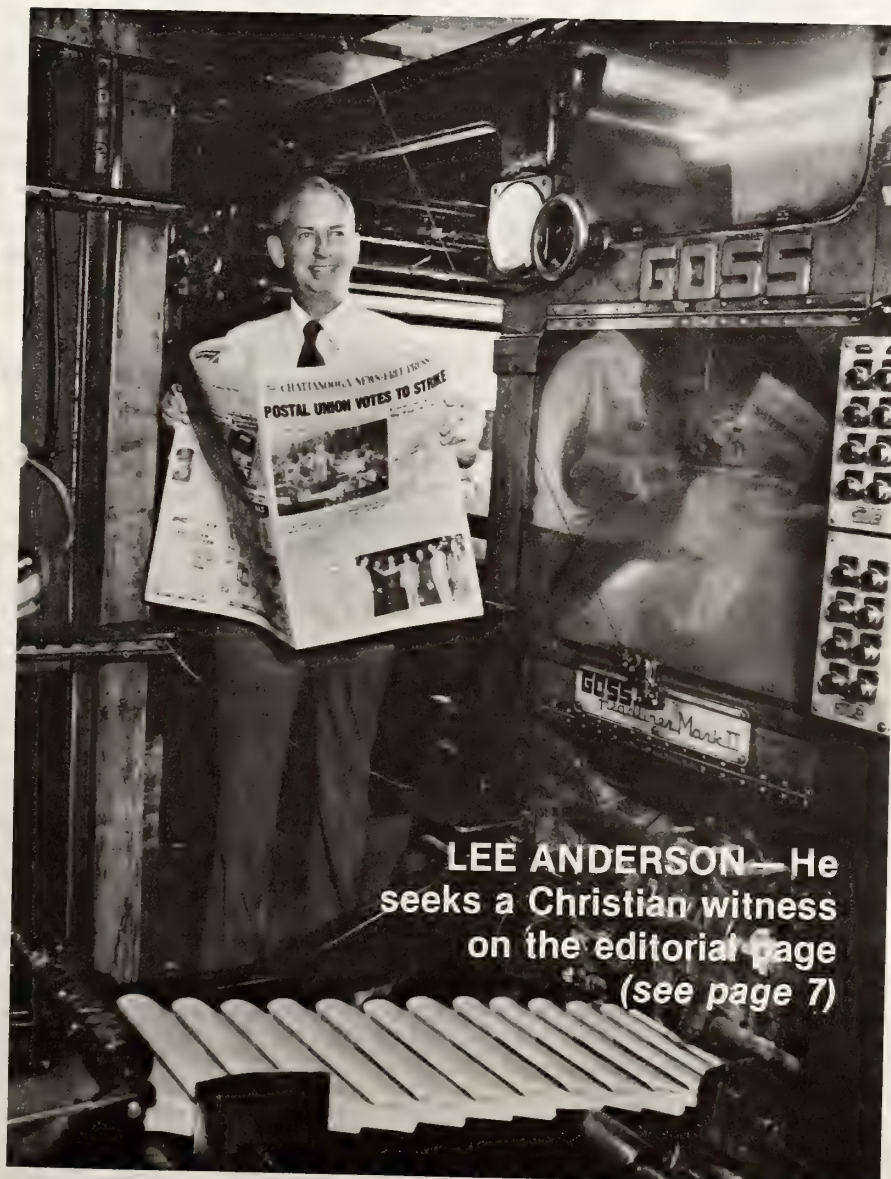


The Presbyterian JOURNAL

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SUPPORTING THE ENLARGEMENT OF A PRESBYTERIAN WITNESS LOYAL TO SCRIPTURE AND THE REFORMED FAITH



LEE ANDERSON—He seeks a Christian witness on the editorial page (see page 7)

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 24

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Mailbag

SECOND THOUGHTS

"Second thoughts are ever wiser," said Euripides. I have been having some second thoughts about the sixth PCA General Assembly, in light of the financial crunch so dramatically highlighted in recent issues of the *Journal*.

Churchmanship has been an honorable word and concept in the history of the Christian Church. A newly ordained Presbyterian minister always has been expected to believe his Church was one of the branches of which Christ is the vine, and to believe that Christ "will build my

Church." He expected to be an undershepherd of Christ's flock. In that role he was highly approved if he became a *churchman*.

A churchman supports all facets of the work of his denomination. A denomination functions smoothly and gains "concretion," to use a Whiteheadian term, when the ministers are churchmen—likewise when the professional staffs of the committees and agencies are churchmen.

Although in contacts with local congregations churchmen may expound their own phase of the work, they support the denominational program and, above all, they support the budget solidly.

When one attended a General Assembly—and I have attended many in the 49 years since I was ordained—one had the feeling that the entire assemblage was there to devel-

op and lead in support of the programs presented for the growth and development of the whole Church.

As the modernist controversies developed, the Church's program became suspect. The big complaint voiced against the evangelicals was that they were not good churchmen. Many sent their mission money to faith missions. They were critical of and withheld support from programs they did not consider true to the Gospel.

Unfortunately, we in the PCA seem to be having difficulty breaking with long habit. I saw little evidence of churchmanship at the sixth General Assembly—either on the part of the commissioners or on the part of the professional staff of the committees. One committee, in particular, seemed to have solid support and many ardent defenders, while the other committees seemed to receive only apathetic approval. It was rumored that the popular committee goes into local congregations and asks for faith promises for its work alone. This does not seem to me to be churchmanship.

In our former connections, we all resented our inability to designate gifts. The division of our benevolence dollar was made at higher levels. In the denominations we came from, roughly forty cents of the dollar we gave went for foreign missions, forty cents for home missions, twelve cents for Christian education and the remainder for administrative costs.

The regimentation made us protest that our freedom to give as the Lord led was impaired. But freedom entails responsibility and it is irresponsible if we do not *equitably* support all the committees of that Church we *do* believe is true to the Gospel. The record to date seems to suggest that we need churchmanship on both local sessions and on the staffs of the committees.

Under the old denominational policy, the Gospel was sent across the prairies and plains to the mountains, as well as overseas. Great indigenous Churches resulted, not to mention hospitals, schools and social progress. Then, when America changed from a rural to an urban economy and the inner cities declined, there was money to begin work in the suburbs and those suburban con-

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Seeking to promote a rising reformation in God's Church according to the whole counsel of God known as the Reformed faith; to define, describe, popularize and promote the Reformed faith; to encourage and assist Reformed conservatives; and to report on activities in Presbyterian and Reformed bodies.

THIS WEEK—

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A millennial view that many thought was extinct in Reformed theology has resurfaced

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gregations are the strength of most denominations today.

Under the new policy, there seems to be enough for overseas expansion, but not enough to extend our work across the nation at home. Does this not suggest that we need to learn how to be churchmen?

—(Rev.) James L. Rohrbaugh
Seattle, Wash.

POLITY OR FAITH: WHICH?

As reported in the July 12/19 *Journal*, two candidates seeking to labor in New York Presbyterian churches were denied that privilege because they would not approve of women's ordination. The deciding resolution stated that "only those candidates, licentiates or clergy who can fully support the government of the United Presbyterian Church USA shall be

permitted to serve churches within (the presbytery's) jurisdiction."

Yet some of us are old enough to remember when New York presbytery forced through the General Assembly the acceptance of her candidates who declined to accept the virgin birth of Christ. And this looseness in matters of faith has gone on apace.

A couple of years ago, the pastor of the Upland Presbyterian Church in California was reported as publicly rejecting the deity of Christ, His virgin birth, His resurrection and His ascension. On one occasion he even was reported as attacking in his morning message the moral character of Jesus. From that service two families walked out and lodged complaints with the session. In response to the complaints, two women elders were sent to visit the families. The elders declared that a Presbyterian minister

was free to believe whatever he saw fit.

Thus we are left with a situation in which UPCUSA ministers may believe as little as they see fit, but woe unto them if they deviate a single degree from edicts of government—yes, that means, in part, human commandments.

—(Rev.) William C. Robinson
Clinton, S.C.

MINISTERS

Thomas J. Holden III from Carolina Beach, N.C., to the Stones Chapel and Berryville, Va., Churches (PCUS).

John W. Larson from Amory, Miss., to the Oakmont Church (PCUS), Birmingham, Ala.

Hershey J. Longenecker from Pulaski, Va., to the New Bethel Church (PCUS), Piney Flats, Tenn.

Harvey Lee Friedel from Haskell, Tex., to the First Church (PCUS), Cuero, Tex.



Across the Editor's Desk

● This, and the next issue of the *Journal*, doubtless will be considered controversial in some Reformed circles. On p. 9 you will find the first of a two-part "package." The second part, next week, will cover a new approach to the law of God which has surfaced recently and which goes hand in hand with this first part—a new approach to Christian teaching on "last things" or the "end times." In the lead editorial on p. 14 we also have tried to explain *why* we think these new developments have appeared in Reformed circles. An article which probably should have been scheduled for this issue appeared instead *last* week: "Christians Under Oppression." It would make excellent reading by way of preparation for "Postmillennialism Revisited." Among other things, the author, Roger Greenway, dramatically high-

lighted the way the Gospel has been virtually eliminated from some parts of the world, leading to echoes of tribulation which remind us of the unanimous opinion of the New Testament authors that "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

● The helpful treatment of how to minister to dying persons (p. 11) is one of several attractive tracts authored by Dr. C. John Miller and distributed by the Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship, P.O. Box 1890, Decatur, Ga. 30031. Others in the series are, "Witnessing to the American Businessman," "Witnessing to Jehovah's Witnesses," "Witnessing to Roman Catholics." The tracts are 15 cents each and would be perfect for a church's tract rack. In addition, Dr. Miller has written a very usable tract after the style and format of the "Four Spiritual Laws" presentation, entitled, "A New Life." These are available at 10 cents each from PEF.

● Changing the subject, a recent study of drinking habits in America suggests that in one category, at least, drinking is beginning to approach 100 per cent. The Medical Foundation, after surveying 34 New England colleges, reports that 95 per cent of the students admitted to drinking. The

study found there was "little difference among classes or sexes." It also found that drinking patterns had been set in high school—60 per cent of the "frequent-heavy" drinkers in college said they started in high school.

● We haven't seen it in any of the papers yet, but in Washington, D.C., U.S. District Court Judge John J. Sirica has ruled that the federal law which restrains women from serving in combat assignments on U.S. Navy combat ships is unconstitutional. Navy women must be given the same rights as men to receive assignments aboard any Navy ship and the assignment must be made on the basis of their individual qualifications, and not their sex, the "Watergate judge" ruled. The judge noted, in his ruling, that there has been a marked increase of highly qualified women entering the military in recent years and also that the rule which restricts women from combat service also affects the jobs available to them ashore. It used to be that wives once waited patiently for their men to come back from sea duty. Is the time coming when husbands will wait with equal patience for their wives to return from—say three months submerged in a nuclear sub? [T]