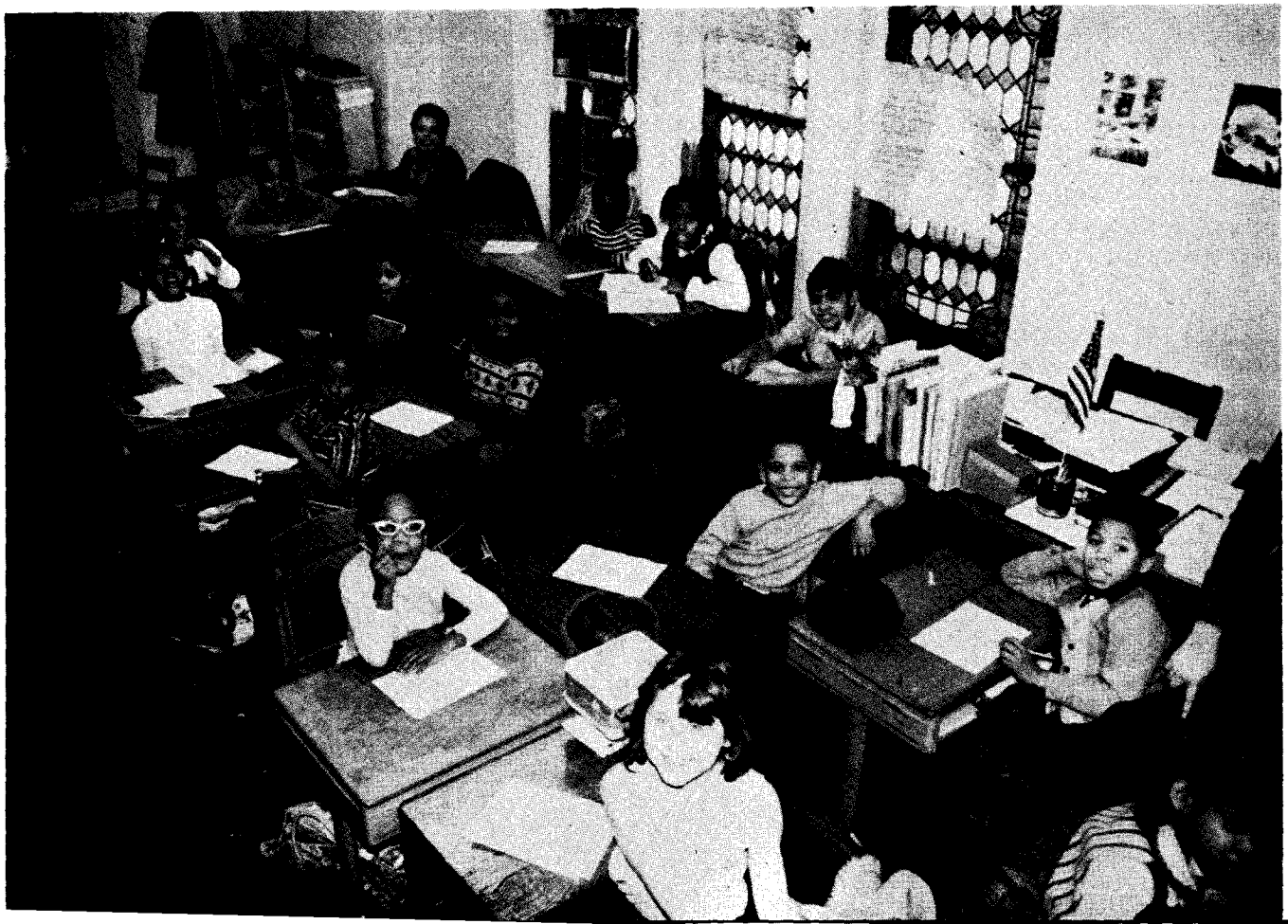


# The Presbyterian Guardian

VOL. 41, NO. 4 - APRIL 1972

**CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS** **CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**  
Christian Schools



# Shall We Have Christian Schools?

J. GRESHAM MACHEN

*The following editorial, slightly condensed, is the last one written for the GUARDIAN by its founder and then senior editor. It appeared in the January 9, 1937 issue along with the notice of Dr. Machen's death some eight days earlier. We believe it is still to the point.*

If one looks out upon the condition of the world today, one has to be very blind not to see that something is radically wrong. Of course something has always been radically wrong ever since the fall of man. But when we say that something is radically wrong with the age in which we are now living, we are referring to something more specific than that great central fact of the presence of sin in the world. What we mean is that the deadly evil of sin is becoming particularly blatant in the present age [thirty-five years ago!], and that the sweet and gentle influences of the gospel of Christ somehow seem for the time to be stayed in their working.

Compare the state of public opinion today with that which prevailed forty or fifty years ago, and you will see that something little short of a moral revolution has come about. Forty or fifty years ago public opinion, at least in Great Britain and America, was in the main favorable to decency and to liberty. Today it is increasingly unfavorable to both of these things.

It is true, there are here and there indications that the sense of decency is not altogether dead. Even the enormous prestige of custom could not quite enable the King of England to remain on the throne when he contemplated marrying [the divorced] Mrs. Simpson. The abdication of King Edward was certainly a victory for Christian morality.

But the king who has thus abdicated has unquestionably great hosts of sympathizers, and unquestionably the trend of the times is in favor of toleration for the sin which he is contemplating.

As for liberty, that is almost everywhere prostrate. Fascism and communism, superficially opposed to each other but really twin sisters, are threatening to divide the world between them; and it seems doubtful whether persons who believe in civil and religious liberty will very long be allowed anywhere a place in the sun.

Underlying this widespread decadence in the field of conduct is a decadence in the field of thought. The licentiousness of the age is not due merely to a disregard of recognized moral standards; it is due rather to the fact that there are no recognized moral standards. Immoral conduct is quite generally defended by immoral doctrine. The existence of the law of God is denied. Men no longer believe that there is any very profound difference between right and wrong.

In the midst of such a world stands the Christian Church. We are not referring to the merely nominal Christian Church. . . . But we are referring to the *real* Christian Church. We are referring to those ecclesiastical bodies that

really do endeavor with some sort of faithfulness to obey the commands which are found in the Word of God. We are referring to those groups of Christian people who are honestly endeavoring to make use of the means of grace which God has provided for His people upon this earth.

What shall *they* do in the midst of a hostile world? How shall they be God's instruments in preserving His Church from the engulfing paganism?

Whatever the answer to that question may be in detail, one thing surely is clear. It is that the efforts of the true Church ought to be directed particularly to the nurture of the children. Even experience shows that that is the case. Ask any company of earnest Christian men and women, especially those who have given themselves to the ministry, and you will usually find that the overwhelming majority of them received their Christian convictions in their youth, through the nurture of Christian parents or Christian pastors or teachers. It is a natural instinct in those who are opposed to the Christian Faith that they desire to get their grip on the children—through paternalistic government control or in other ways. So it should be a very powerful instinct in Christian people that they should desire to influence the children for good, as atheistic or agnostic governments seek to influence them for evil.

But it should be far more than an instinct in Christian people. The truth is that the nurture of the children is rooted deep in the commands of the Word of God. According to Reformed doctrine, baptized children are members of the Church. They are children of the covenant. Surely, then, they should be treated as such. Surely, the Church, whatever else it may neglect, should not neglect the instruction of its own children, in order that when they come to years of discretion they may confirm the vows made for them in infancy, trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls and then growing up into stalwart Christian manhood and womanhood.

How, then, shall this great work of instructing the children be carried on?

In many ways, no doubt. Most important of all is the work of the Christian home—family prayers, family instruction in the Catechism and the Word of God. Very important also is the work of the pulpit. It is a great calamity when children attend a "children's church," under the control often of uninstructed laymen, instead of sitting with their parents in the family pew. No doubt also young people's societies have their uses. They are a great evil when they lead young people to attend their meetings instead of attending the evening service at which the pastor preaches; but they can be productive of much good if instead of being a rival to the evening service they make it their

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primary business to support the evening service and the other regular services of the Church. The Sunday School, also, is an important agency. Its sad decadence is one of the most important causes of the defection in the Church and much good can be done if it is improved.

All these agencies, however, are faced by a terrible handicap. It is found in the attendance of the children of the covenant, during five or six days in the week, upon non-Christian public schools.

There was a time in the history of our country when the evil of this policy was somewhat disguised. In the days of "the little red schoolhouse," no doubt teachers in the public schools were usually Christian and the evils of secular instruction, though they were always present, were apparently kept within bounds. Today, if the school-houses are "red," we very much fear that they are apt to be "red" in some other way than by the application of red paint on the outside. At any rate, from state universities down, the anti-Biblical character of public instruction is becoming increasingly clear.

What shall be done about it?

Well, various palliative measures are being proposed. Some of them—like the introduction into public schools of "character education" based on considerations of expediency—are positively harmful. Others of them, like the required reading of the Bible in public schools [now declared unconstitutional by the U. S. Supreme Court] . . . are at least dangerous. All of them are woefully inadequate.

The real remedy, as over against these makeshifts is found in the establishment of Christian schools.

Fortunately we have in this country a splendid example of the way in which that can be done. Our Reformed brethren, largely of the Christian Reformed Church, have established a splendid system of Christian schools, and very richly has God blessed them. Those schools are not under ecclesiastical control. In that they differ from parochial schools. But they are under the control of associations of truly Christian people and they are doing a splendid work in building up the children and youth in a solid knowledge of the Reformed Faith as it is taught in God's Word. . . .

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*Since those words were penned, the Christian school movement has made great progress, both within and well beyond its origins in the Christian Reformed Church. Those of us who now are responsible for the nurture of the covenant children can only give thanks to God for the sacrifices and efforts of those who led the way in establishing truly Christian schools where God is the focal center of education.*

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## Choose you this day . . .

H. LLOYD BURGHART

Along with the current emphasis on ecology, there is another new emphasis in American public education. And like its predecessors, it warrants considerable close examination. Curriculum developers are not always "ivy-covered professors in ivy-covered halls"! In this day, many classroom teachers are being freed from their traditional roles within the classroom and allowed to extend their creative talents to the preparation of specific curriculum programs.

### The "humanities" today

Among the programs currently under development are those called "the humanities." The exact nature of the humanities is somewhat ill-defined. It appears to mean different things to different people. Graduate students in a large eastern university are expected to take a major percentage of their courses in the "behavioral sciences and humanities."

*Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* identifies the humanities as "the branches of learning having primarily a cultural character." Since man is the only creature that can even remotely be described as having a culture, it would follow that the "humanities" deal with studies involving mankind and his civilization.

The humanities are not relegated to higher education alone. A recent article appeared in a national elementary education periodical, *The Grade Teacher* (March 1972, pp. 58-63), entitled "Humanities Is When You Get It All Together." Written by Howard S. Davis, it describes a junior high school program in the humanities. The program's designer, Peter Greer, is currently associate director of the National Humanities Faculty, a federally-funded organization in the forefront of the humanities movement. The article quotes extensively to give the philosophy underlying the humanities program which is currently in use in the Ipswich (Massachusetts) Junior High School. (Mr. Greer is on leave of absence from his regular position as a teacher in that school.)

### Goals for the "humanities"

Greer identifies four major goals. He views the humanities as "a vehicle for providing the best possible total learning environment so that the child has the greatest opportunity to reach (1) a coherent view of the world; (2) an openness to all the possibilities of a problem, a situation or whatever; (3) the development of a critical sense in evaluating a situation, issue or problem; and (4) an enthusiasm for the acquisition and humane use of knowledge." These are noble goals; so then, why the fuss?

Greer identifies the core of the humanities program to be a focus on "man himself." He notes four basic items that must be considered when a curriculum program is developed. These are "the curriculum, structure, personnel, and technology." It is significant that Mr. Greer does not emphasize the underlying philosophy or assumptions on which his program is based. Nonetheless, he reveals his bias later when he is quoted as saying, "Do we tend to focus on despair? Whenever we select a unit theme, we usually

seem to emphasize the downbeat side of things—poverty, lust, prejudice, hate, war, or what have you. What about happiness, joy and things like that? Sure teach about prejudice and poverty, but also teach that man is capable of great things, that man—though an imperfect being and painfully slow to change at times—is capable of righting wrongs” (my emphasis).

### A Christian’s reaction

What is to be the reaction of the Christian parent when he is confronted with undisguised humanism? T. M. Kitwood, in *What Is Human?* (Inter-Varsity Press, 1970), identifies the main characteristics of humanism as “tolerance, fulfillment, co-operation and self-reliance.” The policy statement of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights states: “Humanists believe that man’s conduct should be based on humanity, insight, and reason. He must face his problems with his own moral and intellectual resources, without looking for supernatural aid. Our concern is with this life, which we try to make worth while and sufficient in itself. We make no claims to special knowledge or final answers, since we regard the search for understanding as a continuing process” (my emphasis).

This is in direct contradiction to the clear teaching of God’s Word. Scripture, God’s special revelation, is precisely his supernatural aid to a fallen and thereby sinful mankind. Kitwood states: “Humanists put humanity first. In the Christian view that ideal is disastrously incomplete, for it can easily become a sophisticated selfishness. Christians seek to put God first.”

This does not lessen our responsibility to mankind at all, but makes it necessary for us to distinguish between being what Francis Schaeffer calls “co-belligerents” rather than full-fledged “allies.” Our aims may appear to be the same as the humanist’s, but our motivation springs from a different source. We must govern our lives in relation to our fellow men by the God-given principles contained in the Ten Commandments. Man can only achieve service to humanity when he recognizes himself as the creature and bows in submission to the sovereign Creator.

Since it is the responsibility of Christian parents to see

to it that their covenant children are confronted with the knowledge of God in *all* aspects of life; since they are commanded to discipline their children and to bring them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord; they must provide Christian education for their children.

The humanist philosophy is not new. Its infiltration and promulgation in public elementary education is relatively new. Christian parents whose children are in public schools should be very aware of the trends that are now coming into vogue. If they themselves are unfamiliar with the curricula being presented to their children, how can they seek to counteract its subversive effects?

The alternatives available to Christian parents are very limited. If the parents choose, or have no choice but to leave their children in public schools, it is their own responsibility to seek to counteract the teachings of the public schools. This is difficult at best, and nearly impossible with the schedule of time in many families today.

Mr. Greer sees the humanities as “a wide-ranging approach to teaching affecting both content (curriculum) and method (instruction).” “Humanities,” he says, “is not just a two-hour course, it’s the whole learning experience.” Christian parents must take an active part in public education. They must become knowledgeable about public education and its curricula. But ultimately, they must make a basic choice.

Christian parents can either continue allowing their children to be publicly educated, exposed to and indoctrinated in the humanism that governs public school curriculum planning and teaching; or they can establish Christian schools true to the Reformed faith of the Scriptures. The choice and the consequences are clear. May God help us apply the teachings of his Word to our daily lives and the lives of our covenant children!

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*Mr. Burghart is an elder in the First Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Hamilton, Mass., and an elementary science curriculum specialist for a nearby public school system. He plans to employ his talents and knowledge in the new Christian junior high school to open in Westfield, N.J., this coming September.*

## Reformed Fellowship established in the Middle East

**Beirut, Lebanon** — A Reformed Fellowship of the Middle East has recently been organized here. Its purpose and goal is to develop a truly Reformed witness in the Arab world, and to build Christ’s church there. The focus of the Fellowship will initially be in Beirut, but the group has and seeks contacts throughout the whole Arab world.

Leaders of the Fellowship include John Grotenhuis, Hind Jacob, and Victor Atallah. They suggest to American Reformed people several ways in which they might help the Fellowship: (1) Supply the Fellowship with names of individuals in the Arab World who might be interested in such a Reformed testimony. (2) Seek out Arab students attending American colleges and draw them into a Reformed church fellowship if possible. (3) Consider the possibility — this for young people mostly — of taking one- or two-year overseas jobs in the Middle East and contributing your own time and talents to the cause; teachers and nurses are

particularly desired.

Finally, much prayer is sought by the Fellowship, as they begin a work that could give a new light to many in darkness. The need for trained pastors may be a problem, though there is hope that a Westminster Seminary graduate will settle in Beirut soon. The group does not seek money, at least not now, desiring to build an indigenous work that is self-supporting.

## REFORMED FELLOWSHIP OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Seeks contacts in the Arab World (including North Africa). Please write to:

**Mr. Victor Atallah**  
**Box 247**  
**Haigazian College**  
**Beirut, Lebanon**

## Taxes to support "religion"?

A recently organized "National Council on Religion and Public Education" has been formed to promote "constitutionally acceptable and educationally appropriate" religion courses in the nation's public schools. So reports Louis Cassels, UPI's religion columnist.

Efforts along this line have already been initiated in several state departments of public instruction. And presumably this new council expects to be successful in surmounting the constitutional prohibition against the "establishment" of religion. The council is composed of representatives from Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish groups, and from the National Education Association. Success would mean that our tax dollars will be used to teach "religion" in the public schools.

Cassels quotes Rabbi Arthur Gilbert,

one of the council's founders, as saying that schools "have the obligation to teach about the Bible for no other reason than that it is the primary source for the values and institutions that have shaped Western civilization." The rabbi describes the Bible as "the most challenging work of literature produced by man."

Should we rejoice that the Bible is somehow being reintroduced into public school classrooms? Or, should we protest loudly and clearly any use of our tax dollars for any "religion" course that sees the Bible as no more than the product of man? Or perhaps, should we quietly hope this effort will succeed so that Christians would have a better case for demanding tax support of their own Christian schools? After all, if "they" can teach "religion" at tax expense, why shouldn't "we" have the same privilege?

Tempting as that might be, and valu-

able as it may turn out to be in actually giving some tax relief to supporters of Christian schools, this is hardly justification for cheering such a misguided effort. Better that the public schools ignore the Bible than to give impressionable minds so distorted an introduction to it. Better for Christian schools to forego any tax break—or at least to seek it on more principled grounds—than even to wish for the success of such an effort to deny the God of Scripture.

Perhaps what we should do is pray that the American Civil Liberties Union will be alert to this threat to introduce "religion" into the public schools. Without a doubt we should redouble our efforts to establish and maintain truly Christian schools—with or without tax relief—where God's Word will be taught for what it is, God's own Word.

—J. J. M.

**Westfield, N. J.** — The Covenant Christian School Society will begin a new junior high school here this coming fall. The group, organized in May 1970, has received its tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service. It is a member society of the National Union of Christian Schools.

The eight-member Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that H. Lloyd Burghart of Ipswich, Mass. has accepted the position of teacher-administrator. The new school will be housed in the educational facilities of Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

A school fair, scheduled for October 19-21, is being planned, both to raise funds and to acquaint the community with the need for Christian education. The help of Christians else-

where is earnestly sought by the Westfield group. They ask for prayer support that the school might bring honor and glory to God's name. They also ask for your donations of handmade articles for the fair—gift items of all types—as well as any suggestions from your past experiences that might be of help to them.

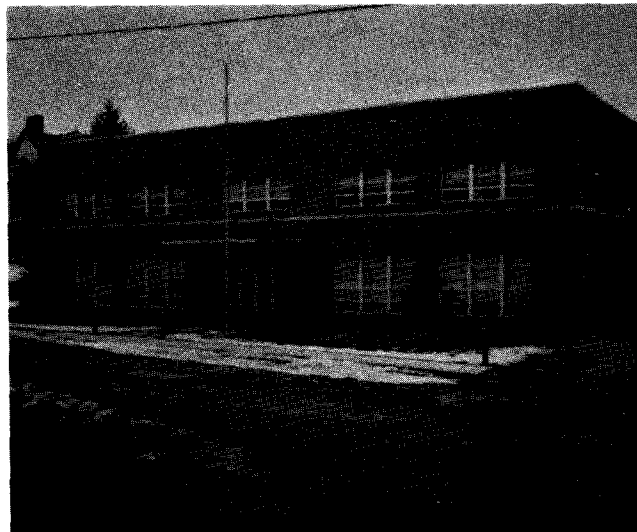
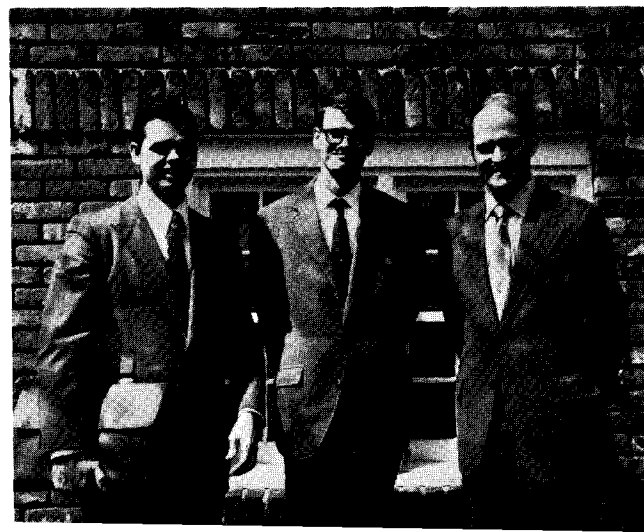
An independent elementary school is a difficult enough project today. A high school, even a junior high school, is quite a bit more of a project. We pray for the success of this newest effort by the Westfield people.

**New facilities at Wilkinsburg School, Pittsburgh** — The Christian School here has recently completed a major expansion of its facilities. Four additional classrooms, office space, teachers' lounge, and storage areas were added through construction of a second story to the existing building on Mullberry Lane. The ground floor areas were also completely refurbished. Carpeting was installed in the upper

classrooms for noise control and ease of maintenance. Voluntary labor by school families kept the project's cost to a surprisingly low \$60,000.

The Wilkinsburg school began in 1953 under the sponsorship of Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church (in whose educational wing the kindergarten classes are held). The school building, housing grades 1-8, was begun in 1959, and expanded in 1967. Enrollment has continued to grow—to a present total of 227 students—making the recent addition necessary. The students come from more than eighty churches.

This school is also a member of the National Union of Christian Schools. Every effort is exerted to stimulate the pupil's interest in learning, and graduates of the school are ahead scholastically when they enter public high schools. Concern for academic excellence as well as Christian instruction continues to be this Christian School's basic objective.



# An innercity Christian school

JESUS SAID, "IF YOU LOVE ME FEED MY LITTLE LAMBS" (John 21:15)

Therefore, in loving obedience —

## Philadelphia Association for Christian Schools



good conscience that they could not send them to the public schools where God is neglected, ignored and omitted. Due to the lack of Christian schools in the inner city it was necessary to start a school association from scratch. Thus PACS had its birth and basis.

—WILLARD CONNOR  
PRESIDENT, PACS BOARD

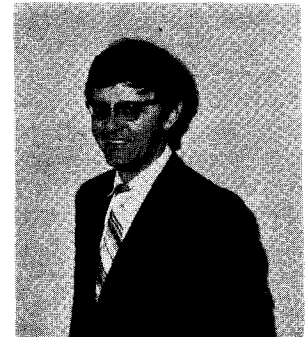
### The Basis for PACS

God commands in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it." This training must develop all phases of growth in the home, church, community and school.

But, what is the "way"? Jesus Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6). Herein lies the basis of our commitment to Christian Schools.

Our children must be taught "the way." They first must be instructed in the knowledge of a personal God and His work of creation, providence and redemption. We must teach children of the authority of the infallible Bible—the Word of God; of the origin of man—his call and sin before God; of the person and work of Satan; and of the ministry of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit.

Christian parents in the inner city with a responsibility before God to train their children in the "way" realized in



### The Ministry of PACS

Education is more than mind stuffing and rule keeping. It is the nurturing of the whole child so as to develop a tender heart toward offering up one's whole life and all his talents to serve the Lord.

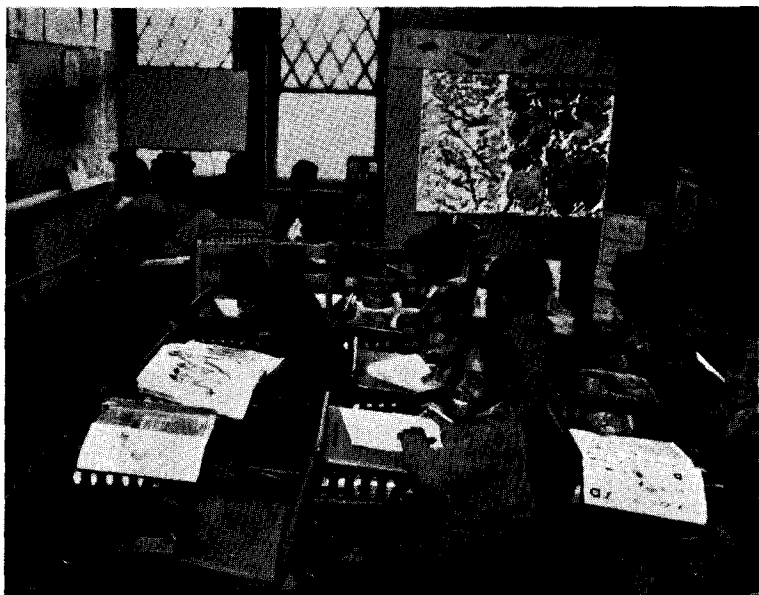
But, how do we do that when despair, like cyanide, penetrates the life of a child? When poverty of spirit makes a child old at 10? When impersonal circumstances make the child only a number? When meaningful learning, even in most schools, is a foreign experience?

You may expect me to say, "We bring hope and love." But I must say, "We first bring discipline." Love and hope flow from proper discipline.

*I've watched* — Peter come from zero reading ability to third level in two years. *I've heard* — many children pray for God's blessing on their classmates, teachers and homes. *I've sensed* — the awakening of a spiritual giant as 200 children sang their hearts out to Christ at Christmas.

I've asked myself: "Where else in this sad sick city could these children find intensive Christian training, disciplined, sacrificial love, hope? I don't know of anywhere. Central Christian and Northwest Christian Schools are ministering because we are seeing many children gradually yielding their lives as living sacrifices to God.

—WAYNE BRAUNING  
PACS ADMINISTRATOR



*The Presbyterian Guardian*



### The Parents of PACS

The most important duty for us as parents is to have our children begin with the Lord. Jesus said: "First seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). Therefore, as Christian parents we must provide Christian education for our children.

We want our children to be trained the same way in the school as we train them in the home and the church. Our children must first know the Lord and His Word and then it will be added unto them as Jesus promised.

Praise God for His goodness to our family thru the ministry of PACS.

—MR. PAUL SAMUEL  
PACS PARENT

### The Challenge of PACS

The Philadelphia Association for Christian Schools is truly a venture of Christian faith. It arose out of the conviction of innercity Christian parents that their children simply had to have Christian schooling. It arose out of their obedience to the Lord's demand that our children be raised in *his* nurture and admonition.

Yet these Christian families had no great share of this world's goods. Many of them have incomes well below

national averages. None are wealthy. Still, they prayed and worked and prayed again.

And the Lord heard them. A large church education building was offered to PACS at no cost, ideally located and more than adequate. A second building, this one the former home of a Christian school whose supporters had largely moved away, was available in another section of Philadelphia.

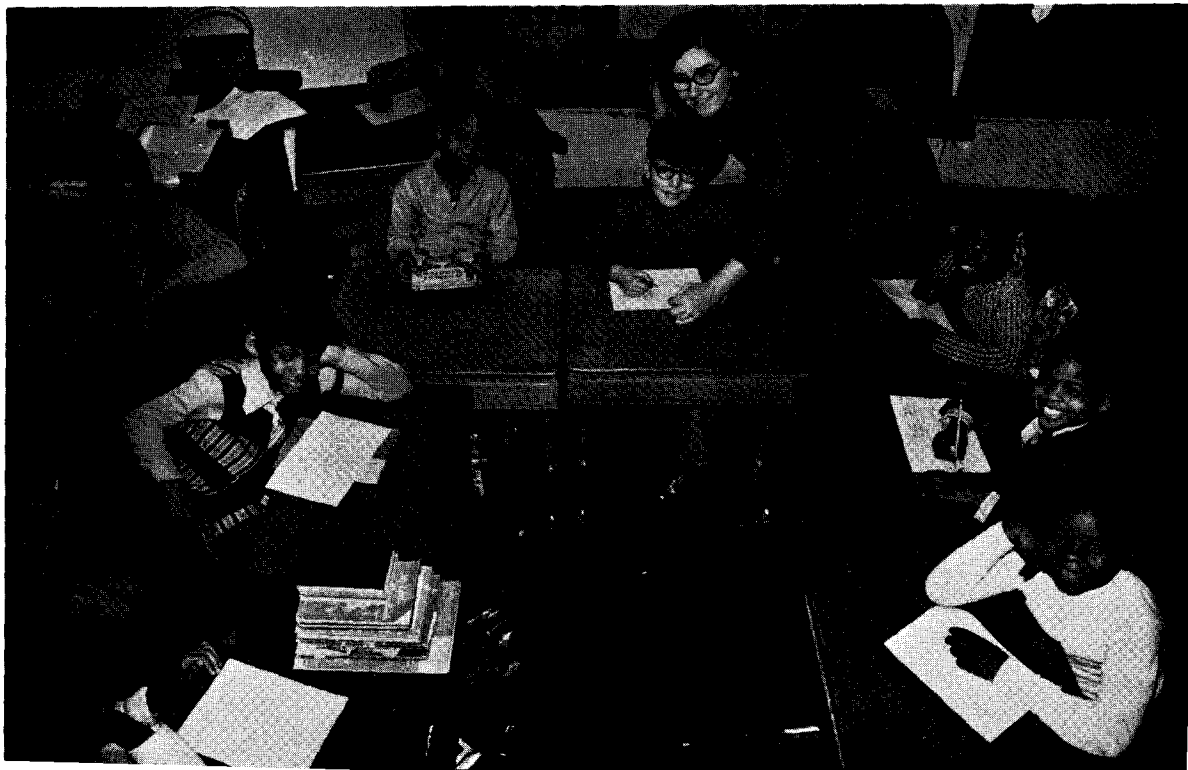
The faculty too came in answer to prayer. A Reformed Presbyterian minister, a devoted and qualified teacher-parent, a wife of a seminary student, young ones eager to serve the Lord this way, more experienced ones delighted with the freedom to teach as a Christian in a Christian school. Instruction has been loosely graded in order to develop the children's learning as needed; many of the students have come to PACS with serious deficiencies in such basics as ability to read. This program has shown remarkable evidence of the effectiveness of disciplined Christian concern to overcome real handicaps.

But how do you finance a Christian school for lower-income families? PACS has kept its tuition rate low because of the limited financial ability of most of its families. The schools are "in the red" — which simply means that the teachers are among its largest contributors. And yet they all continue — teachers teaching even on short pay, parents sacrificing to pay tuition and to give sacrificially besides.

There is no rich "angel" or wealthy foundation to help PACS. There is only a committed group of Christian people, acting in faith and obedience. If you care to help, you may send a contribution to PACS, Box 6941, Philadelphia, PA 19132. If you are moved to follow their example in your own community, may the Lord bless you also.

"The Challenge of PACS" is the *Guardian* editor's heartfelt comment. The rest of this report on the Philadelphia Association for Christian Schools is taken from their recently issued *Sheep Shed*, a brochure setting forth the Lord's work in this Christian effort. If you want a copy, write the address given in the paragraph above. We thank PACS and the Rev. Kenneth Wallace, editor of *Sheep Shed*, for allowing us to reprint this material.

—J. J. M.



# National Union of Christian Schools

## *The Quiet Crisis*

JOHN M. FRAME

Did *you* know that there is a doctrinal crisis in the National Union of Christian Schools? If you do, you would seem to be the exception.

Usually doctrinal crises are noisy affairs, with heated debates, impassioned journalism, intensified pulpit rhetoric and the like. But this crisis is a quiet one. It hasn't been played up in the Christian school literature; it hasn't been hotly debated throughout the Christian school movement. In fact, I have found a great many Christian school administrators, teachers and parents who really have no idea what is going on.

A peculiar state of affairs, and a most dangerous one! The very Christian character of the NUCS is at stake, and few people seem aware of the danger. The NUCS is in danger of being swamped by secularism — that modern idolatry which it was founded to oppose. It is in danger of becoming *like* the public schools in the worst respects! Are *you* aware of the situation?

### A constitutional crisis

I had no awareness of this myself until last July. Then I received a long distance call from the Rev. Calvin K. Cummings, member of the board of the Christian School of Wilkinsburg in the greater Pittsburgh area. Though I am now teaching in Philadelphia, I have belonged to the association of that school for a number of years. Until last July my activities in the association were limited to praying and sending money. But when Cal called, I began to "get involved"!

The NUCS has been in the process of revising its constitution for the past several years. The most controversial part of that revision has been the "Basis Article" defining the commitment of the organization to Scripture and to the Reformed faith. Different versions of the Basis have been discussed. At its 1971 convention, meeting last August, the NUCS Board of Directors presented another version for action.

There had been very little publicity given concerning this latest proposed revision of the Basis. And this was in spite of the fact that a previous convention had expressed considerable concern about the matter. Many in the NUCS had not even seen the latest version prior to the August meeting, and for the most part those who had did not take it too seriously.

### The proposed "Basis"

This proposed Basis was a very bad one, for three main reasons:

(1) The proposal would eliminate the historic commitment of the NUCS to the Reformed creeds (with the possible exception of the doctrine of Scripture contained in those creeds; but even here it was ambiguous). This commitment to the Reformed faith was declared to be "unalterable"

in the original constitution. The convention in 1969 had refused to accept even provisionally any Basis article without that commitment. And many people in the NUCS supposed that the 1969 action settled the matter, and the historic position of the organization would continue.

Yet to our bafflement, the NUCS Board was again proposing to change that commitment! Why? One answer was that the Reformed confessions are "ecclesiastical documents" and therefore unfit for constitutional status in an educational organization.

The Reformed confessions are *not* "ecclesiastical" in any narrow sense. They are not primarily concerned with details of church government, liturgy, or the like. They *are* simply expositions of the biblical gospel of redemption from sin. And is that gospel not the most relevant thing in the world to a *Christian* educational organization?

One might want to *supplement* these creeds for various reasons. One might even want to *replace* them if the replacement contained as full and clear and precise an exposition of the gospel as the creeds now contain. But to eliminate these creeds while offering only a skeletal doctrinal statement as a replacement makes little sense. Such an elimination violates both the "unalterable" commitment of the NUCS founders and the clear will of the 1969 annual meeting.

### An ambiguous commitment

(2) Even more seriously, the proposed Basis also rendered ambiguous the NUCS commitment to the authority of Scripture. As presented last summer, the basis of the organization was to be the Word of God "manifest in creation, incarnate in Jesus Christ, inscripturated in the Bible as it is confessed to be God's Word in the Reformed credal confessions."

This formulation is open to a host of objections: (a) The threefold correlation of creation, Christ and Scripture introduces confusion. To be sure, God reveals himself in nature, and Christ is said in Scripture to be the Word of God (John 1). But to list these three "forms" of revelation side by side without saying anything about the relations between them is bound to cause trouble.

Because we are sinners, we cannot interpret nature or Christ aright unless we look at them through the "spectacles" of Scripture. Scripture, not our independent studies of "nature" or Christ, must have the last word. This priority of Scripture is left in doubt by the threefold correlation.

(b) To say that God's Word is "inscripturated in the Bible," in the context of modern theology, is to say nothing important at all. Liberal, neo-orthodox and religious humanist thinkers would all agree that the Word of God is in some sense "inscripturated in the Bible" — while claiming that a lot of human error is "inscripturated" there also.

(c) Instead of forthrightly confessing that Scripture *is*



the written Word of God, the document sets forth a circumlocution. It refers us to the beliefs of an earlier age, rather than making a straightforward affirmation in the language of *our* age, and in opposition to the errors of *our* age. Such lack of boldness always leads to trouble.

In this case it is especially confusing, because an ambiguity in the conjunction "as" leaves us in doubt as to the relation between the doctrine of Scripture in the proposed Basis and the doctrine of Scripture in the Reformed confessions. Is the "as" in this formula the "as" of precise identity, or is it the "as" of mere similarity? Is the view of the purposed Basis the *same* as that of the confessions, or is it only *similar* to theirs in some unnamed respects?

(3) Lacking any clear affirmation of Scripture's authority, and lacking any general commitment to Reformed theology, the proposed Basis also failed even to endorse the simple gospel! It did, of course, speak of certain *consequences* of sin and redemption for the field of education, but nowhere did it *define* sin or salvation. Nowhere did it suggest that children are transgressors of the law of God and that their only hope is in the righteousness of Christ given by grace through faith. Without such an affirmation, the document contained nothing that a modernist or religious humanist could not have assented to!

### The proposed Basis shelved

At the request of the Wilkinsburg school, I readily agreed to attend the annual convention in August 1971, hoping and praying that something might happen to prevent adoption of this proposal as the Basis of the NUCS. At the convention, my first contacts were most discouraging. A few people were strongly in favor of the proposal. The majority knew little about it. There was little or no organized resistance to it.

But at the business meeting itself, the Lord answered our prayers in a most wonderful way. Our last-minute resistance movement bore fruit. For although the document was not decisively rejected, the motion for its adoption was tabled until the 1972 meeting by a near-unanimous vote!

Some months later the NUCS Board of Directors reconsidered the matter and reversed their position. They announced that they would now support a Basis without the "threefold Word," without the confusing circumlocution, and with a general commitment to the Reformed standards. If this policy prevails, the NUCS will be "based" firmly upon Scripture itself as interpreted by the Reformed creeds.

This announcement of the Board is encouraging indeed. It greatly improves the prospects of a satisfactory resolution of the problem, and reassures many of us of the wisdom and courage of the Board's majority.

Yet the struggle is not over, by any means. Those who supported the Board's previous proposal will be disappointed in its present proposal. There may well be an attempt on the part of some to negate the gains shown in the Board's latest announcement and to promote again something like that bad proposal of last summer. We must all be alert in this situation. And if you have any connection with Christian schools at all, *you should certainly make your feelings known on this crucial matter to those who will represent you at this summer's annual convention.*

### Whence comes the pressure?

But who in the world would support a proposal as *bad*

as the one submitted last summer? Who would support such a proposal now? Where does the pressure come from to weaken the doctrinal commitment of the NUCS?

Perhaps, we might wish to say, no one really *wants* such a poor doctrinal basis. Perhaps it was introduced through carelessness or inadequate study. Well, I wish that were true, but I don't believe it. There *is* pressure in the NUCS for a weakening of its scriptural and Reformed commitment. All fingers seem to point in one direction — the AACS.

What is the AACS? The Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship is a group of people who wish to restructure the church and society in ways suggested by the "Philosophy of the Idea of Law" of Herman Dooyeweerd and his associates. The "threefold Word" is a major emphasis in this group, as is the principle that no ecclesiastical creed may ever be used as the basis of an educational organization. AACS-oriented people have been very active in the Christian school movement, and last summer's "bad" proposal reflects their influence profoundly.

A critique of the AACS and of Dooyeweerdianism in general is too big a project for this brief article. I am, however, prepared to state my position that although there are some good emphases in this movement, it does differ from historic Reformed theology in a number of important ways. Where it does differ from historic Reformed theology, it is either confused (and confusing) or just plain wrong. And that wrongness is often of a serious character.

Readers of the *Guardian*, most of whom I trust have a genuine concern for doctrinal purity, should keep their eyes open to what the AACS group is doing. Its influence in the church, as in the schools, in my opinion is potentially (and sometimes actually) most harmful. If we are not alert, the crisis in the schools precipitated by this group could spread to the church. May God give us wisdom and discernment!

Quiet crises have a way of becoming noisy crises if they are not settled decisively in a scriptural way. And once the crisis becomes noisy, it is often too late to save an organization from catastrophe. Let us this time, for once, take a stand *before* crisis becomes catastrophe.

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*Ed. note:* The latest draft of the Basis article as presently formulated by the NUCS Board of Directors is a great improvement. It reads: "The basis of the National Union of Christian Schools is the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the infallible Word of God, as explicated in the Reformed creedal standards." If that is adopted, the NUCS will have a sound basis indeed.

At the same time, adherents of the AACS have already intimated that a separate organization of Christian schools may be needed where their principles can be developed. This would be, if not a catastrophe for the Christian school movement, at least a very sad development. We hope this article will serve not only to warn of the dangers to the National Union but of the dangers that may confront individual Christian schools in many areas.

Professor Frame (of the faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary) did "get involved" as he said. Besides his efforts at last summer's NUCS convention, he wrote to the NUCS Board of Directors setting forth his criticisms of the proposed Basis. The latest proposal, given above, shows the effect of his strenuous criticism. It can pay to "get involved"!

J. J. M.

# Orthodox Presbyterians give more in 1971

A contradiction? It does sound like it. In the February *Guardian* we reported that Orthodox Presbyterians gave *less* in 1971.

That report was correct—and this headline is also correct. Giving to home and foreign missions and Christian education did fall behind during the past year. But giving to *all causes*, local and denominational, rose significantly during 1971. It increased by about 10% over 1970, and total contributions by Orthodox Presbyterians reached a record \$2,588,000, or \$272 per communicant member.

## A shift in priorities

That record is encouraging. But what about our support of the work of missions and Christian education? What happened to cause a *drop* there even as the church posted an increase in total giving? It can only mean that there was a shift in giving priorities.

Statistics now available show that giving to general or special causes for home churches rose nearly 11% in 1971, while giving to benevolent causes (anything outside the local church's operating expenses or building projects) only rose about 6%. And even this 6% increase in benevolence giving did not reach the denominational committees. Presumably the 6% went to local or presbytery mission causes primarily.

In other words, while Orthodox Presbyterians made a real advance in overall giving, their pattern of support has shifted. Some of the shift may be due to inflationary rises in local operating costs, to efforts to upgrade pastors' salaries, to enlarge mission efforts by presbyteries, or even into new building programs. Wherever it went, it was a shift in priorities away from denominational missions and Christian education to other programs.

This shift away from giving to missions and Christian education has seriously undermined those programs. The Stewardship Committee sent out an urgent appeal to the churches for help immediately and during the rest of 1972. So far the response has been quite encouraging. Churches are moving now to increase their giving to these causes.

## A need for communication

Apparently people in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church do want the work of missions and Christian education to go forward. Why, then, did we fall behind in this during 1971?

Part of the answer must be that people simply did not realize what was happening. Part of the answer too is that business of priorities—which causes will you support and by how much? How you decide your priorities is your own business; but you ought to have some knowledge of how the church's various programs are faring.

Some years ago the General Assembly established a Stewardship Committee and charged it with preparing a combined budget for home missions, foreign missions, and Christian education. This committee was also charged with keeping the church informed about progress in meeting the combined budget goals, and it was also supposed to promote stewardship principles in the church as a whole.

But the Stewardship Committee does little more than present a combined budget to the General Assembly each year—and the mass of figures being so hard to digest, the Assembly usually approves the combined budget rather routinely. And how do they determine this combined budget figure? Basically it is decided upon by adding up the budgets requested by each of the three major committees and then paring them all down proportionately to a hopefully realistic level based on levels of giving in previous years.

The Stewardship Committee can do little more than this. It has no staff. When a crisis occurs, it can meet and send out an appeal. But beyond that it is largely unable to function. It can do little to promote stewardship principles, nor can it really do an effective job of keeping the church posted on the progress of giving to missions and Christian education.

This committee is a hydra-headed composite, with representatives from each of the three major committees plus three "at-large" members. Except for these three, all the others tend to look on their assignment to the Stewardship Committee as much less important than their primary committee duties. And such a membership can hardly avoid a "conflict of interest" when it comes to reviewing the budgets of the separate committees presented to it. As a result, the Stewardship Committee does not really review these at all; it simply adds them up and slices off a bit from each one.

## A new approach badly needed

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church has no presently working method for determining its own priorities in evangelistic endeavors. Should 50% of the combined budget go to foreign missions? Or, only 25%? How do you decide? Should we concentrate our limited resources in evangelizing this largely pagan America in which we live? Is the urgent need of sound Christian literature such as to give that a major priority?

I don't know the answers to such questions. Neither does the Stewardship Committee. Neither does the General Assembly. As things stand now, no one is really responsible to study such questions or suggest any answers.

At last year's General Assembly, the Stewardship Committee recommended its own thorough reorganization, together with the authority to employ a staff to help it carry out its assigned duties. This proposal was soundly defeated. Apparently the idea of the costs involved and the spectre of an enlarged "bureaucracy" seemed too much. The General Assembly instead simply reduced the committee's duties to the bookkeeping chore of preparing the annual combined budget figure.

But, isn't it clear—in the light of the present financial crisis and the large shift in giving patterns—that this failure to reorganize the Stewardship Committee was a mistake? Isn't it clear that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, as a transcontinental church, needs some better method of carrying out its stewardship of the Lord's money? Isn't it clear that some responsible group needs to review our goals and

*(Continued on next page)*

# The Presbyterian Guardian

EDITOR

JOHN J. MITCHELL

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## Letters

### Abortion? Let the woman decide!

All this back and forth about abortion—is it, or isn't it? should we, or shouldn't we?—is irritating to me as a woman, a mother, and a member of the church.

We are under obligation to abide by decisions of the General Assembly for the church. And women are expected to keep silent in the church. What recourse have we but to write letters to the *Guardian*? And the men even monopolize that privilege! Nevertheless, I'm writing. After the last General Assembly [of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, which found itself

unable to agree on the subject] and now as another Assembly is soon to meet, I'm concerned about what these men are going to decide about our bodies.

"Thou shalt not kill!" An interesting and lengthy topic. But I notice that the men don't make rules (in our denomination) against smoking and drinking. Yet, some of them, including men at the General Assembly, will no doubt continue to kill their bodies through smoking and drinking. This is not considered to be killing? But abortion is.

Frankly, under certain circumstances such as rape, or medical reasons, I myself would gladly have an abortion. I believe there are other women in our churches who would also. But we do not like to think that the church, which we love, would bind our consciences and forbid us to do what we might decide is right. I keep asking myself, "What would Jesus do?" I remember that he tempered every decision with love and understanding.

The debate about abortion so far has been carried on with much scholarly research and wisdom. And some will say my letter is based on feelings. But if the problem of whether to abort or not would be yours, gentlemen, it

would hit you in the feelings first! We need a wise combination of wisdom and heart.

When this comes up again at General Assembly, will someone please remember this, and give us the freedom to make our own decision on abortion? In every case, it must be the personal decision of each woman, advised by her husband or father, her minister, and her doctor.

If the General Assembly decides to make the decision for us, then I believe we women in the church should organize a protest and push for a decision in the Assembly about the way men are killing their own bodies also!

Please don't sign my name. I don't want my opinions to reflect on my husband's service to God as a minister in our church.

Name withheld.

### A different feeling

Would you please print this in the *Guardian*? My heart has been burdened lately because of the new abortion laws. Thank you.

Mrs. Bette J. Adams

(A pre-adoption foster mother for the Bethany Christian Home in N. Haledon, N. J.)

(Continued from preceding page)

programs and to suggest realistic priorities for fulfilling the Great Commission today?

Commissioners to this year's General Assembly will have another opportunity to consider this. The Committee on Christian Education is proposing again that the Stewardship Committee be reorganized and in a way so as to avoid the "conflicts of interest." The proposal also calls for staff employment, to be paid in part from funds now used by each of three committees for promoting their own budget needs. And this proposal also calls for the reorganized Stewardship Committee to promote stewardship principles seriously and to suggest goals and priorities for the denomination's overall work.

Certainly the present troika arrangement of three committees could be improved. Each of these committees draws up its own program with little reference to the other two. Each one promotes its own program and seeks its own support. At no point does anyone really take a close look at the total picture of the church's effort.

After all, we're talking about the Lord's money, the gifts of God's people, and about our stewardship of this as a church. Something better is needed before the crisis and confusion grows worse. We hope this proposal to reorganize the Stewardship Committee receives the fullest possible study by the General Assembly.

—J. J. M.

### The Stilled Small Voice

God called us more than a year ago  
to bring little ones into our home.  
He showed our hearts the apparent need  
and we responded, by his Spirit alone.

With trembling hands and fearful hearts  
we took the first child in.  
The joy we found was beyond belief  
as that child our hearts did win.

Then the children came—thirteen in all;  
and the joy and love each one brought  
Can be compared alone to our Saviour's call  
and the peace that salvation wrought.

But since that first child came to us,  
a change has come over our land.  
Abortion is now the thing, they say,  
and that right is in a woman's hand.

The homes where adopting parents live  
are empty, quiet and still,  
Because mercy, love, and God's own Spirit  
have been grieved by man's own will.

The stilled small voice will yet be heard  
by God who is on the throne.  
And the price to be paid for the "silence" heard  
will be paid by mankind, alone.

## Australia to host 1972 R. E. S.

Preparations for the coming Reformed Ecumenical Synod, to be held in Sydney, Australia on August 14-25, have been underway now for sometime.

### Basis of R.E.S. membership

Membership in the Synod is open to all churches that confess and maintain the Reformed faith and subscribe to its constitutional basis which reads: "The foundation of the R.E.S. shall be the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as interpreted by the Confessions of the Reformed faith, namely, the Second Helvetic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Gallican Confession, the Belgic Confession, the Westminster Confession, the Canons of Dort, the Thirty-nine Articles. It should be understood that these Scriptures in their entirety, as well as in every part thereof, are the infallible and ever-abiding Word of the living Triune God, absolutely authoritative in all matters of creed and conduct, and the Confessions of the Reformed faith are accepted because they present the divine revealed truth, the forsaking of which has caused the deplorable decline of modern life. It has to be emphasized that only a whole-hearted and consistent return to this Scriptural truth, of which the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the core and apex, can bring salvation to mankind and effectuate the so sorely needed renewal of the world."

The R.E.S. at present numbers thirty-six member churches on all six continents and some five million people. Membership in the R.E.S. continues to grow; the newest candidate to be recommended this year for membership is the Indian Reformed Church in South Africa, product of mission work begun in 1946. This denomination has four congregations, a communicant membership of 429 and baptized membership of 1282. As a young church it is dedicated to the task of proclaiming the gospel to the 620,000 Indians of South Africa.

### Planning for 1972 Synod

During the week prior to the Synod itself, a Missions Conference will be held from August 7-11. The theme will be "Christ's Gospel in a Needy World" and speakers from South Africa, Indonesia, the Netherlands, the United States, and Korea will bring messages

relating to this theme. Rev. J. Jonker, from the Overseas Mission Board of the Reformed Churches of Australia, will preside on the Conference's opening night.

Besides delegates from its own member churches, the R.E.S. Interim Committee has invited twelve other Reformed churches from the U.S.A., Canada, South America, Japan, Asia, and Europe to send observers to the Synod. Included in the invitation is the Sydney diocese of the Anglican Church of Australia, one of the few Anglican bodies that still takes its Reformation confession of the Thirty-nine Articles seriously.

### Constitution revision on docket

One of the matters to be considered at the coming Synod is the proposed revision of the Constitution in the interests of greater precision and clarity. This work was begun at the 1968 R.E.S. The task of completing the revision has been performed by the Interim Committee.

One question facing the Interim Committee in its revision work was that of a possible name change for the R.E.S. Objections to calling the organization a synod have become vocal in recent years, since the word "synod" cannot be easily disassociated from its common meaning of a church body that issues authoritative resolutions and makes binding decisions. This the R.E.S. has never been; as an organization, its decisions are merely advisory in nature and binding on member churches only if they adopt them as their own. The Interim Committee is recommending that the name be changed to the Reformed Ecumenical Council.

In the past few weeks, copies of the published agenda have been sent to the delegates of the coming R.E.S. meeting. A summary of its reports and communications will be given in a later issue of the *Guardian*.

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*Our "correspondent in Australia" is the Rev. Raymond O. Zorn, pastor of the Reformed Church of Sydney, Australia. This report is adapted from one given in the March issue of TROWEL AND SWORD, publication of the Reformed Churches in Australia.*



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# O. P.—R. P. Relations

## Joint committees urge adoption of Basis of Union

**Pittsburgh, Pa.**—A joint meeting of the Fraternal Relations Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod and the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was held here on April 10.

The meeting determined to ask each of the committees to recommend to their respective Synod and General Assembly that they (1) "adopt the Proposed Basis of Union" and (2) "instruct the joint committee to prepare a Plan of Union to be submitted to the 1973 General Assembly and Synod."

### Background

Since 1966, these two churches have been engaged in conversations looking toward "the ultimate goal of organic union . . . on a scriptural basis." In 1969 the joint committee presented a Proposed Basis of Union as a preliminary statement of position and intention of the two churches. This Proposed Basis was not adopted by the Orthodox Presbyterian General Assembly, but was postponed until certain differences in views between the two churches might be more thoroughly studied.

Growing out of this concern came the erection of a joint study committee to consider "the church's responsibility in defining ethical applications of the Word of God." Difficulty in convening this study group has delayed further progress toward union. But the group has met, and the joint committee meeting in Pittsburgh has adopted a revision to its Proposed Basis of Union intended to clarify this question.

### Acts 15 cited

The adopted revision is the addition of the following sentence to the Proposed Basis of Union (as the next to last sentence of the third whole paragraph of page 2 of the Basis as printed in booklet form): "As the occasion demands, such application [of Scripture to individual and social sins in the

context of modern life"] must be made not only by pastors and sessions, but also by presbyteries, synods, and general assemblies according to the principles of Chapter 31 of the Confession of Faith ('of Synods and Councils'), which are based upon the council of Jerusalem (Acts 15)."

This position was adopted at the joint meeting without dissent. It affirms the right—and the duty—of the church, at any level, to apply God's Word to the sins of the day. The Confession has always taught that God's law could and should be applied to particular sins as they arise. The Confession is equally clear in forbidding any church body to declare anything to be a sin except when it can be shown from Scripture itself that it is a sin. The church could rightly condemn cheating on one's income tax not because the Bible ever mentions that painful subject, but because the principles of God's law are clearly applicable to it.

In general, Orthodox Presbyterians have been reluctant to issue many such applications of God's Word to current ethical problems or sins. The Reformed Presbyterians, on the other hand, have made such statements much more frequently. By affirming the church's right to speak out on the sins of the day, this revision to the Proposed Basis of Union should do much to reassure the Reformed Presbyterians. By pointing to the limitations on such speaking contained in the Confession of Faith, the revision should reassure Orthodox Presbyterians that the right would not be abused.

### The recommendation

Having reached this degree of unanimity in an area where Orthodox and Reformed Presbyterians had differences—if not in understanding of the principles involved, at least in their respective practice of them—the joint committee obviously feels that definite steps toward organic union should be

taken now. They recommend that the Proposed Basis of Union, with the added revision quoted above, be adopted this year by the R. P. Synod and the O. P. General Assembly.

The joint committee also recommends that, if the Proposed Basis is mutually acceptable, that both committees be instructed to get to work on an actual Plan of Union (to include details of how organic union would be completed).

If this Proposed Basis of Union—as revised—is mutually acceptable, then the two churches should move forcefully toward organic union. But are there still sufficient differences to keep them apart? Differences there undoubtedly are, but whether these should be a barrier to merger is the basic question to be decided by the Synod and General Assembly this May.

### A new urgency

Many individuals in both churches have long felt that a merger was truly urgent. The degree of that urgency has recently increased.

This is due, in large measure, to the growing awareness of the existence of many ministers, elders, and whole congregations in the United Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church U. S. ("Southern") who long for a truly biblical and Reformed church fellowship. If they can "escape" their present affiliation, they very much want to be a part of a *national* Presbyterian body.

Will these people, if they do make their exodus, organize their own new denomination? A great many of them frankly look toward the OPC and the RPC/ES as possible havens. But our separatedness is a puzzlement to these people; they can't understand how two churches, so close in confession and practice, can still be separate.

If there can be an OP-RP merger, it seems quite reasonable to expect that many of these people in the main-line Presbyterian churches will seek to join with such a united Presbyterian and Reformed church. That is the vision—a national Presbyterian church true to the Scriptures and the Westminster Confession of Faith. And that is the urgency of the question that will face the Synod of the RPC/ES and the General Assembly of the OPC this year.

—J. J. M.

## HENRY W. CORAY

### Camus speaks

In the March issue of *Harper's* there appears the last chapter of Albert Camus' posthumously published novel, *A Happy Death*. Actually this was the French existentialist's first book, written when he was a little over twenty. It previews the man's literary brilliance.

Camus' hero, Patrice Mersault, senselessly and with no inner turmoil, murders the former lover of his own mistress, Marthe. He then settles down in Algeria on a picturesque promontory that overlooks the Mediterranean, lives existentially and prepares to die existentially. (*The Random House Dictionary of the English Language* defines existentialism as "the doctrine that man forms his essence in the course of the life he chooses to lead.")

Mersault is obsessively in love with nature. Says Camus: "He became one with life in its pure state, he discovered a paradise given only to the most intelligent animals." To him, what mattered most was "to match the rhythm of the days instead of submitting their rhythm to the curve of human hopes." He exists to squeeze from the passing moment "a kind of enormous ever-present happiness. The rest — women, art, success — are nothing but excuses." And so "in the innocence of his heart, Mersault accepted this green sky and this love-soaked earth with the same thrill of passion and desire as when he had killed Zageus in the innocence of his heart."

In his other fictional writings Camus has tried to expound the meaning of "alienation" and of "the absurd." In *A Happy Death*, he has dramatized the absolute bankruptcy of life which ignores God as the supreme Interpreter of life. The editors of *Harper's* themselves affirm that it is "unabashedly pagan"; that it shows "the clear perception of a moral universe splendidly empty of either meaning or authority."

### Joan Barthel weeps

*Life* (March 17, 1972) runs the account of a hospital deathbed scene narrated in detail by Joan Barthel. The caption reads: *I promise you it will be all right, the dilemma of a friend's dying.*

In great anguish the writer tells of the slow agonizing passing of her friend Eleanor, an older woman. "I'm afraid," Eleanor whispers as she approaches the Great Divide. Joan has no word of comfort. "What do I say?" she asks the day nurse. "Ask the doctor," the nurse replies. But the doctor doesn't come. Nor has the night nurse any solution. The resident comes by on his rounds. "What do I say?" "Give her some supportive psychotherapy. There's nothing to be afraid of." When the doctor finally shows, his professional word is, "Tell her she isn't afraid. Tell her . . . tell her she's apprehensive." The little student nurse also has an answer; she looks down at her shoes and murmurs, "Ah gee."

Five days drag by. Death is closing in on the emaciated patient. Joan is still casting about desperately for words of consolation. A beautiful night nurse takes on the role of

Job's comforter. "If you have strong feelings about an after life hang on to them," she says. "I often wish I had."

Joan bends over the dying Eleanor and says, "Dear Eleanor, don't be afraid. It will be all right. Everything will be all right. There is nothing to worry about. I love you. We all love you. I promise you, it will be all right."

And so dies Eleanor. And so Joan lives on but in indescribable loneliness. The loss of her beloved friend has plunged her into the pathos of misery and despair.

The closing paragraph is enough to bring tears to angels. Joan writes: "I was afraid then, and I still am, but for myself . . . I believed in another life for her, but if faith were enough, wouldn't I now rejoice for her instead of lamenting all that is lost — the cruise she won't take, the book she won't finish (it was on Zen Buddhism), the climbing roses she won't see this June? Or is the fault only in the quality of my faith and hope, in my brand of love? This is what I mean by special questions. Are these questions the natural aftermath of this experience, or are they neurotic? But this is a matter, as they say, of life and death, so what is normal? What is neurotic? And whom do you trust to say? I keep thinking I should have sung to her."

(This writer has written Miss Barthel, hoping to open the channels of communication. He asks the readers of the *Guardian* to pray for her.)

### Huxley quakes

The theme of death seems to be one that has gripped the minds of the twentieth-century intellectuals. Pundit Aldous Huxley — *Brave New World* Huxley — scientist, lecturer, novelist, once sat down and in a moment of stark honesty penned the following confession:

When I was a boy at school  
I was a coward and a fool;  
And fool and coward I have stayed,  
All these years I've been afraid  
Of pain, and scornful boys, and then  
Afraid of ridicule and men;  
Afraid of drawing vital breath  
And I shall be afraid — of death.

### Paul exults

Placed in juxtaposition to the above dark portraits of death, what a blaze of light shines forth in the testimony of the great Apostle! He views his exodus from this world, not with the stolid apathy of the existentialist nor with the dread of the skeptic, but with the flaming knowledge that for him Christ has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. His ringing triumphant affirmations vibrate through the corridors of time:

*To me to live is Christ; to die is gain. . . . We know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. . . . To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. . . . The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord.*

The erstwhile sensualist John Donne, having made the

# What have you done with God's hour?

ALICE A. BRADFORD

What have you done with God's hour? God's hour? Yes, God's hour. This hour or the next, it is his hour you know — all twenty-four hours of each day belong to God. You and I are stewards of God's hours, just as we are stewards of the money and talents he provides us.

Our money is a tangible item; sometimes we seem to have a surplus, and sometimes we barely survive on it. But time — a minute or a lifespan — is different from money. Hours are not tangible, not to be handled or stored away.

## The hours God gives to us

You can look to no one for more hours in the day. God has provided each of us with a given number of hours on earth. How many? We do not know. We don't know how much time — how many hours, days, months, or years — we have to spend on this earth. God does not intend for us to know this.

Since we do not know how many hours God will give, we must spend our hours wisely. So the psalmist says: "As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty years, yet their pride is but labor and sorrow; for soon it is gone and we fly away. . . . So teach us to number our days, that we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:10, 12; NASB).

Does this mean we should spend more time cooking all the favorite foods for the members of our family? I don't think so. But it might mean we should spend more time

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pilgrimage from wrath to grace, expresses the same truth poetically:

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee  
Mighty and dreadful, thou art not so;  
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow  
Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill me.

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*Some days, it appears, one's driving  
Is checkered by a chain of red traffic lights;  
Other days, it's marked by green ones.  
And I often wonder if perhaps —  
Could a lesson be learned from this?  
Is not the supreme Director of Traffic  
Teaching us, via red signals, the lesson of restraint:  
"Let patience have her perfect work";  
And via the green, the sign to move ahead:  
"Speak unto the children of Israel  
That they go forward."  
And then I am calmed in the knowledge  
That in the mysterious operation of the lights  
There is a Providence that decrees  
The starts and stops on the way to Zion —  
And I am thankful that grace has cured  
My color-blinded condition!*

— The Old Chinese Philosopher

planning our meals to make them more nutritious so that the time we do have here on earth can be better enjoyed by healthy bodies.

Does this mean we should skip Sunday school and church services so that we have more time to prepare a well-balanced Sunday dinner? No, it does not mean that either. But it does mean that if you spend all day Saturday loafing, sleeping, or watching television and then skip Sunday morning services as I have often done — then it is time to reevaluate the hours God has put in your trust.

## The hours we give to God

To use God's hours wisely, we must attend all the means of grace. Do you realize that, if we attend Sunday school and church services as well as Wednesday evening prayer services, we are still spending only four and a half hours in God's house each week? Since there are 168 hours in a week, this means we are spending only about 0.3% — three-tenths of one percent — of our time at church.

Is this asking too much? If we allow 33% of our time for sleeping — which all of us need — and 24% of our time at a forty-hour-a-week job away from home — which many of us have and need — this leaves us with approximately 42% of our time for other things such as eating, household chores, entertainment, and so on.

So, why can't we arrange our time so that we'll always be able to attend the services of our church? The answer is that it's so easy to use excuses to stay away from church.

But I do not know why this is. We arrange our time to go shopping, and even spend the whole day if we so desire. We always manage to attend our various organizational meetings. We always try to attend circle meetings, though sometimes other things intervene. And there are some among us who spend time in Bible study and prayer, and this takes time too.

Are we really good stewards of God's hour? What have we done with it? Whatever we may have done with it in the past, let's try in the future to do with it what God wants us to do. Let us use every hour of the day to glorify the name of our Lord and Savior. Let us start now to be better stewards of God's time, to use it to his honor, as well as the money and the talents he gives us.

Survival without these provisions from God — if it were possible — would hardly be worthwhile. And survival without faith in God, and obedience to his will, is certainly not worthwhile either. I know; I have not always believed in him, I have not always had faith or obedience. But now I know that God has forgiven me and forgives me — for all the hours of my life on this earth and through all eternity.

What have you done with God's hour?

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*Mrs. Bradford is a member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Caney, Kansas. This devotional talk was presented originally to the Women's Missionary Fellowship of the church. We are glad to share it with you, both men and women in Christ's church.*

# The Presbyterian Guardian

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Westchester, Ill. — Eighty members of the Westminster Church here met on March 12 to break ground for their new church building at 2418 S. Wolf Road. The picture shows the church's pastor, the Rev. Ivan J. DeMaster, wielding the shovel. Mr. Guy Lundvall, chairman of the Building Committee; Mr. Allen Klokow, president of the Trustees; Mrs. Walter Pojman, president of the Women's Missionary Society; Miss Patricia Mikes, president of the Omegans; and Michael Laky, president of the Crusaders also took part in the service.

The first unit will consist of classrooms and a fellowship area. An auditorium is planned for a later date, with the fellowship area to be used for worship services until then. The congregation is presently meeting for worship at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. at 1625 Mannheim Road, Westchester, Ill.

## Here and There in The Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Beaver Falls, Pa.—On March 24 and 25, approximately 150 persons met at the First Reformed Presbyterian Church here to discuss together the implications of the sovereignty of God for everyday Christian living. Participants were members of three sponsoring presbyteries representing the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod.

The Rev. John Sanderson of Covenant College spoke on "The Sovereignty of God—Implications in Witnessing." The Rev. John Frame of Westminster Theological Seminary spoke on "The Sovereignty of God—Holiness." The Rev. James Carson of the R. P. Church of North Hills, Pittsburgh, spoke on "The Sovereignty of God—

Implications for Christian Living as Seen in the Book of Revelation." A panel discussion concluded the conference.

Moderated by the Rev. Jack White of Geneva College, the panel discussion uncovered interesting questions and answers on applying God's sovereignty. Frustration could be sensed in this question: "How good a job are our churches doing in explaining the commands of God in a practical way? How can we bring these things—God's sovereignty, holiness, Christian living—to our families, neighbors, or business associates?"

Those present were stimulated to learn more of these things. It is hoped that the presbyteries will continue to assist their people this way.

Houlton, Maine—Members of the Machen League of Bethel Church traveled across the Canadian border to Newcastle, New Brunswick for a joint meeting with the young people of the new Reformed Presbyterian congregation there. The meetings were held on February 17 and 18. The Newcastle young people had come to Houlton for a similar get-together in November 1971. Study and discussion topics included an evaluation of contemporary issues, Christian liberty, and miracles in Bible times and today. Another meeting in Houlton is scheduled for May.

Manteca, Calif. — The Bethany Church of Stockton, Calif., had been conducting services both in Stockton and in Manteca, a bedroom community to the south of Stockton. The church has made a complete move to Manteca and changed its name to First Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Manteca. The old building in Stockton has been sold. The First Church now meets in the American Legion Hall of Manteca.