
Letters

Vote? A Real Choice

Now that the election is over, let me state that the editorial "Let's Vote" in the October *Guardian* was very good. It did not, however, give Reformed and Evangelical Christians the very happy alternative they were entitled to.

You said, "What's a poor Christian to do on election day?" You seemed to feel the candidates did not profess Christ with clarity and decisiveness. This is true. But you were not speaking of all the candidates.

My candidate did, in fact, profess Christ across the nation. His party's written platform honored our Lord. Born-again Christians came on TV and radio against abortion, professing a godly morality in civil affairs, etc. The American Party's religious commitment was perfectly clear from the start, and still is. Our local church supported Mr. Tom Anderson and his American Party from the pulpit.

That is, we were not left with only "Carter or Ford, Dole or Mondale." In my case I rejoiced to see our local American Party candidate for Congress come out on TV and radio, in public appearances and in the press, praising our Lord. And, praise the Lord, he even got 8% of the vote. (Elijah only had about 1%.) This man was cause for us all to be grateful.

In the early stages of the campaign, a seventeen-year-old member of our congregation, after listening to Mr. Anderson explain his platform, shook his hand. She said, "God bless you, Mr. Anderson." No, we did not have only a "Carter or Ford. . . ."

Ross F. Rogers, elder
Leesburg, Virginia

That Arabic Catechism

My dear friend, Dr. Cornelius Van Til, in a letter to the editor (January *Guardian*), refers to my great enthusiasm and zeal for the use of the Westminster Catechism, not only for the edification

of church members but also in evangelization. This zeal has led to the republishing of the Shorter Catechism in Arabic for the use of the churches, especially in Egypt and the Sudan.

But in his letter, Dr. Van Til made two errors. The first was in the number of copies printed. The correct number is 10,000, not 22,000. However, his estimate is not so inaccurate if we understand that another 10,000 copies of the Catechism for Young Children are being prepared for publication in Arabic.

The second error embarrasses me. He said my picture was put in the Catechism. This is not true! Last fall I showed the good professor a copy of my article on "Palestine — to Whom?" (published in the November 1975 *Guardian*). This has been translated into Arabic by Dr. Farid Mangerios of Cairo and printed in a tract — and my picture is on that tract. Apparently Dr. Van Til's inadequate knowledge of Arabic, which he admits, misled him into confusing this with the Arabic Catechism. Neither my name nor my picture is on the Catechism — and I can think of no reason they should be!

Readers may be interested in what is found on the back cover of the Catechism. It says, "This edition of the Westminster Catechism is paid for by the gifts of members and friends of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in America, and is an expression of their love and concern for their fellow Christians in the Arab world."

Through these gifts other Reformed works are in preparation, and will shortly be published in Arabic. These include Dr. E. J. Young's *Thy Word Is Truth*, and the Rev. G. I. Williamson's two-volume commentary on the Catechism. There is a great need for such works to be made available at low cost to the many tens of thousands of Evangelical Christians in Egypt and the Sudan, and we thank God for the opportunity and challenge afforded us.

W. Benson Male, Missionary
Ramleh, Alexandria, Egypt

Missionaries to Korea?

After having seen our mission work in Korea first hand for more than a year and closely following it ever since, I can heartily agree with the *Guardian* article on why we should "Still Send Missionaries to

Korea" (December issue). Certainly Korea is a most fruitful and profitable mission field.

But please allow me to add a seventh consideration to those given by missionary Ted Hard:

7. Some 87% of Koreans have not identified with any form of Christianity, and a large portion of these are not deeply committed to any religion. There seems to be a religious vacuum which some attribute to the many years of suppression by the Japanese and Communists. God has used this, I believe, to make the Koreans unusually receptive to his truth. Missionaries are needed now to work alongside the Korean church; leading, encouraging, and assisting in this vast field which the Lord has apparently readied for harvest.

Wouldn't it be exciting working with a church that adds more members each year than the total constituency of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?

John Kortenhoeven
Bellflower, Calif.

Thanks on "charismatic" issue

I just received the October issue [via surface mail] of the *Guardian* and read the "Challenge to Kress Decision" and the editorial response.

Your response clarified the issue in as balanced a way as possible—pointing out the proper authority of the ecclesiastical organization. I have heard the assertion that since the General Assembly has spoken that *that* should settle the issue (especially when one agrees with the decision). The decision should be received with respect and an attitude that any one of the parties could be wrong in its interpretation of Scripture.

Your assertion that "only in the written Word of God do we have any assurance of infallible guidance into what is real and what is false or mistaken" is a good guide to measuring experience.

Thank you for this balanced contribution to the "charismatic question."

Olin Coleman
Altamira, Para, Brazil

Ed. note: Thank you. That helped!

The Presbyterian Guardian is published eleven times each year, every month except for a combined issue in July-August, by the Presbyterian Guardian Publishing Corporation, 7401 Old York Road, Philadelphia, PA 19126, at the following rates, payable in advance, postage prepaid: \$4.25 per year (\$3.75 in clubs of ten or more; special rate for "every-family churches" on request). Second class mail privileges authorized at the Post Office, Philadelphia, Pa.

Dr. Hughes's Article on "Living Theology"

Criticisms

The following are "letters to the editor" commenting on the article by Dr. James A. Hughes entitled, "The Great Need: Believers with a Living Theology," published in the November 1976 *Guardian*, and one criticizing the editor's comment at the end.

Weakness of Method

Dr. Hughes has proposed a threefold analysis of those who claim to believe in the Bible; fundamentalists, evangelicals, and Calvinists. If we are considering Christians according to their claims, the relevant analysis is by denomination. The method proposed by Dr. Hughes has the disadvantage of assigning people to groups that are mostly undefined. In effect, he has composed the groups according to intuition or to rules that he does not disclose, and then has commented on the character of people in the groups. There is a certain circularity in this process.

This weakness of method becomes clear when details are considered. The *Baptists*, who have not been hesitant in their doctrinal distinctives, are not included anywhere. The closest we come is to "those of baptistic learning," which is at best unfortunate phraseology. *Francis Schaeffer* is a minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod; the difficulty of classifying him across the evangelical/Calvinist categories is a comment on the weakness of the analysis, not on Schaeffer's failure to identify himself or to be consistent.

Westminster Seminary, Calvinist if anything, itself says it is "glad to be called fundamentalist." Further, on the boundary of fundamentalist and Calvinist, *McIntire* has proved impossible to classify; although he is in his proportion a Calvinist, he is put in with the fundamentalists. Likewise, the tendency to splinter is put in the fundamentalist category. It has just as much right to sit in the Calvinist category.

Finally, with regard to political conservatism: that it is allied with conservative theology is an expressed opinion, not just an apparent view. For political theologizing, after all, the Calvinists do not

need to leave all the boasting to the fundamentalists. Witness *McIntire*, *Rushdoony*, *Toronto*, *Gary North*, to say nothing of *Paisley*. I wouldn't want to judge this all as "conservative politics." My point is rather that what appear to be cited as blemishes on the fundamentalists can be assigned to the Calvinists, too. One wonders what has become of the virtues of the independent churches, the missionary agencies, to say no more of the Lutherans, Reformed Baptists, Presbyterian Laymen, *Dallas*, *Grace* and *Talbot Seminars*, etc. Also, the Pentecostals and all the churches in foreign lands.

An analysis that obscures the distinctive character of those whom it does include, has omitted many very important groups, and has passed over public testimonies in favor of unclear generalities, is unfortunate and, I think, potentially harmful.

John Mason
Westminster Theol. Seminary
Philadelphia, Penna.

Mr. Mason, having been forced by war conditions to leave his missionary post in Eritrea, is engaged in theological study.

"The Great Need: Believers with a Living Theology," by Dr. James A. Hughes, was a thought-provoking article. I would like to suggest that the great need is believers with a living relationship to God, and that this relationship has little to do with whether or not a Christian is a Calvinist or an Arminian, as Dr. Hughes suggests.

He states: "The Bible-believing world of today must be shown that its repudiation of Calvinism, or the true Reformation theology, has left it bankrupt." Is this really true? Are we Calvinists any less bankrupt than Arminians?

The Lord says, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me" (Jeremiah 9:23, 24).

We are Calvinists. We believe that our doctrine is biblical and true. But let us not glory in our wisdom. We Calvinists know more *about* God than the Arminians; but that doesn't mean that we know *him* any better than they.

Marshall C. St. John, pastor
Bible Presbyterian Church
Concord, N. C.

Criticism of editor's comment

Why was it necessary for the editor to add a mitigating critique of Dr. Hughes's view of proper worship (November *Guardian*)? Have indeed most Presbyterian and Reformed churches become "convinced that Scripture, rightly interpreted, did not forbid the use of uninspired hymns but rather advocated it"?

Read the history of the introduction of hymns into Reformed worship and you find rather a gradual *acquiescence* to a relatively recent movement. And the Orthodox Presbyterian Church's handling of the issue, if one reads the General Assembly *Minutes* (13th and 14th assemblies), was at best unsatisfactory. In *The Biblical Doctrine of Worship* (Symposium), the Rev. G. I. Williamson quotes a 1948 *Guardian* in which the chairman of the Committee on Song in Public Worship said, "It would . . . be impossible to prove that uninspired songs are authorized in the Scripture, and to demand such proof before one can in good conscience sing uninspired songs is to demand the impossible!" The committee's argument was based upon *liberty* rather than *advocacy* of Scripture.

Aside from whether or not exclusive Psalmody is normative, permit me to note several observations, based upon having visited Presbyterian and Reformed churches throughout the U.S.:

1. There is widespread ignorance, even among some clergy, of the reasons for that "quaint practice" (exclusive Psalmody without accompaniment). Worse, most laypersons have not even heard of the regulative principle!

2. *Trinity Hymnal*, which is to be commended for its inclusion of so many Psalms, seems to have the more difficult tunes assigned to said Psalms, with the end result that few are sung regularly, if at all. Whatever Ephesians 5:18, 19 and Colossians 3:16 mean, they at least sanction and prescribe the *spiritual* "Psalms, hymns, and songs" of the Book of Praise. Most hymnals have only a handful of "The One Hundred and Fifty."

3. Instead of instrumental accompaniment (also advocated by Scripture?) being an aid and complement to the fruit of our lips, in practice it becomes a crutch to an often weak melody. No congregation sings more heartily, more harmoniously, or with more skill than those of the two "a capella" denominations, the Covenanters and the Churches of Christ (Disciples). Perhaps Dr. Hughes's plea for a return to Calvinism should have included

(Continued on next page.)

John Calvin's statement: "Instrumental music is not fitter to be adopted into the public worship of the Christian Church than the incense, the candlestick, and the shadows of the Mosaic law. . . ."

It's clear where my bias lies, and that I may be digging up a "buried hatchet." But if Jesus is not Lord of that highest of human acts, how can he be Lord elsewhere?

Renwick B. Adams
Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Md.

Editor's response:

The comments following the article by Dr. Hughes were intended to assure readers that (1) the *Guardian* does not endorse the use of exclusive psalmody in worship, and (2) it does not wish to suggest to readers that their Reformed or Calvinistic principles are somehow suspect if they sing hymns.

The regulative principle is that nothing may be introduced into the worship of God except what God himself has commanded.

Whatever the chairman of the OPC committee said, the committee itself did present a lengthy argument to show that Scripture did authorize the use of uninspired songs. Whether that argument was "unsatisfactory" is, of course, a matter of opinion. Mr. Adams seems to feel that "liberty" in Scripture is distinct from "advocacy," but the committee and the General Assembly clearly felt otherwise.

The editor appreciates fully the reasons that persuade some to the use of exclusive psalmody. He does not believe these reasons prove the case. And in response to the present letter writer, and to any others who hold to this position, he would point out that the "regulative principle of worship" is *not* the sole possession of those who sing only the Old Testament Psalms in worship. Rather, many of us who sing hymns do so because we believe the "regulative principle" requires us to sing the praises of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as he is revealed to us in the New Testament. The difference is not over whether we hold the "regulative principle" or not, but on how we interpret the biblical teachings in connection with it.

The question of musical accompaniment is another area of dispute. Suffice it to say that those Psalms that exhort the "children of Zion" to praise their God "with the timbrel and harp" were not addressed just to the professional temple musicians (Psalm 149:2, 3; 150:1-6).

—J. J. M.

Letter to editor about

The Combined BUDGET

John P. Galbraith

I think we all appreciated the fine picture of the Robert Marshall family in the November issue of the *Guardian*, and the first three paragraphs about their going to Taiwan were substantially correct. It was mainly when you editorialized that you slipped into trouble.

After you noted, first, that the Marshalls are to be partially supported by a presbytery (New Jersey), and then that "for some time" presbyteries have been supporting their own home missions work "without going through the Combined Budget," it is passing strange that you should then say that this support of foreign missionary work "outside of the Combined Budget" could "*initiate*" (italics ours) a breakdown of the denomination's present concept of giving to its gospel outreach. This calls for comment which, I am sorry to say, cannot be made in only a couple of paragraphs.

First of all, if presbyteries have been doing home missionary work "for some time" (years, as a matter of fact) outside of the Combined Budget, why would you try to put some kind of blame (if that's the word) on foreign missions for *initiating* a breakdown in giving to our church's "three-pronged gospel outreach"? Actually, if presbytery home missions work hasn't broken down the concept, why would presbytery-supported foreign missions work break it down?

Consequently, since you have brought this matter out of the General Assembly

and before our constituency at large, and lest your readers think that we are simply dealing in semantics about words like "initiate" and "blame," you owe it to them to let them know something about the larger matters that you have raised about the Combined Budget. These are somewhat complicated, but they are also important, and I shall try to clarify them under five heads:

1. The job to be done by our church is bigger than the Combined Budget allows.

The fact that presbyteries have felt it necessary to do home missions work in addition to that provided through the Combined Budget is evidence that the Combined Budget (and Committee on Stewardship) system is not able to do the job that has to be done. The Combined Budget has been smaller, every year, than planned by the three major committees; *every year* it holds them back. Somehow it must be supplemented.

2. Of our three major committees, foreign missions alone must depend on new contributions for growth.

Our denominational *home missions* work is supplemented from within the church in four ways: (1) by the presbyteries doing home missionary work as mentioned above; (2) by churches making special contributions directly to home mission churches, apart from the Combined Budget, when special needs of their home mission churches are made known; (3) by individuals in the church at large making contributions directly to a home missions congregation (I have done this recently myself); and (4) by funds that become available for new work each year through decreasing the support given to existing works.

Christian education income is also supplemented by selling its literature to the church (which is partially taken into account in its Combined Budget allotment). On the other hand, our *foreign missions* work, having none of these additional assets, must depend completely on contributions for its maintenance and growth.

3. The Combined Budget structure almost inevitably prevents our people from enabling any committee from rising to

COMBINED BUDGET of the ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The "Combined Budget" system of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was first adopted in 1963. It has been modified and its operation strengthened in later years, but the basic pattern has not been altered since that first adoption by the General Assembly.

The present "Plan for the Committee on Stewardship," provides budgetary review for the Committees on Christian Education, Foreign Missions, and Home Missions, and the following provisions concerning contributions from Orthodox Presbyterian sources:

- Undesignated contributions shall be allocated to each agency in the proportion which each agency's (General Assembly) approved budget bears to the combined budget (of all three committees).
- Designated contributions shall be allocated to the causes designated by the donors.
- If an agency shall receive the amount set forth in its approved budget, it shall not share further in the allocation of undesignated contributions until all of the other agencies receive their approved budget amounts.

At the present time, over two-thirds of the total Combined Budget for the three major committees is met by undesignated contributions.

new opportunities during the year.

When emergencies and new opportunities or other unforeseen expenses arise during the year, which would add to the committees' expenses above the Combined Budget allocation, the committees are almost completely prevented from receiving new funds to meet those needs because of the structure of the Combined Budget system: *all* contributions from Orthodox Presbyterian churches and individuals for the general funds of the committees are counted as part of their assigned share of the Combined Budget, even though our members may want to give for the additional expense.

It might be said that this is an equitable enough arrangement since it affects all three committees alike. But even if it were equitable it would nevertheless hold us back by discouraging the giving of additional funds for additional needs. The fact is, however, that the arrangement is not equitable because the work of the three committees is so different: (1) by the nature of foreign mission work, emergencies arise much more frequently in foreign, less-controllable situations than they do at home, and (2) when they do arise at home our people are much nearer at hand and feel the emergency personally, and they respond spontaneously and immediately, and their gifts go directly to the church or person involved instead of through the Combined Budget. For example, when the Englishes' house in Korea burned down we could not appeal for contributions to help rebuild, so we had to borrow money and pay interest on it.

We said above that a committee is "almost completely" prevented from receiving from our people for our budgeted work contributions that are in addition to that committee's Combined Budget allocation. There is a provision in the Combined Budget plan that allows the Committee on Stewardship to permit a committee to receive special contributions for a special need, and such action was taken for foreign missions a few years ago. But the process is too cumbersome to make it an effective instrument for use as often as help is needed.

One more thing that may surprise our people but which must be made clear is that contributions from Orthodox Presby-

terians that were intended to add to a committee's work beyond its share of the Combined Budget can actually have the effect of *reducing* the amount that committee will receive through the Combined Budget. Here is one actual illustration in a recent year.

As December was drawing to a close, our foreign missions work was nearing its total Combined Budget allocation, due to substantial contributions during the year from individuals who had a particular interest in the growth of that work. But in December two things happened: (1) some churches delayed sending in their November Thank Offerings until the very end of December, along with their regular December offerings, and (2) a contribution of several thousand dollars for foreign missions was received from a member of one of our churches, and that contribution completed the foreign missions Combined Budget allocation.

The results were: (1) of the Thank Offering and general contributions (Combined Budget) that came to our office after that individual's contribution (some even on the same day and in the same mail) not one penny from our churches went to foreign missions, even though members had given under the impression that part of what they had given in these offerings would go to foreign missions, and (2) that individual's contribution was not permitted either to enable foreign missions to do more work nor even to enable it to meet some unexpected and unavoidable expenses on our fields that had had to be added to the year-and-

a-half-old budget.

Earlier we said that the Combined Budget structure "almost inevitably prevents our people from enabling a committee to do additional work during the year." "Almost" because only when the entire Combined Budget has been fulfilled for *all* committees will new contributions to their general funds, from Orthodox Presbyterian sources, be available for needs that did not exist when the budgets had been adopted possibly as much as eighteen months earlier. If the budgets of all three committees are fulfilled, then new needs can be undertaken. But since that has happened only once in the whole history of the Combined Budget, the possibility is largely theoretical.

4. Our foreign missions work has not been able to grow under its Combined Budget allocations.

In the twelve years since the Stewardship Committee and the Combined Budget have been in effect (1964), we have not been able to add any missionaries with funds received through the Combined Budget, though in prior years we had been adding new missionaries (while the work of the other committees also grew). Because of the restrictions imposed on us by the Combined Budget the only way that we have been able to extend our witness since 1964 has been to seek and use funds from outside our church. So far as the Combined Budget is concerned we have had to stand still for twelve years: in 1964, the year before

the present system went into effect, our church was supporting twelve families and one single person (25 adults); in 1976 our church was supporting eleven families, part of one other, and two single persons (24½ adults).

And the 1976 General Assembly continued that pattern: When it adopted the Combined Budget for 1977 foreign missions was singled out (from the three committees under the Combined Budget) for a decrease in working funds—the number of dollars would be slightly more, but their purchasing power due to inflation would be less than in the previous year; the purchasing power of funds allotted to the other two committees were more than in the previous year.

It should also be realized about our Christian education work that, in spite of the great advantage it has in the selling of its products for more income, it (1) some years ago had to receive a \$50,000 grant from another denomination; (2) has had to incur substantial debt; and (3) has now merged part of its work with another denomination, and in so doing our church has had to relinquish its sole control over that part of the work.

Thankfully God has been faithful, as always, so when our church has faltered he raised up others, from outside our church, to advance the work.

5. How can our witness to the nations grow under the Combined Budget structure?

The realization of the past twelve-year record, and its implications for our future effectiveness in the world, are part of what impelled Mr. Marshall to ask his presbytery and the Committee on Foreign Missions to adapt to foreign missions what has been done for so many years in home missions. On the basis of the previous pattern of limited and inadequate support imposed by the Combined Budget on giving by our churches and members, we do not see how we could plan on any new missionaries *ever*. All future recruiting and sending of additional missionaries, as in the past twelve years, would be limited to our ability to obtain funds from outside our church.

This year, for instance, we have been put in an embarrassing position. After having recruited, nurtured, and encouraged one young man since early in his college years to go to one of our fields, we have been told, as he is ready to graduate from seminary and go to the field in the coming summer, that the foreign missions share of the Combined Budget would not permit us to do as

much work in 1977 as we did in 1976. Only by seeking and obtaining a large portion of his support from outside our church have we been able to assure his going.

To come back to our question, how can *our church* provide growth in foreign missions, it is obvious that presbytery support is at least part of the answer. But there are others also which may, perhaps, be discussed later. A special committee of the most recent General Assembly (1976) has been given the task of reviewing the Combined Budget structure, and we hope that they will not only recognize the problems but will help provide solutions to them.

You expressed fear, Mr. Editor, that this New Jersey procedure would lead to a "general breakdown of the whole concept of giving to the denomination's total, three-pronged gospel outreach." Four things, briefly, must be said:

(1) This same procedure, followed in home missions, not only has not broken down the concept but has, on the contrary, added strength to one of the three prongs.

(2) If this procedure would have caused any breakdown it would not have been in the *concept* of "giving to the denomination's three-pronged gospel outreach" (Christian education, foreign missions, home missions) but to the *present system*, a system that limits giving to that outreach—and there is a big difference between these two.

(3) A change in the present system certainly does not mean abandoning three-pronged work, nor does it necessarily mean abandoning a "combined budget."

(4) Though you fear changing a *system*, I fear that the *constricting results* of the system will *not* be changed; I fear a continued failure of our church to rise to the challenge and opportunity of the tremendous task and opportunity to preach the gospel ever more widely and effectively. We need a system that will not hold us back, but that will help us forward. Let's not be afraid of making changes that will enable us to extend our witness over the face of the earth, that will be of praise to God, and that will bring his blessings to our church.

Although this letter is long, still more will have to be said, in time. Thank you for giving this space at this time.

Mr. Galbraith is General Secretary of the Committee on Foreign Missions of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Further comment on

The sin of USURY

Greg L. Bahnsen

In endorsing usurious business practices within the Christian church, the editor of the *Guardian* (in the December 1976 issue) appears to have employed the illogical reasoning that he mistakenly attributes to another writer. He has been prevented from drawing "good and necessary inferences" from Scripture because of a hasty generalization in his argument. He has reduced the whole to the part (just as does the man who thinks that, because he can tear in half page 127 of the New York telephone directory, he can tear the entire directory in half).

If a moral theologian were to argue that the Bible does not forbid drunkenness in general, but only drunkenness at the Lord's table (1 Cor. 11:20-21), he would employ hasty generalization (overlooking passages like Romans 13:13, etc.). In a similar fashion, I think, Mr. Mitchell has selected a verse that speaks of sinful usury in a *particular* kind of case (a poor brother) and mistakenly *generalized this* part to be the whole of what is forbidden regarding usury. He claims that Scripture's prohibition of interest-bearing loans in non-commercial circumstances applies solely to a poor brother in dire need of relief. This limitation is unwarranted and unwittingly overlooks contrary evidence pertaining to the general sin of usury.

No interest from brother

Deuteronomy 23:19 states categorically: "Thou shalt not lend upon interest to thy brother." The economic status of the borrower here is not relevant, receiving not the slightest mention; the point is that he is "thy brother" and not a "foreigner." The Old Testament could distin-

guish between loans in general ("any kind of loan") and poverty loans ("if he be a poor man"); indeed, it did so distinguish in the nearby context in Deuteronomy 24:10-13. In Deuteronomy 23:19, however, there is *not* a qualification, specification, or limitation of the prohibition to poverty loans alone. We are not at all to charge interest to *any* of God's people (on non-commercial loans).

In his commentary on Exodus 22:25, R. A. Cole says, "Dt. 23:20 extends this rule to money lent to any fellow-Israelites." So also, H. Cunliffe-Jones comments on Deuteronomy 23:19 by saying: "In this generalized form, the injunction is an advance upon the two parallel laws in Ex. 22:25 and Lev. 25:37, which forbids taking interest from *poor* Israelites. Here the prohibition is extended to *all* Israelites." Likewise the Mishnah and Talmud interpreted God's law as allowing for *no* usurious transactions between God's people. This understanding was applied by councils of the Christian church as well (e.g., canon 17 at Nicea, etc.).

The biblical ethic requires that we abstain from making money off of our fellow believers, for it is sacrificial love and not profit-making that characterizes the relationship between God's people. Our attitude must parallel God's character as merciful, kind, and perfect; when it does, says Jesus, we will not turn away from the borrower but will lend without any hope of receiving in return (Matt. 5:42, 48; Luke 6:34-36).

Who qualifies to dwell in Jehovah's holy hill? He "who honoreth them that fear Jehovah; . . . he that putteth not out his money to interest [usury, in the *KJV*], nor taketh reward against the innocent" (Psalm 15:4, 5). God pronounces a beatitude upon, and promises security to, the righteous man who deals graciously and lends freely (Psalm 37:21, 26; 112:5). Increasing your money through interest is only a way to lose it altogether (Prov. 28:8). Exacting interest on non-commercial loans between fellow believers is unseemly and unbecoming of those who have experienced God's gracious redemption; the Lord forbids it. "Thou shalt not lend upon interest to thy brother."

Aggravated usury

Of course, the sin is *intensified* when

committed against a poor Christian brother who is in dire need. This escalates the evil into a form of exploitation. The Bible portrays certain aggravating circumstances as making some sins more heinous than others (cf. *Westminster Larger Catechism*, Q. 151). Fornication with an unengaged virgin is sin, but it is even worse when committed with a married

Note from Dr. North

A printed copy of my rebuttal to Mr. Mitchell's critique of my analysis of usury and interest-bearing loans on church projects is available free of charge to anyone who writes to: Chalcedon, P. O. Box 158, Vallecito, CA 95251. The original essay criticized by Mr. Mitchell will also be sent. For those interested in pursuing the subject more fully, I suggest my essay, "Stewardship, Investment, Usury: Financing the Kingdom of God," which appears in my book, *An Introduction to Christian Economics* (Craig Press, 1973), and also in R. J. Rushdoony's book, *Institutes of Biblical Law* (Craig Press, 1973). Mr. Mitchell refused to print my rebuttal of his editorial because he thinks it went beyond the scope of his critique, which is to say, he doesn't agree with my reply, especially since it was a comprehensive reply.

—Gary North

The Guardian apologizes for not having the source information on Dr. North's remarks available with the editorial in the December 1976 issue.

woman (Deut. 22: 22, 28-29). When a *hungry* man steals, it is evil (Prov. 6:30-31); but how much more unrighteous when one engages in *greedy* extortion (Ezek. 22:12) or when a rich employer steals from his laborers (James 5:4)!

We are not to give offense to anyone (1 Cor. 10:32), but especially not to Christ's little ones (Matt. 18:6). It is sinful to defraud others, but the sin is aggravated when we defraud our Christian brothers (1 Cor. 6:8). Likewise, it is sinful

to loan upon interest to a fellow believer, but the sin is more heinous and aggravated when the usurious loan amounts to extortion from a poverty-stricken brother; here the *general* sin is *particularly* magnified (cf. 1 John 3:17).

The broad command

Exploiting a poor brother with an interest-bearing loan is condemned in Scripture. But it would be hasty generalization to think that this is the *only* kind of usurious loan that God's word forbids. The commandment is broader. It is straightforward and encompasses *all* of God's people, *regardless* of their economic status. Let us not reduce the whole to the part or take a narrow approach to God's commandments. Non-commercial usury is categorically sinful. May it not be named among Christ's people.

If the business practices of the ecclesiastical *status quo* are affected by this teaching of Scripture, let God's word stand while we alter our practices. If the church needs money to finance a building project—a project that is *not* undertaken, by the way, as profit-making venture or capital investment—and I were to loan it money upon interest, that usury would *further* the condition that called for the loan in the first place. That is, the usury would hinder relief and not alleviate the economic distress of the church.

At a time when usury was inhibiting the external building program of God's people, Nehemiah exclaimed: "I pray you, let us leave off this usury!" (Neh. 5:10). And he exacted a promise to that effect so that no longer would the wealthy "exact usury, every one of his brother" (verses 7, 9-12). This violated God's holy law. Next, Nehemiah symbolically shook out his lap, saying God would shake out those who continued to charge interest to their fellow believers (verse 13).

God's church is in need of our financial charity for building programs. Isn't it time that the redeemed of the Lord shook out their laps?

The writer is a member of the faculty at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi, and an ordained minister of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Further discussion of the subject will follow.

SERMONS-- preached and heard

Lewis A. Ruff, Jr.

Can you remember last Sunday's sermon—not to mention sermons? Are the preacher's points still vividly in your mind? Most important, have you begun to practice in your life what you heard in that half-hour?

Listening to sermons—and retaining their substance so they produce more than a complimentary “Good sermon!” to the preacher on the way out—is not an easy task. Much has been written about the difficulty of “listening to sermons in the mass-media age.” (See the article by Tim Ozinga in the December 12, 1975 *Banner*, p. 7.)

Conditioned by TV shows and by TV, newspaper, or magazine advertising, to expect well-organized, bouncy, appealing presentations—and cancellation of any that are not big in the ratings—we find our ability to listen to a thirty-minute sermon of words and a few gestures at least tested and often nearly destroyed. What can we do?

Actually, we can do a good deal. We can meet this challenge to sermon effectiveness by testing our own faithfulness both as sermon preachers and sermon listeners. The following suggestions have been helpful to me in being more responsible in sermon preaching. I hope they will aid you in examining your own place in these areas.

Helps for good preaching

1. *Don't be unconcerned about your sermon's length.* Now let me say that I am in complete agreement with Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones when he says that we “must not think primarily in terms of time nor allow people to do so. . . . Our primary concern must be with the Truth and the people's need of it” (*Preaching and*

Preachers, p. 243). This is why I say, Don't be “unconcerned” with time. Certainly you should attempt to set a general limit for your sermon (mine is thirty or thirty-five minutes); but if the Spirit is using you in a special way on a given Sunday, you must feel free to forget the clock, lest the Spirit be quenched.

I find two factors helpful in determining whether to continue with a sermon: (a) Is there something meaningful to say that is not simply a rehash of what I've already said enough times? (b) What is the condition of my listeners? Any preacher with a little experience should be able to read his audience well enough to know if a few more words would be edifying or counter-productive.

2. *Make sure your sermon is down-to-earth and not too intellectual.* I'm not advocating that we preach a *simpler truth* in the sense of a meatless gospel. But I am saying that we should always be searching for a simpler way of presenting the truth without compromising it, so that more people will understand.

This advice is particularly for young preachers just come from the heady atmosphere of the theological seminary. In seeking to bring my own preaching to an understandable level, I taught a VBS class of first and second graders! It was immediately apparent that I had to simplify my message considerably or be ignored completely. Try teaching such an age level or do some preaching in nursing homes and jails. You'll be forced to cultivate the virtue of simplicity.

A good way of judging how well you're getting through to people with words and ideas they can grasp is to ask your own children (or those of a friend) what they got out of your sermon.

Even so, no matter how far you gear down your sermon, you will still miss many of the children under ten years of age. You might consider using a children's object lesson during the service. Taking three to five minutes to reach children with words specifically aimed at them has brought me a lot of positive feedback. I've also discovered that many adults in the congregation enjoy it too—after all, if the children understand, the adults should also!

3. *Make sure your sermon is practical.* Almost anyone who goes through three years of study at a good seminary can produce a reasonably accurate exegesis of a text. But what the man in the pew is interested in is, “What does all this mean

to me? How can I act on or react to what you've just told me?”

If we are not applying God's truth to the everyday needs of our hearers, it will not be long before they get the death-inducing notion that the Bible is a great book of abstract theory, whose literary perfections are to be marvelled at and whose lists of kings are to be memorized, but whose contents are as life-transforming as *Robert's Rules of Order*.

One way to insure that your sermons are practical is to begin preparing them months in advance. This will give you the opportunity to bask in the truth yourself and to apply it to your own life. Then, when you are ready to share it with your congregation, you can boldly and confidently declare it, knowing the change it has already worked in your own life.

A most obvious way of being practical and meeting the needs of your hearers is simply to know them. Know their struggles and deficiencies through personal contact so that you can bring appropriate healing through application of the Word.

4. *Make sure your sermon is clear.* The old advice was, “Tell them what you're going to say, then say it, and then tell them what you've just told them.” That is still good advice. And so is the practice of breaking up your sermon into a “firstly,” “secondly,” and “thirdly.” Never forget that we want people to be wrestling with God's Word and not with our presentation of it.

Too often our sermons come off as unattached boxcars or wandering amoebas, with a point here and a point there with no apparent connection. But what is our aim in preaching? Isn't it the retention of what God is saying? Of course, and this can best be done by having our sermon points smoothly flow into each other as they unite to shed light on the central theme of the text. One good indicator of lack of unity in a sermon is your inability readily to choose an apt title for it!

I can't leave this point without reminding you of the value of a good home-grown illustration. It's been over three years since I used the illustration of a cow's udder in preaching to a farming community. Yet I still have those who clearly recall it and the point it was meant to shed light on. So, be constant sermon preparers, always on the watch for illustrations in everyday experiences.

5. *Don't be afraid to use mechanical*

helps. Printing your sermon outline in the church bulletin is always helpful. But you can do much more to aid your hearers. You can unify your entire worship service around one major theme—it should be the same as that of your “unified” sermon. Hymns and Scripture readings are frequently blended with the sermon and reinforce the message. But even the call to worship, the responsive reading, the form of the benediction used, and even the content of your prayer can maintain the emphasis throughout the whole service.

I’ve also found it helpful actually to name the day’s theme at the top of the church bulletin and to suggest a Scripture verse touching on the theme to begin engaging the people’s thoughts during their prayer and meditation before the service.

You can also effectively enlist the senses of your listeners by varying the order of worship. Contrary to what some people may believe, the printed order of worship in the bulletin did not fall out of heaven into the session’s hands. While the elements of worship are ordained for us by God, we should never presume to require the staid sort of liturgism our fathers fought so hard to overthrow. Indeed, immovably fixed orders of worship tend to stifle the sincere heart-worship that is the core of a living walk with the living Lord.

So, use some creativity in ordering the elements of worship. Don’t hesitate to preach the sermon at the beginning of the service in order to allow extended time for response through confession, commitment, and praise. And feel at liberty to use bulletin inserts containing collated Scripture passages or even written prayers appropriate to the occasion.

All of this requires effort, of course, by the pastor and the session. But I have found that the benefits to God’s people far outweigh any work expended in thoughtful and creative preparation for the worship service.

6. *Pray more for your hearers.* Pray that the Spirit would cause them to be always aware that you are proclaiming God’s Word and not your own, and that they cannot afford to be indifferent. Pray also that the Spirit working through the Word might bring the appropriate response in them, whether repentance, obedience, thanksgiving, or worship.

Helps for good listening

1. *Prepare yourself for a blessing.* Come into the assembly of God’s people expecting to grow in grace and in the knowledge

of God. Take your seat and pray that God would use the Word preached for your good. Ask God to give the preacher boldness and clarity in proclaiming the truth.

2. *Be attentive.* Don’t succumb to the many distractions that could easily usurp the place of the preacher’s words. Shuffling feet, banging doors from late-comers, cars passing by outside, babies crying—all can be to your detriment if heeded.

I might add that neither should you be a distraction to others, looking around to see who just came in, crinkling candy wrappers, entering the sanctuary noisily, whispering, making faces at babies, putting on your coat before the service is completely over. . . . Those of you who are parents of young children should have concern enough for others to take your child out of the sanctuary temporarily if need be.

Charles Spurgeon once got so annoyed with people turning around to see who was coming in the door that he started describing each person who came in. At least then, Spurgeon said, you can sit and look at me “and keep up at least a show of decency.” His listeners were quickly cured of their poor manners, though I doubt I would have the nerve to follow his example!

3. *Take notes.* Don’t say you can’t listen and write at the same time without having tried it. You’ll be amazed at how the jotting down of even the main points can greatly aid not only your memory of the sermon but your attentiveness in it.

4. *Look beyond the preacher to the Word itself.* Spurgeon also tells the story of an old preacher commenting on people who get turned off by the preacher’s style of delivery. The old preacher said, “Supposing you went to hear the will of one of your relatives read, and you were expecting a legacy from him; you would hardly think of criticizing the manner in which the lawyer read the will; but you would be all attention to hear whether anything was left to you, and if so, how much; and that is the way to hear the gospel” (*Lectures to My Students*, pp. 391f.)

Or as Calvin once put it: We should “not esteem God’s word according to the worth of those who bring it to us” (*Sermons on Ephesians*, p. 7). When your preacher is having problems with his delivery or the organization of his sermon, don’t turn him off! It is still God’s Word he is preaching. Wade your way through

and around his imperfections to the perfect message from God behind them.

5. *Don’t hesitate to speak with the preacher when you’re having trouble following him.* Believe it or not, that Christian in the pulpit makes mistakes and has areas that need improving—just like you. So, you’re simply going to have to be like Aquilla and Priscilla who realized that their preacher Apollos was in need of advice. In love they took him aside privately to share their concern (Acts 18: 24-28).

This task especially falls upon those of you who are ruling elders as the “guardians of the pulpit.” You should discuss your pastor’s preaching with him regularly, touching on content, delivery, effectiveness, etc. If you’re not quite sure about exactly what to look for, ask your pastor for a sermon evaluation sheet (which he can make up) for you to fill in during and after the sermon.

Maybe you haven’t spent too much time lately thinking about your responsibilities as a sermon listener, or as an easy-sermon-to-be-listened-to preacher. Maybe you’re already utilizing one or more of the suggestions made here to great profit. But one thing is certain. If you have listened to all those sermons week after week and year after year, and they haven’t produced any substantial maturity in your Christian walk, then something is wrong. And, whether it is due to shortcoming in you or your preacher, something must be done.

The Lord meant for his people to feed on the Word. And he has given gifts to men that they might feed others with the Word. That is the heart of what God’s people do when they assemble together. We need good preaching and good listening.

I realize that not every help suggested here will be appropriate for every situation. Each congregation is different and will express its piety with differing emphases. Even so, as common debtors to God’s goodness and mercy, we all should always be on the watch for ways to increase the level and fervor of our devotion. May the churches of the Reformed faith never be devoid of that vital spiritual worship that comes from the Word being preached to God’s people.

The Rev. Lewis A. Ruff, Jr. is pastor of Bethel Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Houlton, Maine.

"Black Perspective" Conference

The Westminster (Seminary) Student Association sponsored a conference on the "Black Perspective" under the theme: "The Practice of Truth." The aim was to stress the churches' "needed awareness in the cross-cultural evangelism of the black community."

Held on February 4, 5, 1977, the conference featured John Perkins, founder and director of the Voice of Calvary in Mendenhall, Mississippi, and the Rev. Michael Haynes, pastor of the Twelfth Street Baptist Church in Boston. The conference also provided workshop periods and a "soul food" dinner on Friday evening.

New church in Roanoke

The (O. P.) Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic recently constituted the Valley Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Roanoke, Va. The Rev. Richard L. Horner, who was instrumental in starting the work, was named stated supply. The Rev.

Mr. Horner and his brother, ruling elder Jim Horner, were appointed to supervise the work until the congregation has had opportunity to elect officers. The church meets in the Central YWCA, 605 First Street, Roanoke.

"Animals have a heaven"!

According to a press release by Eckankar, "the Ancient Science of Soul Travel," pet animals do go to heaven. This is the teaching of Sri Darwin Gross, the Master of this religious organization. He says, "The animal form is but one of many forms Soul takes on in a long succession of lifetimes to learn Self-Realization and God-Realization."

Somehow it seems far more comforting to realize that a beloved pet's death is in God's hands and that there is no need for the animal's "Soul" to return again and again and again to endure as a rock, a dog, a bird, or even a man. Far more comforting too is the realization that our eternal destiny is fully settled in and by the grace of a loving Savior who died and rose that we might live with him.

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Ministerial training seminar

Representatives from the OPC General Assembly's Committee on Ministerial Training, the Philadelphia-area "Training in Ministry" (TIM) pastors' continuing-education program, and members of the Westminster Theological Seminary faculty met with Dr. Lawrence Richards in Philadelphia on November 10 for an informal seminar on "New Models for Ministerial Training." The purpose of the seminar was to share perspectives and explore possibilities for more effective structures and methods of training men for church ministry.

Dr. Richards, author of the recently published *A Theology of Christian Education* (Zondervan, 1975), initiated discussion by presenting several concepts he perceived as crucial to the life of today's church and the changing needs of ministerial training: the characteristics of "Body Life" in the dynamics of the living church community, the central function and participation of the family in the mission of the church, and the servant character and role of the pastor. These and other concepts were drawn from Dr. Richards' book which served as the basis for the seminar.

Small group discussions followed and considered three issues in current ministerial training approaches: (1) How can those training for ministry be taught to cooperate with rather than compete against each other? (2) Is relating truth to life crucial to existing or projected models of ministerial training, and if so, how can this relationship be facilitated within current training programs covering curriculum, cognitive theological competencies, and practical experience? and (3) What is the relationship between a "Body Life" and "Servanthood" philosophy of ministry and a structured training curriculum, especially as to the influence of this relationship upon the personal motivation, development, and effectiveness of the ministerial candidate?

Participants shared not only several diverse theories and principles on these issues, but also a variety of practical needs and problems involved in their current experiences with existing ministerial training models. Seminary faculty members informally shared some tentative explorations into curriculum and program changes being studied at Westminster. TIM pastoral representatives shared insights into the strengths and weaknesses of traditional ministerial training programs for current urban and rural church communities. Members of the Committee on Ministerial Training shared their

concerns and goals for a relevant continuing-education program available for pastors and the need for identifying the character as well as the competency of the ministerial candidate. Dr. Richards con-

cluded the seminar by offering four models of pastoral internships now being tested and evaluated within a variety of church communities in different sections of the country.

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For further information contact:

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RES

Cape Town

1976

John P. Galbraith

This report has been provided by the Rev. John P. Galbraith, a delegate of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to the 1976 Reformed Ecumenical Synod in Cape Town. Mr. Galbraith, who is the General Secretary of the Committee on Foreign Missions, was elected Moderator of the Synod.

At the first Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES) there were seventeen delegates from three countries, representing three churches, all of Dutch origin, and several observers. That was August 1946 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

At the eighth RES, held last August in Cape Town, South Africa, there were as many countries represented (17) as there had been delegates thirty years ago. This time there were 93 delegates and they came from 31 different churches together with observers from six other churches; seven member churches were unable to have delegates present.

Worldwide Reformed commitment

The churches that are members of the RES are committed to taking the Reformed faith seriously and it is of interest to know the countries where there is such a commitment: In *Africa*—Malawi, Nigeria, Rhodesia, South Africa, South West Africa (Namibia), Zambia; in *Asia* and the *South Pacific*—Australia, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon); in *Europe*—France, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Scotland; in *North America*—Canada, Mexico, United States; and in *South America*—Argentina, Brazil.

There are churches in other countries also that are considering applying for RES membership.

This should be encouraging to all who love the Reformed faith, for although the several churches may have an exchange of visiting delegations, it is only through the RES that delegations from these churches can come together as one to discuss and wrestle with their common problems and to express their oneness in Christ. Yet, numbers are not everything. In fact, they are nothing apart from the *faith*.

The late Professor Louis Berkhof, who represented the Christian Reformed Church in opening the first RES, put it this way: "We meet . . . as co-laborers with God in the building of His Church. . . . We shall, however, have to be mindful of the fact that we can lay no other foundation than that which has been laid by Christ. On that foundation we must build, and not on any foundation of human philosophy or human science, . . . only with gold and silver and precious stones. Our grand ideal must be to add nothing . . . that is not in harmony with the foundation, . . . nothing that does not promote the unity and beauty of the building."

The RES has tried diligently to do that through the years; and because of that effort, because it has been willing to face up to problems and try to solve them by the Word of God rather than just overlook them as so many church organizations do, tensions have arisen within the RES and some have even wondered if it could continue as a Reformed body. We shall say more about this below, but first we wish to reflect on the meetings themselves.

Hosted in South Africa

The host church was the large Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa, composed (in South African terms) mostly of "coloreds," as distinguished from the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (black), and from the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (white). The memberships of these churches are approximately 450,000, 508,000, and 1,400,000 respectively. These three churches cooperated in providing for the needs of the Synod and the meetings were held in the spacious auditorium of the latter church (DRCSA) in their "Church

Center" building in downtown Cape Town. All meetings were, of course, integrated racially, as were hotel, meal, and transportation accommodations.

The occasion of the Synod also provided opportunity for three conferences in which specific topics were discussed: Missions, Theology, and the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The papers and other documents from these conferences are to be published. Delegates from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church had part in all of these conferences. Similar conferences are held in conjunction with each Synod and, providing as they do the only worldwide audience and arena for Reformed churches, are of much value to all the churches.

Subjects of discussion

Among matters considered at this Synod were two from "study committees"—on the Sabbath and on baptism with the Holy Spirit. Other matters of substance came to the Synod by referral from member churches and by reports of standing committees. These included the following: radio and television programming by the churches, mission work among Jews, a "Message to the Churches Concerning the Missionary Task and Their Equipment for It" (published in the November issue of the *Orthodox Presbyterian Worldwide Challenge*), diaconal involvement of the churches and the need to emphasize the unity of word and deed, laying on of hands in the ordination of office-bearers, Scripture, women in church office, race relations, and the situation in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands with regard to church discipline and to their membership in the World Council of Churches. Space makes impossible a meaningful discussion of all these, but we shall say a few things about the last two. Those who wish to have the texts of reports and actions can obtain them by purchasing the Acts of the 1976 RES (\$3.50) and a digest compiled by RES General Secretary entitled, "The Message of Cape Town" (\$1.00). Write to: RES, 1677 Gentian Drive, S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49508, U.S.A.

The matters of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN) and race relations consumed large amounts of time in debate and stirred emotions. We want to say, to the credit of those on both

sides of both questions, that they displayed in abundance the graces of love and patience that come from the Holy Spirit. The Moderator (this writer) did not have even to consider calling anyone to order at any time for untoward remarks or attitudes; he was able, rather, at the conclusion, to express thanks to God and commendation to the participants for the way in which they were enabled to conduct themselves.

Concern over the RCN

It is thought by some that the RCN matter did not await its formal place on the docket but arose with the first item of business, the election of the Synod's five officers. For at that time, and for the first time since the RES was founded, no one from the RCN was elected to the Moderamen (the five officers as a group). There could have been a number of reasons for this, but the RCN delegates regarded it as a rebuff to their church. Ultimately those elected were from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (Moderator), Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (First Clerk), Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa (First Assessor), Christian Reformed Church, USA (Second Clerk), and Reformed Churches of New Zealand (Second Assessor).

With regard to the RES membership of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands while also being a member of the World Council of Churches, action of the Synod was related to decisions of earlier synods that had advised member churches not to join the WCC. This time, however, in view of the persistence of the RCN in rejecting that advice, the Synod took two further steps: to say that membership of RES churches in the WCC is "inconsistent with membership in the RES," and to "instruct the Interim Committee to seek to arrange a consultation" with the churches that are WCC members (including also two RCN "daughter" churches in Indonesia) "at an early time" concerning their WCC membership. So, instead of simply leaving the matter up to these churches to take initiative in dealing with it, the RES is now, through its Interim Committee, to take it up with them in personal discussion. The Interim Committee is to report to the member churches and to the 1980 RES.

The additional question before the Synod concerning the RCN was whether or not they are properly exercising discipline with regard to two of their ministers, H. M. Kuitert and H. Wiersinga, and in general whether the "theological stance" of the RCN is consistent with the requirements for membership in the RES. The five-paragraph action taken by the Synod is too long to quote here, but it included these elements: (1) urged the RCN "to pursue this process of discipline with all due haste," (2) "clearly state" that if the RCN does not give a "higher priority" to its "duty . . . to protect the people of God from apostasy" than to the difficulties inherent in discipline, "the result can only be that the RCN will lose the marks of the true church," (3) reminded the RCN that allowing "unbiblical teaching and practice in the church is in violation of the" RES's membership requirements, (4) instructed the Interim Committee to include this matter in its discussions with the RCN, and (5) requested all the RES churches "to pray that they (themselves) and all our other churches remain faithful to Scripture and to profess and maintain the Reformed Confessions."

Delegates from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and from a number of other member churches had gone to the meeting apprehensive as to whether their churches would be able to continue in the RES. And had no significant advance been made in these RCN matters their churches probably would have had to give very serious consideration to withdrawal. But significant advance *was* made; in fact, so significant that some of the RCN delegates later recommended to their synod that *they* withdraw from the RES. But the RCN synod declined to do so.

The OPC delegates believe that not only *may* we continue our membership at least until after the 1980 RES, but we *must*. They also believe that other churches that are committed to the Reformed faith should also seek membership. For further developments we must now see what other advances can be made through the RCN-Interim Committee consultations; judging from the actions of the RES 1976, either the RCN will have to provide new evidence from

Scripture to justify their present stance, or the stance will have to undergo significant change in order for the constituency of the RES to continue as it is at present. The RES has provided a great service to Reformed churches throughout the world, and it has opportunity to magnify that service in the future. We should all pray much for it.

Race relations matter

The other time-consuming and emotional subject was that of race relations. It was on the Synod's docket by way of communications from member churches in response to a resolution adopted by the 1972 RES in Sydney, Australia. But even if the subject had not been already on the docket, it would have found its way there in any case; for the now-famed riots in Soweto (a suburb of Johannesburg) had erupted in the weeks before the Synod, and during the Synod other riots took place outside Cape Town. The result was that not only was the anticipated material before the Synod, but also the widely felt need to respond to immediate circumstances.

Ultimately two resolutions came out of the South African unrest: (1) concerning Soweto, directed primarily to the RES churches in South Africa, requesting them to give "early and serious attention" to the problems that helped to produce the unrest and riots in the country, and requesting a regional conference of RES churches in South Africa, scheduled for April 1977, to "devise ways and means for united action" on these matters; and (2) concerning the unrest around Cape Town, called on the South African government to "do everything possible to alleviate burdens that contribute to" the unrest, while also calling the people of the country "to turn to the Lord in prayer and to one another in love."

But the Synod was not content simply to speak words to others. In its resolution concerning Cape Town it provided that the Synod interrupt its business to devote a period of time "to intercessory prayer for peace, justice, and order in South Africa." Synod's determination to do this was dramatized, and even highlighted, by having to interrupt the debate in order to attend a previously-scheduled banquet given in honor of the Synod by the government of Cape Province, and then

to return to an unprecedented night session at 10:30 p.m. in order to reach a conclusion on the five-point resolution without further delay. When the resolution was adopted there was a period of free prayer that was concluded at 12:40 a.m. The Synod's minutes record that "a moving period of intercessory prayer was engaged in with numerous delegates leading in prayer."

Further race resolutions

Later, resolutions were adopted regarding racially mixed marriages and interracial worship. The final decision on the subject of race was to instruct the Interim Committee to appoint a commission that would "interpret the insights and experiences of the worldwide Reformed community" to the South African RES members, and the "attitudes and actions of the South African churches" to the worldwide Reformed community. The Interim Committee has now been constituted as that commission in order to conserve funds, and it plans to meet in South Africa and attend the regional conference on race in April. Following the Synod, the Interim Committee had a meeting with South African Prime Minister J. B. Vorster to explain and discuss with him the concerns of the Synod in the race matter, and to pray with him.

Before leaving the subject of race we must report a significant interlude in the discussions that added an important dimension. At a certain point delegates from other nations rose to acknowledge racial discrimination in their countries—some to the surprise of other delegates—and that the finger of blame was not to be pointed at South Africa alone. Some were in tears as they spoke. It was an emotional moment. Earlier, a black African had told this writer that "apartheid" in Africa is not confined to South Africa, but is practiced by blacks in many parts of Africa against both whites and other blacks. The two-directional action indicated in the previous paragraph was clearly appropriate and, with more time, probably could have been made more so.

Because of the length of this report, even though it hardly scratched the surface of a momentous Synod, we have said nothing of the physical circumstances of the meetings. But a few words must be said. They were for two weeks and were preceded by a Missions Conference of one week. Cape Town is a modern skyscraper city and provided almost any convenience one could desire, plus some spectacular scenery. The "almost" is used because August is mid-winter in Cape Town and

their mild winters (40°-65° F.) have wooed them into making little provision for the warmth in their buildings to which Central Africans and North Americans are accustomed. But the personal warmth and hospitality of the South Africans has lasted in all our minds while the memory of cold feet and warm sweaters has dimmed.

We can only say that we are grateful to God that he has brought our church into such a genuine Reformed Christian fellowship and that we must pray that it may become more and more an edifice beautiful in God's eyes and useful in his hands.

Wycliffe still in Peru

The Wycliffe Bible Translators had been told by the government of Peru that they must give up their linguistic program among the Indians of that country. But protests from many Peruvian sources, including leading journalists, persuaded the government to reconsider its decision. After a lengthy investigation, the government has now declared "the work of the Institute (of Linguistics) necessary to complete the program of integrating the indigenous community into the mainstream of Peruvian culture." Wycliffe's standard procedure is to reduce native languages to a written form, translate the Bible or portions of it into that written form, and so introduce these formerly illiterate peoples to the written Word of God into their languages. The Wycliffe people are tolerated by otherwise anti-missionary governments because of the basic linguistic work being done.

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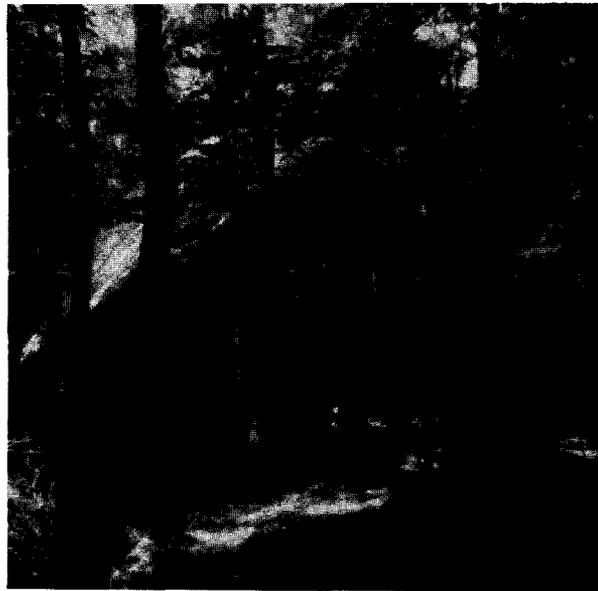
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Camping

at

Lake George

A few years ago the *Guardian* printed an item about the Lake George Family Camping Association, located on Lake George near Skowhegan, Maine. We would like to inform *Guardian* readers further about our association.

Lake George offers the best "get away from it all," "get back to nature" vacation in the northeastern United States (we think!). No telephone, television, traffic, or mailman to bother you. Instead, there's good fishing, great swimming, wonderful peace and quiet waiting there. We have running water in a shower and sink, and the drinking water from the spring is absolutely delicious.

Travel to and from the Association's property is done by boat. We own a fourteen-foot aluminum boat with a motor (new last year), although we also have a Jeep that can negotiate a four-mile road through the woods from the main highway.

Membership in the association takes two forms. Full membership entitles you to the rights of a lot (150' by 140'), for which the dues are \$25.00 per year. Associate membership gives you tenting rights on Association property for \$10.00 per year. Our family has already erected a cabin on their lot (see the picture).

The season at Lake George runs for six weeks, starting the end of July and ending on Labor Day. We invite families, who would like to come to Lake George to tent this coming summer and find out for themselves what it offers, to contact our secretary: Rev. Charles E. Stanton, R. D. 1, Fort Fairfield, ME 04742. Or you may write the president: Rev. Thomas E. Tyson, 151 W. County Line Road, Hatboro, PA 19040.

This report was furnished by Mrs. T. E. (Jean) Tyson.

Color and music and love

Elder Jack Julien claimed it all began when several members of Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Sonora, California, proposed that they present a joint cantata with an ad hoc choir of volunteers from that congregation and from Grace O. P. Church in Modesto.

On alternate Monday evenings the group from one church would drive the hour's jaunt to the other church and do some serious work under the talented direction of Mr. Julien. We discovered that our choir was evenly divided between the two congregations. Even though the long trip (and longer rehearsals) made it a full evening, a loyalty to persevere in the project was clearly evident.

We prayed together, sang together, joked and drank coffee together. You know what happens when Christian people get to know one another. They discover that they love one another. That is what was happening among these musically apt volunteers. Two rather isolated congregations—mountain folk and flatlanders—finally began to develop

Nonhof retires

After thirty-seven years in the ministry, the Rev. Melvin B. Nonhof retired on December 26, 1976. During his ministry, he has served four congregations in South Dakota and two in California.

A retirement dinner was held on January 14 at the Grange Hall in Soquel, Calif. Mr. Nonhof has been pastor of the Westminster Orthodox Presbyterian Church in San Jose for the past several years, and leaves several of his children as active members and officers in the congregation.

a true unity of the body of Christ.

After dangerously few weeks of rehearsal, John W. Peterson's cantata, "Love Transcending," was presented in Sonora on December 19 and in Modesto on the 26th. It was not perfect, but it was our best for the glory of God.

Pastor Roger Wagner pointed worshippers to Jesus, whose transcending love we celebrated that evening in Sonora. Pastor Rollin Keller spoke of that love during the Modesto program. Christians expressed a warm appreciation and non-Christians heard the word.

But an added blessing came out of this, too. Not only were we all refreshed to sing of Jesus' love transcending the gulf between a holy heaven and a fallen world, but we were refreshed to find that love of Jesus at work in us. It only transcended the valley and foothills this time; but we had to begin somewhere.

This report was furnished by the Rev. Rollin P. Keller, pastor of the congregation in Modesto. The accompanying picture was in color—mostly red; sorry we could not reproduce it in all its harmony.



The Presbyterian Guardian

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News and Views

Conference on "Gifts"

On Sunday, February 20, a special conference on "The Holy Spirit and the Gifts" was held at the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Santee, California. Speakers included the Rev. Richard M. Lewis, pastor of Covenant O. P. Church in Berkeley and Dr. William E. Welmers, professor at the University of California in Los Angeles. Local radio station KECR is planning to record the addresses (and recently broadcast the lectures from last year's conference on prophecy). Members from the Point Loma (San Diego) and Bayview Church in Chula Vista helped supply special music.

Reformed Youth Movement Conferences

The 1977 conferences of the Reformed Youth Movement will be held at the Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly grounds in Talladega, Ala., on June 13-18. Featured speakers will be Evangelist John Riesinger and the Rev. Cecil Williamson. Classes on "Walking with God" and "Prelude to Partnership" will be held. For information brochures write to: Rev. Charles Young, P. O. Box 517, York, AL 36925.

Changes at Reformed Seminary

Dr. Morton H. Smith, professor of systematic theology and the first full-time faculty member of Reformed Theological Seminary, is resigning in order to take up full-time duties as the stated clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian

Church in America. (Dr. Smith has served part-time in this capacity since the church's founding.)

Succeeding Dr. Smith as chairman of the department of systematic theology will be Dr. John R. de Witt, who joined the seminary faculty in 1975. He holds the Doctor of Theology degree from the Reformed Theological Faculty of Kampen, the Netherlands, and is a minister in the Presbyterian Church, U.S.

Allen vs. Pittenger

Perhaps the most crucial school law test yet made by supporters of Christian schools is the suit against Pennsylvania school officials by individual taxpayers in Beaver County, Pennsylvania. The suit seeks tax relief for Christian parents who pay tuition for their children's Christian schooling. The basis of the plea is that the public schools are an establishment of (humanistic) religion, thus violating the consciences of those who are compelled to pay taxes to support it. A crucial hearing of the suit is scheduled for February 18 in the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia. (We will provide a longer report on developments in a future issue of the *Guardian*.)

Calvin sponsors conference on Christianity and politics

The Political Science Department of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is sponsoring a Conference on Christianity and Politics on April 29, 30, 1977. This is the fourth such conference with the general objective of relating the Christian gospel to the political arena.

Theme of the 1977 conference will be "Evangelical Views on Political Justice." Papers will be presented by: Dr. Frederick Bonkovsky of Emory University (on social justice); Rev. Richard J. Neuhaus, New York City Lutheran pastor (on international justice); Dr. John Tiemstra of Calvin College (on the affluent society); Dr. Paul B. Henry of Calvin College (on "Love, Power, and Justice"); Dr. Perry Cotham of David Lipscomb College (on

"Morality and Moralism in Politics").

A panel on criminal justice will be included with attorneys and representatives of penal institutions taking part. Those interested in further information may write to: Dr. James M. Penning, Department of Political Science, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

NUCS Directory available

The annual Christian School Directory published by the National Union of Christian Schools is available to interested persons. It includes information about the member schools of the NUCS, its annual meeting, various service functions, as well as listing all the teaching personnel of member schools. Copies (at \$3.50) may be secured from: NUCS, 865 Twenty-eighth St., S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49508.

Dr. Philip Elve, superintendent of the Grand Rapids Christian schools, has been named Administrator for the NUCS effective August 1, 1977. Elve succeeds Ivan Zylstra who was recently incapacitated by a stroke. Dr. Elve's responsibilities are in the area of school and government relations.

Atlanta School of Biblical Studies

The Atlanta School of Biblical Studies continues to grow and serve, looking for even larger enrollments in the current semester term. Mainly designed for those who desire greater depth and background for Bible study and teaching, the courses are acknowledged for credit by Westminster Seminary. Faculty members include: Tom Champness, Ben Wilkinson, David Clowney, Bill Hoagland, Norman McCall, Ed Cunningham, David Wilcox, John Knight, Mike Woodam, Bill Weimer, and Bob Wilcox (who teaches a course in basic auto mechanics!). A special seminar with Francis Schaeffer is also scheduled during the current session. Extension work is available in Charlotte, N. C., and Springfield, Ill. Interested persons may write: ASBS, P. O. Box 1890, Decatur, GA 30031.