

# GUARDIAN

## After Thirty Years

It was in October, 1935 that the first issue of **The Presbyterian Guardian** appeared. Thirty years later we are thankful to God for the privilege of continuing its ministry.

If such a periodical was needed in the controversy of the thirties, it is no less necessary today. A decadent and diluted Presbyterianism is all but being destroyed from within.

Those who would guard the precious heritage of the faith must be encouraged to stand fast. As God's truth, it must be made known to men. Orthodoxy must find expression in print but also in life — for truth is in order to goodness.

WE would call for submission to Scripture's sole authority.

WE would plead for Christ's pre-eminence as Head of his church.

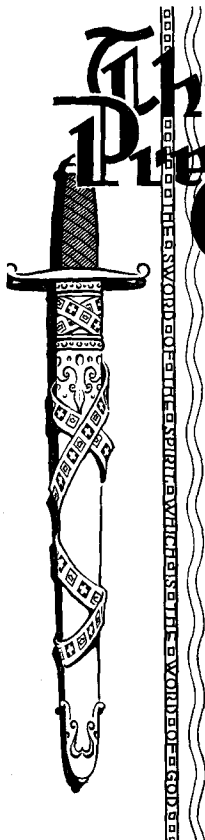
WE would urge men to trust Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

WE would pray to be filled with the Spirit — to use his sword and to manifest his fruit.

WE would labor on for the glory of our Triune God.

OCTOBER 7, 1935

## The Presbyterian Guardian



### PRAYER

Christ, give me strength to stand for Thy dear Name,  
For all the glory of Thy Written Word,  
In spite of jeers or laughter, sneering blame,  
Or light indifference of minds untired,  
Thine is the battle, I am but a breath,  
Take all the honor, pour the shame on me,  
Nerve Thou my arm, and keep my heart till death,  
Which hour alone will set the soldier free.

Dear Lord and Christ, Thou pardoned sinner's Friend,  
Who on the cross hast borne my load of guilt,  
How could I pay Thee for Thy matchless grace?  
Yet give me this: To serve Thee as Thou wilt,  
Until the end—unfeared, triumphant end,  
When tear-dimmed eyes shall rest upon Thy Face.

K. L. W.

THE PRESBYTERIAN  
CONSTITUTIONAL  
COVENANT UNION

## **Jesus Predicts the Future**

**EDWARD WYBENGA**

### ***The Widow's Mite***

**Luke 21:1-4**

**I**t was the last week of Jesus' public ministry on the earth. By day he taught in the temple in Jerusalem, sleeping at night under the open skies on the slopes of the Mount of Olives.

As he sat one day in the court of the temple Jesus took note of the way people gave their offerings for the support of the services. Rich men passing by would cast large sums of money into the coffers. Then a poor widow came along and cast in two mites—the smallest coin in use among the Jews, valued at a fraction of a cent in our money.

It was Jesus' observation that "this poor widow hath cast in more than they all." How could he mean that? In quantity the woman had given far less than the others. But Jesus explained himself in these words: "All these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God; but she of her poverty hath cast in all the living that she had." They gave of their abundance, and made sure that they had plenty left for themselves. She gave all that she had to live on, and trusted God to supply her needs for tomorrow.

Measured by our standards of giving today, this widow lacked good common sense. She gave everything away. What would she eat on the morrow? Jesus, however, did not look on it that way. He who gave all that he had, did not think it wrong for this woman to give all that she had.

What a lesson for us as we approach our season of a Thank Offering! Shall we give out of love for God, and out of self-denial for his church, as the widow did? Or shall we give that which we do need anyway, and which involves no sacrifice?

### ***Jesus Discloses the Future***

**Luke 21:5-38**

As Jesus left the temple never again to return, his disciples called his attention to the beauty and glory of this

massive structure. It seemed that it was built to stand forever. Yet Jesus predicted its utter ruin: "There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down."

Stunned by this disclosure, the disciples walked silently down the valley with Jesus, across the brook Kidron, and up the Mount of Olives. From that position one could command a magnificent view of the city and in the foreground the temple in dazzling white, topped with golden pinnacles.

Jesus' alarming prophecy of the destruction of the temple drew from his disciples the questions, "Master, but when shall these things be? And what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?"

It appears that Jesus' lengthy answer has in view both the downfall of Jerusalem and the end of the world, though we cannot look at it in detail. He did not tell the disciples the exact date when these things would happen, but he did tell them what signs would point to the near approach of the end. Many would appear claiming to be the Christ. There would be wars, earthquakes, famines, pestilences, severe persecutions of true believers, cruelty, hatred, oppression. Are not many of these things characteristic of the age in which we are still living?

Matthew quotes, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (24:12). How true that is! But in the midst of all this trouble and tumult there is hope and victory held out for those who persevere in the faith of Jesus: "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved (Matt. 24:13).

*Mrs. Wybenga has kindly sent us her late husband's notes and meditations on the remaining chapters of Luke. Except for some condensation, much of the material is ready for use, and we are pleased to be able to complete these studies on the third Gospel, in the months ahead.*

### ***Destruction of Jerusalem***

Referring particularly to the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus went on to say, "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." Within 40 years all this was accomplished. In the year 70 A.D. the Roman armies under the command of Titus besieged the city, stormed its walls, and leveled it with the ground, destroying the magnificent temple, the center of Jewish worship, fulfilling the "abomination of desolation" prophesied by Daniel.

Jesus foretold further, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." This oppressive subjection to the nations has continued through nineteen centuries. Some Jews have achieved a degree of independence in recent years by returning to Palestine, but many are still dispersed among the nations. Jerusalem, though not the 'old city' itself, serves as Israel's capital. One wonders how long ere the fulfillment of "the times of the Gentiles"?

The convulsions of nature and the overwhelming calamities and "distress of nations, with perplexity" cannot be limited to Israel. The prophecy must include the world at large with the approach of the end time. Other passages in the Bible support this view. Such mighty forces of destruction will be let loose as to result in "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth," Jesus said.

Ah, what will the wicked do when they "see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" to judge the nations? The Apostle John wrote later that men will cry to the mountains and rocks: "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:16-17). They will cry to stones that cannot hear; neither will they be able to withstand the light of God's judgment.

How different will be the attitude of the righteous at Christ's return! All who trust in the Savior look forward to this event with joyful expectation.

*(concluded on page 122)*

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# The Ministry of the Gospel — a Divine Calling

HAROLD S. LAIRD

I count it a real privilege and a distinct honor to have been invited to bring the message at the opening of this thirty-seventh year of Westminster Theological Seminary. I am not unmindful of the place of prominence and influence that it occupies to-day among the theological seminaries of the world. Indeed I am not unmindful of the fact that, unlike most institutions of learning, it has not had to wait for years to come to such stature. For it has occupied a place of prominence and influence from its very inception by reason of the recognized outstanding scholarship and unique ability as a teacher of that great but humble servant of God through whom this Seminary was brought into being, together with those other well-known scholars associated with him. In fact, such is the stature of Westminster Seminary to-day that I am forced to question, Who am I that I should undertake to address the faculty and students of so distinguished an institution?

And yet there is a certain appropriateness about my doing so. As some of you know it was my very great privilege, for which I shall ever be grateful, to be associated with Dr. Machen and others in the establishing of Westminster Seminary. In fact for some time it was my responsibility to serve as secretary of its Board of Trustees. It was only recently that Dr. Young reminded me that it was I who wrote him, while he was still studying abroad, informing him of his election to the faculty of the new institution. I am happy that I had some little part in bringing to Westminster such an outstanding Christian gentleman and scholar.

I count it one of the greatest privileges and blessings of my life to have been associated with Dr. Machen in the lifting of this standard against the enemies of the truth within the Presbyterian Church. What a man of God he was! Little wonder that the institu-

tion that he founded is what it is.

But let me get on with my subject. Since I am neither a philosopher nor a psychologist, but just an ordinary preacher of the gospel, it is necessary for me in delivering an address under most any and all circumstances to have a text of Scripture as a guide for my thinking.

The text that I have chosen and from which, of course, I get my theme for this address is that familiar assertion of that most effective minister of the gospel of all time found in a portion of the 15th and 16th verses of the first chapter of his epistle to the Galatians. These verses, as we all know, are just a portion of that great argument of Paul in this opening chapter for the genuineness of his apostleship. But I am interested for the present only in that portion of the argument set forth in these two verses, which have to do solely with his own calling to the ministry of the gospel.

That the ministry of the gospel is a divine calling, not only in such isolated cases as that of Paul, but also in the case of any true minister of the gospel, is made abundantly clear in such a passage as Ephesians 4:1-16, where we are plainly told that all real evangelists and pastors and teachers are quite as truly God's gifts to the church as were the apostles and prophets of the apostolic period.

I employ the Apostle Paul's Galatian testimony as my text for this address, mainly directed to you who are students for this ministry, because I

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*One of the founding Trustees of Westminster Seminary, Dr. Laird has been in the gospel ministry for nearly half a century. He resides in New Britain, Pa. and is affiliated with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod.*

*His address at the opening exercises on September 15 is reproduced here, slightly condensed.*

am persuaded that it sets forth certain great facts that characterize this calling of any man into this ministry.

## Originates with God

First of all, it is a calling that has its *origin in the eternal counsel and foreknowledge of God.*

The Apostle declares, "It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb." I like that expression, "*It pleased God.*" It is an expression of God's sovereignty. It suggests the great truth that he, God, does what he pleases. It reminds me of that greatest of all definitions of the sovereignty of God, strange to say, falling from the lips of none other than God's heathen "servant" Nebuchadnezzar, Chaldean king of Babylon, whom God used to chasten his people Israel. And yet, not so strange, for this heathen king had such a remarkable personal experience of the sovereignty of God in his own life, as God employed him first of all as a whip with which to chasten Israel. Then, having finished with him as a whip, God turned the chastening upon the king himself, driving him from his throne into the wilderness, where he spent seven years with the wild beasts until he came to his senses. It was then that Nebuchadnezzar gave us this great definition of the sovereignty of God: "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"

One of the things that God has been pleased to do as Sovereign is to give to the church and to the world in this age of grace Christian ministers of the gospel. The Apostle Paul is telling us here that it pleased the Lord to set him apart for the ministry of the gospel before he was born. This is the meaning of the expression, "who separated me from my mother's womb." What Paul is saying here is that while he was still in his moth-

er's womb God set him apart as a minister of the gospel. But that which was true of Paul is true of all of us who are God's gifts to the church as ministers of the gospel.

To some of us God has given peculiar evidence of this. Some of you know that my middle name is Samuel. It is the name that my mother chose for me before I was born, for the Lord had put it into her heart to give her son, like Hannah of old, to the service of the Lord. Though you may not have such evidence as this, if you have really been called of God to the ministry of the gospel, you too were separated unto that ministry from your mother's womb. But if we were separated unto this ministry before we were born, we know that we were thus separated from the foundation of the world, for all God's purposes are eternal.

Yes, God's calling of us to this ministry had its origin in his eternal counsel and foreknowledge. There is something very solemn and sobering in the knowledge of that fact to me. Not only did God choose me in Christ unto salvation from the foundation of the world, but he also chose me at the same time to be a minister of the glorious gospel of the Son of God.

### By God's Grace

In the second place, it is a calling that is *wholly the result of God's grace*.

The Apostle adds, "*and called me by his grace*." No doubt the "calling" Paul has primarily in mind here is that calling which he experienced that day on the road to Damascus. What an illustration that experience was not only of effectual calling, but especially in the case of this Saul of Tarsus of God's sovereign and irresistible grace! Who would ever have believed that Saul of Tarsus would become a Christian that day? He was even then on an errand to destroy Christianity. One might well have thought, "Any one but Saul. This man a Christian? *Never*." Yet it was Saul who came to Christ that day.

The only possible explanation of his coming to Christ that day is the supernatural explanation of the effectual calling of the Holy Spirit. And that calling is always a calling of grace. That it was so in the case of Paul he himself testifies in I Cor. 15:8-10a, where he relates that experience: "And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due



Dr. Laird, flanked by Professors Van Til and Woolley, following the opening exercises at Westminster on September 15.

time." (Or, as the Greek has it, "He appeared also to me as to an abortion.") In the next verse he seems to be giving his reason for the use of this strange expression. "For," he adds, "I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am."

That this gracious calling of the Apostle from darkness into light issued in the further gracious calling to the ministry of the gospel is clear from the word of the Lord to the timid Ananias, "Go thy way; for he (Paul) is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." That Paul himself so understood God's purpose in this call of grace is clear from what he writes in I Cor. 15:10b, 11, "His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed."

So it is with the calling of any one of us into the ministry. It is all of God's grace. Who am I that I should be thus privileged to represent the Lord of Glory? All of us deserve naught but wrath of God.

### The Son Revealed

In the third place, it is always a calling that is accompanied by a *super-natural revelation of the very person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God*.

In his testimony concerning his own calling the Apostle adds, "It pleased

God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, *to reveal his Son in me*." According to Paul's own testimony elsewhere God first revealed Jesus Christ to him. This he did in that terrific experience which Paul had with Jesus Christ himself on the road to Damascus, when he actually saw the risen and glorified Son of God and heard his voice saying unto him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" This is the experience of which Paul writes in I Cor. 15:8, "And last of all he appeared unto me also." That this was a real appearing and not a mere hallucination is clear from the fact that he was blinded by what he saw and continued without sight for three days until his sight was miraculously restored to him.

This is not the revelation of Christ that Paul is referring to in the Galatian testimony, however. Here he is referring to that revelation of the person of Christ, as his own Saviour as well as the only Saviour of the world, within his own soul through the illumination of the Holy Spirit. This is the experience of which Paul himself writes in II Cor. 4:6, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

This is the revelation of the Son of God that every man experiences who is called to the ministry of the gospel. None of us has *as yet* experienced that kind of revelation that Paul experienced on the road to Damascus when he actually saw the risen, ascended and glorified Son of God. But

we have every one of us had the experience of having him revealed in us by the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, if we have been truly called of God to the ministry of the gospel.

It is utterly unthinkable that God should call any man to preach the gospel and not so reveal the Lord Jesus Christ in him as to cause him to exclaim with Paul, "Woe to me, if I do not preach the gospel." Whenever you hear one preach who evidences that he knows not Christ as his own personal Saviour and the only Saviour of a lost world, you may be sure that God never called that man into the ministry, no matter what other qualifications he may seem to exhibit.

### **Purpose Is Preaching**

In the fourth and last place, it is a calling that has as its *very purpose the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Let us hear the testimony of the great Apostle once more, "It pleased God . . . to reveal his Son in me *that I might preach him among the nations.*" The very verb that Paul employs here indicates that it is truly the *gospel* of Jesus Christ that is to be preached. There is much confusion in the church to-day as to what the "gospel of Jesus Christ" really is. Much that is being preached from our modern pulpits is really no gospel at all, for "gospel" means "good news" or "glad tidings," and the closest that much of our present day preaching comes to it is good *advice* and much of the advice given is not good.

According to the inspired Apostle there is but one message for the man who is called of God to the Christian ministry. It is the message of the glad tidings concerning Jesus Christ, as those glad tidings have been revealed to us in the Bible which is the Word of God, so much of which has come to us from God through this very man Paul. Little wonder that he himself was so effective in this ministry. As Ian Maclaren has said, "It was the mission of St. Paul to declare the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to the nations, and none of his successors in this high office has spoken with such persuasive power. Any one differs from Paul only at his own intellectual peril, and every one

may imitate him with spiritual profit."

May all of us, as ministers of the gospel, be imitators of Paul in all our preaching. You will remember that it was Paul who wrote, "We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord." It is well to remember that it is quite possible for a man—even a good man—to preach himself rather than the Lord Jesus. In his splendid devotional book, *Awake, My Heart*, Sidlow Baxter makes the following comment on this matter: "During the brilliant victorian years in England, when those two great preachers were at their zenith—Parker at the City Temple and Spurgeon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle—the fashion for visitors to London was to hear Parker on Sunday morning and Spurgeon at night. An American followed this procedure. His morning comment was, 'My! What wonderful oratory!' His evening comment was, 'Oh, what a wonderful Saviour!' Dear Spurgeon!—with him it was Jesus, *Jesus, JESUS*, all the time. And that is always the distinguishing trait when the Holy Spirit is filling a person and a ministry. The saintly old F. B. Meyer used to say, 'In all real believers Jesus is *present*. In some he is not only present, but *prominent*. In others (all too few) he is not only present and prominent, he is *pre-eminent*.'"

### **Jesus Christ Pre-eminent**

Certainly for those of us who have been called to this ministry of the gospel the Lord Jesus Christ should not only be prominent in all our preaching, but pre-eminent in it all. There is just one thing that will guarantee his pre-eminence in all our preaching. That is—his pre-eminence in all our living. Oh, that each one of us could honestly exclaim with Paul, "To me to live is *Christ!*"

It is quite fitting that we should close this feeble address on the occasion of the opening of Westminster Seminary for its thirty-seventh year with a reference to that Christ-honoring address delivered on the occasion of the initial opening of the Seminary at that historic gathering in Wither-spoon Hall on September 25th, 1929. Some of us present here to-day were privileged to be present then. We shall never forget that gathering. The ad-

dress was delivered by none other than Dr. Machen himself and began with the following revealing words:

"Westminster Theological Seminary, which opens its doors today, will hardly be attended by those who seek the plaudits of the world or the plaudits of a worldly church. It can offer *for the present* no magnificent buildings, no long established standing in the ecclesiastical or academic world. Why, then, does it open its doors? Why does it appeal to the support of Christian men?"

"The answer is plain. Our new institution is devoted to an unpopular cause; it is devoted to the service of One who is despised and rejected by the world and increasingly belittled by the visible church, that majestic Lord and Saviour who is presented to us in the Word of God . . . No Christ of our own imaginings can ever take his place for us, no mystic Christ whom we seek merely in the hidden depths of our own souls. From all such we turn away ever anew to the blessed written Word and say to the Christ there set forth, the Christ with whom we have living communion, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.'"

This is the Christ, my dear young brethren, that you and I are to preach. Proclaim the person and work of this Christ, and the message we preach will surely be "glad tidings" to many a sin-burdened soul and trouble-laden heart, and God himself will be glorified in it all.

May I add just a word of personal testimony. When I was in college taking a course preparatory to my studies at Princeton Theological Seminary, having had my face set toward the gospel ministry for a number of years, I came into the experience of terrific temptation to turn aside from the ministry to another profession. Under this temptation I so thoroughly made up my mind to this change that I left college and went home to break the news to my father. I reached home just in time to enter my father's church as the service was under way and the sermon was about to be preached. I slipped into one of the rear pews unseen by my father. And in the providence of God, of course, in the midst of his sermon he made this remark: "I am thanking God to-day that one of my sons is following me into the gospel ministry. I would like to say this about it. I would

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*One thing will guarantee Christ's pre-eminence in all our preaching—his pre-eminence in all our living.*

rather see him preaching the gospel in one of the smallest churches in America than to see him occupying the White House in Washington." Then he immediately added, "But, if he should not preach the gospel, I would rather see him picking rags from the ash cans in your alleys than to see him occupying the greatest pulpit in America."

My father never knew the purpose of my home-coming that day. I had nothing to tell him. I turned back to college with a new determination that this ministry should be my profession, for I was persuaded that it was God's calling for me. Oh, may God give to you, dear young men, the satisfaction and the joy and the blessing that have been mine in almost fifty years of preaching this gospel of the grace of God in Jesus Christ our only Saviour and coming King. Amen.

### Wybenga *(from page 118)*

They will welcome his coming, knowing that their "redemption draweth nigh."

Before Jesus closed his discourse on the mighty events of the future he left a warning with his disciples that is still needed. God's people must not be carried away with the unbelieving world in its self-indulgence and devotion to the concerns of this life above all. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always" — this is Jesus' word to us. We must watch lest we be lulled to sleep by the soothing voice of the tempter and the caresses of the world. We must pray lest our faith should fail us in the day of calamity.

When will Christ return? The time is unknown by man, but as the signs indicated in the Bible appear to multiply, we may be sure that Christ's coming again draws nigh. "For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed (Rom. 13:11).

When the leaves begin to fall, we say that winter is not far away. When the trees start to bud, we know that summer is coming soon. "So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." This is the word of Jesus, which "shall not pass away."

#### PICTURE CREDITS

Robert den Dulk, p. 120.  
Norman Shepherd, pp. 123, 126.  
Cover: the first issue.

### Especially for the Ladies

## Morning by Morning

### Three Mothers of Ten

"Catch-up!" The words sound through the clubhouse promptly at six forty-five. Girls come running from all directions to form their columns. The pilots respond with an "All set" to the guide's inquiry, "Wagon Wheels, all set?" Indians, all set? Alligators, all set?" Each line is straight, each is quiet and ready to begin the regular Monday night meeting. The theme song breaks forth loudly, "Pioneers Who Crossed the Prairies . . ." The assistant guide prays and asks God's blessing on the girls and their guides as they begin an evening of working, playing and studying together.

A club that begins its meetings with prayer? It doesn't sound like a Girl Scout group or a 4-H Club. A "Y" group or Campfire Girls, perhaps? What club is this?

"You may take your columns to council." The three pilots have a serious responsibility to lead their columns in the business meeting, Bible reading and prayer, and then to work on ranks and badges.

Too quickly the cry of "Catch-up" is heard again and the columns line up while the pilots report on the attendance and shares. The chief guide announces the father-daughter breakfast and there is an excited murmur. "Those girls who still need Log Books can purchase them tonight—cost one dollar. Now tonight we will begin work on the Sewing Badge."

And so forty minutes glides by in a fury of needles, thread, and cries of "Flame, I can't put a knot in the end of my thread." "Toni, what do I do next?" "I'm all done the back stitch."

Time, time—there is never enough of it!

"Catch-up in the front room and bring your songbooks and Bibles!" Fun songs, a quieter song and then young voices singing their Maker's praise—"For the beauty of the earth . . . this our song of grateful praise." And to the One who is fairer than all his creation—"Fairest Lord Jesus."

From the active fun of the earlier

part of the meeting, they have crossed into the time which is set aside for Bible Exploration. Each girl must learn "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Now in Bible Exploration time she begins to learn how God's Word is a light for her.

The meeting is over and the girls form the goodbye circle, hand over hand, to sing their farewell song.

What kind of a club is this? This is Pioneer Girls—whose purpose is that "Christ (be) in every phase of a girl's life."

You have just "sat in" on a meeting of the Pilgrims. These are the eight to twelve year old girls. For junior high there is the Colonist group and for high school, the Explorers. The two guides are mothers from a nearby Orthodox Presbyterian church, for each Pioneer Girls group is sponsored by an evangelical church. The girls are from local churches and also from homes where God's name is not honored.

Though not as old as Girl Scouts, the program of Pioneer Girls compares favorably with that of Scouting. There is a variety of badges and ranks to stimulate the interest and enthusiasm of the girls. Scattered through the U.S.A. are many "Camp Cheriths" where they may spend the summer weeks. These camps are certified by the American Camping Association.

If you would like information about how you can be instrumental in caring for girls through a Pioneer Girls Club, you may write to Pioneer Girls Headquarters, Box 92, Wheaton, Illinois.

### New Addresses

The Rev. Norman Shepherd, Naardermeerstraat 92, Amsterdam-Noord (Nieuwendam), The Netherlands.

The Rev. Stanford Sutton, 609 Washington St., Marietta, Ohio 45750 (ordained by the Presbytery of Ohio).

The Rev. John H. Thompson, Jr., P. O. Box 575, Harriman, Tenn. 37748.

*The Presbyterian Guardian*

## **The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands**

**NORMAN SHEPHERD**

Every second year, at the end of May, a new General Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands gathers in the "calling church" for a day or two to get organized and to distribute the committee assignments. Then the delegates are sent home for a couple of months to do some synodical "homework" before gathering again in September.

These continued sessions used to be held in the same church where the Synod was called together; but nowadays they are held in a delightful conference center in Lunteren, located in a wooded vacation area. Anyone familiar with the flat, crowded landscape of the Netherlands will know how attractive and relaxing a forested resort can be.

The second session lasts four or five weeks. Delegates go home on Friday noon and return on Tuesday morning. The third session meets in the early part of the next year for two or three weeks. Sometimes a fourth session is necessary later on to complete all of the work.

The writer was privileged to represent the Orthodox Presbyterian Church at the current Synod on September 8 and 9. A brief look at our sister church in the Netherlands may serve to develop an appreciation and concern for our wider fellowship in the gospel.

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The Westminster Larger Catechism (Q. and A. 63) teaches us that one of the special privileges of the visible church is the enjoyment of the communion of saints. More familiar are the words of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in . . . the communion of saints."

For the Apostle Paul this communion was indeed both a privilege and a joy. He wrote to the "saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi," "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, . . . for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now" (Phil. 1:1, 3, 5). The word for *fellowship* is elsewhere in the New



**DELEGATES AT WORK.** Each Provincial Synod comprising several classes or presbyteries sends five delegates, two ministers, two elders, and one deacon, to the Synod. Visible in this picture are the delegates from the provinces Overijssel and Utrecht.

Testament translated by the word *communion*. This communion of saints is fellowship in the gospel.

We do well to ask ourselves from time to time whether the fellowship which we prize most highly is fellowship in the gospel, and whether in our local congregations, this fellowship is received as a special privilege. Just because it is fellowship in the gospel it should reach deeper than the friendly sociability after the regular worship services; for we are members of one body of which Jesus Christ is the Head. Though Paul realized that every man must bear his own burden, he did not hesitate to urge us to bear one another's burden, and thus to fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2, 5).

### **Fellowship**

Fellowship in the gospel, as a privilege of the visible church, is not, however, confined to interpersonal contact in the local congregation. Though we are less aware of it, there is also interdenominational contact through which

we experience something of the communion of the saints.

For example, missionaries are sent out by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to work with Reformed churches and groups of believers in other lands. In turn, these churches send delegates to the assemblies of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to bring greetings from the bodies they represent. In addition to the contact arising from the success of the missionary endeavor, there is also the regular contact which Orthodox Presbyterians have on a local, presbyterial and assembly level with existing Reformed churches both in the United States and abroad.

It is true that when delegates from one church address another church, these speeches often follow a similar pattern with certain themes reappearing. We hear them; but in the press of business at hand, they come to occupy a place of subordinate importance—something to be "worked into" the agenda.

That is unfortunate. In spite of what the critical scholars say, Romans 16 still belongs in the Bible as authentic Scripture, and is not an insignificant part of the total epistle. Paul makes a special point of conveying the greet-

*Mr. Shepherd, who will return to Westminster Seminary next summer, is completing his doctoral studies at the Free Reformed University, Amsterdam.*

ings of one church to another. (See vss. 5 and 16.) In sending and receiving church representatives, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is not simply being courteous; it is following apostolic example in the enjoyment of the benefits of the gospel which it proclaims.

\* \* \*

#### ORIENTATION

The Dutch language is almost unique in having two words for *reformed*. They are *hervormd* and *gereformeed*. In the Netherlands, each of these words identifies a distinct denomination, but the difference is not immediately apparent when the words are translated, for example, into German or English. The current Synod discussed the problem of denominational identification in languages outside of the Netherlands, and the prevailing opinion seemed to be to encourage the use of the Dutch name with a translation in parentheses where necessary. Thus we shall have to learn to recognize and use the name, Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland. Unfortunately Synod did not suggest an accompanying phonetic spelling to help with the pronunciation.

In order to understand what the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland are, we shall have to take account, first of all, of the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church). This is the church which came into existence with the reformation of the Roman Church in the 16th century. For that reason, many of its church buildings date back to the time before the Reformation. These are the churches which attract the attention of foreign visitors by virtue of their size and architectural beauty.

The first Reformed congregations rightly realized that these buildings had not been corrupted because of any use or abuse to which they had been put previously, and so continued to use them. The area where the high altar had stood was cleared of all that pertained to Roman worship and left vacant. The pulpit, located about half-way down the nave and attached to one of the pillars, became the center of interest. The massive wooden structure seen above the pulpit is a sounding board, fore-runner of the modern loudspeaker system. These churches were no longer the high vaulted sanctuaries built to give priests a place to say mass, but had become functional auditoriums where people gathered to

hear the Word of God read and proclaimed.

During the 19th century fidelity to that Word deteriorated in the Netherlands, as it did also in the United States, as for example in the Presbyterian Church, to which the Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk can be roughly compared. Faithfulness to the gospel and a desire for fellowship which was indeed fellowship in the gospel, led to two secessions from the original church, one in 1834 and another in 1886. The majority of those in the denomination resulting from the first secession were soon united with the second secession to form what is now known as the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland. It is not surprising that in view of this common struggle for purity in doctrine, the OPC discovered a kindred spirit in the GKN resulting in the establishment of a sisterly relationship.

#### Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland

Through the years that contact has not been limited to the exchange of synodical representatives. In the academic year 1959-1960 Prof. N. B. Stonehouse, who before his death had an important place in the training of men for the Orthodox Presbyterian ministry, lectured at the Free Reformed University, Amsterdam, where approximately half of the ministerial candidates of the GKN receive their preparation. Currently, the OPC and the GKN work together in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod.

A brief comparison of statistics may help to give some impression of the place which the GKN hold in the life of the Netherlands as a whole. The OPC is a denomination of approximately 13,000 members scattered over a nation with a population of 180,000,000. The GKN total some 800,000 members concentrated in a small country with 12,000,000 inhabitants. Obviously the voice of the Reformed population is something to be reckoned with in political, economic, and social affairs, especially as it is expressed through a Christian press and radio as well as a political party which sends members to the law-making Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament.

Several years ago it was my privilege to attend the Youth Day activities of the GKN in Baarneveld. It was most impressive to see gathered together in one place some 15,000 young

people—more young people than there are members of the OPC.

It is true, of course, that numbers do not tell the whole story, but they do form a part of the account of the Holy Spirit's activity on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41). The decisive question is whether the statistics are being used to exalt the glory of God or to draw attention to the power of man.

The single factor chiefly responsible for the growth of the GKN is the birth of covenant children. Their loyalty to the church and the cause of Christ is nurtured not only at home and by means of the weekly catechism classes through the school years, but also by means of a fully developed system of parent-controlled Christian schools similar to those organized in the United States by Christian Reformed people and also increasingly by Orthodox Presbyterians. In this kind of arrangement, the Sunday school functions not so much to train the children of church members, but to reach children who are otherwise wholly outside of the church.

Interest in evangelism among adults outside the church seems to be on the increase, and these efforts have met with a degree of success. This appeared during the course of the discussion of a lengthy report submitted by Synod's Committee on Evangelism. Attention was focussed on the problem of what to do with people who are newly converted to the faith. After they become members of the church by profession of faith, nothing more happens. They become border-line members and in some cases "fall off the edge."

#### Fruits of Evangelism

The problem arises especially in the low-income areas of the larger cities where people live within walking areas of a Reformed Church, but have never been in one. Groups of believers are formed where both the minister and his message are welcome. These same people, however, either would not think of going to the existing churches, or go, but never feel at home and are not integrated into the life of the congregation. These people find the church a closed society, a sphere other than the one in which they live from day to day.

Prof. Verkuyl (Prof. of Missions in the Free Reformed University, Amsterdam) expressed the opinion in Synod  
(continued on page 126)



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# The Presbyterian GUARDIAN

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EDITOR

Robert E. Nicholas



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## Reformed and Reforming

We think of the Reformation as something long past, but there is a sense in which it continues. Each generation must look back to its heritage and then face up to itself. A truly Reformed church is a reforming church, determined to bring both doctrine and practice ever more into conformity to Scripture.

Another idea is prevalent, however. Its advocates hold a quite different view of what the Reformation was all about. They do not regard the Reformation principles as expressions of changeless truth rediscovered in the sixteenth century and still valid today. No, its watchwords — the sole authority of Scripture and justification by faith alone — are but ancient battle cries no longer acceptable to twentieth century churchmen.

The archaic notions of pre-scientific days must now be re-phrased or discarded. The test is conformity to the modern mind, not to the Bible as the Word of God. Another century (if not another generation) will have to find new symbols to conform to its thought patterns. We can never really expect human language to state truth in propositions or systematically in the old-fashioned manner of the Reformers. Why? Because there is no such thing as truth in any final sense, on this modern (yet very ancient) view.

To this widespread error we protest. Insofar as the Reformation brought to light the truth of God — and in greatest measure it did just that — our heritage is still valid. It is something to build upon, not to forsake. Theses or statements or confessions that were true to the Bible in earlier centuries are exactly as true and dependable today. For Scripture is God's revealed truth.

With the Bible as our standard, Reformed churches may still be reforming on the basis of that Word. Within the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, for example, the process does continue. In the context of a common adherence to our infallible rule of faith and practice, churches speak to one another. Moreover, and this is heartening, these churches are willing to listen to one another, according to the Scriptures.

Such is the true Reformation heritage. Herein is hope that such churches will be both Reformed and reforming.  
R. E. N.

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## Thanks — by Giving

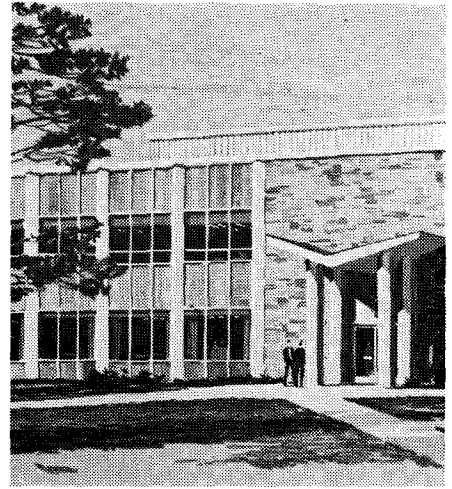
One may show gratitude in many ways. A smile or a warm hand-clasp may suffice. Or a letter of appreciation. A simple "Thank you" from the heart is the kind of personal communication that machines will not replace.

But there is another way of expressing thankfulness — the way of giving. It may be a very ordinary thing. A neighbor takes care of your children while you have a series of dental appointments. The next time you bake your favorite cookies you send some over to your friend. So you return a favor — but your thoughtful deed also speaks of thankfulness. You aren't 'paying' for something; you aren't trying to gain a friend, for friendship is already there. You don't expect your neighbor to bake you a cake the next day. You simply give something as a way of showing your gratitude. In doing so you speak from the heart — with a gift.

That's what the Thank Offering is all about. Yes, it is custom of long standing among Orthodox Presbyterians. But it is more than that. It is doing something as well as saying something about thanksgiving. We give something that is a great favorite with us — our money — that others may rejoice in the gospel.

No, we can't 'pay' for God's favor by offering him gifts. He is already "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." No gift of ours can match the gift of his only begotten Son our Savior. Daily our lips express our grateful praise. Week by week our tithes and offerings show our cheerful stewardship.

But the Thank Offering is something special. Perhaps a way of measuring the depth of our gratitude. A way of saying "Thank you, Lord" that goes beyond words. A heartfelt gift of joyous thanksgiving!



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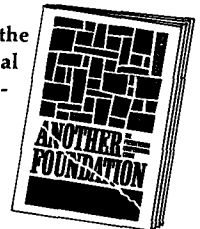
We subscribe to this confession not simply because it expresses the historic Christian faith, but because it is true to the revealed

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When the Westminster Confession declares the Bible to be "the Word of God written" and "given by inspiration of God" it lays the foundation for all doctrine in the "infallible truth and divine authority" of God's own Word.

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## Shepherd

(from page 124)

that these groups of believers should be formed into "young congregations," next to the "older congregations," with their own less formal, less stylized form of worship and work. Prof. van der Woude (Prof. of Church History in the Theological Seminary in Kampen) took issue and pleaded for increased efforts to incorporate Christians young in the faith into the existing congregational life. He pointed to the work of the Christian Reformed Church in the United States as exemplary in this area.

Orthodox Presbyterians might wince to hear the thought expressed by men active in the area of evangelism that "in the present-day pattern of organization of the congregation, what is said in I Corinthians 12, for example, about the organizational unity and the functional diversity of the congregation as the body of Christ, is not to be realized." Nevertheless, "border-line members" are not an unknown phenomenon in the OPC, and we must ask ourselves whether we are prepared to regard each and every believer as an irreplaceable gift from the Sovereign to his church.

Foreign missions also receive their full share of attention. For many years, foreign missions meant for the Dutch simply missions in Indonesia. Now that Indonesia has become independent of the Netherlands, horizons have been expanded, and work has been undertaken in Africa (Ruanda-Urundi) and South America (Brazil, Argentina) as well as Asia (West Pakistan). Work continues, however, among the Reformed Churches on the various Indonesian islands.

### RE-ORIENTATION

Developments in connection with home missions and foreign missions are only a part of the total development in the GKN. Present-day discussions often include the word, *heroïentatie*, a re-orientation made necessary by the shake-up of the Second World War. At the very beginning of the war the center of the city of Rotterdam was thoroughly destroyed by a surprise German air attack. The Rotterdam which the visitor now sees is totally different; the architecture is 20th century architecture suited to the needs of 20th century people. No one seriously thought of imitating the famed 17th century architecture on a grand scale.

The normal work of the church was

also seriously interrupted during the five long years of enemy occupation and we should not be surprised to discover that the old patterns are not being precisely restored. The churches also wanted to capitalize on the opportunity for improvement: hence, re-orientation.

Nevertheless, new architecture is not necessarily good architecture, and re-orientation does not necessarily mean proper orientation. There are indications that developments in the GKN are not altogether healthy, and the danger is that we may find ourselves eventually confronted not only with new architecture but also with another foundation.

Three recent booklets attempt to present an overall view of the situation. The first, published in September, 1964, written by the Amsterdam minister, E. G. van Teylingen, bears the title, *Equilibrium in the Interim*. An indication of the general interest in the questions discussed is the fact that by February, 1965 the 60-page booklet was already in its fourth printing. As the title indicates, the plea is for cool heads and mutual confidence in the midst of change.

The thought that the changes may be of a more serious character was expressed in a booklet of similar size by K. Dijk, former professor in Kampen, called *Change of Course in Our Churches?* The question-mark disappears in the most recent publication, *The Crisis in the Reformed Churches*, by M. J. Arntzen, minister in 's-Gravendeel. Arntzen argues that it is pointless to plead for mutual confidence when it is the authority of

Scripture and the confessional documents that is being challenged.

### The GKN and the WCC

Of the many problems under discussion at the present time, one in particular has attracted the attention of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. That is the possibility that the GKN might seek membership in the World Council of Churches.

The World Council was organized in Amsterdam in 1948, and in 1949 the GKN determined to remain outside for reasons similar to those which continue to hold most of the churches connected with the Reformed Ecumenical Synod apart from the World Council. Though the GKN confirmed this position in 1952, 1955, 1957, and 1959, the Synod of 1963 concluded that the confessional basis of the World Council as revised in 1961 in New Delhi was an adequate basis for ecumenical contact, and that the way in which this formula functioned in the World Council provided no decisive barrier to World Council membership.

Out of a deep concern for the well-being of our sister churches in the Netherlands as well as for the purity and integrity of the church, the body of Christ, the recent General Assembly of the OPC sent a communication to the GKN urging the Synod to reject membership in the World Council.

Why does the OPC take this negative position with respect to the World Council?

It is not simply because there are liberals in the organization, who don't believe in the infallibility of Scripture

**OFFICERS AT WORK.** Seated on the platform are the president (center) with his advisors and the clerks. At the first table are persons called to supply advice or information, but who are not members of Synod. Members address the body from the lectern, to the right of which is seated the chairman of the committee reporting at the moment. The public press is located at the extreme left, and the delegates from other churches, at the extreme right (out of the picture).



and don't believe in the Savior who with his own blood atoned for the sins of his people. There are many people in the world who don't believe these truths, but we don't demand, "Stop the world; I wanna get off!"

The point is rather that membership in the World Council is regarded in the revised confessional document of that organization as fellowship in the gospel. The World Council thinks of itself as a "fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the Scriptures." But it is obvious that there is no fellowship where some believe that Jesus saves men by his substitutionary death and resurrection, and some do not. To enter into such a "fellowship" would not only violate the express teaching of Scripture (for example II Cor. 6:14), but would also neutralize our testimony to the truth. More than organization, the world needs the unobscured proclamation of the gospel of sovereign grace.

#### OPC Communication

The communication of the OPC to the GKN discusses the scriptural teaching on fellowship in great detail. It concludes not negatively but positively with the prayerful hope that the GKN will continue "to maintain common witness with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to the unity of the body of Christ."

The letter sent from Portland, Oregon, was only one of the many received by the current Synod both from inside and outside the Netherlands. In view of the response, the Synod has decided to extend the time limit for receiving communications to July 1, 1966. That means also that the next Synod which will gather in the fall of 1967, rather than the present one, will discuss further the matter of membership in the World Council.

\* \* \*

In writing to the Philippians, Paul not only gave thanks to God for the fellowship in the gospel which he had with them, but he also prayed "that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ" (Phil. 1:9, 10). It is the sort of prayer which we as Orthodox Presbyterians ought to covet from our brethren in other lands on our behalf. The

reason is clear. Paul does not say that we can in our own strength bring to a successful conclusion the good work God has begun in us as individuals and as a church. It is God who both begins and completes the work (Phil. 1:6).

Therefore we ought to seek the same blessing of steadfastness in progress for the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland by prayer and supplication. Fellowship in the gospel is something in which all believers are involved—even on an international scale.

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## Report of the Committee to Formulate a Communication to De Gereformeerde Kerken

*This significant report was submitted to the 32nd General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in July. The recommendation that the communication contained therein be sent to the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands was adopted unanimously.*

*We call particular attention to the section setting forth the biblical teaching with respect to the criterion of fellowship and principles of separation. It has an application far wider than the particular issue here dealt with.*

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The Thirtieth General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church reaffirmed the action taken by the Twenty-seventh General Assembly disapproving the membership of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands (De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland) in the Netherlands Missionary Council (*Minutes of the Twenty-seventh General Assembly*, p. 113; cf. also *Minutes of the Twenty-eighth General Assembly*, pp. 93f.) and elected a committee of three "to formulate a thorough and well-documented communication to De Gereformeerde Kerken setting forth from the Scriptures the principles of separation from unbelief and their bearing upon the relation of Reformed churches to churches and church councils in which unbelief is clearly manifested and submit this communication to the Thirty-first General Assembly for its approval prior to its being sent" (*Minutes of the Thirtieth General Assembly*, p. 79).

A proposed communication was pre-

sent by this committee to the Thirty-first General Assembly. The Assembly expressed appreciation for the work of the committee, continued the committee, and recommitted the proposed communication to the committee with instructions to report to the Thirty-second General Assembly. Messrs. John Murray and Norman Shepherd were added to the original committee (*Minutes of the Thirty-first General Assembly*, pp. 107-115).

Since the Thirtieth General Assembly in 1963 there has been an important action on the part of the Reformed Churches with respect to the World Council of Churches which radically affects the work of the committee. The Synod of Groningen/Lunteren (1963-1964) has stated that it is satisfied with the character of the basis formula of the World Council and that it finds no decisive hindrance to membership in the World Council in the way in which this basis formula functions.

We may observe, therefore, that there has been a significant step taken toward greater involvement of the Reformed Churches in the World Council. Whereas the action of the Thirtieth General Assembly dealt with the question of membership in the Netherlands Missionary Council, the issue has now become that of membership in the World Council itself.

The action of Synod together with an abbreviated form of the report of the committee to study the question of pluriformity and ecumenicity and other pertinent materials has been made generally available in a booklet, *Gemeenschap der Heiligen* (Kampen: Kok, 1964), published by order of the

Synod. The official record of relevant reports and actions is found in the *Acta van de Generale Synode van Groningen 1963 en 1964 van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* (Kampen: Kok n.d.) and in the *Bijlagen* pertaining to it.

*This committee recommends that the Thirty-second General Assembly send the following communication to the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands:*

### The Letter

DEAR BRETHREN:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Head and King of the church.

Out of a deep concern for the purity and integrity of the church, the body of Christ, the Twenty-seventh General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church expressed to the Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland) its disapproval of Synod's membership in the Netherlands Missionary Council (*Minutes of the Twenty-seventh General Assembly*, p. 113 cf. also *Minutes of the Twenty-eighth General Assembly*, pp. 93f.) In view of the relationship which the Netherlands Missionary Council sustains to the International Missionary Council and thus to the World Council of Churches, the Assembly judged that fellowship with the Netherlands Missionary Council in the proclamation of the gospel — a task committed to the church by its Head — necessarily involves fellowship with the World Council of Churches.

The Twenty-seventh General Assembly, in effect, asked the Synod of the Reformed Churches to continue the position taken by previous Synods in rejecting membership in the World Council of Churches and thus to maintain common witness with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to the unity and purity of the body of Christ. While taking full account of a communication from the Synod of Apeldoorn (1961), the Thirtieth General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church reaffirmed the position taken by the Twenty-seventh General Assembly and authorized the preparation of a document setting forth more fully the church's position in the light of Scripture. (*Minutes of the Thirtieth General Assembly*, p. 79; cf. *Minutes of the Twenty-ninth General Assembly*, pp. 68f.)

Recent pronouncements of the Synod

of the Reformed Churches meeting in Groningen/Luntenen make it now imperative that the General Assembly address itself to a new and more serious situation which has been created. Whereas the General Assembly thought it possible to proceed on the common assumption that fellowship in the World Council of Churches was not possible for either the Reformed Churches or for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, it now appears that the Reformed Churches do not share this conviction. The heart of Synod's position is found in the seventh pronouncement (*Acta*, art. 495): "that, when the special character of the World Council as an attempt to cause the fallen and divided church in the whole world to answer more fully to her essence and task is kept in view, the Basis of the World Council of Churches, i.e., in its form as modified at New Delhi in 1961, can serve as the Basis of this particular ecumenical relationship, and that in the way in which its Basis functions according to the information furnished to the Synod, there lies no decisive hindrance for the Reformed Churches to join the World Council of Churches." That is to say, Synod is satisfied both with the character of the basis formula, and with the way it functions in the World Council.

### Sisterly Relationship

The General Assembly addresses itself to this situation, first of all, at the invitation of the Reformed Churches. The Reformed Churches desire to take account of the opinion of other churches holding membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod in their own deliberations and have accordingly made a report of the action of Synod available to this Assembly.

Secondly, and of greater importance, this Assembly is compelled to take part in these deliberations by virtue of the sisterly relationship which the two churches sustain to one another. That relationship creates an ecclesiastical fellowship approaching organic union. For the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands to consider membership in the World Council of Churches is tantamount to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church considering membership in the World Council of Churches. It is not possible for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to by-pass this issue so directly laid before it by the pronouncements of the Synod of Groningen/Luntenen. Central to this issue is

the fact that membership in the World Council of Churches involves ecclesiastical fellowship. It is necessary, therefore, to examine first of all the biblical teaching with respect to fellowship and then to apply this teaching to the issue before the churches.

### BIBLICAL TEACHING

#### 1. The Criterion of Fellowship

In the life of the Christian, fellowship (*koinonia*) is an essential element. The Apostle John writes, for example, in 1 John 1:3, ". . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ . . ." (compare also I Cor. 1:9, 10 and I John 1:6, 7). In the life of the church, also, fellowship is indispensable. All cooperation in the functions assigned to the church is based upon it. In Acts, we read that the believers "continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). In the context of division of labors in missionary work, Paul assumes that the right hand of fellowship is contingent upon faithfulness to the gospel: ". . . when they saw that I had been intrusted with the gospel . . . and when they perceived the grace that was given unto me . . . they . . . gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision" (Gal. 2:7-9). In the Acts 2:42 passage fellowship and steadfast adherence to the message and teaching of the apostles go hand in hand. And in the Galatians context the very ground for the right hand of fellowship, for the harmonious division of missionary labors, and for cooperation together is the mutual commitment to the truth of the gospel.

It is not merely commitment to the truth of the gospel that comes to the forefront in the Galatians passage; it is also the proclamation of the same. Paul's entrustment with the gospel alludes to his commission to proclaim it as the ambassador of Christ, a fact borne out by the purpose stated, namely, "that we should go unto the Gentiles." It needs no demonstration that to the church is committed the proclamation of the gospel. Hence the same criterion must apply to the giving of the right hand of fellowship in ecclesiastical cooperation. There must be the delivery of the truth of the

gospel in proclamation and the truth of the gospel is nothing less than the apostolic teaching.

### Application in N. T.

We have in the New Testament examples for the application of this criterion. The Apostle John writes: "If any one comes unto you, and brings not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting" (II John 10). The situation envisioned is one in which the person contemplated comes as a preacher or teacher and the criterion for acceptance and confidence in the bond of fellowship is "the teaching of Christ" (vs. 9). This standard cannot be understood in any restricted sense but must be as embracing as the apostolic teaching exemplified in the Gospel and Epistles of John. In view of what has been stated above, that the church is the preaching and teaching institute, the criterion John establishes with respect to a preaching or teaching person must apply all the more in the collective sphere to the preaching and teaching institute. Unmistakably the requirement for acceptance, confidence, and fellowship is the preaching and teaching of apostolic doctrine.

John provides us with another example for the application of this same criterion (I John 4:1-3). The heresy particularly in view was of docetic character. In this connection the criterion of orthodoxy and heterodoxy was that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh. Every one confessing this truth was of God and every one not confessing was not of God. In a word, we have here a positive requirement respecting the faith taught by and centering on Jesus. It was mandatory to apply this test because false prophets were abroad. We are again concerned with what takes place in the sphere of proclamation. If an individual is to be judged as not of God when he fails to confess the full manhood of Jesus, we cannot suppose that similar failure on the part of the professing church may be ignored in the exercise of ecclesiastical fellowship and of the judgment that underlies such fellowship. The fact is clear that the basis of favorable judgment is *confession* of the Christian faith in its integrity and even silence or failure to confess requires the damning judgment.

### 2. Principles of Separation

Separation is the opposite side of the truth of fellowship and where there is fellowship in this sinful world,

there must be, of necessity, separation as well. Separation is, thus, also an essential element in the life of the Christian and of the church and is, likewise, most relevant to the criteria by which fellowship among churches is to be determined.

Our fellowship is with God and also with other Christians. In both relationships fellowship requires separation from sin and from the works of darkness (*cf.* I John 1:6, 7). This is so obvious that it needs no argument. With equal clarity the Scripture requires that believers individually and collectively separate themselves from unbelievers in all that concerns the fellowship of faith. This is the import of II Cor. 6:14-18 and failure to observe this separation would be tantamount to having fellowship with demons (I Cor. 10:20). "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot be a partaker of the Lord's table and of the table of demons" (I Cor. 10:21; *cf.* Eph. 5:11, 12).

The Scripture, however, goes further in applying this principle of separation. It applies not only to separation from professed unbelievers but also from professing believers under certain conditions and circumstances. Perhaps most notable is Paul's teaching in I Cor. 5:9-13. From any one named a brother guilty of any of the sins enumerated, either ethical or religious, believers, and also by implication the fellowship of believers, are to separate themselves even to the extent of refusing to eat with such a person. The separation in this case is to be more thorough and complete than that from the sinful and unbelieving world; it extends to the company involved in participation together in an ordinary meal, a prohibition that does not necessarily apply to the courtesy that may be conferred on the fornicators and idolators of the world. We may not suppose that Paul's list of sins is exhaustive. In II Thess. 3:6-14 he gives the same kind of charge with refer-

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*Members of the committee that submitted the report to the General Assembly were: F. Kingsley Elder, jr., George W. Knight, III, John Murray, Carl J. Reitsma, and Norman Shepherd.*

*You will find elsewhere in this month's Guardian an informative article by Mr. Shepherd about the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.*

ence to a sin not mentioned in I Cor. 5, namely, that of idleness and its accompanying vice of being a busybody (vs. 11). Significant also, in accord with what has been noted earlier, is the emphasis that falls in this context upon the criterion by which separation is to be determined. It is the apostolic tradition — "The tradition which ye received from us" (vs. 6), and obedience to the word of the epistle (vs. 14). Those who do not follow that tradition and do not obey the apostolic word are marked as those who are excluded from the fellowship of the saints and those from whom the saints must separate.

### Apostolic Attitude

Of particular relevance to the question at issue is the severity of apostolic attitude and injunction in reference to the proponents of error within the sphere of the church. Most notable is Paul's Epistle to the Galatians and his condemnation of the Judaizers. These could undoubtedly confess "the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the Scripture." There is no evidence that they were heterodox on the doctrine of Scripture, the Trinity, or the deity of Christ. But they "would pervert the gospel of Christ" (Gal. 1:7). At stake was the truth of justification by grace alone. Against any guilty of this perversion of the gospel, the apostle pronounced his anathemas (Gal. 1:8, 9). He calls the Judaizers "false brethren who had crept in" (Gal. 2:4). It is inconceivable that to these the right hand of fellowship could have been extended or that the apostle would have cooperated in any way with them in the furtherance of the gospel. We have an example of the rigidity that must be observed when Paul says: "To whom we gave place by subjection not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal. 2:5). The express injunction to "turn away" from certain persons in Rom. 16:17 is to the same effect and again illustrates the criterion by which "divisions and occasions of stumbling" requiring separation are to be judged; they are such as are contrary to the doctrine learned, namely, the apostolic teaching.

The separation exemplified and demanded in the foregoing instances cannot be restricted to the practice of the individual believer in the discipline he exercises with reference to the erring. It would be impossible to suppose that the church would be at liberty to ex-

tend its fellowship and cooperation to persons from whom the believers as individuals were required to separate. And not only so, the exhortations to separation, implied or express, are directed to churches. The churches of Galatia (Gal. 1:2) are addressed and the separation from Judaizing error which Paul's teaching demands must apply to the churches as such (cf. Gal. 1:6, 11; 3:1; 4:12; 5:7-10). Rom. 16:17 is addressed to the church or churches at Rome, as is apparent from the context (cf. 16:5, 19). And the discipline exercised by the whole church in the case of the incestuous person (I Cor. 5:4, 5) exemplifies what obligations devolve upon the whole church in cases of separation and discipline.

This obligation to separation from error, and from its proponents, devolving upon the whole church cannot be thought of as relaxed or suspended when those espousing and promoting the error constitute an organization that assumes the role of the church. Indeed, the more organized and institutionalized the error becomes, the more necessary becomes opposition and separation on the part of the believing church.

### The Mark of Discipline

Biblical Christianity has always realized that one of the marks of the church is that of discipline, and it has particularly recognized the need to rebuke and rebuke error and to exclude errorists from its fellowship. This is inherent in Christ's gift of the keys to his church (Matt. 16:19) and is specified in Matt. 18:15-18, especially verses 17 and 18. This action of rebuking and excluding the wicked brothers is also clearly evident from I Cor. 5:9-13. "I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator . . . or an idolator . . . with such a one no, not to eat . . . Put away the wicked man from among yourselves" (I Cor. 5:11, 13). And the very fellowship which they have demands this action (verses 1, 2, 6-8). This passage and the Matt. 18 passage set forth the approach not only for the church but also for the individual believer. That which is demanded both of the church and of the individual believers is surely demanded of any organization which claims to be a fellowship of churches. To eliminate the ability to rebuke error and to exclude errorists is to remove an element which is es-

sential to fellowship as it is taught in the Scriptures.

It is apparent, therefore, that the principle of separation, as well as the criterion of fellowship, applies to the relations of the church to other professing churches and must guide inter-church fellowship no less than the fellowship the church extends to individuals.

### BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE AND MEMBERSHIP IN THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

In order to appreciate the relevance of the biblical teaching on fellowship and separation, it must be observed that the World Council is an ecclesiastical fellowship. The Basis revised in 1961 in New Delhi declares: "The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the Scriptures and, therefore, seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." If Christ is confessed according to the Scriptures, the fellowship established is nothing less than the fellowship described in the exposition of biblical principles. It is analogous to fellowship between the particular congregations of a synod or between churches holding sisterly relations.

It is futile to argue that the World Council is nothing more than a forum for theological discussion providing opportunity for witness to the Reformed faith. In fact, the World Council itself claims to be much more than just a forum for discussion. The World Council is not even simply an organization to expedite or perform the work of churches. The World Council claims to be a *fellowship of churches*. It claims to be "one in Christ." This is the basic assumption required of all its members and it is this basic premise upon which all its work is carried out. The 1948 report on "The Universal Church in God's Design" published in *Man's Disorder and God's Design*, p. 204, puts the World Council on record as saying, "God has given to his people in Jesus Christ a unity which is His creation and not our achievement. We praise and thank Him for a mighty work of His Holy Spirit, by which we have been drawn together to discover that, notwithstanding our divisions, we are one in Jesus Christ." (Cf. G.K.A. Bell, *Document on Christian Unity*, Fourth Series, 1948-57, London, 1958,

p. 235, and *The New Delhi Report*, ed. by W. A. Visser 't Hooft, 1962, p. 116 — The Report on Unity.)

### Claim of Fellowship

Surely, such a claim as this goes far beyond the assumptions necessary to participate in a forum of discussion. Discussion permits the parties to remain uncommitted to each other except for the rules of common courtesy. Indeed, in order to present the gospel, Christians should always be willing to enter into discussion with others and even with those who deny the gospel. But, the World Council of Churches, by its own admission, is far more than a forum for discussion. In spite of the fact that it is a council including churches that tolerate denial of cardinal truths of the Christian religion and even honor and promote those that espouse such denial, the Council, nevertheless, claims to be a fellowship of faith whose members are "one in Christ" (Cf. *Acts of Reformed Ecumenical Synod, 1963, "Ecumenicity Report,"* Recommendation 4, p. 48). It is obvious therefore, that by obtaining membership in the Council, a church concedes at the very outset that the differences between member churches of the Council are not of a fundamental nature and admits that all member churches may be endorsed as true churches of Jesus Christ. Membership in the Council amounts to surrendering the battle for truth before it is even fought.

The seventh pronouncement of Synod recognizes "the special character of the World Council as an attempt to cause the fallen and divided church in the whole world to answer more fully to her essence and task." That objective is sought not only through dialogue but also through the fellowship which gives expression to the unity of the body of Christ. Repeated use of the terms "ecumenical relationship" and "ecumenical organization" must not obscure the fact that the relationship of the organization in view is one which expressly lays claim to being a fellowship of churches.

The Bible requires that the Church of Jesus Christ seek to identify itself as a fellowship in Christ by teaching and proclaiming sound doctrine and thus by bearing witness against false doctrine. The basis of ecclesiastical fellowship in the World Council by its very brevity is shown to be too meager a bond of fellowship for churches. A church or a fellowship of

churches which confesses Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the Scriptures and does so in truth, demands a confession embracive enough to exclude errors rampant within the professing church of Christ which deny the faith of Jesus.

The failure of the World Council to go further than it has gone in formulating the basis of fellowship proves how divergent within this professed fellowship must be the beliefs respecting cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith.

### Function of the Basis

This Assembly is therefore of the opinion that the revised basis formula of the World Council cannot serve as the confession of a fellowship of churches seeking to cause the fallen and divided church in the whole world to answer more fully to her essence and task.

The Bible also requires that the Church of Jesus Christ seek to maintain the purity of the fellowship in Christ by separation from false doctrine. In addition to the fact that it is meager and inadequate, the basis formula cannot be effectively applied by the World Council as a test of membership. The World Council at the Evanston Assembly declared that "the World Council would overstep the limits it has set for itself if it should seek to pronounce judgment as to whether any particular church is in fact taking the Basis seriously." (*The Evanston Report*, p. 307). This position was reaffirmed by the New Delhi Assembly. (*The New Delhi Report*, p. 159).

The World Council refuses to determine whether deviation from the Basis is being tolerated. From a Reformed point of view, not only is the World Council ready to tolerate deviation from its Basis, but toleration is guaranteed (*cf.* the fourth pronouncement of Synod). The emphasis of the Belgic Confession of the Reformed Churches (Articles 27-29) does not fall on the relative purity or impurity of the church (*cf.* the third pronouncement of Synod), but on the distinction between the true church and the false church. The Confession requires separation from the false church and fellowship in the true church; but the World Council allows for fellowship with the false church by its refusal to evaluate the genuineness of subscription to its Basis.

**This Assembly concludes, therefore, that there is decisive reason for not joining the World Council to be found in the way in which the Basis functions in the Council.**

While having sympathetic respect for the desire of the Reformed Churches to be obedient to the Scriptures in the fulfillment of their ecumenical calling and to do more in the areas of mission and service on a world-wide basis than is possible through the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, this Assembly would point out

that these legitimate ends cannot be achieved through the World Council of Churches without violation of biblical principle.

The Reformed Churches are respectfully urged to reject membership in the World Council of Churches and to maintain common witness with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to the unity of the body of Christ.

Fraternally yours,  
THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

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## HERE AND THERE IN THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**Chula Vista, Calif.** — Bayview Church welcomed a S-A-V-E team for service during August. Members of the group were Beth Barr, Bob Ingelse, Beth Lefever, Carol Megonigal, Chris Walmer and Nancy Young.

**Schenectady, N. Y.** — On June 5 Pastor Raymond Meiners officiated at the marriage of Miss Gertrude Zuelow to the Rev. Wendell Rockey, of Hamilton, Mass. Gertrude grew up in Calvary Church and after graduating from Cornell worked for several years in Cambridge, Mass. at the AVCO Research Lab. Her brother, Lewis, a 1961 graduate of Westminster Seminary, is a pastor (RCA) in Sonoma, Calif. The Rockeys reside in the manse in Hamilton.

**Los Angeles, Calif.** — Westminster Church has welcomed the Rev. Salvador Solis as its new pastor, replacing the Rev. Michael Stingley, who is now in the chaplaincy, stationed at Ft. Hood, Texas. Mr. Solis and his family have returned to California after three years in Iowa, where he served as pastor of First Church, Waterloo.

**Winner, So. Dakota** — "Redeeming the Time" was the theme which captured the imagination of the more than 50 women attending the Fall Presbyterial on September 29, reports Mrs. Abe Ediger. Following a joint devotional service with Presbytery, Mrs. Wm. Vandenberg of Lark, N.D. presided over the business. A new feature prepared by the officers from questionnaires was a mimeographed compilation of the total output in

work projects, study materials, and missionary programs of all the churches in the Presbytery of the Dakotas. A season of "Redeeming the Time in Prayer" closed the morning period.

In the afternoon the Rev. John Galbraith used slides in speaking about "Redeeming the Time on the Mission Field." The offering of \$157 was divided between foreign missions and the building needs of Immanuel Church, Thornton, Colo., a home missions work. The Winner Missionary Society presented a program "Redeeming the Time as Women" centering around the story of Mary and Martha, including music and a choral Scripture reading. Participants in a debate on the subject, "Resolved, Mary Chose the Best Way to Spend her Time," were Mrs. Dave Lenker, Mrs. Vern Bloom, Mrs. Melvin Bice, and Mrs. Blain Fenenga.

**Marietta, Ohio** — On October 15 Pastor-elect Stanford Sutton was ordained and installed by the Presbytery of Ohio in Faith Church. Mr. Sutton had been serving the church as a licentiate during the past year. On June 19 Mr. Sutton was married to Miss Maureen Abbot in Morristown, N. J.

**San Francisco, Calif.** — First Church, which has been without a pastor during the past year, has extended a call to Mr. Albert W. Steever, a 1965 graduate of Westminster Seminary and a member of Emmanuel Church, Wilmington, Del. Mr. Steever is a licentiate of the Presbytery of Philadelphia. The Rev. Robert Newsom, former pastor, is supplying the

pulpit for the balance of the year.

The Men's Group under the leadership of Mr. Richard Lawrie entertained the boys of the church recently at a pancake breakfast at the manse. After a devotional talk by the Rev. Richard Lewis they enjoyed recreation at nearby Golden Gate Park. New Bibles for the pews and Sunday school rooms were a gift from Mr. Vernon Reno.

**Glenside, Pa.** — Calvary Church moved back into its renovated building in September with its usable floor space increased by about 40 percent. Nearly 100 persons dined in the new portion of the lower level at a mid-October missionary conference supper. The three-day sessions followed the theme of "The Whole Family with the Whole Gospel for the Whole World." Bible studies on the life of Philip the evangelist, films, and panel discussions were used.

**Omaha, Nebr.** — Mr. R. T. Kerr, elder of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church here for 25 years, went to be with the Lord June 4, 1965. His funeral was conducted by the pastor, the Rev. Reginald Voorhees. Mr. Kerr, who was the son of an elder and grandson of an elder, was ordained into the office of ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church of the U. S. in Alabama. After moving from Mobile to Omaha, Neb., he served in the Presbyterian Church of the U. S. A.

It was at great sacrifice that he left an established Negro Presbyterian church to join the newly formed Orthodox Presbyterian Church here. For 19 years he served as its Clerk of Session and for 12 of these years he was the church treasurer. His eldership in the three denominations spanned a period of more than 55 years. The last three years of his life he was a shut-in but maintained an active interest in the work of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to the end. The Lord was gracious in giving to the Omaha congregation this man of deep convictions, great courage and vast experience in Presbyterian government and discipline, according to his pastor, Mr. Voorhees, who has served the church for over 20 years.

**Mission Project Begun**

**San Jose, Calif.**—One of the rapidly expanding cities on the West Coast, San Jose lies 45 miles from San Francisco and at the present rate of growth will soon pass the City of the Golden Gate in population. Industry is booming and housing development continues to astonish everyone.

Here on June 13 seven families who had affiliated with the Sunnyvale OPC held worship services for the first time. Fifty-two were present and enthusiasm ran high. The work is under the direction of the Sunnyvale Session.

From the inception it is entirely self-supporting. The Rev. Wilson H. Rinker, the most recent addition to the Presbytery of the West Coast and a man of enormous vitality and deep conviction, heads up the movement. Mr. Russell Johnson, an elder from Sunnyvale, is Sunday school superintendent.

Excellent publicity has been given in the San Jose papers. "Concerned Presbyterians" in the United Presbyterian Church and a few members of the Reformed church in America, exercised over a possible future merger of that body with the U. P. Church, form the nucleus of the group.

Since the above report was received from the Rev. Henry Coray, Sunnyvale pastor, the San Jose group has been organized into a congregation with the name Covenant Church. The Presbytery of the West Coast at its October 13 meeting examined the members and officers-elect and constituted this newest OPC with three elders, 26 communicants and 25 covenant children.

The Rev. Wilson H. Rinker was installed as its missionary pastor. Mr. Rinker, who had previously served churches in Twain Harte and San Jose under the Reformed Church of America, was received by the West Coast Presbytery last spring.

**Silver Spring, Md.** — Twenty of Knox Church's young people are enrolled at schools of higher learning this fall. The Rev. Cromwell Roskamp occupied the pulpit on the last Sunday of September while the Ellises were in Illinois for the marriage of their eldest

son, Ray, to Miss Carol Cody. A hymn sing after the evening service on October 31 was planned on the occasion of Mr. Ellis' completing ten years as pastor of Knox Church.

"That the Word May Have Free Course" was the theme of the church's fifth annual Missionary Conference in October. Among those taking part were the Harvie Conns, the Arnold Kresses, and Messrs. John Johnston and Edwin Urban.

**Bridgewater, So. Dak.** — Trinity Church has extended a call for the pastoral services of the Rev. Howard Hart, of Immanuel Church, Bellmawr, N. J. The former pastor of Trinity, the Rev. Samuel van Houte, is now teaching in the Fairfax, Va. Christian School. Dr. Daniel van Houte and the Rev. Edwin Urban are also additions to the staff of that school this autumn. Principal is the Rev. Robert Thoburn, who also serves as pastor of Trinity Church of Fairfax.

**La Mirada, Calif.** — Mr. and Mrs. John Kortenhoeven are assisting the OP missionaries in Korea in as many ways as possible. They volunteered for a year of service at their own expense, arriving in Korea with the Ted Hard family at the end of July. John Kortenhoeven is a deacon in Calvary Church, and both he and his wife, Lori, have been active in the Sunday school and with the Machen League.

The Rev. Dwight Poundstone, who began his work with Calvary Church early in 1957 a year and a half before its formal organization, has announced his resignation. Although he has been asked to consider a call to a presbytery mission project in Goleta, near Santa Barbara, his plans for the future are reported as uncertain.

<p><b>SUBSCRIPTION FORM</b> Please send the <i>Presbyterian Guardian</i> for one year to:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(include zip code if known) \$3.00 per year — \$2.50 in Clubs of ten or more.</p>
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