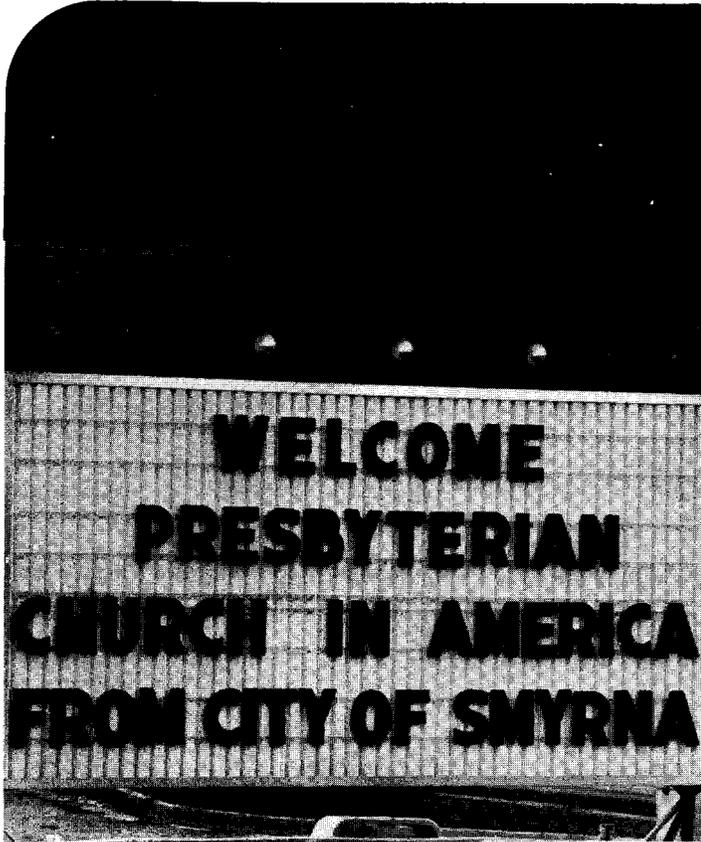
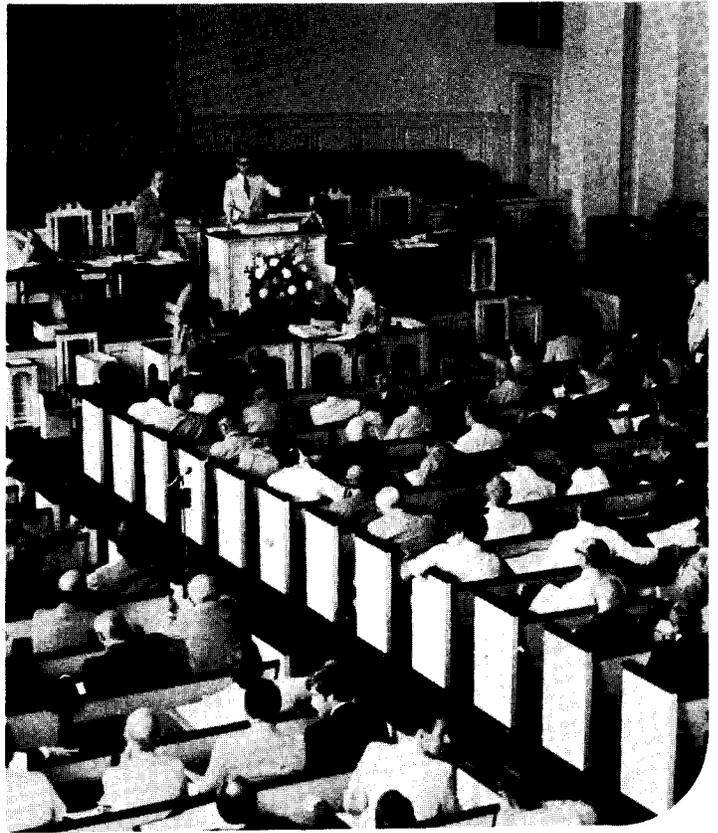
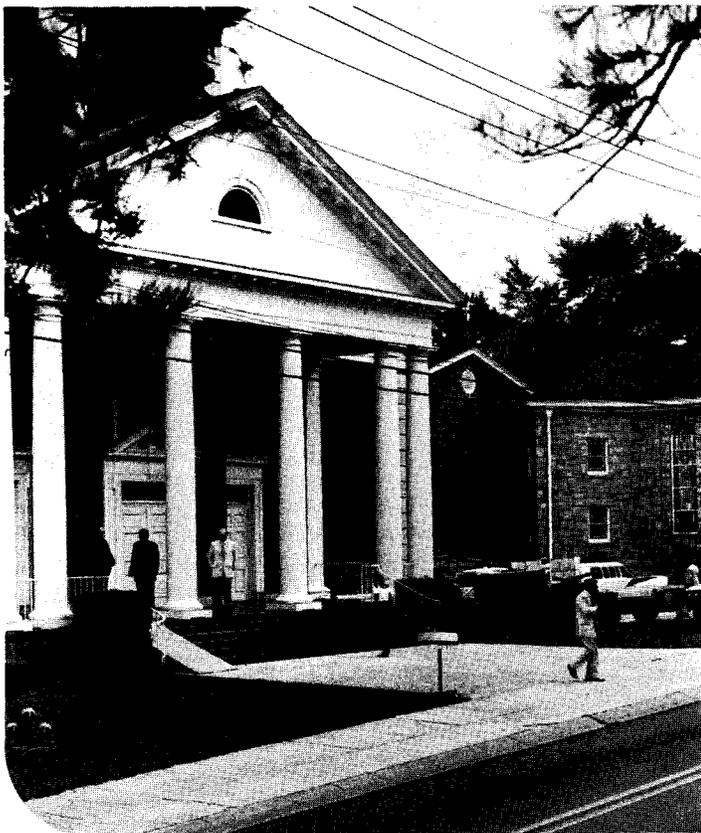


The Presbyterian Guardian



IN THIS ISSUE:

ALSO . . .



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Letters

Christian cartoon tracts

A member of our church here, McIlwain Memorial Presbyterian Church, has an excellent Reformed tract ministry that will be of interest to readers of the *Guardian*.

Vic Lockman, a professional cartoonist, writes, draws and publishes gospel cartoon booklets under the name of Christian Missionary Tract Society. He publishes evangelistic booklets (a good example is "Looking Unto Jesus"), booklets on doctrine (for example, "TULIP: Five Things God Wants You to Know"), Bible-science themes ("The Great Flood" is an excellent one), and booklets applying the Bible to current issues (such as "Inflation and the Bible," "The Bible and Taxes," "Abortion," and "The Death Penalty").

Readers of the *Guardian* can get samples and order forms by writing to Vic Lockman, P.O. Box 2177, Pensacola, FL 32503. I commend this ministry wholeheartedly.

Donald A. Dunkerley, pastor
McIlwain Mem. Presby. Church
Pensacola, Florida

Ed. note: Dear Don, You—and Vic—are welcome to the free "plug."

Perverted view of AACS

Dr. Rudolph warns us about the AACS (in a letter to the editor in the July-August *Guardian*). I would like to warn of an even greater danger, the danger that some people might actually believe there is substance to his endless criticisms.

I was present when Dr. Rudolph spoke to an audience here in Wilmington two years ago. He was not invited to speak on the subject of the AACS [the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship in Toronto, Ontario], but used his "captive audience" to make a variety of groundless and unproven charges about the organization. Among other things he said, "There is no Bible to it and no Christ in it." That is a strong statement

and is so contrary to my personal experience with the AACS that I nearly walked out in the middle of what he was saying. After the meeting, when I challenged the validity of his statements, he made no effort to prove his charges but merely substituted additional baseless charges in place of meaningful dialog.

Dr. Rudolph's perverted view of the AACS is hard for me to take because the organization has meant a great deal to me. I know it as a group that has helped me to get things into proper perspective and to develop a world and life view. There is an openness that I've rarely seen in the Christian community. There is freedom to put one's views out for inspection without fear of ridicule. The emphasis on genuine scholarship is easy to appreciate. The Scriptures are the basis and guide for all the research into areas such as art, philosophy, politics, history, science, etc. All I have heard from the speakers and the leadership at meetings has been in accord with and an expansion of my Orthodox Presbyterian and Reformed Presbyterian background and teaching.

I would urge the readers of the *Guardian* to examine the evidence on their own before they put any stock in Dr. Rudolph's distorted opinion. This can most easily and accurately be done by attending a regional conference. Those in the East should contact Mrs. Mary C. Rittenhouse, 1106 N. Broom St., Wilmington, DE 19806, for information on the upcoming conference on "Our World of Work" to be held in Wilmington on November 18, 19, 1977.

When there is so much to be done, it grieves me that so much of our time is spent fighting each other rather than fighting the real enemy.

Neal Cooper
Wilmington, Del.

Notes on RPCNA Synod

Thanks for the coverage on the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America in your July-August issue. Two items however should no doubt be made clearer to your readers.

First, the committee reporting on the Testimony revision, which has already worked for seven years, is chaired by the

(Continued on page 14.)

The Presbyterian Guardian is published eleven times each year, every month except for a combined issue in July-August, by the Presbyterian Guardian Publishing Corporation, 7401 Old York Road, Philadelphia, PA 19126, at the following rates, payable in advance, postage prepaid: \$4.25 per year (\$3.75 in clubs of ten or more; special rate for "every-family churches" on request). Second class mail privileges authorized at the Post Office, Philadelphia, Pa.

"THANKS"

A Last Word

From the Editor

This is the last issue of the *Guardian* for which I am responsible as editor. After October 1, I will be serving the Committee on Stewardship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in a full-time ministry. Who the next editor will be has not yet been determined. But the *Guardian* will be published while the search goes on. Readers should be patient if it's a bit late in getting out.

I am glad that the main feature of this issue is the report on the Fifth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America. It has been the goal of the *Guardian* during the seven years I've been its editor, to seek a broader readership than the faithful supporters it's had in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. And we've sought to provide broader coverage of events — like this assembly — that should be of interest and concern to all true Presbyterians.

Be Presbyterians

Now over the years as editor I have been charged with insisting on having the last word — a charge that, I admit, has some justification. Right or wrong, I do want to get in one more "last word" while the opportunity is mine. And that word is simply this: Be Presbyterians!

Now why that? Because I see a tendency in those Presbyterian churches that still mean to be Presbyterian — the Orthodox Presbyterians, the Reformed Presbyterians (both varieties), and those in the

Presbyterian Church in America — a tendency to ignore their Presbyterian heritage and to take up every new thing that comes along.

For instance: How many of us jumped eagerly into the "Here's Life, America" campaign? Even if you could use or adapt the latest revision of the "Four Spiritual Laws," did this rather Madison Avenue style evangelism really work? What fruits can you see now? (And if you think I'm being unduly negative, get the most recent issue of *Eternity* magazine and see the discussion there by a friend of the campaign.) Why can't we be Presbyterians in our evangelism? Don't you realize that every major revival in the English-speaking world was initiated by outspokenly Calvinistic preaching?

Or how many of us regularly ignore our church's Directory for Worship? After all, there's nothing said about it in our ordination vows, at least not explicitly. But it is part of the constitution of the church whose government we accepted. It's that Directory that plainly says the elders are responsible for what the pastor preaches, and for whatever is taught the congregation. Have you elders discussed the preaching with your pastor lately? It also says the pastor is to pronounce a benediction, give Christ's blessing to the people as his representative; but many pastors do no more than pray for one and thus deny the people what Christ intended for them.

Whether it's in doctrine, government, discipline, or worship, we too often seem to operate as though the Spirit of Christ had given no light to the church until we came onto the scene. We seem to forget or not to know that most of the things we get all worked up about have been discussed by godly men — more able than most of us — in the past. I'm certainly not suggesting that every ancient form of words must be preserved without alteration; but can't we look more carefully to our spiritual forebears before we take off in all directions?

Be Presbyterians. Whether it's in evangelism, local church life, the duties of the elders, or whatever, we have a heritage that has been blessed of God to the saving of many souls and the upbuilding

of the church. And if we do suppose that some new light has been shed, and some change in the standards is needed, well, go right ahead and do something about it. But do it as Presbyterians — in the courts of the church where there is a multitude of counsellors.

We are Presbyterians and that is biblical. We are Presbyterians because we recognize that when Christ gave gifts to his church he never gave them all to one man or to one local congregation. Christ meant for his people to be Presbyterians — and we should never feel apologetic about that or restless within it. Be Presbyterians!

And, thank you

For seven years the readers of the *Guardian* have put up with my faults and failures. I am exceedingly grateful for the loving way so many have encouraged me in those years. The *Guardian* has grown in circulation and in support through contributions.

I can express that appreciation because I know full well no reader — not even I — has always been pleased with the editor's decisions. There has been too much of that "last word" bit, too much of one person's voice. It seemed necessary at the time, due to the limited resources available for securing other voices. (Did I ever tell you that I am also the copy boy, the layout man, the circulation manager, and whatever else it takes to get a magazine out?) So, I am indeed appreciative of your patience and understanding and the support so many of you have given.

Finally, I will indeed miss being the editor. I do feel something like the fig tree in Jotham's parable to the men of Shechem that declined to be the king of trees because he would have to leave his sweetness. But I am persuaded that it is God who is calling me to another form of service, not the citizens of Shechem. And I don't really suppose this will be the "last word," for I would hope to contribute from time to time to the pages of the *Guardian*.

Meanwhile, do be Presbyterians; it's the biblical way. And thank you!

— John J. Mitchell

P.C.A.

5th General Assembly

It looked more like the "fifth general postponement" in the early parts of the assembly. Several crucial decisions for the Presbyterian Church in America were being postponed when it became obvious the assembly could not agree on an issue. But the Fifth General Assembly of the PCA, despite problems of uncertainty and unwieldy size, did accomplish a great deal of the business of Christ's church.

The assembly convened on Monday evening, September 12, 1977, in the First Baptist Church of Smyrna, Georgia, northwest of Atlanta. All sessions of the assembly were held in this church, which adequately seated the more than 600 commissioners though some committee meetings found themselves rather crowded. The moderator, the Rev. William A. McIlwaine, retired missionary from Pensacola, preached from Ephesians 3 on "The Mystery of Christ." The Rev. John K. Reeves of Moss Point, Miss., presided.

Though over 600 were registered, most votes where a count was made showed less than 500 voting. Even so, the assembly was cumbersome and many motions were passed with little or no discussion. No count was made, but the number of commissioners who actually spoke during the assembly must have been less than a fourth of the total.

The assembly's business is reviewed in advance by Committees of Commissioners whose membership is chosen by the presbyteries. These committees met on Tuesday (which left the other commissioners with little to do). This system of review was the sole guarantee that many items of business had been given some examination before passage by the whole assembly.

Assembly officers

Nominations for moderator of this as-

sembly were less in the desire to give honor to noted members than in previous assemblies. The Rev. Paul Settle, former coordinator for the Committee for Christian Education and Publications (CE/P) and present pastor in Greenville, S.C., was known as an effective presiding figure. The Rev. James Moore, well known to many readers of the *Guardian* as the clenched-jawed expert in doing things "according to the rules," was also nominated. Ruling elder John T. Clark from Macon, Georgia, was elected, and continued a trend for PCA assemblies of alternating between ministers and ruling elders. Mr. Clark made good use of the other nominees in the chair and also invited ruling elder Jack Williamson, moderator of the first assembly, to preside for one lengthy discussion.

The PCA now employs a full-time Stated Clerk. As the church has grown, the need for such service has developed. Dr. Morton H. Smith, former professor at Reformed Theological Seminary, has been the Assembly's Stated Clerk from the beginning; he will now serve full-time with freedom to do some writing and speaking also.

The other major assembly office is that of Business Administrator. Dr. Dan Moore serves in this post and operates as treasurer, budget advisor, and general watchdog over the church's denominational funds and budgets.

Since the business of the assembly was often separated in the docket, this report will not follow the daily sequence but will focus on areas of interest.

Church standards

Being a new church (the PCA was organized in December 1973), the assembly is still involved in decisions on its church standards. Though it adopted at its first assembly the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms (in the form held by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church), this assembly acted to approve the publishing of proof-texts for the doctrinal standards. Rather than wait for a thorough study of these proofs (as has been done by the OPC), the assembly chose to use those prepared by the original Westminster Assembly until the church has had time to consider the need for change. The proofs will not be part of the standards themselves.

A question concerning the place of children of believers had been referred to the Committee on Constitutional Documents, the continuing special committee dealing with these matters. This committee interpreted the constitutional

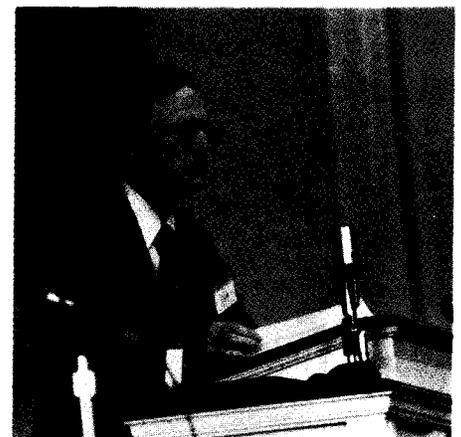
documents as teaching that the children of believers are to be recognized as members of the visible church universal and are to be received into a local congregation by baptism. The full statement on this matter was approved by the assembly and included a requirement for local churches to list such members on a non-communicating members' roll.

This Committee on Constitutional Documents had also been asked to study the meaning of 1 Timothy 3:2 and the requirement that an elder "be the husband of one wife." It was agreed that, since Paul himself was not married, this could not mean that every elder had to be married; the question was with those who had been divorced and then remarried. The committee's report urged that those who had been divorced on biblical grounds (of adultery or desertion) and then remarried could serve as church officers; those divorced on unbiblical grounds could do so only after public repentance had been made.

The assembly was not prepared to accept this statement. A proposal that those divorced unbiblically were ineligible for office so long as the first wife remained alive obviously had significant support in the assembly. (This approach puts one into the sad position of either hoping the first wife dies or that she remarries — thus committing adultery and giving the husband a biblical ground for divorce. Somehow there must be a better approach than that!)

In any event, the assembly declined to settle the issue itself and referred the matter to a special "theological committee" for further study. This was one of

Moderator of the Fifth General Assembly, John T. Clark, ruling elder of the First Presbyterian Church, Macon, Ga.



the first postponements of a difficult question.

Number of offices

The largest question in the area of constitutional positions is one that has vexed the PCA (and many of the other Presbyterian bodies) since its founding. How many offices of the church are taught in the New Testament?

Traditionally, Presbyterian churches have held to a "three-office view," with the minister, elder (or "church governor"), and deacon as separate offices. But over a hundred years ago, a modification of this began to be advocated and was urged on the Southern Presbyterians by J. H. Thornwell and R. L. Dabney. Often known as the "Thornwell view" (in distinction from the "three-office view" espoused by Charles Hodge), it was Dabney who most clearly set it forth.

As Dabney puts it, "there is one class of presbyters [i.e., elders] embracing two orders, the preaching elder and the ruling elder." There is one basic office of elder, in other words, but with two distinct groups whose functions differ. Dabney insisted on the equality of all elders in the courts of the church; he also insisted — which many have not always recognized — on a clear distinction between the functions of the two groups. This has been generally known as the "two-office view."

More recently, however, there has been heard an appeal for a strict two-office view *without* any distinction within it, except that some elders may labor full-time and some part. This more radical view has led some to speak of Dabney's position as the "two-and-a-half-office view!"

The committee reporting to this year's assembly strongly urged Dabney's position, arguing that the Scripture was not



Book table of Great Commission Publications.

entirely clear on the subject and that this would not force the church to amend the Confession of Faith (with a strong "three-office" bias).

Despite the fact that "two-and-a-half" could be viewed as a compromise between the others, the assembly was not of one mind even after nearly four years of debate. Also, certain advocates of the "three-office view" argued that they had not had a full enough hearing. Finally, convinced it was not going to satisfy everyone this year, the assembly referred the whole matter back for further study. And another major postponement of a difficult question was achieved.

Judicial business

Though most PCA congregations were used to the Book of Church Order (including the Form of Government, Book of Discipline, and Directory for Worship) of the PCUS, attention to careful procedures had been haphazard in the old church. The new church is finding itself gradually learning anew how to do things "decently and in order." But the result of learning was a trio of formal complaints against various presbytery actions.

All three complaints, at least on the face of them, had some merit. In each case the presbytery seemed to have acted without full regard for proper process. But in each case the assembly basically decided that, though good procedure was not always followed, the case did not warrant sustaining the complaint.

It might be argued that something less than good order was maintained. But the assembly seemed more interested in maintaining peace and harmony than on insisting presbyteries should be punctilious in every detail. In effect, the assembly

urged presbyteries to be more careful in the future.

Interchurch relations

The PCA already has a full complement of fraternal relations with other bodies. From the beginning it has recognized those churches that are now members of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) — the Christian Reformed Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America ("Covenanters"), and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, as well as the PCA itself. It has also recognized the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (as did the OPC at its last assembly), which is seeking NAPARC membership.

Significant decisions in interchurch relations included a decline of the invitation from the Presbyterian Church, U.S. (from which many PCA congregations had withdrawn and with which some are still in court litigation over property) to send an "ecumenical participant" to its next general assembly. The PCUS is inviting several such representatives from churches with which it does not have fraternal relations. Though this was declined, an overture asking the assembly to forbid letters of transfer to PCA members seeking to join PCUS congregations (or any church affiliated with the World or National Council of Churches) was not concurred in, leaving such decisions to the local sessions.

Relations with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church showed signs of strain. The Synod of the ARPC had addressed a letter complaining about the locating of a PCA congregation "only 300





yards" from an existing ARP church in Charlotte, N.C. The letter deplored such "needless and harmful competition," suggested that some sort of "comity agreement" might be reached, and noted that their agencies were required to correspond with equivalent agencies of those churches with which it has fraternal relations (a provision similar to one passed by an earlier PCA assembly).

The assembly did not answer directly but sent the letter to the presbytery having jurisdiction and declined to discuss any "comity agreement." (This whole matter of trespassing on the "territory" of another church in fraternal relationship has never had a good answer; probably it never will until all those churches whose basic commitments are essentially the same achieve organic unity. Neither "comity agreements" nor union congregations or presbyteries are a satisfactory answer.)

In another action, the assembly narrowly turned back an attempt to direct its Committee on Interchurch Relations to oppose the ARPC's bid to join NAPARC (on the grounds that the ARPC is not consistently committed to the "basis" statement in the NAPARC by-laws particularly in the area of Scripture's authority and inerrancy). The move was squelched by the moderator's ruling it out of order because the assembly had no right to bind the conscience of committee members. (Of course, an assembly could direct a committee to some action and any member who could not conscientiously agree would be free to resign.) Though appealed, the assembly upheld

the moderator and the motion was tabled.

(The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church has an honorable history. But it had fallen on lean years as liberal ideas and Barthian views on Scripture permeated some of its ministry. More recently, however, an influx of new ministers, mostly trained at Reformed Theological Seminary, has gained a majority in the church. At its most recent synod, a frontal attempt was made to recall the denomination's Erskine College and Seminary to a firm commitment to an inerrant Scripture. The institutions so far are resisting this pressure and the tension within the ARPC is growing. It seems likely that NAPARC will postpone approving the ARPC bid for membership until the problems are more clearly on the way to resolution.)

The assembly, in answer to a request by its interchurch relations committee, authorized that committee to continue discussions with other Reformed bodies, "including discussions of possible union with the RPCES and the OPC" (the only ones specifically mentioned), but not allowing any proposal of formal union until a study committee can prepare a position paper on the biblical basis of ecclesiastical union. (The PCA has tended to shunt aside merger talks with the plea that it needed to get itself unified before talking about union with others. But these actions do signal a willingness to talk about the basics of possible merger.)

The assembly also approved a change in the NAPARC "basis" statement that added a commitment to Scripture's inerrancy. A motion to urge subscription to the church papers of the OPC and RPCES was tabled (which makes sense, since neither has an official church paper at present). The assembly also agreed to pay the expenses of fraternal delegates attending its assemblies. And it agreed to seek a joint chaplains commission with the OPC and RPCES, in order to meet a new requirement that such agencies represent 100,000 constituents and in order to have a Presbyterian agency instead of using the services of the National Association of Evangelicals as the PCA now does.

Stewardship

The PCA has three major "program committees" — Christian Education and Publications (CE/P), Mission to the U.S. (MUS), and Mission to the World (MTW) — involved in gospel proclamation. It also has an umbrella Committee on Administration with various sub-committees such as interchurch relations,

stewardship, insurance and annuity funds, judicial business, and other functions.

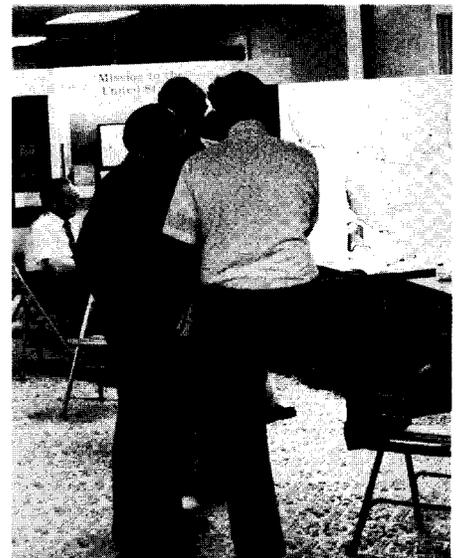
The Sub-committee on Stewardship reported that total giving in the PCA during 1976 increased 8.9% to a total of \$331.28 per capita. Giving to all benevolent causes increased as did giving to PCA denominational agencies (though 43% of PCA benevolent giving goes to causes outside the denomination).

This stewardship sub-committee has no budget review duties (though the umbrella Committee on Administration does present the budget requests of all the committees). Stewardship itself is promoted through printed and recorded media and tithing in particular is actively urged. (The old Southern Presbyterian Church was for years a tithing church; with loss of trust due to liberalism in recent years, many PCA people had lost the tithing habit or had diverted their tithes to causes outside the Church.)

A lengthy paper on the "Theology of Stewardship" noted the tensions already apparent in the PCA between the need to support the whole work of the church and the right of individuals to give to whichever aspects of the work they desire. Churches are encouraged to give to the whole work of the "program committees" and these undesignated contributions are distributed according to a formula (not based on actual budgets) determined by each year's assembly.

When the budgets were presented, the

The Rev. Larry Mills, Coordinator of the Mission to the U. S. Committee, talking to friends.



total figure for 1978 exceeded \$4 million — and the assembly rather routinely approved them all. The current year's budget total is nearly the same, though projections for the year would seem to show that total giving will not go much above \$1.25 million at most. Each major committee must raise its own budget as best it can and there is already complaining about the number of appeals. A total budget nearly three or more times as large as reasonable expectations seems more than a little irresponsible, but no system of budgetary control is likely to gain support very soon. It was noted that the budget of the CE/P committee contained items of fixed responsibility in the main, while both the MUS and MTW budgets included many "blue sky" items that no one really expects to see funded.

The PCA has also established a foundation to handle long-term giving, annuities and bequests. Though very new, the foundation anticipates making a major contribution to the long-term financial strength of the church.

One service of the stewardship subcommittee was a tape-slide presentation on the necessity of making a will (worked out from material supplied by Robert G. den Dulk of Westminster Seminary). Other churches, by changing the concluding remarks to suit their own needs, may find this presentation valuable.

Christian Education/Publications

The report of the CE/P Committee

The Rev. Charles Dunahoo, Coordinator of the Committee for Christian Education and Publications.



introduced several items that evoked extended discussion. Its basic report noted the continuing involvement in and dependence on Great Commission Publications, the joint OPC-PCA publishing venture. There seemed to be general appreciation of this arrangement, though many churches have yet to look into GCP Sunday school materials. One speaker even described the arrangement, approvingly, as "de facto merger" in this area of ministry.

GCP already has a twelve-grade Sunday school curriculum. It is beginning to produce adult study guides (with the first already available). It expects to have VBS materials available next summer. A new Senior High curriculum is to begin in 1978. GCP also supplies *Trinity Hymnal*. The CE/P report emphasized the outreach aspect of GCP as it ministers to many churches outside either the OPC or PCA. The report also noted that the PCA has not been able to fulfill its financial commitment to GCP.

This committee is also engaged in supplying materials to meet particular needs of the PCA. Foremost among these is its preparation of various study guides for its Women In the Church (WIC); and the women's organizations in the PCA are probably among the most active and involved to be found in any denomination. The WIC receives an annual offering (the "Love Gift") to fund some special project. In 1976 it was given to a TB clinic in Korea. In 1977 it is to fund a Youth Ministry Manual being produced by the CE/P Committee. In 1978 it is planned to purchase two mobile churches for use in new mission churches until buildings are erected.

Covenant College proposal

The CE/P Committee was responsible for reporting a proposal from the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, inviting the PCA to enter into an arrangement leading to joint control of Covenant College. The college is owned and operated by a board whose members are presently chosen by the RPCES in its General Synod. The proposal would eventually allow the PCA equal representation if equal support is forthcoming.

The proposal was rather elaborate in detail, but the basic idea was simple enough. Yet the assembly had real difficulties with it. Two problem areas became evident. Covenant College has accepted federal grants and is involved (as are almost all colleges) in federal student loan programs. Federal money means federal control. And Covenant College is



Dr. Marion Barnes, President of Covenant College, discussing the college before the Assembly.

discovering that the controls may change from year to year. The Atlanta regional office of the U.S. Office of Education is pressuring the college to remove all religious references from classes held in a building partly funded by federal money, and even to remove a plaque that includes the phrase "to the glory of God"! This problem of federal aid and control clearly worried commissioners, and though Dr. Marion Barnes, president of Covenant College, explained the situation at length, his frankness only made it more obviously a difficulty.

The second concern, though not so widely voiced, had to do with the more basic question of whether a church should be in the liberal arts education business. After a great deal of discussion, including Dr. Barnes' remarks and a tape-slide presentation on the college (student-produced and very effective), the assembly postponed the whole matter. It urged that discussions continue but that formal negotiations be postponed one year and that discussions include the question of federal aid as well as the college's philosophy of education. The CE/P Committee was also instructed to "draft a definitive statement regarding the relationship of the Church to non-theological education."

Ministerial training

In the area of theological education, the CE/P Committee had also tackled the whole complex of the proper training for future ministers. The variety of approaches advocated in the PCA seems as broad as the number of those who have



The Rev. Jim Moore, prepares to set the Assembly straight with assistance from Dr. Morton H. Smith, Stated Clerk.

an opinion on the subject. Some are satisfied to depend on existing institutions (of which Covenant, Reformed, and Westminster seminaries have been commended; the Reformed Presbyterian ("Covenanter") seminary in Pittsburgh was also included in the list this year).

Others want to see a denominational seminary established. Still others urge more flexible approaches through regional centers more or less closely affiliated with existing seminaries. There is also a strong sentiment favoring more practical experience under supervision before a man is ordained.

The committee's report urged two basic approaches to ministerial training. It would continue to endorse the standard three-year program in most seminary catalogs. But it would also require a man to take a fourth year of practical experience or internship under presbytery supervision. The alternate proposal would allow for a two-year academic program, either in a regular seminary or an "extension center," including all the regular academic preparations except those in practical theology. After that two-year introduction, the candidate would be expected to spend two more years in supervised practical experience and training.

Both the "three-plus-one" and the "two-plus-two" approach involved supervised practical experience, and the total package establishes rather strict control over any regional "extension centers." Though discussed at length with several attempts at amending, the original proposal was adopted by the assembly — one of the few "sticky" questions resolved by the assembly. The CE/P Committee was assigned various responsibilities in implementing the program, providing guidelines, establishing a library. (In fact, one

might assume that the whole machinery was the basic gears for a denominational seminary in the future, though this was not the plain intent.)

Church magazine

One question expected to generate sharp debate — in view of previous assemblies — was a CE/P proposal regarding an official denominational news organ. The committee had published two pilot issues of *The PCA Messenger* and was asking the assembly to decide its future. With surprisingly little discussion the project was approved and the magazine, to appear bi-monthly, will be sent free to any who request it. It is to serve as a news organ, not a journal of opinion, and though published by the CE/P Committee, will serve all the committees equally.

Foreign missions

The report of the Committee on Mission to the World (MTW) generated very little debate, in contrast to some previous years where certain policies were under fire. The committee continues to serve as a coordinating agency, ministering to a variety of missionary work supported by the churches and presbyteries. Its own goal of sending forth evangelists to establish and strengthen Reformed churches is under way, but is still quite limited. Most of the missionary personnel are engaged in various service functions and in many cases work under assignment to independent or other denomination's agencies. (It was estimated that more than 60% of MTW missionary support goes to such assigned service personnel.)

But MTW is clearly seeking to enlarge its involvement in distinctively Reformed evangelism and establishing of Reformed churches. (The committee has adopted the term "church planter" to describe such personnel — a term we find something of an unpleasant cliché, though what to use instead is beyond us. Perhaps the biblical term "evangelist" would do?)

At any rate, "church planting teams" are already on the field in Korea and Mexico with others being prepared for Taiwan, Ecuador, and Brazil. Most recently, in conjunction with the Christian Reformed Church, a PCA missionary engaged in "church planting" is being sent to Central America.

The MTW Committee experienced a major change in leadership during recent months. Its coordinator, the Rev. John Kyle, has returned to the Wycliffe Bible Translators. The new coordinator, approved by this assembly, is the Rev. Paul McKaughan, who has been serving on the staff of Overseas Crusades. In addition, the Rev. Kennedy Smartt, former pastor in Hopewell, Virginia, has assumed duties as an associate coordinator with responsibilities mainly in communication with the church at home.

The MTW Committee reaffirmed its concern that the primary thrust of its program be to establish and strengthen Presbyterian and Reformed churches in other countries — and its desire to do this is beginning to show effect. It asked for special prayer that some twenty ordained men might be found to engage in this sort of missionary activity. All in all the assembly seemed pleased with the committee's progress.

In elections to this committee, ruling elder and former moderator Leon Hendricks of the First Presbyterian Church in Jackson, Mississippi, urged the assembly not to elect that church's pastor to the committee arguing that he was urgently needed at home. The Rev. Donald Patterson failed to be elected by a narrow margin — much to the amusement of many commissioners! (Mr. Patterson had been serving as MTW's chairman.)

Home missions

The Mission to the U.S. Committee (MUS) is the church's leading edge in its rather rapid growth. The addition of former PCUS congregations, along with their property, has slowed to a trickle, though the assembly was obviously encouraged to learn that the First Presbyterian Church of Augusta, Georgia, had been received into the PCA along with its pastor, the Rev. John Oliver and the whole session. But most of the growth now is from former PCUS members who left their former congregations and are seeking to start new churches or from groups elsewhere throughout the country seeking the same goal.

The MUS Committee still anticipates seeing PCA congregations in every state of the union, and noted that a work has

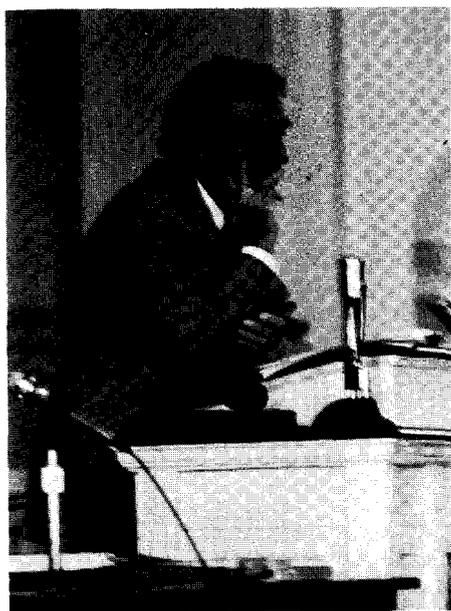
begun in Hawaii, among other places. As these new churches are organized, the need for new presbyteries arises. This assembly approved the formal recognition of the new Presbytery of Central Florida (excepting the Panhandle and the area south of Tampa) with five organized churches and five mission churches.

This committee's coordinator, the Rev. Larry Mills, was reaffirmed — and is the only coordinator of a "program committee" who has now served continuously since the first assembly.

The committee also had a lengthy recommendation dealing with campus ministries that drew some fire for its readiness to work with such "parachurch" organizations as are already operating on college campuses. But the main thrust was on the establishment of PCA congregations that could minister to students and involve them directly in the organized church. Despite the reservations, and after some amending, and possibly because of the lateness of the hour when this matter was debated, the assembly approved the committee's basic approach.

Perhaps the most daring proposal before the assembly was a recommendation by the MUS Committee that it be authorized to engage in a five-year campaign to raise \$5 million for a capital fund to acquire property and build new churches. There was some opposition expressed to this proposal, particularly its restriction to home mission concerns and exclusion

Jack Williamson, Moderator of the First General Assembly, presiding patiently.



of foreign missions and Christian education. But the argument that the PCA needed to take full advantage of the interest of so many groups now to establish new congregations apparently carried the day. The assembly approved the campaign—and it remains now to see whether the church will produce the goal.

General impressions

To this observer, who has attended four of the five assemblies of the PCA, this assembly was rather a quiet one. The most difficult questions were postponed—and in general that approach was probably wise, waiting for the church to come to more of one mind on the subjects. The Fifth General Assembly was an assembly doing its business as a court of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, doing it fallibly no doubt, but doing it in dependence on the Lord and a desire to seek and do his will.

The assembly was almost more of a convention than a deliberative body due to its size. Six hundred voting members is too large, but the desire to continue a "grass roots" assembly involving representatives from all the churches remains strong during these early years of the denomination's existence.

The assembly's docket is not as helpful as it might be. After convening on Monday night, the Committees of Commissioners (including only one representative from each presbytery on each committee) met on Tuesday — leaving all the other commissioners with nothing to do. Also, the assembly gives up a great deal of time to lengthy presentations by the four main committees. No doubt the need to communicate with the individual churches demands something like this, but the man-hours expended in watching those presentations must have involved a large amount of lost income!

The assembly allows a great deal of discretion to the Stated Clerk as to when certain items come before the assembly. No doubt that improves the conduct of the business, but too often major discussions were interrupted by other matters or were delayed because some committee was not yet ready to report.

The assembly would also do well to regulate the introduction of resolutions by individual commissioners. In a Presbyterian system, an individual probably should not even have the right to introduce a personal resolution but should be required to propose it through his local session or presbytery. One such resolution, urging the assembly to petition the "powers that be" not to withdraw U.S.



The Rev. Paul McKaughan, Coordinator of the Mission to the World Committee, talking to the Rev. James Baird, pastor in Macon, Georgia.

troops from Korea, took up a lot of valuable time on the floor of the assembly that should have been prevented by at least passing the thing through the lower courts first. Several other "personal resolutions" were simply postponed to the next assembly.

To Orthodox Presbyterians used to an often pains-taking (read "nit-picking"?) assembly, the PCA assembly seemed chaotic at points and a well-oiled machine at some others. When former moderator Jack Williamson occupied the chair for a time, his handling of routine motions struck some as high-handed. The motion would be stated as a recommendation of some committee; Mr. Williamson then asked, "Any questions? Any objections?" And if silence prevailed, he quickly intoned, "So ordered" — and that was that. But his approach is strictly in accord with Robert's Rules — and some other moderators might take lessons here!

The Fifth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America postponed a great deal of its problems for another year. It made some decisions that left something to be desired — but then, any church's assembly is hardly likely to satisfy everyone. But essentially this was a working assembly, busy at the cause of its King and Head, concerned to do the work as Presbyterians, and generally finding itself increasingly agreed as to what that should be.

The Lord has blessed the PCA. May that blessing be multiplied.

— John J. Mitchell

Edwards' sermon

SINNERS in the Hands of AN ANGRY GOD

Using the text, Their foot shall slide in due time (Deut. 32:35), the famed preacher of the "Great Awakening" addressed the unconverted about the certainty of hell to come, warning them that only the mere pleasure of God prevented their falling into eternal torment at that moment. Having set forth his outline of the teaching implied in the text (see last month's Guardian), Edwards proceeds to the "application."

The "Application"

The use of this awful subject may be for awakening unconverted persons in this congregation [at Enfield, Mass.]. This that you have heard is the case of every one of you that are out of Christ.

That world of misery, that lake of burning brimstone, is extended abroad before you. There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God. There is hell's wide gaping mouth open. And you have nothing to stand upon, nor any thing to take hold of; there is nothing between you and hell but the air. It is only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.

You probably are not sensible of this. You find you are kept out of hell, but do not see the hand of God in it, but look at other things, as the good state of your bodily constitution, your care of your own life, and the means you use for your own preservation.

But indeed these things are nothing. If God should withdraw his hand, they would no more avail to keep you from falling than the thin air to hold up a

person that is suspended in it.

Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell. And if God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf. . . . Were it not for the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you one moment, for you are a burden to it. The creation groans with you. . . . God's creatures are good, and were made for men to serve God with, . . . and groan when they are abused to purposes so directly contrary to their nature and end. And the world would spew you out, were it not for the sovereign hand of him who hath subjected it in hope. . . .

The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present. They increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given. And the longer the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course when once it is let loose.

It is true that judgment against your evil works has not been executed hitherto; the floods of God's vengeance have been withheld. But your guilt in the meantime is constantly increasing, and you are every day treasuring up more wrath. . . . If God should only withdraw his hand from the flood-gate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power. And if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, . . . it would be nothing to withstand or endure it.

The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string; and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow. And it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood.

Thus all you that never passed under a great change of heart, by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls, all you that were never born again, and made new creatures, and raised from being dead in sin to a state of new, and before altogether unexperienced, light and life, are in the hands of an angry God.

However you may have reformed your life in many things, and may have had religious affections, and may keep up a form of religion in your families and

closets, and in the house of God, it is nothing but his mere pleasure that keeps you from being this moment swallowed up in everlasting destruction.

However unconvinced you may now be of the truth of what you hear, by and by you will be fully convinced of it. Those that are gone from being in the like circumstance with you, see that it was so with them. For destruction came suddenly upon most of them; when they expected nothing of it, and while they were saying, Peace and safety. Now they see, that those things on which they depended for peace and safety were nothing but thin air and empty shadows.

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider . . . over the fire, abhors you and is dreadfully provoked. His wrath toward you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire. . . . You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince. And yet, it is noth-

*All that never were born again
are in the hands of an angry God.*

ing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. . . .

O sinner! consider the fearful danger you are in. It is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it and burn it asunder. And you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment.

And consider here more particularly,

1. Whose wrath it is; *it is the wrath of the infinite God.*

If it were only the wrath of man, though it were of the most potent prince, it would be comparatively little to be regarded. . . . "The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whose provoketh him to anger, sinneth against his own soul" (Proverbs 20:2)

But the greatest earthly potentates, in their greatest majesty and strength, and when clothed in their greatest terrors, are but feeble, despicable worms of the dust, in comparison of the great and almighty Creator and King of heaven and earth. . . . The wrath of the great King of kings is as much more terrible than theirs as his majesty is greater. "And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. . . . Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him" (Luke 12:4, 5).

2. *It is the fierceness of his wrath that you are exposed to.*

We often read of the fury of God. "According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries" (Isaiah 66:15). . . . So, we read of "the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Revelation 19:15). . . . If it had only been said, "the wrath of God," the words would have implied that which is infinitely dreadful. But it is "the fierceness and wrath of God." . . .

Oh! then, what will be the consequence? What will become of the poor man that shall suffer it! Whose hands can be strong? and whose heart can endure? To what a dreadful, inexpressible, inconceivable depth of misery must the poor creature be sunk who shall be the subject of this!

Consider this, you that are here present, that yet remain in an unregenerate state. That God will execute the fierceness of his anger implies that he will inflict wrath without any pity. . . . There

***How awful it is
to be left behind!***

shall be no moderation or mercy, nor will God then at all stay his rough wind. He will have no regard to your welfare, nor be at all careful lest you should suffer too much in any other sense than only that you shall *not suffer beyond what strict justice requires.* "Therefore will I also deal in fury; mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity; and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet I will not hear them" (Ezekiel 8:18).

Now God stands ready to pity you. This is a day of mercy. You may cry now with some encouragement of obtaining mercy. But when once the day of mercy is past, your most lamentable and dolorous cries and shrieks will be in vain. . . . God will be so far from pitying you when you cry to him, that it is said he will only "laugh and mock" (Proverbs 1:25, 26)

[God] will not only hate you, but he will have you in the utmost contempt. No place shall be thought fit for you, but under his feet, to be trodden down as the mire of the streets.

3. *The misery you are exposed to is that which God will inflict to that end, that he might show what that wrath of Jehovah is.*

God hath had it on his heart to show to angels and men, both how excellent his love is and also how terrible his wrath is. Sometimes earthly kings have a mind to show how terrible their wrath is, by the extreme punishments they would execute on those that would provoke them. Nebuchadnezzar . . . gave order that the burning fiery furnace should be heated seven times hotter than it was before. . . .

But the great God is also willing to show his wrath, and magnify his awful majesty and mighty power, in the extreme sufferings of his enemies. "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" (Romans 9:22). And seeing this is his design, and what he has determined, even to show how terrible the unrestrained wrath, the fury and fierceness, of Jehovah is, he will do it to effect.

There will be something accomplished and brought to pass that will be dreadful with a witness. When the great and angry God hath risen up and executed his awful vengeance on the poor sinner, and the wretch is actually suffering the infinite weight and power of his indignation, then will God call upon the

***Let every one of you
that is out of Christ
now hearken to the loud calls
of God's word and providence.***

whole universe to behold that awful majesty and mighty power that is to be seen in it. "And the people shall be as the burnings of lime, as thorns cut up shall they be burnt in the fire. Hear, ye that are afar off, what I have done; and ye that are near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites" (Isaiah 33:12-14).

Thus it will be with you that are in an unconverted state, if you continue in it. The infinite might, and majesty, and terribleness of the omnipotent God shall be magnified upon you, in the ineffable strength of your torments. You shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. . . . The glorious inhabitants of heaven shall go forth and look on the awful spectacle; . . . and when they have seen it, they will fall down and adore that great power and majesty.

"And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh" (Isaiah 66:23, 24).

4. *It is everlasting wrath.*

It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment. But you must suffer it to all eternity. There will be no end to this exquisite horrible misery.

When you look forward, you shall see a long forever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and amaze your soul. And you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all. . . . [And] when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this

manner, you will know that all is but a point to what remains. . . .

Oh who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it. It is inexpressible and inconceivable. For "who knows the power of God's anger?"

How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious, that they otherwise be. Oh that you would consider it, whether you be young or old!

There is reason to think that there are many in this congregation now hearing this discourse, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity. . . . It may be they are now at ease, and hear all these things without much disturbance, and are now flattering themselves that they are not the persons, promising themselves that they shall escape.

If we knew that there was one person, and but one, in the whole congregation, that was to be the subject of this misery, what an awful thing would it be to think of! If we knew who it was, what an awful sight would it be to see such a person! How might all the rest of the congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter cry over him! . . .

Those of you that finally continue in a natural condition, that shall keep out of hell the longest, will be there in a little time! Your damnation does not slumber; it will come swiftly, and, in all probability, very suddenly, upon many of you. You have reason to wonder that you are not already in hell.

It is doubtless the case of some whom you have seen and known, that never deserved hell more than you, and that heretofore appeared as likely to have been now alive as you. Their case is past all hope; they are crying in extreme misery and perfect despair.

But here you are in the land of the living, and in the house of God, and have an opportunity to obtain salvation. What would not those poor damned, hopeless souls give for one day's opportunity such as you now enjoy!

And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open, and stands in calling, and crying out with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him, and pressing into the kingdom of God. Many are

daily coming from the east, west, north, and south. Many that were very lately in the same miserable condition that you are in, are now in a happy state, with their hearts filled with love to him who has loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

How awful it is to be left behind at such a day! To see so many others feasting, while you are pining and perishing! To see so many rejoicing and singing for joy of heart, while you have cause to mourn for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit! How can you rest one moment in such a condition? Are not your souls as precious as the souls of the people at Suffield [a nearby town], where they are flocking from day to day to Christ?

Are there not many here who have lived long in the world, and are not to this day born again? and so are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and have done nothing ever since they have lived, but treasure up wrath against the day of wrath? Oh Sirs, your case, in an especial manner, is extremely dangerous. Your guilt and hardness of heart is extremely great.

Do not you see how generally persons of your years are passed over and left, in the present remarkable and wonderful dispensation of God's mercy? You had need to consider yourselves, and awake thoroughly out of sleep. You cannot bear the fierceness and wrath of the infinite God.

And you, young men and young women, will you neglect this precious season which you now enjoy, when so many others of your age are renouncing all youthful vanities, and flocking to Christ? You especially have now an extraordinary opportunity. But if you neglect it, it will soon be with you as with those persons who spent all the precious days of youth in sin, and are now come to such a dreadful pass in blindness and hardness.

And you, children, who are unconverted, do not you know that you are going down to hell, to bear the dreadful wrath of God, who is now angry with you every day and every night? Will you be content to be the children of the devil, when so many other children in the land are converted, and are become the holy and happy children of the King of kings?

And let every one of you that is yet out of Christ, and hanging over the pit of hell, whether they be old men and women, or middle aged, or young people, or little children, now hearken to the

*Here you are
in the land of living
and have an opportunity
to obtain salvation.*

loud calls of God's word and providence. This acceptable year of the Lord, a day of such great favor to some, will doubtless be a day of as remarkable vengeance to others.

Men's hearts harden, and their guilt increases apace, at such a day as this, if they neglect their souls. And never was there so great danger of such persons being given up to hardness of heart and blindness of mind. God seems now to be hastily gathering in his elect in all parts of the land. And probably the greater part of adult persons that ever shall be saved will be brought in now in a little time, and that it will be as it was on the great out-pouring of the Spirit upon the Jews in the apostles' days, the election will obtain, and the rest will be blinded.

If this should be the case with you, you will eternally curse this day, and will curse the day that ever you was born, to see such a season of the pouring out of God's Spirit, and will wish that you had died and gone to hell before you had seen it. Now undoubtedly it is, as it was in the days of John the Baptist, the axe is an extraordinary manner laid at the root of the trees, that every tree which brings not forth good fruit, may be hewn down and cast into the fire.

Therefore, let every one that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation. Let every one fly out of Sodom: "Haste and escape for your lives, look not behind you, escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed."

This sermon of the pastor at Northampton has long been ridiculed as the epitome of all the horrors of Puritan preaching. So be it. But if it is the means of convincing any of his personal danger of eternal hell, we shall be glad we printed it.

Another report

CAMP ELIM 1977



Elim Bible Camp, conducted by the OP Presbytery of the Dakotas, was held this year in the Colorado Mountains near Pinecliff on July 18-25. Attendance, somewhat lower than in past years, was eighteen boys and thirty-three girls with twenty staff members. Campers came from North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and Colorado. There were representatives from Amarillo, Texas; Roswell, New Mexico; Cheyenne, Wyoming — three places which had never been represented before.

Daytime classes were devoted to a study of the doctrine of the church. In the evening and on Sunday, different ministers of the presbytery preached on the elements of public worship such as the sermon, the offering, and music. There was a special emphasis on counseling this year and because of the smaller camp there was a greater opportunity for counselors to get to know and work with the campers.

Rain caused some scheduling problems and forced some improvisation of indoor activities. There was no rain problem on Saturday when most of the campers hiked to the top of nearby Thorodin Mountain, 10,555 feet high. (Problems did arise when the hike leader decided

to take a shortcut on the way back — and ended up with the whole group considerably off course and an hour and a half late in returning to camp!)

Rain also threatened but did not force cancellation of the bonfire service on Sunday evening marking the end of the camp. By 8 o'clock the next morning most of the campers had left on the long trip home — there to start writing letters to new and old friends and to begin thinking about next year's camp.

Were you there?

The report above was supplied by the Rev. Donald J. Duff of Grand Junction, Colorado. What follows is a strongly felt opinion of the editor.

Were you there? Or if you are a parent, Was your child at Bible camp this year? If not, why not? What was more important to your child's spiritual health and growth than a few days at a Bible camp?

Never having been a pastor, I have nevertheless frequently been a moderator of sessions. And repeatedly over the years, when a young person came before session ready to make public profession of his faith, we would ask, "When did you first come to know and believe in Christ?" And over and over again the

answer came, "At the Bible conference."

Now I readily admit that if you talked with these young people you'd soon learn that they often had had some measure of faith in Christ before that. But whether they were converted or had simply "put it all together," there, those who attended the Bible conferences all credited these times of concentrated Bible study and Christian fellowship as major spiritual experiences in their lives.

The Bible conference is the only experience we provide for our children that is so concentrated for so long a block of time. It is also deliberately arranged so that Christian counselors can work with each camper, getting to know the young person and treating with him of the claims of Christ. Since it is the Word of God and the testimony of believers that the Spirit uses to win young souls to the Savior, the results are hardly surprising.

And what impressed me most during my week of Bible conference this summer was the intense concern on the part of some campers for their friends' spiritual state. Have you ever seen teenagers praying for the conversion of other teenagers? Have you ever seen them earnestly seeking to leading a friend to the Savior and Lord they already know for themselves?

No, it's hardly surprising that the Spirit works so often at Bible conferences. I personally heard five young people make new commitments to Christ this year, and that does not include others who obviously were benefited spiritually. What's surprising is the number of young people who do not attend these conferences.

Was your child at this summer's Bible conference? Will he be there next year? I pray, for his sake, whether he is a professing believer or not, that he will be! And if you want a wonderful spiritual experience for yourself, then volunteer to help out in your area's Bible conference. But whatever you do, get the young people there. Please, for their sakes and the Lord's glory!

—John J. Mitchell



Letters

(Continued from page 2.)

Rev. James D. Carson of Los Angeles. The committee of which I was made chairman was only appointed at this most recent Synod and has not yet convened. Our assignment is the drawing up of a condensed version of the Testimony. All of which means that Synod has two committees now: one that has worked to produce a full-fledged Testimony as previously adopted in our past, and a second one just appointed to try to prepare a more concise, popular version. Our Synod owes a deep debt of gratitude to Jim Carson and his committee for the splendid work they have accomplished thus far. The bulk of the work has been done by them!

Second, while your reference to "closed" communion may reflect a common attitude toward the sacrament, it should be clear that the RPCNA has always held to "close" communion. It is to be termed "close" inasmuch as it built on the practice of requiring members to subscribe to our doctrinal standards, and therefore those who communed were "close" in commitment. No doubt such a position may have often been misconstrued by an impression given of its being "closed," but I think it should be noted that the position had a firm doctrinal basis when seen in the light of standards of church membership. The two major changes that you noted therefore have very close scrutiny.

Kenneth G. Smith, pastor
Pittsburgh, Penna.

Search the Scriptures

Praise the Lord that our salvation is based on the shed blood of Christ and the grace of God—not on the practice of holiness! Yet as Paul indicates in his letters we should seek to walk in a manner pleasing to the Lord. Hence, exhortation to holiness is scriptural.

I can relate to the evidences of inconsistency mentioned by Mr. Priem in his letter to the editor. In earlier years I read Scripture and saw there a way of life far different from what I saw practiced by many Christians and church leaders. I heard questionable jokes (vs. Eph. 5:4), speeding (vs. 1 Pet. 2:13), and a general approach to detailed life situations that followed man's ways closer than what I read.

I concluded that perhaps we, in the

twentieth century, weren't meant really to do what the Bible said. It was too idealistic really to practice. Once the questioning started, there was a problem in where to stop and what to believe and follow in today's world.

Attending an Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts seminar brought about a wonderful change! There I saw God's Word applied rigorously and practically to life situations—even where Scripture (God's way) looked to be opposite to common sense (man's way). Best of all, it was shown to work (Prov. 14:12). This enabled me to trust in God and his Word, ask forgiveness for bitterness, and receive new life. I *could* seek direction in Scripture and believe that in God's wisdom it was right.

I believe that Mr. Priem is correct in questioning inconsistencies. We should measure life against Scripture, not human ethics, or the standards of men's practice. This measurement will, unfortunately, show up glaring defects. But we are not to judge others (Rom. 2:1-3); we are to judge ourselves (1 Cor. 11:28-32). By God's grace we can love and pray for others and where there is offense seek to correct it by the procedure of Matthew 18:15-17, done in the spirit of restoring (Gal. 6:1).

Our prime concern, however, seems to be taught as being to search the Scriptures (Acts 17:11), and then to conduct our own lives in accord with it, being fully persuaded in our own minds (James 4:17). Scripture is very radical in its practice—but we are taught to trust in the Lord and lean not to our own understanding (Prov. 3:5), and we know that God's ways are higher than ours. If we read Scripture with a questioning mind seeking its ways, and then truly believe, i.e., practice what it teaches, we will be different and it will be noticed, giving opportunity to testify to God's grace.

May that grace enable us to study and implement!

Frank Sloat
Birdsboro, Penna.

Good, but far-fetched

May I suggest to Mr. Priem (whose letter-to-the-editor appeared in the July-August issue of the *Guardian*) that his general idea of making suggestions to ministers from the "lay" point of view is a good one. But some of those he comments on are a little far-fetched.

If the lady of the manse works, is it because the family is "chasing the almighty dollar," or might there be another really legitimate reason?

If the minister's family is offered dis-

counts by service people, is it wrong to accept them? The lay people take advantage of all the honest breaks IRS gives.

If the minister is not sure how to handle some hard section of Scripture, is he ducking it because he prefers to wait until he has made a real study of it?

Must the minister have no friends among the congregation lest someone be jealous? What an isolated situation that would leave him in.

On a home visitation, if a "cogent, provocative" question is asked, and if the minister deems it rather to be a tart, argumentative question, isn't he wise to lay it on the table? Whose mind was ever changed by an argument?

There are many things that ministers could learn from the people of the congregation. But let's not turn them off by unfair statements. Rather, remember that we are all full of faults and to correct the other fellow's takes gentleness and the clear awareness of all his good points.

Florence Partington
Gloucester, Mass.

"Wild animal" a wolf?

The letter from Mr. Priem, in which he lists various "sins" of the clergy, seems to have been motivated more by personal prejudices than any real desire to be helpful in pointing out inconsistencies between life and profession. Some of his comments are ridiculous. Some touch on things that need to be considered but are not likely to be received seriously in view of the context in which they are made.

The letter brought to mind the following from Luther's *Table Talk*, in which the subject of animosity between pulpit and pew is in view:

This is not without reason [Luther said] because untamed people don't want to be corrected, but it is the function of preachers to accuse them. This is an extremely burdensome and dangerous business, and therefore laymen counter by keeping a sharp eye on clergymen. They have to find some fault with them and see some boils, even if they're only on the wives and children of the clergymen. In this way the laymen try to get revenge. If the princes didn't have power over them, the people would pursue them with the same hatred. Only let us abide by the pure Word in order that we may sit in Moses' seat. If life is not so well rounded and perfect, God will have mercy, even if the hatred of the laity should remain according to the old saying, "When the ocean dries up and Satan is lifted up to the stars, the laymen

will be the trusted friend of the clergyman."

One further observation: Mr. Priem speaks of himself as a "wild animal at bay." I am no authority on the matter, but I fear that such seems to be more the characteristic of wolves than of sheep.

Eugene C. Case, pastor
First Presbyterian Church
Woodville, Miss.

Editorial wisdom?

The letter you printed from Mr. Priem in the July-August *Guardian* undoubtedly is bringing in the comments you invited. What is motivating *me* to write is not the words of this apparently bitter man as what I feel is a lack of editorial wisdom in printing them.

The worldly view of free speech as championed by the media today is that anyone has a "right" to make known anything he wants to. Are Christian editors to be trapped into this kind of thinking also?

Freedom of speech is certainly not license for irresponsibility. Scripture calls on the body of believers to do all to the edifying (building up) of the whole body (Ephesians 4:16). If this is true of all of us, it is certainly true of the editor of a Christian magazine that serves the church. I believe that the venting of anger and bitterness on the part of anyone writing to you should be dealt with privately in love (and with reference to Ephesians 4:31), but without public airing.

Your liberty in this matter, as an editor, is to print anything you see fit. But the words of Scripture speak loud and clear in restricting your freedom to what is constructive. In 2 Timothy 2:22-23, Paul exhorts Timothy to "pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels" (NIV).

With appreciation for your work as editor,

Mrs. Polly M. Edwards
Westfield, New Jersey

Ed. note: Dear Polly, I appreciate your letter. I agree entirely with you on the matter of editorial responsibility — and have quite a file of letters that have not been printed. I hesitated about this letter from Mr. Priem for some time. But since he was not aiming it at any identifiable person, I felt the possible benefits of printing it might out-weigh its somewhat intemperate language. If you don't agree, please put it down to this departing editor's questionable wisdom.—J. J. M.



ITEMS

Sewickley, Pa.—Dr. Willem A. Van Gemeren, a faculty member of Geneva College in the Bible department, was ordained as a teacher of the Word by the Presbytery of Ohio on November 19, 1976. (We're a bit late with this one!)

Point Loma, Calif.—The Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Point Loma (San Diego, Calif.) has called the Rev. George C. Miladin to be its pastor. Mr. Miladin, who is accepting the call, has been pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church on Lookout Mountain, Tenn.

Bridgeton, N. J.—Calvary O. P. Church has called the Rev. Robert Gramp as its pastor. Mr. Gramp, formerly in Christian school work in Florida, has indicated his acceptance of the call.

Winner, S. D.—The Winner Orthodox Presbyterian Church has called Mr. Gerald S. Taylor to be its new pastor. Mr. Taylor is licensed to preach the gospel; he and his wife Paula and young son expect to take up their duties in September.

La Mirada Breaks Ground

Calvary Presbyterian Church, La Mirada, Calif., broke ground for new buildings on Sunday, June 26. The ceremony took place between the two morning worship services so the entire congregation could be present. Henry Coray, Bob Nicholas, and Dwight Poundstone took part in the worship services and the ground-breaking. Each of these men had a vital part in the founding and early life of the church.

The new buildings will be arranged as a campus, a feature appropriate to southern California. The present building will be remodeled for Sunday school and fellowship hall. The new buildings will include a nursery and pre-school building (the "Heir Port"), a new auditorium, and another Sunday school building to be built at a later time.

Schenectady, N. Y.—We reported the ordination, on June 1, of Mr. Stuart R. Jones as associate pastor of Calvary O. P. Church some time ago. But this picture arrived later and we thought our readers would like to see it. From left to right, the Rev. Ronald M. Jenkins from Hamden, Conn., Mr. Jones, the Rev. Lewis A. Ruff then of Houlton, Maine, but now in California, the Rev. Richard W. Tyson, R. P. pastor in Ballston Spa, N. Y., and the Rev. Raymond M. Meiners, senior pastor of Calvary Church.

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).

Contacts in Phoenix

Hope Reformed Presbyterian Church (RPCES) is seeking to establish itself as a strong Presbyterian and Reformed witness in the southeast 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).

Contacts in Springfield, Mo.

Readers knowing of friends or relatives in the Springfield, Missouri, area who would welcome a Reformed fellowship should contact: B. R. Robinson, Jr., 3560 S. Parkhill Ave., Springfield, MO 65807. (Mr. Robinson is a ruling elder of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and has recently been transferred to the area.)

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Here and There

Missions on the Move

The foreign missions program of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has undergone major changes in the past two or three years. Three veteran missionary families have retired: the Bruce F. Hunts, the R. Heber McIlwaines, the Richard B. Gaffins, Sr. (The Hunts live in the greater Philadelphia area and Mr. Hunt is regularly working with a Korean Presbyterian congregation; the McIlwaines are in Wilmington, Del., and active in the outreach of the congregation there; the Gaffins have returned to Taiwan under their own means although officially retired.)

Meanwhile, new faces have appeared and new fields are being opened. The Robert L. Marshalls have been in Taiwan for several months. The Rev. and Mrs. Steve Hake with infant son Jesse are in Toronto for language study and expect to go to Taiwan in September. The Rev. Young J. Son with his wife and children have just arrived in Korea; Mr. Son, an American citizen, is Korean by birth.

Others are also preparing to go forth. By the time this is in print, the recently ordained Victor Atallah and his wife will have reached Lebanon; a Reformed fellowship already exists there in the war-torn land that was Mr. Atallah's home for several years. The George R. Cottendens are preparing to go to Egypt by the end of September to continue the work begun by the Rev. W. Benson Male. (Mr. Male, despite a second heart attack, enjoyed a family reunion recently in Denver.)

Other calls to foreign service are "in the works." The Theodore J. Georgians hope to go to Lebanon also if reports from Mr. Atallah indicate it is safe for an American citizen in that unsettled country. Another candidate has applied for service in Japan.

The Rev. John S. Mason, the only ordained minister-missionary with the mission in Ethiopia when it was forced to leave, is planning to go to the Sudan under another missions agency. He hopes to work among refugees, mainly from Ethiopia's revolution-torn Eritrea province.

In the home office, the Rev. Laurence N. Vail has accepted the call to serve as full-time assistant general secretary. This would prepare him for becoming the general secretary upon the retirement of the Rev. John P. Galbraith who has served in this post for over forty years.

Many changes, many new faces. Pray for these servants of the Lord and those who have been serving in this part of the Lord's work.

GCP Adds to Staff

Great Commission publications, Inc., the publishing arm of the Christian education committees of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in America has made recent additions to its staff of writers.

The Rev. Joey Pipa, former pastor of the PCA congregation in Tchula, Miss., is serving as a writer-consultant in both adult and senior high curriculum areas. Mr. Pipa will also be engaged in graduate study at Westminster Seminary.

Mrs. Becky Johnston, former staff member for *Better Homes and Gardens*, will be assigned various writing duties. She has already had a hand in reworking the handwork projects in the VBS curriculum that is to appear next summer.

Meanwhile, the first adult material is now available. A leader's study guide, designed for use with Jay E. Adam's *Christian Living in the Home*, the new booklet contains thirteen lesson plans for one quarter's work. It is planned that this will be the first of a series of adult curriculum materials.



Covenant has new president

Dr. William S. Barker, Associate Professor of Church History was installed as the second president of Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis on September 24, 1977. The seminary, founded in 1956, is the theological school of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, though its students come from a variety of denominations and from more than twenty foreign countries.

The new president grew up in nearby Clayton, Mo. He holds the A.B. from Princeton, an M.A. from Cornell, the B.D. from Covenant, and a Ph.D. from Vanderbilt. He served four years as pastor of the Hazelwood (Mo.) R. P. Church before joining the seminary faculty. Barker has been active in civil rights causes, engaged in an innercity ministry in Chattanooga. He has also served as the moderator of his church's annual synod.

Dr. Robert Rayburn, the seminary's first president, is now on a sabbatical and is teaching in various theological schools abroad. A new classroom building named in his honor is now under construction at the seminary.