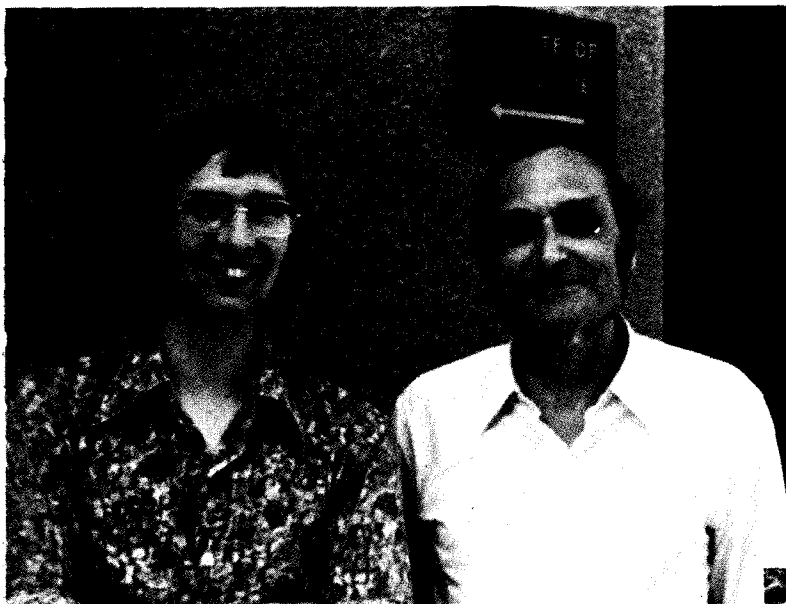


# The Presbyterian Guardian

VOL. 42, NO. 7 - AUG./SEPT., 1973



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new presbyterian church  
in the south



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## The Southern Scene

### *The Continuing Presbyterian Church*

Asheville, N.C.—Over three hundred voting delegates and another three hundred observers gathered here, August 7 through 9, to prepare for the birth of a new Presbyterian denomination. Voting delegates represented over 200 congregations, most of which only recently withdrew from the Presbyterian Church, U. S. (i.e., "Southern").

More precisely, this was the Advisory Convention for the Continuing Presbyterian Church. Its business was to decide whether to call the first general assembly of a new Presbyterian body to be made up of congregations, mainly located in the South, that felt obliged to separate from the PCUS because of the increasingly liberal leadership in the parent denomination.

#### Background of the C. P. C.

In the 1950s a campaign in the Presbyterian Church, U.S., largely led by conservative laymen, was successful in defeating a merger with what is now the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. But the pro-union and theologically liberal leaders proceeded to work for union anyway.

Joint UPUSA-PCUS congregations were fostered; joint literature projects undertaken; union presbyteries, contrary to the PCUS constitution, were approved by the Assembly.

Conservatives organized in various groupings—which were roundly condemned as 'unPresbyterian'—and did win some skirmishes. But conservative strength was eroding as seminary graduates tended to be liberal, and presbytery control was lost.

When union talks were begun again with the UPUSA, conservative strength was still sufficient to force an "escape clause" into the Plan of Union that would have permitted dissidents to stay out of a merger. But when PCUS representatives in the union talks moved to delete the escape provision, it was time to escape anyway.

A Steering Committee for a Continuing Presbyterian Church had already

been organized. Now it called for the new church to be organized in 1973. The meeting in Asheville was a vital step in meeting that goal. But much planning had already taken place, and the delegates were able to move through a heavy docket with a minimum of disagreement or debate.

#### Call for a General Assembly

As its first item of business, the Convention unanimously issued a call for the First General Assembly to meet in Birmingham, Ala., on December 4, 1973. A name for the new denomination has yet to be determined.

The Convention elected as its permanent chairman ruling elder W. Jack Williamson of Greenville, Ala. Dr. Morton Smith, professor at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Miss., was chosen as clerk. In a later action both men were recommended for the equivalent posts in the Assembly.

#### Constitutional standards proposed

The Convention then proceeded to a consideration of proposals dealing with doctrinal and governmental standards, and organizational structures, for recommendation to the General Assembly.

Ready agreement was given to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms. The precise form proposed is identical to that of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

The Convention also agreed to use the 1933 edition of the PCUS Book of Church Order with certain changes, to strengthen the rights of local congregations to their property and to delete provisions for (regional) synods—both areas in which conservatives in the PCUS had been threatened by liberal forces. The Convention also deleted a requirement for a Latin essay by candidates for the ministry!

#### Denominational structures

Much time and careful discussion preceded decisions on the new church's

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organizational patterns. Four permanent committees were proposed for General Assembly consideration. Committees on home and foreign missions and Christian education were agreed to and their basic duties carefully defined. Considerable attention was given to avoiding many of the abuses of power in the PCUS.

A Committee on Administration was also proposed. Its duties would be to nominate and supervise the General Assembly's stated clerk and business administrator, to operate insurance and retirement programs, to review budget requests of the other three committees and to recommend budgets for them to the General Assembly.

Though it gave budget control to its Committee on Administration, the Convention—after much debate—insisted that each committee must raise its own budget and maintain its own treasurer.

#### Interchurch relations

According to a resolution adopted by the Convention, the Continuing Presbyterian Church "will be a separate and distinct Presbyterian denomination. It is not likely to commit itself to organic union with other denominations in the near future." But the new church "shall encourage fellowship with all evangelicals who believe the entire Bible to be the verbally inspired and inerrant Word of God" and eagerly desires "fraternal relations and associations with those who adhere to the distinctives of the Reformed Faith."

An attempt to have the Convention appoint representatives to a meeting in early September sponsored by the National Presbyterian and Reformed Fellowship was defeated. Reasons for this action were its unsuitability until after the Assembly could meet and the new denomination be constituted. It was strongly urged that the action not be seen as in any way unfriendly to the other groups in the NPRF.

#### Other decisions

Those who met in Asheville are representative of many true Presbyterians in the South. Those who formed the Convention itself have already withdrawn or are in process of doing so, from the PCUS, having been convinced that "reform from within" is not possible.

Thus the Convention encouraged its congregations, and others likely to withdraw, to form new presbyteries. It also instructed its Mission to the U.S. (home missions committee) to begin organizing new congregations of those who were unable to withdraw in their existing

local churches. One such group is now being formed and others are expected.

In reaction to abuses in the PCUS, provision was made for congregational rather than presbytery representation in General Assembly. A carefully drawn statement on credentials for the first General Assembly sought to insure that churches and ministers were committed to Reformed doctrine and Presbyterian church order.

#### Impressions on an observer

This observer felt quite at home in the company of these southern Presbyterians. Having been born and baptized into the PCUS and a communicant member for many years, there were strong bonds of memory and friendship.

But more important by far was the repeated and insistent note that this was to be a genuinely Reformed and Presbyterian church. No doubt there will be disappointing fallings away as the members, and even the ruling elders and ministers, come to learn what the doctrines of God's sovereign grace really are. Instruction in these truths has been sadly deficient in the PCUS in its seminaries and literature. But many do know these grand truths and are fully prepared to stand for them.

At times the Convention seemed to overreact to the past. It required any constitutional amendments to pass the General Assembly by a three-fourths majority, be adopted by three-fourths of the presbyteries, and passed again by the same majority in a second Assembly—which should make even minor changes nearly impossible.

On the other hand, there was a warm appreciation voiced to the examples of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, which were the only denominations to have official observers present. A particularly cordial interest was shown in the Great Commission Publications of the OPC.

#### Prospects for the future

Parallels with 1936 were obvious, but differences were equally apparent. There was no Machen and no group of "Machen's boys" all about the same rather young age. In the Continuing Presbyterian Church, leadership talent and the wisdom of experience is widespread. Though the majority of delegates to this Convention were older men a large group of young ministers gives promise for the future.

This observer was struck by the apparent tension between the determina-

tion to establish a continuation of the old "Southern" Presbyterian Church and the frequently heard interest in a national Reformed and Presbyterian church including OPs and RPs, even some UPs perhaps, and these Continuing Presbyterians.

Already over two hundred congregations have taken steps to unite with the Continuing Church. Total membership exceeds 40,000 and total giving in 1972 was more than \$7 million. Only 150 ministers so far have enrolled; but much of the impetus in the movement has been from ruling elders all along.

There is a concern also to avoid bitterness and to maintain communication with those who do not see their way clear to leave the PCUS. Many conservatives are staying in; but how long mutual respect can survive across denominational boundaries remains to be seen.

Will there be separations among the separatists, as in 1937? Some may prefer independency. A few ministers are said to hold neo-pentecostal views, and such views have been divisive elsewhere. But the overwhelming majority want a truly Reformed and Presbyterian church. This observer believes they will have such a church, by God's help and in faithfulness to their vows.

## L. Nelson Bell dies

Montreat, N.C.—Dr. L. Nelson Bell, died in his sleep in the early morning of August 2. A former medical missionary to China, a founder of the *Presbyterian Journal*, he was immediate past moderator of the Presbyterian Church, U.S. Though a noted conservative in southern Presbyterian circles, Dr. Bell had refused to join with those who are leaving the PCUS in protest over its increasingly liberal tendencies.

Dr. Bell served in China for 25 years until forced out by the Japanese in 1941. In that same year the *Journal* was founded to give conservatives a voice. In 1956 he was instrumental in founding *Christianity Today* which is the organ of evangelicalism typified by Dr. Bell's son-in-law, evangelist Billy Graham.

Just 79 when he died, Nelson Bell lived a Christian life of service to his Lord. As a surgeon, publisher, writer, and counselor to many, he spoke out vigorously against the trends in his beloved church. Though it elected him as moderator, the PCUS seems unlikely to follow his counsel.

# You Have the Book

LUDER G. WHITLOCK

Jesus was a marvellous story teller. And one that has always caught the eye of Bible readers is the story of the rich man and Lazarus.

This man Lazarus was just as poor a beggar as you would ever meet. Every day he sat outside the rich man's house to beg. Lazarus lived on almost nothing. In fact, he lived on so little and became so weak that when the dogs licked at his sores the poor man was unable to scare them away. He would have thought it a banquet to eat the bread that people wiped their hands with and then threw under the table to the dogs. That is destitution!

On the other hand, the rich man cared nothing at all for Lazarus. He passed this poor man daily, but *felt nothing* in his heart for Lazarus, not one ounce of compassion. Eventually both men died—the poor man and the hard-hearted man—and they each went to their eternal reward. Lazarus, because he believed, went to heaven. The rich man, who had no faith, no love, no compassion, went to his reward in hell.

## Heaven and hell are real

As Jesus tells the story, it is immediately apparent that heaven and hell are realities. They actually exist, and when you die you immediately go to the one or the other. Lazarus went straight to heaven. When you die—if you believe in Jesus Christ—you too will go immediately to heaven as did Lazarus. There's no doubt about that.

But if you do not believe, you will immediately go to hell just as did the hard-hearted and indifferent man. Once there it is too late to change things. Once there it is too late to switch. You can't change your mind then, you can't take your life back and get a replacement. There is a finality to it all. When death comes, it will be one or the other, and it will be forever and you will be unable to change it. There is *no second chance*.

## Faith comes from the Word

Yet that is not the major thrust of the story. Jesus wasn't primarily concerned to remind people that heaven and hell are real and that when you die you're going to one or the other. He was attempting to elicit faith from the people.

Notice the response of the man who was in hell. He says, "If I can't get any relief for myself, at least let me go back and warn my family. Then they will believe and avoid this horrible torment." Then comes the word from Abraham himself in heaven: "They have Moses and the prophets; they have the Word of God. Let them listen to that and believe." To which the rich man replies, "I know; but if someone were to come back

from the dead, then they would surely believe." And Abraham answers, "If they won't believe Moses and the prophets, then they won't believe even if someone came back from the dead."

*If people will not believe in Jesus Christ when they hear the Word of God, they will not believe regardless of what happens.* This is important for us to realize, because frequently in our particular era we get the idea that if we could only do something big or sensational, if we could smash it out in a spectacular fashion, then people would believe. If we could get Joe Namath to believe then all the boys in the country would believe. If we could persuade Jane Fonda to believe then all kinds of people would join in.

But this just isn't so. If people won't believe God's Word, then even if sensational, spectacular things occur, even if someone were to come back from the dead, people still would not believe.

This story is couched in irony because Jesus actually did bring a man back from the dead. This man had been dead four days; his body had begun to decay; the tomb stank. But when Jesus uttered the words, "Lazarus, come forth," the man was raised from the dead and walked and lived again.

Now this was not the Lazarus of Jesus' story, but a real man who lived in Bethany with his sisters Mary and Martha. And Jesus did raise him from the dead. But, who believed? There is no doubt but that the Jewish leaders were upset about it, because they began in all seriousness to plot to kill Jesus. They thought that if Jesus keeps on doing such things, he is going to have everyone believing and following him. But did they believe? No! They were hardened in their unbelief.

## The world wants a sign

One reason Jesus told the story was because the Pharisees and Sadducees kept asking him for a sign. "If you'll just do something, a miracle say, then we'll believe." Can you imagine that? After all the miracles Jesus had performed, they still demanded a sign—and they never did believe. They insisted on a sign, and insisted on dictating what sign it ought to be. But Jesus said, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given it except the sign of Jonah" (Matthew 16:4). The sign was to be Jesus' return to life after being in the tomb even as Jonah was returned from the depths of the sea.

The devil himself tempted Jesus in just this way. "Throw yourself down from the top of the temple and then everyone will believe you." But the only sign was to be the sign of Jonah. After three days in the sea, Jonah was found alive on the shore. After three days in the earth, Jesus arose and appeared unto many. This

## PRESBYTERY OF DAKOTAS' FAMILY CONFERENCE

Hardville, Neb. — The second annual Family Conference of the Presbytery of the Dakotas was held Covenant Cedars Conference grounds on June 11-16. The Rev. Henry W. Coray was featured speaker. Others participating in the conference were Dr. John M. Zinkand, the Rev. Messrs. Jack J. Peterson, Richard G. Hodgson, John W. Mahaffy and John R. Hilbelink; teachers for school-age children were the Mmes. JoAnn Vandenburg, Linda Hardwicke, Betty Peterson and Lois Hilbelink. Total attendance was 70 campers. Next year's conference will feature the Rev. Harvie M. Conn as speaker.



was the sign of Jonah.

But did everyone believe then? Why, they paid the guards to tell the people a lie. The leaders knew what had happened, the facts were plain. But who believed? even though Lazarus was raised from the dead? even though Jesus rose from his tomb?

### The world excuses itself

We all tend to make excuses for those who refuse to believe in Jesus. After all, if he hadn't suffered this or that calamity, he would have believed. If he hadn't had such a terrible experience, he wouldn't have become soured against God. But Jesus said, "If they won't believe the Word of God, then no matter what happens they will not believe."

I talked to a person recently, opening the Bible carefully and explaining the message. It was clear and it was simple. But that person refused to accept it. "Why?" I asked. "Isn't it clear?" "I just don't believe it," he replied. "It's not that it isn't clear. I just reject it." And that is the point. We must realize that unless people believe the Word of God, we can stand on our heads, put on a show — have someone come from the dead! — and they will not believe.

There's always some kind of excuse. John the Baptist came preaching repentance, and people condemned him for his austere way of life. Then Jesus went to a wedding and performed a miracle, and people called him a glutton and a winebibber. But they didn't believe. That is the point. If people don't accept the message of the Bible for what it is, they're not going to believe no matter what you do. Gimmicks and programs do not bring people into the kingdom of God. These things add up to a big fat zero.

### But there is no excuse

People believe when the Word of God convicts them of sin and shows them their Savior. It doesn't have to be sensational; it is quite simple even in its glorious wonder. I went to seminary with a fellow who grew up in a non-Christian home. They didn't even have a

Bible in it. The family was really isolated from Christianity, quarantined from it. Yet one day he was in his great-grandmother's attic poking through the relics and curios there, and he found an old family Bible. He blew off the dust, and began to read it. As a result, he was converted — by the power of the Word.

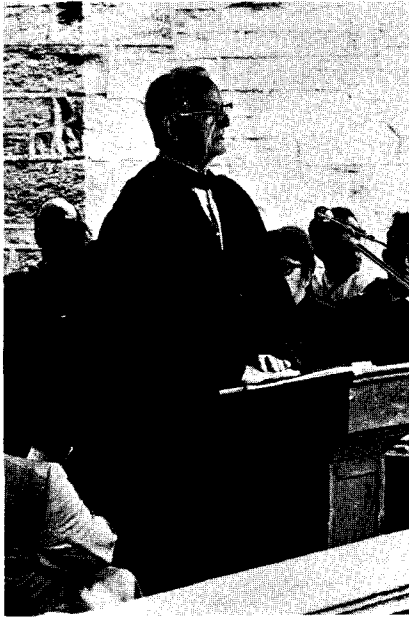
That young man is now a minister of that Word. He preaches the Word of God that was the instrument of his own salvation. This is what makes the real difference. Not everyone will be converted by reading dusty old Bibles in an attic. But *no one will be converted apart from the Word of God.*

You may get people to join the crowd for a time. There was Judas, one of the twelve. He heard and saw everything Jesus spoke and did. He was there, an eyewitness to every single moment of it. History was being made! God was in the flesh! But did Judas believe?

He had no excuse; no one today has an excuse. It is the Scriptures that speak of Christ, and you have the book. But if you will not accept the Bible for what it is — the Word of God — then do not expect God to make some special miracle to persuade you. He will not do a miracle for you; he will not send someone back from the dead to persuade you. If you can't believe the message of salvation in the Word, if you can't believe in the Christ presented in the Word, then don't fool yourself — you won't believe, even though your own mother were to return from the dead and whisper in your ear!

You have the book. Search it, read it, study it, accept it as the very Word of God himself. Then you will see yourself for what you are — a hell-bent sinner — and you will see Christ for what he is — the one who died and rose again, the sign of Jonah, the Savior of lost sinners who believe in him.

*The Rev. Whitlock is pastor of the West Hills Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Harriman, Tennessee. This sermon, from Luke 16:19-31, was preached to the congregation and duplicated for distribution elsewhere. It is reproduced here in slightly amended form.*



# The Certainty of Our Faith

**CORNELIUS VAN TIL**

*The Forty-fourth Commencement of Westminster Theological Seminary was held on May 30, 1973. Dr. Van Til, emeritus professor of apologetics, delivered the commencement address which is reproduced here in a condensed form.*

When I speak to you of the certainty of our *faith*, I am thinking of the faith of our fathers — the faith of Martin Luther, John Calvin, Geerhardus Vos, and particularly the faith of J. Gresham Machen, chief founder of this seminary. I believe today, and trust that all of us here believe today, what these men believed in their day. With them we believe in Jesus Christ as the only Name given under heaven by which men must be saved.

Secondly, when I speak to you of the certainty of *our* faith, I am speaking of the faith that we possess as the redeemed by the blood of Jesus on Calvary's cross. We have found grace in the sight of God. We believe in the Christ who died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and rose again according to the Scriptures. Paul speaks to us as to fellow believers in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and of our justification through it. He says we are "sanctified in Christ Jesus." We believe this is true because we are born of God the Spirit, born from above, while other men are not. As believers, we have a common *heritage*, a common *task*, and a common *hope*. And we, who by grace have received the heritage of the Reformed Faith, must win other believers to see with us the vision of our heritage and task and hope.

Thirdly, when I speak of the *certainty* of our faith, I think of the fact that we must *speak to the world* about us of our faith in Christ. I think of this graduating class and of their task to go out to proclaim to the world and to an apostate church the gospel of Jesus and his resurrection, of Jesus the victor over sin and death, of Jesus' establishing his kingdom so the powers of hell cannot prevail against it. I think of the temptation that will come to them to accom-

modate the gospel to the taste of the natural man. To be an effective minister of the gospel of salvation, one must be *certain* that this gospel is not some cunningly devised fable, but that it is true and that all truth everywhere springs from this gospel.

Think of Martin Luther defying the emperor, refusing to retract what he had written. Think of John Rogers of London who went to the stake "as if he were walking to his wedding." Think of John Hooper who was burned to death because he believed in the finished sacrifice of Christ and had declared the Popish Mass to be an invention and ordinance of man that was keeping the people from "the merit of the blood of Jesus Christ." Or think of the words of Hugh Latimer to Nicholas Ridley as both were tied to the stake: "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day by God's grace, light such a candle in England as, I trust, shall never be put out."

As this graduating class goes forth, they will be confronted with a world that is more definitely committed to man's self-sufficiency than it has ever been in the past, and with a church far more deeply and widely apostate than was the Church of Rome in the days of the Reformers. The *Confession of 1967*, largely constructed under the leadership of faculty members at Princeton Seminary and officially adopted by the United Presbyterian Church, is calculated to erase "the merit of the blood of Jesus Christ" from men's hearts as surely as Rome ever tried to stifle the gospel of God's sovereign grace to man.

## I. The Certainty of Our Faith—Today

### A. *Our faith — eating his flesh, drinking his blood*

Go back with me to the time when Jesus our Savior instituted the supper for the remembrance of his Name. Jesus had told his disciples that he was the "bread of life," that "whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:54). And now, before he was to give his life a ransom

## WTS grads receive M.Div. degrees

Westminster Theological Seminary awarded a newly authorized Master of Divinity degree to more than thirty graduates of the regular three-year curriculum. Since its founding in 1929, Westminster and most other seminaries had granted a Bachelor of Divinity to those who completed the basic course of preparation for the gospel ministry.

However, seminary training is on the graduate level, requiring a four-year college education. Thus the new M.Div. degree more fairly represents the actual work completed in seminary.

Those who hold the older B.D. diplomas from Westminster will be allowed to obtain new M.Div. ones. If they have one of the genuine parchment documents, however, they would do well to preserve it; the new models are a substitute—rising costs, you know.



The Rev. Bruce F. Hunt, missionary to Korea, converses with Koreans Bo Min Lee and Yung-Ho Suh who received the Master of Theology degree.

for many, he met with the twelve he had chosen to proclaim his Name to all men everywhere.

Come with me to that upper room. Some time before, Jesus had sent out the twelve to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, and raise the dead. Go, he had said, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and tell them the kingdom of heaven is at hand; freely ye have received, freely give. But, because you come to men to do them good and offer them salvation in my name as the promised Messiah of Israel, do *not* expect them to receive you gladly. I come as the Light of the world; but men love darkness rather than light. Men hate me, the Master, and they will hate you, my servants.

Jesus was thinking of Satan as the instigator of this hatred. From the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Satan sought to destroy the work of salvation the Lord had come to perform. He had even tried to make Jesus himself believe that he did not need to die in the place of his people in order to remove the wrath of God from them. Satan had proposed that he and Jesus cooperate in leading mankind to the establishment of a kingdom of joy and peace.

Now near the end of Jesus' ministry, Satan was redoubling his efforts to defeat the Christ because he knew more clearly now that Jesus had all along been set to defeat him and destroy his kingdom. Satan even influenced Peter in order to deflect the mind of Jesus from the necessity of suffering as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. But Jesus had quickly detected the spirit of satanic opposition even in the words of a disciple who truly loved him: "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense to me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Matthew 16:23).

At the supper Jesus forces the issue. Will you, the Master asks, all twelve of you, be my true servants and proclaim my Name as the one whose shed blood will set men free from death as the pascal lamb freed Israel from physical death at the time of exodus? Take, eat, this is my body. Take, drink, this is the new covenant in my blood.

But one of you will betray me. One will show himself to have been Satan's tool all the while. One of you will soon openly choose the side of the Pharisees who have from the beginning been seeking to destroy me. Choose ye now, *for* me or *against* me. Am I really *for* you the Lamb of God that takes away *your* sins? Do you now see that I must be wounded for *your* transgressions and bruised for *your*

iniquities?

The atmosphere in the upper room was getting much too hot for Judas. The others too were depressed, not fully understanding what Jesus had come to do for them. But in their hearts was true love for their Lord, wrought by the Spirit of God. In Judas, on the contrary, there had been smouldering a hatred for Jesus wrought by Satan. So Judas now goes out into the dark of night.

When Peter later denied that he knew Jesus, this was the result of the weakness of the flesh. After Jesus looked at him and the cock crew thrice, Peter went out and wept bitterly for his sins. But when Jesus handed the morsel of bread to Judas, Satan entered and took full possession of him. Judas never found true repentance for his betrayal of Jesus. He became the great apostle of Satan, and in following Satan lost himself and all that he had.

### *B. Our faith — in the merit of his blood*

Our faith, like that of Dr. Machen, is the faith of the old Princeton not the new; the faith of the Hodges and Warfield; the faith of the founders of Westminster, of men like Frank H. Stevenson, first president of the Board of Trustees, of men like Samuel G. Craig, Robert Dick Wilson, Oswald T. Allis. It is the faith of all those who today are ready to stand up for the "merit of the blood of Jesus Christ" against those in modern science, philosophy, and theology, who have been and are seeking to construct the kingdom of man, the kingdom of Satan, even though they talk of the kingdom of God.

All of us must, even across many ecclesiastical lines, speak oft with one another of this our *common* faith, our *common* heritage, our *common* task, our *common* hope. It is the faith of all of us who believe in the merit of the blood of Christ, who must rejoice in the fellowship of all those who glory in the merit of that blood.

### *C. The certainty of our faith*

When Jesus had been crucified, it seemed that Satan had been victorious. The Jews had found Jesus guilty of blasphemy. The high priest, a mere man, had said that Jesus made himself equal with God. Thus the leaders of God's covenant people, called to be a light to the Gentiles, sought to envelop that light in the darkness of the nations. And so they handed him over to Pilate, the representative of



these Gentiles.

"What is truth?" asked Pilate. You claim to be the king of a kingdom of truth; what nonsense is that? Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle have shown us that truth is *beyond* the reach of man. It is at best an ideal set by man for which he must strive. Surely then, man cannot be spoken of as guilty because he does not *know* the truth.

Thus the Jews, God's covenant people, those to whom the oracles of God had been revealed, joined with the Gentiles to say that Jesus was not, *because he could not be*, the promised Prophet, Priest, and King through whom alone salvation could be accomplished for men. All of them were the instruments of Satan. Through them the powers of hell were seeking to establish the kingdom of men instead of the kingdom of God.

But notice the *certainty*, after Christ's resurrection, with which the apostles and their followers proclaimed the name of Jesus as the only Name given by which men must be saved. It is from this same sense of fearlessness that our certainty of the truth springs and with which we must today speak forth our common faith to men.

"The kings of the earth stood up and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together for to do whatever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:26-28). May the certainty of our faith be the certainty of these early believers, a certainty that produces fearlessness before the Sanhedrin of today.

## II. Christ, Victor over Satan in History

### A. Our faith — in the victorious Lord

For the third time, we ask about the substance, the nature, the content, the object of our faith. "Where is your God; where is your Christ?" a scorning world and an apostate church says to us today.

Our answer is that the object of our faith is *the self-attesting Christ of Scripture, the Lord of history, the Victor over Satan* and his hosts. The whole course of history consists of an all-out war between Christ and Satan for the souls of men, with Christ the victor and Satan the vanquished. All things are *from* him and *through* him and *unto* him. This is the good news that unitedly *we* as *believers* must proclaim without fear — the message of joy to the

world that lies in darkness.

In short, when we assert that all things are from, through, and unto Christ, we give in a word our total philosophy of history. With respect to the past, we believe that all things were created by Christ. "In the beginning was the Word. . . . All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1, 3). As for the present, "all things were created by him, and for him, . . . and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16, 17). Finally, as to the future: "Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

None but those who bow before the Scriptures as the Word of Christ have such a philosophy of history. Apostate men do not believe in the existence of Satan as the deceiver of mankind since the day of his fall in Adam. But we do believe in Satan's existence. And we also believe that the powers of hell have been defeated by Christ on the cross. At no time in history was Satan able to win more than a sham victory. The entire course of history is a manifestation of the victory of Christ over Satan. And that victory is anchored in the finished work he performed on the cross for his people's salvation when he cried out, "It is finished."

### B. Our faith — participating in Christ's victory

Christ's victory over Satan also spells our victory over Satan and all his attempts to enlist us in his service and to take us with him to hell. History is now for *me* and all those who, in partaking of the supper that Christ instituted, really do eat his flesh and drink his blood.

We are on a staircase that leads upward to our Savior's presence. Did he not tell us, "Let not your heart be troubled"? "Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:1, 2). At the right hand of the Father *my* Savior now intercedes for *me*, appealing to the Father on the basis of the finished redemption he wrought for *me* on Calvary's cross. The Holy Spirit also makes intercession for *me* with groanings that cannot be uttered (Romans 8:26). He too pleads for *me* on the basis of the finished work of Christ on the cross.

The Heidelberg Catechism expresses my faith marvelously well: "What is your only comfort in life and death?" The

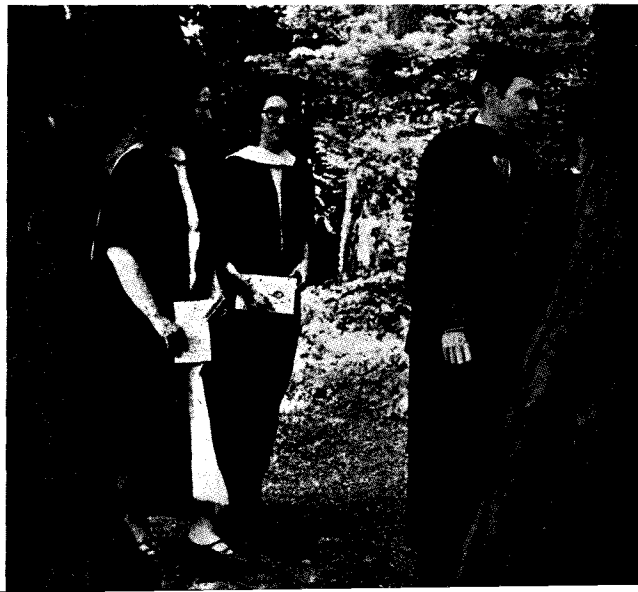
## First women graduate from WTS

Miss Lynne Haas and Mrs. Susan Truitt received the degree of Master of Arts in Religion during the May 30 commencement exercises. The degree is given upon completion of a two-year course, similar to that required for the M.Div. degree, but not including work in the area of preaching.

Though women have attended classes at Westminster in the past, the seminary only recently was given authority to award the M.A.R. degree. The new degree is designed for those who want a sound theological education but who do not plan to enter the ministry.

Miss Haas expects to use her training in church work or teaching. Mrs. Truitt took the course in parallel with her husband who expects to graduate with the M.Div. degree next year.

Susan Truitt and Lynne Haas in academic procession to receive the first degrees awarded to women at Westminster Theological Seminary.





answer is "that I, with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ; who with his precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things work together for my salvation, wherefore, by his Holy Spirit he also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready henceforth to live unto him" (Question and Answer 1).

This is *my* faith. It is *our* faith as believers in the merit of the blood of Jesus. More than ever before we must hold to this faith against the opposition of the combined forces of an inherently hostile world and apostate church.

### C. *The certainty of our faith — in the self-attesting Christ*

When I think upon my faith in the self-attesting Christ of Scripture as the Lord of history to whom all power in heaven and earth is given, who will soon return on the clouds to judge all mankind, then I ask myself once more of the *certainty* of this my faith.

Do I, do we, dare fearlessly to set our philosophy of history over against that of the unbeliever and challenge him to forsake the "wisdom of the world"? Does not today's philosophy assure us that no one knows the truth? Are we not told that science cannot operate except in an open universe? Does not the prevailing thought tell me that my body, and all life, has come into the world by a process of evolution from a world of chance? When we cry out, "O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?" do not the leading theologians of our day — Roman Catholic and Protestant — inform us that we are deluding ourselves, setting our hope on fairy tales that no mature person can take as representing the facts in our world?

I think again of this graduating class. A number of them will soon be called upon to preach Christ and him crucified and risen from the dead. They will be called not to set forth cunningly devised fables, but to speak the truth as it is in Jesus — to say, to those for whom all things are relative and no truth is known by anyone, that the Christ of the Scriptures *is* the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and that without him life is worse than vain.

Will they dare to say with full assurance of its truth that Christ is risen from the dead and become "the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20)? As servants of Christ who will be called upon to give account of what they have said to men about their Lord, they will continually hear the solemn words of Paul: "Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye *know* that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). Will they dare to say, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Timothy 1:12)?

After Easter and Pentecost, how can any servant of Christ be anything but *certain* of his faith in Christ as Lord of lords and King of kings? How can any true servant of Christ speak hesitantly or apologetically of Christ as victor over all of history? Listen to Peter tell the high priest, who was "grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead," that "if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus

Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole" (Acts 4:2, 9-10).

In this way our graduates, this Seminary, and we all each in his own way, must speak today to those who are "grieved" when they hear of Christ and him crucified for the sins of his people and raised for their justification. It is the responsibility of all of us who, by God's providence, have inherited the Reformed Faith to lead other believers into the service of the sovereign God of the Scriptures.

### III. The Cloud of Witnesses to Our Faith

If fear should ever threaten to prevent our being steadfast, immovable, abounding in the Lord's work, then let us look to those witnesses, some of whom were "stoned, and sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, who wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, tormented, afflicted, . . . [but] received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:37-40).

#### A. *Noah, the man of God*

Noah differed from the men of his time because he had received grace in the sight of God. With grace in his heart he lived as a covenant-keeper among covenant-breakers. He preached righteousness to those who preached lawlessness. Obeying the vision of God he built an ark to save his house and as a warning to all who had forsaken their Creator-Redeemer.

Noah's faith involved a philosophy of history, for he believed that God had originally created man perfect but that man had disobeyed the command of God. For their disobedience they were to be destroyed by a universal flood. When he told them this, Noah's contemporaries ridiculed him: How do you know this vision of your's means anything for the world of sunshine and showers? There are no records of all-destructive floods. Do you think you are God's favorite? Do you think that if we all should drown that you will not drown with us?

But the Spirit of Christ was speaking to men through Noah. Christ was calling all men to himself as the one from whom, through whom, and unto whom are all things. As covenant-breakers, all men are under God's wrath and will be destroyed. Only covenant-keepers will be saved, and they are covenant-keepers because, by God's grace, they have been lifted out of the mass of covenant-breakers. Noah *knew* that his labor was not in vain in the Lord.

Jesus said, "As were the days of Noah, so shall the days of the Son of man be. For, . . . until the day that Noah entered the ark, [they] knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37-39).

The men of Noah's day paid no attention. They simply assumed that Noah's claims of the coming judgment were but the product of an overheated imagination. Men today simply assume that Jesus' word about his coming as the Judge of all men was based on a delusion at best.

In Noah's day the line of separation between the children of Cain and the children of Seth had, for all practical purposes, been wiped out. Today an apostate church has become enamoured of the principles of an apostate world. As Jews and Gentiles united to destroy Jesus and his claim



Dr. Cornelius Van Til speaks with friends following the Forty-fourth Commencement of Westminster Seminary.

to be the Son of Man and Son of God, the coming Judge of all, so a false church and apostate world today sing in chorus that nobody knows anything about anything, but that all *know* that the faith of men like Luther, Calvin and Machen *cannot* be true. It is the task of this graduating class in days to come to dare to stand alone as Noah did against those who believed his words were folly.

Those who hold to the faith in the Christ of Scripture must do so in the face of well-nigh universal doubt, indifference and unbelief. They must listen to the words of God: "Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

#### B. Abraham, father of the faithful

When we are afraid or doubt, let us also look at the faith of Abraham, father of believers. "In *obedience* to the heavenly vision he left his home and went out not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11:8). "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange land, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (verses 9, 10).

Our Lord says that Abraham longed to see his day, and that he saw it. And "to Abraham and to his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Galatians 3:16).

Through Christ, the promised seed of Abraham, will all the nations be blessed. But who believes this today? The world says that nobody can predict the future. Those who believe that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, . . . that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:13-14), must believe this in the face of the opposition of the god of this age.

Kierkegaard centers all that he says about God in man as self-sufficient. Karl Barth says that "the historical Abraham does not really concern us," that it is a "non-historical truth that to Abraham his faith was reckoned as righteousness." Arnold Toynbee says there is no special merit in Christ's

blood since all suffering of any man anywhere sanctifies him. Bonhoeffer teaches that all men, as men, are what they are because they are in Christ who *is* the *act* of saving all mankind. Jacques Maritain, the Roman Catholic theologian, teaches an "integral humanism" in which the "merit of the blood of Jesus" has no place. Herman Wiersinga, of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, denies openly that Christ was made a curse for us.

Thus modern theologians do what the Pharisees did — deny the need and efficacy of "the merit of the blood of Jesus Christ." The task facing this seminary and facing us all is to be obedient with Noah and Abraham to the heavenly vision of the Christ, to his atoning death and resurrection for men under the wrath of God for their disobedience to him. To be obedient is for us to proclaim Jesus and him crucified, Jesus as risen, Jesus as ascended into heaven, Jesus as soon to return on the clouds to judge all men according to whether they have believed or have not believed in him.

Modern man is paralyzed by doubt and fear. His wisdom has been made foolishness with God. Taking for granted that he must start his effort to know himself and his world from within himself, he cannot even find himself. He is a whitecap on the wave of a bottomless and shoreless ocean of chance. He differs from the sea only because there chanced to be a wind from the infinite blue above that stirred the surface of the bottomless deep. After a moment he sinks back into identity with that from which he came.

Such is the vaunted freedom of modern science and philosophy. The message of modern theology is one of death and despair. It is to this world lying in darkness, and to an apostate church with a gospel of darkness, that we, who by grace have seen the vision of the sovereign grace of God, may and must bring the message of light, of hope and of gladness.

We receive this message by grace, not because we are any wiser or better than others. We believe what we believe on the absolute authority of him who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." We believe that all things are his because *he has told us* this. We believe that truth is what Jesus Christ says it is and that what he has spoken in the Scriptures is true because he has spoken it. We are certain in our faith on the authority of him who knows all things because he made all things, directs all things, and will judge all.

Let us then run with patience and perseverance the race that is set before us, "looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1, 2).

Lift up your hearts then, my friends, to that one who sits on the throne with the twenty-four elders and four living creatures as all the church of God sings the song of Moses and the Lamb, saying, "Worthy art thou, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power; for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they are, and were created" (Revelation 4:11; R.V.).

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

*Amen.*



Photographs accompanying this report were taken by Dr. Edmund P. Clowney, president of Westminster Seminary, during recent speaking engagement at Aix. The cover photo shows Paul Wells on the left with François Gonin at entrance to the school at Aix.

## A new start in France

PAUL WELLS

"Self-governing, confessional, unified." With these words M. Pierre Filhol, leading layman and President of the Faculty of Protestant Theology at Aix-en-Provence, presented the new project of the Faculty. The occasion was the Synod of the Free Reformed Church of France (Eglise Reformee Evangelique Indépendante), meeting at Ganges early in May 1973.

This date could become of historical importance for the Reformed faith in France, since the proposed project was unanimously accepted. The goal of M. Filhol and all those involved at Aix is that a truly Reformed theological training center be established in France to combat the growing ministerial crisis in the churches. This has been caused by the increasing liberalism of the older faculties of theology such as those at Paris and Montpellier.

### *Background of the school at Aix*

The Faculty of Theology at Aix was founded in 1940. The newly reorganized school will use the same premises as previously, sufficient to accommodate thirty students. There is a ten-thousand volume library, recently renovated, but in need of more recent publications. Over one hundred and fifty students graduated during the first twenty years, a not inconsiderable number by French standards.

Some things about the old faculty were never quite right, however. Although several able men taught at Aix during this period — such as G.-E. Meulemann (now at the Free University of Amsterdam), H. M. Matter, and historian E.-G. Léonard — and though the faculty was generously supported through Dr. Donald Barnhouse, a true unity of

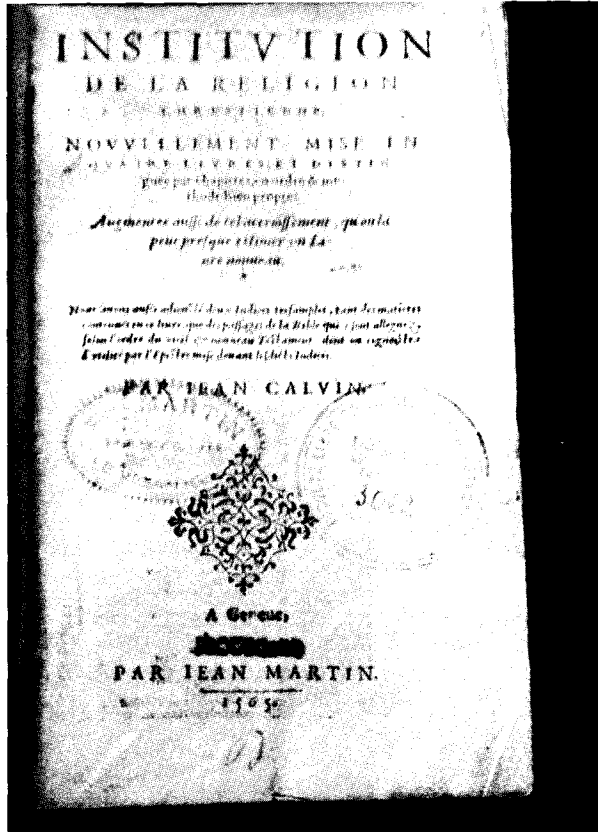
purpose based on a given confessional standard was always lacking. The differences were made plain at the synodical level, and the Faculty remained too much in a denominational context. In the mid-sixties these factors caused the Faculty to cease as a full-time theological school.

### *Reorganized on a solid basis*

The new project now adopted aims at something different. The Faculty is no longer to be conceived of as a denominational possession, but, while maintaining privileged relations with the Free Reformed Church, it is to address itself to the French churches in general. The new commission of the Faculty will consist not only of a delegation from the Synod of the Free Reformed Church and the teachers at Aix, but will also include five men of Reformed convictions, chosen by the commission, from other French churches and particularly the French Reformed Church.\* One such member, M. Jean Kreitmann from Geneva, has already been elected.

At the same time it was seen to be necessary to place the enterprise on a more solid confessional footing. The French Confession of 1559 (La Rochelle) was chosen as most suitable for the purpose. Those who teach at the Faculty will be required to sign this confession. This will give the new

\* The Free Reformed Church numbers fifty congregations and was founded in 1938, when the larger Reformed Church of France was formed. The reason for the separation was the alleged insufficiency of the doctrinal basis of the larger Reformed Church.



Sixteenth-century edition of Calvin's 'Institutes' in the library provides foundation with the Reformers for this new testimony into the twentieth century.

school an undoubted theological identity as specifically Reformed, in contrast to the liberal faculties and other institutions based on evangelical pluralism. In line with this development the Faculty is now to be called the "Faculty of Reformed Theology."

Thus the new school will be unified in its teaching staff through a common faith as defined by the Confession. But also as each new member of the staff is engaged, it will be on the basis of the unanimous agreement of the existing faculty.

### Getting the new school moving

Given this basis, what has been done so far? Four full-time teachers have been engaged for the first year beginning in October. Pierre Courthial, a pastor in Paris who studied under Auguste Lecerf, will bring to the Faculty many years of pastoral experience as well as his intellectual gifts; he will teach pastoral theology. François Gonin, pastor of the Free Reformed Church in Aix, will teach church history. Aaron Kayayan, another pastor from Paris, will teach part-time, assisting in apologetics.

Three other full-time teachers, though not French, are European. Drs. Johann Renkema, who studied at Kampen in the Netherlands, will join us to teach Old Testament. The New Testament department will be supplied by Peter Jones, who has just completed his doctorate at Princeton. The present writer, also English, studied at Westminster Seminary and will teach systematic theology.

This faculty, in allegiance to the truths of Scripture as expounded by the Reformers of the French Church, will seek to revive these truths by their fidelity in biblical exposition. With both youth and experience, various nationalities but a common conviction, we pray that the new Aix will be effective in the center of the University where the Fac-

ulty is located. (As is common in Europe, the Theological Faculty is located within a university but is not controlled by it.)

As a prelude to the full-time program, the Faculty has already begun theological instruction on a decentralized basis. Courses have been taught in Aix, Marseille, Nîmes, and Alès. Some classes were regularly attended by as many as fifty people and included all types from lawyers to agricultural laborers. Several of those who attend are lay-preachers working sacrificially in country areas where declining population has caused local churches to dwindle alarmingly.

These courses will be continued in the future. At present they have been taught by François Gonin, Emile Nicole, Paul Wells, and Eugene Boyer. The last named man, who broadcasts for La Voix de l'Évangile, has been at Aix since 1970, and has been an invaluable help in the progress of the project.

Such is the beginning that has been made. Much more remains to be done. Finances have to be consolidated, the curriculum drawn up, publicity planned, and most important, students must be sent by the churches. But so many obstacles have already been removed even at this stage, that we press on confident that our God is faithful to his people.

The time is ripe for a change in France. Many Protestants have been alienated by the desiccated teachings of the church. Its seemingly ever more scholastic theology changes as rapidly as Paris fashions. But a return to the apostolic gospel can change even this. Aix can make a vital contribution to the needed reform.

Further inquiries may be directed to the writer:

Paul Wells  
Faculté Libre de Théologie Protestante  
33, avenue Jules Ferry  
13100, Aix-en-Provence, France

Designated contributions for the Faculty at Aix may be made to: "National Presbyterian and Reformed Fellowship" and sent to:

Rev. Russell E. Horton, Treasurer  
3130 Ridge Road  
Lansing, IL 60438

## Reformed Youth Conferences in the South

From eleven southern states, over 200 young people and counselors gathered for the second year of Reformed Youth Movement Conferences in Bristol, Tennessee and Sardis, Mississippi. Evangelist John C. Reisinger and Professor Harvie M. Conn were featured speakers.

Classes centered on a study of the Holy Spirit, the fundamentals of the Reformed Faith, and practical aids to Bible study using I John. Numerous young people spoke of their conversion to Christ and their new understanding of Biblical truth.

Plans are underway to widen the geographical outreach of these conferences for next year, if God be willing. God's people are urged to pray earnestly for this new work our Lord has raised up. [*Guardian* readers who desire more information concerning this ministry to young people should write to: Rev Kerry W. Hurst

Rt. 1, Box 197  
Coeburn, VA 24230.]

# Letters

## Campus minister seeks to help

For the past several years, the Christian Reformed Church has been seeking to provide a ministry for students and staff here at the University of Minnesota. I am presently serving the campus position here as an ordained minister of that church. This ministry is of course extended to all those in the campus community, but has in view in a special way those of Reformed backgrounds and Calvinist communities of reference. There is a deep need for students to remain in touch with their spiritual heritage while here in our secular campus situation.

The purpose of this letter is to ask you to inform the Orthodox Presbyterian churches of this region of our presence on campus and of our desire to serve their young adults who are studying or working in this campus community. We are prepared to provide assistance to incoming students in whatever ways possible. Resource persons are available to assist them in orientation and registration, and in locating housing, etc. It is our hope most of all that students will be assisted in maturing as Christians while here on campus. We are concerned not only to minister to students, but also to challenge and equip them to participate in the work of ministry on campus. I personally am available at any time to these students for conversation or counseling.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Dan J. Becksvoort  
1101 University Ave., S. E.  
Minneapolis, MN 55414  
612-331-1102

## Did "fathers" eat a sour grape?

I am personally troubled when I keep reading these calls for repentance on the part of one or both sides in connection with the proposed merger of the OPC and the RPCES. Now a Scripture has thrust itself into my mind: "In those days they shall say no more, The Fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Jeremiah 31:29).

You see, in 1937 I was a backslid Christian who had spent a number of years in dance halls and nightclubs as a trumpeter. I was not even aware of the Presbyterian Church of America, or the subsequent Orthodox Presbyterian name, or the division that produced the Bible Presbyterian Church.

When the Lord graciously restored me to his fellowship, and I became an

avid student of the Bible and theology, I eventually felt his call to the ministry. By circumstances too detailed for this letter, I was received into the old Bible Presbyterian Church. Thus I am one of the "children" whose teeth are now being set on edge because of the "fathers" who ate some sour grapes. I also realize that there are many of us, in the RPCES and the OPC, who came into these churches without having any connection with whatever mistakes were made in the past.

It seems to me, from where I now sit, that the "fathers" who still remain in either church should get together on a personal level and straighten out their differences, so that the rest of us who were not personally involved in 1937 can proceed on a free and unhampered manner to discuss and decide the proposed merger on an objective basis! And this (so it seems to me) would be in harmony with what Jeremiah also said: "...every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge" (verse 30).

Some have apparently put forth the doctrine of "corporate guilt"—although there can be a debate over the validity of this doctrine. But even if it be accepted as valid for the sake of the argument, should the repentance and confession come first from those of us who did no actual wrong, or should it come from those who are said to have acted wrongly way back in 1937? Implicating the many by means of "corporate guilt" does not lessen the personal guilt of the few.

I confess to having mixed feelings about the merger, which feelings will disappear as soon as some of the practical problems have been solved. Yet if this merger is to be effectuated, it should be done with an eye on the possible good that can be accomplished unitedly in the future, and not be handicapped by the failure or wrongdoing of the past—especially when (as I think is the case) the far greater majority of us in both the RPCES and the OPC have had no personal connection with whatever happened thirty-six years ago. After all, this is 1973, not 1937!

Claude Bunzel, minister,  
Calif. Presbytery, RPCES  
Anaheim, Calif.

## Opposes Catechism changes

How shall we guarantee eschatological liberty when the OPC and RPC/ES merge? Shall we spell it out by alterations in the Larger Catechism? The proposed plan of union calls for this, and the *Guardian* approves. But does modifying the Catechism achieve this?

I do not think so. An illusion created, but at key points certain unyielding words are retained. For example, the words "invisible church" and "moment" (in the answers to Questions 90 and 87

# The Presbyterian Guardian

EDITOR

JOHN J. MITCHELL

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

of the L.C.). Both of these must be stretched or glossed over to accommodate Premillennialism. Together they constitute a continuing amillennial statement, regardless of the proposed alterations.

Eschatological liberty is a fact in both denominations already. Why tinker? In my opinion, the flat statement is preferred, if any statement is necessary. Perhaps something like this would do as a stopgap until the Westminster Standards can be properly amended:

"Varying views of the millennium, which do not involve the aberrations of modern Dispensationalism or Liberalism, may be tolerated as falling within the guidelines of subscription to the standards of the church."

All that is being done for eschatological liberty at present is token tinkering. I do not want such tinkering to be crystallized as a part of our standards. We need time to work this problem out, and time to do this before consummation of the proposed union may not be available. Hence, the desirability of the "statement" in recognition of what is actually the case until we are able to amend and harmonize the Westminster Standards to reflect this liberty which we now practice.

Edwards E. Elliott, pastor,  
Presby. S. Calif., OPC  
Garden Grove, Calif.

*Ed. note:* The *Guardian* has not said it approved of the proposed changes. Its editor has expressed his opinion that changing the standards is preferable to a "declaratory statement" or the present practice of ignoring what they say on this subject.

Granting differences of opinion as to the meaning of subscription to the Westminster Standards, it still seems more honest and helpful to set forth in our standards what we intend to confess to the world. To disown the confessional standards by declaration or in practice is dangerous.

If the proposed changes are not adequate, then Mr. Elliott might well suggest what would be. And if this takes time, so be it. — J.J.M.

## Alleine defended

The Rev. Henry W. Coray strongly criticizes the Puritan classic, *An Alarm to the Unconverted*, by Joseph Alleine (in the December *Guardian*). I call in question both the fairness and the helpfulness of Mr. Coray's article.

Mr. Coray levels three accusations against the *Alarm*, the first being that it confuses *regeneration* and *conversion*. Judging by the example cited this accusation appears to be correct. But since the connection between regeneration and conversion is so intimate, it being difficult to determine precisely where one ends and the other takes up, is an occasional failure to meticulously observe this distinction when pleading with careless sinners such a grievous error? Mr. Coray calls this failure in Alleine both "regrettable and unfortunate." Perhaps it is. But then is it not infinitely more regrettable and unfortunate that the hearts of our hearers are so little affected by our exact but passionless discourses today?

Secondly, Mr. Coray asserts that the *Alarm* focuses on man and not on Christ. But, assuming that to be the case, is it fair to censure Alleine on that account? Mr. Coray admits that God has used this book to bring many souls to Christ. Yet it must also be admitted that present-day preaching, though it may focus almost exclusively on Jesus, is calling but few to true conversion. If this seems a mystery to us, it would not have seemed so to Alleine and other Puritans, for they knew that men will scarcely seek a Savior for whom they feel no urgent need just as few will apply to a physician while thinking themselves whole (Matthew 9:12). Mr. Coray complains that page after page of the *Alarm* "are devoted to opening up the Pandora's Box of the human spirit until the very air around us is filled with moral smog." Does he find these pages so distressing, and—may I say it?—so alarming? Yes, my heart too recoils at such a description of itself, even as it does at the words of the prophet Jeremiah (17:9): and yet after all, I must confess that the half has not been told!

There is a danger in becoming overly introspective and dwelling too much on the sinful self. But none except those who have gazed long and hard into the recesses of their own

hearts can begin to apprehend the depths of Christ's love and humility as he agonized on the cross for sinners such as we are.

Mr. Coray's third criticism is couched in these words: "I fail to find [in the *Alarm*] a clear, sustained, definitive, satisfying, scriptural exposition of the pivotal doctrine of the vicarious atonement wrought by Christ." And again I admit the truth of this allegation as it stands. One can only wish with Mr. Coray that Alleine had given more space and development to the atonement. It does constitute a serious deficiency that those who use the book today need to recognize. Yet I must say something in defense of Alleine even at this point.

*An Alarm to the Unconverted* is not the leisurely work of a detached scholar. It is the vigorous panting of a zealous and youthful heart after the souls of lost men who themselves are oblivious to their peril. Alleine labored at a time in England when sound preaching was relatively common. Thousands who repeatedly heard the gospel preached in clarity yet remained unmoved and unconverted. To the task of awakening such careless souls Alleine set himself with all his might. He knew that unless the alarm first be sounded little good would be done. Today we may say that he went too far here, and not quite far enough there. But sound the ALARM in the hearts of poor sinners he did. Mr. Coray laments the "sad imbalance" in Alleine. But what of our preaching today? We glibly speak of "balance" and week in week out preach comfort and joy to vain professors of Christian faith in our midst who must either have their self-righteousness stripped away or perish. May it not be said of some of our ministers on the day of judgment: "They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace: when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 8:11)?

The *Alarm* is a disturbing—in places even a frightening—book. But so also is God's book. And if our preaching is truly a balanced proclamation of the "whole counsel of God," it will disturb and frighten as well as gladden. Oh that more of our smooth-preaching ministers would sit at Joseph Alleine's feet and catch some of his urgency over

souls treading on the brink of hell!  
Kenneth W. Williams  
Long Beach, Calif.

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*Ed. note*—This defense of Alleine's *Alarm* by Mr. Williams is only one of several such received. We are publishing—after considerable delay, due to limitations of space—this particular letter because it covers most of the points made in the others.

Briefly, we would call attention to the admissions that Mr. Williams himself makes in the letter. He admits Alleine's failure to observe the distinction between regeneration and conversion. But this failure is an important one, confusing the sovereign work of God—regeneration by the Spirit—with conversion. This latter term includes both regeneration and the human response of repentance and faith that results from it.

Secondly, is preaching rightly to be focused on man, even on man's dreadful sin and urgent need? To be sure, the light of the Light of the world will not be seen clearly except in contrast to the darkness. But Alleine's failure to preach Christ and him crucified is a one-sided and partial presentation of the truth.

Then, Alleine's failure to set forth clearly the atoning work of Christ is the most serious fault of the book. What good does it really do to convict a man of sin—as Judas himself was at the end—and fail to direct his attention to the cross? Granted that Alleine may have had good reason, in his estimation, for making the emphasis he did, it is still in order to warn against making the mistake today. To sound an alarm and to mute the message of the remedy is a mistake.

The need for clear preaching—of man's sin and Christ's person and work—is never greater than now. Sinner I am, and I need to be reminded again and again lest I delude myself otherwise. But my sin will be seen most clearly when it is contrasted with Christ's righteousness; my hope of escape from its bondage will be nurtured most helpfully when I am sent to the foot of the cross. Henry Coray's plea, in reviewing Alleine's *Alarm*, was for the preaching of the whole counsel of God. It was well taken.

— J. J. M.

# The Changing Scene

HENRY W. CORAY

Dr. Hudson T. Armerding, president of Wheaton College, is wise in the direction of the thinking and lifestyle of young people today. Recently in a thoughtful chapel talk, he revealed this perceptiveness when he stated:

Feelings are a legitimate component of a genuine Christian experience. If they become the dominant criterion by which spiritual reality or growth are judged, however, they can produce unfortunate consequences. For example, the Christian faith is increasingly described as primarily a meaningful interpersonal relationship. When an effort is made to summon believers to place themselves under the authority of objective, propositional truth as found in the Holy Scriptures, this is viewed with impatience. It is variously thought to be unnecessarily cluttering up the beautiful and simple fact of a relationship or needlessly stressing the intellectual or indefensibly being preoccupied with that which tends to divide rather than to unite Christians.

It is evident that the dominance of feelings has tended to bring about a lamentable degree of instability in both conviction and practice. There are instances in which some have remained Christians in the formal sense only as long as it was "exciting." As soon as this is perceived as diminishing, then some other religious personality is sought who can allegedly fill this need. Too often, moral or ethical lapses are defended on the grounds that there was no sense of guilt or shame. Underlying all of this is a most important issue of whether an objective criterion of truth such as the Holy Scriptures is to be received as authoritative or whether subjective feelings in essence are really the ultimate basis of one's faith and practice.

Dr. Armerding's words are certainly pertinent and should be pondered by all Christian young people. They vibrate with a fine balance and contain a wholesome note of warning that ought to keep sons and daughters of the covenant from wandering into many attractive but dangerous fads of the day.

## Farsightedness in the CRC?

In the June 29 issue of *The Banner*, official organ of the Christian Reformed Church, there is an article by David Alao, currently working for his Th.M. at Calvin Seminary. Mr. Alao writes:

Even though Calvin Seminary is denominational in origin and support, it is not narrow in scholarship. For this reason, the time is overdue for it to obtain recognition as an ecumenical center. It is the responsibility of the seminary to give the necessary leadership to get the Christian Reformed Church out of the prejudices of the past and join the National Council of Churches in the United States. Christ is one, and He has only

one body here below and that is the sum total of all the churches. United we stand, divided we fall.

The advantages of cooperation with others for the cause of Christ are enormous. I am not the only one who feels this way. The pressure has been on since 1923 by some far-sighted members of the Christian Reformed Church who achieved some success before 1945 in getting the Christian Reformed Church to participate in the program of the NCC. I wonder why they relaxed their efforts and gave in so easily? It is untrue that the purity of the life and witness of the Christian Reformed Church would be affected by cooperating with the NCC. On the other hand, the Christian Reformed tradition has the power to transform the NCC. Truth shines by its own light. You don't need a majority to present the truth.

This is indeed an illuminating comment. What Mr. Alao and "some far-sighted members of the Christian Reformed Church" apparently do not see is that by participating in a movement like the National Council of Churches they are compromising their testimony. The record of the NCC for its theological liberalism, extreme inclusivism, political lobbying in Washington that often amounts to browbeating, and its other defections—these are well known to the American public. What, then, would Alao and others of his persuasion do with passages like these? "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:9). "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; . . . [but] come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord. . ." (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). Or, the whole Epistle of Jude or 2 Peter, chapter 2, and other large segments of the Old and New Testaments?

We recommend for Mr. Alao's consideration a reading of John Bunyan's *Holy War*, one of the most penetrating parables on the perils of compromise ever penned. It is a literary masterpiece crying in the wilderness of confusion.

## Pay your debts

Many Americans are obsessed with the idea  
That they can perform good works  
And so cancel out their debt to God.  
They remind me of an incident  
Of a lady in Berkeley, California,  
Who received notice from her bank  
That she had overdrawn her account  
To the extent of \$25.00.  
Whereupon, the lady sat down,  
Wrote out a check for \$25.00,  
And mailed it in to the bank.

THE OLD CHINESE PHILOSOPHER



# The Presbyterian Guardian

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## Here and There in The Orthodox Presbyterian Church

**San Diego, Cal.** — Mr. Craig Rowe, recent graduate of Westminster Seminary, is serving as an assistant to the pastor, the Rev. Edward L. Kellogg, of the Point Loma Church. When he is ordained, Mr. Rowe will be the tallest minister in the O.P.C. His warmth and zeal for the Lord have been greatly blessed in past summers at the Boardwalk Chapel in Wildwood, N.J.

**Volga, S. Dak.** — *Calvary Church here has called the Rev. Arthur O. Olson to be its pastor. Mr. Olson has been serving the Galloway Church in Miami. His new address is simply: Volga, SD 57071.*

**Bancroft and Manchester, S. Dak.** — Murdock Memorial in Bancroft and the Manchester Church have jointly called Mr. Edward Eppinger to be their pastor. Mr. Eppinger is a licentiate of the Presbytery of Ohio.

The previous pastor of these churches, the Rev. Stanford Sutton, has accepted the call of the Second Parish Church of Portland, Maine. He had expected to take up his new duties by now, but Mrs. Sutton has been hospitalized for severe injuries received in an auto accident. Prayers for her recovery are sought.

**Long Beach, Cal.** — *The Rev. Wilson Rinker, pastor of First Church here, had been expected to undergo major surgery on July 24 to relieve a severe circulatory problem. Last-minute tests, however, showed it to be less serious than supposed. Mr. Rinker is now undergoing intensive physiotherapy treatments to correct the difficulties. Prayer for his recovery is asked.*

**Oxford, Pa.** — Bethany Church has called Mr. Jonathan Peters to be its pastor. Mr. Peters has been serving as an assistant to the Rev. Robert Atwell of Grace Church in Westfield, N.J. during the past months. He expects to move to Oxford in early September.

### MINISTERS' RETREAT IN NEBRASKA

**Mason City, Neb.** — *A special retreat for ministers is planned for September 4-6 at the Homeward Trails Bible Camp here. Ministers from the Christian Reformed, Reformed Presbyterian N.A., Reformed Presbyterian E.S., Reformed U.S., and Orthodox Presbyterian churches are invited. Dr. Richard B. Gaffin Jr., professor of New Testament at Westminster Seminary, is to speak on 'Resurrection Theology.' We regret not having this news earlier; if it reaches you in time and you are interested, phone the Rev. Jack Peterson in Carson, N. Dak., at 701-622-3272.*

### NEW ADDRESSES

The Rev. Roger W. Schmurr (new pastor of Sharon Church in Hialeah)  
699 W. 69th Pl., Hialeah, FL 33014.

*The Rev. Larry D. Conard (new pastor of Bayview Church in Chula Vista)*  
607 Melrose Ave., Chula Vista, CA 92011.

The Rev. Andrew E. Wikholm (headmaster of the Wilmington Christian School)  
2150 Grafton Dr., Wilmington, DE 19810.

*The Rev. Louis E. Knowles*  
3247 Roxanne Ave., Long Beach, CA 90808.

Dr. Daniel van Houte  
13412 Silver Lake Dr., Poway, CA 92064.

*The Rev. Robert K. Churchill (new pastor of the Shreveport Chapel)*  
2808 Alkay Lane, Shreveport, LA 71108.

**Denver, Col.** — The Park Hill Church has called Mr. Richard Wynja to become an associate pastor with particular responsibility for the chapel in nearby Aurora. Mrs. Wynja, the former Mary Male, is the daughter of the Rev. Ben Male who was overseeing the Aurora work. Mr. Wynja is a recent graduate of Westminster Seminary.

In a later decision, the Park Hill congregation called the Rev. James L. Bosgraf of Hanover Park, Illinois to be its own pastor.

**Garden Grove, Cal.** — *Mr. Charles McIlhenny is serving as assistant to the pastor, the Rev. Edwards E. Elliott, at the Garden Grove Church. A graduate of Reformed Episcopal Seminary, Mr. McIlhenny is a candidate for the gospel ministry under the care of the Presbytery of Southern California.*

### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

#### 1974 OPC Assembly — Time & place

The 1974 General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church will convene on Friday, May 17, 1974 at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Illinois.

Time and place for the 1974 Assembly were left to be determined by the Moderator and Stated Clerk. After checking possibilities this Chicago-area location was picked as the most convenient.

The Assembly is to convene at 8 p.m. on Friday, allowing extra time for a heavy docket of business. The O.P.-R.P. Plan of Union and the report of the Committee on Revisions to the Form of Government will both require an extra amount of time. The Assembly should be dissolved on Friday, May 24.