

STATED CLERK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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**TO: SESSIONS AND FRIENDS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

Dear Friends, Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

A few weeks ago I was reading through Psalms in my devotions and came across two verses in Psalm 106 that struck me and spoke to my heart. They read as follows:

"Therefore He said that He would destroy them, had not Moses His chosen one stood before Him in the breach, to turn away His wrath, lest He destroy them. . . Thus they provoked Him to anger with their deeds, and the plague broke out among them. Then Phineas stood up and intervened, and the plague was stopped. And that was accounted to him for righteousness to all generations forevermore."

(Psalm 106: 23, 29-31, NKJV)

I was reminded of the action by the General Assembly of our call for Forty Days of Prayer before election time and these verses struck me as being so apropos to our needs. Quite frankly, it hit me between the eyes that what God is looking for is intercessors like Moses and like Phineas. What was such a blessing to me, is that whether it's a prayer for a nation or for a church, the people of God, in this case, we are told, was accounted to Him for righteousness to all generations forevermore. I share this with you as a challenge that perhaps no time in the history of our Church or in the history of our nation do we need the fervent prayers of intercessors or that God would raise up men like Moses and Phineas to be intercessors in our day. Isn't this really what God has called us, especially those of use who are ministers of the Gospel, to be priest in that very real sense. May God grant us the desire to be that kind of godly leaders.

24TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S CALL TO PRAYER

In response to an Overture from Evangel Presbytery calling for a "National Prayer Watch Before We Go To The Polls -- let us go to our knees." General Assembly answered this Overture in the affirmative as amended. The amended action reads as follows:

"Whereas, God's people are called upon to humble themselves and pray, and "If my people who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land...." 2 Chron. 7:14 ff, and;

Whereas, our duty as Christian citizens is to pray for the authorities God has placed over us (1 Tim 2:1-4); and

"... for the WORD of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged SWORD, piercing even to the division of the soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the HEART."

Whereas, Biblical precedent abounds for extended periods of prayer. Moses sought the face of God for 40 days on behalf of God's rebellious people (Deut. 9: 18, 25, 26). Daniel prayed and sought God for an extended period to move the hand of God for the captive nation (Daniel 10:3). Jesus was led by the Spirit to separate himself for 40 days of preparation before the mighty move of God in redemption (Luke 4:1).

Therefore be it resolved that the congregations of the Presbyterian Church in America, and all Christians, be encouraged to declare election day a Day of Prayer and Fasting for our nation, and that Christians all over the United States be encouraged to join in 40 days of prayer (to begin on September 27, 1996 and end on November 5, 1996) that God would grant revival to our churches and the nation, and that God would grant us godly leaders.

Be it Further Resolved that PCA churches and presbyteries in other nations be encouraged to adopt similar measures at appropriate times.

Be it Finally Resolved that this resolution be communicated to the churches of the Presbyterian Church in America by the Stated Clerk."

CLERGY APPRECIATION MONTH

In a communication from Focus on the Family, they're calling the month of October "Clergy Appreciation Month 1996." It's a call to congregations to honor their Spiritual Leaders. H. B. London, Jr., Vice President, has interviewed Jim Dobson and a booklet has been written on "Caring for the Pastors Family." That still may be available from Focus on the Family at 1-800-A-FAMILY (1-800-232-6459). If it is still available there would be a nominal charge for that booklet. Interestingly enough, CE/P in the September-October issue *Equip for Ministry*, has also written up articles on "Supporting the Pastor" subtitled "Getting the Leaders we Deserve." All over the world there is almost a disregard for the spiritual leadership that the Lord has given to His Church and one of the unfortunate consequences has been that some of our pastors are on the brink of burnout, almost totally discouraged with the ministry. I have received several calls from pastors who are almost ready to give up or want some kind of a change that will help them at least to put their lives together in such a way that they would be useful vessels in the Kingdom.

Among other things I would like to make a suggestion to those of you who are lay leaders in our church. Please consider whether you have adequately compensated your pastors. In conversations with some of our pastors recently, some have not received a raise in their salaries for three or four years. I could understand that, if we were living in very terrible economic situation. But the Lord has blessed our Church and He has blessed you with good people serving you. Remember the words of Paul to Timothy:

"Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,' and 'The laborer is worth of his wages.'"

(I Timothy 5:17-18 NKJV)

RESOLUTIONS ON PARTIAL BIRTH ABORTION

The General Assembly adopted the following resolution in which it “wholeheartedly condemns partial birth abortions as a murderous and horrifying practice and a grave offense to Almighty God and urgently and humbly petitions the President and Congress of the United States to act in accord with this Biblical standard.”

RESOLUTION ON HOMOSEXUALITY

There were two personal resolutions submitted to the 24th General Assembly, one opposing legalization of homosexual marriages, the other concerned Disney’s promotion of homosexual lifestyles. General Assembly responded as follows:

“That [the resolution on opposition to legalizing homosexual marriages] be answered by reference to previous actions of the General Assembly (e.g., *M5GA*, 67-8, *M21GA*, p. 129ff) and the following statement:

“We affirm the Bible’s teaching that promotion of homosexual conduct and relationships by any society, including action by the governments to sanction and legitimize homosexual relationships by the legalization of homosexual marriages, is an abominable sin calling for God’s judgment upon any such society (Lev. 18:22 and Rom. 1:18-32). We also reaffirm our belief in the transforming power of God’s grace and our commitment to ‘speaking the truth in love’ to those in the homosexual community.” *Adopted as amended*

The second personal resolution regarding Disney was “answered by reference to the Assembly’s action [above] and by the following statement -- “We abhor what Disney and other corporations do to promote the homosexual lifestyle.” *Adopted*

Injecting a note of humor, one pastor asked that this last motion be put into effect a week after General Assembly because he already planned to take his family to Disney World following GA.

PCA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: THE INTERNET

The coordinators and presidents of our committees and agencies have agreed to encourage the business managers to work together as an Information Technology Team. The efforts began in January with a presentation to the coordinators about a Christian internet connection service. It has developed into a cooperative effort to determine how to best utilize current technology to improve communications between our offices and how to share information with greater speed and efficiency. The goals include developing better ways to serve our constituencies and to provide better access to information which can be helpful. The first action being taken, with the help of Covenant College, is the development of Home Pages for each committee and agency.

SCAM ALERT!

Too many of you probably have already had this latest scam experience. We know of churches in Georgia, Tennessee, Texas and Mississippi already, thanks to the alert we received by one of the victims.

The individual drives an old, dark blue car, has children under the age of 12, and a heavy set wife. His story is that he is a member of the PCA (naming a church in another state), has just been hired in your community (usually by a construction firm), and the landlord needs a \$75.00 deposit for rent. If he doesn't get the money he and his family will have to sleep in the car for the night. But he will pay you back on Friday. Sometimes he will come to the church and sometimes he might ask you to meet him at a pay phone, but it is usually at noon.

If you have other details, give us a call so that we can share it and perhaps spare others from such clever thieves who would prey on the generosity of our churches.

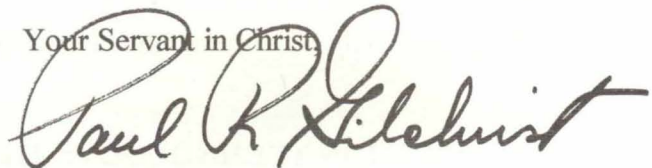
25TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN COLORADO SPRINGS

Plans are moving ahead in preparation for the 25th General Assembly at Colorado Springs next year. The dates are June 10-13, 1997. Some of the Committee of Commissioners meetings will start on Monday afternoon (June 9) at 1:00 p.m. (Administration, Bills and Overtures and Interchurch Relations).

Because this is the beginning of their prime tourist season, **you will need to plan well ahead of time.** We and the local GAAC need some help from you, so we are enclosing a questionnaire for you to complete as soon as possible and return to our office.

Thanks for your help. May the Lord richly bless you in your ministry for our Lord Jesus Christ.

Your Servant in Christ,



Paul R. Gilchrist
Stated Clerk of General Assembly

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P. S. We have just received word that Bronwyn Rayburn Leonard (Mrs. Steve Leonard) passed away Sunday night (September 29), after a long bout with cancer. Also, Rev. Robert Starr Allyn, II, pastor of New Port PCA in Washington, Missouri, died suddenly on September 30. He was only 46. We express our deepest sympathies to the families of these who leave many loved ones behind including several children. May we all find comfort in the consolation that can only be found in Christ.