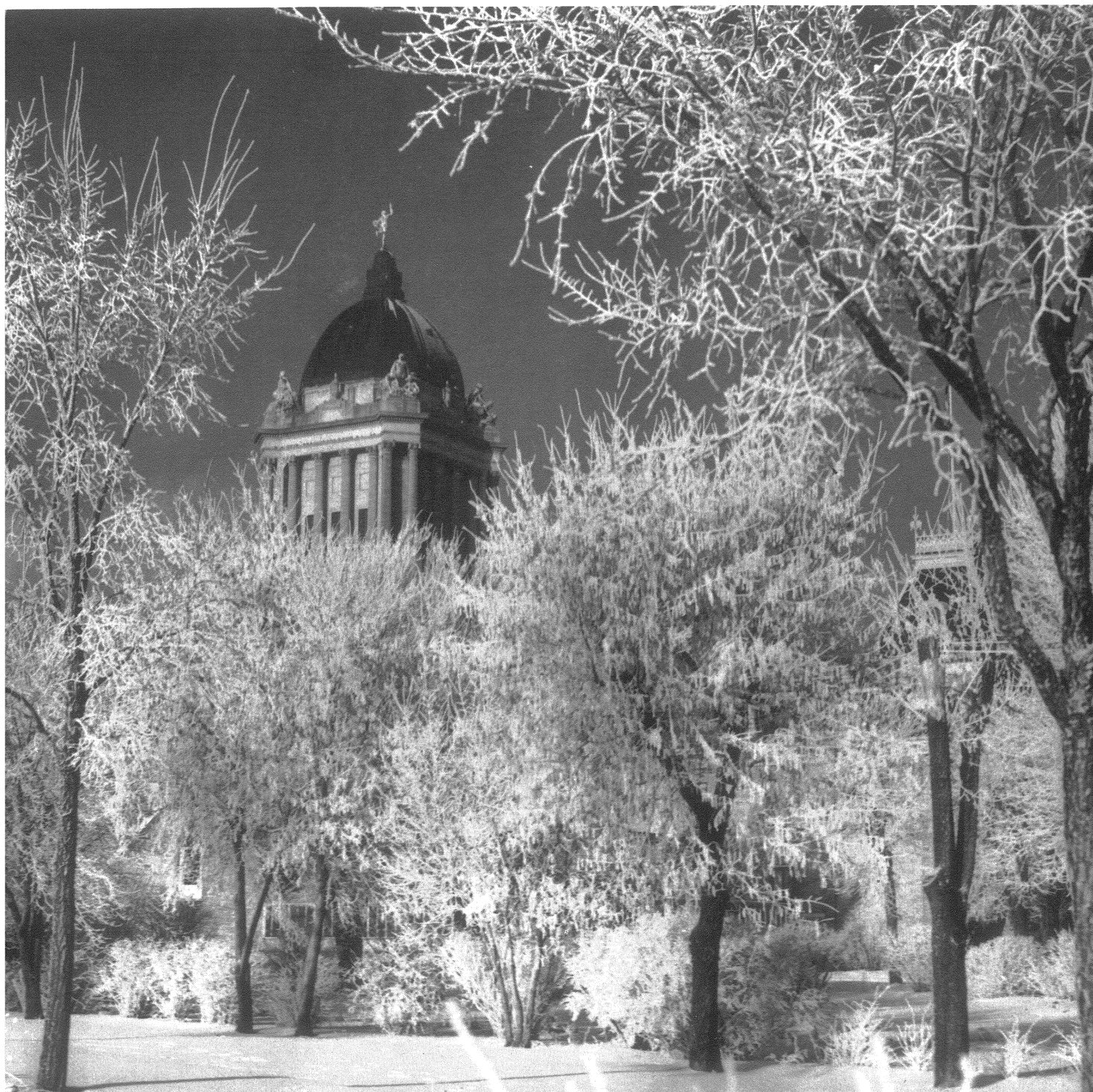


Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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The Law and The Christian

(Second of Two Parts)

Now that we have seen the origin of government and of law we can consider the question: What should be the Christian view of law? Rather, what is our task as regards the law? Does this really need explication? Do we not already know our calling in our three-fold office of prophet, priest and king? Read again Q. and A. 32 of the Heid. Cat. on what it means to be a Christian! We must use the time and the talents God has given to us to confess His Name; that means in this context to actively promote good laws and to protest against bad laws. Your question: "What is a good law and what is a bad?" My answer is: you have been trained in Christ's Kingdom. Read the Scriptures and you will find the answer. Pray to God to open your eyes so that you may understand. Do you want examples? The current abortion laws and possible future changes in them, gambling laws, exorbitant tax laws, and discriminatory labour laws.

All right, let's look at some of them. Take the amendments to the Criminal Code a couple of years ago, introduced under the so-called Omnibus Bill. (Incidentally, this is a pernicious method to introduce wholesale changes in laws of different types. Because of the way our political system is organized - particularly the party system with its principle of party loyalty - such package bills deny the right of the legislators in many cases to vote against portions of the bill which they consider wrong. They must take either all or nothing.) Under this bill, *inter alia*, the abortion laws were relaxed. Strictly speaking, not as much as was thought, because while before the amendments, killing an unborn child was also defined as murder, there was also an exception under which a person was justified in taking the life of the child if he considered it necessary, in good faith, to preserve the life of the mother. However, while before, this exception was rarely resorted to by medical practitioners, that exception which is

now specifically spelled out in connection with abortion, is relied on with sickening regularity, sanctioned by a law that requires no more than the opinion of a committee of three qualified medical practitioners appointed by the Board of the particular hospital. While it (i.e. danger to the physical or mental health of the mother) is still an exception in theory, in practice the exception has become the rule in all too many hospitals.

It is a terrible thing that the government authorizes or at least condones legalized murder. And it is murder. The argument that the foetus is not yet a human being for some weeks after conception has been rejected even by qualified medical practitioners who favour relaxed abortion laws. It is murder, and we who know the Scriptures, or ought to know them, should realize it. Read Ps. 139, especially verses 13 to 16 again on this. When you deny a helpless unborn infant the right to live, when you murder it, you sin against God's commandment. You are taking the life of a person, and who knows what a blessing that person might not have been to those around him. And will not also the blood of these little ones once testify against us if we sit idly by without a word of protest?

If we have come to the stage where all we are concerned about in our society is the convenience of the mother of the unwanted child, and in practice that is where we are at in many cases, then I ask, how far are we removed from Hitler's Germany, where life was no longer sacred? Oh sure, I know, we clothe our excuses in fine sounding words -- the health of the mother (Q. How often would that be the real factor?), there are too many children in the family already and we can't properly support any more, we must be concerned about the population explosion, etc. But who will be next? We can think of similar excuses to kill -- sorry, to relieve of their suffering -- the aged and the mentally ill. After all, they no longer perform a useful function in

society. They take up much needed space, and it costs so much to maintain them. So much human garbage. You have to dispose of them.

Now you will say, "But of course that goes too far! That just can't happen in our society." But as far as abortions are concerned, while we may not approve of them ourselves, isn't the government acting for the good of society, because one of the effects of this legislation is to put the dirty back-room abortionists out of business and to make sure that the patient receives the best treatment in proper antiseptic surroundings? And anyway, did not also Christ say in another context, with respect to divorces, that Moses permitted the Israelites to send away their wives because of the hardness of their hearts? In other words, wasn't Moses also regulating society to make the best of a bad thing?

But I ask you, is that a justification that you can present to God? Surely not, for you are transgressing one of his express commands! And Christ also said on that matter of divorce: "from the beginning it was not so." (Math. 19:8)

Of course governments have to regulate civil affairs, but for the purpose we have already discussed, and in no event can they disobey the law of God. Or do you think that governments are not bound by the law of God? If so, then you must disabuse yourself of the notion that the government is a kind of corporate personality like the state which is above and beyond the law. The Scriptures and the Confession, which repeats Scripture, do not know such a revolutionary abstraction. They speak very simply of kings, princes, magistrates, governors, rulers, judges, etc. And it is to each and every one of such persons that God's commandments are directed individually. Just as each of us is responsible in our three-fold office to keep the commandments of God in our daily work, so also is the minister of state

and the member of Parliament - not just in his private life, but also and especially in his public life - bound to reckon with God and His law.

This is why it is so frightening in our time that persons exercising a public office, while acknowledging a private morality (and we should be thankful that they still have this private moral code), nevertheless feel perfectly at liberty to deny God's norms in the public execution of their office. For this is what happens. Some time ago a letter of the former Minister of Justice, the Hon. John Turner, was published in C.R.M. It was a reply to a letter sent to him opposing the relaxation of the abortion laws. He said (I quote from memory) that while he personally believes that indiscriminate abortions are wrong, if the majority of the citizens want abortions on demand, then the government should pass laws to that effect. But this is a denial of the authority given him (along with others) by Christ to govern this nation in conformity with God's law. This is not governing by the grace and authority of God, but a rule by the consent of the (majority of the) people. And therefore it is at bottom a denial of Christ's rights to this nation, a denial of the sovereignty of God.

And what do we see? With increasing frequency and shamelessness demands are made for laws that will permit abortions on demand - on the demand of the liberated woman (the father has no say in the matter); homosexuals demand more freedom and an end to discrimination; we are told that we need divorce on demand, that our Sunday observance laws are an anachronism. Everyone wants freedom and equality and, of course, the brotherhood of man. It is still the old revolutionary cry of the French Revolution. Everyone should be able to do his own thing. What right have you to impose your moral standards on me? So long as I don't hurt anyone else by my actions, why should you be concerned?

Here you see the reversal of the great command. God is totally ignored, He is not reckoned with, let alone feared. And the neighbour - well, we are all brothers aren't we? The radio regularly assaults our eardrums with the song: "Come on everybody, love your brother right now." Yes but do we love our neighbour, our brother, as ourselves?

Can we do that without obeying the first part of that commandment, to love God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our strength?

We cannot. While everywhere the brotherhood of man is preached, in practice it becomes: Do the other guy in. How else do you explain the exorbitant wage demands of the powerful unions, the dishonesty in business practices, yes and the theft by many of those on the welfare rolls?

Now I can already hear some of you say: "It is the old story, criticize the government and everybody else. Can't we ever see any good in anything? For example, in the fact that we have laws that protect our person and property, that recognize the Church, that protect the common people from big business through consumer protection laws, that, generally speaking, give everyone the right to a fair hearing and counsel; isn't that working justice, isn't that doing good?"

But then I must ask you, what is good? Yes, man, and therefore governments, can do many things that are beneficial to other men, to society, to the Church even. And we should be thankful that we have in our country governments under which we may still lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. (1 Tim. 2:3) But is this doing good? Our Confession (Can. of Dort, III & IV, Art. 3) says that men are by nature incapable of *saving* good and that they are unable and unwilling to be reformed to God without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit.

What are we, Christians, to do then? Is this all we can do - criticize and complain about the world around us and for the rest retreat into our little shell, our comfortable pew, and leave the world and the governments to their own devices? But then we become like the Anabaptists and other sects who reject the authority of civil governments. Yes, that is just as pernicious as the innumerable demonstrations that we have these days. And that is not the right way either. We are not a pressure group, a mob of revolutionaries, that must stand up for their rights, if necessary by force. For that approach we reject with the error of the Anabaptists in Art. 36 of our Confession.

What then? Should we organize - maybe with others who are like-minded, get some big organiza-

tions going and really shake this nation? Should we start a crusade of Christian activists? With organizations and large numbers you can achieve so much - just look at the results demonstrators all around us achieve. Maybe we can even attain those goals of a Christian university, a Christian newspaper, a Christian broadcasting group, etc., etc. But with large number? Then what about Gideon with his three hundred men? He succeeded because God was at his side.

What can we say then about our task? It is this. We must witness. Witness to those around us, to our neighbours, to those in Governments, singly or in groups, in word and deed. We must protest to our Governments when they propose to pass laws which do not take account of God's laws, or which do injustice to our fellow-man and therefore an injustice to the Creator. We were promised a "Just Society." It has not come. And we should protest when in the name of that ideal or some other, labour codes are proposed that will expropriate the employer's God-given authority over his business and hand it to the employees. We should protest when we have a law that is supposed to prevent discrimination on the basis of race, creed, religion, etc., but in fact does discriminate against a Christian worker who cannot, before God, join one of the secular unions. And there are so many examples. Yes, we should be thankful for the many freedoms which we have and which other nations have lost. But let us watch that the same does not happen to us without our protest. How, you still ask? By sending a demonstration to Parliament Hill or Queen's Park? No, very simply, by using the means given to us and which do not in themselves cause injustice or confound that decency and good order. Very simply by writing to your M.P. or to the minister of state, or by writing to your newspaper. Very simply in your actions and your way of life. "(Have) your conversation honest among the Gentiles: That, whereas they speak against you as evildoers they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Pet. 2:12.)

We must not dream of large

Continued on Page 10).

news medley

For a long time already the Church at CHATHAM has felt the need for a new Churchbuilding. Not only was the old one very crowded many a time, there was also the added factor of the temperature during the summer which was not very conducive to attentive listening. And then: for the preacher it was not an unqualified pleasure to sit right in front of the pipes of the organ! It won't be long before there will be a considerable change in the whole situation. The building committee will come with proposals soon, so that the Consistory can proceed and make definite plans.

This Church is also considering abolition of the collections for the Church. It was decided not yet to abolish them. However, the discussion as such proves already that it is felt that, when it comes to the point, no separate collections for the "Church" should be held. The "voluntary" contributions for the Church are the source from which all expenses are to be paid. I remember a Church in the Netherlands where every Sunday there was a collection for the Church and then the last Sunday of the month there was also an *extra* collection for the Church. In the same place there were different sources of income for the same purpose: people still paid rent for their pews, and there were voluntary contributions. No wonder that I asked, "Brethren, whom are we trying to deceive, the Lord or ourselves? Is not this a situation unworthy of the house of the Lord?" It is good that more and more Churches feel that.

Having received an unexpected discount from the radio station with which they were in contact, the brethren in EDMONTON decided to purchase equipment well in excess of a thousand dollars in order to make the broadcasts as good as they are able to. We are still happy with the possibilities which we receive to make the Gospel known to those in our vicinity. Also in this manner the Church of Christ is to grow.

Over against the growth which we notice here and there, there is sorrow when there are people who break with the Church. Although we do state in Article 28 of the Belgic Confession that "no person of whatsoever state or condition he may be, ought to withdraw from it", yet we have a somewhat "neutral" impression, so to speak, when we read that so-and-so has withdrawn from the Church. Personally, we feel that it would be better to state that so-and-so has broken with the Church of the Lord. Then the sin is pointed out the more sharply. Unless, of course, one is of the opinion that this is not the Church of the Lord. But then there is little sense in talking about it at all.

In the FRASER VALLEY the Broadcasting Committee has a slowly growing file of reactions from listeners. Shortly it will be five years since the work there began. I still recall the preparations: when in the study of Rev. Van Popta we made the first feeble attempts to put together a bearable tape. We were convinced that it was necessary; but as it is with everything you do, so it is with this undertaking: afterwards you sometimes wonder how you dared to appear before the public with something like that! It is the same with a minister of the Gospel: in later years you sometimes shiver when you look at the first sermons, and you think: That's what the sheep had to be content with! And yet the Church was edified, for ultimately it is the Holy Spirit Who speaks through the Word.

Remaining in the Valley for a little while, we offer our congratulations to br. and sr. Wieggers, Sr., who will celebrate their forty-fifth wedding anniversary on the first of March. They lived in Edmonton for many, many years. The first Yearbook of the Churches mentions that, when the Church was instituted there, G.J. Wieggers was elected as deacon. That is almost twenty-three years ago! Now they have their home in New Westminster and work there for the edification of the Church. Many more years we wish you. The same wish goes to br. and sr. Buikema in Burlington who also receive the privilege out of the hand of the Lord that they were spared for each other and for their children for many years: forty years to be exact. How good it is that in this way we can show our interest and prove the communion of saints.

This is approximately all the news that we should mention this time. It is, after all, only that which is more or less outstanding or obvious or of more general interest what we mention in this column.

Maybe it is good to make just a few remarks about one more point. A member of the Fergus/Guelph Church, Miss F. VanSydenborgh, has written a letter to the Churches informing them that she is busy with a study for which she solicits the help of the Church members. For her Master's degree in sociology, she is investigating the influence of the Church upon the various movements of immigrants. Being a member of the Church here, she has chosen the Canadian Reformed Churches and their Church life to write about. If everything goes well, the results of her study may be published later on. That is important. Oftentimes we hear complaints that there is so little information about the Canadian Reformed Churches available. Here we have an opportunity to help that such information does become available.

The first immigrants - in so far as they are still alive - are getting older and they are the ones who are able to give valuable information which would become lost if they did not give it now that they are still among us. Our young people frequently complain that they know so little about the history of the Churches here. Personally I am busy with a study of that history, although for the moment only one particular aspect can have the attention. It is therefore something about

which I am very happy that there are also others who give themselves to this task. And it is for the sake of the younger people especially that I ask you all to cooperate wholeheartedly and speedily by filling out any questionnaire which you may receive. And if you have any documents relating to the institution of any Church or the history within any Church, please send them to me. After perusal they will be passed on to the College, and thus come into the possession of the Churches together. No better place for them could be found!

So long!

vO

THOU ART INDEED JUST, LORD Jeremiah 12

Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend
With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.
Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must
Disappointment all I endeavour end?

Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost
Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust
Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,
Sir, life upon thy cause. See, banks and brakes
Now, leaved how thick! laced they are again
With fretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes
Them; birds build - but not I build; no, but strain,
Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.
Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain.

Gerard Manley Hopkins 1844 - 1889



Fraser Valley Office-Bearers Meet In Cloverdale

"In the twenty years since the institution of the first Canadian Reformed Church in the Valley, this is the third conference of office-bearers. The topic at all three conferences: the family visit. If anything, this indicates how important the family visit is in the discharge of our office."

This in part were the opening remarks made by the chairman Br. Bosscher at the third conference of office-bearers held in the Fraser Valley in January 1973. From the churches of Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Cloverdale and New Westminster, some thirty-five office-bearers assembled in the church of Cloverdale.

Under the moderator Rev. M. Vanderwel, a panel consisting of Br. A.C. Lengkeek, Rev. J. Mulder and Rev. M. Van Beveren discussed a dozen questions which had been formulated by the committee.

The various practical questions - such as: how do we start, with prayer, scripture reading, or not - our secondary to the question: What is the purpose of the family visit?

It is the official task of the elders to seek in the family which they visit, the fruits of the word of God in all aspects of life. It is not purely a "finding-out" mission, but rather must tend to the upbuilding in the faith.

The methods then may vary widely. "What do you think of the weather?" is a spiritual question and can be suitable for openers with some people, while for others it is better to start with prayer and scripture reading. The questions asked, must be invitations to the family to speak of their faith.

Therefore general questions to which yes or no answers can be given, must be avoided (such as Q: Do you love the Lord? A: Yes) This is particularly true for the children. They should be addressed at their own level, and as early as possible during the visit, so that they can be excused if any confidential matter must be discussed.

Attendance by the children of "catechism age" should be encouraged; however, the parents are the authority, they decide.

The visit of the church-members by the office-bearers is not made on behalf of the consistory; they are sent by Jesus Christ, the only Bishop, to which all office-bearers are responsible. However, they may not act in an individualistic manner. The pastoral oversight is with the consistory.

Therefore, reports should be very brief and contain only such details that may require follow-up or discipline by action of the consistory.

Confidences must not be reported. If sins have been committed, and repentance is shown, NO report must be made, but the elders should follow up to assure that there is no relapse.

Reports, if written, must be considered the property of the consistory. It was held advisable that there be strict control over these reports, and that they be destroyed within a few years.

The district system, whereby each elder has a limited number of families to his charge, was considered most desirable, particularly in the larger congregations. The minister, if he participates in the family

visiting, should do so in his capacity as an elder, and this type of visit is distinctly different from his own pastoral contacts in the congregation.

With three conferences in twenty years, should the next one be six years from now? Not according to the committee, which recommended to hold the next conference in the fall of 1973.

Abbotsford, the hub of the Fraser Valley, is to host the conference. For the hostesses then, it will not be easy to outshine their Cloverdale sisters in pampering the men with coffee and cake.

JOHN DE VOS

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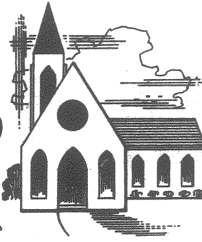
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CHURCH NEWS



FROM THE NETHERLANDS

In the January 13 issue of our Magazine old and new contributors were introduced to the readers. Of the undersigned the introduction read: will scan the Dutch Reformed press and report on the life of our sister churches in the Netherlands. This last duty is taken over from prof. Selles who, in the same issue, wrote "L. S. Exit".

The future will teach whether it will be a difficult job or a dangerous one. It is, at any rate, interesting to report and to comment on information received from the other side of the ocean and to relate this information to the readers of *Clarion*.

Professor Selles terminated his column with a report on the Synod of Hattem. He mentioned the appeals, requests and objections with which Synod dealt during the last sessions. Reaction to these decisions could be expected. It is instructive to read such reactions. Prof. C. Veenhof wrote about the appeal of the "ministers from Groningen" and called the decision of Synod: "Bad News from Hattem". The two-page article deals extensively with the contents of the appeal, which C.V. calls a "conscientie-kreet", but fails to give any argument for the qualification "bad news". After having accused a delegate to Synod of having uttered "exclamations to which I shall not react" the last sentences of his article contain expressions like "it is a sorrowful matter" (het is een trieste zaak), "it is a fatal, formalistic, extreme-judicial way" (een heilloze, formalistische, extreem juridische weg).

Speaking about exclamations to which one should not react!

The road from Hattem to Kampen is not a long one. Apart from the good news about the extension of the facilities of the Theologische Hogeschool there was a news-item which may be of interest for our own College.

On January 27 an "Information meeting" was held for all those interested in the study of theology. Young people with a Highschool diploma and those who will receive one in the future were informed about the structure of theological studies, conditions for admission and grants for students. This is an idea which could be considered by the Board of Governors and Staff of our College.

We now turn to some news items concerning the synodical Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. *Nederlands Dagblad* reports that Rev. W. C. Van den Brink wrote an article in *Waarheid en Eenheid* (Truth and Unity) about the last sessions of the Synod of Lunteren. In this article he mentions that after lengthy discussions a decision was reached at which the song of the confession could not be sung. "The brothers left Lunteren with faces like farmers with a tooth-ache (als boeren die kiespijn hebben)". According to him "the Reformed Churches have been buried in the woods of Lunteren, and the last honours have not been paid".

Our sisterchurches have commemorated the fact that prof. dr. S. Greijdenus retired as professor in the New Testament Disciplines in 1943. It would be interesting to report extensively on articles written on that occasion. Many of the Canadian ministers have heard the lectures of this scholar who, after his retirement, continued to work at the Theological College at the Broederweg in Kampen. However, this would require almost an entire issue of our magazine. I quote one sentence from his Inaugural Address, which was delivered in 1917 and contains a prophetic note: "The struggle about the Bible as the Word of God is not a difference between scholarship and faith, but between faith and faith. The determining question is whether the Gospel is accepted in faith or not."

Another gratifying item is the interest which is shown in the new *Book of Praise* of the Canadian Reformed Churches. Professor H. J. Schilder introduces and recommends it to the readers of *De Reformatie* and congratulates our churches with this Psalter. However, he does more than that. I quote (in free translation) part of his article:

After having read a number of Psalms I established something surprising. Comparing them with the old rhyming of 1773 I noticed that some are much shorter while they have maintained the Scriptural content and are made better 'singable'.

Among the Hymns one finds a fascinating choice of songs from the treasure of the Church of past and present. They are paraphrased portions of Scripture AND Hymns of a different character. Rightly so, not only the one but also the other. In the service of Worship the Church speaks and sings, not only in the literal Word from the Bible but also in the scriptural expression of the faith content of the congregation which praises the Lord and confesses his Name, and answers with Amen to that which He said, proclaimed and promised.

No comment is needed. The last two lines are recommended for careful reading to those who have expressed fear and predicted that the danger exists that the churches will not sing the Word of God anymore when Hymns are included in the *Book of Praise*.

D.V.

Church News

The American Reformed Church at Grand Rapids has called

REV. G. VAN RONGEN
of Launceston, Tasmania, Australia.

OUR COVER

Winter scene with Manitoba Legislative Building and its Golden Boy in background. Courtesy Manitoba Department of Tourism and Recreation.

school X crossing

As explained in the last of the "Pink Pages" of C.R.M. and also in the previous issue, this column is expected to become a regularly appearing feature in our new *Clarion* and will bring our readers news from our Canadian Reformed Schools and Societies and the other organizations connected with our Reformed Education Movement. Hopefully the local School Bulletin Editors will co-operate by sending us their publications. The *Clarion's* Editor, Rev. VanOene, has extended his co-operation by promising to abstain in his News Medleys from everything which is not in his province, an act of self-denial which leaves him still with 344,092 square miles.

This year promises to be a year of joy for at least three Societies which, D.V., will be opening their schools for the first time on September 4th. There is first the School Society of CARMAN which will begin with Grades 1 to 6 and a staff of two. Although we did not obtain this information "officially", our private grapevine informed us that br. Wm. VanSpronsen of Edmonton has been appointed Principal. The search for a teacher for the lower grades continues.

Then there is CHATHAM, where the School Society bought a used, portable schoolbuilding and will have it erected on its own property, adjacent to that where the Chatham congregation is to build a new church. The Chatham Society recently began to publish a Newsletter and from it we may judge that, although relatively small (less than 25 members), this Society does not lack a willingness to sacrifice. Also the Ladies Auxiliary makes a substantial contribution and since October 1971 collected almost \$2200.00 - by means of Family Nights, Bake Sales, Dinners and other fund raising activities. So far, the Society has not yet appointed anyone to the two teaching positions available there.

In HAMILTON expectations are high that, only a few weeks after completion of the new churchbuilding, construction will start on the school. Also this school will be located close to the church, although it may eventually be separated from it by a row of houses. Some time ago br. Ewoud Gosker of Smithers was appointed Principal and sr. Henrietta Schuller of Grimsby, Ont., as second teacher.

It is interesting to discover that for the schoolyear starting September 1973 at least seven teaching positions were added to our schools. Some of these have been filled while others still remain vacant. This is an indication that Reformed Education is "alive and well". At the same time it shows how important it should be for our young people to consider entering the teaching profession. But it also shows how important it is for those who *are* teachers that they improve their qualifications. Since the Fall of '72 four schools have advertised for a Principal, yet one of these positions is still vacant. Could it be that some of our experienced teachers lack the drive to upgrade their qualifications and are without ambition to become Principal of their own school?

A new School Society made its appearance in August 1972 when members of the congregations of LONDON and WATFORD formed the "Can. Ref. School Society of

London and District". As officers to the Board were elected: brs. F. Wildeboer, A.H. Oosterhoff, and J.M. Boersema. At the Constitutional Meeting dues were set at \$10.00 a week and 19 members joined that evening. In the Society's Newsletter "Maranatha" we read that a Friday-night School has been organized with br. U. Krikke as Principal and sr. F. Westrik as second teacher. We sincerely hope that the efforts of the brothers and sisters in London/Watford will soon be crowned with the blessing of a Reformed day school. It is always a source of amazement what God will do when His children, with faith-determination, set out to do His will.

LEAGUE OF C.R.S.S. Eight Ontario Societies are now represented in this organization by delegations from the local Boards. At present a League Committee and one from the C.R.T.A. are drawing up Salary Guidelines for '73-'74. Uniformity will be sought in the matter of Staff membership in the local Society and the payment of tuition fees by teachers.

The Teachers' Course, given at the Theological College on alternating Friday evenings, will complete its third and final year in the Spring of '73. The League decided to investigate the possibilities for continuing and expanding the Course. A Committee has been formed, consisting of two members of the Staff at the Theological College, two members of the C.R.T.A., and two representatives of the League, which will examine this issue.

The C.R.T.A publishes a Magazine which deserves to be read by all who work for Reformed Education. From an article by br. L. Hoogerdijk, entitled "The Truth Shall Make You Free", we quote: "What qualifications ought a teacher to possess? First and foremost, according to Calvin and Bucer, 'One of our religion and having communion with us at the Supper Table of our Lord Jesus Christ.' One may assume that VanTil has the same qualifications for a teacher in mind, when he states that part of the duties of a teacher are as follows: 'The Reformed Faith frankly begins with the presupposition of the absolute truth of the Christian position. It is this that the teacher tells the pupil. As he has learned that the goal of human life can be known only from the authoritative revelation of God, so he knows that the criterion by which man must live, can be found only in this revelation too . . . On the Reformed basis only, the teacher has a criterion for judging what is educative and what is miseducative. Whatever is not in accord with it is miseducative. Difficult as it may be for both the teacher and the pupil to make out in individual circumstances how to apply the criterion, the criterion itself is plain and simple enough.'"

In a next "School Crossing" we hope to be able to report on the activities in other Schools and School Societies, provided that copies of their Bulletins are received at: 84 San Antonio Drive, Hamilton, Ont. With twelve (or more perhaps) School Bulletins passing this "corner", "School Crossing" could become a favourite spot for those who wish to see Reformed people in motion.

J. J. KUNTZ

mission news

NEWS FROM IRIAN BARAT

[Although some of the details that follow were already mentioned in our Jan. 27 "Congregational News Medley", we publish here in its entirety the latest report from the Board of Foreign Mission, Toronto.

-Ed.]

In the early part of September, Rev. Knigge made a visit to Kaisah. This is a trip normally made by boat, but because of the severe three months long drought, the water level in the river was so low as not to permit travel by boat. When therefore Rev. Knigge arrived by plane, he was met by a disappointingly small reception. The village was all but deserted because the people were out hunting crocodiles, whose skins are of considerable value. It was not until the following Tuesday, when almost a week had passed, that a sufficient number of people had returned to make it worthwhile discussing their problems with them. Plenty of excuses were made about the crocodile hunting that could not be passed up. During two weeks of Independence Day celebrations, however, no one of these people had worried about sacrificing the profitable hunting time. Rev. Knigge was sadly forced to conclude that the Word of God had not touched the hearts of these people to the point where they were willing to sacrifice some of their selfish interests to the greater glory of His Holy Name.

After the discussions regular

classes were taught. Rev. Knigge left Kaisah on Friday, having spent more than a week there.

From Kaisah our missionary flew to Boma, with a two hour stop-over at Butiptiri to pick up Mrs. Knigge and the two youngest children. He spent two weeks in Boma, teaching at the Central Bible School. This is a boarding school with 18 students being trained in the Word of God. The planned duration of the course is four years. It is hoped that the students, who are at present content, will be able to endure the disciplined life of a boarding school, which is unfamiliar to the people of Irian Barat.

The latest information from the mission field reveals that Mrs. Knigge will likely precede her husband to the Netherlands. The reason for this is that Mrs. Knigge has ear trouble which necessitates an operation. This operation cannot be performed in Irian Barat, nor must it be delayed till furlough time in June. Although all details are not known as yet, Mrs. Knigge will probably leave for the Netherlands quite soon, taking the youngest two children with her. The rest of the family will then join her when the older children have completed their school year in Sentani in June.

We ask you to remember our missionary family in your prayers, especially in the present circumstances.

SKETCHES FROM BRAZIL

THE LIVING SEEKING THE DEAD

A warm tropical evening. In-between the dark silhouettes of the crowns of the cocopalms the full moon played hide-and-go-seek with the white tufts of clouds floating in the star-spangled sky. The roaring of the surf of the Atlantic Ocean was clearly audible.

A small trail off the main road led

to a simple, whitewashed home, dimly lit by the usual floating-wick oil-lamps. A number of people had already arrived and stood around talking together in hushed voices, while those inside were making the last-minute preparations. The open shutters and doors revealed glimpses of women of a dark complexion in long, colourful apparel.

The silence was broken by the

abrupt beating on drums in a strange and fast rhythm coming from a larger room in the back of the house, and, as we filed in, we entered the place where the living intended to meet the dead. Considering these high pretensions, the setting was relatively simple: a bare room with chairs and benches lined along the wall, one corner table and a set of two drums, while the ceiling was hidden by streamers of yellow paper pennants. All was scantily lit by one oil-lamp.

The audience consisted mainly of women, but there were also a number of men and children, from sucklings to teenagers. Seated there were perhaps no more than thirty, but as the evening wore on the number of onlookers at the doors and windows increased: women leaning against the walls and doorposts, and curious youngsters securing a place in the 'window' sill.

In the centre of attention were the women: in the middle of the room, about ten in number, dressed in long, ceremonial robes. The woman in the red gown, richly adorned with scarves, sashes and necklaces was unmistakably the leader, a corpulent matron with negro features. With an authoritative and stern look she ruled this assembly, while she also started each chant by singing the first lines. To the rhythm of the drums the women would chant the ancient songs, dancing in a circle with various motions, paces, and other symbolism. A major role in this ceremony of colour, movement, and song was played by the drummers, two dark boys no more than 12 or 13 years old, beating the drums with their bare hands with a remarkable skill.

After the more meditative and prayerlike invocation of the forces of 'the other side', the pace and the volume increased as certain spirits were called upon in particular to manifest themselves to them. Communication is by the sole means of singing, but even a visiting Brazilian understands very little, since many African words and phrases are used and the Portuguese used is that employed by the African slaves several centuries ago. The spirits and gods called upon often bear African names, such as Xango and Iemanja.

The calling, dancing, and singing is not in vain: one of the dancers, a girl of no more than 18, begins to stagger and to fall behind in the circle, and halts abruptly as she is seized by a spirit. Resting her hands on her knees she begins to moan, groan, breathe

Mr. and Mrs. G. Wiegers' 45th Wedding Anniversary

The Lord willing, Mr. and Mrs. George Wiegers hope to celebrate their 45th Wedding Anniversary on March 1, 1973.

Geert Jelte Wiegers, born June 30, 1902, in Niekerk, The Netherlands, and Hilly Wiegers, nee Bontkes, born Dec. 11, 1903, in Groningen, were united in marriage March 1, 1928, in Groningen by the Rev. D. VanDijk. Mr. and Mrs. Wiegers then moved to a small town, Zuidhorn, Groningen, where they owned and operated a furniture and carpet store for 20 years. In August 1948 along with their family of 6 children (2 boys and 4 girls) they emigrated to Canada.

They first lived on a farm in Neerlandia, Alberta. December 1949 the family moved to the city of Edmonton. There Mr. Wiegers after working for a few floor-covering companies started his own business of selling and installing wall-to-wall carpets, and proved successful. He retired in September 1969.

Mr. Wiegers was also one of the original pioneers in instituting the Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton, which then covered the Edmonton, Neerlandia, Barrhead, Blackfalls and Rocky Mountain House area with a total of approximately 50 members including children. Mr. Wiegers served as an elder for many years.

After their children were married, Mr. and Mrs. Wiegers moved to the Vancouver area in October 1969. There they are now enjoying a healthy and happy retirement along with 3 of their children and their families who live in the same area. Mr. Wiegers is an elder in the Church at New Westminster.

They can boast of a large family of a total of 6 children, 25 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild, all healthy and giving them a lot of visiting to do as their children are spread over a wide area: Vancouver, Edmonton, Neerlandia, and Zwolle, The Netherlands. Their present address is 9146 - 116 St., Delta.

May the Lord bless them with many more years of health and happiness together.



heavily, perspire intensely as if in great agony. The drums stop silent, and while the medium sways back and forth as if losing her balance, a helping hand quickly loosens her hair and removes necklaces and scarves. Another chant is sung, but when the spirit has a firm hold of her, all again stop and watch the activity of the dead. The possessed begins to dance backward, with heavy thuds of her bare feet on the floor, shrieking nearly inhuman sounds, while she is being flung around by the unseen force in speedy circles. With rolling eyes she seeks the leader, greets her in a ceremonial manner, and after various rituals the spirit seems to leave her again. Uneasy and slow at first, she again joins the circle of singing dancers.

Shortly after a middle-aged woman stops, gazing with lifeless eyes to the ceiling, after which she begins to shake and shiver. Suddenly she is struck to the ground, rises up again only to be struck for the second time, while the onlookers are quiet, but seem to be rather unconcerned. This medium is dealt with much more violently by the invisible spirit: amid

motions of desperation she is flung back and forth. Through her the spirit makes clear to the leader that she needs a new robe. After this is quickly fetched, the spirit demands that the woman be punished. She is given a wooden ladle and she herself beats the soles of her feet and her hands until the blood shows on her knuckles. Still it is not sufficient. She must be fed black pepper by the spoonfuls. In wild ecstasy she continues her wild staggering dances, until exhausted she drops to the ground.

Unrelieved, the boys continue beating their drums, and their faces show their addiction to this ritual, however young they may be. More and more of the participants greet and honour their leader, bowing before her, touching the ground with their one hand and their forehead with the other, and making the motions of a Brazilian embrace without touching her. Unmoved by this adoration she stands there in the glory of her authority as mediator between the living and the dead.

The ceremony will continue until the early hours of the morning, at least two evenings per week in thousands

and thousands of meeting-places throughout Brazil. Hundreds of thousands will go to seek this communication with the spirits of the dead, or to be cured of their diseases, or for a solution to any kind of problem, marital, economical, or political. For many women, who occupy an insignificant place in this society, this is the opportunity to be a 'queen' at least for a few minutes, the centre of attention, when a spirit has chosen her as medium to communicate with the dwellers upon the earth.

Spiritism has many ranks and shades, some proclaiming to seek only the good spirits, while others openly proclaim to seek the evil spirits to worship and honour them. But all have this in common that they are manifestations of the powers of darkness, strongly opposed to the power of the Holy Spirit who was given to glorify Jesus Christ and to take what was His to declare it unto us.

May also of these people here later on be said: "The people who lived in darkness saw a great light; light dawned on the dwellers in the land of death's dark shadow."

C. VAN SPRONSEN

THE SECTS

The Armstrong Cult (3)

3. C. Why do we reject British-Israelism?

The main reason why we reject this theory is that it is not proved at all by God's Word. Only when we misinterpret a number of passages can we distil this theory out of it. For whenever we interpret a passage of Scripture we always have to look for the great line in the Bible, namely, Creation, Fall, Redemption in Christ, the Second Coming of Christ with the following New Heaven and New Earth. Everything in God's Word has to be related to those main events. The Covenant made by God was in the Old Testament founded in the nation of Israel, because Israel had to bring forth the Messiah. But after Christ's first Coming there is neither Jew nor Greek in Christ. Every nation or race or language or people or tongue is now the same in the sight of God, be it the Dutch or the Anglo-Saxon, the Australian Aboriginal or the Jew.

But what about those "proofs" which they adduce for their belief that the Anglo-Saxons are Israelites? Prof. Martin J. Wyngaarden writes, "The Hebrew philology of the British-Israel view is especially weak. For instance, the word British is interpreted as berith ish, - berith covenant, and ish man; - and then the British are interpreted as "men of the covenant". Now, even at best, the term British could never mean "men of the covenant", but covenant of a man; - if berith and ish were the component parts of the word, in a Hebrew sense. But such is not the case as can be seen from the words Great Britain and the Britons. The ish, at the end of the word, British, is in the same category as the same particle, ish, in boyish and girlish, bluish and pinkish. Certainly in all such cases, the particle, ish, does not come from the Hebrew word ish, for man. Such a philological theory is simply ridiculous and preposterous.

"No less so is the interpretation given of Saxons in the term Anglo-Saxon. The Saxons are then regarded, with a mere witticism, as Isaac's sons, namely sons of Isaac, - the son of Abraham.

"But Isaac comes from yits-chaq, he laugheth, and certainly the letters in Saxons are not at all identical with the Hebrew root letter in the word 'he has laughed', tsa-chaq. The one thing that can be said of the derivation of the word Saxon from the Hebrew root tsa-chaq, laugh, in Isaac, is that it is certainly laughable, and unfounded".

"There is no scholar of any repute who would rate the Anglo-Saxon languages and dialects as belonging to the Semitic group, and who would for any such reason regard the British as essentially the ancient people of Israel. That is simply preposterous and all the evidence is against it."

When we study the Bible we will find that not all of Israel was carried away by the Assyrians. Just as the Babylonians left many of the poor people in the land, so did the Assyrians. The stories of 11 Chron. 30:31 are not dated, but it seems to have happened after the fall of Samaria, because otherwise it is unexplainable. Hezekiah had no authority in the kingdom of Israel before the fall of Samaria, and Assyria had already taken captives, 30:6-9. We therefore reach the conclusion that many of the ten tribes were left in the land (30:1, 5, 6, 10, 11, 18, 25, 31:1). 11 Chron. 34:9; 35:3, 17, 18 confirm that there were still Israelites in the land, contrary to Armstrong's statement that "none of the Ten tribes had been left in Palestine after the Assyrian captivity".

After the Babylonian captivity people of all tribes returned, although mainly from Judah. The Babylonians and later on the Medo-Persians ruled over the former Assyrian empire, to which Israel had been taken. Some texts which show that Israel and Judah were regarded as one after the Babylonian captivity are: Ezra 7:13, 28; 8:25, 29, 35; 10:1, 2, 5, 10; Neh. 7:73; 9:32; 12:47; Ac. 26:6, 7 (cf. Zech. 8:13); Lu. 2:36; Ro. 11:1; Ja. 1:1.

The belief that with "the gate of their enemies" is meant the sea gateways of the world, seems pretty ridiculous, because nowhere in the Bible has it this meaning; therefore we must accept that the brothers of

Rebecca did not know what they were talking about (if Armstrong is right) or we have to reject this view. Furthermore we can ask the question, "Those sea gateways, to which enemies did they belong?"

The claim that the British Royal House is the House of David is clearly refuted by Ac. 2:29-34, where Peter shows that Christ sits already on the throne of David. The "stone of destiny" has been examined and found to be "calcareous, a sandstone of a reddish or purplish color, with heterogeneous pebbles and of Scottish origin". Martin writes that this fact "does not deaden the enthusiasm of Anglo-Israelites, who must make Jacob a native of Scotland, and Bethel, a suburb of London, if they are to maintain the fiction that the Stone of Scone is of Asiatic origin".

Much more can be said to refute British-Israelism, but it would take too much space to give an extensive rebuttal.

A. H. DEKKER



The Law and The Christian

(continued from Page 3)

organizations by which to reform this nation into a Christian state or at least give a Christian colouring to it. It is true that with God all things are possible, but we must not tempt God either. And He has told us in His Word how to recognize the spirits of the age. The time of His coming is at hand. Do you see in these times when it is every man for himself, when there is a great falling away from God, that the prophesies of 2 Thess. 2 and of Rev. 17 are being fulfilled? Reread the late Prof. B. Holwerda's "The Church in the Last Judgement," and look around you. The spirit of lawlessness is upon us and the Antichrist is coming.

But know also then that Christ is gathering His Church in these times. He is using you and me; He is using governments in spite of themselves, to reach that goal. Watch therefore and pray and work at whatever your hand finds to do in His Service, for blessed are they whom the Lord shall find so doing in that day.

A. H. OOSTERHOFF

Country Walks

A few years ago, when coming out of church at Fergus/Guelph one spring morning, a brother mentioned to me that some time during the preceding week he had seen his first "lijster" of the year.

This sounded quite hilarious to me at the time, and I remarked to him that he had a good eye for similarities, as indeed our robin, though remarkably different from its European counterpart in colouring, is the same size, has the same habits, and does belong to the same family of birds: the large thrush family.

Knowing this brother well and knowing that he knew the robin by name I suspected that the real reason for calling the robin by its Dutch name was a bit of nostalgia or sentiment as it reminded him of the popular bird "back home".

This tendency is present in a lot of our older people who left for Canada some twenty years ago and who just love to talk about how things used to be in the old country.

This feeling, apparent in all newcomers to Canada, has lessened somewhat with the arrival of the jet-age, in which distances have shortened so considerably that a journey of eight or nine days twenty years ago takes half a day at present.

But the settlers who arrived in Canada 150 or 200 years ago, for whatever reason they left their homeland, had to face the fact that the chances of ever seeing their native country again were practically nil. Realizing that they were doomed to spend the rest of their earthly days in the wilderness of Canada, we can understand that the letters written to their relatives were at times full of despair about the harsh conditions they had to cope with.

This, combined with home-sickness, was the reason that the early settlers were unfavourably impressed by the wealth of wildlife their new homeland offered, and it is interesting to see what their opinion was in those days. One observer of nature unjustly remarked that in Upper Canada (as Ontario was then called) "the flowers have no scent, the birds no song, the women no virtue". Another wrote: "No music in the sky, no chorus in the grove . . . no comparison with the feathered songsters of England. No lark, no linnet, no blackbird, no thrush, no nightingale, no robin by that name, chirp, chirp, chirp, and only a little bit of that."

There were exceptions, however. Credit must be given to Mrs. Simcoe, wife of Upper Canada's first Lieutenant-Governor, who admired the birds of the province. She spoke of a beautiful black and yellow bird (the American Goldfinch), seen in the neighbourhood of the new capital of York (Toronto), of geese and blackbirds which came on March 13th as heralds of approaching spring, and of wild pigeons (the now extinct passenger pigeon) which arrived some time later, increasing in number through the first fortnight of April. The ducks she found excellent eating, particularly the black duck, one of the best of its kind, and exceptionally good in those parts where it fed on wild rice. In July she discovered several mosquito hawks' (night hawks) nests lying on pieces of bark on the ground, and her query as to whether this bird



*The American Goldfinch, sometimes called the "wild canary".
National Museums of Canada*

was to be identified with the whippoorwill suggests that she had a good eye for similarities.

There were others who protested against the statements made by homesick settlers in those days. One of them was the well-known naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton, who used to roam about his aunt's property in Erindale (Ontario). He called these statements "sheer libel, the result of ignorance and prejudice".

It was people of this kind who started to collect an imposing list of songbirds, all of them to be found in the Canadian wilderness: the thrush, the catbird, the robin, and the meadowlark; the sweetest of little songsters, the woodwren; the bluebird in the orchards during early summer, the "wild canary", the baltimore oriole, and the bobolink in the cloverfield; the blackbird and the whippoorwill and many, many more species of birds which all together make this land of ours just as appealing to bird-watchers as countries on the other side of the Atlantic.

COR TENHAGE

"EBEN-EZER" CANADIAN REFORMED SCHOOL SMITHERS, B. C.

The Board of the Canadian Reformed School in Smithers invites applications for the year 1973 starting September 1st, for a

Female Teacher (grades 1 - 2)

This is a 4 man school.
Principal: Mr. E. Gosker, Kidd Road, R.R. 2, Smithers,

Send applications to:
c/o Mrs. R. Paize
Canadian Reformed Education Committee
Box 744 Smithers, B.C.

The Importance Of The Preaching Of The Word In The Worship Service

The following article is an introduction held by the Rev. M.C. Werkman at the Annual Meeting of the League of Men's Societies in Ontario, on Saturday, November 11, 1972.

You will notice that the topic for today is NOT: the importance of the preaching of the Word on the foreign mission fields or in home mission, etc., but: the importance of the preaching of the Word in the *worship service*. That takes us immediately to L.D. 38: what does God require in the fourth commandment? First, that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be maintained; and that I, especially on the Sabbath, that is the day of rest, diligently attend the church of God, to learn God's WORD, to use the sacraments, to call publicly upon the Lord, and to give christian alms.

There you have the elements of the worship services! So we are concerned today with the importance of the preaching of the Word in the worship service of God's people, of that assembly where the Lord Himself meets with His people; in that assembly on Sundays where the people come together in the Name of the Lord (votum) and where they are greeted by the Lord Himself with His blessing of grace and peace; in that assembly where the Lord speaks His Law to His people; where His people praise Him in their songs and call upon His Name in prayer; where the beginning is in the Name of the Lord and the end in the benediction of the Lord.

That is the assembly of God's people where the Lord God Himself is in their midst.

Well then, if the Lord is in the midst of His people in the worship service, we realize that this has serious implications for the preaching of the Word during these services where God is present. For we are speaking about the preaching of the Word of God! Therefore we are now not dealing with the importance of the preaching in churches where the Word of God is not truly and purely

preached anymore but has been replaced by a different gospel. For the topic is *not*: the importance of the preaching of a human, a social gospel for example.

What place does the preaching occupy in our worship services? Is the preaching *more* important than the other essential parts of the service? Or is it perhaps *less* important than other parts? Is the preaching the *centre* of the worship service? Is it the *summit*?

It is the CONTENTS of the preaching that determines the specific place of preaching in the service. And the contents of the preaching depends in turn on the CONTENTS of the WORD of God!

Therefore the *importance* of the preaching in the worship service does not depend on how long or how short the sermon is; or on the question: what do I personally and individually get out of the sermon? Or: does the preaching satisfy the individual needs of the people? It does *not* depend on how good a speaker the preacher is, but on *what* he preaches. It all depends on the CONTENTS of the WORD he preaches! And so the question is: what is the *Word* and what is the *preaching* of that Word. Once we see that we will also see the *importance* of the preaching in the worship services.

What is the Word that is preached? We confessed in L.D. 38 already that it is the Word of GOD! In L.D. 31 one of the keys of the Kingdom of heaven is called the holy *gospel*. In L.D. 6 we confess that God Himself first revealed the holy gospel in Paradise; afterwards published it by the holy patriarchs and prophets, and foreshadowed it by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law; and lastly fulfilled it by His only begotten Son. And in L.D. 7 we confess that the Holy Spirit works *faith* in our hearts by the gospel.

The preaching of the Word is the preaching of the gospel of God. It is the preaching of the Holy Scriptures of the Old as well as of the New Testament. For Christ has

sent his apostles into the World to preach the gospel to all nations. And the apostles in turn charged their followers to "preach the Word" (Paul to Timothy).

We have the Word of God lying before us in all the writings of the Old and New Testament. We confess of this Word of God that it was not sent nor delivered by the will of man, but that men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit (B.C. art. 3).

The Lord wants this gospel, this Word of His, *preached*! That is clear from Isaiah 52:7: how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion: thy God reigneth!

The apostle Paul quotes these words in Romans 10:15. Why is it stressed that the *feet* of the bringer of good tidings are beautiful? Because not the *person* of the preacher is important but his message, his preaching, his proclamation! The feet: the *coming* of the messenger with the good tidings! And so Paul also stresses the importance of the *preaching*: how shall they hear WITHOUT A PREACHER? So then faith cometh by *hearing*, and hearing by the Word of God.

The preacher is important as a preacher! Because of his message! And the purpose of his preaching is FAITH! So that the hearers may *believe* that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and believing may have life in His Name (John 20:31). As Peter says (1 Peter 1:23, 25): ye are born again . . . by the Word of God . . . and this is the Word by which the gospel was preached unto you!

Therefore preaching in the worship services is never the activity of the minister only! Paul says: how shall they HEAR without a preacher? Preaching implies HEARING. The congregation must *hear* in order that by hearing the Word of God they may be born again, have faith and grow in faith! The Lord Jesus says in Luke 10:16: he that heareth you,

heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me. When the preacher preaches the Word of God it is indeed the WORD OF GOD! That has serious implications for the preacher in the first place. For he has only one duty: to preach nothing but that Word of God. That is also the reason why such heavy demands are made of the ministers. They are required to study the original languages of the Bible, have a good education and a thorough theological training. That is

all necessary and very important because he must preach the Word of God! However, that is not all! All that education and knowledge is not sufficient. He must also promise that he will at all times in all parts of his work do nothing else but preach the Word of God. Therefore we request the ministers to sign the Subscription Form. That is for the protection of the hearers in the worship services! For they must come to faith and grow in faith not by a preacher's ideas and thoughts, but by the gospel of God.

On the other hand this also has serious implications for the congregation that hears the preacher. When he brings indeed the Word of God (in his own words) then the hearers must accept it not as a word of man but what it indeed is, as the Word of God. Paul says in 1 Thess. 2:13: . . . when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the *Word of God* . . .

(to be continued)

M. C. WERKMAN

POLITICAL COMMENT

The Use and Abuse of Media

If you are reading these words you are probably still of the opinion that the print culture is not dead, that words can still have meaning. According to the leading exponents of the new communications theories, the linear concept of the printed word has been replaced by the electronic images received through television. I have been reading a book entitled *Telepolitics* for review purposes recently and was struck by the observations made there concerning the impact of the electronic media upon man's concept of himself and of the world around him.

No doubt many of you have heard or read about the phrase of Marshall McLuhan in which he stated that the "medium is the message". In other words, it is not the content of the medium which is important, but it is the medium itself as an extension of man, of his nervous system. Through the wizardry of electronic communications, man is put in touch with the past and the future, the two melding together in a fleeting present. He cannot escape the immediacy of the televised experience; he fights all the wars and is a participant in all the protest movements.

The all-encompassing nature of this medium tends to "tribalize" man, to throw him back upon his own particular group with which he can identify. Unable to cope with the multiplicity of stimuli, he withdraws into his own clan, group, family or what have you. This is how the theorists write.

The effects of the use of television as part of the political struggle has been widely discussed but little understood. Again, according to the experts television has been used by politicians and their agents in order to mold certain images of the candidate calculated to appeal most to the voters. Television does not lend itself to a rational discussion of issues or reveal fundamental life and world views. It is rather a melange of impressions received. People react viscerally to the image portrayed before them. How does the man look? Do his voice and mannerisms exude confidence? These are the questions which are stimulated through the television tube.

If one is to believe such books as *The Selling of the President 1968* by Joe McGinniss in which he describes the deliberate shaping of an image in order to sell a particular man, then I think the prospects of a free and informed discussion of issues is hopeless. The "reel" world then becomes the real world.

Though some of these views may be slightly exaggerated, I think there is enough truth in them to make us wary. It is also something to keep in mind when making a decision as to whether or not we can "handle" a television set. From some of the experiences which I have had, I don't doubt that even many Reformed people get their political views from this side of the television screen.

You may counter that I am biased because of my association with the

printed media. Nevertheless, that is a bias well worth maintaining. As someone who holds the Bible to be the infallible Word of God, I can only say that *there* the printed culture is not dead. When we start forgetting about the content and instead concentrate on the peripherals we are in danger of losing the Word which comes to us in printed form.

This is not meant to be a diatribe against the dangers of electronic media but simply a plea to Reformed people to remember that our hope lies not in raising our consciousness through electronic participation but in **READING, STUDYING, AND LIVING THE WRITTEN WORD.**

HAROLD J. LUDWIG



Hymn 2

What tongue can tell thy greatness,
Lord,
That art in all the world adored,
The world by thee created?
Through all this temple praise
abounds;
Unceasing praise to thee resounds,
By every voice repeated.

PARAPHRASE

Who can utter the mighty doings of the LORD? Ps. 106:2. For thou, O LORD, art most high over all the earth, Ps. 97:9; Thou hast established the earth, Ps. 119:90. In his temple all cry "Glory!", Ps. 29:9, and day and night they never cease to sing, Rev. 4:8, 9, 10.

let's read

THE EARMUFFS (2)

Why had they called him "The Mole"? Because of his voice? Because of his clawlike hands that nervously moved along the edge of his desk? Two weeks ago he had come into their classroom, a small, skinny boy with a sickly complexion; the lock of lank, whitish hair that almost touched the brow could not hide his high forehead. There was something about him which distinguished him from all the other boys in class, something feminine, something very old and fragile, something . . .

Peter cups his hands around his mouth again. They are almost numb by now, but he does not slip them into his pockets where the earmuffs are, Allen's earmuffs, the stolen ones . . . He is almost at the top of the hill now; a few steps and the wind will beat in his face, will bring tears to his eyes . . . Only November, only five o'clock in the afternoon, and already it is so bitterly cold. Allen walks this path daily, every morning, each afternoon. No wonder he needs those . . . those things to keep himself warm. Peter touches his ears; he has to pinch really hard before he feels it. Then he is there . . .

In front of him are the mountains; very close by they look, very high, as if only the tall firs at the foot keep them from falling over. Among the firs - as in the dreamworld of Christmas cards - stands the little house, not bigger than a good-sized cabin, hedged in by a dilapidated fence of rude boles. Warm light floods from the one window to the right. It looks beautiful, this little house, this little . . . home. Peter stares at the house, stares at the window. He does not move, he cannot move; his legs feel so heavy, so tired. And the window . . . are there people by the window? are there children's faces and a woman menacing him with an angry fist? Paralysed he stands there, gazing at that casement-window, puzzled by that hand which is not a fist at all: it beckons and invites, it urges him to come inside, him, Peter, the mean thief . . . He feels his eyes fill with tears. It is as if another window shoves in front of it, bulging and melting and blurring . . . Then he turns and runs back, out of sight of that little house, down the trail again, down the slope, away from that window with the people behind it, away from that woman that beckons and waves, so cordially, so affectionately . . . Peter flees!

And then it happens . . . Maybe it is because he

runs too fast and recklessly, maybe the slope is steeper than he anticipated, maybe treacherous patches of ice have formed under the trodden snow, but all of a sudden Peter is losing his balance; his arms frantically wheel around to keep him from falling, but then his one foot hits something hard, a flash of pain flares up through his body, he reels to one side and plunges headlong in the snow that bites in his face and neck, and creeps in by his sleeve. A moment only he lies still; then he makes a futile attempt to scramble to his feet. Ouch! His leg . . . ! A groan escapes his clenched teeth as he falls back again, and tears . . .

"I don't want to cry," Peter thinks desperately, "I don't want to!" His hands grope for hard ground, for support, and he again tries to push himself up, but his leg hurts so badly, he has to give up. Panting heavily he droops his face on his arm and sinks deeper away in the cruel snow. He cries . . . His whole body shakes with convulsive sobs, and even that hurts . . . Little bundle of despair in the wide, wide, silent world of snow . . .

Oh, if only that lady had made a fist at him! If she only had thrown open the door and had started to bawl him out! He would have taken that; he had deserved that, but she did not . . . she beckoned to him instead and, though he could not distinguish her features, he was sure she smiled at him, the thief . . . Memories that plagued him all along the way, tumble through Peter's mind: the low whisperings behind Allen's back; the pencil which they had hidden; the math book that they had dropped in the snow behind the school; and then the earmuffs! Peter and his chums had felt themselves so big and important, and him, Allen, so weak. The boy had never even threatened them, never had shown his fists. He had only looked at them with big wounded eyes; silent eyes they had been, mild and full of pain . . . Now Peter hates himself because of all that; he despises himself and feels miserable, sick with disgust. It was good after all, surely, it was a good thing that Dad had found out, that he had sent him here . . .

Peter digs his hands in the snow again, and carefully, slowly tries to push himself backwards, onto the trail, out of the snowbank. Ouch! . . . He bites his lip with pain, pushes his face in his sleeve again and sets his teeth in the material. "Oh LORD . . . !" It is a strange prayer Peter makes. His eyes are not closed for reverence, he does not even try to fold his hands or bend his knees, but notwithstanding it is a real prayer: "Oh LORD, I feel so miserable, I did it all wrong. Please, forgive me! Please, give me a chance to make it all right again! For Jesus' sake, Amen."

EWUOD GOSKER

(to be continued in next issue)

our little magazine

Dear Busy Beavers,

I read in your letters how you are enjoying the snow - making snowmen, building snowforts, going tobogganing. It reminds me of the song children sing in winter. Maybe you know it. Here it is:

Over the beautiful, beautiful snow,
All in row, Swiftly we go;
Down the hill dashing and shouting with glee,
Happy, oh, happy are we.
Merrily, merrily, sing heigh-o, sing heigh-o,
sing heigh-o;
Over the snow, away we go, away, away,
we go!

It's such a lively song it always makes me happy to hear it sung!

But you know, Busy Beavers, while we are happily enjoying the snow, there are other boys and girls who are not able to go out to play and enjoy the snow and ice. Maybe you know someone who has been sick for a long time and hasn't been able to get out.

Don't you think it would really brighten their day if these girls and boys received a card now, and then from us Busy Beavers? Let's see what we can do for them!

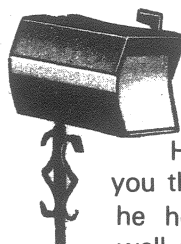
If you have a brother or sister or friend or cousin who has been, or will be sick for a long time, and who will enjoy getting some mail, please send me his (her) name and address. Then I will let everyone know and all the Busy Beavers can join in sending some day-brighteners! (Remember my address is now: Box 54, Fergus, Ont. N1M 2W7).

Time for birthday wishes again! All the Busy Beavers and Aunt Betty wish you lots of happiness for your birthday and all the year through, too! May the Lord bless and guide you.

Joanne De Groot	March 2
Stephanie Louwerse	March 2
Janet Veenendaal	March 2
Nancy Koster	March 8
Jo-Anne Vander Ploeg	March 9
Angela Wiersema	March 9
Frieda Boersema	March 13
Jane Kobes	March 14
Margaret Tenhage	March 17
Arlene Schulenberg	March 18
Margaret Van Wyk	March 18
Clarence Bouwman	March 20
Lorraine Linde	March 20

Pat Kamstra
Lizzie De Boer
George Schuurman
Cor Bultena
John Vander Woerd

March 20
March 25
March 25
March 27
March 27



From The Mailbox

Hello, *Marion Van Dyke*. I'm happy for you that your father is home again. Did he help you do the quiz? You did very well on it! Write again soon, Marion.

Congratulations, *Anne Bergsma*, with your new baby brother! Are you allowed to give him his bottle sometimes? How are your music lessons coming? And do you know who your other teacher will be? Thanks for your big letter, Anne.

Thank you, *Ann Holtvluwer*, for your letter, too. Nice to hear from you again. Were you out of school for very long over that broken furnace?

Hello, *Grace Jongs*. What exciting news about your cousins coming over from Holland this summer! Are you busy making plans for them?

Thank you, *Jane Kobes*, for your nice letter - and your Valentine! How is your bedroom coming along? Will you have a hand in redecorating it? Best wishes for your Talent Night, Jane. I think your group will do just fine!

* * * * *

How did you enjoy last time's quizzes? Let's see how you did.

Quiz I: Answers: 1-Horeb, 2-Gaza, 3-Philippi, 4-Sodom, 5-Kidron, 6-Arnon, 7-Gibeah, 8-Nebo, 9-Jabbok, 10-Moriah.

Quiz II: Answers: 1-Mt. Sinai, 2-Jericho, 3-Tarsus, 4-Eden, 5-Bethlehem, 6-Jordan River, 7-Jerusalem, 8-Lystra, 9-Damascus, 10-Antioch, 11-Mt. Carmel, 12-Isle of Patmos, 13-Damascus Road.

Sorry Busy Beavers, but I forgot to give the answers to the January 13 quiz on "Be-Attitudes". Were you on pins and needles waiting for the answers? Anyway, here they are! Plus the answers to the last time's riddles!

"Be-Attitudes"

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 1. holy, blame | 5. unequally yoked |
| 2. humility | 6. evil speaking |
| 3. wise | 7. thanksgiving |
| 4. mind | 8. perfect, comfort |

Riddles 1. a clock 2. a comb

So long for now, Busy Beavers. Will you let me know then, about anyone you know who is shut in? And have you thought about a BOOK LOOK for our BOOK NOOK?

Aunt Betty