

May 29, 1969

Dr. R. T. L. Liston, Chairman  
The Pastoral Commission of Holston Presbytery  
Columbia Theological Seminary  
Decatur, Georgia 30031

Dear Dr. Liston:

Since eventually it will be necessary for Presbytery's Commission to make a report and/or be dissolved, and since I still wish my separation from the Presbyterian Church, U. S. to be as harmonious as possible, let me here record several observations for the information of this Commission.

I am, of course, perfectly willing to meet with the Commission again and to answer relevant questions if I am given a few minutes to make a statement of my position, but I dislike being the occasion of inconvenience unless something constructive can be accomplished. Should Presbytery so desire, I would still be willing to accept a letter of transfer to some other Communion, either before or after joining such other Church, but I see no possibility whatsoever of any retraction or recantation--the issues were too clearly drawn for that.

Perhaps I should say clearly that my original letter to Presbytery omitted details out of courtesy to the father of the candidate in question. I still think this was appropriate, but if there is to be further formal correspondence with Presbytery, I rather think the letter should say in some detail that a properly appointed Committee of Holston Presbytery, in formal session on July 18, 1968, approved for ordination and recommended to Presbytery a candidate who asked what difference it makes whether or not Jesus actually fed the five thousand, who said clearly that he did not know what he would say to a person who wanted to know how to be saved and that "nobody is asking that question any more," and who, after a discussion of some fifteen or twenty minutes on the subject of the existence of God, never did say so that the chairman could understand him that he believed in the actual existence of God. (Possibly/probably he does believe in the existence of some kind of god, but a



Presbyterian minister should at least be able to say that he believes that God is real, objective, actually "there" as distinguished from the view that god is subjective (existing in the mind as a dream or like Alice in Wonderland) and that God is personal as distinguished from modern pantheistic views.) I believe that such a letter should also say that the chairman of the Examining Committee at that time understood that this endorsement by the Committee involved encouraging the candidate to make vows that he believed the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and that he received and adopted the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of the Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in Holy Scripture, when in matter of fact the candidate held no such belief in Scripture and had no such reception of the Standards of the Church.

Let me say emphatically that I have no desire to make this matter more public than necessary. The full content of my original letter was in the hands of the Church Press almost immediately after it was read to Presbytery; it was pulled out of the "copy basket" after having been prepared for publication with extended editorial comment only as a favor to me. I prefer to follow this general policy if I am permitted to do so.

With appreciation for your many kindnesses to me and for the generous efforts of your Commission to solve this problem, and with continued good wishes to you and to Holston Presbytery, I am

Cordially yours,

George A. Anderson