

# *The Presbyterian* **GUARDIAN**

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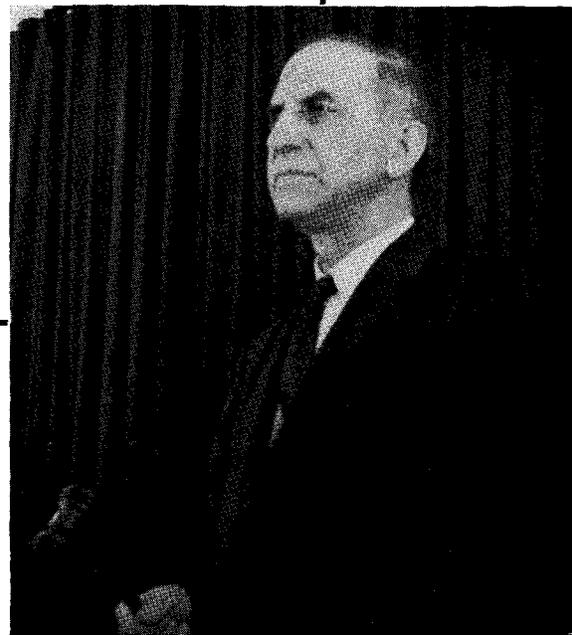
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## Fishers of Men

By EDWARD WYBENGA

**E**ARLY in the morning before it began to dawn Jesus went to a solitary place to hold communion with God (Mk. 1:35). In the early morning hours before the cares of the day or the temptations of the world have had an opportunity to exert their influence upon us—this is the best time to fortify our souls against the Evil One. Let us start the day with high and holy aspirations in communion with God. Such an experience will serve to bless us and keep us from evil ways throughout the day. Thus Jesus began the day; and having replenished his spiritual resources out of the fulness of God, He went forth to preach the gospel of the Kingdom in all of Galilee.

### The Missionary Call—Lk. 5:1-11

Jesus knew that his ministry on this earth was not to last for long. He was soon to return to heaven after his redeeming work was done. Therefore it was important and necessary that he gather about him certain men whom he could train to continue the work after he was gone.

Using a boat for his pulpit, as it lay anchored in one of the coves of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus taught the people the things of God. A multitude of attentive listeners had gathered around him on the shore, forming in appearance a kind of amphitheatre. The people were quiet; the lake was still; a gentle breeze was blowing; and Jesus' voice could be clearly heard by his audience. What a lovely and impressive scene it was—a fit emblem of the peace he had come to bring to troubled hearts through the preaching of the gospel.

Having finished his sermon Jesus called to Simon: "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch." Simon hesitated a bit. Said he: "Master, we have toiled all night, and have taken nothing." It was often disappointing business, this work of fishing—toiling all night without sleep

or rest, yet nothing to show for all this labor. Such had been the experience of Simon and the other fishermen the night before. But this circumstance all the more proved the presence of a remarkable faith, for Simon added, "Nevertheless, at Thy command I will let down the net."

The net is cast; the haul is made; the net is at the point of breaking because of the multitude of fishes. What a miracle! The Lord of nature, by a mysterious exertion of his will, drew the unconscious creatures of the sea to the place where, just at that moment, the net was cast to enclose them. So great was the catch that one ship could not bear the weight; and waving for help across the waters, James and John were summoned to bring up their boat.

This experience struck the fishermen with astonishment and awe. They saw in the person of Christ something more than a mere man—they saw in him the presence of God! Deeply impressed with his own sinfulness and unworthiness in the presence of so divine a being, Peter, as the spokesman for the rest, cast himself at Jesus' feet, saying: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" So should we all tremble with holy fear in the presence of a Holy God! Peter's experience was like that of Isaiah 700 years before, when, seeing God in a vision in the temple, he said: "Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts" (Isa. 6:5).

Peter did what was right when he prostrated himself at Jesus' feet, but he said more than he meant to say. He did not really mean that Christ should depart from him. He did not wish to dispense with the favor and blessedness of Christ's presence. But he was so overcome with amazement; he was so impressed with his own weakness and unworthiness in con-



trast to the Christ that Peter was constrained to say what he did say.

Ah, if we only had more of that spirit in the church—a deeper consciousness of the vast gulf that separates sinful man from the Holy God—then our worship would be purer, our prayers humbler, and our gratitude for salvation from so deep a fall all the greater!

Far from departing from Peter and from the others, Jesus had other intentions. He would call these men into his service. He would dwell in them, empower them, and work through them to bring about his kingdom. Therefore we hear him saying: "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men"; or, in the words of the evangelist Mark: "I will make you to become fishers of men." This was the official inauguration of Peter and his fellows to the work of apostleship. It was a far more impressive work to catch men in the gospel net of salvation than to catch fish, for this would bring eternal life to those so caught.

"And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him" (v. 11). This was instant obedience. This was faith in action. This was self-denial. This was giving up all—their earthly belongings, their occupation, their means of income, friends, families, themselves—all! When you give up all, that's as far as you can go. All is all!

## Orthodox Presbyterian General Assembly

By ROBERT E. NICHOLAS

Although the General Assembly which convened in Glenside, Pa. from June 5-10, 1961 was the 28th held by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (there were two Assemblies in both 1936 and 1939), it actually met during the closing week of the denomination's 25th year. The first Assembly began and the Church was constituted on June 11, 1936.

Ruling elder David Neilands, Moderator of the 27th Assembly, presided at the devotional service preceding the 28th General Assembly on Monday evening, June 5, at the Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church where all business sessions were held. Mr. Neilands gave a message from Exodus 40:17-38, using the theme "God Delivers His People." The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered by the Rev. E. J. Young, assisted by the Rev. Messrs. Jack Peterson and Robert Graham and by ruling elders Harry Greiner, Willard Neel, George Smith and Lambert Van Eerden.

Tuesday evening was left open for meetings of the temporary committees appointed by the Assembly, the proposed amendment to the Standing Rules having been adopted in an early action of the Assembly to provide for a recess in the docket for that purpose. Many commissioners and friends who were not on committee assignment took advantage of the opportunity to visit the new administrative offices at 7401 Old York Road. A popular meeting sponsored by the Committees on Home and Foreign Missions took place on Thursday night.

Meals were prepared and served in the nearby Westminster Seminary dining rooms by mothers of the local Christian elementary school for the convenience of commissioners and visitors. Lodging was provided at the Seminary and in many nearby homes. The Committee on Arrangements consisted of the Rev. Messrs. William Rankin and Leslie Sloat and elder Howard Porter.

Each morning session was preceded by a twenty-minute devotional period. Those who led were the Rev. Messrs. Robert Nicholas, Edward Kellogg, G. I. Williamson, Bruce Coie, and Calvin Cummings.

### TUESDAY

The 28th General Assembly was constituted with prayer by Mr. Neilands at 9:07 a.m. on June 6th. When the roll of the Assembly had been completed it showed a total of 76 ministers and 21 elder-commissioners (with only two or three alternates). A few of the men were able to attend only a portion of the time. A year ago there were 68 ministers and 23 elders in attendance at Manhattan Beach—36 of whom were from the host Presbytery. Last year 45 attended from west of the Mississippi (this year 18), whereas this year the adjacent Presbyteries of Philadelphia and New Jersey had 48 men at the Assembly (last year 21 made it to California).

It does seem, however, that the moving of the meeting-place from year to year achieves a measure of proportional representation over any two or three year cycle, together with some continuity in the light of the fact that a rather substantial core of men manage to attend nearly every year regardless of where the Assembly is held. Your reporter shares the opinion of many that efforts should be made to encourage and to make possible the attendance of a larger number of elders as commissioners. It is not too early to begin making plans for the 29th General Assembly whose business is to commence on May 29, 1962 in Cedar Grove, Wisconsin.

*In a brief debate as to the inclusion of regular recess periods in the docket, one commissioner (EPC) remarked, "Every golden minute of recess yields fruit in the discussion later." To which came the rejoinder (LBO), "It simply refuels men for further talking!" Recesses were taken.*

The following fraternal delegates were enrolled during the course of the Assembly as corresponding members: the Rev. N. Robert Prins, of the Christian Reformed Church; the Rev. Professor G. Brillenburg Wurth, of the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands; the Rev. Wilbur W. Blakely, of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, General Synod; and the Rev. Daniel Fannon, of the Bible Presbyterian Church, Inc.

An amendment to the Standing Rules proposed at the 27th Assembly was adopted at the outset providing that "only properly accredited representatives from corresponding bodies of other denominations shall be seated as corresponding members in the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church."

### Officers and Committees

Five men were nominated for the position of Stated Clerk: Richard Barker, LeRoy Oliver, Robert Nicholas, Jack Peterson, and Calvin Cummings. Mr. Oliver had a plurality from the start and on the fourth ballot was elected to another (his fourth) term in this office.

The following were voted upon for the office of Moderator: Messrs. Robert Atwell, Henry Coray, John Murray, Ned B. Stonehouse, Glenn Coie, and Robley Johnston. Professor Murray had a slight lead on the first ballot and was chosen to fill the chair of the 28th General Assembly on the third ballot and escorted to the rostrum by Mr. DeVelde, who had nominated him. Despite his plea that he would need a year to brush up on his parliamentary law, his awareness of Roberts' Rules and the Standing Rules of the Assembly soon became evident. The progress of the Assembly was furthered by his impartiality, his meticulous keeping to the times of recess and orders of the day, and his care in stating the motion before the house. Withal he retained his good humor

throughout in keeping the Assembly in good order during the five full days (and for the first time in years, no nights) of business.

Messrs. Richard Barker and Leonard Chanoux were nominated for the task of Assistant Clerk, and elder Barker was elected to serve in this capacity once again.

Four overtures and 20 other communications were before the Assembly, which acted to assign them to appropriate special or temporary committees as seemed to be required. Among the letters which needed no action was one from the Rev. J. W. Deenik, for the deputies of the Reformed Churches in New Zealand, expressing the hope that they may be able to send a representative in future years. The letter went on: "We would like to express how thankful we are and how much we praise the Lord for the Orthodox Presbyterian witness. In New Zealand we had to face a situation in the established Presbyterian Church which was very similar to the circumstances in the States twenty-five years ago, and we believed that we had to follow the example you gave us.

"We bless the Lord that He has enabled you to continue steadfastly in your witness for the gospel of salvation by grace and by faith alone, and we feel that we should assure you that not just in the States, but in many parts of the world we of the reformed, the presbyterian faith do listen to the voice of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and of the Westminster Seminary.

"We have hoped for many years that we would be able to find help in the ranks of your Church for the ministerial and pastoral needs of New Zealand, and we are thankful that it seems as if God is opening doors for us in this regard."

### Letters of Greeting

Another letter of fraternal greetings was sent by instruction of the 51st Annual Session of the Eureka Classis, Reformed Church in the U.S. and stated in part: "We share in your gratitude to God as He has brought you through a quarter century of maintaining and propagating the historic Reformed faith. We believe with you that so long as a church stands upon and adheres to the infallible Scriptures it may always look to the future with confidence, courage, and assurance."

The Moderator appointed the fol-

### STATISTICS

The annual statistical report of the churches calls attention to steady if not spectacular growth. The increase in total membership during the fiscal year showed a gain of 4.7 percent, well above the national population average of slightly over 2 percent annually over the past decade. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church has gained nearly 37 percent in the ten years since 1951. May we call attention to the interpretative letter from elder Edward Haug, Jr. in our June issue.

As of March 31 the report showed 138 ministers, 92 churches and 11 chapels. Two of the chapels have since been organized as churches, and two young men have been ordained.

Per capita giving increased \$5.37 per communicant member, less than the sizeable \$10.17 gain of the preceding year, but enough to bring the average contribution per communicant to a new high of \$161.66. The church will no doubt continue to be listed among the first ten in the annual report of the Stewardship Council.

lowing temporary committees to serve during the 28th General Assembly: Overtures and Communications — Messrs. Atwell, Coray, DeVelde, Peterson, and elder Roberts. Presbyterian Records—Messrs. Poundstone, Knight, and elder J. C. Smith. Date and Place of the 29th Assembly—Messrs. Reitsma and Chanoux. Travel Fund—Messrs. Clelland, G. Coie, and Phillips.

A Committee on Necrology was also appointed consisting of Messrs. Cummings and Woolley. A memorial minute for the late Robert S. Marsden, similar to the one which appeared in the June issue of the *Guardian*, was adopted on the final day of the Assembly, following which Dr. Van Til led in prayer for the family.

The Tuesday afternoon session opened with a short word of greeting from the fraternal delegate of the Christian Reformed Church. In speaking of the appreciation for the labors of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church on the part of those who know its struggles and faithful testimony, the Rev. Mr. Prins noted that the work of such an assembly of the church transcends the international conferences so much in the news these days. He went on to express the hope that the Christian Reformed and Orthodox Presbyterian Churches may come to under-

stand one another better in love even while recognizing weaknesses and blemishes.

Professor Clowney, in reply, quoted from Psalm 133 and emphasized that church unity is not a luxury item to be thought of as optional but is a Scriptural concept. We must not obstruct the flow of grace and blessing which God has poured out upon these churches but must seek to share it mutually in the service of the Lord, he concluded.

The Twenty-fifth Anniversary Committee was continued in order to complete its tasks, primarily the preparation and distribution of an anniversary volume, for which most of the material is now on hand. The Assembly urged the churches to promote its distribution, and the Committee said it assumed that nearly every family in the denomination will want a copy. In view of the response to a possible "book of best sermons" and the almost uniformly pessimistic opinion as to its salability, the Committee concluded "that it was not warranted in proceeding with this project."

### Home Missions

The report of the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension was read by Dr. Stonehouse. Of the 14 fields which received support during all or a part of the past year, two assumed self-support at the beginning of April, 1961: Westminster Church of Westchester, Ill. and Westminster of Evergreen Park, Ill.

In reporting its intention to assist in the support of seven seminary students during the summer of 1961, the report stated: "We believe that the employment of students for summer activity is in the best interests, not only of the local churches, but also of the whole denomination. For while the students are assisting in the program of evangelism they are trained for future service as ministers."

One phase of the report is entitled "Contact Work: There is evidence that many opportunities exist for the witness of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to individuals and groups in liberal denominations. During the past year contacts have been made with a number of ministers and members of these denominations and the Committee plans to intensify its efforts in this area in the coming year."

In response to a question, Mr. LeRoy Oliver, the Committee's General

Secretary, stated that the Contingent Fund represents "assets" of the Committee in the form of real estate, loans to churches, and some cash on hand. (It is the Committee's desire "to use these funds to purchase land for building sites where we wish to start new work.") The Church Extension Fund, on the other hand, represents loans to the Committee from individuals—on which interest is paid—from which in turn loans are made to congregations (whether home mission fields or otherwise) to help finance needed church buildings. "It is anticipated that up to \$100,000 will be needed during the coming year," according to the report, and the Committee's intention is "to promote the Church Extension Fund through appeals for support of particular needs." Churches which have not done so are urged to appoint agents to solicit loans from members.

### Administrative Costs

The question of administrative costs in relation to other costs was raised at this point and once or twice later in connection with reports of other Committees. A motion that the three Standing Committees be directed to examine their budgets with respect to such costs was made at the close of the Assembly under miscellaneous business, but was defeated. It was pointed out that the Committees continually undertake this review and are well aware of the problem which is common to small denominations.

Mr. Roberts, Controller for the Committees, presented brief evidence of certain economies which have been effected in order to do more work with fewer people at times. He noted that when the church is able to send out additional foreign missionaries, for example, the proportion of "overhead" will show a significant reduction. He also reminded the commissioners of the variety of services which are performed for the churches through the office of the Committees at 7401 Old York Road, and that the new administration building itself represents a more economical operation for the church. The cost of space for the Home Missions Committee, for instance, was 24 percent less than rental would have been for a full year elsewhere.

A motion by Mr. Elliott, later tabled, proposed that the Committee on Home Missions adopt a policy of encouraging presbyteries to assume di-

rect support of home missions fields within their bounds. The mover felt such a policy would make for needed decentralization and cut down on overhead of the denominational Committee. While some observed that it was not simply a question of "either—or" and that the denominational Committee could work in some areas not now being reached as well as in presbyteries at their request, others were quick to point out that some presbyteries are too small to undertake all of their own needs and that more competent and efficient administration would by no means be assured. The chairman of the Committee deemed it unwise to adopt so radical a change in the whole procedure of home missions as a denominational function. "To move in this direction of home rule would tend to isolate the presbyteries, and we could scarcely do what we have done if the eight presbyteries each worked independently," he said.

Elected to the class of 1964 were ministers Busch, Clough, and Eckardt and elders Garret Hoogerhyde and Lambert Van Eerden. All but the last named had been serving on the Committee. Mr. Peterson was elected on the second ballot to fill out the 1962 term of the late Mr. Marsden.

### Foreign Missions

Mr. Dunn read the report of the Committee on Foreign Missions. Besides the rather comprehensive report on the several fields for the calendar year 1960, there was a statement on "The Opportunity" from which we quote: "The need is pressing. It is

estimated that the total number of 'Christians' in the world, including Roman Catholics, modernists, and others, as well as evangelicals, is some 775 million. Of this number only 192 million are Protestants of every shade. Meanwhile 650 million more remain completely un-evangelized in areas not now behind borders closed by advancing Communism. They are in such areas as Africa, the Far East, India, Latin America, the Near East, and the Pacific Islands.

"In many parts of the world not heavily influenced by the pure gospel we have seen the borders of religious and civil freedom pushed back. Even in areas where we now work there are influences which would remove these freedoms if they could achieve power. The only sure hope of continued open doors is the influence of the gospel in these nations. We should feel it our responsibility to give ourselves without stint to the task of sharing with the whole world the riches of Christ while it is yet day.

"Young people in our church are offering us the opportunity to send them forth. Several are now in contact with the Committee. We would urge upon our pastors a vigorous and constant presentation to their congregations both of the missionary challenge which we face and of their responsibility for faithful stewardship of life and possessions. We do not want our church to be found wanting. We are certain that great blessings will follow faithfulness."

Under the heading of "Administration" mention was made of the appointment of a new sub-committee on "new fields" whose task is to gather information concerning, and consider, possible new fields in which our church might minister. Three-member sub-committees were chosen toward the end of the year for each of the foreign fields to meet with the General Secretary between meetings of the Committee. Mr. Galbraith, whose responsibility was changed from part-time to full-time General Secretary for this Committee as of February 1, answered a few questions that were asked from the floor.

### WEDNESDAY

Following the reading and approval of the minutes of the previous day (a customary action each morning) the item concerning Foreign Missions was concluded. Brief letters of greeting which had reached the clerk from

### WILL YOU HELP?

**LOANS NEEDED FOR  
LaPuente Orthodox Presbyterian  
Church  
(formerly LaHabra)  
California**

**A strong Orthodox Presbyterian nucleus, now meeting in a rented hall, owns a building site in the midst of mammoth grading and building projects. Plans are complete for a new building with chapel seating 176 and full basement at a cost of \$30,000. Work can begin as soon as money is available.**

**Still needed — \$19,000**

**Write for information to  
Church Extension Loan Fund  
Orthodox Presbyterian Church  
7401 Old York Rd.  
Philadelphia 26, Pa.**

the China and Japan Missions were read. A communication from the Korea Mission had been read with the communications on Tuesday.

Nominations for the class of 1964 were made as follows: ministers Vining, Kline, and Fikkert, and elders Newman de Haas and Willard Neel (all incumbents). There being no further nominations, the Moderator declared the nominations closed and the five nominees elected to continue their service on the Committee on Foreign Missions. Rarely has it been possible to choose a full class for a Standing Committee in this manner!

### **Committee on Christian Education**

The report of the Committee on Christian Education was read by its chairman, Dr. E. J. Young. (For an up-to-date history and survey of the work of this committee see the article in the May *Guardian* by the Committee's General Secretary, Mr. Johnston.)

Mr. Hills asked whether we are spending our money wisely for such things as a new pamphlet ("Horizon") when it's hard to get people to read one, let alone three, publications. To this Mr. Woolley responded by saying that he saw no objection to a multiplicity of publications, in the hope that everyone will read at least something. Mr. Hills also wondered why we could not use the Sunday school materials of other publishers, with modifications. "We are not true to the catholicity of the church in refusing to use available materials," he said, remarking that the Sunday school is primarily for the evangelization of the unchurched, not for the instruction of covenant youth.

Dr. Young pointed out that the problem is one of the message, of finding a really biblical presentation of the gospel. Mr. Johnston, referring to the many, many queries that keep coming from outside the denomination for materials comparable to the vacation Bible school series, affirmed that "the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has a unique opportunity to prepare and publish Sunday school materials in the light of the recognized needs of others as well as our own. Other small denominations, in particular, do not have the machinery to produce materials to meet what appears to be an urgent and widespread need. We have, moreover, explored the possibility of working with other agencies,

but without satisfaction," he said. And Mr. Clowney added that we now have an effective organization capable of handling a greatly expanding program.

Mr. Clelland expressed the view that the Christian Education Committee, perhaps more than any other agency of the church, has been able to reach out into the evangelical world with a quality of work which is "high class" and gives a "good image" of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in America.

The following were elected to the class of 1964: ministers Cummings, Rockey, and Schaufele, and elders F. Kingsley Elder, jr. and Edward Haug, Jr. Except for Mr. Schaufele, who had served on the Committee earlier, all were incumbents.

### **Bradford Speaks For Westminster**

During the discussion on the above report an order of the day gave an opportunity to the Rev. Eugene Bradford, Executive Secretary for Westminster Theological Seminary, for a brief address in behalf of that institution. The Seminary began its existence seven years prior to the church which had its origin in 1936, and Mr. Bradford called it a "beautiful thing to see an independent Reformed seminary and a truly Reformed church in such close cooperation for a quarter century."

Observing that the faculty had grown from six to eleven and the student body from a low of 30 to over one hundred during the past year, with a rather large increase in sight for the year 1961-62 (whereas enrollment in Protestant seminaries across the country showed a five percent drop last year), he declared that Westminster stands on the "threshold of a new day, but the financial responsibility is great and will increase. Operating costs alone are something over \$1,600 per student, annually. Gifts of about \$200,000 are needed for the current year. Capital funds in addition to those on hand for a new Library building are essential. Remember the Seminary in your prayers and make wide use of the new quarterly bulletin," he urged in conclusion.

### **General Benevolence**

The report of the Committee on General Benevolence was read by Mr. Bachman, Secretary-Treasurer. A few highlights of the report may serve to

encourage our congregations, as the Committee expressed it, "to increased loving concern for the multitudes of poor, sick, and hungry people to whom we should minister the abundance God has mercifully entrusted to us."

"We are happy to report that more of our churches have begun to send gifts during the past year (total receipts were \$6,719.79) . . . The Committee continues to aim at a goal of \$2,000 per year for the next five years (\$600 came in from 11 churches this past year) to establish a modest fund which will be used to care for aged ministers and their dependents. . . . The need may be readily seen from the fact that the Committee now contributes almost \$2,500 per year toward the care of one aged minister!

"The MEALS FOR MILLIONS program continues to be a popular concern of more and more churches and their organizations (\$1,575 was received this year). Leper funds have continued to increase, as well as support for Korean orphans (\$825). Mrs. Hunt has informed the Committee that there is a serious need for whole milk powder for the babies in four orphanages connected with our church. The Committee hopes to be able to begin regular shipments of this urgently needed food very soon, but funds must be provided to enable us to assume this new responsibility.

"Funds for shipping used clothes continue to be less than half sufficient to meet the need each year. Our women's societies can help by increasing their gifts for this purpose.

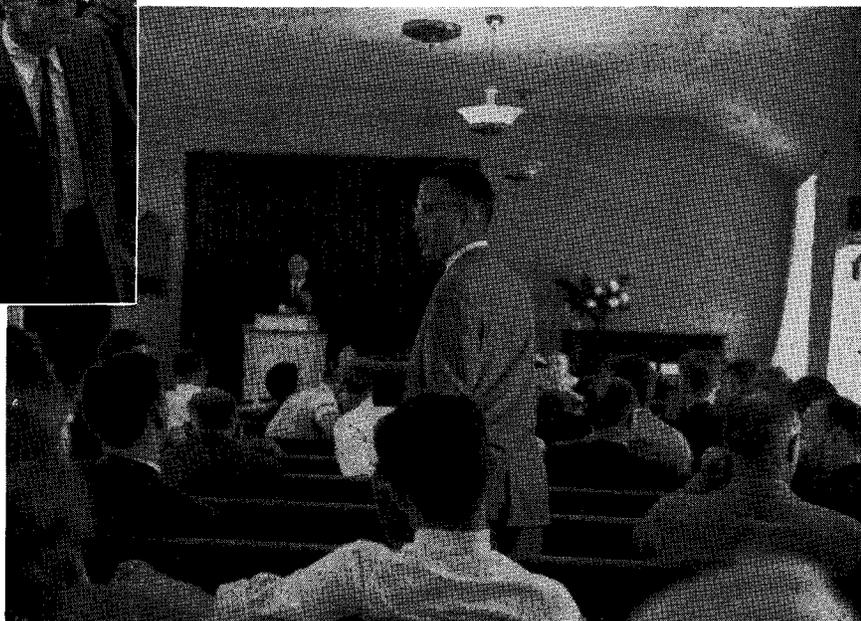
"Fourteen churches kindly supplied the Committee with (information indicating that through their local deacons' boards they) aided over 40 families in amounts as high as \$600. . . . Almost \$3,000 was spent locally by these 14 churches. If this were to be taken as an average, it would indicate that all of our churches together are giving almost \$20,000 per year to aid over 250 families."

The following were elected to the Committee on General Benevolence: Dr. Skilton and deacon Eric J. Crowe to the class of 1964 (both have been serving on the Committee), and Mr. Chanoux to fill a vacancy in the class of 1962 as a result of the resignation of Mr. Vining, previously elected to another Standing Committee.



Recess-refreshment periods were popular as usual.

“Full and free spirit of discussion and debate.”



### Representative Assembly

The report of the Committee on a Representative Assembly was the order of the day immediately after lunch on Wednesday, and a lively discussion consumed most of the afternoon. Dr. Goddard read the report of the Committee. The Assembly determined to hear the report of its Committee on Overtures and Papers relevant to this matter—an overture from California—and Mr. Peterson, as secretary, announced the Committee's recommendation as “no action.”

The ruling of the Moderator that Dr. Goddard's further informal report was out of order was not sustained, and Standing Rule 34 was suspended to permit supplemental reports by Messrs. Goddard and Marston. Since we published both the report and Dr. Goddard's supplementary argument in our May issue, we shall not repeat it here. Most of the argument in favor of the proposal centered about the possibility of financial saving together with the probability of more adequate reimbursement for commissioners attending, along with the hope of larger elder representation particularly if compensation were provided for work missed. Others felt that sooner or later we'll come to it, and we may as well try to work out now a formula related to what is regarded as a desirable size, but that financial consideration is a backward way of approaching the problem.

The minority report—that no change be made at this time in the present method of electing and gathering the

With great bewilderment  
 I observed your General Assembly.  
 A Scotchman with a hammer stood  
 Behind the pulpit, looking angry.  
 There was a Professor Rockdwellling or Somebody  
 Who started to make a speech when, thump!  
 Down came the hammer on the pulpit  
 And the chairman roared,  
 “Orders of the day have arrived!”  
 (Odd, because I never heard any orders.)  
 The good professor just stood there with his mouth open  
 Like rigor mortis had moved in . . .  
 Then came a flurry of motions, amendments,  
 And amendments to amendments, substitute motions,  
 And calls for previous questions.  
 Motions were divided,  
 Two men did much frantic adding,  
 And complications multiplied.  
 At last, exhausted, I got up and said,  
 “Mr. Chairman, I may be Wong, but may I please ask  
 To be subtracted?”  
 (I merely wished to be excused.)  
 Well, everybody laughed.  
 The Moderator got mad,  
 Slammed his hammer against a pulpit  
 And said, “There seems to be  
 A little Confucian here.”  
 Do you know that man was entirely right?

*The Old Chinese Philosopher*

General Assembly—was substituted for the majority, and in due course adopted. In the development of the argument there were two speeches in particular that reflected on somewhat wider aspects of the nature and function of our Assemblies, and for that reason we single them out for mention at this point.

### On General Assemblies

Mr. Woolley, while expressing agreement with some but not all of the statements of the majority report, does not think that a higher court of the church is constituted primarily as representative of a certain number of persons at a lower level, but rather as a responsible court of adjudication on matters that properly come before it. There is not, he held, a universal agreement on a Reformed principle as to the ratio that should obtain between teaching and ruling elders.

His main reason, however, for opposing a change in the direction of a limited representative assembly at this time he stated with warm eloquence somewhat as follows: A great deal of the genius of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is found in the full and free spirit of discussion and debate in our assemblies. Restricted representation would tend to introduce more of the psychology of 'only the few are truly wise'. At this stage of our development everyone who wishes to express an opinion should have the opportunity to do so, and thus to preserve an important democratic right. It is extremely important that we be able to do this for the health of our movement. We are not yet altogether a mature church.

Dr. Stonehouse, also indicating some sympathy toward the majority report, does not think we should rely on this particular method. With reference to the question that has been raised as to where we are in the life of the church at this juncture, he is inclined to feel that we are really not far from the beginning, a church still finding itself and its place of responsibility. Isn't it likely, he asked, that for several years to come we shall be engaged in doctrinal matters? It has been so. It is not in the interest of true progress for decisions to be made by a necessarily smaller representative assembly.

Our progress in adopting a new Form of Government has been slow, for we are not simply asking what tradition has been in the past, but in church government as in church doctrine we are trying to evaluate questions of great magnitude in the light of Scripture. Moreover, the matter of trying to define our place within the church catholic is going to be one of significance for years to come, he stated.

We shall surely need as unrestricted attendance as possible for many years to do justice to such matters as the question of our relationship to the

Christian Reformed Church and to all truly Reformed bodies. There would be a most unfortunate loss of continuity if delegates to the General Assembly were subject to much change from year to year.

In the course of the debate on a representative assembly the order of the day arrived for hearing the fraternal greeting from the Rev. Dr. G. Brillenburg Wurth of the Gereformeerde Kerken (Reformed Churches) in the Netherlands. His address was printed in the June issue of the *Guardian*. Dr. Knudsen replied on behalf of the Assembly.

### THURSDAY

#### Pension Committee

The report of the Committee on Pensions—which had actually been read by Mr. DeVelde on the previous day and then interrupted in the midst of some questions—was disposed of early Thursday morning after some queries about the disposition of funds which are returned to the Committee if and when a minister or church withdraws from participation.

Among other matters the report called attention to the accumulated Cash Surrender Values (nearly \$70,000 at the end of 1960) as being, "in effect, a large Deacons' Fund from which benefits will be provided for participants when they reach retirement age. This Fund is administered by The Presbyterian Ministers' Fund which guarantees that the money will be available for the participants' use when needed."

In its "Observations" the Committee "would strongly urge participation in the Pension Plan by every pastor and congregation. . . . Sometimes overlooked are the important features of Life and Disability Insurance protection that are wrapped into our Pension Plan . . . and could be very important to the local congregation in the discharge of its responsibility to the pastor's family in the event of his death or prolonged disability while serving as its pastor. The cost of this vital protection is included in the premiums. . . . The practical suggestion was also made that the annual premiums be paid quarterly . . . to spread the financial load for those involved."

The following were elected to the Committee on Pensions, class of 1964: minister: Clough; and elders Wm. Colzman and Lewis Roberts.

The Rev. Wilbur Blakely brought greetings as fraternal delegate of the

Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, General Synod, to which Mr. Cummings responded briefly.

#### Travel Fund

Mr. Clelland presented a recommendation of the Committee on Travel Fund that commissioners making request be compensated at the rate of five cents per mile above 850 miles travelled (round trip), suggesting that as far as possible this equalizes the sacrifices entailed in coming to the Assembly. The recommendation was adopted, and the Committee later presented its final report indicating disbursements of \$3,593.70 from \$3,627.90 available, leaving a balance of \$34.20 in the fund. On motion it was decided that the churches be requested to contribute one dollar per member toward the Travel Fund for the 29th General Assembly in 1962. Messrs. Dunn, Bordeaux, and elder Edward Haug were named to the new Travel Fund Committee.

#### Proposed Amendment to Book of Discipline

The report of the Committee on Revisions to the Form of Government and Book of Discipline had already been presented by Mr. Clowney prior to the two matters just referred to, and discussion was resumed on the proposed revision of the Book of Discipline, Chapter VI, Section 4. A number of minor amendments to the wording were passed before the Assembly voted to propose to the Presbyteries (in accordance with the procedure of Chapter XXVI, Section 1 of the Form of Government) the following additional paragraph to Section 4, Chapter VI of the Book of Discipline:

*When a minister, not retired because of age or physical disability, ceases to exercise the office of the ministry or enters upon full-time secular employment, for a period of two years, the presbytery shall at the expiration of that period make a full investigation of the circumstances. Should it become clear that his neglect of the office proceeds from a lack of the requisite gifts and his consequent want of acceptance to the church, his ordination shall be withdrawn. He remains a communicant member of the church, and the presbytery may issue him a certificate of dismissal to the*

(continued on next page)

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# The Presbyterian GUARDIAN

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## Trinity Hymnal

Perhaps by now you will have seen for yourself the brand new publication of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church — *Trinity Hymnal*. This long-anticipated fruit of a decade and more of labor is attractive in appearance and format throughout, and it was sheer joy to hold it in hand and turn its pages in a first brief perusal.

It is a superb work, and insofar as that which is tangible may do so, it brings to expression the Orthodox Presbyterian Church at its best. It is oriented to the Scriptures, from the appropriate text at the head of each hymn to the biblical truth of the poetry. Here too are most of the Psalms set to music, and this will enrich our congregational singing not a little. An index of the Scripture references on which the songs are based will prove most helpful.

The Psalms have been included for responsive reading. The text of the Westminster Confession of Faith appears, and users will also observe that the arrangement of the hymns largely follows the order of the Confession. It is actually surprising how much material has been incorporated into this one compact volume.

The indexes — seven in all — are quite complete, and it is doubtful if a more comprehensive subject index is to be found in any hymnal. The painstaking care with which this whole task was performed reflects, we believe, the genuine desire of the Committee on a Hymnal that the result should be to the glory of God who himself has put a new song, even a song of praise, upon the lips of the redeemed.

The hymnal surely captures the purpose of coming before the Lord's

presence with singing. From the little children (yes, there is a section just for them) to the mature saints, in houses of worship but also at summer camps and around the pianos of countless homes, one has the feeling that *Trinity Hymnal* will go a long way toward making "everything that hath breath praise the Lord." We venture to predict that many a family, after singing from this book for a few weeks, will want a copy for its own use at home.

The widespread use of this hymnal at long last will bring a new uniformity in worship into the churches so far as congregational singing is concerned. It is going to be a pleasant surprise to many to find how singable the tunes are, even those now unfamiliar that will become favorites in years to come. And our young people who "grow up" on *Trinity Hymnal* are likely to be both better singers and more joyfully aware of the meaning of making melody in their hearts to the Lord than some of us have been.

One cannot refrain from comment as to the significant role the late Robert Marsden had as a member of the Committee on a Hymnal from its beginning until his death last autumn. The wish comes that he might have seen the finished product until the thought follows at once that he no longer needs even so notable an aid as this for the praise of our Savior.

We are all indebted to the men who persevered at this task until the new hymnal was brought to its first printing. Their sense of satisfaction and our gratitude are but further recognition that all honor belongs to the Lord who has enabled the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to produce this, another witness to our living faith in the Triune God, who alone is worthy of blessing and praise and glory. Let us come before his presence with singing.

R. E. N.

## Changes of Address

The Rev. Robert L. Atwell, 8740 S. W. 126th Terrace, Miami 56, Fla.

The Rev. Ralph E. Clough, 65 Hitchner Ave., Bridgeton, N. J.

The Rev. George W. Knight, III, 1300 Newton Ave., West Collingswood, N. J.

The Rev. Ronald E. Jenkins, 158 Military St., Houlton, Maine.

## (General Assembly — continued)

*particular church with which he desires to connect himself. Mature consideration is necessary in all such cases. Secular employment may in unusual circumstances serve the minister's calling; on the other hand entanglement in the affairs of this life may reveal not a lack of ministerial gifts but a failure in their exercise, for which the remedy is fraternal admonition and discipline.*

## Second Revised Version Chapters I - IX

The Committee on Revisions presented a Second Revised Version of Chapters I-IX of a Form of Government, and the Assembly determined, in accordance with the recommendation of the Committee, to submit this Version to the Presbyteries and Sessions for study, with the understanding that the minority report submitted by Mr. Clowney also be sent for study.

The difference has to do largely with the concept of the office of elder: whether there is a distinct office of ruling elder as such, or whether both a 'twofoldness' and a 'threefoldness' need to be kept in view to do justice to the Scriptural data. A related question is whether the minister shall be a member of a local congregation.

The discussion, while not lengthy, was illuminating, but since we propose to devote some space in early issues to this important difference of opinion as it relates to the Version of the Form of Government being studied by our Presbyteries and Sessions during the coming year, we shall save the pros and cons for future articles by proponents of the respective views.

At 4 o'clock the Peniel debate was interrupted to hear fraternal greetings from the Rev. Daniel Fannon of the Bible Presbyterian Church, Inc. (sometimes called the Columbus Synod). He spoke of the friendly relationships between us "that many have longed to see," and also mentioned the move toward possible union with the Reformed Presbyterians in North America, General Synod, on the part of the Bible Presbyterians.

The Bible Presbyterians, Inc., according to Mr. Fannon, have a few more than 70 churches with somewhat less than 7,000 communicants and a per capita giving of \$141. World Presbyterian Missions expects to occupy its new headquarters in Wilming-

ton, Del. in July, and Home Mission fields are opening in new areas in Florida, Texas, and New England. Covenant College and Seminary in St. Louis anticipates a greatly increased enrollment. Mr. Clelland responded for the Assembly.

### Peniel Debate

Since the 24-page report of the Committee to Examine the Current Doctrines and Practices of the Peniel Bible Conference had been circulated prior to the Assembly, it was not read on the floor. Discussion of the report and motions relevant thereto consumed most of Thursday afternoon and all of Friday morning. We shall note some of the points around which the discussion revolved, but shall not attempt to trace the various amendments and parliamentary procedures in exact order.

Then, after quoting the final action of the Assembly (in bold face type) we shall reproduce that portion of the Committee's report dealing with the doctrine of Guidance. We are doing this because of the long history of this controversy, much of which has appeared in these pages through the years, and because it is this particular matter that brings to focus the crucial issue of the sufficiency of Scripture.

After some rather inconclusive discussion of the original motion (namely, the recommendation of the Committee presented and defended by Dr. Knudsen), an amendment prevailed deleting the latter part, which would have required "that members of the Peniel Bible Conference who are office bearers in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church are obliged in terms of this office to disavow such erroneous views." Mr. Woolley, in proposing the amendment, argued that while Peniel is in error, to require people to affirm their rejection of views which they may or may not hold involves "personal persecution."

Mr. Kuschke maintained that regard for individual liberty must not lead us to forego our corporate responsibility in requiring office bearers to take a stand on a public matter. A number of others pointed out that the better, and certainly the constitutional, way is to allow presbyteries or sessions to initiate such action as may need to be taken.

### FRIDAY

As the debate continued on Friday morning Mr. Rankin made a substi-

tute motion to the effect that the Committee be instructed to explicate its phrase "in those respects specified" by setting forth specific statements in the "Formulation of Doctrine of Guidance" in the Peniel Communication to the 27th Assembly in parallel with the relevant passage from Scripture and the subordinate standards, and to report to the 29th General Assembly.

Dr. Wm Young also urged that the conclusion of the Committee was lacking in "specificity" but others insisted that we should not now be sidetracked from adopting "this definitive statement in clear testimony before the world at a time when the sufficiency of Scripture is being attacked everywhere," as Dr. Van Til expressed it. The substitute was lost.

### Specifying Amendments

A little later, however, successful efforts were made by way of amendments from the floor to state three particulars in which Peniel's doctrine of guidance is erroneous, as specified in the report of the Committee (see the motion as finally adopted below).

Although Mr. Meiners objected that, while the "Formulation" may be "infelicitous or even inept in places," these amendments set up a 'straw man' and not what Peniel meant or understands, it had already been observed by Mr. Cummings that "faulty formulation constitutes error . . . resulting in false teaching, which has given people erroneous views that they in turn have propagated." Mr. Atwell, although opposed to the amendments as unnecessary, did call attention to the great problem raised by the "vagueness" of the "Formulation" and other documents from Peniel, and stated that the other members of the Committee, at least, had "done great service to the church and to the friends in Peniel in the difficult task of pointing out the inferences to be drawn from the 'Formulation.'"

One further substitute motion was proposed, by Mr. Meiners, that action on the report be deferred for consideration by the 29th Assembly, and "that the request of the Peniel Bible Conference for official joint conference with representatives of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, being an eminently fair and Christian request, be acknowledged and implemented in the interval." While Mr. Meiners had earlier conceded that the Committee had presented "a generally fair report" he (and Mr. Kress) had also alleged

that the report did not fully prove its statements and misinterpreted the views of Peniel and had pled that the Assembly take no final action on these doctrinal issues.

He renewed his plea that the Committee sit down and talk with representatives of Peniel, "which does not take the position that it has crystallized its thinking on all these matters." Peniel, he affirmed, is appreciative of the Reformed standards and the report of the Committee does go far in stating what we as Reformed Christians believe as to guidance, "but much land remains to be possessed through a positive study of these matters."

Dr. Stonehouse, on the other hand, maintained that this is in effect asking for a non-ecclesiastical approach, noting that the Peniel Bible Conference has had many opportunities to express its views in presbyteries and assemblies but has not carefully delineated them. "It is clear," he said, "that in the doctrine and practice of Peniel there is not a careful guarding of what is so basic an issue—the sufficiency of Scripture."

The substitute was defeated (with Messrs. DuMont and Meiners recording their affirmative vote) and the main motion as amended was adopted in the following form:

**That the Assembly declare that the "Formulation of the Doctrine of Guidance" in the Communication of the Peniel Bible Conference to the 27th General Assembly is erroneous, as specified in the report of the Committee, in teaching that in every decision of life the Christian may look for a sense of assurance akin to the witness of the Holy Spirit to his sonship; in teaching that a witness of the Spirit is the decisive index constraining assurance respecting the proper course of action in daily life; and in teaching a non-exegetical conscious leading of the Holy Spirit; which views constitute a deviation from the doctrine set forth in the Word of God and our subordinate standards.**

On further motion, the Assembly declared that, as indicated in the section on Sanctification in the report of the Committee, the particular conception of method entertained by Peniel, especially with regard to counseling, introduces unwarranted restrictions in connection with the process of sanctification and involves unwholesome tendencies as specified in the report.

A motion to advise the judicatories concerned to consider whether they should take disciplinary measures was defeated on a standing vote.

*With the Committee which prepared it we too hope that the section of their report which follows "may contribute to the increase of the doctrinal purity and unity of the Church." We believe that our readers will benefit much in their own understanding of the Bible's teaching on guidance from a careful perusal of this excellent statement.*

*The headings which have been inserted are ours, not the Committee's.*

### **Some Good Emphases**

The "Formulation" contained in "Document III" of the *Communication of the Peniel Bible Conference to the 27th General Assembly* may fairly be regarded as the most considered statement that has appeared up to date by the Peniel Bible Conference on the subject of guidance. In the esteem of the Committee there are many statements and cautions in this "Formulation" that are to be endorsed and welcomed. A good deal of emphasis falls upon the inerrant authority of Scripture, upon the dangers for faith and practice inherent in errant subjective mysticism, upon the necessity of testing all experience by the norm of Scripture, upon the basic requirement of self-denial and the constant mortification of self-will if we are to follow Christ and be led by the Spirit, and upon the communion of the believer with the Holy Spirit. To all such emphases the Committee accords its full consent and regards these positions as basic to any biblical view of guidance. Furthermore, the Committee does not dissent from the biographical accounts of the way in which such an eminent saint as Samuel Miller sought guidance in the practical decisions with which he was faced (p. 32), and it regards as eminently sound on the subject of guidance the quotation from Jonathan Edwards on page 34. The Committee does not believe that such a practice as that exemplified by Samuel Miller or the operations of the Spirit of God delineated by Jonathan Edwards are in the least degree alien to but rather in full accord with the views and sentiments entertained in the ranks of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The Committee deems it unfortunate if the appeal to such examples was made on the assumption that disagreement with the Peniel Bible Conference involved divergence from the practices and principles set forth in these quo-

## **The Committee's Report on Peniel's Doctrine of Guidance**

tations, or if the appeal to these quotations in context was calculated to create such an impression. There is much more in the "Formulation" with which the Committee agrees and regards as closely germane to a biblical view of guidance.

### **Lack of Clarity**

In assessing the "Document", however, in its relevance to the focal points of dispute, the Committee is constrained to judge that the document as a whole is not characterized by the pointedness and clarity which would contribute to ready understanding and resolution of the main point at issue within our denomination. Nevertheless, it appears to the Committee that the Peniel Bible Conference takes the position that there is in or to the consciousness of the consecrated believer a witness of the Holy Spirit which is not derived from the data of revelation relevant to a particular choice but is additional to and distinct from the enlightenment imparted by the Holy Spirit through all the revelatory data pertinent to the case in point. Peniel expresses this in terms of "a sense of assurance concerning the rightness of some decision or act, which goes beyond the testimony even of enlightened reason" (pp. 35f.). And Peniel appeals to Romans 8:16 and avers that this assurance is akin to the witness of the Holy Spirit to our sonship. "Peniel simply states that at every stage of his development the Christian can enjoy and cultivate such a real relationship of fellowship with God that in every decision of his life he may look for this same sense of assurance that God is leading him in his choice" (p. 36).

### **Observations and Criticisms**

With reference to this formulation the Committee submits the following observations and criticisms:

1. The quotation from Charles Hodge (p. 36) is not to the same effect as that to which it is alleged to lend support. What Hodge says is that the Holy Spirit "enlightens the judgment and guides the conscience, so that the true and humble Christian often has an assurance of his sincerity" — the assurance, according to Hodge, is derived from an enlightened judgment and guided

conscience. What Peniel claims is "an assurance beyond the testimony even of enlightened reason" (ital. ours). What Hodge says is that the assurance is "above what the powers of nature can bestow" (ital. ours). Peniel says beyond the testimony of enlightened reason. But enlightened reason is not to be equated with what Hodge means by the powers of nature. The powers of nature are but our natural powers.

2. It is not denied but rather affirmed that the believer often enjoys an assurance concerning the rightness of some decision or act and also the assurance of his own sincerity, an assurance generated in his heart, mind, and conscience by the Holy Spirit. This fact of assurance is not in dispute. And the believer often enjoys this assurance with respect to decisions on which the Scripture gives no express direction, decisions that are in the realm of what are called things indifferent. The question is: what is the source of this assurance?

3. The Committee is cognizant of the fact that the operations of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers are mysterious and surpass our understanding. This is a subject that must be handled with great care lest, on the one hand, we fall into the error of attempting to define and restrict the modes of the Holy Spirit's working in the hearts and lives of believers and, on the other, attribute to him impulses and phenomena of which he is not the author. In either direction we can be guilty of grievous presumption. The Committee is aware that oftentimes there are impressions, impulsions, and inhibitions in the mind of believers which are the result of the Holy Spirit's operations but which they may not be able to explain in terms of the relevant considerations by which these impressions, impulsions, or inhibitions have been induced. It is a fact of our psychology that considerable influence is exerted in our consciousness by the sub-conscious in ways that we are not able to explain to ourselves or others. Sometimes these influences proceeding from the sub-conscious are sinister. But they may also be good. We are not to deny but gratefully acknowledge that the Holy Spirit works in the realm of our sub-conscious and

from the reservoir of the sub-conscious produces effects which, in our conscious mind, are proper expressions of revelatory data which have been brought to bear upon our thought but which, at a particular moment, we are not able to recollect or evaluate. But these considerations or others of like character which might be mentioned do not warrant a doctrine of the "witness" of the Holy Spirit interpreted and applied after the pattern which the "Formulation" of the Peniel Bible Conference propounds.

4. It is to be recognized that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the data of revelation in our consciousness. He bears this witness by illumining our minds, by quickening our hearts, by instructing our consciences, by enabling us to perceive how the data of revelation bear upon the concrete situation in which we find ourselves, and by sealing to us the revealed will of God in its application to us. But this is a witness borne through and to the sum-total of relevant considerations as they bear upon our conduct.

#### **Without Scriptural Warrant**

5. In the judgment of the Committee Peniel takes the position that the above-mentioned assurance is often derived from a witness of the Spirit similar to that of the Holy Spirit to the sonship of believers. (Rom. 8:16), that it is not derived from the Spirit's enlightenment of the understanding by revelatory data, and that it is one of the fruits of fellowship with the Holy Spirit. It is this position that the Committee controverts and seeks to show that it is without warrant of Scripture.

In support of this judgment the Committee offers the following reasons:

(i) In Romans 8:16 Paul undoubtedly refers to a witness which the Holy Spirit bears to our spirits respecting our adoption as children of God, and this witness is most likely to be distinguished from the witness borne by our spirits to the same fact. So we may have to distinguish between the witness borne *by* our consciousness through the operation of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and the joint-witness of the Holy Spirit *to* our consciousness. But, in any case, Romans 8:16 speaks of the witness of the Holy Spirit to our spirits. Other texts dealing with the Spirit as the earnest of the saints' inheritance and sealing

believers unto the day of their redemption are to be taken into account as expressing what is coordinate with this inward witness of the Spirit (*cf.* II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13, 14; 4:30). But hermeneutics requires that we take note of the precise scope of the witness referred to in Romans 8:16. It is a witness to the sonship of believers and the Committee does not find any biblical warrant for extending this witness to that with which Peniel is concerned in the quotations given above from page 36 of "Document III".

The witness of the Holy Spirit to our sonship (Rom. 8:16) is a witness borne to an antecedent fact and it does not itself create that to which the witness is borne. In this respect it is similar to the internal testimony of the Spirit to the Word of God. The internal testimony is always to the truth of Scripture and has no additional revelatory or regulative content. So it is with the witness the Spirit bears to the adoption of believers; it is a witness borne to a status which is derived from and constituted by another distinct action on God's part and has no independent or isolated validity.

(ii) In the context and particularly in the broader context of the discussion respecting Peniel's view of guidance it is the judgment of the Committee that in certain situations Peniel regards this alleged witness of the Spirit as the only index to God's will or, at least, as the decisive index constraining assurance respecting the proper course of action. If this judgment is correct, then Peniel must, in the premises, regard this witness of the Spirit as regulative and authoritative. It becomes apparent how far-reaching for the conduct of the Christian belief in such a witness of the Spirit can become and in the absence of biblical warrant how precarious the assumption is.

#### **A Fundamental Datum**

(iii) It is a fundamental datum of our faith that we are wholly dependent upon the data of divine revelation for our knowledge of God and of his will in all matters of faith and conduct. We have no access to his mind and will for us except by what he is pleased to reveal to us. There are but two sources of such revelation, what is called natural revelation and supernatural revelation. The former in-

cludes the light of nature and the works of creation and providence, the latter is for us exclusively the Holy Scriptures. If there is the supposed witness of the Spirit it must be a medium of conveying to us the will of God for our conduct. Since it is a witness of the Spirit flowing from the communion of the Spirit, it could not reasonably be classified as natural. So the inference seems inescapable that it must be a mode of supernatural revelation supplemental to the Scriptures, and the implication would be that there is claimed for the witness of the Spirit an additional source of revelation which impinges upon the doctrine that the Scriptures are the sole source of supernatural revelation. The position in question, therefore, is a deviation from the doctrine of Scripture set forth in the Scripture and in our subordinate standards.

#### **"Non-exegetical" Leading**

(iv) The "Formulation" betrays at various other points the tension between the insistence upon the normative authority of Scripture, on the one hand, and jealousy for the regulative function of "the witness" of the Spirit, on the other. This appears in such statements as the following: "Some Christians, wishing to guard the uniqueness and sufficiency of the Scriptures as divine special revelation, would limit *conscious* guidance of the Holy Spirit to that which may be exegetically produced or inferred directly from Scripture and the principles contained in it, under the illumination of the Holy Spirit" (p. 30). "Certainly it is true that during subsequent centuries there was a strong trend among evangelical Christians away from the extreme position that the Holy Spirit never grants conscious guidance to the Church except through logical deduction from the express words of Scripture, and this trend is clearly represented among Reformed theologians" (p. 32). "As has been previously stated, since the nineteenth century, the most prevailing view of guidance is one which allows for some degree of 'non-exegetical' leading of the Holy Spirit" (p. 33). These statements and others of similar character, though given in the form of historical review, must be construed as representing the view of Peniel. The tendency, in the Committee's esteem, is to underestimate in the matter of the guidance or leading

of the Spirit the regulating and directing function of Scripture. But, in any case, there is a plea for the "non-exegetical" leading of the Spirit. The only construction that the Committee can place upon such an expression is a leading of the Spirit that is not dependent upon Scripture. The exegesis of Scripture is no more than the setting forth of the meaning of Scripture and Scripture is to us a closed book for our instruction and guidance except as its meaning is apprehended. There is no direction derived from Scripture apart from exegesis. To speak then of "non-exegetical" leading of the Spirit is to speak of a leading of the Spirit that is unrelated to or divorced from Scripture. This is equivalent to the alleged "witness" of the Spirit and must be construed as something apart from Scripture since it is stated to be "non-exegetical".

The more serious implications of this statement appear in the application which follows. The "Formulation" proceeds to say: "The position which the church at large has taken is that, while the prophetic gift has ceased, and no further additions to the *credendum* of the Church are to be expected, the Spirit of Christ still works among Christians as the Architect of the Church, superintending its practical decisions; and that where wisdom is sought from God in decisions which touch on the vital issues of His kingdom, that wisdom, with the assurance that it is *His* wisdom and not our own, will be given" (p. 33). The clear import is that "wisdom" respecting decisions which bear upon the building up of the church and upon the vital issues of God's kingdom is to be derived from a source other than Holy Scripture. This follows from the premise that this wisdom belongs to the category of "non-exegetical" leading of the Holy Spirit".

The Committee reprobates this position. It believes that if Peniel does not accept this position it was under obligation to express in the strongest

## *The Sufficiency of Scripture Must Be Maintained*

terms its rejection. For scarcely any statement could more effectively enunciate the abandonment of the confession that "the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture".

### **Sufficiency of Scripture**

Furthermore, with reference to this alleged "non-exegetical" leading of the Spirit and the "wisdom" to be sought from and granted by God, it is true that there is the illumination and quickening of the Holy Spirit by which believers as individuals and in their collective capacity as members of the body of Christ are imbued with understanding, discernment, and discrimination in virtue of which they address themselves with wisdom to the practical and vital issues of God's kingdom. And believers are also imbued with readiness to comply with the will of God which this understanding enables them to perceive. But there are two observations respecting this subject. First, the nineteenth century had no monopoly on this emphasis nor could it be said to have shown distinctive advancement in the enunciation of it. Secondly, to speak of the leading of the Spirit which pertains to this subject as "non-exegetical" is, to say the least, misleading. The understanding or wisdom referred to may never be conceived of as operative apart from Scripture as the deposit of God's revealed will, and is principally the enlightenment directed to Scripture so that believers individually and corporately may be able to interpret aright the mind and will of God as revealed in Scripture and apply the same to practical and vital issues as they emerge. This understanding is also brought to bear upon the data derived from the light

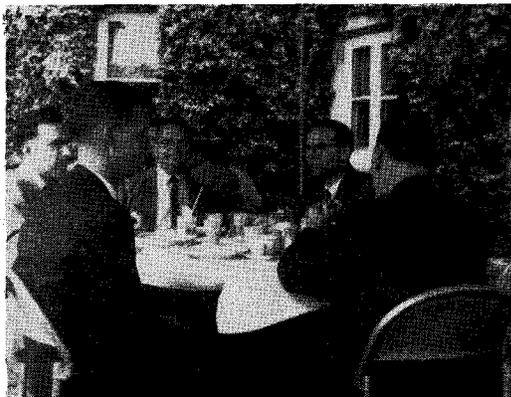
of nature and the works of creation and providence. But, in either case, whether the understanding or wisdom has respect to God's general providence or to the principal source of our knowledge of God's will, namely, Scripture, to speak of it as "non-exegetical" is an erroneous analysis prejudicial to the nature of the Spirit's operations in the body of Christ and to the place which Scripture occupies in the faith and life of the church. For even when the light of nature and general providence are being considered, these must always be interpreted in the *light* of the special revelation provided for us in Scripture alone. Christian prudence, even in the ordinary affairs of life, is prudence derived from and dictated by the Christian revelation and in its possession and exercise may not be spoken of as "non-exegetical".

### **Hope for Repudiation**

It is the judgment of charity to believe that representatives of the Peniel Bible Conference were unaware of the implications of these statements which are apparently endorsed but, in any case, not condemned and that these same representatives of Peniel will, on more mature reflection, recoil from these implications. But the Committee is constrained to infer that the Peniel Bible Conference is led into the endorsement of such positions by an unbiblical view of the "witness" of the Spirit and that a formulation such as is now being criticized is the logical result of the doctrine maintained respecting the "witness" of the Spirit.

The Committee hopes that the erroneous formulation dealt with in this part of its report will be repudiated by the Peniel Bible Conference. It is encouraged in this hope by the concluding paragraph in the "Formulation": "In the meantime, Peniel is open to further enlightenment on this very complex doctrinal question, and

**Lunch on the Porch of Westminster Seminary.**



**Calvary Church's Auditorium was well filled with Commissioners.**



**The Moderator with Clerks Oliver and Barker.**



is convinced that the peace and unity of the Church need not be disturbed while the issue is under study" (p. 37). But the Committee also wishes to stress the gravity involved in a position which propounds a source of supernatural revelation respecting the affairs of conduct and the vital issues of God's kingdom other than that provided for us in Holy Scripture.

(end of Peniel report)

Mr. Johnston presented a brief report for the Committee on a Hymnal. He noted that the copyright for *Trinity Hymnal* is in the name of the Committee on Christian Education and that the first printing of 12,000 copies is more than half sold. Shipment is expected in a few weeks. The Committee was continued.

### Relation to Other Churches

The Committee to Confer with Representatives of the Christian Reformed Church reported several meetings, including one in November with the corresponding Committee of that denomination. Its recommendation that the Assembly advise the Presbyteries to exchange delegates with the Christian Reformed Church on the Presbytery/Classis level wherever possible was adopted.

A statement on "The Biblical Basis for Ecclesiastical Union" which the Committee had prepared was included in its report, and we expect to print it in a later issue of this magazine. Messrs. Atwell and Clowney resigned from the Committee, as did Mr. Galbraith as alternate. Messrs. Stonehouse and Woolley were elected to the Committee, whose other members are Mr. Murray and elder Bert Roeber.

Dr. Stonehouse presented the report of the Committee on Correspondence with Other Churches, which noted the appointment of fraternal delegates to the 1961 synods of five other Reformed bodies. In response to an overture from the Presbytery of California the Committee recommended that Dr. David Calderwood be appointed to bring fraternal greetings to the Synod of the Reformed Churches of North Ireland. It was suggested that he might explore the possibility of informal conversations with the Irish Evangelical Churches as well while visiting in his native land. It was determined that the letter of June 5, 1961 addressed to the Gereformeerde Kerken of the Netherlands by the

### Twenty-fifth Anniversary Events

Professor Paul Woolley delivered a fascinating lecture on "Machen in the Church" before a crowded auditorium on Wednesday evening in Glenside. Dr. Ned B. Stonehouse presided at the banquet and rally in Wilmington on Friday. After a prayer of thanks by the Rev. Bruce Coie and a turkey dinner a la Howard Johnson in Emmanuel Church's social hall (where an historical display attracted a good deal of interest), the diners adjourned upstairs to the spacious auditorium where they were joined by many others to fill the room.

Reminiscences of the early days were given by Murray Forst Thompson, Esq. (legal struggles), the Rev. Henry Coray (the lighter side), and the Rev. John Clelland (local testimony). Other "old-timers" who participated were the Rev. Messrs. Everett DeVelde, Robert Atwell, and Calvin Cummings. Before the address by the Rev. Carl Ahlfeldt (see last month's issue where it was reproduced), a choir of singers from churches in the area, under the direction of Charlotte Kuschke, with Howard Porter at the organ, sang "Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord" and "Gloria."

A tape recording of the occasion was made. For information as to its availability for gatherings of churches or presbyteries write the Clerk of the Assembly, the Rev. LeRoy Oliver.

Committee on Correspondence be read to the Assembly and recorded in the Minutes. The Assembly recessed at 4:30 on Friday in order that commissioners and friends might leave for Wilmington to attend the anniversary banquet and rally.

### SATURDAY

The next item on the docket was the "matter of the *Presbyterian Guardian*" which required no action but elicited a short discussion as to the paper's policy. Mr. Graham, noting that the *Guardian* has been historically a militant paper defending the Reformed Faith, felt that when the movement to start a church paper was "quashed" a couple of years ago the *Guardian* had tended to become more of a church paper. In so doing it has become "a nice paper," he said, and does not speak out as "forthrightly" on the issues in the church as he would like to see. "We must not be so broadminded as to become flat-headed," declared Mr. Solis.

Mr. Clowney, acknowledging a situation not easily resolved, thinks the Church supports the periodical on the assumption that it is going to reflect, in part, varying views within the Church. This is "precisely why we need a separate paper as a journal of opinion to take forthright stands on all sorts of issues. Can we accomplish both purposes in one paper?" he asked.

Dr. Stonehouse pointed out that at a recent meeting of the *Guardian* trustees a committee of five was

erected to evaluate more fully just such questions in order that the magazine may seek more adequately to achieve its goals.

### New Fiscal Year after 1962

Mr. Peterson, presenting a further partial report of the Committee on Overtures and Communications, recommended "no action" on the overture from the Dakotas to change the fiscal year to coincide with the calendar year. This same proposal, though concurred in by six of the Presbyteries, was defeated in the 27th Assembly a year ago. This time, however, a substitute motion was carried, and the General Assembly instructed its Standing Committees that, effective September 1, 1962, they submit their reports to the next Assembly for the period April 1 - December 31; and its Stated Clerk to collect and compile reports from the Sessions and Presbyteries for the same period. The motion also included the equivalent of a proposal to the 29th Assembly to amend the Standing Rules so as to make the fiscal year the calendar year.

Regarding another overture from the Dakotas as to the preparation of a critical text of the Shorter Catechism and the revision of its archaic language, the Committee's recommendation of "no action" was adopted. During the brief consideration it was pointed out that an autograph has now been found and therefore a study looking toward a critical text (comparable to the critical text of the Confession of Faith which we have ap-

proved) is increasingly possible.

The Committee's recommendation of "no action" on the overture from California with respect to a representative assembly was adopted.

As to the protest signed by Messrs. Atwell, Murray and Knight regarding the manner of the administration of the Lord's Supper on Monday evening, the Committee recommended (and it was adopted) that the Assembly express its regret that the service was not adequately publicized in advance and that future Committees on Arrangements give consideration to the practice of the session of the host church with respect to 'fencing the table.' It may be noted in this connection that later in the day, when action was taken on the time and place for the 29th Assembly, all reference to a devotional service on the previous evening was deleted.

On motion two recommendations of the Stated Clerk contained in his report were adopted as proposals to amend the Standing Rules, for action by the 29th Assembly. The present Standing Rule was suspended in order that the Clerk of this Assembly might transmit his transcript of the Minutes to the Committee on Christian Education for publication.

Mr. Cummings moved and the Assembly determined to refer "A Study of the Teachings of Scripture as They Refer to Employees of the Standing Committees" submitted by the Committee on Christian Education, to the two Missions Committees for their study, with the request that they report to the 29th Assembly their appraisal of this report.

Following the reports of fraternal delegates to other bodies, the Assembly recessed for Saturday lunch, after which a report of the liaison representative to the World Home Bible League was presented on his behalf by Mr. B. Coie, the alternate representative, who was then on motion appointed as representative.

Mr. Poundstone presented the report of the Committee on Presbyterianial Records. The Minutes of the Presbyteries of Ohio and New Jersey were approved without exception. The recommendation of the Committee that a committee be appointed to draft rules for the keeping of presbytery records was adopted, and Messrs. DuMont, Goddard, and elder Lenville Hawkes were named.

The budget for the general fund of

**July, 1961**

the Assembly was set at 35 cents per communicant member in addition to the one dollar per member requested for the travel fund. About 75 churches contributed to the travel fund this year, but a motion that only those churches that contribute to the travel fund shall receive compensation for their commissioners was defeated.

**Cedar Grove, May 29, 1962**

After Mr. Chanoux presented the report of the Committee on Date and Place of the 29th Assembly, it was decided to accept the invitation of Calvary Church, Cedar Grove, Wisconsin and to meet there at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, May 29, 1962.

In adopting a resolution of thanks it was noted that the Assembly was

meeting for the twelfth time with Westminster Seminary and/or Calvary Church as hosts. Appreciation was also expressed to the Willow Grove Christian School mothers and to Emmanuel Church of Wilmington.

A proposed change in the Standing Rules to grant the Stated Clerk an honorarium of \$150 instead of \$100 was acted upon favorably, with a suspension of the rule putting it into effect for the present Clerk.

The report of the Committee on Necrology has already been mentioned.

After a brief recess for putting the Minutes in shape and approval of the Minutes as a whole, the 28th General Assembly was adjourned at 5:01 p.m. on Saturday, June 10 and the Moderator pronounced the benediction.

**La Habra Church Moves Across Hills, Approves Building Plans**

**E**ARLY this fall another congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church expects to erect a new church building in which to worship our great God to whom all praise and honor are due. The Hacienda Heights Orthodox Presbyterian Church (near La Puente) is in the fast-growing Los Angeles area and will undoubtedly have marvelous opportunities for reaching people with the gospel.

It will be located in a foothill area whose population is expected to grow from the present 6,000 to approximately 60,000 in the next ten years. Presently only one other church building can be found in the immediate area and it is hoped that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church will be the next denomination to be represented there.

Before continuing, it would be well to examine how this group got its start. This church is another culmination

of the faithful home mission work and foresight of a number of OPC home missionaries and ministers. The group began meeting under the leadership of the Rev. Robert E. Nicholas in a Boy Scout hall in La Habra (just east of Whittier) back in 1956.

Since that initial service the group has grown to an average weekly attendance of fifty as various people have contributed to the work, including the Rev. James Moore, the Session of our Manhattan Beach Church, the Home Missions Committee of the California Presbytery, a number of Westminster students on summer leave, the Rev. H. Wilson Albright (our present organizing pastor), and many others. The group was publicly received into the Presbytery of California on May 17, 1959.

A number of other OPC congregations are represented in the group with former members of our churches in

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While the group has been faithful and persevering, the location of the meeting-place has not permitted the desired growth. Just last November purchase was completed of a prominent corner lot over the hills about four miles north of La Habra in an area which will very likely be called Hacienda Heights. At this point preliminary plans of a first building consisting of a sanctuary and Sunday school (basement) have been completed by our church architect and approved by the congregation. The working drawings should be completed very shortly; then after necessary permits are granted, building should and must start. To stay ahead of the population tide, building should get under way by the end of August.

To complete this building will require \$30,000 in loans or gifts from other than the local members. We will pay 5 percent interest and make payments equal to one percent of the principal per month on loans made directly to the church. Loans designated for us may also be made to the Presbytery of California, or to the denominational Church Extension Loan Fund of the Committee on Home Missions. Readers who have any sum of money which they are willing to lend for this purpose may contact one of the above.

Beginning with the first Sunday in July worship services were begun in a Women's Club building in the area of the new building site. For the past three years the congregation has met in the Townsend Hall in La Habra not far from several other churches. The plan of morning worship at 10 o'clock with Sunday school following immediately will be continued, with emphasis upon the entire family worshipping together and remaining for Bible instruction in classes for every age from nursery through the adult group.

WILLIAM F. SHAW

## Letter from Aunt Polly

72 Chung Hsiao Rd.  
Taichung, Taiwan  
June 24, 1961

*My dear Young Friends,*

I regret that I have been unable to write you for some months. I have been thinking of you often—especially because so many letters have arrived saying that the letters were very interesting. Uncle Dick and I have been in excellent health, happy and busy.

I have been doing some extra language study. That's the principal reason why I have been unable to write. Along with reading Mr. Marston's "Communicant Church Membership" course my teacher has been helping me revise the "Catechism for Young Children." The catechism which we have been revising was translated about five years ago by Daniel Hung. He came to know Christ through a Bible class that Mr. Andrews taught in Taipei when he first came to the island.

Soon Daniel will have finished his term of military service and hopes to go to Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia. He is an especially interesting person. Since his English is excellent I hope you may be able to hear him speak while he is in the States. It took us only a few hours to revise the catechism that Daniel had done for the work is very accurate. As soon as Uncle Dick checks it over it will be ready for the printer. But there is that ever present matter of money. We cannot send it to print without money.

I learned much of this catechism when very young by listening as my older sister and brother recited it to mother. In the back yard of our home there was a wonderful old maple tree. I used to sit behind that tree and think

about God and the world to come. When I was just past four I realized enough about God and enough about sin that I was looking to God for mercy.

I am so thankful for the "Child's Catechism" for it helped me to understand about God and sin and the meaning of the Bible stories we were read. Once when I was in college a psychology professor asked me a very difficult question, adding that I being a minister's daughter should be able to answer. I answered it right from the "Child's Catechism."

When Daniel finished the catechism translation it was published in mimeograph form. Now, most of those copies are gone. I am anxious that this very wonderful, simple book be printed and placed on the market in the Christian Bookstores on Taiwan. Have you been blessed as I by this catechism? Then I know that you will want to join me in prayer and giving to make it possible for Chinese children to have it in their language at a price that they can afford. Will you speak to your Sunday school class, your parents and friends about sending a gift to our Missions office to help us get the "Catechism for Young Children" on the Chinese market?

I hope that you have been having a pleasant summer vacation. It has been very hot here for three weeks. The warmest in forty years they say. Uncle Dick sends his love.

Your loving friend,

*Aunt Polly*

**Luther Craig Long, Ph.D.\*—Certified Clinical Psychologist**  
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(\*Ministerial member of The Presbytery of Philadelphia of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church.)