

The Voice

of the Mennonite Brethren Bible College

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Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. — 2 Tim. 2:15.

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College Rundschau

“Die Frist ist nur noch kurz bemessen,” schrieb der inspirierte Schreiber an die Korinther. Das müssen auch wir sagen im Blick auf das schnelle Dahineilen unseres Schuljahres. Viel Segen durften wir aus der gnädigen Hand des himmlischen Vaters entgegennehmen. Bis dahin sind wir vor schweren Störungen in der Arbeit bewahrt geblieben — eine nicht geringe Gnade. Der Herr allein hat die vielen Kämpfe und Siege gesehen, wenn sie auch oft ein gemeinsames Erleben waren.

Der Predigerkursus durfte unter göttlichem Segen gehalten werden. Wir hatten das tiefe Empfinden, daß die Wellen solcher Studien weiter schlagen könnten. Auch ließ der Herr uns in den Tagen der Missionskonferenz die große Aufgabe der Gemeinde — Weltevangelisation — auf's neue erblicken.

In den stillen Stunden des jährlich abgehaltenen Gebetstages begegnete der Herr einem manchen seiner Kinder.

Nach einer kleinen Unterbrechung, während der Ostertage, geht die Schularbeit ihren Gang weiter. Wir freuen uns auch, daß der Herr unsern Chor glücklich von der langen Reise zurückgebracht hat. Möchte ihr Dienst zum bleibenden Segen gewesen sein. Die herzliche Aufnahme in den Gemeinden hat ihnen wohlgetan.

Am ersten Juni schließt unser Schuljahr ab. Viel Arbeit soll noch bis dann überwältigt werden. Immer wieder hören wir den Ruf nach Arbeitern. Helft uns sie vorzubereiten. Durch eure “Fürbitte und Unterstützung des Geistes Jesu Christi” kann dieses geschehen.

David Ewert.

DENOMINATIONAL

Der schwindende Einfluß des Lehrdienstes in unsern Kreisen.

Ein besorgniserregende Erscheinung in unserer Mennonitischen Bruderschaft ist der schwindende Einfluß des Lehrdienstes. Die Belehrung von der Kanzel wird in vielen Fällen sehr leicht genommen. Die vielen und im allgemeinen auch guten und schriftgemäßen Predigten machen scheinbar keinen tiefen Eindruck auf das Denken und Leben der Zuhörer. Auch in Gemeindefragen wird das Wort der lehrenden Brüder nicht als maßgebend anerkannt. Solche Erscheinungen sollten uns eine Veranlassung sein zu aufrichtiger Selbstprüfung und zu ernster Untersuchung der Ursachen.

Daß ein starker Einfluß des Lehrdienstes von der größten Bedeutung ist für ein gesundes Wachstum und eine normale Entwicklung der Gemeinde, geht klar hervor aus der Lehre des Neuen Testaments. Von der ersten Gemeinde lesen wir: “Sie blieben aber beständig in der Apostel Lehre” (Apg. 2, 42). Nach Eph. 4, 11 hat der Lehrdienst die große Aufgabe “daß die Heiligen zugerichtet werden zum Werk des Dienstes, dadurch der Leib Christi erbaut werde.” Der Schreiber des Hebräerbriefes fordert die Gläubigen auf zum Gehorsam gegen die Lehrer, weil letztere Rechenschaft geben sollen für die anvertrauten Seelen (Hebr. 13, 17).

Die Geschichte der Kirche durch die Jahrhunderte zeigt uns auch sehr klar den Einfluß des Lehrdienstes (oder den Mangel desselben) auf das geistliche Leben der Gemeinden. Die Hebung des sittlich-religiösen Lebens, die geistliche Erneuerung der Kirche, war immer auf's engste verknüpft mit einem verstärkten Einfluß eines rechten Lehrdienstes. (Für ein eingehendes Studium des Einflusses der Kanzel auf die Gemeinde in Kirchen- und Mennonitengeschichte verweise ich den werten Lesern auf den Aufsatz von A. H. Unruh in der vorigen Ausgabe des “The Voice”).

In diesem Aufsatz möchten wir uns

beschränken auf die Andeutung etlicher Ursachen, die für den schwindenden Einfluß verantwortlich sein könnten. Diese Ursachen können, unseres Erachtens, beim Lehrdienst sowie auch bei der Gemeinde liegen.

I. Ursachen beim Lehrdienst.

Eine sachliche Abwertung der Predigten in unsern Gemeinden würde jedenfalls ergeben, daß der schwache Einfluß nicht zurückzuführen ist auf eine mangelhafte homiletische Ausbildung, oder auf Mangel an Beredsamkeit in der Darbietung. In den meisten Fällen dürfte der Vergleich mit früheren Zeiten sehr günstig für die Gegenwart ausfallen, wenn wir Form und auch sogar Inhalt der Predigt in Betracht ziehen. Die Ursachen liegen auf andern Linien, und die angedeuteten Erscheinungen haben tiefere Wurzeln. Im Lichte der heiligen Schrift könnten es die folgenden Mängel sein.

1. **Es mangelt an tiefer Frömmigkeit im praktischen Leben.** Über den “Lehrdienst” seiner Zeit mußte Christus klagen: “sie sagen's wohl, und tun's nicht” (Matth. 23, 3). Die Autorität Jesu hatte ihren Grund in seinem heiligen Leben. Deshalb konnte Matthäus von ihm schreiben “...er lehrte wie einer der Vollmacht hat, ganz anders wie die Schriftgelehrten” (Matth. 7, 29, nach Menge). Im Dienste Jesu gab es nie einen Widerspruch zwischen Lehre und Leben. So soll es auch im Leben seiner Knechte sein. Petrus ermahnt die Ältesten zu einem vorbildlichen Leben und Wandel (1. Pet. 5, 3). In den Pastoralbriefen legt Paulus das Hauptgewicht auf das Leben der Diener der Gemeinde. “Das Leben des Dieners ist das Leben seines Dienstes” hat ein Gottesmann gesagt. Die Stärke der Anabaptischen Bewegung lag in dem heiligen Leben der Führer. Die ersten Prediger der Mennoniten-Brüdergemeinde zeichneten sich mehr aus durch ihre Frömmigkeit

als durch ihre Beredsamkeit. Wie steht es heute? Es genügt nicht, wenn der Prediger nur öffentlichen Anstoß und ausgesprochenen Tadel vermeidet. Sein Leben soll anziehen und die Lehre bestätigen. Welch eine Verantwortung! Horatius Bonar sagt: Unsere Stellung ist solche, daß wir nicht neutral bleiben können. Unser Leben darf nicht in harmloser Verborgenheit bleiben. "Wir müssen Seelen anziehen oder abstoßen — retten oder ruinieren... Von allen Menschen ist es am ersten der Diener Christi der berufen ist zu einem Wandel mit Gott" (Frei übersetzt aus "The Christian Ministry," Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 51). Gott helfe uns mit dem Liederdichter zu beten: "Mehr Frömmigkeit gib mir."

2. Es mangelt an unerschrockener Offenheit in der Wortverkündigung. Der Diener am Wort wird nur dann einen bleibenden Einfluß ausüben, wenn er seiner innern Überzeugung treu bleibt und die volle Wahrheit in furchtloser Weise verkündigt. Ein Johannes der Täufer predigte die göttliche Wahrheit ohne Vorbehalt und Rücksicht auf die Folgen für seine eigene Person. Ein Stephanus, voll heiligen Geistes, zeigte seinen Zuhörern aus ihrer eigenen Geschichte ihren Ungehorsam und ihr Widerstreben in einer offenen und ungeschminkten Weise. Paulus konnte im Rückblick auf seinen Dienst in Asien (Kleinasien) bekennen "wie ich nichts verhalten habe, daß da nützlich ist, daß ich's euch nicht verkündigt hätte und euch gelehrt öffentlich und sonderlich" (Apg. 20, 20). Jeder Arbeiter hat es mit gewissen Neigungen, oder vielleicht besser, Versuchungen, zu tun, die es ihm erschweren, die volle Wahrheit zu predigen. Da ist einmal die Neigung zur **Menschengefälligkeit**. Man möchte das Wohlwollen aller Zuhörer haben. Das erfordert dann eine beständige Kompromittierung der Wahrheit, weil es in jeder Gemeinde ungehorsame, ungeistliche oder fleischliche Glieder gibt. Der Apostel Paulus weist hin auf diese große Gefahr in Gal. 1, 10 "Wenn ich den Menschen noch gefällig wäre, so wäre ich Christi Knecht nicht." An die Gemeinde zu Thessalonich schreibt derselbe Apostel "... also reden wir, nicht als wollten wir den Menschen gefallen,

sondern Gott, der unser Herz prüft" (1. Thess. 2:4). Manch ein Prediger verkündigt eine halbe Wahrheit um populär zu sein oder zu bleiben. Das Verlangen den Menschen gefällig zu sein kann sich auch besonders leicht da geltend machen, wo der Diener von der finanziellen Unterstützung der Gemeinde abhängig ist. Das Sprichwort sagt: "Wes Brot ich esse, des Lied ich singe". Eine andere Versuchung ist die Neigung zur **Toleranz**. Toleranz ist eine christliche Tugend, wenn sie geübt wird im Verhältnis zu andersdenkenden Gläubigen, die aber "mit Ernst Christen sein wollen". Toleranz kann jedoch zum Verderben des Arbeiters — und der Gemeinde — führen, wenn es eine Duldsamkeit des Irrtums und der Sünde ist. Samuel Keller spricht von einer "Toleranz zum Tode", und die Bibel sowie auch die Geschichte des Christentums bestätigen diese Wahrheit. Der Einfluß des Lehrdienstes kann nur erhalten werden wenn die Prediger des Evangeliums bereit sind, ihrer Überzeugung treu zu bleiben, auch wenn es gilt dafür zu leiden. Einem Johannes dem Täufer, sowie auch einem Stephanus, kostete diese Treue das Leben.

Wir brauchen Männer in unsern Tagen,
Die für den Herrn ihre Seele wagen,
Die stark sind im Streit, doch durch
Gnade gebeugt
Von denen nicht einer vor Menschen
sich neigt.

Doch gibt es noch weitere Ursachen des schwindenden Einflusses des Lehrdienstes.

3. Es mangelt am unerschütterlichen Glauben an die Autorität des Wortes Gottes. Die Autorität des Arbeiters ist die Autorität des Wortes. Die Vollmacht der Propheten bestand darin, daß sie in dem festen Glaubensbewußtsein sprechen konnten: So spricht der Herr! Moderne Psychologie und menschliche Philosophie können dem Prediger nie die Vollmacht geben für seinen Dienst in der Gemeinde. Die Berufung auf die göttliche Offenbarung verleiht Autorität und Einfluß. Vor dem Reichstag im Worms im Jahre 1521 mußte Luther sich verantworten vor den Wür-

dentragern von Kirche und Staat. Der feste Glaube an Gottes Wort gab ihm die innere Kraft und Freudigkeit für die Wahrheit zu zeugen. Mutig bekannte er: "... Mein Gewissen gefangen ist in Gottes Wort. ... Hier stehe ich, ich kann nicht anders, Gott helfe mir! Amen." Der bekannte Evangelist Billy Graham braucht immer wieder den Ausdruck in seinen Botschaften: Die Bibel sagt!

Wir sind heute in der Gefahr, nach allerlei Ersatzmitteln zu greifen, um den Einfluß auf die Gemeinde zu stärken. Es gibt nur einen Weg: die klare und kraftvolle Predigt des Wortes. Zur Zeit Jeremias predigten die falschen Propheten ihre Träume; Jeremia jedoch hielt sich an Gottes Wort. Der Herr bekannte sich zu seinem treuen Knechte und ließ ihm sagen: "Wo du dich zu mir hältst, so will ich mich zu dir halten, und sollst mein Prediger bleiben" (Jer. 15, 19).

Man könnte noch auf andere Schwächen im Lehrdienst hinweisen — wie Mangel an gegenseitiger Hochachtung und Mangel an Einigkeit unter den Dienern der Gemeinde — doch wir müssen auch aufmerksam machen auf die Ursachen im Leben der heutigen Gemeinden.

II. Ursachen bei der Gemeinde.

In Kanada und in den Vereinigten Staaten sind unsere Gemeinden, besonders in den letzten Jahrzehnten, manchen zersetzenden politischen und sozialen Einflüssen ausgesetzt gewesen. Diese Einflüsse haben in vielen Fällen die Autorität des Lehrdienstes in der Gemeinde untergraben. Die demokratische Staatsverfassung, und noch mehr der demokratische "Geist", haben im Gemeindeleben manche ungesunden Tendenzen gefördert. Dazu kommt noch der Hochdruck einer halbchristlichen Kultur und Bildung. Der Rahmen dieses Aufsatzes erlaubt nur eine Andeutung der Gefahren.

1. Die Überbetonung der Gleichheit aller Gemeindeglieder. Die Wahrheit der vollen Ebenbürtigkeit aller Gotteskinder ist eine köstliche Heilswahrheit: "Hier ist kein Jude noch Grieche, hier ist kein Knecht noch Freier, hier ist kein

Mann noch Weib; denn ihr seid allzumal einer in Christo" (Gal. 3, 28). Alle Rassen- und Klassenunterschiede fallen in Christo weg. Alle Rangordnungen sind in der Gemeinde Jesu Christi ausgeschlossen. So hat der Herr Jesus gelehrt: "... einer ist euer Meister, Christus; ihr aber seid alle Brüder" (Matth. 23, 8).

Doch dieser Wahrheit müssen wir eine andere Wahrheit zur Seite stellen. Es ist die göttliche Verordnung von gewissen Gliedern für bestimmte Dienste. In der Funktion der Glieder bestehen wesentliche Unterschiede, die beachtet werden müssen. Paulus schreibt an die Korinther: "Und Gott hat gesetzt in der Gemeinde aufs erste die Apostel, aufs andere die Propheten, aufs dritte die Lehrer..." (1. Kor. 12, 28). Die Stellung und Verantwortung des Lehrdienstes bedingt eine Stellung der Unterordnung, der Liebe und des Gehorsams von seiten der Gemeinde (Vergl. 1. Thess. 5, 12-13; Hebr. 13, 17). In manchen Gemeinschaften hat man das Prinzip der Bruderschaft auf Kosten des Prinzips der biblischen Autorität in den Gemeinden betont. In Fragen der Lehre trägt der Lehrdienst die Verantwortung vor Gott und der Gemeinde.

Die Überbetonung der Gleichberechtigung aller Glieder bezieht sich in besonderer Weise auch auf die Stellung der Frau in der Gemeinde. Die Emanzipation der Frau durch das Evangelium ist eine der herrlichsten Früchte des Christentums. Das Weib ist nun Miterbin der Gnade Gottes und steht mit dem Manne auf dem Boden der vollen Gleichberechtigung im Empfangen und Genießen aller Heilsgüter. Und doch schreibt Petrus an die Gläubigen: "Desgleichen sollen die Weiber ihren Männern untertan sein..." (1. Pet. 3, 1). Und doch lehrt Paulus: "Einem Weibe aber gestatte ich nicht, daß sie lehre, auch nicht, daß sie des Mannes Herr sei, sondern stille sei" (1. Tim. 2, 12). Die Zulassung der Frauen zum Lehrdienst, wie es auch schon in einigen mennonitischen Richtungen der Fall ist, ist unbiblisch und wirkt sich negativ aus in der Entwicklung der Gemeinde. Der zunehmende Einfluß der Frau in prinzipiellen Fragen des

Gemeindelebens wird als Gegenstück immer einen abnehmenden Einfluß des Lehrdienstes aufzuweisen haben.

2. **Die Entscheidung aller Fragen durch Stimmenmehrheit.** Das demokratische Prinzip, daß die Mehrheit entscheidet, hat ohn Zweifel manches für sich. Doch liegt darin eine Gefahr, wenn man dieses Prinzip auch in Fragen anwendet, wo es sich um Erkenntnis — und Lehrpunkte handelt. Im Mittelalter glaubten manche Theologen, daß eine Wahrheit durch eine sogenannte "Disputation" zu beweisen sei. Heute verfallen wir zuweilen in den Irrtum, daß wir glauben, daß eine biblische Wahrheit durch Stimmenmehrheit festgelegt werden kann. Dieses war nicht der Weg der Apostolischen Gemeinde in der Lösung von Lehrschwierigkeiten, wie aus Apostelgeschichte 15 ersichtlich ist. Die lehrenden Brüder, die Apostel, kamen unter der Leitung des heiligen Geistes zu einer innern Einheit der Überzeugung auf Grund der geschichtlichen Tatsachen sowie auf Grund des prophetischen Wortes. Diese Lösung und Antwort

wurde von den Gemeinden angenommen. Obzwar sich der Herr jedem Gliede seines Leibes offenbart, so ist es dennoch sein göttlicher Wille und Ratschluß, sich durch das Zeugnis seiner Knechte der Gemeinde mitzuteilen. Gott helfe uns das biblische Gleichgewicht zu halten!

Andere zersetzende Einflüsse in unserem Gemeindeleben sind die Geistesströmungen einer Christuslosen Kultur und Bildung. Leider achten manche Gemeindeglieder mehr auf das, was der Professor oder Politiker in sittlich-religiösen Fragen zu sagen hat, als auf das was der Knecht des Herrn auf Grund des Wortes sagt. Die laute Propaganda durch Presse und Rundfunk übertönt oft die Stimme des Zeugen der Wahrheit.

Nur eine tiefgehende Reinigung und Neubelebung gewirkt durch den heiligen Geist, die beim Lehrdienst beginnt und dann die ganze Gemeinde erfaßt, kann den Einfluß des Lehrdienstes wiederherstellen zum Segen der Gemeinde und zum Heil der Verlorenen. Das walte Gott!
J. A. Töws.

EVANGELISM

The Proposition in Preaching

Preaching, says Pattison, is "the spoken communication of divine truth with a view to persuasion." Two elements of this definition are important. There is the static element, that of "divine truth", which is unchanging and final. It has been so through the centuries. On the other hand, there is a dynamic element in the definition characterized by the term "communication". Communication involves the transfer of eternal truth from its divine repository, God, to the mind of man. This process is subject to change, since man's thinking is symbolized best by change.

This would mean that in preaching the **message** remains unchanged, but the **method** is subject to change. Hop-

pin says correctly that "the human method of presenting divine truth so that it may be received to the welfare of the soul, must be adapted to the soul, and to the soul of an age."

Closely associated with method in preaching is the subject of homiletics. "Homiletics is the science that teaches the fundamental principles of public discourse as applied to the proclamation and teaching of divine truth in regular assemblies gathered for the purpose of Christian worship" (Hopkin). This method of preaching is subject to investigation and inspection, to revision if need be, without fear of desecrating the central aspect of the sermon, its message.

This article addresses itself to one particular aspect of homiletics, namely to the use of a proposition in preaching. Mennonite Brethren preaching of the past generation has been much influenced by the Bible School movement. The majority of our preachers below fifty years of age, have attended these schools and those who have not, have been subjected to this influence through ministers' courses and conventions. The leader in the field of homiletics was undoubtedly brother John G. Wiens, of Winkler. His book on homiletics was used in many schools, and the majority of the teachers in the Bible Schools had received instruction from him in the art of preaching.

If my evaluation is correct, it is safe to say that the strongest feature of brother Wiens' homiletics was the aspect of outlining a text. His twelve principles of outlining are stimulating and certainly usable (pp. 56-58). There is, however, one feature which is not included and that is the proposition. Consequently, few Mennonite Brethren preachers make use of the proposition.

There may be a legitimate explanation for the general absence of a proposition in the sermon. Many feel that the title or theme covers that which for others is the function of a proposition. The proposition has been given the following definition:

"The proposition of a sermon (Hauptsatz) is that portion in which the subject or the theme of the sermon is more distinctly and more formally announced."

"...is a statement of the particular truth arising out of the theme which the preacher wishes to elaborate. It is the ultimate conclusion which the sermon has in view."

"The proposition states the thing to be proved or the question to be answered in the sermon... The proposition is to the discourse what the heart is to the physical system... It is the sermon in a nutshell."

Looking at these definitions, it becomes clear that the proposition is more than a statement of subject. The proposition answers the question: What is the sermon about? The theme is the

subject, but the proposition states both subject and predicate of the sermon. It is the statement of the subject as the preacher proposes to develop it. It is the major "contention" of the sermon, the one great idea which is to be transmitted to the audience.

The proposition is the sermon in miniature. Someone has rightly said: "The discourse is the proposition unfolded, the proposition is the discourse condensed." After announcing his theme, the speaker also announces his "major thrust", the "central contention" which he wishes to prove.

The question might now be raised; Should every sermon have a proposition? In this there must be complete, favorable agreement among preachers. To disagree is to argue that a sermon should not have one central thought to which all other thoughts are subordinated. The question might be asked whether it is always necessary to state the proposition. This could be a matter for debate.

F. D. Whitesell is too sharp in his evaluation of the sermons which lack a proposition. He says: "Whether or not a sermon has a proposition formally stated is a question of more than form. It is a question of the inner quality of preaching. Leave out the proposition and you have shallow and effervescent preaching. Use the proposition, and you have thoughtful, solid elemental preaching." This can scarcely be so. Many "thoughtful and solid" sermons are preached with no definitely stated proposition and may clearly enunciated propositions fail to rescue the body of the sermon from its mediocrity.

The proposition does have certain definite advantages for young preachers as well as for the most accomplished pulpiteer. These advantages speak for its adoption as a regular feature in the sermon.

The proposition gives unity to the sermon. Without unity the sermon will likely be rambling, and end without accomplishing any definite object. The criticism could be valid which says: "he aimed at nothing in particular; and he hit it." Aristotle spoke correctly when he said that every discourse should

state something, and prove it. It is somewhat doubtful if the speaker will ever "speak to the point" unless he has a clearly thought out proposition.

The proposition also makes for better understanding on the part of the listener. If the speaker states his proposition, the hearer knows which direction the speaker intends to go. The hearer can immediately agree or disagree with the major contention of the sermon and thus become personally involved in the discourse.

Perhaps a few propositions by renowned preachers might help to convince. Horace Bushnell's sermon, **Every Man's Life a Plan of God**, is still recognized as a masterpiece. Preachers should read it for the finest in form and content. He begins his sermon by stating this proposition:

"The truth I propose then for your consideration is this: That God has a definite life-plan for every person, girding him, visibly or invisibly, for some exact thing which it will be true significance and the glory of his life to have accomplished."

There may be a question as to whether it is simply stated but there can be no doubt as to whether or not this was the main trust of the sermon. This it was, and Bushnell did prove his point. Such a procedure makes possible an evaluation of the effectiveness of the sermon. Did we actually "get the point across?" Did we leave one central thought with the audience, one lasting impression? If we did, we probably had a proposition, stated or implied. I prefer them clearly stated.

F. C. Peters.

MISSIONS

Der Sieg Gottes in der Weltmission.

Die gegenwärtige Lage der Weltmission fordert zum ernstesten Nachdenken auf. Nachtschwarze Gewitterwolken bedecken ganze Länder der Erde, und viele Gotteskinder fragen sich, wie es sich denn eigentlich mit dem Sieg Gottes in der Geschichte verhält. Es ist von größter Wichtigkeit, daß wir immer wieder scharfe Blicke in die Weltmission werfen, um vor Illusionen bewahrt zu bleiben. Türen, die einst weit offen standen, sind heute fest verriegelt. China wäre ein Beispiel. Der anti-göttliche Koloß, der Kommunismus, droht die ganze Welt zu überwältigen. Weltsinn und Materialismus rütteln stark am Fundament der sogenannten christlichen Welt. Vor unsern Augen sehen wir die zunehmende Antipathie der östlichen Völker gegen die Länder von wo aus das Christentum zu ihnen kam — und damit ist oft eine Abneigung gegen die Botschaft des Kreuzes verbunden. Die Welt des Islam wird beständig größer. Ganze Länder — Indonesien, Pakistan, der Nahe Osten,

z.B. Afghanistan, u.a. — sind unter dem Bahne des Mohammedanismus. Wir übersehen nicht die großen Möglichkeiten, welche die heutige Zeit der Verkündigung der Heilsbotschaft bietet; auch zweifeln wir nicht an den endgültigen Sieg Gottes, aber es will uns manchmal beim Anblick der zunehmenden Macht der Finsternis der Pessimismus beschleichen.

Schauen wir auf die Weltmission vom Standpunkt der göttlichen Offenbarung, so finden wir, daß die Schrift recht klar das Zunehmen, und das Wachstum des Reiches Gottes hier auf Erden lehrt — man denke hier nur an die Gleichnisse vom Senfkorn und vom Sauerteig. (Man mache bitte, bei der Auslegung dieser Gleichnisse doch keinen Unterschied zwischen Himmelreich und Reich Gottes!) Für Jesus, der die Missionsgeschichte im Voraus sah, und für Paulus, der Jesu Bahnbrecher für die Weltmission war, war Missionsgeschichte im Vollsinn des Wortes ein "Triumph" des Gekreuzigten. Und heute? Es gibt

heute mehr Heiden als zur Zeit William Carey's, des Pioniers des modernen Missionszeitalters. (Natürlich gibt es heute auch viel mehr Menschen in der Welt). Auf jeden Fall, die ganze Frage des Sieges Gottes in der Missionsgeschichte ist eine heiklige, und da sich heute viele mit der Frage beschäftigen, möchten wir etwas zur Beleuchtung des Problems sagen.

I. Der Sieg Gottes am Kreuz.

Der Sieg Gottes in der Weltmission findet am Kreuz seine historische Grundlage. Die ersten Zeugen Jesu wußten ihre Missionsbotschaft in der Geschichte verankert. Sie verkündigten vollendete geschichtliche Tatsachen — Jesus gestorben, begraben, auferstanden, gen Himmel gefahren. Gott hatte am Kreuz, in Christus gehandelt, und seine Herrschaft herbeigeführt. Die Mächte der Finsternis waren ein für alle mal besiegt. In diesem Bewußtsein des göttlichen Sieges am Kreuz durchzogen die Apostel Städte und Land, um die Herrschaft Jesu zu verkündigen.

Man kann sich keinen Missionsimperativ denken ohne diesen geschichtlichen Indikativ. Der Sieg Gottes war eine Wirklichkeit geworden, darum "so gehet hin in alle Welt." Das vollbrachte Werk der Erlösung, am Kreuz geschehen, ist die Grundlage für den Missionsbefehl. Es ging nicht darum die Welt zu "besiegen," sondern der Welt den Sieg Gottes zu verkündigen. Das Schlagwort der ersten Zeugen Jesu war: **Kyrios Jesus**, d.h. Jesus ist Herr. Wir brauchen Ihn nicht in der Welt zum König zu machen, sondern der Welt zu sagen, daß Er König ist; Er hat seine Herrschaft bereits angetreten. Freilich, seine Herrschaft wird nicht allgemein anerkannt, aber das ändert nicht an der geschichtlichen Tatsache. Schon beim Anblick des vor Ihm liegenden Kreuzesweges sagte Jesus: "Jetzt ist das Gericht dieser Welt! Jetzt wird der Fürst dieser Welt hinausgeworfen werden" (Joh. 12, 31). Gerade durch's Kreuz hat Er die Fürstentümer ihrer Rüstung beraubt (Kol. 2, 14-15), und die "Reiche dieser Welt sind unseres Herrn und seines Christus geworden."

Daher der Siegesruf: "Es ist vollbracht." Ehe der letzte Missionsbefehl gegeben wurde, wiederholt Jesus noch einmal vor seinen Jüngern, "Mir ist gegeben alle Gewalt." Nach dieser feierlichen Bestätigung der Herrschaft Jesu, und des vollbrachten Sieges Gottes, spricht Er: "Darum, so gehet hin."

In der Missionsarbeit das Bewußtsein zu haben, daß wir nicht den Sieg für Gott zu erringen haben, sondern den Sieg Gottes zu verkündigen haben, gibt uns einen unerschütterlichen Optimismus — ein Optimismus der nicht auf Illusionen aufgebaut worden ist, sondern der auf geschichtliche Tatsachen beruht. Gott hat gesiegt.

II. Der Sieg Gottes in der Geschichte.

Wenn auch der Sieg Gottes eine geschichtliche Transaktion ist, so wirkt sich der errungene Sieg Gottes am Kreuz doch in der Geschichte, der Gegenwart, aus. Die Kräfte der oberen Welt wurden am Kreuz entfesselt, und sind nun in der Zeit wirksam. Doch da drängt sich bei uns die Frage auf, wie wir uns den Sieg Gottes in der Geschichte vorstellen. Die großen Niederlagen in der Weltmission zeugen doch recht deutlich davon, daß Ihm noch nicht alles untertan ist.

Es geht in dieser Frage um das Problem einer biblischen Geschichtsphilosophie. Diese darf nur von der hohen Warte der göttlichen Offenbarung, in seinem Wort, formuliert werden. Ganz anders ist es mit Geschichtsphilosophien dieser Erde. Da gibt es die eine Ansicht, daß die Geschichte der Menschheit beständig sich wiederholende, und wiederkehrende Zeitenkreise darstellt. Das Ende eines Kreises ist der Anfang des Nächsten. An einen Abschluß der Geschichte glaubt man nicht. Wäre dem so, dann lebten wir buchstäblich in einem "Teufelskreis." Andere haben sich die Geschichte als ein Spiral gedacht, wo mit jedem Kreis der Geschichte, die Menschheit zu einer höheren Fläche hinaufsteigt. Nicht in Zirkeln geht die Menschheit, sondern sie macht Fortschritt. So gibt es noch viele andere Geschichtserklärungen — etliche sehr optimistisch, andere recht pessimistisch.

Da für uns die Menschheitsgeschichte aufs engste verbunden ist mit der Heilsgeschichte, müssen wir auch eine ganz andere Perspektive haben wenn wir an den Verlauf der Geschichte denken, und an den Sieg Gottes in der Geschichte. Hier stehen wir aber vor einem biblischen Paradox — deren es recht manche gibt. Da lehrt die Schrift uns einerseits ein beständiges Zunehmen des Bösen in der Menschengeschichte bis es im Antichristen gipfelt. Es gibt einen Abfall und ein Verführerwerden und ein Irregehen in der letzten Zeit. Andererseits nimmt das Reich Gottes zu und Gott bringt seine Herrschaft auf Erden mit einem gewaltigen Eingreifen am Ende der Geschichte zu einem glorreichen und siegreichen Abschluß. Hier gilt es also vorsichtig zu sein, wenn man eine Definition für den Sieg Gottes in der Geschichte denkt. Wir müssen uns, vor allen Dingen, beim Gedanken an Gottes Sieg in der Weltmission, darüber klar sein, daß das Reich Gottes seiner Entstehung und Entwicklung nach völlig verschieden ist von irdischen Reichen und Mächten. Die Verheißungen Jesu für den Sieg der Gemeinde in der Welt haben nichts mit irdischem Glanz und irdischer Größe zu tun. Der Weg der Gemeinde ist der Weg des Dienens, des Opfernens, des Leidens, und nicht der Weg der Macht und der Größe. Hier gilt es immer vom eschatologischen Ziel, vom ewigen Ziel aus, zu schauen; alle irdischen Reiche werden "am Ende des Äons", vor diesem himmlischen Reich in Nichts vergehen (vgl. Rienicker, Matth. 13).

Wenn wir, also, vom Sieg des Evangeliums in der Welt reden, so müssen wir alle menschlichen Maßstäbe, die angelegt werden um das Wachstum des Reiches Gottes abzuschätzen, zur Seite legen. Wir sind so geneigt unseren Standard für "Erfolg" von der Welt zu nehmen. Oft sind bei uns große Zahlen der Beweis für den Sieg Gottes. Wenn in einer Evangelisationsversammlung tausend Menschen aufstanden, oder nach vorne kamen — nicht immer genau wissend wozu oder weshalb —, dann ist Erfolg gewesen. Von der Statistik aus wollen wir den Sieg Gottes

abwerten. Aber auch solche "Erfolge" sind verhältnismäßig wenig und klein im Blick auf die ganze Völkerwelt, und das Gesamtbild will uns manchmal geradezu bange machen. Wird Gottes Reich nicht heute von den bösen Mächten überwunden?

Um die Jahrhundertwende war der Gedanke der Weltchristianisierung recht populär. Man glaubte das Christentum würde sich bald in allen Ländern, allen Kulturen, und allen menschlichen Einrichtungen durchsetzen. Das Christentum, so glaubte man, sei der Sauerteig, der den ganzen Teig durchsäuern würde. Zum Teil bekam dieser falsche Optimismus durch den weitverbreiteten Evolutionsgedanken seine Unterstützung. Die Welt, im Prozeß der Entwicklung, würde besser und besser werden, und bald würde auf dieser Erde das Reich Gottes aufgerichtet sein. Andererseits gaben auch die außergewöhnlich großen Erfolge der Mission im 19. Jahrhundert Veranlassung zu solchem Denken. Länder die lange verschlossen gewesen, öffneten sich dem Evangelium, und triumphierend lief die göttliche Botschaft von Land zu Land — man denke hier an China, Japan, Afrika, Korea, und die Welt der Inseln. Jedoch durch die Katastrophen des letzten halben Jahrhunderts ist dieser Optimismus sehr abgebaut worden. Das Paradies wurde nicht gefunden, und in Ländern die Jahrhunderte lang unter dem Einfluß des Christentums gewesen, schienen die Menschen auf einmal barbarische Heiden zu sein, und ergingen sich im Schlachten und Morden ihrer Mitmenschen. Heute denkt man etwas realistischer, denn das vermeintliche Utopien ist durch menschliches Können nicht herbeigeführt worden.

Wir glauben nicht an eine Weltchristianisierung, aber wir glauben doch an einen Sieg des Reiches Gottes in der Geschichte der Menschheit. Einmal dürfen wir Gott nicht einschränken. Auch in den dunkelsten Stunden der Geschichte hat sich das Evangelium durchgesetzt. Wenn man immer auf angenehme Zeiten gewartet hätte ehe man Missionen plante, dann wäre nie Mission getan worden. Manche große Missionsgesellschaften des modernen

Missionszeitalters wurden zur Zeit der napoleonischen Kriege gegründet — eine Zeit, die nicht sehr gelegen war für solche Wagnisse. Auch haben wir keine Vorstellung von dem was Gott noch in der Geschichte tun kann und wird. Daher freuen wir uns auch über jede durchschlagende Erweckung in welcher Tausende ins Reich Gottes gebracht werden. Es wäre unbiblisch, wenn wir nicht Großes von Gott, auch in unserer Zeit, erwarteten. Wer bekannt ist mit unseren großen Missionsliedern, der wird finden, daß diese recht stark den Glauben an den Triumph des Evangeliums in der Geschichte aussprechen. Auch wenn wir den Erfolg der Mission nicht in äußerlichen Faktoren sehen, so dürfen wir diesen gegenüber doch nicht indifferent sein. Jesus hat die Frage der Jünger, ob nur wenige würden selig werden, nicht beantwortet. Wir wollen da nicht reden wo Jesus schweigt. Ganz richtig sagt Stewart: "If it is dangerous for the Church in the work of mission to corrupt the Gospel through being swayed by success, it is no less precarious for the Church to argue from the absence of success to the purity of the Gospel proclaimed" (J. S. Stewart, *Thine is the Kingdom*, p. 64).

Wir müssen uns letzten Endes mit dem biblischen Gegensatz zwischen dem "apokalyptischen" und dem "prophetischen" Ausblick, was den Sieg des Herrn in der Geschichte betrifft, bekannt machen. Der "apokalyptische" Seher hat wenig Aussichten für den Sieg des Reiches Gottes in der Geschichte, sondern sieht nur den Sieg Gottes am Ende der Geschichte, wenn Gott mit Macht einbricht, seine Gemeinde heimholt, und die böse Welt richtet, und dann sein ewiges Reich aufrichtet. Der "prophetische" Blick hat es mehr mit dem Sieg Gottes in der Gegenwart zu tun, wenn auch die Endkrise stark in sein Bild hineinspielt. Die Bibel unterstützt beide. Es gibt einmal ein Wachstum des Reiches Gottes in der Geschichte; es gibt aber auch einen radikalen Abschluß der Geschichte durch da Eingreifen Gottes. Das Wachstum des Reiches Gottes wird klar gelehrt, wie wir es verstehen, durch die Gleichnisse vom Senfkorn und Sau-

erteig, und andere Bibelworte. Aber sehr klar wird uns auch gesagt, daß Gott am Ende dieses Zeitalters in die Menschheit hineinbricht, durch seinen Sohn, und mit der Menschheit abrechnen wird. Also ein Gegensatz. "Sometimes the Scripture bids us lift up our eyes and look away beyond history; sometimes it spreads history itself before us and shows us Christ conquering and to conquer..." (Stewart, *Thine is the Kingdom*, p. 70). Sieg kommt jetzt in dieser Zeit; Sieg kommt bei der Vollendung. Der Ausgang der Mission ist nicht nur gewiß, sondern auch herrlich — **Christus Victor**. Und der Sieg in der Geschichte? Der ist auch gewiß, aber den wollen wir nicht zu klar definieren; vielmehr wollen wir unsern Beitrag zu diesem Sieg liefern. Nur nachdem die Gemeinde den Missionsbefehl ausgeführt hat, kommt der Sieg Gottes in der Vollendung.

III. Der Sieg Gottes in der Vollendung.

Der Missionsfehl Jesu an seine Jünger, schloß mit der Verheißung: "Und, siehe, ich bin bei euch alle Tage, bis ans Ende der Weltzeit." Damit hat Jesus Weltmission und Weltvollendung verbunden. Der Missionsauftrag zielt auf die Offenbarung des Sieges Gottes am Ende dieses Äons. In Matth. 24, 14, wo Jesus von der Predigt des Evangeliums in aller Welt spricht, fügt Er hinzu: "dann wird das Ende kommen."

Diese enge Verbindung zwischen dem Sieg des Evangeliums in dieser Zeit und dem Sieg Gottes am Ende dieser Zeitperiode, haben viele führende Männer in der Missionsgeschichte gesehen und betont. Dr. Samuel Zwemer, Apostel der Islamischen Welt, predigte in 1943 über das Thema: "Die Wiederkunft Jesu und die Weltmission." Laßt uns nicht zur Trägheit verführt werden durch einen falschen Dispensationalismus der den Juden die Weltevangelifizierung, nach der Entrückung der Gemeinde, überläßt. Es gibt immer noch Menschen, die sich mehr damit beschäftigen wa sie im Tausendjährigen Reich tun werden, als daß sie jetzt etwas tun. Die Verkündigung der Heilsbotschaft in der ganzen Welt ist die Aufgabe der Gemeinde in dieser Zeit — es sei ferne

von uns festzustellen, wann diese Aufgabe erfüllt sein wird. Und dann kommt der Herr. So glaubte R. H. Glover, früher Direktor der China Inland Mission; so glaubt G. W. Playfair, Direktor der Sudan Interior Mission, und viele Missionsleiter mit ihnen. Dr. A. B. Simpson, Gründer der Christian and Missionary Alliance, schrieb: "Das Werk der Mission ist das große Mittel durch welches das Kommen des Herrn beschleunigt wird" (G. Ladd, *The Blessed Hope*, p. 152).

Hat die Gemeinde erst ihre Aufgabe hier auf Erden getan, dann kommt der Sieg Gottes in der Vollendung. Alle Geschichtsphilosophien die nicht für einen glorreichen, siegreichen Klimax des Reiches Gottes stehen, sind unzulänglich. So wie der Sieg des Evangeliums heute sich auf den Sieg Gottes am Kreuz gründet, so ist auch der Sieg Gottes in der Vollendung das göttliche "Amen" zu dem Triumphzug des Gekreuzigten in der Jetztzeit. "Thus our concept of the end of missions must be

related to missions because we have made the claim consistently that the end cannot occur apart from the completion of the missionary task of the Church... To divorce missions... in thinking of the end, is to do great violence to the divine structure of history" (H. Lindsell, *A Christian Philosophy of Missions*, p. 190). Wenn auch die Endkrise in der Menschheitsgeschichte, und auch der Missionsgeschichte, von Gott selbst herbeigeführt wird, so ist die Aktivität des Menschen davon nicht ausgeschlossen.

Wir wollen, aus Liebe zum Herrn, mit einer Passion für die Verlorenen, und aus dem Gefühl der Pflicht, den Missionsbefehl des Herrn Jesu ausführen. Unsere Arbeit wollen wir stets vom Sieg des Kreuzes aus beschauen; wir wollen siegesbewußt den Mächten der Finsternis entgegenreten; aber wir wollen auch auf den gewaltigen Klimax unserer Arbeit schauen — der Sieg Gottes in der Vollendung.

--David Ewert.

EXPOSITIONAL

The Interpretation of Parables

The word "Parable", comes to us from the Greek word "paraballo", which Thayer's Lexicon defines as meaning, "to put one thing by the side of another for the sake of comparison, to compare, liken."¹ Schodde defines a parable in the following terms: "In the more usual and technical sense of the word, 'parable' ordinarily signifies an imaginary story, yet one that in its details could have actually transpired, the purpose of the story being to illustrate and inculcate some higher spiritual truth."²

Unger divides parables into two classes, which he names "symbolic" and "typical."³ Into the first category he places those parables in which the physical and the natural becomes a symbol of that which is immaterial and supernatural. As an example of this type we mention the natural processes of

sowing and reaping which are used as symbols of the growth of the Gospel. In a "typical" parable the truth is set forth by direct example. In this type of parable the chief persons are representatives of some moral and spiritual attitude or disposition. To illustrate, the good Samaritan is a type of the kind person who loves his neighbor.

The greater bulk of the parables recorded in Scriptures are recorded in the Synoptic Gospels and come to us **from the teachings** of Jesus. Christ had a special reason for using them, and he gave it to the disciples while telling them the parable of the sower. After Christ had told this parable to the multitude, we are informed, that the disciples came to him with a request for his reason of speaking in parables.⁴ This seems to indicate that up until

that time, Jesus had not used this form of instruction and the disciples immediately sensed some specific purpose in this method. In the resulting conversation Jesus gives two reasons for his new approach. In the first place he did it, "because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." The disciples were willing to accept the teachings of Jesus and consequently he could give them more knowledge. The Pharisees and other enemies objected to the preaching and as a result they were to be kindered in understanding it. By speaking in parables, which He later interpreted to the disciples, Jesus was able to continue his ministry to the believers.

Due to the fact that the Synoptic Gospels give us the interpretation of all of the parables (perhaps Jesus did not interpret all of them, for in some cases the meaning was obvious, e.g. Matt. 13:51; 21:45) it is left up to us to determine the intended meaning. However, we may safely assume, that explanations which are recorded, were given to us as a guide in interpreting the rest. However we should refrain from the temptation of setting up a hard and fast system according to which we then interpret every parable. This is the case where it is held that, for example, "birds" are always a symbol of the devil or that "leaven" is always a symbol of sin.

The problem of interpreting parables centres around the question of how much of the parable is significant and how much of it is merely the outward shell which holds the story together. Two main schools of thought have developed around this question. The one group believes that there is a central core, one main thought, which is relevant and the rest should be considered mere drapery. They hold that there is actually only one point of contact between the parable and the central truth. It has been illustrated by the point of contact existing between a sphere and a plane. Here at any given time the two can come into contact at only one given point.

There is a danger in accepting this interpretation, for did not Jesus speak

of the sower, the seed, the birds, the fields, the thorns and assign a meaning to each? If we accept only one basic idea we are liable to lose many other important truths. Trench writes, "Besides it is always observable, the more this system (of rejecting the unessential) is carried, the more the peculiar beauty of the parable disappears."⁵

The other school of thought attempts to determine the symbolic meaning of every person, beast, article and word that appears in the parable. This was the basis of the allegorical interpretation propounded by many of the Church Fathers. They felt that every detail was important and should be expounded to reveal the whole truth. Even to-day we meet this type of exposition in which it is often claimed that only by this method is one able to reach the "deeper" truths of Scriptures. An honest appraisal of some of these systems reveals their mediocrity.

Obviously there must be some "golden mean" which we must follow in our interpretation of the parables. It is obvious that Jesus was trying to teach some main truth when he spoke in a parable. In the interpretation we must attempt to determine this central thought. Schodde calls this, "determining between the bark and the marrow. Those features which illustrate the scope of the parable belong to the substance, and those which do not, belong to the ornamentation."⁶

The central thought, or scope, is often stated, e.g. Luke 18:9 "And He spoke this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others" Luke 19:11. "And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." Cf. also Matt. 18:23; 20:1; 25:13; Luke 15:2; 18:1.

These passages, and many others, tell us the occasion on which the parable was told. A careful study of the situation will help us in determining what is essential and what is ornamental in the parable.

There are other basic rules to be fol-

lowed in interpreting parables. One has been called by one writer the "perspective principle."⁷ It is pointed out that the parables deal with the topic of Christ and His kingdom. A right perspective of the whole them is important if we would understand it. We must keep in mind that the Kingdom is both present and future. Present in the sense that it came with Christ's entrance into the world, future in the sense that the consummation (the harvest) will be in the end.

Furthermore, one should study a parable in its cultural background. The stories presented to us reflect the life of the people of those times. Due to the fact that our culture is different we may find the parables hard to understand. Unless we know something about the culture of Bible times we are in danger of underscoring certain customs and of setting them up as Biblical examples to be followed.

Lastly we should be on guard not to read doctrines into the parables. The parables display, but never systematise the Christian doctrines. They were given for the purpose of throwing light on certain questions but never to give a complete discussion of the whole problem.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Camping With A Purpose

Camps have steadily grown in scope, significance, and popularity among Christians in the last decade. Over four million children will attend the more than 12,500 camps in Canada and the United States this summer. By now summer camping is an accepted part of the evangelistic, recreational, and Christian education program of many denominations, and each year more and more Christian children, young people, and families, see for themselves why this is so.

In summing up we must remind ourselves that the parables are a perfect example of the oriental way of thinking and teaching. The westerner speaks by "points" and has a "system" of theology, but the oriental thinks and speaks in symbols and "pictures". We must be very careful when attempting to transfer the "symbol" into a "system". We know it is possible, for our Gospel was intended for everyman irrespective of his cultural background. We must therefore let ourselves be guided by the Holy spirit, and then check our conclusions against those of other brethren.

V. D. Toews.

1. Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.
2. Schodde, G. H., "Parables", The International Standard Encyclopaedia, p. 2243.
3. Unger, M. Principles of Expository Preaching. p. 188.
4. Matt. 13, Mark 4, Luke 8.
5. Trench. Notes of the Parables. p. 16.
6. Schodde, op. cit.
7. Ramm, B. Protestant Biblical Interpretation. p. 257.

I. Opportunities

Our churches, too, have not been slow to realize that here is one of the greatest opportunities to influence young lives with Christian ideals. Most of the children of the churches of our conference in Canada and the U.S. have access to an M.B. operated and supervised camp. Young people and families are in increasing numbers taking advantage of the opportunity for retreats at camps.

1. **To influence children.** Of greatest impact is the opportunity to influence

boys and girls for Christ. In the average week at camp, a boy or girl spends up to one hundred waking hours with a young man or woman who may become the child's ideal. Inasmuch as the camper and the counsellor eat together, play together, do camp chores together, participate in sports activities together, study the Bible together, the counsellor is afforded a most advantageous opportunity to influence and impress this young life. When parents calculate the value and dividends realized from sending the children to camp, they are sold on the idea. Even if it means some sacrifice, every young person should have the chance to attend a Christian camp because of what it will mean to his own life. Children bring home more than nut-brown faces, sparkling eyes, and happy memories. Many bring new lives, a more obedient heart, a more earnest witness, and a meaningful and enjoyable.

2. **To develop the counsellor.** Nor is it only the children who are helped spiritually during camp. Counsellors often report spiritual enrichment and blessing to their own lives. After a winter of work, teaching, or college, it is often with reluctance that they consent to be staff members at a children's camp. Little do they realize that God means to further and promote their own spiritual lives. In the spiritual atmosphere, while being themselves engaged in helping others, workers often get down to business with God. "It was on my knees on the lake shore at the camp one evening that I met the Lord as I had never seen him before. It was there I renewed my covenant with God", was the testimony of a counsellor.

3. **To enrich a home.** Some of the children who attend camp are from homes where there is little or no Christian training. These children lack the experience of living in a Christian environment and associating with only Christian boys and girls for even one full day: Now, as never before, they become aware of the responsibility of transforming concepts into daily living and of translating truth into the daily walk. Having lived for ten days or two weeks in this manner, they will be bet-

ter prepared to live the Christian life where they stand alone. So these young Christians will be encouraged to introduce the Christian life at home for they have found it practical and possible. An example of such a case is the following: "I just wanted to tell you," explained a tall man to the minister, "I and my wife were converted because of the changed lives of our two daughters who had attended camp. I was a beer truck driver, and plenty rough. But those two kids of ours, living their religion after they came home from camp, put me under conviction. They were two happy girls when Mom and Dad knelt at the altar and found God. I know personally that these Christian camps pay off." We thus notice that many a home has benefited from the camping experience of the child.

II. Objectives

Stating camp objectives is connected with certain dangers. Objectives can be stated in such multiplicity that the array is confusing to the camper as well as to the counsellor. On the other hand, a lack of clearly defined objectives may likewise lead to vague generalities and failure to achieve. A statement of what is to be achieved at camp requires focus. Since there must be breadth as well as brevity, we must concentrate on the primary purposes and subordinate the others to them. The goals for which a Christian camp should strive includes three main areas.

1. **Spiritual.** We expect a Christian camp to be evangelistic. Every camper should be challenged with the need of personal salvation. Many camps are mission camps, consequently we must make the message of salvation clear and plain. In all camps there will be those who are unsaved and we must not miss the opportunity to lead them to Christ. Furthermore, the Christian camp is a Bible Camp so we must place the Bible in the center of our curriculum. We want to help the individual camper develop a program of personal growth and Christian action. Through studying the Bible and praying consistently the camper should be

helped to live a more effective Christian life at home, in the Church, and in his community.

2. Recreational. Possibly all campers, children as well as adults, go to camp for enjoyment, recreation, and what is generally called a "good time." There is often the mistaken idea that counsellors, the camp director, and other supervisors are there to curb the campers' desires. This is not so, rather, they are there to direct recreational activities to ensure the utmost enjoyment. It is the purpose of the camp to provide a place for retreat, recreation, and diversion. It is part of the program of the camp to provide opportunities for developing skills in sports, swimming, craft, and other out-of-door activities. Adequate variety and purposeful, supervised recreation, as well as free-time sports and hikes, will help to provide a happy, wholesome time for the campers.

3. Social. Finally, there is the social phase of the objectives. Through group experiences the camper learns to live happily, in genuine Christian fellowship, with others. He learns to adjust to new groups, to live in a cabin unit, and to associate with those whom he would not normally select as companions. By being away from home and the maternal care, he learns to take care of his own needs. There is a distinct value in learning to adjust to new situations and people quickly and easily. The personality and the experience of the camper is enriched by these opportunities of contact with other campers and with the camp staff.

III. Personnel

1. The need for workers. One of the greatest and most pressing need of children's camps is volunteers to staff the camp. We are accustomed to this common, universal need for workers when it comes to religious endeavors today. Why is this? Among the many reasons for the lack of personnel may be the fact that many young people work in summer to earn money for next winter's Bible school, college, or university studies. Others attend summer school. Then, the majority have

steady jobs from which they are unable to get a release for a period of several weeks or more and expect the position to be available for them when they return. However, there must be a number who would be in position to serve in this type of work without jeopardizing their job, if they only could become willing to sacrifice their time.

Perhaps many do not serve because our methods of recruiting help are inadequate. May be the solicitation is begun too late in the season—after plans for the summer have been completed. Or, it may be that many are never personally approached and asked to help, and they are so modest and think that they do not have the abilities to be useful at camp. Another group may just be uninformed and do not realize what they miss by not serving in this capacity.

2. The Task. To staff a fair sized camp a number of workers are needed: director, cooks, counsellors, office secretary, recreational director, hand-craft worker, nurse, life guard, business manager, and others. A camp must be well-organized and the workers well-instructed as to their duties to work together as a team and achieve the desired results.

All camp workers are what the term says—"workers." But those who have the greatest responsibility for the individual camper are the cabin counsellors. They are closest to the children. From the time the rising bell rings (sometimes before) until the lights are off at night (most of the time after) these workers are on duty. Their duties vary from braiding hair, buttoning dresses in back, teaching rudiments of housekeeping to younger children, or settling a pillow fight, to teaching classes, conducting devotions, and doing personal work. In the evening, when boys like to "pull pranks" which disturb the cabin and girls whisper confidential stories that elicit giggles, counsellors must use their native genius to lull the campers to sleep. Counsellors try every device possible, telling stories, playing mouth organ, airing sacred music over the P.A. system, or just plain discipline.

The counsellor must exercise a great amount of patience in all of these circumstances. Most of the events make up the harmless fun of the camping experience—providing it is kept under proper control.

3. Qualifications of the workers. Probably it is not superfluous to enumerate some of the desirable qualifications of the workers. We need the very best to utilize the valuable time and to do this all-important work. I shall enumerate some of the salient traits desirable for the counsellor. 1) He should be a mature Christian with a pleasing disposition and an attractive personality. 2) He must know and love the Bible, and his life should be in harmony with its teachings. 3) He should have a sincere love for children and possess considerable tolerance capacity. 4) He should possess robust physical health and enjoy outdoor life and activities. 5) He should be able to work with others, have leadership qualities, but not be a "boss." No one expects perfection in all of these areas, however, these are basic and highly significant if the worker is to do a satisfactory job. It is without question that the worker will further develop and improve the above mentioned qualities while engaged at the task. Remember, "what the job does to you might be just as important as what you do to the job."

4. Rewards for the worker. Those who offer themselves for camp service despite all the undesirable aspects and the great demands will experience a most enjoyable summer. In most instances there is no financial remuneration; in the case where the worker is paid it is only a token of appreciation. Looking at that which is at hand, the work seems somewhat unrewarding, hectic, taxing the endurance and the nervous and physical energy of the workers; however, in the end the work yields a most bounteous reward. I have yet to meet the first counsellor who regrets having served in camp. Without exception they speak of the time spent at camp as rewarding and most valuable. "The greatest reward is a task well done."

IV. Dangers

I believe it is in place to mention a few cautions or pitfalls which must be guarded against.

1. There is the danger that the children make only a camp experience in regards to salvation. Actually it is harder not to be a Christian in camp than to be one. The social pressures against the unconverted child are great in camp, because the vast majority of the campers are saved. Very easily, now, the camper can be coerced to make a commitment. Such experiences often evaporate as soon as the child comes home and the pressure is off. There may be more truth than we realize in the statement: "Mr. or Miss so and so saved me." It was only a human work. This can lead to disappointment and confusion in the life of the child.

2. Another danger may be that there is not the proper nurture after camp. The child may have made a genuine experience at camp, nevertheless, in view of the temporariness and the transitoriness of the camp environment he may remain unrelated and disoriented when he comes back to his home and church. He does not testify of his new-found life or commitment and consequently receives no help or encouragement from the home or the Sunday School. There must be a proper tie established between the camp and the home church so that the necessary nurture will be forthcoming.

A third danger may be that of having "too much church" at camp. Not that we can get too much of the Bible, but we must remember a statement made previously, campers come to camp for a good time or for the recreational aspect. The total environment and association is to carry the Christian imprint. Here the instruction is to be related to life itself. The children are to learn Christian behavior on the ball diamond, while on a hike, or while doing chores. At Church this has been preached to them; hear they can be shown, guided and corrected. Even a good thing can be overdone and the purpose lost.

In conclusion may I say, camping

MUSIC

Music Festivals

The music festival movement in Canada is not an old one, but it has become so well established as an institution that we tend already to consider it as a traditional feature of music-making in this country. The idea of competitive music (or drama) festivals is an old one, going back in history at least as far as the Classic period in Greek literature. The non-competitive type of music festival was already flourishing in the days of Mendelssohn and usually featured the performance of some notable work composed specifically in honour of the occasion. One cannot help calling to mind the opera "Die Meistersinger" by Richard Wagner when one thinks of musical competitions.

As Mennonites we have come in contact with the festival movement largely through the public and high school competitions, first perhaps as members in choirs and later as teachers of music in the schools themselves. Of late a number of Mennonite teachers have distinguished themselves by winning a number of classes or trophies with their children's choirs, and Mennonite soloists and instrumentalists have done as well for themselves in the individual entries. Opinions concerning the desirability of participation in music festivals have been divided, but the ranks of those who are not favourably disposed toward the competitive idea in these festivals are decreasing in num-

ber. Those who have participated actively in the festivals usually compete again and again because they feel the experience gained is rewarding indeed. When the spirit of competition is not wholesome there may be some harmful results, to be sure, but when the entrants perform to the best of their ability in the spirit of "may the best man win", the negative aspects of competition may be largely overcome.

H. R. Baerg.

ber. Those who have participated actively in the festivals usually compete again and again because they feel the experience gained is rewarding indeed. When the spirit of competition is not wholesome there may be some harmful results, to be sure, but when the entrants perform to the best of their ability in the spirit of "may the best man win", the negative aspects of competition may be largely overcome.

The music festival tends to raise the standards of performance and to emphasize the artistic ideals or goals one should strive for. Any musician knows how easy it is to stop trying to do better. As soon as this stage has been reached the recession has begun and will soon be noticed in all areas of his activities. The stimulus gained from being challenged by a fine performance or by the attempt to perfect a certain rendition may have beneficial results that never cease to bear fruit.

But what about competition in the realm of religious works? Is there any benefit to be derived from competition in this sacred realm? I think so. As church musicians we need to be very conscious of the best that can be done — only that will be good enough. We should not feel that our music-making in the church is above criticism, or that we have no need to meet certain standards of performance or to strive for perfection. As soon as we cease to keep higher standards or goals in mind, the level of the work being done gradually goes lower and lower. If we cannot criticize our own work objectively it would be wise to ask someone else to do this for us — a trained adjudicator may be just the right person for this. It is so easy to do less than the best and constructive or objective criticism tends to help us keep in mind what this "best" may be and how far short we have fallen of it. It would seem

to me that those who are opposed to competition in the realm of religious music are more concerned about trying to hide their own weaknesses and deficiencies than in raising the level of their own performance. Do we not have "Sonntagsschulproben" or are we not familiar with the "Probepredigt"? Where is our "Probegesang"?

I would suggest that as Mennonites we could do much more to encourage the festival movement in our own districts and along such lines that would be satisfactory to those who object to the secular emphasis of the ordinary music festival. Why not take the idea of the music festival and use it in such a way that it would meet the standards laid down in the Bible?

I would further suggest that we expand the idea of the music festival to include the other arts as well. Here again we need not pattern such festivals after other types that do not meet our own needs — but use the idea of a festival of the arts as a starting-point. There are many positive elements inherent in such a venture which we have not been able to utilize heretofore because we have been overly concerned with the negative aspects. I think that a healthy interest in the arts as such would help to counter-act the unhealthy interest in sports or in unworthy pursuits. Many of our younger people in particular have such low

tastes in the arts generally or in the "finer things of life" because they have been left to grow up in a garden of weeds. I also believe that a festival in a "Mennonite" setting has many possibilities in the realm of fostering and maintaining a distinctive "Mennonite" culture. Many worthwhile contributions are made or would be made in this area alone if there were a means by which they could be brought to the attention of the public. I do not believe in overemphasizing the arts, but if we neglect to do something constructive in this area we leave a gap in the armour of the individual which may be a point of entry for the shoddy, the trivial, the mediocre, the immature, the transitory, the make-shift, the thoughtless and for all those things that accompany ignorance. We have only ourselves to blame if there is such a lack of good taste among Mennonites for the finer, more wholesome things in life. If we permit our children and young people to grow up in complete ignorance of these finer things we can but expect to reap the results of our neglect. I feel that a festival of the arts which is conducted in a manner worthy of Christians and in this case with a "Mennonite" flavour would do much to make us as Mennonites better people to live with and a little less "peculiar".

Peter Klassen.

CHRISTIAN WORKER'S LIBRARY

Some Books on the Rapture Question

Some time ago (in the May-June, 1956, issue) we received for our readers Paul Erb's book, "The Alpha and Omega," a recent and distinctly worthwhile contribution by a Mennonite scholar to the general study of Biblical eschatology, and made introductory reference in this review to the increased current interest in, and discussion of eschatology amongst evangelicals. This ever-growing concentration on the part

of many Christian scholars and preachers of the Word during the last century or so, on eschatological truth as distinct from other equally, and more important areas of truth given to us in Biblical theology, is so patent and interesting a phenomenon that many writers have made more than passing mention of it. Various reasons, too, have been suggested for this development, and words of approval as well as of

censure and disparagement have been voiced in connection with it.

During the last few years, however, one particular aspect of Biblical eschatology has become the focal point, again, and also, as was perhaps inevitable, the subject of much serious study, heated controversy and spirited debate; this aspect concerns the exact time of the coming of Christ for His Church in relation to the period generally termed the "Great Tribulation." Dr. Wilbur Smith goes so far as to designate this the dominant theme of contemporary literature in the area of eschatology written by conservatives. Six noteworthy studies that have appeared only within the last three years and which deal specifically, and in fact almost exclusively with this single eschatological question are the following: L. Wood: "Is the Rapture Next?" (Zondervan); J. F. Walvoord: "The Return of the Lord"; J. F. Walvoord: "The Rapture Question" (Dunham); N. F. Douty: "Has Christ's Return Two Stages?" (Pageant Press); G. B. Stanton: "Kept From the Hour" (Zondervan); and G. E. Ladd: "The Blessed Hope" (Wm. B. Eerdmans). Of the five writers, Douty and Ladd present the post-tribulational view of the coming of Christ for His Church (the Rapture), whereas the other three defend the more familiar, and more widely held pretribulational view of it.

Another view with respect to the question of the time of the Rapture which has, however, a much more slender following and is represented by much less serious literature than either of the other positions, is the so-called "mid-tribulational" one. Two well-known contemporary Bible teachers who hold essentially this view are Norman B. Harrison and Dr. Harold J. Ockenga. G. E. Ladd, however, does not grant this view independent standing but prefers to view it as "a variant of pretribulationism" (cf. p. 12), and there seems to be some justification for regarding it in this way.

Of the six works cited above, we have selected the last two for rapid review in this present issue: G. B. Stanton: "Kept From the Hour" (1956) and G. E. Ladd: "The Blessed Hope" (1956). Stanton's book, though it probably

doesn't meet the present "need for a complete, scholarly and thoroughly Biblical defense of the pretribulational return of Christ" quite as adequately and satisfactorily as the author hoped it might (see Preface), represents, nevertheless, a fairly able and spirited treatment of some of the most important elements involved in this whole question of the Rapture and its relation in time to the Tribulation. W. Smith (see March, 1957, issue of *Moody Monthly*) has in fact called it the "most important defense of the pretribulation theory that has appeared in this generation," yet directs several serious criticisms against it with respect to its style, general tone, format and manner of development. Our personal guess (for what it is worth) is that Walvoord's book "The Rapture Question," which appeared only last year (1957), and so after Smith wrote the above words, will very soon replace Stanton's work as "the most important defense of the pretribulational return of Christ in this generation," but it is probably much too early, and so quite presumptuous, for us to even hazard such a guess!

Dr. Stanton, to say a word about the author himself, is presently professor of Systematic Theology at Talbot Theological Seminary in Los Angeles. He received his doctor of theology degree from Dallas Theological Seminary, and "Kept From the Hour" is itself actually a revision of his doctoral dissertation.

Dr. Ladd's book, on the other hand, is a very able and cogent defense of the posttribulational view of the return of Christ. The central thesis of his work is that the Blessed Hope is the glorious coming of Jesus Christ as such, and not synonymous with a pretribulational rapture, and various arguments are marshalled by him with unusual force to demonstrate that (1) the Tribulation must precede the Advent of our Lord, and that (3) there are not several distinct phases involved in Christ's coming, but that the "parousia," the "apokalypse" and the "epiphany" together constitute one single, indivisible event. "The Blessed Hope," too, has won high praise and that from both pre- as well as, of course, post-

tribulationists! Dr. W. Smith (himself a pre-tribulationist), for example, who is a colleague of Dr. Ladd at Fuller Theological Seminary, has said of this and Ladd's other eschatological work, "Crucial Questions About the Kingdom of God" that they "have exercised more influence upon conservative scholars in the field of eschatology than the writings of any other one person during the last twenty years." C. E. Mason Jr. (another pretribulationist) has commented thus concerning it: "George E. Ladd has presented in "The Blessed Hope" the posttribulation rapture view as objectively and ably as any book which has been written in its favor."

Dr. Walvoord himself (one of the leading pretribulationists in America today) and president of Dallas Theological Seminary, considered Ladd's book so significant that he interrupted a long series of articles in *Bibliotheca Sacra* on "Premillennialism and the Tribulation" to provide a special and rather extended review (some 19 pages!) of it in the October, 1956, issue of the periodical. As far as we know, this review constitutes the fullest and ablest (in the main) critique of *The Blessed Hope* that has yet appeared, and it certainly merits most careful consideration on the part of all who are seeking a clearer understanding of all the issues involved in this difficult subject, and who are seeking surer ground for the position which they either already, or finally will hold. Dr. Walvoord, as was indeed to be expected, subjects Ladd's work to very serious and thorough-going criticism (particularly in regard to its fundamental arguments) and finally asserts the emphatic and double-edged conclusion that "the main reasons for pretribulationism are practically untouched by this volume, but it is nevertheless the best posttribulational book to appear for some time." Elsewhere in this article Walvoord voices the fear (?) that *The Blessed Hope* "will probably strengthen the cause of posttribulationism in contemporary conservative theology."

And now for a few of our own general impressions and modest attempts at critical evaluation of these two works which represent opposing sides in

respect to this difficult and highly controversial aspect of Biblical eschatology.

Kept From the Hour, we may say to begin with, is, on the face of it, a more extensive and more thorough-going study than Ladd's, of the entire question. It has, first of all, some 275 pages, irrespective of a rather lengthy (some 30 pages) appendix dealing with the related subject, "Literal interpretation, figurative language and prophecy," as compared to Ladd's work which contains only some 165 pages. Then, too, **Kept From the Hour** is chock full of footnotes and contains, at the end, an extended bibliography of some 160 titles, whereas *The Blessed Hope* contains not a single footnote, and is without any bibliography whatsoever. Stanton in his work, in fact, includes at certain points so many quotations from books by 2 or 3 posttribulationists of former days and devotes so much space to a spirited, even at times intolerant refutation of their assertions that the reader may be somewhat wearied by them.

Ladd, though he also quotes from authors, does so much less frequently and only occasionally supplies (and this in the text of the book itself) the source of the quotation; in the case of those who hold a different theological position from that of Ladd himself, he almost invariably omits both name and source. The reasons for this deliberate omission of names and sources and of the usual "paraphernalia and jargon of scholarship" Ladd gives in the **Introduction** to his book (p. 12). We shall leave it to the reader himself to decide as to the over-all advantages and/or disadvantages of such a procedure; one thing, however, seems evident enough and that is that **laymen and pastors, for whom this book was specifically intended** and who, to be sure, will be especially interested in such a work, will have little difficulty in reading it—will read it with considerable ease and a sense of smooth and rapid flow. And so, if we were to judge by reference to such obvious matters as formal documentation, extent of bibliography and the number of pages only, we would naturally conclude that Stanton's work

is the more complete and thorough-going one.

When, however, more fundamental and more important matters such as manner of development of them and manner, and method of argumentation, are duly considered, Ladd's study, we feel, fares somewhat better than Stanton's work. This is not to say that Ladd has established more securely for us the Biblical validity of the posttribulation position than Stanton has established for us the validity of the pretribulation position. A few reasoned discussions of this sort, able as they may be, will hardly suffice to do **that**, in any final and permanent sense, for any discerning and cautious believer. Moreover, this is not the place to express our own personal position in respect to this debatable question. The purpose of this review is rather that of calling attention to the current interest in, and concern about this eschatological theme, and passing under brief review two representative and opposing studies that also deserve careful consideration in this present search for a fuller and clearer view of eschatological truth. There is nothing quite as wholesome and as salutary, apart from studying Scripture itself, of course, as considering carefully, and in close connection, two (or more) opposing views of a given doctrine or teaching of the Christian Church. Though such comparative study may prove rather disturbing and frustrating at first, it afterwards often yields the rich fruit of increased charity towards others who hold views different from ours, and of increased capacity to analyze and evaluate teachings and or views which were until then accepted, perhaps, as absolutely certain and indisputable but which in reality are of only secondary importance and not really as well established, on the basis of proper Biblical exegesis, as was heretofore believed.

But to come back to the matter of development of theme: Ladd, it seems to us, develops his subject in a more concise and more coherent fashion. There is more readily discerned connection and continuity in the ordering

and development of the various individual aspects of his theme than is the case in Stanton's work. And this is surely worth a great deal in any discussion and defense of so difficult a subject.

The first third or so of **The Blessed Hope**, it is true, contains no Biblical exegesis at all, but is devoted rather to a consideration of the historical argument for posttribulationism. In this section Ladd shows, by careful quotation from a number of early Church Fathers or writings, that a **posttribulation return of Christ** was really the historic hope of the church from the beginning. A second chapter in this same section traces the rise and development of pretribulationism to the Plymouth Brethren movement in the early 19th century, and also cites from leading pretribulationist who later abandoned their position for posttribulationism. But this more or less introductory section does not detract from the main course of the book but, much rather, serves to supply an interesting and satisfying background for the entire study.

Ladd then considers, in rapid and connected fashion, the following issues. (1) He examines the Biblical terminology used of Christ's coming in order to determine whether or not there is valid support for the view that the return of Christ will be divided into two aspects — one before and one after the Tribulation. (2) He considers the passages that deal with the Tribulation, the Rapture and the Resurrection, in order to ascertain whether or not they require the placing of the Rapture before the Tribulation. (3) Having concluded from (1) and (2) that the view that sees the Rapture before the Tribulation is purely inferential, Ladd raises the question as to whether this inference is valid, and in answer carries through a rather comprehensive refutation of the arguments commonly used by pretribulationists to support and defend their position. (4) The conclusion of the book, finally, concerns itself mainly with such matters as the actual relation of pretribulationism to premillennialism, and the relative importance

of various questions having to do with the doctrine of the return of Christ as such.

Now Stanton's study is, as we have already intimated, even more comprehensive in scope than Ladd's; it includes, for example, other relevant issues and/or passages as well such as brief considerations of key (according to pretribulationists) Rapture passages: John 14:3, 1 Cor. 15:51-52 and 1 Thess. 4:13-18, and a consideration of the necessity of a time interval between the "Rapture" and the "Revelation" to allow for certain events mentioned in the book of Revelation such as the "marriage of the Lamb" and the "Bema judgment of the saints." Sometimes, however, discussions and/or passages are introduced that seem quite irrelevant — or at least are not clearly related to the essential theme of the book — and which therefore interrupt the flow of the study and so render the whole more disjointed. There is, moreover, more needless repetition and uninteresting reiteration in "**Kept From the Hour**", we feel, and this, too, prevents it from having the same kind of ready continuity and flow which characterize **The Blessed Hope**.

Is The Mennonite Church A "Volkskirche"?

The concept of a "Volkskirche" is not a strange one for us as Mennonites. The Anabaptist reformation was, in part, a reaction against the Reformers' view of the church. Speaking of the Anabaptist separation from the main stream of the Reformation, Franklin H. Littell in his book **The Anabaptist View of the Church** says:

"The attitude of the Reformers to the church underwent some significant changes, and the Anabaptists also separated slowly and painfully from the dominant party... But it will be plainly seen also that the lines became clear in time to both parties, and that what was truly at stake was the concept of the church, and the pattern of church life involved in a genuine re-formation." (p. 20)

Space does not permit us to illustrate and confirm the validity and justice of our second contention, that Ladd's book surpasses **Kept From the Hour** also in respect to the **manner and method of argumentation**. We must therefore content ourselves here with the one broad statement that **The Blessed Hope**, in general, exhibits a greater measure of sanity and thoroughness in regard to Biblical exegesis itself, as well as greater strength in regard to logical analysis and philosophic grasp in general.

And now a final word about these two books in respect to their **general tone and spirit**. **Kept From the Hour** manifests, we feel, a somewhat more personal and contentions spirit — one that is less "kindly and generous" than that evident in **The Blessed Hope**. The author of **Kept From the Hour** is more inclined to become restive and intolerant when he argues a case, whereas Ladd's arguments and discussions seem more unperturbed and dispassionate in tone. In other words, in our opinion, Ladd argues more winsomely and concessively, though he has, we may be sure, just as sincere and real a conviction that his thesis is the correct one!

H. Giesbrecht.

The danger which faces the Mennonite church today is that of becoming what they once repudiated — a "Volkskirche." It would probably be incorrect to say that the Mennonite church is only now in danger of "becoming" a "Volkskirche" since Robert Kreider's study "The Church in the Russian Environment" (M.Q.R., Jan., 1951) has as its thesis that "the Mennonite Church in the Russian Mennonite environment moved in the direction and exhibited many of the characteristics of the Volkskirche..."

If this is true, and all indications seem to point in that direction, Mennonite leaders should be concerned. Some are concerned and at least one has written a pamphlet on the subject.

J. Lawrence Burkholder, Associate

Professor of Bible and Philosophy at Goshen College, has written a pamphlet entitled **The Church and the Community**. It is the second in a series captioned Focal Pamphlets which are being published by the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania.

This article is not simply a review of the booklet. The writer takes the liberty of expressing personal concerns which are similar to those expressed by brother Burkholder.

The discussion begins with an inquiry into the nature of the church. Luther disagreed with the Catholic view which presented the church as an institution for dealing out and administering grace. In such an "ecclesiastical economy" the clergy were of primary importance for they had "the keys of heaven." The Lutheran view of the church placed emphasis on the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments. Wherever the true Word is preached and the sacraments are properly administered, there is the true church. The Anabaptists, however, placed the emphasis upon the **fellowship** of true believers which fellowship has preaching as **one** of its functions.

The passage which brings us a clear view of the church is 1 Peter 2: 9-10. "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained verily."

Several things follow from such a definition of the New Testament church in terms of a "called out people." It excludes spiritual pride and **exclusivism** since the basis of such calling is **mercy** and not merit. The call was not God's response to personal achievement on the part of those called. Again, such a definition sets the purpose for the call, namely, that of witnessing. The church is a witnessing people and it must look **outward** rather than inward. When Jesus gave his disciples his last words He pointed to the fact

that they would be witnesses. This was not a command but a simple statement of fact. The issue was not "ihr sollt meine Zeugen sein" but rather "ihr werdet meine Zeugen sein." Witnessing belongs to the nature of the New Testament church.

The gifts which reside in such a church are **spiritual**. In the early church a Christian was identified primarily by his spiritual gift, not by his vocation or social position.

All this points to the great truth that the church is essentially a **spiritual** fellowship rather than a fellowship of flesh and blood. The ties which unite us in the body of Christ are **not** the ties of culture or history but what we now are in Christ Jesus. Whenever the affinities in the church become predominately cultural, the **"Volkskirche" has become a reality**.

Burkholder makes mention of a sobering fact. It is hard to get into the Mennonite church and hard to get out. This does not always mean that the spiritual standards are so high. It suggests that our fellowship may have become or is becoming a fellowship of blood rather than a fellowship of the spirit. The strange absence of names beyond that of Peters, Klassen, Friesen, and Dyck is a disturbing feature. **If it is not a disturbing feature, then we may have already made the transition to a "Volkskirche" concept of the church.** This does not mean that we do not have life, or that the gospel is not being preached; but it does mean that we are slowly sinking below the level of a New Testament concept of the church.

The Church and the Community is a stimulating, yet disturbing, pamphlet. May we be attuned to its message.

F. C. Peters.

I find the doing of God's will leaves me no time for disputing about his plans. —Macdonald.

* * *

O God, I'll follow you like a dog, if only you will show me the way. — Ignatius Loyola.

ALUMNI SECTION

The Lord give thee understanding . . .

No one was more fully aware of the challenge and responsibility of Christian life and service than the aging Apostle Paul when he uttered the prayer for his co-worker Timothy as recorded in 2 Tim. 2:7, "The Lord give thee understanding in all things." In another translation we detect a note of confidence in the old warrior's triumphant assertion, "the Lord will grant you understanding in everything." Paul's life was a continual demonstration of this very thing: when he was facing the fanatic Jewish mob, when he appeared before the regal Agrippa, or when he stood on Mars Hill. He had received a liberal share of divine wisdom and as a result the Word of God had "free course" when he proclaimed it.

Our Bible School work has been rich in spiritual experiences. We have had frequent occasions to beseech the Lord for understanding and wisdom. There is the obvious need to learn to understand ourselves better. It was our experience that the intimate contact with the Word of God necessitated a constant appraisal of our spiritual state and stature. As the Word became vital to us and found application to our own situation we also felt the need of understanding in applying it to the lives of others.

Sometimes we like to call our century the "atomic" or the "hydrogen" age. Yet we know all too well that not all developments or changes are taking place in the field of applied science. Along with these changes are also innovations in the ideological and theological field. Article headings like "We Can't Have Christ and Sputnik too" indicate that our Western "Christian" world is wondering whether after all Christ is not a greater liability than an asset. Some Christians in China appear to believe that they can identify themselves with their godless govern-

ment while retaining their Christian integrity. In the theological world the liberalism of the last generation is demanding new respect and attention in the patched garb of New Modernism and at the same time "Evangelicalism" is being branded by some as a compromise of the faith. We pray that the Lord will also give us an understanding of our own day and age on the premise of our faith in Jesus Christ.

We are also facing the challenge of our modern youth. Our materialistic culture is "forcing" our young people into its irresistible mould. Where are the "Gideons" in our own circles, or the "Joshuas", who in the face of overwhelming odds of unbelief and social pressure stand up for the cause of Christ? Surely God will raise Himself a banner against the enemy flood of agnosticism, materialism, and "scientism". We look for understanding to present the challenge of the cross to the soldiers of Christ.

Let us raise our sights and aim at the stars. We dare not be satisfied with anything less than God's best for us and for those who are entrusted to us — our young people. It seems tragic that we often expend our energies on internal differences: on inter-conference, interprovincial and inter-church matters when we should be launching out in the fields of evangelism, home and foreign missions, and Christian education. The basis for such a unified and united effort could well be laid in our schools. Our prayer is: "May the Lord give us understanding in all things." God's answer by the mouth of Paul: "The Lord will grant you understanding in everything."

George G. Konrad,
Matsqui, B.C.

(Grad. 1953, teaching at Mennonite Brethren Bible School, Abbotsford, B.C.)

CAMPUS NEWS

Much study is wearisome to the flesh. Realizing this, the Recreation Committee provided the change needed to give the students the break they needed. The annual broomball game, was held on January 24. The East managed to squeeze out a narrow victory over the West. After the game, weary broom ballers were refreshed with coffee and hot dogs, then they relaxed as Dr. F. C. Peters showed some of his slides of the Middle East. Muscles toned up, the students were ready to attack the books with renewed vigor and zest.

These past months we have been challenged time and time again in our chapel services. Miss Theaker of Child Evangelism, through an illustrated report, impressed upon us the importance and the need of bringing the gospel to the children of Canada. Rev. P. R. Toews of the Fraserview M.B. Church in Vancouver, stopped over on his way home from board meetings in Hillsboro. He spoke to us on "The Untrodden Path of Christian Service." Harvey Toews of the M.C.C. visited us in February. Many and great are the opportunities for young people for a positive witness in M.C.C. work.

The eagerly awaited Missionary Conference was held February 20-23. The daily prayer meetings held from the 10th to the 23rd prepared the students to receive the messages and reports from God's faithful servants — Rev. J. B. Toews, deputation secretary of the M.B. Mission Board; Rev. H. Friesen, Japan; Rev. H. Derksen, Africa; Rev. W. Baerg, Africa; Miss Edna Thiessen, Mexico; and Rev. J. J. Dick, India. These, plus several home mission workers, spoke to us.

In the first message of the Conference, Rev. J. B. Toews spoke on the topic, "Missions in Relation to Worship." Worship consists in recognizing God's Being and redemptive provision, and in our identification with Him in character and purpose. Missions is,

therefore, more than just the need and destiny of a people; it concerns our personal relationship to the glorious purposes of God. The motive for missions should be, that the glory of God may be established among the nations that they may become convinced that He is the only true God who will judge all righteously.

Rev. Toew's second message was, "Missions in the Present World Crisis." Various statistics were quoted giving us a picture of what is happening in the world, population wise, and mission wise. His next message was on "The Measurements for Missionary Qualifications." Man is God's method. "The church is looking for better methods but God is looking for better men." To be a missionary one must surrender his independence, his capacities, and his whole being. One must be ready to suffer and to die for the sake of the gospel message. "Our Mission Task in Relation to Prophecy", "An Analysis of the South American Mission Field", were also some of the other topics of his messages.

Rev. H. Friesen took us on a journey through Japan in his messages and reports. Ninety eight per cent of the Japanese people are literate. There is a high standard of education and as a result, liberalism to contend with. The Non-Christian Movement, made up of the highly educated, stresses these principles: 1) Find good in other religions, 2) Be loyal to your country, 3) Baptism and discipline are not important, 4) Love is the greatest power in the universe; let the Budhists and Christians unite, 5) The Bible has split the Protestant churches, 6) Fellowship is everything — you need no creed or doctrine. Only those who have white collar jobs have Sundays off, thus making church work quite difficult. The 600 false cults in Japan also have to be contended with. A ray of light in the

darkness is the Japanese M.B. Church of 200 members.

Some of the topics for Rev. H. Derksen's messages were, "The preparation for a Missionary," "The Basis for an Indigenous Church", and "A Healthy Foundation for School Work on the Mission Field." Rev. Derksen impressed upon us that only the best training and preparation is good enough for the mission field and 30 years was soon enough to go to the mission field. It is important for us to realize that the same problems we face in the homeland are found in the field.

Rev. W. Baerg spoke on "The Proper Spiritual Attitude for Mission Work." One must have a clear vision, a God given burden, and a vital prayer life. Then conflicts will be overcome and God will give the victory.

Miss Edna Thiessen gave us an insight into the work among the Mexicans and the Old Colony Mennonites in Mexico. Catholicism dominates the country and persecution of christians is not uncommon. In a meeting which Miss Thiessen attended, the attendants were stoned by a group of Catholics. It is not possible to enter Mexico as a missionary; only as a professional worker will one be allowed to enter Mexico.

Rev. J. J. Dick of India told us of the changes which have taken place in India as a result of becoming independent.

Together with other speakers and messages these thoughts have struck home in our hearts and have challenged us to be willing to go, to give and to pray.

A student offering was held which enabled the chapel at Ecole Belle Vue

in Africa to be repaired at a cost of \$375.00. The remaining \$261.35 went to help outfit the Peter Hamms (graduates of M.B.B.C.), who will be going to Kodaikanal, India, to work in the school and in the home for missionary children.

We were privileged to have Dr. Bender of Goshen College, Indiana, with us for a chapel period. He spoke to on the Anabaptist Vision, a topic on which he is an authority, because of his study and his books on this topic.

March 19th was set aside as a day of prayer and fasting. The emphasis for this day was on the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Students, finding a place where they could be alone, meditated and prayed. The testimony meeting at the end of the day witnessed to the fact that God had been sought and found and heart blessed.

March 20 and 21 saw the drama "The Summoning of Everyman" directed by the literary promotor, Harold Jantz. "Everyman" is a medieval morality play depicting the inward struggle and fear of a man who is not ready to die when Death calls.

St. John's Passion by Bach was performed by the Oratorio Choir under the direction of Victor Martens, in the Elmwood M.B. Church, on March 25. The last days of Christ as portrayed in John's Gospel were vividly expressed in the singing.

May this be our prayer that we may bring ourselves, our all, into God's presence and consecrate them to His service. May we realize that our wills are ours to make them God's.

Peter B. Klassen.



PEACE

Life's mystery — deep, restless as the ocean —
Hath surged and wailed for ages to and fro;
Earth's generations watch its ceaseless motion,
As in and out its hollow moanings flow.
Shivering and yearning by that unknown sea,
Let my soul calm itself, O God! in Thee.

Life's sorrows, with inexorable power,
Sweep desolation o'er this mortal plain;
And human loves and hopes fly as the chaff
Borne by the whirlwind from the ripened grain
Oh! when before that blast my hopes all flee,
Let my soul calm itself, O Christ! in Thee.

Between the mysteries of death and life
Thou standest, loving, guiding, not explaining;
We ask, and thou art silent; yet we gaze,
And our charmed hearts forget their drear complaining,
No crushing fate, no stony destiny,
Thou "Lamb that hath been slain!" we rest in Thee.

The many waves of thought, the mighty tides,
The ground-swell that rolls up from other lands,
From far-off worlds, from dim, eternal shores,
Whose echo dashes o'er life's wave-worn strands;
This vague, dark tumult of the inner sea
Grows calm, grows bright, O risen Lord! in Thee.

Thy pierced hand guides the mysterious wheels,
Thy thorn-crowned brow wears the crown of power;
And when the dark enigma presses sore,
Thy patient voice saith: "Watch with me one hour."
As sinks the moaning river in the sea,
In silent peace, so sinks my soul in Thee.