

the PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

Supporting the enlargement of a Presbyterian witness loyal to Scripture and the Reformed faith

I Belong!

Triumphantly I can say, "I am not my own. I belong." I belong to none other than my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. As the peace of that glorious salvation floods my soul, I realize that I belong, not by personal choice, but because my name is eternally written by the loving hand of the Father in the book of life. What a comfort that doctrine of election and predestination!

I belong because Christ laid the seal of His blood, which was shed upon Calvary, upon that name in the book. I know that I belong to Jesus, for the Spirit of Christ assures me that I am adopted to be God's son, heir of salvation, to bear the likeness of the Father before His throne forever.

Once I was bound, now I am free. Once I was blind, now I see. Once I was dead, now I live, for Christ lives in me!

—Cornelius Hanko
(See p. 9)

LESSON AND YOUTH PROGRAM FOR JUNE 26
BIBLE STUDY FOR JULY

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MAILBAG

HE DISAGREES

I really can't believe that you meant what you said.

You said, "No doctrine of revelation can be considered complete unless it makes room for the experience of Augustine whose conversion began with the voice he heard, 'Take, read!' God was in the voice as well as in what Augustine took

and read."

Literally, I suppose, you can defend that, although I have to wonder how you can *know* that God was in that voice rather than it just being a coincidence.

But you make it sound like the two "words" are of the same quality—that what Augustine heard from the next courtyard was of the same

certainty as what he read a few minutes later.

If I followed that reasoning I could find God speaking to me in hundreds of other sources, I think that could be dangerous, and you had separated rather than combined those two forms of revelation.

—Fred Wagner
Atlanta, Ga.

There was only one revelation, the Word, but the Spirit used the voice.
—Ed.

AS IT IS

The May 18 issue of the *Journal* was superb. You told it exactly as it is. The scandal needs to be known far and wide. The UPCUSA received some 250,000 members in the take-over of the UPNA in 1976. Many of those who voted for the union are sick at soul now. They just didn't know!

I recall well J. Howard Pew's advice prior to 1958: "Do not join the PCUSA. Your conservative voice would be lost—silenced." His words were prophetic.

The only item omitted from your account of the Church scandals in the May 18 issue) was the item reported in the *Presbyterian Layman* of June-July 1976. Entitled, "A Ten-Year Trend in Church Membership," it reported that the UPCUSA had lost 638,348 members.

An equal loss of clients, customers, etc., in the business world would call for an investigation and revelation of policy.

—Name Withheld

AT HOME, TOO

Please allow me to say thank you for the account of the young Hindu ("Bridge of Death—or Life," *Journal*, May 11) who was saved from suicide and then really saved. The account came at a very timely moment for us in the U. S. A., even though it happened in his native India.

With all the activity of cults, proponents of Eastern pagan religions—even witchcraft and Satan worship—prevalent in our country today, we who call ourselves "Christian" need to examine our own activities. We need to determine if we are what we say we are.

Are we living lives that will make others see an inner peace that they may not have? Or, do we go to church on Sunday and live like pagans Monday through Saturday?

If we are to call ourselves Christians, we surely need to ask our Lord

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

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Our Only Comfort 9

No earthly trouble can defeat us with the comfort available from our Lord by Cornelius Hanko

How Good Is Your Memory? 10

We remember to call on God in emergencies; but do we remember to obey His commands?—by J. Render Caines

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An Impressive Testimony

In the news pages of this and the immediate past issue of the *Journal* we have the story of the latest General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. Increasingly, it is becoming apparent that the RPCES may deserve to be recognized as the most progressive, in a basic Reformed sense, of the Presbyterian denominations in America today.

Without surrendering any of their distinctives, or wholehearted commitment to the Word of God, Reformed Presbyterians not only are growing at a faster rate and giving at a more generous rate, but reaching out in a bolder fashion than any of the other Churches with which they are in correspondence.

Their average growth rate of 7.5 per cent is almost twice that of any of the other Churches in the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council—except when the new Presbyterian Church in America grew spectacularly through wholesale congregational withdrawals. They are planting new churches (in proportion to their size) at an even greater

rate than the PCA.

Where the work of the kingdom promises to be better advanced by sharing with another denomination a cherished institution, such as a college, they do not hesitate.

Where a genuine Christian ecumenicity can be furthered without compromise, as through concurrent assemblies, joint conferences or shared commissions, not even a hint of parochial or regional jealousy appears.

Their leaders are statesmen, not politicians. They enjoy a level of mutual trust in their assemblies which allows the election of best qualified men, not politically identified partisans, to the positions of responsibility. Their spokesmen are professionally as well as spiritually distinguished before the watching world.

They are small enough to trust one another and large enough to undertake ambitious projects.

We salute them as brethren who increasingly are manifesting the testimony that best represents the Reformed faith in our time. ☐

The Early Church's View

What did the earliest Christians believe and teach about the practice of abortion—an issue very much before the world today?

John A. T. Robinson of Oxford, after relating the New Testament in a new book, goes on to redate the Apostolic Fathers (those who had been in direct touch with the apostles). He brings the date of the *Letter of Barnabas* to about 75 A.D.; and follows Jean A. Audet in dating the *Didache* or the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" to 40-60 A.D.

These two documents each quote large sections of *The Two Ways*, which thus must antedate both of them. This would mean *The Two Ways* must have appeared in the middle of the first century, and would make its teaching and practice to be that of the Apostolic

Church. Indeed, even a somewhat later dating would still mean that it represents the ethical conduct of the Apostolic Church.

The Two Ways is a kind of catechism or ethical code based on the Sermon on the Mount and on the Ten Commandments. It sets forth first The Way of Light/Life and then The Way of Darkness/Death.

Under The Way of Life as it appears in the *Didache* it declares: "Do not murder a child by abortion, nor kill it at birth." Or, as the same is cited in Barnabas: "Do not murder a child by abortion, nor again destroy that which is born."

Under The Way of Darkness/Death, the *Didache* cites the previous document thus: "The Way of Death is this . . . Murderers of children, destroyers of their children, abortionists."

Barnabas declares that this "is crooked and full of cursing Murderers of children, corrupters of God's creation."

The last seems to be a reference to the fact that God creates human beings in His own image by way of pregnancy so that abortion on demand is a corrupting or destroying of what God has and is creating the right to life.

Has the Church adequately considered that abortion is counter not only to the Roman Catholic but also to the Apostolic Church?—LIAM C. ROBINSON.

Do You Really Care?

Jeremiah, the "weeping prophet" of the Old Testament, is mostly remembered for the disdain with which the people of his day received his warnings. In deadly peril of facing their early obliteration, the deeds of Jeremiah's time reacted to his charges, warnings and prescriptions with indifference and even hostility.

The vehemence of his prophecies has even resulted in a common word, *jeremiad*. The word, according to Webster, refers to "a prolonged lamentation or complaint about a condition which goes unrecognized by those who tolerate it."

We saw a *jeremiad* in a recent issue of *Firm Foundation* which impressed us greatly. The editor wrote:

"We have almost completely abandoned public education to the secularists and humanists. All about all we do is cry in the night. Nothing much is done to rescue our youth from the wanton plundering of reprobate experimentalists.

"It is time parents became concerned with what is in the textbooks of their children, and what fills they are being shown in the schools. Maybe the time has come when teachers have to produce and the educational system has to produce, or risk being sued for educational malpractice. Maybe officers of the Church could be sued for that too.

"Behaviorist, secular humanism and 'third force' psychologists have become the major directors of public education. The mental conditioning of students is being based on the infamous Humanist Manifesto which states that there is no God; there are no absolutes; there is a right nor wrong; all ethics are situational and the acceptance of it