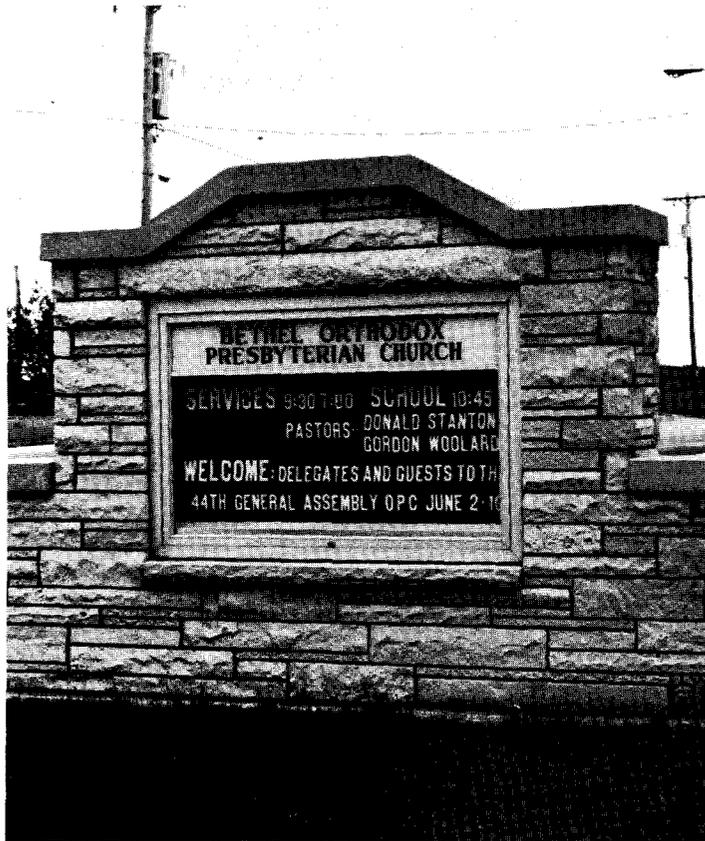


# The Presbyterian Guardian



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## Letters

### "Life After Life"—Cont'd

Your closing comments ending with the Catechism (in the May issue of the *Guardian*) on the subject of "Life After Life," were just great, and "hit the nail on the head." I couldn't agree more.

It appears to me that my critics are missing the point. I did not intend to talk about the joys or sorrows of eternal life—just the transition of getting there. Of course, every Christ-confessing Christian will experience unlimited joy and happiness with the Lord, but not I believe until either the soul and body are separated or judgment day itself has arrived.

I am convinced that death is a penalty for sin, and that Christ has borne the full penalty for sin. But nowhere in Scripture can I find that Christians or anyone else will be free from the pangs of death.

Why did God make man? Apparently for fellowship and enjoyment, for God visited with Adam in the cool of the day (Genesis 3:8). Our infinite God would not make man in his own image for a temporary situation. He made man, body and soul, to live forever in his image.

But it was Satan and sin that caused God to pronounce the death penalty, so there is a rupture of what God intended. There appears to be a reluctance of the soul to leave the body, and we hear much about the will to live. The body does not want to die; it was created to live.

My father suffered a stroke about a month ago; he is nearly 95 years old. In this time, I have prayed with him many times. His mind has been affected, but he has said several times, "The Lord is coming, the Lord is coming"; and, "Open the gate and let me in." He is ready to die. He has been dying for over a month, and it is agony. Why?

Many, many Christians have a very hard death. Their joy is not in death but in the glorious presence of their Lord afterward.

Clarence Roskamp  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

*Note:* Mr. Roskamp commented, in an earlier issue of the *Guardian*, on the cur-

rent best-seller, *Life After Life*, and his own near-death experience.

### "Millennial Question"

I was going to let my subscription lapse. But now that you have published "The Millennial Question" by Donald J. Duff (in the June issue), I have changed my mind. I want to see what kind of a response you receive to this article.

I am sure you will receive letters from Orthodox Presbyterian ministers of the premillennial persuasion. But I would just like to add a comment myself. It seems to me that Mr. Duff is confusing premillennialism with Dispensationalism. Mr. Duff says, "Most premillennialists have a different set of rules for interpretation to start with." He never states just what these different rules are, and I think his accusation is unfounded unless he is referring to Dispensationalists.

It is possible to be premil, amil, or postmil, and still be thoroughly Reformed. We ought to bear in mind that great Bible students and theologians have held to all three of these views down through the centuries, and it is unlikely that this question will ever be decided one way or the other beyond a shadow of doubt.

Marshall C. St. John, pastor  
Bible Presbyterian Church  
Concord, North Carolina

*Ed. note:* We're glad the article saved one subscriber! Just how much response may come has yet to be seen. We do have a promise of a reaction from one holding to the postmillennial position, and we would be glad to have one from the premillennial viewpoint. We tend to agree with Pastor St. John that the question is not likely to be settled—at least until Christ returns to settle it for us. But we also believe it is worth careful thought and discussion. Readers are invited to join in.

### "Wild Animal" at bay

As a layman I have been chided, scolded, and exhorted about my sins and lifestyle for more years than I care to remember. Like a wild animal at bay, I have decided to turn on my tormentors—the Christian clergy—and ask a few questions of my own. Over the years a few have occurred to me, coming in no

(Continued on page 13.)

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# Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod

Rather than a summary of actions of the recent Synod of the RPCES, we are publishing a lengthy statement adopted by Synod that should be of particular interest to readers. The following resolution was adopted by a vote of 146 to 34, following a lengthy and strenuous debate and several amendments to the original recommended statement.

The Synod of 1976 had erected a study committee on the subject of the beverage use of alcohol. Membership on the committee was intended to represent what were thought to be widely differing viewpoints. But the committee's report to the 1977 Synod was unanimous. As finally adopted, the resolution is as follows:

## Beverage Use of Alcohol

1. To be faithful to the Scriptural mandate to teach the whole counsel of God our churches must teach what the Bible says about the sinfulness of drunkenness. This should be done, as deemed appropriate in the local circumstances, in the preaching ministry, in the Sunday School or other Bible classes, in the homes, in the training of church officers, and especially to the young people. Cases of drunkenness must be disciplined. Those in our congregations who are afflicted with alcoholism must be treated with loving care.

2. In light of the increasing serious abuse of alcohol in contemporary American culture, the Synod reaffirms its advocacy of total abstinence from the beverage use of alcohol. Dispassionate discussions of this and other Synodical statements and studies might be held in Sessions to assist the ruling body of the local fellowship of believers in achieving consensus of policy in accordance with Scripture. The results of such discussions might be shared at Presbytery level for the sake of conference and possible uniformity.

3. In maintaining a testimony recommending total abstinence, our denomination must continue to make clear that this is a matter of prudence, based on the exercise of Christian love, in our con-

temporary American culture, in which highly alcoholic beverages are readily available and in which the abuse of alcohol is both prevalent and dangerous. It should be acknowledged that Scripture neither makes total abstinence a mark of holiness nor a universal requirement.

4. Our churches and presbyteries must not make total abstinence a requirement for membership or office as a matter of principle; this would be to go beyond Scripture. As a matter of prudence, however, under certain conditions, a local congregation may deem it wise to decide that only abstainers be elected to church office. In like manner the partaking of alcoholic beverage in moderation must not in itself be made a matter of church discipline. Church officers should give serious consideration to the advisability of practicing total abstinence in view of their position and the influence of their example.

5. It is appropriate for our denominational agencies, according to the judgment of those responsible for governing and administering them, to establish a rule of total abstinence as a matter of operational or institutional expediency for a given time or place. In such cases it must be made clear to those who submit themselves to such a rule that it is as a matter of prudence, based on Christian love, and not as a Scriptural command.

6. We recommend that our churches use grape juice in the Lord's Supper, not to open the possibility of an offense to those who cannot safely take any alcohol. Fer-

*. . . maintaining a testimony  
recommending total abstinence,  
. . . a matter of prudence,  
based on . . . Christian love,  
in . . . American culture . . .*

mented wine should not be used unless it is diluted with water.

7. Our churches should be sure to teach in a balanced way the Bible's teaching on questions of conscience. Those who partake in moderation must be counseled to exercise loving concern for those who abstain out of conscience. Those who abstain must be counseled not to judge those who partake in moderation. Above all, both have a responsibility to maintain the peace and unity of the church in joyful hope in the Lord. A Reformation and Puritan motto expresses this well: "In things necessary, unity; in things not necessary, liberty; in all things, charity." Knowingly to cause a weaker brother to sin is to sin against Christ. To raise scruples pharisaically is to condemn him whom Christ has received. Both of these sins should be dealt with in the church with careful, loving discipline. Ministers and ruling elders especially, as well as other church officers and leaders, have a responsibility to be sensitive to the testimony of the Synod which commends total abstinence to our people as appropriate for our cultural context and at the same time does not teach that it is an absolute requirement of Scripture.

In another basic decision, the Synod refused to approve the ordination of women as deacons. This action was in spite of a carefully prepared argument in favor of such ordination, one based not on the current liberal approach of denying all sexual differences in the church and society, but seeking to ground its conclusions on careful study of Scripture teaching. There was no attempt to include the office of elder in the area of participation by women.

A Survey

## The Church and ALCOHOL

The Editor

The question of the beverage use of alcohol is one of the root issues that caused the infant Presbyterian Church of America to split in 1937, less than six

(Continued on page 10.)

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## 44th General Assembly

# Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Meeting in what the Moderator described to a fraternal delegate as "one of the small, rural churches" of the denomination, the Forty-fourth General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church convened at Bethel Church (actually one of the largest anywhere) in Oostburg, Wisconsin (but rural enough) on Thursday evening, June 2, 1977. Following an address by ruling elder Garret A. Hoogerhyde, Moderator of the Forty-third General Assembly, and a communion service, the assembly recessed in order to begin business sessions on Friday morning.

The assembly was again made up of presbyters commissioned by their respective presbyteries according to a proportional representation. A total of one hundred and fifty-five are eligible under the current rules, but only 124 were actually present—81 ministers and 43 ruling elders. Though the proportion of ruling elders present has greatly improved under the representative system (in contrast to the time when every minister and an elder from each church was eligible), concern was voiced to improve ruling elder attendance even further.

The members of this "small, rural church" managed quite easily to house all the commissioners, provide transportation to and from the airport in Milwaukee, and provide more and richer food than most commissioners really needed. Hospitality in Oostburg, among the many Dutch names, is gracious indeed. Supervision of arrangements was under the direction of Gordon Woolard, intern-pastor at Bethel Church for the past year.

### Character of an assembly

Statistics are important in characterizing an assembly. But there are factors that color the style and manner of an assembly that go beyond figures. This as-

sembly, to this reporter, possessed two notable characteristics: (1) it was able to do major business efficiently when it chose (which was not always, but most of the time); and (2) it had a certain radical tone, at least as heard from some commissioners.

That last remark calls for explanation. The "radical tone" was one of challenge to the status quo, to the "establishment" of the denomination, a note of questioning the "way we do things." Such an attitude can be healthy indeed, particularly if a church has settled into a rut of traditional patterns. On the other hand, to call for change in every procedure, without examining the wisdom of the past that led to those procedures, is radical, uprooting without sufficient reason.

In 1970, the "old guard" arrived at the assembly in Portland, Oregon, to discover that a new generation had taken over. Those men who had founded the denomination in 1936, or joined it in its formative years, no longer were a majority. That was the first major change in generations. At this 1977 assembly, nearly fifty of the 124 voting commissioners had attended their first general assembly since 1970, and the church has already come near to seeing a second new generation in the majority.

At least to this reporter, the sense of radical challenging can be explained by the presence of these relatively new teaching and ruling elders. New blood is invigorating, and the church can use it.

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**Moderator:** I recognize you . . . What's your name?

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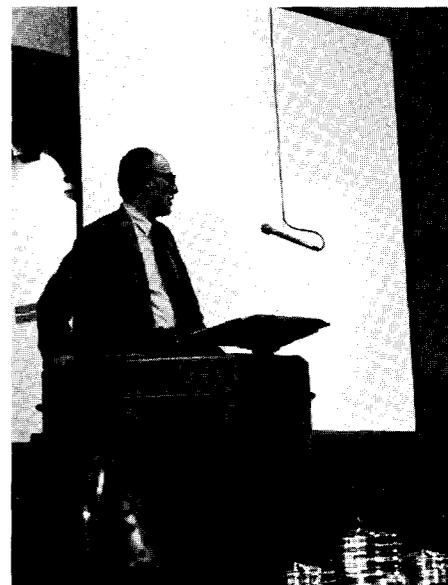
It is only hoped that the "new blood" will search carefully for the wisdom of Spirit-led men who have laid the foundations of the church these younger presbyters have entered.

By way of example of such "radical" expressions, one could cite the strong desire of some to see the church adopt a "two-office" view of the eldership without any real distinction between teaching and ruling elders; a proposal to decentralize foreign missions almost entirely, with presbyteries and groups of local churches assuming the responsibilities of sending and supporting missionaries; and the strong reaction against a church "hierarchy" expressed in various ways.

A large denomination can and probably should seek ways to decentralize its activities; only so will the members of the church have a vital interest and part in the church's total ministries. But a small denomination must work more unitedly if only because it lacks adequate resources to do otherwise. A spirit of independency, of local ingrown interests, without regard to national goals, can only reduce the effectiveness of a church like the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

### Organizing the assembly

Following the determination of the roll of commissioners on Friday morning, the assembly proceeded to elect its officers. Despite some expressed concern over the delays in getting out the minutes and correspondence, the assembly re-elected Mr. Richard A. Barker as Stated Clerk. It happily received the willingness of Mr. Edward A. Haug to serve as Statistician. (And in general, the church



is finding the services of senior ruling elders to be a valuable asset. Scarcely any denomination depends so much on "lay" leaders who are thoroughly knowledgeable about their church.)

Nominations for Moderator provided the first real excitement. Messrs. Calvin Busch, Thomas Champness, Larry Conard, Abe Ediger, Robert Eckardt, Ed Haug, John Hills, John Mitchell, Wendell Rockey, Henry Tavares, Thomas Tyson, and Robert Vining were nominated. After speeches and several ballots, the Rev. Wendell L. Rockey, Jr. was elected—the first Moderator from the Presbytery of New York and New England. Mr. Rockey is pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Cape Cod, Mass.

The choice of Moderator was a happy one for the assembly. Mr. Rockey constantly pressed the assembly to move forward, but did it with flashes of wit that delighted old friends and intrigued new ones.

#### Fraternal delegates

Representatives from those churches having fraternal relations with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church were present, in several cases throughout the whole assembly. From the Presbyterian Church in America were Dr. Carl Bogue, pastor of a congregation in Akron, Ohio, and Dr. G. Aiken Taylor, editor of *The Presbyterian Journal*. The Rev. Robert Stuebbe, pastor of a congregation in Manitowoc, Wisc., represented the Reformed Church, U. S. (Eureka Classis).

From the Christian Reformed Church were Ruling Elder Albert Bel, who has now attended five OPC assemblies, and the Rev. John Hoeksema, pastor of a congregation in Sheboygan, Wisc.

Present for less of the assembly, due to the overlapping dates of their own synods, were the Rev. Charles B. Holliday, III, from the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, and the Rev. Lee Bittner, from the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Also present at the beginning of the assembly, but not as an official representative, was the Rev. Donald J. MacNair of the RPCES.

One delegate from each church addressed the assembly during the course of the proceedings. The presence of several of the delegates for most of the sessions was helpful in their gaining a better understanding of the OPC. With next year's assembly to be held concurrently at Calvin College with the assemblies/synods of these other churches, even greater mutual understanding should result.



#### Advisory committee work

One thing learned from the operations of another church is the system of referring all assembly business to temporary advisory committees. This procedure, long standard in the Christian Reformed Church, means that every report, overture, communication, or judicial case, will be studied closely by a small group of commissioners before coming to the whole assembly. This guarantees that at least some commissioners have studied each matter enough to have useful suggestions.

The assembly recessed early on Friday afternoon to allow time for the advisory committees to meet. Those committees dealing with reports from the various standing (or permanent) committees invited representatives of the respective committees to confer and help explain the reports. Any commissioner with a particular concern for some item of business was also free to express his concern before the appropriate advisory committee.

The assembly reconvened on Saturday afternoon and proceeded to hear the first in a series of reports from major standing committees and from the various advisory committees dealing with those reports.

#### The church's outreach

Always first on the docket, after the housekeeping and organizational business is done, have been the reports from the three standing committees charged with carrying out the church's commission to preach the gospel in foreign missions, home missions, and through Christian literature and instructional materials.

*The Committee on Christian Education* presented the first report (following a plan of rotation year by year). This committee's report was mainly concerned with its involvement in Great Commission Publications, Inc., the joint publishing venture of the OPC and the Presby-

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**Commissioner:** I'm speaking over here. If I spoke over there, the Moderator might hit me on the head with the gavel.

**Second Commissioner:** I so move.

---

terian Church in America. The new venture has had one full year of operation and is publishing and expanding its materials for Sunday school as well as *Trinity Hymnal* and the church bulletins. Expansion of the Sunday school curriculum into adult and pre-school materials, and a revised Vacation Bible School curriculum, are projected. The committee, though primarily involved in Great Commission Publications, is looking ahead to possible ministries for specific Orthodox Presbyterian needs. (The advisory committee reviewing this report expressed its commendation of the standing committee's work and urged prayer and financial support.)

Concern over lack of cooperative work in Christian education with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, was expressed. It was noted that attempts to work out such cooperation had been made in the past, but that Christian Training, Inc., the RPCES corresponding agency, had chosen to work in different areas and to develop a different curriculum approach from that of the OPC committee. Despite this background, the assembly urged the Committee on Christian Education to explore possible cooperation with its RPCES counterpart.

Elections to the Committee on Christian Education saw the Rev. Messrs. James Bosgraf, Edmund Clowney, and Leonard Coppes, and Ruling Elders



Robert Ashlock, Arnold Larson, and Lloyd Theune placed on the committee.

*The Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension* was next to report. This committee notes with gratitude the increased involvement of presbyteries in home mission efforts, but forecasts a continuing need for support by the whole denomination. The committee is encouraged by the response to the concept of a missionary-at-large at work with a presbytery and hopes to employ a denominational evangelist as well. Though not a large part of its budget, funds for summer workers and interns are seen as a significant factor in attracting able young men into the church's ministry.

The advisory committee reacted enthusiastically to the idea of a denominational evangelist—or perhaps more accurately to the work of the Rev. John Fikkert in this area—and urged the assembly to direct the Committee on Home Missions to make it a priority to secure Mr. Fikkert on a full-time basis. With a bit more cool, the assembly referred the idea to the committee, believing that such matters, even when desired by all, were better done by the responsible committee.

The Rev. Messrs. George Cottenden, Jonathan Male, and Wendell Rockey, and Ruling Elders Richard Hake and Theodore Pappas were elected to the home missions committee. The Rev. Larry Comard was elected to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Dr. George W. Knight upon his transfer to the RPCES recently.

*The Committee on Foreign Missions*, shortly after the reconvening on Monday morning, presented its report. Major changes in the church's foreign mission program have taken place: the mission to Ethiopia has been closed down due to

war conditions there; three veteran missionary families have retired, one each from Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. On the other hand, an exciting open door of opportunity has been found in Egypt where the Rev. W. Benson Male has been enthusiastically received by the evangelical church there (largely the result of efforts by missionaries of the old United Presbyterian Church). The Committee hopes to have a permanent missionary in Egypt (Mr. Male has been serving on a retired basis, largely at his own expense) and if conditions permit, also in Lebanon, which would be another new field.

The advisory committee dealing with this report expressed great concern over the dwindling of the church's foreign mission force. Some of this is due to the circumstances mentioned above, some of it to lack of suitable candidates at times, and some of it to restrictions caused by limited funds. To overcome this "Stagnation," the advisory committee urged a complete rearrangement of mission support and calling, with presbyteries and groups of congregations to take the initiative. (The one existing example of such an arrangement, that of the Presbytery of New Jersey in jointly calling and supporting the Rev. Robert Marshall on Taiwan, hardly is the successful example needed; less than one half of the Marshalls' support is being raised in the churches of that presbytery.) In any event, the assembly simply referred these proposals to the committee itself.

The assembly elected the Rev. Messrs. Donald Buchanan, Donald Duff, and B. J. Stonehouse, and Ruling Elders Norman Byer and William Haldeman to the foreign missions committee.

### **The Stewardship Committee**

Since its report deals with the Combined Budget for the three major standing committees, the report of the *Com-*

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**Date, Place, & Travel:** One commissioner requests early excuse to return to his dairy farm.

**Commissioner:** We should excuse him as it is an utter necessity.

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*mittee on Stewardship* comes next on the docket. But since that report was discussed at length during parts of more than one day, this summary of the assembly's actions will treat it here in one section.

Concern with the recommendations of the Committee on Stewardship and the functioning of the Combined Budget occupied more time in the assembly than any other subject. The committee's report recommended that the assembly approve its proposal to employ a full-time general secretary, on the grounds that the part-time efforts being used so far were not enough to carry out the committee's full responsibilities.

In addition to the committee's own recommendation, a special Committee to Review the Combined Budget, after studying the concept and operation of the church's system for supporting its various gospel outreach efforts, had independently recommended the same course of action. The assembly's own advisory committee, having studied both the report of the Committee on Stewardship and that of the special review committee, also unanimously urged adoption of the recommendation concerning a general secretary. Two of the three major standing committees had also favored this course.

Despite all this favorable support, the debate in the assembly indicated a great deal of reluctance for the proposal. This took two approaches, (1) some being opposed to any addition of executive employees for whatever purpose, and (2) some being opposed because it might strengthen the operation of the Combined Budget. Others simply questioned whether a full-time general secretary would make that much difference or whether the cost (estimated at \$20,000) was worth it.

Debate on the subject began about 2 p.m. on Monday. Just before the supper recess, the assembly finally came to a vote and resoundingly rejected the proposals for a full-time general secretary by a vote of 47 in favor, 66 opposed.

After supper the assembly did adopt, with no attempt to change the recommendation, a Combined Budget for 1978 identical to that approved last year for 1977, or a total figure of \$664,000 for the three major standing committees. The assembly then recessed for the evening.

### A major turnaround

Those who favored the proposal for a full-time general secretary, believing it was necessary if the church was to make significant improvements in its support for its gospel outreach, were dismayed by the assembly's rejection. And overnight, apparently many commissioners had second thoughts on the subject. Two members of the Committee on Stewardship resigned, along with the committee's part-time Administrative Assistant, and two of the General Secretaries of the major standing committees were considering similar action.

At any rate, when the assembly reconvened on Tuesday morning, there was a desire to do something on the matter. One motion was proposed that would have informed the people of their per communicant share of the Combined Budget, which the mover insisted was not the same as the quota system employed in the Christian Reformed Church but which to this reporter certainly seemed essentially identical. That proposal eventually died.

But then it was moved to reconsider the actions of the previous day in rejecting the recommendations of the Committee on Stewardship. In view of the overwhelming vote against these, many commissioners thought reconsideration was pointless. The assembly did agree to reconsider, but determined to do so later in the docket to allow other urgent business a fair hearing and, possibly, to give time for reflection.

The subject came up again finally on Wednesday evening when the assembly came to consider the report of the special Committee to Review the Combined Budget. Ruling Elder Ed Haug, chairman of the special review committee, presented its report—and the debate was on in full force.

Since the review committee's principal conclusion was that the present Combined Budget system be reaffirmed and strengthened (see reports on this in the March and April issues of the *Guardian*), debate focused on the principles for the Combined Budget and its actual operation. A principal opponent of the present system was the Rev. John Galbraith (though General Secretary of the Committee on Foreign Missions, he spoke for

himself and not the committee).

Speaking in favor of the Combined Budget system were the Rev. Messrs. George Haney and Robley Johnston, General Secretaries of the Committees on Home Missions and Christian Education, respectively, and the Rev. John Mitchell, Administrative Assistant for the Committee on Stewardship. Members of the review committee also spoke, as did the Rev. John Hills, reporting for the assembly's advisory committee dealing with the whole subject.

After a series of complicated parliamentary maneuvers, the assembly affirmed "that the present plan for the Committee on Stewardship [including the Combined Budget system], in its essential nature, be continued, and that the concept include the understanding that those charged with the responsibility of presenting the combined budget to the churches, shall remind the people that while the plan encourages designation to the total work of the church, it also permits designation to the work of the individual committees, and to individual needs of the committees."

This motion prevailed over a counterproposal to establish another review committee charged with studying biblical principles bearing on the church's support of its gospel works and also with studying methods of support used in the other member churches of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (the CRC, the PCA, the RPCES, the RPCNA). But once taken, the debate was largely over. The various recommendations of the special review committee designed to improve or strengthen the stewardship plan (chief among them a strong recommendation to use some other name than "Combined Budget" with its cold, money-oriented sound)

were referred to the Committee on Stewardship either for possible implementation or future recommendation to the next assembly. (The Committee on Stewardship, in line with this, has already determined to call the combined program, the Worldwide Outreach, emphasizing the positive program of gospel proclamation instead of budget-raising concerns.)

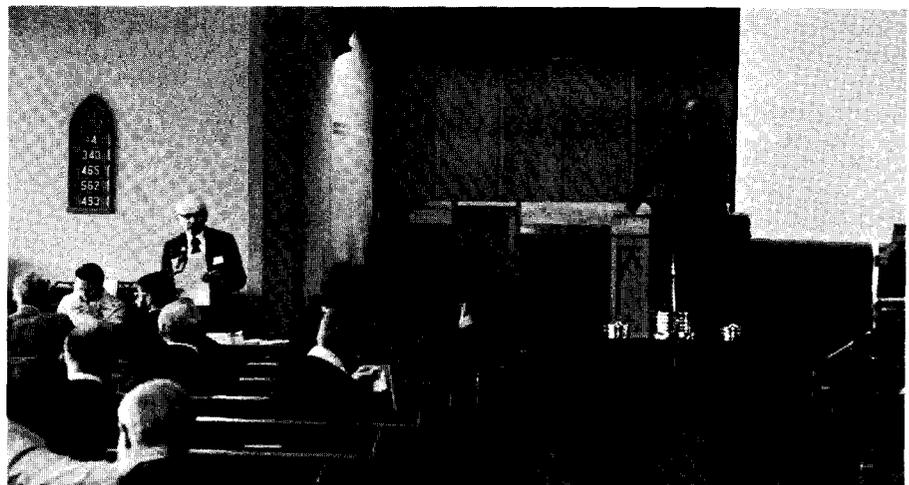
Having favorably acted on the review committee's report, the assembly returned to reconsider the recommendations of the Committee on Stewardship that it had earlier resoundingly rejected. The debate on the basic subject being fairly well exhausted already, the assembly rather promptly approved these recommendations for a full-time general secretary, and did so this time with very little negative votes expressed.

Why such a large change of mind? Everything that could be said in favor of having a general secretary for stewardship was said before the first vote. Perhaps it was the open dismay expressed by several of those most intimately concerned in the matter. Or perhaps it was simply a matter of giving the subject deeper reflection. At any rate, what seemed a dead end for the Committee on Stewardship and the Combined Budget on Monday night became a much more positive outlook by Thursday evening.

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**Moderator:** I don't know if it has anything to do with what we are doing up here, but some fuses downstairs have blown.

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Together with resignations and expired terms, over half of the members of the Committee on Stewardship needed to be elected. Chosen were the Rev. Messrs. John Hills (chairman of the temporary advisory committee), Albert Steever (a former member of the stewardship committee), Marven Bowman (incumbent), and Jack Peterson (representing the church's great "heartland"?), and Ruling Elder Ed Haug (chairman of the special review committee).

[In a meeting of the Committee on Stewardship shortly after the close of the assembly, it determined to call the Rev. John J. Mitchell, its former part-time Administrative Assistant, to the full-time position of General Secretary. Readers should be aware that this report is written by Mr. Mitchell, with whatever bias that may involve; he was certainly not neutral in the assembly debate. He has not yet indicated an answer to the committee's call.]

### New Form of Government

The second major item of assembly business, and one with far-reaching effects for the church, was the presentation of a proposed new Form of Government. Work on this document began twenty-nine years ago, and the committee's chairman, the Rev. John P. Galbraith, is the only member to serve all those years.

The committee presented the product of its labors with more than a little trepidation, fearing that the process of approval might degenerate into a parliamentary chaos of amendments and counter-amendments. But the advisory committee reviewing this document proposed, and the assembly agreed to follow, a schedule of dealing with it that worked beautifully.

Giving itself an open period of discussion only, the assembly went through the whole document, chapter by chapter. Some parts took longer, others took no time at all. The questions and comments clearly indicated some sentiment for different approaches at places from those in the committee's version. But it was understood that the committee would be continued to deal with any proposed changes and that seemed to satisfy everyone.

At any rate, following this time of open discussion, the assembly voted on whether to send the document down to the presbyteries for formal constitutional adoption. The motion passed—to everyone's surprise—without one audible dissenting vote. If two-thirds of the presbyteries (by simple majority votes) now approve, and the next assembly approves by a two-

thirds vote (the two-thirds being required to make rather minor changes in the various ordination vows), the Orthodox Presbyterian Church will finally have a new Form of Government.

What did the document do? For one thing, the new Form is considerably expanded over the old, primarily in order to spell out in some detail the procedures to be followed particularly in ordinations of various church officers; the new Form, in other words, is more of a handbook. The whole process of receiving and transferring ministers is given in what seems to be exhaustive detail, though certainly gaps are likely to be found once the procedures are put into practice.

The second main characteristic of the new Form was its tendency to steer a middle course between differing views existing in the church. The continuing controversy over the number of church offices (two or three) is reflected in the new Form's flat statement at one point

████████████████████  
**Important statement:** Daniel Hung doesn't have a motorcycle.

████████████████████  
**Moderator:** Let's have the speeches, and then the clerk will tell us how to vote.

████████████████████  
that there are basically only two (elders and deacons) and its equally plain provision for a clear distinction in the eldership between those called ministers and ruling elders. In fact, with separate chapters for pastors, teachers, and evangelists, some have fairly tagged the new Form of Government as being a five- or six-office document. The resolution of the differences is in the fact that the Scriptures nowhere clearly define what an office is even as they clearly distinguish between a large variety of official (God-called and church-recognized) functions of ministry and service.

Those least satisfied with the new document were commissioners persuaded that ruling elders, though they may not "labor in word and doctrine" full time, are nevertheless charged with pastoral responsibilities similar to those of the teaching elder we call a pastor. A change in one chapter, made by the committee

during the course of the discussion, eased this concern somewhat, by removing what seemed to be an exclusive reference of pastoral duties to the minister alone.

Certainly the church will have to live with this new Form of Government for some time before it can be sure it wants any further substantive changes. Meanwhile, a proposed new Book of Discipline and Directory for Worship is waiting in the wings!

### A judicial case

After forty years of experience with no judicial cases reaching the assembly level, the church has had one in both the last two years. In 1976, it was the case of the Rev. Arnold S. Kress, charged in relation to the matter of speaking in tongues primarily. This year it was the Rev. Robert H. Countess, charged with error in practice and doctrine in relation to the Sabbath.

The background of the charges brought by the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic against Dr. Countess, formerly a pastor in the presbytery and presently a chaplain in the U.S. Army, was this minister's involvement in a semi-pro soccer team that played on Sundays. Dr. Countess defended his activity, holding the "Continental view" that the Fourth Commandment is not binding on Christians—a view he had expressed when being received into the presbytery.

In the judgment of this observer, neither the case against Dr. Countess nor the defendant's own appeal of a guilty verdict, were very well presented. The basic issue was clear enough: Would the assembly uphold its doctrinal standards with their strong emphasis on a "Puritan Sabbath"? The assembly would and did overwhelmingly. It even rejected proposals urging the presbytery to modify its censure of suspension or even to delay implementing it. Presumably Dr. Countess, unless he chooses to seek church affiliation elsewhere, will be suspended from the exercise of his office.

One comment seems in order: The reason the church has had so few judicial cases before the assembly is not because there were no disciplinary efforts being made. It was rather the case that, whenever a lower court would move to institute formal judicial process, the individual being charged would simply withdraw from the jurisdiction of the church and go elsewhere, thus effectively precluding further action. Both Mr. Kress and Dr. Countess are to be commended for going "the whole route" even when their particular cases seemed to have a foregone conclusion. Whether the final de-

cisions were right or wrong, the church has been able to do a difficult duty.

### Other significant actions

Having nearly exhausted itself in consideration of these three major items, the assembly tended to move rather rapidly through remaining business. The danger is that important decisions will be made with little thought given to them. Some of the other reports and decisions are noted here, at least in brief.

*The Committee on Diaconal Ministries.* (Having slighted this committee last year, let me make some amends now.) This committee serves the whole church in the area of diaconal (deacon) concern, extending help and the ministry of mercy where needed. Its ministries extend both abroad, in various helps to the needy, and at home both in special emergencies and to those servants of the church in need.

Support for the work of this committee comes mainly from funds given to the local church deacons. Only about two-thirds of the congregations make any contribution to the denominational committee. Yet the support received has enabled the committee to do a great deal of work.

At present, the committee's special concern is for the needs of pastors and their families; the desire is to have reserves to meet emergency medical needs. The committee also seeks to provide more adequate retirement income for some ministers not provided for otherwise. A recent effort has been to help refugees from the dictatorial oppression in Uganda.

This committee is requesting support in the amount of \$4.50 per communicant member during 1977 and also in 1978, as it seeks to enlarge its budget from about \$40,000 in 1976 to improve what it can do in these areas of genuine concern. The Rev. Rollin Keller and Ruling Elder John Novinger were reelected to this committee.

*The Committee on Pensions* had been subject to rather strenuous criticism in recent years as its pension fund investments suffered from the general decline in the economy. But both a change in the management of the funds and improvements in the financial market generally resulted in a substantial improvement for each participant in the plan.

Changes also in the hospitalization plan now provide improved coverage, both in life insurance features and major

medical expense. Costs have increased for the participants, but the protection gained has been considered well worth it.

This committee, dealing with pensions for retired ministers, had become concerned with the need for housing provision for retirees, many of whom have accumulated no equity over the years they have lived in church manses. The committee felt itself unable to take on another area of work and urged the assembly to erect a special committee to study the needs.

The assembly agreed and proceeded to elect this committee. First nominated and receiving the largest majority of votes was the first woman to be elected to any committee of the assembly in the history of the church, Mrs. Ada M. Galbraith, a realtor in Jenkintown, Pa. Also elected were the Rev. Lewis Grotenhuis and Ruling Elders Ken Bosgraf, Robert Coie, and John Kinnaird.

The Committee on Pensions also asked permission to receive a special offering in 1978 to supplement the benefits of participants in the Pension Plan. This proposal was readily adopted, as commissioners were well aware that existing pensions are indeed meager. In elections to this committee, the Rev. Messrs. Roger Schmurr and John Galbraith and Ruling Elders John Dowling and William Wilkens were chosen.

### *The Committee on Ecumenicity and*



*Interchurch Relations* has in former years presented reports that generated lengthy debate. But no mergers or unusual development seemed present this time, though a number of significant actions were taken.

The assembly approved the establishing of fraternal relations with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, a body of approximately 30,000 communicants, located largely in Piedmont Virginia and the Carolinas, Florida, and Arkansas. The church has a long history, but had suffered decline both in numbers and in faithfulness to sound doctrine. A recent influx of new ministers, mostly from Reformed Theological Seminary, has brought new life and a new desire to draw closer to the more orthodox Reformed bodies. The ARPC is seeking membership in the NAPARC organization also.

A proposal to authorize the committee to present another plan of union with the Reformed Presbyterian Church,

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**Announcement:** Today is cleanup day (Friday). Lunch will be served downstairs and you will be eating again everything you ate this week.

---

Evangelical Synod, generated some debate. After it was pointed out that this step did not constitute any sort of approval of the merger in advance, the proposal was approved with the plan to be presented in 1979.

The assembly also determined to accept the invitation of the Christian Reformed Church to meet at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, concurrently with other synods or assemblies of the NAPARC churches; all five have now accepted, though there is some stir in the Presbyterian Church in America to reconsider the matter. The OPC assembly will be held on June 15-24, 1978.

The most extensive debate in this area centered on the church's membership in the (international) Reformed Ecumenical Synod. Negative criticism, both this year and previously, centered on the cost of membership and of travel to the synod every four years, and on the presence of the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Reformed Churches in the Netherlands) as an RES member church (the largest one) while also holding membership in the World Council of Churches.

Discussion of the RES situation was generated by a recommendation from the Committee on Ecumenicity and from the delegates to the 1976 RES that the assembly urge both the Presbyterian Church in America and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod to seek RES membership. (The CRC, RPCNA, and ARPC are members.) In effect, the assembly decided it was proper enough for the OPC to continue its membership, particularly as the RES itself sought to persuade the Dutch churches to withdraw from the WCC and to exercise discipline in some notable instances of heretical teaching in its midst; but to urge others to join under the circumstances was not seen as appropriate, though the desire had been to strengthen the more orthodox elements in the RES. (The Rev. Messrs. Edmund Clowney, John Galbraith, and Norman Shepherd were elected to this committee.)

*The Committee on Date, Place, and Travel* was directed to recommend permanent guidelines on travel compensation—to eliminate the annual wrangle over this matter.

A new special *Committee on Appeals and Complaints* was erected, in order to give better order in the handling of judicial matters, but not to make judgments on them. The Rev. Messrs. Robert Eckardt, John Mitchell, and Thomas Ty-

son were named to this committee.

Various other committees also reported and were continued in their tasks of service or study.

The Forty-fourth General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was dissolved late in the afternoon of Friday, June 10, 1977, with the pronouncing of the benediction by the Moderator.

—John J. Mitchell

*The quotations scattered throughout this report come from a collection of witty sayings in the assembly made by Ruling Elder C. Wayne Hays of Fort Lauderdale, Fla.*

## THE CHURCH AND ALCOHOL

(Continued from page 3.)

months after the death of its leading founder, Dr. J. Gresham Machen. The continuing body eventually took the name (under threat of court action by the old Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.) of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The group departing at that time became the Bible Presbyterian Church.

The Rev. Carl McIntire was one of the principal leaders of those who left to form the Bible Presbyterian Synod. His leadership, however, was rejected by a majority of the Synod in 1956, the majority eventually taking the name of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. This group united with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Synod in 1965 to form the present Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod.

### The struggle in 1937

Though alcohol was only one issue in 1937, it was one that generated a good deal of passion. The Third General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America was faced with several overtures on the subject. These may be characterized as follows:

1. *From the Presbytery of California* (Overture #3). This overture opened the debate in the church and called for church members "to abstain from all appearance of such evils" as the use of "intoxicating liquors, use of tobacco, and engaging in such questionable amusements as theater-going, dancing and card playing," "in a determined effort to present a consistent, glorious Christian testimony" (*Minutes*, 3rd G.A., p. 7).

This overture plainly sees total abstinence as required under the circumstances and would make it practically a requirement for church membership.

2. *From the Presbytery of the Chicago Area* (Overture #2). This overture was much longer, being rather elaborately constructed with "whereases." It made the historical point that the old church (PCUSA) had frequently gone on record against the abuses of alcohol, and also using the argument about "avoiding even the appearance of evil" to urge total abstinence. The overture called upon the Third General Assembly to reaffirm this historical tradition. The effect was the same as that of the overture from the Presbytery of California. (See *Minutes*, 3rd G.A., pp. 5f.)

3. *From the Presbytery of Philadelphia* (Overture #1). This overture announced this presbytery's rejection of the California overture and called on the Assembly to emphasize the teachings of the Catechisms (especially, L.C. Questions 91-148, S.C. Questions 37-81) in the area of godly living. (See *Minutes*, 3rd G.A., p. 5.)

In addition to the rejection by the Philadelphia presbytery, the California overture had also been rejected by two other presbyteries and concurred in by two.

4. *From the Presbytery of New Jersey* (Overture #6). This overture, after denying that total abstinence was required by Scripture, nevertheless urged that course "so as to give none offence nor occasion of stumbling"; the overture insisted that individual Christian liberty was not to be deprived, however (*Minutes*, 3rd G.A., p. 8).

Though the California overture had been the first formulated, the one from Philadelphia—rejecting that from California—was the first (Overture #1) received by the Assembly. As such it had priority on the docket. The debate on these overtures did not come up, however, until after the Assembly had already been badly torn over the church's relation to the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. (The Assembly in effect rejected the Independent Board and determined to erect its own foreign missions agency. The division over this subject and that of total abstinence was very nearly identical.)

In the rather complicated parliamentary maneuvering that took place in regard to these overtures, the Philadelphia overture was first moved. In due time, a substitute was proposed, emphasizing

liberty of conscience (Confession of Faith, XX, 2, 3) and certain statements from the Larger Catechism condemning immoderation in all things, and asserting that no "further statement" was called for.

The Chicago Area overture, with its call to reaffirm the historical tradition in favor of total abstinence found in the old Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., was next proposed and eventually was defeated, 24 in favor, 65 opposed.

The Assembly, after closing off further debate, finally approved the substitute for the Philadelphia overture. And, apparently fed up with the subject, it determined to consider neither the California or New Jersey overtures. A strong protest against this decision was made by several members of the Assembly later on.

It was immediately following the action to close off consideration of the other overtures concerning abstinence from beverage use of alcohol that several commissioners left the Assembly, later to form the Bible Presbyterian Synod.

The Third General Assembly rejected a reaffirmation of the historical tradition of the old Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., favoring total abstinence as a matter of "avoiding even the appearance of evil." It rejected a somewhat stronger position calling for total abstinence as necessary, also to avoid "all appearance of such evils," and to lead a consistent Christian life in today's world. It further rejected the much milder approach of the New Jersey overture, which called for total abstinence "as a matter of expediency," but not as one of Scripture requirement or binding on the conscience.

Though only the first of these was rejected by direct vote, the latter two were effectively rejected by the decision not to consider them. What was adopted was a statement affirming liberty of conscience and urging moderation in all things. These decisions were one element that led to the separation of 1937 and the formation of the Bible Presbyterian Church, and its successor in part, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod.

The "Resolution on the Beverage Use of Alcohol," adopted by the 1977 Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, opens up this old debate again. It must be recognized that the resolution is clear enough in stating that total abstinence is *not* a biblical requirement on anyone. It has, in effect, rejected those erroneous arguments in favor of requiring total abstinence that

claimed, for example, that Jesus made unfermented grape juice at the wedding in Cana. It also rejected the sort of argument from the cultural context of today that would make the dangers of alcoholic abuse so serious as to require Christians to abstain totally—rather neatly ignoring the tremendous problem of drunkenness throughout the Roman world of New Testament times.

The resolution passed by the Synod of the RPCES is, in effect, the 1937 overture from the Presbytery of New Jersey to the Third General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America. It calls for total abstinence, but insists that this is not a biblical requirement. It calls for total abstinence, but insists that there is liberty of conscience in the matter. This was precisely the position of the New Jersey overture rejected in 1937.

Or to put it another way, the RPCES resolution insists on liberty of conscience but allows local churches, church boards and agencies, to require total abstinence of its officers or employees. It upholds liberty in the matter but permits various restrictions in practice. It warns against judging those who use alcoholic beverages in moderation but denies the right of a local church to use fermented wine in the Lord's Supper—or if it does, requires the wine to be watered (most commercial wine is well watered down already).

The biblical principle is moderation. There is no other, unless it be the equally biblical principle that calls upon men to rejoice in such good things from God as wine "that makes glad the heart of man." What the church should teach is *enjoyment* of God's good gifts in *moderation*, positively, and not by grudging negative emphases.

The 1977 action by the Synod of the RPCES, despite some very helpful clarifications, reopens an old quarrel. Approval of this resolution, at least with all its amendments, can hardly do much to foster the merger of the OPC and RPCES which the 1976 Synod called for. *We are back to 1937 all over again.*

—John J. Mitchell

### Wanted: Vos materials

Minister seeks class notes, syllabi, sermons, personal letters, etc., from students of Prof. Geerhardus Vos of Princeton Theological Seminary. Contact: Rev. J. T. Dennison, 213 W. Vincent, Ligonier, PA 15658. (Note: A bibliography of Vos's work, prepared by Mr. Dennison, appeared in the Westminster Theological Journal recently.)



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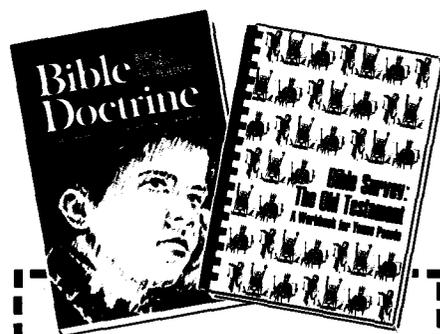
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# Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America

The Synod of the RPCNA (the "Covenant Church") met at Geneva College, June 3-10, 1977. Dr. Lester Kilpatrick, pastor of the First Church in Beaver Falls, Pa., was elected Moderator. Seven new ministers and ten ruling elders were enrolled. Among minister commissioners were four, now serving in America, who were born abroad; one each from Ghana, Cyprus, Northern Ireland, and Scotland.

## Revised "Testimony"

In addition to the usual Westminster Standards, the RPCNA maintains a "Testimony" of doctrines. Concern for a shorter, more popularly written version of this had led to a special committee of which the Rev. Kenneth G. Smith was chairman. The committee reported its work, a seven-year project, in thirteen chapters. Twelve of these were approved by a two-thirds vote; one was recommitted. The approved portions are to be studied by the churches.

## Major changes

Three other changes in the church's standards had been referred to the sessions last year. All three had passed.

The first provides for session-controlled (but otherwise "open") communion, instead of the former "closed" communion in which only members of the RPCNA were eligible to participate. The new arrangement, or "close" communion, allows for a local session to admit others who make a profession of faith acceptable to the session.

A second major change was in the requirements for church membership. The RPCNA has long required subscription to its doctrinal standards on the part of all who were coming into communicant membership (unlike almost all other Presbyterian bodies). The change permits an individual to join who, though having doubts about some points of doctrine, is prepared to submit himself to the teaching of the church.

A simplified procedure for amending the church standards was also adopted.

## Study reports

A lengthy report of the Bible teaching about the office of elder was presented. The question, Are there two distinctive offices within the eldership or only one? The report was returned for further study, but only after the Synod agreed that the Bible teaches one office of elder with two distinct functions (the "Thornwell view").

Another report dealt with "public covenanting." The discussion turned on the principles used in interpreting Scripture. This report was sent back also for more exegetical study of Scripture itself.

## Church agencies

The church's seminary in Pittsburgh reported its call to Dr. J. Renwick Wright to service as professor of New Testament, consequent on the coming retirement of Dr. S. Bruce Wilson. Synod approved the call.

Geneva College is launching a special development program, seeking \$500,000 from the church in a total campaign for \$15 million. A similar campaign a decade ago had gained \$8 million in improvements for the college.

The Board of Education and Publications nominated the Rev. Lee Bittner to continue as its part-time director (in addition to work for Geneva College); Synod concurred.

## Missions, finances

The RPCNA operates both a home and foreign missions program. New works are in progress at home, but with increasing support by presbyteries. Abroad, the church has work in Japan, is turning over properties in Cyprus to the autonomous church now organized there, and is seeking possible openings in Taiwan.

Contributions fell some \$36,000 short of goals, though part of the deficit was made up otherwise. Congregations are asked to provide \$245,000 during 1978.

## Interchurch relations

Fraternal delegates were present from

the Associate Reformed Presbyterian, Christian Reformed, Orthodox Presbyterian, Presbyterian in America, Reformed Presbyterian/Evan. Synod, and Reformed, U.S. (Eureka Classis) churches.

Synod determined to meet next year, June 16-23, at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, concurrently with the other NAPARC churches.

*Much of the above report is taken from a summary prepared by the Rev. Ken Smith for the Covenant Fellowship Congregation in Pittsburgh, of which he is pastor.*

## ITEMS

**Silver Spring, Md.**—At a service of ordination on May 17, the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic ordained Leonard N. Stewart to the gospel ministry and installed him as associate pastor of Knox Church here. Participants in the service included the Rev. Charles H. Ellis, pastor of Knox Church; the Rev. Barry R. Hottford, pastor of Covenant Church in Burtonsville, Md.; the Rev. William A. Mahlow, pastor of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (RPCES) in Annapolis; Ruling Elder Robert Morrison of Knox Church; and the Rev. Edwin C. Urban, pastor of Bethel Church in Leesburg, Va.

**Gowen, Mich.**—The Spencer Mills Orthodox Presbyterian Church announces a new schedule of worship services for the summer: Morning worship at 9:30 and 11 a.m.; the Labor Day Weekend service at 11 a.m. will be held at Lincoln Pines Resort. Evening service is at 7 p.m.

**Bonita, Calif.**—The congregation at Bonita has broken ground for its new building. It has been meeting in a local school. The pastor of the church is the Rev. John Garrisi. The Bayview Church in Chula Vista is hoping to break ground soon also for a new gymnasium and other facilities, to be used by Covenant Christian School.

**Cono, Iowa**—The Rev. Max Belz, founder of the Cono Christian School, and a long-time father in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, has been suffering serious physical infirmities. Doctors, including the one who worked with Dr. Robert Rayburn of Covenant Seminary, say the condition is manageable but requires regular trips to Waterloo for treatment. Prayer is asked for Mr. Belz.

## LETTERS

(Continued from page 2.)

particular order.

1. Do you chide your congregation about chasing the almighty dollar, giving them one of your "birds of the air and lilies of the field" sermons—while your wife takes an outside job for forty hours a week?

2. Do you rail at corrupt politicians and policemen "on the take"—while you look for doctors and dentists who give 50% discounts to clergymen, not to mention free admission to movie theaters, half-fare railroad tickets, etc.?

3. Do you see that you are included in every seminar or travel junket that gets you around at church expense?

4. How deep is your commitment to the ministry? When our government embarks on one of its periodic crusades to save the world for democracy, and your draft number was looming on the horizon, did seminary then look particularly inviting? Did it beat taking over the family farm?

5. Do you avoid making sermons on biblical subjects that seem to be in conflict with scientific knowledge? (E.g., Joshua's commanding the sun to stand still.)

6. Do you choose biblical passages selectively and make tortured translations of the same in order to make the Bible come out the way you want it to come out?

7. If you smoke, do you have a framed picture of the Savior in your study with a cigaret drooping from his lower lip?

8. Do you foster church cliques by associating primarily with those of your own age group? the influential and affluent? the college educated?

9. On your home visitation calls, you are asked a cogent, provocative question. Do you start to dissemble, give 'em the dummy act? the "I didn't understand your question" bit? Do you stand up, mumble "I'll pray for you," and take your leave?

10. Do you abuse and neglect your household pets? Your Christian ministry extends to animals as well.

11. You are orthodox. . . You consider yourself a bastion of conservatism, but you have long hair. This was a symbol of defiance to establishment mores introduced by a group of degenerate British musicians (?) whose greatest contribution to 20th-century culture was trash music, bawdy lyrics, hallucinogenic drugs

and group sex. (See 1 Corinthians 11: 14, 15.)

12. You take your twelve-year-old son to the ballgame. Reggie Jackson drops a homerun right in your lap. What do you do with the ball?

This is just a sampling of questions that may be asked. I have seen the clergy come up short on every question except the last one. I shall try to witness that some day if possible. I am curious to see how that one will be (whoops!) fielded.

I am hoping you will see fit to publish this letter. Any comments, pro or con, are invited.

Roland Priem

Menominee Falls, Wisc.

*Ed. note:* We published it. And the comments are welcome.

## Warns of AACS influence

I was saddened to see an advertisement, larger than a half page in the May issue (p. 11), for what called itself "An International Christian Political Conference" to be held at Dordt College, August 26 through 29, 1977.

I have read writings of the proposed speakers and can assure the readers of the *Guardian* that none of them have disassociated themselves from the Bible-denying leadership of the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship (AACS), of which this group is simply a branch. Some of the speakers themselves have written and taken positions concerning the Bible that are in direct opposition to the Westminster Confession; notably so, some of the articles by Dr. Paul Schrottenboer in his periodical (*The International Reformed Bulletin*)—and he is one of the speakers.

There can be neither political action nor common agreement unless an inspired and inerrant Bible constitutes the basis of the "Christianity" said to underlie the proposed party. What is done cannot really be that which the Lord Jesus would have, unless it is done by those who are born again through faith in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ and who believe him to be very God and very man—the promised Messiah—God come in the flesh.

Supporting Hendrik Hart when he writes, "Biblical living can never be summed up in rules for faith and conduct or faith and morals" (p. 123, *The Challenge of Our Age*); accepting and promoting "The Cosmomic Idea" — i.e., that all law arises from *our observation of creation* and NOT from *God's revealed law in the Bible*, which is asserted

to be only for that age and culture in which they were written; and castigating those who preach the gospel because it renders people "saved" instead of working for change—all this guarantees that as a political party this is not Christian in any biblical or redemptive sense.

These are *not* "orthodox" positions deserving of the backing of Orthodox Presbyterians or true Bible-believing Reformed Episcopalians. What these well-meaning but misguided proponents of Cosmomic doctrine are trying to do can only be done, actually, by *true* evangelism and *not* by dreamed-up political action.

Robert K. Rudolph, Th.M.

Reformed Episcopal Seminary  
Philadelphia, Penna.

## A Ministry in Houston

The Covenant Presbyterian Church in America of Houston, Texas, desires to minister to the needs of any who would welcome our ministry and who are here to undergo treatment in the Medical Center. If you have people who need the ministry of other loving Christians, contact: Rev. Laurie Jones (713-497-774) or Rev. Tom Hoolsema (713-495-7891), or write to the church at 2110 Gray Falls Dr., Houston, TX 77077.

## A Ministry in Memphis

Eastland Presbyterian Church (PCA) of Memphis, Tenn., desires to minister widely in the Mid-South area. Those moving to the area, or those temporarily in the area for medical or military reasons, are urged to contact the Rev. Robert L. Mabson (901-323-6578), or write to the church at 3741 Jackson Avenue, Memphis, TN 38108. Services are held each Sunday 11 a.m., 5:30 p.m., and Wednesday at 7 p.m.

## FOR SALE

Farmettes, 10-acre and larger — 35 miles from Washington, D.C. in beautiful rural Virginia, near growing Orthodox Presbyterian church and fine Christian school, grades K-12 — 10% down, \$3200 per acre, financing available. For information write: CLEAR SPRING FARMS, P. O. Box 1556, Leesburg, VA 22075 (703-777-7957 or -7959).

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# Genesis 2:22

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Dear Sarah:

How responsible is a wife, who does not work outside the house, for tithing the family income — especially when the husband controls the purse strings?

—Would-be tither

Dear Would-be:

From your letter I take it you are a Christian and believe in tithing and your husband either is not a Christian or does not believe in tithing. I'll answer on this assumption, since there would be no problem otherwise.

You can do any number of things depending on the circumstances in your home. First of all, God requires a tithe of all our income and if a man is the only one earning an income and will not give to the Lord, the woman is not responsible for her husband's attitude or actions.

However, most every woman receives at least *some* kind of allowance to run the household on. A prudent woman can find a way to tithe that sum and still be able to provide for her family in a way acceptable to all. A wife should never be *sneaky* about this, if her husband should object. If her husband forbids her to give to the church anything that he earns, then she must not do so.

If this happens to you, try asking your husband if he will go along with an experiment — similar to that of Daniel and his friends. Ask him to give you a trial period to use your house allowance in any way you see fit, reserving a tithe for the Lord, and see if he is satisfied with the job you do and will not then willingly let you continue. Ask God's help first, of course!

And a woman can also find ways even within the strictest rules by sharing food with others who need it, for instance. Few men are tyrants to the extent of not allowing a woman to take a meal to someone in need. Or, do you knit, sew, crochet? Use these talents and make things to give to others who need them, as Dorcas did. Or even sell such things

and give or tithe your income.

If you cannot give money because you have none, you can certainly find any number of ways of tithing your *time* for the Lord. Service in the church. Baby-sitting for someone else so she can serve the Lord or learn of him. How about asking your pastor if you can do something to help him — type, file, address envelopes, make phone calls?

Don't overlook gifts of money that are given to you personally. These belong to you. What joy many have expressed to me when they have been able to give of their very own to the Lord!

Let these be seed thoughts to produce a harvest of further ideas.

—Sarah.

---

## God's Plan

God gave us a Book to read  
and told us to talk to Him.  
How uncomplicated!

But man, in his arrogance  
has dessicated that Book.  
Theologian, scholars, have  
argued, questioned, doubted,  
And some have destroyed  
the beautiful message  
contained therein.

Try it.  
Read it.  
Listen.  
Pray.  
And I assure you,  
"Mountains will be moved!"  
Mountains of hate, greed, lust,  
doubt, fear, misunderstanding.

"Only believe,"  
the Book tells us.  
"Faith as a little child,"  
Jesus said.

"The blind shall see."  
Your eyes will be opened,  
To see the unusual in the usual—  
the great in the commonplace.

---

## It's MY GRAIN! . . . isn't it?

Julie Stone

I first came to grips with the "dying as a grain of corn" idea when I had a car-less son who had a 7 a.m. class at a hospital ten miles from home. After this two-hour class ended, he had thirty minutes to

"Cast out your nets  
and launch into the deep."  
You will know the joy  
of faithfulness,  
of glorifying God,  
of pleasing Him.

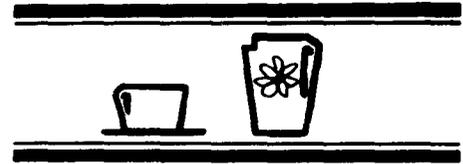
"The hungry will be fed."  
The searchers,  
the spiritually hungry,  
Will be fed that Word  
of peace, assurance,  
comfort, strength, and grace.

"I have come that you may have  
life more abundantly."  
Yours will be a life of  
the abundance of loving  
and whole relationships,  
the abundance of worthwhile tasks,  
the abundance of needs to be met,  
And the joy of satisfying those needs.

"Seek ye first His Kingdom  
and all these things  
shall be added unto you."—  
When you claim Christ  
as your personal Savior and Lord,  
And read His Book and talk to Him.

Dorothy G. Hake

Mrs. Hake is a member of Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Burtonsville, Maryland—and the mother of Stephen Hake, preparing to go as a missionary to Taiwan.



make his next class at school—ten miles from the hospital. This kept me on the road a great deal during the morning hours!

Now, I'm what my husband sometimes describes as "disgustingly cheerful" early in the morning. So, the hour wasn't my problem. It so happens those same hours are my most productive—and I was spending them in my car.

I keep a Bible in the car to read during moments when I'm waiting to pick up kids. One morning I was another Jonah as I complained under my Toyota-gourd roof.

"Lord, you know I'm busy. I have

four children at home. I do church work. I work at school. I garden. I sew. I call on the sick, wounded, and elderly. I do Ladies' Missionary work. I'm tired. My health isn't that good, and I need more rest. . . ."

I'm sure I was impressing God with my many activities! I was warming up to a much longer list when suddenly this "grain of corn" thing came into my mind. And reluctantly, I stopped my "prayer" and opened my Bible to read:

*Truly I assure you, unless a grain of wheat drops into the earth and dies, it remains single; but if it dies, it produces a rich yield. The one who hates his life*

*in this world will preserve it to eternal life (John 12:24, 25).*

The Lord seemed to say to me, "If you need more rest I'll take care of that. Right now it is important for you to taxi Matthew. Instead of wasting my time complaining, why not use this driving time praying. I'll take care of you. Julie, you need to die a lot more to self."

You know, I never resented the time in the car after that morning, even though that schedule lasted for two semesters. I went back to praying as I drove.

For years I've prayed aloud when I'm driving alone. (I've learned to switch to thinking silently at stop signs after several people obviously took me for a looney!) And since that day I've given a lot more time and effort to "dying" to myself. I find it's something I need to work on a lot. It was difficult to stop protecting my "grain." It was difficult to plant it so as to bear fruit. But every step of the planting process has been rewarding in the spiritual sense.

Do you have the same problem? Give up your "grain of wheat," friend. It will only rot while in your keeping.

*Mrs. Stone is a member of the Garden Grove (Calif.) Orthodox Presbyterian Church.*

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Mary Lou Clemenson*

*Some Ways of God*, by C. Stacey Woods, Inter-Varsity Press, 1975 (\$2.95, paper).

The author weaves together some of his own personal history with that of the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship and the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, with which he has been associated most of his life. But the bulk of the book is a commentary on the state of evangelism, the church, and the individual Christian, with good remedies prescribed for their ills. There are helpful chapters on "Knowing the Will of God," "Christian Contentment," and "The Christian in a Materialistic Society," the latter two being especially needful in our day.

For Reformed Christians, who sometimes have little contact with fundamentalist society, there are eye-opening glimpses of what wrong doctrine is leading to in the lives of certain individuals. Equally interesting are the statistics on the longevity of "converts" of popular evangelism.

Mr. Woods sometimes quotes with approval certain preachers who happen to agree with him on a particular point but

who, I am sure, would disagree with him on many things he himself would consider important. This may mislead some readers.

This book can be easily read in one evening (if the kids are spending the night at Grandma's and your husband is away on a business trip), but it is long enough not to be superficial. It is a good "review" book of the Christian life and will provide a quick but helpful "brush-up" for busy Christians. I wish especially that many of the "Four-Easy-Steps" type of professing Christians would read it and heed its solid biblical teachings.

*The Valley of Vision, A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions*, Arthur Bennett, Ed., The Banner of Truth Trust, 1975 (\$4.95, paper).

Being relatively new to Calvinism, I am revelling in the newly discovered writings of the Puritans, but had not yet come across a collection of their prayers, nor had it occurred to me to look for one. And now here it is—another good gift from our Heavenly Father! These prayers are those of citizens of the Heavenly Country and they will take you there along with them. I would part with very many of my books before I would part with this particular treasure. Praise the Lord again for The Banner of Truth!

*Mrs. Clemenson is from Bridgeton, New Jersey, and attends the Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church there.*

### Contacts in Phoenix

Hope Reformed Presbyterian Church (RPCES) is seeking to establish itself as a strong Presbyterian and Reformed witness in the south-east area of greater Phoenix, and desires contacts in Phoenix, Mesa, and Tempe, Ariz. If you know of persons who would welcome this ministry, please call the Rev. Tom Troxell at 602-967-4242 or write the church at Box 27282, Tempe, AZ 85282.

### Contacts in Illinois, Michigan

The Church Extension Committee of the Presbytery of the Midwest (OPC) is seeking to contact individuals who might be interested in helping establish Orthodox Presbyterian churches in Decatur, Illinois; Jackson, Michigan; and the Detroit metropolitan area. If you know of any prospects, contact the Rev. Don Stanton, Oostburg, WI 53070, or call 414-564-2581 (home) or 414-564-2300 (office).

# The Presbyterian Guardian

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## WILD IDEA

Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Westfield, New Jersey, put a float in the Memorial Day Parade. It had never been done before. It was a wild idea—but it worked.

The float turned out to be the only one in the parade, which was made up otherwise of marching bands, scout troops, and various patriotic organizations. But Grace Church had a float.

The idea of the float was initiated by Tom and Dorothy Hannan, joint sponsors of the Junior High Machen League, together with Neil and Janet Franklin. It was quickly picked up by the young people and a number of other persons in the church.



Since the parade theme had to do with patriotism and history, the winning idea for the float was Kathy Hannan's, "Blessed Is the Nation Whose God Is the Lord." A large Bible with that verse from the Psalm, as well as a global map of the earth, were constructed out of tissue paper flowers fastened to chicken wire.

An enormous amount of work went into the project. Loud speakers on a bor-

rowed dump truck blared out Christian hymns and patriotic music played by a brass band, as the truck towed the float.

People all along the route clapped vigorously as the float went by. Young people and their sponsors, riding on the float and in the dump truck, responded with equally vigorous waving. The town enjoyed the float, and those who made it had a great time.

The impression was certainly given that Grace Church, with its clear commitment to Scripture and its vigorous assertion that Jesus is Lord, was not an austere, stand-offish group, but one that had enjoyment in life and something very important to contribute to it.

The Westfield Memorial Day Committee Chairman summed it up this way in a letter: "I would like to take this opportunity to inform you how pleased the Memorial Day Committee was with your float. It was simply outstanding... I sincerely hope you can store the float and use it again in 1978. Sincerely yours, A. Bruce Conlin, Jr."



*This report comes from the Rev. Albert G. Edwards, pastor of Grace Church. The photos are by courtesy of Mr. George Kondak.*