

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church is a good place for a deepening of godly aggression. In changing the name of the church when it could have kept it as the majority group, it has showed some exhibition of the love of God. And as a church which practices the principle of the purity of the visible church, yet breaking with that which in our day has come to discredit the principle of the purity of the visible church, it has showed some exhibition of the holiness of God. These two things together give some exhibition of the existence and character of God. If committed to the leading and power of the Holy Spirit, God will surely in his grace use us, individually and corporately, and perhaps He will use us in our moment of history beyond all natural expectation.

Francis A. Schaeffer
(*EPR*, Aug.-Sept., 1961, 20)

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church

SO far we have traced the history of the Bible Presbyterian side of the Presbyterian Separatist Movement through the turbulent split of 1956, that is, the history of the Bible Presbyterian Church up to its division into the majority Columbus Synod and the minority Collingswood Synod. It is the purpose of this chapter to carry on the history of the Columbus Synod since it is this branch of the Bible Presbyterian Church which will eventually unite in 1965 with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Synod, to form the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod.

In the meantime the Columbus Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church will take a new name, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The present chapter deals with the history and ecclesiastical stance of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church from 1957 to 1965. Now it is true that the Church did not officially rename itself until 1961. Yet the Columbus Synod of 1957 was for all practical purposes the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of 1961 in that the distinctive spirit of the EP Church was born in 1956 and 1957, not in 1961. The change of name in 1961 was a mere formality marking no significant development in the history of the Church; whereas the emergence of the Columbus Synod in 1956, despite much continuity with the old BP Church, really marks a new phase of Bible Presbyterian history—the distinctively Evangelical Presbyterian phase. That this is the case would be acknowl-

edged by many observers both within and without the Church. The following remark of one very astute and interested observer well illustrates the point: ‘Then the Columbus Synod occurred, and what was to be known as the Evangelical Presbyterian Church took form.’¹

In presenting the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, this chapter deals, first, with the spirit of the Columbus Synod through 1960; then, with the development of the agencies of the Synod during this period; third, with the major concerns of the Church throughout the whole of the period 1957 to 1965; then, with the life of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church from 1961 to 1965; and, finally, with the distinctive flavor of Evangelical Presbyterianism.

The Columbus Synod

There can be little doubt that there was much discouragement in the Bible Presbyterian Church during the dark days of 1955 and 1956. This was true of many in the group which was eventually to find itself in the Columbus Synod. For instance, G. Douglas Young could muse in 1955: ‘With the trouble that seems to crop up periodically in our Presbyterian witness, one could wonder whether such a testimony is necessary.’² It was not long before he left the Bible Presbyterian ministry to affiliate with another communion.

However, others, equally discouraged, would not follow suit. As Kenneth Horner writes in 1956:

In the midst of such disruption, there comes a great temptation to all to turn our backs upon the whole church and movement and go our own independent way or find another denomination with which to work. As I have personally faced this temptation and sought to think it through, I believe it would be most glorifying to God to remain with the church to which He led me at the beginning of my ministry and to

1. R. W. Gray in the *Reformed Presbyterian Reporter*, 99:6 (June, 1965), 10. In this chapter the expression ‘Columbus Synod’ refers not only to the Bible Presbyterian Synod meeting at Columbus in November of 1956, but also to that branch of the Bible Presbyterian Church which gathered there—from 1956 until it became the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in the Synod year 1960-61.

2. *Bible Press*, Sept. 9, 1955.

trust Him to enable us to weather this storm. We never solve problems by running away from them; and as someone has wisely said, 'When in a fog, throw out the anchor.' It is very important to move slowly rather than precipitously these days, and we must therefore go ahead on our knees trusting the Lord to guide us.³

Nevertheless, as intimated by these remarks, the spirit of the Columbus Synod would not be basically one of discouragement, but of determination to 'go ahead.' There is a deep and determined resolve on the part of the men to 'go forward' (Ex. 14:15) in the witness and work of the Bible Presbyterian Church. This, accordingly is the theme of the Synod of 1957, the second largest in the history of the Church.

There were various aspects of this spirit of resolve in the Church. To mention only a few: As indicated by a meeting of the New Jersey Presbytery in early 1957, there is a deep sense of the need for unity and revival in the Church. As Kyle Thurman told the Synod, when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, they did not throw mud at each other in their forward march.⁴ There is also a deepened ecclesiastical sense, that is, a new sense of the importance of the Church and subjection to the brethren, on the local and Synod-wide level, in the face of the independent spirit of the age.⁵ Moreover, there is an accompanying spirit of evangelical urgency.⁶ Finally, there is a spirit of expectancy as to the blessing of the Lord on the Church now that the storm of strife is past.

Coupled with resolve there is also in the Columbus Synod a spirit of relief, repentance, repudiation, and regret. Against the background of the Division of 1956 there is a general

3. *An Analysis of Troubled Conditions in the Bible Presbyterian Church and the Separation Movement* (Originally prepared Nov., 1955), Mimeographed Preface, May 17, 1956, 2.

4. *Bulletin News Supplement (BNS)*, 1:20 (June 11, 1957); 1:17 (May 21, 1957). This little weekly denominational news sheet, for insertion into the weekly bulletins of the various local churches, was begun at the beginning of 1957. Its origin and success are no doubt both a product and cause of a new sense of unity within the Church. The *BNS* is an invaluable source for tracing the history of the Church from 1957 on.

5. Cf., e.g., *Bible Presbyterian Reporter (BPR)*, 2:1 (not 1:7; Feb.-Mar., 1957), 5; R. H. Cox, 'What Is Involved in Church Membership?'

6. Cf. remarks of P. Edwards in *BNS*, 1:11 (April 9, 1957).

feeling of relief that the storm of schism is over. There is, as we have seen, repentance regarding past sin and failure relating to the genesis, development, and consummation of the division. For instance, one day of the Synod of 1957 is set aside as a day of humiliation and prayer. Moreover, there is, as we have seen, repudiation of Carl McIntire's approach to maintaining the testimony of separation, as one which embodies a dishonest fundamentalism on the one hand and extreme separatism on the other.⁷ Finally, there is regret for 'the severity and bitterness of the division of 1937' on the one hand, and for that of the division of 1956 on the other. As the Synod of 1957 declared:

We wish to express our deep sorrow and regret at the separation that has come with esteemed brethren, and would assure them of our continued love and prayers. We pray that though a separation between us is now an accomplished fact, that as we pursue our respective ministries, bickering and bitter words may come to an end, so that there may be no further stain upon our testimonies, and the work of the Lord may go forward.

The Synod of 1957 also assured Christian brethren around the world, both within and without the McIntire-dominated International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC), of its continued opposition to apostasy and communism. The Synod, on the whole, was also interested in maintaining Bible Presbyterian distinctives. For example, the commissioners turned down a proposal to let the *Bible Presbyterian Reporter* become an interdenominational Presbyterian journal, 'wary of anything that looked like a retreat from Bible Presbyterianism'—as church-goers read in the *Bulletin Supplement*.⁹ In this spirit there was also at the instigation of moderator Horner, a reaffirmation of the Harvey Cedars Resolutions regarding personal and ecclesiastical separation.¹⁰ The spirit and con-

7. *Minutes... of the Twentieth General Synod* (Columbus), 1956, 59; *Minutes*, 1957, 6. Cf. the *Free Press (FP)*, 2:6 (Oct.4, 1957), 1.

8. *Minutes* (20th Synod), 1956, 54; *Minutes*, 1957, 29.

9. *BNS*, 1:21 (June, 1957).

10. *Minutes*, 1957, 29. The first resolution, regarding separation from a

tent of the Harvey Cedars Resolution on the Christian life was reflected in the Columbus Synod in both a practical and a theoretical way. For instance, Bible Presbyterian veteran E. A. Dillard is presented in the *Bulletin Supplement* as ‘an old-fashioned Presbyterian minister with an up-to-date success story in dealing with alcoholics.’ He casts a wary eye at a lax ecclesiastical approach to the problem of Christian liberty: ‘The beverage use of alcohol is one of the increasing problems in America. . . . Is it an encroachment on Christian liberty for our church to teach total abstinence as the Christian way of meeting this problem?’¹¹

In a more theoretical vein, Bible Presbyterian newcomer Lynden Stewart discusses the matter of Christian liberty on the basis of the exegesis of Acts 15. What are the implications of the decision of the Jerusalem Council for the church of today? *Negatively*: the church must not legislate conditions of salvation beyond that which the Scriptures require. Nor must the church multiply specific rules of Christian behavior for those of good standing in the church without being convinced on good evidence that such are proper applications, in concrete situations, of the law of God. At the same time, *positively*:

The church *does* have a right to speak even in matters of indifference, when the current world situation threatens to curtail the effectiveness of the church’s testimony. Just *when* such a situation actually exists may be a matter of debate among those who truly love the Lord. *What things* should be forbidden, or counseled against, may likewise be a matter of debate. There must be, as we see it, the earnest endeavor to preserve the liberty of the individual Christian, while at the same time considering the testimony and effectiveness of the church in the society in which it exists.

According to Stewart, this is precisely the historic position of

worldly life, was brought up to date to include the following: ‘We further hold that listening to or observing such radio and *television* programs as bring worldliness into the home are dangerous [*italics ours*].’ The resolutions, as amended, were published in *BI’K*, 2:6 (Aug., 1957), 7. With regard to the TV issue, see *EPR*, 8:4 (April, 1963), 20 f, where Max Belz denies, from a Christian standpoint, the educational value of TV. This article has been reprinted in pamphlet form.

11. *BNS*, 1:14 (April 30, 1957); cf. *BPR*, 4:7 (Sept., 1959), 14 f.

the Bible Presbyterian Church and the rationale underlying the Harvey Cedars Resolutions.¹²

Another element in the spirit of the Columbus Synod with regard to Christian living is an emphasis on a balanced outlook with respect to the Christian life. This emphasis is illustrated in a 1957 article by Dr. Robert G. Rayburn in the *Reporter* entitled 'Proper Balance in Christian Living.' With the grim, negativistic, separatist outlook of some Bible Presbyterians obviously in view, Rayburn counsels: 'Let us be awake to the danger of extremes. . . . If we will be faithful to the whole counsel of God, the Holy Spirit will keep us from disastrous extremes.'¹³

Additional insights into the character of the Columbus Synod may be gleaned from the editorials of R. Laird Harris in the *Reporter* in 1958 and early 1959. One programmatic editorial is entitled 'A Pure Church.' In setting forth the program of such a Church, Dr. Harris borrows the expression of National Missions Secretary Thomas G. Cross: We are trying to do a positive work on a separated platform. Both the positive and the negative emphases are important in presenting the Gospel to a needy world. The real problem facing the church is still modernism, not communism, modernism in its varied intellectual assaults upon the historic Christian faith. The Bible Presbyterian Church must raise the banner of the true Gospel in the teeth of modernistic denials.¹⁴

However, a separated platform does not preclude fellowship with any who trust in Christ. 'May we make plain an elementary point? Separatists believe in fellowship, too. We

12. *BPR*, 2:4 (July, 1957), 10 f., 20, 'The Jerusalem Council and Christian Liberty.' The above account is only the conclusion of a closely reasoned exegetical argument. Cf. the statement of P. Stam regarding the Harvey Cedars Resolutions in *BPR*, 5:5 (May, 1960), 16: 'It is to be observed that these Resolutions do not legislate with regard to the practices mentioned, nor do they state that they are the *only* worldly practices which are to be discouraged, but they do emphasize that these are not helpful to spiritual life and growth, and they urge our ministers and leaders to instruct their people accordingly.'

13. *BPR*, 2:2 (April, 1957), 6.

14. *BPR*, 3:1 (Jan., 1958), 14.

do have, and we rejoice in fellowship with anyone who believes in Christ.’ This fellowship includes those remaining in apostate churches, however inconsistently, as well as those in Bible-believing denominations. However, we cannot have fellowship with those modernists who deny the Lord. We must separate from them, but we can have fellowship—in the form of personal contact, prayer, worship, or communion—with those who, for lack of discernment, have not yet followed the Scriptural command to separate from apostate denominations and join a true church. In other words, we are not called upon to separate from the unseparated but from the apostate.¹⁵

Dr. Harris sees the Columbus Synod as a significant part of what *Life Magazine* calls the Third Force in American Christianity—that is, all those sects which are distinct from the Roman Church and the old Protestant denominations. Not that all the groups which *Life* lumps together in this category are truly Christian, or that the historic Presbyterian could agree with much of their teaching; but that many of these groups hold to much of God’s truth and have the blessing of His Spirit in their evangelistic endeavors. The Bible Presbyterian Church, small as it is, can influence this movement for good, far beyond what its size would warrant, through the activity of its various agencies and local churches.¹⁶

As Dr. Harris reviews the Synod of 1959, he finds the regular business of Synod of a very encouraging nature. Indeed, there is evidence of substantial numerical growth throughout the year, mostly due to the evangelistic outreach of the Church. With a view to continued evangelistic endeavor, the key note of the Synod is set by the sermon of the retiring moderator, Dr. Cross, on the subject, ‘He That Winneth Souls Is Wise.’ This was a powerful reminder to all that evangelistic fishing for men is the chief work of the Church.¹⁷

15. *BPR*, 3:4 (April, 1958), 16 f.: ‘Separation, Fellowship, and Discernment.’

16. *BPR*, 3:7 (Aug.-Sept., 1958), 13. Cf. *Life*, June 6, 1958.

17. *BPR*, 4:5 (May-June, 1959), 1 f.

Before presenting the work of the agencies of the Church, a word on official statistics is in order. In 1955, before the division in the Bible Presbyterian Church, the number of communicant members was 8,670. Of these some 3,722 church members, comprising about 36 churches, were lost to the Collingswood Synod or to independency due to the Division of 1956. This includes some 1,617 members of the Collingswood church itself. The number of communicant members amounted to 5,148 in 1957. In 1958 it rose to 5,537; and in 1959 to 5,956. By 1960 the total was 6,248. Of course, these figures only include the churches regularly reporting to the statistician.¹⁸

To summarize, the Columbus Synod, by its own profession at least, stood for a Church Reformed in theology, evangelistic in emphasis, active in missions, and positive in approach.¹⁹

Bible Presbyterian Agencies

Against the background of the controversy of 1955 and 1956 regarding the Church's relationship to independent agencies, the Columbus Synod of 1956 reaffirmed the traditional Bible Presbyterian position—namely, that Bible Presbyterian churches and members are free to give to both independent and Church-related agencies. At the same time the Synod made an appeal to churches and church members to support the total work of the Synod undertaken through the agencies of the Synod.²⁰ This appeal illustrates the fact that almost all of the Church-wide work of the Columbus Synod, later to be renamed the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, was to be undertaken through Synod-controlled agencies—as opposed to the situation in the old Bible Presbyterian Church in which most of the Church's work was supervised by independent agencies.

18. *BPR*, 3:5 (May, 1958), 2, 16. Cf. statistics in Synod *Minutes*, 1957-1960.

19. Advertisement of the Synod's Committee on National Missions in *BPR*, 1:10 (Dec, 1956-Jan., 1957), 14.

20. *Minutes* (20th General Synod), 1956, 63 f.

That this should be the case was only natural due to the Church's sad experience with independent agencies during the controversy of 1955 and the division of 1956. Indeed there were some in the Church who were on the verge of maintaining that only Synod-controlled agencies should be supported. To counteract this tendency and the criticism of the Collingswood Synod, Dr. Harris writes an editorial on freedom in the Columbus Synod. One aspect of this freedom, due to the experience of the 1930's with the U.S.A. Presbyterian Church, is the freedom to support either Church-controlled or independent agencies. 'Our Church has Boards and Committees all of which are true to the Faith. They merit our support. But even so they are prepared to show themselves worthy of support and do not claim our exclusive interest. Independent agencies and independent giving are fully legitimate. We simply should give where our gifts count most for the Lord.'²¹

Before presenting the work of the major agencies of the Synod, it should be mentioned that various independent agencies did receive support from local churches and church members, such as Hebron Colony of Mercy for alcoholics and Children for Christ. This latter evangelistic work was supported as a 'separated, church-centered children's work,' and well publicized in the Church.²²

It should be also be mentioned that each of the Church's agencies, as organized by the Synod, was not intended to be under the direct control of Synod, but to be directed by an administration answerable to a board elected by the Synod. Thus Synod's control over its agencies is indirect and, while moral persuasion is very possible, can be officially exercised

21. *BPR*, 2:6 (Aug., 1957), 18. With regard to freedom in the Church Harris also stresses the right of the local church to hold its own property, and keep it if it should leave the fellowship of the denomination. 'This is right and really in line with historic Presbyterianism. . . . We want no property club to enforce any Synod decision' (170).

22. *Minutes*, 1959, 54 f.; cf. 1958, 8. Cf. *BPR*, 3:7 (Aug.-Sept., 1958), 1; 3:8 (Oct., 1958), 15; *Evangelical Presbyterian Reporter (EPR)*, 7:1 (Jan., 1962), 13.

only by electing men to the board who, it is believed, will carry out the will of the Synod as a whole. These elections are in turn regulated in such a way, as to prevent the board's membership from becoming stagnant, self-perpetuating, or subject to the influence of the same people all the time.²³

The first Synod-controlled agency to be mentioned is the oldest, the Committee on National Missions, existing for the purpose of assisting in the establishment of local self-supporting churches. The General Secretary of this committee until the spring of 1958 was Thomas Cross. In the spring of 1957 Cross is encouraged by his travels among the local churches adhering to the Columbus Synod. Given what might have happened because of the difficulties adhering to the division in the Church, one cannot help being grateful for, and encouraged by, the stability, growth, and progress evident in many places around the country. Thanks must be given to God for His goodness in holding the churches together and blessing their outreach.²⁴

However, there is much work to be done, and the Church as a whole must supply workers and funds for the establishment of new Gospel testimonies across the land. There is a real need for ministers with definite gifts in the area of organizational leadership, and there is a real need for sacrificial giving.²⁵ The Church needs to be convinced of the importance of National Missions work. 'There are more opportuni-

23. Cf. *EPR*, 8:5 (May, 1963), 8: 'The boards and agencies of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church are not made up of self-perpetuating members, but they are representatives nominated and elected from the floor of Synod and they represent a cross section of the whole denomination. In order to prevent a hierarchy from forming, approximately one-third of the board members of all the agencies are elected yearly, and no member can be elected for more than two consecutive terms, unless by a three-fourths majority vote of Synod,' *etc.* (Kyle Thurman).

24. *BPR*, 2:8 (May, 1957), 4: 'As one travels through the Bible Presbyterian Church today and realizes the difficulties through which we have passed and what might have happened because of these difficulties, he cannot help but be encouraged by the growth and progress in many places during these days. Let us together thank God for His goodness and pray for His blessing upon our labors, as well as for those who have gone from us at this time.' Cf. *Minutes*, 1956, 31.

25. *BNS*, 1:20 (June 11, 1957); 2:5 (Feb. 24, 1958).

ties before the Committee at the present time than at any time in the history of the Committee. If our people will accept the challenge which is before them, and assist the Committee in establishing these new churches, the new churches will very soon become the additional support we need for the whole work of the church.²⁶

After ten years as General Secretary, Cross resigned at the end of 1958 to re-enter the pastorate. The new National Missions Secretary is Jay Adams. His initial enthusiasm is somewhat dampened by the lack of money available to the committee. Able men are available as a result of the work of Covenant Seminary; and excellent fields of endeavor are not hard to find. However, the main problem is securing adequate funds to put the men and the fields together. There simply must be more regular giving to the work of National Missions.²⁷

Despite these financial concerns, however, Adams is vigorous in appealing to dissidents in the modernistic Southern and Northern Presbyterian Churches. The November 1959 issue of the *Reporter* carries an article in this same spirit entitled 'An Open Letter to Former United Presbyterians.' Adams, himself a former United Presbyterian, argues that many relatively young evangelical ministers in the old UP Church are now, since the consummation of the merger with the U.S.A. Presbyterian Church, sinking the rest of their ministry into a lost cause. To save the ship at this late juncture is an outright impossibility. However, more serious than this is the consideration that their very presence in the new UPUSA Church will cause them to sin. They should therefore seek a Church which is truly Presbyterian in government and Reformed in doctrine, which is not tainted with liberalism, and which is truly 'missionary in outlook and warmly evangelical in approach.' The Bible Presbyterian Synod is heartily recommended for their consideration.²⁸

26. *BPR*, 2:10 (Dec, 1957), 15. Cf. *BPR*, 3:5 (May, 1958), 15 f.

27. *BNS*, 2:41 (Nov. 4, 1958); *BPR*, 4:2 (Feb., 1959), 15.

28. *BPR*, 4:9 (Jan., 1959), 15. Cf. *BPR*, 3:8 (Oct., 1958), 1.

Adams has to report to the Synod of 1960 that much time and energy had to be spent the preceding year in resolving many serious problems in national mission churches. Nevertheless, the year had been one of 'decided progress.' Hopefully within the next two years the work of national missions should at last begin to snowball. However, Adams would no longer be General Secretary of the National Missions Committee. He resigned due to personal considerations and the criticism of many in the Church who felt that his apparently militant amillennialism precluded his continuing in this position.²⁹

We turn now to the origin and early development of the Synod's foreign mission board, World Presbyterian Missions (WPM). At the time of the Division of 1956, the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions (IBPFM) was found to be under the control of the McIntire party. Nevertheless, churches and individuals loyal to the Synod continued to support BP missionaries serving under the Board. However, with the solidification of division in 1957, relations between the Synod and the Board gradually grew worse. The Synod refused to recommend the Board to its churches, and the Board refused to report to the Synod until such a recommendation was forthcoming.³⁰ The Board also made it a policy to require of its missionaries a wholehearted allegiance to Dr. McIntire and the International Council of Christian Churches. This many of the missionaries refused to do and in time either resigned from the Board or had their funds cut off. To the Synod men who gathered at the nineteenth General Synod in April of 1956 for the purpose of repudiating Dr. McIntire's leadership and the ICCS, such a requirement was uncalled for, and there was some talk about authorizing Synod's Foreign Missions Committee to be able to receive missionaries and funds if and when necessary. This was precisely the action of the Columbus Synod in November of

29. *Minutes*, 1960, 47, 57 f., 64, 10.

30. *Minutes*, 1957, 3.

1956, with a view to caring for dissident BP missionaries serving under the IBPFM.³¹

If the foreign missions board of the Synod was conceived at Columbus in 1956, it was born at the Wilmington Synod of 1957. Dr. T. Stanley Soltau reported for the Foreign Missions Committee that there was no possibility of reconciliation with the Independent Board without returning to the ICCS, and recommended the formal creation of a foreign missions board by Synod. Thereupon a proposed set of by-laws was presented and after amendment adopted as part of the constitution of World Presbyterian Missions, Inc.³²

William Mahlow, formerly General Secretary of the Independent Board, was appointed the first General Secretary of WPM. In the December 1957 issue of the *Reporter* Mahlow introduces the new mission board to the Christian public. WPM's basic principles are set forth as follows: With regard to *doctrine*, all those connected with the board are committed to the infallible Scriptures and to those great doctrines summarized in the Westminster Standards. With regard to *purpose*, the ultimate purpose of WPM is the proclamation of the Gospel through all available means to the unconverted everywhere in all those fields to which the Holy Spirit leads in the initiation of work for the establishment of indigenous, New Testament churches. With regard to the *testimony* of WPM, it takes seriously the doctrine of the purity of the visible church and 'deems separation unto Christ from impurity of doctrine or life essential that its missionaries might well represent the King of Glory whom they serve.' Finally, with regard to the *work* of WPM, the board is desirous that all connected with it be free to receive and obey the leading of the Holy Spirit, realizing that the Spirit never leads contrary to the teachings of the Scriptures nor to the Scriptural princi-

31. D. J. MacNair, To the Bible Presbyterian Missionaries Under the Independent Board, April 13, 1956, 3 f. *Minutes* (20th General Synod), 1956, 56 f. Cf. *Biblical Missions* (Aug.-Sept., 1957), 8.

32. *Minutes*, 1957, 7 ff., 21 f.

ple that all things should be done decently and in order. As the foreign missions board of the Bible Presbyterian Church, WPM is responsible to its Synod, but at the same time desirous to cooperate with all 'Bible-believing people of like precious faith.'³³

A WPM advertisement in the *Reporter* sets forth the board in the following terms: 'A Christ-centered, Bible-teaching, Gospel-preaching missionary agency. Presbyterian in doctrine and polity. No entangling alliances with Modernism.' In 1959 Mahlow could report to Synod that there were 32 missionaries and missionary candidates under its care. By 1960 there were 36.³⁴

Covenant College was the result of the Synod's authorization of a Synod-controlled liberal arts college in 1955 and the consequent agreement of the presbyteries with this proposal. During the academic year 1955-1956 the college was held in Pasadena, California, on a temporary basis, moving to a recently purchased property in St. Louis for the year 1956-1957.³⁵ This year was also the first for Covenant Theological Seminary convened in St. Louis as the college's graduate school of theology. The creation of a new theological seminary was necessary because the board of trustees of independent Faith Seminary was controlled by McIntire men. As a result, the whole faculty, except for two men, resigned due to their loyalty to Synod and distaste for the McIntire mentality. Most of these men moved to St. Louis to constitute the original faculty of Covenant Seminary. The faculty and administration of the college and seminary were one under the presidency of Dr. Rayburn. At the Synod of 1957 Covenant College and Seminary is commended to the churches for their support, and Dr. Rayburn is commended for his leadership of the school.³⁶

33. *BPR*, 2:10 (Dec, 1957), 16.

34. *BPR*, 4:6 (July-Aug., 1959), 17. *Minutes*, 1959, 48; 1960,30.

35. *Minutes*, 1955, 79; 1956 (19th General Synod), 11, 26 f.

36. *Minutes*, 1957, 26.

At the Synod of 1958 Dr. Rayburn gives thanks for the Lord's goodness to the school and for the definite evidences of His work on the campus. 'While there have been testings and hardships there has been a sense of the presence and power of the Lord in the work.' He is quick to point out to the Synod that the seminary is indeed providing more and better equipped men for the ministry of the BP Church. However, along with these encouragements, there is a serious financial problem facing the school.³⁷

By the Synod of 1960 Dr. Rayburn is especially thankful for the growth of the school. There are 138 students enrolled, including 40 in the seminary, as compared with a total of 22 in 1956. Thanks should also be rendered for the ever wider outreach of the practical Christian work activities of the students—including pastoring churches, teaching Sunday School classes, sponsoring various youth groups and clubs, and conducting services in rescue missions and old folks homes. 'The testimony of Covenant is having a real impact in the metropolitan area of St. Louis.' 'There seems to be, however, little real vision in many of our churches of the vital role that this school has in our denomination's future.' It is therefore imperative that the Synod take definite steps to guarantee the financial stability of the school which it has created.³⁸

The last agency of Synod to be discussed is the Committee on Christian Education created in 1954 with Robert H. Cox as General Secretary. The work of the committee is presented to the Columbus Synod of 1956 in general terms of providing counsel and materials for the purpose of helping local churches and presbyteries in the organization and improvement of their Christian education facilities and endeavors. The Synod commends the work of the committee to the churches for their prayer and regular financial support.

37. *Minutes*, 1958, 14. Cf. *BPR*, 3:9 (Nov., 1958), 1. Cf. *BPR*, 4:1 (Jan., 1959), 2.

38. *Minutes*, 1960, 59-61. Cf. *Minutes*, 1959, 63 f.

The churches are encouraged to avail themselves of its materials and personnel.³⁹

It is Cox's conviction that the Church is suffering from a very serious lack of leadership among local church officers. That such should be the case is a sad commentary on the Church's response to the opportunities afforded by almost a quarter of a century of separate denominational existence. Certain searching questions must be asked:

We can begin to ask how our churches and members compare with those which do not maintain Biblical authority and doctrine as we do. How well have we taught those who have been under our preaching and teaching all these years? How thoroughly have we acquainted our people with Biblical faith and practice? How effectively have we trained them to give, to serve, to teach, to witness, to faithfully support the Lord's work? Are our Sunday schools making the most of their reaching and teaching opportunities? Are our church activities and efforts marked by spiritual vigor in contrast to the modernistic, worldly organizations from which we have no fellowship? What is our spiritual temperature after twenty years of being on our own with freedom to succeed or fail?

In answer to these searching questions it might be intimated that, with some notable exceptions, objectives have not been definite enough, goals not clear enough, methods not effective enough, and commitments in the area of Christian education in the home and local church too limited.⁴⁰ Cox is convinced that the BP Church heretofore has had far too limited a vision in this crucial area of Christian education in the home and local church. His appeal is for *Vision Unlimited*, as the committee's periodic publication is called. To publicize this vision many short articles on Christian education are prepared for the *Reporter*. For example, there is an appeal for more instructional meetings in the life of the local church. There is also an appeal for a resurrection of the catechetical method of instruction in home and church. There are also fervent appeals for educational evangelism in the home and in the Sunday school.⁴¹

39. *Minutes*, 1956, 54; cf. *Minutes*, 1958, 17. 40. *BPR*, 4:7 (Sept., 1959), 11.

41. *BPR*, 5:7 (Aug.-Sept., 1960), 9; 5:9 (Nov., 1960), 11; 5:10 (Dec, 1960), 17 f.; 6:1 (Jan., 1961), 12. Cf. *Minutes*, 1960, 35 f.

So much for the agencies of Synod. We now turn to some of the major concerns of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church from 1957 through 1964.

Evangelical Presbyterian Concerns

As one might expect, given the origin and development of the EP Church, one of its chief concerns is the modernistic teaching and apostasy of the modern church taken as a whole. For instance, Dr. Harris writes a series of articles in the *Reporter* on the higher criticism of the Old Testament. These articles trace the higher critical attack upon the trustworthiness of the Bible and present learned arguments in opposition to the so-called assured results of criticism. Higher criticism is recognized, along with the evolutionary mentality, as an essential element in modernism.⁴²

In these articles Harris points out that neo-orthodoxy, the current theological fad, fully accepts the higher critical approach to the Bible. The whole movement moves upon the assumption that we can no longer believe the Bible to be true.⁴³ In the issues which immediately follow, the *Reporter* reprints a pamphlet by Harris on the theology of Karl Barth, the leading neo-orthodox theologian, in which neo-orthodoxy is roundly dubbed 'the new modernism.' After discussing the historical background of neo-orthodoxy, Harris castigates its view of the Bible, knowledge, truth, the fall, Christ, and salvation as being radically opposed to historic Christianity. 'Barthianism should first be understood. Then it should be feared just like the old style Modernism, which, from a different angle, also denies the Bible, its Christ, and our salvation. Then it should be opposed as God's Word tells us to oppose

42. *BPR*, 2:5 (July, 1957), 13: 'The Higher Criticism of the Old Testament—Its Roots and Fruits.' This first article deals with general considerations regarding higher criticism along with its attack upon the Pentateuch; the latter two with the higher critical attack upon the Prophets and the Psalms respectively. Cf. *BPR*, 2:6 (Aug., 1957), 14 ff: 'Criticism and Israel's Prophets;' 2:7 (Sept., 1957), 8 f., 13: 'Higher Criticism and the Songs of Zion.'

43. *Ibid.*, 17, *BPR*, 2:6, 15 f.

all the wiles of the Devil.’ The most effective antidote is the clear and powerful teaching and preaching of the fundamentals of the historic Christian faith.⁴⁴ On this same page of the *Reporter*, Dr. Flournoy Shepperson emphasizes the necessity of a thorough teaching ministry in the church as an antidote to modernism. ‘If a man came into my pulpit and began preaching modernism, they could smell it a mile.’⁴⁵

In this same spirit the Synod of 1960 avows its continued opposition to the National Council of Churches (NCC) with its denial of the infallibility of the Bible and basic Bible-doctrines along with its ‘liberal and leftist pronouncements and ideas.’ It urges once again those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, the Gospel of God’s grace, and the United States of America, and yet are still members of churches in the NCC, to consider their relationship to the Council in the light of the clear commands of God regarding fellowship with unbelief and apostasy.⁴⁶ The appeal of the Synod of 1961 is in the following terms:

We remind all Christians within these churches that there are other churches where they can worship and serve, and not be troubled by these serious problems of doctrine and policy. Among these other churches is the Evangelical Presbyterian Church which continues to believe without reservation and teach without compromise the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church likewise continues to proclaim, at home and abroad, salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church also governs itself in accordance with the principles of representation prescribed in the historic Westminster Confession of Faith and Form of Government.⁴⁷

Another, related, concern of the EP Church has to do with its altitude toward the rise in the 1950’s of what came to be called the new evangelicalism. An early indication of concern with this movement in the Church is an article re-

44. *BPR*, 2:9 (Nov., 1957), 17; 2:8 (Oct., 1957), 10-12.

45. *Ibid.* Shepperson also blasts the modernist-sponsored RSV Bible: ‘They slur at the virgin birth . . . and in several other places they went astray from the fundamental line.’

46. *Minutes*, 1960, 74 f.

47. *Minutes*, 1961, 62; cf. *BPR* 5:9 (Nov., 1960), 2.

printed in the *Reporter*, by independent pastor W. A. Ashbrook, entitled 'Evangelicalism—The New Neutralism.' 'It boasts too much pride and has imbibed too much culture to share the reproach of Fundamentalism. It still has too much faith and too much understanding of the Bible to appear in the togs of Modernism. It is seeking neutral ground, being neither fish nor fowl, neither right nor left, neither for nor against—it stands between!' Now then Bible-believing Christians must beware of this new neutralism for at least four good reasons: it is a movement born of compromise, nurtured on pride of intellect, growing on appeasement of evil, and doomed by the judgment of God's Word.⁴⁸

Certainly not all Evangelical Presbyterians would approve the whole of this treatment of the new evangelicalism since certain aspects of its outlook, some of which are left unmentioned by Ashbrook, were approved of in the Church—either due to long-standing Presbyterian convictions, on the one hand, or to new-found observations, on the other, concerning the weaknesses of much of fundamentalism. Nevertheless, the reaction to the new evangelicalism on the whole was in general a decidedly negative one.

For example, Dr. Buswell severely attacks the controversial *Case for Orthodox Theology* (1959) by E. J. Carnell, a leading neo-evangelical light. Carnell does not handle his data carefully. 'His horizons are blurred and his perspective is myopic.' Certain aspects of the book are singled out for particular criticism: the attack on the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy, the criticism of the Calvinistic attitude toward doctrine and ethics, the sarcastic attack on fundamentalism, and the attempt to discredit 'that great Christian scholar and courageous leader,' J. Gresham Machen. 'It is hard for those who knew him and stood with him in his efforts to keep the church pure from blatant infidelity—it is hard for us to realize that younger men can be so ignorant.'⁴⁹

48. *BPR*, 2:3 (May, 1957), 19 f. (*cf.* 2).

49. *BPR*, 5:1 (Jan., 1960), 15 f.; 4:10 (Dec, 1959), 16 ff. *Cf.* W. A. Mahlow, 'A Dangerous Tendency Among Evangelicals' (*BPR*, 5:1, 1).

Perhaps the most thorough EP treatment of the issues raised by the fundamentalist-neo-evangelicalism controversy is the learned and balanced discussion by John Sanderson—EP minister and professor at Westminster Theological Seminary—entitled *Fundamentalism and Its Critics* (1961). Sanderson attempts a fair presentation of both sides of the controversy. His own attitude toward fundamentalism is, negatively, that two criticisms can be properly leveled at the fundamentalists. ‘Fundamentalism is properly criticized for its “reduction” of the whole counsel of God to a few doctrines. This produced a weakness in its world and life view and it was not able to cope with scientific problems, or to preach prophetically concerning society’s problems. Moreover, on the level of individual Christian living, Fundamentalism often became legalistic and concerned itself more with the outward act than with the attitude of the heart.’ However, positively, neither of these two liabilities is of the essence of fundamentalism. At its core fundamentalism is an attitude of love for the most basic truths of the Bible which gallantly fights to defend these most important doctrines of the faith against all odds. ‘Any criticism of Fundamentalism coming from a real Christian should make a clear distinction between the essence of Fundamentalism for which it is to be commended, and certain lamentable accretions which are not essential to it.’⁵⁰

Sanderson’s attitude toward neo-evangelicalism is likewise based upon a distinction between what is essential and non-essential to the movement. There is basic sympathy for the essential ingredient of neo-evangelicalism, namely the passionate desire to communicate with the lost. However many precious Biblical truths are sacrificed to this desire, as for instance a strict doctrine of the purity of the church and a high view of the inspiration of the Bible. This desire is Scriptural enough, but when it runs roughshod over other equally

50. J. W. Sanderson, *Fundamentalism and Its Critics*, 1961 (Reprinted from the *Sunday School Times*), 14 f. Cf. 24: The essence of fundamentalism was ‘to preserve the hard core of the faith.’

Biblical principles, it ceases to be Scriptural and involves the pitfall of doing evil that good may come. Moreover, the neo-evangelical frequently forgets that the liberal and secular antipathy toward evangelicals often rules out Christianity *a priori*—‘not because it is ill-reasoned or poorly presented, *but because it is Christianity.*’ This is partially due to the fact that unbelievers are becoming increasingly aware of what believers, especially neo-evangelicals, ought to be more aware, namely the stark antithesis between Christianity and all other forms of thought.⁵¹

Sanderson’s reaction, indeed proposed solution, to the controversy is for both fundamentalism and neo-evangelicalism to face up to and live up to the whole counsel of God by means of the contemporary rediscovery of an older tradition.

Today there is a corrective trend which, God willing, should restore the full-orbed character of the Gospel and give the people of God a new sense of the relevance of God’s Word to man’s present situation.

Fundamentalism was a “reduction” of an older orthodoxy, but it preserved the heart of it. If men today will be faithful to that heart and revive the older orthodoxy already implicit in Fundamentalism, the Church will have a new lease on power. . . .

Is there a corrective trend in the still young Neo-Evangelicalism which will prevent its glossing over real differences between Christianity and anti-Christian thinking, and which will turn it into the direction of continued affirmation of what is central to Biblical truth?

If both movements can find their *raison d’être* in a recovering of the richness and potential power of an older tradition, recovering it in the modern situation, then there is real hope indeed for American Protestantism.⁵²

For Sanderson this older tradition is no doubt Presbyterian and Reformed!

One very practical aspect of the Church’s attitude toward the new evangelicalism is the matter of its attitude toward the evangelistic ministry of Dr. Billy Graham. In 1957 Synod appointed a committee to confer with Dr. Graham. This committee reported back to the Synod of 1958 that they had

51. *Ibid.*, 24, 42. There is a somewhat difficult discussion of the issue of ‘worldliness’ on 32 ff.

52. *Ibid.*, 34 f. (cf. 44 f.).

made known to him both their joy that he preaches Christ with evident results and their regret that he cooperates with modernists in his evangelistic campaigns. Dr. Graham received them cordially, presented his own position in these matters, and thanked them for coming. The committee's own opinion on the issue, received by the Synod, is as follows: 'Not forgetful of the expressed position of several Synods of our Church as stated in the Harvey Cedars Resolution on apostasy and worldliness and similar resolutions, we continue to rejoice wherever and whenever Christ is preached. However, we cannot ignore what we believe to be clear enunciation in the Scriptures of principles for fellowship and maintenance of the purity, peace and unity of the Church.'⁵³

In the months and years which followed various local judicatories in the Church made pronouncements regarding Billy Graham's evangelistic policies. For instance, the Rocky Mountain Presbytery declared later in 1958 that the Word of God, as properly interpreted by the Harvey Cedars Resolutions, precludes Graham's inclusivistic policies and position on ecclesiastical fellowship.

We thank God for the fact that Dr. Graham proclaims the Gospel of Christ: but that we believe he is violating the principle of ecclesiastical separation when he has modernists as cosponsors in his union campaigns; and that we consider he fails to preach the whole counsel of God in minimizing the issue of modernism and not warning people against the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches, the chief exponents of this view point. . . . As far as public criticism of Dr. Graham is concerned we believe this is a matter of expediency and that the local church session is to determine the time as well as the advisability of such public statement in the light of the local situation.

At the same time, the youth group at the Greenville, S.C., church was sponsoring a busload to attend a Billy Graham meeting in the area.⁵⁴

53. *Minutes*, 1958, 17; cf. 1957, 24 f. The committee members were P. Stam, Jr., T. G. Cross, K. Thurman, W. B. Leonard, Jr., and R. H. Cox. This is apparently the last time the matter came before the Synod.

54. *BNS*. 2:37 (Oct. 7, 1958). Cf. Dr. Shepperson's altitude to Billy Graham's ministry in *BPR*, 2:9 (Nov., 1957), 17.

As time wore on, however, Evangelical Presbyterians would become more and more distressed with Graham's policies, not as a result of immediate emotional reaction but of protracted reflection. This attitude is illustrated by missionary Phil Foxwell's critical review of *Co-operative Evangelism* (1958) by Graham apologist Dr. Robert Ferm. 'A man may admire Billy, appreciate his Gospel ministry, but oppose co-operation with modernists and find the defense of Ferm inadequate.'⁵⁵

This discussion regarding cooperative evangelism leads us naturally to consider the Evangelical Presbyterian concern for evangelism. This subject is a concern of many individuals in the Church, but we shall only single out certain ones in particular.

Preson P. Phillips, Jr., attempts to show that world evangelism is indeed at the heart of historic Protestantism and Presbyterianism. However, today it is the independent and interdenominational societies that are most concerned with missions and evangelism. However, who can deny that God's perfect plan is the whole *church* involved in evangelism as an organic 'missionary society,' each member of the priesthood taking his place as a living sacrifice in subjection to Christ the Head. Certainly if we believe that the Presbyterian Church is God's Church, constructed in God's way, according to the Scriptural pattern, by God's Holy Spirit, we must believe it is perfectly competent to conduct God's work without assistance from foreign agencies, boards, or societies. What is required of a missionary organism that our church courts are not qualified to do—that the Gospel might be sent to every creature under heaven? We have neglected the practical riches of the Presbyterian priesthood. Indeed, is it not the cardinal feature of Presbyterian polity that God has raised up bishops and elders to sit in church courts, which, with deacons at their disposal, are abundantly adequate to face all the cor-

55. *BPR*, 5:8 (Oct., 1960), 17 f.; 5:6 (June-July, 1960), 15 ff.

porate responsibilities of the church, including evangelism? The recognition and practice of these Presbyterian principles would result in a revived and militant Presbyterian Church.⁵⁶

Phillips asks the penetrating question, What is wrong with the Bible Presbyterian Church? The typical Bible Presbyterian minister can give a good lecture anytime on the subject of modernism, fundamentalism, and separation; but he is not an evangelist, in the Biblical sense—that is, one who is not only a soulwinner himself, but who is constantly stirring up others to do evangelistic work. However, without active evangelizing Christians, why have a sound, orthodox, separated church anyway? Why have people ‘come out’ of modernistic churches if they do not become witnessing, working, evangelizing Christians? Why have presbytery and synod meetings anyway? ‘How much more could Bible Presbyterians be blessed and a blessing if they came together at Presbytery and Synod with evangelism, soul winning, revival foremost in their minds.’⁵⁷

Another EP minister much concerned about evangelism, of a different sort, is Francis Schaeffer. Schaeffer’s work in Switzerland is at least successful enough to catch the attention of *Time* magazine, which dubs it ‘one of the most unusual missions in the Western world.’ The article is entitled ‘Mission to Intellectuals.’ Intellectuals of multitudinous occupations, beliefs, and backgrounds—existentialists, Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and left-wing atheists—come to *L’Abri* (The Shelter) to hear and discuss the historic Christian Gospel. Says Schaeffer: ‘We don’t sell sweet religious pills in the discussions. What we give is the truth.’ Says *Time*: ‘Missionary Schaeffer’s conception of the truth is uncompromisingly Biblical and fundamentalist.’ The number of converts is not spectacular, but those likely to become Christians are not likely to be superficial ones. As Schaeffer puts it: ‘They’re no

56. *BPR*, 2:4 (June, 1957), 11 f.; cf. 2:3 (May, 1957), 7 f.

57. *BPR*, 4:4 (April, 1959), 16 f.: ‘Evangelists, Evangelism, and *Bible Presbyterians*.’ Cf. *EPR*, 7:2 (Feb.-Mar., 1962), 10 f.

fools. When they make a decision, they possess the intellectual framework to make it in.

Others in the Church were concerned with the subject of evangelism. For instance, Dale Umbreit is concerned about multiplying churches. In an article on how to 'grow' churches, he maintains that Presbyterians can learn much from Southern Baptist methods so successful in the South. 'Each church has a vision for its own locality. If an area becomes populated in any way, the established church seeks to meet the need of the new community by a Sunday school and/or mission. Call it by any suitable name: mission, branch, chapel, or preaching station; the idea is the same. It is basically sound and very flexible. There is no need for a lot of red tape, or a complex program.' The potential for such a plan in a Presbyterian church with its peculiar polity is unlimited. Indeed, 'this plan should commend itself to all of us as more in keeping with true concepts of Presbyterian policy and polity.'⁵⁹

Nelson Malkus is concerned about personal evangelism and asks in the *Reporter*: 'Why Do I Not Witness More?' The major reasons are thoughtlessness, procrastination, prayerlessness, selfishness, unreality that is, the things we say we believe are just not real to us—and, for some, lack of Bible knowledge. 'Personal work is the answer to the needs of this day. People no longer seek out the church. They do not come where the Gospel is preached. Let us face up to the sin of our lack of personal witnessing and then ask God to make us, truly, fishers of men.'⁶⁰

R. H. Cox is concerned about Sunday school evangelism. 'With every teacher an evangelist, every Sunday a season for evangelism, every pupil a prospect for profession of faith in Christ, how great are the possibilities compared to every

58. *BPR*, 5:5 (May, 1960), 17: 'L'Abri Testimony Described in TIME Magazine' Cf. *Time*, Jan. 11, 1960. *BPR*, 4:7 (Sept., 1959), 13, 18.

59. *BPR*, 5:5 (May, 1960), 1.

60. *BPR*, 5:2 (Feb., 1960), 5.

other type of evangelism.’ On the other hand, Sunday school evangelism is no substitute for home evangelism, by far the most important type of all. ‘Every Christian parent who claims covenant promises for his child should evangelize that child. . . . Having said this, we reiterate that the Sunday school is the next best place when the home misses its opportunity.’⁶¹

This leads us to consider another Evangelical Presbyterian concern—the Christian home. This according to William Mahlow is the Christian’s Achilles heel, the place where he is most vulnerable to the devil’s attack. The Christian home must be strengthened, not only for the sake of everyone in the Church, but especially for the sake of the Church’s future ministers. ‘Christians are “made” in the home and local church, not the seminary.’⁶² For this reason the *Reporter* carries a series of articles on putting Christ in his rightful place in the Christian home. For instance, W. Harold Mare has a suggestive series on the use of the Bible in the home. ‘We cannot leave the teaching of the Bible to our churches or our Christian schools. We must use the Bible in our homes. Let us start today.’⁶³ Dr. Rayburn has a stimulating article on recreation in the Christian home. ‘Christian parents, let’s take the time to improve our family’s recreation. The rewards will be very satisfying.’⁶⁴ William A. Sanderson has a heart-searching article on the reasons why well-known Old Testament characters failed in the vital task of training their children. Some failed because they did not teach obedience; others, because they set a bad example; and still others, because they compromised their religious principles.⁶⁵

Another vital concern of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church is the matter of the unity of the visible church. This

61. *BPR*, 5:10 (Dec, 1960), 17. Cf. *EPR*, 8:4 (April, 1963), 15, 20 f.; 8:7 (July, 1963), 19 f.

62. *BPR*, 5:1 (Jan., 1960), 8; 4:8 (Oct., 1959), 18.

63. *BPR*, 5:1 (Jan., 1960), 12; 4:10 (Dec, 1959), 10 f.

64. *BPR*, 5:3 (March, 1960), 8.

65. *BPR*, 6:1 (Jan., 1961), 15.

concern is forced upon the Church from without by the modernistic ecumenical juggernaut, and from within by the talk of union with other historic Presbyterian bodies. With regard to the latter, an overture from the New Jersey Presbytery to the Synod of 1957 notes the fact that there has been 'much general discussion concerning our Synod's relationship to the Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.' In order that a mature judgment might be made in this matter, Synod is requested to instruct its Fraternal Relations Committee to investigate the possibility and advisability of entering into union negotiations and to submit a detailed report to the next Synod together with a 'written study of the doctrine of the unity of the visible church as it pertains to the question of church union.'⁶⁶ No official report on the doctrine is brought back to Synod as the result of this overture, but the concern expressed in it results in a lively discussion in the Church.

Jay Adams offers some thoughts on church union. Certainly John 17 and I Corinthians 12 will hardly serve as proof that the Organizational unity of the visible church is the New Testament ideal. Yet pluriformity in terms of independent denominations and congregations is certainly not the Biblical pattern. This can be proven from Ephesians 4 where Paul sets forth the ideal of *organizational* unity as well as *spiritual* unity. That this is the case is clear from the fact that the unity which Paul pleads for is a unity involving the cooperation of church officers, organizational functionaries, in the whole, not simply the local church. Therefore, although it is obviously not possible to attain a visible unity of the entire church of Christ, we should nevertheless strive toward it simply because it is the ideal which Christ holds before all his people. Furthermore, although we scarcely ever live up to our ideals, the higher our ideal in this matter, the more we are likely to achieve. Thus, on the authority of Scripture it is

⁶⁶ *Minutes*, 1957, 5 (cf. 21). The story of union negotiations is withheld for full treatment in Ch. 9.

imperative that we seek organizational union with other Christian groups, but it is also imperative that we refuse to unite with anyone except on proper Biblical grounds.⁶⁷

Dr. Buswell fails to see any conclusive Scriptural support for the position of some that the obliteration of denominational separateness is an obligation resting upon the churches of Christ.⁶⁸ Buswell amplifies his position in the first volume of his *Systematic Theology* published in 1962 when he deals with the subject of branches in the visible universal church of Christ on earth.

To imply that the existence of denominations, recognizing one another as branches of the Church, is a sin, or a reproach, is to voice a wholly unscriptural opinion. The word ‘schism,’ wherever it refers to the church in the New Testament, refers to quarrelsomeness, and never applies to a peaceable division among Christians who cannot see eye to eye in all matters which they consider important. . . .

Shall then those who in all simplicity and honesty believe that the truth must be defended and expounded on certain scriptural issues, whether ethical, sacramental, or doctrinal, be the ones who are to be blamed for ‘dissensions’?

Of course, organizational unity is desirable where there is ‘unity of faith and understanding’ (Eph. 4:13), but organizational unity is not essential to ‘unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace’ (Eph. 4:3). Human nature being what it is, it would not even be desirable that all Christians should be under one ecclesiastical structure. Denominational differences ought of course to be minimized, and dissensions prevented if possible, but the liberty of dissension is essential to the liberty of Christianity in this age of world history. The visible church of Jesus Christ has no need to apologize to the world for diversity of organization, insofar as the church, of different denominations, is united in the proclamation of the Gospel.⁶⁹

Perhaps the best expression of the majority viewpoint in

67. *BPR*, 3:5 (May, 1958), 17 f. Cf. J. W. Sanderson in *BPR*, 4:6 (July-Aug., 1959), 6. Cf. Sanderson, *op. cit.*, 29 f., 38 f.

68. *EPR*, 7:10 (Dec, 1962), 9 f.; cf. 7:5 (June, 1962), 16. This article is in response to ‘The Biblical Basis for Union’ (8 f.) prepared by a committee of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. As might be expected, not all RP’s would wholeheartedly agree with Buswell. For a reply to his article, see R. A. Milliken, *EPR*, 8:5 (May, 1963), 12 f.

69. J. O. Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, I, 1962, 425-428. Cf. the similar argument of P. Phillips, Jr., in *EPR*, 7:2 (Feb.-Mar., 1962), 5.

the Church is found in one of the resolutions of the 1960 Synod:

While we express our glad consciousness of the spiritual unity of the body of Christ comprehending all those who are born again and redeemed by the blood of Christ, we recognize the Scriptural basis and practical desirability of our joining with those of like precious faith in common testimony and fellowship. We do not claim that on principle all branches of the body of Christ must unite in one super church, but we do recognize the danger and heartbreak of unnecessary division.⁷⁰

With respect to theological matters, the Church continued to have a deep interest in doctrinal issues. As would be expected, there is a concern to set the doctrines of Christianity in stark contrast to those of the non-Christian religions on the one hand and 'Christian' counterfeits on the other. An indication of this is the series of articles in the *Reporter* on world religions by T. Stanley Soltau, and various articles on contemporary cults by Jay Adams, as well as protests against modernism's opposition to the historic Christian faith in favor of the ever continuing clamor for a new theology. Dr. Buswell speaks for the Church as a whole when he replies to the cry for an entirely new ecumenical theology of an 'existential' nature. 'We need deeper devotion and greater sympathy and understanding, but we do not need a new theology.'⁷¹

At the same time there seems to be a fresh appreciation of distinctively Reformed theology, a greater interest in Reformed distinctives than was the case in the old Bible Presbyterian Church. For instance, various articles on these distinctives recur in the *Reporter* with such titles as 'Unconditional Election' and 'Plain Points on Predestination.'⁷² Dr. Buswell is zealous to inquire into the validity of the Calvinistic philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd; or whether the

70. *Minutes*, 1960, 69.

71. *EPR*, 7:6 (July-Aug., 1962), 12. For the series on world religions see *BPR*, 2:5 ff. For articles on the cults see e.g. *BPR*, 2:4 (June, 1957); 2:9 (Nov., 1957) *et al.*

72. *BPR*, 4:6 (July, 1959), 7 ff. (Lynden Stewart); 3:2 (Feb., 1958), 10 f. (Harold Hight).

distinctive views of Reformed Presbyterian philosopher, Gordon H. Clark, constitute a legitimate form of Calvinism.⁷³

The most talked-about doctrinal issue in the EP Church is in the area of eschatology, specifically the millennial question. The issue arose in the Church due to two factors: first, the tendency of some of the ministers to grow cold toward the premillennial position itself; and second, the merger negotiations with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Synod.

With regard to the former, the Carolina Presbytery overruled Synod in 1958 to clarify the duty of presbyteries with respect to the matter of ordaining and receiving men who do not subscribe to the doctrine of the premillennial return of the Lord; and to clarify the practical aspects of the Church's commitment to eschatological liberty, as resolved by the Synod of 1938, in view of the premillennial changes in the Standards adopted at that time. The answer of Synod is that premillennialism has a long and honored history in the church in general and in the Presbyterian Church in particular. In fact, many of the Westminster divines were premillennial in their views.

Premillennialism has been held by Presbyterians through the years. However, in the movement and times preceding the formation of the Bible Presbyterian Church some brethren in the zeal for strict adherence to the Westminster Standards declared that dispensationalism, and some even seemed to include premillennialism as well, was contrary to the Westminster Standards. Partly as a result of this charge, we took action when we formed to amend the Westminster Standards so as to make premillennialism explicit.

At the same time we adopted a statement expressly allowing full liberty of eschatological views. By this means we declared that while the majority of us were premillennial yet we did not wish to include this doctrine in the system of doctrine to which we require subscription. This has been our position ever since. Most of us believe that premillennialism in its broad outlines is Biblical. We allow difference of interpretation of the Bible, however, in this regard. . . .

Therefore we urge our Presbyteries to ordain without hesitation those who believe in the supernatural, bodily return of the Lord Jesus

73. *RPR*, 6:7 (Aug.-Sept., 1961), 13 f.; 7:9 (Nov., 1962), 10 f.

regardless of the details of their view on the millennium. At the same time we would recommend renewed study of these matters confident that study of the Biblical teaching will be a blessing and benefit to all.⁷⁴

The result of Jay Adams' renewed study of the Bible leads him to deny premillennial teaching in his book *Realized Millennialism* (1959). Realized millennialism is by definition the belief that the millennium is a present reality. Adams' sole intention in the book is a presentation of that coherent and consistent system of eschatology set forth in the Bible namely, amillennialism. Church-goers are introduced to the book in the *Bulletin Supplement* by means of a startling question to Bible Presbyterians—'Are we in the millennium?'⁷⁵

Dr. Buswell is quick to reply to Adams' book. 'We have felt that in a church like ours, where practically every minister is an instructed premillennialist, and where we are so thoroughly committed to the grammatico-historical method of exegesis, any view contrary to premillennialism would be eliminated by friendly give-and-take among the ministers. We have felt that the Bible is so clearly premillennial to those who actively study the question that a church like ours will remain premillennial without making this doctrine a legal part of what is required of ministers and elders, or declaring it to be essential to the "reformed" system of doctrine which we hold. Now for the first time the premillennial doctrine has been challenged by one of our ministers in good standing.' The basic question is: what does the Bible teach? After an involved discussion of the passages to which Adams appeals, Buswell concludes that he has not done justice to them, as only the premillennialist can do. He has not breathed the literary atmosphere of the authors of the New Testament with its two basic themes—the spread of the Gospel now and the glorious consummation of history at the Lord's return—which are basically one in that it is the "blessed hope" which sustains them in the hardships involved in their evangelistic

74. *Minutes*, 1958, 19 (cf. 3).

75. *BNS*, 3:19 (June 2, 1959). Cf. J. Adams, *Realized Millennialism*, 1959.

endeavors. Furthermore, his 'spiritualizing' methods of interpretation are, unconsciously, a symptom of the modern tendency to retreat from simple, tangible reality.⁷⁶

The Synod of 1959 turned down the Carolina Presbytery's request that the Church repudiate eschatological liberty. The Pacific Northwest Presbytery overtures the Synod of 1960 to see to it that militant amillennialist Jay Adams be removed from his influential position as General Secretary of National Missions. The Great Plains Presbytery is on record as preferring a creedal premillennial Church which leaves room for other views that do not become aggressive. Synod's response to such appeals is to vote to write the eschatological liberty principle into the constitution of the Church on the one hand; and, with a view to union with the Reformed Presbyterians, to neutralize the doctrinal standards of the constitution with regard to the millennial issue on the other. The former is ratified, with the concurrence of the presbyteries, at the Synod of 1961, so that church-goers read in the *Bulletin Supplement* 'Millennial Freedom guaranteed by Synod.' The latter is accomplished with the final acceptance of the Plan of Union in 1964 and 1965.⁷⁷

The attitude with which most of the ministers in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church were coming to regard the millennial issue is perhaps best expressed by John Sanderson. After surveying the three basic millennial positions, premillennialist Sanderson asks what attitude should we have amid all those conflicting opinions. The answer is that we should shun any partisan spirit that does not give a fair hearing to an opposing view. Nor must we turn away in disgust, ridiculing all study of eschatology and trying to live our Christian lives in ignorance of it. 'The important point is this: the Bible says

76. *BPR*, 4:7 (Sept., 1959), 4—*cf.* 4:8 (Oct., 1959), 4 f.; 4:9 (Nov., 1959), 6 f. (*cf.* G. Blomquist, 'Answering the Amillennialists' in *BPR*, 6:5 (May, 1961), 15 f.

77. *Minutes*, 1959, 9, 27; 1960, 10, 25, 38-41; 1961, 16, 22 (*BNS*, 5:27); 1964, 14 ff. for a fuller discussion of these developments, see Ch. 9.

that Jesus is coming again. Good Christians, believing with all their hearts that He is coming, disagree about some of the details, but then we disagree about details of other doctrines too. The right attitude is neither an arrogant refusal to hear the other side nor a revulsion from study. No one knows enough about the Bible but that he can be helped by the opinions of others. Even in disagreement truth comes to light.⁷⁸

The discussion concerning the Church's relationship to premillennial doctrine raised another discussion concerning the doctrinal terms of presbyterial communion. As a result of this discussion, the Synod of 1961 was asked to define what is meant by the *system of doctrine* in the Standards, defining what is essential and what is nonessential. The answer of Synod is:

We hold our standards as a whole set forth the system of doctrine of our faith, and we deem as essential those doctrines of the Christian Faith without which one cannot have a consistent Biblical and Calvinistic Confession such as those pertaining to the nature of and the sovereignty of God, and His Revelation, and the continuity of the one covenant of God; for example, the doctrines of the inerrancy of the Scriptures, the Virgin Birth of Christ, the substitutionary atonement, the miracles of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, as defended by our parent Presbyterian body in 1910, 1916, 1923 and any other doctrine which in the judgment of the church would undermine such essential doctrines should be regarded as against the system of doctrine.⁷⁹

So much for some of the concerns of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. We now turn to the life and development of the Church during the period 1960-1964.

78. *EPR*, 7:7 (Sept., 1962): 'Millennialism: Pre-, Post-, A-.'

79. *Minutes*, 1961, 13 f., 58. This debate is very interesting, with Dr. Buswell arguing for a looser subscription than that proposed by R. H. Cox. For Buswell's arguments, see *BPR*, 5:6 (June-July, 1960), 17 f. (cf. *BPR*, 5:10, 15 ff.); for those of Cox, *BPR*, 6:3 (April, 1961), 3 f., e.g.: 'With different doctrines and motive involved, but with similar import, like the Auburn Affirmationist U.P.U.S.A. Presbyterian church, we say formally by our creed that we are premillennial but also say it is not essential for office-bearers to adhere to this doctrine. The U.P.U.S.A. Church applies this to doctrines like the virgin birth, substitutionary atonement and miracles. Their creed, and ours, is not really an expression of what we *really* believe. . . . Whether we are really a premillennial church or not is one thing, but whether we are satisfied with such confusion of terms is another and vital to our future as a church.'

An Evangelical Church

In announcing the 25th anniversary Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church in 1961, Kyle Thurman, the moderator of the 1960 Synod, declared that the occasion should be one of great rejoicing on the part of all those whom the Lord has called to be a part of the movement. 'With ecumenical and apostate rumblings on every hand, we are given occasion to appreciate as never before that God has brought us together in a true, Bible-believing church.'⁸⁰ It is at this anniversary Synod that the *Bible Presbyterian Synod*, after a quarter of a century of existence by that name, officially becomes the *Evangelical Presbyterian Church*.

There had been requests for a change of name as early as the Columbus Synod of 1956. The names suggested were the *Westminster Synod* or the *Covenant Synod*. However, Synod declined to do so on the ground that, at least for the present, the continuity of the organization should be maintained through the name in case property rights were challenged by the Collingswood Synod. At the same time a news release had to be prepared stating that there were now two church bodies called the Bible Presbyterian Synod. Although there was request for it, Synod refused to seek a readily obtainable court injunction against the use of the Bible Presbyterian name by the Collingswood Synod.⁸¹

The Pacific Northwest Presbytery drew up a lengthy overture to the Synod of 1958 presenting reasons for a change of name. Apart from the confusion involved, the main argument is that the Bible Presbyterian name leaves such a bad taste in the mouth of evangelical brethren that it precludes their joining the testimony.

Until we divorce ourselves in name as well as in fact from the unhappy circumstances and negativism which has kept our denomination from normal growth we will never become the growing and posi-

80. *BPR*. 6:3 (March, 1961), 3.

81. *Minutes* (20th General Synod), 1956, 52, 61 f. Cf. *Minutes*, 1957, 3, 17.

tive testimony for Christ and His Word to which God has called us. . . . We feel that one of the biggest problems of the past has been a lack of proper balance in our testimony. . . . We believe that the recent problems of the church have left us in a healthy position to advance without many of the difficulties that have plagued us in the past. All that remains to be done is to clear the atmosphere with the adoption of a new name that will commend our church to the Bible believing Presbyterians of this country without the damaging prejudice of the past.

The suggested alternative is the *Conservative* Presbyterian Church, a name which would suggest a balanced and positive testimony to the world. This time Synod agrees that a change of name is advisable, but believes that the most suitable occasion for a change will be the consummation of the expected merger with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Synod.⁸²

Again in 1959 the Pacific Northwest Presbytery appealed for a change of name, but this time it was felt that the name *Evangelical* Presbyterian would have the widest possible appeal to Bible-believing Presbyterians seeking shelter from the constantly encroaching apostasy. However, this proposal was overshadowed by the overwhelmingly optimistic report of the Fraternal Relations Committee, and Synod took no action on it.⁸³ The proposed merger, however, was not as imminent as expected; and when a pessimistic fraternal relations report was delivered to the Synod of 1960, Synod did take action to submit the name *Evangelical* Presbyterian to the presbyteries for approval.⁸⁴ This resulted in much discussion

82. *Minutes*, 1958, 5, 20.

83. *Minutes*, 1959, 11 f, 35. For a list of the names suggested for the united Church, see p. 22: Covenant Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church (Reformed Synod), Bible and Reformed Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church (Bible and Reformed Synod), Evangelical Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Conservative Presbyterian Church. The three highest names in the balloting are Conservative Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, and Evangelical Reformed Presbyterian Church. Of these the most popular is Evangelical Reformed Presbyterian Church by a vote of 36 to 21 for EPC and 19 for CPC. But, strangely enough, by a vote of 60-4 Reformed Presbyterian Synod was preferred to Evangelical Reformed Presbyterian Church (25-27)! Perhaps this can be explained by the enthusiasm for a quick merger with the RP's.

84. This action was actually taken in response to a recommendation from the Chaplains Committee. See 1960 *Minutes*, 68.

of the problem of a suitable name throughout the ensuing year. However when the stated clerk reported the actions of the presbyteries to the 25th anniversary Synod in 1961, the new name was approved by a slim six to five majority, and Synod declared that the name of the Church was changed to Evangelical Presbyterian Church.⁸⁵

There were various responses to the new name, yet all seem to feel that the name is a mandate for aggressive evangelical activity. For instance, Francis Schaeffer writes:

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church is a good place for a deepening of godly aggression. In changing the name of the church when it could have kept it as the majority group, it has showed some exhibition of the love of God. And as a church which practices the principle of the purity of the visible church, yet breaking with that which in our day has come to discredit the principle of the purity of the visible church, it has showed some exhibition of the holiness of God. These two things together give some exhibition of the existence and character of God. If committed to the leading and power of the Holy Spirit, God will surely in his grace use us, individually and corporately, and perhaps He will use us in our moment of history beyond all natural expectation.⁸⁶

Jay Adams hopes that the name does not mean a new departure for the Church in the sense of implying a lesser emphasis on the Bible. ‘Let us ever be as fully persuaded that the Bible is our only infallible rule of faith and practice (what God tells us to believe and do) as when we used the word “Bible” in our denominational label.’ On the other hand, he does hope there is in fact a new emphasis in the Church. ‘As

85. *Minutes*, 1961, 17, 35, 44 (cf. 62). There was some ambiguity in the approval of the presbyteries in that with five for and five against the new name, the Carolina Presbytery voted in favor with the amendment that the name be Evangelical Presbyterian *Synod* rather than Evangelical Presbyterian *Church*. For missionary Richard Strom’s sentiment that a change of name is not necessary, but that if the name is changed, the name *Fundamental* Presbyterian Church is stronger than *Evangelical* Presbyterian Church, see *BNS*, 5:13 (April 18, 1961). On the whole matter of the change of name see R. W. Graham, ‘The Spirit of the Evangelical Synod.’ Unpublished Paper, Covenant College, 1969, 9 ff. This short paper is a helpful and well-written introduction to the history of the Church during the period 1955-1965.

86. *EPR*, 6:7 (Aug.-Sept., 1961), 20. Cf. T. G. Cross, [*Historical Background and Development of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod*](#), 1968, 20.

we adopt this new name, let us fervently look for a renewed stress upon evangelism.⁸⁷

The January, 1962, issue of the *Evangelical Presbyterian Reporter* is a 25th anniversary issue. After mentioning the formal change of name, Dr. Harris writes:

The Church feels that it is now entering a new phase—that of evangelism and growth. Its statistics are encouraging, its churches are at peace. Its agencies are flourishing. But most of all, its call of duty is unchanged. The world lieth in the lap of the wicked one. The larger denominations with few exceptions are modernistic in their program and control. God's people are leaving them or their work is floundering in ecumenical and semi-political discussion while the Lord is building a new group of fundamental institutions and denominations. There is a revival of true Christianity in our day. It is being recognized as a 'third force' by ecumenical men. It numbers more adherents than are found in the modernistic National Council of Churches. May we awake to our duty and opportunities as one branch of the true Church of Christ.⁸⁸

Elder McGregor Scott was elected moderator of the Synod of 1962. His word for the Church concerns her responsibility to communicate the message of salvation to a corrupt and dying age. 'Never in our twenty-five years have we been in a better position to extend comfort and real fellowship to many who must shortly, for conscience sake, leave unsound denominations. Never have we had better opportunities for preaching the Gospel, starting new Evangelical Presbyterian churches and training our young people.' In his grace God has given the facilities and abilities to the Church. All that remains is faithful obedience and zealous service on the part of her members.⁸⁹

WPM General Secretary Mahlow left the Synod grateful for the many reports of progress and growth. He is also

87. *EPR*, 6:8 (Oct., 1961), 2 f. Adams left the EP Church in 1963 to minister in the OPC (*BNS*, 7:15).

88. *EPR*, 8:1 (Jan., 1962), 5, 9. This statement of Dr. Harris is interesting as an indication of his conception of the place of the EP Church in the ecclesiastical world.

89. *EPR*, 7:6 (July-Aug., 1962), 3 (*cf.* 1).

thankful for the various problems facing the Church, for instance, the lack of teamwork. 'Our emphasis upon freedom with a lack of central authority has sometimes manifested itself in a certain amount of irresponsibility, and we have not always pulled together as we might.' Nevertheless, this diversity within the unity of the Church does reflect some good points. 'There are certainly no dictators or any centralized authority or vested interests in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.' Mahlow is also grateful for the unprecedented opportunity set before the Church in an age when not only the world but much of the visible church has turned away from the Lord. 'In his mercy, God has placed in our hands the beginnings of a church which we believe is honoring Him, though yet imperfect and with much land to be possessed.'⁹⁰

The *EP Reporter* summarized the Synod of 1962 in terms of two definite trends: 1) increasing interest in union with other conservative Presbyterian bodies; and 2) mounting opinion in favor of constitutional freedom in eschatology.⁹¹ The Synods of 1963 and 1964 were, for the most part, taken up with these and kindred issues.

To some these trends are not healthy for the Church. An instance is the standpoint of pastor Kyle Thurman. He regrets these trends and wishes that the *Reporter* could have reported that the definite trends clearly discernible at Synod were: 1) an increasing interest in the salvation of souls lost in sin; and 2) mounting expectation of the soon coming of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.⁹²

In his sermon before the Synod Thurman is deeply concerned about the lack of evangelistic zeal in the Church. He looks askance at that hyper-Calvinism which is devoid of evangelistic concern for all men.

We must never let the doctrine of election or predestination cool our evangelistic zeal. This doctrine of the sovereignty of God should

90. *Ibid.*, 4.

91. *EPR*, 7:4 (May, 1962), 1.

92. *EPR*, 8:1 (Jan., 1963), 15. For perhaps part of the reason for this discontent, see *Minutes*, 1962, 73.

encourage the certainty of our success. Every man is a potential believer as far as we are concerned. . . . Every Evangelical Presbyterian must become a winner of souls. . . . Every Evangelical Presbyterian Church must establish a mission chapel. Our covenant children must be catechised at the feet of their parents, and led to a saving knowledge of the Saviour, and further trained in the standards of God's righteousness. This is our task!

At the same time Thurman is also deeply concerned that the Church have a proper conception of Christian liberty. How may we know what is right and wrong when it is not specifically spelled out in the Bible? The principles laid down in Scripture to answer this question are very simple: All things are lawful for the Christian, but all things are not expedient or edifying with reference to his testimony. 'If dancing, smoking, the type of music, the commercial theatre, or the games one plays, or the places he goes, or *anything* causes a brother to stumble, or to be offended, or to be made weak, then, "when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, *Ye sin against Christ*" (I Cor. 8:12). Satan knows he cannot get your soul, once you have been saved; but if he can destroy your testimony, then he will have rendered you useless as a soul winner, and helpless as a victorious Christian.' All must be done to the glory of God; this is man's chief end.⁹⁴

In connection with these two needs, Thurman pleads for a revival among the people of God. As steps in this direction, he urges, first, that everyone in the Church determine to set aside a time each day for communion with God by means of Bible reading and prayer. 'A consistent daily devotional period is a *must* if we are to have revival in our church.' Second, there must be a resolve that the whole family will regularly attend *all* the stated meetings of the church. 'In churches adhering to the Covenant of grace Christianity is a

93. *EPR*, 7:5 (June, 1962), 9. Cf. 8:2 (Feb., 1963), 2 f.

94. *EPR*, 8:3 (Mar., 1963), 5 f. The Scriptures appealed to by Thurman are I Cor. 6:12 f., 19, 20; 10:21, 23; 2:15; 6:19, 20; 8:12; Rom. 14:7, 13-15, 21-23; Gal. 5:1. For the view of Dr. T. G. Cross on smoking, see *BNS*, 7:27 (July 2, 1963).

family affair.’ Third, all must tithe their income, and fourth, each one is to witness to at least one person a week concerning his soul’s destiny. Church members throughout the denomination are challenged to test God with this simple formula for revival.⁹⁵

WPM Secretary Mahlow is also concerned with the matter of revival. Why does the Church see so little life among its members? What is the great hindrance to revival in our day? Is it communism, paganism, nationalism, or existentialism? No! ‘It is the sin and hypocrisy of the Christian Church. It is preaching that exegetes without exposing, teaching that informs without imploring, lives that profess without possessing. . . . Revival means preaching and praying against sin. It means conviction of sin, confession of sin, cleansing from sin, and victory over sin. It means putting off sin and putting on Christ.’⁹⁶

One particular area of concern of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church has to do with the relationship between the Gospel and various social and political issues. This concern was partially the result of the public agitation of the liberal ecumenical movement on the one hand and Dr. McIntire’s rival movement on the other.

The basic attitude of many of the ministers in the Church is well expressed by Dr. Harris. He reacts to the argument of many that the contemporary church must condemn the social evils of the day in the prophetic tradition of ancient Israel as follows: First, the ministry of the prophets was not simply to denounce sin but to reveal to men the Word of God. A prophet is not simply a synonym for a courageous preacher, but one who speaks the Word of God by inspiration. However, since we cannot do this by means of a ‘thus saith the Lord,’ we cannot denounce sin exactly as they did, but rather only point evil doers to the written word of God.

95. *EPR*, 8:1 (Jan., 1963), 1 f.

96. *Ibid.*, 1. Cf. W. A. Mahlow, *Revival in Our Day* (WPM pamphlet); also *BNS*, 13:7 (Feb. 18, 1969).

Secondly, we must recognize that the situation in our day is different from that in Israel's day. In ancient Israel church and state were united in accordance with the command of God. However, today the situation is far different. By God's command church and state are now separated so that the church has no rightful control over the state.

The church's ministry is now wholly to the individual with a message of salvation and sanctification. The corporate church surely now has no business lobbying in the halls of Congress for any specific program however laudable it may be. . . . Today, the establishment of civil righteousness within the state and among the nations is in the civil powers. The state is supreme in civil matters; the church is supreme in the spiritual sphere. They should be kept separate.

This does not mean that the church has no witness in matters moral and social.

Christianity must affect every area of the life of Christians and make them live according to righteousness. This is a far different thing from making Christianity try to affect every individual in a nation and making the individual citizens live as Christians. They will not do so and they cannot! It is useless for the church to try to impose Christian standards of morality on a nation. To do so, the church would have either to lower its standards or to impose a standard impossible for the nation to keep.

This was the mistake of the Puritan Reformed Churches in the British Isles and America.

Many clamor that the social gospel and the gospel to individuals must be held together as one gospel. However, to hold that the Gospel must redeem society is to misconstrue the nature and reality of the sin from which Christ saves the individual. In fact, the social gospel is a denial of Christ's declaration that he came to save us out of the world from which we may expect only tribulation. The world is sinful and the Bible tells us that it is getting worse. 'If the work of the church is to save society, she is fighting a losing cause.'⁹⁷ This does not mean, of course, that individual Christians should not take an interest in social and political questions.

97. *BPR*, 3:5 (May, 1958), 12 f.

Christians indeed should take a conspicuous place in government activities as citizens. The church also is not blind to the sins of the day be they greed, immorality, hatred, or what not. It commands its own members to live by God's moral law in all relationships. But the church as a church has no business in the sphere of government. As the church attempts to influence the world, the danger is that the world will attempt to use and influence the church for its ends.⁹⁸

This attitude does not preclude the Church's speaking out on political and social questions. In 1960 the Synod passed a resolution in opposition to a Roman Catholic president, and another condemning communism. The citizens of the United States are alerted to the danger of the former; and with regard to the latter, they are urged to maintain a strong stand against this godless philosophy, and to resist in every way its inroads into American life. In 1961 all Protestants are called upon to oppose communism by teaching the Christian religion in the home through family worship, in the church through God-centered preaching, and in the school through private or church-directed efforts. 'By these means Christian people can thus salt the earth, extending Christian influence even into our public, social, cultural, educational and political life with a demonstration of the power, love and Lordship of Jesus Christ. This, we are convinced, is the most effective way to meet the threat of the hammer and sickle of atheistic materialism.'⁹⁹

The Supreme Court's decision regarding the unconstitutionality of Bible-reading and prayer in the public schools provoked much discussion in the Church, most of it adverse to the attitude and action of the court. In fact, the Synod of 1963 goes on record supporting the proposed constitutional amendment to make explicit the right to read the Bible and pray in the public schools on the ground that such would be consistent with the basic religious principles involved in the origin, history, and present-day attitude of the American people. Such sentiment is reiterated by the Synod of 1964.¹⁰⁰

98. *BPR*, 4:3 (March, 1959), 14. 100. *Minutes*, 1963, 66 f.; 1964, 20, 56.

99. *Minutes*, 1960, 34 f., 47 f.; 1961, 55 f.

The Synod of 1963 also goes on record as being opposed to the use of public funds to provide free bus service for private and parochial schools—in the interest of maintaining the Biblical principle of separation of church and state.¹⁰¹ At the same time, many of the Church's leaders are expressing the view that the Supreme Court's decision is a clarion call, not only for more Church-related activity in general, but also for the establishment of more Christian schools.¹⁰²

A resolution on civil strife and racial tension was presented to the Synod of 1963, but after much discussion the matter was tabled only to be removed from the table again for the presentation of another resolution stemming from the following sentiment: 'In view of the current struggles of the American negro for political and social recognition, we desire to give expression on this question which is consistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ.' This resolution stresses the unity of lost humanity in Adam and the unity of redeemed humanity in Christ. However, it was voted to send this second resolution back to the resolutions committee.¹⁰³ The racial issue came up again at the Synod of 1964, which adopted a statement setting forth Biblical principles on racial discrimination. The thrust of this statement is the basic equality of all men

101. *Ibid.*, 68.

102. *EPR*, 8:9 (Sept., 1963), 15. See pp. 12 ff. of this issue of the *Reporter* for a discussion of 'The School Issue and the Supreme Court' by various EP ministers—one of which, W. S. Barker, vigorously defends it. For Dr. Soltau's support of the Christian school movement, see *BNS*, 7:19 (May 7, 1963). For Dr. Buswell's opinion, see *BNS*, 7:24 (June 11, 1963): 'I believe in the American principle—the Biblical principle—of separation of church and state; but this should not mean the complete secularization of public education. This should not mean that children in public school should be left in spiritual illiteracy. Current trends are threatening to blot out the memory of our most sacred heritage. Some of us believe that the solution may be in the development of a great system of private Christian schools.'

103. *Minutes*, 1963, 50, 66, 68 f. The original resolution reads: 'With regard to recent complicated questions of racial tension and civil strife, we draw attention to the Biblical principle that "God is no respecter of persons" and that "He hath made of one blood all . . . men . . . on the . . . face of the earth." We deplore the hatred and strife currently being fomented, and encourage our people to exercise Christian love and patience in all the complicated social questions of our day' (66).

condemned in Adam on the one hand and of all those redeemed in Christ on the other—so that from the spiritual standpoint no racial distinctions exist in the Church of Jesus Christ. The Synod also directed the moderator to appoint a special committee for further study of the racial question.¹⁰⁴

The Synod of 1964 erected a permanent Resolutions Committee. It is suggested that a resolution be defined as follows: First, it should pertain to the religious and moral issues of the day rather than the strictly social or political issues, or should at least bear on the moral or religious aspect of a social or political issue. Second, it should be aimed primarily at the constituency of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church as the flock of God under the oversight of the presbyteries of Synod rather than at the high counsels of government or society at large. Third, the basic purposes of a resolution are to help God's people to clarify and apply the precepts of God as found in the Scriptures, and to serve as a testimony to the world of what the Church believes the Christian faith and life to be.¹⁰⁵

A brief word is in order concerning the agencies of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church during the period 1960-1964. These agencies are considered very important in the life of the Church. 'While Evangelical Presbyterians are free to support and participate in Gospel-furthering work as they see fit, the Lord has given to the Church agencies in which it

104. [Minutes, 1964, 43 f.](#) The results of this committee's work are mentioned in Ch. 9. Part of the reason for Synod's inability to come up with a statement on the racial issue is that certain of its members held the following attitude expressed by Dr. Flournoy Shepperson in 1957: 'Preachers should hush up about segregation. It is not a religious issue—it is a social issue.' *BPR*, 2:9 (Nov., 1957), 17.

105. *Ibid.*, 41 ff. For an excellent sermon of K. A. Horner, Jr., on the spiritual issues involved in the assassination of President Kennedy, see *EPR* 9:1 (Jan., 1964), 4 f. On the matter of the involvement of ecclesiastical bodies in politics see *ibid.*, 16: 'Pulpit, Pew and Politics' (R. W. Lyon). The article is critical of the activity of Dr. Carl McIntire. For the reply of missionary John Dorsey see *EPR*, 9:5 (May, 1964), 2: 'I certainly agree that politics is not our aim in life and many times I am sure that Dr. McIntire detests the time he has to spend on it as well as I detest it. However we see it as a Christian duty. We both enjoy preaching the Gospel and have the joy of seeing souls saved by His mighty grace.'

has confidence. These agencies carry on work in the fields of education, evangelism, missions, church extension and the like. They are an “arm” of the local church, service agencies which assist the local churches in doing cooperatively what it would be difficult or impractical to do separately.¹⁰⁶

World Presbyterian Missions continued to grow throughout this period—from 36 missionary personnel in 1960 to 76 in 1965.¹⁰⁷ The Committee on National Missions received a new General Secretary in 1961, C. Howard Oakley. In 1962 the agency is renamed National Presbyterian Missions (NPM).¹⁰⁸ Oakley, however, resigned in 1963 to re-enter the pastorate, and the burden for the work of NPM, after some unfortunate delay, fell in the spring of 1964 upon the shoulders of Donald J. MacNair. It is MacNair’s conviction that the country needs ‘the dedicated, zealous, missionary-minded leadership of a church with the Reformed faith as its bed-rock.’ MacNair is determined that under his leadership NPM will get a new start.¹⁰⁹

During the summer of 1962 there was a severe financial crisis at Covenant College and Theological Seminary, involving a special appeal for prayer on the part of President Rayburn. However, the school weathered this storm and continued to prosper and grow. At the end of 1963 Dr. Rayburn announced that Covenant College would be moving to a new location atop Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, while Covenant Seminary would be remaining in St. Louis. For this project the Covenant student body of a little over 150 students raised \$25,000.¹¹⁰ William Mahlow was exuberant over the opportunity to expand the College: Here is an opportunity to take

106. *EPR*, 7:1 (Jan., 1962), 10. Part of this 25th anniversary issue is devoted to the agencies of the Synod.

107. *Minutes*, 1960, 30; 1965, 8 ff.

108. *Minutes*, 1962, 53, 57; 1961, 26. Cf. *BPR*, 6:5 (May, 1961), 1; *BNS*, 5:3 (Feb. 7, 1961).

109. *EPR*, 9:5 (May, 1964), 7; 9:6 (Summer, 1964), 5. Cf. *Minutes*, 1963, 60; *BNS*, 7:17 (April 23, 1963); 8:19 (May 12, 1964).

110. *BNS*, 6:30 (July 24, 1962); 6:34 (Aug. 21, 1962); 7:53 (Dec. 31, 1963); 8:16 (April 21, 1964).

a step forward in building 'a college based upon the principles for which the Evangelical Presbyterian Church stands.'¹¹¹

At the same time the importance of the seminary is kept before the people of the denomination. In the words of Professor Harris:

Basic to the program of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church is its seminary. Any denomination, to continue and thrive, needs a source of ministerial supply which will be in line with the denominational testimony and will bless the whole Church. If we left our students to Arminian training, we could hardly expect a Calvinistic church. . . . At the same time, the work and testimony of the school is not narrowly denominational. This is because our Evangelical Presbyterian denomination is not narrow in its horizons. It has always been our purpose to supply leadership to the church at large.¹¹²

The committee on Christian Education continued to suffer from a periodic lack of funds. For instance General Secretary Cox laments in 1961: 'We must have more funds to do a job which must be done now.'¹¹³ However, despite this discouraging feature Cox continues to keep his vision for Christian education before the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. He remarks that, although the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches have always prided themselves in a well-trained ministry, modern Presbyterianism whether liberal or conservative is not especially marked by an educated laity. 'Presbyterian and Reformed churches may well glory in their commitment to a trained and properly prepared ministry; but it is time that many of us who delight in such a tradition hang our heads in shame when we consider what we expect of and what we provide for so many others who share the Christian education responsibilities in our churches.'¹¹⁴

The work of the committee is strengthened by the activities of a national youth director in the person of Arthur L.

111. *EPR*, 9:2 (Feb., 1964), 3 (cf. 10). The issue is devoted for the most part to Covenant College.

112. *EPR*, 9:9 (Oct., 1964), 4; 10:1 (Jan., 1965), 6, 11.

113. *BNS*, 5:31 (Aug. 22, 1961); cf. 5:22 (June 20, 1961).

114. *EPR*, 7:9 (Nov., 1962), 13; 7:7 (Sept., 1962), 5 ff.: 'Our Church and Christian Education.'

Kay. Kay pleads for a higher quality of Christian education in EP homes and for closer cooperation among EP churches in the matter of youth endeavors. 'Let's be Presbyterians, or let's quit kidding around. Commitment *must* be taught to the coming generation.' With this in mind he suggests that the Christian Education Committee should be the basic committee of the Synod.¹¹⁵

The official statistics of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church for the period 1960-1964 actually show a loss from 6,248 communicant members in 1960 to 6,108 in 1964. However, the latter figure especially is misleading in that it does not include many churches which were negligent in reporting. If the membership of those churches were in 1964 what they were when they last reported, the total figure would mount to some 7,597 members in the Church as a whole.¹¹⁶

Evangelical Presbyterianism

What is the distinctive flavor of Evangelical Presbyterianism as distinguished from the older Bible Presbyterian outlook? Before attempting to give a summary answer to this question it should be made plain that there is not only much continuity between the two outlooks, but that they are basically the same in their allegiance to the three great principles of Presbyterians. Whatever differences may exist between them are more differences of emphasis than of substance in that the basic spirit of Bible Presbyterianism and Evangelical Presbyterianism is the same.

What then are these differences of emphasis? Various ones could be mentioned, and some have already appeared on the preceding pages, but in summary we may mention three of the most basic ones.

First of all, in Evangelical Presbyterianism there is a shift

115. *BNS*, 7:25 (June 18, 1963).

116. *Minutes*, 1960, 'Statistics of the Bible Presbyterian Church'; 1964, 'Statistics of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.'

of emphasis from the *formal* to the *material* principle of Christianity. This shift is well symbolized in the change of name from *Bible* to *Evangelical* Presbyterian, for if the Bible sets the form of the Christian faith, the Gospel is the matter of it. This shift is also seen in the renewed emphasis on a distinctively Reformed understanding of the Gospel. Not that the EP Church thought less of the Bible, but that its stress was more upon the *content* of the faith, than on its *form*—the distinctive emphasis of the old BP Church—in that it was felt that there is more to Christian witness than the defense of the Bible as God's Word in the face of modern denials.

This leads us to note a second shift of emphasis—the shift from a more negative to a more *positive* approach. The old BP Church, particularly the McIntire element in it, tended to be more negative in its witness, stressing more what the Church is against than what it is for. The EP spirit, while very negative in certain aspects of its witness, seems to feel that the negative aspect of the Church's witness, to be both loyal to the Scripture and effective, must be built upon the positive foundation of the Gospel. A negative witness while very necessary, especially in this blatantly apostate age, must rest upon a foundation—namely, a positive witness to the evangelical content and intent of the Bible. This shift is seen in the EP attitude toward the doctrine of separation: what we are to be separated unto must be emphasized as the basis of what we are to be separated from.

A third, related, emphasis—as seen in the foregoing pages—is the EP concern for a proper *balance* in the testimony of the Church—a balance not always very evident in the old BP testimony. There is the desire for a balanced stress upon the formal, material, and practical principles of the faith on the one hand, and upon the positive and negative aspects of the testimony of the Church on the other.

There are other differences which could be brought out—some of which are obvious from the account already given. Perhaps one more, not so obvious from the foregoing, should

be mentioned. This is more of a sense of church history, more of a concern to recognize continuity with the past, and more of a desire to establish historical roots back beyond the turbulent 1930's. A measure of this concern had been with the BP Church all along—as seen in the desire to maintain the true spiritual succession to the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.—but there seems to be an intensification of it in the EP Church. This tendency is most obvious in the desire to unite with the old, historic Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Synod.

Perhaps the tendency is also reflected in W. S. Barker's series of articles in the *Reporter* on lessons from church history. It is interesting that Barker sees the place of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in history as akin to the medieval Waldensians. In fact, he likens Evangelical Presbyterians to twentieth century Waldensians. The desire of the EPC, toward the goal of a thoroughly Biblical Christianity, is for a twentieth century reformation. However, it must be acknowledged that no such reformation has taken place on the scale of that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However like the Waldensians who saw the issues long beforehand, perhaps it is the place of EP's to maintain their distinctive and separated testimony in humble patience until God be pleased to work a thoroughgoing reformation in Christendom.¹¹⁷

It would seem that this sense of history is also reflected in the following words of Dr. Harris at the beginning of his brief history of the EP Church found in the 25th anniversary issue of the *Reporter*: 'The history of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church began a long time ago. We claim to be only a branch of the true Church of Christ, and therefore our history includes the noble history of the Church down through the early ages of the martyrs, through the dim light of the middle ages, through the Reformation, and into modern times.'¹¹⁸

117. *F.PR*, 8:5 (May, 1963), 16 f. For other articles in the series, see, *e.g.*, Dec, 1962, and Feb., 1963.

118. *EPR*, 7:1 (Jan. 1962), 4.

In getting at the basic nature of Evangelical Presbyterianism, perhaps it would be profitable to take summary note of what it at least in theory claims to be. In the same anniversary issue the characteristics of the work and witness of the Church are set forth in the following terms.

First, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church is *Protestant in Witness* in that it holds to the basic formal, material, and practical principles of the Reformation. This involves the necessity of a militant defense of ‘the faith once delivered to the saints’ in the face of all the ‘isms’ of this modern age.

Second, the Church is *Reformed in Doctrine*, holding to the historic Calvinistic tradition. ‘The Evangelical Presbyterian Church accepts the emphases of “the Reformed Faith”—the full authority of the Scriptures, the sovereignty of God, the covenant of grace, and the necessity of obeying the whole counsel of God.’

Third, the Church is *Presbyterian in Polity*. This involves the rule of elders as set forth in Scripture and the system of graded courts in recognition of the Biblical challenge to oneness in fellowship and service. ‘The power of these courts is ministerial and declarative. Church properties are held by the local congregation, and churches are free to leave our fellowship when they so desire, and take their property with them, though urged to do so only on Scriptural grounds.’

Fourth, the Church is *Evangelistic in Practice*. ‘Because it believes that men are lost sinners under God’s wrath, and that they must accept Jesus Christ as Saviour if they are to escape everlasting punishment, all its services and activities seek to proclaim the Gospel, and all church members are challenged to personal witnessing for Christ.’

Fifth and finally, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church is *Missionary in Outlook*. Indeed, its roots go back to the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. This church takes seriously God’s command to take the Gospel to

every creature.’ The Church believes that it has been raised up in God’s providence for ‘such a time as this.’¹¹⁹

Apparently this was not all theory at least in the eyes of those attracted to the ranks of the EP Church. For example there is dissident Southern Presbyterian Dr. Carroll R. Stegall, Jr., who is attracted to the EPC by ‘a tolerant, warm conservatism’ akin to that in which he was raised. After being received into the ministry of the Church in 1962, he is ‘spiritually and doctrinally at home.’ Stegall also leads his dissident congregation into the EPC as opposed to the course of independency. The reasons for affiliating with the EP Church are manifold. However, briefly summarized, they amount to this: that the Church is what it claims to be. For instance, while shunning independency it embodies a ‘free Presbyterian Christianity’ in that it is not a tightly controlled denomination. Unlike other denominations there is room for new leadership, and newcomers can contribute something to the life of the Church. Furthermore, while small, the EP Church is growing and shows much promise. As its very name suggests the Church is both orthodox and dedicated to the conviction that Christianity means missions and evangelism.¹²⁰

Likewise missions leader Dr. Arthur F. Glasser, General Secretary of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (formerly the China Inland Mission), finds his spiritual home in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in early 1963. Glasser’s reasons for affiliating with the EPC are given in a letter printed in the *Reporter* in the spring of 1965. He saw his need to be in contact with the challenge and counsel, as well as under the authority and discipline, of a sound Reformed Church.

When I looked abroad, however, I saw much confusion, isolationism, competition. One sought a communion in subjection to Christ as He is revealed in the Scripture. And what of a balanced Biblical concern for both unity and purity of His Church? Where was love, not conten-

119. *Ibid.*, 3.

120. *Ibid.*, 14 f.: ‘Why I Joined the Evangelical Presbyterian Church’; *EPR*, 7:4 (May, 1962), 2 f.: ‘The Evangelical Presbyterian Church: to join or not?’

tion; faith, not suspicion? Where was one to find eschatological liberty, evangelistic fervor, evangelical ecumenicity, and the Reformed fellowship determined under God to reverse the trend of splintering and withdrawal from Christians of like faith and obedience?

Eventually, the Lord led me to seek association with the Evangelical Presbyterian movement. I believe this has brought me to my spiritual home. I rejoice in the personal enrichment and opportunities for service that have come through being received by my brethren in this church. Together with them I hope and pray and work for the establishment of an evangelical movement in America that will embrace all Reformed bodies of similar concern. Together we affirm fellowship with all Christians everywhere who, though not Reformed, yet love our Lord Jesus Christ and His household of faith.¹²¹

This outlook is a prophetic introduction to the next phase of this history—the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod.

121. *EPR*, 10:2 (Feb.-Mar., 1965), 13. Cf. *BNS*, 7:3 (Jan. 15, 1963).