

Proclaiming God's Sovereignty: Breisch

Proposed Basis of Union: Report

The Scientist and his Church: Haas

Toward Maturity: Editorial and Letters

In the Meantime: Davis

Here and There in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

VOLUME 38, NUMBER 4

APRIL 1969



**Significant Assembly
Convenes May 20 in
Silver Spring, Md.**

Knox Church of Silver Spring in suburban Washington, D.C. is again host to a General Assembly, the 36th, of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In 1964 a previous annual meeting of the denomination met here. While business begins officially at 9 a.m. Tuesday, May 20, a worship service with the Lord's Supper under the direction of the Session of Knox Church is scheduled for Monday evening at 8 o'clock. Pastor Edward Kellogg of Point Loma, California, has been invited to preach.

The moderator of the 1968 Assembly, Pastor Arthur Olson of Bridgeton, N. J., will preach a sermon and call the 36th General Assembly to order and preside until a new moderator is chosen. Mr. John Mitchell was elected stated clerk last year.

In addition to the reports of the three "major" standing committees, four other standing committees will report: Pensions, General Benevolence, Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations, and Date, Place and Travel. There are fifteen other special committees set up or continued by the 35th General Assembly scheduled to report, in addition to some individual reports and such overtures or communications as may properly be addressed to the highest judicatory of the church.

It is not always easy to predict which matters will provoke the liveli-

(continued on page 50)

Proclaiming God's Sovereignty in a Secularist Society

FRANCIS D. BREISCH

Living in the United States of America in the latter half of the twentieth century is an unnerving experience for many Christians. The process of secularism has moved ahead at jet speed. Cultural change has been so sudden and so complete as to produce cultural shock. Today's philosophy, art, music, and literature speak of an empty universe. Theology concurs by declaring that God is dead.

Has the Calvinist a place in this world? Can the message of a sovereign God be proclaimed in a secularist society? The answer of many is a resounding negative. Such a view, they declare, is outmoded and irrelevant. If Christianity is to be heard today, it must come to terms with modern thought, they say, and present either an immanent, limited God who can help modern man in his psychological adjustments to present-day reality, or a God so separated from the universe that he can be reached only by an existential leap of faith.

The current situation has one great advantage. It emphasizes the folly of trying to find the middle ground of a theology that retains some contact with the historic Christian faith while finding some foothold in modern thought. The choice is clear. One must go all the way with modern thought and abandon all pretensions of orthodoxy or stand self-consciously and intelligently against modern thought and proclaim the whole message of the gospel.

Desperate Need

Although he does not realize it, modern man desperately needs the message of the sovereignty of God. By his own admission, he finds his empty universe meaningless and absurd. Philosophy has come to a dead end, and its predicament is reflected in the literature of despair, the theatre of the absurd, and the aimless wanderings of art that mocks all standards of judgment. Morality, lost in the maze of subjectivism, polarizes into

that licentiousness which allows anything and the harsh imposition of standards based only on the whims of a majority. Feeling pressed in by an impersonal world, men search frantically for something which will provide some assurance of personal value.

In such a world, we who have tasted God's grace need to proclaim anew that God lives and rules. We need to present unequivocally the God who sovereignly controls history. We need to declare that the infinite personal God who is the author of the universe still does according to his will in heaven and earth. We must tell men that God has a plan and purpose which is being fulfilled, even if we cannot understand all that he is doing.

Sovereign Law

We must proclaim to men who are reeling under moral relativism that there is a sovereign law in the universe, that the universe is just because it is ruled by the One who is altogether just. We must present the law of God as the standard to which men must conform, because it reflects the nature of God in whose image men are made and because it is the standard by which men will be judged.

We must declare again and again the message of sovereign grace. We must assure men that there is hope, not because man can change his ways and return to God, but because God has come to men in Jesus Christ. Without apology we must call men to repentance and faith, assuring them that God accepts them as they are, that he can transform them by his power and will transform them out of his matchless love.

The modern world needs the whole message of the gospel, the message of

Mr. Breisch is pastor of Bethel Church in Wheaton, Illinois and a member of the editorial committee of the Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

God's sovereignty. It needs to hear that message and to heed it. And that puts on us the grave responsibility of communicating that message to our culture. All too often the whole counsel of God has been presented in a way that seems totally irrelevant to today's world. We need to learn anew Paul's determination to become all things to all men, that we may save some.

Relevant Answers

It is imperative today that Christians learn to understand modern man. We need to listen to what he is saying, to hear the heart-cry of our culture. All too often we have dogmatically given men the answers without bothering to listen to his questions, and so our answers have been irrelevant. But it is our answers, not the gospel, that are irrelevant.

We have been answering the questions raised by Darwin when they have been asking the questions framed by Antonioni, Fellini and Bergman. Those questions find an answer only in the sovereign God, but the answer we give must be related to the questions that really disturb men today.

It is imperative today that modern men see Christians live their faith in the sovereign God. Can we hope to convince men that we believe in a sovereign God if we are victims of a fortress mentality, more concerned to protect ourselves than to venture forth courageously into the world? When Christ declared that the gates of hell should not prevail against his church, he was using the figure of a mighty offensive force assailing the enemy. Do men today see that in us? Can we talk to men about the sovereign grace of God which transforms men as they are, if we are repelled by those whose dress and habits are different than ours? Does that display sovereign love in action?

The world today needs the message of the sovereign God. But it needs more than an intellectual presentation. It needs to see Christian men living as if they believed God is sovereign, trusting God in every situation, going forth boldly to present their sovereign God to a world that is dying without him. That is the task God has given us in our generation.

The Presbyterian Guardian is published ten times a year, monthly, except July-August and November-December, by the Presbyterian Guardian Publishing Corporation, 7401 Old York Road, Phila., Pa. 19126, at the following rates, payable in advance, postage prepaid anywhere: \$3.00 per year (\$2.50 in Clubs of ten or more) or 30¢ per single copy. Second class mail privileges authorized at the Post Office, Philadelphia, Pa.

PROPOSED BASIS OF UNION

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE COMMITTEE ON FRATERNAL RELATIONS OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, EVANGELICAL SYNOD

The Thirty-fifth General Assembly instructed the committee "to seek to develop with the appropriate committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, a basis of union between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, which will require defining and dealing with the theological problems involved."

Since the Thirty-fifth General Assembly three joint meetings were held between your committee and the Committee on Fraternal Relations of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. Through correspondence between the chairmen of the committees of the two churches and ministers and sessions of their respective denominations an effort was made to determine whether there are theological problems between the two denominations. Your committee received a total of 21 letters, of which eight indicated support of and one opposed union between the two Churches. At a joint meeting of the two committees in Willow Grove, Pa. on March 20 and 21, 1969 these matters and other matters raised in letters from Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod ministers were considered over many hours.

Within the limitations of time and energy the committee has sought to deal seriously with the theological questions raised by ministers and sessions of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as well as with questions raised by ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. In many cases the committee was able to resolve these questions to its complete satisfaction. The committee came to the conclusion that it is unable at this time to define any theological problem that would be an obstacle to union between our two Churches. It is the intention of the committee to foster continued discussion of questions with Reformed Pres-

byterians at national and regional meetings of ministers and members of our two Churches.

In accordance with the instruction of the Thirty-fifth General Assembly the committee proposes the following Basis of Union between the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church:

I. PREAMBLE

The Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church are churches in the United States of America having one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. In determining to unite in one Scriptural order and to remove every barrier to full fellowship in the service of Christ, these churches come acknowledging both God's grace and their sins in days past and trusting in the renewal of the Holy Ghost for days to come.

They would first make mention of what Christ has wrought in their confession and service.

Both churches come rejoicing in one Sovereign Saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Both churches believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. Both churches therefore have sought to be obedient to Scripture in teaching and life, in order and worship. Because the inspiration and divine authority of Scripture have been questioned and denied

In presenting portions of the report of the Committee on Ecumenicity it is hoped that the whole church may be better informed of this significant proposal which will come before the Assembly of the OPC and the Synod of the RPC, ES. Subheadings have been inserted by the editor.

within the professing church, the acknowledgement of the Bible to be the Word of God written is the more necessary for those who would stand today in the apostolic gospel: "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."

Common Background

These two churches have a common background in our struggle to maintain the clear teachings of the Word of God that our Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, worked mighty miracles, offered up himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and to reconcile us to God, that on the third day he rose again from the dead with the same body with which he suffered, with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father, making intercession.

Modernism, old and new, in denying these doctrines and the infallibility of the Word that teaches them, denies the Lord of the Word and casts aside the scepter of his rule in his church. Since the fellowship of the church of Jesus Christ must be grounded in the truth the spread of apostasy brings division. Our churches exist because we have chosen to obey God rather than man in conflict with false teaching in the church.

Yet in opposing such denials of doctrines essential to the Word of God and our secondary standards, these churches have not reduced the whole counsel of God to a few fundamentals of Christian faith.

Same Confession of Faith

Rather with the renewal of obedience to the Word of God there has come a renewal of rejoicing in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms as containing the system of doctrine taught in the holy Scriptures. Both churches have adopted the Confession of Faith in virtually identical form, a form that precedes the modifying amendments made to the Confession by the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in 1903. The two churches have one Confession, a Confession that expresses the glorious fullness of the Reformed Faith, declaring without equivocation that salvation is of the Lord.

Soli deo gloria!

New obedience to the revelation of the grace of God in Jesus Christ has kindled new desire for holy living. Both churches have manifested deep concern that Christians be not conformed to this world in an age of license, but rather be transformed into the image of Christ. These churches have turned again to the law of God, believing that contemporary immorality springs not only from the lusts of the flesh but also from hatred of the truth. The apostasy that casts off the authority of God's Word of commandment revealed in Scripture is at the last more destructive than guilty sensuality.

Application of God's Law

Because both churches teach obedience to the revealed commandments of Christ they have also sought to apply these specific commandments to modern life.

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church has called attention to the specific instruction of our subordinate standards, particularly the Larger Catechism, on the requirements of the Word of God for holy living. The Westminster Larger Catechism so applies the Ten Commandments, warning that each commandment implies the specific forbidding of all sins of that kind, "together with all the causes, means, occasions and appearances thereof and provocations thereunto" (Q.99).

The plan for the union of the Reformed Presbyterian Church with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church to form the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, contained a declaration on the Christian life in which the united church emphasized the applicability of God's commandments to questions of conduct and practice that arise in the modern world.

The acknowledgement of Scripture as the infallible rule of faith and life has therefore borne fruit in both these churches in specific exposition and application of the Bible to learn what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man. In life as in faith the rule of the Word of God is both specific and inclusive. As the church is led into all truth by the Word, so is it led into all righteousness: whatever we do, individually in our hearts, together in our homes and communities, or corporately in the church of Christ, we are to do to the glory of God.



WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT AN OP - RP MERGER?

This was the subject discussed pro and con by about one hundred men, mostly ministers and elders, at an open meeting on March 19 in Willow Grove, Pa. under the sponsorship of the "ecumenicity" committees of the Orthodox Presbyterian and Reformed Presbyterian (ES) Churches.

Following a panel discussion the gathering broke up into a half dozen smaller groups (one of which is shown above) for further discussion and formulation of questions to be asked of panel members. The afternoon concluded with a time of prayer.

—Sam Parker photo

Witness in a Lawless Age

In uniting their witness, these churches would seek to grow in love and new obedience to Christ, finding in that obedience the remedy for both legalism and antinomianism. We dare not build a hedge around God's law, adding to it the burdensome traditions of men. Neither may we ever cease to hear in the law the voice of the living God, whose will and nature are revealed in his commandments. Yet respect for the liberty of the sons of God must not dampen our pastoral zeal to warn those in our charge against particular sins and against those practices in contemporary life that become frequent occasions of sin.

When the mass media pander to unlawful sexual appetites, the Saviour's warning about the lustful look must be part of the church's instruction. When respect for human life is cheapened by glorified violence or when the proper function of the body is impaired through narcotics, stimulants, and hallucinogenic drugs, the church must teach that our bodies are for the Lord and oppose those who exploit for gain those desires that rebel against God's ordinances for human life.

Apart from the courageous application of Scripture to individual and social sins in the context of modern life the church cannot fulfill the whole ministry of the Word of God. The

forming of Christian consciences to prove the things that differ is most necessary so that the church shall not be conformed to the lawlessness of an unbelieving world.

Missionary Zeal

Nowhere does the direction of the Word of the Lord appear more clearly in the witness of these churches than in the work of missions and evangelism. Not only do the doctrines of grace require the seeking of the lost by those who are drawn by the Son of God to know the Father's heart of mercy; the express command of the risen Saviour sends his disciples to the ends of the world and the end of the age.

In obedience to Christ's Great Commission the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church have carried forward constantly expanding missionary programs at home and abroad. Concern for the soundness of the missionary message in the former Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. led to the establishment of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, and to the division that was forced upon those who refused to surrender that testimony. In the work of World Presbyterian Missions of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod and the Committee on Foreign Missions of the Orthodox Presbyterian

Church the cause of truly Presbyterian missions has prospered.

More than one hundred ten missionaries now serve in thirteen countries with the support of these agencies. In addition, the gospel is preached by more than thirty-six men supported at least in part by corresponding home mission agencies. Evangelism is also served by the printed word through the labors of our committees on Christian education.

Biblical Evangelism

In contrast to the secularized evangelism that would substitute political action for the proclamation of Christ's kingdom, the Biblical evangelism to which these churches are committed recognizes that Christ must be obeyed in his program; that the gospel must be preached to all nations, and that until he comes only the sword of the Spirit may be wielded in his name. These churches have sought to manifest the compassion of Christ by deeds of mercy and to proclaim the gospel of Christ by words of power, but the power they claim is spiritual. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of . . .) imaginations and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God . . ." (II Cor. 10:3-5).

In so speaking of the witness of our churches we know that we have nothing that we have not received and that we have this treasure in earthen vessels. We would therefore with lowliness, meekness, forbearance, and longsuffering give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. To this end we of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church would remove every wall of partition that divides us, manifesting in one fellowship of order and service that unity under the Word of Christ that we profess as members of his body.

Demonstration of Unity

We do confess that all saints that are united to Jesus Christ their Head, by his Spirit, and by faith have fellowship with him in his grace, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory: and, being united to one another in love, have communion in each other's gifts and graces. As God now offers to us

opportunity we would assume the obligation of our profession to extend and maintain toward one another a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, in performing such other spiritual services as tend to our mutual edification, and in relieving one another according to our several abilities and necessities.

May the ascended Lord fill us with his Spirit and bless this work of ministering till we all attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

* * *

Part II of the Committee report delineates the texts of the several parts of the Westminster Standards. Part III designates the Standards of Government (RPC/ES), Discipline (OPC), and Worship (OPC) — all of which together with other present and proposed forms of the two bodies would in due course be referred to a committee in each category in the united Church for further study and recommendation.

Part IV specifies the question to be voted on eventually in an adopting act by the highest judicatories and presbyteries of the two communions. The first basis states that "the supreme standard shall be the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, the Word of God written, the only infallible rule of faith and practice." Then follows a designation of the subordinate standards as noted above; and finally certain agreements which would be adopted concurrently with reference to a consummating Assembly, the retention of the agencies and administrative personnel of the two bodies until they can be reconstituted, and procedures to be followed therein and with regard to presbyteries.

Recommendations

What the Committee is actually recommending is (1) that the 36th General Assembly send the foregoing proposed *Basis of Union* between the churches to presbyteries and sessions for study; (2) that the Assembly request these judicatories to submit suggestions and criticisms to the Committee by March 1, 1970; and (3) that the Committee be authorized to prepare with the Committee on Fraternal Relations of the RPC/ES in the light of these communications a *preliminary*

proposal for a plan of union to be submitted to the highest judicatories of the respective churches in 1970 to be sent down to presbyteries and sessions for study.

The Committee further indicates that if these recommendations are adopted it intends to recommend that the 37th Assembly in 1970 request the lower judicatories to submit criticisms and suggestions as to the preliminary proposal for a plan of union to the Committee by January 1, 1971, with the expectation that if authorized a plan of union could be submitted for constitutional action by the highest judicatories in 1971.

Presbyterian Youth Convention

Youth seminars will highlight the triennial convention for Reformed and Orthodox Presbyterian young people at the Lookout Mountain campus of Covenant College from July 5 to 11, according to Art Kay, national director of the RPC/ES's Christian Training Board.

With the conference theme "Alive in God's World" and Dr. Edmund Clowney of Westminster Seminary speaking each evening, the daily discussion groups will give high schoolers and adult youth leaders a chance to work together in helping "develop a generation of Christian leaders who are sensitive to God, to self and to others." Dr. Robert Nuemberger, professor of psychology at Covenant College and an Orthodox Presbyterian minister, is to lead seminar on "Understanding Yourself."

"Understanding Your Place in the Church" will be under the direction of Mr. Jim Ferris, youth director in Willow Grove, Pa. and Mrs. Charles Anderson of Lookout Mountain, Tenn. Among other seminar leaders are Dr. Will Barker, professor of history at Covenant, Pastor George Smith of Manchester, Conn., and Pastor Tom Jones of Lookout Mountain Church.

While sponsorship of the convention is by the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, the directors hope that delegates from many Orthodox Presbyterian congregations will attend. They urge churches to make it possible for key young people to come. Registration (with a \$5 deposit) or further information may be obtained by writing to Art Kay, Box 5050, Wilmington, Del. 19808.

The Scientist and his Church

JOHN W. HAAS, JR.



AUTHOR'S NOTE: Science and its handmaiden, technology, play a dominant role in today's society. Our lives and thought processes are strongly colored by this pervasive influence. Recent years have seen the raising of issues of national and world significance as a result of technological developments on many fronts. As citizens we are increasingly required to make decisions on science-related questions. As citizen-Christians we must base our decisions on biblical principles. However, it is often true that Christian thought has not seriously considered these questions with the result that judgments are made on the basis of sentiment, political orientation or a secular ethic.

The following series of articles will deal with such topics as our polluted environment, overpopulation, recent developments in medicine, tools for war, genetic tailoring and origins. Basic factual information will be provided and points of particular consideration for the Christian will be discussed. It is hoped that the reader will respond in kind.

* * *

It may be surprising to observe the large number of Christians to be found at all levels of scientific endeavor. They are represented in the several disciplines and find employment in a wide range of industrial, educational and research organizations.

The scientist often contributes significantly to the life of his church as teacher, elder, youth leader, trustee, etc. Yet in spite of this participation, he is often looked on with suspicion by the Christian community. Past con-

flicts between science and Christianity and the current fashion to attribute much of the pagan spirit and ills of the age to technological developments carry over to the church's scientists.

Often the scientist, in order to maintain a peaceful relationship with his church, has had to forego his science within the gate. This forcing apart of faith and work results in loss for both scientist and church. The church should tap the information and insights of its scientists in order to see and understand the problems of a technology oriented society and should in turn be able to respond to his needs as well as those of any other segment of the congregation.

The sorry history of the relation between church and science does not encourage dialogue. The problem is particularly difficult for a community which seeks to maintain a high view of Scripture. Although both sides would maintain that God is the source of all truth and that he has revealed himself both through the written word and in nature, the problem has come with the search for an integrated world view which encompasses all revelation. This search for unity is expressive of the biblical conviction that God is Creator and Lord of all that is — not limiting himself to the life of the soul or man's salvation.

Correlation Not Easy

Correlation of the observations and theoretical models of science with the statements and interpretations of Scripture has been difficult at several points. These include the origin of man and the universe as well as a large number of "unusual" events recorded in Scripture such as healings, the virgin birth, sudden calming of the sea, the "long" day and the resurrection of Christ. The desire for a complete sorting out of all details has produced conflict when apparent differences appear. At the point where Bible confronts test tube the tendency for the theologian has been to impose the authority of his interpretation regardless of the data of nature and for the scientist to require reinterpretation

Dr. Haas, a graduate of The King's College, received his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in chemistry from the University of Delaware. After teaching in Grove City College from 1957-1961 he was invited to the faculty of Gordon College. There he holds the rank of Professor of Chemistry and is chairman of the Division of Natural Science and Mathematics. His research interests are in spectroscopy and chemiluminescence.

With his wife, Ann, and three children Dr. Haas resides in South Hamilton, Massachusetts. He serves as an elder, trustee and organist for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Hamilton.

of Scripture to meet this data and theoretical formulations while ignoring the limitations of his methodology. It is suggested that our concern with the traditional questions be tabled for the moment in order to examine the pressing problems of our time.

Ours is a society in which science-related issues are front page concerns. Questions ranging from fluoridation to birth control, from air pollution to missile installations, require the individual Christian to make decisions with respect to his personal life and in terms of the community when these questions enter the political realm. If one's faith is to be brought to bear on society, the Christian must be informed on the issues and consider them through the eye of his faith. It is the responsibility of the scientist-Christian to rid these issues of their technical gobbledygook and to separate the science from the science fiction.

It is interesting to note that the scientific community is not unaware of the need for ethical decision or of the role of Christianity in the development of science. Scientists are increasingly voicing concern for the consequences for our society of an unchecked development in science. The Christian can make a substantial contribution at this point. Are we willing to expend the energy to meet this challenge of our age?

The Presbyterian
GUARDIAN

EDITOR

ROBERT E. NICHOLAS



All correspondence should be addressed to The Presbyterian Guardian, 7401 Old York Road, Phila., Pa. 19126

A local radio station has a daily commentary called "One Man's Opinion." Perhaps it is wise to point out that editorials are essentially that, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of any or all members of the publication's trustees. The same is true of articles by contributors, and differing viewpoints in letters or other articles are welcomed, within the framework of the periodical's basic commitment.

Now it is not apparent that the Stewardship Committee has carefully assessed the merits and proportionate relationship of the budgets submitted or thought seriously about the order of priority of the goals sought in them. It has been unable to estimate the church's ability or willingness to meet the budgets. Nor has the Committee actively pursued its task of encouraging the practice of biblical principles of financial stewardship.

This is not to be construed as questioning the diligence of the Stewardship Committee in laboring at its job. There are perhaps good reasons why this Committee has not found it possible to do more. First, the Stewardship Committee is composed of ten members, six of whom are representatives of the three standing committees. Only three members, elected by the Assembly, have no vested interest in or special concern for the work of any one of the standing committees.

Toward Maturity in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

A number of significant decisions face the 36th General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church meeting in Silver Spring this May. Attention is here given to three that focus on the future of the denomination. What is its direction to be in the ecumenical area? Where are the lines to be drawn in subscription to ordination vows? How seriously is the church committed at the grass roots to its total program? These and similar questions will be running through the minds of all commissioners as they convene near the close of the first third of a century of the church's witness to the faith once delivered to the saints.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

The report of the Stewardship Committee cannot go unnoticed. Those who read the lead article in the March *Guardian* will be aware of the importance of taking a hard look at our approach to stewardship planning. This is the year to urge that sessions and congregations devote as much thought to their benevolence budgets for the work of the denomination as is put into meeting the pastor's salary, the fuel and light bills, and the mortgage payments.

The work of our standing committees represents the effort of the whole denomination to carry out Christ's great commission. In doing that work these committees have to meet salaries, pay utility bills, and make mortgage payments exactly as do local churches.

The entire denomination is responsible to see that these obligations are met month by month.

It is clear, however, that action by a general assembly in the spring in approving a budget for expenditures beginning the following January is not enough. Not only is the planning on the part of the committees necessarily timed far ahead of any commitment by the congregations, but sessions and local churches in general do not appear to be planning their benevolence budgets in terms of dollar commitments to the overall task and communicating that information to the Stewardship Committee.

Difficulties

Nor is this the only difficulty. Another side to the problem is that the Stewardship Committee itself has not really carried out its full task. That task as outlined by the 30th General Assembly involves more than combining the budgets prepared by the three standing committees into a unified budget and then informing the churches of their obligation to meet it.

Rather, the Stewardship Committee was established "to assess the merits of the respective budgets, the proportionate relationship of each to the others, the goals which are to be sought, and the ability of the church to meet the budgets." The Committee was also "charged with the encouragement of the practice of biblical principles of financial stewardship in the church."

Proposals

Would it not be better to have a Stewardship Committee composed of men who are not members of the standing committees—or at least a majority of such men—before whom the representatives of the standing committees could present the several needs of their respective programs? Such a committee would be far more free to assess the merits and proportionate relationship of the budgets and to think in terms of broad goals and priorities in the fulfillment of the church's total mission.

Second, if the Stewardship Committee is to be more effective in doing its work, it probably needs the services of an employee able to devote full time to its important assignments. Someone ought to be heading up a program encouraging financial stewardship—with literature and direct personal contact with pastors and sessions. Conferences on biblical stewardship might well be conducted within presbyteries. Intensive efforts need to be made in the area of long range and deferred giving for the work of the denomination as a whole. Moreover, the present general secretaries of the standing committees can ill afford to take time from their unique tasks for these vital but neglected concerns. Nor can a Stewardship Committee meeting for a few hours even several times a year execute its essential program unaided by some staff.

Now Is the Time

It is now time to begin moving in such a direction. Meanwhile, if our sessions and congregations will lay more careful plans this fall for next year's benevolences—and then inform the Stewardship Committee of their commitment in terms of the people's willingness to give—the pattern of intended giving will become more apparent when the Committee is next called upon to assess the several budgets. Our aim ought to be to develop a closer relationship between budgets as guides for expenditures and what the people of God are willing to give for the church's work at large.

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church has a record of good giving. Yet who among us does not need constant motivation from biblical principles? We could be doing still better. And there are as yet untapped resources. The Church has made progress at the denominational level in combining its budgets so that congregations may see the total picture. The time has come to implement this good beginning along the lines herein suggested, starting with our local benevolence planning and taking steps to make it easier for the Stewardship Committee to help us realize the potential of a continued upward trend in our giving to the cause of Christ.

How the General Assembly and the churches respond in this area of concern will be one signpost in the church's movement toward maturity in the coming decade.

* * *

COMPLAINT AGAINST A PRESBYTERY

A second issue to come before this Assembly is raised by a complaint against the Presbytery of the Midwest (Wisconsin). Complainants allege that the Presbytery erred in refusing to prepare charges and specifications and to proceed with a judicial trial of a member of Presbytery whose view of the fourth commandment is out of accord with the Westminster Standards. Of his divergence at this point there is no doubt, although he of course holds that his position accords with scriptural data, which the complainants deny. His position is essentially that of Calvin and has been maintained by a minority in the Reformed tradition.

(Parenthetically it may be observed

that some discussion is going on in Reformed circles as to the validity of at least the emphasis of the Westminster and Puritan view of the Sabbath—this on the part of men whose allegiance to the Scriptures as the Word of God is undoubted.)

It is not the purpose of this editorial, however, to defend the divergent view in question. It is intended, on the other hand, to raise the query whether one who holds such a view of the Sabbath must be regarded as having departed from his ordination vows. He, along with all officers of the church, has sincerely received and adopted "the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms as containing the system of doctrine taught in the holy Scriptures." Does disagreement at this particular point go counter to one's vow and involve an "offense" requiring judicial process and presumably some form of discipline?

The Presbytery, after deliberation in a number of meetings over a period of several months, has refrained from reaching such a conclusion with its consequence of drawing up formal charges. The complainants insist, on the other hand, that the Assembly should overrule the Presbytery and require that it proceed to a trial. Their position if upheld would put the church on record as binding the conscience of a man on this particular doctrine. It would say in effect that one may not differ as to the interpretation and application of the fourth commandment and still claim to adhere to the Standards as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Bible.

A number of problems are brought to the fore by this whole matter. One is the question of the prerogatives of a presbytery in judging its own members. If a presbytery is not persuaded by the evidence of preliminary charges and specifications presented to it and seriously considered, how far ought a general assembly go in requiring it to do what it has not judged that it must do?

"General Discipline" of the Word of God.

Another inquiry relates to what may be termed "general discipline"—the mutual ministry of the Word of God within the fellowship of the church in a continual effort to admonish and enlighten one another in the truth. An individual or a session or a

presbytery or a general assembly may feel obliged to deal in some way with what is believed to be error, without necessarily entering upon judicial process in every instance.

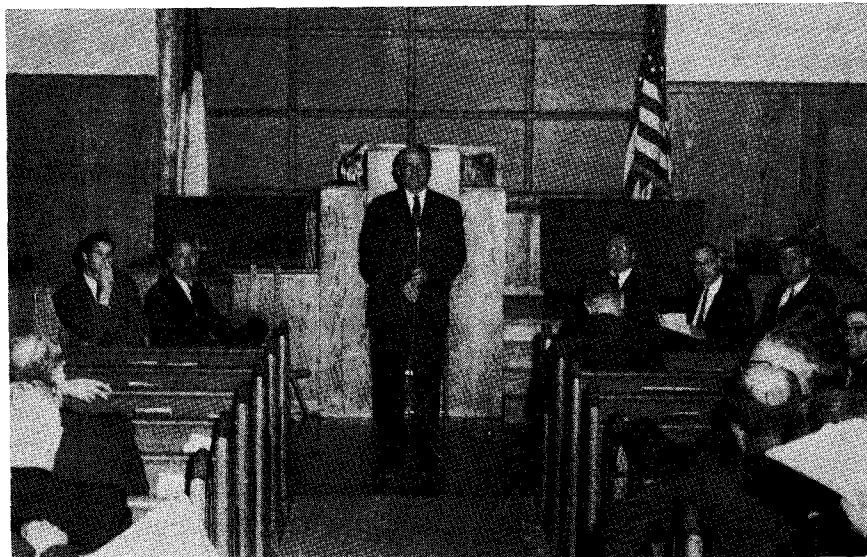
In the matter of lodge membership, for example, this is what the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has done. Such a tract as "Christ or the Lodge?" was a result of committee work and after referral to sessions for study has been widely circulated as a tract. Assemblies have consistently refused, however, to make a hard and fast rule on this subject for church membership, leaving it to sessions to judge in each case. Some have acted in one way, some in another.

Or take the articles in these pages and discussions at two fairly recent General Assemblies on the question whether parents not yet convinced that their infants should be baptized might be admitted to church membership in special circumstances. Again, the Assembly refused to force the issue in the direction of a binding rule, leaving it to the judgment of sessions, while at the same time testifying to the biblical teaching on the subject.

This type of approach, in the writer's opinion, is the approach of maturity. It recognizes the possibility of differences of interpretation or practice in at least some areas. It allows for a determination by those who are closest to the situation and are in the best position to decide whether there is danger of actual disruption of the purity and peace of the church. It does not regard every erroneous opinion or practice as demanding formal disciplinary measures.

Danger of Rigidity

There is real tragedy if a church becomes lax in dealing with matters of doctrine, but there is also danger in moving in the direction of rigidity in attitude or action as to all doctrinal differences. We are not now talking about outright denials of the faith nor so much as suggesting indifference to doctrine or to the moral law. Far from it. We are treating of issues within the sphere of a common commitment to the Scriptures as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. It is proper to assume that all of us have the same basic allegiance to the historic Presbyterian faith of our Standards and that none of us desires to weaken this commitment.



RP - OP PANEL DISCUSSION MARCH 19

Dr. Richard W. Gray moderated an afternoon panel discussion at Calvary Reformed Presbyterian Church, Willow Grove, of which he is pastor, on "The Pros and Cons of Union in Our Time" with some one hundred present.

Representing the Reformed Presbyterians, Evangelical Synod, were Messrs. Stephen Smallman of McLean, Va. and Paul Alexander of Huntsville, Ala. (left) and William Mahlow of Annapolis, Md. who was not present when the picture was taken.

Messrs. Calvin Cummings of Pittsburgh, Pa., Robert Eckardt of Vine-land, N. J. and Luder Whitlock of Hialeah, Fla. spoke for the Orthodox Presbyterians.

An evening meeting attended by many others was addressed by two seminary presidents, Dr. Edmund P. Clowney of Westminster and Dr. Robert G. Rayburn of Covenant, on the theme, "The Urgency of Our Times and the Question of Union." The Rev. LeRoy B. Oliver presided.

— Parker photo

In what direction then are we to move? May we allow a measure of flexibility without compromising the faith that we all cherish? Or must we perhaps revise our understanding of what it means to "sincerely receive and adopt" our subordinate Standards?

One position would see us move in the direction of increasing strictness. Its emphasis would appear to be toward complete doctrinal uniformity, even at the risk of narrowing the bonds of fellowship. It would allow a minimal liberty of conscience. This approach seems to assume that most issues, even those of longstanding disagreement, can be resolved once for all if we resolutely press toward a decision. Perhaps its advocates are inclined to feel that we should redefine what is involved in subscription vows and work for some confessional changes.

Does not history teach us, on the other hand, that most groups that have pursued such a course tend to become sects rather than mature churches; that orthodoxy becomes identified with a

few, often a very few so-called distinctives; and that alleged soundness (*our* soundness) in the faith is stressed at the cost of neglecting other tasks of the church? The end result may be a small group talking to itself while the world that needs the gospel goes heedlessly on its way to destruction.

Now this is not to suggest that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is already far down that road, but it is to say that here is a path on which the church could find itself without so intending by failing to consider the course it may set in seeking to resolve just such an issue as the one now at hand.

Other Differences

For, you see, there are other matters of divergence among us, of greater or lesser importance. Are we going to consume an undue proportion of our energy and time through an insistence on resolving all these issues? It is one thing to have the discipline of lively debates and carefully reasoned articles on disputed matters. It is something

else again to force the issues to a conclusion one by one through a trial in the church courts or a perhaps premature effort to change the Confession at this point or that.

There is, for instance, the problem of eschatology. "All three" of the commonly held views as to the millennium cannot be correct. Must we push toward a uniformly required solution even at the risk of losing some of our brethren?

Many of us do not see eye to eye on questions of church and state, specifically on the role of the state in general welfare. It has been alleged by writers in this magazine, for example, that certain governmental programs violate the eighth commandment. Presumably those who participate in or benefit from such programs are involved in some guilt. Happily so far we are dealing with this sharply divergent opinion by means of the "general discipline" of occasional articles pro and con. No doubt wide disagreements in this area will be with us for some time in a spectrum running from adherents of the John Birch Society to radical left wingers!

And among us are some who sing Psalms exclusively in worship. Shall the present majority come to the point of insisting that this difference be settled once for all even though it could result in making some of the brethren feel quite unwelcome? But enough.

A Better Way

Is it not possibly much better to face our differences "within the system" with openness and patience? Must we now be forced to decide that a certain position on the fourth commandment makes a man liable to the procedure of a formal trial? Each and every one of us is free to exercise the discipline of the Word by mouth and pen and thus to admonish and instruct one another as together we seek to gain insights into and apply the Scriptures. This surely ought to suffice.

A mature and maturing church is one that is not fearful of discussion and that recognizes its inability to say the last word on every subject. A mature church realizes that its acceptance of minority viewpoints by no means makes it liable to the charge of tolerating error. A mature church understands that sanctification is a life-long process for both officers and members. A mature church is able to

make a proper distinction between heresies as to the faith itself, and differences of interpretation on the part of men whose honest and hearty commitment is to the same Lord in obedience to the same Word of God and subordinate Standards.

* * *

PROPOSED BASIS FOR UNION

Finally, a third major item on the agenda of the forthcoming General Assembly remains to be mentioned. A proposed *basis* for union, hammered out in joint sessions of the respective "ecumenicity" committees of the Orthodox Presbyterian and Reformed Presbyterian (Evangelical Synod) Churches is to be presented for consideration. If approved, it is to be sent to presbyteries and sessions for a two-year period of study. Criticisms and suggestions are to be returned to the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations, and further joint meetings of the two committees will be held, with the possibility of a specific merger plan being readied for action by the two bodies two years hence.

This is not the time for comment on details of the proposal or on the various problems to be faced and eventually worked out. Ensuing months will suffice for such discussion and these pages will be open to expressions of opinion from both communions. It appears to the editor, however, that an endorsement of the substance of the proposed basis for eventual union is warranted. The Committee has done a notable job in wrestling with the instruction of the previous Assembly, as its report indicates.

There can be little quarrel with the evidence that in principle the two churches are in agreement. The OPC Committee apparently concluded that there are no theological differences sufficient to keep the two bodies apart. Both are committed to the Scriptures as the infallible and inerrant Word of God as the supreme standard. Both acknowledge the Westminster Standards as subordinate formulations. Both are seeking to fulfill the demands of Christ's great commission to his church. Both show concern for godliness in a crooked and perverse generation. Both have taken a similar stance on separation from ecclesiastical unbelief since their common origin in the nineteen thirties. Both are subject to the biblical teaching of the

unity that ought to be demonstrated on the part of those of like faith.

Why Not Now?

Agreement appears widespread that merger will come about eventually. Those who appeal for further delay mention very real problems, which of course will have to be resolved in the labor of preparing complete and final plans. Is there any reason to suppose, however, that such problems — matters of doctrinal emphases, attitudes and customs, strengths and weaknesses, organizational structures or whatever — will be much different five years or ten years from now? Is it not as likely that the two churches can combine their strengths and together strive to overcome their weaknesses just as readily in the seventies as in the eighties?

A third of a century has passed since our shared beginning, a new generation is at hand and will soon be dominant in both communions, and each denomination is struggling financially and with personnel to keep up with almost limitless opportunities about us. There is competition and duplication where there might be complementary use of the gifts and resources God has bestowed.

Each of us calls upon men and women to separate from the unbelief and apostasy found in many other bodies—but then we force still another decision upon them: shall it be the OPC or the RPC/ES to which to turn?

What is it that we are waiting for? Until all the old-timers who were on the scene in 1936-37 are gone? Or until all the problems in our own communions are resolved? Does anyone seriously think that given another ten years—or another third of a century—either body will have reached perfection? Or that there won't be new problems facing us from within and from without in every generation? Will we really know and understand one another better in 1979 if we continue our separate ways? Will combining of agencies and programs be any less complicated a decade hence? These are questions not lightly to be brushed aside.

Digression

(If a brief digression on an ecumenical theme may be permitted, the thought occurs that if the Orthodox Presbyterian Church had the faith and

imagination and sense of urgency called for in these last days, it might well be taking the lead in an even more dramatic plea for unity. It could be urging a merger that would also include the Reformed Presbyterian Church (Covenanter) and the Reformed Church (Eureka Classis)! With these bodies as well as with the RPC/ES the OPC already has mutual areas of cooperation and financial support. All four communions are committed to essentially the same historic formulations of the faith. All four have the same position on the Bible, take the Reformed faith seriously, and stand in opposition to modernistic alliances with unbelief. Certainly there are differences, but most if not all the divergences are present within the Orthodox Presbyterian fold itself! One may be pardoned for wondering at times why churches of Jesus Christ that have so much in common seem unable to find a breakthrough toward a unity matching our professed desire to obey our Lord in more effective service while it is yet day. The night cometh when no man can work.)

But to return to the issue of immediate concern. Are we mature enough to put aside our fears, to rely upon God to maintain his truth if we obey his will, to lose our identity if need be in a larger communion—all for the sake of the gospel? Do we discern the nature of the times in which we live and are we able to face the sacrifices required of good and faithful stewards in our generation?

Perspective

One of the younger men at the recent Willow Grove conference attended by more than a hundred brethren from the two bodies put it aptly when he spoke to this effect: "We keep thinking of the church as a fortress as we build its walls ever higher. The thing that troubles me is that when I peer over these walls I don't see anyone. Nobody seems to care that the fortress is there. We need to think of the church also as an army and join forces in a battle against a common foe with a desire to see men become free in Christ."

Perhaps there have been periods in the history of the church when men could afford to take a half century or even a century to work something out. This is hardly such a time. The next decade, to say nothing of the remainder of the twentieth century, is

likely to tell the story of how effectively we have seized our God-given opportunities. The times call for boldness, not caution; for faith, not fearful hesitation. We shall find it increasingly difficult to justify our isolation from those of like faith to our own children, not to mention brethren in our sister communion.

Meanwhile the world about us groans in hopeless confusion. It is not waiting for us to settle our internal problems in disunity while it moves ever farther into the chaos of secularism. The spirit of antichrist is at work among the rulers of darkness, for the glory of man.

Much soul searching with prayer and even fasting might well be undertaken prior to this 36th General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. It could be that it will mark a turning-point in our short history, and that whether we are noticed or remembered at the close of the century may depend in part on the maturity of our perspective in this spring of 1969.

May God give us a true grasp of the principles of Scripture. May he grant us humility in subjection to one another and in willingness to listen to one another in the debates that will come. Above all, may our sovereign Lord prepare us for greater usefulness in his kingdom for such an hour as this.

— R. E. N.

EDITOR'S MAIL BOX

Dear Sir:

I am grateful that the Special Appeal for Home Missions was authorized for April. It is unthinkable that, in the light of our financial resources, we should jeopardize our Foreign Missions and Christian Education work in years to come by cutting back on Home Missions at this time, or that we should require such a man as Francis Mahaffy to earn his bread by secular labor in order to continue Home Missions projects.

I am grateful too to the *Guardian* for providing extra space for this appeal.

But I also confess that I am grateful that the four-page excerpt from the *Guardian* arrived after we had made local preparations for the April offering. I can see no positive relationship between the biblical "tithes

and offerings"; between the biblical "according as the Lord has blessed" and an appeal for "two cents a day" or, in this very critical emergency, for "\$2.25 from each communicant member." How does this suggest the "hilarious giving" that so aptly paraphrases the biblical norm?

Less important but relevant, such an approach is not practical. Our Westfield session hoped our offering might average ten dollars a communicant. We also knew that a guaranteed way to realize less than that was to suggest \$10 from each person. Our appeal was to the joyousness of the privilege on the background of publicizing the critical need. Thus the gifts might spring from the hearts of the givers and in relationship to the blessings, spiritual and material, that God has given us.

Stewardship that is geared to II Corinthians 8 and 9 can have little discernable relationship to "two cents a day" for 99 percent of Orthodox Presbyterians. Only for the widow who has but "two mites" is such an appeal biblical. Let us not rob our people of the joy of liberality experienced by the Macedonian Christians of II Corinthians 8:1-5 by niggardly suggestions. A pastoral concern for our own people, as well as the needs of our Committees, requires the teaching of biblical stewardship.

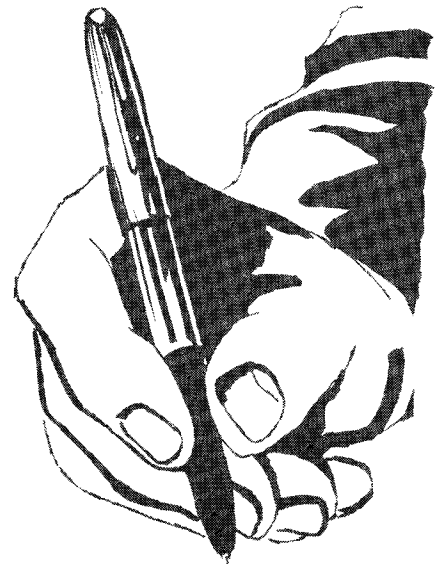
ROBERT L. ATWEL
Westfield, N. J.

* * *

Dear Sir:

When the Orthodox Presbyterian Church came into existence some thirty-three years ago it was as the climax of a long period when the attempt was made to keep the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. faithful to its constitution. The last year of that campaign was led by the Presbyterian Constitutional Covenant Union. Its members pledged to hold themselves "ready to perpetuate the true Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., regardless of cost."

In line with that determination the ministers and elders of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (then called the Presbyterian Church of America) at its first General Assembly made a statement. They said that they were associating together "in order to continue what we believe to be the true spiritual succession of the Presbyterian Church



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in the U.S.A." (*Minutes, First G.A.*, p. 3). They said that "the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms contain the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures" (*ibid.*, p. 4).

They directed the presbyteries (to be erected) to ask candidates, "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?" (*ibid.*, p. 17). This pledge, except for the phrase "and Catechisms," goes back to the first Presbyterian General Assembly in this country, provided for in 1788 and meeting in 1789.

In your March 1969 issue the Rev. John J. Mitchell raises the question of the meaning of this pledge and advocates the adoption of another view of the meaning of this pledge than that advocated by Dr. Charles Hodge. It is the opinion of the present writer that the approach to the meaning of the pledge advocated by Dr. Hodge is in accord with "the plain, historical meaning of the words;" and that it is also in accord with "the intention of the party imposing the oath or requiring the profession" (quoted from Hodge in *The Presbyterian Guardian*, March 1969, p. 27).

I believe that the Hodge approach was held by the great majority of office-bearers throughout the period from the formation of the General Assembly after the American Revolution to the time when the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was formed. If that Church is to continue in truth to be what it was founded to be, "the spiritual succession of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.," it may not depart from that point of view. Otherwise it becomes a "new sect."

In *The Presbyterian Guardian* for December 2, 1935 J. Gresham Machen said, "Which of these systems of doctrine . . . does the ordination pledge require ministers and elders and deacons in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to hold? There can really be no doubt about the answer to that question. The ordination pledge requires the candidates to hold distinctly the Reformed or Calvinistic system" (p. 70). Machen is in line with Hodge. We ought to be in line with both.

Sincerely yours,

PAUL WOOLLEY
Chestnut Hill, Pa.

Moonlighting for Missions

Dear Sir:

I am awake early this morning. The clock says 4 a.m. but I cannot sleep. I am thinking of over fifty young men looking forward to the ministry of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. About eight will be graduated from Westminster Seminary in June, and there are scarcely enough openings for them now.

Then there are a few other licentiates available. And about forty others under care of our presbyteries. Some are already in seminary, others still in college. For years we have been praying the Lord to raise up young men for the ministry at home and on foreign soil. The Lord of the harvest has done this. But what are we doing to get ready for them?

There is really no shortage of fields. Our Committee on Home Missions receives pleas from groups around the country for men and funds. Our Committee on Foreign Missions has published the need for reinforcements on distant fields.

What shall we do?

I heard a pastor say one day that he would give his shirt off his back for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. He felt its cause was that important. Some of our pastors did this, too, almost literally, in our early days. But

I haven't heard anyone talking like that recently. More of us are going to have to feel like giving our shirts, now that God has answered our prayers. We are going to have to feel that the luxuries are unimportant because the gospel is *so* important.

What I am saying is that we must find ways somehow to give more money for missions. Some of us are going to have to learn to give as though somebody's life depended on it—because it does! We may have to forego owning a color TV in order that someone may have the light of life. We may have to sacrifice our luxury home that others may look forward to a mansion in the Father's house. And we might have to reduce our old age security so that others may hear the message of eternal security.

Some of us have had to "moonlight" in order to catch up on hospital bills and similar emergencies. Should we perhaps consider "moonlighting for missions"? In this emergency are there some who could take on an extra job or part-time work solely for Christ?

I'm writing like a radical, I acknowledge. But these are radical times, and they require radical measures. *What shall we do when God answers prayer?*

H. WILSON ALBRIGHT
Hacienda Heights, Calif.

Supplementary response to "Question Two"

In the Meantime

D. CLAIR DAVIS

John Mitchell's "Question Two" article in the March *Guardian* is most thought-provoking and useful. Most likely he is right in thinking that the next General Assembly will have to do some serious thinking about the meaning of subscription to our Standards. He is certainly correct in thinking that even if it could be said in the last century that everyone knows what Calvinism is, most of us today are well-advised to at least begin our answer to that question with a close look at our Standards. But may I offer a few supplementary remarks.

(1) No one could quarrel with his suggestion that the Standards contain a) Scriptural teaching, and also b) possibly statements contrary to or going beyond Scripture. But this second category needs further subdivision. I personally am absolutely convinced of only two statements in the Standards which obviously go beyond Scripture, and which I therefore dare not confess to be my Christian faith: the Larger Catechism's teaching that there is less light of nature for the Sabbath than for the other commandments, and that there is a duty to review participation

in the Lord's Supper.¹

But surely there are other areas in which we are simply not yet completely sure, one way or the other. R. B. Kuiper's expression of this situation can hardly be improved upon:

Would you know why premillenarians, amillenarians and supernaturalist post-millenarians stand and labor shoulder to shoulder in our church? The reason is very simple. It is not at all that we are willing to condone a mild type of heresy, but that, whatever our *individual* convictions may be, as a *church* we have not yet arrived at certainty that any one of these groups is a hundred per cent right. Our church is still seeking more light. Obviously this type of Christian liberty has nothing in common with doctrinal indifference.²

Christian Liberty

Of course Kuiper here was referring to liberty in an area where the Standards did not give that liberty: the Standards do in fact condemn premillennialism! Probably Machen had much the same thing in mind when he said:

We think that a man who holds that the return of Christ and the final judgment take place not in one act, as the Westminster Standards contemplate them as doing . . . yet may honestly say that he holds the system of doctrine that the Standards contain. It is no new thing to take this position regarding creed subscription. It is the position which has long been taken by orthodox Calvinistic theologians.³

Not only should we keep in mind the possibility of there being an area in which we are still seeking more light (it is certainly timely to remember the current Reformed Ecumenical Synod study of the nature of the Sabbath); but is not Kuiper also correct in his distinction between *individual* convictions and the lack of certainty of the *church*? Again with the May Assembly in mind; is there not a difference between the fact that while most of us would regard John Calvin's position on the Sabbath as false, we would still have to think twice about excluding either him or modern-day Calvinists from our church.

(2) Perhaps there is just a bit more

¹ *Larger Catechism*, Questions 121, 175.

² "What's Right with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?" reprinted in *Presbyterian Guardian*, Vol. 35, No. 5, p. 79. Italics mine.

³ *Presbyterian Guardian*, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 21.

to the mind of the church than the Standards. At least the first action of the first General Assembly of our church was to affirm that the purpose of the new church was "in order to continue what we believe to be the true spiritual succession of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A." Precisely what that means may not be clear, but at the very least it indicates that it is not entirely irrelevant to refer to Hodge's and Warfield's understanding of what that old church meant by Calvinism. I for one am continually asked just what in particular the O. P. C. stands for, and the best answer I know is, just ordinary, garden-variety Calvinism. Nor would it be foolish for someone to seek to become a minister in the church because he thought it stood for Calvinism, no more and no less.

The "System"

(3) While disclaiming any notion of strict subscription to every proposition, Mr. Mitchell is convinced that the Standards themselves tell us what it is within them which constitutes the "system" (although presumably not what within them is erroneous). This is not crude question-begging, but the very valuable reminder that the Standards themselves tell us that only Scripture itself is infallible. He admits that while it is not easy to tell what the Standards intend to be of the "system," they nevertheless help in its definition. I wish Mr. Mitchell had followed up this very fruitful suggestion. Perhaps we would do well to search the Standards for the doctrines which are being asserted definitely over against a particular error, or perhaps for those doctrines which seem to link together the various parts of the Standards, and consider these the basic ones. At least we should always be alert for the *systematic* character of the system, and to pay special attention to the elements which make our church Calvinistic, and not something else.

(4) Mr. Mitchell thinks we should face up to the errors we find in the Standards and seek to have them amended, presumably as speedily as possible. Of course thirty-three years ago our church did not see things that way, and refused to adopt any amendment or declaratory act which would make explicit the church's desire to welcome premillenarians. But it did see fit to accept certain amendments

made in the old church at its beginning, and also in 1887 and in 1903. Perhaps we should be doing more thinking today about possible amendments. But it is highly doubtful that it can or should be done very quickly. For one thing, when definite statements are removed, somehow the people holding them think that the removal is an attack upon them, instead of a simple affirmation of the liberty which has existed all along anyway.

Meanwhile

Still the practical question remains, what should the church do in the *meantime* before the amendment is adopted? To illustrate, liberty to marry one's widow's sister, though affirmed as early as 1717 (and later off and on denied and confirmed) was not "settled" by amendment until 1887, a matter of 170 years! Even if now the O. P. C. were to adopt a premillenarian declaratory act, this would be 33 years after it had made clear that premillenarians were welcome.

Though the "Form of Government" is of a somewhat different order than the Confession and Catechisms, recent discussions have made it clear how many there are within the church who do not now, and perhaps never have, accepted the "three-office" view of the church's Form of Government. Perhaps someday the church will declare that the "two-office" view is an acceptable one, but this too will only be *after* a considerable "meanwhile." Tidiness in the Standards is no doubt a good thing, but in the meantime the church should continue to welcome "two-office" people, premillenarians, and also, I would say, Calvinistic Sabbarians.

Cannot Kuiper's remarks also be of value here? *While* waiting for more light, whether the R. E. S. supplies it or not, or *while* deciding the relation between our individual convictions and the position we think the church should hold, are we not well-advised to remember the "spiritual succession" which Machen took as a matter of course, and to recognize that our church intends that there be areas of liberty even for matters condemned by the Standards in their present unamended form. The best quick rule of thumb for that that I know of is the old Hodge/Warfield one, that Calvinism is that on which all reformed Confessions agree. Maybe

someone knows a better way to say it.

I think that to exercise great caution before departing from that "spiritual succession" is not "doctrinal indifference," but the exact opposite. It seems to me that the Presbytery of Wisconsin has displayed in an exemplary way that very succession in its careful study over the last five years, and in its deliberate final conclusions. General Assembly must think at least twice before it says whether or not it is sure that Presbytery has made a mistake. I hope very much that the Assembly will respect Presbytery's caution and reasoning, and therefore its conclusion.

Assembly

(from cover)

est or longest debates on the floor of an Assembly, but there are a number of issues coming before this 36th Assembly certain to receive careful attention and even anguish of soul on the part of many commissioners trying to reach a right decision. Three of the several significant issues receive editorial comment in these pages. There will be sharp differences of opinion on each of these matters, as well as on others.

Renewal and Prayer

Not every issue can reach final resolution in any one Assembly, of course. For example, the proposed basis of union between the Reformed Presbyterian (Evangelical Synod) and Orthodox Presbyterian Churches, if approved, will be but the beginning of a process of critical study and revision and working toward a possible completed plan of union. Perspective is given to such a period of discussion by a statement adopted at a joint meeting of the two "ecumenicity" committees in late March "calling on both churches to appreciate that discussion concerning merger does in fact constitute a spiritual challenge to more diligent study of the Scriptures and more earnest contending in prayer in order that each communion may be responsive to the will of God."

"Accepting this challenge," the statement continued, "does not prejudice anyone for or against any development, minor or major, that will occur. Rather, it admits that there will be a period of examination of self and each other and that, regardless of the out-

come, the proper spiritual preparation for these examinations will bring great blessing and renewal, whereas insufficient or improper spiritual preparation may well cause great harm and regression."

Both committees "urge the pastors of both communions particularly to emphasize the doctrine of the church as visible and invisible during the period of discussion and urge presbyteries, sessions, and pastors to call for heart-searching and humble prayer, both by individuals and by special prayer meetings during the period of discussion."

June Offering Highlights Opportunities in Christian Education

Again this year the Stewardship Committee has suggested that the month of June be designated as a time for emphasizing the ministry carried on by the Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The June Offering for Christian Education has by now become an "annual event" in the denomination. But it is more than that; it is an effort of increasing importance in the support of the committee's attempt to seize new opportunities for witnessing to modern man.

Only 15 years ago the ministry of the Committee on Christian Education was just a "part-time" program of tract publication and makeshift curriculum aids to the congregations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Today it is by comparison a "big-time" publication effort that includes Vacation Bible school, Sunday school, and catechetical curriculum materials, a weekly church bulletin service and an increasingly popular hymnal.

Its influence now reaches far beyond the congregations of the denomination. More than 250 churches outside the denomination use the Committee's VBS materials and an equal number use the Sunday school materials. In all, the Committee on Christian Education now serves a total of approximately 1000 churches in this

Host Pastor Charles Ellis of Knox Church has sent information that will be of interest to commissioners desiring a bit of exercise or recreation to offset the long hours of sitting and concentration. The Y.M.C.A. right across from the church will be available for before breakfast, noontime and evening periods of swimming, volleyball, jogging or other activities at 75¢ per visit or \$3.00 for the entire week.

Delegates who wish to remain in the area following the Assembly will find that Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones is speaking at Knox Church May 25 - 29.

country and Canada besides groups and individuals in the British Isles, Mexico, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, and those countries in which the Orthodox Presbyterian Church carries on missionary work.

Sunday School Program

In 1969 and 1970 the efforts of the committee will be directed chiefly toward the preparation of Sunday school materials for use in the Junior department. This course, tentatively scheduled for publication in October 1970, will bring to four the number of courses completed in the Sunday school curriculum. Mrs. Helen Pappas, writer of the very successful Primary course, is at work on the Junior course, and her preliminary work offers the prospect of exciting and effective teaching tools for those who work in this department of the Sunday school.

In order to help meet the needs of the Christian education program in 1969 a goal of \$2 per communicant member has been set for this year's offering. Based on the membership of the church in 1968, the offering this year will total \$18,000 if each member in every congregation gives just \$2. Of course, the Committee on Christian Education does not expect that it will happen that way. Some will not give, and others of necessity may give



BOARDWALK CHAPEL BEGINS TWENTY-FOURTH SEASON JUNE 23

Night and day the crowds pass the chapel in Wildwood, an evangelistic effort of the Presbytery of New Jersey running through Labor Day. Speakers for the first three weeks are Messrs. Robert Knudsen, Andrew Wickholm, and Cromwell Roskamp. — Parker photos

Director Leonard Chanoux (center) is resident minister in charge again this summer. Personal work on the boardwalk is a part of the ministry of those who assist in the work.

less than \$2. However, the committee hopes that all who can will give considerably more than \$2 in an all-out effort to reach the goal for the first time since the initiation of this annual effort.

The first June Offering for Christian Education was received in 1961 as a part of the 25th Anniversary celebration of the denomination. That year the offering totalled \$6100 and last year it reach \$10,546. Since 1961 a total of \$50,000 has been given in these annual efforts for the publication of materials for teaching the Word of God.

— R. J. J.

New Addresses

John J. Barnett, 119 N. Irving St., Greenville, Mich. 48838 (ordained by Presbytery of the Midwest).

Leslie A. Dunn, 23 Neal St., Portland, Maine 04102.

Stephen M. Reynolds, 613 Custis Rd., Glenside, Pa. 19038 (received by Presbytery of Philadelphia).

William A. Shell, Rowley, Iowa 52329.

Young J. Son, 2146 Parkview Ave., Abington, Pa. 19001.

Eugene B. Williams, 3228 Midway Dr., Waterloo, Iowa 50701 (received by Presbytery of the Dakotas).

A Reformed Testimony in WICHITA, KANSAS
The Reformed Presbyterian Church
 6300 Tarrytown, Park City
 G. I. Williamson, Pastor SH 4-1305

Here and There in the ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Lincoln, Nebr. — The two congregations served by Pastor Russell Piper have merged and began holding worship services together in March, using the name of one congregation and the building of the other. Faith Church, with a membership now of a little over one hundred, is meeting on West Burnham in Yankee Hill just outside the southwest city limits of Lincoln in the former Pioneer building.

Land was purchased last year for a new building in Salt Valley View south of the penitentiary, and work on a new manse is anticipated this summer. Mr. Piper has been pastor in Lincoln for twelve years.

Oostburg, Wisc. — The 1969 S-A-V-E program (Students as Volunteer Evangelists) has one team lined up for inner city work in Philadelphia with Mr. William Krispin. It is hoped to assist in one other home mission field, according to Pastor Donald Stanton of Bethel Church. Seniors in high school or older may apply for this opportunity in training in evangelism and practical work. One or more teams have gone out in the past six years to such places as Miami, Fla.; Boardwalk Chapel, N. J.; Chula Vista, Hacienda Heights, and Goleta, Calif.; Hatboro, Pa.; Thornton and Grand Junction, Colo.; and Spencer Mills, Mich.

Pittsburgh, Pa.—The Ohio Presbyterial under the presidency of Mrs. Barbara Fluck has begun a project to help send out new missionaries with the hope that it may meet with a hearty response in all ten women's presbyterials. Called "SHARES" — Share Harvest As Responsible Entrusted Servants — the purpose is to help provide funds for sending new missionaries on home or foreign fields with \$8,000 a year as the goal of SHARES.

"Shares"

Some encouraging responses have come to the challenge to each presbyterial to accept a goal of \$800, with Ohio hoping to go "over the top" at its spring meeting. Wrote the president of another presbyterial: "There is much enthusiasm about this project which is an answer to the prayer for something tangible for us to do."

Mrs. Fluck pointed out that our denomination is coming into its sec-

WRITE FOR LITERATURE
 For a short "Introduction to the OPC" or a longer historical pamphlet on "Why the OPC?" or other literature, write to:
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ond generation and we need to be reminded of the urgent need for dedicated men and women to replace retiring ministers and missionaries. Among foreign missionaries eligible for retirement within the next five years are the Duffs, the Gaffins, the Hunts, and the McIlwaines. It's the same story for some of our home missionaries who are "well past middle age." Money for their replacement by new missionaries needs a boost. That's where SHARES can lend assistance—by seeking extra contributions "over and above" our regular giving.

Mrs. Fluck emphasizes "over and above. That's got to sink in deep. Not just down to our mouths, but clear down to our feet! Would it be clearer if I said 'um grosszügige gabe wird gebeten' or 'boven op' or 'upraszq sie o hojne datki'? Or maybe even 'ucn-pawubambi baweu benukog ywchomu'? *Over and above.* How we need that!"

"As Christians," she went on, "we belong to a corporation whose dividends are seven-fold with no original purchase price. Our original share is given to us as a gift and we reap dividends all our lives as we seek to serve the Lord. May our SHARES grow in the Kingdom harvest as we seek to be responsible, entrusted servants."

Gowen, Mich. — Spencer Mills Church was the scene of the ordination and installation of Mr. John J. Barnett as pastor on March 14 by the Presbytery of the Midwest (Wisconsin). He had been serving the congregation as a licentiate since his graduation from Westminster last May.

Participants in the service were Messrs. Donald Parker, who presided and gave a charge to the congregation; George Haney, who preached from the text Jer. 37:17, "Is there any word from the Lord?" and Donald Stanton, who gave the charge to the young minister.

Kirkwood, Pa. — Pastor Arthur Steltzer welcomed Presbytery to the March meeting, at which five men were received under care as candidates

for the gospel ministry: David Hunt and Richard Miller of the Glenside congregation (the latter a former UEB-United Methodist lay preacher); Donald Poundstone of Center Square, formerly under care of the Presbytery of Southern California; Douglas Watson of Wilmington, enrolled in the U. of Delaware; and Gerald O'Donnell of Hatboro, teaching psychology at Eastern Baptist College and a partial student at Westminster. Messrs. Hunt, Miller, and Poundstone are seniors at Westminster Seminary.

Presbytery also received, after examination, a former United Presbyterian minister, Stephen M. Reynolds, Ph.D., of Glenside, librarian at Conwell School of Theology in Philadelphia. A 1933 graduate of Princeton Seminary, he was ordained in 1934 and received his doctorate from Princeton University in 1939. He had several pastorates, taught at Gordon and at Lincoln University, and for twelve years at Crozer Seminary where he served as librarian. Dr. Reynolds was vocal in his defense of the faith and active in opposition to the Confession of 1967 before his decision to seek admission to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Recently he was guest preacher at Calvary Church, Glenside, where he and his wife attend regularly.

Silver Spring, Md.—Knox Church recently welcomed eleven new members and five covenant children. Three adults were received on profession of faith and six on reaffirmation of faith—three former United Presbyterians, two former Methodists, and one former Lutheran.

Dr. C. John Miller of Westminster Seminary was guest leader for a two-day Christian education conference dealing with the Sunday school!

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER NEEDED
Missionary challenge. Good salary. Write Rev. C. K. Cummings, Christian School of Wilkinsburg, 1608 Graham Blvd., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15235.

IN PRAISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

O Breath of God whose first descent
Upon the darksome deep began
The timely op'ning of God's plan,
Our God, we now our praise present.

O Spirit of the living Lord
Whose striving with the men of sin
Before the flood of wrath closed in,
To thee we sound our rev'rent word.

O Holy Ghost whose speech divine
Through holy men in days long past
Foretold of Christ who came at last,
To thee, O God, our song assign.

O Wind of God, and blowing still
Upon dead bones in desert dry
To cause the new-born life to cry
Aloud his praise with unlocked will—

O Spirit sent by God, the Son,
To move his own beyond the gate
Into the world, the news relate
That all the chosen may be won.

Praise God, Triune, whose sov'reign
grace
The Spirit brings into the hearts
And saving faith in Christ imparts,
That back to God our steps retrace.

—CALVIN A. BUSCH

A CHALLENGE in developing a Reformed philosophy in education; mixed church community, Philadelphia area. For positions in high school science, physical education and other, write William Viss, principal, Phila.-Montgomery Christian Academy Box 93, Wyncote, Pa. 19095.

COLLEGE TEACHERS
We invite confidential inquiries from persons committed to the Reformed Faith wishing to consider teaching at Trinity, a baccalaureate liberal arts college located in a Chicago suburb.
The doctorate or an active doctoral program is expected. Inquiries about combining college teaching with graduate study in the Chicago area are also solicited.
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