

**The
Orthodox Presbyterian Church**

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(*Sex Education in the Home*, Am. Social Hygiene Ass'n
What a Young Girl Ought to Know, Wood-Allen
(Out of print.)

B. Observations

The most obvious lack, as far as materials in print are concerned, is material either for those below teen age or for parents to use with children at this stage of development. It would be helpful if Mrs. Wood-Allen's book could be reprinted, for, if nothing more it serves as a guide to parents as to the approach that may be taken. Children below teen age begin to get information through unsavory channels. They should rather get it directly from their parents (or lacking that, from Sunday School teachers or Christian doctors or nurses or ministers) or from carefully-prepared books. *Strictly Confidential* contains a bibliography, some of which we have not had opportunity to examine, but there might be some books which would help this age group. It seems to the writer, however, that there is a definite lack of suitable materials at this point and that a good volume ought to be welcomed by Christian people if someone would only set himself to the task of preparing it.

Most parents feel a sense of inadequacy, both as to knowing what to pass on to their children and how to express what they know they ought to say. A satisfactory book, therefore, ought to *go into detail* and provide the very phraseology to use as well as to suggest what points should be gotten across to the children. "A Formula for Sex Education" sets forth the points quite well, except that it is entirely secular, and from the very beginning the approach ought to be thoroughly Christian. Here is a challenge to someone to study this pamphlet and translate it into a Christian document, enlarging it into book form, if possible.

The Committee is convinced that if we could lay an intelligent, Christian foundation regarding sex during the pre-teen age years and then place even a minimum of proper literature in the hands of our youth for their own perusal during high school and college years we would eliminate much of the problem which is ours today. We do well if we follow the principle of not waiting until questions are asked before orientating our children in the things which pertain to the origin of life, but too many lack the knowledge, vocabulary or ingenuity to be successful in their training if they have only a general idea as to how to proceed.

The delegate to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod in Amsterdam in 1949, Dr. Ned B. Stonehouse, reported as follows:

REPORT OF DELEGATE TO THE REFORMED ECUMENICAL SYNOD OF AMSTERDAM, 1949

In fulfillment of the appointment by the Sixteenth General Assembly, as the delegate of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod of Amsterdam, I attended the sessions of the Synod which was held from August 9-19, 1949. I desire, first of all, to give expression to my appreciation of the honor of representing the Orthodox Presbyterian Church at this memorable assembly.

Since the Minutes of the Fourteenth General Assembly (1947), pp. 24ff., set forth at some length the character and significance of the First Reformed Ecumenical Synod held in Grand Rapids in August, 1946, it will not be necessary to delineate the background of this movement nor to enlarge upon its basic aims in this report.

It will be recalled that only three churches were represented by official delegates at the Synod in Grand Rapids, and that it was anticipated that the following Synod would far more fully justify the designation "ecumenical." This expectation was realized to a considerable degree. The final count of churches with official delegates was fifteen.

The Reformed Churches of the Netherlands were represented by three pastors and an elder. The number was actually brought up to six by the addition of a ministerial delegate from the churches of Ostfriesland and Bentheim in Germany and an elder delegate representing the Reformed Churches of Belgium and France. The Christian Reformed Church of the same country had not had a Synod for a considerable time, and hence had not been able to elect official delegates, but it did have three observers present. Other churches in Europe with official representatives were the Free Church of Scotland with three ministers and the Irish Evangelical Church with one.

There were four church groups from South Africa, as compared with one in 1946.

Five persons had been fully appointed to act as their spokesmen, with at least three having made the long trip specifically for this purpose. One or two were ministers taking graduate work in Amsterdam.

Four Indonesian churches, established through the missionary labors of the Dutch churches, were also present, and thus Asia was included for the first time. One group known as the Reformed Churches of Indonesia had as spokesmen a Dutch minister and elder; and others were Javanese, Sumbanese and Malayan-Chinese churches and were represented by native ministers and elders.

Only two American churches were represented. The Christian Reformed Church sent three delegates and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church one. Besides, the Free Magyar Reformed Church in America had accredited Dr. Bouma, of the Christian Reformed Church, to act in its behalf.

Thus, though the Synod had a distinctly international character, it remained a rather small group. Due to tensions and difficulties of one sort or another the ideal had not been fully realized. But on the credit side there is the fact that this movement from the beginning has been motivated by the determination not to be guided by purely empirical considerations and organize as a block of nominally Presbyterian and Reformed Churches. Taking realistic stock of the apostasy of the present day, and aware that church discipline even in the case of ministers has become a dead letter in many churches with Reformed confessions, it was determined to invite only denominations that gave positive evidence of loyalty to the historic Reformed Faith. This approach involved the risk of overlooking some sound churches and hurting the feelings of others, but it also possessed the incalculable advantage of building on the bedrock of principle. If the result so far has not formed a powerful combination of Reformed churches, that may safely be said to reflect the generally weak state of the Church today. And the positive significance should not be minimized. For it is thrilling to consider that Reformed churches of four continents could join together in common commitment to the authority of Christ speaking through the infallible Scriptures and could confer on their common problems in a spirit of cooperation and mutual helpfulness.

As a matter of fact the assembly was considerably larger than the approximately twenty-five voting delegates which have been accounted for. The Dutch committee in general charge of arrangements invited about twenty persons to be present as guests, and since they were given the privileges of the floor and even took part in the work of the committees which met during the sessions to expedite its business, they added substantially to the company which deliberated on the various questions that came before the body. Moreover, following the practice of the Dutch synods, the professors of theology were given the role of advisers, with the result that ten or more members of the theological faculties of the Free University and of the Kampen Theological Seminary were in regular attendance.

The guests added greatly to the international flavor of the gathering. For they, for the most part, were rather isolated pastors who came from various parts of Europe: from France, Germany, Denmark, Wales and England. Hungary was represented in this category by a number of young clergymen who were students in Amsterdam, for it had become impossible for the Hungarian Church to get its leaders in front of the iron curtain. A minister of the Bible Presbyterian Synod stationed in Europe also was a guest. And a number of orthodox men from the Hervormde (Old State) Church of Holland attended in this capacity.

The official languages of the sessions were English and Dutch. A large central section was reserved for those who understood only one of these languages, and here a modern communication system had been erected with earphones wired to the translators' microphones. Speeches in Dutch were translated into English and vice versa. The Dutch, South Africans and Americans sat on both sides of this central section since they did not require the services of an interpreter. The four interpreters were capable and worked valiantly. But I received the impression that, for all of the science and energy and good intention of the Dutch, the system was far from an unqualified success. Those who did not understand Dutch were at a particular disadvantage, for it proved exceedingly difficult, in the nature of the case, for the interpreters offhand to provide precise and accurate translations. And most of the speeches were in Dutch. Perhaps the Dutch felt most at home and uninhibited, and it may be that they are more talkative anyhow than, say, the

Scotch. And there was the factor that there were so many professors present! I have heard from some quarters the criticism that the Synod was too strongly Dutch in character. To an extent, in the historic situation in which the Reformed and Presbyterian churches find themselves today, that seems to me to have been more or less inevitable, and hence I do not altogether agree with the criticism. Nevertheless, I do think there is a measure of truth in it, and in the future even greater thought will have to be given to the problem of communication. Perhaps the problems involved will be quite different when the Synod convenes in Edinburgh in 1953!

Since the meetings began with an informal reception on Monday afternoon, August 8th, and did not reach adjournment until 9:30 P. M. on August 19th, the Synod lasted about ten days. Not all of this time indeed was devoted to synodical deliberations, for there were times devoted to prayer and worship and still others were of a social character. On the opening evening a very large audience was present in one of the largest churches of Amsterdam for a period of prayer and inspiration. The service was in charge of Dr. G. C. Berkouwer, a professor in the theological faculty of the Free University, who spoke movingly on the words of Psalm 25:4: "Show me thy ways, O Jehovah; teach me thy paths."

The Docket for the 1949 sessions was largely determined by the decisions reached at the meeting held in Grand Rapids in 1946. That meeting established several committees to consider various problems which had emerged in the African, American and European churches represented, and to prepare reports which might be reviewed or acted upon by the 1949 Synod. These committees were on Inspiration, Evolution, Eschatology, the Church, Church and State, Christian Education, and Divorce. Evidently there was no lack of problems which were puzzling or disturbing the churches!

The committees appointed to deal with the first and last topics did not succeed in completing their work, but all the others had reports available. Hence there was a full program of work facing the delegates when the 1949 Synod convened last August. And to the credit of the Synod it may be said that several subjects were dealt with in a very painstaking and conscientious fashion. Following the traditional procedure of Dutch Synods, the reports did not immediately come to the floor, but were first committed to synodical committees for preliminary consideration. The members of the Synod, the accredited guests and professorial advisors were assigned to membership in these sub-committees (or committees of pre-advice, as they have come to be known). There were four such committees.

Especially during the first week of the Synod, far more time was spent by the delegates in carrying out the tasks of their respective committees than in the sessions of the Synod as a whole. This approach has the advantage that approximately one-fourth of the members of the Assembly has studied each topic rather carefully. A disadvantage that appeared at times is that, though the recommendations of such a preliminary committee would not necessarily reflect the majority judgment of the entire membership of the Synod, the very fact that the recommendations are definite and formal makes it exceedingly difficult to set them aside or even to amend them. I make special mention of this observation because in my judgment it was a factor influencing the final decision on the ecumenical question.

Several of the reports prepared by committees appointed in 1946 were of high merit, and the evaluation of them at the 1949 Synod was also noteworthy. Since I cannot undertake a survey of them, I may express the hope that they will attract some attention when they are published as a part of the Acts of the Synod. The last word on these subjects was not of course pronounced. In certain instances, as in the cases of the treatment of education and eschatology, the Synod was not completely satisfied with the original reports, and either amended them considerably or referred them to a new committee.

On one subject it was widely held that refreshing progress was made during the Synodical sessions. That was the question of the relation of Church and State. This has been, as you know, a most pressing question for centuries, though it has emerged with special urgency in times when either the Church or the State has appeared to threaten the peculiar rights of the other. Political circumstances and views almost inevitably affects one's judgments on the question. Accordingly in one country and another quite different perspectives will appear — the thinking of the twentieth century is also certain to differ from that of the sixteenth and seventeenth. It may be recalled in this connection that the

form of the Westminster Confession of Faith in force among American Presbyterians generally accords to the state considerably less power than was true of the original Confession. In Chapter XXIII, in particular, a radical change was introduced. The original article includes the stipulation that the civil magistrate has the authority and duty "to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered and observed." The American form, on the other hand, states, to mention but one point, that the civil magistrate may not "in the least interfere with matters of faith."

Similar differences have emerged in connection with Article XXXVI of the Belgic Confession, one of the historic standards of churches of Dutch origin. Within the present century both in the Netherlands and in America such churches have independently amended the original text, which maintains a position similar to that of the Westminster Confession. In South Africa, perhaps due partially to the differing political circumstances, there has been no comparable movement towards revision. Nevertheless, it has appeared that some difficulties in the sphere of interpretation were apparent. And in any case the divergent evaluations on this basic matter, especially among "sister" churches, were generally acknowledged as presenting the very type of problem which called for consideration in an ecumenical gathering. No complete agreement was indeed arrived at, nor was a revision of the Belgic Confession formulated. But the approach which was thought to give good promise of progress was one in which, independently of the historic formulations, certain basic principles were stated.

ARTICLES ON CHURCH AND STATE

The statement included the following four articles:

"1. The Synod declares that, in accordance with the Confessions of the Churches represented here, it maintains that the magistracy is ordained of God and is vested with authority to promote . . . the maintenance of human life and its development in accordance with both tables of the Law of God;

"2. That accordingly the magistracy is called to protect with all God-given means the preaching of the gospel and the entire worship of God in order that freedom of conscience to serve God according to His Word may be guaranteed, and all anti-Christian forces in so far as they interfere with the Church in the exercise of its worship may be opposed and frustrated.

"3. That the Church shall recognize and honor the magistracy in this divinely conferred power and ministry; that she shall faithfully proclaim the full requirement of the gospel both as regards the life of the magistracy and that of those subject to it; and that she shall remember the command of the apostle 'that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men, for kings, and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity.'

"4. That the magistracy, at the peril of forsaking its sacred office and of lapsing into tyranny, must refrain from infringing upon the rights and power of the only King of the Church, Jesus Christ, who from heaven rules and protects His Church and one day shall completely deliver her; and thus that it shall be recognized that the Church with her office-bearers is subject and accountable to Him alone in all things entrusted to her as her task and privilege, and that the Church shall place its expectation of the coming of the kingdom and the destruction of the kingdom of the Antichrist alone in the power of His Spirit and the revelation of His glory."

Just how influential and valuable this formulation will be remains to be seen. Churches faced with the problem of revision of the Belgic Confession are still confronted with difficult questions of interpretation and formulation. And others will have important questions to raise regarding interpretation and application. But it is of some moment that representatives of such widely diverse political backgrounds as the Dutch and British and South Africans and Americans appeared to be in substantial agreement regarding certain basic principles on this thorny problem.

Sufficient has perhaps been intimated to indicate something of the scope of the interests of the Synod. I now turn to the controversial issue of the world ecumenical movement. The urgency of this matter had not been foreseen at Grand Rapids. But both

Dutch and South African synods overtured the Ecumenical Synod of 1949 to advise them with regard to the World Council and their ecumenical stand generally. The crystallization of the ecumenical movement in the formation of the World Council in Amsterdam in 1948, and the establishment of the International Council of Christian Churches at the same time and place, had served to raise the issue in an acute fashion.

The development of thought and action on this matter in the large Dutch denomination known as the "Reformed Churches" is of special importance for the proper evaluation of the action of the ecumenical Synod. As the Assembly of the World Council was approaching, this Church was urged by the Ecumenical Council of the Netherlands to participate, and it became evident that there were ministers and others within the Church who advocated favorable action upon the invitation. The question was taken up at the Synod of Zwolle in 1946, and it was determined not to join, chiefly on the ground that the doctrinal basis of the projected World Council — the confession of Jesus as God and Saviour — was not being maintained in the full Scriptural sense. It was decided, moreover, that the Church should not even be represented at the World Council by an official observer. At the same time, however, it was determined to ask the Reformed Ecumenical Synod to consider the broad question of ecumenical unity and cooperation. And a committee of seven was set up which, among other things, was to advise the regular Synod of the Church when it convened in August 1949, shortly after the close of the Ecumenical Synod.

There was some further agitation for the World Council, and when a special Synod convened at Eindhoven in 1948, the matter was again considered. But the position taken at Zwolle was reaffirmed. In the meantime, however, this church had received the invitation issued by the American Council to participate in the establishment of the International Council. This invitation was not accepted, but it was decided to have a representative present as an official observer. The man eventually chosen was Professor Aalders of the Free University, who had been elected chairman of the Committee on Ecumenicity.

This step failed to achieve unity of viewpoint. Dr. Aalders was indeed present at the Congress which brought the International Council into being, and took an active and influential part in its proceedings. Several other ministers and members of his church participated, somewhat more formally, and it appeared that this movement had won significant support from many leaders in the Netherlands, including especially those who were vigorously opposed to the World Council. The situation was complicated, however, by the fact that about the same time the American N. A. E. initiated activity in Europe, and also gained some supporters among ministers of this denomination. And though the Synod had twice rejected membership in the World Council, its advocates continued to carry on vigorous propaganda on its behalf.

This divided state of opinion was clearly reflected in the report of the Committee appointed by the Zwolle Synod of 1946, which was published in the late spring of 1949. The Committee had not been able to come to unanimity. Five members supported a report (though because of the illness of one member it was signed by only four) which argued vigorously against membership in the World Council, and advocated membership in the International Council. The N. A. E. was also briefly reviewed, and though the consideration that the Christian Reformed Church as a "sister" church had joined it was a fairly weighty point, it was judged that the I.C.C.C. was strongly to be preferred, because of its more distinctly ecclesiastical character and because of the general stand that had been made at the time of its origin in Amsterdam in August 1948.

A minority report, signed by a professor at Kampen and by a minister, however, came out definitely for a quite different evaluation of the World Council. Although allowing that there might be sound practical reasons for delaying participation in the World Council, it insisted that there was no objection in principle to such membership. In support of its stand on the principles involved, the minority maintained that the World Council intends to be a community of Churches of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour and claiming to be Churches of Jesus Christ; that many churches are to be considered as churches of Jesus Christ even though they manifest a sinful deformation; and that it is more necessary than ever before for all churches to submit to the criticism and discipline of the Word of God in order to discover their sins and realize more adequately what the Church should be with a view to the fulfillment of its mission of preaching the gospel of Salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Thus the lines were rather sharply drawn in Holland when the Reformed Ecumenical Synod convened. And because all or most of the delegates from other lands had been compelled to face the issue raised by the World Council, and could not fail to regard it as raising or as constituting the most burning question facing modern Christendom, they likewise did not approach this issue in a merely academic spirit.

One must take care not to exaggerate the extent of the support for the World Council position which actually found expression at the Ecumenical Synod of 1949. It was surely significant that none of the six delegates of the large Reformed Church in the Netherlands (Gereformeerde Kerken) favored the position taken in the minority report which was circulating in their Church. And as time went on it appeared that support for the World Council position among the delegates of other Churches was almost negligible. A significant exception however resulted from the fact that at least one of the young Oriental churches had joined the World Council, apparently without mature deliberation. And there seemed to be a strong feeling of solidarity among the several East-Indian members. Moreover, the tensions in the international political situation as it concerned the Netherlands and Indonesia perhaps influenced some delegates to take as conciliatory an attitude as possible towards this issue. And among the professorial advisers and guests there were a few who took a flexible if not a positively favorable attitude toward the World Council. Hence, it soon became apparent that among the delegates, guests and advisers there were remarkably divergent viewpoints, and that no other question before the Synod was so potentially explosive.

One of the synodical committees was charged with the preliminary evaluation of this question. Its membership included one or two spokesmen for the World Council viewpoint, and one gathered that the committee was able to reach unanimity only after a considerable struggle. Finally its report was ready, and was first presented at a special evening session held on the Tuesday of the second week of the Synod. The report included the following:

COMMITTEE REPORT

"The objections against joining the W.C.C. shared by all members of your Committee were the following:

"1. The 'Basic Formula' of the W.C.C. according to the official text of the resolutions of the Amsterdam Assembly of 1948 is phrased, it is true, in the words of the Apostles' Creed, but as appears from the action of the World Council itself and from statements by leading figures in the W.C.C. the basic formula is not taken seriously.

"Though the World Council repeatedly asserts that it does not wish to exercise discipline over the delegates of the participating churches (a task which only concerns those churches themselves) the fact that there is a basic formula certainly implies the maintaining of it. Some members of your Committee expressed the opinion that the total absence of any such formula might completely change our attitude. Moreover your Committee maintains that no interpretation of any basic formula can be given detached from the Word of God.

"2. In connection with this matter your Committee took good note of the letter from the Ecumenical Council (of the Netherlands), in which an attempt is made to remove a misconception: 'The W.C.C. does not pretend to be a super-church.' Though your Committee had an open eye for the arguments advanced in support of this point of view, it still maintains that the danger of being or becoming a 'super-church' has in practice not been eliminated. The World Council passes resolutions, and it comes forward with acts on the world-front. It is not only a meeting-place for churches, but it aims at creating a spiritual unity, underestimating the problem of liberalism in the church.

"3. The danger is not imaginary that the levelling and blurring of confessional truths in the participating churches is advanced in an extraordinary measure, and no one would be served thereby.

"4. Salvation for sinners is found in the redemption through the blood of Christ, the Son of God, and in that alone; and cooperation in one working community with those who do not thus believe would inflict damage on the Church itself.

"The importance of joining the World Council was however supported in your Committee with the following arguments:

"1. It cannot be denied that the W.C.C. aims to assign all churches in the world

their own place in the larger whole; that here an opportunity is offered to voice our own Reformed beliefs and to witness to the Christ of the Scriptures, particularly if an international fellowship of Reformed Churches could unitedly make itself heard there. It is precisely outside of our own circle that clarity and certainty are urgently needed.

"2. Some churches represented at this Synod by delegates and others by guests, are already members of the World Council. Especially the younger churches, which in pre-vaillingly heathen or Mohammedan lands felt compelled to join themselves together (and for whom the problem of modernism does not exist in the same measure as for the 'western' churches), should be offered the greatest possible support.

"3. We should ask ourselves if our responsibility towards the stream of staunch and sincere believers in the World Council does not demand our utmost effort to find a way to exercise our positive influence to the advantage of this group.

"Your Committee was in agreement that it would not suffice to give a simple 'No' to the World Council. An extensive letter to the Ecumenical Council in the Netherlands, with a copy to the W.C.C., would have to contain a well-established exposition of all our objections and an appeal to the Council to remove them.

"The objections in principle to the World Council which have been mentioned do not apply to the International Council. The I.C.C.C. was initiated by the action of the American Council of Christian Churches to permit the voice of the orthodox churches to be heard. The Christian Reformed Church in America decided for practical reasons not to join the I.C.C.C. but did join the N.A.E. It appeared to some members of your Committee that, so far as their churches were concerned, there was no reason for a separate ecumenical movement in this form alongside of the existing regional or national councils (which were created for practical purposes).

"The N.A.E. also possesses a Scriptural basis. Though consisting primarily of churches, it also includes some Christian organizations and individuals. Created in the United States for the same purposes as the I.C.C.C. it has also recently become an ecumenical movement. Here too the question arises whether we have need for such an organization, and if we do to which organization preference is to be given. Due to lack of information your Committee as a whole judged itself incompetent to answer these questions.

"The decision in your Committee revealed repeatedly that not all members were well-informed as to the activities of the ecumenical movements. Nor do the churches appear to be sufficiently prepared to come to conclusions. Moreover it was judged desirable that the churches participating in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod should come to a unanimous viewpoint. Thus the bond between the Reformed Churches throughout the world would be greatly strengthened. Accordingly a decision to join or not to join could better be postponed until the well-established advice of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod is obtained."

The report of the synodical committee concluded with the formulation of recommendations concerning the World Council and the other ecumenical movements. They are presented here as originally proposed by the Committee. But the interests of clarity may be served if it is intimated at once that the first recommendation was eventually adopted as proposed, while the second recommendation was substantially modified. The Report continued:

"Your Committee advises the Synod to consider the following proposals:

"1. The Synod, taking into consideration

"a. the serious and various objections which have arisen to membership in this organization (the W.C.C.);

"b. that it is not considered to be in the best interests of the Reformed Churches to follow divergent paths, but rather that it is preferable to take the same course;

"c. that the discussion and decision concerning this matter has not been sufficiently prepared for in advance in view of the different situations in the several churches; decides;

"a. to address an extensive letter to the Ecumenical Council of the Netherlands in answer to its communication, and a copy of the same to the World Council, with an appeal to the Council to remove these objections;

"b. to advise the churches not to join the World Council at this stage;

"c. to appoint an international Committee with the mandate to give further study to these points and to report to the following Synod.

"2. The Synod, having taken cognizance of the questions raised . . . concerning the

I.C.C.C. and the N.A.E. refers this matter to the same Committee mentioned under (1.) and authorizes it to delegate observers to the meetings of the I.C.C.C. and the N.A.E. in order to become fully informed. Pending this investigation Synod advises the Churches not to join either of these organizations."

It at once appeared that this Report was a compromise which sought to do justice to differing viewpoints on the major issue. It contained arguments both for and against the World Council. It did not come to grips with the issues raised by the I.C.C.C. and the N.A.E. One prominent member of the committee informed me that, though he himself was quite unrelenting in his opposition to the World Council, he had felt that it was imperative that the unity of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod should be maintained since in his judgment it promised far more for the well-being of the Churches than any of the other ecumenical movements.

Following the presentation of this report, it was opened up to debate. And more than twenty speeches were delivered, none of exceptional brevity and at least two extending to forty minutes! In justice to those who took a positively favorable or conciliatory position towards the World Council, it must be admitted that there was nothing in their argument that suggested that they were not completely and enthusiastically loyal to the Bible and the Reformed Faith in their personal beliefs. They were not arguing that the antithesis between Modernism and Christianity should be obliterated or even toned down. They seemed to me for the most part to be moved largely by idealistic reasons, by the desire to avoid a complacent isolationism and to seize an opportunity, as it seemed to them, of testifying to the glories of the gospel of grace. But I did feel that they were completely unrealistic as to the supposed opportunities which would be afforded by the World Council, and strangely unaware of the genius of that movement. No doubt peculiar historical circumstances in the Netherlands contributed their part. The war had forced people to co-operate against the enemy who occupied their country. The theological and ecclesiastical situation was somewhat less hardened and antithetical than it had once been. And there was a strong sense of calling to confer with other Christians about the faith and life of the churches. Nevertheless it was alarming that there was not a greater awareness of the philosophy of church unionism, characterized by a deep doctrinal indifference and pragmatism, which has been the inspiration of and has given direction to the modern ecumenical movement.

In evaluating the conclusions of the Ecumenical Synod, brief account must be taken of an effort to amend the report in a number of particulars. One of these proposed amendments would have substituted for the recommendation advising the churches not to join the World Council "at this stage," one that advised them not to join it "so long as these objections are not removed and to suggest that the Reformed Churches which have already joined it take these objections into serious consideration." This amendment was defeated by a close vote. My impression is that it would have carried except for the fact that certain persons apparently felt they should remain loyal to their committee report. I felt that the recommendation containing the words "at this stage" was misleading, easily creating the impression, when taken from the context, that the Ecumenical Synod had taken a quite equivocal attitude on the subject of affiliation with the World Council. It was especially for this reason that I cast a negative vote when the final action was taken by a roll-call vote. I am indicating this fact since all the other regular delegates became sufficiently reconciled to it to vote for it, and there has been some public discussion of the significance of my negative vote.

Another objection to the Report was that it advised all the churches to postpone their decision with regard to membership in the I.C.C.C. or the N.A.E. until such a time as an investigation might be made by a committee appointed by the Ecumenical Synod. So much time was taken in debating the World Council issue that virtually none was given at the Synod to the evaluation of the evangelical movements. Nevertheless, my judgment was that such full information concerning the I.C.C.C. and the N.A.E. was available to the churches that it was hardly the prerogative of the Ecumenical Synod to advise the churches to postpone their decision regarding their relation to those movements.

To some extent my disappointment at this evaluation was moderated by the fact that one amendment to the final proposal was passed. The amendment took the form of authorizing the appointment of a committee with the charge to study these evangelical move-

ments and to consider "the possibility of one organization of all churches which accept the absolute authority of God's infallible Word and confess and maintain the great fundamentals of the Christian religion." This Committee, which is asked to report to the churches if possible within a year, consists of Dr. C. Bouma of Calvin Seminary, a Reformed elder of the Netherlands who has been a delegate to both ecumenical synods and as well actively supported the formation of the I.C.C.C., and myself. The presence of the two organizations in this country is a stumbling block to most non-Americans, and no doubt in this country also there are many who wish devoutly that it might prove possible to unite them in one effective Christian organization. Whatever may or may not be done along this line, it remains significant that the Ecumenical Synod, while concerned itself to remain specifically Reformed, gave clear expression to the hope that true ecumenicity might be realized on a broader basis as well.

My observations indicate therefore that I was not completely happy with the decision of the Synod on the ecumenical question. But I believe that I should add that the Report, in spite of certain objectionable features, is not as compromising as some apparently have supposed. There is after all a most significant distinction between its criticisms of the World Council and its report of arguments in favor of it. The latter are presented merely as arguments brought forward in the committee. The basic criticisms are presented as being shared by all the members of the committee. These include the devastating judgment that in the World Council "the basic formula is not taken seriously." In saying that much, the Report, and the Synod in adopting it, actually presented a very severe and basic indictment of the World Council. Read in the light of its unequivocal affirmations the Report is certainly not a middle-of-the-road document, and it does not give honest support to the friends of the World Council. Unfortunately however the testimony of the Synod was obscured somewhat in a time when a forthright and vigorous testimony was demanded by the facts and circumstances.

In spite of this measure of disappointment it is my judgment that the movement represented by the Reformed Ecumenical Synod is of incalculable possibilities for the advance of Reformed Christendom. It serves to take the separate churches out of their isolation and absorption with their own problems and perspectives and affords an opportunity for a contemplation of the world-wide mission of the Church of Jesus Christ. And this effort to foster unity and cooperation does not fall into the error besetting the modern ecumenical movement as a whole, of selling the truth short and being content to live and let live. Through mutual counsel and vigorous common testimony to the truth it may serve to lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes of the Church.

Respectfully submitted,

NED B. STONEHOUSE

The Committee on Overtures and Communications reported that

The Committee recommends with regard to the communication from the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (Paper No. 3) that the General Assembly consider the invitation to send delegates to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, which is scheduled to meet in Edinburgh in 1953, following upon the presentation of the report of the delegate to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod of Amsterdam.

The following amended motion carried: that the General Assembly consider the invitation to send delegates to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, which is scheduled to meet in Edinburgh in 1953, following upon the Report of the Committee on Ecumenicity.

The report of the Committee on Ecumenicity was read by Dr. Stonehouse. Minority reports were read by Messrs. Murray and Bordeaux.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ECUMENICITY TO THE SEVENTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Committee on Ecumenicity elected by the Sixteenth General Assembly was charged with the following tasks:

- I. To set forth the principles that should govern the relation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to other denominations.
- II. To set forth the principles which should govern the relation which the Orthodox Presbyterian Church should sustain to the State.
- III. To study the Constitution of the International Council of Christian Churches

with particular reference to the statement of purposes in the Preamble, and to Paragraph 8, Article II entitled "Doctrinal Statement," and to bring recommendation to the Seventeenth General Assembly suggesting changes in the Constitution of the International Council of Christian Churches.

IV. To submit to the Seventeenth General Assembly a report on the changes, if any, which it considers should be made in the Constitution and/or the practice of the American Council of Christian Churches before our denomination should seek affiliation with that Council.

V. To solicit funds (to send a representative to the second meeting of the International Council of Christian Churches to be held in Geneva, Switzerland, in August, 1950) to be received and disbursed by the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

The members elected to the committee are Bordeaux, Clelland, C. B. Ferguson, Galbraith, Moses, Murray and Stonehouse. The Committee invited Prof. R. B. Kuiper, who had been elected as representative of the Church to the Second Congress of the International Council, to take part in its deliberations. It also carried on some correspondence with a somewhat similar committee of the Christian Reformed Church. The Committee has held seven meetings.

I

PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATION WITH OTHER DENOMINATIONS

The first task of the Committee is construed as that of setting forth the principles that should govern the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in cooperating with other denominations. A. The Activities in which the Church of Christ may properly engage.

In order to determine these principles it is necessary first of all to ask what a Church is and in what activities it may properly engage. It should be apparent that our Church may not *cooperate* in spheres and activities other than those in which it properly *operates* or *engages*.

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church is an organization constituted and organized in accordance with the institution of Christ and for the discharge of certain functions appointed by the Head of the Church. The Church is not simply the aggregate of the persons in its membership; it is a corporate entity. It consists of those who are comprised in its membership associated together by divine appointment or prescription and it operates as such within the sphere defined by Scripture as the proper sphere of its activity. The sphere of the Church's activity, therefore, is to be distinguished from the many other spheres in which the members of the Church are properly and necessarily active. In considering the question of the sphere of the Church we inquire as to the functions which the Church properly and necessarily performs. But the question arises further as to the propriety of various activities other than the specific functions of the Church which may be essential to the discharge of these functions.

1 — Specific Functions which the Church as Church properly and necessarily performs.

These include corporate worship, the exercise of government and discipline, evangelization, the care of the poor, and taking of offerings for the maintenance and promotion of the work of the Church.

Among the functions discharged by the New Testament Church in accordance with divine prescription and approval is that of the worship of God in assembly. Corporate worship might be said to be the primary function of the Church. This worship consisted of various elements such as the reading and preaching of the Word, prayer, thanksgiving, praise in song and the administration of the sacraments. This type of worship is specific and is to be distinguished from the generic worship or devotion which must cover the whole life of the Christian and is summed up in the apostolic injunction that whatsoever we do we must do to the glory of God.

The New Testament Church was constituted under government and discipline. Government and discipline are, therefore, functions of the Church.

The New Testament Church was given the commission to make disciples of all the nations. Evangelization is, therefore, a distinct function and may be distinguished from the preaching of the Word which is a necessary part of the worship of the Church referred

to above. Not all proclamation of the gospel falls into the specific category of the *worship* of the Church. Oftentimes the gospel is proclaimed where there is no assembly of the saints. But the Church is rightly said to perform this function. It does so through its representatives.

The New Testament Church cared for the poor and took collections for this purpose. Much activity that properly belongs to the Church falls into this category, such as ministering to the sick and infirm. In our time a good deal that goes under the name of relief work is not only the proper function but the obligation of the Church.

The taking of collections for the maintenance and promotion of the work of the Church is a necessary part of the Church's function. They who preach the gospel should live of the gospel. This involves the proper administration and distribution of such funds.

2. — Activities which, though not included under its specific functions, are properly engaged in since they concern circumstances or incidentals essential to the discharge of these functions in the world.

These include the following:

- a. The discharge of its specific functions in its worldly environment requires engaging in various business activities, and such activities may be carried on in so far as they promote the specific work of the Church. As examples of such activities mention may be made of the acquisition of property, securing legal incorporation and entering into contracts.

- b. Other activities arise from the fact that the Church exists alongside of the state, or, to be more concrete, that denominations exist alongside of governments, and under certain circumstances may find it necessary to deal with governments in the interest of accomplishing their own mission. The functions of the Church differ from those of the State, and each has its proper sphere. And thus the Confession of Faith (XXXI, v) insists that the Church is "to handle or conclude nothing but that which is ecclesiastical" and "is not to intermeddle with civil affairs." But it goes on to state that "in cases extraordinary" it may make humble petition to governments, and in cases of conscience it may offer advice. In particular, if the State encroaches upon the sphere of the Church, or threatens to do so, the Church may be under a sacred compulsion to protest such action and even to resist it, in loyalty to the Head of the Church.

- c. Somewhat similar activities may arise from the fact that a denomination exists alongside of other organizations, including other denominations, and that conflicts may develop because of differences of judgment concerning the specific sphere of the respective organizations. One church or a group of churches may take measures which would discriminate against the rights of another church, and then the aggrieved church may properly make such protestations and take such other actions as may serve to preserve its liberty to discharge its specific functions. As examples of such discrimination mention may be made of such actions as a church or a group of churches might take to secure a monopoly in conducting missionary work in a certain territory, or in the use of radio time.

B. The Basis for Cooperation between denominations.

Cooperation between churches must rest upon the recognition of the existence of a plurality of churches of Jesus Christ, and that the plurality of the churches must be held in harmony with the recognition of the unity and catholicity of the Church. The Church must act upon the basis of that unity. This view of the Church and the churches is taught and implied in the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter XXV. Particular churches are declared to be members of the catholic church and are said to be "more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them." It further teaches that "the purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error", and thus implies that no church may make the claim of being perfectly pure. Nevertheless, a qualitative distinction is drawn between the "more or less pure" churches of Christ and such as "have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan."

It may be added that in these statements the pluriformity of the church is viewed as an historical fact, but not as a necessary or essential feature of the Church of Christ. Hence also there is not present in this doctrine a basic indifference to the divisions among the churches. The more ultimate emphasis falls upon the unity of the churches, a unity that persists in spite of their being more or less pure. And there is the implication that churches must seek to become more pure by reforming their life and doctrine. Churches

may properly therefore cooperate to promote such reformation as well as cooperate in various activities on the basis of actual unity.

It hardly needs to be stated that cooperation between churches must necessarily be restricted to activities which the church may legitimately perform, for no church may leave its proper sphere without being in rebellion against Christ. But it must also be emphasized that cooperation between churches may never permit of compromise of the specific doctrine and practice to which a church stands committed. For no church in the interest of cooperation may set aside or compromise its own doctrinal and governmental position without denying its right to separate existence as a denomination.

In order to maintain faithfully its commitment to what the Scriptures teach concerning faith and practice, it follows that a church may cooperate in the performance of the specific functions of the Church only with denominations of like purity of faith and practice. In the case of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church this would mean, for example, that cooperation in worship and evangelization would be permissible only with denominations which are specifically committed to the Reformed faith and life and are similarly faithful in maintaining discipline in accordance with this commitment.

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church is not the only Church of Christ on earth nor even within those areas in which it exists as a corporate entity. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church must therefore recognize that it is not the only organization that with propriety and divine commission discharges these functions. In some cases it will have to recognise that other bodies discharge these functions with an equal degree of purity and fidelity. It would appear to follow from this that in certain circumstances the Orthodox Presbyterian Church might fulfill all of the functions delineated above in cooperation with other denominations of similar purity and fidelity.

Before considering ways of cooperation two observations have to be made at this point. First it does not fall within the task of this Committee to consider the question of organic union with such Churches as, within those areas where the Orthodox Presbyterian Church exists, maintain faith and practice with equal or greater purity and devotion. This is a question of grave concern to our Church, but we cannot deal with it now. Second, in the matter of cooperation in corporate worship, it has to be borne in mind that there cannot in the nature of the case be *denominational* cooperation. Even within a denomination all the congregations cannot at any time assemble together for corporate worship. Hence even when we grant in principle that two denominations may cooperate all along the line of the specific functions in which they properly engage, it should be apparent that there are in the nature of the case very definite limitations placed upon the actual application of this principle.

In the matter of worship congregations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church could quite properly cooperate with congregations of other denominations provided this cooperation would not impair the witness of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Congregations might hold joint services under the auspices of the respective sessions of the cooperating churches and that for longer or shorter periods. It does not appear that any principle would be violated thereby provided the foregoing assumption obtains.

In the matter of government and discipline it is not easy to see how joint operation could be practised. Yet there is a large and indispensable place for cooperation in matters of government and discipline. For example, respecting discipline, churches should cooperate to the fullest extent in maintaining standards of purity. A person disciplined on a proper ground in one denomination should not be allowed the privileges of membership in another and thereby evade or flout the requirements of discipline. Denominations may and should cooperate in these matters to the fullest extent. Likewise in the granting of privileges. One denomination in fellowship with another may delegate to that other the right to administer baptism, for example, in its name. Various avenues of cooperation are therefore feasible even in matters of government and discipline.

It is particularly in connection with evangelization in home and foreign mission fields that cooperation may prevail to the fullest degree. Churches may jointly conduct missionary work in the various kinds of activity which missionary work comprises. In such cases the respective denominations would exercise jurisdiction over their own representatives in this joint undertaking, and governing bodies in the respective denominations could harmoniously agree with one another as to the conduct of the mission concerned and promote

similar cooperation on the part of those who actually conduct the missionary work.

A great deal of cooperation between such denominations could also be carried on in the care of the poor and the conduct of relief work at home and abroad.

Hence there are large areas in which cooperation may take effect between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and other denominations of like purity in faith and practice.

The situation is different, however, with regard to the other activities which have been set forth above under A. 2, as proper, though not established as specific functions of the Church. Cooperation with non-Reformed churches is permissible in dealing with matters which arise out of the necessity of performing its functions *in the world* inasmuch as questions concerning the maintenance of purity in doctrine and practice are not involved. Such denominations might cooperate, for example, in leasing property, in protesting to the government because of encroachments upon the sphere of the Church, and in undertaking to protect itself against the discrimination which might be practised by one or more denominations against others. If the Orthodox Presbyterian Church were to cooperate with other denominations, including non-Reformed denominations, in such activities, its fidelity to the system of doctrine and the principles of government taught in Holy Scripture would not be relinquished. It would be acting upon the basis of the unity of the Church without compromising its own right to existence.

C. Instruments of cooperation.

If the right of churches to cooperate is acknowledged, and the lines laid down as to the limits of this cooperation are maintained, the question arises as to how the church may proceed to put such cooperation into effect. Since the church will be concerned, in the first place, with the discharge of its own specific functions, and in the second place with activities essential or incidental to the accomplishment of its task in the world, it may not transfer these functions to another denomination or to a non-ecclesiastical organization. In the very act of cooperation it must remain true to its commitments as a church of Jesus Christ. But this is not to say that a church acting with other denominations may not establish an instrument or agency to effect cooperation in performing legitimate functions. If, for example, cooperating churches decide to establish a joint committee to accomplish certain legitimate tasks, such a committee would not be a church nor yet a non-ecclesiastical organization. It would be an ecclesiastical instrument erected to perform ecclesiastical functions.

On this background one may evaluate the right of the establishment of a council of churches. If a council were conceived of as an organization existing independently of the churches cooperating in it, it could not be justified. Even less could its right to existence be maintained if it acted as a superchurch which directly, on its own initiative, engaged in the performance of the specific functions of the Church. But if a council of churches were regarded as being in reality a joint committee established by several churches, it may be wholly justified.

The legitimacy of such a council would not be affected by the consideration that it may be necessary for it, as distinguished from an ordinary committee, to operate under a constitution, which in the nature of the case would have to be approved by the cooperating churches. For such a constitution would be in essence a working agreement between the churches and would define the specific tasks of the council. Such a council might also elect officers and committees to discharge its responsibilities. The fact that the organization of the council may be more complex than that of an ordinary committee would not affect its essential character as an instrument of cooperation erected by churches to realize certain legitimate ends.

Operating under a constitution approved by the cooperating churches, it would be proper for such a council to pass on the qualifications of particular denominations which might seek to join the council and on the exclusion of others which give evidence of not being in agreement with the position to which the cooperating churches are committed in establishing the terms of cooperation. Each church must be recognized as possessing the ultimate right of determining with which churches it would choose to cooperate, and this basic right may not be relinquished to a council of churches. This right could be exercised at the time when a church considers the question whether it approves of the constitution and is prepared to cooperate in the council. And a church could withdraw at any time that it judged that the constituency of the council was such that it could no longer justify

cooperation. So long, however, as a church participated in a council of churches, it could recognize that the council might, under the terms of the constitution, determine whether any particular denomination was in such agreement with the others as to permit its inclusion in the group of cooperating churches. Such action on the part of the council would, as indicated above, be subject to review by each participating denomination. And it would be essential that the denominations would take this responsibility seriously if they were to preserve their own prerogatives as churches and to be properly aware of the implications of their cooperation with other churches. But the fact would remain that if a council consisting of several churches were to function at all, and to be concerned with the maintenance of its essential character, it would have to be recognized as possessing the proximate right to act upon the inclusion or exclusion of churches.

Such a council might also publicize its own activities. It could act for the churches in making known the reasons for the erection of the council and defend the council against eventual attacks upon its right to exist or upon its activities. It could urge other qualified churches to join in the cooperative activity by arousing them to awareness of the situation that had led to the erection of the council. Such publicity might require the issuance of testimonies and manifestos. It would be imperative indeed for a council which includes non-Reformed churches to take care to avoid transgressing upon the specific work of the church including that of Evangelization, but the right to carry on various activities for the churches would include the right to publicize and defend such activities.

It may be observed that the argument presented above would establish the right of a denomination to participate in a council of churches. But it would not support the right of a denomination to participate in, as a Church, an organization which was not distinctly ecclesiastical, and included in its constituent membership, for example, other organizations or individuals. In participating in the latter type of organization, a church would cease to be acting in an ecclesiastical manner.

On the foregoing analysis, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church would have the right to participate in two types of councils of churches. It might be a member of a Reformed council of churches and of a council which included non-Reformed churches in its membership.

D. Special considerations bearing upon participation in a non-Reformed Council of Churches at the present time.

Though the evaluation given above restricts sharply the activities in which the Orthodox Presbyterian Church might cooperate with non-Reformed churches, there are other considerations which at the present time particularly commend cooperation in the broader areas which have been outlined above. These are bound up with the recognition of the fact that extraordinary developments in the political and ecclesiastical world affect or may affect profoundly the Church and the churches. Their liberty to prosecute their task as Christian churches, if not their very existence, is and may be further threatened.

That our times have been marked by a sharp increase in the power of civil governments and by tendencies toward totalitarianism is tragically apparent. Moreover, though world government may not be realized, the division of the world into two gigantic power blocs has the effect of aggravating a situation, which had already become very serious as a result of the War, in which the political sphere has come to be accorded a dominating place. Though it remains incumbent upon the churches "not to intermeddle with civil affairs", the growth of governmental power and influence over the affairs of men indicates that there might be special reasons at the present time for a church, or churches in cooperation, to petition governments. And there may be special urgency in supporting a council of Christian churches at a time when there is peculiar danger that the state will encroach upon the sphere of the church.

It is in the ecclesiastical sphere, however, that the most compelling reasons have developed for cooperation among Christian churches. The establishment of the World Council of Churches as a colossal organization comprised of nearly all the large and many small non-Roman churches constitutes a serious threat to the liberty of churches outside the Council to fulfill their mission according to their convictions as to the requirements of obedience to Christ. This organization appears to wish to act as the voice of the Christian Church throughout the world. And especially in dealing with governments regarding the right to conduct missionary activities, there would be great danger that there would be

discrimination against churches not participating in the World Council. Discrimination against such churches must be resisted. Such resistance may properly be carried on by churches in cooperation. It surely will be done much more effectively if churches act together through an organization which they have brought into existence to accomplish this, and other legitimate, tasks.

II

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE RELATION OF THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH TO THE STATE

Both Church and State are divine institutions. The State no more than the Church owes its origin and authority to human expedient or contract. It is true, of course, that the form of government and the bounds within which a particular government wields its jurisdiction may be and often have been determined by the will and consent of the governed. It is also true that the constitution and laws may be established by the vote of the people. But the institution of civil government is by divine ordination, and it is only because government has divine sanction that those who govern may exercise this authority and those who are governed submit to it. The civil magistrate is the minister of God and he is the minister of God for good.

Civil government has its own distinct sphere of operation and jurisdiction. This sphere is that of guarding, maintaining, and promoting justice, order, and peace. It is its function to prevent the encroachment upon, and to guard the exercise of, the God-given liberties, rights, and privileges of the citizens, and it must provide against attempts to deprive the citizens of the opportunity to discharge their divine obligations. In maintaining and promoting these ends the civil magistrate is invested with the power of the sword to restrain evil, to punish evildoers, and to promote good (cf. Rom. 13:1-6; I Pet. 2:13, 14).

Since the civil magistrate is invested with this authority by God and is obliged by divine ordinance to discharge these functions, he is responsible to God, the one living and true God who alone has ordained him. The magistrate is, therefore, under obligation to discharge the office devolving upon him in accordance with the revealed will of God. The Bible is the supreme and infallible revelation of God's will and it is, therefore, the supreme and infallible rule in all departments of life. The civil magistrate is under obligation to recognise it as the infallible rule for the exercise of civil magistracy.

It must be recognised, however, that it is only within his own restricted sphere of authority that the civil magistrate, in his capacity as civil magistrate, is to apply the revelation of God's will as provided in Scripture. It is only to the extent to which the revelation of Scripture bears upon the functions discharged by the State and upon the performance of the office of the civil magistrate that he, in the discharge of these functions, is bound to fulfil the demands of Scripture. If the civil magistrate should attempt, in his capacity as magistrate, to carry into effect the demands of Scripture which bear upon him in other capacities or the demands of Scripture upon other institutions, he should immediately be guilty of violating his prerogatives and of contravening the requirements of Scripture.

The sphere of the Church is distinct from that of the civil magistrate. Its sphere of cooperation has been defined in the first section of this report. What needs to be appreciated now is that its sphere is coordinate with that of the State. The Church is not subordinate to the State, nor is the State subordinate to the Church. They are both subordinate to God and to Christ in His mediatorial dominion as Head over all things to His body the Church. Both Church and State are under obligation to recognize this subordination and the corresponding coordination of their respective spheres of operation in the divine institution. Each must maintain and assert its autonomy in reference to the other and preserve its freedom from intrusion on the part of the other. But while this diversity of function and of sphere must be recognized, guarded, and maintained, the larger unity within this diversity exists must not be overlooked. The principle that defines this unity is the sovereignty of God and the obligation emanating from it is the requirement that both Church and State must promote the interests of the Kingdom of God. It is only on the basis of such principles that any Christian conception of the relation of Church and State can be developed.

To the Church is committed the task of proclaiming the whole counsel of God and, therefore, the counsel of God as it bears upon the responsibility of all persons and institutions. While the Church is not to discharge the functions of other institutions such as the

State and the Family, nevertheless it is charged to define what the functions of these institutions are and the lines of demarcation by which they are distinguished. It is also charged to declare and inculcate the duties which devolve upon them. Consequently when the civil magistrate trespasses the limits of his authority, it is incumbent upon the Church to expose and condemn such a violation of his authority. When laws are proposed or enacted which are contrary to the law of God it is the duty of the Church to oppose them and expose their iniquity. When the civil magistrate fails to exercise his God-given authority in the protection and promotion of the obligations, rights, and liberties of the citizens, the Church has the right and duty to condemn such inaction and by its proclamation of the counsel of God to confront the civil magistrate with his responsibility and promote the correction of such neglect. The functions of the civil magistrate, therefore, come within the scope of the Church's proclamation in every respect in which the Word of God bears upon the proper or improper discharge of these functions, and it is only misconception of what is involved in the proclamation of the whole counsel of God that leads to the notion that the Church has no concern with the political sphere.

When it is maintained that the Church is concerned with civic affairs, is under obligation to examine political measures in the light of the Word of God, and is required to declare its judgments accordingly, the distinction between this activity on the part of the Church and *political* activity must be recognized. To put the matter bluntly, the Church is not to engage in *politics*. Its members must, but they do so in their capacity as citizens of the State not as members of the Church. The Church is not to create or foster political parties or blocs. The proclamation of the Church may indeed induce the members of the Church and others to affiliate themselves, in their capacity as citizens, with one party rather than with another or, perhaps, to form a political party for the promotion of good politics. If the proclamation of the Church is sound, the Church has no need to be ashamed of the influence its proclamation exerts in this direction nor does it need to be troubled by the charge that may be levelled against it to the effect that it is engaged in politics. In such circumstances the Church must be prepared to pay the price for its faithful witness to the political implications of the message committed to it.

It might appear that this position regarding the duty of the Church is inconsistent with the statement of our Confession, to wit: "Synods and councils are to handle, or conclude nothing, but that which is ecclesiastical: and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth, unless by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary; or, by way of advice, for satisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate" (Chapter XXXI, Section V). It may be that the conception of the right and duty of the Church in reference to the functions of the civil magistrate and his discharge of, or failure to discharge, these functions, set forth in this report, goes beyond that envisaged by the framers of the Confession. If so, the Confessional statement does not make it necessary for us to resile from this conception. The Confession is not to be our supreme standard. But it is not apparent that there is an inconsistency. Two observations need to be made. First, it should be remembered that the Confession defines the sphere of the magistrate's jurisdiction and it incorporates such a definition in what was intended to be the Confession of the Church (cf. especially chapter XXIII). The framers, therefore, consider it proper for the Church to declare what the prerogatives of the civil magistrate are and what limitations circumscribe the sphere of his jurisdiction. It is surely implied that it is the right and duty of the Church to declare from time to time what the applications and implications of such a definition of authority are. History has demonstrated how ready Churches adopting the Confession were to resist arrogations and intrusions on the part of the State. Second, the Confession says that "synods and councils are to handle, or conclude nothing, but that which is ecclesiastical". But to declare the whole counsel of God in reference to political matters, as well as other matters, is definitely an ecclesiastical function and was surely considered to be such by the framers of the Confession. Furthermore, the terms used by the Confession to designate the type of activity denied to synods and councils, namely, handling, or concluding, or intermeddling with, "civil affairs which concern the commonwealth" indicate that what is regarded as beyond the province of synods and councils is something quite different from proclamation of the whole counsel of God as it bears upon the conduct of civil affairs. The intermeddling prohibited can well be regarded as the kind of *political* activity which is not by any means

accorded to the Church in the thesis propounded in this report. The Church is certainly not to be regarded as handling or concluding political affairs when it declares the religious and moral implications of political measures; it does not *determine* civil affairs, it simply propounds and defends the requirements of God's revealed will in reference to civil affairs. Finally, the Confession grants to synods and councils the right of "humble petition in cases extra-ordinary" and of "advice, for satisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate." This provision contemplates direct appeal to the civil magistrate in reference to what is specifically commonwealth business and goes further than the proclamation, in reference to political affairs, which the Church in the discharge of its function may at all times perform.

The question remains: how is the Church to proclaim the counsel of God as it bears upon civil affairs? It is obvious that there are two means, in particular, of proclaiming the Word of God, namely, the pulpit and the press. The Church lives in the world and it lives within the domain of political entities. If it is to be faithful to its commission it must make its voice heard and felt in reference to public questions. The Church may not supinely stand aside and ignore political corruption, for example, on the ground that to pronounce judgment on such issues is to intermeddle in politics. Political corruption is sin, it is public sin, and the Church denies its vocation if it does not reprove it. When there is political revolution which contravenes the principles of God's Word and is directed against the Kingdom of God, the Church may not be an idle spectator on the ground that the powers that be are ordained of God. It must assess the revolution for what it is in the light of the Word of God and proclaim in pulpit and press what the judgment of the Word of God is. If political revolution is right, displaces usurpation and tyranny, and is in the interests of equity, the Church may not refrain from expressing by like media the favorable judgment which the principles of the Word of God dictate.

It will happen, of course, in the imperfection which characterizes the Church that there will be dissident voices. The judgments of men will differ. But this does not affect the principle that the official representatives of the Church are under obligation to proclaim in Christ's name the judgment of His Word on all questions to which that Word is relevant, and such spokesmen ought to strive for unity of thought and expression in accordance with the Word of Christ. There ought to be in this matter, also, the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

This proclamation may also take the form of corporate pronouncement. That is to say the Church may in its corporate capacity through its assemblies, whether provincial, national or international, make official pronouncement regarding the religious and moral implications of political measures or movements. In certain situations it is under obligation to do this for the instruction and warning of its own members and adherents as well as for the instruction of others, including those in whom is vested civil authority. Such pronouncements are for the purpose of proclaiming the Word of God and of vindicating His authority in the issues involved. To deny such a prerogative as belonging to the Church is to compromise on the universal relevance of the Word of God and on the testimony which the Church must bear to the world.

It is necessary to be reminded that great caution and reserve must be exercised by the Church in making pronouncements regarding political affairs. This caution is particularly necessary in connection with the pronouncements and resolutions of assemblies of the Church. Hasty analyses and proclamations must be avoided and great care must be exercised to insure that pronouncements are in accord with and necessitated by the requirements of the Word of God. Too frequently the Church has brought reproach upon the name of Christ and has seriously curtailed its influence for good by making pronouncements which are not supported by the requisite evidence or which are beyond the prerogative of the Church. And the representatives of the Church in the performance of their official ministrations must beware of turning the pulpit into a forum for the discussion of political questions, especially a forum for political partisanship. A lopsidedness prejudicial to the proclamation of the whole counsel of God is only too liable to characterize those who are alert to the religious and moral issues at stake in political trends and movements. Balance and moderation must be preserved here as elsewhere. But abuse and the liability to abuse do not rule out the obligation and the necessity of bringing the proclamation of God's Word to bear upon every department of life and, specifically, upon that department of life concerned with civil government.

III
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION
OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

The third task of the Committee, that of suggesting changes in the Constitution of the International Council of Christian Churches, is in its outworking simply a practical application of the principles of cooperation as formulated in Part I of this report to the Constitution of the International Council. It will be recognized that the International Council does not fall into the category of an instrument of cooperation between churches of like purity and practice with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church but into the category of an instrument of cooperation between churches which may cooperate only in the matter of circumstances or incidentals essential to the discharge of the specific functions of the church. It is with this fact particularly in mind that the Committee considers the present constitution of the International Council as requiring substantial revision, particularly in respect of the Preamble and Functions of the Council.

The Committee therefore recommends that the Seventeenth General Assembly recommend to the Second Plenary Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches the adoption of the following amendments:

1 - The substitution of the following for the present Preamble:

"Whereas an increasing number of civil governments are under the domination of forces opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ; and

"Whereas professing churches in increasing numbers are being swept into the paganizing stream of modernism, and there has been a notable growth of autocratic domination on the part especially of modernistic leaders by whom the rightful powers of the churches are often usurped and are now being usurped; and

"Whereas we believe in the oneness, in Christ, who rules by His Word and Holy Spirit, of all true believers, and acknowledge the divine demand for separation from unbelieving and corrupted churches; and

"Whereas we are convinced that the times make urgent the cooperation of all true believers against encroachments upon Christian faith and practice by unbelieving civil and ecclesiastical organizations;

"Therefore we, bodies of various nationalities and languages throughout the world, do now band ourselves together for the purpose of unitedly resisting such encroachments and protecting the rights and facilitating the discharge of the obligations which inhere in the commission of Christ to His Church to make known the gospel of Christ to every kindred and tongue and tribe and nation."

2 - The revision of Article II g to read as follows:

"Salvation, not by works, but by grace through faith, the effect of regeneration by the Spirit and the Word."

3 - The substitution in Article III, Section 1, Paragraph 2, first sentence for the words, "or by any Committee to which the Council may delegate this power," the following:

"or provisionally by any committee to which the Council may delegate this power until the next meeting of the Council at which time the Council itself shall act upon the application."

4 - The revision of Article VI, Functions of the Council, as follows:

"The Council shall act for the constituent churches as an instrument of cooperation in matters that have been delegated to it by the churches. It shall not perform the specific functions of the church but shall act for the churches with regard to circumstances or incidentals essential to the discharge of these functions in the world. The functions of the Council shall be:

- (1) To maintain and defend the rights of the cooperating churches against any threats to their liberty to fulfill their God-given calling.
- (2) To seek to facilitate by the means proper to this Council the conduct of missionary work of the cooperating churches.
- (3) To act as an agent in promoting such cooperation and to arouse other Christian churches throughout the world to participate in the Council by warning them of the sin of compromise with modernism and other religious systems which do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God and do not receive the Scriptures as being the inerrant Word of God.

- (4) (as old 5.)
- (5) (old 7)
- (6) Old 8 except that 'Word of God' be substituted for 'doctrinal statement of the International Council of Christian Churches.'

IV

SUGGESTED CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTION AND/OR PRACTICES OF THE AMERICAN COUNCIL

The fourth task of this Committee was to evaluate the Constitution and/or practices of the American Council of Christian Churches.

The Committee has adopted the position that the association of our church with other Christian churches, in certain prescribed spheres, and the organizing of that association as a "council of churches", is not contrary to any basic principles in the Word of God and is therefore in itself legitimate, provided that such a council be neither independent of nor above the churches but essentially a committee representing various Christian churches and existing merely as an instrument of cooperation.

The Committee, therefore, finds no principal impediment to membership in an association of Bible-believing churches. Furthermore, the Committee believes that there should be such an association: (1) to oppose the pretension of the Federal Council to speak for American Protestantism. An overwhelming phenomenon of our day is the apostasy and unbelief of the major portion of the visible church. The very foundations of our faith are under attack. The Federal Council in its programs, activities and the public statements of its leaders is a clearing house and center of this apostasy. Evangelical churches should band together to oppose the Federal Council's claims and expose its unchristian character. (2) to defend the right of the gospel to be heard. This is a day of increasing state power and religious syncretism. Our freedom to preach and proselytize is threatened.

The American Council is an association of Bible-believing churches and in many respects it has done yeoman service in defense of the gospel. Consequently our church has rightly felt itself under obligation either to join the Council or justify its refusal to do so. Nevertheless, two main faults have been found with the practices of the American Council of Christian Churches.

First are those activities of the American Council which have been deemed to be proper for a church, but improper for a council of churches. Among such practices which have been engaged in by the American Council as such, are preaching ("devotional", "inspirational", "evangelistic") and teaching ("Bible study", and Sunday school lessons).

The fact that such activities are the function of the church but not the function of a council of churches has been presented to previous General Assemblies, notably the Twelfth (p. 59f.), obviates the necessity of our laboring the point here. Suffice it to make the summary statement that since a council of churches is not itself a church it may not perform the ecclesiastical duties of a church, i.e., administering the sacraments, conducting ecclesiastical worship, preaching of the Word, exercising discipline, ordaining officers, or performing the work of the deaconate. Nor must we fail to mention the added practical difficulty which arises when one member of such a council, which is composed of churches of many shades of evangelical theology, presumes to act for all the members in any of these ecclesiastical duties of the church: that he cannot, nay must not, divorce himself from his own theology. In so doing, such a member necessarily misrepresents to his audience those members whose theology is different from his.

The second group of activities in which the American Council has been engaged are certain activities which are felt by many to be not legitimate for *either* a church or a council of churches. These activities fall mainly under the heading "political", and have been expressed by the passing of resolutions on a variety of non-religious subjects.

One further practice which has been a prominent, though less important, factor in the refusal of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church to seek affiliation with the American Council has been that insufficient care has been exercised at times by officials of the Council in making public declarations.

It seems quite apparent that some, if not most, of the practices alluded to above are consequent upon the form of the Constitution, and that therefore the Constitution of the American Council should receive primary, rather than secondary, attention. The deficiencies of the Constitution lie first in the statement of purposes in the Preamble, and second in omissions from the Constitution of paragraphs which would carefully delimit the ac-

tivities of the Council and its officers.

We believe that the following changes would remove the objections of our church to the Constitution of the American Council of Christian Churches:

1. *Preamble*

- a. Substitute for the introductory clauses ("Whereas . . . adherence to") the following or similar words: Whereas it is desirable for Christian believers to band themselves together against the encroachments of a progressing apostasy, and for the preservation of the freedom of true churches of Christ to proclaim without compromise or evasion . . .

Reason for change: — The Constitution states that the purposes of the Council are "to make a common testimony to their (believers) glorious faith . . . as a witness to the glory of God and the historic faith of the Church universal . . ." Thus the Constitution makes it almost obligatory for the Council to enter into the ecclesiastical functions of the church, or at the least, into the sphere of preaching, i. e., "testimony", "witness".

- b. Add as a separate paragraph the following or similar words: Therefore does this Council exist to be an instrument of cooperation for its members, in those spheres where cooperation will neither compromise the distinctive witness of the members nor involve the member churches in activities which are not directly relevant in aiding them in performing their individual functions in the world.

Reason for the addition: — To eliminate activities by the council which are proper only for the church (e.g. preaching) and those which are not proper for either church or council (e.g. political).

2. *Article III, Section 4*

Add the following as a part of the now existing sentence: ". . . nor shall any officer or member of the Council make any public statement as an officer or member of the Council without the approval of a majority of the executive committee."

Reason for the addition: — To prevent any officer or member from committing the Council to any view or position on his own initiative.

3. *By-Laws, Article I*

Add a new Section 3 and renumber the following sections accordingly: The purpose of these departments shall be to aid true churches of Christ to preserve full freedom of action in these spheres; and in no case shall their purpose be to proclaim the gospel by the Council or its representatives.

Reason for the addition: — To apply to these specific items the principles enunciated in the amended Preamble; to prevent the Council from engaging in the church's functions in these spheres.

The suggested wording of the amended sections would thus be:

Preamble

Whereas it is desirable for Christian believers to band themselves together against the encroachments of a progressing apostasy, and for the preservation of the freedom of true churches of Christ to proclaim, without compromise or evasion, these truths among others equally precious: the full truthfulness, inerrancy, and authority of the Bible, which is the Word of God; the holiness and love of the one sovereign God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the true deity and sinless humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His atoning death, "the just for the unjust", His bodily resurrection, His glorious coming again; salvation by grace through faith alone; the oneness in Christ of those He has redeemed with His own precious blood;

Therefore does this Council exist to be an instrument of cooperation for its members, in those spheres where cooperation will neither compromise the distinctive witness of the members nor involve the member churches in activities which are not directly relevant to aiding them in performing their individual functions in the world.

Article III, Section 4

The Council shall have no authority over its members, but shall be their servant and voice in matters requiring joint testimony and united action; nor shall any officer or member of the Council make any public statement as an officer or member of the Council without the approval of a majority of the executive committee.

However even if the Constitution of the American Council met with complete approval there would remain the practical difficulty of what appears to be the settled policy of the Council to make pronouncements which cannot be shown to be warranted by the Word of God and are therefore beyond the legitimate sphere of the Council. As instances of such pronouncements we cite: the Council's advocacy of universal military training in peacetime; its petitions to the United States government for intervention in Korea and Greece; the resolution passed by the Seventh Annual Convention in Philadelphia, October 28-31, 1948, "We call upon the representatives of freedom-loving nations for a complete and frank showdown with Russia"; the demand made in the election campaign of 1948 that John Foster Dulles not be appointed Secretary of State; the resolution passed at Atlanta, Georgia, May 6-9, 1948, "The F. E. P. C. is a vital part of the communist program . . . In the name of civil rights, the proposed Civil Rights program will destroy America's most fundamental civil liberties"; and a continuous identification of modern capitalism with the teachings of the Bible. It is not that we necessarily disagree with the positions taken in these resolutions, but we hold rather that the moral and spiritual issues are not sufficiently clear on the basis of Scripture to warrant adoption of such statements by a council of churches. By such actions as those mentioned above, the American Council of Christian Churches has become embroiled in politics in a way beyond the province of the church and unless this policy were revised membership in the Council would inevitably involve our church in action and propaganda of a partisan political character.

We recommend that the General Assembly urge the American Council to desist from the issuance of such political pronouncements, and to give serious consideration to the suggested constitutional amendments.

V

SOLICITATION OF FUNDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF SENDING A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH TO THE SECOND PLENARY CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

Your Committee wishes to express appreciation to those individuals and churches who have been most helpful in contributing to this fund. It was estimated that \$500 would be adequate for all expenses of one delegate. At the present time, the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension reports total receipts of \$365.75, and the expectation of further receipts.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the
Committee,

NED B. STONEHOUSE, Chairman

A MINORITY REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE SEVENTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

I, the undersigned, a minority of the Committee on Ecumenicity elected by the Sixteenth General Assembly, respectfully submit the following minority report to the Seventeenth General Assembly. In doing so I wish to express my agreement with the greater part of the report of the Committee. I am deeply gratified that, both in the enunciation of principles and in the application of these principles, agreement covers so large an area. I am convinced that the report of the Committee makes an estimable contribution to the clarification and resolution of those questions which were referred to the Committee by the Sixteenth General Assembly.

My dissent from the report of the Committee respects only some specific points. I particularly dissent from the provision made in the first part of the report whereby an instrument of cooperation is accorded the proximate right to act upon the inclusion or exclusion of Churches. Since an instrument of cooperation is an instrument erected by the cooperating Churches I do not deem it to be a proper function of the instrument of cooperation to act upon the inclusion or exclusion of Churches. I consider that the utmost of prerogative which an instrument of cooperation might perform in such a matter is to consider the qualifications of such Churches as might seek to cooperate with the other cooperating Churches and make recommendations accordingly to the cooperating Churches. It would be the prerogative of the cooperating Churches to act upon the inclusion or exclusion of Churches.

Furthermore, I consider that a succinct statement of principles which should govern the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in cooperating with other denominations is a *desider-*

atum, and that, in accordance with these principles, a sharp line of distinction should be drawn between cooperation on the part of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with Churches of like purity in faith and practice, on the one hand, and cooperation with non-Reformed Churches, on the other. This distinction is sometimes liable to be blurred in the first part of the Committee's report and the application of this distinction to the question of the American Council of Christian Churches is not as apparent as I deem necessary.

Hence, in order to serve the end of validating my objection to the provision which accords to an instrument of cooperation the proximate right of acting on the inclusion or exclusion of Churches and in order to provide a succinct statement of principles, particularly in their application to membership in the American Council of Christian Churches and the International Council of Christian Churches, I submit the following observations:

(1) The Orthodox Presbyterian Church may cooperate with other Reformed Churches of like purity in faith and practice in the discharge of those functions which are most specifically the functions of the church. The ways in which such cooperation may be conducted are varied and it would be impossible to reduce them to one stereotyped pattern. The method of cooperation would be dictated by the nature of the particulars in which cooperation would be conducted and by the circumstances and conditions whether local or denominational.

(2) Such cooperating Churches may erect and, in certain cases, might be required to erect an "instrument of cooperation" for the actual execution of *certain* cooperative enterprises. There are obviously limitations to the functions which might be committed to an *instrument* of cooperation. For certain functions would have to be performed by, and directly under the auspices of, the courts of the respective Churches and could not even be executed by an instrument of cooperation. The administering of the sacraments and the exercise of discipline would be cases in point.

(3) The Orthodox Presbyterian Church itself, whether it be the General Assembly, in cases of denominational cooperation, or the Presbyteries and Sessions, in cases of local cooperation, must determine with what Churches it may thus cooperate. It is not the prerogative of the instrument of cooperation to determine this; the existence of the instrument of cooperation presupposes that the Churches concerned have decided to cooperate and have determined to erect this instrument of cooperation to carry into effect certain purposes or projects.

(4) Neither the A.C.C.C. nor the I.C.C.C. falls into this category because they comprise and intend to comprise in their membership Churches of non-Reformed persuasion.

(5) The Orthodox Presbyterian Church may cooperate with non-Reformed Churches in matters which are not specifically the functions of the Church but which are essential to the discharge of these functions. These may be called "essential incidentals". They comprise such activities as the securing of property in which to conduct the God-given obligations of the church, the making of representation or protestation to civil authorities in reference to the rights of the church, and the securing of the right to enter various fields in order to fulfill the Lord's commission.

(6) Such cooperating Churches may erect an instrument of cooperation in order that such an instrument may more effectively perform the ends in view.

(7) Such an instrument of cooperation must be erected by the Churches cooperating and the Churches must determine what the character of the instrument is to be, how it is to be constituted, and what functions it is to perform.

(8) The Orthodox Presbyterian Church must determine with what Churches it is to cooperate. It may not commit the determination of that question to any other organization nor to the instrument of cooperation. It must not assume the risk of finding itself in cooperation with a denomination with which it did not itself decide to cooperate.

(9) Such an instrument of cooperation as may be erected by such cooperating Churches may not carry into execution any of those functions which are specifically the functions of the church but only *certain* functions as have been defined above in terms of essential incidentals. It may not conduct, for example, evangelism.

(10) If the A.C.C.C. and the I.C.C.C. could be construed simply as instruments of cooperation, they would fall into this second category, namely, instruments of cooperation for cooperation with churches other than Reformed.

(11) Neither the A.C.C.C. nor the I.C.C.C. conforms to the prescriptions outlined above for the reasons given in the report of the Committee, to wit, that the functions per-

formed by these Councils are to a very considerable extent those which would apply to cooperation with Reformed Churches of like purity in faith and practice with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

(12) If the I.C.C.C. were permanently to follow the pattern laid out in the present form of its constitution the Orthodox Presbyterian Church would not be warranted in being a member of it.

(13) In the matter of cooperation with other Churches and in devising instruments of cooperation which will carry into effect certain tasks which the Churches cooperating may perform together, the minority considers that it is necessary to rethink the whole question lest we become involved in the pattern of those organizations which have grown up in the last half century which have loaded themselves, or have been loaded, with prerogatives which trespass upon the functions which are to be performed by the church itself and not even by an instrument of cooperation. It appears to the minority that neither the A.C.C.C. nor the I.C.C.C., however noble the intentions of those who established them, has proceeded on the basis of those principles that should guide the Churches concerned in erecting an instrument or instruments of cooperation.

Respectfully submitted,
JOHN MURRAY

A MINORITY REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE SEVENTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

I, the undersigned, a minority of the Committee on Ecumenicity elected by the Sixteenth General Assembly, respectfully submit the following minority report to the Seventeenth General Assembly. In doing so, I should like to indicate my complete accord with much in the official report of the Committee, whose work may well prove to be of considerable profit to both the American and the International Councils of Christian Churches. Both these Councils being composed of fallible men, notwithstanding their regeneration, it is but to be expected that mistakes of judgment shall from time to time be made. Nor is it my opinion that the Constitution of either organization as formulated at this moment is the ultimate in excellence or perfection. Therefore, I view with appreciation the well-meaning attempts of any Christian men to make recommendations designed to achieve a more perfect instrument in each of these aforementioned Constitutions.

I concur fully with the Committee sentiment that "Our Church has rightly felt itself under obligation either to join the (American) Council or justify its refusal to do so." Tho this may be said with intent to honor the American Council, the end result is that of doing much harm to the Council; for, it is tantamount to saying, "Our report reveals such serious defects in the Constitution and practice of the American Council as justifies the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and by necessary inference, would justify all other Bible-loyal Protestant churches, in standing aloof from the American Council of Christian Churches." With this conclusion I cannot agree, for I am persuaded that *facts* will not sustain so serious and unfavorable a verdict. One could quite as easily build this case: That because of the imperfections in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, those unaffiliated but of Reformed persuasion are justified in refraining from uniting with our denomination.

It is my deep and unalterable conviction that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church erred in not identifying itself years ago, in the so-called "formative years," with the American Council; and, that the failure of our Church to apply for General Constituent Membership during these past three Assemblies constitutes a continuance of that mistake. In the light of what the American Council may be fifty years from now, it is still in the formative period. For a more effective combatting of the forces of modernist unbelief and championing of the cause of the historic Christian faith, it is my opinion that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church should immediately seek membership in the American Council of Christian Churches. By such action, our Church would encourage other churches free from the blight of modernism to do likewise, and an increasing number of our members who have desired this relationship for years would thereby be encouraged. Above all other considerations, it is our considered opinion that the presence of our denomination in the American Council of Christian Churches would be to the advantage of the church universal, and would bring glory to Christ, its exalted Head.

Respectfully submitted,
WM. HARLLEE BORDEAUX

The Assembly recessed at 10 p. m. with prayer by Mr. Dunn.

SATURDAY MORNING

Following a devotional service conducted by Mr. Eyres the Assembly reconvened at 9:05 a. m. with prayer by the Moderator.

The minutes of the sessions of May 26 were read and approved as corrected.

It was moved and carried that the Assembly proceed to the consideration of the recommendations appearing under section III of the report of the Committee on Ecumenicity.

On motion the recommendation of the Committee regarding proposed amendment No. 1 was adopted.

The Travel Committee reported a total of \$699.25 on hand, and recommended that the previous rate of disbursement of funds for those travelling above three hundred miles be increased to 2.7 cents per mile and for those travelling above two thousand miles to 3.7 cents per mile.

On motion the recommendation was adopted.

It was moved that the recommendation of the Committee on Ecumenicity regarding proposed amendment No. 2 be adopted.

It was moved that the motion be amended so that the statement shall read: "Salvation, the effect of regeneration by the Spirit and the Word, not by works, but by grace through faith."

It was moved as a substitute that the words "which faith is" be inserted between the word "faith" and the words "the effect."

The Assembly recessed at 12 noon with prayer by Mr. Bruce Coie.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

The Assembly reconvened at 1:33 p. m. with prayer by Mr. Betzold.

The amended motion regarding Article II g of the Constitution of the I.C.C.C., that the proposed amendment No. 2 read as follows, "Salvation, the effect of regeneration by the Spirit and the Word, not by works, but by grace through faith" was carried.

It was moved that amendment No. 3 be adopted.

The following substitute was moved: that this Assembly urge the Second Plenary Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches to revise Article III, particularly Section I, of the Constitution in such a way that applications for constituent membership in the Council shall not be acted upon by the Council or by any committee to which the Council may delegate this power but rather by the cooperating Churches themselves so as to insure that the rights and prerogatives of the cooperating Churches may be fully conserved in reference to the reception of members. The substitute was lost.

Messrs. Murray, Kuschke, Freeman, and Hills requested that their affirmative votes be recorded.

Amendment No. 3 was adopted by the Assembly.

It was moved and carried that the following amendment be recommended: that the following sentence be added to paragraph 2 of Article III, Section 1, "The Council or such committee shall once each year inform each constituent member of the Council of the bodies which have been either finally or provisionally received into membership of the Council."

On motion the Assembly recessed at 3:28 p. m. with prayer by Mr. Phillips.

MONDAY MORNING

Following a devotional service conducted by Dr. Young the Assembly reconvened at 10:30 a. m. with prayer by Mr. Churchill.

The minutes of the sessions of May 27th were approved as amended.

It was moved that the Assembly recommend that Article III, Section 1, paragraph 2 of the Constitution of the I.C.C.C. be amended as follows: that the words be added: "in order that any member may exercise within 18 months from the date of notification the right of veto upon the entrance of any newly received body."

It was moved as an amendment that for the words "veto upon" the words "making objection to" be substituted and that the following sentence be added: "Reception into membership of the Council shall not be deemed final until such objection shall have been acted upon by the Council."

The Assembly recessed at 12 noon, with prayer by Mr. Georgian.

MONDAY AFTERNOON

The Assembly reconvened at 1:38 p. m. with prayer by Mr. DuMont.

The Clerk read the following greetings from the General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America:

May 25, 1950

The General Assembly,
Orthodox Presbyterian Church
Rev. Robert Eckardt, Stated Clerk,
Crescent Park, N. J.
Dear Brethren in Christ:

Your letter of greeting in Christ's name was received and read at the meeting of our General Synod. The General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church meeting at Houston, Ky., gratefully acknowledged said greetings and wishes to send greetings to you in the name of Christ, the King and Head of the Church.

Many are the problems that face the Church of Christ today but they shall only be met as we remain true to Him and not through compromise with the forces of evil.

May the only King and Head of the Church guide you and bless you in all of your deliberations in your Assembly.

Yours in Christ.

ROBERT W. STEWART,

Stated Clerk of General Synod

The following amended motion was lost: that the Assembly recommend to the Second Plenary Congress of the I.C.C.C. the amendment of Article III, Section 1, paragraph 2, by the addition of the words "in order that any member may exercise within 18 months from the date of notification the right of making objection to the entrance of any newly received body"; and the sentence: "Reception into membership of the Council shall not be deemed final until such objection shall have been acted upon by the Council."

Messrs. Kuiper, Murray, Kuschke and Freeman requested that their affirmative votes be recorded.

It was moved and carried that the points under proposed amendment No. 4 of the recommendation of the Committee on Ecumenicity be considered seriatim and that the first paragraph of that proposed amendment be considered a separate point.

On motion the first paragraph of the proposed amendment was adopted.

Point No. (1) was adopted in the following form: To maintain and defend by spiritual means the rights of the cooperating churches against interference with their liberty to fulfill their God-given calling.

On motion point No. (2) was adopted.

It was moved that point No. (3) be adopted.

It was moved as an amendment the substitution of the word "association" for the word "compromise." This amendment was carried.

It was moved and carried that the amended motion be laid on the table until after consideration of point No. (6).

On motion the requests of Messrs. Marston and Eyres to leave the Assembly at the time of recess was granted.

On motion the request of Mr. Holkeboer to leave the Assembly at the time of recess was granted.

On motion point No. (4) was adopted.

Point No. (5) was adopted in the following amended form: To encourage all members of the Council to advocate on every continent an educational system for all ages which shall be free from the blight of rationalism and in which the Bible shall be basic, to the end that education may again become the handmaid of the Church rather than the foe to the whole Christian conception of God and the world.

On motion point No. (6) was adopted.

Point No. (3) was taken from the table.

Point No. (3) was adopted in the following form: To act as an agent in promoting such cooperation and to arouse other Christian churches throughout the world to participate in this Council as over against religious associations which do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God and do not receive the Scriptures as being the inerrant Word of God.