



Todd Overbeek

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Dewey,

The characterization of BCPRC as haters of the new members from Hope PRC is simply beyond the pale. I was on three of these new member visits (one with you) and the attitude of the elder I partnered with towards those with whom we visited was always cordial and encouraging. This includes our conversation as we travelled to and from these meetings, not just during our meeting.

The new families that came to our church shortly after Lanning arrived were well received, their children were active in Children's Activity Night and Young Peoples, and adult members served on a variety of committees. In fact, we temporarily lost the sound for our service the night that the suspension from office was announced because two of our newer members were volunteering for audio that evening and made a show of themselves by leaving the sanctuary in a huff, turning off the sound as they went.

The point is that, try as you might, you cannot re-write the history of BCPRC's treatment of new members from Hope to fit your narrative. That is violence.

Ascribing an alleged inflammatory quote to an unnamed elder intentionally leads the reader to assume, first, that this is true, and second, that it depicts the attitude of the consistory towards all new members from Hope. It is specious and misleading and it too is violence.

In retrospect, it is painfully obvious that Byron Center PRC was used as a membership placeholder, a gathering place for those with a larger agenda. We naively believed that there was a sincere desire to enjoy the fellowship of believers and grow in our faith together but that was never the intent and that is violence.

Our membership swelled with the arrival of then Rev. Lanning and was decimated in equal measure upon his departure. These nomadic members were determined, even excited, to follow a man whatever the consequence doing violence to a congregation along the way.

There is a great deal of sin that is evident in this controversy, to be sure. Not all of our conversations have been charitable when speaking to or about one another. For that each man must repent, turn from such sins and press forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Please consider the assertions that you have made about the battered congregation at BCPRC in light of Proverbs 16: 2-3: "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits. Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established."

Todd