

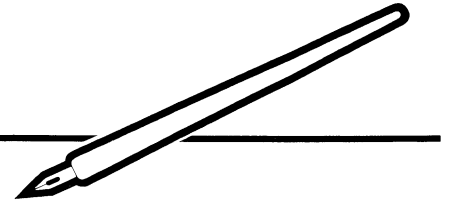
Clarion

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Perspectives on the Christian Reformed Church₂

Is there a bright future for church and world?

In the previous Editorial we paid attention to the book *Perspectives on the Christian Reformed Church. Studies in Its History, Theology, and Ecumenicity*, written on the occasion of the retirement of Dr. John Henry Kromminga, president of Calvin Theological Seminary. We continue our discussion of this book, focusing on the second part, the six Studies on Theology in the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). I shall first give a short overview and then delve a little deeper into the contents of one of these studies.

This second part written by Dr. Harry R. Boer begins with a sympathetic-critical discussion of the pre-millennial ideas of Rev. Diedrich Hinrich Kromminga. He is the father of the retired Calvin Seminary president, and was professor in Church History at Calvin before his son. The elder Kromminga's book gives us a variation of the modern thousand-year-reign idea. He had no special place for the Jews in his millennium.

Reading through this study I have become even more convinced that pre-millennialism is unfounded speculation that raises more questions than it solves. Boer concludes his study with saying: "The virtue of Kromminga's contribution is that he has alerted us to eschatological possibilities in a manner and on a scale that the Reformed tradition up to now has not taken into account. Most especially an appreciation of Kromminga's eschatological vision should raise the question by what legitimate rationale can public discussion of it be ecclesiastically prohibited?"

With this last sentence Boer refers to the beginning of this study in which he informs the reader that prof. Diedrich Kromminga did not publish his own views since he knew himself bound by the Subscription Form with which Reformed office-bearers promise that they will not teach or publish anything that is in conflict with the Confession of the Reformed Church, the Three Forms of Unity. Prof. Kromminga (Sr.) went to the Synod in 1945 with a request to have a synodical study on this matter but, he died in 1947 and the matter was not further pursued. We can see in this attitude of professor Kromminga the old faithfulness to the promise in signing the Subscription Form. The last remark of Boer shows a different attitude. It undermines that old confessional faithfulness and promotes the opening of a door to millennial speculations which I believe, with professor Kromminga (Sr.), to be in conflict with our Reformed Confession Article 37 B.C. and Lord's Day 19 H.C. speak of only one return of Christ, namely as Judge, to judge the living and the dead.

I also draw attention to the second last sentence. Kromminga's contribution "has alerted us to eschatological possibilities in a manner and on a scale that the Reformed tradition up to now has not taken into account." I read these words of Boer in the light of what he has said before, in his critical evaluation. I quote: "The central thrust of eschatology, however, does not lie in eternity but in time." And "he (Kromminga) discloses prospects that have never been seriously contemplated in mainline Reformed theology. They center around the expectation of a final era in human history, comparable in antithetical order to the first era in human history, in which faith shall be so dominant and influential in the affairs of men as

almost to negate its manifested power in any previous era. It will be a power to be reckoned with not only religiously but also in the affairs of the economy, politics, international relations, education, the home, indeed, in the whole of life. It will have the ability, after the binding of Satan, to bind also the aggressive exploitative, demoralizing, and other negative proclivities of the human spirit."

This rather long quotation is needed, so that the reader can follow me. Boer appears to me to be optimistic with respect to the future, seeing the development of our history in the following way. It began with an era of religious and moral decline in the days before the flood, according to the Biblical narrative, and in contrast with this beginning, the last period of our human history will bring us a time in which the healing influence of the reign of Christ will be experienced. Then a true religious and moral life will flourish and the world will become a Christian world with social, economic, and political justice everywhere. Our world will develop into a "good" world under the influence of the gospel of Christ.

Also humanism has an optimistic view regarding the future. Humanism proclaims that man is basically good; with good education he will also do good and build himself a good world. The socialist or communist branch of humanism is not different. It pictures for our eyes a bright future of a final communist state, where the ideals of the revolution are materialized: the ideals of liberty, fraternity and equality. Here social, economic, and political justice and peace will rule the entire (communist) world. This final "salvation" will be brought about by a spreading world revolution. That is why the social(ist) revolution must be promoted all over the world.

The readers of *Clarion* know that a liberal, modern Christianity united in national Councils of Churches and in the World Council of Churches, has basically taken over this line of thinking and this socialistic view, only putting it in a "Christian" garment. It is the thinking of today and a version of the social gospel of "liberation." These social gospel adherents preach and work for a better world in which social, economic, and political justice and peace rule: a better world without oppression and discrimination. They are convinced that they as Christians have to be the "avant-garde," the pushers of this better world with their social "Christian" gospel. With this thinking, they expect a better future.

Is the optimism expressed in this contribution in *Perspectives on the Christian Reformed Church* influenced by the humanistic social gospel thinking? Is that its background? I hope it is not. Anyway, I do not think that there is any Scriptural ground for such optimism. God's Word teaches us clearly that the end of the history of *this* world will show the appearance of the man of lawlessness (II Thess. 2), an anti-Christ who will receive the power and the throne of the dragon, and will deceive the whole world (Rev. 13). And when the measure of sin of this world is full through the man of lawlessness, then Christ will appear as Judge, to judge the living and the dead. After this, there will be the new heaven and the new earth.

This is not the time or the place to delve into the matter of millennialism. But it will receive our attention in the future.

J. GEERTSEMA

Are nuclear weapons acceptable?

Some reflections on war and disarmament³

7. Disarmament

Seeing the results of the arms talks and the hesitation of both superpowers to make concessions, one might wonder why they started these talks in the first place. The answer is simply that they had to. It was a must! Both sides realized that the systems of the arms race and the balance of terror are running out of control. The reaction and the resistance of public opinion also must be faced.

In the disarmament conferences the same rule functions which determines the arms race, namely the question as to how far they trust each other and in how far they are convinced of each others determination to face the consequences. Also in the disarmament conference the effect of deterrence works. If the parties in a disarmament conference already make wrong assessments with respect to each others determination, how will the system of deterrence ever work when a real confrontation takes place? Therefore these arms talks are extremely important and the results are, humanly speaking, decisive for the political and military development of the near future.

Of course, both sides try to show off and win public opinion. It is a big propaganda campaign. They are both more eager to win public support than we realize. Every move is well considered. The Soviet Union is also very concerned about public opinion. They cannot afford to continue the arms race as it is today in the present economic situation. It might very well kill their own economy. We don't know too much about what is going on behind the iron curtain, but even a dictatorial regime can spend a ruble only once. People need food to live, and making people slaves of the system has its limits. The Soviet Union has tried desperately and has succeeded in catching up with the USA in the arms race, but don't ask what it has cost their national economy which is in very bad shape, despite very ambitious plans.

The Soviet Union is not prepared to give up its ultimate goals, but it is a necessity, also for them, to bring the escalation in the arms race to a halt.

It is important, therefore, that we strive and fight for multilateral disarmament.

It is in the best interest of all parties involved. But it can be reached only with the determination and willingness to face reality.

8. Unilateral disarmament.

Many people are so frightened by the prospect of nuclear war that they talk about unilateral disarmament. Their reasoning goes like this: if we show our willingness to stop the arms race by throwing away our weapons, to start with all nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union will see that we mean business. They will not

“The Soviet Union is also very concerned about public opinion. They cannot afford to continue the arms race as it is today in the present economic situation. It might very well kill their own economy. We don't know too much about what is going on behind the iron curtain, but even a dictatorial regime can spend a ruble only once.”

feel threatened any longer and they will follow suit. In this way we can restore mutual trust and peace in this world.

Unfortunately, this is a rather naive attitude. It does not take into consideration the completely different approach and way of thinking of the people in the Eastern European Countries. They have a different philosophy and attitude than we have. The people in the Kremlin do not feel the same way we do. They simply do not believe that someone would give up his defence and trust someone else. Instead they consider unilateral disarmament to be a matter of weakness and lack of determination. They will only take advantage of the situation to reach their own goal.

We also have to take into consideration the big propaganda campaign. According to some people who have escaped the Soviet System and have firsthand knowledge, the Soviet Union is working very hard to promote the so-called “peace” movements in the world. Every action against nuclear armament and in favour of unilateral disarmament is applauded by them. They are even will-

ing to support these movements financially whenever possible. At the same time they will never allow such actions in their own country.

It is unfortunate that many “peace” activists are not aware of the fact that they are being manipulated. The whole worldwide peace movement is certainly a political matter and a big propaganda project as well. Many activists are manipulated by naively following propaganda while others, we don't know how many, are actively involved in the manipulation of public opinion. This is a very dangerous

situation. It can destroy or do great damage to the deterrent of our defence organizations and the balance of terror. Instead of bringing peace it will increase the chance that a local conflict will cause a restricted war. Let us be realistic. The Soviet Union is not prepared as yet to take the risk of a worldwide nuclear war. And they will never have to if the development continues as it is today. The undermining of the Western defence system by all kinds of so-called peace movements will give them military superiority anyway. They do not even have to increase their arsenal of armaments to reach this goal, neither do they have to use their missiles.

The greatest danger today is not a well considered nuclear attack. Of course, it could happen through a complicated process of human mistakes, computer errors, miscalculations and misinterpretations. However, an even greater danger is that the Soviet Union, because of its superiority in the arms race, will try to reach its goal via small steps, as in Poland, Afghanistan and other parts of the world.

As it is today they can take it easy and just go step by step. They don't take too many risks, because the Western World is disunited and unable to resist them. Public opinion prevents the Western World from taking firm actions and from showing real determination. That basically means the end of the balance of terror.

We have to be aware of these developments otherwise we will not be able to make a just assessment of what is going on today. Unilateral disarmament does not solve any problem, on the contrary, it only makes matters worse and it gives an advantage to the Soviet Union and its allies.

9. Are nuclear weapons acceptable?

In spite of all we have said until now the question remains: are nuclear weap-

“The greatest danger today is not a well considered nuclear attack. An even greater danger is that the Soviet Union, because of its superiority in the arms race, will try to reach its goal via small steps, as in Poland, Afghanistan and other parts of the world.”

ons acceptable? It might be part and parcel of the arms race and of the balance of terror, but is it an acceptable and appropriate tool in this respect?

Due to recent publications we all realize that a full nuclear war will leave no survivors and no real winner. The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of the Second World War had a terrible aftermath. The present nuclear weapons are much stronger. There is a great overkill capacity. A nuclear war will leave no life on earth untouched and what will be left may hardly appear to be life. It appears to be a totally inhuman way of warfare.

Certainly, that is true. Such a war would almost annihilate human life on earth. No one can deny or ignore this reality. But still more has to be said to give a complete picture of all the aspects involved in nuclear armament. The atom bombs dropped on Japan caused a terrible ordeal but many more casualties and cruelties would have taken place in the Japanese concentration camps if the war would have dragged on for many more years.

During the last forty years, or at least a part of them, the presence of nuclear weapons has, humanly speaking, kept both superpowers from using them. If the USA would have destroyed all its nuclear weapons and would have stopped further development, would the Soviet Union have done the same? We doubt it very much. If the Soviet Union would have had

the monopoly in this respect, would they not have used them? We are not sure. On the contrary, they would have at least used their so-called tactical nuclear weapons in local conflicts to reach their goal and to bring matters to a fast solution and to achieve their own goal. They would have used their superiority to reach their goals everywhere.

The presence of nuclear weapons on both sides has prevented their use.

Still the question remains: can we and may we use as a deterrent, weapons which never will be used? If someone has a gun, but everyone knows that he will never use it, it does not work and does not have any effect as a deterrent. The balance of terror only works if both parties are prepared to use their weapons. In the military strategy of the USA the use of nuclear weapons is certainly included as an option. Dangerous as this may be,

it is the only way to prevent things from getting worse.

We have to face the reality that these weapons exist. Throwing away all Western nuclear weapons will only increase the danger that the Soviet Union will use them. Though deterrence and the balance of terror might be frightening, the absence of this balance would be even worse.

Some reason: “Let us, unilaterally, start with nuclear disarmament, and the Soviet Union will follow suit.” We are convinced they will not, as we have stated before. Some argue that it would be better to live under a Soviet supremacy than face the possibility of a nuclear war. That might sound reasonable. But is it realistic? People who have escaped the Soviet Union have a different opinion. The communist system will never stop its effort to gain power everywhere. Even the people at the top do not trust each other and are sometimes prepared to kill one another to reach their personal goal, as history has proven. The power struggle in the Kremlin is not a public matter. It does not go in the same way as in election campaigns in our part of the world. But if it goes that way among “comrades” in the Kremlin, let us not make any illusions about the grass roots. Our freedom and independence are at stake and they are worthy of being defended.

Moreover, for us as Christians there is another point we have to consider. In our Western part of the world we can

serve the Lord without any hindrance. Let us be thankful for that. The communist system takes away this freedom. Of course we know that the Lord takes care of His people, also in persecution. But we should not willingly bring ourselves into such a situation. We have to be careful that we do not forfeit our privileges.

10. Eschatological perspective

Finally we have to mention another aspect.

What has been said until now seems to paint a gloomy picture of the future. Is a third world war inevitable? Many people seem to follow, in an irresponsible naivety, the leaders in so-called peace movements and others willingly mislead them. People seem to be willing to give up their freedom. Where will this all end? Is the future a matter of a global destruction or an atheistic supremacy? Does the future hold worldwide persecution of the Church?

We have to see it in a different way!

In the first place it might very well be that a war or global disaster is at hand. It is also possible that a time of persecution of the Church is coming. But basically we knew it all along. The Bible in many places tells us about war, persecution and global calamities. But such catastrophes will not occur because of human mistake neither through a well considered attack of an enemy. They will come as a fulfillment of prophecy.

Not a decision of a superpower or a computer error will cause the destruction of this world and the end of all human life but the sound of the trumpet and the word of our Lord will trigger a great calamity. That will be the great eschatological event, the renewal of this earth at Christ's glorious return.

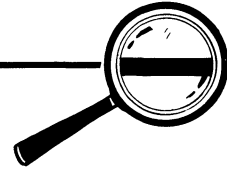
We do not know which means the Lord will use to bring this earth to its final destination. Our heavenly Father has very often used sinful actions of man to bring His plan of salvation to its fulfillment. He will do it also in the future. Let us not lose heart.

We have to face our responsibility to defend our country, our freedom and our national independence and sovereignty. Ultimately we know we are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven from where we expect our Saviour and our King.

Let us work, aware of our responsibility. Let us fulfill our mandate in this world. Don't worry too much.

If we have done what we can do, the Lord will do what we cannot do. Our life is in His hand. The whole world is under His supremacy. He is the one and only real “Superpower.” In His care and under His protection we are safe.

W. POUWELSE



British atheist rejects evolutionism

Sometimes scientific research causes atheistic scientists to come to the conclusion that there must be more than just matter. Materialism as a philosophy "believes" (!) or assumes that everything that exists is basically matter. In a long evolutionistic process, by chance, matter produced life. And life, based on matter, developed into complicated life forms, including life forms of a higher intellect.

In this philosophy of materialism, man's mind is just a matter of electrical impulses, and reactions of the brain. And brain is matter. This materialism is the basis of all modern humanistic philosophies as we have them in socialism and communism.

Being confronted with such atheistic materialism, the Christian believer can rejoice when scientists conclude from their scientific research that there must be more than just matter.

I quote from the *Preface* of the book *The Mystery of the Mind* written by Dr. Wilder Penfield, a neurosurgeon, who made a special study of epilepsy. He wrote (page XIII):

Throughout my own scientific career I, like other scientists, have struggled to prove that the brain accounts for the mind. But now, perhaps, the time has come when we may profitably consider the evidence as it stands, and ask the question: *Do brain-mechanics account for the mind? Can the mind be explained by what is now known about the brain? If not, which is the more reasonable of the two possible hypotheses: that man's being is based on one element, or on two?*

And on page 114 he writes:

In the end I conclude that there is no good evidence, in spite of new methods . . . that the brain alone can carry out the work that the mind does. I conclude that it is easier to rationalize man's being on the basis of two elements than on the basis of one."

The reader understands that the author means with two elements both the physical (brain, matter) and the spiritual (soul, mind, or spirit). In other words: man is more than body cells. Man is also soul or spirit. But we already knew that from God's Word.

Certainly we do not need the results of scientific research in order to accept the truth of God's Word. Nevertheless, it is a good thing to see that scientific research causes people to come to conclusions that deny a false philosophy like

materialism. (By the way, Dr. Wilder Penfield writes that he had a Christian upbringing.)

I write this as an introduction to what follows. Recently I read the following little interesting article in *Nederlands Dagblad* of February 27, 1984:

London — "It is impossible, that life on earth came about via a process of evolution." This is a statement of Sir Fred Hoyle, England's most renowned astronomer and so far an avowed atheist.

With this statement Sir Hoyle places himself in opposition to Darwin's theory of evolution. He has antagonized many evolutionist scientists in this way. The theories of Darwin are rejected as "absurd" by Sir Hoyle in a recently published book. Man has such unique qualities that it is impossible that these came about by chance. According to Hoyle there must be an intelligence-source somewhere in the cosmos which governs the whole universe. His book shows an almost yearning desire to discover more about the mystery of life. "Is this intelligence-source, outside the earth, unbridgeably far away?" asks Hoyle. "Or is it sufficiently nearby so that we can make contact, if only we know how?"

On a question from a journalist whether Hoyle would be willing to believe in a divine creator, he responded: "Yes, if I could understand it. I must be able to understand it."

Now we do not confirm our faith with a statement of the great astronomer, Sir

Fred Hoyle. Our faith stands apart from it. Our faith is simply based on God's Word as the infallible truth revealed by God. That is how God's Word offers itself. Our faith is the work of the Holy Spirit in our heart by means of God's Word and its preaching.

Nevertheless, we can rejoice when such a statement is made. It shows that the eternal power of God in creation is stronger than the satanic power of suppressing the truth. I refer here to what the apostle Paul writes in Romans 1:18-20. What can be known about God, Paul writes, is plain to the ungodly who suppress the truth, because God has shown it to them. "Ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature, [or qualities, literally: His invisible things, J.G.], namely, His eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse." We can see, on the one hand, that this power of God with which He made the earth and especially man with his intelligence, has been too strong for the atheist, Hoyle.

On the other hand, we can also see that without faith as work of the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit the letter of God in creation cannot be read correctly. A natural man cannot understand or grasp the things of the Spirit. Sir Hoyle says that he is willing to accept faith in



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OUR COVER

Spruce Woods Provincial Park, courtesy Manitoba Government.

a divine Creator if he can understand. That is the wrong order. Understanding, human insight, and human reasoning do not work faith. Sinful man, who is dead in his trespasses and sin, in his unbelief, cannot draw near to God in his own power, nor through scientific research, even when that research causes him to admit that evolution is not the answer. No, faith works and shapes understanding. It is *through faith* that we *understand* that the world was created by the Word of God, Hebrews 11:3. Sir Hoyle has a great desire to know the mystery of life. We answer: God has revealed that mystery in His Word. And in that Word He is not far from us, but near. This is His Word of grace in Christ Jesus who has made known the Father to us.

We rejoice in the power of God in creation, when a scientist comes to a statement that says evolution cannot be true. We rejoice even more with great and humble thankfulness when we can say that through grace we understand what this great scientist does not. Our heavenly Father has made all things and He upholds all things through His Word, through Christ Jesus His Son unto full, eternal salvation for those to whom He gives faith, but also unto perdition of those who suppress the truth in their wickedness.

It is our prayer that many may come to the true faith through His Word of grace, and so find God as the saving Creator.

J. GEERTSEMA

Letter to the Editor



Dear Editor:

We are writing this letter in response to comments made in the January 27, 1984 issue of *Clarion*, News Medley column, concerning pipe organs vs electronic organs.

First, we would like to point out that every instrument imitates a sound. A pipe organ imitates a sound as much as an electronic organ does. Sound, no matter how it is produced, is still sound.

Secondly, a pipe organ does not have a sound all its own. With the help of several members of our group who have had a number of years of musical training on organ, we reviewed the stops you usually find on the average pipe organ. Some of them are labelled Tibia, Flute, Trumpets, etc. A pipe organ does not have these instruments inside of it, it has pipes which sound like these instruments.

Thirdly, we will agree that the pipe organ is a fantastic instrument to have

and to play but if purchasing one is a problem for a congregation, especially a small one, an electronic organ is more than sufficient. In regards to your comment that it is harder to sing along to an electronic organ, we believe that this would depend on both the setting and the organist. If both are efficient, there should be no problem. A bad setting and an incompetent organist will be hard to sing with on both a pipe and electronic organ.

Finally, we come to the purpose of singing in church. We sing in church to praise God and we feel that singing along to an electronic organ will not offend Him. It is not the sound and how it is produced that counts, it is the words and the feeling each individual has in their hearts.

Hoping you will understand our opinion, we remain

Yours in Christ,

The Young People's Society of the
Providence Canadian Reformed Church
Edmonton

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your letter and your interest in this matter. As with you, so with me it is close to my heart.

There are a few points in your letter which show a misunderstanding, and I should like you to take note of the following.

You write, "every instrument imitates a sound." Did you really think before writing these words down? Does a pipe organ really "imitate" sound, or does it *produce* sound? When the wind enters a pipe, the pipe starts "speaking." This is not an imitation, but this is actual sound, peculiar to that specific pipe. The pipe does not imitate anything, it produces the sound according to its own "nature," that is: according to the way it was built for this specific rank. Do you know that you should never put a Prestant-pipe amidst the rank of Rohrflöte? It does not fit, for it belongs to a different rank, it has a different "nature."

It is a complete riddle to me how you can say that a pipe organ "does not have a sound all its own." It produces — not imitates — its own specific sound; it produces a combination of sounds when you use various stops together, and thus you get a full "body."

You write that with the help of several members who have had a number of years of musical training on organ, you reviewed the stops you usually find on the average pipe organ. Well, it would have been a lot better if, instead of reviewing the stops, you had examined the pipes. Then you would have found that there is a markable difference in the build of the pipes. You would then not have written e.g. that a pipe organ does not have a "Flute" inside it. You would have discovered that the pipes belonging to the trumpet stop all have a tongue which pro-

duces the trumpet sound, being moved by the wind, (real trumpet sound, no imitation) in the same manner as the lips of a trumpet player make the air vibrate. The "tongue" of the pipe works in the same manner as the lips of the trumpet player you might say for simplicity's sake. The only difference is that the human trumpet player can change the pitch by means of lip-pressure and valves, whereas the pipe organ has a separate trumpet for each note: C, C-sharp, D, E-flat, E, etc.

As for the flute, did you ever look inside an organ? Then you will have discovered that each pipe is a separate flute, producing one particular "note." When you take a side-flute, there are several holes, there are valves, and they are manipulated by the fingers of the player. This enables the player to play a tune on the one instrument which is the same instrument as all the pipes of the "flute-stop" combined. I would not advise you to do it, but if you had a chance to go inside an organ and take one of the flute pipes out, and blew into it — not too forcefully, for the air-pressure is carefully regulated — you would produce the actual flute sound. What you hold in your hand is a real flute, just as real as the flutes which we cut from willow branches when I was a child; and just as real as the whistles which you can buy in the store, or the panpipes which you perhaps have seen and played.

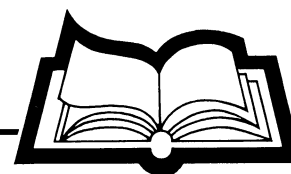
The panpipe is a real combination of flutes. When you take them apart and put them on a windchest, then you have a flute you can play from the console of a pipe organ. In fact, that's what the pipe organ has inside it. Don't ever say now again that a pipe organ does not have these instruments in it. I hope that I have convinced you. I hope that from now on musical training on organ also includes some theory about the "innards" of a pipe organ. It would be very beneficial. Your letter would not have been written, I am convinced, if such theory had been taught.

Mind you, I shall certainly not condemn a congregation that cannot afford a pipe organ and, for the time being, avails itself of an electronic instrument. In fact, I did accompany the congregational singing on such an instrument quite a few times. If such an instrument will have to do for some time, who am I to say a bad word about it?

This does not take away my *basic* objection to electronic instruments, for of *these* instruments it has to be said *indeed*: "They do *not* have inside them what they pretend to have and what we read on the levers on the keyboard."

Meanwhile, we shall continue singing to the glory of our God.

Yours sincerely,
VO



“And He said to them, ‘This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting.’” Mark 9:29

Drawing the Battle Line

This response of the Lord Jesus to His disciples concerning their inability to cast out a certain demon leaves us a bit confused. Regardless of whether the term “fasting” actually belongs to the text or not, the meaning of the Saviour’s words is not clear. Are there, as some say, special kinds of demons — some more powerful than others — which are simply too strong for any resistance? Did the disciples need to pray more to cast out more demons? Did the Lord Jesus foster a kind of competitive mentality among them with regard to their special powers?

The context tells us that the Lord Jesus is concerned about something different here. He has just come down the mountain of transfiguration with His disciples, and suddenly He is confronted with this abrupt and powerful demonstration of the devil’s power. He has talked with Moses and Elijah in the presence of heavenly glory; now the full powers of hell stand before Him. A young epileptic dashed to the ground; he would foam, grind his teeth and become rigid — all in all, a moving and disturbing spectacle. The disciples find this show of demonic strength too powerful for them, and in fear they stand back. The scribes have found here a wonderful opportunity to discredit the Lord Jesus and His work. The Lord Jesus meets with *unbelief* on every side, from His own, and those not His own. And this is what He must deal with.

It’s especially the unbelief of the *disciples* that the Lord Jesus is concerned about, and that forms such a trial and temptation for Him. They were getting used to the exercise of the special divine powers given to them, and began to feel confident with their work of healing, casting out demons, and other miracles. It was becoming easy for them — almost fun. And they expected the arrival of the kingdom to be very soon. Their thoughts were already focussed on the positions of honour and prestige that would be distributed among them. They saw the victory, and the arrival of the kingdom, but did not see the *battle*, and how it would be fought.

That is why this healing of the epileptic boy appears here, after the transfiguration. This is the great mid-point in Christ’s ministry, the mid-point of Mark’s gospel. Here Christ Jesus begins to announce His coming suffering and death: He begins to show the *way* the battle will be fought. And where His disciples have completely misjudged the battle. He must draw the battle lines sharply. They had begun to think it was all coming quite easily; now the Lord Jesus tells them how great the enemy is. They do not contend with flesh and blood, but with powers and principalities. They are to be equipped for *spiritual warfare* — not political battle.

So the Lord Jesus calls His disciples to deep, intense prayer. And whether the term “fasting” is included or not, the idea is certainly not foreign to the context. Prayer — earnest, serious, heartfelt and continuous prayer — is required to battle against the powers of the evil one. One may not expect automatic results. All one’s concentration — mind and body — must be directed to the Lord’s service, and towards the honour of His name. Diligence, self-examination and heartfelt turning to God in prayer is required to fight the Lord’s battles.

This is the prayer Christ Himself had to learn and practice. It was there at the beginning of His ministry, Mark 1:12, 13, 35. It returns here at the middle of His ministry, the great turning point. So it also returns at the end of His life on earth. Again the disciples had to climb a mountain; again it was night, and again they were weary, cf. Luke 9:32; 22:45. But this time there was no transfiguration, no moment of glory. All heavenly help left Him. He had only one weapon: fasting and prayer, Mark 14:32 ff. — intense, heartfelt, unwavering cries to His Father in heaven. He fought the battle according to the lines drawn by His Father, and so came to see that He had no easy enemy. Yet He remained faithful, and fought as a faithful Son, obtaining a complete victory. “For in the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was *heard* for his godly fear . . . he learned obedience through what He suffered; and being made perfect He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,” Heb. 5:8, 9.

Thus, those who follow Him and share His salvation must see the battle lines, and how deep they are drawn. We cannot be content with easy prayers, expecting quick and easy answers. We cannot expect automatic deliverance from trials and temptations. Rather, in the power of the Spirit we must pray earnestly to God day by day, directing our attention to His will and His honour. Without serious, intent and fervent prayer, our faith will only be small and waning. Growth and maturity in discipleship requires a life of “prayer and fasting” — regular and devoted personal and family worship before the Lord who has saved us, and delivered us from all the power of the evil one. Then we will see the truth of the words:

“When perils o’ertake us, escape Thou wilt make us,
and with Thy help, O Lord, our battles we win.”

Hymn 59:2

J. DEJONG

PATRIMONY PROFILE³⁴

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

“The propaedeutic examination was done at the Provincial Synod and covered all disciplines. Likewise the peremptory examination, with this difference that each province sent two deputies (ministers) so that, when all were present, there were besides the ministers of the Provincial Assembly another sixteen ministers by whom one was examined. And one was in for it then for at least one-and-a-half days, so that it was sometimes necessary to have an intermission of half an hour because the candidate was exhausted. The exams started at 10 in the morning and sometimes went on till 8 or 9 or even 10 at night. They were concluded with a serious inquiry as to the calling to the ministry.”

As for the study: “We had to attend lectures daily: in the morning with the lecturer in languages and logic, in the evening with Rev. Kok who also taught *Historia Sacra*, General and National History. We were free on Saturdays but had to study. The first year we were allowed to go for a walk an hour in the afternoon, but not after that. We studied from 5:00 a.m. till 10:00 p.m.; during the winter we started a little later. That was not bad at all, was it?”

When the Theological School in Kampen was established the Rev. Kok had no students left: they all had been admitted into the ministry.

The Gelderland School

From approximately 1839 on both Rev. A.C. van Raalte and Rev. A. Brummelkamp were engaged in the work of training for the ministry. They saw themselves more or less guided into this work by brothers who approached them with the request for instruction. The plans to combine the efforts of both ministers were shelved when Brummelkamp accepted the call to Schiedam; but when he returned to Gelderland and became a minister in Arnhem in August, 1842, the situation changed again. Van Raalte came to Arnhem with his students in November, 1844. The cooperation between Brummelkamp and van Raalte did not last long: the latter had plans to emigrate to the United States, which plan was realized in October, 1846.

Brummelkamp was on the verge of moving to Amsterdam to become a member of the faculty of the Christian Reformed Seminary, which was to be established in Amsterdam and intended to be an institution where ministers of “Reformed persuasion” were to be trained, when he changed his mind and chose for his Seceded brothers instead of for his friends in the Netherlands Reformed Church.

In 1851 — as we saw before — the unity is restored between Brummelkamp and those following him on the one side and the other Seceded Churches on the other side. This unity is confirmed at the Synod of Zwolle in 1854, by which Synod the Theological School in Kampen is established. The Rev. Anthony Brummelkamp is appointed to the faculty of this School. The unity of training is achieved. The one school for the training for the ministry will serve all the churches from now on.

The Reformed Congregations under the Cross or De Gereformeerde Kerk in Nederland (The Reformed Church in The Netherlands)

There was no doubt or uncertainty among the Seceders that they remained in the path of the old, Catholic Church, and that therefore they were the legitimate continuation of the Reformed Church in The Netherlands. That they were not permitted to carry this name was no reason for them to abandon their claim. It was only through pressure and in order to receive recognition by the civil authorities that — for the time being at least — they consented to give up the name “Reformed.” As we saw before: Utrecht with the Rev. H.P. Scholte was the first congregation to yield. Not all of the Seceders went along with this course of action. There was a group which boldly and bravely held on to its claim and also in its official documents presented itself as “the already for centuries existing Reformed Church in The Netherlands.”

“The Reformed Church in The Netherlands” is also known as “The Reformed Congregations under the Cross.” The latter name expresses that they are being dealt with in an unjust manner, that their rights are being trampled upon. Sometimes we also find the expression “The Reformed Church under the Cross.” What is the reason that they speak of “Reformed Church” the one time and “Reformed Congregations” the other time?

Some of the leaven of the hierarchical form of church government and its underlying principle that: the national body is church (singular); the local parts of the national body are congregations (plural), was still evident. We shall see more of this leaven. It is seen in the Regulation of 1869; it also played a part in the discussions between the Churches of the Secession and those of the Doleantie.

Wolter Wagter Smitt

A short time after the Secession accusations were brought in against the ministers Brummelkamp, Scholte, van Raalte, and van Velzen. It was said that they were not preaching the pure doctrine and did not promote a conduct that was pure. This happened specifically in and around Zwolle and was done especially by Wolter Wagter Smitt who, as a lay preacher conducted services in that region on a rather regular basis.

This Mr. Smitt was usually called Lieutenant Smitt, because he was an officer in the local militia. Born in Steenwijk, in 1804, he made profession of faith in 1825. However, soon he found no satisfaction in the services that were held and with some others he organized meetings where they studied and discussed God’s Word. On February 27, 1838, the young people were cited to appear before the Consistory of Steenwijk because they had the audacity to have their own gatherings every other Sunday evening instead of going to church.

However, the brothers were not intimidated and continued. The consistory then asked the local government “to take care that these gatherings which are so completely in conflict with the will of His Majesty, our beloved King, and whereby the peace and rest of the National Church, the love and edification of the congregation is undermined, and whereby all sort of disorder is caused, are prevented.” This did not help either. Even the accusa-

tion that the gatherings of the young people constituted a danger for the state (!) had no effect.

The meetings and his attendance there could not prevent that Wolter Smitt was appointed sergeant-major in the militia on October 4, 1829. A little more than a year later he was commissioned as second lieutenant in which capacity he also served during the Belgian Campaign. From 1834 on until its disbandment in 1839, he served with the militia in Zwolle.

When, in 1835, a Seceded Congregation was formed in Zwolle, Smitt was among their number and regularly conducted the services. Initially they confined themselves within the limit of 20 persons, but Smitt did not have any objection if members on an individual basis should ask for permission to come together with more than 20 persons instead of asking for this permission as a congregation. In the latter case they would have had to acknowledge that they were something new and would have been obligated to refrain from any ecclesiastical actions; in the former case they did not have to reveal what they were planning; and the less they told the civil authorities the better it would be.

When Synod of Utrecht of 1837 changed the Church Order, some congregations in Overijssel broke the bond with the other Seceded Congregations. In a brochure, Smitt writes, that by not holding on to the Dort Church Order in every respect, the Seceders have given occasion to others to regard them as a "new sect." He was especially opposed to the introductory articles and what was said therein about church membership. He called it a deviation from the doctrine of the fathers when it was being taught "that all who are found in the visible church are to be considered as true members of the church, yea that it is not allowed to suspect anyone of hypocrisy as long as he is pure in confession and of irreproachable conduct." He was not completely correct in that, but he did not want to be convinced by H. de Cock; and when a split occurred, he was the recognized leader of those who broke with the church.

On July 10, 1840, a meeting was held in Mastenbroek where various congregations around Zwolle were represented. At this meeting A. Schouwenburg, W.W. Smitt, D. van der Werp, and A. Flier are ordained as ministers.

In June 1844 the various "Congregations under the Cross" united as one federation, at the General Synod of the Reformed Church in The Netherlands held at Linschoten. They adopted the Three Forms of Unity and the unchanged Church Order of Dordrecht. At this same assembly the lay preacher Cornelis van den Oever of Rotterdam was examined and declared eligible for call according to Art. 8 of the Church Order; after which the Rev. W.W. Smitt ordained him as a minister in Rotterdam.

W.W. Smitt did not serve long. On August 31, 1846 he preached for the last time in Zalk. His text was Psalm 73:3. In the afternoon Lord's Day 48 was explained. When he came home he was ill. He died on September 9, 1846.

Efforts towards Reunion

The Reformed Church in The Netherlands and the Christian Seceded Congregations generally stood sharply over against each other. Some extreme minds among

the Seceders said that it was better to go to church with the Roman Catholics than with the Congregations under the Cross. Sometimes even children baptized by ministers of the latter were baptized again when the legitimacy of the office of such a minister was considered doubtful. The actual cause of the conflict was distrust and judging each other rashly and unheard. And: the request for recognition, even though it made an end to persecution, did more harm to the cause of the liberated churches than the persecution had been able to inflict. The brothers lived separately for some thirty years. The main guilt is to be sought with those who, cost what it may, wanted to push the new Church Order.

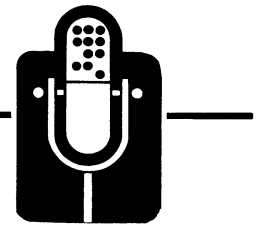
True, the Synod of the Seceded Churches of 1840 declared, "And while acknowledging that in imprudence, by changing the Church Order, we have disturbed the congregations, not realizing that this change was to have such effects of confusion, we now desire that by the setting aside of all self-made Church Orders, and by the recognition of that which our fathers made, the minds of all — Seceders as well as non-Seceders — who have become scared, may be put at ease."

But now the big question was: Who was right, the ones who adopted and pushed the new Church Order through or those who rejected it and held on to the old Church Order of Dort? Both groups claimed: "We are the Church." Somewhere some would have to give. Both said: "You have to come and join us." How was the unity to be restored? Synod 1849 of the Seceded Churches "invited the Reformed Congregations under the Cross . . . to come to this Synod in order that we may talk about re-union." In reply, the "Cross Churches" sent a letter in which they defended their right to exist, accused the Seceders of having sacrificed the principles of the Secession, and declared that for that reason they could not unite with them.

The Synod then decided to respond to this letter with a submission in which they presented themselves to the "Cross Churches" as the true Church and told them: "Your behaviour, your ecclesiastical position is therefore directly in conflict with God's Word, our Forms of Unity, as well as with our liturgy and Church Order. "For this reason we must declare with sadness that you have rendered yourselves guilty of public schism, intrusion upon the holy ministry, and profanation of the sacraments, while increasing your guilt as long as you continue in this way. Therefore we are not allowed to unite with you, lest we bring upon ourselves the Lord's displeasure. But we pray and advise you, confess your sins before the Lord and before men; fearing Him, for with the Lord there is forgiveness. Return to the communion of the church in order that we may rejoice with you and because of you."

It is not surprising why a rather negative reaction resulted from the above communication. Yet the Congregations under the Cross showed much willingness to come to closer contact, and, possibly, closer bonds. This appears already from a decision which their General Assembly, held at Zwartsluis April 25, 1849, had made. This was three months before the above quoted letter from the Seceded Synod was sent.

— *To be continued.*



In all quietness and without much ado, brother and sister D. DeWitt of Guelph celebrated their fifty-fifth wedding anniversary. They did have an Open House and celebrated with their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren after the Open House had been closed, become a closed session, so to speak. Although our brother's health has not been lately what we would have loved to see it be, yet he could enjoy the blessings of the Lord to the full extent and they are both very grateful to our gracious God for the privileges given them in such an abundant measure. They know from whom they have received their blessings and on whom they depend for the future. Also via our *Clarion* our heartfelt congratulations and a continuation of the blessings received thus far.

There may be more brothers and sisters who should have been mentioned in our column, but I am not aware of any other celebrations. *Clarion* has not arrived at regular intervals — except at regularly-too-late dates — and therefore I do not know whether there is any advertisement in the March 23 issue (which I have not yet received on the 29th of that month). We have been told that there won't be an increase in postal rates this year. There had better not be one when a letter from British Columbia's Fraser Valley to my mailbox in the Fergus Post Office takes ten days to get from the one place to the other. Lately they had a "dispute" in the Guelph Post Office with the result that there it took ten days for a letter to travel from a mailbox to the homes of people living in Guelph. As a result of this, many taxpayers were faced with penalties because their payments reached the proper address sometimes more than a week too late.

In this case it must be said that the "tax people" showed compassion — or was it union solidarity? — and the penalties were waived.

In any case, we do have a few news items to pass on or to comment on, in spite of the postal difficulties. It won't be a long medley, something which various readers won't regret, I am certain.

If anyone is planning on visiting relatives in the Brampton area, he may appreciate it to know that it was "decided to move the Lord's Supper from July 8 to June 24, to accommodate the holiday period." July is mostly the holiday month for many Church members, but there may be some who go a little early. They know now about Brampton's changed schedule.

At the Ottawa Consistory the matter of Home Mission was discussed and "after some discussion it is decided to form a Home Mission Committee."

The Congregation Meeting in Burlington West saw the following on its agenda: "Plans for the manse to be built on the church property will be presented and discussed." It is a nice place to build a house and to live, quiet and off the highway. Personally I have no desire at all to live in a city again; the wide view we have and the need to use field glasses if one wishes to look into the neighbour's livingroom suits us fine. We enjoy the former and make no use of the latter. Neither do our neighbours for that matter, at least not as far as we know.

As for this building of a manse, I still think that for the Church itself it is the smartest thing to do. In the long run it is the cheapest for the Church. For the minister, however, it means that he still does not have any equity in a house once he retires. He has to start from scratch at an age at which practically all others have paid off their mortgage and have no trouble living

off their pension earnings. If he wants to rent a house once he is retired, the payments may be more than he can afford. Recently I heard of someone who rented a house that was suitable for him and his family and who had to pay \$750.00 per month rent. I almost fainted when hearing this, but upon further reflection did not find this amount exorbitantly high. If a house costs \$80,000.00 the owner may expect a reasonable return on his investment, and could easily make 10% if he invested in certificates. That brings us already close to the \$750 per month; and then we still have to add the property taxes and maintenance costs.

Granted, when a minister retires, he could do with much less as far as house is concerned than what he needs while being in active service. Still, the cost may be considerable.

For this reason I read with great warmth around my heart — pardon the figure of speech — that the Providence, Edmonton, Consistory decided "to request the Committee of Administration to give Council advice re: a fund for the accommodation for the minister when he retires."

Don't think now that I write these things because I am approaching retirement age myself. I have enough courage to approach the Consistory here in Fergus if it would be necessary that they take similar measures. I only pass it on for the benefit of my colleagues and of the Consistories who may from time to time think about this matter.

Burlington East's bulletin contained the following passage from the hand of its minister. "A few weeks ago we had a visitor in our midst who recently, with his family, moved from Calgary up north to Whitehorse. Also from our congregation a family moved to Whitehorse a few years ago. They have met, and our visitor told me that he intends to place an ad in the paper there to find out whether there are more Reformed believers there, so that they may meet together."

I pass this news item on in order that anyone who knows about any person or family living in that area may add his information to the above, in the hope that contact may be achieved, and the gathering of believers may continue also in the NWT, and the Yukon. So far we have to confine ourselves to the Yukon, and this is a vast area, but knowing that there are a few families who wish to maintain the bond, some of our people may have an opportunity to find suitable employ in that region and now be encouraged to pursue it, knowing that there are others who may be of help and support. No one should go there without the firm determination to remain faithful to the Lord and to seek and maintain the bond with the brothers and sisters. But everyone who is of that resolve should consider the possibilities.

In more than one bulletin I read remarks about the "last pews." Thereby are meant the rear pews in the auditoriums, pews which apparently attract mostly the younger members and sometimes are the scene of littering — wrappers of peppermints and other candies — and of talking and other activities which should not take place during the worship services. We come to Church to meet the Lord, to hear His Word, to sing to His praise and to practise the covenant-bond which our God has established with us. It should not be necessary that the following be written in a bulletin.

"Oversight and discipline regarding the attitude of some members of the Congregation, who often are seated in the back of the Church are discussed. The Consistory decides to remind the congregation that a problem does exist and urges

all members to conduct themselves as they should. Parents have the duty to know how their children conduct themselves during the worship services."

The problem is most times that there are only a few who misbehave; however, the others — due to "peer pressure" — don't want to sit somewhere else, and do not have the nerve to tell the culprits to "quit it." Thus even those who go to Church with the sincere intention to listen and to behave properly are oftentimes involved in actions which they hate deep in their hearts. Improvement can be expected only when our young people themselves make the guilty ones to understand that they are not appreciated if they continue. You will be surprised how soon things improve if that happens!

We close with some news from the Fraser Valley.

"With regard to the singing of the Apostles' Creed at the celebration of the Lord's Supper it was decided not to follow this suggestion up for the time being." This was a decision of the Abbotsford Consistory.

It is a great improvement already that the Apostles' Creed is no longer found in the prayer, as was the case in the old form. It would be an even greater improvement if the Congregation as a whole professed their faith with these words, but Reformed people are sometimes wrongly-conservative and oftentimes it is so that a vociferous small group of people impose their will upon all the rest by simple blackmail. Note: I am *not* referring here to Abbotsford! I have something else in mind and say this for clarity's sake.

"A date was also set for an informative meeting with the brothers and sisters in the U.S. concerning a possible Church institution in Washington." Apparently the matter has not yet been laid to rest but is still very much alive. Even if the possibilities are not there at the moment, it is good when the matter keeps having the attention of those involved.

The Surrey Municipal Council decided *not* to permit wide-open Sunday shopping. This is what Rev. J. Visscher reports in the *Church News*. "We may thank the Lord that He has heard our prayers in this regard and also blessed our witness. It was indeed quite something to see so many of you at the hearing

held by the Council. It seemed to me that of the 200 people present; at least 150 were from the Cloverdale and Maranatha congregations. I was also pleased to see that so many of you took the opportunity to address the Council directly at this hearing. It has surely had a bearing on the outcome."

This shows anew that we should be involved also in local, political matters, and should let our voice be heard in order to achieve that God's Word be acknowledged in civil life. The Word of God itself works and penetrates, but if we don't see to it that this Word is heard, as is our obligation, no effect can ever be noticed.

In Langley, the Consistory received a request "from the Credo Christian High School Board to investigate the possibility of cooperating in the area of caretaking. This request will be forwarded to the Committee of Administration."

Similar action may be considered elsewhere as well. In Langley the buildings are close together, so this does not present a problem. It would solve some difficulties if a full-time position could be created. Now the caretaker duties for both Church and School are part-time concerns, with the result that the one as well as the other could suffer to some extent. If a caretaker holds a full-time job, it is not easy for him to be present when, in the evening, a meeting is held in one of the facilities of the Church building. Yet, this is his duty, for it is his responsibility to see to it that everything is locked properly, that the lights are off, that the thermostats have been turned down, and so on. This is not an easy task to fulfill after the regular daily task has been finished. Thus it may be a solution to combine two jobs, the one for the Church and the other one for the School, although even then it is questionable whether this will provide a complete income. In any case, it is good that the matter is being considered.

Let's end high up.

"The Committee will also be instructed to examine the feasibility of installing a steeple on the Church."

And: in the Okanagan Valley spring visitors are arriving once again.

VO

PRESS RELEASE



Classis Alberta/Manitoba, Edmonton, AB, March 13, 14 and 15, 1984

The chairman of the convening Church, the Rev. S. DeBruin, opens the meeting in a Christian manner. He welcomes the delegates in the new building of the Immanuel Church.

All credentials are in good order. Classis is constituted.

As officers are appointed Rev. A. de Jager, chairman; Rev. M. van Beveren, vice-chairman; Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar, clerk.

Reports of church visitation to the Churches at Calgary, Coaldale, Barrhead and Neerlandia are read.

The annual report of the Classical treasurer, br. A.J. Nauta, is received with appreciation for the work done.

The Immanuel Church at Edmonton reports that it has found the Classical archives kept by the Providence Church complete and in good order.

Revised rules for conducting church visitation are adopted and will be incor-

porated into the Regulations for Classis. A general Guideline for the questions asked at the visitations is also adopted.

During the Question Period at Art. 41 C.O. the Church at Carman requests and receives advice regarding the convening of the next Regional Synod. The Church at Winnipeg requests and receives advice in matters of discipline.

The Church at Carman submits some proposals regarding the mandate of the Committee for Needy Churches. It is decided to appoint some brethren to draw up a mandate and to report to Classis.

The Church at Calgary requests Classis' advice re the calling of a minister. Classis declares that it is desirable that the Church at Calgary receives a minister of the Word, and advises the Church at Calgary (1) to further consider what financial responsibilities the Church at Calgary can take upon itself when calling a minister; (2) to request from the Committee for Needy Churches advice in this matter; (3) to submit to the next Classis a request

for financial assistance, if deemed necessary.

Several appeals against decisions of the Immanuel Church at Edmonton are dealt with in committee meetings. It is decided that the committees further prepare proposals for the continued Classical meeting to be held on May 15, 1985, at 10:00 a.m. in Edmonton.

The Rev. B.J. Berends reports on correspondence with the Fraternal Relations Committee, Presbytery of the Dakotas, of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

It is decided to appoint the Rev. D.J. Wielenga to take the place of Rev. B.J. Berends, who has accepted a call to the Church at Smithers, BC, examiner for Doctrine and Creeds, and the Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer is appointed to represent the Churches with the Government of Manitoba.

The Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar leads in prayer and thanksgiving.

The chairman adjourns this session.

For Classis, M. VAN BEVEREN

Mission and evangelism

The Bible Course₂



This Bible Course, Een Geschenk Uit De Hemel (A Gift from Heaven), produced by our Dutch sister churches has been revised and translated by the Reformed Evangelism Taskforce.

Creation

It is not at all surprising that the question about the origin of this world has intrigued and puzzled man throughout history. We are confronted with it every day. You keep asking yourself, "Where did all this come from?"

Neither is it surprising that many answers have been given to this question. Answers that differ very much. There are for instance the myths of the ancient peoples, stories about the origin of man and animals, of water and land. These tales have been strongly influenced by local circumstances. Sometimes a high mountain plays a role and sometimes the sea stands central in the story.

All of these stories and myths were invented by man and were transmitted from one generation to the next. New elements were continually added as time went by. Nevertheless, as man's understanding of nature and of natural phenomena grew, myths and sagas began to play less and less of a role in man's thinking. Yet one question remained relevant: "What is the origin of all things?" That question is still current.

Today there is a very popular answer to that question making the rounds. It is the evolution theory. This theory goes out from the point of view that higher, more developed organisms came from lower, more simple organisms. According to it, life evolved from dead matter and after a long period of time (billions of years) and after many mutations, man made his appearance. In this entire process, it is chance that played a major role. Such is the basic idea of the evolution theory, although it is often worked out in a variety of ways.

Assumptions

Now, if you study the theory of evolution carefully, you will soon discover that it proceeds from certain theoretical assumptions. One is that nonliving things gave rise to living material. Another is that

one species gave rise to a different one (eg. Protozoa to Metazoa). And so there are many more assumptions, assumptions, we say, because they have never been duplicated in any laboratory but have taken form in the mind of man by way of deduction. Evolutionists have yet to find the missing link that will substantiate their theory.

Certainties

There are many myths, there are just as many scientific theories, but there is no certainty. No one knows how life really began. However, that is not true, for there is a source of knowledge that almost everyone overlooks today. It is the BIBLE. Already on its first pages we receive the answer to the question of origins. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). God did not create some primitive matter out of which everything slowly evolved. No, He gave to each creature its essence, its form, its appearance and its mode of life. God also created the first people: Adam and Eve. They were placed in the Garden of Eden, in Paradise. That is where they were to live and work.

More specifically, what does the Bible say about creation, the origin of the world? In Gen. 1 and 2 you can find a description of creation. A brief outline of the six creation days is as follows:

Day One:

God creates light. He calls the light "Day" and the darkness "Night."

Day Two:

God separates the waters. The firmament He calls "Heaven."

Day Three:

Water comes together and the dry land appears. The dry land He calls "Earth," and the water He calls "Sea." On the same day He creates the plants and trees.

Day Four:

God creates the sun, the moon, and the stars. The luminaries are there to separate day from night. They serve as signs for seasons, days and years.

Day Five:

God creates the sea animals and the birds.

Day Six:

God creates the land animals. On this last creation day God also creates man. He creates him in His image and after His likeness. Man has to rule over all that God has made.

Following the description of creation, it says in Gen. 1:31, "And God saw all that He had made, and see, it was very good."

You will not find a detailed description of creation in the Bible. What you will find there is enough for you to acknowledge that God is the Creator of everything.

What may we know?

If you now know and believe that God has created all things, you will see things differently. Behind everything around you, behind all of creation, you will see God Himself. When you walk through nature, you will see and experience God's might and power. The writer of Psalm 19 did too: "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims His handiwork." In Psalm 147 we read: "He gives snow like wool; He scatters hoarfrost like ashes. He casts forth His ice like morsels; who can stand before His cold?"

Besides telling us that God is the Creator of the world, the Bible also tells us that He still rules and upholds it. Even in our time when all things seem possible, no creature can live in his own strength. The Creator gives life. He can take it back too. Being aware that God is the Creator and upholder of this world means that you will have to be careful with creation. Not so much out of respect for life itself, but more so out of respect for the Maker and Giver of life. Behind the creation stands the Creator.

As people we run the risk that we begin to see life and nature as independent powers. However, the Bible warns us against this when it says, "Yet, O Lord, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou art our potter; we are all the work of Thy hand." The thought that life is independent is a result of the theory of evolution. Sometimes, for example in Eastern religions, nature and life are said to be divine, and hence worthy of worship. The Bible, on the other hand, teach-

es us to show respect for God first of all, and that from that respect should come respect for nature and life.

The place of man

The Bible says: "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." Man is the crowning achievement of God's work. The words "image" and "likeness" point us in a certain direction. They do not mean that man physically looks like God or that he has a little bit of divinity in him. No, when man is called God's image, it means that God creates man in such a way and with such qualities that he is able to fulfill his appointment as the living representative of God on earth. In God's way and in God's name he has to rule justly over all creation. In Gen. 1:28 it says: "And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and

subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' "

When God thus looked at everything He had created, all was good. In other words, everything turned out the way He intended it to. Adam and Eve could work fully, freely and joyfully. Nothing hampered them. Their life was a continuous feast, a feast in honour of their God and Maker, who created everything to His glory.

Questions:

1. Adam was appointed ruler (viceroys) over the earth by God. How does that appear from Gen. 1:26-28?
2. How was man created (Gen. 2:7) and how was woman (Gen. 2:18-24)?
3. What did God do on the seventh day? (Gen. 2:2-4) Why is that so important? (see Exodus 20:8-11).

— To be continued.

YAK'ISDA BIK'AH

Smithers Indian Ministry Newsletter No. 6 March 1984

WHAT WOULD JESUS HAVE DONE FOR THEM?

Why live?

He came in halfway the evening, looking haggard and bewildered. Joe (not his real name)* had dropped in at the Centre before with some of his buddies curious to see what we were doing there. They had many questions but made sure we would not get too personal. Tonight Joe was all different and his face, ugly from the many scars from previous fights and mishaps, looked more painful than usual. "I am not disturbing you, am I? You don't mind if I sit down? Please help me! I just came out of the bar and all my friends are still there. Maybe I should go there again too: we are all going to hell anyway! I look ugly and my life is ugly, I have made a big mess of things and there is no way out anymore. The devil won't let me go and I am sure God would not want a guy like me anyway. Why did I even come here?"

"Maybe God brought you here, Joe, to show you a way to lead a new life that will not lead to destruction. He can set you free. That's why Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners: ugly people, ugly lives, people who have made a big mess of it all."

"But my mom and dad also died leading an evil life. You know they were burned to death when I was a little kid while they were on a fishing boat, probably drunk. I guess there is no hope for me either. And how about my friends who are probably getting more drunk and doped up

while I sit here telling you all these things I should have never told you. Well, I better move along."

"Shall we first pray together, Joe? After all, God is the only one who can help you and set you free." O.K.

Joe is no exception. Often such desperate persons do drop in, at unexpected times and unexpected situations, searching and looking for help.

Many troubles

We have known Alec for a number of years. His teenage children have been coming to the Youth Bible Camps and Alec himself and his wife have often visited camp to pass on some of the Indian heritage to the children. He is one of the most regular attenders at the Adult Bible Study even though it means driving 30 km for it with a car that breaks down at least once a month. He admits he needs the strength and courage Bible study gives him and wishes that his wife would share this need. Lately she has been joining him more often but bingos are still a greater attraction and often she is very rebellious against God. Their troubles are many. Since they are non-status Indians (not registered as Indians with the government) they do not have all the benefits of reserve status-Indians. Yet they are both leading figures in the Indian society and their extended families resulting in many social and financial obligations. She resents the poverty they live in. They have to

give up their home in a month's time even though they live on traditional grounds. Their boys are unemployed after finishing high school and out of boredom at times take to drinking. A teenage daughter is pregnant. Traditionally they are Roman Catholic and ties are still strong. Yet it gives them no help, no support and no fellowship. Some other relatives are putting pressure on them to attend the prayer meetings of the charismatics. Amidst all this confusion they want to know what the Bible really says and so they continue to come to the Christian Indian Centre: hungry for the Word of God. May the Lord keep this family united and may they learn to walk in the ways of the Lord, "Yak'isda Bik'ah," and experience the only comfort in life and death.

The outcast

He grew up on an isolated reserve, the oldest of a large family. When all the children were left orphans Patrick knew it was his responsibility to take care of his brothers and sisters. Fish was abundant and hunting was good but it left no time for school. His younger brothers grew up, went to school and some had a good job but Patrick had no qualifications for anything and since he had often found escape in drinking he was not in good physical health either. They moved to town one after the other and sometimes Patrick is allowed to live in with one of his brothers but it never lasts long. He is an embittered man, looking 15 years older than his actual age. He is known as a "wino," an embarrassment to his own people, and shunned by others since he becomes most unfriendly when intoxicated. Soon he may receive a pension if he will reach that age.

Lately he lives with a "friend" in a shack in a back alley: no water, no heat, no stove to cook on and no power. It means going to bed when it gets dark, eating bread and some cold canned meat and drinking . . . , yes, what else?

He accepted the invitation to come for a hot lunch at the Centre and has dropped in regularly ever since. Sometimes we have good conversations but often communication is very difficult. Yet he appreciates being accepted as he is and having a place where he can rest, have a cup of coffee and some delicious homemade soup. In the meantime we sow the seed. Two of his buddies burned to death at Christmastime who lived in similar conditions with similar problems. May the Lord have mercy on Patrick.

"He is different"

"Chester is different," his parents say, "he is quiet and never gives serious problems. He doesn't drink and he doesn't fight." Yes, he is different. We have known

him for five years, he has come to all the Youth Bible Camps and hardly ever misses any other of our activities and yet it is hard to really know Chester. He is very conscious of being Indian and that their life is so much different. Now he is in his teens and faithfully attends the Teeners' Bible Study Club. He does not say much but follows the Bible lesson and under his breath gives the right answers just so that you don't appear to eager in front of your peers and yet let the leader know you are taking an active part and learning.

Chester is very sportsminded and excels in several sports. Lately his boxing instructor is putting pressure on him to skip Bible study because he is such a promising boxer and could make it to a number of tournaments in other towns. They also need him for floorhockey and in a little while for baseball as well, but Chester is different. He comes to the Centre anyway and likes to get a ride home, not because home is so far but because when alone he likes to talk. He also has his problems: at times his family goes on a drinking brawl, sleeping at the regular hours becomes impossible, he misses school, they ridicule him for not taking part: "Come on, you're not a little kid anymore!" Then there is the peer group pressure: it is not easy to be popular in sports and at the same time be faithful at the Christian Indian Centre, neither when at times you are almost the only one who comes to Bible Study because your friends said they would come but found something more exciting instead. Yet Chester comes. He *is* different. Is it because the Holy Spirit is working in his heart through all that he has heard from the gospel through the years?

"Let them come to Me"

She is only a little one and shows the symptoms of being born of alcoholic parents, a slow learner and having problems concentrating for any length of time. Yet Sheila is usually at the Sunday morning Youth Group. Sometimes she misses because the whole family is sleeping yet, even at 11:30 a.m. Sometimes she cannot stay home and has to go somewhere else for a day or so. "Mom is at it again!" An older brother asked us if Sheila was allowed to come: "She needs it because she is always stealing in stores." Sheila says she comes because she wants to go to the summer camps just like her older brother. She takes an active part in the Bible lesson and enjoys hearing how Jesus cared for people who had all kinds of problems. Last week she was not home and we picked her up at a brother's place. "Did you go to my mom's place first? Was she still drunk? She cut my dad with a knife last night."

On the way home from a Get-Together

she asked: "Mr. Van, I was never baptized. What happens to me when I die? I pray every night now." A troubled little heart, hidden behind a barricade of loud behaviour and foul language.

Etcetera

We could continue and tell you of many more troubled people, old or young, troubled through their own doing or that of others, some who want help, others who don't, likeable people, and sometimes not so likeable, yes, at times even repulsive. Yet the Lord leads them all to

Christ for sinners and hopeless ones.

We are thankful that also during the past months we were allowed to continue to do this. The Lord gave us health and opportunities. There is development and progress and we may also be encouraged by your continuous and generous support. May the Lord bless this work so that the new life in Jesus Christ may set us free from the bondage of sin to the honour of the Redeemer.

C. VAN SPRONSEN

*None of the names used are real.

FROM THE TREASURER			
<i>Financial Report for the months of Dec. 1983, Jan. and Feb. 1984.</i>			
<i>Balance — November 30, 1983</i>			\$15,092.00
<i>Received on requisitions from:</i>			
Abbotsford	\$ 1,837.29		
Chilliwack	1,248.22		
Cloverdale	2,605.73		
Coaldale	—.—		
Edmonton (Imm.)	—.—		
Edmonton (Prov.)	2,608.65		
Houston	462.82		
Smithers	2,258.03		
Surrey	1,521.71		
	<u>\$12,587.45</u>	12,587.45	
<i>Collections:</i>			
Carman	\$ 833.07		
Hamilton	891.00		
Brampton	250.00		
Toronto	1308.41		
Langley	947.75		
Barrhead	272.94		
Burlington (Eben)	607.17		
Smithville	639.00		
Smithers (Chr. Ref)	564.57		
Burlington (W)	699.39		
Fergus	290.00		
Okanagan Valley	170.00		
	<u>\$ 7,473.30</u>	7,473.30	
<i>Donations:</i>			
Boys' and Girls' Club - Cloverdale	\$260.—,		
Others: \$100.—, \$50.—, \$3.—, \$100.—, \$50.—, \$50.—,			
\$10.—, \$10.—		633.00	
<i>Miscellaneous:</i>		163.00	
		<u>Total</u>	\$35,948.75
<i>Total Expenditures: (Dec. - Feb.)</i>			23,728.75
			Balance Feb. 29, 1984 \$12,220.00

us, or leads us to them and being His servant and imagebearer we must ask ourselves: "What would Jesus have done for them? What would He have said? How would He have helped? How would Jesus receive them?" Usually asking these questions will also give us the answer: open the Scriptures, pray, lend a listening ear, give a "cup of water" show hospitality and compassion and help to heal the wounds; guide them in the religious confusion in the ways of the Lord; proclaim God's love as revealed in Jesus

Once again, the figures show that financial support has been more than adequate. We are able to pay \$8,000.— on the principal of the loan from the Church at Smithers.

We thank all those who have supported us in prayer and deed, and may this work be acceptable in the sight of our God!

J. PLUG, Treasurer
Home Mission Board
Box 3868
Smithers, BC V0J 2N0

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE



Dear Busy Beavers,

Easter morning.

The women are sad. The disciples are sad.

But then Mary comes back from the tomb happy and excited.

The sad disciples will not listen to her.

They are too sad to open their ears to Mary's story.

Mary says that she SAW the Lord and that He is ALIVE.

Alive? Jesus alive? He died. They KNOW He died. The women helped Joseph of Arimathea bury Him.

No, Jesus is dead. And the disciples are too sad to notice the joy in Mary's eyes and voice.

But Peter goes to check the tomb, just to be sure.

And now he, too, comes back happy, yes, joyful.

"The Lord lives" Peter shouts.

Later still the excited men of Emmaus burst in on the other disciples, "The Lord lives."

Their joy grows, and the living Lord Himself comes to them.

Yes, He LIVES.

The disciples knew it then, and we may know it now. The Lord lives.

And because He is alive, everything is right between God and us.

No matter who we are, no matter what our worries, the living, powerful Lord is OURS, if we believe in Him.

Easter Quiz: The Living Lord

1. John 11:25 "I am the _____ and the _____: he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live."
2. John 6:35 "I am the _____ of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never _____."
3. John 8:12 "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of _____."
4. John 10:10b "I came that they may have _____, and have it _____."
5. John 10:11 "The good shepherd lays down his _____ for the _____."
6. John 10:28 "I give them (my sheep) _____, and they shall never perish, and no one shall _____ them out of my _____."
7. John 14:6 "I am the _____, and the _____, and the _____; no one comes to the Father, but by me."
8. Romans 8:2 For the law of the _____ of _____ in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of _____ and _____.
9. Col. 3:4 When Christ who is our life _____, then you also will appear with Him in _____.
10. 1 John 5:11, 12 "... God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His _____. He who has the Son has _____; he who has not the _____ of God has not _____."
11. Rev. 2:7 To him who conquers I will grant to eat of the _____ of _____, which is in the _____ of God.



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Alida Knol*. We are happy to have you join us. Be sure to join in all our Busy Beaver activities. I think you're going to be a very good writer, Alida. Keep up the good work.

I think your grandmother was very happy to see you all, *Irma Van Ellenberg*. After talking all that Dutch did you start reading it, too? Thanks for the riddles, Irma.

What are some of the songs you sing in your choir, *Katrina De Jong*. Will you write and tell us about it? I think your little sister thinks it's fun when you feed her, right Katrina?

Hello, *Jennifer Siebenga*. It was nice to hear from you again. I see you are a real Busy Beaver. Thanks for the riddles, Jennifer. Keep up the good work!

Thanks for the big word search, *Marjorie and Jeannie Barendregt*. You really mean to keep those Busy Beavers busy, don't you? And thanks for the poem, too, Jeannie. Bye for now.

Who got to split all your wood, *Brenda De Boer*? Did you help stacking it? How did you enjoy your March break? You're a good puzzler, Brenda. Your answers were all right.

Hello, *Esther Bouwman*. It was nice to hear from you again. Thanks for the puzzle you sent in. That will keep the Busy Beavers busy for a while! Write again soon, Esther.

I think you had a lot of winter fun, *Carl De Boer*. Do you and your brother miss the snow? Are you still playing soccer at school? Thanks for the puzzle, Carl. Keep up the good work!

Quiz Time!



Code Quiz

by Busy Beaver *Esther Bouwman*

A-4	M-9
B-14	N-26
C-2	O-3
D-8	P-13
E-16	Q-17
F-10	R-28
G-20	S-12
H-1	T-22
I-19	U-23
J-15	V-21
K-11	W-18
L-7	X-5

22 1 16

16 4 28 22 1 19 12

22 1 16

7 3 28 8 12

4 26 8 22 1 16

10 23 7 7 26 16 12 12

22 1 16 28 16 3 10

Busy Beavers, you can earn an Easter bookmark by sending me the answers to this quiz!