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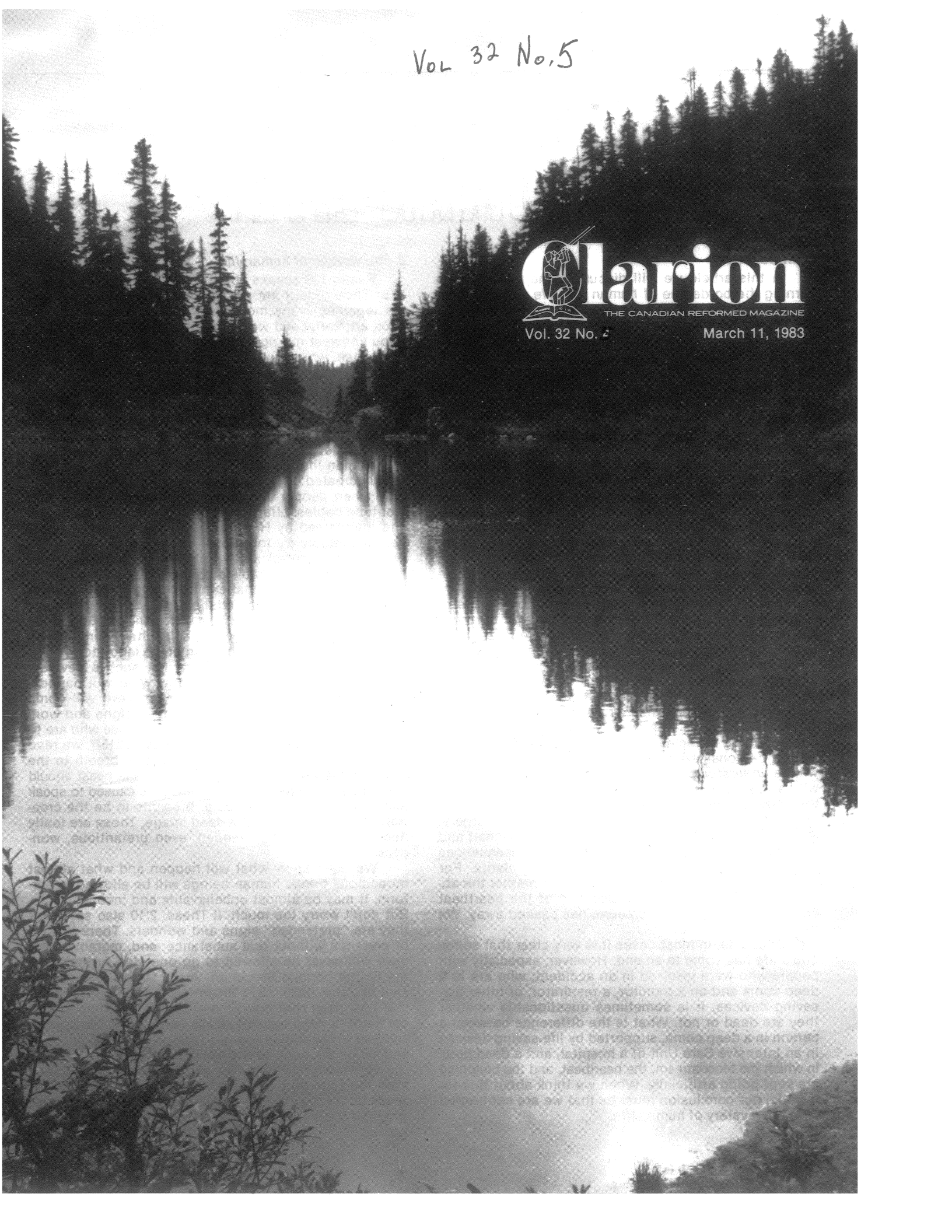


Clarion

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The Borderline of HUMAN LIFE.

1. Introduction

In this article we will discuss some matters concerning the borderline of human life. We will deal with some questions which may arise when people are on the verge of death. That doesn't seem to be a cheerful topic, and some may wonder why we have to discuss such a matter extensively in a magazine like this. Isn't death a reality we have to live with and to accept? From a Christian point of view we can see it as an inevitable consequence of sin. It will be with us until the end of this world. But need it be extensively discussed?

Still we consider it important to pay attention to a number of points which may often be overlooked or at least not dealt with properly. An open discussion of these things can make it easier to deal with problems which otherwise could cause frustration.

That there are important questions to be answered becomes clear when we realize people today are apparently not able to agree on the question what death really is. That may sound somewhat strange. Everyone knows what death is; we all are confronted with it in one way or another, aren't we? However, there is an increasing insecurity with respect to the borderline of human life. When, exactly, does it end? Even in the medical field people are looking for a solid and satisfying definition. I will try to explain what really is at stake.

In the past it was sufficient to ascertain that the patient had stopped breathing or that the heartbeat had come to a halt. Today neither of these phenomena are sufficient any longer. When a patient stops breathing, it is possible to use a respirator or similar device to keep him breathing artificially. That the stopping of the heart cannot be considered either as evidence of being dead will be understood when we realize that people can live with an artificial, purely mechanical heart, implanted in the body. Sometimes a patient can live for quite a while after his heart has been stopped for open heart surgery. An external heart-lung machine takes over the heart and lung functions. We will see later what consequences this may have with regard to organ transplants. For the moment, may it suffice to prove that neither the absence of breathing nor the stopping of the heartbeat can serve as proof that someone has passed away. We need further evidence.

Of course, in most cases it is very clear that someone's life has come to an end. However, especially with people who were involved in an accident, who are in a deep coma and on a monitor, a respirator, or other life-saving devices, it is sometimes questionable whether they are dead or not. What is the difference between a person in a deep coma, supported by life-saving devices in an Intensive Care Unit of a hospital, and a dead body in which the bloodstream, the heartbeat, and the breathing are kept going artificially. When we think about this for a while, our conclusion must be that we are confronted with the mystery of human life.

2. The wonder of human life

Psalms 139 speaks about the wonder of human life. "For Thou didst form my inward parts, Thou didst knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise Thee, for Thou art fearful and wonderful. Wonderful are Thy works! Thou knowest me right well; my frame was not hidden from Thee, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth. Thy eyes beheld my unformed substance; in Thy book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them." Knit together by the Lord, intricately wrought; that means: complicated, containing many detailed parts, and difficult to understand.

Human life is a wonder. Every human life is mysteriously created by God's hand. We hold to that even in a time when people talk about genetic engineering and test-tube babies. Life comes from the Lord; it is created and maintained by Him from the very moment of conception. People try to unravel this mystery. They try to get it under control and to imitate it. Some consider human life as a remarkable development of DNA chains, a bio-chemical process that can be brought under control and can even be manipulated by man. They are already talking about the "raising" or "creating" of a special breed of human beings, with special characteristics according to the wishes of the man in the laboratory.

We shouldn't say to hastily that such a development is impossible. We don't know what will happen. The Bible teaches us clearly that the devil will come "... with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish. . . ." (II Thess. 2:10). And in Rev. 13:15ff. we read about the devil who was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast should even speak. That means: a dead image is caused to speak and to act as a human being. It seems to be the creation of human life out of a dead image. Those are really deceitful signs and pretended, even pretentious, wonders.

We don't know what will happen and what almost miraculous things human beings will be allowed to perform. It may be almost unbelievable and inconceivable. But don't worry too much. II Thess. 2:10 also says that they are "pretended" signs and wonders. There is a lot of pretence without real substance; and, moreover, the devil will never be allowed to go one step further than the Father permits him to go. Jesus Christ Himself has said in John 10:28, 29, concerning those whom the Father has given Him that no one can snatch them out of the Father's hand and out of His hand. Don't panic when you see unbelievable things. Trust in the Lord our God and in Jesus Christ, who stays in control.

However, one thing we know for sure: life comes from the Lord and we have to hold to that. We do not speak about the absolute value of human life; we do not consider the human right to life or the universal human

rights. Instead, we speak about the right of the Lord, the Creator of human life. He is the only One who, sovereignly, can decide on or dispose of human life. He gives life and He can take it away. He makes it begin and He can let it come to an end. Every decision or action of men with respect to human life has to be subject to His commandments. That is what we have to remember when we talk about abortion. Human life is a work of God's creating power, from the very moment of conception on. Every destruction of or infringement upon this life is an act against the Lord. We do not speak about the absolute value of human life, neither as far as the beginning of it is concerned, nor as far as the termination of it is concerned. We do speak about the absolute right of the Lord with respect to human life. That also counts when we hear about eugenic abortion.

3. *Eugenic abortion*

Eugenic abortion is an abortion executed with the purpose "to improve the human race." During pregnancy a test can be performed to see whether the baby is handicapped, retarded, or suffering other abnormalities. If so, an abortion can take place to prevent the birth of such a baby. We will all agree that in such a case a human being is killed. In principle, it doesn't make too much difference whether the baby is killed before or after birth. Therefore we should be careful with regard to such tests. It can bring a family into temptation to violate the rights, not of a human being, but of the Lord, who created life. This is especially so when they have to deal with a doctor who tries to make them believe that they are doing the right thing. Sometimes it seems to be difficult to go against the advice of a physician, even when he is an unbeliever and tries to make us act according to the ethics of atheists rather than according to the commandments of the Lord.

However, we should not treat all cases in the same way. We have to make a distinction between eugenic abortion and abortion upon medical indication. The latter often refers to an abortion performed to save the life of the mother. In how far is that acceptable? In the past it was, and to a certain extent it still is, according to the ethics of the Roman Catholic Church, that the life of the baby always prevails over the life of the mother. Even if, humanly speaking, it can be expected that the mother will not survive the delivery, the life of the baby goes first.

To come to a proper approach in this dilemma, we have to be careful in our formulation. We shouldn't use the word abortion at all in this respect, although it might be the appropriate technical term according to medical jargon.

The aim and purpose of every medical treatment has to be to save the life of the patient or to relieve his suffering. In this respect risks sometimes have to be considered. That is the responsibility of human beings who are facing a difficult decision. After an accident, for instance, when the lives of a number of people are in danger, risks have to be taken to rescue them. This can put people in a threatening dilemma. The rescue of one can increase the risk for, or even kill, another. A choice has to be made. Serious consequences are inevitable both ways. That is a precarious situation, but nonetheless we have to act. Taking no decision or making no choice will only make things worse. Humanly

speaking, only one life can be saved. Doing nothing may cost two lives. That is a terrible situation.

The same situation can occur during a pregnancy or a delivery, where humanly speaking, going by the information which is available and the consequences as far as they can be foreseen, only one life can be saved. A choice must be made. It can happen that the life of the mother can be saved only at the cost of the life of the baby. We should not call this an abortion. The crucial point in this respect is that the intention of the treatment is not to terminate the life of the baby, but to save the life of the mother. If the consequence of this life-saving operation is that the life of the baby cannot be saved, it is part of the inevitable choice between the rescue of one out of two human lives. It becomes clear that we cannot speak about the absolute value of human life. We have to be obedient to the Lord and we have to respect His sovereign and absolute right with respect to human life.

In such a situation we have to make a difference between the "relative value" of two lives. It can happen that someone has to sacrifice his life to save the life of others; for instance, in a time of war, in calamities, or with rescue operations. A commander-in-chief sometimes has to make a decision to sacrifice the life of some in order to save, rescue, protect, or defend others. In the same way it can be necessary to sacrifice the life of an unborn baby to save the life of a mother who is supposed to take care of a family and who still has an important task with regard to the rest of the family. We cannot escape such decisions, and we shouldn't try to evade them either. In this respect we have to bear in mind that we are not dealing with the absolute value of human life, the right to life, or other human rights, but with the God who creates life. We have to make decisions which can stand the test of His Word. We have to face our responsibility before Him, the God of life and death. However, — to prevent misunderstanding — it has to be stressed that cases like this very rarely occur with the present state of medical help. Situations where a choice has to be made to save the life of the one at the cost of the other are few in number.

What I have said so far about abortion and making a decision with respect to a treatment that has a desired effect but also some undesired effects or undesired consequences, is also important with regard to euthanasia.

4. *Euthanasia*

Euthanasia is and will become a current issue more and more. We have to think about the implications of it, and we have to discuss the ethical aspects of it. Of course, we can say: "We are against it. Period." That is an easy way out, but we are in danger of evading the real questions. We have to be aware of the problems in this respect and the complexity of this issue. Sometimes a distinction is made between passive and active euthanasia. That in itself shows us that we can not treat every case in the same way.

What do we mean by active and passive euthanasia? In short, we can put it this way: active euthanasia is doing something to terminate human life; passive euthanasia is causing someone's death by considerately leaving something undone. However, this matter is much more complicated than it might seem to be at first glance.

Therefore we will try to explain some aspects in what follows.

The word "euthanasia" comes from a root which means "to die in a desirable way"; literally it means: "a good death." Its original meaning expressed the desire to die in a peaceful and painless way, without suffering and anxiety. According to ancient literature, Caesar Augustus often prayed that he should die without suffering and pain. That, literally, was "euthanasia."

Nowadays the word has received the meaning of: causing the death of a patient who is incurably ill, handicapped, retarded, or in terrible suffering — or at least to hasten his death. It is done on request of the patient himself or on request of his family if he is unable to make a decision himself.

It will be clear to everyone that we reject active euthanasia. That means every treatment or action undertaken with the purpose of bringing human life to an end. It does not matter what kind of human life it is. It is not up to us to decide whether human life is still meaningful. Even with incurably ill, demented, or severely handicapped people it is not up to us to decide about their span of life. We cannot judge about the meaning of their life, asking questions like: Does it make sense? Does it serve any purpose whatsoever to keep them alive? It is not up to us to decide! Life comes from the Lord and He, our God, the Creator of human life, is the only One who has the right to terminate or to take away human life. The quality of human life, the usefulness or meaningfulness, or even the seeming meaninglessness, does not give us the right to intervene. Even when people are unable to communicate, because they are either in a deep coma or in a state of constant unconsciousness because of heavy sedation, we have no right to make decisions about the end of their lifetime.

As far as severely handicapped, deeply demented, imbecile, and idiotic people are concerned, we have no right to decide whether their life is meaningful. We know that handicapped people sometimes are a real blessing in a family and can cause a better atmosphere of unity, communion, and willingness to serve than can be found in families with so-called superintelligent children.

Active euthanasia, in whatever circumstances it may take place, is always a violation of the commandments of the Lord and a matter of the murder of our neighbour. As far as passive euthanasia is concerned, the matter is more complicated.

5. *Passive euthanasia*

The term passive euthanasia often refers to a situation in which something is considerably left undone that humanly speaking could have prolonged life. Here we are entering a very precarious area. What do we mean by prolonging a life? As we have seen before, we cannot and should not speak about the absolute value of human life. We have to honour and respect the God who creates life and who can bring it to an end. We should have respect, not for human life as such, but for the God who creates human life. That means that we respect also God's deeds with regard to the termination of human life.

On the one hand, we can see everywhere how people take into their own hands the decision to kill others. But, on the other hand, many are not prepared to face death as a reality, coming at a time decided upon by the Lord. In the hospitals we can see how doctors some-

times fight desperately against death, unwilling to admit that it is the Lord who decides. Especially where some heads of state were involved, we have heard strange stories: doctors, unwilling to give up a humanly speaking lost battle. That borders on idolatry and human overestimation. We should not take away someone's "right to live" but we should not infringe upon someone's "right to die either." We would do better to state it this way: we have to accept and to respect the Lord's hand in creating and maintaining human life as well as in bringing it to an end. Refraining from further treatment in such cases has nothing to do with passive euthanasia; it is rather a matter of facing reality and admitting that life is not something we can decide on.

In this respect we do not only consider cases in which further treatment finally results in a desperate continuation of a lost battle. We also have to consider those situations in which it is questionable whether there is really human life. I have mentioned earlier that it is sometimes hard to say whether a person is still alive. After an accident a patient may be in a deep coma. There can be severe brain damage. The heartbeat can be kept going artificially, but the fact that the heart still works does not prove that the person is alive. In the case of a heart transplant, a person's heart continues to work, even in someone else's body. No one will maintain that the heart donor is still alive, because "his" heart is beating. No, he was probably killed in an accident, and someone else received his heart while it was still working or after it had been reactivated.

Also the opposite happens: after a cardiac arrest, when a heart stops, and even when it is replaced either by another heart or by a heart-pump, the person is still alive. The same counts for other organs. So-called life-saving devices can take over the functions of different organs or keep them going even after the person has died. At what time is the doctor allowed to switch off the equipment? In other words: When is the patient dead?

There are situations in which we really can speak of "life-saving devices" and "prolonging of life," at least from a human point of view. But there are also situations where the equipment only maintains the bloodstream, heartbeat, oxygen supply, and perhaps some metabolic processes in a dead body.

Where does the borderline lie between life and death? The most commonly accepted indication nowadays seems to be a repeatedly flat EEG or a so-called isoelectric encephalogram. You might wonder what this "technical" term is all about. The brain produces very small electrical waves. With an electronic device, this activity can be registered. That gives a so-called EEG. If the test shows no activity at all, we call it a flat EEG. If such a test, repeatedly performed with a certain period of time in between, does not show any activity of the brain, a patient can be pronounced dead. This lack of brain activity is considered to be an irreversible phenomenon. If the equipment is turned off in such a case,

— *Continued on page 98.*

CORRECTIONS: *Discipline*

Clarion Volume 32, No. 4, page 71, column 1, line 24, should read: . . . ultimately at the age of *thirty* years (not twenty years).

Page 71, column 3, line 10, should read: . . . this announcement shall not be made before they have reached the age of *twenty* years, (not thirty years).

“WITH LIFE AND LIP”

A critique from Scripture and History,

Sleeping?

For weeks now I've been waiting for others to voice a protest against the article "Evangelism and Home Mission" published in *Clarion*, Jan. 14 — in vain. It seems as though no one noticed that this article, if true and convincing, could well mean the end of evangelizing as far as we are concerned. Finally, a letter arrived from a brother past the age of 80, urging me to try once more to convince "our people" of the calling to evangelize. "I am troubled," so he wrote in Dutch, "by the idea that via *Clarion* our congregations receive a guidance by which the work of evangelism will be paralyzed even more." Then he refers not only to what he was allowed to do in this kingdom work when he was younger, but also to The Netherlands, where after a period of such paralysis there is an awakening of evangelizing. Even general synods give directives!

Having read this, I decided, reluctantly, to write a word of protest against the tenor of that article, for the sake of truth and, yes, also for the sake of "evangelism."

"Conclusions"

From the long article that led up to subsequent conclusions, I only quote at this moment the remark, worth mentioning, that the two terms "evangelism" and "home mission" belong together: the former speaking of the *contents* of preaching, the latter about the *mandate* for preaching.

These, then, were the conclusions:

- Nowhere in Scripture are all believers called and sent to preach the gospel. They are all called to confess Christ in their own vocation (Lord's Day XII, I Cor. 7:17-24).
- The Lord has instituted a special office for the ministry of the Word.
- By the institution of the office for the ministry of the Word the Lord forbids all rejection and overshadowing of it by taking up this office in an unlawful way (Belgic Confession, Art. XXXI).

d. "Evangelism" (preaching the Word) may never be separated from "mission" (a lawful calling and sending).

A Summary

To pinpoint the issue, I summarize these conclusions in (hopefully) a clear and simple way. Only ordained preachers are allowed to preach. Evangelizing (I prefer this above "evangelism") is preaching. Thus the Lord forbids anyone not lawfully ordained as preacher, to evangelize. This would be overshadowing the offices in the church. Common believers are never called in the Bible to preach; they have to confine themselves to confessing Christ "in their own vocation."

A Conclusion from Conclusions

My first, and also last, conclusion is that this position spells the end of evangelizing by all Christians who (Lord's Day 12, Q&A 32) received the Spirit of Christ "to confess His Name" but have not been ordained as preachers.

My second conclusion is that in our Churches we have no office for the kind of evangelizing that this article speaks of. Yes, foreign mission is called "evangelizing all the nations" by the Lord Himself, Matt. 28, and we have a special office for that. Finally we now even have an article in the Church Order about such Missionaries, and even better: a Form for the Ordination of Missionaries! But neither in the letters of call I received during the years, nor in the form for ordaining and installing ministers did I ever read a single word that, in addition to my work as pastor and teacher within the already-gathered local church, I would also have to consider it my calling to "evangelize" *outside*. As a Christian, yes, but not in my official capacity as ordained minister. When the author or I deliver a message via "The Voice of the Church," that is not a part of our ministerial calling. Then all ministers would have to do it. But the "Voice of the Church" proves clearly that not all ministers *should* do it. . . .

Therefore, unless we (we?) create a new office of — let's say — "evangelist," evangelizing as preaching the good tiding is out! The only thing we are left with is that Arminian nonsense joyfully voiced by some "Reformed" people that the doors of the church are open. . . , as though a sinner has ever come to Christ on his own initiative. And then, of course



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“every believer confessing Christ in his own vocation.” But — and this is the weight of the whole article — that confessing may not develop into preaching. . . .” God forbids that.” Here I only refer to the title “Life and Lip” which is often found in literature on evangelizing. You witness not only with your life but also with your lip! K. SCHILDER said more than once that the “godly *walk*” by which we should win the neighbour for Christ, Lord’s Day 32, consists largely of godly *talk*! Our English word “conversation” means both “walk” and “talk.” The New Testament loves that word: “your conversation among the Gentiles,” 1 Pet. 2:12.

My critique against the article and its conclusions will come, I admit, quite sharply from Scripture and history.

Undue Limitations

As an introduction and preparation for my “attack,” I want to say a word or two on undue limitations applied by the author of that article.

1. There is the limitation “confess Christ *in your own vocation*.” I assume with reason that a believer may not go outside that vocation, because of the words, “The Lord forbids. . . .” You are a baker, a clerk, a housewife? That’s your vocation. And of course you have to confess Christ there! The just-mentioned term “conversation” expresses that most often in the New Testament. But do not dare go outside that vocation with any form of “preaching.” Forbidden! You are not ordained. I leafed through the *Handboek Voor Gereformeerde Evangelisatie* and saw the long list of all those evangelizing activities by our grandpar-

ents in Sunday school, street preaching, homevisiting, distribution of tracts, etc. They did it all so faithfully, but I beg your pardon: “faithfully”? Were they called? They should have stuck to their jobs. . . .

2. “Confess Christ” we read in the conclusions. Reference is made to Lord’s Day 12. Your and my Catechism refers to Matt. 10:32, “So everyone who acknowledges Me before men, I also will acknowledge before My Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies Me before men, I also will deny before My Father who is in heaven”; and Rom. 10:10, “For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved.” There we have those *lips*! Lips speak, and when they speak the truth about Jesus Christ, such speaking is evangelizing, and evangelizing is preaching (cf. the article; cf. also below). That’s what the men of Heidelberg meant by “confessing Christ.” Then, after the *lip*, they mentioned the *life*: “living sacrifice.”

3. The author scrupulously avoided the term “*to witness*,” possibly because he, with many others, still sits at the feet of *Dr. R. Schippers*, who wrote his dissertation on the term, trying to prove that you may use it only for the so-called ear- and eye-witnesses of Jesus, like the apostles. On the evening of Oct. 26, 1940, I withstood him to his face in Kampen (the date got stuck in my memory: having returned home, that home plus church building were hit by a 400-pound British bomb . . .). The Holy Spirit uses the term also for

all those mentioned in Heb. 11. Rev. 11 speaks about the two witnesses, and the commentaries I consulted say that these witnesses must be understood to witness during the whole New Testament dispensation! Besides that, all those countless *martyrs* (but the Lord knows their number) are *witnesses*. In Greek it is the same word: *martus*. Maybe we first have to suffer for Christ, become “*martyrs*,” before we really start to witness, ordained or not.

Decisive Argument Killed by Theological Term

Still paving my way towards my main criticism, I have to remove an obstacle. The beautiful term “redemptive-historical interpretation” must serve to render null and void the powerful testimony of the Holy Spirit re: evangelizing by common believers: *Acts 11:19-23*. The author states that we must read this information within the redemptive-historical framework. What does it say?

“Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to none except Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned to the Lord.”

Later I have more to say on this beautiful picture. But the article states: “This is not necessarily normative. . . . At this early date the special offices had not been established yet.” Therefore the passage is “in-

it is not a matter of euthanasia, although the immediate result is that all the functions of the body stop. He does not die; his life was already terminated.

However, there are other cases we should consider as well. Suppose someone is in a terminal stage, either because of serious illness or because of age. Humanly speaking, the person can only live a few days. Then a complication occurs which under normal conditions would have been corrected by an operation or a rather complicated treatment. What are we supposed to do now? Suddenly start an action which might prolong the life of the patient, but which also can be too much for him to take so that he dies during the operation? Or do we refrain from any treatment, admitting that this is part of his terminal stage? The latter seems to be a kind of passive euthanasia! leaving undone something that

could have prolonged his life.

I am convinced that in cases like this we sometimes have to refrain from intervening. We have to admit that the Lord is at work, bringing human life to an end. We should never try to hasten death, but neither should we in a desperate way try to evade the reality of the process of dying. We shouldn’t call this passive euthanasia but rather a matter of respect for the Lord, who rules over life and death. We recognize, to a certain extent, a human “right” to live, but we should also recognize a “right” to die quietly, without medical interference at any cost.

Burlington, ON

W. POUWELSE
(To be continued).

conclusive.” I say, “I beg your pardon, but were there not apostles already who had the mandate to go to Judea, Samaria, and the end of the world?” But, except for Peter, who was forced to go to Cornelius in Caesarea, Acts 10, they were all still sitting in Jerusalem. Then, I have always learned, all that was written before was written for our instruction. Also, “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,” II Tim. 3:16, 17. Further, the above-quoted “conclusions” say that “God forbids . . .” the common believer to overshadow the ordained offices, but this text tells us that these scattered believers, doing just that, experienced that “the hand of the Lord was with them.”

Three Biblical Examples

Acts 11 was not the first time “evangelizing” was done by common believers.

1. Acts 8:1, 4ff.

“And on that day a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the region of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. . . . Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.”

Although much could be quoted from the many scholars who have been impressed by this intriguing picture, let’s first firmly stress that the Greek says, “They went *evangelizing*. . .”! You remember what that article wants us to believe? That evangelizing, because it means preaching the gospel, can only be done by those called to it (“mission”); God forbids such preaching by those who are not ordained. Of course, one can get out of this by saying that because of the “redemptive-historical framework” this text means nothing. But the Holy Spirit testifies here that common believers “evangelized.” They were persecuted and scattered, and the Lord used this scattering for His kingdom.

R. FREW writes that there is no evidence, nor is there any probability, that all these persons were ordained to preach. Even Philip, who came later to Samaria, was not ordained as a preacher, Acts 7, but preach he did! GROSHEIDE remarks that these common men and women, fleeing for their life and having left everything behind except the gospel, would not

easily have “evangelized” in Jerusalem because the apostles and evangelists were there. There may have been about 25,000 believers in Jerusalem by that time, and God was pleased to use their “dispersion” (*diaspora*) for the fast growth of His church. No one among us would dare deny that the Holy Spirit was working through these people, because it is He who works faith by the preaching of the gospel. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were with these “informal missionaries,” as M. GREEN calls them in his *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Eerdmans, 1970, p. 172).

I would like to conclude this article (more has to come!) with some more from this same source, p. 172/3. “. . . the little man, the unknown ordinary man, the man who left no literary remains was the prime agent. . . .” Quoting HARNACK, “We cannot hesitate to believe that the great Mission of Christianity was in reality accomplished by means of informal missionaries.” Green then continues:

“But as early as Acts 8 we find that it is not the apostles but the ‘amateur’ missionaries, the men evicted from Jerusalem as a result of the persecution which followed Stephen’s martyrdom, who took the gospel with them wherever they went. It was they who travelled along the coastal plain to Phoenicia, over the sea to Cy-

prus, or struck up North to Antioch. . . . It was an unself-conscious effort. They were scattered from their base in Jerusalem and they went everywhere spreading the good news which had brought joy, release and a new life to themselves. This must often have been not formal preaching, but the informal chattering to friends and chance acquaintances, in homes and wine shops, on walks and around market stalls. They went everywhere, gossiping the gospel; they did it naturally, enthusiastically, and with the conviction of those who are not paid to say that sort of thing. Consequently, they were taken seriously, and the movement spread, notably among the lower classes.”

We will hear more of the same about this kind of “evangelizing” by common, non-ordained believers when we turn to the tremendous growth of the church in the first centuries. We will even listen to the sworn enemies of the gospel of Jesus, who found material for their scorn in the fact that this Jesus religion was a religion of slaves, lower classes, even young people, because they were all preachers, “evangelizers. . . . But first more from the New Testament itself.

G. VANDOOREN

(To be continued.)

PEACE

There is the peace that cometh after sorrow,
Of hope surrendered, not of hope fulfilled;
A peace that looketh not upon tomorrow,
But calmly on a tempest that is stilled.

A peace which lives not now in joy’s excesses,
Nor in the happy life of love secure,
But in the unerring strength the heart possesses,
Of conflict’s won, while learning to endure.

A peace there is, in sacrifice secluded,
A life subdued, from will and passion free;
'T is not the peace that over Eden brooded,
But that which triumphed in Gethsemane.

ANONYMOUS



Evangelism - A Scriptural Mandate For All Believers

Dear Editor:

The article of Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer on Evangelism or Home Mission in the January 14, 1983, issue of *Clarion* leaves me in a quandary. In contrast to Rev. C. Van Spronsen's articles on Evangelism which appeared in the June 19, 1981, and July 3, 1981, issues of *Clarion* in which he emphasized the Scriptural demand of evangelism as being "an essential part of being Church," and in which the whole congregation should be involved, Rev. DeBoer states that "the Lord does not call all believers to evangelize." He equates "Evangelism" to "preaching the Word," and "the Lord has instituted a special office for the ministry of the Word." He concludes: "Nowhere in Scripture are all believers called and sent to preach the gospel. They are all called to confess Christ in their own vocation (L.D. 12, I Cor. 7:17-24)." And he warns us against taking up the office of the ministry of the Word in an unlawful way. Although Rev. DeBoer does not specifically say that it is wrong for common believers to be engaged in evangelism, his article leaves the distinct impression that evangelism best be left to those legally called to the ministry of the Word. As a common member of the church, one would almost begin to feel guilty about bringing the gospel, the evangel, the good message, to unbelievers outside the church. (Another good excuse for "laymen" for not getting involved in evangelism). Hopefully Rev. DeBoer didn't mean to convey a sort of negative attitude toward evan-

gelism. Unfortunately in his attempt to clear up the confusion of the expressions "evangelism" and "home mission" with Scriptural texts which he thought "to be sufficient to teach us the direction which the Lord gives us for this matter," he omitted a number of texts which clearly point to the duty of all believers not only to show their gratitude in living a godly life but also to talk to others about the gospel of Christ.

Just a few examples: Christ tells us in Matthew 10:32: "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven." Does this mean that when we make profession of faith, at which time we publicly confess His name before other church members, we then have satisfied Christ's commandment to profess Him before men? Or is it sufficient to show the gospel truth by just professing it in our daily walk of life without talking about the hope which is in us? Or perhaps just tell other believers about what Christ has done for us? Of course, not! We must tell as many people as we can with whom God places us in contact about Christ's saving work for sinners, and this especially includes unbelievers and those who have gone astray. Is this the same as preaching? To tell others about the gospel, to share the evangel (gospel) with them and to tell them that Christ died to save miserable sinners and that His suffering and dying on the cross is sufficient to save all sinners who believe in Him; to call unbelievers to repentance, to tell them that God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the Truth (I Tim. 2:4)? How can we be quiet?

In Romans 1:8 Paul says of the believers in Rome that the whole world speaks about their faith in Christ. And I Thes. 1:8 tells about how out of the midst of the believers in Thessalonica the Word of the Lord sounded in every place and their faith in God was spread abroad. How could their faith be known all over the world if the believers themselves had not openly and frequently talked about the gospel? Just think about the busy traffic which connected the harbour cities. Believing seamen, dockworkers, merchants, and travellers must have made many contacts to try to win others for Christ.

In Eph. 6:15 we are told that as part of our spiritual armour, our "feet must be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." This means that with the feet of a messenger we must be willing to bring the message of the gospel of peace. (Compare Isa. 52:7: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings").

In 1 Pet. 3:15 it says: "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." What a beautiful opportunity to witness or to evangelize when we are placed in situations where people put us to the test of our faith. I am thinking here of students at secular universities, believers placed in the political arena, believers facing worldly psychiatrists and social workers, etc. What an opportunity to bring the gospel not only in the way we act, but also in the way we talk. Yes, Peter said in I Pet. 4:16, ". . . if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." Yes, let us not be ashamed; let us talk to unbelievers about what God has done for sinners by sending His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:16).

In Acts 8:4 it says: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word." These scattered Christians are the same as the ones mentioned in the first verse of Acts 8, namely, the members of the church of Jerusalem. They were scattered throughout the region of Judea and Samaria and later travelled further to Phenicia, Cyprus, and Antiochia. Through their evangelical labours, many were added to the number of Christians. Besides the apostles and preachers such as Stephen and Philip, these simple brothers and sisters contributed willingly to the spread of the gospel among their Jewish and heathen neighbours.

These are just a few texts which support a Scriptural mandate for *all* believers to be involved in evangelism and to bring the message of good tid-

Church News

Change of address:

Rev. C. Olij
222 Wellington Street East
Aurora, ON L4G 1J5

CALLED by the church of Hamilton,
Ontario

CANDIDATE A.P. FEIJEN

from Assen, The Netherlands for
missionary work in Brazil.

ings to unbelievers. This in contrast to Rev. DeBoer's conclusion that the texts which he chose do not support the concept that the Lord calls all believers to evangelize. For lack of space, I will not go into the explanation he gave for each text he mentioned; however, I do not entirely agree with his interpretation of Acts 11:20-21 and Eph. 4:11-12.

Our sister churches in The Netherlands at their Synod of Kampen in 1975 adopted a number of guidelines for evangelism which call for the consistory to stimulate and supervise congregational involvement in evangelism. Many brothers and sisters in The Netherlands, especially young people, have become active in a variety of evangelism projects with the sole purpose of drawing unbelievers to Christ and His church. Rev. G. Van Dooren, lecturer in the Pastoral Disciplines at our Theological College in Hamilton, in his book *Get Out* has given a series of excellent guidelines for congregational evangelism. He stresses the voluntary involvement of all believers as "front soldiers" to "get out" as disciples, as witnesses of Christ.

I am happy to see that nineteen of the thirty churches listed in our Yearbook 1982 have an evangelism or home mission committee. How active these committees are, I do not know. Neither do I know the number of church members who are involved; or the number of ministers, elders, and deacons supporting and stimulating it. However, I hope that in the near future all of our churches will be involved in evangelism since there appears to be a clear Scriptural mandate for all of us to "get out" to bring the gospel to those who are outside.

W.D. MEESTER

**Although this submission is too long for a "letter to the Editor," we do publish it because of the importance of the issue.*

vO

URGENTLY NEEDED

Spare copies of *Clarion*
Volume 27 and Volume 28

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Reply to Dr. W.D. Meester's letter entitled "Evangelism, A Scriptural Mandate for All Believers" which came as a response to the article "Evangelism or Home Mission" published in the January 14, 1983, issue of *Clarion*.

Let me first thank Dr. W.D. Meester for his letter. It is well possible that there are more who have received the same impression from my article that is expressed by Dr. W.D. Meester. This gives me an opportunity to clear up anything which may have been unclear.

1. The purpose of my article was to defend how the Scriptures teach us that certain men are *called* and set aside for the office of preaching the gospel (I Tim. 5:17, II Tim. 2:2). A clear distinction must therefore be maintained between the preaching of the gospel and confessing the gospel. Although Dr. W.D. Meester does not refute this, he does not show where and how this distinction should be made and maintained. It was my contention that the expressions "evangelism" and "home mission" reflect this lack of distinction and give confusion to the matter itself.

2. The texts to which Dr. W.D. Meester refers almost all speak about the confession and sanctification of all believers. A confession of the gospel must certainly be shown in the whole of man's life. It must be shown in daily walk including every word which is spoken. The point, however, remains that not all believers have received a specific *call* to preach the gospel, whether to believers or unbelievers. Isaiah 52:7, to which Dr. W.D. Meester refers, clearly speaks of special office-bearers or messengers whom the Lord has sent to bring the glad tidings of the gospel. This is confirmed by how the Lord through the apostle Paul in Romans 10 teaches us that this prophesy is fulfilled by those *sent* (v. 15) to preach the gospel.

3. Dr. W.D. Meester noticed that the term "evangelism" has been equated with "preaching the Word." It must be admitted that the word "evangelism," and especially the Greek word *euaggelizoo* from which it stems, have been translated in different ways. Much of the discussion hinges upon the interpretation of Acts 8:4, 11:20-21, which speaks about how the scattered church delivered the gospel message among the people in

the places where they came to live (See about this text in my article). Dr. W.D. Meester does not entirely agree with the interpretation of that passage as given in the article. Whether *euaggelizoo* is to be translated by "preaching the gospel" or in the broader sense of "confessing" the gospel, the point still remains that from Acts 8 and 11 we cannot conclude that all believers are *called* to preach the gospel. When interpreting Acts 8 and 11 we must compare Scripture with Scripture. We must remember and take into account what is said about the calling and office set aside for this task. The difficulty with using the English word "evangelism" is that it has not been clearly defined. Does it refer to preaching the gospel? If not, what does it mean? If it does mean "preach the gospel," which is the most-used translation of the Greek, then not all believers are *called* to evangelize.

4. Dr. W.D. Meester mentions the guidelines for evangelism adopted by our sister churches in The Netherlands at the Synod of Kampen 1975. The difficulty with this guideline is that it lacks a clear definition of "evangelism" because it does not distinguish between the preaching and the confessing of the gospel. In this guideline the Dutch churches say that "Evangelism means: to call those that have been estranged from God's Word and service to the Lord, to the Lord and thus also to the Church of the Lord" (my translation of Dutch Acts: "de Evangelisatie bedoelt degenen, die vervreemd zijn van Gods Woord en van den dienst des Heeren, te roepen tot den Heere en dus ook tot de Kerk des Heeren.>"). What do the Dutch churches mean by "calling" (roepen)? Did they have the Greek word *kaarussoo* (proclaim, the work of a herald) in mind? If they did, they imply that evangelism is preaching the gospel, because *kaarussoo* is clearly used only to speak of the task of those called to the special office. If something else is meant by it, what is it?

The lack of a clear definition of evangelism in the guideline of the Dutch sister churches is also shown in the strange way this calling for all believers (as it is claimed) is restricted by the Consistory. In the decision (besluit) the Synod states "2. The office-bearers . . . shall point out this calling to all the members of the congregation and equip (prepare) them for it ("2. De ambtsdragers zullen . . . de leden van de gemeente op deze roeping wijzen en voor de vervulling

PARALIPOMENA

OUR PUBLIC IMAGE

Some Comments

As an average church member I'm interested in the impression we as Churches and church members make upon our environment. Just recently I had the opportunity to ask for some comments. Or maybe "ask" is too much: I "ran into" those comments.

One came from a business relation. We are on the best of terms, but he gave me the impression that he did not like us Reformed people (Gereformeerden) too well. His background was Reformed (in Holland: Hervormd). "Why don't you like us?" Answer: "You people act as though you know everything."

The other came from a lady active in local community matters. She had against us that we never got involved in community activities and services. "You people isolate yourselves and think only of yourselves."

The list is not complete by far, but it is a good sampling. I must add, as my impression that the criticism is usually not directed against "us" as individuals, neighbours, business-relations, etc., but rather against the churches to which we belong.

"Couldn't care less . . ."

I have discussed the matter of our public image and public relations with several fellow members. One of them was completely indifferent to this opinion of "outsiders." He "couldn't care less"; he even quoted a word from the Bible (I forgot the exact text) where it says: "The world does not know us." So what? "They" do not know us; thus their opinion about us has no value whatsoever. "They" are considered outsiders because they do not belong to our churches, although in the two cases I mentioned I can vouch for the fact that these people are believers in Christ.

But is it indeed true, "Biblical," to give the cold shoulder to whatever is said about us by others? Just on the basis of that one word, text? I am old enough to know that you can prove everything with *one* quote from the Bible, even "that there is no God." Thus:

"When they see you . . ."

A theologian should be able to give

you many more texts, but even I, quoting from memory, know that — I think in the sermon on the Mount — the Lord Jesus said, ". . . that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." He also calls His church there a city on a mountain, a light in the world, salt of the earth. I conclude from these words that, even though the world does not understand our deepest motives, what they see of us should urge them to glorify our God. Does not Peter also say something in this direction? If you suffer, suffer then, not as a criminal, but as a Christian. Even our Catechism puts into our mouth the word that "by our godly walk our neighbour should also be won for Christ." This seems to me the opposite of the "couldn't-careless" attitude.

How to improve our image?

I will stick to the distinction I made: what is said about us personally and what is said about our churches. They cannot be separated, of course, but there is a difference.

I cannot give complete answers in these few lines. I would like to put the question before my esteemed readers. How would they answer (supposing that they agree with the above)? Personally — this cannot be "discussed" — we have to be "readable letters of Jesus Christ." Every believer has to examine his life to find out. But how can we improve the public image of our churches?

First, we should never try to become popular in a worldly sense. Christ told us quite different: The world will hate you, because they hate me. But there are many seekers all around us, many who are not satisfied with what they have. They should be able to see that a true church is an open church, a hospitable church, a church where people love each other and want to extend that love to others; also, I would add, a church that has no place for hypocrites, nominal Christians, people who try to walk on two ways and are bad in business. And so on.

I think I should conclude this incomplete talk with: "Improve the church; start with yourself"; I mean, myself.

CHRONICLER

van deze roeping toerusten"). On the other hand, they do not seem to fully trust the members of the congregation with this task to which they call them. In the decisions we also read "4. Public evangelism activities shall not be undertaken without advice and permission from the Consistory ("4. Publieke evangelisatie-activiteiten zullen niet zonder overleg met en toestemming van de kerkeraad mogen geschieden"). Whose task is it now: all believers' or the special offices' (Consistory)? The Dutch guideline does not solve anything. It confuses the matter.

5. Before applauding the 19 evangelism and home mission ("mission" means "send," which must refer to a calling and sending of special office-bearers. See J. Van Bruggen's series of articles, "Zending en Evangelie" in *De Reformatie*, Vol. 46, Nos. 46-49; he argues especially from Romans 1&2 that there is in principle no difference between home and foreign mission) committees, we would do well to know exactly what we are applauding. What do these committees do? Do they take over and thus overshadow the special offices which the Lord has instituted in His Church? Do they help and support the special offices in their task? Is that not the duty of the whole congregation and not just of a committee? Do they meet together to teach each other how to confess Christ in all of life? It is for this last reason, it would seem to me that a lot more can be accomplished by diligently listening to the preaching and studying God's Word, because it is from God's Word that we must confess with our whole life. Again I Corinthians 7:17-24 must be remembered, and especially verse 20, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." It is there, in the place where we have been called, that we must confess Christ.

6. We must conclude with the same conclusions that were made in the article, provided we keep the same definition of evangelism. Even if the definition of evangelism is questioned, the matter itself stays the same. A clear distinction must be kept between the office of all believers and the special offices. This distinction is not a question of superiority or inferiority. It is a matter of *calling*. Some are *called* to preach the gospel; not all (Belgic Confession, Articles XXX and XXXI). All are *called* to confess Christ in their *own* calling or vocation.

P.K.A. DE BOER

FROM THE SCRIPTURES

“Then the disciples understood that He was speaking to them of John the Baptist.”

Matt. 17:13.

John Before Jesus

In his account of the discussion which took place between the Lord Jesus and His disciples after the transfiguration, Matthew includes a seemingly incidental point not found in the other gospels: he notes how the disciples understood that the Lord Jesus, in speaking about the Elijah who was to come, actually spoke of John the Baptist. Rather than placing Himself in the foreground, the Lord Jesus, in answering the questions of the disciples, instructs them concerning the place of John the Baptist and the things which happened to him. Only then does He speak about the things that will happen to Himself. Why does John have such a significant place here?

As a prophet, John had a very high place among the common people, particularly those who followed him. The disciples of Jesus had also heard his preaching and were no doubt baptized with the baptism of John. The disciples had joined the call for preparation of the arrival of God’s kingdom and had accepted the preaching of repentance. Later, the Lord Jesus Himself was baptized with John’s baptism, and throughout the gospel of Matthew we see how the Lord Jesus qualifies His Messianic task in terms of the baptism that He was baptized with.

This moment of understanding is then a great milestone for the Lord Jesus, and it is a very significant moment in the development of the disciples. Understanding the things that happened to John through the instruction of the Lord Jesus and the transfiguration, they were prepared for learning what would happen to the Lord Jesus. For they knew what had happened to John, and they reported this to their Master, 14:12. Now they saw and understood that he was the Elijah whom the prophets had spoken about and that his life reflected the things that had happened to Elijah. They remembered how Elijah suffered at the hands of Ahab and Jezebel. Now they perceived, with true understanding, that John was the “greater” Elijah who was coming; for they had heard about the terrible way he had suffered at the hands of Herod and Herodias.

But how was this such a milestone in their development, on their road to Pentecost? For it is remarkable that this is the only instance of true understanding among the disciples that we read about in the gospels. This passage, in fact, stands in marked contrast to many others which indicate that the disciples did *not* perceive or understand the things of God, Mark 9:32, Luke 18:34, John 2:22. In particular, the disciples did not understand that the Lord Jesus had to suffer and die. They recognized John as a prophet, and they recognized that he

suffered and died as a prophet. But on this point, Jesus stands in marked contrast to John. What they understand about John they *fail* to understand about the Lord Jesus. The previous chapter tells us how they confessed the Lord Jesus to be the Messiah. However, they were not at all prepared to accept the notion of a *suffering* Messiah. As soon as the Lord Jesus began telling them this, He was rebuked, and, as John says, many stopped following Him, John 6:66.

It was only after the death of Christ on the cross and after the resurrection that they understood the things that had happened to the Lord Jesus. Only later were their eyes opened, and only later did they see the character of the new Messianic kingdom. Only later did they see that this kingdom was not one of glory, but one of suffering; not one of eminence, but one of persecution; not one of ruling, but one of serving. And the way they come to *this* understanding is through *repentance*. It began with Peter, and the rest followed. Their hearts were changed.

It is precisely in this repentance of the disciples that the ministry of John bear its fruit. For that was the first rule for entrance into the kingdom of heaven in his preaching, Matt. 3:2. And the Lord Jesus, who began His ministry with the same message, 4:17, honours this rule of the kingdom right to the very end. That is why He places John before Himself, and that is why this understanding concerning John and his work by the disciples is so important. In understanding John’s suffering, they are, as it were, halfway there. This understanding is the bridge between their initial call and the hour of Pentecost. Later, Peter is able to recount how the Lord had taught that John’s baptism would be followed by the baptism with the Holy Spirit, Acts 11:16. After John’s baptism takes its full course, bringing repentance and faith, the disciples are ready for Pentecost. Then they truly understand.

So we see how the first rule of the kingdom is upheld, even in the way the Lord Jesus teaches His disciples. And the way to entrance into the kingdom is still the same, even after Pentecost. Repentance, conversion, is still what the Father demands. As Christ led His disciples then, so the great Teacher still leads all His children today. Before glory comes service, before honour comes shame, before eminence comes humility. This was the road the Messiah had to follow, according to John’s baptism. This is the road that applies to all who truly belong to Him.

J. DEJONG

news medley

Our heartfelt congratulations to brother and sister H. Leffers who celebrate their fifty-fifth wedding anniversary on March 8. Some time ago there was concern for sister Leffers' health, as I learned via various channels, but now we could read underneath the picture which appeared in the previous *Clarion* that they are in reasonably good health. If the picture was taken recently, this certainly shows. For as long as I have known them they have resided in the Coaldale area. It must have been on the occasion of their forty-fifth wedding anniversary that I mentioned brother Leffers' service as treasurer for the Theological College. That was in the time when no institution could be established as yet but when we did collect moneys with a view to the moment when such could become a fact. Locally as well they both occupied quite a place in Church life, and with them we are grateful for the blessings bestowed upon them. Add our wishes to the very many you will receive on the occasion of your anniversary, and may the favour of our covenant God continue to surround you with every step.

It would not attest to gratitude for all the Lord gave to His Church in this brother if we did not mention the passing away of Prof. C. Veenhof at the age of eighty. That during the last fifteen years he followed a course which we deplore does not undo all the work that he did and the blessing he spread through his work.

The first time I really met him was in his study in the Utrecht parsonage. It was in the days of the Liberation, and we already had made up our minds that continuing under the imposed yoke was not allowed by the Lord. If I remember well, we were there with the four of us: The Rev. O.W. Bouwsma of Breukelen, Rev. W. Verwoerd of Kockengen (a minister without a congregation after his liberation), Rev. C. Veenhof, and yours truly. Veenhof was busy writing another of his many brochures in which he tried to salvage whatever could be salvaged. He was not yet ready to take the step himself, even though he said openly that we (the other three) had no other way open to us but to liberate ourselves from the yoke in order to remain in the old, catholic Church-way.

I had sent him beforehand a little treatise I had written for the Congregation I served, and he expressed his agreement with what I had written. We urged him to take the same step, but he was not that far yet. There was no doubt with us that he would come that far and he did.

It was an encouraging visit which lasted quite a few hours and we parted strengthened by having seen the brothers. It is a sobering thought that the other three attending that afternoon are no longer with us but are now with the Lord.

Veenhof's interest was very much directed towards the history of the Church. He had a vast knowledge of all sorts of events and developments, having scanned reams of periodicals and magazines. His publications give ample evidence of that.

Prof. C. Trimp wrote a very appreciative *In Memoriam* in *Nederlands Dagblad* and I was thinking about translating it and inserting it in *Clarion*, but we would have to ask for permission to do this, something which meant undue delay. Thus these few lines will have to suffice.

As for our own Church-life here on this continent, Prof. Veenhof had quite a part in the ultimate institution of the Grand Rapids Church and we mention this with gratitude.

For many years to come the fruits and benefits of his work will be enjoyed by the Churches, fruits from his many publications, fruits also from the preaching of his former students.

From those students I sometimes heard criticism on Veenhof's gestures, standard expressions, and hobby horses. But whenever they spoke of him, the gratitude for what they learned from him prevailed. This, too, we receive with gratitude from the hand of the Lord.

Meanwhile, we still have to continue for as long as the Lord gives us time and work.

The work will be there always.

And our times are in His hand.

With the news from the Churches we begin this time in Ontario, although there is not much that should be mentioned about this region.

Our Yearbook will appear shortly, I presume with all the particulars and all the statistics which we like to know. One thing, however, will most likely not be found in it: that is the average age of the members of the separate Churches. This is something which I found in the bulletin of the Burlington South Church. "From our administrator . . . we received some interesting statistics. The average age of the congregation in South is 23.07 years. This is the youngest average of all Burlington Churches."

For those who like puzzling and are interested in this kind of work a new field has opened up: figuring out the average age in each Congregation.

Another question was pondered in the Ebenezer Church in Burlington (East): "The Committee of Administration will discuss whether the church should pay for all the coffee."

Yes, and this exhausts our news from Ontario. That everywhere Congregational Meetings are held will not be news to you all: it happens everywhere in this time of the year. At these congregational meetings the financial statements and the budgets are discussed and question periods are held. Here and there a topic is introduced briefly. And that's it again for the congregational meetings for this year.

I am happy to report that in by far the most Churches it could be stated that the budget was met, even though for many members times are tough. Herein we experience the blessing of the Lord, something we confess with gratitude, being aware of it that we are not deserving of these mercies.

Something which I did not understand fully was a paragraph in the Carman bulletin. We are told that a letter was received "from the Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund plus a letter of recommendation from the local committee which shows us what is being done in this undertaking and the committee asks the Consistory to hold *one* special collection in order to get a substantial amount of money together without delay. This is urgently needed for the continuation of the work and the government of Alberta will put up an equal amount of money as the Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund (West)." That is quite something, that the government of Alberta will put up an equal amount of money. Perhaps it was published somewhere before, and perhaps I missed it. I cannot read everything that is published, not even everything that reaches my home. In the United States you might get a protest action claiming that here the principle of the separation between Church and State is violated

Before proceeding to British Columbia, we stop over in Calgary.

There is in the first place the matter of rent for the churchbuilding.

"A discussion was held with representatives of the United Church on the huge increase of the rent from \$300 to \$400 a month. They will discuss it internally and let us know before our congregational meeting . . . Later we received word that the United Church is willing to lower the increase to \$400 a month." Good.

There was more in the Calgary bulletin.

The other time we already mentioned that Rev. D. DeJong wrote about an overture decided upon by the First Christian Reformed Church in Lethbridge regarding correspondence with the Synodical Reformed Churches in The Netherlands. In a following issue of the *Calgary Tower* he elaborates a little on that decision.

"The consistory of the First Christian Reformed Church of Lethbridge overtures Classis Alberta South to overture the Synod of 1983 to DISCONTINUE the present provisions to table and pulpit fellowship between the CRC and the GKN as elements in the ecclesiastical fellowship between our two churches. This is the literal text of the decision made. From the adduced grounds I pass on the following:

"The increasing trend toward apostasy and away from confessional loyalty, as evidenced by decisions re homosexuals, and the resulting baptism of children whose guardians maintain a lesbian relationship, the controversial report on Scripture GOD MET ONS; and the publication of Dr. Wiersinga's book on sin in which he denies the Biblical teaching about sin.

"Further, it appears that the warnings and admonitions of the CRC have not had the desired effect, and on the basis of the present rule which calls for 'for exercise of mutual concern and admonition with a view to promoting the fundamentals of Christian unity,' we believe that integrity demands a further change in our relationship with the Gereformeerde Kerken at this time."

"I am glad with this decision, although I miss in it a pointing out of the deeper causes."

In the same bulletin, the Rev. DeJong writes about an article in *Calvinist Contact* in which it was claimed that at baptism only the given names of a child should be mentioned, not the surname. The day of baptism was formerly also called the day of namegiving, and this is why our first name very characteristically is called the baptismal name.

Rev. DeJong then writes, "I simply don't know what made me to add the surname. Was it other ministers, whose example I followed? . . . Anyway, I think that I must amend my way of doing it from now on."

I hope that my colleague will *not* change his ways. I, for one, am not going to change my way and shall continue to add the surname, using the child's full name: given names and surname together. That's how the child is known throughout life. I am sorry, but I don't believe in "baptismal names" since a child receives its name sometimes even before birth, so to speak. It comes to baptism as, let's say, David Aaron Henderson and not simply as David Aaron. It would be very interesting to do some research into the question where the idea of "baptismal names" comes from. Is there some trace of nature-grace idea behind it? Anyway: I think it more proper to use the full name with baptism, surname included.

On February 27, the Rev. C. Van Spronsen was installed as the missionary of Smithers' Church being separated for the work among the native population in the

Smithers region. In the previous *Clarion* we read a report on the development. Now the *Bulkley Valley Echo* informs us that "We were able to locate a suitable building from where we can conduct our various activities which we hope to develop. We will be renting the old 'Chocolate Moose' building, 3896-4th Avenue as of March 1st. It needs some fixing up inside and hope that many will be able and willing to help out. We will call it the Christian Indian Center, with as subname 'Yak'isda Bik'ah.'"

Our best wishes for this undertaking!

We go down to the Fraser Valley.

The Abbotsford Consistory discussed announcements to be made on Sundays. "Regarding announcements to be made from the pulpit, it was decided to have these announcements made before the church service starts." Therein Abbotsford joins the number of Churches where it is done in this manner.

Of course, the whole question of announcements as such is connected with it. It seems proper to me to have them before the service starts, although I have no objection to making the *necessary* announcements (such as: for approbation of office-bearers, public admonitions, etc.) during the service.

Cloverdale discussed the need to expand the seating capacity of the auditorium. Unfortunately, they used the word "sanctuary"! The Committee of Administration came with a proposal which was to be discussed at a Congregational Meeting. We'll hear about it later.

A few other items in the *Church News* gave me cause for concern and made me ask whether we indeed are going into the right direction. I have come to the conclusion that we are not.

More and more I see in bulletins announcements of film series. Here in Fergus we had the Dobson series which was greatly appreciated by some, called more or less a waste of time by others.

Now the *Church News* of the Fraser Valley contains the following announcements.

"As was mentioned in the last *Church News*, the Langley Home Mission Committee will be presenting, on Friday, Feb. 4, the first two films of a six-film series entitled *The Counterfeits: Biblical Answers to the Cults*. They will be shown in the Langley Church building and will start at eight o'clock sharp! The first film, 'The Confusion of the Cults,' is introductory to the series, and the second film is 'Spiritism, U.F.O.'s and the Occult.' 'Jehovah's Witnesses and the Trinity' is not available for Feb. 4. It will be shown at a later date."

And then an item from Cloverdale.

"The Senior Catechism Class is busy with the study of church history this curriculum year and in connection with this they are hosting a showing of a film on Martin Luther. The film is 105 minutes in duration and is in black and white. It presents an accurate account of Luther's struggles to reform the church."

When I think about these announcements and ponder the question whether this is going into the right direction, I cannot but think of what we confess in Lord's Day 35: that the Lord does not wish to have His Christians taught by dumb images — and I also rank films among these — but by the living preaching of His Word.

It is said that the last-mentioned film, e.g. "presents an accurate account of Luther's struggles to reform the church." This would have been possible only if the film was made in the days of Luther himself, but even the black and white had not been invented yet at that time. Now someone must play Luther and try to present things in the manner in which this Reformer presented them. Or,

A Ray of Sunshine



Calvin wrote the following about Matthew 5:5:

*Matt. 5:5. **Blessed are the meek.** He means the calm and quiet ones, who are not easily provoked by wrongs, who do not sulk over offences, but are more ready to endure anything, than pay the wicked the same back. For Christ to promise the **inheritance of the earth** to such, might seem quite absurd, for the folk who really claim the control of the earth for themselves are those who rebuff injuries with energy, and, if ever they are hurt, are quick to raise a hand in vengeance. Certainly experience shows, that the wicked go on more audaciously and boldly, the more gently they are treated. Hence the devilish proverb, You must howl with the wolves — for whoever makes himself a sheep will soon come to be eaten by wolves. But Christ contrasts His and the Father's protection with the rage and violence of the evil ones, and effectively affirms that the meek will be lords and heirs of the earth. The sons of this generation believe that safety lies only in their sharp resistance to any wrong done them, and defend their lives by force of arms. But as we must be sure that Christ is the only guardian of our lives, then our only course is to hide under the shadow of His wings. Yes, we must be sheep, if we wish to be counted in His flock. If one objects that what is said here contradicts experience, I would have him first consider how the violent are so un-quiet that they are at odds with themselves. In all the tumults of life, though they were a hundred times lords of the earth, in possessing all things they yet possess nothing. On behalf of God's children I reply, that though they never find a place of their own to*

put their foot, they enjoy their residence on earth in quietness, and their possession is not illusory, for the earth which they inhabit they know to be granted them by God. Thus in the face of the wildness and rage of their enemies, they are covered by the protecting hand of God, and though exposed to all the slings of fortune, vulnerable to the evil-doing of the wicked, surrounded with every danger, they live securely under God's protection, and even now enjoy this grace of God. This is enough for them, until, at the last day, they reach the inheritance of the World.

A thought for today:

*"A little explained,
A little endured,
A little forgiven,
And a quarrel is cured."*

C.H. SPURGEON

On our calendar we have:

DEREK KOK

*377 Dominion Street
Strathroy, ON N7G 3G9*

The Lord willing, Derek hopes to celebrate his 13th birthday on April 2. Happy Birthday, Derek!

In the mailbox we found a thank you note from Mrs. Homan, Smithville, Ontario. She wrote how much it was appreciated that Grace received so many cards. Grace joyfully opened the envelopes everyday and let her mother read the messages to her. The cards will be put in a scrapbook. Grace became 27 years old, and not 25 as I had written. Grace included the following note, written under the guiding hand of her sister:

"Thank you brothers and sisters for the birthday cards I got. In the workshop I put earplugs in my ears."

From GRACE HOMAN.

It must be noisy in the workshop, Grace! Thank you for your letter! I am sure we all very much appreciate it.

Please send your requests to:

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

if it is simply a narration, illustrated with shots of the Wartburg and Eisleben or Wittenberg, the question is pressing whether this makes so much difference with the teacher at Catechism classes saying the same things. We don't need a film for that.

And when we wish to investigate what the so-called Jehovah Witnesses teach concerning the Holy Trinity, we don't need a film for that either. The Biblical answers to their errors should not come to us via a film but from the Word of God itself without the help of dumb or moving images.

It is my conviction that here we set out on a wrong course.

Keep films out when we wish to plot our course and when we wish to find answers to the questions all around

us. Even if we had a "Reformed" film industry, we should not start out on this route.

Home Mission Committees should do what they have been appointed to do: bring the Word of God to those who are alienated from the Gospel and do this in the only manner in which the Lord Jesus sent out His apostles: be My witnesses to the end of the earth. Preach the Word! Not: show films.

Am I simplistic? Am I unable to keep up with the development?

Let it be so; I would rather remain old-fashioned and I think that I am in good company: the company of Ursinus and Olevianus who taught the Church the correct way, among others, in Lord's Day 35.

In closing, one of my famous remarks (or notorious,

school crossing

A. Competition — a Fact of Life?

I hope that many of you read the excellent article entitled "The Competitive Spirit" (*Clarion*, Nov. 19, 1982). The main point was that we should minimize and subdue our competitive spirit, because much of it is connected to the fallen nature of man. The author pointed out very clearly how Christians should deal with competition in every aspect of life.

The *Church Herald* (Dec. 1981) contained an equally good article, "In Sports We Trust." To quote directly:

In many respects, sports has become a challenging civil religion. Sports has its gods, the stars; its high council, the national sports groups. Sports also has its scribes who write about the game and discuss in detail, sports events. Sport has its shrines, such as the Halls of Fame and trophy rooms in almost every educational institution in North America. Believers in sports, those whose number *one* priority in life is sports or sports related matters, flock to their houses of worship (stadiums), huge multi-million-dollar facilities that are well-dressed, -tilled, and -kept.

This is not to say that involvement in sports is bad. However, consider the following popular slogan: "Those who worship sports are often called *fans*; those who worship God are usually called *fanatics*."

Sports involvement, if kept in the proper perspective, can be a

wonderful, enriching experience for all of us. Sports (and the competition it entails) can provide fun, excitement, broader interest, better fitness, and development of our God-given talents. However, let's remember that a fanatical following of sports events, which spills over into our daily conduct, is not what God intended when He spoke of us as being blessed, to be a blessing (Gen. 13).

It seems to me that we should make ourselves and our children aware of another kind of competition within ourselves: to become better than we are; to make better use of our God-given talents. This type of competition should be stressed *much* more in our homes and schools. Beating others is not a Biblical criterion for success. The Bible, however, does say a lot about excelling or improving oneself. That should be both in the mental as well as in the physical talents which our children possess.

If competition is viewed in this way, then a number of school activities or practices should be questioned.

1. Displaying Spelling Charts on a classroom wall, perfectly colour-coded according to the number of mistakes students make. Do we actually believe that this is a *fair* way of competition?
2. Awarding prizes or ribbons on field days. Doesn't everyone deserve an award for trying hard?
3. Placing plaques in school halls with the names of students who

have an average of 80% or better. Is this *really* an "honour" roll?

4. Making up a bulletin board display of "excellent" projects or essays, including perhaps a mark and/or favourable comments. Don't all students have the right to have their work displayed at one time or another?
5. Reading student's marks out loud in class when tests are returned. What are we trying to prove by that?
6. Showing (by saying little or nothing) that we really don't mind that much that ridicule takes place in the gymnasium, classroom, or playground, because someone has made a mistake. Don't we realize that adults are Exhibit "A"?

Some food for thought!

B. News from the Schools

1. Computers in School

As you know the field of home and micro-computers is rapidly advancing. More computers at cheaper prices are becoming available all the time. The same is true for the computers which are recommended for schools. It has been said in technical journals that in 1983 there will be many advances in this field. The Education Committee has decided not to rush into this project. At present the desired equipment is too expensive for the financial means that we have. In the meantime, more research will be done to become more familiar with the hardware (computers) and software (computer programs) that are available on the mar-

if you wish).

In some bulletins I read that the Consistory is characterized as "she."

Even in Dutch "kerkeraad" is masculine. In English we should call the Consistory "it," as it is not a person but a body. Even apart from this, it sounds kind of funny when a body, consisting only of men, is called "she."

Language is not a dead but a living thing; I realize that.

But I don't think that the rule has changed which we learned at high school right from the start. *he* or *she* should be used only of *persons*. And whether a dog is male or female, *it* listens to *its* master's voice.

Yours affectionately
vO

more

Church



News

DECLINED to Brampton, ON:

REV. W. POUWELSE

of Rehoboth Canadian Reformed Church, Burlington, ON.

DECLINED to Smithers, BC:

REV. W. HUIZINGA

of Hamilton, ON.

ket which could benefit and supplement our curriculum.

The Education Committee has had contact with the North York Board of Education to get more information on and become more familiar with computers in school. The Ministry of Education of Ontario is also expected to release a major report soon on the use of computers and programs in schools in Ontario. The Committee could also benefit from this information.

Credo Courier — Credo Christian School, Brampton, ON)

2. Children and Television

You will probably think: "Oh no, here we go again. Someone else who wants to tell us what to do with our children, and how we let them watch TV too much, and so on."

But that is not the reason I write this small article. The reason is this: During lunch in my classroom, the main topic of discussion is TV and what was on the night before. I sometimes listen to these discussions and am often surprised when I hear remarks like: "Did you see 'The Fog'?" (A movie for a mature audience.) "... and then he shot the guy right in the head. That was neat, boy." "The only thing I am not allowed to watch is "M*A*S*H" and movies."

Obviously, these children have watched this kind of shows. And they enjoyed it. They enjoyed seeing someone get killed. Don't you think there are a lot more useful things you and your children can do? Why not play a game together when "Hawaii 5-O" is on? Why not ask your children what the sermon was about that Sunday, so that they will be able to answer at least some questions about that at school, instead of watching the adventures of D. Duck at 6:00 on Sunday? Why not help with homework instead of watching "M*A*S*H"?

I don't want you to throw your TV out of the house, but when you have it on, make sure your children are watching something useful. Why not let them watch "New Wilderness," or "Untamed World," or "The Nature of Things." In these programmes, at least, the children will learn something about the beauty of God's creation, even though the makers of these programs may not be Christians at all.

I hope I have not stepped on your toes by writing this article, for that was not my intention. Consider this to be just some remarks from a concerned teacher who is trying to help you educate your children, which

are, after all, God's children.

Shouldn't we try to make the best we can out of something we get as a gift from God?

Ebenezer Canadian Reformed School, Smithers, BC

3. Prayer in our Schools

One of our favourite staff quotes has been, "You should be able to tell that a school is Christian even after you take away all prayer and Bible reading." That quote is profound and should be kept before us as a guide.

Let it never enter our minds that this quote suggests that prayer and Bible reading is an unnecessary cultic frill that can be dispensed with when our curriculum and lives and school atmosphere is so totally Biblical that it of itself shouts out the praise and style of God.

As a school, an educational institution, we also profess that "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7). The fear of God means worship and love response on the part of all those in school, both pupils and teachers. Yes, prayer is necessary for Christians also at school, as the chief part of our thankfulness (L.D. 45, Q&A 116).

If the writers of the Catechism devoted seven Lord's Days to the subject of prayer, surely we as Reformed teachers need to pay special attention to the 740 prayers that we offer up each year in our classes. Don't you marvel at how many prayers that is? It sure is easy to have these prayers become repetitious, knee-jerk reactions that can be as meaningless as a dog offering his paw before his dog food comes. This is not meant to be funny in any way. The seriousness of our topic demands that we deal sternly with this topic. "Search me, O God ... ! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any wicked way in me ..." (Ps. 139, vv. 23, 24).

Dedicated labour in producing exemplary curricula, teachers' college style outstanding lesson plans, class control, and all the necessary elements of a good school, are valueless as fool's gold if they are not the sincere offering of our lives (Romans 12:1). A slick hypocrite, or a lukewarm Christian cleverly operating the Christian school ropes, does not offer up "such prayer as God is pleased with and will hear" (L.D. 45, Q&A 117). We as Christian teachers must take the responsibility of "Christian" dead seriously. Let the warning

of Matthew 18: 6, 7, keep us in line and on our knees.

We are enjoined to call upon the one true God who has revealed Himself in His Word from the heart. Our prayers should therefore be Biblical, fresh like bread that is baked daily. We must personally meditate on and read in the Word of God. This can be tempting to overlook because one's Quiet Time can in some ways be hard to see back in tangible results.

The busier he became, the more time Luther set aside for prayer. That may seem paradoxical at first glance, but indeed here was a man who believed in the effectiveness of prayer (James 5:16).

What should the content of our prayers be in school? Calmly, let us first consider the prayers that the Lord has recorded in the Bible. The prayer that the Lord Jesus gave to the disciples as the Lord's Prayer, the high priestly prayer of John 17, the prayer of dedication of the temple, and the prayer of the leaders of the returning exiles all have striking similarity. These prayers are not needs lists sent up to give our spiritual efforts a sort of magical super punch.

Specifically, I like keeping a formula for balanced prayer in mind, namely,

A = Adoration ... worship and praise to our Father Abba, loving Him for His own sake, even as Job did; fostering, exercising that love relationship, that fellowship which we poor mortals may have with the Almighty Creator of Heaven and earth. This sets the entire tone for the prayer.

C = Confession ... is a necessary element of every prayer. The unholy cannot come before the Holy One still in their unconfessed sin.

T = Thanksgiving ... a confession that we live by grace alone through His majestic providence in all things great and small.

S = Supplication ... first for others, then for ourselves. Here we may and must be specific. Here we must also be careful to ask Biblically important things. We ask for those things that are "Kingdom Important."

How do we teach our pupils to pray?

1. By model.
2. By having them pray. They too are living, praying Christians. The

only way to learn to pray is by praying.

Prayer is a discipline. If you have ever been with an adult who prays for the first time in his life, you can appreciate this. Prayer is a battle that never gets easier. When we neglect our prayers, our praying gets worse. We can improve our prayers by praying much.

Notice that Jesus never initiated a conversation about prayer. He prayed and set an example in prayer (Luke 5:15, 16).

We undertake to do great things in school. The men and women of the Bible who did great deeds were not specifically men of great deeds . . . they prayed first. They did not ask for peanuts but for continents, for lives, for the humanly impossible even.

Prayer is the Life breath of the Christian.

P. Smid

Link — Fergus/Guelph
Canadian Reformed School
Society, ON

4. Curriculum Perspective

We believe that a curriculum ought to be the unifying framework which ties the teaching staff, the students, and the subject matter together in the setting of the school. We believe it to be the parents' responsibility for determining the religious direction of their children's education and that it is the task of the teachers to articulate the content of the educational curriculum in accordance to the above-mentioned religious direction. We believe that in such a curriculum we must be obedient to God's Word and that in all our educational activities it is shown that God calls us to a heart-obedience and expects a positive response from us. Without this Biblical confession *and without its application* our school would be no different from the state-controlled public schools. Inherent in this confession is the belief that *knowledge cannot be neutral*. Behind all knowledge lies a *principled* vision on the basis of which known facts and realities are explained.

Ebenezer School,
Chatham, ON

C. Conclusion

Since this column started with some rather strong personal feelings about the adverse effects of competition, I would like to conclude with a fable which many of you have probably read before, but one that is worth studying once again.

Once upon a time, the animals decided that they had to do something to meet the problems of a new world, so they organized a school. They adopted the activity curriculum consisting of running, climbing and swimming, as well as flying. To make it easier to administer, all the animals took all the subjects. The duck was excellent in swimming, better in fact than his instructor, and made passing grades in flying, but he was very poor in running. Since he was slow in running, he had to stay after school and drop swimming in order to practice running. This was kept up until his webbed feet were badly worn and he was then only average in swimming. The rabbit started at the top of the class in running, but had a nervous breakdown because of so much work in trying to compete in the swimming class. The squirrel was excellent in climbing until he developed frustration in the flying class where his teacher made him start from the ground up, instead of from the treetop down. The eagle was a problem child, and was disciplined severely. In the climbing class, he beat everyone to the top of the tree, but insisted on using his own way to get there. At the end of the year, an abnormal eel that could swim exceedingly well, and also run, climb and fly a little, had the highest marks and average, and was made valedictorian. The prairie dogs stayed out of school, and fought the tax levy because the administration would not add digging and burrowing to the curriculum. They apprenticed their children to the badger and later joined the ground-hogs and gophers to start a successful private school.

Until next time (D.V.).

NICK VANDOOREN
John Calvin School
607 Dynes Road,
Burlington, On L7N 2V4

OUR COVER
Barrier Lake, Garibaldi Park, BC.

PRESS RELEASE

Meeting of the Inter-League Publication Board held on Friday, November 19, 1982, in Burlington, ON.

Opening. As acting chairman, Mr. C. Hoff opens the meeting with the reading of Romans 12, after which he leads us in prayer. A welcome was extended to all the delegates of the various leagues: Mr. C. Hoff and Mr. L. vanZandwyk of the Men's Societies, Mrs. M.C. Vandergriendt and Mrs. F. Ludwig of the Women's Societies, Grace Holsappel and Jake Bouwman of the Young People's Societies.

Minutes. Minutes of the meeting held on October 23, 1982, were read, discussed, and approved.

Matters arising from the minutes. A thank you letter will be sent to Rev. J. DeJong for the time he served the I.L.P.B. as chairman.

Incoming Mail. A letter from Mary Doekes was read and discussed.

Financial Report. Mr. Hoff reported that Mr. J. DeVries and Mr. K. Temple of London will audit the books.

Progress Report. Mr. Hoff presented all the delegates with a copy of an outline on "The Church" by Rev. I. DeWolff. An outline on Ruth has been sent to Premier Printing. A publication on Daniel is in the process of being typed, and an outline on Numbers is to be edited. Mr. L. vanZandwyk reports on an incomplete publication by Rev. G. vanRongen: "Our Churchbook." He will contact Rev. vanRongen about the possibility of having it completed.

Mr. C. Hoff was unanimously elected as our chairman and Mr. L. vanZandwyk accepted the position of vice-chairman.

The work of the I.L.P.B. is now divided into departments and each delegate is asked to be responsible for one department. *Planning Department:* Jake Bouwman. His task is to look for outlines both in the Dutch and English languages. *Personnel Department:* Mrs. M.C. Vandergriendt. Her duty is to have regular contact with translators, editors, writers, typists, etc. *Public Relations Department:* Mrs. F. Ludwig. She will issue a press release of every meeting. Her duties are also to contact societies, Bible study groups, etc., who are not supporting the I.L.P.B. as yet. *Review Department:* Mr. L. vanZandwyk. Research study material suitable for publication. *Secretary and Treasurer:* Grace Holsappel. *Bookkeeper:* Mr. C. Lindhout.

J. Bouwman presented us with a proof copy of a monthly progress report to be used by translators, editors, typists, etc. After a few changes it was accepted.

A draft of a revised constitution was given to all the delegates by Mr. L. vanZandwyk. It will be discussed at our next meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 15, 1983, at 1:00 p.m., in Ingersol.

J. Bouwman closes the meeting with prayer.

MRS. F. LUDWIG

our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

Sometimes new Busy Beavers write and ask me,
"What is the BIRTHDAY FUND all about?"

Well, older Busy Beavers will remember it's for the
birthday of our Theological College.

The Theological College is the school for new min-
isters.

So it's a very important school!

And each fall it has a birthday.

That's when we Busy Beavers like to send our The-
ological College a birthday gift.

Let's start collecting money for that birthday gift
again in our BIRTHDAY FUND.

You may send as much or as little money as you
like.

One Busy Beaver saved all PENNIES for the Birth-
day Fund and did very well!

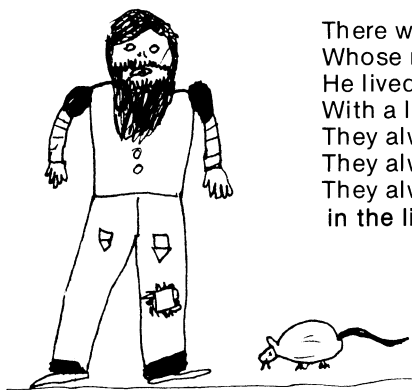
Let's all join in!

Let's see how well we can do together!

You know the address, right?

Aunt Betty
Box 54
Fergus, ON N1M 2W7

Busy Beaver *Rose Peters* has a poem and a picture
to share with you. Thank you, Rose!



There was an old man
Whose name was Sam.
He lived in a house
With a little old mouse.
They always talked,
They always walked.
They always walked right
in the light!

FOR YOU TO DO

Who's the Best Detective?

This is not a real contest, Busy Beavers.

But I am curious to hear from you how many
signs of spring you can find!

It's so much fun discovering the first red
rhubarb sprouts.

And nice fat sticky buds on trees and bushes.

And soft pretty gray pussy willows.
Would you like some clues where to look?
Try warm, out-of-the-wind spots.
Close to water you will soon find things
starting to grow.
Kick up some dry leaves under the trees or
in ditches and see what you can see.
Have fun looking!
Be a good detective!



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Debbie Jagt*. We are happy to have you join us. We hope you'll really like being a Busy Beaver. Thanks for sharing the jokes and riddles, Debbie.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Edward Stam*. We hope you'll have lots of fun joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Bye for now. Write again soon.

Hello *Teena Buzeman*. Did you want to join the Busy Beaver Club? Please write and tell me. Then I will send you a membership card.

Where did you skate for school Phys. Ed., *Frederick Dewit*? Are you playing floor hockey again? What position do you play? Thanks for writing, Frederick.

Hello *Brenda De Boer*. It was nice to hear from you again. I see you've been very busy, Brenda. Keep up the good work. Thanks for the nice "report" on your book.

I'm glad you had such a nice birthday, *Linda De Boer*. Sounds to me you're doing a very interesting project at school. How did you do on it? Thank you for a very neat letter, Linda.

It was nice hearing from you again, *Rose Peters*. I'm glad you and your family had a good time at New Year's. But you didn't tell me what you did!

Congratulations still on your baby sister, *Lawrence Stam*. Is she starting to be lots of fun, or does she still sleep a lot? I do hope you get the pen pal you want, Lawrence!

Did you have fun when your cousin came over, Tim Hofsink? What are you asking for your own birthday, Tim? I hope you find a pen pal, too!

Congratulations on a good report, *Sylvia Leffers*. Keep up the good work. How are your music lessons coming? What instrument do you play? Can you play your favourite song already? It's one of my favourites, too! Thanks for the pretty pictures, Sylvia.

Busy Beavers we have two people who would like a pen pal. Here are the addresses:

Lawrence Stam
Box 326
Smithville, ON
L0R 2A0

Tim Hofsink
Box 121
Smithville, ON
L0R 2A0

Who would like to exchange letters with them?