

# THE OUTLOOK

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DEVOTED TO THE EXPOSITION AND DEFENSE OF THE REFORMED FAITH

JULY 1982



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**THE SIGN OF JONAH**  
**MID-AMERICA REFORMED SEMINARY**  
**NAIVE EVANGELICALS**

# Judgements and Repentance

John Blankespoor

Even now, declares the Lord, return to Me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments, return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate. Joel 2:12,13.

It was exceptionally hot and dry in mid-western America, the "bread-basket" of the nation. In a certain congregation of which many members were farmers, and therefore directly dependent upon the products of the land for a livelihood, the council decided to have a special prayer service for rain. In the service the pastor gave a message and several members of the congregation offered prayers for rain. At the close of the service a few of the members commented that they enjoyed the service, but that one necessary part was missing.

Jimmy Jones was an eight-year-old boy living in the city. He had just gotten a new bicycle for his birthday. Repeatedly he had been warned about riding on the street. But this Jimmy soon forgot, and was hit broad-side by a car. For days he was lying unconscious in the hospital. Members of the congregation "put" his name on the prayer chain list. How people prayed that he might recover. Again, someone remarked that this was all good, but something extremely important was missing in most prayers. What was that?

\* \* \* \*

The text quoted above from the book of Joel speaks of judgments. The prophet has announced the coming of a severe plague of locusts which would devour all of the fruit of the land. Judgments were coming. The Bible often warns of judgments, of wars and rumors of wars, poverty, earthquakes and many other kinds of calamities. The judgments of God are upon the world today, and, in many respects, also upon the church.

A reader of Old Testament history observes how often God brought His judgments upon Israel. Think, for example of the periods of the Judges, of

the Kings and of the prophets. Again and again the Lord brought physical catastrophies upon His people, often using other nations to oppress them, sending drought and storms, and even deporting the entire nation into Babylon. Think of the bloodshed, suffering and hardships which these judgments brought to multitudes of people.

And let us not overlook the similar judgments upon the nations in the New Testament. The Bible speaks of spiritual judgments which are even more to be feared than the physical. Paul says, in connection with the coming of "the lawless one" in the last days, that the Lord will send upon the people a power of delusion that they will believe the lie. II Thess. 2:11.

Why should we mention such depressing things? Because they are taught in Scripture and are truths which illuminate the present troubles of the countries in which we live.

\* \* \* \*

What does the Lord by these judgments prod us to do? What did the Lord want those farmers to do in that time of alarming drought? For what should the parents and friends of Jimmy pray when he was in the hospital?

On July 1 the citizens of Canada, and on July 4 the citizens of the U.S. celebrate the birthdays of their countries. It's time for prayer, but prayer for what? This year President Reagan designated May 6 as a National Day of Prayer. Again we must ask, "Prayer for what?" Should our prayers be only or primarily for our physical welfare, for physical relief and material prosperity? The apostle Paul, speaking about material things, tells us that the Lord has given us all good things richly to enjoy. But the danger is that we separate the physical from the spiritual, and pray primarily for our physical welfare. Thus our prayers become man and self-centered, and try to use God for ourselves, and our physical well-being.

When a sinner is born again and becomes a Christian he becomes that with his whole being. Body and soul, he is a new creation. If he lives as a Christian he may not permit the body still to be used for sinful self and devote only the soul to the Lord. All must be for the Lord. The physical must also serve the spiritual. Essentially all of his life is spiritual Paul tells us, that whether he lives or dies, his goal is that Christ may be made great.

This principle determines how we should pray. Surely we may pray for relief in times of distress, but that with the relief we will serve the Lord, whether that distress is a severe drought, or an injured child in a hospital. Hasn't it often been said of sickness, that the Lord puts us on our backs so that we'll look up. That is the purpose of the Lord's judgments.

One word that stands out in bold relief in all of Scripture is *Repentance*.

Think of how the Lord called Israel to repentance in the time of the judges, of the kings, and in all times of apostasy and judgments throughout the Old Testament. Think of Elijah who actually prayed that it would not rain in order that Israel would repent. (I wonder what even the nominal church would do with a man like that today.) Joel announced the coming of the great plague of hordes of locusts because of the sins of Israel, and therefore called them to repentance. John the Baptist called the church to repentance as a "voice in the wilderness." In the last book of the Bible, Revelation, the Apostle John forewarns us of the judgments that will be brought upon mankind. He also repeatedly says, "And they repented not." God is calling men to repentance with these judgments. When our countries celebrate their birthdays, or when the leaders of the lands declare certain days to be national days of prayer we must pray and give thanks. We are also called to preach and to pray for repentance.

Repentance, which is rooted in regeneration, is a change of life-style. It includes a sincere confession of sin, a turning away from it, and a desire of the heart to live more sanctified lives in Christ Jesus. Repentance means to be more "in Christ" and like Him.

The call to repentance should "ring-out" to the churches. They are threatened by their own lethargy and complacency, "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." The warning of the prophet Amos still comes to us, "Woe to those who are at ease in Zion." And let us beware that we don't consider the call the repentance only for the world. The Pharisees said to Christ when He admonished them, "We are children of Abraham". In other words, "We belong to the church; that's not for us."

Daily we listen to the news of our own countries and of the world, and much of what we hear and read is alarming. God's clarion call of repentance comes to us in all these things. Let us pray for the help of His grace and Spirit, that we may return to Him with all our hearts and lives. ●

# THE OUTLOOK

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"And the three companies blew the trumpets . . . and held THE TORCHES in their left hands, and THE TRUMPETS in their right hands . . . and they cried, The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon" (Judges 7:20).

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# The Sign of Jonah

James T. Dennison, Jr.

However bold the following statement may seem, I believe it is an accurate reflection of the history of interpretation — the book of Jonah continues to perplex and bewilder the church, much as the prophet himself who seems so unnerved by his commission. Interpreters of this little jewel have often left their hearers (and readers) with questions rather than with answers. Why did Jonah flee to Tarshish (1:3)? Why was he angry at God's relenting (3:10-4:1)? Why did he wish for death (4:8)? I am not suggesting that answers to these questions have not been advanced by preachers and commentators; nor am I suggesting that the answers tendered do not contain elements of truth. Yet, it seems to me that those wrestling with the dilemmas of the book of Jonah have not fully appreciated two essential considerations. First, what significance does the inclusion of Jonah in the sacred canon of Israelite Scripture have in interpreting the events of the book? Second, what significance does our Lord's remark about the sign of Jonah have as a clue to the meaning of the book?

Rationalistic and liberal commentators have no ultimate resolutions for the difficulties of this book for they reduce the work to a parable or semi-mythological construct. Hence, the historicity of this canonical work as endorsed by our Lord Himself remains problematic. Orthodox commentators have not adduced this difficulty, but still they leave us where the book ends — with questions (cf 4:11). Let us take a fresh look at the book of Jonah in the light of the two considerations above.

When the worm gnaws its way into Jonah's gourd so that it withers (4:7), Jonah responds with anger and bitterness. His fury at the loss of his gourd is a parable of his anger with God who failed to destroy the Ninevites. The poet has represented the hillside scene as follows.

Oh greenly and fair in the lands of the sun  
The vines of the gourd and the rich melon  
run,  
Like that which o'er Nineveh's prophet once  
grew  
While he waited to know that his warning  
was true;

And longed for the storm cloud and listened  
in vain  
For the rush of the whirlwind and the red  
fire-rain.

Jonah is not usually remembered as an angry prophet. Generally, we associate him with the great fish as we emphasize the stupendous miracle of his preservation and deliverance. The truth is, Jonah is the most furious of the prophets and insofar as we fail to understand the context of his anger, we fail to understand the meaning of his book. And if we fail to understand this angry prophet, we fail to understand: (1) why a book which apparently has nothing to do with Israel is included in the canon; and (2) the remark of our Lord (Mt. 12:39-41; cf. Lk. 11:29-30, 32).

This angry prophet manifests his displeasure on three occasions. When he is first commissioned to go to Nineveh (1:1,2), he flees from his duty in angry rebellion. When the great fish spits him back upon the right path, he goes to Nineveh and preaches the sermon God directed, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown" (3:4). That sermon — surely one of the shortest in the history of the church — is the instrument of a marvellous work of conviction and humiliation. The Ninevites give themselves up to the mercy of God while acknowledging the just deserts of their sins (3:5ff). Shortly after this, Jonah becomes angry with God for the second time as he watches in vain "for the rush of the whirlwind and the red fire-rain". While he awaits the fireworks from his hillside campsite, God provides relief from the burning sun by means of a shade gourd. But when the worm kills the gourd, Jonah is angry with the Lord for the third time (4:9).

Superficially considered, the prophet's anger appears easily explainable. He did not want to go to Nineveh — hence becomes angry when commissioned to that task. He did not enjoy preaching one thing (destruction) and finding God doing the opposite (sparing the city). He did not like the sun beating upon his head and the death of his shade inflames his fury. Yet if we look below the surface of Jonah's anger and probe more deeply the fury of this prophet, we discover a common thread woven through each of the three incidents. Something is gnawing at Jonah! Something continues to chew

away at his soul whether he is on his way down to Joppa, preaching his way through Nineveh or sitting under his shade gourd. Even before "the word of the Lord came to Jonah" (1:1), he was angry. What was the source of Jonah's anger in every instance of its manifestation? I would suggest that it was related to the fact that Jonah was a prophet *of, to and for Israel!* Jonah was a home-born Jewish prophet — son of Amittai of Gath-hepher (II Kings 14:25). He was commissioned to preach to the Israel of Jeroboam II (ca. 793-753 B.C.); hence was a contemporary of Hosea and Amos (cf. Hosea 1:1, Amos 1:1 and II Kings 14:23,24). Jonah was a prophet *for Israel*. While he prophesied prosperity for Israel (cf. II Kings 14:25,26), it was a prosperity derived from the grace of God. Israel in the days of Jeroboam II was not godly (cf. II Kings 14:24; Hosea 4 and Amos 5,6). Thus we may imagine Jonah pleading with an affluent society to remember her covenant Lord. For all her prosperity, Israel was decadent, perverse and idolatrous. Jonah undoubtedly raised his voice with others urging Israel to return to the Lord, forsake her idols, humble herself in sackcloth and ashes casting herself upon the mercy of her Sovereign. But she would not!

Therefore when God commissioned Jonah to go to Nineveh, his response was maddening disbelief. He had preached to hardhearted Israel without success. The chosen people would not listen. What then was the likelihood of the heathen hearing? Jonah's words had fallen on deaf ears in his homeland; he was angry at the thought of yet more failure in a pagan land. After all, the Assyrians had not been Israel's benefactors! Although he acknowledged the mercy of God (4:2), he balked at the thought of a covenant prophet prostituting his gifts before the Gentiles.

The sovereign Lord has determined the opposite. Jonah is to preach the Word of the Lord to the Gentiles even if God must pursue him with wind and wave to the ends of the earth. Even if God must send a great fish to suck him up off the bottom of the ocean; even if God must give him up to death for three days and three nights in order that he may be vomited out to life anew. God's ways are not Jonah's ways and Jonah must learn the redemptive purposes of God. Jonah is rapidly convinced that his Pursuer is relentless. By the time he has nearly drowned in the Mediterranean Sea; nearly gone stir-crazy from the darkness of a living tomb; nearly strangled on the seaweed floating about his head (2:5) — he has become very cooperative.

In Nineveh, Jonah preaches his sermon, leaves the city, puts up his little booth and camps out to wait for the fire and brimstone. In the spirit of the annual holiday shopping countdown, one imagines Jonah counting 40, 39, 38, 37. . . . As he nears the zero hour, his expectations are more and more aroused — 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. . . . Day 40 dawns, but there is no fiery spectacular. No great balls of fire — no thunder claps of destruction — no smoke and sulphur. Nothing!

The pent up anger of failing again is released. He has preached repentance to Israel without result. He says, "Yet forty days. . ." and there is no

destruction. His words have failed to produce the effect he expects. In despair he cries, "I wish I were dead" (4:8). God responds with a parable in horticulture. Indeed, the lesson of Jonah's gourd is an audio-visual entitled — "My Ways Are Not Your Ways."

God asks Jonah to discern his sovereign redemptive purpose in the display of mercy to the Gentiles. And the purpose of showing mercy is reflexive — to provoke Israel to conviction, humiliation and repentance. God gives repentance unto life to the Ninevites so that a sign will be recorded in the canon of the Scriptures of Israel. God gives repentance to the Gentiles through Jonah in order to anticipate the mission of one greater than Jonah.

The key which unlocks the meaning of the mission of Jonah is the comment which Jesus made to another generation of the chosen people — "no sign. . . but the sign of the prophet Jonah" (Mt. 12:39; Lk. 11:29). A sign is given to the Israel of Christ's day — it is the sign of Jonah. How is Jonah a sign to the Israel of our Lord's era? Consider the following parallels. Jonah was a preacher of repentance, vindicated (as a messenger of God) by "death" and "resurrection" who brought good tidings to the heathen in order that Israel herself might be stirred to heed the prophet's voice. So it was with the eschatological prophet. Jesus preached to Israel, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt. 4:17). But she would not (cf. Mt. 23:37). Jesus was delivered up to death — three days and three nights in the belly of the earth. He was vindicated or justified as the Son of God in power (Rom. 1:4; I Tim. 3:16) by resurrection from the grave. He commissioned his representatives to go to the Gentiles and command men everywhere to repent and believe. And lo, the Gentiles do repent and believe. All of this serves God's sovereign purpose to provoke Israel to jealousy (Rom. 10:19; 11:13,14) that she may heed the voice of one greater than Jonah — one vindicated in a more spectacular manner than Jonah — one in whom the Gentiles come to the light and mercy of the Lord.

The sign of Jonah is a sign to unbelieving Israel. This is the reason for the prophet's inclusion in the canon of Old Testament Scripture. The chosen people in a state of rebellion and rejection are given a sign. A sign now heightened and magnified by the fulness of time. Behold, O Israel, the supreme sign — an empty tomb and the streaming of the Gentiles to the city of great David's greater Son. Behold, O people not a people, the Son of God offers you repentance unto life through His own life, death and resurrection. The harvest begun in the days of Jonah proceeds in these last days. The risen Lord commissions His messengers to go make disciples of the nations. Let Jew and Gentile embrace the Son. For He has given us a sign — from death to life. The death-life of this present evil age passes away; the resurrection-life of the age to come dawns for all nations. Truly a greater than Jonah is here! ●

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# The Seminary Training of Ministers

Peter De Jong

Increasing morale problems of ministers, departures from the ministry and the beginning of a new independent Reformed seminary in Iowa are some of the factors which have focussed the attention of our churches on the question of what kind of training should be given to prepare for service in the gospel ministry.

## Should It Be Practical or Academic?

The suggestion has been made that whereas churches establish seminaries to train for practical service in the gospel ministry of those churches, such schools in their development have only too often succumbed to the temptation of seeking academic status and so trained students to be scientific theologians instead of gospel ministers.

There is a certain plausibility about this suggestion to anyone who is familiar with the academic world. One of the most common complaints about universities is that while their practical business is supposed to be to teach students, the professor's status and honors do not depend upon his teaching efforts and ability but upon his earned degrees, research and getting his scientific studies into print so as to gain the recognition of his peers. Accordingly, the teaching and education of his students is neglected. It does not seem unreasonable that the same criticism should apply to theological seminaries.

In the theological seminaries that kind of development can get an even more subversive kind of twist in working against the continuing orthodoxy of the churches which depend upon the seminaries to train their ministers. The accrediting organization established by the various seminaries tends to be liberal in theology and can readily use its influence to promote that kind of development in the curriculum which it

approves. When the Missouri Synod Lutherans a few years ago insisted that their Concordia Seminary in St. Louis be brought back to the orthodox doctrine of the churches, the accrediting organization, according to reports, tried to intimidate the churches by defending the "academic freedom" of the Liberal professors against whom the churches were acting.

In spite of the real danger to the training of ministers that there is in such academic developments, I do not believe that the suggestion that we ought to seek "practical" rather than "academic" training is valid. These should not be considered alternatives. An adequate training for the gospel ministry should be academically thorough and should include the study of the languages in which the Bible was written.

## Warfield on Seminaries

Almost a century ago Dr. B.B. Warfield, the famous Presbyterian theologian, stated very clearly the reasons why that kind of training was necessary. His writings on this subject were printed in an article on "Our Seminary Curriculum" in *The Presbyterian* of September 15, 1909 and in another on "The Purpose of the Seminary" in the November 22, 1917 issue of the same paper. (Both are reprinted in Vol. I of his *Selected Shorter Writings* issued by Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., pp. 369-378.)

## Erroneous Views of the Ministry

In the first article Dr. Warfield observed that confusion regarding proper seminary curriculum was arising out of confusion about the functions of the ministry for which it was supposed to prepare. He saw among the churches a lowered view of the ministry which made extensive training seem unneces-

sary. "If the minister comes to be thought of . . . as merely the head of a social organization from whom may be demanded pleasant manners and executive ability; or as little more than a zealous 'promoter' who knows how to seek out and attach to his enterprise a multitude of men; or as merely an entertaining lecturer who can . . . charm away an hour or two of dull Sabbaths; or even . . . an infinitely higher conception — as merely an enthusiastic Christian eager to do work for Christ . . . we might as well close our theological seminaries." "The 'three R's' will constitute all the literary equipment they require; their English Bible their whole theological outfit; and zeal their highest spiritual attainment."

Warfield saw a secularized conception of the minister, pioneered by the Unitarians, invading "evangelical circles." "Extremes meet. Pietist and Rationalist have ever hunted in couples and dragged down their quarry together. They may differ as to why they deem theology mere lumber, and would not have the prospective minister waste his time in acquiring it. The one loves God so much, the other loves Him so little, that he does not care to know Him. The simple English Bible seems to the one sufficient equipment for the minister, because . . . it seems to him enough for the renovating of the world just to lisp its precious words to man. It seems to the other all the theological equipment a minister needs, because in his view the less theology a minister has the better. He considers him ill employed in poring over Hebrew and Greek pages, endeavoring to extract their real meaning — for what does it matter what their real meaning is? The prospective minister would, in his opinion, be better occupied . . . in learning to know that social animal Man, by tracing out the workings of his social aptitudes and probing the secrets of his social movements."

### God's High Calling

"But, if the minister is the mouth-piece of the Most High, charged with a message to deliver, to expound and enforce; standing in the name of God before men, to make known to them who and what God is, and what His purposes of grace are, and what His will for His people — then the whole aspect of things is changed. Then, it is the prime duty of the minister to know his message; to know the instructions which have been committed to him for the people, and to know them thoroughly; to be prepared to declare them with confidence and exactness, to commend them with wisdom, and to urge them with force and defend them with skill, and to build men up by means of them into a true knowledge of God and of His will, which will be unassailable in the face of the fiercest assault. No second-hand knowledge of the revelation of God for the salvation of a ruined world can suffice the needs of a ministry whose function it is to convey this revelation to men, commend it to their acceptance and apply it in detail to their needs — to all their needs, from the moment that they are called into participation in the grace of God, until the moment when they stand perfect in God's sight, built up by His Spirit into new men. For such a ministry as this the most complete knowledge of the

wisdom of the world supplies no equipment; the most fervent enthusiasm of service leaves without furnishing. Nothing will suffice for it but to know; to know the Book; to know it at first hand; and to know it through and through. And what is required first of all for training men for such a ministry is that the Book should be given them in its very words as it has come from God's hand and in the fulness of its meaning, as that meaning has been ascertained by the labors of generations of men of God who have brought to bear upon it all the resources of sanctified scholarship and consecrated thought."

In the second article Warfield, eight years later, restated the same plea for a seminary concentrating on Biblical training. He reminded us that Christ has sent the minister "to preach the gospel; not to ameliorate the lot of men, but to carry them to salvation . . . and the business of the minister is to apply the saving gospel to lost men for their salvation from sin — from its guilt and from its corruption and power. Palpably, what he needs for this is just the gospel; and if he is to perform his functions at all, he must know this gospel, know it thoroughly, know it in all its details, and in all its power. It is the business of the seminary to give him this knowledge of the gospel. That is the real purpose of the seminary."

"We may talk of 'the simple gospel' being enough; and we may thank God that the gospel is simple, and that it is enough. But it is no simple matter rightly to apply this simple gospel in all the varied relations of life. . . ."

For this . . . he (the minister) needs to know the gospel: to know it at first hand, and to know it through and through. All the work of the seminary must be directed to just this end.

"Of course, 'the simple preaching' of the 'simple gospel' will not fail of its effect. The loving lisp of the name of Jesus by the lips of a child may carry far. But that is not reason why we should man our pulpits with children lisping the name of Jesus. The foolishness of preaching is one thing; foolish preaching is another." "If knowledge without zeal is useless; zeal without knowledge is worse than useless — it is positively destructive." Warfield concluded by recalling that the zealous William Farel felt the need to call for the help of John Calvin in the Reformation in Geneva — "John Calvin, scholar become saint, scholar-saint become preacher of God's grace." "What we need in our pulpits is scholar-saints become preachers." Preparing such men, he saw as "the one business of the theological seminaries."

With such an exalted view of his calling, need anyone be surprised that Warfield, the prince of theologians, became a legend to men he helped to train and inspire with enthusiasm for the gospel ministry?

One of the most common complaints about preachers — often although not only heard after classical examinations — is that they do not know our faith in its Biblical definition and detail. How can anyone effectively teach, defend and promote what he does not know? If seminaries are to prepare ministers of the gospel, they must, as Calvin and Warfield saw so clearly, train them in that gospel. ●

Mid-America Reformed Seminary:

# THE ROAD AHEAD

Timothy M. Monsma

*The following material is based on a lecture given by Dr. Monsma in Zeeland, Michigan, on April 29, 1982. The board of Mid-America felt that his lecture should have a wider audience, and that is why it now comes to you in the form of an article, which is to appear in two issues of the OUTLOOK. Dr. Monsma, former missionary in Nigeria, where he headed the Tiv Reformed seminary, has been teaching at the Reformed Bible College and has accepted an appointment to teach in the Mid-America Reformed Seminary at Orange City, Iowa.*

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Mid-America Reformed Seminary is now a reality. A board and faculty are in place. Students are enrolled. And classes are scheduled to begin on September 1.

## Is It Needed?

But there are those of all theological opinions in the Christian Reformed Church who are still asking, "Is this school really necessary or desirable?" The best way to demonstrate that this seminary is needed is to tell what it hopes to do, and to indicate how it may differ from existing institutions and agencies. That is the aim of this article.

It is not the aim of this article to answer all the charges that have been made against Mid-America in regard to procedures. These charges have been made by the Editor of THE BANNER and several others.

There are two ways to carry on an argument. The one way is called, in the Latin language, *argumentum ad hominem*, that is, arguments about the character of your opponent. The second way is called *argumentum ad rem*, that is, arguments about the issue itself.

Rev. Kuyvenhoven's editorial of April 19, 1982, was an *argumentum ad hominem*. So long as he deals with people and what they did, he does not have to deal with the issues. This gives him a tactical advantage, for the argument can easily degenerate into a mud slinging contest, and people will quickly forget what the real issues are.

To the friends and supporters of Mid-America, I would say, Don't fall into this trap. We need *argumentum ad rem*, not *argumentum ad hominem*. I know there are plenty of legitimate grievances that

conservatives could raise. They might thereby be able to win one or two battles, but I am afraid they would lose the war. We ought at this time to have sufficient confidence and poise so that we can follow the example of our Lord about whom Peter wrote in I Peter 2:23: "When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly."

Rather than mulling over procedures of the past, this article wants to look at the road ahead. What are the goals and ideals of this seminary? Will she be a positive blessing to the churches, or simply a drain on their finances? The road ahead will be viewed with the help of two very important questions. The first is: HOW WILL MID-AMERICA REFORMED SEMINARY BE DIFFERENT FROM EXISTING INSTITUTIONS IN THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH? The second question is: WHAT WILL BE THE POSITIVE EMPHASIS AT THE MID-AMERICA SEMINARY? You will notice that I am purposely avoiding a direct comparison of Mid-America and Calvin Seminary. I want to talk about MARS; I do not wish to talk about Calvin Seminary. And I will ask that any questions which readers may have concentrate on what we hope to do in Iowa.

## How Will It Differ?

I want, in answering my first question, to compare Mid-America Reformed Seminary to other agencies and institutions in the Christian Reformed Church, both those sponsored directly by the church and those sponsored by para-church agencies that have church endorsement. If Calvin Seminary is among them that is something I cannot help. The only reason why I mention other agencies at all is in order to outline more clearly by way of contrast what I think MARS will be doing.

It is my belief that Mid-America has something unique to offer the Christian Reformed Church. And that is the reason why I accepted the appointment to be one of its first professors even though I was not involved in the founding of this school.

As I perceive it, the uniqueness of MARS does not consist simply in the fact that it wants to be more conservative than Calvin Seminary. Many observers have thought that this is the whole issue, for



some of the early supporters of MARS have expressed dissatisfaction with Calvin. And these observers are wondering why the Northwest Iowa people didn't try to correct Calvin before they founded another seminary.

I would like to point out, however, that IT IS ONE THING TO SAY THAT YOU ARE DISSATISFIED. IT IS ANOTHER THING TO CHARGE A SCHOOL WITH TEACHING HERESY AS MEASURED BY THE CREEDS. To make such a charge one would have to have irrefutable proof; and inasmuch as church leaders are not detectives, such proof might be very hard to gather.

The Chrysler Corporation does not try to sell cars by saying that the cars of General Motors and Ford don't run. Chrysler merely tries to convince the public that their cars run better.

I have not heard the supporters of MARS say that Calvin doesn't train pastors. I have only heard them say that they hope to do a better job than what Calvin is already doing.

The MARS men have made a tactical decision. They have decided that heresy trials alone will not preserve the integrity and vitality of a church. They have observed and also participated in various attempts during the past decade to preserve and strengthen the church by way of eliminating questionable teachings.

They have tried, unsuccessfully, to strengthen Report 44, a report that deals with the nature and extent of biblical authority. (*Acts* '73, pp. 33, 34) They have supported the unsuccessful attempt of the Central Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan, to correct a Calvin College professor. They have supported the Dutton Christian Reformed Church in her protests over the ordination of a candidate whose views on Genesis were very shaky, but they have seen this protest rejected. They have been frustrated and even angered by parliamentary tricks that dodged the real issues. They have reluctantly come to the conclusion that on many issues they no longer have the votes, and that additional protests offer little promise of success.

Calvin College Professor Theodore Plantinga stated the situation accurately in an article that he wrote for the November, 1981 issue of the *OUTLOOK* entitled, "Conservatives in the CRC: the View from the Back Seat." Plantinga wrote:

The conservatives, it seems to me, can best be compared to back-seat drivers. Although they still have some influence in the denomination, they are clearly not behind the wheel. Because they are in the back seat, they are being taken where they do not want to go.

In the same article Plantinga also says:

The conservatives in the CRC seem to be almost without influence in the critical area of higher education. People of their way of thinking are not often appointed to teach in our educational institutions (p. 2).

The arrival of an alternative seminary is not necessarily an indication that Calvin Seminary pro-

fessors have violated the creeds; it is more an indication that conservatives are being taken where they don't want to go. They now plan to do something about it. Their seminary will have a *unique emphasis* within the Reformed community, and I intend to describe that emphasis as I understand it.

Before I do that, I would like to point out that within the Reformed community there have always been various streams of thought. And Reformed Christians have generally been able to recognize these various streams as genuine expressions of the Reformed faith within the circle of creedal fidelity.

For example, although both the Presbyterians on the British Isles and the Reformed on the continent of Europe are followers of John Calvin and they respect the creeds that each group has drawn up, they differ on less important issues. The Separation from the state church of the Netherlands in 1834 had a different spirit from the separation that took place later in that same century under the leadership of Abraham Kuyper. But both groups held to the same forms of unity. In a perceptive article written for *THE BANNER* of January 3, 1975, Calvin College Professor Nicholas Wolterstorff points out that there have been three patterns of life and thought in the Christian Reformed Church for many years. He calls them pietism, doctrinalism, and Kuyperianism. One's choice of which stream to emphasize does not involve creedal loyalty; at least no one that I know of has made that assertion. It is rather a matter of personal choice within the circle of the creeds.

This element of choice has been present in the founding of other alternative schools. When the Reformed Bible Institute (now the Reformed Bible College) was initiated in 1940, people accepted the fact that this school was to have a different emphasis from Calvin College. I know of no one who suggested that R.B.I. would first have to exhaust all means of protest against the courses offered at Calvin College before a new school could be established.

More recently, when the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship came into existence with headquarters in Toronto, this too might have been viewed as an organization directly competing with Calvin College. People might have advised the association to protest against what was being taught at Calvin if they didn't like it. But they didn't. Mid-America does not endorse the philosophy of this Toronto-based association. In fact we differ from them on certain important issues. But we recognize their right to exist and propagate their views, and so apparently does everyone else.

Why then do we now hear that Mid-America Seminary has no right to exist? Perhaps we have been too slow in pointing out that the issues are much wider than bare creedal loyalty. This article attempts to remedy at least part of that communication gap.

Now for a direct answer to that first question: **HOW WILL MID-AMERICA REFORMED SEMINARY BE DIFFERENT FROM EXISTING INSTITUTIONS IN THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH?**

We will be different in the way we understand the Christian's relationship to the world around him. To explain that statement, I would like to borrow three terms that missions professors have used to describe the relation of Christians to the various societies or cultures of the world. Although these three terms have been used primarily to describe the relationship of Christianity to cultures overseas, they can equally be used to describe how Christians relate to Western culture right here in the United States and Canada.

The term ACCOMMODATION is recommended by the well-known Catholic missiologist, Louis J. Luzbetak. In his book *The Church and Cultures* Luzbetak says,

Accommodation is mutual: it is not a one-sided condescension, for the Church goes as far as possible while expecting the new Christian community to come the rest of the way. The Church accommodates to the local culture; the new Christian community accommodates to the Church, and that at a great price. (p. 345)

### Compromise

When one hears this explanation, one thinks in terms of compromise. And this is exactly the relationship that many in the Christian Reformed Church have tried to establish with the world around us. I do not question the good intentions of those who wish to compromise with the culture that surrounds us. They intend to be a salt and a light in the midst of that culture. I do, however, question their wisdom, for they are defending the fort by leaving it, and that is never wise. The evidence for this spirit of compromise is found in many places. Let me quickly cite four examples:

(1) The Christian Reformed Church in North America has told the *Gereformeerde Kerken* of the Netherlands that they are on the wrong path. Yet we continue following them about twenty years behind, and we continue sending young men to be educated at the Free University, where we know that the pure Reformed faith is no longer taught.

(2) The Christian Reformed Church has repeatedly refused to join the World Council of Churches. Yet many of our leaders want to get as close to the WCC as they possibly can and "benefit" from whatever the WCC and her leaders have to offer.

(3) At the very time the Women's Liberation movement in North America is very strong, some of our leaders suddenly "discover" that the Bible is for the ordination of women at every level. Individual churches have ignored synodical rulings and proceeded with ordination, or that which amounts to ordination. DE WACHTER has objected, but THE BANNER remains silent.

(4) Many churches are filled with luke-warm Christians who are busy laying up for themselves treasure upon earth, who are concerned to eat, drink, and be merry, but who show little concern for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

In all these areas, and others, the spirit of accommodation is alive and well in the Christian Reformed

Church today. The result is that people are leaving the Christian Reformed Church in large numbers. Rev. Kuyvenhoven has recognized the problem in an editorial written for *The Banner* of March 15, 1982. He wrote: "There must be a big leak somewhere. The exodus to other churches is the main problem." Some are going to more conservative or charismatic churches where they feel that the pure gospel is still being preached. Others are saying that there is little difference between the Christian Reformed Church and the more liberal churches that surround us; so why not join one of them. Most tragic of all, there are many dropping out of the church entirely. The problem of "black sheep" has always been a problem, but in my observation, the leak is getting larger.

### What Shall We Do?

"That's too bad," you say, "but what do you fellows in Iowa propose to do about it?" Without God's blessing there is nothing we can do, but we are going to try. And with God's blessing we will at least make a dent in the spirit of accommodation that presently exists in the Christian Reformed Church. In this connection I should say that the founders of Mid-America have a deep commitment to this school. Last January I was interviewed by the board of this school. It's a board of six ministers and twelve laymen, including two lawyers, a medical doctor, a college professor, a farmer, and several businessmen. When I reminded the board that I already had work to do, and one is entitled to some assurance that the ship is going to float before he gets on board, they told me that when they made the decision to go ahead, they felt like the signers of the American Declaration of Independence who said at the end of that document: "We mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." I am told that at the meeting held at O'Hare Field in Chicago, laymen outnumbered ministers five to one. Some are wondering where all the money is coming from in order to launch this seminary. It's not coming from the ministers, because they don't have much to give. But there are many laymen deeply convinced of the necessity of this school, and they are willing to give generously.

How then do we at Mid-America propose to relate to the culture that surrounds us? The Dutch missiologist J. H. Bavinck has given us the right term. And the American missiologist, Charles Kraft, has given us a useful term too. I want to look with you at both their terms, beginning with the one suggested by Bavinck.

### Possession

Bavinck suggested that we use the Latin word *possessio*, from which we get our English word possession. According to Bavinck, Christians ought to relate to the culture that surrounds them by taking into possession whatever can be salvaged and put to the Master's use. In his book AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SCIENCE OF MISSIONS, he put it this way:

Christ takes the life of a people in his hands, he renews and re-establishes the distorted and deteriorated; he fills each thing, each word, and each practice with a new meaning and gives it a new direction. Such is neither "adaptation," nor accommodation; it is in essence the legitimate taking possession of something by him to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth (p. 179).

A biblical example of *possessio* is found in Ezekiel 16 where God takes the formerly pagan city of Jerusalem and makes the city His. "I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign, Lord, and you became mine (Ezek. 16:8)."

If we are to take both the behavior patterns and the material products of our Western culture and dedicate them to God's service, we must know who we are and where we are going. We must have a firm knowledge of our roots. And when I say that, I don't mean that we ought to get out wooden shoes or place windmills on our front yards. I mean we must know our spiritual roots.

The dry season in Nigeria, where I worked for twelve years, usually lasts from November to April — about the same time as winter here in Michigan. During the dry season all the vegetation turns brown. There is a good supply of gravelly subsoil in Nigeria that is used on the unpaved roads. As the cars and trucks go down these roads a great deal of red dust arises and covers the leaves on the trees so that they take on an ugly rusty hue. But during the month of March, after several months of drought, something unusual happens. The old leaves drop off and beautiful new green leaves appear on the trees.

How could these new green leaves appear before it even starts to rain? They have roots that go down deep to where there is moisture throughout the dry season.

If we are to be God's instrument for possessing the culture around us, we must have spiritual roots. Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck, and Louis Berkhof allow us to put the problems of our generation into good perspective; and the instruction that these men gave to their generation will be heard at Mid-America Seminary in order that we may know how to think and act in our generation.

I think in this connection of what the Rev. Peter Eldersveld and more recently Dr. Joel Nederhood and others have been doing on the Back-to-God Hour. These men have been able to speak in a relevant way to our generation because they have roots going back to a previous generation. They are assisting to possess our culture for Christ.

Francis Schaeffer is also goading us in this direction. There are some statements in his most recent book, *A CHRISTIAN MANIFESTO*, with which I cannot agree. But on page 56 he makes a telling criticism of the Christian Church in America. Schaeffer writes:

Most fundamentally, our culture, society, government, and law are in the condition they are in, *not because of a conspiracy, but because*

*the church has forsaken its duty to be the salt of the culture.*

Schaeffer gives a good example of what *possessio* might mean in practice. Christians in this country have been largely quiet while the forces of humanism have propounded the falsehood that the separation of church and state mentioned in the first amendment to the constitution meant separation of religious conviction from government. Now we are faced with an emphasis in government that goes directly contrary to the will of God in such practices as abortion, euthanasia, pornography, and homosexuality. Our failure to possess our culture through the legitimate means open to us in a republic has meant that our culture possesses us.

Although we reject the accommodation approach, no one ought to interpret this as obscurantism, isolationism, asceticism, or a form of Protestant monasticism. *Possessio* does not mean withdrawal, but a testing of the spirits of the age and witness to that age.

### Transformation

And this leads me to the term proposed by Charles Kraft: transformation. In his book *CHRISTIANITY IN CULTURE* Kraft defines transformation as follows:

My preference is for a term like "transformation," which focuses on the fact that Christians, like yeast (Mt. 13:33), are to work with God from *within* culture. We are to use the forms (i.e. the dough) already there in such a way that they are gradually transformed (though occasionally replaced) into more adequate vehicles of the meanings that God seeks to convey through them. (p. 346)

Although there are important areas where I disagree with Kraft, his term transformation is a good one if it is viewed as the goal that we have in view as we interact with our culture. That is to say, as more and more items are taken into possession for the Lord, the entire culture is gradually transformed. In the foreseeable future here in the West we will have to think in terms of a subculture that is permeated by Christian perspectives, while in some smaller societies of the world there is the possibility of a more thorough transformation of an entire culture. Paul wrote to the Romans: "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind." (Rom. 12:2) This transformation must occur not only in individuals; it must extend to our interaction with society.

This is a big task. It won't be easy. The other professors and I who will be involved in this task covet your prayers that God may equip us to accomplish the goals set before us.

That, in my opinion, is how Mid-America Reformed Seminary will have a different emphasis from other institutions in the Christian Reformed Church, including schools, institutions of mercy, and agencies for evangelism. If others feel that they are already doing in some other area what we hope to do on the level of theological training, or if others wish to join us in these ideals, we welcome their cooperation. ●

# No Man is an Island

James Shook

A recent article in a Christian publication about a film entitled *Chariots of Fire*, raised again the age-old question about the responsibility of Christians toward one another and toward the non-Christian world. The article itself gives support to the age-old truth that "the farther away we are from the source of the stream, the dirtier the water becomes."

Throughout the passing years we cannot help but detect the tendency of the church, along with the rest of society, to wander farther and farther away from its original insistence upon maintenance of moral behavior and dedication to strictest of moral standards. The mandate of scripture to "avoid the appearance of evil" has throughout church history, and, therefore, throughout the history of western cultural development, been the keystone in determining how Christians, and societies which are impacted by the Christian church, should behave. But as time progresses and the world becomes "dirtier" morally and more corrupt in its social standards, the church has also become much "looser" in its behavior. What was clearly once "wrong" to the church of Christ oftentimes now has become acceptable Christian behavior. That, of course, raises a question as to how early Christians, under the guidance and instruction of the Holy Spirit, could have been led astray in their believing and preaching that so many of today's "acceptable" Christian practices were then considered "unacceptable." Now we must decide whether they were wrong. Or was the Spirit of God wrong? Or has God's Word changed? Or were God's demands simply misunderstood by the church? These are the types of questions which even the nonchurched ask about the Christian community today.

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But now, back to the article mentioned beforehand, the one about a Christian's approval of a film entitled *Chariots of Fire*. What has this to do with that subject? Much, I assure you. For many generations of Christians, movie-going was classified as a worldly practice, one which Christians should not, and could not, indulge in. To attend the theatre itself, and to watch films, was simply to lend support to the furtherance of non-Christian activities, smearing the character and the witness of Christians who were dedicated to the complete separation of the Christian from the world and its activities. And there are still many Christians who believe the same thing.

To give approval to *Chariots of Fire* is to lend approval to an entire industry which portrays — and personifies — the most sinful of human activities. Anyone and everyone is aware of the fact that the film world appeals to some of the most immoral and corrupt of human inclinations and that its selling point focuses upon crime, sexual indecency, and many other of the worst of human activities. Many crimes result from impressions made in the film media. To spend one's money for even one production of such an industry is to lend some financial support to an entire industry; a portion of the money you give to attend the "best" of films also is used to make the "worst" of films. So the final result of an article supporting one film is that it lends support to an entire industry, one which is a foe of all that the church is dedicated to doing, cleaning the impurities out of society and staying away from activities which will hurt the Christian witness. However, there is one other very important consideration which the author of the aforementioned article has either forgotten or ignored, and that is the responsibility of Christians one toward another, a responsibility clearly set forth in Scripture. Now let us

focus our attention on that subject, our obligation to always consider the effect that our behavior will, or may, have upon others.

All Christian activities may be classified in one of three different categories — the good, the bad, and the questionable. The Scriptures give us definite instructions as to what is proper activity for the Christian, it being summed up in Jesus' admonition to "love God, and your neighbor as yourself." They instruct us about those things which are sinful in themselves, these being summarized in the historic Ten Commandments. And they are not silent about those things which are classified as questionable or doubtful Christian activities. They lay down certain guidelines which serve to point us to our responsibility to "bear one another's burden and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Among the dubious activities are smoking, drinking, and theatre-going, all being acceptable to some as proper behavior and totally unacceptable to others in the Christian community. But there are scriptural statements which give us some indication of what our attitudes should be and which inform us that "no man is an island." Let us look at some of these principles as they apply to activities which are not "white" nor "black" but "gray."

1. We are called upon to surrender whatever may be offensive to others. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offense, neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God." (*I Corinthians 10:31,32*).
2. That which may seem right to us but is offensive to fellow Christians must be surrendered, at least for the sake of another's conscience. The Apostle Paul paid particular attention to this principle when he addressed the Corinthian church regarding the eating of meat sacrificed to idols. Though he knew the eating of such meats was right to him, still he wrote "But if any man say unto you, this was offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake. For the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof: Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" (*I Corinthians 10:28,29,33*).

As the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, your body surely deserves better treatment than it will receive from the practicing of dangerous body-destroying habits. But, above all, "a tree is known by the fruit it bears"; and the Christian faith and life are judged by the example set by Christian believers in action. What we do speaks well or badly for the Christian faith; there is no room for the doubtful behavior. We live for Christ or we live against Christ; either we reflect true Christian virtue, or we do not.

And now, back to the original subject — the rating of a movie which a Christian leader top-rated. How can that in any way be a detriment to anyone? Surely there must be worse if that is the "best." And the "worst" was not the one that was rated. Is there anything wrong about a Christian giving his approval to the product of Hollywood or some other movie capital around the world? Let me reply to that one with one example in recent history. A few years ago, a number of small boys saw a film in a public theater, one made in the same Hollywood as any other. After observing the picture and seeing so much that was "good" and "enjoyable," they decided to put into practice that which they had seen. The end product? A short time later they killed a small friend, using the same method they saw used in the picture. That was a physical death which resulted from their seeing just another "western" in a theater. But what about its coming influence on their lives? And what about the many people who follow the examples set by many of our "stars" and wind up in lives of sin and eventual spiritual death? It all started somewhere, in the home, in the school, or even in a Christian church community, perhaps the result of following the example of a Christian leader who was willing to put his investment, time, and approval into an industry which has given more approval to sinful life-styles than any other.

As "living epistles" we are "known and read of all men." As we consider what we do — however right it may appear to be to us — we are called upon to remember that "we are members one of another," that we are "examples to believers," and we are called upon to bring forth a "certain sound."

Perhaps, then, we had better take another look at what is thought to be acceptable behavior to Christians today and return to the standards set by our Christian forefathers, they who were willing to pay the "cost" to maintain purity of life, unquestionable Christian behavior standards, and exemplary Christian living. Perhaps it would be best to "be our brother's keeper" and to give high ratings only to that which will help him maintain a pure Christian life. And the movie industry does the opposite.

3. Activities which cause — or may cause — another Christian to stumble are sins against Christ. And many a person has been led from one sin to another grosser still, all of it being based upon that first encounter. Our hospitals, jails, and rehabilitation centers are filled with people who had to start on the road down at some point — whether it was the first drink, the first puff, the first movie, or whatever dubious activity it may have been. How many Christians — and non-Christians alike — ignore the fact that the matter of "first example" is tremendously important to the ignorant or the simple follower. How any Christian can even believe that anything except total abstinence is the greatest "cure all" for these habits is inconceivable in the light of Scriptural lessons found in *I Corinthians 8:7-13*. We are challenged to read this passage

in order to understand the "stumblingblock principle" of Christian behavior. In this passage, Paul again declares that every Christian is indeed his brother's keeper, but more, that when we sin so against the brethren and wound their weak consciences, "ye sin against Christ."

4. Participation in questionable practices sets an example which may cause younger Christians and children — our own and those of others — to stumble, to fall into worse habits, and even to become "hooked" on these affairs. Like it or not, we are some kind of example to everyone else. How difficult it would be for a parent practicing those activities which are "first steps" toward future problems to another Christian or a young person. How difficult it would be for a drinking father to explain to an alcoholic son just why drinking was even prac-

ticed in the home at all or why alcohol was even closeted in the house. How difficult it would be for anyone who sets another Christian on the path of addiction to the theatre and immoral influences to explain why his leadership led in that direction. Jesus said: "Whoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the sea." (*Mark 9:42*) Paul the Apostle wrote: "What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." (*I Cor. 6:20*) ●

# About Smoking

Walter D. Meester

## Smoking. Is it a sin?

Do you smoke cigarettes? If yes, read on; you may need a "light". If no, continue reading as well; you may be able to "enlighten" someone else. Is smoking really as bad for your health as they say? And if my body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, should I continue to defile it with smoking? Am I serving the Lord with my body if I knowingly harm it? Is suicide really a sin, especially if you do it slowly? Come on now, you may say, if smoking is that bad, why do so many church members smoke; even some ministers, some elders, some deacons, some Christian school teachers, etc. Aren't they all serving the Lord in their respective offices and duties? Of course they

are. The question is not whether we can still serve the Lord when we smoke or whether we can still serve the Lord when we sin — We all sin — but rather, what can we do to fight our sins in order that we can serve the Lord better. It makes a big difference if we don't know whether we are committing a sin, or if we don't care when we know and live in sin. I'm afraid that most smokers stick their head in the sand like ostriches and don't want to know about the effects of smoking. And once they have developed an illness directly related to their smoking, such as lung cancer, heart disease, chronic lung disease, etc., who will tell them that they are to blame themselves for their illness?

## Smoking and cancer

Recently my father in The Netherlands had major chest surgery. His right lung was removed. They could not remove all tumor tissue in the lymph nodes, and he is presently receiving radiation therapy for the remaining cancerous cells. He smoked two packs of cigarettes a day for at least forty years. Didn't he know what smoking can do to you? Yes and no. Twenty years ago not many people were concerned about smoking. It wasn't until 1964 that the U.S. Surgeon General issued his first report on the health consequences of smoking. Since that time extensive research and a large data base on the effects of smoking has been accumulated by scientists throughout the world. There is no longer any doubt that cigarette smokers have a higher death rate than non-smokers.

In his recently published 1982 report<sup>1</sup> to the U.S. Congress on the health consequences of smoking, the Surgeon General identifies cigarette smoking as the major single cause of cancer mortality in the United States. Cancer is the second most frequent cause of death in the United States; it will account for an estimated 430,000 deaths this year. Tobacco's contribution to cancer deaths is currently estimated to be 30%. This means that 129,000 Americans are likely to die of cancer this year because of the higher overall cancer death rates for smokers as compared to nonsmokers. Cigarette smokers have total cancer death rates that are two times greater than those for non-smokers. Heavy smokers (those who smoke more than one pack a day) have three to four times greater excess risk of cancer mortality.

## Lung cancer and smoking

Cigarette smoking is the major cause of lung cancer. Lung cancer alone accounts for 25% of all cancer deaths in the U.S.; it is estimated that 85% of lung cancer cases are due to cigarette smoking. The number of lung cancer deaths in the United States increased from 18,313 in 1950 to 90,828 in 1977. The American Cancer Society estimates that 111,000 persons will die of lung cancer in the U.S. in 1982 — 80,000 men and 31,000 women. The lung-cancer death rate for women is currently rising faster than for men, reflecting the more recent adoption of smoking by large numbers of women. If this trend continues, the lung cancer death rate for women will soon surpass that of breast cancer, currently the leading cause of cancer mortality in women. The five-year survival rate for lung cancer is less than 10%. The rate has not changed appreciably in over 15 years.

How about those who don't smoke but who are exposed to the smoke of others (passive or involuntary smoking)? In 1981 two epidemiologic studies found a statistically significant correlation between involuntary smoking and lung cancer risk in nonsmoking wives of men who smoked. In other words, the risk of lung cancer in nonsmokers goes up when exposed to the smoke of smokers. What about those smoke-

laden ecclesiastical meeting rooms in which you can literally cut the air? Is this consistent with "love your neighbor as yourself"?

## Cancer of the larynx, oral cavity, and esophagus

Cigarette smoking is also a major cause of cancer of the larynx (voice box), oral cavity (mouth), and esophagus (gullet). Smokers have a mortality risk ratio for laryngeal cancer at least five times greater than that of nonsmokers. Heavy smokers have laryngeal-cancer mortality ratios fifteen-thirty times those for nonsmokers. An estimated 40,000 individuals will develop laryngeal and oral cancer, which will result in approximately 13,000 deaths this year in the United States. These types of cancers are also strongly associated with use of cigars and pipes in addition to cigarettes. All three forms of tobacco use carry approximately the same excess relative risk of at least five-fold. The long-term use of snuff appears to be a factor in the development of oral cancer, particularly of the cheek and gum.

This year 8,300 deaths are expected due to cancer of the esophagus; only about 4% of patients are alive five years after diagnosis, and most die within six months. Patients with this form of cancer have one of the poorest survival rates for any form of cancer. The use of alcohol in conjunction with smoking acts synergistically to increase the risk of cancer of the larynx, oral cavity, and the esophagus.

## Cancer of the bladder, pancreas, and kidney

Cigarette smoking is a contributory factor for the development of cancer of the bladder, pancreas, and kidney. The term "contributory factor" by no means excludes the possibility of a direct role of smoking in the causation of these types of cancer. The consistent demonstration of an excess risk of cancer of these sites among smokers in comparison with nonsmokers suggests that if smoking were not to exist in these populations, a measurable proportion of these diseases would not occur. Over 50,000 Americans are expected to develop bladder and kidney cancer this year; about 20,000 will die. The five-year survival rates are approximately 50% to 60%. Numerous investigators have estimated that between 30% and 40% of cases of bladder cancer are smoking related, with slightly higher estimates for males than for females.

Approximately 24,000 people in the U.S. will develop cancer of the pancreas this year, and there will be an estimated 22,000 deaths from pancreatic cancer. Like cancer of the lung and esophagus, pancreatic cancer is often fatal. Patients with this form of cancer have one of the poorest five-year survival rates for any form of cancer. While few estimates are available as to the proportion of these deaths attributable to smoking, it would appear to be about 30%. Pancreatic cancer appears to be increasing at

a more rapid rate than cancer of most other sites except the lung.

### Stomach cancer

Numerous epidemiologic studies have noted a link between smoking and cancer of the stomach. This association is smaller than that noted between smoking and other cancer sites.

### Cancer risks after you stop smoking

Although cigarette smoking is a cause of many forms of cancer, encouraging facts have been reported. Studies have shown that even after many years of smoking, stopping smoking reduces one's cancer risk substantially compared with that of the continuing smoker. The more years one refrains from smoking cigarettes after stopping, the greater the reduction in excess cancer risk. Fifteen years after stopping cigarette smoking, for example, a former smoker's lung-cancer risk is reduced to nearly the level observed for nonsmokers. This same reduction in cancer risk is observed for other cancer sites associated with smoking. There is no single action an individual can take to reduce the risk of cancer more effectively than to stop smoking — particularly smoking cigarettes.

### Other health effects

Besides the direct relationship between cigarette smoking and lung cancer, there is also a proven relationship between cigarette smoking and coronary heart disease. In addition, the relationship between cigarette smoking and chronic obstructive lung disease (emphysema) has been well documented. Several conditions and illnesses related to smoking are enumerated elsewhere in this article.

### Spiritual health

If there is still an "unbelieving Thomas" among us, will he continue to smoke until he can see the devastating effects of smoking in his own body before he will believe that smoking causes illness? What about the question which I raised before: Is smoking a sin? I trust that after reading this article and examining the facts you will agree with me that "cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health." Not only your physical health, but even your spiritual health. For if I knowingly harm my body, doesn't this constitute sin? And if I commit this sin many times day after day, year after year, shouldn't I try my utmost to break with it? How do you do that? How do you quit smoking? It is pretty hard to quit. Maybe you've tried once or twice before. But did you ever pray to God to help you fight and overcome this sin? Did you ever pray for someone else who smokes and is trying to quit? I believe that the best way to quit smoking is to realize that it is a sin and that, if I love the Lord, in thankfulness for what He has done for me, I will quit committing this sin, for His sake.

## Health effects of smoking

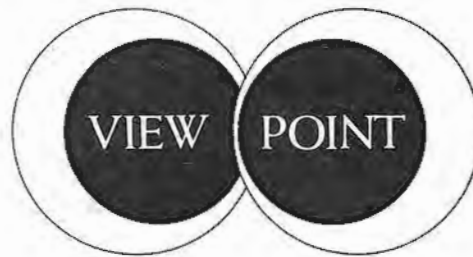
Do you know . . .

- that some 500,000 persons die annually in the United States and Canada because of smoking?
- that one's life may be shortened 14 minutes for every cigarette smoked?
- that cigarette smoking is the major cause of lung cancer?
- that lung cancer is now the most common cancer among men?
- that lung cancer in women is rapidly increasing?
- that smoking is also a major cause of cancer of the larynx, the oral cavity, and the esophagus?
- that smoking contributes to the development of cancer of the bladder, pancreas, and kidney?
- that cigarette smokers have a much higher incidence and death rate from heart attacks than nonsmokers?
- that the incidence of coronary heart disease increases as the daily number of cigarettes smoked increases and that the incidence of heart disease decreases among those who quit smoking?
- that cigarette smokers have a higher death rate from cerebral vascular disorders (e.g. stroke) than do abstainers?
- that smoking causes constriction and narrowing of the blood vessels resulting in peripheral vascular disease?
- that smoking is the most common cause of chronic obstructive lung disease (emphysema)?
- that smoking is associated with an increased incidence of ulcers and death therefrom?
- that cigarette smoking during pregnancy has been shown to have adverse effects on the mother, the fetus, the newborn infant, and the child in later years?
- that smoking by pregnant women increases the risk of vaginal bleeding, miscarriage, premature delivery, fetal death, and reduces the birth weight of newborn infants?
- that children of smoking mothers are more susceptible to some adverse health effects such as bronchitis, pneumonia, and respiratory disease during early childhood?
- that parental smoking is associated with the sudden infant death syndrome? ●

<sup>1</sup>"The Health Consequences of Smoking: Cancer." A report of the Surgeon General, Rockford, Maryland: Public Health Service, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1982. Copies of this report can be obtained by writing to: Office of Smoking and Health, Park Building, Room 1-58, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Maryland, U.S.A. 20857.

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# Puncturing the Inflated Self

A highlight of the Evangelical Press Association's annual meeting, this year held in Grand Rapids, Mich., was the May 12 address of David Myers entitled, "The Inflated Self: A New Look at Pride." The Hope College psychology professor observed that we have long been sold the idea (promoted by many psychologists and bought by many religious leaders) that the remedy for many human problems and the key to greater happiness is the development of a high self-esteem. While a high self-esteem seems to pay dividends, making people less critical, encouraging them to effort and accomplishment, psychologists now are beginning to warn against the evils of self-serving pride. The speaker observed that there is an irony in the fact that as theologians copy the old psychology's cultivation of higher self-esteem; the newer psychology's observations are beginning to sound like orthodox theology's warnings against the sin of human pride.

The speaker cited many evidences that we usually suffer from a self-esteem that is too high rather than too low. People more readily accept credit for the good than responsibility for the bad which they do. Athletes accept credit for their wins but not blame for their losses. Drivers rarely acknowledge that they were at fault in accidents. When questioned in a variety of ways most people rate themselves "better than average." "Can we all be better than average?" We find it easy to believe phony compliments.

We tend to rewrite our past history to make it better than it was. We readily find arguments to justify our own actions. We more readily adopt optimistic than pessimistic forecasts of future developments. When something worthwhile needs to be done, more people say that they "would volunteer" than will actually do it. Even the self-disparagement which is taken to indicate low self-esteem is often pretended and self-serving. It excuses failure and increases credit for success.

The Bible teaches us that, although man was created in the image of God, he has become a sinner who needs and can be saved only by God's grace. This produces in us a humility which is not self-contempt, but more like self-forgetfulness, freeing us from ego-trips and for lives of Christian service.

A little reflection on Myers' point suggests that it is a message badly needed within our churches as well as in the larger society around us. For long we too have been subjected to the psychologists' dictum that we must build up a better self-image, to the point that this principle has been undermining, if not destroying, the foundations of Christian doctrine and life.

Does this charge sound too strong? Consider how in our families we have been warned not to discipline our children because that would damage their self-esteem. The Biblical teaching that "He who

sparing his rod hates his son but he who loves him disciplines him diligently" (Prov. 13:24; cf. 23:14, 29:15; Eph. 6:4) has been superseded by the more permissive counsel of the child psychologists. Children reared without discipline, taught only to seek the interests of their sovereign selves, have not learned to face the responsibilities of the family, the job, or society around them. Reared to acknowledge no law but their own desires, they have been taught that sex relations in or outside of marriage were legitimate if only people felt sincerely attracted to each other. The results of this idolatrous worship of the self are only too apparent in the disintegration of our families and of all of the other structures of our society.

The churches' teaching which ought to have been counteracting this subversive worship of self has shown many symptoms of surrendering to it. The Bible's teaching about sin has been minimized or denied because it threatened people's self-esteem. Paul's Romans 7 complaint, "Wretched man that I am," has been radically reinterpreted, first by Dutch theologians and then by their followers here, because it seemed to threaten the all-important Christian self-image.

Similarly the new forms of liturgy of our church services show the effects of this exaltation of the self-image. The realistic, Biblical stress of man's sin and depravity to prepare him to appreciate and receive God's grace has been minimized; displaced by the new forms' dominant theme of "celebration."

At the time when this "self-image" worship threatens to overwhelm us, as naturalistic Baal-worship over-ran ancient Israel, it is refreshing to hear a Christian psychologist expose the fallacies of this exaggerated "self-image," and call us to a return to stressing the dignity of man as created in the image of God and the sin and depravity of man as in need of and saved only by God's grace.

A renewed stress on the Bible's teaching of man's sin and depravity does not make us pessimists. It only delivers us from a false confidence in self which must always bring disillusionment, in order to give us a Christian confidence in the grace of God. "Where sin abounded, grace did abound much more exceedingly" (Rom. 5:20).

Regarding a proper self-image, the apostle went on to teach "through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3).

Surrounded by changing theories, let's observe that one of the functions of gospel teaching in the life of the Christian is to deliver him from being "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:14) which blows through our society. The unbelieving world, lacking that guide, and the skeptical theologian, beginning to lose confidence in that guide, are tossed and swung about by the aberrant winds.

The Christian, learning from his inspired Guide, should steer a straighter course. ●

Peter De Jong

# INSTITUTIONAL Loyalty

As editor of our official church-paper, it is not hard to see why Kuyvenhoven feels obligated to defend Calvin Seminary and denounce the Mid-America Ref. Seminary. Chr. Ref. people in general have always had the peculiar weakness of being prone to defend their "sacred" institutions at all costs, come what may. I know several colleagues e.g. who have been and are very critical of Calvin Seminary, but when the opportunity arises for them to put their money (or actions) where their mouth is, they all retreat into the "safety" of "loyalty" to our "official" institutions. That's always the easiest way out.

But I submit that loyalty and trust are things that must be *earned*. And it's not at all surprising to me that this trust has been shaken in the minds of several people. Consider the following: Kromminga and the infallibility issue; Dekker and the love of God issue; Hugen and De Ridder and the women-in-office issue, and now Stek and the Adam and Eve question. Are matters like these designed to produce confidence in our Seminary? Even Harry Boer knows better than that. According to him "ambiguity is the hallmark of the CRC teaching on Scripture," and it is his contention that if we continue to have denominational studies in which both sides participate, "we shall move from study committee to study committee, from decision to decision, and thereby from ambiguity to ambiguity. In the end this can have no other effect than to discredit both the nature and the authority of Scripture." In much the same vein James Daane wrote some time ago:

I have followed the official history of the denomination we share (its classical and synodical actions and decisions) long enough to know how its official evasiveness and procrastination and compromising and ambiguity can tempt anyone, in the pulpit or the pew, to some cynicism and distrust and overreaction.

The honesty of Boer and Daane is commendable. Where the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, there will be confusion among the soldiers.

But of course we shouldn't talk about these things. We should hush them up by issuing pious-sounding "official" statements from headquarters. Better to go down with the ship than sound the alarm. ●

Jelle Tuininga

# Naive Evangelicals

One of the most dangerous things that is occurring throughout the world is the well-meaning but naive attempt on the part of many people to get America to stop the arms race, and more particularly, the build-up of nuclear weapons. It is dangerous and naive because it is a one-sided effort based on the totally naive and false assumption that if the United States should lead the way in a nuclear arms freeze, the Soviet Union would certainly also stop producing armaments.

The tragedy of this thinking is that it ignores the fact of Soviet determination to destroy the West, and to force Marxism-Leninism on the world. It is a tragedy also because many of the people in the forefront of this peace movement are Evangelical Christians who ought to know better than to trust godless Communism. One of the best known of these Evangelicals is Dr. Billy Graham. In a recent trip to Moscow, Billy Graham reported that he was impressed with the effort in Russia to stop nuclear proliferation. He along with other Evangelicals, was in Moscow to attend the World Conference of Religious Workers for Saving the Sacred Gift of Life from Nuclear Catastrophe. In the words of columnist George Will, the title of this conference shows the Kremlin's "audacious cynicism." Who can be so naive as to think that the Communists can seriously talk about "religious workers" who are interested in the "sacred gift of life"? Again George Will asks, "A gift — from whom? Marx? And when did the Kremlin begin speaking of 'the sacred'?"

When Billy Graham talks about freedom of religion in Russia, reporting that he was impressed with the large amount of freedom of worship enjoyed by the people, surely he is being naive. Dr. Mark Azbel,

a Russian dissident now living in the United States, reacted vigorously against Graham's comments, charging that he was taken in by the leaders of the state-controlled church. Dr. Asbel appeared on the ABC program, "This Week with David Brinkley." He said that Billy Graham had done a great disservice to all Christians in Russia because of his naive support of the repressive regime. The Siberian Seven, living in the American Embassy in Moscow, are reported to have been bitterly disappointed at Billy Graham's appearance in Moscow.

With all of these reports coming from Russian dissidents who speak of the determination of the Kremlin to continue all-out efforts to control the world, why do American Evangelicals and even Reformed Christians still naively pursue their attempts to get our country to unilaterally stop producing arms? No one wants a nuclear war, of course. But that is not the point. The point is that the only way to prevent a nuclear war is to have a strong defense that will deter Russia or any other country from aggression. Let us Christians lead the way in encouraging the United States in a stronger, not weaker, defense. Otherwise Lenin's prediction will surely come true: America will fall like a ripe plum into our hands. ●

Henry Vanden Heuvel

## CAUSE for CONCERN

Those who express concern about the church and her institutions are increasingly being labeled "troublemakers" and "schismatics" and their convictions are even publicly declared to be worth less than "two bits." The April 9, 1982 issue of KERUX, the student paper at Calvin Theological Seminary reminded me how much reason those who love the Christian Reformed Church and who want to preserve her rich heritage have for concern.

A feature of KERUX is the "Insta-poll" which each week raises a series of questions and then invites responses from the student body. A recent issue had raised questions about the ordination of women to ecclesiastical offices. The results of that particular "Insta-poll" are printed in the April 9

issue. Of the students responding to the question "Do you favor ordaining women to the ecclesiastical office of elder?" 42.9% said YES, 46.0% said NO and 11.1% were UNDECIDED. To the question "Do you favor ordaining women to the ecclesiastical office of minister?" 38.1% said YES, 49.2% said NO and 12.7% were UNDECIDED. Is it not a matter for concern, in fact for great concern when over 50% of the students responding either take a position which is contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture and our confessions or are unable to make a decision which is in harmony with the position of the church for whose ministry they are preparing?

Someone may argue that these students are young and need time to mature. It may be true that they are young and no doubt need time for theological growth and development of thought, but let us not forget that some of these students in a few years or even in a few months will be declared candidates for the ministry of the Word and Sacraments in the Christian Reformed Church. They will be called upon to give leadership in the consistory rooms of the Church, they will be exerting their influence at the meetings of classis and some will eventually be delegated to synod. What will that influence be?

How will these students be able to sign the Formula of Subscription?

The question may be raised, "Are they being confronted with the clear biblical teaching forbidding the ordination of women to office in the church?" Are they being taught that neither our Confession nor our Church Order permit the ordination of women to office? Or are they being unduly influenced by those professors who by their words and actions have shown that, in spite of the teaching of Scripture and the official position of our creeds and church order, they favor the ordination of women to office in the church? This is a question which cannot be lightly brushed aside.

In the BANNER of April 12, 1982 the author of "Of Cabbages & Kings" shares with his readers the prayer that he prays as he is troubled by the situation in the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland. He tells us he prays: "Dear God, guide your churches everywhere in this age of confusion and keep them from adopting the ways of this world. Amen." May the King of the Church answer this prayer also on behalf of the Christian Reformed Church. ●

Arthur Besteman

# Report on the Headship Lectures

*Sponsored by the Committee for Women in the CRC*

Paul Ingeneri

"Headship in the home, O.K.... headship in the church, no way!"

That used to be the line that many CRC feminists pacified conservatives with. "At least they acknowledge headship in the home," or so we thought. Since they have gained in numbers however, and in terms of control of many of our denominational power structures, they are able to come out of the closet. Now even headship in the home is out... at least a headship which implies anything beyond source or sacrificial servanthood.

The Committee for Women in the CRC, which actively promotes putting women into all church of-

fices, held a "panel discussion" April 21st at the Calvin Seminary Auditorium on this topic of headship in the home and family. Those mini-lectures (all the panelists held the same position!) are to be followed up by another presentation on headship as it relates to church functioning.

The three panelists gave short presentations followed by general audience questions. Besides seeing no element of authority to headship in the home, the panelists had no problem with women in all church offices as well. Rev. Daniel G. Bos of Fellowship CRC in Grandville began with a lecture indebted to the writings of Marvin Hoogland, Patricia Gundry and

Berkeley Mickelsen. His thesis was that words change meaning and that our idea of headship comes from reading our modern connotations of "head" into the Scripture. Originally, Rev. Bos claimed, "head" meant only source, origin, or enabler with no idea of authority. The main body of his talk consisted of a citing of headship passages from a February, 1981 *Christianity Today* article by Mickelsen in which that author interpreted the headship of the passages to imply no authority whatsoever.

When I first read the Mickelsen article over a year ago I was absolutely amazed at his exegesis. Let me give just a few examples for your consideration. As you read these ask yourself, "Is it the conservative who is reading an element of authority into the text or is the feminist interpreter, blinded by his enlightenment concept of equality, simply ignoring all mention of authority?"

1. "For in Him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fulness of life in Him, who is the *head* of all rule and authority." (Col. 2:9,10) Though Jesus is said to be the head of all rule and authority, "head" here means only life source, top or crown according to Mickelsen.

2. "He is the image of the invisible God... all things were created through Him and for Him... He is the *head* of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything He might be pre-eminent." (Col. 1:15-18) Here, according to the author, "head" only means exalted originator and completer of the church. This is partly true... but is not the entire imagery surrounding the use of "head" reflective of one in supreme authority?

3. "Now I want you to realize that the *head* of every man is Christ, and the *head* of the woman is man, and the *head* of Christ is God." (I Cor. 11:3) Here "head" is said to mean source, base or derivation. But as I examine the relationship of Christ to God (His Father) I see mutual submission, oneness, equality asserted and operating and yet total obedience of the Son to the Father. Note that this subjection of the Son to the Father is seen even in the consummation (I Cor. 15:28). One can see that Jesus' total obedience to His Father's headship implies that the Father is somehow in authority over the Son without the relationship of equality being destroyed or affected.

4. "... He made Him to sit at His right hand, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named... and He has put all things under His feet and has made Him the *head* over all things for the church, which is His body..." (Eph. 1:20-23) Here "head" means only top or crown according to Mickelsen, despite the admission of the author that "Paul here presents an exalted picture of Christ and His authority over everything in creation."

5. "Wives be subject to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the *head* of the wife as Christ is the *head* of the church, His body and is Himself its Savior. As the church is subject to

Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands." (Eph. 5:22-24) "Headship" here means only loving, cherishing and enabling according to the author. Surely these elements are involved and emphasized, but do they cancel out verse 24?

What were Pastor Bos' conclusions from all this? "There is no such thing as a headship principle for marriage and family... certainly then no headship principle should stand in the way of women as deacons, elders and pastors."

The second speaker, Gertrude Beversluis of Ada, Mich., essentially reviewed her *experience* of the meaning of "head." "The head verses seemed somewhat irrelevant. Whatever in them was incongruous to our faith fell along with Paul's words on long hair into the ditch of culturally or historically restricted matters." Denying the existence of a headship principle as "giving false weight to Paul's metaphor," she went on to state that, "insofar as Paul may extend in some places the metaphor to adapt to the two level marriage that he knew, he (Paul) was limited by his own culture and time... Where Paul's interpretations are flawed by the patriarchalism of his day, then we have to just admit that and take them as being limited." I ask you to consider where this type of hermeneutic will take us 5 or 10 years down the road.

The final speaker, Rev. Rensselaer O. Broekhuizen of 14th St. CRC in Holland, began by stating that he was the head of his wife. But after speaking of (1) submission to her out of reverence for Christ (2) his "savior-hood" of his wife (3) loving his wife (4) the fact that she is God's image and Christ's sister and (5) the authority over their children being parental and not limited to himself as husband... after speaking of these 5 qualifications he was "not at all sure where to draw the lines in terms of their spheres of influence" and he had "not needed to draw those lines because he married a Christian woman." The closest he could come to a concept of headship was a "primus inter pares" or first among equals possibility. This speaker as well saw no Biblical problem with women in leading teaching church offices.

As I sat through the meeting I agreed with much of what was said... but I was and continue to be at odds with the main thrust of the lectures. Surely we have not emphasized enough the sacrificial love or the enabling aspects of the husband's role in the past. But let us not conform to the world's mold by pressing an increasing number of Christian marriages into the other extremity trap of distortion, that of total egalitarianism. John Alexander of IVP has stated it well. "God's plan moves between those two extremes and calls for a Christ-centered husband and a Christ-centered wife to love, serve and support each other within an authority structure where Christ is head of both of them within His body and husband is head within the marriage." ●

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# News and Views

Elco H. Oostendorp

**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON BIBLICAL INERRANCY.** Under the sponsorship of this organization a Congress On The Bible was held in San Diego, California in March. The report on this meeting in the April 9, 1982, *Christianity Today* informs us that some 2,500 attended. The "event was designed to infuse the evangelical movement with renewed enthusiasm for the authority and reliability of Scripture." Many prominent evangelical leaders spoke on a variety of subjects related to the authority of the Bible and developments in this area in present day theology. A very striking testimony was given by Rev. Josif Ton, a Romanian Baptist minister who was exiled from his country last year for his vigorous efforts for the faith. He told how he had lost his faith in the Bible as a result of reading English theology books written by liberal scholars. "My faith wasn't killed by Marxism and communism. My faith was killed by liberal theologians," he said. He concluded with the strong statement: "Liberal theologians who undermine the faith of their nation in the Bible work for a Communist takeover of their land." All in all, the report on this large conference is very encouraging as indicative of a growing emphasis on the infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible.

**JONI EARECKSON**, well-known quadriplegic author, will marry in July, according to an item in *Christianity Today*, April 9, 1982. Her future husband is Ken Tada, a high school teacher and coach in Special Olympics for the handicapped. Readers of her book *Joni* will recall that she had other proposals to marry, but considered marriage not advisable at the time. Miss Eareckson was paralyzed in a swimming accident 15 years ago.

**ARE CONFESSIONS ARCHAIC?** This is the question answered in the negative by Dr. David P. Scaer, professor in Concordia Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana (Missouri Synod Lutheran) in an article in *Christianity Today* of April 9. Although writing with a definitely Lutheran emphasis he champions a position all too rare in our day. Contending that confessions preserve the apostolic faith, he repudiates both the fear that many evangelicals have of "confessionalism," and the modern ecumenical indifference to denominational distinctiveness. There is need for such loyal subscription to our doctrinal standards and historic confessions also among many in the Reformed tradition.

**CHURCH AND SCHOOL.** *The Grand Rapids Press* for April 17, 1982, reported that the Rev. James Binney of the Rose Park Baptist Church in Holland, Michigan, had been found guilty of contempt of court for failing to bring his Rose Park Baptist Academy up to state fire code regulations. "Binney testified he believes God has chosen the Rose Park Church as the place for his ministry and that to move the school, located in the church, or to change the structure, would be a violation of God's will." The pastor maintains that fire code regulations for schools do not apply since the day school is a ministry of the church just as its Sunday School and other church activities are. The church has appealed the ruling to the State Court of Appeals, and is supported in its efforts by a group of fundamental Baptists who seek the same freedom from state interference for their schools. Although one must admire men like pastor Binney for their convictions and zeal, there is no doubt that he is mistaken in his insistence that the

state cannot regulate education in any way when it is church related. The proliferation of such cases throughout the country confirms the wisdom of the parental-society supervision and support of our Christian Schools. From our Calvinistic standpoint we would say that Baptist Binney can profitably learn something about "sphere sovereignty!"

**SMOKING, A POLITICAL DISEASE.** *Evangelical Newsletter* quotes from an article by Dr. Raymond Downing in *The Other Side* which points out some interesting and disturbing facts about the tobacco industry and the evils of smoking. "Lung cancer has grown from the eighth to the second leading cancer killer in women in the last twenty years." U.S. tobacco companies produce over half a trillion cigarettes a year and they export over 70 billion of them. The Federal government spends some \$50 million annually on anti-smoking efforts and an equal amount to finance price-support programs for tobacco farmers. Dr. Downing calls upon Christians not only to oppose the evil of smoking on a personal level, but he concludes, "Smoking is a *political* disease, a form of social and economic exploitation. It is as worthy of our attention as any other social evil."

"WHAT DISHONESTY COSTS YOU." Conservative Christians usually react to the breakdown of the

moral standards taught in the Bible as it manifests itself in the area of sins against the seventh commandment. We are properly alarmed by promiscuity, premarital sex, prevalence of divorce, and the many abortions which in large part reflect illicit sex especially by young people. A challenging article in *Eternity* for April, 1982, calls attention to the fact that this breakdown of morality and departure from godliness are also reflected in sins against the commandment, "You shall not steal." Mrs. Betty G. Ulrich tells us various forms of employee dishonesty account for loss to business of some \$40 billion a year. Shoplifting adds many additional billions to the cost of what we buy. Even more serious is what she calls "time pilfering," when employees do not put in full time at their work; it has been estimated that this may total as high as \$100 billion a year. These losses ultimately are paid for by the consumers, and we pay about five percent for such "retail shrinkage." She quotes a large construction contractor as saying that failure to do an honest day's work for an honest day's pay on the part of many construction workers adds as much as a third to the cost of a house. She challenges us by saying, "Perhaps one of the most important contributions God-fearing people can make to the society in which we live is to be scrupulously honest in every detail of our lives; to employ only truth in our dealings with others; to teach our children once more some proverbial moral precepts." ●

## BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

**THE CHRIST OF THE COVENANTS**, by O. Palmer Robertson, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Phillipsburg, N.J., 1980, 308 pp., paper, \$9.95.

**ISRAEL AND THE NEW COVENANT**, by Roderick Campbell, Presbyterian and Reformed, Phillipsburg, N.J., 1954, 350 pp., hardcover, \$12.95.

**WISDOM FOR TODAY'S ISSUES**, A Topical Arrangement of the Proverbs, by Stoven Voorwinde, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1981, 187 pp., paper, \$3.75.

**SCRIPTURE AND CONFESSION**, A Book about Confessions Old and New, Edited by John H. Skilton, Presbyterian and

Reformed, 1978. (Chapters by N. Shepherd, E.J. Young, J.H. Skilton, Paul Woolley, John Murray, J. Gresham Machen, E.P. Clowney, C. Van Til, and R.D. Knudsen) 273 pp., paper, \$4.95.

**CHRISTIAN BAPTISM**, by John Murray, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974, 93 pp., paper, \$1.75.

**THE PURPOSE OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**, edited by David B. Cummings, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979, 133 pp., paper, \$3.75.

**PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION: A CHRISTIAN APPROACH**, by Norman De Jong, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1977, 87 pp., paper, \$2.75.

**REFORMED EDUCATION**, by David J. Engelsma, Federation of Protestant Reformed School Societies, 1977, 1981, 92 pp., paper.

**ASKING QUESTIONS**, A Classroom Model for Teaching the Bible, by D. Bruce Lockerbie, Mott Media, Milford, Mich., 1980, 157 pp., paper, \$4.95.

**BREAD, PEACE AND LIBERTY**, by J. Kreitmann, Translated by Mary M. Crum-packer, The Craig Press, Nutley, N.J., 1980, 95 pp., paper, \$3.50.

**COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON**, by Geoffrey B. Wilson, The Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, Scotland and Carlisle, PA, 1980, 111 pp., paper, \$3.95.

**THE SHORTER CATECHISM EXPLAINED FROM SCRIPTURE**, by Thomas Vincent, Banner of Truth, (first published 1674) 1980, 282 pp., paper, \$3.95.

**GRACE AND THE GENTILES**, Expository Studies in Six Pauline Letters, by Marcus Loane, Banner of Truth, 1981, 149 pp., paper, \$5.95.

**MATTHEW**, by David Dickson, Banner of Truth (first published 1647) 1981, 416 pp., hardcover, \$14.95.

**THEY SHALL BE MINE**, by John Tallach, Banner of Truth, 1981, 128 pp., paper, \$4.95.

**WORKS OF RICHARD SIBBES**, Vol. 3, Exposition of 2 Corinthians 1, Banner of Truth, 1981, 543 pp., hardcover, \$14.95.

**THE LIFE OF ARTHUR W. PINK**, by Iain H. Murray, Banner of Truth, 1981, 272 pp., paper, \$5.45.

**HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS OF ACCOUNTS OF REVIVAL**, by John Gillies, Banner of Truth, 1981, 582 pp., hardcover, \$22.95.

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