



THE CONCERNED PRESBYTERIAN

*Dedicated to Returning the Presbyterian Church U. S.
to its Primary Mission — Winning the Unsaved for
Christ and Nurturing all Believers in the Faith*

*"The Only Infallible Rule
of Faith and Practice"*

234 BISCAYNE BLVD.

MIAMI, FLORIDA 33132

BULLETIN No. 4

APRIL, 1966

Pray — Pray — Pray

THE 106th General Assembly of our Church will be meeting in Montreat, April 21-26. There will be many important decisions made at this meeting.

We are asking every Concerned Presbyterian to pray daily from the date this Bulletin arrives until the Assembly adjourns on Tuesday, April 26, asking specifically:

1. That there will be an end to the bitterness which has characterized so many of our recent Assemblies;
2. That the discussions and debates on the controversial issues will be carried on in a spirit of Christian love and mutual respect for those brothers in Christ with whom we conscientiously differ;
3. That the Holy Spirit will be present in power, guiding and directing the decisions which are made.

We would suggest that prayer groups be organized either in the churches or in the homes of members, meeting daily during the period in which the Assembly is in session.

Where Our Money Goes

*Stewardship Program jeopardized
by "equalization" of gifts*

EFFECTIVE January 1st of this year the Central Treasurer plan for "equalizing" all gifts to Assembly boards and agencies which was adopted by the 1964 Assembly went into effect.

Under this plan individual donors and individual churches are free to designate the agencies to which they desire their gifts to go and the amount they wish given to each board or agency. Money so designated will be distributed as the donor has directed.

But the "joker" in the plan is that the treasurer of each board and agency is required to report all the gifts it has received each month to the Central Treasurer and, if an agency has received more than its percentage set by the Assembly, the Central Treasurer will withhold from that agency its share of the undesignated gifts until the distributions have been "equalized."

This simply means that every dollar given by our people is in effect going to be distributed the way the church directs that it be distributed rather than the way the individual donor or the church session wishes it distributed. In the final analysis it will make no difference whether you designate your gifts or not. Every \$100. given to Assembly's benevolence causes during 1966 will be divided up as follows:

Board of World Missions	\$52.73
Board of Church Extension	17.36
Board of Christian Education	8.18
Board of Annuities & Relief	7.72
Board of Women's Work	1.96
General Council	2.10
Committee on Television, Radio & Audio Visuals	2.05
Presbyterian School of Christian Education	2.13
Mountain Retreat Association	1.67
Stillman College	2.54
Historical Foundation41
American Bible Society41
Presbyterian Foundation52
National Council of Churches11
World Council of Churches08
Lord's Day Alliance01
Religion in American Life02

Most members of Concerned Presbyterians will resent the fact that the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches will participate in their gifts. The 11¢ of every \$100. that would find its way directly into the treasury of the NCC is rather insignificant but it becomes much larger when one includes the amounts contributed to the NCC and the WCC by various boards and agencies.

But even if the NCC and the WCC were taken out of the budget entirely and our boards and agencies did not contribute a dollar to the support of these two organizations, we would still insist that the Central Treasurer plan is unwise and that it will discourage rather than encourage the people of our Church to give more liberally to the work and program of the Church.

Why do we believe so positively that this will be the case? Let us assume that you have made your annual pledge to current expenses, benevolences and possibly to the building fund of your church. You are perfectly willing to have the money you pledge for benevolences distributed in accordance with the percentages set by the Assembly.

You then decide that you would like to make a special gift to support one or more missionaries, to help with the building of a church or chapel in one of our mission fields or to provide the Board of Church Extension with additional funds to aid new churches which it is helping to establish here at home. Will you be encouraged to make this over-and-above gift if you know that 47.27% of the gift you specifically designate for World Missions or 82.64% of the gift you designate for the Board of Church Extension will actually benefit other agencies to which you did not intend it to go?

We think most donors will resent what they have every right to consider a misappropriation of their funds — that the plan, once its implications are fully realized, will discourage many donors from making sacrificial gifts — and that it will hurt and not help the stewardship program of our Church.

What of the Sunday (Church) School in This Day?

By Ruling Elder, H. S. Williford,
Jackson, Mississippi,

a Trustee of Concerned Presbyterians, Inc.

THIS is a day in which the Presbyterian Church U.S. is in turmoil. It is divided by opposing views of the Bible. Some accept, by faith, the Bible as the inerrant Word of God. (See Chapter 16, Sec. 1 and 2, *The Confession of Faith*). Others hold that men must judge the Bible as to its truth or error. The truth or error in the thinking of the Church will be automatically and quickly reflected in the teaching of the Sunday Schools. Should the thinking of the Church be in error, it will produce a greater tragedy in the Sunday Schools because the Sunday Schools are charged with the instruction of little children as well as adults.

In the light of this, let us discuss the Sunday Schools briefly.

What is a Sunday (Church) School?

As the name indicates, the Sunday School is a teaching program that is carried on on the Lord's Day in the Lord's House. In one sense at least it is the broadest teaching effort of a Church since it touches the lives of people literally from the cradle to the grave. It has, or should have, a teaching program for every member of the family — from those just learning to toddle to those who by reason of age are barely able to hobble around.

Although there are accessory benefits to Sunday School attendance, such as fellowship, the primary function of the Sunday School is to *TEACH*. People are willing to get up on Sunday morning, spend the necessary time and effort to get themselves and their children dressed and to Sunday School on time because, and only because they feel that there are valuable *LESSONS* in store for them and their children at the Lord's House.

What Should a Sunday School Teach?

For guidance on this question, we turn to the Bible and the Standards of the Church. The Bible says among many other things bearing on this matter:

II Timothy 2:15, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Luke 9:26, "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."

John 6:63, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

In the light of these quotations from the Bible, we should rejoice that the Book of Church Order *requires* that the Word of God be the "center of every course of instruction" in the Sunday School:

Sec. 345, "The Bible, together with the Catechisms, shall be the chief textbooks of the Church School, the center of every course of instruction . . ."

The Shorter Catechism says: *Question 1*: What is the chief end of man? *Answer*: Man's chief end is to

glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.

Proof Texts:

1 Cor. 10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Romans 11:36, "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen."

Psalms 73:24-26, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever."

John 17:22, 24, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one . . . Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

Question 2: What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him?

Answer: The word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him.

Proof Texts:

Gal. 1:8, 9, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Isa. 8:20, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

Question 3: What do the Scriptures principally teach?

Answer: The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man.

Proof Texts:

Micah 6:8, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

John 20:31, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

In the light of these quotations from the Shorter Catechism, we must ask why anything other than the Bible should ever be taught? Since people live for the purpose of glorifying and enjoying God, since the Bible is the "only" rule to direct us on this course, and since the Scriptures teach "what man is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man," there can surely be no need for anything to be taught in addition to the Bible. To teach anything in place of the Bible will not bring honor and glory to our Lord.

The Sunday School deals with the spiritual condition of people. It should, through the teaching of the Bible, tell the unsaved of their lost condition and that unless they accept Jesus as their Savior they will spend eternity in Hell. It should, through the teaching of the Scriptures, tell them of the way of salvation through receiving

Jesus as their Lord and Savior, and it should, through the teaching of the Scriptures, help those who have been saved to grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord.

We should keep in mind that people are properly related to their fellowmen after, and only after, they have become "new creatures in Christ." The closer they get to their Savior the more they grow in grace and the more nearly they will be able to follow His perfect example of daily living. To try to bring people to the Lord by teaching them how to live with their neighbors (the "Social Gospel") is like trying to grow fruit from branches without vines. It is impossible.

God has revealed Himself only in the Word, written and incarnate. So, people young and old come to God only through His Word. As I Peter 1:23 says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." In addition, the Shorter Catechism, *Question 89* asks, "How is the word made effectual to salvation?" *The Answer*: "The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching, of the Word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation."

Proof Texts:

Psa. 19:7, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."

Psa. 119:130, "The entrance of thy words giveth light: it giveth understanding unto the simple."

I Thess. 1:6, "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost."

Romans 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

Romans 16:25, "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began."

Acts 20:32, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

Those who seek to turn the Church from its spiritual (Biblical) mission to make the message of the Church "relevant to our day and generation" (as if the inspired Word of the "infinite eternal and unchangeable" God changed from year to year like automobiles) have a program for Sunday Schools too. They have sought to influence the Sunday Schools through Sunday School literature. This is not to speak for or against any particular Sunday School literature. There is good Bible-centered literature available and there is Sunday School literature being published which turns aside from the primary message of the Bible to over-emphasize the reconciliation of man with man (without mentioning his first great need to be reconciled to God). The point here is that literature for the Sunday School needs to be examined with the greatest care, to see that it is faithful to the Word of God, and that the program of study is and continues to be, year after year, the teaching of the Bible. Anything in place of, or in addition to, such a course will rob us and our children of the blessing of continuing Bible study.

Insofar as the family is concerned, it is the responsibility of parents (particularly the father) to see that they and their children are taught only the Word of God in Sunday School. Being sure that children are taught the Bible and Catechisms in Sunday School is surely a part of bringing them up in "the nurture and

More Evangelism Needed

EVERY concerned ruling elder should encourage his session to schedule a week of evangelistic meetings in his church during the next 12 months.

Biblical evangelistic preaching revitalizes churches, overcomes indifference and inertia, produces candidates for the ministry and the mission field, and inspires stewardship commitment. It will set in motion positive, spiritual forces that will help to overcome the present dangerous trends in our Church.

Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., will be glad to send you the names and the data on qualified men who are available for evangelistic meetings.

admonition of the Lord." Parents should read the literature their children use in Sunday School to know whether or not it is Bible-centered. The *source* of the literature is unimportant. Its *content* is of the greatest importance to the spiritual development of children.

Insofar as the local Church is concerned, the teaching of the Sunday School is the direct responsibility of the Session. Not the minister, not the Sunday School Superintendent, but the *Session* is responsible. The Book of Church Order, Sec. 345, paragraph 2 says, "The Superintendent, with the Pastor, shall be responsible to the Session for the curriculum of the Church School."

Each Session therefore has the heavy responsibility of the teaching program of the Sunday School. Regardless of loyalty to the program of the Church, supreme loyalty must be to the Word of God, which is also to say to the God of the Word. It could be that an elder's loyalty to God's Word will bring him into conflict with his loyalty to the Church's program. Should this happen, let it be remembered that Elders are set apart to the service of God, not to the service of the Church.

When a man is called of God, ordained and set apart to the office of Elder, he is given, with his fellow Elders, (ruling and teaching), care of the Flock of God. There is no means by which he can give his proxy to the Board of Christian Education, his preacher, or to his fellow Elders. He is required under the guidance of God, to express *his own* convictions and is accountable to God for his faithfulness. It is the duty of the Session to see that the Sunday School literature teaches the Word of God, and nothing else. It is also the duty of the Session to see that teachers are qualified for the vitally important task entrusted to them.

Conclusion

Let us recognize that some in our Churches seem to have lost faith in the saving power of the message of God's Word. They seem to feel that they (sinful human beings) must "prop up" the message of the Almighty God with programs of their own making to help God be effective, to bring things up to date. The apparent sincerity of these people does not diminish the extent or the consequences of their error.

We need to recognize that it is our duty as Christians to be obedient and faithful to the Word and to the teaching of the Word. This is God's program for His people and is the pathway to the receiving of God's blessing. Psalms 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." The results are God's business, not ours; but our responsibility is to walk by faith.

Every member of the Presbyterian Church U.S. should pray earnestly for those whose duty it is to develop courses of study for our Sunday Schools, that God will give them faith to believe and love His perfect word and use them to develop literature honoring the Scriptures and useful in bringing people to our Lord.

New Wine Skins?

ON January 7th, our Presbyterian News Service issued an official release advising that the *Ad Interim* Committee on Institutional Forms was sending a report and questionnaire asking presbytery commissioners at their *January* meetings to discuss the report and reply to the questionnaire by February 1st.

The very short notice — less than three weeks to study proposals which if approved could pave the way for drastic changes (confessional as well as governmental) in the Church — seemed to indicate an effort on the part of the Committee to rush this through before many in the Church realized what was happening.

Concerned Presbyterians, Inc. feels that any report of this nature which affects so vitally the program and the mission of the Church should receive very prayerful study. We urge that Presbyteries delay taking any action and that presbyters refrain from answering the questionnaire until the Session of each church has ample time to study the proposals.

Among the letters we have received, this one from the Rev. Harry S. Hassall of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, strikes us as being very much to the point:

"The report of the *Ad Interim* Committee on Institutional Forms, entitled 'New Wine Skins?' is the most revolutionary document yet produced by an official body of our Presbyterian Church in the United States. If it should be adopted *in toto* there simply would be no Presbyterian Church left as we have known it. It, therefore, seems to me to be the most alarming effort to torpedo our Church and to remake us in the image of the UPUSA Church that I have yet witnessed (from the left). If accepted by the General Assembly and Presbyteries, it would change our denomination into one

identical to the UPUSA Church and one ready — completely ready — for absorption into the super-church of the Pike-Blake dream. Though many of its criticisms have some validity, its purposed solutions appear contrary to our Presbyterian heritage and are unpalatable to those who love the old Church.

"So shocking are the Committee's recommendations that they have tried an unprecedented method to convert the Church as a whole; they have asked for the opinion of Presbyteries and individual Presbyters. This new stratagem on their part could well backfire if we conservatives act in full strength immediately. If every elder and minister were really informed as to what is going on, read carefully this book, and answered the response questionnaire *before* the next General Assembly, I believe this whole unhappy affair could be ended.

"How I pray that some group of leading conservatives immediately could produce a booklet in answer to this one and therein provide a conservative critique of the Church with conservative alternatives for the future of the denomination! Such a booklet could be studied side by side by every officer and Presbytery of the General Assembly."

We asked Mr. Hassall's permission to publish his letter because we believe it points up the very real danger which will confront our Church if the ruling and the teaching elders of our Church express their opinion without being given adequate time to consider seriously the implications of this document.

We would recommend — indeed, urge — every Session to write immediately to the Office of the General Assembly, 341 Ponce de Leon Ave., N. E., Atlanta, Georgia, requesting sufficient copies of this booklet and questionnaire so that every member of the Session may have an opportunity to read and to study this revolutionary paper.

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