

# *The Presbyterian* **GUARDIAN**

## *Contents*

*The Grace of Humility*

By C. RALPH VERNO

*Preparing to Preach Today*

By CORNELIUS VAN TIL

*Observations of a Missionary*

By FRANCIS E. MAHAFFY

*Are We Encouraging Sacramentalism?*

By ALBERT G. EDWARDS, III

*Must We Be Negative?*

By G. I. WILLIAMSON

*Editorials*

*Letters*

*News*



Machen Hall  
Westminister Seminary

VOLUME 30, NO. 10  
OCTOBER, 1961

# Preparing to Preach Today

By CORNELIUS VAN TIL

*Professor Van Til, Presiding Fellow of the Faculty and Professor of Apologetics, welcomed the students entering Westminster Theological Seminary on the occasion of the 33rd annual opening exercises on September 20. His remarks are relevant to the Protestant situation today, particularly in the light of the upcoming conference at New Delhi. After noting that we "live in trying times," Dr. Van Til went on to speak as follows.*

**Y**ou are going to preach Christ as the redeemer from sin. But there are those who deny that they are sinners. Therefore they also say that they do not need Christ to save them from sin. Or, if they think they need to be 'saved,' then they think they can save themselves.

When I speak of those who deny that they are sinners you are thinking with me of those who have, as they say they have, no religious need at all. We hear much of secularism today. You are thinking also of those who say that any particular religion is as good as any other particular religion. You are thinking of those who say that there are many paths that lead to the top of the same mountain. All men are God's children and as a true father, so they say, God never gets permanently angry with any of them. God, if there be a god, we are told, loves all men and all men, in the depth of their heart, love a God who loves all men. If Christ comes into the picture at all for those who speak in this fashion, it is in the same way that Buddha comes into the picture for Buddhists, namely, as an example of the love of the universal father of men.

Mr. Wybenga, who was hospitalized for a time, will continue his studies in the Gospel of Luke next month. The series appears regularly on the opposite page.

There are, moreover, the millions who have never even heard the name of Christ, that only name by which men must be saved.

## Universal Need of Christ

How anxious then you are to go out into the world and to the ends of the world to tell men of the crucified One. How anxious you are to tell men, that whether they acknowledge it or not, it is because of sin that they are under the wrath of God. How anxious you are to tell men that their condition is far worse than the greatest minds of the world have ever thought of it as being. And then how anxious you also are to tell men how far better their condition will be if only they believe and trust in the crucified and risen Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. You would hasten to tell them that he who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, and that he who was rich was made poor so that we by his poverty might become rich. Men need to be told that they are sinners in the sense that as such they are under the wrath and condemnation of God, and men need to be told that Christ Jesus died to save those who believe in him from the wrath to come and that he will come again to take them into his presence.

## How Few Prepare Themselves

Of course, in thinking of the false views of sin and salvation that are entertained by so many millions of men you are mindful of how few there be who prepare themselves to preach the gospel. Counting all those that are being trained in all the seminaries of all 'Christian' churches will only make you say, "What are these among so many?" The fields are white



unto the harvest. How shall so few minister to so many?

But the full seriousness of the situation appears only if we realize that of the "few" that prepare themselves for the Christian ministry only a "very few" prepare themselves to preach the true Christ. How many serious young men are about to enter Roman Catholic seminaries! How sad to realize that there they learn to preach only an adulterated gospel.

As little as did Luther do they learn at these seminaries to know either the full heinousness of sin or the full joy of the forgiveness of sins. When these young men go out into the field they are ready, unless Christ in his mercy intervenes as he did with Luther, to compromise with the false saviors that sinners have made for themselves.

Once more then your urgency to prepare yourselves to preach the Christ who died and rose again according to the Scriptures increases. You realize

*How very few prepare to preach the true Christ.*

that only the sons of the Reformation, the followers of Luther and of Calvin, may be expected to preach Christ as the redeemer from sin without compromise with the desires of the natural man.

### What of New Delhi?

But you are deterred by divisions found among these sons of the Reformation. You bewail the schismatic and sectarian nature of those who claim to follow Luther and Calvin. You long for a united voice of Protestantism. Did not our Savior pray that his followers might all be one in their speaking of him? Is this prayer never to be answered on earth?

Involuntarily your thoughts turn to the meeting of Protestant leaders soon to be held at New Delhi. Are we there to see the answer to the great high-priestly prayer of our Lord? There are those who seem to think that we shall or that, if that prayer is ever to be answered, it must at least be by such means of unification as are there to be employed.

Here at New Delhi the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council will meet together, and may well be joined into one organization. If such a union is effected the possibility of a united Protestantism may seem, to some, to have been virtually realized. Then too the World Council will have within itself a division of World Missions and Evangelism.

Must we not take at face value the aims of both of these organizations as expressed in their official documents? "The Tambaras, Madras Meeting of the International Missionary Council in 1938 issued a statement on 'The Faith by which the Church Lives' that declared unequivocally:

*We believe that Christ is the Way for all, that He alone is adequate for the world's need. . . . We are bold enough to call men out from them [other religions] to the feet of Christ. We do so because we believe that in Him alone is the full salvation which man needs."*<sup>1</sup>

As for the World Council, until recently its basis has been "acceptance 'of our Lord Jesus Christ as God and as Saviour.'"<sup>2</sup> If this should seem to allow for doubt as to where the Christ may be found, the proposed revision of this basis reads as follows: "The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the

Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

If then "the Christ" is to be proclaimed "according to the Scriptures," what more could any son of Luther or of Calvin desire? Are we not all ecumenically minded? How can we help but be if we remember John 17?

### Morrison's Ecumenical Ideal

It might seem then that soon the ideal of ecumenical-minded men of the modern church will be realized. One of them, Charles Clayton Morrison, reviews the history of Protestant churches in relation to the process of their unification.

The whole history of Protestantism, says he, "appears as a long series of schismatic chain reactions—one schism producing other schisms and they in turn producing others, in a process which continued up to, let us say, the late nineteenth century."<sup>3</sup> But now, says Morrison, "we live in a different time and a new kind of world." The "walls of our sectarian isolationism are in a process of crumbling."<sup>4</sup> The prophetic voices of "inspired idealists" calling for Protestant unity are at long last meeting with response.<sup>5</sup> Men are beginning to see that "every denominational creed used as a basis of Chris-

tian fellowship is a violation of the unity of the ecumenical church."<sup>6</sup> Any local church will soon be seen to be "the ecumenical church manifested in a particular locality."<sup>7</sup> When the ecumenical church is a reality it will mean "the virtual passing of the heretic."<sup>8</sup> The church will have a "new vision of Jesus Christ."<sup>9</sup> The ecumenical spirit, born of the Holy Spirit, was well expressed by Philips Brooks when he said: "To me, the gospel is just one great Figure standing with outstretched arms."<sup>10</sup> And this, adds Morrison, expresses the "spirit of Martin Luther who, in his earlier days, desired the Reformation to rest upon no other foundation than 'the forgiving love of God in Jesus Christ.'"<sup>11</sup>

### The Mission Appeal

With the appearance of the ecumenical church, we are told, the proper missionary approach to the peoples of the Orient can be taken. These religions themselves have lost much of their own mutual exclusiveness.<sup>12</sup> "For instance, such words as Karma and Maya to the modern Hindu, or Metta and Nibbana to the modern Moslem now convey new meanings." And the "newness" about these doctrines "makes them challenging and relevant to all people."<sup>13</sup> "What vitally matters is the dynamic of faith undergirding these concepts,

### LARGEST STUDENT BODY ENROLLED

With classrooms bulging with students and the more than crowded library pointing up the urgent need for a new building, Westminster Seminary is in the midst of another year of strategic service in the cause of the gospel. For the second year in a row enrollment figures show an increase of 20 percent.

The widening appeal of this seminary for those who want a theological training grounded in a commitment to the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God is in part indicated by the fact that the 120 students hold degrees from 63 different colleges and universities. Of the 28 denominations represented just half would be classified as Presbyterian or Reformed. There are 14 Orthodox Presbyterian students.

Twenty per cent of the students come from countries other than the United States: Australia—2, Canada—6, India—1, Japan—6, Korea—7, Netherlands—1, United Kingdom—1, for a total of 24. There are 34 in the entering, or Junior class. Of more than 20 in the graduate program nine are candidates for the degree of Doctor of Theology.

A large crowd attended the opening exercises, at which the Rev. Henry Fikkert, pastor of Community Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Center Square, Pa. gave the invocation. Scripture was read by the Rev. John DeWitt, pastor of the Sixth Reformed Church, Paterson, N. J. The Rev. Egbert Andrews, missionary to Formosa of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, offered prayer. The address by the Rev. Alexander De Jong, Th.D., pastor of the Second Christian Reformed Church, Highland, Ind. on "The Focus of Our Consecration," stressed the central concern of the ministry with the welfare and task of the church.

## *The true church of Christ still speaks the words of Christ.*

making them relevant to present life and meaningful in contemporary history."<sup>14</sup>

It is thus that according to modern ecumenicists, the ecumenical spirit back of the Protestant creeds and the ecumenical spirit back of the Oriental religions may merge in one great ecumenical spirit centered in the common ideals of all good men. The "dynamic of faith" common to all truly religious men may hereafter be "mobilized to create a just social order, a true community of people, a world in which human rights are guaranteed." All faiths may now "seek to put meaning to our common humanity and ensure the worth of human values."<sup>15</sup>

### **Not Historic Protestantism**

Now if you look at all this even with a measure of care, my friends, you will observe that if the voice of *united* Protestantism does emerge at New Delhi it will no longer be the voice of Protestantism in the historic sense of that term.

The new voice of modern ecumenical Protestantism seemingly about to emerge at New Delhi will not sound either like the voice of Luther or of Calvin. In God's providence Luther and Calvin set men free to believe and to preach the gospel of free grace apart from works. But the voice of modern ecumenical Protestantism ultimately makes man his own savior. Luther and Calvin pointed men to the Christ of whom the Scriptures speak plainly. Modern ecumenical Protestantism will presumably also speak 'according to the Scripture,' but its Scripture is nothing more than a sublimation of sinful man's self-constructed ideals. Its Christ is nowhere to be found for he is but the ideal that sinful man makes for himself.

Luther and Calvin preached Christ as dying on the cross for them, in their room and stead, in order to set them free from the wrath to come. Modern ecumenical Protestantism preaches a Christ-ideal in terms of which men tell themselves that there is no such thing as the wrath of God upon the sin of man and therefore no eternal punishment.

Luther and Calvin preached Christ as the One who, when he had blotted out the handwriting of sin that was against them, returned to his Father in heaven to prepare a place for them.

Modern ecumenical Protestantism leaves men without a merciful heavenly Father and therefore without hope in the world.

### **Be of Good Courage**

Here then is the situation. An apostate church preaches a false Christ to a world that is dying in sin. Is then the prince of darkness to be victorious after all? Will your work of preparation for the preaching of the Christ of the Scriptures at best rescue a few brands from the burning?

No! Christ broke the power of sin and death! He did rise from the tomb. Through him death is swallowed up in victory. He did save men from the wrath to come. He did ascend to heaven to prepare a habitation for his people. He does rule over all. Satan is a vanquished foe. The voice of the gospel is still heard among men. There are those who have not bowed their knees to Baal. The true church of Christ still speaks the words of Christ. In spite of much apostasy Christ's voice is still heard among men. And by the grace of God men still respond to the preaching of the gospel. Christ did save the world. He is saving the world. He will save the world. In his name you may freely preach "liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

Let us then with full commitment to the Lord, with great love for his name, with great zeal for his cause, with great joy because of the certainty of his victory undertake our work together.

God's truth abideth still,  
His kingdom is forever.

1. *The Theology of the Christian Mission*, Gerald H. Anderson (ed.), London, 1961, p. 11.
2. Bernard Leeming S. J., *The Churches and the Church*, London, 1960, p. 6.
3. *The Unfinished Reformation*, New York, 1951, p. 5.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 194.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
11. *Idem.*
12. *The Theology of the Christian Mission*, p. 150.
13. *Idem.*
14. *Idem.*
15. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

## **Orthodox Presbyterian Churches Use Seminarians**

During the past summer a dozen or more Westminster Seminary students were given the opportunity throughout the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to apply knowledge previously acquired in the classroom. Two churches — Emmanuel, Wilmington, Del. and Covenant, Pittsburgh, Pa. — were able to supply the full summer support of a student. With the cooperation of the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension 14 additional congregations and home mission fields were able to employ ten students for at least a part of the summer.

"The work assigned to the seminarians was varied and strenuous, from renovating a barracks building for services to acting as camp counselor," reports the Rev. LeRoy Oliver, general secretary. Most taught in vacation Bible school, preached while pastors were on vacation, and did extensive calling.

### **Florida to California**

The students and their fields of labor were: Jack Corzine, Redeemer, Newtown Square, Pa.; Ivan DeMaster, Covenant, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Raymond Drake, Sharon, Hialeah and the new home mission field in Southwest Miami, Fla.; George Hall, Trinity, Hatboro, Pa.; Norman Jones, Park Hill, Denver, Sable, and Thornton, Colo.; Rollin Keller, Neptune, N. J.; Duncan Lowe, First, Waterloo, Iowa; David Moore, Knox, Silver Spring, Md.; Michael Stingley, La Puente, First, Manhattan Beach, and Westminster, Los Angeles, Calif.; and Bernard Stonehouse, Emmanuel, Wilmington, Del. Richard Gaffin, Jr. and Peter Steen spent one week canvassing a suburb of Baltimore, Md. for First Church. Calvin Malcor was employed part time by Greyfriars, Torrance, Calif.

As reported by the Committee on Home Missions to the 28th General Assembly, "We believe that the employment of students for summer activity is in the best interests, not only of the local churches, but also of the whole denomination. For while the students are assisting in the program of evangelism they are trained for future services as ministers" of the gospel.