



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

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*

BULLETIN No. 11

FEBRUARY, 1969

Politics in the Church

IN September, the "general presbyter" of the presbytery of Central Texas, the Rev. John W. Cunningham, sent a memo to "selected persons." The memo advised that "several of us — have talked about the need for a meeting this Fall." The memo then went on to say:

"The purpose of the gathering is to begin to lay plans for next year, with emphasis on the 109th General Assembly. We need to have advance word on Commissioners from *all* presbyteries and thought needs to be given to the Moderator. Each of you will have other concerns that ought to be discussed, so bring them with you . . . Needless to say that we must be *discreet* about discussing such a meeting as this. It is unashamedly political."

The memo implied that those attending the meeting would come from a very wide area, and that this was a regular affair.

This sort of thing has been going on in the Church for many years. It is in secret meetings such as this one that ministers have schemed and planned their strategy. It is in secret planning sessions such as this one that the decisions have been made which were carried out at various levels in the Church, resulting in control of the Church passing into the hands of the liberals.

It is some of these same men who now condemn Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., for "bringing politics" into the Church! They charge that we are "working outside the official courts of the Church" because we are frankly organized and hold our own meetings. They have been doing this for years.

It can be said that during much of the history of the Presbyterian Church US the actions and pronouncements of the higher courts reflected a devotion to the Scriptures and to the doctrines of the Church and clearly were guided by the Holy Spirit. Those were the days when commissioners to the Assembly joined in searching the Scriptures and the Confession of Faith for guidance in their decisions. When they disagreed, it was over honest interpretations of the Standards. And when decisions were reached after full and free debate, and in soul-searching and prayer, those decisions almost invariably were faithful to Scripture and to historic presbyterianism.

About fifteen years ago (1954 to be exact) a concerted effort was begun to change the complexion of the boards and agencies by replacing their conservative members a few at a time. This was accomplished through primary attention given to the election of a moderator, through whom the nominating committee was appointed which brought to the Assembly the

names of board and agency members. When the "right" names did not come to the floor of the Assembly through regular nominations, these were nominated from the floor and their election carefully assured by hard "behind the scenes" work.

In time the boards and agencies of the Church came to be largely composed of liberals — radicals, even. Where conservatives served it was in such a minority that they seldom influenced board or agency decisions. The elected and appointed bodies making the decisions which affected the vital life of the Church in its work and program came to represent almost entirely a single viewpoint, the liberal one.

Today the leadership of the Church, including the controlling membership of all boards and agencies, is almost entirely liberal. In the change that has taken place most ruling elders serving as presbyters and as commissioners to the General Assembly were, totally unaware as to what was being done, primarily by a few radical ministers. The elders did not wake up until the takeover was complete.

The extremely critical condition of the Church today is the result of the machinations of men who have taken the Church far from its Confessional foundations and its Scriptural authority. They have taken the Church so far that the membership has been shocked into wakefulness and the elders have been galvanized into action. An awakened lay leadership, represented by Concerned Presbyterians, Inc. is determined that the plans of the Church politicians, to weaken the evangelical testimony of the Church through such devices as "back door" union schemes, radical pronouncements, changes in the Confession of Faith, and eventual merger into the Super-Church being planned by the Consultation on Church Union, will not succeed.

Concerned Presbyterians have repeatedly stated that their primary objective is to break the hold upon the Church which the small radical group now in control

continued on page 2

OFFICERS of

Concerned Presbyterians, Inc.

Kenneth S. Keyes
President
Col. Roy LeCraw
Vice President

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Secretary
J. M. Vroon
Treasurer

Politics in the Church

continued from page 1

exercises. We have said that we intend to restore to places of leadership men who believe the Presbyterian Church US has a testimony worth preserving and who are unwilling to have that historic and Scriptural testimony diluted or destroyed. We do not intend to see this Church disappear in unions of one kind and another with denominations and groups of denominations which no longer believe in the primary mission of Christians to lead the lost to Jesus Christ and encourage believers to surrender themselves more fully and completely to Him.

To accomplish our purpose we *must* work hard and untiringly within the courts of the Church. Dedicated ruling elders who know the vital importance of the issues at stake must learn to distinguish between the false and the true, between those leading according to the Scriptures and those leading against the Scriptures. They must join hands with each other and with faithful ministers until voting control of presbyteries, synods and the General Assembly is once again in the hands of evangelical Presbyterians.

Is Ecumenism Running Out of Fuel?

ONE of the most curious aspects of today's Church in the Western world is that it has no formidable foes on the outside. All the troublesome skeptics are inside. They fight the Church with the Church's own resources. More and more the question seems to be one of faith versus skepticism. Jesus asked, "When the Son of Man cometh, will he find faith?" Is the Church he founded going to stand for something or isn't it? Inasmuch as the Church's mandate and mission, clearly given in its New Testament charter, are now routinely violated, is the institutional church any longer of a mind to hear and listen to its legitimate Head? What would Jesus have said to the 1966 Geneva meeting or the 1967 Detroit conference? Suppose he should have appeared at Uppsala?

Ideologically barren ecumenists in search of fuel will find the ultimate in the New Testament. Indeed, those true to Christ's Word have found that they become one in the best sense when they work together for the Gospel. The most memorable examples of ecumenicity have been found in common spiritual causes.

Evangelicals worked together in hundreds of city missions, ministering to the underprivileged and distraught, long before ecumenists discovered the challenge of the inner city. Denominational missionary boards know all too well that most of their recruits have been and still are theologically conservative. Christians in North America and abroad have now for nearly two decades found common cause in the Graham crusades in ways that no amount of ecumenical promotion has been able to achieve. Most evangelical education was interdenominational before the current ecumenical emphases in liberal schools. Consider also the many years during which summer Bible camps and conferences have drawn together believers from different streams of Protestantism. The ecumenical movement as such still has nothing to match that dynamic.

Biblical Christianity has a built-in dynamic that ecumenical engineering cannot duplicate. The ecumenical movement has failed to capture the imagination of the Christian laity in any appreciable depth. It is being

carried along by the ecclesiastical establishment. History shows that the establishment has never originated any great spiritual movement; it is too much concerned with self-perpetuation of its own leadership. Either it must find enthusiasm among the common people or it fails.

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The Attacks Are Mounting

DURING the last few months attacks on Concerned Presbyterians, Inc. have been increasing both in number and in intensity. In one sense this is encouraging. It indicates that officers and church members everywhere are letting their ministers know that they do not look with favor on the scheme to unite us with the UPUSA church by the creation of union synods and presbyteries and that they are very much opposed to the liquidation of the Church in the super-church being planned by the Consultation on Church Union.

Several presbyteries have overtured the 1969 Assembly asking that it admonish Concerned Presbyterians, Inc. "to cease and desist from circularizing the membership of the churches in the Presbyterian Church in the United States."

These overtures are similarly worded and apparently stem from a common source. Both quote pronouncements of the 1934 and 1961 assemblies relating to circularizing in the Church. They completely ignore the most recent action of the 1965 Assembly which approved the following statement in the report of the Standing Committee of Bills and Overtures:

"In the light of established policies outlined in the form of government of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, it is therefore out of order for one court of the Church to communicate with another apart from the regular procedures stated. The General Assembly, therefore, calls upon Synods, Presbyteries, Sessions and individuals to follow scrupulously the procedures of good order in the Church. *We recognize the right of individual conscience in many matters of common concern to members and courts of our Church. We recognize the right of individual and group 'freedom of expression.' Freedom, therefore, on the part of an individual, groups of individuals, and organizations of the Church to express convictions on matters pertaining to the well-being of the Church cannot be denied. The General Assembly urges and expects, however, that honest convictions be expressed in Christian love and with concern for the truth.* In the light of our vows of church membership and ordination, there is no allowance for slander or vicious attacks against any member, agency, or court of the Church or any other persons or any other organization. When such violations occur they should be properly dealt with through the Constitutional procedures for discipline clearly outlined in the Standards of the Church." [The underscoring is ours.]

To report factually what boards and agencies, seminaries and other organizations of the Church are doing does not constitute a "slandrous or vicious attack." Members of the church and their ruling elders who are called upon to vote on controversial matters are entitled to know what the organizations they have generously supported over the years are doing.

It is significant that the organizations which the radicals claim we have "attacked" have not attempted to refute the facts which we have reported. Instead

they have attempted to discredit our organization by charging that we "resort to lies and half-truths," that we are an "ultra-rightwing organization of hatred and agitation," and that we are working to divide the Church.

The liberal *Presbyterian Outlook* devoted most of its editorial page on December 2nd to a vicious attack on Mr. Keyes personally. It said:

"For more than 20 years, Kenneth Keyes has been seeking to gain his objectives by intimidation, threats and predictions of disaster, by attacks on honored leaders in the church, by withholding benevolences from established and church-approved agencies, by working with a campus nucleus here and there to destroy able professors, by impugning the Christian witness of members of other denominations, by undermining the influence of pastors in their own congregations, by scattering across the church and nation wild and irresponsible charges that were long since shown to be false. His record in this endeavor is voluminous and it is documented."

This isn't the first time the *Outlook* has attacked Mr. Keyes and it probably won't be the last. The editorial is libelous. It would be an easy matter to prove to any judge that many of the statements made are simply not true.

To the charge that Mr. Keyes has been "scattering across the Church wild and irresponsible charges that have long since been shown to be false" we would reply that 10 issues of our Bulletin — the *Concerned Presbyterian* — have been published to date. Most of them have had a circulation of 50,000 to 60,000. Many thousands of copies of Mr. Keyes' message — The State of the Church — have been distributed. We challenge the editors of the *Outlook* to cite *one single statement* in the 10 Bulletins or in Mr. Keyes' public message which has been proven to be false. If they had any evidence which would refute the statements we have made they would have presented it long ago instead of resorting to slanderous personal attacks.

We view this vicious attack as one of the most encouraging things that have happened all year. Only a deeply frustrated person would stoop to strike such a "low blow." It is apparent that the *Outlook's* editors are finally realizing that their attempt to liquidate the Presbyterian Church U.S. and its testimony is about to be thwarted. They know now that an informed and aroused ruling eldership is not going to stand idly by and allow the Church they love to be destroyed by a small group of radical leaders who have plotted to gain control of the political machinery of the Church. They are becoming desperate. Afraid to discuss the issues on their merits, they have adopted the age-old tactic of trying to discredit those who oppose them.

In his great commentary on the Psalms, Charles Haddon Spurgeon said two things which we think are pertinent. He wrote, "It is only at a tree laden with fruit that men throw stones." And then he added, "Ashes always fly back in the face of him who throws them."

Obeying the General Assembly

THE 1968 Assembly refused to endorse the so-called Poor People's March on Washington. It also refused to urge ministers and laymen to take part in the Solidarity Day program which was to be the climax of the march.

But some of the executives of our Boards of World Missions, National Ministries, Christian Education and Women's Work ignored the decision of the Assembly,

went to Washington and participated in the program. There was even a group of missionary candidates from Montreat. And the expenses of some of the Negro leaders of the Church were paid in order that they might attend.

These four boards are directly accountable to the General Assembly. We think the Church is entitled to know why the Boards permitted their paid executives to arrogantly flout the will of the Church's highest court after the Assembly had refused to approve this.

More "Strange Bedfellows"

THE Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ and the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) — four of the 9 denominations in the Consultation on Church Union — publish *Power*, a daily devotional guide for their young people. The subject of their devotion for March 6, 1966, was "The Suffering God — Facing Death". Here is what is said:

"The story of the Garden is not a story to write sermons about. It resists beautiful meditation. It is an ugly story.

"We don't know the Jesus it portrays from anywhere else. We know Him as the man in control. Who always had the last word. There was no fear in Him. He had power. You read the stories about Him and you know: something more than man is here! But this man is not in control. He shivers. He weeps. He is mortally afraid. He looks like most people just before their execution. He doesn't want to die. Jesus compares badly with Socrates. Socrates invited his friends, talked to them. Calmly. 'I still owe Asclepius a cock' he said, drank the poison cup and died. You would almost be ashamed about Jesus.

"You know the difference? Socrates believed in the immortality of the soul. Death was — so be believed — a door. Even a liberation. The soul was freed from the prison of the body.

"But Jesus did not believe in the immortality of the soul. He knew death was the end. Of body and soul. Death was destruction. The last enemy. Death was the realm of nothingness. The final separation of God and man."

The four denominations which published this booklet have more than 18,000,000 members. They will probably comprise at least three-fourths of the total membership in the proposed super-church. Educational materials to be used in training our boys and girls will be largely under their control.

The author of this heresy was Albert H. van den Heuvel of the World Council of Churches staff. Those in charge of the program for the Youth Quadrennial Convention of the Presbyterian Church US held in Atlanta, December 27-31 invited this man to speak and lead one of the discussion groups at the convention. He was also scheduled as a featured speaker at the Christmas Student Convention of the Reformed Church in America.

DID YOU SEND \$1 FOR LITERATURE?

WE have received \$1 for 25 copies of one of our items of literature. The person sending the order failed to include his or her name and address. The material will be mailed promptly if the person, who also enclosed a tract "Dreaming of a Right Christmas," will write and give name and address.

Session — The Forgotten Judicatory

THIS guest editorial by the Rev. R. Norman Herbert, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Waukegan, Illinois, appeared in the December issue of The Presbyterian Layman; reprinted with permission.

WE United Presbyterians face a crucial question. Like many other questions, this one wears many faces in many places. In essence, however, the question is singular: Is the Presbyterianism we preach and practice a matter of *process* or of *purpose*?

Like many another Presbyterian, it is my boast that my form of Christian expression is based on choice rather than birth. Blessed with a Catholic father and a Lutheran mother, my first choice of the Presbyterian Church was based on mere physical proximity. My ultimate choice of the Presbyterian ministry, however, was largely based on our form of government. Now the very factor which motivated that choice is prompting me to consider anew what it means to be Presbyterian.

There is nothing sacrosanct about the process of Presbyterianism as practiced today. Certainly there is nothing sacred about our personal or corporate practice of that process. It is only when the practice of that process leads us closer to God's eternal purpose for our personal and corporate lives that Presbyterianism has true meaning.

That meaning stands challenged today by our preoccupation with its means.

In our preoccupation to be and remain Presbyterian in process, we seem to have lost the essence of our Presbyterian (and Christian!) purpose. "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever" is a point which, in the words of my associate, "we seem to forget to remember."

Presbyterian church government exists, not to uphold or honor its own process, but to fulfill God's purpose. The glory of our system lies in its past usefulness and present potential as a means for fulfilling Christ's Gospel, not as a control over it. It is for these reasons that I find myself so profoundly disturbed by current trends within our beloved Church.

In my own presbytery, we have witnessed a half-dozen major and minor alterations in structure in as many years. I think it fair to say that all they have had in common has been the exclusion of a vital program of evangelism in any conventional or useful sense, and a consequent waste of the time, talent and treasure of the presbytery and its members with regard to any vital fulfillment of our essential Christian calling and purpose.

Within the past few months a single ray of hope has broken through. Chicago Presbytery's division into several "mission councils" gives promise of at last providing reasonable working units based upon fair representation. Hopefully, this will also free pastors and elders from mere speculation about process, and allow us to begin anew to fulfill purpose.

But that gain on the local scene has been more than cancelled by the upper-echelon advent of the "Regional Synod Plan." Scarcely had we begun to structure for reasonable congregational representation and involvement at the bottom, than this new ecclesiastical crown of thorns is being pressed down on our heads from the top.

Granted, the Regional Synod Plan now facing us must be defeated if we are to remain truly Presbyterian in process. What is more basically troubling, however, to those of us who would be servants of Christ first and

Presbyterians second, is the constant, nagging drain on our own precious time (and God's still more precious purpose!) posed by the need to be forever defending our historic faith and practice against an ever-increasing tide of such ill-begotten, would-be innovative changes in Presbyterian process.

That these novel concepts neither arise from the people by basic Presbyterian process nor, descending to the people, serve any Presbyterian or Christian purpose, only adds to the agony. That our people are required to pay an ever-increasing administrative levy to support the fabricators of such ecclesiastical nonsense, is enough to send one into Christian convulsions!

One of the favorite ploys of those who advocate change for the sake of change is to charge their opponents with the heinous crime they call "congregationalism." Laying legitimate emphasis upon our nature as a connectional church, they then proceed to the unfair inference that the most-connected (i.e., largest) body should be invariably determinative. The inevitable result of this illogic is the loss of Presbyterian and Christian purpose as Presbyterian process is increasingly decided in the essentially episcopal domain of upper-echelon churchmen whose from-the-top-down orientation is administrative rather than individual, and whose relations are invariably public rather than pastoral.

Such was surely not the will nor the way of our spiritual forebears, who long and successfully governed themselves from the bottom up, and who gave the word "Presbyterian" its historic ring of dignity and honor. Indeed, if their history has any lesson for us at all, it is this: If we must err, then let it be on the side of the quasi-congregational rather than the ersatz-episcopal. Our human herd instinct renders the former quite temporary. The latter is invariably permanent!

What, then, in terms which both laymen and pastors can understand and utilize, is the answer to Presbyterianism's present, pressing problem of too much process and too little purpose? We must begin by rejecting the option posed by the essentially episcopal Regional Synod Plan, as it seems little more or less than a trial run for the more emphatic episcopalianism envisioned under COCU. Nor can we make a compelling case, in this last third of the twentieth century, for a system as loose-jointed and slow-gearred as congregationalism, even though it be the lesser of two evils.

What remains, then, is the ultimate option of Presbyterianism.

And why *not* give *real* Presbyterianism a chance? Not some supposedly-remembered, actually-forgotten faith of our fathers that was "good enough for Calvin and good enough for me." And certainly not some thinly-veiled *ersatz*-episcopal hoopla designed to concentrate all power in a few persons. But an up-to-the-minute, yet eternally honorable Presbyterianism which finds its meaning as the means of expression, under God, of His people. Presbyterianism which puts God's purpose before its own process.

Such Presbyterianism can only begin with our forgotten judicatory — the session. And this must mark the beginning of the end for those false forms of Presbyterian process which arrogate power from the many who are upwardly represented by session, and concentrate it instead in the hands of a few executives and administrators. Such power too easily becomes a descending force to exact fiscal fealty, while using the resultant fiscal product to build a still broader base of power.

Only at the session level can this power-dollar-power cycle be broken, for it is only at the session level that dollars and real power through upward representation originate.

But let the power of session be broken, either by formal change in our form of government or by session's own dereliction of duty, and the whole locus of Presbyterian power will quickly shift from the people and their chosen representatives working through ascending judicatories, to a system of descending ecclesiastical appointees representing no interests save their own as advanced by pleasing their superiors. So Presbyterian process must be made to serve Presbyterian (and Christian!) purpose lest, merely seeking and serving a process only, we serve no purpose under God at all.

But what, you ask, can session do? Surprisingly, session can do, in essence though not in kind, just about anything any superior judicatory of our Church can do. In addition, session has the power of proximity to the people's purse which finally finances the work of all judicatories. Any judicatory can levy an assessment. Only session can capably conduct an every member canvass which adds the personal and purposeful elements of understanding and concern to the continuing process of budget and program.

What can session do? Obviously, session ought not to abuse powers as vast as those intimated above. Indeed, session must be as careful to rightly use fiscal force as it is to avoid instructing its delegates to superior judicatories. This does not mean, however, that session (or individual elders) should docilely pay and pray while more outspoken individuals in other judicatories have the whole say. We can have *real* Presbyterianism, government by the people from-the-bottom-up, only if the people who form the base of the Presbyterian power pyramid are as willing to speak out as those who form the point.

What, then, can session do? It can, as it always has, send uninstructed delegates to superior judicatories. But it can make sure that those uninstructed delegates have two hind legs, a strong voice, and the disposition to use all three! For it seems likely that one-half of the questionable process and program plaguing our Church today can be traced back to the silence of laymen.

What can session do? It can learn, together with its elder members and all whom they represent, that our Christian duty does not end with mere giving. We must give, make no mistake about that! But only with and to a cause. And our cause is the cause of Christ as God gives us grace to understand it. Our hearts must learn to follow our treasure! For it also seems likely that the other half of the questionable process and program plaguing our Church today can be traced back to our common willingness to pay for what we do not truly believe.

Let me be absolutely clear about what I say. I dislike the use of fiscal clout by either the point or the base of the Presbyterian power pyramid. Neither a majority of laymen nor a minority of administrators should have the right to dictate program or process for all, by fiscal pressure or any other means, save the due process of the form of government we have all accepted. "God alone is Lord of the conscience," and we believe that He makes His purpose known through our personal exercise of conscience in our individual lives, and through our collective exercise of conscience through the form of government we have chosen.

But when the time arrives in which the average evangelical feels as ill at ease with the emerging program of his church as an archbishop at a revival meeting, then the time has also arrived for Presbyterians and their judicatories—notably session—to focus their giving upon

causes which they can truly follow with their hearts, for this is the Christian (and Presbyterian) way.

When historic, evangelical ministries of our Church are increasingly slighted by General Assembly program agencies, in favor of merely novel or "experimental" ministries, whose quest in consequence is marginally Christian at best and sickly secular at worst, it is time to consider modes and means of stewardship which place Christian concern ahead of mere blind denominational loyalty. Such action would *not*, as some suggest, be punitive toward national boards or agencies. Instead, it would merely be the expression and wish of local judicatories functioning as a part of our whole historic Presbyterian process.

What can session do? Ultimately, session can and must do exactly what it is called to do. In short, session must face up to the issues, and ruling elders must rule, in order that ministers may be free to minister. This, you may recall, is where we came in. The basic question is still that of process and purpose. And my pastoral purpose to preach and teach God's Word is compromised from the very outset unless ruling elders fulfill their God-given purpose of maintaining the peace and purity of the process within which we mutually minister according to our God-given talents.

Presbyterian Elder, it is God's Church — and yours! What will you make of it?

Covenant Life Curriculum Study

THE Rev. William A. McIlwaine, who served the Church as a missionary in China and in Kobe, Japan, for many years, made an intensive analysis of the Covenant Life Curriculum. Close to 3,000 copies have been distributed in booklet form and a third printing is being planned. This informative study should be in the hands of every ruling elder. There is no charge as a "concerned" Presbyterian is providing funds for the printing and distribution. We will be glad to send you as many copies as you can use to advantage but please limit your request to the number you will actually need.

Welcome, Joseph B. Nalls!

JOSEPH B. NALLS has been a member of the Presbyterian Church U.S. for 41 years. (He joined the church when he was 9.) Joe has a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Chicago; he worked in industry for 18 years; and he has spent the last eight years as engineer in the Army Missile Command at Huntsville, Alabama.

When we learned that Joe was seriously considering resigning his \$20,000.-a-year job to devote full time to the Lord's work we invited him to join our staff as Associate Field Director at about one-third the salary he was earning. He accepted the challenge and reported for duty December 9th.

From now on Field Director Warren R. Wilson will be spending more time in the Atlanta office, handling the mounting volume of correspondence with Presbytery, Area and Local Church Chairmen. The office has been moved to 2793-A Clairmont Road, Atlanta, Georgia, 31329; the telephone number is 636-4566.

Get Out of COCU!

THE following is the text of remarks by Dr. G. Aiken Taylor, editor of the Presbyterian Journal, made before the 107th General Assembly during the course of the debate over the motion to withdraw from the Consultation on Church Union (COCU). Here, we believe, is the crux of the matter of (COCU) membership.

No man may claim wisdom to the exclusion of his brethren in the matter before us. But some of us may have had better access to the facts than others.

I *do* have an opinion on the subject. And I can claim the dubious honor of being the only voting member of this Assembly to have been at Cambridge for the latest meeting of the Consultation on Church Union.

I have *not* been to as many such meetings as Dr. Sengel, another voting member of this Assembly, who attended several meetings as an observer. But I *have* been to one more such meeting than the distinguished chairman of our delegation, Dr. William Benfield, who reported to us with such power on Saturday.

There is much misinformation abroad concerning COCU. I find it unbelievable that material should be in circulation saying that our delegates to the Consultation have accepted for the entire membership of our Church certain propositions and have irrevocably agreed on things which bind the General Assembly. But Dr. Benfield says he has such material in his file, so it must be true.

On the other hand, the opinion is abroad, and I have heard it, that these are conversations only, that no substantive decisions have yet been made, that the Churches have not proceeded beyond the conversation stage, and that they will not proceed beyond the conversation stage until concrete proposals have been laid before the General Assembly for a constitutional vote. This is completely false.

I have here a tape recording of the entire public proceedings of the Cambridge meeting, just held. On this tape are press conferences, as well, in which the leading figures at the Consultation interpret to the press the significance of actions being taken.

From this tape, if the Assembly should permit it, I could play the voice of Bishop Gibson, head of the Episcopal delegation, explaining to the press that the reason why the Consultation could not say in words what everyone actually knew it was doing, was that the delegations were still officially bound by the limitation of the authority they had received from their respective top courts.

From this tape I could play the voice of Dr. Kenneth Neigh, head of the UPUSA Board of National Missions, telling the Consultation that its objective is to create a *de facto* union, by consolidation of boards and agencies, *in advance* of the completion of formal structures.

From this tape I could play the voice of Dr. William Thompson, head of the UPUSA delegation to COCU, telling the press why it was necessary to back up and *not* say that the Consultation would work towards a plan of union to be completed by the next meeting in 1968 — after his small group, the night before, had recommended to the Consultation that it do just that.

From this tape I could play the voice of the Consultation chairman, Dr. David Colwell, happily announcing to the body that remarkable strides were being made in coordinating and consolidating the work of the boards and agencies of the participating denominations, especially in the area of overseas mission, of national mission, of education, and of pensions.

Not from the tape, but from an actual copy of the

resolution, I could read to you the action of the Consultation which created a commission to help bring together the separate work of the various denominations in various areas and to further consolidate the actual cooperative enterprises already begun.

The Consultation has already announced that it will put off drafting a final constitution for the United Church until after the denominations have come together . . . perhaps as long as fifty years after they have come together.

Before Cambridge, the Consultation was talking about the necessary details of a Plan of Union within three to five years, perhaps by 1970. At Cambridge, the discussion of a formal Plan set dates ten, fifteen, or more years into the future. Why the change from three years to fifteen years or longer? Because, as Dr. Neigh stated, *de facto* union may take place before the plan is perfected. Confrontation, among these churches, at the level of constitutional doctrine and constitutional polity may run into insurmountable obstacles. But cooperation at the level of service, mission and education may lead to oneness of purpose, oneness of action and finally oneness of identity even before the obstacles are removed.

Is all this to be deceitful? No, it is not . . . at least it is not so considered at the level of honest endeavor to which these men have committed themselves. They look at it this way: When you have differences that cannot be resolved, then perhaps if you approach each other through the similarities you can establish, the differences may one day melt away. Here is an immersionist, and a sprinkler. Neither will give an inch — in the matter of baptism. But if they will put the argument on the table, go out for a cup of coffee, then come back to work together on that joint program for mission, in Columbia, Maryland, one of these days they may wake up to discover that differences of opinion over baptism matter not at all.

This is the philosophy of COCU. Meanwhile, there *are two particulars* in which it can truthfully be said that our Church *is* being represented *beyond* mere conversations. First, in the preparation of the Principles of Union, the delegates have been making substantive decisions; these decisions, to be sure, are only upon the principles, and only among the delegates themselves. But the decisions have not been Reformed. They have been *for* doctrinal and governmental principles foreign to the order we now accept. They did *not* commit the denomination to anything, but in Dallas, our delegation voted for bishops, in the approved principles of union, with the Methodist power to appoint ministers to their posts.

In the second place, our Church is being represented beyond mere conversations in the agreements that are to be worked out and are even now in the process of being worked out at the functional level, at the board and agency level, among the participating Churches in the Consultation.

These people are not just talking. They are busily engaged in putting together a future, united Church. If we do not intend, 20 years from now, to be part of such a 25,000,000 monster, the time to say so is not 19 years from now, when it will be too late to back out. The time to say so is *now*.

There is much talk, these days, about the will of Christ and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Some of this talk, in my opinion, is irresponsible. We do not detect the leading of the Holy Spirit from the enthusiastic consensus of ecumenical gatherings. As Presbyterians we are committed to the will of Christ, revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures which are the Word of God. Let us follow Him there.

How Near the Precipice?

RECENTLY we read with interest an article prepared for the National Association of Evangelicals by Dr. David Breese, President of Christian Destiny, Inc. Space will not permit reprinting the entire article but we do want you to read the concluding paragraphs:

"The most potentially influential group on the face of the earth today is the Church of the living God!"

"It appears to be fantastically presumptuous, but it is nonetheless true. Those who know Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour have been endowed with the power of heaven to solve the problems of earth and effect the influences of time.

"No one but a fool would have believed this when Christ met with twelve humble individuals and promised to use them to change the world. Nevertheless the day came when the arrogant power of Rome was turned into dirt and ashes, and the Church of the living God has grown into proportions that touch the very ends of the earth. Nero was big and Paul appeared small when the emperor condemned the apostle to death. But history has made its judgment, and now we name our sons Paul but we name our dogs Nero. So it was that, even in the face of apparent hopelessness, the Apostle Paul could say, 'Now thanks be unto God which always causes us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place.' (II Cor. 2:14)

"The genius of a Christian is that he believes in a Christ who has already overcome the world. To him, therefore, there is no situation too hopeless, no person too degenerate, no goal too impossible, no victory too remote for his God and his Christ to bring the impossible to pass.

"The Christian who properly understands his Bible realizes that corruption is the constant but faith is the variable. He is never surprised when the world appears to be falling apart, he is never afraid of the prospect of immanent destruction, for he knows that 'with God nothing shall be called impossible.'

The Burning Issue of the Day

"How far then is the precipice? If the question were up to the politicians to answer, then the only answer is, 'Very near.' If it were up to the educators, the scientists, the artists, then obviously we are close to the end.

"Fortunately the question is not up to them, but it is up to us — we who name the name of Jesus Christ and profess to believe the faith that overcomes the world. Within that principle, however, it is apparent that our response to the current hopelessness of our world situation is of consummate importance just now. We who represent the God of the universe in the vicissitudes of time are speaking not unhumly, the most important people on the face of the earth.

"Therefore, the question, 'What course will the Church of Jesus Christ take to meet the challenge of these times?' is the burning issue of the day. Nothing on earth is more important, nothing!

"God has ordained that His people should be the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the overcomers. The capacity of the Church to fulfill that sublime commission will surely depend upon at least the following components of capability.

"1. Our knowledge of eternal reality. A church which has lost its God, its Bible and its sense of authority will be of no help in such an age; in fact, it will be a corrupt religion which will compound the problems of our world. Evangelical Christianity will expand its capability only as it increases its sense of authority. Our

knowledge of, and confidence in, the living God and His inspired and infallible Word is our significant strength.

"Our message, not our methods, is the genius of a Christianity which hopes to speak in times like these. Our strength lies not in clever preaching but in a prophetic voice which speaks as the oracle of God. 'The knowledge of the holy' is that sure word for want of which our generation is dying of fear and uncertainty. A Christianity without authority is neither a hope for our world nor is it Christianity at all; it is philosophy and vain deceit.

"2. Our faith that God will work in such an age.

Isaiah promulgated an eternal principle in stating 'When the wicked shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall raise up a standard against him.' 'Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound' is ever true, but especially today. The physical suffering and intellectual disillusionment of our day will surely produce a climate of spiritual sensitivity in the midst of which our God can work.

"The end of the age of materialism is upon us. What an hour for the resurgence of spiritual reality! Someone significantly said in Berlin, 'If God chose to attend the beginning of the church age with mighty power from on high, who can deny that He may choose to do the same at the end of that age when the church faces its greatest hour of opportunity and need?' Do we believe that God is able? That He is willing? If we do not believe this, all our knowledge of His ability and His love will go for nothing. Surely this is an hour for faith. Faith that prayer will be answered. Faith that the Spirit of God can, and will, work in this hour. Faith that darkness is temporal but light is eternal!

"3. Our willingness to work for what we believe.

James spoke with devastating candor when he said, 'Faith without works is dead.' The mighty store of truth believed by evangelical Christians in our day is without significance unless it is preached, published and distributed with prodigious effort to the ends of the earth. The Christian must not be a haughty recluse, proud of his knowledge of God and secure in his ivory tower. Rather he must be a debtor, running with dispatch while daylight lasts, before the hour of foreclosure, to pay his spiritual obligations 'both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise.' We must be more than believers together. Rather it is imperative that we become 'workers together with God.'

"What a tragedy it will be when some stand before God, still possessing all of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge uniquely possessed by the Christian, and all of it selfishly hoarded in their little storehouses. How wonderful to believe the Gospel, how foolish not to work industriously, patiently, that the Gospel may be distributed to others. In our generation there is little evidence that our works match our faith. Evangelical Christianity is today's great spectator sport, applauding the evangelist, the missionary, the gladiators of the cross, ignoring the fact that each one of us is called to be a soldier. 'Work for the night is coming,' is specially good advice today, for perhaps God might cause the sun to stand still and give us the daylight we need to complete — if we show we are serious — the great task of world evangelism that remains before us.

"The invitation is still open. The possibility is still alive and real. Mr. Man of God, how about you?"

Concerned Presbyterians who would like to read the entire article may obtain a copy by writing National Association of Evangelicals, Box 28, Wheaton, Illinois 60187. Enclose 50¢ in stamps to cover the printing and postage.

Teaching Presbyterian Church Standards

MEMBERSHIP in the Presbyterian Church U. S. rests upon affirmative answers in two fundamental areas; a belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and submitting oneself to the government and discipline of the Church. To require assent to such simple and fundamental statements, however, is a long way from completely understanding the doctrinal and governmental standards of our Church.

Once a person is accepted into the membership of the Church, very little is being or has been done to develop and nurture him in the knowledge of the Church he has joined.

Very few Presbyterian Church members know intimately the doctrine, government and discipline of their Presbyterian Church U. S., yet these doctrinal standards are drawn directly from the Holy Scriptures. Without this knowledge, church members are not prepared to defend the Westminster standards or our Calvinistic faith and order. Neither should it be amazing that we have drifted so far from our historical Presbyterian doctrine.

Church officers are being elected by electors who do not know nor fully realize what the responsibilities of an officer are. And, the officers elected in many cases do not know church government or what is required of them as an officer. In addition, students particularly at college level too often are embarrassed or confused by questions asked by their contemporaries

on predestination and the sovereignty of God or too easily have their faith uprooted or shaken by well-meaning but misguided professors of philosophy and religion who find points of correspondence between Christianity and other worldly religions.

This need not be so. If church Sessions, Christian Education committees, and Sunday School Superintendents would initiate classes on church doctrine and government for all levels and ages from high schools through adults, this trend can be reversed. The priority for such courses should be given to high school seniors, college students and young adults or couple classes.

Initiating such courses is not a difficult task. In several churches, small discussion-type classes have been most effective using Dr. Benjamin Green's "Harmony of the Standards" and "What Presbyterians Believe" as texts. Also, the "Book of Church Order" and various histories of Christianity and the Presbyterian Church can provide supplemental material or adequate texts for other studies of church history and government.

Once Presbyterian Church members know their Church they can properly evaluate any changes they may be called upon to make regarding it. It has been the experience of the writer that the more a class or a group of Presbyterian members dig into our Church's constitution the deeper Presbyterianism becomes embedded in their lives and the more consecrated Christians they become. They also gain a greater appreciation for the profound understanding of the Scriptures held by the Westminster divines and their faithful interpretation of them into our Confession of Faith and Catechisms.

Ours is a great heritage and a wonderful anchor and compass to guide us through these sorely troubled and confusing times.

THE CONCERNED PRESBYTERIAN

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— CONTENTS —

Politics in the Church
Get Out of COCU!
Obeying the General Assembly
Session — Forgotten Judicatory
Teaching Presbyterian Church Standards