

One day while I was a seminary student I was sweeping the little hall right outside my apartment. There was a very small crack at the bottom of the door frame, where the frame meets the floor. I decided to stick the broom in there and get as much dust out of there as I possibly could. I turned around and kept sweeping...less than a second or two after I turned around I felt a horrible pain on my feet, which almost paralyzed me. I was wearing sandals. Two wasps or hornets stung me on one foot and another one on the other. I did not realize that in that very small crack at the bottom of the door frame these hornets had a small nest. I had just violently snatched them from what they called home. Interestingly enough the three hornets reacted the same way. Luckily, I was able to move and went inside, or more would have come after me. The building did not belong to the hornets, yet somehow they made their home there. I messed with their home, and their reaction to what they saw as an aggression was to sting me. They were simply being territorial. It is a normal reaction among insects and animals.

At a home bible study yesterday the host family had a small Chihuahua who was very friendly. This friendly puppy spent all evening playing with my daughter (who had just turned five the day before). After every one left and only I, my daughter and the host family were left, the little Chihuahua went to a sofa and sat comfortably on a pillow. This friendly and loving pet has made this pillow and this particular corner of the sofa her home. That is where she rests and lies down. Without thinking I walked rapidly in that direction to grab my bible. Suddenly, this loving and kid friendly dog turned on me and started barking like crazy. The owner of the house explained that I had come close to her corner, to the place she sees as home and that is why the puppy reacted in such manner. The little Chihuahua was only being territorial.

On November of 2012 El Principe de Paz will be celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Sometime in 2011 Getsemani celebrated its 100th anniversary. El Principe de Paz has been in the *building* at the corner of S. Georgia and 14<sup>th</sup> for about 45 years, and in that particular corner even longer (with an older building). In the current building we have celebrated funerals for our loved ones, we have had baptisms for our children, grand children and great grand children, our young people have led worship and preached, many of our teenagers and young adults used to crawl under the benches during worship when they were children, the lives of the people have been lived there. Every single bench was donated by a family, so was the communion table and the baptistery. Every ornament and banner was made by someone in the congregation. The church is the people, and this particular group of people had a building which they called home. The building was held in trust for the PCUSA and we all knew that. We had stated repeatedly that we were willing to walk away from it all if presbytery asked. Yet one day we were suddenly and violently asked to leave. The pastors were ordered to leave the buildings immediately. Our congregations, sessions and pastors were united. If the pastors were asked to leave the congregations were leaving as well, if one congregation was leaving the 3 congregations that disaffiliated were leaving. We had agreed to stand as one as a testimony to our faith in Christ.

To this act by Mission Presbytery there was a collective reaction, completely unexpected, completely unplanned. Our congregations began to take their things with them. Some things we would need wherever we went in order to continue with our ministry and some others were of such sentimental value that they could not be left behind. El Principe de Paz had the opportunity to gather its people on Thursday night to pray, cry, mourn (keys had to be turned in on Friday). We were all shocked at the extreme and militant response of Mission presbytery. That Thursday night we had but an hour to absorb this response, there was no time to think, we were like a hornet's nest that had been violently shaken, we were like a dog being removed from its territory. Getsemani did not have the opportunity to even gather as we did, and neither did San Pablo. Why did three congregations made up of hard working, honest Christian citizens react in a very similar way? Banks, apartments, the federal government and other institutions give people time to vacate a place. Mission presbytery gave no time to our congregations.

Mission presbytery was informed that our 3 congregations were now members in good standing in the EPC: congregations with a session, a pastor and church members. They were informed as well that in removing the

pastor from the building they were removing the congregations as well and that in removing one congregation they were removing the 3 congregations. The only response received to this was “You & Tom because you renounced jurisdiction are no longer PCUSA pastors & are required to vacate the church immediately.”

Our congregations are mostly family congregations. The majority of the members are descendants of the founding members. The buildings belong to God. These buildings were provided to our congregations by God Himself. Therefore they were home to our people, they were a haven, a sanctuary, these buildings were La Casa de Dios to us. Yet without a thought of the consequences Mission presbytery moved merciless to cut off the head of each congregation. Hornets sting, dogs bark and bite...what did you expect for us to do? Mission Presbytery...you treated us like animals...when we were willing to hand it all over peacefully. Nevertheless, we still handed everything over peacefully, without a protest. You asked for the keys to the buildings, we gave them to you, you asked for the bank accounts of El Principe de Paz, we turned them in, you asked for my personal baptismal and wedding records I turned them in, you asked me for missing items from 15 years ago and I went the extra mile and found them for you...you ask me for missing items that I do not know of...

The word theft has been thrown around for a situation that you created (as far as I am concerned all missing items have been returned). The word or term “legal action” has also been thrown around...how dare you? We have no building, no assets, no finances and you dare imply we are thieves...Our people have been trampled by you, humiliated, do you not know that the majority of our members are senior citizens. There has now been a collective response in the three congregations of high blood pressure, people thinking they are going to have a heart attack, extremely high levels of stress. One of our ladies suffered what we believe to have been a stroke yesterday...You and I... definitely do not serve the same God.

I was in COM and I never, not even for a second put the institution before God and His people.

As if all of this was not enough now I am getting emails being circulated in Mission Presbytery that refer to me as a Pharrisee and a saducee.

You...make me cry...you sadden my heart...

I am a man of my word...look at the facts...I am simply doing what I said I would do for the Lord...did you not hear me and see me at the General Assembly...did you not hear my complaints and concerns about your dismissal policy at the October Presbytery meeting (2011)...I even brought up disaffiliation in front of every one. I have not hidden what I stand for; I have publicly proclaimed what I believe and what I stand against. I have said I loved you and that I was willing to give my life for you...what do you think I am doing?

You make me cry...You make Jesus cry

I am no one, and I wrestle with my Lord for choosing me to speak His Word, I am the Lord's and I have no choice but to speak what He puts in my heart and mouth. I love you all...I lovingly say this...we are having a higher attendance now that we do not have the buildings...this has only made us stronger in the Lord...as far as I am concerned...do not give us the buildings back.

To the PCUSA, and other denominations facing the same issues, I say on behalf of the Lord...”Let my people go, so that they may worship Me and serve Me.” PCUSA you are holding people hostage with a property clause.

To the pastors in the PCUSA I say, do not hide from God's people what the PCUSA is doing (Both conservative evangelical and progressive liberal pastors). I did not, and that is why we are leaving the PCUSA, the people in the pews won't have it any other way.

I Love you all in the PCUSA, from the bottom of my heart and in Christian love through this letter I say to you....today I wipe the dust off my feet and move on to worship and serve the Lord Jesus Christ wherever He takes El Principe de Paz, Getsemani, San Pablo and all those who stand for Him.

Con Cariño y amor en Cristo  
Kneeling and Standing for Jesus  
Pastor Hector Reynoso