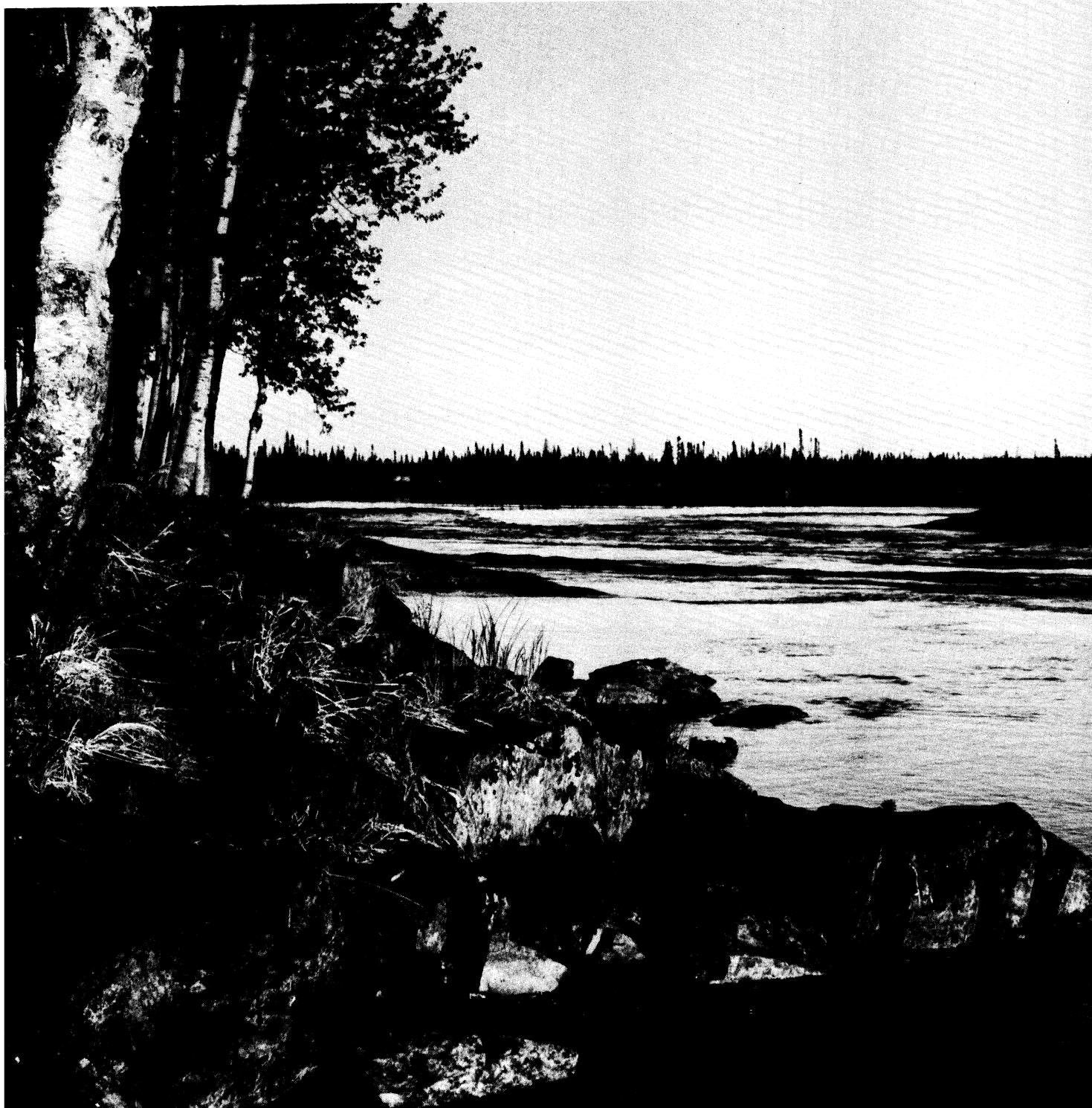


Clarion

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The Image of the Grains and the Grapes

In the issue of June 19 we discussed a new Dutch Form for Holy Supper and especially the “bread and wine illustration” of the mutual brotherly love. It is the passage:

For as out of many grains one meal is ground and one bread baked, and out of many berries, pressed together, one wine and drink flows and mixes together, so shall we all who by true faith are incorporated in Christ be all together one body, through brotherly love

The Dutch deputies proposed to Synod Arnhem to delete this grains and grapes image completely. I deemed this to be too rigid and tried to make a case of defence for this passage that has always captivated me. Does the Form really want to give an explanation of I Corinthians 10, or is this passage a free illustration? Why should we diminish an element of our catholic heritage? In this connection I expressed the wish to have more information. “The Report speaks in general terms about the early Christian and medieval church. But does the illustration not go back already to the Didache, the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, an early Christian treatise from the beginning of the second century?”

In the meantime, I found some more information. Because some of our readers probably do not mind making a spiritual journey to other places and periods in history, I use this summer edition of *Clarion* to read with you some passages that show the historic background of the “bread and wine illustration.”

Let us begin our trip in Volume 1 of the Library of Christian Classics: *Early Christian Fathers* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press). The editor, Cyril C. Richardson, describes “The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, Commonly Called the Didache” as a church manual, although this name is more appropriate for the second part of this early Christian document. The first part is a code of Christian morals, presented as a choice between the way of life and the way of death. “The second part is a manual of Church Order, which in a well-arranged manner lays down some simple, at times even naive, rules for the conduct of a rural congregation.” While at one time this tract was viewed as a very ancient product—as early as A.D. 70 or 90—it is now generally ascribed to the second century. The main outlines of its arrangements for Church life seem to reflect the end of the first century.

We now concentrate on the so-called Eucharistic prayers, the prayers of Thanksgiving in the celebration of the Supper of the Lord. Although most scholars think of Syria, especially Antioch, as the source of this early Christian Church Order, it is not impossible that the prayers surrounding the Lord’s Supper are Judean in origin. Richardson is of the opinion that these prayers are clearly modeled on the Jewish forms for grace before and after meals. But let us read a part of the instructions:

Now about the Eucharist: This is how to give thanks: First in connection with the cup:

“We thank you, our Father, for the holy vine of David, your child, which you have revealed through Jesus,

your child. To you be glory forever.”

Then in connection with the piece [broken off the loaf]: “We thank you, our Father, for the life and knowledge which you have revealed through Jesus, your child. To you be glory forever.

“As *this piece* [of bread] was scattered over the hills and then was brought together and made one, so let your Church be brought together from the ends of the earth into your Kingdom. For yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever.”

This passage strikes us because of its simplicity and directness. There is nothing here of the later deviation in the form of the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are not even mentioned. That is poor, if we think of the words of the institution spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the assurance and admonition given by the apostle Paul: “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.” But it is clear that in the early Christian Church of which the Didache gives us a picture, the Supper of the Lord was still a real supper and that there was the joyful expectation of the Messianic Banquet, the Supper of the Lamb for which we long. The main point now, however, is the image in which the catholic Church is compared to the piece of broken bread. It was once scattered over the hills of Judea or Syria. The wheat was sown over the hillsides, and then the grains were brought together and made one. Now the congregation prays that in like manner God’s people may be brought together from the ends of the earth into the great assembly of the Messiah, when God’s kingdom will have come. Is it not a beautiful comparison? Sure, we know that this image or illustration is not found in the Bible, but this does not mean that it is un-Scriptural or anti-Scriptural. Preachers of the Word use many illustrations or images that are not directly taken from Holy Writ, and God’s people are built up by them. Why should we eliminate from our Form of the Lord’s Supper an illustration of the unity and harmony of the catholic church that has such ancient roots? Sure, the application in our Form is a little bit different, but the main idea is the same. The image is taken from the process of transformation of many grains into one piece of bread; it is an illustration of the process of growth of the church into oneness through the power of the Holy Spirit. It reminds us of this prayer of thanksgiving at the end of the meal according to this early Church manual:

Remember, Lord, your church, to save it from all evil and to make it perfect by your love. Make it holy and gather it together from the four winds into your Kingdom which you have made ready for it. For yours is the power and the glory forever.

Let Grace come and let this world pass away.

Hosanna to the God of David!

If anyone is holy, let him come. If not, let him repent.

Our Lord, come!

Amen.

Having visited an early Christian congregation in Judea

or Syria, at the end of the first century, we are going to listen to the voice of Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage in North Africa, in mid third century. We take Volume V of Eerdmans' edition of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*; they are the so-called church fathers before the council of Nicea (325 AD). We read a letter written in the year 253 and addressed to Caecilius. The topic is the sacrament of the cup of the Lord and the bishop of Carthage is opposed to those who used only water in the Lord's Supper instead of wine mixed with water. Cyprian refers to Christ's Word, "I am the true vine"; the blood of Christ is assuredly not water, but wine. If we scan this letter we become aware of Cyprian's sometimes strange ways of interpreting Scripture. Cyprian sees Noah setting forth a type of the future truth, when he did not drink water, but wine, "and thus expressed the figure of the passion of the Lord." It goes without saying that I do not propagate such arbitrary and allegorical exegesis. We should not retain or restore something in the Reformed liturgy simply because it is old. There are old follies, and age does not transform them into wisdom. But an illustration or image is not meant as exegesis of Scripture and as such a figure can have its place. Cyprian writes:

Thus the cup of the Lord is not indeed water alone, nor wine alone, unless each be mingled with the other; just as, on the other hand, the body of the Lord cannot be flour alone or water alone, unless both should be united and joined together and compacted in the mass of one bread; *in which very sacrament our people are shown to be made one, so that in like manner as many grains, collected, and ground, and mixed together into one mass, make one bread; so in Christ, who is the heavenly bread, we may know that there is one body, with which our member is joined and united.*

The Eerdmans' edition of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* remarks in a note: This figure copied by St. Augustine (Vol. V, p. 1247, ed. Migne) is retained in the liturgy of the Reformed Dutch communion. If Synod Arnhem 1981 has accepted or will accept the proposal of the standing committee, this note will become outdated as far as our Dutch sister churches are concerned. Our Theological College does not possess the writings of the Latin Fathers in the prestigious series of Migne, and therefore I can not quote the bishop of Hippo, but we note that also Augustine used the illustration in one of his sermons. Cyprian and Augustine have certainly provided a link in the tradition for the Reformation.

For the remarkable thing is that Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin were acquainted with the early Christian figure of the many grains that become one bread. On Easter Sunday of 1526 the congregation at Wittenberg was to celebrate the Lord's Supper and at the end of March of that year Luther preached three sermons on *The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ*. When he comes to speak of the fruit of the sacrament, the Reformer of Wittenberg emphasizes that this fruit is nothing other than love. "The early Fathers too have emphasized this most of all, and for this reason they called the sacrament *communio*, that is, a communion. This is also presented to us here in two ways — first, by way of an example, and second, by way of a symbol or sign which is bread and wine . . ." When he comes to speak about this figure or symbol, Luther elaborates on it in the following manner:

The teachers of old have diligently pointed out that he (Christ) wished to give us his body and blood under the form of things which are of such a nature that they are themselves constituted by the fusing together of many individual things into one: just as a loaf is constituted

by many kernels out of which one makes a single lump of dough; so that a loaf is nothing else than many kernels baked into one another. "We who are many" (says Paul in 1 Cor. 10:17), "are nevertheless all one loaf and one body." Just as each grain loses its form and takes on a common form with the others, so that you cannot see or distinguish one from the other, and all of them are identical, yet separately present; so too should Christendom be one, without sects, that all may be one, of one heart, mind and will, just as faith, the gospel, and baptism are one (Eph. 4:5). That is how a Christian acts. He is conscious of nothing else than that the goods which are his are also given to his neighbour. He makes no distinction, but helps everyone with body and life, goods and honour, as much as he can. A similar picture is portrayed in the wine. Here many grapes are pressed together, and thereby each grape loses its form and a juice emerges. All the grapes are present in the wine, but there is nothing by which we could distinguish one from another; they have all flowed together and become one juice and one drink. (*Luther's Works* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959], Vol. 36, pp. 352-353).

It is interesting to see that Luther makes the same application to the Lord's Supper.

From Wittenberg we travel to Zurich; we go from Luther to Zwingli. Shortly before his death in 1531 the Reformer of Switzerland submitted to the king of France a clear statement of his beliefs, and we can understand that Zwingli dealt with the much controverted topic of the Lord's Supper. Whatever his differences from Luther might have been in this respect, Zwingli concurred with the image of the grains and the grapes. In his *Exposition of the Faith* he deals with the analogy between the signs and the things signified. In the Supper there is a twofold analogy. The first is to Christ; the second, to ourselves.

For as bread is made up of many grains and wine of many grapes, so by a common trust in Christ which proceeds from the one Spirit the body of the Church is constituted and built up out of many members a single body, to be the true temple and body of the indwelling Spirit (The Library of Christian Classics [Philadelphia: Westminster Press], Vol. XXIV, p. 263).

The triad of the Reformers would not be complete without John Calvin. Already in his first edition of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536) he makes use of the illustration of the many grains and grapes. In 1975 Ford Lewis Battles gave us an excellent translation and also for this article we owe much to his extensive annotation (Atlanta: John Knox Press, p.372). Calvin wrote about the purpose of the Lord's Supper. It serves not only our faith before God; the Lord also intended the Supper to be a kind of exhortation for us, which can more forcefully than any means quicken and inspire us to love, peace, and concord.

The bread shown as Sacrament represents this unity. As it is made of many grains so mixed and commingled that one cannot be distinguished from another, so it is fitting that in this way we should be joined and bound together by such agreement of hearts that no sort of disagreement or division may intrude.

Calvin prefers to explain this in the well-known words of Paul in I Cor. 10:16-17 about the one bread and the one body — compare our Form for the Lord's Supper — and he mentions Augustine's custom to call this sacrament "the bond of love." Calvin retained this passage throughout all editions of his *Institutes*; in the last edi-

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THE IMAGE OF THE GRAINS — *Continued*

tion of 1559 it can be found in Book IV, Ch. XVII, Section 38.

Let us stop our trip through many countries and many centuries and let us think over the proposal in our Dutch sister churches. Should we, in a schoolmasterly fashion, eradicate this centuries-old image of the grains and the grapes because we think that it is not a right exegesis of I Cor. 10? Or should we gladly maintain and

keep this sermonlike illustration as a precious heirloom and simply make clear that it is no explanation of a text, but a free Christian expression? My choice is clear: our Canadian Reformed deputies did well to retain this illustration. By deleting the word "For" they loosened the bond with I Cor. 10, but they kept the image of the grains and the grapes in the line of the Didache, Cyprian, Augustine, Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin.

J. FABER

Discipline in the Old Testament and Its Significance for the Church Today

So far we spoke of the people as a whole. It is the people as such that is disciplined by its God. That is what we gather first from the Old Testament revelation in its significance for the church today. The Church is in need of discipline — the church as such, in its entirety. So, not a certain category, e.g. those among its members prone to wander away and to go astray, the weak brothers and sisters; nor a certain age group, e.g. the young people as opposed to the elderly, who are supposed to be closer to heaven AND NEARER TO God. Experience tells us differently. A young man, a boy, or a girl who, struggling with the problems of every-day life, can raise a vehement protest against an elder or minister in a discussion can be closer to the LORD than an aged brother or sister, with whom there seemingly is no problem, but whose comment on reading the Bible is confined to commonplaces and standard phrases, or a sigh: "Ja, Domine, 't is wat," and that is all.

Everyone, each member, first and foremost the ministers, is subject to and object of church discipline. Let them not have the nerve to deny it! Are they not all in need of guidance on the way they have to go? Nobody among us is perfect. That can become a commonplace. Woe betide the church if it becomes a commonplace to which we resign ourselves. We are not perfect; that is, we fail so often where we should have succeeded. We are on the way to perfection. Only the minister, the elder who has disciplined himself again and again, is able to discipline others.

Once this point is established, we can go further into particulars. For, although sometimes you can

hear or read differently, it is not right that the Old Testament revelation has an eye only for Israel as a group, where the individual person vanishes and his interests disappear in that of the multitude, the clan or tribe or people. On the contrary, in the Old Testament the individual Israelite counts just as well. And, all in all, we may say that true discipline aims at the heart, where the sin has sprung up and where the sin was committed, that is, at the individual, the brother and sister.

The people as a whole can commit a sin, and be chastised for it and atoned for, cf. Lev. 4 and 16.

An individual church member can fall into sin and be in need of discipline, a discipline appropriate for his act and his person. Let us consider two cases as presented in the book of Deuteronomy: 1) Deut. 21:18: "If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, though they chastise him, will not give heed to them"

As to his sin, it is rather in the private sector than in the public sphere, so, as far as that goes, not one to bring someone into conflict with the public law. V. 20: his parents call him a glutton and drunkard. Different from a brother who during the discussion laid the emphasis on the aspect of his squandering his father's goods and maybe his estate like the prodigal son of Luke 15, I would rather put the stress on the aspect of rebelliousness. It is the sin against the fifth word of the Law, not that against the eighth word of the law that matters first, the latter being only one of the evil consequences of his stubborn attitude. He is a source of sorrow to his parents. They are not

able to handle him, and it is impossible for them to have him around the house any longer. The peace at home is disturbed to such an extent that he, a son born in the house and an heir, is to be removed from the scene. Although it is an extreme case — and I would never advise parents to take recourse to this remedy unless worse comes to worst with one of their children — the Law makes provisions "that his father and his mother bring him out to the elders of the city Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones."

What do we gather from this "case"? That in case one of us happens to have such a child, a teenager, who is simply unmanageable, they can request the authorities to have him put to death? Of course not! Immediately the question arises: Which authorities? Or, who are the authorities? Ecclesiastical or political authorities? Parents in Old Testament times did not have the authority themselves but had to bring him out to the elders. The question is now: What do those elders stand for in this case or more generally? Although, as everyone knows, nation (state) and church coincide in the Old Testament, we see the elders of the city at the gate appear and act AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHURCH. The peace and harmony within the church is at stake! The "state," to use that word here, would not step in — or only in a superficial way. There is an evil to be purged away. And I capitalize the words in the middle of v. 21: "SO YOU SHALL PURGE THE EVIL FROM YOUR MIDST." The situation had become untenable. Though for the civil or criminal law there may be loopholes, not so for the Church law, where the PEACE of Psalm 122 and the LOVE of Psalm 133 ought to pre-

vail. To apply the death sentence, in the literal sense of the word, is not within the province of the church any longer. We live in the New Testament dispensation, which in this respect is different from the Old one when the LORD had to spell out to His people by means of those concrete ordinances what His intention regarding them and their life was. Basically, however, the two are one: in a spiritual way, *and both Old and New Testament handle the matter in a spiritual way!* The effect is the same. By means of church discipline the glutton, drunkard, troublemaker is considered dead, declared to be dead, certified dead. That is what excommunication boils down to. And if I would be asked to extend the line, then I would see in the place of the elders of the city in Israel, not the municipal or provincial court, but the elders, members of the consistory, who do not have the authority to pronounce what is called a death sentence, to be sure, but who do have spiritual authority and the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And that entails more than just the power to excommunicate; it *begins* with pastoral care for a difficult child. That can be of much assistance to the father and mother who have to cope with an incorrigible son. Excommunication by the church has the same value as a spiritual death sentence, in case the son is beyond praying for. (During the discussion the question was asked in how far the elders need the permission of the parents in dealing with their stubborn son, if a [conceited] father would say: "Stay out of it. The problems of my child are none of your business. I am able to handle them." In answer I would say that in such a case I can not admire the attitude of the father, unless it is because of the way in which the elders handle the matter, e.g. not with proper discretion.)

2) Another case we come across is in Deut. 22:18. There is a newly-wed couple, in whose home peace and harmony are disturbed. We read: "If any man takes a wife, and goes in to her, and then spurns her, and charges her with shameful conduct, and brings an evil name upon her . . ." Now it is — even though she is married — the father and the mother of the young woman who proceed to action; they "bring out the tokens of her virginity to the elders of the city." In case there is proof, "the elders of the city shall take the man and whip *and discipline him* and they shall fine him a hundred shekels of silver . . . be-

cause *he has brought an evil name upon a virgin of Israel . . .*"

Of course, this is a delicate, sensitive affair. The law made clear to the Old Testament elders what to do. It is they who are given a task here. The name of a virgin of Israel, a sister of the church, was at stake. Our name is protected in the ninth commandment. So, something should be done about it. If the husband was right, then action ought to be taken. The Bible leaves no doubt about the manner in which: "and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones . . . She has played the harlot in her father's house." "She has played the harlot," which is irreconcilable with the holiness of God's people. But a factor also to be taken into consideration is: "in her father's house." Her misconduct regards not only her own person but her father's house, the family in which she was born and reared, just as well. This family shares the disgrace; now the peace is disturbed there. "She has wrought folly in Israel," an expression well-known to us, though thinking it over one might wonder: Does the Scripture not push things to extremes now? Is this not exaggerated? Is it some other Israelite's business what happens to a girl some two or three hundred kilometers away? That is what we say, but we cannot dismiss the matter with our cheap comments, because it is ISRAEL(!), the church of olden days. Folly in Israel is what such a crime is, because Israel is a wise people. Their wisdom, moreover, is not a matter of national pride! That is what it would be in the case of Edomites, Temanites, Arabs, Egyptians, who had a reputation for wisdom. No, Israel has been made wise by the LORD's instruction and kept wise by the LORD's, YAHWEH's, discipline. A young woman can act contrary to that wisdom and so can the young man, but Israel's wise law demands of him as well as of her that he or she make up for it by giving restoration. And though we notice on the Old Testament level a difference in the way the bridegroom is treated compared to the bride (his behaviour prior to the wedding is left out of the picture — cf. Numbers 5:11ff: The man is given a flogging but she is stoned to death), and we discover the progress made under the New Testament dispensation, nevertheless, everything possible is done to restore the peace, to bring life back to normal.

And again, taking into account the distinction there is between the

Old and New Testament, I see the elders of the Church, the consistory, given a task here, if things take a turn for the worse in a certain family, where the domestic peace is seriously jeopardized by the misconduct of a son or a daughter. And although the elders or the minister normally should not meddle in what is a family affair, giving parents and children, teenagers, every opportunity to solve their own problems, **AS SOON AS THE SALVATION OF THE YOUNG BROTHER OR SISTER AND THE FAMILY IS AT ISSUE, THE ELDERS OF THE CONGREGATION SHOULD NOT HESITATE TO TAKE ACTION**, first of all by speaking, counselling, guiding, offering every possible help and (in this very way) disciplining — for that is how discipline begins — to avert the worst: excommunication from the body of CHRIST.

Continued on page 310.



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CLARION
P.O. Box 54,
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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editor: J. Faber
Managing Editor: W.W.J. VanOene
Co-Editors: J. Geertsema, Cl. Stam

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DISCIPLINE — Continued.

It is not sufficient to mention these two conspicuous cases of Deut. 21 and 22. They are like the tips of an iceberg. Only a little is brought out into the open of family life in general; much more remains hidden, part of which, fortunately, never will come into the open, because it could be solved well in time. What I would like to convey is that already here, at this stage, the elders or (in a confidential case) the minister alone have a task, e.g. just by asking some questions during a home visit or a personal visit; this, of course, with tact and with understanding of the person, of his or her character and circumstances. For in all those circumstances Holy Scripture does not let us down. I think of all the wisdom stored up in the books of wisdom: Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, books really going into the relationship as it is or should be in a home where the FEAR OF THE LORD is.

We as office-bearers of the church should keep in mind that it is the father and mother in a family who have a task here. They are meant and addressed in the book of Proverbs as is pointed out by Prof. Dr. W.H. Gispen in his *Korte Verklaring*, and the task of the office-bearers is, first of all, to see to it that in a certain family father and mother are father and mother indeed. It is they who are obligated to discipline their children. They do so by taking care that there is a good and open communication between the two generations present in every household, by speaking and listening (which is just as important!), in this way teaching (as they have promised at the baptismal font), and, *if this is fitting and necessary*, taking recourse to corporal punishment.

It is not human wisdom but divine wisdom which shows us the way in cases when we are upset about our children; situations which not only worldly parents (as we have seen in our introductory quotations), but also believing parents have to face. Let me now quote and pass on some of this wisdom of the Scriptures: Prov. 13:24 says: "He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him." Prov. 22:15: "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him"; or 23:13: "Do not withhold discipline from a child. If you beat him with a rod, he will not die."

Three times the rod. Father, however, who handles the rod, should keep an eye on himself as well. Called

to apply discipline, he ought to show himself to be a disciplined man. So we read in Prov. 19:18: "Discipline your son while there is hope; do not set your heart on his destruction"; and ch. 29:17: "Discipline your son, and he will give you rest; he will give delight to your heart."

Corporal punishment, sure. However, the author of Proverbs speaks more often of WORDS; for the author of the book knows, just as our parents (ought to) realize, that one can punish in an outburst of anger, or because of some wounded pride, or because they bear a grudge against one of their children, or worse, it can be evidence of a sort of psychological illness. Any good disciplinarian first disciplines himself. His purpose is definitely not to work off his emotions, to vent his feelings, to let off steam, but to lead his son, his pupil, his daughter, toward the goal, which cannot be done without proper discipline, with everything that is included.

From the very outset we see the book point in that direction. So it reads in the heading (the longest one of any book in the Bible): "The Proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: That men may know wisdom and instruction, understand words of insight, receive instruction in wise dealing . . ." For "instruction" we find the same word in the original as "discipline."

All we read in the Book of Proverbs is of such a nature, that "you" — and by "you" I mean the son in the family (and I add: the daughter may see herself represented by the son) — receives, is given, discipline.

Needless to say, it is not a bunch of wiseacres Israel once, or the church today, is in need of — Enough of them! — but what it reads in v. 7 of this chapter: "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction." And in chapter 8 we hear the Wisdom incarnate speak in the same vein. Wisdom, *chokmah* in Hebrew, has the connotation of a skill to tackle matters in a purposeful way. Proverbs is a purposeful book, and so a real guide for the church today (and the world turning to this source of true wisdom may benefit from it as well). It always emphasizes the same principles, underlying a good education.

In summary I would like to discuss three points. 1) Authority. Over and over in the book we read of a father and a mother. Not "spiritual," but real, physical parents are meant, a real father and mother in charge of their children's education. They are

the people for it. Having learned by experience, having been disciplined themselves once, they are, or should be, able to pass the wisdom on to the next generation.

"A wise son hears his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke" (chapter 13:1; cf. also chapter 15:1).

Hence we can extend the line to all those invested with authority, keeping in mind that the authority of *the parents* is at the base. Nobody ought to intervene here. As I said before, father has to control himself; chapter 23: 13, 14: "Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you beat him with the rod, he will not die. If you beat him with the rod, you will save his life from sheol." Chapter 19:18 serves as a correction for a father all too eager to lay about one. The consistory, or let us confine it to the ward elders or the minister, has a task to see to it that these lines are maintained by the parents; I mean, when it is brought up during a home visit or when family problems arise and the consistory has cognizance of it. It is a matter of wisdom who exactly has to bring the matter up in a certain case: elders, parents, or the child concerned. An open relationship will pave the way here. It is not good if first a gap between family and consistory must be bridged, but I know it happens. Too often, sad to say. Parents and child(ren) may count on the fact that problems should be dealt with in a confidential, understanding way.

As church of Jesus Christ we stand in the midst of a world worrying about or coping with these problems, as I pointed out in the opening lines of my speech. What happens in the world can happen, and quite often does happen, in the church. Let our parents and families be shining lights and the church a pillar of truth which the world today badly needs.

2) A second point: what the book of Proverbs and Scriptural instruction are interested in, are *the objects of discipline*: son or daughter. It is for their sake, their benefit, that the book was written. They need wisdom, instruction. We learn from Proverbs, as from the cases in Deuteronomy, that it worked then already two ways. Both the wise son *and* the foolish son appear on the stage and were apparently known. Man's nature was not any better then than it is today. The author is not beating the air. Ancient Israel was visited with problem children just as our modern society. They are not ignored but spoken to, ad-

dressed, and the way in which this was done is still instructive for us today; for, taking into consideration the problems modern youngsters can run into, the juvenile delinquent boy, or the girl (still a child) who becomes a mother, the disobedient, unmanageable student in the classroom, it is wisdom and again wisdom which knows what life is all about (what the youngster hardly understands) that can solve the problems.

3) Wisdom aims at LIFE.

In v. 13 of chapter 4 we read: "Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life," life in the profound, comprehensive, Scriptural sense of the word!

To discipline or not to discipline is a matter of life and death. That is why in the (extreme) cases of Deut. 21 and 22 the death penalty comes into the picture, not in order that some family may get rid of an incurable nuisance around the house, but to point out, to spell out, by this drastic punishment what ultimately is the lot of the unrepentant sinner. Again we look up Proverbs, e.g. chapter 5:23: "The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him. He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is lost." Or chapter 6:23: "For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching a *light*, and the reproofs of discipline are *the way of life*." And chapter 13:18: "Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores instruction; but he who heeds reproof is honored."

Brothers, this is the way. Let us do it. You may wonder: Are we able to? What about our sins and failures, lack of understanding or lack of firmness, even with the best of intentions? Our only comfort is that we may believe, may know, that is, may have communion with HIM, THE SERVANT OF THE LORD of whom it says in Isaiah 53: "UPON HIM WAS THE CHASTISEMENT THAT MADE US WHOLE AND WITH HIS STRIPES WE ARE HEALED." Chastisement is *Musar* in Hebrew! Disciplined. He had Himself disciplined in the place of all of us. He bore the burden. He knows what it is all about: to be disciplined. He has the right to speak. What mercy to have such a substitute, who suffered it all in our place, that our lives might attain the goal.

Suffering from the wounds in our family life and, consequently, our church life, we are assured: there is healing and peace where the Saviour is received.

H.M. OHMANN



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.

EDE

In the Old Reformed Congregations in The Netherlands a declaration was read from the pulpit in which possession of a television set or a radio is rejected.

The declaration expresses the concern of the latest synod of the Old-Reformed about increasing conformity to the world. Members who are in the possession of a television set will be deprived of membership after having been admonished. Possession of a radio is also reprehensible because of the detrimental influence, for which reason a serious admonition is well in place, according to the declaration. An exception is made for the use one makes of a radio in connection with one's occupation.

Other matters which are being touched upon in the declaration are: wearing the hair long by men, wearing the hair short and wearing men's clothing by women, and "wilful birth control." (ND)

* * *

ARNHEM

Deputies for Correspondence with Churches Abroad received permission from the General Synod to issue an informative bulletin in the English language. It will be issued twice a year and will be distributed among the churches with which contact is being maintained.

Deputies also will be known under a different name from now on. Synod agreed with a proposal to change the name "Deputies for Correspondence with Churches Abroad" to "Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad." (ND)

ARNHEM

The Synod of Arnhem revised some of the rules for correspondence. The third rule now reads as follows:

- c. To inform each other as much as possible and as soon as possible about proposals (c.q. reports) and decisions which concern linguistic or similar changes in confessional forms or non-essential changes in Church Order and liturgical forms; however, if it concerns proposals for changes which regard essential points of doctrine, the foreign churches shall receive ample opportunity (at least three years) to make their judgment known before definitive decisions are made.

With this change the objections of the Canadian Reformed Churches are met. The Canadian Churches considered it to be sufficient that the Churches inform each other afterwards about changes in non-essential points. (ND)

* * *

ARNHEM

The General Synod of Arnhem met in a lengthy closed session to discuss the suggestion of the Deputies for Correspondence to appoint a part-time permanent secretary for the Committee. It decided not to comply with that request and expressed as its expectation that the deputies will be able wisely and effectively to divide the load and also to avail themselves of any help outside the circle of ministers which they can get for the linguistic and administrative aspects of the work. (ND)

* * *

A NEW REFORMED SEMINARY

An event that may prove to be important in our Reformed circles was the decision made on April 21, 1981, to organize a society to establish a new Reformed theological seminary. The decision was made at a meeting held at the Airport Hilton Hotel at O'Hare Airport in Chicago. The Tuesday afternoon, three-hour meeting was attended by about 70 people from various parts of the country, over two-thirds of them laymen . . .

Some discussion about the target date for beginning classes resulted in a decision to begin no later than September of 1982, upon decision of the board.

It was decided to buy a very suitable building with eight acres of land at Orange City, Iowa, offered at an attractively low price.

The organization is to be incorporated as the Mid-American Re-

formed Seminary Association. (*The Outlook*) * * *

In its Report to the 1981 Synod the Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary asked synod to say "what, if anything, it wishes the board to do further" concerning the alternative seminary recently proposed by eight North-West Iowa preachers.

One delegate insisted that it was improper for "two instigators of the proposed seminary" to continue serving on Calvin's Board of Trustees. Rev. Edward Knott and Rev. John Sittema, elected to represent their classes on the Calvin Board, have reportedly continued attending board meetings while working to found a rival seminary.

But after debate, synod adopted a resolution expressing "strong appreciation for the efforts made by the Board of Trustees and the representatives of Calvin Seminary to enter into constructive dialogue" with those trying to start the new seminary.

In a second action, synod urged the Calvin board and faculty to talk with *all* groups affected by the proposed alternative seminary, opponents of the plan as well as supporters. The goal of such dialogue should be, according to the synodical statement, "unified denominational support for, and confidence in, Calvin Theological Seminary." (*The Banner*)

Recently *Calvinist Contact* also paid attention to the efforts to establish a new seminary. In the article in *Calvinist Contact* the question was raised why a new seminary was deemed necessary whereas there is Westminster Theological Seminary as well as the Seminary of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

It may sound somewhat selfish if we, too, mention our own College, yet we do it, for we still cherish the hope that we may mean something for a wider circle than only the Canadian Reformed Churches that established and maintain this institution.

Personally I am not aware of any contact sought by the ones who now are going to establish that new seminary. I am not aware of any feelers or any investigation regarding the possibility of training men for the ministry in the Christian Reformed Church at our College.

Perhaps we do not rate, and if that is the case I won't say too much about it; only that in my humble opinion such would be a mistake.

I am afraid, however, that the establishing of a new seminary within Christian Reformed circles is simply another step in the process of polarization. During the past years we heard some encouraging words from the mouth of

those who have grave objections to the course within the Christian Reformed Church, words which gave us hope that some action might follow.

We certainly do not rejoice in schisms and breakaways, but we do believe that there are moments when we have to make a choice and to part ways with those who refuse to return to the obedience to Christ and who lead the church away from the solid foundation, going into the direction of modernism which presents itself in various forms. I am convinced that that moment is already past for the "concerned" within the Christian Reformed Church. They may go from the one "revision-synod" to the next one: it will be the pilgrimage of the Wandering Jew: always seeking, never home and finding.

Now a new seminary will be established. Obviously the "founding fathers" hope that they can train young men for the ministry in such a way that the new generation of ministers in the Christian Reformed Church abide by the old Truth and values.

I wish them well, but can predict right now that their whole endeavour will be a failure. Oh, they will establish their seminary and they will graduate students and perhaps those students will enter the ministry in the Christian Reformed Church, but they will be just one group over against a much larger group that received their training at Calvin Seminary and continue in the line learned at that institution. Thus the polarization has become a fact even more.

Perhaps there will be a conflict-situation such as was the case in 1886, when a candidate from the Free University was refused examination with a view to becoming a minister in the Netherlands Reformed Church. And perhaps such a refusal will have its consequences and produce a conflict resulting in a breakaway. Unfortunately, if that happens, it won't be a reformation but a schism caused by secondary or tertiary causes. And in all likelihood, the result will be the establishing of a new "denomination" with the main issues pushed to the background.

We follow the developments with great interest, but my expectations for the furtherance of the cause of *real* unity are not too great, I must admit; although I do wish from the heart that I am mistaken.

* * *

NEW YORK, NY, MAY 30

Many European Christians are turning to Judaism in quest of a renewal of their own faith, according to a leading Jewish theologian.

Addressing the National Commission of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith at the Grand Hyatt Hotel here, Dr. Pinchas Lapide,

professor of Judaic Studies, Göttingen University, West Germany, said "there is a new trend in 'dialogical theology.'"

He went on to say that many Christians, beset by a crisis of insecurity and doubt about their own faith, are finding answers in Judaism because they consider the existence of Jews "the only palpable proof for the existence of God." For Christians, he said, Judaism is an incentive for religious self-renewal and a living creed for tomorrow.

In addition, Dr. Lapide said, "Christians from the broad middle of church membership are unabashedly displaying open minded curiosity about the Jewish religion."

These Christians are virtually unprejudiced, he said, and too young to have any personal guilt feelings about the Holocaust.

Dr. Lapide said they seek to fathom the meaning of:

- the "mystery" of Jewish survival;
- the "riddle" of Israel's national rebirth;
- the "tenacity" of Jewish belief.

The theologian said that these young Christians are finding an affinity with Judaism because it is the faith from which Jesus and his followers sprang.

He pointed out that philo-Semitism in general is growing among German Christians for secular as well as religious reasons. One indication, he said, is the increasing number of conversions to Judaism. Another is the presence of about 50 Christian-Jewish groups in Germany with a total of about 8,000 members. These strive to combat anti-Semitism and project a constructive Jewish image, he said.

Dr. Lapide said there has been a growth in the Jewish population of Germany and less disposition to "sit on packed suitcases" — ready to depart at the first sign of danger.

The membership of neo-Nazi groups in Germany has declined from a high of 30,000 to 8,000. Nevertheless, he declared, the Jewish community in Germany remains "hyper-sensitive" to anti-Semitism.

For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the Word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they then commit apostasy, since they crucify the Son of God on their own account and hold Him up to contempt.

Hebrews 6:4, 5, 6

Continued on page 314.

The Majdanek Trial: A Personal Assessment

This article is reprinted from the ADL BULLETIN, national publication of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

Little attention is being paid these days to the events unfolding in a courtroom in the West Germany city of Dusseldorf. The criminal trial being held there — the longest in German history — started in November, 1975. No wonder that many people have lost interest in the repetitive testimony, arguments, pleadings and rebuttals.

Though the war crimes being discussed were committed more than a generation ago, I have closely followed the progress of the proceedings — or lack of progress — from afar. But then, I have a personal stake in the outcome. The nine defendants are accused of complicity in the calculated, state-organized murder of 250,000 persons at Majdanek, the Nazi-run death camp deep in the entrails of Poland. One of their victims was Paul Reiss, my father.

According to papers I received from the International Tracing Service, Paul Reiss, born August 13, 1902, was killed in Majdanek on August 13, 1942. His fortieth birthday.

Among all the concentration and death camps, therefore, Majdanek retains a special poignancy for me. I rage with every day the trial goes on, so unnerving is the procrastination of justice. And the almost six years of litigation have sharpened my senses to ironies and paradoxes that must surely escape most observers.

For one, were the trial to end today, it would have already lasted far longer than the time it took to murder all the victims of the Holocaust.

I cannot help but notice, too, how meticulous the defense attorneys are about procedures and affording legal protection to their clients. They rightly point out that under due process, none of the defendants can be convicted of collective guilt, nor guilt by association, not even with an admission of having belonged to the SS in the death camp at the time the mass murders were committed. It is individual guilt that must be proved beyond

reasonable doubt — although in view of the passage of time, this is certainly most unreasonable.

Already 20 years have elapsed since the German government started preparations for the trial. It has taken that long for the prosecutors to search out witnesses, battling legal hurdles along the way. Very few witnesses survived, and even among them many have died since the camp was liberated.

The strict adherence to the fine technicalities of civilized law has resulted in the dismissal of seven of the original 16 defendants from the trial. The court, sticking to the smallest minutia of jurisprudence, deemed that the prosecution lacked the "smoking gun"-type evidence required for further litigation.

In contrast to the immoral, inhumane summary executions perpetrated at Majdanek, those who stand accused of these murders have been allowed to bask interminably in the protective light of due process.

Yet, as cumbersome and painstaking as the process is in a civilized society, the day of verdict is finally in sight. But only after each of the defense attorneys seizes yet another concession of time granted by the court: One week of summation for each of the defendants — nine weeks in which they will attempt to defend the indefensible. At this writing, these are about to conclude.

In a sense, the pleadings have been more shocking and devastating than the gruesome evidence which had been cited earlier during the course of the trial. The perversion of logic and reason by both the defendants and their defenders is so complete that any person who has even the slightest sense of acceptable human conduct must stand aghast in disbelief.

For example, in his summation, the attorney defending the actions of Hermann Hackmann, onetime deputy commandant of Majdanek, tells the court not to forget that the defendants are also suffering since they have lived with — and for the rest of their days will continue to live with — the memory of their misdeeds.

Another defense attorney pleads understanding for those who took the lives of a quarter of a million people. After all, he explains matter-of-factly, the victims often contributed to their own suffering and eventual death by acting irresponsibly, defying authority and lacking discipline.

Yes, contends one of the defense attorneys, children were indeed brutally thrown into the trucks which took them to the gas chambers, but that was because their mothers clung to them and refused to part with them. If the mothers had cooperated, the children would have been led away in orderly fashion.

Still another defense lawyer acknowledges that his client whipped female inmates about the legs until only shreds were left of the stockings they wore as protection against the bitter cold. But, he reminds the court, the women knew it was forbidden to wear stockings.

Justification is given for the brutality with which Hildegard Laechert, a camp guard, unleashed her German Shepherd to fatally maul an inmate. It is suggested — preposterous as it may sound — that the victim brought the punishment on herself by not fending off an SS-man's amorous advances, although she had rejected Laechert's lesbian overtures.

It is not easy to read the reports and transcripts of the Majdanek trial. Which of these people knew my father? Which of them killed him? And as I read, an ultimate irony transcends the past and brings us into the present.

As this trial hobbles to its inevitable conclusion, as accused mass murderers are accorded all the legal protection available under democracy, and even as they acknowledge and seek justification for the atrocities they committed, there are spiritual heirs of Adolf Hitler who continue to deny that the Holocaust ever happened at all.

It would be amusing, were it not so macabre.

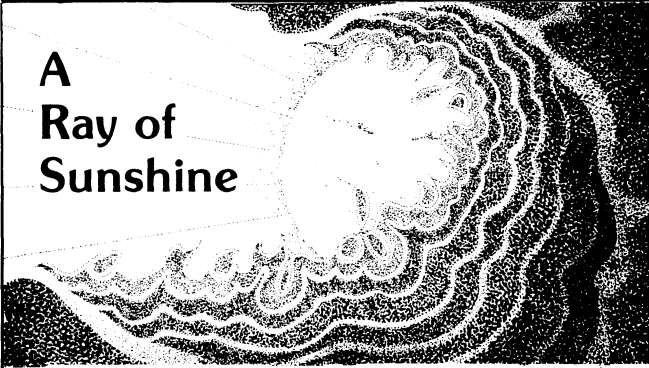
FRANK REISS

Dr. Reiss, a survivor of the Theresienstadt concentration camp, is director of the Anti-Defamation League's European Affairs Department.

OUR COVER

Gods River-North. (Photo Courtesy of Manitoba Government, Department of Tourism and Recreation.)

A Ray of Sunshine



Commit your way to the LORD; trust in Him, and He will act.
Be still before the LORD, and wait patiently for Him.

Psalm 37:5, 7

It sometimes seems that one of the hardest things for believers is to trust in God. Committing our ways to the Lord is not one of our strong points. We like to see action and results. Waiting patiently for the Lord to act is quite a test for us. God sometimes tests us this way. When we experience such trial we should remember how David coped with things. Most of David's psalms show us that he experienced many difficulties. In the book of Samuel we read about the history of David and the troubled times in which he lived.

The book of Judges tells how God allowed enemy armies to beat down the Israelites until they repented of their disobedience, and in I Samuel 17 we read about Goliath's defiance of the living God and how David gives account to King Saul as to why he wants to destroy this Philistine enemy. And although his own brother mocks him, he perseveres in steadfast courage. We read: "Your servant has killed both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God. The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will deliver me from the hand of the Philistine" (I Samuel 17:36, 37). This is what trusting in God means — committing one's life into God's hand. David's ad-

vice to "Be still before the LORD, and to wait patiently for Him," is beautifully illustrated to us by David's own attitude when he spared King Saul's life at Engedi. His own men urged him to kill Saul, but David's reply shows us that he waited for the LORD to act. When his men tempted him by saying, "Here is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you,'" David persuaded his men not to kill Saul with the following words, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed, to put forth my hand against him, seeing he is the LORD's anointed." By NOT taking things into his own hands, David shows us to be patient and to wait for the Lord, for "the LORD loves justice; He will not forsake His saints" (Psalm 37:28).

For God the souls shall keep
Of those who on His truth depend;
To them and their posterity
His blessings shall descend.

Psalm 34:11

De Enige Troost

Ja, je moet dapper zijn om te vertrouwen,
om te geloven op hoop tegen hoop,
om door te vechten en niet te verflauwen,
Christen te zijn is niet licht of goedkoop.
En je moet strijden om God vast te houden,
ook als je niets van Zijn liefde meer ziet,
ook als de mensen, op wie je vertrouwd
eenzaam je laten in pijn en verdriet.
Ja, je moet dapper zijn om te geloven
dat er geen haar van je hoofd vallen zal
zonder de wil van de Vader daarboven,
en dat er nooit iets gebeurt bij geval;
En je moet weten, dat Jesus je zorgen
dragen wil, — Hij is aan lasten gewend —
dat je, in Zijn liefde beschut en geborgen,
levend en stervend Zijn eigendom bent.

Uit Goudraad uit Vlas by Nel Benschop

INTERNATIONAL — Continued.

SALT LAKE CITY (RNS)

A record 211,000 converts were baptized into the Mormon Church in 1980, bringing the worldwide membership to 4,668,000, latest church estimates show. New statistics reported here by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) show that convert baptism has nearly tripled in the last 10 years. Church membership in 1970 was 2.9 million and 79,000 converts were baptized. Figures show the number of full-time Mormon missionaries has increased from 14,387 in 1970 to 29,953 in 1980. (CN)

* * * * *

HONG KONG (RES NE)

In 1949 the Christian population

of China was placed at approximately 1.8 million. The largest Protestant mission field in the world, China then had 19,500 churches and chapels, 6,000 missionaries, 13,000 Chinese Christian workers and hundreds of Christian hospitals and schools. The Communist takeover in that year quickly changed all of that: foreign missionaries were expelled and the number of churches was drastically reduced. Shanghai's 200 congregations were reduced to 15; Peking's 66 to four. According to *Time* magazine (May 4, 1981) "it was one of the most systematic attempts ever mounted to expunge religion from the life of a nation." During the turmoil and persecution of Mao's Cultural Revolution, local house churches sprang up across the country. It is estimated

that there may be as many as 40,000 to 50,000 of them. In the past these home assemblies have been relatively free from government control.

In recent years a few government-authorized church buildings have been permitted to reopen as well as the Nanjing Theological Seminary, the first school to train clergy since 1966. Independent sources report that both house churches and conventional churches are thriving; young people account for about a quarter of the congregations in conventional churches. It is estimated that the present Protestant population may number four to six million, which would be considerably less than 1% of the population of one billion. In Peking alone 70 Chinese were baptized at Easter. The govern-

For the month of August we have the following birthdays on our Calendar:

PHILIP SCHUURMAN

P.O. Box 1000,
Vineland, Ontario

Philip lives in a Christian Home for the handicapped about half an hour's drive from his home in Hamilton. He visits home every other week. He receives training for work in a restaurant, and he is hoping to get a job in that line of work. On August 5 he hopes to celebrate his 22nd birthday. Shall we welcome Philip to our "Calendar" and send him many happy wishes?

* * * * *

ROSE MALDA

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

Rose hopes to celebrate her 24th birthday on August 8. In past years we have been able to give her much joy by sending her colourful cards. She expressed this by a happy smile and handclapping. Shall we again send her many rays of sunshine this year?

* * * * *

FENNY KUIK

38 Rizzuto Bay,
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2C 3Y8

Fenny is looking forward with much anticipation to her special day. She works in her father's print shop and helps put Clarion together. By gestures and a happy smile she communicates her feelings. Her 29th birthday is on August 18. Shall we give Fenny a happy birthday by sending her lots of cards?

JACK DIELEMAN

307 Connaught Avenue,
Willowdale, Ontario M2R 2M1

Jack hopes to celebrate his 9th birthday on August 27. Although paralyzed from his waist down and spending his days in a wheelchair is not easy for a young boy, he is still of a happy nature. He attends a special school in the mornings. He lives at home with his parents, five brothers and two sisters. He likes cats and other animals. Shall we surprise Jack by sending him many best wishes?

* * * * *

May the Lord grant you a happy birthday, brothers and sisters! Let's hope the mail strike is over so that our rays of sunshine can get through to you.

* * * * *

We have received the following request:

HERMAN WEMEKAMP

131 Brenda Boulevard,
Orangeville, Ontario L9W 3L5

Herman (in his early forties) has multiple sclerosis, and he has lost complete control of his limbs. He is now confined to bed in Shelburne Hospital, as he has bad pressure sores. It is expected that he will be there for another couple of months. When home, Herman spends most of his time in a wheelchair. It would be nice if he could receive lots of mail. Brothers and sisters, shall we send Herman many encouraging words?

Send your requests to:

Mrs. J.K. Riemersma

380 St. Andrew Street East,
Fergus, Ontario N1M 1R1

ment also allowed 135,000 Bibles to be printed for the first time last year. These are being paid for by Chinese Christians and have all been sold.

The Three-Self Patriotic Movement (RSM) (self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating) was officially established at a National Christian Conference in 1954 and was restored recently after a 15-year suspension by the government. In October 1980 in Nanjing at the National Christian Conference of the TSM the Chinese Christian Council (CCC) was founded to handle pastoral affairs. Bishop K.H. Ting (Ding Guanxum) is chairman of both organizations. The stated goals of the CCC as reported in *Pray for China* are:

1. To supervise the work of churches and pastors,

2. To train Christian pastors,
3. To publish the Bible and other materials,
4. To consolidate churches and believers in the People's Republic of China.

The CCC will be the organization for contact between Chinese Christians and those outside of China.

According to *Pray for China focus* (March/April, 1981), Bishop Ding's dividing line in the matter of church issues is between those who support the TSM and those who do not, whether they are in China or overseas. He "distinguished only overseas Christians 'friendly' to the Three-Self Movement as his co-workers." Bishop Ding wishes the TSM to return to the policies and philosophies of the '50's.

Ding now wants the TSM to include the house churches. He said, "We must not carry on the Three-Self Movement among only a minority, but should unite the over one million Christians to carry it out."

The aim is now being questioned. Does it mean liberty for these now apparently legalized house churches? Or does it mean that the TSM is seeking to control the activities of the house churches to bring them into conformity with the Three-Self principle? Would perhaps continued economic troubles cause Vice-Chairman Den Xiaoping to change his course of limited religious freedom and "crack down" on Christianity again?

The Book of Job

The following essay was presented at the Annual District Meeting (of Women's Societies in Ontario) held in Lincoln, Ont., last spring.

This book sets before us the history of a man whose blameless piety is confessed by the LORD Himself, but challenged by Satan.

To prove to Satan that Job's piety is not selfishly motivated, the LORD permits Satan first to strip him of all his wealth and slay his children and then to afflict him with a deadly disease. From these trials Job emerges triumphantly and Yahweh's confidence is splendidly vindicated.

Then three friends of Job's, having heard of his troubles, come to condole with him and sit seven days in silence with him. The book then changes to a poem, as Job at last gives vent to all the complaints that he has so long repressed and he curses the day of his birth. This leads to a debate between Job and his friends: they reprove him for his complaints against God and attribute his suffering to his sins, while he protests his innocence and charges God with mismanagement of the world and mistreatment of himself in spite of his innocence.

After the debate is exhausted, a fourth speaker intervenes to set both parties right, but he does little more than repeat their arguments. When his speeches are at last ended, the LORD Himself answers Job out of a storm, and in language of matchless beauty and power brings before him the marvels of creation and convicts him of ignorance of the mysteries of the universe.

Job is humbled and subdued, and with his penitent confession the poem closes. In prose language we are told that the LORD condemned the friends for not speaking of Him

that which is right as Job had done. Job intercedes for them and they are forgiven. Job himself is restored to health and prosperity.

The author of the Book of Job is unknown. Some say he must have been a man who himself had passed through great sorrows and had been forced to think a lot about the question of suffering. God might well use such a man to provide the divine answer to this important question. Others say that the book originated in a circle of wise men living at the time of Solomon, the same circle responsible for the contents of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. Two facts favour the latter: the Book of Job is very much like Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, which were written about this time, and it contains much wisdom and required deep thought. Such meditation is most likely to occur in a time of peace and leisure, all of which points to the time of Solomon's reign.

The man Job, whose name means "the much persecuted," is thought by some to be a picture of sufferers and not an actual man. But in Ezekiel 14:14 and 20 he is mentioned in connection with Noah and Daniel, and in James 5:11 his endurance is set forth as an example for us. These references demand that we accept Job as a historical person.

But when and where did he live? The fact that he is not presented as an Israelite and the absence of any mention of the law of Moses, make it necessary to place him at a very early date.

He is probably a contemporary of the patriarchs of Genesis. Perhaps he even comes before them. In the early days of the history of mankind, the knowledge of God was spread abroad widely. Only as man rejected

that knowledge and turned away from God was He hidden from all men except those whom He chose for His own people.

Job is something like Melchizedek. He is a non-Israelite who worships the true God. To speak with the Heidelberg Catechism, Job had a true faith, which made him righteous before God, but he had a limited knowledge of all that God has revealed to us in His Word. Job only had particular or special revelation, and both through his suffering and the long debate with his so-called friends, who in their misguided way tried to comfort him, he comes to a fuller knowledge of God.

Before his misfortunes, Job, in his personal relationship with the LORD, enjoys God's favour. His very possessions are to him proof of God's lovingkindness towards him. So when everything is taken away from him, Job cannot understand how the LORD, who surely loves him, can let all this happen to him. (Remember Job is totally unaware of what we read in Chapter 1 and 2, how, as the LORD Himself puts it, Satan has incited God against Job.) So Job feels himself forsaken by God. In his suffering Job is no longer able to hold onto the God he knew. This leads him to curse the day he was born. There is, of course, never an excuse for that; but if Job could not live in communion with God any longer, he wished never to have been born.

Job does not have a complete knowledge of the One who for that very purpose was born: our Lord Jesus Christ. He reminds us here of the words we may hear every time the Lord's Holy Supper is celebrated: "He has humbled Himself unto the very deepest reproach and anguish of hell, in body and soul, on the tree of the cross, when He cried out with a loud voice: My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? that we might be accepted of God, and nevermore be forsaken of Him, and finally has confirmed to us with His death and shedding of His blood the new and eternal testament, the covenant of grace and reconciliation, when He said, 'It is FINISHED.'"

Although Job feels himself forsaken of God, the Spirit of this Victorious Christ does not leave him alone. Job wrestles with God (like Jacob at Peniel) all through the long poetic debate, egged on by his sceptical friends, who think he must be a great sinner.

Bildad provokes Job most of all by saying: All your children have per-

Dear Subscribers

Due to the harmful postal strike, the normal channels of communication were completely disrupted. Shortage of copy has forced us to combine two issues in one! This issue is dated August 14, 1981.

The Publisher

ished. Thus they must have been terrible sinners, for the one thing you can count on is that God is just. But Job knows differently. Does not Job 1:5 tell us the exact opposite?

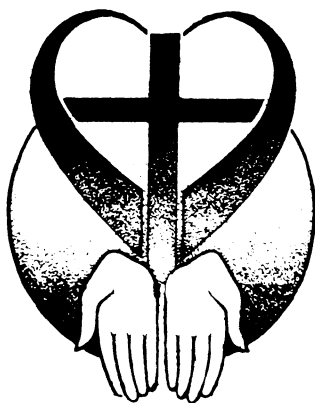
Thus Job is driven to his beautiful confession in Chapter 19:25 and 26: "But as for me, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. And [thinking he is slowly but surely dying of this incurable disease, where he sees his skin and flesh rotting away] after my skin, even this body, is destroyed, then from my flesh shall I see God."

The book of Job presents a question which has been asked by men in every age: Why do the righteous suffer?

The book of Job also provides an answer to that question. It denies that all suffering is punishment for sin, as the three friends would have the man Job believe. This book does not even admit that all the sufferings of the righteous are chastisements, intended to remove our sins and make us better Christians, as is the principle behind Elihu's speeches. Sometimes suffering is God's way of testing His people, in order that it may be clearly shown that God's children love God for His own sake. It can be used to demonstrate the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, who turns sinners into righteous servants, who admit, yes, even praise, God's sovereign power in creation.

The words of God at the end of the book do not give a definite answer to the problem that faced Job and his friends. He does not explain precisely why Job suffered. He simply points out that neither Job nor his friends are able to provide all the answers about this problem of suffering. There are reasons for suffering which are hidden from them. But this does not mean that the book of Job does not provide an answer for the question it raises. It both provides us with an answer and shows us the proper attitude to take when we must suffer.

We must remember that God has revealed something to us which was not revealed to Job. We have in Chapters 1 and 2 of the book the story of what happened in heaven. We know how Satan challenged the righteousness of Job, and we know that God permitted Satan to test Job by suffering so that Job's faith would be clearly demonstrated. So when God tells Job and his friends that Job's suffering was caused by something that they could not know about, we know what that cause was. Job's suf-



Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund

FOCUS ON AFRICA

Africa is a continent in pain. It is a land known for its landmarks of great beauty, its impressive variety of game, and, increasingly, its torrential floods of refugees. Once labelled "the dark continent," Africa is again today overshadowed by black clouds of oppression, dictatorship, drought, and homelessness. It is also the world's most food-deficient continent.

Recent figures reveal that a total of four million Africans are refugees. Caught in political knots they are usually powerless to unravel, or climatic changes beyond their control, their choice is unenviable: stay and face death through fighting or famine, or leave in the hope that elsewhere things may be better. Most leave, straggling across land on foot or in trucks, seeking escape from the horrors of war, genocide, and starvation which have become all too common in the African continent.

East Africa suffers most from the twin plagues of drought and war which have invaded Ethiopia, Uganda, Somalia, Kenya *Somalia* is

fering was neither punishment nor chastisement, but testing.

The reason Job suffered is not the most important point made in this book. The words of God give us the proper attitude toward suffering. From them we learn that there are many reasons why people suffer. It is not for us to ask why. We must suffer, we cannot know. God's purposes are too great for us, as they were too great for Job. Therefore we must not question. Above all, we must not doubt the righteousness of God. We must leave the reason with God and trust Him completely to use our suffering for His Glory and for our good. For His Glory is our good and our good is His Glory.

MRS. R. VANDERGRIENDT

the hardest hit. This tiny country bordering Ethiopia now harbours one and a half million of Africa's four million refugees: one refugee for every four native Somalis! It is a country which can ill afford aid to others, for Somalia is listed among the five poorest countries in the world. Nonetheless, refugees continue to stream in and exhaustion and starvation take their toll. In only one of the many dangerously overcrowded camps, fifteen children die daily.

What is the cause of this Somali crisis? In a nutshell, it is the latest result of an old boundary dispute between Somalia and Ethiopia. The issue, which had smoldered for decades, burst into full flame in the late 1970's. The consequences, magnified by drought, were horrendous. But, to backtrack a moment

In 1897, a British act included the Ogaden desert as part of Ethiopia, in spite of the fact that the inhabitants were ethnic Somalis. The Somali nomads and other ethnic tribes continued to consider the Ogaden their home. Though few people have had more need of economic help, such concerns were not primary for the Somalis. Fiercely nationalistic, they were captivated by the dream of unifying Somali-inhabited areas. For this they wanted arms, and when the West, mainly out of concern for Somalia's neighbours, refused to deliver, the Kremlin jumped at the opportunity to establish a foothold in the Horn of Africa.

In the 1960's, the Soviets poured military advisors and weapons into Somalia, transforming its tiny, tattered army into a fighting force of 25,000. The Soviets were not being uncharacteristically benevolent. They were well aware of the benefits of Somalia's strategic location near Saudi Arabia, and knew how important this country could be as a link between Africa and the Middle East. Somali ports, for example, were soon put to

use to provide docking and communication facilities for Moscow's expanding navy.

Soviet popularity in Somalia was never assured, and Marxist-Leninist philosophy received only lip-service from a people committed to the tenets of Islam. Still, the Russians were tolerated because of the arms they supplied. Somalis were building for the day when they could liberate "Greater Somalia" (their name for the Ogaden), and the Soviets were happy to fuel this effort.

The 1974 overthrow of Ethiopia changed the picture in the Horn of Africa. Emperor Haile Selassie's Christian-based, pro-western regime collapsed under the onslaught of Marxist militarists. The junta seized power and initiated its experiment in "scientific socialism." In effect, it launched a reign of terror that eliminated almost a generation of Ethiopian leaders and cost the lives of thousands of innocent men, women, and children. Ethiopia under Marxist control was a prize indeed: 30 million inhabitants, one of the largest landmasses in Africa, with two main ports on the Red Sea, and possession of Egypt's life-blood, the source of the Nile.

Russia attempted to reconcile her two allies: Somalia and Ethiopia, by proposing a linking of the two countries — a plan which Somali President Siad Barre later told Western leaders was part of a master plan to win control of southern Africa and the oil-rich nations of the African peninsula. Ensuing events were, of course, more complex than indicated in this article, but the final analysis is that the Somalis weren't interested. Finally, they concluded that the time was ripe to try to win back the Ogaden desert. In July of 1977, using their Soviet arms, Somali forces launched an offensive. The Carter administration had apparently given Somalia reason to believe that the U.S. would support her cause, but when Washington realized that Somalia had launched a full-scale war against Ethiopia, offers of arms were rescinded. Somalia was forced to rely on her own stock-piled arms and aid from the Muslim states of the Persian Gulf. The Soviets, now backing their new ally, Ethiopia (Somalia subsequently expelled its Soviet advisors), were sure the U.S. would avoid confrontation in the area. Their reasoning proved justified.

Ethiopia set out to bring Somalis to their knees. It was no idle threat. Reinforced by Soviet supplies and

Cuban advisors, Ethiopia began her offensive in February 1978. Cuban-manned artillery and planes raining bombs pushed Somali forces back to the hills and mountain passes. After three days of fighting, the hopelessly outgunned Somalis were trapped and slaughtered, and the war which had begun with Somali victories, ended in resounding defeat. Disappointed Somali leaders spoke of the U.S. as a "paper tiger" and one publicly concluded, "We have learned there is but one superpower, and that is the Soviet Union."

The war is over, but guerrilla attacks have continued to flare, and now the nomadic peoples of the Ogaden are being forced to leave. According to refugees straggling into the Somali camps, their cattle and goats are being killed, their water poisoned. Some of the men stay and fight. Most of the women, children, and elderly folk walk for weeks, even months, across the stony, drought-

dried desert to reach the relative safety of Somalia. Refugee camps have sprung up to accommodate the masses arriving often at the rate of 800 to 1,000 a day. There is not much for them to come to . . . Some construct shelters just anywhere and attempt to be independent of outside aid. Others, realizing that they cannot survive without their livestock, head for refugee camps where there is at least a chance of obtaining a little food and water.

Somalia, realizing her inability to meet this need, has appealed for outside aid. As a result, World Vision International entered Somalia in May of last year to investigate the situation. The crisis was so severe that World Vision quickly assumed responsibility for Las Dhure camp, a camp which has since dangerously surpassed its original quota of 25,000 and at last count stood at over 76,000.

A year later, the storm has not yet passed. Conditions are still very

AFRICA'S FAMINE BELT



serious: disease and starvation take their toll in the sweltering, overcrowded camps. Refugees continue to straggle in. World Vision has set up therapeutic feeding centres and has medical teams working diligently to care for as many of the multitude as possible, but, for many, the help is too little and too late.

The effects of Soviet power and influence ripple far beyond the shores of Somalia. One thinks of Mozambique, Afghanistan, Angola, etc. Sadly, our countries have done little to prompt Soviet restraint, though one hopes that the present U.S. administration is more inclined to attempt to aid those resisting the outside imposition of Marxist rule in Africa.

Is there anything we can do? Any attempts at improving the situation require some sacrifice — whether of time, money, or energy — but certainly, looking at Africa today, one cannot but be convinced of the necessity for involvement. Right now, more *financial aid* is needed if thousands of malnourished Somalis are to live. (Ethiopia too is suffering severe drought and consequent famine in two of her provinces.) One can speak vaguely of causes, mistakes . . . but the fact remains that children die each day . . . and we *can* help. Our heavenly Father has given us so much! In gratitude to Him let us do what we can to “maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute / Rescue the weak and the needy” (Ps. 82:3, 4). Our gifts can go a long way!

Looking at the broader picture, we can also through personal conversations with others, through letters to MPs and newspapers, through *political involvement*, strive to influence public opinion and push our government to do more to support freedom and oppose tyranny. It must be made clear to the Soviets and other countries which promote tyranny, that economic cooperation cannot continue while they attempt to conquer the Third World. The Soviet attacks are strong and well-calculated. Feeble re-proofs or taps on the hand will never halt the Marxist machine. Western nations must overcome their apathy and join in providing a counter-force against Soviet bloc interventions, if not for the sake of the African nations, then, selfishly, in the realization that such action is eventually for the preservation of our own freedom.

Thirdly, we should realize that the battle for Africa is a spiritual one. Giving monetary gifts alone can be sentimental: a response to a touched heart-string, a picture of a severely



A Somali refugee camp. The people construct shelters of tangled thorn bush covered with old sacks. Water and food are in very short supply.

malnourished child. Our giving must be an act of gratitude to God whose love enables us to reach out in concern to our needy neighbours. And our gifts must be accompanied by *prayer*, by personal involvement as much as possible. The path is not without stumbling stones; e.g. there is a growing Church movement in Africa (backed by the World Council of Churches) which seems more committed to Revolution than to the Gospel. All the more reasons for our daily intercession at the throne of grace. Not to act, after all, is to act. Brother Andrew in *Battle for Africa* stresses that:

“the flow of history can still be interrupted in Africa. Only a few countries are already Marxist, and the leaders even there do not have a strong, ideological hold on the mass of people, only a military one. Our greatest weapon is people with changed hearts, hearts which have been changed by the love of Christ” (p. 51).

The forces of evil move on ruthlessly, seeking through every possible means and medium to control men’s minds and conduct. Thousands of young Africans, to name only one of countless Communist ploys, are encouraged to study at no cost in Eastern European universities, where the authorities use every opportunity to indoctrinate them with Marxist ideology. Does our interest in living the Christian life and bringing others to the Lord match this zeal? We must be willing to learn, to give, to pray . . . asking God to bless Bible translation and mission efforts (only with God’s

Word can Christians really grow and withstand persecution), and praying that the work done by the many dedicated Christian missionaries of the past, whose graves dot the continent, will continue to bear fruit. Scores of people have spent their lives bringing the light of the Gospel to a continent darkened by animism and slave trade. Let us pray that African Christians will stand firm against the growing force of Islam, and the oppression and persecution Communism has brought and is bringing to Angola, Mozambique, the Sudan, Tanzania, and many other areas of the African continent.

May God cause us to be faithful and bless all of our small efforts, using even them to hold back the Goliath of communism. He can, for our battle, like David’s, is a spiritual one. So, let us give from our abundance that others might live, and let us pray that He who holds the course of this world and each one of us in the palm of His hand, will lift the darkness of unbelief, tyranny, and famine that overshadows so much of Africa, and make it increasingly a continent of light.

NOTE: Gifts to help relieve the suffering in Somalia may be sent to:

C.R.W.R.F.
P.O. Box 793,
Burlington, Ontario L7R 3Y7

C.R.W.R.F. will forward monies received to World Vision of Canada whose teams are labouring in Somali refugee camps.

A Reformed Social-Political Magazine

Housekeeping

In one of the many reports to the Canadian Radio and Television Commission it was said about that medium: "Content is all that matters; the rest is housekeeping."

That may be true, but putting an as yet empty house in order means a lot of very important work. One of the chores of housekeeping is now almost completed: A constitution and a set of bylaws has been drafted and discussed. Soon the foundation can be incorporated under the Societies Act and application to be a registered charitable organization will follow, so that Canadian donations will be tax deductible. Of this constitution, although it is not passed yet, we feel free to quote the two vital articles:

2. Purpose of the society is to publish periodically a magazine promoting Christian principles in all spheres of life, especially the social, economic and political realms.
3. In carrying out its objects, the society will recognize the Bible as God's infallible Word and be subject to the official creeds of the CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES, to wit: the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort.

We do not believe, as is becoming fashionable these days, in strictly defined "spheres" where the creeds of the Church should only apply to the "sphere of the Church." Life is one. The Three Forms of Unity, precisely because in them the Church speaks in accordance with God's Word, are in all of life the source of authority.

If this is called confessionalism, then so be it.

So much for housekeeping, which, you may understand by now, is not without importance.

Content — all that matters

To readers who are eagerly (we hope) or curious-

ly looking forward to our first number, mid-November may seem far away. To us, however, who have to come up with a product that can stand the test, that date is dreadfully near at hand. We are contacting potential contributors around the world. We are sketching a menu for the first issues. We are trying to visualize how the pages should be laid out. We are dreaming about the front page. We do not get much sleep.

One field where readers of *Clarion* could help is in the "letters-to-the-editor" department. One may scoff at this so-called "participatory democracy"; we believe that reader comment is healthy.

Naturally, there will be the usual restriction: we maintain the right to abridge, to summarize redundant letters, or, if responses are irrelevant or in bad taste, not to publish them at all.

In order to have something to place, please note that we are planning to deal with "high interest rates and inflation, cure or cause?" If you have any comments, please send your letters to the editorial address. Letters on any other subject are welcome. Your opinion may be strong, but we would like to see some basis or argument as well; statements like: "egg marketing boards are for the birds" may cause a chuckle, but it does not bring our understanding to the next base.

Well, what of it? Here is the address:

The Editor

Box 12, Transcona Postal Station
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2C 2Z5

On the question whether the mail will ever start moving again, we shall not speculate. We shall not fulminate either. That we leave up to Rev. VanOene. He does that so well.

Below are again the names of the Committee members. Please make their task a pleasant one. You can do so by bringing together as many subscriptions as possible.

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