

May 27, 1954

I fear that your statement that a man who has never had philosophy can gain a working knowledge of it in a couple of weeks time with a college review handbook, is much too sanguine.

Your suggestion that the man should stand examination on the full contents on the form of government of the Bible Presbyterian Church, and likewise a full examination on the contents of the Book of Discipline is a good one. I was at a meeting of the Philadelphia Presbytery not long ago, when discussion was taken up of a very important point of procedure, and the group argued for nearly half an hour as to exactly what should be done. Finally someone arose and read a very clear statement in the Form of Government, which completely settled the matter. All the members of the presbytery seem to have completely forgotten this point, if they had ever known it.

The Bible Presbyterian Church, like any other church, is faced with a practical situation. We can imagine the sort of perfect ministers we would like to have, but they do not exist anywhere. We have to pick the best men that we can find among those who are available. If you had sat in committees and in presbyteries during many years as I have, you would often have felt quite discouraged as to the outlook. And yet, you would have seen, as I have, some men who made very poor examinations, later become outstanding leaders in the church. (These are often men who have done excellent work in class, but who do not seem able to make a good impression in an examination.) It is really very difficult, from an examination alone, to make a real judgment.

Agreeing as thoroughly as I do with the great central purposes of your letter, and knowing that Mr. Freeland agrees with them just as much as I do, I feel that I regret very much the discouragement that has come to him from the whole experience, and the wrong impression that some have received of him, and that he has received of the attitude of our Bible Presbyterian Church.

Please forgive me for writing at this length, but I believe that the matter is one of very great importance, since I thoroughly agree with your fundamental purpose in the letter, and with your enthusiastic desire to raise the level of presbytery examinations. I look forward with anticipation to Christian fellowship with you at Synod in the near future.

Cordially yours in Christ,

Allan A. MacRae

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