

# The Klinean Minority

The following document is a collection of 3 minority reports authored and co-authored by Meredith Kline. The first deals with the Peniel controversy. The second two deal with the subject of medical missions in the OPC.

Pgs. 2-5 The Minority Report: A study of Errors Alleged by Peniel in the Report of the Committee by Meredith Kline and Robert Knudsen (1961 – 28<sup>th</sup> GA)

Pgs. 6-7 Minority Report: Committee on Foreign Missions by Paul Woolley and Meredith Kline (1963 – 30<sup>th</sup> GA)

Pgs. 8-12 Minority Report: Committee on Foreign Missions by Meredith Kline (1964 – 31<sup>st</sup> GA)



*Meredith what a surprise!*

of selection or choice on the part of a moral agent is the *sine qua non* of the adiaphora concept, to isolate certain things from such choosing and then to equate the adiaphora concept with these isolated things is surely an abstraction and indeed an abstraction which has robbed the term adiaphora of its meaning. In the case of the Reformed writers who use the language "things indifferent" the usage is in its context meaningful even if loose and abstract. For as used by them it means that the things so designated might be the objects of an indifferent choice. But that is precisely what Peniel is reluctant to admit and consequently Peniel's use of the terminology "things indifferent" is not merely an abstraction but a meaningless abstraction as the Report indicated.

Respectfully submitted,  
Robert L. Atwell  
Chairman of the Committee

### MINORITY REPORT A STUDY OF ERRORS ALLEGED BY PENIEL IN THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

A. Cf. Majority Report I and II. [Doc. IV, pp.38, 39 *re* G. A. (1959), pp. 70, I, A - 72, I, C]. The criticisms made by Peniel in this section are gratuitous since the position which Peniel criticizes is not the position of the Report. As is clear even from the quotations of the Report cited in Peniel's own criticisms (p. 39) the Report heartily agrees that a fruitful use of the means of grace involves a proper receptivity on the part of the believer.

In diverting attention to this false issue Peniel has evaded and so failed to answer the real charge which was made in the section of the Report in question. The Report's contention is that the procedure which characterizes Peniel's devotional activity, while it cannot be equated with the scriptural prescriptions for the proper use of the means of grace, is nevertheless treated in Peniel practice as indispensable for an effective program of sanctification. Agreeably, the Report charges Peniel with an unwarranted restriction of the means of grace. Indeed, the contention of the Report is in effect that this Peniel procedure, even if somewhat flexible, is nevertheless of such a formal character that it virtually amounts to an extension of the divinely appointed means of grace. We believe that a fair study of the Report, interpreting it according to context, will show that the intent of the language "unconditioned and unrestricted" was to repudiate such humanly devised additions to, and in that sense restrictions of, the means of grace appointed by God. The question at issue is not the mere fact that Peniel has a peculiar method associated with its use of the means of grace, nor is the question so much one of the inadequacy or the propriety of that method, but rather of the *pretensions* of that method as practiced by Peniel.

The fact that the Report denoted the Peniel procedure as "a certain subjective experience [or "emphasis"] in the use of the means of grace" has been misinterpreted by Peniel as further evidence of the Report's alleged rejection of the truth that there must be a personal appropriation by the believer of the benefits of salvation. Once again a careful study of the Report should show that that was not the Report's intent. Its use of the word "subjective" simply reflects the fact that the formal Peniel method to which objection was being taken is largely subjective. It must be granted that the Report's use of the word "emphasis" in this connection is confusing. In its next paragraph, where the Report does deal with the matter of the relative amount of attention that ought to be given in the formulation of the doctrine of sanctification to the human part in that process as over against the divine part, the Report again uses the word "emphasis." However, the fact that that paragraph introduces the subject of the believer's subjective role in sanctification as "A *further difference* between the Peniel Statement on sanctification and the

statement of the Confession" (italics ours) indicates that the expression "subjective emphasis" in the preceding paragraph refers, however infelicitously, to something other than the believer's subjective receptivity.

In the Majority Study of this question, adequate account is not taken of the fact that the Peniel Statement which was being criticized by the Report had itself already introduced the subject of the means of grace. Hence, the Report was entirely justified in evaluating the Peniel view of the relation of the means of grace to sanctification in terms of the Shorter Catechism's teaching concerning the means of grace.

B. Cf. Majority Report III. [Doc. IV, p. 40 *re* G. A. (1959), p. 73, I, C, paragraph 2]. Admittedly the language of the paragraph under consideration is ambiguous; but if it be borne in mind that the Report was criticizing Peniel for the presumption of adding to the means of grace, it will not appear so strange that the Report calls special attention to the despite done to the role of Scripture by such an addition. Moreover, the very fact that the Report thus relates its criticisms of Peniel's method to the issue of the Scriptures' adequacy as a means of grace is itself a significant indication that the thrust of the Report's criticism was as interpreted above; namely, that Peniel's method presumes to serve as an appendage to the means of grace.

C. Cf. Majority Report IV. [Doc. IV, p. 40 *re* G. A. (1959), p. 73, I, D, 1st paragraph; cf. p. 41 *re* G. A. p. 74, I, D, 1, middle of page]. The protest registered by Peniel against the use of what might well be the most pertinent of evidence for judging the nature of a particular Peniel teaching or practice *i.e.*, the testimony of former adherents of the Conference, cannot be seriously entertained. The protest serves, however, to point up the great gulf that exists in Peniel's esteem between the Conference faithful and those who demur to identification with the Conference. This attitude has without doubt been an important factor in the tendency of divisive Peniel enclaves to develop in the life of the local churches, as was observed in the section of the Report on "The Peniel Bible Conference and the Church" (G.A., p. 86).

D. Cf. Majority Report V. [Doc. IV, p. 41 *re* G. A. (1959), p. 76, I, D, 3]. The Report is at this point justifiably cautious. The Committee which prepared it was persuaded that there was an excessive emphasis on direct address to Satan in Peniel religious exercises. That is all the Report chose to say and it said that very clearly: "In this connection, the Committee would note, however, that according to reliable descriptions of certain private gatherings of certain Peniel adherents for prayer, *considerable* attention has *frequently* been given to the direct address of Satan. The Committee judges *such an emphasis* to be without biblical warrant and indeed to be a dangerous distortion of true Christian piety" (italics ours). Whether there is warrant for believers' ever addressing Satan directly is a matter enveloped in some mystery. The Report's silence on that point is, therefore, not merely understandable but commendable.

The Majority Study in dealing with this point concludes that one virtually denies the relevance of Christ's example if one does not allow that Christians may address Satan as did the Lord in his temptation in the wilderness. But is it certain that such a conclusion is warranted? The temptation of our Lord was not only redemptively unique; it was unique in that it was the temptation of one who was omniscient. And that is of immediate relevance to the question at issue. For while the Christian is not able to determine whether he is to construe a particular temptation as an encounter with Satan directly and personally nor does the Christian possess absolute certainty that the finite spirit, Satan, will be cognizant of the words addressed to him in a particular instance — such is the mystery surrounding the relationship of angelic spirits to mortal men — our Lord was not limited by ignorance of this dark area. Moreover, in the wilderness temptation of Jesus the kind of difficulty we have mentioned was obviated by the special, extraordinary self-manifestation of the Tempter.

E. Cf. Majority Report VI, 1. [Doc. IV, p. 43 *re* G. A. (1959), p. 79, II, A]. Peniel charges that, by an uncritical shift in terminology, "decretive will" and "guidance of providence" become almost synonymous terms in the Report. This charge is unfounded. The Report plainly states the relationship of these two things in the following sentence. "By the guidance of providence is meant that the people of God are brought by Him to their appointed destiny, all things working together for their good, as one aspect of God's execution in history of His eternal decrees" (p. 78). The guidance of providence and the decretive will of God are not equated in the sentence quoted by Peniel from G. A., p. 79, paragraph 4. In interpreting this sentence it should be borne in mind that Peniel's failure to distinguish between the decretive will of God and the preceptive will of God is logically of a piece with their failure to distinguish between the guidance of providence and the guidance of precept. Their failure at both these points emerged again in the 1959 Studies and that observation is all that can fairly be gathered from the quoted sentence: "This same characteristic obscuration of the distinction between the decretive and preceptive will of God, between the guidance of providence and the guidance of precept, is evidenced in the 1959 Studies."

The Majority Study in its comment on this matter would defend the Peniel Statement against the charge of confusion between the decretive and preceptive will of God on the oblique ground that since the Committee Report uses the word "guidance" in two senses, Peniel might in all innocence bring the two senses together in a composite picture of guidance. The relevant facts are, however, that the Report is obviously aware that it is dealing with two kinds of guidance, defines the two kinds, and constantly distinguishes between the two; while the Peniel Statement nowhere distinguishes between the two varieties of guidance or gives evidence of recognizing such a distinction. This last fact the Majority Study itself acknowledges when it expresses its sympathy with the Report's judgment that "the distinction between the two has suffered complete eclipse in the thought of the authors of the Statement." It should not be forgotten, moreover, that the Statement was Peniel's response to the Church at a time when criticism had already been expressed of Peniel on this very matter. The Church was earnestly concerned to have clarification of Peniel's position with respect to these precise distinctions and all Peniel offered was the Statement's bewilderingly vague formulation in which the vital distinctions are completely ignored.

F. Cf. Majority Report VI, 2. [Doc. IV, pp. 43, 44 *re* G. A. (1959), p. 79]. A most natural interpretation of the tract on marriage in the 1959 Studies is that given in the Report. If, however, the phrase "bring it to pass" found in that tract refers to God's preceptive will (as Doc. IV says it does) rather than to God's decretive will (as the Report interpreted it), then this tract does not afford evidence of the characteristic Peniel confusion between the decretive and preceptive will of God. To concede this, it should be noted, does not affect in the slightest the validity of the Report's appeal to this same tract in illustration of Peniel's abandonment of the adiaphora principle (cf. Report, pp. 81, 82). Attention may be called, incidentally, to certain unsatisfactory features in the comments of Doc. IV at this point (p. 44). For one thing the Document errs in appealing without qualification to the sanctions of the theocratic covenant of Deuteronomy as evidence of the principles governing the lives of individual believers. And for another, the Document betrays a most strange prejudice when it manages to identify the concept of Christian Liberty advocated in the Report as a sort of "fatalism"!

G. Cf. Majority Report VII [Doc. IV, p. 45 *re* G. A. (1959), pp. 80-82]. The undersigned concur with the majority report on this subject and would in addition simply draw

attention to the fact that Peniel in Document IV (p. 44) emphatically reaffirms the unscriptural view of adiaphora criticized by both the Report and the present Committee.

Signed:

Meredith G. Kline

Robert D. Knudsen

(While signing this report as a whole, Dr. Knudsen has no opinion on the particular points discussed in sections E and F.)

It was moved that the Assembly declare that the "Formulation of the Doctrine of Guidance" in the Communication of the Peniel Bible Conference to the Twenty-seventh General Assembly is erroneous in those respects specified as such in the report of the Committee, that these views constitute a deviation from the doctrine set forth in the Word of God and our subordinate standards, and that members of the Peniel Bible Conference who are office bearers in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church are obliged in terms of this office to disavow such erroneous views.

It was moved that Standing Rule No. 42 be suspended and that Mr. Meiner's request that the Rev. Donald G. Mostroim, a member of the Prayer Council of the Peniel Bible Conference, be given the privilege of the floor, be granted. The motion was lost. Mr. Meiners recorded his affirmative vote.

On motion Mr. Meiners was granted five more minutes to complete his remarks.

The order of the day having arrived, the Assembly was addressed by the Rev. Daniel Fannon. Mr. Clelland responded for the Assembly.

It was moved as an amendment that the word "and" be inserted after the word "Committee," that the comma and all of the motion following the word "standards" be deleted, and that a period be placed after the word "standards."

The Assembly recessed at 5:30 o'clock after prayer by Dr. E. J. Young.

#### FRIDAY MORNING, JUNE 9

Following a devotional service led by Mr. B. A. Coie, the Assembly reconvened at 8:35 o'clock with prayer by Mr. Coray.

The Minutes of Thursday were approved as read.

On motion the Committee on Travel Fund was requested to prepare a budget for the Travel Fund for the Twenty-ninth General Assembly.

The amendment before the Assembly was carried.

It was moved as a substitute that the Committee Elected by the Twenty-seventh General Assembly to Examine the Current Doctrines and Practices of the Peniel Bible Conference be instructed to explicate the phrase in their conclusion, "in those respects specified as such in the report of the Committee", by setting forth specific statements in the "Formulation of the Doctrine of Guidance" in parallel with the relevant passages from the Scriptures and the subordinate standards of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and report to the Twenty-ninth General Assembly.

The Moderator ruled that he could not properly recognize Dr. W. Young. Appeal was taken from the ruling of the Moderator. The Moderator was sustained.

The motion to put the previous question was carried. The motion to substitute was lost. Mr. Rankin recorded his affirmative vote.

The Moderator requested Mr. Clowney to take the chair. The Moderator resumed the chair.

The amended motion before the Assembly was further amended to read as follows: That the Assembly declare that the "Formulation of the Doctrine of Guidance" in the Communication of the Peniel Bible Conference to the Twenty-seventh General Assembly

Ghinda, Eritrea .....	5,223.62
Pusan, Korea	
#1 — 23-67 Punji .....	955.00
#2 — 23-29 Punji .....	5,000.00
#3 — 23-33 Punji .....	4,400.00
Taipei, Formosa .....	5,552.88
Hsinchu, Formosa .....	9,756.50
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Total .....	\$55,450.59
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## Headquarters Fund

Administration building,

7401 Old York Road

Melrose Park, Pennsylvania — 1/3 interest .....

\$23,545.17

On motion the Treasurer's report was included in the Minutes without being read.  
 Dr. Kline presented the Minority Report of the Committee on Foreign Missions as follows:

#### MINORITY REPORT COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN MISSIONS

The undersigned dissent from the decisions of the Committee on Foreign Missions to appoint medical specialists as members of the staff of the Eritrean Mission and from its decision to establish a hospital as part of that Mission. Our dissent is necessitated by the following convictions:

1. There is no scriptural warrant for the church as church to establish or otherwise identify with its name institutions devoted to the practice of medicine or of any other profession which belongs in the sphere of the cultural mandate that God has given to men as men.

2. There is no scriptural warrant for the church as church to make official appointments of individuals to a ministry of mercy which is directed exclusively or even primarily to those outside the household of faith.

3. In so far as the church may properly support medical work in the exercise of its ministry of mercy the sponsorship of such undertakings would not be the province of the church's Committee on Foreign Missions but, of its Committee on General Benevolence.

PAUL WOOLLEY

MEREDITH G. KLINE

It was moved to adopt the first recommendation of the Committee on Foreign Missions.

On motion the word "the" was substituted for the word "geographical."

The Moderator announced the appointment of Mr. Atwell to the Committee on Overtures and Communications in place of Mr. Clough, who was unable to serve, and of the Rev. Messrs. Eyres (convener) and Nilson, and Mr. Metzger to the temporary Committee on Travel Fund.

The Assembly recessed at 5:53 p.m. with Mr. Wade leading in prayer.

#### WEDNESDAY MORNING, MARCH 27

Following a devotional service led by Mr. D. F. Stanton, the Assembly reconvened at 9:00 a.m. with Mr. Ediger leading in prayer.

The Minutes of Tuesday were read and approved as corrected.

The first recommendation of the Committee on Foreign Missions was adopted in the following amended form: That the Assembly inform the Fifth Reformed Ecumenical Synod that: a) this Thirtieth General Assembly believes that it is highly desirable that there be as much cooperation in Reformed foreign missionary work as possible with a view to assisting the Reformed churches in the promotion of their respective missionary endeavors and in the practice of biblical missionary principles and methods, and urge the Synod to consider ways and means for effecting such coordination; and b) since the nature and purposes of the plan of "a federated council with one headquarters," as proposed by the Reformed Churches of Australia and New Zealand, have not been fully defined, the Assembly is not prepared to endorse such a proposal.

It was moved to adopt the second recommendation of the report of the Committee on Foreign Missions. It was moved to insert the word "voting" after the word "a."

It was moved and carried to postpone the whole matter until after the report of the Committee on Correspondence with Other Churches.

It was moved that a committee be erected to establish principles defining and/or regulating the use of medical works on our foreign fields, with respect to the areas of evangelism and Christian mercy, and report to the Thirty-first General Assembly; and that no further special medical work be undertaken beyond our present operations until the General Assembly of the church can consider these principles.

It was moved to postpone consideration of this motion until after discussion of the Minority Report of the Committee on Foreign Missions.

It was moved to amend the above motion by adding the words "and that the Minority Report be considered at this time."

The Moderator ruled that this motion required a two thirds vote. Appeal was taken from the ruling of the Moderator. The Moderator was not sustained. The motion to amend was carried.

The motion as amended was carried.

The Assembly recessed at 12:21 p.m. after being led in prayer by Mr. Moreau.

### WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON

The Assembly reconvened at 1:35 p.m. with prayer led by Mr. Georgian after the singing of the hymn, "The Lord's My Shepherd."

Mr. Charles L. Eckardt, fraternal delegate of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, General Synod, was introduced to the Assembly and on motion was invited to sit as a corresponding member. Mr. Eckardt was invited to address the Assembly at this time. Mr. Eckardt addressed the Assembly. The Moderator responded on behalf of the Assembly.

The following motion was lost: That the General Assembly instruct the Committee on Foreign Missions of the General Assembly to terminate plans for conducting medical work under its supervision and proceed in accordance with the principles stated in the Minority Report of the Committee on Foreign Missions. Messrs. Kline and Woolley recorded their affirmative votes.

It was moved and carried to terminate discussion of the Minority Report of the Committee on Foreign Missions.

The Moderator ruled that the following motion, consideration of which had been postponed to this time, was now before the Assembly: That a committee be erected to establish principles defining and/or regulating the use of medical works of our foreign fields, with respect to the areas of evangelism and Christian mercy, and report to the Thirty-first General Assembly; and that no further special medical work be undertaken beyond our present operations until the General Assembly of the church can consider these principles.

medicinal. There does not appear to be any ground which allows for dogmatism on any of these interpretations and with such wide-spread uncertainty it would be dangerous to decide on the basis of this verse what the church may or may not do with reference to medical work.

It cannot be denied, however, that the apostolic church obeyed Christ's command to heal. In obeying that command it used certain endowments which it had been given for that task. Nor may it be denied that the church today has also been given gifts of healing. These gifts are fundamentally different in nature than the miraculous gifts possessed by some in the apostolic age but nevertheless they are gifts from God to the church.

7. We are to use such talents as God has given. Although we don't have miraculous gifts we do have the gift of healing in another form.  
It would seem clear that one of the lessons of the parable of the Good Samaritan is that whatever help one has been given the power to render, so far as it is needed, should be given. In these days of advanced medicine may our church allow a sufferer to die by restricting our help to a poultice administered by an evangelist when a drug administered by a doctor would have saved a life? Drugs are dangerous in the hands amateurs and in most countries their use by amateurs is forbidden. In Eritrea, over the last several years, there has been a gradual tightening of such restrictions. God has equipped and called men for just this function.
8. The command of Christ to heal was to the continuing church.  
This thesis has been somewhat indirectly stated above. We make it explicit here: The command was not merely to the disciples as individuals but to the church. The command to heal was given virtually in the same breath in which Christ commanded the disciples to preach: "And as ye go, preach . . . heal the sick . . ." (Matt. 10:7-8). See also Mark 3:14-15; Luke 9:2, 10:9. Since we interpret the preaching as applicable to the church, we can hardly deny that same interpretation to the healing. And since preaching was an activity to be continued, how can we say that healing as such was not? True, *miraculous* healing would have stopped with the cessation of miracles, but if the activity of healing, *per se*, was legitimate to the church then, how can it be illegitimate to the church now? In I Corinthians 12:1-30, there is a lengthy discussion of the variety of gifts given to the church for the perfecting of the one body, the church. Quite a variety of gifts is mentioned: "the word of wisdom," "the word of knowledge," "faith," "gifts of healing," "miracles," "prophecy," "discerning of spirits," "tongues," "interpretation of tongues." Healing is one of the gifts.

From these considerations it seems clear to the committee that just as Jesus himself and the church immediately following him were on scriptural ground in engaging in works of mercy in conjunction with the preaching of the gospel so also has been the church of past generations and the church today.

The Stated Clerk read the minority report as follows:

#### MINORITY REPORT COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN MISSIONS

The following is submitted by way of dissent from the study report of the Committee on Foreign Missions on the subject of medical missions. Notice was given to the committee by the undersigned of his intention to submit a minority report. It was not possible, however, to present this report at a meeting of the committee since its own subcommittee, charged with the preparation of the committee's study, did not report its conclusions until the final meeting of the committee, shortly before



the deadline for the submission of reports for publication for the Thirty-first General Assembly. The formal limitations of the present report were dictated in part by these circumstances—and by the committee's unofficial pious advice to the effect that the elaboration of the minority case beyond the general order of magnitude of the committee's own report would be unseemly.

It is disappointing to find that the committee's study has not advanced the discussion beyond or even as far as the stage reached at the Thirtieth General Assembly. In fact, that study turns out to be an only slightly revised version of a study prepared by an earlier subcommittee prior to last year's Assembly. It might be contended that the explanation for this lies in the form of the Thirtieth General Assembly's request, the terminology of which is reflected to an extent in the way the committee has chosen to state the question under debate, viz., "Is a ministry of mercy a legitimate part of the missionary work of the church?" However, that topic is not as comprehensive as the study actually requested by the Thirtieth General Assembly, nor does it begin to face squarely the specific contentions of the minority report of 1963, which precipitated the special concern of the General Assembly in this matter. The committee's self-assigned question for study is in fact so vague and evasive that even those who agree with last year's minority report that a church may not establish a medical institution can join the committee in its affirmative answer to the question which it erroneously claims to be the issue among us.

A considerable part of the committee's study consists in the reiteration of the fact that it is a Christian duty to show compassionate concern for the physical as well as the spiritual well-being of one's neighbor, thus reflecting the compassion of the messianic redemption which extends to the whole man, body and soul. Unfortunately, this sound biblical emphasis is interwoven in the committee's report with the unqualified assertion that opposition to medical missions springs from a depreciation of the natural. Now if we may assume that the committee's observations were intended to have some relevance to the current discussion within our General Assembly, we can only conclude that the committee is charging the position of the minority report of 1963 with divorcing the natural from the spiritual and with encouraging the neglect of Christian mercy. If such was not the committee's intention it should make it quite clear that it did not intend to speak relevantly. Certainly such a charge, if actually directed against the minority report, could only have arisen from a total failure to become acquainted with the position of that report and would be undeserving of serious attention. Suffice it to say that by the same lack of logic the committee would have to conclude that those who oppose parochial schools out of the conviction that a parent society is the proper agency to provide education in the area of the cultural mandate show a tendency to divorce the natural from the spiritual and to neglect the divine ordinances pertaining to the cultural task of man.

The issue among us is not whether Christ does or whether Christians (missionaries or otherwise) should manifest active mercy towards men in their physical sufferings. If, for example, a group of covenant people form a society to maintain a hospital as a ministry of mercy in the name of Christ, there is none among us but would rejoice in it as an eminently proper kingdom enterprise.

The precise question that requires study is whether there is a biblical warrant for the church as church institution to administer the affairs of a medical establishment through its official agencies or to practice medicine through "missionaries" appointed specifically for that purpose and so performing that function not as private individuals but in their specific capacity as official agents of the church. A subsidiary question that is involved and requires serious study is whether there is biblical warrant for the church as church to possess proprietorship of any kind of cultural establishment or, for that matter, of any real estate whatsoever.

Happily, the committee report is not as irrelevant as it claims to be when it claims to be limited to the question: "Is a ministry of mercy a legitimate part of the missionary work of the church?" For the report tries to do something far more than to prove, for example, that the church may make distributions from its charitable resources to enable the needy on mission fields to obtain medical assistance. The committee report attempts to demonstrate, and is indeed under obligation to demonstrate, nothing less than that medical work has been appointed as a continuing function of the church as church, like the preaching of the gospel and the administering of the sacraments.

Such an appointment would be a glaring anomaly. That this is not generally recognized by the church of our time is perhaps due in part to the distracting influence of venerable ecclesiastical tradition and of current administrative-financial involvements. In any case, for the church to be assigned the practice of medicine as one of its normal institutional functions would constitute a unique exception to what is otherwise a clear pattern in the assignment of functions to the church and to other institutions. According to the divine distribution of responsibility, the church is charged with a distinctive ministry of the gospel in Word and sacramental symbol, while the performing of all functions properly appertaining to the cultural mandate is left to other institutions and agencies. This being the case, the evidence which is adduced in alleged support of the thesis that God has nevertheless assigned the cultural task of medicine to the church as well as to other institutions must be unambiguous. The evidence presented to the General Assembly by the committee is anything but compelling.

The committee's appeal for a biblical warrant for its policy is to the miraculous healings that accompanied the preaching of Jesus and his disciples within the theocratic community of Israel and to the miraculous healings of the apostolic age. But these miracles, as all acknowledge, were designed to be special signs in a special period of redemptive history, serving as attendant witnesses to divine revelation and as a prophetic earnest of the eschatological regeneration of all things. Now understandably the committee report does not venture to claim that there is any comparable sign-value in the activity of the missionary doctor. For the always fallible, often unsuccessful, and sometimes even harmful nature of the practice of medicine through the centuries quite disqualifies it from serving as a sign of divine revelation in word and soteric act. There is thus a remarkable peculiarity about the miraculous healings in question that removes them at once from the category of an unambiguous biblical counterpart to modern medical missions.

There are still other fundamental differences between the two activities under comparison. As observed above, the specific issue among us is the propriety of ecclesiastical administration of a medical establishment. Certainly no warrant for that particular practice is to be found in the biblical healings to which the committee appeals. On the contrary, those healings were such as to obviate the need of medical establishments! For the performance of those miracles required no hospital paraphernalia and the consequence of them was that the patient had no further need of a hospital's ministrations.

Another basic difference appears at the very point where the committee would find similarity. The committee acknowledges that the biblical healings were the product of miraculous gifts but also asserts: "Nor may it be denied that *the church* today has also been given gifts of healing. These gifts are fundamentally different in nature than the miraculous gifts possessed by some in the apostolic age but nevertheless they are gifts from God *to the church*." (See under #6; italics not original.) This dogmatic assertion is gratuitous, precisely what needs to be demonstrated, namely, that the

gifts have been bestowed for ecclesiastical rather than private exercise, is declared to be an undeniable fact. And if it is the case with physicians who are found among the members of the church that their natural gifts of medicine must be construed as gifts which God has given to the *church as church* to be exercised as an ecclesiastical function, what of the Christian plumbers and dog-catchers, etc., etc.? What is undeniable (here the committee is right) is that the supernatural gift of healing which was the peculiar endowment of the household of faith, is "fundamentally different in nature" from natural medical talent, which is the common possession of the just and the unjust and universally finds expression in a non-ecclesiastical vocation.

We must, therefore, conclude that the committee's argument claiming biblical warrant for its policy of medical missions is specious. It is now further to be observed that the church finds itself in conflict with the most important principles of biblical ecclesiology as soon as it adopts the traditional approach to medical missions, the approach recommended in the committee's report.

It would seem evident that a physician commissioned by the church to devote his full time to performing in the name of the church what is alleged to be an ecclesiastical function is thereby appointed as some sort of officer of the church. Which office he is supposed to occupy is somewhat obscure—the convenient title of "missionary" is bestowed on him and that covers a multitude of problems. Yet, his work does not coincide with that of any of the church officers as described in the standards of government of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The committee's report presents his ministry as one of mercy and presumably then he would be, in terms of the committee's position, a specialized variety of deacon. (For those who appeal to the miraculous healings of the New Testament for a biblical warrant, the ministry of Philip (Acts 8:5-7) and of Stephen (Acts 6:8) might be of particular interest, but the relevance of these examples is uncertain because of doubts attaching to a simple identification of the seven (Acts 6:1-6) with the diaconate. Also, according to James 5:14, 15, it is the elders whom the sick are to summon to render the services there described.) However, since there is no biblical evidence of deacons or any others practicing ordinary medicine as an official ecclesiastical function, what the modern church has actually done is to invent the new office of the ecclesiastical medic.

But leaving aside the question of the medical missionary's official status, there remains the fact that the *function* of medicine is, according to the committee's insistence, a properly ecclesiastical function. Therein the committee would find the justification for its policy of medical missions. But if, operating on such assumptions, the church proceeds to commission physicians to practice medicine as an *ecclesiastical* function, the question at once arises: By what standards is this work to be performed and governed? The church may not abandon responsibility for the nature of the performance of any ecclesiastical function carried out in the church's name.

Perhaps it is the general excellence of modern medical practice that prevents us from appreciating the reality of the problem at this point. The woman in the Gospels who had suffered much at the hands of the physicians and grew worse rather than better (Mark 5:26) would have more readily recognized that the church that undertook the practice of medicine in her day would be obliged to discover some standards by which to see to it that its medical missions work was truly and consistently a ministry of *mercy*!

Unless, then, the church has lost the third mark of a true church and is prepared to disclaim responsibility for exercising disciplinary supervision over its medical work, it will be obliged to adopt a set of standards by which to judge of the medical qualifications of those whom it would appoint and by which afterwards to govern their

labors. Such a code of medical practice is, however, not provided in the Word of God. Presumably, the church will desire to practice medicine according to the present state of the art (that, indeed, becomes the fourth mark of the true church). It will then probably be the latest medical journals that are elevated to the position of standards of the church alongside the Bible. In any case, the Scriptures will no longer be the sole authority and rule in the government of the church.

And, of course, there are not available to the church from any source standards of absolute authority and validity for the practice of medicine like the divine norms available to the church in the canon of Scripture for regulating the functions that are indisputably the church's proper ministry. Thus, when the church usurps to itself from the sphere of human culture the function of medicine, it involves itself in the relativism, the uncertainties, and the fallacies of expert human opinion and repudiates the character of absolute divine authority that is the glory of its true ministry.

Nor is that the end of the dilemma for the church entangled in the medical profession. Such a church must also be ready to submit to the interference of the state in its own proper ecclesiastical functioning in a way clearly prejudicial to the prerogatives of Christ as Head of the church. For the missionary doctor has no license to operate in independence of the civil regulations governing the practice of medicine nor does he have diplomatic immunity from the sanctions of the civil court by which those regulations are enforced. Consequently, the church that commissions him must acknowledge the right of the state to interfere in its government and ministry so far as to determine who is and who is not qualified to be appointed by the church to one of its own offices or ministries; to establish the particular procedures that the medical appointee must follow in fulfillment of his ecclesiastical ministry; and, in case of malpractice, to inflict temporal penalties on him for his official ecclesiastical shortcomings and virtually to compel his suspension or deposition.

Surely the church that submits to such state interference has thereby removed itself from under the exclusive lordship of Christ as King (in a special sense) of the church. And the church that insists that the practice of medicine is one of its proper divinely assigned functions has no choice but to submit to that kind of state control and in so doing to become guilty of giving unto Caesar that which belongs unto God.

In summary, the committee's policy of medical missions involves our church in the contradiction of the foundational biblical principles of church polity, the principles of the kingship of Christ and the sole authority of the Scriptures. And if this judgment is correct it, of course, confirms the conclusion stated above that the committee's claim to have found biblical warrant for its policy is not valid.

Should the General Assembly adjudge this analysis of the question at issue to be sound, it may not allow any considerations of expediency, voiced though they be out of the urgency of Christian compassion and the immediacy of contact with human misery on the mission field, to deter it from instructing the Committee on Foreign Missions to terminate its present medical missions program and to adopt a new policy on this matter consonant with the Scriptures.

Respectfully submitted,  
MEREDITH G. KLINE

The order of the day arrived to recess the Assembly during the reading.

On motion the order of the day was extended to permit the completion of the reading of the report.

The Assembly recessed at 6:06 p.m. with prayer led by Mr. Murray.

WEDNESDAY MORNING, APRIL 29

Following a devotional service led by Mr. Malcor, the Assembly reconvened at 8:45 a.m. with the Moderator leading in prayer.

The Minutes of Tuesday were read and approved as corrected.