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That the generations to come might know. Psalm 78:6

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<u>DJM</u> —David J. Mensing	<u>MIS</u> —Comm. on Missions	<u>RJL</u> —Robert J. Lietz	<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> YEAR TAG _____ </div>
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CONSIDERED AS A UNIT

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ANALYSIS OF FORMER PROFESSOR SCHAEFER'S CLAIM THAT HIS CALL AS PROFESSOR/PRESIDENT AND HIS CALL TO BE ASSISTANT PASTOR AT PEACE WERE TO BE "CONSIDERED AS A UNIT", that is, that they were, from the outset, interdependent & inextricably linked to one another

The correct understanding of the language involved cannot be divorced from the correct understanding of the principles of Scripture and the entire context of the matter, both immediate and remote.

On the basis of this necessary assumption in arriving at legitimate interpretation, we examine herewith the two expressions which seem to be in controversy:

I. "... be considered"

The following definitions are abstracted from Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language (College Edition). New York: World Publishing Co., 1966.

- consider** --
1. originally, to look at carefully; regard attentively; examine.
 2. to think about in order to understand or decide; to ponder.
 3. to have or keep in mind; take into account.
 4. to have regard for (others, their feelings, etc.); show consideration for.
 5. to regard as; to believe or think to be.
 6. to believe after thought.
 7. to think of as acceptable or possible.

SYN. -- **consider** basically denotes a directing of the mind to something in order to understand it or to make a decision about it. Cf. **study; contemplate; weigh reflect.**

Peace Congregation used this expression in its accompanying letter with the call in May, 1969. Note also the use of the verb in its context by Pastor Bloedel in his letter of June, 1969:

The two calls should "be considered by you as a unit."

- A. The word "consider", when speaking of a divine call having been issued, encompasses the first two basic definitions. The only activity of a pastor-or professor-elect between receipt of the call and his decision on that call is to CONSIDER it, i.e., to deliberate upon it, to think about it in order to decide.
- B. The phrase "**by you**" clearly limits the meaning of the verb here to this very personal, subjective activity. Once the calls were extended, the CONSIDERATION of or deliberation upon those calls was an activity in which only Rev. Schaefer himself could be rightly involved, and no one else.
- C. The verb, as here used, cannot mean "regarded", "seen as tantamount to" or "believed and thought of objectively as the same as"; for then not only Rev. Schaefer should have "considered" the calls "as a unit", but the whole Conference should have regarded them as such.

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II. "...as a unit..."

Taken without respect to context, these words could mean that the two calls were

1. to be regarded as ONE call;
 2. to be regarded as so inextricably and essentially linked with one another and so interdependent, so as to FUNCTION as ONE call;
- or
3. to be recognized as so interrelated as to their combined EFFECT ON the Seminary Plan, that one call could not be accepted and the other declined without destroying the plan to have a faculty of two instructors. Therefore both calls had to be considered or deliberated together, as a package.

These three otherwise completely plausible interpretations must be examined ACCORDING TO THE ENTIRE CONTEXT, both immediate and remote. This context necessarily encompasses NOT ONLY the language used in the call documents and in the accompanying correspondence but also:

--the Conference's doctrinal position on the Church and Ministry (including the Office of the Ministry, auxiliary offices in the church, the doctrine of the call, and the autonomy and sovereignty of the local congregation);

--the Conference's constitutional position (founded on Scripture) concerning its relationship to its member congregations as an "advisory body" only with no interference in local matters and no binding force in its decisions upon local churches;

and --the entire concept of the 1969 Seminary Plan, specifically with regard to the size and structure of the faculty, the respective responsibility and accountability of each man to which authority, and the equitable distribution of the professors' workloads.

A. Could the words "as a unit" possibly mean that the two calls were to be regarded as ONE CALL? Clearly, NO, for the following reasons:

- 1) The calls were issued separately by TWO DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT AGENCIES. The Conference issued the call to the professorship; Peace Congregation issued the call to its assistant pastorate.
- 2) The calls were issued separately for TWO DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT OFFICES, although both offices were auxiliary offices to the Office of the Ministry, i. e., neither office was the God-ordained office of Pastor.
- 3) The calls were issued separately for TWO DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT AND ESSENTIALLY UNRELATED DUTIES: Teaching in the Seminary and assisting the local Pastor under his direction with duties in the congregation, so that the Pastor would be freed up to teach in the Seminary as the Associate Professor.
- 4) The calls were issued separately to ensure TWO DISTINCTLY SEPARATE ALLEGIANCE FOR ACCOUNTABILITY -- To the C.T.E. for the professorship (as required by the Conference Constitution, and to the Congregation and its Pastor for the assistant pastorate (as required by the Word of God).
- 5) The calls were issued separately because THERE WAS NO ESSENTIAL CONNECTION OR INTERDEPENDENCY BETWEEN THEM WHATSOEVER.

- B. Could the words "as a unit" possibly mean that the two calls were inextricably and essentially LINKED WITH ONE ANOTHER and completely INTERDEPENDENT, so as to FUNCTION AS ONE CALL?

Rev. Schaefer now holds, according to his letter to the C. T. E. of November 2, 1985, that the action of Peace Congregation, recognizing that an assistant pastorate was no longer needed, "leaves me no alternative but to relinquish my position in the Seminary." But, is that indeed true? Clearly, NO!

- 1) The calls themselves were ESSENTIALLY INDEPENDENT OF ONE ANOTHER, as was already shown:

--There is absolutely NOTHING in the full-time professorship of the Seminary that necessitates the same man serving as assistant to the Pastor of the local congregation.

--There is absolutely NOTHING in the assistant pastorate of Peace or any other congregation that requires the incumbent of that auxiliary office to be a theological professor.

- 2) The call to an assistant pastorate was issued SOLELY for the purpose of providing limited help to the local Pastor, so that he, in turn, could teach part-time in the Seminary. Since a TWO-INSTRUCTOR FACULTY WAS DESIRED BY THE CONFERENCE, an assistant pastorate was offered by Peace Congregation as a sort of "trade-off" for instructional time in the classroom on the part of its Pastor, as his letter accompanying the call to Rev. Schaefer states:

"The need for this office of Assistant Pastor is apparent from the proposed plan of the CTE to call me, the local pastor, away from some of my pastoral duties to teach some of the seminary subjects as Associate Professor." (May 4, 1969)

Thus it was the call to the ASSOCIATE PROFESSORSHIP (not the PROFESSORSHIP) that was linked to the call of ASSISTANT PASTOR. For, had it not been for help in the parish work, the Pastor could not have taught in the Seminary, as Rev. Schaefer himself wrote in his acceptance letter of July 22, 1969:

"I have accepted these two divine calls for the following reasons...
... 3) because assistance is necessary in the Tinley Park church if its pastor is to assume the duties of Associate professor, without which the plan cannot go forward."

- 3) Has a two-instructor faculty not been deemed at least desirable and even preferable, Peace Congregation would not have called an assistant pastor AT ALL. Why? Its membership was so small, even at the time the Seminary was started, that such an auxiliary office was not warranted by the local pastoral workload. Furthermore, the congregation was in no financial condition to salary a second man. This came about ultimately only because the local Pastor received a nominal salary from the Conference for his teaching. Although the salaries of the assistant pastor and the associate professor began at par, again as a sort of "trade-off", the professorial salary soon fell behind due to freezes in the Conference budget, while the local congregation continued to increase the salary of the assistant pastor.

- C. Would the Seminary Plan, as it was devised in 1969, have been in any way affected without this mutually cooperative exchange between the Conference and the local congregation? Yes, BUT ONLY THE ASSOCIATE PROFESSORSHIP WOULD HAVE BEEN AFFECTED. Note the following:

- 1) A ONE-INSTRUCTOR FACULTY would have been the best that could have been

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arranged. NOTE, however, that, without the assistant pastorate, the FULL-TIME PROFESSORSHIP COULD HAVE CONTINUED INDEFINITELY, if students had materialized to make the Seminary a "profitable" proposition. Had this cooperative arrangement not been made, the FULL PROFESSORSHIP would not have been affected IN THE LEAST, except that the full curricular load would have to be borne by one man. NOTE also that EVEN SUCH A SITUATION was not deemed unworkable by the Conference. Nevertheless, it preferred the better balance in instructional approach and style and combined experience with two instructors if that were possible.

- 2) In its present deactivated state, the Seminary has, for some time now, NO INSTRUCTION GOING ON. This means that the local Pastor is free to give his full time to the congregational work to which he was called originally by the Holy Ghost (Acts 20:28). As Rev. Schaefer himself agreed in a meeting of the Board of Elders of Peace Congregation on September 26, 1985, under these conditions "AN ASSISTANT PASTOR IS OF COURSE NO LONGER NEEDED."

III. Evidence from the WIDER CONTEXT (remote context) which will not permit the interpretation which Rev. Schaefer constantly reiterates and insists upon:

A. The Doctrinal Position of the Conference, particularly on the Church and Ministry, epitomized in its theses of 1968 entitled "This Scriptural Position We Still Hold", would be violated by Rev. Schaefer's interpretation.

- 1) When the Conference issues a call, it does so in the name of and by the authority of its constituent congregations, since the right to call is vested in local congregations as divine institutions, not in man-made organizations. Thus, when the Conference called Professor Schaefer as full professor and president of the Seminary, it did so for ALL the congregations together. Thus, THE ACTION OF PEACE CONGREGATION ALONE CANNOT NULLIFY WHAT ALL THE CONGREGATIONS TOGETHER DID. For Rev. Schaefer to speak this way is simply not according to fact.
- 2) When Peace Congregation issues a call, it does so on its own by the authority given to it by God Himself. IT ALONE decides the matter, and IT ALONE may change its arrangements. Its power to do so is in no way dependent upon the Conference, upon its decisions and resolutions.
- 3) The office of seminary professor, as well as the office of assistant pastor, is an auxiliary office to the office of pastor. Such auxiliary offices are not God-ordained, and, unlike the Pastoral Office, may be terminated and even eliminated in Christian liberty. Properly-speaking, it is not even necessary to have a unanimous vote on such a change, because Christian doctrine is not at issue -- only a temporal, albeit important, arrangement.

B. The Constitutional Position of the Conference, regarding its relationship to its member-congregations -- a position fully in conformity with the Word of God -- would be violated by Rev. Schaefer's interpretation.

- 1) Article VI,1 "...a conference or synod is neither of higher nor of equal authority to any of its congregations... this conference is not a church or church-government exercising legislative or coercive powers... Accordingly, no resolution of the Conference is of binding force if it is held by any of its members to be contrary to God's Word or inexpedient as far as the condition of a congregation is concerned."
- 2) For this reason, Peace Congregation's own arrangements CANNOT BE SUBJECT TO CONVENTION DECISIONS, nor should it be compelled to await such decisions before acting on its own internal business.
- 3) The Conference never mandated the establishment of the assistant pastorate

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at Peace; neither has it the right to do so. Neither has it the right to stand in the way of the Congregation's action to change its arrangements.

- 4) Rev. Schaefer, by insisting on his interpretation of the term "unit", sets the principle that the congregation

---must maintain the auxiliary office of assistant pastor, as long as the Conference maintains the Seminary. (Rev. Schaefer links the assistant pastorate not only to the associate professorship, but to his own professorial office as well!)

---dare not make any change in its local arrangements concerning this auxiliary office, even though it be no longer needed, until and unless the Conference changes the Seminary set-up or discontinues it.

---"forced the issue" for the Conference by its unilateral decision. This is, of course, UNTRUE. Just because the auxiliary office of assistant pastor is "no longer necessary" (because the local pastor is not burdened down with teaching responsibilities) DOES NOT MEAN THAT
 a) the associate professorship is no longer needed or that
 b) the full professorship is no longer needed.

Those two determinations have to be made BY THE CONFERENCE in convention assembled. Whether or not the associate professorship is needed has nothing to do with the assistant pastorate whatsoever. The status of the Seminary and the availability of students are the factors which determine the need for professors. And whether the full professorship is needed anymore has even less to do with the assistant pastorate, as any objective observer can see. THE OFFICES ARE ESSENTIALLY UNRELATED.

In the light of the above facts, principles, and publicly-stated positions, the expression used both by Peace Congregation in its accompanying letter of May 4, 1969 and Pastor Bloedel's accompanying letter of June, 1969, namely,

...that the call to the professorship and the call to the assistant pastorate of Peace congregation are to "**be considered as a unit**" for the reasons stated...

CAN ONLY BE INTERPRETED AS FOLLOWS:

In order to inaugurate the 1969 Seminary Plan, engaging two instructors, the TWO CALLS (to the professorship and to the assistant pastorate of Peace) MUST BE DELIBERATED UPON by you AS A PACKAGE, so that both calls are either accepted or declined. The calls themselves are not interdependent, of course; but without help in the local congregation, Pastor Mensing will not be able to take time away from his pastoral duties to serve as associate professor in the Seminary.

* * *

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