

**MINUTES**  
**OF THE**  
**GENERAL SYNOD**  
**OF THE**  
**ASSOCIATE REFORMED**  
**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**



**BONCLARKEN**  
**Flat Rock, North Carolina**  
**June 5-8, 1978**

Following announcements, Synod recessed at 11:47 A.M. with the Benediction pronounced by Mr. Paul L. Grier.

### TUESDAY, JUNE 6, 1978 — 7:00 P.M.

Synod began its evening session with the devotional by Mr. Jan Senneker, "To Know Christ and to Make Him Known."

The first presentation of the evening was that of the Committee on the Minister and His work, with Mr. Thomas G. Long presiding. After introducing chaplains Doug Jones, Pete Pressly, Robert Luebke, and Jim Craig, Mr. W. C. Lauderdale introduced the Director of the Presbyterian Council on Military Chaplains, Dr. Robert Harriman. The General Synod stood in recognition of the work of Dr. Harriman over the years as he approaches his retirement. Dr. Harriman then spoke to the Synod on behalf of the Council and its chaplains and presented a memento to Moderator Todd.

The Board of Foreign Missions, with Mr. E. R. Young presiding, made the second presentation. Mr. Young reviewed the status of our retired missionaries and the status of foreign missions today, and then introduced Dr. Clyde W. Taylor, International Representative of World Relief Commission, who addressed the General Synod on behalf of the cause of World Missions.

The presentation of the Board of Church Extension, with Mr. E. L. Bland presiding, began with the singing of "The Church's One Foundation." Mr. Bland then expressed appreciation to Mr. Clyde T. McCants for his work in the past, and introduced Mr. W. C. Lauderdale, the new Director of Church Extension, who then introduced Dr. Francis Jackson Redford, Director of Church Extension of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, who addressed the General Synod in the area of Church Extension, using as his topic, "Church Planting is Your Business."

The presentation of Erskine College was made by Mr. Joe Patrick, Mr. Thomas S. Watt, and the Reverend M. Stanyarne Bell.

Special promotional presentations were then made by Mr. Don W. Elliott and Mr. John A. Bigham, Committee on Lay Ministry; Mr. Bryant McLendon, Committee on Worship; and Mr. Zeb Williams, Editor of *The Associate Reformed Presbyterian*.

Following announcements, Mr. Frank D. Stewart led in prayer and pronounced the Benediction, closing the Tuesday Evening Session at 9:58 P.M.

### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1978 — 9:00 A.M.

The Morning Session began with a devotional "Growth in Knowledge," by Mr. Ray B. Lanning.

The Moderator then introduced the President of the Woman's Synodical Union, Mrs. Harry McCalla, who presented her report. A motion carried to print the report in the Minutes (See APPENDIX).

The Minutes of Tuesday's Session were read and adopted. Mr. William H. Stuart, Sr., presented the report of the Special Committee on Christian Higher Education which was adopted:

#### REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

##### PART I — STATEMENT REGARDING THE STUDENT

###### Preamble

At its meeting of June 1977, the General Synod adopted a "Statement of the Philosophy of Christian Higher Education." In connection with this matter, the Synod directed this committee to prepare an addendum to such Statement in order to more clearly enunciate therein the role and responsibility of the student at Erskine College. Pursuant to this directive, your committee has prepared and recommends to the Synod for adoption the following:

**Addendum to "Statement of the Philosophy of Christian Higher Education"**  
Add the following as new paragraph (d) of Section III of the "Statement of the Philosophy of Christian Higher Education" and redesignate existing paragraph (d) as paragraph (e):

"The student attending Erskine College becomes part of a meaningful tradition of Christian leadership, of education for a life of service and witness. At a Christian college, the uniqueness of each individual is a basic premise, but the universality of our human dependence on Jesus Christ as the ultimate Word is equally fundamental, the point of reference for all knowledge and all experience being Biblical revelation and authority. From these truths it follows that both the individuals comprising the student body and the ethos of a college campus which is truly Christian should manifest qualities differentiated from the secular norm. At Erskine College, students are privileged to belong to a community of genuine concern and conviction which it is their responsibility to foster and to maintain as they relate its values to their own time. Under the supervision of the Board of Trustees, the Administration and the Faculty, the student is expected to cooperate in creating and maintaining an environment that will honor God, promote the Christian goals of the Church and support the moral standards of the College. In the educational process, the student is expected to study and evaluate all knowledge objectively, seeking God's guidance in matters of faith, vocational calling and educational preparation."

##### PART II — AUTONOMY

###### Preamble

By action of the Executive Board of the General Synod, your committee has been assigned the responsibility of defining the term "autonomy" with reference to the Board of Trustees of Erskine College in relation to The General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, with the request that this report be made to the 1978 meeting of the General Synod.

Pursuant to this assignment, your committee submits the following report:

###### Definition of Autonomy

The college, incorporated as Erskine College under the laws of the State of South Carolina, is a separate corporation, legally distinct from the church

and governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is empowered to exercise its independent judgment with reference to the operation of Erskine College and final decisions related thereto lie within the exclusive province of the Board. It is clear to the committee that, from a legal standpoint, the Board of Trustees is an autonomous body.

#### Supporting Discussion

Members of the committee have had access to and have studied carefully the legal documents and opinions concerning the charter and bylaws of Erskine College and their bearing on the relationship of the college to The General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

The bylaws of the college corporation make provision for determining the membership of the Board of Trustees and show that, legally, the control of the college by the General Synod lies in the General Synod's authority to appoint members of the Board of Trustees.

This provision is made in Article II, paragraph 3, of the bylaws as follows:

**“Composition of Board.** The number of members of the Board shall not exceed thirty-two. Annually, the Board may recommend to the Nominating Committee of the General Synod one member for appointment to the Board. The General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church shall annually appoint five persons to be members of the Board, each of whom shall have a term of office to terminate with the sixth fiscal year-end after that person's term begins.

“In addition, the General Synod may elect one person whose term may be specified by the Synod. In addition, the president of the Erskine Alumni Association shall be a member of the Board. Each member may hold office until the expiration of the term for which elected or until earlier resignation, death, or incapacity. At least fifty percent of the members shall be alumni or alumnae of Erskine College and/or Seminary.

“The General Synod, or its Executive Board, may fill vacant or unexpired terms. Each member shall have equal seat, voice and vote in all meetings of the Board. Any member who is absent from three consecutive meetings of the Board may be asked to resign.”

The autonomy of the Board was confirmed by the General Synod at its annual meeting in 1972 when it approved amendments to the charter of Erskine College as recorded in the 1972 Minutes of Synod, page 174. Among other things, these amendments removed the clause in the charter which provided for Synod to exercise a general control and supervision over the officers, affairs and government of the college.

The committee believes that the intent of the present charter is to make the college legally and solely responsible for its own acts.

The committee believes that the intent of the present bylaws is to make the college responsive to the will of the General Synod as expressed by the Board of Trustees, appointed by the Synod.

This relationship of the General Synod to Erskine College through the Synod-appointed Board of Trustees was recognized and emphasized by action of the Synod at its meeting in 1977 in adopting the Statement of Philosophy of Christian Higher Education, which dealt with this relationship as follows:

**“The Trustees of the College.** The Board of Trustees of Erskine College is the authority of the church at Erskine. Representing the church's presence in its work of Christian higher education, the Trustees are an integral part of the college community.

“For service in such positions of responsibility, it is incumbent upon the General Synod to select individuals who have a perception of the church and its work that coincides with that of the Synod and who are kept informed of the church's policies and purposes. A Trustee is a servant of Christ and His Church in one of the greatest and most sacred endeavors. In this task the church needs Godly men and women of knowledge, wisdom and dedication to this work.”

#### Other Considerations

The corporate structure of Erskine College was no doubt initiated by the Synod and, through the years, the changes in the charter and bylaws relative to autonomy have been approved by the Synod. Autonomy is essential if the college corporation is to act legally and responsibly. It is in the best interests of the church that the Synod protect and defend this autonomy.

Precipitous action of the Synod, creating undue pressure by directing, or commanding, the Board of Trustees or Administration to take certain specific action can jeopardize the accreditation of the college by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and seriously impair the church's mission in Christian higher education.

The committee feels that in the history of the church and its work in Christian higher education the two institutions have always been inextricably bound together. The hope of successful achievement of the Christian goals and purposes of the college lies in mutual understanding, deference, respect and a spirit of Christian charity between the Board of Trustees and the General Synod, with both bodies seeking prayerfully to function wisely and well within the blessing of God, whose we are and whom we serve.

Respectfully submitted, W. H. Stuart, Chairman, R. E. Beckham, H. H. Long, Alice L. Love, L. L. Richardson.

The Report of the Special Committee on Congregational Self-Study was adopted:

#### REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE FOR CONGREGATIONAL SELF-STUDY

The committee met in Due West, elected Bryant McLendon chairman and made plans to carry out its duties. We are presently in the process of receiving information from all of Synod's standing committees and request that we be allowed to carry on for one additional year in order to compile the material we are receiving. We further ask that those committees who have not responded send in their information as soon as possible.

The Report of the Committee on Election of Moderator was presented. The report was divided into two subjects for debate and adoption purposes. Following discussion, the first part of the paper was adopted. An amended substitute for the second part of the paper carried as follows:

- (12) That the same provisions made for procedure in the election of Moderator in Part I be used for the election of Vice Moderator Elect and the Rules of Procedure be amended accordingly.

K. C. Seawright, T. S. Watt, R. T. Ruble, G. G. Parkinson, C. H. Carlisle, Chairman.

The Report of the Ecclesiastical Commission on Judiciary Affairs was considered item-by-item.

Section One with regard to the referred Memorial of Virginia Presbytery was adopted.

Section Two with regard to the William H. Dunlap Orphanage was adopted.

Section Three with regard to the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, International was adopted.

Section Four with regard to the Constitution and Bylaws of Erskine was presented, discussed, and an amendment by Mr. Troy Pritt was offered and tabled. At this time, the retiring Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Erskine, Dr. E. D. Sloan, Jr., was granted the floor to answer questions. Section Four was then adopted. The Report was adopted as a whole as presented until this time:

#### REPORT OF ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSION ON JUDICIARY AFFAIRS

##### I. Re: Memorial Of Virginia Presbytery

The Special Committee appointed under the Memorial of Virginia Presbytery as reported on page 500, 1977 *Minutes of General Synod*, met with the Commission at its meeting held at the Doraville ARP Church on Friday, January 29, 1978. After a lengthy review of chapter III of The Standards and discussion of the questions presented in this Memorial it was moved, seconded and passed by said Special Committee and this Commission:

"that the joint body of this Commission and Special Committee finds that The Standards, with reference to the questions raised in the Virginia Memorial, are not inconsistent nor ambiguous; that it further finds The Standards are clear of meaning on the issues raised and therefore recommends no change be made in The Standards."

##### II. Re: The William H. Dunlap Orphanage, Inc.

The Commission adopted the Report of the Review Committee on the above-named corporation as herein set forth.

"The Review Committee found the applicable documents to be in proper legal order with two (2) exceptions which may be corrected under the recommendations set forth below:

###### Manual Requirements:

*Membership - At Large:*  
3 of the 9 members shall be from the Mississippi Valley Presbytery, two of whom shall be from the Dunlap area.

###### Findings:

Article III of Bylaws does not contain the provision that 2 of the 9 members must be from the Dunlap area and is, therefore, in conflict with the Manual and Paragraph 2 of Article IV of Constitution

##### Membership - Advisory:

Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent,  
Secretary-Treasurer of Dunlap

Article IV, paragraph 5, does not include Assistant Superintendent as an advisory member

It is recommended that the proper amendments be made as to eliminate these conflicts.

The Commission has other organizations under review and will report at the time work is completed.

##### III. Re: Constitution of The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Int.

The Commission was also directed to make a study of the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, International, and reports the following:

"That whereas the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, International, is to be principally a consultative and advisory body; and

"That whereas, each synod shall retain its complete autonomy, as at present, without the relinquishment of any authority or property, the Ecclesiastical Commission on Judiciary Affairs recommends the Constitution of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, International, be referred to the Committee on Inter-Church Relations for further review prior to recommendation for adoption by the General Synod."

##### IV. Re: Erskine College

The Commission met on April 21, 1978, at which time it received and discussed the Report of its Review Committee. This Report and recommendations were discussed with Messrs. E. D. Sloan, Chairman of the Board of Erskine College, E. I. Davis, Chairman-Elect of the Board of Erskine College, and Erskine President M. Stanyarne Bell. The representatives of the Commission and the representatives of Erskine College were in one accord as to the purpose of Erskine College and it was agreed that the recommendations to be reported to Synod by this Commission would be given immediate attention by the Board of Trustees of Erskine College.

The Report and recommendations are hereinafter set forth.

**REFERRAL MADE** — paragraph 2, page 460, Minutes of the A.R.P. General Synod 1977.

At its meeting of June 1977, the General Synod approved the referral of the Charter (issued February 3, 1977) and Bylaws (adopted April 15, 1977) of Erskine College to this Commission, and instructed this Commission to check their conformity to Synod's Manual of Authorities and Duties. In compliance with this directive, this Commission has made the study required and report the following findings:

1. The Erskine College Board of Trustees is an autonomous Board without any provision for any supervision or governance by the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church over the activities of the Board of Trustees of the College or the activities of the College or Seminary.
2. The restatement of Erskine College Charter in 1973, with approval of Synod, made the Erskine Board of Trustees an autonomous Board without

any supervision or governance powers reserved in Synod and the 1977 restatement of the Charter continues this status.

3. The Charter when amended in 1973, dropped the clause in Section 11 of the 1850 Statute, which provided:

“ . . . That the Associate Reformed Synod of the South, or any other assembly to which such said Synod may transfer its authority, shall have the power of confirming or annulling such appointments (of faculty and administration made by the Board of Trustees), and of exercising a general control and supervision over the officers, affairs and government of said College.”

The Charter, as amended in 1977, dropped the requirement that twelve (12) of the members of Erskine Board had to be Associate Reformed Presbyterian Ministers.

We shall not try to point out small differences between the Erskine Charter and Bylaws under consideration, hereinafter referred to as “Charter” or “Bylaws”, and General Synod’s Manual of Authorities and Duties of the Officers and Agencies of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, hereinafter referred to as “Manual”, but will only point out differences we think are of significant importance:

**Manual Requires:**

1. Twelve (12) of the members of Erskine College Board to be A.R.P. ministers.
2. In the exercise of its authority the Board shall comply with the Standards of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, and its policies and programs shall be consistent with the purpose of the General Synod.

**Comments:**

Charter and By-laws contain no such requirement.

It is a question of fact as to whether or not the Erskine Board and President have taken positive steps of a definite nature to make Erskine a distinctly committed Christian institution, including the four directives set forth in the memorial adopted and shown on page 498 of the Minutes of the 1977 meeting of Synod.

We suggest that the President of Erskine and the Chairman of the Board be invited to appear before the Commission on April 21 and advise the Commission whether or not the policies and program of the General Synod referred to above have been complied with.

**Requirement of the Standards:**

1. Chapter XIV, paragraph 2(d) “Any action of a board may be approved, amended, or set aside by the appointing court.”

We believe that the Charter of Erskine College makes no provision for any governance by Synod and Synod now has no legal right nor authority to amend or set aside any action taken by the Erskine Board.

2. Chapter XIV, paragraph 3(a) “Members of a board shall be appointed and their terms of membership shall be fixed by the appointing court.”

Erskine Charter provides that: “The membership of the Board of Trustees and voting rights shall be set forth in the By-laws of this corporation.”

Composition of Erskine Board and terms of membership are fixed by the Trustees By-laws.

3. Chapter XIV, paragraph 3(b) “A board shall elect its own officers and, subject to the approval of the appointing court, shall adopt a constitution and by-laws.”

Present Charter was apparently written and secured from the State of South Carolina without first being approved by Synod.

The By-laws were adopted prior to the meeting of the 1977 Synod and have not been approved by Synod. While simply procedural matters for the good of the College, nevertheless, without approval, the By-laws have been amended twice since the meeting of Synod and the referral to this Commission.

We believe that in view of the authority granted to the Board by its Charter and By-laws it makes no legal difference whether Synod approves or rejects such instruments. Synod’s action would have no legal effect on the validity of such instruments.

4. Chapter XIV, paragraph 3(c) “A board may incorporate; however, the provisions of its charter and by-laws must always be in accordance with the Form of Government of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.”

We do not have a clear understanding as to exactly what is meant by “Form of Government of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.” We do not believe a corporate set-up, such as Erskine now has, without any legal control left in Synod, is in keeping with “Form of Government” within Synod’s intent.

5. Chapter XIV, paragraph 4 “any newly (after the date of the adoption of the Standards) appointed employee of any board as administrator or teacher, shall give satisfactory evidence of his belief in and adherence to the basic doctrines of evangelical Christianity.”

Question of fact which would have to be developed by testimony. By-laws require this Standard to be complied with by the President “insofar as possible without violating civil law.”

The only legal right Synod has in the governing of Erskine is the right to appoint members to the Board of Trustees in accordance with the Bylaws of the Erskine Board. This remaining right could be taken from Synod by the Board amending its Bylaws without the approval of Synod or the voice and vote of the members appointed by Synod could be watered down by the enlargement of the membership of the Board by a Bylaw amendment and appointments made in some other manner than by Synod.

Nothing herein is meant to reflect against any of Erskine's administrative officers or members of Erskine Board.

We believe what has been done was done with the purpose of improving Erskine College and no doubt there is some good or necessity in the Erskine Board being an autonomous Board, but as it stands today Erskine is not within the fold of the Church and the Synod has no legal control over Erskine College or the Seminary. This condition needs to be corrected. It cannot be done by Synod's directives, and this kind of action by the Synod should be avoided. Changes can only be made by action of the Board of Trustees.

We believe any difference of opinion that might now exist between the delegates of Synod and the Board of Trustees should be expressed in an orderly manner and in the form of recommendations by the Synod.

We submit to the General Synod the following recommendations:

1. That the Erskine Board of Trustees be requested to prepare amendments to the Charter of Erskine College with the idea of incorporating in the Charter provisions that will accomplish the following:
  - (1) The composition of the Board of Trustees as heretofore approved by the General Synod be set forth in the Charter.
  - (2) The General Synod be empowered to appoint the members of the Board of Trustees as is now provided by the Bylaws of Erskine Board.
  - (3) A prohibition against any amendments being made to the Charter without approval of the General Synod.
2. That the Erskine Board of Trustees continue as an autonomous body after the above powers have been vested in the General Synod.
3. That the Erskine Board of Trustees be requested to appoint a committee from its body for the purpose of preparing the suggested amendments to Erskine's Charter and that such committee work with the Ecclesiastical Commission on Judiciary Affairs in such a way that the proposed amendments will be a joint effort of the Board of Trustees and this Commission.
4. That the suggested amendments as approved by the Erskine Board and this Commission be reported to the General Synod at its 1979 meeting for its consideration and approval.

A motion carried that the Moderator's Committee on Foreign Missions be made the Order of the Day at this time. The motion carried, and the Report of the Moderator's Committee on Foreign Missions was adopted item-by-item:

#### REPORT OF MODERATOR'S COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN MISSIONS

The meeting was opened with prayer. The roll was taken and a quorum was present. Also attending were Mr. John Mariner, Mr. Clyde Taylor, and Mr. E. R. Young.

The committee makes the following recommendations:

1. That recommendations 1 - 8 be adopted as presented in the Board of Foreign Missions' report.
2. That recommendation 9 of the Board report be adopted as amended by Synod's Report of Stewardship as adopted by Synod.
3. That Synod commend the Board of Foreign Missions and John Mariner for the work they have done in promoting missions in the past year.
4. That the Synod reaffirm the plan of deeper cooperation with the Synod of Mexico and the General Synod of the A.R.P. Church which was approved by our Synod in 1975 and that the principal clerk of our Synod be instructed to communicate this to the Synod of Mexico.

#### REPORT OF THE BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

##### Introduction

The Board of Foreign Missions gives thanks and praise to our Almighty God for His steadfast blessing on the Foreign Missions work of the denomination this past year. It has been both a year of self-evaluation for the Board of Foreign Missions as we study ways in which we can be more faithful in carrying out the Great Commission and in providing pastoral care and support to our staff abroad. The Board expresses its appreciation to the ARP Church and the General Synod for the depth of their support in carrying out the Great Commission. It is only through the deep prayerful support of our denomination that the work has gone forward. We are grateful for all the pastors, individuals, congregations and organizations who support our missionaries and their work. Many congregations are supporting one or more missionaries through Direct Support. We wish that space permitted an acknowledgement of each and every individual who has contributed to this work. The Woman's Synodical Union has continued its commitment to Foreign Missions this past year. The support of the Woman's Synodical Union is being used in strategic areas of our program, and we have grown to be more and more dependent on this support for our on-going ministry. The One Great Hour of Sharing Easter Offering provided support for summer camps, Bible Correspondence and scholarship ministries in both Mexico and Pakistan. Through all of these means, our Lord had met our needs. Although our expenses were about \$38,000 over budget, our income for the year, through God's Grace, was also \$38,000 over budget.

We are especially grateful to our missionaries, associate missionaries, and faithful National co-workers on the field for their commitment to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. They have been faithful in the task for which they were commissioned.

And, we are thankful to God for the General Synods of Mexico and Pakistan which are providing leadership for the growth of the church abroad. We recognize the competence of these bodies to sustain the established churches and desire to support them in meaningful areas of evangelistic outreach.

##### The Fields

##### Mexico

The Board is thankful for increasingly open conditions in Mexico which provide for development of the established church and evangelistic work in new areas. Mexico is the fastest growing country in the world, and these are