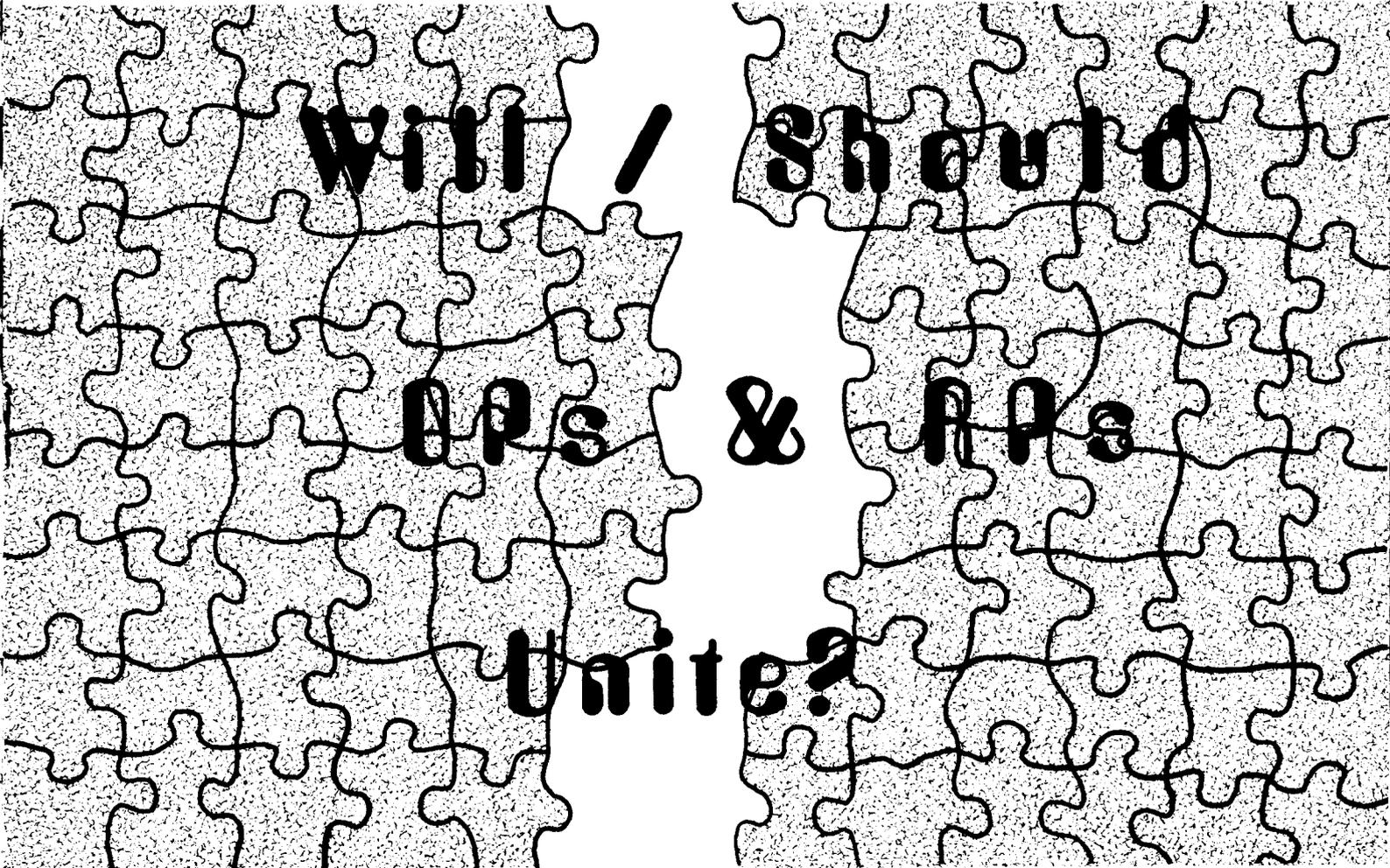


The Presbyterian Guardian

VOL. 43, NO. 3—MARCH, 1974



Will / Should
OPs & APs
Unite?

OP-RP Plan of Union nearing final form

Philadelphia, Pa.—A joint meeting of the Fraternal Relations Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod and the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was held here on February 4 and 5. The joint committee worked on wording and details of the Proposed Plan of Union for the two churches in order to present a completed draft to the Synod and General Assembly of the two bodies later this spring.

Present for the meeting were Reformed Presbyterians: G. L. Blomquist, T. G. Cross, F. S. Dyrness, R. W. Gray, R. L. Harris, K. A. Horner, D. J. MacNair, R. G. Rayburn, and L. H. Stewart; Orthodox Presbyterians: E. P. Clowney, J. P. Galbraith, G. W. Knight III, L. B. Oliver, J. J. Peterson, and N. Shepherd. (The *Guardian's* editor was present throughout the meeting.)

The two-day meeting considered a number of suggestions from presbyteries, sessions, and individuals from both churches concerning various matters in the proposed merger plan.

Modifications to Preamble and Testimony

Part I of the Plan of Union consists of a preamble setting forth the background history leading up to the proposed merger, and a testimony to the two churches' faith and practice. Strong requests for changes in the historical statements led to changes adopted concerning the division that took place in 1937. The full text of the Preamble, with the latest changes shown in italics, is given elsewhere in this issue of the *Guardian*.

Changes in the Testimony were mainly to improve the language and make it more readily understandable; no changes of substance were made.

A third section of Part I is entitled "Declaration of Purpose" and sets forth the prayers and hopes of the united church for the future. The last sentence of the first paragraph was altered to read: "To this end [keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of

peace] we of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church would remove every wall of partition that divides us, manifesting in one fellowship of faith, order, discipline, and service that unity under the Word of Christ that we profess as members of his body." The change involved the addition of the words "faith" and "discipline."

The confessional standards

Part II of the Plan of Union sets forth the confessional standards proposed for the united church. The joint committee had been urged to make it clear just which of the many existing texts of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms would be the official ones for the merged church. In response, it determined to propose the text of the Confession of Faith, as held by both churches now, and as printed in *Trinity Hymnal*.

The only official publication by either church now of the texts of the Catechisms is that contained in the *Standards* (or *Constitution*) of the RPC/ES. It was determined to propose that these be the definitive texts for the merged church, except for the texts of the Larger Catechism, Questions 86-89, which were determined separately.

Larger Catechism changes retained

In September, the Presbytery of Philadelphia (OPC) had adopted a resolution urging that the Plan of Union *not* include any alterations to Questions 86-89 of the Larger Catechism. Alterations intended to make the Standards neutral in respect to millennial views were being proposed in the Plan of Union.

(In the October issue of the *Guardian*, Professor Norman Shepherd presented arguments on why the original form of these questions, as held now by the OPC, ought to be satisfactory to those with pre-millennial views and thus ought to be retained without change. An answer to these arguments, by Professors J. Barton Payne and George W. Knight,

appears elsewhere in the present issue.)

Since September, a total of six (out of eleven) OPC presbyteries has adopted similar resolutions opposing any changes in the Larger Catechism. In the light of this strong expression, the OPC Committee proposed that the changes be dropped and the original wording be restored in the Plan of Union.

In the discussion at the joint meeting that followed this proposal, both Professor Shepherd and Dr. Knight were present. It seemed clear, however, that many pre-mils would find it impossible to agree with Mr. Shepherd; they would feel that the original text of Questions 86-89 clearly excluded the pre-millennial view of our Lord's return. It also seemed clear that failure to include the altered forms of these questions would make it impossible for a large number of Reformed Presbyterians to approve of the merger proposal.

It was also noted in the discussion that the two committees had a mandate from their respective churches to draw up a Plan of Union that could be acceptable to both churches. After a lengthy and frank airing of views, it was determined to present the Plan of Union with the altered questions—thus ensuring "eschatological liberty"—despite the strong opposition voiced by the OPC presbyteries.

Presentation of the Plan

It had been the intention of the joint committee to complete its work on the proposed Plan of Union at this meeting in order to present the completed proposal to the Synod and General Assembly this year for action. If approved by the highest judicatories of both churches, the Plan would have been sent down to the presbyteries for action. Conceivably, union could have taken place in 1975 if approved by the necessary majorities.

But due to delays in getting the full text of the Proposed Plan before the presbyteries, several of the OPC presbyteries had not yet had time to meet and consider parts of the Plan; all of

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the RPC/ES presbyteries had. In view of this, it was finally determined to present Parts I and II of the Plan of Union as revised at this meeting to the Synod and General Assembly "with a view to approval by the two churches as the preamble to and constitutional basis of union."

"Approval" is not understood to be "adoption"; but "approval" would indicate the willingness of both churches to accept these basic parts of the Plan and would thus amount to a preliminary endorsement before a vote on adoption that would be taken in 1975. (In any event, final merger is thus postponed to 1976 at the earliest.)

Other Modifications in the Plan

The remaining parts of the Plan of Union have to do with details of the actual merger process. Part III defines the bounds of presbyteries in a merged church. Several changes were made in these at the joint meeting.

Arizona was placed within the Presbytery of the Rocky Mountains; Dade and Walker Counties in Georgia were placed in the Presbytery of the Tennessee Valley; Ontario was added to the Presbytery of the Great Lakes, Manitoba and Saskatchewan to the Presbytery of the Great Plains, and Quebec to the Presbytery of the Northeast; the District of Columbia was added to the Presbytery of Delmarva; division lines in Illinois and Indiana were defined in terms of county lines rather than the 41st parallel; and the name "Presbytery of Ohio Valley" was changed to "Presbytery of Pittsburgh."

In Part IV, dealing with committees and agencies of the merged church, the membership of the Chaplains Committee was changed to permit ruling elders instead of ministers only. Other changes were made in various places to improve wordings or the like.

This observer was impressed by the frankness with which problem areas were discussed and dealt with. Frequently the desire of one member or group for some particular item was put aside when it developed that others would be given real difficulty in accepting the proposal. Several such proposals were made on both sides and then dropped. The overall concern of

those present, despite the individual inclinations, was to come up with a Plan of Union that was deemed most likely to find acceptance on the part of both churches. This was their mandate, and the joint committee worked hard to fulfill it.

It is now the urgent duty of all of us to study this Plan of Union with care and diligence, and with earnest prayer that our decisions be in accord with the Lords's will.

—John J. Mitchell

Preamble to the Plan of Union

(as revised, February 4, 5, 1974)

The Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church come together committed to the supremacy and authority of the Scriptures, the inerrant Word of God, and confessing one Lord, one faith, one baptism. These churches* come together to unite as the

Church in one scriptural faith and order, in full fellowship in the service of Christ under the divine authority of the whole of Scripture for all of faith and life. We come to this union acknowledging both God's grace and our sins in days past, and trusting in the renewal of the Holy Spirit for days to come.

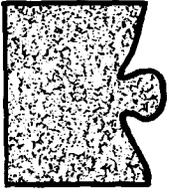
In this union we seek first the honor of our Saviour's name; we wish to be found pleasing in the sight of the Lord who prayed for the deepest unity of His people. In particular, we would praise God for His mighty grace in bringing us together after a sad experience of division in the history of our churches. Soon after the Presbyterian Church of America was established in 1936 to continue faithful witness to the Christ of the Scriptures, a grievous division brought reproach upon this testimony. We recognize the genuine and deep concerns that influenced this division: *on the one hand, a fear that the church was taking a position regarding Christian liberty and eschatology that was out of accord with evangelical American Presbyterianism and might doom the church to sectarian isolation;* on the other hand, a fear that the reformation of the church would be crippled by adherence to requirements for life or faith that went beyond the teaching of Scripture.

We do not claim to have achieved unanimity of opinion on all the issues

that led to that division, but in effecting this union we do confess that the unity of Christ's church should not have been broken as it was in 1937 [Two sentences deleted here.], *and that neither the newly-formed Bible Presbyterian Church nor the church from which it was formed pursued reconciliation.* In seeking the joy of restored fellowship, we would confess afresh our need of the heartsearching and healing work of God's Spirit to convict us of all sin and lead us into the obedience of Christ. We express, by this union, our obligation and determination to maintain, by God's grace, the unity of the church in the mutual faith, love, and confidence which we profess. To these ends we make our testimony and declaration of our purpose.

*The Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod was formed in 1965 by the union of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, General Synod and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, originally called the Bible Presbyterian Church. The former was a church of Scottish descent. The first Reformed Presbyterian congregation in the United States existed as early as 1738 and the Reformed Presbytery was organized in 1774. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church began as part of the Presbyterian Church of America which was established in 1936 to continue the spiritual succession of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. The Presbyterian Church of America in 1939 took the name The Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

[Italics indicate revisions made at the joint meeting, February 4, 5, 1974.]



Will / Should

Orthodox and Reformed Presbyterians unite?

At first glance that seems like two quite distinct questions. What Orthodox Presbyterians and Reformed Presbyterians *should* do is one thing; what they *will* do might turn out to be quite different. And there are many who have their minds made up on the *should*, but are equally convinced that the *will* could well go the other way.

But on second thought, it really is only one question after all. For the answer that the *should* is an answer that will be made when these two churches vote as to whether they *will* indeed merge.

This issue of the *Guardian* contains several articles having to do with the proposed merger of these two branches of American Presbyterianism. This may seem of little interest to those readers who are neither Orthodox Presbyterian nor Reformed Presbyterian. Yet it ought to be of genuine concern to all Bible-believing Christians.

After all, here are two small denominations, both holding to nearly identical confessional standards, both avowedly committed to the absolute and supreme authority of the inerrant Word of God, and both overlapping in location and ministry. If two churches can be joined on a sincere basis of genuine unity in faith and practice, these two ought to be able to accomplish that feat. But can they do it?

The barriers are real

To many outsiders, it is extremely difficult to understand how these two churches can manage *not* to merge. I've lost count of the number of times I've had to give up even trying to explain our present separate existence—and that is true for a good many members in both denominations also.

Yet there are real barriers to merger. Granted that some of these barriers may be in people's imaginations, that does not make them the less real as barriers to union. Granted that some of these barriers ought not to be, it is still a fact that they exist. They are barriers of differences in attitude and approach,

of doubt about motives and intentions, of questions concerning soundness in doctrine or zeal in practice.

It has sometimes been urged, by those in both churches, that all such barriers should be removed before merger takes place. But that is both impossible and unreasonable. It would require a unity and unanimity on all possible questions more uniform than exists *within* either body now!

The need of the hour

This observer has had opportunities to hear and sense the attitudes of many in both churches. He has been privileged to receive frank expressions of opinion from men who favor union, both OPs and RPs, and equally frank expressions of opinions from those who oppose it, both OPs and RPs. He has taken no scientific poll to determine which way the wind is blowing, however.

And what does all this add up to? Well, it adds up to a most urgent duty on the part of every one of us—Orthodox Presbyterians, Reformed Presbyterians, and everyone else who cares for the honor of Christ's name in today's sin-torn world. That urgent duty is simply to pray the head and king of the church, the only lawgiver in Zion, that he will send forth the Spirit of truth into the hearts of those who must decide whether to approve this merger or not!

This is not refusing to come out and take a stand on the question; I already know in my own mind how I intend to vote. But not everyone does know this yet, and even those of us who do cannot settle back with our opinions firmly in place. There is the utmost urgency right now for all those with any responsibility in this question to study the situation carefully, pray most urgently, and be prepared to yield our hearts to the Lord's will.

This urgency is not just for ministers, not just for ruling elders, not just for those who may be going to the next Synod or General Assembly. It involves every member of both church-

es. I'm not suggesting that you ought to lobby to persuade your commissioner to vote your way. But I am saying that you have a duty before the Lord to seek his will in this matter, that you have a right and duty to express your judgment of that will, and that you are under real obligation to hold up this whole question before the Lord praying for his sovereign will to be done in it.

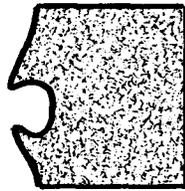
What OPs need to do

What's been said up to now has some right to claim to be the Lord's will for us all in the matter. What follows makes no such claim, but is rather the personal judgment of one interested and involved observer. To Orthodox Presbyterians, this observer would suggest several things:

We need to realize, and sympathize with, the sincere desire of many pre-millennialists within the RPC/ES to have confessional standards to which they can give ready assent. I am convinced that many RPs will be unable to vote for a union that does not include alterations to the Larger Catechism that make it neutral on the millennial question. Their desire to have these changes is not, in my judgment, a bull-headed insistence on having their own way, but grows out of a very sober-minded attitude toward subscription to the confessional standards of the church.

Orthodox Presbyterians also need to realize that there are going to be differences in attitude and method, some of which will be hard to accept. The decision about these differences will have to be one of careful weighing. Are they differences that cannot be overcome with time and loving admonition? Are they perhaps differences of no great principle at all?

Most of all, Orthodox Presbyterians—I speak as a charter member of the OPC—need to pray for a spirit of faithful adherence to the truths of the Word of God, and for a spirit of love and patient dealing with those who may not see the truth precisely as we do.



After all, if the truth is of God, will not the sovereign God give strength to see it maintained? Our duty is to serve the cause of God's truth in God's way.

What RPs need to do

Now it's not quite so easy to speak frankly on this side of things. But there are one or two matters that I make bold to suggest to the Reformed Presbyterians.

On the one hand, Reformed Presbyterians have repeatedly approved the various stages in the development of the Plan of Union to a degree that their Orthodox Presbyterian brethren have yet to do. But on the other hand, unless all my "scouts" are badly informed, there are a sizable number of Reformed Presbyterians who fully intend to vote against a merger when it finally comes to that.

Why so? Well, I suspect it is a combination of things. Some Reformed Presbyterians just don't hanker at all to be merged with those who have the reputation for hardnosed discipline. But brethren, discipline is commanded in Scripture. And Reformed Presbyterians, instead of dreading the future with Orthodox Presbyterian "heresy-hunters," ought to be concerned to exercise that God-given responsibility to uphold the truth of his Word.

And Reformed Presbyterians ought to realize also that if a merger takes place, it is actually the Orthodox Presbyterians who are making the greatest concessions. I know that the Plan of Union seems to suggest that it's mainly the OP standards that are going to be used in the merged church. But really, since neither church has a form of government that it's all that satisfied with, since both churches have the identical Confession and Shorter Catechism, which church is really giving up something basic? Reformed Presbyterians need to realize that, if a merger is approved, it is because Orthodox Presbyterians have been willing to modify their confessional standards (in the area of the millennial question) to meet the needs of Re-

formed Presbyterians.

What both groups need to do

Both Orthodox and Reformed Presbyterians will have to face up to the need to accept the other, not as they might like to have them, not even as they suppose the other actually to be, but on the basis of what each church actually says when it votes on a Plan of Union. This is a tricky business, after all. A Plan of Union is only that, a plan. It will have no constitutional force once the merger takes place, if indeed it does. At the same time, that Plan of Union contains many extremely important statements and promises. A vote in favor of the Plan is a vote endorsing the thrust of all those statements and promises.

The whole aim of the joint committee that has worked so many months to formulate this Plan of Union has been to draw up a Plan that could be accepted by both churches. The preamble and constitutional basis of the Plan are to be voted on this year. Let us suppose that both the RP Synod and the OP General Assembly vote to approve these parts of the Plan; what would such an action prove?

It would prove nothing about what both the Synod and Assembly might do in 1975 when the whole Plan is presented for adoption. But it ought to indicate clearly enough what the basic attitude is in each body toward the crucial parts of the Plan of Union.

If both Synod and Assembly approve the Preamble and Constitutional Basis, that ought to be enough to assure both churches that union is truly desired on both sides. It doesn't mean that either side is entirely satisfied with all the details; it doesn't mean that everyone voting in favor approves of every detail. But it should amount to a formal engagement to be married, a plighting of troth, a giving of solemn promises.

All of which is simply to say again that everyone, both OP and RP, and all the rightly concerned observers from outside, ought to be in the most urgent attitude of earnest prayer before the Lord that his will be done in the decisions to be made this year.

Will/should OPs and RPS unite? Brethren, an extraordinarily important decision is before us. May the Head of the church give us wisdom to see and do his will!

—John J. Mitchell

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A meditation on John 17

EDWARD L. KELLOGG

With the proposed Plan of Union now in hand, the ministers and ruling elders—indeed all the members—of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, should give careful thought and study to the question of whether or not such a union would be pleasing to the Lord.

To answer this question it is imperative that we turn to the Word of God. Both denominations profess allegiance to that Word. The opening sentence of the Plan of Union reads: "The Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church come together committed to the supremacy and authority of the Scriptures, the inerrant Word of God. . . ." Both churches profess to sincerely receive and adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, including the following: "The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture" (Confession, I, X).

Thus our primary concern as we study the question of union should be, "What do the Scriptures say?" Since Jesus Christ is very God of God, the king and head of his body the church, we should above all desire his will in this matter. One very significant passage in this regard is the prayer of Jesus recorded in John 17.

And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are (verse 11).

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me (verses 20-23).

In the secret of our closet as we engage in importunate prayer, we may make a request over and over again. But how often have you heard a minister or any person in public prayer urge the same request three times? Jesus, even as he faces death, offers this most significant prayer and *three times* asks that present and future believers may be one as he and the Father are one. We dare not regard such a request lightly.

Christ prays for his own

For whom is Christ praying here? They are the chosen of

God whom the Father has given to Jesus Christ. They are the ones to whom Jesus gives eternal life (verse 2). They are those who have heard the word of Jesus and have kept it (verse 6). They are the ones who believed that Christ came from the Father (verse 8).

Jesus is praying, "not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me," because they are the Father's own (verses 9, 10). He prays for those who have received his word and now bear the hatred of the world (verse 14). And not only those who were his disciples then, but Jesus prays for all those "which shall believe on me through their word" (verse 20).

The oneness for which Jesus prays does not apply to unbelievers in the world, nor to unregenerate persons who have found their way into membership in some visible congregation. But this oneness applies to those chosen ones whom the Father gives to the Son. These are the ones who receive the Word and possess true faith in the Lord.

The oneness Christ prays for

What is the nature of the oneness that Jesus desires for his people? It is a relation that is illustrated by the oneness of the Father and the Son. Jesus prays "that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (verse 21).

When we think of the oneness of the Father and the Son we often think of the fact that they are the same in substance, equal in power and glory. But we are not the same in substance either with God or with fellow believers. We know that the Bible speaks of a marvelous spiritual unity of the Father and the Son; we also know the Bible speaks of the Spirit of God uniting himself with our spirits in a mystical union.

Now this union is imperative to our spiritual life. It is the union by which we are born again: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). It is the union that brings new life and abiding life: "Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his" (Romans 8:9).

It is through the coming of the Holy Spirit that Christ comes to dwell within and thus the believer is enabled to bear spiritual fruit. "I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). In our mystical, spiritual union with Christ, there is a likeness to the mystical oneness existing between the persons of the Trinity.

But is this the sum total of our Lord's request? Is he simply praying that his disciples and future believers will be kept in this mystical union in which they are united to Christ and in him united to one another?

... that they all may be one

Scripture clearly teaches the eternal security of the believer. "I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:28). Or as Paul puts it, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

Now the disciples of Jesus *had* received eternal life, they *were* mystically united to the Lord, and those who in the future would believe would also be united to him and be the possessors of eternal life. It would hardly seem that Jesus would be praying that this union with believers and between believers, a union established by the indwelling of the Spirit, would be continued when it is clearly declared to be a *permanent* relationship. There must be more than the mystical union in view here.

A oneness of perfected obedience

Now Christ had given the Word of God to his disciples. "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world" (verse 6). "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them" (verse 8). "Sanctify them through the truth, thy Word is truth" (verse 17).

The Word of God not only reveals the Lord to us but also reveals his holy will for our lives. The unregenerate are not subject to that law neither indeed can be. It is God's children, in whom the Spirit dwells, who are subject to the will of God.

But there is a great difference among God's children in the degree of obedience to that Word. Perfect obedience would manifest a perfect love for the Lord and for the brethren. It would result in a perfect oneness, with one another and with God, a perfect oneness that would perfectly reflect the oneness of will and purpose between the Father and the Son.

There should be a great concern that we Orthodox and Reformed Presbyterians should believe and obey the Word of God in doctrine and life. The more perfect our subjection to that Word in all things, the more perfectly we will fulfill our Lord's petition for oneness in his people. To that end, we should pray much for one another, speaking the truth in love to one another, that we all may truly grow up into Christ in all things.

A oneness in the work of the church

The Word of God speaks about the government of Christ's church and the mission of that church. We who through all our lives have known the church to be divided into denominations find it difficult to conceive of it in any other way. Yet we all know that there were no such divisions in the days of the apostles. There was one church of Jesus Christ.

The Bible also teaches that the one true church of Christ

has both a visible and invisible aspect. Is the ideal of unity for which Christ prayed fully satisfied if visible portions of the church of Christ are separated both in government and mission?

Christ is the head of the church; there is a parity among the elders called to rule in the church; there is a discipline to be administered in the church. Separate denominations would seem to fragment that government and discipline of Christ's church. So too, the church is commissioned to bear witness in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth; we insist that we have a certain obligation for the whole world. Yet we labor in a few restricted fields. Could we better fulfill our responsibility if we joined with others and thus shared more fully in reaching to the uttermost parts?

Christ's reason for oneness

Finally, we need to take account of Christ's own reason for this oneness among his own. It is simply "that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them as thou hast loved me" (verse 23). The reason is that the world may know that Jesus Christ is from God, and that God has indeed loved those who believe in the Son with a love like that which he has for the only beloved Son.

So we might ask, How visible to the world is the oneness of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod? Would the visibility of our oneness be improved or hindered by a union of these two denominations?

No doubt it would be hindered if union was the signal for an outbreak of violent controversy. Such vehement controversy, however, should never be. Scripture is clear enough concerning discipline in the church. It should be conducted with love, and in meekness and humility. It should be accompanied with the most earnest and importunate prayer for a true oneness of understanding and obedience to the Word.

If that were the pattern of the union, the result would be an increase of love among the brethren and a perfecting of the unity. Furthermore, union should be humbly entered with the hope that still other brethren in other communions might aid us in our own sanctification, that by sharing the gifts of Christ to his church (Ephesians 4:11ff.) we might all be edified and perfected "until we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

The Rev. Edward L. Kellogg is a former moderator of the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, an able home missionary and pastor. He is presently pastor of the Point Loma Orthodox Presbyterian Church in San Diego.

Shall We Remarry?

1. Change the Standards first!

DAVID L. NEILANDS

"Scotty" Neilands is a ruling elder in Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, California. A father in the faith and a leader in his church, he served as moderator of the General Assembly in 1960, the first ruling elder to do so. His concerns about the proposed merger of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, are representative of those held by many others. What follows is the first in a three-part discussion of issues involved in the proposed merger.

A horrible divorce occurred in 1937. This divorce involved not individuals but the bride of Christ. Any divorce is a terrible, traumatic experience. It leaves wounds that are deep and seldom can be completely healed.

Remarriage of divorced persons should be considered only if the basic causes of the divorce have been eradicated. The old adage, "Time heals all things," may or may not always be true. Has time healed those wounds of 1937 so that the parties involved can and should now remarry? If you were a marriage counselor, what would you recommend?

No doubt this is a most difficult decision. The counselor should look first at the causes of the original divorce, and then try to determine if those causes have now been removed. Can there be a true reconciliation? To make such a decision the counselor must have knowledge, both of the past and of the present.

That is precisely the situation that confronts us all in considering the proposed merger of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. We need to look at the events that precipitated the divorce to see what relationship, if any, they bear to the present.

Background to a divorce

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, then known as the Presbyterian Church of America, came into being on June 11, 1936. Dr. J. Gresham Machen, leading New Testament scholar and staunch defender of biblical Christianity, was unanimously elected the first moderator.

In November 1936, at the second general assembly, Dr. J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., president of Wheaton College, was elected moderator. At that assembly it was decided, in answer to certain requests, not to add any declaratory statement to the church's Confession of Faith with reference to the premillennial view of Christ's second coming.

Two very significant events occurred shortly after the close of the second general assembly. On November 16,

Dr. Machen was ousted as president of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions; the Board elected a president and vice-president who were entirely independent of any Presbyterian affiliation. (Dr. Machen and others had founded the Independent Board in 1933 to provide a means for Bible-believing Presbyterians to support the proclamation of the gospel by Presbyterians, in the face of the rampant modernism in the Board for Foreign Missions of the then Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. This challenge to the denominational hierarchy rapidly led to the formation of the new denomination in 1936 as Dr. Machen and several other defenders of the faith were suspended by the old church.)

The second crucial event at that time was the death of Dr. Machen himself on January 1, 1937.

The third general assembly was held in June 1937. Two issues were determined by this assembly that culminated in the divorce. These issues were concerned with ecclesiastical independency and problems related to the Christian's life and conduct. (Because the Independent Board was no longer controlled by Presbyterians committed to a program of Presbyterian missions, the assembly moved to erect its own foreign missions committee. The issue in the area of Christian conduct was settled when the assembly refused to make a statement on a matter of a Christian's practice that would have gone beyond the clear teaching of Scripture on the subject.)

Immediately following the close of this third assembly, fourteen ministers and three ruling elders withdrew from the infant church and formed the Bible Presbyterian Synod. This number grew until approximately thirty ministers had left the Presbyterian Church of America.

Having sketched the events that resulted in the divorce, the rest of this article will consider only the actions of the second general assembly. Subsequent articles will be concerned with the actions of the third assembly.

The first disruptive issue

The first issue with which we shall deal revolved around the heresy of Modern Dispensationalism. During the year 1936, three professors of Westminster Seminary, O. T. Allis, R. B. Kuiper, and John Murray, had written articles warning against the serious errors of dispensationalism as taught by the Scofield Reference Bible. These authors showed that Modern Dispensationalism is out of harmony with the Westminster Confession and Catechisms.

As Professor Murray succinctly stated the issue:

The "Dispensationalism" of which we speak as heterodox from the standpoint of the Reformed Faith is that form of interpretation, widely popular at the present time, which discovers in the several dispensations of God's redemptive revelation distinct and even contrary principles of divine procedure and thus destroys the unity of God's dealings with fallen mankind.

—*The Presbyterian Guardian*, February 3, 1936, p. 143.

These articles caused a wave of reaction throughout the country. It was claimed that they were an attack on men holding premillennial views. This charge persisted even though the writers of the articles were careful to condemn the errors of Modern Dispensationalism, and not the premillennial view of our Lord's return. The Rev. Carl McIntire, editor of the *Christian Beacon*, writing in the October 1, 1936 issue, said: "The remark in regard to the 'Dispensationalism of the Scofield Bible' is an attack upon the premillennialists, as heretics."

These charges and counter-charges brought demands that the new church make some change in its doctrinal standards to insure "eschatological liberty." In opposing any such changes to the Westminster Standards, and yet to assure those holding to the historic, non-dispensational view of premillennialism, Dr. Machen wrote in the *Guardian* of October 24, 1936:

Can a person who holds the premillennial view be a true Calvinist; can he, in other words, hold truly to the Calvinistic or Reformed system of doctrine which is set forth in the Westminster Standards? We think that he can; and for that reason we think that Premillennialists as well as those who hold the opposing view may become ministers or elders or deacons in The Presbyterian Church of America.

The second general assembly refused to add any declaratory statement or make any changes in the Westminster Standards because it believed that there already was sufficient liberty for those holding to historic premillennialism. That such liberty had been considered inherent in the Standards is shown by the fact that there were premillennialists in the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., and there are now and have been premillennialists in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church both before and after the divorce of 1937.

When the division did come, the new Bible Presbyterian Synod took steps to change the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms "in any particular in which the premillennial teaching of the Scripture may be held to be obscured." This included the Larger Catechism, questions and answers 82, and 84 through 90.

What about the present?

Is it true, as the writer was told by one Reformed Presbyterian minister, "You're living in the past"? Or, are any of the principles that were at stake in 1937 still issues today? Has time applied its healing powers so that now we are truly one again and should therefore unite?

There is a very clear connection between the divorce of 1937 and the proposed changes to the Larger Catechism, questions 86-89, contained in the Plan of Union as now proposed.

A rather significant series of historical developments relating to those proposed changes needs to be emphasized. Changes in the Larger Catechism go all the way back to the action of the Bible Presbyterian Synod after the divorce in 1937. Since then, these questions and answers in the

Larger Catechism have been subjected to further development:

1. The original changes in 1937 at the inception of the Bible Presbyterian Synod, including Questions 86-89. (See: *The Presbyterian Conflict* by Edwin H. Rian, p. 243; and the *Guardian*, June 26, 1937, p. 99.)

2. In 1956, the Bible Presbyterian Synod split, with the group meeting in Columbus, Ohio, claiming to be "the legal, constitutional synod." This group later became known as the Evangelical Presbyterian Synod, and retained the changes in the Larger Catechism. (See the *Guardian*, December 15, 1956, p. 175.)

(Note: The actual wording of these questions and answers differs from that of the 1937 Bible Presbyterian Synod, having been modified to permit a premillennial view but not to set forth that view exclusively. The text as contained in the Proposed Plan of Union, and compared with the original form of the Westminster Larger Catechism, is given in the October 1973 issue of the *Guardian*.)

3. In 1965, the Evangelical Presbyterian Synod united with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Synod, to form the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod; again, the changes to the Catechism were retained. (See the *Minutes* of the Evangelical Presbyterian Synod, 1964, p. 14.)

4. At the present time, the Proposed Plan of Union for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, still contains alterations in Larger Catechism questions 86-89 (in Part II of the Plan).

Thus we have made a full circle. The principle rejected in 1936 is still being urged upon us in 1974. It would appear that the passage of time has not eliminated the differences nor healed the wound. One wonders why this continued insistence for changing the Standards even though premillennialists have had complete freedom in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church without question since 1936.

The doctrinal standards of a church ought not to seek to protect this or that person or group, but should seek to set forth Scripture's teaching. It was that the original Westminster Standards did so eminently well, even to using the language of Scripture itself; all this would be lost in the proposed changes. In the October 1973 issue of the *Guardian*, Professor Norman Shepherd analyzed the language of the proposed changes as compared with the original text; he said:

The thesis to be developed is that the language of the Catechism is biblical in character and would provide the new denomination [a merged OPC and RPC/ES] with the doctrinal scope envisioned when the Presbyterian Church of America . . . came into existence under the leadership of J. Gresham Machen. This language should therefore prove acceptable to all involved in the union of the Orthodox and Reformed Presbyterian Churches. It does not require either revision or the addition of a declaratory statement. Also, there are certain advantages to the original language that would be lost by adoption of the revisions.

I believe that Mr. Shepherd successfully sustained his thesis that the original text is the one based on Scripture. (Every person concerned with voting on this proposed union should read this article.) Should we not then retain the original wording of the Westminster Larger Catechism in any Plan of Union?

(To be continued.)

Larger Catechism, Questions 86-89

a plea for equity

In the October 1973 issue of *The Presbyterian Guardian*, Professor Norman Shepherd has argued against the compromise-form of the Westminster Larger Catechism, Questions 86-89, that has been proposed by the Joint Committee on a Plan of Union between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. He has called, instead, for a return to the original form held by the OPC, with the suggestion that this "would provide the new denomination with the doctrinal scope" that would be "acceptable to all involved in the union" (p. 115).

The question, however, is whether such a step really would be acceptable. Or, to put it otherwise, is not the phrasing in the proposed Plan of Union the most equitable form to insure the eschatological liberty that all now wish to achieve?

Question 86

The proposed wording in the Plan of Union locates the resurrection of Christians "at the return of Christ"—an expression acceptable to all and thoroughly biblical (1 Thess. 4:15-16). Yet Professor Shepherd advocates the former wording that this event occurs "at the last day," citing the use of the phrase in John 6.

Within that Gospel, the believers' resurrection is indeed "at the last day" for those given by the Father to Christ (John 6:39) and drawn to him (verse 44); for those who believe on the Son (verse 40) and have drunk of his saving blood (verse 54). But in the Catechism, the next line goes on to speak of the wicked being resurrected to the "judgment of the great day," seemingly referring to the same "last day" cited in the preceding sentence.

So what a premillennialist gladly affirms in John becomes unacceptable (since he finds two separate resurrections in Revelation 20:4, 5) when introduced into the total context of Question 86.

(The use of the phrase "the last

day" in Question 85, referring to the deliverance of the saints from the presence of death, causes no such problem. Actually, the form of the Catechism adopted by the Bible Presbyterian Synod had said "return of Christ" in Question 85 also; this would be true, referring to the time of believers' resurrection from death. So when Mr. Shepherd argues for a uniform wording in 85 and 86, the shift could be made in 85 as well. But there is an advantage in making as few alterations as necessary. Similarly, the Confession of Faith, XXXII, II, speaks of "the last day" for the changing of those who will be found alive when all the dead are raised; and this statement also none would seek to modify.)

Question 87

Here the Plan of Union recommends reading "last time" instead of "last day," for much the same reason. In Question 87 the Catechism again goes beyond John 6 by adding to the resurrection of the just, the fact of the resurrection of the unjust. All agree that both of these occur in one broad eschatological period of *time*; but they could not occur on the same *day*, if one is to follow the premillennial understanding of Revelation 20:5.

The Plan would also omit the word "general" before *resurrection*. Professor Shepherd protests that the term

"general" need not suggest simultaneity, so that premillennialists should not object to its reinsertion. But by the very dictionary definition he cites, it appears that *general* does "pertain to the whole" and is "applicable to each and all" in the same way. Since pre-mils do not, in fact, think of the resurrection as applicable to each and all in the same way, is it then the part of equity to call for its introduction, especially when such an adjective appears nowhere in Scripture?

Question 88

In this question, the Plan would read, "What shall follow after the resurrection?" The original form as held by the OPC reads, "What shall *immediately* follow . . .?"

Mr. Shepherd contends that this is a legitimate question for those of all shades of eschatological opinion. True. But it would be naive to suggest that all would agree on the legitimacy of the *answer* if the qualification "immediately" were to be included. For an a-mil, Question 88's discussion of the final judgment might be suitable immediately after the resurrection, but not so for a pre-mil (see Rev. 20:5, 7, 12). Yet all can be content if the idea of immediacy is simply avoided. Similarly, the Plan would omit the word "general" before "judgment." Some pre-mils envision only one final judgment for all; but other pre-mils do not. We feel it only fair not to insist on adding this nonbiblical qualifying term.

In the second part of Question 88 the Plan would affirm that no man knows "the day of the coming of the Lord," rather than that of the final judgment. For while an a-mil may view the judgment as imminent and thus undatable, both pre-mils and post-mils are sure that it is not imminent because, after the inception of the millennium, it can be dated 1000 years in advance of its arrival. Furthermore, the accompanying prooftexts cited in the Catechism refer, not to the judgment, but to our Lord's return. The Confession of Faith, XXXIII, III,

Comparison of texts in the Larger Catechism

The original text

Proposed revision

Q. 86. *What is the communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death?*

A. The communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death, is, in that their souls are then made perfect in holiness, and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies, which even in death continue united to Christ, and rest in their graves as in their beds, till at the last day they be again united to their souls. (Etc.)

Q. 87. *What are we to believe concerning the resurrection?*

A. We are to believe, that at the last day there shall be a general resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust: when they that are then found alive shall in a moment be changed; and the self-same bodies of the dead which were laid in the grave, being then again united to their souls for ever, shall be raised up by the power of Christ. (Etc.)

Q. 88. *What shall immediately follow after the resurrection?*

A. Immediately after the resurrection shall follow the general and final judgment of angels and men; the day and hour whereof no man knoweth, that all may watch and pray, and be ever ready for the coming of the Lord.

Q. 89. *What shall be done to the wicked at the day of judgment?*

A. At the day of judgment, the wicked shall be set on Christ's left hand (etc.).

Q. 86. *What is the communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death?*

A. The communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death, is, in that their souls are then made perfect in holiness, and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies, which even in death continue united to Christ, and rest in their graves as in their beds, till at the return of Christ they be again united to their souls. (Etc.)

Q. 87. *What are we to believe concerning the resurrection?*

A. We are to believe, that at the last time there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust: when they that are then found alive shall in a moment be changed; and the self-same bodies of the dead which were laid in the grave, being then again united to their souls for ever, shall be raised up by the power of Christ. (Etc.)

Q. 88. *What shall follow after the resurrection?*

A. After the coming of the Lord and the resurrection of the just and the unjust shall follow the final judgment of angels and men. The day and hour of the coming of the Lord no man knoweth, that all may watch and pray and be ready.

Q. 89. *What shall be done to the wicked when they are judged?*

A. When they are judged, the wicked shall be set on Christ's left hand (etc.).

likewise links the unknowableness to the coming of the Lord. Thus the proposed wording in the Plan of Union is at once both more acceptable to all parties and more biblical.

Question 89

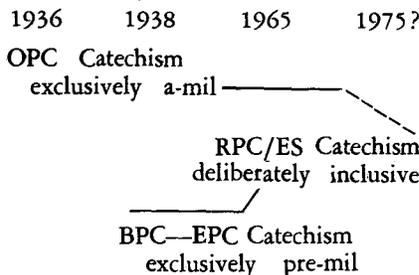
Again, the issue parallels that found in the part of Question 88 on whether to say simply, "When the wicked are judged," or to insist on one precise date, "the day of judgment," as in the original form of this question. As noted above, some pre-mils see no problem here; but for the sake of those who do, can we not be generous?

A non-excluding form

The Joint Committee on a Plan of Union has recommended a form of words for the Larger Catechism on which both our denominations can

agree (and on which, in the providence of God, our pre-mil and post-mil brethren in the National Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America can also agree, in days to come).

Should the Joint Committee's work be undermined by proposals to return to a form on which our denominations might not agree? Confessionally, the situation can be charted like this:



That is, both the BP and the OP confessional positions in 1938 are seen by us today as being too narrow. To put it another way, both groups are finding value in adopting the RP attitude of mutual recognition, which has been forged out of three centuries of successive a-mil, post-mil, and pre-mil emphases, all of which have claimed biblical support.

It would not seem to be asking too much that, even as the EPs gave up their exclusivism in 1965, the OPs be willing to make a similar concession in 1975. We have found, frankly, that the RP confessional methodology is not just comfortable; it is also scriptural!

—J. Barton Payne (RPC/ES)
George W. Knight III (OPC)
Covenant Theological Seminary
St. Louis, Missouri



Haney to Home Missions / Oliver to Westminster

Philadelphia, Penna.— The Rev. George E. Haney, former pastor of Falls Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Menomonee Falls, Wisc., takes up the labors of the General Secretary of the OPC's Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension on March 15.

In his new post Mr. Haney is replacing the Rev. LeRoy B.

Oliver who had resigned in order to serve as a special assistant to the Director of Administration of Westminster Seminary. Beginning this month, construction on a long-needed chapel and classroom building will inaugurate a major expansion program for the Seminary in which Mr. Oliver will be actively involved.

(The *Guardian* will carry a full report on construction plans for the Seminary next month.)

U. P. Conservatives plan Conference on Reformed Theology

Philadelphia, Penna.— The first annual Philadelphia Conference on Reformed Theology has been set for April 26-28, 1974 at the Tenth Presbyterian Church here. According to Dr. James M. Boice, chairman of the conference and pastor of Tenth Church, it is for all who are concerned about the state of the church today and are willing to work toward true spiritual reformation.

Sponsoring the conference, in

addition to Tenth Church, are *Eternity* magazine, The Bible Study Hour and Geneva Forum, a group of conservatives in the Philadelphia Presbytery of the United Presbyterian Church.

The theme of the conference is "The Doctrines of Grace." Main speakers will be Dr. Roger R. Nicole of Gordon-Conwell Divinity School in S. Hamilton, Mass., and Dr. Ralph L. Keiper of Conservative Theological Seminary in Denver.

Dordt College squelches AACS criticism

Sioux Center, Iowa—Dordt College officials have moved to settle the increasing polarization on campus between supporters and critics of the Toronto-based Association for Advancement of Christian Studies and the AACS's militant advocacy of Herman Dooyeweerd's thought.

Tension has been growing since the fall of 1971 at which time the faculty began to study the college "Statement of Purpose," which set forth Dordt's understanding of its function in Christian higher education. Dooyeweerd's philosophy was a chief element in these studies.

Critics of the AACS became increasingly concerned as the pro-AACS faculty members seemed determined to control the future tone of the school.

In November 1973, seventeen faculty members signed a letter expressing their concern over the AACS influence on campus and asked for a full discussion of the issues in the faculty and Board.

Within a week after the letter

appeared, all faculty members received from the Board a lengthy statement to which each faculty member was asked to give his 'whole-hearted agreement.' Since the statement insisted that there had already been a thorough investigation of AACS influence and declared this was a satisfactory resolution of the problems, several faculty members have refused to accept the Board's statement.

Among those refusing the statement is Dr. Samuel van Houte who resigned as professor of history. Two other critics of the AACS have been denied reappointment: Dr. Norman De Jong, professor of education, and Gerald H. O'Donnell, professor in psychology. Other members of the faculty are expected to resign in coming months.

(In a recent issue of *The Banner*, official organ of the Christian Reformed Church, editor Lester De Koster promised a full airing of the AACS views because of their increasingly divisive effects.)

Baird resigns at Dayton

Dayton, Ohio—J. Elmer Baird has resigned as elder and withdrawn his membership from the Redeemer Orthodox Presbyterian Church here. The Redeemer church session has been under strong criticism from members of the Presbytery of Ohio for having ordained Mr. Baird who is a Masonic Lodge member.

General Assemblies of the OPC have declared that membership in the Lodge is in effect allegiance to a false religion and thus incompatible with faith in Christ. This position was endorsed by the 1973 General Assembly.

The Redeemer session, however, being persuaded that Mr. Baird had the gifts for rule and was able to give affirmative answer to the ordination vows, had ordained him.

Mr. Baird was instrumental in beginning the Redeemer Church. He hopes to gather another group elsewhere in Dayton, and may seek the aid of the National Presbyterian Church. In a letter of resignation, Mr. Baird urged members of the Redeemer congregation to uphold their witness to historic Presbyterianism, regretting his inability to continue with them.

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Life in an ill-parted world

PAUL DAVENPORT

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is (Ephesians 5:15-17).

The picture showed a fishing boat, chugging in from the open seas. It had lost a crate of fish overboard, and the crate had broken when it hit the surface of the water. Two seagulls had lighted upon the find, one standing on the floating lid, but the other in the open crate gorging himself on the fish. Under this superb piece-of-photography was the simple caption: "Life is ill-parted."

Coming to grips with an ill-parted life

What happened to the two seagulls happens to people. Life is ill-parted. Things simply are not fair. But we must learn to live in such a world. We must come to grips with this ill-parted life.

So Paul speaks of this very thing to the Ephesians. He says we live in evil days, because we live among evil people. Once people no longer understand God, or recognize this world as his kingdom, they no longer know where to draw the lines. But they have to draw lines someplace, so they draw them in the wrong places. As a result, everything is out of order, messed up, unfair.

Life is ill-parted. What is wrong is excused and approved. What is right is not even allowed to be heard. This is the world we live in.

So the Preacher said long ago: "I saw under the sun the place of judgment—wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness—iniquity was there" (Ecclesiastes 3:16). The lines are in the wrong places, the guilty are excused, the innocent are abused. The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Misfortune, failure, and disaster are doled out at random.

To us it seems that the good ought to enjoy blessings and the wicked ought to receive the results of their own sin. But that is not the way the lines are drawn. Life is unfair; we live in an ill-parted world.

Drawing lines in wrong places

How has our world drawn lines in the wrong places? Talking about this is not something remote; it is a very practical concern. It is something that never leaves us alone. In fact, we meet up with it very early in life.

Think of the child just starting to school. His parents have taught him to be good, to be polite. Sometimes he is; most of the time he doesn't even think about being good or polite, he is just what he is. But when he thinks about it, he can behave himself as he should.

But then on the playground he comes up against the bully. The child knows how to behave, but his instincts tell him this is an entirely different situation with different rules. He hears the bully sneer, "Coward! You fight me, or else I'll push you into the mud puddle!" What is

the small boy to do now?

The bully has drawn the lines—a fight, or a mud puddle. If the child accepts the challenge to fight, then the bully can beat him up with a clear conscience. If he refuses to fight, he gets thrown in the mud anyway. So what happened to being good and polite? It's been pushed out of the picture. The lines are drawn to exclude it.

Sometimes we think the answer is to get into the fight, but to be sure and beat up the bully. But even if the good guy beats the bad guy, he still fails as much as if he had gotten thrown in the mud. He fails because he accepted the lines as they were drawn. Even if he wins the fight, he has done it on the bad guy's terms. Confronted with alternatives drawn by the world, he acted within them. What happened to the "ought to be"? It got lost.

The small child, eyeing first the bully and then the mud puddle, is looking at the whole of life. Over and over again we face just this situation. All through life we are confronted with lines drawn in the wrong places and the demand that we accept the situation and operate within it. How do we deal with this sort of ill-parted world?

Understanding the evils of the day

The answer is, "Be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil. So then, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:15-17). We must not accept the lines the world has drawn but insist they be redrawn in the right places. But it's not easy to walk circumspectly, redeem the time, understand the will of the Lord.

What are some of these wrong lines we confront? We find them even in the institutional church. Scripture emphasizes that God's people are one people, a covenant race, a community in Christ. The stress is on the unity of the church. But we live in a day of denominationalism, with lines drawn between splinters and factions, lines that seem to be indelible. We think in denominational terms and never question these lines. But Scripture draws a line between God's people and those who belong to Satan.

Or take the matter of politics. In the New Testament we read that the early Christians "turned the world upside down." The believers belonged to a kingdom whose ruler was Christ, but they lived in a world where everyone else gave first allegiance to "The Empire." And so too, Paul says in 2 Thessalonians, when the man of sin appears there will be a covenanted people serving the Antichrist, and with a clear line drawn against those who have not the mark of the beast.

But today we see lines drawn between East and West, between Republican and Democrat. We hear, "Which is more Christian, the right or the left?" But if we are to begin thinking seriously of obedience to Christ in politics, we find ourselves confronted by lines drawn all in the wrong places.

Then there's the matter of family lives. For example, Scripture shows that Adam was given a wife only after he had mastered the animal world and found no suitable help for himself. He had attained some maturity before God gave him Eve. Marriage demands maturity, and the head of the family must be competent and reliable.

But what does the world give us? The Don Juan and the cowboy hero, the totally immature, irresponsible male, with no family ties or responsibilities. Manhood is drawn not in terms of mature competence, but as a matter of sexual prowess and conquest. Once men surrender their responsibility, their competence, all that is left of their manhood is physical flesh. Their motto can only be, "I came, I saw, I conquered."

Redrawing the lines aright

As Christian parents we simply must unteach what has been dinned into our children's heads. Boys must be prepared for manhood, not for the cowboy scene. We must instill in them—enable them to develop through practice—a sense of responsibility and the need for genuine maturity. We cannot allow ourselves, or our children, to bow down before the TV and say, "Yes, all you say I will do and be obedient."

Or consider our country's hangup with competitive sports. The essential requirements are toughness, discipline, paying the price. That's one thing when it's followed on the field; but we take this same approach and apply it to all of life. We think of ourselves as competitors in all we do, looking for the weakness of others in order to exploit it. The unforgivable sin is weakness, and we have no sympathy for failure.

This attitude is plainly contrary to Scripture. As Christians we are to love one another, not compete with one another. We are not in competition with our brothers, but are to live together with them in Christ. This means not seeing their weaknesses as opportunities for us to exploit, but as something we should be concerned to help strengthen. It means genuinely caring for them and trying to help them. The competitive spirit of the football field is dangerous indeed when it spills over into the rest of life. After all, Christ did not say, "By this shall all men know you are my disciples by how well you exploit one another."

Redeeming the time

The small boy facing the bully could only see two choices: double up his fist, or get thrown in the mud. The great danger is that we Christians will accept what is thrust in our faces. Because the world we live in has drawn the lines and refuses to change, we tend to accept it as inevitable and try to live with it. But there are times when a small boy must run from the bully, when the Christian must flee the devil. Only so can we live where the lines are drawn by God's patterns.

Life is ill-parted. We need to be constantly aware of this. And we need also to know where God would have the lines rightly drawn. This will not come easily. But Christ calls on us to redeem the time, to buy up the hours in which we live, reordering them according to the will of the Lord.

Indeed it won't be easy. But as we work out our lives that have been redeemed by the blood of the Savior, we know it is God who is working in us to do and to will

what is his good pleasure. The results may come with difficulty, but they are indeed worth it. For as lights in a darkened world, we will be pointing men to the Light which is the only hope for an ill-parted world.

The Rev. Paul Davenport is pastor of Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Fall River, Massachusetts. The sermon above was sent to us at the insistence of one who heard it and felt it was needed by many of us.

read the OUTLOOK

A periodical published for the purpose of:

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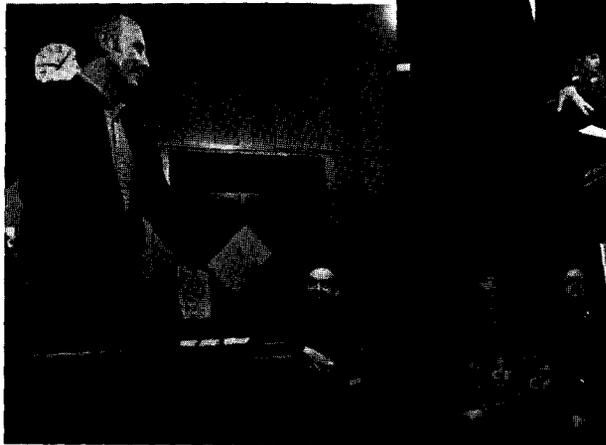
Lake Luzerne, N.Y.—Ninety young people and staff members braved the cold for the warmth of fellowship at the Winter Conference of the Presbytery of New York and New England (O.P.C.). A large delegation of Christian Reformed youth also attended.

Main speaker was the Rev. Jim Petty of the Church of the City in Philadelphia. Other staff members were the Rev. Wendell Rockey of South Hamilton, Mass., the Rev. Raymond Meiners of Schenectady, N.Y., and the Rev. Peter Vosteen, Christian Reformed pastor in Whitinsville, Mass.

Ed. note: Why does the *Guardian* give so much space to these Bible conferences? One reason is that the Rev. Peter Vosteen's photos are hard to resist. (How did he know that one kid had his eyes open in the prayer time?)

More important, though, is the extremely valuable spiritual work done at Bible conferences for our young people. The results continue year after year as changed lives strengthen churches and bring new glory to God.

These . . .



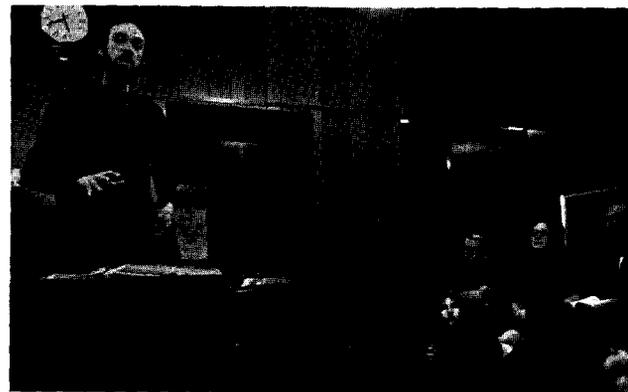
are youth workers?

The Spellbinder tells them . . .

. . . how to make

the right moves

Photos by Peter Vosteen



Here & There

Orlando, Fla.—The Lake Sherwood Orthodox Presbyterian Church has been encouraged by the Lord both in an enlarged spirit of giving by the people and the provision of qualified leaders. At its recent congregational meeting, the church elected two new elders: Howard W. Clegg and Clifford H. Rea. Mr. Rea is a former member of Calvary Church in Harrisville, Pa.

Alliance, Ohio—On January 30, the people of the Orthodox Presbyterian Chapel here met to organize and petition the Presbytery of Ohio for reception as a particular congregation. This chapel, under the oversight of the Rev. David W. King, expects to have twenty communicant members and three elders-elect by the time presbytery acts in April.

NO COMMENT DEPARTMENT

The following appeared in a church newsletter:

Thanks to J. C. and his three grandsons for their help in preparing the coffee and setting up and cleaning up the Coffee Fellowship.

March, 1974

Lynchburg, Va.—Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Chapel is rejoicing in a new building, a renovated house with two acres of land and accommodations for 75 worshipers and 10 Sunday school rooms. The Rev. Richard L. Horner serves as home missionary-pastor.

REFORMED YOUTH CONFERENCES

June 10-15, 1974

Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Tenn
Main speaker: Albert N. Martin

July 1-5, 1974

Garden City Conf. Center, Myrtle Beach, S.C.
Main speaker: Dr. John R. de Witt

Classes on: The Christian Family
God's Law
God's Order in Salvation

Ages: 9th grade through college

For information, write:

Reformed Youth Movement, Inc.
P. O. Box 43347
Birmingham, AL 35243

Postmaster: Send Form 3579 to

The Presbyterian Guardian

7401 Old York Road
Philadelphia, Pa. 19126

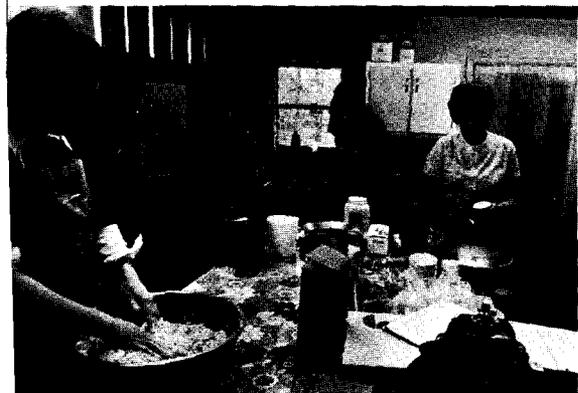
Mr. A. Kenneth Austin
Rt. 1, Box 330
Lookout Mountain, TN 37350
Feb.

Second Class Postage Paid
At Philadelphia, Pa.



A "full house" attends to the Word

They all prayed – but one (two?)



There really is – "Cause

Scrapbook

N.Y. - N.Eng.
Winter Conference

Lake Luzerne, New York
December 26 - 28, 1973



... and effect"

More photos on page 47 inside.

Those lazy, crazy, hazy days of winter

Bangor and Whitinsville talk it over

