

THOMAS R. KUNKEL JR.

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To the members of the Nashville Presbytery
Presbyterian Church in America

My name is Thomas Robert Kunkel Jr.

Christ saved me over a quarter century ago through the faithful witness of my mother, the daughter of a Presbyterian Scottish immigrant, through the love and patience of one of the founding members of the PCA, and through the solid preaching of a PCA church planter who planted a church near the college that I was attending.

Also, for what it is worth, I have a master's degree in theology from Westminster Theological Seminary having studied under some of the most influential Presbyterian professors and ministers of our times, for which I am enormously grateful.

For over a decade now I have served alongside my Mexican-born wife in the city of Guadalajara, Mexico as an ordained minister of the INPM¹, nine years of which were served in a church called Cristo Redentor (Christ the Redeemer) that was planted by the PCA through Mission to the World (MTW). That is to say, I not only have over a quarter-century of connection with the PCA but also over a decade of experience working alongside MTW missionaries.

As an ordained minister of the Gospel of Christ, I write to your Presbytery today fully conscious of the gravity of the accusations that I make against a fellow ordained minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and TE of the PCA.

According not only to the rules outlined in Appendix I of the BCO but above all, according to the commands of Christ Himself in Matthew 18:15, I first reached out privately to TE Steve Robertson in a sincere attempt to reconcile the following issues and to call him back from his sin to Christ on November 30, 2021. When that attempt was ignored for more than a month, I contacted him again on January 5, 2022 according to the rules outlined in the documents of both the Libro de Disciplina (Book of Discipline) of the INPM, Appendix I of the PCA's BCO, but above all, the teachings of Christ Himself in Matthew 18:16.

Only because these were ignored do I write to the Presbytery now.

My primary purpose with this letter isn't to defend my name. Christ clearly told us in the Scriptures that as His followers we would be hated so attacks on our name as ministers of the Gospel is to be expected. However, the fact that sin is being willfully committed in the name of the PCA, MTW, but above all Christ Himself has caused such pain and division in the Lord's Church here in Guadalajara that it should be of deep concern to anyone who, like myself, have been so richly blessed and edified by God through the PCA.

So, with full understanding of the gravity of charging an ordained minister of the Lord's church with sin and having already pursued the path of reconciliation outlined in Matthew 18:15-16 by Christ Himself, I, with hope that this situation will end in the glory of God, make the following accusations against TE Steve Robertson.

¹ - Iglesia Nacional Presbiteriana de México (National Presbyterian Church of Mexico)

While I will not endeavor to fully document every charge with the corresponding evidence here, please know that I have and am willing to produce both witnesses and evidence for the charges made in this letter when the matter is investigated.

In short, the charges are as follows...

TE Steve Robertson has, on multiple occasions, not only displayed sinful and scandalous behavior that would reasonably call into question his biblical qualification as a minister of the Gospel, but has continued to do so in a knowing, willful, and unrepentant manner even after the behavior was brought to his attention.

There were two sinful scandals that have not only caused significant damage to several local churches here in Guadalajara Mexico, but have continued to bring shame to the Name of Christ amongst the saints here. These scandals involved the unrepentant serial adultery of MTW missionary Paul Fisher and the embezzlement of at least 1.25 million pesos in church donations by local elder Humberto Carrillo, a friend of Steve Robertson.

The evidence will show that Steve not only contributed to these two scandals through a combination of negligence and willful disregard of biblical and denominational rules, but also attacked my reputation and attempted to intimidate me as I tried to expose and deal with these scandals in my role as an ordained minister in the local church. This included giving intentionally false public testimony against me.

The following is a brief outline of the central facts of the situation including several events leading up to the sin to provide context...

The governing documents of the INPM place the responsibility of managing the material resources of the local church in the hands of the deacons. Alongside the biblical reasons for this, the importance of having multiple sets of eyes on the church's finances is self-evident.

When I was still in the process of taking my ordination exams, I approached Steve Robertson in a meeting that I asked for regarding my concerns that his friend Humberto Carrillo had essentially unsupervised access to the local churches' finances without diaconal oversight. Immediately after the meeting, Steve began to engage in bullying and intimidation tactics to make this objection disappear.

I am 6'4" tall and over 230lbs and never in my life, even as a youth, have I ever had someone attempt to physically intimidate me. However, the day I questioned the fact that Steve had allowed unsupervised access of the church's finances to his friend Humberto, he waited until no one was around, laid his hand on me in an aggressive/threatening way, and in coarse language reminded me that he was a pastor and I a mere employee of the church and that I was not to question his authority again or it would have negative consequences for my ordination exams that he had control over (at that time he was the acting "minister of education" in the local Presbytery and in charge of the ordination exams).

A few years later, when I began to investigate Steve's friend's embezzlement based on concerns shared with me by one of the church deacons and the church's former secretary, Steve (who had left Mexico by that time and had taken a different position at MTW) personally called me to threaten my reputation and family finances if I continued to investigate his friend Humberto Carrillo by giving a bad report about me to my supporting PCA church, New Saint Peter's in Dallas, Texas. Anyone who has been or supported a missionary in the past knows how damaging sowing division between missionaries and their supporting churches can be. Steve would later follow through on this threat with false testimony as several PCA TEs and Elders can attest.

This wasn't the only scandal in the local church that Steve Robertson knowingly contributed to. When fellow MTW missionary Paul Fisher was caught being unfaithful to his wife by a member of the local church, Steve not only participated in hiding the adultery from the local church but continued to support Paul's serving publicly in ministry as if nothing was wrong. This prevented Paul from getting the help that he obviously and desperately needed (as evidenced by his continued unrepentant adultery later with another woman that will be addressed below). This shielding and enabling the sin of a fellow MTW missionary (already a scandal in and of itself) lead to further sin and scandal and damage to the Name of Christ.

When PCA/MTW missionary Paul Fisher was confirmed to be in unrepentant sin by multiple groups (the former elder board of Christ the Redeemer that suspended him from the Lord's Supper, the "current" elder board of Christ the Redeemer that excommunicated Paul from the Lord's Church when he refused to repent of his sin, the leadership of the church named "Origin" that Paul fled to after he openly refused to repent of his serial-adultery, and MTW itself that fired Paul) it is concerning to see that fellow MTW missionary Kenton Wood simply hired Paul to regularly preach in the pulpit against the legitimate concerns of myself and others who had spent countless hours seeking Paul's repentance only to be ignored.

As I understand the Scriptures, it is not just "a bit inappropriate" but an intentional act of high-handedness against God Himself to put an unrepentant, excommunicated serial-adulterer who is living separated from his wife in the pulpit to not only preach but give the Lord's Supper. However, this situation continued under Steve Robertson's leadership with his full knowledge. If this isn't a scandal against Christ and His church, I am not sure what would qualify.

As mentioned above, the MTW missionary that put Paul in the pulpit while in unrepentant sin is named Kenton Wood who has for years been falsely presenting himself as an ordained Presbyterian minister when he in fact was not. Steve Robertson, who is the director over Kenton Wood's mission knows this, yet this too has continued.

Why would I mention what might seem to some to be a relatively minor issue, especially when laid aside the other sin and scandal? If any PCA TE was discovered to be falsely representing himself as an ordained minister when he had never submitted himself to ordination exams much less had studied theology in any seminary... would the PCA allow that man to continue falsely presenting himself as ordained? Would that TE be allowed to continue voting in the local presbytery if their deception was discovered? If not, why would this be ok in the case of MTW missionary Kenton Wood (as supervised by Steve Robertson who was fully aware of this situation)?

I mention it because it is part of a pattern of "the biblical and denominational rules don't apply to me" that Steve and the missionaries under his leadership have shown. Adultery amongst the Mexican congregation is disciplined, but among the white American missionaries it was swept under the rug. Not only that, the American missionary adulterer was simply hired by another PCA/MTW planted church in the same presbytery to continue working *after* being biblically excommunicated. Kenton is allowed to falsely present himself as an ordained missionary with Steve's support while they demanded that the Mexican pastors go through all the required steps to study theology and pass their ordination exams. It was the same thing we saw when Steve, on his own authority, skirted the financial rules of the denomination that led to the embezzlement.

This would be a concerning pattern of behavior of any pastor, but Steve Robertson isn't just a regular pastor, he is a director over two continents worth of missionaries. To act like the rules don't apply to the relatively wealthy first-world American missionaries while the same missionaries impose these rules on the developing-world local pastors, is at best terrible optics and the kind of soft-racism that gives some American missionaries (and by proxy, Christ Himself) a bad name in mission fields such as Guadalajara.

All of this is important but it primarily provides context for the central element of my accusation. When I questioned Steve's actions both before and after these scandals, he publicly made provably false accusations against me, a fellow minister of the Gospel. Against the BCO of the PCA, the Book of Discipline of the INPM, but more importantly, against the directives of Christ Himself in the Scriptures, Steve brought his false and libelous charges against me by surprise in the local Presbytery without ever first seeking me personally as a brother. As an aside, the charges were overturned by the Synod who declared me a minister in good standing with the denomination.

I would certainly hope that no true servant of Christ would find it acceptable that an ordained minister would give intentional, slanderously false testimony against another ordained minister of the gospel, especially in a case where in a conflict of interest, doing so would effectively help cover-up and "justify" the accuser's pattern of reckless and sinful behavior. When I asked to speak with Steve privately on these matters, my petition was ignored (See: Matthew 5:23-24).

Then, if making false and slanderous charges were not enough, MTW director and PCA pastor Steve Robertson used the libelous accusations (based at least partially on his false testimony) to intentionally try to assault my reputation as a pastor and to sow division between myself and my supporting church, potentially causing both reputational and economic damage. Steve actively contacted the session of my supporting church and dishonestly misled them about the outcome of the false accusations that he had made against me. As if that were not enough, Steve used his high position at MTW to pressure my supporting church to distance themselves from my wife and I.

According to Proverbs 6:16-19, lying, a heart that devises wicked plans, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife amongst brothers are considered to be "abominations" and sins that the Lord hates. This, taken together with the elements mentioned above I believe show a pattern of sinful behavior that must be repented of if MTW and the PCA are to maintain their integrity Coram Deo. Circling the wagons to excuse and defend sin just because of Steve's high-profile position (as I have seen again and again amongst the local MTW missionaries here in Guadalajara) will not bring the Lord's blessing.

My sincere hope is that Steve will recognize and repent of his sin as an important first step in repairing the damage done to the name of the Lord and His church here in Guadalajara.

As this situation spans a number of years, there are a number of additional elements which can be discussed in greater detail (including the specifics of the false charges made by Steve) as would be prudent and necessary for the members of the Nashville Presbytery to call fellow-member Steve Robertson to repentance. I have both direct evidence as well as multiple witnesses of known good character in support of the accusations presented in this letter.

In the Name of Christ,



Thomas R. Kunkel Jr.

I want to make clear that nothing of what I have said here should be construed as speaking negatively of the PCA itself. It is in part because I love the PCA and am distressed to see what Steve Robertson, Kenton Wood and others have been doing in her name that I am bringing this matter to your attention.

Also, I am not making any general statements positively or negatively about MTW as a whole. I have no substantial knowledge about the details of their work in the vast number of mission fields around the world. While the actions of Steve and others have been deeply concerning here in Guadalajara, I choose to believe that the sinful behavior was a local phenomenon and in no way represents the Christ-honoring labor done by a countless number of their fellow MTW missionaries.