

MANDATE

EXPLORING GOD'S COMMANDS FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, EVANGELICAL SYNOD, IN THE 20TH CENTURY
JUNE 4, 1973

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Synod does its own business, but watches other groups carefully

Reformed Presbyterians used the 151st General Synod at Covenant College last month to move efficiently through some small mountains of their own business. But just occasionally, the event had a little of the sensation of a three-ring circus. To be sure, most of the action for RPs was in the center ring, since the side circles were in Manhattan Beach, Calif., and in Atlanta, Ga. But those side circles got a good share of the attention as well.

From the west coast, Retormed Presbyterians waited somewhat anxiously for word about how the Orthodox Presbyterian Church's General Assembly was dealing with the proposed plan of union for the two denominations.

And from just 125 miles down the road in Atlanta, the RPs were looking for clear indications of what was happening at the historic meetings of representatives of the Presbyterian Church, U.S., who were forming a new, conservative denomination.

During the week, there came from both side rings capable spokesmen who told in some detail what had happened where they had been and who expressed forthrightly the eagerness of the groups they represented to work more and more closely with the RPCES.

"Closely" for the Orthodox Presbyterians may mean very close indeed. Just a few hours before Reformed Presbyterians gathered on Lookout Mountain, the OPs in Manhattan Beach had given what their fraternal delegate called "overwhelming" approval to the idea of sending an extensive proposed plan of union down to the presbyteries and churches for study and comment. (The first two parts of that Plan of Union are carried in full on pages 4 and 5 of this issue. The third and final section, detailing the mechanics of union, is to be released by the appropriate committees this fall).

RPs RESPOND

For their part, the Reformed Presbyterians found that news to their liking, and later in the week took identical action. Only one or two commissioners voted against the motion, which could well prepare the way for formal approval of the union next year.

Also to the liking of Reformed Presbyterians was the fraternal delegate sent to Synod by the Orthodox Presbyterians. Dr. Clair Davis, church history professor

at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, was both hilarious and incisive as he told his impressions of the relationship between the two denominations.

"We almost know more about you RPs than we do about ourselves," Davis said. "We have looked you over in more detail than we have ever viewed ourselves with."

But Davis said the time had come to put a new emphasis on working with each other rather than just looking at each other. "Then we will really come to know each other's churches," Davis said that such cooperation should be on the local church level, and he especially suggested evangelism as a good area for joint activity. "It would be good for others to see Presbyterians working together that way."

Davis said that the OPs are not without reservations about the union; among the latest questions are doubts about the RP studies in the last two years on the subject of tongues. "I'm not even calling it disagreement right now," Davis said, "just questions." Concerning those OPs who are steadfastly opposed to the union, Davis said that the General Assembly is working on some plan to help them.

In an informal evening session, members of the RP Fraternal Relations Committee summarized the background of the union plan, and indicated the general approach to be followed in merging the ministries of the two churches' various agencies. In most cases, agreements have been reached to maintain the status quo and to work out plans of cooperation and possible combination during and after the union, if it occurs.

HONESTY FROM ATLANTA

Meanwhile, from Atlanta, where about 1,000 people had gathered on the first two days of the RP Synod to resolve their own ecclesiastical futures, came word of the likelihood of the formation later this year of a new continuing Presbyterian denomination representing the theologically conservative element until recently in the Presbyterian Church, U.S. (Southern).

The group in Atlanta, called together by about 30 different local church sessions, represented churches which include about 7% of the million-member denomination. No one fully expects that large a group actually to leave the large church, but current estimates are that perhaps



CLAIR DAVIS

"We know more about you than about ourselves"



BEN WILKINSON

"With love, patience, humility—but definiteness"

150-250 congregations will be represented in the new denomination.

Giving an honest report and evaluation from Atlanta was Rev. Ben Wilkinson, director-elect of the Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship and a minister in the continuing church movement. Wilkinson's straightforward answers to the varied questions of RP commissioners was an impressive example of church statesmanship.

Wilkinson said that the action to leave the larger denomination was taken with sorrow and tears, with love, humility, and patience—but with definiteness.

Wilkinson claimed that although the new denomination wants to be a national body and not just a southern church, still there is a recognition that various conservative Presbyterian bodies should not "build on top of each other."

But such building by the new group is for the future. Right now, there are chal-

—continued on page 3, column 1

WHERE SHOULD ONE DO HIS ALMS?

I've always been bothered a little by what we call "challenge gifts," because they always seem so public. Perhaps that is why they are effective.

Right now, *Mandate* needs something that is effective. To get this issue printed, I am having to take along \$100 of my own money to pay the printer's bills. I really need a few other people to do the same.

No, I haven't given up yet on the \$5 plan, through which we promise to put out a f monthly, 8-page paper if we receive 1,1 gifts of \$5 each during the year. But so far this year, we have received just 281 gifts, and welcome as they were, it has been enough.

But, we wanted you to have this much of a report on Synod, and so we're challenging a few of you readers—right here in public. If there are some \$5 gifts that just haven't been sent yet, fire them our way. But if there are a few of you who want to do something in a big way, our address is *Mandate*, 415 Krupski Loop, Lookout Mountain, TN 37350.

Bill Felt

Most RP and OP pastors think demons are an active force today

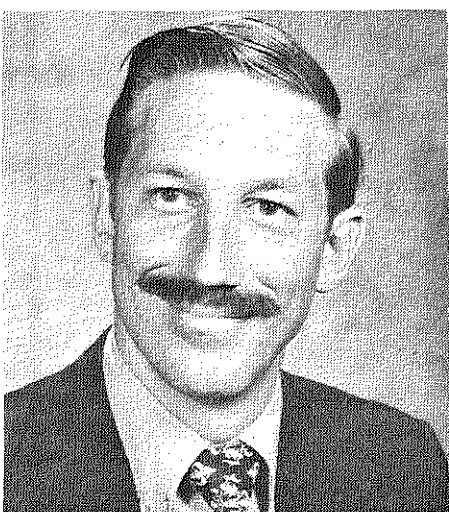
Nearly 90% of all Reformed and Orthodox Presbyterian ministers believe demons or evil spirits still are active today, but only 6% have attempted to exorcise a demon, a special committee report to the 151st Annual Synod has revealed.

The Rev. Tom Watson Jr., pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church, Lakeland, Florida, chaired the Special Committee on Demonic Activity and sent brief questionnaires to all ministers of both churches. In his report to Synod, Watson shared trends in point of view and experience revealed by the survey. "The questionnaire was not designed to find out about demons," he said, "but to discover certain things about people—namely, our ministers."

Only 43% of the ministers polled reported witnessing anything they could identify as demonic activity. The remaining 57% could report no such experience. A full 70% feel a true Christian cannot become demon possessed, while 22% believe carelessness, disobedience or apostasy can result in demon possession. The remaining 8% did not respond to this question. Nearly 26% of all ministers would insist on discipline in cases within their congregations involving the casting out of demons "or other pentecostal activity."

Committee members Seth Dyrness, Jr., and Bill Kirwan shared with the commissioners information and impressions from their own experience designed to prompt "a more thoughtful and exegetical study" of a topic they felt destined to become "a dominating concern" in the years ahead.

Synod voted to extend the committee's assignment for another year, with a Biblical and practical study to be offered at the next meeting as a guideline for our churches.



DEWITT WATSON

DeWitt Watson of Sparta, Ill., to represent NPM in Southeast

National Presbyterian Missions has announced the appointment of Rev. DeWitt Watson of Bethel Reformed Presbyterian Church of Sparta, Ill., as Associate Executive Director, and says that he will move to the southeastern part of the country to assist in the establishment and strengthening of RP churches there.

Watson will take the place of Rev. Nelson K. Malkus, who resigned earlier this year to become General Secretary of World Presbyterian Missions.

Watson, 34, is a graduate of both Covenant College and Covenant Theological Seminary. He is a native of Lakeland, Fla., where he was a member of Covenant

RP Church, and where he also helped establish a surgical supply business before going into the ministry.

Watson worked with NPM as pastor of the RP Church in Wheat Ridge, Colo., before moving three years ago to Sparta.

"I want to see not just churches established," said Watson at the recent Synod, "but churches of a particular kind."

Specifically, Watson hopes to help establish churches interested in personal evangelism, interested in having the people minister to each other, interested in being serious about worship, and interested in Christian education.

No specific plans were announced with reference to where the Watsons will live, although the Atlanta area was mentioned as a likely possibility.

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Progress for the ruling elders

A little bit of understandable confusion at Synod almost turned into a serious step backwards so far as the ruling elders of the churches were concerned. Happily, the issue is being dealt with in good spirit.

Because of the church's growth, Synod had reached the point according to the Form of Government where not every minister in the denomination can automatically go to Synod and expect to have a vote. Right now, only 90% of the approximately 335 ministers can vote at Synod, and the individual presbyteries are to determine which 90% shall be so certified. The purpose of the rule is to keep Synod to a manageable size.

At the same time that this rule went into effect, however, the nature of representation by ruling elders was also substantially changed. Before, each church was to have one elder, and those churches with 300 members or more were to have additional elders for every 300 members more than the original 300. Under the new rule, there are to be just as many elders from each presbytery as there are ministers, regardless of the size of the churches in that presbytery. If a presbytery has 30 ministers, the presbytery is charged with certifying 30 ruling elders to go to Synod, and it is to make the selection on a fair and representative basis.

Now admittedly, there is a built-in inequity in the new system just as there was a different kind of inequity in the old. The new one is that if a presbytery has an especially high number of ministers with reference to the number of local churches in that presbytery (as is the case with the presbyteries near the seminary and the college because of ordained ministers serving as professors), then that presbytery will have an even greater clout at Synod than before because it can bring along an equal number of ruling elders.

Example: Both the Rocky Mountain and the Southern Presbyteries have six churches. But the Rocky Mountain Presbytery has just 10 ministers (of whom 9 can vote at Synod), while the Southern Presbytery has 33 ministers (of whom 29 may vote at Synod). That means that the six churches of the Southern Presbytery may send 29 elders to Synod while the six churches of the Rocky Mountain Presbytery may send only 9. This, in spite of the fact that the Rocky Mountain Presbytery has about twice the number of communicant members.

So how do I call that "progress"? Just this way: that

for whatever inequities may be involved, at least we are sending ruling elders to Synod on the same basis that we have always sent teaching elders—the basis of their ordination to be leaders of the church. That is progress.

What almost happened at Synod this year was that some ministers saw the potential for an avalanche of ruling elders—an avalanche that was potentially uneven across the Synod—and so an attempt was made to bypass the new applications of the Form of Government.

Some midnight sessions kept that from happening, but in the process important questions surfaced about how we have been operating as a church:

Has there been a double standard for attendance? Ministers go to Synod because they are ordained. Ruling elders appear to go because they represent a certain number of members back home. When it became clear that such representation was going to be substantially increased, some ministers (including some who represent no members at all) expressed their concern. So it seems a fair question: why does ordination for a teaching elder traditionally involve more leadership in our church government than does ordination for a ruling elder?

Why, for instance, do ministers dominate almost all the boards and agencies of the church? Synod's administrative committee includes one ruling elder among 10 members. There are no ruling elders on the evangelism committee. There are none on the Form of Government Committee, nor on the study committees for Demonic Activity, Gifts for Ordination, or a World-Wide Presbyterian Church. In most other cases, the ratio of ruling elders to ministers is about 1-5 or 1-8. In the case of Covenant College's board, Synod chose to ignore the stated desires of the board itself and instead elected six ministers and just two laymen to the new class of directors—all after a somewhat cryptic speech encouraging commissioners not to let too many non-ministers get on the board of the college. It makes some of us ruling elders wonder what it means to be a ruling elder.

Why, then, weren't there more ruling elders at Synod? Especially since in the RPCES there are just about twice as many ruling elders as there are teaching elders, why did the teaching elders outnumber the ruling elders 161-40 at the recent Synod? To stir your thinking, I'll suggest three simple reasons: (1) when elders do come, they get the distinct feeling that it is a "ministers' show," and they are therefore less inclined to come back; (2) the importance of their participation is not stressed by the teaching elders as much as it should be—as in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church where now, as I understand it, a minister may not attend the general assembly if he is not accompanied by a ruling elder; (3) the ruling elders themselves have shirked their responsibility.

This is not written in bitterness, but in a desire to see a church taught and ruled well by teaching and ruling

elders alike. In the next *Mandate*, I will make one practical suggestion for easing some of the tension, as well as some other difficulties which are growing in the church.

LETTERS

FINE PUBLICATION

Without showering superlatives let me thank you for a fine publication. I like the format, broad coverage and information details like where to write. Thanks to Jean Shaw for sharing her insight and can we hear more from Bitar in the future?

I hope your 1000 gift requests goes over the top.

AUDREY VAN DYK
Wilmington, Delaware

LIKES, DISLIKES . . .

I appreciated very much the article which you wrote concerning the Southern Presbyterian Church happenings. My impression has been that Reformed Presbyterian people have not had the proper sensitivity to the tragic eventualities taking place in the South. Your coverage helps to remedy this problem.

Your article of two *Mandates* ago regarding the switch in leadership at World Presbyterian Missions was terrible. The article excused the exit of a man who has given the denomination and the world almost 30 years of missionary effort as if you hardly cared or noticed! Your reporting was unexcusably irresponsible.

Thank you for printing Byron Bitar's most relevant and timely essay which I gave to you to print almost exactly one year ago. Enclosed is my \$5.00. You scratch my back; I'll scratch yours.

WILLIAM A. MAHLOW, JR.
Lookout Mountain, Tenn.

HAVE YOU PICKED ANY NAMES?

I note in *Guardian*, and hear generally, that one of the problems of merger yet unsolved is that of a name. Perhaps a little juxtaposition of words will provide us a choice of names that will either emphasize the historical, or pre-split denomination, or positionize us doctrinally.

If, as has been suggested, though apparently not tested, the name *Presbyterian Church of America* is court-clouded, there seems no reason to not merely rearrange it to *American Presbyterian Church*, which meets the criteria possibly established originally, being hemispheric, hence able to include both Latin and Canadian congregations.

Similarly, should that not meet approval, simply shuffling around the words and coming out with *Presbyterian Reformed Church* would not only solve the problem of mis-identification with the Covenanters, it would remove any connotation (to the ecclesiastically unsophisticated) of reaction, illustrated by the phrase, "reformed alcoholic."

The syncretism represented by the National Association of Evangelicals has diminished the clarity of the word *Evangelical*, since it often means Pentecostal. This lessens the value of the term to us as a name, as in the old *Evangelical Presbyterian Church*.

So, here's one man's opinion. A.P.C., or P.R.C. Which ought it to be?

RICHARD ADELMAN
Valparaiso, Florida

CHALLENGE FROM A PERPLEXED PARISHIONER

We suffer from a lack of direction.

Not that there is an absence of the central religious motivation which is the *sine qua non* of authentic Christian existence. Nor that we lack the basic inner direction called faith in God.

We suffer from a lack of *specific* direction. Our desire to please the Lord is frustrated as soon as we begin to act, the moment we are called upon to decide. The reason is not as often faithlessness as it is ignorance.

In the realms of social, political and economic morality, for instance. We are dumb when confronted—yes, we are all confronted—with the plight of society's down-and-outers, with the questions of military spending, with the challenge of human rights, with the perplexities of capital punishment, abortion, pornography, public education. Our ignorance paralyzes us and our debilitating diversity discourages us whenever we begin to combat the spirit of the age. Suddenly we realize that we suffer from a lack of direction.

What kind of direction do we need?

It must be rooted in the Law of God. The principle is so simple, and so difficult: we must learn to listen to the Word. We must recognize that to be directed by the Word means to do what it says even if it hurts.

We need a direction that is specific. We need to venture beyond the cozy confines of statements that "the Creator expects us to take care of his earth," that "Christ tells us to minister to the whole man," that "the scriptures demand equal treatment of variously colored people."

Unless these principles are translated into concrete action, they are little more than shibboleths working therapeutically on guilty consciences. We

need to explore the moral implications involved in choices between industrial progress and environmental health, between automation and employment priorities, between freedom and responsibility, between labor and management.

We need a direction that unifies us. Our leadership has in recent years been careful not to dictate opinions on vital issues, for fear, among other reasons, that they might "bind the conscience" when there should be room for differences. This reluctance of the church to take official positions is perhaps justifiable for several reasons.

The admission, however, does not destroy the question: do not our leaders have a duty—not necessarily an official church function—to provide direction concerning the moral aspects of the vital issues confronting us? Can it be that councils—composed of the most eminently qualified laymen, clergymen and scholars—could be called to deal with such questions? If the Westminster Assembly required five years to hammer out solutions to spiritual puzzles of a deeply theological sort, why should we continue to live as though less serious efforts will solve other kinds of spiritual problems?

Most of the efforts to accomplish this task have been made by concerned pastors, teachers, missionaries, scholars, and other Christian workers on an individual basis, while many efforts to arrive at solutions have been made out of the groundworks of various philosophical ideologies.

Some of us have settled for an individualistic (and correspondingly ineffective) eclecticism. Because we are disillusioned with ideological commitment, we have chosen the safer way of picking and choosing.

Others are taking the more venturesome route

of commitment to ideology. Such a way is appealing in that ideology tends to unite, to marshal the loyalties of its disciples. But such loyalty is often purchased at the expense of reason, of communication, and, because of its narrow philosophical underpinnings, at the expense of a broader unity.

We need a unity of purpose, of vision, of action. While it is true that nothing is accomplished without individuals, it is also true that many tasks—spiritual challenges—cannot be met by individuals as individuals. We must unite, not in order to fulfill visions of grandeur (although such visions may be good for us), but rather that we might by God's grace stop hindering his work through disorganization.

The question is obvious: will the leadership of the RPCES provide moral direction in questions of vital importance or must we continue to flounder in aimlessness and confusion? Can our leaders, who are poles apart politically, economically, and socially, sheath their polemical swords and listen to the Word long enough to mold some helpful and respectable, if not final, solutions, or must we continue to rely on probing lectures, groping seminars, surface-skimming books, and our own confused minds for answers? Must our leadership's refusal to "bind the conscience" mean it is unwilling to "lead the conscience"?

The leadership we need would not be necessary, if we could stay where we are. But we cannot, and we suffer from a lack of direction.

The writer, Timothy Belz, is a graduate of Covenant College, and was recently appointed editor of the *Presbyterian Journal*.



Being moderator is a high honor, and a lot of hard work. Dr. Will Barker was equal to both.

SYNOD—continued from page 1

lenges of another kind. The agonies of a divided church are just now becoming realities for those involved, even though there was considerable realism in the expectations of the movement's leaders. "Don't come out unless you're ready to lose your property," local congregations were and are being told. "We can't sell our Lord for our pew."

Such hardships and sacrifices may trim the size of the new church, but Wilkinson said: "We'd rather have 300 churches who know what it's all about than 3,000 who have to ask what it's all about."

Asked to evaluate the grass-roots situation in the local churches in the Southern Presbyterian denomination, Wilkinson said: "Most of our people still believe the Bible—it's just that they haven't heard it lately."

Of the breakaway movement, Wilkinson acknowledged that it is frequently criticized for being racist. "It's just a dodge," he said. "Our first congregation was an integrated church. We'll leave behind more segregationists than we bring with us."

The new group is recommending Covenant College and Covenant Seminary to its people, is supporting some WPM missionaries, and is officially recommending Rev. Donald J. MacNair's textbook on church planting. Further cooperation with the RPC,ES is certain to follow in the months ahead.

Besides Wilkinson, two other leaders of the new movement were in attendance at Synod. One was Rev. Kennedy Smartt of Hopewell, Va., who was elected to the Covenant College board of trustees. The other was Dr. G. Aiken Taylor, editor of the *Presbyterian Journal*. Both men have recently become ministers of the RPC,ES, although probably only on a temporary basis until their own continuing church is formally organized.

THEIR OWN BUSINESS, TOO

Reformed Presbyterians had their own business, too. An extensive part of the schedule was devoted, as usual, to reports from the various agencies and committees and election of new members to the boards of those groups. A full listing of those

boards and committees will be carried in the next issue of *Mandate*, along with additional excerpts from various committee reports and studies.

Receiving considerable attention were reports from study committees on the subjects of divorce and remarriage and whether a man should be ordained to the ministry if he is planning to enter a counseling ministry on a full-time basis. On both issues, there was considerable disagreement, and continuing study will take place. At the same time, valuable study papers were eagerly read by commissioners, and will be part of Synod's minutes for study and discussion by presbyteries and local churches.

Lively discussion also followed a request that Synod modify an earlier study on speaking in tongues. Whether I Corinthians 14 "discourages," "does not encourage," or "discourages the disorderly and uninterpreted" speaking in tongues proved too difficult a question to solve in the short time available, and that matter was referred to a new committee for further study.

Carefully steering Synod through its business was Moderator William S. Barker, Faculty Dean and church history professor at Covenant Theological Seminary. Barker was even and fair, but also occasionally exhorted commissioners when he felt they were unruly, inattentive, or acting in a wrong spirit. He also set a tone of good discipline by appointing a sergeant-at-arms.

Rev. E. A. Steele III of First Reformed Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis was an able and eloquent assistant moderator. The Barker-Steele team was certainly the youngest leadership ever elected by an RP general synod.

Commissioners were encouraged to hear reports from Stated Clerk Paul R. Gilchrist to the effect that the denomination had grown about 7% during the past year. Latest statistics, he said, indicate there are 16,277 communicant members in the RPC,ES, 332 ministers, and 4,708 covenant children—for a total membership of 20,985, compared with a similar total last year of 19,530.

Roberts and Myers will go to Australia as pastors

Though not entirely without precedent, it is somewhat unusual for a board member to become a missionary. It is quite unusual when two board members are called of God to the same field at the same time. It might even be unique when those board members go, not as missionaries, but as pastors to indigenous churches. Strange to say, this has happened on the Board of World Presbyterian Missions.

Last December, Rev. Linleigh Roberts, pastor of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Newark, visited the work of WPM in Western Australia. In seeing and discussing what God has done through the ministry of the David Crosses, he became burdened to see the established testimony expanded to other areas of that country. A short period of vigorous correspondence between Perth and the U.S. resulted in a call being issued by Westminster Presbyterian Church in Perth to Rev. Warren Myers (who until recently was engaged in recruiting for Covenant College). Myers is known to the Perth church and is well suited for the ministry there, having worked in Western Australia among the aboriginal people in 1967-68. He looks forward to working with these people again also.

At the same time, a call was issued to Roberts by the Dingley Union Church in suburban Melbourne. Roberts is an Australian and has been burdened to minister to his own people for several years. Presently, a major union between some of the large denominations in Australia is being planned and the religious situation is particularly acute. Because of the spiritual dearth, the Dingley church is concerned that Roberts should spend a significant part of his time teaching other groups.

Though the two men will be separated by considerable distance, they envision working as a team in a joint effort with missionaries of World Presbyterian Missions to establish a sound testimony on that continent. The WPM board has enthusiastically endorsed this concept and

has appointed Myers and Roberts as board representatives to Australia.

The men are trusting the Lord to provide passage expenses so that they can begin this work by late September. "That's a bargain," says Bill Mahlow, retiring general secretary of WPM. "Where else can we put three men on the same field and be responsible for the support of only one?"



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MANDATE

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TWO

REFORMED YOUTH CONFERENCES THIS SUMMER

1. John Kyle State Park, Sardis, Mississippi — June 18-23
Harvie Conn, Professor at Westminster Theological Seminary, Main Speaker
2. King College, Bristol, Tennessee — July 9-14
John Reisinger, Editor of "Sword & Trowel" magazine, Main Speaker

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PART I

PREAMBLE: TESTIMONY AND DECLARATION OF PURPOSE

The Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church come together committed to the supremacy and authority of the Scriptures, the inerrant Word of God, and confessing one Lord, one faith, one baptism. These churches* come together to unite as the _____ Church in one scriptural faith and order, in full fellowship in the service of Christ under the divine authority of the whole of Scripture for all of faith and life. We come to this union acknowledging both God's grace and our sins in days past, and trusting in the renewal of the Holy Spirit for days to come.

In this union we seek first the honor of our Saviour's name; we wish to be found pleasing in the sight of the Lord who prayed for the deepest unity of His people. In particular, we would praise God in his mighty grace for bringing us together after a sad experience of division in the history of our churches. Soon after the Presbyterian Church of America was established in 1936 to continue faithful witness to Christ of the Scriptures, a grievous division brought reproach upon this testimony. We recognize the genuine and deep concerns that influenced this division: on the one hand, a fear that indifference or hostility to characteristic features of the piety and hope of American Presbyterianism would doom the church to sectarian isolation; on the other hand, a fear that the reformation of the church would be crippled by adherence to requirements for life or faith that went beyond the teaching of Scripture.

We do not claim to have achieved unanimity of opinion on all the issues that led to that division, but in effecting this union we do confess that the unity of Christ's church should not have been broken as it was in 1937. Both those who left and those who suffered them to leave did so without pursuing with zeal all the Scriptural means for reconciliation. Each sinned in a measure, and even the least sin against the love of Christ brings reproach on His name.

In seeking the joy of restored fellowship, we would confess afresh our need of the heartsearching and healing work of God's Spirit to convict us of all sin and lead us into the obedience of Christ. We express, by this union, our obligation and determination to maintain, by God's grace, the unity of the church in the mutual faith, love and confidence which we profess.

THE TESTIMONY OF THESE CHURCHES

Humbled, but rejoicing in our renewed and extended fellowship, we would call on others to join with us in confessing the Lord Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the Scriptures. To that end we would recall the testimony that has been raised in our communions by God's grace. In our united fellowship we pray that the Lord will receive our confession of His name and build His church.

1. A Testimony to the Christ of Scripture

Both churches come to this union rejoicing in one Sovereign Saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord. We confess Him as the Bible presents Him, not dividing a Christ of faith from a Jesus of history, but confessing one Jesus Christ, true God and true man, whose words and deeds were reported by those who were eyewitnesses of His majesty, and recorded for us in Scripture.

2. A Testimony to the Fundamental Doctrines of the Bible

Both churches believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. Both churches therefore have sought to be obedient to Scripture in teaching and life, in order and worship. Because the inspiration and divine authority of Scripture have been questioned and denied within the professing church, the acknowledgement of the Bible to be the Word of God written is the more necessary for those who would stand today in the apostolic gospel: "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and that he was

"We confess Christ as the Bible presents him . . ."

buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."

These two churches have a common background in our struggle to maintain the clear teachings of the Word of God that our Lord Jesus Christ was

*The Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod was formed in 1965 by the union of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, General Synod and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, originally called the Bible Presbyterian Church. The former was a church of Scottish descent. The first Reformed Presbyterian congregation in the United States existed as early as 1738 and the Reformed Presbytery was organized in 1774. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church began as part of the Presbyterian Church of America which was established in 1936 to continue the spiritual succession of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. The Presbyterian Church of America in 1939 took the name The Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

born of the Virgin Mary, worked mighty miracles, offered up Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and to reconcile us to God, that on the third day He rose again from the dead with the same body with which He suffered, with which also He ascended into heaven, and there sits at the right hand of His father, until He shall come again bodily and visibly in power and great glory.

"Our churches exist because we have chosen to obey God
rather than man in conflict with false teaching
in the church."

Modernism, old and new, in denying these doctrines and the infallibility of the Word that teaches them, denies the Lord of the Word and casts aside the scepter of His rule in His church. Since the fellowship of the church of Jesus Christ must be grounded in the truth, the spread of apostasy brings division. Our churches exist because we have chosen to obey God rather than man in conflict with false teaching in the church.

3. A Testimony to the Whole Counsel of God

Yet in opposing such denials of doctrines essential to the Word of God and our secondary standards, these churches have not reduced the whole counsel of God to a few fundamentals of Christian faith. Rather, as we have separated from unbelief and renewed our commitment to obey the Word of God we have found fresh occasion for rejoicing in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures. Both churches have previously adopted the Confession of Faith in virtually identical form, a form that precedes the major modifications made to the Confession by the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in 1903. The two churches have one Confession, a Confession that expresses the glorious fullness of the Reformed Faith, declaring without equivocation that salvation is of the Lord. *Soli deo gloria!*

To set aside the Westminster Confession for a contemporary creed might be laudable if the new creed set forth more clearly the great doctrines of God's sovereignty in salvation, if it summarized more fully the riches of God's revealed Word, if it condemned more pointedly modern errors in the light of God's abiding truth. But when new and proposed creeds frame ambiguous statements to cloak error, when they labor to break down the doctrine of inspired Scripture expressed in the Westminster Confession, when they substitute a social gospel for the Biblical doctrine of salvation, then loyalty to the Westminster Confession is simply loyalty to the truth of God revealed in Scripture. To confront the sophisticated errors of our day, those who teach and rule in Christ's church need to hold fast to the whole counsel of God as He has revealed it. The high mysteries of salvation by grace alone, in particular unconditional election, definite atonement, and effectual calling including the need of regeneration for faith, as taught in the Westminster Confession may be distorted by those who set man's wisdom above God's Word, but no lesser confession is adequate for guiding the church of Christ today.

4. A Testimony to Holy Living

New obedience to the revelation of the grace of God in Jesus Christ has kindled new desire for holy living. Both churches have manifested deep concern that Christians be not conformed to this world in an age of license, but rather be transformed into the image of Christ. These churches have honored the law of God, believing that contemporary immorality springs not only from the lusts of the flesh but also from hatred of the truth. The apostasy that casts off the authority of God's Word of commandment revealed in Scripture is at the last more destructive than guilty sensuality.

Because both churches teach obedience to the revealed commandments of Christ they have also sought to apply these specific commandments to modern life.

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church has called attention to the specific instruction of our subordinate standards, particularly the Larger Catechism, on the requirements of the Word of God for holy living. The Westminster Larger Catechism so applies the Ten Commandments, warning that each commandment implies the specific forbidding of all sins of that kind, "together with all the causes, means, occasions and appearances thereof and provocations thereunto" (Q. 99). In the exercise of pastoral supervision ministers and assemblies of the church have similarly warned against specific breaches of God's law. The application of the teaching of Scripture to the question of abortion was a recent example of such warning.

The plan for the union of the Reformed Presbyterian Church with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church to form the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, contained a declaration of the Christian life in which the united church emphasized the applicability of God's commandments to questions of conduct and practice that arise in the modern world.

The acknowledgement of Scripture as the infallible rule of faith and life has therefore borne fruit in both these churches in specific exposition and application of the Bible to learn what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man. In life as in faith, the rule of the Word of God is both specific and inclusive. As the church is led into all truth by the Word, so is it led into all righteousness: whatever we do, individually in our hearts, together in our homes and communities, or corporately in the church of Christ, we are to do to the glory of God.

In uniting their witness, these churches would seek to grow in love and new obedience to Christ, finding in that obedience the remedy for both legalism and antinomianism. We dare not build a hedge around God's law, adding to it the burdensome traditions of men. Neither may we ever cease to hear in the law the voice of the living God, whose will and nature are revealed in His commandments. Yet respect for the liberty of the sons of God must not dampen our pastoral zeal to warn those in our charge against particular sins and against those practices in contemporary life that become frequent occasions of sin. When the mass media pander to unlawful

**"New obedience to the revelation of the grace of God
in Jesus Christ has kindled new desire for holy living."**

sexual appetites, the Saviour's warning about the lustful look must be part of the church's instruction. When respect for human life is cheapened by revolutionary violence and socially sanctioned murder, the church must declare that man is made in the image of God, and apply the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" not only to the murderous hand but to the murderous heart. When the proper function of the body is impaired through the vain pursuit of pleasure and escape by the use of narcotics, stimulants, depressants, and hallucinogenic drugs, the church must teach that our bodies are for the Lord; it must warn not only the drunkard and the addict of his sin, but also caution all those who would begin in their desires to rebel against God's ordinances for sober and responsible human life; and it must charge all Christians to obey the law of love in every situation where the exercise of their own liberty under the gospel might offer an occasion to sin to another, or impede the service of Christ's church. When lusts and abuses of every kind are exploited for gain and power, the prophetic warnings against men who profit by pandering to vice must be heard in the preaching of God's Word. Apart from the courageous application of Scripture to individual and social sins in the context of modern life, the church cannot fulfill the whole ministry of the Word of God. As the occasion demands, such application must be made not only by pastors and sessions, but also by presbyteries, synods, and general assemblies according to the principles of Chapter 31 of the Confession of Faith ("Of Synods and Councils"), which are based upon the council of Jerusalem (Acts 15). The forming of Christian consciences to prove the things that differ is most necessary so that the church shall not be conformed to the lawlessness of an unbelieving world.

5. A Testimony to the Mission of the Church

Nowhere does the direction of the Word of the Lord appear more clearly in the witness of these churches than in the work of missions and evangelism. Not only do the doctrines of grace require the seeking of the lost by those who are drawn by the Son of God to know the Father's heart of mercy; the express command of the arisen Saviour sends His disciples to the ends of the world and the end of the age. In obedience to Christ's Great Commission the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod have carried forward constantly expanding missionary programs at home and abroad. Concern for the soundness of the missionary message in the former Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. led to the establishment of an independent board for Presbyterian foreign missionary work and to the division that was forced upon

**"Nowhere does the direction of the Word of the Lord
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those who refused to surrender to that testimony. In the work of World Presbyterian Missions, National Presbyterian Missions, and the Board of Home Missions of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod and the Committee on Foreign Missions and the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the cause of truly Presbyterian missions has prospered. Missionaries supported by these agencies now serve throughout the United States and Canada as well as in thirteen other countries. Evangelism is also served by the printed word through the labors of our committees on Christian education.

In contrast to the secularized evangelism that would substitute political and social action for the proclamation of Christ's kingdom, the Biblical evangelism to which these churches are committed recognizes that Christ must be obeyed in His program; that the gospel must be preached to all nations, and that until He comes only the sword of the Spirit may be wielded in His name. These churches have sought to manifest the compassion of Christ by deeds of mercy and to proclaim the gospel of Christ by words of power, but the power they claim is spiritual. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh; for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God . . . , casting down imaginations and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God . . ." (II Corinthians 10:3-5).

DECLARATION OF PURPOSE

In so speaking of the witness of our churches, we know that we have nothing that we have not received, and that we have this treasure in earthen vessels. Yet in dependence upon the Sovereign God of grace and truth, we come together reaffirming our commitment to Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, to His infallible Word, the Holy Bible, and to the pattern of sound words set forth in Scripture and summarized in the Westminster standards. We would now with lowliness, meekness, forbearance, and longsuffering give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. To this end we of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church would remove every wall of partition that divides us, manifesting in one fellowship of order and service that unity under the Word of Christ that we profess as members of His body.

We do confess that all saints that are united to Jesus Christ their Head, by His Spirit, and by faith, have fellowship with Him in His grace, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory; and, being united to one another in love, have communion in each other's gifts and graces. As God now offers to us opportunity we would assume the obligation of our profession to extend and maintain toward one another a holy fellowship and communion

in the worship of God, in performing such other spiritual services as tend to our mutual edification, and in relieving one another according to our several abilities and necessities.

And we pray that the ascended Lord will fill us with His Spirit, will give us grace to be faithful to our affirmations, and will bless this our work of ministering in His name till we all attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, and that to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, dominion and power, now and forever, world without end. Amen.

PART II

Resolved, that the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church be united on the following bases:

A. The supreme standard shall be the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the Word of God written, inerrant in the original writings, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

B. The following subordinate doctrinal standards:

1. The text of the Confession of Faith of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster in 1646, except for those slight revisions adopted by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

2. The Westminster Larger Catechism with questions 86-89 amended to read as follows:

Q. 86. *What is the communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death?*

A. The communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death, is, in that their souls are then made perfect in holiness, and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies, which even in death continue united to Christ, and rest in their graves as in their beds, till at the return of Christ they be again united to their souls. Whereas the souls of the wicked are at their death cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, and their bodies kept in their graves, as in their prisons, till the resurrection and judgment of the great day.

Q. 87. *What are we to believe concerning the resurrection?*

A. We are to believe, that at the last time there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust: when they that are then found alive shall in a moment be changed; and the self-same bodies of the dead which were laid in the grave, being then again united to their souls forever, shall be raised up by the power of Christ. The bodies of the just, by the Spirit of Christ, and by virtue of his resurrection as their head, shall be raised in power, spiritual, incorruptible, and made like to his glorious body; and the bodies of the wicked shall be raised up in dishonor by him, as an offended judge.

Q. 88. *What shall follow after the resurrection?*

A. After the coming of the Lord and the resurrection of the just and the unjust shall follow the final judgment of angels and men. The day and the hour of the coming of the Lord no man knoweth, that all may watch and pray and be ready.

Q. 89. *What shall be done to the wicked when they are judged?*

A. When they are judged, the wicked shall be set on Christ's left hand, and, upon clear evidence, and full conviction of their own consciences, shall have the fearful but just sentence of condemnation pronounced against them; and thereupon shall be cast out from the favourable presence of God, and the glorious fellowship with Christ, his saints, and all his holy angels, into hell, to be punished with unspeakable torments, both of body and soul, with the devil and his angels forever.

3. The Westminster Shorter Catechism.

C. Form of Government—

1. The congregations, sessions, and presbyteries of the united Church shall operate under one or the other of the present Forms of Government concerning all matters, according to their preferences.

2. The constitution and actions of the general assembly shall be regulated by the Form of Government in force in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

3. The Form of Government of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, the present Form of Government of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and the proposed revisions to the Form of Government of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church shall be referred to a Committee on Form of Government in the united Church for further study and recommendations.

D. Book of Discipline—

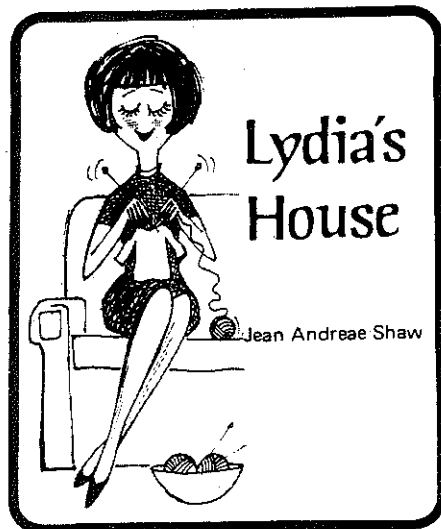
1. The united Church shall operate under the Book of Discipline of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

2. This Book, the Book of Discipline of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, and the proposed revisions to the Book of Discipline of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church shall be referred to a Committee on the Book of Discipline of the united Church for further study and recommendations.

E. Directory for Worship—

1. The united Church shall operate under the Directory for Worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

2. This Directory, the Directory for Worship of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, and the proposed revisions to the Directory for Worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church shall be referred to a Committee on the Directory for Worship of the united Church for further study and recommendations.



So you didn't get to synod. You thought about going, but gave up at the last minute. Now you'll never know how to make a good speech that uplifts everybody but doesn't say anything. You'll never know which wild plants to cook the next time you're lost in the mountains. You missed all the new mustaches, the grits, the tiled roof on the college buildings, and the Barnes' garden party. You didn't get to meet the Taylor children and find out how they feel about moving back to India. You don't know who are the two most eligible bachelors in our denomination, which church has a holy mackerel, why Dave Peterson is in Brooklyn, who was attending synod on their honeymoon, or which couple does 25 push-ups before going to bed. You missed hearing George Miladin preach. You won't know why half the churches in our denomination will use grey plasticware at their next picnic. You missed talking with the five "Flickers" from Timonium, learning about Tom Watson's new book, and hearing Dick Mercer tell about Canada. You missed listening to the latest news on mergers and divisions, and finding out what makes our Colorado churches grow so fast. It was a great synod. We missed you. Hope you can make it next year.

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A new picture of Covenant College has been taken for picture post card purposes. These should be available by September 1. For a reasonable number of cards write to the Development Office.

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Jim Ward's first record is now on sale through CTI for \$4.95. We have played it here at home at least 20 times and like it more each time we listen. Of course, if you think George Beverly Shea is the latest thing to come down the gospel music pike, Jim's music will take some getting used to. But it is not overamplified with that distortion so common to current recordings. There are no heavy drums to cover up the singing, which is clear and intelligible. Jim has a way of setting scripture to music that gives it a fresh meaning. He writes with sympathy for human feelings. A song sheet is included which makes this record an excellent gift for teens and youth groups. Jim earns part of his living by selling records so no taping, please.

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During synod the women spent much time discussing women's liberation, ably led by Claudé Baldwin, a minister's wife who teaches French full time at Calvin College, shares a deep concern for her church, and manages her home and family. Claudé has combined research of scripture with her own insights to believe that the Lord allows women many kinds of fulfillment in a wide choice of roles. What came out of these discussions was the conclusion that all this talk about women isn't going to do much good unless it is shared by men. None of us, married or not, lives in a female commune or an isolation booth. We need to share our feelings with men and be sensitive to their feelings about us. For my part, I will believe the men take us seriously when they

stop making the whole liberation issue such a big joke. It gives me the feeling that they are unaware of the dilemmas facing Christian women today as they search for a way to express themselves within the confines of scripture. Since this is a column for women, I will say frankly that some men in our denomination look upon women as rather dumb, except in the areas of homemaking and child rearing which they are not too interested in anyway. This is a distorted view when one considers how many members of our denomination are women, how many women teach Sunday School, con-Bible classes, make home visits, and attend the stated meetings of the church, besides working at home or on a job. Have you compared the number of female missionaries working for WPM with the number of males? What percentage of the contributors to our denominational agencies are women? There are quite a few Deborahs among the Baraks.

As for women, we need to spend some time finding out who we are. We act like we aren't at all sure of ourselves, apologizing for any intelligence and good judgment that we have. We accept the stereotype that we gossip alot (while men do not) and are most happy when we are having a social time (while men are not). "Ha, ha, just like a woman," the men say, and we blush and laugh at ourselves. We really are a humorous bunch, trying to appear learned and important when everyone knows we can barely cope with a microwave oven. While we were not made to act like men, we were made to act like women, of infinite value in God's sight. Unlike the animals on George Orwell's farm, it is not a case of all of us being created equal but some of us being created more equal than others.

Some men have the impression that when a woman talks about being liberated she means she wants to be like a man. This is not so. She wants to be liberated from the victorian image which still plagues her, especially in the areas of employment, government, and education. She is not asking men for a blind acceptance of her abilities, but she would like an opportunity to prove what she can do. She asks for the opportunity to work at something besides homemaking, meanwhile recognizing that many women find complete fulfillment at home and this also is a precious right.

As we pass from one life stage to another we have different needs, different opportunities. Children who are in school do not make the same demands upon our time as do pre-schoolers. As children mature they often have activities after school which require an audience and a driver. This is the time of day when parental attention is so important. Then come those years when all the children are grown. What to do after breakfast for two has been cleaned up until dinner for two has

to be prepared? One old movie and four hours of soap operas and game shows? Women can prepare themselves for these later years through employment, school, volunteer work, or creative expression at home. Each choice deserves respect.

If the father is the spiritual head of the family could he not clean up after breakfast and get the children off to school if mother needs to leave for an early job? Could he make some adjustment in his schedule? At least one family at Covenant College lived under this arrangement last year to the mutual insight of all. If husband and wife have a strong relationship there are many employment patterns which can be worked out. Often it is the fear of Christian criticism which prevents families from adopting a life style suited to their particular needs.

Could we discuss these matters at synod next year? Could the women be given more time than the annual synodical report which is significantly placed on the docket on the last morning? Are the men of our denomination sure enough of themselves in these changing times to give us a hearing?

+++

Food at synod was quite tasty. There was an ample choice on the buffet table with plenty of salad and cottage cheese. As a member of JLOA (Jello Lovers of America) I was delighted to see so much jello. One of the ministers assured me that there will be jello in heaven which gives me one more reason for looking forward to going there. If the collective weights of all the people at this synod were compared with those at last year's meeting I would say this year's was thinner. Alot of people are really trying to keep their temples in shape. Curiously enough, the ministers having the most girth trouble seem to be those between 30 and 40 who have forgotten that they are no longer as active as they were in their seminary days. The over 40's have made the adjustment to a less fattening diet. Moral of the story: stop over-feeding your minister and put a basketball court in the church parking lot.

+++

Much time at synod was spent on the question of church merger. Since we must all direct our presbyteries on the eventual proposal, we need to be informed. The twentieth century has seen enough denominational amalgamation based upon emotionalism, ignorance, and pure politics! Assuming that you are reading *Mandate* regularly, you might ask your church to subscribe to the *Presbyterian Guardian*, 7401 Old York Road, Philadelphia, Pa. 19126 and *Presbyterian Journal*, Weaver-ville, N. C. 28787. These two publications, plus our own, will educate you as to the present state of Presbyterianism in our country. And then take a Presbyterian outside our denomination to lunch

(low calorie, of course) You'll learn alot that way too!

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It was a great synod. Attending often means sacrifice. Consider the little girl who was left with her beloved grandma for the week, and prayed, "Dear God, thank you that I can be at Grandma's, and thank you that I don't have to be here very long."

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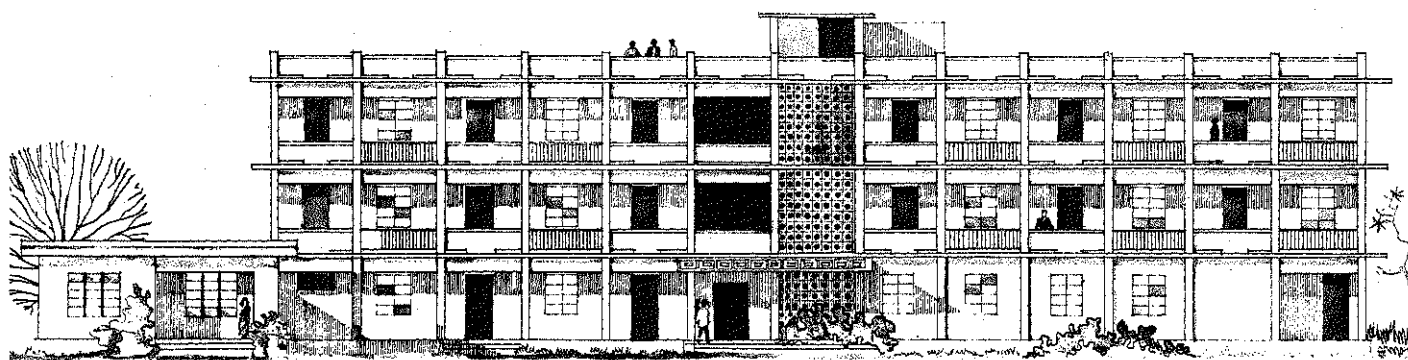
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NEW DORM FOR INDIA SEMINARY . . .

This impressive contemporary building is now under construction at Roorkee, India, where Reformed Presbyterians are greatly encouraged with the response to the theological seminary program inaugurated there in 1969. That year, there were only six students, but by this past spring, enrollment had grown to 33, and Principal Richard B. Strom thinks that enrollment is likely to pass 40 this fall. This new dormitory will have room for 48 students in 12 large rooms, plus a number of other rooms for senior students, for staff, and for a dormitory supervisor and his family. A large lounge, dining room, and kitchen will occupy half the lower floor. Total cost of the facility—including furnishings—will be about \$55,000, or just slightly more than \$1,000 per occupant. Many Indian Christians are sacrificing to have a part in the construction, but generous gifts from North Americans will also be necessary. In a country where the population is still only 2% Christian and where new missionaries find entrance virtually impossible, there is perhaps no greater priority than training future leaders for the church. Gifts may be channeled through World Presbyterian Missions.

COVENANTING DISTINCTIVES TODAY

The Practice of Worship

FOURTH IN A SERIES OF FIVE ARTICLES
BY DR. J. BARTON PAYNE
PROFESSOR OF OLD TESTAMENT
COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Between 1643 and 1647 the Westminster Assembly completed five documents. By the next year, all had been adopted by the parliaments of England and Scotland; and they became "subordinate standards" for the Presbyterian Church, subject, that is, to the primary and only infallible rule of faith and life, which is the written Word of God. But while Westminster's Confession of Faith and its Larger and Shorter Catechisms have received the most recognition as church standards, it was its Form of Government and its Directory of Worship that the Assembly first completed (1644); and it was the Directory that the parliaments first approved (early 1645), to replace the Anglican Prayer Book. Liturgical supplications were out! The Bible itself contains only two "set" prayers: in the New Testament, one, the Lord's Prayer (really only a guide, "After this manner pray ye..." Mt. 6:9-13), and even in the OT, with all its rites, only one other, a formula for Israel to follow at the annual presentation of their "first-fruits" on Pentecost (Deut. 26:5-10). For though the Psalms are often in prayer form (see the titles to Pss. 17, 86, 90, 102, and 142), they remain essentially individualistic expressions of devotion. But Westminster was still concerned about worship: order and dignity were definitely to be maintained. The Reformers insisted, with Paul, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Cor. 14:40). They wanted "the sense and scope of the prayers and other parts of public worship... [to be kept] agreeable to the general rules of the Word of God." Pastors were not to indulge in flippant, slovenly, or impromptu prayers but were to devote thought and effort in preparing their supplications, just as they would to their Bible centered sermons.

Among the Reformed Presbyterians, "order" came in particular to be identified with psalm singing. This in itself was nothing new. In A.D. 350 the Synod of Laodicea had affirmed, "No psalms composed by private individuals nor any uncanonical psalms may be used in the church"; and 1200 years later John Calvin insisted, "When we sing the Psalms we are as certain that God has put the words in our mouths as if He Himself sang within us to exalt His glory." Significantly, the first book to be printed in British America was Boston's famous *Bay Psalm Book*. The original Westminster Directory of Worship contained a section on Singing of Psalms; the Westminster Confession (1646) commends the "singing of psalms with grace in the heart" (XXI, 5; see Col 3:16); indeed, for the next century all English-speaking Protestants were committed to

metrical versions of the Psalter for their devotional song. The first change among Reformed in America occurred in 1787, when the Synod of Philadelphia allowed for the great hymns of Isaac Watts. But here as elsewhere the Reformed Presbyterians upheld their reputation as "representatives of the Covenanted Church of Scotland in its period of greatest purity, the period of the second Reformation" (1638-1649; *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge*, IX: 215), and remained dubious about such an innovation especially when it might bear the stigma of man-made "will worship" (Col. 2:23). Their initial U.S. Declaration and Testimony (1806) therefore stated,

The Book of Psalms, which are of divine inspiration, is well adapted to the state of the church... and these psalms, to the exclusion of all imitations and uninspired compositions, are to be used in social worship (*Reformation Principles Exhibited*, XXIV, 8).

Deviation from the above platform was one of the issues (but not the only one) in George Stewart's dismissal and in the major 1868 disruption of the R.P.C., General Synod (New Light) that followed. It remains as the official position of the R.P.C. of North America (Old Light) up to the present.

The reasoning behind the concept of "exclusive psalmody" is not hard to discern. Almost 2000 years ago the Christmas angel had explained to the shepherds, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord" (Lk. 2:11); and just 300 years ago this same Savior's followers in Scotland were laying down their lives under "the blue banner" (whose motto has stood at the masthead of publications such as the North American Synod's *Covenanter Witness* or the General Synod's *R.P. Advocate*), namely, "For Christ's crown and covenant." They realized, in other words, that the Savior wore a crown and that His total lordship includes the determining of His own correct worship. As the Westminster Confession puts this "regulative principle":

The acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or... under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture (XXI, 1).

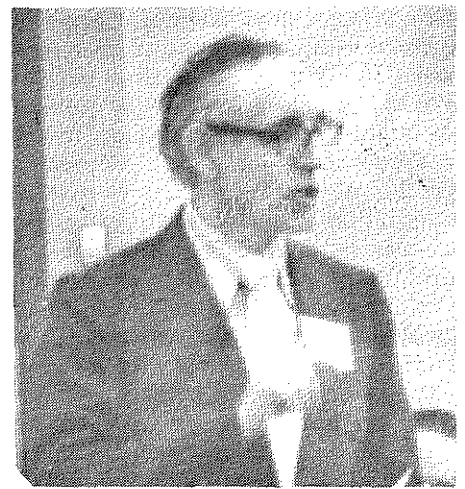
The Reformers were reacting—and rightly so—not only against the material images of medieval Romanism, but also against papal authorizations of "spiritual" hymns from the Apocrypha and other such sources. As an example, the famous Latin selection, "Dies irae dies illa" (*a day of*

wrath is that day), continues, "cantat David et Sibylla" (*sings David and, in the same breath, the Sibyl*, originally a pagan Greek prophetess, but to whom certain inter-testamental and then semi-Christian prophecies came also to be attributed). Accordingly, recent Old Light publicity states, "Since our worship is based on the word of God, we follow the NT pattern of singing the Psalms exclusively, without instrumental accompaniment."

This, however, is just the question; for what does the NT say? There are two Pauline references to "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19, Col 3:16), which might indeed refer to selections from the OT Psalter, defining the word *spiritual* as meaning given by God's Spirit; and there are four great Lucan poems (Lk. 1:46-55, 68-79; 2:14, 29-32), which may be considered more as spoken praises, uttered under particular circumstances, than as songs designed for Christian worship in general. But the ten Johannine hymns that occur throughout the Revelation (4:8, 11; 5:9-10, 12-13; 7:10, 12; 11:15; 15:3-4; 19:1-2, 6-8) are variously introduced as songs of the Lamb or of Moses, or as new songs, to be employed in worship continuously "day and night." True, the singing is said to occur in heaven and not in churches on earth; but it does seem to justify the practice, attested as early as the 2nd century in letters by Pliny, of worshipping by means of "a hymn to Christ as to a god" (X, 97). Interestingly enough, the New Light Synod is now discussing a proposal to emend the relevant parts of its Directory of Worship as being "unduly restrictive" (1972 Minutes, pp. 97-98, 157-165).

What is truly distinctive about this lies in the unswerving covenant conviction that worship must honor the majesty of our King Jesus and correspond to the truth of His Word. It is no idle fancy that in the hymnbook most widely used among R.P. congregations today, *Trinity Hymnal* of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, every number is introduced by its proper Scripture passage. Piety of this kind contrasts sharply with two major failures in modern, non-covenant hymnody: namely, banality and heresy. Concerning the former, Psalm singing at least never lapses into triviality. The Psalter's title in Hebrew is *T'hilleem, Praises*; and while human compositions may settle for "thanks," Scripture does concentrate on "praise." Thanks is subject-centered (on man's feelings), in the 1st person, "I want, I appreciate, I hope"; but praise is object-centered (focusing on our Sovereign), in the 2nd and 3rd person, "Thou hast Thy flock safely led, Israel through the sea" (see Pss. 77:19-20, 78:52-53). And perhaps, we should ask ourselves, Which type characterizes the prayer meeting in my church? Or in my own devotions? We all have so far to go! But let us be those who recognize what ought to be. There was, for example, the elder from out of town who found himself in a service consisting primarily of "Gimme that ol' time religion" and related themes, and who remarked, "It didn't sound quite Reformed Presbyterian." On the other hand the president of our Covenant Seminary is known to have pointed with pride to some of his graduating ministerial candidates, saying, "When they came on campus three years ago, all they could sing in the *Trinity Hymnal* were numbers 663-730 (informal gospel songs); now they have a feeling for the first part too" (Isaac Watts, the metrical Psalms, etc.).

Yet is it possible for loftiness to be just as man-centered and just as contrary to the Reformed spirit as is banality, when its content becomes sub-Biblical and unsound. Concerning this latter failure, the *Trinity Hymnal* would experience real difficulty finding an appropriate canonical heading for such hymns as Whittier's, "O brother man, fold to thy heart thy brother," whose next line teaches, "where pity dwells, the peace of God is there." No wonder some of the Psalm singers



Dr. J. Barton Payne, author of this series of articles, was a frequent participant in discussions at the recent 151st General Synod.

have mocked at "whimnody." Even great music is no safeguard against heresy; though put to a moving Welch air, Lowell's "Once to every man and nation, which still speaks of 'Some great cause, God's new Messiah,' of 'Jesus' bleeding feet... toiling up new Calvaries ever,' and seeking to 'keep abreast of truth.' Thank God the *Hymnal* has salvaged this same melody for use with the words, "Oh the deep, deep love of Jesus" (#453, legitimately identified under the textual heading of John 13:1).

In the areas of musical and of literary form, critics have been quick to detect certain inconsistencies in the R.P. approach to majesty in worship; they may call attention to "the attachment of these groups to the stately psalms of the OT, [but] rendered into what is frequently mediocre verse" (E. T. Clark, *The Small Sects in America*, p. 179). Now granted, not all the metrical psalms and paraphrases come up to the standard of "The spacious firmament on high" (Ps. 19), set to Haydn's great hymn, "Creation"; but we are aware of this and are at work. The R.P. of N.A., for example, is even now issuing a revised psalmbook, with "selections of singable length" (446 of them), "100 new versions," and "music from the standard literature... in current hymnals." A major issue nonetheless for the Old Light R.P.'s as has been quoted above, concerns the disapproval of instrumental accompaniment. The NT makes no mention of such, it is true; but New Light R.P.'s (Evangelical Synod) find it hard to sing chap. 98 of the OT Psalter (#15 in *Trinity Hymnal*—"Praise God with harp... with trumpets, cornet, gladly sing... before the Lord, the King) unaccompanied! Furthermore, while in 1896 the first international convention of Reformed Presbyterians may have felt that instrumental music "tends to sensuousness" (Resolution #6), those connected with the R.P., E.S. Covenant Seminary cannot but realize, whenever their president seats himself at either the chapel piano or organ, what it means to be led, I mean impelled, into heartfelt worship!

Commitment to the kingship of Jesus has had a pervasive effect upon Reformed Presbyterian worship practices. The seriousness with which sabbath observance is understood stems from the Reformed acknowledgement of Christ's lordship over time, together with the changeless validity of His moral law (Commandment IV of the Decalog), in the spirit of Isaiah 58: 13-14, as honored on the Lord's Day (Rev. 1:10). The maintenance of reverence, as opposed to any frenetic abandonment of self-control, corresponds to the presence of regal deity: Christ's "royal prerogatives," as the Cameronians put it, produce worshipful hearts in "the house of the Lord." No doubt, certain followers of the covenant did deserve the title, "dour Scot" (Webster's definition: door, *sour in aspect*, Scottish dialect); and Scripture, on the contrary, enjoins us to rejoice in the Lord alway (Phil. 4:4; see

Neh. 8:10). Joy, however, cannot be equated with the scrapping of inhibitions and a throwing to the winds of psychological restraint, as has been the hallmark of certain "speaking in tongues" on the one hand and of rock-style "folk masses" on the other. Again, the preserving of standards at communion springs from the covenanters' conviction that "the table of the Lord" is not lightly to be approached. The Westminster divines insisted that "they who receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper are, before they come, to prepare thereunto, by examining themselves of their . . . love to God and the brethren. . . by serious meditation and fervent prayer" (Larger Catechism, #171). Most R.P. churches today place the emphasis on men's examining themselves; and they invite all who sincerely put their faith in Christ, whatever their denominational affiliation, to share in the communion. But as late as 1961 the R.P., General Synod, was listed in the Yearbook of American Churches as "holding to restricted communion," i.e., for members only; and the R.P. of N.A. does yet. Its Directory of Worship adds:

Some congregations still use tokens, a practice which came down from centuries past. . . When used, they are distributed at one of the preparatory services; and each communicant in accepting his token indicates his acceptance of the Terms of Communion (III, 10).

But whether by tokens for admission, by preparatory services, or by pulpit admonition and church discipline, all agree to the fundamental idea that "fencing the table" evidences our respect for its Master, the importance of His ordinance, and the reality of His displeasure upon those who partake wrongfully (see I Cor. 11:29). As the Catechism goes on to say, "Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous . . . may and ought to be kept from that Sacrament by the power which Christ has left in His church, until they receive instruction and manifest their reformation (Question #173).

A final, distinctive rite of the covenanted church is, yes, covenanting. This is a uniquely Scottish practice within Presbyterianism as a whole. It has OT origins: not in the Hebrew word's deepest sense, of indicating God's saving testament with Israel (Gen. 3:15, Ex. 19:5, etc., His "last will," for bequeathing them an inheritance of righteousness through the death of His Son; see Heb. 9:15-18, Westminster Conf., VII, 4), but in another of its senses, as identifying Israel's solemn promises to perform God's service (II Kings 11:17, II Chron. 23:3) or to maintain His standards (Jer. 34:10, Neh. 9:38 and 10:29). Covenanting is a form of commitment to God, one which serves to reinforce the believer's own decision. It becomes especially appropriate when outward circumstances might oppose the resolve of God's people. This may explain why covenanting did not arise in England, where the Reformation was sponsored, and demanded, by Henry VIII, but why it did arise in the North, where Protestantism was opposed and persecuted by Mary Queen of Scots. In 1556 certain Forfarshire gentlemen are known to have sworn to a "band"; and to the year 1557 dates the first document that is still extant, whose signers, in the course of inviting John Knox to return to Scotland, covenanted to "apply our whole power, substance, and our very lives to maintain . . . the most blessed Word of God." Others followed, including the Confession of King James VI, 1580, and climaxing in the famous National Covenant of 1638, which committed all Britain to the kingship of Jesus Christ. The Westminster Confession, XXI, 4, thus identifies "oaths and vows" as a special part of religious worship. Covenanters were among those who emigrated to America; and in S.E. Pennsylvania in 1743, on the centennial of this last-named document, they solemnly renewed it and thereby introduced covenanting to this soil. The 1806 *Reformation Principles Exhibited* con-

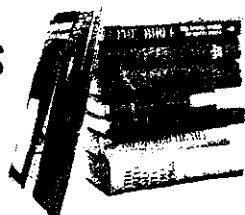
demned any who might maintain "that religious covenanting is not a duty in NT times" (XXVII, error 5); the Covenant of 1871 is published to this day as a part of the subordinate standards in the Constitution of the R.P.C. of N.A.; and in 1954 this body entered into its most recent official covenant at Grinnell College, Iowa, primarily for the renewal of former commitments by the generations since 1871. New Light covenanters have been less involved; but if the prayed for reunion of the two American branches of Reformed Presbyterianism should be achieved, perhaps before the 1980 tricentennial of Richard Cameron's martyrdom, would not such an occasion provide a providential setting, in an acutely hostile world, for renewing our covenanted dedication to the distinctives of the Scottish Reformation.

For can we afford to restrict our heritage of worship, with majesty, to the category of nostalgia, limited to the adjournment of occasional meetings of presbyteries and synods, at which "a metrical version of Psalm 133 shall be sung by the commissioners to an appropriate tune" (R.P., Evang. Synod, Form of Govt., III, 3: IV, 7d)? Heaven forbid! In these dignified denominations are forsaking their theology, and when so many evangelical groups seem bereft of practices congruous to the majesty of God, the distinctives of Reformed worship assumes relevance as never before. *The Inter-variety Hymnal*, for example, has found it can best meet the needs of its Christian college students by reintroducing to them the metrical psalms and the great hymns; and in our own *Trinity Hymnal* no less than 85 of its selections are credited to the 1912 United Presbyterian *Psalter* (one of the best), 16 more to various of the Scottish psalmbooks and paraphrases, and no less than 41 of its hymns to that master of majestic worship, Isaac Watts. Come to think about it, what parts of the Hymnal does your church use most? Did you sing a psalm last sabbath? See James 5:13!

NEXT ISSUE:

The Promise of World Victory: Eschatology

Books & Records



LABOR PROBLEMS IN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE, edited by John Redekop, Eerdmans, \$6.95.

As a Christian layman aware of the fact that there are many different problems facing labor and management today, I found this book giving me an excellent perspective. Not only does it show the differences between the two groups but also some thought provoking suggestions and guidelines for resolving those differences. The contributions of each author are well done and I would heartily recommend this book to every Christian. In particular I would commend Werner Schmidt's article on the application of the Christian ethic to the bargaining table. Mr. Schmidt is currently the leader of the opposition as the head of the Social Credit Party of Alberta. Some may feel his suggestions are too idealistic, however, this should challenge laymen involved in negotiations to know their Bible and be willing to apply its principles.

—THOMAS FRIESEN, deacon
at Glenmore RP Church,
Calgary, Alberta, Canada



WHEATON HONORS DR. ELEANOR SOLT AU

Dr. Eleanor Soltau, medical missionary in Jordan under World Presbyterian Missions of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, was named alumna of the year by the alumni association of Wheaton College at the organization's an-

nual banquet June 2. The "distinguished service to society" award honored her service as a medical missionary, a humanitarian, an administrator, and a devoted servant of Christ. She is talking here with alumni president Dr. V. Gilbert Beers.

Pastor Kyle Thurman of Gainesville, Tex., recounts another experience in personal witnessing . . .

ENCOUNTER

The following letter came to my desk recently from one of our constituents at Sherwood Shores Chapel. The lady attends the early morning services with her husband and then goes on to the church of which they are members some ten miles away.

Dear Brother Thurman:

My heart and whole being was so warmed last Sunday morning by the message, but that happens every Sunday when I come to Sherwood Chapel. But I was disturbed this time, and my heart was pounding so fast I thought it would not stop. Could it be that I am not saved and the Holy Spirit was trying to tell me something and I didn't know what to do?

So many times, I have wondered about my salvation and I have prayed for years asking God to save me, then asking Him if I am saved to give me a sign, and I am so confused that I could cry sometimes.

I wish there was an opportunity to talk with you, but there is never time after the chapel services. I really felt the Spirit was in the chapel last Sunday. I think He must live there all the time. We went on to ----- and I did not have the warmth during the sermon, and I asked myself, "Does God only live at the chapel . . .?" I never have that feeling except at the chapel.

What is wrong with me? It is so silly for a person my age to act so childish, but if I am not saved, what can I do to be saved? I've done all the things that have ever been required of anyone, but the fear has always been there that I have been trying to do it myself, and I know the Holy Spirit must first woo one's heart and then the person must respond to the call of the Spirit. I can't remember if the Spirit called me, so I don't know if the Lord has accepted me or not. I keep fearing that I tried so hard to be saved by myself that I am scared to death that I am not. ashamed

So, I am really scared, and ashamed of my confusion. I cannot say that if I died tonight I know I would go to heaven. I really don't know whether I would be helped or convinced, even after I talked with you, but I sure would like to give it a try . . ."

It was a genuine joy for Mrs. Thurman and me to make this call and give this troubled spirit an answer from God's Word. Limited space does not permit me to go into detail as to how we dealt with this most welcome encounter, but the outline of our discussion is as follows. Possibly a reader of the *Mandate* may have the same uncertainty about his salvation as this dear lady had.

First, I remarked that she would have no concern for her soul whatever if the Holy Spirit were not dealing with her. I learned she had a clear knowledge of the Gospel of Christ. She really lacked assurance. I believe it is possible for a person to have security and not have the assurance of that security. I proceeded with five reasons why one who has received Christ as Lord and Savior may know that he is saved:

(1) The counsel and the decree of the Godhead stand forever including the covenant made between the Holy Trinity concerning one's redemption . . . Psalm 33:11; Hebrews 13:20.

(2) The blood-payment of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . I John 1:7.

(3) The intercessory work of Christ, our Mediator, as High Priest in Heaven always . . . Hebrews 7:25.

(4) The veracity of God's Word . . . John 10:28,29.

After all had prayed, we left. Today, I received the following which are excerpts from another letter:

Thanks very much for coming by to talk and visit with me last week. It was a high point in my day and I appreciate you taking part of your busy time to counsel with me. I am satisfied now and have a happier outlook and am LOOKING FORWARD TO HEAVEN.
Praise God!