

THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MINUTES OF THE ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MEETING AT

WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

MAY 16-19, 1944



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THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Minutes
of the
Eleventh General Assembly
The Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
of
THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Westminster Theological Seminary
Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
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Tuesday, May 16, 1944

The Moderator of the Tenth General Assembly, the Rev. Oscar Holkeboer, opened the devotional service preceding the Eleventh General Assembly at 11:00 A. M., May 16, 1944, in the Library Auditorium of Westminster Theological Seminary, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Mr. Holkeboer preached a sermon on Romans 8:32, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall be not with him also freely give us all things?" Following the sermon the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered by Mr. Holkeboer, assisted by the Rev. Dr. E. J. Young and the Rev. John H. Skilton, and by Elders C. L. Johnson, Matthew McCroddan, A. H. Squires and H. Van Brummelen.

Tuesday afternoon.

The Eleventh General Assembly was called to order at 2:00 P. M. by the Rev. Oscar Holkeboer and was constituted with prayer by the Rev. Robert K. Churchill.

The roll was called by the Clerk of the Tenth General Assembly.

THE ROLL OF THE ASSEMBLY

Presbytery of California:

Ministers: Robert K. Churchill, Robert H. Graham.

Presbytery of the Dakotas:

Minister: Melvin B. Nonhof.

Presbytery of New Jersey:

Ministers: H. Wilson Albright, Robert L. Atwell, Edward B. Cooper, Everett C. DeVelde, Leslie A. Dunn, Charles H. Ellis, Donald C. Graham, Richard W. Gray, Edward Heerema, John C. Hills, Clifford S. Smith.

Elders: F. H. Fitch, Floyd C. Graf, Matthew McCroddan, Samuel S. Parker.

Presbytery of New York and New England:

Ministers: Edmund P. Clowney, Bruce A. Coie, John J. de Waard, Raymond M. Meiners, John Murray, Herman T. Petersen, John C. Rankin, John H. Skilton, Charles E. Stanton, William Young, Th.D.

Elders: Louis H. Jacobs, A. H. Squires, H. Van Brummelen.

Presbytery of Ohio.

Minister: J. Lyle Shaw, Ph.D., D.D.

Presbytery of Philadelphia:

Ministers: Samuel J. Allen, Egbert W. Andrews, John W. Betzold, D. Eugene Bradford, John P. Clelland, Calvin K. Cummings, Franklin S. Dyrness, Edwards E. Elliott, David Freeman, John P. Galbraith, Floyd E. Hamilton, Edward L. Kellogg, R. B. Kuiper, Arthur W. Kuschke, Francis Mahaffy, Robert S. Marsden, George W. Marston, LeRoy B. Oliver, Henry D. Phillips, James W. Price, Edwin H. Rian, Charles G. Schaufele, Leslie W. Sloat, N. B. Stonehouse, Th.D., Robert Strong, S.T.D., Cornelius Van Til, Ph.D., William E. Welmers, Ph.D., Paul Woolley, Edward J. Young, Ph.D.

Elders: D. C. Boyd, Cyrus Ferguson (alt.), E. F. Hankin (alt.), C. L. Johnson, J. H. McClay, Charles Phillips, Walter P. Smyth, Murray F. Thompson, C. A. Tichenor.

**THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL EVANGELISM
ELECTED BY THE NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

In accordance with the action of the Tenth General Assembly these five reports,* prepared by the Committee on Local Evangelism, namely, "The Message of Evangelism", "The Prerequisites of Evangelism", "Preparation for the Evangelistic Meeting", "Personal Work" and "Intensive Survey Work" are being sent to the ministers and sessions of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The Tenth General Assembly has provided that these reports will be considered at the Eleventh General Assembly.

JOHN MURRAY,

Secretary of the Committee

THE MESSAGE OF EVANGELISM

The word "evangelism" has generally been understood to apply to the propogation of the gospel among the unsaved. In dealing, however, with the obligation that rests upon the church of Christ to witness to the gospel it does not appear that the various activities of the church that may properly be embraced in the work of evangelism have exclusive reference to those who are reckoned, in the judgment of the church, as without God and without hope in the world. Particularly is this true when it is remembered that many believers in Christ have so inadequate a knowledge of the gospel and so impoverished a conception of the Christian life that a considerable part of the work of the church, properly regarded as evangelism, must needs have as its aim the instruction and edification of such believers. The evangelism that the true church of Christ undertakes must therefore contemplate the bringing of the gospel in its full import and demands to those who, though believers, are nevertheless the victims of ignorance, unfaithfulness and compromising associations.

This report, however, in accordance with what is believed to be the intent of the Ninth General Assembly, will deal in the main with the message of evangelism as the message of the gospel to the lost.

The Whole Counsel of God

The message of evangelism is the whole counsel of God as revealed in His Word, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Too often this commonplace statement is not accepted or, if accepted, not appreciated or followed. The cause of evangelism has been greatly prejudiced and hindered by the supposition, far too prevalent, that for the lost the message has to be restricted to the central elements of the gospel, namely, sin, redemption by the blood of Christ, and the demand for faith and repentance. It is true that evangelism should always keep in the forefront of its message the central and elementary principles of the gospel. But two facts must be borne in mind. (1) The Scripture pattern will not support the conclusion that the central message of the gospel is the exclusive content of the message of evangelism and (2) the central message itself cannot properly be presented or understood except as it is presented in the context of the whole counsel of God.

Paul's message to the Athenians reached its conclusion in the declaration that God commands men that they should all everywhere repent. But that conclusion was prefaced by appeal to God as the creator of all, to God as the Lord of heaven and earth, to the self-sufficiency and spirituality of God and to God as the Lord of all nations, and Paul's appeal for repentance was oriented to God's final judgment. It can be seen then that the declared orbit within which Paul delivered the gospel of repentance was the orbit defined by the doctrine of God as the absolutely self-sufficient and spiritual God, Creator and Lord of heaven and earth and that the termini of the history within which the message of repentance is given are creation at the beginning and judgment at the end.

*For motion regarding these reports see page 44.

When it is said that the whole counsel of God is the message of evangelism this should not be understood to mean that the whole counsel of God can be compassed in each message. Nor is it to be understood as meaning that sound judgment and wisdom are not to be used to the fullest extent in the selection of the topics to be presented at particular times and in the devising of the manner in which they are to be presented. The message of God's counsel is multi-form and the particular needs of men are varied. The message should, therefore, always be adapted to the peculiar need and condition of the persons concerned and great care should be exercised that the truths presented and the manner of presentation should be chosen and framed so as to make the most direct and effective impact upon those who are the recipients of the message. Great care and sometimes exacting labour are required in the interest of insuring, as far as possible, that the inopportune-ness of the time chosen for the presentation of a particular message and the inappropriateness of the manner adopted do not become the occasion for a distorted understanding on the part of the persons to whom the message is given, just as alertness and faithfulness are equally required to insure that the appropriate opportunity for the presentation of a particular message is not lost by indolence and weakness on the part of the evangelist. It frequently happens that the evangelist has to refrain from the presentation of certain truths until the proper foundation is laid in the minds of the persons concerned by the understanding and acceptance of other truths. And it just as frequently happens that to refrain from imparting the necessary instruction at a particular time imperils the success and the fruitage of the evangelist's work.

There is need, therefore, for the greatest wisdom in dealing with the numerous diversities that exist among the subjects of evangelism, diversities of tradition, of education, of temperament, of religious knowledge and conviction, of social standing, and even of vocation.

But admitting all of these reservations and taking all care that they be duly applied, it must, nevertheless, be maintained that there is no part of the revelation of Scripture that is not the fit subject for the message of evangelism. This proposition will be illustrated by a few examples.

Examples

(1) **Election.** It might be supposed that the doctrine of election could not properly be incorporated into an evangelistic message, or, at least, could not properly be the topic of an evangelistic message. This is a grievous mistake. It is true that only believers have any right to regard themselves as elect of God and only they can derive from the truth of election covenant assurance and comfort. But the doctrine of election, when properly conceived and handled, has the closest bearing upon the lost. It may be used in arousing the lost from lethargy and indifference. Election implies non-election. It concerns the ultimate destinies of men and to that question the lost cannot afford to be indifferent. The truth of election may thus be used to bring the unsaved to the most earnest solicitude concerning their salvation and when thus awakened to concern it provides them with the understanding of the ground upon which they may entertain hope with respect to the grace of salvation as it applies to them.

God's sovereign election is the one source of the only salvation there is for lost men. It was in pursuance of God's electing love that God sent His Son into the world. It was in pursuance of electing love that Jesus died upon the cross, was raised from the dead and sat down at the right hand of God. The nature of the salvation offered to lost men in the gospel can not be abstracted from that purpose of grace in pursuance of which salvation was wrought and in subordination to which it is being constantly applied. Therefore the salvation offered to the lost, the salvation presented to their need and demanding the response of their faith, is salvation determined in its very character by election.

Election is the only source of the salvation presented in the gospel. As such it is calculated to bring hope to the perishing. For in election there is the assurance that God loved sinners from eternity, that He loved sinners with

such invincible love that He did not spare His own Son but delivered him up for them. The evangelist should show this truth to be aglow with hope for those who, under the conviction of sin, are tempted to believe that so grievous are their sins that God could not love them and save them. Election shows the character of God's love, that it is love for the lost, that it is sovereign love, not determined by the degrees of sinnership but by the mere good pleasure of God and therefore not in the least incompatible with the sinnership and hell-deservedness of those who are its objects. It should be apparent how close a bearing election has upon the most urgent demands of a practical evangelism.

(2) **Limited Atonement.** It is often argued that the doctrine of definite or limited atonement is quite foreign and even inimical to the interests of evangelism. For how, it may be plausibly protested, can salvation be freely offered to the lost and its claims pressed upon them if salvation has been procured only for a limited number? Proper analysis of the salvation offered to lost men will show, however, that only on the basis of a definite atonement can full salvation be offered to lost men. True evangelism must ever bear in mind that it is not the mere possibility of salvation nor simply provision for salvation that is offered freely in the gospel. It is rather salvation full, perfect and free. For it is Christ in all the glory of His person as Saviour and Redeemer and in all the perfection of His finished work who is offered to sinners in the gospel. This glory and this perfection that reside in Christ as Saviour have come to reside in Him only by virtue of what He has done in His capacity as the captain of salvation. And what He has done in this capacity is not that He made the salvation of all men possible nor that He made provision for the salvation of all but rather that He wrought and purchased redemption. It is salvation with such completeness and perfection that is presented to lost men in the full, free and unfettered call of the gospel. But only on the basis of a limited atonement could such salvation and redemption be wrought and only on the basis of a limited atonement can such salvation be offered. We should not then be loathe to make known to lost men the real nature of the extent of the atonement. For bound up with a limited extent is the real nature of the salvation and of the Christ offered. If we universalize the extent of the atonement we must limit its efficacy and when we limit its efficacy it is an impoverished and truncated salvation that the ministers of evangelism have to offer. Just as we mutilate the salvation offered so do we empty our message of the irresistible appeal that the proclamation of a full and perfect salvation provides. Evangelism thereby not only proves itself unfaithful to the fullness of the gospel but also robs itself of that which is indispensable to its effectiveness, namely, the recognition on the part of men of the claim, privilege and opportunity that the full and free offer of Christ entails.

(3) **Total Depravity.** The doctrine of total depravity and inability must not be compromised and avoided in the conduct of evangelism. It is true that any emphasis upon this doctrine appears quite inappropriate in dealing with the unsaved. For the assertion of human inability seems to cut the nerve of any motive to that exercise of faith and repentance which is the demand of the gospel message, and it may very plausibly be contended that evangelism should not prejudice the urgent demand for faith by proclaiming human inability. It is also true that men have oftentimes shielded themselves against the claims and demands of the gospel by pleading the subterfuge of their own inability.

It must be recognized, however, that human inability does not remove responsibility and neither does the abuse of inability, arising from the perversity inherent in human depravity, provide us with any valid reason for deceiving men with respect to the real nature of their moral and spiritual condition or for withholding from them the truth with respect to the consequences of that condition.

But, to speak more positively, it is the self-sufficiency that proceeds from failure to appreciate our complete spiritual bankruptcy and impotence that is the greatest obstacle to that contrition of heart that alone creates the state of

mind requisite to the appropriation of the gospel of grace. Evangelism must produce, by God's grace and the operations of the Spirit, a deep sense of helplessness in the minds of those evangelised. Without conviction of sin there will never be acceptance of the gospel. It is the preaching of man's total depravity and inability manifested in the overt transgression of God's law that is calculated to induce this sense of sin, of helplessness and of need. And so this doctrine of depravity and inability is not only necessary as belonging to the whole counsel of God but is also one of the most fruitful elements of that counsel in promoting the interests of wholesome and effective evangelism.

Particular Requisites of the Message

(1) **The Conviction of Sin.** The most formidable barrier of effective evangelism in any generation, and particularly accentuated in ours, is self-sufficiency and self-righteousness. It was the witness of our Lord Himself that the whole need not a physician but they that are sick. One of the primary tasks of the evangelist, therefore, is to bring the demands of law and gospel to bear upon the consciences of men so that they may be convinced of the reality of the condemnation to which they are subject, of the reality of their separation from God and of the certainty of eternal doom apart from the gospel of redeeming grace.

One of the most appalling defects of much present-day evangelism is the absence of any consistent and sustained emphasis upon the holiness, justice and authority of God. This defect is illustrated very concretely in the failure to proclaim and apply the binding authority and sanction of God's law, summarily comprehended in the ten commandments. It is as these commandments are brought to bear upon the hearts and lives of men that the effect referred to by the Apostle Paul is produced, "I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died" (Rom. 7:7), "Verily I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. 7:9). This conviction is an invariable result of faithful proclamation of the binding claims and sanctions of the law of God and we must not deceive ourselves by thinking that the sophistication of which modern philosophy has made men victims in any way abrogates the divinely established rule that by the law is the knowledge of sin. Only the sharp arrows of God's commandments can pierce the heart of the King's enemies and only these can lay low the self-sufficiency of human pride.

A conspicuous defect, closely coordinated with the foregoing, is the absence of warning and of condemnation in evangelistic effort. The naturalistic temper of our age, united with its callousness, makes the doctrine of hell peculiarly uncongenial. It is more often the subject of crude jest than it is of solemn warning or foreboding. The supposed politeness of modern etiquette has too often succeeded in creating the sentiment that any serious reference to hell and damnation is not accordant with the canons of good taste. These evils have in many cases ensnared even the orthodox.

But hell is an unspeakable reality and if evangelism is to march on its way it must by God's grace produce that sense of condemnation complexioned by the apprehension of perdition as the due reward of sin. For it is in the anguish of such a sense of condemnation, in the anguish of a conscience that stings with the apprehension of the wrath and curse of God, that the gospel of God's free grace becomes as cold water to a thirsty soul and as good news from a far country.

(2) **The Free Offer of the Gospel.** As pertinent to this subject there are in particular two evils that have to be avoided. The first is the presentation of the gospel with an Arminian complexion or on an Arminian basis. A very considerable part of the evangelism that has been conducted for several decades, if not for the last two centuries, has been of an Arminian character. This type of evangelism proceeds on the assumptions that Christ died to save all men or, at least, to make provision for the salvation of all men, and that all men have by natural retention or by gracious restoration the ability to believe in Christ. The overtures of grace in the gospel are therefore presented on the assumption

that God has done His utmost in this matter of salvation and that now it is left to men in the exercise of their own autonomous will to accept Christ. The really decisive factor in the matter of salvation, now that Christ has died and is freely offered by men, is held to be the autonomous decision and action on the part of men themselves.

It must be admitted that this construction of the gospel and of man's responsibility and opportunity has many appealing and plausible features. In favour of it might seem to be the fact that it has produced mighty results. Indeed it has seemed to many that this is the only feasible way in which to present the claims of Christ and the appeal for faith. Being the predominant form of evangelism in many parts, people of Reformed persuasion have readily fallen into line with this type of evangelistic effort.

Oftentimes as an accompaniment of this conception of the message and of the response to the message there has been fostered a certain type of high pressure appeal and of emotional excitement that is scarcely compatible with the sobriety and dignity that ought to characterize the preaching of the gospel and scarcely consistent with the deliberateness and intelligence appropriate to the exercise of faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord.

The second evil is that of hyper-Calvinism. Those thoroughly convinced of the error of Arminian anthropology and soteriology have quite properly reacted from the type of evangelism that is the characteristic expression of it. But deep persuasion of the particularism of the plan of salvation and revulsion from Arminian evangelism have sometimes been the occasion for the abandonment of evangelism altogether or, at least, for the denial of the full and free offer of the gospel to lost men. If this reaction does not go the length of theoretically denying the free offer of the gospel, it nevertheless manifests itself in a conspicuous awkwardness and lack of spontaneity in the preaching of the free offer. Reaction from the error of Arminian doctrine and methods together with persuasion of man's total inability and God's absolute predestination have rendered many unable to understand or work out in practice the complete congruity of man's inability and of consistent particularism in the plan of salvation with the full, free and unfettered offer of Christ to lost sinners, and they have also been unable to appreciate the congruity of man's inability and God's predestination with the necessity for the most urgent and passionate appeal for the exercise of faith and repentance.

The only proper path for true evangelism is the path that lies between these two extremes. Evangelism must understand that election and the particularism of the whole process of redemption puts no fence around the free offer of Christ in the gospel. Neither does human inability and the necessity of efficacious grace in any way circumscribe the offer of a free and full salvation to those who are dead in trespasses and sins. And the responsibility, privilege and opportunity of lost men as they are confronted by the external call of the gospel are not in the least curtailed by the fact that efficacious grace is indispensable to the saving exercise of such responsibility and to the saving embrace of the privilege and opportunity.

(3) **Human Need and Responsibility.** In earlier parts of this report on the message of evangelism stress has been laid upon the necessity of intelligent evangelism. But evangelism must also be zealous and persistent. The zeal of evangelism must find its origin in the recognition of the gravity of sin and of its consequences. Sin is directed against God's glory and majesty and it has its consequence in alienation from Him. Lost men are therefore in desperate need of the gospel. Apart from the faith of the gospel the only outlook for men is the blackness of darkness forever, eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. These facts impart an irresistible urgency to the task of evangelism and require that urgent demand be characteristic of the delivery of the message. This is to say that the message of evangelism can never be presented as if it were simply a reasonable hypothesis or probability attested as good and useful by the witness of experience. It must rather be presented as the only alternative, as the absolute

truth which must not be rejected except at the peril of eternal death. It must be presented as unescapable finality that there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved but the name of Jesus. And so faith and repentance must be urged upon men as not only good and useful resorts but as imperative demands and duties.

The responsibility of men as they are presented with the claims and overtures of the gospel springs not only from the gravity of their need but also from the glory and perfection of God's gracious provision in Christ. Evangelism must impress upon those who are the subjects of it the heinousness of the sin involved in the rejection of such unspeakable grace. To reject the gospel is to offer insult to the supreme revelation of God's glory. It is the claims of God's glory, as that glory reaches the zenith of its disclosure in the person and work of Him who is the image of the invisible God, that cause to rest upon men so stupendous a responsibility. "This is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).

(4) **Christ Crucified and Risen.** Evangelism must always be jealous to make Christ as the crucified and risen Redeemer the sum and substance of its message. The example of the apostle is final and conclusive in this respect. "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Cor. 1:22-24). "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified (I Cor. 2:1,2).

It is doubtless true that the recording of Christian experience has its proper place in Christian testimony, and the record of the experiences which are the fruit of God's saving grace has often exercised a powerful influence for good upon the ungodly. It is also true that godly life is an indispensable element in our witness to the power of gospel. But evangelism has been ensnared by the subtlety of Satan when it regards the witness of Christian experience as that which constitutes testimony to Christ. Too often an egocentric interest and emphasis, very plausibly bearing the appearance of doing honor to Christ, has nevertheless grievously perverted the true witness of evangelism. We must ever be faithful to the import of the apostle's word, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (II Cor. 4:5).

The preaching of Christ is the preaching of Christ crucified. Christ is not truly preached unless there is the offence that is to Jews a stumbling block and to Greeks foolishness. This offence that inheres in the cross lays evangelism open to the temptation to eliminate or tone down that which appears to imperil the success of evangelistic effort, the temptation to withhold, at least at the outset, the very kernel of the gospel of grace. This is fatal dishonour to Christ and nothing more successfully insures that the gospel we preach is not the gospel but the wisdom of man. It is the cross of Christ as the exalted Lord that embodies the supreme revelation of the justice, love and grace of God, and to eliminate or tone down the offence of the cross is to preach another than the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and it is to fall under the condemnation of the inspired apostle who, after having testified that the Lord Jesus Christ "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. 1:4), also wrote, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed, For do I now persuade men or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:8,10).

THE PREREQUISITES OF EVANGELISM

The prerequisites of evangelism, as conceived of in this report, pertain for the most part to the individual and deal with the moral and spiritual qualities which ought to characterize the person who engages in the work of evangelism.

1. **Personal Faith.** The person who is to perform the work of evangelism ought to be a true believer. It is not to be supposed that unconverted persons may not be used by God as His instruments in propagating the gospel. In His sovereign grace God may use the efforts of those who do not themselves know the saving power of the gospel. It is the Word of God that is the power of God unto salvation and its efficacy does not depend upon the character of the person who may be the minister of it. But, though God may effectually use the Word communicated through unconverted persons, it nevertheless is true that everyone who makes the gospel known to others and urges its claims upon them is guilty of hypocrisy and insincerity if he himself does not believe and obey the gospel. It is also axiomatic that only the person who believes and obeys the gospel can be an effective and faithful witness to its truth and power.

It is requisite that the foundation of all other moral and spiritual qualities be laid in personal faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord and in the intelligent understanding of what personal faith in Christ and obedience to Him mean. Heart-searching should, therefore, begin with the question of personal relation to God and to Christ in giving all diligence to make our calling and election sure.

2. **Orthodox Belief.** It is requisite that the faith that is to be propagated through evangelism be the true faith and therefore it is the responsibility of the church to insure that those who bear the message of salvation to the lost have themselves orthodox belief and an intelligent understanding of that which they are to promote. It is the truth of the gospel that is the power of God unto salvation and though God is pleased to use imperfect and unworthy instruments in the promotion of His cause yet evangelism is never promoted by ignorance and distortion.

3. **Humility.** The person conducting evangelism is one who is wholly indebted to divine grace and he must continue to be aware of complete dependence upon God's grace. He must therefore be clothed with that humility which is appropriate expression of this indebtedness and dependence. He brings the gospel and its claims not in the spirit of self-righteousness nor with a sense of superiority but as a sinner saved by grace and with a profound realization of the fact that he proclaims not himself but Christ Jesus the Lord. "Humility is to the Christian what ballast is to the ship; it keeps him in his proper position and regulates all his thoughts and feelings. A ship with all its sails expanded to the wind, if it were without ballast, would be capsized by the first violent blast; thus many high professors in the church make speedy shipwreck, because they go forth without humility" (Archibald Alexander, *Practical Sermons*, p. 262).

Shipwreck may be made in two respects — in relation to God and in relation to men.

If the messenger of the gospel is not imbued with humility then he must needs rely upon his own strength and this is the pride that God resists. It is to the humble God gives grace.

If the messenger of the gospel is not imbued with the humility that emanates from a sense of sin and from the grace of contrition, then a barrier will be erected between him and the persons whom he seeks to evangelize. Conceit when it wears the costume of pity is not only the opposite of the spirit engendered and cultivated by the grace of God but it is also repellent even to the ungodly. Evangelism should never be responsible for creating such prejudice against its message. It should always be jealous to show the lost that the difference between the saved and the unsaved is wholly due to the exceeding greatness of God's grace and the attitude of those promoting evangelism should be a living exhibition to this truth.

4. **Consecration.** Consecration is a necessary prerequisite from two points of view — it is necessary for consistent testimony to the truth and power of the gospel and it is necessary for power in the work of evangelism.

The gospel proclaimed in evangelism is the gospel of salvation from sin and to holiness. Inconsistency in the life of those conducting evangelism is one of the most serious obstacles to effective evangelism. The mind of the natural man is not hospitable to the gospel; it is rather enmity against it. Though inconsistency on the part of Christians does not make the gospel untrue yet the unregenerate are quick to seize upon the inconsistency of the witnesses to the gospel as an argument against the truth and power of the gospel itself. Hence evangelism must not give occasion to the adversaries to speak reproachfully.

The proclamation of the gospel should be wholehearted, sincere and persistent. If the person who proclaims the message is the victim of lust and thus divided in his loyalty, such lack of consecration must impair his wholeheartedness and sincerity and detract from the persistence and zeal with which he attends to and promotes the work in which he is engaged. The failures in personal devotion will necessarily gnaw at the root of his fervency, bring coldness and indifference into his spirit and produce perfunctoriness in the discharge of his duties, all of which result in the absence of that earnestness and power which holiness of heart and of life preserves and fosters.

Consecration will require constant heart-searching. The messenger of Christ must prove to himself the conformity of his motives and actions with his profession. He must bring his inward life, as well as his outward, to the scrutiny of the Word of God lest secret sin indulged or left alone bring defilement upon his soul and the cloud of God's displeasure upon his person and testimony. Oftentimes these secret disasters are hidden from men but they are naked and open to God and they have the most destructive effect upon the fruitfulness of the witness to the gospel. Ever-active and penitent heart-searching is the only way whereby the proper consecration and increasing sanctification can be maintained. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23,24).

5. **Zeal.** Zeal when intelligent is always inspired by respect for the glory of God and by love to Him. The basis upon which zeal in evangelism rests is absolute confidence in the truth and power of the gospel. The constant urge of evangelism is the recognition that the gospel is indispensable to the salvation of men. In the face of discouragement and opposition, failure and reproach, the messenger of the gospel will be certain to fall if he is not sustained by the unfaltering zeal that springs from jealousy for the honour of God against all gainsaying, from conviction of the inviolate truth of the gospel and from understanding of its indispensability and supreme preciousness.

6. **Prayer.** The proper proclamation of the Word of God requires insight, love, and power. As regards insight, the person proclaiming must be sensitive to discern the meaning of the Word and alert to apply it to the needs and lives of men. As regards love, he must love the truth and have sympathy with men. As regards power, he must be endowed with the Holy Spirit so that he may declare the Word with unction and blessing. He must, therefore, be constant in prayer as the means of securing and maintaining that illumination and quickening of the Spirit who alone can impart the insight, love and power apart from which evangelism will degenerate into cold and formal professionalism. Evangelism must on its own account be wrought in the exercise of supplication.

The messenger of the gospel must also pray for those to whom he brings the gospel. The gospel has no power in and of itself. Clear, complete and pertinent to a situation though our message be, yet the Word is impotent apart from the inward work of the Holy Spirit. The saving effect does not reside in the clarity or appropriateness of our presentation, nor in the fervency of our appeal, but in the sovereign and efficacious grace of the Spirit. This complete dependence upon God's sovereign grace provides the basis and necessity for constant and unfailing prayer that God would graciously add His regenerating,

converting and sanctifying power. Such prayer receives its encouragement in the assurance that if we being evil know how to give good gifts unto our children how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.

7. **Love for Men.** Love for lost men should not consist merely in the interest we have in the salvation of their souls. Love for lost men should rest first of all upon the recognition that they are, like ourselves, creatures created in the image of God. We should therefore have interest in them in the whole range of their being, of their relations, of their interests, and of their activities. Too often the work of evangelism has been frustrated and brought into reproach because the messengers of the gospel have shown little interest in, or sympathy with, the everyday troubles and joys, cares and interests of those to whom they minister. Evangelism must follow the example of the Saviour who identified Himself with the interests of men in the whole range of life and activity. Furthermore, evangelism must appreciate the fact that the Word of God bears upon all of life and our love and interest cannot be less extensive than the application of the Word of God. It is as the messengers of the gospel establish contact and confidence in the ordinary relations of life that they are placed in the most favorable position to bring to lost men the supreme blessing of the gospel.

This love for lost men as creatures made in God's image and this interest in them in the whole range of life must not, however, obscure the fact that they are lost men and that our supreme love for such concerns the salvation of their souls, to the end that they may glorify God in the totality of their being and of their interest. Evangelism must burn with passionate concern for his supreme need of the lost and perishing. There is always the temptation that our interest in them as men, our admiration of the many noble qualities they may exhibit and of the noble services they perform will blind us to the reality of their alienation from God and of their enmity against Him. Love must show itself in appreciation of their deepest need and in the determination to confront them with the truth and claims of the gospel of Christ.

8. **The Filling of the Spirit.** God has commanded believers to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). To be filled with the Spirit is to be possessed, ruled, guided by the Spirit, and it is this filling of the Spirit that causes the fruits of the Spirit to abound and the gifts of the Spirit to be exercised with power (cf. Acts 4:31, 33).

To this filling of the Spirit the following are essential.

a. **Heart Searching and Confession of Sin.** Sin grieves the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30-32). When the Holy Spirit is grieved there is a quenching of that power with which He works in and through the believer. We must be brought in humility before the scrutiny of God's unerring judgment and pray with David, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23,24; Cf. Psalm 51:10-13).

b. **Resolution and Endeavor to Live a Life of Obedience.** The Holy Spirit always honours His own commandments; they reflect His own holiness. When we are filled with the Spirit we must be filled with love and jealousy for the commandments of God. This will mean that we present our bodies a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1), present ourselves as servants unto obedience and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God (Rom. 6:13,16). The believer is filled with the Spirit only to the degree in which he obeys the Word of God.

c. **A Consistent Study of the Word of God.** If the believer is filled with the Spirit only to the degree in which he obeys the Word of God it follows that he must first know that Word, and knowledge requires application, study and meditation. The Holy Spirit does not fill us irrespective of knowledge but through our knowledge of His will as revealed in the Scriptures. The exhortation in Ephesians 5:18, "Be filled with the Spirit" is in the context of, "Understand what the will of the Lord is" and "Speaking one to another in psalms and

hymns and spiritual songs." If we are filled with the Spirit the Word of God dwells in us richly in all wisdom.

d. Prayer for Particular Needs. The most particular need is the filling of **the Spirit**. Earnest prayer must be directed to the supply of this need. But even more specific needs, as they emerge in the work of evangelism, should always be brought to the throne of grace. As the apostolic church laid before the Lord the particular danger which threatened their evangelistic effort, they were filled with the Spirit and enabled to witness with great power (Acts 4:31, 33).

PREPARATION FOR THE EVANGELISTIC MEETING

Anything which is to be done well calls for careful preparation. This principle applies to sacred as well as secular endeavors. An evangelistic effort without careful planning is almost certain to fail. A large church having many adherents and calling an evangelist with a big name may draw many unsaved to the meetings. This, of course, would not apply to most of our churches. However, whether a church is large or small the true possibilities of the evangelistic meeting may be realized only if it is preceded by careful preparation.

Your Committee makes the following suggestions by way of preparation for such meetings.

1. Make a house-to-house canvass of the community which the church expects to reach through these meetings. Inquire as to church and Sabbath school affiliations, regularity of attendance, number in family, etc. If at all possible this canvass should be made by Christian laymen under the direction of the pastor or session. Encourage even those church members who live outside this area to make a canvass of their immediate vicinity.

2. From this canvass and other sources make a prospect list of families and individuals whom the church hopes to reach through these meetings; i.e., those without church or Sabbath school affiliations, those who do not attend regularly, and those whose affiliations make them proper subjects of evangelism.

If at all possible have the Christian laymen who have uncovered these prospects call upon them several times before the meetings with a view to bringing them to the meetings and to doing personal work with them. The pastor should also call upon these prospects with the same end in view.

3. Make thorough prayer preparation for these meetings. Have the Christian laymen who have made the house-to-house canvass make their prospect-list a prayer-list. Urge every member of the church to set aside a daily period of prayer for the meetings. Instruct them to pray for definite needs and specific individuals. Ask them to include the evangelist in their prayer-list. Seriously consider the advisability of having a week of cottage prayer meetings preceding the special services. This may not prove to be practical for various reasons, but it should be a source of rich blessing if carried out.

4. The people should be prepared to take part in this program and prepare for the meetings. Instruct them concerning the way to make a house-to-house canvass. Teach them how to do personal work. Acquaint them with the value and ends to be obtained by united and private prayer. Preach on such subjects as Witnessing, Soul-Winning and Prerequisites for Revival.

5. Urge each member to determine to pray for the meetings daily, and, if not providentially hindered, to attend all the meetings and to endeavor to bring at least one person to each meeting.

6. Endeavor to obtain opportunities for the evangelist to witness to groups outside your own church during the period, as, for example, in schools, clubs, on the radio, at Sabbath afternoon or early evening services in other churches, rescue missions, open-air services.

7. Make every possible effort to publicize the meetings. Distribute hand bills, place window cards in homes and stores, advertise and place write-ups with a picture in local paper.

8. One night a week, either Monday or Saturday, should be observed for rest, especially if the meetings are to continue for more than one week. Due

to special conditions some churches might find it more practical to limit the public meetings to one week and have the evangelist devote several days and nights of the following week to calling and to doing personal work with strangers who came out to the meetings and with prospects who were unable to attend.

9. The evangelist would do well to request of the pastor three letters during the preparatory period. The first letter should acquaint the evangelist with the preparatory program which the church plans to put in practice. The second letter should inform him as to the progress which is being made by the pastor and the congregation in the carrying out of this program. The third letter should acquaint him with the particular needs and problems of the congregation. This information should aid him both in his prayer and sermon preparation for the meetings in that particular church.

As a general rule, at least a month should be devoted to this preparatory program. All these suggestions may not prove practical in every local situation. The pastor and session must use their judgment in respect to them.

PERSONAL WORK

Personal work is a very important aspect of evangelism. This method of presenting the gospel was widely used by our Lord. In the apostolic church this work was not only done by the ministers but by the laymen as well. This fact sheds light on its phenomenal growth. If the churches of our denomination are going to do an effective work of local evangelism then The Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a whole must be roused to the need and instructed in this type of work.

The Nature

Personal work may be defined as an effort made by an individual Christian to deal with another individual concerning some spiritual matter. This work should be done with two classes of people, those who profess to be Christians and those who do not.

We should endeavor to do this type of work with the brethren to help them with their problems. As God presents the opportunities, in meekness and in love we should correct, instruct, comfort or encourage according to our knowledge of their peculiar needs.

It is also our privilege and duty to do personal work with the unsaved. God has commanded us to be witnesses, fishers of men and soul winners. God has called us to labor with men individually as our Lord did with Nicodemus and with the woman at the well, and as Philip did with the Ethiopian Eunuch. It is this type of personal work in which we are particularly interested in this part of the report.

The Prerequisites

The prerequisites for personal work are: personal faith, orthodox belief, humility, consecration, zeal, prayer, love for men, a working knowledge of the scriptures, prudence and skill. The first seven of these are fully discussed in the chapter which has to do with the prerequisites of evangelism. We shall therefore confine ourselves to a consideration of the last three.

1. **A Working Knowledge of the Scriptures.** The personal worker should have such a knowledge for two reasons. In the first place he is concerned that it should be evident to the one with whom he is dealing that he is not setting forth his own opinion of man's spiritual condition and needs but God's revealed will. He should therefore be able to show from the Word what God has to say on these subjects. This calls for a working knowledge of the Scriptures. The soul winner must know where to find the pertinent passages from the Word of God.

It should be noted in passing that when we are endeavoring to produce Scripture proof for a certain point we will do better to confine ourselves to the

use of a few well chosen passages, since a multiplicity of references may prove confusing to the one with whom we are dealing.

In the second place the Holy Spirit is pleased to work with saving grace through the Word (Heb. 4:12; Rom. 10:17).

2. **Prudence.** The personal worker must be prudent in his conduct. He must not only proclaim the gospel but also strive to live a life of conformity to the Word of God. Failure in this respect is bound to weaken the effectiveness of his work.

He must also be prudent in the exercise of his Christian liberty lest he needlessly antagonize those with whom he would labor. There are conceivable circumstances under which prudence might well demand that he refrain from the use of certain things and from engaging in certain practices which are not sinful of themselves but which have been brought into disrepute through the abuse and misuse of sinful men.

The soul winner must exercise prudence in his work. Prudence must be exercised in approaching men with the gospel. Some are needlessly antagonized by the type of worker who rushes up to one with the question: "Are you saved, brother?" Prudence must be exercised in the selection of a suitable place and time to deal with an individual.

3. **Skill.** The personal worker should possess the skill to make friends, to turn the conversation into spiritual channels, to deal with sin, to answer the inquirer's questions, to set forth the way of salvation, and to ground the new convert in the rudiments of the Christian faith.

Now while we have listed skill as a prerequisite for personal work and while a certain aspect of skill, that is knowledge, may be obtained by instruction, there is another aspect of skill, namely, expert ability which only comes with constant practice. Therefore the skill which is essential to fishing for men can only be developed by doing that kind of work. The more practice one has in the right kind of soul winning the greater his skill should become.

The Method

We are now to consider the way in which personal work is to be done. It is impossible to draw up a set of rules which will apply to every case. The method will vary somewhat with each individual. Some cases present problems that others do not. It may be necessary to strive by the grace of God to bring one individual to a consciousness of his utter sinfulness and of its implications while another may already have such a knowledge. One will have an intellectual grasp of the gospel while another will be ignorant of the most elementary truths. One man will lack salvation, another the assurance of his salvation.

The personal worker must be a diagnostician. He must analyze the needs of the individual and deal with him accordingly. We shall therefore set forth the various problems which a worker may face and offer a few suggestions as to how to deal with each.

1. **Making the Contact.** The personal worker is to present the gospel not only to his friends but also to strangers. The question therefore arises as to how he is to contact the stranger. In the fourth chapter of John's Gospel we have recorded for us the manner in which the Lord Jesus contacted a strange woman at Jacob's well in Sychar. Our Lord did not wait for a formal introduction, neither did He approach her with the question as to whether or not she were saved. He simply began a conversation with her by asking for a drink of water.

The way to contact a stranger is to begin a conversation with him. Begin to talk about the commonplace as, for example, the weather, or the war. If the individual has any obvious interest ask him some questions along that line. There are times when the asking of some slight favor may prove to be an opening wedge.

Authorities on the subject of personal work agree that in general it is better for men to deal with men and women with women. This suggestion is designed to guard against certain real dangers which arise from the frailty and

sinfulness of human nature. It is not, however, to be regarded as an ironclad rule. There are notable cases both in Bible times and in present-day life where men have been used to deal with women and vice versa.

2. Turning the Conversation. The personal worker often faces the problem of turning the conversation into spiritual channels. In dealing with the woman at the well the Lord Jesus accomplished this transition by following his question concerning physical water with a remark concerning spiritual water. The analogy between the two made the transition a natural one.

If we keep in mind this analogy between the physical and the spiritual we shall be more likely to find opportunities to turn a secular conversation into spiritual channels. We may illustrate. After questioning a miner concerning the darkness of a mine and the lighting system which dispels that darkness, would it not be easy to turn the conversation to such subjects as the darkness of sin and the Light of the world? After talking with a soldier concerning the problems of physical warfare would it not be an opportune moment to turn the conversation to the subject of spiritual warfare? Surely this should afford one the opportunity to discuss such subjects as, the enemies of the soul, man's inability to cope with them, God's plan and power in respect to them and salvation in all its aspects.

Another way to turn the conversation into spiritual channels is to lay hold on the spiritual implications of the secular statements of those with whom we are talking. For instance, when a man grumbles about the weather, that is our opportunity to speak of the providence of God. When one with whom we are talking uses profanity this presents us with an opportunity to speak with him about the third commandment and its implications.

Even as every spoke leads to the hub so every aspect of Christian truth may be made an avenue of approach to the proclamation of the gospel. Once the conversation has been turned into spiritual channels it is the task of the personal worker to keep it there until he has set before his acquaintance as full a presentation of the gospel as time and ability permit.

3. Dealing with the Sin Question. A conviction of sin is essential to a genuine conversion (Matt. 9:13). Very few with whom the personal worker deals are already under conviction. In most instances he must endeavor by the grace of God to bring the individual with whom he is dealing to a conviction of his sinfulness and a consciousness of the implications of this fact.

The soul winner should learn much from the example of Christ here as well as elsewhere. The Saviour's method in dealing with the woman at the well concerning her sins was marked by two things. There was a determination that the woman must face her sins. This is evident from the fact that He refused to be sidetracked by her statement, "I have no husband." He displayed both love and tact. He exposed her sin but spared the details. He opened the wound only as wide as was essential to a thorough cleansing.

The personal worker must be neither brutal nor condescending in dealing with those who are guilty of the more flagrant forms of sin. He must show both love and tact in dealing with all kinds of men. For instance, in dealing with a respectable citizen he should be careful to recognize this man's standing in the eyes of his fellowmen, but at the same time he must make clear to him that in the sight of God he is a hell-deserving sinner.

In dealing with the sin question the soul winner should stress three facts. He should stress the nature of sin. The word sin means to miss the mark. The mark is the law of God. Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God. He should stress the manner in which all men have sinned. All have sinned in thought, word, and deed. They are guilty of sins of omission and commission. He should stress the consequences of sin both in respect to man's nature and his relationship to God. The wages of sin is death, that is, eternal separation from God.

Whether he is dealing with the vile or respectable the same determination should possess the personal worker, namely, that this man with whom he is

new working may by the grace of God come to see himself as a helpless, lost sinner.

4. Answering Questions. A fisher of men often faces the problem of answering questions. Some questions are asked to gain information, others would seem to be motivated only by a desire to turn the conversation from the subject at hand.

There are some valuable lessons to be learned from the manner in which our Lord answered the question of the woman at the well. He did not say, "My dear woman, forget your questions; if you will accept Me they will all disappear." Neither did He launch into a long dissertation concerning the proper place of worship. Instead He answered her question in a word and then proceeded to call her attention to matters more important to one in her spiritual condition, namely, the object of her worship and the manner of worship. He said to her, "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth." *In passing it should be noted that in most cases it will be necessary to deal with the individual concerning his concept of God. An attempt should be made to show him the fallacy and inadequacy of his present view. Then he should be faced with the concept of an absolute God and its implications. Paul's sermon on Mars Hill presents us with an excellent example in this respect (Acts 17:22ff.).

The soul winner must endeavor to give an honest answer to the inquirer's questions. At the same time, however, he must be able to evaluate them. Those which have the least bearing on the discussion should be answered more briefly. He should cultivate the ability in answering a question to stress the aspect which is most pertinent to the discussion. Above all he must never permit himself to be sidetracked from his main purpose. As soon as he has answered the questions he should bring the conversation back to the main subject under discussion.

The personal worker must not be afraid of being asked questions which he cannot answer. If he does not know the answer let him be frank to say so and then let him go to his Bible, his commentaries, or his pastor and find the answer. If he will pursue this method the question which at first he cannot answer will prove a blessing in disguise.

5. Presenting the Gospel. In most cases it will be necessary for the personal worker to proclaim the gospel to the one with whom he is dealing. Five out of every seven so-called Protestants do not even know that the gospel is the good news concerning the person and work of Christ.

In many cases it will be necessary to declare the essential facts concerning the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. In so doing the following truths should be stressed and amplified. God is a triune God. Some nineteen hundred years ago God the Son took unto himself a human nature and entered this world as the Babe of Bethlehem. The Lord Jesus Christ is an absolutely unique person with two natures. He is at once truly God and truly man. These two natures were wholly essential to the work which He came to do, namely, to save His people from their sins.

In most cases it will be necessary to make known the work which Christ came to accomplish. In this connection the soul winner might well stress and amplify the following truths: the work which is essential to salvation, namely, a perfect keeping of the law and a complete payment of the penalty for sin; man's utter inability to do this work; the manner in which Christ has accomplished this work by His perfect keeping of the law and His payment in full of the penalty for the sins of His people; the condition upon which God's people may embrace and enjoy the benefits of His atoning work, namely, through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In many cases all the theological terms will have to be explained. In dealing with the woman at the well the Lord Jesus made no attempt to explain the meaning of the term "Messiah", but it is evident from the narrative that

*Correction. See Minutes, p. 44.

this woman had some doctrinal background. With most men, however, such is not the case. If we state that Christ is the Messiah we must go on to explain: the meaning of this term, the offices to which He was anointed, and what is the work of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king. We cannot even take for granted that men know the meaning of the term "saved" but must explain that it means to be delivered from sin and its consequences. We must also explain what it means to have faith in Christ and in so doing we must distinguish between believing the facts about Christ and placing one's trust in Him for salvation. It should be made clear that the former is insufficient and that both are essential to saving faith.

6. Giving the Invitation. This subject has been dealt with at some length in the section of the report which has to do with the "Message of Evangelism". Hence we shall confine ourselves to the following remarks. After the presentation of the gospel the next task of the personal worker is to invite the one with whom he is dealing to accept the gospel.

This person should be invited to consider:

1. Such commandments of God as Mark 1:15 . . . "Repent ye and believe the gospel."
2. Such invitations of Christ as Matt. 11:28ff. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." The soul winner should explain that this is an invitation to accept Christ as a prophet, as a priest and as a king.
3. Such promises as Romans 10:13. . . "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." The personal worker should point out God's terms and God's promise as set forth in this verse. The terms are prayer and the promise is salvation. Care must be taken to make clear the necessary content of such a prayer, namely, a confession of sin and an acceptance of Christ as his prophet, as his priest and as his king. The individual should be urged to meet these terms and rest upon this promise at the earliest possible moment. If circumstances are suitable he should be urged to do so at that particular time.

If the individual is hesitant or reluctant in accepting the gospel invitation it is the duty of the soul winner to endeavor to persuade him. The apostle Paul said; "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men."

This persuading is not to be done in the Arminian manner of telling every individual that God loves him and that Christ died for him, but, for instance, by drawing a contrast between the individual's present state and the change which will occur if he by the grace of God should accept the gospel invitation. This man is now cut off from God, under his wrath and curse, liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever. If, however, he will call upon the name of the Lord, God will forgive his sins for Christ's sake, accept him as righteous in His sight, make him His child and heir, bestow upon him certain blessings in this life, and reserve for him greater blessing in the life to come.

The personal worker must ever keep in mind that while God has called him to witness, to invite, and to persuade, salvation is of the Lord. Effectual calling is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is only as He quickens elect sinners and applies our words to their hearts that they shall be saved. Therefore we must always labor in a spirit of humble reliance upon the triune God.

7. Instructing a New Convert. If at all possible the personal worker should at once give the new convert brief instructions concerning such matters as: the assurance of his salvation, how to obtain forgiveness for daily sins, daily devotions, witnessing, church attendance, and the necessity of becoming a communicant member of some true branch of the visible church.

INTENSIVE SURVEY WORK

In this report we shall be confined to the subject of intensive survey work

in contradistinction to extensive survey work. Extensive survey work has as its primary object the extension of our witness into new communities with a view to the establishment of new churches. Intensive survey work has as its primary object the reaching of the immediate and surrounding communities where our churches are already established.

Biblical Basis. Some type of intensive work is a clear implication of the great commission. Christ has commissioned His Church to "teach all nations" (Matt. 28:19) and to witness to Him "both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8b). The Church of Christ has not fully fulfilled this commission until it has done its utmost to reach all men everywhere with the Gospel. No church can say that it has done all that it could to evangelize its community until a house-to-house survey and witness has been made. Peter and John "in every house . . . ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42). Paul taught "publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Divine precept and Apostolic example would appear to make some type of intensive survey work an inescapable duty, not to mention its stimulus to spiritual and numerical growth. Up to the present time a goodly number of our churches have attempted some form of intensive survey work but apparently a large number of churches have made no serious efforts in this direction. It is hoped that this brief report will be an encouragement for them to do so.

Method. There are essentially two different though not mutually exclusive methods that have been employed with substantial success. The one has been employed rather successfully in Orthodox Presbyterian Churches. The other method has proven itself successful in The American Lutheran Church. We shall describe these methods in this order.

The method that apparently has *frequently been employed in Orthodox Presbyterian Churches is the securing of a woman worker for several months during the year to go from house to house for the immediate purpose of securing children for the Sabbath School or Summer Bible School. Sometimes the Pastor or a member of the church conducted the survey. The approach, in either case was through the children and a specific object of interest was used as a basis of appeal to the parent and the child. This method gives the worker the advantage of offering a service rather than giving the impression of selling something. It affords an unobtrusive occasion to engage in Christian conversation and to invite the parents to the services of the church. The worker takes the names and addresses of any who give evidence of any willingness to listen to the things of Christ and gives them to the local Pastor. The Pastor then calls upon these contacts and seeks to interest them in a class on Christian doctrine.

The reports of those who have employed this method indicate that the results of this type of work were definite and worthwhile. Of three city churches that employed this method all reported that a very substantial number of children were reached for the Sabbath School and that a goodly number of worthwhile converts for the Pastor resulted. Some of the families contacted by this method are now believers and members of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In one church this method has been the chief means of its growth. Of two churches located in towns (8,000 and 1,200 populations respectively) there were results corresponding to the opportunities that the respective fields afforded. In one of these the number of families reached for the Sabbath School and Church compared most favorably with the number of families reached by the city churches that employed this method.

The method employed by the American Lutheran Church is to have the local Pastor make forty house-to-house calls five days a week between 12:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. The Pastor simply gives his name and the name of his church and asks if they could spare a few minutes to hear about his church.

*Correction. See report of the Committee on Local Evangelism, p. 25.

The immediate purpose of his conversation is to interest the adult members of the family in attending a class in Christian doctrine. This class can be conducted for a group or for an individual and consists in eight hours of instruction over a period of eight weeks. In this course the doctrines of sin, grace, and the Christian life are emphasized. Should there be no interest manifested in this class an invitation to attend the services of the church is given together with an appropriate tract.

This method has been highly successful in the American Lutheran Church and should have the serious consideration of our ministers. It must be borne in mind of course that the circumstances under which this method is employed in the American Lutheran Church are somewhat different from the circumstances in which many Orthodox Presbyterian ministers find themselves. This high standard is required only of men who are experienced preachers and who therefore have a repertoire of sermons. It must further be remembered that the average Orthodox Presbyterian minister has several more messages to prepare each week than does the average Lutheran minister. This does not nullify the fact, however, that we have scarcely begun to realize the amount of work that can and should be done by us as ministers of the Gospel.

*It should further be observed that the experience of some of the ministers of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church who employ the method of the American Lutheran Church has shown the advisability of recommending certain important modifications of that method.

It has been found that inviting first acquaintances to a public worship service brings far better results than inviting them to a private class on doctrine.

In one instance, only two in the neighborhood attended the class in doctrine while twenty-eight in the same neighborhood responded to the invitation to attend a church service. We therefore recommend working from the public service to the more private instruction class.

It has also been observed that informal social gatherings, preferably in homes, have been an effective means of eliciting the interest of strangers in the larger cities. The object of these gatherings is first to befriend people. Our Lord took time to do this; so must we. Christian love is indispensable to Christian witness-bearing. It is therefore recommended that an effort be made to reach the good contacts of our house to house survey work through the medium of informal social gatherings.

The Committee does not feel that it can commend one method of intensive survey work as superior to the other. It is not necessary that either method be used to the exclusion of the other. These two methods might well be dovetailed into one method in which the best elements of each are retained. What these better elements are will depend to a large extent on local conditions. As a general rule, however, two principles should guide. First, the local church should regularly and systematically be engaged in intensive survey work. **Second, the occasion of our visits should be to invite the members of the family to some project of the church designed to meet their particular need, be it a public worship service, a Sabbath School for the children, an evangelistic service of catechetical class for the adults. In addition the worker should always leave some good gospel tract or Scripture portion.

It has been impossible to include the details of these methods in this report. The Committee will be glad to answer any questions on the details of these plans.

It was moved that the recommendation be adopted. (See p. 25)

It was moved and carried as an amendment that the words "the first five reports" be substituted for the words "these reports."

It was moved as an amendment that the report on "Preparation for the Evangelistic Meeting" be omitted.

*Insertion. See report of the Committee on Local Evangelism, p. 25.

**Correction. See report of the Committee on Local Evangelism, p. 25.

On motion the matter was laid on the table until Friday morning.

The tellers reported the election of Messrs. Kuiper, Allen and Stonehouse to the committee to investigate the A.C.C.C. and to study the matter of co-operation. They were declared elected.

It was moved and carried that the report of the Committee on the Sale of Standards be heard. The report was presented by Dr. Strong, chairman of the committee. The report is as follows:

COMMITTEE ON THE SALE OF STANDARDS THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Statement of Cash Receipts and Disbursements

Balance on hand June 1, 1943	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$137.47
	RECEIPTS:						
Standards sold	-	-	-	-	-	-	28.89
							166.36
	DISBURSEMENTS:						
Postage	-	-	-	-	-	-	.29
	Balance on hand May 10, 1944						\$166.07
	Respectfully submitted,						
	ROBERT STRONG						

It was moved and carried that the Committee on the Sale of Standards be continued.

It was moved and carried that the report of the Committee on Texts and Proof Texts be heard. The report was presented by Mr. Murray, chairman of the committee. The report is as follows:

THE COMMITTEE ON TEXTS AND PROOF TEXTS

The Committee respectfully reports to the Eleventh General Assembly that it has continued the work of revising the proof texts for the Confession of Faith and that in this work it has advanced as far as Chapter XXI, Section II.

The Tenth General Assembly asked the Committee "to consider the matter of proof texts for the Shorter Catechism, and provide such proof texts as soon as practicable" (Minutes of the Tenth General Assembly, p. 45). The committee considered that it would not be advisable for the Committee to interrupt its work of revising the proof texts for the Confession of Faith and so judges that it would be more practicable to complete the revision of the proof texts for the Confession of Faith before undertaking any revision of proof texts for the Shorter Catechism.

Respectfully submitted,
JOHN MURRAY, Chairman

It was moved and carried that the Committee on Texts and Proof Texts be continued and that the name of Dr. Stonehouse be dropped from this committee at his request.

The order of the day was called for and the Assembly recessed with prayer by Mr. Atwell.

FRIDAY, MAY 19, 1944

Friday morning.

A devotional service conducted by the Rev. Edmund P. Clowney was held at 9:00 A. M.

The assembly was called to order at 9:25 A.M. and was led in prayer by Mr. Allen.

On motion the roll call was omitted.

The minutes of May 18 were read. It was moved and carried that the phrase "to study the matter of cooperation" be changed to read "to investigate