

The Presbyterian
GUARDIAN

*C*ontents

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Births of John and Jesus

By EDWARD WYBENGA

*The Birth of John and the
Song of Zacharias
Luke 1:57-80*

The time had now arrived for the fulfillment of the promise made to Zacharias by the angel that a son would be born to him and Elisabeth. Upon the birth of John great joy was manifested everywhere. The parents, the neighbors, the relatives — all assembled to celebrate the great event. Usually the birth of a child in any family occasions considerable joy, but much more so in the case of John, for he was a miracle-child; and he was to be an extraordinary person with an extraordinary mission. He was to be a sort of "rough and ready" person like Elijah of old, dressed in camel's hair, a fearless preacher out in the desert. He was to come with the glad proclamation of the approach of Christ.

No wonder the birth of John brought so much excitement to all. Light had risen in Judea's black sky. The silence of four hundred years in Jewish history had at last been broken.

On the eighth day the child was to be named. Everyone thought that he would be called Zacharias, after the name of his father; but when the father was consulted, he asked for a tablet and wrote: "His name is John." This was the name given to him by the angel in the birth announcement. No sooner had Zacharias declared the name of his infant son than another miracle took place. The old priest recovered his speech which had been denied him because of his unbelief when the angel foretold the birth of John.

And now Zacharias, being filled with the Holy Spirit, employs his tongue in a grand prophecy of praise to God, called "The Benedictus." This hymn of praise and thanksgiving was sung daily for hundreds of years by Christian groups and in Christian worship. Although the hymn was oc-

casioned by the birth of John, only two verses apply directly to him, vv. 76 and 77. The rest of the song revolves around the praise of God for the salvation he has wrought for his people Israel, redeeming them from all their enemies by the advent of the Messiah — vv. 78 and 79. It is a hymn expressive of strong faith, living hope, and joyous gratitude.

*The Birth of Jesus and the
Song of the Angels
Luke 2:1-20*

In the providence of God the events of history were so arranged that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. This had been predicted by the prophet Micah under the inspiration of the Spirit of God (5:2). And so it happened.

Just at the time when the birth of Jesus was to take place in Bethlehem, Caesar Augustus, emperor of Rome, passed a decree that a census should be taken for purposes of taxation. All were to register in their native city. Accordingly, Joseph and Mary journeyed to Bethlehem, a distance of about one hundred miles. The route usually taken was on the east side of the Jordan river. This was longer but it was taken in order to avoid passing through Samaria, for the Jews and the Samaritans were not on friendly terms.

Under the circumstances the time required to make the journey was probably four or five days. At last, as the shades of night were gathering around them, the weary travellers reached Bethlehem, the city of David built on the Judean heights. Their late arrival accounts for the fact that all available places for lodging had already been taken by those who had come earlier. And thus it happened, again under the providence of God, that Joseph and Mary sought shelter and rest in a stable. There, in the most poor, humble, and unattractive surroundings (to say the least) the

Son of God came into the world, taking upon himself our human nature.

His mother wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in the manger, the best place that could be found for him. Indeed, he became poor that through his poverty we might be made rich — rich with all the blessings of salvation in this life, and rich with eternal glory hereafter!

But, if the surroundings under which Jesus was born were extremely humiliating, the glory of his person was by contrast all the more revealed. With remarkable simplicity and utmost brevity the evangelist Luke sets forth the greatest event of history (v. 7). He leaves it to the angel, appearing that night in dazzling glory to the shepherds, to explain the meaning and significance of the event (vv. 10 and 11). And then the further celebration of Christ's birth and its profound importance was voiced by the angelic host as they sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." God is to receive the praise for it all, for he is the author of salvation. And through the reconciliation between God and man which Christ would bring, peace would come to human hearts and to the earth.

So important an event as the birth of Jesus could not take place without some recognition. If Jerusalem lay asleep, and only Joseph and Mary knew what was happening, God would see to it that angelic messengers from heaven would proclaim the glad tidings that the Saviour was born. And if the proud rulers of Rome and the self-righteous leaders of the Jews were unworthy to hear the birth announcement of the Son of God, God would cause humble shepherds out in the field at night, keeping watch over their sheep — God would cause them to hear the wondrous song of redemption. God's ways seem strange accord-

ing to man's way of thinking, but that is because they are God's ways and not ours. And the way God does things always works out best to humble the pride of man, and to magnify the glory of God.

Stirred by the angel's message and the song of the celestial host, the shepherds make haste to verify for themselves what they have heard. Sure enough, there was the "babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger" just as the angel had said. And there were Joseph and Mary looking in glad wonderment upon the adoring shepherds — adoring the Christ-child. What an eventful night that was! And leaving the manger scene the shepherds could not contain the good news in their hearts. They must tell it around everywhere; and their lips must overflow with praise and thanksgiving to God.

Ah, if only the hearts of Christians today were so full of praise and joy, would not the gospel of salvation literally ring out across the world to stir the dead souls of men out of their torpor, and bring gladness to a sad and troubled humanity?

The birth of John and the "Benedictus"; the birth of Jesus and the "Gloria in Excelsis" — how marvellous are the works of God for the redemption of His people! To Him be all the praise!

New Church Formed

Hamilton, Mass. — The new Orthodox Presbyterian Church of this city has announced completion of negotiations for the purchase of a church building. The structure is at present occupied by the South Hamilton Methodist Church, and it is hoped that it will be available for occupancy by the buyers by next summer when the Methodists anticipate moving into their new building.

The Rev. Charles Schaufele, professor of Christian Education at Gordon College, is moderator of the session and supply preacher of the newly organized congregation, which was received by the Presbytery of New York and New England on November 16, and observed its first Communion on the 20th. The group until recently had been meeting as an independent Fellowship. Morning worship is held in the home of Dean Burton Goddard, who is chairman of the building committee, while the evening meetings are held in the Schaufele home.

December, 1960

Biblical Doctrine of Election

By RAYMOND O. ZORN

We are all thoroughly familiar with the facts of a political election. Only a short time ago this country experienced one of the closest presidential elections in its history as the climax of grueling campaigns previously staged by each of the two opposing candidates. But in the end, the choice was left to the individual voter and the collective majority result of his decision was accepted as final. For it is the people who choose their leaders. And with this political fact of life all must in the end concur.

There is another type of election with which people are not nearly as familiar. It is the doctrine of election as set forth in Biblical revelation. With this doctrine, as in the realm of Biblical truth generally, too many find themselves in strange if not altogether unfamiliar territory. For Biblical truth today has suffered equally from the shafts of outright denial and obliterating distortion, both of which in the final analysis come from the same arsenal of the Evil One. In this regard, however, it would seem that the doctrine of election has not only suffered at the hands of its enemies but has also been wounded in the house of its friends. Many, at any rate, for one reason or another stumble at its clear teaching.

The Biblical doctrine of election is not like that of a democratic election in which the people make their choice of the best candidates. Rather, according to the Biblical witness, it is God in the first place who does the choosing (Eph. 1:4). Moreover, his choice is not of the best candidates, but of completely unworthy candidates, of those who one would suppose should not, under the circumstances, be chosen at all (Eph. 2:1-5). The implications of this not only run counter to natural reason but are a blow to individual pride and worth as well. Hence, reasons for difficulty with this doctrine are not far to seek.

In I Thess. 1:4 the Apostle Paul refers to the doctrine of election in an almost incidental manner as he writes to members of a young church who had newly experienced the fresh bloom of its reality. Paul here neither

defends nor makes apology for the doctrine of election. He simply mentions it with a manifest certainty that it will be accepted without question or cavil by his readers. Why? Because the doctrine is true, not only since its reality had been experienced by the Thessalonian Christians, but because their new life in Christ was producing practical evidences of it, a number of which the Apostle points out in the remaining verses of the chapter. So, with easy reference but yet positive conviction, he writes to the Thessalonian Christians, "Knowing, brethren beloved by God, your election" (lit. trans.).

THE FACT OF ELECTION

Election is always used in Scripture in the sense of a divine act or choosing on God's part. In Acts 9:15, for instance, we learn of the Lord's affirmation that Paul "is a chosen vessel unto me" — "chosen" being the same word that is translated "election" in I Thess. 1:4. In the other places of the New Testament where the word (*Gr.* — *ekloge*) is used, namely, Rom. 9:11, 11:5, 7, 28, and 2 Pet. 1:10, it is uniformly translated "election" in the K.J.V., and all of these texts refer to the act of divine choice.

God's Prerogative

If God is clearly sovereign, as the Scriptures teach, we would expect election to be his unqualified prerogative, not only with respect to employment of his creatures for service (Acts 9:15), but also with respect to their choice unto salvation. In fact, if we allow that the potter has power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor, must not the same right be given unto God? (Rom. 9:20-21). Consequently, God has every right as Creator, according to the purpose of his election, to choose, for example, a Jacob over an Esau if he so desires. "For the children being

Not political election, but divine election is the subject of this illuminating and practical article by one of our frequent contributors.

not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth: it was said unto her, "The elder shall serve the younger" (Rom. 9:11-12). As Scripture here makes clear, this is nothing more than the prerogative which must be allowed God as the Sovereign over the works of his own hands, "for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever" (Rom. 11:36).

An Absolute Imperative

As a matter of fact, however, election is more than the expression of mere divine prerogative. It is, rather, an absolute imperative if any of mankind, lost in sin, is to experience salvation at all. For man, by his revolt in sin against God, has sundered himself from God spiritually and ethically and is consequently described by God's Word as "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). Something that is dead physically is obviously by definition completely without life. All power of self-determination is gone. This is so plain in the physical realm that further description is rendered unnecessary. What, however, is accepted without dispute in the physical realm is often not so clearly seen when transferred in parallel to the spiritual realm. But why should not the same truth as it pertains to a description of unregenerate man's spiritual state be accepted in the same forthright way? A man who is dead, whether physically or spiritually, is without life. He needs to be quickened, or be made alive, if he is to live.

But man, who was once alive spiritually, has by his sin committed *spiritual suicide*. He is responsible for the state of his spiritual death and utter helplessness. Moreover, he is under the sentence of punishment for his sins, which is not solely spiritual death, but physical death consequently, and eternal death ultimately — which will be final and complete separation from God in everlasting outer darkness reserved for all the perpetrators of iniquity (Matt. 25:41). Man needs forgiveness of sins and new life. In a word, he needs to be born again (Jn. 3:13).

To continue the parallel between the physical and spiritual realms, this he is no more able to accomplish by his own effort than he is to effect his own physical birth. If man is to be-

Into this otherwise hopeless picture the doctrine of election enters with the light of its cheer and comfort.

come a new creature by spiritual birth, it must come about as the result of divine action (Jn. 3:8). But does a suicide, who has consciously and deliberately put an end to his life, deserve another chance to live? Man as a sinner responsible for his spiritual death cannot plead innocence from involvement in his lost estate, nor can he expect to escape the just retribution with which he is progressively and inexorably being visited from the bar of God's justice.

Into this otherwise hopeless and doleful picture, therefore, the doctrine of election enters with the light of its cheer and comfort. For God has not left the whole of humanity to its spiritual death and just condemnation but has determined to show his mercy by being gracious unto many (Rom. 9:23-24). This he can do without compromising his justice because he himself, in the person of his incarnate Son, paid the price of their salvation. The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), but Christ bore our sins in his own body on the cross and paid their price by his vicarious death (I Pet. 2:24); for him who knew no sin the Father made to be sin on our behalf that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Cor. 5:21). And this salvation, purchased by Christ for the elect, is in God's own appointed time, by the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the preaching of the Word, effectually applied to all for whom Christ died (Rom. 8:29-39), until the day when he presents them all before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy (Jude 24).

A Doctrine Needing No Apology

This doctrine of election, though it "is to be handled with special prudence and care" (Westminster Confession of Faith, III, 8), needs no apology as if it might be responsible for leading to despair on the one hand, or to the encouraging of sloth and sinful complacency on the other. Paul, at any rate, did not understand it thus. Nor did he feel that it was a truth from which his young converts needed to be shielded, particularly since it was this doctrine which made their salvation a reality.

The good news of a full and free redemption accomplished by God in Christ and received by faith is to be preached to every creature (Matt. 28:18-20). True, only the elect will respond (Acts 13:48), but can anyone to whom the gospel is preached plead excuse from deliberate and extreme culpability if he, by his own continuing unbelief and hardness of heart, fails to accept the overtures of God's grace?

Moreover, no one, not even the elect, can know that he is such save only as he responds by faith to the invitation to salvation. For the seed of new life is planted by God deep within the heart of the elect person. It is present below the conscious level of the soul and is first discerned only after the active exercise of faith. Faith is thus the initial result of regeneration and the mother grace of all the successive fruits of the Spirit in the new life following.

Faith therefore is the gift of God in that it is a product of regeneration, or the impartation of spiritual life by God. But again, to use an aspect of the physical life as an illustrative parallel of the spiritual, this faith is the individual's own to exercise in the same way as breathing is his to exercise at the time of his birth. That is to say, while it is true that a person cannot breathe unless he be born, he himself must nevertheless breathe if he is to live. So the act of believing is the result of the new birth, but an individual no more knows that he has been regenerated apart from his exercise of faith than he would learn that he had been born apart from his initiation of the process of breathing. Without either in their respective realms life is impossible.

So the command of God in the gospel is to hear and live. For, "God who is absolutely sovereign is gracious in His sovereignty (Ex. 33:19). The greatest sinner among men may be saved if God pleases. And men will be saved when they come to recognize, in an awareness of their awful need, that God alone can save them, if He pleases. When men seek the Lord, it is a sign that He pleases. Men are therefore encouraged to seek Him"

(G. Aiken Taylor, *Christianity Today*, Nov. 7, 1960, p.40). To refuse to heed this command is, consequently, deliberately to choose death rather than life. A man is therefore as responsible for faith or his lack of it as he is responsible to choose between breathing or death. Failure to believe is hence the culpable mark of abiding spiritual death for which there can be no excuse, especially in the light of God's gracious free offer of salvation to whosoever will (Rev. 22:17).

Far from encouraging complacency, the doctrine of election establishes the reality of new life in redemption for spiritually dead sinners and urges upon them their necessary response to God's proffered grace by repentance and faith.

EVIDENCES OF ELECTION

This the Thessalonian church had done so that the certainty of their election had become apparent, not only to themselves, but to the Apostle Paul and all in the regions round about them.

The Power of the Gospel

In the first place, the preaching of the gospel to them had been effectual, resulting in their conversion, for Paul writes, "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance" (v.5). Paul had felt and was yet further to feel the emptiness of preaching to the reprobate. He had already run the gamut of their reactions from the extremes of murderous hatred and animosity to mockery and patronizing indifference. His message, after all, consisted only of words which he himself could refer to as "the foolishness of preaching" (I Cor. 1:21). How can mere words change lives, effect the new birth, elicit obedience to God on the part of hearers? The answer is that mere words cannot — apart from the efficacious application of them to the hearts of the hearers by the operation and power of the Holy Spirit.

This the Holy Spirit had superabundantly done in connection with the gospel preached to the Thessalonians so that the existence of a church of Christ in their midst was but another patent evidence of elec-

WHAT DO YOU CONFESS?

There had been a lot of talk about Jesus. Who was he? Where did he get his power?

Some said that he was Elijah. Others said that he was a certain prophet. These answers were so far from the mark that Jesus himself asked his own disciples at Caesarea Philippi, "Who do you say I am?"

There must have been a moment of silence. Then in a flash of insight Simon Peter answered for himself, for the other disciples, and for the true church of all time, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Some religious teachers would say that it makes little difference what we confess. What is important is what we are or what we do.

Jesus' own answer to Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi refutes such a claim. Jesus says that Peter's insight was so great that it could not have come only from man. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

So great and so basic was Peter's confession that it would form the cornerstone of the confession of the church for all time. "Upon this rock I will build my church."

Indeed this confession became the foundation of the church.

Later the apostle John writes, "Whosoever confesseth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." The test of our divine sonship is that we make the same confession that Peter made, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Everything turns on the fulcrum of this confession, for "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9, 10).

ROBERT D. KNUDSEN

tion. For they had experienced that spiritual dynamite (*Gr.* — *dunamis*), which produces the heart change of conversion and transformation of the old life of sin into the new life of righteousness and holiness.

Moreover, they now possessed the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, the witness to them of their divine sonship (Gal. 4:6), the earnest of their ultimate inheritance in salvation (Eph. 1:14), and the producer of the fruits of the new life (Gal. 5:22-23). No wonder they had much assurance! With so much evidence to prove their election, how could it be otherwise?

The Completeness of Conversion

Paul therefore encourages them to continue giving diligence to make their calling and election sure by a completeness of conversion that will come to practical expression in their lives in matters both of faith and practice.

Doctrinally, as they had turned away from erroneous conceptions of God in idolatry, now to serve the true and living God (v.9), so they were from henceforth to continue to be lovers of truth, for it is the truth which makes men free (Jn. 8:32). Receiving and believing the whole counsel of God, they were to let the white light of truth continue its sanctifying work in their lives as they experienced delivery from the enslaving bondage of the sinful world, the flesh, and the devil. And having experienced the supernatural work of the risen Saviour in salvation, they were finding it no greater feat of their faith to believe in and to await his triumphal return on the clouds to consummate the work of his new creation (v.10), than it had been to believe the miraculous historical facts of the gospel (I Cor. 15:3-4).

Ethically, their lives were now to be completely devoted to the service of the living and true God. They were consequently to be followers of the New Way (v.6), seeking to imitate the dedication of the Apostle Paul who himself was a devoted imi-

A precious doctrine of assurance to the oft-beleaguered and embattled saint.

tator of the Lord in holiness, zeal, self-sacrifice, and constancy to the doing of the divine will even while under fire of opposition and affliction. They were ever to remember, too, that as servants they were not above their Master, and if their Lord had suffered persecution, they must also expect the same (Jn. 16:20). So, as good soldiers of the cross, they were to endure their appointed afflictions (3:3), and by their good example to all (v.7) continue to give evidence of their election.

In this way the witness of their lips to the Lord's saving grace and transforming power would be heard (v.8), because its consistency with the witness of their lives would be obvious for all to see. In fact, the Lord had already blessed and used their instrumentality in the redeeming outreach of the gospel. Paul exults, "From you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad" (v.8). As a sounding-board receives, reinforces, and sends on the sounds directed to it, so the Word of the Lord, having been addressed to them and reinforced by the transforming experiences of their own salvation, was now re-echoing forth from them to others. This is the way it should be with all who are truly the Lord's. And it is but another evidence of election. No wonder Paul could say, "Knowing, brethren beloved by God, your election"!

The truth of election is a precious doctrine of comfort and assurance to the oft-beleaguered and embattled saint. Moreover, far from evacuating responsibility or lulling into sinful complacency, it promotes and stimulates God-glorifying activity in an increasing fruitfulness which brings to manifestation obvious evidences of its reality and experience. What evidences of election does the reader's life manifest? Would the Apostle have been able to write, had he observed your life instead of that of the Thessalonians, "Knowing, brethren beloved by God, your election"? Unless we have believed the gospel, and received Christ, this is not yet true of us. But if we have received Christ, then this text will be as true for us as it was for the Thessalonians. May we, too, give cause for rejoicing by the evidences of our election.

Whither The Orthodox Presbyterian Church ?

By EDWARD A. HAUG, JR.

Elder Haug, a member of the session of Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Westfield, N. J., with the insight of his own business experience has managed to put some life into the meaning of statistical reports in this article. Mr. Haug is a member of the Committee on Christian Education and of the Pensions Committee.

EACH year, in connection with the minutes of the General Assembly, the Statistical Report is read by many with interest to help answer such questions as: Are we growing? How many members do we have? Which churches are showing gains? Is the Orthodox Presbyterian Church really reaching the lost?

Are such questions proper? Yes, for Scripture speaks in these terms in a number of places. For example: "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand" (Acts 4:4).

The writer freely acknowledges that statistics can be very lifeless. They reveal nothing about the human drama which has been acted out to produce them. They speak in terms of quantity, a relatively poor criterion for an organization that deals in matters of the soul. Nevertheless, even with this concession, a study of our statistical data can provide meaningful insights into a better understanding of our church.

To answer the question of this article, let us look at three indicators or measures which can be developed from the reported statistical information.

1. Indicator of Life

This measure is defined, in the thought of the writer, as the percentage of our total churches which experienced in a particular fiscal year a net gain of at least one in total membership (adults plus children). For the fiscal year ending in March, 1960, for example, 53 of the 86 churches which provided data for this purpose each showed a net gain of at least one.

This experience produces an Indicator of Life of 62 percent.

This indicator at three-year intervals back to 1951 is shown below.

Indicator of Life	
Fiscal Year Ending	Indicator
1960	62%
1957	59%
1954	53%
1951	57%

What is a reasonable standard? What should our Indicator of Life be?

It seems to the writer that in any particular fiscal year about 5 to 10 percent of our churches may experience situations beyond their control that will make even a net gain of one impossible of attainment. The unexpected departure of one or more large families from the church because the husband is forced to change his place of employment, a disproportionate number of deaths, the accumulation of discipline cases into one year's activity are examples of uncontrollable factors which make a net gain extremely difficult or impossible. Thus, the writer believes that the above table should be interpreted against an arbitrary standard of 90 to 95 percent.

2. Indicator of Progress

This measure is herein defined as the percentage of our total churches which experienced in a particular fiscal year a net gain of at least five in total membership (adults plus children). For the fiscal year ending in March, 1960, for example, 30 of the 86 churches which provided data for this purpose showed a net gain of at least five. This experience produces an Indicator of Progress of 35 percent.

This indicator at three-year intervals back to 1951 is shown below.

Indicator of Progress	
Fiscal Year Ending	Indicator
1960	35%
1957	42%
1954	30%
1951	41%

What is a reasonable standard? The writer believes that the higher net gain

Here is another article in a series on
What's Right with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

of five may find 15 to 20 percent of our churches experiencing uncontrollable situations in any particular fiscal year which will make this figure unattainable. Therefore, the above table should be interpreted against a suggested standard of 80 to 85 percent.

Scripture gives the formula for progress in Acts 9:31. To this we can give heed. "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

3. Indicator of Evangelistic Activity

This measure may be defined as the percentage of our total churches which experienced in a particular fiscal year a gross gain of at least five in Confessions of Faith, Reaffirmations of Faith, and Transfers. For the fiscal year ending in March, 1960, for example, 44 of the 86 churches which provided data for this purpose showed the gain required. This experience produces an Indicator of Evangelistic Activity of 51 percent. It is of interest to note that two-thirds of the Confessions of Faith during the past year were among adult converts, and one-third by covenant children.

This indicator at three-year intervals back to 1951 is shown below.

<i>Indicator of Evangelistic Activity</i>	<i>Indicator</i>
<i>Fiscal Year Ending</i>	
1960	51%
1957	55%
1954	43%
1951	41%

What about a standard? The writer believes—though some may disagree—that the standard here should be 100 percent. That is, every one of our churches should show a gross gain of at least five adult members as the result of a year's activity. The reason is not hard to find. This measure is controllable, humanly speaking, by us. It is directly related to the doorbells rung, the invitations offered, the support given the pastor, the love shown to visitors and the prayers made for the lost. And in this work we have the promise of divine aid. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in

earth. Go ye therefore . . . and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:18-20).

Well, all in all, how have we done? Whither the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?

Figures Are Encouraging

The writer believes that these figures are encouraging. To be sure, we are below the arbitrary standard suggested in each case but we are closer to it than we were some years ago. We are currently more alive than we were! Our progress is at higher levels! And more significantly we are engaging in evangelism more effectively than in earlier years!

What can an individual church do? Because each church contributes to the whole on either the positive or negative side of the indicators, individual churches can watch the various elements that make up net gain in total membership and gain in adult members, and set goals that will bring them out at the end of the year on the right side of the ledger.

Finally, the standard suggests that we have a long way to go and a lot of work to do. But the results indicate that in the providence of God our church is being used increasingly and to God be all the praise!

The printed *Minutes of the Twenty-seventh General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church* have now been mailed to ministers and sessions. Additional copies, at \$1.50 each, are available from the Stated Clerk, the Rev. LeRoy B. Oliver, through the office of the Committee on Home Missions, 7401 Old York Road, Philadelphia 26, Pa.

Besides the proceedings of the Assembly held last July in Manhattan Beach, Calif., the appendix contains a complete statistical report for the year ending March 31, 1960, the personnel of the Standing and the Special Committees, clerks of session, names and addresses (corrected to November 1, 1960) of all the ministers, and other items of interest.

Blake Proposes Plan to Unite Four Church Bodies

San Francisco (RNS) — A proposal to unite four Protestant denominations into a new Church of nearly 20 million members was made by a Presbyterian leader and immediately endorsed by a Protestant Episcopal bishop.

Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, Philadelphia, chief executive officer of the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., advanced the proposal in a sermon at Grace Cathedral (Episcopal) on the first Sunday of December.

Episcopal Bishop James A. Pike, of California, offered "an enthusiastic Amen" to the proposal, describing it as "the most sound and inspiring proposal for the unity of the church in this country which has ever been made in its history."

Dr. Blake proposed that the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches invite The Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ "to form with us a plan of church union both catholic and reformed." The United Church of Christ was formed in 1957 through merger of the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Dr. Blake emphasized he was not making the proposal on behalf of his Church but only as one of its ministers.

On hand to hear the proposal were many delegates to the National Council of Churches' triennial General Assembly. Dr. Blake is a former president of the National Council.

At a news conference later, Dr. Blake explained that he was not limiting the union plan to the four denominations proposed, but had started with them since they were involved in union plans in India.

Dr. Blake expressed hope that "if there is support for what I have said in my own Church, any or all of our presbyteries may, if they will, overture the General Assembly (of the United Presbyterian Church) which meets next May asking that assembly to make an official proposal."

Catholic and Reformed

At the news conference, Dr. Blake suggested it may take 10 years to work out the union. He said a possible name for the new church might be "The Reformed and Catholic Church in the U. S. A."

Blake Proposal (cont.)

Dr. Blake outlined two sets of principles which he said the plan of union would have to embody.

One set, he said, was important to all of the "catholic" tradition, and the other was important to all of the "reformed" tradition.

Important principles for the proposed merger to preserve in the catholic tradition, he said, were "historical continuity" with the church both before and after the Reformation, adherence to belief in the Trinity, and preservation of the sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism.

Churches in the reformed tradition, Dr. Blake said, would desire to preserve the principles that the reformation continues "under the Word of God by the guidance of the Holy Spirit," that the united Church must be "truly democratic in its government, that there must be a sense of brotherhood and fellowship among all its members and ministers, and that it must be hospitable to a wide variety of theological thought and worship."

Dr. Blake said a broad reunion of the Churches could only take place on the basis of the historical continuity of the ministry, and therefore it would be essential to unify the whole ministry of the uniting Churches.

One of the stumbling blocks to mergers of other Churches has been the Episcopal insistence that clergy from other Churches be re-ordained by Episcopal bishops, to preserve the tradition of the apostolic succession.

Dr. Blake said his proposal was "simply to cut the Gordian knot of hundreds of years of controversy" on this issue.

In the reunited Church, the "ministry of all believers" must be recognized, Dr. Blake declared. "All Christians are Christ's ministers even though some in the Church are separated and ordained to the ministry of word and sacrament," he said.

Reactions Swift and Varied

Bishop Pike, who spoke to the Cathedral congregation after Dr. Blake finished his sermon, said he was sure "a warm response throughout my own Church is clear." He pointed out that the 1958 Lambeth Conference, composed of Anglican bishops from 46 countries, had given general approval to unity plans, based on the same principles, in North India, Pakistan and Ceylon.

"I hope and pray that his plan will be received by the four Churches — and others — in the Christian spirit in which it has been offered and that definite action toward its fulfillment will soon be forthcoming. I shall certainly labor to this end."

Commenting on Dr. Blake's proposal, Methodist Bishop John Wesley Lord, of Washington, D. C., said the plan is "as shocking as it is Christian." He said "it overcomes with stark simplicity many of the problems that have perplexed the separate communions over the years."

He admitted, however, it would require a good deal of education and study to have it adopted by grass roots.

Bishop Gerald Kennedy, Los Angeles, president of the Council of Bishops of The Methodist Church, said there was "nothing new" in the proposal of Dr. Eugene Carson Blake.

Bishop Kennedy noted "there are a large number of churchmen who are committed to closer cooperation but are not at all enthusiastic about organic union that would make a Protestant Church top heavy with administration and machinery."

Dr. Fred Hoskins, New York, minister and general secretary of the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches and co-president of the United Church of Christ, expressed fear that Dr. Blake's proposal will be "widely misunderstood in many places as a specific plan rather than as a proposal for a procedure."

Dr. James E. Wagner, Philadelphia, president of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the other co-president of the United Church of Christ, said "there was a danger that those looking for an opportunity to criticize or minimize the National Council of Churches would seize upon this and say this is what the National Council of Churches is doing."

Protestant Episcopal Bishop Lauriston L. Scaife, of Buffalo, said here that the proposed merger of four major Protestant denominations in the United States "merits study and discussion," but emphasized that any such plan should also include the Eastern Orthodox and Polish National Catholic Churches.

The president of Princeton Theological Seminary has called on American Christians "to take a radical step forward" in the quest for unity.

"Cooperation is not enough," Dr.

James I. McCord told delegates to the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches here.

Dr. McCord, who is chairman of the council's Faith and Order Study Commission, warned that "time is no longer on our side."

"History has now caught up with us and encircled us," he said.

He called the proposal made here by a top Presbyterian leader, Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, "an eloquent expression" of a new search by American churches for visible unity.

Thomas E. Tyson Ordained

At a meeting of the Presbytery of Ohio on December 23 Thomas Earl Tyson was ordained to the gospel ministry and installed as pastor of the Wayside Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Grove City, Pa. He had been serving as stated supply since his call as a licentiate of the Presbytery of Philadelphia in the spring. Mr. Tyson is a graduate of Wheaton College and of Westminster Seminary.

The ordination sermon was preached by the Rev. Robert Atwell, of the Calvary Church, Glenside, where Mr. Tyson had been a member. "The Indwelling Word" was the sermon theme, based on the text Col. 3:16-17. The Rev. Calvin Cummings, of the Covenant Church, Pittsburgh, gave the charge to the newly ordained pastor, and the Rev. Arnold Kress, of the Nashua Church, Edinburg, delivered a charge to the congregation. The ladies of Wayside Church served refreshments following the service to the members and friends who had gathered despite the eight-below-zero temperature.

In other actions of the Presbytery, the Rev. William Young, Th.D., was dismissed to the Presbytery of New York and New England; and the calls of the Faith Church, Harrisville and the New Hope Church, Branchton for the pastoral services of Mr. George Morton were found in order. The calls will be forwarded to the Presbytery of Philadelphia, of which Mr. Morton is a licentiate.

This is the last issue (No. 12) of Volume 29, and an Index for the year 1960 will be found on page 191.

EDITOR

Robert E. Nicholas

EDITORIAL COUNCIL

Ned B. Stonehouse

Edmund P. Clowney

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

Except Ye Repent

Riotous outbreaks with their fatalities or tragic accidents such as have recently occurred bring a reminder of the implied questions (Why did it happen to them? Were they worse sinners than we are?) in the minds of some who in Jesus' day called to his attention the slaughter of certain Galileans (Luke 13).

His reply to their concern or curiosity was in the negative, but he went on to say, Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Then he added an illustration of his own concerning a tower in Siloam whose collapse killed eighteen persons.

We may ask in words similar to his: Those one hundred and thirty-five, who met death in the collision of two planes above New York, or those thirty or more trapped in the streetcar in Munich upon whom the plane fell, or the nearly fifty who perished in the flames of the Constellation in a Brooklyn shipyard — do you think that they were sinners above all others?

Jesus' answer will suffice for us also: No, of course not; but except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.

Do we discern the warnings of God in the disasters and violence of our times? Do we sense the uncertainty of life from day to day? Do we realize the awfulness of the fact that the same Jesus whose first advent we gaily celebrate, one day "shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thess. 1:7-8)?

Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Ecumenism's Rising Tempo

Sometimes a sermon makes the headlines. This was certainly true of a sermon (reported elsewhere in these pages) preached just prior to the triennial assembly of the National Council of Churches in San Francisco. Many daily newspapers carried the sermon story conspicuously, with its proposal for a union of four large denominations.

The weekly magazines gave it prominent coverage. *Life* devoted an editorial to the subject. A Philadelphia television station presented, as part of a series called One Nation Under God, an hour-long panel discussion which included the author of the proposal, United Presbyterian Eugene Carson Blake, and representatives of the three other denominations mentioned in the plan of union.

Somehow the idea captured the interest and imagination of people, for it was being talked about in barber shops and on the subway and in homes. Doubtless the timing and setting of the proposal had something to do with this, and also the publicity, which was in part at least well planned (the complete text of the sermon appeared in the December 21 issue of the *Christian Century*), but Dr. Blake himself expressed surprise at the amount of interest aroused.

This merger suggestion, with modifications or amplifications which will be made, is going to be widely debated, probably for years to come. We shall have more to say about it, as well as about the whole modern ecumenical movement, from time to time, but for now here are three brief comments.

The first we have already alluded to, namely, the fact that such a proposal has some popular appeal. We live in an age of amalgamation. The idea that there must be something better about bigness or togetherness is rather prevalent. There is a lot of talk about one world and some talk about one church. We are going to hear more such talk and witness still other proposals for church union.

Secondly, it appears that the leaders of the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. are in the vanguard of this accelerating tempo toward union. The particular plan here in view was offered by the man called "the chief executive officer of the church," its stated clerk. A most enthusiastic sec-

ond has come from the president of Princeton Theological Seminary, among others. Obviously, we are bound to raise certain questions, although it is hardly to be expected that answers will be satisfactory. For instance, how can a church that calls itself Presbyterian contemplate union with bodies so divergent in both doctrine and polity as this plan envisages? What attitude toward the truth of the constitution of their church do these prominent leaders have? And most basic of all, is the whole approach of such a proposal consonant with the Word of God, the infallible rule for faith and practice?

Finally, however, in the critical evaluation of this or similar plans in the light of Scripture, we need to beware of two extremes. We must be careful lest we simply express a negative reaction against the non-doctrinal and pragmatic ecumenism that prevails. We must do more than blast away at the false; we must ourselves study the Scriptures to understand and apply what they teach about true unity. We must continue to face our obligations particularly toward those who "maintain through a sufficient discipline the Word and sacraments in their fundamental integrity."

On the other hand, we must be cautious lest the mounting tempo and inevitable pressures of widespread heterodox ecumenism tend to produce undue haste or inexpedient "union for the sake of union" — even among adherents of the Reformed faith. There are few short cuts in striving toward that visible unity of the body of Christ which is based squarely upon the Word of God and which alone it is incumbent upon us to seek to manifest.

R. E. N.

EDITOR'S MAIL BOX

Good News from Wade

Dear Brother:

I am on the deep blue sea right now with somewhat less than two days travel before reaching Honolulu. When I was allowed the choice in returning to Guam between a ship or a plane, I elected the ship at once. Unless there is some emergency or desperate need to save time, I simply can't understand why anyone would fly if he can take a ship! (It is consider-

ably cheaper and allows an almost unlimited amount of baggage. I also highly recommend these freighters, or "cargoliners"—to give them their new sophisticated designation.)

I'm on the S.S. *India Bear* of the Pacific Far East Lines and we are having a wonderful, beautiful, restful voyage. I could wax well-nigh poetic (if I had it in me) about the sea, the sky, the birds (albatrosses follow every ship all the way across and are utterly fascinating), and the ship itself. This is my 28th crossing of the Pacific Ocean by ship and I've lost none of the thrill of my first voyage, exactly 19 years ago.

I returned to the Veterans Administration Hospital in Los Angeles from my trip East on November 25, and after examinations the doctors were well satisfied with the results of the treatments they had given me. The existing tumors were definitely reduced and no new ones had appeared. It is hoped that the existing ones are at least dormant and that the disease has been arrested. No one can, or will, guarantee a permanent cure in cancer cases, naturally. I'll still be "standing in the need of prayer" for some time to come, and will greatly appreciate my friends' and brethren's remembering me in prayer.

For the time being the x-ray therapy is considered effective, and if I should need more in the future I can get it on Guam, so they released me to go home. I do feel wonderful! We should get to Guam around January 6, D.V., and I have plenty of hard work cut out for me from that day on.

As ever in Christ,

LYNNE WADE
Box 728, Agana, Guam, M.I.
c/o "Challenge to Faith"
(Use 7c airmail, please)

The Name Orthodox

Dear Editor:

Please allow me a few words in reply to your recent articles concerning the word *Orthodox* in the name of our church. I rejoice in all that was said but I don't think that enough has been said. It seems to me that if we are completely satisfied with that name it may indicate that our view of the world is lacking both in depth and complexity.

I hope the time has not come when we cannot make an agonizing reappraisal and ask some pointed ques-

tions which must be honestly faced in the light of the understanding or feelings of the earth's multitudes. Here are some questions to ponder about the use of the word *Orthodox* in a church name:

Is this a word which explodes into a constellation of definite and pleasant images in the popular mind?

Is this a word which points backward rather than forward?

Is this a word which lays enough emphasis on progress? Is this a word which summons men to interpret new voices, to blaze new trails? Is there in this word the love of adventure into that "all of reality" which reveals the living God? Is it a word for pioneers? I refer of course to the popular mind.

Is this a word which communicates? Does it communicate to 90 per cent of the world's population that great thing which our church has been commissioned to accomplish in this hour?

Is this name too demanding? Does it demand too much explaining before we start explaining Christ?

May the use of the word in a church name not sound pharisaical to some? Many have asked, Does that church think it is the *only* Presbyterian church which is 'orthodox'?

When we try to witness in the realms of philosophy, literature and the arts, is this name meaningful? Does it help us in the way of involvement wherein we may speak the quickening word? Does this word have in it an offence which is not the 'offence of the cross'?

I realize of course that because of a lawsuit brought against us years ago by The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., we could be arrested, fined, or put in jail if we fail to use the whole denominational name. But this is manifestly unjust. The church which won the suit against us seldom uses its full name, now changed. It is free to use part of its name, while we are not. Now I think we ought to be rebels here. Let us exercise the same freedom which other churches enjoy.

If we go to jail for it that may be a good thing. At least we would know where we were and pastoral visitation would be greatly simplified. Furthermore, the jail would be far better accommodations than many of our churches have enjoyed: it would be a step up. Above all, this mass ar-

rest might call attention to the real ecumenical spirit of those who are shouting about their tolerance and ecumenicity. It's a ludicrously unjust injunction to hang over our heads.

Now let me hasten to say that I am orthodox as is every true believer. And I haven't much time for those who are ashamed to use the word. As long as it's our name I'll use it in spite of my doubts and fears.

But if we are making out a formula by which a man is not orthodox unless he has that name tag always attached to him in plain sight, then I say that we have lost the true meaning of being orthodox.

The trouble which faces us is something very real, something which arguments have little effect upon. The real situation is that the farther we travel from our own bailiwick the more problematical the name becomes.

Ever your friend,

R. K. CHURCHILL
Tacoma, Wash.

P.S.: The views expressed in this letter are not necessarily the views of the typist, Mrs. R. K. C.

Idea for a Column

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the samples. I have distributed them and am seeking to stir up a taste for good things. Here's a suggestion for a column: a brief opportunity to raise questions about theology and practice — to encourage sounding off! For example, I am personally opposed to the accepting of Romish baptism on two grounds: the doctrine of the church and the nature of the covenant. Others have wonderments, too, and just a short pithy statement of those wonderments could do a job for the church's conscience and thinking.

Another topic would be the airing of differences on the race question. I have an increasingly integrated situation here and am curious about the segregationist attitude of some of the brethren. I am as much of a Southerner as several in my background and know the cultural problem fairly well. Our church should take the lead in airing such thorny problems — and I guarantee every layman will be interested for the problems are current.

Cordially in Christ,
ELMER DORTZBACH
Denver, Colorado

The Presbyterian Guardian

For the Ladies . . .

Weekday "Sunday School" At Nottingham

About a year ago, our pastor had a real burden for some children of the neighborhood that were not attending any Sunday school or church. Most of these children were from underprivileged, and some from broken homes. The parents said the children did not have proper clothes or did not get up in time. Often the real reason was indifference on the part of the parents and late hours Saturday night resulting in "sleeping-in" Sunday morning.

So the pastor said, "If we can't get them out on Sunday, let's have a weekday class right after school and they can come in their school clothes."

We set Thursday afternoon from 4 to 5 as the time. The pastor had made calls, got promises and, this being a rural field, provided transportation. Mrs. Ralph Trout, an earnest witness, drove and invited, and we started on January 14th (1960). We did not know how many would come and were happy to have 16 at the first meeting.

Mrs. Leonard Brown joined us and taught the Bible lesson. We sang songs, had sentence prayers, memory work, stories, etc. Each week some lady of the church would supply a treat of cookies or candy, to be given as the children were leaving. We also gave them left-over Sunday school papers. The Young Adults provided party refreshments once a month.

As more children came, Mr. Preston Reburn, a retired elder, drove his station wagon to transport children. We discontinued the work for the summer but as fall approached we heard requests as to when Thursday Class would start again.

We realized that it would be necessary to grade the work as ages ranged from 4 to 12. Mrs. Chas. Breuninger and Mrs. Wm. Shepherd joined our teaching staff. We have four classes now — Pre-school, two Primary and a Junior class. It is really run very much like a Sunday school. We had 43 children out last week and to our delight some are coming on Sundays. Yes, we do have a few covenant children but most are from non-Christian

homes.

The work is somewhat similar to Good News Clubs sponsored by Child Evangelism Fellowship, but we can plan our own study and this fall we started the Child's Catechism. A New Testament is promised for learning 79 questions and answers and a Bible for the entire Catechism. Thus we plan to get the Word of God into the homes.

Our hope is to reach the parents. One mother told me that when her little girls came home and sang "Jesus Loves Me" it reminded her of the days when she went to Sunday school as a little girl. When I urged her to come she laughed and said that the church would fall down if she walked in.

Some of these families come from the mountains of the South looking for better working conditions here. One of our helpers said, "When a new family moved in near me, I watched the clothes line to see if there would be children's wash on the line, and if so I would call and invite them to Thursday Class." That's the spirit!

The earnest prayers of our people in prayer meeting Wednesday nights for the Thursday Class is of inestimable value.

Do you have unreached children in your community? How about speaking to your pastor and offering your services? We feel this work is a real blessing to our church.

EVELYN VINING

Philadelphia Presbyterial Auxiliary in Baltimore

The Fall Meeting of the Presbyterial Auxiliary (Philadelphia) was held in St. Andrew's Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Baltimore, Md., in October. Mrs. Charles Baker extended a greeting from the host church. A solo from Mendelssohn's "Elijah" was rendered by Mrs. Howard Porter.

A short business meeting with Mrs. Jack Vander Sys in the chair preceded a most interesting and informative panel discussion. "Opportunities for Practical Christian Service" proved to be a very helpful topic in learning what is being done by other groups and what can be done by your own. Many new ideas were gleaned from this discussion.

Mrs. Robert Atwell described Pioneer Girls, which is a national organization, but individual groups are under the control of the local session. Mrs. Robert Vining's report on neighborhood mission opportunities is related more fully in her own words, elsewhere. Speaking on city missions, Mrs. Robert Eckardt told how local churches may have an active part in helping to salvage those who have fallen into evil ways. The wonderful privilege of presenting the gospel and helping the sick in hospital visitation that has been given to the women of the West Collingswood Church was explained by Mrs. Walter Reid.

"Songs of Joy to the Lord" was the subject of Mrs. Leonard Brown's devotional talk after lunch. There was time for prayer, and the women's

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choir under the able direction of Mrs. Cromwell Roskamp sang "Unto the Hills." The offering was to help defray the expense of a motor scooter for the Rev. Edwin Urban in Formosa.

Mrs. Arthur B. Spooner, home on furlough from Korea, was the speaker for the afternoon session. She gave a vivid picture of the great problems in Korea — for the individual missionaries, the churches, and the country as a whole. She stressed the crying need for the spread of the Reformed Faith throughout south Korea. She likened the churches in the homeland to a hand and the mission stations to the fingers of that hand, reaching throughout the world to carry the gospel of salvation through Christ.

MRS. A. EUGENE HAYMAN, JR.
Wilmington, Delaware

Suggestions For Your Family or Personal Devotions

THE 1961 *Daily Manna* Calendar, edited by Prof. Martin Monsma (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, \$1.95), has a daily reading on a separate sheet which may be easily lifted from the box. The writers are mostly from the Christian Reformed and Orthodox Presbyterian churches.

The Back-to-God-Hour, 10858 So. Michigan Ave., Chicago 28, Ill., continues to publish a monthly "Family Altar" booklet, with a different author each month along with a general theme. These may be obtained in quantity for distribution to a church group or received on request by mail at your home address.

"Spires" is a pocket-sized daily Bible reading guide that fits within the covers of a pocket New Testament. It is published bi-monthly by the Young Calvinist Federation, 2365 Nelson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Mich. and is mailed free to servicemen. To others the price is 20c per copy or \$1.00 for the year. Writers for the November-December issue were the Rev. E. L. Wade of Guam, and Chaplain John J. Hoogland, stationed in Germany.

For families with children there is the new *Children's 'King James' Bible* (New Testament) published by Modern Bible Translations, Inc., 1124 S.E. First St., Evansville, Ind., listed at \$6.95. This is a complete New Testa-

ment, edited by Jay Green, who is responsible for the wording. Included are 100 stories by 'Peter' Palmer, on separate pages so as not to be confused with the Bible text, with both colored and black and white illustrations by Manning De V. Lee.

Escapists

By G. I. WILLIAMSON

Did you ever wish that you could 'get away from it all'? When all is said and done there is much more sadness than joy, misery than bliss, tears than laughter. And we are all 'escapists' at heart. There is in the heart of every man at least a lingering home-sick feeling. As Augustine said, the heart of man is restless until it finds rest in God. The heart of man is home-sick until it finds the way back to God and to paradise.

Perhaps this will help us to understand what Peter said when he beheld Jesus, transfigured, talking with Moses and Elijah. "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." Peter may not have known the right thing to say, but he did know that he was where it was good to be, and he wanted to stay there. Nothing on earth could interest him in comparison with this mountain upon which heaven had descended. And wouldn't you have done the same? Just imagine what it would be like to step out of this world of misery and sin? Who in heaven would care to come back to this?

And yet that is the mystery of our redemption. For that is just what Jesus our tender Savior did care to do. He wanted also to 'get away from it all'. Only in his case it meant getting away from paradise, and glory, and exaltation, in order to enter a dark corner of his glorious universe, a thorn-covered island in the sea of space, marked out by God for wrath and curse.

We might compare this to the owner of a great estate, in which all is of perfect design, filled with beauty, and a pleasant place for the lord of the estate. But off in one forgotten corner, under a dark stone, is a deep pit filled with venomous serpents, into which the sheep have wandered and

strayed to be stricken with poison and carried down to death. Into this dark corner the Lord himself comes, to die that he might save his sheep, before he destroys that miserable place altogether.

So our Lord wanted to enter the forsaken wilderness of this world to save us. Of course we are not, like the sheep, merely poor victims of the serpent. We are willing victims. Satan is more like a father to us than anything else, since we have in every way adopted his ways. But the main point is, that Christ our Lord wanted to get away from heaven in order to come to us in our misery — so that we could at last 'get away from it all' and come back to him. He wanted to, and in the Father's appointed time did, take upon him the misery and sin even to the cursed death of the cross. He thus bore for his people the curse which was due them for their sin. And so now we can 'get away from it all'.

But we can 'get away from it all', not by a mountain top escape, but by taking up our cross to follow Jesus to heaven. There is only one escape. It is to die with Jesus, and to rise also with him. This applies to both body and soul, with a difference in time only.

The time for the soul to make its escape is now. "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Man, as a sinful child of Adam, is now self-centered and independent. He is dead in trespasses and sins. But by the power of Jesus' Word, which by the gospel is preached unto you, the dead hear him and live. They cease to be self-centered. They cry out for mercy, and cast themselves upon the grace of God in Christ, acknowledging freely that they can of themselves do nothing. And the soul that does this is already passed from death unto life. By dying (to self) it is alive unto Christ, and as he said, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die!"

The time for the body to make its escape has, for good purposes of God, been delayed until the coming of Jesus at the last day. But be sure of this: "The hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves will come forth." Ah, but only some will make their escape. Those who have made their escape in soul, in this life, will then do likewise in body, and shall ever be with the Lord.

Here and There in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

New Sanctuary Dedicated

Schenectady, N. Y. — The Rev. Robert Atwell, Glenside, Pa., preached the sermon on the theme "Build the House" at the dedication of the new sanctuary of Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Schenectady on the Lord's Day afternoon, November 27. Greetings were extended by the Rev. John Galbraith, denominational missions secretary. Mr. Galbraith also was guest preacher at the morning worship hour.

The Rev. Arnold Kress, Edinburg, Pa., read the Scripture from Haggai 1 and offered prayer. A charge to the officers of the church was given by the Rev. Robert Nuermberger, eastern N. Y. representative of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, and a member of the Presbytery of New York and New England, of which Calvary Church is a part.

Calvary Church was organized in the fall of 1938 with ten charter members, and has grown to a present

membership of 114 communicants and 39 baptized children. Eleven former members of the congregation are now in the ministry of the gospel, while 14 young women of the church have married ministers. The Rev. Raymond Meiners was called as the first pastor, shortly after his graduation from Westminster Seminary, and has continued to serve to the present.

First services were held in the YMCA, then in the basement of the Civic Playhouse, until the congregation moved to its present location on Rugby Road at Glenwood Blvd. in 1939, using a building erected by the N. Y. Congregational Conference and later sold to the City for use as the 4th Police Precinct. The building and corner lot were acquired in 1943 and the mortgage paid by 1952.

For the new sanctuary the architectural firm of van der Bogart, Feibes, and Schmitt was engaged. "When the activity of building transcends its technology and becomes the art of architecture, it becomes a cultural ex-

Pastor Raymond Meiners at the Dedication Service. Seated are the Rev. Messrs. Robert Atwell, Arnold Kress, Robert Nuermberger, and John Galbraith, all participants in the occasion.



December, 1960



Interior of Calvary Church

—Photos on this page through the courtesy of the Schenectady Gazette

pression of the builders," according to a statement of the architects in the dedication program. "The Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church is architecture conceived as an expression of the faith of its congregation. We established a strongly disciplined order by planning the building on a strict module. The contrast of the deep stained wood battens against the light grey asbestos panels gives expression to this module and produces a strong and simple rhythm."

"We shaped the massing of the building with strong, unhesitating boldness in order to produce a strong sense of conviction. To attain the indispensable unity among the various masses of the building complex, we established a horizontal plane to knit the sanctuary, fellowship hall, school, and entry together . . . Here is architecture not achieved by means of opulence, but on the high plane of truthful and meaningful expression of humble, but beautiful materials," the statement concluded.

Westfield, N. J. — Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church was the scene of the November 25th wedding of Miss Bertha Hunt and Mr. John Kinnaird. Wearing a lace gown which she herself made, the bride was given

in marriage by her brother David. Her sister Mary was her maid of honor.

Another sister, Mrs. Bernard Stonehouse, played the organ, and with Mrs. John Mitchell also present the occasion brought together the five children of Korean missionaries the Rev. and Mrs. Bruce Hunt. Another who attended was Dr. William Blair, grandfather of the bride, who with Mrs. Blair had come from Topeka, Kansas. Dr. Blair, former missionary in Korea, led in prayer at the reception — where he met his great grandson, Bruce Mitchell, for the first time. Among the many guests were members of a number of missionary families, some of whom had not seen each other since pre-war days in Manchuria.

The bride's uncle, the Rev. Leslie Dunn, pastor of Grace Church, read the wedding ceremony, and prayer was offered by the Rev. Robert Atwell, of whose congregation the bride had been a member. The Kinnairds are now members of the Faith Church, Harrisville, and reside at the Miller Park Apts., Franklin, Pa., near Oil City where Mr. Kinnaird is employed.

Cranston, R. I. — Calvary Church, whose pastor is the Rev. Wendell Rockey, was host to a Reformation Rally, with the congregation of Grace Church of Fall River as guests. In turn, as seems to be a happy custom, Grace Church was host for the annual Thanksgiving Eve service with the Cranston friends invited to join in gratitude to God.

Pastor G. I. Williamson of Grace Church in November began a 16 week Bible survey course in the Adult Class of the Sunday school de-

signed to cover the highlights of the biblical story in connected fashion. At the end of the month seminarian Howard Hart spoke at a dinner meeting celebrating the fifth anniversary of Grace Church.

Trenton, N. J. — Grace Church, White Horse, has issued a call to Mr. Donald Parker, a senior at Westminster Theological Seminary. A member of Calvary Church, Glenside, he is presently under the care of the Presbytery of Philadelphia as a candidate for licensure.

Mr. Parker, who comes from Grand Rapids, Mich., was graduated from both Moody Bible Institute and Wheaton College before entering Westminster Seminary. He was married last fall to the former Ada Mary Potter, of the Glenside Church. The call of the congregation has not yet been acted upon by either of the Presbyteries concerned. The Rev. LeRoy Oliver is moderator of the session of Grace Church, which has been without a pastor for some time.

Philadelphia, Pa. — Two nearby congregations have issued calls during recent weeks — both to the same man, the Rev. Robert K. Churchill. The call of the Redeemer Church of Newtown Square has been found in order by the Presbytery of Philadelphia and transmitted to the Presbytery of California, of which Mr. Churchill is a member. He is presently a field representative for Westminster Seminary in the western part of the United States and Canada.

Trinity Church of Hatboro in mid-December likewise extended a call for the pastoral services of Mr. Churchill. There is no indication at the present time as to what the outcome of these calls may prove to be.

Manhattan Beach, Calif. — The Rev. William E. Welmers, Ph.D., participated in the morning worship of First Church last month. Dr. Welmers, who is now with the Department of Near Eastern Languages, U.C.L.A., resides in Los Angeles with his wife and three children.

There is a reference to a "Bill Welmers" in an interesting article in the December *Reader's Digest* by Elizabeth Bowne, entitled "Gift From the African Heart." The association has to do with Dr. Welmers' work as a language specialist some years ago on that continent and his concern for a

fellow human in an hour of need. (Read it for yourself.)

Garden Grove, Calif. — Nine communicants and four baptized children were received into membership last fall. Proposed changes in the zoning ordinance have delayed the securing of a permit for building expansion that is needed, particularly for the Sunday school.

Mr. Charles Chao of the Reformation Translation Fellowship was the speaker at the Harvest Banquet. The tenth anniversary of the first worship service in Garden Grove is to be observed on January 1 with the Rev. Louis Knowles preaching, as he did on the first occasion a decade ago.

Eugene Bradford Named as Executive Secretary for Westminster Seminary

The Rev. Eugene Bradford, pastor of the Third Christian Reformed Church of Paterson, N. J. since 1954, has been named to the position of Executive Secretary for Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, succeeding the Rev. Robert Marsden, who died on October 23rd of this year.

Action was taken at a special meeting of the Trustees of the Seminary in mid-December upon the recommendation of a committee of seven appointed at the October 25th meeting of the Board. It is anticipated that Mr. Bradford will be able to assume his new responsibilities in the near future.

A graduate of Westminster Seminary in 1941, Mr. Bradford served as a pastor in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for a number of years prior to his entrance into the Christian Reformed Church in 1951. Both he and his wife, the former Gwen Welsh, are graduates of Wheaton College, and are the parents of five children, three boys and two girls. Mr. Bradford is a member of the Board of Trustees of Westminster Seminary and has taken an active part in the affairs of the Alumni Association, including the Reformed Ministerial Institute.

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Changes of Address

The Rev. William J. Bomer, chaplain, 3420 N.W. 29th Ave., Oklahoma City 7, Okla.

The Rev. Walter J. Magee, Box 605, Florida, N. Y.

The Rev. Jack J. Peterson, 403 E. Atlantic Ave., Stratford, N. J.

The Rev. Charles G. Schaufele, 260 Chebacco Rd., Hamilton, Mass.

The Rev. Thomas E. Tyson, newly ordained, 311 State St., Grove City, Pa., is added to the roll of Orthodox Presbyterian ministers.

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Hughes Lectures on English Reformers and Inspiration

Although "the question of the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture was scarcely a live issue four hundred years ago, for it was not in dispute — it was universally acknowledged that the Bible was the inspired Word of God — this does not mean that the Reformers did not have much to say about the Bible and its origin," stated Dr. Philip E. Hughes in the introduction to an informative address early in December. Professor Paul Woolley presided on the occasion of this Worcester Lecture of Westminster Theological Seminary.

Quoting extensively from such men as James Pilkington, Thomas Cranmer, Bishop Hugh Latimer, William Whitaker, John Jewel, and William Tyndale, the lecturer noted that several points at issue during the Reformation are still of importance to us. Among examples cited were "the sense in which Scripture should be interpreted" and the fact that the authority of the Fathers and of the Church must be subject to that of Holy Scripture.

The Reformers were not mere "academic theologians in retreat," according to Dr. Hughes, who is editor of *The Churchman*, for "they were in the thick of the battle," and the Bible was for them a most practical book.

In the second part of his lecture he turned to the writings of Calvin to show how in his commentaries the same principles enunciated by the

English Reformers worked out when applied to the text itself. When confronted by passages that might appear to offer problems or perplexities, Calvin was not "embarrassed or disconcerted," said Dr. Hughes. "Holy Scripture is a sacred mystery" — illustrated by "the still more wonderful mystery" of the incarnate Son who is both God and man, he affirmed.

The lecture was concluded with a quotation from Tyndale: "The Scripture is that wherewith God draweth us unto Him. The Scriptures spring out of God, and flow unto Christ, and were given to lead us to Christ. Thou must, therefore, go along by the Scripture as by a line, until thou come at Christ, which is the way's end and resting-place."

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