

A LETTER FROM DR. SEAN LUCAS

June 21, 2018

My dear Friends:

Thank you so much for your prayers for us last week at the PCA General Assembly. I very much believe that your prayers were answered in significant ways. Confessedly, I was nervous going into the week—there were a number of very divisive issues that threatened to challenge the peace, purity, and unity of our church. However, God's Spirit clearly moved to cause us to move forward together.

For me, there were three highlights of the week. The Assembly elected our first African-American to serve as moderator: TE Irwyn Ince, formerly pastor at City of Hope Presbyterian Church in Columbia, Maryland, and presently an assistant pastor for Grace DC (PCA), leading the Institute for Cross-Cultural Mission. Irwyn led our assembly with patience, skill, and grace. It was a great joy for us all to see him in this role.

Our ad interim committee on racial reconciliation presented the Thursday seminar and report. As you remember, both Richie Sessions and I served on this committee, although Richie was not at GA. Our seminar, which was open for the entire Assembly, gave an overview of our report. In addition, we answered questions (only a few of the over 200 that were texted to us!) about the report as well as about how we as a denomination might move forward together toward reconciliation and justice. When the Assembly considered our report, our recommendations were moved without discussion or objection and our chairman, TE Kevin Smith (pastor, New City Fellowship, Chattanooga), was given a standing ovation. (If you are interested in reading the committee's work, you can find it here: <http://www.pcaac.org/racial-and-ethnic-reconciliation-study-committee-report/>)

Finally, the Assembly approved a significant addition to our Book of Church Order (BCO) that reinforced our commitment to a biblical understanding of marriage. BCO 59-3 was amended to read "Marriage is only to be between one man and one woman, in accordance with God's Word. Therefore, ministers in the PCA who solemnize marriages shall only solemnize marriages between one man and one woman." The underlined section was added to make clear our biblical position, reflecting Westminster Confession of Faith 24. In addition, the Assembly voted to give this section of BCO 59 constitutional status. Should the new language pass two-thirds of the presbyteries and gain two-thirds of the vote at next year's Assembly in Dallas, it will become part of our BCO.

All three of these actions were vital for the peace, purity, and unity of our church. And most of us who were there, and all three of IPC's teaching elders (Ed Norton, Mike Malone, and I) as well as Ruling Elder Cannon Allen, were very encouraged by our assembly this year. Grateful to see how our church works together to advance the good news of Jesus in our country!

In the grip of God's grace,



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