

The Presbyterian GUARDIAN

J. GRESHAM MACHEN • EDITOR 1936-1937

General Assembly

Report

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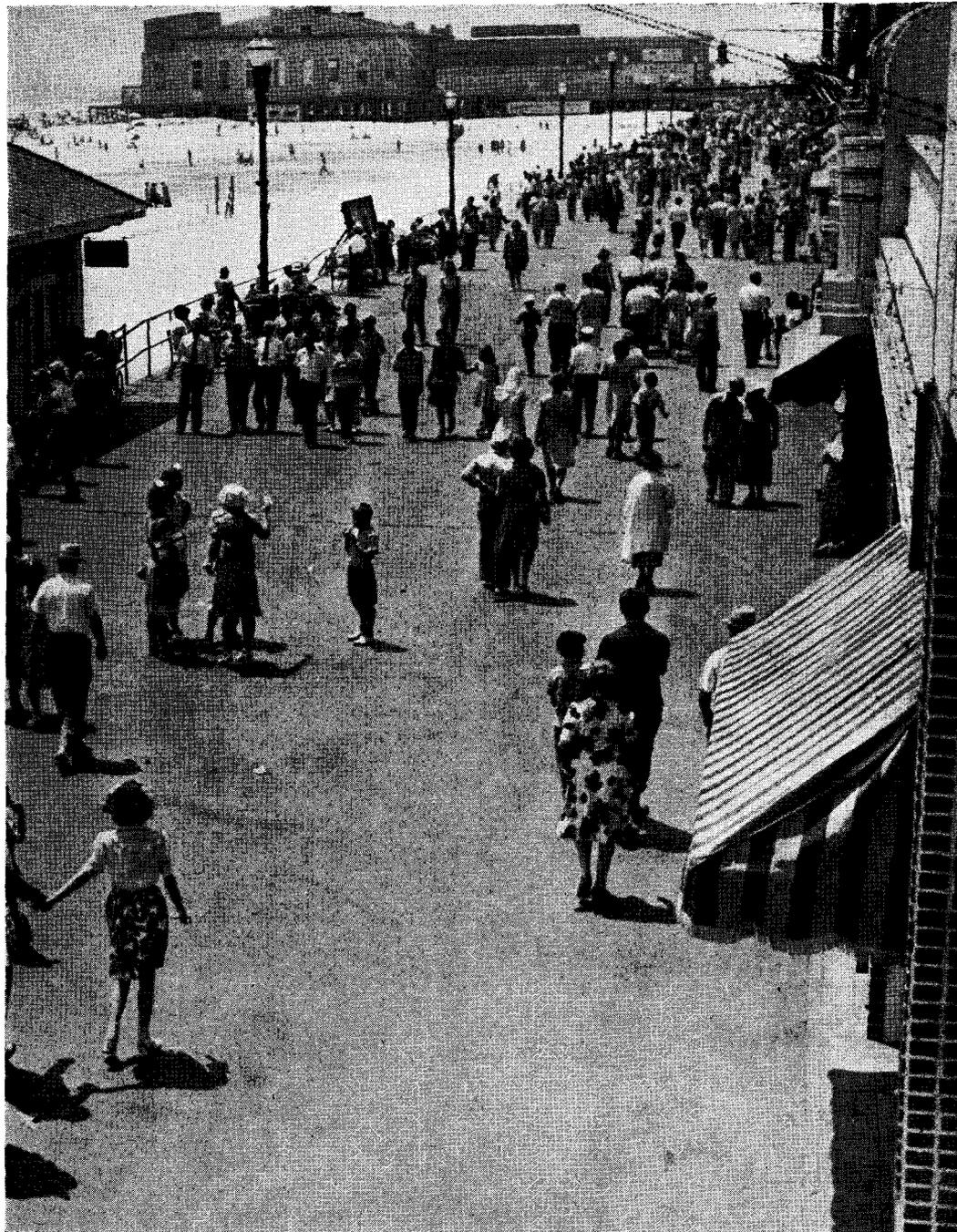
Orthodox Presby- terian Church News

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Report from Liberia

Part 3

William E. Welmers



“MULTITUDES . . . AS SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD”

Typical scene on the Wildwood Boardwalk any summer afternoon, showing the sort of a crowd which is constantly passing the doors of the Boardwalk Chapel.

June 25, 1947

VOLUME 16, NO. 12



Your FAMILY ALTAR

The Wrath of Man

Robert G. Ingersoll, the noted infidel, once said, "Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud—and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry." Though spoken of the mystery of death this expression of despair might also describe man's futile effort to understand apart from God's Word the existence of good and evil in this world. Who is sufficient to analyze history and our present generation and tell how disparate forces such as the Church of Christ and the spirit of antichrist can exist together in this world? A rational explanation for the evil that is all about us is nowhere to be found except in the pages of the Bible. According to the Scriptures God is not surprised by the rebellious actions of His creatures. When men defy His law or oppose His Church the Lord is not confronted with a situation with which He had not reckoned. Evil as well as good is included when the apostle writes that believers have been "predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." The Divine decree embraces every particular thought, word and action of every individual creature. Why God has decreed that men shall do that which is contrary to His will has not been disclosed to us, but that there is an adequate answer in God is not to be doubted. The Christian echoes the words of Romans 11:33 "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" And in that adoration of the perfect, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable wisdom of God there is comfort for the troubled inquiring soul.

Yet in the Word of God there are indications given that the sin that men commit and the violent attacks of the ungodly upon the Church are instruments in the sovereign, omnipotent hand of God for good. The very bitter-

ness of feeling that led the brothers of Joseph to sell him to the Ishmaelites proved to be but a link in that

Daily Bible Readings

Week of June 30

Monday	..... Luke 3:1-18
Tuesday	..... Ezra 1
Wednesday	..... Ezra 3
Thursday	..... Ezra 4:1-10
Friday	..... Ezra 4:11-24
Saturday	..... Ezra 5
Sunday	..... Ezra 6:1-15

Questions for Sabbath Meditation

1. What impelled Cyrus, king of Persia, to permit the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem?
2. Who were the leaders of the people who returned from Babylon to rebuild the house of God?
3. Who sought to hinder the work and in what way did they seek to do it?
4. How were the children of God vindicated? How were future hinderers to be treated?

Week of July 7

Monday	..... Jeremiah 11:1-11
Tuesday	..... Jeremiah 11:12-23
Wednesday	..... Esther 1
Thursday	..... Esther 2
Friday	..... Esther 3
Saturday	..... Esther 4
Sunday	..... Esther 5

Questions for Sabbath Meditation

1. What was distasteful to the men of Anathoth in Jeremiah? Was Jeremiah aware of their plot? How would God treat them?
2. What was the occasion of Esther's being made queen in the kingdom of Ahasuerus?
3. Why did Mordecai refuse to bow before Haman? How did Haman seek to punish Mordecai for his refusal to do him honor?
4. How did Mordecai propose to Esther to meet the plot of Haman?

Week of July 14

Monday	..... Esther 6
Tuesday	..... Esther 7

Some Prayer Suggestions

Pray for suffering Christians in Korea and the Koryu Seminary.

Pray for local evangelistic work conducted in street meetings during these summer months.

redemptive chain that brought God's people into the Promised Land. The seething animosity of Haman terminated not in the destruction of God's people but in the undoing of this proud infidel. Ezra and Nehemiah's foes in seeking to hinder the work of rebuilding Jerusalem only spurred on those valiant soldiers of Jehovah to finish the work committed to their hands. So the Psalmist writes "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the residue of wrath shalt thou gird upon thee." (Psalm 76:10 A.R.V.) What an awful instrument in God's almighty hand is man's hatred for his Creator. God sits in the heavens to laugh and deride kings and rulers whose counsel is to overthrow the rule of God's Anointed One. Taking hold of the rage of His enemies He turns that very passion into an instrument of their destruction. And He remains Lord of all.

The Church in our day has suffered and will undoubtedly suffer still more before Christ's return. The swords of determined unbelief are being sharpened for future attacks upon the Word of God and those who stand upon that Word. The gospel of the sovereign grace of God will continue to stir up hatreds which come to the surface only when that pure unadulterated gospel is preached. Even God-fearing men will be tempted to despair of seeing victory over the forces of antichrist. But in that day let us remember that the outworking of God's eternal plan can result in nothing less than complete victory over His and our enemies. Temporary successes for Satan's hosts provide the preliminary steps to the climactic triumph of the Israel of God and the ultimate crushing of the head and seed of the serpent. The disciples may be scattered abroad, the apostles imprisoned, the Word of the Lord denied, but these events are small parts of the Divine mosaic wrought by the Master's hand. There shall be "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." The words of Luther are very fitting here: "And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us; We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us."

—LE ROY B. OLIVER

General Assembly Report

Part 2: Concluding Sessions

By the REV. LESLIE W. SLOAT

ON SUNDAY the Rev. Professor John Skilton preached at the morning service in Cedar Grove. In the Sunday School following, the Rev. R. Heber McIlwaine spoke to the older classes concerning Japan and the work in Formosa, and the Rev. J. Lyle Shaw spoke to the younger classes. At the Young People's meeting in the evening the Rev. Floyd E. Hamilton gave a talk on his experiences in mission work in Korea. The Rev. Professor Edward J. Young was the preacher at the regular evening service of worship.

In nearby Bethel Church of Oostburg, Dr. N. B. Stonehouse preached at the morning service, Dr. C. Van Til at the regular afternoon service, and the Rev. Professor John Murray at a special evening service. Bethel Church does not ordinarily have an evening service, but had one this Sunday in view of the meeting of the Assembly.

Other commissioners were preachers at services in Sheboygan, Racine, and Milwaukee. In this way the entire area was given the privilege of meeting some of the outstanding ministers of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and of hearing the message which the Church endeavors to proclaim to the world.

Monday Sessions

The business sessions of the Assembly began again on Monday morning. The motion on the floor was amended to read that the resignations of Messrs. Davison, McCroddan and Smith from the Foreign Missions Committee be accepted with deep regret.

In discussion on the motion, two significant speeches were made. The first was by the Rev. Richard W. Gray. In supporting the motion, Mr. Gray began by intimating that he himself would not stand for re-election to the Home Missions Committee, when the time for elections to that Committee came.

Mr. Gray maintained that the withdrawal of these men, and of himself and others of like mind, from active participation in the work of the Com-

mittees of the Church, was a real contribution to the elimination of party spirit which has come to exist in the Church and which has been affecting all of the Church's activities. We have fought so hard, said Mr. Gray, that we have "gotten mad" at each other. We must get rid of this party spirit. These resignations are a contribution toward that end. There are, said Mr. Gray, divergences of viewpoint in the Church. The decision of the Assembly in the Saturday election, had indicated that one of these viewpoints, that represented more or less by those who support Westminster Seminary and its faculty, was the choice of the Assembly. These resignations meant an acceptance of that decision of the Assembly. On the other hand, all in the Church love the Church, and what it has always stood for. The parties in the Church must get closer together. We must all continue to strive on the basis of the Reformed faith. These resignations ought to be accepted, said Mr. Gray, as an acquiescence, on the part of those making them and of others likeminded, in the decision of the Assembly and as a contribution to the unity and peace of the church.

Following Mr. Gray's speech, Dr. Strong rose to speak, also in support of the motion to accept the resignations. He considered them as a protest against the action of the Assembly in its election on Saturday. He maintained that the real issue in that election was the approval of what he considered the imposing of extra-constitutional tests. Shall the imposition of such tests be endorsed? A related issue involved the Rev. Floyd Hamilton. Shall a man tested and qualified be sent to fill a need on the foreign field, or shall the door be slammed in his face? The Assembly in the election, maintained Dr. Strong, had said that it was all right to impose extra-constitutional tests, and had said that we should take a long time examining candidates. It had in effect slammed the door on Mr. Hamilton. Against that decision these resignations stand as a protest. Rather than

having a statement signed and recorded in the Minutes, the protest is being made through the form of resignation from active participation in the Committee work. Dr. Strong indicated that when the time came, he too would resign from the Committee on Home Missions. This does not mean that those protesting are withdrawing from the denomination. They will remain in it, and will work as members of it. But they are registering their protest against its decision.

Dr. Stonehouse rose to reply to the previous speakers, but at the same time to support the motion on the floor. The action proposed would, he agreed, promote the unity of the church, inasmuch as it represented a bowing to the will of the Assembly. On the other hand, Dr. Stonehouse maintained that the question of extra-constitutional tests had not really been involved in the matter. The questions in point were within the Constitution of the Church, and of great importance from a doctrinal point of view. Furthermore, Dr. Stonehouse questioned the resignations as in any sense a real protest. For when men sincerely protest what they believe to be wrong, they are bound to stay in and try to rectify things, but this action meant a withdrawing from the situation, rather than continued activity trying to correct what was considered wrong. Dr. Stonehouse also pointed out that we needed to get rid of the party spirit in our Presbyteries and throughout the Church, and not only in the Committees. He was hopeful that a real unity could be reached in these areas also, a unity based on a real working together of those concerned, even though they were on some points of differing opinion.

The motion to accept the resignations was finally put and carried, and the Assembly proceeded to elect members to fill the vacancies thus created. Following two ballots, it appeared that the Rev. Henry D. Phillips had been elected to the class of 1949, and that the Rev. James Price and Elder M. F. Thompson had been elected to the class of 1948.

Dr. Stonehouse presented a brief

report on the Ecumenical Synod of Reformed Churches which was held last year in Grand Rapids, and at which he was an auditor.

Christian Education

The report of the Committee on Christian Education was the next item on the docket. The report was read by the Rev. Leslie A. Dunn, Chairman of the Committee. Mr. Dunn prefaced his reading of the report by an announcement that Mr. Hamilton had indicated to the Committee his intention of resigning as General Secretary, the resignation to take effect not later than July 1st. This announcement was made at the request of Mr. Hamilton.

Most of the information contained in the report is probably known to our readers. But a summary of the information may not be out of place. The Committee publishes Sunday School lesson helps for Beginners and Primary classes. Work on Junior lesson helps has been begun. Supplementary helps for Sunday Schools using the Christian Reformed Church lesson series are also available. Samples of all this material may be secured from the Committee office, 728 Schaff Building, Philadelphia 2, Pa.

The Committee also publishes lessons for Young People's groups, and Summer Bible Schools. Courses for Young People are available in the following subjects: The Doctrine of Church and State, Exploring Bible Truths Systematically (2nd series), Applied Christianity, and The Minor Prophets. Graded lessons for summer Bible schools which cover a period of nine years have been prepared. These include a three year course for beginners, a three year course for juniors, and a three year course for intermediate-seniors. Teacher's manuals for each course are available.

A number of new Tracts were prepared during the year, including short tracts on some of the Commandments of the Decalogue. A Tract Bulletin for use as a church calendar is also available.

The Committee reported on its activities in the work of promoting the idea of Christian education. It has provided literature and information for Christian School Societies. A number of new Christian schools have been opened during the past year. A Sunday School convention was held in the fall of 1946, and the Committee urged that churches in all areas make

plans for the holding of such conventions. The Committee office serves as a book agency and also offers to provide "book tables" at summer conferences and other similar gatherings.

In 1945 the Committee presented to the General Assembly as part of its report, a statement of principles concerning Sunday School and Young People's work. It urged that this material be studied and re-studied by those responsible for work with young people, with a view to the improvement of the work of Sunday Schools, catechism classes, teacher training courses, and Christian day schools.

The Committee noted an increase in contributions to its work, but urged that churches recognize the great importance of its activities, and increase their support. A budget of over \$13,000 has been adopted for the coming year. It asked that local congregations support its work to the extent of at least 15% of their benevolence budget, with a goal of at least 3 cents per week per communicant member. The Assembly agreed to recommend this to the churches of the denomination.

Other recommendations of the Committee that the Assembly approved were that churches and church organizations contribute as they are able to the support of Westminster Theological Seminary, and that they make an effort to inform pre-ministerial students concerning the Seminary; that efforts be made to put the Westminster Theological Journal in libraries; and that Presbyteries make increased efforts to promote the establishment of Christian day schools.

Nominations for members of the class of 1950 of the Committee were opened. The following persons were nominated: Ministers Bradford, Kuschke, Dunn, Albright, Hoefinger, Elliott and Tichenor, and Elders Logue, Andreas, H. P. Allen, R. Grove and W. Moses. Following the taking of three ballots, a complete election was secured, and Messrs. Bradford, Dunn, Elliott, Andreas and Grove were declared elected to the Committee.

Home Missions

The Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension was the next to report. The report indicated that aid was being granted to 25 persons at the close of the fiscal year, and that eight other persons had also received aid during a portion of the year. In view of the general situation, the Com-

mittee had raised the salary-scale of its aid-receiving pastors and missionaries, and it presented information concerning the details of this salary schedule.

The Committee also reported that during the year insufficient funds had been received to care for the expenses of the last General Assembly, with the result that the funds of the Committee had been loaned for this purpose. We believe the Church should give attention to this matter. The Assembly is the highest court of the Church, and its work is of vital interest to the entire Church. That work should not be handicapped by lack of funds. Committees appointed by the Assembly should be able to do the work entrusted to them without too much thought of the expense involved. It is to be hoped that many congregations will forward to the Home Missions Committee for its General Assembly fund contributions to enable the work of the Assembly to be carried on well. At a later point in the Assembly a budget of \$1700 for the Assembly fund was approved. This amounts to about 30 cents per year per communicant member. If churches would contribute an average of this amount, it would be a great help to the work of the Assembly and its committees.

The report of the Committee included a section dealing with certain difficulties that had arisen in the work of the Committee. It reported that half of its time had been spent on discussions of the activities of the General Secretary which are outside the scope of the Committee's work. Protests against some of the activities of the General Secretary had been considered, and answers to such protests had been prepared. Though the attention of the Assembly was thus called to these matters, no action was taken on them. However, a minority report, signed by seven members of the Committee, was submitted to the Assembly. It related to this section of the regular report of the Committee.

Following the report of the Committee, Dr. Robert Strong announced his resignation from membership on the Committee. The resignation was accepted with regret. It was also noted that the Rev. Edwin H. Rian, having withdrawn from the denomination, was no longer a member of the Committee.

The Assembly then proceeded to the election of members to the class of 1950, and to fill the vacancies. Following the taking of two ballots,

it appeared that these men had been elected: Ministers, class of 1950, Galbraith, Vining, Grotenhuis; class of 1949, Olson; class of 1948, Willis; Elders, class of 1950, C. Ferguson, Moses.

Committee on Doctrines

The next item on the docket was the report of the Committee to study certain doctrines. The report of the Committee, covering only the first of the doctrines involved, had been submitted to commissioners several weeks previously. Various complicated motions were introduced at this point. All were designed to prevent any extended discussion of the subject at this Assembly. The result was that actual discussion of the report as such was eliminated, but the members of the Committee were interrogated on various phases of the questions involved in the work of the Committee. This process of discussion and questioning occupied well over an hour on Monday evening. That some clarification of the issues was achieved is probable. But that much remains yet to be done, was also abundantly evident.

On Tuesday morning the Assembly got rather bogged down as it considered the question of continuing the Committee on doctrine, and possibly changing the membership of the Committee. The Committee had been established by motion rather than by election last year, and now the question of its continuance was also made a matter of motion. Several amendments were introduced which would change the personnel of the Committee. It became apparent, however, that such a procedure would not work, and finally the Assembly decided to proceed, by way of nomination and election, to reconstitute the Committee. The following persons were nominated: Messrs. Kuschke, Clowney, Churchill, Hamilton, Clark, W. Young, Stonehouse, Murray, Bradford, E. Hills, Gilmore, Sloat, Gray. A complete election was secured on the first ballot, and it was declared that the Committee would consist of Messrs. Kuschke, Clowney, Hamilton, W. Young, Stonehouse, Murray. Four of these, Messrs. Clowney, Young, Stonehouse and Murray, were members of the five-man Committee last year.

With the time rapidly passing, other reports were received and dealt with in relatively short order. The Committee on Local Evangelism was con-

tinued, and its request that papers which various ministers had been asked to write be sent in as soon as possible, was noted. The Committee on Examination of Presbyterial Records presented its report, which was adopted. The Committee on Ministerial Benefits presented its report. The first recommendation was adopted, but not the second.

Next came the report of the Committee on Overtures and Papers appointed early in the Assembly to consider the disposition of communications that had been received. The Committee recommended the erection of a Committee on General Benevolence, in fulfillment of the desire expressed in the overture from Philadelphia Presbytery. The Committee consists of five persons who were appointed by the Moderator. With respect to the overture from the Presbytery of Wisconsin that a section on the organization of new churches be inserted in the Form of Government, a committee was appointed to make a study of the proposed chapter and bring recommendations next year.

Licensure and Ordination

In the statement from the Presbytery of Philadelphia acknowledging error, there had been a request for a clarification of the chapters 14 and 15 of the Form of Government. The Committee on Overtures and Papers brought in a statement as an answer to this request. However, the motion which was finally adopted was this: "That the General Assembly suggest to the Presbyteries that they make a study of Chapters 14 and 15 of the Form of Government, with a view to proposing amendments to simplify and enunciate more clearly, if need be, the provisions respecting the following: 1) taking under care of candidates, including a definition of the term 'Candidate'; 2) the purpose of licensure; 3) what constitutes a call to teach or be an evangelist; and 4) the prerequisites for ordination; with the understanding that in the meantime the Presbyteries will not so interpret the Form of Government as to permit ordination to follow licensure immediately, or to deem the examination for licensure sufficient for ordination."

In connection with the discussion of this question, reference was made to the action of the Presbytery of New Jersey at a recent meeting in licensing and, at the same meeting, determining

to ordain certain candidates. The statement was made that this had been done deliberately, for the purpose of testing the law of the Church on this point. If such was actually the case, may we say that in our opinion the idea of setting up "test cases" within the Church for the purpose of discovering whether a given interpretation of the Constitution will stand, is rather strange. And especially in this matter, to proceed in such a way that the persons involved are ordained and given a standing in the Church, when the test supposedly is to determine whether or not they should be ordained, is rather incongruous. It is a procedure which results in "putting a man in the middle," which is exactly what has been objected to on previous occasions in the Church. It would seem that by far the better way is to proceed by direct consideration of the Constitution, and the proposing and considering of amendments, rather than by such so-called "test cases."

Other Reports

The report of the Committee on Union with the Reformed Church of North America, General Synod, was next received. It appeared that the committee of that Church had been empowered to talk only of closer cooperation, not of union. It appeared to our Assembly's committee that union was not impossible, but that it was impractical at present. In order to cultivate closer cooperation, it was recommended that we send a fraternal delegate to their 1948 Synod, that we encourage our ministers to seek fellowship with theirs, and that the committee be continued. All these recommendations were adopted.

Standing Rule No. 3 of the Assembly was suspended in order that the report of the Committee on Song in Worship might be recorded in the Minutes without actually being read at the Assembly. It was decided that both the majority and minority reports of this Committee be referred to the 15th Assembly, along with the report of last year, and also that they be submitted to Presbyteries and sessions for earnest study, with a view to their thorough consideration at the 15th Assembly.

The Committee on Sickness and Hospital benefits was continued. A new committee of three was appointed to carry on a study of the matter of representation at the Assembly. This question will loom larger as a problem

as the Church increases in size and the number of ministers. At the present time it is possible to have all the ministers and an elder representative from each local church at the Assembly. But the time will come when this will make the Assembly too large to function efficiently, and then some form of representation will have to be introduced.

American Council

Finally the Assembly came to the consideration of possible affiliation with either the American Council of Christian Churches or the National Association of Evangelicals. The Committee considering this brought in two reports. Three members had approved the idea of affiliation with the American Council. Two had urged that no action be taken on affiliation with either organization.

A motion was placed on the floor that the Assembly make application to the American Council for constituent membership. A substitute was offered that the Assembly adopt the recommendation of the minority of the Committee and take no action. A number of extended speeches were made on this subject. The Rev. Samuel J. Allen of Philadelphia, who has been ardently advocating affiliation with the American Council for several years, emphasized the manner in which the Federal Council is attempting to gain control of religious work in local communities, and argued that the American Council was providing the only effective opposition to this Federal Council program. He urged the Church not to follow the path of isolation, but to join with those who were openly battling the forces of modernism, even though it might appear that in many points we did not see eye to eye with them. Other speakers followed Mr. Allen, arguing both sides of the question. It was pointed out that on the one hand we maintain that such a Council may not do the work of the organized church, but that actually the American Council was doing this through its evangelistic programs, its preparation of Sunday School materials, and the like. The question was asked as to how, on the matter of principle, an organized church which is committed to doing the work of the church, can as a church join an organization which may not do the work of the church. There was reference to some of the resolutions recently passed by the

American Council at its national convention, resolutions which seemed to involve the Council in an undue entrance into political questions, and in the taking of positions which it was quite certain the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was not willing to endorse. Several interesting suggestions were made during the course of the debate. One was that the committee be continued and instructed to make recommendations to the next Assembly concerning the establishment of a council of Reformed churches. Another was that the committee be directed to study the question of how an uncompromising witness to the Reformed faith can be used to the furtherance of the visible manifestation of the unity of the Body of Christ. Neither of these proposals carried. The Committee was finally continued and requested to explore the possibility of a consultative relationship with the American Council.

Final Actions

The Assembly had invitations for its next meeting from the Calvary Church of Wildwood, N. J., from the Memorial Church of Rochester, N. Y., and from the Presbytery of the Dakotas to come to the Black Hills. Those in favor of going to the Black Hills argued their case so strongly that a motion to accept the invitation to Wildwood was at first defeated. However, when a further examination was made into the problems involved, this motion was reconsidered, and the Assembly decided to hold its next meeting at Wildwood, beginning on May 13, 1948.

Various miscellaneous items were considered as the Assembly drew to its close on Wednesday morning. Dr. N. B. Stonehouse was appointed a fraternal delegate to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. A budget of \$1700 to defray the expenses of the Assembly was approved. Messrs. Bradford and Sloat were appointed a committee to prepare a leaflet containing amendments to the Form of Government, which have been adopted since the last printing of that document, so that they may be conveniently available. A resolution expressing the hearty and sincere thanks of the Assembly to the pastor and people of the Cedar Grove Church for their hospitality was adopted.

And finally, at a few minutes after noon on Wednesday, the Assembly officially adjourned, and was dissolved

by declaration of the Moderator. The commissioners ate their final luncheon at the church, and soon the road south from Cedar Grove witnessed the rapid passage of numerous cars bearing the commissioners on their homeward journeys.

Concluding Notes and Comments

All credit is due to the Moderator, the Rev. John P. Galbraith, for an excellent job in seeing to it that the business was conducted in an orderly fashion. Mr. Galbraith used a firm hand, and was even over generous at times in allowing procedures that were perhaps technically out of order, yet he showed a sense of fairness which cannot be questioned, and his work was praised from all sides.

* * *

We feel that the general tone of the debate was on a much higher plane at this Assembly than it has been at some previous Assemblies. There was an evident desire to get at the heart of the matter in most cases, and there was little willingness to be superficial. We believe this augurs well for the future of the Church.

* * *

The Assembly received word on Monday that Mrs. Lynne Wade, wife of Chaplain Edwin L. Wade of Norfolk, was seriously ill following the birth of a child a few days previously. The Assembly took time for special prayer on her behalf. A second telegram reported the seriousness of her illness, but the Assembly was encouraged just before it broke up on Wednesday to hear that she had apparently passed the crisis, and was improving. Latest report is that the improvement continues, though slowly.

* * *

It was good to receive greetings from our missionaries on the foreign field. We were informed that the missionaries in Eritrea were holding special meetings of prayer for the Assembly, during the course of its sessions. The bonds that hold us together in Christ are not affected by the physical distances that separate us one from another.

* * *

Mr. Chung, Young Chang, a Korean who is in this country to attend Westminster Seminary, and who has been speaking at a number of the churches, was present for the sessions of the As-

(See "Assembly," page 184)

The Presbyterian
GUARDIAN

1505 Race Street, Philadelphia 2, Pa.

EDITORS

Ned B. Stonehouse

Paul Woolley

Leslie W. Sloat

Managing Editor

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Robert L. Atwell

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The Assembly

THE 14th General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, which is being reported at length in our columns, is rather difficult to evaluate. It was not marked by positive decisions of far-reaching importance. And it may be premature to estimate the ultimate significance of various developments which took place. Nevertheless, we believe that the Assembly on the whole spelled progress of a solid kind in the life of the Church.

A year ago we sadly stated that doctrinal indifference had been a significant factor in the consideration of certain issues before that Assembly. While at the Assembly this year there were occasional expressions of impatience with the debate concerning doctrinal matters, and calls to turn from what were judged to be over-refinements of theology to the practical work of the Church, it was refreshing to find nearly all the commissioners evidently determined to discuss doctrinal issues thoroughly. This appeared in connection with the evaluation of the qualifications of a candidate to serve in a Foreign Missions field, which took two days of the Assembly's time. It also appeared in connection with the decision to go forward with the study of the doctrinal questions which have been before the Church. Although the controversy that has been raging has been wearisome, there was manifest a serious concern that the truth of God should not be minimized in the interest of outward unity and progress.

At various points, indeed, in the midst of the doctrinal discussion, it was alleged that members of the Com-

mittee on Foreign Missions and others of like mind in the Church, were in effect insisting upon extra-constitutional requirements. If ever the Orthodox Presbyterian Church should become narrower than its Constitution, that would be a calamity indeed. On the other hand, we fear that the charge of extra-constitutionality rests upon a mistaken conception of the Church's commitment to the Westminster standards.

It is not true, in the first place, that our subscription is to the "system of doctrine" in the standards, as one speaker said. Subscription is to the standards themselves as containing the system of doctrine taught in Holy Scripture. And, in the second place, we strongly disagree with the view that the doctrinal issue in the Church turns about inferences drawn from the Confession, rather than with the teaching of the Confession itself. Although Dr. Clark and Mr. Hamilton, for example, have indicated their agreement with the Confession, this does not in itself settle the matter. For the Confessional statements do not exist in a vacuum. They were formulated in the context of the development of the Reformed theology. Moreover, they were set forth upon the basis of the exegesis of Scriptures. Hence it is always pertinent to inquire as to the meaning of the Confession in the light of history and the Scriptures, and to take great pains to discover whether candidates for the ministry and service in the Church hold to the meaning of the Confession.

In connection with the charge of extra-confessional requirements, we may well be placed on our guard against over-simplification if we recall some recent Presbyterian church history. The defenders of the *Auburn Affirmation*, for example, claimed that it merely insisted upon liberties guaranteed under the Constitution. And if this example be not sufficient to make the point, we may also recall that in the controversy that engulfed the Presbyterian Church in the 19th century, Professors Briggs and Smith and their defenders claimed the protection of the Confession of Faith for their denial of Biblical infallibility and inerrancy. As their writings indicate, these men sincerely believed their views were in agreement with the Confession, and that the views of men like A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield, who opposed them, went beyond the Confession. We hope that during the

coming year, as doctrinal questions continue to be studied, a sounder view of confessional subscription will prevail than appears to be abroad in some quarters today.

Another respect in which there was reason for gratitude was the generally good spirit that prevailed at the Assembly and the high plane on which most of the debate was conducted. While lines were rather sharply drawn, there was an evident desire on the part of many to overcome, insofar as possible, the party spirit which has marred the life of the Church, and has proved a serious obstacle in the path of a resolution of differences on doctrinal and other matters. The elections to the standing committees of the Church, on the background of the resignation of several members, apparently indicate that the missions and educational work of the Church will be carried forward more harmoniously than was possible last year. Although resignations from Committees are obviously not a solution of the difficulties in the Church, it is to be hoped that this measure may be instrumental in promoting unity.

If true progress along these lines is to continue, it will be necessary to deal with other issues, through personal contacts and in presbyterial actions, with a determination to cultivate good will. In this connection, we would urge that an end be put to the conducting of controversy by the scattering abroad of letters of condemnation of one group or another. Although there has been a criticism of *THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN* in the past as too controversial, and it has been contended that church members as a whole required a more positive approach, many members of the Church have received letters of the most controversial nature and containing allegations which the persons attacked have regarded as untrue and slanderous. When letters are scattered abroad indiscriminately, what opportunity do persons attacked have to reply or to defend themselves? We believe that the historic position of *THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN*, which has sought to take forthright but dignified stands on issues as they have arisen, and has permitted the opportunity of a reply in its pages to persons who believe that less than justice has been done to them, is much more conducive to the peace and unity of the Church.

The Assembly was a cautious As-

sembly, as appears also from the handling of the question of possible affiliation with the American Council of Christian Churches or with the National Association of Evangelicals. This subject has been before the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for a number of years, and has been investigated in a careful manner. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church does not make a principle of isolation and non-cooperation. However, it evidently wants to be sure that cooperation shall not demand any sacrifice of principle. It acknowledges many splendid attainments in both organizations, and wishes that the obstacles to membership might be overcome. But as long as they have not been overcome, it is unwilling to minimize their importance for the sake of certain practical advantages.

There were other accomplishments of an encouraging nature. For example, the Assembly gave proof of its conscientiousness of being a part of the Church of Christ throughout the world, by the erection of a Committee for General Benevolence, which will seek to minister to the needs of impoverished Christians here and in other lands. But it is impossible to comment on other matters in detail. Suffice it to say that we are profoundly grateful to God for the progress that was made, and pray that He may continue to rule in order that the Church may more and more effectively fulfill its divine mission.

Assembly

(Continued from page 182)

sembly, and seemed to take an active interest in the discussions. He is one of the directors of the new Korean Seminary where the Rev. Bruce F. Hunt is teaching at present.

* * *

At a previous Assembly one time the remark was made that, in debate on a certain question, though everything had been said, not everybody had said it. In our opinion, this Assembly made a certain amount of progress beyond that point. Not everybody tried to say everything. However, we do think that there is often needless repetition of arguments, and it doesn't seem to us always necessary that everything which has been said on one side shall be answered from the other side. If we could

only concentrate our argument on the main points of an issue, business would be considerably expedited.

* * *

It appeared to us that there was considerably less complication of business through the moving of amendments and substitutes than there has often been. Though we had enough of that sort of thing, an effort was made to formulate original motions carefully, so that the issues were plainly stated at the first.

* * *

The debate on Tuesday morning, when the Assembly bogged down over the matter of revising the Committee on Doctrine through motion, should forever persuade the Assembly that the way to handle the erection of committees is by nomination and election, not by direct motion. In direct motion

it becomes necessary to argue the merits or demerits of a particular candidate on the floor of the Assembly and often to his face, and can be extremely embarrassing, to say the least. Let men be put up for nomination, and let the Assembly elect.

* * *

All thanks again to our considerate hosts, who maintained their gracious hospitality, even when we were sometimes out late at night through the necessity of doing committee work after hours, and when we arose at off hours in the morning, disrupting the quiet orderliness of their rural life. More than one commissioner, who has spent his life in the city, has since indicated in our hearing that maybe life in such a rural community would not be so bad after all. Let the hosts take this as a compliment.

Christian Reformed Church Sends Fraternal Greetings

THE Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, at its meeting last year, appointed the Rev. Edward B. Pekelder, pastor of their church in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, as fraternal delegate to the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Mr. Pekelder was cordially received by the Assembly, and delivered the following brief address.

MR. MODERATOR AND DELEGATES,
Brethren in the Lord,

Your esteemed Dr. Cornelius Van Til was presented to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, convening in Grand Rapids, Michigan, last June, as the fraternal delegate from your body, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. According to Article 54 "an advisory vote was accorded to him." In the closing part of his address he urged that the bond between your Church and our Church be strengthened. Our Synod replied promptly for in the next article I read "Synod declared itself in favor of sending a representative to the next General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church." It is my happy privilege and task to serve as the first fraternal delegate of our Church.

I may begin my brief address by stating that our leaders have always thought highly of your Church, have

respected your leaders and have admired your position, as Dr. Van Til called it, "a beachhead for the Reformed faith." Ever since that great man of God, Dr. Gresham Machen, left the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and became your leader in the fight against Modernism we have watched with keen expectations your struggle and warfare. None other than the Rev. H. J. Kuiper, Editor of our official church paper, *The Banner*, wrote as late as October 18, 1946, "During the years of its corporate existence the O. P. Church has engaged in heroic warfare against the forces of liberalism in this country. Its influence for good has been remarkable. . . . There is no other denomination in this country which has so many things in common with our own, though there are some differences, in government and discipline rather than in doctrine." Our respected Editor has kept our membership informed on the trends of your church and on the basis of the Minutes of your 13th General Assembly concludes "We are happy to express the opinion that the O. P. Church and our own are not drifting apart but getting closer together."

The Editor of the Holland weekly, *De Wachter*, who also devoted an Editorial to your Church, in the issue

of October 15, 1946, wrote, "Intentionally we have called your attention to a few matters taken from the Minutes to bring home that the O. P. Church strives mightily and seeks that which also characterizes our church and her activity, namely, it emphasizes purity." Referring at length to your decisions pertaining to Christian schools, the strengthening of the doctrinal instruction to be given to God's covenant children, the Rev. Henry Keegstra concludes, "Thus the O. P. Church and our Christian Reformed Church are drawing closer to one another. That is a cause for rejoicing. So it must be; for in the principles of our faith and in the essence of our religious life we are one."

The Christian Reformed Church in America numbers some 315 congregations, with 281 active pastors. At the present time we have some 31,382 families. Our church is only ninety years old. The growth of our church has not been phenomenal. When immigration from the Netherlands came to an abrupt end we depended solely on growth from within, while occasionally, as the fruit of city mission and home extension work, some were added to our churches from without.

With profound gratitude to God, and without any semblance of boasting, we may report to you that our Church is still noted for its faithfulness to the Word of our God; for its loyalty on the part of professors and ministers to the Reformed faith; for its exercise of Christian discipline, whereby it strives to keep the Bride of Christ pure; for its insistence on catechetical instruction of the children and young people, and its stand that parents should establish and maintain Christian schools where God's covenant children may be trained in the fear of the Lord.

Along with other colleges throughout our land our own denominational college has forged ahead. At present some 1250 young people are enrolled, and the Faculty has been strengthened so that at present it numbers some 54 professors and instructors. A Building Program for more than one million dollars is in progress. Our Calvin Seminary, manned at present by six professors, may ere long add a seventh professor who will specialize in the field of missions.

Speaking of missions, we rejoice to be able to report to you that there has been a genuine revival of interest and love for the cause of city missions.

The Reformed Bible Institute, though not officially connected with our church, occupies a strategic place in the training of workers for this field. At present some 55 students are enrolled. The work of Home Missions, though difficult and beset with many disappointments, is carried on by some eleven ordained missionaries. Our denominational radio ministry, known as The Back to God Hour, has forged ahead so that each Sunday our radio minister, the Rev. Peter H. Eldersveld, brings his message over some 32 stations in the United States, Canada and Honolulu. We pass by our Indian field and our foreign labors in China, South America, and in Africa with this remark,—to the best of our ability we are endeavouring to comply with the marching orders of our exalted Lord to go out and preach the gospel of repentance and of remission of sins to men and women everywhere.

As we have briefly enumerated some of the activities of our Church so that you may intercede for us, we are deeply conscious and aware of the fact that we are still members of the militant Church. Our eyes are not closed to the enemies within the fold, as well as those that are without. We would not be blinded by self-complacency or self-sufficiency. We are surrounded by the same subtle forces of Modernism and of the equally dangerous foe of Arminianism as you are. In America the philosophies of Materialism and Humanism seem ready to swallow us up. There is much room in our churches for spiritual growth, for more genuine piety and godliness. We find members who are indifferent to doctrine and doctrinal controversies. They prefer a cemetery peace to a worthy contending for the faith once delivered unto the saints. Worldliness and world-conformity are making their inroads. There is a seeking after the forbidden pleasures. Our family altars are breaking down. Interest and delight in Reformed literature is waning. Arminianism, with its popular appeal and methods, appears to many to be more attractive than Calvinism. To be Reformed and to remain Reformed in this land of ours is our big struggle.

In closing, we are aware of your problems and the tasks that await you at this Assembly. The words of our Editor are my sentiments, "We admire your vigour, zeal for the Reformed faith, and your courage in facing the most difficult problems with the deter-

mination to grapple with them on the basis of the Word of God. May the King of the Church cause you to be faithful at every cost. May you never compromise with error or with the philosophies of men. May you flourish and grow." Rest assured that the prayers of our people accompany you at these meetings. May the Holy Spirit qualify every delegate and give you a rich measure of wisdom and knowledge to do His will. We in turn bespeak your continued interest and prayers. May we stand shoulder to shoulder in fighting for the Reformed faith, to the praise and glory of our eternal triune God, and the upbuilding and spiritual welfare of Christ's church!

Daughter to the Rev. and Mrs. John Gray

THE Rev. and Mrs. John Gray, of Ripon, California, are rejoicing in the birth of a daughter, Linda Willer, on May 6th, at Ripon. Mr. and Mrs. Gray expect to be in the east, visiting Mrs. Gray's family in Willow Grove, Pa., for the summer months. They will return to Ripon in the fall.

Southern Church and Federal Council

THE Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church had before it the majority and minority reports of a committee appointed to consider the Church's relation to the Federal Council. After lengthy debate, the minority report, critical of the Council, was passed by a narrow margin. At a later session, however, the matter was reconsidered, and the whole question was referred to the Presbyteries "without prejudice." The Assembly voted also to send to the Presbyteries for study and comment a revised plan for union with the Northern Presbyterians.

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The Gospel for Vacationers

Meetings begin at Wildwood Gospel Pavilion

By the REV. LESLIE A. DUNN

Pastor, Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Wildwood, N. J.

VACATION time is upon us. America is the playground of the world. Nearly everyone in America will have some kind of vacation. Churches all over the land will also know that vacation time is here. In many places services will be sharply curtailed, while at other places, at resorts and camps, meetings will be accelerated.

The sad thing about vacations is that too often people take a vacation from the church. The Bible is left at home and often restraints are cast off. The Sabbath is desecrated and many who for the rest of the year consider it a holy day, now for a season count it nothing more than a holiday. But the picture is not altogether black. Thousands of Christians choose their vacation spot because of the Christian atmosphere surrounding it. Larger and larger numbers of people, including young people, are taking their vacation at a time when they can attend Summer Bible conferences. I want in this article to picture one corner of America at ease, and urge that at vacation time more of the Christians in our land seize the opportunity which is offered to provide moral and spiritual as well as physical refreshment.

Eighty per cent of the summer vacationers at Wildwood do not attend church during their stay at this New Jersey resort. Fifteen per cent of them may enter the Roman Catholic Church, one per cent the Jewish Synagogue, and four per cent a Protestant church or Sunday school.

Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church here may have one hundred and fifty or two hundred persons in its building for a typical summer Sunday service. So that this church reaches approximately one-tenth of one per cent of the vacationers at Wildwood, at its regular services.

In order to reach a larger proportion of the multitudes who throng the ocean resort in hot weather, the New Jersey Presbytery of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has built a Gospel Pavilion or Boardwalk Chapel on the busy boardwalk. Each evening approximately fifty thousand people congregate in the twenty blocks of the

amusement section along the beach. The Gospel Pavilion is situated at a location where each evening three thousand persons an hour pass within a few feet of its doors. At this strategic location, ten thousand people on a typical summer evening are confronted with an opportunity to hear the Gospel message of our loving Lord. While the Pavilion itself will seat only some two hundred, its doors are open for three hours each evening with people entering and leaving all during that time. At least three distinct services will be held each evening this summer.

The first service will be designed for Christians. At 7.45 p.m., before darkness brings the peak crowds to the boardwalk, a meeting for prayer, Bible study and inspiration is offered to believers. This half hour may serve as an appropriate way to begin an evening of fun on the Boardwalk. It may for others serve as a preparation for the evangelistic service which follows. In any event it is designed to help the

believer grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The main emphasis of the Gospel Pavilion, of course, is on evangelism. At about 8.30, when the most people are on the boardwalk, a service of song and preaching begins. With the front doors opening directly on the walk, the thousands who pass hear the singing, and, since an amplifying system is used, may easily hear the speaker. Hundreds come in and sit down to listen for a while. Others pause for a few minutes outside. It is a time when the seed is being sown. Hundreds of strangers every evening hear snatches of the Gospel, or read the scripture from the bulletin board. Many, as they go along the walk, sing quietly the gospel song they hear coming from inside the building. Some come in to stay for an hour or more. Some deliberately choose this as the way they wish to spend their evenings. Others stop for the novelty of it, or because they are tired of an unbroken series of meaningless amusements after the first couple of evenings of gaiety.

Following the evangelistic preaching service, a Bible picture program is given. With the use of a projector, kodachrome transparencies or filmstrips are projected on a screen where passers-by and those seated inside the



Interior of the Wildwood Gospel Pavilion, now known as the Boardwalk Chapel.

Pavilion may see illustrations of Bible stories and lessons, either in color or black and white. Many stop, attracted by the pictures, who would not otherwise be interested. The narrator uses a microphone so that the description of the pictures reaches the ears of all who are within hearing distance of the loudspeakers. So once again the gospel message of salvation is presented. Finally, about 10.30, we call it a day at the Pavilion.

Of course, the day did not start with the 7.45 meeting. For five mornings each week a worker is on hand to gather the children who can be persuaded to come, and to teach them Bible verses, Bible stories and Christian songs. Last summer a number of Jewish and Catholic children were among those attending this Children's Bible Hour. More attention will be given to this work this summer than was given it last summer.

In the Pavilion many decisions are made. Some persons accept Christ as Saviour for the first time. Others who may have for a time become indifferent, make decisions to walk again with the Lord. Many personal interviews are held each evening. Visiting ministers or Christian workers find it easy to engage in conversation with the people standing about. Opportunities to bear testimony to Christ as Saviour, and to make friends of Christians of other localities are numerous. Hundreds of friends have been made, and a number of souls have found Christ as Saviour, by personal contact in the Pavilion.

The literature is readily taken by hundreds of people each day. Those who come in, help themselves to a variety of tracts on the table, and some purchase some of the worthwhile books which are to be found at the book table. A tract rack nailed on the outside of the building needs to be refilled several times daily.

Wildwood boasts of having the "world's finest and safest bathing beach." Perhaps a half million people will come to this resort this season. Christians are urged to pray that many will be reached through the work of the Pavilion. The season runs from June 15 to September 15.

Costs of this work are kept at a minimum, but they do exist. Gifts or communications may be addressed to the writer of this article, who is the executive director of the Pavilion. The

address is 207 E. Davis Ave., Wildwood, N. J. Free literature about the work of the Pavilion will be mailed to any who request it.

The list of speakers for the present season is as follows: June 14-20, Rev. Eugene Bradford, Rev. Leslie W. Sloat; June 21-25, Rev. Lewis J. Grotenhuis; June 26-July 2, Dr. Edward J. Young; July 3-9, Professor R. B. Kuiper, Rev. Henry D. Phillips; July

8-15, Rev. J. Marcellus Kik; July 10-22, Rev. Donald C. Graham; July 19-26, Rev. Richard W. Gray; July 28-August 4, Rev. Edward L. Kellogg, Rev. James W. Price; August 4-15, Rev. Robert Strong; August 16-22, Rev. Donald C. Graham; August 23-29, Rev. Bruce Wideman, Rev. Donald Graham; August 30-September 13, Chaplain Edwin L. Wade, Rev. James E. Moore.

Eritrea

The Land and Its History

By the REV. CHARLES E. STANTON
Orthodox Presbyterian Missionary in Eritrea

THIS article by Mr. Stanton is intended to give our readers a more accurate and intelligent idea of the country where our missionaries are laboring, than they may have had before. Mr. Stanton indicates that he is considering the preparation of other articles of the same sort. All should be of especial interest to missionary societies.

ERITREA is a triangular area some three hundred twenty miles across at its southern base, and about two hundred seventy miles from north to south, together with a narrow strip of coastal plain which extends about two hundred miles southeast to the French Somaliland. Historically and geographically the Eritrean highlands, a smaller triangle in and including nearly half of the whole area of Eritrea, are a part of Ethiopia. The west and north lowlands constitute the fluctuating border-ground between the ancient nations of Egypt and Ethiopia, while in times past Turkey has made rather persistent claim to the coast-line.

That Eritrea exists as a separate unit today is due to the fact that it was a spot where Italy, in her search for new territory, was able to get a foothold. The modern boundaries of Eritrea are artificial and without regard for racial groupings. The western boundary divides into two parts the very old Beni Amer peoples of that region, while the southern and eastern boundaries run more or less directly through the center of the Tigrannia-speaking, the Saho-speaking, and the Dankali-speaking peoples.

The value and importance of Eritrea has been greatly enhanced by the extensive improvements introduced by

the Italians during the past half century. Massawa has been improved into an excellent harbor, and from a tiny native village, Asmara has become a modern city on the cool, healthy highland plateau. Railways have been built, and first class highways have been constructed, along which points of European culture have been established.

The history of Eritrea is inseparable from that of Ethiopia, having this added feature that from time immemorial the Eritrean coast-line has been the gateway to Ethiopia for travel, commerce, and invasion.

The oldest people to invade and settle Eritrea of which we have authentic record are the Mamites from North Africa. Some one thousand years B. C. the more vigorous and advanced Semites began crossing the Red Sea from Arabia. They ascended immediately to the desirable highlands, allowing their predecessors to retain the more barren lowland hills and plains. Until modern times this same pattern prevails in Eritrea: the lowland hills and plains being occupied by the older nomadic peoples, and the highlands being occupied by the newer, more progressive agricultural peoples.

The vigor and culture brought by Semitic invaders led to the establishment of the Axumite Kingdom, which, in contrast to the subsequent decline of culture in this region, attained, just before the time of Christ, a high degree of power and civilization. Axum, the capital city of this kingdom, is but a short distance south of the present Eritrean border. The Axumite Kingdom included the present Tigrannia-speaking territory: the highlands of Eritrea and the northern highlands of Ethiopia.

The trails that the Axumites followed from the coast to the highlands are the very ones that we follow today when traveling by foot or mule from Caieh to Arafalo. In some cases these trails are marked by the still standing walls and pillars of the ancient Axumite buildings. The Axumites carried their ambitious campaign of conquest into Egypt and Arabia, and perhaps in this way dissipated their power, because after the seventh century we hear no more of Axum as a kingdom.

During the next ten centuries Eritrea held a place of decreasing importance in its role as a part of Ethiopia. The center of Ethiopian power moved southward. At first Eritrea existed as a separate vassal kingdom along with the vassal kingdoms of Tigrai, Lasta, Amhara, Gojjam, and Shoa. Later Eritrea was absorbed by her stronger neighbor, the Tigrai. The decreasing importance of Eritrea in Ethiopian history is doubtless partly due to the determination of Ethiopian rulers to exclude foreign influence. Such influence would have come in through Eritrea, the gateway to the outer world.

The suspicion with which foreigners were regarded in Ethiopia resulted in the imprisonment in 1862-66 of the British Consul, his staff, and most of the Europeans in Ethiopia, by the Emperor Theodore. The British Government sent an expedition under Sir Charles Napier which landed in 1868 at a point about two thirds of the distance from Massawa to Arafalo. There are men still living in this area who remember this expedition. Napier released the imprisoned Europeans and departed. Theodore, who had committed suicide, was succeeded by John IV who was also of the Tigrai people.

In 1875 Ethiopia was invaded by an Egyptian army, and the independence of the country was gravely threatened. John IV was able to win a decisive victory which brought a halt to the southward advance of the Egyptians in the highlands, but for some years Egypt continued to retain control of the lowlands and of the coast-line of the present Eritrea.

Missions of the Roman Catholic Church had been active in Eritrea from time to time for many years. In 1869 Father Sapeto arranged for the purchase by Italy of various tracts of land in the vicinity of Assab. Exploration of the interior and the establishment of trade routes by military force followed, and in 1885 Massawa was taken.

John IV had been succeeded by Menelik, of the southern province of Shoa which had been growing in power. In 1889 Menelik signed a treaty with the Italians recognizing Italian sovereignty over her "present possessions," but the question of just what those "present possessions" included became the occasion of much trouble and eventually the Battle of Adua in 1896. In this battle the Italian forces were defeated with heavy losses. This served to establish peace for forty years between Ethiopia and the Italian territory, and fixed the boundary at approximately the present boundary line between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Menelik died in 1913. In 1930 the son of Menelik's cousin ascended the throne, as Haile Selassie I. He was driven from his country in 1935 by the Italian invasion, and was restored to

his throne in 1941 by the British forces.

Since 1941 Eritrea has been under British control. Feeling is increasing at present among the Eritreans over the question of this country's future. Part of the Tigrannia-speaking inhabitants of the highlands wish to be united with Ethiopia again as members of a united Tigrai to which the territory once belonged. The Muslims and a part of the Tigrannia-speaking people wish to remain separate from Ethiopia and to be, temporarily at least, under some such control as that, perhaps, of the United Nations Organization. If anyone knows what the future of Eritrea, as a former Italian colony, is to be, it does not seem to be those who are living in Eritrea. But according to the news broadcasts, everyone should know before long.

Orthodox Presbyterian Church News

Presbytery of New York and New England

Calvary Church, Worcester, N. Y.: Proof of the fact that the Calvary Church still carries weight in Worcester was provided by a recent show of strength between the local school board and the Church and its friends. The board in some way or ways unknown was induced to take the following action: "The motion was made by . . . and seconded by . . . that Mr. Rankin's name be dropped from the list of Baccalaureate speakers. The motion was carried." The Rev. John Rankin is pastor of Calvary Church.

The transaction of this business by the board remained a deep, dark secret for about three weeks, until on a day about three weeks before the time for the Baccalaureate service, the pastor called the principal of the school and received the information. It was apparent at once that the effect of this action was to deprive the church and its pastor of their rights in the matter. The news spread quickly, and such a furore was raised among the citizens, who threatened to circulate a petition, and in the graduating class itself, which convened and voted to register protest, that a special meeting of the board was called, a hearing granted, the action rescinded, and the pastor reinstated in his rightful place on the list of Commencement preachers.

Presbytery of California

Beverly Church, Los Angeles: A mother-daughter banquet on May 13th attracted well over 100 persons. It was the largest affair of its kind ever held in the church. . . . A group of young men, known as the Fisherman Club, led by Elder Paul Walker of the First Church, Manhattan Beach, conducted the Young People's meeting and the evening service on May 18th. . . . The primary and beginner departments of the Sunday school sponsored a "get-acquainted" pot luck supper on the evening of June 3rd. More than 80 children and parents attended. . . . Memorial Day, May 30th, was designated as work day on the new church building. Fifteen men volunteered their labor for that day, and the wives furnished the lunch. A program to raise \$10,000 in the next two months, in order to complete the new building without borrowing, has been launched. In the first two weeks \$1,200 has been contributed. Anyone interested is invited to help with large or small gifts.

Mrs. Nellie Auer, a charter member of Beverly Church, went to be with her Lord on Friday, May 9th, 1947, at the age of 82. Mrs. Auer was one of the most honored members of the church. Illness had kept her from attending church services regularly for about three years prior to her death. Before that time, however, she was seldom

absent from any service. She is sorely missed by all who knew her. Plans are being made to set apart a stained glass window in the new church building as a memorial to her.

Presbytery of the Dakotas

Bancroft, Manchester and Yale Churches, S. D.: The ladies of the three churches continue to collect things for overseas relief. A large box of clothing was recently sent from Bancroft. Kitchen utensils, etc., are being sent by Yale and Manchester. . . . We have lost four families recently by removal to other communities,—one each from Manchester and Yale and two from Bancroft. . . . Boxes of food-stuffs have been sent by the Bancroft ladies to our missionaries in Eritrea. . . . The young people are planning to attend the Bible Conference at Niobrara. The Rev. Henry D. Phillips of Nottingham, Pa., is to be the speaker. . . . A missionary conference, with Mrs. R. B. Gaffin and the Rev. George W. Marston as speakers, is being planned for early in the fall.

First Church, Denver, Col.: First Church has been privileged recently to hear messages from several visiting preachers. These include the Rev. Donald C. Graham, Mr. Young, Chang Chun, and the Rev. Jim "Red Moccasin" Begay, a Navajo Indian evangelist who brought a remarkable message to a midweek prayer meeting. . . . An Evangelical Day School Association for the city of Denver has been formed. Plans are under way for the starting of at least one elementary school this fall. The Rev. W. Benson Male, pastor of First Church, is serving as president of the Board of Directors. . . . Mr. Brandt Bruxvoort, Superintendent of the Christian Reformed Gospel Center, and ruling elder Virgil Bellinger, former Chaplain's Assistant, supplied the pulpit while the pastor was at the General Assembly.

Presbytery of New Jersey

Grace Chapel, Warren Point, N. J.: Messages during the month of May centered around the Christian Home. Mr. Edward Haug, energetic layman of Covenant Church in East Orange, supplied the pulpit during the absence of the pastor at General Assembly. The Rev. Oscar Holkeboer who with his family has faithfully assisted in the work of Grace Chapel since it was launched in 1945, has accepted a call to Waterloo, Iowa, and left on June 23rd. Their assistance in the work of

Grace Chapel will be greatly missed. Mr. Holkeboer was teaching at the Eastern Academy in Paterson. . . . Mr. George Botbyl, who has been treasurer of the Grace Chapel Association, recently suffered a stroke and is confined to his home. He resigned his position and Mr. Henry Griswold has been elected to that office.

Presbytery of Ohio

Covenant Church, Indianapolis: Two guest preachers supplied the pulpit on May 4th. The Rev. William H. Bordeaux, general secretary of the American Council of Christian Churches, preached in the morning and the Rev. Paul P. Stough, a missionary of the Africa Inland Mission, spoke in the evening and showed pictures of his work in Africa. . . . On May 10th the Senior Machen League sponsored a youth rally. Delegations from Cincinnati, Newport, and several local churches attended. The highlight of the rally was an address by the Rev. Edmund P. Clowney of La Grange, Ill. About fifty persons were present. . . . On May 20th the first ordination was held in Covenant Church when Licentiate Thomas M. Gregory was ordained as teacher and evangelist by the Presbytery of Ohio. Dr. J. Lyle Shaw, the Moderator, was in charge of the service. Dr. Robert Strong preached the sermon, Dr. Lawrence B. Gilmore gave the charge to the candidate. Besides Ohio Presbyters, a number of elders from the Presbytery of Philadelphia took part in the laying on of hands. . . . On May 25th the Rev. Leonard C. Hunt, who is a director of the Wheeler City Rescue Mission in Indianapolis, supplied the pulpit in the absence of the pastor, the Rev. Martin J. Bohn, who was attending the General Assembly.

Presbytery of Philadelphia

Bethany Church, Nottingham, Pa.: Summer Bible School was held the last two weeks of June. . . . Bethany Church, is again planning to conduct evangelistic services at the open market in the community on Tuesday evenings during the summer.

Community Church, Centre Square, Pa.: This congregation, formerly the Valley Forge Church of Norristown, held its first service under its new name and in its new location on Sunday, June 8th. The church building in which meetings are being held, and which has been leased to the congregation at a nominal sum for 25 years,

is the Union Meeting House, built in 1814, and now vacant for some eight years. It is located near the Skippack Pike (Route 73), approximately seven miles from Westminster Theological Seminary. The renovation of the building has been carried on chiefly by members of the congregation, with Mr. Henry Tavares, a student at the Seminary, doing much of the work. There is a great deal yet to be done, including the installation of a heating plant before winter. The Rev. Robert S. Marsden preached the sermon at the service Sunday morning. In spite of heavy rain, there was an encouraging attendance from the nearby areas. It was an occasion of great rejoicing on the part of the members of the former congregation, who have long endured much hardship in their efforts to maintain their testimony in the Norristown area. The Rev. Arthur W. Kuschke, Jr. is the Moderator of the church's Session. Mr. Tavares is largely responsible for keeping the work going during recent months, and has had loyal support from the members of the congregation.

Presbytery of Wisconsin

Grace Church, Milwaukee, Wis.: On April 13th the pastor, the Rev. Richard B. Gaffin, preached his farewell sermon from Acts 20:32, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." The text was a fitting one for the closing of a ministry characterized by a faithful and careful instruction in the Word, publicly and privately, from door to door, and to Jew and Gentile alike. This faithful people, who have suffered many testings and triumphs under his leadership, will follow Mr. Gaffin, as he returns to the mission field, with their prayers and loving interest. . . . The congregation is continuing to hold its meetings in the home of the Rev. and Mrs. Gaffin. All regular services are being held under the leadership of Elder C. H. Gaffin. The women's, children's, and young people's work is being carried on by Mrs. Clifford Jorgensen and Mrs. R. B. Gaffin. The congregation is interested in hearing prospective candidates. There is great need for a building, and the city has finally granted permission to erect a basement on a lot purchased some time ago. . . . On May 25th the Rev. Arthur O. Olsen was guest preacher. The congregation were happy to have in their midst

some of their ministerial friends who were attending the General Assembly. In the evening of that day Mr. Young, Chang Chun spoke to a capacity audience and made many friends and prayer helpers for the Korean church. On June 1st the Rev. Delbert Schowalter, who is vacationing in nearby Jackson, preached at both morning and evening services.

Calvary Church, Cedar Grove: On May 22nd Mr. Young, Chang Chun was the speaker at a special assembly of the pupils of the public schools of Cedar Grove.

Rian Returns to U. S. A. Church

THE following news item is taken from the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* under date of June 10th:

"The Rev. Dr. Edwin H. Rian, until recently a leader in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, will be proposed for reinstatement in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., by the Philadelphia Presbytery (U.S.A.) today.

"Dr. Rian was deposed from the ministry by action of the Presbytery 11 years ago, and at the same time he renounced its authority by withdrawing with 16 others to form a new fundamentalist Orthodox Presbyterian denomination.

"Officials of the Presbytery said that favorable action was expected at its meeting at the Wayne Presbyterian Church this afternoon. Upon his readmission, Dr. Rian will be subject for reordination as a minister of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A."

A news item in another paper the next day stated that Dr. Rian had been reinstated, and that he had read a lengthy declaration stating that "it was wrong to form the separatist movement in 1936 and to proclaim that the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. was apostate." One of the most ardent advocates of the restoration and reordination of Dr. Rian was Dr. George Emerson Barnes, who was moderator of Philadelphia Presbytery (U.S.A.) in 1936, and who is a signer of the *Auburn Affirmation*.

THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN views with deep regret this action of Mr. Rian. In order to keep the record straight, however, it should be recalled that Mr. Rian has been progressively increasing his opposition to

the basic principles upon which the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was founded. This has been manifested in an increasing criticism, especially of the faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary. It was a number of years ago that Mr. Rian withdrew from his connection with THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN, because of his disagreement with the views of the majority of its editorial staff. More than two years ago he ceased his activities as field secretary of Westminster Seminary. At that time the ostensible reason was that he might devote his efforts to the Christian University Association work. But it was well known that he was out of harmony with the position of the faculty of the Seminary. His work for the University was terminated last fall, by action of the majority of the Board which employed him. In a public statement made at an Association meeting later in the year, Mr. Rian indicated that for five years he had been viewing with disfavor the position in theological matters which the Seminary faculty and those associated with them had been taking. And on April 25th of this year Mr. Rian withdrew from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church entirely, renouncing its jurisdiction. On the day he withdrew, it had been indicated to him that certain members of his Presbytery wished a conference with him concerning his conduct as general Secretary of the University Association, and it had been intimated that there was a possibility of disciplinary proceedings.

Mr. Rian's particular claim was that he favored a broad ecumenical Calvinism, in the line of the "American Presbyterian tradition," as over against what he called a "narrow personalized Calvinism" which he said characterized the faculty of Westminster Seminary. In some recent editorials THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN has indicated its fears of the consequences of such a broad outlook, and of the inclusivism which it involves. That its fears were justified is now apparent from the action Mr. Rian has taken, in which he has placed himself on the side of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in its activities for the last 11 years.

It is needless to say that Mr. Rian's action stands in complete isolation from the position of THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN and of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church. We believe that the grounds upon which this denomination was organized in 1936

were valid grounds. The General Assembly of the U.S.A. Church in that year demanded of its ministers implicit obedience to its orders, even when those orders were contrary to the Word of God, and when those accused stood ready to establish that fact. No appeal to the Word of God was permitted. Dr. Machen and others were ordered suspended because they refused demands of the Church, demands which if obeyed would have involved them in sinful acts of disloyalty to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. This was, of course, a consequence of the protest of these men that the Boards and Agencies of the U. S. A. Church were actually disloyal to the Standards and Constitution of that Church.

Nothing has happened in the intervening years to indicate that the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. has repented of its actions or reversed its decisions in these matters. The U.S.A. Church is, we believe, giving continual comfort to the enemies of the Cross of Christ. We are exceedingly grieved that Mr. Rian has chosen to walk their road. In the Grace of God, we shall continue the path we have been traveling, which we believe is the path of loyalty to Christ.

University Board Looks to Future

THE Board of the Christian University Association held its regular spring meeting in Philadelphia on June 5th. Although at the present time the Board is faced with rather critical conditions, it spent a considerable part of its meeting discussing the future of its work.

Although the decisions were couched in general terms, with details to be worked out, and with many conditions involved, there was action which can be reported. In particular, the Board contemplated the possibility of establishing, in the Philadelphia area, as a preliminary step toward the accomplishment of its goal, an Institute of Higher Studies. The proposal which was presented suggested that such an institute might well begin with work only in the fields of philosophy and history, and possibly linguistics. It would not cover the equivalent of a full college term of four years, but, while perhaps including some work on

the college level, would more probably emphasize post graduate study. Its beginnings would undoubtedly be relatively small, both in number of faculty members and of students. However, such a beginning, which is conceived of as being definitely practicable within the near future, would be a big step in the direction of the proposed University establishment.

It was felt that one of the great needs, with respect to present day education, is the development of an underlying philosophy in accordance with Reformed thought. We need a careful understanding of the relationship of Reformed thought to all fields of study. A Reformed philosophy of history, of education, and of science must first be established, before the actual study of those subjects on such a basis can be carried out.

Further information will be given as soon as it is available from the Board, which appointed a committee to consider certain practical problems connected with the establishment of such an Institute.

Presbyterian U. S. A. Assembly

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. met this year in Grand Rapids, Michigan. A number of the actions of the Assembly are of more than passing interest.

Among other things, the Assembly took steps to bring into being a "National Church" in Washington, D. C. This church includes the congregations of the First Church and the Church of the Covenant. This national church is to represent the denomination at large, in the capital of the country.

Charles P. Taft, President of the Federal Council of Churches, delivered an address in which he repeated the claim he had made before the Northern Baptist convention earlier, that the Federal Council is not Communist, but does claim the right to criticize our present economic order, when that order works badly. To the credit of the American Council of Christian Churches it is to be said, that they have forced the Federal Council to take the defensive at numerous points, one of them being on this matter of Communism.

The Assembly also gave the go-

ahead signal for the establishment of an official denominational weekly publication. It will be a journal of religious news and information, and will be financed partly by help from various denominational boards and agencies. On the basis of promotional work already done, over 75,000 subscriptions have been secured, to take effect "if and when." The matter of a denominational publication has been agitated in the church for many years. There was even discussion of it back in the nineteenth century.

Federal aid to education was opposed by the Assembly, on the ground partly at least that such aid would mean federal control of education. The Assembly also expressed concern over the maintenance of a personal representative of the President of the United States at the Vatican.

Apparently one of the most interesting debates concerned an Intermediate Catechism, which the Church has been using as a teaching device to present the material of the regular Shorter Catechism in language adapted to the needs of youth. A proposed revision of this Intermediate Catechism was submitted by a committee. In the proposed revision the committee had apparently sought to define the Holy Catholic Church as including the

Protestant, Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic groups. Dr. Clarence Macartney opposed the revision at this point, arguing that the Holy Catholic Church includes the visible and invisible Churches, in other words, the company of the redeemed. To use the new language would, in his opinion, have been to depart radically from the position of the Confession of Faith, to give a wholesale endorsement to Romanism, and to admit that the Reformation was a mistake. Dr. Macartney won his point, and the revision was sent back to the committee with instructions to make changes along the lines he had suggested.

Presbyterian Missions in China and the Philippine Islands will be transferred to the national churches of those countries instead of remaining under the Assembly's foreign missions board. This decision is described as a "great, historic achievement" in Presbyterian missions. In China the mission work will be transferred to the Church of Christ in China and in the Philippines to the United Evangelical Church. The Presbyterian Church will continue its financial support, but will recognize the national churches as sister churches, and its missionaries will become an "integral part" of those national churches.

Report from Liberia

Part 3: The Problem of the Language

By the REV. WILLIAM E. WELMERS, Ph.D.

Orthodox Presbyterian Minister at Sanoyea, Republic of Liberia

IN THIS article Dr. Welmers describes the importance and some of the difficulties which the language barrier raises in mission work. As he indicates, his own activity is that of trying to help the missionaries in handling this language problem.

ALL of our life here seems to be directly affected by the language work we came to do. The United Lutheran Church has maintained a mission in Liberia for over eighty years. At first, most of the work was among the Americo-Liberians at the coast, who speak English only. In later years, interior stations have been opened, and now the largest station is only a few miles from the eastern border of Liberia, almost at the north end of the country. In all these years

of interior work, there has been no organized attempt to work through the native languages. The policy has been, for the most part, to teach English to the people and thus to use the English language as a means of evangelization. This policy has been the easy way, since the official language of Liberia is English, and only English may be taught in the schools. However, by pursuing such a policy, evangelism has been confined to those who have been able to attend school for several years, or to the use of an interpreter for others. Interpreting is an extremely difficult job, and a rare skill. When the missionary himself does not understand the language of the people, he has no way to check on the accuracy of the interpreter, and the interpreter's mistakes often prove to be both

comical and pathetic.

This difficulty of interpreting is nothing to be surprised at. Even a university-educated man with theological training, equally fluent from childhood in two languages, finds it most difficult to interpret a sermon sentence by sentence. Here we have to use eighth-grade graduates with only an elementary knowledge of the Bible. I have heard a missionary quote the Nicene Creed verbatim and expect a fourth-grade school boy of about eighteen to translate it into Kpelle. At least I give the missionary credit for feeling that the Nicene Creed is worthwhile quoting.

The stories about interpreters and missionaries first learning a new language are unlimited. I'll mention only one of each. The first one happened to myself. I was preaching one morning and using an eighth-grade graduate as an interpreter. I knew enough Kpelle by then to know that I should avoid certain complicated types of sentences, and some difficult words. So, to try to illustrate "sanctification" in simple language, I said something like this: "Every Christian sins often. No Christian is ever free from sin. However, the Holy Spirit helps a Christian to fight against the devil and to avoid sinning. As a Christian gets older, the Holy Spirit makes him stronger, and he fights against the devil more successfully. If you are a Christian, I know that you still tell lies sometimes. But if you are really a Christian, if you really love God, it is not so easy for you to tell a lie now as it was ten years ago." Each sentence of what I said was translated after I said it. After I said the last sentence, the interpreter said in Kpelle, "God lies to us for ten years, and then he tells the truth." I am sure that he did not realize what he was saying. I am sure too that the missionary who is beginning to learn Kpelle did not realize what he was saying when he translated a Kpelle sentence into English as "My older sister is younger than I am." Anyone who has taken French or German in high school or college will recognize such errors as being very common. However, when we are preaching the eternal truths of God, such mistakes are no longer funny. They are a matter of a man's eternal salvation. Fortunately, after that sermon of mine, many of the people said that they had not understood anything, that the interpreter's words sounded like water running over the rocks.

During all of these years, many in-

dividual missionaries have seriously attempted to learn and use the languages of the people. Thirty years ago one of them sought the help of a well-known German linguist, and with that help it is said that he finally learned Kpelle well enough to preach and teach in it. He also prepared lessons for missionaries, and succeeded in translating the Gospel of Mark into Kpelle. This was a tremendous step in the right direction, but unfortunately the mission as a whole did not succeed in carrying on from there. None of the Kpelle people learned to read the part of God's Word that had been so laboriously translated; today there are several copies of the Gospel of Mark in Kpelle in the hands of missionaries here, but no one can read it. The system of writing which was used was not easy to master, and in many cases words with different sounds are written in the same way. Several attempts at language classes for missionaries were made, but none was successful. Without proper leadership, the missionary students failed to understand the problems which the Kpelle speaker faces in trying to teach his own language. Finally it became the conviction of almost the entire field that the languages of Liberia are hopelessly difficult and useless to master. This conviction was encouraged, no doubt, by the fact that any Kpelle person who speaks a little English is proud of his accomplishment, and shows off his vocabulary by using English words as often as possible even when speaking Kpelle. He gives the impression, often false, that Kpelle has no word for what he is saying, and therefore that it is hopeless to try to teach God's Word in Kpelle.

A few years ago, some of the missionaries here came to the conclusion that missionary work in Liberia was not advancing as it should be, and that the failure of the missionaries to learn the languages was one of the big reasons for the discouraging state of the work. They requested the home board to plan more efficient language work on the field. As a result of the board's plans, I became interested in the project, and finally made arrangements to come here to help get the program started. At the same time one of the young missionaries spent his whole furlough acquiring as much of a knowledge of linguistic method as he could. He is now working on the Loma language, and I am working on Kpelle. My instructions were to start wherever I felt it was necessary to start, and do

whatever I could.

One of my first tasks was to determine a way in which to write the language simply and consistently, so that words with the same sound would not be written differently, and words with different sounds would not be written the same. This is not always an easy job. After over nine months of work, I am fairly well satisfied that I have a satisfactory way to write Kpelle.

For the last two months, I have been spending a few hours each week teaching some of the Kpelle people to read and write their own language. This is a part of the language work of a mission which has apparently been neglected here until now. Perhaps you have read some thrilling accounts of how people in various parts of the world flock to learn to read and write their own language, and how they weep with joy and fall at the feet of their teachers when they realize that they can recognize their own name. I wish I could tell such a story about these people, but it just wouldn't be true. The only way we could persuade anyone at all to come to learn to read and write Kpelle, was to promise that we would also teach them English and Arithmetic. About twenty came, and it is difficult to hold them. The fact is, of course, that after six months they should be able to read and write Kpelle better than they could read and write English after six years. When they can read and write, the mission will hasten to give them God's Word to read.

Perhaps you have wondered what we can do in the short time we will be here. Our original plans were to stay here one year, but we have extended that to a planned year and a half, in order to see the first missionaries through their course in spoken Kpelle. In that year and a half I hope that the products of my work will include an outlined grammar of the language, a card index from which a dictionary can be begun, written lessons in spoken Kpelle for missionaries, lessons in written Kpelle for native speakers, and a nucleus of literate speakers of Kpelle and of missionaries who can speak the language. I do not intend to attempt any translating, other than perhaps a few elementary passages from the Bible which will be part of the lessons. My only aim is that I can conscientiously say that I have laid such a foundation that someone else with only a little linguistic training can go as far in three years as I could by staying another year and a half.