recently in Kanawha County with all five churches participating. Kennedy Smartt was the speaker. Committee chairman Harry Musser, Jr., planned to attend a retreat for Presbytery MTW chairmen. The report was accepted as information.

Nominating Committee - Chairman Hill proposed the names of Summers Dunbar and James Brown to fill the vacancies on the Christian Education and Stewardship Committees respectively, formerly filled by Dick Adams and R.A. Batusic. Motion seconded and carried.

Christian Education - Chairman Alder's report described the WIC work at somewhat of a standstill and in recognition of the fact that enthusiasm is generated best at the local or grassroots level the WIC chairwomen were urged to be in contact with the Presbytery WIC chairman, Rev. Fitzhenry. All pastors were requested to encourage these ladies to maintain this contact.

The Campus Christian Fellowship which involved U. of Charleston students is progressing. The report concluded with the observation that the GA C.E. budget is still not being met and that we should help either to the end that the budget is met or that a budget be approved which can be met. The report was then accepted as information.

Stewardship - Norman Evans reported for the absent chairman. He introduced Roy Gamble of the GA Stewardship office. Gamble spoke briefly on the GA stewardship picture. Evans then presented the Presbytery budget for 1980. It was approved as presented and as follows:

Mission to the U.S.	\$5600 (Princeton work)
	2000 (Expanding work)
Mission to the World	700
Christian Education	600 (100 for camp and 500 for campus ministry)
Ministers and Candidates	800
Stated Clerk	100
Nominating Committee	100
Stewardship Committee	150
	<u>\$10050</u>

At this point there was a brief recess.

Ministers and Candidates: Dr. Bob Miller took the chair while Rev. Bolus made the report. A letter had been received from Chaplain Wayne Good with progress being indicated in his affiliation with a reformed chaplaincy body. Received as information.

The status of Rev. Michael Hall, examined and approved at the summer meeting was reviewed. There was a misunderstanding by Mr. Hall as to what his examination meant. He will not be leaving his present ministry until June, 1979. It was moved that all action taken concerning Mr. Hall be rescinded. Motion seconded and carried.

Mr. Bolus requested permission to present the remainder of his report later when the appeal concerning South Ruffner would be acted upon. Permission denied. It was moved by Rev. Hill that the remainder of the report be handled in executive session. Seconded and carried. Presbytery went into executive session.
Presbytery recessed for lunch at 12:30

Presbytery reconvened in the Grace Camp dining room at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Jerry Martin gave the report for the Committee on Thanks.

The Stated Clerk presented a financial report for the year to date which was accepted as information. (See exhibit A.)

Installation of WIC officers - George Alder installed these officers with appropriate remarks and prayer: Jeanne Martin (president), Lois Caines, (secretary), Dama Lynn (treasurer), and Darlene Fitzhenry (Mission to the World). Mary McDaniel (vice-president), Elizabeth Dunbar (Christian growth), and Willadean Planz (Mission to U.S.) were absent.

Amendments to the Book of Church Order were voted on. (See exhibit B) All were approved by good margins with the exception of Item Two which was disapproved by a good margin.

New Business: The moderator read the appeal (see exhibit C) submitted by members of South Ruffner Presbyterian Church along with minutes of a congregational and session meetings. It was moved that the appeal be referred to a commission made up of the Committee on Ministers and Candidates with power to meet with the congregation and session of South Ruffner and to make binding decisions by December 31. David Williams moved an amendment that would add one teaching elder and one ruling elder to the commission. Motion approved as amended. Rev. Fitzhenry, Rev. Mays, and Mr. Eades asked that their negative votes be recorded.

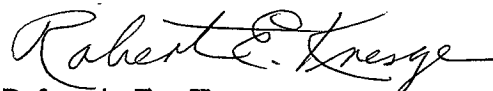
Rev. Fishel and Pat Jenkins were nominated as the additions to the commission. There were no other nominations. They were elected.

Rev. Evans, who had voted with the majority in the executive session, requested a reconsideration of that decision to the end that Rev. Wilkes will write each person to whom he wrote expressing his regret and asking for forgiveness. He made a motion to that effect. It was seconded. An amendment asking that Rev. Wilkes' ~~original~~ letters be read was offered. Seconded but defeated. The main motion was then approved.

Presbytery meetings in 1980 will be held the second Friday and Saturday in March at Kanawha Salines, in July at Rebecca Littlepage, and in November at Faith.

Presbytery adjourned at 3:15 with prayer by Rev. William E. Hill, Jr.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert E. Kresge
Stated Clerk

Exhibit A

FINANCIAL STATEMENT
NEW RIVER PRESBYTERY

Jan. 1979 Nov. 9

Balance, January 1, 1979		\$1458.79
Income:		
Churches	\$4930.00	
Offerings	607.19	
Refunds (from <u>222.00</u> committee trips)		<u>5759.19</u>
Beginning balance plus income		\$7218.98
Less Expenses:		
Princeton	\$5078.26	
Camp	600.00	
Campus Work	400.00	
Advertising	94.30	
Stated Clerk	<u>105.32</u>	
		<u>6527.88</u>
Balance, November 8, 1979		\$691.10

Respectfully submitted,
Robert E. Kresge
Robert E. Kresge
Stated Clerk

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER

The following proposed amendment to the *Book of Church Order* was approved by a majority of those present and voting at the Sixth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America. In accordance with the *Book of Church Order*, paragraph 27-2, amendments to the *Book of Church Order* may be enacted by a subsequent Assembly only after two-thirds of the Presbyteries have given their consent to the same.

Each Presbytery is asked to consider the proposed amendment, and to report their actions on this proposal to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly as soon as possible, so that the results may be reported to the next General Assembly.

(Note that the material is presented in "blocks" as adopted by the Assembly. The assumption is that the Presbyteries should vote on each item as a whole. If a presbytery should elect to do otherwise, the Clerk of the Presbytery should make it clear in his report to the Assembly.)

Presbytery voted as follows:

Item 1 Amend paragraph 7-2 to read as follows: The ordinary and perpetual classes of office in the Church are Elders and Deacons. Within the class of Elder are the two orders of Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders. The Elders jointly have the government and spiritual oversight of the Church, including teaching. Only those elders who are specially gifted, called and trained by God to preach may serve as Teaching Elders. The office of Deacon is not one of rule, but rather of service both to the physical and spiritual needs of the people. In accord with Scripture, these offices are open to men only.

Affirmative _____ Negative _____

Item 2 Combine Chapters 8 and 9 as follows and renumber the following chapters accordingly:
CHAPTER 8. The Elder.

- 8-1. This office is one of dignity and usefulness. The man who fills it has in Scripture different titles expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed Bishop or Pastor. As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, an example to the flock, and to govern well in the house and Kingdom of Christ, he is termed Presbyter or Elder. As he expounds the Word, and by sound doctrine both exhorts and convinces the gainsayer, he is termed Teacher. These titles do not indicate different grades of office, but all describe one and the same office.
- 8-2. He that fills this office should possess a competency of human learning and be blameless in life, sound in the faith and apt to teach. He should exhibit a sobriety and holiness of life becoming the Gospel. He should rule his own house well and should have a good report of them that are outside the Church.
- 8-3. It belongs to the office of Elder, both severally and jointly, to watch diligently over the flock committed to their charge, that no corruption of doctrine or of morals enter therein. They must exercise government and discipline, and take oversight not only of the spiritual interests of the particular church, but also the Church generally when called thereunto. They should visit the people at their homes, especially the sick. They should instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourner, nourish and guard the children of the Church. All those duties which private Christians are bound to discharge by the law of love are especially incumbent upon them by divine vocation, and are to be discharged as official duties. They should pray with and for the people, being careful and diligent in seeking the fruit of the preached Word among the flock.
- 8-4. As the Lord has given different gifts to men and has committed to some special gifts and callings, the Church is authorized to call and appoint some to labor as Teaching Elders.
- 8-5. When a man is called to labor as a Teaching Elder, it belongs to his order, in addition to those functions he shares with all other Elders, to feed the flock by reading, expounding and preaching the Word of God and to administer the Sacraments. As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed Ambassador. As he bears glad tidings of salvation to the ignorant and perishing, he is termed Evangelist. As he stands to proclaim the Gospel, he is termed Preacher. As he dispenses the manifold grace of God, and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed Steward of the mysteries of God.
- 8-6. When a Teaching Elder is appointed to the work of an Evangelist, he is commissioned to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments in foreign countries or the destitute parts of the Church. The Presbytery may by separate acts from that by which it commissioned him, entrust to the Evangelist for a period of twelve months the power to organize churches, and, until there is a Session in the Church so organized, to instruct, examine, ordain, and install Ruling Elders and Deacons therein, and to receive or dismiss members.

- 8-7. As there were in the Church under the law, Elders of the people for the government thereof, so in the Gospel Church, Christ has furnished others besides Ministers of the Word with gifts and commission to govern when called thereunto, which are called Ruling Elders.
- 8-8. Elders being of one class of office, Ruling Elders possess the same authority and eligibility to office in the courts of the Church as Teaching Elders. They should, moreover, cultivate zealously their own aptness to teach the Bible and should improve every opportunity of doing so.
- 8-9. Although preaching is only the function of Teaching Elders, notwithstanding, Ruling Elders should be regularly engaged in the practice of exhorting the people of God, by taking clear and well-known truths of the Scriptures and applying them with Zeal and earnestness to the lives of God's people.

Affirmative _____ Negative _____

Item 3 Amend 15-1-11 to read as follows: A Nominating Committee shall be comprised of one representative elected by each Presbytery in the following manner. Each Presbytery shall be assigned a lineal number by the Stated Clerk based on its date of formation. In odd number years, odd number Presbyteries will elect members, alternating between Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders, respectively. In even number years, even number Presbyteries will elect members, alternating between Ruling Elders and Teaching Elders, respectively. The term of each member shall be two years. When necessary, unexpired terms shall be filled by an Elder of the same class, Teaching or Ruling. This committee is to present all nominations for which it is responsible to the next meeting of the Assembly from a slate of men nominated by the Presbyteries. Each Presbytery shall through its representative present the Nominating Committee the name of one Ruling and one Teaching Elder for each committee of the church, utilizing the nominating forms provided for this purpose by the Stated Clerk. In addition to nominees for expired terms the Committee shall nominate for each permanent committee one Ruling and one Teaching Elder as alternates to fill any vacancies that may occur during the year. Each alternate should attend each meeting and fill any vacancies necessary to meet a quorum. In addition to the new nominees from the Presbyteries, alternates not assuming any vacancies during a year will be automatically considered by the Nominating Committee as candidates for nomination to that same committee.

Affirmative _____ Negative _____

Item 4 Amend paragraph 15-1-12 as follows: Add the following to the end of the first sentence: "on the odd years and four men each on the even years."

Affirmative _____ Negative _____

Item 5 Amend paragraph 15-1-14 to read as follows: "The Assembly shall elect a six-man Theological Examining Committee (three Teaching Elders and three Ruling Elders of three classes of two men each). This Committee shall examine all Coordinators, Associate Coordinators, Assistant Coordinators, and those acting temporarily in these positions who are being recommended for first time employment by Assembly Committees to the Assembly. They are to be examined in the areas of Christian Experience, Theology, the Sacraments, Church Government, and English Bible. No person will begin work or move on the field without prior examination and approval by the General Assembly's Theological Examining Committee. No person will be presented to the Assembly for election who has not met the approval of this Committee. Nominations for this Committee will be presented by the Assembly's Nominating Committee."

Affirmative _____ Negative _____

Item 6 Amend Chapter 20 by deleting paragraph 2.

Affirmative _____ Negative _____

Date _____

Attested by _____

Stated Clerk

(COPY)

November 3, 1979

APPEAL

TO. Robert Kresge
Stated Clerk
New River Presbytery

We the undersigned members of South Ruffner Presbyterian Church in America, whose signatures are attached hereto and made a part hereof, do appeal to the New River Presbytery per The Book of Church Order, Chapter 43 the following irregularities during and following the properly called congregational meeting on October 21, 1979:

- I. Without substantiation or reference to uphold his decision the moderator, William A. Fitzhenry, ruled from the chair that a majority, or 51% of the members on the church roll as of October 21, 1979 would be required for the motion to pass. An appeal of the decision (ruling) of the chair was properly made and seconded. The moderator, William A. Fitzhenry, refused to place the appeal of the decision of the chair to a vote by the congregation, as required by standard meeting practices to do so. The moderator, William A Fitzhenry, stated erroneously that his ruling was not debatable.

- II. At a legally called session meeting on October 27, 1979 the clerk of the session Coy Hughes, presented a petition signed by 38 members requesting a congregational meeting to dissolve our pastoral relation with William A. Fitzhenry. Mr. Firzhenry charged elders Gallagher and Hughes with conduct which against the peace, unity and purity of the church. Mr. Fitzhenry, then, ordered them out of the meeting and proceeded to suspend thmm, and using the petition, to suspend members recorded thereon from the sealing ordinances and from all offices of the church. As of this writing the petition to call a congregational meeting that was properly presented at the October 27, 1979 session meeting has been ignored in violation of the Book of Church Order, Chapter 26-2.

(Signatures and addresses follow of
the members, which copy the moderator,
Mr. Bolus, has in his files)