



Deciding vote is cast to defeat *Amendment B*

April 25, 2009

Dear Friend,

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has decided for the fourth time in twelve years to uphold the ordination standard in its constitution (G-6.0106b). On April 25--today--the Presbytery of Northern Plains cast the deciding vote.

Attempts to repeal the standard of Scripture and Confessions regarding the acceptability of sexual behavior outside the marriage of a man and a woman have failed again. In spite of cultural pressures to normalize non-marital relations, the PC(USA) stands with the Body of Christ around the world and across the ages in affirming God's plan for marriage as the proper place for human sexual intimacy.

The effort to substitute a meaningless paragraph for the current language of "fidelity and chastity" in the PC(USA)'s constitution has failed in the recent round of voting by presbyteries. The decision means that examinations of and judgments about candidates for office, based on the G.A.'s response to the Peace, Unity, and Purity (PUP) report of 2006, must comply with this explicit standard, which has just been reaffirmed by the presbyteries.

Thank you!

I want to thank each of you who helped clarify the issues of this vote by what you said in the debate, who helped your presbytery plan for the vote, and who actually cast your vote. Your work has served the Church well.

It is time to accept the Church's decision

Since the 1970s the PC(USA) has heard, considered, and responded to appeals to change her standard of sexual morality. Those who wish to change the biblically-rooted standard have continually pressed the matter and required repeated votes that have had the same outcome each time. It is well past time to acknowledge that the Church today, as throughout her history, knows her mind on this matter, and that it is the mind of Christ. It is time to call for forbearance from those who constantly disturb the peace and unity of the church.

It is time to live into our decision about sexual morality

Now it is time to live out the decision pastorally, leading people out of our society's sexual confusion into repentance and newness of life. The decision gives witness to the Church's strong conviction that the Savior came to offer redemption to those held captive by any sin, including the prevailing sexual sins of our time. We have the Savior's promise that he will care for us, forgive us, and tenderly lead us to repentance. This is the standard. Our repentance and newness of life is the qualification for office in the Presbyterian Church (USA), as it is in the Church Universal. In that we rejoice. We rejoice in the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who died that we might have life abundant.

A faithful witness and ministry in the areas of sexual morality is a distinct part of the Church's calling in our day. We urge the churches of the PC(USA), in looking to the future, to recall these words of Reformer Martin Luther:

If I profess with loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefield is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that one point.

The PC(USA) has just taken its stand with the message of Scripture where it is most fiercely contested today: in its call to repentance and newness of life in the areas of sexuality and marriage.

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