

Contact

Number 2

July 1970

THE 110TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

• (As reported by the Executive Secretary.)

THE NEW MODERATOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH U.S. is Dr. W.A. Benfield of Charleston, West Virginia. Dr. Benfield has been a leader in the church for some years, promoting the cause of COCU and leading the church in that direction. He defeated Dr. Harry Fifield, of Atlanta by a vote of 217 to 212. Dr. Benfield was an excellent presiding officer.

• **THE DIVISION IN THE CHURCH** was openly and lightly recognized by Moderator Benfield and outgoing Moderator Lynn when a plaque, badly broken in shipment, was passed from Lynn to Benfield. Said Benfield: "This is symbolic of the church you passed on to me". Said Lynn: "I hope you have greater success than I did in putting the church back together." Though not always admitted by leaders, the division is caused by theological differences; the direction taken by most of the Boards and Agencies, the Board of Annuities and Relief being a notable exception; and by the radical ecuminists who press for organizational uniformity at the expense of church unity.

• **ALL BOARDS AND AGENCIES**, except the very successful Board of Annuities and Relief, reported serious loss of funds and curtailment of activities. Gradually Sessions are realizing their Constitutional rights and are directing their monies away from socialistic, economic, and political activities. The people in the pew are not "sold" on what many of the Boards are doing.

• **PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHMEN UNITED AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY** formed their own prayer meeting to intercede for God's blessing on the Church at large and the work of the assembly. Even though the Standing Committees required long hours, and transportation was a problem, a large group met each evening for prayer and fellowship. In the committees that handled controversial issues, PCU men fought the conservative battle with faithfulness and ability. Since the chairmen of these Standing Committees were appointed by moderator Lynn, it was doubly difficult for conservatives to develop suitable reports, but much headway was made over the previous year. This writer, from his seat in the church balcony, listened to the debates and noted that almost every man who made an effective speech for the conservative side was a signer of the Declaration of Commitment. They bore witness with integrity, logic, sincerity, brotherly spirit and usually with solidarity. They won many votes but seldom a majority. Anyone who knew the roster and heard their speeches could not help but be proud of his membership in PCU.

• **RESTRUCTURE OF SYNODS AND PRESBYTERIES** was, perhaps, the most vital issue before the Assembly. It was delayed for one year for restudy. This is a very doubtful victory depending on how much good work conservatives can do between now and next year. It may disrupt the radical's timetable since they seemed to have been pointing everything for union with COCU and UPUSA in 1974. The vote to delay restructure was 213 to 203.

• **THE VOTE TO REMAIN IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES** was the smallest majority in 10 years. The NCC is losing face rapidly.

• **THE CONSULTATION ON CHURCH UNION'S** drafted plan for a "Church of Christ Uniting" was sent down to lower judicatories and Churches for their study and response. The Assembly also continued its committee on union with the UPUSA Church.

• **THE APPROVAL OF THE PRINTING OF THE MAGAZINE "Colloquy"** was, in the minds of many, one of the lowest points of the Assembly. This magazine published jointly by the Board of Christian Education and two other denominations is full of profanity, pornography, and blasphemy. Advocates of our Boards participation in this publication argued that the church should spend its money to thus show in print the vulgar and profane side of life. Many others felt this type of literature could be bought at any pornography counter and the church should produce more spiritually helpful material. A large number of commissioners signed a written protest against their action. In addition to the moral damage done the church, this action may well cause the Board of Christian Education to lose thousands of dollars.

• **THE MAJORITY PARTY REJECTED ABLE THEOLOGIONS** when they were proposed as additions to the present committee to draft a new confession. The present committee is weak and liberal. The rejected men are men of ability and acknowledged Theological leadership--so it goes.

• **THE COMMITTEE ON CHURCH AND SOCIETY** dealing with such issues as Abortion, Vietnam War, use of alcohol, etc, reflected the philosophy of situation ethics (the new morality or old immorality). In steadfast opposition, conservative ministers and medical doctors were able to modify the radical report. It made one grateful for christian laymen who in many instances demonstrate far more christianity than the clergy.

• **TWO FAR-REACHING RESOLUTIONS** introduced by conservatives have to do with how individual ministers and particular churches may transfer in an orderly manner to the "Church of Christ Uniting" and how churches and ministers who do not go into unions should be provided for. These resolutions are respectively nos. 5 and 17. No. 5 was defeated on the floor but no. 17 was referred to the Ad Interim Committee on COCU and the Ad Interim Committee on Union with the UPUSA Church. It was not anticipated that these would be passed the first year, but they are now entered in the records and may be used as guides. Because of the far-reaching nature of these resolutions and their possible use for study and reference, their entire texts are printed herewith.

RESOLUTION # 5

Whereas, the constitution of the Presbyterian Church U.S. provides for union only "with ecclesiastical bodies whose organization is conformed to the doctrines and order of this church", (BCO 18-6 (17)).

And Whereas, the "Church of Christ Uniting," as proposed by the drafted plan of the consultation on Church Union, does not conform to "the doctrines and order of this church" and therefore could not be a legal partner for church union with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.

But whereas, some ministers and some particular churches of the Presbyterian Church U.S. may wish to be a part of "The Church of Christ Uniting"

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED:

1. That the General Assembly establish an Administrative Commission for one year to carry out the provisions of this resolution only; and that said commission be hereby authorized to receive notice of such individual ministers and particular churches as officially notify the Commission that they wish to transfer from the Presbyterian Church U.S. to the "Church of Christ Uniting" as it is projected by the drafted plan of the Consultation on Church Union;

2. That, as soon as 3 churches and 9 ministers have notified the Commission of their desire to transfer, the Commission shall organize them into a provisional Synod. This Synod will establish 3 presbyteries. These presbyteries will be the receiving and dismissing agents for such additional ministers and churches as express their desire to transfer to the Church of Christ Uniting. After the historical precedent of Snedecor Memorial Synod, the district of the provisional Synod and its presbyteries need not be geographically contiguous;

3. That the General Assembly authorize and request the respective presbyteries to dismiss any minister and particular church who so requests from their present presbytery to a presbytery of the provisional Synod on or before March 1, 1972, in order that they may transfer to the Church of Christ Uniting;

4. That the General Assembly assure such ministers as shall transfer to the "Church of Christ Uniting" of all the rights and privileges under their minister's annuity contract with the Board of Annuities and Relief that would accrue to any member of the fund who ceased to be a minister of the Presbyterian Church U.S.:

5. That any particular church that shall request same shall be transferred by its Presbytery to a Presbytery of the provisional Synod upon receipt by the Presbytery of certificate that in a duly called congregational meeting with a quorum present, two-thirds of the voting members present voted to request such a transfer. Any property held by that particular church shall remain in possession of said congregation and be transferred with it;

6. That the present ad-interim committee on COCU shall continue in effect through May 1, 1972, at which time it shall be automatically dissolved and the Presbyterian Church U.S. shall cease to have any connection with the COCU. (Defeated but recorded.)

RESOLUTION #17

Whereas, there are different interpretations of that unity to which obedience to Christ calls professing Christians; and

Whereas, numerous loyal Presbyterians in conscience believe that both the Reformed faith and order most faithfully depict God's will for His Church in all ages; and

Whereas, equally sincere members of the Presbyterian Church U.S. do not believe that conformity to the doctrine and order of the Presbyterian Church U.S. (BCO 18-6 (17) should be a sine qua non in Church union proposals:

Now therefore, be it resolved that the 110th General Assembly instruct the Committee of 12 and the Committee on the Consultation on Church Union to incorporate into any Plans they may devise for the union of this Church with other bodies an alternate arrangement for those synods, presbyteries and local churches unwilling to enter such merger, such alternate arrangement to take the form of provisional bodies erected to receive and hold presbyteries and local churches.

For the purpose of implementing this resolution, the plan of union should provide for the creation of a General Assembly administrative commission with power to organize and form which may vote by two-thirds of those present and voting, to remain out of any united body formed by the merger of the Presbyterian Church U.S. with other Churches.

(Referred to the Ad Interim Committee on the Consultation on Church Union and the Ad Interim Committee on Union with the UPUSA as information.)

CRISIS IN EVANGELISM

(NOTE: An address delivered to Georgia meeting of PCU by the Rev. Ben Wilkinson, Evangelist.)

At no point is the crisis in the church quite so critical as in the area of evangelism. At no point is the crisis in the Church quite so damaging and damning to the lives and souls of men as in the area of evangelism. And at no point is the crisis in the Church so evident, clear, plain as in the area of evangelism. This is easily seen in the net gain membership statistics that I list below.

You will be aware that we get the annual net gain by adding the number who are received by profession of faith, transfer of letter or restatement of faith, and those reactivated from the inactive roll. Subtract from that total the number lost to other churches by transfer of letter, the number dismissed to the inactive roll, and those deceased. This gives the net gain membership. We shall list the last 15 years since most of us have been living and active in this period. You will notice the tragic decline.

Net Gain Membership

1955-26,771	1960-13,592	1965-5,369
1956-22,051	1961-14,066	1966-5,179
1957-19,060	1962-10,522	1967-1,084
1958-20,766	1963- 9,430	1968- 944
1959-16,023	1964- 7,100	1969-4,256

(loss)

Understand that each statistic represents a life, a soul of a father, a mother, a son, a daughter, a brother, a sister, a neighbor, a friend. They are not empty numbers. But perhaps more tragic are those who have not made the statistics because they have not been evangelized--a father, a mother, a son, a daughter, a brother, a sister, a neighbor, a friend, a stranger--real, live people who live in misery and who die condemned eternally.

You would be interested too in churches established in the same period. You will notice the apex and the decline.

Number Of Churches

1955-3,852	1960-3,995	1965-4,008
		(apex)
1956-3,875	1961-3,998	1966-4,003
1957-3,928	1962-3,997	1967-3,987
1958-3,948	1963-4,004	1968-3,960
1959-3,978	1964-4,007	1969-3,926

These statistics can be better understood against the backdrop of our national population explosion. Our Church serves the most rapidly growing section of our nation. Only the state of California exceeds us. While the population soars, the number of churches subsides.

Join me in an analysis of the source of this tragic situation.

The basic problem is theological. The two totally divergent beliefs already explored--historic Reformed faith and Neo-orthodoxy and points further out--begin with different suppositions and move in different directions. The beliefs of the new theologies undercut evangelistic concern.

Let me illustrate. If a person is not convinced that all men apart from Jesus Christ are eternally lost, he will never be zealous in sharing Him. Why bother with the demanding strain and emotion draining efforts of evangelism if all your message is "Man, you are a child of God. Begin living like it". The urgency is lost! Participation in our prime mission dies.

A second obstacle is that controversy in the Church has created confusion in the minds of many. And a confused person loses his desire to confront people with Jesus Christ. To do this consistently, conviction of the truth of Christ is necessary; the confusion of controversy is undermining this needed conviction. Wierd experimentations replace Biblical and proven methods of evangelism. This Biblical evangelism is by most ignored in the confusion.

As our analysis continues the third difficulty is that most ministers are not prepared to do evangelism nor to train their people to do the same. It is my conclusion that this responsibility has to be laid at the doorstep of the seminaries for they are not preparing men to introduce a person to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

In the last over four years as an evangelist with the Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship, it has been my joy to serve about 125 churches. It is appalling to discover the number of ministers who are admittedly unable to talk with a person and confidently present the gospel. A young minister wrote "when you get here, I want you to take me out and show me how to personally present Jesus Christ." The minister I was last serving with said that the thing he should best be prepared at seminary to do, he is least prepared to do. He has never received training and has never felt at ease trying to talk to people about the Lord. He is regretfully typical. And if a minister cannot do evangelism, he certainly cannot lead his people to do so.

No man should ever be graduated from one of our seminaries who cannot and has not been used of God to lead others to know Christ. Nor should men ever be ordained as pastor, teacher, evangelist, or graduate student who are not being so used. Yet we are flagrantly doing this every year.

The fourth problem hindering our prime mission is that we have lost the atmosphere for doing evangelism. Though difficult to do, let me explain. Man is a social creature who likes to do what others are doing. Whereas the Christian should be willing to stand against the tide and do His work, many do not have what it takes. He is receiving little encouragement from his fellows to bear his witness. If he persists in doing so, he is looked on as suspect by some. The literature of our Church seldom speaks to this prime responsibility. The courts of our Church rarely pass actions directed to encourage our prime mission. The boards of our Church are busy "doing their own thing" and their thing is not encouraging evangelism. Special seasons are promoted, like Stewardship, Christian Education, Witness, etc., but never is there the promotion of a joint season to train people to go out and seek to guide others to Jesus Christ. Workshops are held on varied subjects, but not on why and how a human can share Christ with others. Too little preaching and teaching are done on the subject in the local church. Special revival/evangelistic series have been ridiculed.

For years presbyteries sent overtures to the General Assembly requesting the appointment of full-time evangelists. The negative reply was always the same--there is no need for such in our church. Then in 1958 Rev. William E. Hill of Hopewell, Virginia

began a full-time evangelistic ministry alone. He found the need and the interest were there. Yet he was the only full-time evangelist in our Church. This while Southern Baptist had over 200. Then we wonder aloud, "Why is it those Baptist across the street are always growing and we are drying up. I can't understand it!" Can't we?

Today Rev. Hill's ministry has grown into the Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship with nine full-time evangelists, 4 associate evangelists, one affiliate, and a host of laymen who are prepared to assist voluntarily in evangelistic thrusts. Our emphasis of preaching-teaching-personal evangelism has found tremendous need and interest.

Outstanding successful evangelistic churches are officially prejudged and ignored as Coral Ridge in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and Briarwood in Birmingham, Alabama. Some of our most zealous ministers and laymen have gone outside the church to support the evangelistic ministries of Campus Crusade, Intra-Varsity, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and others. Their gain has been our loss.

The atmosphere to encourage Presbyterians to do any type of evangelism in our Church is woefully thin. And worse, little is being done to remedy this.

The fifth point of heartbreak is that ministers and laymen who do believe in Biblical evangelism, as the prime mission of Christians here on earth, are lacking in commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord, and the unction of the Holy Spirit that will motivate them to consistent witnessing. It is a great deal easier to be for evangelism than to do it. It is easier to promote evangelism than to present Christ to another. It is easier to cry, "Why doesn't somebody do something than to do evangelism ourselves".

Let me bring this down as close as I can. Now I talk to none but you, dear one. How long has it been since you sat down and premeditatively sought to introduce someone to Jesus as Savior and Lord? Have you ever done it? Our Board of Church Extension published a book some years ago stating that surveys showed that out of every 100 Presbyterians only 5 ever in their lives had sought to lead someone to Christ. Have you? We have no right to criticize the failure of others until we are ready to pay the price of evangelism ourselves. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin." . . . James 4:17.

This is my brief analysis of the crisis in evangelism. "What in the world can one person do?" you cry. Let me list several things that are being done over our church. If you want more information on any of these, contact me.

1. Gather together those in your church who are concerned for evangelism to begin to pray for openings to evangelism to begin to pray for openings to evangelistic involvement in your church and community. Let me warn you, Be ready! He is!
2. Your church can conduct a revival/evangelistic crusade. Such crusades when properly prepared for and earnestly prayed over are yielding good results in Christians awakened and the lost converted. There are evangelists available to assist churches in these efforts. PEF evangelists have

assisted in efforts in the inner city with no members to churches of about 2000. Ask your Session to lead in this.

3. Your church can bring in a Personal Evangelism Institute to train and encourage your people in personal evangelism. There are evangelists and teams of laymen available to lead in this training period. Approach your Session to sponsor such training.
4. Your church can begin any of a variety of outreaching ministries in your area. Evangelistic Home Bible Studies can be begun among "the up and outers" of suburbia, teenagers, and the downtrodden. Boys and girls can be reached through the Good News Club approach (Bible Study, singtime, fun groups). Child Evangelism reminds us that nearly 70% of the boys and girls of the United States never are in Church Schools. Many public schools are still open to an evangelistic Bible teacher supported by local churches. Negroes are still open in numerous communities to have Bible studies presenting the gospel. And I might add that we have a major responsibility there. The most unevangelized group in our country is the Negro. It would be easier for the average Negro to hear the true gospel in the Congo than it is for him here. Let us repent of our failure and share the gospel with them. Get your creativity to work as to how you can under the Holy Spirit's guidance get the gospel to more people. Condemned persons wait the "good news" you can bring.
5. Pastors, begin to preach an evangelistic sermon on Sunday Morning when the most lost people come. Preach clear, personal, and under the power of the Holy Spirit. Do not hesitate at giving an invitation for people to respond in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ. God still especially uses the preaching of the Word to the effectual calling of His elect.
6. At any point that you have influence in the committees, commissions, and courts of our Church, call for a re-directing of our efforts to Biblical evangelism. Offer and be ready to implement practical suggestions as to how this can be done.
7. You, as a born again Christian, must begin to do personal evangelism if no one else does. The time is now for those who will do God's first work in spite of what the majority do. And when a magnificent minority does their work, others will be drawn to join with them.
8. You can pray! Pray for revival of Christian experience in our church and over our nation. Pray for reformation of Biblical theology. Pray for a return to the prime mission by the church--to evangelize. We are desperately in need of Christians with camel knees.

This is the overwhelming crisis in our Church in evangelism and some working solutions to its cure. Dear one, I plead with you. Don't just sit there! In God's Spirit, do something!!

THE THEOLOGICAL CRISIS

(NOTE: An address delivered to Georgia meeting of PCU by the Rev. Joe Morecraft III, 1969 graduate of Columbia Seminary.)

It has been said that the divisions in the Presbyterian Church, U.S. have been brought on simply because of a difference of emphasis. One side emphasizes the social aspect of the Gospel, and the other side emphasizes the individual aspect, we are told; and for the Gospel to be complete, both sides are needed. Therefore, they say, let us throw down our arms and get together. But that is not the correct evaluation of the situation in the Presbyterian Church, U.S. I wish it were.

The problem is not one of emphasis but of diametrically opposed systems of doctrine - one leading to the Living Christ of the Scriptures, the other leading away from Him. The differences among us are so deep that they are irreconcilable, as they stand now, unless one side changes or compromises their present convictions.

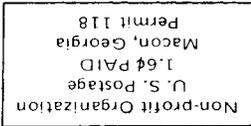
The key in determining the soundness of a house is to examine the foundation upon which that house is built. The same holds true in determining the soundness of a man's theology. For brevity's sake, let us call the two theologies in view, Neo-Orthodoxy and Calvinism. Both theologies are in a sincere search for Truth and assurance. Both are earnestly looking for something that will bring meaning, stability and genuine growth to life.

In Neo-Orthodoxy, to some degree or another, Truth, upon which a person's life can be based is not reasonable, not systematic, contradictory, paradoxical, non-communicable, irrational, subjective, momentary and nebulous. "Talk-about-God" can never be sure or absolute. This leads to a kind of thinking which says that everything is true and everything is false. Our language, in reality, is meaningless when speaking about God, because He is in an irrational sphere, we are in a rational sphere, and never the twain shall meet. We can never really know God because He is so different from us. Therefore, we can never be sure about what God has to say to us, if anything at all.

A Calvinist believes that God has something definite to say to men, and that He has clearly said it in a perfectly self-consistent (i.e., non-contradictory with itself), perfectly rational (i.e., consistent with reason and experience), and perfectly satisfying (intellectually and spiritually) revelation in the Bible, in which men actually meet God in Christ through faith and go away assured that they met Him.

The inspired revelation of God, the Bible, is thoroughly trustworthy, infallible, and incapable of error in any and every statement which it makes concerning the Truth. This is true because the Bible is verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit of God from the "In the beginning" of Genesis One, to the "Amen" of Revelation Twenty-Two. In other words,

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHMEN UNITED CONTACT is an occasional publication of Presbyterian Churchmen United, an organization of ministers and sessions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. Issued from the office of the executive secretary, John E. Richards, 263 Candler Drive, Macon, Georgia 31204



the authors of Scripture wrote down exactly what God wanted men to know, nothing more and certainly nothing less.

Up until fifty years ago Presbyterian seminaries held to this basic view and the church agreed with them. Charles Hodge of Princeton said that the words of Scripture were the words of the Holy Spirit.

The picture has changed drastically. Neo-Orthodoxy's view of Truth has affected, influenced and determined its entire theological outlook, especially concerning the Doctrine of Scripture, and the Doctrine of Atonement.

It is fairly obvious from the above discussion what Neo-Orthodoxy would think of the Bible. The old, historic and biblical view of the Bible has left our seminaries, our pulpits, and our colleges, to a large degree. In exchange for it we hear such things as: "The Bible becomes the Word of God to me as God sees fit, but no book lying on a table can be called the Word of God," or "The Bible contains the Word of God mixed with the erring opinions of men," or "The Bible contains the infallible Word of God clothed in the fallible words of men."

A southern Presbyterian seminary professor said that he did not care what the Bible said, he wanted to know what God said. Another one said that there were parts of the Old Testament, such as the story of Jericho, which should not be in the Bible.

As the result of the prevalent view, I was taught in seminary that when studying Genesis as an historical document, the first eleven chapters were not to be considered at all, and chapters twelve through fifty, as well as the rest of the Old Testament, were to be read with a critical eye.

I was taught in seminary that Moses was not the author of the first five books of the Bible, although the bulk of the Bible and Jesus Christ Himself affirm that he was. In other words, Jesus cannot always be relied upon. He too can be mistaken, for He was wrong in His view of the Old Testament.

I was taught in seminary that much of the prophecy of the Old Testament such as Isaiah and Daniel is not prophecy at all, but is texts written in prophetic form after the events took place about which they were to prophesy. That is basic dishonesty.

I was taught in seminary that Paul misinterpreted the Old Testament at some points in his Epistles, thus making his teaching unreliable.

In other words, enough has been said to see that, in our seminaries and pulpits, the Bible is regarded as a book which cannot be relied upon, but which needs human correc-

tion, clarification, and supplementation.

These opinions that: 1) the Bible becomes the Word of God; 2) the Bible contains the Word of God mixed with human opinions; and 3) the Bible is the infallible Word in fallible human words, make Truth purely subjective. What sounds good to me is truth from God, regardless of how it sounds to you, they say. God could contradict Himself, in that case, in speaking to each of us, and if so we could be sure of nothing we held as being Truth. We would have nothing of which to give testimony.

Again, if the Bible contains the Word of God mixed with human opinion, and if we can distinguish it from error, we would be placing our minds in such an exalted position that papal infallibility would be child's play.

And if it is true that the Word is always clothed in fallible words, like a mask, then we could never get behind the mask and know the one Living GOD.

The Doctrine of the Atonement, if a man's theology is to have any respect at all, must be clear-cut, certain and rigidly adherent to the truths of Scripture, going as far as they go, and stopping where they stop.

Two generations ago, our seminaries unashamedly taught the following about the Death of Jesus Christ: It was a space-time event in history, in which the Son of God turned away the wrath and satisfied the justice of an angry GOD. The Son willingly gave Himself to die because of the Father's love for sinners. This satisfaction was made by Jesus being put to death as a substitute in the place of many sinners, taking upon Himself the punishment and hell which our sins deserve and which God's justice required.

If there is any doctrine which enrages Neo-Orthodoxy and which sets its teeth on edge, it is this doctrine which we have just mentioned, called in the Bible--Propitiation. One Presbyterian seminary professor said that propitiation should never be in any translation of the Bible anywhere.

Another seminary professor said without further explanation, "A cross-centered theology is a bad theology."

In Neo-Orthodoxy the Atonement could mean several things: 1) It was the releasing of Christ's life in which mankind participates; 2) By it Christ lifted the sins of humanity by identification with those sins and overwhelmingly abolishing those sins by His own Deity; 3) In it the Electing God becomes the Elected Man (i.e., in Christ all men are elected), and bearing the rejection of God for the world, Christ becomes the

only Rejected Man; 4) In it, God, out of His almighty power, simply says, "I forgive everybody," with no regard to His Justice and Holiness. If God did this, we surely would stand in respect of His power, but we could never trust His love.

At the heart of Neo-Orthodoxy's view of the Atonement lies one of three things: 1) repudiation of the supreme importance of the Cross; 2) an implicit universalism saying that all humanity will be saved; 3) the sovereignty of man, who is able to thwart God's plan, ruin His purposes and disavow His election.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as lesser biblical miracles, in the minds of many today are seen as being performed not in verifiable human history, which can be given attestation, but in the realm of faith. In other words, if you had been there when Jesus fed the Five Thousand with bread and fish, you would have gone home hungry.

A Presbyterian seminary professor said that it did not matter to him whether or not Jesus arose from the grave, he would still be a Christian. That sounds noble, but what if Jesus Christ is still in the grave today! (?? He did not genuinely arise from the grave in the same body in which He suffered, we have nothing. The Cross through the Open Tomb gives the Christian religion its power and uniqueness.

In the light of all this you say, "I am greatly disturbed about the condition of our church. What can I do?" Let me suggest several things:

1. Know what you believe!! Read the Bible. Study the standards of our church.
2. Be willing to take a stand for what you believe, at any cost.
3. Ruling elders, go to presbytery and synod and listen carefully to what is going on. Be familiar with the issues and stand up and be counted. There are enough Bible-believing elders to change the course of events in the entire church if they were to go presbytery and synod and stand by their convictions.
4. Church officers, see to it that the Truth is taught in your Sunday Schools and from your pulpits.
5. Pulpit committees, be very careful in your choosing the man to be your shepherd.
6. Presbyterians, support your pastor who faithfully preaches the Word of God, with your prayers and full cooperation.

In conclusion, I pray that it can be seen that some things are not negotiable. There are some things which we cannot compromise or give up, even at the cost of peace. For, to compromise in the least degree on what the Bible claims for itself--total and unconditional authority in everything it says; or to compromise at all on what Christ did for us in accomplishing our salvation--satisfied an angry God, is to deny Christ, betray Christianity, and stand with the anti-christ.

There is coming a time and now is, when you and I as Bible-believing Presbyterians must publically and boldly take a stand in the face of persecution, ridicule and mockery, and say with Martin Luther so long ago, "Here I stand, I can do no other, God help me. Amen."