

How beautiful upon
the mountains are
the feet of him that
bringeth good tidings,
that publisheth peace; ♫

ISAIAH 52:7

And the angel said
unto them, fear not:
for behold, I bring
you good tidings of great
joy, which shall be to all
people.

For unto you is born this
day in the city of David,
a Savior which is Christ
the Lord. ♫

ST. LUKE 2, 10-11

CHRISTMAS:

Celebration of D-Day in the History of Spiritual Enmity



Christmas: almost everyone thinks and speaks of peace on earth. People try to be kind and peaceful around the Christmas tree, giving presents to each other. Did not the angel say to the shepherds, "Do not be afraid. For behold, I bring you good news of a great joy

which will be for all the people. For . . . there has been born for you a Saviour, Who is Christ, the Lord."? Did not the angel chorus speak, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace . . ."? (Luke 2:10, 11, 14) Peace to men! Finally! Those are joyful tidings! For mankind is tired of all the devastating wars with their destruction, with misery, sorrow and grief. Mankind wants peace, for that will be the condition for a good world to live in.

Political and ecclesiastical leaders understand this cry for peace on earth among their people, so they will speak about peace on earth and tell people how hard they are working and will work for that peace on earth. And all men are called to co-operate. So had we not better join the chorus of peace-singers instead of speaking about "D-Day" (Decisive battle-day in a war) and "Enmity", as is pointed out in the title of this article? Well, read and judge.

I THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE, A "MESSAGE OF JOY".

The angel proclaimed great joy to the shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem when the Christ of God was born. The angel was a "messenger of joy". He, with his message of joy and announcing peace, reminds us of Isaiah 52. There we read in verse 7:

How lovely on the mountains
Are the feet of him who brings good news,
Who announces peace
And brings good news of happiness,
Who announces salvation,
And says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!' (N.A.S.B.) (1)

"Him who brings good news" is the rendering in English of what in the Hebrew bible text is one word. It is a form of a verb that means "to bring good news", news that makes the hearer glad, or is intended to do so. It is remarkable that such a "messenger of joy" almost always appears in a situation of war: he brings the good news of a victory from the battlefield. So, for instance, Ahimaaz is such a "messenger of joy", bringing to David the good news of the victory for him. (II Samuel 18:26, 27)

So, imagine in those olden days a people attacked by a foreign king and his army. The king of the attacked nation leads his army to the border to fight that foreign king. And in a first, but decisive, battle he defeats the army of the assaulting king. The first thing the victorious king will do after he wins the battle is to call one of his field officers and send him as a "messenger of joy" to his people and family

at home in the capital. The watchmen, looking out on the walls of the capital, see the messenger of joy coming far off in the distance. For he can be recognized by the festal wreath around his head. They lift up their voices and shout joyfully together to announce to the city the coming of the "messenger of joy". Then the people break forth for joy on account of the redemptive victory of their king.

It is in such a context of war that we must read Isaiah 52. In verse 8 the prophet speaks of watchmen who are told to lift up their voices. In verse 9 the waste places of the destroyed city of Jerusalem are told to shout joyfully because, "the LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem".

Now Isaiah is prophesying about the return of Israel out of the Babylonian captivity and he compares this return with Israel's exodus out of Egypt. In verse 4 we read, "For thus says the Lord God (Yahweh): My people went down at first into Egypt to reside there, then the Assyrians oppressed them without cause". And in verse 11 and 12 the prophet speaks in the name of the LORD:

Depart, depart, go out from there . . .

But you will not go out in haste,

Nor will you go as fugitives;

For the LORD will go before you;

And the God of Israel will be your rear guard.

These last words remind us of the fiery pillar of cloud in which the LORD protectingly led His people out of Egypt.

That exodus out of Egypt was a war of the LORD. In Exodus 15, the song which Moses made after the Egyptian army had been drowned in the Red Sea, we read, "The LORD is a Warrior". The exodus out of Babel is also such a campaign. Besides what we read in the verses 11 and 12 of Isaiah 52 and what clearly shows that the return out of Babel is a second exodus under the powerful leadership of the LORD as Warrior, verse 10 already spoke:

The LORD has bared His holy arm

In the sight of all the nations;

That all the ends of the earth may see

The salvation of our God.

In those days, when marching to the front line of battle, a warrior kept his right arm covered with cloth as much and long as possible against the burning heat of the sun. For with that arm he had to fight. When, however, the moment of fighting came, then he bared his arm. So the whole context in which the "messenger of joy" appears in Isaiah 52 is the situation of a war in which the LORD as Israel's Commander and King is the Conquerer. The messenger says to Zion, "Your God reigns", or better, "Your God is King". He remains the King. For in a decisive battle He defeated the enemy and brought salvation for His people.

We can make a comparison with a moment of the Second World War - the invasion of the Allies in Normandy, France, on June 6th, 1944. That day is called "D-Day". That means "Decision Day". The success of that invasion on that day was decisive for the outcome of the

war. It was the beginning of the end. The war still went on. The final defeat had yet to come, but in principle the enemy was conquered.

Now Luke's telling of the birth of Jesus, the Christ, corresponds with the prophecy of Isaiah. Both Isaiah and Luke are inspired by the same Holy Spirit. So in Jesus Christ also Isaiah 52 finds its fulfillment. For the return from the Babylonian exile was a first fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. The full realization was to come in the redemptive work of God in Christ Jesus. For it is in Christ - the suffering Servant of the LORD (Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12) - that God calls His people to full salvation through His mighty arm. Behold, when Christ Jesus was born a first "messenger of joy" arrived. A field officer of the heavenly army of the LORD came to God's people. By order of God, the King, he announced great joy; he brought the good news of the decisive battle in the old war between God and the devil; between the woman with her seed and the old serpent, Satan, with his seed.

God shall arise, and by His might
Put all His enemies to flight;
In conquest shall He quell them. (Psalm 68:1, B.o. P.)
But let the just with joyful voice
In God's victorious might rejoice;
Let them exult before Him. (Psalm 68:2, B.o. P.)

II THE STRUCTURE OF LUKE 2:1-20

So Luke speaks about the continuing enmity, which God had put in paradise and which He since maintained when giving His gospel about the birth of Jesus, the Christ, in chapter 2:1-20. We have to divide these verses into three parts; and not into two, as often is done: the verses 1-7 about the birth itself in Bethlehem in the days of Caesar Augustus; and the verses 8-20 about the angels as messengers of that birth to the shepherds. This division into two parts is wrong, because as far as I can see, Luke himself divides into three parts. He does so by the use of the expression "and it came about". We find it in verse 1, verse 6 and verse 15. (2)

NEW YEAR'S PRAYER

For thy mercy and thy grace,
Faithful through another year,
Hear our song of faithfulness;
Jesu, our Redeemer, hear.

In our weakness and distress,
Rock of strength, be thou our stay;
In the pathless wilderness
Be our true and living Way.

Keep us faithful, keep us pure,
Keep us evermore thine own,
Help, O help us to endure,
Fit us for thy promised crown.

H. DOWNTON

Now Luke tells us first, in the verses 1 to 5, about the historical situation in which the Redeemer of heaven and earth is born. Then, in the verses 6 to 14, he tells us of the fact of Christ's birth; and of the explaining, prophetic Word of God regarding that redemptive fact, as brought by the angels to the shepherds. Finally, in the verses 15 to 20, we find the reaction - faith and unbelief - with respect to the preached message of the birth of Christ.

One more remark has to be made about that expression with which Luke divides his narrative. "And it came about" is not common Greek language. It is a Hebrewism. That means, it is a Hebrew idiom translated literally into Greek. It is remarkable that the Greek Luke so often uses this Hebrew way of speaking. In a certain way we can say he starts his gospel with: "It came about in the days of Herod, the King of Judea; a certain priest named Zacharias . . ." This very same sentence construction we find in Judges 13:2 and more or less in I Samuel 1:1. "And it came about" - that is how the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel begin. "And it came about", means: God started a new work, which is at the same time also a continuation of His work; it is a new and a next step towards God's goal. God set forth the one history of redemption.

From this we can learn how the Greek physician, Luke, purposely uses a Hebrew way of speaking in order to show that what he tells about is the continuation of God's work. God started His work on the basis of His paradise promise about the coming seed of the woman. The Old Testament shows how God continued to keep that enmity in preserving the seed of the woman, in order that it could bring the great Seed into the world to perform the work of redemption. Luke wants to make clear that what he tells about are again great works of God in that continuing history of redemption - through maintained enmity - in the promised Messiah Who now is born in Bethlehem.

III THE HISTORICAL SITUATION

In the first part of Luke 2, the verses 1 to 5, Luke tells us what the historical situation was around the birth of Jesus, the Christ. "It came about in those days, that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth", i.e. of the whole Roman empire. Palestine was part of that Roman empire in those days. So the Jews, the Old Testament people of God, were subjects of the Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus. Who was that Augustus, whose decree brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem?

Augustus, whose real name was Octavianus, was the great Prince of Peace in his empire. In the church we speak of the Advent of Christ. It means: the expected and foretold coming of Christ as the great Redeemer. But in those days there was also spoken of the Advent of the Roman Redeemer. The poet, Virgil (70 to 19 B.C.) spoke in one of his poems of the birth of that child which would bring the golden age. With that child there would be "the rise of the Eternal Light". "During your reign the traces of our guilt which still remained will be wiped out in order to redeem the world of her eternal anguish. Divine life he receives, the lad, and sees the old heroes go in the procession of the gods to appear also himself in their midst. As the Prince of Peace of the Kingdom which Father's power founded."

Virgil sings: "the great turn of the times is here. The divine king can come at any moment. He will bring to an end the evils of before, He will establish an empire of peace

as a blessing for a renewed mankind. Even in nature, outside in the field, everything will be new. Poisoning plants will disappear; the field will become a garden of Eden; and ox and lion will graze together."

And it was said that this song of Virgil came true in the person of Caesar Augustus. This man had his "advent" in Rome. After fourteen years of war Octavianus returned to Rome as the great conqueror. Then the temple of Janus, Roman god of war, was closed. For Octavianus' last victory was the end of wars between nations; it was also the end of the many assassinations of party leaders and the end of the massacre of great armies. He returned to reign in peace. After disorder, destruction, and misery, he finally brought rest. He restored the economy. He established order. He gave to everybody his rights. In short, the great Roman empire, "the world" of those days, became a world of peace, healthy and wealthy; a very good world to live in - humanly speaking - for everybody who accepted him as the great Ruler.

Because of all his great works, Octavianus received the name "Augustus". This means, "the exalted", "he who is worthy to receive divine adoration." He was said to be "the incarnation of Zeus". Zeus was the highest God of the Greeks and Romans. Temples were built for "Augustus" where sacrifices were offered to him. "Augustus is the Saviour of the world, who was to come, that was the faith of his people (the Romans), and the confession of the nations."

Augustus also became the High Priest in Rome, who purged out the sins of the past in ritual offerings. He was said to be the mediator between heaven and earth; god and man in one person. With him returned to the earth, "faithfulness and peace; honour and chastity; valour and blessing." For he was the exalted son of God (Augustus). He was the only Saviour. Salvation was in no one else". In prayers and on deathbeds, his name was called upon. He was called "the wondrous star which makes its light rise with the splendour of the great, heavenly Saviour". He was the "Bringer of the great blessing". (3)

More could be quoted, but this is enough to show a little of who Caesar Augustus was, and what he was said and believed to be. It is also enough to notice that the names which are given to Christ in the Bible were given to Augustus, too. It is even so that, when the Christ of God was about to be born, the other "Saviour" had already established his solid Roman "kingdom". He had already established a kingdom of peace on earth. He was there already upon his throne in Rome.

There was rest and order; there was peace on earth. He brought really great relief after the times of evil and misery. Life could again develop and flourish under his reign. But it was not the peace of the only true God. It was a rest and peace like that of Babel after the flood when that tower was built to the glory of man (Genesis 11). It was one world, one human race, under one king, against God. Augustus really was an anti-christ, an anti-redeemer!

So we now clearly see here in Luke 2 already, saviour overagainst Saviour; "Incarnation" overagainst "incarnation"; "son of God" overagainst "Son of God"; "Peace" overagainst "peace". In this situation, when God started His new work of bringing His Saviour into the world as a baby, Satan was already finished. He already had his saviour of the world on the throne. His man had already established peace on earth. So, what was God yet to do? He seemed to be too late. The world was already redeemed

by Augustus. That was the situation then. But Luke started with "and it came to pass" ("en het geschiedde"). That means: it is definitely God who "makes" history! It is He Who reigns. Satan and Augustus could only be subservient to God's work, in spite of themselves. Aware or not aware of it, Augustus in issuing his decree was the means in God's hand by which Joseph and Mary were led to Bethlehem so that Jesus was born there in accordance with the Scriptures.

IV THE FACT OF THE BIRTH AND ITS PROCLAMATION

In this way, we come to the second part of Luke's story, the verses 6 to 14 - "and it came about" that Mary gave birth to her firstborn son, Jesus. God did not stop because Satan already had his redeemer on the throne. No, He continued His work according to His promises. The true Son of the only true God came on earth as a little child, and that fact was the start of the decisive battle between God and Satan; between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

Although Satan already had his saviour of the whole world on the throne, who had already finished the "redemption of the world," while God's Saviour was only a newborn baby yet; although Satan's "king" was already reigning over the world in glory, while Jesus was laid down in a manger in a stable, nevertheless, the very fact of His birth means: God is King. Israel's God reigns and will reign! Not Satan.

Not an anti-Christ. Satan is now in principle defeated, for the great Seed of the Woman, which would bruise the head of the serpent, is born.

Oh sure, it does not look like that at all yet. But look, there is a heavenly "messenger of joy". He speaks the Word of God in which he explains the fact of that birth and its importance. The Saviour is born, the Lord, the Christ - that is, God's great Office-bearer, the Servant of the LORD. Indeed, he is lying in a manger. The shadow of the cross falls upon Him. Isaiah 52 is followed by Isaiah 53! The Servant of the LORD "will prosper. He will be high and lifted up, and greatly exalted". (Isaiah 52:13) But:

He was despised and forsaken of men,

A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief . . .

But He was pierced through for our transgressions

He was crushed for our iniquities. (Isaiah 53:3, 5)

It is via that way of humiliation, of sufferings, that God's Saviour will come to His throne, the throne of David's house and, at the same time, the throne in heaven. It sure does not look like the D-Day - the decisive battle - in God's favour. But the angel said so, and a heavenly host - army (!) of angels - confirms it. "Glory to God in the highest". For the LORD has bared His mighty arm. He arose to the battle to have the head of the devil bruised.

We today know how that child did defeat the Serpent, how He decisively won the battle through His death at the cross, paying for our guilt before God. We know how His ascension to the heavenly throne meant that Satan, "the Accuser of the brethren", was cast out of heaven! (Revelations 12:5-9)

However, Christ's birth was only the beginning of the decisive battle. It was not the final battle yet. That means that the same spiritual enmity, put in paradise, still continues to dominate history. Satan is cast out of heaven. The heaven is cleansed. But he is thrown upon earth, trying to "deceive the whole world." (Revelations 12:9) His deceit is still that he leads people to believe that man can save

himself and his world. Is not our world torn apart by wars and revolutions? Is not our world divided also because of the great contrasts between black and white; between poor and rich? Is not our world more and more a world of destruction of life through decadence; through sin and lawlessness; through pollution of soil, air, and water? Isn't our world economically becoming a mess? Don't you already hear a voice starting to scream for peace . . . peace . . . rest . . . order? The United Nations Organization, the World Council of Churches, the political and ecclesiastical world, cries and works for rest, for peace; a human peace. The ideal of the French revolution: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. The ideal also of Beethoven, expressed in his ninth symphony: "Alle Menschen werden Bruder" (All men become brethren). Don't you already hear a voice calling for a strong arm to create that order and rest and peace? Peace of man!

God has his plan. We make plans. Do not forget that Satan plans, too. He is the great organizer. He works behind the scenes; though not visible to the natural eye, he is therefore not less real! He, too, works towards a great goal; man, as his viceroy, on the throne of the whole world: a world of *his* peace, rest and order; overagainst God and

THE LORD HAS ONCE TO DAVID SWORN

The LORD has once to David sworn
An oath he never will bemoan:
"There will to you a child be born,
A son shall from your body spring
Whom on your throne I'll set as king."

"Your sons, if they my covenant hold
And hear when I my law unfold
Which I revealed in days of old,
They also shall forever own
Your kingdom and your glorious throne."

For Zion, by all men admired,
The LORD has chosen and acquired
And for his resting-place desired.
"Jerusalem is founded well,
For evermore I here will dwell.

"On her I will my blessings shed.
Abundantly she will be fed;
I'll satisfy her poor with bread.
Her priests I'll with salvation dress;
Her saints will shout in happiness.

"There I will cause, in David's line,
A horn to sprout, a lamp to shine
For my anointed as a sign.
His enemies I'll clothe with shame,
But deck his crown with lustrous fame."

Book of Praise. Psalm 132, stanzas 6-10

His Christ! The tower of Babel and Caesar Augustus in their fulfillment. Satan works, organizes, leads, according to plans made long before. People still ask for "Augustus", even in the name of Christ. The enmity goes on. But in the continuing battle between Christ and Satan the "message of joy" because of the birth of Christ Jesus, God's Redeemer, is proclaimed. And still this message is placed overagainst the message of Satan with *his* "redemption".

V THE REACTION TO THE PROCLAIMED REDEMPTIVE WORK OF GOD.

Now the third part of Luke's narrative, the verses 15 to 20: the reaction to the preached gospel of God. In that enmity, God fought the decisive battle. Jesus, the Christ, was born and that redemptive-historical fact was proclaimed by the "messenger of joy". But did that message find faith? Isaiah asks "Who has believed our message?" (Isaiah 53:1)

The birth in poverty, in humiliation, was not a stumbling block for the shepherds. They reacted to the proclaimed redemptive work of God in faith. They became the "watchmen on the wall" (Isaiah 52:8), who lifted up their voices to tell all the people in Bethlehem about the proclaimed message of joy. They preached the redemption of God through that poor Child in the manger. But the people of Bethlehem did not want to believe. The Jews refused faith in Jesus the Christ. They crucified Him. They wanted an earthly Jewish empire, just like that of Augustus. And in the Roman empire the Church of Christ was also persecuted, because the christians refused to burn incense to "the divine Roman Emperor"; and because the "world" refused to reject "Augustus" and accept Jesus the Christ as Redeemer.

Still the gospel of Jesus Christ who redeemed through the cross - reconciliation through satisfaction - is rejected. Peace can be established without that. But now again, on which side do we stand? We have to choose: Augustus or Christ! Satan or God! Peace of and in and with this world, or Christ's peace with sufferings with the continuing enmity. But know, it was three times: "and it came about". Finally, it is God who makes the history of this world. Although it still does not look that way, God has won the decisive battle. Jesus, the Christ, sits in heaven on His throne. That is the guarantee that in the final battle God in Christ will win the war. Human peace cannot last. The Roman empire had an end. The peace of God and the rest which Christ gives in his eternal Kingdom will last everlastingly. In all what "came and will come about," He reigns towards that glorious Kingdom of God. That was so in 1973. That will also be so in 1974. Blessed are those who do not see but, nevertheless believe, and work with Him in faith towards His Kingdom of Peace, rejecting a human empire with the peace of this world as given by Satan.

J. GEERTSEMA

(1) N.A.S.B. means that this is the translation of the New American Standard Bible. If not otherwise mentioned, all the translations are taken from the N.A.S.B.

(2) It is regrettable that the King James has only twice this "and it came to pass", namely, in verse 1 and verse 15; it reads in verse 6, "and so it was . . ." The R.S.V. does not render the Greek words at all. The N.A.S.B., however, gives it the three times.

(3) All this about Augustus can be read in "De Koning en de keizers", by Ethelbert Stauffer - a Dutch translation of an original German book entitled, "Christ und die Caesaren", pp. 64ff.

It is Good to Remember . . .



hen one has been taking care of a regular column in which the various events and happenings in the midst of the Churches are mentioned and commented on, a review of the whole year that passed by cannot be much more than a summary of all that has already been said.

Even so, it is good to do that, since it is the Lord's command that we shall remember all His benefits, that we shall count all His blessings, and that we shall live in thankfulness before Him. "To remember" His blessings means not just that we recall them, but also that we shall let ourselves be governed and directed by them; that they influence our whole conduct and set the pattern for our future actions. That happens when the Lord remembers His covenant; that is to be the case when we remember the great things which His hands have wrought.

In our Catechism, we mention as the first obedience to the fourth word of the covenant, that the ministry of the Gospel and the schools be maintained. Let's, therefore, first pay attention to the ministry of the Gospel, and then to the School.

Although in many Churches reading services were a regular phenomenon, yet the children of God could be fed and nourished every week anew. Although there still is a lack of printed sermons for reading purposes, we have not heard of any service having been cancelled for lack of a sermon. In some instances, however, a sermon was read for the third or fourth time. We are the more grateful for the number of students we have at our College, since that will alleviate the shortage of ministers after some time. But we'll return to that later on.

The number of services in the Dutch language is diminishing gradually, although in more than one place it has appeared necessary either to continue or to reinstate services in Dutch, and then as an extra, third service, either every week or twice a month. It struck me that already at the first Classis Canada, held in 1951, the necessity of switching to English was brought to the attention of the brethren and that all were convinced that it should be done. The only differences in this respect concerned the tempo in which it should be executed. There still appears to be some differences as to the tempo; some have practically stopped making progress, others have come a long way. Still, when we compare the progress made within the Churches during the last twenty years or more, we are to be grateful for everything that has been achieved also in this respect. What we should avoid at all costs is that the worship services are separated from the rest of our life. There is the great and serious danger that, if the worship services are in Dutch and every discussion of the Word of God and of the aspects of Church life is in Dutch, whereas the rest of our dealings in business and work are all in English, the service of the

Lord becomes a strange element in our life, and that it has no influence on our business dealings and our surroundings. When one conducts all his business dealings in English, but can (or is willing to) speak about the service of the Lord only in Dutch, there is something drastically wrong: then life is split and there is the tendency to fall a prey to an anabaptist (and ultimately romish) division of life into a spiritual part and a profane part.

As for the ministers of the Word, almost all of them were able to continue their work without much serious interruption. We are thankful for the mercy of our God shown to all of them, so that none has been taken away by death. No one could have thought that we would be able to write that, since the Rev. H. Stel's illness appeared so serious in the last part of the previous year that we did not expect him to be with us much longer. Although we do not know how long the Lord will spare him for his family and Congregation, we are thankful already for what he received. Recently he was even able to conduct a few services again. Also in this respect we live by the day.

The Rev. A.B. Roukema was hospitalized for a few weeks, but recovered and was allowed to return home. The Rev. H. Scholten was compelled to ask to be relieved from his duties as minister of the Smithville Church, although he continues to do the work at our College. On the other hand, the number of ministers in active service increased by two: The Rev. G. Van Rongen came to Grand Rapids from Launceston, Tasmania, and the Rev. J. Van Riet-schoten, after having completed his studies at our College, was ordained as minister of the Smithers Church.

We also had the privilege of having both missionaries in our midst: The Rev. H. Knigge visited the Ontario Churches, and the Rev. C. Van Spronsen did the same in the Churches of the West. The former will return to the mission field in Irian Jaya until 1975; the latter will return to Brazil for another three-year term. After those terms have expired, we shall have to have two new missionaries, while Toronto also intends to send a second missionary, if one can be found. A call extended to the Rev. W. Huizinga was declined, and no further progress has been made until now.

The contact with sister Churches abroad was shown not only in the arrival of the Rev. G. Van Rongen and the call received by the Rev. J. Mulder, but also in the visits which some of the Netherlands ministers paid to this country. Their presence was used to ask them to lead worship services and to speak on topics of interest to our membership.

Returning to our ministers, we may mention that the Rev. and Mrs. D. Vander Boom celebrated their thirtieth wedding anniversary; the same may be said of the undersigned and his spouse, while we at the same time remembered a thirty-years' ministry. The Toronto Church and the Church at Fergus/Guelph did not allow those respective events to pass by unnoticed.

Our "School" continued operation throughout the year. Our Principal mentioned in his Report, delivered at the Convocation, that this was the first year in which the work could be done by all appointed teachers without interruption. We note that with gratitude. There may have been the odd day when either the one or the other was not feeling too well, but the work could regularly continue without interruption. And we received another fruit of this work in the graduation of Mr. J. Van Rietschoten. Three new students could be registered. The members of the

Churches in Ontario showed their love for our College by coming to the Convocation in large numbers.

The Board of Governors passed on to the Faculty a request received from one of our schoolboards, to organize some special courses for teachers and future teachers. It would be nice if our College could be of help and support also to our schools, since our teachers receive their education as such usually at institutions which do not base their teaching on the Holy Scriptures. There are the odd cases in which teachers are obtained from the Netherlands, but we should do that only if none of our own are available. So far, the places have been filled. Yet, more teachers will be needed in the near future; more schools are in the planning stages: London, Coaldale, Grand Rapids, Edmonton; other schools will have to expand and to attract additional teachers. This will be the more necessary when not only the number of pupils grows but also the number of grades taught. For many of our schools the only possibility of providing highschool programs will be to start adding grades 9 and 10 to the present number of eight grades. Combining resources with other places will be difficult in most circumstances: only where several schools are close together and the transportation problems are not insurmountable, it appears possible to have a separate highschool. Discussions are held and plans are being drawn up in Ontario and in the Fraser Valley.

As for the schools which opened their doors during the past year: Hamilton, Chatham and Carman are the ones who saw their endeavours crowned. The principals of almost all the schools in Ontario have decided to come together at regular intervals to discuss and set up a curriculum which may be followed by all the schools and show the own character of the instruction which is bound to the Word of God. That is an important work from which we hope all schools will benefit.

Church buildings are in the planning stages in Chatham and Winnipeg. Hamilton was allowed to dedicate their Church building, a photograph of which was shown on the frontpage of **Clarion** a few weeks ago. Burlington-West, too, expects to have their own building in the coming year.

The Churches at Brampton and Edmonton obtained a pipe organ, the former only after many troubles which were beyond the control of the Church or of the organ builder. The official dedication of these organs can be expected shortly.

The office-bearers in general held some conferences to increase their knowledge and to better their understanding of the duties of their various offices and the manner in which to execute them. General office-bearers conferences were held in Ontario, in Edmonton, and in the Fraser Valley. More specific "ministers' workshops" were held in the College in January and in April. Our University students also had their conferences where public lectures were held about Liturgy, Understanding the Scriptures, and the Church of Christ according to the Scriptures. More lectures are planned for this year. We have not heard of any such activity among the students in other parts of the country. There seem to be sufficient possibilities, for example, in Vancouver or Burnaby, with two universities to draw from. People who live and work under the same conditions are the most suitable helpers for each other.

The societies were also active. Besides the weekly or bi-weekly meetings, study weekends were held of the

Young People's Societies. In the Fraser Valley, in Alberta, and in Ontario, the ladies held their Women's League Days. Of the Men's Societies we know such only of the ones in Ontario.

The contact with others is not confined to the foreign sister Churches. Throughout the Churches there is activity in collecting money to aid orphanages in Korea, to support the work of Mission Aid, especially in Brazil, and to send help for the support of the widows and orphans of Korean Ministers.

In our own country radio broadcasts are being conducted in the Fraser Valley and in Edmonton. In quite a few Churches there is much activity with respect to the spreading of the Gospel by other means. Distribution of Bibles takes place, vacation Bible schools are held and the contacts obtained via them are maintained by visits to the parents. Tangible results, so to speak, are not too numerous, although there is joy once in a while when new members can be added to the Church.

The number of Churches has remained the same during the past year. Discussions in the Fraser Valley about eventual institution of a Church between Cloverdale and New Westminster seem to have reached a dead point. That may be in connection with the proposed move of the New Westminster Church building (a "figurative" move, that is) to south of the Fraser. On the other hand, there is some more definite development in Fergus/Guelph. Since October 14th separate services were held in both places, and it is very likely that Guelph will become a separate Church on Jan. 1st, 1974. No definite decision has been made as yet, but it is the general feeling that there is nothing which would prevent such a move. It is the local and natural development for which we can only be grateful.

We could mention many more things in this brief review of the past year. Much is being done which never comes into the limelight and which is nevertheless of great importance for the edification of the Churches. When certain activities have not been mentioned in this brief review no conclusion should be drawn as if they were considered to be of lesser importance or even of no importance at all. What we did mention is sufficient to show the great mercies of our God and the necessity of remembering His deeds.

One more thing is worth mentioning. We have now, for one full year, endeavoured to serve the membership via our **Clarion**. No, **Clarion** was not a new periodical: it was the old Canadian Reformed Magazine, but now in a new form, under a new name, coming from a new publisher. We wish to express our thankfulness also in this review for the opportunity we have received from our heavenly Father to do this work and for the gratifying reactions which we have received from our readers. From these reactions it has become evident that we have succeeded, indeed, in strengthening the bond between the members in the various places and in helping them in more than one respect. It is our sincere wish that we may serve the memberships also in this coming year and together may be enabled by our God to find the right answers to the many heresies and false theories which we encounter.

This review did not contain new things; we only wished to recall some of the things we have received. Those are already more than enough for us to say,

"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits."

vO

Everlasting Youth



atechism in our Christian religion means a brief and simple orally given summary of the main parts of the Christian doctrine, in which the young people and beginners are examined and heard as to what they have learnt.

For all those who fear the LORD have, from the

beginning of the Christian Church exerted themselves to instruct their children in the fear of the LORD in the Home, School, and Church, undoubtedly for the following reasons, which must induce us too to do the same.

For firstly they considered well that the congenital [or: natural] wickedness would get the upper hand and then pervert Churches and Civil Government, unless one would fight it in time by means of salutary doctrine.

In the second place, they were also prompted to this by the expressed command of God, which we can read in Exodus 12 and 13, and Deuteronomy 4, 6, and 11, where the LORD says: "And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

Lastly, as the Israelite children were instructed after circumcision as soon as they were able to understand, in the mystery of this holy sign and also in the Covenant of God, so are also our own children to be taught on baptism, which they have received, and on the true Christian faith and conversion. In order that, before they are admitted to the Lord's Table, they profess their faith in the presence of the whole Christian congregation.

(From the PREFACE of the Heidelberg Catechism.)

* * * * *

THE EVERLASTING YOUTH OF HEIDELBERG

If I remember well then it was a certain Dr. Oorthuis who published a book on our Catechism under this title.

He meant to draw his readers attention to the fact that the little booklet that originates from Heidelberg is still young and always fresh and lively. Year after year a great number of ministers preach on it. Yet it is not old-fashioned but still gives spiritual support and strong consolation to many people all over the world.

Try to imagine this: Its text must have been written some 411 years ago; its manuscript must have been at the printers at the end of 1562, so that the first edition could be published in January, 1563. But still, after more than four centuries, this little booklet is used for the instruction of the youth of the Church, and for the Catechism sermons on almost every Sunday, so that the congregation may learn to understand how rich they are with this confession of our faith.

ITS THEME

How is this possible, so that indeed we can speak of "the everlasting youth of Heidelberg?"

This is possible because of the majestic theme of this booklet.

The Catechism really scores a point when it summarizes the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures under the theme of our only comfort both in life and death, and says: this is our comfort, that we belong to our faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.

This is always the same, whether we confess this in the year 1563 or in the year 1973. It is the comfort of the Gospel.

Here the Gospel is confessed in a very fine way, so that it must do something to everyone who really loves the Saviour.

COMFORT

It is to be pitied that the new edition of the *Book of Praise* does not contain the "Preface" of our Catechism. I admit, our Churches have never officially adopted or accepted this document. Yet it may be of great value to read it now and then.

This Preface, then, makes it very clear that the only comfort which is explained in our Catechism is always effective, even on a larger territory than we usually are thinking about.

It is true, it is comfort in death. There is a strong and rich comfort whenever the LORD takes from us our beloved ones who die in the Lord. There is also strong consolation when we ourselves have to die, to cut the bonds with our relatives and have to face so many unknown and unfamiliar things.

It is also true that there is also comfort in life. Life comes towards us with all sorts of evil. Lord's Days 9 and 10 further inform us about this, when they speak about illness, poverty, barren years and other kinds of adversities. How great is it to know that these things come not by chance but from the fatherly hand of our God, and that all that the devil has in mind is under His control. It is stated in Lord's Day 1 already - which summarizes the whole contents of the Catechism - that not even a hair can fall from our head without the will of our heavenly Father. There is comfort, even in life.

"PREFACE"

However, the Preface of the Catechism makes it perfectly clear that this comfort is much wider and deeper than we usually think.

For first of all we are given several reasons why the youngster of the Church must be instructed in the Christian doctrine and why this Catechism was written.

One of the reasons is this, that this instruction is really essential, because otherwise the congenital - or natural, inborn - wickedness would get the upper hand and pervert Churches and civil governments. Therefore it has to be fought in time by means of salutary doctrine.

Here we find something very important. Even in our young children there is much evil. If this would be given a free hand, if they themselves would be given the freedom to do whatever they want to do, then things would go

utterly wrong, everywhere, in the Church, but also in public life which is under the authority of the civil government.

Therefore we have to put something else over against this wicked nature of man.

This "something else" is there indeed. It is the salutary doctrine of the Scriptures, which is confessed in our Catechism.

Is not this exactly the definition of "comfort" as we find it in one of the writings of the main author of this booklet, Zacharias Ursinus: "Comfort is the consideration of our mind whereby we put something good over against something evil"?

I think that the Preface was written as a result of the authors' experience. These men, together with the person who took the initiative, Elector Frederick III of the Palatinate - of which Heidelberg was the capital city - must have seen that the statement of the Scriptures is true which says that man's heart is evil from the beginning, that all people's nature, that of the little children included, is wicked.

It was a nickname, which his relatives gave him: "the pious one". But indeed, Frederick was a pious man when he wrote the Preface of the Catechism and therein showed in such a clear way how great and deep our comfort of belonging to Christ Jesus, the faithful Saviour is, and which rich and enriching "salutary doctrine" we possess in the Holy Scriptures and confess as Reformed people.

SCRIPTURAL

What we confess in our Catechism, and what our children are taught, is also Scriptural.

That is to say: Its theme has been taken straight from the Bible.

The Bible speaks about the relation between Christ and His followers as of that between the Vine and the branches thereof. Or about a body with a head and many members. Or of a master with his servants.

We find the reflections of that in our Catechism when it says: we are ingrafted into Him by true faith - then indeed we have in mind a tree, a vine or an olive tree into which new branches are grafted (Romans 11 for example). When the Catechism speaks about being incorporated into Christ or speaks about a Head and members, we have the same image of a body which we also find in the epistles of Paul concerning the relation between Christ and His Church.

When further on in our Catechism we even hear about "flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones," we are reminded of the first song ever sung in this world by man, Adam's love-song in paradise.

REFORMED

Here again our Catechism goes down to the depths of the Scriptures and does not speak in a superficial way.

Many people do so indeed. They speak in a superficial way about their relation with the Lord Jesus (rather, simply with "Jesus"). He is the One Who has to help them to go to heaven, that is almost all. But further there is hardly a bond between Him and them. Consequently their way of life is almost the same as that of the unbelievers.

Our Heidelberg Catechism - read in the light of its Preface - can save us from losing our typical Reformed faith and way of life and from joining today's "general Christendom" or modern religiosity!

MANY SUBJECTS

It is no wonder that many subjects are dealt with in our

Catechism. For when there is a bond between Christ and ourselves, we must learn to know how this relation was established, and also how it is maintained.

Therefore the Catechism deals with the preaching of God's Word, emphasizes the significance of attending Church, shows us the importance of the sacraments, and also of the Church. Special attention is given to the position of the children of the believers, who too belong to the covenant of grace.

All this belongs to "the true Christian belief." Whenever or wherever any part of this Scriptural doctrine is neglected or spoiled, we can no longer speak of "true faith", "true religion," or even of "true Church".

"SIN AND MISERY"

The "first part" of the Catechism, "Sin and misery", should not be neglected either. Even today we have to take a strong stand overagainst any kind of Pelagianism, Arminianism, or whatever form of Humanism that sees some good left in man. We need Christ, and Him only, Him as our complete and perfect Saviour.

Today's world - in which the outburst of man's natural wickedness, which perverts Churches and civil governments quite clearly - needs, badly needs, the Saviour.

It is a great thing that we may rest assured: We belong to Him, and can tell our boys and girls: The same thing has been promised to you, too! It is great when in this revolutionary time we are able to meet their natural wickedness with the salutary doctrine of the Scriptures, and to do so with the help of that ever-young booklet, called Heidelberg Catechism!

(Part two in next issue)

G. VAN RONGEN

This article first appeared in installments in *Pro Ecclesia*, the bulletin of the Grand Rapids Church. It is published here with permission.

Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King!

The heavens are not too high,
His praise may thither fly;
The earth is not too low,
His praises there may grow.

Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King!

Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King!
The Church with psalms must shout,
No door can keep them out;
But above all, the heart
Must bear the longest part,
Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King!

George Herbert, 1593 - 1632

Do We Have Only Half The Truth?

The Challenge of Neo-Pentecostalism [4]



Triptych on Tongues.

s promised, this article will pay special attention to the three chapters Paul dedicates in his first letter to the Corinthians to charismas or special gifts in general, and to tongues in particular, chapters 12, 13, 14.

Three chapters, not two! Chapter 13 is as important for the issue as are the others; it even holds the key.

What follows is certainly not a commentary on the three chapters, just some notes, or remarks.

The first one is, should be, that according to sound principle of exegesis this part of Paul's letter must be understood within the frame of the whole letter. This "theology of tongues" is not found in Ephesians, which has a different set-up, more "general", speaking of the Church, its unity with Christ, its life in the world (hardly, if any, indications of "special gifts"), or Hebrews, or, for that matter, the seven letters in Revelation 2, 3 which were mentioned in the previous article.

This longest letter of Paul is for the greater part filled with instructions with respect to several abuses in the Corinth Church. They are "sanctified in Christ Jesus" alright but a lot of things are terribly wrong, exactly because they are "called to be saints" (1:2). It is within this context that the three chapters must be understood, interpreted. Paul does NOT write this part about an ideal congregation (if there ever was one) set to be an example for every other congregation. On the contrary, he has many things against them, also with regard to the use and practice of tongue-speaking.

I submit the following "outline" or "triptych" (picture in three parts):

- chapter 12 describes the situation in Corinth as it is;
- chapter 13 shows that there is "a still more excellent way: love";
- chapter 14 admonishes them for their unspiritual strife around the spiritual gifts.

"Concerning spiritual gifts"

Ch. 12 gives us a clear, imposing picture of the Church in the apostolic age. I might as well say it right away: I agree with Chrysostom, Augustine, John Owen, Matthew Henry, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Spurgeon, Abraham Kuyper, Shedd, Warfield and other (all mentioned in *Outlook*, Oct. '73) that "miraculous signs of the Spirit were a feature of the apostolic age"; that these gifts authenticated the apostles during their lifetime; "that, what the gifts of miracles and signs did in the history of redemption (when there was no New Testament yet! vD) is now done in the history of the Church by the miraculous and self-authenticating Word of God." (G. Thomas in *Outlook*).

Thus this chapter shows us the Church during the lifetime of the apostles.

Even then it is significant to discover that in the list mentioned in vs. 27, 28 "various kinds of tongues" are at the *bottom* of the list! Furthermore, we learn that the various gifts were "equally" distributed with the result that only "some" had the gift of glossolaly (vss. 8f). "Do all speak with tongues?" (vs. 30). The answer is, no! There goes already the thesis of Neo- and other Pentecostals that every "full" christian should proceed from the first blessing (justified by faith) to the second (filled with the Spirit, bestowing special gifts).

The last word of this chapter is most important. It really belongs to chapter 13.

"the more excellent way"

In this wonderful, poetic chapter 13 Paul does not even with a single word recommend tongue-speaking as the "more excellent" way of being a "full" christian.

He mentions tongues alright, but in this way: "as for tongues, they will cease" (vs. 8).

Taking this chapter within the context of 12 and 14, and again within the context of the whole letter (as already mentioned) I submit that Paul speaks here about the future of the Church, and *not* only about eternal life. In vs. 13, "So faith, hope and love abide . . ." It is difficult to understand that faith and hope will abide in the glory.

The well-known commentator *Godet* asks our attention for the fact that in vs. 11, "I spoke, thought, reasoned like a child," there is a surprising parallel with vs. 8 in his use of verbs. His conclusion is that the verbs in vs. 11 refer to what vs. 8 said about "prophecies, knowledge and tongues", all three to be taken in the specific sense of special gifts of the apostolic age. Especially the verb "*lalein*" (that you find in 'glossolaly') is interesting here.

Furthermore, even "love" which is "the greatest" is to be understood as being shown in this dispensation, and not as it will be in eternal glory. This love "is patient, not boastful, does not rejoice at wrong ('wrong' is still around, vD), it bears, hopes, endures all things."

Thus the more excellent way of love will, and has to, replace the tongues, etc., of the child's age (vs. 11).

"Decently and in good order."

Thus we come to chapter 14, which concludes with the above words.

We learn here some interesting and important things about tongue-speaking.

The first thing that strikes us is that tongue-speaking should not be done in public (as happens in pentecostal meetings). "Let one speak to himself and to God" (vs. 28). "For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him . . ." (vs. 2). "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophecies edifies the Church" (vs. 4).

Right after the well-known word, "rather five words

with my mind than ten thousand words in a tongue" (vs. 19), Paul continues, "Brethren, do not be children in your thinking!"

Prophecy is more important than tongues (vs. 5). For prophecy can be understood by others, and so the Church is edified. That is the most important thing! After having stressed that tongues are like a foreign language (vs. 11), the apostle continues, "So with yourselves; since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church" (vs. 12).

Then again that outstanding declaration: "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all; nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (vss. 18, 19). Rather a very short sermon that can be understood by old and young, thus edifying the congregation, than an outburst of tongues. Such an outburst will even make the impression on outsiders "that you are mad" (vs. 24).

In conclusion, two things should be added. First, Paul warns against disorder (vs. 27f.) which so easily would happen if there were unbridled tongue-speaking. Second, from ch. 12 we learn (what else can one expect from a congregation of believers who are still sinners?) that there was a very unhealthy and unchristian competition going on. Everyone wanted to have everything. Everyone wanted a tongue-gift, and thus they were not too happy with the way the Holy Spirit distributed gifts, to the one this gift (only) and to the other that gift. How different would it be if the more excellent way of love would be realized: "Love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way, it is not irritable or resentful" (13:4f.). Read all these words against the background of the Corinthian situation and you may be sure you have understood them the way Paul wanted it.

Conclusion.

I am convinced that what has been indicated above is the only legitimate way of interpreting these chapters. This becomes even clearer when the context is not only this letter but the whole New Testament, as we have pointed out in previous articles.

After the manner of sects, Pentecostal groups sever such sayings about tongues from the whole context of the Scriptures. After the Reformed manner of keeping in mind the whole history of revelation, we acknowledge Paul's words as spoken in a specific situation to a specific church. Then we wholly agree with what was quoted before, that tongues, together with other special gifts, had their place in the apostolic age, when as yet there was no New Testament, but now we have the complete, "miraculous and self-authenticating Word of God." Or, in the words of W.G.T. Shedd, "The supernatural gifts of inspiration and miracles which the apostles possessed were not continued to their ministerial successors, because they were no longer necessary. All the doctrines of Christianity had been revealed to the apostles, and had been delivered to the church in a written form. There was no further need of an infallible inspiration. And the credentials and authority given to the first preachers of Christianity in miraculous acts, did not need continual repetition from age to age. One age of miracles, well authenticated, is sufficient to establish the divine origin of the gospel."

Or as James Buchanan wrote in 1843: "The miraculous gifts of the Spirit have long since been withdrawn. They were used for a temporary purpose. They were the scaffold-

A Letter from the Publisher

It is just a year now that we have had the pleasure of publishing and printing the "Clarion". And looking back we can conclude, that although there were a few minor problems, as a whole the take over of the magazine went very smoothly.

We wish to say "Thank You" to all of you, our readers, who continued to subscribe to "our" magazine and to the great number of new subscribers. We have over the year received many notes of encouragement and compliments which is also a tribute to our contributors.

To maintain the standard of our magazine, we are forced, due to the ever increasing cost of paper and other materials, to increase our subscription rate from \$12.00 to \$13.50 per year. Until January 1967 C.R.M. rate per year was \$12.00 with a possible discount of \$.50 per quarter on payment received in advance. In January 1967 it was increased to \$14.00 per year, again with the possible \$.50 quarterly discount and in 1973 when C.R.M. became Clarion, the subscription rate was simply \$12.00 per year. In looking back on these figures we feel our readers will understand the need for this increase. Might we also mention that we are trying to have our readers pay their subscriptions on a yearly basis from January-December. This of course will reduce our administration cost tremendously.

We are continuously striving to broaden the scope of Clarion, although maintaining foremost the special character of the magazine. We hope to cover a little more, the political and social fields, more emphasis on our youth column and possibly on a more or less regular basis a crossword puzzle.

We would like to express our gratitude to our contributors, who without any remuneration enable us to publish regularly. And also, a special thanks to Rev. W.W.J. VanOene and Mr. Bill Helder for their continuous efforts.

May we conclude by wishing one and all a pleasant festive season and the Lord's blessing for the year A.D. 1974.

G. KUIK

ding which God employed for the erection of a spiritual temple. When it was no longer needed the scaffolding was taken down, but the temple still stands, and is occupied by his indwelling Spirit." (Both quotations are taken from the same issue and article of *Outlook*).

In a concluding article I hope to pass on to the reader the striking disparity between *Christianity Today* and *Present Truth*, two magazines which pay much attention to Neo-Pentecostalism but in a quite different way. We will then learn that Pentecostalism is a betrayal of the Reformation and a return to Roman Catholicism.

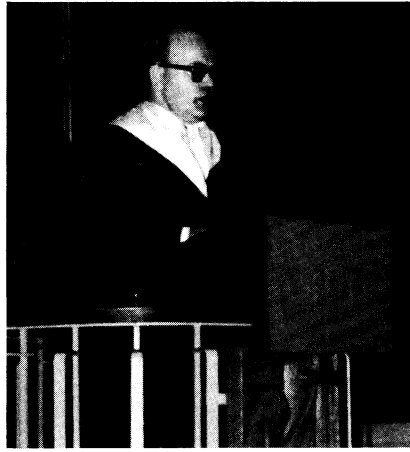
The proper conclusion of these articles must be that we search our own hearts (and churches!). I do not believe that the saying, "Sects are the unpaid bills of the church," holds much truth. On the other hand, let us not boast. Pride comes before a fall. Let's pray to be such living and loving churches that no one of our number ever becomes homesick for a sect.

G. VANDOOREN

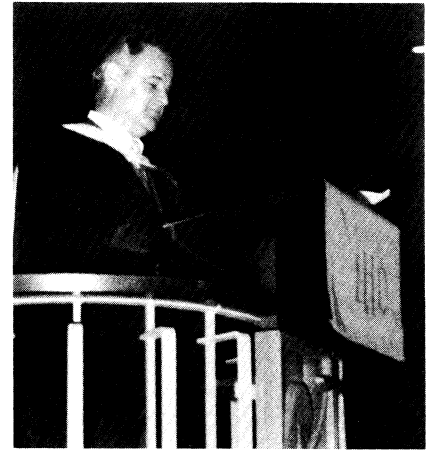


FOURTH ANNIVERSARY - Here are some more pictures of the 1973 Convocation of our Theological College, held on September 14. They were taken by Leo Lodder.

Rev. G. VanDooren speaking a word of welcome: "Beloved in the Lord -"



Dr. J. Faber presenting the Principal's Report: "Also for the future we trust in Him with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.



Mr. J. Van Rietschoten delivering his address: "The all-comprehensive aim of preaching is the glory of God . . ."



Understanding the Old Testament

NAHUM [5]

Chapter 1:7-10

We have seen in the preceding article how the GOD of Nahum, that is, the GOD of Israel, Yahweh - the GOD of all the earth - in a completely divine way approached the earth. And the earth is lifted up before Him (cp. Ps. 99:1). The earth itself is not the target, the butt, of GOD's anger; it is rather, a means, an instrument by which He makes known His indignation. As indicated already in the second part of verse 5 and the first part of verse 6, the inhabitants are the target. From now we shall hear more about them.

The way Yahweh comes forebodes nothing good: "Who can stand before his indignation? Who can hold out or stand in his burning anger." The outlook is dark and gloomy.

But then, in vs. 7, that other thread is taken up again - a thread we had in our hands in the beginning of verse 2; however, soon we lost sight of it because of the impressive manifestation of GOD's anger. But here you can grasp that thread, throughout

the verse. The LORD is good, we read. But we had better invert the order of the words: *Good* is the LORD. The word "good" Hebrew *tôb*, is placed first for emphasis. The hearer of the prophecy or the reader of the book is to know: Good is Yahweh.

What does it mean? Anybody knows that "good" is a very general and common word. Almost everything can be "good" for some purpose. Then I can take the word in the sense of "useful, purposeful" (Dutch: "nuttig" - a word that was very popular a century and a half ago.) We take sides with Dr. Goslinga when he says that "good" in the sense of "useful" (and it has this sense in Hebrew) is applied to things, objects, but never to man, let alone GOD.

The goodness of the Lord is something very particular: a goodness addressed to specific people; directed to them. So, you may expect a certain group to be mentioned right here. Well, this is the case with the Greek translation of the O.T., which our students have to have at hand when

preparing for the lectures. We can render: Good is God towards those who persevere, persist. During the lectures we wondered whether the men who took care of the Greek translation, the Septuagint, might have had before them a Hebrew manuscript in which the word occurred. Throughout the O.T. we meet with the goodness of YAHWEH. See, for example, Lamentations 3:25. I would like to supplement the Hebrew text of Nahum 1:7 this way. Further I may mention Ps. 25:8; 34:9; 73:1; 86:5; 100:5; 125:4; 143:10; 145:9. Compare also Psalm 106, 118, 136. I would recommend that the readers study the Bible in this way to get a clear picture of a particular subject.

One who thinks verse 7 over, will perceive how a dividing-line is here drawn right through the inhabitants of the earth. In what way? Between Israel and its enemies? But does it then apply to all Israel? Are they believers all and everyone? Do all of them wait for the LORD and the revelation, the manifestation of His goodness in times to come? It was Jeremiah who gave the term an eschatological flavour, applying it to the promised new covenant: the time of the Messiah! Well, in all times you will come across Jews inclined to adapt themselves to circumstances. Without going so far as to make a distinction between inward and outward Israel (as theologians did in the years 1936 -



Rev. H. Scholten speaking on church history as "the history of the triumphal march of our King and Saviour": "it witnesses to the truth of the Word that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church."



Mrs. L. Selles, on behalf of the Ladies' Aid, as "bringer of good news, sound promises, and visible gifts".



Rev. M. Van Beveren closing the evening and bringing greetings from the brethren and sisters in the west: "They all rally behind the College because they are convinced that it is a mandate which we have received from the Lord."

1944 e.g.), I believe that Israel is here summoned to examine themselves, in order that they may experience that Yahweh is a stronghold in the day of trouble. For this expression, again I remind the reader of the Psalms - 28:8; 31:5; 43:2; 52:9. And then we read that wonderful expression: He knows those who take refuge in Him. The verb "to know" has a deep meaning; it speaks of Yahweh's care and love and tender mercy towards His people. I remind the reader of Ex. 2:24; Ps. 1:6, 139:1.

Because of whom do they need refuge? Because of the Assyrian, you say. Right, but what does it say in vs. 8? "But with an overrunning flood He will make an utter end of the place thereof." Here I prefer the Authorized Version. We have to do with a manifestation of the LORD's anger. And I ask: Isn't it necessary that Israel seek shelter also from the LORD's anger? But where? With whom? Well, with the LORD's goodness. Israel is to take refuge from the angry GOD with the merciful God. And once more I point to our Catechism, L.D. 5 and 6, and the Belgian Confession, Art. 20: "God therefore manifested His justice against His Son, when He laid our iniquities upon Him, and poured forth His mercy and goodness on us, who were guilty and worthy of damnation". The same idea held good already for the night of the exodus, when Israel had to take precautionary

measures against the anger of the LORD as well.

But let us go back to the text. I said that I prefer the A.V. here: "the place thereof" or "herplace" (footnote R.S.V.). The R.S.V. renders: "of the adversaries". How is such a difference in translation possible? Well, originally the Hebrew text was made up of consonants only. Then it reads in our verse: m-g-w-m-h (pron. *megō-māh*) and we render: its or her place. But who may be meant? Exegetes who consider the heading, vs. 1, unauthentic, or who deem ch. 7: 7-10 a psalm, which was added to the book as an introduction later on, run into problems here. They cannot have it refer to the city of Nineveh, as we do - and without any objections! Nineveh has been mentioned in the heading. The reader can know of it and is eager to know more. The LORD is going to make a clean sweep of Nineveh. The R.S.V. goes gack to scholars who would rather read here the consonants *m-g-m-j-w* (pron. *miggāmāw*), and then you are to render: "of his adversaries". (1)

"And He will pursue his enemies into darkness" (R.S.V.). The translation of the A.V. is possible in itself, but I for one prefer the R.S.V. here: the LORD is subject.

So we come to vs. 9. It is noteworthy that the prophet addresses himself to someone or, rather, to a group of people. A.V.: "What do ye

imagine against the LORD?" R.S.V.: "What do you plot against the LORD?"

Those who render it this way - and a great many do so - will point at the Assyrians. "The writer here addresses himself directly to the foes of Yahweh and seeks by this pointed question to bring out the futility of all human devices against the great God. cp. Ps. 33:10" (Powis Smith, I.C.C.).

In this case it is dependent upon the preposition *ēl*, which is rendered in the majority of commentaries as "against". I do not say that it cannot be rendered this way anywhere (see e.g. Hosea 7:15), but most obvious is the translation: "in view of," "with respect to". If it were used in a hostile sense, Nahum would have used the preposition: *cal*, as he does in verse 11. But another consideration settles the matter, namely that he continues: "affliction shall not rise up the second time" (A.V.) - which is far better here than R.S.V.: "he will not take vengeance twice on his foes". A difference in translation, going back to a different reading (2) I for one prefer the translation and explanation of C.F. Keil: "What think ye of Yahweh?" The question can only be addressed to the Judaeans, and must mean, "Do ye think that Yahweh cannot or will not fulfil his threat upon Nineveh?" The prophet addresses these words to the anxious minds, which were afraid of fresh invasions



The VanOene Family



Part of the Knegt Family

on the part of the Assyrians. To strengthen their confidence, he answers the question proposed, by repeating the thought expressed in vs. 8. Moreover, to whom can the LORD speak in the way He does here? Affliction shall not rise up a second time. Who were the people that were afflicted? The Assyrians? No, it was Israel. If we transport ourselves mentally to the circumstances of the Second World War, which the older ones in our midst remember very well, and if we were to imagine that a prophet had arisen speaking the words of vs. 9 and we wondered: In which case do such words make sense - if addressed to the Nazi-oppressor or if spoken to one of the peoples oppressed - we can supply the answer, I assume. It was in Judah that some might have become sceptical about the LORD's plan. Well, here is the answer: a reproach and, at the same time, a consolation.

As a further encouragement, Yahweh points at the enemy. That is in verse 10 - a very difficult verse. If I am not mistaken, it took two or three hours to discuss this verse in the lecture-room, to consider it from all angles before we - that is, the students, who have a say in the matter, and I - could come to an agreement concerning the exegesis. Some scholars have even abandoned any attempt. They could not find their way out. As far as we are concerned, we

do not have the pretension at 374 Queenstreet, Hamilton, to be so smart as to outdo famous exegetes. But another point is at issue here, namely, that we confess the transparency of Holy Scripture. So, we shall try to the utmost of our power.

The following is a very literal translation (3):

"for unto thorns entangled
and like their drink soaked
they will be devoured like dry
stubble full."

(Powis Smith)

The "unto" in the first line means: "to such an extent that" and is to be rendered by "as" or "like". You see it more often in Hebrew. I refer to 2 Sam. 23:19 and 23, "But he did not attain to the three," i.e. the mighty men. That is to say: He was not like them.

The sense of vs. 10 is: "Although they are entangled like thorns". The prophet is aiming at all the prominent men, the "big shots" at Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. They are compared with thorns - not because thorns can sting, but because the stalks of these plants are intertwined. They are an inextricable bunch. You can hardly disentangle them. That applies very well to the chiefs of Nineveh in council. We are here allowed to cast a glance at Assyrian diplomacy, its cunning and calculation.

In the second line we cast a glance at society life of the upper

class in the capital - the big noisy parties and drinking-bouts they have together as they drink to the success of the cruel Assyrian armies in subjecting nations like Israel. That is why Nahum, playing upon words *sob'ām sebû'īm*, come to the comparison: "and like their drink soaked." Those people are as soaked as their drink. He does not say they are drunk, although it is implied. No, drinker and drink are here compared. The point of comparison is that both are soaking wet. For so the sudden jump in Nahum's train of thought becomes explicable. I am referring to what it reads in the third line: "they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry" (A.V.).

However much they may be soaked, when God is going to pass judgment on them - by fire - they are like stubble fully dry to the flames.

H.M. OHMANN

* * *

(1) Both words go back to a root *gûm*, from which are derived the word "place", "stand" (*māgôm*) and the verb "to stand" (vs. ba), "to rise", and (sometimes) "to rebel".

(2) A.V. is based on the version: *lô tagûm sarah*, R.S.V. on the conjecture: *lô jiggôm saraw*.

(3) The Hebrew text reads: *kî 'ad sîrîm sebukim ûkesob'âm sebû'îm ukkelû kegasj jâbesj mâlê*. (Not the "s" alliteration (four times in the first two lines).)

“Aan de verkeerde kant van de vijftig” of “Christelijke Gerontologie”

Nieuwe wetenschap voor de ouderen



aar heeft zich sinds enkele tientallen van jaren een nieuwe wetenschap ontwikkeld. De naam is “gerontologie”, een grieks woord dat het best vertaald wordt door de wetenschap (*logie*) van het oud(er) worden (*geroon*).” Deze wetenschap heeft zich vertakt in op z’n minst drie takken. Er zit een *medische* kant aan het ouder

worden; dat ligt voor de hand. Denk maar aan de zgn tweede jeugd, de overgangsperiode, enz. Een tweede tak is de *psychologische*, die nagaat welke veranderingen er plaats grijpen in het leven van een mens die lichamelijk ouder wordt. Is het een gevoel van vereenzaming, of van mislukking, of wat dan ook - de psychologie of wetenschap betreffende de ziel houdt zich daarmee bezig. En tenslotte (maar niet het minst belangrijke) is de *theologische* bezinning op het ouder worden. Zulk een bezinning neemt in aanmerking wat de Schrift zegt over het ouder en oud worden; en hoe met die kennis ouderen moeten leren zichzelf te helpen. Dat gaat dan weer gepaard met het helpen van ouderen door anderen, in de eerste plaats door de herders van de kudde. Daarom zal “christelijke gerontologie” ook een plaats moeten hebben in de Opleiding tot de Dienst des Woords, om aanstaande predikanten te leren hoe zij pastorale zorg moeten wijden aan de oudere broeders en zusters. (Over een vierde “tak” de *Sociaal-economische* volgt meer verderop.)

EEN HOOGNODIGE WETENSCHAP.

Het is niet moeilijk om in te zien en te erkennen dat (christelijke) gerontologie een noodzaak is geworden.

De twintigste eeuw is begonnen als de eeuw voor en van het kind. Aan dat kind werd en wordt alle aandacht, en ook veel geld besteed. In hoeverre deze nadruk op het kind goed of kwaad heeft bewerkt, laten we nu maar in het midden. Feit is dat al spoedig werd beseft dat de aandacht voor de ouderen daaronder geen schade mag lijden. Gerontologie werd beschouwd als een noodzaak.

Verskillende factoren hebben daaraan meegewerkt. We noemen enkele.

In de eerste plaats is de gemiddelde leeftijd van het trouwen gaan aanmerkelijk naar beneden gegaan. Gevolg: kinderen kregen jongere ouders, en ouders kregen oudere kinderen, kinderen die de deur uitgaan, soms is het de deur uitvliegen, terwijl de ouders nog betrekkelijk jong zijn.

Parallel daarmee is de gemiddelde levensduur sinds het begin dezer eeuw aanmerkelijk gestegen. Daarin erkent een christen Gods voorzienig bestel. Maar dat heeft dus als gevolg dat vele ouderparen weer “met z’n beiden” zijn voor

een veel langere periode dan vroeger wel het geval was. Dat weer met z’n beiden zijn, zoals ze begonnen op de trouwdag, bestrijkt dus voor zeer velen een veel langere periode dan vroeger. Men mag wel zeggen: deze periode heeft voor heel ons leven heel veel in betekenis gewonnen. Men kan heus niet meer zeggen, als de kinderen de deur uit zijn, dan hebben we het leven zo ongeveer achter de rug. Het tegendeel is waar.

Nog meer factoren werken daaraan mee. Het langer leven gaat gepaard met een minder lang werken, in die zin dat de hedendaagse ontwikkeling heen groeit naar pensionering op een jongere leeftijd. Men spreekt al over 60 of zelfs 55 jaar als de ideale pensioen-gerechtigde leeftijd. Dat brengt weer een maatschappelijk en economisch probleem mee van niet-geringe omvang. Wat men er ook van denkt, kinderbepanking is een feit, evenzeer als de gruwelijke massa-moord die men abortus noemt. Het zal niet lang meer duren voordat er meer, of zeker evenveel ouderen, gepensioneerd, zijn als kinderen. De vraag is dan, hoe zal zulk een maatschappij er uit zien? En men hoort fluisteren (maar het klinkt steeds luider) dat de volgende stap, na abortus en kinderbepanking, zal moeten zijn een beperking van het aantal ouderen. Anders wordt de maatschappij topzwaar. Wat men dan wil? Er is een woord voor: “euthanasie”, wat zo ongeveer neerkomt op het geven van een spuitje, zodat ouderen inslapen, inslapen voor goed.

Als dat zo gaat worden, ja dan is wat boven dit artikel staat, waar. Dan, als men de vijftig gepasseerd is, zit men “aan de verkeerde kant.”

Christelijke gerontologie moet nu gaan intvinden en prediken dat men dan aan de goede kant zit!

Christelijke gerontologie zal ook moeten helpen voorkomen dat ouderen met Jakob zeggen gaan dat hun grijze haren met droefheid ten grave nederdalen.

EXTRA NOOD ONDER ONS.

Ouderwordende immigranten mogen wel bijzondere aandacht geven aan deze wetenschap betreffende het ouder worden. Zij, meer dan anderen, kunnen het gebruiken! Hun moeilijkheden in het ouder worden zijn groter dan die van anderen. We overdrijven niet als we zeggen dat voor onze Canadese Gereformeerde gemeenschap dit ouderworden een probleem gaat worden van de eerste orde. Ook wij hebben alle nadruk gelegd op het kind, op onze kinderen. Voor hen zijn we gaan emigreren. Voor hen hebben we de kerk gebouwd, en voor hen hebben we de nodige dingen ons onzeggd om gereformeerde scholen te bouwen. Alles moest voor het kind.

Het wordt tijd, wat meer te gaan denken aan de ouderen.

Want hun problemen konden wel eens extra groot worden. Laten we enkele noemen.

Daar is, in de eerste plaats, de taal. Voor velen is dat

een vreemde taal gebleven, als ze om en bij de veertig jaren oud waren toen ze hier kwamen. Van twee oudere broeders hoorden we twee uitlatingen. De een zei, het engels is me als een pet op mijn hoofd gedrukt; nu ik ouder word waait die pet me weer "van de kop". De ander zei: Veel broeders, nu 55, 60 jaar oud, zullen ondervinden dat, als ze ophouden met werken, het engels hun weer ontglipt. Persoonlijk heb ik dit al duidelijk gemerkt bij velen. Een voorbeeld: vijf jaren geleden zei een zuster: "ik mag zeggen dat ik nu geen moeite meer heb om uw engelse preken te volgen." Onlangs zei ze, met verdriet in haar stem: "ik kan er haast niets meer van meenemen." Dit zijn feiten.

Intussen worden we volop Canadese kerken: alles engels. Probeer eens in te denken wat dat is voor vele ouderen, voor wie die ene hollandse dienst nog als een bergtop in hun wekelijks leven is.

Ze voelen zich op die manier dus uitgeschakeld. "Er wordt met ons niet meer gerekend" is de klacht. Oudere broeders kunnen niet meer ouderling worden als ze niet in staat zijn om in het engels huisbezoek te doen. Er zijn er die hun eigen kleinkinderen niet eens verstaan. U mag ze daarom veroordelen, en terecht, maar we noemen enkele feiten.

Voor de kinderen zijn ze géémigreerd. Die kinderen redden zich wel, voelen zich thuis, en als vader en moeder "achterblijven", tonen ze daar weinig geduld mee.

Dan komt er in het hart van vele ouderen de vraag: waarom deden we het? Wat hebben we nu bereikt? Harde jaren, zichzelf veel ontzeggen. Nu hebben de kinderen ons niet meer nodig, en hier zitten we nu: vreemden in een vreemd land. En, hoe langer hoe vreemder . . .

Die nadruk op: "we deden het voor de kinderen" heeft, als ik me niet vergis, in meerdere gevallen een ander, droef, gevolg. De Bijbel zegt dat de man zijn vader en moeder zal verlaten, en zijn vrouw aankleven. Maar de praktijk heeft laten zien dat in verschillende onzer gezinnen het aankleven van de kinderen ging boven het elkaar aankleven. De verhouding met de kinderen kwam eerst, terwijl God wil dat de verhouding met elkaar als man en vrouw altijd eerst is en blijft. Maar ja, vader was veel de deur uit, de kinderen waren "alles" voor moeder. Daar leefde ze voor (prachtig!); daar klemde ze zich aan vast (niet zo prachtig . . .), en nu ze de deur uit zijn, zit moeder met lege handen, de dagen duren haar zo lang. "We zijn met elkaar uitgespraakt" (ja, ja). Dus: opzien tegen het ouder worden, het samen alleen zijn.

En om de maat vol te maken: dan komen oudere bezoekers uit Nederland die vertellen dat ze het, financieel gezien, nog nooit zo goed hebben gehad. En dat ze in een prachtig bejaarden-centrum wonen, echt gezellig met zoveel anderen. Geen zorg voor het oud worden. Als er ooit een gat is, wordt het direkt gestopt door A.O.W. en A.B.W.

Alles samengenomen, veel ouderen zeggen, in hun hart, "we zitten aan de verkeerde kant van de vijftig; we hadden hier veel eerder moeten komen, "of:" we hadden hier nooit moeten komen".

Of we ook behoefte hebben aan "christelijke gerontologie"!

HELP UZELF, ZO HELPT U GOD.

Wanneer men bovenstaande op zich laat inwerken, zal - hopen we - het gevolg zijn, dat velen zeggen: we moeten wat meer voor onze ouderen gaan doen.

Paulus noemt dat de plicht der *wedervergelding*, een plicht die in Nederland amper meer gevoeld wordt omdat

de Staat alle zorg overneemt. Een plicht die hier ons leven kan gaan verrijken, als we haar gaan vervullen.

Hier zou heel wat te noemen zijn. We zouden in dit opzicht ook nog wel wat goeds van andere kerken kunnen leren (al willen we daar in de regel niet aan). Ik denk aan dames-comites, die de ouderen geregeld ophalen en in een der zalen van de kerk, echt gezellig ingericht, hun een prettige morgen of middag bezorgen. Vervolgens moet de noodzaak van "nursing-homes" (nog veel nodiger dan bejaarden-centra) ons veel meer op de ziel gaan wegen. Zullen we onze oude broeders en zusters in een hun vreemde omgeving hun dagen laten eindigen?

Maar toch willen we daarvoor de rest van dit artikel niet gebruiken.

Ouder-wordende echtparen, en ook weduwen en weduwnaars, moeten eerst leren *zichzelf te helpen!* Ervaring leert dat iemand die niet geleerd heeft zichzelf te helpen, ook maar heel moeilijk door anderen kan worden geholpen.

Dat zichzelf-helpen is natuurlijk heel anders dan de oude dag te zien als een wachthuisje-voor-de-dood . . .

Levensmoeheid is zeker geen christelijke deugd; het is een onchristelijke ondeugd.

Net zo goed als Paulus twee brieven moest schrijven (I en II Thess.) om de mensen te waarschuwen tegen een verkeerde praktijk met het oog op de wederkomst van Christus; net zo goed als de Heiland nadrukkelijk leerde dat het bereid zijn voor het einde moet bestaan in een wachtend werken, in het werken met de ons gegeven talenten, - net zo goed moet de eerste stelling van christelijke gerontologie zijn: ouderen, werkt met de talenten U gegeven.

Of liever nog, de volmaakte christelijke gerontologie (u weet nu, dat is de kunst van het ouder worden en oud zijn) is gegeven in Jesaja 40:

"De HEERE geeft den moede kracht, en Hij vermenigvuldigt de sterkte dien die geen krachten heeft; de jongen zullen moede worden en mat, en de jongelingen zullen gewisselijk vallen; maar die de HEERE verwachten zullen de kracht vernieuwen; zij zullen opvaren met vleugelen gelijk de arenden; zij zullen lopen en niet moede worden; zij zullen wandelen en niet mat worden."

We hebben het wel eens over de noodzaak van een goede voorbereiding tot het huwelijk, en vrezden dat in veel gevallen daar niet veel van komt, maar soortgelijke vrees moet ons bevangen als we het hebben over de voorbereiding tot het "weer met z'n beidjes zijn."

Intussen schiet me te binnen wat ik geleerd heb van A. Janse: "we zijn vaak veel geestelijker dan de HEERE ons hebben wil." Dat klinkt raar. Maar het is waar. Zich voorbereiden op die laatste, en in veel gevallen lange periode, bestaat niet alleen in bidden en de bijbel lezen.

Natuurlijk dat ook en in de eerste plaats. Ik heb het voorrecht genoten mijn beide overgrootmoeders te kennen; de een was altijd bezig in de Bijbel, nazoekend alle teksten waarnaar in de Kanttekeningen verwezen werd: "ik heb er nu alle tijd voor." De ander, 96 jaren oud geworden, zei eens tegen haar dominee die vroeg of ze zich niet verveelde: "o nee, ik heb zoveel kleinkinderen, achterkleinkinderen, en dan de hele gemeente om voor te bidden, ik kom haast tijd tekort."

Als bidden ons sterkste wapen is, hoezeer moeten dan niet al onze ouderen "zichzelf inschakelen" door gedurig tot de troon der genade te gaan, en voor Gods kerk en koninkrijk te bidden!

Toch, bidden en bijbellezen is niet alles.

Net zo min als (wat velen denken) werken alleen is "om de kost te verdienen." Gevolg: als ze gepensioneerd zijn is het (ineens) met het werken afgelopen. Na de drukte ineens lege handen, leegte - anders niet.

Ook hier zou weer veel te zeggen zijn. We beperken ons tot slechts enkele opmerkingen.

Als man en vrouw, ook temidden van de drukte van een huis-vol-kinderen, naar Gods bevel aan elkaar gekleefd hebben (Genesis 2) dan is het leven nog vol en mooi en rijk, als ze weer met z'n beiden zijn. Dat kon nog wel eens de mooiste, rijpste en rijkste periode van hun leven worden! De liefde is veel sterker geworden dan toen ze jong waren. Door ervaring zijn ze levenswijs geworden. Er is geen groter genoeg dan "elkaar helpen en bijstaan in alle dingen die tot het tijdelijke en eeuwige leven behoren."

Ons Huwelijksformulier zet dat, zeer Gereformeerd, op de eerste plaats, voordat het gaat spreken over kinderen krijgen en opvoeden.

Dat betekent ook, dat men niet afhankelijk is van de kinderen. We bedoelen dat niet zozeer in financieel opzicht. Ik wens alle ouderen toe dat ze die afhankelijkheid nooit zullen kennen. Maar: niet afhankelijk in de zin dat men het best redden kan, zonder altijd "bij de kinderen op schoot te zitten."

Men kan nu allerlei dingen doen, waar vroeger geen tijd voor was, en geen geld. Denk eens aan reizen, geen verre reizen, maar samen iets meer ontdekken van dit prachtige land. Denk ook eens aan de heerlijke tijd om zijn geest te verrijken door lezen, ja door studeren. Waarom niet? We moeten toch altijd onze talenten ontwikkelen?

Ongelukkig de man die nooit hobbies heeft gehad en zich nu loopt te vervelen, een kniesoor wordt. Wat prachtig als men zeggen kan: nu heb ik niet meer de hele dag te werken voor de kost; nu heb ik heerlijk de tijd om dit of dat te doen.

We zouden daarbij de aandacht willen vestigen op verschillende "community projects" (hulpverleningen in de plaats waar we wonen) die we in de regel maar aan anderen overlaten. Als ik een oudere broeder of zuster telkens in het ziekenhuis ontmoet, bezig met bepaalde hulpverlening, dan zeg ik: die hebben de oplossing gevonden!

Natuurlijk zullen we vooral in de kerkelijke gemeenschap gebruik leren maken van de beschikbare krachten. Er is genoeg te doen. Als de broeder niet (meer) in de kerkeraad zit, dan is er toch nog genoeg te helpen. De predikant kan altijd wel hulp gebruiken. Vooral met het bezoeken van zieken, van mensen die aan huis gebonden zijn. Ieder die dat doet, ondervindt dat zijn eigen leven erdoor verrijkt wordt.

Iemand schreef: het ergste werklozen-probleem is in de kerk te vinden. Daar is veel van waar. Ieder die nog krachten, tijd en andere talenten heeft, moet die leren gebruiken.

Sprekend over evangelisatie, dan herinner ik me een broeder die op een vergadering voor evangelisatie vroeg: waarom beginnen wij ouderen er niet mee? Er zijn zo veel geestelijk-mislukte nederlandse immigranten hier. Het zal niet moeilijk vallen een aantal adressen te krijgen, vooral in de "old age homes" en "nursing homes". Wat kostelijk als men licht mag brengen in een donker leven!

Zo is er dus nog genoeg te doen, meer dan genoeg. En er blijft geen tijd over voor verveling of zelfbeklag.

40th Anniversary of Holy Wedlock



January 11, 1934
Katwyk, Holland

January 11, 1974
Delta, B.C., Canada

Mr. and Mrs. D.J. Vandergugten emigrated to Canada in May 1951. With their eight children; Neal, Brian, Dick, Rita, George, Peter, John and Mary, they settled in Burnaby, B.C. After having worked in the landscaping profession for a short while, for his brother, C.A. Vandergugten, Mr. Vandergugten soon ventured into the greenhouse business for himself, in which he literally grew millions of tulip bulbs.

In 1961 the family moved onto bigger premises in Delta, B.C., on which Mr. Vandergugten established a flower and gardening retail outlet.

Since they sold their business in 1971 to their sons Dick and John they have been retired from active business life, which they enjoy tremendously in good health.

The Lord willing, Diederikus Johannes Vandergugten and Hendrica Vandergugten - nee Ravensbergen hope to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary on January 11, 1974. Their address is 8659, 120 St., Delta, B.C.

HET EINDE IS GEEN PROBLEEM.

Dat einde komt. Maar sterven is niet moeilijk; dat heb ik in al mijn dienstjaren wel ontdekt. Daar zou ik me dus maar geen zorgen over maken. Het leven is Christus, het sterven gewin.

Maar ook voor de ouderen geldt dat U niet naar dat sterven uitkijkt in de verkeerde zin. Natuurlijk verlangt U af te zijn van die ellendige zonde die in later leven U soms nog meer plaagt dan daarvoor.

Maar ook voor gepensioneerden geldt: zalig de dienst-knecht welke zijn Heer bij Zijn komst aan het werk vindt! Niet "uit-geleefd" maar "lopen en niet moede worden"! "De krachten vernieuwen!"

G. VANDOOREN

Canada: A Troubled Year



he year 1973 has been one of upheaval and turmoil. Day after day, our newspapers, televisions and radios have assaulted our senses with continuing revelations of corruption, decay, wars and anarchy. During the course of a year, I read more than 600 newspapers, close to a

hundred magazines and periodicals as well as a number of books. It is difficult to be comprehensive about reviewing the past year's events and I will restrict myself mainly to Canadian events, leaving a more detailed review of international events to future articles.

Events in Canada have been largely overshadowed by dramatic world events such as the October war in the Middle East, the end of the Vietnam war (at least as far as American troop involvement is concerned), the continuing detente with the Communist countries, the coups in Chile and Greece and the severe crisis of authority in the U.S. (about which I've written several times already). In the context of these larger problems, Canada's seem minor, but are no less so for all of us concerned for the future of this country which most of us have adopted as our new homeland.

Of most political significance has been the ability of the Liberal government to survive in the Parliament of minorities. They could not have done so without the informal alliance with the New Democrats, who have used their pivotal role in order to squeeze out of the government concessions in policy which are in line with their own thinking. As a result they are claiming credit for many of the measures introduced in Parliament in the past year. Their position is not without political danger, however, as the close association and support of the Liberal government tends to blur their distinctiveness as an ideological party and therefore their appeal to certain parts of the electorate. They are most desirous of power and are anxious to avoid an election which might see them lose their position in the present parliament. It is doubtful whether this "unholy alliance" will last throughout 1974.

What we have seen in the past year are various attempts by the government to overcome some of its mistakes and try to regain a dominant position so they can go back to the country and ask for a renewed mandate with an absolute majority. (I'll have more to say about the "myth" of majority government in a future article). We have witnessed a government trying to cope with perplexing economic problems, proposing solutions which often seemed ad hoc, with the main aim of maintaining power in parliament.

The overriding problems in 1973 have been economic, compounded by the energy crisis dominating the news in the past few months. Not only Canada, but also most other industrialized countries have become aware of their dependence on scarce sources of energy, brought home by the decision of the Arab states to cut off supplies of oil and to curtail production, in order to bring about a more favourable policy towards the Arab position in the Middle East

conflict. It has even been suggested that one of the reasons Canada was so eager to get a position on the Middle East United Nations peacekeeping force was to guarantee a continued supply of Arab oil. Whether there actually is a scarcity in a country as rich in natural resources as Canada is questionable. It seems to be mainly a question of lack of federal-provincial co-ordination and planning.

The energy problem has forced all of us to take a second look at the way we have been using our resources and the wastefulness which has been built into our economic life. In the pursuit of more and more wealth and more and more luxuries, Western nations since the Second World War have exploited the resources of the earth, in the process polluting the water and air. This can not be called a responsible use of the gifts bestowed upon mankind in creation and the present problems are the result of this abuse, in which Christians also share. To that end the energy crisis may yet serve a useful function in making people aware of their responsibilities and limitations.

Though I do not wish to be alarmist, it is quite apparent that nations and individuals cannot carry on indefinitely consuming more goods, creating greater debts, demanding higher wages, without paying a price. To one who has been taught by the Bible about the sinfulness of man and his inclination to be selfish, the present condition of society should not be surprising. That should not make us complacent but spur us on to witness in word and deed about the only way which leads to harmony and peace in society. Apostate man sees only reason and technology as the means to overcome the world's many problems. There is a constant search for answers from "experts", sages in various fields, or men seek strength through association, putting their trust in the state or some strong man (Diefenbaker in '58, Trudeau in '68). We must remind ourselves not to think in the same pattern, instead become more and more aware that our salvation lies in Jesus Christ and submission to the laws of God for this world, in all its aspects.

More than once have I heard it said that the government should do this or the government should do that. Let us be careful that we do not make this an excuse for our own activity or lack of it. It is precisely the trend toward greater government involvement in all areas of life (and our acceptance of it) that we should get away from and warn against. The very power of the all-encompassing state will pose a serious threat to the continued freedom of the believer to live as a redeemed servant in the Kingdom of Christ. The more we (the Canadian people) ask the government to do, the more it will look upon itself as the arbiter of all things and the sole authoritative decision-maker.

During the course of the year we have seen many examples of government being asked to provide solutions, impose settlements, etc. Among the most well-known examples of government action called for was in regard to the cost of food. Food costs were steadily rising throughout the summer and when the government called parliament back into session to legislate an end to the national rail strike (which in itself contributed to rising costs), they also presented measures to deal with the food costs. Thus milk

and wheat subsidies were announced as well as an increase in family allowances and pensions, so that some of the effects of inflation could be eliminated. A Food Prices Review Board was also established under Beryl Plumptre but so far they seem to have had little effect aside from deflecting criticism from the government and creating yet more government bureaucracy.

The Conservative Opposition had been advocating a freeze on wages and prices for 90 days but the government and the N.D.P. continued to reject this. Whether such a freeze would work or not is debatable (witness similar efforts in the U.S. and Britain). The fact is that the government seemed to have no long term solutions to the continuing problem of inflation and unemployment and was instead, by its own practices, contributing to them.

Though economists tell us that the Canadian economy is basically sound and growing, there is considerable worry about a recession over the next few years. Interest rates continue to rise, housing is becoming increasingly harder to come by and consumer prices have gone up 7.5% this year. Inflation has meant a steady rise in government revenues which the government has tried to overcome by proposing a plan to raise income tax brackets annually (indexing), a proposal first suggested by Mr. Stanfield and vigorously rejected by the government. The Economic Council of Canada in a recent report warned about the harmful consequences of a bloated welfare system, which was of course vociferously rejected by the socialist element in the country. There can be little doubt, however, that the producing middle class is being squeezed more and more. But how long can this go on without a revolt on their part?

The Conference on Western Economic Opportunities which was held during the summer was Mr. Trudeau's attempt to regain some political support in the West in the wake of the election results and to soothe the feeling of neglect in the Western provinces. It gave them an opportunity to present their grievances and to try to wrangle some concessions from the federal government as far as freight rates, banking policy, etc., were concerned. It did not take long before the federal government again alienated Westerners by imposing controls on beef exports, a ceiling on grain prices and an export tax on oil (first 40 cents, then raised to \$1.90 a barrel).

A number of measures were announced by the government to deal with the energy problem, some of which, such as the imposition of an export tax, caused friction between Ottawa and Alberta. According to the constitution, provinces have exclusive jurisdiction over natural resources but the federal government can regulate interprovincial flow of products and impose export controls. To what extent can the government of Canada intervene and say that it must take into account the interests of all Canadians? It seems only just that under the type of system we have the resources of the country should be shared by all, without one part of the country profiting excessively at the cost of other parts. At the same time the producing provinces should receive a fair return for their products and exports to the United States should not be denied. Though the government has a responsibility to see that our own needs are looked after as far as fuel is concerned, it would be irresponsible to engage in Arab type tactics by denying resources to a needy neighbour which is quite prepared to pay a good price.

In the year 1974 we can expect increased prices for most fuels, the possibility of rationing and so on. The

government's proposals for an Energy Allocation Board and the possibility of a national petroleum corporation are further examples of the encroaching powers of the state. These measures should make us wary, for they will be passed in all probability under the guise of emergency conditions. Once established, though, it will be hard to dismantle the apparatus.

All the news was not on the economic front - there were also the two visits of the Queen, once for the Commonwealth Conference and once to celebrate with Canadians the centennial of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. As well one can report the appointment of a new Governor-General, Ambassador Jules Leger. Let us hope that the Trudeau administration has had a change of heart regarding the monarchy and is not exploiting the issue for partisan political purposes.

To look at some other events briefly, we remember the visit of the Prime Minister to China in October where he was greeted as an old friend and where he expressed admiration for the Chinese in these words: "The social experiment which you are conducting in this country has already demonstrated its success. Its interest to Canadians is found by the fact that it emphasizes in many respects - though by no means all - goals identical to those held by us." One would like to know exactly what kind of goals he has in mind. It should be pointed out that while the government is currying favour with the Communists, granting most-favoured nation status to China for trade purposes, we are ignoring our relations with our allies in Europe and our bilateral relations with the United States are at a low point as well. The government seems to be trying to adopt a neutralist stance in foreign policy but there is little national debate about this among political parties, regrettably.

The recent election in Quebec saw the return of the liberal government with a massive majority of seats, 102 out of 108, although they had only 54.2% of the vote. This demonstrates again the inequity in the electoral system and the need for a better system of distribution of seats. The Parti Quebecois became the main opposition party and despite their small number of seats, they gained almost 30% of the vote. One should not be deluded therefore that the independence movement is dead and poses no further threat to the unity of the country.

Nothing could be more indicative of the lack of principle in government and among politicians generally than the debate on capital punishment which took place again this year. The ban on capital punishment was extended for a further 5 years till 1977, when it will come up for debate again. It was left up to the consciences of the individual MP's as to how they voted. The government has not seen fit to enforce its well-known position for fear of alienating public opinion. It pained me to see the anguished way in which some MP's deliberated about the precious lives of murderers and criminals of all kinds and at the same time exhibited their callous disregard for the lives of unborn children in the matter of abortion.

No better example of the lack of a coherent philosophy or set of principles can be found than the spectacle of one Conservative MP on Parliament Hill demonstrating in favour of abortion and another on the other side of the hill demonstrating just as vehemently against it. Private morality has been divorced from public morality.

The infamous Morgentaler case in which the doctor was vindicated in his committing some 6,000 abortions



MRS. ANNA BAKER arrived in Canada in 1953. She was married in 1954 and now has three children. The Baker's have been living in Guelph for 4½ years, where Mrs. Baker serves Fergus-Guelph as Clarion Correspondent.



MR. HANK A. BERENDS of the Cloverdale church arrived in Canada in 1957. He has been employed with Vanderpol's Eggs Ltd. for some time. Marrying the boss' daughter in 1963 the Berends' now have four children. Mr. Berends is Clarion correspondent for the Cloverdale area.



MR. D. DANIELS correspondent for Lethbridge came to Canada in 1952. He has held several jobs since coming to this country and is presently employed at the Research Station in Lethbridge in the Veterinarian Medical Entomology section. Mr. Daniels is married and has four children, all of whom are married.



MRS. THEODORA HEYINK, correspondent for London has lived here for approximately 2½ years. Until recently she was employed with the Bank of Montreal as a teller. Theodora and her husband John are expecting their first child in the middle of December.



MR. JOHN JANSSENS arrived in Canada in 1949. Clarion correspondent for the Watford area, Mr. Janssen is married and has six children. For the past 12 years he has owned his own farm and is in the poultry egg production five miles from Watford.



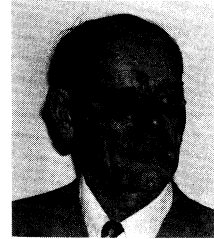
MR. H. KLOS and his wife came to the Carman area in 1953. They have raised a family of seven children and now also have thirty-two grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Although now retired, Mr. Klos is still very active in his son's fruit and vegetable store in Carman and finds time to assist as Clarion correspondent in this area.



MR. BEN KOTTELENBERG and his family immigrated to Canada in 1947 when he was still a very small boy. He is now the owner of a farm in the Orangeville area, where he also serves as our correspondent. Married in 1969 to Joan Groen, the Kottelenberg's are the parents of two small children.



MRS. LINDA RUGGI correspondent for Smithville came to Canada from the Netherlands in 1953. She was married to Fred Ruggi in 1957 and is now a housewife and the mother of three children.



MR. MARTIN ONDERWATER, correspondent for Abbotsford and his wife Hennie are the parents of ten children, and have thirty-nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Mr. Onderwater arrived in Canada in 1952. After being a long time member of the church at New Westminster, he has retired to Abbotsford and is an active member of the church.



MR. PETER A. SELLES a resident and correspondent for Edmonton arrived in Canada from the Netherlands in 1953. He is employed as an architectural draftsman and residential designer. Married in 1960, the Selles' have five children. Mr. Selles enjoys music and is the director of the church's Junior Choir.



MRS. FREDDIE VEENENDAAL, her husband Gus and two small children live in Beamsville, Ont. Most of her years in Canada were spent in this district. Before her marriage Freddie taught at John Calvin School in Smithville. She is now able to contribute some of her time to aid us as Clarion correspondent for the Beamsville area.



MR. A.H. SMOUTER of Burlington, Ontario has devoted a good portion of his time canvassing for our Clarion magazine. He has been in Canada since 1952, residing in several places and finally settling in Burlington. Until his retirement he was employed as an interior and exterior decorator. Mr. Smouter who is married has nine children and six grandchildren. Gardening and painting are his favorite pastimes.



MR. ALBERT YTSMA has lived in Chatham since his arrival in Canada 23 years ago. Married with four children, Mr. Ytsma has been employed as Manager Gas Supply Statistics with Union Gas Limited, for many years. An active church member who is also aiding our Clarion as correspondent for Chatham.



MRS. RIA VANVLIET our Calgary correspondent is married to Kees Vanvliet. They have two young sons.

*Correspondents not shown will be introduced to our readers in the New Year.

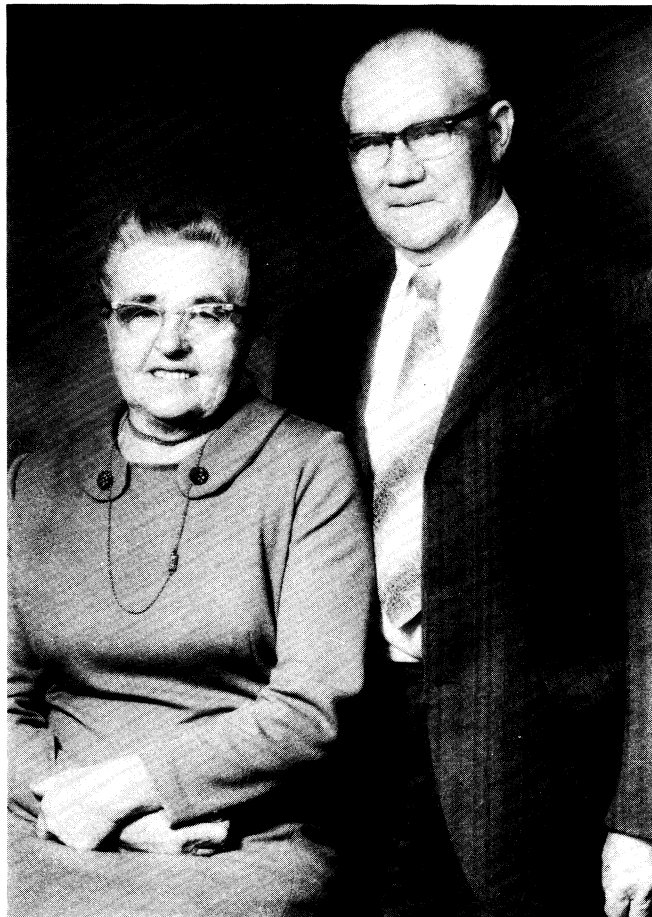
55th Wedding Anniversary

On December 28, 1973, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Kuik hope to commemorate that the Lord has kept them united in marriage for 55 years. They began their married life on a farm in Ruinerwold-Koekange, The Netherlands. Later on they moved to the city of Enschede. From there they immigrated to Canada in July, 1950, a decision which was made as a family. Their destination was to be Lethbridge, Alberta, since a Canadian Reformed Church was located there. However, on their arrival in Halifax they were advised that they had been placed with a beef farmer in Homewood [near Carman, Manitoba], about 50 miles from Winnipeg. They decided to stay there for the time being. From Lethbridge, The Kuik's were advised to stay in Homewood in order to try to establish a church there also. With the help of the fieldman, Mr. J. de Haas, several other families from the Netherlands joined them in the spring of 1951. And that was the beginning of the Canadian Reformed Church at Homewood-Carman which was instituted in August 1951 by the late Rev. J.T. VanPopta. In this way the churches had a central place in our large country to hold the first General Synods: Homewood-Carman 1954 and 1958.

Mr. and Mrs. Kuik saw the church, as well as their family grow. It is the promise of the Lord in the covenant that this will go together; the growth of the family and of the church. We read in Psalm 128:5, 6: "The Lord bless you from Zion: May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life; may you see your children's children."

Mr. and Mrs. Kuik received ten children from the Lord. Two were taken away as infants and their oldest son Jan died in 1944 in a German concentration camp. This was also received as coming from the Lord and that knowledge sustained them in their times of grief. Their remaining seven children all came to Canada and they now have 38 children's children and one great-grandchild. And they are very thankful to the Lord that He preserved them all, so that none of them left the Lord and that all are still members of the church.

After farming in Graysville for 11 years Mr. and Mrs. Kuik have now been retired since 1966 and live in the town of Carman. All of the Kuik's children live and work in Carman or Winnipeg, except for Jantinus [John] who with his



family went further away, namely to the Mission Field in Brazil and two of their grandchildren have moved, one to Ontario and the other to Alberta.

We hope brother and sister Kuik will have a good day with their family and that the Lord will give them some more years together in good health in His service and seeing in their descendants "the prosperity of Jerusalem" to the glory of the faithful God of the Covenant.

Their address is: Box 841, Carman, Manitoba R0G 0J0.

CANADA: A Troubled Year Cont.

when the laws of Canada forbade such procedures is an ominous sign for the future of Canadian society and should make us all the more vigilant and active in the field of public witnessing for the upholding of God's laws for life, not only for our own sake but for all men.

These are some of the events which stand out as we reflect upon the year 1973. I hope that I have made it clear that there is much we as Canadians and as members of the Canadian Reformed churches should be concerned about. In 1974 we will continue to draw attention to those things which contribute to the breakdown of a society which has abandoned allegiance to the Lord of salvation and instead has succumbed to the wiles of the evil one. Let us together strive to find answers to the many problems confronting our society and do this in an obedient, faithful way. That is both a privilege and a responsibility.

HAROLD J. LUDWIG

Church News

Rev. J. Geertsema of Carman has been called by the Canadian Reformed Church of Hamilton.

Our heavenly Father richly blessed us with the birth of:

PETER BRADLEY

on December 2, 1973.

A brother for: Fred - Marsha - Cheryl

We would like to thank all those who showed us in anyway their sympathy, with the loss of our dear father.

Peter and Nelly Oosterhoff -nee Bandringa

R.R. #9, Dunnville, Ontario.

The Word of God

A PROGRAMME OF SINGING, CHANTING, AND RECITING ABOUT

The Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ



1. CHANTING (Each of the four lines is chanted on the same tune):

Remember LORD (4x) Remember LORD what Thou hast promised in Thy faithfulness and love.
 Remember LORD (4x) For by Thy Word all was created here below and there above.
 Remember LORD (4x) Although we sinned, Thou hast prepared salvation to the very least.
 Remember LORD (4x) Remember LORD, there is a King, there is a Prophet, and a Priest.

2. SINGING of Psalm 132:6, by all.

The LORD has once to David sworn
 An oath He never will bemoan:
 "There will to you a child be born,
 A son shall from your body spring
 Whom on your throne I'll set as king."

3. CHANTING by two groups:

Remember LORD (4x) Remember LORD, we disobeyed and did away with Thy command.
 Remember LORD (4x) We lost our face, we lost our place, we did not heed Thy loving hand.
 Remember LORD (4x) But Thou hast promised Thou wilt not leave off the work Thou hast begun.
 Remember LORD (4x) Thy Word is spoken by the prophets and fulfilled by Thy Son.

4. SINGING of Psalm 132:10, by all.

"There I will cause, in David's line,
 A horn to sprout, a lamp to shine
 For my anointed as a sign.
 His enemies I'll clothe with shame,
 But deck his crown with lustrous fame."

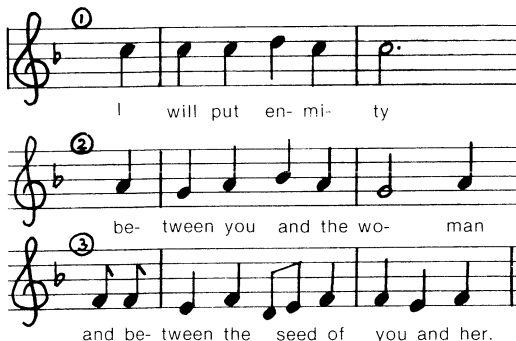
5. RECITATION

In the beginning, the first beginning,
 The very beginning was God.
 God spoke His Word and created the world,
 Heaven and earth. No, not
 From dust or clay or elements
 Or from one little part.
 No, not with hands and not with tools
 As artists "create" art.
 God spoke one Word, one mighty word;
 He spoke the light and called it day,
 He spoke the sky in wondrous way,
 He spoke the land, He spoke the sea,
 The sun and moon and stars spoke He,
 He spoke . . . really, there is no end
 To what appeared at His command:
 The fowls and fishes, great and small,
 The animals, God spoke them all,
 A world of life, a world of love,
 Both earth below and heaven above
 One image of His magnitude,
 Ready to render gratitude
 To Him who spoke.

In this new world, this brand new world,
 This brilliant world stood man,
 He knew His God, he knew His voice,
 He knew His great command.
 He looked away from what was good
 And reached for the forbidden fruit,
 He listened to God's enemy
 And He despised God's company.
 He took the "step ahead" and fell,
 Forgetting all he knew so well,
 The love of God, the grace of God,
 The burning jealousy of God.
 He fell . . .
 But God so loved the world and man
 That He, the Father, spoke again.
 The LORD revealed His mighty plan
 Of love.
 The joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned into mourning.
 The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned!
 For this our heart is faint; for these things our eyes are dim.
 (Lamentations 5:15-17)

6. RECITATION

I will put enmity between you and the woman,
 And between your seed and her seed;
 He shall bruise your head,
 And you shall bruise his heel.
 (Genesis 3:15)



7. SINGING

[The round should be sung once through, before it is sung as a round.]

8. RECITATION

God will put enmity
 The LORD again has spoken!
 God's Word cannot be broken.
 The faithful One is He.
 Creation groans with pain
 And cries for restoration
 The LORD reveals His will,
 "I will prepare salvation."
 When all have gone astray,
 There is a lonesome preacher.
 When almost all is drowned,
 An ark floats to God's future.

9. SINGING



When God looked at the world
He made in the beginning,
He saw that men were sinning
And spilling blood and spoiling,
And He said, "All I see,
Is evil and that grieves Me."

The LORD decided then,
"I will destroy all evil,
The birds and beasts and people,
The plants and trees and forests.
I blot out all I see,
But Noah who believes Me."

Then Noah built the ark,
A vessel with three stories,
With room for food and storage
For all the pairs of animals
And Noah's family.
The ark would hold them easily.

When God had locked the door,
Down came the rain in rushes,
The brooks turned into gushes
Of wild and whirling water,
Till all you saw was sea,
But Noah floated safely.

The water rose and rose:
The valleys, hills and mountains
Were overflowed by fountains
And heavy rain from heaven,
Till God said, "Now the sea
Must disappear completely."

The land was dry at last,
New plants and trees were growing,
And Noah started sowing
And ploughing all and planting.
He did not fear, for lo,
God gave a sign: THE RAINBOW.



10. RECITATION

Also in Noah's family
The evil seed is sown,
The LORD decides, "I will elect
A people for My Own."

The Lord speaks unto Abraham,
"Listen to My command.
Leave all you have in Ur and
Travel to the Promised Land."

Abraham leaves his family
And heads for Canaan.
The LORD adds a new chapter
To the history of man.

Also in this new chapter
The LORD reveals His Word,
Hear, people of God's Covenant,
Believe what you have heard!

11. SINGING

God said to Abram, "Go out of your country,
Out of your household and family,
Go to a land that I surely shall show you.
Take courage, go, and put trust in Me.
And I shall make you a very great nation
And I shall bless you and make your name great.
You'll be a blessing and cause of salvation;
Your friends I bless and your foes I hate!" (Genesis 12)

God said to Isaac, "Don't go into Egypt,
Dwell in the land which I'm showing you.
Stay in this land which I promised to Abram,
I'll give it you and your children too.
I shall continue my oath unto Abram:
Your seed will be like the stars in the sky.
Your father kept the commandments I gave him;
My laws and statutes he did not deny." (Genesis 26)

Jacob lay dreaming and then God addressed him,
"I am the LORD GOD of Abraham,
The God of Isaac. The ground where you lie now
I'll give to you, as I promised them.
Your seed will be as the dust of the earth and
You will be dwelling in North, South and West.
Be not afraid; I will guide you forever.
I'll never leave you. I'll give you rest." (Genesis 28)



12. RECITATION

The Lord has made his Covenant
With Abraham and his seed.
"You are my people in my land;
I'll give you all you need."

For a while it seems that the people of God
Do prosper in Egyptland.
But as time elapses, the rest has gone.
A frightening war is at hand.

A king arises who is sore afraid
Of the strength of Israel.
"Let us weaken the men that there will be no seed!"
The idea stems straight from hell.

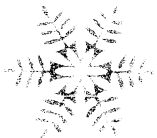
But it does not work out, for the harder they work,
The stronger and mightier they grow.
"Then kick them and beat them, maltreat them as slaves!"
So decrees the Pharaoh.

But the LORD gives children, Pharaoh.
You cannot break His will!
"Then kill the baby boys right at their birth."
The midwives, they have to kill!

But the Hebrew midwives obeyed God
Rather than to obey that brute.
"Ransack all the houses and take the little sons,
We'll wipe them out, stem and root!"

The LORD preserves in wondrous way
The life of a little son:
His name is Moses and through him
Great miracles will be done.

He will speak the Word of the mighty God,
The God of our salvation.
He will write down God's Covenant word
For the future generation.



13. SINGING

The LORD, He is my strength and song,
 Salvation He will bring.
 He is my God and that's the only
 Reason why I sing!

Refrain:
 Sing the Lord, for He has triumphed greatly:
 The horse and his rider He drowned in the Red Sea.
 Sing the Lord, for He has triumphed greatly:
 The horse and his rider He drowned in the Red Sea.

We were forced up by Egypt's king,
 But we were not alone.
 The Lord was near; they sank into
 The bottom as a stone. *Refrain*
 Our enemy said recklessly,
 "Now we will draw our sword,"
 But all the waters gathered
 At the breath of God the Lord. *Refrain*
 The Pharaoh had gathered all
 His chariots and his host.
 But God, He drowned them while his
 People safely reached the coast. *Refrain*
 The floods stood upright as a
 Heap: a path across the sea.
 But God's right hand has dashed to
 Pieces our enemy. *Refrain*
 Who is like unto Thee, O Lord,
 Who is like unto Thee?
 The people went on dry land
 In the middle of the sea! *Refrain*

14. RECITATION

The LORD your God shall raise up for you
 A prophet like me from among you,
 From your brethren
 - Him you shall heed. (Deut. 18:15).

I see him, but not now;
 I behold him, but not nigh:
 A star shall come forth out of Jacob,
 And a sceptre shall rise out of Israel (Num. 24:17).

God is not a man, that he should lie,
 Nor a son of man, that he should repent.
 Has he said, and will he not do it?
 Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?
 Behold, I received a command to bless;
 He has blessed, and I cannot revoke it. (Num. 23:19).

15. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING of Psalm 136:2, 9, 12 and 13.

16. RECITATION

The Midianites! The Midianites!
 Flee to the mountains, all of you!
 Take what you need most urgently
 And leave the rest. The enemy
 Is close at hand. Don't think, but do.

The highways are unoccupied,
 And fear goes hand in hand with death.
 Windows are blinded, doors are locked,
 For Midianites cannot be mocked!
 A noise? Be silent. Hold your breath.

They come in thousands! Grasshoppers
 They are - they consume everything.
 They take the donkeys and the sheep,
 The fields with golden grain they reap.
 They don't leave ox or anything.

Pray to your God, you Israelites.
 Burn down your idols, made of gold.
 They can not see or hear or speak.
 Images are they. Do you seek
 Salvation from a hollow mould?

God's hand will save you mightily.
 He does not need man's power or strength.
 Who is afraid? Go home, I pray.
 Twenty-two thousand steal away!
 Three hundred men are left at length.

Three hundred men, three companies
 With trumpets. Will they give a fright?
 Look at the sleeping enemy,
 Outnumbering the sand of the sea!
 Watch out! For this is Midian's night!

The pitchers break, the torches flame.
 The trumpets shout for victory.
 The Midianites run and cry and flee,
 The enemy kills the enemy.
 Praise ye the Lord, for great is He!

17. SINGING

The people walked in darkness
 But God gave a great light,
 For death has cast its shadow
 A long and frightful night.

God gave them joy and gladness
 As in the harvest day.
 As when a spoil is shared out,
 So glad and gay are they.

For God broke down the collar,
 The yoke that burdened them.
 The driver's rod He broke
 In the day of Midian.

Be comforted, my people,
 Behold, a Son is born,
 Who will restore a life
 That by sin and death was torn.

18. RECITATION

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
 Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.
 Thou has multiplied the nation, thou has increased its joy;
 They rejoice before thee as with joy at the harvest,
 As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.
 For the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder,
 The rod of his oppressor,
 Thou has broken as on the day of Midian. (Isaiah 9:2-4)

For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given;
 And the government will be upon his shoulder,
 And his name will be called
 "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."
 (Isaiah 9:6)

The LORD, the God of their fathers,
 Sent persistently messengers to them,
 Because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place;
 But they kept mocking the messengers of God,
 Despising his words, and scoffing at his prophets,
 Till the wrath of the LORD rose against his people,
 Till there was no remedy. (II Chronicles 36:15, 16)

19. RECITATION

Look at that man with his wooden yoke!
 He walks through all Jerusalem.
 He preaches, and teaches the common man,
 He goes to the priests and admonishes them,
 That man with his wooden yoke.

He is a prophet, the man with his yoke,
 He goes to the temple, he goes to the court;
 Wherever he may be listened to,
 He preaches the terrible Word of the LORD,
 But no one will bend for that yoke.

He does not bear his yoke in vain!
 "The king of Babylon will subdue
 The people of Judah, you must submit!
 For the LORD Himself makes war with you!"
 Saith the man with the wooden yoke.

"What do you want with that miserable yoke?
 I'll break it! There you go, you spy!"
 An angry man breaks the yoke in two.
 He says he is a prophet, but that is a lie!
 He would not have broken that yoke.

Jeremiah turns home with his yoke,
 But the LORD compels him to go back.
 "Tell them that the man will surely die!
 I'll bring an iron yoke on their neck.
 They WILL bend for my heavy yoke!"

God's people don't listen to the man with his yoke.
 They cast him in prison, throw him in a pit.
 "Will God leave His temple, His holy place?"
 "God departed already, and that is just it!"
 Says the man with the wooden yoke.

Turn back to your God and serve Him again,
 Obey His will and recall what He spoke.
 Shall the creature doubt it's Maker's might?
 Obey, and He'll give you a gentle yoke,
 God will give you a gentle yoke.



20. SINGING From Anathoth there comes a man
 Who calls and cries again and again;
 ISRAEL, REPENT YE,
 TURN TO THE LORD WHO SENT ME.
 He's not afraid of making foes,
 That man from Anathoth.

The LORD has said: You preach my Word
 Though people make you eat the dirt.
 ISRAEL, REPENT YE.
 TURN TO THE LORD WHO SENT ME.
 There is no ear; there is no fear.
 God's people will not hear.

They think, God's temple is still here,
 Why should we change, why should we fear?
 ISRAEL, REPENT YE,
 TURN TO THE LORD WHO SENT ME.
 Your heart is hard; your tongue is wrong,
 Your eyes are blind since long.

God's Words are written on a scroll,
 A scroll that takes a heavy toll.
 ISRAEL, REPENT YE,
 TURN TO THE LORD WHO SENT ME.
 The king stands not in awe of these,
 He burns piece after piece.

O Israel, O men of God,
 With God's own blood you have been bought.
 ISRAEL, REPENT YE,
 TURN TO THE LORD WHO SENT ME.
 Don't rouse God's anger, scorn His wrath,
 On pain of your own death!

21. RECITATION

Thus saith the LORD:
 In this place of which you say,
 "It is a waste with man or beast,"
 In the cities of Judah and the streets of
 Jerusalem that are desolate,
 Without man or inhabitant or beast,
 There shall be heard again
 The voice of mirth and the voice of gladness,
 The voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride,
 The voices of those who sing,
 As they bring thankofferings to the house of the LORD,
 "Give thanks to the LORD of hosts,
 For the LORD is good,
 For His steadfast love endures for ever! (Jer. 33:10, 11)

In those days and at that time
 I will cause a righteous branch
 To spring forth from David;
 And he shall execute justice and righteousness
 In the land. (Jeremiah 33:15)

22. SINGING



Hear Israel, the LORD Himself shall give a sign right now:
 Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and thou
 Shalt call His name Immanuel,
 The LORD shall keep His vow.
 O tidings of comfort and joy. (Isaiah 7:14)

Lo, unto us a child is born, to us a Son is given,
 And He shall take the government; the world belongs to Him,
 And Wonderful and Counsellor are
 The names of this new king.
 O tidings of comfort and joy. (Isaiah 9:5)

Behold, out of the stem of Jesse shall come forth a rod,
 A Branch shall grow out of its roots. The Spirit of our God
 Shall rest upon Him: wisdom, understanding
 Is His lot.
 O tidings of comfort and joy. (Isaiah 11:1)

23. RECITATION

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet
 Before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes.
 And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children
 And the hearts of children to their fathers,
 Lest I come and smite the land with a curse.
 (Malachi 4:5, 6)

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John,
 He came for a testimony, to bear witness to the light,
 That all might believe through him.
 He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light.
 (John 1:6-8)

24. RECITATION

From far and wide the people flock to hear
The prophet with his coat of camel's hair
Whose penetrating voice cries out, "Prepare
A highway for the Lord; His time draws near."
He hurls his words at Pharisees and scribes,
"Who told you to repent, you viper's brood?"
But soldiers he just tells to be less rude
And publicans to quit their secret bribes.

He calls for penance, spurns all self-conceit
And preaches humble self-examination.
"Your Lord is coming! In his indignation
He'll burn the chaff and gather all the wheat."
How lovely on the mountains are the feet
Of him who brings the good news of salvation!



27. SINGING

A child is born in Bethlehem, the promised One of Jesse's stem.
Not a gift to hand Him, but a cross on Calvary's hill.
Not a gift to hand Him but our sins, which add up still.
Christ the Lord is born. Christ the Lord is born.
A child is born in Bethlehem, the promised One of Jesse's stem.
Smitten and rejected, He will save us from God's wrath.
Smitten and rejected, He will save us by His death.
Christ the Lord is born. Christ the Lord is born.

25. SINGING

A child is born in Bethlehem, the Promised One from Jesse's stem.
Not a place to lay Him, but a manger for the beasts,
Not a place to lay Him. No royal crown, no royal feasts.
Christ the Lord is born. Christ the Lord is born.
A child is born in Bethlehem, The Promised One of Jesse's stem.
Not a crowd to greet Him, no priest, no king, no multitude.
Not a crowd to greet Him, but some shepherds, rough and rude.
Christ the Lord is born. Christ the Lord is born.

26. RECITATION

And it came to pass in those days,
That there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus
That all the world should be taxed.
And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.
And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city.
And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth,
Into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem;
Because he was of the house and lineage of David:
To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.
And so it was, that while they were there,
The days were accomplished that she should be delivered.
And she brought forth her firstborn son,
And wrapped him in swaddling clothes,
And laid him in a manger;
Because there was no room for them in the inn.
(Luke 2:1-7)

28. RECITATION

A little child is born, somewhere in Bethlehem.
We know the time, the place; we know the situation,
How he, the Promised One, was treated by His nation.
It is so easy to pass judgment and condemn.
It is so cheap to be astonished at the pride
And at the ignorance of men who could know better.

Is not God's Word a self-explanatory letter,
A lambent light before our feet, a truthful Guide?
God's Word is light indeed, and life, and consolation.
It is fulfilled in Christ, the King of heaven and earth.
We may not linger at His low and humble birth,
For in God's history there is continuation!
A little while yet and the Lord will come again.
Oh Lord, let's not be found inactive then, or vain.

29. CHANTING IN TWO GROUPS OF PSALM 24:7-10

Group I

Group II

Lift up your heads, you gates,
Be lifted up, you ancient doors,
That the King of glory

Lift up your heads, you gates,
Be lifted up, you ancient doors,
That the King of glory

That the King of glory may come in!
Who is this king of glory?

Who is this King of glory?
The LORD the LORD

Who is the King of glory?

The LORD strong and mighty

The LORD the LORD
Mighty in battle

The LORD the LORD
Mighty in battle

Lift up your heads, you gates,
Be lifted up, you ancient doors,
That the King of glory

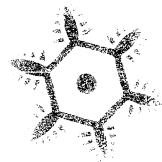
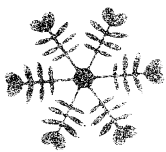
Lift up your heads, you gates,
Be lifted up, you ancient doors,
The that King of glory

That the King of glory may come in!
Who is this King of glory?

Who is this King of glory?
The LORD of hosts.
He is the king of glory.

Who is this King of glory?
He is the King of glory.

The LORD of hosts.
THE LORD OF HOSTS!



Modern Trends in Counselling

My primary purpose this morning* is to say a few things about modern trends in counselling. You will appreciate that this is not an easy task and certainly not something that can be wrapped up in tidy little parcels, marked for quick delivery. For this reason the format of today's conference will have to be such that everyone here becomes thoroughly involved in exploring this important subject area. No one should expect to sit back and let the "experts" do the work. After all, we are all "Competent to Counsel".

A further problem for me will be the difficulty of anticipating the particular concerns you might have. What is interesting and what is relevant to office-bearers in the Church? To what extent should they try to understand the minds of people, past and present, who have attempted to work out theories concerning man, his problems, and how he can be helped? The fact that you have selected this topic for me today allows me to assume that there is an active interest in what is going on around us, and that we are getting away from a notion, "if you don't understand it, ignore it". My opinion is that Christians should be the most aware people around, for *they* are the only ones who are in a position to draw the different trends today into a proper perspective. I might also add that, with a better understanding of trends today, the office-bearers and leaders in the Church will be better able to identify the pressing needs in our own circles, and also encourage more young people to diversify into areas of counselling that we have been largely avoiding until now (see the article, "Careers in Human Services", in *Clarion*, July 28, 1973).

No one will suggest, of course, that the field of counselling is a recent phenomenon. And we are not even proposing that counselling today is superior or better developed. What is interesting in studying the recent trends in counselling is how these reflect the different philosophies about man. We will find, therefore, that as counselling developed as a separate discipline it portrayed the general mood and outlook of people at that point in time. I want to stress

this because it is sometimes felt that psychiatry, for instance, is a fixed thing. Some even like to believe that all psychiatrists today are followers of that strange, bearded man, Sigmund Freud, and that they always will be. This would be quite an oversimplification.

Freud and the Medical Model

I just now mentioned the name of Sigmund Freud, and he is probably a good person to start with when we look at how counselling has been influenced. Freud's influence on counselling and even the common descriptions of human behaviour should not be underestimated. The words, "ego", "fixation", etc., have crept into the language of today. Everyone now talks about defences (although, I suppose, this is being replaced by that strange expression, "hang-up"). Freud stands out in history in that he seemed to lead the way in putting an end to the Victorian attitude that man was a good, and virtuous human being.

Freud shocked many people of his own day by suggesting that man was basically evil in that he was governed by instincts that made him survive, sometimes at the cost of other people's well-being. Incidentally, some Christian writers have tried to improve Freud's reputation by giving him credit for recognizing sinfulness in man (see Paul Barkman's *Man in Conflict*). This is clearly a bit overdone because Freud never did recognize the presence of sin in the true sense of the word; he was actually the one who promoted the idea that concern about sin and a contrite heart led to an imbalance in the personality and could lead to mental illness. Freud's dictum was, "a little bit of good, and a little bit of bad - all of it is acceptable as long as it represents an even balance".

Freud's scientific mind brought him to seek connections between a person's behaviours and mannerisms and the development of his instincts and urges. With this he seemed to bring the whole area of mental illness to a new level of respectability. Mentally ill people were no longer regarded as being possessed of the devil, or being dangerous maniacs who

should be kept out of society. They were now to be seen as patients suffering from a psychological disease not unlike patients inflicted by a physical ailment. This led to an elaborate study of various entities of mental illness, each with its own explanation of how it got started. We see here the beginnings of the profession of psychiatry where emotional problems are being regarded as similar to physical ailments. If you can trace the problem back to an infection or a virus you can prescribe the right antidote or cure. This kind of formulation is called the "medical model", and many psychiatrists have capitalized on this notion to argue that, because of their medical training, they are the final authorities on mental illness.

Man, the Machine.

Around the 1920's another school of thought was gaining in popularity. This particular school of thought was called Behaviourism and its prime mover was John Watson. The modern day proponent of Behaviourism is B.F. Skinner, and some of you may have read my brief article in the August 11 issue of *Clarion* in which I referred to Skinner's latest book, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. Now this new approach was in opposition to the theories of Freud. Followers of Watson, including Skinner, felt that Freud was much too philosophical and that really the only useful approach to human behaviour is the study of facts. Anything that was vague or abstract and could not be measured with the instruments of science was to be discarded. Thus the idea of man as a religious being with a destiny was regarded as naive and irrelevant. These people claim that man is no different from a machine in that all his responses can be studied in terms of what brought such responses on in the first place. The behaviourists introduced us to the term *Conditioning*, which is essentially a process whereby certain behaviours become "stamped in" when they are combined with certain rewards. Mental illness came to be viewed as merely a case of bad conditioning, and parents were encouraged to watch closely how they reward their children for good and for bad behaviour. The book *Dare to Discipline* by James Dobson shows that even Christians were not exempt from the influence of the Behaviourists.

Although Skinner himself denies that his method is dangerous and

dehumanizing, many of his critics (Rollo May, Victor Frankl) regard it with considerable fear. There is no doubt that the method is effective as the reports on brainwashing in Communist countries and even in the West would indicate. The big issue at stake is whether anyone will be safe in a world where man is seen as a machine subject to manipulation in the total absence of values or ultimate goals.

It should come as no surprise that many people nowadays are reacting to the pessimism of Freud's Psychoanalysis, and the scientific coldness of Skinner's Behaviourism. People working with the mentally ill have become disillusioned by these approaches, and in this day and age when the old ways of doing things are being re-examined and overhauled, there is a renewed search for freedom.

The New Freedom

"Man is free." This is the cry today. Man is not controlled by irrational instincts. He is not a living robot programmed in a way that is acceptable to society. Man is free to carve his own destiny. He has the potential to become a swine or a saint. This typifies the thinking of a movement within counselling that is becoming rather appealing to many people today. Again, like the other approaches this also has adherents among people who call themselves Christians. Although this view has a very obvious humanistic base, it has some validity in attacking previous definitions of mental illness. Remember that Freud set a trend in suggesting that emotional illness was much like physical illness, while Watson and his followers assumed that man had been adversely affected by his environment. The view which this new group proposes is that when a person becomes mentally ill he simply *covers up* - he adopts the role of a sick person, and he gets others to respond to him as if he were sick. The suggestion is that the person actually makes a decision to be mentally ill, and that if he decided to be sick he could also decide to be healthy.

I don't want to extend this too far. One should be aware, though, that this is quite clearly a radical turnabout from previous approaches. This view of mental illness is much more refreshing in that it puts the emphasis back on the person's own responsibility - he cannot blame his

parents for a poor upbringing, and he cannot even say that he should be excused because he is sick. The point at which we have to deviate from this particular view is in the solution or the final prescription. The counsellor, insisting that his client is fooling himself as well as others, turns the client back on himself and pushes him to seek the solution within himself. Once this is done and once the client gets in touch with his "authentic self", the counsellor's task is completed because now the client is again master of his own destiny - he is back in the driver's seat. A good example of a person who puts this into practice is Carl Rogers and his "non-directive" therapy.

I think you can tell for yourself

For the Canadian Reformed Church of Smithers, Sunday, Nov. 11, was a very special and joyous day. It was on this day namely that candidate J. Van Rietschoten was ordained as minister. A good two years since the departure of Rev. P. Kingma the vacancy in the Church of Smithers has been filled. Indeed reason for great joy.

Candidate Van Rietschoten was ordained to the ministry of the Word during the morning service by Rev. J. Mulder of Cloverdale, B.C., who has also been counsellor for the Church of Smithers.

The sermon was of 1 Cor. 4:1, in which it was emphasized that it is the task of a minister to be a steward of the mysteries of God.

In the afternoon service, Rev. Van Rietschoten gave his inaugural sermon with the words of Colossians 1:27b, 28.

The theme: The apostolic preaching aims at perfection in Christ summed up as follows: The apostolic preaching proclaims Christ as the only and complete Saviour; The apostolic preaching is brought by apostolic preachers; The apostolic preaching follows up the apostolic method; The apostolic preaching recognizes the apostolic goal.

Represented were: as delegate on behalf of the sister churches in Classis Pacific: Rev. J. Mulder and as delegate for the neighbouring Church of Houston br. J. Ten Brinke.

On Friday evening Nov. 16 the

what is happening - Counselling has taken a full swing from being overly directive to being completely non-directive. Because of this, any of the hopeful signs that started to emanate from this new view are pretty well lost. Man has become a law unto himself. Anything goes. Some of you who have read a bit about Encounter groups will realize that this non-directive approach leads right in to the whole practice of encounter groups where people are encouraged to express their "real selves". Unfortunately, this so-called real-self is usually not something nice and virtuous, but a stream of foul transgression where permission is being given to do your own thing. You may express all your hate, and also your love even

congregation came together in a meeting to especially welcome Rev. and Mrs. Van Rietschoten and family. Br. D.M. Barendregt, Sr. gave a word of welcome as retiring president of the consistory, and br. J. Ten Brinke on behalf of the Church of Houston. Delegates of the men's society and of the Young People's society also spoke a few words, as well as the president of the School Board.

Further in the evening there were individuals and groups who contributed in various ways to make this an enjoyable evening. There were anecdotes, as well as some points to ponder gleaned from some of the earliest church bulletins of 15 - 16 years ago at the inception of the Houston-Smithers Churches and presented by br. D. Onderwater. The children of the "Eben Ezer" school, staged a 'question and answer session' with the minister and his wife, which was enjoyed by all. The girls club had a play. Two members of the women's society held a dialogue of a humorous nature, after which they presented a beautiful plant to Mrs. Van Rietschoten. Rev. Van Rietschoten expressed his thankfulness and appreciation for the warm welcome and hoped to be able, with God's help, to work fruitfully in Christ's Church.

On request of the Chairman, br. F. Hofsink, Rev. Van Rietschoten led in prayer.

Content and glad all brothers and sisters went home.

when this leads to a transgression of the seventh commandment.

New Approaches

To bring the topic into more of a practical focus I would like to talk about some of the approaches being used today. I am now not talking about the underlying concepts of counselling but how counselling actually takes place. The classic image of counselling is that of a person lying on a couch. This was the way Freud operated and it is rarely used anymore today, although sometimes therapists resort to this method to help very tense patients relax. While individual counselling is still being performed a fair bit, marital counselling, family counselling, and group counselling are becoming more popular.

I would like to touch on why these new forms of counselling have become more important in the last decade. It would appear that the swing towards marital, family, and group counselling represents a swing away from the traditional concept that mental illness is like a physical disease. Before, when there was more of a tendency to regard a mentally disturbed person as a sick person, it made sense to deal with the person all by himself. It turned out, though, that while individual counselling seemed to remove some of the symptoms and the patient even appeared to be cured, the person often relapsed when he returned to his family and community. This was also found in cases where mentally ill people were removed from society and placed in institutions for long periods of time. They certainly improved throughout their stay but shortly after discharge they slipped back.

Why did this happen? How could it be that the person was apparently cured, went back to his family and his job, but soon after appeared again at the counsellor's office with similar complaints? When this phenomenon was looked at more closely, the discovery was made that there were forces within a person's family, or his immediate circle of relatives and friends, that caused him to slip back into the same pattern of behaviour. People had gotten used to the person's inappropriate behaviour before, and now they were having difficulty responding differently to the "new person". Consequently the person who had been supposedly cured found it easier to re-adapt his former behaviour pattern.

Another phenomenon occurred with so-called disturbed children which illustrates this point even further. This is the situation where a child with a serious emotional problem may be removed from the home or even placed in an institution.

Sometimes a very strange thing begins to happen in that another member of the family - a brother, a sister, or even a parent - begins to manifest problems. People in the field of Family Counselling label this as the *scapegoating phenomenon*. The theory is that the problem is not really with the child or the identified patient, but with the family as a whole - the child is merely "acting out" the disturbance of the family. When the child is removed, the problem remains, and the acting out of the problem is shifted to another member of the family constellation. We should be clear that no one is saying that when there is a problem with one member of the family that, automatically, you assume that there is something wrong with the whole family.

Another example of what I am talking about is the case where a husband or a wife becomes emotionally ill. One of the partners receives treatment or may even be taken to a hospital. Now again it appears that while one partner receives help and gets better, the other partner becomes ill. It is almost as if the relationship is a very tenuous balance where one of the partners "has to be sick". (I would suggest that this presents a very practical issue for office-bearers in that they should be reminded to spend just as much time with the immediate relatives of a patient as with the patient himself). Whether the person's problems are caused by a poor marriage or a negative family situation is not really the issue here. The real significance is that people began to notice that emotional problems do not happen in a vacuum, but that there were important influences exerted by other people. Now if this is true in cases where things go wrong, it should also be true that there are forces with the family, and the immediate community that can MAKE THINGS GO RIGHT. Family Counselling, and other forms of counselling that involve others who are significant to the person with the problem, should not be seen as an attempt to *blame* those people who rub shoulders with the patient, but as an attempt to enlist their help and

co-operation. This has tremendous implications for all of us here today. For it suggests that we can all become involved in the healing process. For a community of believers that takes its strength from the *GREAT HEALER* this must become its outstanding trademark. The issue is not that we will never have people who become emotionally ill, but how we respond to people who do become disturbed.

The Healing Community

The world of professional counselling has had to face the fact that much healing is being performed by simple people who possess a concern and sensitivity that allows them to respond to their fellowman in true brotherly love and nurture. This does not mean that the specialist has no role among our people. The specialist certainly does have a role to play. But this should be right among the people, and down from the ivory towers of the past. Such people should work closely with ministers, elders, and deacons to seek new ways of keeping the community of saints on its proper course. Some of you may view this as a rather dangerous concept - almost as if I am suggesting that something is being added on to the Biblical message. I propose that this is only a further manifestation of the Christian's mandate, and that we are *not* tacking on something that has been developed by the World. In many ways the World is borrowing from us. The trouble is that we don't always recognize this and don't have the boldness to challenge the false prophets of our time who distort the truth to fit their own vain theories.

I hope I have done some justice to my topic. As I mentioned at the beginning, I did not intend to answer all the questions about modern trends in counselling. Also, I hope that you didn't get the feeling that I have come here to convince you that things are not so bad after all, and that we should adapt to what is going on around us. My main intent was to join you today in a combined effort to discover the will of the Lord for all of us in mending broken hearts and spirits by adding some facts on what is going on around us.

H.C. VANDOOREN

**This is an article adapted from one of the speeches delivered at the Ontario Conference of Office-bearers, October 27, 1973.*

From the minutes of the council meeting of the League of American and Canadian Reformed Young People's Societies in Grand Rapids and Ontario, held on Oct. 20, 1973, in Hamilton.

Y.C.C. GENERAL REPORT: The Y.C.C. of 1973-74 consist of the following members: Harry Terpstra, Christine Blokker, Joanne Vander-schaaf, Jack Boersema, Robert Beintema, Clare Wiersma, and Herman Schutten.

Region I Thanksgiving Youth Conference was hosted by Fergus-Guelph young people, who entertained all those present on Friday evening. Accommodation ran smoothly. Saturday Candidate Ralph Boersema spoke on "What to do About Worry". Discussions followed, after which rollerskating, swimming, and gym activities filled the remainder of the afternoon. On Monday Rev. Van Oene spoke on "Parent-Child Relationship".

Region II was hosted by Burlington-West who entertained on Friday night. Saturday Rev. Van Dooren spoke on "Leave and Cleave" with respect to Christian marriage. Discussions followed. The afternoon program consisted of a car rally, hiking and gym activities. Monday Rev. Kingma spoke on the "Restoration of the Christian Marriage by Christ".

Region I and II conferences combined on Sunday evening for talent night. Although presentations were limited, the evening was successful and enjoyed by all.

CURRICULUM COMMITTEE REPORT: Members forming this committee are the following: Sam de Bruin, Bernie Van Raalte, Kees Brouwer, and Gary Aikema. Gary reports that the book lists are available at the council meeting for the delegates to return to the societies. An addition to the book list will appear later. Addendums will be sent to societies twice a year, each consisting of 5 to 6 outlines on a given topic. The committee will possibly arrange a meeting with all the society librarians to discuss how the suggested books can be obtained and how the library should be set up. (The book list is arranged in order of preference.) Financial costs of this project are \$85.46, which was obtained from the league treasury. Young people are urged therefore to take care of their addendums, perhaps handing them back to the society's librarian for storage at the end of each year.

ILPB GENERAL REPORT: At present an outline is being printed on Deuteronomy, which is to be available in the spring. ILPB requests more encouragement from societies, e.g. which outlines they need most and would like to see published.

ILPB FINANCIAL conditions are good. A balance of \$11,756.64 as of January 1973 is constantly needed, however, to keep the required stock available.

SONG SHEET PROPOSAL: Bert Vanderwoerd proposes the compiling of a selection of songs edifying to our Christian faith, that can be used by young peoples for social purposes. The suggestion is found to be a very worthwhile one. A unanimous vote of the delegates gives the League authority to look into the possibilities

of establishing a committee which is to set up guidelines for the song sheet, and finally produce the same.

EAST-WEST RALLY: Mary Doekes read the letter received from a Western society suggesting another East-West rally. It is discussed as to where this rally could best be held. Some felt that perhaps the Western Y.P.'s would like the chance to see Ontario. Others suggested both should travel half-way. It is decided to set up a committee to organize the rally. This committee shall dissolve upon completion of its purpose. Mary suggests further contact with the West before such a committee be set up. I.H.A. is proposed as the advertising media. A unanimous vote of the delegates authorizes the League executive to further investigate the possibilities of holding this rally, and of initiating it through a committee.

Wilma Bartels,
Assistant-Secretary

Classis Alberta-Manitoba Held

Press Release of Classis Alberta-Manitoba held in Edmonton on Nov. 13, 14, 1973.

1. On behalf of the convening church, Rev. C. Van Dam opens the classis. Due to illness, Rev. Stel is not present.

2. The church of Edmonton reports that the credentials are in good order and classis is constituted. The officers are: chairman - Rev. J. Visscher; clerk - Rev. D. DeJong; vice-chairman - Rev. C. Van Dam.

3. In connection with the approbation of the call to Candidate R.F. Boersema, who accepted the call to the church of Calgary, classis finds the documents in good order and the church of Calgary informs classis that she has set Dec. 2, 1973, as ordination date and from that date accepts all responsibility for him. Classis, having heard this, decides to proceed with the peremptory examination of Candidate Boersema.

4. The candidate delivers a sermon on Mal. 3:1-4. Classis decides to proceed. Rev. Van Dam examines him on the exegesis of Zec. 1 and 2. The next morning the exam is continued with Rev. Visscher examining the Candidate on the exegesis of I Thess. 4 and 5. Rev. DeJong examines on the knowledge of the contents of Holy Scripture, followed by an exam on doctrine and creeds. The opportunity is then given to Rev. Geertsema to examine on church history. Rev. DeJong examines on ethics, Rev. Geertsema on church polity and the exam is finished with Rev. Vis-

scher's asking questions on deaconology.

5. With the favourable advice of the deputies ad Art. 49, C.O., Classis decides to admit Candidate R.F. Boersema into the ministry of the Word in the Canadian Reformed Churches. The chairman announces this decision to the Candidate and congratulates him, his wife, family and the church of Calgary. Candidate Boersema signs the Form of Subscription. Classis sings Ps. 134:3 and the chairman leads in thanksgiving prayer. The delegates congratulate the Candidate.

6. The next item is the church of Winnipeg's request for revision of the revised rules adopted by an earlier classis. This request is not granted.

7. Regarding a communication from Classis Pacific (April 23, 1973) about Regional Synod, Classis decides to advise the convening church of Classis Pacific not to convene a regional Synod before April 2, 1974, so as to prevent having two Regional Synods in 1974 before the General Synod.

8. Br. J. Huizinga of Edmonton requests revision of a decision of the previous Classis dealing with matters of church and school in Edmonton. This request is not granted.

9. No classical preaching appointments are made.

10. Classis is notified by the deputies for needy churches that Calgary will need no help from the churches of Alberta-Manitoba until Candidate Boersema begins his work in Calgary.

11. The reports of the inspection of archives, of Deputies ad Art. 19 C.O. and of the previous and present Classical treasurers are received for information.

12. The next Classis will be held on March 5, 1974, at 8:00 P.M. in Edmonton, and will be convened by the church of Winnipeg.

13. Calgary informs Classis that the date for the ordination of Candidate Boersema has now, due to circumstances, been set at Dec. 9, 1973. Elder C. Van Seters is appointed as Classical delegate to be at this ordination.

Classis decides to send the best wishes to Rev. H.A. Stel that the Lord may grant him many more years in His service.

A committee is appointed to look into the possibility of giving more time for doctrine and creeds in the peremptory examination since it was felt that the present twenty minutes might be insufficient.

14. Censure ad Art. 43, C.O. is not necessary.

15. The Edmonton ladies are thanked for their good work and the Classis is closed in the customary manner. C. Van Dam, vice-chairman.

We received a money order for the amount of \$13.63. It was sent by the Senior Catechism Class of the Can. Ref. Church at Neerlandia, Alberta. Thank you very much, boys and girls, also and especially for the good wishes!

The grades 1-4 of the Timothy Canadian Reformed School at Hamilton visited our College on Reformation Day. We made a display of some books written by Martin Luther himself - the famous theses, some prints of the famous chapel in Wittenberg, etc. - and we tried to explain the connection between the Reformation and the training of ministers.

(There was a reaction to this issue in a previous issue of Clarion.

Grades 5-8 of the same school set up a well-organized project about the Reformation. Even the parents became involved; they were to assist their children in making abstracts from books or pamphlets about certain aspects of this important event in church history. A member of our staff was invited to speak about the life and work of John Calvin. Our library was used to organize an exposition of several editions of Calvin's Institutes and of other important books about the history of the Reformed churches.

If next year another school in our neighbourhood wants to follow the example of Timothy School, we will gladly give our cooperation.

J. FABER

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I would like to make some comments about the recent addition to our "reformed library", if I may call it that. We may count ourselves rich when we look back just a few years. There was not much in the way of truly reformed literature in the English language and in general the outlook was one of pessimism. Surely, we said, there is a tremendously rich source of reformed literature, but it is all in the Dutch language. Translating much of this is out of the question; it is too time consuming, there is no talent for this, the editions would be too small in numbers to make it financially feasible . . . and there were probably another ten good reasons why the future for good reformed resource material in the English language looked bleak.

But things have changed. Now, a few short years later, we find ourselves in quite a different position. I hasten to say that I am not carried away by my enthusiasm and say that we could stop now. Not at all, because this is only a beginning. But when we look over the booklist of the I.L.P.B. you must agree with me that there is reason for rejoicing. The talents were there, the willingness to do the work, but . . . above all . . . the Lord has blessed this work. Most of us surely don't realize what a tremendous amount of work there is

involved in translating and editing a book. The I.L.P.B. is serving the Churches in a most commendable manner.

The actual reason for this letter is the youngest edition to our Reformed Library: W. Meyer's book, *Young People's History of the Church, III*. I must confess that, once I took up the book, I had trouble laying it down again. Here is a book that leads us into the church history of today. Some have said already: this book arrived on the scene too late. I do not think so. We still have the generation with us that is able to relate the youngest Church history to those that came after. In the years to come this will change, and therefore this book is timely. It tells of the struggles of our forefathers, it shows the younger generation the rich heritage they have, that they had forefathers who fought the good fight.

Let us teach them that heritage, so they may understand . . . understand that the Canadian Reformed Church is the continuation of that same Church that has been there throughout the ages. They have to know these things in order to understand why we are members of the Canadian Reformed Church, and not of the Reformed Church, or of the Christian Reformed Church. The answer to that lies in the history, and therefore it is so very important that

they get to know that history in all its details.

One aspect of this book really appealed to me: it teaches "Kerkbesef", not from a cold, legalistic viewpoint, but with the compassion that only a believer can have when things go wrong in the Church of Jesus Christ. Points of doctrine, such as the regeneration, are explained so young people can understand it. The personal style make the figures who played leading roles in the history of the Church come alive.

It is true that this book is not perfect: one can find some awkward translations, one can find a few instances where the Dutch original is evident, but it is not disturbing and does not take away from the enjoyment of reading this book.

The most important part: we do not have to be reserved about this book. We do not have to say about this book: "It is a good book, but . . . be careful about the author's viewpoint on the Church!" We can put this book into the hands of the covenant youth . . . without any warning.

Let's do that . . . let's give this book (and also the other two books in the same series) into the hands of the young people. And I have to be very much mistaken if they do not read it.

It is also an excellent refresher course for those of us who have been blessed with an education that included that part of the history of the Church.

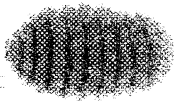
Take and read! U.Y. Krikke,
London, Ontario.

our little magazine

Dear Busy Beavers,

It's Christmas time! We think a lot about gifts, this time of year, don't we? But Christmas is really the time we remember the greatest gift of all - God's gift of His Son. God's Son a small, helpless baby, an obedient boy, a dying Saviour, a triumphant King coming again. Christmas means so much because God gave so much.

We wish all the Busy Beavers and their families a blessed Christmas and a very happy New Year!



Just like a good Christmas program let's start with the Christmas story. Ours is written by Busy Beaver *Jane Kobes*.

CHRISTMAS

At Christmas Jesus was born. Jesus was born in a stable, lying in a manger where straw and hay was. There were wise men that have seen his star in the East. So they are on their way. They come to king Herod's palace and have asked him but he did not know. But Herod said,

"If you find him, please bring me word, so I may come and worship him too."

So they went on their way. They found him lying in a manger. They took out their gold, silver, and myrrh and gave it to Him. That night God told them in a dream,

"Go back to your own country but take a different way."

And they departed next morning. But angels came to the shepherds in the field at night and told them to go to Bethlehem to see the new-born babe. The angels were praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest,
and peace, goodwill towards men."

So the shepherds set off to go and see Him. They found Him lying in a manger and worshipped Him. And they too left.

We are always supposed to remember this. That is why we go to church on Christmas day.

Try to sing this Christmas song to the tune of "Away in a Manger." It comes from Busy Beaver *Vera Vandenberg*.

1. Certain poor shepherds
Stood watch on a hill
And then they saw a star
In the distance afar.
While watching the sheep
In the pasture so still
They saw the sky open
And angels appear.
2. The angels told the shepherds
That Jesus was born.
They hurried away
Where the Christ child did lay.
They entered that stable
And worshipped the Lord.
Stay with us forever
For this we do pray.

* * * * *

Now we have a poem from Busy Beaver *Yolanda Schulenberg*.

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE ABOUT CHRIST'S BIRTH?

He was laid in a manger
Not a crib for his bed
Some people say he had a halo
Encircling his head.

Some people say he just appeared
Like a ghost does in the night
But we know from the gospel
That this is sure not right.

He was born of the Virgin Mary
In the place called David's Town.
He was in a lowly stable
And now is o'er the earth renowned.

Who is this whom we're talking of?
Christ Jesus, it is He,
Who with the help from above
Has come to set us free.

Who are we to believe?
Is the question in our mind.
We must believe the gospel,
Not the words of mankind.

Busy Beaver *Marcia Boersema* wrote this Christmas story for us. Do you feel like the Susan in the story?

CHRISTMAS

Snow is falling and it is Christmas morning. Mother is calling for Susan to get up.

"Susan," she calls, "it's Christmas morning. It's the morning Christ was born. We must go to church and thank God for sending Jesus to forgive our sins."

"But Mom," Susan says, "why can't Santa Claus come to our house today? Everybody else does."

“Because today we remember Christ was born. So today is a birthday. If we were to give presents today we would have to give them to Jesus. Saint Nicholas came to our house on Dec. 5.”

“But Mom, everybody else does.”

“That’s because everybody else doesn’t know why we shouldn’t have Santa Claus today, and we do. But now you have to get washed and ready to go to church.”

From The Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Greta Bosscher*. I’m sure you’ll be a very active Club member! Write again soon, Greta.

And welcome to you too, *Catherine Wendt*. If you send me the answers to your riddles we can share them with the other Busy Beavers, all right?

Thank you for your nice letter, *Eileen Bartels*. I’m glad you could finish that big puzzle. Are you enjoying your sewing classes? And how is your French coming?

QUIZ TIME

A CHRISTMAS “LIGHTS” QUIZ

1. Then spoke Jesus again unto them saying, “I am the light of the _____.” John 8:12
2. A light to lighten the _____ . Luke 2:32
3. The people which sat in darkness saw great _____ Mat. 4:16
4. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the _____ of light. John 12:36.
5. Ye are the light of the _____ . Mat 5:14
6. For so hath the Lord commanded us saying, “I have set thee to be a light of the _____.” Ac. 13:47
7. For God . . . hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of _____ in the face of _____ . II Cor. 4:6
8. Let us walk in the light of the _____ . Isa. 2:5
9. Let us put on the armour of _____ . Rom. 13:12
10. Thy word is a lamp unto my _____ , and a light unto my _____ . Ps. 119:105

A CHRISTMAS PUZZLE

_____	C	_____
_____	H	_____
_____	R	_____
_____	I	_____
_____	S	_____
_____	T	_____
_____	M	_____
_____	A	_____
_____	S	_____

We remember His birth.
 The place where he was born.
 The wicked king who tried to kill Him.
 The angel who announced His birth.
 They came from the east to worship Him.
 Where He went as a baby, then as a boy.
 Where he was laid to sleep as a baby.
 His mother’s name.
 Everyone thought him His father.

Here are the answers to the quiz called “Let’s talk shop” that we had last month. How did you do?

- | | |
|-------|--------|
| 1 - h | 6 - c |
| 2 - e | 7 - d |
| 3 - g | 8 - f |
| 4 - j | 9 - i |
| 5 - b | 10 - a |

BIRTHDAY WISHES

Let’s ring in the New Year with good wishes for all these January birthday people. Especially for you we say “Happy New Year!” May the Lord grant you many happy returns of the day.

Dick Barendregt	January 1	Arthur Linde	January 12
Brenda Kobes	2	Joan Veldkamp	16
Nick Mans	3	Ena Beyes	17
Cathy Wendt	3	Walter Geurts	19
Gerlinda Buist	4	Jackie Hordyk	20
Albert Bultena	5	Aneta Van Seters	22
Anita Oosterhoff	9	Henrietta Veldkamp	25
Kenneth Vanden Haak	9	Vera Vandenberg	26
Debbie Knol	11	Judy Jansen Van’t Land	27
Nellie Knol	11	Diane Breukelman	29
Shirley Lodder	11	Janette De Haas	31
Marian Lof	11		

* * * * *

Busy Beavers, have a very happy holiday! I hope you get plenty of snow to enjoy - and ice too! And if you’re looking for something to do, look up last year’s Christmas story about “Johnny’s Christmas.” Or write a new Christmas story or poem for us. Or write me a letter. I would like that!

Bye for now.

With love from your,
 Aunt Betty.

Unto us a Child is Born

Unto us a child is born!
 The King of all creation,
 Came he to a world forlorn,
 The Lord of every nation.

Alpha and Omega he!
 Let the organ thunder,
 While the choir with peals of glee
 Doth rend the air asunder.

From a 15th-century Latin carol.