

Willis/Loree Elliott

From: "Willis/Loree Elliott" <elliottw@comcast.net>
 To: <confessingchrist@yahoo.com>
 Sent: Saturday, June 25, 2005 1:20 PM
 Subject: Resolution 17 against APOSTASY: Barman again? (long post)

Aside from the question of CC response to Resolution 17 as intentional politics, we in CC should face & respond to the CONTENT of the resolution (pA11 UCNews June-July/05):

The UCC's "a Christian denomination where Jesus is Lord and requires all ordained, commissioned and licensed ministers, as well as 'students in care,' to profess that Jesus is Lord." The resolution's title: "The UCC is a Christian church."

1 The resolution's a hornet's nest. Oh, for a year to kick it around (the churches/groups/individuals studying & voting on it before its coming to Synod vote)! But the Synod Resolutions' Committee must do something with it—pull its teeth, kick its teeth in, something: the resolution's presenters can have no confidence that it will reach Synod floor as they wrote it, or that they will be consulted about the rewriting thereof. As everybody knows, what gets to Synod floor has been politically processed.

2 The resolution's word "requires" is at most de jure: de facto, the UCC only suggests to its churches that Jesus is Lord. On the ground, so many in UCC reject the lordship of Christ that our Book of Worship allows for those who refuse to call our religion's central prayer "The Lord's Prayer." That the UCC "requires" anything is as contrary to facts (the fact of our polity & the fact of our actual on-the-ground being-as-churches) as the present ad campaign's false advertising that our churches are "open" in the sense the ads claim. Synod must not approve a resolution so contrary-to-fact.

3 But Resolution 17 is analogous to Barmen 1934's status confessionis (confessional crisis) in confronting the church with the lordship of Christ in situ: The "German Christians" had compromised the lordship of Christ by submitting pari passu to Hitler's lordship, & many now in the UCC compromise the lordship of Christ by submitting to egalitarianism, the allegedly superior religion of the egalitarian principle (in this case, "lord" not balanced by "lady," as in early Israelitism's folk-religion divine couple Yhwh/Asherah).

4 Since "Kurios Iesous" (Lord Jesus, "Jesus is Lord") is the bedrock Christian affirmation-confession-creed, rejectors of it—Jews, Muslims, all other non-Christians—cannot claim to be authentic Christians. To reject this bedrock teaching is to be "apostate" (Greek, "standing away from" the community's self-identification). Since "Jesus is Lord" is essential to our IDENTITY as a Christian church, the rejectors of it cannot with INTEGRITY claim to be "members in good standing" of the UCC at any level of its existence; & the UCC, in defense of its identity as a Christian church—being unable with integrity to accept apostates—should declare this apostasy as clearly as Barmen 1934 declared the "German Christian" apostasy. The pragmatic fact that such a declaration isn't going to happen means that the UCC is in a permanent state of apostasy. (I hope & pray that I'm too sure of that!)

5 To deny that the lordship of Christ is necessary to being a Christian is to be an APOSTATE, "standing away" from Scripture/Tradition/Church: to affirm that one is a Christian though in denial of the lordship of Christ is to be a HERETIC. But we Christians are to love our enemies, including apostates & heretics. How?

6 Ron Buford (I've read) is going around the country preaching as theologically adequate Jesus' double-love-commandment, the religion of the Jesus sect of Judaism (which morphed into Christianity)—instead of preaching Christianity. This religion is a perfect fit with the wordings of the ad campaign. If the ad campaign succeeds, UCC churches will be flooded with infidels, apostates, heretics—a condition that would logically lead to what the UU did in rejecting its Christian identity.

Like it or not, the theological crisis the UCC is facing is not less serious than that which Barmen 1934 faced with courage & clarity. I pray that restorationist forces in the UCC will be adequate to the crisis, but what I see at present is not encouraging.

Grace and peace—
 Willis

Andy Lang's 3:18pm (less than three hours later):
 "Willis, thanks for explaining your position."