

Church and State

Florida 'Confessing Church' Rebuked by Ecclesiastical Court

By Scott Denkman

Norman Blessing, an elder at First Presbyterian Church of Sebastian, Florida, filed suit against his own church. Blessing claims that during a meeting of the elders, of which he was not present, the elders voted to affirm a confession, now dubbed the "Sebastian Confession."

The Sebastian Confession states that heterosexual marriage is the only acceptable sexual relationship, that the Bible is completely infallible, and that Jesus Christ is the only means to salvation. The confession was modeled around the statements of the Confessing Church Movement, a loose coalition of conservative churches within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), of

which Blessing's church is a member. The Confessing Church Movement has rallied together about 1,200 congregations across the United States. Locally, Montreat Presbyterian Church is a "confessing church," while Black Mountain Presbyterian Church is not. Blessing claims that the Sebastian church required he and others to either consent to the confession or be forced out of the church.

The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of South Atlantic ruled unanimously on September 13 that Blessing's church was in the wrong to require him to sign a confession above and beyond what is stated in the Book of Order, the governmental portion of the denomination's con-

stitution.

The court ruled that any church has the right to draft a confession similar to the one approved by the Sebastian church, but that churches do not have the right to force their members to uphold the same beliefs, or to use a confession as a "litmus test" to join a church.

The court also stated that the Sebastian church must be sensitive to its own membership's diversity of theological beliefs, as stated in the Book of Order (G-3.0401).

The Confessing Church Movement has not released an official statement on the Sebastian ruling.

Neither side is planning an appeal.

Living Water

By Johanna Wright

The Way

This is what the Lord says:
"Stand at the crossroads and look;
ask for the ancient paths,
ask where the good way is, and walk in it,
and you will find rest for your souls."
Jeremiah 6:16

Life can be compared to a journey, on which there are many routes and pathways. The world tells us to make the most of our lives and make a name for ourselves. The world tells us to live the way we want to live, because ultimately it is all about us.

The Lord tells us something quite different in this passage. God instructs us to seek out the good way and to follow it. It is in this way that we can truly make the most of our lives.

The question we must ask when we come to the crossroads of life is: which direction will we choose? Will it be that of the world, or that of the Lord?

The way of the world leads to emptiness and strife. In our passage, God had denied the Israelites the rest they sought because they chose the path of the world and rejected Him. We are prone to wander just as the Israelites did, but we have a hope even in our waywardness.

Friend, God has prepared ultimate rest for you. Will you take it? Through His death and resurrection, Jesus became the way for us to walk in. He is the ancient way, and in Him -only in Him- will we find rest for our souls.

Look. Ask. Find true rest in Jesus.

"Our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee" (Augustine of Hippo).

Minutes of the Student Government Association

By Kelley Cleveland

September 26, 2002

Called to Order by Adam Schultz at 7:06 pm

Scripture:

I Cor. 10:31

Philp 2:3, 3:4-11

Prayer

Present: Adam Schultz, Graham Ottley, Kaylin Fisher, Lucas Fisher, Ashley Presson, Nathan Swift, Jonathan Bennet, Lindsay King, Toney Johnson, Kelley Cleveland, Tim Tyson

Absent: Jeff Bryson, Vince Norfleet, Sarah Hicks

First Order of Business:

Elect Senior and McGregor Dorm Representative

Senior Representative: Lindsay King

McGregor Dorm Representative: Toney Johnson

Second Order of Business:

Howerton Dorm kitchen proposal presented by Tim Tyson

Vote taken on pending resident poll

Other Business:

Adam pointed out that it is important that meetings start on time.

Adam encouraged all to read responsibilities of SGA members that are printed in the student handbook. A vote decided that SGA will research to the possibility of setting up a table

at coffee house on October 3, and members will be present to answer questions. A committee is to investigate recycling.

Formed committees

-Coffee house: Nathan Swift,

-Monthly Service Projects: Nathan Swift, Lucas Fisher

-Recycling: Lindsay King, Kelley Cleveland

A discussion was started to change the next meeting time, but a time was not finalized.

Next meeting the group will be taking personality tests to get a view of how we interact with each other and to learn more about the group.

Meeting adjourned: 8:25 pm

WHETSTONE

Montreat College Box 838
Montreat, NC 28757
828.669.8012 Ext. 3710
whetstone@montreat.edu

Managing Editor
Asst. Managing Editor
Business Manager
Asst. Business Manager
Sponsor/Advisor
Staff Writers

Tim Tyson
Becca Snyder
Donovan Campbell
Andrew Jones
Bob Graham
Kortney Blythe
Kelley Cleveland
Scott Denkman
Jen Jolley
LeAnn Lane
Justin Leonard
Erin Maguire
Kendell Milton
Adam Shultz
Wes Waldorf
Johanna Wright

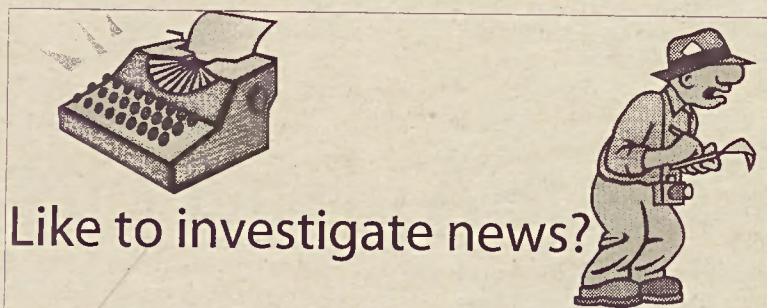
Photographers

Andrew Baird
Andrew Jones
Billy May
Joel North
Tiffany Stoddart
Becca Snyder
Tim Tyson
Wes Waldorf

Layout/Web

Dan Windmiller

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Reporter and Photographer
meeting **October 24 @ 6 PM**
in the Fellowship Hall.

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pages-

3
4
4 & 5
6
7
8
8