



Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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The Beauty of Reformed Liturgy ⁶

In the fifth instalment of this series we discussed the Opening Elements of the covenantal meeting of the LORD with His people. We came to the conclusion that our traditional order of liturgy starts with a word of the congregation, and wondered if that is right. Should not the LORD have the first word, because in all aspects of our redemption He takes the initiative? Thus we promised to say something about the Call to Worship.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. van Rongen told us in the previous article that our "Votum" finds its origin in the worship where the priest was the centre. He prayed the words, "Our help is in the Name of the LORD . . ." as a preparation of and for himself. The Reformation abolished this and put the words into the mouth of the congregation.

Those who have the impression that we want to introduce *new* inventions should know that *before* the votum came into use, there was an *older* beginning of the worship service, the so-called "Call to Worship."

The minister calls the congregation to the meeting on behalf of God. "We must always remember that no one is fully ready for the high and holy experience of united corporate worship," Rayburn, p. 174. "The very best way to call to mind His worth is from His own holy and infallible Word. Actually the only way we can find out about God's worth is from God Himself," *Ibid*, p. 175. From ancient days it has been the custom to quote for the Call to Worship words from the Psalms. The Book of Psalms is full of verses containing very specific calls to worship. No part of Scripture is better for this specific purpose. From the large number we only quote:

Psalms 92:1, 2: It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to Thy Name, O Most High; to declare Thy steadfast love in the morning.

Psalms 100:1, 2: Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the lands! Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into His presence with singing! Know that the LORD is God!

Psalms 113:1, 2: Praise the LORD! Praise, O servants of the LORD, praise the Name of the LORD! Blessed be the Name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore!

And so on . . . These are the words in which the LORD welcomes His people and they sing His holy praise.

We do not expect that the churches will immediately restore this ancient opening of the service, whereby the minister could use a great variety, but always taken from the Word of God Himself. Mention of it may, however, serve the purpose that we are deeply impressed by the fact that we have come into the presence of the Most High and that our opening Psalm gives expression to this awareness.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS OF SINS

In the order of corporate worship, given in the fourth instalment, the purpose of the second "block" of elements is to take away all obstacles between the LORD and us. Although we are His covenant people, justified by the blood of Jesus Christ, the Bible makes very clear that every time we enter into His presence, there are again sins that must be taken out of the way. One thinks of the manner in which men like Abraham, David, Isaiah, Paul, etc., approached the throne of mercy: always in deepest reverence and with a declaration of unworthiness.

Notwithstanding the need for confession of sins and forgiveness through His grace, this part of the average worship service has been sorely neglected and nearly disappeared. Men like Dr. A. KUYPER have tried in vain to restore this part of worship to its proper place, and thus return to the way it was practiced by the Reformers. We have already pointed to the two prayers in the *Book of Praise*, pp. 475 and 480, which contain a public confession of sins (and are, incorrectly, combined with a brief prayer before the sermon, which will be explained later).

Although we wholeheartedly agree with the Catechism that the Ten Words of the Covenant belong in the

third part (of gratitude) — in the worship service they have always been combined with the public confession of sins. To this "block" belong four elements, which represent the two-way traffic in the covenantal liturgy [(A) being from God; (B) coming from His people]. They are: 1. The Ten Words; 2. Public Confession of Sins; 3. Proclamation of Forgiveness; 4. Song of Praise and Thanksgiving. On each of these we should speak briefly.

THE TEN WORDS

It stands to reason that both versions of the Ten Commandments should be read alternately, Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. Our "diligently attending the church of God" (Lord's Day 38) is in obedience to the fourth commandment, and it is exactly this commandment that has two different versions. Only together do they give the full meaning of the Lord's Day. Exodus 20 gives a *reason* for keeping the Lord's Day: His example on the seventh day; Deuteronomy 5 adds as *purpose*: to recall His mighty acts of redemption.

Some minor points should be mentioned. First, pros and cons have been put forward as to whether Exodus 20:1, "And God spoke all these words, saying . . ." should be read or not. Our conviction that they need not be read is based, first, on the fact that we do not find them in Deuteronomy 5; second, because, apart from the fact that God "*spoke*" these words the first time from Sinai, He now *speaks* them to us. We are not just reading an old document!

Another point is: Should the Summary, already given by Moses in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, and combined by the Saviour in Matthew 22, Mark 12, and Luke 10 be read also? The argument *against* doing so usually is that we then read the Law twice. Unintentionally, this gives the impression of criticizing the Lord Jesus. On various occasions (not only Matthew 22, but also to the Rich Young Man) He deemed it necessary, after having mentioned some of the

Ten Words, to convince people of their sins and guilt by adding, "Yes, you say you kept these commandments, but what about loving your neighbour?" It is our conviction that we, for the same purpose, need this reminder badly. That's why the Catechism quotes the summary, Lord's Day 2, in answer to the question, "Whence do you know your misery?" Is it enough that we do not kill our neighbour? No, when God forbids hatred and anger, He commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves," Lord's Day 40, Answer 107.

In reading the Ten Words we are nearly alone. Some churches have kept a resemblance of it by having the minister read selections from the New Testament in which one or more of the commandments are paraphrased. Although it is a must to do that in Catechism preaching on Lord's Days 34-44, such a selection never gives the complete covenant law, and already for that reason we should not go in that direction. The whole Law in its negative and positive form, nothing less!

PUBLIC CONFESSION OF SINS

The combination of this "brief prayer before the sermon" with the prayer before the sermon is the result of permitting this important part of corporate worship to fall into disuse. Every minister be advised to use these two prayer forms now and then, especially when the upcoming Synod has adopted the new wording that has been prepared by the Liturgy Committee (the consistories have already received them).

Leviticus 19:18

You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself:
I am the LORD.

R.S.V.

Those who want more participation of the congregation, have an opportunity here to recommend that the whole congregation prays this. We have them in print.

However, we do not recommend that these forms be used every Lord's Day. That might become monotonous and then the hearts are no longer touched. We have attended churches in other countries where a brief prayer of confession is printed in the bulletin every week, so that the whole congregation can pray together with the minister: everyone confesses his/her own sinfulness before the Holy God. This is mentioned as an example of how other Christians try to do justice to this element of worship. The LORD reminded us of His holy will for us; we learn to acknowledge our sinfulness and confess it: (A) — then (B). *God's* answer is (A):

PROCLAMATION OF FORGIVENESS AND GRACE

Lord's Day 31 rightly stresses that all preaching must be "openly witnessing to believers . . . that their sins are really forgiven . . . and to unbelievers that the wrath of God abides on them." When the congregation, however, in answer to God's holy Law, has confessed her guilt with a contrite spirit, she should already at that moment be firmly assured of God's willingness to forgive the believers, one and all (Lord's Day 31). The minister should use quotations from God's own Word to proclaim this divine grace. That is his mandate and authority, "Whatever you bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."

Now that the congregation has been assured that by her confession and by God's grace everything is "smooth" again between her and Him and thus the service can proceed on the basis of reconciliation, she cannot but answer [a (B) element] with;

A SONG OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

As with every element of the service, the minister should select the song for this moment with the greatest care. Such a song, Psalm or Hymn, should give expression to our gratitude for the great gift in Christ, to our willingness and desire to obey the commandments of God with greater zeal; and, in general it should be the expression of our awareness that we depend totally and completely on the LORD's

mercy. "Bless the LORD, O my soul, who forgives all your iniquity, who redeems your life from the pit . . .," Psalm 103.

With this joy in our hearts we are now looking forward "to learning God's Word," Lord's Day 38. We may "hathe" in His love!

POSTSCRIPT

It would be wonderful if this part of the service, as described in this article, would again (it is nothing new!) be given its due. We do not say that all this has to be repeated in the second service. These articles are, in general, speaking about the first service. If this series does not become too long, we might conclude with a discussion of the difference between the first and the second service. We have done so some years ago, but most of it may have been forgotten.

(To be continued.)

G. VANDOOREN



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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.

PHILADELPHIA, PA. (RNS)

One of the fastest-growing ethnic churches in the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. has withdrawn in protest against alleged liberalism and denominational control of church property.

The 250-member Korean United Church of Philadelphia voted overwhelmingly on May 4 to secede. It was the only Korean church in the Philadelphia presbytery, cradle of American Presbyterianism and second largest in the nation, and was the fastest-growing of all the presbytery's 161 member churches.

What angered the congregation "more than any other issue" was the ordination of the UPC minister who allegedly has publicly denied the divinity of Christ.

The Korean church was also upset by the denomination's mandate last year that women must be elected as elders, an order which the church believes is unbiblical and removes any choice by local churches. (CN)

TOLEDO, OHIO (RNS)

According to the compiler of church statistics on canon law procedures in the United States, it is a rare Catholic marriage tribunal that today does not grant requests for annulments.

The diocese of Brooklyn has gotten something of a reputation as the "Reno" of the Catholic Church in recent years. In 1978, 802 decisions were handed down there compared with 234 in the New York Archdiocese

Circumspection...

THE ELECTRIC CHURCH

Not too long ago we had an interesting visitor, a distant relative who had emigrated to Canada shortly after World War II and had settled well in his new homeland. Except, in The Netherlands he had been a member of the Reformed Churches, but since in his local town there was no Reformed Church he had simply joined the Presbyterian Church. For a time things went well with our relative, but lately he (and his family) had grown somewhat discouraged with the effort of their (aging) minister, and he told me, "Often on Sunday mornings we just stay home and watch Rex Humbard on T.V."

So our relative had become a member of the ever-growing "electric church," that vast audience of arm-chair Christians whose sole worship consists in seeing and hearing their flashy screen-evangelists once weekly on television.

The name "electric church" is not my invention, by the way, but is the title of a book written last year by Ben Armstrong, executive director of the U.S. National Religious Broadcasters (NRB). Armstrong claims that religious producers spend at least \$600 million per year to buy time on commercial stations. He also estimates that at least 14 million Americans watch a religious TV show and that another 115 million listen regularly to a radio gospel program. If this estimate is anywhere close to reality, the amount is much greater than those who actually attend church.

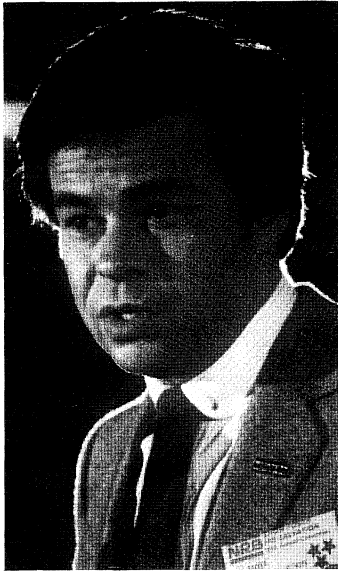
Many of our Churches, too, have their own radio program, THE VOICE OF THE CHURCH, but our budget and (possibly) our audience is incomparable to the effort and following of the multi-million

dollar glitter-and-gleam evangelists who dominate the airwaves.

It is interesting to note who the top TV-preachers are, and what their annual broadcasting revenue is. I take my figures from the February 4th issue of TIME. Jim Bakker, host of the PTL Club (which stands for "praise the Lord" or "people that love," whichever you prefer) leads the pack with \$51 million. Pat Robertson, host of the 700 Club and author of the book, SHOUT IT FROM THE HOUSETOPS, is second in line with \$47 million. In the lower echelons we encounter Rex Humbard (\$25 million) and Jimmy Swaggart (\$20 million). Despite these eye-dazzling figures, even these mammoth-evangelists sometimes meet with financial difficulties, but one moving plea to their faithful following usually results in instant funding. Rex Humbard recently was able to work away a million-dollar deficit and have enough "morsels" left to buy himself a house in Florida. Not bad for one haul.

This new tide of airwave evangelism is fostered and controlled almost completely by the Evangelical-Fundamentalist-Pentecostal wing of Protestantism" (TIME Magazine) and has no denominational binding. With 1400 radio and 35 TV-stations, four religious "networks" make use of satellite and cable to reach millions of people throughout North America and even Europe. The possibilities are simply gigantic. It may very well be that the "tube" is replacing the "pew." This hard-sell "televangelism" is offering devastating competition to the traditional churches who see their attendance and, subsequently, their revenue declining sharply.

The big question is: What makes these religious programs so popular? Perhaps a variety of an-



Jim Bakker, "Leader of the Pack."

swers can be given. The fault may lie for a great part with the "institutionalized" churches themselves whose message and ministry has become so shallow that they cannot hold on to their membership. Many believers are turning away from the clinical coldness of Scripture-critical denominations to the charismatic warmth of Pentecostalism.

For a great part, however, the success of the "electric church" is due to its own slick programming, offering a tempting package of fantastic promises and easy-to-grasp-answers. The formula is simple and is based on the format of secular talk-shows, like, e.g., the Johnny Carson TONIGHT SHOW. The "host" is introduced amidst heavy lighting and belting gospel-music. Views of an enthusiastic live audience flash across the screen — all those happy people, where do they all come from? A Scripture passage is read from which simplistic yet extravagant conclusions are drawn. This is usually followed by a call "to accept Christ now," and prayer. Then various guests from the religious celebrity circuit are interviewed, guests whose enthusiastic witnesses invariably center around the marvellous things Christ has done with their lives. Born-again movie stars, sport

figures, and ex-cons help to pass the hour with lively testimonies and humorous anecdotes. The host addresses the audience with an emotion-filled voice. "If Christ has done all this for them, imagine what He can do for you?" The program is usually concluded with a refined request for more funding so that existing projects can be preserved and expanded, and others can also be brought to Christ. Hence the impressive revenue.

The electric church with its immaculate, ever-smiling host and its pretty parade of born-again beauties does seem to fill a spiritual gap in America. Yet that gap is filled with Arminian heresy and false expectations. The broadcast diet offers little true nourishment, but seems to fit excellently in a society geared to "fast-food" restaurants and drive-in theatres.

Christ gathers His Church DIFFERENTLY. He calls and brings the believers together in holy worship and gives to them the preaching of the pure doctrine. He strengthens faith by the use of the sacraments and the experience of true fellowship. He has an ongoing "follow-up" in the exercising of Christian discipline. The problem of the electric church is not so much the initial motivation but the real follow-up. No wonder; the electric church lets you sit on the sofa; Christ activates His Church via the pulpit to rise from the pew and be His followers every day in every field of life.

Only the Church which gathered according to the norms of Christ is truly "electrifying." It does not offer million-dollar shock-treatments but gives simple edification.

There is a vast difference between a television CLUB, which centers around a charismatic host and the Christian CHURCH which has Christ as its Head and His Word as its only foundation.

Club versus Church. Sofa versus pew. Learn to appreciate the difference: give the wolves in show-business-sheepsclothing no forum in your livingroom.

Cid.

whose population is nearly a fifth greater.

The number of annulments granted jumped sharply in the United States after the American bishops received permission a decade ago from Pope Paul VI to streamline the complete annulment procedure then in use by eliminating the need to refer most cases to Rome. (CN)

NEW YORK (RNS)

Americans are importing Bibles from Eastern Europe.

This situation, which may surprise people who have assumed that the traffic in Scriptures was only one-way, was highlighted by the executive secretary of the Bible Society in Poland in an address to the 164th annual meeting of the American Bible Society here.

In a report on Bible Society work around the world, Dr. Bryant M. Kirkland told the luncheon audience that "the Iranian Bible Society still functions, and outside in the teeming streets of Teheran, they are still able to sell portions of Scripture." (CN)

SALT LAKE CITY (RNS)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon) plans to build seven new temples in the U.S. and abroad.

One will be in Atlanta, Ga., and the others in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Sydney, Australia; Santiago, Chile; Pateete, Tahiti; Nuku'alofa, Tonga; and Apia, Western Samoa.

Temples are sacred buildings reserved for the performance of special ordinances and are not used for regular church meetings. (CN)

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND (RNS)

Prime Minister Robert Mugabe (a Communist, ed.) of Zimbabwe has expressed gratitude to the World Council of Churches (WCC) for its support in the liberation struggle in his country.

He told a WCC delegation visiting Salisbury that "it is an honour to express gratitude for the role you have played and to send through you to other people struggling for justice the message of our firm commitment to the principles for which you and we have struggled together, including the principles of non-racialism." (CN)

MUNICH (EWNS)

Whether it is the preparation for the Moscow Olympics and the Soviet Union's desperate attempt to make everything look good in the heartland of communism, or the move to take over Yugoslavia after President Tito's soon demise, there is no doubt that the Kremlin's control noose is tightening all around Eastern Europe. However, it can be equally reported from nearly every land in the Soviet block, that the church is growing and is more victorious than ever.

On the one hand, there are reports from Poland that the Polish police have conducted raids all across the country on believers' homes and have openly stated that their raids were due to pressure brought by the Soviet KGB. The Polish secret police have been ordered by Moscow to stop the flow of Bibles through Poland into the Soviet Union.

In Czechoslovakia, meanwhile, believers tell of increased pressure of Soviet troops throughout that country, and more restrictive measures have been implemented against the Czechoslovakian churches in recent weeks.

Hungarian believers have told contacts that there is an uneasy atmosphere prevailing, much like that after the Soviet occupation of Hungary in 1956. But that is only one side of the picture; while these most difficult situations severely test the faith of the believers, that faith is being rewarded greatly by increased conversions to Christ throughout the communist block.

Accurate statistics in Romania indicate that more than seventy percent of the congregations in Pentecostal and Baptist churches are made up of young people below the age of 25. (CN; CC)

VATICAN CITY (RNS)

In a letter highly critical of liberal theologian Hans Kung, Pope John Paul II strongly reaffirmed the Catholic dogma of papal infallibility.

Describing infallibility as "a gift from Christ" to his church, the pope said the gift must be cherished.

"Precisely because man is fallible, Christ, wanting to preserve the church in truth, could not leave his pastors-bishops and, most of all, Peter and his successors, without that particular gift — the assurance of infallibility in the teaching of the truth of the faith and

the principles of morality," the Pope said.

The papal reaffirmation of the teachings of Vatican I and II on the infallibility of the church and of the Roman pontiff came in a letter to the German Episcopal Conference, dated May 15 but released by the Vatican May 22. (CN)

NEW YORK (RNS)

Inflation pushed the level of giving to religious organizations in 1979 to \$20.14 billion, slightly more than a nine percent gain over the \$18.45 billion contributed the previous year, reports the American Association of Fund-Raising Counsel.

But the increase lagged behind the rate of inflation itself which clipped along at about 13 percent in 1979. (CN)

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA (RES NE)

For the third straight year the annual synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, a small American denomination, will be asked to decide on a resolution that attempts to make biblical inerrancy the Church's official position on Scripture. The resolution, originating with the Mississippi Valley Presbytery, calls upon the denomination to declare that the words "infallible" and "perfect," as used in the standards of the Church relative to Scripture, mean that "the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God and therefore are inerrant, verbally inspired, and totally trustworthy, including areas of science and history."

GRAND RAPIDS (RES NE)

Speaking in Zutphen (The Netherlands) at a conference of members of the Netherlands Reformed Churches (formerly "Liberated, Unaffiliated"), Professor J.P. Versteeg of the Christian Reformed Seminary in Apeldoorn declared that the two denominations need each other. Describing the character of each of these churches, he followed what was recently said by a Netherlands Reformed minister, the Rev. H. Amelink: The Christian Reformed Churches have a greater awareness of sin; they also are more adept at preserving internal ecclesiastical unity. In contrast, the Netherlands' Reformed Churches give more attention to the certainty of the covenant and the promise, and thus for what it means to be a church; they also better understand what is central and are less agitated about peripheral matters, such as different Bible versions and Psalters. The Netherlands Reformed Churches have a membership of about 30,000; the Christian Reformed Churches, 70,000.

Professor Versteeg warned against making too much of one's own distinctiveness and against attempts to force these peculiarities on others. The differences we have should be used to help each other, he said. Another speaker, the Rev. J.D. Houtman, who chaired the meeting, hoped that the contacts would not remain limited to such incidental meetings. "The outcome should be more than an engagement that lasts 12½ years."

vO

II Timothy 3:14-17

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from Whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

press review

MOVIES AND MATURITY IV

We continue with our comments on the *Derived Guidelines* for the reviewing of movies shown in the theatres, as they appeared in *The Banner* of April 18, 1980. In Guideline No. 3 we read (I repeat them here):

Reviewers must draw upon their critically sharpened faculties to increase the Christian's appreciation of the film arts, thus extending Christ's dominion over this aspect of modern culture.

Guideline No. 4 says:

Reviews should comport with the basic principles enunciated above, and should enable the Christian viewer better to discriminate between films compatible with Christianity and those not so compatible, to judge between integrity or its lack, and to perceive good workmanship as distinguished from the shoddy and cheap.

Guideline No. 5 reads:

The goal which reviews should seek to attain is not to insulate the Christian community from worldly culture but to develop the capacity to deal with it maturely and creatively.

Ad 3) Only if a Christian lives by the Bible, and thus prays what the Apostle Paul told the congregation in Philippi that he prayed for, will he have sharpened critical faculties to increase his Christian "NO" to worldly defilement, and then he cannot at all appreciate those means of the devil which break down the holiness of the Bride of CHRIST. He shuns that. Paul writes: "And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more with knowledge and all discernment so that you may approve what is excellent, and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ" (Philippians 1:9, 10). Is it not remarkable, this prayer of Paul: Your love may increase in being able to discern in a fine and precise way what now exactly the will of God is? Exposing ourselves to sin in entertainment and getting used to it, instead of hating and fleeing from it — does that not already defile us? Where is then the wisdom of the covenant prayer: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one"?

And in the second place, it says that through the critically sharpened faculties of the Christian's appreciation

of the world with all its sin and ungodliness in the movies, whether cultural or not-so-cultural, Christ's dominion over this aspect of modern anti-Christian culture may be extended. When a person thinks about this statement in which the antithesis is piously talked away, he realizes that this is not simply utter nonsense, but blasphemy. Here God's holy Name, the holy Name of Christ, is connected with what is the opposite of God and His Christ, with what is so very much unholy — and that by Christians. This is using Christ's name in vain. For we must not forget that this statement about Christ's dominion is made in connection with the reviewing of movies shown in theaters. The reviews disclose what kind of movies are shown there. It is a poor church that is guided to unholy places, where Satan rules. Do we still believe, with fear and trembling, that we are prone to hate God and our neighbour, and that we are, by nature, still inclined to all evil?

Ad 4) Here we read the guideline about discriminating between films compatible with Christianity and those not so compatible, and so on. An unbeliever can also subjectively be integer and honest. That does not make his doing, his view, good and right. That does not make him serve the Christ. And the workmanship of such a man can be of a high calibre technically, but is that the norm? Read again what Schilder wrote about the elder over against those cultural gadabouts. Do we still know what sin is? And are we still aware that our God is terribly displeased with all sin? with all that goes against his commandments?

It is very significant — and it is a sign — that there is no mention of compatibility with the Word, the holy will, the commandments of God, written in His inerrant Word, but compatibility with Christianity, whatever vague thing that might be. What Christianity thinks and says, that is not the norm. Christianity has been wrong many a time. Only what God says in the Bible is the norm. That is Reformed. Speaking about Christianity can be cultural, but it is a bad sign.

Ad 5) The goal is: not to insulate the Christian community from worldly culture, but to develop the capacity to deal with it maturely and creatively. That sounds nice. I can also appreciate literature like that of Shakespeare, when I read it. And I can appreciate a piece of good music. But must I not hate all sin, like our God hates it? Do such culturally-minded Synods, Boards of Publications, Periodicals Committees, and the people that go to movie theaters, still know the wisdom of the Scriptures, that is, of the Holy Spirit: "The wise fears and turns away from evil, but the fool lets himself go and is careless," Proverbs 14:16; and: "Hate even the garment spotted by the flesh," Jude 23? Jude warns against false teachers who want to connect a sinful, liberal life with being Christians, who defile the flesh and reject authority. And is it not especially these sins, the defilement of the flesh and the rejection of authority, which are played so much in movies? In James 1:23 we read that pure and undefiled religion is "to keep oneself unstained from the world." And in 4:4 James writes: "Unfaithful creatures! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." Here the old antithesis from Genesis is truly maintained. But what do the guidelines say? "The goal which reviews should seek to attain is: *not to insulate* the Christian community from worldly culture but to develop the capacity to deal with it maturely and creatively."

The goal is: "not to insulate the Christian community from worldly culture." But what about the fact that the Church, when true, always strongly opposed this form of truly *worldly* culture? What about the multitude of examples which illustrate that whenever a church opened its doors for this worldly entertainment, it went astray more and more and threw away its holiness more and more? What about the fact that those examples show that such a compromise between church and world led many of its members away from Christ's sanctifying work through His Holy Spirit?

For we see it before our eyes: this adoption of all kinds of worldly forms of entertainment by Christians is a capitulation of the church for the world. Church people want the amusement of the world. And the power of godliness is disappearing. Satan draws Chris-

tians, denominations, slowly away from Christ. It is frightening.

Why do I write so extensively about these things? It is out of concern for our Christian Reformed neighbour, and also for our own Churches. With respect to all kinds of worldly things that others do and have and that we like to do and to have also among us, too, I so often hear that question: "What is wrong with it?" "What is wrong with dancing? What is wrong with going to a good movie? Of course, we start with dancing only with our own wife or girlfriend. Of course, we start with going only to a "good" movie! What is wrong with it? Almost everybody does it anyway. And we want to do it, too. For it is, or seems to be, enjoyable. And, of course, we start with doing these things in a decent 'Christian' way."

What do we think? Satan is not stupid. He leads people in the wrong direction one small step at a time, not by big leaps. One small step at the time. And when people are used to that one step — the next step is not so big any longer. And there we go. And we are cunning enough to defend those small steps with pious words and with our "Christian" and "Reformed" reasonings ("common grace" and "Christ's dominion over all of life"). What is wrong with it? And we say: Nothing, as long as we are mature.

But where is that holy prayer: Our Father, holy Father in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done? That question, "What is wrong with this or that?" is egotistical. We ask that question because we want this or that for ourselves. But our life should be directed to God and His service in holiness through the Holy Spirit. We should constantly ask: "Father in heaven, how can I with my whole life, with my thoughts and with my words and with my actions, honour and glorify Thee and live so that also my neighbour sees the redeeming work of Christ in me, redeeming me from all that is sinful and selfish and connected with evil? Father, how can I serve Thy Kingdom and its coming? How can I work with Christ for the gathering, the defense, and the protection and preservation of His Church by Thy Word in holiness? Father, how can I do Thy holy will?" Is going to the worldly movie theater really doing God's holy will? And does it preserve and promote the holiness of the Church? It does not!

An important guideline here is what the apostle Paul writes in Romans

14 and 15 and in I Corinthians 10. There he writes about the strong and the weak; the strong say that they can eat meat that comes from the temples of the idols. And Paul agrees. But the weak still see that meat so strongly connected with the idols that they say: a Christian cannot eat meat. And Paul says: if my eating of that kind of meat would cause my brother to fall into sin, I would not eat meat at all. Now we must be aware of it that, when Paul in this connection says, "Everything is lawful, allowable," he means with "everything" those things that in themselves are good and not bad at all, but of which some say that they are not good. Paul cannot and does not mean with "everything" also sinful things. In that same chapter, I Corinthians 10, he has first strongly forbidden the Christians to sit at table to eat meat in a temple of an idol, because that would mean having fellowship with the idols, that is, with the evil spirits. So the question should be: What builds the congregation of the Lord in its holiness? I should not seek myself. I should seek the church of the Lord.

Now I am fully aware of the fact that this is just the point in the editorial in *The Banner*. Reviewing movies is thought to be for the benefit of the people in the church. But it can be clear from the above that we strongly disagree here. With Jongeling in 1958, I, too, see nice, pious words here. But it is a capitulation. I shall say it even more strongly. I see this reviewing of movies and its defense as *false prophecy*.

In the Old Testament we read about false prophets. They said they spoke in the name of the LORD, but in reality they simply spoke what the king or the people liked to hear. They talked right what the people or the king did wrong. They did not speak the will of the LORD. Now people want to go to the movies. Well, the prophets know ways to make it right to do so. They only warn and guide here and there a little yet, for people must do the evil thing in a mature way. Because, for taking a part of the world's amusement and entertainment for yourself, you must be mature, of course. It is not all without danger. Once again: I call this false prophecy; it breaks down the congregation of Christ as a holy congregation for the LORD. And I hope and pray that the eyes of our neighbours may be opened again and that they may return from a wrong direction with repentance and so be converted to the old Reformed ways; I also pray that our

own eyes may remain open. But I sometimes fear.

In that chapter about movies and the theater Jongeling writes a last part under the heading "Christian Fasting." From it I quote: "As members of the covenant who have been separated from all other peoples and foreign religions, and who are involved in an awesome spiritual struggle, which becomes more difficult every day, we must learn again to hate also the garment which is stained by the flesh. The seducing power of an apostate culture has become so strong that every cautious treaty, every policy of compromising, constitutes a deadly danger."²⁴

And thus those possessing true Christian maturity see those dangers and turn away from evil, even from the garment stained by the flesh. And therefore, those possessing true Christian maturity maintains their "NO" against the worldly film and theater that shows it. For it is sin and iniquity. Mr. DeKoster writes: "The world of 1980 is not the world of 1928! And the world of 1928 will never come back again! If we do not recognize that in *The Banner*, only we — not the world — will be hurt." Here is, in my opinion, the defeat. People now go to the movies. And it cannot be reversed. But should *The Banner* not give a clear, prophetic direction in this deteriorating situation? In 1928 a clear "no" was maintained. And in 1980 the movies are much more wicked and lawless. It is true, people can change. And so can their attitude. And Christians can and do follow a path of apostacy. But the norm, God's Word, God's commandments, does not change.

Is reviewing movies also one of the consequences of the close relationship maintained with the synodical, once-Reformed churches? Bad company still breaks down good morals. I write this also with respect to ourselves. There is a discussion going on about the communion of saints and the church. Doctrine and life are a unity. Let us be on the alert that the false prophecy which we find with the neighbour does not take hold also among us. We are also prone to hate God and the neighbour; we are by nature also inclined to all evil. And also among us there is a liberal trend. Who likes to stand apart and be an odd-ball?

Let me conclude with what the apostle Paul writes in II Corinthians 6:14-7:1, which is also applicable in this matter of movies:

Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For

what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said: "I will live in them and move among them. And I will be their God and they shall be My people.

Therefore, come *out* from them, and be *separate* from them, says the LORD; and *touch nothing unclean*. Then I will welcome you. And I will be a Father to you; and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty."

Since we have these promises, beloved, let us *cleanse ourselves from every defile-*

ment of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

If we want to mean something for our Christian Reformed neighbour, as well as for others, we had better keep ourselves undefiled from the world as God's temple, and also from those who compromise, in order not to compromise ourselves. Compromising is losing the taste of salt. And if salt loses its saltiness it will be thrown away by the Lord. Therefore, let's hold onto God's Word in holiness for Him, for the sake of the neighbour, and for our own sake.

J. GEERTSEMA

²⁴ P. Jongeling, *Ibid.*, page 149.

Church at Burlington-East should be granted that the decision of Classis "has no binding character."

7. *Incoming Mail* (continued). Regional Synod decides to deal with the appeals sub b) and c) and f) - s) at a later date to be set by Regional Synod. Grounds: the number of the appeals is many and time to study them should be given to members of Synod. Steps are taken to have the various appeals multiplied and made available to the delegates.

8. *Incoming Mail* (continued). A letter from the Church at Hamilton, May 30, 1980, re nominations for the election of delegates to General Synod 1980 will be dealt with under that point of the agenda.

9. *Incoming Mail* (continued). A letter from the Church at Chatham appealing a decision of Classis Ontario-South of May 28, 1980 sub Article 5, *Acts* re the interpretation of Article 19, Church Order (to include or exclude the families of needy students) is read.

The Consistory requests the Regional Synod to declare that the decision of Classis Ontario-South to grant full support including aid for the family of a needy student "was not correct and that Classis should have maintained the interpretation and application of Article 19, Church Order as found in the decision of General Synod Orangeville 1968 (*Acts* Article 172, Church Order) and in the decision of the Classis Ontario-South of December 2, 1970, *Acts*, Article 6." The discussion of this appeal leads to supper time.

10. The meeting is reopened by the chairman, who requests to sing Hymn 19:1, 5, and 6. The roll-call shows that all delegates are present. The discussion continues on the request of the Church at Chatham mentioned under 9.

The Regional Synod decides not to grant this request of the Church at Chatham.

11. *Reports*. The following reports are dealt with: a) report from the treasurer, br. P.L. Schuller. Regional Synod decides that the amount of \$2.50 per communicant member shall from now on be an annual amount in preparation for General Synod; b) report from the Church at Lincoln re the auditing of the books of the treasurer. Everything is found to be in good order; c) report of the Church at Brampton re the checking of the archives of Regional Synod. Although some relating documents are missing, the archives are generally in

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PRESS RELEASE

of the Regional Synod Ontario, held at Burlington (East), June 11, 1980.

1. On behalf of the convening Church, Rev. M. van Beveren requests the delegates to sing from Psalm 1:1, 4. He reads Psalm 97 and leads in prayer. The delegates are welcomed.

2. *Examination of the credentials*. The credentials are found to be in good order. All *primi* delegates are present, except for br. W. van Grootheest who is alternate for br. J.J. Knegt. Br. Knegt is absent due to illness.

3. *Election of Officers*. The following brethren are elected to serve Synod: Chairman: Rev. J. Mulder; Clerk: Rev. W.W.J. VanOene; Assessor: Rev. Cl. Stam

Synod is constituted. The chairman speaks a few words, especially to the convening Church for the welcome given and the preparations made.

4. *Adoption of the Agenda*. The following items are added to the agenda under *Incoming Mail*: b) and c) letter of br. L.v.Z. of Burlington-West with enclosure, dated May 10 and May 27, 1980, containing an appeal regarding a decision of the Classis Ontario North. d) letter from the Church at Hamilton regarding nominations for delegates to General Synod 1980. e) an appeal from the Church at Chatham, dated June 10, 1980, regarding a decision of Classis Ontario South. f) an appeal from Rev. C. Olij protesting the approval of his release according to Article 11, Church Order by the Classis Ontario North. g)-s) 13 appeals from brothers and sisters from the Church at Orangeville regarding the release of

Rev. C. Olij. The agenda is then established and adopted.

5. *Incoming Mail*. a) A letter from the Church at Burlington-East appealing a decision of Classis Ontario North of March 8, 1979 "to request the Church at Burlington-East to see what can be done and to do what is considered feasible to give guidance to brothers and sisters who spend a shorter or longer period of the year in Florida." The Consistory requests Regional Synod to declare "that on the grounds of Article 30, Church Order, Classis Ontario North of March 8, 1979, having dealt with the request of the Church at Brampton (first part of Article 6 of the *Acts* of Classis) should not have placed the matter of worship services on its agenda again, and that the decision re the Church at Burlington-East in this matter (second part of *Acts* Classis, Article 6) has no binding character." The discussion of this appeal continues until lunch-hour.

6. The chairman, Rev. J. Mulder, re-opens the meeting by requesting the delegates to sing from Psalm 146:1 and 3. The discussion of the appeal (sub 5a) is continued. A proposal is adopted reading, "Regional Synod decides: 1) that Classis Ontario North did have no grounds for their decision in the matter dealt with. 2) that Classis acted against Article 30, Church Order, because the matter had been dealt with; 3) that Classis did not have the right to ask a Church to give guidance to brothers and sisters of other congregations because this is the task of local consistories. Therefore the request of the

news medley

This will be one of the shortest medleys we have had since the day when we started this venture. The reason is not that I don't have much time for it. That, too, is true, but I would have tried to "make time" as I was told at home, in order to meet our readers anyway. However, on this beautiful summer evening (even though officially it is still spring) we'll endeavour to write a few sensible sentences to satisfy those readers who are always looking forward to the moment when they can take the new issue of *Clarion* to see what's new and what's wrong. At the same time we can inform readers who think somewhat differently about certain things that for some issues I shall not bother them, since this is the time of the year when the one half of the population provides shelter for the other half that has left home and hearth to wander sometimes aimlessly across the wide prairies or amidst the majestic grandeur of the Rockies. We expect to do both, although not aimlessly; but by the time you read these words the fun is almost half over. We are living fast and the shadows lengthen soon enough.

However, back to business!

I do not recall having offered our congratulations to brother and sister Vogelzang of Barrhead, who, on June 7th, celebrated their forty-fifth wedding anniversary. They have been living in Barrhead for many years and may be counted among the pioneers there in that region and congregation. Especially the fact that the Church at Barrhead is growing will be a reason for joy for them and will have heightened the joy at their celebration. We congratulate them from the heart and wish them more years together as husband and wife, as parents and children, as grandparents and grandchildren.

And now then the news from the Churches.

The news comes this time from Ontario alone. I could tell something about the development in the matter of institution and/or splitting in Edmonton, but what I know right now is not gathered from the *City Guide* and I had better wait for that source of information.

Thus we go to Ottawa. The Ottawa Church has been vacant for many years, perhaps the longest of all Churches that did have a minister. That brings specific difficulties, as we all can understand. The Consistory has been pondering the question what can be done for the benefit of the congregation, and the "Consistory decides to approach Classis for assistance with the pastoral care of the Congregation. Classis will be asked to direct the preaching engagements to spend more time in Ottawa with the Congregation." It is the Consistory's intention apparently to have the ministers who come to Ottawa for classical appointments, stay for one or two days so that they can help the Consistory with the work of taking care of the flock. Classis will have to decide whether such is feasible. It is too bad that life is so busy and that also ministers who go to Ottawa to fulfill classical appointments need their time and oftentimes have to be back at home by a certain time because of Catechism classes or meetings or other matters.

We hope to keep you posted.

We are not through with Ottawa as yet.

You will recall that the Ottawa brotherhood has been looking for property to purchase or for an existing building which could be remodelled and made suitable for worship services, while, at the same time it could serve as a center for Congregational activities during the week. Thus far their efforts have not been crowned with the desired result. They keep looking, however, as may be evident from the following, "Brother T. reports on a one-room school building which is for sale For a variety of reasons this building is found to be unsatisfactory for our purpose as a church building." Well, keep looking!

And then a last item from Ottawa. A letter was received from the families that have emigrated from The Netherlands to the neighbourhood of Grand Falls, N.B. They asked for some information, the bulletin tells us. When you read that, you start wondering what the brotherhood in The Netherlands knows about the situation here and why people who decide to emigrate to Canada do not contact a Church before they make the decision and anyway before they learn where they can go. For many years there has been an organization in The Netherlands to assist would-be emigrants, to provide them with all sorts of information, and to guide them with the purpose of preventing that they "get lost" when they go to a place from where they can not be an active and living Church member. That Association or Foundation has been in existence for more than thirty years; but in 1980 it can happen that a few families emigrate to a region which is too far away from one of the Churches to belong to it. Strange.

The Ottawa Consistory, however, decided to write and one of the brethren would try to visit them. How good it would be if they should come to Ottawa, there to strengthen the brotherhood and to work together towards the goal of having their own minister of the Gospel and their own Church building.

Going more to the south, we learn from the Toronto bulletin that "In view of the extremely small number of members who attend the Dutch Worship Services because they have a poor understanding of English (there are those who attend as a matter of convenience or because they drive elderly relations), it is decided not to have the Dutch services this summer."

The last piece that I wish to quote is from a school bulletin. It is the bulletin of the Watford School Society. In Watford the people will go ahead with the establishment of their own school which is scheduled to open in September of this year. The building which they intend to erect will be similar to the one in London. There will be a slight difference, I think in the financial aspect: Contact was taken up with Mr.S.B. "regarding land on his property suitable for a school. This was agreed upon and a two-acre parcel was bought for \$3,000.00, subject to a severance affirmation. This is a substantial saving when compared to the land beside the church which would have cost \$10,000.00."

Thus far our actual medley.

It is quite a while ago that we mentioned something about the Australian Churches.

Let me, therefore, insert a piece from *Una Sancta*. It is a piece about mission work. The Australian Churches may be few in number, they do endeavour to spread the Gospel, especially to the native population of their country, the aborigines. For a considerable number of years they worked among those people, especially the Armadale Church. Now, sadly enough, it had to be decided to

discontinue that work. That's what we are told in the piece which follows.

NEWS DIRECT FROM THE MISSION FIELD

The Mission has withdrawn from Coolbellup.

This sad decision had to be taken and put into effect as from May 1980. The Church Council received two reports, one on the Sunday and the other on the Tuesday meetings in Coolbellup, accompanied by a letter from the Mission Committee proposing that the meetings there should be stopped.

This was no easy decision for both Committee and Church Council. We have been working in Coolbellup since 1969, some ten and a half years. Yet it was the only correct decision and we should not have any regrets for having made it.

In 1969 we started in Coolbellup at the direct request of some people who had shifted to that place from Pinjarra. For about six months we enjoyed the presence at the meetings of approximately ten to twelve adults. However, also due to the large number of very often noisy children, one by one the adults stopped away and by the time one year had passed we were left with only children. At different times we did conduct a Bible study class with several families, but they, too, lapsed after a while.

In 1975, the Sunday meetings were started with the intention to draw the adults, the parents of the children who attended the meetings on Tuesday evening. Despite a lot of effort, however, the parents did not come. At different times we renewed our determination for more home visits, but they did not bring the desired result either. Short of actually saying so, the people clearly did not want to come to listen to God's Word. The home visits were very difficult and the good discussions few and far between.

In the meantime the children kept up a good attendance to the meetings, both on Sundays and on Tuesdays. However, at the age of fourteen to fifteen they all disappeared from the scene. We set up a class for the older children, but that, too, did not stop the exodus. Over all this time we have had no further contact with these youngsters, once they left.

During the past year, the attendance on Sundays declined. In the end we had only three or four Aboriginal and some five white children attending. The Tuesday attendance went down, too, but still maintained a turn-up of about fourteen Aboriginal children.

When the Sunday meetings were started, it was argued that to work only among the children is not correct. It is the parents' responsibility to bring up their children in the fear of the Lord. If they neglect this duty through their own unwillingness to love and serve God, they do great harm, not only to themselves but also to their children. We have no calling to separate the children from the parents, a Bible study group for children can, or should only exist as part of the whole of the work.

So now a decision had to be made, and was made. The result is that we no longer go to Coolbellup. The parents have been told of this decision and its reasons and their response to it was a miserable apathy.

For the work group the implementation of the decision was a difficult task. Over the years you do get attached, not only to the work, but also to the children individually. Naturally, some children felt hurt and could not

understand it. We feel the importance of the decision for them and it does not leave us cold. But we had no choice. The Lord sends His messengers, but He also withdraws them when the Gospel is not received in faith.

We continue in Armadale, Pinjatta, and Wandering.

We have to keep our eyes open here, too, but until now the contact with the parents is much better than in Coolbellup, some of them do come to Pinjarra and the Catechism class is progressing satisfactorily with some teenage girls who also attend in Pinjarra and the Church services in Armadale.

The meetings in Pinjarra are still attended fairly regularly by some ten to twelve adults and in Wandering by about twelve to fifteen adults. It can be questioned as to how long we should keep on preaching to people who do not clearly show their acceptance of the Saviour, our own approach can also be taken into consideration, but we also know that as long as there are people willing to listen and who do not close the door on personal discussions, our task remains — and for that we are thankful.

Our work in Coolbellup is done. If we were to dwell on our own weaknesses and failings, we could go on endlessly. The Word has been brought, that is what counts. We deeply regret that we did not see the desired fruits of our labours and lay our sadness before the face of the Lord. We realize how much dependent we are on Him. We thank Him above all that He gave us the opportunity and the strength to spread His Gospel, also in Coolbellup. The time, the money and the efforts were not wasted, but spent in the service of the coming Lord Jesus Christ. In the assurance that we have been allowed, in this part of our work, to labour as co-workers of Christ for the coming of His great Kingdom — we rest.

Have good holidays. That is the wish of:

vO

Pharaohs — old and new.

*When — long ago —
king Pharaoh
told midwives babes to kill,
they, though in awe
of royal Law,
did not obey his will.*

*Then soldiers came;
without a shame
babes in the Nile were cast.
When children died
their parents cried,
and called on God at last.*

*The midwives' aid
was well repaid:
God blessed them day by day.
What happened then
to king and men?
The sea washed them away.*

*The modern nurse
invites God's curse
when she lends aid and skill
to Pharaohs
who now propose
the unborn child to kill.*

JOHANNES DEVIET

Our Reformed Response to the Secular Labour Unions ²

CHRISTIAN REFORMED DECISIONS ON UNIONISM

The above Confederation is well-known to us, since it shares our Confessions, form of church government, and much of our past history. It also seems to have been the only Reformed Confederation of Churches which has endeavoured to address itself via its Synods to the questions regarding secular unionism. From these decisions we can learn much, both positive and negative. The following was borrowed from the *Church Order Commentary* of Van Dellen-Monsma, pp. 370-3:

As to Labour Unions the Synod of 1943 reasserted the positions taken in 1916 and 1928, and the conclusions of the report "Christian Social and Industrial Organizations" as adopted by the Synod of 1930.

The Synod of 1943 really adopted a complete revision of all previous decisions, and summarized these decisions in a number of concise principles. We quote these principles:

1. Church membership and membership in a so-called neutral labor union are compatible as long as such union gives no constitutional warrant to sins, nor shows in its regular activities that it champions sin.
2. The Biblical doctrine of corporate responsibility and the Biblical teaching of the Christian's separation from the world make it imperative for members of neutral labor organizations to discontinue membership in any such unions whose common practices are clearly in conflict with the principles of the Word of God.
3. Christian conscience cannot condone membership in a neutral organization if it continues and approves its sinful practices in spite of protests against them.
4. The doctrine of corporate responsibility does not imply that membership in unions which have engaged in sinful practices of itself makes one liable to ecclesiastical censure; however, when members of the

Church render themselves guilty of acts which are contrary to the Word of God there shall be the usual application of the rules for discipline. Corporate responsibility may render one worthy of ecclesiastical discipline, but the degree of guilt must be determined by the local consistories.

5. Consistories and Classes should take careful note of the practices of all labor organizations existent in their respective communities to determine whether membership in our Church and membership in such organizations are compatible.

Besides these principles this Synod also adopted the following resolution:

Synod exhort the ministers of the Church to emphasize the Scriptural principles of the Christian's separation from the world, and the sinful consequences of putting on an unequal yoke with unbelievers to obtain right and justice through means condemned by the Word of God. Further, Synod admonish the membership of the Church to break with all organizations which by common practice reveal an anti-Christian spirit. In short, Synod urge upon ministers and elders by vigorous use of the keys intrusted to them to declare the principles of the Word of God which must guide the members of the Church in their relation to the world and the organizations of the world. (See *Acts*, 1943, pp. 102-103, and *Agenda I*, pp. 1-25, 1943.)

You will have noticed that, in spite of the beautiful words and statements in the above decisions, in these "revision" decisions of 1943 there was a "fly in the ointment" with the introduction or maintenance of the word "neutral." We will come back to this later.

In the Synod decision of 1945 a much-needed and welcome addition was made to the previous decisions on the issue of secular unionism:

It will be noted that the principles of 1943 mention the matter of corporate responsibility. There was a specific

request at the Synod of 1943 for greater clarification regarding the expression and principle of corporate responsibility. Classis California requested a study and clarification of this principle. Synod appointed the following committee regarding this matter: Prof. L. Berkhof, Prof. Dr. C. Bouma, Dr. R. Danhof, Prof. Dr. Wm. Hendriksen, and the Rev. C. Huissen.

This committee presented its study and advice to the Synod of 1945. Synod in turn adopted the following five points on corporate responsibility:

1. Active participation in the sinful practices of an organization to which one belongs not only renders one guilty before God but may even make one an object of ecclesiastical discipline.
2. In order to be responsible for the sinful deeds of the organization or the group with which one is associated it is not necessary to be an active participant, in the usual sense of that term. By requesting, promoting, encouraging, or in any manner abetting the wrongdoing, one is rendered responsible, even if the support which one gives amounts to no more than consent or approval. In connection with all this the discipline of the Word should be vigilantly exercised.
3. In order to be responsible for the sins of the group one need not even be an abetter; mere passivity or silence also renders one guilty; failure to reprove makes one accountable before God.
4. It is possible, moreover, that one neither engages actively in the sinful acts of his associates (1), nor promotes them or consents to them in any manner (2), nor even fails to reprove them (3), and yet involves himself in co-responsibility for these evil practices; namely, if one remains a member of such organizations which refuse to mend their evil ways when the latter have been exposed and reprovved.

5. Finally, it is even possible that although a person does not become guilty of any of the sins described in the preceding four points, he, nevertheless, becomes responsible, in a measure, for the evil decisions and practices of the group; namely, by becoming a member of the organization whose aims or practices are known to be evil. In connection with these principles the Synod of 1945 also adopted the following significant recommendations:

Your committee further recommends that Synod call the attention of our people to the fact that these principles are intended to be applied not only to labor unions, but also to all industrial, business, and professional organizations, as well as to any other types of group activity.

Your committee suggests further that the following recommendation of the committee on Corporate Responsibility be adopted by Synod, "They (that is, these principles) should be faithfully expounded from the pulpit, in personal visits, and family-visits, and in the religious press. The question of their application to concretely existing local, state, or national conditions is a matter for the individual Consistory and Classis, and especially for the conscience of each person who becomes involved in it (*Agenda*, p. 37).

Your committee also recommends that, in view of the moral and spiritual dangers of membership in non-Christian organizations, Synod urge all our people, wherever possible, to establish and promote definitely Christian organizations in the social sphere.

You will notice that the above Five Points on Corporate Responsibility are excellent, especially since the recommendation was added that all other social groups or organizations besides the organized labour be included. (We will come back to this later). However, the matter was not settled yet.

Once again the matter of Labor Unions received consideration at the Synod of 1946. The previous Synod had decided, upon a specific overture and request, to "appoint a committee to formulate the grounds for the position taken by the Synod of 1943 regarding the compatibility of church membership and membership in the so-called neutral labor union." The following brethren served on this committee: Prof. Dr. C. Bouma, Prof. Dr. Wm. Hendriksen, Prof. L. Berk-

hof, Dr. R.J. Danhof, Mr. Joseph Gritter, Rev. C. Huissen, Prof. Dr. H.J. Ryskamp, Prof. Dr. S. Volbeda.

In harmony with the advice of this committee the Synod of 1946 declared that the position adopted by the Synod of 1943 and by previous Synods; namely, that "church membership and membership in so-called neutral labor unions are compatible," is based upon the following grounds:

1. Becoming a member of such a so-called neutral labor union does not as such constitute a sinful act, inasmuch as according to Synod's circumspection such unions as here meant give no constitutional warrant to sin, and do not show in their regular activities that they champion sin or that they are in conflict with the universal principles of justice contained in the Word of God.

2. It follows that becoming a member of a so-called neutral labor union, as thus described, does not constitute a censurable act.

3. To adopt the principle, making it applicable to every case, that church membership is incompatible with membership in labor unions which give no constitutional warrant to sin and which do not show in their regular activities that they champion sin or that they are in conflict with the universal principles of justice contained in the Word of God would amount to dangerous separatism, which is condemned by Scripture, John 17:15, I Cor. 5:9-11. See explanation of these passages in the *Agenda* of 1926, pp. 116-117.

The Synod of 1946, furthermore, adopted the following declarations: With respect to membership in organizations (in any sphere, including labor) which do give constitutional warrant to sin and/or show in their regular activities that they do champion sin, Synod call the attention of the church to the Report on Corporate Responsibility, whose conclusions were adopted by the Synod of 1945, and which gives adequate advice to consistories and classes with respect to the matter. See *Acts* of the Synod of 1945, Article 100. Note also the detailed exegesis of the Scripture-passages upon which these conclusions are based, *Agenda*, 1945, pp. 28-37.

Whereas it is undeniable that many organizations in whatever sphere (whether labor, business, or professional) have assumed or tend to as-

sume a character which excludes them from the class of so-called neutral unions, as circumscribed by the Synod of 1943, and places them in a class of organizations against which the Synod of 1945 has issued a warning, and whereas membership in such worldly unions or organizations entails moral and spiritual danger, Synod repeat the exhortation given in the Conclusion of the Report on Corporate Responsibility and adopted by the Synod of 1945, namely, that "wherever feasible our people "establish and promote definitely Christian organizations in the social sphere."

From the above decisions you will notice that the fly introduced in 1943 had now been encouraged to grow significantly. To what extent this Synod must have understood the concept "neutral" was made clear by a following Synod:

And finally the Synod of 1947 was requested to rule "that membership in the A.F. of L. or the C.I.O. shall be incompatible with membership in the Consistories of the Christian Reformed Church."

In answer to this overture Synod decided "not to accede to this request." Synod based this decision on the following two grounds:

1. Synod has laid down principles for Consistories and Classes to deal adequately with matters of this nature, in the decisions on corporate responsibility adopted in 1945. Cf. especially points 3, 4, and 5 as adopted in 1945 (*Acts*, p. 103).

2. The rule that they (the petitioners) request, would be in violation of the synodical decision, that membership in a neutral organization is not per se actionable.

This last decision placed the AFL-CIO into a huge no-man's-land of neutrality. You might even say that a new area of life was staked off between the thesis and antithesis, between light and darkness, between true and false, or between being for Christ or against Him. (More on this concept later.)

Based on the above you will understand that our leaders in the early fifties were not helped all that much by these decisions made by other churches. What about the O.P.C.? To my knowledge no General Assembly has ever addressed itself specifically to these issues.

(To be continued.)

S. DE BRUIN

PRESS RELEASE — Continued.

good order; d) report of the Deputies ad Article 49, Church Order, (i) The Rev. J. Geertsema and the Rev. W. Huizinga report on visiting Classis Ontario-North of March 20, 1980 in connection with requested advice ad Article 11, Church Order; (ii) The Rev. J. Mulder and the Rev. W.W.J. Van Oene report on visiting the Classis Ontario-South to attend the peremptoir examination of br. P.K.A. de Boer.

12. Since it is apparent that matters cannot be finished at one session, Regional Synod sets ad date to continue the meeting: Thursday, June 12, 1980 at 10:00 a.m.

13. *Appointments.* Most of the standing appointments are reconfirmed. Deputies ad Article 49, Church Order are appointed as follows: for Classis Ontario-North: Primi Rev. J. Mulder and Rev. W.W.J. vanOene (Rev. van Beveren alternate); for Classis Ontario-South: Primi Rev. J. Geertsema and Rev. Cl. Stam (Rev. W. Huizinga alternate). The Church at Grand Rapids, U.S.A. is appointed as the next convening Church for Regional Synod.

14. Nominations of Governors for the Theological College. The following are nominated for governor, as primi: Rev. J. Geertsema, Rev. J. Mulder, and Rev. M. van Beveren; as alternates: Rev. Cl. Stam, Rev. P. Kingma, and Rev. W. Pouwelse (in that order).

15. Election of delegates to General Synod Smithville 1980. The following ministers are elected: primi: Rev. J. Geertsema, Rev. J. Mulder, Rev. Cl. Stam, and Rev. M. van Beveren; alternates: Rev. P. Kingma, Rev. W.W.J. vanOene, Rev. M. Werkman, and Rev. W. Pouwelse (in that order). The following elders are elected: as primi: H. Aasman (Burlington), A. Koster (Chatham), F. Wildeboer (London), and G. van Woudenberg (Smithville); as alternates: H. Kampen (Toronto), H. Buist (Burlington), P.J. Scholten (Hamilton), and J. Bartels (Smithville).

16. With a view to the late hour, the chairman suggests to adjourn the meeting until the date agreed upon. He requests to sing from Psalm 89:1 and leads in thanksgiving and prayer.

17. On Thursday, June 12, 1980, at 10:00 a.m. the chairman, Rev. J. Mulder, reopens the meeting by requesting the delegates to sing from Psalm 145:1 and 5. He reads from Lamentations 3 and leads in prayer.

The roll-call indicates that all delegates (mentioned sub 2) are again present.

18. *Incoming Mail* (continued). The appeals of br. L.v.Z. of Burlington-West (mentioned under 4 b) and c) are read. Synod deals with these appeals in executive session.

19. After lunch-hour, the meeting is reopened. The delegates sing from Hymn 2:1 and 2. A proposal is adopted not to grant the request of br. L.v.Z.

20. In executive session Synod next deals with an appeal of Rev. C. Olij of Orangeville (mentioned sub 4 f). The appeal and a supplement are read and given a preliminary discussion.

21. After supper the meeting is reopened by the chairman who requests to sing from Hymn 59:1, 2, 3. The discussion of the appeal of Rev. C. Olij is continued. Synod also reads and deals with the various other communications from Orangeville (mentioned under 4 g)-s). One of these letters is considered inadmissible. It is decided that since these communications basically deal with the same matter to formulate a reply covering all the points raised which pertain to Regional Synod. A committee is appointed to draft such a reply and the discussion is closed until a later date.

22. Censure ad Article 43, Church Order is not necessary.

23. Date of the next session of Regional Synod is set for Thursday, June 19, 1980 at 10:00 a.m. The meeting is adjourned after singing of Psalm 90:8 and closing prayer by the chairman.

24. On June 19, 1980, the meeting is reopened for the third session by the chairman, Rev. J. Mulder, who requests to sing from Psalm 72:1 and 9, reads from Psalm 72 and leads in prayer. The roll-call shows that all primi delegates (mentioned under 2) are present except for: br. H. Aasman, who is replaced by his alternate br. H.J. Kamstra, Rev. W.W.J. vanOene who is replaced by alternate br. J.D. Ganskoeele. Regional Synod proceeds to elect a new clerk and Rev. M. Werkman is chosen to serve Synod as such.

25. *Incoming Mail* (continued). The discussion of the appeals from Rev. C. Olij and members of the Church at Orangeville is continued in executive session. The committee appointed by Regional Synod (see: Article 21) reported that a draft has been completed. This draft and other proposals are handed out to the delegates. One of the appellants, Rev. C. Olij, is present

and has asked the privilege of the floor. He is given the privilege to speak after every round of discussion.

26. The report of the committee appointed by Regional Synod is read. After some discussion it is decided to deal first with the appeal of Rev. C. Olij. The discussion of this appeal continues until lunch time.

27. After lunch the meeting is reopened with the singing of Psalm 24:1, 2. Roll call shows that all members are present, except for Rev. van Beveren who arrives somewhat later. The discussion of the appeal of Rev. C. Olij is continued. Synod decides to reject the appeal of Rev. C. Olij and to give him notification of this decision.

28. The committee-report dealing with the appeals g)-s) is discussed, and after a few ammendments this report is adopted not to grant the requests of the brothers and sisters at Orangeville.

29. *Personal Question Period.* A question is asked: if a delegate chosen to General Synod leaves his area of the Regional Synod before General Synod convenes, should he ask his alternate to take his place or still go himself. Various delegates give advice, but Synod refrains from making a general rule in this matter.

30. Censure ad Article 43, Church Order is not necessary.

31. The Acts are read and adopted.

32. The Press Release is read and approved.

33. After Synod has sung from Psalm 130:3, Rev. Cl. Stam leads in prayer and the chairman closes the meeting.

For Regional Synod,
Cl. Stam, assessor e.t.

Church News



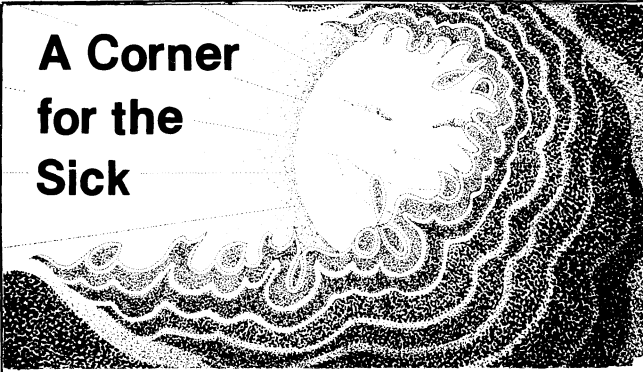
CALLED by the Church at Barrhead, Alberta and Guelph, Ontario:

CAND. R. AASMAN
of Burlington, Ontario.

OUR COVER

Kenora, Ontario. (Photo courtesy Ontario Government, Tourism Branch.)

A Corner for the Sick



Brothers and sisters, shall we not forget to send cards to our birthday "Calendar" children?

JIMMY WANDERS
Huron Regional Centre
P.O. Box 1000,
Orillia, Ontario L3V 6L2

Jim hopes to celebrate his 19th birthday, the Lord willing, on July 29th. He loves pictures and cards, and likes to show them to everyone.

* * * * *

ROSE MALDA
Oakland Centre
53 Bond Street,
Oakville, Ontario L6J 5B4

Rose will be celebrating her 23rd birthday, the Lord willing, on August 8th. Rose can express her joyfulness only by a happy smile and clapping her hands. In previous years she really appreciated all the colourful cards she received. As a baby Rose had meningitis which damaged her brain to such an extent that she cannot communicate by speech.

* * * * *

Shall we send many "rays of sunshine" for our special children, brothers and sisters?

Send your request, with some information, age, circumstances, and hobbies, to:

Mrs. J.K. Riemersma
380 St. Andrew Street E.,
Fergus, Ontario N1M 1R1

The End of the Road Is But a Bend in the Road

When we have nothing left to give
and we are sure that the "song has ended" —
When our day seems over and the shadows fall
and the darkness of night has descended,
Where can we go to find the strength
to valiantly keep on trying,
Where can we find the hand that will dry
the tears that the heart is crying —
There's but one place to go and that is to God
and, dropping all pretense and pride,
We can pour out our problems without restraint
and gain strength with Him at our side —
And together we stand at life's crossroads
and view what we think is the end,

But God has a much bigger vision
and He tells us it's ONLY A BEND —
For the road goes on and is smoother
and the "pause in the song" is a "rest,"
And the part that's unsung and unfinished
is the sweetest and richest and best —
So rest and relax and grow stronger,
LET GO and LET GOD share your load,
Your work is not finished and ended,
You've just come to "A BEND IN THE ROAD."

by Helen Steiner Rice

* * * * *

I will include a Dutch poem for our readers who are able to enjoy the Dutch language.

NAJAARSLAAN

Ik keek in de gouden heerlijkheid
Van een najaarslaan,
Het was of ik goudene deuren wijd
Zag openstaan,
Het werd mij, toen ik binnen ging,
Of ik door gouden gewelven liep:
Ik aarzelde even, ik ademde diep,
Diep van verwondering.
Ik voelde mij eerst als een kindje, dat stout
Doet wat verboden is;
Ik sprak: "Zijn voor mij die gewelven gebouwd?
Ben IK zoo rijk, dat van louter goud
De gang mijner woning is?"
Toen sprak ik: "Deze gouden grot
Is immers geen menschenpaleis."
Ik sprak: "Het is een betooverd slot,
Dat lang op sprookjeswijs
Geslapen heeft en stil gewacht,
Op één, die de poorten ontdekken zou,
De doode gewelven wekken zou
Van 't huis, dat ieder menschenhuis
Te boven gaat in pracht."
Ik sprak: "Hoe ben ik zoo rijk, zoo rijk!
Hoe ben ik zoo rijk, mijn God!
Welk' aardsche woning is gelijk
Aan dit, mijn sprookjesslot?"
Trotsch, of ik een prinsesje waar,
Ging ik door 't goud;
Aan beide zijden stonden daar,
Schragend de gangen, hoog en zwaar,
De zuilen opgebouwd.
Waar gouden de portalen zijn,
Hoe zullen daar de zalen zijn,
Ik zag aan 't einde van mijn pad
Een kleine ronde poort,
Als blauw saffier in goud gevat,
En haastig, vol verlangen trad
Ik door de gangen voort.
Ik sprak: "Als bij mijn aankomst wijd
Die poorten openstaan,
In welk een groote heerlijkheid
Zal ik dan binnengaan,
Indien van goud de gangen zijn,
Hoe groot moet mijn verlangen zijn,
De zalen in te gaan!"

our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

Hurrah! School's out!

Holidays are here!

Is your family going away on vacation?

Or are you planning to spend your holidays at home, close to the pool?

I know some Busy Beavers have a swimming hole behind their house.

Guess where you'll find them all summer long!

Even if we're not going far from home we can have a *Busy Beaver Holiday Tour Quiz*.

We'll pretend we're touring across Canada.

We'll go to all the famous sights together and also have lots of fun!

To get us to all those famous places match them up with the name of the province where we'll find them.

Let's start in British Columbia.

Lots of our Busy Beavers live there and they can join the "tour" there!

Riding Mountain Park	British Columbia
Lake Louise	Alberta
Niagara Falls	Manitoba
Cultus Lake	Ontario
Peggy's Cove	Quebec
Montreal Docks	New Brunswick
Signal Hill	Nova Scotia
Reversing Falls	Newfoundland

Have lots of fun on our "tour," Busy Beavers.

And I wish you all a SAFE and happy holiday!

* * * * *

Busy Beaver *Helena Hamoen* sent in this poem for you. Thanks for sharing, Helena.

- I love to eat bananas
They taste so rich and sweet
I love to eat bananas
Bananas can't be beat!
- Bananas in the kitchen
Bananas in the halls
Bananas in the bathroom
Hanging from the walls.
- I love to eat bananas
With waffles or with cherries
With beezlenuts or radishes
Or boola-boola berries!

* * * * *

"Happy birthday" and "Many Happy Returns" to all the Busy Beavers who celebrate their birthday this holiday month of July. We hope you'll have a great time celebrating with your family and friends! Maybe you'll have a swimming

party? We also wish you God's blessing and guidance in the year ahead.

Ian Hulzebosch	July 1	Jo-Anna Flach	July 16
Theodore Kanis	1	Sharon Leffers	16
Eric Jans	2	Anita De Vries	17
Robert Feenstra	3	Michael Wildeboer	20
Plony Hofsink	3	Alison Helder	21
Angela Linde	4	Henrietta Gansekoele	23
Ingrid Feenstra	6	Rick Leffers	23
Marion Van Grootheest	7	Eileen Salomons	24
Sharon Van Grootheest	7	Helen Vander Pol	25
Shona Meerstra	9	Judith Barendregt	26
Joanne Hamoen	10	Cynthia Eenkhoorn	26
Wilma Meerveld	11	Jason Van Vliet	26
Karen Schouten	11	Corrie De Boer	29
James Slaa	11	Darlene Lodder	29
Rosemary De Haas	12	Margaret Vanden Haak	29
Sharalee Terpsma	13	Mary Van Raalte	29
Irene De Jong	14	Esther Bouwman	30



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Henrietta Huinink*. We are happy to have you join us. It sounds to me as if you had lots of fun on your birthday, Henrietta. Thanks for the poem and the quiz — I see you're a real Busy Beaver already! Bye for now.

Thank you very much for the pretty rock, *Karen Stam*. I've put it in a safe spot and whenever I look at it, it will remind me of you! I'm glad you and your family had such a good time on Victoria Day, Karen. I did, too.

Hello, *Theodore Kanis*. It was nice to hear from you again. You mean to give the Busy Beavers a real challenge with that puzzle, don't you? Thanks for writing, Theodore.

What kind of flowers did you plant in your garden, *Geraldine Tamminga*? How are they doing? What are you planning to do during the holidays? Thanks for the poem, Geraldine. Write again soon.

Thank you for your pretty letter, *Sharalee Terpsma*. I'm glad you found the address book so useful. Bye for now. Write again soon.

QUIZ TIME

Match the Brothers

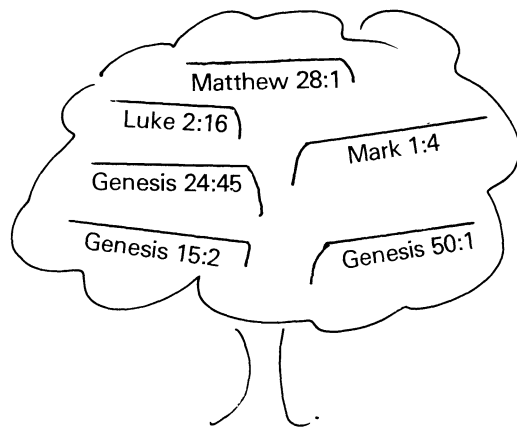
Each of the persons named in List A has a brother in List B. Can you pair them off correctly?

LIST A

Joseph
Moses
Cain
Jacob
Hophni
Peter
David
James
Mahlon
Shem
Alexander
Herod

LIST B

Aaron
Abel
Andrew
Benjamin
Chilion
Eliab
Esau
Japheth
John
Philip
Phinehas
Rufus



Busy Beaver *Michelle Van Egmond* has a special puzzle for you called:

BIBLE TREE PUZZLE

Look up the text to find the name that goes on the branch.

Answers to all the quizzes next time.

I hope you enjoyed all the quizzes!

Bye for now, Busy Beavers.

Hope to "see" you next time.

Look for news about our Big Summer Contest!

Yours
Aunt Betty

A Letter to My Father

Dear Dad,

Well I sometimes let my letter writing wait a little but right now I'm writing while this is fresh in my mind. Someone shoved one of those Reformed(?) articles under my nose. It said a woman was created to serve man and bear children. Too bad they didn't say which verse, because I could only find that Eve was created to be a help for Adam. To me that means she was created to help man serve God rather than created to serve man.

As far as having children goes, that was the curse she received for her part in the fall into sin. In addition she was cursed by having a desire for a husband. Anyway the pain of childbearing, if not womanly functions, was a curse. Incidentally, I found it remarkable that I even heard one of our Professors suggest from the pulpit that the Old Testament sin offering, required of women after giving birth, was because it was the result of the sin of an act of love by carnal knowledge. I should think that it was naturally a result of its being the curse for causing mankind to sin or because of the accompanying shedding of blood. Anyway, you taught me that sexual intercourse is not sin when it is a sacrament of love in holy wedlock, but only if it is committed in fornication or adultery.

Still, I agree we were told to "be fruitful and multiply." At the society meeting it was argued that some women really feel the need to have children and artificial insemination is therefore justified when natural means with a lawful husband fail. To me that seems to be making an idol of motherhood. Anyway it is loving the blessings of the Creator more than submitting to the Creator of life in love. It's a bit like "the end justifies the means." It would allow me to grab whatever blessings I feel I'm entitled to by whatever means I have at my disposal. In my opinion, that leads to demanding that God live up to His end of the bargain and provide the promised blessings (food, shelter, peace, justice, heaven), i.e., worship the blessings rather than the Lord and Provider. It also makes me think of Matthew 10: "He who loves . . . more than me is not worthy of me." Mind you, I decided not to argue against them, because their line of rea-

soning suits me just fine. Just think! Without getting married, (Paul, the apostle, and our own Form for the Solemnization of Marriage says that marriage is for those who can't contain themselves, and otherwise you had better not marry), without a husband, I can have children by artificial insemination. I don't commit that sin which is a natural consequence of marriage (if it is sin as the Professor said), I don't commit fornication or adultery, and I can propagate the human race as very Reformed people will tell you is my Christian duty.

I assure you it really appeals to me. Anyway, fathers are not important in rearing children. In this church I have actually heard a very Reformed woman say that it is a shame for a father to rear his children, and, if there is a possibility to get out from under it by getting a babysitter (must be female), that would be better. Just think, getting someone merely to look after their physical needs is better than having a father do both, i.e., physical and spiritual needs. Besides, that fathers are not considered suitable for supervising and caring for children in our circles is clearly demonstrated. Have you ever heard of a babysitting list where men took their share of the duties? I don't see, for instance, why the men couldn't do the afternoons. They could be exempted if they had other duties in the church, such as that of ministers, elders, deacons, organists; but that would still leave enough of them to take some of the duties.

Anyway, Dad, because I'd love to have children and I'm sure I'd make a good mother, I think that is the answer for me. No sin, just children. So, if you get a letter from me one of these days to tell you I'm pregnant, don't be too surprised. Ministers often preach about the virtue of motherhood and the sin of not having children. They usually tag on that, by the way, being single is O.K. too, but they never sound very convincing. Wouldn't you like to have more grandchildren? I'm afraid some people are manufacturing God according to what they think He should be; against the second commandment.

Love
JEAN