

God brings faithful witnesses.

While the decisions of the 219th General Assembly on life issues seemed to affirm only the current pro-choice position of the the PC(USA), there were many voices heard around the Assembly that proclaimed God's interest in human life at every stage of development and ability. Other voices defended the faith and raised the moral voice of the global church. It was these moments—'God moments'—that enabled us to see God's Spirit at work in the Assembly and in the Church.

[PPL's LUNCHEON with The Rev. Dr. David D. Swanson](#)

(Swanson's message begins about 7 minutes into the video)

Commissioners attending PPL's Luncheon event on Sunday heard a riveting and inspiring message uplifting life from [Dr. David D. Swanson](#), pastor of [First Presbyterian Church](#) of Orlando. You can view Dr. Swanson's message [here](#).

Related article: [Life unrealized](#), by Carmen Fowler, *The Layman*

[Women of the Bible, Elizabeth & Puah, visited PPL's Tuesday Luncheon](#)

The voices of these women came alive in their stories of God's involvement with life in the womb. Actress [Anita Gutshick](#) shared her personal testimony of a near abortion and the restoration and redemption she found in Jesus Christ.

[Dr. Andrew Purves speaking at the PFR Breakfast:](#)

"The Faith Once For All Delivered to the Saints" (Jude 1:3). (Click above to download the audio.)

Uphold the 4 historical markers of the faith:

- Incarnation- The "becoming carnal" of God—The "Word became flesh" Col. 2:9
- Resurrection- Jesus who was dead is alive—raised bodily by the Father
- Ascension - This corresponding return of the Lord should be celebrated as is Christmas, the coming of the Lord.
- The Holy Spirit - the "dunamis" or "dynamite" that makes us incendiary Presbyterians. It is the Spirit that joins us to Jesus and allows us to share in the mission of the Father.

[Ecumenical Greeting from Rev. Siarhan Hardun of Orthodox Church of Belarus](#)

Click on the link above to watch the complete greeting of Rev. Hardun. His was a clear moral voice reflecting God's word to the church among a plethora of voices reflecting only the culture. He began with a perfunctory greeting but then switched to sharing a message from his heart:

I was really struck while listening to your discussion about homosexuality, same-sex marriage, civil unions and other moral issues. Christian morality is as old as Christianity itself. It doesn't need to be invented now. Those attempts to invent new morality look for me like attempts to invent a new religion - a sort of modern paganism. When people say that they are led and guided by the Holy Spirit to do it, I wonder if it is the same Spirit that inspired the Bible... My advice as an Ecumenical Advisory Delegate is the following: 'Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.' (Romans 12:2).

Reflections on the 219th General Assembly

While the actions of the Assembly on life issues were mixed, there were some actions taken that affirmed life, implicitly condemning abortion. The Rev. P.J. Southam writes about the irony of this GA.

The Irony of the 219th G.A., By P.J. Southam

Commissioners to the just concluded 219th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) had several opportunities to take a strong stand for the unborn, and for those who carry them. The results were a very mixed bag.

Several overtures and one commissioner's resolution came before the Assembly, asking them to affirm God's claim upon the unborn children of believers, to stand against forced and coerced abortion, to condemn violence against pregnant women, and to end the Board of Pension's paying for abortions. This General Assembly rejected or modified these requests.

However, this General Assembly did affirm the "Charter for Compassion", which reads in part:

"The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the centre of our world and put another there, and to honour the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect.

"It is also necessary in both public and private life to refrain consistently and empathically from inflicting pain."

This General Assembly also affirmed the Covenant with Children, to celebrate the Decade of the Child. Part of this affirmation was reciting a litany of dedication, written by Rev. Cindy Cushman, which contains these affirmations:

"All children are a gift of God, created by God, and created good." "We hope for a world where all children can find a safe place."

The womb is intended to be a safe place for children for their first nine months of development. Unfortunately, the 219th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) didn't seem fit to affirm that clearly or consistently.

A God Moment at GA

By Carolyn Poteet (posted on The Layman Online)

Monday morning, I broke away from my own committee meeting to testify before the opening hearing for the Committee on Theology and Worship. Hoping to just slide in and out, I was discouraged to find out that I would be one of the last to testify on a long list. One of the issues ahead of mine was an overture that sought to add a line from Calvin saying that "God pronounces that he adopts our infants as his children, before they are born."

A line-up of pro-choice speakers got up, and I braced myself for what I knew was coming. The most grating testimony was from one woman who reminded the committee that since the PCUSA had declared that this is

just fetal tissue, not a child, then how could it be adopted? The words felt so empty and tragic to me, my heart broke. Then finally, a speaker for the overture rose, and began to quote scripture.

"The child in her womb leapt with joy... before I formed you in the womb, I knew you... I knit you together in your mother's womb..." [Read more.](#)

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