

The Presbyterian Guardian

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*Keys
of the Kingdom*

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Genesis Two:

Being a Ruth or Naomi

VICTORIA RUSTAND

As I searched for a Scripture passage to use for an evening meeting, I became more and more aware that younger women in the congregation would be speaking to older women.

This situation had existed for nearly a year, during which I had been part of a committee to organize our Thursday morning studies and prayer meetings. Yet every time I came to prepare for one, it seemed that what came immediately to my mind were the various exhortations Paul has for older women to instruct the younger women in the church.

Then I would think: "What do I have to offer these mature Christian women?" But I was drawn to the story of Naomi and Ruth and back to Ephesians, and I'd like to share some of what I found.

The story as found in the Book of Ruth is a familiar one to all of us: how Elimelech, Naomi, and their two sons left Judah during a famine and settled in Moab; how Elimelech died and the sons married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth; and then, how the sons died also.

After that Naomi hears "how that Jehovah had visited his people in giving them bread" (Ruth 1:6). So she decides to return to Judah; her daughters-in-law plan to accompany her. She urges them to return to their own homes, for she cannot provide them with husbands, and in the end, Orpah does return.

But the faith of Ruth is great as she utters those well-known words that declare her trust in Jehovah:

Entreat me not to leave thee, and to

return from following after thee, for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me (1:16-18).

Accompanying in faith

Consider all that Ruth is giving up: her homeland, her family, her friends—all that is familiar to her. Perhaps most of us have had the experience of moving from one city or state to another. And even in these days of mass communication, when we know so much about where we're going and can keep in touch so easily with those we've left behind, we still have feelings of sadness and even fear of what lies ahead. How much more difficult such a move must have been for two lone women in Old Testament times! Yet Ruth accompanies Naomi in faith.

We continue to see the faith and the love through which Ruth acts when the two women reach Judah. Ruth must work hard among strangers, gleaning the fields in order to find enough for herself and Naomi to eat. Through her diligence (2:7), she gains the attention of Boaz, and subsequently his favor:

Then she fell on her face, and bowed to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found favor in thy sight, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me seeing I am a foreigner? And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath been fully showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy

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Twenty - Two

mother-in-law since the death of thy husband; and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people that thou knewest not heretofore (2:10-11).

We see the love Ruth has for Naomi beginning in Chapter One, and it is sustained throughout the entire book. Surely there is a one-to-one relationship between the two women that can humanly account for the affection between them. Naomi must have been a wonderful example of faith to Ruth during the time they'd known each other, especially in the courage she had shown as she lost her husband and her two sons, and finally in her decision to return to Judah even if she had to make the long journey alone. Throughout the book we see how Naomi receives and cares for her daughter-in-law as she would for a child of her own.

No more strangers

There is a greater reason than natural human affection for the love Ruth and Naomi have for each other. And that is the love they have been given by grace through faith in the Lord. Ruth was an outsider, a foreigner; but because of her faith, she was no less in the kingdom than those who were born into the covenant community.

Boaz says, "Jehovah recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of Jehovah, the God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to take refuge" (2:12). Through Ruth's continuing love for and obedience to Naomi, she becomes the wife of Boaz, receives the riches of her inheritance, and becomes the great-grandmother of David, and the ancestor of Christ.

Now, we *all* are outsiders, sinners, brought into the kingdom of God by grace through faith in Christ. "But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13). So that,

ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom each several building, fully framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the

Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit (2:19-22).

What a magnificent description of the church of Jesus Christ! And yet we are not only to be a solid structure for the habitation of the Holy Spirit; we are also to be

strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God (3:16-19).

As a younger woman in the faith

Dear Sarah:

I'm twenty, am separated from my husband, and now I wish I'd married the old boy-friend I really love. My pastor tells me I should not have kicked my husband out. But does God really want me to ruin my life by being unhappily married to the wrong man?

—Miserable.

Dear Miserable:

The kind of husband God knows you need may not be the husband you presently think you want. God does want your happiness. But happiness is not found in running (1 Corinthians 7:10); rather, it is found in learning to be conformed to the image of his Son *through* this marriage. Even Jesus learned obedience through the things he suffered.

Have you considered that your problem may well not be in your husband, but in yourself? Set your heart on loving him out of a heart that loves the loving God. Then you will be truly happy. Remember: love is an attitude not a feeling and must be formed and nurtured by practice and purpose of heart. God tells us that love for a husband is something that has to be learned by younger women

speaking to my peers, but also to more mature Christian women, I need not fear that I have nothing to offer them. Knowing that we are all sojourners who have been rooted and grounded together through the love of Christ, we are to use our individual gifts to minister to one another in that love.

I pray that all women in Christ's church may have the blessings of love and teaching that I've received in the few short years I've been a Christian. There have been many Naomis to me; and I only hope that we younger ones can be Ruths to them, so that through the grace of God we all truly may "make the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:16).

Mrs. James Rustand is a member of Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Glenside, Pennsylvania. These remarks were originally given to the Women's Fellowship of that church in March 1974.

from older women (in Titus 2:3-5).

I pray that you may seek out a successfully married, older woman to help teach you these things. May God's love strengthen yours.

—Sarah.

Dear Sarah:

In answering the question about modesty in dress, you said nothing about the girl's father. Shouldn't he be involved in this? When I taught high school, I found that problems of immodest dress by young girls received far more satisfactory solutions if they were referred to the girls' fathers. A father seemed better able to explain to his daughter just why a certain style was provocative, and his interest in his daughter was often most helpful to her. What do you think?

—Father of two girls.

Dear father of two:

Well said!

Young girls are far more naive than they themselves may suspect. Generally speaking, they have no idea how little it takes in dress to provoke lust in the eyes and hearts of men!

Here's one for you Abrahams to handle. Ephesians 6:4 does exhort fathers also to bring up their children, girls included, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

—Sarah.

Keys of the Kingdom

DENNIS J. PRUTOW

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:19, NASB).

These are the words of Christ to Peter. They are words of commission given. They are words that denote great responsibility.

For Christ says that ministers of the Gospel are like gatekeepers of the Kingdom of heaven, because they bear its keys. And secondly He adds that they are endowed with a power of binding and loosing which is effective in heaven" (Calvin, *New Testament Commentaries*, Torrance Edition, vol. II, p. 187).

We tend to fear this text and its accompanying commission and responsibility. And this fear, displaying as it does a retarded commitment, has reared its head in our own churches. The overall growth of our churches is not what it ought to be. The giving of individual congregations is not what it ought to be. Are we prepared to fulfill the responsibility that Christ himself gave us when he said, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven"?

To Peter and the Twelve

Christ was speaking to Peter, and it was to him that the keys were being given. It is evident here that "keys" are related to "binding" and "loosing." But there are two other places where Christ speaks of "binding" and "loosing."

In the first of these, our Lord is speaking to the whole body of disciples. "If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained" (John 20:23). Two things are noteworthy: This message speaks of the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, the gospel of Jesus Christ is involved, for it is only through the work of Christ as proclaimed in the gospel message that men are loosed from their sins. Also, the context here shows that the authority of "binding" and "loosing" was not Peter's only, but was given to all the apostles.

Christ also referred to this "binding" and "loosing" in Matthew 18:18, where he says, "Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven." Again, two things are noteworthy: Here the reference comes in the context of Christ's directions for the administration of discipline in the church; in fact, our Lord uses the word "church" in this passage. "Binding" and "loosing" is therefore involved in the practice of

church discipline. Also, it is clear from the context here that the authority to bind and loose belongs to the church as a whole, of which Peter and the disciples were representative.

What do we have then? We see the Lord, the King and Head of the church, giving the keys of the kingdom of heaven to Peter as a representative of the church. It is the church of Jesus Christ that has been given the commission and the responsibility to exercise the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And these keys are related, first, to the proclamation of the gospel, and second, to the administration of church discipline.

The Key of the Gospel

The word "keys" is a metaphor for opening and closing of doors. It is used of Christ himself as the one "who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens" (Revelation 3:7). It is the Lord himself who has the key to open and to close heaven.

Our Savior opened the door to heaven through his death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. Christ himself holds the true keys to the kingdom of heaven, and through him that kingdom is established. Through Christ, God's rule and reign is established in and exercised through the hearts of men.

But our Lord gave the keys to Peter and to the church. For it is to the church that gospel of Christ is entrusted. All disciples of Christ are stewards of and ambassadors for his gospel.

This is the gospel, the good news to sinners of Christ's death on the cross, that looses men from sin. Through this gospel God's rule and reign is established in human hearts. Through this gospel the doors of heaven are opened. And it is to the church that this key has been entrusted.

But a key both opens and closes, looses and binds. Whenever the gospel is proclaimed, sin and righteousness, repentance and faith are set forth with boldness. "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). So Paul ministered to Jew and Greek, "solemnly testifying . . . of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21), and "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved" (Romans 10:9).

The gospel calls for repentance from sin and faith in the Savior, and it evokes either acceptance or rejection. Those who believe are baptized and the kingdom of heaven is opened to them. They have been "loosed" from the guilt

and pollution of sin. Those who reject the gospel will neither believe nor be baptized; heaven is closed to them, and they remain "bound" to the guilt and pollution of their sins.

It is this key of the gospel that Christ gave to Peter, and through him and the apostles to the whole church. It is the key with the commission that rests still upon us to preach the gospel to every nation.

The Key of Discipline

There was also that other side to the keys of the kingdom of heaven that had to do with church discipline. But first, let us set the record straight: When talking about church discipline, we are discussing not just a negative concept but the positive; we are talking of discipline as that which develops self-control, character, orderliness, effectiveness. Being a disciple of Christ involves a disciplined and orderly life in which Christ works to develop his own character in us.

Now we do need to remember that there is an invisible aspect to the church, that area where the Holy Spirit works regeneration, where the Lord alone knows infallibly those who are his own. Yet the church is also a visible society of the faithful; it meets for public worship and mutual edification. And it was to this visible organization that the keys of the kingdom were given.

As the gospel of Christ is faithfully proclaimed, the gates of heaven are opened to those who believe.

Christ himself gave to the church the key of church discipline, that opens or shuts the entrance into the visible church so that the whole body might develop in an orderly and decent manner. This grave responsibility was given to fallible human beings; they have been entrusted with God's vineyard and are to care for it under the supervision and guidance of Christ and his Spirit. It is a truly awesome task to which the church has been called!

The Use of the Keys

By what criterion are fallible human beings to judge of what to bind and what to loose as they exercise their responsibility in church discipline? This criterion of judgment cannot be devised by men. Why? Because God has called fallible men to be administrators of what is in its essence invisible and hidden from human perception. The criterion must be one given by Christ the Head of his church.

In Matthew 16, Christ makes it plain enough what criterion is to be used in determining who should be admitted or who excluded from the organized church. He gave the keys to Peter when that disciple boldly confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (verse 16). It is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, faith confessed before men, that opens the door. And as Christ said to Peter, this faith came from the Father in heaven (verse 17). "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3). It is here that the invisible work of God has its visible manifestation in men.

It was the believing and confessing Peter, along with the other disciples, who became the foundation stones of the church (verse 18; Ephesians 2:20). It is confessing believers ever since who become living stones in that spiritual temple of God, the church. So then, the criterion to be used to grant men and women admission to the visible church is

To each of us, as members of Christ's body the church, our Lord said, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

the confession, "Jesus Christ is Lord" — in the full biblical sense of the words.

In other words, the use of the keys is directly related to this confession. By God's own appointment, the visible church must admit into its fellowship those who make a credible profession of faith in Christ and promise obedience to him as Lord. By admitting those who confess their faith, and excluding those who refuse to yield to the King, the church exercises the key of church discipline.

The Whole Church and the Keys

By Christ's commission and command, the church of Jesus Christ is privileged to exercise the "keys" of the kingdom. And everyone who is part of the visible church is charged with this commission and has some responsibility in the use of these keys.

As the gospel of Christ is by God's grace faithfully proclaimed, the gates of heaven are opened to those who believe. They are fully loosed from the guilt and pollution of their sins. As the church proclaims the gospel, in the pulpit, in foreign lands, through a witness to our neighbors, the keys of the kingdom of heaven are being used. What a tremendous responsibility is ours, with such a key given to us! May we use it faithfully and truly.

And those who have believed, who have had heaven's door opened to them, will "naturally" seek to enter also into the fellowship of the visible church. That door is open also when they confess Christ as Lord and Savior, to the pastor and session, and then before the congregation as a whole. Those who have believed and made public profession of faith in Christ are then embraced in the fellowship of believers. Here too we have an awesome responsibility as we use the key of church discipline!

To each of us, as members of Christ's body the church, our Lord said, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." This is a most high and holy calling. It is the most awesome task conceivable to which our Lord has commissioned us.

Are we prepared, as a church, as members of the church, to fulfill this responsibility that Christ gave us? We must. We simply must give of our time, energies, and material possessions, to the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of heaven. We have the keys to church growth; our churches must grow; they cannot just be stabilized!

This means that our denominational efforts in home missions, foreign missions, and Christian education must be supported and expanded. Rather than a feeling of fear about this text, we must seek for a revitalized commitment to Christ and the commission of the keys that he gave us.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head and King of his church, we the members of that church are called to exercise, with all diligence and rectitude, "the keys of the kingdom of heaven." They were given to us; nay, we were entrusted with them!

After several years' service in the military chaplaincy, the Rev. Mr. Prutow was received into the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. He is presently serving as pastor of the Westminster Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

About my Father's business

ROSEMARIE MALROY

"We have just a few more invitations to hand out, Andy. Why don't you find your folks and we'll meet on this street."

Spring green edged the new life in fields and yards this lovely evening in April, and four of us were distributing invitations to our new Mission Valley Chapel here in Montana. The long winter was past and spring had brought hope — hope that some may show interest in our Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Yet few had shown even mild curiosity. It was obvious that in order to get people interested in our church we would have to evangelize them. This evening I had once or twice mustered up enough courage to ask a leading question as suggested by the Coral Ridge approach:

"Suppose you were to die tonight and stand before God and He were to say to you, 'Why should I let you into my heaven?' What would you say?*"

The first man, a scraggy sort, seemed almost amused that a woman would ask such a question and said he didn't know. He said he had a missionary nephew who asked him questions like that and he went to church once in a while.

"It's an important question," I pressed. "Would you like to know the answer the Bible gives?"

"No, not now, thank you," he answered. So I went on my way with Andy disturbed at his lack of interest but relieved in my own selfish way that I didn't have to tax my mind and soul in presenting the gospel and taking a chance I'd goof up. It is such a fearful thing working with people's destinies.

Young Andy and I walked on looking ahead to the next house. The evening shadows fell across the beautiful Mission mountains, and meadow larks sang their last good nights. The home looked dark.

Relieved, I gave a dutiful knock starting to slip the paper

in the screen when a rough-looking man answered the door.

"We would like to invite you to our church," I said. Then growing bolder I asked the leading question again. He stood there stunned a minute. I saw he was visibly shaken. He stuttered a moment and then said gruffly,

"I'm Protestant." And he shut the screen door as if to close out the issues of life. I had stood there not knowing what to say, so we went on our way.

Now I was alone thinking as I distributed the last few papers. I just wasn't the one to do this kind of business for the heavenly Father. I wasn't forceful enough. It wasn't my gift. I could never remember verses when I needed them, and to try and logically present God and what he did, to people who had no knowledge of the Bible, overwhelmed me.

I had one leaflet left and as I walked to the last house a persistent thought hedged my being.

If you don't go, who will? My mind moved back to our church's situation. We had just a handful in our group, and we hadn't grown. Our minister could only preach on Sundays and there weren't really any "qualified" or gifted ones to help evangelize. People in Ronan, Montana were mainly unchurched and very ignorant. They just didn't come, "to go to church."

I had always said that if I could learn to be directly used by God to lead people to a knowledge of Christ, then the Lord could use anyone for that purpose. In fact, I never had had the experience of leading someone to a commitment to Christ. I could pray, and God had used me in different ways; but confronting people with the gospel was another thing.

As I walked along thinking, discouragement floundered in my heart before my prayer.

"O Lord, have mercy on us. Let us have some fruits tonight."

*D. James Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion*.

I went timidly up to the last house and knocked quickly. "Come in, come in," a voice called. I hesitated at the threshold. Maybe the welcome voice wouldn't welcome me when it discovered my mission.

A motherly woman in her fifties appeared. She opened the screen door for me to enter, but I quickly said, "We would like to invite you to our new church."

"Come in, come on in," she insisted. "My grandson and I are having a late supper tonight. We've been working out on our ranch. Excuse the mess."

After sitting in her kitchen to talk, I felt braver and I slowly asked her the question, trying to make the words have meaning.

"Suppose you were to die tonight and stand before God and He were to say to you, 'Why should I let you into my heaven?' What would you say?" She looked bewildered.

"Oh, I don't know, I don't know," she cried. "I know we're here for a purpose. I keep praying and praying. I've tried hard to be a good mother. I've had eleven children and want them for God. You can't understand the sorrow I've had."

At this she broke out in tears and told me of her husband's death a year ago.

She continued, "I cry to God, I ask him for help, but it is as if he doesn't hear me. I try my best. That is all we can do, isn't it?"

Before I had left home that night, I had felt very old with the responsibility of my three children. My husband was gone on a business trip and they had been sick with the chicken pox. I hadn't spoken with an adult except briefly on the phone for three days. Now my power of conversation seemed nil, I felt frivolous with blessings, and terribly inexperienced. How could I say anything of meaning to this grief-stricken mother of eleven children?

Total insufficiency weighed me down as I sat there without speaking, but my heart was crying out to God for help, and he enabled me to continue.

"The Christian message has the answer to that question. There is nothing *we* can do. But through faith, by trusting in Jesus, we can know our heavenly Father hears and answers us, and we can receive the free gift of heaven."

I struggled on trying to present man as a sinner, God's requirement of perfection, and Christ as the infinite God-man sent by the Father to be punished for our sins and who had purchased for us a place in heaven. I spoke with labored and halting words, for I wasn't prepared enough and my tired mind fought for order while leaving out important points. She listened, patiently watching me, and finally interrupted,

"Do you know for certain you're going to heaven?" My mind made a flip-flop — that was a point I had left out.

"Oh, yes! That is the wonderful good news," I explained.

"How do you know for sure?" she questioned. "Are you perfect?"

"No, I'm not perfect."

"Well," she said hesitantly, "I know I'm not perfect, but the difference in our belief is I don't know if I'm going to heaven."

"It doesn't matter what I believe or you believe; it matters

God seemed to have used me in spite of all my unsureness, failing memory, and reticence. He even used those! He truly was the one who moved hearts.

what the Bible says," I insisted.

"What does it say?" she questioned. I was disarmed. Here I had tried to explain what the Bible said and we were back at the beginning. I grasped for something.

"You know what John 3:16 says," I suggested. A vague look crossed her face.

"John 3:16?"

Suddenly my mind went blank. I couldn't think of one verse to quote.

"Let's read Romans 3," I said. She listened carefully as I read, and after hearing John 3:16 also, she seemed to grasp the truth of faith in Christ.

"Would you like to pray and ask for faith to believe in Jesus Christ alone for salvation?" I asked.

"Yes," she said simply.

We bowed, and I hesitated a moment grappling for the words, but before I could breathe a word I heard her prayer.

"Help me, help me, Jesus. I've been calling to you for so long. Give me the gift of heaven. Please forgive me."

There was a peaceful stillness. The Lord seemed very near to me. I wondered if he seemed near to her.

Then she broke the stillness. "Church with all those people makes me afraid. But to study the Bible with you would be good. You understand," she said, referring to my lapse of memory and visible nervousness.

As I left joyfully, I rehearsed the past events. God seemed to have used me in spite of all my unsureness, failing memory, and reticence. He even used those! He truly was the one who moved hearts. I couldn't have given the reason of the hope that was in me except for the Lord's help.

"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). Surely I had a lot to learn. I should be able to give that ready answer to anyone, no matter how ignorant they were of the faith. There was no excuse. I didn't need a special calling to do that. I should be well prepared as each one of us should.

As I walked down the street oblivious to the drawing night, headlights flashed upon me.

"Where have you been?" my fellow laborers called. "You've been gone so long, we thought the town swallowed you up. We've looked everywhere. We were ready to call the police!"

Explaining what happened, I acknowledged that I had been foolish to go alone. The soft darkness settled around us as the evening drew to a close. There had been many mistakes that night, but nothing could overshadow the joy in my heart. I had been used of God, for I had been about my Father's business.

Mrs. Malroy brought together the account of how the Lord gave birth to a new church at Ronan, Montana, in the May issue of the Guardian. Then, "A Church Is Born"; now it is beginning to grow up. May the Lord continue to be with that handful of souls and give them fruit for their labor.

Prayer ... is it really

EGBERT and ELIZABETH ANDREWS

Some years ago the ministerial half of this writer-team was asked to preach in the private chapel of President and Madame Chiang Kai-shek in Taiwan. While going over the order of service with the person in charge (everything in Chinese, of course), it was stressed that the people attending the chapel considered the prayer to be a very important part of the service.

Prayer was "talking to God," and they wanted the minister to realize that prayers for their President and the country were of great consequence to them. Their seriousness and concern made a great impression on us. In that rather small group, all close to the President and his wife, one could sense a great desire to seek God's blessing on the fortress island of Taiwan, to which they had fled some years before, having left all behind on the mainland.

Theirs was the close unity born of a desperate situation. Desperation had made prayer important. Whether they realized the requirements for effective prayer is another matter; we tried to emphasize these. But for them prayer was crucially important.

Crucial, in the desperate situation

Over the years as we missionaries have worked and preached the gospel in Taiwan, we too have felt the desperate need for prayer. With the people mentioned above, we too have a common enemy—Satan. He is the master-mind behind atheistic communism and every act of worship not directed toward the one true God, the Lord Jesus Christ. And Satan has a stranglehold on practically 95% of Taiwan's population, and his powers of deception deceive even the educated.

It may be that we ourselves have not rightly realized the power and deceitfulness of our enemy, or the desperateness of our situation. Through men like Dr. Kurt Koch, an evangelical Lutheran pastor and writer from Germany, we are getting insights into why so many Christians we know are so weak and show so little life, even though they attend church regularly.

The problem is simply the power and influence of Satan. Spirit-worship and the use of fetishes are powerful forces, capable of harming the lives of people to the second and third generations. Taking a child to a spirit medium for healing—even once—can cast its shadow over the child's whole life. We had not realized how fearful the spirit-worshipper can be, how difficult it is for him to cast all this aside when he turns to Christ. One true story may give you some idea of how closely the world of spirits is intertwined in the life of the people.

Crucial, in particular situations

The congregation in Taipei once rented the downstairs of a three-story building. The owner, a young businessman with his wife and four children, lived on the second floor.

The third floor was rented to students.

We soon noticed that the young husband was rarely home. The women in the church talked to the wife and invited her to church and the women's meetings. She showed some interest and came to church fairly frequently. But we found out that her troubles went deep.

Her husband's business demanded that he entertain men at the "girlie" restaurants. As often happened, he became attached to one of the "girls." The wife sensed this and within her heart the seeds of bitterness were sown. She began to show symptoms of depression, and our concern deepened for this mother of four children who felt cast aside.

We went to read the Bible with her and to pray, but it seemed as though part of her could not really listen. All of our pleading was of no avail. Then the day came when we were told that she had committed suicide, hanging herself in the bathroom. Why would she do this?

According to her own "folk" belief, she was now a free spirit and could get revenge on her husband without fear of censure or reproof. That same day, the third-floor students moved out, and the husband's mother took the children home with her. They were all afraid of the spirit of one who had died a violent death.

The congregation stayed; all were agreed that no harm would come to it. But what of the soul of that poor woman? Our ladies had prayed for her, but it wasn't the kind of prayer that showed desperation. We had not been truly wrestling for a soul. We so easily say—and Satan must laugh in glee!—"Well, it just wasn't to be." But isn't that too easy? Jacob wrestled all night for his own soul. Are we willing to do this for the soul of another?

Crucial, for true reviving

Our concern for these people gripped by demonic forces has led us time and again to prayer, more prayer, and even prayer with fasting. We have also turned to books about revivals in other lands—in America, Scotland, Korea, and now Indonesia. From this reading we have learned one great, alarming truth—we are blind to our own sin!

In every revival, as the result of a great work of the Holy Spirit, the people were first of all convicted of sin. This was always first. And many times much prayer had to be made for those so convicted before they found peace in the Savior. Now if even Christians (whether truly so is beside the point; they *thought* they were) can be so blind and bound by their sin that the shock of sudden awareness threw them to the ground in remorse and penitence, then how much more difficult it is for those bound by generations of spirit-worship and demonic influences!

In Dr. Koch's books he writes of how much of this Satanic activity is to be found in parts of Europe, that even Christians without knowing it can be troubled by things carried over from occult activity by previous generations. In some cases a special prayer group has to be organized

crucial to us!

when a family finds that its own prayers are not enough to free a loved one from the oppressor, whatever form he may take.

Crucial, by prayer circles

This idea of prayer groups or circles is a matter that we as a church might well consider. Many independent mission societies have raised up hundreds of prayer groups to meet weekly for the sole purpose of reading Scripture and praying for the mission work. We have attended such meetings. News bulletins are distributed to those in charge of the prayer groups. No program is needed. The mighty business of praying is all important. These people know they are in conflict with Satan, but they stand through prayer in the strength of Almighty God. The results are seen on the mission field.

Is it possible that we as a church do not realize the power—the subtle ways—the insidious workings of the Enemy of souls? How can that be? Our Presbyterian heritage includes most of the great revivals of the world, and in its lists of preachers are men who made kings fear and queens tremble.

Satan is working hard in America and he's made significant headway. Great interest has been aroused in all types of occult practices: black and white magic, spiritism, astrology, Satan-worship, and the like. Books are available telling how to do it, and the paraphernalia can be bought. Whole shops cater to this interest.

But once the Devil has been invoked in any of these forms of magic or spirit worship, once he has been called in, it is not so simple to turn him away again. The influence remains; psychic changes occur in many such people, and their effects continue from one generation to another.

Crucial — to use the Lord's armor

What shall be our reaction to this? There is but one possible answer: "Show us, Lord, how to put on the armor and then give us a spot to fight!" And one requirement for effective use of the Christian armor is to pray always (Ephesians 6:18).

It is imperative that we pray, and everyone agrees with this. But why this guilty feeling that we don't do enough of it? To pray takes time and each of us has just twenty-four hours a day. But are there ways to make better use of the time we do have?

Suggestion 1: Appoint a weekly day of intercessory prayer.

On this day, in each church, arrange for prayer throughout the day for definite matters. The subjects for prayer could be listed in the weekly bulletin or on a bulletin board. Individuals could sign up in advance to pray during a certain portion of the day so that the whole day was one of continuing prayer. In larger churches several individuals could be praying at one time. Since the praying could be

done at home or anywhere convenient, it should not be difficult to arrange for the whole day.

Some of the areas to be prayed for would be

1. *the local church.* Pray for the pastor and session. Pray for all the work of the local church and the workers, especially the church's outreach.

2. *the denomination as a whole.* Pray for the different committees and their work of carrying out the Great Commission. Pray for wisdom and the Lord's guidance in our relations with other denominations. Pray for an increase in the grace of giving among the people.

3. *the needs of the missions.* From newsletters and other reports, pray for the special needs of home and foreign missionaries. Pray for the support of our missionaries and for others to answer the call to service.

4. *the preparing of future workers.* Pray for our Christian schools and colleges; pray for the Seminary. Pray for all those engaged in Christian education in the church, those who prepare the materials and those who teach. Pray that the Word sown may bring forth fruit.

5. *the needs in our own nation.* Pray for those in authority, particularly in these troubled times. Pray for those in need. Pray for the light of the gospel to be shown in all areas of our land.

Suggestion 2: Arrange for congregational prayer each Lord's day.

Ten or fifteen minutes at the beginning of the worship service could be devoted to hearing of matters for prayer. Preparation of such matters for prayer could be made by the pastor from missionary newsletters or other sources. Or, perhaps better, it could be done by one of the elders or deacons or someone else. But whoever does it and leads in prayer for the items mentioned, let it be someone with real enthusiasm for the cause who can lead the people in earnest prayer.

Many other possibilities may suggest themselves. But our suggestion is mainly that congregations be involved in prayer as part of the regular worship service, in addition to week-day prayer meetings. If this requires starting the service earlier, of involving more people in leadership, of some planning in advance, is it not a small burden if we are devoting ourselves to zealous prayer for the Lord's cause?

We on the foreign mission field are desperate for more prayer, prayer for the church of God out there, that the words of Isaiah may be realized: "The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praises for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified" (61:1-3).

The Rev. and Mrs. Egbert Andrews are missionaries of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. May all those who read their words let this call for earnest prayer be answered. For your further thinking on this matter, take time to read and ponder the example of the infant church in Acts 4:23-36.

Greg Hard lives in Pusan, Korea where his father, the Rev. Ted Hard, is a missionary of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. What follows is a description of one week in the life of one missionary teen-ager last summer.

A summer trip to a Korean island

It all began with an invitation from a college student from the nearby college and seminary. Mr. Kwang, along with a friend, had come to borrow some filmstrips and a battery projector. I showed them where we kept the films and prepared a projector for them. It seemed that they were going on a "Service Corps" trip with a group from the college, and I was invited to join them.

I went back to the college with them to find out more about it, and was introduced to the group leader and other members and was told the general plan for the trip. With that, I agreed to be ready to go Monday morning and also agreed to prepare one or two speeches for the week. The expedition was to last Monday through Friday of the third week in July.

Now my knowledge of the Korean language is only slightly more than minimal. I combine a third-grade style with tenth-grade words and top it off with a noticeable Pusan accent. Most Koreans exclaim about my proficiency and pronounce me an expert on the spot. After an hour or so they become well aware of my limitations—though they still insist I speak Korean better than the natives. In any case, I knew I would have a lot to do in preparing for my debut in the country next week.

On the way by ferry

Monday morning we left on the eight o'clock coastal ferry bound west along the southern coast. The group included about fifteen college kids, six of them girls, and myself. We talked, enjoyed the scenery, and played games. I got to know their faces and enjoyed this introduction to the attitude and atmosphere of a college-level Christian group.

There was another "Service Corps" group from Pusan National University. It was then that I found out that this "Service Corps" was not the unique creation of the Korea Theological College and Seminary. Rather, it was a function encouraged and fostered by the national government. Each college sent out a group of volunteers on the first week of vacation to do manual

service and present educational lectures. The group I was with had the additional purpose of proclaiming the Word of God, and so did I.

After six and a half hours on the ferry we landed at a small coastal town. From there we took a fishing boat further west to a small island called Kal-sa. An easy landing and short walk brought us to our final destination—the elementary school building of the village.

We had an empty classroom in a new wing. In one corner the girls set up a kitchen. Two hours later, supper was on the table. We had brought everything from food to tracts and were self-sufficient except for our lodging and water and kerosene. After supper we sat talking, waiting for two students and a local deacon who had gone by land to bring a movie projector and motor-generator. The island had no electricity yet, though only a few yards of water separated it from the mainland.

Beginning the week's work

By this time it was dark, and children were gathering expectantly for the promised movie. But no movie projector had showed up yet. So out came the battery projector and filmstrips. I showed one or two and then the movie itself arrived. I was soon to find out how much the Korean government had to do with whole idea.

The first movie (required of all such "Service Corps" expeditions) was a documentary type of anti-Communist, this-is-what-the-North-Koreans-did-in-starting-the-Korean-war! film, quite expectable from a government fighting spies and trying to keep up nationalistic spirit. After that came a film on the life of Christ with a Korean sound track dubbed in. The audience didn't seem to mind the switch in topics and many stayed to watch even though it had begun to rain.

While the villagers and children watched the movies, our group met with village chiefs and representatives from the four villages on the island, to discuss our plans and ask for sugges-

tions on improvements we might make on their houses. But they didn't seem to have many ideas to suggest.

After they left, the movie ended and the equipment was taken down. After short devotions and a planning session for Tuesday, we all retired with the six girls moving next door for the night. It was 1:00 a.m.

A full day of service

We had no alarm clocks, but the lot of us were up at 5:00 a.m. A few calisthenics, group devotions, washing up and a short rest brought us to breakfast. Then we split up into three groups: two large groups to go and work and a group of one or two to stay at the school to watch our gear.

My group headed off for village #2, about fifteen minutes away. We were to spray disinfectant liquid in all the toilets—outhouses, actually; only city folk have inside bathrooms. The other group went to village #3 to clean and overhaul its primitive sewage system.

We took tracts along to leave at every house. We had to cover the village before lunch and personal witnessing at every house was impossible. It might have been better to dig deep on a few people and leave the others unscathed than to groove every one:

As it was, most of the young men and husbands were out fishing or in the fields, and there were only women and babies. The children were in school. I passed out a few tracts, carried a spray bottle of disinfectant, and sprayed. Needless to say, I was not very energetic.

Most of the outhouses were filthy, and our spraying only served to kill a few mosquitoes and maggots. The pigpens that we also sprayed contained many a frightened pig. I seemed to frighten them more than my big partner. He referred to them as his close relatives, thus explaining their rapport.

House-to-house witnessing

After lunch, my group moved on to village #3 where we were to spread a DDT-like powder (I think it had slightly more effect than the spray).

GREGORY HARD

We split up into two groups, one to spread the powder and the other to do personal house-to-house witnessing. Being a foreigner and thus of slightly more influence, I went with those spreading the Word.

Personal witnessing was a novel experience for me. I stayed quiet while my partner (the Mr. Kwang who had invited me along) did most of the talking. After each short "session," I put in a "good word," asking the person to believe and to come to church. Then we handed him a tract and moved on.

By suppertime, my partner and I had covered most of the village. But there were several houses untouched, and there were empty houses. As in the morning, there were very few men around.

After supper came phase three of the day. Two girls, a male student and myself, all went to village #2 for lecture time. We met with some of the villagers in the meeting house. I gave a brief summary of U.S. history, trying to emphasize its Christian origins. Then I sang two stanzas of "Amazing Grace," and sat down.

My partner then rose to give an educational, largely factual explanation of Communism and its evils. I was able to catch a large part of it and thought it very interesting. I was also able to compare my Korean with his—a humiliating experience. After his discourse, we sang a hymn and ended the meeting.

Watermelon was served at a village house, and then we returned to the school at 11:30 p.m. A planning session followed, then group devotions; an hour of games brought us to bed-time—1:00 a.m.

Witnessing by manual labor

No, we didn't get up at five on Wednesday; we got up at six. Wednesday was the day to work in the town where we stayed, village #1. And the village had asked us to remove a pile of dirt from the schoolyard itself.

After breakfast, villagers gathered, bringing shovels, picks, small carts,

dishpans, and A-frames (the uniquely Korean A-shaped wooden frame used to carry loads on one's back). We worked all morning and more after lunch, digging and chipping away at the sandy stone, hauling the dirt to a bank at one corner of the schoolyard. It was the first time the villagers had seen a foreigner doing manual labor on the same level with themselves; the degree of intimacy thus created greatly added to my acceptance among them. God works in wonderful ways.

Later that afternoon several of us went with one of the village leaders and some school kids for a dip in the ocean. The tide was only beginning to return, so we were able to swim and get clean in the mildly brackish water from a nearby river. I enjoyed the relaxed and friendly atmosphere between myself and the Koreans—something I very seldom experience.

For the evening lecture phase, two girls, two men and I went down to the meeting house in our "home" village #1. Another group went to village #3 to conduct Wednesday evening services in the island's one church (Presbyterian). While waiting for our villagers to gather, I spoke to a small audience of kids, telling them about the biblical Abraham and another Abraham of American history. I stressed the need to grow up believing the Bible and reading it (as young Abe did in his father's cabin).

Then Mr. Kwang got up and elaborated on the biblical Abraham, telling the story of the sacrifice of Isaac with graphic detail. When the adults arrived, I spoke again, pointing to the difference in length of Korea's history (4000 years) and America's, and again pointing to America's Christian beginnings. I said that a truly happy life depended on faith in Jesus Christ.

Then there was a talk on Communism again. After the villagers left our group was treated by a village sub-chief. We ate watermelon and cookies and listened to the sub-chief praise our efforts and talk about himself. I was thoroughly questioned about my age, occupation, family, attitudes, etc.

We returned to school for a short planning session and more games. The whole group joined in except for one unfortunate soul—none other than Mr. Kwang. At the end of our hour of

fun, Mr. Kwang, who had been sleeping, got bitten by a centipede. Treating him, and taking precautions against further such visits, kept us all up to the fine hour of 2:00 a.m.

Witnessing in the school

Much of our purpose had been fulfilled by the end of Wednesday, but we continued on Thursday to spread powder and hand out tracts. The weather had been good so far, though the rainy season had begun. It finally came that afternoon and we walked through the downpour for dinner at the church.

There was to be a gospel meeting that night with a professor from the Korea Seminary who had come that day. Not more than sixty people came because of the rain. The battery projector's bulb provided the sole light source.

Friday was the day we were to leave. But first we were to visit each class in the school, teach them songs, tell them stories, give them a taste of God's greatest promise. I was to spend about five minutes in each of the upper-grade classrooms, telling them a little about America or myself. Actually, I spent about fifteen minutes telling them again of America's Christian beginnings and some of its Christian leaders. I outlined the message of salvation and urged them to believe and grow up as happy and productive individuals. I think I got my message across to most of the kids.

Then we gathered our stuff and moved out, with some of the men and children helping to carry our gear. We took a small boat to the mainland, ate lunch at a restaurant, and then caught the coastal ferry for Pusan. We talked about what we had done and the results in conversions and inquiries about Christianity.

It was a week of rich experience. I learned a lot about Korean culture, Korean manners, about myself and my relations to Koreans. I improved my vocabulary and made many new friends. And it gave me food for thought about my own future. The taste of one type of missionary work has me still thinking about coming to Korea as a missionary, if God so wills it.

So I thank God for giving me this opportunity to learn more about this country that has been my home for sixteen years. The whole trip was indeed an answer to prayer. ■

I have been provoked in seeing Rome, a city of idols. . . . No longer will I be content to let my Catholic friends go their own way.

The Fourth Beast

ROBERT L. AYRES

What follows is one Christian's reaction after a three-day visit to Rome while on a business trip. Mr. Ayres says of it, "This experience really got to me, never having come into contact with Roman Catholicism." Perhaps it will help others realize that the Reformation is not yet finished.

The tour guide pointed to the three columns standing among an assortment of marble slabs and rubble, and explained that this was the remains of a great temple built several years before the birth of Christ. It had been dedicated to the gods of Rome. She explained how seven fires burned continuously, that seven virgins kept the fires going never to let them go out lest the gods' anger be poured out on the city. If they did go out, the only way to appease the gods was to bury the maidens alive. The guide told this story with contempt in her voice for those early pagans.

Soon afterward we entered St. Peter's basilica and the same guide reverently pointed out the door that is opened only every twenty-five years. A Catholic going through this door, or one of the three others opened at the same time, will have all sins forgiven with full indulgence. These doors represent the gates of heaven. The huge brass door at St. John's (the church of Rome) is one of the four and was actually taken from an ancient Roman temple of a pagan god.

Continuing on inside St. Peter's, we came to a bronze statue of Peter. If the foot is touched, or kissed as many pilgrims do, a blessing is received. This is so popular that the foot is worn out every fifty years. The confessional booths nearby are pointed to with pride for one can make confession here in any language or dialect of the world. (Does God need an interpreter?)

Further on can be seen the towering gilded altar and canopy. This central altar is built over the grave of Peter himself, we were told. The guide insisted there is no doubt but that this is Peter's grave. But she explained that the body recently excavated there has not been proved to be Peter's. On the other hand, at St. John's the day before a guide had shown us golden urns above the altar there that contain the skulls of Peter and Paul.

By the way, before we entered the St. Peter's the bus stopped just beside it at the Vatican's official souvenir shop. Here you can buy medals, crosses, statues of the saints, either plain or blessed by the Pope. At St. Paul's you can buy brandy made by the monks of the cloister in the church's own souvenir shop inside.

Where was Christ Jesus?

Nowhere in all this gilded ornateness was the Jesus I know represented today any more than among the ancient ruins. Nowhere was his free gift evident or its entire sufficiency for those who believe. Only idols and pagan rituals could be found in the "holy city."

Here in America, in our zeal not to be bigoted, but to be tolerant of all people and their beliefs, I think we fail to realize that there is a difference between *tolerance* and *indifference*. Tolerance does not require us to start another Thirty Years' War or to go witch hunting. Jesus was tolerant; he did not try to overthrow pagan Rome by force. But he was not indifferent either, giving himself unto death for all those that God would call, both Jew and Roman, Greek and American.

We talk of evangelism, of bringing the gospel to the heathen, the agnostic, the disinterested. But I for one had forgotten the captives held in the clutches

of Romanism.

Daniel's fourth beast, "exceeding dreadful, with teeth of iron and claws of bronze," still exists, still has captive in its satanic rituals millions upon millions of souls. Is the Reformation over? Should it be? I was deeply shaken by what I saw in Rome. It is written of Paul when he was in Athens that "his spirit was being provoked within him as he was beholding the city full of idols" (Acts 17:16).

I've seen the beast "exceeding dreadful" in its full dreadfulness. I have been provoked in seeing Rome, a city of idols. This was not ancient Rome with its pagan idols, but Rome in the year of our Lord 1974.

Now I hope that no longer will I be content to just let my Catholic friends go their own way. Let me rather test them, see how strong they are, and try to present the truth to them. "We do not know where the wind comes from or where it goes," and maybe the Spirit of Christ will use me or you to bring one of his elect out of the snare of the beast. We will be of no use at all if we are indifferent to it all.

Of course, every Christian's greatest power lies in prayer. We must pray daily for the triumph of truth over the pagan falsehood of the Roman liturgies. Christ's name is being used all over the world in these pagan rites. At the very least, we must show our grief for this to God in our prayers.

Jesus said that we are either for him or against him. There is no half-way place where one can call on the name of Jesus *and* practice idolatry, have Jesus as *part* of one's salvation but not the whole, trust in God *and* in man for eternal life.

Do I sound militant? I am, after seeing the fourth beast. Jude exhorted us to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." I believe this involves raising our voices in truth and praise of the triune God of grace to drown out the pagan liturgy of Romanism.

Overture opposes R. P. name

The following proposed overture has been presented to the Presbytery of Philadelphia with a view to its being sent to the next general assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Though not acted upon yet by the presbytery, it is presented here for information.

The Presbytery of Philadelphia overtures the Forty-second General Assembly not to send down for adoption the Proposed Plan of Union for the Orthodox Presbyterian and Reformed Presbyterian, Evangelical Synod, churches revised as of June 7, 1974 until it has taken the following actions:

1. removed from the Plan of Union, Part I, Preamble, third paragraph, the word "confess" and the implication that the Presbyterian Church of America in 1937 followed a sinful course in its firm adherence to the teaching of its doctrinal standards;

2. rejected the name Reformed Presbyterian Church [for the merged church] since this puts the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the line of succession of a covenanting tradition which it does not accept and which misrepresents its original and continuing purpose to maintain and extend the spiritual succession of the old Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. as represented by the Princeton Theology of Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, B. B. Warfield, and J. Gresham Machen, none of whom were covenanters or defenders of Reformed Presbyterian principles;

3. removed from the Plan of Union any implication of approval of the use of the Lamb Fund by the united church since that Fund was specifically limited by its founder to the support of the principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

Ed note: The author of the overture is the Rev. Paul Woolley, emeritus professor of church history at Westminster Seminary, and one of the founders of that seminary in 1929 and of the Presbyterian Church of America in 1936.

Reformed Presbyterian principles,

The Presbyterian Guardian

EDITOR
JOHN J. MITCHELL

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SPECIAL MISSIONS ISSUE

We're glad to be able to present this first issue of 1975 with its special emphasis on our witness and mission to the world. We are pleased to offer you four extra pages also. (Did you realize that you had received extra material in two issues of 1974? We hope to put out one whole extra issue in 1975!)

French Creek Bible Conference REUNION

Saturday, March 15, Wilmington, Del.

12 Noon: Luncheon (Fr. Crk. Menu!)

1:30 p.m.: Special Service with reminiscences, pics, slides, and Rev. Cal Busch, speaking.

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ADVANCE NOTICE: The Elders of the Church, the series of articles by the Rev. Lawrence Eyres, is in book form. Advance orders, at \$1.00 each - 75¢ each for ten or more - postage paid, may be sent to the Guardian now. Orders should be received in six weeks or less.

the "Covenanter tradition," may seem of little significance to many, and the RPCES itself does not promote these as traditionally held. That may be itself good reason to avoid a name not really representative of the membership of the merged church.

—J. J. M.

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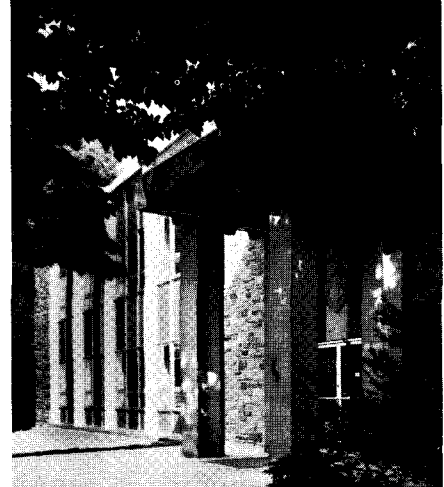
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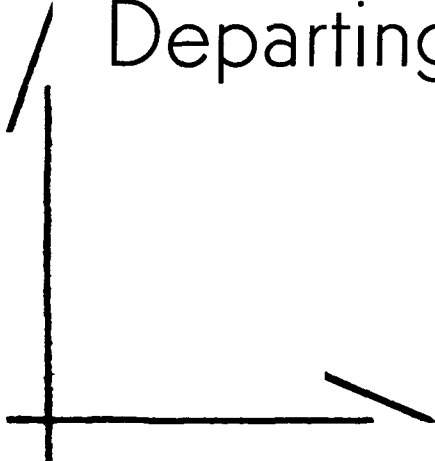
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Departing to Heaven, or remaining to serve?

JOHN VAN HARMELEN*

The twelfth chapter of the Book of Acts describes for us the death of James and the deliverance of Peter. You are invariably impressed with that fact when you read in verse 2: "And he (Herod) had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword," and in verses 7ff.: "And behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him (Peter) . . . and said, 'Get up quickly . . . and he followed the angel outside . . . and when they had gone out they went along one street . . . and when Peter came to himself, he said, 'Now I know for sure that the Lord has sent forth his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jews were expecting.' And when he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, who was also called Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying."

In the same chapter . . . James departs to be with the Lord; Peter remains to serve the Lord.

God's sovereign wisdom

God certainly could have sent an angel for James, just as he did for Peter. But he didn't. Why we don't know. God is sovereign in his actions. What he does is wisdom.

I was forced to think of this chapter when I read recently in various publications that members of the Ethiopian Liberation Front had seized a helicopter belonging to an American oil company, landed near the hospital of the American Evangelical Church in Ghinda, and abducted two nurses, Miss Anna Strikwerda and Mrs.

Deborah Dortzbach, the one 52 years old and the other 24.

The Moslem rebels have great need of medical help, and when they couldn't find a doctor in the hospital, they abducted the two nurses. They had to make a long march through desolate country, and at a point, when Miss Strikwerda had lost a shoe and apparently could not keep up with the others, the guerrillas shot her dead. Mrs. Dortzbach then feared for her life, too, but the Lord spared her, and after 26 days she was released with the message that those who had abducted her were fighters for freedom, something they wanted the world to know.

Mrs. Dortzbach was pregnant and was treated well. She received plenty of goat's milk, goat's cheese, and even some goat's meat.

When her husband completes his (seminary) studies, they both hope to return to Ethiopia to bring the gospel to those who now are fighters for freedom.

God's mysterious acts

God's ways are unsearchable. The one, Anna Strikwerda, departs to be with the Lord; the other, Deborah Dortzbach, remains to serve the Lord.

We don't comprehend this at all. But we know that the Lord directs

our lives.

Anna Strikwerda lived so completely in her work. She loved her work. And although she would undoubtedly agree with the apostle that to depart and be with Christ is by far the best, still she would immediately add: but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. And then she would think of the orphans, the little waifs for whom she wanted to be a real mother. She was so deeply attached to them that she took one of them along on her last furlough to Australia.

My colleague Vanderbom writes about her: "We rest assured with great certainty that Anna is now delivered and already at the age of 52 has received that great distinction, the crown of honor. But her orphans are once more orphaned. Who will care for them now? Doesn't the heavenly Father know that Anna, while invoking his name, testified that she wished to dedicate herself for the rest of her life to caring for these little waifs? She wrote us that she saw this plainly and clearly as God's will. . . ."

This makes her departure very difficult for us. Has death, the enemy, won a victory in this case? Oh, no! We are unable to see the end of God's ways. And before him we will keep silent. Although, we may also do something more than that. We may also come before his throne with our sorrow, with our mourning.

God's faithful servant

The gospel must spread throughout the world accompanied by the

*"Hemelvaart of Zendingsreis," *De Wachter*, vol. 107, no. 19 (24 Sept. 1974), pp. 7, 11. Translated by R. B. Gaffin, Jr., and reprinted with permission.

peril of death. And Christ must rule in the midst of his enemies. Yes, the cause of the king is urgent.

If anyone was convinced of that, then it was Anna! When I met her for the first time, after a sick call in Hobart, where she was working at the time, I did not realize that this young woman had such a strong passion for the poor, the insignificant, and the small, who have no one to help them.

We helped her to establish contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, which then appointed her as a missionary to its work in the barren land of Ethiopia.

According to the Bible, a land of gold — and yet so poor. She went there. And there her faith was often put to the test. For there was so little visible fruit.

We recall her furlough and how unmistakably she voiced her disappointment. So much more had to be done to make progress. A little later she wrote Rev. Jonker to help her. Her concern was the addition of a children's ward. For the children, who frequently had to spend an endlessly long time in the hospital because of malnutrition, had no other place to play than between the beds of the adults! Later she began to write us about her ambitions and plans for an orphanage. She was an intense woman, brimful of ambitions and filled with impatience!

But at the same time she surprised us again and again by her deep and joyful faith. She wrote, "It must be very difficult for you at such a great distance to understand our situation and make decisions. But the Lord knows all our needs, and we discover every day that he cares for us. And we are so thankful for what you do for us."

So in numerous letters, written in her beautiful handwriting, she testified to her faith and her love and her hope. Just now my eye falls on a line from her Christmas letter; "Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father; there is no shadow of turning with Thee."

Anna joined in saying that. And we too must dare to join in. For we must go on. This work too must be continued, even though we do not yet know how.

God's sovereign glory

One thing more: We do not yet see all things subjected to Jesus. But

we see Jesus, crowned with honor and glory. And he himself has suffered to bring many children to glory.

Anna Strikwerda was shot to death. Deborah Dortzbach landed in freedom at Kennedy Airport. But she wants to return to Ethiopia.

The one has departed to be with the Lord and the other remains to serve the Lord.

The death of James and the deliverance of Peter confront us with a problem that we can never solve. Without any explanations we stand with our questions before God's omnipotence.

We do not understand God's motives.

Why was the one killed and the other spared?

And still . . . it is our heavenly Father who unerringly weaves the threads according to his divine

Anna Strikwerda departs to be with the Lord; Deborah Dortzbach remains to serve the Lord. We don't comprehend this. But we know the Lord directs it all.

pattern, for Anna as well as Deborah.

God deals sovereignly with his children in the death of James and in the deliverance of Peter.

Sorrow and joy lie side by side, in the same chapter, Acts 12.

Anna died in a desolate place somewhere in Ethiopia. For Deborah a meeting was arranged at the airport; "friends sang joyful hymns."

And yet . . . both were saved, the one for the church triumphant, the other for the church militant.

WANTING TO BE BORN

Two Reformed families were intrigued by the article "A Church Is Born" in the May 1974 issue of the *Guardian*. There seemed to be so many similarities to their own situation in Crawford and Erie counties in northwestern Pennsylvania.

After several years of fruitless search in various parts of the area, in September 1974, two families — Dave and Katy Wilcox with their three sons, and Art and Kathy Hunsberger with their two sons — found themselves living approximately two and a half blocks apart in the same city. After hearing the story of the families in Ronan, Montana, they believe God can do it again.

Fellowship together

Already there is tangible evidence that God can do it again. Even now additional families have been meeting with the Wilcoxes and Hunsbergers on Sunday evening for a time of praise, prayer and Bible study. The group meets at the home of Dave and Sue Grotenhuis in Cambridge Springs, and includes Jerry and Lorraine Carrier and their two children, Ron and Loretta, and also Bob and Yvonne Thayer. Ron Carrier does not attend regularly since

he is a sophomore at Geneva College and worships with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Sewickley. The Hunsbergers also make a forty-five mile trip each Sunday to take part in the Sunday school and worship of Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Grove City.

Other inquirers have attended the Sunday evening fellowship, which is conducted by Art Hunsberger and Dave Wilcox. There is also a Tuesday morning women's Bible study led by Kathy Hunsberger. The Sunday evening study has focused on the doctrines of Scriptures from a Reformed viewpoint.

Members of this group are hoping to establish a truly Reformed church in this area where no Reformed witness presently exists. If readers know of others who might be interested, send the information to

David Grotenhuis
110 Wall Street
Cambridge Springs, PA 16403.

Or you may contact
Arthur G. Hunsberger
452 Fairmont Avenue
Meadville, PA 16335
(814-336-4391)

WITHOUT THE

LES COVER

Are you one of the fortunate few in the United States who has come to know and love the Lord, and who additionally has come to love the richness and fulness of the biblical doctrines often labeled as Calvinist or Reformed?

If you are, *and* if you have a local church home that is faithfully upholding these God-given truths, then you have real reason for rejoicing. Many who share your faith are not so fortunate.

Searching for fellowship

It is part of human nature not to appreciate our blessings until we've had them removed and had to live without them. My wife and I have experienced this with regard to the many blessings that we enjoyed in our former church when, because of my work, we had to move to another town.

We were moving to a town with many churches and felt certain that we would have no serious problem finding just the right one for our new church home, even though there were to be no Reformed churches there.

It really does sound like such a simple thing to do. Many of the churches can be quickly eliminated from the list of possibles because they have, as denominations, abandoned the faith or hold to heretical doctrines. It would seem then to be just a matter of visiting those churches known to be "evangelical and Bible-believing" and finding the one that "fits" best.

Obstacles to fellowship

Unfortunately, this simple-sounding procedure can turn out to be a disillusioning and heartbreaking experience. We found two primary obstacles in the way of our efforts to find a church home.

The first was in the area of unsatisfactory worship services. A Christian who is accustomed to feeding on the

meat of God's Word will not be satisfied for long with the milk. So many evangelical churches today have forgotten, or never knew, that the main purpose of the organized church is "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:12, *NIV*), so that individual Christians can then perform their function, which is to evangelize.

A Christian who is sure of his salvation and is hungry for the edification of the preaching of God's Word is soon dissatisfied with endless admonitions to "repent and be saved" and interminable altar calls. And, a Christian who knows the awesomeness of the almighty, omniscient God who is his Lord, his Savior, and his Father by gracious adoption, is soon turned off by an irreverent and overly familiar attitude toward God.

Secondly, lack of real fellowship proved to be a problem for us. The reasons are many, but the single biggest factor blocking the way is the vigorous, almost militant objection, in "evangelical" circles, to the biblical doctrine of the covenant. To hint at a belief in the propriety of infant baptism is to open oneself to gasps of unbelief and a barrage of criticism.

If you go further and proclaim this as the proper, biblically correct doctrine, you will be labelled a liberal or heretic, and all future conversations of a spiritual nature will be spoiled by efforts to convert you to the adult immersionist view.

Agreements with individuals not to allow this difference of opinion to interfere with fellowship can work, but only so long as it remains an individual relationship. As soon as a group forms, the issue eventually comes up again. Efforts to use a careful Bible study to persuade such groups that your position is founded upon solid ground are in most cases

a total waste of time, due to a lack of openness to scriptural teaching on this issue. With some groups we found such a general divergence of Scripture interpretation that many words had quite different meanings among us, and underlying concepts would be so different that communication during Scripture study was impossible.

Asking hard questions

As we lived through the agony of learning these unpleasant facts, we had many questions about the correctness of our own actions. Although these sound somewhat rhetorical, they in fact are not meant to be.

For example: Were we being too stiffnecked with regard to our beliefs? Should we simply hide the fact that we believe God's Word teaches that our children are better than heathens between birth and that magical "age of accountability" (as it says in 1 Corinthians 7:14)? Should we not mention the fact that we believe the Old and New Testament saints to be a part of the same church of God? Should we ignore obvious misinterpretations of Scripture for the sake of peace?

The only solution to our dilemma seemed to be to start a new local church in a Reformed denomination. We tried every way we could think of to start a church, including Bible studies in our home, advertisements in the local papers, and letters of inquiry to every denomination we knew of that was truly Reformed.

Nothing worked. We met many Bible-believing Christians and had hours of good meaningful Bible study, and were able to convince absolutely no one to join us in an effort to start a church. These were not things we tried to do in our own strength; this entire concern was accompanied by much prayer and searching of the Scriptures.

CAMP?

A continuing predicament

We finally made the painful decision to start driving on Sundays, as often as possible, to another town over a hundred miles away—the nearest church that is faithfully upholding the Reformed faith. The final influence that brought us to this decision was the birth of our youngest child, and that necessitated a baptism. But even this arrangement cannot be a final solution to our predicament. It is a temporary measure, relieving part of the problem, but causing some serious new ones.

Many questions need to be considered in regard to this predicament. How many other people are there in the United States in a similar situation? How many are there who are never able to attend a church because there isn't an acceptable one for hundreds of miles? What do those people do about the sacraments? What do they do about their children not having the benefits that come with a local church, such as the fellowship of Christian playmates, the instruction in Sunday school, and the preaching of the Word?

Should a Christian stay in such a location? If not, does he need other indications of the Lord's will before he leaves, or would that be showing a lack of faith? If so, how does he fulfill his obligation to raise his family in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

"My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off."

—Psalm 38:11

Perhaps the most fundamental question is: What are the boundaries of the local church?

The camp of God's people in Old Testament times was a place set aside by God. There was a definite boundary that separated the rest of the world

from the camp, and special blessings were available to those inside the camp because it was the dwelling place of God and his people.

Christ's sacrifice has changed all this so that no physical boundaries are any longer established. Christians have the assurance of their Lord's dwelling with them regardless of their physical location.

It is not clear, however, that the organized, visible church does not have boundaries much like those of the Old Testament camp. The Bible speaks of the church in Jerusalem or in Ephesus, clearly suggesting some understood limits. Without question there are and should be boundaries of a spiritual nature; otherwise, there could not be the required separation from the world or proper church discipline. But the boundaries in question here, however, are physical and geographical lines of separation.

Is there some arbitrary radius beyond which the relationship and responsibilities that constitute church membership are no longer relevant? In some parts of the country this may not be a problem. But in the Southwest, where distances between Reformed churches are often quite large, the problem is real and answers need to be given serious consideration.

A problem for the church

If there is an arbitrary radius beyond which the Christian is considered to be "without the camp" and cut off from the benefits of membership, then he is left in a very perplexing situation. Should he and his family go without the sacraments, or should he assume his role as priest to his family and baptize his own children?

But if there is no such boundary, and Christians living great distances from a local church are still to be part of the fellowship, then the church has perplexing problems. How can the church keep in contact to assure that the children are being raised in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, as it vowed it would? How can the sacraments be administered? How can any fellowship be maintained? These are difficult questions and not pleasant to consider, but this does not warrant their being ignored.

In our case we have been able to make the long trip to another town more or less regularly, and the church has agreed to come to our home if a need arises (and it has done so). However, as far as we've been able to de-

"Alone, the fine old beech yields to the blast and lies prone upon the sward; in the forest, supporting each other, the trees laugh at the hurricane. The sheep of Jesus flock together; the social element is the genius of Christianity."

—C. H. Spurgeon

termine, there is no organized effort on the part of any of the Reformed denominations to minister to people in our situation. We have been treated, if not considered, as those "without the camp."

Shouldn't there be a real effort by every truly Reformed denomination to minister to such people, to see to it that they can partake of the sacraments? Shouldn't these people be upheld regularly in prayer? Such simple things as seeing to it that they have all the church literature, bulletins, newsletters, and Sunday school material, would be of great help. Promoting correspondence with other people in similar situations could bring rich blessing through sharing of mutual burdens and joys through letters. Regular (even if infrequent) visits by the elders would be very helpful.

There is much more that could be said about the needs and the possibilities, but perhaps just one more consideration will suffice. People who have learned what it is like to be without a convenient local church are probably the most eager proponents of church growth and development to be found anywhere. It could be a significant factor in the future of the Reformed faith if there were a concerted effort to instruct such people in the methods of church development and to extend encouragement and assistance to help them carry those methods out.

Mr. Cover is an engineer employed by the United States government and lives in Los Alamos, New Mexico.

We do know of many Reformed believers, located in barren places, who have found others likeminded and have enjoyed real fellowship together. We do not know how many there are with an experience like the Covers. But his plea for a concerted effort by the church to care for such people simply cannot be ignored.

If you have any further thought on this area of concern, we would be glad to share it with others. It does require some serious thinking by many.

Neo-Pentecostalism and the Freedom of the Christian

PALMER ROBERTSON

One of the treasured heritages of the Reformation is the freedom of the Christian. Bound by Scripture and Scripture alone, the man renewed in Christ finds himself gloriously liberated from the commandments and dogmas of men. Nothing may bind the conscience of the Christian other than Scripture alone.

Marvel for a moment at the "glorious liberty of the sons of God"! Like a swallow soaring freely in the sunset skies, you may dive and dart to the thrill of your heart, and all to the glory of God.

The original wonder of man in paradise has been restored. Having been created all over again, man is gifted with the freedom to be creative himself. The Almighty does not prescribe a specific ironclad pattern by which his Name may be glorified in the life of every believer. Instead, he endows the crown of creation with a freedom to serve with ingenuity and surprise.

In Christ, you are not the "master of your fate, the captain of your soul." But you are free, free, free within the bounds of God's law to use your talents, whether two or ten, to his glory.

Hesitant toward freedom

More recently, evangelical Christians have manifested shyness and fear toward their freedom in Christ. Instead of seizing with joy and confidence the blood-bought liberty that is theirs to

be creative with their lives, they have stiffened into a corpse-like pattern of uncertainty and doubt. The life-germ of spontaneity in service has been stifled.

One manifestation of this current denial of the freedom of the Christian is seen in the openness to new words of "prophecy" in the churches. Christians committed completely to the finality of revelation in the Bible alone fail to see the inconsistency in looking to new prophetic revelations to guide their lives. On the one hand, they say "the Bible alone." On the other hand, they would bind up Christian freedom by approving the restrictions of so-called "prophecy."

Do you really believe the Bible to be unique as a source of knowledge of God's will for the Christian?

Do you really treasure your freedom as a Christian to serve Christ creatively?

Then you must look carefully at the claims of neo-pentecostalism and the "renewal" of the gift of "prophecy."

There is definitely a conflict of interests. In fact, *there is an absolute antithesis*. You cannot be creatively free under the general requirements of Scripture *and at the same time* subject to the specific "prophecies" of the neo-pentecostal.

Binding the believer

Let me illustrate.

Daddy says to his six-year-old son, "Live as God would have you live." This general command, repeated continuously, covers a lot of ground. Whether the son is running the bases or toting the garbage, the father's command applies.

Right at this moment, the six-year-old is stretched on his bed studying his phonics. He's doing a conscientious job, despite his body posture. He is actively living as God would have him live.

Then big brother comes into the room. He brings a message: "Daddy says, 'Wash your face.'"

"But why?" asks the six-year-old. "It's not suppertime. And besides, I'm working on my phonics."

But the specific "command" of big brother has been communicated. Although the young son may be doing a good job of studying his phonics, he must interrupt his current project to obey the more specific command. The general admonition of the father to "live as God would have you live" has been superseded by the specific command to "wash your face."

Now suppose the father had not even given such a command to the older brother. To give him the benefit of the doubt, suppose a genuine misunderstanding had occurred. Suppose the older brother honestly thought the father had made such a statement.

What, nonetheless, will be the effect of the transmission of this mistaken

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message to the diligent six-year-old?

His liberty as a free son will be lost. His freedom to choose among equally good things will be destroyed. If the older brother had offered his comment in the form of a suggestion or an opinion, it would have been fine: "Why don't you wash your face?" or "I think you ought to wash your face." But the admonition comes in the form of a command originating from the father: "Daddy says, 'Go wash your face.'"

The liberty to choose has been lost completely. The son must obey the specific command of the father. The specific will always supersede the general.

"Prophecy" overrides Scripture

Exactly the same situation prevails in the context of continuing "prophetic" activity among neo-pentecostals.

The commands of the Bible come in the form of general admonitions. Although the Holy Spirit constantly is applying them specifically to the life of the believer, the biblical commands themselves do not have a name, a date, or a place prefaced to them. The Bible says, "Marriage is to be held in honor by all" (Hebrews 13:4); it does not say John Williamson is to marry Linda Tsou.

But that is precisely what the supposed gift of "prophecy" does claim. The specific "prophecy" of a brother always will supersede the relative generality of a scriptural injunction.

Scripture says, "You shall be my witnesses." The current specific "prophecy" says, "Go witness to Tom Brown by giving him a tract."

The Christian to whom this contemporary "prophetic" utterance is directed may have been witnessing to Mr. Brown over a long period of time. He may have been sowing the seed of the gospel with wisdom and care.

But now a "word from the Lord" has come. All previous strategies for witness must be laid aside. This contemporary "word from the Lord" conforms to the general admonition of Scripture that Christians are to be witnesses, and so it cannot be neglected. The command "from the Lord" communicated by "divine revelation" must be obeyed.

What has happened? The universal command of Scripture has been superseded by the particular command of the current "prophetic" utterance. The freedom of the Christian has been terminated. The enlightened conscience of the believer has been bypassed. The wisdom of God abiding in every Christian has been overruled by a supposed gift to communicate revelation.

The completed revelation

It is not appropriate at this point to appeal to the seemingly similar circumstances of New Testament times. It is true that specific prophecies worked alongside generalized scriptural admonitions in New Testament times without interfering either with biblical authority of Christian freedom. The situation does seem rather similar to the circumstances of today.

But there is a most significant difference. And the difference resides in the finality of God's revelation in Scripture.

In the dating process, rich character

development comes from exposure to a variety of marriageable options. But once a marriage relationship has been sealed, further consideration of marriage possibilities is inappropriate. While contact with the opposite sex will provide opportunity for continuing personality growth, any further openness to the ultimate relation of marriage can only destroy the God-created oneness that is now shared.

So long as God's authoritative revelation of himself was still in its formative stage, continuing revelations of his infallible will by the ministry of inerrantly inspired prophets enriched the church. But once the solemn documents of God's covenant vows with his blood-bought people had been sealed in a finalized written form, further additions could only detract from the assured condition of stability and finality.

The doctrine of the finality of revelation in Scripture is too precious to surrender. It is the word of Scripture that Christ said would never pass away. The church of Christ *must not* return to the bondage of an experience-centered religion. The modern doctrine of continuing prophetic activity destroys the freedom of the Christian, destroys the finality of the revelation of Scripture, and destroys the functioning authority of the Bible.

Dr. Robertson is a professor in Old Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary. This is the first of several articles dealing with various aspects of the beliefs and practices to be found among neo-pentecostals or "charismatics."

About Foreign Missions

DID YOU KNOW --

Did you know that the first Protestant missionary actually to reside in Korea, Dr. Horace Allen, M.D., a Presbyterian, arrived there just 90 years ago, this year? [1974]

Did you know that the first Presbyterian missionaries to take up residence and start work in and from Pusan, the Rev. and Mrs. William M. Baird, went there just 80 years ago, this year?

Did you know that the first general assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America (now the Orthodox Presbyterian Church) instructed its moderator, Dr. J. Gresham Machen, to appoint "a committee on Foreign Missions [to] take under its consideration the foreign missions interests of the Presbyterian Church of America and make suggestions to local congregations as to their foreign missions giving and report to the next assembly as to a permanent foreign missions program"?

Did you know that the resignation of four women and four men—Mrs. J. B. Griggs, Miss Marguerite Montgomery, Mrs. A. L. Berry, Miss Mary W. Stewart, the Rev. Paul Woolley, the Rev. Ned B. Stonehouse, the Rev. Edwin H. Rian, and Murray F. Thompson—from the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions was quoted in the minutes of the third general assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America (June 1937) as the reason for withdrawing support from the Independent Board and setting up the church's own Committee

on Foreign Missions? The reason for the resignations is quoted as follows: "In view of the decision of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions refusing to condemn independence in church government and to uphold its charter provisions favoring Presbyterian church government, we believe that the usefulness of the Independent Board as an agency to promote the object for which it was founded, the conduct of truly Presbyterian Foreign Missions, is at an end."

Did you know that "Mr. Lawrence R. Eyres" is listed in the minutes of this same third assembly, within a year of the denomination's founding, as doing "negro work" in Philadelphia?

Did you know that the following ordained ministers were listed as foreign missionaries by the third general assembly, again within a year of the church's beginning?—Egbert Andrews, China; Henry Coray, Manchukuo; A. J. Diefenbacher, China; Frank Fiol, India; Floyd Hamilton, Korea; Alonzo Hitchcock, Peru; Bruce Hunt, Manchukuo; Albert Dodd, China; Malcolm Frehn, Japan. Besides these, there were Richard Gaffin in China (not yet ordained) and Dr. and Mrs. Roy M. Byram, medical workers, also in Manchukuo. Former missionaries present at the first three assemblies include: James Rohrbaugh, Ethiopia; J. S. Selwyn Toms, Korea; Charles Woodbridge, Africa.

Did you know that by the end of its

second year, the Presbyterian Church of America also listed a work among Jewish people by Dr. and Mrs. David Freeman, a work among Indians by the Rev. and Mrs. John Davies, as well as a Committee on the Evangelization of New England?

Did you know that the Korean Presbyterian Church (Kosin), organized in 1951, with which the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has worked since its beginning, in January 1974 sent a *second* missionary family, the Rev. and Mrs. Whan June Yoo, to Taiwan to join the Rev. Young Jin Kim already there? Mr. Yoo gave up his work as a high school teacher in order to enter Korea Theological Seminary, where Orthodox Presbyterian missionaries are teaching. After graduating, he went to one of Korea's distant islands as a home missionary, laboring there some years. Then he returned to Pusan and pioneered in a flourishing congregation while also teaching Greek at the seminary. His going to Taiwan brings to four the ordained missionaries sent out by the Kosin church; besides the two in Taiwan, there is also one in Brazil and in Japan. In addition, several seminary graduates are ministering to congregations of Koreans in the United States and elsewhere.

"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days" (Ecclesiastes 11:1).

—prepared by the Rev. Bruce F. Hunt, missionary to Pusan, Korea.