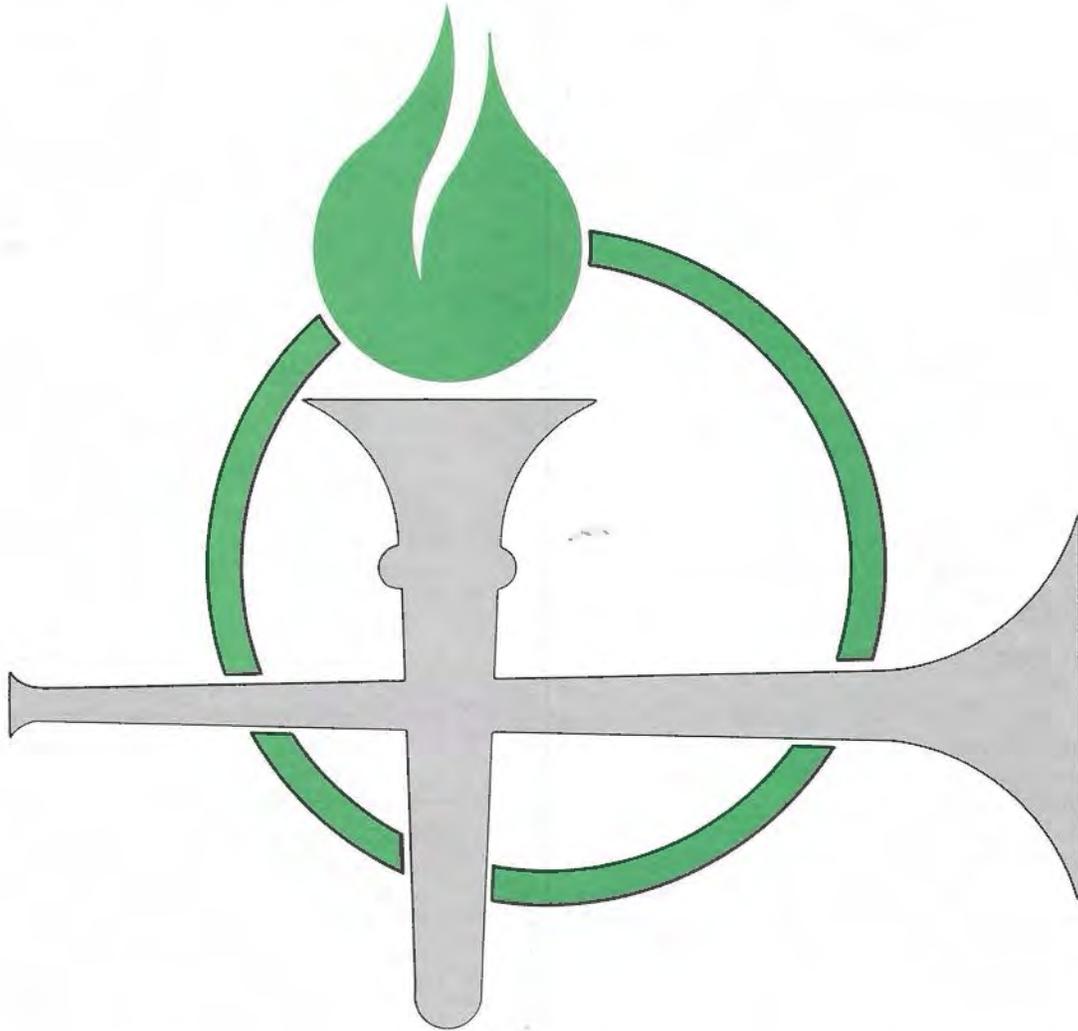


THE OUTLOOK

DEVOTED TO THE EXPOSITION AND DEFENSE OF THE REFORMED FAITH

MAY 1986



**EUTHANASIA AND LIVING WILLS
NEEDED: WHOLE CHRISTIANITY
LIVING ON THE LUNATIC FRINGE**

Women and the M. Div. Program at Calvin

Stephen M. Arrick

I. The Reported Facts

The *Christian Renewal*, in its December 16, 1985 issue, published a portion of a preaching evaluation form usually distributed, collected, and processed by the Field Office of Calvin Theological Seminary. This evaluation form revealed that a female Calvin Theological Seminary student preached in the morning worship service at the Ann Arbor Chapel (CRC) on June 9, 1985. This student also preached on at least two other occasions: once at Judson Baptist, Kalamazoo on June 23, and then again at Servants Community Reformed, Grand Rapids, on July 21.

II. The School Policy

In 1974 the Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary had a policy to "include women (M. Div.) students in field work other than exhorting." It was because this formulation was subject to differing interpretations that the Board began work on a new policy. The Board adopted the following policy governing women M. Div. students at Calvin Seminary. The policy is given in its entirety in the *Acts of Synod 1985, Report 5, p. 143*. Let me restate portions for you:

1. Calvin Seminary will admit women to its M. Div. program.

Grounds:

- a. As an educational institution Calvin Theological seminary has a mission which is broader than preparing men for Christian Reformed Ministry.
 - b. Even though the M. Div. degree program is "primarily for persons wishing to prepare themselves for the ordained ministry," admission to and/or graduation from the program does not require that the student will be or intends to be ordained.
2. Calvin Seminary will not require exhorting (understood as the explanation and application of Scripture at an official worship service) in its requirements for the M. Div. degree for women students.

Grounds:

- a. As a seminary of the Christian Reformed Church, the school must be consistent with the position of the church which has not opened the office of minister of the Word to women.
- b. The Synod of 1976 permitted "the seminary to waive the requirement of exhorting in field education for women students enrolled in the M. Div. program."

3. Calvin Seminary will not solicit, promote, or provide opportunities for exhorting by its women M. Div. students; nor will it place its women M. Div. students in field education assignments without the clear understanding that exhorting is not required or expected.

Grounds: same as 2 above.

4. Calvin Seminary will promote, evaluate, and credit all fieldwork by women M. Div. students other than exhorting, including public teaching and speaking in places such as rest homes, chapels, retreats, and other such non-official worship settings.

III. Reflections on the Issues Involved

A. Calvin Theological Seminary: Educational or Ecclesiastical?

Although C.T.S. is an educational institution, the M. Div. program is designed to prepare for the official church ministry. In the very interest of being consistent, we must distinguish between the "broader mission" of the seminary, and the "specific purpose and nature of the M. Div. degree."

B. Will M. Div. Graduates be Ordained?

Who can say? Is it likely? Yes. To use a far fetched analogy: you don't go through medical school to become a bird-watcher. Classes and presbyteries both require and recognize the M. Div. degree as the academic degree in preparation for ordained ministry.

Examination and ordination are based upon the possession of this degree. Will the present policy continue to allow women to prepare for the ministry in the Christian Reformed Church and then take their degree to another denomination which will examine and ordain them? In other words, if it is biblically wrong for women to be preachers in the CRC isn't it just as wrong for us to train them to be ministers in other denominations?

It is sheer hypocrisy for us to knowingly allow such to be the case. There is obviously a woman currently enrolled in the M. Div. program at C.T.S. whose intent is to be ordained. Otherwise, why would she be preaching?

C. Let's be Consistent!

The wording of ground 2a does not accurately express a scriptural ground for not requiring women to exhort or the seminary not arranging for such opportunities. We are not the church "which has not opened the office

of minister of the Word to women," but we are the church which permits "males who meet the biblical requirements . . . to be ordained to the office of . . . minister of the Word." We want a stop sign here, not a yield sign. We should, as loyal and patient members of the Christian Reformed Church, expect all institutions and policies to be consistent with the biblical pattern as interpreted by Synod and ordered by the Church Order. This policy should not even hint at being a "wait until the springtime comes" statement. We are biblical, and we should be anxious to promote obedience to God's Word and to the Lordship of Christ in the Church.

D. Be Fortright!

Did the Field Office *solicit, promote, or provide opportunities* for women to exhort? The evaluation form seems to indicate that the field office did at least have knowledge of this female seminary student's preaching activities, of her breaches of Board policy, and did process her evaluation form along with male M. Div. students.

Point 3 of the policy states that Calvin seminary will not place its women M. Div. students in F. E. assignments without the clear understanding that "exhorting is not required or expected." (Should it not state "with the understanding that exhorting is prohibited!" to make the policy clear)?

Must the Field office not comply with the Board's stated policy and enforce it?

IV. Suggested Correction:

- A. Rewrite the policy to remove any ambiguities and insist that it be followed.
- B. Refuse women admission to the M. Div. program at Calvin Theological Seminary.

The M. Div. degree program is primarily designed to prepare for ordination to the churches' official ministry. Consistency demands that the churches' institution to train ministers not give that training to those whom the churches declare are ineligible to become ministers.

- C. The Board be authorized to consider establishing a separate program and degree for women that would give them the equivalent academic training, but would not be designated to prepare them for ecclesiastical ordination.

There is a precedent for such a procedure. The January 31 *Calvinist Contact* published an RES report that Westminster Theological Seminary's Board on Nov. 15, 1985 announced that because "Westminster is opposed to ordaining women to the Gospel ministry, the Board declines to admit women to a single-track M. Div." program. However, recognizing the seminary's responsibility to train women for non-ordained ministry positions, the Board instructed the faculty to develop an alternative "General Ministries" track in the M. Div. to which women would be admitted. ●

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THE OUTLOOK

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

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Witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ

John Blankespoor

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8).

Pentecost is the most important special day in the life of the New Testament church. We often make Christmas the outstanding one, with Easter perhaps a distant second. Pentecost is usually almost forgotten, and likely would be completely overlooked by most Christians, were it not for the fact that usually the pastors preach a Pentecost sermon on that day.

What the harvest is to the farmer, the pay check to the laboring man, and profits to the business man, Pentecost is for the church.

Jesus had come to earth to do the work He had to do here, as prophet, priest and king. When that was finished He ascended into heaven. Ten days later came, on Pentecost, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This marked the beginning of the "harvest" of the work of the Son of God on earth. The Spirit would apply all the work of Jesus Christ to the hearts of God's people. By the Spirit we are born again and become spiritually-minded people of God. The fruits of this Spirit are named in Galatians 5: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. By the Spirit through the Word, the risen Lord begins His whole program of the new kingdom, which will culminate in His final return and the new heaven and earth.

Here in vs. 8 Jesus tells the disciples (the church) what they will do when they receive the Holy Spirit. They will witness, the church through preaching and the members with personal testimony. Luke the author, makes this emphatic. He doesn't say that they should do this; they will do this. The implication is that if one has the Holy Spirit he will do this.



We live today in what is called the great missionary age. With the modern means of communication, radio, the press and T.V. (Christian programs even bouncing off satellites) and the modern transportation explosion, more mission has already been done in the twentieth century than in the nineteen preceding ones. (I speak, of course, of all nominal mission work.)

For this we want to be thankful. Someone once said that if Paul were living today he'd use the best means available to preach the Gospel. Much of this, however, is done formally, at least as far as many of the church members are concerned. Many church members don't even know the names of the missionaries their church is supporting or where they are working. Many people also are willing to pay the quotas, but are not living members of the church themselves. They may also give liberally for all mission programs, miles away, but have never once gone to speak to their unbelieving neighbor across the street.

Remember, the Pharisees also were mission-minded people. Doesn't Jesus say that they "compass land and sea to make one proselyte," but that they made him "two-fold more, the children of hell" than themselves (Mt. 23:15)?

The work of many missionaries is not supported by the necessary zeal and mission-mindedness of the church at home.

We ask, "What is a good mission minded church?" and "Where does all true mission work begin?"

The Bible's answers are plain: All healthy mission work must begin with church members; they themselves are to speak of the Lord Jesus Christ. "You are my witnesses," says the prophet Isaiah, speaking to the Israelites (Ch. 43:10, 13). The prophet is not speaking here to the leaders of the church and fellow-prophets, but addressing the Israelites as a whole, the common members of the nation. Here in Acts 1:8

Jesus is speaking first of all to the apostles, but through them to all believers.

Jesus says here in vs. 8, not that His people should be witnesses, but that they will be such, by the power of the Holy Spirit that is poured out on Pentecost.

The basic idea is that faithful Christians are witnesses in their own lives and communities. They also want to reach people across the oceans. Since they themselves cannot reach those people, they call others to represent them in doing it.



What is a witness?

A witness is one who affirms or gives testimony of a certain fact or event. The testimony is given to people who do not have that knowledge. Suppose you were involved in a car accident out of which followed a court case, and you are called upon to be a witness. You must give testimony of what you saw or experienced, something about which the judge and jury may know little or nothing.

Christians are to speak of Jesus Christ, who arose from the grave. He is alive, He is real. How do we know? From those who saw Him and gave testimony of his resurrection. Through the testimony of the Word we all know that He is alive. By the Spirit in our hearts, we have fellowship with Him through faith. Knowing this Christ we are to tell others about Him.

In this connection let me mention two interesting and significant passages in the Bible about witnessing. Of the prophet Jeremiah, we read that he suffered much because of his testimonies and preaching. When further threatened, he decided to quit preaching and be silent. Then we read, "But his word was within my heart as a burning fire, shut up in my bones and I was weary with holding it in. Indeed I could not" (Ch. 20:9). He could not keep still.

Of the disciples, Peter and John, we read after they had been threatened by the Sanhedrin: "We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). They were irrepressible witnesses, for they had seen and heard the Lord Jesus.

True witnessing has to be personal. Witnessing for the Lord does not mean that we just talk a little about religion, the church or even some doctrines of the church or something that has happened in the church or been decided by a synod of the church. We must have a personal knowledge, first of all of our own sin, and then of trusting in and knowing the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior. We must love Him and want to live according to His Word. He must live by His Spirit in our hearts.

The book of Acts often speaks of Paul's personal testimonies given in his great mission work. He related what Christ had done for Him. Jesus and His salvation were the realities of his own life.

The simple truth, however, is that many church people know nothing or very little of this. It also has to be admitted, that with all of our traditional love for the Reformed faith and indoctrination in the truths of the Bible, we generally were not taught much about

how to be good witnesses for Jesus Christ. Many church people have never once given a personal testimony of what they believe and of their personal knowledge of the Lord. And aren't there just too many people in the church with whom the elders and pastors can't even carry on a good conversation about personal salvation and knowledge of the Lord?

The Lord's words in Acts 1 remain true. "You will be my witnesses." That was going to be a fact. True Christians do witness, at least in some measure.



Who can do this? What fills the hearts of saved sinners to enable them to testify and witness?

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit is given you," we read in vs. 8. This power comes from Christ. The Holy Spirit was given to Christ, and Christ poured Him into the church. The entire book of Acts speaks about this power of the Spirit in the hearts and lives of the apostles. The recorded events are really the acts of Jesus Christ working in and through the witness of the apostles by the power of the Spirit.

We read here of the power of the Holy Spirit. What a "loaded" expression! Literally, we read, the "dynamite" of the Holy Spirit. Most of us know something about the power of dynamite, or TNT.

It is the "dynamite" of the Holy Spirit that enables saved sinners to testify about Christ and His marvelous work for and within them. By the power of the Spirit thousands of saints have had the courage of a Daniel to testify even in the face of death, without fear. Even the wicked rulers in Acts 4 were struck by the effect of this power in Peter and John. The boldness of Peter and John, uneducated men, caused them to marvel. We read that they took knowledge of the fact that Peter and John had been with Jesus. Even the Sanhedrists perceived that a special power was enabling these men to do what they did.

May we be filled with this Spirit, so that we experience such certainty and joy of salvation within our hearts. And become Christ's witnesses as individuals and churches.

Another question has to follow. How can we acquire this dynamic power? The answer is plain. He was promised in answer to prayer (Luke 11:13). The Holy Spirit was given to the church. The one hundred and twenty in Acts 2 who received the Spirit as He was poured out were essentially the first New Testament church. Throughout the New Testament the church received the gifts of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we as individuals receive these gifts as real members in the church. Through the preaching of the Word, first of all, we receive the Spirit. With the gospel preaching we need the important spiritual exercise of family and personal reading of the Word. The heart of that word, of course, is Jesus Christ.

Living with His Word in this way, we learn and experience that He as our Savior is "full of grace and truth." He is the "Fountain of life," from whom all blessings flow.

He gives grace upon grace. What our hearts are full of, we must and will tell and show to others. ■

Living on the Lunatic Fringe

Noel Weeks

Several years ago, during my Ancient History lectures at university, I referred to the unconventional historian Immanuel Velikovsky. I made the point he should be taken seriously. I did not agree with those main-line historians who sought to avoid Velikovsky's arguments by dismissing him as part of the "lunatic fringe." I pointed out that Velikovsky's Freudian ideas made him reject the assumptions accepted by the main-line historians. I argued that such so-called "lunatic fringe" people are valuable for exposing the assumptions we take for granted.

Some time later, a student who was far from regular in his attendance, reappeared at lectures. In the course of a bantering conversation I asked him why he was now coming back to my lectures. He replied, "I think it is important to hear what the lunatic fringe thinks."

Besides being an excellent put-down, that remark reminded me that others see us differently to the way we see ourselves. We may see ourselves as entirely sensible and reasonable. They may see us as the "lunatic fringe." As churches, we have recently been reminded of this by seeing ourselves portrayed in the press. The Age's description of the Victorian churches and the New Zealand Times reaction to the stand of our New Zealand brethren against homosexuality, show us the press trying to depict us as the lunatic fringe.

How do we react to this?

We might wish it did not happen. Wishing will not stop the press attacking us this way. We do not control the press. How are we to conduct ourselves so as to minimize the damage and maximize the opportunities created? There are several dangers we must avoid.

The Danger of Respectability

It is easy for us to wish this did not happen to us. It is tempting to wish we had the size and public respectability of the Anglicans and the Roman Catholics. The press may disagree with the stand of those churches, but there is more respect and less muck-raking than the way we have recently been treated.

Yet we do not have their size. The only way we will avoid the unwelcome attention of the press is by not holding views the unbeliever finds offensive. We have seen from these articles what is offensive to the carnal mind of our age: the sovereignty of God in elec-

tion, the unity of the church in submission to God's word, opposition to sexual immorality, especially opposition to homosexuality.

If we are quiet about these things, and any other truth that is unpopular in our day, then the press will leave us in peace. But our cowardice will not be pleasing to God. And I wonder if we should rejoice at such peace. Any sensitive and concerned member of the "main-line" churches will tell you of the great problem they have of being too close to the centre of the national culture and thinking. They so easily drift with the general current of Australasian life.

This, of course, has always been the problem of "state" churches. They buy respectability and peace at the cost of being unable to dissociate themselves from the national consensus. Having reached a position of power in the state, they are so controlled by the state as to be unable to influence it.

Many of our members experienced in earlier years the pain of strangeness and ridicule. They came to a land, or they went to schools, where there was no patience and sympathy for the strange name and the unclear accent. They may have longed for the day when they no longer appeared strange but were just one of the mob.

They may have come also from a situation in the Netherlands where their church played an important role in national life. It is humiliating to find oneself here treated as a member of a strange and obscure cult.

All these experiences may create in us a desire not to be thought weird and strange in our church life. However, if that desire controls us, we are in far greater danger. We must be obedient to God no matter what others think of us.

The Danger of the Love of Notoriety

Notoriety is not in itself a danger. The danger lies in our love of being prominent. One may wonder whether anybody could enjoy being the subject of unflattering media attention. No normal person would, but sin has made us all abnormal. It may be a strange and perverse prominence but we can enjoy the prominence. In our unloved age, a wall graffiti I once saw at university, put it well: "It is better to be wanted for murder, than not to be wanted at all." So we can feel that it is better to be noticed for extremism than not to be noticed at all.

There is also a danger which lies in the way those unjustly treated by outsiders are viewed in the church.

They receive the sympathy and respect of martyrs. There is such a thing as a deliberate courting of martyrdom because of the glory it gives one in the church. This is not to say we should not love and respect those who have suffered for the name of Christ. It is rather a call for those who suffer to examine their own motives.

Some Suggestions

If we are to make the most of the prominence into which our faithfulness to the Word of God, brings us, then there are several things we should keep in mind.

1) Unconnected Extremism

There is an American church which has amongst its central files what somebody labelled "The Nut File." There they file all the letters from people who have written to the church confident that the church will support their crusade for this or that crazy idea. Why does the church attract such letters? It does so because it has the reputation for not conforming to the popular American mould. Others who also revolt against the consensus are attracted to it. The problem is that there are sane and there are crazy ways to reject the consensus.

Also when we look at church history we see that often Christians have been among the first to take up new ideas. There is a simple reason. Most societies are intensely conformist societies. Christians who have rejected the popular views are open to new ideas. That can be very good. And it can be disastrous. The non-Christian media will quickly take up any extremism and use it to make us seem cranks. We need to make sure we have a good Christian reason for all our positions.

2) We Do Not Choose the Issues

This is simply a consequence of the fact that we do not control the media, or the non-Christian world it represents. The issues they seize upon will often not be the ones we would choose. We would like it to be the message that there is salvation for all who repent and turn to Jesus. The media will seize upon the doctrine of election. We would like the world to know that there is a community within which people will be cared for and loved. The world will fix upon our oversight and discipline. We want to tell man God's plan for man and woman in marriage. We will be pilloried for opposing homosexuality and divorce.

How do we respond to this? Do we try to play down our stand on those things the media attack? If we do they will know that we are embarrassed about the truth. Do we change our position on these things to please the world? Then we do not please God.

Jesus was attacked for healing on the sabbath. One could not claim that the central point of His message was sabbath healing. Yet He did not back away from the challenge. Further, He was able to connect the point in controversy to the essential points of His message. That is what we also must do. This is a further reason why all our "extremisms" must be explicitly Christian ones. If they are not, then we cannot relate our stand on these points to our basic message.

3) We Must Not Live by Reaction

Being involved constantly in conflict with the world, it is easy to simply live by reaction. Whatever the world does and thinks, we do the reverse. Is the world stodgy, conformist and dull; wearing pin-stripe suits and bowler hats? Then we make it a mark of Christianity to wear tee-shirts and go bare-footed. But the world also lives by reaction. We simply become conformed to the mass of unbelievers who wear dirty tee-shirts and no shoes. Is the bulk of the Australian population anti-intellectual and anti-cultural? Then we make it the mark of a Reformed Christian to be a culture snob; to have highbrow discussions about common dirty movies and to parade letters after one's name. But we just join the non-Christian snobs.

To be a Christian is not to be conformist or anti-conformist to the fashions of the world. It is to be conformed to the Lord Jesus Christ. The pretense and affectation that characterizes both the conservative older generation and the trendy younger generation are opposed to the simplicity and genuineness of Christian discipleship.

Therefore in our rejection of the world, we must be critical about ourselves. Is this really a Christian reaction? Or are we merely leaping on the bandwagon as one non-Christian generation reacts to the style of the previous non-Christian generation? We may enjoy that position of being front-runners in a new movement, but are we really serving Christ? We have to ask these questions because increasingly Christians are becoming identified very closely with political and social movements of definitely right or left wing tendencies. There are many things the left legitimately finds offensive in the political right and vice versa. Yet do we serve the cause of Christ by being carried along by political reactions?

4) The Real Problem is Not the Media

I do not approve the distortion, slander and biased reporting that seems to infect some section of the media. Nevertheless in these things the media reflects the world. It is not just the media who want to slander and defame the glorious name by which we are called.

Further the issues which we are forced to consider by media spotlight are not new issues. They are the basic questions of living in the world. How do we avoid the subtle trap of being conformed to one aspect of the world at the same time as we think we are reacting to another aspect? How do we bring our instability under the control of the discipline of Scripture?

The Future

The media attention could move away from us for two reasons. It could be because under pressure of ridicule we have turned from those beliefs and practices which offend the world. Or it could be because the wisdom of our answers and the blemishlessness of our lives have silenced our critics. Let us make sure that if the media forgets us, it will be for the second reason. ●

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What About Euthanasia and Living Wills?

Norman L. Jones

It has been frequently observed that anti-Christian humanism, the philosophy that reigns throughout much of our American culture today, is a philosophy of death. Death, not life, is the consequence of man's sin, and death is his "way of life." Solomon stated it succinctly: "He who finds Me [the LORD, as "wisdom", finds life. . . . All those who hate Me, love death" (Prov. 8:35, 36). The philosophy of death has expressed itself in many ways throughout man's history, especially in war and the tendency toward self-destruction. Today we also see it in the abortion movement, and with increasing emphasis in the euthanasia movement.

Many TV programs and articles are appearing in the popular papers and magazines promoting the concepts of "death with dignity" and "the right to die." Two notable examples of this promotional effort are the best-selling book, *Last Wish* by Betty Rollin (condensed in the October, 1985 *Good Housekeeping*), and the "60 Minute" segment, "The Last Right," aired January 5, 1986, which depicted the euthanasia movement in Holland. In that country, we were told, one out of six elderly people opts to die by lethal injection or self-administered overdoses of drugs after signing a so-called "Living Will."

Euthanasia, the "Good Death"

The concept of "euthanasia" on the surface appears to be not only a harmless concept, but a positive good under certain circumstances. The word literally means "good death" and who could be against that?

A "good death," according to this philosophy, is a death promoted by either active or passive measures in order to alleviate the suffering of the incurably ill and terminal patients who have no hope of regaining a pain-free and decent quality of life. Have you ever seen a person pray to God for death and deliverance from his or her unbearable suffering? How could anyone be so unfeeling as to deny that person his or

her request for a quick, merciful release through an injection or at least the withdrawal of all those miserable "life support" contraptions which only prolong the agony, but cannot stop the inevitable? Such is the case for "the good death," euthanasia. For a more detailed description read the aforementioned article in *Good Housekeeping*. It veritably drips with sentimentality.

Background of the Euthanasia Movement

The Euthanasia Society of America was formed in 1938 to work for "lawful termination of human life by painless means for the purpose of avoiding suffering." Analysts tell us that "assisted suicide was in view, but so was the destruction of the institutionalized incompetent." On February 28, 1975 this Society changed its name to the Society for the Right to Die — a more acceptable name and more disarming to the American public which was prejudiced against the word euthanasia. A companion foundation, the Euthanasia Educational Fund, founded in 1967 to advance the concept of the "Living Will" changed its name in 1978 to Concern For Dying — An Educational Council. Another more brazenly anti-Christian euthanasia group is the Hemlock Society, headed by Derik Humphrey. (The reader should know that this name comes from the famous incident in Greek history when the philosopher Socrates voluntarily drank poisonous hemlock and died a "noble" death.)

The Living Will

On August 8, 1985 the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, meeting in Minneapolis, approved the *Uniform Rights of the Terminally Ill Act*. This Act is to serve as model legislation for the states for the "Living Will." Thirty-five states presently have some form of Living Will statute. The vote at the conference by the commissioners from the 50 states was as follows: 35 states in favor, 10 op-

posed, and five abstentions. The push is on for all the states to adopt this form of the Living Will. (As we write, Living Will legislation is presently before the South Dakota Legislature.)

The Living Will is a signed declaration authorizing one's attending physician to withhold or withdraw "life-supporting" medical procedures if a terminal condition exists. The purpose of the Living Will is *not* to grant a consenting adult the right to refuse medical treatment for himself, for whatever reason, as that right is a basic constitutional right for all Americans. Rather, the purpose of the Living Will is to "create a new standard of medical care, one that would involve physicians in starving or dehydrating their patients to death," according to Curt Young of the Christian Action Council (*Action Line*, Sept. 9, 1985). This legislation goes far beyond the older provision of removing the respirator from a "brain dead" patient. During the Commissioners' debate in Minneapolis, the proponents "admitted that intravenous feeding, nasogastric tubes and spoon feeding were all encompassed under 'life-sustaining treatment' that could be withheld" (C. Young, source cited).

Who is promoting the Living Will legislation, and why? First, all the euthanasia societies are promoting the Living Will as a *first step* toward getting more active euthanasia legislation on the books. The goals of the euthanasia groups are four-fold, according to Mary Senander of the Human Life Alliance of Minnesota: passive euthanasia (letting a patient die by withholding needed care), active euthanasia (taking measures to actively end the patient's life), assisted suicide, and suicide clinics! The Living Will is a conditioning measure to get the public and legislators and medical personnel accustomed to the idea that everyone has a right to die when and where and howsoever he pleases.

Others who are promoting the Living Will and the euthanasia concept in varying degrees are physicians who see this declaration as relief from legal liability, to which they are now subject, in decisions to withhold or withdraw treatment from their patients. Of course we can also understand why the health insurance and hospital industries would want to see the speedy demise of certain patients who would be a financial liability to them. It has been suggested that Living Wills be put into the V. A. hospitals so that the "human wrecks" could be removed, saving the government \$2 billion annually. Then there are the many elderly who fear a prolonged, agonizing death under the control of tubes and respirators and other "death prolonging" measures. We can sympathize with those who are revolted by the use of such equipment to prolong the inevitable. Indeed, "there is a time to die," says Solomon.

But the hidden danger of Living Will legislation, a danger cleverly concealed by the pro-death advocates, is that life-sustaining treatment *can* include insulin for the diabetic, dialysis for those with kidney disease and many other incurable, but *treatable*, disorders. And even food and water are defined in many instances as "life-sustaining treatment" which the physician can choose to withhold or withdraw if he so chooses, under the terms of the Living Will.

Dr. C. Everett Koop, Surgeon General of the United States, gives an example of the potential danger of a Living Will. He said, "You and I could be in the same accident — you a young man with a Living Will and I, an old man without one. As a result . . . you might be allowed to die and I might live."

Euthanasia, An Enemy of Biblical Christianity

Behind the euthanasia movement in general and the Living Will legislation in particular is the Anti-Christian concept that a person has the *right* to take his own life, to assist others to take their own lives, or to sign away his life in advance.

It is an ungodly death wish when a person thinks his life is his own to do with as he pleases, irrespective of the will of God; when he believes there is no judgment of God to face for breaking the Sixth Commandment which forbids the taking of human life, either actively or passively. The Heidelberg Catechism explains the Sixth Commandment in question 107: "...God requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves, to show patience, peace, meekness, mercy, and kindness to him, and to prevent his hurt as much as possible. . . ."

It is a Godly death wish when a believer in Jesus Christ resigns his body and soul to the loving care of his Heavenly Father and leans on the grace of God to strengthen him in the act of dying. He longs to die and to be with Christ which is far better than any quality of life in this world (Phil. 1:23). But he patiently waits God's providential ordering of events.

This promise of God remains for the suffering Christian: "No temptation has overtaken you, but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted (tested) beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it" (I Cor. 10:13). The sufferings of the body, no matter how severe, are said to be *light* and *momentary*, and are designed by God to produce for us an *eternal weight of glory* far beyond all comparison (II Cor. 4:17).

God's grace must be seen as sufficient to strengthen the suffering Christian against *cowardice* in the face of wracking pain (II Tim. 1:7; Rev. 21:8 NASV). He can and shall persevere to the end enduring his afflictions. The Church of God consists of heroes, men and women who face martyrdom and prolonged agony simply because God so ordains it. They rejoice with Paul "in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions" (Col. 1:24). "If we suffer with Him . . . , we shall also be glorified with Him" (Rom. 8:17; I Pet. 4:13).

Indeed, we are to "bear one another's burdens" (Gal. 6:2), and minister in every way possible to the suffering, but euthanasia has absolutely no place in the thinking of the child of God; and for a priest to administer the last rites to a person before that person receives, by his own request, a lethal injection (as practiced now in Holland) is a most damnable abomination! ●

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Adam and Evolution⁽²⁾

Lester De Koster

10. To the Corinthians the Spirit has Paul saying: "Thus it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being' . . ." (I Cor. 15:45).

Some evolutionary theorists, who want it both ways, are fond of arguing that the term "Adam" simply means man-in-general. Grant this, and from there anything is possible.

But that obviously does not fit the Spirit's view of the matter. He who guides Paul's pen surely has in view a very specific person, "the first man . . ." Not one among others; surely not one after others. Rather, this very specific man, Adam, the first man. Just Adam and none other. That is what first man means, doesn't it?

A-I's unique reality is reinforced by Paul's (that is the Spirit's) further comparison: "Thus it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit'" (I Cor. 15:45). That "last Adam" is of course the Christ. The Spirit points to a parallel which, in God's providence, exists between this unique historical person—the Christ!—and that other unique historical person—the first man! And one is inclined to ask, what God has joined together, who will put asunder?

No one denies—or almost no one—that the Christ was a unique, historical individual. The theorist who tries to dissolve that "first man Adam" into some abstraction cripples the parallel structure: on this side the Christ and on that side . . . man-in-general? If the Christ be the unique, individual "second" of two persons, what can the "first" be but, in his own way, unique?

The reader will note that St. Paul is guided by the Spirit to quote Genesis 2:7, "Thus it is written . . ." We are obviously being told that the Spirit wants the Church to take Genesis at what it says.

Let's ask the evolutionary theorist if he believes that.

This is not the only indication, of course, that the inspiring Spirit, like the Christ Himself, intends us

to take Moses' Genesis literally.

In the letter to Timothy already quoted, the Spirit is saying through Paul: "For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor" (I Tim. 2:13-14). What a great deal of Genesis 1-3 is confirmed in this brief sentence—from the creation of A-I, and Eve, to their Fall! That's the way it was, by the Spirit's testimony!

Still more, the Spirit carefully confirms the Mosaic account of the Fall as given us in Genesis; He has Paul saying: "But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (II Cor. 11:3). How much farther astray, indeed, might thoughts be misled than down the devious paths of evolutionism?

But, observe how shocking, if not degrading, to "modern" ears! In what shreds would one's "scholarly" reputation be if he were even suspected of flirting with a deceiving serpent! And here God the Holy Spirit is affirming through St. Paul the Genesis account of that talking varment! At this point the theorist who considers himself something of an adult thinker stands much as did Adam and Eve before the forbidden tree: to take God at His Word . . . or . . . ?

At a talking serpent the arrogance of "science" draws the line. Call that part of Genesis myth, or legend, or saga, or adapted to the immaturity of the human race, or borrowed from pagan cosmologies by whoever compiled (as some theories go) Genesis—call it anything but what St. Paul is here inspired to call it with inescapable simplicity: a serpent, as recounted in Genesis, talked Eve into sin. What a painful option for an academic yuppie to take!

Scientists speak of the *experimentum crucis*, that is the crucial experiment on which a whole hypothetical construction hangs. Others speak of the "litmus test" to mean the same thing. That talking serpent serves the same purpose in Genesis 1-3, by

presenting us with the options our first parents faced: take God at His Word, or fall!

So, reader, be sure that the evolutionary theorist—who wants you to keep believing his testimony of loyalty to the Bible—has a satisfactory account of that beguiling serpent. Some try the glib evasion, of course, of saying that Paul was, after all, imprisoned by the myths of his time. That is an easy and convenient (and cheap!) way to substitute man's ideas for the Bible's—until one sees in Paul the inspiring Spirit, who is by no means imprisoned by time. And while the Spirit no doubt employed Paul in terms of the language available to him, it is blasphemous to hold that God the Spirit misled Paul into assertion contrary to fact. Just as, of course, to brush aside or dilute the Genesis account is no less to flout the Spirit.

11. The Spirit, then, clearly confirms the Genesis account of A-I.

He does so, also, by explicitly paralleling A-II with A-I.

We have already heard His Word from Timothy. There are others:

"For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22). Not only a parallel which falls apart if A-I be made other than Genesis presents him, but also another puzzle for evolutionary theory: not only is A-I the first man, but his Fall first opens history to death.

Shall we inquire of the evolutionist when death first entered his theoretical universe—and why!

As to the real universe, St. Paul leaves us in no doubt: "Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin..." (Rom. 5:12).

First the man, that very first man—then Eve—then the Fall—and only then death! So it really was.

Is that how it is for the -ism and its devotees?

Don't brush the question aside, friend. The first man was not made to die. And death gained access to human history only after A-I's sin. If your theory has death hanging around prior to the advent of man, how does it account for that? Or, if death is natural to evolutionism, as one suspects it is, how account for the role which the Bible accords to sin in bringing death about?

To touch on Romans 5 is, of course, to enter upon Paul's drawing out at large the underlying parallel between A-I and A-II.

And to drive that point home, the Spirit inspires Paul to declare, as we have already noticed, that A-I "was a type of the one who was to come" (Rom. 5:14). Some theorists who want to hide their sabotage of A-I extol the importance of A-II. "Of the Christ," it is piously intoned, "I will never let go..." or some such bathos. To the childishness of unbelief it never occurs, apparently, that if A-I never existed, or was not a specific man, it would be untenable for God the Holy Spirit to be speaking of A-I as a "type" of A-II. That kind of faulty parallel would not even pass freshman rhetoric.

And Paul is inspired to say it again: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive"

(I Cor. 15:22). And again: "Thus it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being;' the last Adam became a life-giving spirit" (I Cor. 15:45). And yet again: "The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven" (I Cor. 15:47).

Now, it is obvious that the believer does not really need more than the Spirit's assertion of Truth in Genesis—that is enough! Yet we are given the Spirit's confirmation, and re-confirmation, and re-re-confirmation of the same Truth, as we see. I say, for the believer that is, as the Spirit knows, superfluous. Why then the repetition?

For the unbeliever, of course! How often the prophets represent God as extending the hand of grace, repeating the Word of invitation, shedding abroad the light of revelation that unbelief may at last forsake its childish pride for childlike belief. We observe it here, focused upon evolutionism, in the repetition, over and again, of the ordained harmony between A-I and A-II.

Observe yet another confirmation of the Genesis account: "The first man was from the earth, a man of dust," Paul says. Exactly as Genesis has it. Moses said it first: "... then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground" (Gen. 2:7). God repeats it Himself to a cowering pair: "... you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Gen. 3:19). Nothing about, "You came from animal ancestry, so what could I expect? etc., etc." Nothing at all! How easy for God to have said, were it so, that man had simply not developed far enough. It's what the Carl Sagan types would be thinking. But not so the Creator!

God tells it like it was, and is. Those who cannot hear have introduced an evolutionism which so relativizes social and personal morality that a whole civilization totters over the abyss.

Dust! The Psalmist reminds us of the same: "For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust" (Ps. 103:14). And what, then, does "He" think of dust-formed theorists strutting on their platforms, posturing before the cameras, corrupting the minds of children with their "dusty" accounts of how it all began!

The theme echoes throughout the Bible: God remembers the Genesis account of our origin; do we? How fine a figure does dust-made man expect to cut?

Nothing in the Bible even suggests that instead of dust God used some other living forms to evolve into man. Nothing at all! Though there are those who advance the peculiarly gross hypothesis that God interrupted the animal evolutionary spiral at some point to adapt two specimens into what could be called Adam and Eve! If one can believe that in order to bend Genesis to evolutionary fantasy then, as they say, one can believe anything—and it seems that some evolutionists do. But in sober fact, a talking serpent is reasonable by comparison. Check it out with the next evolutionary theorist you meet.

The Lord once observed that unbelief strains at a gnat and gulps down a camel (Matt. 23:24). What more apt description (and condemnation), and from what more authoritative source, of the theorist who chokes on Genesis 1-3 and gulps down all, or even a part of, the panorama of evolutionary faddisms?

12. In the well-known description of marriage, Jesus Himself confirms the unique individuality of Adam and Eve: "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one?'" (Matt. 19:4-6).

Note not only the dominical affirmation of Moses' account, but also our Lord's emphasis upon "from the beginning." If "from the beginning" means anything at all it means "nothing prior to." Before this "male and female" no others. Man began as Moses reports. Hear Moses to hear the Lord!

13. The biblical confirmation of Genesis 1-3 could, of course, be extended. Though the believer has, as we have observed, no claim upon the Lord for confirmation of the Word which he ought to accept at first hearing, it is graciously given, setting before us all the unmistakable choice: the Word of God, or the words of man?

The reader might, if he wishes to pursue the subject, study J. P. Verstees' *Is Adam A Teaching Model in The New Testament?* And pursue in his Bible passages related to those cited above.

The Word will exercise, as we all well know, its own persuasion.



14. Ah, but what of all those fossils, all those drawings and models of prehistoric creatures, and the methods for dating bones, stones and stars?

Don't we live in a "new" era, one in which science makes the Genesis account untenable?

If you are musing in this way, what do you think of this from Jeremiah, suggesting that the Spirit (of course!) foresaw evolutionary theorizing long ago:

"As a thief is shamed when caught, so the house of Israel shall be shamed; they, their kings, and their prophets, who say to a tree, 'You are my father,' and to a stone, 'You gave me birth.' For they have turned their back to me, and not their face."

That's the way it was rather long ago, it seems. Nothing so "new" about evolutionism after all. Unbelief did not wait upon Darwin to hypothesize trees and rocks into our ancestry. And God did not wait upon Darwin-and-company to condemn that either. But when will our "advanced" theorizers be ashamed, "they, their kings, and their prophets?"

Jeremiah goes on: "But in the time of trouble they say, 'Arise and save us!'"

Sound familiar?

The prophet continues with a dire threat, which explains why our "new" era totters on the edge of disaster:

"But where are the gods that you made for yourself? Let them arise, if they can save you, in your time of trouble; for as many as your cities are your gods, O Judah" (Jer. 2:26-28).

As apt to this moment as if written this morning, and as neat a description of the underlying assumptions, and terrible threat, of evolutionism as only the

Spirit could reveal!

How long will it be before the Church at large declares that the prevailing -isms have no power to save?



But what, then, of all those fossils and specimens and brazenly touted tests for length of years out of which the evolutionists' imaginations fashion so much? What are we to do with those?

Dear me, friend. What are we to do with them?

Why, nothing, of course.

The childish will have their toys. What fun, filling imagined zoos with snarling, growling, ponderously weird creatures. Do you suppose that if the "in" folk prefer scraps of bone and rock to Jeremiah and Genesis and St. Paul that anyone can enlighten them? If the childish prefer their games, who is to deprive them of what may look as attractive as did the fruit of the forbidden tree to A-I and wife—and perhaps for the same reason!

Let those who believe the Word walk with Genesis in hand, having an obedient life to be living, leaving a diet of fossils to those who have a stomach for it.

One day all will be clear, and meanwhile Genesis will see us through—thanks be to Him who breathed it!



The forms of unbelief turn out to be monotonously the same, as do those who proclaim them. That's why Jeremiah fits today so neatly.

But be sure of this: The issue is one of destiny.

The burdens which evolutionary assumptions lay upon every aspect of our lives—moral, religious, pedagogical, social, political and economic—will bring down the Western world unless the Church once again preaches and teaches the reality and significance of the A-I—A-II axis upon which history moves into its future.

Looking ahead in the 1930s, the distinguished French Catholic thinker, Jacques Maritain, predicted that the combinatin of secular forces then gaining a strangle-hold on humanity would one day reduce mankind to the level of technical barbarism. He foresaw the time, of which Nazism was harbinger, when only those gifted with saintly perseverance could endure.

He died, a decade or so ago, without having found any ground for altering that fearful premonition.

Between the childlike in faith and the childish in pride hangs, humanly speaking, the fate of the humane life and the well-being of generations just beginning their pilgrimage.

But how could it be otherwise when the battle is between belief and unbelief!

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J. LARRY ROBERTS

1917-1986

Peter Y. De Jong

On March 4 at 10:20 a.m. the Lord took to himself one of His faithful servants after four days of suffering from typhoid fever and complications. With his wife he had spent forty years in missionary work in the Dominican Republic and in Mexico. Now he entered the joy of the Lord where all tears are wiped away and sighings are replaced by songs of everlasting praise.

J. Larry Roberts, son of John Meredith Roberts and Callie Nichols, was born on April 17, 1917, at Ashland, Mo. Here he grew up in a Christian family but without any conscious surrender to the Savior. At an early age he enlisted in the U.S. Navy. During the last year a friend persuaded him to attend a service in a Serviceman's Center in San Diego, Calif. Now the Lord laid His hand upon the young man's life. And in gratitude for that great salvation he determined to enter missionary service.

He received the necessary education at BIOLA college and thereafter at the Baptist Theological Seminary, both in Los Angeles, California. Here he met Laureta Edna Haine of Ceres, California, who on April 17, 1943, became his devoted wife and co-worker. Both had shortly before been introduced to the riches of the Reformed faith by the pastor of a small Presbyterian church. To them he opened the Scriptures to thrill and strengthen their hearts. Both had also committed their lives to missionary service, hoping to engage in pioneer evangelism in either Brazil or Peru. But upon their graduation these doors were closed because of World War II.

Now their eyes were turned to Mexico. A small house became available in Navajao, Sonora, when a Wycliffe translator had to leave because of ill health. A few Christian friends pledged to send support. Here they worked under trying conditions among the Mayo Indians. Soon they were reduced to less than the barest essentials for living. Often their friends seemed to have forgotten their needs. Mrs. Roberts contracted,

also because of undernourishment, a severe case of amoebic dysentery which threatened her life. After a month in the U.S. she could return, and the couple moved to Hermosillo. In all these trials their faith was deepened as they experienced the gracious leading of their Lord.

When a second child was expected, they deemed it necessary to return to the United States. A new door was opened, when brother Roberts received the call from a small Bible church in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Here they spent two busy, happy and fruitful years. Always, however, they prayed that the Lord might again open a door to missionary work.

Searching for someone with training and experience, the West Indies Mission called them to the work in the Dominican Republic. Arriving there in the fall of 1948, they continued until forced to repatriate because of the violent revolution of 1965. In this beautiful island they found fields ripe for a rich harvest. Here in cities, villages and countryside they could preach and teach the Gospel where it had never been heard before. The impoverished people lived in the darkness of superstition and a formal Catholicism. Shortly after arriving on the field Larry was appointed superintendent of the work on that island as well as director of the small Bible school which had been begun earlier. Soon small groups of believers were gathered as emerging churches. And as a fruit of his searching of the Scriptures, our brother realized that one of the most pressing needs was that of systematic training of young converts for leadership. Thus, besides going out faithfully to new villages and towns, he with his wife labored to strengthen the Bible school. During his years there, no less than seventy-six evangelists, teachers and pastors were trained for service. Nearly all of these had first heard the Gospel from his lips. Six months every year they would be instructed; then to supply the needs of themselves and their families they would return for six months to their

villages, eager to teach what they had learned. In this way a growing number of congregations sprang up, many of them self-supporting and self-propagating from the beginning.

How disappointed the Roberts were when the revolution of 1965 compelled their repatriation. But they had learned well how to wait upon the Lord. They experienced again that their disappointments were God's appointments.

Not long before their return to the United States the Christian Reformed Church, through its mission board had, upon invitation of the Independent Presbyterian Church of Mexico, decided to cooperate with that body in evangelizing that spiritually needy country. Now the young couple, receiving an appointment from the board, found that what they had learned could be put into practice with even greater effectiveness and fruitfulness.

In the fall of 1965 Larry assisted brother Robert Ruis and family to settle in the work in Tijuana. The very next year he was appointed as one of the early professors of the "Seminario Juan Calvino" in Mexico City. Along with this he learned to know that church with its strong commitment to the Reformed faith.

A large but long-neglected field lay open to the Gospel among the Maya Indians in the Yucatan. Because of the coming of other teachers to the seminary, he volunteered to serve with his family there in 1967. Settling in Merida, the capital of that state, he and his wife continued their bringing of the Gospel, she working among the women. But again the need for training leaders weighed heavily on their hearts. They requested permission to open a Bible school. The mission board granted permission, on condition that the cost would not exceed what had been paid out in rent for them in Mexico City. Once again the Lord answered prayers. A large hacienda, with living quarters for the family, rooms for the students and classrooms, could be rented at a nominal cost. Members of the small Mayan congregations promised to supply food for the students. Soon this venture prospered under the hand of God. A large number of students enrolled, completed their course in time, with some of them eager to go on into seminary training. Always Larry stressed education, convinced that the best was none too good as preparation for serving the Lord's churches. Also because of its value for strengthening and enlarging the local congregations, another Bible school was begun in Mexico City in addition to the seminary.

When the Rev. Roger Greenway left the Mexican field for advanced study, the Roberts were recalled to Mexico City, now to serve especially in the Bible school there. This they did with devotion from 1970 to 1975. Unexpectedly at that time, after only a few minutes of discussion, the Field Council decided, in the interests of hopefully saving costs, to close the Bible schools. A new pattern for training would be followed, that of "Theological Education by Extension" which could leave men while learning in their own villages. The Roberts were by no means opposed to this new pattern, but believed that, even with this, the Bible school filled a great need in preparing young men for seminary training.

Although disappointed by this decision, they now went to Campeche. Here he was to engage in pioneer evangelism throughout the five southeastern states of Mexico: Campeche, Yucatan, Quintana Roo, Tabasco and eastern Chiapas. Much of this work was among Indian peoples, the Mayas, Tzoltils, Tzeltals and others who had never heard the good news of God. Here they lived and labored from 1975 to 1980.

Traveling far and wide this pioneer missionary soon found himself again a church planter. Often isolated villages and hamlets in the savanna, jungle and hill country could only be reached by mule or on foot. Nearly all the people, except those near the cities, were without formal education. Yet the goal of establishing congregations which would be self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating inspired him. Soon he also began again with leadership training, so that the young churches might be supplied with knowledgeable elders, deacons and pastors. This required, too, training the people in Christian stewardship and tithing so that their pastors might be adequately supported. Living by hand-outs from a foreign board, he persuaded them, was neither in harmony with Scripture nor conducive to their self-respect. And when the first congregation, in Campeche, adopted the pattern of budgeting and tithing it could within six months triple the salary for the pastor and his family. Soon the churches grew not only in numbers but also spiritual vigor. Now two new presbyteries could be officially constituted in that area.

What joy it was for brother Roberts when in 1979, because of the increased number of presbyteries (classes), the Independent Presbyterian Church could officially constitute itself a synod in control of its own ecclesiastical affairs. Under the new arrangement the seminary and book stores came under its supervision. And one of the decisions of this first synod was the appointment of Roberts' son, John Paul, as a professor at the seminary; the first to be directly appointed by the churches themselves.

By this time, however, dark clouds were lowering over the Mexican mission enterprise. Strained relationships between the CRC missionaries and the Independent Presbyterian Church increased in intensity. Not all the missionaries appreciated the goal of a fully self-governing church. By 1981 an official Act of Agreement, spelling out the relationships between church and mission, was adopted by both the Independent Presbyterian Church and the CR Board of World Missions. Hopefully this would relieve the tensions, so that the work could go on. But soon it became apparent that this did not satisfy several of the missionaries who had been working quite independently of church supervision. Almost from the beginning, aspects of the official agreement were ignored or violated. Out of this sprang the schism which rent the national churches. Some day this story needs to be told in its details. Nothing grieved the Roberts more than these events, at times seemingly taken too lightly by many in the denomination which he had come to love dearly and for which he had labored so long and faithfully.

Reaching retirement age, he and his wife removed

to Ripon, California, where the First Church had called and supported him as one of its missionaries.

His heart, however, longed to see again the fields in which he had spent so many years. In October, 1985 they were able to leave home for an extended visit to both the Dominican Republic (from which he and she had been absent since 1965) and Mexico. After visiting relatives and friends in southern California, Arizona, Kansas, Michigan and Florida, they went by air to the Dominican Republic for two months. Here the warmest welcome, together with a busy schedule of preaching, teaching and holding conferences awaited them. With tears of joy, those whom he had first led to the Lord received him with their children and grandchildren. One conference with young people was attended by no less than 200. All remembered him and her as missionaries who loved and identified themselves with the people. One touching incident deserves mention. An older man, now a pastor of a church, asked brother Roberts: "Don't you remember me? I used to shine your shoes. Each time you gave me 25 cents instead of the usual 5 cents. And when I told you 25 cents was too much, you said, [']But my shoes you will remember were big, much bigger than others.'" Here at Christmas time they were joined by their daughter, Rebecca, who had been born on the island.

Shortly after New Year they returned to Florida. Now they were joined by Harold and Justine Ten Brink (from Kalamazoo, Michigan, and Lake Worth) who for ten years had gone as volunteers for two or three months each winter to assist the Roberts. They knew their work at first hand as no others.

Traveling together they stopped in Texas to visit John Paul's family and friends; then on to Mexico City to renew acquaintance with the seminary and the congregations. Here they were joined by two pastors of the Free Reformed Church, interested in work in Mexico.

Four weeks and more were spent in the Campeche area. Again the schedule was busy but filled with happy experiences. Every evening here and in Merida and surrounding congregations, large groups met for worship and instruction in the faith. In all this they were ably assisted by the Ten Brinks.

One of brother Roberts' great desires was to make contact with what was being done to bring the Gospel to the Totonac Indians living in the coffee-planation country of Puebla state. Here the two couples spent their last days together. Then, already feeling ill, he with Mrs. Roberts left for Mexico City. Arriving in distress and pain, he was hospitalized at the urging of the physician. Within four days he was released by the Lord from the joys and sorrows of this life to the glory of his Lord and Savior.

His body was brought back to the seminary where he had taught. Crowds of mourners necessitated the holding of not less than four memorial services with several pastors and professors officiating, including the rector, the Rev. Jose Miguel Velazquez. This was not only a time of sorrow for the passing of one whom they deeply loved and leaned on for counsel; it was also a season of praise to the sovereign God who had so richly blessed forty years of missionary service.

On Friday morning, March 7, his body was laid to rest with appropriate services conducted by the Revs. Manuel Martin and Samuel Espinoza. These remains await the day of resurrection in the hillside cemetery which overlooks the vast metropolis of Mexico City with its 18,000,000 people. While this servant has been taken away, the Lord is even now raising up others trained by him to bring that same Gospel to a needy land. On the gravestone are inscribed the words of Rev. 14:13 and 14, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. . . they rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."

Brother Roberts is survived by his widow, one son, two daughters, five grandsons, one brother and two sisters. May the God of all comfort sustain them with that peace which passes all understanding. ●

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Who Am I?

Glenn P. Palmer

Hello, I am a rather unknown and unsung man of the Bible; yet my role was important and my name, in English, humorous. Therefore, once you know who I am, please do forget me.

I am a Kohathite and thus my Levitical duty was the care of the sanctuary (Numbers 3:28).

But why am I an "unsung" name? It is because all of you probably know my associate far better than you know me. My associate, Asaph, served at my right hand. We were chosen by David and placed "in charge of the music in the house of the Lord after the ark came to rest there." We "ministered with music before the tabernacle — the Tent of Meeting — until Solomon built the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem."

I am, perhaps, living proof that God's covenant works, because the LORD did not forget me, even though my Dad's misconduct was one of the reasons why the Israelites wanted a king. His dubious honor is stated in this way:

But his (Grandpa Samuel's) sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice. So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us as the other nations have." Thus Samuel was my granddad. Now I will be silent and you can tell my name and the name of my wicked Dad. ●

1 Samuel 8:1-5; 1 Chronicles 6:31-33.

Antichristian Ethnic Theology

Peter De Jong

Dr. Phil Brouwer, who 20 years ago lived in Hamilton, Ontario, returned to the Netherlands for study and subsequently went to South Africa where he has been teaching political science for 9 years. Colvinist Contact Editor, Bert Witvoet, had been one of Brouwer's teachers during his earlier years in Canada. In the January 17, 1986 *Contact*, the editor reports on an interview with his former student during the Brouwers' recent visit to Canada. In the interview, which naturally devoted considerable attention to the political problems of South Africa, the visiting professor was asked whether he supported Alan Boesak and Beyers Naude. Although he opposed some of the same things that those men do, he found that their opposition was too total and lacking in charity.

Professor Brouwer went on in a following article to explain why, as a Reformed Christian, he had to differ with Alan Boesak, referring especially to the introductory chapter of Boesak's book, *Black and Reformed*, entitled "The Courage to be Black." There Brouwer finds Boesak agreeing with Cone in saying, "the only authentic confession in our age is the confession of Jesus Christ as the Black Messiah" (p. 12). "Blackness alone can adequately tell us the meaning of His presence today." "Black theology, says Boesak, 'wishes to make operative what was holy in the Black African community long before the whites came on the scene: unity, mutual respect, community.' That, he says, has disappeared from the scene since blacks have come to know the Christian faith (p. 20). Through struggle against white civilization, the white 'god,' the white's Christ, that which is holy can appear again. It is the holiness of Africa, of blackness."

These views raise a number of questions for Brouwer. Can Reformed people simply equate their Faith with this struggle for political liberation? Were the black peoples of Africa guiltless and innocent before the white missionaries came, and "have blacks no cause to feel guilty about anything?" Do Reformed people identify God's cause as that of violent revolution? Brouwer finds the expressed views of Boesak plainly un-Reformed and is mystified that a man holding them could be elected to be President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

The *Contact* report and especially the quotations from Boesak's writings drive the reader to some further reflections. The missionaries who first brought the gospel of Christ to Africa, undoubtedly had their weaknesses — as who does not? But if Boesak claims, as his words state, that the Africans had a better religion before they had heard of Christ than after the missionaries came preaching His gospel, Boesak is not merely un-Reformed; he is evidently advocating a

return to paganism. For what reason can he then still be called a Christian?

Regrettably, this promotion of paganism in the name of missions seems to be increasingly common among ostensibly Christian leaders. The October, 1985 *Reformed Journal* reviews a book by Gwinyai H. Muzorewa, *The Origins and Development of African Theology*. The reviewer is Dr. Eugene Rubingh, former missionary to Nigeria, until recently Executive Secretary of (CR) World Missions, and at present teaching at Calvin Theological Seminary. According to the review, this book too takes us back to the African religions, seeing in them "God's general revelation as light shining in the darkness long before the arrival of the missionaries." It calls for a moratorium on sending missionaries to Africa, leaving the people there to "forge" their own theology. The tenor of this review of the call for African Theology is remarkably uncritical (as a letter in the February, 1986 *Journal* points out), concluding that "It is from these variant strands that a tapestry of African theology is being woven at this hour." "The monologue becomes dialogue and we shall be the richer and more Christlike for it."

If Dr. Brouwer were more familiar with the current ethnic fads in our churches he might be less surprised at the influence of Boesak with his black theology. Consider that more than half of the Calvin College faculty reportedly registered their support of Boesak on his temporary arrest a while ago. Think too of the way the denomination for more than ten years has given ever increasing sums of money through its race committee to non-whites only on the absurd pretext that this is removing racism. And recall that Calvin Theological Seminary is "urged" toward new and quite different curricula to train ministers for the various non-white ethnic groups.

Such developments should drive all of us to take a more critical look at current ethnic theologies as not permissible or even desirable additions to the Christian faith, but aberrations from it. The Bible really leaves no room for such hyphenated Christianities, be they black, or white — or feminist — To the extent that they are determined not by the Word of Christ but by human ideas and ideals they are not really Christian at all, but in the proper sense of the word, "heresies" (self-chosen opinions) that diverge from the Faith (2 Peter 1:16-2:3). The Bible insists on the need to proclaim to all peoples of the world the one gospel of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19). It underscores the fact that "Salvation is found in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12). It thus leaves no room at all for today's faddish universalisms which destroy both missionary message and incentives, saying in effect, "Why bother; they'll get to heaven anyway!"

Many will undoubtedly reply, "We don't want to deny that we have to believe in Christ!" If we don't want to do that, why should we (and our whole denomination) let ourselves be pressed into making concessions to and common cause with those who tell us more and more clearly that they are doing exactly that? Have we ever needed more urgently than we do today the warning of the Lord's Apostle? "We know that we are the children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true — even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. Dear children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:19-21). ●

Comment and Opinion

John H. Piersma

REVERSE DISCRIMINATION? — In our country there is a rather recently introduced social policy called reverse discrimination. It calls for the allocation of jobs and positions according to some kind of racial formula. Often it is geared to numerical percentages. If a given community is twenty percent black, fifteen percent hispanic, sixty-five percent white then the schools should have that kind of racial mix on its staffs.

This obviously can cause some difficulty. Because the matter of actual superiority on the part of the candidates for acceptance to graduate schools, promotion to advanced positions, etc. is now not an absolutely determinative factor. At a given point the question is not what a certain applicant knows or can do, but rather his racial origin. Even if he is less qualified.

I was reminded of this in a recent issue of *THE BANNER* (Nov. 4, 1985) when reading that "Minnesota South wants 'Conservatives' at Calvin" (p. 24). Reporter Rachel TeGrootenhuis tells us that Classis Minnesota South of the Christian Reformed Church "adopted, by a large margin" a motion that "Calvin Seminary work toward a better theological balance on its faculty, urging the appointment of more conservatives." This plea is not without urgency: it asks that "positions remain open if 'no persons of that type (conservative) are available.'"

This action originated with the Ebenezer Church of Leota, Minn., pastored by Rev. Robert Tigchelaar, who is reported to say that his consistory believes the "agencies of the church should follow the direction of the church and not (operate) the other way around." (That is a reminder we can endorse!)

Ms. Te Grootenhuis also tells us that classis had some trouble deciding just what the word conser-

vative means. Apparently this discussion did not quench support for the recommendation, however, because the term was allowed to stand.

I'm sure I would have voted for this overture from our Leota consistory. However, I must add that it makes me both sad and worried.

I'm sad that the CRC now recognizes officially that there are such radically different types of leaders within her bosom. Please don't misunderstand: I know what our Minnesota brothers are talking about. But I wish it were not so. It is good and pleasant when one sees that his brothers and sisters make it their great delight "to dwell in blest accord." To me it requires a kind of hardness of heart, a kind of acquired indifference, to live happily in terms of established, serious differences of faith and conviction, especially within a single denomination (and a relatively small one at that).

I'm also worried. Because I don't know how this Minnesota plea can be honored. Questions which must arise are: How many of the sixteen men who staff Calvin Seminary ought to be "conservatives?" What is the test for real conservatism? Is conservative really the right kind of idea (wouldn't *confessional* be better)? Doesn't this get us into the business of an unfortunate and distressing kind of labelling? Doesn't it also make us act politically rather than ecclesiastically in our church assemblies?

Once again, I appreciate the effort of the Leota consistory and South Classis in Minnesota. I endorse the intent of this action. But I'm not sure it is the real cure for the problem it signalizes.



THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED TRADITION — Since Synod 1985 the pages of *Christian Reformed periodicals* make frequent reference to tradition. "The Problem of Tradition in the Christian Reformed Church" is a recent contribution appearing in unabridged form in *CALVIN THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL* (April 1985) and in condensed form in the *BANNER* (Oct. 21, 28, 1985). The full-sized piece goes twenty pages. The writer (or speaker — it was originally delivered as an address at Calvin Seminary and Dordt College in October of 1984 and January of 1985, respectively) is evidently "one out of our circles" who has "made it" on the outside. He is listed as "director of The Medieval Institute and associate professor of history at the University of Notre Dame," Notre Dame, Ind. (That is the one with the football team).

Dr. Van Engen offers a good analysis of the current state of affairs in the CRC. He does not mince words. One would be quite naive to think that this scholar who looks at the CRC from the vantage point of a campus representative of quite another tradition sees "the problem" from a strongly conservative point of view. Early in his article he tips his hand by stating:

Loyal as our people remain, more and more of them, possibly even a majority, harbor the vague foreboding that their dear church too could go the way of all those fallen churches once so roundly

criticized — a truly unnerving perception, this, and one sure to provoke more outbursts against those charged with “abandoning the truths of Scripture.” But what does Scripture in fact have to say about the various items usually cited as marks of our “slippage?” On a second Sunday service, nothing at all, and on Lord’s Day observance in general, only what was prescribed for the Old Testament Sabbath. On dance and drink, moderation rather than abstinence. On weekly rather than quarterly communion, a pretty clear endorsement. On more expressive and involved liturgies, much in favor. On women in office, nothing so clear as to convince us all. And even on creation, nothing much beyond the teaching itself.

The whole matter of the state of affairs in the CRC in terms of its tradition is worth a lot of time and our best efforts (even though Van Engen boldly asserts that “we have no intellectual or theological tool with which to analyze our difficulties, our shifting tradition”). Prof. Van Engen deserves full treatment of his contribution, and I hope someone from the side of the spectrum OUTLOOK represents will do it.

My only observation here is that it seems that the people who thought it necessary to shoot down the CRC tradition are coming around rather late in the game with their suggestions and solutions. Happily, Van Engen’s positive suggestions for the new establishment of a good and necessary tradition are remarkably similar to those which our fathers recommended. What could be better than this:

Any adequate view must include at least, it seems to me, the following five themes: (1) a view of reading Scripture that makes use of the best available scholarship (as Calvin already did) and that sees the New Testament in the light of the Old as well as the Old in light of the New; (2) a view of God that does full justice to the scriptural insistence upon his awful righteousness and holiness and upon his being the unique source of creation and redemption; (3) a view of the church that begins with the people but makes mother church the cohesive and authoritative center of community life — a striking mix of high and low church emphases; (4) a view of sanctification that makes a holy and penitent lifestyle essential to the expression of our faith, our living out of Scripture; and (5) a view of creation and human faculties that draws upon their full resources in the carrying out of our divine mission, our vocation (p. 87).

A few remarks: (1) before we discuss tradition it might be helpful to know if the term presumes that everything the Christian does and says is merely an expression of how he thinks in terms of his times, its influences and its needs; (2) the concerned had better hurry — many of our youngest and best are already in or on their way to the Assembly of God church down the street.



A SPECIAL COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS — This heading is taken literally from a moving article in

Perspectives in Covenant Education, published by the Protestant Reformed Teachers’ Institute. It is written by Mary Beth Lubbers, teacher in the South Holland, Ill., Protestant Reformed Christian School. We include it here in its entirety. It needs no further comment!

Jeffrey Lenting will not graduate from our school this year. Under ordinary circumstances, however, he would have, for Jeffrey will be 15 years old on May 17. But the circumstances surrounding Jeffrey are not ordinary. Jeffrey is a very special little boy-teenager.

Jeffrey has eyes, but they have never beheld the breathtaking beauty of springtime nor the look of love on his parents’ face as they care for him. Jeffrey has legs, but they have never walked or skipped or kicked a soccer ball. Jeffrey has arms, but they have never been used to steer a bicycle or to hug his brothers and sister. Jeffrey has a mouth, but he has yet to speak his first word or delight his family with a note of song.

Jeffrey is severely handicapped in mind and body. He has never comprehended the simplest instruction. This is not to say that Jeffrey has no understanding. I have seen him respond to his father’s gentle touch and to his mother’s loving voice. And certainly his parents and relatives could give you other examples of his responses. With a doubt, too, God speaks to Jeffrey in ways that are too deep, too mysterious for us mere mortals to understand. Nevertheless, Jeffrey has little or no awareness of life as we so richly enjoy and imbibe it.

Jeffrey even has difficulty breathing on his own. Often he is hooked up to an oxygen machine. Nor has Jeffrey ever eaten any ordinary food. He has never sat down to a meal of pot roast, mashed potatoes, and green beans — nor has he ever complained about any of his meals. His mother says that he is a very grateful little boy — grateful for the smallest service rendered, the slightest recognition of his needs. Jeffrey eats a thin gruel heavily dosed with medicine to prevent the convulsions which would otherwise rack his already frail and crippled body. And even this he has great difficulty swallowing, only achieved by the second spoonful forcing the first spoonful down his throat.

I stood by Jeffrey’s bed last Sunday evening; for that, after all, is where Jeffrey spends every day, every hour of his life curled up in a near-fetal position. It was a totally humbling experience, and it always affects me profoundly for many days afterward. “My life in all its PERFECT plan was ordered ere my days began?” Sometimes the Lord makes this a very difficult confession.

Did Jeffrey sin? Did his parents sin? Has the church sinned some great corporate sin? Why has God dealt with us in such a heavy way? To ask these questions is to turn quickly to the Gospel of John where Jesus Himself answered this question for His people clearly and for all times: “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”

God's ways are too wonderful for us. God's works are too "awe-full" for us. God's ways are past finding out. So we will not attempt to find out either. Rather we can and will acknowledge His supremacy in all our lives. We will bow before His awesome sovereignty in His dealings with us, weak vessels of clay fitted for destruction. "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it" (Psalm 39:9).

With Jeffrey, we all look forward to the day when the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped, the tongue of the dumb unloosed; when broken hearts shall be bound up; when we shall run and not be weary, walk and never faint. Sometimes I try to envision the very special, altogether lovely places that God is preparing for all His little Jeffreys ("I go to prepare a place for you . . ."). What a love and tenderness must go into their preparation, every detail for their heavenly comfort and bliss attended to by Father's hand.

Our son, the Lord willing and by God's grace, will graduate on Friday evening, May 31. We will celebrate this occasion. It is fitting that we do so, for this is an important milestone in his life and ours. And that is just what it is — a milestone, an earthly marker along the road of life. While we all await the Great Commencement Day — that day of new beginnings when we shall leave this earth forever to walk down the long bejeweled aisles of heaven into the loving arms of Father. What a day of pomp and celebration and rejoicing that will be! Then we will all sing one great "class song." It is the song of Moses and the Lamb. "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Revelation 15:3). ●

NEEDED: Whole Christianity

Larry E. Wilson

It has been encouraging to see — in the last several years — increased efforts by the Christian community to impact the world for Christ. Yet, in many ways, these efforts have been unsuccessful because they have been fragmented and disjointed. For example at times the impression has been given that while Christ alone can save our souls, moralism can save our society. One of the things that the Christian community needs — if it is to effectively impact our world — is to embrace the whole Biblical life-system.

This life-system encompasses three basic themes — **piety**, **doctrine**, and **life**. Unhappily, as Christians, we have tended to latch on to one of these themes and neglect the other two, and then to polarize over our differing emphases. Several years ago, Robert Metcalf

of the Christian Studies Center in Memphis, Tennessee, claimed that the Christian community consists of three basic sub-groups. He labeled them "pies, docs, and kuyyps."

"Pies," or "pietists," latch on to the theme of **piety** alone. They emphasize personal devotion to the Lord, personal evangelism, prayer, missions, etc. "Docs," or "doctrinalists," focus on the theme of **doctrine** to the exclusion of the other two themes. They stress Biblical content, theological accuracy, church purity, etc. Finally, "kuyyps," or "Kuyperians,"¹ isolate the theme of **life**. They dwell on Christian social and cultural involvement, Christian approaches to philosophy, art, economics, politics, etc.

The most obvious problem with this tendency to stress only one of these themes is that it breaks down the Christian life-system. So, for example, **piety** without doctrine and life usually lapses into shallow emotionalism and experientialism. **Doctrine** without piety and life degenerates into traditionalism and dead orthodoxy. **Life** and cultural involvement without piety and doctrine mutates into humanistic social activism.

This breakdown tends to polarize the Body of Christ. Rather than functioning as a body, believers begin working at cross-purposes with one another. Thus, attempts to win the world for Jesus Christ are less successful than hoped for.

A deeper and more serious problem results when we reduce Christianity to only one of these themes. It's that we fail to fully obey and glorify our Savior and Lord. He has called us to be prophets (**doctrine**), priests (**piety**), and kings (**life**). In other words, every believer is called to true doctrine, sincere devotion, and life-wide dominion. Therefore, if we wish to obey and glorify God, we must try to embrace all three themes — or more accurately, all three aspects of the Biblical life-system.

The historic Reformed faith does embrace all three aspects of the Christian life-system. Consider John Calvin. His motto was, "My heart I give to Thee, O Lord, promptly and sincerely." His model of Christian **piety** continues to inspire believers to single-minded devotion to our Lord. His articulation of the Biblical system of **doctrine** was so profound and clear that to this day it is nicknamed "Calvinism." His application of Biblical principles to all areas of **life** was so effective that economists still speak of "the Calvinist work ethic." His impact on philosophy, education, politics, and culture was no less pronounced.

What we need in our day is a return to the entire life-system of Calvin — the *Biblical* life-system. We need a new Reformation — a re-formation of the whole Christianity that changed the course of Western history. This whole Christianity is three-dimensional, embracing **piety**, **doctrine**, and **life** — or, if you will, devotion, doctrine, and dominion. What we need — if the Christian community is to effectively glorify the Lord and impact the whole world for Christ — is vital Reformed faith and practice. ●

1. The label, "Kuyperians," comes from the name of Abraham Kuyper, a 19th century Dutch pastor, theologian, journalist.

educator, and statesman. Mr. Metcalf chose that label because certain "culturalist" Christians have claimed him. To my mind, that was an unhappy choice because Abraham Kuyper is an excellent example of the whole Christianity that I'm promoting in this article.

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Lapsing Memberships

Some time ago Rev. Tymen Hofman wrote an article in *The Banner* about our current practice of "lapsing" members of our congregations who for one reason or another no longer attend services but who claim to be committed to Christ and claim to be attending church elsewhere. Though he recognized that misuse could be made of this practice, in general he thought it was a good thing.

I do not share his view. Yearbook statistics have shown that the practice of lapsing has been (mis) used in many instances to "clean the slate." The year after synod introduced this practice the number of lapsed members was exorbitant. And I know that the practice continues to be used by some consistories to avoid the difficult but yet healthful exercise of discipline for wayward members. It may be an easy way out for consistories, but it is harmful to the members who should be receiving the painful but beneficial treatment of church discipline. What the author of Hebrews 12 says about discipline remains true: "For the moment it does not seem pleasant, but afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been exercised thereby." It is sad that too many elders wish to avoid this unpleasant but necessary task. And synod has given them a way out by the practice of lapsing.

The synod did indeed make certain restrictions and guidelines, but more often than not, they are ignored. Hofman's general endorsement of the practice will only soothe the consciences of consistories who are not doing their duty. I Corinthians 5 makes it very clear that discipline is to be applied in the official gathering of the congregation — see especially verses 3 and 4. There the power of the Lord Jesus is present, and he binds in heaven what is bound on earth. We should never rob wayward members of such beneficial treatment. A church without discipline is a church without love, and such a church cannot expect the blessing of the Lord. The Rev. A.M. Lindeboom, retired minister in the Gerefmeerde Kerken in the Netherlands, has pointed out in more than one of his books how the idea of a "volkskerk" seriously damaged the Scriptural view of the church in the Hervormde Kerk (the former Netherlands state church), and contributed to the almost complete lack of discipline in that church. Children whose parents had never made profession of their faith were baptized and later even children of unbaptized parents were considered members in good standing. The result, says Lindeboom, is that of a total membership of three and a half million, only five hundred thousand are active members. The situation is beginning to repeat itself in the Gerefmeerde Kerken today, according to Lindeboom.

We should take warning from this. Discipline is one of the three marks of the true church, and often the one that disappears first.

Hofman also felt that the practice of lapsing was beneficial for our relations with other church communions. It makes for better feelings between us and other churches around us. That is a weak argument and shows a lack of Reformed "kerk-besef" (church-consciousness), something we desperately need to rekindle in the CRC. We have too much of a watered-down, lowest-common-denominator mentality among our members, to whom it doesn't make much difference to what church-communion you belong. But that's a far cry from what we confess in Articles 27-29 of the Belgic Confession. If, as the *Banner* editor said, these articles don't function anymore in our churches, then we better make them function again. And the *Banner* could and should lead in that direction.

I. Tuiningo, Lethbridge, Alta.

Reformed Ecumenical Synod on Political "Heresies"

The Reformed Ecumenical Synod devoted its October 1985 40-page *Theological Forum*, edited by Dr. Paul G. Schrottenboer, to the subject of "Status Confessionis," a term used by some churches to declare that certain political practices attack the Christian confession and are therefore "heresies." The two practices singled out for this label are South African "apartheid," so designated by a black South African church, and the possession of nuclear weapons, which is thus denounced by the Reformed Alliance in West Germany. The introductory essay of the series of papers observes that while it is surprising to have churches talking about "heresy" in our time, it is not so surprising when we notice that what they denounce as heresy is more a matter of social practice than doctrine, so that these churches are really quite "in line with the mindset of the time."

Perusing these essays makes it plainer than ever that one of the black churches in South Africa, becoming more and more deeply embroiled in the complex political struggle against the racial segregation policy there, and in the campaign for "one man, one vote," has made a declaration that defending the racial segregation policy is a heresy. Having made this statement, it is refusing all fellowship with the white church with which it is organizationally connected — and on which its financial support has depended — until that white church confesses its sin and capitulates to the black church's (what D. A. du Toit's essay calls) "political ultimatum." Among the participants in the discussion, D. A. du Toit indicates (along with many others) his agreement with the objections to the racial policy of apartheid, but takes exception to the harsh judgment of the white church in the document which "acquired the character of a political ultimatum, a whip to get at" that white church (p. 22). Issued at a time when "to many observers . . . apartheid seemed to be on the way out," it increased the confrontation and belied the "Con-

fession's" ostensible aim at "unity and reconciliation." Despite these distressing developments, the writer expresses the hope and prayer that Christ's church there may unitedly surmount the present troubles.

Consideration of the intense conflict out of which the declaration of heresy arose and the highly partisan character that it accordingly assumed, makes the way in which the 1984 C. R. Synod, without significant study or evaluation, officially endorsed the document appear even more irresponsible and potentially destructive.

The other item taken up in this Forum is the declaration by the Executive Board of the Reformed Alliance in West Germany that possession of nuclear weapons is a heresy. How is this remarkable decision reached? The argument is simple. "God has reconciled with himself the entire world at enmity with him and has placed all people under the address and appeal of his peace." "In Christ Jesus God has granted peace for all people. Through Christ's act of reconciliation...the entire world is reconciled with God...we may not, as the unreconciled do, avoid, threaten, deter or utterly destroy each other." Accordingly, the statement calls for unilateral steps toward disarmament.

It ought to be obvious that this declaration wipes out the Biblical distinction between Christ's church and the world and denies much of what our Lord

Himself taught as His gospel. Recall His warning, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34). He is appointed to "rule the nations with a rod of iron" (Rev. 19:15). The commission the Lord gave to His church is not simply to declare that all are reconciled to God, but to entreat them to "be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20). The whole declaration pointedly ignores the distinction between the Christian's personal bearing (Romans 12) and the duty assigned government as a "servant of God" to forcibly take vengeance on the evildoer (Romans 13:4). Although there are some critical comments made about the declaration they fall short of delineating clearly how sharply this stance of the church alliance conflicts in principle with the gospel.

One of the more disturbing facts about this discussion in the RES Theological Forum is that it seems to indicate how, especially since the loss of some of its more orthodox members, the Reformed Ecumenical Synod is letting the secularist preoccupation with social and political matters that so characterizes today's liberal denominations and their World Council determine also the direction of its thought and action.

Our Lord taught us that His people are to be the "salt of the earth" (Mt. 5:13). If they lose that which distinguishes them as His and become tasteless and indistinguishable from the secularized world around them, they are useless and will be discarded. PDJ

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LOWLANDS

Church Reformation Models

Neal Hegeman

The Netherlands is a fascinating as well as a frightening place in which to visit, study and live. For the Reformed Christian it is a laboratory of church history and theological developments. Church history is not only documented at the ancient libraries but the church movements and theological developments arising out of history have taken social and religious forms in Holland. The Hollanders were champions of religious freedom. The Reformed Church formation in the 1600's, the Secession of 1834, the *Doleantie* of 1886, the formation of the *Gereformeerdebond* (Reformed League within the Reformed Church) of 1906 and the Liberation movement of 1944, were all movements of Christian freedom against the bondage of hierarchical dominance, theological apostasy and liberalism. As members of the Christian Reformed Church and other Reformed churches in North America, we are historically and theologically related to the above mentioned liberation movements. However, the frightening reality is that the apostasy and oppression which the Reformed forefathers fought against have come back and possessed the hierarchy of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands (GKN) and continued through the liberal modalities of the Reformed Church (NHK). What can we learn from the

obedience and disobedience within the Reformed churches in the Netherlands? Does their history teach us any lessons as we face the same forces of obedience and disobedience in the Christian Reformed Community?

We increasingly hear about the degeneration of Biblical interpretation, confessional integrity and ethics among the left-wing radical Calvinists in the Netherlands. The Reformed Ecumenical Synod has been trying to exercise discipline toward the Reformed Churches (GKN) concerning their stance on the *homofiel* and the hermeneutics of the report *God Met Ons*. The GKN is responding by hoping to change the RES from a synod which can discipline to a council which will not be able "to continually get on their case." For the Reformed family at large it will be important to pray for and encourage the RES to continue to discipline the GKN. It is encouraging to know that there are ecumenical councils which seek to exercise Christian discipline over the member denominations. Let us also pray that the CRC delegates take the task of discipline more seriously, not only at the RES but in their own household of faith, where the trends which have led to the GKN apostasy are visible as well.

The signs of degeneration should alert us to the necessity of regeneration. The regenerating power of the Holy Spirit comes to us through prayer, the proclamation of the Word, the faithful exercise of discipline and administration of the sacraments. By the faithful use of the spiritual means of grace the hope of the GKN could look bright. There are congregations and leaders who are so inclined in the GKN but they are not influential enough to direct the denomination as a whole. It seems to be only a matter of time before the "concerned" take on organized form.

In the Netherlands there is a growing 'right wing' in the Reformed churches. C. Jansen in his recent doctor's thesis *Bewaar Het Pand* calls them the "bevindelijke gereformeerden" (experiential Reformed). The experiential Reformed hold to a strict interpretation of the Confessions and also have a strong emphasis on the necessity of conversion. The gospel needs to be experienced in a personal and spiritual way and one should be able to witness to that experience. It is a fundamentalistic movement in that fundamental doctrines such as the total depravity of man, the sovereignty of God and other basic Reformed doctrines are emphasized. The doctrine of salvation is stressed in preaching.

The experiential Reformed have kindred movements among the German pietists, English and New England Puritans, Scotch Free Church Presbyterians, Strict Baptists and Reformed Baptists. Literature, sermons and conferences are shared and there is some cooperation on the mission field between the above mentioned groups.

The experiential Reformed are distinct from the experiential Arminians and the experiential Liberals. However, there are interesting similarities between the experiential Arminians, such as the Pentecostals and the experiential Reformed, as well as with the experiential Liberals, who in the line of Schleiermacher, emphasize "feeling" or, in the line of Barth, emphasize the experience with the transcendent God. What make the Reformed experientials distinct and different is that their experience leads to a conversion and lifestyle which are different from those of the above mentioned groups. Upon conversion a literal and even allegorical reading of Scripture is taken; prayer, attending to the preaching of the Word, Christian fellowship, Sunday observance, separation from worldliness, such as theater, dancing, sports, card-playing, and other locally defined cultural activities, are practised. Ecclesiastical and Christian isolation from the world is considered a virtue and a strength. According to denominational and group distinctions, there are minor variations in doctrine and lifestyle.

In the Netherlands the experiential Reformed are to be found in denominations such as the *Gereformeerde Gemeente* (Reformed Congregations; 86,886 total membership in 1984), the *Oud Gereformeerde Gemeente* (several thousand), the *Nederlandse Gereformeerde Gemeente* (16,244 membership 1984), the right wing of the *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk* (Christian Reformed Church, not associated with the CRC of North America) called *Bewaar Het Pand*, as well as the large *Gereformeerde-bond* (Reformed League) which is the conservative

modality within the large Dutch Reformed Church (NHK, which accounts for over 200,000 souls). The experientials exist in other denominations, but not in an organized form.

The organization of the experiential Reformed exists as individual congregations, small denominations or as an organization within a larger denomination. Most of the experiential Reformed groups have their own mission boards (both foreign and home), church periodicals, youth and adult societies, Christian elementary schools, high schools and some have teacher's colleges. The smaller denominations have their own seminaries in which training is given in close relationship to the congregation and through apprenticeship under more experienced ministers. The Reformed League is influential at the theological faculty of the State University in Utrecht where their minister candidates are trained. Several 'borders' are theologians there.

There is also interdenominational working together such as with the small SGP political party which has a few seats in the Dutch government, a daily newspaper (*Reformatische Dagblad*), mission projects like the Spanish Mission Society and projects at the community level.

Perhaps the reader is reminded of the Reformed Church (GKN) in the Netherlands before World War II. Many of the above mentioned characteristics were reflected in the conservative Reformed churches (GKN), albeit with a less subjective and mystical emphasis. The question that must be asked is whether it was beneficial for the conservatives within the GKN to have gone along with the ecclesiastical and theological changes within the GKN or have the experientials something to highlight in the stubborn refusal to change rapidly?

Most CRC visitors and students of the conservative side would feel at home among another group, the "confessionals," in the GKN and NHK. The CGK, the Reformed Church (Liberated) as well as the splinter group (NGK) are confessional as a denomination, in that the whole denomination holds to the Three Forms of Unity. Like the experiential Reformed, they are well organized and have their own organizations, periodicals, political parties, as well as interdenominational projects among themselves.

When the adult members of the confessional Reformed and the experiential Reformed are put together their number includes several hundred thousand Christians, which is perhaps the largest concentration of conservative Reformed Christians in the world. That fact should be highlighted in an age where radical Christian groups are getting the upper hand in denominational and ecumenical affairs. On the other hand, the zeal for purity and isolation has separated many of these Christians into smaller separated groups, which has decreased their collective influence.

The history of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands should teach us not to be idealistic about reforming the church. Many approaches are being taken: the church within a church (Reformed League), separatistic congregations being led by a small number of ministers (Reformed Congregations), mili-

tant (i.e. 'church militant') denominationalism (Reformed Church Liberated and Christian Reformed Church in the Netherlands (CGK) in which church leaders seek to exercise openness and yet strict doctrinal and ecclesiastical discipline, and finally, the silent majority which seeks to preserve personal and perhaps congregational integrity in relationship to Scripture, the Confessions and the Christian life, but who have not organized into a modality. There are other reformation efforts, such as Reformed Christians prophetically being involved in the ecumenical movements such as the World Council of Churches or in the hierarchies of their own liberal denominations. But since these renewal and reformation groups are not institutionally organized they are hard to locate and identify, and it is difficult to observe and learn from them. This article was written about Reformed Christians who have preserved their orthodoxy, not only at a personal level but as part of the Christian community and on a communal level. The Church as well as Christians need a model for reformation.

The CRC should strive towards unity rather than pluriformity. Denominational unity is far healthier for the congregations, Christian organizations, the advance of the kingdom work, rather than continually being confronted with pluriformity. However, if pluriformity, as a consequence of sin and covenant unfaithfulness sets in the CRC community, the church model of Reformation may very well take the form of Christians organizing as a church within the denomination or separating into smaller groupings, like the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church. All of the alternatives and approaches are widely displayed in the history of the Netherlands. The trends are appearing in the CRC. In one form or another, the Church will continue.

The greatest highlight in the lowlands is that God has many of His people there. May we pray together and look to Him for our comfort and direction, and in that way find one another in obedience.

Dr. Neal Hegeman is a Christian Reformed Missionary to the Dominican Republic.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MAN'S AGE (Dec. 1985 OUTLOOK)
Esteemed Editor:

In the December, 1985 issue of OUTLOOK you published an article by Aaldert Mennega entitled "Man's Age." I would like to respond to this article and in particular to the references which it makes to CREATION AND FLOOD by Dr. Davis A. Young.

Professor Mennega classifies Young as one of a group of progressive creationists, and to this group he attributes, along with their acceptance of the Genesis account of man's origin, the view that creation days must have been very long periods of time. The progressive creationists get themselves into a bind, according to Mennega, because they try to reconcile Genesis givens with secular views of the earth's history and the ages assigned to the earth's layers. Mennega then goes on to quote Young's book (unfortunately the quote is neither accurate nor referenced):

Thus the body of pre-man could be viewed as evolving in accordance with divinely-controlled biological laws and processes up to a point at which the spirit was miraculously formed in this pre-man. The being in view would suddenly be constituted man. This

miraculous inbreathing could be the divine miraculous initiation that is required to bring man, the new structure, into existence (quoted from Young, page 105).

Professor Mennega goes on to say Young's view is a compromise which takes us so far out on a limb that it can no longer be considered Reformed. The issue, Mennega concludes, is whether our faith is placed "in God's Word or in the theories of secular man" (Mennega, page 17). I trust he does not direct this last against Professor Young but in general against rationalistic science.

Quite frankly Professor Mennega's perceptions of Young's book do not fit with mine. Young's book strikes me as having a deep reverence for the Bible as God's Word both in his treatment of Genesis and other Biblical material. It echoes the deep reverence for Scripture that was always apparent in the work of his godfearing and noble father, the late Edward J. Young, Professor of Old Testament at Westminster Seminary.

Because of the discrepancy I sensed between my impressions of Young's book and Mennega's comment on it I have gone back to Young's book to hunt for the unreferenced passages Mennega quoted. I began with a chapter entitled "Whence Man" where Young clearly asserts that man is not a body with a soul "added," but that man was created as a living creature. Furthermore he says that "man was not any other kind of creature prior to the divine inbreathing. The text clearly rules out the view that man originated from some pre-existing animal life" (Young, page 138).

In the course of his discussion Young clearly states "that the idea of the evolution of man is utterly foreign to the Bible. . . ." (page 138). In particular Young notes that in the Genesis account of the creation of Eve there is clear indication that Adam and Eve were not created simultaneously, but rather that Adam was first created and then Eve. Furthermore, Young asserts that the text

assumes that Eve was created after Adam because she was created for him. Thus Adam is given metaphysical priority. This account of the creation of Eve is corroborated by the testimony of Paul in I Corinthians 11:8-9 and I Timothy 2:12-13. Such a view of the creation of Adam and Eve is not consistent with an evolutionary view because there is no possibility for either metaphysical or temporal priority of either sex in an evolutionary explanation.

As a second line of argument in his assertion that the Bible does not allow for the possibility of man's evolution from animals, Young appeals to the uniqueness of Adam. Both the fact that Adam is created in the image of God and the fact that Adam is compared to Christ, Young takes to be Biblical evidence that man's creation is that of a unique creature and one distinct from the animals. The position that Young puts forth here is entirely consistent with the assertions Young makes in the paragraphs just preceding the passage which Mennega quotes:

The final instance in which a creation occurred during creation week was the appearance of man. Verse 27 (of Genesis 1) makes this plain: "So God created man in His image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." Here again is an account of the appearance of something new — man. Man did not exist before the sixth day (Young, page 105).

It is at this point that Professor Mennega's misperceptions appear. Young gives several pages to the meaning and use of "create" in both the Old and the New Testaments. Then he comes to the conclusion that if only the word *bara* (create) is considered in Genesis 1:27 one could legitimately adopt a view which sees man's body as being evolved. But Young immediately discredits this possible interpretation by appealing to the uniqueness of man as God's image bearer. He then goes on to say: "If man is 'split' into a spirit-body complex, it is

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possible to view man as being created in the sense that his spirit was that part of man miraculously formed by God and without which man would not have been man" (Young, page 105). This entire italicizing is by Professor Young himself, and it is following this italicized sentence that Mennega's quote begins.

It is this "if clause" (if man is split into spirit-body complex) that gives the setting for the "could" and "would" clauses in the lines Mennega quotes. Evidently these terms too are conditional. Something "could" be the case if it were the case that man were split into a spirit-body complex. But Young has made it clear that the condition has not been met.

Because Mennega has not accurately conveyed the context of the passage that he quotes from Young, he leaves an inaccurate impression of Young's position. A far better presentation of Young's position is the following statement:

However, much other evidence regarding the origin of man is given in Scripture. These other evidences render absolutely untenable the idea of a biological evolution of man from animals. . . . No one must get the impression that I accept the evolutionary origin of man or that I believe such a view is compatible with the total weight of Scriptural data (Young, page 106).

Sincerely,
Andrew Petter
1820 Blaine, S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49507

RESPONSE

In reply to Rev. Petter's lengthy response I wish to make only the following comments.

- 1) I do not think that I am unfairly referring to Young as a progressive creationist since he clearly classified himself as such at a Dordt College public lecture.
- 2) I checked the quote on p. 105 again, and I found it to be the same as in my version of the book. I doubt that anyone would stumble over the omitted hyphen between "divinely" and "controlled." But I should have given the reference for the quote.
- 3) The bottom line is indeed: where do we place our faith? This holds true for everyone, of course, and not only for rationalistic scientists.
- 4) I do not detect the same "deep reverence for Scripture" in Davis as I saw it in his father's writings, his claims (p. 8) to the contrary. It does not automatically rub off from father to son.
- 5) Young makes a number of statements in his book that appear to be contradictory. Although he says that "first the Christian

goes to Scripture" (p. 136), he also says "Thus we do not really know how long a time span is covered by Genesis 5 and 11. It may be only a few thousand years. It may be tens or hundreds of thousands of years. We simply do not know. The Bible does not tell us the age of the human race" (p. 152). What then, I wonder, does it mean to go to Scripture first?

6) I am well aware of the fact that Young makes the positive statements which Petter quotes. However, if Petter would go back to that quote on p. 105, and then carefully read the sentence that follows it immediately, he will find that Young defends the position of that paragraph and appears to posit it as his own when he says, "Lest there be objection to this usage of creation, remember the sense in which creation is used in the New Testament with respect to the new birth" (p. 105-106).

7) A similar situation you will find on page 137 where he says "The text does not say how much time elapsed in the formation of man's body from the dust of the ground. Perhaps considerable development through time has occurred in man's body. Perhaps

God used some pre-existing creature, and permitted it to develop through time into a human body. When the body became sufficiently human (*italics—DY*), God breathed a soul into the body so that man became truly man." This section is very similar to the one I quoted in my article. Here, too, he appears to be saying what he himself believes. Often it is difficult to tell whether he is speaking for himself or making up some other position. In this passage at least he does not make a direct disclaimer. Repeatedly his line of argument gets rather nebulous, and he could be quoted to say various different things. But he seems clearly to be against the theistic evolutionist position.

8) I am curious what the advantage is to Young in appearing to say both yes and no when dealing with issues that are so sensitive and have such far-reaching implications. Why can't his bugle produce a clear sound, so that everyone may know exactly where he stands?
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