

PROTESTANT CHURCH-OWNED PUBLISHERS' ASSOCIATION

A Brief History

In February 1949, the executive heads of twenty-four church-owned publishing houses, meeting together at Columbus, Ohio, authorized the formation of a trade association. It was to be devoted to the welfare of the official church-owned publishing houses and was designed to assist these houses in prosecuting their normal functions as church service agencies. Among those functions were the production and distribution of church and church school periodicals, books and supplies.

The following committee was appointed with authority to develop in detail a plan for such a trade association, with instructions to proceed in setting it up for operation as quickly as possible:

Pat Beaird, The Methodist Publishing House, Chairman; W.L. Jenkins, The Presbyterian Board of Christian Education; Herbert F. Osteyee, The American Baptist Publication Society; C.D. Pantle, Christian Board of Publication; John Ribble, The Presbyterian Board of Christian Education; Roy H. Stetler, Evangelical-United Brethren Publishing House; Harold E. Ingraham, Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

This committee prepared a prospectus and presented it to the executive heads of all the church-owned publishing houses in the United States and Canada. The prospectus contained statements concerning the background, the purpose, a possible program, the plan of organization, and the method of financing the proposed trade association.

After a series of meetings to perfect the plan, The Protestant Church-Owned Publishers' Association was officially incorporated in the State of Pennsylvania on June 22, 1951.

Among the considerations which prompted the formation of the association were the following:

The church-owned publishing house is unique in the business world. It is necessarily commercial in nature because it must operate as a self-sustaining venture. Yet it is, first of all, a church service agency and in its work is influenced by motives that do not enter into the operations of a strictly commercial enterprise. It needs the stimulation and help that come from experiences shared with other church-owned publishing houses. While it has access to and sometimes membership in strictly commercial trade associations, frequently such organizations can be of assistance in only limited portion of its activities.

Many problems of a church-owned publishing house are not common to any commercial agency. It operates under some disadvantages while, at the same time, enjoying advantages not enjoyed by secular organizations.

There is a community of interests among the church-owned publishing houses, which, if pooled for the benefit of all, go far toward raising the level of efficiency in each, both in its commercial aspects and as a service agency to its own constituency. It was the

recognition of these possibilities that prompted the formation of **The Protestant Church-Owned Publishers' Association**, which is devoted to serving the broad interests and needs of the publishing institutions that are owned and operated by the Protestant denominations of America.

The experience of the Association has opened new opportunities for service to its members:

From 24 members with combined sales of approximately \$46 million in 1951, PCPA grew to 28 members with combined sales of more than \$138 million in 1968. Membership rose to 34 publishing houses in 1960. By 1977, mergers among the various denominations and the withdrawal of a few small houses reduced the total membership to 23, but total sales had increased to over \$173 million. By the end of 1989, membership stood at 33 houses with sales of over \$480 million.

During late 1990's and after the turn of the century, membership declined to around twenty. Starting in 2005, membership increased to the present thirty-three publishing houses and six adjunct members.

During its earlier years, the Association completed many surveys, one of which was a wage and salary study. Retail sales and mail order manuals were prepared for use by members in training their personnel. Operating statistics were compiled for book stores by an outside consulting firm. For several years comprehensive operating ratio statistical studies were conducted in the publishing of lesson materials, story papers and devotional magazines. Also, a statistical ratio study of retail bookstore operations made.

PCPA has participated in several projects: Cooperative Publication Association – which produced a number of items for use by several member houses; Religious Film Libraries – fostering the growth of a nationwide network of interdenominational film libraries; Cooperative Advertising – an effort to make church workers and lay people aware of the materials available through their own denominational publishing houses. The “cooperative notebook”, a little booklet produced for distribution among state and local councils of churches, was a part of this program.

During its first nineteen years, the Association held annual workshop meetings. It conducted eleven regional seminars covering such subjects as bookstore management, merchandise and periodical materials distribution, inventory control, retail selling, copyrights, procurement, direct mail advertising, promotion and subscription fulfillment. From 1972 thru 2004, PCPA held biennial conferences. Starting then, it also elected its officers for two years instead of one.

From 1952 until the early 1990s, an important part of the Association's work was maintaining liaison with the chiefs of chaplains of the Armed Forces. In cooperation with the chaplains, a unique resource was developed known as the Armed Forces Religious Education Resource Service. This program provided teaching materials for all age groups, and makes them available to service personnel throughout the world. The curriculum makes possible a continuous

program of Christian education for the serviceperson and family, regardless of how often they are moved from one base to another.

There came a point when PCPA directors did not feel that the association could afford, nor did it need, a fulltime executive secretary. In 1951, the association began to contract with one of its member houses for executive secretary services (which included forty percent of the executive's time plus the necessary office space and secretarial services). This contract was with the United Methodist Publishing House from 1976 – 1977 and then again in 1986. The Baptist Sunday School Board provided these services from 1978 - 1985. The contract was with Warner Press from February 1987 – February 1989. Having three different executive secretaries between January 1986 and February 1989 suggested that the member house contract should be reconsidered with the possibility of hiring a part-time executive secretary with publishing experience, perhaps a member house retiree. This was looked upon favorably and was accomplished in 1989 with the hiring of Jim Clark, a retiree of the Baptist Sunday School Board with thirty-five years experience in publishing. When Jim Clark retired as executive secretary in 1993, Alan Meyer assumed this position, which was then titled the executive director position. After Alan Meyer left, Gary Mulder assumed the position of association director in 2005.

The decades of the 70's and the 80's were turbulent for some of our member houses and for the denominations they represent. While some denominations were still growing, others seemed to have reached plateaus or indeed, had begun to decline in enrollments and attendance. During those twenty years, many of the member houses noticed deterioration in the loyalty level of some to their denominational publishing house; this brought both emotional and financial concerns. Some houses' parent denominations were in the throes of theological controversies which caused churches to be unsure as to whether they could "trust" their publishing house which had served them so well for generations. Our society was being permeated with a similar lack of trust at all levels and in all arenas – political, financial, business, media, etc.

The highly volatile years which concluded the 80's brought tremendous turnover in the leadership of church-owned publishing houses. Many heads of houses in 1990 had been in their place of responsibility for less than five years, few had been there for as many as fifteen years.

The volatility continued in the 1990's and in the early part of the new century. Many if not most PCPA members experienced a decline in sales as their denominations continued to lose members, the denominational loyalty of churches continued to decline, competition increased, and Sunday School attendance (and sales of curriculum) declined.

These trends had an impact on PCPA. Due to cost considerations, and other factors, attendance at the PCPA Biennial declined rather dramatically. As noted earlier, PCPA membership also declined. As a result of these developments, at its meeting in Phoenix, Arizona in the spring of 2005, the PCPA Board of Directors made some significant decisions about PCPA's future, including the following:

- postpone the 2006 PCPA Biennial Conference

- distribute some of the PCPA staff functions to PCPA member houses (most notably the financial services functions to UMPH)
- eliminate the PCPA Executive Committee
- dramatically reduce member assessments
- ask the officers to work with Gary Mulder, a long time PCPA Executive Committee member, to develop a plan for the future of PCPA.

A plan was developed and approved by the PCPA Board in March of 2006. The key elements of PCPA structure and program are now as follows:

- An annual PCPA Spring Conference is held in a central city, consisting mostly of peer group meetings.
- The peer group members are each part of a listserv to promote communication and dialogue between meetings.
- The Heads of Houses also meet as a peer group each fall.
- The Board is made up of one representative from each member house.
- Various surveys (e.g. financial benchmarks, salary/benefits) are done as needed.
- An Association Director position was established to provide continuity and staff support for those matters that could not be transferred to member houses.

There is now new energy and excitement about the “revamped” PCPA. Membership has again increased so that it now includes 33 publishing house members and 6 adjunct members. Attendance is good at the annual Spring Conference, and reviews of these meetings are very positive.

The challenges of denominational publishing, however, will not diminish. It is more important than ever that PCPA continue to provide effective support to denominational publishers as it attempts to achieve its mission of

"Enable its members to serve their denominations by providing visionary leadership through the ministry of Christian publishing".

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History of Past Leadership

<u>Year</u>	<u>President</u>	<u>Vice President</u>	<u>Treasurer</u>
1951-52	Pat Beaird	L. L. Huffman	John Ribble
1952-53	L. L. Huffman	H. Torrey Walker	John Ribble
1953-54	H. Torrey Walker	W. L. Jenkins	Roy Stetler
1954-55	W. L. Jenkins	Kenneth Graham	Samuel Shane
1955-56	Kenneth Graham	Franklin Sheeder	Samuel Shane
1956-57	Franklin Sheeder	Keith Von Hagen	Herbert Osteyee
1957-58	Keith Von Hagen	W. H. Cramblet	Herbert Osteyee
1958-59	W. H. Cramblet	Birger Swenson	Herbert Osteyee
1959-60	Birger Swenson	A. J. Metzler	Herbert Osteyee
1960-61	A. J. Metzler	W. L. Seaman	C. H. Lindewall
1961-62	W. L. Seaman	John Ribble	C. H. Lindewall
1962-63	John Ribble	C. H. Dickinson	C. H. Lindewall
1963-64	C. H. Dickinson	Otto A. Dorn	C. H. Lindewall
1964-65	Otto A. Dorn	Loren A. Owen	C. H. Lindewall
1965-66	Loren A. Owen	Leonard Wedel	George W. Taylor
1966-67	Leonard Wedel	Martin Bratcher	George W. Taylor
1967-68	Martin Bratcher	Albert Anderson	George W. Taylor
1968-69	Albert Anderson	Cecil D. Jones	George W. Taylor
1969-70	Cecil D. Jones	Stuart Johnston	George W. Taylor
1970-71	Stuart Johnston	Charles Colman	Donald Burkholder
1971-72	Charles Colman	Frank Rhody	Donald Burkholder
1972-73	Frank Rhody	J. M. Crowe	Kenneth Walker
1973-74	J. M. Crowe	Ben Cutrell	Kenneth Walker
1974-76	Ben Cutrell	Lloyd Knox	Kenneth Walker
1976-78	Lloyd Knox	Donal Noffsinger	Kenneth Walker
1978-80	Donald Noffsinger	Frank Hoadley	Kenneth Walker
1980-81	Frank Hoadley	Ralph Reinke	Kenneth Walker
1981-82	Frank Hoadley	Ralph Reinke	R. L. Minton
1982-84	Ralph Reinke	James W. Clark	R. L. Minton
1984-86	James W. Clark	Thomas Carpenter	R. L. Minton
1986-88	Thomas Carpenter	Robert Endruschat	R. L. Minton
1988-89	Robert Endruschat	H. B. Tomlin	Donald Noffsinger
1989-90	Robert Endruschat	Cecelia Adkins	Robert Feaster
1991-92	Cecelia Adkins	Robert Feaster	Gary Mulder
1992-94	Robert Feaster	John Gerber	Gary Mulder
1994-95	John Gerber	Gary Mulder	Robert Rist
1995-98	Gary Mulder	Marvin Roloff	Steve Carter
1998-00	Marvin Roloff	Steve Carter	Kristy Pullen
2000-02	Stephen Carter	Kristy Pullen	Ted Warren
2002-04	Ted Warren	Hardy Weathers	Neil Alexander
2004-06	Hardy Weathers	Neil Alexander	Bruce Kintz
2006-08	Neil Alexander	Bruce Kintz	Wendy McFadden

2008-10	Bruce Kintz	Wendy McFadden	Lynne Deming
2010-12	Lynne Deming	Gary Hauk	Beth Lewis
2012-14	Beth Lewis	Ron Hunter	Sarah Wilke
2014-16	Ron Hunter	Sarah Wilke	Russ Eanes
2016-17	Sarah Wilke	Russ Eanes	Marc Lewis
2017-18	Russ Eanes	Mark Lewis	Wendy McFadden
2018-20	Wendy McFadden	Ken Braddy	Scott Gunn
2020-	Scott Gunn	Robin Pippin	Janelle Vernon

Secretaries/Director of PCPA

<u>Year</u>	<u>Secretary/Director</u>
1951-55	Gordon Grant
1955-76	James Cooper
1976-78	Roger Burgess
1978-85	Bob M. Boyd
1986	Harold Fair
1987-89	Richard Grant
1989-93	James W. Clark
1994-05	Alan Meyer
2005-20	Gary Mulder
2020-	Beth Lewis