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The Formation and Testimony Of the Bible Presbyterian Church

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"Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon."

When the Bible Presbyterian Church was formed in 1938 and its constitution adopted, certain foundations were laid. It was my privilege to be among those who helped start this testimony and I served as a member of the committee which drafted the constitution of the church.

We had come through bitter trials at the hands of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. The lessons learned in that experience we wanted to write permanently into the structure of the new Presbyterian testimony being established. It was our thought to build cautiously, carefully, to set up adequate safeguards.

Eighteen years have passed and we have now come to a crisis in our Synod which was never anticipated. The church is being changed and made into a different type of denomination from that which I myself have given time and strength to help build through these years.

The 18th General Synod saw our first "political caucus." "Bible Presbyterian politics" was a phrase that we have heard for the first time. "Men are out politicking" is another expression, and there is talk of "the machine." In view of these developments, there are certain historical facts that all need to consider.

I

AN ECCLESIASTICAL MACHINE WAS ONE OF THE FACTORS IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.A. THAT WAS A POINT AT ISSUE IN THE GREAT STRUGGLE WHICH LED TO THE SEPARATION OF 1936.

The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. developed around its official boards and agencies what Dr. Machen called an "ecclesiastical machine." The denominationally controlled boards and agencies became very powerful in the life of the church, and ecclesiastical poli-

tics came into play in regard to their operation and direction. It was this system, built up through the years, that the modernists actually captured.

Here are historical evidences;

1.

Christianity Today, Mid-June, 1933, Vol. 4, No. 2, contains the first and historic announcement of the formation of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. After reporting the decision of the General Assembly in "accepting the majority report of the Committee on Foreign Missions, expressing confidence in the Board," the article states, "The formation of a new Board was therefore announced at Columbus, but only after an earnest effort to reform the old Board had broken itself upon the adamant walls of ecclesiastical bureaucracy."

Thus, from the very first, "ecclesiastical bureaucracy" was a part of the struggle.

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. The purpose of this Committee is to bring information to the members of the denomination. This publication is the second to be issued in pursuance of this purpose.

Dr. Carl McIntire has prepared three articles which are published in this issue.

2.

The *Presbyterian Guardian*, just previous to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1936, contained an article, "What Should True Presbyterians Do at the 1936 General Assembly?" which was reported at length in the *Christian Beacon* of May 21, 1936. Dr. Machen specifically refers to such a machine, "The ecclesiastical machine has done its work too well and the apostasy of the Church has progressed too far since 1923." Then he advises: "If by some oversight of the machine, you are elected to one of the important committees, do not sign on the dotted line. Bring in a minority report." Further, in his hostility to the machine, he said: "Be sure you speak to the specific point that is under discussion. Even if you do so, you may be ruled out of order by the Moderator, who, of course, will represent the machine."

3.

The Case for Compromise, a pamphlet consisting of a series of articles which appeared in the *Christian Beacon*, written by Dr. H. McAllister Griffiths, contains a section which discusses the machine:

"The boards of the church, appearing at first a hundred years ago as instruments of action, have become the great and absorbing interest of those at the top. The church has developed a bureaucracy—an expensive one—also by what seemed administrative necessity. Now bureaucracies are dangerous things. Instead of existing for the sake of the body (whether nation or church) the body sometimes comes to the condition of existing in order to support them. Yet those in control are not vicious men. They are usually pleasant, likeable, sincere men. But they are looking at things through a different end of the telescope than does the common man. And when they come to think most of all of the

Work of the Church Through Official Agencies, when that is the passion of their lives, they are creating the very psycholological situation out of which totalitarian churches are born . . . The great thing to those who (unconsciously) hold to this view, is the outward organization of the church. The budget *must* be raised. The boards and agencies, the job-employing, fund-dispensing arms are really *the church*. Everything else exists for them. The church is a vast reservoir of contributions to be tapped. Individuals who are members of the church are bound to support its official agencies to the full extent of their ability."

The article then says, "Modernism was coupled with bureaucracy, and the combination was irresistible."

Had the church not developed the bureaucracy which the machine operated, there never would have been official agencies for the denomination to order men to support! It was in contrast to this situation that independent agencies, such as the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, were started by those who were protesting against the modernist control of the machine.

4.

The *Christian Beacon*, November 5, 1936, carried an editorial entitled "A Machine," in which I said: "The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. is run by a machine. Nobody doubts this. Those who have left the denomination have left the tyranny of this machine which manifests itself constantly in the administration of the affairs of the Church. Men who have come into the Presbyterian Church of America have come with the determination that no such unprotestant and unprotestant thing as a machine should ever develop."

In stipulating signs by which a machine could be recognized, the first is indicated in the editorial thus, "A little group of men set themselves up to rule the Church." We said that this was "characteristic of that which has been left behind in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. How foreign it is from the spirit of the Scriptures and the injunctions of the Word that men should be brethren in the Lord, loving each other, striving to do the will of God, and working together for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

"The Church is not a political organization. When it becomes such it starts down the toboggan which leads to the inevitable result which we have seen in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Men should be possessed with the idea that, instead of a machine ruling the Church, the Holy Spirit should rule it, and guide it, and there should be a constant dependence upon the Spirit of God, and a determination to do the will of God."

This indisputable evidence ought to settle the question in the minds of many concerning the place of the issue of the ecclesiastical machine in the great struggle in which we engaged with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Some would tell us now the issue was only modernism. It was both.

Now that the Bible Presbyterian Church has found, first, a caucus operating in political fashion, and, second, a drive for Synod-controlled agencies supported by this caucus, we are moving to develop the same kind of system which creates and feeds an ecclesiastical machine.

II

THE MANDATE OF 1934 WITH THE STUDIES OF THE CONSTITUTION FOCUSED ATTENTION PARTICULARLY ON THE MACHINE OF THE CHURCH.

This focusing of attention upon the machine was twofold. First, the machine produced the Mandate, under the leadership of William B. Pugh, stated clerk of the General Assembly, who, with those closely associated with him in the boards and agencies, were running the church. Second, it demanded that the machine-controlled boards and agencies actually be supported by the members of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions and others of the church. A machine used the authority of the church to endeavor to compel support under pressure of the boards and agencies which the machine delighted to use for its purposes. It was the boards and agencies officially controlled by the denomination which became the focal point in the struggle with the ecclesiastical machine.

"Studies of the Constitution," preliminary to the Mandate itself, is virtually a thesis in support of the principle that Assembly-controlled boards and agencies is Presbyterian.

1

"Studies of the Constitution" was designed to maintain the position of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in regard to its official boards and agencies and to attack the position of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions in its independent position.

The introductory note says that questions had been raised by the formation of the Independent Board "of great seriousness and importance to the members, the officers, and the judicatories of the entire Church," and that "the source of responsibility under the Constitution for the conduct of the missionary work of the Church" is one of the major problems.

One of the major sections of the pamphlet is entitled, "The Authority Vested in the Constitution to Conduct the Mis-

sionary Operations of the Church."

In the conduct of the missionary work of the Presbyterian Church two distinct functions are then described:

"1. The functions which are strictly ecclesiastical, and which have to do with the training and ordination of men for missionary work, the giving to ministers thus set apart their missions and authority as evangelists, the ultimate determination as to where they shall labor and how long they shall remain in their field of labor, and the responsibility for the manner in which they discharge their duties.

"2. The functions which are purely administrative, and which provide the ways and means for sending the missionaries commissioned by the Church to their respective fields of labor and of sustaining them when they are there."

The section then offers an entire division entitled, "1. The Ecclesiastical Functions": "All ecclesiastical functions must by their very nature be exercised exclusively through the judicatories of the Church." Here is the argument that it is Presbyterian and in accord with the whole position of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. that it direct in ecclesiastical matters their missionaries under their own boards. We now hear it in our own midst.

In "2. Administrative Functions," we read: "It is under this power of superintendence that the Presbyterian Church through its Supreme Judicatory has always conducted its missionary work and created, sustained, and directed the various Boards or Agencies which have assigned and supervised the missionaries of the Church." This is what some now tell us we should have!

Then follows a section dealing with "Brief History of Missionary Operations," which includes some of the very references and papers which are now being circulated in the Bible Presbyterian Church in support of Synod-controlled agencies. The identical arguments used in this Mandate are now being used in the Bible Presbyterian Church in support of Synod-controlled agencies. In the summary of this section we read:

"1. The General Assembly, by virtue of the power belonging to it 'to superintend the concerns of the whole Church' and of the authorization given to it by the Constitution to send missionaries to any part of the world, and to 'make the necessary provision for their support and reward in the performance of their service,' is the judicatory which is solely responsible for creating, controlling, and maintaining the missionary work of the Presbyterian Church as a whole."

Then again:

"3. Through years of experience, the General Assembly has finally decided

that it can best administer the missionary work of the Presbyterian Church under its own ecclesiastical authority through Boards of its own appointment."

It is this very emphasis which some of the present leaders in the Bible Presbyterian Church are now arguing and maintaining in behalf of the missionary work of the Bible Presbyterian Synod. From a letter written by one of our Bible Presbyterian ministers I quote: "Independent agencies sounded good when we began our Church but the theory is now being demonstrated faulty."

After these arguments are presented, important conclusions are drawn as they relate to independent agencies, and it is my position which we are seeking now to defend, that the arguments in support of Synod-controlled agencies, which are now being advanced by some of the brethren, logically and automatically involve the destruction of the independent agencies. At least, their position is completely undermined by such arguments, and, though men are willing to accept the presence of independent agencies perhaps for a time, inevitably the church built upon the new principles will arise, and already long steps were taken at the 18th General Synod by the creation of other Synod-controlled agencies.

The following is a quotation from "Studies of the Constitution";

"The foregoing outline of the ecclesiastical and administrative functions which the Constitution recognizes in the conduct of the missionary work of the denomination clearly reveals how impossible it is for any independent Agency or Board to carry on missionary operations within the Presbyterian Church."

Yet the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions was taking missionaries within the Presbyterian Church and sending them out, appealing for funds, and securing support within the Presbyterian Church.

Writing of any independent board or agency for Presbyterian foreign missions, it says: "When it assumes the direction or supervision of any minister in the Presbyterian Church, when it regards that minister as a missionary under its care, when it determines directly or indirectly by its authority or influence the place or character of his labors, when it demands an accountability to it on the part of the minister, it subverts the whole system of Presbyterian Church Government, and subjects its officers and members to the discipline of the Church."

When our present Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions calls one of its missionaries before it to question him concerning some of his activities, one of the presbyteries of the Bible Presbyterian Church addressed a communication to this Board objecting and

indicating that questions concerning this missionary should be handled through the presbytery. Here was the raising of the very same issue involving ecclesiastical functions.

It seems almost incredible that after 18 years there should arise within the Bible Presbyterian Church a position among a number of the brethren which uses the same arguments that are found in the attack of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. upon the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions! History repeats? If such arguments are accepted, the day will come when the position of the Bible Presbyterian Church in regard to the control of its boards and agencies in the name of being Presbyterian will be the same as that of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. This must be understood and resisted with all the strength of those in the church who went through those days of struggle in defense of a true Presbyterian position and of Christian liberty.

Shall they say in the Bible Presbyterian Church that the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions "was a mistake" and that Dr. Machen was "unpresbyterian" in forming it? Shall the U.S.A. Presbyterian Church be vindicated at Bible Presbyterian hands in its position that Assembly-controlled boards are Presbyterian?

2.

"Studies of the Constitution" speak of "our Board" as opposed to the Independent Board. A similar emphasis has arisen in Bible Presbyterian circles, and in discussing "A Brief Summary of the Action of the 145th General Assembly in Endorsing the Board of Foreign Missions" we are told point blank that, for the members of the Independent Board not to accept the decision of the General Assembly in approving the Board of Foreign Missions and their establishing the Independent Board, they "refused to accept the authority of the Assembly and proceeded to constitute themselves, in contempt of the Assembly's action, an Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions."

I have received a letter from one of our beloved Bible Presbyterian brethren in which he says that the formation of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Home Missions by a group of Bible Presbyterians at the present time is in "contempt" of the brethren of the Synod.

This realm of thought, which we resisted in our ecclesiastical trials and to which the denomination endeavored to hold us under the ordination vow of being subject to your brethren in the Lord, now arises within our own midst. I do not believe these brethren have ever read "Studies of the Constitution" or understand the position which the Independent

Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions took at that time under the leadership of Dr. Machen and which gave birth to our Bible Presbyterian position.

Let us go slow, brethren. We must not go back under a yoke of bondage with an ecclesiastical machine to help the cause along.

3.

In the "Introductory Note" to "Studies of the Constitution" one of the questions of "great seriousness" was "the extent of the control which the Church has over its judicatories and churches in the matter of their gifts to benevolent causes." This section on the missionary offerings argues in behalf of the responsibility of the denomination through its General Assembly, since it represents the whole church, to be responsible for the missionary contributions of the whole denomination. This is now one of the criticisms of the independent agencies. For instance, the general secretary of the National Missions Committee has maintained that, before Faith Theological Seminary purchased its new property, the Synod should have been consulted, because so much financial burden was being put on the movement.

Another section of "Studies of the Constitution," dealing with the history of the church, defends this position at length and comes up with certain conclusions that the church must support the officially approved agencies of the denomination. The pressure at this point goes very, very far. It states: "4. The General Assembly by virtue of its power to interpret authoritatively the Constitution and to superintend the concerns of the whole Church has consistently throughout its entire history defined with particularity the obligation of all those affiliated with the Church to fulfill all Constitutional provisions with reference to missionary offerings, and to support the authorized missionary work of the denomination in proportion to the ability of each."

The late Dr. J. Gresham Machen was particularly vigorous in his opposition to this whole concept. A denomination sets up its official agencies, then it puts pressure on the people to support these official agencies. It is this line of development that we begin to hear in the Bible Presbyterian Church in support of the establishment and maintenance of Synod-controlled agencies. A loyal Bible Presbyterian will stand by "our official agencies." Christian giving, on the other hand, according to Scripture, is free, and, as Machen emphasized it, can never become "taxed" or supported by penalties of any kind.

III

IN THE BREAK WHICH CAME IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA (NOW THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH) THE QUESTION OF A MACHINE ARISING IN THAT DENOMINATION WAS ONE OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED.

The division which took place at the beginning of the Bible Presbyterian Church with the Presbyterian Church of America centered around the questions of premillennialism, Christian liberty or the use of fermented beverages, the General Assembly's repudiation of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions and the attendant ecclesiastical machine which came into view.

Church history records the great change which took place in the Presbyterian Church of America. At its Second General Assembly it commended the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions as follows: "It [the Assembly] takes a special pleasure in commending the program and work of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions to the Church at large, and in suggesting that this work receive the sympathetic co-operation of local churches and church members, in so far as that may be possible."

At the Third General Assembly the whole picture was changed. A Majority Report of the Committee on Foreign Missions recommended the formation of an Assembly-controlled agency and declared that "the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions as it is now constituted is out of accord with the provisions of its charter and not consistent with the fundamental principles of Presbyterian Church government which are held by the Presbyterian Church of America, as evidenced by the fact that the practice of certain members of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, including the President and Vice-president, in matters of church government is that of Independency rather than Presbyterianism, which practice was virtually endorsed by the majority of the Independent Board when, at its meeting May 31, 1937, said majority refused to insist that its members bring their practice into accord with the principles of true Presbyterian Church government, or else resign from said Board."

Certain men on the Independent Board had not joined the Presbyterian Church of America. I, with John S. Wurts, brought in a Minority Report, and discussed each particular case at length, quoted from the charter of the Independent Board its purpose, and pointed out that a majority of the members of the Board were members of the Presbyterian Church of America. We maintained that a man could be *Presbyterian* (a member

of the Board) and still be pastor of a church which was not connected with a Synod or General Assembly. The issue was Presbyterianism versus Congregationalism or independency. To take the position that in order to be Presbyterian a man has to be identified with a particular Presbyterian group or a Presbyterian synod does not follow. There were serious questions in many men's minds concerning what was developing in the Presbyterian Church of America, and a group in that church actually took control of the denomination in its Third General Assembly and secured the repudiation of the Independent Board because it was not Presbyterian in the practice of fundamental principles of church government, and set up its own Assembly-controlled agency. It was in this particular context, when the small group withdrew and signed the Articles of Association, that the reference to "fundamental principles" which appeared in those Articles of Association must be interpreted!

It was not a "fundamental principle of Presbyterian church government" that the General Assembly control the Board of Foreign Missions! Nor was it a fundamental principle of Presbyterian church government that a member of the Independent Board who was Presbyterian in his doctrine and practice be a member of a particular synod or general assembly at a particular time upon the insistence of a particular group! When I joined in "reaffirming our belief in the fundamental principles of Presbyterian church polity," we had no thought that such principles included the approval of the denominationally controlled Board of Foreign Missions. We still stood by the principles for which the Independent Board had suffered in this matter of church government of the right of being an independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions without any connection with a General Assembly, Synod, Presbytery, or other particular judicatories!

In the minority report, we simply called for a reaffirmation of the action of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America which it took at the Second General Assembly recommending the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions to the prayers and support of the members of the Presbyterian Church of America.

It is amazing how quickly a situation changes from one general assembly to another. We were not going to be a party to building up a denomination which would go right back to a Synod-controlled board when in our ecclesiastical trials we defended the right to be a Presbyterian and a member of an independent agency that was Presbyterian.

IV

THE BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

AT ITS FORMATION DID NOT MAINTAIN THE POSITION THAT TRUE PRESBYTERIANISM CALLED FOR OFFICIALLY CONTROLLED DENOMINATIONAL BOARDS AND AGENCIES.

Much has been made of the one paragraph which was placed in the Form of Government on this matter, and it needs careful consideration by God's people, because there is much confused thinking concerning it. It reads: "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 such other Christian enterprises."

1.

The question of whether Synod does or does not control an agency is a matter of its "discretion." The Synod in its discretion could have not a single board or agency to act as its agent, and work entirely through independent agencies! If a Synod did not have a single Synod-controlled board or agency, the Bible Presbyterian Church would still be a Presbyterian Church under its constitution! An ingredient of Presbyterianism, according to this constitution, is not the fact that the Synod controls its boards and agencies. This section cannot be used, as it has been, to support the view that true Presbyterianism involves Synod-controlled agencies.

2.

The Synod, on the other hand, in its own discretion, could work through only its Synod-controlled agencies and eliminate endorsement of any independent agencies whatsoever. If it did such a thing, that in itself would not be an element of true Presbyterianism, any more than the former, but a denominational structure would arise like the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and it is that which we strenuously oppose. The arguments which are being advanced for this position are that it is Presbyterian to control the agencies. There is no justification for this in this provision.

3.

On the other hand, the phrases in this constitution, in the light of the present conflict, say a great deal more than those of us who were responsible for putting them in ever realized. It takes history and conflict sometimes to bring out developments which were unforeseen. There should have been no conflict, such as has developed between the two. There is the reference, "It may commend to the churches." But suppose it does not commend to the churches any of the independent agencies at all, how about the independent agencies which are Presbyterian? Suppose it refused to commend the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions? The Pres-

byterian Church in the U.S.A. went so far as to attack such a board, and we were still Presbyterian in supporting that board as the Collingswood Church and as individuals. Dr. Allan A. MacRae in his articles pointed out that our Synod had had only one major agency, the National Missions Committee, until this last Synod. Of course, there have been other smaller committees which have operated more or less, but in the present discussion it is the major agencies of activity—the National Missions Committee, the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, Faith Theological Seminary, Shelton College, a Synod-controlled college, and the like.

The Synod, in the exercise of its discretion, in the past has had its face turned toward the independent agencies. Now a change has taken place, and, in support of the Synod-controlled agencies, arguments are being presented which, if followed consistently, will turn its face away from the independent agencies and throw the weight of its work behind and in support of the officially approved denominational program. One brother said at Synod, "I have voted for my last independent agency." This situation takes us back again organizationally to the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. The time to meet these things and settle them is when the issues are raised. That is now. People must understand the principles.

The conflict is over the Committee on National Missions—that Committee became actually Exhibit A in showing to us the conflict between the Synod-controlled agency and the independent agency. The actual possibility is there in the situation which has developed to some extent in our midst. The argument led men to vote for three more major Synod-controlled agencies.

There are those who argue at length for the Synod-controlled agencies, using the very arguments of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. against the independent agencies. Then they turn around and say, Yes, we are still in favor of the independent agencies; we are for both. But the arguments for the former destroy the latter. The inconsistency involved will express itself in time as time has now brought the struggle over National Missions.

Then again it is said that it is all right to develop the Synod-controlled agencies type of church because we are fundamentalists; that it was only under modernist leadership that the old church went astray. The answer is that fundamentalists themselves also can and do run machines. You do not have to have modernism in order to have a machine. We saw it develop in the Presbyterian Church of America in the repudiation of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions and the establishment

of a Synod-controlled agency. We are Bible-believing Presbyterians, but at the last General Synod we saw a "political caucus" in operation, the instrument of a machine. Then questions were raised concerning the National Missions Committee. Those who had vested interests financially and were under its support rushed vigorously to the defense of the conduct of the National Missions Committee's secretary. Yet men who stood with the secretary later explained that they knew the condition revealed was true.

The whole question of "denominational secretaries going up to the conventions" has been a powerful one in present-day Protestantism. It is said that independent agencies is the Baptist setup. No, the Northern Baptist Convention had its own Convention-controlled agencies, too. A handful of Baptists fought the entrenched power of their boards. When secretaries would go up to the Convention with those under its employ and on its pay roll, with vested interests in what the denominational secretaries wanted, it was calculated that a certain percentage of the Convention could be counted on in an issue to vote on behalf of the boards and agencies' leadership before anything could be discussed. Votes counted.

The boards and agencies in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. were powerful. It is not modernism that makes this system bad. It is modernism which takes over such a system. It is human weakness, the flesh, and the frailties of men that must be guarded against.

Again it is said that Charles Hodge argued for official agencies. Some of our men follow Hodge at this point and do not realize what happened in the Independent Board judicial cases and what happened to the system of boards and agencies he helped build up! If the history of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. teaches anything, it is that we should not follow in its train. If Charles Hodge had thrown his influence at the time in behalf of independent agencies, the Presbyterian Church might not have developed the way it has. It might have been a great deal stronger and freer today. We must see the error which they made and not commit the same error again. It was my understanding that we were going back before those days, as Dr. MacRae has pointed out, for a freedom as Presbyterians which would give us a glorious Bible Presbyterian witness. If there had been no official Assembly-controlled foreign board, no machine could have controlled it. If there had been no official board of foreign missions, no mandate could have been issued to compel support! How much better it has been these years to have had the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions with its appeal being that it is doing a good work!

It is interesting to note that in the

General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, the separatist Baptist movement, up to the present time they have worked entirely through independent Baptist agencies, and I am of the opinion that one real mistake which we made was, first, ever to have started a National Missions Committee under the control of the Synod. It was small; it was hardly a committee. There were just two or three at the beginning; but now it has developed into a committee where there are real vested interests which can be used politically in the church against brethren and on sides. Second, this particular provision which was put in the constitution should never have been placed in it in that way. I recall at the time that there was some thought that it might be too broad. It has opened the door now for a Synod-controlled paper, "the voice of the denomination." At Synod I argued that if we are going to have a Synod-controlled paper, "the voice of the denomination," it did not properly come under this paragraph and that we needed a constitutional amendment, but Synod went ahead on its own authority. We wrote into the constitution, Chapter 1, paragraph 9, page 129: "All powers not in this Constitution specifically granted to the courts of the Church are reserved to the congregations respectively, or to the people." Before power can be exercised for an official voice of the denomination, it should specifically be granted in the constitution. There is no provision in our constitution for a church paper or a "voice of the denomination." If we are to have one, it should be so stated as a power of the Synod to create such a "voice" with such broad interpretation of the constitution at this place.

The door is open to move on down to a tighter denominational setup with Synod-controlled agencies, and anything deemed similar—with cries of "disloyalty," "contempt of brethren," being made against those who oppose and delight in the freedom which we have as true Presbyterians under God.

"Discretion" has to do with an attitude of mind, and when a Synod changes its mind or moves in a different way in exercising discretion, it has changed.

I rejoice in the formation of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Home Missions. History repeats itself! I believe that the issues which it raises in our midst are exceedingly healthy; for it is demonstrating that some of the same arguments used against Dr. Machen and the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions have found currency in our midst, when they should never have been credited within the circle of a denomination which was started to be free from all of this and to move forward in mutual love and confidence under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Collingswood Session Writes Sessions of Bible Presbyterian Denomination

July 18, 1955

To the Sessions of All Bible Presbyterian Churches

From the Session of the Bible Presbyterian Church of Collingswood

Collingswood, N. J.

Beloved Brethren in the Lord:

We greet you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, and we come to you with a report in the spirit of Christian love. Certain things have transpired in recent days here in the Collingswood Church, and on July 14, 1955, a congregational meeting was held at which actions were taken on which we want you to have accurate information.

This church in Collingswood has contributed in every way possible to the strengthening and building of our beloved Bible Presbyterian denomination, and it has been called "the Mother Church." This congregation renounced the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. on June 15, 1936, and became an unaffiliated church, but *Presbyterian*. At the time we lost our civil court case with the possession of our property and went into a tent, we took the name "Bible Presbyterian," but were still unaffiliated. The First General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church met in our tabernacle, September 6 to 8, 1938, and at the annual congregational meeting of the Collingswood Church, April 11, 1939, we voted to affiliate with the Bible Presbyterian Synod.

We had undergone a long struggle within the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., centering primarily in the membership of our pastor, the Rev. Carl McIntire, in the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions: his ecclesiastical trial by the Presbytery of West Jersey, and the order that he be suspended from the ministry and the Communion of the church because of his refusal to obey a deliverance of the General Assembly of 1934 directing him to resign from the Independent Board and to support the official Assembly-controlled foreign missionary agency. During that controversy the question of modernism and the question of bureaucracy or the ecclesiastical machine of the denomination, which the modernists had captured, were the great issues before us. On the one, it was modernism versus the truth of the Word of God; on the other, the machine-control versus the authority of the Word of God. On both, it was the Word of God, our faith and our liberty in Christ.

The records of that time, including our

resolution renouncing the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., testify to these things. The statements of the late Dr. J. Gresham Machen at the time, attacking the ecclesiastical machine centering in the boards and agencies of the denomination, represented a part of our opposition to the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

When we came into the Bible Presbyterian Church we thought that safeguards were being erected within the Bible Presbyterian constitution which would prevent the development of an ecclesiastical machine with its attendant evils. We were only "a spiritual successor" of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. There were no "implied powers" in the specific authority given to the higher courts. The phrase, "superintending the concerns of the whole church," in the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. was eliminated entirely from the power of our General Synod. Resolutions and deliverances were constitutionally declared not to be binding on the Church (Form of Government, Chapter 10, Section 5). Our relationship was voluntary and in no sense was "to be maintained by the exercise of any kind of force or coercion whatsoever" (Chapter 3, Section 2).

Independent agencies were in existence which we were supporting for their faithfulness to the Gospel—these had been born of the battle, too—including the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, the *Christian Beacon*, and Faith Theological Seminary, into whose charter it was written that it would never be subject to ecclesiastical control.

We had a great fear, and justly so, of the development of an ecclesiastical machine and the same kind of church out of which we had come. In the first Synod in Collingswood, only one agency was established under the Synod, and it was hardly that, for the National Missions Committee as set up included in its first year power to receive presbyteries and ministers in the interim. Our pastor was named its first chairman and the money to support the few brethren who stood with us virtually all came from the Collingswood Church. Our pastor went about assisting in forming other churches, and with our full support he helped to establish centers in Indianapolis, Columbus, Minneapolis, St. Louis, and elsewhere. We rejoiced in the freedom which was ours and the fellowship which we had among all who had suffered at the hands of the ecclesiastical tyrant. As the pattern unfolded, in its "discretion" our Synod and our movement saw the emphasis on independent agencies, with

many of them, develop and grow. God blessed them. Harvey Cedars Bible Presbyterian Conference, Crescent Lake Bible Conference, Quarryville Youth Conference, Children for Christ, Delanco Home for the Aged, Friends of Israel Testimony to Christ, Inc., and so on down the line.

It has been only in recent years that we began to realize that conflict was developing between our "Synod-controlled agency" and some of the independent agencies. The one Synod-controlled agency, the National Missions Committee, began to be represented as "our board." All of the others were not *our* boards. And there was church authority being used to promote the Synod-controlled agency which the other agencies did not have or use. The National Missions secretary went about as the representative of the Church and with the authority of the Synod, while the Independent Board secretary went out simply as the representative of a Board doing an acceptable work with no ecclesiastical authority. A loyal Bible Presbyterian was led to believe that his first obligation was to the Synod-controlled agency—that was Presbyterian! What never should have developed did develop, because inherently there is a difference which sooner or later began to reveal itself in appeals and pressures. Thus there came into focus a real point of principle which we as a church have been forced to take cognizance of as a result of the rapidly developing situation which came to a head in our 18th General Synod.

The general secretary of the National Missions Committee used his position and influence to propagandize as a representative of the Synod for Synod-controlled agencies and against certain individuals in our denomination, particularly the pastor of the Collingswood Church. On official stationery of the Committee, in a letter written to the Rev. Clyde J. Kennedy, president of the Board of Directors of Highland College, the denominational secretary had this to say about our pastor and the Greenville Synod of 1954: "So far as I could see, Clyde, everything handled at the Synod was done decently and in order. Unless issues were raised after the Synod by Mr. McIntire, the work of our church and the agencies we support could have continued very smoothly." This, of course, did not represent Mr. McIntire.

Reports came of individual conferences which the general secretary had with men across the country, and in which he carried on propaganda against the testimony of our pastor. At the meeting of the American Council of Christian

Churches in Memphis, April 27-29, 1955, witnesses testified that the secretary conferred with a brother outside of the Bible Presbyterian denomination telling this brother that he had "lost confidence" in Dr. McIntire and that this loss of confidence had to do with the questions of statistics, Bible balloons, and similar matters.

When our pastor, with the knowledge and backing of his session, presented some of these matters pertaining to the general secretary's activities to Synod for their correction, a standing vote of confidence and ovation was given to the denominational secretary.

In many ways there was a parallel between the procedure of Dr. J. Gresham Machen in carrying his questions concerning the Board of Foreign Missions to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in 1933 and the ovation as given to Dr. Robert E. Speer, the denominational secretary, and what happened in Dr. McIntire's case, with the problem centering around the National Missions Committee and his carrying of his questions to the General Synod and the consequent ovation given to the denominational secretary. The National Missions Committee likewise, under the secretary's leadership, not merely established new churches to carry on the work of building the church, but took on a considerable political complexion, with those under it having vested interests, concerned financially in loans and other things, and rallying to the support of the National Missions secretary, when instead honest questions and evidence needed to be considered for the good of the church.

Out of this developing picture, we saw at St. Louis our denomination's first caucus, when one of the elders of this Session providentially found it in session. Its floor leader was appointed, a program or slate of business desired was agreed upon, the members of the caucus agreed to scatter out through the Synod, and there was a plan of action to take over the Synod for certain Synod-controlled agencies. Our delegates testified that they witnessed a labor union type of meeting. Our 18th General Synod finished with the approval of a Synod-controlled college (provisional until two-thirds of the presbyteries ratify), a Synod-controlled official paper to be the voice of the denomination, and a new integrated Synod-controlled Committee on Christian Education with very broad powers. At this one Synod a basic, fundamental turn in our setup was made, and evidence of the old ecclesiasticism we once forsook arose in our midst. Our six elders returned with a unanimous report concerning the Synod which was presented to our congregation in a public gathering.

What we saw developing in regard to

the Committee on National Missions we saw also developing in regard to the Committee on Christian Education. In the report of the Committee to integrate the work of Christian education in the Bible Presbyterian Church, adopted by the Synod, there was approved an amendment for changing the Standing Rules of our Synod which said, concerning the Committee: "This Committee shall have as its responsibility the planning and carrying out of a full program of instruction and training in our churches so that the members and constituents thereof may understand and have a sincere commitment to the Standards of our Church; and that information and assistance may be given to interested individuals and churches not yet affiliated with our Church. This Committee shall consist of three classes of seven members each" (underscoring ours). This does not say the Committee shall have the responsibility of planning a program and recommending it to the churches for their acceptance and consideration, but "carrying out of a full program of instruction and training in our churches." Here we have a denominational agency, officially approved, with the authority of the Synod in its Standing Rules, planning a program and planning to carry it out in our churches! This statement, brethren, is strikingly similar to those which appear in "Studies in the Constitution" of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., 1934, and its attached Mandate, where the officially approved program is authorized to be carried out in the churches, and where the churches are to support it, even to the full measure of their ability.

This manifestation of Synod's power in support of this Christian Education Committee is the type of thing which we thought we had left behind. It is the exaltation of this power of the Synod in an authoritative way over the churches to which we take serious and definite objection. It may be said that the language of the new Standing Rule may be unfortunate, or does not mean what it seems to say, but it is an expression of what has happened in our changed Synod. It represents the drive for "a tighter church" and the expression of men who say, "Now we have more of a Presbyterian Church."

Again, the denominational secretary of this agency we found standing at Synod's door distributing a mimeographed brief supporting the position that to be Presbyterian we must have Synod-controlled agencies, and we are confronted with the building of a denomination with its boards and agencies seeking to run and direct the affairs of the church with the authority of the Church behind it. In this there inevitably comes the machine and, if necessary, the caucus to obtain the desired end. It is the old story of "the

denominational secretaries" seeking to guide policy, and then the boards they represent, under their direction, carrying it out in the churches!

As a Session, we duly and prayerfully considered this development at great length, and issued a call for a special congregational meeting of our people to discuss the problem as it relates particularly to National Missions and to Christian Education—should we help build what we left!

This congregation fought for its liberty to be Presbyterian and also free to support a mission agency which was neither under control nor approved, but, in fact, had the stern denunciation of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. itself. Our pastor resisted the authority of the Assembly when it sought to direct him and to put pressure upon him to support the officially controlled Assembly agency. Our Synod, of course, has not gone that far, but the pattern is here, the pressure is on, that, to be Presbyterian, these agencies must come under the authority of the Synod and must have our support. So we have heard it said that not to back them is to be in contempt of Synod and not subject to our brethren. These very arguments Mr. McIntire dealt with in his ecclesiastical trial. On the other hand, we believe that our fellowship is voluntary, that we must be free, that Christian giving is a matter between God and the individual, and that power in our Church rests with the people who elect us as elders and send us as their representatives to the courts of the Church.

In view of these developments, we consequently welcomed, as a Session, the formation of an Independent Board for Presbyterian Home Missions patterned after the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, free from ecclesiastical control, without vested interest in an ecclesiastical system, and not in any way under obligations to a denominational secretary and his interests or concern. In supporting this new agency we are just as Presbyterian as we were in 1933 when we supported the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, and we are no more in contempt of Synod or our brethren than we were in 1933. Our position remains the same.

There is indeed in many ways, after eighteen years, a strange parallel in position and arguments. We firmly believe that the independent agencies, free from denominational control, represent the best position from which to advance the work of the Lord and to free us from these dangers which have now in some degree again come upon us.

After lengthy consideration, the congregation of the Collingswood Church

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Why the Official Synod-controlled College of the Bible Presbyterian Church Authorized by the 18th General Synod Should Not Be Approved by Presbyteries

"Mutual love and confidence" brings blessed fellowship in Christ. When the Bible Presbyterian Church was established, this emphasis was constantly before our minds and we wrote into the constitution; "Particular churches need remain in association with the Bible Presbyterian Church only so long as they themselves desire. The relationship is voluntary, based only upon mutual love and confidence, and is in no sense to be maintained by the exercise of any kind of force or coercion whatsoever. A particular church may withdraw at any time for reasons which seem sufficient to itself" (Form of Government, Chapter 3, Section 2). Our ties

one with another as churches are purely voluntary, and, as we have said so many times, the Holy Spirit is the One who gives us this mutual love as we delight in our eternal redemption and our companionship together in obedience to the commands of Christ.

We must have *love*, and it was this emphasis that we felt needed great underscoring at our 18th General Synod where there was so much tension and conflict, and out of which conflict, near the close of the Synod, action was secured for the Synod's authorizing the establishment of an official Synod-controlled college for the denomination, under the direction of a committee of seven elected

by the Synod. One provision was added, that the Synod's action was to be ratified by two-thirds of the presbyteries before it was final.

Dr. Allan A. MacRae, in the first issue of *The Free Press*, discussed the principles involved in the matter of Synod-controlled agencies, and presented the position of the Scriptures. With these I fully agree and I believe they represent the *principles* on which we, as a Bible Presbyterian Church, was founded.

In the discussion and conflict which have already developed over the question

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Collingswood Session . . .

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voted to support the unanimous recommendations of their Session, which were as follows:

1. That funds now going to the Committee on National Missions of the Bible Presbyterian Church be directed to the Independent Board for Presbyterian Home Missions, recently organized.

2. That individual churches, now being supported by the Committee on National Missions, be written to and asked if they would be willing to receive funds through the new Board for Home Missions.

3. That the balance of \$1,500 now being paid the general secretary of the Committee on National Missions, the Rev. Thomas G. Cross, be not paid any further; also that the balance of undesignated funds of \$1,515 now being paid monthly to the Committee on National Missions be directed to the Independent Board for Presbyterian Home Missions.

4. That the balance of \$500 designated for the Committee on Christian Education be diverted to the Committee on True Presbyterianism.

The Committee on True Presbyterianism was set up at the close of Synod by those who objected to the establishment of a Synod-controlled college, and it has issued *The Free Press* paper. Our money for Christian Education will now go to that independent committee for the purpose of helping to inform the members of our denomination of the turn of events with a view to helping to save the Church and to restore it again to its former position.

It is our prayer that God will resolve our difficulties and that we may be able to go on to build a great Presbyterian movement in this country, free from ecclesiasticism, political machines, and behind-the-scenes caucuses. We do not feel that

we should help build a system like the one we renounced, so that when some issue may divide the church, the boards and agencies with their vested advantages can be used on one side or another with the attendant political maneuvering and power. To develop a Synod which will control in any proper way these boards and agencies would involve such responsibilities, as Synod grows, that we will have real bureaucracy.

As a Session we are opposed to the Synod-controlled college. The very thought of putting in the hands of seven men, as was done, unlimited authority to commit our Synod financially, with no limits upon property or mortgages, is surely irresponsible.

Our concern for Synod, our desire to see churches established, is as great as ever, for we realize the desperate need in our land. This congregation has given \$94,000 toward the establishment of churches through the National Missions Committee. We believe now that under the new independent agency the whole movement of establishing churches will progress more rapidly, with a wider circle of contact, and a much broader circle of support financially, and that the basic concern which is ours of establishing true Presbyterian churches will be more quickly advanced for the glory of God and the challenging of the great apostasy. Our action is based, we feel, on high principle, our historical stand, bitter experience, and sound common sense.

We have heard the arguments of the Synod-controlled agencies, and it is indeed a concern to us that the same arguments which were used in the "Studies of the Constitution" of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in 1934 are arguments that are now being advanced within our own Synod in behalf of Synod-controlled agencies as opposed to the independent agencies—that one is Presbyte-

rian, the other is not; that those who favor the one are Presbyterian, the others are Congregational. One is democratic and the other is not. One is responsible for the financial giving of the Church, the other is not. These arguments were used against the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions in the trial of our pastor, and when this Collingswood Church took its stand, it repudiated all of this, that "Presbyterianism" included official boards and agencies, Synod or Assembly-controlled.

We believe that we were a true Presbyterian church when we renounced the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and we said so in our resolution. And we were a true Presbyterian church during those years when we were unaffiliated. We supported Presbyterian doctrines and the fundamental principles of Presbyterian Church Government, and, when we affiliated with a Synod, we desired to promote these very matters, not with a view to developing a Synod which would again become a power over us and exercise un-Presbyterian influences upon us, as we sought as a free people to carry on the work of preaching the Gospel and maintaining the standards of our Confession of Faith and Catechisms. It is our earnest prayer that God may lead and undertake, heal and strengthen, and that our Synod shall be united, that genuine brotherly love may return, that confidence may be restored where it has been broken, and that we shall go on to evangelize the lost, to call people out of the apostate denominations, and to build a free, true, Bible Presbyterian Church in a spirit of mutual love and confidence.

Yours faithfully in Christ,
JAMES I. LOGUE
Stated Clerk

By order of the Session of
the Bible Presbyterian Church

Why the . . .

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of a Synod-controlled college we have an illustration of the very things against which Dr. MacRae has so clearly warned, and it is with these particular experiences that I propose to deal in pointing out that under no circumstances should our presbyteries proceed to approve of this college and bring upon us as a Synod greater difficulties. Let me list these developments:

I

THE OFFICIAL BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD-CONTROLLED COLLEGE IS THE DIRECT OUTGROWTH OF THE CONFLICT CENTERING AROUND HIGHLAND COLLEGE OF PASADENA, CALIFORNIA.

The overture which brought this question before the Synod came from the Presbytery of the Upper Midwest as a direct consequence of the division and conflict that had developed around Highland College. I was a member of the Bills and Overtures Committee. When the overture was presented, the chairman of the Committee suggested that representatives of the Presbytery be called before the Committee to find out what they had in mind concerning such an overture. The explanation that was given to the Committee was that it was the conflict of Highland College which raised the question and led to the formulation of the overture. Thus in the most direct way the Highland College conflict brought the question of a Synod-controlled college to the floor of Synod itself. Highland is an independent agency, not under the control of Synod, with the majority of the members of its Board of Directors being ministers and members of Bible Presbyterian churches.

On the floor of Synod, in the debate over approval of the proposal to establish an official Synod-controlled college, when appeal was made for delay and further consideration, it was pointed out that there was a group of students for whom Dr. Robert G. Rayburn had been providing leadership and members of a faculty already in existence which could constitute the beginning of this Synod-controlled college.

There seemed to be no question but that the new college, if it were established, would be under the leadership in the main of Dr. Rayburn himself, and this was the basic condition which was being dealt with. Synod was being asked to take under its wing the group which had withdrawn from Highland College, and with them establish an official Bible Presbyterian college. In effect, Synod was asked to take the group and the side which had broken with Highland College.

Dr. Rayburn, under pressure of the

Board of Directors of Highland College resigned March 1, 1955, as president, and tension and conflict which had developed within the college broke forth into a division when some 40 students walked out of the college and asked Dr. Rayburn to be their leader.

Previous to Synod, as the Highland College issue as it was called was discussed throughout the church, it was constantly said, "We must wait until after Synod." It was believed that the Highland College question would be brought before Synod and discussed. Actually, though the Highland College question was in the minds of many and determined the decision that was made in many cases, there was no open discussion of what happened at Highland College. A few references to Highland College were made in speeches. Behind the scenes it was learned that the Committee on Credentials, according to reports that were circulated, was against the endorsement of Highland College by the Bible Presbyterian Church, and, rather than precipitate a long battle just over Highland College, the directors of the college did not request that Highland College be approved by the Synod. Even the report of the Credentials Committee did not come before Synod where these matters could have been discussed.

The evidence, we believe, overwhelmingly supports the proposition that the present Synod-controlled college is not only the outgrowth of the Highland College difficulty, but it is proposed to start it with the nucleus of the group that withdrew from Highland College.

This means that the issues in the conflict at Highland College are going to continue to be agitated through the church, as even now they are, in the discussion which takes place over the official college itself.

The merits of the various issues involved in the Highland College situation were never discussed one way or another by the Synod itself. So, in effect the Synod has taken one side of the controversy and gathered up the students for its new college without considering or deciding the merits of the issues involved.

Highland College, though, of course, hurt by the break, still has its property, a student body, and a faculty, and Bible Presbyterian pastors and leaders are operating it, and it is going ahead. According to reports, the students who remained are coming back, new students have also enrolled, and Highland College will be a college, as originally intended and planned, to provide leaders for the Twentieth Century Reformation movement. At the time of the break there, when I went to California and was successful in getting the two groups together with an agreement which brought peace

on the difficult issues at the time but which later more or less went to pieces, Dr. Rayburn explained that they had no plan for the establishment of another college and that what they were operating at the time was actually not another college.

There have been two colleges with which our Synod has co-operated—Shelton and Highland. As was said on the floor of Synod, if a group desires a third college and feels it can get support for it, let it start that college independent of the Synod, carry on the work as it feels led of the Lord, but not project the whole controversy into the Synod in an official way by asking that the Synod take sides and by demanding what was considered by many a "vindication" of those who left Highland College.

Must we have an official Synod-controlled college which in its final analysis has been started in order to vindicate somebody in one way or another? I think these factors are in the picture and need to be taken into account by the people of the Synod in their consideration of whether we want a Synod-controlled college, and especially as to whether we want this particular Synod-controlled college, born of these circumstances. I think all can agree that the results of what has happened have not contributed to peace or mutual love. If that situation is to be perpetuated under a Synod-controlled college, we are in for further difficulties and conflicts involving deep emotions.

II

THE OFFICIAL BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD-CONTROLLED COLLEGE WAS APPROVED BY THE 18TH GENERAL SYNOD FOLLOWING AND WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE FIRST "POLITICAL CAUCUS" IN BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY.

A caucus is a meeting of representatives in a democratic body outside of that body for the purpose of planning and endeavoring to secure through the body itself certain desired actions.

Through the years of our Bible Presbyterian Church, in mutual love and confidence we have met together. Following seasons of prayer there have been discussions of the various problems, and votes have been taken, and we have moved along together with a spirit of oneness in the great battle to which God has called us.

One of the matters which stirred the 18th General Synod and almost brought about the division of the Synod itself was the exposure made by Elder Clayton A. Bancroft of the Collingswood, N. J., church of a political caucus which he, in the gracious providence of God, discovered was in session.

At the 18th Synod, Friday was the day of prayer. Saturday we spent de-

bating one question about the American Council of Christian Churches. Word was passed around among some of the brethren that on Monday morning, June 6, they were going to have a meeting—early. At about 7.30 o'clock, 25 or 30 men gathered in a room downstairs before the brethren came to Synod for the morning session. Elder Bancroft had come early with the man he was staying with who said he had to go to an early meeting. Bancroft sat in the auditorium of the church for a while and later realized that men were gathering for something and he went downstairs. As he passed a door he heard Dr. Rayburn tell the caucus that he could prove that Carl McIntire was a liar. Bancroft then went into the meeting, after asking if he might. He sat in the front. Dr. Rayburn was appointed floor leader for the group in the Synod. A list of matters which they would work for was decided upon. One of these was for an officially controlled Bible Presbyterian college. Certain men were to make the motions. The question was then raised about the group's sitting together in a body, and it was decided it would be better for them to fan out through the entire Synod so that when they held up their hands, men sitting near them who perhaps did not know how to vote would also be influenced to vote their way.

A blackboard was in the room on which were charts drawn with chalk. One of the charts contained a small circle with the name of Jesus Christ in it. About it was another circle, a larger, and a still larger, which was supposed to represent the church and the agencies. Alongside of it was another small circle, with a question mark in the middle, then a larger circle and other circles. When the chart was being explained, it was said that they need not mention to whom the question mark referred, but it was McIntire.

The caucus, as it was reported to the General Synod by Mr. Bancroft, had an anti-McIntire emphasis in it, as well as a pro-Synod-controlled program for the Synod, including an official paper which would be the voice of the denomination.

Here, for the first time in the history of the Bible Presbyterian movement was a political caucus held by a group of men who had certain designs and their desire included the opportunity to take over the control of the Synod for the establishment of a Synod-controlled college. Dr. Rayburn was leading the movement, and decisions were arrived at in this caucus by the lifting of the hand.

Effort was made and has been made to try to label as a caucus any little group that gets together for discussion or just for talking about matters, and when I leaned over in my seat in the Synod and spoke to someone near me,

one of the members of the Synod tried to say that that was a caucus. The brethren who were in that caucus endeavored to explain it away and rationalize what had happened.

On the floor of Synod, appeal was made to the brethren that, if we are going to have prayer—and we had spent an entire day in prayer for divine guidance—why must we go out and caucus and come in and deal so with brethren?

This development in the history of the Bible Presbyterian Church almost split the Synod, for it is entirely foreign to mutual love and confidence, the spirit in which the assembly has progressed, and yet it was felt necessary by the proponents of the officially controlled college idea in order that they might have support and carry the day for the college in the Synod.

A college which needed a caucus to get it through Synod will also need caucuses in years and days to come to get its will through Synod, when questions may be raised concerning particular professors or problems or questions in the college itself, which will have to be resolved by Synod. Where division of opinion arises, and one group desires to organize itself in order to obtain the victory, a caucus is the instrument which is used. A school which is born with the assistance of a caucus will not hesitate to resort to the caucus procedure in order to gain its ends in days to come.

This states the case very bluntly and frankly. It certainly jarred the entire Synod when it was realized that we had reached a turning point in the history of Bible Presbyterian Synods.

III

THE OFFICIAL BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD-CONTROLLED COLLEGE HAS REVEALED AN ATTITUDE IN SOME OF THE PRESBYTERIES WHICH HAS CAUSED DISTRESS AMONG BRETHREN.

One of the provisions concerning the official college was that two-thirds of the presbyteries would have to ratify what Synod did before the matter would be finally settled.

Those who oppose the college realize that in the securing of the ratification of the presbyteries there was a certain check which took this question down to the local churches for their consideration, and that, if the people of the denomination could have time to find out what the issues were and what was fully involved in the new college, perhaps the plan could be defeated and a college would not be established under the control of Synod to plague us with difficulties. The supporters of the college who had attended the caucus, however, did not appreciate this provision as it came before Synod and moved to have it stricken out. They wanted to have a free hand to proceed immediately with all the weight

of Synod behind them. Fortunately, by a narrow margin they were defeated on this point and the provision for the new college called for approval of the presbyteries.

This brings us face to face with one of our great privileges as Bible Presbyterians. Presbyteries are made up of representatives of the churches and the churches are entitled to know what the issues are that confront the denomination and just how their representatives are going to vote. According to our Bible Presbyterian constitution, the power in the Bible Presbyterian Church is with the people, and elders represent the people. This reference therefore to the presbyteries meant that each local church would be confronted with the problems involved, have opportunity to discuss it, and the elders could vote as the churches desired. Such discussion in the present circumstances could have a very healthy and restraining effect upon the church, especially since our people have looked to God, with great sacrifice, to build our little, struggling, separatist denomination.

But immediately, word came of *pro re nata* meetings that were being planned in the presbyteries by the proponents of the college. Instead of this matter being docketed for the next regular meeting of presbytery when all are able to be present and when it can be given full debate and consideration among the churches, the proponents of the college have undertaken to hold some special meetings. One was called in Wisconsin. Brethren were summoned to meet at a *pro re nata* meeting on very short notice and some asked to travel as far as 800 miles, and they were unable to do so.

A call went out in the Rocky Mountain Presbytery for a *pro re nata* meeting just coming under the required time line and summoning men to drive great distances. In the case of the Rocky Mountain Presbytery, there are only five churches and seven ministers. The regular meeting of the Presbytery is scheduled for October 5 in Albuquerque, N. Mex., in the Rev. Clarence Van Der Veen's church. He is against the new college. Among the seven ministers, there seems to be a rather equal division of opinion, and the advantage to one side or the other will come in whether men are actually able to be present. The Rev. William M. Irving was still in the East on his vacation when the call was issued. The meeting was summoned to Colorado Springs, Colo., for July 16. Mr. Van Der Veen has written the Presbytery a letter. He received his notice on July 10. In his letter, addressed to the clerk of the Presbytery, he wrote;

"I am sad because of the *pro re nata* meeting of Presbytery and the manner in which it has been called.

"Ordinarily I would write to Bill Leonard directly concerning this matter,

but realize the proper person to contact, in view of the fact that the call has already gone out, is yourself. This is all the more so because of the brevity of time.

"I am sending a copy of this letter to all the men in this presbytery.

"Frankly, this R.R. meeting of our Presbytery, on a matter that Synod cannot meet to consider until its next regular meeting, savours so much of the old U.S.A. thing I just got out of two years ago, that it makes me sick.

"FIRST, I see no reason at all why the next regular meeting of Presbytery would not be time enough to consider these matters.

"IN THE SECOND PLACE, don't you men suppose that our own ministry in our called fields of labour are entitled to a little consideration? What condition do you think that I for one would be in the next Lord's Day, with its three services, after I have driven to the meeting of Presbytery on this coming Friday? BRETHREN, I AM NOT ABOUT TO THROW MYSELF INTO THIS SORT OF BUSINESS. THE BUSINESS OF THE LORD AT HOPE CHURCH HAS FIRST DEMANDS UPON MY TIME.

"HOWEVER . . . if you men feel otherwise, then have the meeting of Presbytery here in Albuquerque on Saturday, July 16th, and see what it means for a change to travel these long distances as I have done, WITH ONE EXCEPTION, since we first started this presbytery. Brethren, the record will show that I have endeavored to be a faithful presbyter all my life. I DO NOT LIKE THIS SORT OF THING AT ALL.

"IN THE THIRD PLACE, I am not so sure that our Brother Burkholder, or Irving, or myself, could be there to voice our conviction or desire concerning the matters that you feel should be considered by us as a PRESBYTERY.

"FINALLY, and about this there is no doubt, I am not so sure that I care for too much more of what I saw and heard at Synod this year! Time is fast running out. . . . I am not interested in engaging in matters of controversy with my brethren.

"It grieves me to find it necessary to send a letter such as this to my fellow presbyters. I would much rather have written you concerning the wonderful way, far beyond all expectation, in which the Lord has blessed us, since coming home from Synod.

"Men, I plead with you; let's have a little more of 1 John 2:3-11 in evidence among us. We have an adversary who is indeed worthy of all of our attention when it comes to the matter of resistance!"

From this letter to Presbytery, Mr. Van Der Veen apparently is not clear about the action of Synod, for Synod did authorize the establishment of a college and it does not have to come before Synod next year for its final approval. As we understand it, when two-thirds of the presbyteries approve, it is settled. Why all this rush through *pro re nata* meetings of presbyteries anyhow?

From a more recent letter we learned that this meeting was not held, and the matter will be taken up at the next regular meeting.

One brother said to me, "My people don't know about this and I don't want them to know about it."

In the past our presbyteries have been united. There has been a desire to pull together and to stand together, but now we have entered a new epoch. The minority interests in the presbytery are entitled to certain considerations and rights, and, when problems are raised, the majority must be considerate that the minority is given full liberty to talk and that their opportunities are fairly granted. Let every Bible Presbyterian remember that we began as a minority and a protest group and have suffered at the hands of intolerant majorities. Must we forget these things when divisions arise in our midst, and not only our Synod but some of our presbyteries are torn with the conflict which has been precipitated over Synod-controlled agencies?

IV

THE OFFICIAL BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD-CONTROLLED COLLEGE IS ALREADY BEING USED TO DESTROY ONE OF OUR INDEPENDENT COLLEGES.

I spoke of the *pro re nata* meeting in Wisconsin. The Rev. Robert I. Hatch of Kansas City was unable to go the 800 miles. He sent a communication asking the Presbytery to delay until the regular meeting. The story of what happened is given in a letter which the Rev. Max Belz wrote to Mr. Hatch concerning their presbytery, and this letter is given here in full:

"Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly" (Hebrews 12:18).

"I took your side of the argument last week at Presbytery, and held out for delay on final action on the new college question. Brother Hawks supported me, but we were defeated. I agreed with him to write you a letter of explanation.

"Many factors were involved. You know, of course, that I am heartily in favor of a Synod-controlled college. I felt, however, that we could well afford to grant you and Brother Cleveland a delay since you felt so strongly about it. We had letters from Dr. Young and Dick Strom favoring the college approval. It

was obvious that feeling ran overwhelmingly in favor of approval. All felt that the *pro re nata* meeting was perfectly in order.

"One major factor, however, was the influence of Dr. Buswell. He was at Camp Crescent all week, and he made it crystal clear that he was thoroughly in favor of the establishment of a Synod-controlled Bible Presbyterian college. When our Committee voted to offer to take over Shelton College (lock, stock and barrel), Dr. Buswell told us that he was ready to support such a move. We are proposing that the present Shelton directors resign and turn the entire school over to our Committee. There are some indications that the offer will be accepted. Dr. Hawks, who had previously opposed approval, was delighted at this prospect. Everyone I have contacted seems to feel the same. Shelton is a great school, and Dr. Buswell is a great educator. He is a veteran in the separatist movement, and was the man who led Wheaton College to greatness.

"So, you see, it appears idle to oppose approval of the new school. I feel sure you will now concur. The move is not merely a younger-men move, but weighted with veterans even older than Mr. McIntire.

"May the Lord bless and keep you."

It is clear that the Committee of the college has now decided to take over Shelton College if it can. The directors of Shelton College, an independent agency, are to be asked to resign, to step aside, and turn the college over to the Synod for its control.

Mr. Hatch in writing to me, sending me Max Belz's letter, had this to say:

"Enclosed is a letter which Rev. Max Belz sent me which arrived today. You probably know everything that is in here, but I thought if you didn't, you should. Would you please send the letter back after looking it over:

"Once again Rayburn and Edwards are off on a wild tangent which will cause great damage even as at Highland. It looks to me like this Committee is acting completely outside of its province. To me this looks like the greatest folly which has occurred to date."

I think that all the members of the church should realize what has happened. Highland College was divided and torn. Synod itself has been torn under the struggle that has followed. On the floor of Synod, when questions were raised about the Synod-controlled college, it was indicated that such a school was desired in the middle west or in Colorado or perhaps even in the South—that there was one on the west coast and one on the east coast. But now the college Committee, set up by Synod with the authority of Synod, apparently has de-

cided that it can take over Shelton College, the independent college on the east coast. Even the raising of this question in the way it has been done is going to cause great trouble and disaster and will hurt Shelton College.

Shall all that has happened be projected into this college? Here is a school which stands on the American Council platform, with a student body last year of 187, with representatives on its board from various American Council denominations. Here is an instance of how Synod's Committee is being used actually to attempt to eliminate an independent college by taking over that independent college and making it Synod-controlled.

I wonder if the members of Synod, if they had had any idea that the Committee of seven who were elected to proceed would have immediately in one of their first steps planned to project this whole question into Shelton College in this way, would have approved of such an action? I am sure there are many who would have hesitated to do so. Must we have one institution after another torn by these issues that are being projected into the Synod over Synod's control and power?

Furthermore, in what position does this place the Bible Presbyterians who are on Shelton College's board? Now that Synod's approved Committee, acting under the authority of Synod provisionally until sufficient presbyteries have ratified, has moved to take over an independent college and ask these men who are Bible Presbyterians to resign, are the members of the board of directors of Shelton College going to be in contempt of Synod and are they going to be "thwarting the will of the Synod" if they decline to resign? Does the Bible Presbyterian Church want to get into all this kind of agitation and conflict? Well, we are in it; we are in it deep. It goes to the very nature of the new Bible Presbyterian Church which is developing under the concept of Synod-controlled agencies as opposed to the old Bible Presbyterian Church which had its face turned toward independent agencies with freedom and liberty.

The experience which has now come with the first moves of the new Committee itself ought to settle this question. But according to Mr. Belz's letter, the plan to take over Shelton, an independent agency, further commended the whole thing to the brethren!

In presenting Max Belz's letter it must be clearly understood that I do so in order to show his understanding of the attitude of the presbytery's action. This was a report to Hatch, a copy of which was sent to the Rev. Emmet Cleveland of the Firth, Nebr., church. Both pastors and elders of these churches were

unable to go to Presbytery. It should be clear that what is said about Dr. Buswell is Max Balz's estimate and that it does not necessarily represent Dr. Buswell. Dr. Buswell will speak for himself and he has let it be known that this letter has things in it which do not accurately represent him.

In case there is any question about the Board of Directors of Shelton College, the following motion was adopted by the Board on July 21, 1955, without a dissenting voice: "This Board intends to maintain the independent nature of this institution. The Board regrets and deplores the question which has been raised by the Committee of the Bible Presbyterian Church for a Synod-controlled College, inviting the surrender of control of the college and the resignation of the present Board of Trustees. The Board of Shelton College rejoices in God's goodness to it and does not wish to become embroiled in any particular denominational struggle. We assure our constituency that it can depend upon our steadfastness."

V

THE OFFICIAL BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD-CONTROLLED COLLEGE HAS COMMITTED THE SYNOD IN WAYS WHICH SYNOD SHOULD NOT HAVE ALLOWED OR PERMITTED.

The Committee of seven established to promote and organize the new college under Synod asked for blanket powers. It received them. Just how much money the new committee can commit the Synod for is a question, but if the Synod were to take over the obligations of Shelton College, as the Committee proposes to do, there are mortgage obligations of \$200,000, debts, including the mortgage obligation of around \$450,000. Does Synod feel that a Committee of seven men can commit it to an obligation of almost a half million dollars when the Synod itself is seriously divided? Some of the churches which have been our strongest supporters are not willing to contribute financially. Or, if it is not the college on the east coast, is the Committee authorized to commit the Synod to a half million dollar investment somewhere else? There is no limit to what this Committee can do, and, when they have done it, we shall have arguments and struggles and other untoward things in the Synod.

Surely, it is apparent, or it ought to be, to any consecrated, thinking member of our denomination that, if we are going into this sort of tension and conflict as a Synod, we are headed for disaster. Let us turn down in our churches and in our presbyteries this Synod-controlled agency. Eliminate the element of ecclesiastical power, the prospects of caucuses, and all these elements in the Synod to obtain desired ends of the Committee in

charge. Somewhere it ought to dawn on some men that people who leave the ecclesiastical machine-controlled churches are not anxious to join any denomination, much less one which is torn over the question of the same controls.

If the spirit and condition which is bringing into existence a college under the control of the Synod is this in the beginning, what, pray tell, shall it be before we finish? Shall this be a serious factor contributing to disruption and a split in our denomination? The Lord's people must look to our Lord and we must seek the peace and mutual love and confidence which we knew together so delightfully in the earlier years as the Synod grew and pressed the great battle against the apostasy and in the building of true Presbyterian churches.

New Independent Home Missions Board Formed

The formation of an Independent Board for Presbyterian Home Missions was announced July 30, 1955 at a Bible Presbyterian Rally held in the auditorium of Faith Theological Seminary, Elkins Park, Pa. Dr. Allan A. MacRae, president of the faculty of the Seminary, is the president of the new Board. The other officers are: Hon. James E. Bennet, vice-president; Rev. Robert Du Vall, secretary; Mrs. Louise Greeley, treasurer.

According to a full page advertisement appearing in the *Christian Beacon* of July 7, 1955, the Board's purposes are: To evangelize the lost, to challenge the apostasy, to build churches. This is a call to Bible believers in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the Presbyterian Church in the U.S., and the United Presbyterian Church, and others to found true Presbyterian testimonies in our land.

A public rally for the Board in the form of a Home Missions Conference will be held in Collingswood, N. J., October 13 and 14.

The Board is incorporated in the State of New Jersey and is patterned in its charter after the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, which was established under the leadership of the late Dr. J. Gresham Machen in 1933.

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