Twitter Thread by Dr. Valerie Hobbs



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[Thread]
For those who followed last summer's exposure of #GenevanCommons hate group, there is an update.

It seems beneath my dignity to report it.
But then again, so much of what women end up having to say is beneath our dignity. 1/11

For *some* of the back story, see here: https://t.co/ojo19jWyvs

and here:
https://t.co/AsHuM8q861

2/11

Reminder: This group had upwards of 1,000 church officer and laypeople members. They mocked and slandered many, many of their brothers and sisters with racist, sexist and homophobic slurs. They plotted to disrupt their sister's work for the church. 3/11

https://t.co/X52uXe75Ru

Last weekend, #GenevanCommons member Rev. Michael Spangler faced charges in a church trial. Two others in this presbytery have not been charged, though one has demitted office. 4/11

Charges
1: offenses against his brothers, "sowing discord in the church by publicly disparaging the governance of the Presbytery"
2: "publicly reviling and detracting Mrs. Aimee Byrd & Mrs. Rachel Miller," focused especially on 2 WORDS Spangler wrote: "ruthless wolves." 5/11

The outcome:
According to multiple sources, Spangler pled guilty to charge 1 & the Presby found him guilty of charge 2.

Recommended consequences: Suspension for 2 yrs for Charge 1, admonishment for charge 2 (the *lightest* of all possible penalties). 6/11

To my knowledge, aside from 1 other man, none of the people involved in the hate group #GenevanCommons, not even its administrators, have been held to account. 7/11

I first encountered some of these men in 2015, when I witnessed the last stage of a church trial. A minister was found guilty of not requiring his ill wife to attend church. Penalties on the table: suspension and expulsion from the church and ministry.

What have I learned? 8/11

Protect women, face serious consequences.
Revile and harass women – a slap on the wrist will suffice.

Trust the courts? Women so often bear the shame of church court failures. Courts remind us over and over, how little we are worth, how little abuse means in the church. 9/11

We are supposed to feel relieved & thankful when men take our cases to church courts. Here come the men w/ all the procedures!

But I do not trust systems that have been set up largely w/out the input of those they should protect. 10/11

Big problems are calls for big reflection, big scrutiny, potentially big change.

All that must take place at a fundamental level.

Until then, church courts are going to continue to go something like this … 11/11

I wrote this 3 yrs ago, suggesting where Presby churches might *begin* making changes to their Books of Church Order. Perhaps someone might find it useful now.

*Sidenote: Ironically, I stopped writing for this particular publication b/c of abuse.

https://t.co/WDWxQtqq9c