

December 17, 2005

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Dr. Kenneth Talbot, Moderator
Westminster Presbytery, RPCGA
1343 Ariana Street
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Dear Dr. Talbot

I received information that you would be interested in eye witness accounts of a certain heads of households meeting in May of 2005 at St. Peter Presbyterian Church.

My family and I had only been members for a month when this meeting took place and I found it very alarming. Evidently these proceeding against the Austin's had been going on for some time and we came in at the middle of it, and we were only getting one side of the story.

Two of the elders spoke that night, Laurence Windham and Jay Barfield. One gave a timeline of the proceedings with the Austin's. Then the other instructed us that the congregation was to shun the Austin family. We were then instructed on how to respond to the Austin's should we see them in public. We were told the only words we could say to them were, "You need to contact the session". We were not to have any contact with them whatsoever by phone or in person and were also instructed to not visit the Austin's website.

There were also comments made by others in the congregation that led me to believe the St. Peter Session was in rebellion to the RPCGA. For example, At one point Jonathan Daugherty stood up and said he did not understand how we (St. Peter Church) could expect the Austin's to submit to the Session's authority when the Session did not submit to Presbytery. Jonathan then went on to say that during a particular time when he was helping serve communion at St. Peter he was warned by the Elders to be cautious not to serve the youngest children that he would ordinarily serve. This was because there were visitors from Westminster Presbytery in attendance who would not approve of serving communion to especially young children.

Laurence Windham objected to Jonathan's statements and said that it was only R.C. Sproul, Jr. that had taken the vows to not practice paedocommunion and that he hadn't taken any vow like that. Laurence Windham also said that the Presbytery was already fully aware of their paedocommunion beliefs and practices at St. Peter and that they were working with the Presbytery to sort out any doctrinal differences.

I remember coming home that night and telling my wife that I felt as if I had been to a lynching. I also had concerns for what seemed to be an Auburn Avenue Theology persuasion in their teachings. This was enough for us to decide to leave. Since I hadn't found employment during our 2 months there we decided to use that as our reason to leave peacefully and quietly.

Keep in mind that we had been told by other families that there was a chance that the session would not allow us to leave and find another church in the area. After we returned home to Texas we made contact with the Austins to find out their side of the story. After weighing the evidence and being witness to some of the abuses going on at St. Peter, we are sickened by the way this family was treated and feel like we have been misled by wolves in sheep's clothing.

We are still recovering from our experience at St. Peter and have not been able to find a church home that we are in agreement with in the 6 months we have been home. We would appreciate it if you could have our letter sent to us releasing us from St. Peter's authority.

In Christ,

Brent Fontenot