

# ATTACHMENTS - ARPTalk(2)

## Attachment 1

Tom Shoger – On Giving

The following are not the exact comments I made at Synod about giving, but my best recollection of them (plus one added comment). The comments were directed toward the items imbedded in the body of the Board of Stewardship report that would have effectively eliminated the Stewardship Counselor position, a position approved by the General Synod only two years before but never filled, and therefore never tried. I personally believe this position is a vital part of changing what ails the ARP Church regarding giving. Each year we bemoan the meager increase in actual dollars given to the Denominational Ministry Fund (this year <1.2%). Such concern once a year does nothing to actually solve the problem nor do speeches that place guilt on ministers and their people. Most can come up with excuses as to why they can't give to, or give more to Denominational Ministry.

The real solution is not focusing on Synod needs but on the needs of the person in the pew of each congregation to see tithing and sacrificial giving as a vital part of his/her personal sanctification. Each person needs to understand biblically and personally his/her need to give generously to their Lord. That giving begins in the local church, and when people experience God's blessing to their faithful giving, the needs of the local congregation will be met, and then eventually there will be more given to Presbyteries, and later yet to Synod. People, especially the younger generations are not motivated by a sense of corporate loyalty. They are motivated by knowing that their money is accomplishing good that they can see. Most people think of Greenville as someplace else that doesn't really have much to do with their lives. When was the last time your church received a "personal" thank you note from Synod for its faithful denominational ministry fund giving; a note that included a short vignette showing how "your giving" made a difference? When we don't let people understand the good their giving is doing, we let them believe that like Washington D.C. their money is simply going to a big black hole.

In addition to preaching occasionally on giving in my local congregation I take every opportunity to show our folks the good their giving is doing. Every thank you note from local charities and missionaries is either read from the pulpit or, most often and better yet, put in the church newsletter each month (that every member receives). Representatives from local charities and all the missionaries we support are invited to speak to the church which personalizes relationships and puts a face with the names. Does this work? Providentially my treasurer reported to the Session the Monday prior to Synod that he had been looking at numbers and White Oak Church has experienced a 65% increase in our General Fund Budget in the past five years and has finished in the black every year. That does not include the additional \$964,000 paid out over that same time to build a new building, renovate the basement of a current building, and make three land purchases. To quote my treasurer exactly, "Not bad for a little rural congregation."

God's money is there and He delights in amazing us as we're faithful in tithes and offerings. It's a matter of being sure His work and our responsibility to Him is understood. And for the record, White Oak is a typical ARP church. We are a rural blue collar church and one of the 17 in General Synod that does give 20% to the Denomination Ministry Fund.

Building relationships with presbyteries and local churches and congregations, and helping them by providing materials and teaching on biblical giving are chief components of the Stewardship Counselor position. The relationship building will be accomplished over time by visiting presbyteries and churches at their invitation, and by personal correspondence to every church at least once a quarter thanking them and showing them what their giving is accomplishing for God's glory in our Synod and its ministries. The focus of teaching will not be on Synod needs but on spiritual principles for growth in faith and individual sanctification. Most folks are aware of Malachi 3:10 but a key that sets up verse 10 is verse 7:

From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?'

May we all increasingly understand and cheerfully return to obeying God's statutes regarding sacrificial giving to Him, so He in turn can bless us as He delights to do!

## **Attachment 2**

### **Jim Corbitt -- Moderator's Committee for the Executive Board of Synod**

**The focus of the meeting was on the concentration of power in Central Services. There was concern that Central Services was moving from a support agency to a supervisory role over agencies of Synod. Many believe that the authority of Synod's Boards over their agencies was being usurped by Central Services especially in the area of finances.**

**There was also concern that too many actions of the Executive Board were done without seeking Synod approval. One of those concerned the actions taken by the Executive Board in planning to sell the ARP Center and buying a new building. Why did they not make this an item for Synod approval rather than burying it in the body of the report. THE COMMITTEE ADDED THIS TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SYNOD APPROVAL**

**The hiring of a Chief Financial Officer without seeking Synod's approval was another item of concern. There was no job description given as to his authority and power. It was feared that this person could manage and oversee the finances of our agencies and thus usurp the authority of Boards to determine how funds could be used.**

**The Moderators Committee removed this item from the body of the report. The Committee then added recommendations that emphasized that Central Services is a support agency and does not have supervisory authority over other Boards. All of these changes were approved by Synod.**

### **Attachments 3**

#### **Daniel Wells – Moderator’s Committee on Erskine**

Dr. Randy Ruble was the first to speak after Mr. David Lauten opened the meeting. Dr. Ruble got up and gave a lengthy report about his last two years at Erskine. He said that he "inherited some problems" with certain faculty and other issues. He also acknowledged that while he has moved things forward, there have also been failures and that more work needs to be done.

Dr. Ruble then highlighted three issues. He first mentioned how this year's Drummond Center Banquet, unlike previous years, did not allow alcohol to be served to students (since this was a concern in the Erskine memorial at last year's Synod). Second, he said that there is a strong moral backbone at Erskine. Third, he described the warm, Christ-centered spiritual climate that pervades the Erskine campus.

Mr. Neely Gaston then gave his report on Erskine Seminary. He spent a good deal of time promoting the upcoming conferences sponsored by Erskine Theological Seminary and the Institute for Reformed Worship.

The committee approved all three recommendations concerning Erskine. After that two additional motions (made known later on to the Synod) were proposed and approved.

It was at this point that Mr. Vaughn Hathaway spoke up and informed the committee that there are ministers frustrated and concerned with Erskine Seminary at the First Presbytery meeting the night before. He mentioned both the John Leith Chair and the accusations about faculty holding to neo-Barthianism or neo-orthodoxy as primary concerns to particular ministers.

Mr. Gaston made his way to the front of the room to address these concerns, but before he spoke Mr. David Lauten read a portion of the minutes from the May 08' Board Meeting concerning the internal process taking place to look at the situation which shall be reported to the Board this October.

Mr. Gaston then spoke up and confirmed what Mr. Lauten had just said. He went on to defend the Leith Chair, noting that it was already in the works before he got to Erskine in 2003. He also mentioned that Dr. John Carson helped write the original requirements for the chair with Dr. Luder Whitlock as a consultant and that the requirement of the candidate being PCUSA was changed to being a Presbyterian. He went on to say that Dr.

Richard Burnett would be the best choice for the chair in a few years once Dr. "Scotty" Old (who currently occupies the chair) is retired.

It was also mentioned by Mr. Gaston that all faculty must affirm the definition of an evangelical in our *Manual of Authorities and Duties* along with the seminary's own mission and commitment statement regarding Scripture.

At this point in the meeting, Dr. R.J. Gore spoke concerning the issue of what Erskine Seminary faculty do adhere to regarding the doctrine of Scripture. In leading the faculty years back as the Academic Dean, Dr. Gore proposed that the seminary include the ARP Synod statements concerning Scripture in the "Who We Are" portion of the seminary's mission and commitments. However, it was apparent that not all faculty agreed with these additional statements since there are United Methodists on the faculty who are not Reformed in their theology. So even in including statements about Scripture did not necessarily mean that everyone agreed with inerrancy.

Dr. Gore went on to say that this footnoted material "fell out" last year but that Dr. Don Fairbairn wished to resolve the issue by incorporating these statements into the main body for the purpose of clarity. Again, the controversy with this proposal was that certain faculty did not agree with the material. In a compromise, a motion was made to simply put the material in the main body (not as a footnote) but to not have a qualifying verb such as "accept" or "agree".

The main point by Dr. Gore was that these revisions were largely stylistic and should not be seen as Erskine Seminary faculty holding to the inerrancy of Scripture.

Mr. Gaston thanked Dr. Gore for his clarification though he noted that it probably isn't the best idea to have faculty determine the mission and commitments of the seminary.

Several individuals in the meeting gave their thoughts and opinions on the matter. One member of First Presbytery questioned whether we should require Erskine Seminary faculty to affirm a higher view of Scripture than what we require our candidates for ministry to adhere to.

Mr. Daniel Wells noted to the committee that as a recent 2008 graduate of Erskine College who is a student of theology under care of Florida Presbytery, he decided to attend Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, NC over Erskine Seminary since this question over Erskine Seminary faculty not affirming inerrancy was disturbing enough for him to pursue a theological education some place other than his denomination's seminary. Mr. Wells also noted that several of his peers, who are also students under care in the ARP, are not going to Erskine Seminary because of the accusations that certain faculty do not believe in biblical inerrancy but instead hold to a non-Reformed/non-evangelical view of Scripture. His peers have instead pursued their education at RTS Charlotte, RTS Orlando, and Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.

Soon after, someone made a motion to adjourn which was seconded and not objected to.

#### **Attachment 4**

### **Jeff Kingswood – A Canadian view of Synod**

As Canadians it is inevitable that we view things from a slightly different perspective than our southern brothers in the ARP. Canada is after all not the 51st state, as is so often joked, but a different nation with a culture that, although tremendously affected by our friends to the south, has its own peculiarities. Sadly we live in a culture that is more like Europe's post-Christian society than that of the United States. In some ways we feel like the canaries in the coal mines.

Most of our members have come from mainline denominations in theological and numerical decline and we have been so blessed to have been welcomed into the ARP. As elders and pastors we count it a special privilege to attend the meetings of Synod where we are welcomed as friends. We are thankful for the worshipful spirit that marks our Synods, for the prayer that often marks our struggle with issues, and the apparent desire to do that which honours God and exalts the name of Christ.

Having come from that mainline background however many of us were distressed by the recommendation from the Executive that Synod further be centralized and a Chief Financial Officer be hired. Alarm bells were going off as many of us had experienced this kind of top down control in other denominations and never for the good. The canaries were gasping. We were relieved when Synod affirmed the support, rather than supervisory, role of Central Services; and the limitations on any Financial Officer of Central Services. If there were one trend to watch for in the ongoing battle against denominational downgrade this is probably it.

The new statement adopted by Synod on the inerrant nature of the scriptures was also an encouragement for although chapter one of the Westminster Confession leaves little doubt about what we say that we believe concerning scripture it seems that it is always necessary for each generation to nail down the details in the battle against Satan's ongoing question, "Hath God said?"

Although we are newcomers we want to thank our brothers in Christ for making us feel at home in the ARP and we hope and pray that we will be able to play a valuable role in the ongoing growth in faithfulness of our denomination.

## A Covenant Of Integrity

The infallibility/inerrancy debate has been a source of contention in our denomination for several years. We believe the Church of Jesus Christ is diverse enough to allow members of different persuasions to be a part of The Body of Christ. We want to maintain the stability and integrity of The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, and reaffirm our inclusive position of theological belief.

We believe "the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of the Living God, the only perfect rule of faith and practice, to which nothing is to be added and from which nothing is to be taken at any time or upon any pretext." (Standards of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, page 186); and,

We support the action of the 1979 General Synod, as stated in the two resolutions below, and believe that these resolutions provide an area of interpretation with which we can all serve effectively.

- (1) "We believe that Christ is the son of God. We believe God the Father gave His Son to save us from our sins. We believe that the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to us through the Holy Scripture which is the Word of God written. While we do not have the original autographs as evidence, we believe on faith that God's Word in its entirety was accurately recorded by the original writers through divine inspiration and reliably transmitted to us. We affirm that salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and Him alone." (*Minutes of Associate Reformed Presbyterian General Synod, 1979, p. 76*)
- (2) "Be it resolved that the General Synod of 1979 affirms that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God without error in all that it teaches;" (*Minutes of Associate Reformed Presbyterian General Synod, 1979, p. 23*)

Although some in our church, and some of the public media, are erroneously interpreting the 1979 Synod resolutions on Scripture as statements limiting the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church to an "inerrancy position" with regard to

Holy Scripture, we feel the Committee on Reconciliation made efforts to reconcile our differences and "promote the unity, peace, purity and prosperity of our church." (Standards, P. 187, item 7)

We the signers of this document are deeply concerned about the direction of and future of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. The controversy in our church is hindering our historic, ecclesiastical, and fraternal relationships with other sister denominations with whom we have had fruitful, cooperative, and productive relationships and is hindering our witness to the world as a progressive denomination in its outreach and vision in all aspects of its ministry.

Therefore we reaffirm our belief in and adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith as our standard of doctrine and/or an expression of our own faith. We commit ourselves wholly to the Biblical directive "to go into all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:19-20) We declare our belief in and loyalty to the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church as we have known it and as it has existed for nearly 200 years and express our loyalty to the total work of our denomination, faithfully remembering that we will work to improve and strengthen the work committed to us by the Lord of the Church.

Thus, we affirm with The General Synod that the resolutions passed by Synod in 1979 are not to be interpreted as "inerrancy statements." We are disappointed in and dislike the division and disruption that has been brought to our church in recent years. We are willing to work with, and accept persons of differing opinions, because we believe that this is the Biblical way. (Rom. 14)

We wish to emphasize that we unanimously support and endorse the traditional doctrine of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. We seek no change whatsoever in our theological heritage and we defend the integrity of the decisions of our General Synod.

### NAMES

Robert B. Elliott, Jr.  
Bob E. Murdock  
William F. Mitchell  
Michael E. Woodard  
Robert J. Robinson  
C. Ronald Beard  
W. C. Halliday  
Richard B. Leaptrott  
Webster Curry  
Lee P. Keimery  
Charles L. Mitchell  
John R. Hunt  
Robert T. Oates  
R. C. Bryson  
Doris I. Kessler  
Dr. Henry E. Pressly  
Rev. Thomas G. Morris, Sr.  
Session of Tabernacle ARP Church  
Session of Plagah ARP Church  
Dr. Palmer Steele  
Mary Steele

Randall T. Ruble  
Dr. W. F. Grier  
Ceoil Smith  
Robert M. Ferguson  
Clifford Hamaker  
Justin Plitts  
Robert McClanahan  
Harry E. Faulk  
Atwell Alexander  
L. P. Knox  
Roger Blakely  
J. D. Almand  
John W. Merron  
Rob Roy McGregor  
C. W. Perry  
Robert E. Ramsey  
Flore Halliday  
Mildred M. Hawthorne  
Rachel S. Bonds  
Charles R. Tudor  
Sally M. Yon  
Florence Craig

Roy E. Beckham  
Margaret Alexander  
Lonnie L. Richardson  
Lewis Hovis  
Henry Bigham  
James C. Barker  
James H. Young  
Guy H. Smith, Jr.  
David W. Sides  
Donald W. Elliott  
Anne Alexander  
W. C. Leuderdale  
John M. Grier  
Earl Linderman  
Robert M. Wallace, Jr.  
Jerry Hallman  
Terry Parker Wallace  
Charles R. Sanders  
Session of Idiewild ARP Church  
Clyde E. Barker  
Julia E. Oates  
Nale Falls