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What Is True Presbyterianism?

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While etymologically the term "Presbyterian" applies to government rather than doctrine, Presbyterian churches throughout the world have been known for their stand for the Calvinistic doctrines. Presbyterianism properly includes acceptance of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, or of a similar creed. The distinctive doctrines of the Reformed Faith have been a source of great encouragement and blessing to Presbyterians, and they have rejoiced in spreading understanding of these vital teachings of the Word of God.

The central stand, however, of Presbyterians, like that of Calvin himself, has been for the emphasis on the great central doctrines of the faith, and for co-operation and fellowship with true Christians who might differ on points of doctrine which were not essential to Christianity. This has been demonstrated over and over in the history of the church. In this country Presbyterians have taken the lead in revival after revival, often joining together with men of many other denominations for the promotion of such work. They have always been prominent in the support of interdenominational Bible conferences and Christian schools.

The term "Presbyterianism" refers more specifically to the matter of government, and we shall examine this at some length. The word literally means "rule by elders." The great stress of Calvin and Knox, and of Presbyterian groups in general, has been against the system of government known as prelacy, wherein the power in the church comes down from above, with some central authority or official telling underofficials what to do. Presbyterians have always insisted that the power in the church belongs to the people.

Prelacy is that system in which a group of clergy dictate the policies and activities of the church. Strict independency means that every man is a law unto himself.

True Presbyterianism stands midway between the two. To strict independency it answers that no man lives to himself alone, that God has established His church as an organism in which the unity of the Spirit should be observed, and that each should profit by the greater

spiritual insight of others. To prelacy it answers by laying emphasis upon the fundamental Protestant doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers, and insisting that each Christian is directly responsible to God for the way in which

On the last day of the 18th General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church, meeting in St. Louis, Mo., there was formed, independent of the Synod, a Committee for True Presbyterianism, by a number of brethren who were seriously concerned by the events of the Synod and the change which had taken place in the Bible Presbyterian Church.

These men included the following: California—R. V. Dickerson, L. G. Gordon, J. E. Janbaz, C. L. Kennedy, J. W. Ludlow, C. M. Worley; Kentucky—F. B. Toms; Maryland—A. G. Slaght; Michigan—C. W. Brogan; Missouri—E. E. Ganz, R. I. Hatch; New Jersey—P. du B. Arcularius, R. E. Baker, C. A. Bancroft, B. J. Bashaw, R. L. Boertzel, J. F. Misicka, A. W. Oldham, E. A. Peters, C. E. Richter, R. S. Wigfield; New Mexico—W. M. Irving, Jr.; North Dakota—E. E. Matteson; Ohio—A. F. Faucette; Pennsylvania—W. H. Clinton, J. G. Holdcroft, A. A. MacRae, J. M. Norris; Tennessee—J. U. S. Toms; Washington—A. B. Hunter.

The purpose of this Committee is to bring information to the members of the Bible Presbyterian Church.

A subcommittee was appointed composed of Allan A. MacRae, Carl McIntire, Albert W. Oldham, Adam B. Hunter, and Arthur G. Slaght.

This publication is issued in pursuance of plans to bring information to the church. The first public rally under the auspices of this Committee has been announced for June 30, 1955 in the Chapel of Faith Theological Seminary, Elkins Park, Pa.

Articles appearing bear the signature of their authors. Dr. Allan A. MacRae has prepared a series of six articles which are published in this issue.

All communications may be addressed to the secretary-treasurer of the Committee, the Rev. Arthur G. Slaght, 1630 S. Hanover St., Baltimore 30, Md.

he serves his Lord. It establishes local churches for the carrying forward of the work of the Gospel in each community, using such methods of work and following such details of worship as commend themselves to the local situation, subject always to the commands of the Scripture. It establishes presbyteries and synods as parts of a system of graded courts, set up in order to safeguard the ministry from the entrance of unbelieving or unworthy candidates, to protect the pulpits from false doctrine, and to give the ministers and elders an opportunity for mutual fellowship and discussion of spiritual matters. Its local churches are ruled by elders in order to guard against the two extremes. Power is in the hands of the group of elders, not simply of the minister, in order to guard against the rise of prelacy, and to keep the power in the hands of the people.

True Presbyterianism never means that a group of ministers and elders takes the place of a king or of an archbishop, and lays down directives for the entire church. Such a procedure was never contemplated by the originators of Presbyterian Forms of Government. Details of methods of carrying on the work of local churches have been carefully left in local hands. The Presbyterian churches have always until recently disclaimed any power of taxation or any right to dictate to the local churches where they shall send their benevolence money, or how much they shall give. Even money for the payment of the necessary expenses of the judicatories themselves has always been raised by voluntary contributions, given by those who desire to contribute, not assessed by a higher body and then paid as a matter of duty.

Presbyteries and synods have uniformly been designated as "courts" or "judicatories," never as legislative assemblies or administrative bodies. Such legislative or administrative powers as they have assumed have historically been restricted to matters dealing with the safeguarding of the ministry from the entrance or continuance of unworthy or unbelieving members.

A glance at the first chapter of the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., adopted by that

body in 1788, shows that this is a correct view of historic Presbyterianism. This chapter states that the church unanimously accepts eight principles. These eight principles, plus one additional one, have been repeated verbatim in the first chapter of the Form of Government of the Bible Presbyterian Church, except for a few very minor changes of wording or of punctuation.

The first of these principles begins with a quotation from Chapter XX of the Confession of Faith. Omitting the final section, which deals only with relations to the civil power, this principle reads as follows:

1. That "God alone is Lord of the conscience"; and "hath left it free from the doctrine and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship": Therefore we consider the rights of private judgment, in all matters that respect religion, as universal and unalienable.

For over 150 years this statement has declared that in religious matters no one has any right to make laws which are additional to what is stated in the Word of God. The principle is made even stronger in the seventh of these principles:

7. That all church power, whether exercised by the body in general, or in the way of representation by delegated authority, is only ministerial and declarative; *that is to say*, that the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners; that no church court ought to pretend to make laws, to bind the conscience in virtue of its own authority; and that all its decisions should be founded upon the revealed will of God. Now, though it will easily be admitted that all synods and councils may err, through the frailty inseparable from humanity; yet there is much greater danger from the usurped claim of making laws, than from the right of judging upon laws already made, and common to all who profess the Gospel; although this right, as necessity requires in the present state, be lodged with fallible men.

It is to be noticed that this speaks of any claim of making laws beyond what is already taught in the Word of God as a usurped claim, and limits the work of synods and councils to judging cases on the basis of laws already found in God's Word and "common to all who profess the gospel." In other words, it makes it clear that the power of synods and councils over the members is a judicial power, not a legislative or an administrative one, and that legislative or administrative actions can properly be exercised by these bodies only for the purpose of safeguarding the preaching from the entrance of unbelief. Hence the assemblies never claimed any power to legislate on the

matter of the details of worship of the local congregation, nor to levy any taxes, nor to declare authoritatively what should be done with the benevolence money of the congregations.

The Bible Presbyterian Church adds another principle to the eight contained in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. This ninth principle reads:

9. All powers not in this Constitution specifically granted to the courts of the Church are reserved to the congregations respectively, or to the people.

It is clear from these principles that true Presbyterianism does not think of the general assembly as a body so representing all the people of the church that all can govern all, and make laws in whatever way may seem advisable. It is nothing of the kind. It is a body which represents the Lord Jesus Christ, and applies that which is clearly taught in His Word. Its function is restricted to the protecting of the purity of the preaching of the church, and the solving of cases of difficulty or disagreement in lower bodies.

This viewpoint of the Presbyterian church has been established in it from the beginning, and has always been maintained, at least in statement. During the past 150 years, however, something new has developed which tends to circumvent this by a side road, and to result in the general assembly actually making laws and performing administration for the great body of the church, directing to whom they shall give their money, and how that money shall be spent, in ways of which the early Presbyterians never dreamed.

This has come about through the establishment of assembly-controlled boards and agencies. Such boards and agencies were never contemplated in the original constitution of the Presbyterian church, and there was until recently no constitutional provision for their existence. The only place in the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. which would seem to give the slightest warrant for the establishment of assembly-run boards and agencies was one brief statement in Chapter 12, "Of the General Assembly," which declares that the assembly has the power "of superintending the concerns of the whole church." This statement was made in the midst of a list of various details to which the assembly might attend, and very clearly was not intended by the founders to cover fully half of the activity of the assembly. Undoubtedly it originally referred to a general oversight over the activity of the different presbyteries and synods to be sure that they did not contravene the law of the church. Yet it is noticeable that in at least some editions of the *Presbyterian Digest* every-

thing relating to boards and agencies has been placed under this brief provision of the Form of Government. There is no explicit reference to boards and agencies in the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., nor any other statement from which such a right could even approximately be inferred.

True Presbyterianism involves the principle that individual members or ministers of the church may associate themselves together for the carrying on of a particular type of Christian activity, and that the only surveillance which Presbyterian bodies shall give to these associations is to determine whether they are tainted with modernism or unbelief, or whether the doctrine which they are advancing is in line with the standards of the church. A little before 1800, Christians in the United States and in other countries began to form organizations for the carrying on of foreign and home missions, and for the development of schools. Some ecclesiastics began to say that actually this work should be done by the church in its organized capacity, rather than by individual members. Thus there developed a new theory as to the purpose of the courts of the church.

This development of assembly-controlled boards and agencies began very gradually, and increased so slowly and so subtly that people did not realize its import, until finally the work of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. was twisted and changed and to a large extent negated by the great development of these extra-constitutional boards and agencies. As a result it ceased to be a true Presbyterian church, and became almost a prelatical church. This movement resulted in the frustrating struggles of many western presbyteries against its Board of National Missions, which constantly interfered with their rights and their liberties. It showed itself in the struggles of the Korean Mission to maintain the Biblical plan of indigenous work against constant hindrance by its Board of Foreign Missions. It reached its climax in the Mandate of 1934, which declared that it was just as much a duty of a Presbyterian to support the official boards and agencies as to attend the Communion service. To such an extreme had the original Presbyterian idea been twisted!

It was not only on account of the development of false doctrine that it became necessary for us to leave the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. The fact that false doctrine was enabled to spread through the church and to get its stranglehold upon it was in considerable measure the result of the development of these extra-constitutional and un-Presbyterian, assembly-run boards and agencies. Think of the number of ministers who did not dare to speak their convictions, because of fear! How many

IS THERE A SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR SYNOD-RUN BOARDS AND AGENCIES?

The principal Biblical warrant for our system of graded courts is found in the description in Acts 15 of the first church council. Let us examine this passage, and see whether the council met in order to protect the church from the entrance of false doctrine by deciding a controversy which had arisen, or whether it was its purpose to exert a controlling power over the church by determining how its members should extend the work of the Lord.

Acts 15:1, 2 tells us that the council was called to settle a dispute that had arisen at Antioch and elsewhere (vv. 1, 2). Paul's converts were being told that in order to be saved they must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. The church at Antioch decided to submit this problem to a meeting of apostles and elders to be held in Jerusalem (vv. 2, 3). After careful consideration, this court judged on the basis of the Scripture (vv. 13 ff.) that Paul's adversaries were wrong in saying that it was necessary for the new converts to be circumcised, and to keep the whole law of Moses. It decided that it would be sufficient for them merely to abstain from those particular things which would be sure to cause scandal and dissension between them and the Jewish believers.

Thus the decision of the council at Jerusalem was a judicial decision on a matter of doctrine, not an administrative decision as to how the work should be directed. It is good warrant for the Presbyterian system of graded courts, established to fulfill their proper function. It is no warrant for the setting up of synod-run boards and agencies.

We shall look at this council again in a few minutes, but first we must examine the Scriptural account of the beginning of the missionary work of the Christian church, and see whether it was carried out by a system which could be compared to a synod-run agency, or whether the Spirit of God caused that a different method should be used.

The Great Commission was given to the church. This is clear in the Gospel accounts, and also in the Book of Acts, which states that the risen Lord told His disciples: "Ye shall be witnesses unto

me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

How did God desire that this command, which He gave to the church, should be carried out? If it were His will that the Commission should be carried out by the church in an organized capacity, administering the missionary work by a system of graded courts acting as legislative and administrative bodies, rather than simply as judicatories, he surely would have caused that that should be the method which was used in the Book of Acts. We find, however, that the first missionary work in the Book of Acts did not come about as a result of a decision by a synod or other church body that it was time to begin a mission. It began in quite a different manner.

The first extension of the Gospel outside of Jerusalem which is described in the Book of Acts came about as the result of a persecution. Acts 8:1 and 4 tell us that the apostles stayed in Jerusalem, but that the rest of the disciples were scattered abroad by the persecution, and "went every where preaching the word." The Holy Spirit worked in a wonderful way through Philip, one of those who were thus scattered abroad, as he preached in the city of Samaria (vv. 5 ff.). When news about this successful mission reached Jerusalem, the apostles sent Peter and John to see how the work was going, to make sure that the doctrinal basis was sound, and to give their approval to the results of this missionary endeavor which they had not themselves initiated (v. 14). Thus the higher judicatory of the church acted as a court to receive the new churches and to protect them from the entrance of unsound doctrine, rather than as an administrative instrument to direct the missionary work.

We find the same principle in the beginning of the first important Gentile church. Acts 11:19 tells us that some men who were scattered abroad by the persecution came to Antioch and preached there, and that those who believed included not only Jews, but also Grecians. This also was not the result of a determination by a church court to set up an agency for spreading the Gospel among the Gentiles. It came about through the work of individuals interested in the extension of the knowledge of Christ and led by the Spirit of God. When news of this development reached the church in Jerusalem, Barnabas was sent to look into the work that had already been started.

Soon after Barnabas came to Antioch, he went over to Tarsus to look for his old friend, Saul (Acts 11:25). There is no reason to think that this was a

command of the church. It seems quite evidently to have been Barnabas' own idea, thinking of Saul as one who could be a useful helper in the work.

The disciples in the new church in Antioch sent Barnabas and Saul to carry relief to the church in Jerusalem, which was evidently in financial difficulty (11:29, 30). In 12:25 we read that Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry. Next we find that the Holy Spirit spoke to the local church at Antioch ordering it to separate Barnabas and Saul "for the work whereunto I have called them." It is quite obvious in the passage that this beginning of the missionary labors of the Apostle Paul was not the result of a determination by the higher court, meeting at Jerusalem, when he went there to carry help from the people at Antioch. It was evidently the result of a direct command given by the Holy Spirit, simply telling the local church to separate Barnabas and Paul for this specific work.

We read that the people fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them and sent them away (13:3). There is no statement that the Antioch church told them where they should go, or laid out plans and directions for them. They were sent to do the work to which the Holy Spirit had called them. After Paul and Barnabas returned from their missionary journey, they came back to the church in Antioch, and gave a report of the way that God had blessed the work.

When it came time for the second missionary journey, we read in Acts 15:36 that Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do." The initiative very clearly came from Paul here, and not from a synod, or even from a local church.

Acts 15:37 says that Barnabas determined to take John Mark with them. Paul did not approve of this, and the contention became very sharp between them. The difference was purely a matter of personality and of administrative detail. It did not involve any doctrinal disagreement or any question of the entrance of unbelief into the church. There is no evidence that either Paul or Barnabas felt that a question of this kind should be submitted to the synod or to the local church for decision. On this administrative matter, each of them proceeded to do what he thought wise. We read that "they departed asunder one from the other" (15:39-41). Barnabas took Mark and Paul chose Silas. It is evident that we have here the beginning of two independent missionary agencies, Paul going in one direction and Barnabas in another, striving in friendly rivalry

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were held back through danger of loss of a pension!

Refusal to obey the dictates of an ecclesiastical body — determination to obey God rather than men — this was what made necessary our exodus from a church that had forsaken its Presbyterian heritage. It is vital that our new church maintain the principles of true Presbyterianism.

The Crucial Importance of the Eighteenth General Synod

The actions taken at the Synod which met recently in St. Louis mark an overwhelming change in the Bible Presbyterian Church. In order to show just how this is, it would be well to survey briefly the past history of the denomination in its relation to the question of boards and agencies.

The immediate occasion which led to the founding of the Bible Presbyterian Church was the various attacks which were made against the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. declared it to be wrong for any member of that church to support such an independent agency, even saying that a man was just as much a sinner if he refused to support the established boards and agencies as if he willfully absented himself from the communion table. The resulting judicial actions led to our withdrawal from that church, and to the founding of the Presbyterian Church of America in 1936. In 1937, when it became necessary for the founders of the Bible Presbyterian Church to leave the Presbyterian Church of America (which name was later changed

to Orthodox Presbyterian Church), one of the principal causes of the division was the repudiation by that church of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, and the establishment in its place of an ecclesiastical committee under the direction of the church. Those members of the assembly who dissented from this action, and also from certain other actions of that church, withdrew and formed the Bible Presbyterian Church.

At the time of this withdrawal a statement of intention to form a Bible Presbyterian Synod was issued by a group of presbyters. Between the issuance of this statement and the meeting of the First General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church, Faith Theological Seminary was established. When the First General Synod met, it had two agencies in which it was vitally interested, an independent mission board and an independent theological seminary.

The Bible Presbyterian Church adopted a form of government which included the following statement in Chapter X, Section 6: "The General Synod may, at its own discretion, set up committees to

act as its agents in conducting benevolent, missionary and educational enterprises, or it may commend to the churches, for their support, other such Christian enterprises." Thus the Form of Government left open the possibility of proceeding in either of these two methods, by the insertion of this provision which had not been contained in the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. It recommended to the churches the support of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions and of Faith Seminary, and itself established a Committee on National Missions with instructions to proceed to do what it could to enlarge and extend the church.

Between 1938 and 1955 a number of other voluntary agencies were established by members of the Bible Presbyterian Church. The church looked into these agencies to be sure that their doctrine was sound, but made no attempt to exert any control over their administration or type of organization. These were added to the list of voluntary agencies which were commended to the church for sup-

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to carry on the work of the Lord, agreeing in their doctrine, but each of them using the administrative methods which he thought wise. There is here no trace of any administrative direction of the missionary work by a synod or other church court, either acting directly or through a synod-controlled agency.

It was between the first and second missionary journeys that the Council in Jerusalem took place. As we have already noticed, this Council met to consider a problem, and gave its decision, ministerially interpreting the statements of the Word of God, not setting down legislation for a new procedure, or acting as an administrative body.

Sometimes this interpretation is questioned and it is said that the Council made laws for the new converts, even giving orders as to what they should eat. Support for this view seems at first sight to be provided by Acts 16:4, which says of Paul and Silas: "As they went through the churches, they delivered the decrees for to keep that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem." A little examination, however, will show that this verse does not mean that the Council laid down a new law, but rather that it decided, on the basis of the Word of God, that it was not necessary for the new converts to keep the entire law of Moses, but only to follow it in those few matters which

might easily give serious offense to the conscience of Jewish believers.

Clear evidence that this is the correct interpretation is found in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 where the question of eating meat offered to idols is discussed. If Paul considered that the Jerusalem Council had laid down laws for the entire church, and given binding directions as to the conduct of the missionary work, he would be very negligent if he failed in this passage to remind these believers that he had delivered this decree to them, and that consequently they should abstain from meat offered to idols, as a simple matter of subjection to the church. This he did not do. He made no reference to the Jerusalem Council, but instead took a very different position, even going so far as to maintain that a man has liberty to eat meat offered to idols, or to refrain. He declared that, since the idol is nothing, there is no actual harm in eating the meat that has been offered, and there is no need that a person should inquire when food is set before him whether it has been offered to an idol or not (1 Cor. 10:25-27). Instead, he recommended a principle of expediency, saying that if the question should be raised by someone else, it would then be expedient to abstain from eating, rather than run the risk of using one's liberty in such a way as to hurt the conscience of a weaker brother (1 Cor. 10:28, 29). The whole import of Paul's discussion in these two chapters is quite contrary to any view that would think of the Jerusalem Council as having laid down laws

for the conduct of the missionary endeavor.

There is absolutely no Scriptural teaching that could properly be taken as a command for the establishment of synod-controlled boards and agencies, or as indicating that church councils should wield administrative power over the educational and missionary activities of the church. All that we find in Acts and in the Epistles fits with the idea that the purpose of the church courts is to protect the church against the entrance of false doctrine, and that the missionary and educational work of the church is best conducted by individuals or groups of individuals, upon whose heart God lays the burden of carrying out some particular aspect of the work.

With the greatly increased size of Christian bodies today, it is normal to have boards and agencies of considerable size carrying on activities which in the first century might be handled by one or two individuals. It is reasonable, however, to expect that the control and administration of such agencies should be handled in accordance with the same principles, in line with Scriptural precept or example, rather than in a more authoritarian manner.

The Bible gives abundant warrant for true Presbyterianism with its system of graded courts to carry on the functions which properly belong to them. It gives no warrant for a prelatial, or semi-prelatial type of Presbyterianism, such as slowly developed in many Presbyterian bodies during the past century and a half.

port. They included such organizations as Children for Christ in the sphere of Christian education, and Shelton College and Highland College in the sphere of higher education.

One of the great forces in the establishment and enlargement of the Bible Presbyterian Church was the publicity given in the pages of the *Christian Beacon*. From time to time the Synod endorsed this paper as an organ for dissemination of news of interest to Bible Presbyterians. At one Synod the question was raised whether the *Beacon* gave sufficient Bible Presbyterian news, or whether another paper was needed for this purpose. A committee examined the pages of the *Beacon* for the preceding year, and was surprised to find how great was the amount of Bible Presbyterian news that had been disseminated in this publication. Dr. McIntire stated that he would be glad to print still more Bible Presbyterian news in the *Beacon*, if it were sent to him.

Other voluntary publications from time to time received the approval of the Synod. Three homes for the aged were established by Bible Presbyterians or by people of related viewpoint, and received the approval of the Synod. Thus, in most fields the outreach of the church was conducted through voluntary agencies, which the Synod simply watched for general soundness of doctrine, while making no attempt to interfere in matters of administration. Only in one area, National Missions, was the external work carried on through an agent established by the Synod.

At the Synod of 1954 there was a move in the direction of reversing this trend. The committee on Christian Education, which had from time to time been occupied in surveying this field and in encouraging the efforts of the local presbyteries to improve the work of the Sunday schools and other agencies for Christian education, was given authority to hire a full-time secretary. This permission was implemented shortly before the meeting of the 1955 Synod. However, only a small step was taken by the 1954 Synod in the direction of forming another powerful agency to stand alongside of National Missions, and even this was subject to review at the 1955 Synod.

The 1955 Synod took three far-reaching steps in the direction of changing the type of activities of the members of the church to that of synod-controlled agencies.

The first of these was the establishment of a new and greatly enlarged committee on Christian Education to cover a large area of the church's work, and to employ a full-time general secretary. This was a major step in the direc-

tion of the type of boards and agencies which were so prominent a factor in the life of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. in the years immediately preceding our departure from that body.

A second far-reaching step in this direction was taken by an action to establish an official magazine, which, it was said, would be "the voice of the church." When one listens to the debates in a synod meeting, and sees the great variety of opinion which is expressed on many different matters, it becomes easily apparent how difficult it is to think of one organ as being "the voice of the church." The attitude of the church has always been that individuals and groups were free to issue magazines or pronouncements of their opinion, but that these represented simply the viewpoint of individuals, and not the voice of the church as a whole. Only within the last quarter century did the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. go so far as to establish an official organ which was supposed to be the voice of the church.

It is true that the final action stated that the magazine was to confine itself to *devotional* and *expository* material. However, in view of the discussion on the part of those who favored the magazine, it would be strange indeed if it did not soon become an organ for the expression of strong opinion on many matters on which it would be impossible to determine what is the voice of the church, unless all the members of the church were first to be given opportunity to spend large amounts of time discussing and investigating these matters, and deciding exactly what their opinion should be. Such a magazine inevitably becomes not the voice of the church, but a voice attempting to direct the church in whatever direction is desired by its editor, or its governing group.

The third vital step in this direction was the action which was presented on the last day of the Synod, and adopted, that a committee should be set up with authorization to establish a college under the sponsorship of the Synod. It was included in this resolution that the committee should present its plan to the presbyteries, and that final action should not be taken until approved by two-thirds of the presbyteries. A vigorous but unsuccessful effort was made to persuade the Synod to remove this provision.

Thus the actions of the Synod embarked the Bible Presbyterian Church in a new direction, and increased by 300 per cent the spheres of activity to be conducted by synod-controlled agencies.

It should be noticed in addition that this introduced for the first time a situation in which independent agencies and synod-sponsored agencies would be working in the same field. This always leads to confusion. Two voluntary agencies

can engage in friendly competition to see which shall accomplish the most for the service of Christ. Competition between a synod-controlled agency and an independent agency is quite a different matter. As in all areas of human endeavor, the advantage is with an agency in which human initiative and freedom of enterprise is able to work unhampered by the necessity of waiting at every point for decision by a large body of people, most of whom have no familiarity with the problems and difficulties of the particular field. This naturally leads the workers in the synod-controlled agency to seek to swing the balance in their favor by asserting that their agency is entitled to the support of all loyal churchmen, since it is an official agency. Thus arguments of loyalty can easily become a mask for inefficiency and lack of enterprise. Monopoly is encouraged, and the work of the Lord suffers. It is precisely like the situation in the secular sphere where a government-run business can pass its deficit on to the taxpayers, while the private enterprise must prove efficient, or disappear before a more effective competitor.

Previous to these crucial actions of the Synod, the work of Bible Presbyterians has been under a synod-controlled board in the one area of National Missions, but in all other areas members of the church have been free to serve the Lord as they thought wise without any competition from organizations which could claim to represent the whole Synod. There was no monopoly in any field, except in National Missions, previous to this Synod; in every other field, there were one or more voluntary groups, each working as it thought wise, to extend its activities in the particular direction. Now, however, this has all been changed, for synod-controlled agencies have been introduced into three fields in which there were already voluntary agencies which had been approved by the Synod.

It may well be asked, How many of the members of the Eighteenth General Synod realized the crucial nature of the steps which were taken? A course has been begun which, if continued, must inevitably mean a complete change in the nature of our church. It is for that reason that it becomes necessary to warn our people of the importance of the change. There is still time to stop, and back up. If this is not done, the church would seem to be headed toward the development of the type of situation which wrought so much havoc in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.

All the articles in this issue of *The Free Press* were written by the Rev. Allan A. MacRae, Ph.D. Dr. MacRae is president of the Faculty of Faith Theological Seminary, Elkins Park, Philadelphia 17, Pa., and one of the founders of the Bible Presbyterian Church.

The Establishment of Additional Synod-controlled Agencies Is a Big Step In the Direction of Prelacy, and Away From True Presbyterianism

All through its history, Presbyterianism has been strongly opposed to prelacy. Prelacy is the system in which the authority rests in a special clerical group instead of in the people. Presbyterian leaders and teachers have proclaimed consistently through the ages that in a Presbyterian system the power is vested in the people.

In prelacy the power comes down from the top. In Presbyterianism the power is in the people.

In prelacy a group of clergy rule. In true Presbyterianism each man is responsible to God for his actions, while a system of graded courts guards the entrance to the ministry and seeks to protect the church from the entrance of apostasy and unbelief.

Presbyterianism has always disclaimed the right of synods to exercise compulsion upon the individual members of the church, or to make any laws in addition to what the Bible clearly teaches. To say that Presbyterianism requires synod-controlled boards and agencies is the same as to say that democracy requires socialism. The purpose of government in the secular sphere is primarily to protect its citizens so that they may carry on their particular affairs without being injured by violence or crime. It is to make such rules as are necessary to give freedom to each one to go forward and do what he desires. It is not to direct the activities of the citizens, or to force them in any particular direction. That is communism, socialism, dictatorship, or monarchy, but it is not democracy. The same is true of the synod. Cluttering the synod's activity with synod-run boards and agencies destroys its ability to fulfill its true function, leads to monopoly, and injures true Presbyterianism.

The argument is sometimes given that the synod has a right to lay down laws for the whole church, because it represents the whole church. If this were a correct view of the power of the synod, the synod would have to be constituted very differently from what it is. Its make-up is entirely suitable for the purpose for which it is intended, but quite unsuitable for a body which could claim so to represent the people as to gather up all their power within itself, and therefore to be qualified to make laws which all must obey.

1. We note the great preponderance of ministers in the synod. At the meeting in St. Louis there were 101 ministers enrolled, but only 33 elders entitled to vote as representatives of churches. A command to the people from a body thus

constituted comes dangerously near to the prelatic idea of a body of clergy dictating to the church.

2. If the synod is a representative body fairly representing all the people of the church, it should not include men who do not represent anybody but themselves. If the synod is restricted to its proper function, in accordance with Presbyterian tradition, namely, that of watching to keep out false doctrine, there is no harm in having voting members at the synod who may not be in full-time Christian service, but who have been trained in the study of the Word of God and its defense, and therefore are able to help by intelligent judgment on Biblical matters. It is absurd that such people should have a right to vote on decisions affecting the manner of work of great numbers of others or should in any way consider themselves as truly representative of the people of the church.

3. In addition to those who are not actually engaged in full-time Christian service, there are other ministers in the synod who are not the representatives of any particular groups of people. They are not pastors, but teachers, evangelists, or other types of Christian workers. While there might be some question as to the right of people not actually in full-time Christian service to sit in synod at all, there is no such question in the case of these men, if the synod is confined to its true Presbyterian purpose. They are quite out of place, however, if it is to be thought of as a representative body with the right to rule over its entire constituency.

4. In a truly representative body it would seem proper that the number of representatives should be strictly in accordance with the number of people represented. In our synod a church of three hundred people is represented by one minister and one elder. A church of eighteen hundred people is represented by one minister and six elders. Thus the eighteen hundred people have seven representatives, and the three hundred people have two representatives. This is not an equal basis of representation.

5. Even more than this, a church in our synod which has only thirty members is entitled to as many representatives as a church of three hundred members. As a result, a church of thirty people has one representative for every fifteen members, while a church of eighteen hundred people, with a minister and six elders representing it, has only one representative for every two hundred and seventy-nine people. A body so consti-

tuted can hardly be considered as truly representative.

6. If it were proper that the synod should act as the representative of all the people with the right to dictate to the people, setting up agencies and institutions in their name, and directing them to contribute to them, justice would require that an information system be established so that all the people of the various churches would have an easy way of getting information about the various matters that might come before synod and therefore be in a position to express their minds to those who are to represent them. If the power of the synod is limited to the ministerial declaration of the meaning of the Scriptures, and to the oversight of measures to keep false doctrine from getting a foothold, such facilities for information are not strictly necessary. If the synod is to be thought of as having power to set up an organ which can speak as the voice of the church, or to establish a college or a synod-controlled agency in the name of the entire denomination, it is absolutely necessary that none of the people be left in ignorance as to the matters upon which their representatives might decide to act in their name.

In the last General Synod an attack was made on the American Council of Christian Churches on the claim that it was not truly representative. It was asserted that the representatives of the Bible Presbyterian Church in the American Council should exactly represent the ideas of the members of the synod.

Actually the American Council is an instrumentality which sets out to fight modernism, to demand from government the rights of evangelicals for representation in radio, chaplaincy, and elsewhere, and to endeavor to keep mission doors open. This is its purpose, and it is limited to this sphere of activity. A church which favors this purpose sends representatives to consider the best ways of doing these things. It would be impossible for the synod to study all the various details of the work that should be done by the American Council. If it were to attempt to do so, there ought to be long and full discussions before all the members of the synod of all the details involved, in order that they could make up their minds fairly upon them. But the American Council is not a body with power over its constituents. It is limited to specific purposes. If the synod is similarly limited to those purposes which are in line with true Presbyterianism, it is so constituted as to be able to fulfill its function; if it

Synod-controlled Agencies by Their Very Nature Tend to Inefficiency

Theoretically it sounds very reasonable to say that the whole church should run the concerns of the whole church. It sounds equally attractive at first sight, to say that all the people of a nation should run all the business of the nation. Yet those nations in which the citizens are permitted a maximum of free enterprise have invariably gone far ahead of those which have tried to set up a managed economy.

The reason for this is quite easy to see. If a government runs an organization, any deficit can be simply passed on to the taxpayers. The officials have to win votes or secure approval of government officers. It is popularity and ability to pull strings that is apt to determine important positions, rather than actual efficiency of operation. Inevitably it comes about that positions in the organization are filled on a basis of popularity or as a result of the ability to pull strings, rather than because of actual efficiency. Beautiful as they sound in theory, socialistic schemes rarely work out in practice.

Under a system of free enterprise, all this is changed. Individuals are free to go into a particular type of work up to the extent of their abilities and of their resources. If they succeed, they go forward. If they fail, others move in to take their place. It is accomplishment which determines, rather than success in convincing people or in making alibis. Although many individual enterprises fail, most of them accomplish far more than is accomplished by government agencies.

A mission board that is run by a small group of people who are intensely inter-

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is to be considered as a master over the church, wielding the power of the church, then its whole character as a representative body should first be completely overhauled.

There are ministers in the synod whose people know very little about the matters that are discussed in the synod, and have no idea of these issues. We believe that the synod should perform its proper function, and not try to carry out functions which are not in accord with the fundamental principles of the Form of Government, and which are contrary to the Bible, which orders that the shepherds should not lord it over the flock (1 Pet. 5:2, 3). We also believe that the people of the church should know what is happening, and should express themselves, as to whether they desire a true Presbyterian system, or a system which seems to be moving more in the direction of prelacy.

ested in its type of work is apt to be far more efficient than one that must give a good part of its time to seeking to win the approval of an ecclesiastical body. It is fatal to efficiency when the problems of an agency have to be determined by a large assembly, most of whose members have no detailed familiarity with the problems of the particular agency. No action of importance can be taken between the meetings of the parent organization. Details are subject to criticism by those who know little about them. The final vote is determined by the decision of large numbers of individuals who are unfamiliar with the particular matters involved. Either the officials of the agency are left quite free, and it is ecclesiastical popularity rather than efficient work which determines their fate, or else they are checked and hampered at every turn. In either event, efficiency suffers. Socialistic, or synod-controlled agencies, can never compete successfully with others of equal size which are formed in the American and truly Presbyterian manner, by the voluntary association of a group of individuals who are interested in the carrying on of a project.

Even apart from the general matter of socialism versus free enterprise, a church synod is not so constituted as to be suited to the efficient running of boards and agencies. It is a judicatory, not a legislature. Its make-up is far more like that of the United States Supreme Court, than like that of Congress. Its membership is largely composed of those who are specifically trained in the study of the Scriptures, rather than being selected by the people on a fairly representative basis. This is entirely right, since it is not a representative body for the making of laws, but a learned body for the making of ministerial statements on matters of Scriptural interpretation, and of guarding the church against the entrance of false doctrine. The Preamble of our Presbyterian Form of Government makes it very clear that our synods and councils have no power to make laws, but only to judge on the basis of those laws which are contained in the Scriptures (Form of Government, Chapter 1, sec. 7).

Even if it were so composed as to be truly representative of the membership of the church, the synod would still not be a proper body to administer boards and agencies. It would then be similar in its make-up to the United States Congress, which has the power of making laws in a way that could not possibly be given to our synod, unless its composition were very radically changed, so as to make it a truly representative body. Even Congress, however, is not an administrative body, but purely legislative. Its committees are for the purpose of gathering facts and investigating evidence in order to have knowledge on the basis of

which to make laws, not for the purpose of carrying on administration. We have very wisely put administration in a different department, that of the executive. We elect a President, and leave it to him, after consultation with advisors of his own selection, to select the personnel of all the various administrative and executive agencies. Our forefathers well realized how inefficient and unworkable it would be to ask a large legislative body to determine and control details of administration. To expect Synod to direct and control boards and agencies is as contrary to sound governmental procedure as it would be to take all of these powers away from the President of the United States and give them to Congress.

Such matters as the carrying on and promotion of enterprises are far better handled by voluntary organizations than by any governmental agency. Such of them as may properly be managed by government agencies can never be well handled by a body of the type of our synod. Synod-controlled agencies, by their very nature, tend to great inefficiency.

A little examination will make the reason for this quite clear. At our last Synod consideration was given to details connected with the American Council of Christian Churches. Out of the many matters of administration which concern those who carry on the work of the Council, five specific ones were brought before the Synod. Almost two full days were devoted to the discussion of two of these. The other three were simply passed by for lack of time. If the synod is to control agencies, it should be aware of all the facts about them and should consider these facts fully, so as not to make wrong decisions. To do this properly with even one board would require at least a fortnight's consideration by synod. Proper administration of any agency requires control by a small group that is able to take time for full consideration, with plenty of opportunity for all members to participate in the discussion. Administration by a large assembly is simply unworkable.

Anyone who studies the activities of large legislative bodies soon notices how frequently their meetings end in a terrible rush. Decisions are rushed through with little consideration. Important matters are dropped altogether for lack of time. Any organization that is dependent on a large body for vital decisions soon learns to fear the snap decisions and unfortunate omissions that occur in this way.

This is true even of bodies like the United States Congress, that meet for months. It was particularly marked in the meeting of the Synod in St. Louis. Even though only two of the five prob-

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lems that had been raised regarding the American Council were discussed at all, and many other vital problems were left untouched, there was still such a rush at the end of the Synod that important matters were decided hastily with almost no time for consideration. This occurs in all large bodies.

Members of boards and agencies may spend months preparing evidence to present a point of view to an assembly, and never get time to present it at all. In the final rush at the end of any such meeting, many things are put through which the body would never pass if time were available to give them fair consideration, and many things are left undone which the body would be anxious to do. Under such conditions real efficiency is impossible.

Nowhere is the unsuitability of large bodies for running boards and agencies more clearly displayed than in the selection of personnel. Even now the Bible Presbyterian Synod has to elect far more officers and committee members than can possibly be done efficiently. About 100 different offices or committee places are filled at each Synod. A nominating committee makes up a slate, largely on the basis of the popularity of the individuals involved. There is no possibility of a full discussion of the fitness of the individuals for the many posts to which elections are made. It is impossible for a nominating committee to give full consideration to these selections, and it is far more so in the case of the entire body. Some members may be quite convinced that a man is not suitable for a particular post, but seldom would one dare to get up and say so. Most people do not know the reasons pro and con. If officers of an important board were to be elected properly, it would be necessary to have long and free and frank discussion of the fitness and unfitness of each one. The actual elections are largely a matter of whim, accident, and personal popularity.

Numerous illustrations of the truth of this statement could easily be given. A large body is by its very nature unsuited to careful selection of the officers of an agency which is to be properly run. This is one of the many reasons why small organizations, run on a basis of free enterprise, usually are much more efficiently conducted, and produce much better results, than socialistically run organizations, whether controlled by a government or by a denomination.

We generally think of the Roman Catholic Church as almost the extreme of a prelatical church, in which all the power is vested in the Pope and his rep-

resentatives. There is a large measure of truth in this, and yet the Roman Catholic Church has learned by experience the great advantage of free enterprise over a governmentally run system. In 431 A.D. Pope Celestine selected a man and trained him thoroughly for the purpose of converting the Irish. Palladius went to Ireland, worked there for three years, and then gave it up, saying that it was absolutely impossible to reach the Irish for Christianity. At about this same time a young Scotchman named Patrick began an independent mission to the Irish. His work spread like wildfire, and within a few years, all of Ireland was won.

The Roman Church learned from this and from many similar experiences. Little of the missionary and educational work of the Roman Church is now conducted by individuals or agencies appointed by the Pope or by the hierarchy. Practically all of it is done by independent agencies. These independent agencies—the Franciscan, Dominican, Jesuit, and other orders—have developed from time to time, through the enterprise and initiative of some individual or group of men. The church officials watch over these orders to be sure that they do not depart from the doctrinal positions of the Roman Church, but rarely interfere in their administration, leaving them free to engage in friendly rivalry (sometimes not so friendly) with one another in their efforts to advance the cause of the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Church has been going forward very vigorously in recent years, and a good part of its advance is doubtless the result of the recognition of this principle.

The same principle has worked out in other bodies. The General Association of Regular Baptist Churches was formed just six years before the Bible Presbyterian Synod, and originally included about the same number of people. Today the Bible Presbyterian Church has about 8,000 members, and the Regular Baptists over 90,000. What is the reason for their much greater growth? It should be readily admitted that an important factor has been the fact that churches could generally leave the Baptist conventions without losing their property. The danger of losing their buildings has kept in the apostasy great numbers of Presbyterians who would otherwise have come with us. Yet this is not by any means the whole story. Doubtless a good part of it is the fact that G.A.R.B.C. has not committed the extension of the church to a synod-controlled agency, which would have to wait until regular meetings of the synod for decisions on its vital matters, and which would have to give a good bit of its time to winning the approval of the members of the synod, instead of being able to spend its time in actual accomplishment

on the field. The G.A.R.B.C. has three independent boards for Baptist home missions which engage in friendly rivalry in building up the denomination. Our lesser results do not in any way indicate that Presbyterianism is inferior as a means of building churches, nor that the men in our synod-controlled agency have not done their very best, but simply that a false view of Presbyterianism is less efficient than the true view of Presbyterianism.

Further evidence of this is afforded by the remarkable progress of some of the independent agencies connected with our church. While our synod-controlled Committee on National Missions has done good work, it must be recognized that the results are far short of those which have been attained by some of our independent agencies.

It is true that one of the reasons for this is that our independent agencies can make an appeal to people outside the Bible Presbyterian Church, which could never be made by a synod-controlled agency, and consequently are in a position to receive considerable amounts of funds which cannot be tapped by a synod-controlled agency. Yet this hardly covers the whole picture. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the growth of the Bible Presbyterian Church would have been far greater and that the results attained in the field of National Missions would have been more extensive if this work had been done by one or more independent agencies instead of a synod-controlled one.

In the past, voluntary agencies have largely kept out of this particular sphere, while synod-controlled agencies have not been operative in other spheres. At the last Synod, three areas in which voluntary agencies were already at work were taken over by synod-controlled agencies. Since the die has thus been cast and a blow struck against the voluntary agencies, no one can reasonably object if voluntary agencies now enter this sphere and prove by their greater record of accomplishment in coming years how much more can be accomplished in the truly Scriptural and truly Presbyterian method of procedure.

"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. . . . For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Peter 2:9, 10, 25).

Existence of Synod-controlled Boards and Agencies Greatly Cuts Down the Effectiveness of the Synod in the Areas of Work Which Properly Belong to It

We have noticed that it is impossible for a synod to run boards and agencies efficiently, since by its very nature it is impossible for it to give proper consideration to the many problems of procedure and administration which must be solved if their work is to be done right. It is equally important for us to notice what the existence of synod-controlled agencies does to the synod itself. The make-up of the synod is such as to fit it for carrying out the work for which it is properly intended, that of ministerially interpreting the Word of God, guarding the church against the entrance of false doctrine, and overseeing the entrance to the sacred ministry. These matters are quite sufficient to keep the synod busy for the several days a year that it normally meets. In addition, it is also vital that there be time for Christian fellowship among the members, for encouraging one another to good works, and for telling one another what measures God has blessed, as each has endeavored to serve the Lord in his own particular area, and thus to learn from one another's successes and failures.

When a synod takes responsibility for the control of boards and agencies, there are always problems connected with them which have to be discussed at great length. This consumes a great part of the time of synod which should properly be devoted to other matters. The recent Synod meeting in St. Louis had before it a large number of problems which the previous Synod had committed to special committees for study, including such matters as the question of secret societies, the question of fasting, the study of the proof texts to be printed in connection with the Confession of Faith, the preparation of a Directory of Worship, and various other matters of this type. Each of these matters could well have consumed a few hours of the Synod's time. In addition, a committee brought in extensive reports from its examination of the various agencies endorsed by the Synod. While it is true that this committee may have gone into matters of administration and procedure which are not properly the work of the Synod at all, at least a part of its report was concerned with the question whether these are standing true to Biblical doctrine, and this matter is one which the Synod ought regularly to face. Yet all of these matters were pushed aside with merely the distribution of mimeographed statements to the Synod. There was not even a minute given to discussion of any of them. The Synod failed to do its proper work, because it undertook to consider in detail matters connected with the

administration of the American Council of Christian Churches.

As we have noticed elsewhere, these matters should not properly have come before the Synod at all. The American Council is the servant of the Synod for a definite purpose. If the Synod approves of this purpose, as it must if it is true to its Lord, it should appoint representatives to the American Council to meet with others to study means of carrying out these purposes. For the Synod fully to consider all the problems that come before the meetings of the American Council would be impossible. So long as the Synod approves of its specific purpose, and it is limited to this purpose, the Synod can safely trust matters of detail to the deliberations of the delegates of the various denominations as they meet together.

Such an attitude could hardly be taken

WHY INCREASE OF SYNOD-CONTROLLED BOARDS AND AGENCIES IS UNDESIRABLE

1. Such a development was one of the things that led to its becoming necessary for us to separate from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

2. This development is a definite step in the direction of prelacy, which is the type of church government to which Presbyterians have been most strongly and constantly opposed.

3. This development is contrary to original Presbyterianism, being practically unknown before 1790, and without any real warrant in the Westminster Confession or Form of Government, or in the original Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

4. The Bible nowhere commands such agencies, nor does it give evidence of the existence of similar procedures in apostolic times.

5. Synod-controlled agencies by their very nature tend to inefficiency.

6. The existence of synod-controlled boards and agencies makes it difficult for the synod to carry on the work which properly belongs to it.

7. Synod-controlled boards and agencies inevitably lead to the development of harmful ecclesiastical machines.

toward an agency which was responsible only to the synod. If the synod is even to make an attempt properly to administer a number of synod-controlled boards and agencies, it must expect to spend great amounts of time discussing their problems and making the vital decisions which will condition their work. To do it with several agencies is impossible. The mere attempt to do it means that the proper business of the synod suffers, as it did at St. Louis this year. This was the sort of creeping paralysis which greatly injured the work of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in recent years, and which doubtless had much to do with its spiritual declension. Gradually during the past century and a half, that body was turned away from its original purpose by the development of synod-controlled boards and agencies. It will be sad indeed, if the Bible Presbyterian Church fails to profit from its bad example.

Let us turn aside from this attractive but injurious side road of synod-controlled boards and agencies. Let us leave these matters in the domain of free enterprise, where they properly belong. Let us see to it that the synod does its own proper work. In this way it can make a far greater contribution to the cause of Christ.

Another way in which the existence of synod-controlled boards and agencies injures the synod itself is that it inevitably leads to the development of harmful ecclesiastical machines. Let us think for a moment about the meaning of this word "machine." When a group of people holding a certain viewpoint get together to discuss ways and means of presenting the viewpoint so as to win others to it, this does not constitute a machine. Any group of members of a deliberative body may properly consider problems together in order to clarify their ideas, and to determine how they can most effectively present their viewpoint to a body. There is nothing wrong nor harmful in this procedure. A deliberative body is helped by anything which has the result of bringing all the facts before it, in order that it may give them proper consideration.

What we mean by a legislative or political machine is an organization which sets about to secure certain ends, not by presenting facts and enabling the body to understand all that is involved, but by deciding how advantage may be taken of parliamentary situations, or how measures may be presented, the meaning of which the body may not fully grasp, and then pushed through in some way in order to secure the ends which the machine

desires without the body fully realizing what it is doing. Anything of this kind can readily be seen to be out of place in a proper religious body.

Yet the development of machines of this type is inevitable if there are to be synod-controlled boards and agencies. Let us see for a minute what happens if there is no such machine. An agency spends many months studying means of advancing its work. It comes up against all sorts of problems on which authoritative decision is necessary. If it is a voluntary organization, it has a board of control which can meet at frequent intervals, give full study to the problems involved, and make proper decisions. In a synod-controlled body, all these decisions have to wait until the next meeting of synod. The very question of the election or continuance of its members is one which is decided not by the action of the other members who know how well these particular members do their work, and whether they are an asset or a liability to the organization, but by a larger body on the basis of personal liking, or some whim which has little to do with real efficiency. If no machine is developed, the utmost the synod can do is to examine two or three of the problems of one or two of the agencies. The rest of them have their membership elected by the passing whim of the body, or the perhaps ill-considered ideas of a nominating committee. Time fails to present the most important problems to the body, or if presented they are often voted upon by

snap judgment in quick time with no opportunity for decent consideration. The result is that if no machine is developed, the existence and efficiency of the agency are dependent upon accident, and chaos results. No agency controlled by a large assembly could possibly continue and do effective work unless it developed a machine which could see to it that in some way or another the most necessary measures were pushed through the synod. It becomes necessary that means be found of reaching the members of the nominating committee, and getting them to nominate the ones whom it is desired to have on the particular committee. Great interest comes to be attached to the question of who is the presiding officer of the synod, because of his power in the selection of the nominating committee and of other committees. Thus, inevitably, a situation develops in which, in self-defense, a board or an agency must develop what in the political world would be known as a machine.

When the Bible Presbyterian Church was founded, nearly all its members were disgusted with their experience with machine politics in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., even though they did not realize that this was to a large extent the result of the system of Assembly-controlled boards and agencies which had gradually developed there through the years, and had to so large an extent ruined the effectiveness of that organization for the purpose for which it was

intended. Sometimes matters in our synod have been handled much less efficiently than might easily have been the case, if more thought had been given to getting measures through. In fear of development of anything resembling a machine, things have sometimes been allowed to drift.

The establishment of three new synod-controlled agencies at the last Synod means that the days of free and untrammelled synods are over. Either chaos and inefficiency will come upon us, or various machines will be established, to some extent co-operating and to some extent conflicting with one another. These machines will confuse the ordinary member of the synod. He will not understand exactly what is happening, but he will leave the meetings with the feeling of having been trampled upon. When such machines are developed, they inevitably come in time to deal not only with matters which immediately affect their agencies, but they find it impossible to resist the urge to use their power in other areas as well. It was in this way that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. was gradually changed from a spiritual judicatory to a machine-run assembly.

It is to be hoped that the members of the Bible Presbyterian Church will seriously consider the great harm that has been done by the actions of the last Synod, and will make a strong turn about in the near future.

Volume I—No. 2 of *The Free Press* will contain articles on "The Formation and Testimony of the Bible Presbyterian Church" and "Why the Presbyteries Should Not Approve of a Synod-controlled Bible Presbyterian College."