

GUARDIAN

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Almost a generation has passed since the birth of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Of course its heritage stretches far back of 1936: for that year was a continuation as well as a beginning. This month is but a milepost on the road ahead.

The perspective of 1966 increases our appreciation for the stalwarts in the faith who saw the urgent necessity of the stand taken thirty years ago. How accurately they read the signs of decadence in the church they were forced to leave! The incipient apostasy of those years has come to tragic fruition in the sixties.

The false principles of the Auburn Affirmation have been written into the Confession of 1967 of the United Presbyterian Church. In 1936 denials of the faith were tolerated in the boards and agencies and by official action of the General Assembly. In 1966 both liberals and conservatives have come to terms with a confessional concept that toys with truth, abandons Presbyterianism, and gives constitutional status to a false gospel. This is nothing less than deliberate apostasy from historic Christianity.

Never has the Orthodox Presbyterian Church had more reason not only to exist but to move forward. It is not enough merely to sound the trumpet of warning. A new generation must catch the vision of the whole Word for the whole world. The hand of fellowship must be offered to all who would unite with a church committed to Jesus Christ.

Let the church continue to strive for a revival of true Presbyterianism in the land. May it take more initiative in the direction of biblical unity with others of like faith. It needs to pray daily for the working of the Holy Spirit in its midst.

May the opportunities ahead both challenge and humble the Orthodox Presbyterian Church under the mighty hand of our sovereign God.

Jesus Alive Forever

EDWARD WYBENGA

The Empty Tomb

Luke 24:1-12

While it was yet dark on the first day of the week—the day that came to be known as the Lord's Day—a group of women left their homes and passed through the streets of Jerusalem, hurrying to Joseph's tomb. They had brought precious spices with which to complete the burial of Jesus' body. So filled were they with a sense of loving duty that the problem of removing the great stone never occurred to them until later—but when they arrived they found the stone had already been rolled away. Surprised, the women entered the rock tomb, but the body of their Master was not there.

Suddenly they became aware of the presence of "two men in shining garments"—angels assuming human form for the time being. The angels gently rebuked the women, saying, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

Christ had said more than once that he would rise again, but they had forgotten until just now when the angels reminded them of his words. If they had believed and remembered, they would not now be looking for their Lord in a burial garden.

The wondrous fact of the resurrection: this his disciples could not understand; they could not believe it; they did not expect it. But their unbelief, under the providence of God, contributed all the more to the veracity of their testimony to the truth of the resurrection when later, by the appearances of Christ, the disciples were compelled to believe what they saw.

No fact in all human history is better established than the bodily resurrection of our Lord. The empty tomb is an unanswerable argument. Those

This is the concluding meditation in a series that began on this page in the issue of October 1960. Although the author went to be with Lord just over a year ago, we are happy to have been able to complete the series which he had put in almost final form. "He being dead yet speaketh."

who deny the fact have resorted to all kinds of weak and implausible theories in a vain effort to support their unbelief. But they can never get around the stubborn historical fact of the empty tomb.

Ours is a living Savior. Hear his words to the apostle John in a later vision on the isle of Patmos: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive forevermore" (Rev. 1:18). He who once died for the sins of his people now lives, never to die again. That is the glorious consolation for all believers. Our trust for eternal salvation is in a Christ who has conquered death.

The Emmaus Travellers

Luke 24:13-35

In the afternoon of that resurrection day two disciples, Cleopas (and perhaps Luke), were journeying to the village of Emmaus about seven or eight miles from Jerusalem. They were talking about the events of recent days, debating the question of Jesus' Messiahship. Could he have been the Christ prophesied in their Scriptures—and yet have come to such an end on the cross at the hands of his enemies?

As they walked along a stranger joined himself to their company and questioned them about their sad looks and anxious words. Surprised at his apparent ignorance, Cleopas asked, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" Then in reply to his further query, they reviewed briefly the recent happenings and how their hopes con-

cerning Jesus had been dashed to pieces—although certain women had astonished them that very day with a report that he was alive, they admitted.

Now it was Jesus' turn to speak (for unknown to them it was the Lord): "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." When they reached their destination, it seemed that their companion intended to go on, but since the shades of night were falling they persuaded him to tarry with them.

While they were having supper the stranger, acting the part of a host, took bread, blessed it, broke and gave some to them. A most marvelous thing occurred as they were watching him carefully: "their eyes were opened and they knew him." And with the shock of recognition suddenly he vanished, and they exclaimed to one another: "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" Leaving the table, they hastened back to Jerusalem, eager to tell the eleven that they had seen their risen Master.

Other Appearances

Luke 24:44-53

They found all the disciples and others gathered together (except for Thomas) excitedly talking about how the Lord had appeared to Simon Peter. Suddenly Jesus himself appeared among them, saying, "Peace be unto you." Since the doors were closed, his mysterious appearance terrified them, and they thought they had seen a ghost. But Jesus quieted their fears as he had often done before as he spoke further words of assurance. He showed them his hands and feet, asked them to touch him—"a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have"—and ate fish and honey before their eyes. In every possible way he demonstrated that it was a real body that he had, that he was truly alive from the dead.

Their joy knew no bounds—they could scarcely believe for the wonder of it. Jesus reminded them of the words which he had before spoken of the fulfillment of prophecy in his suf-

(continued on page 75)

Thirty-third General Assembly

JOHN J. MITCHELL

How does one summarize a General Assembly? In past years there have been certain issues that seemed to dominate the church's interests and served to distinguish one assembly from another. There was no lack of important business when the 33rd General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church met at Oostburg, Wisconsin, during the last week of April, 1966. Still, no single concern pre-empted the major attention.

Certainly this Assembly was a business-like one. Sessions began on Tuesday morning, April 26, and all business was concluded by Thursday evening, April 28, a full day ahead of schedule! Debate was orderly — at least until it became obvious that everyone could go home a day early.

Perhaps two areas of action and debate will turn out to have been the most important. The greatest interest and diversity of feeling was seen during the discussions of our relations with other churches. Nothing new or startling was decided, but certainly a greater understanding of the meaning of these "ecumenical relations" was gained. Though little debate was heard, one of the Assembly's most important actions was the approval of the combined budget of the three major standing committees. In looking toward "brother" churches at our side and in setting a course forward for the work of the church, the Assembly was made aware again that its foundations are in Christ, its guide is his Word, and its future is dependent on his continued blessings.

Yet if this Assembly is to be remembered as "the one when . . .," it will surely be as the Farewell-to-Mr. Murray Assembly. For many of the commissioners, this was the last opportunity for them to bid God-speed to a beloved brother and teacher. Professor John Murray expects to complete his teaching duties at Westminster Theological Seminary by January of 1967 and hopes to return to his native Scotland soon after. During the

days of this Assembly, we were reminded again of the great debt we owe to the sovereign Lord who gives gifts to his church. Not least among those gifts enjoyed by Orthodox Presbyterians has been the faithful service and effective teaching ministry of Professor Murray.

On Monday evening, we gathered with members from the Oostburg and Cedar Grove churches to worship and commune with our Lord. The Rev. Donald Stanton and the Session of the Bethel Church, Oostburg, conducted the service. Mr. Murray opened to us the Word of God in Isaiah 53. We were brought face to face with the Lord's obedient Servant, the Christ who gave himself to do his Father's will even unto bearing our iniquities in his death, that he might be exalted and so "justify many." In the communion that followed, the bread and wine visibly confirmed that gracious love of the Father and humble obedience of the Son that enables us to enjoy communion with the triune God.

TUESDAY, APRIL 26

Many of the commissioners had arrived in Milwaukee on Monday to be greeted by bright sunshine and brisk breezes. They had also been greeted by a most efficient transportation system organized by the host church to bring us to our respective places. Tuesday dawned cold, wet, and blustery. But the warm hospitality of the homes in Oostburg and Cedar Grove was fully appreciated and contributed greatly to a most pleasant week. Many kindnesses were extended to commissioners, and the "tradition"

With the editor absent on account of illness, the Rev. John Mitchell, well-known writer for the Committee on Christian Education, graciously consented to be reporter for the Presbyterian Guardian this year. We are indebted to him for this excellent interpretive account of the Assembly.

of furnishing secretarial assistance to the clerk was continued, a service of benefit to all.

The commissioners were called to order at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday by the Moderator of the 32nd General Assembly, the Rev. Robert Eckardt. The Assembly was constituted by a worship service in which Mr. Eckardt preached on the subject "A Good Servant of Jesus Christ." With I Timothy 4:16 as his text, Mr. Eckardt urged the congregation of commissioners to develop the characteristics of "good servants," as teachers of sound doctrine, exhorters unto eternal life, and examples of spiritual growth. Pastors were reminded that they minister not only to a congregation but to their own spiritual needs, that "in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

Assembly Roll

Following the worship service, the formal business of the Assembly began with the calling of the roll. There were 76 ministerial members present during the sessions. Twenty-two churches were represented by ruling elders with seven alternates present. The total of 98 commissioners was seven higher than last year's.

Attendance by presbyteries was fairly well balanced, reflecting the advantages of a central geographical location. The Presbytery of the Dakotas had 10 ministers present, and one elder: Kamroth. From New Jersey there were 12 ministers and three elders: Barker, Keenan, and Neel. The Presbytery of New York and New England had 10 ministers present and one elder: K. Elder. The Presbytery of Ohio had the most remarkable record with four of its five ministers present (the fifth had to supervise the beginning of construction on a new church), and all churches represented by ruling elders: Armour, Bailey, Boermans, Copeland, and J. Smith.

From Philadelphia Presbytery there were 16 ministers present and six rul-

ing elders: De Haas, De Moss, C. Duggan, W. Ferguson, Meeker, and Roberts. The Presbytery of the South had five ministers present, but no elders. Southern California showed up in force with 10 ministers present and one elder: Flores. But the West Coast Presbytery could only muster two ministers and no elders. Of course, the Presbytery of Wisconsin was well represented with seven ministers, five elders: E. DeMaster, Horne, Mentink, H. Roskamp, and L. Voskuil, and seven alternate elders: Bayze, Le Mahieu, Veldhorst, H. Lemmenes, A. Lemmenes, E. Claerbout, Risseeuw and two more who never had the opportunity to serve since the Assembly finished a day early!

During the course of the Assembly, two fraternal delegates were enrolled as corresponding members: the Rev. John Olthoff, pastor of the Oostburg Christian Reformed Church, was received as his Synod's fraternal delegate; and the Rev. Max Belz of Cono, Iowa, was seated as the delegate from the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. (The Rev. Theodore Engstrom was also enrolled as an alternate delegate for the Reformed Presbyterians.) Both fraternal delegates addressed the Assembly during the course of the discussions concerning relations with their respective churches.

Preliminary Reports

Following a pleasant recess at 10:00 a.m. (the first of many such interludes of refreshment and fellowship), the Assembly heard the report of the Stated Clerk, Mr. R. Johnston. Eighty-seven churches (14 more than last year) contributed a total of \$4826.48 to the General Assembly Fund (the operational expense fund). Expenses during the past year totaled \$4699.97. Including income from sales of the minutes and a previous balance, the Fund has a balance on hand of \$763.81.

Later in the morning Mr. Malcor presented the first report from the Travel Fund Committee. As finally summarized, total contributions were \$7984.98 (almost exactly \$1000 more than last year) with 84 churches contributing (6 less than last year!). For perhaps the first time in General Assembly history, there was no debate over how to disburse the fund! Every commissioner requesting it was paid 4.5¢ per mile for every mile traveled,

and the fund still had a balance of \$895.06 for next year. The churches are to be commended for making it possible for commissioners to attend the Assembly without undue personal expense to themselves. The budget for the General Assembly and Travel Funds was again set at the rate of 75¢ and \$1.25 per communicant member respectively.

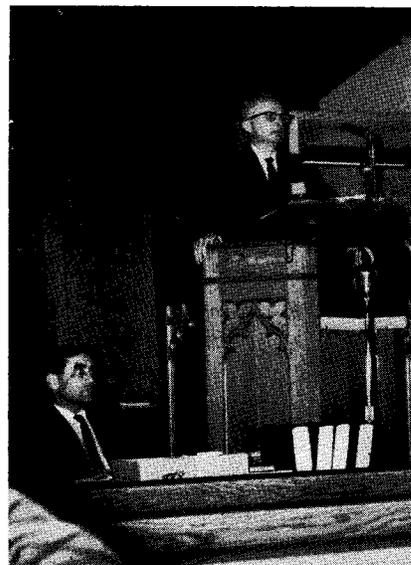
The Statistician (a new office begun last year) reported several encouraging figures. Total contributions exceeded \$1,609,000, and for the first time general receipts went above the million-dollar mark. The rate of increase during 1965 was 7.9 percent, and the average per communicant member has increased during the past ten years from \$108 to \$194. Thanks should be given to God for his blessing us with prosperity and a spirit of liberal giving.

Statistics

One interesting aspect of this increase came from the Presbytery of the South where total contributions rose by 58.7 percent to an average \$303 per communicant member! This remarkable record, in the Statistician's words, was due to the "high giving level" (or, as described in another place, to the "high level giving") of the new congregation in Harriman, Tennessee. Not only do these people give so freely, but they have actively corresponded with hundreds of other true Presbyterians throughout the South. May many more such groups be led of God to seek a sounder fellowship within the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the days ahead!

Some figures in the Statistical Report were not so encouraging, however. Membership has increased by 2.5 percent, slightly faster than the national population growth rate. But most of this growth was due to the additions of the Harriman church and a new congregation in Campbell, California. More serious is the report that 40 churches suffered a decline in Sunday school enrollment during 1965. Surely we need to pray the Lord to give us increased zeal and abilities both to sow the Word and to reap the harvest.

Officers for the General Assembly were nominated and elected in a prompt business-like way. (Mr. Adams proposed a punched-hole ballot that would enable tellers to make the count in much less time than is now the



Elder Richard Barker presides as Moderator. The Rev. Robley Johnston is Stated Clerk.

case. It was also suggested that next year's Committee on Arrangements endeavor to secure local elders and deacons to serve as regular tellers. Adoption of both these suggestions would greatly accelerate business in future assemblies.)

Having already shown his abilities in the job, Mr. R. Johnston was the only nominee for Stated Clerk and was declared elected.

Messrs. Peterson, Ahlfeldt, Barker, Fikkert, and Ellis were nominated for Moderator. Mr. Barker, who had come to the Assembly expecting to present a report and otherwise enjoy himself, found that he had been elected on the second ballot. Mr. Hodgson escorted him to the chair and Mr. Eckardt, with no sign of reluctance whatever, turned over the Moderator's job. Mr. Barker is the second ruling elder to moderate a General Assembly.

Mr. Elliott was nominated for the office of Assistant Clerk and, with no other nominations, was declared elected.

Mr. Edward Haug, the incumbent Statistician, was similarly returned to that post. The Assembly approved changes in the Standing Rules to make this a permanent office of the General Assembly.

Overtures and Communications

With elections so speedily concluded, the Assembly moved on to hear the overtures sent from presbyteries and various other communica-

tions. There were communications from the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands, the Free Church of Scotland, the Reformed Church (Eureka Classis), and a letter asking for conversations on closer fellowship from the Canadian Reformed Churches (a group of so-called "Article 31" churches who trace their origin to the work of Schilder in the Netherlands). Greetings were also read from all four Orthodox Presbyterian Missions. (The overtures presented will be noted later in this report.)

The docket was adopted as presented by the Stated Clerk, and expectations were that the Assembly would certainly be over by Friday evening, at the latest. Changes to the Standing Rules were then considered. As already noted, the office of Statistician was approved. But a proposal to set a permanent regular date for General Assembly met with much less agreement. Debate was postponed until later, and the proposal itself was finally lost. Too early a date interferes with preparation of reports by the Standing Committees; too late a date upsets plans for the rest of the year; much of the time in between conflicts with the schedule of Westminster Seminary. The insoluble problem!

Temporary and Standing Committees

Even with this much business already completed, it was only now time for the lunch recess. For the sake of certain waistlines, it's a good thing business did proceed so rapidly. A few more exposures to the bounty of the table at Bethel Church might have been disastrous! And those folks had coffee for us at every meal and recess—real Dutch hospitality!

After lunch, the Moderator proceeded with the appointment of temporary committees. Messrs. Haney and Tavares were named to the Committee on Date and Place of the 34th General Assembly. Messrs. Ediger, Dunn, Eckardt, Graham (later replaced by Clough), and Phillips were appointed to the Committee on Overtures and Communications. To the Committee on Presbyterial Records, the Moderator named Messrs. Albright, Hodgson, and Armour; and to the Committee on Standing Committee Records, he named Messrs. Voorhoeves, Valentine, and E. DeMaster. Elder Neel was named to replace Mr. Black on the Travel Fund Committee.

A Committee on Necrology was established to prepare memorial tributes for the Rev. R. B. Kuiper and the Rev. Glenn R. Coie. Messrs. Galbraith and Clowney were appointed to this committee.

Most of the reports having been printed and mailed to commissioners beforehand, the most common motion heard all week was that of the Stated Clerk asking that the successive reports be printed in the minutes without being read orally. With this much time saved, the Assembly was ready to consider the Standing Committee reports early on Tuesday afternoon.

Compared with previous years, there seemed to be little discussion of the details of these reports. Judging by the comments made, there was general satisfaction and approval of the work of the three major standing committees.

To the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension were elected Messrs. Thompson, Knight, Marston, and elders Bellis and Roeber. The election of the Rev. John Thompson, pastor in Harriman, Tennessee, reflected the Assembly's interest in the contacts made by that church with many concerned Presbyterians in the South. There seems to be good reason to hope that other new congregations

will soon be found in that area.

In connection with the report of the Committee on Foreign Missions, the Assembly was informed of the Missions Conference to be held in 1968 in the Netherlands just before the meeting of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. It was recognized that our church should be represented at both of these meetings, and the Assembly voted to budget one-half the cost of attendance now, with the other half expected to be approved at next year's Assembly. The selection of delegates was postponed until next year.

Missionary John Johnston spoke about the strategic importance of Taiwan in reaching all of Asia with the gospel. Mr. Arnold Kress, missionary-appointee to Japan, spoke briefly and enthusiastically as he looked forward to departure for the field later this year. Several commissioners expressed particular thanks for the ministry of Missionary Conn during the past few months. Messrs. Dunn, Ellis, Fikkert and elders Width and Bacon were elected to the class of 1969, Mr. Olson to the class of 1968, and Mr. Phillips to the class of 1967 of the Foreign Missions Committee.

Discussion of the report of the Committee on Christian Education soon centered on its Sunday school

AS SEEN FOR THE FIRST TIME

The Rev. John Thompson, Jr., pastor of the Conservative Presbyterian Church, Harriman, Tennessee, which was received by the Presbytery of the South last summer, made the following observations after attending his first Orthodox Presbyterian General Assembly:

The perpetuation of a church's fidelity to the Scriptures and to its doctrinal standards rests in the calibre of the heart subscription of all office bearers. The safeguards which preserve and protect this heart subscription in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, it seems to me, are the unfeigned love and trust of its members for one another, the constant appeal to the Scriptures in all deliberations and debate before action is taken, and the singular absence of complicated structure in the practical operations of the denomination.

There are no boards, all work is carried on by committees of the General Assembly with no divisions or subdivisions and minimal staff. These committees are elected by the General Assembly on nomination from the floor of the Assembly—there is no nominating committee. Every minister is a member of the Assembly and every church is entitled to elder representation. There is no commission on the minister and his work—each presbytery exercises immediate observation, control, and correction over every minister. The principle of congregational ownership of property is fixed in the constitution. There are no dissipating ties with questionable church councils. There is studied pre-occupation with spiritual affairs and broad liberty, with no official pronouncements, in social matters.

Our prayer is that we may be increasingly faithful to the ideas and ideals of this fine fellowship.

curriculum program. The Committee proposed to complete the curriculum (through the Senior High department) in the next five years. That this would require considerable capital funds was obvious, and the figure may well exceed half-a-million dollars. The Assembly seemed ready to proceed on such a development program.

A strong desire was expressed for an "official" printing of the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms, a desire quite relevant in this day of confessional changes and ecumenical discussions. The Christian Education Committee was directed to publish such an edition, and to prepare "prooftexts" for it to be presented at a later General Assembly. (Some work on prooftexts has been done in the past, but the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has never formally adopted any.)

Messrs. Knudsen, Young, Grotenhuis, and elders LeGro and Sandberg were elected to the Committee on Christian Education. By the end of that first afternoon, the Assembly had completed its consideration of the reports of the three major standing committees. At 5:30 p.m. the Assembly recessed for supper, with temporary committees scheduled to meet that evening in various classrooms of the Oostburg Christian School.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27

Following a devotional service led by Mr. Hall, the Assembly reconvened at 8:00 Wednesday morning. The previous day's minutes were read and approved, and the Assembly turned to the report of the Committee on General Benevolence.

It was noted that the receipts for this committee had fallen off. Since the Committee's work is in the ministry of mercy, it is no longer a part of the combined budget. Support for its work is sought primarily from Deacon's Funds and local offerings for diaconal causes. The Committee's total budget, including both the Aged and Infirm Minister's Fund and its more general benevolent activities, was approved at slightly over \$10,000. It was noted that an average of \$1.25 per communicant member would be needed. Mr. Bachman and elder John Tolsma were reelected to this committee.

The report of the Committee on Pensions was presented. Concern was expressed for those ministers not yet

in the pension program. The assets of the Pension Fund now require the Committee to incorporate itself in order legally to handle its affairs, and this incorporation was approved. Messrs. Hodgson, Hoogerhyde, and Keenan were elected to the class of 1969, and Mr. Eckardt to the class of 1967 of this committee.

Ecumenical Relations

This area of our church's affairs generated the most spirited and perhaps fruitful discussions during the sessions of the Assembly. One special committee, the Committee to Confer with Representatives of the Christian Reformed Church, has been engaged in conversations with that denomination for some years. A standing committee, the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations, handles all other ecumenical concerns including conversations begun this year with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod.

The subject of ecumenical relations was appropriately introduced by the address of the Rev. Max Belz, speaking in behalf of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. Though plainly aware of difficulties involved, Mr. Belz declared that Reformed Presbyterians "reach out after you in love," and urged us to find a common rallying point around the confessional standards that both our churches defend and maintain.

In addition to the two churches already mentioned, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was represented by fraternal delegates during 1965 at the Synod of the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, the Presbyterian Church (Hap Dong) and the Presbyterian Church (Ko Sin) in Korea, the Reformed Church of Japan, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America ("Covenanter"), and the Reformed Church in the United States (Classis Eureka). Fraternal relations are also maintained with several other Presbyterian and Reformed churches throughout the world.

It was noted that Dr. Van Til had been released from further obligation to attend sessions of the Reformed-Lutheran Conversations (a talking over of issues by churches, both liberal and conservative, with Lutheran and Reformed backgrounds). The public press in certain cases had listed the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as agreeing with the conclusions of these

conversations. The Committee on Ecumenicity, Etc., was directed to seek correction of this misrepresentation if it had originated with officials of the Conversations. General relief seemed to be the attitude of many that we were no longer involved in this discussion.

Continuing interest in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod was evident. The Assembly voted to pay its proportionate share of RES operational expenses. The Regional Conference being held by the Synod in Grand Rapids on July 26-28, 1966 was noted. Participation in the RES seems genuinely to be an advantage, and its world-wide witness has been effective.

CRC and RPC, ES

But the most concern in this area had to do with our relationships to the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. No doubt this is true simply because it is with these two churches that we are now most seriously discussing possible organic unity. During the discussions of the reports of the two "ecumenical committees," all the problem areas involved with the CRS and RPC, ES were mentioned. Several commissioners seemed to feel that our church was rushing headlong into marriage, or at least into an engagement to be married, with partners whose suitability could be questioned.

In answer to such attitudes it was noted that we have a Christ-given duty to seek visible unity with believers wherever possible, a position that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church formally acknowledged in 1961. We must be willing to talk with our brethren, correct them if need be, be corrected by them if that need be, and endeavor to make a sound spiritual unity apparent to the world through visible organic unity.

On the other hand, there was considerable apprehension expressed that our church might simply drift into these "marriages" at the expense of the truth. Though Christ does expect us to seek visible unity, he expects us to establish that unity for the sake of the truth in the sight of the world. To this reporter, some of the apprehension seems due to a lack of information on the drift of these conversations both with the CRC and RPC, ES. We know the discussions are being held, but we have little information



COMMISSIONERS AT THE THIRTY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HELD AT BETHEL CHURCH, OOSTBURG, WISCONSIN.

on the topics discussed or conclusions reached.

Several recommendations urging greater cooperation with the Christian Reformed Church and its agencies were adopted. In regard both to this denomination and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, similar basic recommendations were adopted to state our position on possible unity. Both of the committees holding conversations with these two churches were directed to "work toward the ultimate goal of organic union between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and (both) the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod (and) the Christian Reformed Church on a scriptural basis." Both committees were also directed to include in their reports to future General Assemblies a summary of their discussions with these churches and an evaluation of the results.

These two recommendations seem to place our ecumenical conversations on a sound footing, with adequate information being made available, and unity being sought "on a scriptural basis."

The consideration of these ecumenical relations was concluded with the address of the Rev. John Olthoff, speaking for the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. Declaring that he desired to see organic unity, Mr. Olthoff in effect urged both our churches to ask themselves "just how sincere is our desire for merger." This is a question that will face the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for years to come!

After a hearty supper on Wednesday evening, the Assembly reconvened

at 7:00 p.m. to begin its consideration of the report of the Stewardship Committee. This committee, composed of *ex officio* representatives and appointed representatives from the three major standing committees, the committees' business manager, and three members elected by the Assembly, is authorized to approve and present to the Assembly a combined budget for the three major standing committees.

The Combined Budget

As presented and approved by the General Assembly, the combined budget amounts to a total of \$497,639, of which our churches are urged to provide a minimum of \$335,550. (About \$55,000 is expected from other sources, and over \$100,000 from sales.) These amounts are in line with past giving by our churches and an increase based on the past rate of growth in giving.

Particular attention was given to the budget of the Committee on Christian Education. Its share of the combined budget "would have to rise from 19.7 percent of the present (1966) budget, to 23.5 percent of the 1970 combined budget." This increase would be necessary to enable the Committee to carry out its proposed completion of the Sunday school curriculum. It should be noted that, great as this increased expenditure is, it is not anticipated that the other two committees will have their budgets cut. The increase to the Christian Education Committee is expected to come from the normal increase in giving by the church as a whole. Still the church should be aware of the fact that this combined budget sets a new course for the

church with this increased emphasis on Christian Education.

Elder Metzger was reelected to the Stewardship Committee, and Mr. Barker was reappointed as its chairman.

The Committee on Revisions to the Form of Government and Book of Discipline continues to make progress in its work, and expects to have completed work on the Form of Government by the next Assembly. Proposed revisions were presented and sent to presbyteries for study. Steps to adopt these revisions will presumably be begun at next year's Assembly.

Two special committees have been erected in recent years to provide guidelines for the Assembly's review of presbyterial and standing committee records. Both committees have nearly completed their work, and this task of the Assembly is much better organized now than it used to be.

THURSDAY, APRIL 28

A devotional service was conducted by the Rev. Wilson Rinker, pastor of the Campbell, California, church. Following this, the Assembly reconvened at 8:00 a.m., and it soon became obvious that its work would be completed in that day.

The Committee to Study the Doctrine of Guidance, Etc. (erected to consider some of the problems that arose in connection with the Peniel Bible Conference) presented a rough draft on "The Communion of the Holy Spirit." The Committee asked that this preliminary draft be studied and comments on it be sent back to the Committee.

Two matters of particular interest to the Presbytery of the West Coast

were considered. The question of admitting to church membership "those who cannot in good conscience present their children for baptism" was declared to be a "matter for judgment by sessions." The Assembly determined to send to the sessions for study the full report of its special committee that had "considered" this question. (*The report will appear in a later issue. — Ed.*)

The West Coast Presbytery had also sought the Assembly's advice in regard to receiving a minister from another denomination without requiring him to pass an examination in Hebrew. The Assembly advised the Presbytery that this requirement "may be waived, if it judge that such a requirement would involve hardship" on the prospective candidate.

Theological Education

From the Presbytery of Philadelphia there had come an overture asking the Assembly to establish a standing committee on theological education to advise presbyteries and candidates for the ministry as to the suitability of training given in various theological seminaries. The sharpest debate of the week came on this proposal.

Those who supported the request saw it as a means whereby the General Assembly would carry out its responsibilities to "superintend the concerns of the whole church," which concerns could well be understood to include that of the preparation of men for the ministry. Those who opposed the request did so mainly on the grounds that it would tend to establish a list of "approved and disapproved semi-

Professor John Murray (right) in conversation with the Rev. Edward Kellogg of San Diego.



naries." Various amendments and substitutions were proposed, but the proposal finally lost by a narrow vote.

A protest was drawn up noting the Assembly's refusal to take any action at all in the matter. Later in the day, the matter was reintroduced in a different form with a committee established to "consider methods whereby the Church might be able to aid and advise presbyteries with regard to ministerial training and to consider the relationship of the Church to theological seminaries. This committee is to report to the next Assembly.

Concluding Business

By now it was evident that the Assembly's work would be done that day, and some horseplay was noted here and there. A secret group of admirers (?) insisted on writing in the name of one commissioner on every ballot being taken, an embarrassment to that commissioner perhaps and certainly a delay to the tellers counting the ballots. Henry Coray's enlightening reports were also heard, as well as other remarks of a mock-serious nature.

Another overture from Philadelphia Presbytery found smoother sailing. It requested the Assembly to set up a committee to consider ways of helping churches without pastors and candidates seeking pulpits. The Assembly passed this request and elected Messrs. Eyres, Kellogg, Coray, Neilands, and Bellis (with a "geographical bias" beyond all doubt!).

Memorials for the Rev. Glenn R. Coie and the Rev. R. B. Kuiper were presented and adopted by the Assembly. Mr. DeVelde was called on to lead the Assembly in prayer for the blessings of God given to us through these two faithful servants.

The records of all the Standing Committees were approved. The records of the Presbyteries were approved with various exceptions noted; only the Presbytery of New Jersey managed to have its minutes approved without exception of any kind.

During the course of the Assembly, several representatives of various organizations were present and addressed the brethren. The Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, the World Home Bible League, Covenant College, Trinity Christian College, and Westminster Theological Seminary were all presented to the commissioners and their respective activities noted.

Date and Place of the 34th

After the usual proposal, counter-proposals, rebuttals, and arguments, the Assembly accepted the original proposal of its Committee on Date and Place of the 34th General Assembly, and agreed to meet at Long Beach, California, on Tuesday, April 25, 1967.

Supper with Mr. Murray

On Thursday evening, the commissioners gathered to eat supper in the basement of the Bethel Church. The meal was delicious, as had been the case throughout the week. Everyone was aware that the work of the Assembly was practically over. And everyone was waiting for the after-supper program.

As soon as the dessert had been finished, Mr. Eyres rose to announce the program. Nearly a hundred commissioners knew what it was, but one had not. Speeches of appreciation by former students, all emphasizing the sound training in the study of God's Word, made it clear enough how this one had affected those present.

Together with an engraving of a notable American (one this reporter doesn't see very often!) to serve as a token of love from those present and as an invitation to return in the future, a scroll had been drawn up and signed by all the commissioners. The concluding paragraph summed up our feelings as we bid God-speed to a beloved friend:

We honour you in our hearts. We respect you for your scholarship and wisdom. We are grateful to our God for you, Professor Murray. But we are compelled to say more: We love you dearly, and it is with deep sorrow that it appears that we may not see your face or hear your voice in future Assemblies. We pray God that He may lay His hand on you for a most useful and happy ministry during your retirement years in your native land. We "thank God on every remembrance of you."

Adjournment

Soon after that farewell supper, the Assembly concluded its business and adjourned. God has blessed our church in many ways during our first thirty years. May He continue to give us such blessings in the years that lie ahead until our Lord's return.

Fraternal Greetings

John H. Olthoff
Christian Reformed Church

To say that I am delighted to bring the greetings of my church to your church is to say it tritely but truthfully. Why shouldn't I be happy to do so? We have so much in common; we are so similar in our interpretation of the Word.

We accept the Bible, in all of its parts, as God's infallible revelation. We are agreed on such basic teachings as: the Holy Trinity, the eternal Sonship of Christ, the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit, vicarious atonement, salvation by grace, the visible, personal return of the Lord Jesus, as well as the resurrection of the body and the everlasting separation of believers and unbelievers.

No one will contradict the statement that we are living in the ecumenical age. Mergers already a fact and discussions of potential union between denominations are accelerating. One is reminded of Wendell Willkie's best seller *One World*, in which he made an impassioned plea for the harmonious cooperation of all nations. He certainly had a laudable aim. But human nature being what it is, and Communism being what it is, the world is far from one. And it will never be one until God has established the new earth.

The condition of the church seems almost as sad as that of the world. It too is a house divided against itself. Yet, unbelievable as it may seem, the church of Christ is one. The Scripture teaches the unity of the church: one Head, one Spirit, one foundation, one faith and baptism, one body. Nothing can destroy it—not even the apparently hopeless division of the church. However, it must be admitted that the present division does hide, does obscure its unity. Isn't the church duty-bound to remedy this situation?

More relevantly, what about a union between our two denominations? Well, of course, we've been working on that. Our respective committees have been meeting and conversing. For some years each of us has been hearing reports at our General Assembly and Synodical gatherings. Perhaps we've come to the point now at which to ask ourselves just how sincere is our de-

sire for merger. Do we really want to proceed toward organic union and thus make a worthwhile contribution to the realization of the ideal of visible unity? I suppose much depends on to what extent we consider organically unity to be a solemn duty.

May the Spirit lead you in this as in all your deliberations. Thank you.

Max Belz
Reformed Presbyterian Church,
Evangelical Synod

I have been asked to convey fraternal greetings to this 33rd General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. I come to this hour with profound feeling of privilege and responsibility.

We reach out after you in Christian love. We reach out after you, moreover, in Christian truth, for our Confession of Faith is practically identical to yours. In the large, we need go back only to 1936 to find ourselves united on confessional standards. They were printed and bound then by our ecclesiastical predecessor, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Because that church had departed from sincere adherence to these standards, our own founding fathers, after seeking correction, withdrew from their unequal yoke with unbelievers.

The thirty years passing since 1936 have seen the apostasy deepen until now a grave confessional crisis is upon the church from which we separated. The standards of 1936, which our founding fathers loved and sought to maintain, are now about to be shamefully abandoned. This confessional crisis in the apostate church makes more necessary than ever a confessional clarity in our own separated and splintered communions.

The hour is upon us to close ranks in our confession and in our corporation, if we are to minister convincingly to confused Presbyterian churchgoers in our land. The hour is come to proceed with dispatch to ecclesiastical reunion. We are creedal communions. We are confessional churches. Because of this, it is likely that our best possible plan of union for 1966 is that set of standards which our founding fathers defended in 1936.

The Presbyterian
GUARDIAN

EDITOR
Robert E. Nicholas



All correspondence should be addressed to The Presbyterian Guardian, 7401 Old York Road, Phila., Pa. 19126

We reach out after you in love, as you have boldly reached out after us. We reach out after you in truth, and so have you, toward us. Let us honor our founding fathers by uniting now upon the very standards they fought bravely to uphold. Let us repair to this beloved, beleaguered banner in simplicity, sincerity, and humility.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit be your portion as you pursue your study of the peace, unity, and purity of the church.

Westminster Seminary Commencement

Twenty-nine degrees were awarded at the 37th commencement exercises of Westminster Theological Seminary on May 18. In addition to 23 bachelor of divinity degrees (including four Canadians and four from the Orient) four master of theology degrees were granted to Richard Hodgson, Myung Hyuk Kim, Jelle Tuininga, and Andrew Zwart.

The degree of doctor of theology was given to Dirk H. Odendaal of South Africa, who had returned in mid-year to his teaching in a missionary school there; and to Theophilus J. Herter of Broomall, Pa. Dr. Herter was recently named a bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church, with his installation set for June 15.

Dr. David W. Baker, assistant professor of religion in Ursinus College as well as a medical doctor and a radio preacher, delivered the commencement address. The speaker at the annual banquet on the preceding evening was Dr. Alexander De Jong, new president of Trinity Christian College.

Training for Laymen

More than four hundred graduates of the Reformed Bible Institute, Grand Rapids, Michigan, are serving in the many ways open to unordained workers in God's kingdom. An equal number have studied at the Institute for shorter periods. This year's day school enrollment is 125, with 200 more in evening classes. Among the 22 graduates this spring is Mr. Roswel Kamrath, Orthodox Presbyterian from Leith, N. D. One graduate is from Nigeria and a half-dozen are Canadians.

Miss Mary Magee (whose late father was an Orthodox Presbyterian pastor) joined the staff as director of Christian service last fall, and will serve as Dean of Women next year. She acted as accompanist for the choir on a spring tour to the Pacific Northwest. Miss Magee points out that R.B.I. students are available for summer assignments as pastor's assistants, for visitation evangelism, VBS teaching and other tasks.

It is of interest that the Reformed Bible Institute was founded in the same year that saw the beginning of the Back to God Hour and the World Home Bible League, and they have all recently celebrated their 25th anniversaries. R.B.I. alumni are found in thirteen foreign countries, and present students come from a half dozen outside the United States. The Rev. Rolf Veenstra has taught Missions since his return from Nigeria two years ago. The Institute is a fully accredited member of the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges.

In addition to its day and evening classes, the Institute offers several correspondence courses in doctrine, evangelism, and various Bible books. The most recent is a text on Ephesians by the Rev. John Schaal. It consists of ten lessons with outlines and comment, together with a separate pamphlet of worksheets to be sent in, and may be used for either individual or group study.

Distinctive! Different!

**THE REFORMED
BIBLE INSTITUTE**

Write for catalog to
1869 Robinson Road, S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

A review article

Symbols, Structures, and Scripture

Christ and Architecture, Donald J. Bruggink and Carl H. Droppers, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1965. ix, 708 pp. \$20.00.

To the extent that passing observers derive their image of our church's life from its architecture they must often see us as unimaginative souls occupied in dull doings. And for that kind of advertising our congregations are paying heavily, in more ways than one. Applause is, therefore, an appropriate greeting for the effort of this superbly executed volume to create awareness of the need for a worthy church architecture. It has been jointly prepared by theologian Bruggink and architect Droppers, both of them men of Reformed convictions.

In Part I, Bruggink seeks to deduce from the nature of New Testament worship certain architectural norms. His special concern is with the arrangement of the furnishings in the worship center. The basic and pervasive fault in his discussion is that he aids and abets the "sanctuary" heresy that befogs much popular thinking about church buildings.

According to the Scriptures, the old, earthly and symbolic sanctuary of the Mosaic age has made way in this Messianic age for the heavenly and true sanctuary, an invisible sanctuary that cannot be localized in any man-made structure, no matter how solemnly "dedicated." The great high priest of the New Covenant has passed into the heavens beyond the gaze of men and, because priest and sanctuary belong inseparably together, it is there in that realm invisible that the true sanctuary of the New Covenant is to be found. Roman Catholicism is at least consistent in its anachronism of continuing both human priesthood and earthly, altar-focussed sanctuary. But what shall we say of the sons of the Reformation who confess Christ alone as priest and recognize that earthly altars have no proper role in Christian worship and yet are prone to a "sanctuary" mentality with respect to their church buildings?

It is not simply by using the word

The book was reviewed jointly by Dr. Meredith G. Kline, Professor of Old Testament at Gordon Divinity School, and Meredith M. Kline, student of architecture at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"sanctuary" for the worship auditorium that Bruggink promotes the common fallacy. That usage might be dismissed as merely a popular, if misleading, convention, similar to calling the building as a whole a "church." It is rather that he seems to assume that the configuration of furnishings in the worship center necessarily possesses a particular symbolical significance. Hence his insistence that church architecture is burdened with its own peculiar set of theological imperatives. He says, for example: "Because we preach and celebrate the Sacraments at the command of our Lord, the furniture which we use to obey his command inevitably becomes a reminder, a symbol, of that Christ-commanded action" (p. 457). "To set forth the God-ordained means by which Christ comes to his people, the Reformed must give visual expression to the importance of both Word and Sacraments. Because the Word is indispensable, the pulpit, as the architectural manifestation of the Word, must make its indispensability architecturally clear" (p. 80, all capitals in original). And succinctly, "Both architecture and liturgy must be determined by theology" (p. 23).

Expediency, Not Principles

The plain fact is that church worship has no necessary connection with an architectural structure of any kind or with any furniture, whether pulpits, tables, or fonts. Judgments on matters of church architecture, as on all other cultural adjuncts of Christian worship, properly proceed from the recognition that what the Scripture has not prohibited is lawful, though not always expedient. Decisions will then turn around such general considerations as functional efficiency and aesthetic appeal, ample leeway being thus afforded

for wide variety of taste and charitable differences of opinion. If, for example, as an altogether indifferent choice based on expediency we decide to make use of a pulpit, there is patently no sound basis for scruples that this pulpit must by theological necessity be located here or there, or somehow made to dominate its setting. Heresy in this matter does not consist in placing the pulpit in an inconspicuous corner rather than in some central spot. The heresy is insisting that there is any particular spot where the pulpit *must* be placed.

Near the end of Bruggink's discussion the following summation is given: "Christ's commands concerning the Word and the Sacraments inevitably involves (*sic*) pulpits, fonts, and tables which become symbols of those functions. Pulpit, font, and table are thus the basic symbols of the Christian faith" (p. 457, original all capitals). Clearly evident here are the serious consequences of approaching questions of church architecture in terms of inevitable symbolism and thus of mandatory theological answers, rather than in terms of expediency. The divine ordinances of worship become overlaid with superstitious human scruples. A new system of liturgical symbolism is invented, the unique validity of the divinely appointed sacramental symbols—the water, bread, and wine—is circumvented, and their simplicity confounded. And notice further how the infusion of symbolic significance into the pulpit, as "the architectural manifestation of the Word," obscures the formal difference between the sacraments and the Word as respectively symbolic and non-symbolic means of grace.

Our quarrel at this point is not with the particular arrangements of the furnishings recommended by Bruggink, as such. Some of them are quite interesting and attractive, and if followed would improve the general architectural quality of the worship centers in many of our church buildings. Our contention is, however, that such recommendations ought to be presented not as Sinaitic models but as advantageous options to be judged according to considerations of expediency within a context of liberty and without any pretext of special sanctity.

In Part II, Droppers defines the role of the architect in relation to the church's building committee. From the

latter the architect requires a well thought out and thorough statement of the church's program. This should be a description of functions, not suggestions for specific spatial solutions. It is the architect's task to translate these programmatic objectives into a design and building. However, Droppers does provide basic information concerning structural possibilities and problems of the construction process.

Architect's Role

Priority in the determination of the architectural solution is given to simplicity of structural system. The sample model of a church on which Droppers himself collaborated is a perfect expression of this approach—and of its serious inadequacies. This box type of building may keep a short-sighted church treasurer happy, but it betrays indifference to major architectural concerns. Pure geometric shapes fail to provide a readable index to the complex variety of functions that are carried on within a church building. They do not possess the variety of scale implicit in the vastly divergent space requirements posed by those functions and consequently do not challenge the architect to cope with the important contemporary architectural problem of achieving satisfactory relationships among differing scales within a larger unity. Moreover, the premium placed on simple forms indicates a lack of appreciation for the claims made by the individual site upon a building. Such forms stand complete in themselves, unrelated to natural surroundings or other environmental factors. They do not participate in their particular setting but only violate it, perhaps disguising their defiance with decoration.

Nevertheless, church building committees will find the kind of orientation they are looking for in the convenient collection of useful information that Droppers provides—much of it in the form of effective charts—about all sorts of details confronting them, from soil and trees and parking, to interior features like pews and organs, heating and acoustics. It might not be a bad idea to publish an economy version of Part II by itself. It is less than a third of the whole and contains a condensation of the major observations of Part I. Interested groups might then secure several copies of this for committee members, whereas they might hesitate to purchase even one

copy of the book in its present expensive form. It must be added, however, that much of the value of the volume consists in the inspiration of the abundant excellent photographs (largely of European churches) distributed throughout both parts of the book and instructively located in conjunction with relevant passages in the text.

MEREDITH G. KLINE and
MEREDITH M. KLINE
Wenham, Massachusetts

Wybenga (from page 66)

ferings, death, and resurrection. "And ye are witnesses of these things," he said. He also instructed them to remain in the city until the promised gift of the Spirit when they should be "endued with power from on high."

Not long afterwards the time of his ascension drew near. The Great Shepherd led his little flock out to Bethany at the mount called Olivet where he was visibly taken from them and "carried up into heaven," his hands uplifted in blessing upon them. "Be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in!"

Though our ascended Lord is in heaven, this does not mean that we have lost contact with him. We are reminded of a little boy flying his kite so high that he could not see it. "How do you know your kite is up there?" asked a passer-by; "I do not see anything of it." "Neither do I," replied the lad, "but I know it's there because I can feel it tugging at the string in my hand."

The line of faith reaches out to our High Priest at the right hand of God and we sense the tug at our hearts. In a mystical union we "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). And where the Head has gone the body one day must follow. Jesus prayed, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am" (John 17:24).

He will come again to receive us unto himself. As the disciples were gazing skyward at his ascension the angels spoke: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go" (Acts 1:11). "Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen." (Rev. 22:20).

What's Right with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

R. B. KUIPER

I was asked to deliver an historical address on this occasion. It is clear that a sermon is not expected. It is also clear that, while in a general way my subject has been assigned, its formulation was left to me.

For just a moment—no more than a moment—I thought of speaking on the question, *What's Wrong with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?* That theme would have proved easy to develop because much is wrong with our church, but it is exceedingly trite. Our enemies have worked overtime at it, and some of us have worked at it almost as hard. Besides, while a measure of introspection is good, and even necessary, for both an individual and a church, concentration on one's faults and weaknesses can be overdone. I have known persons who overdid it to the point of morbidity and even insanity. May God forbid that our church should head in that direction.

I have chosen rather to discuss the question, *What's Right with our Church?* And since, as I said, this is to be an historical address, my precise theme is: *What Is Historically Right with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?*

A great many things are right with our church, so many that I cannot possibly enumerate all of them. It is a foregone conclusion that, when I have finished, some of you—perhaps all of you—will think of things that I might have said, and perhaps should have said, but did not actually say. I have two excuses to offer: first, I cannot think of everything; second, I cannot say everything I think.

The right things about our church that I propose to name may conveniently be brought under two heads:

- I. *Our Church is Narrow in the Good Sense of That Term.*
- II. *Our Church is Broad in the Good Sense of That Term.*

The question arises at once whether the term *narrow* can be used in a good sense and whether the term *broad* can be used in any but a good sense. Nowadays hardly anybody wants to be narrow, almost everybody wants to be broad. A great many folk regard narrowness as an unmitigated evil, broadness as an unqualified good. It occurs to me, however, that Jesus once spoke of a narrow way and a broad way, and said that the narrow way leads to life, the broad way to destruction. Surely, it follows that narrowness is not always an evil, nor is broadness always a good. And so I am on solid ground when I speak of both narrowness and broadness in the good sense of these terms.

I

OUR CHURCH IS NARROW IN THE GOOD SENSE OF THAT TERM

When saying that our church is narrow in the good sense of that term I have reference especially to the matter of doctrine. Was not the Orthodox Presbyterian Church conceived

On June 12, 1946, Professor R. B. Kuiper delivered an address in the New Century Club of Philadelphia, commemorating the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

In the month which marks the thirtieth anniversary of that church it seemed fitting to reprint that address (slightly abridged). It first appeared in these pages and later in tract form. Not only is it of historical interest in relation to the origin of the denomination, but the author's insights are still pertinent twenty years later.

The Rev. R. B. Kuiper, who died in April at the age of 80, was a minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church from 1937 to 1953 and served as the moderator of its Fourth General Assembly.



and born in doctrinal controversy? Doctrinal issues were the occasion of its origination.

Historically our church has opposed doctrinal error. It has refused even to compromise with error. How Dr. Machen used to din into our ears the behest never to compromise with error. Compromising truth was to his mind equivalent to denying truth. He himself consistently refused to compromise even a little. A certain character has gone down in the history of our country as "The Great Compromiser." Dr. Machen may well go down in the history of our church as the great non-compromiser.

Positively expressed, our church has historically striven hard to exemplify the biblical description of Christ's church as "pillar and ground of truth." What is the meaning of that expression? What is the function of a pillar and of the ground? Obviously, to uphold things. Christ brought his church into being in order that it might uphold the truth. In this world so full of falsehood, that cannot be done without opposing error. There-

fore our church has ever been militant in its defense and proclamation of the truth of God. It has declared the truth, both controversially and constructively. It has made the truth in all its whiteness stand out boldly against the black background of error.

In a word, our church is intolerant of error. Intolerance is frequently condemned as a grave sin, while tolerance is advocated as a great virtue. The fact is that the term *tolerance* is a neutral one. Whether tolerance is good or evil depends on that which is tolerated. To tolerate sin is an evil. To tolerate error is sin. But intolerance is usually regarded as evidence of narrowness. It may well be that. Only remember that intolerance of error is evidence of narrowness in the good sense of that term.

Deep Roots

Where did the Orthodox Presbyterian Church originate? You say that it originated at this very place, in the New Century Club of Philadelphia, on the eleventh day of June in the year of our Lord 1936. That is true in about the same sense in which it is true that the Protestant Reformation began on the thirty-first of October, 1517, when Martin Luther nailed his famous ninety-five theses to the church door in Wittenberg. But everybody knows that the roots of the Reformation lie far back of that date. It is equally clear that the roots of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church may be traced behind 1936. It is not amiss to say that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was conceived when the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. became tolerant of error. And that happened long ago. Let no one suppose that the church just named was relatively sound and pure until a decade or two before 1936. He who thinks that betrays an utter lack of historical sense. The decadence of a church is a process, usually very slow—almost imperceptibly slow—at first and then gradually accelerated. To name but one date, 1870 is significant in this connection. In that year the Old and New School Presbyterians were merged into one body, and that merger involved compromise with error.

The doctrinal decadence of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. came to a head in 1924 when some twelve hundred leaders in that denomination affixed their names to the Auburn Affirmation. That infamous document denounced the infallibility

of Holy Scripture as a "harmful" doctrine. It also stated as the conviction of the signers that it was unnecessary for a minister in the church to believe in the virgin birth of Christ, his bodily resurrection, or the miracles of the Bible generally. The precious doctrine that Christ's death on the cross was a sacrifice by which he expiated sin and satisfied divine justice was further derided as but one of many theories of the atonement and non-essential to the faith. The church was now divided into three parties: the Modernists on the one hand, the Conservatives on the other, and between them the middle-of-the-roaders or indifferentists. The last-named party was by far the most numerous, and more despicable even than the first.

It was inevitable that this doctrinal controversy in the church should affect its seminary at Princeton. And so in the twenties a battle royal was waged at that institution. It has been said that this battle concerned a mere matter of administration. Princeton Theological Seminary was controlled by two boards: a Board of Directors and a Board of Trustees. There were those who felt that in the interest of efficient administration these two boards should be merged; others thought otherwise. And that was all there was to it. A more misleading understatement is hardly imaginable. President J. Ross Stevenson had advocated an "inclusive" policy for the seminary. He wanted it to represent not only the conservative wing of the church, but the church as a whole. Now the Board of Directors, which had much to say about the constituency of the faculty, was conservative, while the Board of Trustees was not. Clearly, it was in the interest of Stevenson's policy of inclusiveness that the former board should be swallowed up by the latter. Precisely that happened. In a word, the issue was a doctrinal one. The conservatives went down to defeat. Princeton Theological Seminary, that erstwhile bulwark of American orthodoxy, was taken over by modernists and indifferentists. *Ichabod* was written over its doors.

Westminster Seminary

Thus it came to pass that in 1929 Westminster Theological Seminary was founded as the continuation of old Princeton. In a very real sense the seminary which had been put to death at Princeton was resurrected in Phila-

delphia. Westminster began with a faculty of seven men, four of whom had taught at Princeton. The four were Dr. Robert Dick Wilson, Dr. Oswald T. Allis, Dr. J. Gresham Machen, and Dr. Cornelius Van Til. This seminary contributed incalculably to the founding of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1936.

For some time the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. had been under fire because of modernism in the board and among its missionaries. Pearl Buck, for instance, once served under this board as missionary in China. It was she who expressed the opinion that, if the bodily resurrection of our Lord should be definitely disproved, that would not matter, for the spiritual values of Christianity would persist just the same. When at last she resigned under conservative fire, the board accepted her resignation with regret. Complaints against the modernism of the Board were lodged with the courts of the church. However these complaints fell on deaf ears. Then conservatives in the church found themselves compelled to organize the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. This was in 1933.

Foreign Missions

Before long several members of this board were brought to trial. I do not exaggerate when I assert that their trials constituted one of the greatest travesties of justice in ecclesiastical history. In 1934 the church made the astounding declaration: "A church member or an individual church that will not give to promote the officially authorized missionary program of the Presbyterian Church, is in exactly the same position with reference to the Constitution of the Church as a church member or an individual church that would refuse to take part in the celebration of the Lord's Supper" (*Manual of Presbyterian Law for Church Officers and Members*, published by the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in 1936, p. 115). On that made-to-order and much worse than flimsy ground the defendants were condemned. But never once were they permitted to say in their defense why they had organized the Independent Board. The issue was patently doctrinal, but every doctrinal reference was consistently ruled out by the court as irrelevant. Here let me quote a significant statement by a Unitarian in the *Boston Evening Tran-*

script of April 6, 1935. The reference was to the trial of Dr. Machen, the president of the Independent Board, which trial had just been concluded and had resulted in an order for his suspension from the ministry. Said Albert C. Dieffenbach: "No matter what may be said in slovenly contempt about doctrines—that they do not count—the fact is that they are the only things at last that do count. It will always be so. Every great issue in religion throughout history has been in the realm of belief. The weakness, the incoherency and the ineffectualness of any church can be attributed to its lack of great rooted ideas and convictions to give ultimate meaning to the life of man." How grave an indictment by a Unitarian of an avowedly Presbyterian church! And how just!

Those member of the Independent Board who had been adjudged guilty by the lower courts of the church appealed to the 1936 General Assembly, which convened in Syracuse, N. Y. When their appeal was brushed aside lightly, it was clear as broad daylight that the time for drastic action had arrived. The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. had unmistakably come under the control of modernism and indifference. By accepting that control it had denied the truth. This situation demanded drastic action. Any action short of drastic would have betokened compromise and cowardice. On the eleventh day of June, 1936, The Presbyterian Church of America was founded, the church which today is known as the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

How clear that the beginnings of our church were doctrinal. It came into existence because of the doctrinal collapse of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Basically the one and only issue that gave rise to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was the issue of doctrine. Its founders were intolerant of doctrinal error. They were narrow in the good sense of that term.

Westminster Confession

The whole story has not been told.

It cannot be doubted that some who united with our church in its early days expected it to be broadly evangelical. It seems not to have occurred to them that this church would insist on being specifically and strictly Reformed or Presbyterian. Nor did they realize that, in order to combat modernism effectively, it would have to be distinctively

Reformed, for the reason that of all Christian systems of theology only Calvinism has consistently refused to compromise with naturalism, and hence Calvinism alone is in a position to assail modernism all along the line. It was nothing strange, therefore, that doctrinal differences already emerged at the Second General Assembly of our church in the fall of 1936.

That Assembly concerned itself with adopting the doctrinal standards of our church. Prominent among these standards, of course, is the Westminster Confession of Faith. But the question arose in what precise form the Confession was to be adopted. In the year 1903 the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. had, to put the case mildly, watered it down. Negotiations had been under way for union with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. A stumbling block was encountered. The Cumberlanders were Arminian in doctrine and therefore objected to the rigorous Calvinism of the Confession. In order to meet them, perhaps less than halfway but nonetheless part of the way, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. adopted certain Arminianizing amendments to the Confession. At our Second General Assembly the question arose whether the Confession of Faith should be adopted with or without these amendments. The Assembly was sharply divided. Lengthy debate ensued, some of it a bit acrimonious. But finally Dr. Machen made a ringing and convincing speech against the Arminianizing amendments. This plea won the day.

Doctrinal Awareness

Another doctrinal matter that received attention at the Second General Assembly was the dispensationalism of the Scofield Bible. While the Assembly issued no official doctrinal pronouncement on the subject, it is no exaggeration to say that modern dispensationalism—mind you, I did not say premillennialism—was discredited.

How clear that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in its early days was tremendously insistent on sound doctrine and firmly refused to compromise with doctrinal error. It was narrow in the good sense of that term.

In 1936 our church named itself The Presbyterian Church of America. Through the civil courts the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. compelled us to change our name. In 1939 a General Assembly was called for the

sole purpose of choosing another name. After lengthy debate, our present name—the Orthodox Presbyterian Church—was adopted. How significant a name! Had our doctrinal consciousness been less than strong at the time, we could hardly have chosen it. And by choosing it, we committed ourselves to the strictest orthodoxy for the indefinite future. Failure at any time to live up to that name will make our church a laughing-stock. To put it popularly, we stuck out our necks in 1939. I do not say that one should never stick his neck out, but surely, he should never do so without being ready to take the consequence, if need be, of having his head chopped off. As a church, we solemnly vowed in 1939 that we would be willing to be decapitated if we should not adhere strictly to sound doctrine, or should become indifferent to it. So long as we bear our present name, we shall remain committed to that vow.

Our willingness to debate doctrine, and our unrelenting refusal to desist from doctrinal debate until truth and error have come clearly to light are evidence that as a denomination we have not yet succumbed to the temptation of doctrinal indifference and have not yet ceased being narrow in the good sense of that term.

II

OUR CHURCH IS BROAD IN THE GOOD SENSE OF THAT TERM

When saying that our church is broad in the good sense of that term I have several things in mind. I shall select three.

It has been said that there are present in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church three traditions—the American Presbyterian tradition, the Scottish Presbyterian tradition, and the Dutch Reformed tradition. Who will deny the fact?

But when it is intimated that the presence of these three traditions in one denomination constitutes a liability to that denomination, I beg to differ sharply. I rather consider it a distinct potential asset. Does it not present the opportunity to combine all that is best in these three traditions? Surely, very few churches, if any, have ever had such an opportunity. I do not hesitate to call it golden.

May I remind you that Dr. Machen was responsible for the presence of these three traditions among us? He took a leading part in choosing, among

others, a true-blue Scot and three men of Dutch ancestry for the faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary. And it was he who not only invited these men into the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, but urged them, pleaded with them, to come in. Will you pardon a very brief personal reference? One of the last things Dr. Machen told me before his lips were sealed in death was that I should enter the Orthodox Presbyterian Church without delay. When the overwhelmingly sad news of his untimely decease reached me, I could no longer deny his wish.

Cosmopolitan Calvinism

And may I not remind you of the incomparably more significant fact that Calvinism is cosmopolitan? It cannot help being, for it is consistent Christianity, and Christ is the Savior of the world. Calvinism partakes of Christian universalism. The earliest history of Calvinism bears this out. In the Reformation period Lutheranism remained confined by and large to Germany and the Scandinavian countries, but Calvinism spread from Switzerland through France to the Low Countries, and across the channel to Great Britain, and at the same time it fanned out eastward through Germany to Hungary and Bohemia. Calvin himself was born, neither in Holland, nor Scotland, nor yet in America, but in France, and most of his labors he performed in Switzerland. Calvinism far transcends all national boundaries. It is supra-national.

What then shall we do about these traditions? Shall we fight each for his own, and against the others? God forbid. Shall we tolerate one another's peculiarities? I suppose so, but that will not suffice for true unity. Nothing short of love will hold us together. Let me remind you of pagan Cicero's distinction between friendship and love. He defined friendship as a benevolent attitude toward those who are like us, love as a benevolent attitude toward those who differ from us. If that is a correct description of the love which flows from the common grace of God, what differences will not Christian love surmount?

Also, let us refuse to be traditionalists. Traditions may be valuable—some are and some are not—but traditionalism is an evil. Did not Jesus rebuke the scribes and Pharisees of his day for their traditionalism? Instead of

clinging tenaciously to views and customs handed down to us by our elders, let us settle our differences in the light of the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. Then we shall indeed be in a position to combine all that is best in our differing traditions, and thus our church will be greatly enriched.

True Christian Liberty

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church has repeatedly acknowledged the principle of Christian liberty and has thus manifested itself to be broad in the good sense of that term.

The mere mention of Christian liberty causes some of you to worry. You see smoke and smell liquor, and you wonder whether I may not be about to utter some awful indiscretion. Forget it. Christian liberty is something big. It is truly broad.

It has reference to doctrine. Within the Reformed faith there is an area which has room for differences of opinion. To be sure, this area has its boundaries, but its existence may not be denied. For instance, infralapsarianism and supralapsarianism have flourished alongside each other in the Reformed churches, and their respective adherents have usually found it possible to bear with one another. Much the same thing is true of premillennialism, amillennialism, and supernaturalistic postmillennialism.

Does this mean that, after all, the Reformed churches have been willing to compromise a little with error, that they have been tolerant of error provided error was not too serious? I say with all the emphasis at my command that it means nothing of the kind. All error is serious. To compromise with any degree of error is sin. I have heard it said that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church tolerates premillennialism. Although I am not myself a premillennialist, I resent that statement. If I were a premillennialist I should not want to be tolerated in this church nor in any other. A stigma attaches to being tolerated. Would you know why premillennialists, amillennialists, and supernaturalistic postmillennialists stand and labor shoulder to shoulder in our church? The reason is very simple. It is not at all that we are willing to condone a mild type of heresy, but that, whatever our individual convictions may be, as a church we have not yet arrived at certainty that any one of these groups is a hundred per cent

right. Our church is still seeking more light. Obviously this type of Christian liberty has nothing in common with doctrinal indifference.

Christian liberty also concerns the Christian life. There are practices concerning the propriety of which there have historically been differences of opinion among serious-minded Christians and, more specifically, among Reformed moralists. In the field of Reformed ethics, as in that of Reformed doctrine, there is an area in which there is room for differences. To be sure, this area too has its boundaries, but its existence must be recognized. I hardly need to name any practices that lie within that area. All of you are familiar with some, and no doubt every one of you engages in some. The difference among us is not that some of us engage in such practices while others abstain, but that some of us engage in some, others in other of such practices.

Does this mean that we are tolerant of so-called little sins? God forbid. Calvinism is not a whit less insistent on purity of life than on purity of doctrine. But in such matters as were alluded to, we of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church respect each other's consciences, refrain from judging one another, recognize that each of us stands or falls to his own master, take heed not to use our liberty for an occasion to the flesh, and aim so to live in love as not to offend anyone.

That too is broadness in the good sense of the term.

The Task of the Church

What is the function of the Christian church? Some say: to bring the gospel to the unsaved. Others reply: to build up its members in the faith. If you give either of these answers to the exclusion of the other, you are narrow in the evil sense of that term. If you give both answers, you may be credited with a measure of broadness in the good sense of that term.

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church has ever given both answers.

It is a sad but undeniable fact that some who helped found our church had little doctrinal background. The reason was that they came from the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., which for many decades had almost completely neglected the indoctrination of its members. To be sure, they were not so blind as to fail to recognize the blatant heresy pervading that

church. Yet their doctrinal eyesight was not keen. Awareness of this situation prompted Dr. Machen to say that it was the solemn duty of our church to educate a whole new generation of Christians. We have tried and are trying to perform this arduous task. Most of our preachers do much doctrinal preaching. All of them should. And, by the way, there is no good reason why doctrinal preaching should be dry as dust and abstract. There is every good reason why it should be thoroughly practical and scintillatingly interesting. In most of our churches there is not only a Sunday school, but systematic doctrinal instruction is given the children of the covenant in Catechism classes. That should be done in all of our churches. At least a few of our pastors conduct classes in doctrine for communicant members. The rest of our pastors should follow suit. As a denomination we are rapidly becoming conscious of the necessity of Christian day-schools for our children. Several of such schools have already been established by voluntary associations of Orthodox Presbyterian parents, and more are in the immediate offing.

That our church is strong for missions is a matter of common knowledge. As was already pointed out, zeal for truly Presbyterian missions became the immediate occasion of the founding of our church. And ever since its founding it has conducted a full missionary program. Right now we have mission fields on three continents: America, Asia and Africa. Small and weak though we are, utterly insignificant in the eyes of almost all other churches, we count the world as our field. During the recent war those of our ministers who served as chaplains in the armed forces—and many did—encircled the globe. We are bending every effort to hasten the day when the kingdom of this world will have become the Kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, and when an innumerable multitude will sing, "Thou, O Lamb, wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation."

That again is broadness in the good sense—may I not say, in the best

sense—of that term.

What is right with our church? Much in every way.

The Glory of God

But may we never forget that we are what we are by the grace of God alone. All that we have, we have received. Let us then give all the glory to God and take none for ourselves. *Soli Deo Gloria!*

May we also remember that we have our God-given treasures in earthen vessels. How earthen we are! Then we shall put our trust for the future solely in the almighty Head and King of the church at the right hand of God.

Again may we ever be mindful that much will be required of those to whom much has been committed. Our responsibility is exceedingly heavy.

I conclude with applying to our church the exhortation which He who walks among the seven golden candlesticks and holds the seven stars in his right hand addressed to the church of Philadelphia in Asia Minor, which, like ours, had little strength but had kept his word and had not denied his name: "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Orthodox Presbyterians at R. E. S. Conference

Three Orthodox Presbyterian ministers will participate in the Conference on Christian Thought and Life in Grand Rapids, Michigan from July 26 to 28. Sponsored by the churches of the North American region of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod under the theme "Christ or Chaos," the sessions are expected to bring together ministers and layment from many churches.

The Rev. Professor Edmund P. Clowney will give an address on "Christ the Head of the Church" and participate in what should be a lively discussion among five panelists on the topic, "Christ the Critic of His Church—Testing our Differences by His Word." The Rev. LeRoy B. Oliver is to be the chairman of a session addressed by Dr. Joel Nederhood, radio

minister of the Back to God Hour. The Rev. John P. Galbraith will be chairman of the meeting at which Dr. John W. Sanderson of Covenant College is to speak.

Eleven other men from three other denominations are also on the program. They come from four institutions of higher learning and three pastorates, and the editor of *The Presbyterian Journal*. Dr. Paul G. Schrottenboer of Hamilton, Ontario, is General Secretary of the R.E.S.

Sesquicentennial Year

Ushering in a one-year celebration of its 150th year, the American Sunday-School Union held the first of several banquets planned for key cities across the nation in Philadelphia, the city of its founding on May 13, 1817. The 43 Sunday schools organized in that year were the first of thousands where the Bible was and is taught as the Word of God. In this century some 2,700 churches have been started on foundations laid by A.S.S.U. schools, it is reported.

A history of the Union entitled *The Torch and the Flag* and written by Dr. G. Hall Todd has just come off the press. Guests at the Philadelphia banquet witnessed the first showing of a film in color and sound called "This One's for Jesus." Principal speaker was the Rev. Mariano DiGangi, of Tenth Presbyterian Church, a Westminster Seminary graduate in 1946, whose address was on the subject "It's Not Too Late."

Change of Address

Rev. Harvie M. Conn, 95-3 Yonheedong, Suh Dae Moon Gu, Seoul, Korea (first class only: APO, San Francisco, Calif. 96301) after Aug. 1.

Rev. John J. Johnston, 84 Min Tsu Road, Hsinchu, Taiwan.

Rev. Francis E. Mahaffy, 3010 N. Olcott Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60635 (on furlough as of June 15).

Dr. and Mrs. D. Clair Davis, 1249 Edge Hill Road, Abington, Pa. 19001.

Rev. and Mrs. Dwight H. Poundstone, 9395 Paseo Orlando, Santa Barbara, Calif. 93105 (after July 1).