

The Presbytery of Southern California of the OPC (October 17-18, 2003)

This was the Third Stated meeting of Presbytery, meeting at Faith OPC (Long Beach, CA). The Moderator is Mr. Jim Andruss; the Stated Clerk is the Rev. Donald Buchanan. This report does not cover the entire meeting - only the parts of the meeting pertaining to the censure of Mr. Irons. He had written to the Presbytery ahead of time, stating his intent to renounce the jurisdiction of the OPC at this meeting and requesting erasure rather than censure (communication # 13, dated September 19, 2003). Note that Mac Laurie resigned as counsel to Mr. Irons on September 4, 2003.

October 17, 2003 (Friday)

Discussion of the docket:

Irons: Moves that "the matter of the censure of Mr. Irons and his request for erasure be made the order of the day on Saturday after the morning recess."

Bob Coie: Why have an order of the day?

Irons: Wants a fuller representation at the meeting for discussion of censure versus erasure.

Roger Wagner: No objection to order of the day. Don't want bitterness or second guessing. Support this.

Vote: 20 to 7; motion passes.

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Discussion of communications:

Irons: Moves that he be allowed to read communication #13 (as opposed to having the clerk read it).

Motion passes.

Moderator: All of communications relating to Mr. Irons' case will be read then.

October 18, 2003 (Saturday)

Order of the Day (approximately 10:20 a.m.)

Moderator: Trial judiciary has finished its work. Points out difficulties of reconvening. All that is left is the pronouncement of the censure. Appeal delayed the pronouncement, but appeal was not sustained. Therefore the next business is to pronounce the censure. Motions to try to change those things he will rule out of order. No changes to the censure. Go to Mr. Irons' communication.

Don Buchanan: Moves that communication #13 not be read aloud but referred to the Judicial Committee. Speech: Disliked this whole trial. Not trying to be mean. Must consider, how does the reading of this letter help the presbytery and the church? Letter contains accusations, inferences, errors about presbytery, mentions one who has asked not to be mentioned. Is this last outpouring of disappointment good for Mr. Irons? Isn't it better for Mr. Irons to be quiet and submissive? Respect the church. Not trying to deny Mr. Irons' rights.

Phil Reinheimer: The vote at presbytery trial was 16 to 15 (sic). Know of people who could have turned the vote. Wasn't a mandate for what was done here or at GA. Healing could come with further discussion of this issue.

Mac Laurie: Mr. Irons should explain why he wants his letter read.

Irons: Some things need to be said to the presbytery directly, such as making his apology. Also the presbytery needs to understand why he feels he must peaceably withdraw.

Bob Coie: (Speaking against) A brother who is outside our presbytery [Mr. John Kinnaird] becomes involved. He asked that Mr. Irons not read that part of the letter but it seems that his appeal is not being granted. Good name of the OPC has been impugned. Heard yesterday of an apology and retraction from a magazine out of respect for the 9th commandment. Progress is being made in healing, this would reverse that progress. This brother [who is outside our presbytery] cc'ed Coie in his email to Mr. Irons. Must restrain Mr. Irons from bringing charges against the OPC.

Rollin Keller: (Speaking for) Philippians 4:5 says, "Let your moderation be known to all men." "Epiekeis" means moderation. Has heard it said that "the OPC is the best church in the world, if you can stand it." We put up with tediousness, which is our magnanimity. People who have no case at all are allowed to speak their mind. We are patient and magnanimous. We can always still send it to the committee afterwards.

Moderator: Proposes a consent for vote by secret ballot.

Don Poundstone: (Speaking against) All for reasonableness and magnanimity and graciousness. It is extended to those who have harsh things to say about us, but also to those like the brother who appeal was sustained [by GA]. Shouldn't give further forum to someone saying harsh things about one of our officers.

Mac Laurie: Substitute motion: that Mr. Irons read only a portion of the letter. Speech: He is no longer Mr. Irons' defense counsel and does not speak as such. Didn't like the second part of the letter. Would have advised Mr. Irons not to have included that part of the letter. Must remember the part of the letter where Mr. Irons repents. It's different repenting in person than in a letter.

John Novinger: Objects to statements in letter on John Murray.

Roger Wagner: (Speaking in favor of substitute) We should know when someone is just expressing his opinion.

Ben Wickner: Speaks against voting by secret ballot.

Bob Coie: We agreed on it by consent already.

(Discussion on procedure)

Moderator: Vote to reconsider secret ballot.

Motion fails.

Irons: (Speaking against substitute) A man should be able to express the convictions of his conscience. You may not agree with those convictions, but you should be able to understand the principle of a man expressing his conscientious reasons for withdrawing. The second half of my letter should be read because it is an important factor in my decision to peaceably withdraw from the OPC.

Moderator: Vote on the substitute.

Substitute fails.

Moderator: Vote on the main motion, to refer communication #13 to the Judicial Committee without being read.

Motion fails: 17 Yes; 20/21 No. (Tellers cannot decide whether final "no" tally is 20 or 21.)

Moderator: Have clerk read the letter for info.

Roger Wagner: Move that Mr. Irons be allowed to read the letter himself.

Moderator: Vote on whether Mr. Irons should read the letter (as opposed to the clerk).

Motion passes: 25 Yes; 13 No.

Irons: Raises question about whether he should receive questions from the floor after the letter is read.

Moderator: No, we're just having the letter read for information.

Irons: Appreciates the presbytery's grace in allowing him to read this. (Reads the letter.)

Irons: Asks if he can make a motion.

Moderator: Clerk has withdrawn his motion but would like to comment on the motion he is withdrawing.

Reinco De Jong: Shouldn't the presbytery respond to Mr. Irons' repentance in the letter?

Roger Wagner: Would prefer to grant forgiveness at this point before moving ahead.

Bob Coie: Moves that forgiveness be granted for 1) proceeding to criticize the WCF without sufficiently bringing this to the attention of the presbytery, and 2) failing to express his disagreements with the presbytery in a more charitable manner. Speech: It's always been our practice to do this. The grief is that it is tempered by the bringing of other accusations against us.

Alan Pontier: (Speaking against) This is an awkward and difficult issue that we've had to deal with. Speaks against granting forgiveness because there is a spirit of unrepentance in the letter that undermines it. False accusations against a brother and the church. To grant forgiveness is to make a mockery of repentance and forgiveness.

Mark Mueller: (Speaking for) Mr. Irons' repentance is sincere. Inappropriate to refuse forgiveness just because he is not on every point at peace with us.

Bruce Brawdy: What did Mr. Irons say that would undermine true repentance? Could someone point out the passages in the letter?

Alan Pontier: Was hoping we wouldn't go down this path over this very controversial letter. Misrepresents views of Mr. Kinnaird and the GA's actions. That the GA opposed the gospel is a false characterization.

Mac Laurie: (Speaking for) Let's say that a man lives a life of sin. He repents of the sin he knows, that's all he can do. Let's say that all of Lee's letter is sin. Still should grant forgiveness for what he has repented of.

Irons: Seeks to show that his repentance is genuine. Confesses that the day after the presbytery met, in which his scruples on the Sabbath and the Law were brought to their attention, he preached the sermon "Is the Law Abolished?" Confesses that he was working on that sermon during the presbytery meeting itself.

Bob Coie: Change the motion by adding "2) for proceeding to publicize my difference with the WCF before receiving your counsel" and change "2)" to "3)."

Moderator: Order of the day has arrived. Seeks general consent to extend the order of the day until this matter is finished. (Consent given.)

Bob Coie: (Speaking for) Agrees with second speaker. Grieved that the letter was read. Nonetheless we grant forgiveness. Once [at a past presbytery meeting] we even granted forgiveness when the repentance wasn't clear.

John Garrisi: Should add the phrase, "having expressed repentance."

Alan Pontier: (Speaking against) You are about to grant forgiveness when in his letter he has just publicly criticized the church and has misrepresented the WCF. The letter was a whole and now other offenses have been committed in this letter. It is a violation of his membership vow to heed the discipline of the church.

Moderator: Wants to reconsider going to lunch break.

Bill Baldwin: Mr. Irons mentioned in his letter his willingness to meet with the Judicial Committee if they wish to meet with him. This will be the last break before the end of presbytery. Is the JC going to meet with him?

Roger Wagner: Is willing but indifferent right now. Is willing if Mr. Irons is willing. Doesn't think it will make a difference.

Break for lunch.

Rollin Keller: (Speaking for) Reads from Jesus' teaching to forgive seven times in a day. If you have to forgive the same person seven times a day, one can question the sincerity of the repentance. But we do not judge the sincerity of repentance.

Keller: Reads the motion (as assistant clerk) in response to a request from the floor.

Moderator: Vote on motion to grant forgiveness.

Motion passes: 31 Yes; 0 No.

Moderator: Asks Mr. MacManus to pray.

Mr. MacManus: Offers prayer.

Irons: Raises question of conversation he had with moderator during the break. Asks the moderator to explain the conversation to the presbytery.

Moderator: After the letter was read, Mr. Irons was seeking to put a motion on the floor which Mr. Irons had discussed with the moderator beforehand. After having given the motion some thought, during break the moderator advised Mr. Irons that in order to put the motion on the floor, he must first renounce the jurisdiction of the OPC. Then Mr. Irons must have someone else put the motion forward on his behalf.

Irons: Expresses concern that if he renounces the jurisdiction of the OPC, he would still need to be seated on the floor to be able to make speeches.

Moderator: Not necessary to be seated. Mr. Irons can make speeches until he is erased.

Irons: I renounce the jurisdiction of the OPC as of this moment.

John Garrisi: Asks the clerk to make note of the time of Mr. Irons' renunciation of the jurisdiction of the

OPC.

Mac Laurie: When can he make his motion [a motion which would vacate the guilty verdict against Mr. Irons and propose that the GA erect a study committee on the issue of the Law]?

Moderator: After the clerk's report.

Mac Laurie: What is that?

Don Buchanan: The last recommendation on his report.

Buchanan: Seeks to make a perfection. (Some discussion) Makes recommendation to proceed to censure.

Don Poundstone: "Pronounce" instead of "apply" censure.

Buchanan: Agreed.

Moderator: Will proceed to censure.

Bill Baldwin: Move a substitute to erase rather than censure Mr. Irons.

Don Buchanan: Asks about wording.

Baldwin: Reads the motion:

Whereas the Presbytery of Southern California, on January 10, 2003, found the Rev. C. Lee Irons guilty of violating his ordination vows by teaching contrary to the Scripture and the Westminster Standards that the Decalogue is no longer binding on believers as the standard of holy living;

And whereas the 70th General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, on June 30, 2003, denied Mr. Irons' appeal and affirmed the judgment of the lower judicatory (cf. communication # 2 from the Rev. Donald J. Duff, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly);

And whereas Mr. Irons, in response to the actions of the Presbytery and the General Assembly, has expressed his desire to submit to his brethren by peaceably withdrawing from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (cf. communication # 13, dated September 19, 2003);

That Mr. Irons be erased from the roll of Presbytery ("an act of discipline without full process," BD V:2) in accordance with the provisions of BD V:2.b (1), effective immediately.

Alan Pontier: Out of order. Would have to revisit the trial judicatory. To not deliver the censure means a revisit of the trial judicatory. Secondly, a substitute can't delete the intent of the original motion.

Charlie Perkins: Cites BD V:2.b (1).

John Novinger: Mr. Irons not merely charged with an offense, but found guilty of an offense.

Roger Wagner: We have two options. Either erase Mr. Irons or continue with the judicial process.

Perkins: Moderator must rule it in order.

Moderator: We're not substituting for doing the censure, but for doing the censure right now.

Alan Pontier: This motion has the point of subverting the whole process.

Moderator: Disagrees.

Roger Wagner: Disciplinary action (?)

Alan Pontier: You are nullifying the censure.

Don Poundstone: BD VI:B.3.b. Purpose of suspension from the ministry needs to be looked at, which is for the restoration of a minister to his office. "An officer ... while under suspension, shall be the object of deep solicitude and earnest dealing to the end that he may be restored." Now that Mr. Irons has renounced the jurisdiction, the purpose of suspension has been evacuated.

Bob Coie: Wants to hear the motion again.

Irons: Requests to pass out written copies of the motion.

Don Buchanan: Trial judicatory has ended. We are delivering the letter. If you pass this motion you shipwreck the whole judicial process.

Moderator: We are not taking away the deliverance [of the clerk's report]. Rules that the substitute is in order.

Buchanan: Challenges the ruling of the moderator.

Moderator: Shall the moderator be sustained? Speech: Substitute motion changes the timing of the deliverance of the clerk's report. Motion allows the presbytery to deliberate the question of erasure.

Mac Laurie: Point of order. Please explain meaning of the vote.

Moderator: ?

Phil Reinheimer: Rises to speak in favor of moderator's ruling. Ruled out of order.

Irons: (Speaking in favor) Intent of the substitute motion is to allow the presbytery to discuss the two options of erasure vs. pronouncing the censure before erasure.

Michael DiPeppino: What does "continues disciplinary action" mean? Is this a trial judicatory here?

Moderator: Process has been completed except for the pronouncement of the censure.

Roger Wagner: "Disciplinary action" has broader meaning than judicial process. The umbrella is broader.

DiPeppino: Point is not moot. This would determine whether your ruling is in order.

Moderator: (Discussion about wording.)

John Novinger: That is not the point of BD V:2.b (1).

Moderator: Was that a speech against the moderator's ruling, or just information?

Mr. Alison: The church has a solemn duty to pronounce the censure.

Paul Viggiano: Please clarify what we are discussing.

Moderator: Whether to allow the substitute motion to take the place of reading the censure now.

Viggiano: How would GA respond to allowing the substitute (?)

Moderator: Nobody can know.

Don Buchanan: GA can bring a complaint against the presbytery. (?) They could offer an exception to the presbytery's minutes.

Mac Laurie: We're trying to decide on whether to consider the substitute motion; we're not deciding on the merits of the substitute.

Bob Coie: (Speaking against) Imperfection in the motion. Makes a quasi change in the censure. It is only grace that has kept us from pronouncing it already. Out of order to disrupt a concluded judicial process at this point. A substitute censure without going back to the judicial process. We're playing with the justice of Christ's court.

Roy Postma: Why did we interrupt the pronouncement of the censure? Is it only because of grace that we haven't already pronounced and recorded the censure?

Moderator: Suppose during the lunch break Mr. Irons had been killed in an accident, he would not have the censure pronounced against him. That is one way for him to no longer be under the jurisdiction of the OPC. Renouncing the jurisdiction is another way.

Don Buchanan: Chapter five reads "Cases without full process." But we have carried this out to full process.

Don Poundstone: (Speaking for) Moderator's ruling in order. Circumstances have changed since our last meeting of the trial judicatory and the GA. Mr. Irons has renounced the jurisdiction of the church. The censure of indefinite suspension is for the purpose of seeking restoration. There is no purpose now in pronouncing the censure except to stick it to him.

Buchanan: Objects to the implication that he desires to "stick it to him." This is not about sticking it to him, this is about justice.

Stephen Parker: Would other denominations be informed of Mr. Irons' history?

Moderator: Yes, that would be communicated under "circumstances for erasure."

John Garrisi: Has quibbles with the substitute motion.

Moderator: We'll get to that if the moderator is sustained.

Paul Viggiano: If you can just withdraw, why would anyone opt for staying and receiving the censure?

Alan Pontier: "Renouncing the jurisdiction" does not place you outside the jurisdiction. Mr. Irons understands this, which is why he wants erasure.

Viggiano: Please answer my question, it was not rhetorical.

Moderator: Yes, people have been disciplined and stayed in the church.

Stephen Parker: [Referring to moderator's defense of his ruling] You have stated an act of providence and an act of man. Cannot do so in the latter case.

Norman Byer: Move the previous question.

Moderator: Vote to stop the debate requires 2/3 vote.

Motion passes. 26 Yes; 7 No.

Moderator: Shall we sustain the moderator's ruling?

Motion passes. 19 Yes; 18 No.

Moderator: Now we must consider whether to pass the substitute motion.

Don Poundstone: If we defeat this motion, can the censure be increased or decreased?

Moderator: We are duty-bound to stay with the same censure.

Stephen Parker: How many in Mr. Irons' congregation will depart with him?

Moderator: Defers to the session of Redeemer Chapel.

Don Poundstone: Serves as moderator of overseeing session of Redeemer. Mr. Irons has conducted himself honorably. Since GA there has been no indication that Mr. Irons has tried to lobby people to leave with him. However, you may draw your own conclusions about how the reading of his letter before the congregation may have influenced them. A straw poll was taken, showing that no members are committed to continuing a mission work in the OPC. A few were wavering between that option and doing something else.

Irons: Says that he wrote to the overseeing session in July disclosing his decision to withdraw from the OPC. Didn't tell the congregation, waited until the session met to discuss his decision. Many congregation members are here today who can testify that he refused to disclose his decision to them, though people kept asking. Got permission from the session to read his letter before the congregation on Sept. 21. The session held a congregational meeting on Sept. 28. Straw poll was taken October 12. Sought the session's guidance on how to conduct himself so as not to be divisive.

Rollin Keller: People may not like having this question brought up right now. "The presbytery shall seek to dissuade him from his course." When did we do that?

Bob Coie: We're trying to stop a completed process. Cites historical reasons for why things are done a certain way, why we see to it that churches don't lose their property. If we vow submission to our brothers, you should stand up and take your censure. Notice that in Mr. Irons' appeal there was no complaint against procedure in this body. We have taken great care in these proceedings. Mr. Irons says he "would much rather be erased so that I may continue my ministry outside the OPC." We expect our decisions to be honored. What we do means something. When we do something and there are no flaws in it, it should not be side-stepped or run from. The whole game is to not have the censure "officially happen." To cut short what is already in effect is just not righteous. We believe discipline has 3 purposes: honor Christ, put fear in the church, reclaim the brother. Do we pick and choose what we will submit to? Carry out justice or subvert it. He wants to continue his ministry, and we say, "You shouldn't until you deal with this."

Michael Matossian: Mr. Irons' views are not out of the bounds of orthodoxy. The church of Christ is bigger than our body. Don't want to subvert order. Not entirely comfortable with this motion, but since we don't have a better way of sending this brother on his way, motion should be sustained since it would say that we recognize the church is bigger than our denomination.

Don Poundstone: Proposes amendment to the motion. In place of "effective immediately" amend to say "only after the Missions Committee reports that it is satisfied with the financial resolution regarding Redeemer Chapel."

John Garrisi: If amendment passes, then motion passes as amended. What would stop us from pronouncing the censure?

Moderator: Nothing.

Charlie Perkins: Docket is approved by presbytery. Moderator is not at liberty to simply pronounce censure. Can you delay that pronouncement indefinitely?

Moderator: No.

Perkins: But must have a reasonable explanation for a delay.

Bill Baldwin: If we vote in favor of the amendment, we will move on to the censure, right?

Moderator: Yes.

Mac Laurie: What is the connection?

Moderator: The delay would lead to non-consideration of the substitute motion.

Laurie: What about my substitute motion that you said you would rule out of order?

Don Poundstone: Wants to delay erasure, not censure, so that there would be time to deal with Redeemer's assets in the future.

Michael DiPeppino: Why this amendment?

Moderator: Shall we vote on the amendment?

Yong Kim: (Speaking against) Vote it down because then the censure would be pronounced.

Moderator: Vote on the amendment.

Amendment fails: 15 Yes; 20 (?) No.

Bill Baldwin and John Garrisi rise.

Garrisi: Will yield to Baldwin.

Baldwin: (Speaking to substitute motion) Mr. Irons has peaceably withdrawn for reasons he has offered to you. He cannot in good conscience submit to the ruling of the OPC in part because his conscience is enslaved to the Word of God. You remember that in the trial references were made to the Catechism, to tradition, it was said in one speech during the debates that "all that matters is what the Confession says." The charge went through by a vote of 17 to 16, though it had been said earlier that it was 16 to 15. Mr. Irons asked that we speak from the Scriptures to the Scriptures. We had a duty to make reproof and correction from the Word of God. He has bound himself to be bound by the Scriptures. I'm not saying anything novel here. WCF itself repudiates its own ultimate authority, defers to authority of Scripture. BOCO says no one may be bound by church authority apart from Scripture. Mr. Baldwin read the following:

BCO III.3 - All church power is only ministerial and declarative, for the Holy Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice. No church judicatory may presume to bind the conscience by making laws on the basis of its own authority; all its decisions should be founded upon the Word of God.

BCO XV.8 - The general assembly is not invested with power, by virtue of its own authority, to make pronouncements which bind the conscience of the members of the church. Yet the deliverances of the general assembly, if declarative of the Word of God, are to be received with deference and submission not only because of their fidelity to the Word of God but also because of the nature of the general

assembly as the supreme judicatory of the church

BOD IV.I - This body is about to sit in a judicial capacity and I exhort you, the members, to bear in mind your solemn duty faithfully to minister and declare the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and to subordinate all human judgments to that infallible rule.

WCF I.10 - The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.

2 Timothy 2:14,15 - Remind them of this, and warn them before God that they are to avoid wrangling over words, which does no good but only ruins those who are listening. 15 Be diligent to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth.

2 Timothy 3:16,17 - All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12 - For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Bob Coie: Point of order. How is this relevant?

Moderator: Please explain or move along to the relevant point.

Baldwin: What I'm saying is relevant. Submission must be as the BOCO says. Allow this man whose conscience is bound by Scriptures to depart with his conscience bound by the Scriptures.

John Garrisi: (Speaking against) Note the third paragraph. You aren't peaceably withdrawing when you take a church with you. What does submission to brothers mean? When things get tough you take your censure. Matthew 18: Christ is speaking through his church, not an individual member who makes this pronouncement. Doesn't like the idea of erasure.

Richard Vincent: (Speaking for) What's our calling? To be undershepherds. We're trying to make sure that Mr. Irons doesn't have discussions with other NAPARC churches. But there are a large number of people who wish to withdraw with Mr. Irons. The withdrawal is very peaceable. We will put a final stumbling block before their pastor so they can't seek alignment with another Reformed denomination. We need to do what is right for this congregation.

Baldwin: (Speaking for) When we promise submission to our brothers, it is not on the bare authority of the church. The church is broader than the OPC. There are men out there who are ordained, whose ordination we recognize, we read their books, we recognize their standing. We recognize Lutherans are a part of Christ's church. We even recognize dispensationalists.

Alan Pontier: (Speaking against) The previous speaker is, of course, entirely wrong. The censure of suspension is done in hope of restoration. It is not saying that you can't minister. It is just saying that before you do, there is something that must be corrected before you do. The defendant and his defense counsel agreed that this is the appropriate censure. Is that how you submit, by "peaceably withdrawing"? Brothers, that's absurd. It is said that now that he's renounced the jurisdiction, there is no point in censure. Wrong. It needs to be said that when Mr. Irons left, the Presbytery of Southern California still held its hand out, they didn't bring this process to an end. It needs to be said to the congregation that they were misled, and we did not bring this process to an end. It is alleged that no Scriptures were in the trial, but they were contained in the charges. Mr. Irons responded to those

Scriptures with novel exegesis. It is not true that Scripture was not used in trial. Look at the letter, 4th line of final paragraph (page 5). Mr. Irons says, "If the Law is an administration of the covenant of grace, it follows that NT believers are obligated to keep the Law - not meritoriously or perfectly, but as part of the Spirit's work of progressive sanctification. I don't agree with this view"

Baldwin: To clarify, I didn't say that the Scriptures weren't used in the trial.

Mac Laurie: As Mr. Irons' former defense counsel, need to explain how this censure came about. We thought it was appropriate given the weight the presbytery has given this matter. As for erasure, the Book of Discipline has changed over the years. We are discussing either censure or erasure, but there is a third way, the motion he keeps bringing up that the moderator said he would rule out of order. As for the Word of God, it is one thing to cite proof texts, it is another to exegete those texts. Even the guys on the "other side" admitted to that deficiency in the trial.

Moderator: Call the question.

Motion fails.

David Winslow: (Speaking against) Thinks we should see the process to completion. Mr. Dennison doesn't agree with Mr. Irons' interpretation of peaceably withdrawing. Winslow is hurt by the letter. We owe it to him to discuss this. Encourages the presbytery to erect a committee to meet with Mr. Irons.

Irons: I am grieved at the accusation that I have been unsubmitive to you brothers. I have been submitting to the process. I could have renounced the jurisdiction a year and a half ago, but chose instead to submit to the process. Do you think it was easy for me to go to trial and take it all the way to GA? Do you think it was easy to put my family through this? I could have renounced the jurisdiction at any time and joined another body without a regular dismissal. After GA I could have left right away, I could have renounced the jurisdiction on September 19, the day I wrote the letter to the presbytery. I didn't even have to show up to this meeting today. But if you choose to censure me, I will stand up here and take the censure. It would not be hard for me to find another denomination that won't care what the OPC thinks. The only reason I am here today because of you brothers, our last time together, to give you a chance to decide on what to do about this censure. This is not about me, but about you. I wanted to give you a chance to say, "We don't think you are qualified to hold office in the OPC, but recognize that you have gifts for ministry, and we desire that you continue to exercise those gifts outside the OPC."

John Novinger: Expresses his disappointment in Mr. Irons. Had high hopes for him. Has question about "peaceably withdrawing."

Moderator: Please address body or the moderator, not Mr. Irons directly.

Novinger: Cites Murray's quote from the letter. Those who knew Murray say that he wasn't questioning the Confession. We must pronounce the guilty verdict.

Bob Coie: Move the previous question.

Moderator: Vote to move the previous question:

Passes by 2/3 vote: 23 Yes; 9 No.

Moderator: Vote on making the substitute motion the main motion. Vote by secret ballot.

Motion fails: 15 Yes; 23 No.

(While ballots were being tallied, motion to extend the order of the day to complete the examination of Mr. Zach Keele. Motion fails.)

Don Buchanan: Motion to pronounce the censure.

Moderator: Vote by secret ballot on motion to proceed to censure.

John Garrisi: Should extend the order of the day by 15 minutes to complete business at hand.

Granted by general consent (?).

Motion to proceed to censure passes: 25 Yes; 10 No; 1 Abstain.

Mr. Irons comes forward to stand for the reading of the censure.

Moderator: Reads censure.

Moderator: Asks Mr. Wagner to pray.

Mr. Wagner offers prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m., with prayer offered by Mr. Winslow.