

The Presbytery of the Pacific

6323 West 80th Street
Los Angeles, California 90045
Telephone: (310) 670-5076
FAX: (310) 670-2006



Date: April 28, 2005
To: To all Members of the Presbytery of the Pacific
From: Frank R. Marshall, Stated Clerk
Re: Called Meeting of the Presbytery of the Pacific for May 3, 2005

As you are aware we have a called meeting of the Presbytery of the Pacific for Tuesday, May 3, 2005 to be held at Covenant Presbyterian Church located in Westchester.

For this meeting the following arrangements have been made:

- Parking will be available at the church parking lot and at the two following locations. The Christian Science Church on Alverstone Avenue, one block north of Covenant. The Westchester Lutheran Church also located one block north on Sepulveda Blvd. There is also street parking. There will be security at all locations.
- Registration for visitors will be in Westminster Hall immediately adjoining the Covenant parking lot.
- Registration for Clergy and Presbytery Commissioners will take place in the Presbytery Resource Center.
- **All registration will begin at 6:30 p.m.**
- **Designated speakers must register and report to Room 3 by 6:45 p.m.**
- **Registration will close at 7:00 p.m., late registration for Clergy and Presbytery Commissioners will be done in the sanctuary building narthex.**
- There will be no distributions of materials of any kind without the permission of the Stated Clerk.
- **Open non-designated visitor seating will commence at 6:50 p.m. in the sanctuary. Overflow seating for visitors is available in Westminster Hall with audio provided.**
- No photography or recording devices are not permitted in the sanctuary.



Linda L. Culbertson
General Presbyter

Frank R. Marshall
Stated Clerk

The Presbytery of the Pacific



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April 28, 2005

Dear Minister and Elder Commissioners,

On May 3rd the Presbytery of the Pacific will hold a called meeting concerning First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood. This meeting has been called at the request of the Committee on Ministry as part of our assigned role and responsibility regarding the pastors and the congregations of our Presbytery. We seek to continue our work with integrity and fulfilling the responsibilities to which we are called in our positions on the Committee on Ministry.

This is a painful time for all involved and we ask for your prayers for all at First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood; the pastors, the staff, the Session and the congregation and attendees, as well as the Presbytery at large.

We are aware that there has been an advance communication about this issue, including materials, letters, and comments on various web sites which are related to the issues at First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood. The information currently in circulation, unfortunately, does not accurately reflect the process we have undertaken or the reasons for our recommendations. The misinterpretation of our intentions and process is of grave concern. We want to send in advance the general summary of expressed concerns regarding First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood (which we have shared directly with their Session), and a timeline of the Committee's actions as they pertain to the issues of concern. This will be supplemented by the recommendation and reports of the Committee and more specific information you will receive at the Presbytery meeting.

We know that the call to this meeting has raised many questions on the part of pastors about the security of their own positions, and there has been worry and anxiety over many issues the situation at First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood raises. As you will see in the timeline provided...the concerns surfaced over three years ago and this has been a source of concern and pain for a long period of time. As will be clearly demonstrated in the materials, the division within First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood is deep, and the focus for the Committee was, and remains, whether the leadership of First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood is equipped to recognize the division and work toward reconciliation. The Committee has struggled over considerable time on the recommendations that have been brought to Presbytery; they have not been taken lightly, nor are they arbitrary or outside our responsibility to the Congregation.

The decisions and recommendations we have made are difficult to be sure...yet we feel firm that the responsibilities entrusted to us have led us to make them with integrity and seeing the ultimate good of all involved.

Thank you for your prayers for the Presbytery meeting. Thank you for coming to hear the truth as we have learned it and to listen to all sides of the issues.

For the Committee on Ministry,

George Wilde



Linda L. Culbertson
General Presbyter

Frank R. Marshall
Stated Clerk

MEMORANDUM

To: File April 25, 2005

From: George Wilde, chair of the Committee on Ministry cc: Members of the Committee on Ministry

Re: Committee on Ministry Activities Related to First Hollywood

This memorandum summarizes the nature and extent of COM's activities as they relate to the recent events at First Presbyterian Church, Hollywood ("FPCH").

Before April 23, 2002 Triennial Visit

The Pre-Triennial Visit Questionnaires filled out by pastors and session members prior to the April 23 2002 Triennial Visit raised serious concerns about church leadership and indicated divisiveness in FPCH. Those comments related to (i) the management styles of the Senior Pastor, (ii) the working and personal relationships between the Senior Pastor and Session, (iii) staff turnover and the ability to manage the church staff, and (iv) integration of the various disparate "sub-congregations." Some specific quotes from those questionnaires are:

- Comments from Elders:

Regarding Session:

- "The Session at this point has become a 'rubber stamp' for the actions of the Sr. Pastor. He will frequently bring things to Session at a point where it is too late to take any other action other than whatever he has already decided. Or he (or someone he has appointed) will report to Session as if things are a 'done deal',

leaving Session no alternatives. Very manipulative and degrading to thinking people who are able to make decisions and want to vote their own consciences.”

- “Our ability as a Session to impact any larger, church-wide initiative or direction, including budgeting, is limited. In a large church, perhaps that is the only realistic model. The senior pastor, with the pastoral/executive staff, set the direction. Our job is to support and to communicate.”
- “Session is not quite sure how to respond, and is tentative in plotting a course and choosing a direction.”

Regarding Problems:

- “There has also been a revolving door in some staffing areas. I’m afraid this represents our inability to deal with personality conflicts that grow disproportionately because we have not created the kind of environment that can detect and deal with them early enough.”
- “Staff turnover. Three of our four Associate Pastors arrived in the last 2-4 years.”
- “This past year has been an emotional one – and certainly had the potential to be a very divisive one—in the church and in the Session over the music and worship leadership.”
- “The attempt to redefine the leadership role for music and worship—and then revisiting it again and the ensuing uncertainty.”
- “The choir imbroglio, significant turnover of staff and long-time members.”
- “Some rifts and some immaturity among sectors of the Congregation”
- “The youth of the church are floundering and the congregation must decide whether or not that need will be addressed.”

Regarding Pastoral Leadership:

- “The creation of a new full-time position of Exec. Director of Worship and Music and an exhaustive search for God's person to fill it. Her arrival was followed by a year of unspeakable cruelty by members in that Department and a Senior Pastor who allowed it to go on unchecked and added insult to injury by not allowing her to carry out any of her responsibilities. The result of this unwillingness to receive new leadership was an expensive settlement of the Executive Director's contract and the department having to return to square one with new searches underway.”
- “To help our Senior Pastor understand that he was brought to FPCH to be Sr. Pastor, not micro-manager. (He's wonderful as Senior Pastor, horrible as micro-manager). By this time, the staff (Executive and other) are intimidated, afraid to speak out, and completely demoralized. You will have to do some digging to get them to admit this, as they are afraid to speak out now. But PLEASE DIG!”

Regarding Challenges:

- “This move to three worship services – a major change for a very traditional congregation, when we may not be up to the management of the process.”
- “To stop the out flow of long-time members who are leaving this church because they don't like any things that are occurring.”

- Comments from Associate Pastors:
 - “A further challenge is the re-negotiating of the relationship between Session and the pastor. There has been some tension over vision and process and the resolution of that tension will be very important.”
 - “We have been dealing with significant spiritual warfare. In the church this often tends, as it has for us, to start with the church choir which then leads to gossip and infighting”
 - “There has been tremendous staff turnover: 1 associate pastor has left and 3 have come; an executive director of worship and music has come, stayed for a year and left.”
 - “The youth of the church are floundering and the congregation must decide whether or not that need will be addressed.”

April 23, 2002

Triennial Visit

Team of Rev. Vahe Simonian (Chairperson), Elder George Wilde and Elder Woody Woodruff

The team met individually with the Senior Pastor and the four Associate Pastors over a time period of 2 hours, and also met with Session for the first hour of its regularly scheduled meeting (both with and without the Pastors present). Despite repeated express efforts of the Triennial Visit team to bring these concerns to open discussion during the Triennial Visit Session Meeting, the complaints were not, for the most part, addressed in any open forum. In fact, it appeared to the visiting team that there was a notable willingness on the part of those in attendance to gloss over any concerns. While the visiting team was not satisfied that the concerns expressed in the questionnaires were at all addressed, they felt that those in leadership preferred to work toward resolution of those issues without active participation by Presbytery.

July 10 and July 16, 2002

The Committee on Ministry received two letters (one from an elder and one from a FPCH member) expressing concerns regarding the unilateral change in the call of the Rev. Tim Hartman. The letters state in part:

- “Tim’s pastoral duties were changed dramatically almost overnight. He was reassigned from the role he was called to, Associate Pastor to Students and their Families, to a role heading up the effort to make the church a more welcoming place.”
- “As I understand it, Mr. Hartman found out about this reassignment when he was called in to a meeting of the Senior Staff and was told what they had decided. We were all informed about the change from the pulpit the following Sunday by Pastor Meenan. It was done unilaterally and then announced as *fait accompli*.”

Rev Hartman describes what happened in the following way:

“In May 2002, the Executive Staff took a week-long retreat to reassess the goals and priorities of the church; I was not invited to this planning week. On Wednesday afternoon, I was requested to be at Alan’s house the next morning for the continuation of the retreat. As the meeting began, and in front of the entire Executive Staff, Alan informed me that I was being removed from Student Ministries. I was shocked by this statement since the youth ministry was beginning to stabilize, and I had never had my job performance discussed with me. A number of aspects of this experience are problematic:

- I was given an ultimatum—When I asked what my options were, Alan said that either I could accept the new position he was offering, or resign.

- There was no warning or discussion: No reasons were given to me for my removal, and in fact Alan viewed my reassignment as a promotion.

- Additional reasons were given to others for my reassignment—Alan and David Manock gave multiple, contradicting reasons for my reassignment to elders, staff members, parents, and students which caused confusion, mistrust, and suspicion.

- Neither the Session, nor the Personnel Committee, was involved in this decision. Both entities were asked to approve my reassignment as a package of changes related to launching 4 new worship services. This approval occurred with little opportunity for discussion.

- If this reassignment was in my best interest (a promotion—as Alan described it) and the best interests of the Church (as was publicly stated on numerous occasions), why not let Session decide?

I served the next two years without a formal job description. In contrast to the Associate Pastor for Christian Education, the Associate Pastor for Congregational Life, and the Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care, I was simply Associate Pastor. I bought patio furniture and chose what type of coffee to serve. I recruited and organized volunteers to be present on Sunday mornings to help with parking, coffee, hospitality, and directions. I also worked on recruiting a team of people to interview applicants for the worship leader position in the new service I was to host and to begin to dream about this service. I sensed that the work of this team was not welcomed by Alan. When I asked Alan about this he replied that my role was only to implement what he

had decided; input was not welcomed. Alan's response confirmed that I had not truly been reassigned to an area of ministry more pressing for the church which better utilized my gifts (as Alan publicly repeated many times), but instead I had been removed from youth ministry without cause. Yet, since there were no grounds on which to fire me I was reassigned to insignificance where I could look young and relevant but not affect the ministry of the church."

The process of what happened to my position illustrates how decisions are made by Alan Meenan and David Manock. I refer to this practice as "consensus by attrition." They seek to wear people down, drive them off, isolate, and demean those who disagree with them until they can move forward with their plans. I have seen this process take place with the congregation, with the Session, and on the staff. Long-time members have left the church, elders have resigned from Session, a Worship Director, Business Administrator, associate pastors, and other staff have all left to pursue other opportunities. Time and time again, dissent was crushed. My opinion and input was not welcomed and I could not work in an environment without trust, respect, or belief in the officers of the church.

The issues with First Hollywood are not a theological divide between two conservative pastors and liberal presbytery officials. The question here is of leadership, of respect for others, and truly of the gospel: Is the gospel a hollow assortment of doctrine or is the gospel a way of life? While it is important for ministers of the gospel to proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ in preaching, it is equally important that we live our lives in such a way that the good news is proclaimed. Alan and David have proclaimed the gospel from the pulpit, yet their actions have left me wounded and confused."

The Presbytery and members of the COM held conversations with Rev. Hartman following these events, but Rev. Hartman choose not to pursue these issues further. He ultimately resigned from FPCH two years later following his wife's graduation from Fuller Theological Seminary.

October, 2004

The Presbytery began to receive a number of telephone calls and letters raising concerns regarding irregularities and delinquencies related to decisions and actions of the Officer Nominating Committee, the Session, Pastors Meenan and Manock, and others at FPCH. The specifics of these early letters will not be set forth because they ultimately evolved into formal complaints which are currently being investigated by a Presbytery Investigating Committee. The Committee on Ministry reviewed the early letters, but has not seen any formal complaints, and, of course, the Committee is not a party to any ongoing judicial process.

October 18, 2004

The Stated Clerk received letters signed by several members of Session at FPCH, raising concerns regarding issues related to property, personnel, and finances.

October 25, 2004

The Stated Clerk received additional letters signed by members of Session and members of the Congregation raising similar issues.

November 18, 2004

The Stated Clerk received additional letters signed by members of Session raising similar issues.

November, 2004

After speaking with those who had sent letters, the Stated Clerk referred the matter to the Committee on Ministry.

December 1, 2004

Regularly scheduled meeting
of the Committee on Ministry

At a regularly scheduled meeting, the Church Support and Counseling (CS&C) Subcommittee of the Committee on Ministry reviewed the letters received from elders at FPCH and recommended that the moderator of the Committee on Ministry immediately appoint an Ad Hoc Committee to include persons from the CS&C Subcommittee, to explore the concerns expressed in the letters and to report back to the Committee no later than its January 5, 2005 meeting. The Committee on Ministry approved this action, and a Listening Team consisting of four COM members was appointed by the moderator. The intent of the Listening Team was to

find ways to work with FPCH and not be adversarial. The members of the Listening Team were: Rev. Leon Fanniel, Rev. Kikanza Nuri Robins, Elder Woody Woodruff, and Rev. Laura Krauss, who served as Convener of the Listening Team.

December 9, 2004

Members of the Listening Team met for 3 hours with those who sent letters, and inquired into the basis for the concerns expressed. The Listening Team met initially with 4 elders currently on Session (3 in person and one by telephone conference) and one elder who was previously on Session. The Listening Team also met with one Associate Pastor.

December 10, 2004

The Listening Team sent a letter to Rev. Alan Meenan and Clerk of Session Elder Sarah Berry informing them that the Committee on Ministry had become aware of problems with fiduciary issues and governance at FPCH as a result of concerns expressed by members of the congregation. The letter requested a meeting with both Rev. Alan Meenan and Elder Sarah Berry to discuss these issues before FPCH took further action on purchase of additional property, which had come before Presbytery for approval.

January 5, 2005

Regularly scheduled meeting
of the Committee on Ministry

The Listening Team gave a progress report to the Committee on Ministry at its regularly scheduled meeting.

January 14, 2005

The Listening Team met for 1 hour each with Pastor Meenan and Elder Sarah Berry. At that meeting, Pastor Meenan and the Clerk of Session basically refused to provide any information at all, and requested that questions be sent to them in writing. Pastor Meenan later confirmed to representatives of the Committee on Ministry that he was not cooperative and forthcoming with the Listening Team at that meeting.

January 24, 2005

The Listening Team sent a follow-up letter to Pastor Meenan requesting specific information, as requested by Pastor Meenan. Information requested included:

- Process used by church for nominations of officers
- Discussion of recent changes to bylaws, and why the changes were made
- Identification and discussion of all real property purchased or sold over the past three years
- Discussion of loans obtained over the past two years
- Minutes of Session meetings from August through December 2004
- Copies of bylaws
- Copy of 2003 Financial audit
- List of Session, Board of Deacons, and staff resignations over past three years

January 26, 2005

Regularly scheduled meeting
of the Committee on Ministry

At the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Committee on Ministry, the Listening Team reported that it had uncovered a number of disturbing items. The Listening Team recommended that an Administrative Review be formed. The Listening Team would draft an outline of issues to be reviewed. The Listening Team also reported that when they met with

Pastor Meenan and the Clerk of Session, they basically refused to provide any information and requested that questions be sent to them in writing.

The Committee on Ministry then had a discussion related to some of the issues uncovered by the Listening Team. In particular, concerns were raised about the significant discrepancies between the financial reports provided to the Presbytery Administration Committee for the purpose of seeking Presbytery approval of FPCH's new loan at the Presbytery's January 22, 2005 meeting, and the financial information provided to the FPCH's Session on January 23, 2005. At the conclusion of the discussion, it was decided that an Administrative Review would not be successful because of the significant problems at FPCH and the unwillingness of the Senior Pastor and Stated Clerk to cooperate with the Listening Team.

It was then voted that the Presbytery be asked to form an Administrative Commission to take original jurisdiction over financial, property and personnel matters for FPCH.

February 2, 2005

Email Poll
of the Committee on Ministry

The Committee on Ministry polled members through Email. By consent of the majority of the Committee on Ministry, the Committee decided to postpone action on the motion to appoint an Administrative Commission until additional information could be reviewed at the next meeting of the Committee. This postponement was requested by the moderator to allow time to fully evaluate additional information recently received.

February 19, 2005

The Listening Team received a written response from FPCH which enclosed the information requested in the Listening Team's letter of January 24, 2005.

February 25, 2005

Regularly scheduled meeting
of the Committee on Ministry

At its regular meeting on February 23, 2005, the CS&C Subcommittee reviewed the status of the situation at FPCH. The CS&C Subcommittee reported that the investigation that had been conducted had identified three areas of concern and complaint:

1. The style of leadership;
2. The Session's role and its organizational behavior; and
3. The impact this is having on the church's finances.

At this meeting it appeared that the earlier concerns submitted to the Stated Clerk would soon be submitted as formal complaints, and would therefore be subject to the Presbyterian judicial process. Therefore the Committee on Ministry then voted that the previous action of appointing an Administrative Commission be rescinded and that the Committee table further action until more information was made available.

March 13, 2005

FPCH conducts a
Congregational Meeting

FPCH conducts a Congregational Meeting. Although the Committee on Ministry was not present at this meeting, it is our understanding that at this meeting the Congregation of

FPCH was informed of the very large deficit of \$840,000 that occurred during 2004, and the need to take out a \$450,000 line of credit to meet the April 2005 payroll.

March 19, 2005

FPCH Conducts a
Town Hall meeting

FPCH conducts a Town Hall meeting. Numerous members attended and great concerns were raised. The following reflects some of the concerns that were raised. The meeting was not attended by a representative of the Presbytery. The following notes were extracted from a transcription of the tape recording of that meeting.

- Transitional committee where some employees are deciding what other employees are to be terminated
- Why the congregation was not informed of the huge impending deficit – an \$800,000 shortfall overnight
- Love of four services but do not like that we are being pitted against each other
- Congregation is now living in a state of fear. We all need to be involved and informed so that rumors and agendas will stop and we can move forward in a productive manner
- Concerns about removing Rev. Chuck Suhayda and five other people that the Session is considering terminating. Fears expressed that Chuck's integrity to speak out when things need to be addressed contributed to his name being on the list.
- How long was our leadership aware of the shortfall? Why didn't exorbitant spending stop? Questions about giving \$50,000 to Billy Graham crusade, sending a team to India at enormous expense, cutting mission budget while renovating an upstairs apartment for an Indian couple.
- Three months ago we received mail noting a potential operating deficit of \$400,000, and assured we do not have financial problems. Less than three months later we ended 2004 with an \$840,000 deficit. How can the congregation know what really happened?
- Questions on leadership and accountability. Alan is not a chief of staff. The past several years we have been driving people away with leadership gifts that can fill this void.
- Need accountability in the financial area immediately. Accountability as it relates to staff – people who are focused on their work and not on keeping their jobs or refusing to confront stupid assumptions. The single most dangerous kind of person that we have had and continue to have here are the ones that will tell Alan anything he wants to hear.
- Two components of the budget crisis – people who invested time, energy, and financial resources have left, with a major effect on revenue, and spent money on many things that we didn't have to.
- Why are we having such a hard time keeping staff? What is going on in Christian Education?

- Not sure where the land and buildings are part of the ministry of this church. Maybe we thought it would serve us in time of need. The time for need has come. Church shouldn't value property over people. We shouldn't value real estate over relationships or monetary concerns over ministry.
- The future of the children's program is in question. Many have left. This is a church in trouble, and for session members and pastors to dismiss deep concern as disloyalty is wrong.
- For those session members who feel that asking questions or challenging the status quo is wrong – maybe if more questions were asked six months ago we wouldn't be in debt. Proposed staff changes may cripple our ministry, maybe beyond repair. Examine why some giving units are choosing not to give.
- Session at this church should be handed each month detailed financials.
- Lack of trust because of the sidestepping of these important issues. Glossing over elements that need scrutiny, lack of knowledge when it comes to answering questions that need answers and the secretive nature of the leadership.
- To discover that the budget has an \$800,000 deficit, that we cannot meet payroll next week, and we were told that within a week the church would be firing approximately six key staff and personnel who are committed is intolerable, unacceptable, and a tragedy.
- If anyone thinks that downsizing will solve a problem they would be sadly mistaken. Pastors must care for this congregation to stop the bleeding, to restore trust.
- There seems to be constant turmoil in the administration of the church
- The buck stops up there guys. Chuck – he wants to be the pastor who meets his call to God and gets the job done. We need to rethink what we have been doing that was wrong,
- Scott has been called the only real pastor we have – he is about to lose his administrative assistant. Why have his departments been removed and put in other people's care and why has he been marginalized?
- The church should operate on principles of participation, care, and encouragement of staff. The work atmosphere at our church is filled with fear. Things are made in secret behind closed doors. Instructions are given without explanation and without question; intimidation and confusion reign
- Full discussion at Session meetings is the Presbyterian way and leads to sound decisions
- Need to question the leadership of this church and the direction it wants to take us. Get you acts together and do something.

March 14 forward

Presbytery received numerous letters and phone calls raising concerns regarding FPCH. Concerns related to Pastors Meenan and Manock, the Session, and some staff were received from Elders (both currently on Session as well as former Session members), Deacons, staff, Associate Pastors, choir members, members of the Congregation (many long time

members), and former members of the Congregation who have left FPCH. These concerns fall into several areas, including:

- Mismanagement in general
- Financial Mismanagement
- Misrepresentation of financial condition to Presbytery and Congregation
- Session failure to act
- Conflicts of Interest
- Ignoring Presbyterian polity
- Intimidation of staff and those who disagree
- Inappropriate staff assignments
- Mistreatment of staff
- Poor treatment of members and staff
- Corruption of Session
- Financial irregularities
- Misuse of designated funds
- Irregularities in nominating process
- Irregularities in calling Congregational meetings

A general summary of these concerns is attached.

March 21, 2005

Emergency specially called meeting
of the Committee on Ministry

The Committee on Ministry met for one and three quarters of an hour in an emergency called meeting by telephone conference call. Sixteen of the twenty eligible COM members were present throughout the conference call. At the end of the call, the following motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote of all 16 members participating in this conference call:

“The COM requests to the GMC that an Administrative Commission be appointed over Church A-05 with jurisdiction over property, personnel and finances, and specifically including authority over matters in G-10.0102 (i), (l), (m), (n), and (o), and that the Commission be empowered to assume original jurisdiction of Session if it finds it necessary or appropriate.”

March 22, 2005

The General Mission Council of the Presbytery unanimously approved the above action.

March 30, 2005

Regularly scheduled meeting
of Committee on Ministry

At a regularly scheduled meeting of the Committee on Ministry, the Committee considered a number of options. Concerns were raised that the situation at FPCH continued to rapidly deteriorate as further reports and concerns continue to be received. The Committee became concerned that the Administrative Commission for FPCH would not be successful as long as Pastors Meenan and Manock remained in place, creating an unsafe environment for those who disagree, failing to cooperate with the Presbytery, and defying Presbytery directives. A number of options had been reviewed with the Director of Constitutional Services in the Offices of the General Assembly in a nearly two hour telephone call.

After considerable discussion and review of available options, the Committee unanimously voted to have a delegated group of the Committee meet with Pastors Meenan and Manock to discuss with each of them a number of apparent issues that are involved with FPCH. It was hoped that as a result of those meetings, the way would be made clear to have their relationships with FPCH be dissolved voluntarily. If the relationships were not dissolved voluntarily then the Committee would request a specially called meeting of the Presbytery to dissolve those relationships pursuant to G-11.0103(o), which reads.

“The Presbytery...has the responsibility and power...to establish the pastoral relationship and to dissolve it at the request of one or both of the parties, or when it finds the church’s mission under the Word imperatively demands it.”

The following are some of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission decisions applicable to this section:

PJC (2003, 269, #215-4, Gaba v. Presbytery of Eastern Virginia): If a Presbytery considers a recommendation to dissolve pastoral relationship without concurrence of pastor or congregation, presbytery is obligated to provide all parties fair notice and opportunity to be heard on matters at issue. Test in dissolution process is fundamental fairness - the opportunity to be heard and consideration of respective positions without prejudice. Action by Presbytery to dissolve a pastoral relationship is by nature an administrative action.

PJC (1995, 133, 11.066, Lewis v. Presbytery of New York City): When Presbytery decides to dissolve a pastoral relationship on the basis of this section, it is exercising its administrative, not judicial powers. The appropriate safeguards are those required to ensure fundamental fairness.

PJC (1988, 122, 11.119, Campbell, Jr. et. al. v. Presbytery of Atlantic): Presbytery may dissolve the pastoral relationship without the request of either pastor or congregation, but upon recommendation of its COM.

April 2, 2005

Meeting with Pastors
Meenan and Manock

A delegated group of the Committee on Ministry met separately with Pastors Meenan and Manock.

April 4, 2005

The Committee on Ministry asked to meet with the Session of FPCH in Executive Session.

April 7, 2005

Meeting with Session at FPCH

The delegated group of the Committee on Ministry met with Session, but Session was unwilling to meet in executive session. As a result, the group heard for an hour from a number of speakers who spoke lovingly of Pastors Meenan and Manock. One speaker, however, confirmed that he had sent a letter to Presbytery raising concerns about the pastors, and that he believed his letter was correct.

After an hour, Session decided to meet in Executive Session. That meeting lasted almost 4 hours. The clerk took notes on her computer and agreed to provide them to the representatives of the Committee, but despite several requests, has not done so.

At that meeting, the representatives of the Committee heard from a number of members of Session who were surprised and disappointed at the actions of the Committee, and expressed their beliefs that the concerns raised by the Committee were not factually accurate. Several current elders on Session expressed their beliefs that the concerns were legitimate and that the actions of the Committee were appropriate.

At the end of that meeting with the Session, the Committee on Ministry agreed to provide the Session with a written general summary of the concerns expressed, and agreed to revisit the actions taken by the Committee on Ministry at a specially called meeting. The written general summary of general concerns was provided to Session, and a copy is included in these materials.

April 9, 2005Emergency called meeting
of the Committee on Ministry

The Committee on Ministry met for several hours. Before that meeting, the situation was thoroughly reviewed and other possible options examined with the Department of Constitutional Services at OGA. After much discussion and prayer, the Committee on Ministry unanimously decided to reaffirm its previous actions. This has not been an easy decision for the Committee, and each member approached it with heavy heart. But the situation at FPCH cannot continue unchecked. There is an atmosphere of intimidation and retribution that was very evident during our meeting with the Session. It is an unsafe environment, and there are serious divisions within the Session of FPCH.

More Recent Action

Actions generated by FPCH since our meetings only emphasize the Committee's concerns. The Committee on Ministry has only released information to Pastors Meenan, Manock, and the FPCH Session. Information, often misstated and taken out of context, has been distributed in a variety of Emails and information releases issued from FPCH, as well as published in the Presbyterian Layman. FPCH has defied Presbytery direction and has taken actions that only further divide their already seriously divided Congregation. Through an affiliate, they have organized and posted material on a "SaveHollywoodPres.com" website.

The responses from FPCH in general do not dispute the serious contentions made in the letters of complaint. They strongly question the motives and legality of the actions of the Committee on Ministry.

Attachment

General Summary of Expressed Concerns regarding First Hollywood

It should be clear at the outset that the actions taken by COM are administrative and not judicial in nature. The COM has no role in any remedial or disciplinary matters. The judicial process is entirely separate from the concerns of the COM. COM is not at all involved in bringing charges to the Permanent Judicial Commission.

For guidance, COM is looking to Section G-11.0103o of the Book of Order. That section provides the presbytery is responsible for the mission and government of the church throughout its geographical district, and confirms that the presbytery has “responsibility and power to establish the pastoral relationship and to dissolve it at the request of one or both of the parties, or when it finds that the church’s mission under the Word imperatively demands it.” COM is concerned that for a number of reasons, neither Dr. Meenan nor Dr. Manock (collectively, the “Pastors”) can provide effective leadership to (“FPCH”) at this time in the life of that church.

You have asked for this summary in general terms of the broad areas of concerns that have been expressed to Presbytery over the last number of months by a number of members of the FPCH community with regard to the church leadership provided by the Pastors. In many instances, the concerns have been raised by church members who have been active for many years in a variety of roles. Many of those members have felt disenfranchised as a result of the concerns raised. Additionally, in a number of instances, these concerns have also been raised or reinforced by representatives of Presbytery as a result of personal observations made over the last several years. Because of the nature of the concerns, this memorandum will not describe specific instances in any detail. Nor will this memorandum name any individuals who have expressed any concerns.

The expressed concerns fall into several broad categories. Those categories are: (1) dysfunctional personal relationships with staff, members of Session and others at FPCH; (2) development of an atmosphere intolerant of disagreement; (3) mismanagement of the finances at FPCH; (4) lack of candor and forthrightness with the Congregation with respect to issues existent at FPCH; (5) the development of division within FPCH, and the inability of the Pastors to work effectively toward reconciliation.

1. Dysfunctional personal relationships with staff, members of Session and others.

Presbytery has received a large number of expressed concerns raising issues related to the relationships between the Pastors and others. In sum, members do not feel safe

expressing themselves and their thoughts and feelings. Specifically, it appears that the Pastors act in ways that are not effective in helping others speak openly and freely about issues of concern.

Words used to describe the way the Pastors relate to others in the communications to Presbytery include: “arrogant,” “condescending,” “petty,” “ruthless,” “extremely defensive,” “angry,” “belittling,” “selfish and short-sighted,”. Dr. Meenan’s leadership was called “narcissistic and ham-fisted.” Dr. Meenan is reported to have an “autocratic style and an inability to adjust to feedback.”

2. Development of an atmosphere intolerant of disagreement.

A natural by-product of relationship styles as described above is that those in leadership, and others, feel intimidated, browbeaten and pressured into supporting the Pastors and not expressing any disagreement with respect to any positions, programs or strategies preferred by the Pastors. As a result, the leadership becomes autocratic and intolerant of any open and free exchange of differing values on the issues of importance to FPCH. Some examples include the Pastor’s participation in the officer nominating process.

Some specific quotes in communications received by Presbytery and relevant to this issue include:

- (1) The church is not “spiritually healthy.”
- (2) “Decisions are made in a dictatorial fashion.”
- (3) “Session has been bullied into becoming a ‘rubber stamp’ for Dr. Meenan.”
- (4) “in a very practical way, one’s approval of Alan became a defining factor of what kept you at FPCH. This is not healthy.”
- (5) “Alan continually belittles the opinions of others; is arrogant and condescending; ruthless with those that disagree with him; defensive and petty and has done a terrible disservice to FPCH.”
- (6) If you didn’t agree with his course of action, you were more than welcome to leave.”
- (7) “Alan’s legacy may not be all negative, but he should in no way be allowed to lead or participate in the life of the First Presbyterian Church any longer.”
- (8) “I have never seen the church in such a mess. I do not know of anyone who has served as a Deacon who would want David Manock to remain on staff.” (from a member of more than 35 years.)
- (9) “Trying to talk with them was to no avail.”
- (10) Dr. Meenan continually accuses Session of “disobedience” and “meddling.”
- (11) Dr. Meenan has “manipulatively demonized and dismissed as ‘toxic’ anyone who dares express a grievance, creating a divide within the congregation among those who value harmony and those who value candor.”
- (12) Dr. Meenan’s manner is such that it “alienates wave after wave of onetime supporters.”
- (13) Dr. Meenan believes that “all who oppose him are lost in darkness and folly.”

(14) “There are at least a dozen people who I love and respect who have left the church after years of faithful service, because of ill-considered actions by Alan Meenan.” (from a 14 year member who calls himself a “supporter.”)

(15) “His sermons and the way he leads the church borders on arrogance.”

3. Mismanagement of FPCH finances.

Session is familiar with the specific facts related to the management of the finances of FPCH, and the information provided to Session and the Congregation by the Pastors and staff.

Some specific quotes in communications received by Presbytery and relevant to this issue include:

- (1) “Spending that seems uncontrolled or misguided.”
- (2) Last year was a “financial disaster.”
- (3) “Financially the church is a mess and the blame lies at feet of Alan and David. They are the executive and senior pastors of our church and they do know what’s going on. If they don’t, they should not be there.”
- (4) “The financial aspect extremely outrageous.”
- (5) “The deficit is beyond belief and their casual acceptance of it” was wrong.
- (6) “The current financial situation is untenable. The congregation was not kept informed of the increasing deficit in 2004.”

4. A lack of candor and forthrightness with the Congregation with respect to issues existent at FPCH.

Based upon the communications received by the Presbytery, it appears that the Pastors have not exhibited candor and forthrightness in their communications with the Session and with the Congregation. The trust that naturally follows from candor appears to be not observable in a significant number of the members of FPCH.

Some specific quotes in communications received by Presbytery and relevant to this issue include:

- (1) “While we are told that giving is at an all time high, I have little confidence in this assertion as reliable financial reports have not been available for some time.”
- (2) “Many inconsistencies regarding the managing of the various church departments.”
- (3) “I know that, at the present time, they should not have any authority over the finances of the church and that they should not be charged with any responsibility for employee or administrative matters.” (From a supporter)
- (4) “It appears that Alan and David are going to continue to lie and deceive our church and run it into the ground with impunity.”
- (5) Members know that “talking with Alan is a waste of time.”
- (6) Referencing Dr. Manock, “If you only heard him teach or pray, you would think he is wonderful. His ‘walk’ does not match his ‘talk.’”

(7) “Pastor Meenan’s lack of communication has hurt my spirituality to the point I was about to leave the church, which I found Christ in 11 years ago.”

5. The development of division within FPCH, and the inability to work toward reconciliation.

The division with FPCH is palpable, and recent events have in fact encouraged the discord. It appears clear that the Pastors are neither inclined nor equipped to work toward reconciliation among the various constituencies that call FPCH their church home.

Some specific quotes in communications received by Presbytery and relevant to this issue include:

- (1) Referencing the “continuing turmoil” at FPCH.
- (2) “In the last five years, there has been “a high degree of turnover in the church’s professional and lay leadership accompanied by the steady departure of many who had been committed members of the congregation.”
- (3) “A reduced level of regular giving is, in my mind, directly attributable to the alienation of many regular givers as a result of Alan and David’s leadership.”
- (4) Dissolution of the pastoral relationships “will begin the healing of divisions within our church.”
- (5) Only after dissolution of the pastoral relationships “will our church be able to move forward towards healing that in turn will bring about peace to our congregation.”
- (6) “Hundreds of members have left our congregation.”
- (7) Asking Presbytery to “help our church out of the quagmire it has fallen into or been dragged into.”
- (8) “It really saddens me that Alan and David can split our Session and our church.”
- (9) “There are a lot of very unhappy people, congregation and staff.”
- (10) “While I have serious concerns about HPC leadership, particularly regarding finances and the manner in which Session has been moderated, I feel that it is imperative that Presbytery have an opportunity to review the whole situation.” (from someone who identified himself as a supporter)
- (11) “I know this might rock our church for awhile, but do believe new leadership will take us more solidly and together into the future.”
- (12) “As an active member of FPCH (for over 20 years) I would like to support the Presbytery’s decision to ask Pastors Meenan and Manock to resign. Their tenure at the church has been most divisive and has driven many long time members away. I have prayed for this day for the last 3 years.”