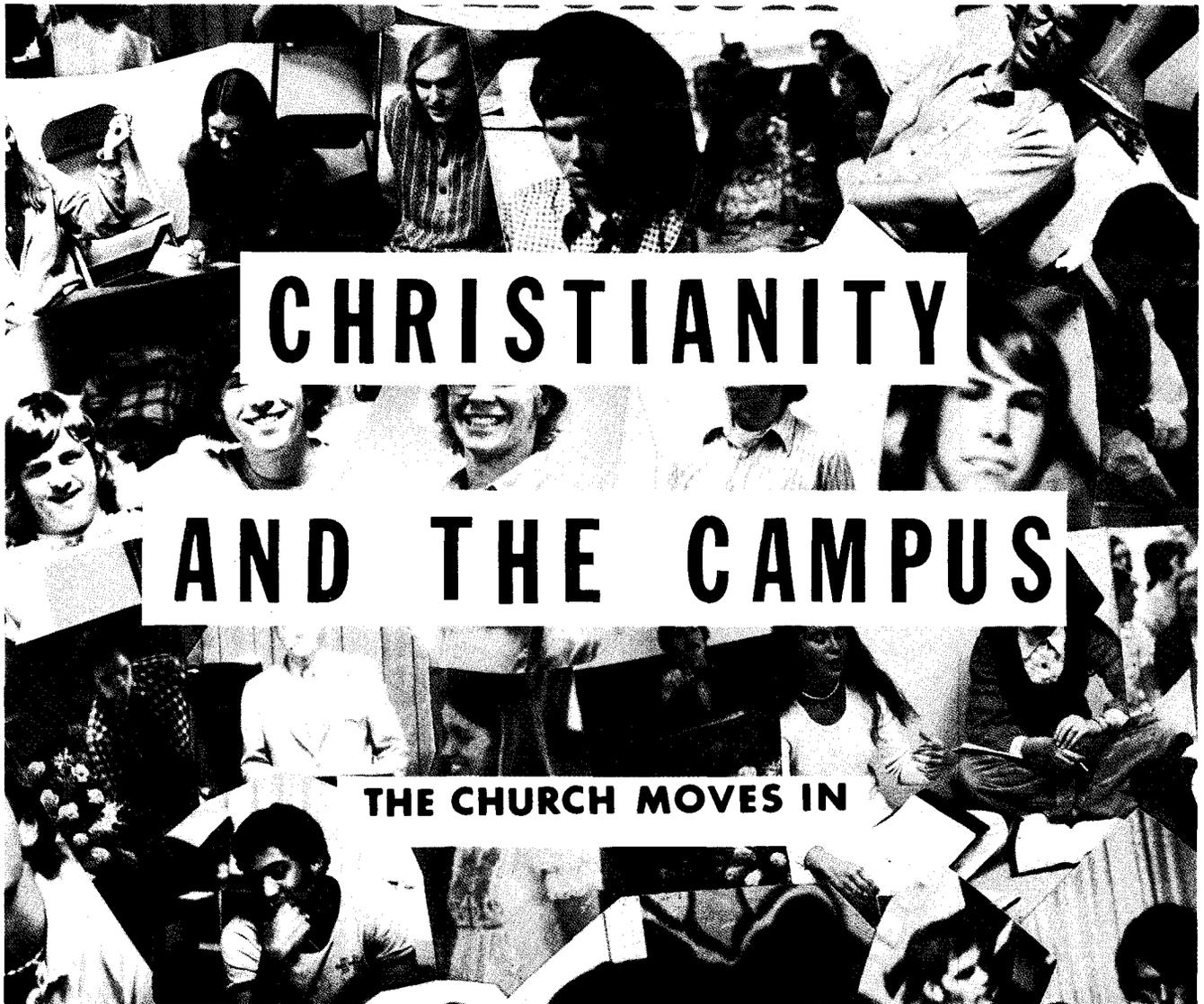


The Presbyterian Guardian

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CHRISTIANITY

AND THE CAMPUS

THE CHURCH MOVES IN

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A Mother in Israel

On Wednesday morning, May 29, 1974, God in his infinite wisdom and mercy took unto himself a great "mother in Israel." Minnie Badenhop Graham, widow of the late Andrew J. Graham, went to be with the Lord at the advanced age of ninety-three.

Mrs. Graham was the mother of four sons, the eldest of whom, Wallace, was a teacher of mathematics and preceded her in death; Douglas, the second son, died in infancy. Her other two sons are ministers of the gospel and for a time were both in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Robert Henry was ordained in the First Presbyterian Church of Orange, N.J. in 1932 and was one of the founding ministers at the first General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Donald Carson, later ordained as first pastor of the Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Westfield, N.J., was one of the lay members listed in the minutes of the first General Assembly.

Members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church are apt to forget that unordained Christians had a very important place in the formation of their church in 1936. Some eighty men and women, who for the most part were former members of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., stood up when that first assembly was constituted with prayer by the presiding officer. By this act they, together with thirty-five ministers and seventeen ruling elders, became the denomination now known as the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Mrs. Andrew J. Graham is numbered on page 5 of the minutes of that Assembly in the list of "laymen" who separated themselves from the apostate Presbyterian Church USA.

Mrs. Graham was for years a member of the Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Middletown, Delaware. She

was a diligent student of the Word of God, but her humility and true piety kept her from any outward display of profound knowledge in the Word of God. She believed in the doctrines of sovereign grace, and found her comfort in the election of grace. Her humble walk with God is seen in a letter to son Bob on March 23, 1967, when she was 87 and had just returned from a stay in the hospital. She wrote:

"Did I mention that we are having services each noon and evening this week. Dr. Fulton of Miami, Fla. is the speaker. Last night he took us to the very gates of heaven. Some were surprised to see me in church but who needs it more? As Dr. Fulton preached I realized how little I know of the heavenly language, but what a comfort — we are saved by grace." [Written from Montgomery, Ala., where she was then living with son Donald, pastor of a Presbyterian Church there.]

Funeral service for Mrs. Graham was held on Monday, June 3, in the First Presbyterian Church of Montgomery, where she was a member. The sermon was preached by the Rev. John P. Clelland of Troy, Alabama; titled "A Virtuous Woman," the text was Proverbs 31:10.

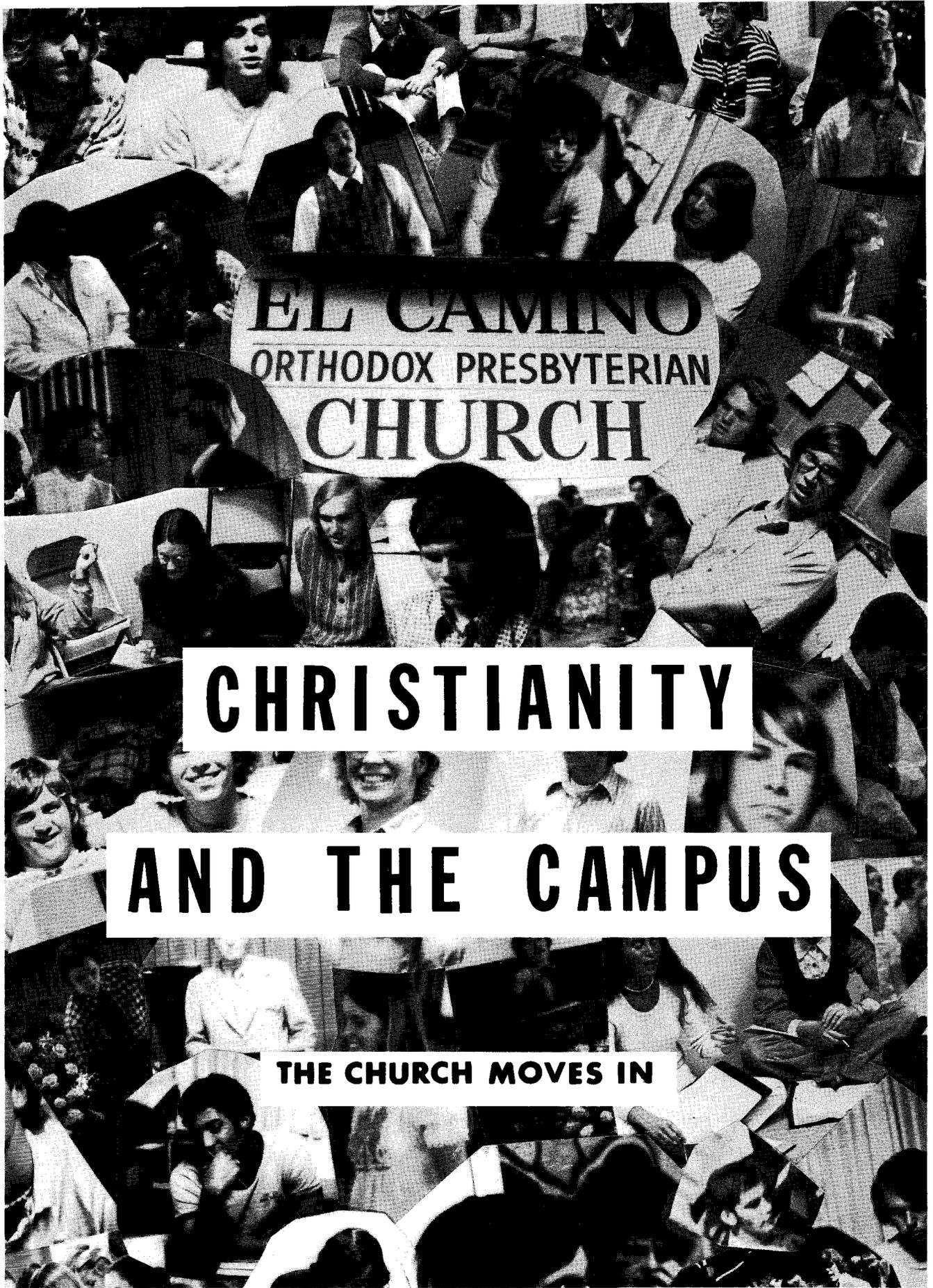
About 140 attended the service for this godly "mother in Israel," and memorials are being received for the Westminster Seminary Building Fund and the new Covenant (National) Presbyterian Church of Panama City, Florida, where son Donald is the new pastor.

**Who can find a virtuous woman?
for her price is far above rubies.**

**. . . A woman that feareth the
Lord, she shall be praised.**

Proverbs 31:10, 30.

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**EL CAMINO
ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

CHRISTIANITY

AND THE CAMPUS

THE CHURCH MOVES IN

Report on the El Camino OPC Youth Ministry
Written by David M. Ciochi
Photography by Ray Ostlie

I first became interested in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1971 while a student at Westminster Seminary. My church background had made me familiar with another theological tradition, and Reformed thinking was new to me. Soon I felt at home in the OPC and was happy to learn that there was an Orthodox Presbyterian church in Goleta near the University of California (Santa Barbara campus), the school at which I began graduate work in 1972. There was no doubt in my mind that I would join that church, but I must admit having had doubts that there would be many other students there. My own experience led me to believe that a ministry on the campus was not likely to be available through a local church. Extra-church Christian organizations control most of the Christian witness in our colleges and universities, and I anticipated becoming involved with such a group

There was a surprise awaiting me. Shortly after arriving in Goleta, I called the Rev. Dwight Poundstone of El Camino OPC, asking him for a ride to Sunday services. That was offered, along with an invitation to join the church's college group for dinner that evening at the pastor's home. Perhaps sixty or seventy students attended that dinner, and there was a spirit of mature Christian love among them which one could not fail to notice. This was not what I had expected.

How did it start? Prior to the spring of 1971, El Camino had had only a tiny handful of college students, as is the case with most other churches. In April of that year nine students banded together with the idea in mind that they would work together for Christ's kingdom through a local church during their student years. They began attending El Camino, and have remained loyal to the church ever since that time. They believed that the New Testament presents the church—the organized local church—as the focal point of kingdom activity. It was never their intention to try to undo the good work done by sincere Christians in extra-church organizations on the campuses, but rather to present a ministry to college students in which one could learn to experience the love of Christ in the context of the family which the local church is—believers of all ages gathered to-



Worship is an important part of the student's Christian life; full integration into the church is the goal of our student ministry.



The Rev. Dwight H. Poundstone shepherds the college students through preaching, counseling, teaching and by inviting students into his home for a meal or a "chat".

gether for worship and fellowship under the leadership of pastor and elders.

The youth ministry has mushroomed during the three years since those nine students began attending El Camino church. From an attendance of nine in 1971 the college fellowship has grown to an attendance which has ranged this year from sixty to one hundred and twenty.

The bulk of the students attend the University of California, but there are also representatives of Westmont College, a Christian school in nearby Montecito, and of the sprawling Santa Barbara City College, which is almost as large as the university itself.

What draws the students to the church, and keeps them there, is not a series of entertaining programs, but the love and concern of other Christians. Students invite their friends to join them in worship, Bible study, prayer, and so on, and many do accept such invitations because of the friendships they have formed with the people who invite them.

This happens most easily in the dormitories on the university campus. People who live together on the same floor, share the same bathroom, dining commons, and recreational facilities, get to know each other rather quickly. The Christians are highly visible in the dormitories due to their godly life-style, and their witness has a way of becoming an issue during the opening days of each fall term, and remaining an issue throughout the year. Bible studies are held in each dormitory, and the Christians who live near each other get together to pray and to plan ways of reaching their friends with the Gospel of Christ.

Students at Westmont College live in a Christian environment, and do not have quite the same opportunities as do the university students. Those who attend Santa Barbara City College are often local residents who live with their families in Santa Barbara and Goleta. And finally there are those who live in the student community of Isla Vista (famous for the 1970 burning of the Bank of America). They live in apartment houses and, having kitchens of their own (something the dormitory residents do not have), they are

David Ciochi is a graduate student in philosophy at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He graduated from Biola College and was an honor student at Westminster for one year before transferring to UCSB.

able to invite their non-Christian friends to dinner and to show hospitality in other ways. They also conduct Bible studies, including one this year which is aimed specifically at people who are not Christians but are willing to look into the claims of the Christian faith.

To prevent the believers who live in these various areas from becoming isolated, the entire college fellowship (all who come regularly, or about seventy-five at the present time) gather on Wednesday evenings at the church for a time known as B.A.S.I.C. ("Brothers and Sisters in Christ"). Two hours are spent together, during which several things happen. There is usually some teaching (this spring the group is studying the attributes of God with the idea in mind of getting to know Him better), a lot of spirited singing, times of prayer and times of sharing (sometimes in small groups and other times with the whole fellowship together). The students care about the people they are witnessing to, concerns for their families, and their personal needs. They know that the others present genuinely care about them and will pray for them. It is a common thing to see dozens of ball-point pens scratching away on paper while prayer-requests are being shared. The requests are being written down so that they will not be forgotten.

The membership of B.A.S.I.C. is divided into small bands of students who live in the same dormitory or the same part of the general community. The members of these bands pray together during the week, help each other in reaching their neighbors for Christ, and generally function as friends. Any student who regularly attends El Camino OPC has not only the services of the church (including a series of Sunday electives for those of college age—there have been classes on the resurrection of Christ, holiness, Galatians, Biblical answers to questions about other religions, and Christian analyses of modern psychology and anthropology) and B.A.S.I.C. on Wednesday night, but he has the fellowship and day-by-day support of Christians who live in his immediate area. The church gathers for worship on Sunday, and it then disperses to do the work of the kingdom during the week. No member of the youth ministry is expected to have to stand entirely alone, but receives the constant comfort and backing of his peers in Christ.

All of this does not exhaust what the church has to offer its college students. It has that which the extra-church, on-campus Christian organizations do not have: the blessings of Christian families. The families in the congregation often invite college students to their homes for Sunday dinner, and there are other kinds of contacts. The adults want to make the students feel that they have a home away from home. One man in the church invites students to go bowling with his family, and though he will always win (being a champion bowler), everyone has a marvelous time! Another man in the church, a dentist, likes few things better than his trombone, and he once played it with the university's pep band, which has been directed by one of El Camino's students. The friendships which can be built from times like these promote the unity in the church which is vital to a healthy witness in the community at large.

A recent development in the congregation which has the potential of drawing college students closer to the adults, is the establishment of groups of adults (all communicant members or regular attenders) called "Faith Families". These families are intended to promote greater unity among the adult membership of the church, including the communicant members among the college students.



The college students gather together Wednesday nights for a time of singing, sharing, praying, and teaching called "B.A.S.I.C." (Brothers and Sisters in Christ). Before the meeting the students from different campuses and living situations share what God has been doing during the week.

While the college students thus benefit enormously from the advantages offered by the church, the church itself is similarly benefited by the presence of the students. Just this past year a small band of college students under the direction of Mr. Robert Ver Burg, himself a senior student at the university, took on the responsibility of caring for the high school students of the church, and encouraging them to reach their friends for Christ. There has been steady growth in the high school department, not only in numbers (the numerical growth has been slow) but in the depth of loyalty to Christ on the part of the high school students themselves. At a recent high school function, one-third of those present were non-Christians invited by their own Christian high school friends. There has already been an interest in El Camino on the part of a few families who want a godly high school fellowship (something more than a party group) for their high-school age children. The college support of the high school ministry, then, is a potential means for increasing the communicant membership of the congregation. This potential increase can not only be drawn from Christian families looking for a good church, but from families in which children of high school age are being converted, thus bringing their unbelieving parents face-to-face with the claims of the Gospel. Since some adults in the congregation also work as sponsors for the high school programs, there is the possibility of Christian parents meeting the non-Christian parents of kids who come to church homes for high-school meetings.

You may have noticed that there has been no mention of any youth pastor or other staff member who works with the youth ministry. The high school and college ministries are under the immediate direction of a number of earnest undergraduates. Four of them constitute a committee known as the Youth Ministry Leadership (YML), and are charged by the Session with the oversight of the high school and college programs. The YML reports regularly to the pastor, the Session, and the Board of Trustees. None of the students receives any pay for the many hours of work put in, except for a token sum which pays the youth ministry secretary for twenty to twenty-five hours of work each month, and a salary of \$2 an hour to the high school dir-

ector (a part-time job). The incredible increase in attendance, and the enormous amounts of work entailed to serve even a much smaller group, finally pressed the YML to request the church to ask aid of the Southern California Presbytery.

The Presbytery responded very generously, and is helping pay the salary for a full-time summer high school director and a part-time youth ministry supervisor in the fall. The summer worker will be supported by a small staff of students who will receive only honorariums for their work. Without the aid of home missions funds from the Presbytery this would not have been possible. When the funds were voted for El Camino's youth ministry, the Presbytery requested that the church send teams of students to the various churches of the southern California area to share what is going on in the youth ministry at Goleta. Several churches have already been visited by teams from El Camino. When possible the teams (from five to twelve people) spend an entire Sunday with a congregation, usually giving a slide show, handling a song service, presenting a short message for the evening, and perhaps giving a small demonstration Bible study or panel discussion. The best parts of the day are always times spent in the homes of the church families. During these hours a great deal of friendly conversation and



Various Bible studies in campus dormitories and apartments supplement the Church programs and provide a base of operation for evangelism.

What I have just written is true, and sounds (at least to me) rather businesslike in tone. But there is something the members of the YML have learned from painful experience (I have shared that experience), and that is that the best procedures and the hardest work fails to accomplish anything unless the sovereign God decides to make something of it. And we offer thanks to Him that He has decided to do so. The love shown by the believers, the spirit of cooperation, the growth of friendships across the generation gap, the continuing high attendance—all evidences the work of the Holy Spirit. We who serve Christ at the El Camino Orthodox Presbyterian Church acknowledge that it is His goodness, not our faithfulness, which is doing wonders in our church, and beginning to work in our community. In all of the excitement of the growth in the church, we still delight in nothing better than worshipping God.



Elder "Bud" Lemkuil and Trustee Don Gesink act as special advisors to the college ministry leadership.

sharing of ideas goes on. To date, all the students who have been on these trips have been enthusiastic about the warm reception given them and the hospitality shown. The YML hopes to visit nearly all of the churches of the Presbytery before the end of the time available in this school year. Further visits may be made in '74-'75.

The members of the YML (all undergraduates except one, a graduate student who spent a year studying at Westminster), and the students who work closely with them, begin all their thinking with the question, "what are the needs of the people here?" There is no attempt to establish a program and then simply hope that people will like it. When needs have been discerned, then goals which will meet these needs, or help to meet them, are formulated, specific programs coming last of all. No program is considered indispensable if it does not meet the needs of God's people. There is required in this a constant evaluation of how people and groups of people are doing in their lives and group ministries. There is a constant flow of information between the members of the YML and the leaders of each smaller group. The high school reports on what it is doing, and regular reports are given to the pastor, along with the larger presentations made at Session meetings.

The College Ministry of El Camino OPC would welcome your comments, suggestions or reactions. If you are interested in more information about our ministry, or would like to know how you personally can help us, please write to us at P.O. Box 15243, Santa Barbara California 93107.



Personal, one-to-one sharing and praying are at the heart of El Camino's ministry.

from one woman to another

A missionary home for a visit

Dear Pat:

You may be interested in hearing about our visit with Mr. Kress last weekend. Members and friends of the Nashua Church enjoyed the privilege of having their former pastor, the Rev. Arnold L. Kress, now a missionary to Japan, with them on Sunday, June 9.

Mr. Kress preached at the morning worship service and told some things about his work in Japan. After the evening service, the congregation had sandwiches, cookies, and iced tea and visited more informally with Arnold. He answered many questions about Lorraine and the children, and gave a more complete picture of their daily lives in Japan.

The two older children have been living about 250 miles from home during the school year, staying with Cal and Edie Cummings and attending school nearby. The Kresses' third son will be joining this group in the fall. Five of the Uomoto girls are there, also. Arnold expressed much appreciation for Cal and Edie's providing a home for the missionaries' children. It is hard to be separated from the children so long, but it is good to know they are in a home where love is.

Arnold said he thinks more in Japanese now than in English. This was evident at times when he would have to explain some word of Japanese he had unconsciously used. Being home on a visit includes an adjustment in language, both in thinking and speaking.

We were happy to learn that Lorraine is having more time for music than she had the first few years they were in Japan. In fact, she sent requests for certain music scores she has been wanting to play. During the past year she enjoyed planning and preparing several musical programs.

Questions were asked about living costs in Japan. Beef prices are phenomenal, though pork and chicken are more reasonable. Gasoline is \$1.20 per gallon and Arnold would have given up the car but needed it to visit villages.

Reason for prayerful concern

You may have heard that Arnold had returned for a meeting with the Committee on Foreign Missions [Orthodox Presbyterian] concerning his experiences of "speaking in tongues." He was also to meet with members of his presbytery and this made it possible for him to visit the Nashua Church.

When asked by the members of the church about these meetings, Arnold asked them to understand that he ought not to discuss it before meeting with the committee. Some were disappointed at not being able to hear more about this, but all appreciated his concern to handle the matter in an orderly way.

We need to pray for Arnold and Lorraine and their children, for the members of the presbytery as they counsel with their brother, and for the Committee on Foreign Missions. [Note: These meetings have been held. The Committee determined to bring the Kresses home early in order to allow Arnold some time for study of the whole situation mentioned. This seemed the fairest course for the sake of the

Kresses and the serious concerns in the matter.]

This reminds me also of the need for prayer for all our missionaries. I am sure you were praying for Debbie Dortzbach during her captivity by the Eritrean Liberation Front. We can praise God indeed for her release and for her strong testimony ever since. We must also remember Anna Strikwerda's family in their sorrow even as we thank God for her years of faithful service.

Speaking of missionaries reminds me: Are you aware of the work of an organization called the RES? That stands for the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. While at the General Assembly in May, I had an opportunity to meet and talk with Dr. Paul G. Schrottenboer, general secretary of this worldwide organization of Reformed and Presbyterian churches.

There are now thirty-six member denominations of which the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is one. Did you know there were that many Reformed churches in the world? Some of them are churches our missionaries work with. Also included are the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church ("Covenanter").

Certainly there are problems within the membership of the RES. Yet I think it is an honest and seemingly workable attempt to fulfill the Scripture's mandate to work toward unity in the church (Ephesians 4, for example). The RES publishes a monthly "News Exchange" (\$2 a year from RES Secretariat, 1677 Gentian Dr., S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49508). In it Dr. Schrottenboer reports on news of various member churches, and others, from around the world. It gives you some idea of the life of the Reformed faith in the world today.

The RES is planning a special conference on the work of the Holy Spirit and one on Missions to coincide with the next Synod meeting in Capetown, South Africa, in 1976. Presumably we will have delegates attending then as we did at the last synod in Australia. [The General Assembly determined to review OPC membership in the RES after the 1976 Synod.]

Wish I had room to tell some of the news in the latest "RES News Exchange", but it will have to wait for another time.

Love to all,

Lois

Ed. note: "Lois" has been agitating for some time to have the Guardian run more news of other Reformed churches. The "RES News Exchange" will be a major source, and we hope to give all our readers some glimpse into the concerns of other Reformed people around the globe.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: *We are looking forward to the beginning of a regular women's section. The response to the idea has been exciting and rather overwhelming. If you have something to contribute or know someone who does, please contact:*

Mrs. Leonard Rolph

Rt. 2, Box 9, Glenwood, WA 98619

Unbiblical methods of guidance

WILLIAM H. BELL, JR.

In seeking God's guidance, or in determining God's will, there are unchanging principles that the believer should never forget. One such principle is that God guides his people according to specific ways. Many Christians try to discover God's will for their lives by other methods than the study of the Word of God written. Some of these methods will be discussed in this article.

God's revelation then and now

The Bible teaches that God is our sovereign guide. He has revealed himself in various ways throughout the Old Testament dispensation. But that revelation was incomplete. The Lord Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament revelation. He is the final, great revelation of God. Christ's apostles completed and explained the revelation of God in Christ. After their work was done and they passed from the scene, special revelation ceased. God has spoken, once for all and sufficiently for all things in his written Word.

One basic principle should be mentioned: We must distinguish between the revelation in Bible times and revelation now. God no longer reveals himself in special revelation; that is completed. But God does continue to reveal himself generally. As the psalmist says, "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1).

But aren't there certain kinds of special revelations today? Some Christians point to the story of Gideon's fleece as a basis for seeking special signs from God as guidance for today. We are warned, however, by the words of Jesus to the Pharisees: "Except you see signs and wonders you will not believe" (John 4:48). Surely this is a rebuke to those Christians who con-

stantly clamor for signs before making an important decision.

Special revelation is finished. We should expect no more until Christ comes again. We have no right to ask God for signs or to expect special revelations from him. To do so would question the sufficiency of Scripture. Paul told Timothy, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God . . . that the man of God may be perfect, throughly [completely] furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). And Paul was talking not just about the Old Testament, but all that is rightly called Scripture. There is not another word from God that we need to live for him.

We have no right to ask God for signs or to expect special revelations from him.

We are not to imitate Gideon. He didn't yet have *all* Scripture as we do. I once knew a student who was perplexed, unable to decide which school to attend. He "threw out a fleece," determining to attend whichever school he next heard mentioned verbally. Sadly, he failed the course and dropped out of the school. More sadly, his faith in God must have been sorely shaken.

R. B. Kuiper (in *God's Will and God's Word*, p. 8) tells the story of a man plowing in the fields who imagined he saw the letters "P. C." in the sky. He interpreted this as a command from God to "Preach Christ." However, it was clear from his seminary studies that he lacked the gifts. A professor (Kuiper himself?) suggested he might have misinterpreted

the vision; perhaps it meant, "Plant Corn"!

Other Christians have cast lots, taking it for granted that God disposes the lot as he did in Old Testament times. But these Old Testament examples, and even the choosing of Matthias to be an apostle, are not proper precedents for us. All of these were done *before* the Scriptures were completed.

Playing with Providence

We are invited to come boldly before God's throne in prayer, with full dependence on the Spirit, that he may minister the Word to us. We have neither precept nor promise in the Bible that God will minister to us through casting lots or tossing coins. Such procedure tempts our Lord rather than honors him.

Others will open the Bible at random, read the first verse they see, and claim this is God's guidance that "speaks to me." Such a practice is presumptuous of the Word. Disregarding the context of the verse and failing to compare it with the general teaching of Scripture is folly. It does not honor God and plainly defies the Christian's sanctified common sense. The Bible is to be used in its totality; "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

Some Christians also err in depending on circumstances to show them God's will. They err also in attempting to coordinate God's providence with Scripture as a source of knowing God's will. But providence is the gradual unfolding in time of God's will of decree, his secret will ordaining everything that happens. Even sin is included in this will of God's decree. When Jesus was crucified, this was done "by the determinate counsel and fore-

knowledge of God" (Acts 2:23).

Well, then, just because it happened and according to God's decree, did that make it right for those who crucified Jesus to do this? Not at all. The same verse says, "Him, . . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." God's secret will, even when we can discover it in the out-working of providence, is not the infallible guide for believers. The only infallible and inerrant will of God for us is his revealed will in the Bible.

Besides, as Jeremiah says, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (17:9). There is always the danger that we may misinterpret God's providence to suit our deceitful hearts.

Let's say a young man is seeking God's will for his life's vocation. An All-American football player, he is drafted by a professional team. But he would also love to coach high school football. What should he do? Being a fearer of the Lord he commits the decision to him in prayer and studies God's Word. He learns that Christians are to keep the Sabbath holy. But professional teams regularly play on the Lord's Day. His duty is quite clear. He may not play professional ball; he may coach. And what made it clear? Providence? Circumstances? Of course not. God's Word did! And the Bible clearly states that moral decisions are to be settled by Scripture's teaching, not by circumstances.

Deciding between good choices

What about the questions that apparently involve no choice between good and evil? Circumstances are not irrelevant, as the Bible also clearly indicates. Paul seems to have moved on to a new place of ministry whenever persecution reached such a level that his present ministry no longer seemed feasible. Circumstances may open or close a door. But our decisions must be based on Scripture principles. If that leaves us two equally good possibilities, then we have done God's will whichever one we choose to follow.

David Livingstone had proposed to go to China as a missionary; he went to Africa instead. William Carey wanted to serve the Lord in the South Sea Islands; he went to India and translated the Scriptures into the Hindu Language. So we can rest upon God's promises: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord" (Psalm 37:23).

We are to come before the throne of grace in prayer that God may minister the Word to us.

We should be slow to decide that no moral choice is at stake in a particular decision — remember Jeremiah 17:9! Yet we often must decide between two equally good choices. We may surely pray for God's providence to be worked out for his glory and our good in such a case. But we must not fall into irrational mysticism.

If one has a gift in Spanish and wants to be a missionary, why not pursue a ministry in a Spanish-speaking area? We are to use our God-given common sense and ordinarily there is no harm in following our natural inclinations. I happen to like basketball, but dislike archery. There is no reason why I should not erect a basketball goal in my yard rather than investing in archery equipment.

The place of conscience

What about conscience and feelings? "Let your conscience be your guide" is *not* a safe rule. Man is totally depraved by sin, and his conscience is included in sin's pollution. All Christians realize it is sin to do wrong, but many consciences are not agreed on what is wrong. In fact, one conscience will often contradict another. It should be obvious, therefore, that man's conscience is not to be the deciding factor in making moral decisions.

Our consciences are easily molded, especially in childhood; that is helpful, if our childhood training was good. But we may also easily stifle our conscience if we continually do what God forbids. In regeneration, we receive new life and a new heart that seeks after God; our conscience itself is enlightened. But sin and its consequences are not yet eradicated. The conscience still needs to be guided, rather than being the rule of our lives. And it is the Word of God that is to be the guide of conscience into all truth.

Nor are feelings infallible. Borden of Yale felt called of God to go to Africa and had no doubt this was God's will. When the day of departure came, he sailed. But Borden of Yale became ill and died on the voyage. Such an experience should tell us that even our strongest feelings are no guarantee that God would have us follow a certain course of action.

The apostles showed a lack of dependence on feelings by planning ahead. They "purposed" to do certain things, realizing that in God's providence their plans might be changed (Acts 16:6-10; 1 Cor. 16:8-9; 2 Cor. 1:15-24). Paul never "felt led" to do anything; he used his sanctified common sense and trusted the God of all providence. See also 2 Chronicles 6:8-9.

We should not ignore our feelings, however. If we have little peace of mind concerning some course of action, we should continue to think through the decision in prayer with dependence on the Word and the Spirit. But the Lord never promised to lead us by "feelings." He leads us by the *subjective* witness of the Holy Spirit who bears witness with our spirits, as he uses the *objective* truth of the Word and the wisdom derived from it.

Dangerous forms of guidance

Others seek to find guidance or their lives in the occult, using horoscopes, ouija boards, seances, and the like. There is an ever-increasing fascination with the occult, especially among young people. All guidance is obviously not of God. The Scriptures condemn spiritualist mediums, clairvoyants, palmists and the like (Deut. 18:10-14).

Our adversary, the Devil himself, is able to perform mighty acts (as through Pharaoh's magicians in Exodus 7:10ff.). He is able to appear as an angel of light and deludes many. He can and may even today perform clearly supernatural marvels. But the call to the Christian is, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

Will you seek to be guided by the Great Sovereign, the Triune God? Or will you run after the guidance of Satan, the great imitator? May our prayer be, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23, 24).

This is the second in a series of four articles by the Rev. Mr. Bell. He is pastor of the First (National) Presbyterian Church of Greenville, Alabama. The third article goes on to discuss how the Christian should seek the guidance of this sovereign God.

The Jerusalem Council ... and church union

EDWARD L. KELLOGG

In searching the Scripture for passages that would be helpful in determining the proper relation between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, let us not overlook Acts 15. The account of the council held at Jerusalem is regarded by Presbyterian churches as of special significance in supporting their doctrine of church government through assemblies of elders. The purpose and judgments of this council should be of great importance to us.

A schism threatened

The council was called to settle a dispute that threatened to tear the church apart. It had to do with the requirements for church membership, and two parties of very opposite conviction existed within the church.

On the one hand were certain Jewish Christians who felt it very necessary for church members to be circumcised and to observe the ceremonial laws of Moses. They had said, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses ye cannot be saved."

It may seem strange to us that persons who believed in Christ would insist on circumcision and observance of the law of Moses in order to be saved. But when we consider that the only Scripture they had then was the Old Testament and that devout Jews received it as the Word of God, as inerrant and binding upon them, and that Jesus himself had stressed this as he quoted these Scriptures as the final authority, the writing that could not be broken, then perhaps we can understand their thinking.

To them Abraham was held in highest esteem; he was the father of the faithful. With him God had entered into covenant. Even in the corruptions of the Jewish faith they still highly honored Abraham and erroneously thought themselves deserving of merit because they were his descendants.

Circumcision and the law

A wonderful revelation of God is given to Abraham in Genesis 17. God makes a covenant with his friend and with his seed, a covenant in which he promises to be a God to Abraham and to his seed and in which he promises the blessing of the land as an everlasting possession.

Then God says, "This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your descendants after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised" (verse 10; *NASB*). Circumcision was to be the sign of the covenant administered to every male child at eight days of age. And the uncircumcised person would be cut off as a covenant breaker (verse 14). For a Jew to disregard this requirement was considered to be the most flagrant rejection of God.

And God gave the law of his covenant, both moral and ceremonial, through his servant Moses. Jesus kept all this law perfectly. He declared that he had come not to destroy

the law but to fulfill it. There is nothing in the example of Jesus to support the contention that circumcision or observance of the ceremonial laws was no longer required.

In fact, the very night before his crucifixion we find Jesus observing the Passover with his disciples. Thus, for anyone to rise up in the church and insist that neither circumcision nor the ceremonial law was now required could only sound heretical. Such a view surely needed to be stamped out before it destroyed the church.

Salvation and God's grace

On the other hand, Paul and others with him had been led of the Spirit to realize that salvation was not dependent on these observances. Rather it depended on the perfect work of Jesus Christ and was given by the grace of God apart from either circumcision or ceremonials or any other observance. To confuse this glorious truth was to undermine the very work of Christ.

The Bible says there was much disputing. And I would suppose that some might have thought that, for the sake of peace, each party should go its separate way; there ought to be two denominations—the Ceremonialists and the Free Gracers. Surely this would seem a far stronger reason for division than many of the reasons given in our day.

But it should be noted carefully that neither faction bluntly called the other apostate or reprobate. All are described as believers. All were accepted as proper commissioners to that assembly.

Arriving at a compromise

What did actually occur? It seems that a conviction grew among the commissioners that a compromise should be sought that would hold the disagreeing parties together and save the church from division. Now to some the word compromise sounds very bad; but we should remember that all compromises are not sinful. There are some that bring glory to the Lord.

The most remarkable yielding was made by those who had insisted that circumcision and ceremonial observance was essential. Did they not have the backing of the Old Testament and the example of Jesus? What persuaded them to back down?

Perhaps it was Peter's argument. He related his experience with Cornelius. As he had presented the gospel to that Gentile household, they believed, "and God which knoweth the hearts bear them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost even as he did unto us, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (verses 8, 9). "Even as he did to us"—that was the conclusive fact.

Peter had also had the vision at Joppa where the voice from heaven invited him to eat unclean animals. When Peter strongly resisted such a thing, the voice replied:

"What God hath cleansed that call not thou common" (Acts 11:9). Peter also reminded the assembly that the ceremonial law was a yoke that neither they nor their forefathers had successfully carried.

Then Paul and Barnabas told of the miracles and wonders that God had wrought among the Gentiles. Here too, as with Cornelius, the special gifts of the Spirit had come. And this giving of the Spirit seems to have convinced the believing Jews that believing Gentiles were truly saved and should be received into God's family.

Finally James quoted Amos 9:11, 12, interpreting the passage to show how it applied to the reception of Gentiles into the church, even those who were not circumcised or observers of the ceremonials.

These are the arguments and considerations that were heard and recorded. Perhaps it still seems rather amazing that the Jewish Christians would be willing to make such a compromise. But we must remember that the Holy Spirit was present among them, working mightily in their midst. It should be noted that these people did not abandon circumcision and ceremonial observance for themselves—for there are later references to such things even on the part of Paul himself—but they did agree that these were not required of Gentiles for salvation or for membership in the same church with themselves.

Abstaining from offenses

Did the other side compromise too? Yes. They agreed to instruct the Gentile believers not to eat meat offered to idols nor blood nor things strangled—all ingrained abominations to the Jewish Christians. They counted abstention from these things as "necessary" requirements (verse 28).

Later on Paul writes to the church at Corinth that "whatsoever is sold in the shambles [frequently meat from idol sacrifices] that eat, asking no question for conscience' sake; for the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" (1 Corinthians 10:26, 27). Paul says whether we eat such meat or not makes no real difference in itself; our concern is to avoid being a stumbling block to someone who does not understand this truth (verses 7-12).

It would seem, then, that Paul had agreed on a restriction at the Jerusalem council for the sake of the unity of the church. He agreed to this even though he recognized that there should really be liberty on the matter. He was willing to make such a restriction for the sake of the church and the fellowship in the Spirit with the Jewish Christians. (The reference to fornication within this restriction was probably included because this sin was so closely tied to the idol worship of the Gentiles. Gentile converts might mistake their liberty in Christ as condoning this sin.)

That first "general assembly" of the church of Jesus Christ was attended by apostles and elders representing the whole church. It was guided in its deliberations by the Holy Spirit. As a result it succeeded in maintaining the unity of the organized body of Christ. Indeed, this goal was so important to them all that significant compromises—in ways of thinking and feeling and acting, not of the gospel!—were made to prevent a schism.

Orthodox Presbyterian compromises

Already in its history the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, for the sake of unity, and in order to include brethren of differing convictions, has made certain compromises. It has been generally understood and frequently urged at general

assemblies that as long as the basic truths are held, ordained officers of the church may hold varying views of eschatology and still be in good standing in the church.

It has also been held in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church that those who hold to the exclusive use of inspired Psalms in public worship, together with those who would also use non-scriptural hymns and songs, are welcome within the requirements of our denomination.

It should be plainly evident that this position allows for the presence of persons in the church who hold views that others in the church believe are unscriptural. This poses a strange problem for a Bible-believing church. But it also indicates the conviction that there must be room for some compromise and that there is a liberty that welcomes divergent views in order to recognize and promote the unity of the body. Our concern should be to allow all the compromises God would have us make and only those God would have us make.

A schism in our history

In 1937 at the Third General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America (now the OPC), a division occurred. There had been overtures before the Assembly dealing with the Christian life and "Christian liberty." I voted in that assembly for a resolution presented by Leslie W. Sloat; a majority of the commissioners voted for it. I thought it was a good overture.

But there were those who, whether they voted for that overture or not, felt that something more should have been said in view of the strong feelings on the part of those who had supported quite a different overture. Many of these people signed the following protest:

"We the undersigned, desire to protest the action of the Third General Assembly, when it adopted only the resolution introduced by Mr. Sloat, and thus disposed of all the overtures touching the subject of a Christian's attitude towards the use of intoxicating beverages. Our protest is based on the following reason,—it is our deep conviction that, in the interest of making clear the position on this matter which we hold, and which we believe is held by the majority of the members of this Assembly, we should have declared that we deem it wise to pursue and to encourage the course of total abstinence."

There were thirteen signatures attached to that protest. The majority of those persons continued in the Presbyterian Church of America, though some left later and some have now died. Four of them are still in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church today.

I believe this protest was a sincere attempt to effect a compromise that might have prevented the church from dividing and so have preserved the unity urged upon us in the Word of God. I think it is impossible to consider carefully and honestly the purpose and judgments of the council in Jerusalem without sensing the need for strong efforts to keep believers together in one organized body.

We regret being unable to include this study from Acts 15 in the May issue of the Guardian due to illness that struck Mr. Kellogg. We rejoice in his good recovery from that and in his returning to his labors as pastor of the Point Loma (San Diego) Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

O.P.—R.P. Merger Discussion Continues

Texts of actions on proposed merger

O.P. Assembly

The General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, meeting May 17-24, 1974, took the following actions in regard to the Proposed Plan of Union with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod:

The Assembly determined to "approve Parts I and II of the Plan of Union . . . as the Preamble to and Constitutional Basis of union, with (1) the exception of Questions 86-89 of the Larger Catechism, (2) the further exception that the [OPC] Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations be instructed to propose to the joint ecumenical committees a revision of the Plan of Union to ensure that paragraph 1 of Chapter V of the Form of Government of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod not become part of the subordinate standards of any of the united presbyteries, (3) the further exception that Part II.B.4.b. be recommended for further study of the advisability of adopting unamendable provisions of the Form of Government, and (4) with the further provision that the committee be instructed (a) to include in the Plan of Union a provision that Chapter I of the Standing Rules of the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, appropriately modified to provide for reconciliation of the statistics to be used for determining apportionment, shall be in force for the second and subsequent Assemblies of the united church, or (b) to bring to the Forty-second Assembly some other proposal for implementation of the provisions of Chapter X, Section 2 of the [OPC] Form of Government for a representative Assembly.

The sense of the Assembly's action

It was further determined that "the 1974 Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, be informed that it is the sense of this Forty-first General Assembly that the text of the Larger Catechism, including Questions 86-89, for a united church should be that which was held by the Presbyterian Church of Amer-

ica at the time of the division that occurred in 1937.

"Among the grounds for this action are:

1. From the time of the adoption of the Westminster Standards by the Westminster Assembly in the 17th Century there have been those with different eschatological convictions who have been able to minister with complete liberty under those standards (adherents of dispensational eschatology excepted).
2. That liberty has been adhered to, without any question, in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church ever since its founding in 1936.
3. Other Presbyterian bodies in the United States with whom both our churches have fellowship hold to the earlier form of the Larger Catechism, and a revision of that document would be an obstacle to closer fellowship.
4. It is the opinion of many in this Assembly that the proposed revisions allow leeway for the holding of dispensational views of eschatology under Constitution of the united church.
5. The doctrinal standards of the church should be amended only from considerations, flowing from the exegesis of the Scriptures, which show the former text to be, or possibly to be, contrary to Scripture.
6. The language of the original text of the Larger Catechism is so largely taken directly from Scripture that it commends itself to us as compared with the amended form that is under consideration.
7. Chapter XXXII and XXXIII of the Confession of Faith are consonant with the original text of the Larger Catechism questions under consideration."

Also, "that further consideration of the question of the original wording of the Larger Catechism, Questions 86-89, be referred to the joint committees."

Future discussions proposed

It was also determined

"A. that the General Assembly urge the presbyteries to arrange and

conduct at least two full-day joint meetings among ministers and elders of the united presbyteries as proposed by the Plan of Union (Part III. A) for the purpose of dealing with doctrinal and practical impediments to union and urge the General Synod of the RPC/ES to urge its presbyteries similarly; and

"B. that presbyteries include in their discussions the following:

- 1) the scope and character of eschatological liberty
- 2) dispensationalism
- 3) the apologetic significance of such doctrines as the doctrine of God, regeneration, faith, and the understanding of the Gospel
- 4) neo-pentecostalism
- 5) exercise of discipline in matters of faith and practice
- 6) the Scriptural mandate for organic union in the visible church; and

"C. that the presbyteries report significant findings from the joint meetings to the [OPC] Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations or the [RPCES] Fraternal Relations Committee by March 1, 1975."

R.P. Synod

The General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, meeting the following week, and aware of the O.P. Assembly actions, passed the following motions:

The Synod determined to "approve Parts I and II of the proposed Plan of Union" including the proposed changes to the Larger Catechism which had been rejected by the O.P. Assembly.

Synod also passed the following resolution:

Whereas the 41st General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has taken exception to the Proposed Plan of Union's changes in the Larger Catechism, Questions 86-89, and

Whereas they have stated as a ground for their action that it is the opinion of many in their Assembly that the proposed revisions allow leeway for the holding of "dispensational" views under the Constitution of the united church, and

Whereas there can be no real union without mutual confidence in each other's doctrinal commitment,

We, therefore, believe it is of ut-

most importance that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church satisfy itself as to the commitment of the RPC, ES to the Westminster Standards as further steps are taken to achieve union, and urge our presbyteries to meet with the presbyteries of the OPC according to the recommendation of the 41st General Assembly of the OPC. To assist with this satisfaction we forward to the OPC and to the Committee on Ecumenicity our previous statements on dispensationalism.

RPC/ES Statement on Dispensationalism

A Committee on Dispensationalism was erected by the 1969 General Synod of the RPC/ES to study dispensationalism, particularly its agreement or lack of agreement with the doctrinal standards of the church. A lengthy report was presented in 1970 in which the dispensational views of Charles C. Ryrie were analyzed and various areas of discrepancy with the Westminster Standards noted. Areas of concern in-

cluded "The Plan of Salvation," "The Kingdom of God," "The Body of Christ," and "Covenant Theology."

In a concluding paragraph, the report says: "In view of these basic differences between the Dispensationalist and the covenant theologian, it is doubtful that one who holds the Dispensational position could state that he is in agreement with the system of doctrine taught in the Westminster Confession of Faith. As this study indicates, the differences are not as great as some covenant theologians would seek to make them, yet it must be recognized that Dispensationalism as here defined is a misinterpretation of Scripture by these evangelical scholars. It would seem, therefore, that the consistent Dispensationalist could not subscribe to Chapter VII, 'Of God's Covenant with Man,' and Chapter XXV, 'Of the Church.'"

In 1971, the Committee made a further report concerning its attempts to study other Dispensationalists besides Ryrie and noting the difficulties of such a study. Rather than have the Synod speak on all these varieties and personages, the committee urged "rather that candidates for the ministry and eldership be called upon to affirm their belief of such basic Presbyterian beliefs, among others, as: the unity of the Covenant of Grace in all ages; salvation by grace through faith in all ages; the unity and continuity of the people of God of all ages as the body of Christ as set forth in the Confession of Faith, chapters VII and XXV; a final eternal heavenly destiny for all the people of God; and the applicability of the moral law to the whole of human history on earth. Pastors likewise are urged to make these and related points clear in their instructional program." This report was incorporated by Synod into the earlier report and sent down for guidance.

Further consideration of Catechism

The OPC General Assembly took a strong stand against any amendments to the Larger Catechism, Questions 86-89. Various arguments were noted against such amendment, and it is clear that the proposed changes in the Plan of Union are not acceptable to a majority of OP ministers and elders.

On the other hand, the RPC General Synod did endorse the proposed changes and did so after defeating an attempt to approve the questions in their original form. (The actual wording of these actions is given at the beginning of this report.)

In its meeting on June 6 and 7, the Joint Committee considered again the proposed changes to the Larger Catechism. It was agreed to propose that Questions 86-89 be changed *only* to the following extent:

In the Answer to Question 87, de-

lete the word "general" in connection with the resurrection.

In Question 88, the word "immediately" is to be deleted, and in the Answer to Question 88, the words "immediately" and "general and final" are to be deleted. [Again, the intent is presumably to allow for spacing out of various events in time, thus permitting more leeway for a premillennial interpretation.]

Besides these changes, the Larger Catechism is now included in the Proposed Plan of Union without further modification. [*Comment:* This would seem to be the irreducible minimum by way of alterations to the standards that could be acceptable to many premillennialists in the RPC/ES. The Joint Committee has evidently sought to reach a position that most people could accept in both churches.]

A Disturbing Statement on Eschatology

At its most recent meeting, on June 6 and 7, the Joint (OPC - RPC/ES) Committee working on the Proposed Plan of Union was presented with a statement on eschatological beliefs with a view to having it included in the Testimony of Part I of the Plan of Union. The Joint Committee did not adopt the statement for this purpose, but did send it to the presbyteries for discussion after amending it somewhat. The statement was not endorsed, but does represent the thinking of some leaders in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. The statement:

"Both of our churches have cherished the blessed hope of the Second Coming of Christ. Differences of interpretation of the Scriptures have led some members in each communion to an amillennial conviction, others to a

pre-millennial or a post-millennial view. In union we come together in mutual trust that all of these covenantal views are allowable within the limits of our standards. These limits allow for the application of many of the Old Testament Kingdom prophecies to the Church or to Israel or to both; for the salvation of Israel as a nation or not, if such salvation is by faith in Christ; for the reestablishment of the Temple, if its ritual is that of symbolic ceremonies only; and for a rapture of Christians prior to the judgments of the great tribulation, if salvation during this period is held to be by faith inwrought by the Holy Spirit, and if this doctrine of the rapture is not motivated by the false distinction between the kingdom and the church which is a tenet indispensable to dispensationalism. Outside of these

limits is any view that denies the unity of the covenant of grace and of the church from Genesis 3:15 onward, or that holds that all of the Old Testament kingdom prophecies apply to Israel alone and not to the church, or holds that salvation in any age is apart from righteousness bestowed by Christ's grace through faith with good works as a fruit of this redemption."

An Outline of Historic Premillennialism

The reason for the various changes proposed in the Larger Catechism, Questions 86-89, is to ensure "eschatological liberty" for all who hold to a personal, visible, return of Christ in glory. Specifically, the changes were intended to allow for the premillennial view, which holds that Christ returns before a thousand-year period (the millennium) of peace and righteousness on earth under Christ's kingly rule.

But if "eschatological liberty" is assured, just how far does that extend? Among those holding to premillennial views are the followers of J. N. Darby and C. I. Scofield, the Dispensationalists. It is generally agreed, both among Orthodox Presbyterians and Reformed Presbyterians, that Dispensationalism (particularly as seen in the Notes of the *Scofield Reference Bible*) is so far out of accord with Scripture teaching as to be excluded by the ordination vows of Presbyterian officebearers.

"Eschatological liberty," therefore, has been understood to permit the holding of "historic premillennialism" but not "modern dispensationalism." The only problem is that no one has ever defined either of these terms in a way that satisfies everyone else. There are those who consider themselves premillennialists but take exception only to some of the more extreme dispensational teachings; other premils hold to a system that is so distinctively different from Scofield that little agreement is left beyond a common belief in the premillennial advent of Christ.

Since there is no single statement of "historic premillennialism," and since scarcely any two premils will agree in every detail, to talk about "historic premillennialism" is not very helpful. Dispensationalism is not much better off, despite the *Scofield Reference Bible* (now in a revised edition); no two dispensationalists agree on all the details.

What follows is an attempt to state "historic premillennialism" in outline, with the idea that at least this much should be permitted within the concept of "eschatological liberty." The outline is largely derived from that of Alexander Reese in his *The Approaching Advent of Christ* (published in 1937 and now out of print), which

was a major effort by a premil to refute Dispensationalism. A more recent book, with similar views, is Dr. George E. Ladd's *The Blessed Hope*, also designed to counter certain Dispensational views.

1. *Events preceding Christ's return*
 - a. The Great Apostasy. Most of the church will become apostate; only a remnant of true believers survive.
 - b. The appearance of the Man of Sin (or Antichrist, the Beast). A personal figure who will lead the Great Apostasy, persecute Christians, and (possibly) head a revived Roman empire.
 - c. The Great Tribulation. The final persecution of the saints.
2. *Christ's second coming*
 - a. Christ's Advent is a single event, visible and glorious.
 - b. Believers, both living and dead, are raised up to meet Christ in the air; the "first resurrection."
 - c. Christ, his saints and angels, return to earth, defeat Antichrist, set up the millennial kingdom.
3. *The Millennium*
 - a. The thousand-year period during which Christ and his saints rule on earth.
 - b. It is characterized as a time of peace, prosperity, removal of the curse on nature, and general righteousness.
 - c. The final great rebellion of Satan and his allies at the end of this period.
4. *The end*
 - a. Satan is finally defeated and consigned to the lake of fire forever.
 - b. The wicked are raised (the "second resurrection").
 - c. The final judgment of men and angels.
 - d. The creation of new heavens and new earth for all eternity.

Modern Dispensationalism's most basic error is to "divide" Scripture history into "dispensations," periods of time in which the conditions for man's receiving of blessing from God differ markedly, and the unity of God's redemptive purpose and his redeemed people is denied. Dispensationalism also differs from the outline above in

many respects. It holds that Christ may return at "any moment," to "rapture" his church out of the world secretly, to hold the saints "in the air" during the seven-year period of the Great Tribulation (i.e., the "Pre-tribulation Rapture" versus the "Post-tribulation Rapture" of the outline, 2. b.), and then to return to earth visibly, defeat the Antichrist, and set up the millennial kingdom in Jerusalem. This kingdom will be Jewish, though Gentiles will be incorporated into it; the temple will be rebuilt, and sacrifices reinstated, in fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecies (none of which are held to apply to the church).

Between the outline and Dispensationalism exists every possible combination of elements. Some non-Dispensationalists hold to a "Pre-trib Rapture"; some (like Dr. J. Barton Payne) deny the "Pre-trib Rapture," but do hold to a rebuilt temple and reinstated Levitical ritual of sacrifices. Some hold to a resurrection of those converted (including the mass of Jews) during the millennium before the final ("second") resurrection of all the wicked. Some have various times of judgment, both of nations as such and of individuals, before the final great judgment.

We have presented this rather lengthy report in the hope that there will be informed discussion of many of these points in the coming months. The basic question, however, is not so much whether one is "Pre-" or "Post-trib," holds to a rebuilding of the temple or not, but how one interprets the Scripture. Even granting a wide degree of "eschatological liberty" in many details, the question to be answered is where to draw a line.

It should be carefully borne in mind that the individual church member may hold all sorts of views in this area, none of which would necessarily be a reason for doubting his genuine faith in Christ. But it is of concern what the teachers and rulers of the church believe concerning these things; they are to be safe guides into the truth. At what point or points do a man's eschatological views become a danger to the peace, purity, and unity of the church? That is the problem.

— John J. Mitchell

Letters

Response to Neilands

I want to say that I, as an RPC/ES minister, appreciate your first two articles in the *Guardian* (March and April issues) and wish we could sit down together and discuss them. Your attempt to air certain issues before a vote on merger is certainly salutary.

May I briefly respond to the statistical data of the second article which concerns the matter of independency?

First, if your figures are taken at face value, the problem is one for *both* the RPC and the OPC; yet you only treated in your article this as a problem for the RPC. The matter is one of principle before it is one of quantity. The silence on your part about independency among OPC men will not be an aid to your overall argument. It makes you look unjustifiably biased; or, to use the old saw, "The pot is calling the kettle black."

In this connection, my calculation of OPC ministers in independent works comes to about 26. I find another 37 whose situation is questionable inasmuch as the current directory does not indicate whether they are retired, teaching in a private school or what. The former 26 are those teaching or working at Westminster Seminary (about 15), an independent educational institution; or in Inter-Varsity (1 or more?); or with the *Guardian* (2 or more? [Just one—Ed.]), both the latter being independent to my understanding. The breakdown on the rest is not possible at this point for me to say.

I did not include George Knight or H. Krabbendam because they are teaching at church-controlled — and therefore, non-independent — educational institutions.

Secondly, your discussion of the WPM income and support matter should have been paralleled by discussion of the OPC Committee on Foreign Missions so as to show to what extent — if any — financial support comes from outside the OPC and to what extent — if any — appeals are made to sources outside.

You concluded by asserting that "Independency in any form is not Presbyterian or Reformed." You thereby seem to have designated Dr. Machen and all who approved of the

original Independent Board of *not* being Presbyterian or Reformed during that era. You may be in fact correct; but are you willing to come out and say such?

I look forward to your third and concluding article [in the May issue of the *Guardian*] and trust that they all may be helpful toward critical re-evaluation by all of us as we seek the will of God. I personally am working for organic remarriage of our two churches. Independency has been more of a problem for us, I believe, than for the OPC. I want to be more Presbyterian and Reformed.

Dr. Robert H. Countess
Nashville, Tennessee

Warns against millennial error

I have just finished reading the March issue of the *Guardian*. I feel we are living in a critical hour and am impelled to write you once more, mindful of God's word to Job: "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" (Job 38:2).

I am firmly convinced that our greatest treasure is the Word of God and our greatest responsibility is to be true to that Word. I feel there is one point we can all agree on, which is that John Calvin was a Reformer. He refers to "Chiliasts who limit the reign of Christ to a thousand years; this fiction is too puerile to need or to deserve refutation" (*Institutes*, III, XXV, 5; Beveridge translation). Also, commenting on Hebrews 1:1, 2, he says: "This whole period of the new dispensation from the time when Christ appeared to us with the preaching of the gospel, until the day of judgment, is designated as 'the last time,' 'the last times,' 'the last days,' that contented with the perfection of Christ's doctrine, we may learn to frame no new doctrine for ourselves, or admit any one devised by others" (*Institutes*, IV, VIII, 7).

We may also read the sermon preached on July 18, 1680, by Richard Cameron just four days before his death, on Psalm 46:10 where God says, "Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth." Of this Cameron says, "The Church of Christ is to be exalted, and its members shall be made to ride again upon the high places of the earth. Let us not be judged to be of the opinion of some men in England, called 'The Fifth

Monarchy Men,' who say that before the great day Christ shall come in person from heaven with all the saints and martyrs, and reign a thousand years on earth. But we are of opinion that the Church shall yet be more high and glorious, as appears from the Book of Revelation, and the Church shall have more power than ever she had before" (From *Sermons Delivered in Times of Persecution in Scotland*).

So, "seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses," may God help us in our day to be true to his Word. As for union, God says that we all are to "speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10); that "there should be no schism in the body" (1 Cor. 12:25).

But we know there are too many schisms in the church. Yet we have a Confession of Faith that cannot be successfully gainsaid. May God help us to pass along to generations yet unborn our goodly heritage.

Kenneth MacLeod
Sydney, Nova Scotia

"Elders" in book form

What good news to learn that you plan to publish in book form Mr. Eyres' series on "The Elders of the Church."

If advance orders will spur you on to quick action, I would like to place an order for ten copies. As soon as you know the price, let me know and I will send payment for them. Thank you.

Richard D. Tevebaugh, pastor
Reformed Presbyterian Church (E.S.)
Charlotte, N. C.

Ed. note: We are working now on this and expect full details next month. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company has tentatively agreed to undertake this and we are grateful for the wide interest shown in the project!

A Reformed Moody Bible Institute?

I am writing this out of Christian concern. As a person seeking to go back to school, I am distressed at the lack of more educational facilities that are Reformed in nature. Covenant College, Geneva College, and Reformed

Bible College are the only ones I can think of. [Ed.: Others would list Dordt and Trinity Christian Colleges and Calvin College, also.] Both Geneva and Covenant are fine liberal arts institutions, but they are expensive. Reformed Bible College is considerably less expensive but does not offer a B.A. degree required for most seminaries.

I feel that it is time to see an institution on the lines of Moody Bible Institute, but one Reformed in doctrine. Moody offers a fine program, no tuition, and is very involved in practical Christian work. We need a school that is Reformed in doctrine and offering courses in Evangelism, Pre-seminary, Christian Education, Sacred Music, Missions, and more, at the cost of Moody and involved in practical Christian work.

It would take a lot of work, money, and especially prayer for this to become a reality. But I feel that if those who believe in the Reformed Faith think and pray about this that someday, by the Lord's will, it could be a

reality.

George Petrella
Hampton, N.J.

Disagree with "Piety" article

We must disagree with the article on "Presbyterian Piety" (in the May issue of the *Guardian*) as it dealt with the matter of politics. Mr. Clelland mentioned that "the principles of liberty and democracy have been propagated and defended." Is there any Scripture to support the idea that it is better to be ruled by a majority than by a king? Or how can we say that a democracy is superior to some other political system?

Secondly, Mr. Clelland proceeds to say that "the Puritans overthrew the Stuarts in England; and Presbyterians played a leading part in the American Revolution." We cannot consider these feats as necessarily being Presbyterian piety, but rather possibly a direct dis-

obedience to the Word of God. Jesus said to render unto Caesar what is rightfully his, including unfair taxes. Paul said that we should submit ourselves to the authority placed over us.

It seems to us that it is dangerous to choose a certain political outlook and proceed to equate this view with the Word of God.

Jerry and Barbara van de Sande
Neptune, New Jersey

Ed. note: The question for American colonials who sought to obey God's Word was not so simple, or so colored by economic factors, as most history books suggest. Basically, they had to decide which of the existing "powers that be" had a rightful claim on their submission. King George had usurped certain powers that rightfully belonged to Parliament and to the chartered colonial governments. Christians had to decide which of the competing and eventually warring authorities to support. This decision caused heartbreak in families, split congregations, drove

Here & There

N. J. ELDERS RETREAT

Bellmawr, N.J. — A two-day retreat for elders was held on June 7, 8 at which the emphasis was on home missions throughout the state. The Rev. Harvie Conn, professor of missions at Westminster, and the Rev. George Haney, general secretary of the OPC Committee on Home Missions conducted seminars and discussion groups.

Carson, Calif. — *The Rev. Bruce A. Coie, pastor of Grace O. P. Church here, journeyed to India on July 25 for a six-week teaching assignment at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Roorkee (supported by the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evan. Synod). A recent illness of Mrs. Coie had threatened these plans, but she is making a good recovery.*

Ocala, Fla. — On July 2, the Rev. John H. Thompson, Jr., was installed as pastor of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church here. Mr. Thompson has served for some years as a missionary-at-large for the denominational Committee on Home Missions and had been active in starting the Ocala work. His new address: 4210 S.W. 6th Ave., Ocala, FL 32670.

Corvallis, Ore. — *The Rev. David A. Hitt has been licensed by Classis Columbia of the Christian Reformed Church and hopes to serve in that body as a minister of the gospel. His name has been removed from the roll of the OPC Presbytery of the Northwest.*

Libertyville, Ill. — The group formerly meeting in Winthrop Harbor is now meeting in the Adler Arts Center on N. Milwaukee Ave. The Rev. Francis E. Mahaffy is pastor. Services at 9:30 a.m.

Modesto, Calif. — The Rev. Rollin P. Keller, formerly pastor of Emmanuel O. P. Church in Wilmington, Del., has accepted the call of First O. P. Church here to be their pastor. The Kellers' new address will be: 3416 Bellevue Dr., Modesto, CA 95350.

Manassas, Va. — *Dr. Robert H. Countess was installed as pastor of Calvary O. P. Church here on July 26. Dr. Countess, formerly a professor in Tennessee, was received from the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod.*

Miami, Fla. — Mr. James K. Workman, recent graduate of Reformed Theological Seminary, was ordained to the gospel ministry and installed as pastor of the Galloway O. P. Church, on May 5.

CONVERSIONS ON THE BOARDWALK

Wildwood, N.J. — *The Boardwalk Chapel reports continuing works of God's grace in presenting the Word to the crowds and in hearts moved to confess Christ. The staff, under the Rev. Len Chanoux, consists of eight seminarians and eighteen college youth, and engaged in personal evangelism on the beach and boardwalk as well as 'rap sessions' and more formal presentations in the chapel itself. Converts have come from every kind of background as the gospel shows its power of God unto salvation.*

many conscientious loyalists into Canada, and also strengthened the American Presbyterians in their careful study of God's Word.

The enclosed check is to renew my subscription. If it expired before the recent issues concerning the OP-RP merger, thanks for sending them. I figure the *Guardian* would be a bargain at \$5.00, the amount of the enclosed check.

Concerning the merger, my sentiments are, tongue in cheek and out of context, those of Philippians 3:13: "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before" — by 1976.

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith,"

Bob Wildeman Sr., pastor
Reformed Presbyterian Church (E.S.)
Lemmon, South Dakota

Assembly and Synod to meet at Geneva College

Both the General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, and the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church are scheduled to meet from May 31 through June 6, 1975, at Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America ("Covenanters") had issued an invitation for concurrent meetings and will be the host.

These are not to be joint meetings, but each group will have opportunity for fellowship with the other and observation of its procedures. It is hoped this will help clarify understandings particularly between the commissioners of the OPC and RPC/ES as discussion of the proposed merger continues.

Note: Having the O. P. Assembly meet this late will make it difficult for the *Guardian* to provide coverage in the June - July issue. If vacation schedules of the typesetters and printers permit, we hope to do this even though it means a later publication date in early July.

NO COMMENT DEPARTMENT

From announcements in a local church bulletin:

Friday, 7:30 p.m. — *Hunter and Firearm Safety Instruction at pastor's home.*

Aug./Sept., 1974

INVESTING FOR THE LORD!

Since its inception, the Church Extension Fund of the Committee on Home Missions has aided numerous congregations in erecting their house of worship. Now that fund is depleted; requests have outnumbered the amount available. The question arises, will or can God's people invest in this project in a day of increasing inflation? The Committee cannot answer that question; the answer resides with you!

Triple Dividends From Your Investment



1. Your Money Works for God

The money you invest in the Extension Fund is used entirely to further the work of the Lord through the establishment of new churches. The Committee on Home Missions lends this money to Orthodox Presbyterian congregations who need church buildings. When the loans are paid back to the Extension Fund, the money is lent out again to help in the establishment of another new church. Thus your funds are put to work over and over again to make possible gospel testimonies which might otherwise take years to establish.

2. Your Money Works for the Church

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church Extension Fund is a vital force in the outreach of our Church and its Reformed witness. Each new church adds strength to our World Program. Each new church means not only more souls brought into the Kingdom of Christ—but also more missionary recruits, more young men who will go into the ministry, more support for our present and expanding missionary program. Our aim: the WHOLE WORD FOR THE WHOLE WORLD.

3. Your Money Works for You

Your dollars invested in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church pay you a guaranteed rate of interest. Your interest is paid regularly. The security of your investment is assured by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In addition to this valuable financial return on your investment, you will also have received the two other dividends, equally important to you as a child of God.

You can invest for triple dividends by requesting an application form today at the address below. With each investment of \$100.00 or more, you receive a note for the amount invested. This note guarantees you a yearly income of 5% of your investment and payment of your note on demand.

A percentage of your money is held in reserve by the church to guarantee repayment of notes on demand. This reserve makes your investment a sound business trans-

action. The rest of your investment is then loaned out to Orthodox Presbyterian congregations for the construction of church buildings. Your interest is paid regularly. Or you may leave it in the Fund to be compounded, if you so desire.

Notes are also available for: 5 years at 5¾% interest, 10 years at 6¼% interest.

For application or more information write—The Committee on Home Missions, 7401 Old York Road, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19126.



Karl and Debbie Dortzbach at home

It took five days, by mule, camel, Landrover, and plane, for Debbie Dortzbach to journey from the place of her captivity to the Red Sea port of Massawa in Eritrea, Ethiopia. But she arrived in good health and spirits, rejoined her husband Karl, and after a two-week vacation in Europe was home in the United States.

Debbie was released without the payment of any sort of ransom. Her captors, the Eritrean Liberation Front, also apologized for the murder of Miss Anna Strikwerda who was shot, Debbie explained, because she could not keep up when the two women were forcibly abducted from the Compassion of Jesus Hospital in Ghinda.

The hospital has been closed, as were other mission works in Eritrea, at the time of the abduction. There are no plans to reopen until the ELF releases four other captives, employees of an American firm, it still holds. Though the ELF gave assurance that the missions are free to continue their medical and evangelistic work, and though preaching will be continued,

none of the medical works will be reopened until all foreign captives are freed.

Meanwhile, the OPC Committee on Foreign Missions, which operates the hospital at Ghinda, plans to send the Rev. John S. Mason to join the Rev. Arthur J. Steltzer in the Eritrean field. John was ordained by the Presbytery of Philadelphia on August 4 at the Calvary O. P. Church in Glenside, Pa. He expects to journey to the field early this fall.

Debbie and Karl have received considerable publicity from their experience. They have been enabled to make a remarkably strong testimony to God's sovereign care, and their readiness to endure hardship has impressed many who had no interest in the gospel. Nationwide media have interviewed them both, and they have been free to make their testimony in their own words. May the Lord himself receive all glory in this harrowing experience, and may many souls be brought to him both here and in Eritrea.

Lausanne Congress bars McIntire

The International Congress on World Evangelization, organized under evangelist Billy Graham's leadership, refused to admit Dr. Carl McIntire as a press representative for his weekly paper, the *Christian Beacon*. Though the congress, meeting in mid-July, had granted press credentials to another representative of the *Beacon*, it refused to allow McIntire to use them when the accredited representative was unable to come. McIntire has been a strong critic of Dr. Graham and the congress, charging that they are working to build the apostate "Babylon church" mentioned in Revelation.

This second congress on evangelism (the first was held in Berlin in 1966) met in Lausanne, Switzerland, with over 2700 persons included, and at a cost of \$3 million. All participants had been invited individually by the organizers and those from the "Third World" countries had all their expenses paid by the organization.

Despite the fact that no one was invited as an official representative of his own church, Dr. Graham did refer to the participants as "representatives" of their churches and stressed the wide ecumenical representation present. Many were there from orthodox evangelical denominations; others were there from churches under Communist state control; others were present from liberal churches in the World Council of Churches.

The congress, under the urging of its organizers, undertook to address the World Council of Churches on the subject of evangelism and in general seemed designed to promote evangelism on the broadest ecumenical front possible.

Comment: We believe the Graham organization was plainly wrong — despite past provocations — to deny Dr. McIntire press privileges. Not even the World Council of Churches ever did this, nor any other organization *except* the earlier Berlin congress. We also believe that Billy Graham's all-inclusive approach to evangelism is an affront to God and so clearly out of accord with Scripture that orthodox Christians should refuse any future invitations to "participate" as "representatives" or otherwise. On these points, and despite strong differences elsewhere, we agree with Carl McIntire.

National Presbyterians convene in Macon, Georgia

The Second General Assembly of the National Presbyterian Church will convene on September 17 at the First Presbyterian Church of Macon, Georgia. Six days of sessions are scheduled, and decisions need to be made that will affect the newly formed denomination for years to come.

With its organizational structures well underway since the First Assembly (held last December), the NPC will be hearing reports of heartening progress in home missions, foreign missions, and Christian education. All three of these agencies have been hard at work, organizing, planning, and carrying on the work of extending the kingdom. A continual growth of new congregations and new missionaries abroad has led to a real growth in the past nine months.

On September 18, the Assembly and friends will hear Dr. Francis A. Schaeffer, of L'Abri, Switzerland. Dr. Schaeffer's writings, particularly on the need for true unity and spirituality in the church, have undoubtedly influenced many in the National Presbyterian Church.

Of special concern in this assembly will be the completion of the church's adoption of its standards. Some portions were adopted only provisionally at the first assembly until certain questions could be resolved. Perhaps chief of these problem areas is the question of "special" or "charismatic gifts" today. A study committee is due to report on this matter, and the assembly will need to make a decision that could have far-reaching effects. (The *Guardian* will present a fuller coverage of this and other Assembly decisions in the next issue.)

NPC Expansion Goals

The Second General Assembly of the National Presbyterian Church will be asked to "adopt as one of its primary objectives for 1975 the establishment of at least one National Presbyterian Church in every state in the United States. . . ."

This comes from the Mission to the U.S. (home mission agency of the Assembly). Already the NPC has congregations in several states where its parent body, the Presbyterian Church, U.S., had never penetrated. Active plans call for churches in the near future still further afield from the

traditional Southern states.

Comments: We have no desire whatever for anything so artificial as a "comity agreement" to divide the United States into "spheres of influence" for the various denominations of separated Presbyterians. There is no reason at all that the National Presbyterian Church should not become truly national in scope rather than regionally limited as was its predecessor.

At the same time, we would hope that the OPC, NPC, and RPC/ES would avoid the unhappy procedure of seeking to establish congregations in the same community. Particularly should all three groups avoid encouraging dissident members from another group to pull out to form a new congregation. Granted that there will be all sorts of circumstances that may lead to congregations of all three denominations in the same immediate area, at the very least home missions executives and presbytery representatives should exercise genuine fraternal relations and seek mutual advice and help before moving into areas where a brother denomination already has a visible testimony to the Reformed faith. This has happened in the past, and there are both Orthodox Presbyterians and Reformed Presbyterians who feel the other has at times "invaded their turf." And recently the National Presbyterians received a congregation that had left the OPC in what can only be viewed as a schismatic action.

What the United States needs is hundreds of new churches where historic Presbyterianism, the doctrines of sovereign grace, and an inerrant Word of God are fully proclaimed before a lost generation. But we do not need three or more small groups competing for members in a relatively small community. If fraternal relations between churches mean anything at all, this is a prime area where they should be thoroughly and cordially pursued.

National Presbyterians reject OPC proposal

For several years the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has provided Sunday school materials for grades 1 through 12, and at considerable financial expense for so small a denomination. Recently, the OPC proposed to the

NPC's Committee on Christian Education and Publications that the latter become full partners in the venture, with shared authority, shared expense, and veto power by each partner.

But the NPC committee felt obliged to turn down the offer, citing uncertainty about its own financial support in so new a denomination (formed in December 1973) and some question about the similarity of "theological climate" in the two churches. At the same, the National Presbyterians did recommend that their churches provide some \$50,000 to the OPC's Great Commission Publications.

The editor of *The Presbyterian Journal* called this rejection an unfortunate decision and is urging the NPC's General Assembly to reverse it. Apart from some such infusion of money from the outside, the OPC will almost certainly have to curtail what has been a most valuable contribution to its own congregations and to over four hundred churches outside its own communion.

Dutch Synod ducks heresy issue

The Synod of the Reformed Churches (Gereformeerde Kerken) in the Netherlands took most of two days in June before deciding not to proceed with normal discipline procedures in the case of Dr. H. Wiersinga.

No one at Synod defended Dr. Wiersinga's views, and all seemed agreed that they were indeed in conflict with the creeds of the church. Wiersinga rejects the notion that Christ endured the wrath of God on the cross in our place; rather, he affirms that Christ's death was to enable us to enter a life of victory over sin through the Spirit. This is a considerable departure from Reformed teaching of Christ's work of reconciling the sinner to a righteous God.

The Synod seemed afraid to institute disciplinary procedures. Despite strong urgings from some, all it finally did was to reaffirm the confessional teaching on reconciliation, urge Wiersinga to refrain from contradicting this doctrine in his teaching as a professor, and hopefully permit greater clarity in the future. Commentators in the Netherlands have pointed out that Synod's action virtually shut the door against any possible discipline of Wiersinga for some time to come. (From RES News Exchange)



Greeting the neighbors at a lawn party

When was the last time you attended a lawn party? Well, if you were in Wilmington, Delaware on June 8, you could have enjoyed the novelty and nostalgia combined as such a party took shape on the side lawn of Emmanuel O. P. Church.

The skies were threatening. Surrounding geography was experiencing rain. "Dear God, we want you to be honored in what happens today. But if you choose to send rain, praise the Lord!" He didn't, and we praise him for that too.

The Lord did send showers of blessing. A great musical group from Philadelphia, "Found Free," presented an exciting two-and-a-half-hour program that appealed to young and old alike.

But what about the neighbors? Would they come? They never come to our church, but would they show up today? They did! At least twenty or thirty of them did. That plus our own members, friends from a local Baptist congregation, oh, yes, and most of my Little League team, formed a good crowd. They stayed and guzzled gallon after gallon of punch and devoured almost 97 dozen cookies — all free, of course.

Perhaps some of the more sophisticated found our art display most interesting. Others may have enjoyed ice cream or soda (sold at cost). But everyone received a Scripture portion and ballpoint pen with church name and address. Our Scripture booth had larger portions for sale at cost (we do want people to show some interest).

But the music was by far the most obvious attraction. Several large pieces of electronic gear, including two

huge speakers, made certain of that. The deafening volume, the exceptional fidelity, and the elevated speaker enabled one of our members who lives a couple of miles away to "hear every word."

Of course our group had to take several breaks. That was when the pastor stepped in for a word from our Sponsor. Some folks actually listened, though all seemed to enjoy his white pants and blue velvet tie.

It was all great fun, and at least the neighbors now know our building is owned by a friendly church, and perhaps is useful for more things than simply a convenient place to vote on election days.

—Rollin P. Keller, pastor

