

LEADER'S GUIDE

Confessing
CHRIST

*A Study of the Christian Faith
from a Biblical, Reformed Perspective*



CALVIN KNOX CUMMINGS


GREAT COMMISSION
PUBLICATIONS

Scripture quotations taken from the HOLY BIBLE,
NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984,
International Bible Society.

ISBN 978-0-934688-77-2

Copyright © 1992 by Great Commission Publications, Inc.


Digital Edition © 2016 by Great Commission Publications, Inc.


Copyright Notice: This digital edition of the *Confessing Christ* Leader's Guide is copyrighted material and may not be distributed electronically. Permission is granted for printing and copying pages for students who have the *Confessing Christ* book.



3640 Windsor Park Drive
Suwanee, GA 30024-3897
800-695-3387 • www.gcp.org

Great Commission Publications is the joint publishing ministry of the
Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the
Committee on Discipleship Ministries of the Presbyterian Church in America.





“*Confessing Christ* has introduced countless inquirers to the Christian faith as well as prepared many to confess their faith in Christ in a Reformed church. I have used it for some years as a pastor to the edification of its users and to the glory of the Savior that it proclaims. It continues to be a clear, concise guide to all who seek to understand the basics of the Christian faith. I commend it to all who confess their faith and those who would prepare them for the same.”

REV. ALAN STRANGE, *Professor of Church History, Mid-America Reformed Seminary*

“For over half a century this little book has served to help scores of Christians find their true home—and feel at home—in Reformed churches. It is truly time-tested and now ready for a new generation.”


DR. STEPHEN J. NICHOLS, *Chief Academic Officer, Ligonier Ministries*



“*Confessing Christ* has been appreciated by so many because Cummings provides a solid, straightforward, and brief explanation of the basics of the Christian life. The discussion questions will allow group leaders to stay at the level of the book or dive much more fully into the grace foundations behind our faith walk.”

BRYAN CHAPPELL, *Senior Pastor, Grace Presbyterian Church, Peoria, Illinois*

“Confessional Presbyterian churches continue to profit from this little book, now over 60 years old, as required reading in membership classes. Especially timely in the hyper-individualism of twenty-first century American Christianity is this book’s stress on the corporate character of the Reformed faith and the Christian life. Pastor Cummings explains how the Christian’s ‘diligent use of all outward means’ (WSC 85) includes participation in the church’s worship and service and submission to its nurture and discipline. Communicants learn from this book that confessing Christ means loving his church.”

JOHN MUETHER, *Dean of Libraries, Reformed Theological Seminary*





*What does it really mean to be a Christian?
What is involved in making a public confession
of faith in Christ as Savior and Lord
and uniting with his church?*



CONFESSING CHRIST is an essential study for the adults in your church, whether they are new Christians or have been calling on the name of Jesus since they were children.

Treasured for decades, *Confessing Christ* lays out the basics of the faith and equips men and women to become disciples of Christ. An excellent resource for membership classes, Bible studies, and adult Sunday school, this book can be used over seven or thirteen weeks. Discussion and review questions are at the end of each chapter. The Leader's Guide includes additional notes and support materials for leaders.

CALVIN KNOX CUMMINGS, SR (1909–1987) pastored Covenant OPC, Pittsburgh (1937–1974), Calvary OPC, Tallahassee (1975–1981), Christ OPC, Melbourne (1981–83), and Trinity OPC, Chicago (1983–85). Always zealous for evangelism through outreach, Cummings taught classes to generations of adults on the truths of the Christian faith, and *Confessing Christ* was the outgrowth of such classes. A longtime member of the Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Cummings also served continuously on the board of Westminster Theological Seminary for 51 years.




TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction		7
Chapter 1	The Bible <i>The Basis of Our Confession</i>	9
Chapter 2	Christ <i>The One We Confess</i>	13
Chapter 3	Repentance and Faith <i>Requirements of a True Confession</i>	17
Chapter 4	The Christian Life <i>Living Our Confession</i>	21
Chapter 5	The Church <i>Uniting with Others in Our Confession</i>	25
Chapter 6	God's Provision for Growth <i>God Nurtures Those Who Confess Christ</i>	30
Chapter 7	Confessing Christ to Others <i>Qualifications and Methods</i>	35
Appendix		
	The Orthodox Presbyterian Church	40
	The Presbyterian Church in America	42
	How to Conduct an Instruction Class for Prospective Church Members	44

INTRODUCTION

This Leader's Guide is designed to be used alongside *Confessing Christ* in church membership classes. Only the barest essentials are included. You may want to supplement each chapter with material of your own. You must be careful, however, not to make the course too extensive. The course is designed simply as a primer in the Christian faith from a biblical, Reformed perspective.

The class will get the maximum benefit by using the review section and discussion questions at the end of each chapter in the book. The review should help the student recall, clarify and clinch the truths presented. The discussion questions will stimulate the student to reflect on and search the Scriptures, leading to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the truth.

This Leader's Guide includes additional notes at the beginning of each chapter for the leader. There are also more review and discussion questions, as well as additional Scripture references. Permission is granted for printing and copying pages for students who have the *Confessing Christ* book.

The Appendix contains short histories of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in America. Consider providing the history of your denomination if you are teaching this class in another setting. You will also find "How to Conduct an Instruction Class for Prospective Church Members," a short article written by Calvin Knox Cummings for a Home Missionary Manual. While this was written several decades ago, pastors and leaders will find useful instruction here that may inspire ideas for today's culture.

These lessons can be presented in seven to thirteen one-hour periods, depending on the amount of supplementary material used and the extent of the discussions.

It is our prayer that *Confessing Christ* may continue to be used to reach men and women for the Savior and solidly build his church.

1

THE BIBLE

1. Your aim in this lesson is to show the trustworthiness of the Bible's own claim to be the very Word of God, and how this gives a foundation of certainty for faith and living.
2. For openers, you will want to make the class feel at home during your first session together. Some of the following suggestions may help:
 - A. While people are still coming into the room, pass around a Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament. Explain that these are the original languages in which the Bible was written.
 - B. Have the class members go around and introduce themselves, giving their name and where they live.
 - C. Assume nothing. Show the class the index in their Bibles and explain how to use it. This avoids embarrassment and encourages an atmosphere of inquiry.
3. You may find it helpful to share some discovery from archaeology that supports the Bible's claim to historical accuracy.
4. Encourage participation by passing around references on pull-off tabs for those who want to read. (See General Teaching Tips.)

Review Questions

1. How can we know Christ?
2. What do we mean when we speak of the Bible as “the Word of God”?
3. What do we mean when we say that the Bible is “inspired”?
4. What does the word *infallible* mean?
5. Should we believe in the Bible as God’s Word because the church says so? Why or why not?
6. Why should we believe in the Bible as God’s Word? How does this assure certainty?
7. What evidence supports the Bible’s claim that it is God’s Word?
8. Did Jesus accept the Bible as God’s Word? If so, how?
9. In what ways did the apostles teach that the Bible is God’s Word?

10. What evidence is there within the Bible that God is its author?

11. If a person does not believe that the Bible is God's Word, is it because there is not enough evidence?

12. Who gives the Christian the assurance in his heart that the Bible is the Word of God?

Questions for Discussion

1. How would you answer a person who says, "I believe in Christ; I believe in the Bible, but I don't believe it fits my situation."? (2 Timothy 3:14–17)
2. Is there anything wrong with our reasoning when we say the Bible is God's Word because the Bible says so? *If God was not the final authority, what would that tell you about God?*
3. What is the difference between saying that the *thoughts* of the Bible are true or that the Bible *contains* the word of God—and believing that *every word* of the Bible is the word of God? Which agrees with the evidence of Scripture itself? (Psalm 119:160) *Matthew 5:17–19*
4. What does the Westminster Confession of Faith teach concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures? *See Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 1.*
5. How would you respond to someone who says there are contradictions in the Bible?
6. Why weren't the books of the Apocrypha included in the Roman Catholic Bible until the Council of Trent in 1545–1563?
7. In what way do people and religions add extra revelation to the

Bible? What is wrong with this? (Revelation 22:18, 19) *2 Timothy*
1:12–14

8. What difference does it make in our lives whether the Bible is the Word of God or not? (Matthew 7:24–27)

2

CHRIST

1. You may wish to cover this chapter in two separate sessions. The aim of the first set of review and discussion questions is for the students to understand the historical claims and evidences for Jesus Christ. The aim of the second set of questions is for the students to see their need for Christ's saving work on the cross. A smaller class with some background in the Christian faith may be able to cover the lesson in one session.
2. Again, encourage participation by passing around references on pull-off tabs for those who want to read.
3. For openers, you may find it helpful to relate Chapter 1 to Chapter 2 by summarizing the various ways God reveals himself. He reveals his power, glory and wisdom in the world he has made (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:18-20). We call this God's *general* revelation. In the Bible, we learn who we are, who Christ is, and how we can know him (John 20:31). We call this God's *special* revelation. God's revelation comes to its highest expression in Jesus Christ (Matthew 17:5).
4. For Review Question 6 (Part 2) you may wish to photocopy the diagram or put it on an overhead transparency as you explain justification.
5. At the end of the session, remind the class to work on the review

questions for next time. The discussion questions for Part 2 would also be a good homework assignment for a second session if you decide to spend two weeks on this chapter.

Review Questions (Part 1)

1. Who is God?
2. In whom does God's revelation of himself come to its highest expression?
3. Does it make any difference what position we ascribe to Jesus?
4. What is the evidence that Jesus was human?
5. Whom did Jesus say he was?
6. In what three ways does Christ's life convince us that he is fully God?
7. Give some of the proof for the physical resurrection of Christ.

Questions for Discussion (Part 1)

1. What do we mean when we say that God is "Triune"? (Matthew 28:20) *Genesis 1:1, 2, 26; 1 Peter 1:2*
2. Why is it important to believe Jesus was born of a virgin? (Luke

1:32–38) *What if Christ was not God? What if he was not fully human?*

3. How would you answer someone who said that Jesus' teachings are good, but he is not fully God? *Is Jesus good if he is not God as he claimed to be? (See textbook, top of page 25.)*
4. If the evidence that demonstrates that Jesus is God and Savior is clear, why do some reject him or treat him with indifference? (John 3:18–20)

Review Questions (Part 2)

1. What did Jesus say was his purpose in coming into the world?
2. Why do we need such a Savior? What kind of character does man have?
3. How do you define sin?
4. What does the Bible teach to be the consequences of sin?
5. Why can't God pass lightly over sin?
6. If we are sinful and God is just, how can *you* be saved? How can *anyone* be saved? *For help in answering this question, refer to the diagram on page 28 and Romans 3:21–28. You may also wish to look up Philippians 3:1–9.*

Questions for Discussion (Part 2)

1. How did we become sinners? (Genesis 1:26–31; 3:1–13)
2. If you would die tonight and appear before God, and he asked you, “Why should I let you into my Heaven?” what would you answer?
3. What excuse will God accept for your not being perfect? (Romans 3:19, 20)
4. What is the proof of God’s love for sinners? (Romans 5:6–11)
5. For whom did Christ die? (John 10:11, 26–28; Ephesians 5:25; Acts 20:28; John 3:16–18)

3

REPENTANCE AND FAITH

1. This chapter explains what true conversion is. Conversion has two aspects, repentance and faith. Like two sides of one coin, repentance and faith are inseparable; where God brings about true change in a person's life, both will and must be present. For a helpful diagram of the nature of repentance and its relationship to faith, see G. I. Williamson, *The Shorter Catechism: A Study Manual*, volume 2, page 126.

2. Your goal is to get your class to understand how Christ wants them to respond to him. In the previous chapter, we saw clearly who Christ is and what he has done. Repentance and faith answer the question, "What does Christ want?" You want your class to discover whether they have truly repented and believed, and if not, to come to Christ in repentance and faith.

3. You may want to take two weeks on this chapter and study the review questions the first week and the discussion questions the second week. The discussion questions will make a good homework assignment for a second class session on this chapter.

Review Questions

1. Who came preaching the message of repentance?

2. What are the three elements of true repentance?
3. What kind of sorrow for sin will be evidenced in true repentance?
4. What is the most important element of true repentance?
5. What will be the fruit of true repentance?
6. Is our repentance enough to save us? Why or why not?
7. What must we do to be saved? Answer with a verse of Scripture.
8. What does knowing the facts about Christ have to do with faith in him?
9. What is the minimum we need to know about Christ in order to be Christians?
10. Can we believe in Christ if we are not convinced that what he has said and done are true?

11. What does Christ invite us to do if we have any honest doubts about him? (John 20:26–31)

12. What is the most important element of faith in Jesus Christ? How was this seen in the Roman officer?

13. What is faith in Jesus Christ? Answer with the Catechism's answer.

14. What is promised to those who believe in Christ?

15. If we are saved by faith, why do good works?

Questions for Discussion

1. How much faith is necessary for salvation? (Mark 9:20–24)
2. Is everyone who says, "I believe in God," saved? (James 2:19)
3. Do you think we need to be born again by the Holy Spirit before we can believe in Christ? (John 1:12, 13) *John 3:3–8*
4. If not everyone is a child of God, why do you repent and believe, and others don't? (Acts 11:18; Acts 13:48) *1 John 5:1*
5. How can we know whether or not we have faith in Christ? (1 John 2:3)
6. Can we lose the assurance of our faith in Christ? How can it be restored? *1 John 5:13; see also 2:9; 3:2, 3; 4:15–19; Hebrews 12:6*

7. If salvation is by grace through faith alone, how do we explain James 2:24? *James 2:18, 26*
8. Do you think we can lose our Christian faith once we truly have it? (*Philippians 1:6 Romans 8:28–30, 38, 39; 1 Peter 1:5*)
9. Can you have Christian love without Christian faith? (*Galatians 5:6*)

4

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

1. Your aim is to show how personal union with Jesus Christ transforms daily living. Christ will make a difference in how you live. Christ will make a wonderful difference for your home and family life. The Lord is good; he doesn't keep secret what pleases him and what is best for us. He reveals his mind plainly in the Scriptures and summarizes how we are to love and obey him in the Ten Commandments.

2. The Ten Commandments have several purposes. They show us our sin. They show us that we don't measure up to Christ, who kept them perfectly. They show us our need for Christ's saving work. And they show us how to live as saved people. It is this last purpose of the Ten Commandments that particularly concerns this chapter (WCF, 19.6).

3. The review and discussion questions are divided into two parts in case you want to spend two class periods on this chapter. The students will benefit most from the discussion if you encourage them to read the chapter and fill out their own answers to discussion and review questions. Encourage them not to get bogged down on a question that stumps them, but just pass on to the next question.

Review Questions (Part 1)

1. What is the purpose of the Christian life?
2. What does it mean to “glorify God”?
3. What is it that keeps us from enjoying God?
4. What is the standard for human life?
5. Where do we find the Ten Commandments in the Bible?
6. What do the verses that introduce the Ten Commandments teach us?
7. What other idols besides wood and stone idols do men worship today? (Matthew 6:19–21, 25)
8. How are we to worship God?
9. What is to be our state of mind when God’s Word is being read or taught? (1 Peter 1:24–2:3)

10. Are we to keep just part of God's day holy? How are we to keep God's day holy?

Questions for Discussion (Part 1)

1. What role does Christ have in restoring us to a life that pleases God? (2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:5–11)
2. Why do Christians observe the first day instead of the seventh day of the week as the Christian Sabbath? (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1; Revelation 1:10; John 20:1, 8, 9, 19, 26)
3. What is meant by the teaching "we are not under law, but under grace"? (Romans 6:15) See the context in Romans 6:12–19 and Galatians 3:13.

Review Questions (Part 2)

1. What does the fifth commandment require of parents?
2. What are some forms of murder that are not commonly regarded as murder?
3. What sin of the heart is condemned by the command not to commit adultery?
4. How can we improve our own or our neighbor's material well-being?

5. Why is it important always to tell the truth?
6. What are we to covet most of all? (Matthew 6:33)
7. How did Jesus sum up the moral law?
8. Where do we get the strength to live the Christian life?

Questions for Discussion (Part 2)

1. What principles does the Bible establish for the Christian's giving? (Malachi 3:10; 2 Corinthians 8:2; 1 Timothy 6:6–10, 17–19)
2. What are some rules and regulations that churches sometimes add to the moral law as standards of right and wrong? How scriptural do you think they are? (Mark 7:1–13) *Galatians 2*
3. Does the Bible command us to love ourselves first? (2 Timothy 3:2, 4; Philippians 2:4–7, 21; John 12:25 with Mark 8:34, 35) *See also the first paragraph under the section, "The Purpose of the Christian Life." Remember, there are only two commands that summarize the law of God in Matthew 22:37–40. There is not a third command, to love yourself.*
4. Can a person who is not a Christian live a truly good life? (Compare Luke 6:33 with 1 Corinthians 10:31.)

5

THE CHURCH

1. Your goal is to convey how important it is for class members to assume responsibilities in a true church of Jesus Christ. To realize the importance of this, they must come to understand what the church is. Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25). They must learn to love what Christ loves. They need to function as part of the body of Christ.
2. Perhaps no membership vow is so easily said, but more difficult to keep, than the promise to submit in the Lord to the biblical correction of the church and her elders. It is important to convey the purpose and benefit of biblical leadership by elders and their submission to it. Are people broken and humbled before God? Then they should be willing to receive the church's admonition and guidance.
3. This chapter may be divided into two sessions based on the division of the review and discussion questions. It is important for the unity of your church that your class come to understand the biblical teaching of the sovereignty of God. God's control of all things affects every area of our lives. This teaching lets God be God. This truth is not to be reduced to the "five points of Calvinism." The five points of Calvinism were never meant as a comprehensive summary of the teaching of God's sovereignty. They were five important statements of doctrine adopted by the great Reformed

Synod of Dordt in 1618–1619 to repudiate the five primary errors of Arminianism. As such, they give us a concise summary of the Bible’s answer to questions about the extent of man’s sinfulness (total depravity), the extent of Christ’s atoning death (definite atonement), and the extent to which the application of salvation to our lives depends upon God (election, irresistible grace, perseverance).

4. Take time to develop a concise history of your own denomination and the biblical principles essential to its founding and ongoing commitments. It will be most helpful to your class if you can hand out a brief outline of this history. At the end of this leader’s guide are provided summary histories of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in America, which two churches jointly sponsor Great Commission Publications, the publisher of this book. (You may reproduce these short histories to hand out to your class, if appropriate.)

5. You may decide to take an additional week between Parts 1 and 2 to survey the history of your denomination and to acquaint the class with the history, life, ministry and elders of your own congregation. At some point in the discussion of this chapter, include a presentation of the questions asked to incoming members of your church. You may want to note that these questions are not a quiz on this book; they are intended for the new member to discern and publicly state his personal relationship to Christ and commitment to him and his church.

Review Questions (Part 1)

1. Once we are children in God’s family, why will we want to become a member of a church?
2. What is a church?
3. Who is the foundation, builder and owner of the church?

4. Who dwells in the midst of the church?
5. There are so many different churches. How can we recognize a true church of Christ?
6. How will faithfulness to God's truth affect a church's doctrine? its life?
7. What are the purposes of church discipline? (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5)
8. How will Christian love show itself in the life of a true church?
9. Describe Presbyterian government by elders.

Questions for Discussion (Part 1)

1. What might we say to someone who says, "I don't need to be a member of a church. It's okay for you, but not for me."?
2. What are some of the privileges of being a member of a true church?
3. What are some of the responsibilities of being a member of a true church?
4. What is involved in publicly confessing Christ as "Lord"?
5. Is membership in secret religious organizations that do not confess faith in Christ consistent with membership in a Christian church?

6. What does Christ think of a church that doesn't exercise church discipline? (Revelation 2:14-16, 20; Revelation 2:4-6)
7. What should you do if one of the elders in your church denies that Jesus is God, and the local elders do not listen to your concern?
Acts 15:2, 6

Review Questions (Part 2)

1. What is the teaching of the Presbyterian and Reformed churches that other churches de-emphasize or neglect?
2. Give a Bible verse describing the extent of human sinfulness.
3. What is meant by unconditional election?
4. For whom did Christ die? *See John 10:11, 26 and the diagram on page 68.*
5. If we are naturally hostile to God, how can anyone come to Christ? *John 6:37, 44*
6. Can a saved person lose his eternal life? Prove your answer from the Bible.

Questions for Discussion (Part 2)

1. Is God truly in control of all things if he is not in control of saving people?

2. Does the teaching that Christ died just for those whom the Father in love had chosen make God unfair? (Romans 9:16–23)
3. Does the teaching of God’s electing love deny that we should freely and sincerely offer the gospel to everyone? (John 6:35–37, 44, 45, 65) *Compare Romans 10 with Romans 9.*
4. Would God still be God if he intended to have Christ save everyone but was frustrated by man?
5. How does the teaching of the perseverance of the saints differ from the teaching that “once you are saved, you are always saved, no matter how you live”? (1 Peter 1:5; 2 Peter 1:1–11) *Philippians 2:12, 13*

6

GOD'S PROVISION FOR GROWTH

1. Your goal is to convey that the God who makes us his people is also the God who ordains the means for his people to grow and bear fruit (John 15:16). While some separate the means of grace from the work of the Holy Spirit and make them automatic conveyors of blessing, it is equally wrong to think that the Holy Spirit will bypass these means he has established for our growth. There are no shortcuts to spiritual maturity. Encourage your class in the diligent and right use of those means. God will indeed bless them with growth.

2. To understand how to grow, we must see that God's means for our growth are no different from those he has always provided for his people, even in the Old Testament. We must also see that the growth God brings is not self-centered, isolated growth, but growth through involvement with others. We must make use of the Word, prayer and sacraments corporately (see Acts 2:42). As we continually devote ourselves to biblical Reformed teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread (both the Lord's Supper and hospitality) and to prayer, we can expect God's blessing. Spiritual growth and the adding of converts to his church will result in his time (Acts 2:42–47). It is important to stress also that God provides for the growth of children in the same way he does for adults. Our youth need to see the life of Christ lived out in true fellowship, and nothing can replace prayer, the sacraments, the reading—and especially the preaching—of the Word for their spiritual growth (Genesis 18:18, 19; 2 Timothy 3:14–17; Acts 20:32).

3. You may prefer to spend two weeks on this lesson. The first week you could cover the Word of God, the sacraments in general, baptism, and the instruction of our covenant children. The second week, using the second set of review and discussion questions, you could cover the Lord's Supper, prayer and fellowship.

4. You may want to have some instructional materials for family worship on hand to show any parents in the class. This will help them to implement Questions for Discussion, Part 1, Question 2, which relates to teaching their children God's Word. Among others, *Memory Work Notebook* by Paul Settle (Great Commission Publications), *The Children's Story Bible* by Katherine Vos (Eerdmans), and *Leading Little Ones to God* by Marian Schooland (Eerdmans) are especially helpful. But we would especially recommend using the Bible itself. Beginning with a paragraph at a time, parents can read narratives such as the Gospel of Mark.

5. Make clear any assignment for a second class session on this chapter.

Review Questions (Part 1)

1. What are God's provisions for our growth in grace?
2. Does the Word of God automatically bring blessing to those who read it? (Hebrews 4:2; 2 Corinthians 2:14–17)
3. How is God's Word to be read and heard so we will be blessed? Give several Bible verses to support your answer.
4. What is a sacrament?

5. Where in the Bible did Jesus command people to be baptized?
6. Are we automatically saved because we are baptized? because we take the Lord's Supper?
7. What does the water of baptism signify?
8. What biblical basis is there for baptizing children of believers?
9. What do we promise when we have our children baptized?

Questions for Discussion (Part 1)

1. When do children reach the age of accountability? (Deuteronomy 29:10–13; 1 Corinthians 7:14)
2. Specifically, how can parents keep their promise to teach their children God's Word? (Genesis 18:18, 19; Deuteronomy 6:6–9)
3. How would you answer someone who says that the Bible teaches "repent, believe and be baptized"—and from this concludes that infants are not to be baptized?

Review Questions (Part 2)

1. What do the bread and the wine represent in the Lord's Supper?
1 Corinthians 11:20–25

2. Of what is the Lord's Supper a seal? Prove it.

3. What is required for partaking worthily of the Lord's Supper?
1 Corinthians 11:26–31; 2 Corinthians 13:5

4. What is the nature of the blessing received in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? *John 6:47, 51; 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8; 10:16, 17*

5. What is prayer?

6. What is the value of prayer?

7. How does God use fellowship to provide for our growth as a Christian?

Questions for Discussion (Part 2)

1. What happens if we emphasize or omit one of God's provisions for our growth at the expense of another?
2. What meaning do the sacraments have for Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches?
3. Does it make any difference to whom and through whom we pray, as long as we pray? (*John 14:14; 1 John 5:14*) *1 Timothy 2:5, 6*
4. What does the Lord's Prayer teach us about prayer? (*Matthew 6:9–13*)

5. What are the things that prevent our praying as we should?
6. How could sitting at home and reading the Bible instead of assembling with God's people affect a person's Christian growth?
Romans 10:14–17; 1 Peter 1:25; Hebrews 10:25

7

CONFESSING CHRIST TO OTHERS

1. Your goal is to stress the importance of each Christian confessing Christ to others. We start by confessing Christ before the elders and the congregation (1 Timothy 6:12; Hebrews 13:17). However, we don't stop there but move on to family, friends, and the world around us. Our model is the transformed demoniac, who told his family and community what great things Jesus had done for him (Mark 5:20). Not just the leaders of the early church, but every believer evangelized (Acts 8:4). The Lord wonderfully promises that those who publicly confess Christ as their own, he will confess as *his* own before his Father in heaven (Matthew 10:27, 32).

2. Have on hand several good tracts for your class to take home. The tracts should present the gospel clearly, urging a response of repentance and faith. If you need some suggestions, the following are recommended (and may be obtained from the source indicated below):

Ultimate Questions by John Blanchard (Great Commission Publications, 7001 Peachtree Industrial Blvd., Suite 120, Norcross, GA 30092)

Coming to Faith in Christ by John Benton (available at your local Christian bookstore, or from Banner of Truth Trust, P. O. Box 621, Carlisle, PA 17013)

Have You Ever Wanted a New Life? (Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship, Box 1890, Decatur, GA 30031)

Does God Love You? (Family Radio, Oakland, CA 94621)

Have You Discovered the Steps to Purpose, Freedom, and Assurance? (Perimeter Church/PCA, 5701 Spalding Drive, Norcross, GA 30092)

The people should read the tracts first before giving them to others. We also suggest that you have available the excellent short series of *Studies in the Gospel of John* by Kenneth Smith (*Who is Jesus? What Has Jesus Done? What Does Jesus Want?*); a leader's guide and a pupil's pamphlet are provided. These materials may be obtained from the Board of Education & Publication of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, 7408 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15208-2531. Follow up by taking three or four class periods and go over this three-part study together. This will prepare the class to use the study with others.

3. This chapter can usually be covered in one class period. If some exhibit real interest in learning how to witness, take them out with you to visit in homes or to follow up on visitors. Not only must evangelism be taught, it must be caught. Have interested individuals go with you to evangelistic Bible studies. Encourage them to invite their friends. Offer to visit friends they want to invite to church or to a Bible study. Do evangelism in fellowship together, confessing Christ as the world's only hope and Savior. And pray that God will mightily bless that confession and build his church for his glory.

4. Consider carefully what Sunday school classes to direct your group to once this class is over. New Christians with little Bible background may not be ready for a regular adult class. Consider having a discipleship class for studying a book of the Bible together. Make disciples by leading them from where they are to where Christ wants them.

5. In conjunction with the final discussion question, you may wish to show a map of the world and briefly describe your church's national and worldwide mission involvement.

Review Questions

1. How do we know that all Christians are supposed to confess

Christ to others?

2. What is the minimum we have to know about Christ in order to share our faith with others? (1 Timothy 1:15)
3. Is it enough just to know facts *about* Christ? In what other way must we know him?
4. How important to confessing Christ is the life we live? Why? (John 13:35)
5. How will our love toward others be obvious?
6. What should we pray for as we seek to witness to others?
7. How can Bible studies be used to lead others to Christ?
8. What was Christ's approach to the woman of Samaria?
9. What was Christ's approach to Nicodemus?

10. What are some good questions to ask those we are witnessing to?

11. What is worse than making a mistake in the way we talk to people about Christ?

Questions for Discussion

1. What things keep us from confessing Christ to others as we should? How can these be overcome?
2. How can tracts and books best be used to lead others to Christ?
3. How much effort is one soul worth? (Luke 15:4)
4. How can our good-neighbor policy lead people to Christ? *Luke 14:12-14; Luke 6:32-36*
5. How does the teaching of God's electing love in Christ (Ephesians 1:4, 5) encourage us in confessing Christ to others? (Acts 18:10; 2 Timothy 2:9, 10)
6. How does knowing that God must first work in a person's life before that person will change affect our attitude in witnessing? (2 Timothy 2:24-26)
7. Did Christ approach people by first telling them "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life" or by confronting them with their sin and need of the Savior? Give proof from Scripture.
8. How can sharing our personal testimony enhance our witness?
9. What responsibility do we have to confess Christ to other nations? How can we as Christ's church fulfill this responsibility?

THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

by C. K. Cummings

With all the presbyterian churches there are in America, why was it necessary to start another one? What is the difference between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the main body of Presbyterians in America, the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.? This is a very good question and demands a trustworthy answer.

At the time of the war between the states, the Presbyterian Church was divided, as was the nation. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church came into being in 1936 because of the triumph of modernism (unbelief) in the Northern church, the then Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (P.C.U.S.A.). In that communion, there were 1,292 ministers who had signed a statement known as "The Auburn Affirmation." In this statement, they opposed the church's requirement that ministers believe in the full inspiration of the Bible, the virgin birth of Christ, the miracles of Christ, Christ's death as a substitute for our sins, and the bodily resurrection of Christ (*An Affirmation*, pages 5, 6). These ministers were attacking the very heart of the Christian faith. They should have been disciplined, but not only were these men not brought to trial, they were elevated to positions of highest authority in the church.

By 1934, this unbelieving element in the church had become so powerful that they succeeded in having a law passed *requiring* the members of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to support the Missions and Christian Education Boards of the church. These Boards were sending out unbelieving missionaries who were not even sure if Jesus ever lived, and were preaching a Jesus that was not the Son of God. Ministers faithful to their ordination vows refused to support these Boards that were teaching a false Christ. Five ministers, including one of the leading Bible-believing New Testament scholars, Dr. J. Gresham Machen, were unfrocked for their failure to support these Boards. Candidates for the ministry were refused ordination because they would not give a blind pledge to support these boards. After passing all their other exams, candidates were asked if they would support all the boards and agencies of the church. To this they replied, "We will support them so far as they are true to the Word of God, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the constitution of the church." This was not enough. They were refused ordination.

There was but one thing to do. When a church requires its members to

sin and support missionaries and teachings not true to the Savior in order to be in good standing in the church, the members must leave that church. When a church officially and judicially places the commandments of men above the Word of God, that church has lost the mark of a true church. The word of man has been placed above the Word of God (Mark 7:7-9). Christ is no longer the head and king of the church, ruling by his Word and Spirit. Loyalty to Christ and his Word, then, required separation from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the formation of a church true to Christ and his Word (Romans 16:17, 19; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 2 John 7-11). This is exactly what many did. They withdrew and formed the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

It was the hard way. A pastor in Wisconsin, who had presented his objections to unbiblical teaching in the Sunday school materials, had his pastoral relationship with his congregation dissolved by the Presbytery. After the representative of Presbytery came to officially announce the dissolution, Pastor John De Waard walked out of the church assembly, and the entire large congregation filed out behind him. They lost their building, but they were not alone. Every congregation that came out of the old church, except one in New England, lost their buildings. Ministers lost their churches. But by the grace of God, they gained Christ and his Word; and where Christ and his Word are, there is the church. The name "orthodox" was chosen as an appropriate name. It means "straight teaching," and it described the purpose of this young church.

The purpose of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is to teach men to think and believe according to God's Word. There is a greater need than ever for such a witness. In 1983, the P.C.U.S.A. united with another liberal body, the Presbyterian Church in the United States (P.C.U.S.), adopting the Confession of 1967 as one of their ten confessions and effectively preventing the possibility of anyone ever being disciplined who denies the Scriptures, Christ's virgin birth, his substitutionary atonement, or his resurrection. It is this Christ whom we unashamedly confess as the Savior of sinners to the glory of God. We do this as individual churches, regional presbyteries and by our denominational committees for Foreign Missions, Home Missions, Christian Education and Diaconal Ministries.

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey
everything I have commanded you. And surely I
am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:19, 20

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

by O. Palmer Robertson

The Presbyterian Church in America began in 1973 during the sad period of departure from "the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3). The PCA first was called "The Continuing Presbyterian Church" because its founders were committed to maintaining the witness that had been established years before in the Presbyterian Church in the United States (P.C.U.S.).

The critical point came when the General Assembly of the P.C.U.S. chose to ignore the official ruling of its own elected judges. They planned to merge piecemeal with a more liberal denomination, namely, the P.C.U.S.A., despite the unconstitutional character of the procedure. As a consequence, they would in effect exchange the Westminster Confession of Faith for the Confession of 1967 as the functioning confession of the church. If a member of a united presbytery were accused of doctrinal error, he could choose to appeal through the courts of the more liberal denomination, and so avoid being held to the pure standards of the Westminster Confession. This merger ultimately came to full fruition in the P.C.U.S. when a minister who denied the deity of Jesus Christ was sustained in his right to continue as a minister in good standing.

Prior to these developments, the struggle to maintain a pure testimony for the gospel had gone on for decades. The liberal leadership of the church viewed Scripture as a fallible "witness" and an erroneous "instrument" of the Word of God rather than as the perfection of divine truth. At one point, a blue-ribbon committee of theologians was commissioned to study the possibility of removing from the church's confession the doctrine of the sovereignty of God's grace in salvation. The committee reported back that this theological excision could not be done as easily as might first have been imagined. It was discovered that the doctrine of election permeated the whole of the church's confessional testimony.

Determined to accomplish their goals despite some setbacks, the liberal establishment introduced a convenient concept: mummify the church's confession. Wrap it up tightly and place it in a museum that could house other past confessions of the church. Let the theologians of the future forever taste at the table of confessional potluck. Let them choose to believe what pleases them, and pass over whatever fails to suit their individual tastes.

This change in theological perspective had immediate practical implications. Unorthodox views on the church and its mission came first through the board of women's work. Then they showed up in the materials of the Board of Christian Education. The "Covenant Life Curriculum" offered great promise of a return to the biblical theology of the reformers. But it actually became the instrument for permeating the church with the theology of neoorthodoxy. Then it was the World Missions committee. Orthodox candidates for service on foreign fields were turned down if they would not agree to work in cooperation with the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches.

These developments resulted inevitably in the gradual suffocation of the life breath of the church. The true proclamation of the gospel was stifled. New churches committed to the biblical faith could not be established, since liberal denominational structures would quickly overtake them. The Great Commission could not be fulfilled, since missionary candidates committed to the scriptural faith were locked out of the system.

At a critical point, it was mutually agreed that a new plan of union with the United Presbyterian Church (U.P.U.S.A., formerly the P.C.U.S.A.) would include an "escape clause" allowing churches committed to the biblical faith to withdraw and form their own new denomination. But when this clause subsequently was removed, the decision was made. All churches committed to maintaining the biblical faith were invited to a "Convocation of Sessions." An "Advisory Convention" was planned so that churches could participate in a delegated meeting that would set the course of a new denomination "loyal to Scripture, the Reformed faith, and obedient to the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ." After almost a year of preparatory steps, the First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America was held on December 4, 1973.

At last the church was free to conform to the teaching of Scripture. The gospel could be preached in all its fulness. New churches could be established any place in the nation. Zeal for reaching the world for Christ now had a proper channel.

From that point on, the PCA has seen the Lord's richest blessing on its life and ministry. In less than twenty years, it had grown in membership from 40,000 to over 200,000, from 260 churches to over 1,000 churches, from a total annual income of 9 million dollars to over 200 million dollars.

To God be the glory! May he uphold the biblical testimony of this church until Christ returns with all his saints.

HOW TO CONDUCT AN INSTRUCTION CLASS FOR PROSPECTIVE CHURCH MEMBERS*

Necessity

It is essential both for the numerical and the spiritual growth of the church of Christ that every local congregation provide an adequate course of instruction for all prospective members. This isn't just a nice thing to do; it is absolutely necessary. Pastors who provide instruction classes for those who desire or need to confess Christ will find that, under the blessing of God, their churches will grow both spiritually and numerically to the glory of God. Observation and experience both show that failure to provide such instruction results in a less than faithful Reformed church.

Purpose

The purpose of the class is twofold. The first is *evangelical*. The sinner should be confronted with the Savior. In reliance upon the Word and the Spirit, the teacher must constantly press for a verdict of the mind and heart. The primary purpose of the class is to prepare the inquirers to make a true confession of faith in Christ as their Savior and Lord.

The second purpose is *ecclesiastical*, namely, to prepare the inquirers to become members of a biblical, Reformed and Presbyterian church. The teacher should purpose that all inquirers not only understand the teachings of your church, but be committed to the great truths of God's Word for which a Christian and Reformed church stands.

To realize these purposes, the instructor will need to vary the emphasis and development of the lessons to suit the various beliefs and backgrounds of the class members. The teacher should be familiar with the religious background and spiritual status of each one in the class and be prepared to meet their particular needs. For example, former Roman Catholics will need specific Bible references to refute the false teachings of that church; former members of mainline denominations (Presbyterian Church/USA, United Methodist, etc.) will need to see any erroneous doctrines and pronouncements in light of Scripture; dispensationalists will

need help understanding the Covenant of Grace; Masons (only after they know and receive the doctrine of salvation by grace) should be given information on the religious teachings of Masonry. But the great passion and aim in everything is to see that Christ is formed in them.

Recruiting a Class

Candidates for instruction don't walk into the pastor's study and ask to be taught. They have to be sought. This requires relentless and extensive calling. Let no one ever say there just aren't any prospects. If you don't have a sizable list of prospects, it reveals just one thing. You haven't been calling. Get moving! Make at least 25 new contact calls a week. You'll find that you'll have at least two instruction classes each year, possibly three. This holds for most churches located in older urban and rural areas, as well as for churches in new suburban developments.

Who are likely prospects for an instruction class? *How* do you go about gathering them?

Visitors to the services are usually good prospects. They have shown at least initial interest. You can get their names and addresses by having them sign an official register before leaving or by personally noting their names and addresses. Then visit them within two weeks.

Relatives, friends and neighbors of members are frequently prospects for instruction.

Covenant young people of junior and senior high school age should all, at some point, be invited to the class.

Encourage members of the church themselves to think of people who could be invited to an instruction class.

Another excellent source of candidates for instruction classes are the contacts from house-to-house surveys. In most cities and counties, a real estate statistical service is available that will supply, for a reasonable fee, names and addresses of the new families that move into the area. If this service is not available, your church will need to arrange a regular survey of the community. Selected couples can often make effective initial contacts. The pastor can then follow up.

Advertise!

The class should be well advertised. It should be announced in the

Sunday school classes, church services and any adult groups at least three weeks before the class begins. Don't spring it on them just one week ahead. People need time to decide on an important matter like this.

Make it abundantly clear in announcing the class that attendance in no way obligates anyone to join your church. Many hesitate to come to a membership class because they feel they will be committing themselves and aren't ready to do so. We don't want commitments before people have first had an opportunity to learn what the church teaches. All we ask for is the opportunity to teach them. Make clear that this is not a pressure class. We will teach them God's Word. What they do after they have been taught is theirs to decide by the Spirit of God, not by pressure from us. Here is a recommended form of announcement:

PASTOR'S INSTRUCTION CLASS TO BEGIN IN THREE WEEKS—
Sunday, [date], at 9:45 a.m. at [location]. This will be ten-week study course in the basic truths of Christianity. This class is intended for any who want a better grasp of the basic truths of the Bible. Attendance in no way obligates you to join this church. The instruction given in this class, however, will prepare you to confess Christ and unite with this church if you so desire. Speak to the pastor today if you are interested in attending. Feel free to bring a friend.

Time and Place

The most advantageous time to conduct this class is during the Sunday school period. Week nights tend to generate conflicting interests and responsibilities. Sunday mornings are usually the most convenient for most families. Children can come to Sunday school while parents attend the instruction class. This serves the practical advantage of getting the family into the habit of coming to church together.

The pastor's home, if conveniently located, is the ideal place for such a class. The informality of the home contributes to a friendly atmosphere. A warm spirit of Christian love should abound. Make the effort to get the class talking with, and interested in, each other. Encourage class members to ask questions at any time. Members can take turns providing refreshments. You may also want to plan a group activity outside of the class time.

The most feasible length of time is about an hour. An hour will carry about as much information as the mind can absorb in one sitting. There should be a definite terminal point.

Ordinarily, don't make the course longer than 7 to 13 weeks. The

purpose of this class isn't to teach people everything they could ever learn about the Bible. This course is simply a primer in the Christian faith from a Reformed perspective. As such it is meant to introduce the class to the public preaching and teaching of the Word. Don't duplicate the other services of the church by making the course too extensive. You don't need to cover the whole panorama of divine revelation.

Class Size

As a general rule, a class shouldn't have less than 3 or more than 12 members. Just one or two in a class poses the danger of a monologue. Too many people will stifle questions and discussion. However, you may still want to conduct some private instruction classes for one or two in a home. You will also need to make up lessons privately with those who miss two or more class sessions, so keep an accurate roll. (See the model class roll following Chapter 7 of this leader's guide.)

Materials

The approach in *Confessing Christ* is to start with Christ and work up to the church. The maximum benefit will come from using the review section and discussion questions at the end of each chapter. The review should help the student recall, clarify and clinch the truths presented. The discussion questions will stimulate the class to think through and search the Scriptures, leading to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the truth. A suggested memory verse comes with each chapter to help summarize and review the truths discussed. The class could be followed up with a discipleship class that includes Bible study and Scripture memory, especially for the newer Christians in the groups.

Personal Visits

When the course is over, your work isn't. In fact, it may have just begun. It is essential for you to follow up the class members with personal interviews in their homes. The purpose of these visits is to make up lessons they missed and to learn how well they understood and received the truths of Scripture that were taught. Have they really come to know and trust Christ as their Savior and Lord? Do they recognize the privileges and responsibilities of being a member of a true church of Christ? You must be prepared to spend time helping in any way necessary to bring them to confess Christ and unite with his church.

As soon as one class is completed and followed up, begin working for the next class. There must be no end of these classes. The command of

Christ must steadily be ringing in our ears, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

And surely I am with you always."

*Adapted from a chapter written by Calvin K. Cummings, Sr., for a Home Missionary Manual.

General Teaching Tips

1. To encourage class participation, prepare a list each week of key Scripture references you would like the class to read. List these references on a card and, using scissors, cut between the references to form pull-off tabs. Pass the card around; encourage those willing to read to pull off a Scripture reference or two. This encourages participation without embarrassing those who prefer not to read in a group. Let the class know from the outset that they should feel free to interrupt and ask any questions they may have.
2. At the end of class, encourage everyone to read the next chapter and fill out the answers to review questions. They may also proceed to work on the discussion questions.
3. Discussion questions are provided with each chapter to help draw out students during the class period. They give you, as the teacher, the opportunity to develop and apply the truths presented in the chapter. They should not usually be assigned for homework.
4. Scripture references and suggestions that are printed in italics in Questions for Discussion in this leader's guide are not included in the student's edition of *Confessing Christ*.