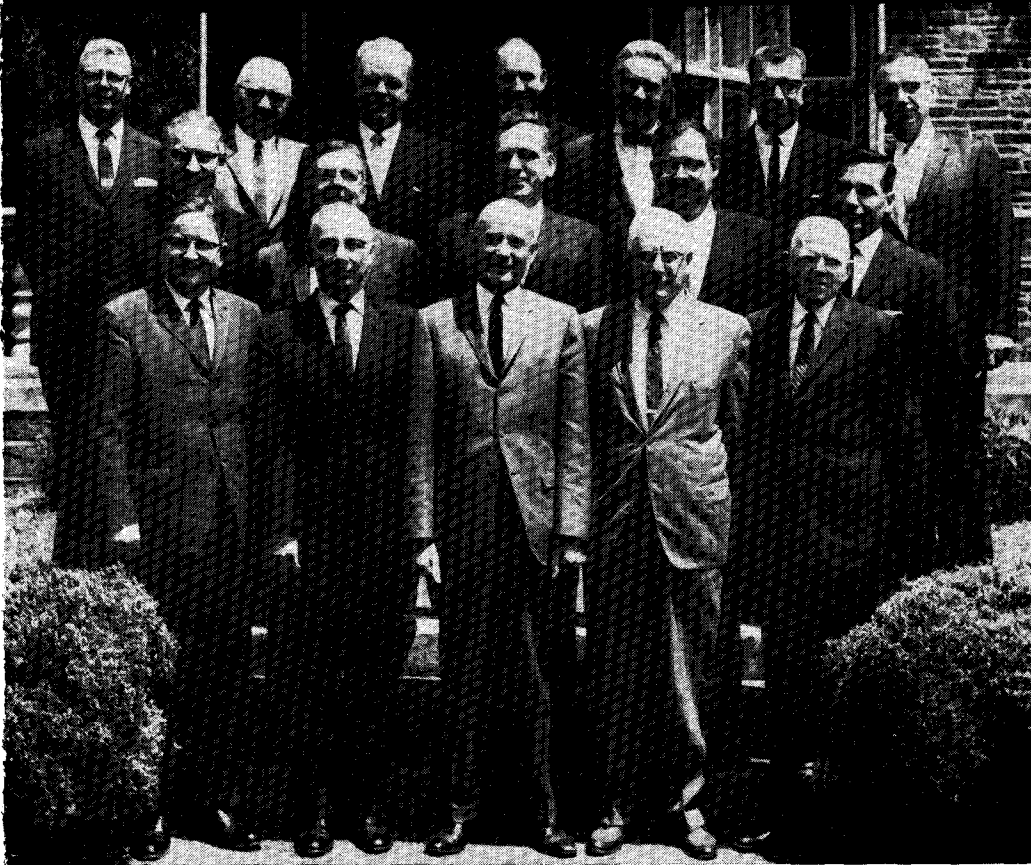


# GUARDIAN



## WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY TRUSTEES

FRONT: Bradford, Kik, Clelland, Stuart, McIlwaine. MIDDLE: Andreas, Cummings, Schrottenboer, Elder, Johnston. REAR: Oliver, Churchill, Armour, Hoefinger, Thompson, DeJong, Mommelaar. (Missing: McPheeters, Reid).

Westminster Seminary's 36th annual opening exercises are to be held on Wednesday, September 16. The address of the day will be given by the Rev. Professor Gwyn Walters, Ph.D., acting chairman of the division of the ministry at Gordon Divinity School, Wenham, Massachusetts. His subject is "Servants of the Sovereign Spirit."

Dr. Cornelius Van Til will welcome the students, including some 30 entering juniors. Other participants include the Rev. George Knight, Immanuel Orthodox Presbyterian Church, West Collingswood, N. J., the Rev. George Linhart of Grace Chapel, Havertown, Pa., and Home Missionary Laurence Vail, Vienna, Va.

## God or Mammon

EDWARD WYBENGA

Jesus had a great deal to say about money and its use. He knew how true an index of a person's character money can be, and how destructive of every good thing.

### **Parable of the Unjust Steward Luke 16:1-13**

A steward is one who manages the property of his lord. He should be a man of absolute honesty, one who can be fully trusted. This was all the more necessary because a steward had the opportunity and was constantly under the temptation to defraud or waste his master's goods.

It so happened that the steward in the parable was guilty of that very thing—he had squandered the property entrusted to his care. And now the master called him to give an account of his stewardship. Proof of dishonesty would result in his discharge.

The steward was now faced with a bad situation. Said he to himself: "What shall I do? I don't want to earn a living at hard labor. On the other hand, for a strong and healthy man like me to sit by the way and beg for alms—that will never do; I would be ashamed of that. I wonder how best to handle this problem?" So he reasons with himself. And so we see that dishonesty gets us into difficulties which we can not untangle.

Suddenly what seems to be a solution suggests itself to his mind. He will call his lord's debtors to him, discard the old contracts and make new ones. He will drastically cut their debts by one fifth or one half with a sweep of the pen. Thus these debtors will be so pleased with him that they will become his friends. Then, when he is put out of the stewardship and has no means of support, they will take him in and provide for him.

This method of gaining their friendship and goodwill was, of course, altogether dishonest. He had already wasted his lord's goods; now he would

sacrifice his lord's interests still further to protect himself. But so it is that one sin easily and quickly leads to another. There is no telling where you will end once you get started on the slippery path of sin!

At this point there is a strange turn of thought in the parable, which has made it one of the most difficult to explain. Note what is said in v. 8: "And the lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely." How can the unjust steward be thus commended?—it is asked. Does the Bible actually approve of sin?

### **Strange Twist**

No, that can not be. The Bible often tells about vile and wicked things that have taken place, but never to glamorize sin as is done in most movies and books today; never to approve of the wrong that men do but always to condemn it. So it is here. The parable must not be explained in such a way that the unjust steward is commended for his dishonesty. Far from it!

The only thing he is commended for is his prudence and forethought. In that sense we should imitate him. We should use prudence and forethought in the affairs of the kingdom of God for high and holy purposes, not for low and wicked objectives.

In this light we must also understand the explanation: "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." They often show more good sense in furthering their selfish and worldly interests than do Christians in furthering the interests of God's kingdom and the cause of Christ, and their own spiritual and eternal welfare.

What an indictment against the church and against the professing followers of Christ! What a different world this would be if Christians used as much diligence and intelligence and determination in promoting the true

religion as non-Christians show in promoting the material interests of men!

"And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." This is the spiritual application of the parable. "Mammon" is the Syriac word meaning "riches." The expression "mammon of unrighteousness" signifies the deceptive and false character of riches. The riches of this world stand in sharp contrast with the true riches that we have in God.

### **Deceitfulness of Riches**

What Jesus is saying is this: "Earthly riches are deceitful. They give a false sense of security. They often turn a man's thoughts and desires only to the things of this world, and the world is passing away with the lusts thereof." Our Lord would say that we must use our property and our money in this life in such a way that when we die, God will receive us into his heavenly kingdom.

Man must die, and will die before long. What then? Unless he has used his money for high and holy purposes—for helping the poor, the sick, and the needy; for spreading the gospel and building the church of God and raising the ethical life of man—unless he has used his wealth for these ends, he will find himself closed out of heaven at last, as the servant of mammon.

How dreadful it will be, after a life of selfish and wasteful extravagance on this earth, to awake after death and find oneself banished from the presence of God into everlasting poverty and loss! Therefore let us heed the words of our Lord: "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6).

The right use of money is not to squander it upon ourselves or upon our children but to use it as a material means for spiritual ends. When wealth becomes an end in itself, it becomes our god. But we can not have two gods—a false god, riches, and the true God who created us for his glory. Therefore our Lord says, "Ye can not serve God and mammon."

You will have to make your choice. Which is it? Whom do you serve? Is it the God of heaven? or, the god of this world?

# The Reformed Ecumenical Synod and the Churches

**PAUL G. SCHROTENBOER**

When the Reformed Ecumenical Synod was organized in 1946 in Grand Rapids, Michigan two years before the World Council of Churches first met, none of the delegates could foresee the great proliferation of ecumenical activity which would occur in the period after the second World War. Someone has called this the ecumenical century. There are presently so many ecumenical activities in the churches of Christendom that it is difficult to keep abreast of them all. To an ever increasing degree ecumenically slanted thinking is influencing the churches. 'Dialogue' has become the golden password. Unity among churches has become the almost universal goal. A whole new ecumenical vocabulary is developing, ecumenical research institutes have been established, an ecumenical catechism has been proposed, and sights are set upon a transconfessional unity that opens wider and wider the church's windows to the world.

For many years ecumenical church activities were limited largely to the less conservative and more latitudinarian segment of Protestantism. The churches which affiliated with the World Council have spearheaded the ecumenical drive. Its leaders were the student leaders of the Student Christian Movement of a generation ago. But with the admission of the Orthodox churches into the WCC at New Delhi in 1961 and the convocation of the Second Vatican Council by the late Pope John XXIII last year, together with a heightened ecumenical activity by other Protestant groups, ecumenical activities have taken hold on all parts of Christendom. For the first time in the history of the Roman Catholic Church, an ecumenical council has placed ecumenicity on the agenda.

In the same year as the Second Vatican Council assembled and the World Conference on Faith and Order was

held in Montreal, Quebec, and several months before Pope Paul VI and the Patriarch Athenagores exchanged the symbolic kiss of peace on the Mount of Olives, the Reformed Ecumenical Synod met for the fifth time. Twenty-two churches from all six continents representing 2,500,000 people sent delegates to the ten-day session. Six additional churches sent observers.

Meeting together those two weeks was a stimulating experience that produced a truly ecumenical and Reformed encounter and issued in significant documents and resolutions. Because the churches which met there already possess a unity in faith and in confession, the testimony of the Synod was incisive and forthright. We did not shirk the difficult problems.

## **Reorganization**

Last summer's meeting was a Synod of extensive reorganization. It instituted a permanent secretariat, made provision for the Interim Committee to meet, reorganized the mode of operation for the study committees, and urged the member churches to organize regional conferences in the period between the meetings of Synod. The implementation of these decisions will make for a more effective and meaningful functioning of the RES.

The purpose and history of the RES show that it believes that ecumenical activity begins at home, with those churches which are closest to us in confession and practice. This means that the RES is an instrument to express a unity which already exists and to enhance the unity where it is already great. In seeking to express the precious oneness we possess, we acknowledge the gift of unity we have through faith in Christ and proceed upon it as the basis for our task of attaining to greater unity. Here as everywhere, Christ's gift precedes our task.

Reformed churches generally, perhaps largely because they have always vigorously stressed the need for a creedal unity of faith for a united testimony, have not been as active in ecumenical strivings as have some other churches. However, Reformed churches do firmly believe and confess the one holy catholic church. We should therefore increase our ecumenical activities in order that we may advise one another, confer together, attain to a common course of action, give united testimony to our common Reformed faith and express our precious unity in Christ. But we must be sure that we proceed in the right direction. This is the way of Reformed or Scriptural ecumenicity.

The Reformed Ecumenical Synod is not a substitute for the church; surely it is not an effort to improve upon the church; it is rather an agency to serve the member churches. Although it is called a synod because it is an ecclesiastical assembly of duly appointed delegates who assemble to perform ecclesiastical business, its decisions and deliverances are advisory in character and shall be considered binding for the respective churches only after their synods or assemblies have adopted such decisions and deliverances as their own.

## **Service Agency**

The purpose of Reformed ecumenical activity is of a piece with the purpose and task of the church itself. The church exists as a fellowship of believers who are called and chosen by Jesus Christ to be his body and the pillar and ground of the truth. Its task is to proclaim the gospel, to administer the sacraments and to assist the needy in the name of Christ. The value of ecumenical activity, accordingly, is limited to the extent that it can assist the churches more effectively and obediently to fulfil their holy task and calling.

It is my conviction that right here the RES can perform significant service. It can assist the churches in carrying out their tasks. Here also the secretariat can assist by performing the service of a liaison officer between the churches and the committees which the Synod has appointed. I believe that the various declarations which the Synod has issued concerning race, Christian organizations, ecumenicity, and the resolution on the church and the world constitute a new beginning of united witness which Reformed churches throughout the world can make. We have a united confession that is articulated in the creeds. We have a common purpose: the proclamation of the truth of revelation in its fulness and power. We should therefore declare the truth as forcefully and relevantly as we possibly can. The church must be the sounding board of the truth of God in Jesus Christ.

We anticipate increased activities by the churches in the work of foreign missions. This can be aided by the RES, especially through the Standing Committee on Missions which has as mandate to assist the churches in their endeavor to fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord. We believe that the world relief agency which the Synod requested to have organized will enable the constituent churches to show mercy to those in need by providing relief to the accompaniment of unhampered Christian witnessing.

### **Cooperation with Secretary**

In all of these activities, the effectiveness of the work of the secretariat and the committees will depend very largely upon the cooperation which the churches afford. The general secretary is only a liaison officer, a messenger boy; he is not in any sense the officer in command, but the servant of servants.

In seeking to strengthen the ties of faith and service that bind us together I have begun to set up an RES NEWS EXCHANGE. Its purpose is to distribute to the member churches news of the Synod and the member churches. I shall try to distribute the news which may be deemed of most importance and interest to the churches. I cannot of course make the news nor even secure much of it. For this I shall require the assistance of the editors and correspondents of the member churches. The NEWS EX-

*"An instrument to enhance the unity where it is already great"*

CHANGE will give each church the opportunity to distribute news of its business and events to the other member churches. News items connected with Reformed ecumenicity in general and with decisions of the churches on the work of the last RES in particular will be welcomed from your church.

### **Testimony to Others**

The Synod of 1963 declared that participation in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod does not exhaust the ecumenical task of a Reformed church. The very nature of the church, which is the one body of Christ in which all the members are fitly framed together, requires that we concern ourselves with the whole of Christendom and all the churches. This the Rules and Standing Orders recognize when they state that the Synod's purpose is to give united testimony to our common Reformed faith in the midst of a world living in error and groping in darkness, particularly to the many churches which have so lamentably departed from the truth of God's holy Word, and which are in dire need of a return to the faith of the fathers. We have acknowledged that this is our task; how shall we carry it out?

There is most definitely a place for us in the ecumenical area. We have a basis which no other ecumenical organization presently has: full confessional unity, both in professing and in maintaining the Reformed faith. Our task is to deepen that unity, to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered and to win others to it.

We have a solemn obligation to enter into dialogue with churches teaching varying doctrines and holding other traditions. We may do so and must; indeed, we must engage in a confrontation in depth. A danger, however, is that we uncritically take over the procedures and purposes of other ecumenical bodies and lose the unity we already have in pursuing a unity whose nature we do not know, yet continue to seek.

### **The Word Normative**

Since we believe that the Word of Christ is the truth that sets men free, we should proclaim the full truth of the gospel for all areas of life—not only for education and science but also for social and political activities on

the national and international levels. We must follow the Good Shepherd in seeking those who are lost and have gone astray. Moreover, we must warn in unmistakably clear language of apostasy and point out departures from the pure teaching of the apostles. This is a formidable task which requires utmost humility and great wisdom and courage.

Our service to the entire church of Christ, which is manifested to greater or lesser degree in the various churches of Christendom, (for we acknowledge as did John Calvin that even the Roman Catholic Church does to some degree manifest the marks of the church) is to center our attention and deploy all our limited resources toward doing that which most needs doing: the proclaiming of the full gospel of Christ, the whole counsel of God, not the streamlined version of that which all churches have in common. Having listened for the missing chords in the gospel symphony of God's sovereign and saving grace, we must tell both to the churches and to the world, the truth that was once for all delivered to the saints.

As we were reminded by one of our member churches, we must be forthright and clear in all our speaking. We may not garble our messages with the vagaries of ecumenical jargon which glibly uses words such as *gospel, tradition, unity, kerugma, reconciliation*, without specifying what they mean. We may not uncritically assume that the 'gospels' which churches today preach are really the gospel that Christ died and rose from the dead according to the Scriptures.

True ecumenicity, I believe, must be an ecumenicity or oneness which is directed by the dynamic Word of God, of which the Holy Scriptures are the written deposit. They are the permanent record of the pre-Scriptural gospel tradition and therefore the norm and content of the Word that should be preached. It is significant that although the RES has made relatively few pronouncements on theological subjects, it did issue a significant declaration (1958) concerning the inspiration and infallibility of Holy Scripture. The holding for truth all that the Scriptures contain we should diligently maintain, especially when

the deviations from the authority of Scripture abound.

### Self-criticism

Involved in the very nature of ecumenical activity is the need of self-examination and self-criticism. Even in such a closely knit confessional group of churches as the Reformed Ecumenical Synod is, there are differences of view. There are differences in the areas of ecumenicity, of race relations, of Christian organizations. Here we must continue to engage in open-minded dialogue with each other. But in keeping an open-minded attitude to those who differ with us, let us be sure that we are always and above all open toward the promptings of the Spirit who takes of the things of Christ and applies them to us. Having been given the true and reliable criterion, we may truly be critical, first of ourselves and then of others. But let us beware that the habit and attitude of criticism not turn upon the criterion itself so that we presume to be the judge of the thoughts and intents of Scripture, for the prerogative of being the discerners of the thoughts and intents of the heart God has reserved for his Word alone. The Reformed Ecumenical Synod should be a place where Reformed churches listen in unison to God's voice in Scripture.

### The Church the Instrument

We may expect many great blessings from increased ecumenical activities in the Reformed churches such as yours. But we believe these blessings will be commensurate to our ability to make the church a more ready instrument in God's hand to carry out his will. We should avoid assiduously any and every attempt to improve upon the church, adding to it features and assigning it tasks which do not accord with its essential nature. We should cease trying to find some quasi-churchly thing which is presumably better than the church lest we attempt to be wiser than God. Indeed we should seek to improve the church but then only by making it conform more and more, both in its offices and in the performance of its task and surely in expressing the unity which all believers have in Jesus Christ, to that which Christ intended it to be and to the program of action which he has prescribed for it in his Word.

Reformed churches possess a precious unity. This unity we should al-

ways manifest and make an increasingly significant reality. But may it ever be a unity in truth, a unity based squarely upon Scripture, a unity directed by the Spirit of God in his Holy Word.

### Nature of Unity Sought

Let us be sure of the nature of the unity we seek. A unity that in no sense detracts from the revelation of God but rather builds upon it. A unity that does not ask us to relinquish clearly articulated, time-honored statements in favor of an ecumenical catechism. A unity which holds the *fides quae* (that which we believe) to be equally necessary as the *fides qua* (the act of faith). A unity that does not entail the loss of clear testimony. Not only what we confess but how we confess is important. We seek unity but not such a kind that produces indifference to doctrine and the teaching of Christ and the apostles, and leads to a levelling-down process in which each party abandons part of his own heritage in the interest of finding a common basis for a public and ecumenical faith.

We should seek for unity with all that is fully and truly church, realizing that Christ himself calls his sheep from another fold so that they all become one flock under one shepherd.

At the same time we must keep in mind the continuing antithesis between faith and unbelief lest we lose the gospel power and bring upon ourselves the displeasure of Christ. Our honoring the antithesis, however, may never produce a feeling of belligerence, but only of a passion and obedience for Christ who established it and of compassion for the world which lieth in wickedness. The awareness of the many enemies of Christ should impell us to don the whole armour of God in order to stand in the evil day and to put on our battle dress with all prayer and supplication.

The Reformed church fathers liked to commence their teachings on the church by referring to Revelation 17:14. We refer to it at the end. The church is the community of men who are called, chosen and faithful. We are called and chosen, for Christ has made the communion of the elect and the body of the church to be one and the same. There remains to be faithful, faithful until the end, when all shall be one and Christ will be all in all.



# armed

Odd weapons fill the armory of Scripture. Shamgar fought with an ox-goad; Samson seized the jawbone of an ass; David found five stones in a brook.

Why does God issue such strange equipment to the champions of faith? David explained the point to Goliath: "The Lord saves not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's."

Minimal technology made for maximal theology. Not the rod in Moses' hand but the Word of God in his mouth defeated the archers of Pharaoh. When the final assault on the powers of darkness was mounted by God's Anointed, his hands held only the nails of his cross, but his cry was the Word of God.

Paul preached this foolishness of Christ crucified, and was not ashamed: "The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds."

Are you equipped for that ministry? Your gifts may seem small, but is God's Word in your hand? If you have that, or if that has you, you are armed with the sword of the Spirit. The calling to the ministry is a calling to be a workman in the Word of truth. Dare you lay hold on that Word?

If that question is yours, so is our booklet, "Called to the Ministry." Write to:

## WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

CHESTNUT HILL, PHILADELPHIA, PENNA. 19118

September, 1964

## **What it Means to be a Woman**

**DOROTHY RUSHDOONY**

**I**n order to consider our position as women today, we must go back and review the developments of the last hundred years or more. When orthodox Christianity was a strong cultural element in our society, women took their position for granted; they were under men, and, in any case, in a young, developing country, they were very busy, very needed, and the whole arrangement seemed natural and proper. But with the rise of Unitarianism and associated heresies, and the decline of orthodox Christianity, a heresy became widespread which caused a great change in the outlook of many women. This heresy which became very popular was not new and was simply *dualism*. Now dualism means that, instead of believing in one God, who is omnipotent, all powerful, and controls all things which come to pass, one believes in two gods or forces in the world.

In this scheme of things, good and evil are both ultimate and are in constant tension and struggle. At times in history the forces of evil have been identified with woman, so that she has been as the great temptress, the instrument of the bad god, seducing men into sin and carnal lusts. But in America this heresy, which was gradually replacing orthodox Christianity, identified the man with evil and the woman with ultimate good. Men were seen as coarse and brutish, women as delicate and refined. Men were seen as exploiters and women as fragile flowers suffering under the cruel, lustful domination of the barbaric male. The little nursery rhyme we all know puts it very nicely:

What are little girls made of?  
Sugar and spice and everything nice,  
That's what little girls are made of.

What are little boys made of?  
Snips and snails and puppy dog's tails,  
That's what little boys are made of.

The early feminists were truly extravagant. Mrs. T. J. Farnham, an early feminist, wrote (1864) of women as possessing "the most per-

fect, complex, varied, refined, beautiful, and exquisitely endowed organization, comprising with its corresponding faculties, the most susceptible, sensitive yet enduring constitution, and also the purest, most aspiring, progressive, loving, spiritual nature of any being that inhabits our earth." Another feminist, Virginia Leblick, stated in 1910 that the lowest prostitute was better than the best of men.

### **Feminism and Frustration**

We tend to think of these women as trying to establish the equality of the sexes. This was not so; they already had the answer to that: women were superior, and what they wanted was political rights, and those opportunities which would enable them to change the social, political situation which the bungling male had controlled to date with such horrible consequences. With women in control, miracles would happen and Utopia would be ushered in. Finally in 1920 the women gained suffrage rights and she steadily "emancipated" herself.

Twenty years later it was plainly seen that the world had not changed, women had not become the saviors of the world, but rather were suffering deep "psychiatric" problems, or more accurately, spiritual problems. Immediately serious thought was given to this problem and much written to analyze the dilemma. Denis De Rougemont, in *Love in the Western World*, exposed the religious roots of the romantic, feminist ideal which made a goddess of women and which, being contrary to reality, led to frustration and disillusionment.

Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia F. Farnham, in their psychiatric and sociological analysis, *Modern Woman, the Lost Sex*, made their contribution to another image of woman which was

*This article was presented at a Women's Missionary Society in one of our California churches by the wife of an Orthodox Presbyterian minister-writer.*

now in the making. This time she was to be the earthy type, no longer ethereal and spiritual but sexy, happy to have found her mate, and ready and willing to realize herself and find fulfillment in this relationship of wife and mother.

After less than 20 years women are in trouble again, and this time the trouble is described very movingly by Betty Friedan in a current best-seller, *The Feminine Mystique*. Case history follows case history describing the plight of the woman who thought she could lose herself in the role of wife and mother and finds only desperate unhappiness, and emptiness which makes all of life meaningless. Women have between 1940 and 1960 gone on a "baby-binge," trying in procreation to find meaning and fulfillment, with only more unhappiness the result. And what is Miss Friedan's answer to this chronic problem? It is a return to feminism but without the religious bases of the old feminism, all of which is simply to say that the secular thinkers have made a complete circle and are back where they started, with no answer for anything.

### **A Religious Creature**

Now these thinkers are attempting to find an answer to this problem of the sexes on the basis of regarding man (that is, mankind) as a social animal. And on this basis there is no answer. As we face the problem biblically, the first thing we must assert is this, man, (that is, mankind) is a religious creature. He is a creature, created by a good and loving God, not an organism evolving out of a primeval slime. Thus our problem is a religious one and must be solved religiously; the answer is to be found in God's revelation. As creatures we cannot possibly know anything about the how or the why of creation unless by God's revealed Word, and God therein speaks plainly.

First of all, when God created the world he created the animals, male and female, but when he created man

he created him alone. God set the man, Adam, in the Garden of Eden to tend it, and he also gave him the task of naming or classifying the animals, a scientific task. We do not know how long Adam labored alone, but we know that after a time God said, "It is not good for man to be alone." And having put Adam into a deep sleep, God took flesh from his flank and created Eve. This woman was brought to Adam and given to him as a helpmeet.

In one of the most beautiful passages in Scripture, Adam responds when Eve is brought to him, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man." The Word adds, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." Adam's delight is obvious; now he has a helpmeet, to share his work and to enjoy his creaturely task with him. Later Eve will bear children and her role will be that of mother as well as helpmeet, but primarily she was created to help her husband in his God-given tasks.

### Sin and Its Consequences

Next we must consider the Fall, for without understanding this, the problems which confront us are not understandable and are without meaning. Eve was tempted by the serpent, ate of the fruit, gave to Adam and he ate. Both of them having disobeyed God, sin has entered the world. Now God speaks to both Adam and Eve. And here we must note that God speaks to them individually. He does not pronounce a curse on mankind generally but individually to the man and to the woman. To Adam God says that his calling, his work, will now be a struggle and a burden. The work which God had given him as an endowment and blessing, and which was pleasant and a joy, will now be difficult. And the woman who was created to be a helpmeet to the man and to rejoice and find happiness in that role, now will find that she will be under the dominion of the man, and, instead of finding fulfillment therein, will find it irksome and difficult. Moreover, she will suffer pain in childbearing.

In all of this we must find occasion

to praise God. Anyone who is a parent knows that it is love which causes us to punish our children, that they must be taught, and that punishment is a means of instruction. So it is with the curses of God. They are meant to teach us and to bring us back to God. Man could not be allowed to flourish in sin. Having eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, it was necessary that they be given these burdens for their own good; and then, lest they should eat of the tree of life and live forever in their sinful state, God cast them out of the garden.

### Place in God's World

This then is the position in which we find ourselves. God created us male and female: each sex had its role, and both were very good. Both sinned, both were cursed by God, and both were cast out of Eden. But now as sinners out in the world, we find that God has preserved this marriage relationship, and in fact has likened it to that glorious spiritual relationship of Christ to the church. A Christian man has first and foremost in his life, his calling under God. Then he has his role of husband and father. He is to be to the wife what Christ is to the church, and the wife is to render that headship and obedience to the husband which the church accords to Christ.

The feminists wailed that it was a man's world and sought to make it a woman's world, and have indeed made it a woman's world according to many modern writers. Recently there was indeed a popular song entitled "It's a Woman's World." And our answer to that is simply this: it is neither a man's world nor a woman's world, but *God's* world. Here we must face the realities of life. We must as women find our place in life as must men, under God and according to his will. If we attempt to make this world a woman's world, we will be as frustrated as the feminists of a generation ago. If we try to lose ourselves in our husbands or our children, we will face the emotional breakdown that Betty Friedan describes so tellingly. In some case histories, she describes the unhappy, disillusioned woman who lives for her children only to find them anxious and relieved to escape from

her and the home; and in other case histories, she describes the woman who primps and works to be alluring to her husband, and struggles to be a perfect housewife as well, only to find that the most she gets is a disinterested grunt from her husband buried behind the morning paper. But the woman who accepts her role under God, renders her service to God. She is not disillusioned when she discovers that her husband is a sinner even as she is, and is often unappreciative. She does not try to lose herself in her children, but takes her responsibility to be that of rearing them to the point where they are ready to forsake father and mother and establish a home of their own and a life of their own. "Momism" is the antithesis of godly motherhood.

Finally, there is a story told of a woman in London who had tacked above her kitchen sink a sign which read, "Divine services are celebrated here three times daily." This is that spirit of faith which sanctifies all of life and gains as its reward a life rich towards husband and children, and in all relationships, because it is first of all rich toward God.

### Presbytery of the Dakotas

The spring meeting of the Presbytery of the Dakotas was held in the Faith Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Lincoln, Nebraska, April 7-8. Retiring moderator John Verhage led a brief devotional service. A prayer session for all the churches included reports from the various pastors followed by related intercession.

Thirteen ministers were in attendance and elders from eight of the congregations. Host pastor was the Rev. Russell Piper. The Rev. Lionel Brown of Volga, S. D. was elected moderator for the coming year, and the Rev. Samuel van Houte of Bridgewater, S. D. was named stated clerk for a three-year term.

The Rev. John Hoogstrate of the Rocky Mountain Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, and the Rev. Nelson Malkus, pastor of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Seattle, Washington, were seated as corresponding members of Presbytery. Mr. Hoogstrate brought fraternal greetings.

The Rev. Elmer Dortzbach reported for the Presbytery's Committee on Christian Education, telling of the progress of two men under care and

*The woman who accepts her role under God, renders her service to God.*

counsel of Presbytery: Mr. David Brown and Mr. Roswell Kamrath.

The Rev. Samuel van Houte presented the report of Presbytery's Committee on Home Missions. There are four home mission fields within the bounds of Presbytery: Grand Junction and Thornton, Colorado; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and Winner, So. Dakota. A considerable portion of the report was related to recent developments in the field of Winner and Ideal, S. D., where home missionary Abe W. Ediger has been laboring.

Mr. Ediger will now be devoting full time to the work in Winner. During the past three years he has

been preaching and doing pastoral work in the Ideal United Presbyterian Church, but since six families have left that church and are now worshipping at the Winner Chapel, his services have been terminated at Ideal.

Reporting for Presbytery's Committee on Foreign Missions, the Rev. Robert Nilson stressed in particular the need of prayerful and financial support of medical missionary work in Eritrea. Presbytery determined to solicit specific support for Dr. Lyle Nilson from the churches of Presbytery beyond their regular benevolence giving.

RONALD E. JENKINS  
Temporary Clerk

## Does Jesus Care ?

CARL J. REITSMA

*"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."*  
I Peter 5:6,7

Sometimes when we are deeply troubled it seems that something breaks deep down inside us. We can't explain what we feel because it's too deep for that. Everything people say seems unable to reach us, go down deep enough to really help us, so that we are satisfied and get relief. People mean well, we know, but there is nothing they can do. They say "Be strong," but strength is just the thing we feel we haven't got. That is the problem, not the answer.

There is someone who can help us, and will. He is the Father in heaven. He can soothe these inner longings and revive us. He is so deep and tender in his love that he can reach down and touch the troubled spot where no other person can reach. So reassuring is he that we may as a little child go to sleep when he is in the room. Our God is good and kind and he will never leave us alone. But, you ask, how can I know that God is this way and that he really cares about me?

*Pastor Carl Reitsma and others from Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Cedar Grove, Wisconsin, hold a monthly service at the Sheboygan County Hospital. This message appeared in the institutional paper, "The Grapevine."*

Well, let's read again the verse from the Bible that is printed above.

The first thing we should notice about this verse is that it tells us to "humble" ourselves. God resists the proud, the ones who resent what he has done, those who question whether it is right or timely, or whether God was being fair. There is a hymn that says "God's way is the best way." Remember the wonderful verse in Romans 8:28 that declares, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

The second thing is that it is *God* before whom we are to be humble. God is good, but not goody-goody. He is great. He is strong. He has a mighty hand. He chooses the time and place for everything. It all takes place "under the mighty hand of God." Whatever happens he could have prevented but God arranged it all—just this way. And, knowing this, he does not want you to blame him and say, "It is all your fault," but rather to say, "God wants it this way, and that is enough for me." That is what it means to be humble—before God.

A third thing is this. If, in the circumstances of our lives it is not only people but God's arrangements we are dealing with, then it stands to reason that he knows all about us and is in a position to help us as no one else can. He knows just how much we can stand and no more. God tells us in II

Corinthians 12:9 "My grace is sufficient for thee." What this means is that God promises to give us adequate strength for every test: a ten-pound muscle for a ten-pound load, a hundred-pound muscle for a hundred-pound load. We can count on God to give us the strength we need to cope with life just as we can count on him to give us no test greater than we can bear. Thus the apostle Paul exclaimed, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me!"

There is a fourth thing. God is going to "exalt you in due time." God is going to take Christians to heaven when he is ready. But it means more: God is going to help us right now. You will be able to notice it very soon. He will give you the very thing you need and want . . . inner strength of body, mind, and heart. You will not be able to explain it, but you will have a wonderful peace and quiet come over your soul, so that you will be able to say, "Nothing has gone wrong, things are not out of hand, it is well, it is well with my soul." Troubles will not seem so big anymore. Best of all, we are going to mean more to God and each other, because God is going to be closer and dearer than ever before.

Finally, all of this can be yours just by "casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." We must do this once for all. Let God take over all our anxieties and fears. Perhaps the worst worry people have is their worry about their sin. We call this guilt. But why should we fret any longer when Jesus suffered and died in our place so that we might be forgiven? In I John 1:9 we read, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." He said it. I believe it. That settles it. Go ahead then and cast your care on God, whatever it may be. He keeps on caring for you. He never stops. So don't worry about the future. God will work it out. He will care for you.

### DOES JESUS CARE ?

Does Jesus care when my way is dark  
With a nameless dread and fear?  
As the daylight fades into deep night  
shades,  
Does He care enough to be near?

O yes, He cares: I know He cares,  
His heart is touched with my grief.  
When the days are weary, the long nights  
dreary,  
I know my Saviour cares.

*The Presbyterian Guardian*



EDITOR

Robert E. Nicholas



All correspondence should be addressed to *The Presbyterian Guardian*, 7401 Old York Road, Phila. 26, Pa.

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## Ecumenicity at Work

One might get the impression at times that the World Council and the Vatican Council have a joint monopoly on ecumenical affairs. Doubtless their size and attention-getting pronouncements on all sorts of matters give them a head start in the area of public relations. But ecumenicity has quiet and, we think, more biblical manifestations as well.

Among churches affiliated with (or sympathetic to) the Reformed Ecumenical Synod are to be found continuing expressions of their essential oneness in the household of faith. Here is doctrinal agreement on the basis of the infallible and inspired Scriptures as the very Word of God. Only on such a foundation may either the structuring or the functioning of true ecumenicity be developed.

Perhaps it is just because of the stress upon doctrinal soundness that the pace toward structural union is slower within this Reformed orbit. The present consideration, however, of a plan of merger between the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America shows that a like Reformed heritage, coupled with sufficient similarity in practice, makes such a union possible.

In other ways, too, biblical ecumenicity is functioning. An example is seen in the young people's camps which are being conducted jointly with Christian Reformed brethren in at least two Orthodox Presbyterian presbyteries (West Coast and Wisconsin).

Moreover, in this number of the *Guardian* you will find an address of fraternal greeting which notes the mutual cooperation and concern on the part of these two bodies through the

years. Included is an instance of new cooperation on a mission field in the recently established Reformed Missions Council on Formosa, in which several denominations are consulting.

A report from one of these bodies in New Zealand, a sister church of the Orthodox Presbyterians, witnesses further to this sense of mutual interdependence and welfare. It is our hope that the printing of such a report in itself may contribute to a growing biblical ecumenicity.

The address by the general secretary of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod also indicates ways and means by which legitimate and beneficial tasks are being undertaken together. Without making headlines, this is nevertheless scriptural ecumenicity in action.

Evidence of such ecumenical endeavor is seen in cooperative efforts in the production or publication or use of Reformed literature. A perusal of the articles already mentioned will turn up a number of illustrations. It surely makes sense to avoid as much reduplication of limited resources as may be feasible, and to draw on one another's God-given talents, whether it be in hymnals, or tracts or devotional literature or whatever.

One example of such ecumenicity at work, as reported in the most recent issue of "Horizon," deserves particular mention. We refer to the decision by the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America in acting favorably upon the recommendation of its Board of Christian Education to give tangible support to the development of the Sunday school curriculum of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

These Covenanter friends (as they are often designated) have been using for some years a special edition of the Great Commission vacation Bible school materials. Presumably their satisfaction encouraged them to take this further step in practical ecumenicity.

Its stimulus to the progress of the Sunday school program can scarcely be overestimated. Already it has made possible a speed-up in plans for securing an additional writer and for adding a new department to the curriculum. Representatives of the Reformed Presbyterians have been invited to enter into a consultative relationship on this publication project with the Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterians.

All of this adds up to effectual bib-

lical ecumenicity. It is a type of cooperative venture which is feasible without immediate involvement in the possible shoals of organizational union. Instead of abstract theory we have the reality of actual accomplishment of a necessary task in our Lord's kingdom—the promulgation of the gospel through the printed page.

—R. E. N.

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## EDITOR'S MAIL BOX

Dear Sir:

In reading the news from the Presbytery of the West Coast, I appreciated the kind report by Rev. Richard Lewis concerning my part in the establishment of the Modesto church. To make the picture somewhat more complete, however, I would like to call attention to the generous labors of others.

Particularly, elder Clarence Westra, a dedicated member of the Stockton session, performed faithful yeoman service. For all practical purposes, he became leader of the evening Bible class in Modesto in order to relieve me for other labor. Later on, he faithfully represented our Stockton session at the Lord's Day afternoon services in Modesto, preached there too, and, I believe, secured guest speakers.

Not only so, Rev. Robert Churchill was active in many phases of the work: in speaking, helping to find a place to meet, and organizing the congregation. Rev. Henry Coray also helped in much the same way. Two retired Christian Reformed ministers, Rev. J. J. Weersing and Rev. J. J. Steigenga, preached frequently and brought a rich spiritual blessing to the people of God in Modesto. And from time to time, a number of the O.P. pastors and elders took part in maintaining the worship.

Although every true church is established by the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, it seems almost as if he had moved in a unique manner in bringing into being the congregation in Modesto.

One particular incident stands out as an illustration of such working. Several years ago on a hot afternoon, I was calling door-to-door in Modesto and stopped at a home where the man of the house was standing on a step-ladder working on his garage door. Quite obviously he did not want to talk, and after a brief one-sided conversation, I turned to leave.

Upon a sudden impulse, I paused. He had said he was a Baptist and that was about all. "Are you," I asked for no apparent reason, "convinced of Baptist doctrine?"

"No," he said, "I'm a Calvinist." That was the first meeting with Richard Nielsen. Within the next five minutes we were sitting on his lawn, well on our way to becoming fast friends in the gospel. Considerably later, the Nielsen family and the families of Charles Cornwell and Robert Cornwell invited me to lead a Bible study. Some months after, the interest of the John De Boer family brought additional encouragement to us.

After a further season of waiting, with some discouragements, God moved again. The arrival of the Clyde Dunlap family and the Glen Harris family from the Long Beach O.P.C. gave the work a renewed impetus and official worship services were started, first on Sunday afternoon, and later regular morning and evening services were established.

In the gathering together of these and other families, the thing to impress the observer is not human agency but God's quiet working to establish a congregation.

Another bright aspect of the picture has been the coming of Rev. Thomas Champness to feed this new flock. For a minister to cross the country may not in itself be so unusual, but Mr. Champness came to a very small group as yet not organized as a church, without a church building, and with relatively little financial help outside the local group.

In calling attention to the working of God in Modesto, one does not mean to slight his other works, for God delights to build with different means in different places. Yet at certain times and certain places, our Father's workings seem especially striking. And our church there appears to be one of his spontaneous products, a grass-roots development. An indication of this fact can be seen in the attendance pattern, for regularly the evening attendance equals the morning.

Undoubtedly, the Modesto O.P.C. will face growing pains like other churches, but God, we believe, will continue the good cause that he has originated.

Sincerely,  
JACK MILLER  
Redwood City, Calif.

# THE CHILDREN OF GOD

JOHN RANKIN

Readers who are at all familiar with their Bibles will readily recall choice sayings of the Word relevant to the theme of this article. We would strongly recommend the following: From the Old Testament, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him" (Ps. 103:13). From the Sermon on the mount, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." "Love your enemies . . . that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven . . ." "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Mt. 5:9, 44, 45; 6:8, 9 and 7:11). From Paul, Rom. 8:14-17; II Cor. 6:17, 18; Eph. 4:31-5:2 and Phil. 2:14-16. From John, Jo. 1:10-13 and I Jo. 3:1-3. Finally — Heb. 12:4-11.

Riches of the kind here noted can be embarrassing and we hesitate to limit our attention to any single text. Our thoughts linger, however, on the passage in I Jo. 3:1-3. The Apostle John, as we know, stood close to the heart of the Lord in the days of his flesh and perhaps saw more deeply than the others into the mysteries of the truth as it is in Christ. John was preeminently the apostle of the sonship of Christ, as is abundantly evident everywhere throughout his works. It is perhaps not too much to say that John was a specialist on the subject of the sonship of the Son of God and of ours in him and with him.

## Family Relationship

In the particular passage under notice it is our sonship in and with the Son that is before us. Here the apostle is lost in wonder for one of the great wonders of God's grace in the salvation of sinner-men. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God!" And, no wonder, when we think of our one-

ness with "the only begotten" Son of God. There is boundless enthusiasm in the heart of the writer as he reflects upon the relationship itself, apart from any and all details; the Father-son relationship as it applies to the believers.

What does it mean to be called "the sons of God"? For one thing, it means the right and prerogative of each one to say: I am a child of God. All of like mind and heart and spirit in the faith which "receives and rests upon Christ and him alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel" are children of God. And all of these taken together are one big, happy family of God here on earth: one with God, one with one another in him, and one with the family of God in heaven.

Something of the life history of the child of God is indicated here. Nothing is expressly stated about our sonship in its inception. But it is said that "now are we the sons of God." Even so, — and yet there is nothing static about this earthly sonship. Clearly it is a dynamic and a growing thing. It grows and blossoms and bears fruit in our lives as we grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ.

## Family Resemblance

And of course all members of the family are mutually involved. Like begets like. Like father, like son. A strong family resemblance obtains among all who are brought together in this relationship. By the grace and power of God the image of God, debased by sin, is gloriously restored. Regenerated and saved by Christ and called of God into this household of the faith, we are "renewed in the

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

— I John: 3:1-3



JOHN RANKIN

whole man after the image of Christ." And, "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. 3:18).

As the children of God here and now, we have our family traits, our inherited characteristics. These are fully set forth in the teachings of the Word, and shine forth on the faces and in the lives of every subject of the new birth. This is why, generally speaking, a Christian knows a Christian when they meet. For, all are one, and we are all of a kind. Like responds to like, and we recognize our own kind in distinction from those not of our own but of quite another and a different kind.

There is a transport of joy in the heart of John as he thinks upon the Father's love in making us his sons. He would agree of course with Paul that we are children first of all by eternal election of God in Christ, by whom in time we are redeemed; so that, bought with the price of his own precious blood, it is our privilege and duty to glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are his. He would also agree that we are children both by new birth and by adoption. The one is a work of the Spirit in our hearts. The other is a divine action taken in the high court of heaven "whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God."

But the emphasis here is on the Father's love in the bestowment of this

sonship under God. The blessedness of this relationship comes first of all from the Father in his love. In and with it all of course is all the love of God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. But it flows, by way of the subordinate relation of the Son to the Father and of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son, from the love of God the Father as its supreme origin and source.

### Family Love

The love bestowed is none other than that of the great Creator and Upholder of all things, the Lord of heaven and earth, the one only living and true God. Love is the incentive in the bestowment. "God so loved"; "God commendeth his love"; "Herein is love . . . that he loved us." "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (Jo. 3:16; Rom. 5:8; I Jo. 4:10, 16).

Love for God and man and among men is commanded; and the exhortation is to love as we are loved. "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (I Jo. 3:18). "For love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love" (Song of Sol. 8:6, 7).

This is after all only one of the qualities of our sonship; but likeness to Christ is the preeminent characteristic of the relationship. The sons of God are incorporate with Christ in the household of God. As he was in the world, so are we. The world no more knows us than it knew him. We are not of the world even as he is not of the world. Our standing and state is that of incorporation into Christ in life and death and resurrection, so that "like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

Originally created in the image of God, we are by the power of God in our salvation recreated in the image of his incarnate Son. Hence our sonship. "Now are we the Sons of God." Nevertheless the consummation of our sonship yet awaits: "it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

### Family Purity

The writer concludes with the practical advice and suggestion that "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." We dare not overlook or neglect this part of the teaching.

There is always enough for every one of the sons of God to do by way of cultivation and improvement of our likeness to Christ. Never may we cease and desist in our activity in conflict with sin in ourselves, in others, and in the world. "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

As we are different from, so must we also differ with the world. Even as God's dear children here below we are often called upon to differ among ourselves; it may even be to stand alone, as "Athanasius against the world" or to take our stand in a very small minority. If so, let us be sure of our ground. On the other hand, if we feel disposed to march with the majority let us not forget that the generality of the believers have often had much to learn from their minorities.

Purity of faith and practice, in heart and life, is always costly; but it is always well worth the price. Christ's resurrection power and life comes only in and with the fellowship of the sufferings of him who was despised and rejected of men. Brother, sister in Christ, do you desire one day to be with Christ and to be like him? Then let us be ready and willing to pay the price of our own self-purification in his likeness and image even now.

### THE WAY

O God, if thou wert only just  
How could I come to thee?  
If thou wert only righteousness  
How couldst thou stoop to me?  
But thou, O God, art also love,  
And through the Christ, thy Son,  
I dare to call thee *Father*, and  
To come, O righteous One!

DOROTHY KREISS  
Alameda, Calif.

*In the November issue we expect to use as many as possible of the responses which have come to the articles (July-August issue) that attempted to state and stimulate Christian thought on racial questions.*

# Address to Christian Reformed Synod

GEORGE W. KNIGHT, III

**B**rethren: It is indeed a great honor and privilege for me to be in your midst to bring the greetings of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. We cherish very highly the fellowship that we have in Christ and in the faith of the Scriptures, the Reformed faith. Hence we regard every contact, and this one at our highest ecclesiastical level, as an important, even though partial, manifestation of the unity we have in Christ and his Word.

I speak for myself, of course, but also I believe that I represent the sentiment of our church, when I say that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is greatly indebted in the Lord to the Christian Reformed Church.

First of all, in the field of education. Many of our sons and daughters have been entrusted to your care and training at Calvin College, and now also at Dordt and Trinity. Also, several of your fathers and sons have been bulwarks in the training of our ministers at Westminster. I think of the late beloved Dr. Stonehouse, of Dr. Van Til, of Professor R. B. Kuiper, and of Dr. Palmer.

## Appreciation

And further, in the field of evangelism and edification your help has been great. We listen to the Back-to-God Hour and encourage our people to do likewise. Its *Family Altar* is the devotional guide used by many of our families. The contacts given by the Back-to-God Hour to our pastors in areas where there are no Christian Reformed churches have been much appreciated. We congratulate you and your radio voice for 25 years of vigorous preaching of the gospel. The *Banner* in numerous Orthodox Presbyterian homes is read along side of our *Presbyterian Guardian*. We have especially been thrilled at the vigorous and clear defense of the faith by the editor of the *Banner*. Your SWIM program has been a great challenge and inspiration to us. It has served as a very fine model for our own SAVE program (Students As Volunteer Evangelists).

In the broader field of Kingdom activities we are also indebted to your

movement as a whole which stems from the life of your Church. The National Union of Christian Schools is looked to by all of our Christian Schools. Several of our churches are beginning to profit from your Calvinistic Cadet Corps. And if the fine presentation of Mr. Lont at our recent pre-assembly pastors' conference and the enthusiastic response of the pastors is any indication, our young people's societies will soon be benefiting from the Young Calvinist movement.

In the field of biblical ecumenicity, your example and your labors have meant much to us. Your serving as the first and also as the most recent host of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod is an outstanding case in point. Your vigorous interaction with these Reformed churches is much appreciated. The leadership provided as General Secretary by your own Dr. Paul Schrottenboer has already made the R. E. S. a much more significant force in our own Church by his address and report at our recent General Assembly. In line with your biblical principles and practices which have manifested themselves clearly in your refusal to unite with the unbelief in the World and National Councils, may we as a Church encourage you to respond, as we hope to, in a vigorous biblical way to the Gereformeerde Kerken, as they have asked, on the decision of their Lunteren Synod that "there is no decisive hindrance for the Reformed Churches to join the World Council of Churches."

## Prayer and Concern

It is because of this recognized indebtedness, as well as our mutual involvement and strong ties of fellowship, that we rejoice when you rejoice, weep when you weep, and suffer when you suffer. In particular, our Church was gravely concerned when doubts concerning the full inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures seemed to have arisen in your midst. Much prayer went up for you throughout our Church. Many in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church have expressed concern over the doctrinal issues in the

Christian Reformed Church as they have been reported in the periodicals emanating from Christian Reformed sources. We rejoice with you that in your highest assembly you have officially affirmed the historic biblical and Reformed position of the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures and its full inerrancy in all matters.

Insistence upon adherence to this official position of the church in the life of the church will go far in assuring the continued witness of your Church to the historic Christian faith, which is the Reformed faith. When you celebrated your 100 years of existence, we noted with thanks that your Church has been unique in standing for the truth of God's Word for such a long time without compromise. We trust that your reaffirmation in regard to the Bible points to another 100 years of faithful service.

We mention this again only because of the sorrowful awareness of our own historical background. In 1893, Dr. Briggs was suspended from the ministry by the Old Presbyterian Church because of his teaching that the Bible contained errors. In 1910, 1916, and 1923 the General Assembly of the Church of our forefathers affirmed the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible as an essential doctrine. But in 1924, 1200 ministers signed the Auburn Affirmation challenging this view of the Scriptures and four other essential doctrines as only theories. The views of the Auburn Affirmationists prevailed and finally Dr. J. Gresham Machen was suspended from the ministry in 1936 for seeking to uphold and proclaim the pure gospel alone in the foreign mission work of the church as well as at home. We humbly remind you of these things that you

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*Mr. Knight was asked by the Committee on Correspondence with Other Churches to bring the fraternal greetings of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to the recent Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. His address will be of interest to many of our readers.*

may, by God's grace and with renewed concern, "take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you bishops" (Acts 20:28).

### Service

Having spoken of our indebtedness to you and of our concern for you, may I now speak of the hope that we have also been able, by God's grace, to be of service to you. As you know, Westminster Seminary stands in a very similar relationship to us as a Church as the Free University stands to the Gereformeerde Kerken. Throughout its years the faculty, with only few exceptions, have been Orthodox Presbyterian ministers. We are thankful that we have had the privilege to train or give partial training to a number of your ministers. In particular, we rejoice in the fact that several of your seminary faculty members have received part of their training with us and that the first two doctor's degrees were received by two of your ministers. For several years, before your own material was available, a number of your churches used our Vacation Bible School material as perhaps the only material available at that time which was vigorously Reformed. We mention only these two items to point up our reciprocal benefit one to another. And we hope that we can continue in this and in other ways to serve you, a beloved part of the body of Christ.

More significant perhaps than our mutual benefit one to another has been our cooperation together. In recent months a notable advance has been made in this area with the formation of the Reformed Mission Council on Taiwan last October 25. Our Foreign Missions Committee reported on this matter at our General Assembly held in April with these words:

Our Mission is fortunate to be able to have the fellowship of other Reformed missionaries. These missionaries represent the Christian Reformed Church, the Presbyterian Church of Korea, the Reformed Churches of New Zealand, and World Presbyterian Missions. Until the latter part of the year their fellowship was only of an informal nature, but on October 25 a Reformed Missions Council was formed. This Council will make it easier to have discussions of common problems and to achieve more sorely needed unity in purpose and action. We regard the formation of this Council as a significant and valuable forward step for our church's work in Formosa and for the advancement of the Reformed cause on that island.

September, 1964

## THE BIBLE AND LABOR

**T**he Bible honors labor.

According to the Bible, man was created by God to work. He was placed on the earth in a paradise and was commanded to till the ground and to take care of the natural beauties around him. It is true that man's sin brought a divine curse. From that time on man would till the earth only by the sweat of his brow, and his labors would be made difficult by thorns and thistles. Yet, work itself is not the result of this curse. The curse only meant that man's labors would be more severe and burdensome. Nature would not respond as readily to man's efforts. But the Bible shows that man was made for work; from it he can obtain his happiness as well as his livelihood.

In our day the place of the working man is much improved over what it used to be. The formation of labor unions brought about many needed reforms. The power of the unions has been used to raise the standard of living of the working man and to give him better working conditions.

This good, however, has not been free from evil. Many persons have misinterpreted the struggle of the working man for betterment. They have said that there is an inevitable class struggle between the working man and his employers. The false idea is preached, that the troubles of the workers will be overcome only if capitalism is overthrown and a socialistic state is introduced. Furthermore, we have had revelations of corruption in the labor unions themselves. We rightly resent such corruption, and we see in it a proof that the problems of the working man cannot be solved simply by the rise of his class to power. The power of big labor can be just as corrupt as the power of big business.

That is no reason, however, to smash the laboring man and to deprive him of a right and dignity that are properly his. The Bible would have us honor a man's work, in whatever capacity God has called him to serve. The worker should be honored for the faithful performance of what has been given to him to do. That is the only attitude that squares with the honor that the Bible itself gives to labor.

ROBERT D. KNUDSEN

### Cooperation

It has thrilled our hearts to see the great advances being made by you in the establishment of home missions churches and the extension of your Church. Here again, I think that our cooperation has been most helpful whenever we have consulted with one another before beginning new works so that they would not overlap or compete. May such a principle and practice of comity always prevail.

In these days, both of our churches are revising our respective church orders. It is my fond hope that our two churches may be mutually stimulated by one another in our respective understandings of the Scriptures as it bears upon church orders. In studying your agenda, I am aware of the various problems that this presents and I do not therefore propose any facile solutions. It would seem, however, that a meeting of our two church order revision committees might well prove to

further our understanding of one another and of the unity which we desire to express in Christ and his Word.

Your Church is a mighty force for the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the United States and Canada. For this again we in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church give thanks. We bring you greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the common labors in the gospel. We pray that God may continue to richly bless you in this Synod, and throughout your Church, not only this year but also in the years to come.

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# The Synod of Silverstream

ARENT I. DE GRAAF

Silverstream is a suburb 20 miles from Wellington, picturesquely tucked away in wonderful scenery of hills and pines and rushing creeks near the rapid waters of the Hutt River. It is also the place where the Reformed Church of Wellington, which has to work in three different centers, was privileged to build its first hall a year ago. When this hall was opened the guest preacher was the Rev. C. W. Oppelaar, just before his departure as our first missionary to Formosa.

Here from May 19 to 22 we thankfully held the first Synod of our Reformed Churches of New Zealand to be on 'home' ground. That fact warmed our hearts so much that we were not to feel the cold on those frosty days even though permanent heaters had not yet been installed in this new hall. When the Rev. Raymond Zorn opened the meeting on behalf of the convening Church of Hamilton, he had the privilege to welcome 11 churches properly delegated, three new ministers having arrived since the previous Synod in October 1962. We were greatly edified by the prayer service in which the Rev. S. Cooper of Avondale, moderator of the previous Synod, preached to us the Word of God from Rev. 2:1-7.

The Moderamen (officers) consisted of Mr. Zorn, moderator; the writer as first clerk; Mr. F. Channing, second clerk; and the Rev. P. van der Schaaf, adjunct. Present as the fraternal delegate from the Reformed Churches of Australia was Prof. A. Barkley, M.A., principal of the Reformed Theological College.

## Characteristics

In general it may be said that the proceedings of Synod bore the following characteristics:

1) They showed the intensive contact within this denomination of the two great streams of Reformed Christianity: the Dutch Reformed as taken along by the migrant members from Holland and also represented by the

*The Rev. Mr. De Graaf, first clerk of the 1964 Synod of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand, sent this report and comment as instructed by his Synod. Our readers will find it most informative in gaining a better understanding of this sister church of the OPC, three of whose former pastors are now serving in New Zealand: Raymond Zorn, G. I. Williamson, and Thomas Tyson. Mr. de Graaf was a delegate at the 1963 Reformed Ecumenical Synod in Grand Rapids.*

Christian Reformed Church, which lent us a number of ministers (of whom Rev. Cooper is the only one remaining); and the Scottish Presbyterian stream as represented by Rev. Scarrow, a New Zealander, and the three ministers now serving us who came from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The Synod showed again that the assimilation process is still in its developing stage.

2) Synod's proceedings also showed the genuine brotherly love in which such contact can take place, for debate, however piercing and wrestling at times, was never heated unduly, and people allowed one another to speak out.

3) Further, there was an increasing amount of ripe restraint which waited rather than hurtling into hasty decisions such as were sometimes made when our churches were younger.

4) Special mention should be made of the wise contributions of Prof. Barkley, who (though not a member of the Reformed Churches of Australia—he serves in the Reformed Presbyterian Church) gave ample evidence of the wisdom of the Reformed Churches of Australia in yet delegating him.

5) Synod manifested, all in all, that the New Zealand Reformed Churches are aware of their calling of the Lord to be a clear witness to the truth of the gospel both here and on the mission field abroad. We shall

mention some of the most important decisions under several headings.

## Ecumenical Relations

Synod addressed itself to its ecumenical relations all over the world, first of all with the Reformed Churches of Australia, with which we already have close cooperation in matters of (a) the Reformed Theological College; (b) joint publications, of which the monthly *Trowel and Sword* is the chief; (c) a joint broadcast of the Back-to-God Hour in this part of the world; (d) a certain degree of cooperation in missions, though both churches have their own respective fields; and (e) a joint superannuation scheme for ministers who frequently are called to and from each other's churches.

Discussions and study as to a possible corporate union have been going on for some time; and although it was the New Zealand Churches which first began seeking union, it was now our Synod which decided not to go beyond the present close cooperation, in order not to tie one another's hands, as in different lands, different approaches are imperative.

In a wider circle, Synod declared itself fully committed alongside other Reformed denominations throughout the world in the growing work of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. Further, Synod showed no wavering from its clear stand in the I.C.C.C., where we are to witness, to cooperate with other evangelical brethren, as well as to protest against whatever unreformed stand that organization may have chosen or may yet choose to take. This means clearly that we see great dangers in the W.C.C. type of ecumenicity, where the antithesis between light and darkness, the true church and the false, is compromised far more than we are permitted to condone.

A letter of warm, brotherly, but also earnest concern is to be written to the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, since their Synod had declared that in principle it saw no objection against

joining the World Council of Churches, but asked the opinion of sister churches. We felt that we should prayerfully comply with that request.

It was also decided that for reason of clarity of our stand our Churches would not engage in any official representation at N.C.C. meetings, even as observers.

### Church Order

What character shall our Churches bear? Presbyterian? Or Reformed? Insiders know that though basically these two are the same, yet in practice quite a few differences of approach have emerged in the four centuries since the Calvinistic Reformation. In our Churches the two streams meet, and it may be of interest to note the following guide lines as they have been adopted by Synod.

1) As to the authority of presbytery: while it is general Presbyterian practice to allow a wide scope of authority to presbytery (a body of which ministers are members rather than of the local church, and which owns the assets, etc.), it was deemed by Synod that the present Reformed practice is more scriptural in shifting the authority much more to the local church, of which the office bearers including the minister are members. Presbyteries and synods derive their authority exclusively from the local churches, that is, from the bottom up rather than from the top down.

2) Regarding the term of office of elders and deacons, it was now decided to leave this matter entirely to the local churches, some of which in our denomination hold life-long terms of office, though the majority have three or four year terms.

3) As to written form prayers, freedom was given to sessions to allow their ministers to pray *ex tempore* instead of being restricted to the prayers supplied, e.g., with the forms for Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

4) Regarding catechism preaching, it was stated that this usage, recommended for its way to build the church in knowledge of the Lord, was no more a matter of compulsion.

5) In matters of adiaphora in worship, freedom is allowed the sessions and no uniformity insisted upon in matters like frequency of celebration of the Lord's Supper; use therein of

fermented or unfermented wine, or of common or individual cups; or partaking in the pews or by coming to table; separated seating of the elders; hand-shake of delegation by elder with minister before and after service; standing, sitting, kneeling during services or parts thereof; and the minister's attire, either in church or outside.

6) Regarding the minister's state-given right to solemnize marriages, it was stipulated that always the session must give clearance before a marriage is performed by the minister.

7) As to the private use of alcohol or tobacco, no rules were made, the matter being left to the Christian conscience of the members themselves.

Synod, however, adopted the two following overall guiding principles for all these matters: (A) That, together with the Australian Churches, the church order revision be taken to hand and that endeavor be made to take into account in any such revision the decisions taken above, allowing for and incorporating such scriptural elements as have now found their way to us from a more Presbyterian tradition; and (B) Synod again calls upon the churches and upon every individual member to avoid placing stumbling blocks before the feet of brethren and, where feasible, to adopt such customs and ways as will make it easy for all our members to feel at home in our Reformed Churches.

### Confession of Faith

Insiders will also know that there always has been a difference in the manner in which the Reformed Churches of Australia and those of New Zealand have subscribed to the Westminster Confession. The Australian Churches in 1957 adopted this Confession only in so far as it did not go beyond the Belgic Confession; while our Churches had adopted the Westminster Confession with the distinct exception of certain chapters containing subject matter on which there was either disagreement or need for further study.

After all, one cannot adopt a confession of faith for a church unless it is abundantly clear that such a confession in all points represents the teaching of Scripture and therefore the faith of the church. It was proposed to this Synod that several chapters

thus far excepted from the Westminster Confession now stand as part of our standards. Provisionally the articles were adopted and recommended for further study. If no scriptural objection against these points would come in before next Synod, then as from next Synod the disputed chapters would be regarded as part of our Churches' confession.

Hesitancy in these matters is mainly caused by the fact that the Belgic Confession, hitherto subscribed to by the bulk of our members, leaves more things open as it was made considerably earlier than the Westminster Confession. Here questions emerge as to the difference between *theology* and *confession*. What is proper in a text book on theology, however Reformed it is, may not be right in a confession of faith. There may be *no* difference of opinion among subscribers of a confession where it concerns the heart of the church, while one may differ on a text book or some exegesis of a text.

In other words, you may not put more in a confession than you are *together* absolutely sure to be in the very Bible itself. Those coming from Australian Reformed Churches, always having had only the Belgic Confession as the really binding one, are now confronted increasingly with the task to ask themselves: Do I believe all that the Westminster Confession teaches *beyond* what I have believed and taught before?

That is a matter requiring time and patience, study and much love. The outcome, provided these four elements are present, can only be gratifying and to the glory of God. It was a help to hear Prof. Barkley declare that the faculty of the Reformed Theological College, including able men from both traditions, saw no reason whatsoever to adopt that Confession (in the way recommended by our Synod's Committee, which is the same as is done in the OPC) entirely as a basis.

The same approach holds as regards the matter of Sabbath observance as laid before Synod in a lengthy report. The churches have to study the question further. What does the Lord's Day mean in our New Testament world and in our modern society? What do we mean when we get up and say, "Thus saith the Lord"? Do we agree with the strict Puritan approach or with the freer teaching of Calvin himself (*Institutes*, Bk. II, chap. viii, par. 28 - 34)? This matter

*"Two great streams of Reformed Christianity"*

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is vital, and the churches' study should be diligent.

Synod also decided that to guard purity of doctrine every minister coming in from another denomination, be it a sister church or not, is to have a "colloquium doctum" (a brotherly learned discussion) in which to express his views on the faith of the church, before being admitted to installation in our churches. Presbytery is to see to it.

### Church Worship

In liturgical matters Synod took a few weighty decisions. The green light was given to the Committee on Revision of the Psalter Hymnal to proceed (providing it can be done together with the Australian Committee) in publishing a booklet containing (a) Psalms and hymns now present in the Psalter Hymnal but set to tunes better known in this part of the world; (b) Genevan Psalm tunes as in the Psalter Hymnal but with restored *modal* harmonization and the proper rhythm, the latter indicated also by way of underlining the long syllables in all stanzas; (c) hymns provided in the new centennial Psalter Hymnal but not in the old, to help out churches which have large stocks of the old in use; and (d) a limited supply of hymns for various occasions featuring more theocentric hymnody. Printing of this booklet will be aided by an overseas sister church provided Australia and New Zealand agree on one plan and will do it together. At the moment the matter is under study in Australia.

In another area, additional forms for the Lord's Supper (the new draft made by the Christian Reformed Church as amended by the Australian Synod, the forms of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and a new draft for a form submitted by our own Committee) will be made available in quantity in booklet form. The churches are free to use both above-mentioned booklets in worship.

Synod also gave advice on the matter of funeral services, allowing such services to be held in our buildings provided all possibility of superstition be carefully avoided and every-

thing done decently and in good order. When the Lord takes someone from our midst to himself, the whole congregation wants to hear the Word of the Lord and to witness to others attending of our faith in the living Lord.

### The Great Commission

It was a moving moment at Synod when the Overseas Missions Board reported its many blessings. We have been granted the privilege of sending our first missionary, the Rev. C. W. Oppelaar, a graduate of our own College in Geelong, to Taiwan. Though more was needed than the set budget, the Lord has abundantly provided for all our needs by opening the hearts and hands of his people without ever anything having to be asked. This gave the Board and Synod courage to trust that the additional amount will come. Moreover, Synod went on in faith and started a fund for a second missionary!

Plans were also made and work begun to start transmission of the Back-to-God Hour from the Far Eastern Station in Manila, which is beamed in to New Zealand, thus making this broadcast under our own name heard here. We are deeply grateful for the generous assistance given by the Christian Reformed Church. The World Home Bible League work, one of our main arms of evangelism, is taken to hand in all our churches enthusiastically as members, two by two, visit homes and present the Word of God. Plans were also accepted to start printing and distributing more tracts.

### Stewardship

A Central Diaconal Fund has been established, into which the churches are to pour 75 percent of deacons' offerings regularly to be received. This money will be set aside for diaconal needs on Taiwan, preferably establishment of an orphanage. "The poor ye have always with you," our Lord said, and living in a welfare state does not relieve us, Synod felt, from the obligation to give Christian alms in our worship services as stipulated in the Heidelberg Catechism (38). For possibili-

ties of relief we need not look far: our own mission field needs not only orphanages based on Christian love and teaching, but also clinics, since sickness is rife and hospitalization available only for the affluent.

### Conclusion

If we know ourselves in receipt of God's free mercy and the wonderful gospel that tells about it is entrusted to our hands, it is a joy to be together in a sense of vocation and victory even in the middle of the battle. In that joy we set up a Youth Work Committee, since we may abound in children, the church of tomorrow. This kind of problem is full of promise!

Synod also addressed itself briefly to the plans made to start a Federation for Christian Workers which, together with New Zealand fellow Christians, is to study and apply the will of God also for social life. It is not proper to allow the say in these matters solely to the Socialists!

More and more our young denomination is getting established and as the problems and conflicts grow that beset any living church here, so do the blessings.

The Lord willing, the next Synod is to take place October 13-20, 1965 in the newly constructed Reformed Church building in Christchurch. We wonder what our Churches will be like by then! It is our prayer that we, together with our Reformed sister churches all over the world, yea, together with all children of God through Jesus Christ, may be used for his glory and for the building of his eternal kingdom.

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