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the
PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

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

Doctrine, Not Structure

No, the situation regarding charismatic experiences is not really parallel to the union effort. For one thing, the various proposed unions aim at structural unity and tend to gloss over doctrinal differences. The core of the conflict between charismatics and non-charismatics is in the doctrinal area.

For another thing, the experiences and convictions involved are intensely personal and intimate. Action, disagreement over what the Church should be *doing*, is not involved. Nobody is called on to endorse, support, march on, or pay for his or another's charismatic experience.

—Ann Hancock
(See p. 13)

S. S. LESSON AND YOUTH PROGRAM FOR JULY 7

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MAILBAG

ONE WHO KNOWS

Your lead editorial in the May 29 *Journal*, "Where Americans Go to Church," caught my attention immediately. The report and map which you discussed of religions in America are unfamiliar to me, and yet the material and presentation do sound familiar, as I served on the geographic staff which compiled the *National Atlas of the United States* in 1970, for the U.S. Geological Survey. The Atlas map was based on statistics for 1952 as compiled by the National Council of Churches. I feel that both maps—the one you discussed and ours—probably have

certain basic faults, regardless of date.

1) Basing religious statistics on a purely county basis gives a very uneven distribution of population data and thus influences the overall visual appearance, such as a Mercator projection map of the world giving the illusion that Greenland is as large as South America. Large but sparsely settled Western counties take on an importance out of proportion when compared with small but more densely settled Eastern counties. For example, big Hinsdale County, Colorado, population about 200, shows up as "solidly Presbyterian" because

there is only one church in this county. Counties in the Plains States and westward may show up as Episcopalian or Congregationalist or Presbyterian due to earlier missions work by these Churches among the Indians.

2) Some major religious groups were *not* considered, at least on our map, perhaps on yours too. About 8 million Negro Baptists and over 2 million Negro Methodists, while amplifying the Baptist/Methodist domination in the South, would certainly alter the overall percentages for many a Mid-South or urban Northeastern county. The Eastern Orthodox Churches were not included for a similar reason of vagueness in membership figures. The "non-denomination," called the Churches of Christ, was not included, which could well affect a large number of counties in the South, especially Texas.

3) The statistics are perhaps misleading because the various Protestant denominations count membership from age 12 or 13 up whereas, I think, the Roman Catholic Church counts its members from the age of infant baptism.

Now, the very fact that the Presbyterian Churches showed up so poorly nationwide *may* be one of our strong points—our relatively even distribution across our nation, compared to the often lopsided distribution of most other denominations.

But, after all, are numbers all that important?

The sectarian groups, such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh-Day Adventists, go about on their strong and zealous mission, unworried about present insignificant numbers.

The "Quiet Ones of the Land"—God bless them—the Anabaptists, the Brethren, the Moravians, the Quakers, are small in number, but have exerted influence for good far out of proportion to their size.

—Henry Sauber
Hyattsville, Md.

OF ABORTION

I have read all of the articles about abortion in the *Journal*, also newspaper accounts about changing state laws on this subject. Every writer since time immemorial has laid the cause and decisions of pregnancy or abortion on the wife or the unmarried mother. I think it is past time, the father of these unwanted babies be brought into the light of day and

the PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

Rev. G. Aiken Taylor, Ph.D., Editor

Charles E. Boyce Jr., Assistant Editor

Rev. Henry B. Dendy, D.D., Managing Editor

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—

Vol. XXXIII, No. 8, June 19, 1974

A Declaration of Faith	7
Reproducing portions of a proposed doctrinal standard	
Departments—	
Editorials	12
The Layman and his Church	13
Sunday School Lesson, July 7	14
Youth Program, July 7	16
Book Reviews	18

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let some of the blame and decisions go where it belongs.

When an abortion is asked for an unwanted child, why not a law of sterilization on that male who caused that life to be there. For five minutes of pleasure, a baby is murdered.

—Mrs. Lucile W. Breedlove
Newark, Del.

USE 'MIRACLE' SPARINGLY

The use of the word "miracle" sometimes is subject to misunderstanding. In your article entitled, "Can We Get Together," you use the term many times. In my opinion, about the only one of the cases you mention which John Calvin would have called a miracle is the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. That was marked by events in the physical world, such as his being blinded, which attested to the apostleship of

Paul and accredited the new revelation to be made to and through him.

Other cases, such as Calvin's own conversion, he would accept as facts, as God's direct action encountering him, as the work of the Spirit—God acted by His Spirit and by His Word and suddenly subdued Calvin unto Himself. But Calvin would not have called these or like spiritual experiences miracles.

Perhaps, if the difference in terminology were recognized and those of us who follow Calvin in his letter to King Francis denying continuing miracles were permitted to call most of the events you call miracles direct actions of the Holy Spirit blessing our hearts and lives, that might help us get together—or at least live and let live.

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

MINISTERS

Edward C. Langham from Tucker, Ga., to the Norcross, Ga., church.

Donald E. Neel from Atlanta, Ga., to executive secretary of Shenandoah Presbytery.

James B. Sherwood from Atlanta, Ga., to the Covenant Church, Montgomery, Ala.

Richard H. Watson (UPUSA) from St. Paul, Minn., to the Westminster church, Duluth, Minn.

Philip H. Young from Blacksburg, Va., to the Church of the Apostles (UPUSA), Burnsville, Minn.

DEATH

Patrick D. Miller, 74, former moderator of the PCUS General Assembly, died June 3 at his home in Decatur, Ga., after an extended illness.

• By the time this issue of the *Journal* reaches most of our readers, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church US, in session in Louisville, Ky., will have received and approved for distribution a proposed new confession of faith and a plan designed to unite the PCUS with the United Presbyterian Church USA. When the first draft of the new confession appeared in 1972, we published the whole thing. This time we are publishing three chapters only: on God, on Jesus Christ and on the Word of God. Interested readers, comparing these with the first draft, will find the text has been completely rewritten, but the substance and style remain essentially the same. The new confession has been issued as part of a "book of confessions," presumably to reduce the impact it has when viewed alone. It is accompanied by a study guide, and by the text of new ordination vows proposed for adoption at the time it becomes the Church's theological standard. As of this writing, there is no plan to vote formal approval and adoption of the new confession any time soon. It is being sent down

ACROSS THE EDITOR'S DESK



for study only.

• The issue of June 5 carried the story of the latest meeting of the General Executive Board in which an action was reported which may have been overlooked by hurried readers. The GEB, in strictly routine fashion, heard from its Division of International Mission that four persons had been appointed to call on southern senators to urge them to vote for a Senate bill dealing with World Bank funding of low-interest, long-term loans for projects in developing nations. This was the same meeting of the GEB which dealt with the restlessness in the Church created by the "political stance" of the denomination's Washington communications office. If there was any question in anyone's mind as to what effect might be created by overtures seeking to stop the Church's political lobbying in Washington, this should

constitute answer enough!

• Commissioners to the Assembly are assigned to standing committees which, for the first time, are officially in charge of "chairpersons." That interesting term has been enlarged, in a report from the GEB to the Assembly, by the use of "churchpersons." However, a news release describing activities at the Assembly makes frequent references to the "churchwomen" who will be present. Isn't that incongruous? Presumably, there will be special care taken to avoid the use of a hymn which has been a long-time favorite in Presbyterian circles, "Rise up, O Men of God." "Persons" just wouldn't fit the verse!

• We have the name of another young lady we can, without reservation, recommend as a potential director of Christian education. Get in touch with us. ☐