

# ARPTalk(14)

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*ARPTalk(14.1)*

## **LETTERS AND THINGS**

### **Letter from Mr. Jay Brantner**

**EDITOR'S REMARKS:** In *ARPTalk(11)* there is a letter by Mr. Daniel Stephens, an Erskine College student. Mr. Stephens complains that Erskine College fails to deliver on her mission as an “evangelical Christian” college that combines Christian commitment and excellence in learning. He also complains that Erskine uses “bait and switch” tactics in recruiting students—claiming to be an evangelical Christian college when Erskine is not. In *ARPTalk(12)*, Mr. Stephens’ letter is followed with a letter from another student, Mr. Scott Cook. In Mr. Cook’s letter, he also complains that Erskine uses “bait and switch” tactics in recruiting. He also complains of the lack of “Christian commitment” on the part of many on the Erskine faculty. Now, in this issue of *ARPTalk, ARPTalk(14)*, another Erskine student, Mr. Jay Brantner, comes forward to agree with Mr. Stephens and Mr. Cook’s assessment that Erskine is “the college of Laodicea.” Mr. Brantner is a senior math major. This article first appeared as a “Letter to the Editor” in *The Mirror*, the Erskine College student newspaper.

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### **A LETTER WE NEEDED TO READ**

by Jay Brantner

As I read “To the college of Laodicea” in last month’s issue of *The Mirror*, I had mixed feelings. Yes, Erskine has a distinct struggle between those with genuinely Christian worldviews and those who adhere to secularism

(occasionally with a meaningless religious gloss). I was taken aback, however, by the challenge, “How many professors or administrators would be comfortable, nay, overjoyed to say ‘Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into this world, was crucified, died, and was resurrected for the salvation of sinful humans’? I submit to you not many at all.” I recognized that the number would be fewer than it should, but for four years, I had naturally assumed that at a Christian college, it would be at least more than half. The claim “not many at all” ran directly counter to my assumption.

So I started thinking about professors that I knew in some capacity (as a professor, guest speaker, etc.), department by department, trying to determine how many held a Christian worldview and which claim was correct—mine or the letter’s. In the end, I found that Erskine only has one department that I could say with confidence is made up of professors who teach and live with Christian worldviews. Of course, there are individuals in other departments with Christian worldviews, but that hardly mitigates the overall problem. Still, that number seemed too small; surely it was generated by my own ignorance and was not a reflection of the sad state of Christianity at Erskine. So I asked my friends in other departments to aid me in my search. Together, we tried to determine which departments holistically taught from a Christian worldview. At the end of the search, the number was still one. *One*. As a senior at a Christian school, I could only say with confidence that one department consistently teaches in a Christian manner.

Of course, the objection may be raised that it is not up to the students—or anyone but God—to judge whether our professors are truly Christian. The statement is true. Far be it from me to judge the state of another’s soul. However, the state of a worldview is not the state of the soul; a man’s words and actions testify to how he views the world. And the Christian worldview is far too underrepresented on the Erskine campus. We have professors who say that the Bible is irrelevant to science, that worldview neutrality is not only possible but desirable, and that what we believe is more important than what is true. I once took a professor aback by believing the absurdity that only one (at most) comprehensive set of beliefs could be true. Another professor claimed that most of us at Erskine adhere to religion to some degree but have some major problems with it. If that doesn’t scream “neither hot nor cold,” I don’t know what does.

“To the college of Laodicea” claimed that Erskine misrepresents itself to prospective students, that we claim to be Christian when we are not. To solve this problem, we should choose Christianity or secularism but be consistent in our choice. I agree wholeheartedly; that decision is long overdue. I would, however, like to point out that choosing Christianity would not require a sacrifice of academic integrity, despite some claims to the contrary. Yes, I came to Erskine believing that biology professors

would be open to Intelligent Design (or at least not openly hostile to it). But there are Christians—with fully Christian worldviews—on both sides of that debate. I would expect that a Christian holding to Darwinian evolution would need to affirm a special creation of the soul, but Christianity does not require people to reject Darwinism out of hand. Such is the case with numerous debates within academia: there is usually no immediate inconsistency. Thus, the Christian's responsibility is to fully examine their belief within the context of Scripture and accept or reject accordingly. So what must we change to become a distinctly Christian college, if not the academic beliefs of our professors and administrators? We need people who truly believe that the Bible is God's Word, that it makes cognitive claims, and that man is sinful and damned without the saving sacrifice of God's perfect Son. Furthermore, these beliefs must inform their entire lives. They must understand their disciplines in context of what is taught in Scripture. They must not see the Bible as irrelevant to *anything*. In some disciplines (for instance, Bible itself), these truths will be explicitly stated in daily lectures. For others, the worldview will be present implicitly. But it must be present, or we must abandon our label of Christian college.

**~Scroll down for the next article, *ARPTalk(14.2)*.~**

*ARPTalk(14.2)*

**A CHRONICLE OF  
THE LONG FAILURE  
OF GENERAL SYNOD  
TO OVERSEE  
ERSKINE  
COLLEGE AND SEMINARY  
(1976 – 2008)**

**Is this not a time for anger?**

**The Editor has finally finished reading through the sections of the Minutes of General Synod, 1976-2008, that deal with EC/ETS. What I have read nauseates me. It makes me angry. It makes me angry at myself, our General Synod, and EC/ETS.**

**The Editor's research reveals that in the last 32 years EC/ETS has functioned autonomously from the ARPC as a rebellious and petulant pubescent delinquent in the life of our church, and the General Synod has allowed such reprehensible behavior. The history of the Erskine Board and Administration has been one of disrespect to, disregard for, disdain of, and contumacy towards the ARPC. With few exceptions, they have demonstrated corporate self-indulgence and indifference in their understanding of Christian faith and learning, administrative malfeasance in their stewardship of the college and seminary of the ARPC, cultural incestuousness in their management of the institution, and ecclesiastical treason in their dealing with the church that has faithfully attended them with the tithes and offering of God's people (over \$15,000,000). And the Editor of *ARPTalk* and the other members of our General Synod have permitted this. Is this not a time for anger?**

**Their MO has shown a disdain for the church. They have known that if they could manage the General Synod in June at Bonclarken with “Christian-speak” that hinted at faithfulness to the desires of the denomination, they could then return to Due West confident of having hoodwinked General Synod again and continue as before. It seems that their promises meant little to them but much to the naïve ministers and elders who take men at their word. Cynically, they banked on the phenomenon of post-Synod forgetfulness on the part of the ARPC. The General Synod has put up with this sort of manipulative and defiant behavior for more than 32 years. Indeed, is this not a time for anger?**

**The task for all the agencies of General Synod is the promotion of the goals, the welfare, and the growth of the ARPC. For more than 32 years, EC/ETS has NOT done this. For more than 32 years, EC/ETS has looked only to herself and complained that the ARPC has not done more to support EC/ETS financially. For more than 32 years, EC/ETS has not been an instrument of the peace of the church but a “bone of contention” and division. When does this stop? When do we see the reformation of EC/ETS? When does the college and the seminary of the ARPC become that which the ARPC envisions? When will we in the ARPC finally rise up in indignation and stop secular humanists from feasting at the larders of the church? The church does not have to feed an agency that does not promote the goals, the welfare, and the growth of the church! The church does not have to feed rebellion and secular skepticism! Is this not a time for anger?**

**Below is a condensed version of the Editor’s research. This comes from the Minutes of Synod, 1976-2008. The Editor encourages you to check his research. The Editor has discovered that for 19 of the past 32 years EC/ETS has been a “hot button” issue at the meetings of General Synod. For 19 of the past 32 years, EC/ETS has divided rather than unified the ARPC. For 19 of the past 32 years, EC/ETS has occupied the time and energy of the ARPC. For 19 of the past 32 years, EC/ETS has manifestly NOT contributed to the goals, the welfare, and the growth of the ARPC. Is this not a time for anger?**

**Let the ARPC now rise up in her righteous indignation! Let the ARPC repent of her corporate neglect and inaction! Let the ARPC now take decisive, corrective steps to address this “long failure” to act.**

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1. **The 1976 General Synod re Erskine:**

- **SYNOD'S CONCERNS:** (Memorial from Virginia Presbytery re Erskine) – Abuse of alcoholic beverages and drugs on the Erskine campus.
- **SYNOD'S ACTIONS:** The Board and Administration were given a year to address the concerns of Synod (p. 263).
- **EDITOR'S COMMENTS:** The General Synod went into post-Synod forgetfulness. The Erskine Board and Administration went into passive-resistance mode. The matter reappeared in 1977 (and is still being dealt with).

2. **The 1977 General Synod re Erskine:**

- **SYNOD'S CONCERNS:** (Memorials from Florida Presbytery, Mississippi Valley Presbytery, and Second Presbytery re Erskine) – (1) The use of alcoholic beverages and closed-door visitation; (2) The hiring of only evangelical Christians as administrators and faculty members; (3) The operation of the college and the seminary according to the "Statement of Philosophy of Christian Education."
- **SYNOD'S ACTIONS:** (1) A motion was passed directing the Board and Administration to address these matters of concern in a manner acceptable to the General Synod (p. 459-460). (2) A motion was passed directing the Board to present to General Synod "any future proposed changes in the by-laws for Synod's approval prior to the Board's vote for adoption" (p. 499).
- **MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES:** There was a mild "demonstration" by students and former students asking for a "Christian Erskine." It was noted that "a number of students, former students, and friends of the college appeared before the [Moderator's Committee on Erskine] at their own request, and made statements of their concern regarding: 1) Use of alcohol, 2) Dormitory visitation, 3) Lack of Christian atmosphere on campus" (p. 516).
- **EDITOR'S COMMENTS:** At the next meeting of the Erskine Board, the Board declared "autonomy" from the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. However, this did not mean that the Board and Administration did not want General Synod's money.

### 3. The 1978 General Synod re Erskine:

- **SYNOD'S CONCERNS:** (1) The declaration of "autonomy" by the Erskine Board. (2) It was noted that governing oversight of the Synod over the college was dissolved in 1972 (pp. 621-623). (3) It was noted that Erskine College, at that time, was "legally its own entity" (pp. 621-623). (4) The Erskine Board, in response to the directive that those teaching Bible "personally affirm and teach the Scriptures as the infallible and inerrant Word of God," voted "That, in the light of the Board of Trustees commitment to comprehensive, quality Christian education, to the principles of academic freedom pledged to the faculty and students; and in view of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church's adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, the Board express to the 1978 General Synod the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church its inability to comply with the directive" (p. 664).
- **SYNOD'S ACTIONS:** The above matters were sent to the Ecclesiastical Commission for reconciliation.
- **EDITOR'S COMMENTS:** The General Synod was told BY THE BOARD that the ARPC does not "own" Erskine but is "related" to Erskine. The ARPC is still trying to resolve the issues inherent in this matter.

### 4. The 1980 General Synod re Erskine:

- **SYNOD'S CONCERNS:** The relationship between Erskine and ARPC.
- **SYNOD'S ACTIONS:** (1) The Synod chose to keep Erskine (pp. 215-216). (2) The following motion was passed: "That the General Synod think positively about Erskine and pray that Erskine will exert an ever greater Christian influence upon the Students" (pp. 215-216). (3) The following motion was passed: "That the Board of Trustees and Administration give added emphasis to Christian Commitment as well as academic excellence" (pp. 215-216).
- **EDITOR'S COMMENTS:** The "tail now wags the dog." The dog is still staggering because of the tail's wagging. How are we in the ARPC supposed to "think positively" about Erskine? How do we come up with such absurdities?

## 5. The 1982 General Synod re Erskine:

- **SYNOD'S CONCERNS:** ETS and the Methodist Church – The Erskine Report stated that Dr. R. T. Ruble had hired three adjunct professors who were United Methodists to teach Methodist polity, doctrine, and history. It was also stated that Rev. Ms. Susan Henry-Crowe was one of three and that she would teach Methodist History (p. 660).
- **SYNOD'S ACTIONS:** Nothing!
- **EDITOR'S COMMENTS:** (1) In 1982 ETS ceased to be Reformed in theology and Presbyterian in ecclesiology and, in reality, ceased to be the seminary of the ARPC. At that time ETS became the “used car lot of seminaries.” The attitude at ETS became “Whatever you want, we can be that kind of seminary for you!” (2) From this point, ETS was “held captive” by the Methodist Church until 2005/6, when an administrative blunder failed to maintain diversity on the ETS faculty and that blunder lost the approval of the seminary governing agency of the Methodist Church.

## 6. The 1984 General Synod re Erskine:

- **SYNOD'S CONCERNS:** The relationship between EC and ETS.
- **SYNOD'S ACTIONS:** A motion was passed to form a “committee to work with the Erskine Board to study the feasibility of the separation of the Seminary from the College, and that his committee report back to the next meeting of the General Synod in 1985” (p. 337).
- **EDITOR'S COMMENTS:** Nothing came of the motion. This matter is still being talked about.

## 7. The 1986 General Synod re Erskine:

- **SYNOD'S CONCERNS:** (1) Erskine Board Chairman Mr. H. Lloyd Wilderson informed General Synod that the ARPC was the “sponsoring authority” for EC/ETS (p.18).
- **SYNOD'S ACTIONS:** (1) The Synod requested that the Board present to Synod in 1988 a five-year plan for the implementation of the “Statement of Philosophy for Christian Higher Education” approved in 1977 (p. 86). (2) A request by the Erskine Board to change the *Manual of Authorities and Authorities* in order to allow the Erskine Board to become a “self-perpetuating Board” was defeated (p. 101).



- **MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS:** Below is the speech by Dr. Wayne Frazier that he was asked to give by the Moderator's Committee on Erskine College and Seminary.

Mr. Moderator, Fathers and brethren,

I did not seek this opportunity to speak to you. But the Moderator's Committee on Erskine College and Seminary asked me to share with you my reflections as a retiring member of the Board of Trustees. It has been a privilege to serve this institution and contribute in a small way.

The Board of Trustees and administration have a very demanding and complex responsibility. They approach it with diligence and commitment. The financial needs of Erskine are real. Yes, our faculty needs financial relief. Yes, demographics show a decline in the number of available students.

But our evaluation has not recognized that top-notch, private Liberal Arts colleges offering a distinctive Biblical world and live view integrated into their programs of academic excellence are not experiencing the serious decline in enrollment that Erskine is experiencing. We are "pricing" ourselves out of the student market by not offering a sufficiently distinctive product. By offering mainly academic excellence students are going down the road to Clemson, Wofford or Furman. The Moderator's Committee has offered two solutions.

One is long range planning. Jim Tysinger, former board member, requested for his three years as chairman of the board that a 5-year plan be developed. At present some trustee committees have done so and most have not. But there remains no comprehensive plan that defines the kind of college God wants us to be and the way we are going to achieve these goals. The board needs the administration to coordinate this essential effort for a comprehensive 5-year plan.

Closely related to the need for a 5-year plan is the implementation of Synod's 1977 Statement of Philosophy of Christian Higher Education. The efforts of a few trustees to be faithful to the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Synod concerning our trust have been unsuccessful [Editor's emphasis]. The statement adopted by this Synod and printed in the *Manual of Authorities and Duties* has the following recommendations to trustees:

#2 "That, as part of the basic development of the Philosophy of Christian Higher Education, this Report and the accompanying Statement, as adopted, constitute the governing philosophy for policies established and maintained by the Board of Trustees at Erskine College in the operation of Erskine College and Erskine Theological Seminary."

#5 "That in making its annual report to the General Synod, the Board of Trustees be asked to include a special section relating to the implementation of this Statement of Philosophy of Christian Higher Education."

From 1978 to 1984, the Statement of Philosophy was not mentioned in the Board's report to Synod. In 1985 and 1986 it was mentioned in the preface. But there remains no special section concerning its implementation.

I am convinced one reason Erskine is facing financial difficulty is a lack of courage and vision to be entirely faithful to our calling in Christian Higher Education. We must integrate faith and reason. We must integrate a Biblical world and life with each academic discipline. All truth is God's truth. Jesus Christ is Lord of all.

At present some faculty members are involved in this endeavor. But there is no adequate coordination or support of this effort throughout the college community. Did not the apostle Paul write in II Corinthians 10:5? "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to obey Jesus Christ."

That is what it means historically to be Reformed in our theology.

Fathers and brethren, the battle today is for the minds of men and women. Romans 12:2 says: "Do not be conformed to the world (do not be pressed into the world's mindset), but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

The Lord Jesus Christ will bless Erskine College even more in the future than He has in the past when a distinctively Christian Education triumphs. Thank you. (pp. 104-105)

- **EDITOR'S COMMENTS:** The members of the General Synod went home delighted in Dr. Frazier's excellent speech and, since they were good men, expecting the Erskine Board and Administration to act as good men in response to Synod's concerns. The Erskine Board and Administration, as they are wont to do, ignored the stated and unstated desires of the ARPC.

## 8. The 1987 General Synod re Erskine:

- **SYNOD'S CONCERNS:** Under the leadership of Mr. W. H. "Bill" Stuart, Jr., Board Chairman, an addendum to the Erskine Report was given that proposed an *ad hoc*

committee of three Trustees to meet with the Committee of Moderators to facilitate discussions regarding the main concerns of the ARPC—such as the alcohol policy, the visitation policy, the need for a full-time chaplain, the lack of emphasis on the ARPC, and a general lack of emphasis on the Christian aspects of education (pp. 357-358).

- **SYNOD'S ACTIONS:** The report was received as information.
- **EDITOR'S COMMENTS:** The General Synod is still waiting for many of these matters to be resolved. The alcohol issue was settled by the State of South Carolina when the legal drinking age was changed to 21 by the Legislature. But there are still reports of problems.

#### **9. The 1988 General Synod re Erskine:**

- **SYNOD'S CONCERNS:** (1) Under the leadership of Chairman W. H. "Bill" Stuart, Jr., a long range strategic planning process was outlined. (2) Issues regarding the implementation of the 1977 "Philosophy of Higher Education" were still under discussion. (3) The Board reported attempts to resolve communication problems between the Board and the ARPC.
- **SYNOD'S ACTIONS:** None.
- **EDITOR'S COMMENTS:** The issue has never been one of communication! The Erskine Board and Administration have known what the General Synod was saying. The General Synod was also aware of the disrespect and disdain of the Board and the Administration and faculty. The issue is the willful contempt of the Board and the Administration. The issue is the Board's and Administration's determination NOT to respond to the expressed directives of the ARPC. Simply, the Erskine Board, Administration, and faculty are not where the ARPC is theologically. This impasse has never been resolved.

#### **10. The 1989 General Synod re Erskine:**

- **SYNOD'S CONCERNS:** (1) The Board reported "a five year plan that implements the 1977 Statement of Philosophy for Christian Higher Education" (p.108). (2) The Board reported that it took "very seriously" the General Synod's request for a renewal of "the principles of a distinctive Biblical world and life view integrated into programs of academic excellence" (pp. 118-121). (3) The office of Chaplain was

changed from part time to full-time (pp. 118-121). (4)  
Regarding the hiring of staff and faculty, the Board reported "The heart of Erskine College lies in the character and leadership of those who teach and lead the students of this institution. The Board readily acknowledges the need to examine the whole person when evaluating the qualifications of those who seek employment on the faculty and in staff positions at the College. At the same time we believe that such judgments need to be applied with proper respect for the freedom of conscience of the individual, and according to Scriptural principles, and not in any harsh or self-righteous way ... the difficulty may become well nigh impossible if we do not have a reasonably large pool of applicants to select from" (p. 121).

- **SYNOD'S ACTIONS:** The following motions was passed: "That the Synod encourages the Presidential Search Committee of the Erskine Board of Trustees to seek a qualified candidate of unquestioned evangelical commitment so that Erskine College would be one of the finest liberal arts colleges with a Christian World and Life View" (p. 121).
- **EDITOR'S COMMENTS:** The General Synod was betrayed and disappointed again in the Board's choice of a President.

#### **11. The 1990 General Synod re Erskine:**

- **SYNOD'S CONCERNS:** Again the issues of Erskine administrators and faculty were before the General Synod.
- **SYNOD'S ACTIONS:** One of the "Aspirations" of the Special Moderator's Committee on College Education was "to have Erskine College present an unapologetic Christian identity in their recruitment of administration, faculty, students and in its publications presenting Erskine College as one of the finest Liberal Arts Colleges with a Christian World and Life View (all "Aspirations," pp. 433-435).
- **EDITOR'S COMMENTS:** The members of the General Synod are still waiting.

#### **12. The 1991 General Synod re Erskine:**

- **SYNOD'S CONCERNS:** There was a rehashing of responses to the Aspirations and Goals of the 1990 Synod.
- **SYNOD'S ACTIONS:** (1) A significant response was that "The Administration encourages each member of the faculty and staff to embody in their personal and professional life the

fulfillment of the Mission Statement of the College” (p. 791). (2) A Trustee Profile was presented by the Board (pp. 791-793).

- **EDITOR’S COMMENTS:** There was a lot of talk but no substance in the talk. Over the years, the Erskine response to the General Synod’s concerns is to come up with “window dressings.” One has to look long and hard to find substantive responses.

**13. The 1994 General Synod re Erskine:**

- **SYNOD’S CONCERNS:** (1) The completion of the five year plan. (2) Questions regarding the orthodoxy of ETS professors.
- **SYNOD’S ACTIONS:** Inquiries were made regarding ETS professors (pp. 662-663).
- **EDITOR’S COMMENTS:** The good thing that came out of the five year plan was the restoration of the Office of Chaplain.

**14. The 1995 General Synod re Erskine:**

- **SYNOD’S CONCERNS:** The orthodoxy of ETS professors, especially Dr. Merwyn Johnson. The issue was “God-language” (p.53).
- **SYNOD’S ACTIONS:** The following motion was adopted: “That the Synod conveys to the Dean of Erskine Seminary its dissatisfaction in the response of Dr. Johnson as represented before this assembly” (p. 39).
- **EDITOR’S COMMENTS:** Dr. John Blumenstein, then an ARP professor of NT at ETS, stated: “The need for a clear direction and supervision from the A.R.P. Church in a seminary with a vastly varied student body” (p. 53). That need is even more apparent today. The ARPC has no real supervision over the seminary of the ARPC.

**15. The 1998 General Synod re Erskine:**

- **SYNOD’S CONCERNS:** Welcome to a new President: Dr. John Carson.
- **SYNOD’S ACTIONS:** None.
- **EDITOR’S COMMENTS:** Dr. Carson’s ideals for a Christian College are great. His ability to implement his vision during his Presidency is open to debate. The years that Dr. Carson was President and Dr. R. J. Gore was Vice-President and

Dean of the seminary were relatively quiet years for the General Synod.

**16. The 2004 General Synod re Erskine:**

- **SYNOD'S CONCERNS:** This was the last year that General Synod felt comfortable to celebrate Erskine.
- **SYNOD'S ACTIONS:** (1) Motion made and passed: "That the Erskine College Chaplain, and the faculty of the Department of Bible, Religion and Philosophy be commended for their faithful adherence to the theology and doctrines of our church, both in their teaching and in their individual lives" (p. 493). (2) Received the following from Dr. Carson as information: "Faith is not the enemy of knowledge. Authentic Christianity does not confuse, water down, or tamper with authentic scholarship. Instead, the light of the Gospel displays academic excellence in all its radiance. It brings perspective to the events of history, wonder to experiments in the laboratory, and poignancy to the classics of literature ... Neither Christianity nor higher education can retreat to the citadel of the closed mind" (p. 493).
- **EDITOR'S COMMENTS:** There is a maxim that reads: "Personnel is policy." The personnel of Carson and Gore and their policies are far different from the present personnel and policies.

**17. The 2006 General Synod re Erskine:**

- **SYNOD'S CONCERNS:** This was a period of transition. Dr. Luder Whitlock was Interim President.
- **SYNOD'S ACTIONS:** The following motion was passed: "That the Board of Erskine be reminded of the requirement that the annual report to Synod is 'to include a special section relating to the implementation of the Statement of Philosophy of Christian Higher Education (Manual of Authorities and Duties: Board of Erskine College: Duties #10)'" (p. 433-434).
- **EDITOR'S COMMENTS:** In Dr. Whitlock's report, he wrote: "I am committed to building a discerning, integrative, and unwavering program of higher education that is rooted in the authority of God's Word and, therefore, fully aligned with the theology and heritage of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. We will resist the tendency toward secularization that has been the experience of many

Christian institutions of higher learning” (p, 442). One asks, would the present President of Erskine dare to own and seek to implement the words of Dr. Whitlock? If he did, the General Synod would “elevate” him to sainthood and the Erskine community would have a collective “emotional meltdown.”

#### **18. The 2007 General Synod re Erskine:**

- **SYNOD’S CONCERNS:** (1) In the fall, the Board of Trustees lost its collective mind, removed Dr. Whitlock, nominated and nearly elected a Methodist, Dr. Paul Baker, as President of Erskine College and Erskine Theological Seminary. Then, by one vote, the Board elected Dr. R. T. Ruble. (2) Responding to student complaints, Second Presbytery found that a “culture of intimidation” exists at Erskine. (3) Once again, the question of missional fidelity arose, accompanied with questions regarding the loyalty of the Board and the integrity of administrators. All this with students appearing before Second Presbytery and General Synod with complaints.
- **SYNOD’S ACTIONS:** (1) A motion was made and passed to receive a paper which, in essence, was a Board minority report ([.15]). (2) Motion passed: “That Synod call upon the Board of Trustees, Administration, Faculty, and Staff of Erskine College and Erskine Theological Seminary wholeheartedly to fulfill the instructions of the General Synod regarding character and mission of the College and Seminary and, in particular, that they carefully and without evasion adhere to the requirement that any newly appointed administrative or teaching employee of any board shall have given satisfactory evidence of their belief in and adherence to the basic doctrines of evangelical Christianity (*Manual of Authorities and Duties 2006*, pg. 9)” (p. 102). (3) Motion passed: “1. Recommended at the hiring of its next president and all thereafter, that the Board of Trustees commit to the hiring of an evangelical reformed Christian for the President of Erskine College and Seminary and recommit itself to a total integration of a Christ-centered, i.e. the Christian world view and life view in all of its educational process, affirming Christian commitment and excellence in learning. 2. Expressed thanks to God that in His gracious providence

**Dr. Randall Ruble has been appointed as President of Erskine College and Seminary and that our College and Seminary have godly, reformed and evangelical leadership.”**  
**(4) Motion passed: “That the General Synod reaffirm its commitment to the previously approved “Statement of Christian Higher Education” and encourage the committee tasked to produce a new statement, to the end that it will in no way weaken but in fact strengthen, the Christian commitment and clarity of the statement; That the General Synod remind the Erskine President and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of their mandate to implement this philosophy and to maintain the Erskine identity in accordance with it, in ways that are reported to, and verifiable by, the General Synod; and That the Synod pause to pray for the Lord’s present and future blessing on Erskine College and Theological Seminary, its Board of Trustees, and its new president” (p.111). (4) A motion was passed that each prospective Board nominee be sent the 1977 “Report of the Special Committee on Christian Higher Education,” the “Statement of the Philosophy of Christian Higher Education,” and the “Statement of Evangelical Christianity” and asked to sign a statement that he/she has read these (pp. 212-214).**

- **EDITOR’S COMMENTS:** (1) The Administration, in full knowledge of the theological direction of the ARPC, gave tenure to PC(USA), neo-Barthian professor Dr. Richard Burnett. (2) President Ruble spoke before the General Synod and claimed that all the troubles at Erskine were not his making but inherited. He also asked to be held accountable for subsequent matters. Time will tell whether the General Synod gives Dr. Ruble the opportunity of accountability.

#### **19. The 2008 General Synod re Erskine:**

- **SYNOD’S CONCERNS:** Tenure was given to PC(USA) ETS professor Dr. Richard Burnett who is identified as a neo-Barthian. At stake is the definition of Biblical authority.
- **SYNOD’S ACTIONS:** The adoption of three inerrancy statements (pp. 514-515). These three motions were framed in response to the granting of tenure to Dr. Burnett.
- **SUBSEQUENT MATTERS:** (1) The questions: (a) Are there or are there not teachers at ETS who espouse the teaching of Karl Barth as the proper understanding of Scriptural



authority? (b) Are there or are there not teachers at ETS who will not affirm the doctrine of inerrancy? (2) The most important question: What is Erskine doing to promote the goals, the welfare, and growth of the ARPC? Unfortunately, the answer is VERY LITTLE! Instead of advancing the goals, the welfare, and the growth of the ARPC, Erskine has been a point of contention and division. What is the lesson of history for the ARPC?

\* \* \* \* \*

**Well, what do you think? Has the Editor misrepresented the history? Is this not "A CHRONICLE OF THE LONG FAILURE OF GENERAL SYNOD TO OVERSEE ERSKINE COLLEGE AND SEMINARY (1976 – 2008)?" It is not a pretty sight, is it? Is this not a time for anger?**

**Here are a number of issues that need to be addressed:**

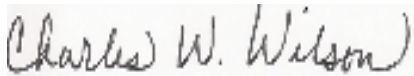
- A significant portion of the General Synod no longer trusts EC/ETS theologically, institutionally, or educationally.**
- A significant portion of the General Synod is simply ASHAMED of and EMBARRASSED by EC/ETS.**
- The senior administrators of EC/ETS (the President and the Executive Vice-President) do not have the whole-hearted confidence of the rank and file of the General Synod.**
- The majority of the EC/ETS Board, Administration, and faculty define the word "Christian" in a manner that is different from and in opposition to that of the majority of the General Synod.**
- A significant portion of our General Synod views EC/ETS as self-absorbed. They believe that the institution does not promote the goals, the welfare, and the growth of the ARPC. In a time of numerical and financial decline in the church, the ARPC can ill afford an institution into which it pours 25% of all its financial resources and have that institution refuse to promote the goals, the welfare, and the growth of the church.**
- A significant portion of the General Synod is CERTAIN that the majority of both the EC/ETS administration and faculty is indifferent to and/or in opposition to the theological direction and denominational ethos of the ARPC.**

**This is "A CHRONICLE OF THE LONG FAILURE OF GENERAL SYNOD TO OVERSEE ERSKINE COLLEGE AND SEMINARY (1976 – 2008)."**

**Whether you agree or disagree with the sentiments of the Editor, the history of EC/ETS and the ARPC is one of division and distrust instead of unity and growth. Whether you agree or disagree with the sentiments of the Editor, EC/ETS is still a "bone of contention" and division in the ARPC. Why do we allow this to continue? Why do we support an institution that does not promote the goals, the welfare, and the growth of our church? Is this not a time for anger?**

**The words of Dr. Wayne Frazier are as appropriate today as they were in 1985. Mr. Frazier said: "The efforts of a few trustees to be faithful to the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Synod concerning our trust have been unsuccessful." Nothing has changed! The chronicle of our General Synod's dealings with EC/ETS is a story of "long failure."  
**YES, NOW IS THE TIME FOR ANGER!****

**These are my thoughts,**



**Charles W. Wilson**

**~Thank you for reading *ARPTalk(14)*.~**