

For Truth and Liberty: Presbyterians and McCarthyism

The anticommunist campaign of Senator Joseph McCarthy prompted a national debate on the protection of civil liberties. The Presbyterian Church defended the freedom of dissent.

by Rick Nutt

THE COLD WAR WITH THE SOVIET UNION dominated life in the United States after World War II. The will to stop the spread of communism was clear in both global and domestic policies, and Presbyterians manifested that conviction along with their fellow citizens—indeed, at times Presbyterians were in the midst of the conflict over communism. It was at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, in 1946 that Winston Churchill added the phrase “Iron Curtain” to our vocabulary. Perhaps the two most famous Presbyterians of the 1950s were Dwight Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles, president and secretary of state respectively, responsible for opposing communism abroad and at home (Dulles became famous for his resistance of communism by a policy of “brinkmanship”). Perhaps the most controversial manifestation of anticommunism was the campaign of Joseph McCarthy, Republican senator from Wisconsin, to stop potential Communist subversion within the United States. His investigative methods, which built on innuendo and failed to protect peoples’ civil liberties, drew the label “McCarthyism.”¹ James Smylie, writing in 1964, asserted that McCarthyism

conjures to the mind legislative usurpation of judicial process, dossiers of unreliable and misleading rumor, denunciations based upon unsupported accusations and innocent associa-

tions, charges levelled without regard to context and shifts in historical circumstances...and, above all, suspicion. McCarthyism describes, moreover, a basically negative approach to the problems of communism under the pretense of patriotism but without concern for free government in an open society...²

One of the most vigorous statements of opposition to McCarthyism was issued by the General Council of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. (PCUSA) in 1953. This essay will survey the Presbyterian response to McCarthy, with special attention to the PCUSA’s “Letter to Presbyterians” and the reaction it evoked.

I

World War II was a watershed in the United States’ role in global affairs. The Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and Southeast Asia Treaty Organization marked the first time in peacetime that the nation had committed its military and economic power around the world. Those commitments stood in singular contrast to the generally isolationist foreign policy which had obtained through U.S. history prior to the war. Yet, for all of the nation’s tremendous power and prosperity, there was a deep sense of insecurity. The Presbyterian Church, U.S. (PCUS) later observed:

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For more than a century the people of the United States felt protected from international complexities by oceans and geographical distances. The nation could choose its involvements in the affairs of the world according to its own sense of interest. It also assumed that its cherished values of freedom, opportunity, and political justice were inspirational to the peoples of the world.³

The attack on Pearl Harbor shattered that sense of security, and national anxiety compounded after the war as the Soviet Union extended its sphere of influence and appeared to foster revolution—particularly in the developing nations. George F. Kennan, architect of the policy of containment, asserted that at the turn of the century the United States' sense of security matched that of ancient Rome. However, "Today that pattern is almost reversed: our national consciousness is dominated by a sense of insecurity greater even than that of many of the peoples of Western Europe who stand closer to, and in a position far more vulnerable to, things that are the main source of our concern."⁴ Consequently, the U.S. built up its nuclear arsenal, reestablished the military draft, and embarked on an international policy of Communist containment.

The search for security against threats from beyond our borders had a domestic counterpart. President Harry Truman issued Executive Order 9835 in 1947, granting government agencies the right to conduct loyalty checks on people doing government work. An extensive list of organizations was designated subversive, or potentially so. The House Un-American Activities Committee, originally formed before World War II to root out possible fascist infiltration, and the Internal Security Act of 1951 (which required the Communist Party and Communist front groups to register with the government, to identify all mailings as such, and gave the government power to detain all registered Communists in internment camps in time of national emergency, passed over Truman's veto), further expanded the power of the national government.

Anticommunism in the U.S. must be understood against the background of the nation's self-identity. The U.S. inherited the

Puritans' conviction that they had a covenant with God to create a righteous "city on a hill" that would serve as an example to the nations and lead them to embody the ideals of freedom, democracy, and civil liberties which were expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. This conviction, often designated "Manifest Destiny," tended to blur the lines between the dominant Protestant Christianity and the nation and its policies. That is, the nation was seen as moral and consistently altruistic in its motives and actions, and other nations were believed to manifest acquisitiveness and selfishness. Given this bifurcated view of the world that frequently drove the nation's self-understanding, the U.S. often sought to transform the world—witness the great missionary crusades at the turn of the twentieth century and the decision to enter World War I "to make the world safe for democracy." Domestically, the nation built a history of xenophobia and, periodically, enacted legislation which restricted civil liberty in order to forestall perceived subversion and insurrection (e.g., the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 and the Red Scare under Attorney General Mitchell Palmer following World War I).⁵

Communism was particularly abhorrent to the U.S. sense of superiority because it espoused an ideology in direct contradiction to the nation's most cherished values. First, communism as an economic system rejected capitalism, which was seen as central to the "American Way of Life." Indeed, capitalism was thought to be integral to Christian civilization—it grew from and fostered democracy and self-initiative. Second, communism was avowedly atheist; almost all in the U.S. took it as axiomatic that the nation's life was founded on a commitment to the benevolent providence of "Nature's God." Finally, communism was equated with totalitarianism. This identification emerged particularly after the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany between the world wars, so that the differences between the two ideologies were deemphasized in favor of the similarities of the totalitarian practices

they shared. The ideology of communism, especially as it was incarnated in the USSR, was seen as a totality of social, economic, political, and religious falsehood that opposed everything the U.S. represented. Church people often referred to communism as a religion, noting the complete view of life it offered and the complete allegiance of its adherents.

Presbyterians concurred in this widespread rejection of communism. Discussions of communism by individuals or governing bodies took as their beginning assumption that communism was antithetical to both Christianity and national ideals, and should be resisted. Dulles allowed that communism had the right to its beliefs and the attempt to persuade others, but "since there is a God ... no human rulers can rightly use ruthless and violent methods and pitilessly crush all within their power who do not conform to their particular dictation." Further, communism in the USSR was a "total denial of tolerance" and could only be resisted by societies "imbued with strong spiritual convictions."⁶ Chad Walsh argued that Christians need not oppose communism as an economic system, for economic systems in and of themselves are amoral. As a materialist philosophy-religion and, in practice, an imperialistic nationalism, the Christian should reject communism.⁷ The PCUS, in 1951 and 1954, denounced communism as atheistic and bent on world domination and urged resistance of it at every turn.⁸

The opposition to communism was not unthinking or unqualified, however. While generally holding that much of the responsibility for global tensions rested with the USSR's expansionist designs, Presbyterians did not reduce their understanding of the situation to simple moral dichotomy. Presbyterians often noted that communism appealed to many around the world because of the injustice and oppression with which people lived—and there was periodic recognition that the U.S. played a role in that disillusionment of the poor. "National Security and the Christian Message," a 1951 report of the PCUS Committee on Christian

Relations, asserted that "Instead of merely trying to 'stop Communism,' we must develop a strategy in such bold and creative terms that we can deal with the underlying causes of world upheaval and cure the conditions that make Communism possible."⁹ The U.S. called itself democratic, but other countries could see political corruption, lynchings, poverty, and a variety of injustices in American society. Nor should the U.S. allow the Cold War atmosphere to destroy civil liberty. Fear could lead people to "smother our essential democratic freedom to hold and to proclaim an honest opinion. To label as Communists those who espouse constructive change or to smear the character and demean the motives of political opponents, are perversions of personal freedom."¹⁰

II

The postwar anxiety over the spread of communism, with loyalty oaths and the hearings of the House Un-American Activities Committee at home, heightened in 1949. In that year the USSR exploded its first atomic device, ending America's short monopoly on nuclear power. The civil war in China ended with the Communists in power and the Kuomintang government of Chiang Kai-shek withdrawn to the island of Formosa. The Alger Hiss trial, which raised the possibility of espionage within the State Department itself, was in the news daily. The idea that communism might subvert freedom in the United States struck a deep chord in many citizens. Some, believing that communism could do so only through the work of American traitors, began to argue that the U.S. had "lost" China to the Communists because Communists and fellow-travelers within the government allowed it to happen. The case of Alger Hiss and, soon thereafter, that of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, convicted of passing atomic secrets to the Soviets, lent credence to the charge.¹¹

Then, on February 9, 1950, a little-known senator from Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy, charged in a speech to a women's group in

Wheeling, West Virginia, that he had the names of 205 Communist party members who were known to Secretary of State Dean Acheson and still working in the State Department.¹² So serious were such charges that a subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, chaired by Millard Tydings, Democrat from Maryland (called the Tydings Committee), investigated them. It became clear that McCarthy had little evidence to support his charge, but in the course of the hearings he targeted Owen Lattimore of Johns Hopkins University as one of those responsible for the loss of China. Lattimore was an Asia expert who had been convinced that Chiang would fall and who had been consulted by the State Department in the 1940s. The committee, in hearings marked by particularly vituperative exchanges between the senators, cleared Lattimore of any wrongdoing and found McCarthy's charges without substance. The committee report held that "We have seen the character of private citizens and of government employees virtually destroyed by public condemnation on the basis of gossip, distortion, hearsay and deliberate untruths." They further found that the "methods employed to give [these charges] validity are a fraud and a hoax perpetrated on the Senate of the United States and the American people."¹³ Apparently, McCarthy's campaign had been halted, but he kept himself in the public eye by continuing to charge people with Communist sympathies and collaboration—particularly people in the Truman administration, which gained him some support from Republican colleagues. Most sensational was the claim, made in a June 14, 1951 speech on the Senate floor, that George C. Marshall, creator of the Marshall Plan and subsequently secretary of state and secretary of defense (this last at the time of McCarthy's speech), had purposefully aided and promoted Soviet aims in the world—especially in the "sellout" of China. McCarthy's campaign to stop Communist subversion by innuendo and suspicion continued through his reelection to the Senate in 1952 and lasted until 1954.¹⁴



Rev. Eugene Carson Blake, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. at the time of the controversy.

As noted, xenophobia and anticommunism were not new to the United States. What made McCarthyism new was that suspicion fell on U.S.-born citizens. Even as late as the Red Scare under Attorney General Palmer the Communist danger was seen to rest primarily with immigrants or foreign-born citizens. Nativism, with a long tradition in the U.S., played a negligible part in the McCarthy era. Charges were laid at the feet of citizens born within the U.S., many of whom were government employees. Further, McCarthyism was unique in that it endured for some four years before finally being halted. Previously, such spasms of assault on civil liberties had been relatively short-lived—Palmer's Red Scare endured for only a year.¹⁵

Although Christians in the U.S. widely opposed communism globally and domestically, many refused to support McCarthy because his tactics threatened basic democratic freedoms. The liberal journal *Christian Century* consistently denounced McCarthy, particularly during his 1952 reelection bid. The editors acknowledged that it was important to remain diligent against Communist infiltration, but held Congress should use responsible means for doing so. The Hiss case was necessary and demonstrated the need for thorough investigations of suspected espionage. "But there is a world of difference," an editor opined, "between the careful investigation which led to the conviction of Alger Hiss and the sort of irresponsible character-lynching...which these committees have sometimes engaged in." Noting that McCarthy's tactics arose and were accepted by people because of fear, another editorial laid a challenge before Christians: "What are the churches doing to help people face and triumph over fear? What are they doing to help millions confront the greatly increased possibility of violent death?"¹⁶

III

Presbyterian responses to McCarthyism manifested similar ideas. In 1951 the Permanent Committee on Religious Liberty of the United Presbyterian Church of North America (UPCNA) delivered a "Report on Religious Liberty" which called communism a godless way of life that enslaved people. The report also admitted that communism sought to make inroads in the very places in American life where Christians had inadequately applied the gospel—in short, where there was racial and class injustice. The same committee two years later agreed with the Association of American Universities that Communists had no right to faculty positions. The report also said, however, that

In our country there is a recent development which causes some concern. This has to do with the methods of congressional investigating

committees...Communism must be rooted out. We deplore, however, any methods which do injustice to people who are not tainted with Communism—methods which cast suspicion on their character—methods which allow no possibilities for efficient defense.¹⁷

The UPCNA, then, stood foursquare against communism in the nation's life but still found McCarthy's investigative tactics unacceptable.

The PCUS attitude toward McCarthyism has already been seen in the General Assembly's "National Security and the Christian Message," in which threats to freedom, character, and the judicial process were rejected. Mac Lowry, writing in the *Presbyterian Outlook*, held that the situation posed an exacting dilemma. Both liberty and security are essential, he argued. If, in resisting communism, the U.S. abrogated its freedoms, the security gained could be of a totalitarian type. On the other hand, if security against communism were not diligently maintained, freedom could be lost in a takeover.¹⁸ The same journal published an article (apparently with its approval) by ethicist John Bennett. Bennett argued that the Christian must say both a "yes" and a "no" to communism. That was true because it was atheistic, materialistic, and totalitarian, which the Christian must eschew, but also addressed economic and social injustice, even if improperly. Thus, communism could only be met by a positive program of constructive faith. Bennett posited that

those who take their bearings chiefly from "anti-communism" do all the wrong things. They help to perpetuate the very evils which give rise to Communism. They endanger the freedom which they may claim to treasure in the process of repressing Communism...[R]eckless smearing of people who are suspected of having had some sympathies in common with Communists in the past is the special danger to freedom.¹⁹

The larger PCUSA delivered statements regarding McCarthy and loyalty investigations more frequently than the more conservative UPCNA and PCUS.²⁰ The 1951 General Assembly approved the Social Education report which asserted that, in the current world crisis, it was singularly important for

Christians to discern God's will and act on it. Christians in the U.S. needed to guard against a rejection of the evils of communism which led to a self-righteous attitude that justified evil on our behalf. The report further declared that fear and hysteria could lead to repression which imitated the communism the nation so abhorred—and noted that character assassination violated the commandment against false witness. The use of loyalty oaths could “stifle freedom of thought and inquiry. People are afraid to speak their convictions for fear of reprisal. Thus is laid the groundwork for a police society which would destroy the very freedom we seek to save.” Even more, such an atmosphere made people afraid to negotiate with the USSR, lest they be labeled appeasers—conjuring up images of the 1938 Munich agreement in which concessions were made to Adolf Hitler.²¹ The same report the following year bemoaned the destruction of reputations, charges of disloyalty, and loss of jobs that were the result of unproved suspicion, guilt by association, and condemnation without a trial. “Freedom of conscience, inquiry, and expression” fell before a kind of “authoritarianism and thought-control.”²²

The 1953 General Assembly took up the issue yet again. This declaration became especially important in retrospect, for the General Council's later “Letter to Presbyterians” drew its justification, in part, from pointing to what the General Assembly said in this report. The National Council of Churches had issued a paper treating the importance of freedom both abroad and at home, which the General Assembly affirmed. The General Assembly's report held that freedom is a precious right from God which the government should seek to promote abroad and preserve at home. Congress had the right to investigate for information on which to base legislation, but should do so in a way that the rights of witnesses were protected, the declaration argued. Too often the current Congress forgot the difference between the legislative and judicial branches, creating a style of investigation which became inquisitorial. The Congress should

guard against guilt by association, inappropriate release of confidential information, and accusations leveled against a person without an opportunity to reply. The General Assembly upheld the right of teachers to present controversial subjects without fear of intimidation or attack—although it also argued that Communists should not be a part of American education and called on “administrators of schools and colleges to eliminate the evil of Communism when it is found in their midst, safeguarding at all points, however, the constitutional rights of all concerned.”²³ Finally, the paper commended “Presbyterians and churches who take action against infringements of personal liberty such as blacklistings and unsupported charges of disloyalty.”²⁴

One can get more of an indication of the range of opinions in the denomination through periodicals. In 1950 Paul Calvin Payne, writing in *Presbyterian Life*, addressed the issue of McCarthyism by looking at the question of congressional immunity. Payne compared legislators who, because of immunity, made unsubstantiated charges without fear of countercharges of slander to a dog that barks violently at an intruder from the safety of its hiding place under a couch. He called the tactic Stalinist and a service to communism, urging that “We can remain free only so long as our love of freedom is greater than neurotic fears of its abuse. If we are dominated by such fears, freedom is on its way out, speeded by such ‘investigations.’”²⁵ Subsequent letters to the editor revealed differences of opinion. T. Garland Tinsley of Baltimore, Maryland, disagreed strongly. The Truman administration, he argued, was working against investigations that would uncover treasonous or disloyal employees in the government—for example, Truman himself had originally referred to the Hiss investigations as a “red herring.” Presbyterians—and *Presbyterian Life*—should not be helping or comforting such people, but instead those seeking to find them.²⁶ Henry F. Schwarz of Glenside, Pennsylvania, disapproved of some congressional investigative tactics, but believed that it was

important to build more “ability and integrity” in the State Department. An essential way to achieve that was to root out any who were disloyal.²⁷ Harriet Anderson of East Liverpool, Ohio, argued that, given the reality that communism was infiltrating the nation, the U.S. needed more people like McCarthy. She felt more secure as a result of his work.²⁸ These people clearly represented a significant Presbyterian support for McCarthy.

On the other hand, John W. Meister, minister in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, expressed his agreement with Payne’s article, as did Charles McKenny, an elder in Denison, Texas. The latter was critical of McCarthy’s techniques and thought it was important to have people willing to speak out on such issues. Ruth Ikeler, of Lambertville, New Jersey, held that McCarthy’s tactics endangered the principles on which the U.S. system of justice was founded—and at the least were grossly irresponsible.²⁹

IV

The year 1953 proved to be pivotal in the course of McCarthyism and the churches’ relationship to the phenomenon. In January of that year Eisenhower was inaugurated president and the Republicans took control of Congress. McCarthy was appointed to the chair of the traditionally inconsequential Government Operations Committee, but relinquished that role and took the chair of the committee’s Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. From this previously obscure position McCarthy began broader and more consistent investigations into possible Communist subversion in government than had been possible prior to holding the office. For example, he charged that the Voice of America insufficiently denounced communism in its broadcasts and that tainted books were housed in overseas government libraries. The State Department’s International Information Agency operated both programs.

In the House on March 9, Harold Velde, Illinois Republican chair of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC),



Rev. Dr. John A. Mackay, President of Princeton Theological Seminary, moderator of the 167th General Assembly, PCUSA (1953), and a principal author of the “Letter to Presbyterians.”

announced that he was contemplating an investigation of “Christian clergy and church-affiliated organizations” (denominations themselves were not mentioned) for Communist influence and as fronts for Communist activities.³⁰ Donald Jackson, representative from California, regretted Velde’s announcement but also argued that there were Communists in the churches, as in every organization. Jackson charged that Methodist bishop G. Bromley Oxnam served God one day a week and the Communist Front the other six—Oxnam was to the Communist Front what Man O’War was to horse racing.³¹ Paul S. Rees, president of the conservative National Association of Evangelicals, commented that it would be objectionable “if the committee’s work is so publicized as to make the social and political liberalism of a suspected Christian leader the occasion for springing the old clichés about ‘pinks’ and ‘fellow travelers’ and the like.”³² President Eisenhower declared his disapproval of any such probe, saying that the churches promoted belief in God and could not be Communist.³³ In response to Velde, Oxnam voluntarily appeared before HUAC to defend himself and clergy in general. He refuted all questions of his loyalty

raised in the hearing and the committee cleared him of any taint.³⁴

This was the immediate background to the 1953 pronouncement of the PCUSA General Assembly. Eugene Carson Blake, stated clerk of the General Assembly, wrote an article refuting the idea that Protestant—especially Presbyterian—clergy were disloyal. He reminded his readers that the Westminster Confession of Faith expected loyalty to one's nation unless the state became unjustly oppressive.³⁵ John Mackay, elected moderator of the 1953 General Assembly, delivered an election speech titled "The New Idolatry," in which he asserted that "A passionate, unreflective opposition to the Communist demon is coming to be regarded as the one and only true expression of Americanism and even of Christianity."³⁶ The General Assembly then proclaimed its stance a few days later.

In the wake of that episode, on June 22, McCarthy named J. B. Matthews, well known in anticommunist circles and a former HUAC staff member, as the executive director of his committee. Providentially, the same day a new issue of the journal *American Mercury* was released with an article written by Matthews titled "Reds in Our Churches." The first sentence, sure to catch the reader's attention, read: "The largest single group supporting the Communist apparatus in the United States today is composed of Protestant clergymen."³⁷ Mackay was singled out as an example of a "pink" church leader.³⁸

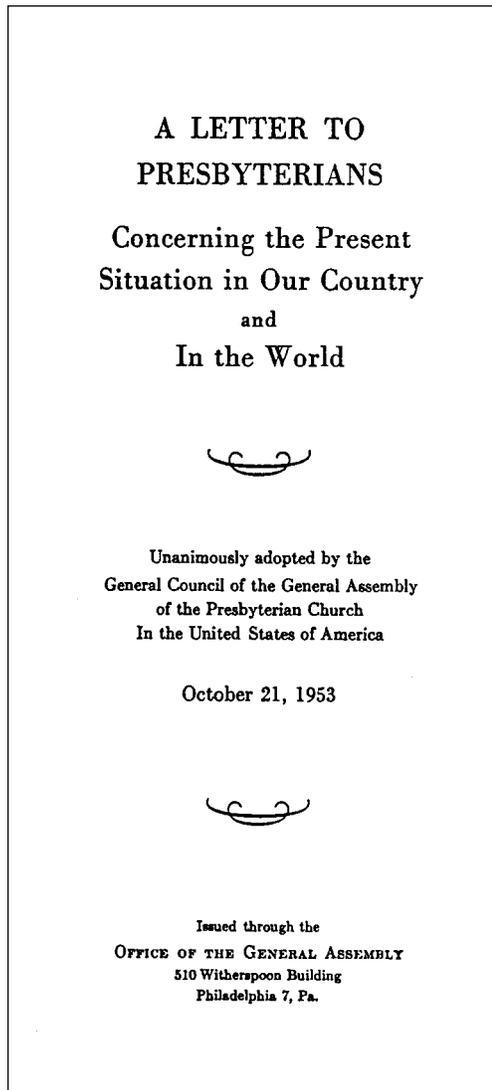
The "Red Hysteria" had overreached itself and support began to crumble. As long as the Truman administration was in place, Republicans would support McCarthy to some degree for his partisan benefit. Now, however, he was continuing his attacks on the administration of his own party—and would soon level charges of disloyalty against the U.S. Army itself. Further, there was deep irony in Matthews' attack on the Protestant ministers. An essential ingredient in the opposition to communism was that the USSR and China were atheistic while the U.S. was religious. Religious faith was widely believed to bolster democratic institutions and

ideas. Consequently, the rolls of churches swelled during the religious revival of the 1950s and the words "under God" were added to the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954. Could America's clergy really be pink?

Reaction to the Matthews article came quickly. The leaders of the National Conference of Christians and Jews—John O'Brien of the University of Notre Dame, Maurice Eisendrath of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and John Sutherland Bonnell of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City—sent a telegram to President Eisenhower saying that the charges were "unjustified and deplorable." The president agreed and responded that "Generalized and irresponsible attacks that sweepingly condemn the whole of any group of citizens are alien to America." The churches, he added, were citadels of freedom and at the heart of opposition to "godless tyranny and oppression." This was one of Eisenhower's earliest and clearest public statements against McCarthy, and the next day Matthews was gone from his committee assignment.³⁹

Mackay believed the earlier letter of the National Council of Churches, the telegram from the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and Oxnam's hearing had been timely and effective for refuting the charges of Velde, Matthews, and McCarthyism in general. He sensed, however, that the church had been on the defensive since the Matthews article, and was convinced that it was important that a denomination make a public stand which expressed positively the church's principles for the promotion of freedom and resistance to communism. Thus was born the idea for what has become the most famous church refutation of McCarthyism, the "Letter to Presbyterians."⁴⁰

Through the late summer and early fall, Mackay refined his ideas into letter form through five drafts, which he presented to the administrative committee of the denomination's General Council. He proposed that the council send the epistle to the denomination as a way of making its stance on McCarthyism clear and providing guid-



ance for Presbyterians as citizens. One person on the administrative committee opposed the idea, holding that the church should not venture into the political arena so directly. Others were uncertain that the General Council had the authority to make such a statement on behalf of the denomination, insofar as only General Assemblies had done so in the past. Those in favor noted that the council had only recently been expanded and given a broader executive role between the meetings of General Assemblies because the work had grown too large for the stated clerk to handle alone. Among the new duties of the council was to "cultivate and promote

the spiritual welfare" of the PCUSA. Still, there was no precedent for such an action and no specific permission in the Book of Order. The final decision of the administrative committee was that the new role of the council provided a basis on which to proceed and that, in the current national situation, they should. Blake wrote an introductory section which outlined the justification for the letter, in which he cited the phrase above and the council's responsibility "to correspond with and advise the General Councils of Presbyteries." The General Council received and approved, with minor changes, the letter on October 20, 1953. Those involved said they did not know how the church would respond to their action, and were aware that the 1954 General Assembly could overrule them. The "Letter to Presbyterians" was mailed to presbyteries and sessions on November 2, with simultaneous press release and mailings to President Eisenhower, Secretary of State Dulles, and Presbyterian members of Congress. The council wanted to take a stand not only before the denomination, but all the nation.⁴¹

The opening of the council's epistle not only referred to the denomination's constitution as the basis for its action but also referred to the 1953 General Assembly which had, in dealing with the issue, asserted that Christians should live with an awareness of God's sovereignty and approach civic affairs out of that awareness. Given the global situation, "Serious thought needs to be given to the menace of Communism in the world of today and to the undoubted aim on the part of its leaders to subvert the thought and life of the United States."⁴² On the other hand, the letters declared that in the fear of communism, "treason and dissent are being confused. The shrine of conscience and private judgment, which God alone has a right to enter, is being invaded. Attacks are being made upon citizens of integrity and social passion which are utterly alien to the Protestant religious tradition which has been a main source of the freedoms which people of the United States enjoy."⁴³

If the church were to develop a positive response to the presence of communism, on what principles would it be built? The letter asserted three. First, the church has a prophetic role to fulfill. A Christian is not a Christian only one day a week, nor is the concern of the church limited—everything that concerns human beings is a concern to the church, including public affairs. The church “owes it to its own members and to men in general, to draw attention to violations of those spiritual bases of human relationship which have been established by God. It has the obligation also to proclaim those principles, and to instill that spirit, which are essential for social health.”⁴⁴

Second, the letter declared that truth is essential, the foundation of true religion and culture. In the U.S. under McCarthyism, however,

falsehood is frequently preferred to fact if it can be shown to have greater propaganda value.... [I]f what is true ‘gives aid and comfort’ to our enemies, it must be suppressed. Truth is thus a captive in the land of the free. At the same time, and for the same reason, great words like ‘love,’ ‘peace,’ ‘justice,’ and ‘mercy,’ and the ideas which underlie them, are become suspect.⁴⁵

In combating communism we adopt the enemy’s own commitment to lying, believing the end will justify the means. Relying on the uncorroborated testimony of former Communists, who had simply traded Communist authoritarianism for that of McCarthyism, would bear serious moral consequences.

Finally, the paper stated explicitly the belief that underlay the entire tenor of the paper, especially the prophetic role of the church: God’s sovereignty. The letter acknowledged that security was important to a nation and a valid goal to seek. One could not hope to achieve complete security in this life, nor was security the “ultimate human obligation.” Ultimate security lay in God alone, not any state or economic system. The Communist advance in parts of the world could be seen, in part, as the judgment of God upon human injustice. Even so, it was precisely because God rules over history that communism was ultimately

doomed to failure—human beings, lost in sin, need more than a socioeconomic system to meet the spiritual hunger only God could satisfy. Above all, the U.S. must be willing to meet and negotiate with Communist leaders, admitting our own faults and injustices, for the unequalled cause of peace. The United Nations could serve a central role in that possibility. The letter concluded: “Loyalty to great principles of truth and justice has made our nation great; such loyalty alone can keep it great and ensure its destiny.”⁴⁶

Reaction to the release of the letter was immediate and widespread. Many newspapers, most notably *The New York Times* and *Washington Post*, commended the statement in editorials. A smaller number, including *The Cincinnati Enquirer* and *Chicago Daily Tribune*, said it was misguided and that the current state of affairs was not yet a threat to American freedom. The Communist *Daily Worker* gave it extensive coverage with some distortions of its meaning for its own advantage, causing some automatically to reject the letter.⁴⁷ *The Christian Century* editorialized:

It was time for a commanding voice to speak from the churches and to the churches, as well as to the American people. This the Presbyterian General Council has done. It has done it with a calmness and a wisdom that speak in every line of its statement. More important, it has given a demonstration of a living faith in the Eternal which the church has to offer as the true ground of any people’s security. This should become a historic document.⁴⁸

Daniel Poling, editor of the *Christian Herald*, published an article in the *Saturday Evening Post* titled “Clergymen Are Citizens, Too!” The core of the letter was the charge that Protestant ministers had too often been the dupes of Communists, a problem manifested in the “Letter to Presbyterians.” Poling offered its use by the *Daily Worker* as proof, but further charged that there was a correspondence of ideas, and in some instances exact language, between the letter and the *Cominform Journal*, another Communist periodical. That fact showed the subtle and sinister nature of Communist infiltration. Dr.

Robert Young, a Presbyterian pastor in Scarsdale, New York, agreed with Poling, declaring the letter the result of confused thinking on communism.⁴⁹ *Presbyterian Life* and Poling engaged in an ongoing dispute in print which was finally submitted to G. Elson Ruff, president of the Associated Church Press (of which *Presbyterian Life* and *Christian Herald* were members), for arbitration. Ruff found Poling's accusations to be spurious: "The difference in character of the two documents [the "Letter" and the *Cominform Journal*] is so extreme as to be obvious to almost any reader." Ruff continued, "Dr. Poling has closely imitated the characteristic procedures of careless accusers who cite various undisclosed, generally unavailable documents as the basis for serious but unspecified charges against reputable American citizens."⁵⁰

There is little record of reaction in the UPCNA, which would unite with the PCUSA in 1958. S. E. Irvine, writing in the *United Presbyterian*, provided a summation of the letter but made little comment. The letter was memorable and should be studied widely, he suggested, believing that "It is not too much to say that, from the Christian standpoint, it is the best summing up of the current situation thus far made."⁵¹

In the PCUS the response was mixed and limited. At the time the letter was issued there was a strong push for reunion of the PCUSA and PCUS, with the UPCNA also to join the new denomination. That topic dominated the life of the PCUS, with many opposing the PCUSA as too theologically and socially liberal and with too much centralized power. The editors of the *Presbyterian Outlook*, still predominantly a southern journal at the time, agreed with the point of view of the letter.⁵²

The *Southern Presbyterian Journal*, opposed to reunion and in favor of a strong defense against communism, ran an exco-riation of the letter by associate editor L. Nelson Bell, who had earlier stated his approval of loyalty oaths for people in important jobs.⁵³ Bell's editorial was sent to the General Council and, like the "Letter to



Executive secretary Dr. Glenn W. Moore (standing) addresses a meeting of the PCUSA General Council. John A. Mackay is seated to his right, Eugene C. Blake to his left. (Photo from *Presbyterian Life* 7:12 [June 12, 1954] 12).

Presbyterians," to the President, secretary of state, and members of Congress. Bell believed the letter played into the hands of the Communists and failed to realize that internal subversion was an ongoing reality that had to be stopped at any cost to preserve the American way of life and its spiritual foundation. He admitted that some innocent people had been attacked, but often they had brought it on themselves. Bell offered that "many men who should have known better have permitted their 'social passion' to lead them into associations, where any serious attempt to expose communist infiltration would find them in the limelight."⁵⁴ Mackay was in that number. Bell's concluding opinion was that the statement was "ill-considered" and would add more confusion to national thinking, for it failed to recognize communism for what it was.⁵⁵

The Journal also reprinted an editorial from the *Church Herald* which said it was only natural the *Daily Worker* applauded the letter—it redirected attacks from Communists to the government offices investigating them. With clear proof that communism had successfully planted itself within the national government, this was no time to denigrate those who were attempting to root them out.⁵⁶ It should be noted that, when the PCUS General Assembly met in 1954 to vote on the question of reunion, the “Letter” was used by opponents to illustrate their charges of improper political involvement and liberalism in the PCUSA. Mackay himself was the object of unfounded charges, partly based on HUAC files which were not official and had not been substantiated by committee findings. In short, McCarthyist tactics had made their way into the denomination.⁵⁷

Response in the PCUSA was mixed also. Historian K. Stephen Parmelee asserts that letters to the denominational offices were highly favorable, saying estimates ran from 3:1 to 8:1 in support of the letter. There was significant opposition, however. Some church sessions repudiated the “Letter,” but no presbyteries. There was, in the Pittsburgh area, a group of “Presbyterian Churchmen” who sought to organize resistance; they received some publicity but soon disbanded and had little effect.⁵⁸ Blake answered some criticisms of the “Letter” in an article, “We’ve Been Asked,” in *Presbyterian Life*. Blake held that the statement grew out of scripture and Reformed theology, then spoke to those who said the “Letter” was dangerous because the Communists could use it. Notice, he offered, what the Communists ignore in the “Letter”—primarily the sovereignty of God. Further, “Communism says it is for brotherhood, justice, freedom, and peace. Does the Christian give up these goals and these words just because they are useful to the Communists, or does he go on preaching the Christian gospel even though the Communist can quote him in part with favor?”⁵⁹

The *Presbyterian Tribune* also gave its editorial support to the “Letter.”⁶⁰ In February 1954 the editors offered signs of hope

that McCarthyism’s reign might be ending. Matthews had been fired from his post, Oxnam had stood up to the tactics, the General Council had released its letter, and other denominational bodies had subsequently come forth. The editor’s tone became harsh: “There is more of America left than the inquisitors realize. We will take care of traitors quietly and firmly, not as those afraid but as becomes an emotionally secure people. We won’t go on being played for suckers by native Fascists....”⁶¹

Not surprisingly, *Presbyterian Life* received many letters regarding the General Council’s declaration. The letters in opposition made the same general points: communism was an evil threat to the world that could not be trusted (and, therefore, with which one could not negotiate), communism had the subversion of the U.S. as its aim and was already engaged in doing so, and extreme measures were necessary to root out Communists in the nation’s government. A letter written on behalf of the session of First Presbyterian Church in Peoria, Illinois, by Frank Stewart, clerk of session, and Robert Hunt, an elder, disagreed that the methods of investigation were a subtle attack on human rights or that the inquiries threatened freedom of thought, speech, or conscience. Those freedoms were unlimited, but individuals were also responsible for their statements and associations. “Those who would identify themselves with movements and organizations through their speeches and publications must be held responsible for all they say and must be willing to accept any discredit which may fall upon them through the associations with which they seek allegiance,” they wrote. “If they have not the courage of their convictions, they should not speak out and then attempt to avoid the responsibility for all they say by hiding behind the constitutional guarantees.”⁶² Nor did the session find justification for the General Council’s letter in the declaration of the 1953 General Assembly. Mrs. Harry E. Propson of Chicago trusted the integrity of those seeking to drive communism out of government. “I believe that every word of

protest registered against investigating committees or individuals on them is a boost for Communism, regardless of the motive," she wrote. She further asserted that any person under investigation who invoked the Fifth Amendment was guilty and should be regarded as such.⁶³ It was obvious that there were Presbyterians with whom McCarthy struck a chord.

There were many people who agreed with the council's stand. John Oldman, Jr., argued that Presbyterians had a long history of political involvement in which this statement—which he believed showed "prophetic insight"—stood. The famed psychiatrist Karl Menninger expressed his full support of the "Letter," for he agreed that freedoms were under attack in the U.S. The Presbytery of Houston stated its appreciation that the church "has had a strong voice to express its loyalty to the Son of Man, and to him alone." Finally, A. Edwin Harper, Jr., a missionary who had some experience in Communist nations, noted that many opposed to the "Letter" believed the church should stay out of politics. Is that what those people wanted for the church in Communist nations or living under dictatorships—to stay out of politics?⁶⁴

When the General Assembly met in 1954, there was uncertainty whether or not the body would endorse or reject the council's action. In his report to the Assembly on the General Council's decision, Mackay said they believed they had a responsibility to speak to the church on important matters, and that the nation was in such a critical situation regarding freedom that action was required. Consequently, they produced a statement they thought was in accord with the declaration of the 1953 General Assembly and founded on Reformed theology. Roy Ewing Vale, former moderator of the General Assembly, moved the Assembly adopt the "Letter" as its own.⁶⁵ John Sutherland Bonnell, in his support of the motion, said the pronouncement "raised a standard to which all who love American freedom and justice may repair. In this resolution, let us lift that standard so high that no one in this

nation can ever doubt where this General Assembly stands."⁶⁶ The General Assembly approved the motion by a vote of 880–1.

V

Out of what principles did the "Letter to Presbyterians" arise? Clearly, theological tenets fundamental to Calvinism received both implicit and explicit expression in the "Letter." Most clear was the conviction that God alone is sovereign over both creation and the individual conscience. The doctrine that each person and each institution is sinful, and therefore cannot be regarded uncritically, was evident. The immediate historical context undoubtedly brought those and related principles into sharper focus. The work of Karl Barth, Reinhold and H. Richard Niebuhr, Emil Brunner, and Paul Tillich, coincident with the rise of fascist governments and then World War II, reminded people of the dangers of a nationalism that unduly exalted one's own nation and social systems as righteous, or facilely equated them with God's will. Although all agreed that halting any spread of communism was important, national idolatry and sacrifice of civil liberty were to be avoided. This essay has surveyed that attitude in the pronouncements of three Presbyterian denominations, and it culminated in the General Council's "Letter."

Many people expressed those convictions. Nathaniel P. Davis knew and negotiated with the Communist leaders of a number of foreign countries, including Hungary, where he held a diplomatic post from 1949 to 1951. Many, he argued, confused "Communism as a philosophy of life on the one hand with Communism as a tool of Russian chauvinism on the other." What was important to realize, he believed, was the deep hurt of many people in the world who often blamed the colonial West for their problems, and to which communism could make an attractive appeal.⁶⁷

Winburn Thomas, former missionary to Japan and then in Indonesia, acknowledged contradictions between communism and

Christianity but reminded American readers that many—especially in syncretistic Asia—saw no contradiction in being both. Many in the U.S. missed an important point:

The state of being a Christian does not, necessarily, condition an individual's feelings of nationalism and patriotism; thus the Chinese Christian and non-Christian alike may accept uncritically communism's self-evaluation. American Christians frequently said to me during the war, "How can a Japanese fight America if he is really a Christian?" Such Americans unconsciously equated their national position with the Christian way. The average Chinese Christian no more analyzes the dialectical character of Communism than does the average American Christian the presupposition of Western capitalism.⁶⁸

William McGill also noted the tendency to equate the gospel with secular issues. "Perhaps one among these identifications is an emphasis upon what we call, 'Freedom,' or 'The American Way'; or we say that Christian faith is the answer to Communism, or totalitarianism, or socialism," he suggested. Christianity is the answer to humanity's eternal needs, not a program of secondary allegiances. The Christian should approach political or social systems on the basis of the gospel, but not treat them as the gospel.⁶⁹ Robert McAfee Brown noted that McCarthy could not understand Acts 5:29. McCarthyism "completely destroys the atmosphere in which men say [*sic*] say, 'We must obey God rather than men.' This consequently is just the time when the 'nonconformist conscience' must begin to assert itself more vigorously than ever against any attempt to produce conformity to one man's ideology."⁷⁰

The impact of the Presbyterian "Letter," although impossible to quantify in any way, was substantial. Within months after the General Council's stance, Parmelee noted, six major religious organizations and institutions issued statements. The "Letter" had helped bring anti-McCarthy sentiment to the surface. Parmelee also observed that in 1962 Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas included the "Letter" in his *Almanac of Liberty*, in which he collected what he believed were principal documents attesting to

national freedom.⁷¹ H. Shelton Smith, Robert T. Handy, and Lefferts Loetscher chose to include it in their monumental and influential documentary history of American Christianity. They wrote that the "Letter" "contributed significantly to the clarification of points of view on Congressional inquiries in the churches and in the nation...."⁷² The "Letter" was important, too, as it manifested the question of involvement in public life by Presbyterians. Presbyterians had always been active in the public and political sphere, from the arguments over slavery to Prohibition to war. Coming on the eve of *Brown v. Board of Education* and the civil rights movement, and then the conflict regarding the Vietnam War, the denomination's statement takes on added meaning.

It would certainly be too much to say the "Letter" brought McCarthy's investigative techniques to a halt. The end for McCarthy came when he leveled charges of subversion against the U.S. Army, with hints that Eisenhower himself was sheltering leftist elements in his administration. The consequent "Army-McCarthy" hearings were televised, and the display of McCarthy's discourtesy, use of innuendo, and bullying tactics turned the nation against him. More importantly, the Senate voted to censure him for contempt and abuse of Senate committees. He had overreached and never recovered. An increasing addiction to alcohol hastened his death in 1957.

However, it can be said that the Presbyterian "Letter" was one of the most public, reasoned, and earliest responses to the last phase of McCarthyism and that it helped create an atmosphere of resistance that eventually stopped the threat to civil liberties in the nation. Moreover, it articulated a Christian response to McCarthy that both denied communism and upheld civil liberty. This set the "Letter" in contrast to the increasingly popular Billy Graham and those, such as Billy James Hargis, to his right. Those evangelical and fundamentalist Christians were quick to identify Christianity with U.S. culture and institutions; consequently, their anticommunism was more nationalistic than

the Presbyterian declarations surveyed here, less protective of civil liberties, and less nuanced in their analysis. The Presbyterian response to McCarthy also differed from the liberal political or secular opposition. Presbyterians, preeminently in the "Letter," delineated a theological basis on which to found national security and on which to build free political systems and ensure liberty. The grounds for Christian involvement in the public life of the nation were clear. Not all Presbyterians in the three major denominations agreed with the General Council's decision to take the stand it did. Yet the "Letter to Presbyterians" has taken its place in history.

NOTES

¹James H. Smylie, "Mackay and McCarthyism, 1953–1954," *Journal of Church and State* 6 (August 1964): 352, credits the word to political cartoonist Herbert Block (Herblock) in 1950.

²*Ibid.*, 352.

³"Peacemaking: The Believer's Calling," *Minutes of the One-Hundred Twenty-first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States* (Atlanta: Office of the Stated Clerk, 1981), 466. This paper had been approved the year before by the "northern" United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. and was borrowed by the "southern" Presbyterian Church, U.S. (PCUS). General Assembly minutes will hereinafter be cited as GAM, accompanied by PCUS, PCUSA, or UPCNA (United Presbyterian Church in North America).

⁴Cited in Mark G. Toulouse, *The Transformation of John Foster Dulles: From Prophet of Realism to Priest of Nationalism* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1985), xxv–xxvi.

⁵The literature on the nature of U.S. self-identity is extensive. Two standard works in religion in the U.S. are Robert T. Handy, *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities*, 2d ed. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1984) and Sidney E. Mead, *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976). For other works more directly bearing on the relationship of nationalism to anticommunism see Warren L. Vinz, *Pulpit Politics: Faces of American Protestant Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1997); Louis L. Snyder, *Varieties of Nationalism: A Comparative Study* (Hinsdale, Ill.: Dryden Press, 1976), which labels much of American nationalism "messianic"; Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Robert Jewett, *The Captain America Complex: The Dilemma of Zealous Nationalism* (Santa Fe, N.M.: Bear and Co., 1984); David Bennett, *The Party of Fear: From Nativist Movements to the New Right in American History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Richard Gid

Powers, *Not Without Honor: The History of American Anticommunism* (New York: The Free Press, 1995); Thomas G. Paterson, *Meeting the Communist Threat: Truman to Reagan* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Richard M. Fried, *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); and Kenneth D. Wald, "The Religious Dimension of American Anti-Communism," *Journal of Church and State* 36 (Summer 1994): 483–506.

⁶John Foster Dulles, "Moral Ideas Must Take Root," *Presbyterian Outlook* 131 (31 Oct. 1949): 5.

⁷Chad Walsh, "Will the Communists Make Us Christians?" *Presbyterian Life* 2 (26 Nov. 1949): 4–5.

⁸PCUS Board of Church Extension, "National Security and the Christian Message," *Annual Reports of Assembly Agencies* (N.p.: N.p., 1951), 87–88, and PCUS GAM, 1954, 198.

⁹"National Security and the Christian Message," *Presbyterian Outlook* 133 (7 May 1951): 5.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 6. For similar attempts to bring balance to the opposition to communism see, for example, "Social Education and Action," PCUSA GAM, 1947, 194–211, and "Social Education and Action," PCUSA GAM, 1948, 200–211.

¹¹Jewett, *Captain America Complex*, 103–4, among others, outlines the tendency of some people to embrace the idea of conspiracy.

¹²McCarthy made this charge on several occasions, with a different number of Communists (57 or 81, usually) in the State Department offered.

¹³Cited in Bennett, *The Party of Fear*, 298.

¹⁴Helpful chronologies of McCarthy's work in the 1950s can be found in Bennett, *The Party of Fear*, 298–310, and the chapter on McCarthy in Powers, *Not Without Honor*, among others.

¹⁵Bennett, *The Party of Fear*, 193–94, makes this point.

¹⁶See "Let Congress Probe—but Honestly!" *Christian Century* 67 (12 Apr. 1950): 453–54; "The Easy Road to Fame," *Christian Century* 70 (21 Jan. 1953): 71–72; and "What Should We Fear?" *Christian Century* 67 (12 Apr. 1950): 455–56.

¹⁷"Report on Religious Liberty," UPCNA GAM, 1951, 1222, and "Report on Religious Liberty," UPCNA GAM, 1953, 477.

¹⁸Mac Lowry, "Security and Freedom," *Presbyterian Outlook* 133 (2 July 1951): 5–6.

¹⁹John C. Bennett, "The Issues Raised by Communism for Christians," *Presbyterian Outlook* 134 (14 Jan. 1952): 5.

²⁰The PCUS, as a southern denomination, was preoccupied with matters of race at this time.

²¹"Social Education and Action," PCUSA GAM, 1951, 252–54.

²²"Social Education and Action," PCUSA GAM, 1952, 199.

²³"Social Education and Action," PCUSA GAM, 1953, 181. It is, of course, difficult to discern how one's legal rights could be guarded at the same time one was being removed from a teaching position for the sole reason of being a Communist. This manifests the kind of ambiguity that often marked Presbyterian thinking on matters of communism and national security. See Rick Nutt, *Toward Peacemaking: Presbyterians in the South and National Security, 1945–1983*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1994), 41–44.

- ²⁴Ibid.
- ²⁵Paul Calvin Payne, "Immunity Gone Berserk," *Presbyterian Life* 3 (29 Apr. 1950): 6.
- ²⁶"Congressional Immunity—Opinions," *Presbyterian Life* 3 (10 June 1950): 3.
- ²⁷Ibid.
- ²⁸Ibid.
- ²⁹Ibid.
- ³⁰See "Investigations: What About the Churches?" *Presbyterian Life* 6 (18 Apr. 1953): 17.
- ³¹Oxnam was renowned as a leader of the ecumenical movement—he was at the time president of the World Council of Churches, was active in social justice ministries, and had long been suspected of Communist leanings by some.
- ³²"Investigations: What About the Churches?" 17.
- ³³Ibid., 18.
- ³⁴Ibid., and K. Stephen Parmelee, "The Presbyterian Letter Against McCarthyism," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 41 (Dec. 1963): 202–5.
- ³⁵Eugene Carson Blake, "Concerning the Loyalty of Presbyterians," *Presbyterian Life* 6 (16 May 1953): 8–9.
- ³⁶Reprinted as John Mackay, "The New Idolatry," *Theology Today* 10 (Oct. 1953): 382–83. Mackay was a Scottish-born naturalized citizen, had been a missionary to South America, and was, at the time he was moderator of the General Assembly, president of Princeton Theological Seminary.
- ³⁷Cited in "McCarthy Appointment Raises Storm," *Christian Century* 70 (15 July 1953): 811.
- ³⁸Parmelee, "The Presbyterian Letter," 206, notes this.
- ³⁹A number of the works cited on McCarthy's career record this episode, but see also Parmelee, "The Presbyterian Letter," 201–23; and "Alien to America," *Christian Century* 70 (22 July 1953): 838–39.
- ⁴⁰Parmelee, "The Presbyterian Letter," 207–11, tells the story of the writing of the "Letter."
- ⁴¹Ibid.
- ⁴²"A Letter to Presbyterians," PCUSA GAM, 1954, 256. The letter also ran as "This Nation Under God," *Presbyterian Life* 6 (14 Nov. 1953): 10–11.
- ⁴³Ibid., 257.
- ⁴⁴Ibid., 258.
- ⁴⁵Ibid.
- ⁴⁶Ibid., 261.
- ⁴⁷Parmelee, "The Presbyterian Letter," 217–18, and "General Council's Letter Stirs Comment," *Presbyterian Life* 6 (28 Nov. 1953): 18–19. See also "Presbyterians Warn on Methods Used Here in Fight on Communism," *New York Times*, 3 Nov. 1953, 1 and 20, and "Presbyterian Manifesto," *New York Times*, 4 Nov. 1953, 32.
- ⁴⁸"Dissent is not Treason," *Christian Century* 70 (18 Nov. 1953): 1319.
- ⁴⁹Poling, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and the Presbyterian Letter," *Presbyterian Life* 7 (15 May 1954): 21, 24–25.
- ⁵⁰Parmelee, "The Presbyterian Letter," 221–22.
- ⁵¹S. E. Irvine, "Presbyterians and Communism," *United Presbyterian* 111 (30 Nov. 1953): 5.
- ⁵²See "Christian and/or Communist?" *Presbyterian Outlook* 130 (6 Dec. 1948): 8, and "Thirty-Five Protestant Leaders Hit McCarthyism," *Presbyterian Outlook* 136 (10 May 1954): 4.
- ⁵³"Those Loyalty Oaths," *Southern Presbyterian Journal* 11 (12 June 1952): 2–3.
- ⁵⁴L. Nelson Bell, "A Strange Pronouncement," *Southern Presbyterian Journal* 12 (18 Nov. 1953): 3.
- ⁵⁵Ibid., 4.
- ⁵⁶Reprinted as "Communists Applaud U.S.A. Presbyterians," *Southern Presbyterian Journal* 12 (2 Dec. 1953): 9.
- ⁵⁷"For Brotherhood and Union," *Christian Century* 71 (16 June 1954): 727–28.
- ⁵⁸Parmelee, "The Presbyterian Letter," 219–20.
- ⁵⁹Eugene Carson Blake, "We've Been Asked," *Presbyterian Life* 7 (6 Feb. 1954): 30.
- ⁶⁰"The General Council's Letter," *Presbyterian Tribune* 69 (Dec. 1953): 7.
- ⁶¹"Dust in Our Eyes," *Presbyterian Tribune* 69 (Feb. 1954): 7.
- ⁶²"Concerning the 'Letter to Presbyterians'—Cont'd," *Presbyterian Life* 7 (9 Jan. 1954): 4.
- ⁶³"Concerning the 'Letter to Presbyterians'—Cont'd," *Presbyterian Life* 7 (6 Mar. 1954): 4. See also the letters of Roger F. Williams, "Concerning the 'Letter to Presbyterians'—Cont'd," *Presbyterian Life* 7 (23 Jan. 1954): 4; and William B. Holmes, "Concerning the 'Letter to Presbyterians'—Cont'd," *Presbyterian Life* 7 (20 Mar. 1954): 4.
- ⁶⁴See the letters by those people in "Concerning the 'Letter to Presbyterians'—Cont'd," *Presbyterian Life* 7 (23 Jan. 1954): 4; *Presbyterian Life* 7 (6 Mar. 1954): 4 and 36; *Presbyterian Life* 7 (20 Mar. 1954): 4; and *Presbyterian Life* 7 (9 Jan. 1954): 4–5.
- ⁶⁵"The Presbyterian Letter: A Vote of Confidence," *Presbyterian Life* 7 (12 June 1954): 12–13.
- ⁶⁶"Stress Loyalty to Truth," *Christian Century* 71 (9 June 1954): 695.
- ⁶⁷"Concerning the 'Letter to Presbyterians'—Cont'd," *Presbyterian Life* 7 (6 Mar. 1954): 4.
- ⁶⁸Winburn T. Thomas, "Can a Christian Be A Communist?" *Presbyterian Tribune* 69 (Feb. 1954): 12.
- ⁶⁹William O. McGill, "We Can't Equate Christ with Political Freedom," *Presbyterian Life* 3 (8 July 1950): 3.
- ⁷⁰Robert McAfee Brown, "Christian Faith and McCarthyism," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 9 (1954): 21.
- ⁷¹Noted by Parmelee, "The Presbyterian Letter."
- ⁷²H. Shelton Smith, Robert T. Handy, and Lefferts A. Loetscher, *American Christianity: An Historical Interpretation with Representative Documents*, vol. 2, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), 550.