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the PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

Supporting continuation of a Presbyterian Church loyal to Scripture and the Reformed faith

Decisions, Decisions

From the Word of God we establish doctrine: the nature of God, man, the plan of redemption and the life of discipleship. The Bible lays down principles which are to give us guidance in the practical situations of life. The practical answers must be found through sound Biblical interpretation and humble dependence on the Holy Spirit in applying the Word of Scripture to the world of decision.

The Holy Spirit illumines the Word for us. It is His task to relate the continuing and abiding principles of the Word to the fluid and changing circumstances of the world about us. It is the Spirit and the Word that enable us to make decisions with confidence, whether individually or in the Church.

—Linden M. Wenger
(See p. 7)

S. S. LESSON AND YOUTH PROGRAM FOR AUGUST 25

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MAILBAG

CRACKING A DISH?

Thank you for the bold and scholarly article, "Baptism—How, Who, When" (*Journal*, July 17). Without personal bias on sprinkling vs. immersion, I concur with the author's specification that to be meaningful it must be the outward sign of an inward change.

I would add a personal footnote: "Baptism—Why?" All four Gospels and the Acts state that John baptized with water unto repentance/forgiveness but the One who followed would baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the

kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

I believe Christian baptism is a symbol of this second birth and that form is less important than significance of the act. For example, if our first birth were out of an egg like the fowl, our baptism signifying the second birth in the Spirit could well be demonstrated by cracking a dish over our head!

—Lawrence Chandler
Spanish Fort, Ala.

the PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

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Seeking to defend, encourage, interpret and report developments in the National Presbyterian Church as long as it is truly Reformed. Reporting conservative efforts in the PCUS, while encouraging Reformed conservatives in the PCUS in their witness, showing them respect, goodwill and sincere appreciation. Reporting important events in other Churches in the Presbyterian and Reformed family.

THIS WEEK—

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AVOID CONFRONTATION

I was browsing through back issues of the *Journal* and ran across your editorial, "Toward Unity in the Bond of Peace" (May 22).

Your observations re the very real difference between historic precedent and Scripture are refreshingly discerning. Let us praise and thank God that "there is room at the foot of the cross. . . ."

I well remember the charismatic delegation that appeared before our presbytery at Atlanta. Everyone seemed so unprepared, so defensive, so bordering on hostility. My heart went out to this group as they returned to their cars, bewildered and frustrated.

A similar confrontation must be avoided at all costs at the General Assembly. We simply cannot afford a bruising encounter over this highly important issue. Thus I feel that your counsel can lead us above the petty differences that often surround this subject, toward a higher plane where true men may seek divine guidance.

—(Rev.) Robert G. Eppler
Louisville, Ky.

POLITICAL CHARGES

In "Across the Editor's Desk" of the June 28 issue, there is an account of the cost of the proceedings by the Senate Watergate Committee, the House Judiciary Committee, and the special task force of the Justice Department. The editor summarizes: "All in all, these raiding parties trying to bring down the Administration have spent about \$6 million and the game isn't half over." Then he brings the paragraph to a climax with a quotation from a Raleigh, N. C., editorialist who closes thus: "Without question, this is the best financed lynching party ever assembled."

We protest these accusations. A

raiding party which becomes a lynching party takes the law into its own hands, judges and executes an alleged criminal. Have Sen. Sam Ervin, Prof. A. Cox, or Hon. Elliot Richardson so disregarded law and order? Have "the President's men" who have been indicted and convicted for their illegal acts in his re-election campaign been lynched? And what of those who have pleaded guilty, and sometimes have plea bargained for mercy? At least one of these, Charles Colson, only confessed his wrongdoing after his conversion. Or what of the uncovering of the almost half million that the President failed to pay on his income taxes?

Instead of publishing these political charges, should not a journal of the Reformed faith rather call its readers to prayer: that the God of our fathers may pilot the ship of

state through these troubled waters?

—(Rev.) Wm. C. Robinson
Claremont, Cal.

MINISTERS

J. Gary Aitken from Mullins, S.C., to the First Church, Clarksdale, Miss.

James E. Atwood from Wilmington, N.C., to the Grace church, Springfield, Va.

Ralph G. Bright from Gastonia, N.C., to the Elizabethtown, N.C., church.

Richard W. Caldwell from Shelby, N.C., to the First Church, Tampa, Fla., as associate pastor.

James Choomack Jr., received from the United Church of Christ, to the Forest Hills church, Tampa, Fla., as associate pastor.

Martin L. Harkey Jr., from Anderson, S.C., to the First Church, Orlando, Fla., as assistant pastor.

P. Douglas Heidt from Roanoke, Va., to the Grace church, Little Rock, Ark.

William D. Hyers from Bakersville, N.C., to the Central, Westridge and Cedarview churches, Kingsport, Tenn.

Boyd F. Jordan, received from the UPUSA, to the Auburn, Caney Fork and Ebenezer parish, Auburn, Ky.

William H. Mason from Wesson, Miss., to the Brent, Ala., church.

Guy Newland Jr. from graduate work, Louisville, Ky., to the New Providence church, Salvisa, Ky.

E. P. Nichols from Gautier, Miss., to Putney, Ga., as evangelist for Southwest Georgia presbytery.

• This is being written at 38,000 feet (and 110° below zero, according to the pilot), somewhere between Glasgow and Greenland on the way home from a meeting which deserved all the adjectives ordinarily thrown around with casual abandon. This one, being largely inspirational, had to be experienced to get the impact. We've tried to convey a bit of the flavor on the following pages.

• When you come back from a meeting of this kind, it isn't easy to answer the first question everybody asks: "What did they *do*?" Apart from being thrilled with the story of what others are doing around the world to win it to Christ and being motivated to get out and do more than one has done, what *did* they do? Perhaps the greatest benefit went to the leadership of the Third World, of whom many had never strayed far from home. These testified their vision had been stretched to almost astronomical proportions, with accompanying appreciation for people they before had mistrusted. The whole world can only benefit from such cross-contacts between Uganda and Pakistan and Hong Kong and South Africa and Iran and Chile. There *was* a "continuing committee" elected, from whose efforts hopefully a worldwide fellow-

ship of evangelicals will develop. And Billy Graham, who was in large measure responsible for it all, announced that he intends to cover as many different continents as possible with crusades in the next few years.

• In Europe, the pagan presence is a bit more commonplace than in America (although in some areas, notably France, evidences of revival are beginning to appear). One night we casually flipped the switch on the bedside radio speaker. A folk singer was improvising a ballad on "The Poor Carpenter." Sang he: "Jesus called on the poor to rise up against the rich—so the rich conspired together and killed Him—now the vision of this poor carpenter is in your hands—what will you do with it?" That one was followed by another in German that we did not understand. But the refrain contained a phrase we did: "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh. . ."

• At the hotel desk, we watched Frank Barker dealing with the at-

tractive girl behind the counter. What would she say to the Almighty if she should stand before Him that night? The answer came matter-of-factly: "I don't believe in anything after this life. When you're gone, you're gone." Followed by a French shrug. By the time we left Lausanne, four days later, the ongoing conversation had bogged down. But she accepted a tract . . . and a telephone number. Some day, the Lord will touch her heart. We believe that.

• Some of our mistakes are small, some are large. We have just learned that we made what could be the biggest yet. In reporting the actions of the United Presbyterian General Assembly, we said the proposed constitutional change authorizing a membership category of "mission associate" had been approved and sent to the presbyteries. We now have been told that the proposal, as approved by the standing committee, *failed* on the floor of the Assembly. It will *not* be voted on this year. We are sorry. ☩

ACROSS THE EDITOR'S DESK

