

February 10, 2006

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Mr. R.C. Sproul, Jr.
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Subject: Open Letter to the Defrocked Session of St. Peter Church.

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” Hebrews 13:17

Dear R.C., Laurence, Wayne and Jay,

I wish to express my sorrow over the fact that you men were defrocked by the Westminster Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Assembly. I take no delight in that. Nor was it in any way pleasurable to bring forth the plethora of evidence and testimony that overwhelmingly demonstrated that you men are unfit for the office of Elder, per Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3.

I have never doubted or regretted the fact that it needed to be done. However, I do regret the fact that it was I who had to do it. I agonized for weeks and asked the Lord to raise up another man. Yet, so many others had come and gone before me and, rather than confronting you men for your tyrannies and unethical business practices, they evaded their biblical responsibilities (Mat 18:15-17) and just left St. Peter Presbyterian Church, almost always with cover stories and phony excuses. This resulted in only emboldening you men further. It became apparent to me that if I didn't rise to the task then probably no one ever would. But what an unpleasant task it was!

I pray that some day each of you men will *genuinely* repent and that we can be reconciled, and that you will not only be reconciled to the Kershaws, but reconciled to the Austins, the Burtons, the Bransons, the Saenzs, the Wintons, the Hutchinsons, the Fontinots, Dennis Cochran, and all the other former St. Peter members and Christian brethren that you have wounded, injured and outright attacked, slandered, gossiped against and poisoned relationships with. Your meager efforts toward repentance are, as of this date, entirely inadequate. May God grant you the humility to genuinely,

unequivocally and fully repent. But should you continue in your present course of cover-ups, white-washing, blame-shifting and subterfuge may God see fit to judge you in your pride, according to the condition of your hearts, before you are able to injure anyone else.

For my part I had serious doubts as to the sincerity of your repentance, as expressed in your letter to Westminster Presbytery of 2/2/06; but releasing you from general membership in the RPCGA was not my call to make. Presbytery did “accept your word, that you have knowingly and willingly given true repentance in a spirit of humility...” Placing such trust and confidence in you men I think was unwarranted. However, it is not for me to criticize a Presbytery who has, in every other respect, shown such bold decisiveness. It is left for you to now demonstrate to the world whether your repentance was genuine or just a ruse. From my perspective it hasn’t taken you long to demonstrate that the latter is most likely the case.

It is my understanding that this past Sunday you manipulated, or at the very least permitted, your being reinstated by a majority vote of the members of Saint Peter Church, as the Session and Elders of said church. So much for submitting to the authority of your Presbytery that you swore oaths to obey, and that has declared each of you unfit to be Elders. Now you are just autonomists.

When a pastor is defrocked because he has a long history of being an ecclesiastical tyrant, insubordination to his Presbytery, and even for things that he could wind up going to jail for such as Tax ID Number fraud, identity theft and perjury, not to mention all the other serious allegations in Presbytery’s case file that have yet to be released to the public (and for your sakes I hope never will be released) he needs to obey those in authority over him. To quote one of your own favorite Bible passages, that you for years have beaten your own members over the head with (myself included):

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls...” Hebrews 13:17

It’s time for you to depart the ministry and seek out vocations better suited to your temperaments. That’s the only honest thing a defrocked minister can do. A dishonest man, in true Jimmy Swaggart fashion, defies the will of his Presbytery and remains in the pulpit, thereby making a public mockery of the dignity of the Office of Elder and Pastor. When he refuses to obey the will of his Presbytery that has rendered its verdict with, in your own words, “great grace and kindness,” he is proving to the whole world his arrogance, his unrepentance, and his open defiance and rebellion for godly authority.

Think of it this way: A Marine Captain has been court-martialed and found guilty of “Conduct Unbecoming of an Officer.” He is stripped of his rank and dishonorably discharged. Instead of taking the hint, he shows up the next day at the Coast Guard recruiting office and tries to pawn himself off as a man worthy of being recommissioned. In his mind the Coast Guard doesn’t have the high standards of the Marines, so they’ll probably take him (untrue, but that’s what he *thinks*). When the Coast Guard discovers (and they *will* discover) that he was court-martialed and dishonorably discharged they’ll wonder, in addition to his having grave moral shortcomings, if he’s also not a pathological liar and delusional.

He might respond, “But I confessed and repented before that Marine Court-Martial. They could have thrown me in the brig, but instead they forgave me.” He has completely missed the point. Repentance does not in any way reverse a man’s unfitness to be a Commissioned Officer, nor can any

resulting forgiveness, of itself, restore him to Office. When the Marines deem you unfit, all the other branches of the military honor that decision, and it is impossible to be recommissioned in any other military service.

Churches have authority structures and chains of command as well. However, unlike the military, it's a relatively simple process to circumvent church discipline and authority. A defrocked minister, if he is a man of poor character (as is inevitably the case), can choose to ignore the ruling of those he swore vows to submit to and obey. If he is unethical he will just walk down the street and find another congregation to take him in – that is if that church is gullible enough. In your cases you didn't even bother to walk down the street! You shamelessly stayed right where you were. Astonishing!

It's every bit as ludicrous for you now to attempt to play pastor as it would be for the Dishonorably Discharged man to continue playing Marine. If he were to put back on the uniform, pin the bars on, walk back onto a Marine base and start ordering enlisted Marines around, it wouldn't take long before he'd be arrested by the Military Police, charged with Impersonating An Officer, and thrown into the brig. The brig serves as strong deterrence to such folly. Unfortunately, the church has no similar means of sanctioning those men who wish to mock its authority.

Further touching on the matter of your alleged “repentance,” up through February 4, the home page of the Highlands Study Center stated of your defrocking, in a rather accusatory and blame-shifting tone:

“This action was taken without a trial, indeed without even a conversation. We disagree with the action taken, and are considering our options as to how to respond. What we will not do is take shots against our accusers over the internet, and would encourage you not to do the same Please be patient, and please pray for the peace and purity of the church.”

Given that I have already addressed your “inferences and innuendos” at http://hushmoney.org/R.C._Sproul_Jr._disclaimer.htm#Innuendos there is little need to restate anything here, other than to reiterate that such a statement is evidence of your lack of contrition. Thankfully, you subsequently removed the statement. However, now the Saint Peter Church web page states:

“The Westminster Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Assembly (RPCGA) has found the session of Saint Peter Church to be guilty of what they saw as grave sin against the church. Our brothers there were concerned about the elders' failures in pastoral care. They were likewise concerned that our practice of admitting young children to the Lord's Table, if they had made what we deemed to be a credible verbal profession of faith was against their standards, and the Westminster Larger Catechism. The session has repented to the presbytery for our pastoral failures, and repented for violating the standards of the presbytery as it applies to the Lord's Supper. The presbytery has in turn, with great grace and kindness, deposed us from our offices in the denomination without censure, and has released us from their jurisdiction, as of February 3, 2006. We are grateful to have these issues resolved, and are thankful for those of you who endeavored to both reserve judgment, and who prayed so faithfully.”

Such a statement is whitewash. Moreover, it contains blatant misrepresentations. In point of fact about the only thing that you have truthfully stated is, “The presbytery has in turn, with great grace and kindness, deposed us from our offices...” However, it is a falsehood for you to claim that you

were deposed from office “without censure.” Who ever heard of an “non-censured defrocked minister”? Such a phrase is oxymoronic.

A minister of the gospel can receive no more severe a censure than being defrocked. It’s the ecclesiastical equivalent of a Dishonorable Discharge. As defrocked men you were effectively stripped of your rank, reduced to mere laymen, and remanded to the jurisdiction of Westminster Presbytery as general members. It was only from your status of general membership in the RPCGA that you were dismissed without censure. Do you find cause to take pride in that, and that after you had already been defrocked?

Furthermore, you are attempting to portray your defrocking as almost inconsequential, having occurred due to some minor doctrinal disagreement, or mere misunderstanding, over communion. I have heard multiple reports that you men are spinning a story, both to your congregation, and to many others, that this is all really nothing more than “just a minor flap over paedocommunion.” Raising the issue of paedocommunion is a straw-man. Nevertheless, since you have erected this straw-man, it is incumbent on me to dispatch him.

Both current and former members testified to Presbytery that you practice paedocommunion, myself included. Furthermore, you men have each acknowledged to me that paedocommunion is practiced at St. Peter. At no time did you ever examine any of my children, and there are also other St. Peter children who were never examined, regardless of age. Your mischaracterizations of your practice compels me to now publicly release my testimony to Presbytery, on the matter.

The real issue was never the straw-man of paedocommunion, or the wiggle-room you afforded yourself by concocting innovative definitions of credo-communion, which by your practice is, in reality, paedocommunion. Rather, the issue was always about your nefarious intentions, as expressed to me and others who have furnished their testimony to Presbytery, of conspiring to bring in additional “like-minded men” into the Presbytery sufficient in numbers to achieve a majority and, thereby, force your will on a denomination that is adamantly opposed to paedocommunion. Any denomination that would in the future have the least bit of interest in ever taking you in should be aware of your capacity for orchestrating such duplicitous agendas.

From your letter of “repentance” to Presbytery of 2/2/06 your state:

“In addition, we confess that because of instances where our offices and authority have been mishandled, some families have been hurt and others unknown to us could have been offended. To those who have made it known to us we have apologized.”

This is just more whitewash. You know exactly who you have “hurt.” You also know who you have attacked, slandered, gossiped and lied against. You know because some of those former St. Peter members you maliciously slandered in *ETC* (e.g. Dennis Cochran, Lyle Burton, et al), and you’ve also slandered several who were never St. Peter members. At what point in history have you ever apologized to them? At what point did you ever apologize to the Bransons, the Saenzs, the Wintons, the Hutchinsons, or the Fontinots? At what point did you ever apologize to the Kershaws? We have all long ago “made it known” to you your “mishandling” of us. However, none of us would characterize your tyrannies in such benign terms as “mishandled.”

You have been *Dishonorably Discharged* by the judicatory of Westminster Presbytery. Yet, you continue on in your former role as though nothing had really happened. As such, you are each *Impersonating An Officer*. Westminster Presbytery may have no earthly means of enforcing its will. However, the court of public opinion is now in session. The court of public opinion, for the most part, reserved its own judgment until Westminster Presbytery handed down its sentence. The court of public opinion formerly felt some sympathy for you men. But given your refusal to comply with Presbytery's sentence, which can only be interpreted as arrogant defiance, the sentiments of the court of public opinion are unlikely to remain sympathetic any longer.

You have each been adjudged “not qualified” to pastor and defrocked by a duly constituted ecclesiastical court that you swore an oath to submit to and obey. The Presbytery ruled:

“Most importantly, their actions manifest that they lack the qualification for the ministry (1 Timothy 3:1-7). It would be unwise to allow these men to continue to hold an office for which they are not qualified.”

Apparently that message hasn't sunk in. Your alleged repentance, genuine or not, in no way changes the fact that you are biblically disqualified from the office of Elder. I have a hard time believing that any of you are really as foolish as you're acting like right now; but just in case you are, let me spell out for you what being defrocked means – it means you don't get to pastor anymore. If you continue to *play* the part of a pastor it doesn't mean that you are a real pastor, just that you are *impersonating* a pastor who, in reality, is just an autonomist.

“Here is the application part of the R.C. Sproul Jr. principle of hermeneutics – After you figure out how you are being stupid, repent.”
Squiblog, Nov 7, 2005, http://highlands.gospelcom.net/journals/hsc/#the_blogeopagus

It's time that you each remove those collars and pursue vocations that are better suited to your temperaments. To do anything less would be open rebellion, if not mutiny.

Sola Christo

Peter Kershaw