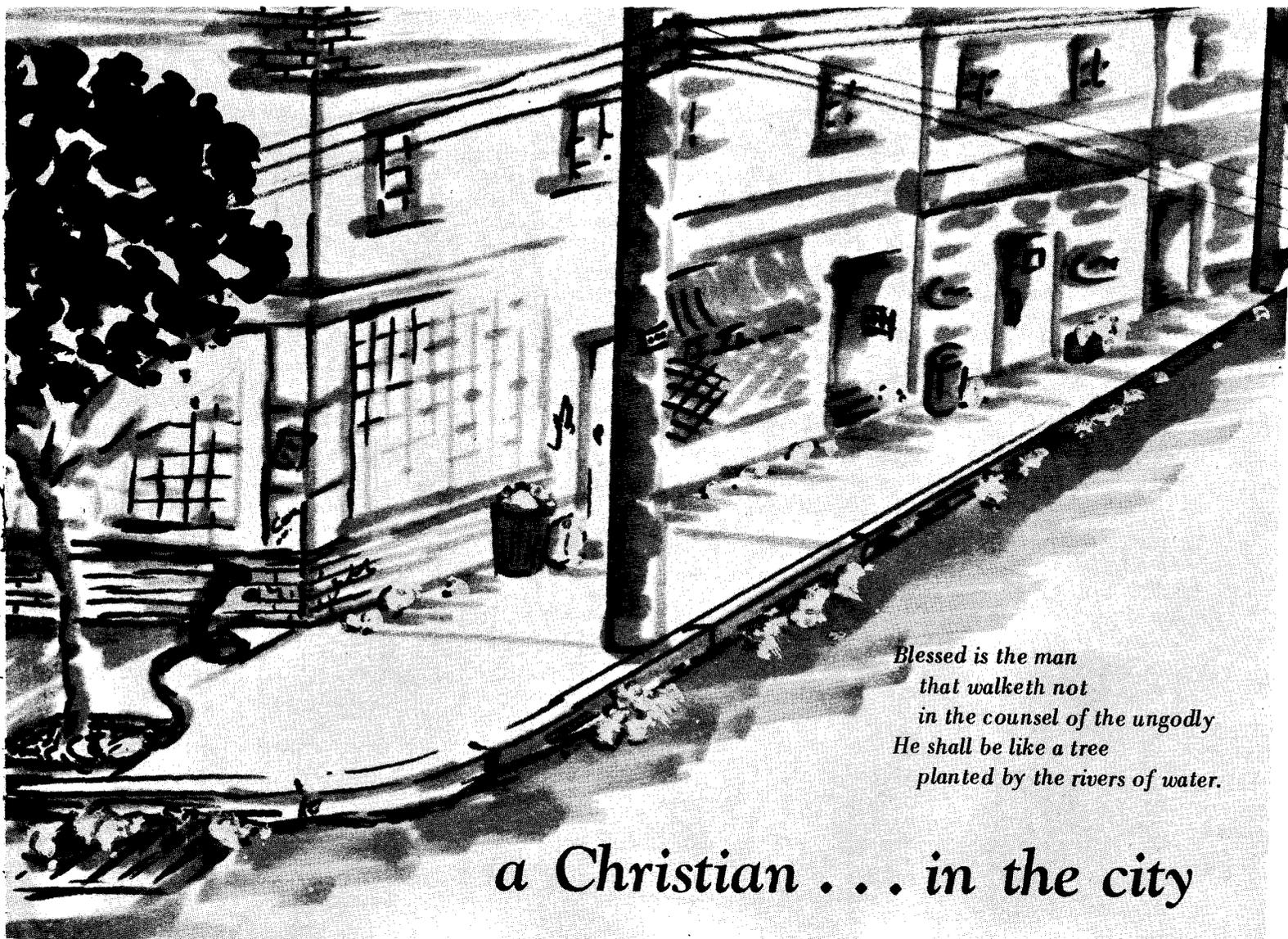


The Presbyterian Guardian

VOL. 41, NO. 7 - AUG./SEPT., 1972



*Blessed is the man
that walketh not
in the counsel of the ungodly
He shall be like a tree
planted by the rivers of water.*

a Christian . . . in the city

To whom do we show mercy?

ALBERT G. EDWARDS

Is the benevolence mission of the church limited to the confines of the church, either a congregation or all believers at large? Or is our mission of mercy to be extended to the world? In attempting to answer such questions, several important concerns need to be considered:

1. Is the work of benevolence a work of the church as a body or of individual members of the church only?
2. Should the work of benevolence or mercy be shown to believers only?
3. Under what conditions should benevolence be shown?
4. To which believers should it be shown?

God's command: Show mercy!

We must remember that God's command to the individuals who make up the church is, among other things, to show mercy (Micah 6:8). But this command is not just to the individual; it is to the church as a body. This is seen in that the command is given to persons as officers of the body of Christ and not merely as individual members in it.

For example, the requirement that the Old Testament priest be merciful was a requirement for his office (Hebrews 2:17). An office-holder acts not merely for himself in what he does officially, but in behalf of the whole body. When one of the requirements for office is that the office-holder show mercy, it is clear that he is to do this because it is the responsibility of the whole body to show mercy.

This is especially clear in the New Testament church. When Paul was being examined as to whether he really held the office of apostle, the examiners reminded him that among his duties was that of concern for the poor (Galatians 2:9, 10). In showing mercy to the poor, Paul was not acting as an individual Christian, but in his office of apostle. As an officer of the church he was doing this particular work of the church.

So too, when deacons were appointed to care for the needy widows of the church, these officers were acting in behalf of the whole church (Acts 6). It was the church's responsibility, though given to special officers. The work of mercy is the work of the church as a whole, as well as of every member of that church.

Mercy to anyone in need

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus intimates that it is our responsibility to care for those in need without reference to their relationship to the church (Luke 10:30-37). Nothing is made in this parable of the *victim's* nationality or his possible relationship to God's people. The contrast set forth is between office-holders (the priest and Levite) who evade their duty of mercy and the man (the Samaritan) who is not even of the people of God but who nevertheless does the work that should be done. The point is that if even unbelievers show mercy and not only to their own kind, how much more should God's people do so. Thus we demonstrate

that we are indeed the children of God who sends the sun and rain on the just and unjust.

In this light, the teaching of Galatians 6:10 becomes quite significant. In verses 6 through 9, Paul has urged his readers to be liberal with those who minister the gospel to them. Now in verse 10 he says, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

Now Paul is not merely saying that the church needs to be generous with those who teach the gospel and with other Christians also. He is saying that we are to do good to all men, though especially to fellow-believers. All men are to benefit from the good works of Christians (Matthew 5:43-48). And these words of Paul are *not* directed to the church members as individuals (as though each one of them were responsible alone to pay the pastor's salary), but are addressed to the church as a body.

There are two conditions attaching to this showing of good by the church. Good is to be shown, first of all, as there is opportunity (cf. James 4:17). This means the church is to show good, both as God provides the occasion and as he provides the means, whether the need be close or far away. Indeed, it is wonderful to see congregations going *beyond* their ability as the Macedonians did (2 Corinthians 8:1-4).

The second condition is that the church make a priority in its benevolent work to those within the household of faith. This does not mean the unbeliever is to be ignored, but it does mean that the believers have a prior claim on our benevolent concern. Consider Paul's example in urging help for the hungry in Jerusalem; it was indeed for the saints there that he made his effort. Yet even an ox or an ass is not to be left helpless in a pit but is to be pulled out. How much more should we be showing mercy to those made in God's image?

The household of faith

Just how extensive is this "household of faith?" Paul's exhortations and the example of the early church show that the household of faith was large, going way beyond the bounds of any local congregation, or even of churches within a large geographical area. Churches from all over, from Europe as well as Asia, were urged to send gifts and did send them to their brethren in Jerusalem. They did so because the opportunity, the need, was there.

It is the responsibility of the officers of the church to rouse the body to see to it that mercy is shown as needed. All the officers, ministers, elders, and deacons, have a responsibility in this, and not just the deacons alone. Although they have the duty to administer the funds of the church, especially to the needy, yet Paul did not leave the work of

(Continued on page 110)

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Reformed Ecumenical Synod – Agenda Issues

The Reformed Ecumenical Synod, an international fellowship of churches holding the Reformed faith, meets in Sydney, Australia on August 15-25. American churches represented are the Christian Reformed, Orthodox Presbyterian, and Reformed Presbyterian ("Covenanter").

A report on preparations for the Synod was carried in the April issue of the *Guardian*. Here we present some of the significant issues to come before the Synod.

The authority of Scripture

In 1958 the RES approved a statement dealing with the inspiration and authority of Scripture. But the Reformed Churches (Gereformeerde Kerken) in the Netherlands objected to aspects of this report. RES member churches were asked to study the matter and report their conclusions to the 1972 RES.

(For some of the implications, at least as they appeared in a study report for the Christian Reformed Church, see the articles and discussion between Dr. Fred H. Klooster and the editor in issues of the *Guardian* from May to December 1971. See also the report on the Christian Reformed Synod elsewhere in this issue.)

The objections by the Dutch churches were that the 1958 report did not make "sufficient distinctions in dealing with the nature and extent of the authority of Scripture," and did not make "any connection between the content and purpose of Scripture as the saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ and the consequent and deducible authority of Scripture."

One whole day is to be given to the discussion of this subject by the RES this year. The subject is crucial, but the differences are large.

The Sabbath Question

The 1968 RES appointed a study committee on the Fourth Commandment in hopes that it might "provide a basis of agreement among the various Reformed traditions" concerning the Sabbath.

This the study committee was unable to do, and has submitted two reports. One holds to the "creation-ordinance" view of the Westminster Confession,

and the other insists that Scripture teaching is not so clear that the churches should make Sabbath observance obligatory.

Study committee members who agree with the Westminster position note that Christ did not come to abrogate the Sabbath any more than he came to abolish any other part of the law. "It would seem to this reviewer," writes the Rev. Raymond O. Zorn in *Trowel and Sword*, "that the proponents of the Sabbath as being a creation ordinance have the stronger case. For the view of those arguing against this position is weakened by not taking into sufficient account the historic Reformed view of the *basic unity of biblical revelation* and the relationship between Scripture's epochal themes, creation, the fall, and redemption. Which means that [this] view suffers virtually from the same weakness as Dispensationalism" (emphasis added).

Church office and women

Should church offices be open to women? In 1968 the RES declared: "It is the plain and obvious teaching of Scripture that women are excluded from the office of ruling and preaching elders."

But the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands expressed regret that so rigid a position was approved. Soon afterward, these churches began to ordain women to church office.

The present RES study committee insists that the burden of proof lies on those who would ordain women, and rejects the idea that upholders of the traditional Reformed position (excluding women from office) are obliged to prove their case. But the committee goes on to make that case anyway, and notes that Paul's objection to women acting in authority in the church was based, not on temporary social customs, but on laws and commandments of God, and the order of creation and the fall into sin.

Strenuous debate on this matter is expected. But the report itself confirms the traditional view with a solid scriptural argumentation.

Challenge to WCC membership

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church has requested the RES to declare that

its rules of membership "make membership in the World Council of Churches and other religious organizations which allow unbelief to be uncensured, incompatible with membership in the RES." The letter also seeks to require the churches with such dual membership (two in Indonesia and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands) to make a choice and withdraw from one organization. A similar letter from the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands would only require such churches to give an account of their position.

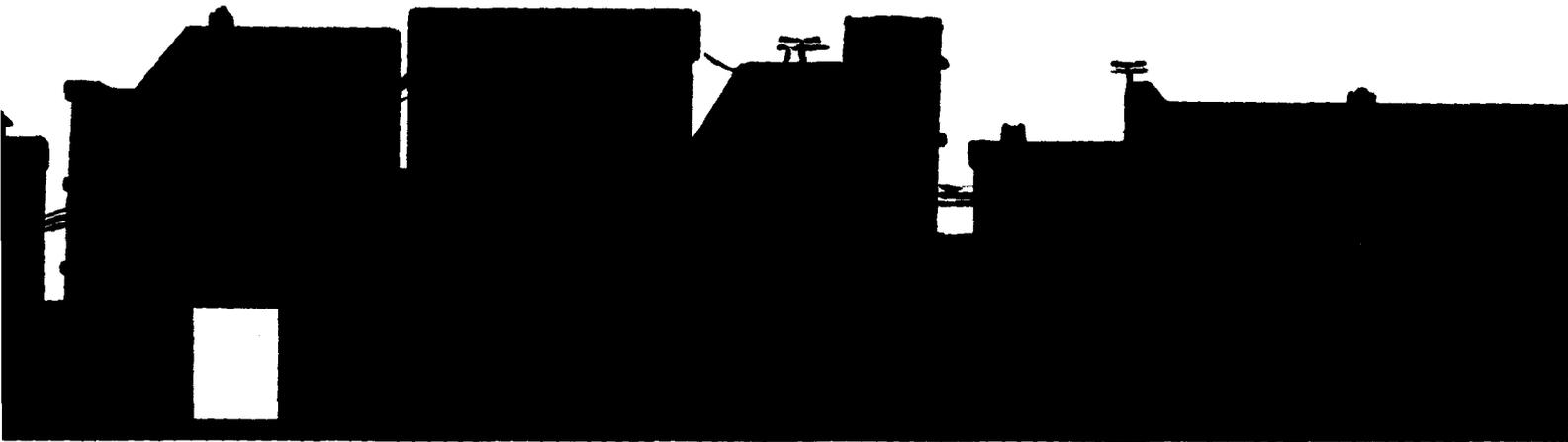
Another letter from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church challenges the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands for failing to discipline Dr. H. M. Kuitert for his denial of the historicity of the fall into sin. The Dutch church had refused to do this, thus leaving Dr. Kuitert to advocate his views.

"It therefore seems inevitable that a show-down is to take place at this Synod, not simply over matters of ecclesiastical polity, but more basically over doctrinal issues which are responsible for matters of ecclesiastical polity as well as the whole concept of what constitutes the basis of unity among Churches within and outside of the R.E.S.," quoting again from Mr. Zorn's report in *Trowel and Sword*.

Whether the RES will survive the confrontation over such issues as these is a moot question. To some readers a meeting in Australia may seem very far away. But this is the only world-wide organization of churches holding to anything like the traditions of the Reformed faith. If it fails to find unity in such basic questions, it will mean very simply that there is not any world-wide consensus of what it means to be Reformed today.

May the Lord and Head of the church send forth the Spirit of truth to the delegates gathered in Sydney, that the infallible Word might be heard and its truth upheld in this present age.

The editor acknowledges with gratitude the reports of the Rev. Raymond O. Zorn, pastor of the Reformed Church of Sydney, and writing in *Trowel and Sword* for the Reformed Churches in Australia, for the background from which the above report was taken. — J. J. M.



Becoming a Christian . . . in the city

DWAIN WHITLEY

To begin with, my name is Dwaine Whitley. I've lived in Philadelphia for seven years, though I was born in Portsmouth, Virginia. I have seven other members in my family, including four brothers and a sister.

I used to go to the "Church of God and Saints of Christ" in Philadelphia. (It is a "Jewish church." They do not believe that Christ is the Lamb of God, but still believe in sacrificing animals. They also observe the Passover.) I claimed to be a Christian for about two years, but I really wasn't one.

Then I went to the French Greek Bible Conference, and that's where I really, truly came to know the Lord as my personal Savior. I realized that not only was he to be my Savior, but also he was to be Lord of my life—which means, to be the king, ruler, head of my life. That was a change in my whole idea of life!

I also realized that life wasn't a bag or just a Do-it-yourself world. I realized that I was a sinner and that I needed someone to save me from sin and the punishment for sin which is death. And obviously, I knew I couldn't do it myself. Only God could, or would die for a sinner like me.

Three months after I became a Christian, the Lord really knew that I had given my life to him. So he started to use me as his mouthpiece in witnessing to others. I knew that in order to have an effective witness I had to know God's Word, and in order to know God's Word I had to read it. So, I read God's Word constantly and eagerly, because I was like a starving person who wanted food. His Word was

food for my spirit and also armor for my flesh. And this was the beginning of my wanting to go to a Christian School.

My goal is to get a Ph. D. in Apologetics like Dr. Van Til. I love philosophy, and most of all I like to defend Christianity. I know through experience that this is not a phony gospel that men of God preach, but it's for real, man; it's for real.

And the Christian School means a lot to me because: (1) A Christian should learn how to live for Christ moment by moment, how to think about his Lord all the time (Psalm 1:1, 2). (2) A Christian should learn how to glorify Christ in his life, by the way he lives, acts, and talks with others, and by the way he presents Christ as Lord and Savior.

Now I am a new person in Christ. My whole life is dedicated to, ruled by, and under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Amen.

JAMES RODGERS

My name is James Rodgers. I am 12 years of age.

If you want to know about me and my family, I would like very much to tell you. First, I would like you to know their names. My oldest sister, Rena Mae, is 25 years of age, a very attractive young lady. My 21-year-old brother Alfred is married to a pretty young lady. My 18-year-old brother Oscar is in a very good club called "The Oridginators." My 15-year-old brother George is a nice guy at times and belongs to a club called "Club F.A.D." The next one is Darcella, and she is the knitter of the house. And next in the family is me. Then there is Yvette

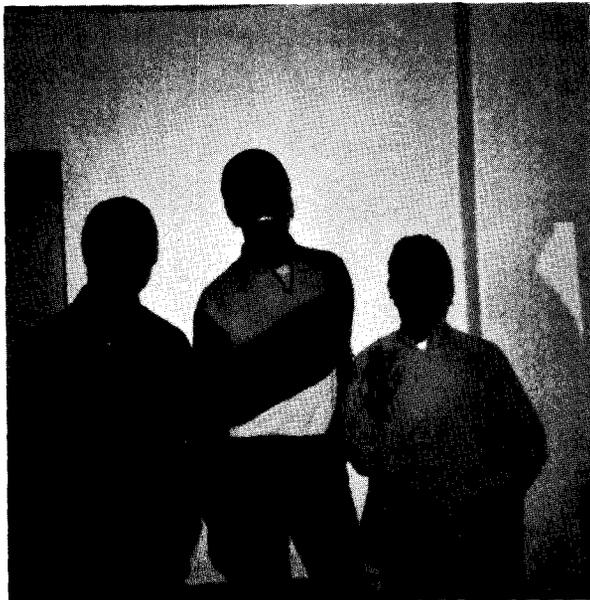


and she is only in the second grade. Then comes Baby Lester, and man, I'm telling you he is a bad boy.

Now you have met my family. If it's possible, I would like to meet yours, friends.

I would like to tell you about me and the Lord in our ways of life. I'm not a full Christian yet, but in a few weeks with the help of Mr. Krispin and Mr. Cummings I hope to be. I used to be a full fool and then I found that I couldn't be a Christian without the help of Jesus Christ. There is a camp called French Creek [Bible Conference]. It is a camp that helps me think more about the Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes I could not study the Bible at home, so I would go around to Mr. Cummings' house. I study the Bible every day.

I really want to be a Christian, but I do not have



Left to right: Dwaine, Michael, James.

the courage to ask God to forgive my sins that I have been doing.

May the Lord be with you always.

MICHAEL BROWN

Michael is a young man [13 years old] who loves mostly all things. He loves people and people love him. He just loves nature. He likes to play with animals. Michael is a very wonderful boy. Because he loves some things that people wouldn't (I think) even care about.

Michael loves to think about some things like his future. He thinks about living on a farm, and about his purpose on earth. What did God put me here for? Every man has his one purpose here. Maybe God wanted me to be a preacher. Preachers are concerned about other people. And it is wonderful to know someone cares about you.

Michael has just begun to know about the Christian religion. A Christian life is gloriful. A Christian loves everything and everyone, that's what a preacher would tell you.

Michael's mother wants him to be a preacher. But his brothers are not happy with the fact that he is going to be a Christian. Michael is going to be a Christian, and maybe a preacher.

Dwaine Whitley is a communicant member of Emmanuel Orthodox Presbyterian Chapel in South Philadelphia. He will be a tenth grader at the Philadelphia-Montgomery Christian Academy this fall. Mike is an eighth grader in the city, and travels quite a long distance by public transportation to attend the Chapel's services. James, who has had trouble believing that God could forgive a sinner like himself, is younger than the other two, and hopes to go to the French Creek Bible Conference again this year.

It is hard to be or to become a Christian where these boys live. Often their own families are anything but a help. We have let you meet these three, hoping that you will be able to uphold them and their friends in your prayers. And we want you to realize that God's grace is sufficient, even in the city jungles.

Why I Support the A. A. C. S.

JOHN W. VAN DYK

In the April issue of the *Guardian*, Professor John M. Frame warned of the potential dangers, particularly to the Christian school movement, from an organization called the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship. As an elder in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and a supporter of the Reformed faith, I want to tell why I have been an active participant in the AACS for the last three years and why I am an enthusiastic supporter of it.

The AACS can be described in many ways. It is an organization whose purpose is the promotion of scripturally directed learning and scholarship. It sponsors the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto which offers graduate level courses from a thoroughly Christian perspective. It also presents study conferences and lecture series throughout the United States and Canada. It has published a series of booklets, most of which are summaries of the study conferences.

But rather than giving more details about the AACS, let me deal with how my association with this organization has expanded my vision of what it means to serve the Lord and also of how the Lord is at work in the world today.

What the AACS has taught me

● I have learned that I cannot put my faith in "political conservatism," as I once did, for the solution of political problems. As a witness for Christ and his gospel I must *not* be recognized as a "conservative" but as a Christian. In politics, my criteria must be Christian and not those of humanistic, man-centered political systems. Although as a Christian I may pursue some of the same objectives as those of other political "faiths," I cannot accept any of these idolatrous faiths as my own.

● I have learned that I cannot put my faith in capitalism, as I once did, for the solution of economic problems. Those who know me must recognize me as a Christian and not a Capitalist.

● I have learned that I cannot put

my faith in Americanism for the solution of society's problems. As a Christian I must be critical of the injustices in society and I cannot blindly support the status quo as exemplified in the slogan "America — Love it or leave it!"

● I have a greater love for the Bible because of a deepened appreciation that throughout the whole of it God is speaking to me and my problems. Previously, I had filtered the Bible through Reformed doctrine and creeds, and saw it primarily as the source of prooftexts for what I already understood and accepted as true. Now I read the Bible with excitement because from it, with the Holy Spirit's guidance, I am given new insight into how to serve my Lord and to solve the problems that confront me.

● I have learned to recognize the many subtle manifestations of the religion of Scientism that is so prevalent in our society today. This is especially important to me because, in my occupation as a chemist, I have in the past been guilty of promoting the anti-Christian tenets of this religion. I am no longer tempted to say, "It's a scientific fact," when what I really mean is, "I have the highest degree of confidence that what I say is true."

● I have experienced in a new and vital way what it means to be a member of the Body of Christ — part of a living organism — working to one end, the honor and glory of the Lord in all areas of life.

● I am excited about being alive in the world today. I see the despair and decay that is all around us as an invitation to the Christian to show the world that "Christ is the answer." If we work diligently to understand the problems, if we study these problems in the light of the Scriptures with the guidance given by the Spirit to those who ask, if we are earnest in prayer, then the Lord will bless; then we will really be the light, showing forth more effectively the wholeness of Christ's redemptive work, in this world of darkness.

These are just some of the ways in

which I have been blessed by my associations with the AACS. Many others will also testify of new fervor and excitement in serving our Lord as a result of learning to orient their "callings" to the Bible, be they lawyers, educators, pastors, homemakers, or whatever. Their response has been one of praise to God for granting scriptural light to the AACS, which in turn has enabled them the better to perform their task of proclaiming Christ as Lord of every area of their lives.

Criticism of the AACS

In view of the many blessings received, is there any basis for the criticism made by Mr. Frame?

It should be pointed out that he is not alone in criticizing the AACS but falls into a class of critics who claim to be in favor of the stated goals of the AACS but are opposed to the way these goals are being pursued. If such criticism were directed toward improved understanding and clarification of issues, I would be very much in favor of it and so would the leaders in the AACS.

Unfortunately, the majority of the criticism has been directed toward discrediting the AACS by pointing out an alleged "deviation from Reformed tradition" or "heresy." Much of the criticism has a familiar ring, particularly to a formerly avid reader of "right-wing" literature. It goes something like this:

Mr. Black of the AACS says "so and so." If I correctly understand what he is saying, then it follows that Mr. Black must believe "thus and thus." Since "thus and thus" is a deviation from Reformed tradition, or even outright heresy, then it follows that Mr. Black and the AACS are "bad" and should be opposed.

In using this type of argument there is unfortunately no attempt on the critic's part to learn from Mr. Black whether he really believes "thus and thus," nor really to demonstrate that "thus and thus" is in fact a deviation or heresy.

In his article, "The Quiet Crisis,"

The Presbyterian Guardian

Thy People ARE My People

by Shirley Morris

These were some of my thoughts
As I prayed earnestly to know —
What is the Lord's will for me?
To which church shall I go?

I've been going to Covenant O. P.
For almost a year now, or more;
What a blessing it's been to me!
Lord, should it be rather permanently?

I sought whole-heartedly to know His way,
Continuing to pray and waiting to see.
Then one day as I knelt to pray,
These thoughts, clear as day, came to me.

Where will you go to find a man,
A servant after God's own heart,
One who loves God all that he can,
And exudes the love God does impart?

Look at the sheep already in his care;
See how healthy and well-fed they look.
And see the light and joy they wear
As he feeds them from your Holy Book.

'Tis true, 'tis true, my Lord,
I definitely stand much to gain.
But how can I serve, how can I give,
So that You have not saved me in vain?

For I long to labor among my kin,
My people according to the flesh.
— And what will my husband say?
They all need to know your blessedness!

Now, child, just stop there.
You know better than to worry and fret.
Have I not led you to this point?
Will I not lead you yet?

But what of my children, Lord,
Is this what You want for them too?
All I want is what You want;
Show me what I should do.

You have been around and seen a lot;
Could you be satisfied anywhere but here,
After knowing, in Me, that true fellowship
And the joy of godly friends and dear?

I could, if You want me to, Lord;
It is You I seek to please.
It is your will I want to do,
To praise You with words and deeds.

One thing you must remember, child,
And this thing you know is true:
I have promised to work in you
My will to will and to do.

Oh, and I do will, Lord, to be with them,
To be with your people at Covenant O. P.
And I know You have led and have blessed,
For I can surely look back and see.

That's it, then, Lord; that's it!
All praise and glory unto You.
You have worked your will in me;
Now all I have to do is "Do!"
Amen.

Mrs. Shirley Morris, a young Black mother, recently united with the Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh. This poem was read at the church's 35th Anniversary banquet — and three copies were forwarded to the *Guardian's* editor from among those who heard it.

Professor Frame's criticism is again difficult to accept for one who knows the facts. He alleges that Christian schools are in danger of being swamped by secular humanism and then points the finger at AACCS. The fact is that the leaders of the AACCS have in their writings and lectures been vigorous and effective critics of secular humanism! This was a recurring theme at an AACCS conference held in Philadelphia early this May.

How then can Mr. Frame seem to accuse the AACCS of promoting secular humanism? From personal discussion with him I know his answer; it consists of a strange mixture of facts and Mr. Frame's interpretation of them

which he saw fit to withhold when he wrote the article.

Although I disagree with Mr. Frame's evaluation of the AACCS, I do agree with him when he says readers of the *Guardian* "should keep their eyes open to what the AACCS group is doing." As president of the Mid-Atlantic States chapter of the AACCS, I invite you to do just that. Don't take my word, or John Frame's; come and see for yourself. Weekend study conferences will be held throughout the United States and Canada in the fall. The Philadelphia area conference will deal with music and natural science. A series of five monthly lectures on the political role of the Christian will also

be presented at various locations throughout the country. We especially invite our critics to come to our meetings in order that they may *know*, as well as *know about*, the AACCS. Shalom.

John W. Van Dyk, Ph.D., is an elder in the Emmanuel Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Wilmington, Del., and a chemist with DuPont.

For information concerning conferences and lectures sponsored by the AACCS, write to:

A.A.C.S.
22 College St.
Toronto 2B, Ontario, Canada

Note: This article was first published in the 1970 summer issue of the International Reformed Bulletin, official publication of the International Association for Reformed Faith and Action (1677 Gentian Dr., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49508).

The article is being presented in two parts by the Guardian and was graciously offered as a means for furthering discussion and clarification of some of the issues raised by Professor John M. Frame in his article, "The Quiet Crisis" (in the April Guardian), concerning

proposed revisions to the constitution of the National Union of Christian Schools. The basic issues are not limited to Christian schools, however, but have implications for every area of Christian life and action.

Both Dr. Olthuis and Dr. Zylstra are faculty members of the Institute for Christian Studies (229 College St. W., Toronto 2B, Ontario, Canada). The Institute offers graduate level courses in a variety of fields with a Christian perspective. The Institute is sponsored by the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship.

Confessing Christ in Education

James H. Olthuis
Bernard Zylstra

ON THE NATURE OF CONFESSION

According to the Scriptures, profession that leads to salvation is upon the lips, and faith that leads to righteousness is in the heart (Romans 10:9f.). This does not in the least mean that profession is a matter of lip-service. Profession of Christ is a matter of the heart; it is an act of faith in obedient response to the Word of God. Having acknowledged Christ as the only point of certainty in life, as the foundation upon which to stand, the Christ-believer develops a life-view from that vantage point and on the basis of that foundation. He begins to view himself, his fellows, and the world in the perspective of Christ's redeeming reign and thus begins to walk in the Way of the Lord.

Since individuals do not exist in themselves nor walk by themselves, because they are members of a body, their profession and walk of life are of a communal character. Profession must be confession: a saying along with others of the same thing (cf. Ephesians 3:18; Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:25). The basic unity of the act of confessing is found in the Word of God written as the norm for all confession. Because of this commonly held confession, because of this common response to the Word, the members are knit together into a body.

Elaborating our root-confession

The members of the Body of Christ are united in that most fundamental and totally encompassing confession which can be expressed in the words: "Christ is Lord" (cf. John 20:28; Romans 10:12; Acts 10:36; Ephesians 4:5; 1 Timothy 6:15). Every confession of Christ-believers is an elaboration of this confessing act of self-surrender. But this root-confession calls for an ever growing richness of confessing response in tune with the rich diversity in the Lord's creation. The confession of the Master's servants is never isolated from the con-

text in which it occurs. For this reason there is a need to confess in diverse ways, geared to and relevant to the diverse life-situations in creation. With the unfolding of creation in history and with the appearance of ever new situations and new social contexts, the followers of the Lord will strive for a more specific confession as an elaboration of their first submission: Christ is Lord. With respect to the many-sided society of our day the confession of Christ as Lord ought to take place within the particular societal spheres or zones, e.g., the institutional church, the family, the school, the body politic and the industrial sector.

As part of man's task to have dominion over creation in God's name, those in authority in the various life-zones are to concretize and make specific for their areas what the Lord reveals to us in His Word. Never on the basis of their own insights but as office-bearers that are to make clear how they understand the Word to guide and norm the areas concerned. This may include drawing up a written confession stipulating in a skeletal manner the content of what they confess to be their anchor of hope and certainty as Christ-followers in a particular sphere of human action. Such a written confession stands as it were between the Scriptures and the life of today. It may serve as a basis for action, as an ideal to realize, and as a call to others to join in a common confession and a common walk in joyful obedience to the one Lord.

Such a confession need not of course assume a written form in every instance. But as affairs develop and become more complex this may be necessary for the sake of clarity in direction. A written confession, too, is a response to the Word and specifies the demands of the Word in a certain time for a certain situation. As such, written confessions have all the strengths and weaknesses of being time-conditioned documents drawn up by believers with a certain level of spiritual insight

into the Scriptures in a particular stage of cultural development. The confession of Christ-believers cannot be bound and limited by the specific response to the Word of a specific period of history. If there is an alive Biblical faith among believers, their confessions should continually be amplified and revised in order to make use of new insights into the Scriptures and in order to make the act of confessing a living and fresh response to the inexhaustible Word for each generation.

Confessions are authoritative in that and insofar as they are specifications of the Word. At the same time it should not be forgotten that confessions are open to critique in that they are human and fallible reiterations of the Word. What the Lord demands of us in the church, the state, the school, and industry is completely trustworthy and has infallible authority. This divine appeal ought to be heard in the fallible confessions. The confessions and creeds are normative. But, since they are the words of men, they are never self-sufficient or final and must thus always be under the test of Scripture. Confessions serve always as secondary norms, and it is blasphemy to identify them with the primary norm, the Word. This is readily admitted, for instance, in the Belgic Confession: "Neither may we consider any writings of men, however holy these men may have been, of equal value with those divine Scriptures, nor ought we to consider custom, or the great multitude, or antiquity, or succession of times and persons, or councils, decrees or statutes, as of equal value with the truth of God, since the truth is above all" (Art. VII).

Multiformity of confessions

Believing and confessing in their roots are one. But, as we noted above, the working out of the heart-confession takes on the form and shape of the diverse contexts of Kingdom service. The result of the Christian community's confession of Christ in all of the zones or 'rooms' of the creation is a *multiformity* of confessions all having their basic unity in the Word. First comes the unity of our confession, then the pluriformity of its forms.

The institutional church has composed a series of very significant ecclesiastical creeds as a response to the Word of God and often in battle with the heresy. The act of confessing within the institutional church is defined and shaped by the confession of the church. Since the non-church areas of life are also subject to the Word of the Lord, it is our conviction that there too the Christian community ought to confess the Lordship of Christ as it pertains to these areas. When the time is ripe and the need is there we feel that for the non-church areas of life written confessions or 'creeds' can also be formulated. For example—and that is our concern in this article—a school confession or an educational creed should indeed be drawn up which specifies the main Scriptural guidelines for education in our time. Such an educational creed ought to be a link between the Scriptures and the educational process: it norms, defines and shapes the direction of activities in the school.

Until today most of the creed-writing energies in the history of the Christian church have been devoted to

LATE NEWS BULLETIN

Sioux Center, Iowa--The National Union of Christian Schools, at its annual convention here, adopted a new "basis article" in its constitution, reaffirming its adherence to Reformed creeds and the Scriptures. The vote was reported to be near-unanimous.

the life and confession of the institutional church. Since Christ is Lord over the whole of human life His servants must confess Him in the major areas of human culture. In the complexity of contemporary civilization that confession ought to be given a measure of clarity in terms of written statements of principle—which in this context we will call 'creeds'—so that Christians may reflect and act together in the non-church areas of life and so that the world may know the direction and goal of our Christian walk of life. In saying this we do not want to minimize the importance of ecclesiastical confessions. But we do want to articulate more clearly the nature of our confession in areas beyond the institutional church. Since in this essay we are interested in making a contribution to the development of an 'educational creed' it is necessary in view of the historical situation to examine for a moment the relation between church creeds and educational creeds.

EDUCATIONAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL CREEDS

The confessions of a (denominational) institutional church should not take the place of a Christian educational confession since a school is a school and an institutional church is an institutional church. Each of these structures requires a confession relevant to that structure, though in each instance a response to the Scriptures. We would suggest the following considerations for this position.

The creeds of the institutional church were not intended to be and should not be looked upon as school creeds. They were written at a time when schools as we envision them today were largely absent. They do not *specifically* express the directives of the Word of God for an educational enterprise and thus do not deal with modern educational problems and current anti-Christian views of the schooling process.

The church creeds are more general and wider in scope than educational creeds. They make the confession of Christ-believers for all of life—thus also for the school. But they speak the central, basic, concentrated language characteristic of a community at worship which holds equally for all areas of life. The educational particularization is not yet worked out. An educational creed is more limited, yet in its restriction it is able to provide a more complete and more precise spelling, out of the demands of the Word for education.

Reliance upon ecclesiastical confessions as a sufficient basis for Christian education may readily lead to spiritual sterility and even principial bankruptcy in the educational setting since the educational relevance of the Word of God is not brought explicitly to the fore. This narrowing of the basis of Christian education to the ecclesiastical creeds may occasion great confusion. This is present, for example, in the frequent practice of appointing teachers

"The confessions of an institutional church should not take the place of a Christian educational confession since a school is a school and an institutional church is an institutional church."

and professors who are members of a church confessing these creeds when in effect the appointees cannot clearly articulate the fundamentals of Christian education. Adherence to church creeds may even serve to hide the absence of a scripturally directed educational curriculum. In addition, it should be noted that many denominations adhering to identical creeds have not found it imperative to draw from these a set of principles relevant to Christian education.

Confusing Church and Kingdom

To act as if a church creed can be a school creed is to confuse and mislead. For one is then readily given the false idea that schools can only be of a Christian character in an indirect manner, namely through the institutional church and its creeds. In this way the church as institute is somehow identified with the entire range of the Kingdom of God so that all non-ecclesiastical organizations must to a smaller or greater degree be subject to and dependent on the church if they are to maintain a Christian character. The result of this approach in effect is the establishment of church-schools. It is an expression of ecclesiastical imperialism against which the Reformation fought and which today even many Roman Catholics are beginning to question. The issue in this context is plain: how can ecclesiastical imperialism be avoided if Christian education must be based on the church's creeds?

We realize that we are touching a delicate point here. In the light of the Scriptures it is indeed very clear that the institutional church occupies a central place in the coming of God's kingdom. The church must preach the Word, nurture the faith of its members and their children, establish a place of communal worship and the celebration of the sacraments, and stretch out a helping hand to the needy. But the institutional church does not embrace the totality of Christian life as it is restored in Jesus Christ (cf. Ephesians 5, 6; Colossians 3, 4). For this reason we regard it as unbiblical to maintain that all Christian activity and witness must be channelled directly or indirectly through the institutional church. To think and act in this manner is to confuse the Body of Christ as the New Humanity (cf. Ephesians 1:22f. and 2:15) with the ecclesiastical institution, which is one of the ways of the Body of Christ in the world. To think and to act in this manner is also to deny the office of all believers which is part and parcel of the tradition of the Reformation. (For a more detailed discussion of this entire matter, see J. H. Olthuis, "Must the Church Become Secular?" *International Reformed Bulletin*, January 1967; reprinted in revised form in *Out of Concern for the Church*, Toronto: Wedge Publishing Foundation, 1970.)

Moreover, to employ church creeds as school creeds is to take the easy way in a difficult situation—as if our spiritual fathers had worked it all out correctly and

in detail for later centuries and for later developments. It is to take the way of fear—as if the Spirit no longer leads his people so that they grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ attuned to his Word. Actually, it may be the way of little faith—refusing to heed the admonition to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is the Lord who is working in us (Philippians 2:12f.).

Finally, to place church confessions in a school constitution in a North American setting—where the institutional church is tragically fragmented in hundreds of denominational pieces—is to obstruct the desired development toward an (inter) national system of Christian schools in accordance with the biblical injunction to be of one mind and of one spirit. If Christ-believers are willing to come together in allegiance to the one Lord in a new dimension of Christian witness then it is not imperative to maintain the present fragmentation in that new dimension.

All this is not to suggest that there is no connection between the various confessions within the biblically attuned Christian community. The multiformity of confessions must not result in the disintegration of our confession. On the basis of our position we believe that the opposite is the case. There is indeed a unity to our confession, but it is not to be sought for in the confessions of any one area of our life, not even in an area as central as the institutional church. The unity is found in the Word of God as the norm for all confessional activity. The point is that the required unity should not be sought in the subordination of all non-ecclesiastical witness and action to the one ecclesiastical confession, but at a deeper level. When one seeks the unity in the church institute, he is forgetting the deeper religious root of life, the Covenant renewed in the Second Adam which embraces *all* of life.

The pluriform confessions are not the splinters of a shattered ecclesiastical confession, but the colors of the rainbow which together form a beautiful unity. The church creeds are more general and wider in scope than the non-church creeds. The non-church creeds are more limited; yet, in their restriction they provide a more complete and more exact spelling out of the demands of the Word than do the church creeds in those areas of our life where today the battle for the direction of men's lives is being waged with an ever greater intensity. Pluriform confessions, rather than undermining or taking away the integral confession of the Body of Christ, deepen it and enrich it on the way to perfection. (Cf. Donald Oppewal, *The Roots of the Calvinistic Day School Movement*, Grand Rapids: Calvin College Monograph Series, 1963. Oppewal says: "The real job remaining here [for the Christian school movement in North America] . . . is the translation of Biblical principles into positions taken on educational questions. This series of positions, along with their Biblical support, would then be the 'creed' of the Calvinistic school"; p. 34.)

The second and concluding portion of this article presents the authors' initial approach towards a Christian educational creed. It will appear in next month's issue of the Guardian.

"Educational creeds" for Christian schools? NO!

In the April *Guardian*, John M. Frame wrote of "The Quiet Crisis" in the National Union of Christian Schools over proposals to replace the historic commitment of that organization to the Reformed creeds with an "educational creed" instead. Professor Frame pointed to the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship as the source of this advocacy of an "educational creed." The article "Confessing Christ in Education" in this issue shows something of the reasons for his pointing toward the AACCS; other aspects of his concern should be apparent in the second portion of this article to appear in next month's *Guardian*.

We agree that every Christian should develop the implications of his confession of Christ as Lord (and as Savior also!) in every "life-zone" in which he exists. We do not agree that this means he should develop a distinct creed for each such "diverse life-situation" *in place of* the creeds and confessions of the organized church. We do not agree for several reasons:

The church is one

In the first place, Olthuis and Zylstra seriously minimize the truth that Christ's church is a vital unity in all its aspects. The Bible knows nothing of an "institutional church" restricted to one "life-zone." Nor does it suggest that the member moves from the "institutional church" to some other aspect of the body of Christ when he leaves the building after the Sunday worship services.

To be sure, our human minds find it convenient to speak in abstract terms about the church "visible" or "invisible," "institute" or "organism." But these are semantic tools to describe appearances; they do not identify distinct or separate entities in reality.

The church is the church. It has its instituted appearance and its organic or living quality. But it is one church, not just on Sundays for one "particular societal sphere"; it is the church organized and living organism in and to all societal spheres. And *as institute*, the church has a right and duty to be concerned about its members in whatever "societal sphere" they may be functioning.

The creeds for a unified life

In the second place, Olthuis and Zylstra have seriously delimited the creeds of the "institutional church." It is simply not so that "the creeds of the institutional church were not intended to be . . . school creeds." Quite the contrary; the creeds were meant to be confessions of what the people believed in and for *all* areas of life, schools not excluded.

Just consider the all-inclusive scope of the two most familiar creedal statements in the Reformed tradition:

(My only comfort is) that I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ . . . (Heidelberg Catechism, 1). And, Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever (Westminster Shorter Catechism, 1).

Now what "life-zone" is untouched by these reflections of biblical "norms"? Not a single area of life. These are creeds, statements of belief, expressions of biblical truth, that encompass all that we do or think.

We may not sunder the "institutional church" from the

living body of Christ. So too we may not relegate the "ecclesiastical creeds" to some narrow liturgical or faith-aspect of our lives. When I confess "my only hope" or "man's chief end," I am confessing biblical norms that are true and basic and altogether relevant to all of life — including the Christian school.

A basis for Christian unity

Finally, Olthuis and Zylstra have seriously underestimated the vital urgency for a *Reformed*-creed understanding of the truths of Scripture as the only viable basis for a truly Christian school. Fractured denominationalism is indeed a sad spectacle. But we do not believe that "Christ-believers" — of whatever "ecclesiastical creedal" hue they may be—should or even can "come together in allegiance to the one Lord in a new dimension of Christian witness" like the Christian school.

Only where God is recognized as the absolute sovereign over creation *and* in the salvation of individual sinners, where the Christ of the Scripture is believed in as the only and *all-sufficient* Savior from sin (as well as Lord), where man (including Christian school pupils!) is understood to be totally depraved even *in intellect* and unable to believe apart from sovereign grace, and where the Scriptures are received and obeyed as the *only* infallible rule for faith *and* for all life—only where these truths, core truths of the Reformed creeds, are the basis will we have biblically "normed" and truly Christian schools.

Only when such truths are understood and accepted will we approach every part of creation with a biblically directed respect and awareness of its God-related character. Only then will we understand the perverseness that so often rises in our children (and in their parents and teachers also!). Only so will we see Christ and him crucified as the wisdom of God, the Truth whom to know is life now and forever. Only with that infallible, inerrant, God-given Scripture as our guide will we learn anything aright, or know how to use it to the glory of our sovereign and gracious Lord.

Any basis less than the Reformed creeds will result in a lowest-common-denominator "Christian school" misnomer. I know; for over twelve years I've served as a board member of a Christian school solidly committed to the Reformed creedal standards. Yet to this school have come "Christ-believers" with their children from more than sixty different local congregations of more than twenty different confessional orientations. Only the commitment of the school to a Reformed standard—and the grace of God working through it—has enabled it to avoid being blown about by all the winds of diverse doctrine within its constituency. Instead, the school has served—*on this basis*—to draw together these Christian families in a genuine Christian unity and mutual respect.

Nothing but the Reformed creeds will do as the basis for a truly Christian school. Nothing but a school functioning on such a basis will serve to unite Christians of differing confessional allegiances. That basis happens to be according to God's Word; it happens to be biblical, in other words. That's why it's necessary, and that's why it works!

— J. J. M.

The Presbyterian Guardian

EDITOR
JOHN J. MITCHELL

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Letters

Sees danger in OP/RP merger

You asked for views on the proposed OP/RP merger. First, I do not see the issues clearly in the *Guardian*. This is wrong; the issues surely can be made more clear.

I see differences! Or rather, I see trends in the Reformed Presbyterian Church that I do not like. I recently saw a "Southern" Presbyterian church accepted into the RPC/ES although I knew personally there was severe liberalism in the congregation. The Reformed Presbyterians merely examined the elders. I had proposed, when asked, that all the members of this church be given a complete examination (when it was seeking membership in the OPC).

The Reformed Presbyterian Church has membership in the National Association of Evangelicals, a body that is full of liberal churches; the NAE is liberal. For the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to go in this direction would be a clear victory for the United Presbyterian Church. The NAE refuses to speak out against the National or World Council of Churches.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church was active in "Expo '72." Billy Graham was prominent there, and fully characteristic of Expo's support of apostasy. Graham refuses to speak against atheistic Russia.

My wife and I raised our five children in a church "gone liberal." We got out, but the "scars" are far deeper than most Orthodox Presbyterians ap-

In brief . . .

CHRISTIAN REFORMED SYNOD

Synod 1972 of the Christian Reformed Church, meeting during the last two weeks of June, confronted several crucial matters. Some of the more important are noted here.

Authority of Scripture. A lengthy report on "The Nature and Extent of Biblical Authority" was first presented to the 1971 Synod. Dissatisfaction with the report's confusing definitions of that authority and with its discussion of Genesis 1-11 led Synod to recommit it for further study. (For some of the particulars, see the articles and correspondence in the *Guardian* from May through December 1971.)

The revised report, though insisting that it is viewing Scripture's authority from two perspectives, still contained definitions that many felt to be irreconcilable. The Genesis discussion had been rewritten.

Synod 1972 approved the whole report as "providing guidelines" for further discussion of Scripture's authority, and adopted seven statements of "advice"—though only after amending them. As adopted, the advice no longer suggests that Scripture's authority derives from its purpose as "the saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ," but speaks simply of Scripture as having "full divine authority." The advice warns against methods of interpretation that would compromise "the full authority of Scripture as the Word of God."

This is certainly an improvement

preciate. I don't wish this on any OPC member, say, five years after merger. I don't want to go through it again!

Ross F. Rogers, member of
Bethel OPC, Leesburg, Va.

Sees benefit in OP/RP Merger

I was so interested and glad to read in the April issue of the *Guardian* about the present state of OP/RP relations, and indeed more particularly in the light of your closing remarks on the hopes of a national Presbyterian body. Is it not true that the very birth

over the committee's first or second report. Whether all the possible ambiguity has been removed is doubtful. Though concerned with methods of Scripture interpretation, it is still hard to say just what methods would "compromise" Scripture's authority or how. Synod clearly affirmed that God himself spoke forth the Scriptures; it is not so clear whether it is now permissible to deny that a serpent once spoke audible words in Eden. The final result is quite disappointing.

OPC Relations. Both the Christian Reformed and Orthodox Presbyterian churches have had special committees discussing a possible merger. Talks had become strained, however, when the Orthodox Presbyterians began to ask about a possible "trend toward liberalism" in the Christian Reformed Church. Attempts to show that such a trend did not exist were not fully convincing to the Orthodox Presbyterians.

Synod, in rather contradictory decisions, approved the idea of joint study committees on questions of mutual concern to both churches. At the same time, it dismissed its special committee and placed OP relations under its regular committee for interchurch matters.

Synod may well have felt it was more honest to stop talking under the circumstances. Yet it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Synod, unhappy with talk about a "trend toward liberalism" in its midst, has simply turned off its hearing aid. Despite declarations of continued interest in the goal of possible merger, Synod's action has effectively squelched it by refusing to con-

of Presbyterianism as an historical entity was in a national context and atmosphere [in Scotland, and later on repeated in the American colonies], and that it is only sin that has fragmented this scriptural ideal?

Knowing the predicament of conservatives in the "Southern" Church, I most sincerely long with them that you may all come to a common mind in the Lord; that you may be favoured of the Spirit of God to achieve this holy desire.

One realizes that in facing the practical issues of union it is of vital importance that cherished principles are not recklessly jettisoned — only such

tinue open discussions in the face of serious differences. It remains to be seen whether any joint study committees will be set up.

Other decisions. Previous decisions of Synod declaring that members of secret societies (like the Masonic Order) could not be members of the church were reaffirmed despite requests for modification.

Synod adopted a statement condemning abortion except to save the life of the mother—over strong opposition that favored a more open position—and then moved to make violators of this decision subject only to "loving concern rather than judgmental pronouncements." Apparently, if you're involved in an abortion, the church may express concern about it but cannot exercise discipline.

This Synod, whatever its intent or attitude, took decisions in various interchurch questions that set a pattern. It broke off conversations with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Canadian Reformed Churches, both of which may be termed "conservative," both of which had expressed concern over "trends" in the Christian Reformed Church. Synod refused to take any steps toward severing relations with the Gereformeerde Kerken (Reformed Churches) in the Netherlands despite toleration of error by that body. At the same time, the Synod approved a special meeting to be held with participants from the Reformed Church in America. It even approved an investigation into the desirability of membership in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (containing the most liberal Presbyterian and Reformed groups).

principles must be seen to have solid biblical foundation. But it is needful to aim, and keep aiming, at the greatest good of the whole body, to which end our earnest prayers must accompany every effort (Philippians 4:6).

We have no biblical Presbyterian church in England (though Scotland and Ireland do have), so those of us who revere the Confession must make do in more general churches where we can find regenerate fellowship and ministry. But we have made a start again in 1971 to explore the possibility of such a Reformed body (and congregations) eventually arising here. It is early yet to predict the outcome, but

Whatever trend toward liberalism may or may not exist within the Christian Reformed Church, that church seems clearly to feel more at home with the more liberal of its brother and sister churches.

FOR THE RECORD

Recent reports in the *Christian Beacon* assert various entangling alliances of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod with "Neo-evangelicals." To set the record straight:

Neither the OPC or the RPCES, or any of their agencies, "cooperated" with "Explo '72" in Dallas. Booths were set up to promote Covenant College and Seminary; Westminster Seminary also had a booth. There was *no cooperation* in the program itself.

It has also been alleged that the RPCES is a member of the National Association of Evangelicals. This is an error, possibly due to the fact that the Reformed Presbyterian Church, N. A. (the "Covenanters") is a member of the NAE.

Dr. Carl McIntire, editor of the *Beacon*, has been asked to correct some of these errors, but has not yet acknowledged the request.

Going someplace ??

Are you going to move? Please let us know, at least a month in advance. Your postcard will save us 30¢ or more in special postal fees. Thank you!

you can be assured that English Presbyterians have the U. S. churches close to their hearts.

May the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and all the other biblical remnants, avoid the plague of modern gimmicks infecting professed evangelical denominations. The founder-members of the OPC (who seceded with Machen) kept a very high standard of witness.

In conclusion I may say I have been reading the *Guardian* from the late 1940s — it is the only U. S. paper I have continued with.

J. A. Titcombe
Clapham Park, London
(*Letters cont'd next page*)

HAVE YOU HEARD?

Have you frequently heard the words "Gift Annuities"?

Have you heard that Westminster Theological Seminary recently announced a new Gift Annuity Program?

HAVE YOU WONDERED?

Have you wondered exactly what gift annuities are?

Have you been a little uncertain as to whether those ads were inviting people to invest or asking them to give?

HAVE YOU WISHED?

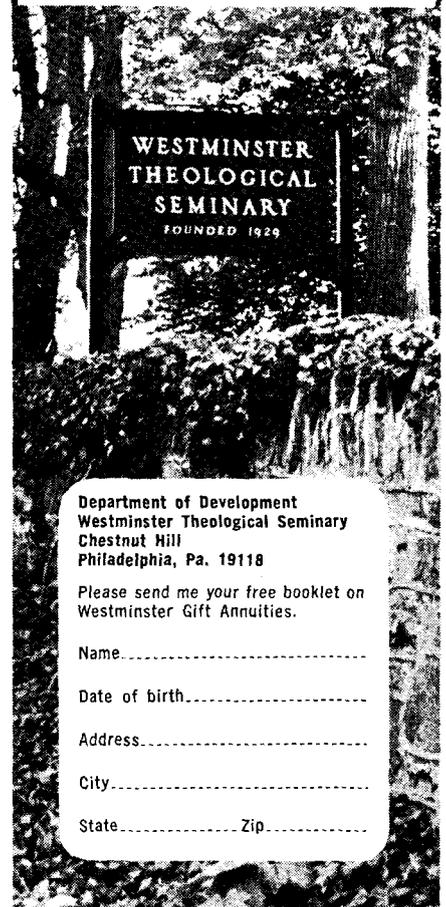
Have you wished you had more money to give Westminster?

Have you wished you had more financial security?

HAVE YOU WORRIED?

Have you worried a little that you might outlive your resources?

For answers to these questions send coupon today for Free Booklet.



Department of Development
Westminster Theological Seminary
Chestnut Hill
Philadelphia, Pa. 19118

Please send me your free booklet on
Westminster Gift Annuities.

Name.....

Date of birth.....

Address.....

City.....

State..... Zip.....

To whom do we show mercy?

(Continued from page 98)

encouraging and exhorting the people in their duty of mercy to these officers alone. He himself took an active part, calling the church to benevolence; he instructed Timothy and others to do this also.

Thus it would appear that not only the church as a group of individuals but the church as a body, through its God-appointed officers for the task, must engage in the work of doing good and showing mercy. This mercy, though with a priority on the part of believers, is to be shown to all men. Every occasion should be looked on, not as another drain on the budget, but as an opportunity given by God himself in order that our work of mercy might demonstrate his kindness and mercy who does good to all (Psalm 67:1, 2). If even unbelievers are to be ministered to in Christ's name, certainly those of God's own family or household should

receive such mercy. And it should be given with cheerfulness (Romans 12:8).

The church, through its officers, must be alert and active to show mercy wherever needed and to all men, as God gives us the occasion and the means, but especially so to Christians. Distance is no barrier; the work of showing mercy should be as world-wide as the work of spreading the gospel of God's grace. Indeed, the one cannot be separated from the other.

The Rev. Mr. Edwards is pastor of the First Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Portland, Oregon. His article, though appropriate any time, does happen to derive from a study made in relation to questions that arose within the denomination concerning its own work of benevolence. We hope this article will help to focus our thinking on this vital aspect of the church's call to service in this world.

Letters, continued

Left is right, right is . . . ?

Just received the June/July *Guardian*. The cover picture [of the 39th O.P. General Assembly] has been turned around. Is this the "Revised Version" of the Assembly? At least it put me on the right the way it stands now.

Gerald G. Latal
Manteca, Calif.

Ed. Note: The printer goofed, and put the picture's negative in backward. No political-theological implications intended! At least it left the editor in the middle-of-the-road position, whichever way you look at it.

Enclosed is my check for renewal of my subscription. *The Presbyterian Guardian* is one of the few publications in the United States today that uncompromisingly defends Christianity in its truth and purity.

William O. Solberg
Lancaster, Calif.

Ed. Note: That is our purpose, and thanks for the encouragement. And praise be to God who has revealed himself and his grace to his people in truth and purity, that we might know the Truth!

"Feed my sheep!"

I appreciate the major burden of Wallace A. Bell's "The Once-er" in the May issue of the *Guardian*. But I am concerned that we not, in our zeal to encourage faithfulness in our Chris-

tian commitment in the Body of Christ, lapse into an emphasis that might well lead to legalistic forms for gauging one's spiritual health. [See also the "Reaction" by C. Ralph Verno.]

My chief concern lies in the need for those of us who teach and preach the Word of God to make the services or classes we preside over bear such an obvious stamp of the Holy Spirit's active presence that no true child of God would consistently opt to remain absent from our meetings. I have no great sympathy with those who, for reasons of leisure or selfishness, choose to stay away from the stated meetings of the church. Such a one fairly well brands himself spiritually and ought not to object to sessional agreement with his own judgment.

But there seems to be more to the question than personal preferences. I am aware that our confessional standards teach (as does Scripture itself) that the means of grace do not derive their efficacy from the virtues of those who administer them. But that fact does not absolve the teacher or pastor from his responsibility to be strong in the Lord, actively dispensing the Lord's grace through the particular ministries he performs. The onus rests on the minister and his ministry for the edification of the congregation. In the Reformed tradition, the ministry of the Word of God has been the focal point of worship and fellowship and with good reason: the Word of God in our lives is the secret of our existence as the church. But we can never assume that grace comes *ex opere*

operato simply because the Word is presented and the sacraments administered.

Are we making that our position when we ask people to attend the services of the church without due consideration to whether we actually have anything to offer them? Are we asking more of our people than we deserve if we give little attention to their existential needs and are content with meetings as usual? Pastors, *feed* his sheep!

Jack Buckley
Berkeley, Calif.

Missionary leader dies

Memphis, Tenn. — Dr. T. Stanley Soltau, missionary statesman, pastor, author, and lecturer, died at age 82 at his home here on July 19.

Born in Tasmania and reared in England, Dr. Soltau came to the United States for his advanced education. After graduation from Princeton Seminary, he was appointed a missionary to Korea by the Board of Foreign Missions of the then Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. A leader in Korea for twenty-five years, he joined with those who resisted the Japanese military rulers over the issue of obeisance to the Shinto shrines just prior to World War II.

Until his retirement he was pastor of the First Evangelical Church of Memphis. He has served in many capacities in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. Of his four children, one is a pastor and two are missionaries.

The Presbyterian Guardian

REACTION TO "THE ONCE-ER"

Although no doubt having good motives, Mr. Bell in his article on "The Once-er" (in the May issue of the *Guardian*) says things and takes an approach which are of grave concern to me and should be to anyone who truly believes that the Bible alone is the rule of faith and life. Basically he questions the faith of the person who attends church only once a week; he finds it "difficult to believe that his profession of faith and obedience is genuine". Mr. Bell sought to arrive at his conclusion "in the light of God's Word" and the summary of its teachings set forth in the church's Confession and Catechisms.

First, it should be pointed out that Mr. Bell need not consider the church's secondary standards in this matter, for if something were shown to be wrong by the Confession or Catechisms but not by Scripture, then these standards are going beyond Scripture. (Furthermore, the person making a credible profession of faith in uniting with the church does not and should not have to commit himself to "sincerely receiving and adopting" these standards of the church as the officers do in their ordination vows.)

Charges against the Once-er

Mr. Bell makes a number of very serious charges against the once-er, charges no one should make except on incontestable scriptural ground.

1. Mr. Bell claims that the once-er does not keep the Sabbath holy. No doubt many once-ers do not keep the Sabbath holy, but there is also no doubt that many twice-ers do not either. There is also no doubt that many once-ers as well as twice-ers do keep the Sabbath holy. Whatever the requirements of the Sabbath commandment, it is obvious that they do not include attendance at formal worship twice on each Lord's Day. Mr. Bell admits he does not know what the once-er is doing the rest of the Lord's Day, so why does he guess and assume? He doesn't know what the twice-er is doing either. Mr. Bell assumes, without any real biblical evidence, that one cannot truly keep the Sabbath holy, nor hunger and thirst after righteousness, without being a twice-er.

2. Mr. Bell says that "it appears that the first-century Christians met more often than once on a Sabbath morning" but he submits no evidence at all. Even if such evidence is forthcoming, one must show from Scripture that the first-century pattern is obligatory upon us. Mr. Bell charges that the once-er is failing to obey Hebrews 10:25, but it is obvious the verse does not require, explicitly or implicitly, attendance at two formal services of worship on the Lord's Day. The once-er does not necessarily fail to heed the exhortation of Hebrews 10:25 any more than the twice-er.

3. Mr. Bell charges that the once-er despises God's mercy and grace, and does not love the brethren because he lets the minister preach to empty pews. Surely the once-er could be doing all this, but so could the twice-er; similarly both the once-er and the twice-er might care very much for these things. Again Mr. Bell assumes, without any scriptural evidence, that one must attend two formal worship services on the Lord's Day in order to care properly for God's mercy and grace, and in order to love the brethren properly. Concern for mercy and

grace, and love for brethren, can very well be shown in other ways.

4. Mr. Bell charges that the once-er has no real conviction about the church as the salt and light in the world, does not serve God in giving testimony to the world, indeed does not (in most cases at least), really serve God at all, is not given wholly unto the Lord, is professing with his lips but denying his Lord by deeds or lack of them. Again, for these astoundingly grave charges Mr. Bell gives no biblical basis. If absence on Sunday evening means a breakdown of testimony, then by that logic our testimony (even of the twice-er) breaks down many other times in the week. Mr. Bell assumes, with no biblical basis, that being a twice-er is the only way to witness to the world as part of the church and to serve the Lord.

5. Mr. Bell charges the once-er with living a lie since he has promised in reliance on God's grace to serve the Lord, forsake the world, mortify the old nature and lead a godly life. The obvious fact is that this vow does not, explicitly or implicitly, require being a twice-er.

My point is not to discourage being a twice-er nor to say that it may not be very beneficial for many people, but rather that the Bible does not require it and that it is not the only way one may fulfill biblical obligations. The Bible places upon us an obligation to worship and fellowship, but does not say that we must attend two services on Sunday. The Bible tells us we must pray but does not tell us we must do it at a midweek service. The Bible tells us to teach our children but does not tell us that it must be done via certain media.

Adding to the Word of God?

It is tragic, in my opinion, that a Christian minister would question the faith of a once-er simply because he is a once-er. The cartoon with the article depicted the once-er as a modern Pharisee, but I am sure that there are many twice-ers who emulate the Pharisee by being proud of their going to church twice on Sunday, attending Sunday school and midweek service, etc.

The most serious point about Mr. Bell's approach is that it cuts at the heart of the basis of our faith by adding to God's Word. Two services on Sunday is a custom in our Christian culture (perhaps a good one!) but it is not a biblical obligation. By in effect making it an obligation, Mr. Bell elevates the word of man to the level of the Word of God.

God places a curse on those who add to his Word, and we justly criticize Romanism, liberalism, sects and cults for doing this. Rather than look down our "more orthodox than thou" noses at these people, we in the Reformed faith in general and in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in particular ought to engage in much careful self-examination to see if we have not added to God's Word by absolutizing human traditions.

God was wise in not spelling out all the details of carrying out these various biblical obligations. Let us not presume to be wiser than God by making those details we happen to like obligatory.

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Novato Church celebrates two anniversaries



Novato, Calif. —The Novato Church began in May 1970 with two young couples who lived in Marin County but worshipped in Berkeley across the Bay. The Covenant Church in Berkeley sponsored the work for its first year and a half.

In May 1971, the group applied for admission as a congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. At the time of its reception, twenty-one members were enrolled. The church called the Rev. Robert H. Graham as its first pastor.

On May 7, 1972, the Novato Church celebrated its first anniversary. Some of the original members have left, but others have come. Between forty and fifty people normally attend Sunday morning worship. The church, despite sacrificial giving by members, has been unable to achieve its goal of self-support; it is receiving denominational aid at present.

Then on July 23 following the evening service, elder Bob Williams announced a reception in honor of the pastor's fortieth anniversary as an ordained minister. Mr. Graham was "completely surprised" as members and friends gathered and presented him a handsome desk set.

Robert H. Graham was ordained on July 20, 1932 in the First Presbyterian Church of Orange, New Jersey by the Presbytery of Morris and Orange of the then Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Dr. Oswald T. Allis preached. Three months later, the Rev. Mr. Graham was installed as pastor of the Forest Presbyterian Church of Middletown, Delaware. In 1936, Mr. Graham and loyal members of the congregation, left the old church to form what is now Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Middletown. Mr. Graham also held pastorates in Middletown, Penna. and Chula Vista, Calif. before coming to Novato.

Here and There in The Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Flood damage in Middletown

Middletown, Pa. —Hurricane Agnes caused extensive and damaging floods in the last week of June throughout much of Pennsylvania and Maryland. Several families of Calvary Church here received damage to their homes and possessions.

One of the first agencies to respond to their need was the Christian Reformed World Relief Commission which simply sent immediate aid and asked what else was needed. Help was also channeled through the Committee on Diaconal Ministries of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church following an

appeal by its general secretary. Other funds were sent directly to the deacons.

Apparently all those suffering loss have received enough to restore their homes. In fact, some surplus funds may be left over so generous was the response to the need. A few families are still "camping out" with friends but most expect to be at home soon.

Middletown, Pa. — The Rev. Abe W. Ediger, pastor of Emmanuel Church in Thornton, Colorado, has accepted the call to be the pastor of Calvary Church here. Installation service is scheduled for September 20.

The Rev. George W. Hall, Jr., former pastor of Calvary Church, is now engaged as a case worker in a state

correctional institution. The Halls are living at 1655 Laketon Road, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15221.

Portland, Me. — The Rev. Leslie A. Dunn, pastor of Second Parish Church, has announced plans to retire effective late in September. During the summer months he and Mrs. Dunn have been serving as hosts at Knollwood Presbyterian Lodge in Wisconsin. Though retiring, the Duns hope to continue serving where their retirement income will help a struggling work.

Quarryville, Pa. — Mr. Charles F. Johnston, long-time elder at Community Church of Center Square, Pa., died here on July 28 after months of declining health. He had recently come to the Quarryville Presbyterian Home to receive needed nursing care. He is survived by his wife and son, the Rev. Robley J. Johnston, general secretary of the Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.