

Clarion

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The Theology of Liberation

Second of Two Parts

AN EVALUATION

What must be our response to this theology of liberation, of which we saw an overview in the previous article? One could simply reject it and leave it at that, but surely we must attempt to learn something from it and so arm ourselves against the evil one, for we live in the last days. It would go far beyond the limits of an introduction to the subject to attempt to go into this in any sort of comprehensive way. Furthermore, we must remind ourselves that the situation in Latin America and in much of the Third World, where the WCC is active, is in many cases very difficult. The poverty, the hunger, the injustice, and the difficult social structures are only too real. There are no easy solutions, certainly not from a distant and recent spectator. Yet we must examine and evaluate some of the ideas of the theology of liberation, for this theology is not confined to distant places on our globe. It forms part of the spirit of our times, and this theology is therefore also part of our environment, one way or another. Let us touch on one or two of its major themes.

LIBERTY

Without its cry for liberty, there would be no theology of liberation. Liberty is its central theme. However, liberty is not the central theme of the Bible. A text often quoted is "Let my people go." But, it is forgotten that the next part of that text reads, "that they may *serve* me" (Exodus 8:1). God freed Israel that Israel might serve Him. The people needed freedom from Egypt for *that* reason.

Our Exodus

Egypt was a hindrance to serving God — although it was but *a* hindrance, for sin is *the* hindrance to serve the Lord. Ultimately Israel therefore needed deliverance from sin, so that the Exodus from Egyptian oppression might be truly fruitful for service

to the Lord. Therefore the redemptive overtones are many in the Exodus event, and the Exodus was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ, our paschal lamb, Who made possible our release from the bondage of our sins that we may serve Him. And, just as Israel was groomed and trained by the Lord in the desert, we, too, who journey as church through the wilderness prepared by God, submit to His rule, seeking to do His will and so find the true freedom in Christ, in anticipation of entering the promised land. In Him we are set free to service in holiness, set free from the domination of our sins, against which we must struggle. This is the perspective of the Exodus throughout the Old and New Testaments, as also our Baptismal form indicates. That is a far richer perspective than the theology of liberation gives by simply using the Exodus and other material from Scripture as it finds them suitable, without taking into account the context and message of Scripture. Indeed, the ideas of the liberation theology are not from the Bible, but from an analyzing of contemporary problems through Marxist glasses. The Word of God only seems to be used to attempt to justify conclusions reached without the Bible. (With the exception of one small reference to Scripture earlier in his book, Gutierrez's *Theology of Liberation* has no Scriptural references or study of Biblical passages until the second half of his book, by which time the author has already presented his basic conclusions and laid the groundwork for all that follows!)

Secularized Sin and Oppression

In the theology of liberation, one looks in vain for any Biblical idea of sin. Since it is assumed that all men are saved, this present saved life must be transformed, for salvation is already here and now, and, after all, this is the only kind of salvation which an atheist

can understand. You cannot expect an atheist to be interested in an other-worldly salvation. As we noted the last time, the theology of liberation results in secularization and at the same time maintains a universal salvation. The end result must therefore be a salvation in terms of what man considers to be "sin" and "bondage" in purely this-worldly terms.

Without any Scriptural idea of being set free from sin as the Bible describes it, the liberty which is proclaimed is a liberty from oppression as man sees it — an oppression which is often more imagined than real. People must nevertheless be converted to see their oppression. Therefore an International Woman's Year was held, among other things, to open women's eyes to see their oppression and to urge them to set themselves free from sexism, bigotry, and male chauvinism. Mothers are urged to be freed from the oppressive task of caring for their children by leaving them to day-care centres while they fill their new found freedom with more "worthwhile" activities. On the other hand, children must also be liberated, and by subtle and not so subtle means are urged to be free to do "their own thing," even if parents object. Furthermore, we must be set free from economic and social structures which can be restrictive; yes, we must even be set free from political structures, for is anything Western not part of capitalist oppression? And so the cry for liberty works itself out into the most radical forms. But the Bible says that the fault does not lie in man's relationships or structures as such. It lies in man's sin and rebellion against the Lord God. Unless one knows one's true misery and oppression in terms of sin over against the holy and just demands of God Who rules on high, there can be no true liberty and comfort (see Lord's Day 1).

There is something else involved with the cry for liberty. All liberty and

freedom which is in one way or another rooted in man, must inevitably lead to tyranny of one form or another and a suppression of freedom. This takes us to our next point: authority.

AUTHORITY

A Blessing

Authority in this world of sin is a blessing from God and freedom without authority is a curse. We must obey the authorities set above us (Romans 13). This means that advocating subversion, undermining the effectiveness of those who rule, as the theology of liberation is promoting, is against the will of God. Also the Bible makes it clear that we need not hope that all adversity and oppression in whatever form will ever be eliminated from this world of sin. It won't. We have to learn to live with it and even to prepare for worse things to come.

Servant of God or of the People?

While we must indeed obey the government, this does not mean that we cannot protest or be critical and point out basic weaknesses. According to the Bible, the government is to be accountable to God and is to be a servant of God, Who rules the world and in Whose hands the governments are to be instruments to execute His justice (see Romans 13; Belgic Confession, Article 36). It is important to note, however, that although there once was a time when a ruler was conscious of his ruling on behalf of God, from Whom he received his authority (note the phrase "Queen by the grace of God" on our coins), today this is no longer so. The authority is now seen as coming not from God but from the people. When a ruler is truly conscious that he rules for God, then he will seek to execute justice in the sight of Him Who sees all things and to Whom he will be accountable on the last day. However, today that is *not* the underlying idea of our government, and *therefore* our liberties and freedoms can be in jeopardy precisely because the democratic form of government is based on the idea that the people rule through the government. This government must therefore make decisions which are not necessarily right before God, but decisions which a simple majority of the people considers correct.

Yes, the people rule and they are sovereign. This revolutionary basis to our own form of government means that the people only accept the govern-

ment as authoritative — to be honoured and obeyed — as an evil necessity. For, the people is the ultimate "boss"! Groen van Prinsterer, who died a hundred years ago, has prophetically pointed out that the sovereignty of the people means that the governing bodies, in order to ensure their own self-preservation, will in one form or another work to a centralization of power in the name of the common good; otherwise governing will become an impossible task. When we recognize this basic set-up, then we are able to see that there really is not that much *basic* difference between democracy on the one hand and Marxism on the other. It is also not surprising that the theology of liberation can make a choice for Marxism and that in a democracy, the possibility of communists' even being elected into power is a real one (think of Western Europe), for the people, the common good must be served, even if it means a temporary loss of some freedoms. Therefore, we who live in North America must never consider ourselves isolated from these possibilities and dangers, for the basic ingredients are all here in our own country and they are active ingredients. The difference between the West and the communist blocs is a difference ultimately only in degree. We can never make an absolute distinction between the two as if the West can somehow be equated with a Christian system of government or the like. Both democracy and communism in its principal foundations serve man and not the Lord, and with man there is no constant norm of justice and freedom. Only if a government sees itself as God's servant is true justice and freedom possible.

Tyranny and Liberty

Therefore the theology of liberation, in seeking renewal on earth in a secular way through political Marxism or otherwise, is doomed to fail. The Biblical gospel must be preached so that man's obligation to God be put straight, and then, only then, can fellow men be truly served. Only then will it even be remotely conceivable that a government be formed that wants to serve the Lord and, in following His norms, give justice and freedom to His subjects. But, with the secular theology of liberation, in spite of all its cry for liberty, there is no possibility of freedom. The theology of liberation, with its humanistic and Marxist premises, will have to seek a strong

government, even possibly a type of dictatorship. The renewal of the world and the bringing of full salvation to all men from all oppression will demand a strong government (yes, even oppression!) so that in as short a time as possible much may be done for the common good. Once the "utopia" is well on its way, then full freedom can be returned to the people, for they are sovereign and free and equal, and they will then be able to rule themselves in a mature way and share all things together. Then the true communism will be there (for, properly speaking, communism today is but a preparatory stage, the stage of socialism). Then heaven will be on earth! When will that day be? That is unknown, but the hope for that day must live! Yes, for the theology of liberation (and Marxism) is a religion, and religion must have a hope. A religion, yes. But, a religion which leads men away from God and in its fullest development will be without God.

Therefore, that hope is unfounded. It will not happen that way. For not man but God will bring heaven on earth. Even though man may deny it, He, the Lord, rules and even uses the revolutionaries of this world to work towards *His* return and the bringing of His heaven to earth.

The developments in our world are unsettling for those who love the Lord God and who want to serve Him only. But we must not and cannot remain fearful spectators, for we are *in* this world and have an office and task from God. He has set us free from the dominion of sin and the evil one. We must therefore arm ourselves and our children for the present and future trials, test the spirits of the times, study the issues and raise our voice as a prophetic witness while the opportunity is still there. And as we work, we must pray that we may still see and continue to see the fatherly hand of our Lord and King Who rules also today and Who has set us free!

C. VAN DAM

For further reading

Joh. Francke, *De Jongste Theologie*; Groen van Prinsterer, *Vrijheid, Gelijkheid, Broederschap* (a popularization of *Ongeloof en Revolutie* which is being translated in instalments into English. Write the Groen van Prinsterer Fund, c/o Hoofdgebouw 13A-31, Free University, Amsterdam, The Netherlands); Francis N. Lee, *Communist Eschatology*; Rene de Visme Williamson, "The Theology of Liberation", in *Christianity Today*, August 8, 1975.

press review

ARE CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED TODAY?

In the COVENANTER WITNESS, the bi-weekly of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, the issue of April 14, 1976, the Rév. Lester E. Kilpatrick writes about the above mentioned question. He starts his article as follows:

One gets different answers to this question, depending on whom one asks. A member or missionary of a World Council of Churches affiliated church in Chile, for instance, says that since the military coup in Chile that overthrew the Allende regime, Christian leaders have been persecuted and jailed. Others in Chile, Protestants and Catholics, say there was persecution under the Allende regime, but now there is considerable relief. The explanation of these differing assessments is, of course, that the persecution is politically related.

There is evidence that Cuba's Castro had agents in Chile, seeking to establish a Cuban type revolution in Chile, and within the Allende government they had some support; how much it is difficult to say. The military government, when it came to power, in turn, tried to purge the country of those considered leftist, and many of these were professing Christians. The evidence seems to be that each of these governments, in seeking to establish securely its own power, caught many Christians in its net, while there may have been no persecution of Christians as Christians.

The same is true in Korea where the government in power in South Korea, wishes to keep independent of North Korea. She has jailed many, including some Christians who are campaigning for union with North Korea.

An example of this totally differing view regarding the situation in South Korea is the following. I first give a quotation from CHRISTIAN BEACON, the paper of the ICCC. In the issue of May 6, 1976, we find part of an address of Dr. Philip Potter, the general

secretary of the World Council of Churches, to the Bicentennial Conference on Religious Liberty, held in Philadelphia, in April of this year. Dr. Potter said:

In the Republic of Korea, which is closely allied to the U.S., Christians have been expressing their religious liberty in identifying themselves with those who are deprived of their human rights, who are economically and socially exploited and are hardly able to express their religious freedom. These Christians are drawing out the implications of their faith to expose this situation and to challenge the government to respect human rights and to be more just in its dealings with its citizens. The result has been harassment, imprisonment, and the deprivation of the rights of such Christians. Efforts have been made to get teams of Christian leaders, including Americans, to visit Korea and also to make representations to the U.S. government on this matter. One crucial element here is the dependence of the Korean government on U.S. military and economic aid, which are being used to violate human rights.

In his address Dr. Potter attacks governments in Latin America and South Africa in the same line: human rights are violated, just like in the U.S. Now on March 1, 1976, a number of people, all opposed to the government of President Chung Hee Park, have issued a "Declaration on Democracy and National Salvation." It was signed also by thirteen churchmen. It speaks in line with what was quoted above from the address of Dr. Potter: restoration of human rights. It also says that the goal of South Koreans should be national reunification. That means: unification with communist North Korea, while it does not speak of violations of human rights in North Korea. Ten days later, on March 11, this Declaration was introduced into the *Congressional Record* of the U.S.A., with the intention of stopping all U.S. aid to South Korea in this way.

Against this attack Dr. Dwight Malsbary, a vice-president of the ICCC, and missionary in South Korea, released a statement "repudiating the entire attack as communist oriented and designed." I quote the end of an

article in the CHRISTIAN BEACON of April 29, 1976. It says:

Dr. Malsbary testifies that there is no religious persecution in South Korea. In no way are the churches interfered with — in evangelism, in the preaching of the Gospel, in seminaries, in Christian schools. All are carrying on their God-appointed tasks.

The 13 churchmen who signed the Communist declaration only further revealed their own complicity with the Communist movement. Their statement repeats word for word similar declarations about peace and justice which have come from the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* and the Hungarian Church Press.

The use of church leaders in Korea is the one area left which the Communists are now exploiting to their fullest in an effort to interfere with U.S. support of the courageous and valiant Koreans.

We turn back to Chile. In CHRISTIAN NEWS of May 1, 1976, an interview was printed that had been broadcasted first. The man interviewed was father Brown, a Roman Catholic priest, who had been in Chile since 1964. On the question whether there were "any evidences of foreign Communists" in Chile after Allende took office, the Rev. Brown answered:

Very definitely. At the end of Allende's regime there were 13 thousand Cuban extremists in Chile, and a great deal of Soviet and Czechoslovakian arms. Soviet patrol and fishing boats were patrolling the coast of Chile.

One of the next questions was:

I understood that there was a plot or a plan by Allende to murder a big convocation of high military officers during their September 17 celebration, which is like our 4th of July. Did the military find out about that or was there anything to that?

And the answer:

Yes, the army did discover this plot. The military intelligence discovered the fact that the leftists intended to murder all of the chief military and political leaders who opposed the Allende government.

Now the military form the government. General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte is President. The next question is about the situation now:

How have they (the military government) acted? How have they treated you and the rest of the people who live in Chile? Have you had a satisfactory relationship with them?

The answer:

The relationship which I have, and which anyone has with them who want to continue on in civil life, is excellent. I have never seen anything out of the way in

FOR THE READER'S INFORMATION

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that sense, and I feel that this is the best government that Chile has ever had.

The next questions and answers deal with the "persecutions" of Christians under this military government. The question:

Do you think that these priests who are up here (the U.S.A.) now, many of them complaining about the atrocities in Chile, and who have been expelled or deported from Chile, deserved it?

The answer:

I certainly feel that they deserved it because leftist activities on the part of the clergy is well known in Chile. It is not at all surprising that like international Communist propaganda, they too would make propaganda against the government in Chile.

Next question:

Do you know, as a matter of fact, without mentioning any names, that some of these priests who are back here (in the U.S.A.) now were guilty of subversive activities against the government?

The answer of father Brown:

Very much so. There are a number of North American Sisters and Priests who were very much involved in covering up extremist and other activities against the government.

Turning back to the article in the COVENANTER WITNESS I quote:

So political power and advantage are often involved when Christians are persecuted. This is the almost universal plea by Communist countries when they are charged with persecuting Christians. Even the Russian representatives at the recent World Council of Churches Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya, Africa, insisted that "there is no evidence of denial of rights" in the USSR. Many of the Assembly thought otherwise. And apparently the only consideration that kept them from adopting a resolution calling attention to "restrictions on religious freedom in the USSR" was that those pushing for the adoption of this resolution were charged with wanting to "break fellowship with the Soviet bloc." The resolution was finally diluted to read, "the alleged restriction of liberty in the USSR."

After a few examples are given of persecution in the USSR, a.o. that of Georgi Vins, head of Evangelical Christians Baptist, a group of churches — not all Baptist — that are not registered with and do not follow the orders of the Committee of Religious Affairs in Russia, who was sentenced to 8 years in prison, we read:

As in Jesus' day, persecution for one's faith is often confused with political issues. Laws are on the books of many countries, affirming freedom of religion,

but it must be kept to one's self. Assembly for worship, Bible study, preaching and evangelizing are forbidden. This is an ingeniously diabolic kind of persecution. It strikes at the body, at the living organism of the Church. Especially heart-breaking is the prohibition against teaching one's children, and more so when the penalty is to have the children removed from the home for the State to rear and educate. If they are not removed, it is made plain that the children's opportunity for advanced education or for a job are beyond their reach if they believe in God.

M. Titov in the office of the Council on Religious Affairs in Moscow stated that Christian groups have been punished for 1) refusing to practice their social duties; 2) for ignoring Soviet laws, and 3) for promoting non-voting.

Now it can seem that in both the communist and the "capitalist" countries Christians are persecuted for the same reason: not agreeing with their respective governments. But there is a great difference. We must ask: Why can a true Christian not adhere to Communism? And why do some "Christians" rebel against governments in the "free" world? True Christians cannot adhere to Communism, in the first place, not because Communism violates human rights, but because it is the obvious enemy of God and His Christ, and a Christian wants to obey God rather than man. They are suffering as Christians.

However, those Christians who are persecuted in "free" countries are not suffering as Christians, but as revolutionaries, who in fact work together with leftist people to overthrow the established governments and come to a socialist/communist state. The theology of revolution, adhered to by these "Christians," is in conflict with the Word of Christ that Christians have to submit to those in authority over them. This does not mean that in the "free" countries no injustice ever is done by the authorities. There is injustice, and Christians can and must protest against it, but never in a revolutionary way. I conclude this review with quoting some parts of a report of an address of Professor C. Veenhof, as it appeared in NEDERLANDS DAGBLAD some time ago. We read:

Communism is a belief that is prepared for every sacrifice; and it is an alarming phenomenon that the free world has no alternative to offer. Roughly speaking the churches are infiltrated with the communist ideology. It is, in brief, a demonic threat According to him this picture is one of the consequences of a statement made by one of the greatest ideolo-

gists of Communism, Wladimir Iljitsj Lenin, namely, the mandate for the communists in the free world: "Infiltrate into the life of the churches, into the trade unions, and into education, and in doing so you are permitted to resort to all kinds of illegal means, even to the twisting or concealing of the truth in order to reach the goal"

At the end of his address, Professor Veenhof pointed at two statements. The first one, by party ideologist Manuelski in 1931, is timely, especially with respect to the much praised detente-policy. Manuelski said: "It is certain that at the moment we are not yet strong enough to attack. Our time will come after about 30 or 40 years. In order to win we need the element of surprise. Patiently we must work towards it. Slowly but surely the Bourgeoisie must be brought into a state of numbness, for then they will come with extreme proposals and extraordinary promises. Therefore we shall begin to develop a large-scale theatrical peace movement, such as the world has not seen yet.

"The capitalist countries, stupid and decadent, will gladly cooperate in their own downfall. They will crawl towards us in response to the apparent friendship we offer. As soon as the possibilities, resulting from this weakening are there, we shall destroy them with clenched fists." That was said in 1931.

Another remark, in this case by Lenin, is also very timely still. In his will he says that he wants to exercise influence especially through teachers, instructors, and ministers in order to weaken and to manipulate the mentality of all the people on whom they have influence in such a way that they are no longer willing to cooperate in a possible fight against Communism.

The very same things are plainly said by e.g. Solzhenitsyn. But the western world is deaf and, not least of all, many leaders in the churches. For many, Communism is merely a different economic and social system — a system that is much better than the bad capitalist system, and that, in fact, is considered to be the only redeeming system for our troubled (western) world. This is the bad thing, indeed, that a false prophecy, in the name of Christ, preaches that the socialist/communist system will bring a better and a righteous world, and in this way promotes the reign of the anti-christ. Our constant prayer is needed, not only for the persecuted brotherhood in Communist countries, but also for the many who are misled in the free world by the liberal socialist theology of liberation with its stress on human rights.

J. GEERTSEMA

mission news

"TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH"

In a brief news item under the heading "Help the Doctor" Rev. Cl. Stam referred to the new magazine in which the Mission Churches in The Netherlands have bundled their mission news.

I received the first issue of this magazine and took note of the fact that after a long time the Churches have reached a close cooperation as far as public relations are concerned. The magazine is introduced to the readers in an editorial written by the Reverend D.K. W(ielenga), who is editor-in-chief. He writes: We can understand that this (close cooperation) was not a matter of course and that these organizations, namely medical and other mission-aid organizations, had to grow toward such a decision. "We are grateful for their voluntary sacrifice." It is also emphatically stated that this is a news-information-paper and that "there is no room for discussions." After consultation with the Church at Drachten which had a news bulletin with this name, the name "To the Ends of the Earth" ("Tot aan de einden der aarde") was chosen in the conviction that the gospel of salvation MUST be proclaimed to the utmost corners of the earth.

The first issue gives indeed a treasure of information about the mission-work on several continents. It is gratifying to see how the matters of mission and mission-aid are reported side by side while an unnecessary separation or strict distinction has been avoided. I agree with the statement made by the Ebenezer Church at Burlington that this distinction is "more theoretical than practical." The work of the medical staff on the mission field receives ample attention. This is also of interest to the Churches which cooperate with the Church at Toronto since we have often heard of the work of Dr. Dresser and nurse VanEgmond, who now has been replaced by nurse J. Velvis. How the two, mission and mission-aid are intertwined can be concluded from a story which sister VanEgmond tells about a young woman who "came to the poli every day" and was taught by her about the love of Christ and our faithfulness to Him. It is tempting to translate and copy the entire story, but that would make this brief review too lengthy. But we see here a beautiful team-work of missionary and nurse described in a simple and moving way.

With the publication of this magazine it has also become possible to reach a much larger audience than before. Now the people who offer their prayers and financial assistance to the work on Sumba and Irian Jaya can also read — in ONE paper — a-

bout the work in Brazil and Curacao. Here in Canada that is only possible through the Mission News which is sent to the Churches. These news bulletins from the cooperating Churches in Western Canada are apparently read by only a restricted number of people, while the membership in the "West" does not hear much about the work in Irian apart from the reports which are published in *Clarion*. Maybe the time will come that we also can make some "voluntary sacrifices" and find a mode of cooperation as far as the publication of mission news is concerned.

Rev. O.J. Douma from Groningen writes an interesting article about the Koro-way district in Irian Jaya which is not far

away from the Sait area where Bram and Joanne Vegter are stationed and where a future missionary is going to work. He refers to a study of Rev. J.B.K. DeVries, who has just left for Kouh. In a following article I will quote more extensively from this study in which Rev. DeVries makes it clear that there is a generally spread religious expectation of a "Lord" who will initiate a time of happiness and prosperity.

There is also some news in this issue about the area of the tribe of the Wambons and the villages of Niop, Sawagit and Manggelum. Now the place Manggelum is particularly interesting to the (Eastern) Canadian Churches. We will leave that for next time.

To state it very briefly: This is a highly interesting magazine with information about the worldwide mission of the Church. The Editorial Board is to be complimented not only about the contents but also about the format of this paper.

D. VANDERBOOM

Church News

Called by the Church at Guelph, Ontario, the:

REV. J. VAN RIETSCHOTEN

of the Church at Smithers, B.C.

Called by the Church at Armadale, Australia,

and

the Church at Chatham, Ontario, the:

REV. J. GEERTSEMA

of the Church at Carman, Manitoba.

REQUEST

Consistories, please inform *Clarion* as soon as possible when a call has been extended to a minister in or for our churches.

Please phone collect: (204) 222-5218

Classis Ontario South has examined:

BR. JACK DE JONG

in a preparatory examination according to Article 4, Church Order, and declares him eligible for call within the Federation of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Classis extended to him the right to speak an edifying word for the period of one year.

Candidate J. De Jong wishes to inform the churches that he will be unavailable for call until, D.V., May 1977, as he plans to continue his studies in The Netherlands.

LANGLEY/CLOVERDALE

After having received the favourable advice of the Classis Pacific of April 21, 1976, the Canadian Reformed Church at Cloverdale, B.C. has proceeded to assist in the institution of the Church at Langley, B.C.

On Sunday, June 20, 1976, four elders and two deacons were ordained in the Canadian Reformed Church at Langley. The membership is 203; 100 communicant members and 103 members by baptism only. The membership of the Cloverdale Church is: 328.

The worship services in Cloverdale and Langley are held at 9:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. The Langley Church worships in the Seventh Day Adventist church building, corner of 55 A Ave. and Brydon Cres., Langley, B.C.

All correspondence for the Church at Langley should be addressed to: Canadian Reformed Church, c/o Mr. R. Koat, 21012 Maple Ave., Langley, B.C.

The address of the deaconry is: Mr. D.S. Doesburg, 20237 - 52 Ave., Langley, B.C.

"T.M."

"East is east and west is west,
And never the twain shall meet . . ."

When Rudyard Kipling wrote these famous words, he didn't realize how wrong he might be. For some time already, the silverlocks of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the successful promoter of the Transcendental Meditation Movement, have been enlightening the pages of western periodicals.

More and more, Oriental religions are permeating our western society, transplanting the Christian faith, or transforming it in an almost inescapable synthesis. Some of these Oriental influences are variations on the Christian faith (like Mr. Moon's Unification Church), others are simply heathen religions adapted and adjusted to western tastes.

One of these heathen religions is what is commonly called "T.M.," which stands for "Transcendental Meditation." I like to de-capitalise it, t.m., and then it stands for "typical mysticism." The cute thing about T.M. is that it has been presented as a SCIENCE and not a RELIGION. And, you see, because it is "only a science," which affords greater knowledge, many people have unwittingly fallen prey to this form of paganism. But T.M. is not a science at all; that's the biggest laugh of the decade. T.M. is as religious as the Vatican.

Certainly, T.M. uses scientific terms, especially those connected with the fields of physiology and psychology. It has been praised as a sure system to overcome tensions, addictions, criminal inclinations, and a means to self-discovery and self-understanding. Not bad. The Maharishi seems to be Dale Carnegie's oriental counterpart: how to be a successful person through T.M. Seriously though, I'm willing to admit that some semi-scientific systems, involving physical and mental relaxation, can bring relief from certain miseries. That's not the point.

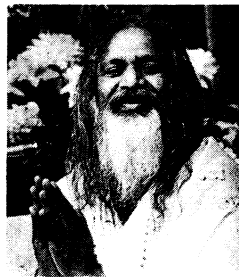
May I quote from a recent article in NEDERLANDS DAGBLAD, "T.M. is a simple technique to refine the nervous system by a regular alternation of deep rest and activity." This technique, however, is combined with the recitation of hindu scripture passages ("mantras") and the pupils are aided by a teacher (guru) into the finesses of Hinduism. The higher gurus, like the Maharishi himself, are almost worshipped and there is a cult, complete with ceremonial worship which ultimately glorifies Krishna and his consorts.

So T.M. is a deeply religious ex-

Circumspection . . .

perience. It has been called "the science of being" and the "art of living" (even the title of a book by the Maharishi), yet at the same time introduced as the "fulfillment of EVERY religion." Typical of oriental tolerance, T.M. claims to unite all religions in its particular system. But it doesn't really climb above local Indian level: it is based on the Hindu scriptures, especially the Bagavad-Gita, and seeks man's union with a "higher being" or "reality" through a processed system of meditation.

And despite the undertones of worshipping some form of deity, T.M. is "autosoteric," i.e. it stresses man's SALVATION out of HIMSELF. That makes T.M. just another form of humanism. It's the same old mystic story that man must and can loose himself from this material world, and through systemized methods can transcend



Maharishi
Mahesh
Yogi

the distance ("bridge the gap") between himself and some divine (cosmic) reality, ultimately sharing in deity or becoming godly himself. That's why, finally, I call T.M. just another form of human SELF-REALIZATION, and therefore discard it as deeply anti-Christian.

The Gospel teaches that salvation can only be received through faith in Christ our Lord. And salvation HAS been achieved, not through OUR efforts — how systematical they may be — but through His atonement on the cross!

The Bible teaches that not man transcends the distance, but that the gap has been bridged throughout the ages by the Word of God, His own revelation. Our faith does not emphasize techniques designed to escape the miseries and the estrangement of life, but through faith we hang on to what we have in the Gospel, so that we can live HERE in this world as God's children in Christ. We don't have to transcend any distance, even

if we could, between us and the "higher realities," because "the Word is near you, on your lips and in your heart" (Romans 10:6-8).

Besides, to top it off, rather to fulfill the promise of the Gospel, the Word became flesh. It is Christ Who has dwelt among us and dwells among us today through His Holy Spirit. We don't teach REincarnation (like Hinduism does), we teach the INCARNATION of the Son. And we must live in a daily communion with the Lord. We may communicate with the Father through the simple "technique" of prayer, a system which does not demand scientific knowledge, but quiet reverence. As we sing in Psalm 42:5, "And in prayer TRANSCENDING distance, seek the God of my existence." Yes, prayer is my T.M., so to speak.

The question is: Why is this T.M. receiving such enthusiastic response in our western world? The answer is simple. Generally speaking, our western world is becoming increasingly "post Christian." Which means that it is steadily moving away from the word of God. Many churches are replacing the Gospel by humanistic teachings. Now, where men refuse the only means to have communion with the Lord, alternative ways are sought and found to establish some communion. In other words, where the WORD is despised, mysticism grows rapidly.

It can be an "older" form of mysticism that is revitalized, like old-fashioned charismatic Pentecostalism being "discovered" again. It can also be "modern" mysticism like T.M. But basically it's the same problem: man seeks unity with a higher reality through things OTHER than God's Word. Mysticism is a rejection of God's full revelation in Christ. Mystics always BYPASS God's Word in some way, and they thrive in a society that comes to despise that same Word. No wonder that in our days charismatic mysticism is on the move!

T.M. is typical mysticism. Modern heathenism. Be satisfied with the Lord's rich revelation of the Gospel. Through it He bridged the gap. And in daily prayer you may transcend any distance and seek the God of your existence.

No matter how hard you try, that's all you've received. And, you know, it's more than enough.

Cid

Something on Textual Criticism

IN CONNECTION WITH: *THE ANCIENT TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT*, by Dr. J. van Bruggen.

This booklet was published as No. XVI of "Kamper Bijdragen" by the publishing house "De Vuurbaak" at Groningen. The Dutch edition, which was given to me to review, costs f. 7,50. The booklet contains the learned address delivered on December 8th, 1975, by Prof. van Bruggen at the occasion of the completion of his term of office as "rector" of the "Theologische Hogeschool" at Kampen. Dr. van Bruggen begins his address with a chapter on the uncertainty among 20th century scholars with respect to the New Testament text.

To prevent any misunderstanding, I may add that this uncertainty does not extend to the substance of the New Testament teaching. As to that, ignorant and unstable people — scholars included — may twist the contents of the New Testament (II Peter 3:16). The text of the New Testament as we possess it, does not leave us at a loss what these contents are. God in His provi-

dence is, also in this sense, awake over His Word.

The uncertainty applies to the exact wording of particular sentences and the authenticity of words, parts of passages, and of a small number of passages, which are printed in italics or in parentheses in the modern translations.

If we still possessed the original gospels, epistles and the book of Revelation, there would be no problem. Neither would it exist if all the copies made of the originals, the so-called autographa (the writings proper) were a perfect rendering of them and for that reason were identical. There are, however, differences between them. As a matter of fact, there are no two — among the 5,000 manuscripts — which are exactly alike.

The cause of these differences is, among other things, the errors which were made by the copyist, errors of hearing in case of dictation, errors of sight in case of reading, errors of mind, and errors due to sloppiness. Utmost care and caution could have prevented many errors, but this care and caution was not always practised in the first centuries after Pentecost. The first Christians, as someone put it, were more concerned with the edification by the Word, than with the exactitude of the text of the Word. That changed when the Church tremendously expanded under the reign of the first Christian emperor Constantine the Great, and the dependence on the written word was commonly felt. This period marks the beginning of the restoration and revision of the text of the New Testament.

This restoration was done with the aid of a comparison of various text copies, or so-called manuscripts. Wherever they agreed, the common text was accepted; wherever they disagreed, more evidence was sought or the reading which was considered the best one, was adopted.

It is generally believed that a certain bishop Lucian of Antioch, who died a martyr's death in 312 A.D., took care of such a revision. His revised edition of the Greek New Testament — it is assumed — was brought to Constantinople, the residence of the emperor and one of the centres of Christianity. This edition was multiplied and spread from Constantinople all over the churches of the Middle East and beyond. The text of it, called Byzantine after Constantinople, became the standard text for the Greek New Testament and the basis for various translations of the New Testament.

Following K. Lake on this point, Prof. van Bruggen uses the name "church text" ("kerkelijke text") time and again. One could get the impression from that name

that the churches passed a resolution to adopt the Byzantine text as the authorized text of the New Testament, but nothing is known of such a decision. The text was used in the churches and then mainly in the Eastern Churches, if not exclusively. The Western Churches used a different type of text, which could be called the church text as well. It seems, however, better to avoid the name "church text," which might cause confusion.

It was again basically the Byzantine text, which, though not in its purest form anymore, was used for the Greek New Testament edited by Erasmus, Stephanus, and Beza in the 16th and 17th centuries. It formed the basis for the well-known Bible translations made in and after the time of the Reformation. One publisher even wrote in the preface to an edition of the Greek text that the reader had "the text which is now received by all, wherein we do not give anything changed or corrupted."

That was a bold statement. It remained, however, unchallenged for a long time. Roughly, one may say that this lasted into the time of the great manuscript discoveries. These discoveries already started in the 17th century. To mention a few manuscripts of which you may have heard, Codex Beza belongs to them, the codex which Calvin's successor gave to the University of Cambridge. Another one is Codex Alexandrinus, presented by patriarch Lucal of Constantinople to Charles I in 1627. The study of this Codex brought a turning point in the absolute supremacy of the Byzantine text. A third famous manuscript is Codex Sinaiticus, discovered in 1859 by Dr. Constantin von Tischendorf in the St. Catharine monastery on Mt. Sinai. It was presented to the Czar of Russia, and bought in 1933 by the British Government from the Communist Government of Russia. Rev. Stel wrote about it in an article entitled "The Sinaitic Bible" in the Yearbook of 1971. To mention one more well-known manuscript, I think of Codex Vaticanus. It had been in the Vatican for centuries but not released for detailed copying before the 1880's. These Codices dated back to the 4th and 5th centuries, which is considerably older than the Byzantine Codices, which were made in the 6th and following centuries.

It was characteristic of these older manuscripts that they contained texts which, except in the Gospels of Codex Alexandrinus, differed from the Byzantine text and which mutually showed surprising similarities and dissimilarities. The conclusion drawn from the study of these and of hundreds more manuscripts was that a distinction should be made between various types of text which according to the regions in which they were found, were called *Western* (referring to Western Europe and Africa), *Alexandrian* (referring to Alexandria in Egypt, a centre of text critical studies), *Caesarean* (referring to the New Testament Caesarea famous for its Catechetical School under the leadership of Ori-

Continued on next page.



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event.

gen; for his library; and for its Church historian Eusebius), and the already mentioned Byzantine text. All these texts are, as is assumed nowadays, the result of recensions.

Codex Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are considered to be the closest to the original because the text is shorter than the text of other types of manuscripts, and thus free from later additions. The longest text is found in the Western text, represented by Codex Beza and the Old Latin translations. Its length in Acts is 10 percent greater than in the other texts. On the other hand, it leaves out passages found in other texts. Consequently, modern scholars do not know what to think of this text, and it is felt that further study is necessary. The Caesarean text is considered to be a mixture of the Western and the Alexandrian text. The Byzantine text finally is considered to be the text which is furthest removed from the original text. The revisor or revisors who worked on it produced a text, smooth and complete, composed out of elements of other texts. The result was that in the 19th century the Byzantine text was less and less published. It was substituted by the Alexandrian text.

In 1881 the King James version was revised, resulting in the Revised Version, (the English edition) and the American Standard Version, (the American edition). These revisions, as far as the New Testament is concerned, were for the greater part based on the Alexandrian text of the New Testament. As to the Revised Standard Version of 1952, and most other modern versions, including the New American Standard Bible and the New International version, it has a wider basis than the Alexandrian text. Although this text is still prominent, elements from other types of text, including the Byzantine text, were also used. And it did not stop there.

Starting at the end of the previous century and continuing through the first half of our century, new manuscripts were discovered. This time in the Egyptian sand in the form of papyri scrolls containing parts of the New Testament. The oldest is a tiny piece of the Gospel of John, with only a few words on it. In so far, it is negligible. Nevertheless, it is highly important because dating from the beginning of the 2nd century, it proved that the Gospel of John was not written by an unknown author in the 3rd century as had been assumed by a Bible-critical theology, but must have existed before the end of the 1st century. Many of these papyri scrolls date back to the 2nd and 3rd centuries, that is two centuries earlier than the oldest Codices, two centuries closer therefore to the original text. It is not surprising therefore that these papyri have been and are closely studied.

Comparison of the text of the papyri brought to light that several of them have a text which is close to the Alexandrian type and so far forms a confirmation of the thesis that this text is an old one. There was more however. The text of other papyri

contains, in addition to Alexandrian and Caesarean, also Byzantine elements, indicating that not all was young about this Byzantine text as the theory had it. The conclusion drawn from these findings is that the borderline between the various local or regional texts is a lot more fluid than was imagined and that one has to be careful with the revision theory and especially with the far-reaching conclusions as to the ages and purity of manuscripts derived from it.

And here — forgive me for the detour, taken to avoid roads which might be too hard to travel — here Prof. van Bruggen comes in. He not only points out the things I just mentioned, he also challenges the theory that the Byzantine text would be the youngest text, the one furthest removed from the original, not only in time but in content as well. He does so by discussing the various arguments which were advanced against the Byzantine texts by two highly respected English scholars of the previous century, namely, Westcott and Hort.

Although with some reservations, I can go along with much of Prof. van Bruggen's criticism. Take for example, the Lucian recension which is used as a kind of axiom by Westcott-Hort. It is and remains a hypothesis which is hard to prove. It also seems improbable that one man would have undertaken a complete recension of the text without any clear record of it in the history of that time. On the other hand, Prof. van Bruggen cannot deny — as writings from those days indicate — that Lucian added to the text of the New Testament. It would not be surprising at all if these additions found their way into the Byzantine text.

Prof. van Bruggen also has a point when he states that a manuscript of a relatively young date does not necessarily contain a young text. The copier may have had a very old text at his disposal. So the fact is not decisive that the manuscripts which have the Byzantine text are, in their great majority, relatively young. On the other hand, an old manuscript cannot contain a text younger than it is itself. When, therefore, manuscripts of the 4th and even the 2nd century became available, then we might conclude that they have texts dating back to the 4th and to the 2nd century, and consequently quite close to the time wherein the New Testament was written. That explains the excitement about the discovery of the Codices of the 4th and 5th centuries, and accounts for the even greater excitement caused by the discovery of the papyri and of their agreement with the text of the 4th and 5th century codices. It proved that the text of the latter was already found in the 2nd century.

It seems to me that Prof. van Bruggen, though acknowledging the great importance of the papyri discoveries, far too easily divests himself of this importance by pointing out that Egypt was not the most flourishing part of the Church in this period, and by saying that the papyri are not representative library copies, but publications

which circulated in a cheap edition in Egypt (p. 24). I would reply that this shows they contained the current text, for cheap editions point to common use. Think of our present day paperbacks of hard-cover novels.

I also feel that Prof. van Bruggen disposes of the 4th and 5th century codices on a ground which is far too shaky on which to build a solid argument. This argument is an appeal to codicology, that is, the science which is engaged in the study of handwriting and of the history of the written book.

The important New Testament manuscripts, according to this science, were transliterated in the 9th and following centuries into the current form of writing. The so-called majuscules — or, as they were also called, uncials — were rewritten in the minuscule writing. It is assumed (note: *assumed*, which is not the same as proven) that after the completion of the transliteration, the majuscule, that is, the object of the transliteration, was destroyed, or anyway withdrawn from circulation (p. 24).

That would explain why no old majuscules in texts different from the Byzantine one, were discovered. These Codices, to which Alexandrinus, Sinaiticus, Beza, Vaticanus belong, were passed by in the process of transliteration as strange ducks in the manuscript pond, and that is the reason why they survived and could be discovered (p. 24). In other words, the very existence of these codices today, is evidence that they actually are no good and that the best text is not found in those old codices, highly praised though they may be, and consequently not in the even older papyri with their similar text either, but in the young codices which contain the Byzantine text.

This conclusion is indeed drawn by Prof. van Bruggen. He not only challenges the theory of Westcott-Hort that the Byzantine text type is the youngest and the worst preserved, but also comes to the conclusion that this Byzantine text type is actually the oldest and the best. The closing chapter of the booklet has as title: "Rehabilitation for the Old Text" (Eerherstel voor de Oude Text) p. 37ff.

No further proof is advanced. It is not considered necessary either by Prof. van Bruggen. It is the majority text (p. 14). And although Prof. van Bruggen realizes that the number of manuscripts is not decisive, but the weight of the manuscript evidence (p. 10), he attaches so much value to it that he wonders why this fact of the majority is not recognized as decisive (p. 14). Moreover, in addition to being the majority text, it is "the old and familiar church text" (p. 37), whose legitimacy needs no proof (p. 36).

Prof. van Bruggen, obviously referring to the papyri scrolls, even speaks of "the accidentally preserved copies of corrupt text forms in the 2nd century, which would be given the same voice as the copies out of many other centuries which generally are recognized as reliable." That is exactly the

Continued on page 243.

Houston: 25th Anniversary

On Wednesday, May 19, 1976, the congregation of the Canadian Reformed Church at Houston commemorated the institution of the Church in a very enjoyable social evening.

This memorable evening was opened with the singing of Psalm 145:1, 5, whereafter Br. R. Fennema read Psalm 145 and led in prayer. He extended a hearty welcome to everyone present, especially our honourable guest, Sr. Stel, wife of the late Rev. H.A. Stel, our first minister, who served the Church at Houston faithfully for just about eleven years. He also extended a special welcome to the delegates from our sister-Churches and the former Houstonites.

Br. John ten Brinke was called upon to relate to us a detailed history of the Church from its very beginning.

In the year 1949, a house congregation was started with four families. The heads of the families took turns in reading sermons on Sundays. The number steadily increased, so that in the fall of 1950 an old school building was rented to come together on Sundays for worship services. On March 4th, 1951, the Church was officially instituted. The membership at the time of institution was 34, of which 10 confessed and 24 baptized. In the years

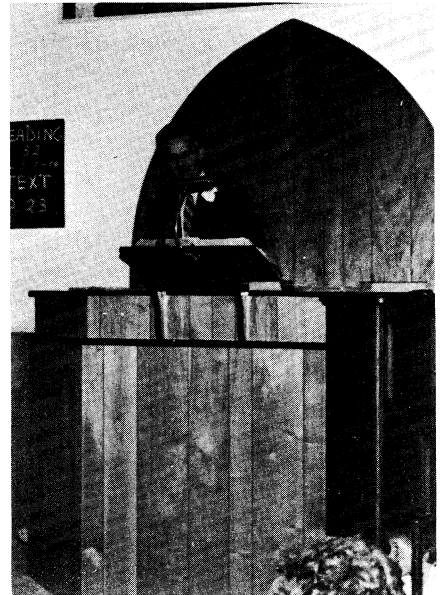
1954 and 1955 several calls were extended to ministers of The Netherlands, but these were declined. In the year 1956 a call was extended to Rev. H.A. Stel, minister of the Church at Neerlandia, who accepted the call, and was minister of the Word here in Houston till the spring of 1967. During that time the congregation grew to a respectable number of about 165 members. After Rev. Stel accepted the call to the Church of Winnipeg, Rev. P. Kingma, at that time minister of the Church at Smithers, became counsellor of the Church at Houston.

It was only a few years later that the Church of Houston started to decline rapidly in membership, mainly due to the fact that the primary resource, which is the lumber industry, was invaded by a secular labour union.

Till the Church of Smithers received a minister again in Candidate J. VanRietschoten in the fall of 1973, the ministers from southern B.C. provided the Church here with services and counselling.

* * *

The small children of the congregation amused us at different times during the evening with songs and solo, under direction of Sr. Vanden



Rev. J. VanRietschoten

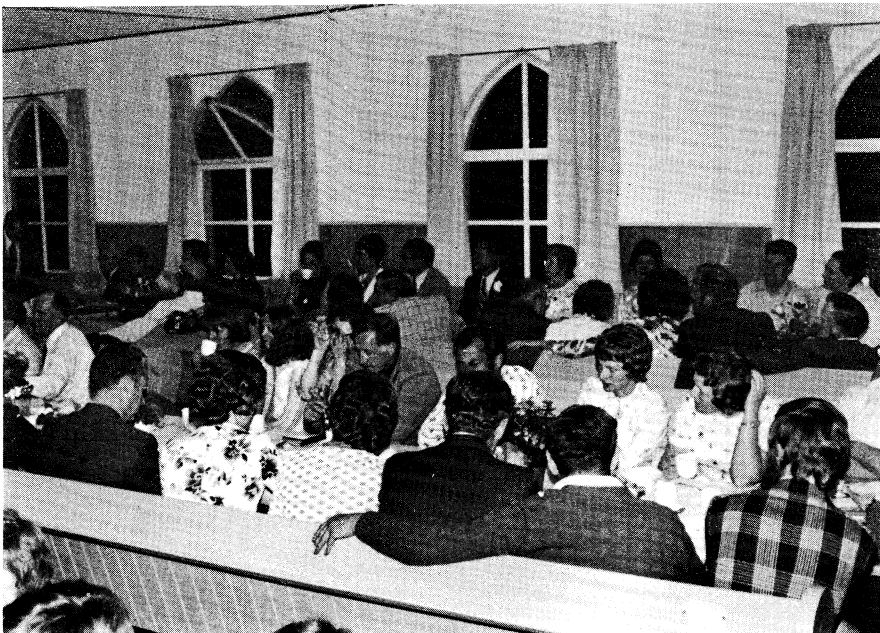
Hoek. Also the Young People's Society contributed to this social event with songs and skits. Sr. H.A. Stel congratulated the Church with its 25th Anniversary and wished us God's blessings in the future as He has blessed us the past 25 years. She then requested the congregation to sing Psalm 84:4, 5. During intermission coffee and refreshments were served by the Ladies of the congregation and many acquaintances were renewed.

After re-opening with Psalm 138:1, 3, the Rev. Van Rietschoten (our present counsellor) in his speech related to us a similarity between his home town, IJsselmonde, and the Church of Houston, with regard to the desire to build and maintain the Church.

One particular relative highlight mentioned in his speech was that in Bolnes-Slikkerveer and IJsselmonde, Candidate H.A. Stel was ordained as minister by Rev. Knoop in 1945. He also extended congratulations to the Church at Houston, and the blessing and guidance of the Lord.

On behalf of Classis Pacific and the Church of Abbotsford, Rev. Vander Wel (ex-counsellor of Houston Church) gave a congratulatory speech in which he exhorted the congregation to keep up the good work in true faith and with dedication, relying on our heavenly Father.

On behalf of the Church of Cloverdale, Br. T. Pothoven congratulated the Church with her 25th anniversary and the blessings of the Lord. Br. Kanis extended congratulations on be-



half of the Church of Smithers (our neighbour Church) and conveyed to us also the best wishes and blessings of the Lord so that the Church of Houston (the Mother Church of Smithers) may faithfully continue in His service.

From the Churches of Chilliwack and New Westminster telegrams were received in which they extended their congratulations on this occasion.

Also other telegrams from former members of Houston were received with congratulations, and were read by the chairman.

It was a very pleasant evening and it was enjoyed by everyone.

The evening was closed with Hymn 62, "Now thank we all our God," and Rev. Van Rietschoten was called upon to close in prayer.

R. FENNEMA
Houston, B.C.



TEXTUAL CRITICISM

— *Continued from page 241.*

opposite of the conclusion which textual criticism of the last couple of centuries reached. It is therefore not surprising that Prof. van Bruggen pleads for a reinstatement of the Byzantine text as basis for translation and exegesis, and that he welcomes a republication of the *Textus Receptus*, the received text of 1634, as planned by the Trinitarian Bible Society, now that no edition of the Byzantine text is readily available anymore.

I would go along with Prof. van Bruggen's conclusions and recommendations if he had not only pointed out the weaknesses in the hypothesis and arguments brought against the Byzantine text, but had also presented solid proof for his thesis that the Byzantine text is the oldest and best text of the New Testament. Instead of that kind of evidence, I found the hypothesis of the disappearance of the old manuscripts of the New Testament, after they had been transliterated.

So it is actually a matter of hypothesis over against hypothesis. The difference, however, is that whereas the one hypothesis, that of the Byzantine text as defended by Westcott-Hort, has lost much ground and is on the way out, the other hypothesis, the one of the superiority of the Byzantine text and the inferiority of all other texts as championed for different reasons by Wettstein, Burgon, Hills in the past, is again brought to the fore by Prof. van Bruggen.

I cannot see that this attempt will be more successful than former ones, and certainly not in cooperation with a Trinitarian Bible Society, which presents itself as a de-

fender of the faith in the triune God over against the great Codices of the 4th century which would harbour the heresies of the arian struggle, a thesis easily proclaimed but impossible to prove and totally untenable.

It seems to me that as long as textual criticism is suspended in and for that reason at the same time is bogged down by hypotheses, a text which can satisfy all Bible-believing scholars never will be published. The only way to get there, in my opinion, is a continued, patient study and comparison, not of one, but of all the various types of texts. This study is by far not completed yet and new material is still coming in. Personally, I am glad that the study of textual criticism moves in that direction. It may not lead to a text exclusively based on one text type, but it will lead to a text which is firmly rooted in the manuscript evidence of the one Word, an evidence which was preserved for the generations of men under the providence of God.

I am glad that Dr. van Bruggen's speech will be or has already been translated into English. I hope that it comes where it belongs in the first place, that is, in the studies of professors and students of the New Testament, on the desks of the editors of the "Greek New Testament" published by the United Bible Societies, of the editors of the new Nestle edition under preparation, and of the editors of the International Greek New Testament.

The study of Prof. van Bruggen concerns basic points in text-critical studies which are treated by him with a profound knowledge of the issues involved and deserves for that reason, all attention.

The publication of the English edition by Premier Printing may provide the opportunity to weed out some printing errors, which even occur in our modern age with its sophisticated equipment. I found on page 13 Horst instead of Hort; on page 27 Mrs. instead of Mr., and Mms. instead of Mss. Not all North American students read their Greek and Latin as well as the Dutch students. An addition of a translation of quotations in Greek or Latin is therefore appreciated on this continent. The paragraph starting as the last one on page 8 and continuing on page 9 with footnote 15, in my opinion, could stand some clarification.

The booklet is well printed and dressed in a nice cover; too bad that it is glued on, instead of sewed on. Now it comes loose.

Recommended to the knowledgeable reader.

L. SELLES

OUR COVER

Douglas Lake Ranch, British Columbia. Photo courtesy the Photographic Branch, Department of Travel Industry, Victoria, B.C.



News items are published with a view to their importance for the Reformed Churches. Selection of an item does not necessarily imply agreement with its contents.

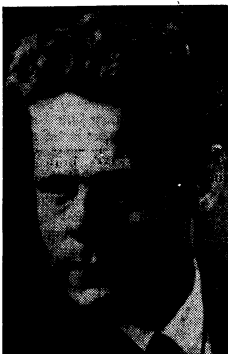
RCA GENERAL SYNOD 1976

Madison, New Jersey. The General Synod of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) meeting at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Madison from June 14 to 18, will deal with overtures sent in from the particular synods and classes. Of the many overtures, the following are notable. The Classis of Mid-Hudson overtures Synod "to maintain the equality of women with men in the Kingdom of God and to uphold the right of women to participate with men in all organizations, boards, agencies, and judiciatories of the RCA."

The Classis of Dakota "respectfully overtures Synod to withdraw its membership from the World Council of Churches."

BIBLE-LEAGUE

Johannesburg, South Africa. According to a recent report of the World Organization of Bible-Leagues, the Bible League of South Africa is the largest distributor in the world of complete bibles. The American Bible League is second with at least 80,000 Bibles less. The South African League operates mostly with the support of the churches, and distributes the Bibles in various languages, such as Chinese, Russian, Timbuku, and the local languages like Afrikaans, English, Xhosa, and South-Sotho.



*Hans Küng
"controversial . . ."*

VATICAN CRITICIZES KÜNG

Vatican City. The Roman Catholic Church has officially criticized the lat-

est work of the controversial Roman Catholic theologian, Dr. Hans Küng of Tubingen, Germany. The Vatican Daily, *Osservatore Romano*, discusses the latest book of Dr. Küng (*Christ Sein: To Be a Christian*) and claims that Küng denies the Godhead of Christ. The book is said to conflict with the clear decisions of Nicea (325) and Chalcedon (451). Küng's book has reached a German printing of 160,000 and has already been translated into nine languages.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Capetown, South Africa. The name of the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa (which correspond a.o. with the Canadian Reformed Churches) seems to give rise to misunderstandings, as if it would denote some liberal denomination. Rev. D. Los writes this in the local bulletin of the Free Reformed Church at Capetown (Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk). Rev. Los comes to this conclusion from talks with the Nederduits Gereformeerde minister Rev. B.H.S. Cross, with whom he has many contacts. According to Rev. Los it would be a blessing if a name is found that is not "ambiguous." Meanwhile Rev. Los has been invited to attend a regional minister's workshop of the N.G. Churches and to speak on "Covenant and Baptism," especially the different insights of A. Kuyper and K. Schilder on this point.

COMBI-SYNOD

Utrecht, The Netherlands. In September of this year the second combined Synod of the Synodical Reformed Churches and the Dutch Reformed Church (Hervormde Kerk) will be held with the goal of achieving unity. A first meeting was held in 1973, also in Utrecht. Topics for discussion will be: central points of confession, local cooperation, and church-political matters.

DISAPPOINTED YOUTH

Driebergen, The Netherlands. The national centre for Reformed youth work (Synodical) has notified the Syn-

od of the Synodical Reformed Churches that it is quite disappointed by the Synod's recent decision to withdraw its active support for the Program to Combat Racism (PCR of the WCC). The youth feel that the Synod has taken a "step backwards on the road to solidarity with the negroes."

IRISH PRIESTESS?

Dublin, Ireland. The Anglican Church of Ireland has decided in favour of ordaining women into priesthood. The delegates to the annual national Synod appeared in great majority for such a move. The Irish archbishop Buchanan of Dublin, who initiated the move, called the decision "simply righteous." Such an ordination, however, is not expected to take place for some years, since there are no female candidates known for this position.

MEMBERSHIP DECREASE

Edinburgh, Scotland. In a recent report of the annual General Synod of the Reformed National Church of Scotland, it is estimated that in the next 25 years church membership will be cut in half. In 1973 the Church of Scotland registered more than one million members, but according to present figures and insight, membership is diminishing at such a pace that by the year 2001 only 500,000 members will be associated with the church.

MR. MOON'S GUN FACTORY

New York, USA. The multi-millionaire leader of the Unified Family, the Korean Sun Myung Moon, has admitted that his factories in South Korea take an extensive part in Korea's total weapon production; as *Newsweek* reports, at least 10 percent. Mr. Moon, however, denied rumours that he would be cooperating with the Korean Secret service or have special contacts with president Park. The Unification Church in the U.S. has an estimated 30,000 members and maintains a capital of 20 million dollars, according to *Newsweek*.

WYCLIFFE IN TROUBLE

Lima, Peru. The World Home Bible League has informed participating leagues (also the Canadian Home Bible League) that the minister of Education of Peru has ordered all Bible-translators out of the country by January 1, 1977. This means that all translations for Indian tribes must be completed before that deadline. Wycliffe has extended an emergency plea for funds to all participating organizations.

Lagos, Nigeria. The Nigerian Department of Foreign Affairs has told Wycliffe-translators to be out of the country by June 30. The government announced that it would take over all important organizations necessary for the Nigerian people, but that Wycliffe's work is "no longer considered necessary."

COMMENT

Hans Küng

Hans Küng, born in Switzerland in 1928, professor at Tübingen (Germany), has been widely hailed in America as one of the major architects of the Second Vatican Council and as the "herald" of the new spirit of ecumenism. Already in his dissertation (1957) about the doctrine of justification, he tried to reconcile the Protestant and Romanist position, the doctrine of Karl Barth and the Council of Trent. Especially his publications on the church and its structures, culminating in his attack on the doctrine of infallibility (1970), have attracted the attention of many inside and outside the Roman Catholic Church.

It cannot be denied that Küng's publications show an earnest and honest search for truth, and that especially in the parts that deal with Scriptural data and exegesis, one is reminded time and again of what Luther and Calvin stood for. A theologian of Calvin Seminary even wrote: "I wish John Calvin could have lived to read this book; I think he would have rejoiced in it . . ." (A.A. Hoekema, review of "The Church" in *C.T.J.*, V, 1970, p. 114).

Nevertheless, I would like to warn against hasty reactions from Protestant side. After Küng's sharp attack on the doctrine of the infallibility of the pope, Dr. Willem Visser't Hooft, former General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, wrote that if Küng's ideas are taken up in Catholicism, then Protestantism will no longer have any important reason for protesting. Now, first of all, Küng's ideas are not taken up by the Roman Catholic church. As he himself pointed out, the Second Vatican Council not only reinforced the doctrine of the First Vaticanum (1870), but even broadened and underlined the concept of the infallibility of the Church. From conservative Roman Catholicism we may not expect any weakening of this un-Scriptural doctrine. And in the second place, from modernist Roman Catholic

scholars like Küng we have, alas, not to expect a return to the Bible as the infallible Word of God. In his "Infallible?," Küng wrote that Scripture *is* not revelation; it attests revelation. "Thus the human weakness, autonomy, and historicity of the biblical writers remain completely untouched. They are never at any time made inerrant . . ." (Image Books, 1972, p. 195). Küng demands biblical criticism: literary, historical, and theological criticism. He states that the Bible is not the ground of Christian faith. Sure, Scripture is the testimony of Jesus, "But my faith is not based on Scripture . . ." One can deeply deplore the fact that this gifted theologian in his attack on false doctrine of his Roman church did not turn to the Word of God as the infallible rule of our Christian faith. Misled by Protestant so-called neo-orthodox theologians such as Karl Barth, he did not find the true confession of the Reformation. This basic error shows also its consequences in departure from the truly catholic confession about our LORD Jesus Christ, the Immanuel. In this respect we side with conservative Roman Catholicism. Although Reformed people will never approve the structure of Roman hierarchy and its discipline, they should also never endorse any attack on the truly Catholic doctrine of the councils of the early Christian church. It remains our calling to discern the spirits and not to depart from God's truth, neither to the right nor to the left.

J. FABER

Wycliffe

Whenever I sample copies of the project-bulletin of Wycliffe Translators, IN OTHER WORDS, I'm not overly impressed with the spiritualistic atmosphere which prevails in its contents and also seems eminent at the (summer) linguistics institutes (SIL). And while I object to the religious implications of the organization (e.g. methodical prayer directories), I still regard the actual work of Bible-translating to be of considerable importance for the Kingdom of God. That's often the problem with many organizations: one agrees with one thing but not the other!

It is, of course, a sad fact that the position and work of many Wycliffe Bible translators is in grave danger. Are the happenings in Peru and Nigeria tokens of new policies in this respect? Are governments in these

"third-world" nations becoming increasingly wary of Wycliffe-workers?

One would think so, if he hears the reports. A number of Mexican anthropologists have asked their government to forbid Wycliffe's work among the Indian tribes in Latin America. The director of the Colombian Anthropological Institute has called the SIL (Summer Institute of Linguistics) "a neo-colonialistic group." In Venezuela the government has ordered an official investigation of the work of American missionaries, anthropologists, and language-specialists. Wycliffe is clearly in trouble.

Yet there are reasons which could be given for these sudden steps. Major religious organizations — often connected with the WCC — are following rather revolutionary ideologies and in some cases this means moral and financial support of violent movements. Governments in these unstable underdeveloped countries will not relish foreign influence of this nature. And even if one would not identify the independent, more evangelical organization of Wycliffe with these revolutionary policies, it still is a major worldwide organization of influence which to many governments could pose a threat.

The point which especially worries some governments, I imagine, is that these SIL-people are hard to control or check, since they operate in far-off and often impregnable jungles, among remote tribes and maintain an own communications system (JARS, Jungle Aviation and Radio Service). And undoubtedly the tribes are being "influenced" to some extent. It is this foreign influence, positive or negative, religious or not, which Nigeria wishes to prevent. And is it not significant that the minister of EDUCATION in Peru has ordered such a move? The Peruvian government is indeed worried about possible outside indoctrination. Third-World countries are showing the desire more and more to take as many matters as possible into their own hands, especially education.

The radical policies of the WCC are not supporting the cause of mission, but hindering the completion of necessary tasks. Many Third-World governments see Christianity as an exponent of western decadence and are trying to oppose it. It is, in my opinion, a combination of these things which forces Wycliffe to go.

CI. STAM

Country Walks

Odd as it may seem, one of the most appealing sights to some of us is to view the marshy lake shores, ponds or sloughs during early spring, when their appearance is so vastly different from the summerdays when the cattails, bulrushes and reeds have grown taller than the tallest man and when the surface of the more protected bays and ponds are covered with waterlilies, duckweed, pickerel weed or water plantain.

When we visited one of the many bays along the lake Erie shore this May the new growth of the cattails was just visible above the surface, but the old vegetation, sometimes with roots and soil still attached, was deposited by wind and water in heaps along the shores. One of the reasons that we were impressed with this area was that it corresponded so remarkably with the Dutch landscape: a combination of sand dunes along the lakeshore and reeds on the sides of the bay and rivers with even the weather adding to its touch by being cold and windy and by continually surrounding us with the not unpleasant smells of decaying vegetation.

Due to the high level of the water the little islands out in the bay were partly submerged so that the shrubwillows and dogwood, already in leaf seemed to grow right out of the water. The few yellow warblers we saw on these islands seemed happy nevertheless, as were the songsparrows who undoubtedly had found the ideal, solitary spot for nesting but would have to wait until the water level goes down, ground nesters as they are.

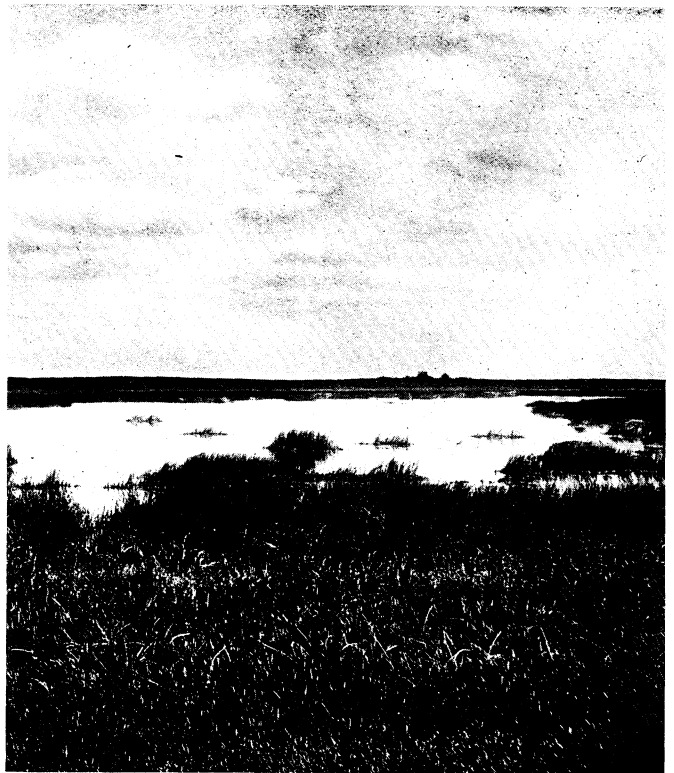
The poplars along the only road leading to the point weren't quite in full leaf as yet, and when we heard the unmistakable songs of the Baltimore orioles, it was not hard to spot their bright black and orange colours.

One shallow bit of marsh, protected by the road, was the home of at least a dozen redwings. Here some of the old cattails were still intact and despite the protests of the males we found several new nests in among the old, weatherbeaten ones of last year.

The purple grackles and cowbirds keeping the redwings company seemed very unsettled yet; the grackles hadn't started nesting yet, while the cowbird just would have to wait until the smaller songbirds had finished their cradles for them.

Although the migration of various birds was still in progress as not all the marshbirds had returned at this time, most birds seemed to be quite at home. The house- and barnswallows sailed over the surface as if they hadn't been away, but must have had a rough time as the weather seemed way too cold for flying insects, their staple food, to be around in any numbers. The gulls, bobbing on the waves or sitting on the boat docks, never had a better time feeding on the dead fish appearing every spring. The common terns were all over, and, diving for fresh fish as they did all day, had us convinced that they, too, were content.

Once we hopefully scanned the wide expanse of the bay when we heard the impressive honking of geese, but instead of a large flock we saw two individual Canada geese winging their way to a far away spot. No doubt they had paired off like the mallards and black ducks of which we saw several, not in flocks but all in pairs or as individuals near



such likely nesting places as clumps of grass or hard-to-reach islands.

Scanning this vast area with our binoculars we even noticed the upper half of a great blue heron far out in the marsh — an early bird, as it seemed to be the only one so far of the six or seven which can be seen later on in the season.

Several times we heard the calls of the biggest and most musical member of our native swallows: the blue martin. We had already discovered earlier that quite a few owners of the cottages had erected specially made martin houses along the waterfront.

That not all the birds had returned at this time could be concluded, for birds like kingbirds and other species of flycatchers, marsh wrens, catbirds, and brown thrashers, etc., despite our efforts, remained invisible.

But the coots, birds unknown to so many people as they're strictly marsh birds, made up for the birds we expected to see but didn't, by being present in numbers I never encountered before.

Freely mixing with the ducks when foraging along the reedbeds or bobbing in little groups farther out in the bay, we estimated that we spotted around three hundred that day especially after we saw a group of fifty in a secluded, reed-protected bay.

Looking back afterwards, it hurts when we realize that this beautiful part of creation, so extremely attractive to naturalists and so well-known for its fishing, with a landpoint jutting 20 miles into lake Erie where one can walk for days without meeting a soul, borders on the most polluted of the five lakes that together form the biggest fresh water reservoir in the world.

COR TENHAGE

OUR COLLEGE

It seems only a couple of months ago since I wrote about the College during the first semester of the course '75-76. It is in the meantime almost half a year ago that I did so. Time runs fast at the College, or rather, that's what it seems to do, due to the pretty heavy schedule which keeps everyone busy.

Things are quieting down now; this "now" is the middle of June. Lecturing stopped on May 7th. The two following weeks were set aside for the exams. Cool and pleasant weather helped to keep the students going, and on May 21st the course could be closed by the principal with the final chapel. The students who had completed all their assignments could start their summer job. They who had to write one or more papers yet, stayed to get that done.

For the faculty, it was a time of making and marking exams, of meeting on the results of the past course and of preparing for the new academic year, of getting out the reports for the Board of Governors, and the marks for the students.

We always had some aid for it, provided by Mrs. Faber who worked part-time in the College. Her main work was the care for the library files, and the ordering of books. In addition, she did some secretarial work. The Board of Governors and the Board of Trustees felt, however, that the College should have a full-time secretary who, in addition to library and secretarial work for the faculty, could also take over part of the work of the secretary of the Board of Governors and of the secretary and treasurer of the Board of Trustees. So we have, since March 1st, our administrative assistant. She is Anne van Sydenborgh who, because she has worked in East and West, as well as in Manitoba, is well-known to many of us. This is advantageous since she also acts as hostess who shows visiting guests from all over the country around. More important, however, is that she is up to the task to be a "girl Friday," as her position was characterized.

Faculty and students expressed their gratitude for ready help given to both by Mrs. Faber, in presenting her with a beautiful gloxinia.

Coming back to the exams, the results were generally speaking gratifying. All four students of the freshmen year were admitted to the junior year. One of them, however, will not return, at least not for the time being. Bert Vanderwoerd accepted a teaching position at the Canadian Reformed Dayschool at London, which will be opened in September.

Another student who is leaving is Jack DeJong. He completed his studies for

the Bachelor of Divinity degree. The degree will be conferred on him at the annual Convocation and College evening which will be held D.V., Friday, September 10th, in the Wellington Square United Church, 2121 Caroline, Burlington. Mark the date already on your calendar. The completion of his study does not mean that on passing the Classis examination, br. DeJong will be eligible for a call. He plans to go to Europe in September and to, among other things, do some studying at the Theologische Hogeschool at Kampen. Although no date is set, he hopes to return within a year.

We will not get two students back for the two who are leaving. Only one student had sufficient qualifications to be admitted so far. It shows that the education for the ministry should not only have the attention of the Churches in providing it, and of the faculty in working in it, but also of the families in presenting the students who may be trained in it. We can all work for that with our prayers and with the encouragement of young men who may qualify for this education.

I am pleased to report that, with the approval of the Board of Governors, the College showed hospitality to an auditor, that is, a person who attends the lectures but is not registered as a regular student and for that reason is exempted from writing exams. This person was Rev. Kim who studied at the Korea Theological College and is a pastor of the First Korean Presbyterian Church at Toronto. These months were not easy for Rev. Kim because of the language difficulties and the differences between the Korean and Canadian training. However, things are getting easier for our brother, and we expect him to come back in September, but then not as an auditor anymore, but as a regular student working toward the College degree. I may mention in this context, br. and sr. K. Vink of Burlington, who opened their home for Rev. Kim during the days that he is away from wife and children in Toronto.

Thinking of co-labourers in the College work, I should mention Rev. Roukema who does the cataloguing of the new acquisitions to the Library, and goes over the various catalogues which list old and new books for sale. The older books are not less important than the new; actually, they are more important for they are, in as far as they are valuable, hard to come by. So Rev. Roukema must have the qualities of both a hunter and a sorter, but he can do it all sitting behind his desk in the small filing room, where he feels quite at home.

Br. and sr. Walinga keep the building in good repair and in clean condition. Even a complete spring cleaning was done with

some extra help. This work too is highly appreciated.

We are grateful to the LORD that the various duties could be discharged without interruption and that the seventh academic year could be concluded.

L. SELLES

Letters-to-the-Editor

Dear Editor,

In August of last year I sent you a request to be published in your magazine regarding *Adolf Herman Wildeman*, member by baptism of the Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton. A week ago the body of the boy was found, and it has been established that death must have occurred at the time that he was first missed.

On June 4, 1976, exactly one year after he was missed, Adolf Wildeman was buried. The comfort of his parents, brothers and sisters, and all who knew and loved him, is that he belonged and belongs, body and soul, to Jesus Christ, Who also had signed and sealed to him the promise of eternal life.

On behalf of the parents I thank you and, in this way, all bulletin-editors, who published our request last year, and all those who in prayers and deeds have given their help.

With Christian greetings,
D. DEJONG

We want to express our great appreciation for all the good wishes which we received from brethren and sisters in various ways on our 35th Wedding Anniversary.

Mr. and Mrs. W. Gelderman
42486 St. Sumas Road
R.R. 1, Sardis, B.C., Canada
V0X 1Y0

"Children are a heritage from the Lord."

With this confession we thankfully announce the birth of our son:

HENDRIK EDWARD
a brother for: *Carl* and *Eric*.
Frank and Annette Ludwig
(nee Jager)

June 10, 1976
564 Emerald St., Burlington, Ont.