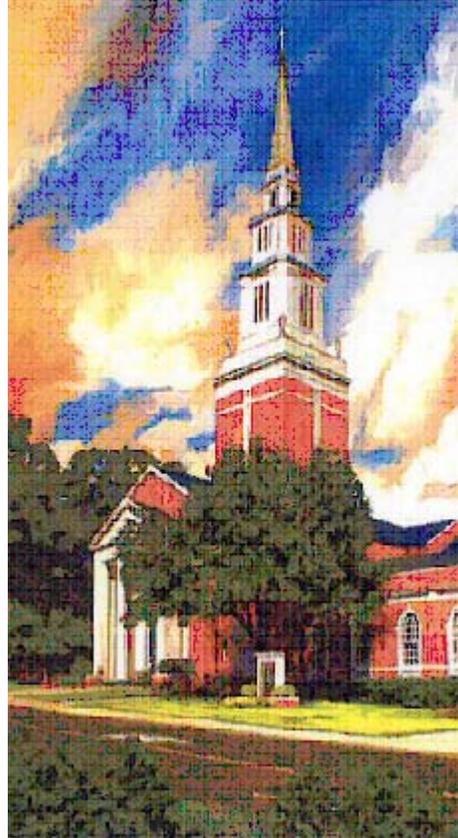


The First Presbyterian Church

Jackson, Mississippi



2008

Officer Training Manual

Introduction to the Course

Congratulations on having been recommended for nomination as a church officer. After the completion of this course of study, those approved by the Session will stand for election before the congregation. Before standing for election, however, all nominees will complete the training process in order that you will be well equipped to serve in the great work to which you have been nominated. This process will be (we hope) a blessing both to you as individual trainees and to the church at large. For those ultimately elected, it will serve to prepare you for office. For those not elected, it will prepare you for wider service in the church and for more effective witness in the community. For the congregation as a whole, it will provide a large group of men, officers and non-officers, all of whom will be better able to build up the body.

If our church is to be governed by biblical and Reformed principles, and is to continue in its commitment to the faith once-delivered, then it is necessary that those nominated and ultimately elected to church office should be committed to Christ, His Word and His Church. This training program is thus designed to accomplish at least two things. First, it aims to ensure that all potential officers can make an honest, informed, and wholehearted affirmation of the ordination vows (see *PCA Book of Church Order* 24-5). Second, it aims to equip our nominees to serve, if elected, with the knowledge and resources required for the fulfillment of the office.

Guidelines for Study

The training period will be divided into eight sessions, beginnings June 15 and running eight consecutive weeks, as indicated by the course schedule. Each prospective officer will be given a set of resource books, along with this study booklet which contains questions for study. Each man is asked to research and answer the questions at home. You are asked to briefly write out your answers in the space provided or on a separate sheet. It is important that you write out your answers in your own words, even if you think you already know the answer. The discipline of this process will be quite helpful educationally. Remember to keep your answers brief and to the point. Answers can be found within the resource books. The following will also be helpful to you in your studies:

(1) Review (and remember!) the answers to the following Shorter Catechism questions: 1, 4, 14, 33, 86, 87, 98. You will need to be able to give the answer to five of them, from memory, on the final exam.

(2) Read carefully through the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. The theology test will cover the Confession and Catechisms with true/false, fill in the blank, and matching questions.

(3) Review your notes from the class on Church Government and read through your *Book of Church Order (BCO)*. The Church Government section of the test will be short answer and multiple choice questions. These questions can be answered straight out of the *BCO*.

(4) Make sure you have your copy of the *Westminster Confession*, *Shorter Catechism*, and *BCO* with you when you begin to take the test. You will be able to consult them *on certain portions* of the exam.

You should do your assigned reading ahead of time. When we meet together in class, we will discuss our work. Obviously, class attendance is an imperative. Any absences must be approved and made up. Audio recordings will be provided for those who miss a session.

Resource Materials

REQUIRED READING:

PCA Book of Church Order

The *BCO* is part of the constitution (along with the *Confession* and *Catechisms*) of our denomination. Every officer should be acquainted with it.

The Westminster Confession of Faith (PCA)

Our denomination's doctrinal standards, to which every officer must subscribe.

Ligon Duncan, ***Ten Principles for Christian Giving***

A pamphlet outlining the Bible's teaching on our giving to the Lord's work.

Ligon Duncan, ***Worshiping God Together: Congregational Worship at First Presbyterian Church***

A booklet that explains why we do what we do in our public worship services.

Mark Ross, ***Elders as Shepherds of the Church of God***

Very short article. Mark Ross's helpful treatment of the office of elder will aid your understanding of the true nature of this spiritual office.

Mark Ross, ***The Role of the Deacons*** An excellent article (only 6 pages) explaining the biblical duties of deacons.

RECOMMENDED READING:

Mark Dever, ***What is a Healthy Church?***

What does the Bible say that a local church should be like and do? Dever helps us see.

John R. DeWitt, ***What is the Reformed Faith?***

A former RTS professor's outline of the basics of Reformed doctrine and practice.

David Dickson, ***The Elder and His Work***

An important treatment of the work of eldership, by a Scottish Elder from the 19th century

Albert N. Martin, ***The Practical Implications of Calvinism***

An excellent booklet introducing the experiential side Reformed faith.

Philip Graham Ryken, ***City on a Hill: Reclaiming the Biblical Pattern for the Church***

Expository preaching, worship, fellowship, pastoral care, discipleship, evangelism and missions, mercy ministry and the Gospel characterize the biblical church, says Ryken.

Steele and Thomas, ***The Five Points of Calvinism***

A good Scriptural presentation of the doctrines of grace, by two Baptist ministers.

Rowland Ward, ***Baptism in Scripture and History***

Perhaps THE best, short treatment of the mode of baptism from a paedo-baptist perspective.

Thomas Witherow, ***The Apostolic Church: Which is it?***

Classic presentation of the six Biblical grounds of presbyterian government.

A Basic Reading List (in a suggested order for reading) of Classics for Personal Edification

1. John Stott, ***Basic Christianity*** (IVP).
2. R.C. Sproul, ***The Holiness of God*** (Tyndale House).
3. John Piper, ***Don't Waste Your Life*** (Crossway)
4. Don Carson, ***A Call to Spiritual Reformation*** (Baker)
5. J.C. Ryle, ***Holiness*** (Evangelical Press)
6. J. I. Packer, ***Fundamentalism and the Word of God*** (Eerdmans).
7. John Murray, ***Redemption Accomplished and Applied*** (Eerdmans).
8. J. Gresham Machen, ***Christianity and Liberalism*** (Eerdmans).
9. J. I. Packer, ***A Quest for Godliness*** (Crossway Books)
10. David F. Wells, ***The Courage to Be Protestant*** (Eerdmans).

ASSIGNED READING SCHEDULE:

Topics, Times, and Assignments

Session One (June 15, 4:30-5:30pm)

1. The Nature of the Offices of Elder and Deacon

Assigned Reading: Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1
 Ross, *Elders as Shepherds of the Church of God* (all) [6 pages]
 Ross, *The Role of the Deacons* (all) [6 pages]

Session Two (June 22, 4:30-5:30pm)

2. The Qualifications for and Work of Elders and Deacons

Assigned Reading: Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1 (again)
The PCA Book of Church Order (chapters 7-9) [6 pages]
The Westminster Confession of Faith (all)[14 pages (of text)]

Session Three (June 29, 4:30-5:30pm)

3. The Spiritual Life of the Elder and Deacon

Assigned Reading: Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1 (again!)
 Reminder: Your testimony is due today at the beginning of class.

Session Four (July 6, 4:30-5:30pm)

4. Presbyterian History

Assigned reading: *Ten Principles of Christian Giving*

Session Five (July 13, 4:30-5:30pm)

5. Presbyterian Doctrine

Assigned Reading: *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (again)[14 pages (of text)]

Session Six (July 20, 4:30-5:30pm)

6. Presbyterian Doctrine

Assigned Reading: *Worshiping God Together*

Session Seven (July 27, 4:30-5:30pm)

7. Sacraments

Assigned Reading:
 Reminder: Take Home Exam [Due Friday, August 8]

Session Eight (August 3, 4:30-5:30pm)

8. Church Government and Book of Church Order

Assigned Reading: *The PCA Book of Church Order* (all) [63 chapters]

Reminder: Take Home Exam [Due Friday, August 8]

WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE:

Session One (June 15, 4:30-5:30pm)

- 1. Overview of the Course and Requirements**
- 2. The Nature of the Offices of Elder and Deacon**

Leader/Duration
Duncan/Smith (15 mins)
Duncan (45 mins)

Session Two(June 22, 4:30-5:30pm)

- 1. The Qualifications for and Duties of the Offices**
- 2. Question & Answer/Comment Session**

Leader/Duration
Duncan (45 mins)
Duncan/Smith (15 mins)

Session Three (June 29, 4:30-5:30pm)

- 1. The Spiritual Life of the Church Officer**
- 2. Question & Answer/Comment Session**

Leader/Duration
Duncan (45 mins)
Duncan/Smith (15 mins)

Session Four (July 6, 4:30-5:30pm)

- 1. Presbyterian History**
- 2. Question & Answer/Comment Session**

Leader/Duration
Duncan (45 mins)
Duncan/Smith (15 mins)

Session Five (July 13, 4:30-5:30pm)

- 1. Presbyterian Doctrine**
- 2. Question & Answer/Comment Session**

Leader/Duration
Duncan (45 mins)
Duncan/Smith (15 mins)

Session Six (July 20, 4:30-5:30pm)

- 1. Presbyterian Doctrine**
- 2. Question & Answer/Comment Session**

Leader/Duration
Duncan (45 mins)
Duncan/Smith (15 mins)

Session Seven (July 27, 4:30-5:30pm)

- 1. Sacraments**
- 2. Question & Answer/Comment Session**
- 3. Hand out Exam**

Leader/Duration
Thomas (40 mins)
Thomas/Smith (15 mins)
Smith (5 mins)

Session Eight (August 3, 4:30-5:30pm)

- 1. Church Government and BCO**
- 2. Question & Answer/Comment Session**

Leader/Duration
Thomas/Smith (45 mins)
Thomas/Smith (15 mins)

Session One: The Nature of the Offices of Deacon and Elder

Class Study Questions
(to be completed before next class)

Sources: **Acts 6, 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1**
 The PCA Book of Church Order (Chapter 9)
 Ross, ***The Role of the Deacons in the Overall Mission of the Church*** (all)

Now that you have just been recommended for nomination to the office of elder or deacon, what things could you do to prepare yourself for this ministry?

2. Where in Scripture did the office of deacon originate and why? What does deacon mean?

3. Where in Scripture will you find the qualifications for a deacon?

4. List some of the responsibilities of the deacon.

5. According to Scripture, is it necessary for deacons to have the same spiritual qualities as elders? Why or why not?

6. Why is it so essential that your conduct be in accord with Christian principles in every area of life?

7. Where (or with whom) does authority lie in a Biblically governed and Reformed church? Are you able to follow the leadership of the elders wholeheartedly?

8. What qualities are necessary for deacons according to 1 Timothy 3:8-13? If you are a deacon nominee, do you see them in yourself?

9. Compare your answers with the qualities required of the elder in 1 Timothy 3. What are the differences?

10. Are you the kind of person who can motivate others (model how) to serve God in the ministry of mercy? (Deacon nominees only)

11. How can a deacon help develop the grace of giving in the congregation?

12. What is the deacon's responsibility regarding attendance of the stated services of the church?

Session Two: The Qualifications for and Work of Elders and Deacons

Class Study Questions
(to be completed before next class)

Sources: **1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, Acts 20:17-28**
 Elders as Shepherds of the Church of God, by Mark E. Ross
 The PCA Book of Church Order (Chapter 8 and 16)

1. What specific things do the following passages teach us about the eldership?
 Acts 14:23, I Timothy 5:17, Ephesians 4:11.

2. Two Bible passages state the qualifications for an elder and say he should be blameless.
 What are these passages and in what way is he to be blameless?

3. Where does the authority lie in a Biblically governed and Reformed Church? How does an
 elder exercise oversight?

4. From I Timothy 3:1-15, what are the qualities required in those who are chosen to
 exercise oversight in a congregation? Note what Paul says (A) About their personal
 character (B) About their abilities (C) About their Christian experiences (D) About their
 general reputations.

5. Compare the qualifications necessary for a deacon in 1 Timothy 3. What are the differences?

6. Compare the qualifications for elder given in Titus 1:6-9 with those in 1 Timothy 3. What are the similarities and differences of emphasis?

7. What does the *PCA BCO* 8-3 say about the elder's responsibilities in the church? Are these things you feel called to do? (Elder nominees only)

9. Ross argues that Elders are to “shepherd the flock.” According to him, what exactly does that mean?

10. What do the *PCA BCO* 8-8 and 8-9 teach about Ruling Elders?

11. Do you see in yourself the basic Biblical qualifications for the office of Ruling Elder? (Elder nominees only)

12. Do you sense a divine calling to the office of Ruling Elder (see *PCA BCO* 16)?(Elder nominees only)

Session Three: The Spiritual Life of the Elder and Deacon Questions to Consider for Prospective Church Officers

Class Study Questions

(to be completed before next class)

Source: **The Bible, Class presentation, Personal reflection and self-examination**

I. In the Area of Personal Piety

1. Do you know God? Is your trust in Christ? Is your life God-centered and grace-based?
2. Do you have a passion for the Cross of Christ? Is your joy in Jesus' fame?
3. Do you treasure the truth of God's Word and understand and cherish his means of grace?

II. In the Area of Support of the Ministry of the Church

1. Will you faithfully attend the worship services of the Church (Sunday morning and evening)?
2. Will you regularly attend Sunday School and Wednesday night?
3. Will you attend the regular meetings of the Board of Officers on which you serve?

III. In the Area of Stewardship

1. Do you believe in tithing and make a sincere effort to do so?
2. Will you support the church budget and missions?
3. Will you give of your time as needed to carry on the leadership of the church?

IV. In the Area of Cooperation

1. Are you in good relations with the church and its members?
2. Are you in good relations with the other officers?
3. Are you in good relations with the Senior Minister and Ministerial Staff?

V. In the Area of Seeking the Purity, Peace and Unity of the Church

1. Will you promote the peace and unity of the church and seek to check murmuring and complaining?
2. Can you engage with your fellow officers humbly, face them frankly, deal with them fairly, and then stand loyally with the majority in their decision?
3. Can you answer the questions in the *Book of Church Order* paragraph 24-5 in the affirmative?

VI. In the Area of Family Life

1. Have you any serious domestic troubles?
2. Do you and your wife know how to hold your tongue against needlessly spreading gossip or talking critically about others?
3. Are you involved in financial difficulties that might hinder your service to the church?
4. Do you make an effort at having family worship?
5. Do you control your own household as called for in 1Timothy 3:4, 5?

VII. In the Area of Social Life

1. Have you seriously considered the admonitions in Scripture about the dangers of being a stumbling block and the need for specific caution and exemplary conduct in every area for Church Officers?
2. To the best of your ability, will you keep the Lord's Day above reproach?

Briefly write out the testimony to God's grace in your life.
(To be handed in at the beginning of the third session)

Session Four: Presbyterian History

Class Study Questions
(to be completed before next class)

Source: *A Brief History of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)*
 Dr. Marshall C. St. John

Note: The author makes no claims to originality in the following. He has borrowed lavishly from denominational brochures, websites, and other internet resources, as well as official Minutes, and other books about the PCA. Please feel free to copy and reproduce the following information.

WHAT IS THE PCA?

The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) was formed to be a denomination that is –

(1) True to the Bible, (2) True to the Reformed Faith; and (3) Obedient to the Great Commission

By “Reformed” we mean that we are connected to the teachings of the historic Church, and the doctrinal beliefs recovered by the Reformation.

By “Presbyterian” we describe our representative form of church government. Local congregations are governed by a “Session” of “presbyters” (elders), elected by the members of the local church. Local churches within a specified geographical area are called a “Presbytery.” Representatives of all the PCA congregations meet once a year in a “General Assembly.”

By “Obedient to the Great Commission” we mean that we are eager to be busy with the work of evangelism and church planting, both in North America and around the world. We want every human being to hear the Gospel and become a believer and follower of Jesus Christ.

The history of the PCA, like all other Christian churches, shares a common heritage that stretches back to the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ (and underneath that back to the saving purposes of God in eternity past, and through promises and prophecies of the Old Testament). But more proximately, our history begins with the formation of the Presbyterian form of church government, which may be traced back to the Reformers, especially John Calvin and John Knox.

JOHN CALVIN OF SWITZERLAND

John Calvin (July 10, 1509 – May 27, 1564) was a French Protestant theologian during the Protestant Reformation and was a central developer of the system of Christian theology called Calvinism or Reformed theology. In Geneva, he rejected Papal authority, established a new scheme of civic and ecclesiastical governance, and created a central hub from which Reformed theology was propagated. He is renowned for his teachings and writings, in particular for his Institutes of the Christian religion. Calvin's "scheme of ecclesiastical governance" was later called "Presbyterianism."

The word "Presbyterianism" comes from the New Testament Greek word translated "elder." Presbyterianism is a system of church government, in which leadership and authority is centered in a group of elders; not in a bishop; not in the congregation.

If authority flows from a system of bishops, then you have the Episcopal form of church government.

If authority flows from the congregation, meeting and voting on every issue, then you have the Congregational form of government.

Presbyterianism is also representative church government. The congregation elects elders, who seem to be gifted and called by God to their office, who then rule the church. This is very much like the House of Representatives or Senate, in the government of the USA.

Calvin established the authority of elders in Geneva, and taught his system of church government to visiting theological students, the most influential of which was John Knox of Scotland.

JOHN KNOX OF SCOTLAND

John Knox (c. 1514 – November 24, 1572) was a Scottish religious reformer who took the lead in reforming the Church in Scotland along Calvinist lines. He is widely regarded as the father of the Protestant Reformation in Scotland and of the Church of Scotland.

Knox returned to Edinburgh May 2, 1559. The time was a critical one. During his absence the reform party had become more numerous, more self-reliant and aggressive, and better consolidated. The queen dowager, Mary of Guise, acting as regent for her daughter, the young Mary I of Scotland, then in France, had become keener to crush the Protestants and determined to use force. Civil war was imminent, but each side shrank from the first step. Knox at once became the leader of the reformers. He preached against "idolatry" with the greatest boldness, with the result that what he called the "rascal multitude" began the "purging" of churches and the destruction of monasteries. Politics and religion were closely intertwined; the reformers did not hesitate to seek the help of England.

Knox negotiated with the English government to secure its support, and he approved of the declaration by the lords of his party in October 1559 suspending their allegiance to the regent. The death of the latter in June 1560 opened the way to a cessation of hostilities and an agreement to leave the settlement of ecclesiastical questions to the Scottish estates. The doctrine, worship, and government of the Roman Church were overthrown by the parliament of 1560 and Protestantism established as the national religion. Knox, assisted by five other ministers, formulated the confession of faith adopted at this time and drew up the constitution of the new Church: the First Book of Discipline.

The Church—or Kirk—was organised on something approaching Presbyterian lines. Priests were replaced by ministers (from the Latin for servants), with each parish governed by the Kirk Session of elders. John Knox died in Edinburgh on November 24, 1572.

IRISH PRESBYTERIANISM

From Scotland, Presbyterianism spread to Ireland. Presbyterianism in Ireland dates from the time of the Plantation of Ulster in 1610. During the reign of James I of Ireland (James VI of Scotland) a

large number of Scottish Presbyterians emigrated to Ireland. The first move away from the Church of Scotland, of which the Presbyterians in Ireland were part, saw the creation of the Presbytery of Ulster in 1642 by chaplains of a Scottish army which had arrived to crush the rising of 1641. Under Cromwell congregations multiplied and new presbyteries were formed. After the Restoration, nonconforming ministers were removed from parishes of the Established Church, but the Irish administration could not afford to alienate such a substantial Protestant population and Presbyterianism was allowed to continue in the country.

AMERICAN PRESBYTERIANISM

The Rev. Francis Makemie (1658-1708)

Makemie was an Irishman, born near Rathmelton, Donegal county, Ireland in 1658. He studied for the ministry at Glasgow University, where in February, 1676, he was a student in the third class. In 1680 the Irish Presbytery of Laggan received a letter from Judge William Stevens, a member of Lord Baltimore's Council, entreating that ministers be sent to Maryland and Virginia. The next year it licensed Mr. Makemie, and ordained him soon in 1682, as a missionary for the American colonies.

He preached for a time in Barbados. About 1684 he began his labors on the continent. In 1690 his name figures in the records of Accomac County, Virginia, where he was engaged in the West India trade, and where in 1692 four hundred and fifty acres of land were granted to him. Here he married Naomi, daughter of William Anderson, a wealthy merchant.

In the Southeast corner of Maryland there were three or four "meeting houses," and in the one at Snow Hill he organized a church. An elder and merchant, Adam Spence, had probably signed the Solemn League and Covenant in Scotland, and a descendant of his, reciting the tradition of a hundred and thirty years, thus writes of Mr. Makemie: "One generation has uttered his praises in the ears of its successor, and you may, even yet, hear their echo. Parents made his surname the Christian name of their children, until, in the neighborhood of Snow Hill, it has become a common one." This hill was his base of missionary operations.

It was not long before quite a number of congregations were gathered in the region which he had selected as his field of labor. An itinerant missionary, and in reality the bishop of a primitive diocese, he journeyed from place to place, sometimes on the eastern shore of Maryland, sometimes in Virginia, and sometimes extending his journeys as far as South Carolina. To the extent of his ability he supplied the feeble churches, but he deeply felt the need of others to assist him.

In 1704 he went to London, and on his return brought back two other missionaries, who, along with Makemie himself and four others, formed at Philadelphia in the spring of 1706 the first Presbytery.

Mr. Makemie died at his residence in Accomac Virginia, in the Summer of 1708, leaving a widow and two daughters. He made liberal bequests to charitable objects, and distributed his valuable library among his family and two or three other friends.

He is generally regarded as the first regular and thorough Presbyterian in America, and the father of the American Presbyterian Church.

THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES

A great deal happened in the history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States between the time of Francis Makemie and the War Between the States. Presbyterians existed in half-a-dozen different denominations. But the largest was the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. This denomination became two separate denominations on December 4, 1861, when commissioners from Southern presbyteries met in Augusta, Georgia, to renounce the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (Old School) and to form the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America. (After the war, the church changed its name to the Presbyterian Church in the United States.)

In its "Address to All the Churches of Jesus Christ throughout the Earth," the church outlined the Northern ecclesiastical indiscretions that forced its separation, especially the Gardiner Spring Resolutions of the previous General Assembly that declared the church's obligation to uphold the Union and support the federal constitution. In the minds of Southern Presbyterians, this was a violation of the spirituality of the church by an unwarranted engagement in partisan politics. Thus we find the PCUS, the mother church of the PCA, coming into existence.

Let us now move ahead very rapidly over one hundred years, during which the PCUS (and most American denominations of all persuasions) declined from its spiritual peak into Liberalism.

WHY WAS THE PCA CREATED?

The PCUS (Presbyterian Church in the US) is the mother church of the PCA. When the PCA was brought into existence in 1973 it was created by churches and elders separating themselves from the PCUS in order to found a Bible-based truly Christian Church.

There are a number of reasons that these churches and elders left the PCUS:

1. The PCUS denied the authority of the Bible.
2. The PCUS required the ordination of women as elders and deacons.
3. The PCUS defended abortion and funded abortions.
4. The PCUS joined the National and World Council of Churches which support communism around the world.
5. The PCUS defended Darwinian evolution.
6. The PCUS was promoting sexual immorality to church youth.
7. The PCUS opposed capital punishment of murderers.
8. The PCUS welcomed some ministers who denied the virgin birth, and the deity and resurrection of Jesus, and refused to accept some ministers who believed in these doctrines.
9. The PCUS was run by a political machine which excluded conservatives from influential posts.
10. The PCUS redefined missions as social action, and downplayed evangelism and church planting.

HOW WAS THE PCA CREATED?

Conservatives in the PCUS had fought the growing "Liberalism" in their denomination for decades.

It became clear that a conspiracy of liberal ministers and seminary professors in the Presbyterian Church in the United States--the so-called southern Church—were engaged in an organized effort to gain control of the church. These men led by Dr. Ernest Trice Thompson--a professor at Richmond

Theological Seminary--formed a secret organization which they called "The Fellowship of St. James." They sought to have the church abandon its belief in the integrity and authority of the Bible, to water down the Westminster Confession of Faith, and to participate more actively in the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. Their primary goal, however, was to unite the PCUS with the far more liberal and three times larger Presbyterian Church in the United States of America--the Northern Church. They developed a political machine to control the actions of the church.

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

To let the members of the Presbyterian Church U.S. know about this attempt to undermine our historic faith and to encourage conservatives to resist the efforts of the liberals to gain complete control, Dr. Bell (recently returned from China, the father of Billy Graham's wife, Ruth; and Dr. Henry B. Dendy, minister of the Weaverville, North Carolina Presbyterian Church, founded The Southern Presbyterian Journal. Dr. Bell served as editor and Dr. Dendy as business manager.

By 1964 the secret "Fellowship of St. James" was no longer secret so they replaced it with a new and larger group which they called "The Fellowship of Concern." They redoubled their efforts to merge our Southern Church with the far more liberal Northern Church. This group was in complete control of Assembly's Nominating Committee, many of the synods and presbyteries, the board and agencies, colleges and seminaries and most of the important committees of the church.

Dr. Bell and a number of other conservative leaders met in Atlanta and concluded that informing church members regarding the direction the liberals were taking the church through the Presbyterian Journal would never return control to Bible-believing Presbyterians. They decided that an organization was needed to actively combat what the liberals were doing and that it would be a lay organization because if conservative ministers in liberal presbyteries became involved they could be defrocked.

CONCERNED PRESBYTERIANS

At the Journal board meeting in August of that year, Kenneth S. Keyes was asked to form and head such an organization. With \$15,000 seed money which the board provided, Concerned Presbyterians was formed in the fall of 1964 with Col. Roy LeCraw of Atlanta serving as vice president, W.J. (Jack) Williamson of Greenville, Alabama, as secretary and J. M. Vroon of Miami as treasurer.

The first bulletin from Concerned Presbyterians listed these reasons for concern:

- * because the primary mission of the church--winning people to Jesus Christ and nurturing them in the faith--is being compromised today by overemphasis on social, economic and political matters, forgetting the basic necessity for regeneration.

- * because the integrity and authority of the Word of God are being questioned by dubious theories of revelation in some of the literature of the church.

* because some presbyteries no longer require complete loyalty to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms.

* because continued membership in the National Council of Churches involves us in activities, pronouncements and programs of which we strongly disapprove and repeated protests to that body have been ignored.

* because the plan to establish a central treasurer now approved by the General Assembly indicates a determination to regiment the benevolence giving of the church's members by "equalizing" their gifts-in effect actually thwarting the wishes of many donors.

* because another determined effort has been started to effect a union of the Presbyterian Church U.S. with the United Presbyterian Church U.S.A- which is now engaged in negotiations to unite with denominations that do not adhere to the Reformed faith.

By this time many conservative members were leaving churches which were pastored by liberal ministers.

PRESBYTERIAN EVANGELISTIC FELLOWSHIP

When it became evident that those in control of the PCUS were no longer interested in evangelism, Rev. William P. Hill organized the Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship. Starting with two full-time evangelists they eventually had fifteen evangelists serving the church. Later on this group became a sending agency for missionaries so that PCUS conservative churches which had stopped giving to the church's Board of World Missions had missionaries whom they could support.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHMEN UNITED

In 1969 more than 500 conservative ministers formed Presbyterian Churchmen United and ran 3/4 page statements of their beliefs in 29 or 30 leading newspapers.

Dr. John E. Richards, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Macon, Georgia, headed this organization and Rev. Paul P. Settle was its field director. They both played a very active role in speaking at conservative rallies, informing members in the pews regarding what the Liberals were doing to the church. By this time presbyteries where the Liberals were in control were receiving ministers who did not believe in the Virgin Birth, the validity of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross, His bodily resurrection and other cardinal doctrines of the faith.

The Board of World Missions was replacing conservative leading missionaries with men and women who no longer believed that leading the unsaved to Christ was their primary mission. The Liberally controlled courts of the church made no effort to discipline a West Virginia minister who "married" two homosexuals at a church in Washington D. C., and a Louisville, Kentucky, minister who offered himself for a position as elector in the Communist Party. Some of the Liberal presbyteries were blocking the efforts of conservative churches to call conservative ministers.

A NEW SEMINARY WAS NEEDED

Southern Presbyterian conservatives, like their counterparts earlier in the century in the North, represented a mixture of doctrinal viewpoints that ranged from firmly committed Old School Presbyterians to fundamentalists who resisted social change. Moreover, there were divisions between those who sought reform from within and others who urged the need to separate. All parties seemed to agree, however, that a seminary was needed to provide ministers for the conservative cause, given their suspicions about the teaching at the four seminaries of the South (Austin, Columbia, Louisville, and Union). A key step in the promotion of the conservative cause was taken in 1966, when Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi, was established on explicitly Old School Presbyterian grounds, especially underscoring the spirituality of the church. (Note: Reformed Theological Seminary never became the "official" seminary of the PCA, but remains an independent organization, though many of its students do become PCA pastors.)

THERE WAS CONCERN FOR CHRISTIAN YOUTH

In 1961 the National Council of Churches published and distributed a booklet entitled "The Meaning of Sex in Christian Life." Its text was a heart-to-heart talk between a church leader and a teenager.

On one page the church leader told the youth:

"Our culture declares that all sexual activity within marriage is legal, proper and good, while any such activity outside marriage is illicit, sinful and wrong. We know that there is sexual contact between unmarried couples that is motivated by love and which is pure and on occasions beautiful."

In 1969 or 1970 the church's Board of Christian Education joined with the Northern Church and the United Church of Christ in publishing a monthly magazine called "Colloquy."

Of pre-marital sex it said: "If kids were made aware of alternatives, they wouldn't have to worry about getting into trouble. If there were some way you could stop pregnancy, I don't think there would be anything wrong with sex."

At the 1971 General Assembly our four conservative organizations decided to make an all-out effort to elect three conservatives to the Permanent Nominating Committee-probably the most vital single committee in the church. Our nominees were Dr. C. Darby Fulton who had ably directed our Board of World Missions for many years, Walter Shepard, a former missionary, and Ruth Bell Graham (Billy Graham's wife.)

The Liberals nominated the layman from Charleston, West Virginia, who had given the church \$50,000 to start paying for abortions, a minister from San Antonio, Texas, who held a liquor party in his room every night, invited our youth delegates and got two of them so drunk that they had to be hospitalized and a liberal woman from Texas. It was the most radical group ever nominated for this very important committee. All three were elected.

This assembly rejected an overture to withdraw from the National Council of Churches by a vote of 213 to 189. It condemned the Commission on Overseas Evangelism which the Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship had set up to provide a vehicle by which churches and individuals who had lost faith in the Board of World Missions could support conservative missionaries. The vote was 270 to 126.

The assembly rejected a motion to order the Board of Christian Education to stop cooperating in publishing Colloquy--the blasphemous magazine which was undermining the morality of our young people.

A few weeks after the General Assembly representatives of Concerned Presbyterians, Presbyterian Churchman United, Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship and the Presbyterian Journal met in Atlanta to assess the situation. They decided that the time had come to abandon our efforts to change the Liberal leadership and to start planning for a new church. The vote was 25 to 1.

A steering committee of three members from each organization was appointed. Rev Donald B. Patterson was elected chairman, Rev. James Baird, vice chairman and Rev. Kennedy Smartt, secretary. Dr. John E. Richards resigned his pastorate at First Presbyterian Church, Macon, Georgia to become administrator for the steering committee.

In August 1971 this decision was announced with this statement:

INTOLERABLE SITUATION

We have reached the point where the situation in our beloved church has become intolerable to thousands of loyal Presbyterians who love the Lord, and want to serve Him in a Presbyterian church which will be true to His Word.

We feel that we can no longer be a part of a denomination in which the Board of Christian Education publishes literature which violates our Confession of Faith and encourages our young people to experiment with sex and drugs; in a denomination in which the Board of World Missions no longer places its primary emphasis on carrying out the Great Commission; in a denomination with seminaries which train ministers who substitute social and political action for the preaching of the Word; in a denomination where presbyteries violate our constitution by receiving ministers who refuse to affirm the Virgin Birth, the bodily resurrection and other cardinal doctrines, while denying membership to faithful ministers who stand firmly for these doctrines which they vowed to uphold.

Especially do we feel that we can no longer subject our children and grandchildren to the kind of youth leaders that those in control have seen fit to place in these sensitive position-young radicals who seem determined to lead our young people away from their faith in God.

Two years was spent in laying the foundation for the new denomination.

ADVISORY CONVENTION

In his anecdotal history of the PCA (*I Am Reminded*), Kennedy Smartt records that an Advisory Committee met in August of 1973 at the Grove Park Inn in Asheville, North Carolina. 160 churches were officially represented by 280 voting delegates, representing 40,000 church members. The Organizing Committee recommended that the 1933 Book of Church Order of the PCUS be adopted, with some minor changes, and the addition of an important chapter on church property. The Convention determined also that ordination to both elder and deacon offices would be accorded only to men. In *How is the Gold Become Dim*, Morton Smith states that the ordination of women to the offices of deacon or elder had been approved in the PCUS at the 1963-64 General Assemblies, and that the practice was "obviously contrary to the specific teaching of the Word of God." The

denial of the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible, lack of evangelistic emphasis, a Liberal bias in denominational literature, heavy-handed top-down authority, the World Council of Churches, abortion, female ordination, immorality and evolution were considered to be major issues in the need to form a new denomination.

THE FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PCA

In December 1973, delegates, representing some 260 congregations with a combined communicant membership of over 41,000 that had left the PCUS, gathered at Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama, and organized the National Presbyterian Church, which later became the Presbyterian Church in America.

THE PCA TODAY

Today, the PCA is the largest conservative presbyterian denomination in the English-speaking world, supports the largest reformed campus ministry in the English-speaking world (RUF) and is blessed with the largest missionary force in the history of presbyterianism.

THE HISTORY OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, JACKSON, MS

I. Beginnings

The First Presbyterian Church of Jackson, Mississippi (1837), is one hundred seventy years old this year, and celebrating the completion of the fourth house of worship in its history. As such, this gives us the opportunity to learn a little about God's providence over the course of our history and to reflect on some of the lessons we can learn from our past "for the living of these days."

Presbyterianism came to Mississippi long before Mississippi became a State (on December 10, 1817). One immediately thinks of, for instance, the old Salem [now Pine Ridge (PCA)] Church in Natchez that dates from 1807 - the oldest extant Presbyterian Church in the State. Within twenty years of the first Presbyterian missionaries in the territory, the Synod of Kentucky constituted the original Presbytery of Mississippi on March 6, 1816.

But there were Presbyterians and Presbyterian churches here even earlier. For instance, the Presbyterians of the New York Missionary Society (of the Presbyterian Synod of New York) had sent missionaries to work among the Choctaw Indians while Mississippi was just barely a territory (established April 7, 1798), in 1799. In 1801, the Synod of North Carolina sent three missionaries who came by way of Nashville, and down the Old Natchez Trace. They established Presbyterianism in the Natchez area (the Bethel [1804], Salem and First Natchez [1817] churches all resulted from their ministry).

In general, Presbyterianism in Mississippi has spread eastward and north out of the southwestern corner of the old territory, from what is now Adams County. Meanwhile, back in the east-central region of the State, the early influence of Presbyterians from North and South Carolina can be seen in the name of the Carolina Presbyterian Church (1841) in Neshoba County.

Presbyterian churches existed in Edwards and Clinton before Jackson. In 1826, the Bethesda Presbyterian Church was founded in Edwards, and the old Mount Salus Church was established in

Clinton, prior to the organization of First Church in Jackson. The Bethesda Church is the oldest church in the Mississippi Valley Presbytery (PCA).

The congregation of First Presbyterian Church, Jackson began its history on a Saturday afternoon, April 8, 1837, by the Rev. **Peter Donan** and four persons: Mrs. Margaret E. Mayson, Mrs. Susan Patton, and John Robb and his wife, Marion. The organizational meeting was held in "the Old State House," Mississippi's first capitol, a small two-story structure on the northeast corner of East Capitol and North President Streets.

The organizing pastor (what today we would call a "church planter") was Peter Donan. Donan studied at Princeton Seminary under Charles Hodge and Samuel Miller, continued as the church's pastor for four years. There were no elders for two years, no deacons for six years, and no meeting house for nearly nine years. In the first two years of its existence, the church had but three new members.

Several things are interesting about the timing of the church's founding and the facts of its humble beginnings. Let me elaborate on a few.

First, the church was established just scant months before the Old School-New School division in the Presbyterian Church. Interestingly, Mississippi's representatives to the 1837 General Assembly sided with the New School party. Now there's a story to tell sometime!

Second, the church's organizing pastor, Peter Donan, studied under leading Old School theologian Charles Hodge of Princeton Seminary, who trained over 2000 student during his long and distinguished teaching career (from 1822-1878). However, Donan eventually left Presbyterianism for a sect! Yet another tale to share.

Third, the slow growth in the beginnings of First Presbyterian Church needs to be considered in light of her long-term impact. Starting with four members, growing by only two members in its first two years (Jackson probably had only about 1000 citizens then), 170 years later First Church is home to about 3100 members, is the largest Presbyterian congregation in the state, one of the largest Presbyterian churches in the United States, a flagship congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), which is itself the largest conservative Presbyterian denomination in the English-speaking world. Furthermore, God has chosen to use ministers, elders and members of First Church to play a significant role in establishing the PCA, Reformed Theological Seminary (a leading theological training center for evangelical ministry with campuses in Jackson; Charlotte, North Carolina; and Orlando, Florida), and Reformed University Ministries (a nationwide collegiate campus fellowship), as well as significantly supporting Belhaven College, French Camp, Palmer Home, Chamberlain-Hunt Academy and more.

"Do not despise the day of small things," is surely one of the messages we can learn from the modest beginnings of First Presbyterian Church, Jackson.

II. A History of the Ministers of First Presbyterian Church

First Presbyterian Church has had only twelve senior ministers over the course of its almost 175 years of history. The church's first five pastors served for 21 years, collectively. The church's next five pastors served, collectively, for 125 years, or to look at it another way, its last seven pastors have served for 149 years.

The dates of the ministers' service (and that of two long-standing supply pastors) are: Donan 1837-1841, Hazard 1841-1842, Halsey 1842-1848, Russell 1848-1849 (SS?), Henderson 1849-1853, Lowrey 1853-1855, McInnis 1855-1858, Hunter 1858-1896, Hutton 1896-1941, Lowe 1941-1951, Miller 1952-1969, Patterson 1969-1982, Baird 1983-1995 and Duncan 1996-present.

In 1841, Donan was followed by the Rev. **S. H. Hazard**, who was pastor for little more than one year. He was succeeded by **Leroy Jones Halsey**, a dynamic man and able preacher, under whose ministry the congregation commenced to grow. Halsey spurred the building of the first sanctuary on the northwest corner of North State and Yazoo Streets (we have a copy of the sermon he preached urging the congregation to build). When Dr. Halsey resigned in 1848, the pulpit was supplied by the Rev. Joshua T. Russell until February 22, 1849. The congregation then called as pastor **Isaac James Henderson**, who served until he was succeeded by **L. A. Lowrey** on December 3, 1853. The Rev. Lowrey was a fine pastor and effective preacher, but died of Yellow Fever after but two years' service. Richmond McInnis became stated supply minister in March, 1855, and served in that capacity until a call was extended to Rev. John Hunter on January 24, 1858.

Rev. **John Hunter** was born and reared in North Ireland, received his seminary training at the Presbyterian Seminary in Danville, Kentucky, and was a vigorous, faithful and able preacher of God's Word, and pastor of First Presbyterian Church for 37 years. John Hunter's wife, Rosa Farrar Petrie Hunter, worked ably with him through all his years. Hunter's pastorate was the first in a string of long ministries at First Presbyterian. Indeed, there have been only seven senior ministers at First Presbyterian since 1858. Our church's current "**Hunter Lectures**" are named for Dr. Hunter and in part meant to honor his memory, as well as to honor our present Minister of Teaching, Derek Thomas, who also came to us from Northern Ireland (though he himself is Welsh!).

Dr. Hunter's pastorate was followed by that of **James Buchanan Hutton**, a native of Virginia and graduate of Union Theological Seminary at Hampden Sidney, Virginia, who with his wife, Rosalind Gwin Hutton, were loved and admired by our congregation throughout his pastorate of almost 44 years. Members of First Presbyterian Church recognized Dr. Hutton's profound and scholarly sermons, his leading of his flock in prayer, his presence when troubles came, and his steadfast faithfulness always to God's Word. We still have Hutton descendants in the congregation today. **Hutton Chapel** is named after him.

Our next minister, **R. Girard Lowe**, was another consecrated, spiritually minded, conservative man of God, who also was a fine athlete and who had unusual rapport with the young people of the congregation, many of whom he was instrumental in leading to the Lord. His ministry ended with death by cancer, and it was a saddened congregation that buried this fine, attractive, much loved man. During Dr. Lowe's ministry our present sanctuary was built, the final service in the old church on North State at Yazoo Streets being on Aug. 29, 1951. **Lowe Hall** is named after him.

Dr. **John Reed Miller**, a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, then was called and served as pastor from 1952 until 1968. Previously he held pastorates in Ohio, West Virginia, and Tennessee. He had served as president of Knoxville College, taught at Belhaven College, and was the founding pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Jackson. Under his leadership, First Presbyterian Church became more vitally interested in missions, and the church began holding annual World Mission Conferences. In 1962 he led the church in founding a Winter Theological Institute, which was continued at Reformed Theological Seminary after that institution was founded, with Dr. Miller's counseling and encouragement. Dr. Miller was known for his commitment to pastoral ministry and to Biblical preaching. His scholarship and careful sermon preparation were always apparent, as was his love for his Lord, and his conviction that "the message must be saturated with the profound conceptions of God's Word." With Dr. Miller's profound sermons, for the first time the sanctuary was filled to capacity for Sunday evening services. For 16 years his evening sermons were broadcast on WSLI radio, and beginning in the early 1960's, the morning worship services also were televised. Throughout his ministry Dr. Miller worked diligently but with a kind spirit at the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly levels, in attempting to preserve the biblical and theological heritage of his denomination. In all his work he was supported by his beloved wife, Betty. After leaving First Church, Dr. Miller became pastor of Macon (Mississippi) Presbyterian Church, where he remained until his retirement from the active ministry in 1973.

Returning to Jackson, for many years Dr. Miller taught a weekly evening Bible study that was widely attended. He continued an active pastoral ministry with young and old, devoting much concern to young ministers and those preparing for the gospel ministry. After physical infirmities confined him to a nursing home, he began speaking God's Word in season to those around him. He died in 1997. **Miller Hall** is named after him (which, strictly speaking, is the Fellowship Hall within the larger structure of **Westminster Hall** - itself named for the Assembly in Westminster Abbey, London, England, that composed what became the doctrinal standards of worldwide presbyterianism).

Dr. **Donald B. Patterson** was installed as the next pastor in September 1969, and served until 1983. Under his leadership the World Mission Program was greatly expanded and the church experienced substantial growth, both numerically and in the amounts of contributions by members. During Dr. Patterson's pastorate, Twin Lakes Conference Center was developed, an outstanding addition to our church's ministry. Also, during Dr. Patterson's ministry at First Church, Presbyterian Church in America was formed, with Dr. Patterson and several of his church's ruling elders serving on the various committees which wrote the fundamental documents for the new denomination. Dr. Patterson served as Chairman of the Steering Committee that formed Presbyterian Church in America.

During Dr. Patterson's pastorate, his wife, Jeanne, served as the leader of Explorer's Bible Study, which involved more than 450 women from 72 churches, and continues to attract today men and woman from over the City of Jackson. Subsequent to his retirement as Pastor of First Church, Dr. Patterson was appointed "Pastor at Large" to Mission to the World, the foreign mission arm of the Presbyterian Church in America, which embraced a total of 325 missionaries, 57 of these being members of First Presbyterian Church. Dr. and Mrs. Patterson traveled throughout the world counseling and encouraging these missionaries. When Dr. Patterson asked to be relieved of this responsibility in 1993, his pastorate included more than 600 missionaries located in 60 countries. He then was named "Special Representative," which enabled him to return to the Jackson area, from where he continues to represent Mission to the World in various capacities, one of which is to

organize two "Vision Trips" a year for numbers of pastors and interested laymen to go to various mission fields to see the work and to become involved in the mission efforts of those fields.

Patterson Hall in the new Study Center is named after him.

Dr. **James M. Baird** succeeded as Dr. Patterson as Pastor of First Church in November, 1983. Dr. Baird was a popular minister and an able preacher of God's Word. The church continued to grow under his pastorate, and he gave leadership to three successful building programs to increase the church plant size. Dr. Baird's TV ministry was widely followed and was instrumental in bringing numerous persons from all over Mississippi to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was instrumental in involving First Presbyterian Church in the Mission Mississippi movement, and he met regularly with black and white ministers from over the city in promoting that work. Until his resignation in December 1995, Dr. Baird was ably assisted by his capable and delightful wife, Jane (or "Miss Jane," as she was and is known to so many).

The Reverend Dr. **J. Ligon Duncan III** is the current minister of the church. From the days of its first minister, Peter Donan (a student of Charles Hodge at Princeton), the pulpit of First Church has been marked by faithful expository ministry. Since Dr. Duncan's arrival in 1996, he has emphasized the teaching of the Word of God and the people are responding: as witnessed by the faithful attendance of the congregation on Sunday mornings, and especially on Sunday evenings and Wednesday nights. Dr. Duncan sees his task as five-fold: (1) Preach the Word, (2) Love the People, (3) Pray down heaven, (4) Equip the elders and deacons, and (5) Promote family worship and religion. Undergirding this five-fold agenda, is Dr. Duncan's personal commitment to live a godly life.

Dr. Duncan became the Minister of First Presbyterian Church in August of 1996. He is a native of Greenville, South Carolina, and was born and reared in the home of an eighth generation Southern Presbyterian Ruling Elder. He is a graduate of Furman University, Greenville, SC, Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, and the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. Duncan is the sixth minister of First Presbyterian Church during the twentieth century (only the twelfth in the church's history), and is the youngest since Dr. Hutton first came. He recalls hearing his predecessors Drs. Patterson and Baird preach Bible Conferences when he was a boy and, upon his arrival in Jackson, he became a friend and admirer of Dr. Miller. He has greatly benefitted from the rich legacy of the ministries of these three great men of God.

Dr. Duncan came to Mississippi in 1990 to join the faculty of Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS) where he became Chairman of the Department of Systematic Theology, and later the John R. Richardson Professor of Theology. During this time he was also Assistant to the Pastor at Trinity Presbyterian Church (PCA), Jackson, Mississippi, and in 1993 served as Interim Pastor at First Presbyterian Church (PCA), Yazoo City, Mississippi. Dr. Duncan's wife Anne is an accomplished Christian Educator in her own right, and is the loving mother of their daughter, Sarah Kennedy and their son, Jennings (IV).

Duncan is active in a number of professional societies in the U.S. and Britain, and currently serves as the Chairman of the Board of the **Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood**, and as President, and Chairman of the Council, of the **Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals**, as well as continuing to teach at RTS. He is a past Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, and has authored numerous articles in various magazines, journals and newspapers, and has also written and edited a number of books.

The preaching ministry of First Church is followed on radio both in and outside of Mississippi. Morning services are carried in North Mississippi on WWSL 102.3FM. In Central Mississippi, WJNT 1180AM carries “Hymns of the Faith” –a talk format radio program that features discussion of the greatest hymns from the history of the Church, focusing on the lyrics, authors, composers and music. Dr. Duncan and Dr. Derek Thomas (the church’s Minister of Teaching) co-host the program. This program is accessible world-wide via the internet. Dr. Duncan’s and Dr. Thomas’s expository messages are available on TV, radio and internet - worldwide. Currently, over 30,000 visitors a month come to the church’s website – www.fpcjackson.org

Sunday morning services are broadcast on WLBT Channel 3, the local NBC affiliate and are picked up statewide. A wide audience across the whole state follows these programs. And the church’s website, www.fpcjackson.org, is chock full of information and Christian resources is extensively used by the broader Christian community. God has continued to bless First Presbyterian beyond our deserving over the last decade. The Lord has prospered us financially and numerically, but more importantly we are growing Spiritually.

The space allocated for this very brief history doesn't permit mentioning by name the ruling elders of First Church of Jackson, men elected to that office for lifetime. It will suffice to say that our ruling elders, through all the years of this church's existence, have guided and directed the First Presbyterian Church of Jackson in such paths that the state of this church today is attributable in large degree to the faithful, Christ-exalting, God-centered efforts of these ruling elders.

Mention must be made of the work of these ruling elders, and deacons, too, in founding **First Presbyterian Day School** of Jackson, which has provided outstanding scholastic training and strong Biblical teaching for over forty years to hundreds of young people from the congregation and from all over Jackson. First Presbyterian Day School now is one of the strongest ministries of First Church, and the church's continued growth and strength has been greatly aided by the Lord’s blessing on the First Presbyterian Day School.

The **Twin Lakes Conference Center** is another unique ministry of First Presbyterian Church. Located near Florence, Mississippi, the wonderful staff and facility of Twin Lakes ministers to thousands of youth and adults ever year. Twin Lakes has gone through two major phases of renovation and expansion over the last six years, and is now well-situated to engage in not only in youth programming, but also in family ministry, more effectively than ever before.

The staff of First Presbyterian Church is large and gifted, with a number of remarkable ministers serve our congregation. Our Minister of Teaching, The Reverend Dr. **Derek Thomas**, is one of the best Reformed preachers in the world and an accomplished professor of systematic and pastoral theology at RTS. Derek is the Editorial Director of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, and is in constant demand as a conference-speaker around the world. Our Minister of Music and Media, The Reverend Dr. **Bill Wymond**, is extraordinarily gifted and much appreciated by our people (and has held just about every position on the ministerial staff over the last thirty plus years). The Reverend **Brister Ware**, our treasured Minister of Pastoral Care, is a son of this congregation and deeply loved by all. The Reverend Jeremy Smith, our Senior Assistant Minister (who will automatically become the Executive Minister on January 1, 2009) has already distinguished himself as a preacher, teacher, leader, chief of staff, facilitator of the work of the Session and more. Our longtime and greatly appreciated Executive Minister Emeritus, The Reverend **Bill Hughes**, is a veteran minister with great wisdom and experience who will be retiring his position at year’s end.

The Reverend **Billy Joseph** is pastoring, discipling the deacons and serving as Minister of Congregational Care (after spending over twenty blessed years in campus ministry). Billy has almost single-handedly helped our church have more of the feel of a large family. The Reverend **Nate Shurden**, is our remarkable Minister of Young Adults, is diligently pouring himself into ministry with our singles and young couples, overseeing the college ministry, as well as giving leadership in the overall discipleship of the church. Nate, as is well-known, is an outstanding preacher and teacher, and gifted at counseling as well. **Justin Pillsbury** is our superb Director of Student Ministry, leading our Junior High and High School ministry to Students. He and his wife Caroline are greatly loved and appreciated by our students and families.

We can't mention the whole staff here (or we'd run out of space) but we ought to take note of the much-appreciated ministries of Donna Dobbs, our wonderful Director of Christian Education, Ashley Hall, our Director of Women's Ministry, and Earl Davis, our Business Manager. Each of these friends make vital contribution to the spiritual well-being and total ministry of the church.

In all things, to God be the glory.

Session Five: Presbyterian Doctrine (part 1)

Class Study Questions
(to be completed before next class)

Sources: *The Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF)* {The following study questions are organized according to the chapters of the WCF.}

Chapter I (WCF)

1. What are the two types of revelation? How are they different?
2. What does the *Confession* mean when it asserts that God's former ways of revelation have ceased?
3. What do we mean when we say the Bible is inspired?
4. How are we to interpret Scripture?
5. Does the Holy Spirit speak apart from Scripture? Explain.

Chapter II (WCF)

1. When the Confession calls God "a most pure Spirit," what does that mean and imply?
2. Distinguish the doctrine of the Trinity from tri-theism.
3. What do we mean when we say the persons of the Godhead are of one substance, power, and eternity? Why is this important?

Chapter III (WCF)

1. In a sentence or a phrase, what is God's eternal decree?
2. Is God's decree "conditional?" Explain.
3. If God has ordained "whatsoever comes to pass" how is he not responsible for sin?
4. What is the difference between God's foreknowledge and God's predestination?
5. The *Confession* says that the doctrine of predestination "is to be handled with special prudence and care." What are the practical applications of such a doctrine?

Chapter IV (WCF)

1. The *Confession* asserts that God created the world “of nothing” (*ex nihilo*) “in the space of six days.” What is the theological significance of these statements?
2. The *Confession* 4.2, gives a detailed account of the endowments that God gave man when He created him. Compile and organize these.
3. What do we mean when we say "man is created in the image of God?"
4. What are some practical implications of the Christian doctrine of creation in light of current secular thought?

Chapter V (WCF)

1. What is the difference between “fate” and “Divine Sovereignty?”
2. What does the *Confession* mean by “second causes?” How does this help explain how God can be sovereign and yet not responsible for sin?
3. According to the *Confession*, does God’s sovereignty extend even to the fall of Adam, and other wicked deeds?
4. According to the *Confession* 5.5, why does God sometimes leave His own people to face temptations and inner corruptions?
5. According to the *Confession* 5.6, does God “harden” sinners or do they “harden” themselves?

Chapter VI (WCF)

1. What happened when our first parents fell? That is what were the consequences of the “fall of man” recorded in Genesis 3?
2. What does "total depravity" mean?
3. What does the *Confession* mean when it says that “the guilt of this sin [Adam and Eve’s fall] was imputed . . . to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation?” Theologians call this the imputation of Adam’s sin. Explain.
4. What is the difference between “original corruption” and “actual transgressions?”
5. Are we sinners because we sin, or do we sin because we are sinners?

Chapter VII (WCF)

1. What is the "Covenant of Works?" Explain.
2. What is the "Covenant of Grace?" Explain.
3. What are the differences in the Covenant of Grace as it was administered in the time of the law, and as it is administered now under the Gospel?
4. Are there two covenants of Grace?

Chapter VIII (WCF)

1. What are the principle doctrines about the person and work of Christ set forth in the *Confession*, chapter 8?
2. In what way is Christ a Prophet? (Make sure to look at the *Catechism*)
3. In what way is Christ a Priest? (Make sure to look at the *Catechism*)
4. In what way is Christ a King? (Make sure to look at the *Catechism*)
5. Why was it necessary for Christ to be both God and man?
6. What does "limited or definite atonement" (sometimes called "particular redemption") mean?
7. What is wrong with the statement, "Christ died for everybody?"

Chapter IX (WCF)

1. What do we mean by "free will?"
2. How does a Calvinistic view of free will differ from an Arminian view?
3. What do we mean (theologically speaking) by "man is free to do what he wants to do?"
4. What are the four states of man, as set forth in the *Confession*, chapter 9?
5. Do all people have "the ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation?"
6. Why is a regenerated person not able to do good perfectly in this life?
7. What is "perfectionism?"

Chapter X (WCF)

1. What is “effectual calling?”
2. Is this “calling” conditional?
3. What does this chapter say about the status of infants who die in infancy, and others who are unable to be called outwardly by the word?

Chapter XI (WCF)

1. Who justifies?
2. What does “justify” mean?
3. What do we mean by “justification by faith alone?”
4. What is the “ground” or “basis” of our justification?
5. What is the difference between a Protestant and Roman Catholic view of justification? What is the significance of this difference?

Chapter XII (WCF)

1. What is adoption?
2. Is God the Father of all men? Explain.
3. Give a pastoral application of the doctrine of adoption.

Chapter XIII (WCF)

1. What is sanctification?
2. Can a person be regenerated and justified, without being further sanctified?
3. Are we active or passive in sanctification? Explain. What is the significance of this?

Chapter XIV (WCF)

1. What is saving faith? Whose work is it?
2. What are the principle acts of saving faith?

Chapter XV (WCF)

1. What is repentance? Can a person truly believe on Christ without repentance?
2. If the believer is forgiven of his sins, why should he continue to repent?

Chapter XVI (WCF)

1. What, according to the *Confession* 16.1-2, is a “good work?”
2. Can an unbeliever do any “good works” in the sight of God? Explain.
3. From whence comes our ability to do good works?
4. Can we merit pardon of sin by our good works? Why or why not?

Chapter XVII (WCF)

1. Can a true believer lose his or her salvation?
2. Can a believer fall into grievous sin?
3. What is the basis of the perseverance of the saints?

Chapter XVIII (WCF)

1. What does the “assurance of of grace and salvation” mean?
2. What is the basis of this assurance?
3. Do all Christians have this assurance? Why or why not?
4. Can a believer’s assurance be shaken, diminished or intermitted? How?
5. Are true believers ever utterly destitute of the evidences of the Spirit’s work, from which assurance may be revived?
6. Should all Christians desire a full assurance of grace and salvation?

Session Six: Presbyterian Doctrine (part 2)

Class Study Questions
(to be completed before next class)

Sources: *The Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF)* {The following study questions are organized according to the chapters of the WCF.}

Chapter XIX (WCF)

1. Are Christians under obligation to keep the law of God?
2. What is the “ceremonial law?” What was its purpose?
3. What are the three classes of Biblical law, according to the *Confession*? Which are still in force?
4. What does the *Confession* 19.6 say about our relation to the moral law? Summarize.

Chapter XX (WCF)

1. What is the difference between “liberty” and “license?”
2. In what does our Christian liberty consist, according to the *Confession*?
3. In what ways do new covenant believers have greater freedom than old covenant believers?
4. What does it mean that God is “Lord of the conscience?”
5. Would it be wrong to do something against the conscience? Why?

Chapter XXI (WCF)

1. State the “regulative principle.” Contrast it with the Lutheran and Roman Catholic views.
2. What does the *Confession* mean when it says that the acceptable way of worship is “instituted” and “limited?”
3. What are the elements of ordinary worship of God?
4. How is the Sabbath Day to be observed?

Chapter XXII (WCF)

1. What is the difference between an "oath" and a "vow?"
2. What is the purpose of an oath, a vow?

Chapter XXIII (WCF)

1. What is the basis of the authority of the civil government?
2. Should a Christian obey the civil law? Can a Christian be involved in secular civil government?
3. How does the American version of the *Confession* 23.3 differ from the original version?

Chapter XXIV (WCF)

1. Why did God institute marriage?
2. What is the *Confession's* position on so-called "same-sex marriage?"
3. What are the Scriptural grounds for divorce?
4. According to the *Confession*, should a Christian ever marry a non-Christian? Should Protestants marry Roman Catholics?
5. What are "degrees of consanguinity or affinity?" What does *Confession* 24.4 teach?

Chapter XXV (WCF)

1. What do we mean by the "invisible" Church?
2. What do we mean by the "visible" Church?
3. Are these two different churches?
4. Is it possible for the "visible" church to be completely pure? Why?
5. Who is the Head of the Church? What of the claims of others in this regard?

Chapter XXVI (WCF)

1. What do we mean by "union with Christ?"
2. Does this "union with Christ" mean that believers become divine?

Chapter XXXII (WCF)

1. What happens to believers at death? What happens to unbelievers at death?
2. Is there such a thing as purgatory? Explain.
3. What is meant by the "resurrection of the dead?"
4. At the last day what will happen to the believer? What will happen to the unbeliever?

Chapter XXXIII (WCF)

1. What is meant by the last judgment?
2. What is the purpose of this judgment? Who will be judged?
3. What is going to happen to the believer at the judgment? What about the unbeliever?
4. Why has Christ not made known the timing of the last judgment?

Session Seven: Sacraments

Class Study Questions
(to be completed before class)

Sources: *Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF)* {The following study questions are organized according to the chapters of the WCF.}

Chapter XXVII (WCF)

1. What is a sacrament?
2. In what sense is a sacrament a sign? In what sense is it a seal?
3. How many sacraments were ordained by Christ?
4. How is God's grace conferred in our taking of the sacraments?
5. In what ways are baptism and circumcision the same?
6. In what ways are the Lord's supper and the Passover the same?

Chapter XXVIII (WCF)

1. What is Baptism? What does it signify?
2. Should children of believers be baptized? Why?
3. Is it necessary to be "immersed" to be baptized?
4. Can a person be saved without being baptized? Explain
5. Can a person be baptized without being saved?

Chapter XXIX (WCF)

1. What is the meaning of the Lord's Supper and when was it instituted?
2. What are the elements in the Lord's Supper? What do these elements represent?
3. In what way is Christ present in the Lord's Supper? Is He present in the elements?
4. Is it ever proper to administer this sacrament "privately?" Why?

Session Eight: Church Government and Book of Church Order

Class Study Questions
(to be completed before *this* class)

Sources: *Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF)* {The following study questions are organized according to the chapters of the WCF.}

Chapter XXX (WCF)

1. What is meant by saying Christ has “appointed a government” in His Church?
2. What is the purpose of Church censures (a.k.a. church discipline)?
3. Why is it important to maintain Church discipline?
4. What happens to a Church that neglects Church discipline?

Chapter XXXI (WCF)

1. Why should we have synods and councils?
2. Is it possible for a Church Council to make a mistake?
3. What matters should a Church Court concern itself with?
4. Does this mean that the Gospel is not regulative of political matters for the Christian?
5. How does the Church rightly influence political affairs?
6. When may the Church concern itself directly, as an organized body, with political matters?

Sources: **Book of Church Order (BCO)** Chapters are indicated in the BCO.

Preface (BCO)

1. Who is the Head of the Church?
2. Where did the Church receive its system of government and discipline?
3. In your own words, give phrase-length summaries of the preliminary principles.
4. Which documents make up the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America?

Chapter 1 (BCO)

1. Name the various kinds of church government, which kind of government is the PCA? Support our form of government from Scripture.
2. What does “Ecclesiastical jurisdiction is not a several, but a joint power” mean?

Chapter 2 (BCO)

1. Of whom does the visible church consist?
2. Is the unity of the Body of Christ destroyed by denominations?
3. What determines if a denomination is a true branch of the church of Jesus Christ?

Chapter 3 (BCO)

1. What are the two types of Ecclesiastical power?
2. What are the sole functions of the Church?
3. When does the exercise of church power have divine sanction?

Chapter 4 (BCO)

1. What is a “particular church?”
2. Who has the power of jurisdiction in the particular church?
3. What are the ordinances established by Christ?

Chapter 5 (BCO)

1. Who has authority to organize a church?

Chapter 6 (BCO)

1. Who are the members of the church?
2. What is the difference between communing and non-communing members?

Chapter 7 (BCO)

1. What were the extraordinary offices of the New Testament? Do we have them today?
2. What are the ordinary and perpetual classes of office in the Church?

Chapter 8 (BCO) I Timothy 3, Titus 1

1. Compare the offices of Teaching and Ruling Elder.

Chapter 9 (BCO) Acts 6

1. Describe the office of Deacon as indicated in the *BCO* and support from the Scriptures.

Chapters 10 (BCO)

1. Why do we speak of the “courts” of the Church, in reference to our various graded assemblies of elders? (Hint: see *BCO* 11-2)
2. Name the church courts.

Chapters 11 (BCO)

1. What is the jurisdiction of church courts?

Chapter 12 (BCO)

1. Of whom does the Church Session consist?
2. List some of the specific duties of the church Session.

Chapter 13 (BCO)

1. List some of the specific duties of the Presbytery.

Chapter 14 (BCO)

1. List some of the specific duties of the General Assembly.

Chapter 15 (BCO)

1. Describe the difference between a committee and a commission.

Chapter 16 (BCO)

1. Can any man be placed over a church as Pastor without the consent of that church?
2. Why is every candidate for any office to be examined and approved before serving?

Chapter 17 (BCO)

1. What is ordination?

Chapter 24 (BCO)

1. Review the ordination vows for elders and deacons. Can you heartily affirm them?

Chapter 25 (BCO)

1. What is the procedure for calling a congregational meeting?
2. Section 7-12 of *BCO* 25 contains several important statements. Outline the highlights.

Chapter 26 (BCO)

1. What is the procedure for amending the *BCO*?
2. What is the procedure for amending the *Confession of Faith*?

The Rules of Discipline

Chapter 27 (BCO)

1. According to *BCO* 27, what is church discipline? In what two senses is the term used?
2. What are the aims of church discipline?

Chapter 28 (BCO)

1. How are we to provide discipline for noncommuning members?

Chapter 29 (BCO)

1. What constitutes an offense?

Chapter 30 (BCO)

1. What censures may be inflicted by church courts? Describe each of them.

Chapters 31-33 (BCO)

1. What is a “case of process?”
2. Who are the parties in a case of process?
3. Under what circumstances should a church court institute process?

Chapters 39-46 (BCO)

1. How do the acts and decisions of a lower court come under the supervision of a higher court?
2. Describe the higher courts’ work of “general review and control.”
3. What is a “reference?”
4. What is an “appeal?” On what grounds can it be made?
5. What is a “complaint?”
6. What is a “dissent?” What is a “protest?” What is an “objection?”
7. What is an “associate member?”

Directory for the Worship of God**Chapter 47-55 (BCO)**

1. What are the proper elements of a worship service?
2. What are the responsibilities of every Christian on the Lord’s Day?
3. What ought to be included in every worship service?

Chapter 56 (BCO)

1. Discuss the practical aspects of the administration of Baptism (56-1,2, & 3).

Chapter 58 (BCO)

1. Discuss the practical aspects of the administration of the Lord's Supper (58-1,2, & 3).

Chapters 62, 63 (BCO)

1. Other than stated Lord's Day service, what are two other special occasions for worship?