

Editors' Message: In This Issue

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In 1764, the Scottish-born Archibald Laidlie became the first English-speaking pastor of the Dutch Reformed church in New York City. Joyce D. Goodfriend in our initial article tells the story of Laidlie and his congregation as they dealt with the issue of language. Should worship continue to be held in Dutch only or should services also be in English? Was Dutch essential to maintaining traditional faith? Was its use a guarantee that church membership would continue to decrease? Goodfriend illumines the way in which these questions were mixed with issues of evangelical piety and social class, and she shows how Laidlie's ministry helped to revive a dwindling congregation.

In the late nineteenth century, Robert L. Dabney faced different problems of cultural and religious adaptation. As Sean Michael Lucas argues in his study of Dabney, this leading Virginia Presbyterian offered virtually unremitting opposition to the forces that were making for change in the post-Reconstruction South. A so-called classical republican in the tradition of John C. Calhoun, he favored a social order founded on hierarchy, patriarchy, and localism. He rejected egalitarianism, attacked the "New South" ideology of economic development, opposed the restoration of friendly relations with Northern Presbyterians, and upheld the South's racial orthodoxy in the age which gave birth to Jim Crow laws. In him one finds, according to Lucas, "the chief exemplar of the white southern Presbyterian mind in the postbellum era."

Frank L. Arnold examines the adaptations that have occurred during more than a century of interaction between Presbyterians in Brazil and in the U.S.A. At the outset, American Presbyterians (North and South), as the "sending" churches whose missionaries had brought Brazilian Presbyterianism into existence, were clearly dominant. Yet as early as 1884, when the young Eduardo Carlos Pereira helped found the Brazilian Evangelical Tract Society, there were already calls for greater indigenous control of Presbyterian activities in Brazil. How such demands have played out in altered relations between American and Brazilian Presbyterians is the central theme of Arnold's essay.

This issue also contains valuable information on several other matters. For stated clerks and others concerned about the preservation of records, we offer information on digital technology. "Our Documentary Heritage" highlights the work of Eugene R. Kellersberger as a medical missionary in what was then known as the Belgian Congo. Dr. Kellersberger was a pioneer in dealing with sleeping sickness and leprosy. This issue also notes an important milestone. A hundred years ago the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. adopted a change in its basic confessional document, the Westminster Confession of Faith. It added new chapters dealing with the Holy Spirit and missions and eliminated a few passages elsewhere—for example, the accusation that the pope was antichrist—that seemed anachronistic to many Presbyterians in 1903. At the same time, the General Assembly of the PCUSA also adopted a "Declaratory Statement" that softened certain aspects of Calvinism as traditionally understood.