

*An attempt to dig down to . . .*

## The Underlying Issue

Under all the confusing layers of accusation and retort, of claims and counter-claims, of issues social, and political, and ecumenical, and personal—when one digs down to the very bottom—he finds the underlying issue in all the divisions in the Church today. That rock-bottom issue is one's attitude toward the Bible.

Has God spoken? Has He caused His mind and will for the Church to be committed to writing? Do the words of the Bible—in their construction and combination with relevant words, clauses, sentences—represent God's very own revelation to mankind?

There can be no doubt that the Westminster Confession of Faith gives a clear, **affirmative** answer to such questions. There can be no doubt, further, that the Bible's own testimony to the Scriptures is that they, in their entirety (all 66 books), and in detail (all the words) are the very Word of God. As John Calvin says, “. . . the Scriptures are the only records in which God has been pleased to Consign His truth . . . The full authority which they ought to possess with the faithful is not recognized unless they are believed to have come from heaven, as directly as if God had been heard giving utterance to them.” (**Institutes** I-7)

This is the view of the Bible which God's people have firmly held since the beginning. And no wonder, since God's people believe the Bible (Westminster Confession XVI-2) and the Bible teaches that it is directly inspired by the Holy Spirit. This inspiration was such a superintendance of the Holy Spirit over the writers of the Scriptures, that their writings possess Divine authority and trustworthiness, and are therefore free from error.

And, let's face it, it seems that the majority of the leaders in our denomination are mighty uncomfortable with this view of the Bible, these days. Their official and semi-official pronouncements, actions, and literature provide ample evidence to prove conclusively that the traditional, Reformed views are no longer adhered to.

For instance, the **Layman's Bible Commentary** tells the reader that the stories of Genesis 1-11 are not historically, literally true, that the story of Jonah is a parable and not fact, that the Bible indeed contains many errors.

The Covenant Life Curriculum lumps the Old Testament wisdom literature with the wise sayings of Robert Kennedy or Winston Churchill, declares

that all men will eventually be saved, suggests that not all the commandments in the Bible are necessarily God's, and teaches that Jesus and Mark, Luke, and Paul are in contradiction on the concept of divorce.

A John Knox Press book, **The Westminster Confession for Today**, declares that the Westminster Confession “fails to discern the actual pattern” of the being of God and therefore describes “another God.” In the same book the author denies the satisfaction view of Christ's atonement, scouts the idea of merit in conjunction with justification, and ~~denies~~ <sup>declares</sup> that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is derived from Plato!

Dr. Ben Lacy Rose, the Moderator of the 111th. General Assembly, says that it is not necessary “that we accept the story of Noah and the ark literally . . .”

Is the Bible true or isn't it? That's the issue. By whom shall we be led? What is our standard of authority, Whom shall we trust?

Conservatives are committed to the living and true God. He is Truth. God cannot lie; all His ways are truth. If we know God, we know the truth; but we know God only through His revelation and specifically through His Word. The Word of God is the truth, and if we know God, we know His Word as the truth. When men speak of knowing God and the truth that He is apart from the word of revelation which is incorporated in Scripture, they deal with mere abstractions which have no meaning and no relevance. True Christians, who are of the truth and know the truth find in the written words of the Bible the living voice of God.

We must be led by God alone. We can be assured that we are led by God only when our lives are ordered by the infallible standard of the Bible, the true Word of God. We trust only the living God, who speaks the truth.

When the General Assembly, synods, presbyteries, sessions, and individual churchmen begin to insist that their members and brethren take seriously the Biblical and Confessional view of Scripture, then the issue will be settled and we will have a large measure of peace in the Church. But not 'til then. Peace will not be enjoyed until purity is secured. And purity cannot be had until all the life of the Church is shaped by the living Word of God—the Holy Scriptures.

When we get right down to it, this is the issue.

—Paul G. Settle

## The Unfailing Test of Orthodoxy

“. . . although (the Romanists) exhibit a temple, a priesthood, and other similar masks, the empty glare by which they dazzle the eyes of the simple should **not** move us in the least to admit that there is a Church **where the word of God appears not**. The Lord furnished us with an unfailing test when he said, ‘Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice’ (John 18:37).

“Christ has designated (the true Church) by a sign in which is nothing in the least degree equivocal . . . the existence of which infallibly proves the existence of the Church, while its absence proves the absence of everything that properly bears the name of the Church. Paul declares that the Church is not founded either upon the judgments of men or the priesthood, but upon the **doctrine** of the Apostles and Prophets (Eph. 2:20). Nay, . . . the Church of Christ is to be distinguished by the discriminating test which our Saviour has applied, ‘He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God’ (John 8:47). In short, since the Church is the kingdom of Christ, and **he reigns only by His word**, can there be any doubt as to the falsehood of those statements, by which the kingdom of Christ is represented without His sceptre, in other words, without His sacred word?

“The name of heretics and schismatics is applied to those who, by dissenting from the Church, destroy its communion. This communion is held together by two chains—viz: consent in sound doctrine and brotherly charity. But the thing to be observed is, that this union of charity so depends on unity of faith, as to have in it its beginning, its end, in fine, its only rule. Let us therefore remember, that whenever ecclesiastical unity is commended to us, the thing required is, that while our minds consent **in Christ**, our wills also be united together by mutual good-will **in Christ**. Accordingly, Paul . . . when he tells us to be ‘of one accord, of one mind,’ immediately adds, ‘Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus’ (Phil. 2:2, 5); intimating, that **where the word of the Lord is not**, it is not a union of believers, but a faction of the ungodly.

“Accordingly, (Cyprian) declares that when heresies and schisms arise, it is because men return not to the origin of the truth, because they seek not the head, because they keep not the doctrine of the heavenly Master.

“Let them . . . clamour against us . . . for having withdrawn . . . since the only cause of our estrangement is, that they cannot tolerate a pure profession of the truth.

“. . . to me it is enough that we behoved to withdraw from them in order to draw near to Christ.”

— *INSTITUTES, IV-II, 4-6*

- Conservative commissioners to the 112th. General Assembly meeting in Montreat, June 11-16, will find a spiritual oasis in the conservative fellowship headquarters located at Camp Fairley, just up Look-out Mt. road from Anderson Auditorium. A prayer room, frequent testimonies to God’s grace, counsel on Assembly issues, light refreshments, cots for cat-naps, and a PA hookup to the Assembly floor are among the services provided for anyone desiring a spiritual pick-up during the week. Mrs. Paul Settle (Georgia) will be the hostess. Ken Smartt, Jack Williamson, Paul Settle, and John Richards will be on hand to greet those who drop in.

- You may have heard that conservatives captured the convention of proposed Synod “F” on May 16. A great turn-out by Ruling Elders, coupled with expert leadership, resulted in a resounding triumph for those unhappy with restructuring and the general trends in the denomination away from Biblical faith. Dr Robert Strong was elected Chairman of the Convention by a vote of 278-162 over Massey Mott Heltzel. A slate of conservative nominees for committee posts was adopted *in toto*, and the convention, by a vote of 293-139, turned down an invitation to merge with proposed Synod “C” (Kentucky, Tennessee). The convention also adopted a resolution opposing the abolition of synods (because this would give to the General Assembly the power to change presbytery boundaries).

- Dr. Ben Rose (the Assembly’s moderator) and the Council on Church and Society have called on the government of the U. S. to stop the killing in Indochina, and have appealed to the President and the Congress “to declare that as of a date certain—no later than Dec. 31, 1972—the U. S. government will supply no more military forces or aid for the war in Indochina.” This appeal was made following the statement that “the moral imperative to stop the killing . . . now outweighs the moral claim of the U. S. government’s commitment to the Saigon regime . . .” PCUS leaders joining in a protest of the bombing of North Vietnam included: Ben Lacy Rose and George A. Chauncey.

- Savannah Presbytery recently adopted a resolution “deploring” the “schismatic tendencies” of groups calling for withdrawal from the denomination and called on Sessions to “discourage the activities of dissident groups.”

- Asheville Presbytery joined Augusta-Macon Presbytery in asking the General Assembly to declare that the church’s standards “do indeed teach the plenary verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture.”

- Looking for a spiritual challenge, deep studies in the Word, and blessed Christian fellowship? Then you’ll want to attend the Sixteenth Annual Pensacola Theological Institute, August 13-20, at the McIlwain Memorial Presbyterian Church in Pensacola, Fla. Hear Jack B. Scott, James I. Packer, Albert N. Martin, George C. Fuller, and Dr. Robert Strong. Write today for a brochure!

We are often asked . . .

## What Are You Up To?

Oh, we are up to **here** with God-denying socialism, communism, secularism, atheism, humanism, materialism, rationalism—you name it—in the Church.

We are up to **here** with youth-oriented magazines that condone illicit sex, the illegal use of narcotics, violent political revolution, and just about anything else that's unholy and profane.

We are up to **here** with educational materials that relegate parts of the Bible to the never-never land of myth, that deny the truth of many of the great doctrines of Christianity, that question the supernatural character of the Christian faith.

We are up to **here** with conferences wherein God is blasphemed and holy worship is prostituted with profanity and carnal orgies of secularism.

We are up to **here** with the devil's religion.

And we are up to doing something about it.

What are you up to?

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## Side by Side . . .

"I believe that the Bible is our only infallible rule of faith and practice . . . but I do not believe that it is necessary that we accept the story of Noah and the ark literally. The historicity of the story is not the important thing . . ."

—*Dr. Ben Lacy Rose*  
Moderator of the 111th  
General Assembly  
(In the *Presbyterian Survey*,  
Jan., 1972, p. 14)

"The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth . . . wholly upon God . . . the author thereof . . ."

—*Westminster Confession, I-4*

"By him (the Holy Spirit) the prophets were moved to speak the word of God, and all the writers of the Holy Scriptures inspired to record infallibly the mind and will of God."

—*Westminster Confession, IX-2*

"By this (saving) faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein . . ."

—*Westminster Confession, XVI-6*

"But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

—*Jesus Christ (Matthew 24: 37-39)*  
(see also: Heb. 11:7; I Pet. 3:20)

## Letters

We still run into good responses to (PCU's) visit . . . This was the **first** time we have heard the other side. Many thanks for (the) fine presentation.

—South Carolina

It is good to know . . . that . . . we shall be moving in the direction of a continuing church that will be truly Reformed according to the Word of God.

—South Carolina

This May issue (of CONTACT) is excellent throughout . . . Put down a standing order for five hundred copies . . . to the Church for distribution each month. "Contact" provides an excellent means of keeping our people in touch with the developments in the denomination.

—Florida

The April C. E. Conference . . . was a great blessing to my husband and me. . . . I still remember clearly the excellent workshops, messages, and displays.

—Georgia

It would be an embarrassment to this congregation to be associated with your organization.

—South Carolina

God bless your continued rightful stand.

—Texas

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"The truly wise man is he who believes the Bible against the opinions of any man. If the Bible says one thing, and any body of men says another, the wise man will decide, 'This book is the Word of Him who cannot lie.'"

—Midway Presbyterian Church Bulletin,  
Anderson, S. C.

## ANNUAL MEETING OF PCU

Asheville, N. C., August 9

For all Ministers and Session representatives  
who have subscribed to the  
Declaration of Commitment.

*Business Meeting*, Buncombe County High  
School, 3:00-5:00 P.M.

## BANQUET FOR MEMBERS AND WIVES

Sheraton Motel, 7:00 P.M.

Woodfin at Market (Off I-40)

Banquet Tickets \$3.50

For Reservations and Banquet Tickets

Write: PCU, 3436 Wellington Road  
Montgomery, Alabama 36106

## Closet Call

*"And when thou prayest, enter into thy closet . . ."*  
—Matthew 6:6

Keep the 112th General Assembly before the Lord in these days. The Assembly convenes at Montreat on June 11.

Pray for Kennedy Smart, Jack Williamson, and Paul Settle as they lead conservative strategy at the General Assembly this year.

Praise God that conservatives captured the convention of proposed Synod "F," meeting in Meridian, Miss., May 16th. Conservative commissioners from the synods of Alabama and Mississippi barely can believe that they took the whole thing!

The Steering Committee meets this Summer on June 2-3, June 30-July 1, and August 10. The Lord blessed with a very productive meeting in Atlanta, May 5-6.

Special prayer is requested for Governor Wallace, and for the safety of the other candidates for national office.

Continue to remember the P. E. F. evangelists and staff, and especially the big PEF evangelism Conference at Montreat, August 18-23.

Pray for pastorless churches.

*"It shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."*  
—Isaiah 65:24

## Reformation Reaffirmations

*"Sola Scriptura"*

Thy sacred Word, O Lord of might,  
To erring mortals given,  
To guide their faith and life aright  
Through this dark earth to heaven,  
Thy very own,  
Has been made known  
And written for our reading,  
Pure from the pen  
Of Holy men  
By Thy good Spirit's leading.  
This Word, enshrined in Holy Writ,  
No power from thence shall sever;  
Though earth and heaven their place shall quit,  
God's Word abides for ever.  
Not hell's array,  
Not the Last Day,  
Shall witness its undoing.  
O blest are they  
Who here the way  
Of God's Word are pursuing!  
Keep with us, Lord, Thy Word of grace,  
Life-giving let us find it;  
Restrain its foes in every place,  
Let nothing halt or bind it.  
When on our part  
Will then our heart  
To grateful praise awaken.  
Lord, to the last  
Let us hold fast  
Thy Word with faith unshaken!  
—Herr Zebaoth, dein heil'ges Wort  
—From The First Presbyterian Church  
Messenger, Augusta, Georgia

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