

Vanguard Presbytery Formed

By JAN REETZ
Staff Writer

The sheep literally left the flock Thursday night when some 40 conservative members of the Presbyterian church formed the Vanguard Presbytery, leaving the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

Spearheading the action was Rev. Todd Allen, minister of the Eastern Heights Presbyterian Church and newly elected moderator of the hours-old presbytery. The conference was held at Allen's church.

Allen explained the some 40 representatives from seven states came to the conference because they were at odds with the Presbyterian Church in the United States, the southern arm of the Presbyterian church.

Interested Observers

Although all present did not

sign the resolution and were only there as interested observers, those present blasted the parent organization as being politically oriented and accused them of adopting "non-Gospel trends."

As one Virginia minister put it, "We don't approve of giving funds to Angela Davis or favoring legal abortion or participating and condoning Vietnam anti-war demonstrations as does the Southern Presbyterian Church."

The newly-formed Presbytery will function under the ancient Westminster Confession and the Book of Church Order of 1934, in contrast to the new denominational of faith adopted last month by the former parent church.

Historically a presbytery can be formed by the signatures of three ministers and one church elder on a resolution.

After collecting the signatures, the members of the pres-

bytery set Nov. 14 as an organizational meetings to iron out the parliamentary details of the organization.

That meeting will be held at the Tabb Independent Presbyterian Church in Petersburg, Va.

Hall Named

The group elected Chester Hall of the First Presbyterian Church in Louisville, Ky. as clerk and treasurer of the presbytery.

Following the rules adopted Thursday, the office of the Presbytery will be in the clerk's church in Louisville.

"There have been lots of Moses' to lead our people in the wilderness for the last 40 years. We want to be the Joshua to lead us to the promise land," Hall said metaphorically criti-

cizing affiliation with the previous organization.

The charter of the group will be filed under the laws of Georgia.

Adoption of the resolution came in spite of flashing caution lights displayed by Dr. Aiken Taylor of Asheville, N.C., editor of the Presbyterian Journal.

Taylor called the group's attention to the seriousness of forming a presbytery at this time which would become a legal entity precluding any further development for its members in the larger "continuing Church" movement in which he is involved.

This movement is composed of four groups, all who are in conflict with the Southern Presbyterian Church.

Those groups are the Presbyterian Evangelical Fellowship, the Presbyterian Churchmen United, the Presbyterian Journal and the Concerned Presbyterians.

Although these groups are dissident toward the parent organization, no movement toward secession has yet been taken.

Question Raised

One of the thorniest questions raised at the meeting was what to do about the observers and ministers interested in being affiliated with the presbytery but who were tied in one way or another to commitments to the parent body.

"Transitional ministers," those serving churches who are members of the organization,

and interested elders who had no mandate from their church to sign the resolution are specific examples.

For the next 18 months, churches will be allowed to be original signers of the resolution. After that, the original document will be closed.

All three categories—transitional ministers, elders and signers of the resolution—will attend the Nov. 14 organizational meeting.

Voicing a strong display of confidence, Hall told his fellow presbytery originators, "I know a lot of human beings with less intestinal fortitude than you fellows who just need you to back them up before they join us."

One minister called the presbytery a "harbor, a home for those who have had no place to turn in the parent organization. "We now have a ruling body we can support," he said.



Staff Photo by Richard Summers

DR. JOHN RICHARDS SPEAKS
Perry Leader Delivers Sermon