

# The Presbyterian Guardian

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EZEKIEL 37

will sanctify my great  
was profaned among the  
ch ye have profaned in  
them; and the heathen  
at I *am* the LORD, saith  
I, when I shall be sancti-  
fore their eyes.

ill take you from among  
and gather you out of all  
I will bring you into your

ill I sprinkle clean water  
d ye shall be clean: from  
iness, and from all your  
leanse you.

heart also will I give you,  
rit will I put within you:  
te away the stony heart  
sh, and I will give you an

will put my spirit within  
e you to walk in my stat-  
hall keep my judgments,

shall dwell in the land  
to your fathers; and ye  
people, and I will be your

so save you from all your  
and I will call for the  
increase it, and lay no  
you.

will multiply the fruit of  
the increase of the field,  
ceive no more reproach  
ong the heathen.

shall ye remember your  
s, and your doings that  
I, and shall lothe your-  
own sight for your in-  
or your abominations.

your sakes do I *this*,  
I God, be it known unto  
ned and confounded for  
s, O house of Israel.

th the Lord God; In the  
hall have cleansed you  
r iniquities I will also  
well in the cities, and the  
e builded.

desolate land shall be  
s it lay desolate in the

plant that that was desolate: I the  
LORD have spoken it, and I will do it.

37 Thus saith the Lord God; I will  
yet for this be enquired of by the house  
of Israel, to do it for them; I will in-  
crease them with men like a flock.

38 As the holy flock, as the flock of  
Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so  
shall the waste cities be filled with  
flocks of men: and they shall know that  
I *am* the LORD.

## CHAPTER 37

**T**HE hand of the LORD was upon  
me, and ce  
of the LORD,  
midst of the  
bones,

2 And caus  
round about;  
very many in  
*they were* very

3 And he sa  
can these bon  
O Lord God,

4 Again he said unto me, Prophecy  
upon these bones, and say unto them,  
O ye dry bones, hear the word of the  
LORD.

5 Thus saith the Lord God unto  
these bones; Behold, I will cause  
breath to enter into you, and ye shall  
live:

6 And I will lay sinews upon you,  
and will bring up flesh upon you, and  
cover you with skin, and put breath  
in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall  
know that I *am* the LORD.

7 So I prophesied as I was com-  
manded: and as I prophesied, there  
was a noise, and behold a shaking, and  
the bones came together, bone to his  
bone.

8 And when I beheld, lo, the sinews  
and the flesh came up upon them, and  
the skin covered them above: but  
*there was* no breath in them.

9 Then said he unto me, Prophecy  
unto the wind, prophesy, son of man,  
and say to the wind, thus saith the  
LORD God; Come from the four winds,  
O breath, and breathe upon these

are dried, and our hope is lost: we are  
cut off for our parts.

12 Therefore prophesy and say unto  
them, Thus saith the Lord God; Be-  
hold, O my people, I will open your  
graves, and cause you to come up out  
of your graves, and bring you into the  
land of Israel.

13 And ye shall know that I *am* the  
LORD, when I have opened your  
graves, O my people, and brought you  
up out of your graves,

14 And shall put my spirit in you,  
and ye shall live, and I shall place you  
all ye know  
oken it, and  
RD.

LORD came

of man, take  
upon it, For  
en of Israel  
like another  
For Joseph,  
d for all the

house of Israel his companions:

17 And join them one to another  
into one stick; and they shall become  
one in thine hand.

18 And when the children of thy  
people shall speak unto thee, saying,  
Wilt thou not shew us what thou  
*meanest* by these?

19 Say unto them, Thus saith the  
Lord God; Behold, I will take the  
stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of  
E'-phra-im, and the tribes of Israel his  
fellows, and will put them with him,  
*even* with the stick of Judah, and make  
them one stick, and they shall be one  
in mine hand.

20 And the sticks whereon thou  
writest shall be in thine hand before  
their eyes.

21 And say unto them, Thus saith  
the Lord God; Behold, I will take the  
children of Israel from among the  
heathen, whither they be gone, and  
will gather them on every side, and  
bring them into their own land:

22 And I will make them one nation  
in the land upon the mountains of

EZEKIEL 38

save them out of all the  
places, wherein they have  
will cleanse them: so shall  
people, and I will be their

24 And David my serv  
king over them; and they al  
one shepherd; they shall al  
my judgments, and observ  
utes, and do them.

25 And they shall dwell  
that I have given unto Jac  
vant, wherein your fathers I  
and they shall dwell therein  
and their children, and thei  
children for ever: and m  
David *shall be* their prince

26 Moreover I will make  
of peace with them; it shall  
lasting covenant with them:  
place them, and multiply  
will set my sanctuary in th  
them for evermore.

27 My tabernacle also sh  
them: yea, I will be their God  
shall be my people.

28 And the heathen shall  
I the LORD do sanctify Is  
my sanctuary shall be in th  
them for evermore.

## CHAPTER 38

**A**ND the word of the L  
unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, set thy fa  
Gog, the land of Ma'-gog,  
prince of Me'-shech and Tu  
prophesy against him,

3 And say, Thus saith  
God; Behold, I *am* against  
Gog, the chief prince of Me'  
Tu'-bal:

4 And I will turn thee  
put hooks into thy jaws, a  
bring thee forth, and all th  
horses and horsemen, all  
clothed with all sorts of ar  
a great company *with* buc  
shields, all of them handling

5 Persia, E-thi-o'-pi-a, a  
with them; all of them with  
helmet:

6 Go'-mer, and all his b

## "Take it and read it!"

BRUCE F. HUNT

Dr. Samuel A. Moffett was one of the great pioneer missionaries in Korea. He used to tell of an early experience in Pyongyang, the old capital city (now in North Korea) that came to be known as the "Jerusalem of Korea." Dr. Moffett was one of the first westerners the people of the city had seen at close range. His blond hair and blue eyes attracted large crowds of curious spectators. Speaking with the Bible in his hand and using what must have been a very halting and broken Korean, Dr. Moffett would tell the multitude what God had said.

"But," asked one of the crowd, "how do you know it's the word of God?"

"Take it and read it!" was Dr. Moffett's reply; and he gave the man a Scripture portion.

The man did take it and read it that night. Next day he returned to hear the preaching, and then went back to "read it" some more. Eventually this man became a Christian and was one of the seven men who were first ordained to the ministry of the Korean Presbyterian Church.

The man had asked, "How do you know it's the word of God?" and Dr. Moffett had answered simply, "Take it and read it!" But both men were talking about the same thing, that book in Dr. Moffett's hand—the Bible, the Holy Scriptures, the written Word of God.

I don't know whether Dr. Moffett had been trying to show the universal truthfulness, the reasonableness, or the practicalness of what he was saying. From the man's question we do know one thing—the missionary had stated very clearly that what he was saying was in the Bible, and that what was written in the Bible was God's Word. He was doing what the Lord told Ezekiel to do: "Say unto them, 'Thus saith the Lord God.'"

I don't know either whether Dr. Moffett had a mixed-script Korean Bible containing many Chinese characters known only to the intelligentsia, or one in the simple Korean script that was still largely unknown at that time to most Koreans. But, whether it was pure Chinese ideographs, simple Korean alphabet, or in English, Latin, or the original Greek and Hebrew, his words were sound: "Take it and read it!"

To follow Dr. Moffett's instructions might have required the man to learn to read, as many people all over the world—including our own children—have had to do. It is still sound advice. David Fountain, in his little book *The Mayflower Pilgrims and Their Pastor*, quotes John Robinson the pastor as saying, "If a man should find the book of the Holy Scriptures in the highway, or hidden under a stone, yet he were bound to *learn*, receive, believe and obey them and every part of them."

Missionaries all over the world are constantly trying to get the Bible translated into languages familiar to the people, and have spent countless hours helping people to read God's Word. But "the authority of the Holy Scriptures for which it ought to be believed and obeyed"—and the reason why

Dr. Moffett and others like him have said, "Take it and read it!"—does not depend on the particular tongue in which it is printed or even man's understanding of it. It depends not on the testimony of any man or church, "but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, *because it is the Word of God*" (Westminster Confession, I, 4).

People may be moved and induced, by the testimony, erudition and scholarship of whatever church brings them the Bible, to a high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scriptures. They may be greatly influenced by the heavenly and spirituality of its contents, the efficacy and practicality of its teaching, the culturally enriching, literary, and majestic style of its writing. The unity and consent of all the parts, the grand scope of the whole, revealing and pointing to God, to the glory of his grace and the plan of salvation set forth, the incomparable excellencies and the entire perfection of the whole, are all evidences that the Scriptures are indeed the Word of God. But, as Christians of an earlier age pointed out, "our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness *by and with the Word in our hearts*" (I, 5, emphases added).

"God has spoken," Moses said; "God spake all these words." To Ezekiel, God said, "Thou shalt *say* unto them, 'Thus saith the Lord God,' *whether they will hear or whether they will forbear*"; and added, "Thou shalt speak *my words*." Ezekiel is to declare that God has spoken even before he reveals the contents of God's speech; he is told to declare the authority of the words even before giving the message.

The Scriptures do not become God's Word just because people hear them or understand them. God's Word, even when man tries to isolate it, or sticks it away in his bookcase, or leaves it untranslated in an unintelligible language, is still God's Word. Because it is God's Word, it is authoritative—whatever the people's reaction to it.

Yes, "take it and read it!" Get it out of isolation. Take it out of the bookcase. Have it translated into the language of the people. But let us never forget it is God's Word even when man tries to isolate it, seeks to twist its meaning, says it is irrelevant for our day, and not understandable or intelligible.

Take it out of the bookcase, off the table, out from under our arms. Let us indeed "search the Scriptures." Let us "read in the book in the law of God distinctly (or "with interpretation"), and give the sense, and cause [people] to understand the meaning." Let us see that every person hears and can read the Word in his own language. For our God *has* spoken, and the Bible *is* God's Word. And he has commanded us to say to all, "Thus saith the Lord"—whether they hear or refuse.

Yes, "take it and read it"—and "blessed is he that readeth"!

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*Captain with the mighty heart — 19*

## THE VICTOR

HENRY W. CORAY

Early in January of 1937, I returned from a country itinerary to our home in Harbin, Manchuria. I was so completely exhausted that I tumbled into bed and into a deep sleep. About four o'clock the next morning I came to, feeling wonderful. Mrs. Coray heard me stir. It was then that she broke the word she had withheld the evening before. "Dr. Machen," she said softly, "has gone to heaven."

I must confess that something in me died also. Poignantly I thought of those joyous years I had known him at seminary, his stimulating lectures, his "tightwad parties," the many warm personal touches on campus, the moving prayer he had offered at our wedding, the magnificent sermon he had delivered at my ordination service—an exposition of Cecil Alexander's hymn, "There Is a Green Hill Far Away" and many other priceless remembrances. And now to learn that he had been taken away in the prime of his career just, it would seem, when he was most

needed—this fact bombarded my mind together with a rash of quivering doubts and questions. Why? Was his death avoidable? How could the Christian community afford the loss of such a redoubtable Achilles? What would become of Westminster Seminary; of *The Presbyterian Guardian* which he had begun; and of our frail church still in its swaddling clothes?

I suppose what grief-stunned hearts too often forget, in the shock of sudden bereavement, is that

**Human counsels come to nought,  
That will stand which God hath wrought.**

Time has proven it to be so. Westminster Seminary still stands as a bastion of Reformed theology, and despite severe testings. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, fragile and imperfect as it is, continues to hold aloft the torch Machen had helped light. The *Guardian* has been able to survive the loss of its originator. All

three represent enduring tributes to his courage and foresight.

Days dragged by before we in the Orient were to receive information concerning the details of his passing.

The late Samuel Allen, a minister in the Presbytery of the Dakotas, had invited Dr. Machen to speak in the churches in his area. He had accepted the invitation, even though hard pressed for time. When the hour came for him to entrain for the west he was feeling anything but energetic. The strain of conflict had taken a heavy toll of his reserve strength. Members of his family as well as several close friends urged him to cancel the engagements. He refused, arguing that he had made a commitment and could not let Allen down. Confident that he was doing the right thing he left Philadelphia—for the last time.

Sam Allen met his train at Bismarck and drove him through the brutal December cold to Leith, North Dakota. There he preached a sermon, even though in great physical weakness. That night pleurisy struck him.

The next day Allen chauffeured him to Bismarck, seventy-five miles from Leith. Now his condition was deteriorating fast. The pleurisy, one of the most painful of ailments, put him in a state of agony. He should have gone to bed. Instead he insisted on preaching.

The following morning he said he was better. He informed Allen he planned to go home. The Bismarck physicians, however, would not hear of it; they insisted that he be hospitalized. Concerned lest his family and his fellow-workers in Philadelphia worry about his illness, he dispatched telegrams assuring them that there was no cause for alarm.

He was wrong. By the next morning pneumonia had set in.

On New Year's Eve, Allen sat with him as his life ebbed away. He said to Sam, "I had a vision of heaven and it was glorious."

New Year's Day found him at the point of death. Periods of consciousness checkered moments of unconsciousness. He realized the end was at hand. One of the last of his actions was to dictate a telegram to the Rev. John Murray with this message:

"Thankful for the active obedience of Christ. No hope without it."

*(continued on page 51)*

Ye are my witnesses . . .

# on tv

CHRISTINE BACHMAN

"Quiet Please—Filming" reads the sign leading to the television studio. Inside, a mild state of confusion exists as Director Richard Flores gives last minute instructions to the cast and choir. The children, neatly dressed and combed, sprawl on the floor giggling and squirming. Seated in front of them is Master of Ceremonies Nick Perrone and Pastor Carl Erickson. "Father Bob" the artist stands at the drawing board, crayon in hand. Opposite him is Debbie Moncrieff with her puppet "Ichthus." Program Director Andy Trentacosta and Production Manager Bob Matheson are in the booth ready to start filming. The cameramen take their positions. Richard crosses the room and squats in front of the children.

"O.K., kids, this is it," he warns them. "I want you to keep your legs down and be *absolutely* quiet."

Suddenly the room is filled with the brilliance of the flood lights, causing everyone to squint. The camera moves in on Nick, who shows definite signs of nervousness. Richard motions for the choir to begin the theme, "My Anchor Holds." The cameras begin to roll!

Nick smilingly greets his viewers, somehow a bit calmer. "Welcome to *Ichthus the Fish*, our first in a series of Christian television programs for children. For the next thirteen weeks we will be bringing you stories on the life of the apostle Paul and on the lives of great missionaries. Pastor, will you explain the meaning of our title, *Ichthus the Fish*?"

The children look up eagerly as Pastor Erickson explains: "Ichthus, the sign of the fish, was used as a symbol among the early Christians. They would come into a village and, in order to identify themselves to other Christians, would draw one-half of a fish in the sand. If other Christians were present, they would complete the drawing. Father Bob will illustrate, so please observe."

The camera swings to Elder Robert Santo. He begins to sketch for the children and explains the symbolism. At one point, he wanders away from the microphone, forgetting all about it. But the camera moves to focus on sixteen-year-old Debbie from the Sunnyvale Church. She is delightful in the puppet skit, leading the children in singing and memory work. The eyes of the children light up as they sing and converse with Ichthus. Mrs. Samuel Moncrieff, Debbie's mother, displays a necklace with the fish symbol, explaining the growing popularity of this symbol among many Christians today.

The camera returns to Nick as the program draws to a close. He urges viewers to tune in for the many exciting missionary stories to follow. And, our half-hour show is over—but in only fifteen minutes!

## How it all began

For the "premiere performance" of Brentwood OPC

Films, that wasn't bad! Incredibly, *no one* in the cast and crew, except for the studio staff, had had any experience whatever in the field of television.

How does it happen that a small church in South San Francisco can sponsor a children's TV series, with members and friends serving as directors, actors, script writers, artists, set designers, costume makers, musicians, singers and story tellers? Exciting? Indeed it is!

Carolyn Marchant and Ella Sponaugle had long considered the wonderful possibilities to spread the gospel through television. They began to pray specifically for the Lord to open the way for a TV program.

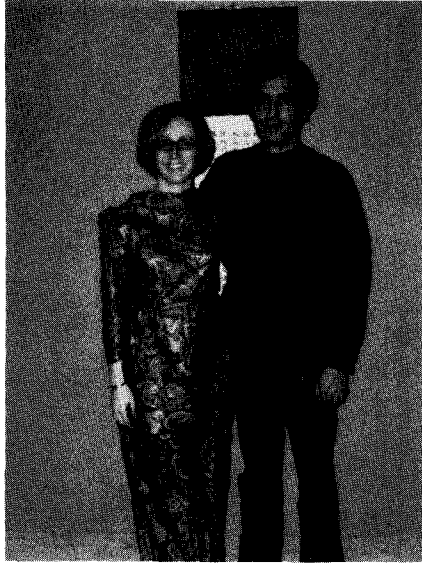
God moves in a mysterious way to perform his wonders. Mrs. Richard Flores just *happened* to be employed as a secretary for Peninsula Cable TV in San Carlos. Nancy had undergone surgery in December and was recuperating when Carolyn dropped by for a visit. The subject of a children's TV series came up. "Why don't you ask your boss if it's possible to do this?" suggested Carolyn.

Next day Mrs. Sponaugle also stopped by. Again, the matter of a TV program came up. "With the help of the Holy Spirit, we came up with a basic format, suitable title, and potential actors," Nancy recalls. "We sat there overwhelmed at the task before us. We had one big problem, even if they said we could do the show—that of financial backing. Ella and I prayed then and there. We figured if the Lord really wanted us to do this, not only would everyone be willing to help, but somehow the Lord would take care of the finances!"

Nancy went to the Program Director about their idea. "We want to do a *Christian* TV series for children, and our church wants to know how much it would cost." The answer: Because the series is of a religious nature, Cable TV would *donate* the time! How we thanked God for his goodness; he had heard our prayers!

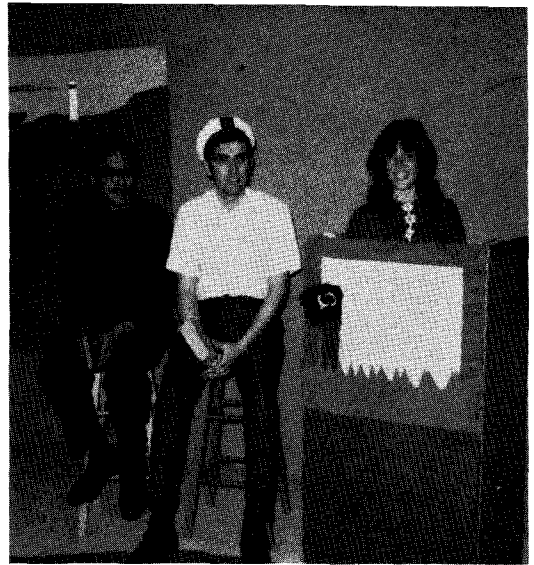
*Pantomime: Karl Sanders, Ricky Farrell,  
Paul and Judy Santo*





Richard and  
Nancy Flores

Bob Santo, Nick Perrone  
and Debbie Moncrieff  
with "Ichthus"



### How we all worked!

Now, everyone had to get to work. The first taping was set for January 5 at the studio in San Carlos. Each session began with prayer. The Lord's guidance and help was certainly needed. A young crew at Cable TV was starting out too, as they were just beginning to program. It would be a time of trial and error, of testing and just plain work. But the Lord has blessed the Brentwood congregation with many special talents. So it was with some confidence that work began, and a great deal of faith that it *could* be done.

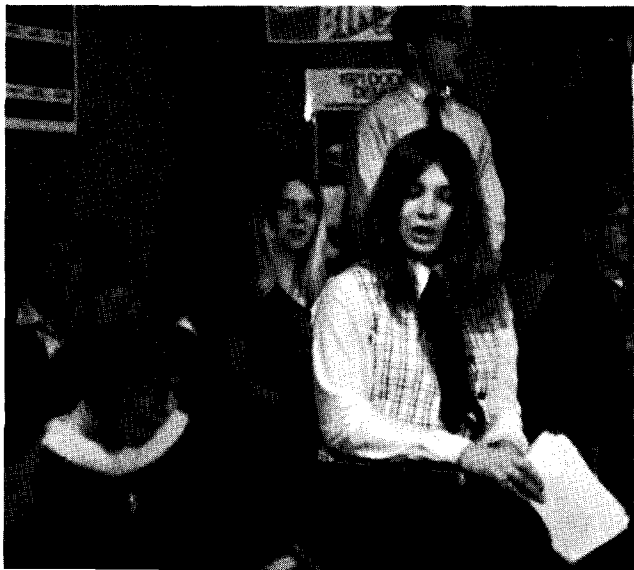
Ella, who writes children's stories, volunteered to do the first scripts. "By the third program," she says, "the allotted time of thirty minutes was reached. Believe me, it is difficult to get the time down pat!"

Richard Flores has served as director of the series, assisted by sixteen-year-old Shelley Kirker as pantomime director. Shelley also wrote the Christmas program for our Sunday school, and permission was granted to show it on Christmas day. All our Sunday school children participated.

Shelley's mother, Mrs. Thomas Kirker, has also written scripts. She reports: "The series sparks terrific enthusiasm and has renewed the interest of our teenagers. Here they can make a vital contribution."

Pastor Erickson agrees: "The TV series has been a personal challenge, causing me to reevaluate our youth program. They now have a real opportunity to serve the Lord. All age groups are united like a family. Also, we have found real talent among our teenagers. Gary Koch, who has played Paul, is a real 'ham' and does a great job."

*The musicians*



What advice would the pastor give to other groups wanting to try such a project? "Look for opportunities in your local area. Write and ask TV stations; don't wait for them to come to you."

Publicity is also an important matter in such a venture. This was my share of the burden. I sent news releases to six papers on the Peninsula notifying them that *Ichthus* was to appear on TV. A Saturday news supplement on one of the major TV channels has been notified, and we hope they will be interested in doing a feature. And KEAR, a Christian radio station, will present a taped interview of some of the staff during the month of April. I hadn't realized what the publicity meant until Richard said, "It encourages and inspires us, as well as telling others about the show."

The music is a vital part of the series and is headed up by Kathy Erickson. "I just supply the piano accompaniment assisted by Rose Marie Gregory, and teach the children words and motions to the songs. Nancy has helped, and also Alice Karas and Vicky Brown. The children themselves really put their hearts into the singing!"

Frammie Poundstone, a talented singer, has added much to the music. She comes thirty-five miles for the taping sessions, often bringing some of her students from the San Jose Christian School. Another fine singer, Bob Bowman, also comes in from San Jose. Fifteen-year-old Debbie Brown sings and plays her flute.

Our "star," Nick Perrone, smiled when asked how he felt when first approached to "M.C." the show. "I can't really tell you why I accepted so readily. A part of me felt we would never really do the show; but the Lord had a different idea! As the first taping came near, I was a nervous wreck. Not only did I have to learn my lines, but I had to teach five-year-old daughter Diana hers too. With the bright lights and cameras, she forgot one line! I'll never forget the dead silence. But after that, I felt I could go through anything. By about the fourth show, I began to feel a strong concern for the lost children and parents who might be viewing the series. This seemed to enrich my whole spiritual life. I think we had a taste of what missionaries feel as they reach out for souls in the name of the Lord."

"Father Bob" Santo comes by his title naturally—a father of six, he and his wife Carol expect a seventh in July. Bob says, "I feel the TV series is another means of spreading the gospel. I do want us to reach out for



*Nick and daughter Diana  
with children*

the lost, even the studio personnel. Also, I think it is good for families to participate, for children to exercise and display their abilities. Sometimes they need reminding of the importance of what we are doing. The children will complain about the bright lights in the studio, about how *hot* it is in there. My wife reminded them how it would be to spend all eternity under such conditions; she made her point!"

The person most instrumental in the success of the series has been Richard Flores our director. Assisted by his wife Nancy, he has directed and coordinated the operation, and has been on the scene for many rehearsals as well. How had he felt when asked to direct the program?

"Insecure, but excited because I was getting involved in the Lord's work. It has strengthened my faith in the Lord to know that 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' Working with so many people has assured me that God has given us all talents to be used to glorify his name. We just have to step out on faith.

"And it has been exciting to see a child react to situations, and it has given me more patience. Since Nancy and I are going to become parents soon, I am grateful for this opportunity. And watching the kids view themselves on TV for the first time! All those happy giggles—they have everybody laughing!"

Eight-year-old Karl Sanders stepped in recently to fill Gary Koch's place in the pantomime. Karl kept asking his dad after the first performance, "Was I really good, Dad?" Everyone says he was!

#### **More to follow?**

Cable TV's Production Manager, Bob Matheson, had these comments: "It has been a fun show for us, aimed at children, a change from what we usually do. We have enjoyed being a part of it. Just because a program is professionally done doesn't make it good; amateurs can turn out a really fine show. Actually, the audience can easily identify with them—like seeing their own or neighborhood kids perform."

Did he feel the medium of TV had been neglected in the showing of such programs? "Generally they are shown just on Sunday. In my opinion, this is a mistake.

Viewing response isn't that great on Sunday, even for religious programs. We have been showing *Ichthus* three times a week—Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 5:30 p.m., a prime viewing time for children." And what about extending the series? "We're all for it! I've certainly admired the way everyone has worked so hard on this week after week. Richard Flores has done a great job with the group, and it's been a pleasure to work with him."

One lamentable fact for us has been that the programs are not shown in our own viewing area, since it is a closed-circuit cable system. But we figure the Lord has his purposes in wanting to reach viewers "on down the Peninsula."

What of the effect to date of the series on the community? One child says, "I think it's neat having Bible stories on TV." A fellow worker in Redwood City told Tommy Kirker's dad: "Hey, my kid saw Tommy on TV." "It's really too early to tell the impact," is the consensus at Brentwood.

Nancy Flores summed it up this way: "As I look back on these thirteen weeks, I find how much we have in spiritual wealth and strength, and how a 'fear-full' idea can turn into something good because God's hand is in it. I think of what it has done for our small church. Even though we are all very tired each Tuesday night after taping, yet everything has gone so smoothly. We come away wondering how we ever thought it would be a difficult project. But of course, we have an 'invisible coordinator' who makes everything work right!"

"Would you like to see the series extended?" I asked everyone. It was generally agreed that, with the ending of the current thirteen-week series, a rest is needed. But all expressed a desire to start again in September. Perhaps there's a bit of "ham" in each of us now, but it's been to the glory of God.

*So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11). This is the Lord's promise. The prayer of our congregation is that the message of the Lord through television may reach into the hearts of many viewers!*



## Captain with the mighty heart (continued from page 47)

Soon after, he drew his last breath.

He lies buried in the beautiful Greenmount Cemetery in Baltimore, near the graves of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Webster Machen, his beloved father and mother.

The Book of Proverbs reminds us that "when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Sometimes the armistice is consummated posthumously. In his case certain prominent Americans, not at all in sympathy with the theological stance he assumed in his life, nevertheless paid high tribute to him upon his exodus.

From the pen of the brilliant but skeptical H. L. Mencken came this panegyric:

My interest in Dr. Machen while he lived, though it was large, was not personal, for I never had the honor of meeting him. . . . Though I could not yield to his reasoning I could at least admire, and did greatly admire, his remarkable clarity and cogency as an apologist, allowing him his primary assumptions.

One of the distinguished editors of *The Boston Evening Transcript*, Albert C. Dieffenback, a self-confessed Unitarian, had this to say:

No other man equalled Dr. Machen in a recognized command of the situation. That his passing brings into relief the lack of success of the great religious adventure only slightly dims the significance of the issue. . . . Newspaper readers and the uninformed opponents of Dr. Machen within his own household have fashioned in their minds a characterization of the man which is in fact a caricature. J. Gresham Machen was a gentleman. That is the word. Born of an excellent family of the South, in Baltimore, Machen was a Christian after the Presbyterian order. And that means a living, doctrinal, cultured and spiritual faith.

Pearl S. Buck was constrained to add her word of praise:

The man was admirable. He never gave in one inch to anyone. He never bowed his head. It was not in him to trim or compromise, to accept any peace that was less than

triumph. He was a glorious enemy because he was completely open and direct in his angers and hatreds. He stood for something and everyone knew what it was.

Those in the orbit of his friendship were no less appreciative of his worth. Said Dr. Caspar Wistar Hodge:

I not only loved him as a personal friend, but I regarded him as the greatest theologian in the English-speaking world. The whole cause of evangelical Christianity has lost its greatest leader.

Dr. Leander S. Keyser, a Lutheran scholar, wrote:

I admired him for his stalwart faith, his unswerving loyalty to Christ, his clear and definite convictions, his unique and forceful way of stating his views, and his undaunted courage.

And so passed from this earthly coil one who was both loved and hated, admired and resented, honored and slurred, a genuine Valiant-for-truth who, like Paul, carried on his ministry by "evil report and good report"—one of whom in a very real sense "the world was not worthy."

*After this it was raised abroad that Mr. Valiant-for-truth was taken with a summons . . . and had this for a token, that the summons was true, that his "pitcher was broken at the fountain"—Ecclesiastes 12:6. When he understood it he called his friends, and told them of it. Then said he, "I am going to my Father's; and though with great difficulty I have got hither, yet now do I not repent me of all the troubles I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and my scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I fought His battles who will now be my rewarder." When the day that he must go hence was come, many accompanied him to the river-side, into which as he went, he said, "Death, where is thy sting?" And as he went down deeper, he said, "Grave, where is thy victory?"—I Corinthians 15:55. So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.*



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# Why not "total abstinence"?

ROLLIN P. KELLER

From its beginning, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has consistently refused to take a stand for total abstinence from the use of alcoholic beverages. This refusal has cost us dearly. We are whispered about in some evangelical circles as the "wet" church. Our stand has been interpreted as a weakness, a Charlie Brown wishy-washy fear to rebuke the world for its sin. We must take an honest look at ourselves. What is the truth in this matter?

"Christian Liberty", particularly in regard to the beverage use of alcohol, was one of the explosive issues that divided the Church in 1937 when the Bible Presbyterian Synod was formed. Today this question is still a sticky issue that needs careful discussion in view of a possible merger between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod.

When we sit down to count the cost today, does our hindsight tell us we have been unwise in taking such a stand? Are we really so jealous for the privilege of having a drink? Do we actually think more of booze than of brethren? Are we demonstrating a divisive, unChristian attitude of inflexibility for an issue of small consequence?

## The only infallible rule

Let's take another look. First of all we need to declare again the authority for all matters of moral conduct. There is no difference of opinion here. Our only infallible rule of faith or conduct is the Bible.

But, as Professor Murray has said, "The line of demarcation between virtue and vice is not a chasm but a razor's edge" (p. 56, *Principles of Conduct*). The only safe way to stay on the right side of the line is to draw the line precisely where the Bible does. We dare not describe as right conduct that which the Bible calls sin. We are also in error when we categorize as sin that which the Bible does not. Our distinctions may be easier to observe than the Bible's, but to the degree that they differ from the Bible they will be wrong by just that much. *It is always hard to draw the line where the Bible does, but that is where we must draw it!*

Consider these words of our Lord: "John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!" (Luke 7:33, 34). As a Nazarite, John the Baptist did not drink wine. But Jesus was not a Nazarite, and he says here that he *did* drink wine.

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*The Rev. Rollin P. Keller is pastor of the Emmanuel Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Wilmington, Delaware.*

We must not allow emotion to guide our interpretation here. The obvious intent of our Lord's words is to contrast his conduct with that of John. What John did not do, Jesus did. The Pharisees had rejected both. Jesus is pointing out the arbitrary judgment of these religious icebergs who implied, "You're damned if you do and damned if you don't."

If we are not to understand that Jesus had specific reference to wine here, then interpretation means nothing and the passage makes no point at all. Jesus is exposing the sin of deliberate misinterpretation. It was true that Jesus ate bread with sinners and drank their wine. But it was nothing short of sinful exaggeration to jump from that fact to conclude that he was a glutton or a wine-bibber-drunkard. That is Satan's logic, and Jesus calmly disposed of those who deliberately misinterpreted his acts with the words: "Wisdom is justified of all her children" (verse 35). If one is, in wisdom, seeking to know the truth, it will not be hard to find.

The word used by Jesus to describe his beverage is the same word used in Paul's warning: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess" (Ephesians 5:18). In other words, Jesus drank the same wine that made others drunk when they over-indulged. Jesus practiced true temperance, not total abstinence.

The issue then becomes *much* larger than it seemed. Those who insist that it is sinful to drink a glass of wine are pointing the finger at your Savior! If it is wrong to practice anything short of total abstinence, then Jesus was a sinner. This is no little matter. Can you possibly imagine Paul telling Timothy, "Sin a little for thy stomach's sake" (1 Timothy 5:23)?

## The only sufficient rule

But, someone may say, "Those were different days. The water was poor, and the wine not so potent as today's. Because we live in our day and age, our practice should be one of abstinence."

That brings up another important matter. Is the Bible a *sufficient* revelation of God's will for our lives? Is Jesus not the perfect example to follow even in this matter? Could it be that God did not foresee that modern-day American Christians would look to the Bible for guidance on this? Those who claim to believe the Bible as the infallible word of God dare not make reservations about that book's ability to guide them!

Let no one misinterpret the intent of a church that refuses to take a stand for total abstinence. We would draw the lines where the Bible does. What God calls sin we must condemn. The Scripture clearly teaches that drunkenness, orgies, and drinking parties, the wild and reckless living of this sinful world, is sin (see 1 Peter 4:3, 4).

But to condemn the glass of wine at the dinner table is

*The Presbyterian Guardian*



plainly an untenable position for anyone who professes to accept the Bible as his only infallible rule of faith and practice. To speak of the one who so indulges as "unspiritual" or unfit to hold office in the church is to make the same judgment against the one whom we confess as the King and Head of the church!

### **My brother's conscience**

But there are brothers and sisters in the church who differ as to their strength of conscience. What shall they do? The Bible speaks so clearly to this; the answer is very simple: They are to love one another! To be specific, Romans 14 explains that: 1) they are not to judge each other; 2) they must put their brother's need ahead of their own; 3) they are to encourage the brother's growth and strengthening in the faith; 4) they must avoid at all costs whatever tends to the brother's destruction; and 5) they may not view the other as a less "spiritual" Christian on some lower plane.

What does it mean to be "spiritual"? Wherever the Bible uses the word "spiritual" it means "of the Spirit." A spiritual person is one led, indwelt and taught by the Holy Spirit. Every Christian has the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9), and every Christian is led of the Spirit (verse 14). It is wrong, then, to say that some Christians are more "spiritual" than others.

The common use of this term has been unfortunate and misleading. It sometimes becomes only a synonym for "ascetic." In medieval times men sought for higher levels of Christian living by physically punishing themselves. There is still a little of such asceticism in the temperament of the church. The deliberate depriving oneself of some legitimate good is thought to be conducive to a higher plane of sanctification. Among the horrendous dangers of such an attitude are the development of a double standard (of Christians and super-Christians) and the attempt to perform meritorious works to earn a place closer to God.

### **"Offending" my brother**

It is very important for a Christian to avoid "offending" a brother. But what does it mean to "offend"? Today, if someone ruffles our sensitivities in some way, we speak of being offended. If the minister appears in the pulpit with a wide tie and colored shirt, some members of the congregation are sure to be "offended." That is not what Paul meant.

When one is "offended" in the biblical sense, it means he has been caused to stumble in the faith. He is led to do something that is wrong for him to do. Stumbling is sinning, in other words.

For example, if my conscience is untroubled about having a glass of wine before bedtime, then I am free to have one (Romans 14:22). But when I go to a restaurant with a brother Christian, there is more to take into account than the simple fact that "all things are lawful." Has this brother a weak conscience on this matter? Would my imbibing lead him to follow the example even though his conscience tells him this is wrong? That would be causing "offense" to him. And that is sternly described as sin against Christ (1 Corinthians 8:12). Strictly speaking, if my brother were not the least tempted to indulge him-

self, then there would be no such "offense."

Still, there is more to consider. Perhaps my brother would become argumentative, and judge me a sinner for taking wine with my meal. He should not judge me; Scripture makes that clear. But shall I deliberately put myself into that situation just to prove a point? And what point would I prove? I could become very pious and quote the Scripture to prove that the abstaining brother is the weaker Christian. But what would that accomplish except to alienate a brother whose fellowship I need. Certainly his conscience needs educating; but this is neither the time, place or manner in which to do it.

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Romans 14:19). While I am plugging away to demonstrate that wine is a legitimate beverage for a Christian, I have forgotten a much higher principle: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not" (1 Corinthians 10:23). I am then like the Pharisee who tithed meticulously and forgot the weightier matters of the law — judgment, mercy and faith. We are so tempted to strain out the gnat only to swallow the camel. I must remember that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:12).

### **Love for my brother**

There is a very real principle under which I must operate, the principle of love. If I love my brother (1 John 3:14 says every true Christian does!), then I will alter my habits in whatever way will benefit him. This applies even to my eating habits, which is a very personal issue. But the principle of adjusting to my brother's needs outranks preference any day.

Then there is the matter of cultural good taste to which Christians must pay heed. There are places where chewing gum in public is highly disgraceful. The missionary who deliberately defies the cultural etiquette will find himself ignored — and deserves to be! Paul's missionary method was simply to be all things to all men that by all means he might save some.

This applies to the matter of drinking an alcoholic beverage. There are places where, rightly or wrongly, one's claim to be a Christian is just not taken seriously when the non-Christian sees him take a drink. "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" (1 Corinthians 10:32, 33).

In summary then, the drinking of wine in itself is not to be condemned as sinful. To do so would run contrary to the very heart of the gospel, casting a shadow over the person and ministry of Christ. In considering my actual practice, however, I must consider my brother in Christ that I do not cause him to sin by following my example, nor alienate him by my belligerence. I must also consider the social implications of my practice in the minds of those to whom I go to preach Christ. For the highest principle of all in this matter is that "whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

## Whence man?

DAVIS A. YOUNG

No one will deny that Reformed thought in the Netherlands has had profound influence on Reformed circles in the United States and Canada. American Christians owe a great debt to men like Kuyper, Bavinck, and Hepp, and more recently, Berkouwer, H. Ridderbos, and Dooyeweerd. Yet it is precisely this influence that gives the present writer cause for concern. Most recently there have been disturbing new trends both at the Free University of Amsterdam and in De Gereformeerde Kerken (the Reformed Churches) in Nederland.

### New views of man's origin

One of the more upsetting aspects of current theological thinking in Dutch Reformed circles concerns the matter of origins. Much is said and written about Genesis 1-3 that conflicts with the traditional interpretation of these chapters. But Genesis 1-3 is foundational to the whole Bible; if our interpretation is faulty here, then our understanding of all of Christianity will be distorted. There are strong indications that the Christian message is gradually being distorted in the Netherlands and that faulty views of Genesis 1-3 play a large part in this. Reformed Christians on our own continent must guard against similar faulty views.

Among influential writings coming from the Netherlands are those of Jan Lever, a biologist at the Free University. In *Creation and Evolution* and in his recent little booklet *Where Are We Headed?*, Lever outlines a thoroughly theistic-evolutionist point of view. As a scientist he feels that evolution is an unquestionable fact, and is convinced that man evolved from animal life. Thus he rejects the historicity of Adam and Eve, and of the Fall. He tells us that the writer of Genesis did not intend to convey scientific information about origins; rather, he was using oriental pictures of reality to show the Israelites the great truths of God's creatorhood and the universal evil in mankind.

### . . . by theologians and in the church

It is distressing that so influential a Reformed thinker seriously presents such an evolutionistic view. Yet perhaps we can forgive a *scientist* for being so unaware of the devastating theological consequences of his view of origins. But it is with genuine dismay that we see a bright young *theologian* espousing much the same idea. H. M. Kuitert, a professor of dogmatics at the Free University, maintains that the stories of Genesis 1-3 are simply so much packaging in which the great religious truths concerning God, man, and sin are presented. He too feels that Adam and Eve never existed as real individuals, and that their story is but a vehicle to tell us of the universal evil in men.

Signs of weakness appear also in the church. The Synod of the Reformed Churches, meeting in Assen in 1926, held that the Bible meant to teach that the trees of life and of the knowledge of good and evil and the serpent and its speaking were literal, sensorially perceptible realities. Therefore, this was the only interpretation of Genesis 2 and 3 permitted to ministers in the church. The 1967 Synod at Lunteren, however, rescinded the view of the Assen Synod. Now it is permissible to say that the serpent, for example, was *not* a literal snake.

These signs of change on matters relating to the origin of man and the Fall are extremely critical, for a weakening on these can ultimately threaten a genuinely Christian view of salvation. In this series of three articles, we will view afresh the scriptural data on man's origin, and discuss the theological importance of holding to the biblical view.

### No accommodation to evolution

At the outset we should state our belief that there is *no way, absolutely no way* to reconcile an evolutionary view of man's origin with the biblical data. There are numerous lines of evidence in Scripture to indicate that there was a first pair of human beings specially created by God.

In Genesis 2:7, we are told that God "formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living creature." This plainly indicates that man became man when God breathed the breath of life into him. It has been objected that this refers only to man's soul or spirit being given, that prior to the divine inbreathing the creature involved was some other kind of preexisting animal. The imparting of the breath of life, the giving of a spirit to the animal, thereby constituted it a man.

But the text cannot bear this interpretation. There is nothing in the phrase "breath of life" that would serve to distinguish man from other animals. Genesis 7:22 indicates that animals also have this breath of life. The divine inbreathing does not indicate the impartation of a "soul" to some preexistent animal. The verse does indicate that the divine inbreathing first imparted life, so that the lump of earth formed by God became a living man.

This interpretation is clinched by the statement that "man became a living soul (creature)." This has nothing to do with the soul as against the body, so as to distinguish man from the animals—though it is often incorrectly used to support a doctrine of the human soul. In Genesis 1:20, 21, 24, and 30, the animals are also called living creatures or

souls. The text of 2:7 thus tells us that at the time of the divine inbreathing the creature known as man became a living thing. Prior to this, he was *not* a living creature of any kind. This text immediately precludes the evolutionary development of a man from any preexisting living things.

### Man appears before woman

A second scriptural evidence against the evolutionary view concerns the relationship of the sexes. The evolutionary view holds that the male and female evolved simultaneously through time. Genesis 2, however, clearly teaches that Eve was formed subsequently to Adam, and in order to be a help for him. If this is not to be taken literally, it is a bit puzzling to explain why the writer gives so much detail about Adam's loneliness and his attempt to find companionship among the animals. The account also indicates a time lapse between the initial appearance of Adam and that of Eve.

This interpretation is certainly shared by the apostle Paul. In 1 Corinthians 11:8, 9 he sees the woman as having been formed specifically *of* and *for* the man. If mankind evolved, it is hard to understand what these texts would have meant to Paul. In what sense could it be said that the woman was *of* the man if she were his equal through evolution?

Paul also speaks of this in 1 Timothy 2:11-14. He gives as one reason for the woman's silence in the church that she was formed later than the man. The idea of subordination also occurs here. If man and woman evolved simultaneously, then why should the woman be subordinate to the man in any sense? Why would she not have as much right to speak in the church as he? This writer has yet to see a theistic evolutionist discuss this; but it is interesting that, wherever theistic evolution has made inroads in the church, there we find an increasing tendency to ordain women as elders or pastors in a clear departure from the biblical norm.

### Sin brings death to man

Paul's teaching in Romans 5 on the origin of death in the human race is also clearly at variance with evolution. *Any* evolutionary theory requires death of every generation of the animal ancestors of man, and views death as something that would come normally to the "first" man. Death would not be an unusual interruption, but the expected phenomenon in the development of the human race. Paul, however, says that death came upon mankind because of the sin of a specific individual man. Paul did not view death as normal. Rather it came as punishment for the *act* of one individual. The implication clearly is that death did not exist for the human race prior to the commission of that one man's sin.

### Adam's parallel to Christ

The analogy between Adam and Christ, in both Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15, also excludes the evolutionary idea. Paul insists here that sin is a result of a specific transgression of one individual. If that individual, Adam, did not exist and did not fall into sin by means of his one transgression, then these analogies make no sense.

Theistic evolutionists have indicated that the story of the Fall of Adam and Eve simply shows that we are all sinners. The story tells of "everyman's" struggle against evil. In reality we have evolved to our present status and the evil within is but a remnant of our pre-human origins, and is therefore basic to our nature.

If we take this view and apply it to Paul's Adam-Christ analogies, we may "exegete" Romans 5:19 this way: "Just as by one man's (Adam's) disobedience many were constituted sinners, so by the obedience of one (Christ) shall many be constituted righteous; but inasmuch as Adam did not exist but only represents our struggle against evil, so also Christ need not have existed and represents our struggle to do what is good." Christ can be our example, but not our Savior in the biblical sense. This writer has never seen a theistic-evolutionist exegesis of this passage, so the above "exegesis" may be a somewhat unfair interpretation of a theistic evolutionist's view of Christ's work. Nonetheless we believe it is the logical consequence of this view of the origin of man and of sin.

### Man in the image of God

A final argument for the special creation of man is that he was made in God's image (Genesis 1:26, 27). This is never stated of the animals. The theistic evolutionist is thus confronted with the problem of determining the point between animalhood and manhood when the evolving creature is suddenly in the image of God. Or, is the image of God a developing thing? We dread to think that it is, for if so and if man is continually evolving, then the image of God is also evolving and man is becoming more God-like all the time. This is blasphemous; but it seems to be a logical outworking of the evolutionary view. And, if true holiness, righteousness, and knowledge (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10) are aspects of the unblemished image of God, then how could it be said of the first man (men) that they possessed that unmarred image—if they too struggled against the evil nature inherited from their animal ancestors?

We have presented a number of Scripture texts that are utterly irreconcilable with an evolutionary view of man. We do not see how any Bible-believing Christian can hold such a view, in spite of the apparent results of science. We have shown somewhat sketchily what we believe are logical consequences of a theistic-evolutionary view of man. Whether or not any theistic evolutionist actually holds to these consequences we do not know; but we would offer a challenge to such individuals to exegete some of the texts cited above.

In the next article we will develop more fully the theological-ethical implications of the theistic-evolutionary view of man, and show how radically these implications distort true Christianity. In the final article we will discuss the nature of the scientific data that relate to the origin of man.

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# The Presbyterian Guardian

EDITOR

JOHN J. MITCHELL

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## Letters to the Editor

### "Slay not the innocent!"

Dear Mr. Mitchell:

I very much appreciated your recent articles on abortion. In our present-day situation, the issue is a vital one and all Christians must search God's Word for the answer. Your references to Psalm 51:5 and Jeremiah 1:5 were very helpful, and I feel they do most assuredly apply. I agree that, if men are uncertain of when exactly the humanness of the fetus begins, then they certainly have no right to take that life. It seems to me that man's idol, his "super-intellect," is rearing its ugly head once again when he can blatantly assert that a child is certainly not human before birth or before he is viable outside the womb.

How can he be so sure of himself? How can he take the chance of possibly committing the murder of an innocent life and breaking God's commandment? If in God's sight the fetus is a human being in his own right, how then will they stand in the final judgment who say abortion is not contrary to God's will? Fifty thousand

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[latest figure: sixty-nine thousand] unborn lives taken in the state of New York alone! How will they justify their actions? As we well know many of these were performed to prevent inconveniencing many selfish and irresponsible people.

As a nurse I have seen many unwed mothers who have given up their newborn children for adoption, or kept them and faced the consequences. Though they have sinned, they have at least not been responsible for the death of an innocent life. In many cases they have repented of their sin and with God's help have worked out to the best of their ability what would be best for their child.

I feel that the unborn fetus is human and innocent, in the sense that he has not *personally* yet broken any of God's commands. I fully realize that we are under God's wrath at conception for the sin of our first parents. But the unborn fetus has not actually broken God's law, and in this sense is innocent. "Keep thee far from a false

matter: and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked" (Exodus 23:7). Does this not apply to the murder of an unborn child?

I hope that all Christians everywhere will search the Scriptures and pray for God's grace to help us in dealing with this matter and incoming to the right decision.

Mrs. Paulette Staley  
Tiverton, Rhode Island

*Ed. note:* Another correspondent from New England points to the significance of Genesis 5:3, which says, "And Adam . . . begat a son in his own likeness, after his own image" — which was the image of God himself. This generation of a new person in God's image is said to be due to Adam. But the only direct act of Adam was the impregnation of his wife; after conception, the whole affair was out of his hands. In other words, if Adam "begat" a son, this took place at conception — not at some point in time afterward!

# Morality: Old and New

NORMAN SHEPHERD

A recent pamphlet published by the National Education Association with the title, *What Parents Should Know About Sex Education in the Schools*, declares: "As with so many other areas affecting society as a whole—driving, nutrition, smoking, narcotics, physical fitness—the school has emerged as the agency best equipped to help young people learn to live comfortably with the evolving sexual ethic of the adult world."

We may set aside for the moment the question whether the school is the best agency to accomplish this task. Most striking, indeed alarming, is the unchallenged assumption that the task is to help young people live comfortably with the evolving sexual ethic of the adult world. Educators realize that they cannot teach simply the biological facts of sexual encounter. These facts are to be given "more complex and specific treatment" in the junior high school; but "from this point through high school, the emphasis will be on social questions and problems and on sexual standards and mores." The myth of neutrality in the approach to questions of moral standards is thoroughly exploded, however, when the announced intention of the program is not simply to acquaint students with the dynamic and the program of the evolving sexual ethic, but *to live comfortably with it*.

## An ethic of "No!" to God

One would have to be worse than blind not to realize that the evolving sexual ethic runs counter to what is summed up in the divine command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." We need not limit our perspective to the area of sex. All across the line the emerging ethic—the way of "life" for our day—says "No!" to the commandments of God. The freedom which modern man has assumed to himself gives no place to "commandments," and even where some sort of rule is introduced as helpful and useful to regulate conduct, it certainly is not to be obeyed as "of God."

In recent years the emerging ethic, which made no pretense of being Christian, has received strong impetus from the side of professing Christianity through the development of "situation ethics" or "the new morality." Five years have passed since the publication of *Situation Ethics* by Joseph Fletcher, and the public discussion over the new morality has abated. The reason for this does not lie in the public rejection of the movement but in the thoroughness of its victory which seems to place the propriety of the new morality beyond question.

In the minds of many professing Christians, the new morality has succeeded in casting an aura of Christian respectability over the emerging ethic of our day. It appears to be a viable way of circumventing the rigor of the Ten Commandments, but with the divine approval. Even some evangelical Christians, who have grown weary in well-doing, may begin to derive comfort from the thought that sleepless nights of meditation upon the law of God may no longer be necessary after all.

The Christian who is faithful to his Lord cannot help but respond to the challenge of the new morality by recognizing that, in the purity and genius of its conception,

situation ethics is a radical evil.

## "No rules — none at all"

At the heart of situation ethics lies the proposition formulated with commendable clarity by Joseph Fletcher: "For the situationist there are no rules—none at all" (*Situation Ethics*, p. 55). No amount of qualification—and it is by no means a meager or insignificant amount—ought to obscure this basic thesis. Even Paul Ramsey, as severe as his criticism of the new morality has been (e.g., in *Deed and Rules in Christian Ethics*), seeks to explain what a Christian does in terms of an 'ethic without rules' (*Basic Christian Ethics*, chapter 2).

But why should it be necessary to qualify in any way the basic proposition that there are no rules at all? The answer obviously is that a world with no rules, with no moral law, and with no moral order would become a chaotic world. No one could differentiate morally between giving a cup of cold water and giving a cup of hemlock poison, between killing six million Jews and feeding starving Biafrans. The consistent application of the new morality's basic principle leads to chaos and death.

Fletcher himself has drawn back from a consistent application of his basic principle. He has criticized existentialist ethics as an undesirable extreme (pp. 24f.). In the very same paragraph (p. 55) where Fletcher says that there are no rules, he introduces the commandment to love God through the neighbor as an operational directive. He also recommends "maxims" to the effect that one should tell the truth and respect life.

We may be grateful for the grace of God which in this way restrains the outworking of radical evil. But our eyes must not be blinded to the anti-Christian character of the movement as a whole. Boulders are a less chaotic form of rock than sand; but both are stone and not bread.

Some Christians are tempted to respond to the challenge of the new morality in the public sphere by an appeal to the principle of law and order. The thought is that enough of the right kind of legislation on the books, and the willingness of police and judicial officers to enforce it, will raise the level of decency and morality in society.

Indeed, it is a biblical principle that the civil magistrate does not bear the sword in vain. It is his obligation to enforce a minimum standard of public morality so that society does not fall apart into the chaos that would ensue if there were no rules of any kind at all.

## Chaos or Tyranny

Nevertheless, law and order where there is no reference to God's law and God's order is no less fatal than pure lawlessness. The latter leads to death by way of chaos; the former leads to death by way of tyranny. One need only think of Nazi Germany, and the response then made in the name of law and order to the chaos of the post-World War I society, to see this point illustrated.

In a recently published biography of George Whitefield, Arnold Dallimore has briefly discussed the moral decay characterizing the society in which the evangelist began his

ministry. He also notes the measures taken to deal with it. "Crime became rampant and the authorities resorted to the only hope they had of checking it: the increase of punishment. They made as many as 160 offenses punishable by death, but lawlessness still mounted" (*George Whitefield*, vol I, p. 26).

### No answer but Christ

It is clear that the answer to the permissiveness of the emerging modern ethic is not repression, and the church will make a grave mistake if it only and indiscriminately aligns itself with the forces of repression. It is out of the heart that the issues of life proceed, and it is at the heart of man that the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ is aimed.

There is no solution to the modern dilemma of freedom, chaos, and death on one side, or repression, tyranny, and death on the other, apart from the name of Jesus Christ. He took upon himself the form of sinful flesh to give his life a ransom for many. He gives men life from death and shows them how to live in the freedom of obedient servants of God. Paul writes to the Corinthians that you are "in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30).

The new morality is nothing but the Satanic imitation of what is in fact the only truly new morality, the walk before God of the believer who has put on the new man, renewed

in knowledge after the image of his Creator (Colossians 3:10).

We are frequently challenged to make clear what the relevance of the gospel is to our present situation—as if our present situation derived its meaning from the immediate crises through which we are passing, whether defined in terms of the Vietnam war, or the poverty problem, or the racial issue, or the pollution of natural resources. As significant and pressing as these issues are, they are not to be compared with the fact that this present age is the time between Christ's advent to save by his death and resurrection and his return to judge according to righteousness and truth. Therefore says the apostle Paul, we are to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and are to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in *this present world* (Titus 2:12). How utterly different is this from the goal of modern public education—"to help young people learn to live comfortably with the evolving sexual ethic of the adult world."

Far from yielding to the temptation to make the gospel relevant to modern man, the Christian must challenge modern man to yield to the gospel and to become relevant to the world that God has made for his own glory.

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*Group therapy — continued*

## A reply to Professor Adams

DONALD A. SEMISCH

The article "Group Therapy—or Slander?" by Dr. Jay E. Adams, in the February 1971 issue of the *Guardian*, provides an interesting study in forensic art. The conclusion of Dr. Adams should be thoroughly discussed by one competent in the field of counseling, a task I should not undertake as I am a lawyer. My profession does qualify me, I trust, to comment on the dialectics of Dr. Adams and to analyze their relevance, fairness and competency.

It is fair to assume that one of Professor Adams' position has marshalled the best available arguments on behalf of his case; and if they are discovered to be irrelevant, immaterial, or indeed unfair, to judge that they cast doubt on the validity of his conclusions.

My purpose is to demonstrate that the arguments presented do not meet the ordinary tests of relevant, material or fair argument.

### Condemned for abuses

Dr. Adams begins by falling into the common error of arguing against the validity of an activity because of some abuse or misuse of it. We, naturally, join in rejecting the non-Christian activities of some encounter groups.

The provocative description of those activities serves to warn us of his style of argument, since such abuse or misuse can have no bearing on the validity of the activity where the abuse or misuse is absent. A simple illustration is the fact that we condemn pornography, but continue to read good literature. The only purpose the argument serves is to demonstrate the invalidity of the improper activity; but it

in no way bears on the issue of the propriety of groups where the improper activity is absent. If groups are wrong, it must be for some other reason.

Secondly, he states that a variety of group programs exists to which seminarians and youth groups are "now being subjected." This introduces a new element—coercion—which is not an argument against groups, but against force. Involuntary subjection to some activity immediately raises our defenses, as it should. But the argument clearly has no place in a scholarly discussion of the propriety of groups. The same argument is used later by Dr. Adams in his discussion of slander, and is just as inapposite in that context.

Thirdly, the author sets forth what he characterizes as pertinent questions to be asked in judging any manifestation of group encounter or therapy. The questions are largely of the style deemed "misleading" in the law of evidence and inadmissible in a court. Notice question one: "Is there any biblical warrant for systematically unlacing another person and throwing his stuffing around the room in order to ventilate one's own hostilities and thus selfishly find relief for himself?" It is difficult to conceive a more unfair question. Perhaps it will clarify the point to ask: "Is there any biblical warrant for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church systematically to encourage young people to smoke and drink in order to exercise their liberty and thus selfishly ignore others?" Your reply, and quite correctly, would be an indignant denial that the OPC does that, and I would agree.

The second question is of exactly the same nature: "Is it really necessary to take other people apart and tell them off in the name of honesty and openness?" The third question, actually several in one, falls to the same charge. The questions are exotic, but hardly fair and certainly not to the point; for instance: "Are [believers] . . . to be so open that they may freely discuss any and all matters, without

distinction, or exception, with anyone?" Question four simply asks the question, and one wonders how it can serve as a guide unless the answer is clear. If the answer is clear, he need not ask the question—or any of the others—but simply show the answer. It is absurd to assume the answer and then ask the question as a guide to the answer.

Questions five and six are in the same category as the first three. It is worth singling out question six for study: "Should sinfully rebellious and biblically confused persons be selected as the proper persons from whom one should seek counsel when he is in a similarly mixed up state?" Even assuming that such a question is fair or relevant, if we ask the question with regard to a group of elders or professors at seminary, we find that the answer is not at all what we are initially led to expect. Question seven simply falls to the recurring mistake of thinking that by attacking possible abuses one has attacked the activity without such abuse, and as we have seen this is no argument at all.

### Undefined "slander"

Next, Dr. Adams comes to his main polemic, which gives its name to the title—"slander." This point must be considered by him to be his strongest support. Notice that Dr. Adams does not define slander. The two verses of Scripture noted do not define it, unless he is giving us a definition never before offered. Slander is well defined legally as the injuring of a person's character or reputation by *false* statements. Is he using that definition? Does he recognize the important distinction between slander and "invasion of privacy" and simply ignore it? Not only does he blend these separate offenses without definition, but he adds "coercion" to the theme (he uses the term directly) which simply has no place except to excite prejudice.

Instead of a factual description of what slander is and how it occurs (if at all) in groups, he sprinkles his argument with emotionally laden terms—"one-sided account," "spill the beans," talking about people "behind their backs"—and then adds the misleading question: "Can we dump our personal resentments and complaints on the table . . . ?" Now such terms add spice to a jury speech and to some sermons, but in a scholarly argument they impede rather than advance the inquiry. Furthermore, they all proceed on the assumption that when one is in the group he must of necessity be talking about another, and not only talking but "slandering," which is not defined but which a lawyer knows is something a good deal more than Professor Adams indicates. Did Paul slander Peter in his Galatians letter when he tells how he withstood Peter to the face?

From slander, the author moves to alleging that groups to which earnest Christians have been attracted involve "charges and accusations" resulting in a "Kangaroo court" where a person is "tried, convicted and judged in absentia." While Dr. Adams is demonstrably wrong on his facts, one must ask that even if he is right, "So what?" Is not Christian liberty fraught with the potential danger of abuse whereby it becomes license? Do we give up Christian liberty? How then do we justify giving up groups because of "potential" danger?

Again, having assumed his answer and placed it in the hat, it is no surprise that he finds it in the hat after saying the magic words. If we assume that our problems almost always involve others, and that we must talk about others in a manner that brings charges against them or slanders

them, we expect to have to consider the effect of this on groups. A moment's reflection, however, indicates that the assumption is unfair and unbiblical. It is out of the heart that the issues of life proceed, our thoughts, desires, attitudes, rebellion, etc., and when confessing we surely recognize that it is "I" that is at fault. Dr. Adams' combination of slander with discipline obliterates distinctions and confuses the issue, but allows him to find biblical comfort for his thesis which was absent until then. Dr. Adams' complaint, if accurate, could be brought against Paul for mentioning that he had been deserted by friends who loved this present world, a "charge" he made in their absence.

It is interesting to inquire, assuming again that Dr. Adams' term "slander" is appropriate, if it is any less slander if told to a minister, a seminary professor, a lawyer or a Christian counselor? Is there any qualitative difference because of the numerical difference between one and a group? Obviously not. Then what does make a distinction? Is it who you tell? If it is, can you tell a group of them? Is the confidential relationship important? Then what if that exists in the group (it can, you know). I fail to see that Dr. Adams comes to grips with meaningful differences. At any rate, his argument is not against slander, for slander has to do with what is said and if it is said to someone other than the person slandered. Hence, slander is irrelevant to his argument, for he really means to focus on the view that a group cannot receive the "confession," and on that point slander is totally beside the point.

In observing a superior attorney presenting a case, one cannot fail to observe that he states accurately and fairly the issues and the opposing views without emotionally charged terms or misleading analogies. Can we honestly find that Dr. Adams gave us a fair view of the brothers in Christ who sincerely believe there is a form of encounter group that leads people to a deeper personal relationship with Christ and their fellow Christians?

There is an important distinction in controverting his conclusions (or even his assumptions) from disputing his reasoning. To question the former is to make truth an issue, and to require evidence. I have not undertaken to establish the truth of a counter-position. I have attempted to disclose the inadequacy and fallacy of his arguments which leave his case wholly unsupported.

I hope it is not preverse to note in closing that it is ironic that Dr. Adams has slandered (using the term as it is defined legally) those who use groups in churches or among seminarians, with prayer believing they advance the cause of Christ. If he is wrong and they are right, he has slandered them. Even if he is right, then he has brought "accusations" and "charges" against them without following the biblical procedure (to follow his own argument). In light of this I would hope that Dr. Adams will search out those of whom he has written, and discuss the biblical warrant for the group method and the possible abuses. He has called for a return to biblical procedure; it should be followed in the manner with which he deals with those who, as sincere Christians expert in the field, differ with him.

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Return Requested

## *Here and There in The Orthodox Presbyterian Church*

### **THREE NEW CHURCHES**

**Bartlesville, Okla.** — Westminster Chapel was officially organized and received as a congregation of the Presbytery of the Dakotas on February 14. The Rev. Robert L. Malarkey is pastor.

**Herndon and Manassas, Va.** — The Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic, meeting on April 17, approved the reception of Bethel Chapel in Herndon and Calvary Chapel in Manassas as organized congregations. The Rev. Edwin C. Urban is pastor in Herndon, and the Rev. Richard Wirth in Manassas.

### **OVERTURES TO ASSEMBLY**

**Portland, Ore.** — The Presbytery of the Northwest urges the General Assembly to adopt the "Statement on Christian Liberty" drawn up by the joint committee on a possible merger of the Orthodox Presbyterian and Reformed Presbyterian Churches. The Synod of the RPC/ES adopted the statement in 1967 and Reformed Presbyterians want the OP Assembly to consider it also.

**Hialeah, Fla.** — The Presbytery of the South wants the General Assembly to "adopt as guidelines for Sessions in receiving and dismissing members the provisions of the Second Revised Version of the Form of Government, Ch. XIV, 10," which call for a letter of dismissal to churches of like faith and practice, and a letter of standing in other cases.

**Caney, Kans.** — The Presbytery of the Dakotas, by a vote of 16 to 3, defeated the proposed amendment to

the Form of Government sent down by the last General Assembly. This is the first negative action reported on the amendment to permit representative assemblies.

**Raleigh, N.C.** — The Rev. Cromwell G. Roskamp, presently pastor of the Westminster Church in Valdosta, Ga., has accepted the call of the Raleigh Chapel and expects to take up his new duties late in June.

**Grand Junction, Col.** — The Rev. Donald J. Duff has accepted the call of Bethel Church here; his new address: 1971½ Glory View Dr., Grand Junction, Colo. 81501.

**Portland, Me.** — The Presbytery of New York and New England installed the Rev. Donald R. Miller as pastor of Trinity Church in Lewiston, and also received the Rev. Paul Davenport from the Free Church of Scotland as pastor-elect of Grace Church in Fall River, Mass.

**San Francisco, Cal.** — The Presbytery of Northern California examined and approved for ordination Messrs. Robert D. Raglin and Arthur G. Ames. Mr. Raglin is serving as pastor of Covenant Church, San Jose, and Mr. Ames as assistant pastor of First Church, Sunnyvale.

**Winner, S.D.** — The Rev. Robert D. Sander, pastor of the Winner Church, has accepted the call of Grace Reformed Church (Eureka Classis) in Bakersfield, Cal., and expects to move to his new charge in June.

**Spencer Mills, Mich.** — The Spencer Mills Church is completing its new building; it will seat 250 and has six classrooms.

### *NPRF (continued)*

**Atlanta, Ga.** — Meeting here on April 15, the National Presbyterian and Reformed Fellowship adopted a constitution. Members (ministers or elders) are required to subscribe "to the doctrines set forth in the classical Reformed confessions" (the Westminster standards and the Three Forms of Unity of Reformed churches).

The Fellowship sees itself as a possible focal point to which various Presbyterian and Reformed groups may rally, particularly if the United Presbyterian and Presbyterian ("southern") Church unite. The Fellowship now consists of members from the Christian Reformed Church and Reformed Church of America, and the Orthodox Presbyterian, Presbyterian U.S., United Presbyterian U.S.A., Reformed Presbyterian Evangelical Synod, and Reformed Presbyterian N. A. ("Covenanter") churches.

Apparently there is now a real possibility that the proposed plan of union of the UPUSA and PCUS will contain clear provisions for congregations to withdraw with their property intact and even some right to seek a division of presbytery assets. Pro-union forces seem willing to grant this in order to secure support for the union plan; otherwise, conservatives (especially in the southern Church) would resist union and could probably defeat it at the presbytery level. There is no estimate as to how many congregations might take advantage of such an option for withdrawal from the uniting body. (If such options are allowed, they will provide a much more equitable arrangement than the so-called "escape clause" in the plan of union of the Consultation on Church Union in which both the United Presbyterian and Presbyterian U.S. churches are involved.)