

The Presbyterian Guardian

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Whether we live or die,
we are the Lord's

Witnessing to the Dying

Karen's "Right to Die"

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Letters

Exception to PCA Assembly report

I must take exception to your editorial comment (p. 139 of the October issue of the *Guardian*). You say:

"During the year, the persistent and able efforts of 'the truly Reformed' party had their effect. Though not abandoning the support of mission works now in existence, the permanent committee showed itself concerned to develop a consistently Presbyterian mission testimony abroad. As approved by the Third General Assembly, the foreign mission program of the PCA is pointed in the right direction."

I object to your first sentence because it leaves the obvious impression that the things stated in the remainder of the paragraph would not have been true if it had not been for the efforts of the "truly Reformed" party. The permanent committee would not be concerned to develop a consistently Presbyterian missions program abroad. Previously the foreign mission program of the PCA was pointed in the wrong direction. Only the "TR" efforts have changed that situation. That is the implication of your paragraph.

I am not a member of the permanent Committee on Mission to the World, but I know members of the committee and have been in touch with their efforts from the beginning. I am quite sure that they have always been as concerned as they are at present to develop a consistently Presbyterian mission testimony abroad. I am convinced that the mission program has always been pointed in the right direction.

It is not the Mission to the World committee that has changed, but the "TR" party. As members of the Presbyterian Church in America are becoming better acquainted with the Mission to the World committee, they are becoming more aware of that committee's Reformed commitment. Charges against that committee of being less than truly Reformed are losing their credibility and are having to be dropped. We are glad that these

accusations are being dropped, but disappointed if the impression is given that they were once true and that the "TR" group deserves the credit for the Reformed commitment of Mission to the World.

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

No official OPC view on gifts of the Spirit

In view of the rash of articles in the *Guardian* appearing in recent years on the matter of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and presenting one viewpoint only, it might be well to remind your readers that these articles do not represent the official view of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, but are essentially the viewpoint of the writers of the articles and perhaps of the editor and trustees of the *Guardian*. There are other viewpoints on this matter in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the holders of which have done their best to base them on Scripture, and which so far have not been given an airing in the pages of the *Guardian*.

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church has taken no official position on the matter of the gifts of the Spirit. It might be well, in order to enable the church to give prudent consideration to such a difficult issue, to invite articles arriving at different conclusions to be presented for publication.

We need not be afraid of differing positions. After all, the Westminster Confession was hammered out together through the process of scriptural debate. The great truths of Scripture have a way of emerging and shining clearly through the illumination of God's Spirit in the process of debate.

Yours for scriptural solutions to difficult problems.

Albert G. Edwards, pastor
Grace Orthodox Presby. Church
Westfield, N.J.

Editor's response:

Mr. Edwards is quite correct in noting that the *Guardian* does not necessarily reflect the "official view of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church" on this subject or on any other. The

(Continued on page 178.)

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Karen's "Right to Die"

THE EDITOR

A New Jersey state court has refused to order hospital personnel to "pull the plug" on a life-sustaining respirator connected to the comatose body of Karen Ann Quinlan. Karen's parents, devout Roman Catholics and with the support of their parish priest, had sought to have the machine disconnected so that Karen might return to her "natural state" and "die with dignity" and thus enter into her life hereafter.

Judge Robert J. Muir, Jr., insisted that the courts could deal only with life in the present and that such life must be preserved. He held that the court had no constitutional right to order such a life terminated but that the decision was a medical one to be made by attending physicians. The judge's decision set no new precedent in defining death, though this was the underlying question.

The court's ruling does strengthen legal precedents against various pleas for "mercy killing" or "euthanasia" for incurably ill, pain-racked patients. It flatly rejected any concept of a "right to die," whether expressed by the patient or by his family. The decision does restrict the recent trend in judicial and legislative acts toward a looser view of life. (It's hard to see how this ruling can be readily reconciled with the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to permit abortion. Karen Ann Quinlan's life is hardly as "human" in potential as that of a fetus.)

In leaving the question to medical authorities, the judge only did what we have all taken for granted for quite some time. When the doctor would check for heart beat, for some sign of breathing, and for dilated pupils in the eyes, and then tell us the patient was dead, we accepted it. Without the machine, Karen's body would meet those traditional tests in a short time. More recently, doctors have tended toward defining death in terms of brain wave activity; Karen still shows some such activity and on that basis would be judged to be still alive.

But the judge has done the medical profession no favor. Already doctors are plagued by malpractice suits and hardly any doctor will now disconnect a machine if there's even the faintest sign of life. It is possible, and there

are cases like Karen's, where some signs of life can be artificially maintained almost indefinitely.

The court's ruling could lead to some strange situations. Hospitals may find themselves caring for machine-sustained bodies and unable to shut them off. How long should such a body be maintained? Who's to pay for the machines? Who's to pay the costs of such treatment? Are such bodies really alive, or are they only biological specimens artificially preserved?

It's not a question, however, of "artificial" as over against "natural." A majority of us are alive today because of "artificial" interference in "natural" calamities. We welcome such things as an appendectomy, a Caesarean delivery, a shot of penicillin, or a blood transfusion, and Christians rightly give God the thanks for such means of preserving and extending life.

It's not even a question of machines. Polio victims are still being kept alive by modern successors to the iron lung. Kidney patients are enabled to live by use of extremely complicated machines. Heart patients may be cured because a machine can allow a surgeon to do delicate repairs. For these things too we are rightly thankful to God.

Nor is it a question of a "right to die." Though Paul strongly desired to go to be with the Lord, he recognized that he had no right to this (Philippians 1:21ff.). No one has a right to die, either for himself or for another except as God himself has made certain exceptions. No one has a right to ask for "mercy killing" or "euthanasia." So far as Judge Muir's ruling works against such a concept, it is all to the good.

And it is not a matter of thwarting God's will. God will end every sign of life in Karen's body whenever he so determines, be that through "natural" process, failure of the machines, or the decision of the doctors. No matter how expert the machines become, God will still exercise the final authority. And for this too we may be truly thankful.

No, the crucial question in Karen's case is not that of a "right to die." The question is really one of determining whether death has occurred. Doctors are no longer certain about

this, too many exceptions having been recorded. But neither is there any other clear-cut guideline for defining death. The Bible speaks of life in terms of breath and of blood, but it nowhere defines death in terms of physically observable signs.

We believe that Judge Muir's ruling was the only right one to make. Not only is it right in rejecting the concept of a "right to die," but it is right in leaving the question of disconnecting a life-sustaining machine to the judgment of the doctors. We expect that further court cases will arise in attempts to spell out the limits within which doctors may exercise this judgment. But the basic decision was correct since doctors are really the only ones capable of making a knowledgeable decision. And Judge Muir further insisted that doctors had the obligation to preserve human life, which all doctors have accepted—until the matter of abortion upset traditional medical ethics.

Doctors should maintain life-sustaining machines, but only so long as there is reasonable expectation that this may contribute to the patient's life. When a comatose, "vegetative" body has shown no signs of improvement over a period of time, we believe doctors should be free, both legally and ethically, to discontinue prolonging the treatment. When the tools of medical science have been used to the extent they are available, and when those tools have failed to alter an otherwise hopeless situation, the doctors will have done all they could to preserve life. This is all that anyone can rightly expect of them; it is all that God expects.

There will be differences of judgment among doctors. There will be cases where doctors make mistakes. The line of judgment to be made, despite its uncertainties, should be whether continued treatment has any reasonable expectation of success. And that is, as Judge Muir said, a medical decision. May the Lord God be gracious to those who must make such difficult decisions, and may they be led to make these decisions in conscious dependence on God and a desire to do his will.

—J. J. M.

Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's

THOMAS E. TYSON

For if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's (Romans 14:8).

The following sermon, by the pastor of Trinity Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Hatboro, Pennsylvania, was preached at the funeral service of Mr. Tyson's mother, Mrs. Earl (Thelma) Tyson, who died after a lengthy illness. The sermon is published here at the urging of many who heard it.

What do you want most of all in life? To live long? to be healthy? to have a lot of stuff? to enjoy yourself? to be free? to have plenty of friends? a family?

Many people have not only *wanted*, but have actually *gotten*, all of these things, and still have no real satisfaction!

The question is not so much what we want, but what we need. To have what I want is not necessarily to have what I need. If I want all sorts of things, and even get them, I may still not be satisfied, unless I have received the basic thing that I need.

And what is that? To belong to the Lord! And that is what Romans 14:8 tells us: the believer belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, come what may.

We need to belong to Christ

Paul had been discussing, in this chapter, how people were living: the keeping or not keeping of certain special days; the eating or not eating of certain foods; the criticizing or not criticizing of someone's house-servant. And his conclusion was: Let each conscience be captive to the Lord Jesus only. For we don't live for ourselves (verse 7), and even death is appointed for us by the Lord.

So, there is something more important than either living or dying. It

is our need to belong to the Lord. We are made by him, like him, and for him. We are made to live with him. And that is a unique relationship, in all creation. Only God himself will do, to satisfy this our basic need.

We will be satisfied and comfortable only when we are right with God. And we are right with him only when the Creator-creature relationship of fellowship and belonging is what it should be — when we love and obey him!

The Preacher, in Ecclesiastes, remarks that death is the mocker of the man who spends his life in the vain circular pursuit of satisfaction, meaning, and comfort, everywhere and anywhere but here.

And Paul's own life, before his conversion, is a good example of our need to belong to the Lord. "Circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless." And so he acted accordingly, and kept the coats of those who stoned Stephen, and consented to his death. So he busied himself breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.

Why? Because of his need, his basic need to be right with God and to belong to God. He thought that by this means he would be. Yet later Paul would write that "whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ."

The corruption of the best is often the worst. Man is incurably in need of belonging to God. That is his nature. And that is why when he is, or should I say, *now* that he is unwilling to submit himself to God, he has to satisfy this basic need elsewhere. He will give himself to someone or something else. No wonder Augustine said that we are

made for God and that our hearts are restless until they rest in him.

And, if we are not willing to have God rule over us, if we are not prepared to accept his estimate of us, and if we are not disposed to accept his way, truth, and life, as the only path of forgiveness and reconciliation with God — then, then we will surely belong to someone.

Perhaps we will belong simply to ourselves — a self-made person, a self-directed man. That is really the only logical and practical alternative to the Christian gospel. And Paul recognizes this, when he says in verse 7 that the believer does not live and die for himself.

What does he do? Well, first, he recognizes that he needs to belong to the Lord, and that he removed himself from belonging to the Lord through his rebellion. He confesses that he has voluntarily and culpably left this place of fellowship, love, and obedience, toward God his Creator — the place he knows he should be!

Yes, the believer knows the first thing without which he cannot be saved, and that is: how great his sins and misery really are. He knows that his sins have separated him from God. And he knows his misery, that he no longer belongs to God, but is instead a servant of sin and death and hell.

It is this very desperate condition that the believer confesses first: his absolute need of the Savior Jesus Christ.

We do belong to Christ

"We are the Lord's," cries the apostle. "For this purpose Christ both died, and rose, and lived again, that he might be Lord. . . ." We "are bought with a price," and that is why we are not our own.

We believers are redeemed by the precious blood of the Son of God, which he spilled on Calvary. There he

fully satisfied for all our sins, and delivered us from belonging to them anymore. There he completely crushed the Serpent's head, and delivered us from his power altogether. There he suffered our eternal damnation, that we might not die forevermore.

Again, look at Paul himself, a pattern of these things. He found no comfort in his religious zeal, activities, and accomplishments. And why? Didn't he follow the letter of the law? Yes, he did. That was exactly his trouble. He followed the *letter*, and thought that by so doing he had fulfilled all righteousness and was truly right with God. But in his heart of hearts he knew he wasn't. So he gave himself all the more diligently to establishing his own righteousness — without success.

Yet one day Paul exchanged all that for the real thing. On the Damascus road he was met by the Lord Jesus Christ, and he saw the Lord. Saul, also named Paul, saw the Lord, fell down before him in true repentance and faith, and was converted. He exchanged all his filthy rags of self-righteousness for the shining robe of Christ's own perfect righteousness.

Later he would write, "Yes, doubtless, I count all things to be loss in

Man is incurably in need of belonging to God. That is his nature.

view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith."

See? That is why Paul could write our text — that we belong to the Lord, we who believe in the Lord. He knew what he was talking about, be sure of that. For although he had to make a complete about-face, and turn his back upon everything that he had been committed to formerly, yes, even his family perhaps, and the conviction that had been so strong in him that it led him to active persecution of the followers of the Way — even though he had to be *so* converted, yet he found his deepest need fully satisfied.

Paul found Christ. He found all. Then he belonged to the Lord.

Afterwards the call came, "Separate unto me Barnabus and Saul." And off

he went, serving the Lord; ready to die if necessary; and while living, not living for himself, but for him "who died . . . and rose again." Christ the Lord lived in Paul his slave. And yet, through it all, the servant of Christ knew how imperfectly he served his Lord and Master. The will was there, but not the ability; "for the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish."

But Paul was not discouraged, though he knew his own sinfulness, because he knew that he belonged to the Lord. He knew that the crucial thing was this: not my faith in Christ, or even my service of him, but Christ's possession of me! Not so much that he belongs to me, that I have accepted him as my Savior — though I have — *as that* I belong to him, that he has loved me and drawn me to himself, for himself.

Paul's comfort was that of the first question and answer of the Heidelberg Catechism, "that I, with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. . . ."

The gospel message is that believers are redeemed by Jesus Christ alone. By the payment he made, and by that alone, they become his possession and shake off the chains of sin and its penalty. How wonderfully it has been solved, this problem of what we must first know to live and die happily!

Long before I knew my sin and misery, the Lord did.

Long before I could even confess my sins, he was doing something about them.

Long before I was ever concerned

The crucial thing: not my faith in Christ, or even my service of him, but Christ's possession of me!

about finding Christ, he was dying for me!

And the same Lord Jesus that sought out, found, and took possession of Saul of Tarsus, sought out, found, and took possession of Thelma Tyson. She told us so. And she showed us so.

You may suppose I learned theology at Westminster Theological Seminary. Well, I didn't. I learned it at home. My mother told me about God's predestination of certain sinners to inherit eternal life. And she patiently explained to me how I must receive this wonder of a doctrine with faith and thankfulness. She led me to receive it:

"You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." That was Mom's choicest gift to me.

Jesus Christ sought out, found, and took possession of every one of the sheep the Father gave him. He does it now, and he will keep on doing it until he is done. And then the Father will say to him, "Go and get them. Gather them all together, for I am going to wrap up everything down there, and I want them all safe. They belong to us, and I don't want a hair of their heads lost when I burn up the old earth and sky. Yes, Son of Man, go get them, and we will be together!"

The people of the Lord Jesus are confident, knowing that they belong to their faithful Savior.

"We are Christ's," cries the apostle, "and Christ is God's." The Lord Jesus is the middle link in the chain that connects us again to our God and Creator, our heavenly Father. That link needed to be forged by divine hands, and it was. When we were hopelessly and eternally cut off, he sent his only begotten Son. He sent *the one who belonged to him*, and gave him up a sacrifice for sin, that *we* might belong to him. Hallelujah!

We are blessed in belonging to Christ

"Whether we *live or die*, we are the Lord's."

You see, the blessedness in belonging to Jesus Christ is found in the comfort it provides us, among other things. Comfort, come what may! in life *and* in death! united to Christ in his crucifixion *and* resurrection!

It's not that while we are alive we have a religion, and then — pity! — like all the sons of men, we die and then we have nothing. No! Not even death will make the big difference, as it does in the eyes of so many who hold out bitterly that death is the end. There is no comfort there.

But Paul directs our eyes to the Lord of life and death. Jesus said, "I give them eternal life, and they shall never die," and Paul agrees. Oh, the clearness and simplicity of the gospel promise: "He that believes on me has everlasting life!" What a blessing to be able by God's grace to see and believe that clear, simple promise! Not disembodied "saints" strumming non-

(Continued on page 177.)

Witnessing to the Dying

C. JOHN MILLER

The call came unexpectedly. I had known the man's health wasn't good, but I wasn't prepared for this message: "Come to the hospital quickly. Mr. York is dying!"

At the hospital I received my second shock. The sound of Mr. York's breathing was horrible. This non-Christian man was dying from lung congestion; he was suffocating and had already lapsed into a coma.

Tubes and paraphernalia

The whole scene left me dismayed. My impression was of tubes and hospital paraphernalia everywhere.

Here I was, a young pastor who had never before been plunged into anything like this. To top it off, I didn't know the patient all that well. Once or twice I had talked to him about Christ, but his response had been vague. So what should I do? How do you minister to a man who seems unconscious? No seminary course had prepared me for anything like this.

Even so, I've long been convinced that God's sovereign plan governs everything. But what kind of web was the Lord weaving here? All I could see to do was to give Christ's gospel to Mrs. York.

Yet when I leaned my heart on the Almighty, the deep waters of death seemed less threatening. God began to bring to mind things I'd heard several years before from a Christian nurse.

This distinguished lady had encouraged me in hospital visitation and laid down some guidelines for communicating with a patient who seems to be unconscious. In effect she had said, "Don't assume that a person in a coma or apparently unconscious is beyond all communication. Sometimes the patient who does not speak or show signs of listening can hear you. Don't be misled by appearances."

Three things to do

To this she added wise counsel on communicating the gospel to the person who appears to be unconscious, especially to the dying:

1. Read to the patient a short, familiar passage of Scripture, a few verses that sum up the gospel (as, John 3:16, 17).
2. Speak rather loudly and briefly, close to the patient's ear.
3. Repeat the process several times, using as much as you can the very same words each time you speak.

With these thoughts coming to my mind, I prayed with Mrs. York in the hallway outside the dying patient's room. Then I asked, "Do I have your permission to speak with your husband about his need for Christ — and to speak loudly to him?"

She consented, and I approached the bedside. I read

Scripture — no, really I half yelled it at him. And I fired off a two-minute sermon, setting forth the way of salvation. I did this repeatedly.

"Tell Bob I'm saved!"

Afterwards Mrs. York and I came in and out of the room to see how her husband was doing. For a short time hope was renewed for his recovery, but his life energy continued to drain away.

Then suddenly one day Mr. York raised up in bed, tubes and all, and said, "Tell Bob I'm saved!" Then he slipped back into the coma.

Mrs. York was dumbfounded but also greatly comforted. It turned out that "Bob" was a Pentecostal neighbor who had been witnessing to Mr. York. The next day the man died; but there is good reason to hope that he is now in eternity, adoring the Father and the Lamb, along with persons like the thief on the cross.

What impresses me from that experience is how little the church does to train its leaders to bring real hope to the dying. As a result we tend to write off the dying as unreachable or not worth the effort. Except for the "training" given me by a wise Christian nurse, I wouldn't have had a clue as to the opportunity at this man's bedside.

Psalm 23—read realistically

In a second experience of ministering to the dying, which took place nearly ten years later, I had to learn that more goes on at the bedside of the dying than you may think.

Mrs. Smith was about forty years old and dying of cancer. I had not known her before, but the Smith family had friends in our church who told me of her sad condition.

My twice-weekly visits to her bedside were brief and apparently profitable to her. I began by reading a familiar passage of Scripture, one that sets forth the loving kindness of the Lord. This time I started with Psalm 23, a passage that I almost always use as an opener in a hospital visit when I'm on unfamiliar ground and the situation calls for special tact.

I explained that this shepherd psalm pictures a sovereign Lord who loves his people with infinite compassion and strength. But, I added, this often is understood unrealistically, with the psalm being used to evoke sentimental images of sheep gamboling over the green, presenting God's peace without conflict. In fact, the psalm presents something entirely different from a nature romanticism. For here you learn about a perfect security the believer enjoys even in the midst of the deepest needs and in the very presence of the shadow of death.

Peace in the midst of conflict! That is what the Shepherd-Lord can give to those who know him. He helps people

where they really live and when they die.

But, I concluded, this realistic help comes only to those who know the Lord personally. This tender Shepherd cares for his own sheep. They are sinners, and he laid down his life for them in Jesus Christ. And you, through faith in God's Son Jesus, can come to know this Shepherd intimately and to rest in the care of his mighty arms.

This is what I shared at the beginning — though the communication was much more in the form of dialogue than indicated by the summary here.

A theology of heaven

Because of the conversational freedom that developed after about the fourth visit, Mrs. Smith said something like this: "You know, you ministers are always talking about heaven. But heaven doesn't mean a thing to me. I want to live now, right here. Why, what is it then that makes heaven so special?"

Her penetrating comment was offered with a smile, and it made me smile in turn. "You think," I replied, "that heaven is a pretty boring place? I can see your idea of it now — everybody standing around in choir robes, singing the same boring hymns forever and ever."

"Well," I went on, "that's not what it's like at all. Think for a moment, Sharon. What has been the happiest moment of your life?"

What followed was striking. She slowly pulled on the question with the tired ropes of her mind. It turned out that the best, happiest times of her life came when she was with someone she really loved.

"And that," I said with joy, "is what makes heaven so very special. The Christian loves Jesus most of all. Jesus is his very best friend. And the great thing about heaven is being there forever with my best and truest friend."

That was the high point of this ministry and practically its conclusion. Apparently the private-duty nurse had been listening, and she reported my visits to the dying woman's husband.

Machine-gunned at six paces

At my next visit, the nurse met me in the hall. According to her, she had talked to Mr. Smith and he did *not* want me visiting so often for fear that my presence would alert Mrs. Smith to the seriousness of her condition. Why didn't I do what the other ministers did? They don't disturb anyone. They stop for a moment, quickly pray, and move on. Didn't I have any sense? Did I want to get her all upset? Did I want to get everybody upset?

Mr. Smith had enough of me, and so had the nurse. "Why," she continued with righteous anger, "I lie to her a hundred times a day. It's just what I must do, the Lord forgive me."

She certainly gave me a powerful shock. This nurse treated me as though I'd committed some unpardonable crime against a mysterious deity. I was the blasphemer because I was willing to take death seriously and to be concerned about the soul of a dying woman.

If the nurse was upset, I was even more as the charade unfolded around that bedside. Mr. Smith paid fewer and fewer visits. It was reported in the community that his loss of interest stemmed from his already having selected a new wife. Whatever the case, he certainly handed his wife over to the medical people and then seemed to fade out of the picture.

But Christ wasn't finished. Unexpectedly the telephone

Pray with and for the dying person with strong and loving convictions about the realities of divine things. This is how the patient comes to realize that you know God as your own Father and to expect that he too can share in God's gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

rang and a voice said, "Rev. Miller? I'm one of the nurses caring for Mrs. Smith. She's told me she wants to see you. When can you come?"

This nurse was on the night shift and turned out to be a Christian who loved the Lord and Mrs. Smith. She arranged for me to visit while she was on duty. Furthermore, as Mrs. Smith weakened from the cancer, the day nurse lost interest along with Mr. Smith.

Abandoned to die alone

Although Mrs. Smith was still physically alive, she was socially dead — abandoned and almost forgotten by her friends and family.

Again, this was a shock. Earlier the family seemed passionately committed to keeping her in the dark as to the fact of impending death. Now that physical death spread its darkening shadow across her thin face, they couldn't care less.

Or as one writer bluntly sums up the mood of our century:

One must avoid — no longer for the sake of the dying person, but for society's sake, for the sake of those close to the dying person — the disturbance and the overly strong and unbearable emotion caused by the ugliness of dying and by the very presence of death in the midst of a happy life, for it is henceforth given that life is always happy or should always seem to be so. (Philippe Aries in *Western Attitudes Toward Death*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1974, p. 87.)

An even deeper issue is what lies behind this attempt to preserve the collective happiness, undisturbed by death. People want to tame death, draw its sting by ignoring it and by handing over the dying person to the medical priests who often do their best to disguise the reality of death with drugs and other technology. The medical team will often let you die by inches so that you will never be confronted by the hard reality that this is it. You just fade away, with little thought or attention given to your eternal destiny.

It's still hard for me not to get sick at heart as I think of Mrs. Smith being eased into eternity, lonely and afraid, her mind crying out for answers about the nature of life and the meaning of death. Instead of getting a deeper love from her family, she was increasingly forgotten. She took months to die, and they couldn't stand it. So far as I could see, they did everything to hide her, to forget about her; instead of receiving answers about the purpose of life she received heavier doses of drugs.

The only word for the whole situation is "phoney."

The legal drug-pushers?

Mrs. Smith's dying was a microcosm of the phoney response to death that dominates sick rooms and funeral parlors of the western world. I have known some great doctors who were concerned about the whole patient, including the issue of his eternal destiny. But as a general rule I see doctors tending to become legal drug-pushers, re-

spected leaders thoughtlessly teaching people that the most important thing is to live without pain.

What about ministers? If anything, they are worse than doctors because they should know better. As a class, ministers are on the timid side — overawed by the real authority in the hands of medical personnel today.

But why? Well, the root problem of pastors appears to be their desire to be popular.

Ministers want to be liked

Now I do not agree with the old minister who always took as his funeral text the words, "Repent, lest you likewise perish." But the clergymen not only look phoney but *are* phoney when they try too hard to be liked. As a result, in moments of crisis they can be frightfully bland and not infrequently they become downright liars. They too serve the gods of carnal peace and carnal comfort.

At the bedside of the dying, how many ministers are content to discharge a social responsibility by mumbling a quick prayer and moving on? At the funeral, how many ministers preach unrepentant sinners into heaven, putting forward a "God" who is as bland and lifeless as themselves? What about the clergyman who expounds on the virtues of the deceased when, in fact, that departed brother never took the trouble while alive to discover that he had a rotten set of relationships with wife, children, and business associates?

The solution: Death defined

Look, pastor, don't worry whether or not someone calls you "an ignorant fundamentalist." Death is a mighty mystery and we're all pretty ignorant of its nature until God introduces us to himself as Savior, Teacher, and Victor over death. But saturate yourself in the Scriptures and let their powerful interpretation of life and death take over your heart and mind.

What you will learn there is that death is *abnormal*. Man was made to live in fellowship with a covenant God and not to die. Yet because of sin death becomes the penalty executed upon fallen man by a holy God (Genesis 2, 3). You further learn that death is man's enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26), man's greatest fear (Hebrews 2:15), and Satan's weapon for destroying man (Hebrews 2:14, 15).

Satan's strategy is simple. As the prince of a kingdom of darkness, he has certain rights. He is master over a realm of sin and has a right to accuse all sinners living in this realm, demanding that God execute a just penalty against them (Luke 22:31, 32). This penalty is death — physical, spiritual, eternal. Its leading principle is separation — separation of man from fellowship with God, of soul from body, of man from his surviving friends, and eternal separation in hell from God and all that is good.

Consider the agony, O man

Scripture does not tell us all we'd like to know about death in relationship to sin and Satan's rule. It opens the door a crack, just enough to let us know that there are hostile powers at work far beyond man's understanding.

True, science may attempt to explain death apart from sin and Satan, but then the dilemmas mount. If the scientist says that death is merely natural and physical, how then does he explain the dying man's deep sense of struggle with a terrible enemy?

Consider the agony of blasphemous Peter De Vries as he struggles with his child's death in the semi-autobiographical novel, *Blood of the Lamb*. If death is purely natural, why De Vries' mighty anger against it? And why do doctors and

nurses war so splendidly against death and feel so frustrated when they lose?

Good questions. They fall into place once you accept the biblical tie-in of the triad: sin, death, and Satan.

But keep reading the Bible and you find that there is much more. Take up the Gospels and you encounter a Man who overcame sin, death, and Satan. Death is the Great Separator, but Jesus is the Great Reconciler. He has become the Prince of life, the author of a new hope founded upon his perfectly righteous life and his own death in man's behalf.

Surrendered to the lie

Let's now apply this to Mrs. Smith. Once her disease worsened with a pattern of slow, steady decline, she lost all her human rights and her dignity as well. The family finally had her moved to a nursing home where she was so heavily sedated that she became a near zombie. All decision-making was out of her hands. She was not permitted to express any feelings about her approaching death.

Regrettably, as the end neared she embraced the charade of the professional staff and her family. She deepened her pretense that she only had a "back problem."

But within this framework of deception, I could tell her about a sympathetic God-man who had honestly looked death in the face at Calvary, had seen its horror, and had overcome it. I also could tell her that all who are united to Christ by faith immediately pass into his presence at death (Acts 7:59). Their souls find a paradise of peace in the presence of the Father and the Lamb (Luke 23:43). And at the general resurrection of the just and the unjust, they will inherit glorified bodies resembling the transformed body of Jesus (Philippians 3:21). As a pledge and guarantee of this reality, Jesus dwells by faith in our hearts even now. Heaven awaits; but heaven already has begun to possess our hearts (1 Corinthians 2:9).

I don't think this message of hope got through to Mrs. Smith. Instead, she surrendered herself to the lie — the lie that death will go away if you don't talk about it.

I'm very, very sorry. Before this experience with the Smith family I had not taken seriously the idea that death has become the new American obscenity, the unmentionable word. Americans no longer "die"; they "pass away."

A Christian bedside manner

From all of this I also learned that bitter anger is often just beneath the surface whenever a family member appears to be dying. The terminally ill patient can get fiercely angry at the doctors for not informing him as to the seriousness of his medical treatment, of major surgery or chemotherapy. Without any good reason nurses can catch it from the patient and the family.

And, in a word, the pastor should also expect to encounter bitterness against himself. But knowing this possibility ahead of time, he should use the attack as *an opportunity* to show Christ's love. No matter what happens, God wants you to practice the forgiveness commanded in the Sermon on the Mount. And the next time you visit, the patient may well apologize for last week's outburst.

When he does, you have a beautiful opening to explain the gospel. But do not seek to force the gospel on someone who does not wish to listen. Remember that in some sense a sick person is a captive audience, and you must guard against taking advantage of his helplessness to preach to him contrary to his expressed desire.

For any Christian who wishes to minister to the aged and the terminally ill, I would recommend some background reading to help you understand the attitudes of psychiatrists, doctors, nurses, patients, and the general public toward death and dying. Standard works on the subject are: Herman Feifel, ed., *The Meaning of Death* (McGraw-Hill, 1959); and Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying* (Macmillan, 1970).

For a recent work that provides a bibliography (340 entries), see: O. G. Brim, et al., *The Dying Patient* (New York: Russell Sage, 1970). One of the most helpful works on the practical level is *The Psychodynamics of Patient Care* (Prentice-Hall, 1972), by Lawrence H. and Jane L. Schwartz.

For the Christian nurse I would also recommend an article in the January 1975 issue of the *American Journal of Nursing*. Written by Helen H. Whitman and Selby J. Lukes, its title — "Behavior Modification in Terminally Ill Patients" — reveals its Skinnerian orientation; yet it supplies some common-sense solutions to the behavior problems created by bad-tempered people who are dying.

Let's put it all together now. Here are some steps to take when you are called to minister as a Christian to a dying non-Christian:

1. Recruit all the believers you can to pray for the terminally ill person, his family, and for you. Remember, this is a battle over a man's eternal destiny and the devil will not give up easily.

2. Watch to see if fears and frustrations are making it impossible for the patient to listen to you. If so, find out what they are and do what you can to relieve them. Remember, he has a physical life as well as a soul, a social life as well as a spiritual life; and if he is upset by something trivial like diet, see what you can do to get the matter straightened out.

3. Present the gospel in the framework of realistic hope, setting forth the grace and power to be found in Christ. Lift up Christ and keep lifting him up as the great Victor-Redeemer who supplies the answer to man's deepest need.

Then at an appropriate point, ask the person if he knows the Lord Jesus and invite him to trust in this Savior.

4. Pray with and for the person with strong and loving convictions about the realities of divine things. This may be the most important part of your ministry. For this is how the patient comes to realize that you know God as your own Father and to expect that he too can share in God's gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

For myself, I also pray for healing of the patient unless God has made it abundantly clear that his will is to take the person from this life. In keeping with the prayer for healing, it seems to me that it is not ordinarily the minister's duty to inform the sick person of the approach of death. I believe this responsibility lies with the family, not with the physician or minister.

Under special circumstances, however, the minister or doctor may do this at the request of the family. But even here a word of caution is in order, just because in some instances the dying person recovers or at least lives much longer than the doctors think possible.

5. Make your visits *brief and regular*, especially if the illness is protracted. The patient will begin to expect you at a certain time. So try not to disappoint him by coming several times in one week and then staying away for ten days.

6. Keep your eyes open to see how you can support the family, both during the final illness and afterwards. Cooked food for the family supplied by the congregation during the final hours and in the days afterward often is much appreciated. Spiritual food is, of course, even more important. So, whenever possible, use the opportunity to teach the whole family about the person and work of Jesus Christ within the context of deeds of kindness performed by the Christian community.

Dr. Miller is Associate Professor of Practical Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary. This article is but one evidence of Dr. Miller's concern for the pastoral ministry and for bearing an effective witness to Christ before the unconverted.

Whether we live or die, . . .

(Continued from page 173.)

material harps, but rather, deliverance beyond death and physical re-creation — in a word, *resurrection!* What Jesus the Head did, so he will do with his body, the church!

The Lord Jesus has his people — and he puts his mark upon them. He sends his Holy Spirit into their hearts, crying, "Abba, Father." Thus they not only belong to the Lord, but they know it too. They are confident, knowing that they belong to their faithful Savior.

That is why they can say with Paul that both life and death must still serve their Savior's purpose for them. They know that neither are brought about by their own will. They cannot extend their days, nor may they end them. But this they do know: in both life and death they are the Lord's.

So they agree with the apostle when he writes: "Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord — for we walk by faith, not by sight — we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to him."

They can't tell — to live? to die? The question pales. For their greatest need is already met! "You are not your own. . . ." They are eternally happy, knowing *this*.

Have you come to know this one thing worth knowing? The question comes to each of us personally. Is that what I want most of all, because it is what I need most of all?

"Whether I live, therefore, or die, I am the Lord's." Well, then, show it! Do your neighbors know that this is the case with you? Is it obvious to them because of the way you live that the thing you want first and foremost in all of life is to serve and obey the Lord?

That is the third part of living and dying happily in the comfort of the gospel, dear friends. To know my sin and misery — yes; and to know how I am delivered from them — yes.

And to be thankful.

People so comforted, so delivered, so redeemed, find it their food and drink to do their Lord's will. You who believe in the Lord Jesus, and who trust in him alone, *belong* to the Lord. You are witnesses of these things. Rejoice! You are heralds of King Jesus! □

LETTERS

(Continued from page 170.)

Guardian is an independent publication; what appears in its pages is a reflection of the editor's judgment concerning an article's usefulness.

It is not necessarily true that the "rash" of articles on the gifts of the Spirit even reflect the editor's view; an article may appear just because it opens up a subject that needs to be discussed.

On the other hand, the *Guardian* is committed to setting forth and defending the doctrines of historic Presbyterianism, particularly as these are contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms. Moreover, the "official view" of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church on any subject can be sought within those same documents; they are the confessional standards of the church, and are its "official" position on any matter until they are constitutionally amended.

The articles on gifts of the Spirit appearing in the *Guardian* have all been consciously in agreement with certain key statements of the confessional standards. Among these in particular is the statement that God determined to commit his revelation "wholly unto writing; which maketh the holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased" (I, I; cf. I, VI). That does not, of course, settle all questions at issue today; but it is the "official" position of every true Presbyterian church.

The *Guardian* certainly is open to airing differing views even on this subject. Only one such manuscript has ever been offered and it was returned with the request that it be both condensed and certain aspects of it re-considered. A carefully drawn discussion of Scripture teaching on this subject, even though it arrives at different conclusions, would be given more than casual consideration.

The editor agrees with Mr. Edwards that open debate is indeed valuable in arriving at what Scripture really teaches on any subject. In fact, he has been rather disappointed that those holding differing views have not come forward to present their views. The subject of the gifts of the Spirit today can be and has been disruptive in many churches; it is a subject that needs careful study. The *Guardian* will readily serve to forward that goal.

—J. J. M.

Another view of RPCNA Synod

Your October issue with its interesting report of the RPCNA Synod by one of its pastors prompts my pen. Obviously you are about to get another pastor's opinion.

Having been a pastor of the RPCNA since 1952, I have watched with interest how God has confronted us with issues as a Synod over the years. Although our having been overseas lately meant that this past Synod was my first in four years, nonetheless I felt the assembly to be an excellent demonstration of brothers struggling to be sure their testimony for Christ was biblical—and, that it be held together.

While my nameless brother has correctly lined out some of the issues before us and how they were debated, I feel his report leaves something to be desired in reflecting this spirit of biblical concern. For example, I can remember—though he may not—when it was not protocol even to state publicly that one had a problem with some position in our testimony that needed review. That is not true today in the Synod of the RPCNA. What my brother terms "clash," "hornet's nest," and "racked by disagreement," may betray something of his own perspective. Perhaps he is new to the denomination—as a number are—and has misjudged this debate since his experience is still getting acquainted. Furthermore, he may not be used to pointed debate which is sometimes necessary to maintain a corporate witness.

For clarity, I believe I should set one thing straight. There are probably at this point three general viewpoints in our Synod relative to the question of total abstinence from beverage alcohol. One states that all such drinking is, on the basis of biblical principle, wrong. Another states that while there may be times when drinking is permissible, on the basis of biblical principle for our day, particularly for the welfare of our neighbor, such drinking should not be permitted. Still another states that, on the basis of biblical principle, this whole area must not be legislated but left to individual conscience. (The denomination in her present standards does not permit members to use alcoholic beverages.)

What my brother fails to acknowledge is that each of these viewpoints purports to build on *sola scriptura!* For

him to suggest that they do not seems to put an indictment on them that is strictly his own opinion, and misrepresents them to the readers of the *Guardian*. He may believe they have discarded *sola scriptura*, but to suggest that they have consciously abandoned this principle is to misrepresent them. And it misrepresents the concern of this Synod.

It is very important, I believe, to recognize the nature of the debates going on in our Synod. While our statistics have deservedly been called "terminal," I personally believe there is a qualitative reformation going on among us. We do indeed desperately need your prayers.

I have written somewhat in the way that I have—does it sound a bit subjective?—because the report you printed was set forth as one man's attempt "to assess the life of the church as reflected in the spirit, temper, and quality of thought exemplified in the synod." We should never abstract "thought" from what God has been doing in the people doing the thinking.

With deep concern for *sola scriptura*,
Kenneth G. Smith, pastor
Covenant Fellowship R. P. C.
Pittsburgh, Penna.

Reply from Duncan Lowe

I can share in some of the concerns Dr. Palmer expresses in his article in the Aug./Sept. issue of the *Guardian*. However, I believe that the best I can do in the way of reply is simply to urge a calm re-reading of my original review of the NIV in the March 1975 issue.

My review of the NIV was intended to treat this appearance of a new modern-English translation of the Bible with seriousness and respect. In particular I wanted to examine the NIV in terms of the claims made for it: first, that it is in style not only modern but strong, memorable and free of mere cleverness; and second, that in accuracy it is worthy to be used not just as a convenience for the modern reader but as a text fit for the use of the serious Bible student. It is because of the scope of these claims that I held the NIV up to a high standard of criticism. In doing this I certainly never meant to be understood as minimizing the difficulties and the often thankless labors of producing such a translation.

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So, for instance, my reason for comparing the NIV to the KJV was not at all to impute perfection to the KJV but rather to determine whether the NIV, in terms of the modern English language, had attained to the same excellence of style as the KJV has done in terms of the English language of its day. This is a high order of expectation, I realize, and I surely don't envy the translator who has to enter a field long dominated by such a classic. Nevertheless, I believe such a comparison to be entirely legitimate and, indeed, inevitable.

As for my treatment of the NIV's translational integrity, I did not question the idea that a translator may at times quite properly employ various techniques and expedients. I also recognize that a translator *must*, on occasion and in varying degrees, engage in interpretation simply in order to have a result that makes good sense. But I would say that this general consideration does not give him complete license. A translation must aim, above all and to the degree that the language allows, at being a faithful mirror of the original. Even if a committee of theologians should agree that some non-necessary interpretation is probably right, I would hold that this interpretation belongs in a commentary, not in the actual text of a Bible version. And if Dr. Palmer disagrees on this point, then we remain in disagreement.

So too in the matter of translational consistency, I recognize that it is not always feasible to translate a given word of Greek by the same English word every time. Nevertheless, when it can be done without awkwardness, a one-to-one type of translation is a real benefit to the Bible student who has to depend upon a version for his insight into the original language. In my view the NIV could have been more cautious and considerate on this point.

In regard to Dr. Dillard's stimulating and useful article in the same issue, let me just remark that the priorities that he espouses, priorities derived from current translational theory, need not always be appropriate to producing a version of the Word of God. The kind of version these principles tend to produce might be rather quickly out-of-date (a frequent result of attempting to use language entirely in the fashion of the moment). And it may well happen that as those to whom such a version is addressed grow in

faith they will come to desire another kind of version, one that does not cover over or disguise the "technical terms" the Bible itself employs in setting forth the great themes of redemption.

Doubtless there are different purposes to be served by different kinds of translation, but if it is truly desired to achieve a standard of classic expression of the Word of God for our own day—a version that will have wide and enduring currency, and whose intelligibility and meaningfulness will not only stem from the modern tone that makes it readable to the average non-Christian, but what will also derive communicative power from its actual treasured use by the believing community as its most faithful and worthy expression of the once-for-all Word of God—then I submit that such a classic will come, if at all, from a somewhat different set of priorities

The Presbyterian Guardian

EDITOR
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from those Dr. Dillard has recommended.

For the rest let me only add that I too, like Dr. Palmer, am convinced of the real need for a sound version of the Word of God that speaks the language of today with power, fluency and grace. I am even quite willing to use a modern version that may fall short of this ideal in various respects. But I am not willing to overlook or minimize these shortcomings or to give up hoping for something better.

G. Duncan Lowe, pastor
Reformed Presby. Church
Morning Sun, Iowa

Another linguist's voice

May I add a belated further note on Bible translations? I too was brought up on the King James Version, and learned to love God's Word—but it gave me real problems. As a child, I

could not appreciate Psalm 23 because in modern English the first line as usually quoted (without a full stop after "shepherd") can only mean "The Lord is my shepherd *whom* I shall not want." "Want" is only a transitive verb meaning "desire" today. My children once suffered from the same natural misunderstanding.

"Thou" in contemporary English is not unambiguously singular—it is simply meaningless. But if the KJV makes God unambiguously singular, some passages also make him unambiguously inanimate: "Our Father *which* art in heaven," "I can do all things through Christ *which* strengtheneth me." I will pray to one God even if I call him "you," but I cannot refer to my God with anything but the personal relative pronoun "who."

Insistence on the exclusive use of the KJV is comparable to the long opposition of the Roman Catholic Church to vernacular translations. Forcing our children, and adults unfamiliar with the Bible, to learn a strange dialect of English is no different in principle from forcing them to listen in Latin. And if "beauty of style" is so important that intelligibility may be sacrificed, why didn't the Holy Spirit inspire Luke to write his entire Gospel in the majestic classical Greek of the first four verses, rather than permitting him to revert to the patois of his day?

I'm afraid that underlying the rejection of contemporary translations is the assumption (or occasionally the outright assertion) that modern English is somehow inferior to Elizabethan English, and in particular that historical change in language is specifically a result of sin. There is nothing scriptural about such an assumption; on the contrary, language change and language diversity may be seen as reflecting the glory of God, in whom there is both unity and diversity. After all, it was God who brought about language diversity in the first place, in order that his will might be accomplished (Genesis 9:7; 11:6-8). I want God's Word in all of man's languages—my own included.

William E. Welmers
Los Angeles, Calif.

Ed. note: Dr. Welmers is a professor in African languages at the University of California in Los Angeles and has been an active participant in many efforts to translate the Scriptures into the languages of western African peoples.

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Update on Westminster "Festival of the Arts"

The Student Association of Westminster Theological Seminary is planning a Christian Festival of the Arts to be held at the Seminary on Thursday, January 8 through Saturday, January 10, 1976. The aims of the Festival are to encourage Christians in their enjoyment of the arts and to challenge them to think biblically about aesthetics.

There will be lectures dealing with the history of the arts, contemporary developments in the arts, and biblical approaches to aesthetics. Those speaking will include Dr. Hans Rookmaaker, Ph.D. in History of Art and author of *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture*; Dr. Calvin Seerveld, Senior Member in Aesthetics at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto and author of *A Christian Critique of Art and Literature*; Dr. Edmund Clowney, President of the Society of Christians in the Arts and editor of its new publication, *Genesis*, and author of *In Spirit and In Truth*; Rev. Kefa Sem-pangi, Drs. in History of Art from the Free University of Amsterdam; Mr. Cook Kimball, a musician doing graduate work at the New England Conservatory; and Jonathan Bragdon, an artist and lecturer.

Dance, drama, the place of the arts in worship, pottery, architecture, and film are some of the areas to be explored in a variety of seminar/workshops Friday and Saturday afternoons. Before each evening lecture there will be a time dedicated to involvement in the arts through singing, dance, and musical performance. An evangelistic multi-media slide show will be presented and discussed. One of the many highlights of the weekend will be Westminster Gallery, a time set aside for viewing and discussing the work brought to the Festival by participating artists. Dr. Rookmaaker may lead a tour of a Philadelphia art museum.

Requests for further information should be sent to Mr. Charles Drew at the Seminary, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, PA 19118.

"Andres' case" decision

In a meeting held on October 18, the Presbytery of California of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, adopted the following motion proposed by its Committee on

Candidates and Credentials:

"Having read evidence from the Northern California Presbytery, OPC, and having heard refutation of it by representatives of Westminster Chapel [an unaffiliated group some of whose members were formerly members of the First Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Sunnyvale, Calif.], the Committee is not convinced of genuine schism on the part of Westminster Chapel or its pastor, Mr. [Lawrence G.] Andres. We therefore recommend that these findings be received by Presbytery, and our judgment be communicated to our brethren in the Northern California Presbytery, OPC, with the sincere prayer that they and the membership of Westminster Chapel seek God's way of reconciliation for the peace of the Church and for the glory of God."

In its report, the Committee declared that it did "not find any intent on the part of any person or persons to initiate a schismatic action," that those who left the Sunnyvale church "did so as individuals and not as a group," and that the Committee did not "believe that Mr. Andres had any formative influence in the decision to begin an independent work." These judgments grew out of the Committee's investigation into contrary judgments expressed by the Presbytery of Northern California of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

The Westminster Chapel remains as an independent congregation unaffiliated with any denomination. Mr. Andres is pastoring the group and is a member of the RPCES Presbytery of California.

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Presbytery to prosecute conservative PCUS layman

Dr. C. Gregg Singer, a professor at Catawba College in Salisbury, N.C., and a ruling elder of the Franklin Presbyterian Church, is faced with judicial charges initiated by his own pastor. Dr. Singer is the president of Concerned Presbyterians, an organization of southern Presbyterian laymen, and an outspoken voice against liberal trends within the Presbyterian Church, U.S. (Many of the earlier members of Concerned Presbyterians were active in the formation of the Presbyterian Church in America. Dr. Singer remained in the PCUS and continues to support and publicize the conservative goals of Concerned Presbyterians.)

Dr. Singer is being charged with sending literature to church members who did not request it, of agitating a minister, and of making remarks considered detrimental to the peace of the church. A committee of the Presbytery of Concord is investigating the charges; its chairman, the Rev. J. Whitner Kennedy, says, "There is a strong presumption of guilt."

The liberals largely in control of the PCUS have allowed many dissidents to leave with their church properties. Most of these have united with the PCA. In later "guidelines" for handling such dissatisfied congregations, only those churches voting to leave unanimously have been allowed to take their property. Several groups have been taken to court in efforts to keep the church property for the PCUS. The attempt to try Dr. Singer, which could lead to suspension from office or even excommunication, is the first step taken to silence remaining conservative critics within the PCUS.

Christian Government Movement to end

At a meeting on October 25, the Board of Directors of the Christian Government Movement reluctantly agreed to recommend to CGM's annual meeting that the Movement cease its operation on December 31, 1975.

The CGM, largely an outgrowth of the Covenanter insistence that the government give official recognition of the Lordship of Christ, has more recently urged Christians to get involved as Christian groups in the political processes. Support for the Movement has come mainly from the Reformed Pres-

byterian Church of North America ("Covenanter"); it was the decision of the recent RPCNA Synod not to continue budgetary support of the CGM that necessitated the decision to suspend operations.

The CGM had been publishing the *Christian Patriot*, a journal speaking to various issues in politics and economics. The paper will also cease publication.

This decision ends a long history of Covenanter activity to advance the "Crown Rights of King Jesus" in the civil government. At one time this

"distinctive principle" of the Covenanter tradition was understood to require members of the RPCNA to abstain from any participation in the civil government. This position has been eased in recent years, and Covenanters are free to vote or hold elective office. The decision to discontinue synodical support of the CGM was dictated by budgetary restrictions, however, and does not represent a lessening of Covenanter concern for Christ's rightful authority to be recognized by the civil government.



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Genesis 2:22

Letters to 'Sarah'

Yes, I read and love your Genesis 2:22 column. Please don't eliminate it from the *Guardian*.

I would enjoy more glimpses into the life of a missionary wife, such as the one by Joan English. Would it be possible to have an exchange of ideas from various youth group sponsors concerning their programs, Machen Leagues, etc.? Maybe some successful ideas on women's programs could be included also.

I've often thought of writing an article, but I'm afraid it might not be polished enough to be printable.

Again, don't stop the column. I look forward to it when the *Guardian* arrives. It is especially for me. Thanks.

—Mrs. S., California

Indeed I do read your feature "Dear Sarah" and find it fills a great need for women readers of the *Guardian*. It has been spiritually rewarding in my own life. I am only sorry I haven't taken the time to write and tell you so before now. As editor of our church paper I know how very much a few kind words can mean.

I have also intended to send in an article, but somehow "didn't get around to it." One doesn't realize, or stop to think, that the feature depends on its contributors. I should, however, since as an editor I experience the same problems!

I have enclosed an article about which I feel very strongly. I don't know if you will think it suitable or not, but anyhow, I felt I would not delay and so am getting it off to you right away.

How sweet it was of Mr. Paul Rainey to give his wife, Virginia, such a lovely testimonial of his love for her and God's love to them both.

I hope and will pray that many of your readers will be flooding your mail with features for the "Genesis 2:22" section. God bless you in this special ministry.

—Mrs. B., California

Since you asked how readers like the articles pertaining to women, I will give my view. They do me very little good.

Married women are not the only ones who have problems. Since the women who write the articles are married, they cannot understand some of the problems of unmarried women. They do not have to deal with Arminian roommates on doctrinal issues. They do not sometimes wonder whether they are financially cheating their roommate or being cheated themselves. They do not have problems of being misinterpreted by unmarried Christian men they try to befriend or accused of husband hunting. The unmarried men are not the only unmarried members of their churches who feel out of place at church functions — especially missionary fellowship.

I am the only unmarried person in my church, but I am not the only one

Dear Sarah:

As a mother I am upset because I don't know how to feel about the case before the New Jersey courts concerning the life of Karen Quinlan. Her parents are asking the court to order that life-sustaining machines be turned off so that their comatose daughter may die.

I can really relate to that mother's feelings as she sees her vegetable-like daughter being kept alive, humanly speaking, only by a machine. On the other hand, I cannot see that I would have the right to decide her death if I were her mother. What are your thoughts?

—P. E.

Dear P. E.:

Mothers as well as fathers must feel their heartstrings tugged whenever such cases are known to them, for as parents our natures make us wonder,

in the country. Why don't you devote part of your page to our problems? The answers would be more accepted and effective if they came from a woman the Lord has called to remain single.

—Miss I., Tennessee

Editor's Note:

A cross section of your letters appears above. One common denominator seems to persist. "I don't think I write well enough to submit material." If God has given you thoughts, and you're capable of writing and saying you "can't write," well, you can. It's a rare manuscript submitted anywhere by anyone that doesn't need, or at least get, a few changes made. So take courage, and share.

Mrs. Juanita Rolph
Rt. 2, Box 9, Glenwood,
WA 98619.

"What would I do for my child?"

As in every area of our thinking, however, we must be governed by the Scriptures and not by our emotions. God has clearly said that he is the Creator of life (John 1:1-3) and as such he alone has the right to end our earthly life. "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive . . ." (I Samuel 2:6). Our God is sovereign and really does control all things. Just as there is no condition on earth so "hopeless" that God cannot restore one to full health again if he so chooses, so there is no power on earth strong enough to keep one alive whose life God chooses to end. All the life-sustaining machinery in the world will be ineffective at the point when God determines to take a life. That point is in God's control, not ours.

Our actions, then, must be based on the responsibility God has given us in the Bible. The sixth commandment very clearly prohibits the taking of life other than as God authorizes.

—Sarah

NOW

GEORGIA SETTLE

A not unfamiliar scene today is a busy street and a group of women marching back and forth carrying signs. On the signs are such slogans as: "Equal Rights NOW," "We want our rights," and "NOW, NOW, NOW!"

The NOW expresses the urgency these women feel for their cause, but it also stands for the National Organization of Women. We have become accustomed to the cries of such women as Betty Friedan and the other NOW women of the world today.

I would like to suggest that there is need for a NOW woman in the church today. She does not carry a sign to identify her, but she can be recognized by certain characteristics. The woman who is NOW in Christ is a New creature, she is an Obedient servant, and she is a Winsome witness for Christ.

New creature in Christ

As Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "If any one be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away, behold, all things are become new." And what does it mean to be a new creature? The beginning phrase clarifies it — "if any one be in Christ . . ."

To be "in Christ" is to depend upon him for life. In John 15, our Lord used the illustration of the vine and the branches. He said that only those branches that abide *in the vine* would produce fruit; the others would be destroyed. The branches connected to the vine draw their very life from it. If they are separated from the vine, they have no life source.

The one who is "in Christ" in this way is then a new creature. *Old things are passed away*, all things are new. What old things?

The old outlook on life that seems to say, "This life is all there is." "Get all the gusto you can." "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

1 John 2:15-17 speaks about this kind of attitude. The new creature in Christ realizes that all this is temporary. This too shall pass away. The new creature makes decisions *in the light of eternity*.

The old attitudes of self-sufficiency

and self-planning and rebellion against God are passed away. They have been replaced with a humble spirit, a grateful heart and a song of praise to God. The new creature in Christ aspires not to be great in the eyes of the world, but to be more and more like Christ who was despised by the world.

Obedient servant of Christ

The NOW woman in the church is new in her attitudes, desires and thought patterns. She is even glad to be an obedient servant of her Lord. Scripture seems to place great value on the obedient servants of the Bible, and Christ himself is described as The Servant (Philippians 2:5-8).

Christ demonstrated this attitude of obedience in his suffering and death. But he also demonstrated in a very specific way the *attitude* required of a servant. In John 13, we see the disciples and Christ in an upper room preparing to eat the last supper. The custom in those days called for a certain courtesy to guests in a home. The hostess would have a servant wash their feet as they entered.

In this instance there was no servant or hostess to perform this courtesy. The disciples did not bother. But Christ himself arose, girded himself with a towel and washed their feet. He behaved as a willing servant. (John 13:14-17.)

In the church there are so many servant tasks to be done, and often we women are the ones to do them. Taking care of the nursery, working in the kitchen, carrying meals to the sick, making telephone calls, running errands, and so on. Sometimes we are called upon to do things that we consider too menial. But the servant tasks that are "beneath us" — these are just what Christ had in mind when he said to his disciples, "If you know to do these things — happy are you if you *do* them" (verse 17).

Winsome witness for Christ

The NOW woman is a new creature and an obedient servant. If these two things characterize our lives, then we will also be winsome witnesses for

Christ.

Think of the most winning personality that you know. What is it that makes the person so winsome? Most likely the winsome personality is cheerful, thoughtful, kind, loyal, and sensitive to the people around.

Now it is one thing to cultivate these qualities to make people like us. But the NOW woman in Christ cultivates these qualities by his power in order that she might win some to Christ.

Consider the opportunities women of today have to witness for Christ. Our greatest pulpit is our home. Christ said, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Do our own children glorify God because of the life we lead before them? If our light shines dimly at home, it cannot be very effective in the community. We should strive first to be a winsome witness to our husbands and children at home. Then in the church and in the community our lives and words should testify to the grace of Christ.

How can this be?

How can one be a NOW woman such as this? Of course, it is by abiding in Christ as the branch abides in the vine. Totally relying upon the Savior for the source of our life. To live a supernatural life, we must have a supernatural Savior.

We know this, and I find that the little word NOW helps in remembering it. For example: Are you NOW in Christ? this moment? Are you aware that he is NOW with you? this moment, alive and present? He only asks us to live one moment, one hour, one day at a time. Our victory comes in the constant awareness that:

Right NOW the Lord Jesus is here.

Right NOW he is walking beside me.

Right NOW I am a new creature in him, his obedient servant, and by his grace a winsome witness for him.

"Beloved, NOW are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be. But we know, that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

Mrs. Settle is the wife of the Rev. Paul G. Settle, coordinator for the Committee on Christian Education and Publications of the Presbyterian Church in America.

NAPARC organized

Five conservative Presbyterian and Reformed churches inaugurated a new organization for mutual support and cooperation. The North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council had earlier been approved by the major assemblies or synods of the Christian Reformed Church, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church in America, the Reformed Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Representatives of these five denominations, meeting in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, formally constituted NAPARC.

A sixth denomination, the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, had hoped to be one of the founding churches, but its application for membership had not been in hand early enough. A delegation of observers from the ARPC was present, however.

The purpose of NAPARC, according to its constitution, is to "facilitate discussion and consultation between member bodies on those issues and problems which divide them as well as on those which they face in common." It will also work to "promote cooperation wherever possible" in common program areas.

The new organization requires of member denominations that they agree to a basis that calls for "full commitment both to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the infallible Word of God and to their teachings as set forth in the Reformed standards . . ." The RPCES had approved this on a provisional one-year basis, and sought to have the reference to "infallible Word" strengthened. The Council referred the matter to a study

committee charged with bringing recommendations to the next annual meeting. (Any change would have to be approved by the council and by its constituting member churches.)

NAPARC also organized various committees designed to carry out its stated purpose of mutual discussion and cooperation. It also noted the existence of the National Presbyterian and Reformed Fellowship, a loosely knit organization of elders and ministers from some ten Presbyterian and Reformed bodies. NPRF had been the

source of the suggestion for NAPARC's organization.

Elected as chairman of the Council was the Rev. John P. Galbraith, General Secretary of the Committee on Foreign Missions of the OPC. Dr. J. Barton Payne, a professor at Covenant Seminary, St. Louis, of the RPCES, was elected secretary. Mr. Albert A. Bel, a Christian Reformed elder from Grand Rapids, was elected treasurer.

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for Grand Rapids, October 29-30, 1976.



Newly elected officers of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council are, from left to right, Dr. J. Barton Payne, the Rev. John P. Galbraith, and Arnold A. Bel.