

The Presbyterian Guardian

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Letters

Not retired, thank you!

Thanks are hereby expressed to *The Presbyterian Guardian* for calling attention in its May issue to some of the work into which the Lord is now leading me. I also appreciate the fact that quotation marks were placed around the word 'retire' in reference to my withdrawal from teaching responsibilities at Westminster Seminary. I mention this because I am not retiring from the work of the gospel ministry, but rather have, by God's grace, entered upon a new, varied and very active ministry.

John H. Skilton
Philadelphia, Pa.

Note: Dr. Skilton is busily engaged in preparing materials for publication. He also is planning evangelism work both in Philadelphia and Ocean City, N.J.

"The Elders" — in book form?

I have just finished reading Part 8 of the Rev. Lawrence Eyres' "The Elders of the Church." These are excellent studies that should be widely recommended. I would like to exhort you to do what you can to get these studies combined in a book or pamphlet form for purchase. I would treasure the opportunity of giving such a book to each of our elders. Anything you could do in regard to such a venture would not only be greatly appreciated by me, but more importantly, it would bring glory to our Savior because these articles are true to his Word. Certainly the kingdom of God would be strengthened in the Presbyterian Church, U.S. (of which I am a minister). I appreciate the *Guardian* very much and pray that God will use it for the furthering of his kingdom upon this earth.

William H. Bell, Jr.,
Associate Pastor
Covenant Presbyterian Church
Columbia, S. C.

Note: Both Mr. Eyres and I have hoped to publish his series of studies on the elder in booklet form. The type used in the *Guardian* series can be reused; but initial costs for printing need to be arranged for. If others are interested in this possibility, a note from you would encourage us to proceed. —J. J. M.

Dispensationalism and Israel today

I have heard otherwise biblically sound fundamental ministers and elders (and others) joke about dispensationalism, as opposed to a correct interpretation of Scripture. J. Gresham Machen felt that this "false method of interpreting Scripture [will] in the long run be productive of harm" in the church (p. 49, *Christianity and Liberalism*).

Modern dispensationalism has been a highly effective force in the formation and continuing support of the modern state of Israel. Hundreds of millions of U.S. dollars have been poured into Israel. Congressmen urge this aid to Israel on direct pressure from their dispensationalist constituents. Complaints from other Bible believers who oppose this dreadful heresy to these same congressmen have not been enough to stem the tide of U.S. aid to Israel. U.S. dispensationalists have succeeded in assuring this steady flow of U.S. dollars to Israel. The cost in lives of men, women and children continues to be great.

Orthodox Christians should resist dispensationalism as vigorously as did Machen. We should view the slaughter in Israel as God's wrath against sin and heresy. And we should speak out strongly against the heresy in America whereby even 'fundamentalists' contribute to this killing, in the name of 'dispensationalism.'

Ross F. Rogers (Col. USAF, ret.)
Vienna, Virginia

About that "Career Missionary"

The Rev. Bruce F. Hunt
c/o *The Presbyterian Guardian*
Dear Mr. Hunt:

Dean Arthur Glasser has just called my attention to your comments in the May issue of the *Guardian* on the phrase 'career missionary.' I think you are quite right in what you say—and I know something about the phrase; I was the one who first used it! It does have a secular sound, which I do not like.

The problem is, however, one of distinguishing between missionaries who intend to spend a lifetime propagating the gospel, who take their calling seriously, who are going back for the second and third and fourth terms, and are not going to quit because they suffer loss or are opposed or persecu-

The Presbyterian Guardian

EDITOR
JOHN J. MITCHELL

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In the next issue . . .

Westminster Seminary Commencement. Two women received degrees—a first. Development plans noted.

Continuing Presbyterian Church in the South. Planning and organizing already under way. A full report on this exciting development among Bible-believing Presbyterians.

The Separation of the Church. A sermon by Dr. Machen, first given in 1925 and still needed today.

Should women be ordained as deacons? The editor discusses the biblical evidence.

ted, and those who come back home after a couple of years, or get pulled out of one country and don't go back to another. The phrase 'career missionary' was invented to describe these dedicated men.

Here at the School of Missions we seek to help those missionary associates of ours (we do not count them as 'students'—that is too youthful and immature a word for the men we enroll here) who are dead in earnest about being missionaries, and who intend to go back again and again. It's worth pouring ourselves into those men—those career missionaries—and giving them everything we have to help them to be better stewards of the grace of God.

Warm good wishes! And especially warm greetings to the Rev. and Mrs. Egbert Andrews whom we count among the fine career missionaries who have studied at SWM-ICG.

Donald A. McGavran, Prof. of
Mission and Church Growth
Fuller Theological Seminary
Pasadena, Calif.

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Thanks for the "MEMORY"

Since the release of the first group of POWs, I, like many others, have been pouncing on every scrap of information available concerning their captivity. The last piece of intelligence was of particular interest. In one camp, the prisoners put together as much of the Bible as they could recall.

It made me wonder how much of the sacred Word the members of my congregation could reconstruct out of their common memory pool, if banished to some prison camp by persecution. Suppose the Holy Scriptures were suddenly confiscated. How many texts and passages, together with their references, would I be able to put together?

The ability to remember is a wonderful gift of God. He has bestowed it on more than elephants. But, like faith, it strengthens with exercise—while it atrophies with disuse.

So, when is the last time you memorized anything?

The fact is that many of us are too lazy to exert ourselves in this God-given capacity. Why should we memorize in this age of canned entertainment and computers? A few generations ago there were those among us who could recite a poem or two at a moment's notice. Today, a kind of generalized amnesia has set in.

True, some of us have a greater capacity for remembering than others. It so happens that I am not strong in this department. Baseball averages, details of childhood, and hospital room numbers stick to me with embarrassing ease and regularity. This is because I have a weak brain. I remember many years ago when I paid ten cents to a phrenologist at a county fair to have my head read. She put her hands, palms down, on my tousled hair, and told me I had a very prominent memory bump. I knew she was a fake right then and there, because my teacher had told me a few days earlier that I had the best "forgettor" it had ever been his misfortune to meet.

I have a friend who has a photographic mind. He can recite whole plays. He insists that I could have such a mind as well. He's wrong. Or, if he's right, mine has no film in it. I have another friend who has a catalog

for a brain, chuck full of useless data. He could write an encyclopedia of inconsequential information. Of the two, I resemble the latter more, with my reservoir of hospital room numbers which never seems to evaporate.

Through it all, I have come up with at least one conclusion which is hardly original. It seems generally true that what is earliest remembered, is best retained.

How I hated those multiplication tables! How I struggled to avoid becoming their master. Today I thank those teachers who drilled them into me with such relentlessness. 8 x 7? I can give the answer in a flash, though I haven't looked those tables in the eye for decades.

To this day, I get the numbering of the Ten Commandments all confused. That is because I memorized them as a child in their Lutheran order. And I can still do pretty well with those Old Testament kings of Judah and Israel. That is because I had them thrown at me in their proper order so often when my age turned to double figures.

I remember my first catechism book. Who was the first man? Adam. Who was the first woman? Eve. I can still see the page. And I remember a book, dog-eared, furred and unfurred till it fell apart, by Hylkema and Tuuk. I never got out of the house until I had recited the answers to my father. In class, at church, I had to recite them again. Those answers, too, are with me still.

I had the good fortune (though at the time I called it something else) of having to attend Dutch services as a boy. I can still see my parents singing any psalm the preacher announced, without ever cracking a book! It was a continual source of amazement to me. Years later, I discovered the key. They had been made to memorize when they were young. Some years after that I went to a seminary other than our own and found classmates from other Christian traditions who could recite chapter and verse and content out of Scripture with such facility as made me envious. I consoled myself with the thought that I had a stronger hold on doctrine. That was true. In that department, however, they soon caught up with me. But with all my memoriza-

J. D. EPPINGA

tion of proof texts as a seminarian, I never caught up with them. They had an unbeatable head start.

By all of which I fashion an appeal. Our rising generation, for the most part, gets lost in the sixty-six books. Church School teachers, but parents most of all, make your children memorize choice texts and passages from God's Word. Insist on it while they are young.

A number of years ago, an aged parishioner of mine was moved to a rest home. She was not far from five-score years. Her mind was dim. At the age of fifteen, she had moved from the old country where the psalms had been drilled in. But for close to seventy years, she had not spoken in her mother tongue. Indeed, she had forgotten it.

Her last days in the rest home saw her semi-conscious. My visits elicited no response. I quoted Scripture and familiar hymns, yet it seemed I wasn't coming through.

On my last visit, I had an idea. I would get close to her ear. I would quote a psalm in her native tongue. Accordingly, I found a Dutch Bible and took it along. Slowly and distinctly, and in a foreign language, I said, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

She had not spoken for several days. She had not spoken in her mother tongue for seventy years.

It seemed to no avail, yet after one long minute, she stirred. Her lips moved. I barely heard her. Yet her sister did, and so did I. In fact, I can still hear her today, and the accent of the province of her native land.

"*Mij zal niets ontbreken*" (I shall not want).

It was fantastic!

The next day she went to heaven.

The Rev. Jacob Eppinga writes regularly for *The Banner*, official organ of the Christian Reformed Church. Though always with humor and wit, his weekly column usually has a sharp point. This one was first published on April 27 and is reprinted here with the kind permission of *The Banner's* editor.



Retiring – and smiling – moderator Jack J. Peterson hands over the gavel to newly elected Charles H. Ellis, moderator of the Fortieth General Assembly.

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General Assemblies and their effects

THE EDITOR

The “decrees and determinations” of synods and councils, “if consonant to the word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission, not only for their agreement with the word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God, appointed thereunto in his word” (cf. Acts 15).

—*Westminster Confession of Faith, XXXI, III.*

Whether they are called synods, councils, or general assemblies, the gatherings of the elders of Christ’s church can evoke laughter, solemnity, joy, sorrow, frustration, and solid satisfaction. The Fortieth General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church contained all of this and more.

Meeting at the First Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Manhattan Beach, California, the commissioners gathered on Monday evening, May 14, for the opening service of worship. The Rev. Jack J. Peterson of Carson, North Dakota, and moderator of the Thirty-ninth Assembly, preached and administered the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. One of the chief joys of any assembly is that moment when the voices of so large a number of God’s men are united in praise of their Lord.

This was the first assembly in this church’s history that was chosen on a proportional representation basis. Each

presbytery was permitted to send ministers and ruling elders in proportion to the number of ministers on its rolls and the number of churches in its bounds. The result was a noticeable increase in the number of ruling elders present, with fifty-three elders and eighty-six ministers as voting commissioners.

The Fortieth General Assembly convened for business on Tuesday morning and remained at work, morning and evening, until early Saturday afternoon, May 19. It promptly re-elected Richard A. Barker, elder from Grace Church in Westfield, N.J., as Stated Clerk. The Rev. Stephen L. Phillips, pastor of the Stratford (N.J.) Church, served again as Assistant Clerk. The Assembly then chose the Rev. Charles H. Ellis, pastor of Knox Church in Silver Spring, Maryland, as its Moderator.

This was also the first assembly to provide a system of review by advisory committees for all matters on its docket. Each commissioner was assigned to one of these committees, and each committee focused on the particular portion of the docket assigned to it. The results were varied, but the assembly determined to continue the system for another year.

Frustration was also apparent at times as the assembly tried to deal with various problems. Some of the problems seemed insoluble; other times the commissioners simply could not agree. But there was satisfaction also as committees

reported progress in their work.

Sorrow was keenly felt when, on the last morning of the assembly, word came of the death of Timothy Knudsen, son of Dr. and Mrs. Robert D. Knudsen. Yet even in this there was joy in knowing that Tim was released from his physical sufferings and had seen the face of his Lord.

The sense of solemnity was evident when the assembly dealt with such matters as the "Sabbath question" and a request for advice about ordaining a Mason to church office. The need to know God's Word, to be obedient to it, to seek the Spirit's help, were impressed upon those present. Throughout the debates, both about doctrinal questions and about the programs of the church's outreach and ministry, the assembly's dependence on her sovereign Lord was evident.

And there was laughter too. Perhaps the most delightful interlude came when the fraternal delegate of the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Hop Dong), the Rev. Kyu Suk Hwang, addressed the assembly. Mr. Hwang spoke in Korean with the Rev. Bruce F. Hunt, veteran Korea missionary, serving as interpreter. Mr. Hwang insisted on complimenting Mr. Hunt for his excellent command of the Korean language and his valuable service in Korea, all to the intense embarrassment of Mr. Hunt who was compelled to repeat the compliments for the assembly.

Councils and synods do make mistakes (*Confession of Faith*, XXXI, IV), and no doubt this one did too. Yet the repeated prayers for the Spirit's presence, the sincere desire to do God's will, and the patient hearing of opposing views, always impress this commissioner. May the people of the church receive this assembly's decisions "with reverence and submission," and may the Lord bless them, overrule them if need be, all to his own glory!

Bruce F. Hunt interprets for the address of the fraternal delegate of the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Hop Dong).



FOREIGN MISSIONS

Much time was devoted to the concerns of the Committee on Foreign Missions. In the committee's report it was noted that in none of the fields where Orthodox Presbyterians labor abroad—Ethiopia, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan—"have any restrictions been placed upon us for religious reasons; in all of them we see fruits of the work of the Holy Spirit." But the financial problems and the need for new missionaries have become major reasons for prayerful concern.

The conversion of a Muslim in Ethiopia is cause of thanksgiving. Use of new methods of evangelism in reaching Japan's people is cause for earnest intercession. But reductions in the number of missionaries now in service is cause for intensive prayer and supplication.

In Ethiopia, the Rev. Arthur Steltzer must carry the work of preaching alone. In Taiwan, only the Gaffins and the Andrewses remain on the field. In Korea, the departure of the Conns and the time of retirement for the Hunts has seriously curtailed the efforts there. Besides the Hunts, three other missionary families should be retired in the next five years.

The assembly seemed particularly concerned for these needs and the difficulties facing foreign missions today. Sharply increased costs, including dollar devaluations abroad, have forced cutbacks even though financial support has increased. Further cost increases seem certain. Meanwhile, the committee has no applicants for foreign mission service who are approved and ready to go.

Presbyteries were urged to challenge men with the need for missionaries. Adjustment of the allocations in the Combined Budget was made to offset some of the sharply increased costs (see below under "Stewardship"). The *Guardian* plans to run special reports in the coming months to provide fuller background on both the needs and opportunities that face us abroad.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The Committee on Christian Education has sought to impress upon the church the fact that its ministry of spreading the gospel through publications is a genuinely "missionary" endeavor. And the church appears to have gotten the message as evidenced by its increased willingness to support this work.

Many people do not realize just how involved a matter it is to publish a full twelve-year Sunday school curriculum. The first Sunday school materials (for Senior Highs) appeared in 1963; the full twelve-year cycle finally became available in 1972. But the work is not complete. In fact, it has simply begun and must now be maintained. What might have been suitable for Senior Highs in 1963 is sadly outdated in 1973. A continuing effort in writing, rewriting, and publishing must be sustained indefinitely.

This, like most efforts to evangelize today, costs money—money to pay a staff of writers and editors, money to pay the rapidly increasing costs of publication. The pinch has become so acute that the Committee decided it had to abandon the old Vacation Bible School materials. These materials needed a complete revision to make them workable and thus saleable. Even reprinting them without revising would demand more capital funds than were available. Despite pleas to the contrary, the decision to suspend VBS publication was reluctantly agreed to by the Assembly.

Yet the efforts of this committee have indeed attained a "missionary" character. In 1963 only fifty-three churches



Father-and-son team, Dwight H. and Donald M. Poundstone.



Robert L. Atwell makes a point.

outside the denomination made use of the Sunday school material then available; in 1972 there were 419 such churches. In addition, many other churches are using the materials through a joint publishing effort with the Christian Reformed Church. A total of 18,000 pupils are being confronted with the claims of Christ through these printed words. That is "mass evangelism" indeed.

The cooperation of the Christian Reformed Church, and more recently from the Steering Committee for a Continuing Presbyterian Church (US), have greatly encouraged this committee. And this encouragement includes financial support. But it is the Orthodox Presbyterian congregations that must still carry the major load in this work of obedience to the Great Commission.

HOME MISSIONS

The Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension "reiterates its intention to seek to bring home missions and church extension under the direction of presbyteries and local congregations as far as possible. . . . The long range goals of the denominational Committee . . . provide that the Committee will be a service agency for the presbyteries in their outreach."

This emphasis on service and decentralized control has met with a cordial response in the presbyteries. The Committee, rather than committing itself to a long-term arrangement with new home mission projects, now works through the presbyteries to provide oversight and financial help. Special loan funding for building programs is also available.

The goal is to see a steady growth in each mission toward eventual self-support. Presbyteries are expected to make year-by-year requests for continued help. Several presbyteries have recently inaugurated or greatly increased their local efforts at home missions. Use of the missionary-at-large to cover scattered small groups of interested people has also increased.

The Committee continues to provide assistance and help in placing seminarians for summer work. In 1972, twenty-

eight seminary students were at work in various churches. This program provides a period of intensive practical experience and supervision for the student, and gives the church the benefit of an extra worker. On all sides the arrangement has brought real blessings as churches receive an extra spark and the students gain insight into the pastoral calling.

Home missions, as the work of extending one particular denomination, receives very little financial support from outside the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Yet because so much home mission work is being done locally, it is hard to estimate just how much financial support is given to this cause. The field of America remains "white unto harvest" and the need for workers is very real. Pray ye the Lord of the harvest in this matter also.

DIACONAL MINISTERIES

It used to be the Committee on General Benevolence, and its major work was to build up a fund to provide help for retired ministers without adequate retirement benefits and to do some relief work on a limited scale. But the committee had been instructed to consider its proper work and to draw up a statement of its goals and principles of operation. In general, it was seen as a denominational board of deacons doing diaconal work beyond the scope or local reach of congregations. At this year's Assembly, its name was changed to the Committee on Diaconal Ministries.

During 1972 this committee was active in conveying the gifts of God's people to those in need in many areas. Particularly, help was extended to victims of flood damage in Pennsylvania, relief to the needy abroad, and scholarship help at home and abroad to needy young people seeking Christian schooling.

When the Committee was instructed to develop a "statement of purpose, principles, and theological grounds upon which . . . to operate," the basic question soon showed itself: To whom is the church, through its official deacons, to show mercy? Is it to "the world" in general, or is it limited

to the body of believers? It was not a question of the individual Christian's obligation to do good to all men, but a question of official diaconal responsibility.

The Committee proposed to answer this by saying that the "proper object" of the church's official ministry of mercy is the "household of faith" itself, though it allowed for certain exceptions. A minority, one member of the committee, argued that the "household of faith" was the "primary object" of the church's official diaconal work, but that mercy should also be extended in the name of the church to those outside. After extended debate, the Fortieth General Assembly approved the minority view and adopted it as the statement of principles for the Committee on Diaconal Ministries.

It may interest those who feel the church is dominated by its ministers to learn that this minority view was drawn up by a ruling elder. We quote:

The primary duty of the church is to witness to the gospel, to celebrate the sacraments, to seek man's sanctification, and above all, to seek God's glory. . . . The office of deacon was established to relieve the elders of certain time and energy consuming tasks in order that the elders might devote themselves more fully to prayer and the ministry of the Word. As part of the diaconal ministry, the church has asked the deacons to oversee the work of God's people as they provide fully, with love, first for their fellow Christians' needs, and afterwards for the needs of the world. We have an obligation to provide for the poor both within and without the church; but the primary concern must be for those within the church.

The principle to be observed is that general benevolent operations to all men should not be allowed to dilute significantly the primary benevolent concern for fellow Christians. . . .

We cannot say, "Be filled with the Spirit," to a man whose stomach is empty when our pockets are full. Neither can we "hide our light under a bushel" while we go about feeding the poor in the humanistic fashion so popular today and neglecting to give to them the Bread of Life. A proper motive will cause us to make a proper allocation of our strength and our fortunes to each ministry in its proper order of primacy — always to God's glory.

STEWARDSHIP

The Thirty-ninth General Assembly reorganized the old Stewardship Committee and gave the new Committee on Stewardship a stronger role in determining the church's budget planning. The committees on Home Missions, Foreign Missions, and Christian Education are required to present their respective programs and needs. The Committee on Stewardship shall then "assess the merits of the respective budgets and the proportionate relationship of each to the others."

This, in effect, requires the Committee on Stewardship to engage in very careful study of these proposed programs and budgets and to determine the degree of priorities involved. In reporting to the Fortieth Assembly, this committee judged that the program of the Committee on Christian Education was the most urgent in its needs, and so recommended that both Home and Foreign Missions be held to their existing programs without any advances.

This committee also studied the patterns of the church's giving and prepared charts showing expected trends in the future. On the basis of these projections, the Committee recommended a total Combined Budget to be requested of the congregations of \$575,000 in 1974. This compares with: \$454,000 budgeted in 1972 (and \$440,500 actually received); \$500,000 budgeted for 1973. It is too early to determine how well receipts for 1973 will match the \$500,000 sought. In line with its decision to "hold the line" in Home and Foreign Missions, the Committee on Stewardship recommended the following apportionment:

For Christian Education	\$165,000
For Home Missions	185,000
For Foreign Missions	<u>225,000</u>

Total Combined Budget \$575,000

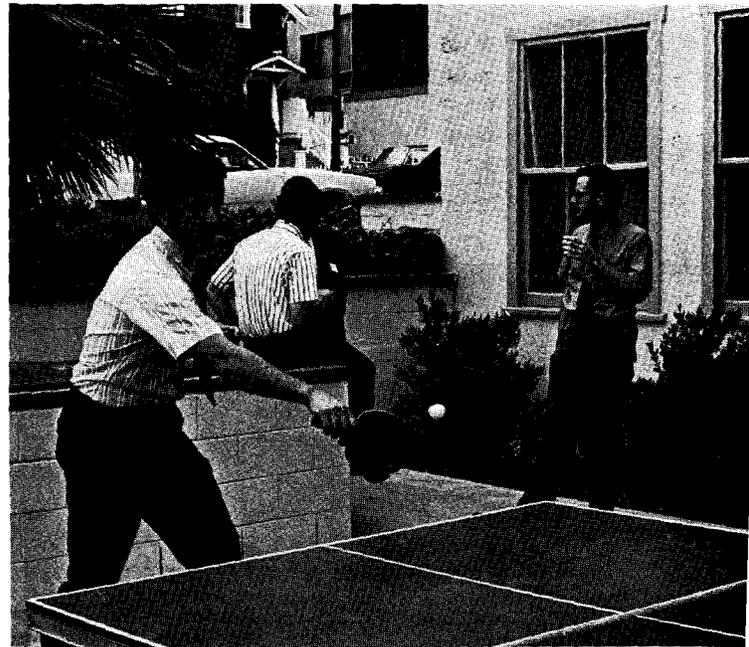
In considering this recommendation, the Assembly concluded that the figure for Foreign Missions, in view of further dollar devaluations abroad, represented a cut-back in program. After lengthy discussion, the Assembly finally adopted the Combined Budget with the following apportionment:

For Christian Education	\$158,000
For Home Missions	175,000
For Foreign Missions	<u>242,000</u>

Total Combined Budget \$575,000

Despite some strenuous opposition to the idea, the Assembly made the new Committee on Stewardship a standing, or permanent committee. One effect of this decision is to give the Committee a green light to proceed with its plan to seek a general secretary. The Committee has felt severely handicapped at not having a staff person to carry out some of its review functions and to direct its mandate to provide assistance to the congregations in promoting Christian stewardship. The Committee is actively seeking a general secretary.

Lendall H. Smith slams one during recess; more sedate types enjoy coffee.



General Assembly (Continued)

The first portion of our report on the Fortieth General Assembly has dealt with the basic "housekeeping" concerns of an assembly. Because these subjects are discussed at each assembly, there is a tendency to think of them as little more than oiling the machinery's wheels.

But this attitude is simply mistaken. An assembly's concern with budgets, programs, personnel, and operations is its concern with the basic work of Christ's church. What is determined for home and foreign missions, Christian education, and diaconal efforts, is the church's answer to her Lord's commands. Since the commands continue in force, so also the church's highest court must continue to concern itself with these things.

But the church must also be obedient to her Lord in other areas which, for various reasons, only come up for attention occasionally. Questions of doctrine, of fellowship with other Christian bodies, and of response to current problems in the church and the world, also make claim on an assembly's time. Some of these matters are reported here, in the order in which they came up at the Fortieth Assembly.

SABBATH MATTERS

After having been postponed from the last Assembly, the report of the Committee on Sabbath Matters was given a priority position in the docket of the Fortieth General Assembly. Though the Assembly was under pressures of time limitations, the report received a full hearing and extended debate.

In brief, the Committee had been asked to do three things: (1) study and compare the teachings of Scripture and those of the church's Confession and Catechisms on the Fourth Commandment; (2) review a formal complaint against a presbytery that charged that body with failing to agree that certain alleged teachings were in error; and (3) give a reply to a question from another presbytery that asked whether an ordained officer's ordination vows required him to accept the teachings of the Confession and Catechisms concerning the Sabbath.

The Committee presented a lengthy background survey of Scripture teaching on the Sabbath. This was summarized as follows:

Conclusions from the Scripture teaching

1. The Sabbath is a "creation ordinance," a weekly rest patterned after God's creation rest, and established for mankind by God at the beginning of history. This is the teaching of Genesis 2:2, 3 as interpreted by Exodus 20:10, 11 and especially by Mark 2:27, 28 and Hebrews 3:7—4:13.

2. The Sabbath was intended for all men from the beginning and is thus for all ages until the consummation of all things. Among others, Mark 2:27, 28 particularly points to the inclusiveness of the Sabbath ordinance, and Hebrews 3:7—4:13 to the final goal of entering into God's eternal rest that awaits those who persevere in faith.

3. The Sabbath is meant to be a day of rest from labor and a day of worship, holy to the Lord. It is defined in terms of rest, as in Exodus 20:10, 11 and the activity of worship is not only appropriate to the sanctifying of the day commanded by God, but is prescribed in Leviticus 23:3; cf. Acts 15:21.

4. The Sabbath received the same kind of attention from our Lord during his earthly ministry that was given to other commandments of God, as he purified it from "traditions of men," brought it to perfected expression, and thus prepared it for his New Testament people. Jesus' concern for the Sabbath is seen in such passages as Mark 2:27, 28; 3:1-6; Luke 13:10-17; 14:1-6.

5. The Sabbath was not abrogated for the New Testament dispensation. Colossians 2:16, 17 refers to the loosing of the bonds of the Mosaic requirements in respect to ceremonial and sacrificial elements of the Old Testament holy days in the light of Christ's perfect sacrifice; but it does not remove the obligation of the Fourth Commandment itself. Such passages as Romans 14:5, 6 and Galatians 4:10 do not nullify all distinctions between days, since the New Testament itself distinguishes the first day of the week from other days, as in 1 Corinthians 16:2; Acts 20:7, and designates that day as the Lord's Day or Christian Sabbath as in Revelation 1:10.

6. *In summary:* The Scriptures teach that God, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages, has appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto him.

If readers will compare this final summary with the words of the Confession of Faith, XXI, 7, it should be apparent that the Committee found the Confession to be in basic harmony, at least on the obligation of the Sabbath, with the teaching of Scripture.

Readers should also note that the question before the Committee and the Assembly was basically whether or not the Fourth or Sabbath Commandment was still binding on Christians; it was not a question of how to apply that commandment in particular situations.

On the basis of these conclusions from Scripture, the Committee recommended that certain teachings, allegedly held by a former member of the presbytery being complained against, if proved to be actually held would show that an offense against the teaching of Scripture had occurred. The Assembly was asked to declare that the following teachings were contrary to the Word of God: (1) "that God has not appointed the first day of the week to be the Christian Sabbath or Lord's Day"; (2) "that, because the weekly Sabbath was given to Israel as a type of spiritual rest from sin, it was therefore abolished at the coming of Christ"; and (3) "that the distinction between the six days and the seventh day contained in the fourth commandment does not apply in this dispensation."

One member of the Committee presented a contrary view of the Scripture teaching. Basically, this minority view held that Colossians 2:16, 17 did in fact abrogate the Sabbath Commandment for Christians. But the view went on to develop the idea that the New Testament references to the first day of the week, or Lord's Day, were such as to constitute that day as the day for Christian assembly and worship. As circumcision was transformed into baptism, the Passover into the Lord's Supper, so the Old Testament Sabbath had been transformed into the Lord's Day, with greater freedom and less restrictiveness. This view is admittedly contrary to that of the Confession of Faith. But its author presented it to the Assembly and urged it as the teaching of Scripture.

The Assembly, after lengthy debate, adopted the Committee's recommendation to declare the teachings given above to be contrary to God's Word. In effect, this decision was

an upholding of the basic position of the Confession—though it did not at all go on to say anything, pro or con, about the further development of Sabbath teaching in the Confession and Catechisms.

A second minority view was presented that challenged the Committee's understanding of an "offense" in doctrine. The Committee followed the definition in the Book of Discipline, I, 2, that "an offense [is] anything in the doctrine or practice of a member of the church which is contrary to the Word of God." The minority view held that the second ordination vow, requiring the man being ordained to "sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scripture," obliged him to hold that "system of doctrine" that is the core of the Reformed faith. Since the doctrine of the Sabbath is not found in all Reformed creeds, and the position of the Westminster Confession is actually denied in some of the Reformed creeds, therefore an ordained officer cannot be held to the specific view of the Sabbath contained in the Westminster Confession. Or, to put it simply, the question of the Sabbath should be left an open question.

The Assembly did not adopt this position. Instead, it followed the Committee's recommendations and proceeded to sustain or uphold the complaint against the presbytery for failing to agree that the alleged teachings were contrary to Scripture and thus constituted an "offense."

The Committee had also been instructed to answer a question about the force of this same second ordination vow. The Committee proposed that the Assembly answer as follows: "So far as the teaching of our secondary standards [Confession of Faith and Catechisms] regarding the Christian Sabbath or Lord's Day is the teaching of Scripture, its

acceptance is required by the second ordination vow." After proposals to change this in line with the minority view given immediately above and another proposal that would have substituted the word "because" for the phrase "so far as," the Assembly adopted this statement as its answer to the question about the second ordination vow.

This statement should be read very carefully. It does not say that any man can believe whatever he pleases about the Sabbath so long as he believes it is taught in Scripture. It does not say that everything in the Confession and Catechisms concerning the Sabbath is necessarily taught in Scripture—but neither does it deny this possibility. What it does say, in effect, is that a man is obliged to obey the Scripture first and foremost, and "so far as" the Confession and Catechisms contain Scripture's teaching they are to be obeyed.

If sessions and presbyteries follow this statement as a guide in questions of doctrine and ordination vows, they will see the Confession and Catechisms as a summary of Scripture teaching as the church understands it. But if a man feels obliged to reject some part of the teaching of these secondary standards, that rejection in itself does not prove that man to be guilty of an error in doctrine or practice. That man has the unlimited right to appeal to Scripture alone in such a case, and the session, presbytery, or General Assembly must determine the matter from Scripture.

Since the Assembly has in effect upheld the Confession's basic position on the Sabbath's continuing obligation for Christians, it is now in order to ask ourselves how may we best obey that commandment of God. The *Guardian* hopes to present several articles and discussions of this matter of how to apply the commandment. The Christian's faithfulness to Sabbath-keeping is indeed a major means of visible testimony to the world; how we do it is vitally important.

INTERCHURCH RELATIONS

The "Sabbath question" took up a major block of the Assembly's time. Following that the attention of the Assembly was given to matters of the relation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to various other churches. A summary of decisions in this area is given:

1. An invitation to send observers to the International Council of Christian Churches (of which Dr. Carl McIntire is the president) received no action.

2. A letter to the Canadian Reformed Churches (a group with Dutch background who followed Dr. Schilder out of the larger Gereformeerde Kerken in the 1940s) asked them to consider establishing "fraternal relations" with the OPC.

3. The "sister relationship" (somewhat closer than "fraternal") with the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland was terminated. Reasons cited were "serious doctrinal deviations" in the GKN (in the area of Scripture, membership in the World Council of Churches, and ordination of women to ruling office), and the impossibility of exercising the sort of interchurch discipline required for so close a relationship. This decision leaves common membership in the internationally organized Reformed Ecumenical Synod as the only bond of fellowship between the GKN and the OPC.

4. The Assembly determined to answer affirmatively an invitation from the National Presbyterian and Reformed Fellowship to send representatives to a meeting in Atlanta in

September. The purpose of this meeting is to explore possible ways of developing closer relations with other genuinely Presbyterian and Reformed groups in the United States. The NPRF contains individual members from the OPC, both Reformed Presbyterian bodies, the Christian Reformed Church, the Reformed Church in America, and both the United Presbyterian and "Southern" Presbyterian bodies and other churches. It is understood that one suggestion to be brought forth at the Atlanta meeting will be the possible convoking of a national synod of churches, a nation-wide gathering whose decisions would be binding only to the extent that participating churches chose to adopt them. Agreement to send representatives to Atlanta does not at all mean endorsement of such a national synod, however.

5. The work of a separate Committee to Confer with Representatives of the Christian Reformed Church was transferred to the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations, in line with a similar transfer by the CRC Synod of 1972. Both the Synod and the OPC Assembly have now agreed to inform one another of and to invite representatives from the other body to sit on various study committees. Cooperation and exchanges of delegates at the presbytery/classis level was also endorsed. The goal of organic union, though not abandoned, has been set aside and measures to achieve closer understanding are being emphasized instead.

O.P.—R.P. PLAN OF UNION

Though this subject is actually one more point under the preceding topic, it is dealt with separately because of its greater importance. The Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations has been meeting for some time with the Fraternal Relations Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod to draw up a Plan of Union for merging the two denominations. The Committee on Ecumenicity presented the Plan of Union in its current revised form and recommended that the first two sections of it be sent down to the presbyteries (and sessions, according to a later amendment) for study. These sections include the Preamble, a lengthy statement of past history of both churches and their common goals now, and a second section detailing the specific standards of doctrine, government, discipline, and worship proposed for the merged church. (Portions of these sections are reproduced below.)

Questions of conscience. The Assembly had earlier been confronted with an overture that sought to have the Committee on Ecumenicity make provision in the Plan of Union for the continuing existence of the church in the event of a merger with the RPCES. The sense of this overture was to provide for a continuing church, or churches, for those who might feel obliged by conscience to refrain from entering the merger.

In the debate that followed it was pointed out that it would also be a matter of conscience to require those who favored a merger to provide for a continuing division in the

body of Christ. And this the Assembly declined to do.

What it did do was instruct the Committee to take steps to "avoid any uncharitable actions with reference to the rights and privileges of persons or churches which may choose to refuse to be participants in any union into which the Orthodox Presbyterian Church may enter in the future."

Questions of timing. In recommending that the two sections of the Plan of Union (of the OPC and RPCES) be sent down for study, the Committee also asked that any comments on these sections be sent to the Committee by December 31, 1973. Efforts were made to postpone this date until May 1974, but these failed to pass.

The significance of the December date, which the Assembly maintained, is to make it still possible for a completed Plan of Union to be presented for action to the 1974 General Assembly. If that Assembly approved the Plan, it could be sent down to the presbyteries for adoption, and actual merger could take place in the spring of 1975.

That is still only a matter of possibilities. If the sessions and presbyteries express serious reservations about the portions of the Plan sent to them before December 31, the schedule could be delayed. And of course, the next Assembly could act to delay it further or even to terminate the proposals. But for sessions and presbyteries, the next few months is the time to engage in serious and concentrated study of this proposal for merging two branches of the church of Christ.

PREAMBLE OF THE PLAN OF UNION

The following text from the first section of the proposed Plan of Union engendered considerable discussion at the Fortieth General Assembly. Efforts were made to amend it, either to strengthen certain ideas or to remove part or all of the reference to "our sins in days past," particularly as they touched on the division that took place in 1937.

Though strong appeals to modify the Preamble were made before the Assembly, that body made no alterations in the document, but sent it down for study in the form that had been agreed upon by the joint OP-RP committee. The crucial portion of the text is as follows:

The Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church come together committed to the supremacy and authority of the Scriptures, the inerrant Word of God, and confessing one Lord, one faith, one baptism. These churches come together as the _____ [the name of a united church has not been determined] Church in one scriptural faith and order, in full fellowship in the service of Christ under the divine authority of the whole of Scripture for all of faith and life. We come to this union acknowledging both God's grace and our sins in days past, and trusting in the renewal of the Holy Spirit for days to come.

In this union we seek first the honor of our Saviour's name; we wish to be found pleasing in the sight of the Lord who prayed for the deepest unity of His people. In particular, we would praise God for His mighty grace in bringing us together after a sad experience of division in the history of our churches. Soon after the Presbyterian Church of America was

established in 1936 to continue faithful witness to the Christ of the Scriptures, a grievous division brought reproach upon this testimony. We recognize the genuine and deep concerns that influenced this division: on the one hand, a fear that indifference or hostility to characteristic features of the piety and hope of American Presbyterianism would doom the church to sectarian isolation; on the other hand, a fear that the reformation of the church would be crippled by adherence to requirements for life or faith that went beyond the teaching of Scripture.

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

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

(*Note:* This is a further revision of the Preamble from that on which the *Guardian* commented in its January issue. The concept of "sin on both sides" has been much more clearly set forth in the present document.)



One of many advisory committees at work.

LARGER CATECHISM CHANGES

In the second section of the Plan of Union that is being sent down for study and comment, certain proposed changes in the Larger Catechism are presented. These grow out of changes made by the Bible Presbyterian Synod to modify the Catechism so that it would not preclude the holding of a premillennial view of our Lord's return. As given in the Plan of Union, the text has been further modified to improve the wording.

Readers are invited to compare the text here with the form in the Larger Catechism in various editions available.

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

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

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

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

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

A. After the coming of the Lord and the resurrection of the just and the unjust shall follow the final judgment of angels and men. The day and the hour

of the coming of the Lord no man knoweth, that all may watch and pray and be ready.

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

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

An overture from the Presbytery of Southern California to the Fortieth Assembly sought to have these changes deleted from the Plan of Union unless they could be shown to be required by the Word of God. But the Assembly simply referred the matter to its Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations.

Comment: The overture suggested that instead of amending the Catechism, a guarantee of "eschatological liberty, within the guidelines of subscription to the constitutional standards" be written into the Plan of Union. We do not approve of this suggestion for two reasons: Precisely what is required by subscription to the standards is a debated question in both the OPC and the RPCES. Moreover, if both groups are willing to allow "eschatological liberty," it would seem more honest to the world to amend the Larger Catechism to permit it rather than to declare that one may reject the Catechism's statements.

OTHER ASSEMBLY ACTIONS

Ordination of a Mason. The Presbytery of Ohio had overtured the Assembly to "give specific counsel" about ordaining members of secret societies as officers of the church, in view of the ordination of a member of the Masonic Lodge as an elder in one of its congregations. The Assembly took no action to answer this overture directly except to refer the presbytery to previous statements by earlier assemblies. These earlier statements clearly expressed the view that to become a member of the church an individual should renounce his membership in the Masonic Lodge; Masonry is seen as a religious institution and one that is definitely anti-Christian. Refusal to take further action was to avoid any prejudging of the particular situation in the Presbytery of Ohio, by seeming in any way to condemn the elder in question without a proper trial.

History of the OPC. The Assembly, in answer to an overture to last year's Assembly, determined to erect a special committee to write a history of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The church was founded in 1936 by those who left the old Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., when that body officially chose to follow its own man-made rules and denied men like J. Gresham Machen the right to appeal to Scripture. The committee was composed of Arthur W. Kuschke, Jr., Davis A. Young, and Henry W. Coray.

Reformed Ecumenical Synod. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church is a member of this world-wide grouping of Presbyterian and Reformed churches, most of which are not and have not been members of the World Council of Churches. Contrary to the strongly stated advice of the RES itself, one of its largest member churches recently did join the WCC. When the report of the Delegates to the 1972 RES was before the Fortieth Assembly, considerable sentiment was ex-

Richard B. Gaffin Jr. addresses the chair.

for Worship, in the coming months.

Church Paper. An overture seeking to set up an official church paper for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church had been presented to an earlier assembly. A committee to study the matter had reported that such a paper was not required, though permissible. A minority had urged that it was needed. This Assembly finally concluded the debate by dissolving the special committee and thus halting further discussion of such an official paper. (*The Presbyterian Guardian*, though it seeks to serve the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, is not that denomination's official organ, but is published by an independent corporation.)

Prooftexts for the Catechisms. The report of the committee that is preparing prooftexts for the Catechisms was greeted with applause when it was reported that the group had been meeting *every week* and was nearly done. The final report is expected for next year's Assembly.

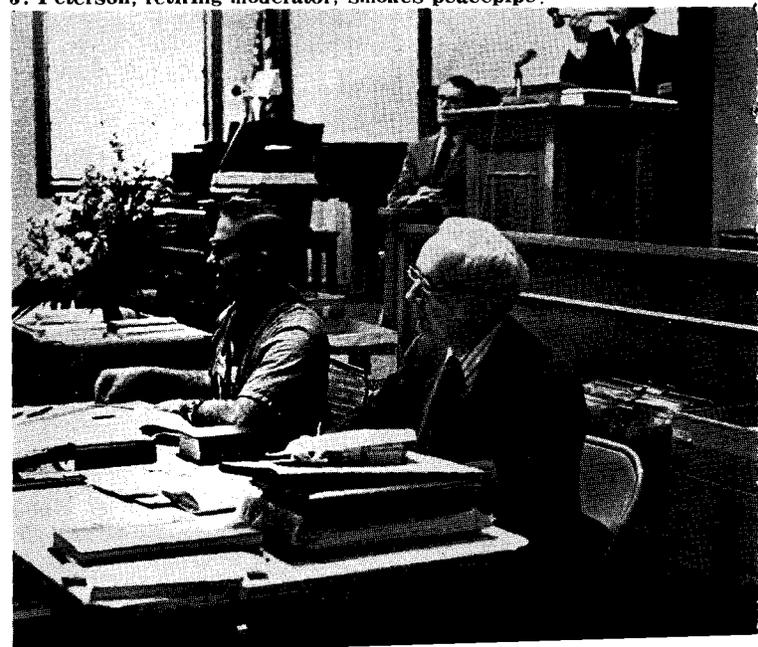
Next year's Assembly. No date or place for the Forty-first Assembly was determined, the matter being left to the Stated Clerk and Moderator. Costs of travel to this year's Assembly were much higher than usual, and commissioners were reimbursed their travel expenses only for any amount over \$100. It was widely hoped that the 1974 Assembly could be held in the East Coast area, preferably in or around Philadelphia. This would reduce travel expenses since the largest concentration of commissioners comes from this area.

The *Guardian* gives this extensive reporting of the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for the information of its readers. For those who are members of the OPC, the decisions of the Assembly should be received with all due respect as those of the church's highest court. For those readers who are not members of the OPC, this report is at least a look into the affairs of a church that seeks to be faithful to her Lord and in full obedience to his Word.

As indicated here and there in the report above, the *Guardian* hopes to present further discussion of some of the questions and concerns that faced this Assembly. We welcome comment from our readers on these matters and others also. We ask only that such comment be brief—printing costs are rising and space is limited—and that it seek to advance the cause of our great sovereign and gracious Lord, the King and Head of his body the church.

—John J. Mitchell

Clerks Richard A. Barker and Stephen L. Phillips keep the minutes. Edmund P. Clowney records nominees on overhead projector during voting for new moderator. Jack J. Peterson, retiring moderator, smokes peacepipe?



pressed urging that the OPC separate itself from this body.

It was argued, however, that the OPC still had a voice in the RES, that it was an encouragement to other biblically oriented churches, and that an abrupt separation would be unwise. The Assembly agreed, but did ask its delegates to present a recommendation to the next Assembly with specific reasons as to whether the OPC should take steps to withdraw or not.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit. In answer to a request from the RES that each member church study the "matter of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a special experience in addition to regeneration and conversion," the Assembly determined to erect a special committee to study the question. No doubt also the concern for questions in this area as raised by the "charismatic renewal" in our own country may have influenced the decision to have such a committee. Members of the committee are Herbert S. Bird, John J. Mitchell, William E. Welmers, and Richard B. Gaffin Jr. as an alternate. Those readers who have a particular interest, or have done study in this area, might communicate directly with Mr. Bird or through the *Guardian's* editor.

Slicing up Iowa. The Assembly was asked to change the boundaries of the presbyteries so as to include the area around Sioux Center, Iowa (site of Dordt College) in the Presbytery of the Dakotas rather than the Presbytery of the Midwest. The reason was to accommodate the group in Sioux Center who are seeking to be organized as a church there and who felt closer to other churches in the Dakotas area than to those in the Midwest presbytery. Though the Presbytery of the Dakotas is the largest presbytery in geographical extent, the Assembly agreed to separate the western tier of Iowa counties from the Midwest and include them in the Dakotas presbytery.

Book of Discipline, Directory for Worship. A committee on revisions to these two parts of the church's standards has been at work for some years. It presented its final version of proposed changes to the Book of Discipline and asked that they be sent to the presbyteries for adoption. After discussing the proposed changes and approving most of them, the Assembly determined instead to send the revisions down for study at this time. The *Guardian* hopes to present some discussion of these, and of proposed changes in the Directory

Success in Youth Work

The April issue of the *Guardian* arrived and, as I sat down to read it, I discovered that it mainly addressed itself to two areas of thought—church union and the youth ministry of the church. While I must confess a certain ignorance of the issues of church union, I found myself greatly encouraged by the many areas emphasized with regard to the youth ministries.

For some time our youth group has struggled in size, and it would be easy to grow discouraged. Sometimes we do feel badly about the many problems the kids have. Sometimes we are let down by what often appears to be apathy towards God. Yet, we cannot quit! I'd like to share why, so that perhaps others might take heart.

The teen years are filled with the most intense struggles of life. Not that other ages are exempt, but the teens particularly are torn.

Parents who want their teens to act maturely and wisely often forget to let them try. Other teens are given far too much opportunity and they try too much! It's like a giant tug-of-war between staying in the nest and taking flight.

Even when a parent has successfully passed through the critical hour, he cannot offer much advice to his neighbor-parent. And more often than not, he isn't too much wiser the second time around in his own house. So, the struggle is there and must be recognized.

Most of our youth work centers around non-church youth. And that means our teens get very little encouragement from home. More often they are discouraged when they attempt to be faithful to Christ.

We've tried many programs, ideas and places, and have seen both success and failures in each thing we've tried. There has been, however, one area where our group has had 100% success! Impossible? No, not really!

When we first met these kids we were scared by their worldliness, by their knowledge, ability, and frankness, and by our own unprofessional awkwardness.

As I look back I must admit that being a youth sponsor has been 100% effective in driving *me* to *my* knees, confessing Christ more openly, and in general being a better, more honest Christian.

Somewhere along the way we've learned that being an effective youth leader means you put yourself and your own inconsistencies on the line. You have to see that you don't have all the pat answers. If that comes as a surprise, just think how funny and perplexing it was suddenly to become aware of the fact during a youth meeting!

So, if you were to ask us as sponsors for figures and definite responses within the youth ministry of our church, my answer would have to be 100%! I'm 100% impressed by the effectiveness of our teens at *helping me* be a more aware and alive person!

As for the teens, I just love them! I love them when they goof, when they succeed; and I love them when they disappoint me—or I them!

None of us is perfect. None of us has all the answers. But I do believe that if each of us starts with himself and his own relationship toward his Creator in honesty, then we'll be headed in the right direction. Our effectiveness doesn't depend upon the size of the group, but upon whether we glorify God and if we're able to enjoy our personal relationship to him. . . . And that is the chief end of man. In Christ's joy,

Mrs. Barbara Blietz
Hanover Park, Illinois

As a young person (21) I read Mr. Leonard Miller's article in the April issue of the *Guardian* with great interest. I am glad that he realizes so clearly—and I would like to reemphasize—the great importance, in working with young people, of content rather than gimmicks.

Preaching, teaching, and living the gospel in all its fullness and clarity and power is meat and drink to people (especially young ones) in a world in which so many parents, teachers, and so on either don't know what they believe, or are reluctant to state it clearly and defend it, though it challenges and offends. I believe there is a rich harvest God will give to such salty types as will, in love, declare his whole counsel to young people, showing how untenable is any position other than the Christian one.

Steve Hake
Tunghai University
TaiChung, Taiwan

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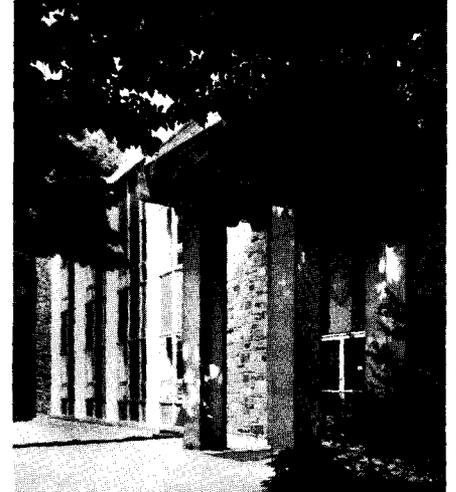
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Presbytery of Pitscottie

S. R. CROCKETT

When I cam' hame from my first presbytery at Pitscottie, the wife was awfu' keen to ken [know] a' that had passed, for she said, "If it's sae graun' to listen to yae minister on Sabbath, what maun it no' be to hear a dizzen a' at yince?" But there was juist where my wife was mista'en that time whatever, for as a matter o' experience, it's a moral impossibeelity to hear ony yin o' twal ministers when they are a' speakin' at yae time.

But I said to Mrs. MaWhurr, "Do you no' think that ye had better wait till the forenicht, an' then ye can hear a' about it, no in snips an' clippets? Rob Adair will likely be ower frae the toon, for he was gaun to come this way to gie a look at some score or twa o' Kirkconnel's yowes [ewes]."

So in the afternoon she pat on a bit fire in the parlor ben the hoose, which she disna do unless we're gaun to hae company, and by the time that Rob Adair cam' she was in graun' fettle to listen. For ye see this was the first time that I had ever been presbytery elder, an' oor minister was fell anxious for me to gang doon to Pitscottie, for there was a lad that he kenned comin' a' the road frae Enbra' for leecense to preach the Gospel, an' the minister thoct that some o' the auld yins o' the presbytery micht be ower sair on the young man.

Rob Adair cam' in baith wat an' dry, an' to help baith, got a change o' claes an' his tea oot o' oor best cheena. Then when the pipes were gaun weel, they baith looked ower at me. Brawly kenned I that they were hotchin' for me to gie them the presbytery; but I gaed on askin' Rob aboot the price o' beasts, an' hoo many lambs had been settled on the hill that day, till my wife could stand it no longer.

"Saunder MaWhurr," says she, "if there's a war tried woman than me or a mair aggravatin' man than you in six parishes, I dinna ken them."

So I began.

"Weel, as ye ken, I was no' that carin' aboot gaun to the presbytery at the first go-off, but oor minister wadna be said 'No' to."

"An' you're no' the man to say it gin he war," said the mistress.

"She means that me an' the minister 'grees fine," said I to Rob, "though he wasna my man when he cam' on accoot o' his giein' oot a Paraphrase. This was my opeenion at that time; he haes a harmonium noo i' the kirk, an' Alexander M'Quhurr, Drumquhat, was the first name on the list o' subscribers. Change?—I wadna gie a whistle for a man that canna change when he fin's he's wrang; so it's no wonder oor minister an' me's verra pack. He has taen me a lang gate sins him an' me fall aquant. I used to think Jeems Carlyle the only yin o' the Carlyles that had come to ony guid (an' 'deed there were few better sheep in Dumfries market on Wednesday

than Jeems Carlyle's); but oor minister, wi' the help o' the Almichty an' some buiks o' Tammas Carlyle, thrawn stick as he was, hae garred anither thrawn stick o' a farmer body lift his een abune the nowt an' the shairn."*

"Skip the minister, an' the haivers the twa o' ye talk about auld Tam—drive on wi' yer presbytery!" said my wife. In the generality, ye ken, I'm ower slow for the wife; she kind o' likes a' things to gang forrit gye-an' sherp, an' wad gar a' the hens hae their layin' dune i' the mornin' an' their nests made afore they gaed oot to pick up a single corn.

Yince I offended her sair when the factor [the landlord's overseer] was here to his tea. "Hae a bit o' this skim milk cheese, factor," says I, "it's my wife's ain makkin', an' I'se warrant there's neyther dirt nor butter in't!"

"Weel, the presbytery be't," says I, for I saw that my wife's patience, never verra lang at the best, was comin' near an end. I ken the length o't to a hair, as by this time I hae a good richt to do. "Weel, the coort met an' was constitutit."

"What's that?" asked Rob Adair.

"Fegs, I do not ken; ye'll hae to ask the clerk, it was him that said it," says I, "an' then there was reports, an' strings o' feegures like laddies' coontings (sums); but naebody payed muckle attention, but talkit to their neighbors till the clerk caed 'Order!' Then they were quait for half a meenit, an' syne at it again. 'Deed the clerk talkit too when he didna mind.'"

"Deer sirce, an' that's a presbytery. I thoct it was like a week o' sacraments!" said my wife.

"Verra far frae that," says I, "for o' a' the craiteurs to fecht [fight], doos an' ministers are the maist quarrelsome."

"Did oor minister fecht?" asked the mistress, verra pointed.

"Na; he was raither a peacemaker, so to speak," says I, cautious like; "of coorse a man haes whiles to speak his mind."

"Ow! he's the wee white hen that never lays away, oor minister, I ken," says she, dried like.

"Ye never war the bird to fyle yer ain kirk riggin'," says Rob. Whiles I'm feared that auld Rob is gettin' a wee doited [dotty, senile].

"Yer keepin' me frae the presbytery wi' yer haivers,"

*"but our minister, with the help of the Almighty and some books of Thomas Carlisle, thrown stick [i.e., something to be thrown out of the way] as he was, has made another thrown stick of a farmer body lift his own [voice in song] above the oxen and sheep." Saunder has been persuaded to sing something other than a Psalm in worship and even to sing with the accompaniment of a harmonium or reed organ.

says I, an' that made them as quait as pussy-cat. "Weel, in a wee it came on to the leecensin', an' the laddie frae Enbra' was bidden to step in alang wi' two ither lads frae the neeborhood that had compleeit their studies at the college. The Enbra' laddie had been unco' graun' scholar—had gotten the Knox Fellowship, I think they caaed it, an' was noo gaun oot to be a missionar' to the haythen. So afore they could let him gang, they bood examine him on the Hebrew an' Laitin, an' ither langwiges that naebody speaks noo. I wasna lang in seein' that the lad kenned mair than maybes a' the presbytery pittin' thegither. ('Surely no' than yer ain minister!' pat in my wife.) An' for the life o' me I couldna see what they could fin' faut wi'. The ither twa were nice lads aneuch, an' they hummered an' ha'ed through some gate, but the Enbra' lad never made a stammer, an' had his answers oot afore they could read their questions off the paper."

"But I thocht that they war a' sair again the paper," said my wife.

"Weel, sae they maistly are, but some o' them are maybes a wee mair comfortable wi' a bit note when it comes to the Greek an' the Laitin.

"At ony rate, it wasna till they cam' to the discoorses that there was ony o' the kin' o' din that oor minister was sae feared o'. The laddie was askit to read yin o' his discoorses — I kenna what it was about, something onywee that he had written in the Laitin, but was askit to read in the English as bein' mair convenient for the presbytery.

"He wasna halfway through when up gets Maister Begbie frae Soorkirk, mighty dour-lookin', an' he says, 'I'll no' sit in this presbytery an' listen to ony siccan doctrine, frae a Knox Fella' or ony ither fella!'" says he.

"An' wi' that Maister Pitbye o' the Dullarg gat himsel' on his legs; 'I canna help thinkin',' says he, 'that we wad not hev been asked to license the young man noo afore us if he had been considered soun' in the faith in his ain presbytery. There maun be something sore wrang,' he says.

"A' this time the young man had been standin' wi' a face like daith, his lips workin', tryin' to get a word in, an' oor minister haudin' him by the coattails, an' tellin' him for ony sake to sit doon, that there war plenty there to speak for him. But he got awa' frae the minister an' juist on Maister Pitbye's heels he spoke oot, 'May I say that this discoorse has passed through Professor Robertson's hauns and has received his approval.'

"Oor minister sat back wi' a look in his face as muckle as to say, 'Ye hae done for't noo, young man!' Then there was a din to speak about. There was Maister Bangour frae Muldow, an' he was a wild man this day. 'Professor Robison, indeed! I'll learn you, young man, that Professor Robison has nae standin' i' the presbytery o' Pitscottie, an' faith, if he had, we wad libel him this verra day, for he's a rank heretic, leadin' the young men o' oor kirk astray efter strange gods! Ay, an' I wull testifee —'

"'Sit doon,' says Forbes, the new-placed minister o' the Pits, him that the collier lads like so weel; 'testifee in your ain parish, if you want to testifee! Talk sense here!' says he. Forbes is a determined North-countryman as dour an' radical as fire, that got scunnered [hurt by prejudice] at hame wi' the mair auld-fashioned o' his breth-

ren o' the kirk. He's no' a great respecter o' persons, neyther. He looks as if he had focht mony battles in his day, and by his set teeth I could see he was bidin' his time for anither.

"Richt glad was I that he didna mean to set them in me.

"By this time the fiery young minister frae the Shaws was on his feet, and wi' the strongest words an' a power o' gesture, he was layin' intil them on the ither side. An' they were speakin' aye back till ye couldna tell what was what. But I watched Forbes bidin' his time wi' a face like a grew [greyhound] when he sees the hare but canna get slippit.

"There was the verra sma'est calm, an' then like a shot there was Maister Forbes at the table. Some o' them cried, 'Hear Mr. Girmory,' but Forbes said —

"'No, Maister Begbie, ye'll be hearin me the noo. Ye are makkin' bonny fules o' yerself.'

"My consciencel!" said my wife, who was listening with her whole being, "was he no' blate [shy] to say that to ministers?"

"Hoots, woman, that's nocht to what he said efter.

"'Ye are pittin' a premium on mediocrity,' he says. 'Thae ither twa chaps ye let through without a word, though they stammered like a boy new into the tenpenny. But ye settled on this lad because he was clever, an' wrote what he thocht himsel', an' didna juist tak' twa-three pages frae a sermon o' Spurgeon's, or water doon the Shorter Quastions,' says he. 'As for you,' he says, turnin' sharp to Maister Pitbye, 'ye are speakin' on a quastion ye ken nocht about it. Gae hame, man,' he says, 'an' read yer Calvin, or buy a Turretin an' read him, an' then come back an' gie us an opeenion worth listenin' to on a theological subject.'

"'Order, order!' said the clerk; but the moderator said naething, for he didna want Forbes down on him.

"'I'll no' be spoken to in that mainer. I've never listened to sic' words in my life,' said Maister Pitbye.

"'The mair's the peety,' says Maister Forbes; 'it's time ye did — but better late than never!'

"'I move we proceed to license,' says oor minister, verra quait; so efter a show o' hands, an' a bit grummle, they juist did that; but there was some warm wark efter the young men had gaen oot, an' yince it lookit as if the neeves [fists] micht sune be goin'; but it cleared up verra sudden, and when a' was dune, and they cam' oot, they war a' as thick as thieves — an' Maister Bourtree, nae less, gaed roon shakin' hands wi' everybody, an' sayin', 'Whatna graun' day we've had the day; there's been some life in Pitscottie Presbytery this day, something worth comin' down frae Muldow for!'

"But I'm no' so sure that it was as great fun for the puir lad frae Enbra'. He said to mysel' he was glad he was gaun awa' to the Cannibal Islands, an' no' settlin' in oor pairt o' the country."

This is one of a collection of little stories of Scottish Presbyterianism in a book entitled, *The Stickit Minister*. Crockett wrote them originally for a magazine called the *Christian Leader*. The book was published about 1890 and was dedicated to Robert Louis Stevenson, a friend of the author.

Whether in Galloway or wherever, the more things change the more they stay the same.

The Presbyterian Guardian

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Here and There in The Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Silver Spring, Md.—On May 4, the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic ordained Mr. Jim West to the ministry of the gospel. Mr. West has been called as an assistant pastor of Knox Church here and is to serve with the branch chapel in Rockville, Md.

Silver Spring, Md.—On May 11, the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic met again, this time to ordain Timothy H. Gregson to the gospel ministry. Mr. Gregson is laboring in the Charlottesville and Bridgewater, Va. areas in home mission chapel work.

Hialeah, Fla.—Sharon Church has issued a call to the Rev. Roger W. Schmurr to be its pastor. Mr. Schmurr has been serving as assistant pastor in the Point Loma Church of San Diego.

Mechanicsville, Pa.—On June 8, the Rev. George F. Morton was installed as the pastor of Mechanicsville Chapel O. P. Church. Mr. Morton was received from the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evang. Synod. His address: 246 Surrey Rd., Warminster, PA 18974.

Naples, Fla.—Covenant Ref. Pres. Church has called the Rev. Luder G. Whitlock as its pastor. Mr. Whitlock expects to leave the West Hills O. P. Church of Harriman, Tenn. for Naples in August.

Atlanta, Ga.—The Rev. Elmer M. Dortzbach has resigned as pastor of Redeemer Church here, in order to complete a program of graduate studies.

Newberg, Ore.—The Rev. Arthur G. Ames, former assistant pastor of First Church, Sunnyvale, Calif., has accepted the call of Trinity Church in Newberg.

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A prayer of thanks in remembrance

O Lord God,

Thank thee, Lord, for thy love for thy sinful creatures. Thank thee, Lord, for the gift of thy Son. Thank thee, Lord, for the gifts of thy Son to his Body, the church.

Thank thee, Lord, for giving us men like Lewis Roberts. Thank thee, Lord, for his life of faithful service—as an elder of the church, a steward in the work of the kingdom, a wise counselor in the courts of thy covenant people.

Thank thee, Lord, for the years thou hast given to this thy servant, to be a devoted husband and father, so that now his wife and children and children's children rise up to call him blessed.

And now, Lord, thank thee for taking Lewis Roberts home to thyself where he may enter in to the joy of eternal rest in thee.

In Christ's name, Amen.

Lewis W. Roberts entered into rest on May 29. Though suffering from leukemia for the past few years, his final attack was mercifully brief. Mr. Roberts, in a picture taken over ten years ago, is at work at his desk in the Administration Building in Philadelphia where he was comptroller for the Orthodox Presbyterian Committees on Home and Foreign Missions and Christian Education.

