

# *The Presbyterian* **GUARDIAN**

## *Contents*

### **Organized for Action**

By JOHN W. SANDERSON, JR.

### **The Place of the Layman in the Church**

By EDMUND P. CLOWNEY

### **Letters of a Minister to His Nephew**

By HENRY W. CORAY

### **Lost Blessedness ?**

By CARL J. REITSMA

### **The Impact of One Christian Layman**

By ROBERT L. ATWELL

### **The Communion of Saints**

By EDWARD WYBENGA

### **Where Are We Going ?**

By EDWARD J. YOUNG

### **General Assembly Report**

By ROBERT E. NICHOLAS

**Magazine Viewer — News — Editorial**

# Organized for Action

By JOHN W. SANDERSON, JR.

The Sunday School superintendent was asked a direct question, "Why do we have a Sunday School?" His reaction was two-fold: first, indignation that anyone should even suggest that there be no Sunday School; second, chagrin because on sober second thought he was not sure that he knew why. Here was organization all right, but for *what* action?

Then there was the little boy who went to Sunday School, Christian day school, weekday Bible class, Friday night youth activity, and pastor's catechism class and heard the story of Joshua five times! (And it was a bit disconcerting when the Moses of one flannelgraph story was used to represent Joshua in another.) Here was action all right, in a disorganized kind of a way!

Examples of such hit-or-miss activity in our churches may be rare or common. In any case they point up the need for sessional planning so that the whole counsel of God is not only preached from the pulpit, but receives an adequate implementation in the church's activities. Elders, in such planning, must be guided by the Scriptures — what activities must the church engage in as it obeys the Lord's commands? what provision has the Lord made for such activities in His gifting of men, and in His ordering the functions of the Church?

Although the gifts which God gives are for the whole church, most individual churches will have their share for the work of their locality (I Cor. 1:7). The session will then provide for the training of those who have these gifts and then organize the church for their proper expression.

In all of this the pastor will be wise if he reserves his strength for activities for which no layman can be trained. He will be part-'coach,' and part-'quarterback' in the execution of the church's program; and hold himself ready for tasks which come to light while the others are doing their work. This seems in keeping with the principle of Acts 6:1-8.

While modern individual-centered psychology cannot be accepted in its

ordinary sense, still the program contemplated will take into account the community in which the church lies, and its particular needs will dictate much of the program to be undertaken. Thus where there is no Christian day school, the church's education program must be more vigorous; or, where the Sunday School attracts few outsiders, a week-day Bible class will have to be set up for evangelism.

No item in the program should be scheduled "just because we have always done it this way." But every item should be justified by reference to the Scriptures, and ways and means should be sought to implement the full program of the New Testament in all of our churches today.

*This is a brief abstract of a discussion planned for the Laymen's Conference at Wildwood, June 27, 1959. You may find it will serve the same purpose for a discussion in your group elsewhere. The writer is Lecturer in Practical Theology at Westminster Seminary.*

## A FAITH THAT REDEEMED

The book of Joshua relates one of the strangest battles ever fought. According to the Lord's command, the children of Israel circled the city of Jericho once a day for six days, and on the seventh day they circled it seven times. As they completed their last journey around the city, they blew their trumpets and gave a great shout, and the walls of the city fell outward, so that each soldier could enter the city directly in front of him.

When the children of Israel shouted, the walls fell—except the part which supported the house of Rahab, where she and her family were taking refuge. Of the inhabitants of the city only she and her family were saved.

If God was to show his mercy, why did He save only one family out of the ruins of Jericho, and why did He show mercy to ones who were among the worst in the entire city? The Bible says that Rahab was a public woman. One might think that she was not worthy of being saved. Must we say, "How odd of God?"

But the Scriptures tell us something more about Rahab. When the men who had been sent by Joshua to spy out the land were in danger, Rahab protected them. To them she confided her belief that God had given them the land of Canaan. She sent the king's soldiers on a wild goose chase, and she helped the spies escape to their own troops.

Do we have to call Rahab's actions by the ugly word, "treason"? Was her aid to God's people simply a means of saving her own skin? It was more than that. Rahab also confessed her faith in the living and true God: ". . . for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (Joshua 2:11).

The book of Hebrews gives us the final, divine answer to our questions about Rahab: "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not when she had received the spies with peace" (Hebrews 11:31).

Rahab rightly belongs on the roll of the faithful. In her own right she had nothing to commend her to God. But she realized her danger, she confessed the Lord of heaven and earth, and she came to Him for refuge. Rahab was not saved because of what she had or what she was. She was saved by faith.

That is God's way of salvation. Christ said, I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. We are saved by *grace*, through *faith*.

Rahab's faith was a faith that redeemed.

ROBERT D. KNUDSEN

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# The Place of the Layman in the Church

By EDMUND P. CLOWNEY

Where is the church on Monday? Dr. L. Praamsma puts this question in a book which appeared recently in the Netherlands. (1). The usual American answer would be, "On the corner of Main and Central, where it was on Sunday!" When a little reflection leads to the conclusion that the church is not really a stone building, the right answer is not so easy. Does the church exist only where the pastor is making a hospital call? Suppose that not even two saints are together in Christ's name at 11 a.m.; has the church disappeared without a trace in the secular world?

Reformed theology has given a clear answer to the question. The church is to be found wherever a Christian is to be found. Church officers are important for the well-being of the church; buildings may be convenient for certain church activities; but only Christians are necessary to the existence of the church on earth. Yet those who most cheerfully admit this go on talking about the Walnut Street Church or Dr. Parker's Church; and the trouble is, they mean it! They expect all church service to be carried on either in the building or by Dr. Parker, with his paid assistants.

A "churchman" has come to mean a professional cleric, while a "layman" is one quite inexperienced and unacquainted with ecclesiastical affairs.

## Renewed Emphasis

That such a view means death for the church is now increasingly recognized. In the lands of the younger churches, events have forced the recognition of the place of the layman. Mission programs which were built up on the activities of paid workers have been swept away by nationalism or Communism, or have sunk beneath their own weight when foreign financing was withdrawn or diminished. On the other hand, in countries such as Korea where the laity were instructed and given full responsibility, the church has flourished.

New emphasis on the laity has arisen in Europe since World War II. Many lay movements have been

started; Hendrik Kraemer, who has recently written *A Theology of the Laity* (2) has been a leader in this field in the ecumenical movement. Even Roman Catholics have been struggling to find a place for the layman in a hierarchical church. (3)

The structure of our society has made the position of the layman crucial. Perhaps the pastor in a little village could keep in effective contact with all the people in his parish, but this is quite impossible in a modern city. Besides, there are whole areas of life in factories and offices to which a minister has no access at all. If Christ is to be confessed in split-level suburbs, in the electronics division, or on the sixteenth floor in Metropolis, it must be by the layman.

Yet even this practical necessity is not the final guide to the place of the layman in the church. Only the Bible provides an adequate understanding of the place and calling of the layman.

To begin with, the word "layman" is not a Biblical term. Its background is honorable; it is derived from the Greek word for "people." If we understood it in the sense of the "people of God," its use would be wholesome. But we have only to contrast our negative understanding of "layman" with such Biblical terms as saints, brethren, sons, disciples, believers, witnesses, stewards to see how much we have lost. Put one of these names in the title of this article — the place of saints in the church!

## A High Calling

When Paul wishes to distinguish laymen from church officers, he writes "to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1:1). He describes himself as one "called to be an apostle," but those whom he addresses are "called to be saints" (Rom. 1:1,

*Westminster Seminary's Associate Professor of Practical Theology here sounds a keynote for the Boardwalk Laymen's Conference and challenges all believers to their high and holy calling.*

7). Christian discipleship is the calling of God. Every Christian is an officer of God, charged with a mission and equipped with gifts of grace. The saints are the "holy ones" of God. The very word "church" does not mean any assembly; in the usage of the Bible it points back to the great assembly at Sinai, in "the day of the assembly" (Deut. 9:10; 10:4) when God was revealed as King in the midst of the great gathering of the heavenly "holy ones" and the earthly saints (see Deut. 33:2, 3). How majestically does the writer of Hebrews describe the great assembly of the New Jerusalem to which every believer is joined! (Heb. 12:18-24). The new Israel of God is an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, charged with displaying His excellencies (I Pet. 2:9). These sons of God and priests of the Most High are no mere laymen.

The term which has been used to describe this high and holy calling of every Christian is "the general office of the believer." The phrase itself is not particularly thrilling, yet it is probably better than "the priesthood of all believers," since there are royal and prophetic aspects to the believer's calling that are coordinate with his position as a priest.

## A Calling to Service

Does this mean that in the church there are all chiefs and no Indians? Remarkably, the same New Testament teachings which exalt the calling of the Christian also demand the deepest humility. All Christian calling is to service of God and man. The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many (Mt. 20:28). The priestly nation serves God in the midst of the Gentiles so that they too may come to worship His name. He is greatest in the church who is servant of all (Mt. 20:26, 27).

Further, the particular form of service is determined by the gift of God. Christ has united His body in a harmony of function. The service of

every member is necessary; there are no useless gifts nor ungifted members (I Cor. 12). These gifts are of grace, and cannot be made the ground of boasting. They are marvelously diverse. Each man must learn to be realistic about his gifts and function. No man should think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but should soberly estimate what measure of grace has been granted him, and what field of service lies in its scope (Rom. 12:3). A man must stir up the gift of God that is in him, and he should desire earnestly better gifts (II Tim. 1:6; I Cor. 12:31).

### Diversity of Gifts

The distinction in the church is not between clergy and laity but among a host of individual ministries. These are all *services*, and they are all a *sharing* of the gifts of the one Spirit in the Kingdom and Body of the one Lord.

It is true there are greater as well as lesser gifts. Among the gifts there are some which entail particular authority in the church. Such gifts must be publicly recognized or they cannot be exercised. If a man is to be a preacher of the Word, he must be acknowledged as possessing gifts of the Spirit qualifying him for such authority and service.

There is, then, a distinction between those ministries which require public recognition and those which do not. In the ministry of the Word, of order, and of mercy such offices are indicated in the New Testament. They are often called "special offices" in distinction from the general office of believers. Yet there is no distinction in principle among the ministries of the church. You have your individual calling of Christ. Are you fulfilling it?

### Love, Faith, Hope

What are your gifts? Paul discusses particular gifts in I Corinthians. Some members of that church were assigning undue importance to the more spectacular gifts. The apostle reminds them that love, which fulfills the whole law, is the greatest gift of all (I Cor. 13). Every Christian has this gift to some degree. Are you stirring up this gift of the Spirit or quenching it? To find your place in Christ's service, keep finding occasions to love your Lord, His people, and your neighbors who are in the darkness of unbelief. Love is the first fruit of the Spirit and the only gate to

## "You have your individual calling of Christ.

Are you fulfilling it?"

Christian usefulness. Every form of Christian service is a way of loving or it is vain pretense.

With love goes faith and hope as gifts of the Christian. These most obvious gifts are also the greatest, and all others flow out of them. To learn the secret of Christian service, learn to pray and sing in private and in public in faith, hope, and love, expressing the riches of Christ's Word in your heart.

It is also worth remembering that particular gifts serve the purposes of Christ's Kingdom: the worship of God, the edification of the saints, the witness to the world. Every gift of Christ has some application to each of these areas. "Lay activity" is not to be mere activism, nor is Christian fellowship constructed of church meetings every night and three or four times Sunday. To adore God in secret is the calling of every son of God. Neglect sheer worship and you are sealing off the fresh fountains of grace. Family worship is a supreme function of Christian parents and young people. Christ is as truly present at family prayers as in the largest church in Christendom.

### Purposes and Use

The manifold ministries by which these ends are served may also be grouped as comparable to the work of the minister, the ruling elder, and the deacon. Every Christian must be

ready to give a reason for the hope that is in him. He must know and love God's Word. There are many gifts related to the understanding and explanation of God's truth. Other gifts relate to encouraging and admonishing others, preserving order in the family and the church. Still others are gifts of showing mercy: relieving poverty, counseling the distressed, comforting the sick and sorrowing.

All these gifts, as applied to worship, edification, and witness are cultivated as you use them daily wherever the Lord gives you opportunity. They are beautifully interrelated in the communion of the saints and along your path in the world. Visit a sick neighbor out of mercy, and you soon find yourself with opportunity for witness. You then remember your pastor's explanation of a passage of Scripture, or what a fellow-believer said in prayer meeting about a verse he had used to point a friend to Christ. You share what you have received, and the whole process is of the Spirit, as you realize when you give thanks with your family for another evidence of His calling and blessing.

1. *Het dogma der Kerk*, G. C. Berkouwer, G. Toornvliet, eds. Groningen: Jan Haan, 1949.
2. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958.
3. Cf. Yves M. J. Congar, *Lay People in the Church*, Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1957.

## Letters of A Minister to His Nephew

162 Laurel Avenue  
Menlo Park, California  
May 6, 1957

*My dear Livingston:*

I am not the least surprised to learn that you are running into snags in the ministry of music in the church. Breathes there a clergyman who has not? Washington has its Pentagon, and so has the congregation of the righteous. I sometimes

think that when Satan cannot cause disruption among us on the matters of doctrine or life, he bends every effort to stir up strife via hymnody.

You suggest that some of your good people are dissatisfied with the grand and stately hymns of the church and are clamoring for "lively tunes." It might be an interesting experiment for you to ask these impatient ones to list some of these "lively tunes."

On one occasion a young lady and her mother approached me with a request that we sing something in church other than "dead hymns." I found out that what they had in mind were jump tunes such as "Do Lord, O Do Lord, O Do Remember Me," "I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy Down in My Heart," "Every Day with Jesus," and other jazzed up versions of pieces that are usually belted out with the verve of the Andrew Sisters doing their famous polka numbers.

I would say that at no point has the world invaded the church more successfully and more tragically than right here. The purpose of public worship is to glorify the blessed triune God. Truly great hymns such as "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," "Holy, Holy, Holy," "Crown Him with Many Crowns," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" are designed to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience to Christ, not just to make worshipers feel happy. And curiously, when the minds of the worshipers are turned Godward in these matchless hymns, isn't it true that they are accompanied by depth of feeling in the soul that is too deep for words?

My advice is for you to make an earnest effort to educate your flock in this important exercise. Be patient, of course. But be pointed. Remind your listeners that God merits the very best—in music as well as in all else. Show them that believers live by inspiring hymns, as they die by them. Before those valiant missionaries in Ecuador went out to face death at the hands of the Aucas, they and their families joined in the singing of no religious jive. No, they worshiped the Lord in the beauty of holiness. They sang:

"We rest on Thee—our Shield and our Defender.  
Thine is the battle,  
Thine shall be the praise;  
When passing through the gates of pearly splendor,  
Victors—we rest with Thee, through endless days."

Affectionately,

*Your Uncle Hank*

## Lost Blessedness ?

By CARL J. REITSMA

One of the topics we will be discussing at the Laymen's Leadership Conference is the "Role of the Deacon in the Life of the Church." I have found that in many of our churches the Board of Deacons is largely inactive and in others it is altogether extinct. There may be a deacon or two in your congregation, but chances are they have little to do and hold meetings very seldom. When you see them you don't instinctively associate them with the compassion of Jesus, but probably you know them much better for their work as trustees or Sunday School teachers. We are faced with a disappearing diaconate and with that we are losing the ministry of mercy, the sweet side of the Christian gospel.

Jesus' own ministry contains many examples of His tenderness and love for the poor, and the Apostles appointed seven men to care for them. It may safely be said that the mercy of Christ is expressed most clearly and beautifully in the work of the diaconate and it is this that gives to the office of the deacon its intensely spiritual character, so that a church without an active diaconate is incomplete in its proclamation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Diaconate Important

The diaconate has been declining in almost every church in America. Our growing prosperity has eliminated the need for assistance in most cases and with factories offering pensions and the government providing social security there just does not seem to be much for the deacon to do. Some congregations have no poor families, widows or aged, but in others however, and this is the important thing, there are some who do need help but have secured it from governmental welfare agencies. As a result the church's ministry has become less and less important and less and less physical until we have come to believe that it belongs to the church to care for

the soul and to the state to care for the body. This is a serious impoverishment of the gospel which God designed to supply the needs of the whole man. When one is saved and ushered into the church he ought to feel complete relief from worldly as well as spiritual uncertainty and enjoy a sample of perfect heavenly deliverance so that to be with the church is to be with God. It cannot be stressed too much that the care of the church's poor is the responsibility of the family and the church rather than the state.

### Are There No Poor?

While it is no doubt true that some congregations have no poor, it will never be true that the church at large has no poor. Jesus Himself said, "For the poor always ye have with you." Economic and political circumstances in different parts of our nation and the world as well as the individual abilities of the worker give rise to broad inequalities in income. A certain amount of disparity in standard of living is wholesome and right, but in the church of God it is sinful for one to be hungry while another has enough and to spare.

It is extreme riches and extreme poverty that God sought to eliminate by Old Testament economic legislation. The Year of Jubilee had the effect of leveling off wealth by providing that on the fiftieth year all the land be returned to its original owners. God compensated for factors of initiative and misfortune by this means and thereby limited gains and curbed losses among the people. God made very clear to Israel that He was Lord of the land and that the possession of ground and goods rested upon the foundation of their gracious deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

### Our Money Is God's

The principle then seems to be that Christians should willingly share those extra funds not essential to maintaining their own households with poor brethren at home and abroad. This is the point that is also made in such New Testament passages as Luke 12: 33, "Sell that ye have, and give alms." We may translate: "Sell that ye have left, and give alms." Obviously, we

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*"We are losing the ministry of mercy,  
the sweet side of the Christian gospel."*

ourselves would be candidates for the deacon's fund if we sold everything and gave the proceeds away. But, if we have property we do not need for our own security, stocks, bonds, or extra savings we should make these funds available to our deacons so that they may draw upon them if and when they are needed to meet the needs of our brethren.

A Christian may have no "frozen assets," no dead capital. Our brethren in Korea and elsewhere need this money that some of us have "rotting in the bank." It is God's money and God wants them to have it, and this means that they have a right to it. The seriousness of holding on to such "dead funds" is underscored in I John 3:17: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

### An Enlarged Concept

The deacon then is to serve as collector and distributor of surplus funds for God's people. But he must try to do much more than this. He must plan ways and means to eliminate permanent and complete poverty by re-establishing needy families in society. In the Old Testament the land was the means of production and God insured by law that a man's *means of production* would not be taken away from him. We have mentioned the Year of Jubilee in this connection and the Law of Redemption also served this purpose. It provided that in cases of impossible debt a close relative would be obliged to buy the land so that it would remain in the family until such a time when the original owner would be in a position to buy it back. The deacons as "redeemers" then are acting within their limits when, for example, they help a baker retain his business with loans or gifts because a bakery is this man's means of production, and it is the means of production which must be held inviolate.

Provided, of course, that a man's business is basically sound in the judgment of the deacons, it is Scrip-

*"Never ought anyone who is a Christian have too little to live or too much to die," says the author, who is pastor of the Immanuel Orthodox Presbyterian Church of West Collingswood, N.J.*

tural to help him keep his business rather than for him to be unemployed and his family to be dependent upon the diaconate indefinitely. The efforts of the deacons should be directed toward helping each member maintain his means of production. Thus one need not be destitute before one may qualify for deacon's assistance, but one should apply whenever one's livelihood is threatened. For this reason the deacons ought to be thoroughly conversant with job opportunities in their areas. Monetary gifts ought to be only stop-gap measures in most cases.

### Expression of Love

It needs emphasis that the diaconate has a most important roll to fulfill in the church of Christ today. In it the loving and uncalculating care of Christ our Saviour comes to most beautiful expression. It is the open hand of the warm heart. Never ought anyone who is a Christian have too little to live or too much to die. The fellowship of the saints should insure that the widow, the aged, the orphan and the unemployed have all their needs supplied. And what is more, they should have some of the little luxuries and niceties which make for a full and happy life and that reflect the Christian's deliverance from the bondage of Satan and his royalty as a son of the Great King. It goes without saying that the primary responsibility for the care of the poor rests upon the family and relatives, but the ultimate responsibility resides in the family of Christ which is the church of the living God.

### Elders Meet for Monthly Fellowship

Fellowship! Planning! Instruction! Inspiration!

These are four primary benefits being enjoyed by elders of the Los Angeles, California, area in their monthly dinner meetings which began three years ago to promote the interests of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church through a continuing series of informal gatherings.

Originally sponsored by the sessions of the Beverly (East Los Angeles) and Manhattan Beach churches, the meetings are now attended by elders from all eight churches of the metropolitan area, including Long Beach,

Garden Grove, Torrance, Eagle Rock, Whittier and La Habra.

For many months the men reserved banquet rooms in various cafes for their meetings, but now meet for dinner followed by business sessions in the churches on a rotating basis.

Officers are elected for six-month terms, the present ones being John Reynolds, moderator, and Wm. Russell Malcor, clerk, both of the Manhattan Beach session.

There is no stereotyped agenda for the business sessions, each elder freely proposing and entering into the discussion of any matter applicable to the interests of the individual church, the presbytery or the denomination.

Meetings are held on the last Thursday evening of each month, and from time to time guest speakers are invited to bring devotions or present a special study on some subject. For example, the elders have just concluded a course of instruction on parliamentary procedure given by Rev. H. Wilson Albright, stated supply of the La Habra Church.

W. R. MALCOR

### Pittsburgh-Xenia and Western Seminary Merged

Pittsburgh-Xenia was the only theological seminary of the former United Presbyterian Church, which united with the Presbyterian USA denomination one year ago. Its President, Dr. Addison Leitch, and at least some members of the faculty, had hoped and worked for its continuance as an entity which might represent the conservative viewpoint in the merged UPUSA church. The board members are reported, however, to have voted 22-10 in favor of the proposed plan for merging Pittsburgh-Xenia with the modernist-dominated Western Seminary, and the merger of the two institutions was approved by the Indianapolis General Assembly of the United Presbyterian USA church. The denomination thus safeguarded itself from a potential center of conservative influence.

### Notice to Subscribers

May we remind you that the next issue of the GUARDIAN will be dated July 25; it will be Number 13 of the current year. Number 14 will be the issue of August 25.

# The Impact of One Christian Layman

By ROBERT L. ATWELL

On a recent Sunday evening I preached a sermon on I Corinthians 5:9-11 entitled "Separation is not Isolation." That important truth I illustrated by reference to Will McBride, a layman who was a Christian "epistle, known and read." Your Editor thinks the reference would be profitable for GUARDIAN readers, in connection with the theme of this issue.

I first met Will McBride in 1935. He was then clerk of session in the Presbyterian Church of Harrisville. He was assistant cashier in the Harrisville Bank. He was a member of the school board and intelligently active in support of such projects as were for the betterment of the community. I doubt that there was anyone in that village of 800 who didn't think of Will McBride as his friend. He loved his neighbors and somehow it was surprisingly clear that this was but a reflection of his love for his God.

When the Syracuse Assembly upheld the iniquitous mandate of 1934 and the suspensions of Dr. J. Gresham Machen and others from the ministry of the church, Will McBride's forthright stand, backed as it was by the testimony of a consistent Christian life, was largely responsible for the continuance of a truly Presbyterian witness in the community. Moreover in the years that followed his contribution to the building up of Christ's church was outstanding. Why? He was one set apart to God. He was conscious that he was not his own but was bought with a price. His concern was to do the thing that was right and the consequences were of no moment for consequences are God's responsibility. At the same time he was singularly free from the appearance of self-righteousness. Though he was a quiet man there was no aloofness about him. His interest in his neighbors and his community was genuine and obviously so.

This unostentatious maintenance of a Christian walk in the community, what someone has called "living graciously in a non-Christian society," was indicative of his Christian perspective.

He kept thoughts, attitudes and deeds in Biblical balance. A young pastor never had more effective support for the work of the Gospel than came from him and his family. The obvious intensity of his interest in sermons made a poor sermon or dull delivery both embarrassing and difficult. Such listeners must always make for better preaching.

According to First Timothy chapter three, an elder is to rule his own household well. This he did. His oldest boy was center on the high school basketball team and first baseman on the baseball team. He was the idol of all the younger boys of the town. He was always at Sunday School and morning church, at young people's and evening church, and at mid-week prayer service. I said to him, "This is not true of other fellows on the athletic teams, why is it with you?" His answer was revealing, "As far back as I can remember I have always been in services with my Dad." At a session meeting an Arminian elder was objecting strenuously to the doctrinal preaching which was "completely over the heads of the people." I was about at the point of despair when Will McBride spoke up: "Each Sunday after church, while Mother is preparing the meal, my nine year old son goes into my study and preaches the morning sermon. There isn't much that he doesn't get; I don't think we need be overly concerned that the preaching is too doctrinal." Today that boy is not a preacher but he is, as his father was, the treasurer of the church and he is raising his four little ones in the "nurture the admonition of the Lord." So the church of Christ is built.

Another indication of perspective was his care concerning his own conduct and his lack of censoriousness of his neighbor. For example, one day I realized that for many months I had not seen him smoke and on inquiry he simply said he had quit because he felt, in the peculiar situation of our church in the community, his smoking was not an asset to his work. His was a conscious endeavor to do whatever he did to the glory

of God. But he never fell into the error of condemning others without Scriptural warrant.

Finally, Will McBride lived as though he believed answer 114 of the Heidelberg Catechism: "Even the holiest men, while in this life, have only *small beginnings* of this obedience; yet so, that with a sincere resolution they begin to live, not only according to some, but all the commands of God." He was one who hungered and thirsted after righteousness. Too often this eager search for truth, this intense desire to "grow in grace and knowledge," is found only in youth. How heartening and wholesome, but, alas, how rare, to find it also in our mature laymen. When I heard several years ago of Will McBride's departure of this life the words that came immediately to my mind were, "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost." May the Holy Ghost increasingly bless His church with laymen whose very lives will be as a benediction to all those who love the Lord and as lights reflecting the true Light in this darkened world.

## UPUSA Assembly and The Virgin Birth

This year's UPUSA General Assembly attracted more attention than otherwise would have been the case because of a controversy over the confirmation of Theodore A. Gill as the new president of San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, Calif. Opposition had arisen apparently first on the West Coast where a small minority had raised the issue of Dr. Gill's views on the virgin birth of Christ.

Shortly before leaving his position as managing editor of *The Christian Century* last year Dr. Gill wrote an editorial on "A Choice of Miracles" in which he asked, "What of us who make the Virgin Birth no part of our personal confession, however often liturgical obedience involves us in its public repetition, yet who hang our whole hope on the Resurrection?"

The Rev. Herbert Schreiner of Seattle moved that confirmation of Dr. Gill be withheld. Efforts of the Rev. Ellis Shaw of San Diego to secure the privilege of the floor for Dr. Wm. D. Livingstone, pastor of the 5000-member First Church of San Diego, were unsuccessful. Dr. Livingstone, not a commissioner, had led a small

minority in the modernist-dominated Los Angeles Presbytery opposing the confirmation. After the Assembly had, to nobody's surprise, voted for confirmation by an overwhelming voice vote, Dr. Livingstone was quoted as saying, "But the matter is not ended . . . We remain unsatisfied until Dr. Gill makes a clear affirmation."

*Newsweek* quoted Dr. Gill as saying, following his return to his job in California: "I cannot pledge allegiance to the doctrine of the virgin birth. I believe in the Incarnation of God in Christ. You cannot discuss the fact that He was Christ, but you can discuss the how of the fact that He was in Christ." This statement doubtless explains why persistent efforts at the Assembly to get him to affirm specifically belief in the Virgin

Birth failed—along with Stated Clerk Dr. Eugene Carson Blake's negative opinion as to the propriety of asking him to speak since he was "not on trial" and any statement would reflect on the Seminary board of trustees which had unanimously endorsed his appointment.

The chairman of the Standing Committee on Theological Education, Dr. W. Paul Ludwig, simply insisted that Dr. Gill "had not abrogated his ordination vows," and that he "stands in the center of Reformed theology." What all of this indicates as to the way in which words are being used, or rather abused; and as to the brazen manner in which the plain teaching of the Bible as to the Virgin Birth of our Savior is being denied, must be tragically evident.

stone was that in 1923 the "Auburn Affirmation" was prepared and signed. It was first published in January, 1924. This document is today the virtual doctrinal position of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA. It was in accord with the Auburn Affirmation's position, that Dr. Gill was confirmed, at the latest General Assembly, as the new President of San Anselmo (San Francisco Theological Seminary). Dr. Gill would consign the doctrinal statement of the Westminster Confession to the area of "liturgical obedience"—which seems to mean "recite the creed with tongue in cheek."

EDWARDS E. ELLIOTT

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## The Magazine Viewer

"Are Invitations Biblical?" Burton Harding in *His*, June 1959.

We are either trusting God to open hearts and draw men and women to the preaching of the cross, or we are resting in the false hope that methodical procedures, so common in public invitations, will win the day and persuade men to turn to God."

*Bible Society Record*, June 1959.

The leading editorial is a devotional on Isaiah 60:19, "The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light and thy God thy glory." The editor comments, "When the prophet spoke to Israel he was addressing a people who had suffered exile . . ." This dates that section of Isaiah as post-exilic. The reasons for dividing Isaiah into First, Second (and Third) Isaiahs are evaluated by the writings of Dr. E. J. Young and Dr. Oswald T. Allis. We believe in the unity of Isaiah, and that it was written before the exile.

"The Presbyterians" by Hartzell Spence, *Look*, June 9, 1959.

This flattering article gives a great amount of popular Presbyterian history. In the third paragraph, Dr. Glenn W. Moore, secretary of the General Council of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA is quoted as saying, "When our church is truly

convinced of something, it acts. The implications of our message must be faced in the practical life of persons and communities." (The history of Dr. Moore's own activities as an opponent of the gospel of Christ, first in the Los Angeles area, and then on the national scene, exhibits at least that when he is convinced of something, he acts. He helped exile Paul Prichard to the hinterland, for opposing Moore's high-handed halting of the UCLA ministry of Milo Jamison.)

It is significant that Moore does not say, "When our church is convinced that something *is* Biblical, it acts." The article then gives examples of how the church should speak in local and political matters, and even how two Presbyterians in New York can speak for all, on the Little Rock controversy.

In listing the Presbyterian Milestones, the date 1923 is given as very important—"Reorganization of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. establishes a General Council and four consolidated boards." This was indeed a fateful date, for these boards before long were putting loyalty to themselves on a par with the attendance at the Lord's Table. (See "Studies in the Constitution," 1934 Minutes of General Assembly.)

But another reason, not given, for the importance of 1923 as a mile-

## A Fallible Bible?

"The Bible *Is* Brass Tacks" by Theodore A. Gill, in *The Pulpit*, December 1958.

In an article prepared for Bible Sunday last fall Dr. Gill, who edits this journal of contemporary preaching, has some very worthwhile things to say about the Bible as a book "about what matters most . . . for us, right where we are . . . nothing else in the whole earth is quite so to the point."

But one paragraph is quite revealing as to how he evaluates some of the "ups and downs in the biblical teachings," as he expressed it. "Some of its sentiments and statements are as inadequate and fallible as were the authors and the characters in the Bible," he wrote. "We must always read the Bible with discrimination, not limiting ourselves by the writers' limitations, but looking always in the Bible for that Word of God and will of God which is Jesus Christ. Do not relegate the Bible to quiet hours and hobby time because its perfections make it somehow unreal. Work it into your workaday world because it is real enough to have imperfections — and still to bear the Word of God."

With such a view of the Bible as imperfect and fallible, a book which is not but simply *contains* the Word of God for us to look for, it is not so surprising to find Dr. Gill questioning the Virgin Birth of Jesus, which latter view led to a brief controversy over his confirmation as new President of San Anselmo Theological Seminary, of the United Presbyterian USA church. R. E. N.

## For the Laymen

If this issue may be said to have something of a theme it could be expressed in the words above. There are several articles that should be of particular interest to our laymen, and in this case we are thinking primarily, although not exclusively, of men. Readers will note that some of these articles were prepared in connection with a Laymen's Leadership Conference June 26-28 at the Boardwalk Chapel of the Presbytery of New Jersey.

We hope that such a conference may be productive of untold good in the life of the church. It is announced as the "first," and we anticipate that those who attend as well as the sponsors will be agreed that there must be a second, and a third. In fact, we should be pleased to see the idea catch on throughout the church and to be able to report similar conferences in the future. Here is a source of strength which we have only begun to recognize, or if we do recognize it, we have not yet seen anything like the impetus that would result if the Orthodox Presbyterian Church should really become a church of prepared and enthusiastic "laymen on fire."

Certainly it is often the case that we need better-trained men, men more aware of their high calling, men who take the lead, beginning in their own homes and in their churches, and then reaching out in more effective witness to their God and Savior in the shop, the office, the neighborhood.

### Danger of Clericalism

Let us note that we are using the term *laymen* in the popular sense of non-clergymen. In this sense we include ordained officers as well as trustees or teachers or committeemen who may not be ordained, and men who hold no office whatsoever—everybody but the preacher, in other words. Now *clericalism* — the tendency of the clergy to dominate in one way or another — is an ancient cause of much weakness in the church, but it is no less a modern danger, even among us. Partly this is due to the willingness of all too many to "let the preacher do it; after all that's what he gets paid for." But all too frequently the preacher himself aids and abets this proneness to clericalism. Sometimes he is unwilling to take the time necessary to train other men for

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## The Presbyterian GUARDIAN

1505 Race Street, Philadelphia 2, Pa.

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tasks they could do well. At other times he assumes that no one else can possibly do a job as well and as quickly as he can. He may even have a little fear that people will discover that he is not indispensable to the progress of every detail of the kingdom-work!

One danger to which Orthodox Presbyterian pastors are peculiarly liable stems from the very fact of the superior training that most of them have had. In stressing correct doctrine and the importance of the truth so much — and it can hardly be stressed too much — they perhaps unintentionally leave the false impression that without seminary training you had better be wary of how and where you express yourself in witnessing to or teaching others! Actually we may have made some earnest and godly men too hesitant about "holding forth the word of life." Perhaps we show too much impatience when mistakes are made, or expecting too much too soon we end by getting too little too late.

### Danger of Expecting Perfection

Do we have fathers reluctant to pray before their own children lest they stumble in speech? Do we have Bible classes where some men keep still rather than come up with an idea that may be wrong? Are there men who hesitate to teach until they learn to express everything in precise theological terms? Have we not prayer meetings were too few men pray for fear of not putting their petitions into polished phrases? Are there not too many men silent in their places of employment because they wonder

whether they can give "an answer to every man that asketh"?

These things, if so, ought not to be. They need not be. Let those who are able not shirk the responsibility of training others. Maybe we need to *encourage* them more: give them things to do and help them with patience and understanding to do them. Better a halting prayer than no prayer at all. Better a grammatical mistake than speechlessness in the face of an opportunity to say a word for Jesus. Better an occasional error (if this be not heresy) which can most likely be corrected, than no teaching, no speaking, no witnessing at all. It's one thing not to want to lead anyone astray. But it is tragic if such a fear results in never trying to lead anyone into the truth.

### Encouragement to Action

So speak up, men. Ask your pastor for tasks to do. Seek his help and counsel. Get a group together and have some training classes. Discuss some of the articles herein if you are not one who is attending the Boardwalk Conference. Get the churches in your area or presbytery to have a similar conference this fall. Ask your pastor if you may borrow the book recently sent him, entitled *Organized for Action*. Read the Book of Acts again this summer and renew your vision of what the early church was doing, not just the apostles, but elders and deacons, and others without office. They had help, yes. Some had training. But at the same time they started in to fulfill their calling as disciples. They went everywhere preaching the gospel. They were on the move. They shook an empire. People knew when they were around.

All this is a part of what the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is all about. It's involved in being Reformed. The church does not belong to the clergy or to any hierarchy. None of us can pay anyone else to do his own particular task. The humblest believer among us is called to be a witness. Together we are the saints of the Lord and the servants of the Most High God. Our generation is waiting for a church, small and weak as it may be, to measure up more fully to its calling. The time is now. The place to begin is with you, and me.

R. E. N.

Once we are reconciled to God by faith in Jesus Christ, we enter into fellowship with God's people. There are common interests, ideals, hopes, aims, experiences; all of which grow out of our common relationship to Christ. This is the Communion of Saints. It is one of the articles of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in the communion of saints."

*The communion of saints is based upon our union with Christ.* This is clearly taught in the 12th chapter of I Corinthians. Note particularly these words: "For as the body is one, and hath many members; and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ" (that is, — so also is the Christian Society or the Church). "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (v. 27).

In the Bible Christ is said to be the Head of the Church, which is His body. The members of the Church are the members of Christ's body. They are united together because they are related to the one Head, Christ. He controls the body; directs it; nourishes and protects it.

The unity of the Church may also be compared to a tree. There is the one trunk; there are the many branches. And there is the one life-giving fluid flowing from the trunk into all the branches. The trunk gives unity and support and life to the whole tree. So also are we related to Christ. Jesus said: "I am the vine; ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing" (Jn. 15: 5).

Our union with Christ is a spiritual union. It is the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us, the Holy Spirit, that unites us to Christ and to one another. It is also a vital union. The apostle says: "Christ liveth in me." It is an indissoluble union. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" And, it is a mystical union. It can not be fully understood or explained. It can only be experienced.

The communion of saints is based upon our union with Christ. Why does the tie that binds us together often seem so weak? Why do church-people often feel like so many stones in a pile without any living relationship between them? Why do we feel like so many individuals with little in common in a spiritual way, when

## The Communion of Saints

By EDWARD WYBENGA

we should have so much in common? One cause for this may lie in the fact that many who are on the roll of the Church are not even regenerated or born again. They are not really united to Christ; how then can they be united to one another? They are like dead branches, still hanging on the tree, but bearing no fruit, and waiting only to be cut off. Or, it may be that some do not feel the close tie that binds them together as members of the Church because the life of Christ does not flow freely and richly through them. There are too many obstructions of worldly cares and earthly interests. They are like a stream clogged with weeds and rubbish—the water can not flow along freely. Nor do they replenish their supply frequently and generously from the spiritual reservoir which is Christ.

If the communion of saints is to be a rich and vital and satisfying experience, then there must be a close and living contact between Christ and His people: "for without Me ye can do nothing." The communion of saints is indeed based upon our union with Christ.

*The communion of saints comes to expression in our fellowship with one another.*

The communion between the members and Christ, and between the members themselves is invisible because it is a spiritual union; but it does come to visible expression in the fellowship of believers. There is fellowship in faith and doctrine. Concerning the early Christians we read: "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). These Christians believed the same things; they kept the Lord's Sup-

*"There is variety and diversity but always an underlying unity among the people of God. That makes for the enrichment of the life of the Church." So states the author of this meditation which was given at a recent meeting of Presbytery. Mr. Wybenga is pastor of Westminster Church, Bend, Oregon.*

per together; they went to church together; they prayed together. This was the communion of saints.

There is also fellowship among believers in each other's spiritual gifts and graces. We read: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (I Cor. 12:4, 13). "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13). Believers employ their spiritual gifts and talents for the common spiritual good.

There is also fellowship among believers in mutual respect and subordination. We read: "Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10). The communion of saints comes to expression in the love and respect that members of the Church show toward one another.

And, there is fellowship in the experience of suffering and joy, as the case may be. We read: "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it" (I Cor. 12:26). This is true in the human body. It is also true in the body of Christ, the Church.

### Privilege and Duty

The communion of saints is a great privilege. It also involves important duties. We are saved to serve; blessed to be a blessing. Each member of the human body, no matter how small or seemingly useless, has its special work to perform, and thus to contribute its share to the beauty and health of the body. So it is also in the Church. All members are needed; all are useful. Some talk too much; some talk too little; but we need them all. All do

not have the same talents or gifts, but what each has is needful in order to complete the Church. And the measure of responsibility corresponds to the quality and the quantity of the gifts possessed.

We have been speaking about the communion of saints. *Who are these saints?* Roman Catholics apply the term only to famed persons in heaven whom church authorities on earth have canonized. They are supposed to stand far above ordinary believers. They are said to excel in holiness and blessedness. Mormons and other sects reserve the term "saints" only for themselves. The former call themselves: "The Latter Day Saints." That leaves the rest of us out.

But the Bible teaches that all believers are saints whether they are still on earth or have already gone to heaven. On the other hand, all unbelievers are excluded from this group. Saints are those who have been redeemed in Christ, separated from the world, and dedicated to the service of God. They are not yet perfect in themselves, but they are perfect as represented in Christ.

The communion of saints: that means harmony and unity among believers but it does not mean a dead uniformity. There is variety and diversity but always an underlying unity among the people of God. That makes for the enrichment of the life of the Church. There can be true harmony in the music of an orchestra, though the instruments are varied; or in a choir, though the voices are different.

The communion of saints: that includes the saints on earth and the saints in heaven. Yes, we can have communion with the saints in heaven—not directly, of course, as on earth; but we can follow their faith and patience; we can hold them in loving remembrance; we can now experience a joyful anticipation of perfect communion with them hereafter.

The communion of saints is based upon our union with Christ; and comes to expression in the fellowship of believers. If you are conscious of that union with Christ; if you feel the tie that binds you to those of like faith; if you love to be in the company of God's people—then you have the evidence that you are a child of God, an heir of eternal life.

And so, let us strive for the fulfillment of Christ's prayer when He said: "That they all may be one!"

# Where Are We Going ?

## PART III

By EDWARD J. YOUNG

In previous articles we pointed out that the modernism which was so powerful a factor in the ecclesiastical situation of Dr. Machen's day has been on the wane. At least, it does not have the same prominence that was once the case. In its place there has been another emphasis, namely that of new modernism or neo-orthodoxy. It is this latter phenomenon with which we must contend today.

One often hears it said that the antagonisms between modernism and Fundamentalism which characterized the second and third decades of this century have died down and that there is now a new alignment of forces. The modernists can learn from the fundamentalists, it has been said, and the fundamentalists from the modernists. The fundamentalists can learn to be kinder and more gentlemanly, and the modernists can learn that doctrine is rather important after all. Thus, so the argument sometimes runs, each has something to teach the other.

### The New Evangelicalism

It is in this atmosphere of apparent quiet after the battle of the twenties and the thirties that a new phenomenon has appeared among those who believe the Bible to be the infallible word of God. This new phenomenon goes under the term "The New Evangelicalism." How shall we describe this New Evangelicalism? To describe it is difficult, for to the best of our knowledge it has no formal organization. It seems rather to consist in the manifestation of certain attitudes.

We may note first of all that its adherents, those who wish to describe themselves by this term, want to believe in the fundamental doctrines of the historic Christian faith including the doctrine of the infallibility of Holy Scripture. For this we can do nothing but give profound thanks to God. Wherever the truth is proclaimed, we may indeed rejoice, and even when it is weakly proclaimed, we may be grateful to God. That the New Evangelicalism wishes to be truly evangelical is indeed cause for thanks-

giving. As far as we can determine, its leaders or spokesmen do not wish to be known as adherents of neo-orthodoxy, but of the historic doctrines of Christianity, nor can the New Evangelicalism be called modernism.

Should this movement, if such it may be labelled, merit then our wholehearted support? It is when we come to the question of attitudes, that this writer believes the New Evangelicalism to be weak. For one thing its leaders are outspoken opponents of the "come-outer" groups. The "come-outers" are those who have come out of the ecclesiastical tyranny, the corroding middle-of-the-roadism, the soul-destroying blight of modernism and the bondage of church politics which have brought some of the large denominations to the point where it is questionable whether they can any longer truly be called churches of Christ. Those who left the organization known now as the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. did so, not because they were separatists at heart but because they deeply believed in the unity of the true church and were concerned for the purity of its doctrine.

### Attitude Toward the Church

With this attitude toward the church the New Evangelicalism has little or no sympathy. Indeed, if we understand it aright, it seems little concerned as to how a man obeys his ordination vows. A man's ecclesiastical connections apparently are his own affair. If he is faithful to his ordination vows, well and good; if he is not faithful; apparently it is well and good also. We say this, because we have seen leaders of the New Evangelicalism who have no hesitation in working with men who stay in the United Presbyterian Church and do nothing about the appalling conditions in that body.

Perhaps it is not incorrect to say that the New Evangelicalism would like to build up the church without any reference to the church. It stresses evangelism, and does not always show itself discriminate with respect to those whom it invites to support it.

It stresses scholarship and education. In fact, it stresses just about everything except the all-important doctrine of the church, and the need for vigorous contending for the Faith. If the New Evangelicalism is correct, the labors and sufferings of Dr. Machen, as he sought to be faithful to his ordination vows, were wasted. Is then the New Evangelicalism the answer to the present day situation? For our part we say no, and we say no emphatically. Here is a temporary phenomenon, and the sooner it passes, the better for the church.

### Fundamentalism

If the New Evangelicalism does not believe in contending for the Faith in a genuinely Biblical way, the phenomenon known as Fundamentalism does so believe. What is Fundamentalism? The word itself is a good word, for it simply stresses fundamental truths of the Christian religion. A fundamentalist, then, is a man who believes in the fundamentals of the Christian religion. In that sense, may we all be fundamentalists.

Interesting has been the history of the word. It was applied to those who vigorously contended against the early soul-destroying modernism. But there came a time when the designation lost much of its significance. There were some, known as fundamentalists, who were really anti-intellectual in character. They believed in prayer and in Bible conferences, but they did not take doctrine seriously. They emphasized certain phases of the Christian life, but not the teaching of the Scriptures as a whole. And many of them became enamored of a type of dispensationalism which in reality denied the underlying unity of the plan of salvation or covenant of grace taught in the Bible.

Today men who call themselves fundamentalists are coming more and more to recognize the importance and significance of scholarship and of doctrine, and that is a good sign. There is much in Fundamentalism that is admirable, and if we were compelled to choose between Fundamentalism and New Evangelicalism, we should choose Fundamentalism without any hesitation. Fundamentalism is concerned about the defense of the Faith, and such a concern is truly Biblical.

There is one criticism often levelled against Fundamentalism about which

a word should be said. The charge has often been made that the older Fundamentalism was not courteous nor polite; its advocates were not always gentlemen. The New Evangelicalism seeks to overcome this; it is sure that it is very polite. It has learned, or—as its spokesmen say—we have learned that a different attitude must be adopted. Now, for our part, this criticism does not impress us very much. No doubt there were some fundamentalists who did not always act as they should. They were human beings, and they sinned, just as all human beings do. Perhaps at times they said things that were out of place; perhaps at times they uttered injudicious words, but at least they uttered those words. They were not like those who are so cautious that they never get around to defending the Faith.

### Outspoken Defense

Fundamentalism, in our opinion, need not hang its head in shame over its warfare. When others were keeping still, it spoke out in defense of the Gospel. It made mistakes, but not nearly so great a mistake as did those cautious middle-of-the-roaders who thought that the right time to speak out had not come. Fundamentalism made mistakes, but so did the modernists. And, if we are going to talk about politeness and courtesy, it has been this writer's experience that those who acted least like gentlemen were the modernists and middle-of-the-roaders who would not stand up for the Lord. It is far better to speak out boldly for Christ than it is to keep quiet.

Of course, we should seek in all our efforts to be gentlemanly and courteous. But the so-called rudeness of Fundamentalism has been greatly exaggerated. Adherents of the New Evangelicalism who have not been through the modernist-fundamentalist conflict are in no position to castigate the older Fundamentalism. Would that they could exhibit one-tenth of the zeal for truth that characterized some of those fundamentalists.

Where then shall we who love the Word of God stand? Shall we follow the New Evangelicalism or shall we simply be fundamentalists? As we said before, if that choice were imperative, we, for our part, would unhesitatingly choose to go with Fundamentalism. But is that choice impera-

tive? Is there not a better way? There is indeed, and it is that way of which we wish to speak in our concluding article. That is the way of whole-souled devotion to the entire counsel of God, laid down in His infallible Word.

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*In this brief series of articles Dr. Young, Professor of Old Testament at Westminster Seminary, is giving a popular but searching analysis of trends in the church. Some copies of previous issues in which his earlier articles appeared are still available if any of our readers wish to make use of them or have them sent to friends.*

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### Southland Bible Conference

**A**nother Bible conference just announced is the first annual Young People's Bible Conference under the sponsorship of the Presbytery of the South of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Planned for boys and girls entering the 7th grade and up this fall, the conference is to run from August 17 through 22 for a total fee of \$18.

The site is at Camp Rotary on the western shore of Lake Julian in the beautiful orange grove country of central Florida, about 12 miles east of Lakeland and a short distance northwest of Auburndale. The grounds include a dining hall, chapel, 12 cabins accommodating ten each, play fields and a dock with frontage on the lake for supervised waterfront activities.

Courses will be taught by the Rev. John Clelland of Valdosta, Ga., on "What Presbyterians Are and Are Not," and by the Rev. Henry Tavares of Ft. Lauderdale on "The ABC's of Salvation." These classes will be given in two sections, divided according to age. The third morning hour will be a combined assembly, and it is hoped that Mrs. John Johnston, recently returned from Formosa, will be able to be present to give a missions course.

The evening speaker is announced as the Rev. Thompson Casey, Jr., of High Springs, Florida. Business manager is the Rev. Arthur Froehlich, of Maitland. The Rev. Robert Lucas, Christian School teacher, will be the head counsellor for boys, and Mrs. John Clelland will act as head counsellor for girls. The Rev. Glenn Coie, of Hialeah, will find himself in a familiar role as Conference Director.

*The Presbyterian Guardian*

The past fiscal year saw the proclamation of the gospel through home missionaries of the denomination in some 21 fields in a dozen states. In three of these places congregations were organized during the year. Four became self-supporting either during or by the end of the fiscal year: Paradise Hills, San Diego; Immanuel, Bellmawr; Mediator, Philadelphia; and Community, Center Square. Grace Church, Fair Lawn has indicated its intention to achieve self-support during the current year, which will be nearly two years ahead of the required schedule.

### Home Missions

A new responsibility undertaken during the year was in Oklahoma City where partial support is being given to Knox Church whose charter members, together with pastor William Bomer, were formerly members of the United Presbyterian Church. Knox is one of four congregations added to our rolls during the year instituted by persons who had been affiliated with the UP denomination but who withdrew in particular protest against the union of a little more than a year ago with USA Presbyterians. The other three are Cranston, R. I., Lisbon, N. Y., and Nashua, Pa.

From time to time in these pages reports of progress in home mission fields have been given, and will continue to be related, so that we need not give the detailed report of each such work here. It may be noted that the average weekly gain in attendance for all fields combined, for the first quarter of 1959 as over the same period in 1958 was 27% for the morning service, 12% for the evening, and 25% for Sunday school.

The Committee reported that of some \$43,000 received as loans for the Church Extension Fund during the year, more than \$40,000 had been lent to ten congregations.

### Finances

Apart from the Thank Offering, contributions to the general fund from churches and individuals showed an increase of nearly \$5,000 over the previous year, but the proportion of the Thank Offering for Home Missions was sharply reduced in view of the pressing and greater need this past year for Foreign Missions. The general fund budget for the current year is \$81,000, some \$10,000 less than

# General Assembly Report

*Continued from Last Issue*

By **ROBERT E. NICHOLAS**

last year's expenditures. "We believe that our church is not in a position to attempt any new work that will necessitate the expenditure of funds until our present commitments are being met by monthly contributions," the report stated, "and that for the present we should concentrate our expansion efforts in endeavors which can be carried on by local congregations without additional expense" to the denominational Committee. The report also noted that "the Committee is actively engaged in a study of ways to extend our testimony without cost to the Committee in areas where our churches now exist, so as to release funds for outreach in new territory."

Following the reading of the report by Mr. Eckardt, the general secretary, Mr. Galbraith, pointed out that, as sometimes happens, there were certain unforeseen expenses during the past year as, for example, the urgency of giving some help to the new congregation in Oklahoma City; also the introduction of the Pension Plan and the desire to include the missionaries therein. As to the hope of expansion, he said that there are more opportunities than we can take care of, outside of as well as within the bounds of existing presbyteries. The Committee, he said, wants the help and counsel of the presbyteries, and he suggested that perhaps the time has come when some men more distant from headquarters might well be elected to the Committee. He also mentioned that there are signs that a few more people are becoming aware of the inroads of unbelief in the major Presbyterian denomination in this country, and some are looking to the OPC for leadership. Our responsibility is great and we stand in the need of much prayer, he concluded.

Questions soon led to a rather lengthy discussion of missions policies and a number of motions and substitutes were made and in due course defeated. We shall attempt to give only some highlights of the debate, as it may be of interest to many readers who share the concern of all the commissioners, and the Commit-

tee, for the improvement and progress of our efforts to reach our nation more effectively with the gospel.

### Policies and Methods

Mr. Cummings started the discussion by raising the question as to geographical distance where a new work is to be started. Is the "strawberry plant method" to be followed, or should we enter a new area altogether, like Wyandotte for instance, where a nucleus exists and help is needed? Does not our starting new works five miles from an existing one result in withholding the Reformed Faith from some other area with no such witness at all?

Mr. Edwards expressed fear lest we discourage the efforts of local congregations to evangelize, as Bellmawr did in seeing a need in Stratford and as Stratford is now seeking to do in Oak Lawn.

Mr. Galbraith informed the Assembly that the Committee now has a subcommittee studying this very problem and seeking a plan that may encourage the starting of new works within presbyteries and near existing churches which they will support without calling on the denominational committee.

A little later Mr. Hills interjected the thought in relation to the big problem of indebtedness that we are depending too much on schemes and methods of our own devising, instead of returning to the book of Acts and asking what the early disciples did. "You can't ask for programs and policies to be laid out and then tell God to bless them: you must wait upon God first in prayer . . . God wants it done in a certain way, set forth simply and clearly in Acts, though not in detailed structure. But first we must wait upon Him," he urged. "Until we do this we'll have the problem of needing funds and not knowing where to find them. We're drifting and we must stop the drift."

Expressing agreement with much of Mr. Hills' sentiment, Mr. Kellogg insisted that in such a beginning as

in Crescent Park (Bellmawr) some years ago there was much prayer and a great deal of vision; and that to follow the Bible we must also have committee meetings and work things out very carefully and faithfully. The one is not in conflict with the other.

Mr. Cummings introduced a motion to the effect that the Home Missions Committee normally pursue the policy of giving metropolitan areas without a Reformed witness preference in starting new works. Mr. Moore, in giving vigorous support to the motion, saw in it a step in the direction of attempting a new and different way of doing things and of showing that "the apostolic method will work in America." Dr. Stonehouse, on the other hand, was concerned that the passing of such a motion might jeopardize the vision of such churches as Bellmawr and Stratford in striving to reach out. He sensed some danger in making new work in a metropolitan area the norm, over against a vision for expansion in local areas.

Mr. Atwell, however, favoring the motion, said that while we have the apostolic doctrine we are greatly in need of that type of fellowship which he felt could be obtained if we had larger central churches. "Outlying Sunday Schools and Bible classes, yes, but let them come together as one larger congregation for worship and fellowship on the Lord's Day," he said.

Mr. Marston proposed a substitute at this point which would encourage the Home Missions Committee to begin at least one new mission work in an entirely new area every other year. This motion, he thought, would allow for the validity of both points of view as to the original motion but give a push toward starting some brand new ventures. It failed to be substituted, however, and eventually the original motion was likewise defeated.

### **Galbraith Statement**

Mr. Galbraith, obtaining the floor shortly before the supper hour, sought to clarify a few matters. The Committee, he said, does not simply wait for things to come to it. Mr. Oliver, as associate secretary, has traveled a good bit during the past year as has the general secretary. "Nor does the Committee have an ossified policy," he insisted. It is flexible. No overall

policy can solve all the problems, and the Committee must adapt itself to situations that exist.

As to finances, for years we have been doing things beyond our current month-by-month income, he stated, and depending upon the Thank Offering to make it up. "It has been my great desire," he said, "to meet current expenses from current income, that we might have the Thank Offering for extras, for expansion." He went on to point out that since we have not yet caught up with these obligations, the Committee has held back except as presbyteries have urgently pleaded that we help. It would be of tremendous aid if work started by presbyteries could be carried on by them. Mr. Galbraith stated that the crux of the whole matter is the problem of getting the two groups—presbyteries and the denominational committee—to collaborate in working out this mutual missionary responsibility.

On Friday morning a motion was presented that presbyteries be requested to consult with the Committee on Home Missions before entering upon new work which requires the expenditure of additional funds. A number of commissioners spoke briefly to the effect that this would tend to force sessions or presbyteries to try to know all the answers before starting anything and would be contrary to their primary obligation to spread the gospel in every possible way and place without first thinking of any possible supervision from the denominational committee. This motion too failed to pass, as did a substitute offered for it, that the Committee and the presbyteries be requested to seek to cooperate more fully in the work of home missions.

After a little more discussion, elections to the Committee took place as reported in our previous issue, and Mr. Atwell was asked to lead the Assembly in prayer in behalf of our home mission and church extension endeavors.

### **Foreign Missions**

The report of the Committee on Foreign Missions as to our twelve missionary families laboring in four fields, one in Africa and the others in the Orient, was both informative and cause for much thanksgiving to God. Since we hope to continue to make an effort to keep our readers abreast

of the progress of the gospel through these missionaries, rather than reproducing the entire report here we shall make use of portions of it as background for stories on these various fields from time to time.

In the section on finances the report called attention to the overshadowing difficulty in meeting expenses from month to month, which difficulty became especially acute in the last months of the fiscal year. It appeared that it would become necessary to withhold portions of the salaries of the missionaries and of the men in the Committee's office, the report stated.

The information was given on the floor of the Assembly that 85% of salaries had been paid in April, 80% in May, but that it appeared that 100% could be paid in June.

While the Committee noted with gratitude substantial increases in contributions totalling some \$17,000, and an increased proportion this past year allotted from the Thank Offering, it pointed out that unexpected expenses offset these gains and that there are no reserves to carry through the summer months. Among the unexpected items were pension premiums, advance payment of furlough travel to save money in the long run, extra medical expenses, a car essential for furlough travel, and certain field supplements.

This section concludes: "Though the road before us and our missionaries is going to be hard we have no reason for despair. God has promised to provide for His church, and He has given our people abundant resources. The necessary increase is almost negligible in terms of the money we spend on ourselves each week. We have rejoiced too in the evident fruit from the leadership in missionary interest and giving which has been provided by a number of our pastors."

The budget proposed for the current fiscal year is \$100,000, about \$9,000 less than the expenditures for last year.

### **Questions**

It was to be expected that a number of questions would be asked in view of the curtailment of salaries and the prospect that the financial picture might worsen before it became better. One question was as to why money cannot be borrowed (from other funds) this year as in

past years to tide the Committee over the low spot. Another was whether this "penalizing the missionaries was intended to put pressure on the churches to give more, and more regularly." The further query came as to whether there was actually a deficit since the Committee operates on a fiscal year and expects to make it up eventually. There were also some expressions of bewilderment as to why the apparently sudden crisis and as to whether there had been a deliberate change from one policy to another without enough information given to the church about it.

In attempting to answer and clarify the picture, Mr. Dunn, chairman of the Committee, stated that there had been no real change, but that the Committee realized that even with the Thank Offering there appeared the likelihood of a shortage of some \$5,000 by late fall, and that this deficit would increase unless regular monthly giving can be brought to a higher level. It is true, he said, that there is in the action of withholding a portion of salaries, temporarily it is hoped, some pressure upon the churches to strive for a current basis for the paying of salaries. Mr. Galbraith said that the announced aim had been and was to plead for the goal of having receipts sufficient month by month to pay current salaries, so that eventually the Thank Offering may be used for special needs, equipment, and so on.

"Our real problem," said Mr. Galbraith, "seems to be that of getting the information across to our people in the pew. We have not sought to withhold anything, but we need your help in making this point clear, that the long-range solution is increased

regular giving month after month."

As the discussion was being concluded Saturday morning Mr. Clelland took the floor to seek, as he put it, "to pour a little oil on" after the extended discussions as to the work of the missions committees which might have had an "abrasive" effect. "You know how you would feel as pastors if a congregational meeting took a similar line. Now our critical faculties are highly developed — and I have joined in some of that questioning and criticism — yet I want to say that I think this discussion and debate ought not to be construed as an attack either on the general secretary or the two committees." The spontaneous applause which followed his statement no doubt indicated the general agreement with the sentiments expressed.

#### Comments on Procedure

Your reporter would like to add a few observations in retrospect. (The report concerning Peniel and the discussion thereon must await a later time.) First, a few remarks as to Assembly procedure may be warranted. The report of the delegate to the 1958 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church included this statement: "The thoroughness with which the Synod was organized was impressive. Committees set up to digest reports and present advice to the Synod enabled the delegates to accomplish a great deal in a comparatively short time. This custom commended itself to your delegate as one that might well be considered by our General Assembly."

At least one step in the right direction was taken this year when the Assembly, in accord with the proposed docket, refused to schedule regular

Assembly business during the first two evenings. This did enable temporary committees to function with less hardship upon their members and with more time for consideration of matters assigned to them by the Assembly. It may be that other committees whose members often find it difficult to get together might arrange to meet in connection with future Assemblies if they have some assurance that such time may be available, since members could presumably be present then at some saving of time and expense.

Another matter which we broach, with a bit of trepidation, is whether it is necessary to have as much as five or six hours of time taken up simply with the reading of printed or mimeographed reports which usually are, or could be, in the hands of commissioners prior to the Assembly. Reading of excerpts or calling attention to significant matters, yes, but one wonders whether all this time spent in reading and listening (if one can hear) to these reports is the best use of limited time. We doubt that an Orthodox Presbyterian Assembly is in danger of rushing over reports too quickly even if they are not read in full on the floor, and at the very least, reading time could be halved if the commissioners read silently to themselves under the Moderator's watchful eye!

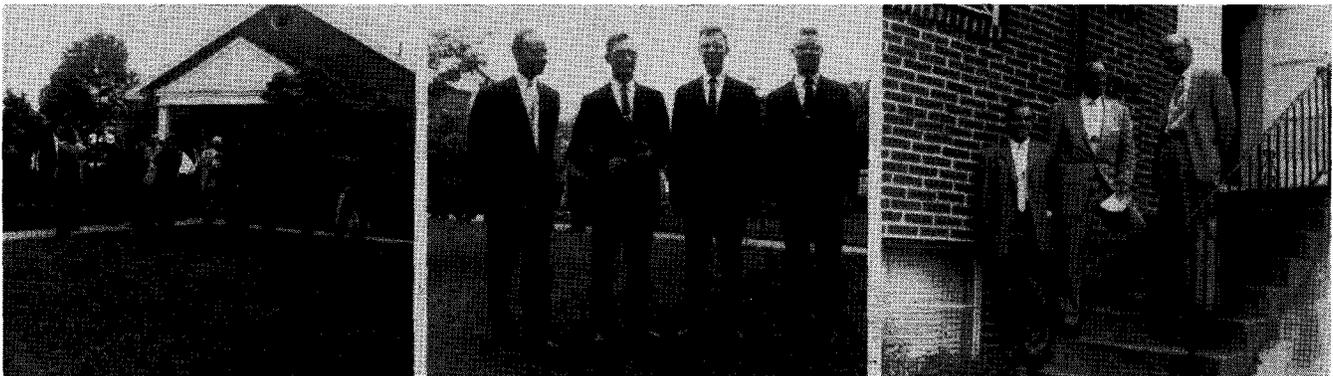
#### Midnight Sessions

The other comment we presume to make under this heading has to do with the bad practice, which ought to be broken before it is longer perpetuated, of working far into the night in order to reach adjournment "without wasting another day," it is sometimes expressed. The writer is

Commissioners visit outside of Calvary Church, Glenside, during an Assembly recess.

H. Oliver, Assistant Clerk, Moderator Dunn, former Moderator Clowney, and L. Oliver, Clerk of Assembly.

Johnston, home from Taiwan, and McIlwaine, now en route to Japan, chat with missions secretary Galbraith.



completely in accord with the protest against this procedure which was submitted toward the close of the recent Assembly, as reported in our previous number. Personal experience and some slight effort to sample the opinions of others confirm the impression of several years that after these post-midnight final sessions most of the thoroughly fatigued commissioners "waste" a couple of days recuperating, and that it would be preferable to take an extra day or half-day and thus conclude the business of the Assembly decently and in order.

It would be ridiculous, if it were not so serious, that some eleven or twelve hours after the start of sessions on the final day, when weariness was all too evident both in bodies and in minds, the Assembly was actually trying to act on a number of motions which sought to make definitive statements as to what was or was not in accord with our Standards. It is difficult to suppose that decisions made under such circumstances are likely to represent the wisest judgment of men, no matter how responsibly they are determined to act.

In the hours after 10 p.m. on the final night, moreover, such important items as a church paper, elections of men to two important special committees, consideration of the future of the committee on revisions to the Form of Government, the report of the Committee to Examine Minutes of the Presbyteries, and the setting of the Assembly budget for the ensuing year, were given at best cursory treatment by sleepy commissioners whose uppermost thought — we think this is a fair appraisal — was to get it over with and to head for home.

**Discussion on Missions**

That there was more extended discussion than usual as to the church's missions policies and finances must be obvious from our report. In general we would say that this concern is a healthy sign; certainly it is far better than complacency. There is reason for gratitude that the church at large feels a keen and personal interest in the problems and the progress of our common desire to fulfill our Lord's commission. Some of our evident frustration comes from a sense of the overwhelming magnitude of the task along with a realization of our own weaknesses and the inadequacy of even our best efforts. So we wonder

wherein we may be making mistakes and whether this change or that method may not make for greater effectiveness. And, we repeat, this healthy concern may indeed send us all back to our tasks with new determination.

While we continue to strive for improvement in the formulation and the carrying out of our mission programs — even while we continue to agree to disagree on various policies — it is gratifying that there is no inclination to relax our efforts in the meantime. There is also proper concern for more prayer, and for unceasing searching of the Scriptures and application thereof to our planning and action. This too is cause for thanksgiving.

It would seem that all along the line there is need for "more effective communication" — to use a current phrase. One result of the consideration given to these problems at the Assembly most certainly will be a greater awareness on the part of members of the committees as to the thinking of the church at large. Another may well be in renewed efforts toward closer cooperation between the Home Missions Committee and the Presbyteries. Finally, perhaps all of us may give greater attention to getting our information across, to bending every effort to make sure that we are understood. We must try to think and to express ourselves more in terms of the grass roots: to bridge any gap between the man in the pew and the committee office; to help the child

in the Sunday School see the connection between his missions offering and the child in Eritrea, let us say, who is studying the same catechism in another language; to increase the feeling of oneness between the missionary and the group gathered for midweek prayer.

**To the Work**

Maybe we could all use our imaginations more and think more confidently: rejoice in all that God has done and is doing: recapture more of the biblical imperative and enthusiasm for missions in the life of the church. Suppose we concentrate for awhile a little less on money as such and a little more on motives for missions. Shall we say a little less about our finances and much more about faith in the God of heaven who supplies all things? Could we minimize our manifold problems and magnify the opportunities which our sovereign God is giving us? We have a tremendous task; it's too big for any of us. But we have a mighty and a gracious God.

We would not want to be anywhere else than where we are, would we? Do we not thank God daily for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and for the privilege, by His grace, of being even a small part of it? "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58).

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