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THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

1. THE POSITION OF THE FAMILY IN MODERN SOCIETY

To a certain extent everyone is an expert on the Family. After all, we have all been raised in families, and have inherited certain ideas about the right ways and the wrong ways of running a family. This also applies to people who may have had an unfavourable family experience - they at least have certain firm ideas of how *not* to run a family. A situation in which we allow our own backgrounds, our own life experiences, to totally influence our present outlook would lead to a confused and highly personalized discussion. For this reason, it is important to find a common ground for dialogue - a solid reference point. For Bible believers this anchor point has always been provided by the Word of God.

An increasing number of sociologists and psychologists are recognizing that in this highly complex society the Family has been reduced to certain primary or root functions. That is to say, the family has become increasingly specialized, concentrating on a few special functions that really count. These functions are, (1) the socialization of the young child to certain standards and life attitudes; and (2) the provision of a focal point for resolving and releasing tensions. The family has become an island of safety in a confusing technological world, i.e., a place where a person can be himself.

The Family has not only been regarded as an important entity socially but also politically. We find that today the government is taking a closer look at supporting families, not only in the way of providing financial assistance, but also providing free psychiatric and counselling services.

Changes in Child Welfare legislation have also brought the situation to a point where the institution of the Family is laid bare to greater scrutiny. I will not go into the rights and wrongs of such a development. The whole area of government intervention has always been a very personal issue with our people. Again, I am not making the reference to add to the debate, but simply and primarily to

accentuate that the government, for selfish reasons or otherwise, is well aware of the importance of a sound Family unit.

While the Family unit has generally been recognized as quite important, it has also come under severe criticism for not having done a proficient job. The high divorce rate (1 in 4) has led some people to believe that there is something wrong with the institution of marriage. Rising crime and delinquency rates are being attributed to a deterioration of Family life. While various resources have been brought to rescue or salvage broken homes, some people are starting to wonder whether the Family is even worth saving. Are we not beating a dead horse? One of the questions now is whether man in his great wisdom is able to devise alternate structures to replace the traditional family as we now know it.

Some time ago TIME Magazine provided a feature article on the Family and outlined some of the alternate styles of life that some segments of the population were experimenting with. One set-up which has captured the imagination of youth and has an almost religious appeal to members of the Hippie movement is the Family Commune. This is a situation where the children are made common property and in certain cases sexual partners are interchangeable and shared by all.

We find that the experiment in Family communal living is blowing up in people's faces. It is proving true that, while these people have tried to flee from the so-called restrictions of family life to seek a new freedom, they have been forced to yield to even greater restrictions; namely, the bondage of a sinful life and the anarchy which results from a life of licentiousness.

Another development which is probably much closer to home is that of the great increase of working mothers. (I do not want to go on record as saying that this phenomenon is automatically a cause of family breakdown. The matter is too com-

plex to make such a direct statement.) With mother out of the home supplementing the family income, the children are left to a string of babysitters, or they are farmed out to daycare centres and professional child care agencies. If this happens on a regular basis the obvious effect will be that one of the primary functions of the family, that of socialization (inculcating values and life style) is left to other people. The risk is that young children will adopt values from people who do not support or even stand opposed to the values of their parents. The problem of working mothers has no ready solution.

Again, to say simply that mothers should never work out of the home does not account for the dire necessity of extra income for some families (maybe to be in a position to pay more for Christian education). When you think about it, it must strike you that we never talk about the problem of *working fathers*. We can be judgemental, even hypocritical, about mothers working but nothing is said if Dad decides to moonlight, to take on a second job which takes him away from his family and restricts him in performing an effective role in the family.

All around us we see a general shift in attitudes towards the whole issue of authority. Man is becoming a law unto himself. Responsibility to others is played down as man is ultimately responsible only to himself. This kind of philosophy, this set of attitudes, would appear to have a certain impact on the matter of responsibility and the respect for authority within the family. The question might be one of "Which came first? The chicken or the egg?" That is to say, has the general change of attitudes in society had an impact in changing the structure of the family, or is it the other way around? Have the disturbances on the campuses of North America been planted by faulty relations between parents and children?

It is true that many North American parents in the late 40's and

the early 50's responded to a new revolution in the care of the child. The child was to flourish naturally and uninhibited by the restraints of society. Parents became deathly afraid of interfering with the delicate egos of their offspring; plain old rebellion came to be interpreted as the child's attempt to "find himself" and to develop his own creativity. This trend in child care would appear to be a reaction to the overly rigid methods of previous decades. It is important to realize that in both cases (the rigid and suppressive attitude as well as the overly permissive attitude) parents failed to understand and were even openly disobedient to the norms laid down in Scripture.

2. SUPPORT FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

We can safely say that various aspects of family life have changed and that we can expect further change in the future. Just a few examples: the Family is no longer the economic unit it used to be, with sons and daughters working for the home and contributing their talents to the material welfare of the family; the Family is much more self-sufficient and no longer needs to be dependent on intricate lines of kinship whereby children maintained close dependent ties with the parents even when they had established their own families.

While the outward manifestations of family life change and are probably culturally conditioned, there are certain principles that transcend every day and age. This means that the Bible, while it does not demand us to return to the life style which existed in the time of Moses, or even the Apostles, does require our obedience to certain basic principles. I call these *structural principles*. In the time of the Old Testament there was little differentiation between the separate spheres of government, church, business and school. The tribe included everything. It was in this context that Moses wrote: "Honour thy father and thy mother that it may go well in the land that the Lord thy God gives

thee". Society became more complex and varied in the time of the Apostles but while this brought about some surface re-alignments the basic principle of obedience and respect was maintained . . . "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right". And, parents, "provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord".

In order to place the institution of the Family in proper context, it is necessary to differentiate it from other structures of society and emphasize its uniqueness.

The first comment here is that, because of its uniqueness, the Family cannot be reduced to any of the other societal structures or spheres. That is to say, the Family is not a miniature state or government; the members are not bound to be ruled by democratic vote, and the children do not have equal rights with the parents. And the Family is not a miniature Church.

A second comment on the uniqueness of the Family is that it should be considered as having more than a biological function. The Family should not be totally concerned with supplying bodies to fill the Church pews. The Family is designed by God's providence to be an *intimate social community* based on love. This means that it supplies an all-important nurturing function to its members so that they will be prepared for a calling in society. While the Family must launch its members into constructive roles outside, it remains as an island of safety from a hard world. The Family becomes a place where a person can be himself and also find himself.

The Family has an important responsibility to members who are experiencing the pains and stresses of the teenage years. Here a conflict often occurs in terms of launching the person into a responsible role and at the same time providing that island of safety and security. During this time it is probably even more important to exercise the virtues of patience and sensitivity but, and this is important,

never to lose sight of the structural principles God has laid down. The changing face of the Family in the twentieth century, due to changes in technology, has extended the age at which young people leave school. This places them in a position of continuing to rely on Mom and Dad when, to all intents and purposes, they have reached adulthood.

It is hoped that concerns about the Family will go beyond intellectual discussions, and that there will be an increased interest in strengthening the Family in a concrete and direct way. Without going into the need for Christian counselling for families which have fallen apart, I should like to stress that there is a demand for more activities involving families as units. We need to examine whether something is not being lost in our age-graded system whereby, for example, Young People's activities are segregated from the concerns of Men's and Women's societies. Why not provide study groups for fathers and sons, or experiences which would bring several families together to share in the blessings of the Lord?

Another thrust would be to plan Family Retreats where the programme or curriculum is designed to enrich family life. This requires financial sacrifice and many people will argue that this cannot be absorbed by those who already pay heavily toward Church and School. We should, however, be open to examining our priorities and consider whether we really do mean it when we talk about the importance of the Family. We will also have to admit that a solid family life is built on prayer *and* action, and that it is not sufficient to expect the Family to prosper automatically without a greater involvement of the Church community.

H. C. VANDOOREN

The major part of this article has been adapted by the writer from a public address that was later mimeographed by the Fellowship of Can. Ref. Univ. Students under the title "The Christian Family in Today's Society".

Grapes Are Not Ripe Until October

This is a translation of an article by "Pater later", published in DE REFORMATIE of Oct. 21, 1972. It was prepared for publication in CLARION by Rev. H. A. Stel and it appears here with the permission of De Reformatie. As is perhaps evident from the above, the writer is a Dutch medical doctor.

Ed.

When driving through Burgundy or Alsace between mid-September and mid-October, you find the grape harvest in full swing. You should take the somewhat narrow country roads - the "routes du vin" - which lead from one wine town or village to the other, in order to see the festive business accompanying the "wine harvest."

For then the grapes are ripe and delicious; they are marvelous as a dessert after a delightful French dinner.

They are not delicious, but unpleasant and sour, if one eats them too early. This was already known in olden times. Jeremiah relates this experience (chap. 31:30) when he quotes a proverb that was well-known in his days already: "Every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge." Among us also there is still the saying that grapes which will only be ripe in October should not be eaten in June. Thereby reference is made to pre-marital sexual intercourse. I want to say something about that in this article.

Since the end of the 1960's pre-marital sexual relations have increasingly become fashionable. While formerly it was a matter of shame when an unmarried girl or woman expected a child, nowadays cohabitation before marriage has become a normal thing, about which hardly anybody feels ashamed anymore. The opposite is rather true.

This completely different attitude towards sexual intercourse has been strongly promoted by the fact that prevention of conception has become so much easier: "take the pill regularly, and you can do as you please." The moral and physical trouble of undesired pregnancy can be avoided. In the earlier days, when a girl came rather reluctantly to the doctor's office with complaints which pointed in the direction of a beginning pregnancy, and one began to ask her, cautiously, "if perhaps she had had intercourse with somebody", then it was usually at first denied with reddening cheeks, until further denial became impossible, and the tears

came. Nowadays girls of seventeen and eighteen - in university towns often female students, a few of whom appeared even to be studying the-ology-come quite regularly to the office with the question: "Doctor, will you give me the pill?" When one then first asks: "Are you married?" the reply is often: "What does that matter?" On one occasion a girl, who was only sixteen, answered rather impertinently: "Do you think I have no feelings?"

As was already said, it is no longer considered a shameful matter to engage in pre-marital sexual relations. It has been accepted, in a great many areas, as a normal phenomenon in our cultural system.

Or, to use the above mentioned metaphor: one no longer waits until "October" when one thinks that it is possible to enjoy the "grapes" in "June" or "July" already.

I want to continue briefly with this metaphor. Grapes are indeed not ripe until October. Could we, however, possibly speak of "ripe grapes" when cohabitation is moved from official married life to the pre-marital period?

What are "ripe grapes"? Is it simply the cohabitation? Or is the fact of receiving children in the spiritual experience of marriage connected with this "ripeness"? I am fully convinced that the second definition is the true one. An "accident" is surely not the worst thing that can happen, although I maintain that it must be condemned. But I immediately add to this stern-sounding word "condemned" the warning: "Whosoever standeth let him take heed lest he fall." Or also, with respect to the older ones who are leading or have led a not quite spotless married life: "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy sister's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" (variation on Matt. 7:3). Much worse than an "accident" is the devaluation of the married state that is apparent in the novel sexual practices. Just as the Bible itself becomes a book that is read less and less among young

people, so also the concept of a Biblical marriage disappears more and more from the view of many. "To leave one's father and mother" is certainly no longer done in order to "cleave" unto a man or woman, but in order to be "free", to do as one pleases, without the least intention to accept the criticism of the "old people" who cannot or will not understand these modern times.

And a "cleaving unto the man or the woman for life" is no longer the ideal either; when one is fed up with the other, one must not be bothered with marriage bonds and divorce procedures. A "commune" is often preferred over an official marriage. "To be one flesh"-that idea *does* appeal; at least when it is meant in a sexual and not in a spiritual sense.

A young person - and this continues when he gradually grows older - must get out of life what he can and ought not to be hindered by moral ties. The upbringing of children which, accidentally, are born should be left to the day-care centres and nurseries. These are, in effect, demanded more and more.

The dominant position granted to sex therefore means nothing less than the destruction of Christian marriage, in which the relationship between man and woman must be of such a character that it can be a symbol of the relationship between Christ and His congregation.

A Christian cannot and may not resign himself to this situation as if it were an indifferent matter. He is not allowed to neglect his responsibility towards society and to ignore his duty to testify against such moral decay, with a shrug of the shoulder and the remark, "After all, times are changing."

No cohabitation before or outside marriage.

Perhaps someone comes with the question: does the Bible say anything about this matter?

I have already mentioned Christian marriage and its essence, as we find it clearly expressed in the Bible. However, more can be said. I first mention 2 Cor. 11:2. Paul writes there

to the Corinthians, among whom fornication was frequent, that he has "espoused," or "betrothed", that congregation "to one husband to present it as a chaste virgin to Christ." The congregation at Corinth must therefore let itself be joined to Christ only, and not allow itself to be drawn away from Him, e.g. by false teachers. For that would amount to fornication, i.e. taking up with another . . . The congregation, which is described here as a girl who is as yet unmarried, is espoused to one man. That girl therefore must be a "chaste virgin"; "a girl who has had nothing to do yet with a man". She has not yet been permitted to have any sexual relations with a man.

That was already the rule in Israel in days of old. We read of it in the Mosaic laws which meant to keep Israel away from the immoral practices of the surrounding nations. Let us look e.g. at Deut. 22: 13ff. We read here of a man who marries a woman and discovers in the marital relationship that, when he married her, she was not a virgin anymore; in other words, that before her marriage to this man she had already had sexual intercourse with another. It is then described how it had to be proved before the "elders of the town" that his accusation was correct. For if it was judged that proof had been given, then the woman in question had to be stoned to death "because she has wrought folly in Israel to play the whore in her father's house" (vs. 21).

In verse 28 of the same chapter we find something of a similar character. For a moment the wording "if a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her" suggests to us the idea of rape, so that the girl could be judged innocent.

The description continues however with the words "and they be found" (i.e. "and they are discovered, or caught"). This shows that the girl has not offered enough resistance, that eventually she allowed the intercourse. The conclusion is therefore that the man has "dishonoured" her. Again we find that cohabitation with a girl who is not yet engaged, who is still free, is "to dishonour" her. In this case we may add that she has let herself be dishonoured.

We now turn to Exodus 22:16: "If a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall . .

endow her to be his wife." To have sexual intercourse with a girl who is not engaged but free, is called here "to entice", "to tempt". Because she was still free, he has to take her as his wife, which means that he has to conclude with her a marriage for life. By cohabitation outside of marriage he has anticipated marriage.

Finally I mention 1 Cor. 7:9: "for it is better to marry than to burn." Grosheide translates in the *Korte Verklaring*: "than to be aglow". Reference is made here to people who cannot control themselves. They really cannot live without marriage. If such a person does not marry, then the danger of falling into the sin of fornication is certainly not imaginary. The sexual urge can set such people "aglow", "on fire", with as the possible evil result sexual relations outside of marriage. And once more: that is forbidden; it is a sin! Therefore Paul admonishes such people that they should rather seek a woman in order to marry her. In that case the danger of sexual relations outside of marriage is minimized.

The Bible therefore does not speak in vague terms when it deals with pre- and extra-marital sexual intercourse. It is, in fact, considered to be such a great sin, a "folly in the people of the covenant," that in a certain case capital punishment was commanded. In condemning such sexual intercourse Old and New Testament are one, and what else could have been expected, since God is one.

Prevention is better than cure, as a wise saying has it. This certainly applies also to the matter of pre-marital cohabitation. Our young people must learn to control themselves when they are still young. Perhaps it is better to say it this way: those who received children from the hand of the Lord must train them from the beginning to control themselves. It is an act of wise education when on good grounds we refuse something to the child we love, although that child itself wishes it so strongly. A child that has been trained from the beginning to deny himself a pleasure - because father does not have the money for it, or because father and mother show their child that a less fortunate friend at school should have preference for once - will later be more able to resist temptations unto sinful actions, including actions to which it is moved by the

awakening sexual urge.

The sexual urge belongs to man's nature; it is essential for human procreation. But in a sinful world it easily becomes a powerful instrument in the hands of the evil one, by means of which, before we realize it, he turns that which is pure and chaste into dirt and filth.

We should be careful - and this is another point I wish to mention - that we do not allow the devaluation of the word "pure" or "chaste". Mankind has already grown accustomed to the sin of immorality to such an extent that many people consider chastity as unrealistic and old-fashioned, something that is characteristic of the bigot. We should refrain from such a devaluation of the word and the matter of "chastity", and not start ridiculing it. In this respect also we must remain ourselves, and not become one with the world. That is what Christ demands from us.

Let us keep in mind that He teaches us in Matth. 10:33, "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven."

That is the negative statement. The positive statement is: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven" (vs. 32).

Our responsibility is great!

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Address for Editorial matters:

Clarion, Box 54, Fergus, Ontario  
 Canada, N1M 2W7

Editorial Committee:

Editor: W. W. J. VanOene  
 Co-Editors: W. Helder, D. VanderBoom

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# "FREEWILL" OFFERINGS ?

Consistories have recently been busy figuring out the balance of the church finances of 1972. They have been equally busy in setting up the budget for 1973 and discussing it with the membership.

One half of such a budget is always "easy". On the left side we have the necessary expenses, for salaries, keeping up the property, etc., paying interest. On the right side there is only one amount: the income by means of freewill offerings. The financial needs of the local church life have been delineated; the congregation has to pick up the bill.

We would like to put some question marks behind the word "freewill". If this word means that God loves the cheerful giver (II Cor. 9:7), and that therefore our contributions have to be given by the "free will" of our love and gratitude, it is all right. If this cheerfulness for giving is not in our hearts, we might hear, "Your silver perish with you!" (Acts 8:20).

But it certainly does *not* mean that it is completely left to us, what we should contribute. How can a consistory, a committee of adminis-

tration work, if there is not the certainty that the congregation will understand and fulfill its duty? Once the budget has been approved, every member has to comply. He does not need to agree with every part of the budget, like fixing up the church building, or paying the share for the college. The consistory, as the God-given authority, has decided that such things have to be done. Suppose the budget has gone up 20% in comparison to last year's, not only because of devaluation of the dollar but also because certain extra expenses have become a "need". In such a case no member is entitled to say, sorry, but I stick to last year's amount. A fundamental biblical, and therefore Reformed, principle is that we as individual members go along with what the "flock" as a whole agrees to, unless we could prove that it is against God's Word and the Church Order to do so.

In this sense our contribution is not a matter of "free will", disregarding what has been agreed upon. The word "freewill" must be complemented by the word "fixed" or "regular" (i.e. according to the rule),

otherwise this stress on free will becomes an opportunity for the flesh. Everyone has to accept his fair (which does not mean, equal) share of the whole burden. And he has to take up that burden cheerfully, because the Lord of the Church wants him to do so.

This christian duty is based upon the fact that the LORD demands, very explicitly, that we pay Him the firstfruits of our income. The *first* fruits.

During the O.T. period of the Church the LORD spelled this out in detailed manner, because his Church was still in its childhood, and had to be told, as one tells a child. You plant a fruit tree, but the first years you are not allowed to pick and eat its fruits. They are for the LORD. The same with the harvest of wheat and barley. The same with the firstborn of all cattle. Even the field itself remained the LORD's property. That's why all real estate had to be returned to the original "owners" in the year of Jubilee. God's argumentation for this is very remarkable. In the chapter on the year of sabbath and jubilee (Leviticus 25) we read, "For the land

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## YOUTH COLUMN

### 'STANDARDS' AND 'WALK OF LIFE'

Last time we reminded ourselves of the need for standards, biblical standards. As a builder needs a blueprint, so a Christian needs biblical or Reformed standards which may be consciously and consistently applied.

This time we shall see how Scripture describes the life that is molded by its standards. One word found frequently is "walk" (of life). For example. Paul writes in his letter to the Ephesians "that we should walk in them (good words)" (2:10); "that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind" (4:17); "walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us" (5:2); "walk as children of light" (5:8); and "see then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise" (5:15). Good works, love, light and wisdom are parts of this "walk". It is therefore evident that this walk referred to one's whole walk of life. And it brought to light one's distinctive characteristics which separated one from the Gentiles. Moreover, one can and must pattern his "walk" after the example of Christ, as the apostle John says:

He that saith that he abideth in him (Jesus Christ) ought himself also so to walk, even as he (Jesus Christ) walked. (1 John 2:6)

To model our walk according to Christ's walk means to adopt his standard, which was always the Word of God, and his aim, which was to glorify his Father.

Today one usually walks beside a road or a sidewalk. In the Scriptures it was simply called a road or a way or a path. These two words (walk and way) are combined in the following exhortation of God:

Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess. (Deut. 5:33)

The psalmist asks, "Make me to know thy WAYS, O LORD" (25:4). The LORD complains,

O that my people would listen to me,  
that Israel would walk in my WAYS. (Ps. 81:14)

ine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me" (vs 23). We have always known that we are strangers and exiles in this world, (I Peter 1:1); we have also always known that our forefathers were strangers and foreigners, but: "So you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow-citizens with the saints of the household of God" (Eph. 2:19). But now we hear that we are *still* like strangers and foreigners with God! This clearly means in Levit. 25 that we are never really the owners; we, with all that we have, are owned by Jesus Christ (L.D. 1). That is the underlying principle of the divine demand on our firstfruits.

Experience tells that, if we put our church contributions at the bottom of the list, we will never be able to pay. All prices are going up and there is so much to pay, you know. The experience of God's obedient children, however, also teaches that Malachi was right when he wrote down as the Word of the LORD, "Bring the full tithes into the storehouse (of the LORD, vD), that there may be food in my house; and thereby put me to the test, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing" (Mal. 3:10).

It is not up to us to decide whether we will contribute to the Church. It is God's demand, although this does not exclude (but include)

that we do it cheerfully, and not grumbling.

There was the word "tithing". That means 10%. It has often been asserted that this rule is "old-testamentic". All right, others have said, but that means for us that tithes are the minimum. We know that there are several churches on this continent where 10% is the minimum, indeed, even excluding the costs of christian education.

We do not take sides in this debate. Although, we might have to learn something from others in this respect.

We have something else yet.

These few lines were written in answer to a request; the request again being the result of a question.

"Should unfaithful members be disciplined?"

If members persistently refuse to pay their fair share of the financial burden of churchlife, should they be disciplined? That is, should they be forbidden to go to the Lord's Supper, and if they continue in their unwillingness, should they not - in the end - be excommunicated?

It stands to reason that we are not talking about members who are unable, although we would also warn against speaking about inability too soon. The Bible has something to say about the "penny of the widow". 25 cents a week is also a contribution and it may be as much as \$5.00 from

someone else. And: is there inability because one does not have a right sense of priority? Financially weaker members should never say: I cannot pay the full amount, therefore I pay nothing.

But, coming back to the question, what is the right answer?

The answer of Bible and Confession is that unwillingness to contribute is a SIN; a sin against the LORD. The people of Malachi's days were accused by the LORD of "robbing Him" in their tithes and offerings. They offered blind animals in sacrifice (see ch. 1) and were thus despising the LORD.

"Robbing God" must be a terrible sin, and unwillingness to repent and change in this respect certainly becomes occasion for discipline. If a consistory would *not* discipline in such cases, the wrath of God (who is a jealous God!) would be kindled against the whole congregation.

Do not say: but you should never *begin* to discipline, unless you are prepared to go to the very *end* of excommunication. This is a way of reasoning that I cannot find in the Bible. Any sin can become occasion for discipline (and therefore excommunication) if the heart is hardened, even to the bitter end. Then it will become clear that this unwillingness to pay was rooted in some more

Continued on Page 11.

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So the standards or customs of God's people were called "ways".

We find the same designation used in the N.T. Christ designated himself as "the Way" in John 14:6. Is it then any wonder that people described the Christians as those who belonged to "the Way"? This designation is used repeatedly in Acts (19:9; 19:23; 22:4; 24:14, 22). For example, Paul confesses "that according to the Way, which they (his accusers) call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the law or written in the prophets . . ." (Acts 24:14). From this passage one may conclude that "the Way" submitted itself to the whole Word of God.

So we can summarize by saying that the church has a peculiar or special walk of life which distinguishes her from the rest of the world and from false religion (cf. Acts 19:9). Her peculiar "walk" receives its distinctiveness from the adherence to God's Word as the only and complete standard.

Why is the Word of God as our only standard stressed so much? Firstly, the Scriptures themselves compel us to confess (and practise) this. Secondly, there is nothing more necessary today than a return to principles, absolutes, standards or norms taken from the Scriptures. Have you ever heard remarks such as, "that might work for you, but I cannot accept it", or, "I do not agree with that opinion"? In other words, what is good for you is poison for me. And once you accept this line of argumentation you arrive at a dead end. Truth which endures, because God does not change, then no longer exists. It is not only that one cannot find truth, but it does not exist. Owing to these compelling reasons, it seems beneficial to review some aspects of youth in the light of God's standard.

W. HUIZINGA



## A THANK YOU

*Publisher and Editorial Committee are grateful for the reactions which we have received during the past months. We wish to say a heartfelt "Thank You" to all who have taken the time to give us their opinion about our magazine in its new appearance. The reactions which we have received so far are almost exclusively favourable and this encourages us to proceed. We do so with joy. Meanwhile we solicit your remarks and criticism by which mistakes may be corrected, deficiencies removed and that which is good improved still.*

*This issue of CLARION will be the last one sent free to non-subscribers. We are convinced that during the past two months every one has been enabled to form an opinion about our magazine and therefore is able to decide whether he will subscribe or not. Even if it were possible, it would not be fair towards our subscribers if we would continue to send CLARION free of charge. We express our expectation that many will join the steadily growing number of faithful readers.*

*Although every magazine or periodical is inclined to quote only such parts of letters as may help promote its cause, we do not have to make a selection in order to make a good impression.*

*Only one letter has been received in which we were requested not to send CLARION any longer. The only reason given was: "I am a member of the . . . C.R.C., you know, and my minister is . . ."*

*We are convinced that this minister is not to blame for this attitude.*

*As for the rest, the notes, sometimes hastily scribbled on the back of a piece of the renewal notice, are encouraging and praising. The most gratifying aspect of the reactions is that it is realized that we all together endeavour to promote the cause of the Lord and of His kingdom. Some expressed the wish, "May the Lord help and bless you to guard and improve our C.R.M. to a weekly national Reformed Magazine." Some paid for two subscriptions, one to be sent to relatives in the Netherlands. Some took out a subscription of their own whereas before they read it together with someone else.*

*Briefly, we are very grateful.*

*As for the possibility of a weekly magazine, no promise can be given. We have not even dared to consider that question as yet. All we can say is: We shall do our best. With your help we shall continue, expecting the blessing from our King Whom to serve is the desire and endeavour of all of us who, in whatever way or respect, have joined in this labour.*

*Editorial Committee and Publisher*

## Hoek van Holland

EEN BIJBEL VOL  
"INTERPRETATIES"?

Het is eigenlijk met enige schroom dat ik de blanke bladzijden van *Clarion* binnentreed. 'k Voelde me met ons Hollands Hoekje goed thuis in de oranje pagina's van CRM! Men kan zich ook afvragen of de zo gelukkig voltrokken overgang van CRM naar *Clarion* - wie prijst niet het frisse initiatief van uitgever Kuik? - maar niet tegelijkertijd een overgang moest betekenen naar een volledig Engelstalig blad. Tenslotte worden ook nieuwelingen als Uw dienaar geacht de "taalwet" van het land te kennen. Maar nu de overgang tegelijk betekende het begin van het afdrucken van foto's van hen die zovele jaren getrouwd zijn, en elk in de korte levensgeschiedenissen kan aflezen hoe lange tijd ze op hun geboortegrond verbleven, heb ik weer wat moed gegrepen. Vooral voor enigszins oudere lezers moet het plezierig zijn, dat in ons blad van tijd tot tijd ook iets te lezen valt in de taal van hun hart. We herbeginnen dus met frisse lust. Tegelijk blijven we in de oude lijn; het is tenslotte nog niet helemaal een nieuwe lente en *Clarion* is niet een nieuw geluid. In CRM van 2 September 1972 schreef ik over het rapport van de onderafdeling van de Wereldraad, het departement voor Geloof en Kerkorde, te Leuven 1971 uitgebracht over het gezag van de Heilige Schrift. Toen beloofde ik ook iets te zeggen over het derde hoofdstuk van dit rapport: de openbaring en de verscheidenheid van interpretaties.

Laat me allereerst trachten een overzicht te geven van wat Leuven 1971 in dit opzicht betoogt en beoogt.

De wetenschap - zo zegt men - heeft ons getoond dat de gebeurtenissen die volgens de Bijbel van beslissende betekenis zijn, in alle gevallen reeds het voorwerp waren geweest van een bepaalde uitleg of interpretatie. Zou het gezag van de Bijbel nu ernstig worden geschaad, indien bleek dat de gebeurtenissen nimmer hadden plaats gevonden? Aan de ene kant moet worden gezegd dat de gebeurtenissen als zondanig geen enkele openbaringsbetekenis bezitten; ze zijn om zo te zeggen "stom" en hebben uitleg nodig. Aan de andere kant kan men betogen dat de waarde

van de interpretaties uiteindelijk rust op de gebeurtenissen.

Het middelpunt van het Nieuwe Testament is het "Christusgebeuren". Hier rijst de kwestie van de historiciteit (het feitelijk gebeurd zijn) direct bij de wonderverhalen, maar zij raakt ook zulke centrale berichten of mededelingen als de maagdelijke geboorte, het lege graf of de hemelvaart. Zulke berichten verhelderen en interpreteren de centrale inhoud van het evangelie, namelijk Gods handelen in Jezus Christus.

Indien alleen het geheuren-in-(verbinding-met-de-interpretatie God openbaart, kan de nabijheid-in-tijd) en het eerste-hands karakter van de Bijbel niet beslissend zijn voor haar gezag. Alle groepen en deelnemers aan deze studie waren het er over eens dat bepaalde Nieuw-Testamentische interpretaties meer geschikt konden zijn dan andere. Het gaat hier om "substantial proximity", dat betekent: het gaat hier om de vraag wat naar de inhoud gerekend het dichtst staat bij de centrale inhoud van de Bijbel, Gods handelen in Jezus Christus.

Een volgende paragraaf van het rapport handelt dan over het feit dat het Nieuwe Testament onderscheidene interpretaties bevat.

Kan iedere interpretatie het recht voor zich opeisen dat zij een wettige uitleg is van een centraal gebeuren? In beginsel is het mogelijk een kritische onderscheiding te maken tussen de verschillende interpretaties. De maatstaf daarvoor is de mate waarin een interpretatie een centraal heilsgebeuren uitlegt en in dat heilsgebeuren is gegrond.

Hoe wordt de stem van God nu hoorbaar voor onze tegenwoordige tijd, gelet deze grote verscheidenheid van materiaal in de Bijbel? Bepaalde interpretaties zijn alleen maar van secundaire betekenis. Toch waren alle groepen tegen het uitsluiten van enig materiaal van de Schriften. Hoewel dus een onderscheidend, discriminerend oordeel niet alleen oorbaar maar ook inderdaad geboden is, moet toch het lichaam van de Schriften in tact gelaten worden.

De uitspraken van de Bijbel bezitten bepaalde innerlijke verbanden en vele daarvan staan rechtstreeks in betrekking tot centrale heilsfeiten terwijl andere van deze primaire uitspraken zijn afgeleid, bij wijze van gevolgtrekking of nadere verklaring. Verschillende reeksen uit-

spraken, verschillende geschriften en groepen van geschriften hebben alle haar verschillende centra. Om deze verschillende centra aan te duiden heeft men de term "Beziehungsmittle", "relational centre", gevormd. Dat is dus een beslissend middelpunt waarop verschillende uitspraken betrekking hebben. De liefde van God of de opwekking van Christus zijn bijvoorbeeld zulke middelpunten waaruit de uitspraken over het eeuwige leven logisch volgen. Voor het Nieuwe Testament als geheel kan men denken aan Jezus de Christus, het koninkrijk Gods, en het sterven en de opwekking van Jezus Christus.

Maar het is dikwijls onmogelijk de bijbelse interpretaties vandaag zonder meer te aanvaarden. De huidige generatie moet ook zelf interpreteren. "The present generation enters into the process of interpretation in which the witnesses of that past time were also engaged." Onze interpretatie is de voortzetting van het interpretatieve proces dat in de Bijbel gevonden wordt. Hier treedt onze eigentijdse situatie binnen het gezichtsveld. Deze situatie bepaalt het perspectief waarin het bijbelse getuigenis moet worden gelezen en uitgelegd. De Amerikaanse groep bijvoorbeeld besloot dat op grond van haar eigentijdse situatie het perspectief voor haar uitlegging van de Bijbel was God de Bevrijder. Zo bracht men de Bijbel als het ware tot spreken in een situatie die gekenmerkt wordt door de rassensrijd. Het is in dit verband niet verwonderlijk dat het Rapport Leuven 1971 van oordeel is dat de scheidslijn tussen canonieke en niet canonieke geschriften vloeiend is.

Wat zullen wij nu van deze dingen zeggen?

Het is duidelijk dat we allereerst moeten antwoorden met een woord van de Schrift zelf. De apostel Petrus schrijft: Dit moet gij vooral weten, dat geen profetie der Schrift een eigenmachtige uitlegging toelaat; want nooit is profetie voortgekomen uit de wil van een mens, maar, door den heiligen Geest gedreven, hebben mensen van Godswege gesproken (2 Peter 1:20,21).

Dit gezaghebbende woord maakt een duidelijk onderscheid tussen onze uitlegging (die eigenmachtig kan zijn) en de profeet der Schrift. De apostel Petrus spreekt hier over Schrift in het enkelvoud en hij geeft daarmee meteen haar eenheid aan, een eenheid die gefundeerd is in den enen Heiligen

Geest, de ene Oorsprong van de profetie der Schrift. Worden vele problemen die tegenwoordig in verband met de Heilige Schrift worden opgeworpen, tegenover dit woord van Petrus niet als *schijn*problemen openbaar?

Het is voorts duidelijk dat in dit centrale hoofdstuk van het rapport van Leuven de woorden "event" en "interpretation" een beheersende rol spelen. Nu laat ik maar rusten de vraag wat met de term "event" bedoeld wordt. Juist de laatste ontwikkeling in de synodalistische kerken in Nederland heeft opnieuw bewezen, dat men met het woord "gebeuren" een spel kan spelen. Dr. H. M. Kuitert spreekt over de zondeval als een gebeuren, maar ontkent tegelijk dat er een eerste mens Adam is geweest, een historisch persoon, die in deze, onze geschiedenis in zonde is gevallen op het moment der verleiding. Een "gebeuren", maar niet een concrete gebeurtenis. Wie een woordje Duits kent en kennis heeft genomen van de gedachtengangen van theologen als Barth en Bultmann, weet dat men onderscheid maakt tussen "historie" en "geschiedenis". Wat "geschiedenis" is in de ontmoeting tussen God en mens, is daarom volgens hen nog geen "historie". Wij laten deze, door een verkeerde wijsbegeerte beïnvloede onderscheidingen, nu maar rusten. Ook spreken we niet over de vraag of men in Schriftmatige zin de uitdrukking "Christ event" - "Christus-gebeuren" - kan gebruiken.

Laat ons dus maar zeggen dat het rapport Leuven handelt over "feit" en "interpretatie", of beter "interpretaties" in het meervoud: er worden volgens Leuven onderscheidene interpretaties gevonden, die niet allemaal op de zelfde hoogte staan.

Nu hebben wij ook in gereformeerde kring altijd vernomen dat de Heilige Schrift een tendensboek is. De Heilige Schrift heeft een bepaalde gerichtheid; zij komt met een bepaalde boodschap tot ons. Is dat nu hetzelfde als wat in dit rapport gezegd wordt over "feit" en "interpretatie"?

Naar mijn oordeel is dat niet het geval. Wanneer wij spreken over heilsfeiten en heilsgeschiedenis, bedoelen we in de verste verte niet dat de toevoeging die spreekt over het *heil* dat God in en door deze feiten bewerkte, ook maar in enige mate afbreuk doet aan het *feitelijkheid* van

Continued next Page

hetgeen echt gebeurd is. Het zijn *heilsfeiten*, maar zij kunnen dat alleen zijn, omdat zij werkelijke *heilsfeiten* zijn. God bewerkte het *heilsfeit* en God openbaart het als *heilsfeit*. Hij bewerkte het in de geschiedenis en Hij openbaart het in de profetie der Schrift. U kunt en moogt en moet ook zeggen: Hij bewerkte het *heilsfeit* en Hij openbaart het als *heilsfeit*. Men mag het geopenbaard zijn als *heilsfeit* niet uitspelen tegen het werkelijk geschied zijn als *heilsfeit*.

De uitdrukking "interpretaties" in het rapport van Leuven is op zijn minst een allerongelukkigste uitdrukking. Het is een koude term, die geen recht doet aan het *getuigeniskarakter* van de Heilige Schrift. De apostel Johannes schrijft niet: Hetgeen wij gezien hebben met onze eigen ogen, hetgeen wij aanschouwd hebben en onze handen getast hebben van het Woord des levens . . . , hetgeen wij gezien en gehoord hebben, *interpreteren* wij ook u. Hij spreekt over een *verkondiging* (van de tastbare feiten!), gericht op gemeenschap en blijdschap 1 John 1:1-4.

Uit het rapport Leuven is duidelijk dat het feit op de achtergrond geraakt en dat de "interpretaties" in haar gevarieerde veelheid alle aandacht krijgen. Zelfs valt de uitdrukking dat in een zekere zin de interpretatie het gebeuren *is*. "In a sense . . . , the interpretation *is* the event." (ER XXIII/4,428).

We zijn ook ditmaal nog niet gereed gekomen. Graag schrijf ik een volgend maal nog iets meer over het bij Leuven alles beheersende begrip "interpretatie". Laat me voor ditmaal een kleine sprong mogen maken aan het slot. Was het van de Synode 1972 niet een weinig onverstandig in rapport 44 te laten staan "that the Bible presents to us interpreted events" (Acts, p.520)? Zulke termen in Grand Rapids 1972 na Leuven 1971?

J. FABER

#### OUR COVER

A view from the Cabot Trail near Cheticamp, Nova Scotia. The 184-mile Cabot Trail on Cape Breton Island is one of Canada's most scenic drives. [Nova Scotia Communications and Information Centre photo.]

## North American Nook

*For The Honour of a Brother*

In the new set-up of our magazine it will be my task now and then to write about things that drew my attention during the reading of North American church magazines. I have the idea that our editorial board is trying to kill two birds with one stone. On the one hand yours truly is enticed away from the isolation in his beloved "Holland Corner"; he is obliged to take notice of what is going on in North America. Is this task not of benefit to a newcomer on the American scene? On the other hand - this is more important - our readers are to be informed a little bit about that which is written outside the confederation of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

In this "North America Nook" the editors leave our hands free. We may talk together about developments in the so-called denominations or about the relationships *between* them. We may simply inform our readers or we may add some comments. We may take official statements or individual utterings.

Let us start off with an example of the last category. I want to inform you about two reviews of a book. Bookreviews are interesting reading material; sometimes they reveal more concerning the ideas of the reviewer than of the author himself. The book in question is entitled, *Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation*, and was written by Dr. Carl Bangs (Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1971).

Bangs' interest in Arminius began in 1942 while he still was a student. He wrote his B.D. thesis on "Arminius and the Remonstrants," and at the University of Chicago he wrote his doctoral dissertation on "Arminius and Reformed Theology."

Since 1956 Dr. Bangs has made numerous trips to Holland to do research on Arminius. In 1968-69 he was guest professor of theology at the University of Leiden. He is now professor of historical theology at St. Paul School of Theology (Methodist) in Missouri.

It is not strange that a Methodist does such thorough research on Arminius. The dustjacket of Bangs' book rightly states the Arminius'

influence has been felt not only among his followers in the Remonstrant Brotherhood in Holland but also in Anglican theology and especially, through John Wesley, in Methodism.

Now we are not only interested in

the study of Professor Bangs but also and especially in some reactions. Shortly after each other I read two reviews, both by theologians of a denomination with a Dutch background.

The first review was by the Rev. L. Verduin; it appeared in *The Banner*, official organ of the Christian Reformed Church (Jan. 19, 1973). The second review was written by M. E. Osterhaven, professor of systematic theology at Western Seminary in Holland, Michigan. The two seminaries of the Reformed Church in America (New Brunswick and Western) publish a journal *Reformed Review*; the review by Prof. Osterhaven is found in Vol. 26, No. 2, Winter 1973.

Leonard Verduin declares in his review in *The Banner* that many of the nuances in the theology of Arminius have gained respectability among Reformed thinkers since his day, "and one wishes that Gomarus and all the rest who were after his scalp had been less vehement."

Is it true that Gomarus was after Arminius' scalp? At the conference of May 1603, before the inauguration of Arminius as professor, Gomarus admitted that Arminius' views on Romans 7 were admissible if not preferable. Bangs tells that the meetings finally ended with the concurrence of all in Arminius' appointment (p. 238). He does not mention that a few days later Gomarus in a letter to Walaeus expressed his gladness about the outcome of the conference and writes, "Tot nu toe maken wij het goed, maar ook de academie, die in Arminius een nieuwe hoogleraar ontvangt. Op een vriendschappelijke conferentie heb ik te aangenamer met hem kennis gemaakt, waar ik aan zijn oprechtheid in de grondslag der leer niet meer twijfel. Wel huldigt hij in sommige stukken, vrij als hij in zijn oordeel mag zijn, een afwijkende



opvatting. Ik zou wel willen, dat er meer mensen waren, zoals hij, die hun gaven in oprechtheid wilden besteden om de Kerk te steunen, want, naar ik hoor, is er op verschillende plaatsen aan zulke mannen gebrek." (G. P. Van Itterzon, *Franciscus Gomarus*, 's Gravenhage, 1930, p. 96).

I hope that the readers understand this Dutch quotation. Gomarus speaks about his discussion with Arminius as a friendly conference. He does not doubt anymore whether Arminius is sincere in doctrinal respect, and leaves him freedom of opinion in non-confessional matters. He even expresses the desire that there were more men available like Arminius, willing to use their gifts in the upbuilding of the church.

How is it possible that L. Verduin accuses his brother Gomarus of being after Arminius' scalp? In the dissertation of Van Itterzon we read that in the case of Vorstius - a heretic, who was appointed in Leiden after the death of Arminius - Gomarus did not push himself into the front of the battle. Festus Hommius, who was to become one of the clerks of the synod of Dordt and the translator of our Belgic Confession into Latin, was very well acquainted with the personality

of Gomarus. He wrote, "Ik betreur Gomarus' zwijgen, maar verbass mij er niet over. Gij weet, dat hij in zulke zaken gewoonlijk te bevreesd en te traag is" (p. 203). Gomarus was not an inquisitor; he was rather afraid to take action. At the synod of Dordt he remained in the background; he did not speak often, and, when he spoke, he did it in a modest way.

Van Itterzon writes in his conclusion, "Op de Synode hield hij zich in het geding met de Remonstranten op de achtergrond, zoals hij ook, in de strijd met Arminius, steeds weinig strijdlustig, zich bij de voorkeur afzijdig had gehouden. En trad hij in het strijdperk, dan deed hij dit steeds na aarzeling, door de broeders hiertoe aangespoord en zelf ook overtuigd, dat hij ter wille van de waarheid niet langer mocht zwijgen" (p. 379).

Gomarus entered the battlefield only hesitantly. The brethren had to stir him up. He was not like the warhorse of Job 39 that, when the trumpet sounds, says "Aha!" He shunned the battle, but he did not fear it.

The reader will understand that I do not only write this piece in order to defend and promote the honour and reputation of my neighbour and

brother Gomarus. Here is more at stake. L. Verduin in *The Banner* ends his review with a threefold "if". "If there are still people around who live with the caricature that Arminius was an arch-heretic, a Pelagian . . . - these *must* read this book . . . If there are still people to be found who think that Arminius got a square deal at the hands of the 'orthodoxy' of his times, these too *must* read this book . . . If there are still people on the scene who think of the Synod of Dort as an altogether holy moment in the annals of Christ's church, . . . a congress to be proud of, let such persons by all means also read this study . . ."

Now, here is such a reader who is thankful for the Canons of Dordt, one of the three Forms of Unity officially of binding force also in the Christian Reformed Church.

Because of his thankfulness for the result of the struggle in the Dutch Reformed Churches at the beginning of the seventeenth century, he does not want to have a caricature made of "Gomarus and all the rest."

We hope to continue the next time, the Lord willing.

J. FABER



## "FREEWILL" OFFERINGS

Continued from Page 6

serious sins. In addition, not the sin as such is disciplined but the sinner who refuses to break away from his sin.

Our Catechism goes in the same direction by stating that the primary obedience to the LORD of the fourth commandment is, "first that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be maintained" (L.D. 38). That is a "first"! Without this "maintaining" there cannot even be a Church nor the ministry of the Gospel.

Our conclusion is that consistories should not hesitate to discipline a member who - for how long already? - has consistently refused to pay to the LORD, and thus has robbed God. Such a consistory will also discover that faithful discipline in this respect will answer the three conditions set for it. It will be *love for the sinner*, who lives an awfully dangerous life as churchmember and

should feel the "pain" of the stone that the shepherd throws at him, to urge him back to the flock. It will be *love for the whole church* at the same time. You all know what kind of disposition is created in a congregation by the fact that some members do not contribute. One rotten apple can spoil the whole hamper. It pulls the level of congregational life downward in a very dangerous spiral. Finally, it is also the *love for the LORD* that is expressed in such discipline. We fear his Name and want his Bride to be holy and unblamable in his sight. We want to honour him. And you will be surprised by the positive results of such discipline if applied with pastoral love.

We should then also become known as a tithing Church to everyone who considers joining the Church. It should be made very clear

to new converts and to new arrivals from other places that this is a Church which fears the LORD and does not dare to despise Him in tithes and offerings.

This should also be made clear to young members who prepare themselves for profession of their faith. If that means anything, it means committing themselves to Jesus Christ and becoming fruitbearing church members. You need not worry that this might "turn off" people. We suggest that, to use the same terms, it may "turn them on".

And to us another secular expression: "money talks"; it tells you a lot about the person who is either grudgingly unwilling or cheerfully willing to offer to the Lord the firstfruits of all his income.

G. VANDOOREN



With our congratulatory messages we remain this time in the region of Classis Alberta/Manitoba.

Our first trip is to EDMONTON, to congratulate the REV. DE JONG with the fact that the Lord has enabled him to serve as a minister of the Gospel for twelve-and-a-half years. We know that you don't have to do anything for it, once you are a minister, to see the years increase and reach the 12½ year mark. Yet it is quite something when one is enabled by the Lord to fill those 12½ years with the work in the Lord's vineyard. Also the other Churches have benefited from what the Rev. De Jong did in broadcasting and writing, to mention only those two things. Our readers will also recall his articles on the Belgic Confession. May the Lord our God strengthen him and his family also in the time to come.

Staying in Alberta for a moment, we extend our heartfelt congratulations also to br. and sr. H. LEFFERS, who will celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary. The fam. Leffers belonged to the first waves of immigrants and have a well-established place not only in the Church at Coaldale but also in other Churches where members have settled. Br. Leffers was treasurer for the Training for the Ministry for several years and most likely he would still have held that position if he had lived somewhat closer to our College. We wish the celebrating couple and their children and grandchildren the blessing of our God upon their further pathway.

And, as a last personal note within the Alberta/Manitoba region: we heard that the REV. STEL is again doing most of the work and also preaches once a Sunday as a rule. Several times we are asked whether we know anything about his health; that's why we thought it would be appreciated if the information were given via our *Clarion*.

The fourth item of personal information regards MRS. KNIGGE. From members who returned from a visit to the Netherlands we learned that Mrs. Knigge has arrived in the Netherlands and will live in Groningen during the months of their stay in that country.

Now we turn to the Churches.

HAMILTON expects its Churchbuilding to be ready by March 1st. It is expected that the Rev. W. Looopstra will conduct the first service in the new building, and that is a very nice gesture, which will certainly be appreciated. CHATHAM is busy with trying to arrange the finances for the execution of their building plans. When you look at the figures on paper, it looks very good. It will have to be seen, of course, whether reality and plans cover each other.

The Young People Societies in Chatham have drawn up a letter about Capital Punishment which they sent to the Member of Parliament for that riding. Now that the matter of Capital Punishment has been pushed to the background because of the budget debate, there is still a possibility to make our conviction known.

At a meeting of the congregation at Hamilton, Prof. L. SELLES spoke on "Bible Translation" and after that meeting he was shown a copy of the Revised Standard Version which has Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8: 11 no longer in the footnotes but in the text. (1) "So my hope for this change has already been fulfilled," he writes in the Hamilton Bulletin. We thought it good to pass this information on.

The WORLD RELIEF FUND in Ontario has decided to help the Church at Edmonton with its project for Korea, since the funds received in Ontario cover amply the regular expenses of the help pledged by the Fund. Several slide-evenings were arranged by the Fund, during which the contributors could become better acquainted with the orphanages which are being supported.

Besides the extra contributions and donations which are asked for various causes, there are the regular contributions for mission, Theological College, cost of Church Federation (major assemblies etc.,) and others. One treasurer told the congregation via the bulletin that for those causes alone \$50.00 per communicant member per year was required. That means that for a married couple one hundred dollars per year is needed for causes which come over and above the expenses of the local Church. It was good that we are reminded of that. It also means that if one member of the Church does not fulfil his duty in this respect, another member has to pay double. The Churches in the West pay for the mission already \$13.50 per communicant member.

Via one bulletin we learned that the Classis Alberta/Manitoba requires that appeals are sent in at least three weeks before a classis is held, and then in as many copies as there are delegates. With the latter provision we agree wholeheartedly. Whenever one deems a matter important enough to send in an appeal he should not lay the burden of work and expenses on the Churches. He should see to it that the matter can be dealt with in a serious manner and therefore should provide sufficient copies for the delegates.

However, we disagree with the first part of the above decision. An appeal is directed to the major assembly, and this assembly is only there the moment when it is constituted. We deem it not in harmony with Reformed Church Polity to demand that an appeal

shall be sent three weeks before the major assembly is born. It has, therefore, always been the custom to acknowledge appeals even when they were put on the table just before the agenda is adopted. An appeal is not directed to Churches, nor to delegates, but to the major assembly. It appears to be in conflict with that accepted fact when it is decided that appeals shall be sent in three weeks before the major assembly to which the appeal is directed exists.

Let us close with something else.

Reading bulletins is an entertaining business. The most unexpected things appear to happen in various Churches. When a husband is in the hospital, this is no reason for joy, but his return home sometimes causes other problems, as seems to be the case in the Church where the bulletin mentioned: "Sr. B. has been ill since her husband came home from the hospital, but she is feeling better now."

Ministers sometimes do unexpected things, too. Very entertaining things, it seems. One bulletin announced: "Preparation for Congregational Meeting; next to singing the minister will introduce, "How to Build Up a Christian Home Library." We are sure that the Book of Praise will be included.

That sometimes the finances of a Church show a pitiful image, is well known. But we never knew that it was necessary to hold a "Door collection after the morning service for Korea (for a loaf of bread)."

vO

[1] This applies to Collins edition of the RSV as published by the "Canadian Bible Society", not to the edition of "The Bible Societies". In a later bulletin Prof. Selles points out that also the edition published by the A. J. Holman Company includes the mentioned passages in the text.

## THE SECTS

### ***The Armstrong Cult (4)***

#### 4. *Armstrong's Doctrine of God.*

The doctrine of God of this cult is centered in their interpretation of the Hebrew word for God, namely "Elohim". This word has a plural form in the Hebrew language, although it takes a singular verb when used for God as the Creator and Sustainer of heaven and earth. This cult teaches that this word Elohim is a uniplural noun, like such words as group, crowd, family and church.

"Elohim is the divine Family - only one family, but more than one divine Person . . . So the Eternal Father is a Person, and is God. Jesus Christ is a different Person - and is God", says Armstrong. And the important point of his teaching is that this divine family is open, i.e., that human beings can be born of God and become at the resurrection part of the God family. Human beings will become gods.

This explanation of the word Elohim was unknown to the Israelites in the Old Testament, to the followers of Jesus, who wrote the New Testament (the same explanation cannot be given for the Greek word for God - Theos) and to all Jews and Christians until Armstrong invented it.

A study of the word "Elohim" in some Bible passages proves that this explanation cannot be maintained.

1) In some places the word is used for rulers or judges, who are the

representatives of God (in their ruling and judging). Ex. 21:6; 22:8, 9, 28. Here the plural word Elohim is used for more than one person and it takes a plural verb.

2) Moses is said to be an Elohim to Aaron (Ex. 4:16) and to Pharaoh (Ex. 7:1).

3) Foreign gods are Elohim in the Hebrew language. Here the noun is a normal plural and takes a plural verb. Judg. 2:3; I Kings 12:28; II Kings 18:34, 35.

4) A single idol is also referred to as Elohim. I Sam. 5:7; Judg. 11:24; I Kings 18:24; 11:33.

In all the above cases Elohim is not a uniplural noun. Why should it be a uniplural noun when used for the true God?

And yet, Armstrong, is right to a certain degree, for God is a plurality in unity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Armstrong denies the Trinity and the personality of the Holy Spirit.)

To state that human beings can become gods is only possible if we make God too small. Armstrong never really states what it is that makes God God, what the nature of God is. In connection with the divinity of Jesus Christ we will see that he gets confused in this respect.

#### 5. *The Personality of the Holy Spirit.*

Following the Jehovah's Witnesses, Armstrong denies the personality of the Holy Spirit and calls it the

power of God. God uses this power just as man uses electricity. This doctrine strikes at the very heart of our faith, for only through the work of the Holy Spirit (who applies the redemption wrought by Christ) can we be regenerated to eternal life.

The Bible (especially the New Testament) is full of proof for the personality of the Holy Spirit as one of the members of the Godhead. We will mention only a few passages here:

In Acts 13:2-4 the Holy Spirit speaks in the first person "I". Only a personality can do this.

Acts 21:11 shows that the Holy Spirit can speak, command, and prophesy.

Acts 5:3 and 15:28 also prove that He is a member of the Godhead. The Baptismal Formula places the Holy Spirit on an equal footing with the Father and the Son.

#### 6. *The Person of Jesus Christ.*

Armstrong has rightly been called Mr. Confusion, and I believe that in his doctrine about Christ this comes especially to the fore.

We believe that the divine Person of the Son, the second Person in the Godhead, assumed human nature, having ever since both the divine and the human nature.

To show Armstrong's confusion I will quote a number of statements from his publications:



## THE ARMSTRONG CULT Continued from page 13.

"Jesus had possessed and shared the divine GLORY of God through eternity, UNTIL He divested Himself of that Power and Glory to be divinely begotten in His human mother Mary . . . He gave up ALL that He shared with God the Father, in order to save the human race."

This statement means that Jesus was not God while being man.

"Jesus Christ was the very God of the Old Testament - the Everliving One called YHVH . . . He now emptied Himself of eternal spirit life and became human flesh, subject to death . . . man killed YHVH their Creator."

If Jesus did not have eternal spirit life, while being man, Armstrong should be consistent and teach that He ceased to be YHVH.

"Jesus was also God - He was both human and divine . . . For three days and three nights the Second Person of the Godhead - EMMANUEL - God with us - God made human flesh - was DEAD."

Here Armstrong teaches that God, the Eternal One, can die; secondly, that Christ was still God while being a human being. But we have seen above that he teaches that Jesus divested Himself of divine Power and Glory. In what sense was He then God?

"Jesus said He is the SAME through all ages (Heb. 13:8) and does not change!"

Yet, Armstrong teaches that Christ's nature changed from being divine to human and once again to divine.

"One who had been God became man. Jesus Christ was actually telling them that God had become a human being. This was the same Jesus, who emptied Himself of the glory of being God and became a human being, fleshly, subject to death. Jesus . . . having already emptied Himself of being God."

Here Armstrong teaches again that Jesus was *not* God while being man.

"The penalty for sin is DEATH and God cannot die!"

He also teaches that God was dead for three nights and three days.

I still do not know what Armstrong teaches about the divinity of Christ while He was on earth.

On the one hand he says that Jesus changed from being God to

being man, that He emptied Himself of being God, while on the other hand he states that He was both human and divine.

It is really very confusing.

I wrote to them about this problem and received the following answer, "For a temporary period Jesus Christ 'put on' human flesh, and followed the way of life associated with that 'uniform'. But His office or rank of God remained unchanged."

Can you speak about Christ's divinity as being an "office or rank" of God? It seems to me that this is an example of their double-talk. Either they do not have a doctrine of the natures of Christ and therefore they contradict themselves, or they do not teach the same thing in private and in public. If this is the Plain Truth, I would like to see something which is not plain.

A. H. DEKKER



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

We sometimes hear the complaint: there should be more active participation of the congregation in the worship services. Behind that may be the thought that the congregation is active only in the singing, offering and to a certain extent also in prayer.

As though the minister is the only one who is active during the preaching! That is far from true, or should be far from true. For the preaching requires *hearing*. The whole congregation should be most active during the whole service! In all the parts of the worship service. And especially during the preaching! For it is through the preaching that God wants to work faith in our hearts and confirm us in faith! The whole congregation is involved!

The preaching is not just an opportunity for the minister to vent the results of his studying! No, it is for the hearers to work with! The congregation can never *relax* during the sermon. They are not *passive* but active. That also determines our attitude during the service and our position in the pew. The minister *speaks* - the congregation *listens*. The Lord speaks His Word to His people, through the preacher and that Word is the *living and abiding* Word of God. God speaks - the people hear. God speaks and the people respond. Respond to what? To the word of God, the holy gospel of which Paul

says that it is the *power of God to salvation*. As such the preaching is unique. For nowhere else is the power of God proclaimed than in the church of God. That gospel is preached or *proclaimed*. It is a proclamation of the gospel. The word used for preaching in the New Testament is: *proclaim*. That is what John the Baptist did. He proclaimed as a herald of the King that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand, was just around the corner so to speak.

The minister is a preacher who proclaims the good news that the King is coming. He proclaims that with great authority. For he proclaims that with the authority of the King Himself.

Every preacher therefore is such a herald who announces the gospel to God's people during the worship service. He is a herald who has been sent by the King Himself, as Paul says: "how can they preach except they be sent". The preacher is an ambassador of Christ Himself. Paul calls himself an angel of God (Gal. 4:4), an angel, i.e. a messenger. That means then that such a messenger has to pass on, to convey to God's people the message which God has given him. A herald can not come with his own gospel but must pass on to the people the good news of the King himself that the Kingdom is at hand. In the herald the King himself speaks and comes to the people.

Therefore the preaching of the Word is so important in the service, for we do not just listen to the minister, but to the minister as an ambassador of our King Jesus Christ.

As Isaiah said: "how beautiful are the feet of him that brings good tidings, that publishes peace and salvation, that says to Zion: Thy God reigns! That is the gospel: God is King. His Kingdom will come and has come already." That is a good tiding, for it proclaims to us that God Himself is our King and no one else! That He gives us peace. That we have been freed out of the power of the devil and that God rules over us. That is gospel-preaching indeed. But let us not forget that this proclamation also comes to us with a heavy demand. The demand to repent and believe. To anyone in the house of God the preacher must proclaim that God *is* King and will rule and that everyone must bow his knee to Him and that everyone who resists His royal power and rule and rejects His peace and salvation, will be cast down and destroyed by God our King. Therefore we can never say: every sermon must also be and always end as a happy gospel. For the Word of God is a gospel indeed to all those who believe, but to the stiffnecked and stubborn, to the unbelievers and disobedient, it is a power of God to destruction.

Every sermon requires from the hearers a decision for or against Christ the King. For He comes to them with His Word and a rejection of the preaching is a rejection of the Word of God. Christ was crucified and has risen from the dead and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father from where He shall come to judge the living and the dead. For He must rule as King till He has put all enemies under His feet.

The preacher on the pulpit is also a *witness* of the gospel. No, not in the sense the apostles were eye - and ear-witnesses of Jesus in all his work from the baptism of John till his ascension into heaven. But he is a witness in passing on to God's people the witness of the gospel, the witness of Jesus Christ. The biblical idea of witnessing is: to speak the *facts* and on the basis of these facts to accuse someone or excuse him or plead in favor of him.

The preacher then speaks, proclaims the facts of salvation and on the basis of these facts of Christ's

suffering, death, resurrection and ascension he preaches to the people that Jesus Christ must be accepted and believed as the Messiah of God. He speaks with great certainty: for these are the true facts which he proclaims. There is no doubt at all as to what happened. A preacher must never speak on the basis of his own experiences or the experience of other people. It is his task to preach Jesus Christ crucified and risen, the exalted King to whom has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. In that way he will press on his hearers to believe and submit to Christ as the King.

The sermon must not degenerate into an interesting story with perhaps a lot of information about the text, but it must always be proclamation and witnessing to Jesus Christ the King. As such the preaching accuses us on account of our unfaithfulness, our deviations from the Word of God, our lack of faith in our exalted King, our lack of longing for the second coming of the King.

The preaching must therefore be *concrete*. That requires a lot of serious study from the minister. For he must first study the Scriptures to be able to preach the true facts of salvation in a given text in a particular time, in the Old or the New Testament. From there he must move on into the present time in which the congregation lives. That means that he must know the present times and the facts and philosophies of the present. From the pulpit the preacher must proclaim that also in the present days Christ is King and is moving with great haste to the day of his Royal return. He must therefore not shy away from being concrete in his proclamation and witnessing. If for the sake of clarity for the congregation he must mention names, he should not hesitate to do so. Where the people of God are unfaithful to God's covenant, the preacher must concretely point out their sins to them. For he must witness that Christ is King and wants to rule in the heart and life of everyone in his church. Therefore no area of life may be left out in the preaching. For Christ is King of all of life.

The preaching of the Word of God is of the utmost importance in the worship services. For God is in our midst - with his Word and Holy Spirit and He has sent the minister as a preacher to proclaim His Word; His

Word of grace and peace, obtained by our King Jesus Christ but which at the same time is a proclamation that condemns everyone who does not bow to and submit to his royal dominion. Christ has sent the minister as a preacher in the congregation to witness for them - preaching the acquittal of God's wrath and eternal judgment - but at the same time to witness *against* us if we remain unfaithful in his service. For it is a witness of the last judgment on the day of Christ's return.

The preaching of the gospel is one of the *keys* of the Kingdom of heaven - it announces to us with divine authority that the King has come and is coming again and rules as the King of Zion. He sits at God's right hand as our exalted King. The preaching of the Word is so important in the worship services because of what we confess in L.D. 31, q. 84: How is the Kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the preaching of the holy gospel? By proclaiming and openly witnessing, according to the command of Christ, to believers, one and all, that whenever they receive the promise of the gospel by a true faith, all their sins are really forgiven them of God for the sake of Christ's merits; and on the contrary, by *proclaiming* and *witnessing* to all unbelievers and such as do not sincerely repent that the wrath of God and eternal condemnation abide on them so long as they are not converted. ACCORDING TO THIS WITNESS OF THE GOSPEL GOD WILL JUDGE, BOTH IN THIS LIFE AND IN THAT WHICH IS TO COME.

Is the preaching in the weekly services important? Yes, indeed, for it is the preaching of the Word of God and that Word of God is GOSPEL, PROCLAMATION AND WITNESS for or against us.

Do we still want more participation of the congregation during the worship services?

Let us realize how serious this preaching, this proclamation is. It involves us completely for the full 100% during every service, especially during the sermon.

The preaching of the Word requires us to be *hearers* of the Word in order that we may become *doers* of the Word.

According to this witness of the gospel God will judge us both in this life and in the life which is to come.

M. C. WERKMAN

# "Preaching God's Word"

Under this heading the Rev. G. VanDooren of Burlington delivered the second of a series of lectures, *Preaching and Interpreting the Scriptures* in the 1970's, sponsored by the Fellowship of Canadian Reformed University Students. To a capacity crowd in the auditorium of the church in Toronto, Rev. VanDooren revealed some of the joys of being a preacher and warned against the attempts which are being made to undermine the centrality of the preaching in the '70's.

Preaching is the second most important thing in the world (next to the coming of Christ Himself). "It is the bulwark of God in this world". As we read in Romans 10, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news," and in vs. 17, "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ". There is only one office of the preaching of the Word according to the Scriptures and the Confession. In the form for the ordination of ministers we read "how indispensable it (the pastoral office) is for bringing men to salvation; which is also the reason why the Lord would have such an office remain." In addressing the congregation the form reads: "Remember that God Himself through him speaks unto you and entreats you. Receive the Word, which he, according to Scripture shall preach unto you, 'not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God'."

Many attempts have been made in the past to take away the textbook of the preacher, that is, the Bible; thereby undermining the authority of the Scriptures as well as him who brings the message. Already in the middle ages the church replaced the Bible by the missal and all manner of forms and rituals in a language not spoken by the ordinary man. It is one of the blessings of the Reformation that the Bible was made accessible to all.

With the advent of the scientific

age, the age of rationalism, further attempts were made to rob the Bible of its historicity in order to make it more acceptable to modern man with his desire for empirical evidence. One of these attempts has been the "demythologizing" of the Bible advanced by theologians such as R. Bultmann.

The betrayal of the Reformed heritage insofar as the teaching about the Bible is concerned was characterized by Rev. VanDooren as "the double trick of the double distance". Many modern theologians have been saying that the Scriptures were written by men who were removed by many years from the actual events and consequently cannot be taken as reliable chroniclers. We are also too far removed from the early cultural background of the first Christians. There is a distance between the Bible and God's redemptive acts and between the Bible and the man in the 70's (including the preacher). All such attempts, however, should be resisted in the spirit of Psalm 139 - hate the attacks upon the Bible with a perfect hatred!

The pulpit is the black sheep today: Preaching should not be a one-man show. There is a need for dialogue, preaching about "relevant topics". Preachers should go out to become instruments of social betterment, thus the critics say.

The Bible is not a book of sermons as some have said but, rather, a sermon is the explication and application of the word of God. "Preaching is the holy activity of explaining the word of God and applying it to the edification of the church and the honour of God . . ."

It pleases the Lord to provide preachers to bring the Word so that men might be brought to Christ. The minister's task is to keep his ears attuned to the congregation - their needs, their sins, the tasks they have to fulfil. Through continuous prayer and meditation he learns to choose his text, which is a window through

which you look at the whole Bible. Rev. VanDooren emphasized that preaching is a "two-way business." The minister is a go-between; he feeds the flock with the Scriptures after they have lived in the world for six days of the week. The congregation should pray for the minister during the week when he is preparing his sermon, in a sense, "pull the does not just read a manuscript but he actually appears on the pulpit does a minister "deliver" his sermon. He does not just read a manuscript but relies upon the communication between the pulpit and the pew to provide the spark which makes the preaching truly a "happening."

Rev. VanDooren stressed that the needs of the 70's are no different from what they have always been. We need a ministry of reconciliation; we need not just "relevant preaching" but what God thinks is important, whether we like it or not. We should beware of the danger of dualism and instead become equipped for service, above all remembering that God is the only King in this world worth serving.

HAROLD J. LUDWIG



## HYMN 8

### Stanza 1.

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here,  
Until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

### Paraphrase.

O come, Isa. 64:1; Emmanuel, Isa. 7:14; Mat. 1:23; and ransom, Mat. 20:28; Thy captive people, Isa. 45:13; 61:1; who mourn in exile, Ps. 42:5; 137:1; waiting for the day of deliverance, Dan. 9:3-20. Rejoice, Isa. 66:10; for Emmanuel shall come, Mal. 3:1; O Israel!



# let's read

## THE EARMUFFS (3).

The severe cold embraces him and makes him shiver. A drowsiness oozes through his mind, a willingness to sleep, to let it all go, to give up fighting and resisting. But Peter does not want to give in! He is not allowed to surrender: he must go to Allen, he must make it right! Drops of sweat stand out on his forehead as he makes an effort to roll on his side. If only he can see what is wrong with his leg. His body quivers with tension, his breath comes in gasps as though he were suffocating, as if his lungs do not function properly, but he manages! He succeeds . . . ! He inhales deeply and tries to regulate his breathing, steady . . . steady . . . Now he can see his legs. There is not anything peculiar about them: they are partly buried in snow, that's all, and maybe the right leg is twisted at an unnatural angle. Peter tries to think hard. If only he could get back on the road again! There is no other possibility than pushing and wriggling, and the pain . . . Peter shakes his head vehemently; wet snow drips from his hair; it is the only way. He sets his teeth and closes his eyes, he takes a deep breath and pushes, pushes to the utmost of his power. Pain flares and burns and smarts through his body; curtains of red and grey flames sway before his eyes; the legs, the black, limp legs scrape over the snow. Peter grunts . . . In his ears the faraway drumming of hostile tomtoms, under his hair a thousand little stings of vicious mosquito bites, all through his body the pain flashing like lightning . . . lightning . . . Then he rolls onto his stomach again; his mouth falls open a little way, and but for a convulsive jerk of his arm he lies still. Out of his pocket sticks an earmuff . . .

x x x x x

"Who was it, Mom?" The little boy nestles up to his mother and affectionately snuggles his head under her arm. "Mom . . . ?" She puts down the knife with which she is cutting the bacon, and looks down into the big questioning eyes.

"I don't know, Billy. I really don't know . . ." Mechanically she lays the slices in the frying pan, dries her hands on her apron and shoves the loose hairs behind her ear. "I wonder . . .," she murmurs and stares out of the window. Who was that boy that appeared so unexpectedly in front of the house

and disappeared as suddenly? Would Allen know? The boy must have been about his age . . . "Billy, put on your coat, quick! Get Allen for me." She returns to the stove and checks the pans. "Now, what was I to do?" Her looks wander through the poorly furnished room. Billy has put on his coat and sits wrestling with his boots. Ready! He opens the door . . . "Your hat, Billy! You'll freeze!" Gone already; but as he scurries past the window she sees him pulling the hat from his pocket. The good little lad . . .

Her eyes rest on her old mother who seems to have fallen asleep over the knitting in her lap. How beautiful and tender she looks, the amiable old lady . . . And Jenny, the dear little tot, quietly mothering her dolls at Grandma's feet. Grandma, the mother of her late husband, and the children: Allen, Billy, and Jenny . . . it is all she has; God left them to her when He took John unto Himself. How could she complain, even if life was difficult at times . . . ? She shrugs her shoulders and straightens her back. That boy . . . It does not leave her in peace. People seldom come here; in the few weeks they live here now, she has hardly seen any people, and the ones that came - the doctor, the ladies from the Ladies' Auxiliary, the minister of course - had come by car. This boy . . .

Nervously she paces to the window again and fixes her eyes on the spot where the trail sharply drops away. There he stood, a moment only, slightly swaying on his feet like a drunken man, and was gone. So strange, so . . . so . . . alarming! She would not know how to explain her feelings, but she is restless and alert . . . Her heart tells her the boy is in danger; an unknown threat is hovering about him, a danger which she might avert . . .

"He is in danger," she whispers, and aloud, "Danger . . ." She turns around, hurries to the stove and turns off all the heat. She pulls her coat off the peg, wraps a shawl round her neck and throws the cloak on. "Mom . . .," she gently taps the old lady's shoulder, "I'll be back in a minute. All right?" Grandma blinks. "Ja, ja, natuurlijk . . ." (1) Puzzled she looks at the drawn face of her daughter, who is already at the door. "Ja, ja, ga maar . . ." (2)

The door slams shut. As she passes the window, the mother stands out against the rapidly darkening sky, a moment only. Then she is gone. Grandma shoves the knitting off her lap and pushes herself up out of the chair. "I must have fallen asleep," she mutters. "What time can it be?" Her veined hand passes over the tired eyes.

(1) Dutch for "Yes, yes, of course."

(2) Dutch for "Yes, yes, go ahead . . ."

EWOUDE GOSKER

(to be continued in next issue)

# our little magazine

Dear Busy Beavers,

Thank you for all your letters I received! Such a pile of them! You really have been Busy Beavers again! But I really think that you like doing our quizzes best of all. Am I right? According to your mail I am! Anyway, I'm glad you enjoy them, maybe with your Dad or Mom or brothers and sisters.

Also in the mail was our first BOOK LOOK! And another quiz for you. Lots of things to do! I hope you will all enjoy joining in our Busy Beaver activities.

But do you remember what I asked you last time! There are some boys and girls who cannot join in all sorts of sports and fun, and we were going to send in their names and addresses to Aunt Betty so that the Busy Beavers can send them "day-brighteners." If you know of someone who would enjoy some mail from us will you let me know right away?

## BOOK NOOK

*The Green Turtle Mystery*

by Ellery Queen, Jr.

"Empty?" exclaimed Mr. Firkins, the real estate agent. "Certainly it's empty".

But two boys - Djuna and Ben - see lights behind the shuttered windows.

When Djuna knocks the door opens and there stands a girl.

"Shut that door, Maria," shouts an angry voice.

That's when Djuna lost Waterbury. Waterbury is Ben's small green pet turtle.

When the two boys go back to rescue Waterbury they discover some strange clues that lead to the solution of a case that the Secret Service couldn't crack.

Thank you, *Andrew Vink*, for our first BOOK LOOK. Have you already received the bookmark I promised you?

Remember when you write *your* BOOK LOOK to tell the title, the author, what the book is about, and why you like the book. And listen, Busy Beavers, you know there are plenty of books around that are not worth our while to read or are just no good. Such books, of course, we don't care to hear about. But if you've read a really *good* book that other Busy Beavers can find in their library, let's hear about it! You will be rewarded with a bookmark!

Now the quiz you've been waiting for, courtesy of *George Wiegers*.

Match the names to the description:

- |                   |                                        |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1. Delilah        | -He was raised from death              |
| 2. Uzzah          | -He was turned loose instead of Jesus. |
| 3. Simon          | -He became insane.                     |
| 4. Barabbas       | -He was killed for touching the ark.   |
| 1. Delilah        | -He was raised from death.             |
| 2. Uzzah          | -He was turned loose instead of Jesus. |
| 3. Simon          | -He became insane.                     |
| 3. Simon          | -He became insane.                     |
| 4. Barrabbas      | -He was killed for touching the ark.   |
| 5. Jairus         | -The Revelation was revealed to him.   |
| 6. Nebuchadnezzar | -His daughter was raised from death.   |
| 7. Belshazzar     | -He died because he lied to Peter.     |
| 8. Lazarus        | -She betrayed Samson.                  |
| 9. Ananias        | -He tried to buy the Holy Spirit.      |
| 10 John           | -In his time Bablyon was captured.     |



## From The Mailbox

First let's welcome our new members. Hello, *Sharon Kieneker*, welcome to the Busy Beaver Club. Did you enjoy the Puzzle Wheel? And did you receive your membership card already?

And welcome to you too, *Shirley Devries*. I'm glad you enjoy Our Little Magazine and the quizzes. That makes you a real Busy Beaver!

We're glad to have you join us, *Carl Mulder*. You did very well on the Puzzle Wheel! Keep up the good work, and write again soon.

Welcome to the Club, *Caroline Hoeksema*. How is everyone in your family after the accident? Better, we hope! You did well on the quiz too, Caroline. And thank you for the interesting picture.

Hello, *Margaret Eelhart*. We hope you'll enjoy all our Busy Beaver activities. Have you done much skating this winter? Please write again soon, Margaret.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Adele and Rolean Hulzebosch*. We are glad to have sisters join us. You can help each other with the puzzles and quizzes, right?

Hello, *Jackie Vander Woerd*. Do you miss your sister now that she is married? You did well on the Puzzle Wheel, too, Jackie. Keep up the good work. Thank you for the puzzle. It must have been a lot of work!

Thank you for your letter, *Henry Nieuwenhuis*. Do write and tell me how you did in your public speaking contest! I'm really curious. And maybe you'd like to write a BOOK LOOK for our BOOK NOOK on that book about the Blackfoot Indians. It must be very interesting.

I'm glad, *Vera Vandenberg*, that you didn't let the language barrier spoil your visit with your Dutch

cousins. And what an interesting trip you made! Imagine, no snow in Switzerland!

Congratulations, *John Hofsink*! You had both quizzes all right! Keep up the good work! And how is your snow shovelling coming, John?

And you had yours right too, *George Hofsink*! Did you and your brother help each other? Hope you had a lot of fun doing them.

Thank you, *Melanie De Gelder*, for your nice letter. You did very well on your quiz too. And weren't you lucky to be able to help celebrate your teacher's birthday? Write again soon, Melanie.

And thanks to you too, *George Wieggers*, for your letter, poem and quiz! The Busy Beavers are such quiz-lovers, we'll do this one right away! Your poem we'll have to save for next February.

Did you have a good birthday, *Joyce Van't Land*? You did well on your quiz, too. Have you tried today's?

You were quick with your answers, *Irene Van Oene*! And you did well, too. What is your dog's name? And do you enjoy your kind of "rotary"?

Thank you for your nice chatty letter, *Jo-Anne Jans*. What a lot of pets you have! I'm sure not too many of the Busy Beavers keep ring-necked and golden pheasants!

I was wondering, *Jo-anna Flach*, when you would send us another story! Thank you for it, and your letter too.

Let's finish with Jo-anna's story then.

#### THE FIRST SNOWFALL

I was climbing into bed when suddenly it started to snow! Most children would laugh and shout. They'd be very happy! NOT ME! Do you know why? I had NO BOOTS! Everyone I'm sure would be unhappy. Well I climbed up on my bunk and sobbed quietly in my pillow. Finally I fell asleep. The next morning I jumped out of bed. I went straight into the livingroom. There my brothers were dancing round and round. I came in with a long face but they didn't notice. Soon my Mom came out. I told her why I was unhappy. She laughed. I didn't think it was funny.

"I bought you some last night," she said.

"You did?!" I exclaimed. "Oh boy!"

I joined my brothers.

Song long for now Busy, Beavers,

Aunt Betty

P.S. My address is now:  
Box 54, Fergus, Ont. N1M 2W7.

Engaged:

MARY DE WIT

and

WILLIAM VAN VEEN

February 27, 1973  
293 Stuart Avenue  
Winnipeg, Man. R2G 0Y7

With great joy and thankfulness to the Lord we announce the birth of our daughter:

LORI-ANNE

born February 9, 1973.

A sister for Teresa and Brenda  
Bill and Annemarie Bartels  
(nee Sikkema)

R. R. No. 1  
Jerseyville, Ontario

Thankful to the Lord, the Creator of Life, we announce the birth of

ROLAND SAMUEL

Henry and Gaya Klos

February 24, 1973

11704 - 97 Ave.  
Surrey, B.C.

We are looking for a mature person who is willing to keep house for, and take care of, our elderly father at his home near Smithville, Ontario. For further information, please contact:

P. Oosterhoff

R. R. No. 9, Dunnville, Ont.

Phone (416) 774-4843

or if more convenient

F. G. Oosterhoff

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Phone (204) 284-3964

Thankful to the Lord who made everything well, we announce the birth of our daughter:

CHERYL DIANE

Dick and Ina Boeve

February 11, 1973  
18 - 1st Street, S.W.  
Carman, Manitoba

With Gratitude to God the giver and keeper of life we announce the birth of our son and brother:

ALLEN LAMBERT

Lammert and Jane Komdeur  
nee Endeman

Mark  
James

February 20, 1973  
Thornhill, Ontario.