

The Presbyterian **GUARDIAN**

Contents

Protestant Centennial in Japan

A Review By R. HEBER McILWAINE

The Sin of Apostasy

By RAYMOND O. ZORN

Twenty-Sixth General Assembly in Preview

The Christian Reformed Church and The Orthodox Presbyterian Church

By JOHN MURRAY

I Don't Want Normal Children

By FRED W. COLBY

Reviews — News — Pictures

The Christian Reformed Church and The Orthodox Presbyterian Church

By JOHN MURRAY

The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church at its meeting in 1956 took the initiative in seeking to establish closer relations with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. It did so by electing a committee of four to confer with one that the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church might, in response, choose to erect. The Twenty-Third General Assembly expressed its cordial appreciation of this action and decision of the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church and erected a committee of four which was authorized to establish contact and confer with the committee of the Christian Reformed Church and to report regularly to succeeding General Assemblies concerning the progress of the conversations.

These two committees have regularly conferred with one another and these conferences have been conducted with the most gratifying cordiality, understanding, and agreement. It is symptomatic of the community of interest and sentiment existing within these committees that all of the resolutions so far adopted and submitted to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church and to the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church have been voted without dissent in the joint meetings of the two committees. The interests which these conversations seek to promote may be furthered more extensively within the two Churches if we are reminded of some of these resolutions.

Joint Resolutions

In 1957 the committees jointly resolved as follows: "In view of the unity of the body of Christ and in view of the basic community that exists between The Christian Reformed Church and The Orthodox Presbyterian Church in doctrine, polity, and practice, it is an obligation resting upon these two Churches to make every legitimate endeavor to bring this unity and community to their consistent expression in the or-

ganic union of the two denominations."

It would be unrealistic, of course, to fail to take account of the differences that exist between the two denominations, and it would prejudice the objective set forth in the preceding resolution to discount these differences. The differences must be frankly faced and ways and means explored of resolving them. These considerations were likewise incorporated in the joint resolutions of the committees. But the ultimate objective and the obligation arising from it should not be obscured or overlooked. There is the necessity which cannot be suppressed that the unity which belongs to the church as the body of Christ should be brought to expression in every phase of the church's function and, therefore, in government and discipline.

The differences which now stand in the way of organic union and which can be resolved only by patient conference and effort do not, however, preclude cooperation in several areas of common interest and enterprise. Hence the committees declared that "it is advisable that the two Churches consider carefully the establishment of sisterly relations" and that "it is proper that the Churches consider greater cooperation in the conduct of enterprises which they have in common such as those in home and foreign missionary work."

Delegates To Be Welcomed

Perhaps the most significant action taken in the directions contemplated in these resolutions is that of the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1958, an action in which the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church concurred. The joint committee recommended that "the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church elect delegates to the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church; and that the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church elect delegates to the Synod of the Christian Reformed

Church on the understanding that these delegates be given the privileges of the floor in the Assembly and Synod respectively, in which they are elected to serve as delegates."

In compliance with this recommendation the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (1958) informed the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church that the Assembly was "prepared to welcome delegates elected by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church and grant them the privilege of the floor." The Synod of 1958 responded favorably and agreed to send delegates to, as also to receive delegates from, the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

At the Twenty-Sixth General Assembly, meeting at Glenside, Pennsylvania, on May 27th, we may be assured that these delegates from the Christian Reformed Church will be present and it is hoped that they will take an active part in the deliberations. And there is no reason to doubt that this General Assembly will elect delegates to be present at the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in June of this year. This is a gratifying step and it should prove one of the most fruitful ways of promoting the understanding and concord which are indispensable to the achievement of both proximate and more ultimate goals.

To these forthcoming major Assemblies of the two denominations will be presented information respecting significant studies being now undertaken by the conferring committees, and factual data will be furnished respecting important areas of community already existing between the two Churches.

It is earnestly to be hoped that these areas of community will be extended in the years to come and that with deepening mutual concern and appreciation the two Churches will cooperate more intelligently and effectively, by the blessing of God, in the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The church is not ours; it is the church of Christ. And nothing underlines the sanctity of the cause to which we are committed and the obligations inherent in this commitment more than the fact that the church is the body of Christ, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.