

HARVEST COMMUNITY CHURCH

8340 West 21st Street Wichita, Kansas 67205

Report to the Eastern Presbytery of the Bible Presbyterian Church

Glenn D. Rogers

RECOMMENDATION: I highly recommend that we receive Harvest Community Church and its pastor, the Rev. Dr. David Henion, into the Eastern Presbytery in the likely event that they apply for membership.

Brethren,

I was commissioned by the Eastern Presbytery to visit Harvest Community Church of Wichita, Kansas, both to present the Bible Presbyterian Church to that congregation and to evaluate the suitability of receiving that church into this Presbytery should they vote to apply. Having just returned from a weekend visiting the church and its pastor, the Rev. Dr. David Henion, I am happy to submit the following report.

CAVEAT LECTOR: Of course, the Bible Presbyterian Church has no standard format for such an appraisal; in fact, I don't remember ever reading one before this. I certainly do not intend to imply any constitutional or traditional standards for any of the topics addressed here. I am simply giving my impressions and observations in hope that it will help you get a picture of what I saw and heard. I wish you could all see the work and meet the Henions' first-hand in the next few weeks, but that is prohibited by the current realities of travel. What I am attempting to do, by this report, is to simply be helpful by being your eyes and ears. Since I have probably missed some area of interest in this report, I think it is important that we meet via Zoom at some point when I can answer your questions directly.

SCOPE OF VISIT: I flew to Wichita from Philadelphia on Friday, June 24, 2022, meeting Pastor Henion about 5:30 p.m. We proceeded from the Eisenhower Airport to Hampton Inn hotel, where the church put me up for the stay. Although I had asked the church to minimize expense, they decided that I would be more comfortable in the Hampton Inn which was conveniently located near the church. After dropping off my luggage, Dr. And Mrs. Henion (Sandy) took me to dinner, where we were able to talk about the church and their ministry at some length.

On Saturday, Dr. Henion gave me a driving tour of the Wichita area, with a visit to the church facility, including the Christian School facilities, and also an opportunity to see things associated with Dr. Henion's ministry as a police chaplain. We had extensive conversations about Dr. Henion's background and pastoral experience, the history and current situation of the church, the reasons why they are preparing to withdraw from the Reformed Church of America, and why they are considering application to the Bible Presbyterian Church. We continued to talk during and after dinner.

On the Lord's Day, they combined their normal two services into one service, which they had invited me to preach, followed by a meeting of about an hour in which the congregation could ask questions about the Bible Presbyterian Church. After the Question-and-Answer period, they had a church **A**covered dish@ supper, during which I continued to answer questions. Dr. Henion and I talked at his home that afternoon, and then we returned to the church for the regular evening Bible study, followed by more Q&A with church members regarding the BPC. We returned to the Henion home, for supper and discussion, returning to the hotel late that evening. Dr. Henion picked me up delivered me to the Wichita airport at 6:00 a.m. on Monday to begin my trip home.

DR. DAVID HENION: Dr. Henion grew up in a godly, Christian home; his father, an elder in the Reformed Church of America, was active in evangelism in the Patterson, NJ community where his home church was located. In later years, when the original congregation had largely moved away from the location, his father led the transition that established a Spanish-speaking congregation in the building to carry on the work of the Gospel among the current residents of the community. David was saved at age 16, and was active in the church. An outstanding athlete, David won a football scholarship to Central College, Pella Iowa, where he played on the NCAA National Championship Division III football team. There he met his future wife, Sandy, and was instrumental in her coming to Christ. After graduation, Dr. Henion received his M.Div. from Western Seminary, Holland Michigan. In his first pastorate, in Ft. Lee, NJ., David was shocked to find that not one of his elders even professed to have a personal relationship with Christ and honed his pastoral skills by depending completely on the Lord in that hostile environment. David and Sandy moved to Wichita in the early 1990's to begin the work that is now Harvest Community Church. After meeting for a time in a school and then the local zoo, the Lord blessed their work with a beautiful building dedicated in January, 1996. As part of his ministry, Dr. Henion has had a great impact on the Wichita community and is a recognized spiritual leader, presently serving as the Senior Chaplain for the Wichita Police Department and the County Sheriff. He recruits, trains and supervises over 30 local pastors, priests and rabbis who volunteer their service in a very active ministry, being involved in active incidents through ministry to both police officers and victims. Dr. Henion received his DMin. from Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, in 2006.

David Henion is a man who should have been a Bible Presbyterian years ago: godly, humble, hardworking, tenacious, gentle, quick-witted and good-humored, a faithful pastor who loves his people, and (most of all) a faithful servant of Christ whose life shows his devotion to his Savior. David is a man of prayer, bold in the Gospel, and an inveterate evangelist. He has seen the results of compromise and has come to the resolute conviction that the purity of the Church is essential. He has not lightly decided to leave the denomination in which he grew up, in which he came to Christ, and in which he has faithfully served in fulfillment of his vows since the day of his ordination. He has paid and is paying the cost of such a decision, but he is resolute in his conviction to follow Christ. He and Sandy are a delight to be with. They take the Lord's work seriously and themselves with a grain of salt. David grew up with the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dordt and the Heidelberg Catechism, and is fully acquainted with the Westminster Standards. The Adult is finishing up their study of the Westminster Confession at HCC. David is a scholar, and our conversations revealed his theological depth. At the same time, he is a down to earth, practical pastor with an understanding of the real world and a passion to see people come to Christ and live for His glory. He has a particular compassion for those with special needs, including those in poverty and seeking mental and physical help. He has an active spiritual counseling ministry, based upon on evangelism.

THE SESSION: Harvest Community Church has an active consistory of 4 elders, Tom Beauchnesne, Bill Moore, Scott Riffle, Howard Tice and 3 Deacons Everett Long, Keith Graber and Jim Titus. They are all active in the work of the church, and my conversations with them revealed that they were godly Christians, invested in seeing the work of Christ advanced. They stand firmly with the pastor in the desire to protect the purity and prosperity of the church, and exercise leadership and practical guidance for the congregation.

THE CONGREGATION: On the Lord's Day of my visit, which was in the midst of summer vacation season, there were 52 adults and 7 children present. There was a wide range of ages represented, with a number of young families. Almost everyone stayed after the worship service for the

question-and-answer period regarding the Bible Presbyterian Church, and almost everyone who attended the Q & A showed interest in the information. My impression was that the pastor and elders have thoroughly prepared the congregation, and that the congregation understands the need both to come out of the RCA and to affiliate with a faithful, Bible-believing denomination. I made every effort to engage as many people in conversation as possible, and I was met with a warm welcome and what seemed like genuine interest.

CHRISTIAN SCHOOL: Faith Academy, a K - 12 classical Christian school sponsored by Harvest Community Church, meets in the church facility. It has seen recent growth from 50 to 150 students, due to both the increasing awareness of anti-Christian, pro-homosexual and CRT curriculum of the public schools and the excellent reputation of Faith Academy. The pastor, consistory and congregation have been very supportive of the school, working to improve the facility wherever needed to meet the needs of the school, and committing to work around any inconvenience incurred by having such an enterprise in the church facility. This reveals the vision of the church to meet the needs of the community in order to expand the testimony of the church.

WORSHIP: Dr. Henion's sermons are available on YouTube, (URL below). I would recommend particular attention to his recent (December, 2022) sermons on **AContend for the Faith@** (Jude 1:3).

Contend for the Faith, Part 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ze9ZsDGmQtc>

Contend for the Faith, Part 2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnMPNaUu0S0>

Dr. Henion's sermons may first give the appearance of topical form, but after actually reviewing them, they are seen to be clearly expositional. Their content is solidly Biblical and Reformed. Their style is warm and thoughtful, without melodrama or ostentatiousness or haughtiness. They give solid teaching of Biblical backgrounds and concepts, but include practical application.

The music used is a blend of traditional and contemporary. Because of the time limits of YouTube and the Order of Service, the on-line viewer may not see the traditional hymns which initiate the service. Both the hymns and contemporary songs are carefully chosen to conform with Biblical, Reformed theology. HCC has a number of gifted musicians, one of whom Steve Elmore, Collegiate Enrichment Academy Director EC Music Director, also Jasper Zilli, a graduate of Wheaton College, leads a study of the Psalms on Sunday nights, which includes both singing the Psalms in metrical form (Scottish Psalter) and exposition. One of the elders (Howard Tice) was a radio and television professional before retiring, and is a gifted musical soloist.

The elders participate in the service in various ways, including the reading of Scripture, announcements and prayer.

Communion is offered once a month. To emphasize its importance, Dr. Henion wears a robe on the Lord's Day when the Lord's Supper is observed.

FACILITY: Harvest Community Church has a large room that is used for many purposes. It is the sanctuary for worship, the gathering place for congregational suppers, and location for youth activities. A kitchen is located just off the all-purpose room, and a lobby allows people to gather before entering the various activities. A strong emphasis on Christian education is evident in the beautiful Sunday School rooms in an adjoining building, which is currently also used by Faith Academy. The church is well-located in a strategic, suburban area, with ample parking in a paved lot, and room to expand the work. Careful planning and foresight is evident in the whole facility, which

was constructed (largely with volunteer labor) under Dr. Henion's leadership and dedicated in 1996.

MEDIA RESOURCES:

Videos of Dr. Henion's sermons are available at the Harvest Community Church of Wichita, KS YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ict Harvest>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/wichitaharvest>

Website:

<https://wichitaharvest.com/>

Faith Academy: (316) 239-1449

<https://www.faithacademywichita.com/>