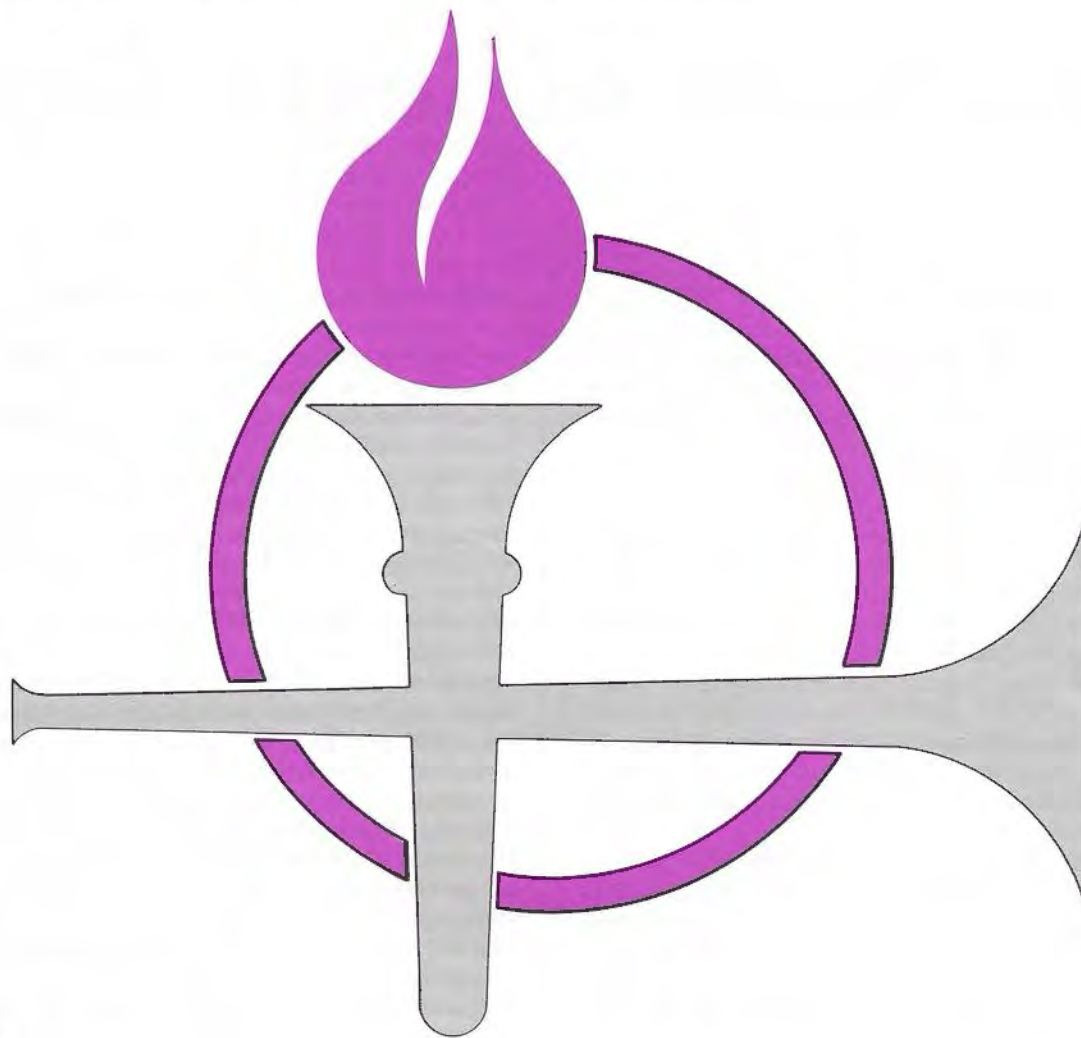


THE OUTLOOK

DEVOTED TO THE EXPOSITION AND DEFENSE OF THE REFORMED FAITH

APRIL 1985



IMPRESSIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA
CONFESSIONS AND QUOTAS?
THE SOWING OF OUR BODIES

Impressions of South Africa

Ben DeBoer

Our group gathered in Brussels and flew over Africa through the night to Johannesburg arriving early in the morning. Since it was the middle of November, 1984, it was the spring of the year. When we returned several weeks later, it was a few days from the longest day of the year. The whole country was suffering from lack of water and in most places we were told people were awaiting the spring rains before planting.

As our plane left Belgium about 50% of the passengers were "black." We use the word hesitantly since we were informed in South Africa that in the Cape area there are no "blacks," only coloreds. In other areas of the country when we used the word colored we were informed that most of the non-whites were "blacks" and not colored. In South Africa everyone is very race conscious. We made one stop enroute and here most of the "black" passengers disembarked. On arrival in Johannesburg the plane had few non-white on board. One wondered why so few dark skinned persons went to South Africa.

We spent much of our time, including evenings and weekends in the downtown areas. Most of the people we saw in the huge malls, which went several floors below the hotels and streets, were non-whites. Shopping in the malls was very limited since all shops closed at 5:00 P.M. We were told this was partly to accommodate the workers who lived in the suburbs, sometimes as much as an hour away via bus. Store owners or managers were often persons from India, but we met many from Rhodesia. These people were of many nationalities who had been forced out of business or had moved for personal reasons. The buyers in these mall areas were also primarily non-whites. We were told by our guide that she seldom bought anything in a downtown mall. Ninety percent of the buyers were non-whites, wives and husbands of the many workers in the downtown area.

We visited a gold mine and a diamond mine in the Johannesburg area. Almost exclusively the workers were non-whites. I suspect, in most cases, they were blacks and not colored. We could not distinguish. The engineers, administrators were white. One, who spoke with a heavy

brogue, said he hoped to visit his mother in Italy during Christmas. In the shops where semi-precious stones were cut and polished the workers were mostly female and non-white. On one weekend we saw a group of dancers who were mine workers during the week. Apparently they had a 5-day week. In all South Africa stores, business closed abruptly Saturday noon to reopen Monday morning. In the big hotels only the coffee shop remained open. The native dances originally were a concession of the government to the people who needed an outlet of activity for the long weekend. Now they are a tourist attraction, including a way of getting a meal at a cook-out that invariably is a part of the activity.

We liked what we saw. Food places in the big hotels were open to all races. There were no "Blankes Alleen" signs on the beaches of any of the places we visited. In church we saw both whites and non-whites (we attended various Reformed churches). They have tremendous problems, many of them unsolvable. We visited the shanty towns, as did Kennedy. We saw the homes of the coloreds and the Indians. We visited a new addition, that was fast being completed, of government housing. We saw Souwestern Township (Soweto) from a "koppje" above the town (we had no permit to enter), but the newer units at the outskirts were fully equal to any of the new housing units for Indians that we visited earlier. Government subsidy provided a tremendous amount of housing at extremely low rental for blacks.

When one reads *Times* (January, 1984) one gets a picture, often biased, of the problems the African countries have. South Africa, then, looms as a giant in that it has very few of the problems of the other 29 so-called independent countries. The comparison is more like that of comparing the United States or Canada with Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic or one of the Central American "independents." People of all nationalities expressed this to us. They realize they are living in a land of milk and honey when compared to most of the 29 nations north of them. Everybody has, at least, ugali (cooked maize meal) and many get a bit of meat and vegetables once a week. This is part of the South African problem. Imagine having a border of several thousand miles

with food on one side and nothing on the other. We in the United States look at our puny problem of regulating our Mexican border and our government essentially gives up. Yet when Nigeria deports 2 million Ghanians we hear very little. When South Africa tries to deport a few 1000 blacks back to their homeland to decrease the congestion in the shanty towns, we hear of the "atrocities" and the "inhumanity" of the central government.

Immediately after the war the government of South Africa set aside several bantustans exclusively for blacks. Today this has been increased to some 14 tracts of land, some quite large, that are essentially separate countries. True, most of them are within the borders of South Africa, there landlocked Transkei and Ciskei border the Indian Ocean and Venda borders Zimbabwe. Living in a homeland, blacks have both independence and liberty. To be sure some of the land is not ideal for farming, etc., but it is the land their ancestors have used for many generations. While on the reservations the peoples share in the huge grants given by the South African government. These grants far surpass anything our government ever considered giving to the Indians of our land. Today in Bophuthatswana are large deposits of Uranium awaiting technical and financial aid to develop. These areas are similar to those of many of the other 29 countries in Africa that remain undeveloped due to lack of technical know-how and general education. Until they are willing to obtain white men's skills they continue to suffer the handicaps.

We visited several universities. In all of them we were told that now all races were admitted. However, the numbers are small. We were informed that in the 1960's less than 5% of blacks completed secondary schooling and now the figure is closer to 30%; that of the coloreds and Indians was much higher (75% or more). These groups are now clamoring for positions formerly held only by the whites. Slowly they are replacing whites in many sectors. One has but to read *Blood River* by Villet to realize that tremendous strides have taken place. Some of the problems of the land are related to the fact that today many people want only education in the culture of their ancestors. In Soweto most of the riots are between blacks who want education including modern technologies and those who want only what their ancestors had.

Beginning January of 1985, the new constitution will be in effect. Elections were essentially complete when we arrived. These were for seats in the new parliaments. In effect there will be three parliaments. They will act independently of each other for their particular needs. Indians, Colored and Whites will each have their legislatures. Problems overlapping each group will be handled by a Council made up of members of each parliament. As these problems increase, so will the need to modify the government to meet the needs. People anticipate much modification. Most expressed the intent that blacks will also have their legislature. When such a cumbersome government will be effective and functional remains to be seen. They reveal a willingness to try new ways to satisfy the 4 almost completely different cultures.

We knew there were many problems. We read of incidents. We saw happy faces and a willingness to try and work together. We were told many times to thank our government for its tolerance and understanding. Progress is good, said one black man, but it is too slow. Help us eliminate the hurdles.

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THE OUTLOOK

(USPS 633-980)



Published Monthly July-August Issue Combined

"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).

JOURNAL OF REFORMED FELLOWSHIP, INC.

Send all copy to Managing Editor, Rev. Peter De Jong, 4985 Sequoia Dr., S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49508. Phone (616) 698-6267.

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This periodical is owned and published by Reformed Fellowship, Inc., a religious and strictly non-profit organization composed of a group of Christian believers who hold to the Reformed Faith. Its purpose is to give sharpened expression to this Faith, to stimulate the doctrinal sensitivities of those who profess this Faith, to promote the spiritual welfare and purity of the Christian Reformed Church particularly and also of other Reformed churches, and as far as possible to further the interests of all Christian action and institutions of Reformed character.

The publishers of this journal express their adherence to the Calvinistic creeds as formulated in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dort, and the Westminster Confession and Catechisms.

All contributions represent the personal views of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the members of Reformed Fellowship, Inc.

Subscription Policy: Subscription price, \$7.50 per year, \$13.50 2 years (Canada rates \$11.50 per year, \$23.00 2 years). Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order and he will be billed for renewal. If you have a change of address, please notify the Business Office as early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of delayed delivery. Include your Zip Code.

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THE OUTLOOK

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The Sowing of Our Bodies

John Blankespoor

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power" I Cor. 15: 42-44.

The Bible's classic chapter on the resurrection of the dead is I Corinthians 15. This all Christians who are at all acquainted with the Bible know. The Corinthians were new Christians. Their knowledge of the truths and doctrines of salvation was limited. Paul here gives them a detailed explanation of this glorious truth. These people believed that Christ arose, but evidently did not understand that we as Christians would therefore also arise. Therefore the apostle in the first part of the chapter shows the inseparable connection that exists between Christ and His people. He is the head, we are the body. If He arose—and He did—we also shall arise. But the Corinthians had more problems, and questions. No wonder, because this great truth is beyond the reach of human perception, it is not something natural. We can know it only if and when it is revealed to us by the Lord. Man does not discover the truth of the resurrection from the dead. And so the Corinthians asked how all this could be possible. Assuming of course that they believed in God, also that He is the God of miracles in all of the work of salvation, Paul even rebukes them. He uses the simple metaphor of the sowing of a seed and the new plant that it produces in this way. The point of the example is that the seed *has* to be sown in the ground for the new life to grow and be brought forth. If the seed is not put in the ground or is left lying on top of the ground it will not sprout and grow. So also our bodies must die and be buried. The body and that which is of this

earth must be left behind. And "out of it" or through this process the new life is brought forth. Some people believe that every body has in it an indestructible germ of life. Out of this germ the Lord will create a new body. Whether this can be proved from Scripture is questionable. But the point of the comparison still holds. The old has to die and be buried before the new life can sprout out of it and grow. Paul means to say to the Corinthians, "Look around you and see millions of examples in nature, of the resurrection." We must bear in mind, however, that this is an example. There is one big difference between this process of the seed and the resurrection of the body of the Christian. In the case of the seed this is a natural process. But the resurrection of the body does not take place naturally. It is a miracle of grace which can be performed only by the Lord of life. But the sprouting seed does illustrate the resurrection. In the next verses Paul goes on in more detail to characterize this sowing of the body. It is sown in corruption, raised incorruptible; it is sown in dishonor, raised in honor; and it is sown in weakness, raised in power.

With burial our bodies are sown in corruption. Beginning with birth our bodies are subject to corruption and depravity. This is the result of the power of death working in us, and death of course is the result of sin. Death is a power that disintegrates, tears apart. It tears apart every tissue and cell until there is nothing left but dust. Everything in this world is subject to that power. Steel rusts, wood rots, other things fade away.

This power subjects our bodies to corruption. Already in life we use perfumes, deodorants and other cosmetics to hide this power of corruption. But finally that power of death takes over completely. The stench of the human body reportedly is more repulsive than that of any dead animal. Also, the appearance of the human body after death can be gruesome. Such bodies we bury—Not really: we “sow” them. Death doesn’t have the last word, Christ does. When the Lord will return He will raise those bodies of His people into a condition of incorruption. That condition is difficult for us to describe or imagine. The Scriptures say little about heaven. We likely wouldn’t be able to understand it anyway. Paul says that it will be something which no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has it ever arisen in the heart of any man. Our new bodies, raised in incorruption, will never become subject to corruption again. The history of the fall with all of its dreadful results can never be repeated.

Our bodies will be sown in “dishonor.” Dishonor means to be disgraceful, subject to shame. That is true of our bodies now. Many of us would look quite different if we didn’t have the help of a dentist, a hairdresser and others to improve our appearances. The dishonor of our bodies becomes obvious when we visit nursing homes. When we die the undertaker makes us look as natural as possible. Without his efforts our bodies soon after death become pale and terribly discolored. To cover up the repulsive reality we have coffins, flowers, etc. And then our bodies are buried. They can’t stay here on earth because of the power of corruption. But God’s people will be raised in the final day in great honor and glory. And so we “sow” this body “in dishonor” into the ground. But we sow in faith that they will be raised. Beyond this process of burial, of “sowing,” the Lord will raise up new bodies out of the old, a condition of great honor. Having never seen this heavenly condition, we are powerless to imagine or describe it.

Our bodies, sown in weakness, are raised in power. How weak we were when we were born, wholly dependent upon others, especially our mothers. At times it may appear, as we grow up, that we are independent. Children and adolescents at times seem to have unlimited endurance. But there is a limit. And as people get older their strength and endurance fade away. We tire easily. Older people usually take a nap (or two) during the day. A person who lives to be 70-75 years old sleeps from 18-20 years of his life because of the weakness of the body. After some 15 or 16 hours we need a night’s sleep again, we need rest. Consider too the many ailments of the body, and the increasing use of medicines and visits to the doctor. Because of these weaknesses we need eye glasses, perhaps hearing aids, crutches, wheel chairs and other helps. Although by surgery our bodies may be “kept intact” with wire, nylon, stainless steel or even nuts and bolts, in the end death conquers. Because of weakness man succumbs to its power. But the bodies of children of the King may not remain conquered. We sow these bodies in the cemetery, knowing and expecting Christ to return and raise them in power. Although the Bible says little about the future state, we do know that in heaven there will be no cripples, handicapped, physical weaknesses, tiredness or disabilities. All this is as certain as the fact that Christ arose from the grave. As our Savior, He is our Head and Lord.

Paul conveys this revelation, not just as a matter of fact, but as a declaration of victory. Corruption, weakness, dishonor and death do not finally describe real Christians. Death may be our “last enemy,” but that’s not the last word. We belong to Christ, with soul *and* body. He has and will have the victory. That exultation of the apostle Paul, which already anticipates being raised in incorruption, honor and power, bursts out in his dramatic questions:

O death, where is your victory?

O grave, where is your victory?

The implied answer is that they don’t have the victory. Christ has. And in the end death will be “swallowed up in victory.” In the end death itself will be gone. In war there normally is a victor and loser, and even the victor may suffer many losses. In the final day there will be no losses for the Christian. Absolutely none! What sin achieved, the Lord will have made work together for the good of His people in *all of their lives*. And in the end, death itself will be destroyed, being “cast into the lake of fire.” No trace of it will be left. Christ will have the victory in *everything*, and the devil will gain nothing. Thanks be to God for the wonderful grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Who Am I?

Glenn P. Palmer

I am a seer—one who sees and discerns. I spoke for the LORD and told the king to build the temple and where to station the Levites and which musical instruments they must use.

But I was also called to serve on a less happy occasion. I was assigned the duty to tell the king (even before he got up) that because of his sin, the people would suffer. I had to offer him one choice out of three possibilities: (1) 3 years of famine, (2) three months of fleeing before an enemy, (3) three days of the sword of the LORD. Who am I? My name does not begin with the letter “N”.

“Prophet for profit” was my trademark. I lived before the days of the Krugerands (and Maple leaves), but I surely appreciated gold. As a matter of fact, the reason I prophesied was to earn some “bread.”

I must have made a considerable impression on the people. The king who called me listened to me and acted on my teachings. In a sense I was more successful than most prophets or twentieth century ministers. I was mentioned by the beloved disciple, by Cephas, and possibly by the brother of Christ. One said that I “loved the wages of wickedness” and another associated me with my trademark. I am the son of Beor.

The Continuing Battle Against Abortion

Frederika Pronk

Hekman, Randall J. *Justice for the Unborn*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Servant Books, 1984; pb. \$4.95.

A Courageous Judge

Perhaps the reaction upon reading the title of this book will be: "not another book on abortion!" Let me assure you that this book is different, even though it is a book on abortion. It relates the story of a Probate Court Judge, born and raised in the Reformed tradition and presently a member of an evangelical church, who in the course of his work was called upon to make a decision on whether to allow a 13-year-old girl to have an abortion. His decision made the national news and serves as a beacon and example of courage to all who are convinced that abortion is a national sin which needs to be eliminated through due processes of law government.

Although the last election showed that more pro-life candidates have been elected to office than before, the law of the land still allows the abortion "mills" to destroy its thousands every day. If we are concerned about God's honor and His righteous anger against a people who disobey His laws, we should continue to protest and work for the elimination of legalized abortion. A courageous example of defending "justice for the unborn" is set before us in the personal account of Judge Hekman. Presented with a case which placed him in a crisis situation in a successful career, he refused to "initiate procedures to kill innocent life for the expedience of others" (p. 165).

In his elected office of Probate Judge, of which the Juvenile Court is a division, Hekman was placed in a position where he had to decide whether a 13-year-old girl could have an abortion. By law, Michigan parents have the right to decide for their minor children whether to have an abortion. But this girl was a ward of the court, five months pregnant. Through her caseworker she had informed the courts that she wanted an abortion which was opposed by the pregnant girl's mother. Realizing that as elected representative of the people it was his duty to uphold the civil law, Hekman was placed before a momentous decision. He could disqualify himself because of his personal conviction that abortion is wrong, but was that God's will? You will learn how Hekman found "creative alternatives" to deal with this case by reading his book.

A Program to Eliminate Abortion

This book is not just about the courageous decision of Judge Hekman, but the book also provides a program to follow in the continued battle to eliminate abortion on demand in the United States.

It is important to take note of Hekman's legal as well as Biblical defense of the life of the unborn. Instructive are the chapters which give a thorough but brief explanation of the procedures used in abortion. Useful also is the historical account which led to the momentous Supreme Court decision in the case of *Wade vs. Roe* in 1973 and resulted in the legalization of abortion on demand. Challenging are the

steps which he proposes to be taken to eliminate abortion. "The days of legalized abortion on demand in the United States are numbered," he believes. "With God's intervention and through our collective efforts, abortion will end as a legal practice in our country" (p. 147). We need to pay attention to this hopeful conviction and ask ourselves what our part can be in these efforts.

A chapter entitled "Steps to Eliminate Abortion" gives practical and Biblical instructions for Christians to follow. Basically it is a matter of attitudes, Hekman believes. "To eliminate abortion... we need to check our attitudes to ensure they do conform to God's standards" (p. 134). He specifies three areas where Christians must be sure to have a Biblical attitude. These are our attitudes toward government, toward God and toward our children. Citing examples from Scripture he shows what these attitudes should be.

Most important is our attitude towards God in heaven. "We're to focus our hearts and minds on our *real* home in heaven and on the overseer of that home — the Triune God." This will not make Christians ineffective, as some might contend, for "the more we love God and long for our heavenly home, the more we will be persistently and courageously and lovingly free to be creative and powerful change agents here on earth" (p. 138)! Hekman also has some pointed things to say about our attitude toward children. The reason why our society eliminates so many children by abortion is because the attitude of many is that they "are an inconvenience to my lifestyle now. Children are an excessive expense and a pain to raise. They prevent me from realizing my potential. For the good of my family and myself, I want my children to be planned. Since I am now pregnant with an unplanned child, I should take steps to end my pregnancy." In contrast, God says children are a reward and that they can greatly enrich our lives. Child-rearing often serves to promote growth and development in parents, he writes (p. 142). It is good to know that Judge Hekman and his wife Marcia are the parents of eight children of whom the oldest has just entered her teens.

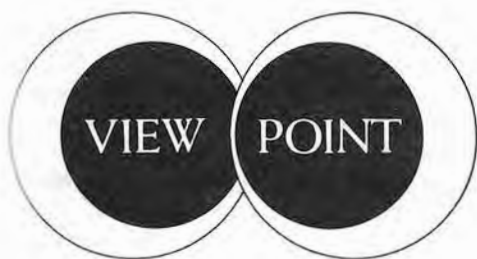
Previous to his election to the office of Probate Court Judge in 1974 at the age of 27, Hekman served as assistant prosecutor. In his position as Probate Court Judge of Kent County, which embraces Grand Rapids, Michigan and environs, he is often involved in Juvenile Court cases. He has a special concern that his Christian convictions have a bearing on decisions in connection with juvenile delinquency. Hekman has a record of being a tough but compassionate judge. He believes in Biblical justice but also Christian compassion, and he has made judgments which were both just and constructive for the future of young offenders.

A Good Book

What makes this book especially interesting to me is that I know Christians who have been involved in the election campaign to get Hekman elected to office. I myself have been involved with counseling the mother of the 13-year-old girl who one night called the pregnancy counseling crisis line I regularly serve.

I highly recommend this book as an example of how courageous Christians can influence society and what they can do to help eliminate the murder of "innocents" which rests as a "blight on our land."

Mrs. Frederika Pronk is the wife of the pastor of the Free Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan.



A LITTLE PLAIN TALK ABOUT THE CHURCH

Anyone who is no stranger in Jerusalem knows that not all things are well in the CRC of late; we seem to be more and more bent on following the example of our "mother" church in the Netherlands: women in office, children at the Lord's Supper, soft on homosexuality, etc. And some of the leadership especially in Grand Rapids is promoting this trend. The evidence is there for anyone who wants to know.

But... try to do something about it, by word as well as deed, and it won't be accepted with kindness by many people. We just don't like to be told these things. The attitude appears to be: Don't rock the boat. Let's keep the peace. Those who do protest are more likely to get rapped than those who make the protest necessary in the first place. Those who oppose the wrong trend in the church are often called the troublemakers.

But perhaps this shouldn't surprise us too much. For here too, there is nothing new under the sun. Ahab called Elijah "thou troubler of Israel." But Elijah reminded him that the shoe was on the other foot — he had troubled Israel by all his idolatries! It was the same thing in the time of Micaiah. Why couldn't Micaiah be nice and say good things like the other 400 prophets of Baal? Why did he always have to be difficult? But Micaiah said: "I speak only that which the Lord wants me to say." And for that he got put into prison.

It was the same in the days of the major prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah. The people said to the seers, "See not," and to the prophets, "Prophecy not to us what is right; speak to us smooth things, prophesy illusions, leave the way, turn aside from the path, let us hear no more of the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 30:10, 11). And Jeremiah said: "An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule at their direction; my people love to have it so" (Jer. 5:31). The leaders weren't the only ones to blame; the people wanted it this way too. Later he says, "They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14; 8:11).

And don't say: That was in the O.T. This was written for us too, "upon whom the end of the ages have come."

The peace and unity of the church are important, very important. But peace and unity are only possible on the foundation of the truth, in our case, the foundation of "the three forms of unity." For that reason the Belgic Confession says:

And, therefore, we reject all human inventions, and all laws which man would introduce into the worship of God, thereby to bind and compel the conscience in any manner whatever. Therefore, we admit only of that which tends to nourish and preserve true concord and unity, and to keep all men in obedience to God (Art. 32).

It could be that those who protest wrong trends in the church love the peace and unity of the church *more* than those who are afraid of protest.

Of course, protest must be carried out in a proper way, and sometimes mistakes are made. But it is not right or fair to point to these mistakes *without at the same time first* protesting the wrong trends in the church. For the latter have the greater sin. At those our main protest should be directed. But often that doesn't take place. The example of the "Punt case" at Classis is a case in point. The minister and consistory of Ist Lethbridge got rapped on the fingers for a wrong *technicality*, but the real *issue* was side-stepped. We received not one word of commendation (except from individual delegates) for the fact that we protested a wrong trend in the church. Only the technicality got dealt with. As one delegate said: When there is a fire, one can do one of two things: put the fire out himself or call the fire department. But perhaps there is a third possibility: Go into the street and call, "Fire!" That's what we tried to do with respect to the Punt issue — alert the church to a "fire" — because, as the delegate remarked, perhaps the fire brigade is on strike. So alert others to the problem. But when you cry "fire" you are disturbing the peace, and it's not nice to disturb the peace. Don't forget that Hendrik De Cock & Klaas Schilder got deposed on the basis of a "technicality" too. The real issue was ignored or side-stepped. It's time we wake up from our slumber and sense what is going on. We need some more of De Bres' zeal who said they would "offer their backs to stripes, their tongues to knives, their mouths to gags, and their whole bodies to the fire" rather than deny the truth expressed in this Confession. The CRC could use a dose of this kind of conviction today.

The truth is above all. No blind loyalty to any institution (not even to the church) should make us compromise the truth. And the conscience of the believer is bound by the Word of God alone, as even the Church Order recognizes (cf. Art. 29). As the Belgic Confession says, we may not consider any "councils, decrees or statute: as of equal value with the truth of God, since the truth is above all" (Art. 7). Before we deplore "polarization" in the church, let's be sure we have the facts straight, lest we be found to be barking up the wrong tree. It is those who depart from the confessions of the church who are responsible for polarization, not those who resist such departure. Some members, including ex-elders, have already left the CRC. I do not agree with them in taking this action at this time. However, rather than blame *them*, we ought to blame the *synod and leadership* in the CRC who are the cause of such action. Let's point the finger at the real source of the problem.

In conclusion, a couple of quotations:

The cause of truth demands an aggressive attack on error... An abhorrence of falsehood is the measure of our love of truth....

There are those who themselves believe in that body of truth... who nevertheless are willing to compromise with those who are disloyal to the faith, in order to avoid the appearance of differences.... The greatest danger of the age in which we live does not come from unsound men, but from men who are sound themselves but who, for the sake of the impression made upon the world by an undivided Church, are willing to cooperate with heterodoxy, and thus give it countenance.... To compromise the truth for the sake of peace is untrue to all those who have suffered for it in the past....

It is quite common to brand the man who is watchful against the encroachments of error as a "heresy-hunter." An epithet is recognized as a last resort of a defeated cause. I dare affirm, that, in view of the infinite and everlasting importance of the saving truth of the gospel, the man who resists the entrance of false teaching into the Church has done humanity a greater service than the one who has established a chain of hospitals and asylums. The more he is forced to stand alone, the more honor to him.

(A.M. Fraser)

Specifically there are three areas of deep concern to conservatives in the CRC:

1. *Most Synodical decisions on this issue (women in office) were decided by very close votes.* The Chr. Ref. Synod has made a far reaching decision... on the slim-mest margin of votes. There is in all this the appearance of calloused political maneuvering rather than a pastoral concern for all segments of the body of Christ.
2. *The arguments most frequently given in favor of ordaining women were pragmatic rather than biblical.* Many speakers at Synod seemed to assume that the matter of ordaining women as deacons was matter of overcoming prejudice rather than a matter of interpreting Scripture...
3. *This is not the end of the matter.* It is well known that there are those who want to see women deacons, elders, and ministers in the Church... Neither have they abandoned their views. They are waiting for a more appropriate time to open up the entire issue once again...

The time has come for conservatives in the Chr. Ref. Church to develop a united front in the face of these developments... WE gladly participate in this endeavor. Pray with us that much good may come from it.

(Prof. T. Monsma in Mid-Amer. Messenger)

J. Tuininga, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.

WE BELIEVE WITHOUT ANY DOUBT

We confess in the Belgic Confession that "we believe without any doubt all things contained in them"—i.e. the sacred Scriptures. But it has struck me over the years, in connection with some of the controversies that have plagued our church, that if "scholarship" or "science" casts doubt on the reliability of Scripture, then some among us, notably professors, are no longer "without any doubt" as far as the Scriptures go. Too often "science" or "scholarship" appear to have the last word. Then we no longer have the conviction of the lady who said: Even if the Bible told me that Jonah swallowed the fish, I would believe it. Yes, that may seem "naïve" and simplistic to some, but that is ultimately the kind of childlike trust we need in the Bible. I am all in favor

of sound scholarship and good scientific endeavor, but when they begin to dictate what in the Bible is reliable and what is not reliable, then we are in deep trouble. Can science ever "prove" the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Or the historicity of Adam and Eve? We do well to keep in mind what synod said in Report 44, when it reminded the churches "that the authority of Scripture is not dependent upon the findings of science." The Report itself puts it this way:

The church may not, however, allow its message to be made dependent upon the scientific enterprise, nor allow scientific findings to dictate its interpretation of the Bible, nor allow the claims of science to call into question its confession of biblical authority, nor allow any science, including theology, to determine what is believable and what is not believable in the Bible.

That is clear language which we need to hear today. But when I read what a Calvin College professor recently wrote about the origin of the world, including Adam and Eve, then I wonder: What is determining what? And I ask the same question when it is said that "cultural anthropology" casts doubt about the actual historicity of our first parents, Adam and Eve. Some years back another professor said that if it were ever proved that Jesus did not rise from the dead, he would cease to be a Christian. The question is: *Could* that ever be proved? Is it even remotely possible that some day science would prove this? What I mean is this: Is our faith in Scripture in the final analysis dependent on the findings of science? Or do we say with Paul, "Now Christ Jesus has been raised from the dead" (I Cor. 15:20). Amen! No doubt about it. Even if all the scientists in the world denied it, even if many famous scientists told us that they had found the bones of Jesus, need that shake our faith? Of course not! Even if an angel from heaven should say this, says Paul, we would not believe it. Rather, those who say this are accursed. Why then are we so enamored with "science" and (so-called) scholarship? The veracity of our faith does not depend in any way upon science or scientists. God has told us, and His word is truth. "Human hearts and looks deceive me, Thou art not, like man, untrue."

In the final analysis, this isn't a matter of scholarship or science; it's a matter of the final allegiance of the heart. As Francis Schaeffer writes in one of his books: "It arose not because of that which could be demonstrated by science, but because the scientists (theologians, J.T.) who took this new view had accepted a different philosophic base. The findings of science, as such, did not bring them to accept this view; rather, their world view brought them to this place."

J. Tuininga, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada

About Confessions and Quotas

When professors, ministers, elders and deacons of the Christian Reformed Church are ordained they sign the Form of Subscription, which, in part, reads:

"We...do hereby, sincerely and in good conscience before the Lord, declare by this our subscription that we heartily believe and are persuaded that all the articles and points of doctrine contained in the Confession and Catechism of the Reformed Churches, together with the explanation of some points of the aforesaid doctrine made by the National Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-'19, do fully agree with the Word of God.

We promise therefore diligently to *teach* and *faithfully* to *defend* the aforesaid doctrine, without either directly or indirectly contradicting the same by our public preaching or writing."

When office bearers faithfully adhere to these promises their leadership is accepted by the church with confidence and blessing. This confidence is the beauty of being united confessionally.

During recent years this confidence has been disappearing, mainly, I believe, because people in the Church are starting to notice a total lack of commitment to the confessions on the part of many in leadership positions. This again became very painfully and publicly apparent in the discussions and voting at the 1984 Synod dealing with the issue of women in office, among others.

Rather than basing decisions on a unified confessional understanding of the Bible, the synod made a series of contradictory and confusing decisions, trying to please everyone. Additional confusion was created by granting a conscientious objector status to those ministers who believe that these decisions are contrary to the Scriptures. Is this confessional? One only has to read Articles 4, 29, 30 and 31 of our Confession of Faith to see that the answer is a resounding NO!!

And now, consider the plight of the elders and deacons who have Scriptural objections, and the rest of the church membership! How can we work with the female office bearers in the council or accept them in our homes when we believe they are not authorized to function as such? This is only part of the problem.

Think too of our quota giving. If I am convinced that this new way of interpreting the Bible is dead wrong and contrary to our confessions, why should I help pay the salaries of professors, teachers, and ministers who actually teach and promote this "new" hermeneutic? It is inconsistent and counter-productive to protest the unbiblical positions taken by individuals and synods and, at the same time, finance the individuals and agencies promoting them.

In our classis (Holland), it is very obvious that the younger ministers (with a few notable exceptions) are the ones promoting the elimination of everything that ever made us a confessionally Reformed denomination. Again, why should those of us who oppose this deadly trend, finance its progress? A quota system of giving can only function in a church which is unified and bound by its confessions. I believe we become corporately responsible if we do not oppose error with all means available, including directing the use of our funds.

Good stewardship is more than generous and joyful giving; it is also directing this giving to those agencies and institutions whose work and teaching reflect a desire to do everything in humble subjection to the Bible as our only rule of faith and life.

Peter Yonker, Holland, Michigan

Women, Positively

The danger for those who hold the traditional view of the ministry is that we approach the problem of the role of women far too negatively. The Bible's teaching is not exhausted when we say that women may not preach and may not exercise authority. There is much they may do, have been doing and should be encouraged to do.

There is even clear warrant for women exercising a teaching ministry. They can teach their own children at home. They can teach the children of others. They can teach younger women. This last is particularly important. In many churches the teaching of younger women, especially in practical and ethical matters, goes by default because the problems are not the kind that men can (or should) discuss with women. This is an area where the ministry of mature women could be enormously important.

It is very interesting, too, that in the Book of Acts Priscilla is associated with her husband Aquilla in teaching Apollos. Clearly a mature Christian woman can do much to instruct promising young men in "the way of God more perfectly".

Women can also have a meaningful ministry in Christian counselling. Today this is often seen as a highly specialized function, the exclusive province of those with at least some psychiatric training. There is little warrant for this in Scripture, which sees counselling as a responsibility of the whole Christian fellowship. Women as well as men are covered by Paul's charge to the Thessalonian believers: "Warn those who are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, strengthen the weak." Many problems would never get to the minister, let alone the psychiatrist, if they were faced up to by Christian women in the interactions of ordinary Christian friendship. If some women in the fellowship also have a training in psychology or psychiatry that is, of course, a welcome bonus.

And of course, women may evangelize. That is not a point to be conceded. It is something to be emphasised. No Christian needs the sanction of any church to bear witness to her Savior.

Note: An editorial from "Focus" from Dec. 1984 Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland by Rev. Donald Macleod, editor.

NEWS ITEM

The Committee of Concerned Members of the CRC is making plans for an *Inspiration Rally* to be held May 15, 1985 in the Fine Arts Center Auditorium of Calvin College. At this Rally the featured speaker will be *Dr. W. Robert Godfrey*. Dr. Godfrey is Professor of Church History at Westminster Theological Seminary in California, an Associate Minister of the Escondido CRC, and was a delegate from Classis California South at the Synod of 1984. Please take note of this rally and pass the word along!

Does the Form of Subscription Still Function?

Edward Heerema

The congregations of the Christian Reformed denomination are bound together as a family of churches by the three Forms of UNITY, that is, by what the churches together confess to be the teaching of the Bible. It is that and that alone which unites us. To be sure, a common national background once served us well on this score, but that day is largely past. Our unity lies in our confessional standards—the Confession of Faith, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort.

And what gives these Forms of UNITY bonding power among us? It is the Form of Subscription which every office-bearer and church-school professor must sign. This important document testifies to the conviction that the church is a fellowship of believers whose most important treasure is the faith they profess, a faith that must be steadfastly guarded against any and every sort of attack or deviation. Under the cultural pressures that affect the church today it is well to emphasize that the church's most important treasure is the biblical faith it professes. That greatest treasure is not the individual rights of the members of this fellowship of believers. Currently the "religion" embraced by many people is one of individual rights. This "religion" must not invade the church.

An Overture

On January 23, 1985 Classis Florida adopted an overture to be sent on to synod. The overture, adopted without dissenting vote, is as follows:

TO THE SYNOD OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Classis Florida overtures the Synod of 1985 to request of the Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven, editor of *The Banner*, according to the terms of the Form of Subscription, a further explanation of his understanding of the Confession of Faith, Articles V and VII, in view of the following writing by our brother in *The Banner* of January 23, 1984:

There is no doubt in my mind that Paul was prescribing a restricted role to women in the service of worship when he wrote I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:12.

However, the reason for the restrictions were local, cultural, and therefore temporal. Paul could appeal to what was in his day a common moral judgment: a woman speaking in church looked "bad," "shameful" (I Cor. 14:35). But when such an appeal can no longer be made, the special apostolic prescription is also removed.

In other words, the veil, the head covering, long hair, and other prescriptions had a cultural importance they no longer have. But reverence, submission, and the good name of the Christian community are the enduring concerns of these passages.

Note: The same thinking about the Bible and culture was expressed in an editorial in *The Banner* of May 14, 1984, and in a speech on "Bible and Culture" given by Rev. Kuyvenhoven on October 12, 1984 as reported in the *Outlook* of January 1985.

Grounds:

1. The exegesis whereby Rev. Kuyvenhoven sets aside the plain overt teaching of the texts involved and limits the teaching of these passages to "reverence, submission and the good name of the Christian community" is plainly not valid.
 - a. According to Rev. Kuyvenhoven the "reasons for the restrictions" were in the first place "local." We note that Paul says in I Corinthians 14:33-34, "As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches" (italics added). The italicized words plainly assert that Paul is laying down a rule for all the churches and not for just one or two of them. It is highly unlikely that one could so familiarize himself with the "local" circumstances in "all the congregations of the saints" that he could declare that one of the reasons for Paul's restrictions is "local." But even more to the point is that the "reason" for Paul's restriction is found in God's Word and not in local circumstances, as the immediate context in both instances clearly shows.
 - b. With the word "local" ruled out, the only remaining reasons for the Pauline restriction in I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:12 are "cultural, and therefore temporal." Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul finds the reason for his teaching in I Corinthians 14:34 in "the Law," which means the Old Testament or some part of it. And the reason for the teaching in I Timothy 2:12 is found in some of the earliest teaching of Scripture, namely, that "Adam was formed first, then Eve" (I Tim. 2:13). How can such teaching, deeply rooted in the abiding Word of God itself, be spoken of as "cultural, and therefore temporal?"
2. Article V of the Confession states that the books of the Bible are "for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith; believing without any doubt all things contained in them. . . ." There can be no doubt that when the Confession was written and when it was adopted by the Reformed churches, the words of Article V covered I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:12 in the plain and overt teaching of these passages. Rev. Kuyvenhoven has chosen to disagree with this testimony of the churches by dismissing as irrelevant today the express teaching of the two passages in question, for reasons that are exegetically invalid. Rev. Kuyvenhoven should therefore give further explanation of his understanding of Article V as it relates to I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:12. To be sure, the plain and overt teaching of these passages must still be specifically interpreted, but that is something other than dismissing such teaching as irrelevant.
3. Article VII of the Confession states that the "doctrine" (that is, teaching) of the Word of God "is most perfect and complete in all respects." How can the teaching of I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:12 "be most perfect and complete in all respects" for us when the plain and overt teaching of these passages is declared to be irrelevant for us?
4. Article VII further states that we may not consider "custom. . . or succession of times and persons. . . of equal value with the truth of God." Rev. Kuyvenhoven should be called on to explain how that which he has written does not violate this language of Article VII, for he has said that the teaching of I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:12 is a matter of the customs and culture of the times in which Paul wrote. Since then the plain and overt teaching of these passages is said to reflect temporal cultural conditions ("succession of times and persons"), it

follows that new customs and cultural conditions can set aside teaching of God's Word of truth that is looked upon as bound up with earlier custom and culture. That makes "custom . . . or succession of times and persons . . . of equal value with the truth of God."

5. The need to ask Rev. Kuyvenhoven for further explanation of his views of certain articles of the Confession of Faith is reinforced by the fact that he has written about other articles of the Confession as follows: "The views of the Reformers are no longer ours. And the kind of thinking about the church that is recorded in the Belgic Confession is no longer functional in the Christian Reformed Church," (Editorial, *The Banner*, Oct. 26, 1981). The editor of our leading church paper has solemnly signified his persuasion "that all the articles and points of doctrine contained in the Confession . . . do fully agree with the Word of God" (Form of Subscription).
6. The issues raised in this overture are of great significance and should be faced by the church. These issues are disturbing to many in the church and are raising troublesome questions for them with respect to the Holy Scriptures. What is to be understood by the cultural or temporal conditioning of the Bible? What does this mean in specific instances, like those raised by Rev. Kuyvenhoven? Does the acknowledgement of cultural and temporal conditioning mean that the Bible is a "time-bound" book, as Kuitert and others have alleged? How does Kuyvenhoven's teaching differ from that of the old liberalism, which said flatly that the Bible is out of date? These and similar questions must be dealt with for the sake of the peace and witness of our beloved church.

CLASSIS FLORIDA

Ralph A. Pontier
Stated Clerk

Done in meeting of Classis Florida January 23, 1985

Shall It Be In The Agenda?

At the time of the writing of this article there is some doubt about the appearance of this overture in the printed Agenda of the forthcoming Synod. I have this information from a totally reliable source. Why the uncertainty? Because the overture is patently defective or contrary to fact or irrelevant? Not at all. The doubt stems from the fact that some denominational functionaries question the procedure followed by the overture. Granted that there may be some difference of opinion on the often moot question of procedure. Does that fact give to any group of individuals warrant to decide to keep out of the printed Agenda an overture duly passed by a classis? The question of procedure was raised on the floor of Classis Florida and yet the overture was adopted without dissenting vote.

Proper Procedure

In assessing the procedure followed in the processing of the above overture we look first of all at the Church Order. Article 13a reads as follows, "A minister of the Word is directly accountable to the calling church, and therefore shall be supervised in doctrine, life and duties by that church. When his work is with other than the calling church, he shall be supervised in cooperation with other congregations, institutions or agencies involved." Please take careful note of the second sentence in that quotation from the Church Order. Does not that language make room for precisely the procedure followed by the overture? The overture asks synod to "require . . . a further explanation" of Rev. Kuyvenhoven because "his work is with other than the calling church," and thus he is "supervised in cooperation with other congregations, institutions and agencies involved." Because this brother's work is done as an appointee of synod and as spokesman for all the congregations, his supervision may therefore be seen as one of cooperation with all the congregations of the church, and that means synod.

And what about Article 28b of the Church Order? It says, "A major assembly shall deal only with those matters which concern its churches in common or which could not be finished in the minor assemblies." The above overture surely fits in the first of the two categories listed, namely, "those matters which concern its churches in common." The substantive issue raised in the overture (that of the cultural conditioning of the Bible) is a matter of high concern to all the churches. And would any one care to argue that consideration of the substantive issue raised by the overture could be finished in the minor assemblies?

There are those who argue that the proper procedure in matters like that addressed by the above overture is to follow the instructions given in the articles under THE ADMONITION AND DISCIPLINE OF OFFICE-BEARERS in the Church Order. These articles apply to disciplinary procedures in which charges are brought against an office-bearer. In a case in which "further explanation" is sought according to the terms of the Form of Subscription there are no charges. And the Judicial Code does not apply since it calls for "written charges requiring formal adjudication."

One Procedure in the Form of Subscription?

A further opinion held by some deserves attention. This opinion contends that the Form of Subscription refers only to a person who reveals his "different sentiments" to "Consistory, Classis, or Synod" and who is ready to submit to the judgment of any of these assemblies. In other words, according to this opinion paragraphs three and four of the Form of Subscription do not set forth two different procedures but rather two phases of one procedure.

Such an interpretation of the Form of Subscription is hard to accept. The procedure given in paragraph three involves revealing "different sentiments" to consistory, classis or synod, and is carried to its conclusion of "being ready always to submit to the judgment" of the assembly dealing with the matter. In other words, the procedure briefly sketched in paragraph three contemplates a complete process, from the declaration of "different sentiments" to the judgment of same.

Paragraph four of the Form briefly sets forth a different procedure which also runs the full course from willing compliance with an assembly's requisition of "further explanation" to acquiescence in the final judgment of the matter. In view of the flow of the description of the process in each case, it is difficult to see how the two paragraphs can be thought of as describing one procedure or two facets of the same procedure. One must agree with VanDellen and Monsma, who in their *Revised Church Order Commentary* recognize two procedures in the Form of Subscription. Of the second procedure, that asked for in the above overture, these authors have this to say, "Action of this kind may be taken by a classis or synod as well as by a consistory. The major assemblies need not wait for minor assemblies" (p. 40).

Precedents

There are clear precedents for the procedure followed by the above overture. In 1936 a consistory went directly to synod under the terms of the Form of Subscription regarding the views of Dr. F. H. Wezeman. Synod responded by appointing a committee to work with the classis involved. In 1961 a consistory went directly to synod asking for "further explanation" of the views of Rev. S. J. DeVries,

and synod responded by calling upon synodical deputies from three neighboring classes to work with the pastor's consistory to pursue the matter.

Certain other more recent cases are hardly germane. Take, for example, the manner in which synod dealt with the request of Central Avenue church (Holland) asking the Synod of 1971 to "adjudicate the correctness or error of Dr. DeBoer's position as expressed" in certain documents. That is something other than calling for "further explanation" of one's views. And how about synod's handling of the Verhey case in 1977? In this instance a consistory appealed against the action of Classis Grand Rapids East in approving the examination and the subsequent ordination of one who had made statements in his examination before classis to which the appealing consistory objected. By the time this appeal came to synod the man had already been ordained. So synod directed the appealing consistory, should it desire to pursue the matter, to press their case by following the procedure given in the Church Order under THE ADMONITION AND DISCIPLINE OF OFFICE-BEARERS. It is evident that this again is something other than asking for "further explanation." (The citing of these two instances does not mean that the writer of these lines fully agrees with the way in which these two cases were handled.)

What Might the Overture Achieve?

The intent of the overture discussed in this article is not to "get Kuyvenhoven." When I went to visit this brother in his office in September 1984 to discuss his views with him, I told him that any action that I might seek to take would be for the purpose of getting the church to face and deal with the urgent and highly important question of the nature and meaning of the cultural conditioning of the Bible. Is the Bible a time-bound book, as Kuitert and others teach? Does the church member of average intelligence have a Bible today, a Bible that he can read and understand? Or must he wait for the interpretation of some expert who has a sophisticated new tool called "the new hermeneutic?" Does the average church member have an infallible guide for his life in his Bible, or is his Bible selectively infallible, depending on the expert's interpretation of how time and culture have conditioned the Book? It is this very timely and crucial question that prompted me to submit the overture to my consistory. I am sure it was this overriding consideration that led the consistory to approve it, and also led Classis Florida to endorse it.

What can synod do in this case? It could do a number of things. It could appoint a study committee, though I do not especially relish the thought, because sometimes the productions of study committees have tended to add to the church's problems rather than contribute to resolution of them. A study committee whose mandate is limited to a study of the Confession of Faith (Articles I—VII) in relation to the issue raised in the overture might be helpful. Synod could deal with the overture in much the same way that it dealt with similar instances in 1936 and 1961. Or synod might tell brother Kuyvenhoven that he owes the church a gravamen, thus admonishing him and the church as a whole to abide faithfully by the teachings of Scripture as set forth in the church's doctrinal standards. After all, every office-bearer has avowed that the teachings of the Forms of Unity "do fully agree with the Word of God."

By all means the church must deal with this overture. The issue is urgent. Our church is in turmoil today and at the

center of the ferment is the question raised in this overture. Let the troubled church know no later than the time of the publication of the Agenda for Synod that this issue will be a matter of genuine concern at the assembly this coming June.

RATIONALE FOR OVERTURE GIVEN TO DELEGATES AT CLASSIS

This request is being sent to synod first rather than to Rev. Kuyvenhoven's supervising consistory for the following reasons:

- a. This overture is not an attempt to bring discipline against an office-bearer according to Articles 88ff of the Church Order. This is a request for further explanation of one's views according to the terms of the Form of Subscription. Therefore, according to the terms of the Form of Subscription, it can be dealt with at the synodical level as the overture requests.
- b. Synod has twice before invoked its right to request of a signer of the Form of Subscription a further explanation of his views. It did so once on the basis of sufficient grounds of suspicion supplied to synod in an overture from Fourth Roseland C R C concerning the views of Dr. F. H. Wezeman, and again at the request of the Bluffton C R C regarding the views of Dr. Simon J. DeVries. (Acts of Synod 1936, p. 146ff, and 1961 p. 100f.)
- c. The person concerned is an appointee of synod, responsible to synod for his work. The explanation asked for concerns his work, therefore synod should be the body to handle the matter.
- d. Because the editor publishes his views weekly throughout the denomination in the only official denominational magazine this matter is not a local concern but is of denominational significance and for the sake of the unity and peace of the church should be dealt with at the denominational level. According to Article 28 of the Church Order this is a matter which concerns all the churches in common and is therefore a legitimate concern of synod which does not have to be processed through the minor assemblies.
- e. It is inconceivable that a matter of this importance and magnitude could be "finished" in a minor assembly. To initiate the matter in a minor assembly would only delay its resolution by synod. If the matter were initiated at the local or classical level, the process would take two or three years at least before synod would deal with it finally, thus imposing great personal hardship on all parties involved.
- f. To require that matters of denominational significance and concern to all the churches be dealt with first at the local level where consistories would need to have all parties present for several consecutive monthly meetings, makes pursuing such matters impossible when great distance separates the parties involved. In this case the parties are over 1,200 miles apart. The framers of our Church Order never intended that distance should be an obstacle to good order in the church, therefore the Church Order should never be applied in such a way that makes distance an obstacle to good order.
- g. The principal author of this overture has, prior to writing the overture, spoken personally to Rev. Kuyvenhoven but received no clarification of the editor's views. Other parties have written to Rev. Kuyvenhoven asking for a further explanation of his views. His reply, printed in *The Banner*, May 14, 1984, "An Open Letter," has only raised more questions. The January 1985 *Outlook* contains a report of a recent address given by Rev. Kuyvenhoven in the Burnaby, B.C., C R C which also gives grounds for asking the editor for a further explanation of his views. The report states, "According to K, the restricted role of women in the church, as taught in Scripture, is no longer applicable in our modern culture. There are two reasons why the church should change its position on this matter. First, because the Spirit of God can express itself also through our society. Although K did not specify how we can identify these divine utterings, he did feel that in this case there could be little doubt. Secondly, . . . our traditional stance on the role of women hinders members of our modern society from coming to church." This quote, although not a direct quote from Rev. Kuyvenhoven, shows the urgent need for a clarification of his views. Does Rev. Kuyvenhoven believe in a new revelation which gives the Church the right to lay aside and contradict the Bible? Does he believe that the Church should compromise God's truth in order to accommodate worldly, popular opinion? These are questions which concern our creeds, and these are questions the Church has a right to ask when, as in this case, there is more than sufficient cause for concern.

Rev. Edward Heerema is a retired Christian Reformed minister living at Cape Coral, Florida.

The Peace of God

Marten H. Woudstra

The English word "peace" is a word with a rich meaning. It is related to the French word "paix" and both these words go back to the Latin "pax." We are not at this time interested in examining the range of meaning of the English word "peace" however. It is our purpose to examine the biblical background of the word "peace." To do so we must go into a brief discussion of Hebrew and Greek words. For in the Bible the word "peace" is a translation of either the Hebrew word "shalom" or the Greek word "eirene."

We here wish to examine briefly this Hebrew word *shalom*. Some years ago one could hear a song that was sung in some of our church related gatherings: "Shalom, dear friend, Shalom." We believe that one or two of the Christian Reformed Churches in North America have used the word *shalom* as the name for their church. An excellent choice!

What, precisely, does the word mean? As one studies the many instances of the word's use in the Old Testament it becomes apparent that the English word "peace" does not do justice to the richness of meaning which the Hebrew word has. The English word often expresses the idea of stillness, quiet and the absence of war. In contrast, the Hebrew word accents rather the affirmative. Peace (*shalom*) can stand for prosperity, as in Is. 45:7. This verse is translated in the King James Version, "I Make peace and create evil." Newer English versions render this, "I bring prosperity and create disaster." Clearly, the Hebrew word at this point is not opposed to "war" but to "evil," "disaster."

Note also the close parallelism between "strength" and "peace" in Ps. 29:11. The Hebrew notion of "peace" (*shalom*) has to do with wholeness, happiness, well-being. Absence of war may be part of this peace, but not necessarily so. The most striking example of how "peace" (*shalom*), in the Old Testament, is not opposed to war is found in 2 Samuel 11:7, where David is inquiring of Uriah the Hittite "how the war prospered" (King James). As one checks the Hebrew at this point he finds that David is actually inquiring about the *shalom* of the war. In other words, here the word "shalom" does not mean the absence of war, or its cessation. Rather, it means the prosperous conduct of the war itself. This may be a rather unusual notion for our western mind to grasp, but, if we are concerned to ascertain the biblical range of the word "peace", we must take such usage into account. Otherwise the danger exists that the word "peace" in the Bible will be uncritically and erroneously used to bolster certain current peace ideologies underlying the "peace" movements of the present day.

Still another instance of the very positive and almost war-like connotations of the word *shalom* in the Bible is found in Judges 8:9. This story deals with Gideon's pursuit of his enemies. As he pursues them Gideon requests the assistance of certain cities on the way of pursuit. But they

refuse to render such assistance. At that point Gideon makes the following threat: "When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower" (King James). Here the word "peace" (*shalom*) actually means something like "victory" or "triumph." This is how the newer versions render it. It should be clear that the word *shalom* at this point is anything but "peaceful" in the commonly understood sense. It is consistent with retaliatory action such as the breaking down of a tower.

It is this positive, life-affirming meaning of the word *shalom* which makes it such a good word to use as one person meets another. At such a point they inquire about each other's *shalom*. It means: "Are things going well with so and so?" Joseph's brothers in the field at Dothan were not exactly a peaceful lot. The life of a shepherd and herdsman just was not that way. Still, Jacob sent his son Joseph to inquire about the *shalom* of these men.

Those who have studied this word further, also in its New Testament usage, have concluded that the New Testament notion of "peace" leans to a considerable extent on its Old Testament predecessor.

A good deal more may be said about this rich biblical word and its Hebrew and Greek background. What has been reported here may serve to caution against a glib quoting of biblical words to defend the pacifism which one encounter among even Christian believers today. Whatever we may say about the significant issues of war and peace and about our civil duty with respect to these matters, let us beware of incorrect use of the Scriptural terms. In the Bible, strength is allied with peace, and at certain points the progress of a war may be expressed in terms of the word *shalom*.

The Christian must indeed "seek peace and pursue it" (Ps. 34:14). Yet, in doing so the Christian will always remember that the deepest and most complete peace that is worth pursuing is a peace which the "world" does not give (John 14:27), because it is a peace that passes understanding (Philippians 4:7). God is not a God of disorder but of peace (1 Cor. 14:33, NIV). They who pursue God's "order" in the world will thereby be pursuing the peace of God.

As concerns the future, the biblical picture concerning the end-time is not that things will first threaten to get out of hand before Christ returns to bring about the eternal order. According to the biblical view of things, Christ will be ahead. It is Christ's coming that is accompanied by earthquakes, famines, war and rumours of wars. These are the signs of His coming. Let us listen to the distant sound of the trumpet and to the voice of archangel in the things we witness today. He has told us that He won't be a minute late. ■

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COMMENT AND OPINION

John H. Piersma

LOUIS PRAAMSMAS 1910-1984 — It pleased the Lord of life to take to Himself a good and faithful servant, Dr. Louis Praamsma, a solidly Reformed pastor, preacher, writer, teacher, and that in three countries: The Netherlands, Canada and the United States of America. I could attempt to say a few things in his honor, but I couldn't possibly do better than translate a short tribute published in *Calvinist Contact* by his son, Herman. It is entitled "In Memoriam," is written in Dutch, and goes like this:

Letters we used to get at our home always carried the impressive address: To the Honorable Learned Gentleman Dr. L. Praamsma. But the memories which have been playing in my mind the last while were not of a person of high honor or great learning.

They were memories of one with whom I gladly rode on the handlebar of a bicycle while we sang choruses together; one with whom we experienced delightful vacations at Schiermonnikoog; of long walks through woods and over dunes, readings from Godfried Bomans and swimming and soccer; a father who could compose such lovely poems for Sinterklass, and play that role himself. I remember Sunday evenings around the organ with Johannes de Heer, and many mornings when I crept into his bed for just a few moments, warm and safe. I remember . . . there isn't any end to it.

Above all I remember his sincere, simple love for God and the people of God; his deep impression of the reality of the grace of a rich Savior for poor sinners, among which he counted himself first. He was aware of his own shortcomings and his complete dependence upon his Savior Jesus. And there was no greater joy in his life than to see children and grandchildren profess their faith in the same Lord Jesus Christ (Translation mine, J.H.P.).

Among his papers was found a poem entitled *Hoe Zal Ik Mijn God Ontmoeten?* (How Shall I Meet My God?) Herman or another of Dr. Praamsma's gifted children owe us a translation of this precious composition!

A Bible text comes to my mind as I think of the life and labors of Dominie Praamsma (he insisted after a brief stint as professor of Church History at Calvin Seminary that he was called to be a pastor and ought therefore to go back to a ministry in a local congregation). It reads:

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (Heb. 13:7,8).

Our Christian sympathy to the family and all who mourn the passing of Louis Praamsma!

HOW DO WE FIGHT ONE ANOTHER? — There are more than a few these days who find it necessary to warn "conservatives" in the Christian Reformed Church against unkind, unchristian conduct. Some years ago a prominent Calvin Seminary professor labeled the kind of people who sponsor this periodical as *militant*. They have "a militant mind." Their theme song is "Onward Christian Soldiers." They love to fight, in fact, they pick fights. They disturb the church. And they ought to be resisted, put away, discredited. In fact, they are the chief cause for disgrace in the Christian Reformed Church.

All this is said with the Bible open to First Corinthians 13, of course.

One of the latest of these warnings comes from the pen of the Reverend Nicholas B. Knoppers of Edmonton. He does it well. Writing an interesting meditation on Philippians 4:5 ("Let your gentleness be evident to all.") in the Dutch language (*DeWachter*, Jan. 15, 1985), Knoppers urges that all parties in the current unrest in his church understand that the word translated *gentleness* has a three-fold significance. It then offers the rules by which and within which we may contend with others as Christian brothers and sisters.

These are: modesty, friendliness, fairness.

Under the first Knoppers suggests that we recognize the relative insignificance of our little denomination. We are just a small drop (some 300,000) in the great North American ocean with its 250,000,000 residents. Let's be modest, says Knoppers, recognizing that things we used to fight for as principles later came to light as not being principles at all. (Just where this leaves modest people like Knoppers and myself I'm not sure!)

And we ought to be friendly. Indeed! I sincerely appreciate Knoppers' assertion that we have often admonished people with a Bible in the hand but without a Bible in our hearts.

Still more, we ought to be fair. This, says Knoppers, appealing to that outstanding (conservative) exegete, S. Greijdanus, means a willingness to go along, to be conciliatory, to be kind. It does not mean compromise at the expense of the truth, but a willingness to listen to one another, to be open so that we can hear this Word of the Lord, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves" (Phil. 2:3).

Knoppers closes by reminding us that this appears in Phil. 4:5 as a *command*. The urgency of this matter is put in awesome language. "The Lord will soon appear for judgment and His verdict will pass also upon our conduct in the current struggle." Who could possibly disagree?

One observation, however: Doesn't the following opening paragraph seem to be a bit one-sided? Translated by me, it reads:

Professors from a seminary with a militant name make long and therefore expensive trips to call the good people to open protest against a synodical decision which has been worked at for no less than fourteen years with five committees and thousands of dollars of expense. Consistories are urged to send 'overtures' according to a certain model. Coalitions are formed to unite available manpower. Bulletins and periodicals press strongly that certain quotas not be paid. A strategy is recommended to get *our* men in the seats of power. Family birthday gatherings are used to form the home front. Pulpits must serve as quivers (loaded with arrows to shoot at the congregation, I guess—JHP). Forward march!

I hope my friend Nick Knoppers will forgive the awkward translation of parts of his meditation. And once again: I agree: we are commanded to love one another, to be good to one another, to be gentle, friendly, fair, modest.

"Conservatives" (I dislike that word!) ought to do that. And even "progressives" (another word I don't recommend) ought to do it. To put it better: *ALL* Christians should pledge themselves to obey the Lord's command found in Phil. 4:5! Pray that it may be done!

WHAT WILL SYNOD DO? — Speculation about Synod 1985 is plentiful these days. Especially about its possible disposition of overtures and protests against last year's decisions regarding the admissibility of female communicants to the office of deacon. A few observations:

1. Does it really make much difference what synod decides on this (or any other) issue? Several years ago the late Edwin Palmer (Christian Reformed minister; executive secretary of the New York Bible Society) wrote a little piece in this journal under the title, "Phooey on the Church Order." From the title it is easy to guess that he felt constrained to observe that careful and scrupulous obedience to the official Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church was lacking. This development has not abated, I fear. I know of at least one instance in which a particular congregation proceeded to install a lady deacon *before last synod*, arguing that the demand for such action was so strong that delay was not possible. Similar stories can be multiplied. Do they reveal that "respect for the law" in the church is lacking? If so, can we believe that all congregations will always "go by the book," or will we see a growing tendency toward individualism, congregationalism, independentism... all "big words" meaning that each does whatever seems good in his own eyes?
2. Are the differing points of view here really reconcilable? My impressions are that they are principally and emotionally so far apart that any decision will provoke disagreement, hostility and further agitation. The intensity with which the feminist movement works makes me shudder. For this issue is not a matter of quiet conviction but of absolute and almost fanatic devotion to the most important of causes. We are being asked to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Well we might! But can we easily pray for a resolution that will satisfy all the saints when the lines drawn are so sharp and the differences indicated are so deep?

3. Have the real dimensions of this controversy about the eligibility of women to hold office in the church been explored by the Christian Reformed Church? I think not. I know that report after report has come to synod and to the churches — and much hard work has been expended to write (and to read!) them. For the past twenty-five years or so we have not suffered from a drought of synodical study committee reports in the CRC! It seems to me, however, that although the reports on this issue have not been superficial or without reference to the larger implications of the problem, there has been almost a total ignoring of the radical, revolutionary spirit of the modern feminist movement. To assume that it has no influence on us is absurd. But have we really looked at it for what it is, and evaluated the implications it holds for any Christian in our time? Whatever moves we make to change our rules governing eligibility for office in Christ's church ought, it seems to me, to be informed by a recognition and understanding of this movement.
4. Can we in the churches expect that business done at Synod 1985 on this (and all other) issues will be totally free from any and all kinds of political maneuverings? Will truly Christian churchmanship be evident? Will there be a real effort to avoid even the appearance of partiality and prejudice in the appointment of key committees, in the full recognition of all voices? Will there be a real attempt to minimize pressure from the gallery during the discussion of this issue? If not, we can pray and talk and debate all we want — the effect will be further polarization. And polarization is not really admissible in the Body of Christ.

HERESY TRIAL IN THE CRC — Thanks to the accused, the Rev. Neal Punt of Evergreen Park, IL, I have a copy of the "Agenda for the Special Meeting of Classis Chicago South Friday, March 1, at 7:30 P.M. at the Kedvale Avenue C.R.C." This meeting is being called to discuss a protest against the teachings of Mr. Punt by the consistory of First CRC, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.

This is not to suggest that Punt is an aggrieved victim in this procedure. On the contrary, my impression is that he couldn't be happier. Ever since his book (*Unconditional Good News*) appeared (1980) he has been more than willing to take on all comers.

Readers of *OUTLOOK* know that one of our more prolific contributors, the Rev. Jelle Tuininga of Lethbridge, has more than once expressed total disagreement with Punt's ideas. Pressed by Punt, this has come to be a formal trial. As a result the Lethbridge consistory has lodged a five-point complaint. These points are:

- I. Punt's book is entitled *Unconditional Good News*, and he writes that 'the church must *announce* the *good news* to all persons,' and that (Karl) Barth 'recognizes correctly that the gospel is the *announcement* of an objective state of affairs for the elect' (p. 108). Since neither the Scriptures nor the creeds speak about the gospel as 'unconditional good news' or as an 'objective announcement,' we believe Punt's view brings him into conflict with both Scriptures and creeds. (Scripture and creedal citations follow, JHP).
- II. Punt's peculiar view of 'biblical universalism' leads him to a peculiar view of faith, whereby faith is not essential in establishing in the state of grace....

III. Punt states that only those who *willfully* reject the gospel will be lost, and that all others must be regarded as being in Christ and as joined with us in fulfilling the cultural mandate. . . . This is a denial of the radical antithesis between belief and unbelief, and of the radical nature of sin rooted in the human heart.

IV. Punt states that all who die in infancy are saved, since no one is condemned on the basis of original sin alone.

V. Perhaps Punt's most basic mistake and error lies in his unbiblical and speculative assumptions or premises. He says that in bringing the gospel we must assume that all men are elect in Christ. . . . We have no business assuming who is elect or non-elect when preaching the gospel. . . . We believe that Punt's premise is in conflict with Scriptures and creeds which state that all men are by nature dead in sins and trespasses, and unless they hear the voice of the Son of God they will not live. . . ."

Punt offers a detailed rebuttal of these charges which we will not try to summarize here. By the time this is published the classis will have met and made its judgment. We'll give you the results next time. Suffice it to say that the issues at stake are not trivial!

MARRIAGE AND RESPONSIBILITY — Sydney J. Harris is a long-time, brilliant syndicated columnist. His material appears regularly in one of Chicago's two outstanding dailies, *The Sun-Times*. A recent column contains this observation

One of the chief reasons that so many marriages fail is that the functions of a date and a mate differ radically; that of a date is to be charming; that of a mate to be responsible; and, unfortunately, the most charming people are not necessarily the most responsible, while the most responsible are just as often deficient in charm.

Not bad!

"Dating" and "fun" are often identified in a very dangerous way. I have often warned covenant young people that their friendships were dangerous for their spiritual and moral welfare, only to hear that they were "only dating" and marriage was not at all being contemplated. This turned out differently, of course, and the problems ensuing were soon horrendous.

It is sad that the Christian world has become so insensitive to the reality of divine calling. Looking for a thrill instead of God's will can only bring pain. Not to mention disaster for God's cause!

The Full Use Of Women's Gifts

Ray B. Lanning

The winter meeting of the Committee for Women in the C.R.C. took place on January 27 at Calvin Seminary. The chief feature of the evening's program was an address by the Rev. Alvin J. Vander Griend on the subject, "The Full Use of Women's Gifts." Dr. Vander Griend is *Associate Minister of Evangelism for the Board of Home Missions*. He holds a post of prominence and influence throughout the denomination and so his views should be of great interest to those who are following the progress of the current contest over women in office in the C.R.C.

The present writer will call attention only to some of the many points raised by Dr. Vander Griend. It must be said that his address covered a vast sweep of territory. Readers are advised to get hold of a tape or transcript of the speech in its entirety before reaching any final conclusions about Dr. Vander Griend's position in the current debate.

Before dealing with specifics, two general observations are in order. Perhaps the greatest strength of Dr. Vander Griend's address was its fine Christian spirit. It was easy

to listen to him, even when he was saying things with which one may not agree. He set a good example for everyone to follow, and displayed a genuine concern for the well-being of the whole Church.

Nevertheless I regard his address as a failure. Specifically, it failed to reach any conclusion regarding the announced topic. Too much time was devoted to making a point which is generally agreed upon. Is there anyone in the Church today who opposes the full use of women's gifts? Is not the real question that of determining the rightness of the claims *certain* women make to having *certain* gifts?

A Reaction Against Special Offices

It is precisely at this point that trouble has arisen in the Church. For too long the people of God regarded His gifts as given only to the favored few. Now the trend runs in the opposite direction; everyone is claiming that he or she has

this or that gift. Our forebearers would be shocked at the arrogance and self-centeredness with which some press their claims. It is enough for these people to say, "I have this gift, so you must now put me into this office." And let no one say otherwise!

Now it is here that Dr. Vander Griend's address only serves to make matters worse. He laid great stress on the matter of gifts given to all believers. Who would disagree? But he waived the question of *office*, and what can only be called the *gift of office*. See Eph. 4:11. It is plain that there is a gift of office, and that it is given only to some and not to all believers. Historically the Church has been guided by such passages as I Tim. 2:11,12 in determining who may rightly claim to have this gift.

But, as noted, Dr. Vander Griend expressly waived this question, and as a result gave the clear impression that he supports this notion that anyone may lay claim to any of the gifts, and that all such claims must be admitted. It was in this connection that he made his strongest statement of the evening:

Any system, any structure, any tradition which discourages the use of members' gifts is working at cross purposes with Christ who gave them, and thwarting His intent; . . . is grieving the Holy Spirit . . . ; and . . . ought if possible to be eliminated or changed or reformed.

The speaker put no limits on this assertion. He made it very clear that he regards the C.R.C. as having such a system, structure, and tradition. And he certainly did not rule out the elimination of such systems, structures, and traditions even if they could be shown to stand on Scriptural ground.

Another feature of the address was Dr. Vander Griend's attempt to turn the tables on those who claim that society ought not to set the agenda for the Church. Many say that in opening the offices to women, the Church is being squeezed into the mould of secular thought, and that ought not to happen. Vander Griend believes that on the contrary it was society that caused the repression of women's gifts in the Church in the first place. This repression began in the 3rd or 4th century and has been going on ever since. If society is now changing, it is only going in the direction in which the Church ought to have been leading it all along.

Dr. Vander Griend qualified this assertion with the disclaimer that he wasn't in this instance quite sure of the facts. A study of the history involved will show that the facts won't support this new thesis. It is rather the case that the Church today is ignorant of her own history. Down through the centuries gifted men and women have made enormous contributions to the life of the Church. Church history has its heroes and its heroines, both sung and unsung. To our shame we today are largely unaware of them.

Loose Use of Scripture

Some attention should be given to the way Dr. Vander Griend used Scripture as he developed his theme. His method can only be called suggestive rather than exegetical. While this method may have helped to confirm the opinions of those who share the speaker's viewpoint, I found it to be a source of dissatisfaction and frustration.

Vander Griend singled out three words in the New Testament. First, the verb, *to prophesy*. He cited passages from Acts and I Corinthians, which showed various people in the act of prophesying. But does it follow that all who prophesy at some time are in fact to be regarded as prophets in the

sense of Eph. 4:11? Vander Griend seemed to say so when he asked, "Where are the women prophets today?" But this is simply not the case, as a study of the whole of Scripture teaching shows.

His second word was the Greek word *diakonos* (and not *diakonon* as AVG incorrectly stated), variously translated as *servant*, *minister*, and *deacon*. Paul calls himself a *diakonos*, and he calls Phoebe a *diakonos*. Does this mean that they are both servants? or both ministers? or both deacons? It would take a great deal of study to decide the point, but Vander Griend ignored all possibilities except for the one best suited to his own purposes.

The third word discussed was the verb *to labor*, in Greek, *kopiao*. The speaker cited three passages where it occurs. Mary bestowed much labor on Paul and his associates (Rom. 16:5); Paul labored abundantly as an apostle (I Cor. 15:10); and those set over the church at Thessalonica are said to labor (I Thess. 5:12). Vander Griend suggested that Paul used this verb to denote official ministry, and that he really saw no difference between Mary's "official" ministry and his own, or that of those set over the Thessalonian church. But *kopiao* does not have this specialized meaning; it simply refers to hard work of any kind in any context. See Matthew 11:28; Acts 20:35; Ephesians 4:28; and II Timothy 2:6.

Does it need to be said that this method of handling the Scriptures is of little use toward resolving the points at issue today? It is not so much that Vander Griend reaches the wrong conclusions, but that he leaves too much unsaid, and too much room for misinterpretation.

Alleged "Tension" in Paul?

Dr. Vander Griend is to be commended, however, for the valiant attempt he made in the conclusion of his address to point out that there are two sides to the question of women in office, and that both sides may point to certain passages in Scripture to support their position. He went to some length to point out what he calls a "tension" in Paul's writings between on the one hand his teaching about gifts in I Corinthians and on the other, the restrictions which he places on the use of women's gifts in I Timothy. He concluded with a warm appeal to all and sundry to work toward a resolution of this tension.

But does such a tension really exist in Paul's writings? I suggest that there is one important point that Dr. Vander Griend has overlooked. In his desire to promote the use of gifts in the Church, he makes the unwarranted assumption that all gifts are given to all believers, men and women alike. We have already tried to show that his assumption overlooks the important teaching about office in the Church found in Ephesians 4:11. What Paul tells Timothy is that the exercise of office in the Church is restricted to men; and nowhere in all his writings does he contradict himself. We may therefore conclude that while some gifts are given to all believers, the gift of office is given only to men. Women may indeed prophesy, and in fact they have always done so; but they are not called either by the Word or the Spirit to the office of prophet in the Church. This is the historic view of the Church, and it is eminently Scriptural. The best interests of the Church would be well served if Dr. Vander Griend and all other officebearers would accept it and uphold it in their public ministrations.

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Prayer

Henry Vander Kam

CHRIST'S HIGHPRIESTLY PRAYER I

Lesson 15

John 17:1-19

No discussion of prayer would be complete without a treatment of perhaps the most beautiful prayer ever uttered, and that by our Savior. It is difficult to make any divisions in this prayer because it is like the robe of Christ "without seam, woven from the top throughout," but there is a division which can be made and therefore we will deal with this prayer in the last two lessons of this year's series.

Jesus spoke this prayer in the hearing of His disciples while they were in the upper room together. There He had given the discourses contained in John 14-16. This highpriestly prayer now forms a fitting climax to all that which He had taught them in the three previous chapters. The teaching He had given in these chapters was deep. They did not understand very much of what He had taught them. Later many of these things became clearer to them. Christ now prayed to His Father to implant the teaching of the previous chapters in their hearts.

To The Father

This prayer could not have been uttered by anyone else. The real and true Highpriest was approaching the throne of His Father. What a blessing it is that these words were spoken in the hearing of His followers and that they have been revealed to us! He calls His God "Father" just as He taught His disciples to do in the Lord's Prayer. The term receives even richer meaning when it is spoken by Him. The Father and the Son stand in a relation to each other which is duplicated nowhere else. The Father was His Father from all eternity. He says: "*The Hour* is come." For this hour all history had waited. For this Christ had waited. Time and again He told His disciples and the people of His day that His hour had not yet come. Everything waited for the clock to strike this hour. Who can say that the hour has finally come? Only He who has complete control over everything which He has come to do. Because the hour has finally come, "glorify Thy Son so that the Son may glorify Thee." The kind of a life which the Christ had lived for the last 33 years was not normal. He had left the glory which was rightfully His and assumed our nature with all its attending weaknesses. Now the hour has come in which this "abnormal" existence must cease. The glory of the past must be restored. Even though He has glorified the Father in all that He did here as Mediator, He must be returned to the Father's presence so that He may glorify the Father completely as in the past. The expected hour has come because He has been faithful in carrying out the Father's will and He has completed His task. Completed it? Do not the cross, the resurrection and the ascension still lie in the future? The hour has come—it is as though all has already been completed—so sure is it that He will accomplish all.

The Son has been given authority over all flesh. All authority in both heaven and earth is His and therefore He can also send His disciples into the whole world and tell them

to turn it upside down! He has authority over all flesh and He gives eternal life to those who have been given to Him. It is amazing how often our Savior refers to the election of God in this prayer. He gives these elect people eternal life and now also tells us what is meant by this "eternal life." Eternal life is here defined simply as the knowledge of the Father and the knowledge of the Son. Those who receive this life must stand in a relationship to Father and Son wherein they have a "heart knowledge" of both. They must believe in both from the heart.

Christ has glorified the Father while He was here on earth. He came to save sinners by doing the Father's will. Psalm 40 had already spoken of this fact. The will of the Father is His delight and it is also His own will. Again He speaks of the work as already accomplished—so surely will all be completed, even though some things must still be done.

There is also a strong desire in the heart of Christ to receive the glory which was His before the creation came into being. He desires to be in the presence of the Father again. He seeks to "be near unto God" (Cf. Ps 73). How He opens His heart to the Father in these first five verses! The One who has taught His people to pray is here "pouring out His heart" in prayer. We receive a glimpse of the unique, intimate relationship between the Father and the Son. If we may paraphrase: "I love Thee, Father, and it is my greatest joy to be in Thy presence again. Thou lovest Me and these 33 years and the cross which still waits do not dim that love. The work had to be done. I did it because thy will is my delight!"

For His People

From verse six there is a slight change in emphasis. Until now He has been praying especially for Himself; now the emphasis shifts toward His people. He has manifested the name of the Father to those who have been given to Him. He has declared the Father to them. In Himself they have had a vision of the Father. This the Christ has done for all those who have been given Him, but especially for the twelve disciples. These are the ones who, although imperfectly, have kept God's word. These had the knowledge and faith that the word of the Father was life. They have, and will in the future still more, give their lives for that word. These disciples realized that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. They realized that everything He gave them was from the Father. These were the very words of God which they had learned from the lips of Jesus Christ. The things so necessary unto salvation—that they believe that Jesus has indeed come from the Father—are present with these disciples. Those who would not believe this are antichrists! (Cf. I John 4.)

For Their Protection

In verse 9 Jesus utters a practical truth that is often misunderstood. He tells the Father that He is praying for those whom the Father has given Him. These belong to the Father and therefore He prays for them! He does not pray for the world. Does this mean that His people may also not pray for the world? The Scriptures are clear enough that we

must pray for the world. There are also examples of this given in the Scriptures. Abraham prays for Sodom. However, this prayer of Jesus Christ is of a particular nature. The following verses clarify it. All that which belongs to the Christ also belongs to the Father and vice versa. They are One! One in essence and also one in property. Both Father and Son are deeply interested in those for whom He is here praying. They are the fruit of His work! He is glorified in them. That is, He is glorified in the salvation of His people!

The reason why He prays so earnestly for them is because He will no longer be with them! He is leaving the world and ascending to the Father. Since these are still in the world, what will become of them? They are in real danger. That danger is described in Rev. 12. When the Man-child has escaped from the dragon, the dragon pursues the woman, that is, the church. Jesus here prays "Holy Father keep them in thy name." They will be safe if *Kept in the name of God!* Surrounded by His revelation they will be safe.

Jesus adds the words which have been quoted more than any other from this prayer: "that they may be one even as we are." Does this refer to the unity of the church? Indeed it does, but not the kind of unity of which men often speak. It is not a unity of numbers only regardless of the truth. He makes that clear later. We must remember that the unity of the church is *an article of faith!* He prays that they may stand together, united against a common foe, speaking the same word as Christ and the Father speak the same word.

Christ tells the Father that He has safeguarded them while He was in the world. He did it in the same way He now asks the Father to do it. "Keep them in thy name!" This was so successful that not one of them perished. Those whom the Father has given to the Son are in good hands. He takes good care of those entrusted to him. The only one who did perish was "the son of perdition." He had never belonged to the Father and had never been given to the Son. Hence, the truth still stands: "of those whom Thou hast given me I have lost no one!"

Now the Christ is going to the Father. He puts the truth into words which His own may hear as He is praying to the Father, in order that "their joy may be full." He is instructing them by means of this highpriestly prayer. How happy they should be! Instead, they do not understand. Their temptation to unbelief will become powerful this coming night and tomorrow!

Christ has given them the word of God. By this possession they are distinguished from all other men. That word is a treasure entrusted to them with which they will have to work. It will change their hearts and their whole manner of life. Therefore the world will hate them. They have become foreigners to the world just as Christ was. Now it would seem to be the easiest for them if they would be taken out of the world. But Christ does not pray for that. The time for that has not yet come. Jesus prays, "Keep them from the evil one." With this protection they will be safe and will be able to accomplish their mission.

In verse 16 there is a repetition of the thought expressed earlier. Neither the Christ nor His people are "of the world." In fact, they have so little in common with the world that the world can't stand either of them.

Equipped With and For God's Word

Christ's people are not only protected from the evil one; they are also equipped to do the task that is awaiting them. Therefore the prayer continues, "Father, sanctify them (set

them apart) in the truth." Let them be filled with the truth of God. "Thy word is truth." Thy word is the infallible guide. That is the word whereby they must be governed and that is the word which they have to proclaim to the whole world. That word comes from the Father. Woe to those who would twist that word! When they do that they are in the clutches of the evil one!

As the Father sent His Son into the world, so the Son sends His people into the same world. Although they each have a different mission to perform, they come with the same truth. Christ gave His life and thereby is essentially different from His people. But, Christ brought the word of the Father, and that is the same word which His followers must also bring.

Jesus has "sanctified" Himself for them. He has "set Himself apart" for them. In this Jesus refers to His atoning work. His people will then also be "consecrated"—set apart for a task. They will be ready to give their lives for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This prayer for Himself and for His disciples is surpassingly beautiful. It gives us an insight into the heart of the Savior. How He loves His Father! How He loves His people! What a purpose He holds before them! What a Savior!

Questions for discussion:

1. Does this Highpriestly prayer of Christ give us an indication of the priestly work He is carrying on for us in heaven?
2. What do we really mean when we confess the unity of the church? Will this ever be realized on this earth?
3. Throughout this prayer our Lord refers to those who have been given to Him. What does this say to His people today? Does this harmonize with question one of the Heidelberg Catechism?
4. How could the joy of His people be "made full?" Is this different from the way we usually think of this joy of the believer?
5. Who was the "son of perdition?" Did he never "have a chance?" Explain.
6. Why does our Lord lay such a strong emphasis upon the word of God in relation to His disciples? What must they do with that word?

CHRIST'S HIGHPRIESTLY PRAYER II

Lesson 16

John 17:20-26

The verses listed above form the last division in the Highpriestly Prayer of our Savior. In the previous verses He had spoken mainly concerning His own relationship to the Father and the relationship of the present believers to Him and to one another. In this last section He will emphasize more the relation of those who are not yet believers, or who are not yet born, to their God and to their fellow believers. This division is not sharp. He has spoken of those who will believe in the future also in the previous verses, but there is now a greater emphasis on this group. Although the division is not even sharp enough to warrant a new paragraph, there is a shift, and we do not do violence to this prayer by dividing it between the first 19 verses and the last seven. The eleven disciples had been one of the main foci in the previous verses and those from outside of Israel are included in the final verses of this prayer.

Future Believers

Our Lord makes the distinction clear when He says that He not only prays for the eleven and the others who are now already believers, but that He also prays for those who will believe in the future. These will make their faith in Him evident through their word. They will make confession of the name of Jesus Christ. That is the way in which all believers come to Him. In their confession they repeat the words which God had first spoken. True profession of the name of Jesus Christ is "to say so," that is, to repeat the words which God had spoken (Cf. 1 John 5:9, 10). There is nothing mysterious or mystical about it—let the people of God say so.

Christian Unity

One of the recurring themes of the Highpriestly Prayer is that all God's people may be *one*. So Jesus now speaks of the people of His day who have believed on His name and those who are still to be brought to the faith. He speaks of the unity of the church of all the ages. That is a unity despite differences of time, language and culture. There is no other institution in the world, nor at any other time, which can boast of such a unity. It must be realized that He does not speak of an external unity but of a spiritual unity! This distinction is important. Only the Spirit of God can unite people of all nations and climes and tongues. This is a unity patterned after the unity of the Father and the Son. These two are, of course, never separated. The Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father. So must the believers also be in Him. This is the theme which Paul often strikes in his epistle to the Ephesians. The believers are to be "in Christ." Although this means that He is also in them, the emphasis here falls on the former. The believers are to love one another. This is an evidence of being "in Him!" By this love, the like of which the world doesn't know, it will become evident to men that they have indeed been with Jesus! The foundation of the unity of the church is found in the unity in the Trinity. There truth and love reign supreme. Never may the church sacrifice truth for a seeming unity. This would destroy the unity which is required. If there is that unity among believers and there is therefore that true love for one another, the world will recognize that the Father has sent the Son into this world. The world will see the effect of the work of Jesus Christ. So will both Father and Son be glorified in the world.

This unity of believers is still an article of faith! The reality has eluded us thus far. When there is all manner of division among believers, the world taunts. Its contempt then goes beyond the contempt for the members of the church and even reaches to the God and the Savior these people profess!

A Unity in God

Christ has given the glory which was His as a gift of the Father to His people. He has bestowed on them the riches which He had received. He is in them and they are in Him. This is the closest bond which anyone could ever imagine. Because of the closeness of the relationship between Christ and the believers, these believers become in the words of the Apostle Peter "partakers of the divine nature" (II Peter 1:4). Are they children by adoption? Of course. But, much more. No adopting parent can give his own nature to the child he has adopted. This glory the Christ has given to His people in order that they may be one. Theirs becomes a oneness of life. They form "His body" in this present world. Again

He repeats the words of previous verses stating that it is a unity which is born of the unity of the Godhead. There is this addition. By their unity it will become apparent to the world that the Father loves them with the same love wherewith He has loved the Son. His people are so the objects of the love of God that the Lord makes no distinction between the Father's love for His only begotten Son and those who believe on Him through their word!

Confidence of God's Revealed Will

Verse 24 of this beautiful chapter is of the greatest significance to every child of God. In this verse our Savior comes with His *demands* to the Father. Is this not completely out of character with the way in which He usually comes into His Father's presence? His approach to the Father is a beautiful example of the way in which we should approach our God in prayer. Christ prays in Gethsemane, "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not my, but Thy will be done." We have also been taught to pray so that we leave all things to the will of our God, which alone is good. However, we are also taught to pray for the forgiveness of our sins. Never do we then add the words "if it be Thy will!" We know that this is the will of God. He will indeed forgive those who come to Him in penitence. To understand this verse we must also realize that the will of which Jesus now speaks is the same will as that of His Father. How different is His approach now from that of a few hours later when He will be lying face down on the ground in Gethsemane! Here He prays in the fullest confidence of His oneness with the Father; there He prays as the One who is the sin-bearer of His people.

The will which He expresses in this verse is that those whom the Father has given Him may be with Him wherever He is. He has bought them—He now claims His purchase! "They are mine!" "Thou hast given them to me." Here is no room for the addition: "If it be Thy will." What a blessed assurance when we stand at the open grave of a child of God. Christ has said concerning this departed one: "I want him to be with me where I am!"

A Certain Future

Not only does Jesus want His people with Him now, but the emphasis is placed on the future. "That they may behold my glory." He is about to be glorified. He still anticipates Good Friday, Easter and the Ascension, but He can already speak of these as though they had already arrived—So sure is He that this work which still remains, will be completed. Then He will again enjoy the glory which was His before the world began. Now, I want these, whom Thou hast given me, to behold the glory which will then again be mine. Then they must be in His presence! Here they have known Jesus in the state of humiliation—and they loved him. Just imagine what it will be to see Him in His glorification!

Christ speaks of His own glory. It is a glory which has been given Him by the Father. The glory which He had received and which He will again receive in the not too distant future is because of the love which the Father has for the Son. He wants His people to behold that glory and therewith behold the Father's love for the Son. It is indeed something which no ear has heard, which no eye has seen and which has never even entered into the heart of man.

The Lord is coming to the close of His prayer. He acknowledges that the world did not know the Father. That which God had made did not even know the Creator! Sin

has so blinded the eyes of men. This is a loving Father but He is also a righteous Father. What would happen to this world which doesn't even know Him if Someone had not intervened? The Son, of course, knew the Father and knew Him from all eternity. He has made the Father known. God had given Him some out of this world which did not know Him and these have actually now known that the Father had sent His Son into the world. What a change has been wrought by the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. They were blind in their ignorance, and now the truth is seen by them. They were groping about in stygian darkness and now have the glorious light. They had seen no glory and will now, in a short time, behold the glory of the Son of God!

Christ says that He has made the Father's name known to them. That did it! That was all that was necessary. That name stands for the whole revelation of God. Christ has made the revelation of God known to His people. This effected the change which can now be seen in them. He *has* made that name known to them and He will continue to do so. The revelation of God was not yet complete in the time in which Jesus utters this prayer. The Apostles must still come with their glorious interpretation of the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. The church must grow and see the realization of the things for which He has prayed this highpriestly prayer. John must still come with his mighty Apocalypse! "I have made known Thy name as no one has ever done before and I will continue that work when the Spirit is poured out."

When the people of God have embraced the word which He has spoken, they will realize how great is the love wherewith the Father has loved them. They will be filled with the same love wherewith the Father has loved the Son. The relationship between the Son of God and His people is so close that He can call that people "His body." He has prayed as the great Highpriest. He bears on His breastplate the names of all those whom the Father has given Him. This "Priest's" sacrifice will be sufficient and it will be "once for all."

So ends our treatment of the subject of "Prayer." It is a subject which is worthy of much more space. His people must learn to pray. Unceasing prayer should arise from every heart and from every home for the "body" of Christ here in this world. Pray without ceasing!

Questions for discussion:

1. How can the unity of believers be attained? Must we work and pray for this unity? What must be the basis of this unity?
2. Will those who believe later than the disciples and the people of their day be at a disadvantage?
3. What is the relation of Christ to His people? How can the world know that the Father sent His Son into the world?
4. Christ demands that His people will be with Him. Is this truth honored enough in the church today? What could give more comfort?
5. Christ made the word of God known as no one else ever could. How important is it that we do all in our power to make that word known? Is there anything else necessary? What is the error of those who stress experience at the expense of the word?
6. This highpriestly prayer of Christ gives us a glimpse into His mediatorial heart. Of what further profit is this prayer for us?

VISIT TO NEW GUINEA MISSION

Dr. F. W. Den Dulk

We, Art Bauman, Dirk Vander Steen and I, are in Papua, New Guinea on a fact-finding and visual aid project so that we can better publicize what God is doing through the Pacific Island Ministries. We have all heard of the work—but to see what is being done and to be present at some of the services is to realize that the half has not been told.

We arrived late Friday and spent Saturday and Sunday in Port Moresby (of World War II fame). It is a sprawling, hot, tropical metropolis with development problems—the worst being the increasing crime rate and street gangs who rob and rape. P.I.M. is cooperating with national pastor Charles Lappa, an outstanding evangelist who works with a team of converted gang leaders—with "rascals" and street people, as well as directing a ministry in prisons and churches—a very influential ministry which has won the respect and cooperation of authorities in Port Moresby.

Monday we went by small plane to Garasa Valley in the highlands. There a house which was just completed for Sopera was to be formally dedicated. Sopera was for many years a well-paid printer-evangelist who was led by God to return to his tribe in this very remote area where there now is a real spiritual revival. We were welcomed by over 300 people—many attired in tribal regalia with tusks in nose, painted bodies, and elaborate head dress—spears and drums, vigorous dancing, singing and music. The pastor led in fervent prayer, thanking "Pappa God" for feeling sorry for his children, "piccaninies" and sending His Son to die on the cross to save us and help us. Then there was a sermon about the house built on a rock, all sang loudly and fervently, and the house was solemnly dedicated. One can't help but be in awe at this demonstration of the power of God's Word, and at God's leading and directing the building up of His body, the church in Papua New Guinea.

From Garasa we went to Maposi. Georgia has been here only one year, yet has started animal projects, raising goats, pigs, chickens, ducks, a fish pond, rice, vegetables, etc., and also runs a very fine clinic and supervises a community school and church program. God is using this dedicated and enthusiastic person in a wonderfully effective way.

In Ambunti—where it all started—we are surrounded by incredible activity. The saw mill and logging operation, run by trained nationals, providing treated lumber out of a kiln for construction, boat-building, furniture-making, etc., is evidence of a well-structured training program. Doug Heidema, who heads all this, has also trained nationals in motor mechanics, welding, electrical work, construction, etc. Doug is a key man, soft-spoken, ingenious, respected by all. The fresh water 2500-gallon tanks and catchment systems,

manufactured under his direction, are doing much to decrease sickness and mortality by providing clean water. Such systems have already been put in 26 villages and many more will be installed. Among all of the mission stations in the world in which we have been involved*, we have not seen any that come close to such a ministry for the entire man and community as that which Pacific Island Ministries is accomplishing. With only a few missionaries (8 at present) and a low budget, they are indeed "equipping the saints for the work of ministry for the building up of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12, 13), which is their mandate. Praise God! He is Mighty!

Other areas are opening up and more personnel are urgently needed, as well as finances, to enter these open doors and to help these people out of poverty, sickness and darkness. We admire the devotion and complete commitment of the workers here—selflessly doing so much with so little. They need the help of committed individuals to accomplish what

needs to be done. They are worthy of our wholehearted support and prayers. I am excited and happy to be involved in this and thought you would be interested in knowing what your gifts are doing.

**Dr. F. W. Den Dulk was formerly a medical missionary in Ethiopia, and later has taken time from a practice in Seattle to give short-term volunteer medical help to a wide variety of missions in many parts of the world. Pacific Island Ministries began about a quarter of a century ago with the work of the Neal Kooyers family under the sponsorship of Wycliffe Translators in New Guinea. When translation was accomplished, the Kooyers who were school teachers (Neal was formerly superintendent of schools in Shasta County, California) developed a Christian school program in this extremely primitive area which later became an independent mission project. (Recently two missionary pastors have been provided to work with this program by our denominational mission board.) The Kooyers when preparing for work with Wycliffe became members of the Christian Reformed Church in Seattle and assisted in the Christian school there. Their expanding work in New Guinea has had the interest and support of a number of our churches and members.*

Spotlight on South Africa

Peter DeJong

I had not thought when reviewing Barbara Villet's extraordinary book, *Blood River*, last fall (January OUTLOOK) that its subject, South Africa, was about to receive the extraordinary attention that it has been getting in current news.

Bishop Desmond Tutu

Figuring prominently in much of the recent publicity has been the black Anglican bishop of Johannesburg, Desmond Tutu, general secretary of the South African Council of Churches. Not long ago he was awarded the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize. The irony of his receiving that award has not gone unnoticed in many quarters. In a clipping from the *Digby Courier* sent in from Canada, a columnist, Patrick J. Buchanan, wrote, "Hearing the glad tidings, the bishop, 'on sabbatical' in the United States, flew home to a tumultuous airport reception. There, he publicly embraced the African National Congress, which calls for the violent overthrow of the South African government. He urged white South Africans to join in up-ending the system. He held a lively rally at his local church. Then, he flew back to the United States.

"The bishop's progress was illustrative. First, it revealed that, whatever his moral splendor, the bishop is a political ignoramus. Should the Soviet-backed terrorists of the ANC ever seize power in South Africa, the bishop, if he is still alive, would likely enjoy the same accommodations his colleague, Bishop Muzorewa, enjoys in 'liberated' Rhodesia: preventive detention.

"Second, the bishop's trip underscored what a remarkably free country South Africa remains. In one week, the bishop exercised—or benefited from the exercise of—freedom of travel, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, and, given the massive publicity, freedom of the press."

The December 17, 1984 *Christian News* printed an "Open Letter to the Nobel Prize Committee" from United Christian Action, "an umbrella organisation for concerned Christians and religious organisations . . . with a membership of more than 4.5 million black South Africans." The letter called attention to the incongruity of giving this award "for exceptional merit in the furtherance of world peace" to Bishop Tutu.

"It has been admitted by the chairman of your committee that the choice was political. But for what purpose? The

people of South Africa, as throughout this tragic continent, still reel under the impact of the worst drought in recorded history. This has coincided with the worst recession since 1930, accompanied by record unemployment and soaring inflation. Yet it is at this time of great national suffering that Bishop Tutu sees fit to campaign across the world for disinvestment and economic sanctions against his people.

"During an interview on Danish television, Bishop Tutu rejected the argument that foreign investment helps to improve the lot of blacks by providing employment saying: 'We do not in fact look for an improvement in the South African situation.' His international agitation to increase the suffering of blacks in South Africa in order to bring about radical change, has already provoked confrontation with black political leaders, most notably chief Gatscha Buthelezi. The leader of the six million strong Zulu nation is in favour of investment and reconciliation.

"Writing in the Johannesburg Sunday Times, 21 October 1984, Alan Paton, South Africa's leading liberal author, reproached Bishop Tutu in these terms: 'Bishop Tutu, I want to ask you a question? I do not understand how your Christian conscience allows you to advocate disinvestment. I do not understand how you can put a man out of work for a high moral principle. It would go against my own deepest principles to advocate anything that would put a man—especially a black man—out of a job. . . I think your morality is confused just as was the morality of Dr. Verwoerd in his utopian dreams. You come near to saying the end justifies the means, which is a thing no Christian can do.'"

After noting that Bishop Tutu had attacked the pope for granting audience to the South African Prime Minister, the letter continues: "Anyone moved by the Christian spirit is automatically castigated for not joining his confrontation course. Far from promoting peace and reconciliation, he has openly stated that he would not rule out the possibility of supporting an armed struggle himself. How can such a pronouncement be reconciled with the original purpose for which Alfred Nobel instituted the Peace Prize?"

The letter goes on to point out that "Bishop Tutu is not supported by the majority of Christians in South Africa. Most black independent Churches are not members of his political pressure group. Moreover many of them have withdrawn in protest against the SACC's politics. He demonstrated his callous attitude towards the common man by uttering these words, quoted from the Rand Daily Mail, 22 December 1977, 'But you never go round in a liberation struggle asking the so-called ordinary people what to do. It is the leaders, the more politicised people, who make the decisions.'

"Proof that the South African Council of Churches, of which Bishop Tutu is principal spokesman, does not represent the Christian majority is borne out by the fact that only 1.2 percent of its finances is generated by member Churches and more than 97 percent from overseas in order to sustain the political campaign of a minority. These donations from Christian sources have been used to aid those engaged in violence. In addition to this, theft and fraud have been committed by leading persons in the SACC and have led to one of the biggest financial scandals in South African church history.

"By this choice, the Nobel Peace Prize Committee has disappointed the hopes of many millions of people of all population groups in this country, who are working towards evolutionary change and have shown tremendous goodwill.

Yours sincerely, United Christian Action." (A copy of this letter was sent to *Christian News* by the director of United Christian Action, Dr. Edward Cain.)

Associated with Bishop Tutu in the effort to generate world-wide political opposition to South Africa has been Dr. Allan A. Boesak, president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. (A recent Lutheran-produced videotape, obtainable from the National Council of Churches, seeks to "portray the challenges of apartheid in South Africa via the perspectives" of Tutu and Boesak.)

It is significant for us that Dr. Boesak was featured as a special faculty lecturer at Calvin College a few years ago and was scheduled to be one of several lecturers to speak there this January on apartheid.

The Anti-South Africa News Campaign

A news item in the January 21 *Christian News* calls attention to the cover story in the January 29 *Review of the News* headed, "Reds Turn the Heat on South Africa." The story observes that "Since Thanksgiving, television viewers and newspaper readers have been given daily coverage of protests at the South African Embassy in Washington and at South African Consulates in our major cities." Noting the orderliness of the protestors, the article states that they "are part of the Free South African Movement . . . which while 'on camera' is expressing concern about human rights and the abuse of power." But "the polite dignitaries on the picket lines, some knowingly and others unwittingly, are acting to transform South Africa into a Marxist dictatorship. . . ." "Review of the News" says that Assistant Director of the F.B.I. Edward O'Malley testified before the House Intelligence Committee in July 1982 that a major anti-South Africa conference held in New York in October 1981 was an example of "specific Soviet active measure activities and operations in the United States." A significant number of the leaders of the current protest campaign were involved in that conference.

"Principal coordinator of the Washington protests which kicked off this drive is Randall Robinson, executive director of transAfrica. . . ." "TransAfrica's real work", according to this report, "is promoting the interests of the African National Congress. . . ., the Soviet dominated South Africa terrorist organization, and Soviet allied regimes in Africa and the Caribbean."

A much more extensive treatment of this same subject is found in the January issue of *The McAlvany Intelligence Advisor* which was sent in by a correspondent. The 10-page report packed with details is far too long to cover in any depth, but much of its information is illuminating. It too calls attention to the series of well-organized demonstrations which began in the U.S. near the end of November, observing that they resemble similar campaigns against the South Vietnamese government before we abandoned it, against the Shah of Iran (before we stopped supporting him, to make way for Khomeini) and against the Smith government of Rhodesia (before we stopped supporting it, to make way for a Marxist regime there).

The strategic importance of South Africa to the Western world is evident when we consider that South Africa and the Soviet Union together control over 80% of the world's strategic mineral reserves which are essential to U.S. and western industry. "Leonid Brezhnev boasted several years ago that the key to Soviet world domination was to isolate

the mineral resources of the Middle East and southern Africa from the West." South Africa also sits astride the shipping lane over which over 80% of western Europe's and half of the U.S.'s imported oil is shipped in tankers too large for the Suez Canal.

Although "the Soviets do not believe they can conquer South Africa militarily", they have been working "to surround and isolate it, precipitate economic sanctions and disinvestment in the West, harass South Africa along her four country 1500-mile border, and foment internal revolution among her 16 million Blacks. The current disinvestment/sanctions campaign in the U.S. is designed to bring such suffering and economic hardship to South Africa's Blacks, that they will stage a revolution, overthrow the white government and install the pro-Soviet ANC." By means of "national liberation movements" in various countries the Soviets have worked for and, in a number of African countries, have already succeeded in getting Communist governments established, especially in areas adjoining South Africa. "Russian, Cuban, East German, North Korean and Bulgarian troops are stationed in Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, etc." In addition to this, the United Nations and the World Council of Churches and its affiliated church organizations have been induced to support the Soviet-fostered Marxist "liberation" movements.

The report points out that while, in general, "Black Africa is today, an economic basket case, wrecked by 25 years of black African socialism," "the wages and standard of living of South African Blacks, while lower than whites, are 3-4 times higher than for Blacks in countries to the north" "South African Blacks have a higher standard of living, own more homes, cars and businesses than any other Blacks in Africa."

While the report recognizes the faults of "apartheid", it also observes that "South Africa has dismantled as much racial discrimination in 5 years as we (the U.S.) did in 25 or 30 years. Sports, hotels, restaurants, public facilities have been desegregated; job and pay discrimination eliminated." "...Real and positive change is evolving rapidly in South Africa. But no matter how fast or positive the change, it will not be enough for the Soviets, the U.N., the State Department, the anti-apartheid groups, and the anti-South Africa

forces... They are not interested in progress, human rights, justice or betterment of the black man in South Africa. They are interested only in the overthrow of the pro-western... government of South Africa and the installation of a black, Marxist, pro-Soviet regime—just as these forces would not rest until the pro-western black government of Bishop Abel Muzorewa was replaced by a black Marxist government in Zimbabwe."

It is difficult for us to understand or fairly judge concerning complex conditions in another country on the other side of the world. We are almost certain to err regarding them if we listen only to partisan agitators such as Tutu and Boesak. Reports cited in this article confirm other indications that the 1984 C.R. Synod's hasty decision about South Africa amounted to a "debacle" and gave support to forces that around the world are working to destroy the Lord's Gospel and Church.

Elsewhere in this OUTLOOK Dr. Marten Woudstra alerts us to the fact that this year's synod will likely face a proposal to join the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. That organization in its over 100-year history compromised the Christian faith, refusing to define it, and has become a promoter of The World Council (of April and May 1983 OUTLOOKS). At its last meeting, according to reports, it was almost exclusively preoccupied with condemning South Africa and elected Dr. Allan Boesak to be its president. Will this year's synod give additional support to this antichristian cause?

When this article was written Dr. Boesak was scheduled to be one of a series of special lecturers at Calvin College dealing with racism and apartheid. My wife and I attended, to be surprised by the hasty replacement of the Boesak lecture with a Bach concert! What had happened to Dr. Boesak? He had not arrived from South Africa. The next day we heard and subsequently saw news reports from South Africa (also reported in the Feb. 25 Time) of Dr. Boesak's extended adulterous involvement with Di Scott, a leading South African Council of Churches official (who also accompanied the recent tour of Senator Kennedy in that country). Dr. Boesak was facing increasing problems with his government because of his worldwide political activities against it. (See the January 28 Banner's report [p.20] of our church's race committee's attempt to intervene on his behalf.) These political problems are now complicated by the problems his personal behavior is raising in the churches which he has been representing.