



*"The Only Infallible Rule
of Faith and Practice"*

THE CONCERNED PRESBYTERIAN

*Dedicated to Returning the Presbyterian Church U. S.
to its Primary Mission — Winning the Unsaved for
Christ and Nurturing all Believers in the Faith*

BULLETIN No. 19

FEBRUARY, 1971

11 Valid Reasons for Opposing Union with The United Presbyterian Church U. S. A.

WE are very rapidly approaching the day when every presbytery and congregation will have to decide whether they wish to remain Presbyterian in doctrine and form of government or whether they want to unite with the UPUSA and become a part of the COCU super-"Church of Christ Uniting." We believe that the time has come for the ruling elders in every session in our Church to study carefully and prayerfully the pros and the cons of this union which our liberal brethren are trying so hard to bring about.

There are many reasons why we feel that it would be a tragedy for our Church to unite with the United Presbyterian Church. There are many fine conservative congregations in the UPUSA — many dedicated ministers, missionaries and church officers who are just as concerned about the situation they face in their denomination as we are about the situation we face in ours. Many of these men have told us that we would have little to gain and very much to lose if we unite with them.

Here are eleven reasons why we are so opposed to this merger:

1. In spite of all the unrest our Church is still doing a far better job for the cause of Christ if statistics mean anything. UPUSA church membership dropped almost 30,000 in 1968 and over 50,000 in 1969. We had a slight gain in 1968 and lost only 4,256 members in 1969 — the first net loss reported in 48 years. UPUSA Sunday School attendance dropped 170,000 in 1967 and 1968 and over 104,000 in 1969. Our church school attendance dropped only 25,000 in 1967 and 1968 but it dropped 57,841 in 1969. Year after year our members give far more per capita to benevolences than UPUSA members give.

2. The UPUSA has 3,200,000 members. We have about 950,000. We would therefore have little voice in determining the policies and programs of a united church. They would be set by the liberal leaders who control the United Presbyterian Church. We would be outnumbered more than 3 to 1.

3. In our Church, planning, staffing and financing are usually determined and controlled by the presbytery. Most decisions are made at the presbytery level. In the United Presbyterian Church control of planning, program and staff tends to flow from the Assembly and

synod down to the presbytery. This is important because the UPUSA Church is dominated and controlled by men of liberal persuasion. Their control is so absolute that there seems little likelihood that the leadership can ever be returned to conservative hands. In our Church recent votes indicate that the liberals do *not* control a majority of the presbyteries.

4. Departures from established doctrine are far more prevalent in the UPUSA. Not many ministers in our denomination dare to stand in their pulpits and openly deny the Virgin Birth and the validity of Christ's death on the cross. The UPUSA Church has not only condoned men who have done this but it has elected to its highest offices men who have publicly disavowed some of Christianity's cardinal doctrines.

5. Social action plays a much more dominant role
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A Challenge to Our Moderator

IN his recent travels our present Moderator, Dr. Wm. A. Benfield, Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Charleston, W.Va., has made it a point to castigate the four conservative organizations which are working to prevent the liquidation of our beloved Church.

Referring to the resolutions which have been adopted by 14 presbyteries, the Moderator said that the resolutions have "brought the polarization of the Church to its highest pitch." He said, "There are those in our denomination who seek to divide us, who will not accept decisions *constitutionally made*, who have drawn the line and are saying to our Assembly: 'If you go in these directions, we will not go with you.'"

We contend that many of the decisions of our highest court have *not* been *constitutionally made*. (The underscoring is ours.) The Book of Church Order amendment to permit union presbyteries was sent to the presbyteries for a simple majority vote when the Assembly's own Permanent Judicial Commission had advised the Assembly that a 3/4ths vote was required for the amendment to be strictly constitutional. The Mobile

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waiting period will discourage the idea of withdrawal. It is moreover to be noted that the vote for withdrawal must be a majority of the communicant members of the congregation; in a church of any size to secure the attendance at a congregational meeting of a majority of the communicant members will prove no small task.

Our survey of the principal aspects of the C.O.C.U. Plan leads to the conclusion that no seriously committed Presbyterian could possibly favor this union.

Institute for Evangelism

THE need for personal evangelism was never greater than it is today when so many "trumpets are sounding an uncertain sound."

During 1970 Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., and Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship co-sponsored a number of Personal Evangelism 4-to-5-day Training Institutes in which church members were trained in the techniques of leading others to Christ. These were so successful that our two organizations have now employed a dedicated layman to conduct these institutes on a fulltime basis.

Henry Thigpen is an active elder in First Presbyterian Church, Tuscumbia, Alabama. He was graduated from Auburn University in 1943 with a B.S. degree majoring in Industrial Engineering. He holds a graduate degree in Civil Engineers earned at Texas A. & M. in 1957. He retired from the U.S. Army in 1967 with rank of Lt. Colonel. He has had considerable experience in personal soul-winning.

Mr. Thigpen will begin his work on April 1st. We want to do everything we possibly can in cooperation with PEF to insure that we take full advantage of his services. At the present time 23 dates are still available:

APRIL — 7-10; 14 to 18; 28 to May 2. MAY 5-9; 13-23; 26-30. JUNE 9-13; 16-20; 30 to July 3. JULY 7-10; 28-31. AUGUST 4-8; 18-22. SEPTEMBER 1-5; 8-12; 22-26; 29 to October 3. OCTOBER 13-17; 20-24. NOVEMBER 3-7; 10-14; 24-28. DECEMBER 1-5; 8-12.

If you want your church to benefit from one of these fine institutes get in touch promptly with Col. Roy LeCraw, 2793 Clairmont Rd. NE, Atlanta, Ga. 30329, phone 633-0104; W. A. L. Sibley, 110 Fant Lane, Union, S. C. 29379, phone 427-5510; or the Rev. William E. Hill, Jr., P. O. Box 808, Hopewell, Va. 23860, phone 458-1313.

Your Copy of C. O. C. U. Plan

ORDER your copy of the Plan for C.O.C.U.'s "Church of Christ Uniting" by sending 25¢ in coin to Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., 100 No. Biscayne Blvd., Miami, Fla. 33132. It is vital that every Presbyterian become familiar with this plan under which nine denominations, including ours, are proposing to unite. Better still, order a copy for every member of your Session and other leaders in your congregation.

On Being a Presbyterian

THE folder *What Presbyterians Believe* is brief, easy reading. It explains the doctrinal magnitudes of Presbyterianism. As a refresher, one copy is available free upon request by writing Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., 100 No. Biscayne Blvd., Miami, Fla. 33132. You may decide to order sufficient quantities for your church school, your session and for your Presbyterian friends, 10 for 30¢, 35 for \$1.00.

IF YOU ARE "CONCERNED" ABOUT THE TRENDS IN OUR CHURCH USE THIS ENROLLMENT BLANK TO ENLIST TODAY!

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I AM CONCERNED about present trends in the Presbyterian Church, U.S. Please enroll me as a member of Concerned Presbyterians, Inc. and send me your Bulletins and other literature.

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homosexuals.

(4) Adultery in "exceptional circumstances."

Discussing "Courtship and Marriage," the report says, "In place of the simple, but ineffective and widely disregarded standard of premarital virginity, we would prefer to hear our church speak in favor of the more significant standard of responsibly appropriate behavior . . . If . . . a couple has taken a responsible decision to engage in premarital intercourse, the church should not convey to them the impression that their decision is in conflict with their status as members of the body of Christ."

"On adultery, for example, heretofore absolutely unpermissible in the eyes of the Church, we recognize that there may be exceptional circumstances where extramarital activity may not be contrary to the interests of a faithful concern for the well-being of the marriage partner."

Such a report urging the Church to take a position directly opposed to the clear teaching of God's Word on fornication and adultery should have been summarily rejected, but the UPUSA General Assembly did not reject it but ordered the report sent down to its churches for study.

Seeking to soften the impact of this decision on the Church membership-at-large the Assembly was then asked to adopt this statement:

"We affirm our adherence to the moral law of God as revealed in the Old and New Testament that adultery,, prostitution and homosexuality are sinful."

347 Commissioners — almost half of the delegate body — voted against approving the resolution. That the resolution passed by only 9 votes indicates that a large number of UPUSA leaders reject the clear teachings of the Bible on fornication, adultery, and homosexuality, are unwilling to oppose the permissiveness which is rearing its ugly head today, and are in favor of replacing God's moral standards with man-made rules for human behavior. For us to unite with a denomination the leadership of which will not take an unequivocal stand on these moral issues would have a tragic effect on our young people.

10. Before a minister, ruling elder or deacon is ordained in the Presbyterian Church U.S. (our Church) he is required to take a solemn vow that he sincerely receives and adopts the Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures and that if at any time he finds himself out of accord with any of the fundamentals of this system of doctrine he will make known to his Presbytery (in the case of ministers) or Session (in the case of Ruling Elders and Deacons) the change which has taken place in his views.

Prior to 1967 ministers, ruling elders and deacons in the United Presbyterian Church U.S.A. were required to take a somewhat similar vow. But when that Church adopted its Book of Confessions in 1967, the subscription question was eliminated. We think this distinction is very important. A Church in which the officers and ministers no longer solemnly subscribe to a confession is not a confessional Church!

11. Union with the UPUSA would be but the first step toward merger into the super-"Church of Christ Uniting," for the UPUSA leadership is deeply committed to the super-Church. The United Presbyterian Church and the Episcopal Church initiated this idea of the super-Church when they formulated the Blake-Pike plan. The plan for the COCU Church is now in the hands of your session for study. It provides for a Church to be ruled by bishops under the episcopal

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system. (pages 49-53.) It takes from your congregation the right to choose your own pastor, (page 62) elect your own officers, control your own finances and hold and manage your own property. (page 61.) All these things would be done by a parish council (pages 61-8). This council will dictate the program of your local church (page 60); it will have power to discipline your church if it does not carry out the program (61); and it will control where your church's money will go. The office of ruling elder will be entirely eliminated. Ownership and control of your church property will be taken away from your congregation. Title will be vested in the parish. (page 61).

We cannot believe that intelligent Presbyterians, if they know what they are doing, will ever consent to become a part of such a Church. We urge you to write our Miami office for a copy of the plan, enclosing 25¢ in coin. Better still, order enough copies for the members of your session. Study the plan carefully.

I have outlined for you 11 reasons why we think it would be a tragic mistake for our Church to unite with the UPUSA. Your congregation will probably end up in this super-church if our Church votes to unite with the UPUSA and your congregation does not elect to remain outside the united Church.

The proposed Plan of Union is to be presented to the 1971 General Assemblies of our two denominations. It is expected that the Plan will be sent down to the churches for study and that the final Plan with any revisions will be voted on by the 1972 or 1973 Assemblies. If the Assemblies approve the Plan it will go to the presbyteries for a vote in January, 1973, or January, 1974.

The Plan as presently drafted contains a provision which will allow individual churches to remain outside the union and retain their properties. It allows dissenting churches in presbyteries and synods to petition for the division of presbytery and synod properties, allowing these units "to convey to such dissenting churches a proportional interest in such properties not greater than the proportion of the membership of such congregations bears to the total membership."

These provisions could be changed in the final draft but we do not believe they will be changed because our liberal brethren realize that they simply cannot muster the necessary votes to have 3/4ths of the presbyteries approve the Plan if it does not contain an "escape" clause.

The Plan makes no provision for a fair and equitable division of Assembly assets. This is a very serious defect. The conservative churches have contributed very substantially over the years to build Assembly buildings and to create the trust and endowment funds and they will be loath to have these assets taken over in their entirety by a new Church in which they will have no part.

We anticipate that as many as 2,000 of our PCUS

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Opposing Union . . .

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churches will refuse to unite with the UPUSA. We feel confident that conservatives have the voting strength today to defeat the Plan. And there is every reason to believe that the present opposition to union will increase considerably as more and more church officers and members become informed during the next two years regarding what this merger will do to our Church.

If the 1972 or 1973 Assemblies approve the Plan, those who stand for a Church loyal to the Word of God and to Presbyterian Doctrine and polity will have to decide whether to reject the Plan and defeat the union or to approve the Plan, taking advantage of its "escape clause" and form a new conservative Church.

If we defeat the Plan by a decisive vote, some of those who favor union will probably decide to leave our Church. If enough of the more radical liberals leave, it would not take very long to change the present leadership of our boards, agencies and important committees. If the vote to reject the Plan is fairly close, these men could decide to remain in the Church and continue their fight to merge our two denominations. In this event the struggle we are presently having will continue.

If the conservatives decide to approve the Plan to take advantage of its "escape clause" and the Plan is approved by 3/4ths of the presbyteries, every individual church congregation will have to decide whether it will enter the new united Church or whether it will join with the hundreds of churches which are expected to refrain from uniting. This decision will have to be made in the spring of 1973 or 1974. Every member of every church needs to be informed regarding the crucial issues which are at stake before this important vote is taken.

We have recently seen a copy of a folder which the Joint Committees on Union plan to issue giving their reasons for forming a new united Church. Its main thrust is that we should be united because Jesus prayed "that they all may be one; even as thou Father art in me and I in thee" (John 17:21). Most commentators interpret this to mean the oneness that all true believers have in Christ—not the organic union of denominations. We feel that our liberal brethren distort the true meaning when they try to make it mean that we should all worship in the same way in one Church.

The folder says, "Presbyterian Union offers a new mandate to provide for fuller participation and representation of minorities in the life and leadership of the church." In recent years conservatives have been largely ignored in the courts of both denominations. The directorates of boards and agencies have been stacked with liberal leaders. It is folly to believe that the merger of the two denominations will give conservatives a greater voice. Past history would indicate that conservatives will have *less* to say about programs and policies in the united church than they have today.

Another paragraph reads, "Presbyterian Union will strengthen and make more compelling the special contributions which Reformed theology makes to the whole of Christian faith." How can our brethren make such a statement when their leaders are planning to abandon Reformed theology entirely in the COCU super-"Church of Christ Uniting"?

The folder also says, "Presbyterian Union would fulfill a widespread desire for union in both churches which has grown throughout many years." "A widespread desire for union" has not been growing in our Presbyterian Church U.S.—indeed there is *less* desire for union today than there was several years ago as more

and more church officers and members become informed regarding the plans of those who seek to liquidate our Church. We heartily agree with the folder's concluding paragraph: "Let our debates be free and hearty, but let our fundamental concern be an openness to the leading of God's holy spirit in these wondrous days which He has given us." Most liberal ministers have refused to allow the views of conservative ministers and lay leaders to be presented to the people in their churches. If they will now permit the issues to be openly debated and discussed we have little doubt about what the outcome will be. We say "Amen" to the holding of "free and hearty debates."

We recommend that every church member prayerfully consider the reasons for uniting advanced in their folder with our reasons for not uniting. Urge your Session to call a congregational meeting at which someone who favors the merger and someone who opposes it are asked to present the "pros and cons." Presbyterians are intelligent people, well able to decide matters like this for themselves when they know the facts.

Our present moderator has been traveling over the Church castigating the organizations which are striving to maintain a Church true to our historic Reformed Faith. If there are any good reasons for merging with the UPUSA and the COCU super-"Church of Christ Uniting" it's time that he start stressing them instead of attacking us.

May I close by telling you that we are much encouraged over recent developments. With every passing month more and more Presbyterians are becoming informed regarding the plans of the liberals to liquidate our Church, to abandon historic Presbyterianism and its evangelical testimony. Conservative voices are being heard as they have not been heard in many years in the lower courts of our Church.

The so-called border states of Missouri, Texas and Kentucky have long been the most vocal in pressing for union with UPUSA. To the surprise and dismay of the liberals, the influential presbytery of Southeast Missouri voted last fall against forming a union presbytery with their UPUSA counterpart. The liberals brought up the matter again on January 23rd and again it was voted down. The Presbytery of Northeast Texas has turned down the idea of forming a union presbytery. On February 9th Brazos Presbytery (Texas)—our third largest presbytery—rejected the formation of a union presbytery with Gulf Coast Presbytery (UPUSA). Presbyteries which have already united are beginning to encounter serious problems.

In our public rallies one question is asked time and time again—*what can I do individually to help save our Church?* Let me suggest these seven ways of helping:

1. If you are in accord with our efforts to preserve the Presbyterian Church U.S. and have not yet enrolled as a member of Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., notify our Miami office by letter or postcard that you want to be a member. You may have received some of our literature at the request of a friend but unless you enroll you will not receive all the information that we send only to enrolled members.

2. Encourage your fellow church members to enroll.

3. Do all you can to insure that conservatives are elected to your Session and Diaconate. Write for a supply of this message, our Bulletins or other literature and distribute it to your fellow members.

4. Encourage your Session to pass a strong

resolution stating that it is opposed to union with the UPUSA, opposed to any watering down of our Confession of Faith, opposed to any change in the Book of Church Order which would take control of your local church property away from your congregation.

5. Send us the names, addresses and zip codes of the officers in your church (and those of any other church in your neighborhood where you can obtain a list. We will put them on our list to receive our Bulletin "The Concerned Presbyterian.")

6. Help to undergird our work with financial gifts as you are able. It is costing \$120,000 a year to do what we are doing and every check helps. Encourage your Session to put us in your church's budget. All gifts are tax deductible.

7. Finally, pray daily for our Church. When your presbytery, synod and the General Assembly are meeting invite a group of friends to come to your home to pray that the actions taken may be in accord with God's will. Nothing encourages us more than to know that thousands of dedicated Christians all over the Church are remembering us in their prayers.

The tide, we believe, is turning. It is generally agreed by both sides that ultimate division in our Church is inevitable. There is just no way to reconcile the views of those who seek to liquidate our Church and destroy Presbyterianism and those who seek to preserve our Church and its historic evangelical testimony. The outcome is in God's hands—not in ours—but of one thing we are sure—regardless of what happens there is going to be a continuing Church loyal to the Word of God and faithful to historic Presbyterian doctrine and polity.

A Challenge . . .

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Assembly passed a resolution of censure on Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., although the Permanent Judicial Commission advised the Assembly that it had no power to censure us. These are two classic examples of the way in which recent Assemblies have violated our Constitution.

Speaking to Kanawha Presbytery last month, the Moderator said that he felt that Concerned Presbyterians, Inc. was responsible for the "myth that there is sharp cleavage between the laity and the ministry." He was quoted as saying: "This simply does not exist except where the organization of Concerned Presbyterians has tried to promote such a rift with *false interpretations* of the General Assembly and actions of ordained ministers."

We deny that we have tried to promote a rift between ministers and those in their pews. We have sought to inform church officers and members regarding the plans of our liberal brethren to liquidate our Church. We deny most vigorously that we have made "false interpretations" of General Assembly actions. We have called attention to Assembly actions which violated the Constitution of our Church. We have revealed unethical methods which those in control have frequently employed to force their minority will upon the Church-at-large. That rifts are developing in some congregations is due, we believe, to the fact many liberal ministers have kept their congregations completely "in the dark" about what is happening. They have not allowed their members to become informed regarding

the crisis in our Church because they know that many of their people would be very opposed if they became fully aware of the direction in which the liberals seek to take us.

At a meeting in Longview, Texas, on January 24th, the Moderator speaking of Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., Presbyterian Churchmen United, and the Covenant Fellowship of Presbyterians, said, "I condemn them all." Of the Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship, which has formed an organization to raise funds for evangelical foreign mission work, he has said he has "never known more tyrannical or deceitful conduct."

The Moderator also has denounced the presbyteries which have passed resolutions taking a stand against union with the United Presbyterian Church and the COCU super-"Church of Christ Uniting," saying that these resolutions had made "untrue statements to undermine and divide the Church," but he has been very careful not to specify any statements which he felt were not true. We think it is an improper act to make general accusations of this kind without being specific.

The Moderator also said that "the overwhelming majority of the Church membership is solidly behind our General Assembly." If this is true we would ask the Moderator why he and his liberal brethren are violating the Constitution of our Church and resorting to unethical actions to force their will upon the Church-at-large. The "overwhelming majority" of our members are not "solidly behind our General Assembly" and we believe the liberals are well aware of this fact.

Speaking of the liberal Fellowship of Concern which announced that it was disbanding several years ago, the Moderator said at Charleston, "I have looked into this matter very carefully. Since their disbanding there has been no organization of this group and no budget and no propaganda machine. Those who belonged to this group and who share similar views do meet at different times in various localities regionally on behalf of certain issues." How can the Moderator in honesty convey the impression that this group has disbanded when the organ of the liberal wing—the *Presbyterian Outlook*—stated in the same article announcing the group's disbanding that the group was reorganizing into "task forces" and even named the chairman of each task force?

After spending much of his time castigating our organization, the Moderator concluded by saying "instead of criticizing and condemning one another we ought to love one another." We would respectfully ask the Moderator why he doesn't start practicing a little of this "love" himself.

We think it's high time that the Moderator and his liberal brethren cease their vitriolic attacks upon the conservative organizations which are seeking to preserve a Church true to the Bible and faithful to historic Presbyterian doctrine and polity. Instead of hurling general charges which are without foundation, why don't they start giving their audiences valid reasons why they think our Church would benefit by merger with the United Presbyterian Church U.S.A. and why they believe it would further the cause of Christ to abandon Presbyterian doctrine and polity in the COCU super-"Church of Christ Uniting."

Most Presbyterians are intelligent people. They have the ability to make up their minds on issues as crucial as those which are presently causing so much discord in our Church. They have a right to hear both sides of these controversial matters. Then having heard the pros and cons they can decide for themselves where they will take their stand.

The C. O. C. U. Union Plan

By DR. ROBERT STRONG

Trinity Presbyterian Church
Montgomery, Alabama

FIVE great issues more pressingly than ever confront the Presbyterian Church U.S.. Restructuring of synods and presbyteries, title to congregationally owned properties, a new Confession of Faith and Book of Confessions, union with the United Presbyterian Church in the USA, the C.O.C.U. Plan of Union will all within the next two years come before the General Assembly for action. **Highest in importance is the issue of union with the Northern Presbyterians. If they can prevail upon our church to endorse this union, the radical and determined ecumenists will in the end secure all their objectives.** We should not on this account depreciate the significance of the other issues nor neglect them.

Now before us for study is the plan for the union of nine Protestant denominations to form the Church of Christ Uniting. This is the culmination of the Blake-Pike efforts, or the Consultation on Church Union. We here take account of the major features of this plan.

Of first importance in church life is doctrine. The plan does not set forth a formal creed or confession, but it has a great deal to say about the faith of the uniting church. It speaks of Trinity, incarnation, the death and resurrection of Christ and His coming again, justification, sanctification, the witness and mission of the church. The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed are to be adopted as the basic confessional statements of the new church, although their use in the church is to be persuasive, never coercive. Everything is in terms of generalities; specific definitions of doctrine are rare.

The universal salvation of mankind is a heresy specifically embraced, as in the phrase "the oneness of all men as reconciled in Christ's new creation" (page 11, par. 10). The language of universalism appears on page 17: "the church invites the world to see foreshadowed the final destiny God has prepared for all mankind and to participate in it" (par. 10). See also on page 18 of the plan: "the New Testament vividly stresses the identification of the risen and ascended Christ with mankind. Through this act God draws all men into fellowship with His Son" (par. 17).

The Scriptures are acknowledged to have "unique and normative authority." The neo-orthodox approach, however, prevails: "The Scripture witnesses to God's revelation, fulfilled in Christ, and to man's response to that revelation . . . It is the inspired writing bearing witness to God's acts in history by which He has called into being and sustained His people."

All the confessions of the uniting churches are recognized as valuable expressions of conviction; the way is left open for contemporary doctrinal expressions or formulations that may be deemed necessary as new problems or occasions arise. Nonetheless "the United church will constantly remind itself of the divisive dangers in verbal confessions and intellectual formulations, and of the need to keep open and continuous the theological dialogue within which the church grasps the riches that are in Jesus Christ."

Clearly the doctrinal element of the plan is a remarkable effort to go as far as possible in pleasing all the participating denominations. The least-common-denominator approach has been employed with consummate skill. Only those with a high doctrinal commitment will

be offended. Those who believe in the final judgment and in the eternal punishment of the lost will be offended. Those who hold seriously to the Calvinism of the Westminster Confession of Faith will be offended. Those who hold to the verbal inspiration and infallibility of the Bible will be offended. They will regard the price of church union as indeed far too high.

Let us now deal briefly with the forms of organization that will apply in the united church. In one word, Episcopal theory has prevailed. Consider the following language: "The Church of Christ Uniting accepts and will maintain the historic office or order of bishops. This office has been a principal symbol and agent of unity and continuity in the church, unifying its doctrine and ordered ministry from apostolic times . . . The bishops together personify the continuity of the church's trusteeship of tradition and pastoral oversight (page 49, par. 57) . . . The bishop is a chief symbol and means of ministerial continuity in the church and is responsible for the orderly transfer of ministerial authority. He presides at all services of ordination, along with representatives of other offices of the ordained ministry and of the ministry of lay persons. Thus, within the whole people of God, the bishop personifies the fullness of the priestly ministry of Christ" (page 52, par. 77). There is even a laying on of hands by bishops in the service of inauguration for the new or united church. Everybody lays hands on everybody else, but the bishop goes around the circle of ministerial participants and lays his hands on all heads. The idea of apostolic succession and of tactile (touch) succession is embodied in the scheme. Will it be stated clearly enough for the Episcopal mind? It is more than clear to a Presbyterian mind. He will be asked to swallow an ecclesiastical camel. If he took his ordination vow to receive the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States out of a sincere heart, how can he now receive Episcopal order?

A much praised feature of the C.O.C.U. Plan is the parish system. Congregations will no longer stand as individual units of their denomination but will be grouped into parishes. The principle of association will not be geographical nearness. The principle could be social or class or race integration. One church may be used for worship, another for religious education, another for social action or service, another for outreach into a neglected community. The device is calculated to eradicate denominational lines with maximum speed. Congregational self-rule will become a thing of the past. A truly radical revolution is ahead for Presbyterians who become a part of the C.O.C.U. structure.

Let it be also noted that congregational ownership of church property will be at an end, for the plan states that "church property shall be held for the benefit of the whole church" (page 80, par. 48).

Finally, we take account of the withdrawal provision in the plan. The language is: "at any time within one year after the formation of the permanent district organization, any local congregation may determine to withdraw from the united church by a majority vote of its communicant members. If such action is voted, the congregation may retain the church property used by it at the time of the Service of Inauguration" (page 81, par. 52). So then for at least a year every congregation will belong to the Church of Christ Uniting. In all likelihood it will be several years before any church will be able to exercise the option of withdrawing. In order to form the "permanent district organization" a forbidding number of steps, requiring several years to complete, will have to be taken. Perhaps it is hoped that the long

waiting period will discourage the idea of withdrawal. It is moreover to be noted that the vote for withdrawal must be a majority of the communicant members of the congregation; in a church of any size to secure the attendance at a congregational meeting of a majority of the communicant members will prove no small task.

Our survey of the principal aspects of the C.O.C.U. Plan leads to the conclusion that no seriously committed Presbyterian could possibly favor this union.

Institute for Evangelism

THE need for personal evangelism was never greater than it is today when so many "trumpets are sounding an uncertain sound."

During 1970 Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., and Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship co-sponsored a number of Personal Evangelism 4-to-5-day Training Institutes in which church members were trained in the techniques of leading others to Christ. These were so successful that our two organizations have now employed a dedicated layman to conduct these institutes on a fulltime basis.

Henry Thigpen is an active elder in First Presbyterian Church, Tuscumbia, Alabama. He was graduated from Auburn University in 1943 with a B.S. degree majoring in Industrial Engineering. He holds a graduate degree in Civil Engineers earned at Texas A. & M. in 1957. He retired from the U.S. Army in 1967 with rank of Lt. Colonel. He has had considerable experience in personal soul-winning.

Mr. Thigpen will begin his work on April 1st. We want to do everything we possibly can in cooperation with PEF to insure that we take full advantage of his services. At the present time 23 dates are still available:

APRIL — 7-10; 14 to 18; 28 to May 2. MAY 5-9; 13-23; 26-30. JUNE 9-13; 16-20; 30 to July 3. JULY 7-10; 28-31. AUGUST 4-8; 18-22. SEPTEMBER 1-5; 8-12; 22-26; 29 to October 3. OCTOBER 13-17; 20-24. NOVEMBER 3-7; 10-14; 24-28. DECEMBER 1-5; 8-12.

If you want your church to benefit from one of these fine institutes get in touch promptly with Col. Roy LeCraw, 2793 Clairmont Rd. NE, Atlanta, Ga. 30329, phone 633-0104; W. A. L. Sibley, 110 Fant Lane, Union, S. C. 29379, phone 427-5510; or the Rev. William E. Hill, Jr., P. O. Box 808, Hopewell, Va. 23860, phone 458-1313.

Your Copy of C. O. C. U. Plan

ORDER your copy of the Plan for C.O.C.U.'s "Church of Christ Uniting" by sending 25¢ in coin to Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., 100 No. Biscayne Blvd., Miami, Fla. 33132. It is vital that every Presbyterian become familiar with this plan under which nine denominations, including ours, are proposing to unite. Better still, order a copy for every member of your Session and other leaders in your congregation.

On Being a Presbyterian

THE folder *What Presbyterians Believe* is brief, easy reading. It explains the doctrinal magnitudes of Presbyterianism. As a refresher, one copy is available free upon request by writing Concerned Presbyterians, Inc., 100 No. Biscayne Blvd., Miami, Fla. 33132. You may decide to order sufficient quantities for your church school, your session and for your Presbyterian friends, 10 for 30¢, 35 for \$1.00.

IF YOU ARE "CONCERNED" ABOUT THE TRENDS IN OUR CHURCH USE THIS ENROLLMENT BLANK TO ENLIST TODAY!

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100 Biscayne Blvd., Miami, Florida 33132

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Mission Now Secularized

BACK in the early 50s Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth S. Keyes provided funds to build the Fellowship Corner Student Center in Taipei, Taiwan. It was located immediately across from the main entrance gate to the University of Taiwan. The primary purpose of the Center was to lead students to Christ, to develop Christian leadership and to channel the students into Christian churches.

Mr. and Mrs. Keyes visited the Center some years ago. Our PCUS missionary, Miss Margaret Sells, who had operated the Center, was carrying on a fine program with Bible classes and conferences. The evangelical nature of the program thrilled their hearts.

In 1969 Miss Sells was forced by the Board to turn the operation over to Mr. Chen Hweig Chung of the Taiwanese Church. Mr. Keyes was told that Miss Sells urged the students to stay on but that when she was on furlough during the summer of 1970 the students became so disgusted with the program which Mr. Chen was conducting they decided to move out of the Center and conduct their activities in the Friendship Church next door.

The Center is now called "The Way" — it is open Monday through Friday. Coffee, tea and cookies are provided from 4 to 5:30 with some sort of recreation. Luncheon and dinner are served on these days at a price students can afford. Reading is scheduled for those who want it but few religious books or periodicals are provided. Students come and listen to classical music or folk music. Classes in English and Japanese conversation are provided. There are lectures on archaeology, architecture and art but almost no Christian talks or witnessing. We understand that there are no activities scheduled on Saturday or Sunday.

Here is a classic example illustrating how the Board of World Missions has converted what was once a strong evangelistic activity into a program that is largely secular in nature.

Our information regarding the present operation of the Center did not come from Miss Sells or any present member of the Southern Presbyterian Mission. It was received from unimpeachable sources — persons who know what has taken place there.

Reformed Seminary Men

A few presbyteries have taken a stand against the admission of ministers graduated from Reformed Theological Seminary. It seems to us that this is a shortsighted policy based on lack of information as to the thoroughness with which these men are being trained to faithfully teach and preach the gospel of our Lord.

No minister or ruling elder could honestly claim that men trained at Reformed Theological Seminary are not as well qualified as ministers graduated from other seminaries.

Indeed, it would not be an overstatement to say that on the whole men graduated from Reformed Theological Seminary have been proved by examination to be more thoroughly grounded in the Reformed Faith of our Church than most men being graduated from our four Church-supported seminaries.

Fortunately, there are plenty of presbyteries where men from Reformed are eagerly sought. For a presbytery to oppose the admission of Reformed Seminary ministers is in no way a reflection on the Seminary. Instead, it is a reflection on the integrity and insight of the presbytery opposing the admission of these fine men.

THE CONCERNED PRESBYTERIAN

*Dedicated to Returning the Presbyterian Church U. S.
to its Primary Mission — Winning the Unsaved for
Christ and Nurturing all Believers in the Faith*

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