

# The Voice

of the Mennonite Brethren Bible College

Vol. XII

July - August, 1963

No. 4

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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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## “Laß mich Deinen Weg wissen!”

So betete der Knecht Mose, nachdem Gottes Volk zum Stillstand gebracht worden war, aber durch Gottes Gnade einen neuen Anfang machen durfte. Zu allen Zeiten haben die Frommen diese Bitte Moses, in ihren Gebeten, zum Ausdruck gebracht. Auch die Erfahrungen anderer Gotteskinder, wie auch eine lange und gesegnete Geschichte einer Gemeinschaft, ersparen uns diese Bitte nicht. Denn für jede Generation, welche es mit neuen Fragen und neuen Problemen zu tun hat, müssen wir neue Wege finden.

Der moderne Mensch, durch seine Erfindungen, hat Unsägliches auf dem Gebiete der Technik erreicht, und findet neue Wege im Universum. Aber er ist dadurch nicht geschickter geworden Wege der Freude, des Friedens, und der wahren Fülle des Lebens zu entdecken. In seiner Verwirrung läuft er aus einer Sackgasse in die andere. In dieser komplizierten und konfuse Zeit, ist es nicht immer so einfach den rechten Weg für uns selbst, unsere Kinder, und für unsere Gemeinden zu finden. Daher schließen wir uns dem Gebet Moses an: “Laß mich deinen Weg wissen!”

Dieses Gebet kommt in diesen Tagen von dem Herzen vieler christlicher Lehrer, die im kommenden Jahr, unserer Jugend den rechten Weg zeigen möchten. Auch der Lehrstab am College schließt sich diesem Gebet an. Viele jüngere, und auch ältere, Brüder und Schwestern aus unsern und andern Gemeinden, haben sich für das Studium am College entschlossen. Wir möchten ihnen unser Bestes geben; erkennen aber, daß wir dabei recht ungeschickt sein können, und daher das Gebet: “Laß mich deinen Weg wissen.” Im Suchen nach Licht, nach Wahrheit, nach Antworten auf die Fragen des Lebens, welche in unserer Zeit gestellt werden, fragen wir nach dem rechten Weg.

Mose bekam auf sein Gebet eine überwältigende Antwort: “Mein Angesicht wird mit dir gehen.” Der Herr gab ihm nicht eine Landkarte für die Wüstenreise; er gab ihm keine Wegweiser; er sagte ihm nicht im Voraus was ihm alles begeben würde. Er versicherte ihm nur, daß

(Fortsetzung auf Umschlagseite 3)

## PRACTICAL

### Public Opinion

Many people have no strong opinions of their own on any vital issue. However, others do, and these are the people who are often in a position to sway the multitudes. It is natural that in due time people will accept the opinions of the stronger and more vocal men and hold to them tenaciously either by conviction or by persuasion. In this way there is called into existence a public opinion which speaks to be heard and demands to be heeded. While private opinion, though founded upon reason, remains fairly weak, public opinion becomes almost omnipotent.

Public opinion must be recognized as a powerful force in human relationships. Great leaders in history have expressed themselves to this effect as a few quotations will show.

“All power rests ultimately upon opinion” (Hume).

“Opinions are stronger than armies. If they are founded in truth and justice, they will, in the end, prevail against the bayonets of infantry, the fire of artillery, and the charges of cavalry” (Lord Palmerston).

“The world is governed much more by opinion than by laws. It is not the judgement of the courts, but the moral judgements of individuals and masses of men which is the chief wall of defence around property and life” (Channing).

Public opinion can be both, a positive and a negative force. As a positive force it can bring about social, economic, political and moral reform. It brings redress to the down-trodden. It overthrows corrupt government. It recalls armies embarked upon aggressive war. It enforces the laws against crime. It can close the saloons and the divorce courts. It can remove the obscene literature from the bookshelves. It will bring liberty of worship and open the doors of churches to the worshiper.

However, public opinion also works as a negative force. It frowns on mor-

ality, encourages divorce, breaks up homes, legalizes lust, proclaims liberty to sin, protects the fraud, sympathizes with the murderer, and laughs while God's laws and God's Son are trodden under foot. The negative force is often stronger than the positive. Franklin has said, “Public opinion cannot do for virtue what it does for vice. It is the essence of virtue to look above opinion. Vice is consistent with, and very often strengthened by, entire subserviency to it.”

There is a good reason why some people are so desirous to get control of the media of mass communication such as the press, radio and television. By these means they hope to succeed in swaying the multitudes to carry out their program as obedient slaves.

We are too much inclined to underestimate the powerful influence of public opinion and the influence of principles to which great men have given their sanction. How often have we heard people justify their position by referring it to the court of public opinion! How often have sound and wholesome ideas failed to carry because public opinion would not fall in line!

Public opinion is often unreasonable and largely based on inclination. Common opinion is often in conflict with common sense; for reason, in most minds, is no match for their prejudices which grow faster than they can be overcome. People who hold opinions and express them freely and frankly are often embarrassed and put to silence when asked to defend them on rational grounds. It is important for us to have opinions of our own, well-reflected and founded upon reason.

Someone has said that the masses procure their opinions ready made in the open market. Ideas expressed by some popular speaker or writer find ready acceptance as long as the ideas appeal to their own inclinations. Goethe has said, “As our inclinations, so our

opinions." Whatever serves immediate interests is both accepted and defended without much serious reflection. Once these ideas are accepted they become, with many, a second conscience and with some the only one. For this reason we ought to be concerned that social opinion be formed on the basis of facts, which requires constant public instruction.

Public opinion is often wrong and must be combatted and corrected. Carlyle has said, "Popular opinion is the greatest lie in the world." Walter Lippmann, speaking for the present generation, says, "The prevailing public opinion has been destructively wrong at the critical junctures. The people have imposed a veto upon the judgements of informed and responsible officials." We must concede that the majority can be wrong on vital issues and when a misinformed majority opinion is allowed to rule in state and church, it can easily ruin us.

The public opinion poll can determine with a fair amount of accuracy what the prevailing public opinion on current problems is, but it does not pass judgement on whether it is wrong or right. Someone must therefore accept the responsibility of investigating and take courage to brave public opinion when he knows that it is wrong and is assured that it will be merciless in its obstinacy.

Public opinion can be a most useful servant and should be mobilized for the good of society. Our own society suffers today for lack of a strong public opinion on various issues that is rational and scripturally sound. We make

slow progress in some areas and retreat in other areas because we have failed to create a strong opinion based on reason and revelation that stands united and possesses the courage to protest vigorously against evil and support what is good. A few strong voices are apparently not sufficient to turn the tide when the public is either indifferent or hopelessly divided in its opinion. Good traditions are buried and new social evils enter and are accepted in the community while the majority continues to live with no settled opinions or with opinions that are not sufficiently based on fact to sound convincing and to be of any consequence.

How can we create a strong, positive and united opinion in our brotherhood that is rationally sound and scripturally true, which we can enlist in the service of society? This is an important question for the leadership of our brotherhood. It means that we will have to think more seriously in terms of the many vital contemporary issues that confront us in a changing world. We will have to recognize and understand our own problems and learn to approach them more objectively. Leading brethren may find it necessary to meet in study conferences in order to wrestle with these problems and study them in the light of reason and revelation. We must resort to private and public instruction, and make use of the pulpit and the press to help mold the opinion of the public into a powerful constructive force to oppose evil in every form and to promote righteousness and truth.

J. H. Quiring

## Gemeindezucht und Seelsorge

Daß Gemeindezucht und Seelsorge gewisse Beziehungen zueinander haben, ist in unsern Kreisen kein neuer Gedanke. Und doch müssen vielleicht manche von uns bekennen, daß diese zwei Begriffe in manchen Hinsichten bei uns grundverschiedene Auffassungen hervorrufen. Wenn diesem so ist, dann dürfte die Ursache darin liegen, daß man eine einseitige Auffassung von Ge-

meindezucht hat. Nach der Lehre der Heiligen Schrift wissen wir von zwei verschiedenen Arten von Zucht, die wohl der Methode aber nicht dem Wesen nach verschieden sind. Die eine sucht den Irrenden von dem Irrtum seines Weges zu überzeugen und ihn zur Buße und Reinigung zu führen; die andere sucht den Gläubigen durch Lehre und Ermahnung vor dem Irrtum zu be-

wahren. In beiden Fällen ist die Handlung Seelsorge — die eine strafend und zurechtführend, die andere bewahrend. Die Motivierung zur Handlung ist in beiden Fällen das geistliche Wohl des Betroffenen.

Wir finden reichlich Schriftgrund für das Üben beider Arten von Gemeindezucht. Einmal haben wir Schriftstellen wie Matth. 18, 15-20 und 1. Kor. 5, so wie auch 2. Kor. 2, 5-8, die uns das erste und zweckmäßige Eingreifen der Gemeinde schildern. Andererseits haben wir aber auch eine große Menge von Schriftstellen, die uns anspornen, durch Lehre, Ermahnung und Vermahnung in der Gemeinde Zucht zu üben. Wir erwähnen nur etliche: 1. Thess. 5, 14.15; Kol. 3, 16; 2. Thess. 3, 15; Hebr. 10, 24.25; 12, 15; u.a.m. An allen diesen Stellen merken wir immer wieder das Besorgnis um das geistliche Wohl des Bruders. Dieses steht an erster Stelle.

Diese Betonung der Absicht fehlt uns oft. Vielleicht ist es gerade deshalb warum wir Gemeindezucht oft nicht als Seelsorge ansehen. Vielleicht halten wir ein abstraktes Prinzip fest, nämlich „die Reinheit der Gemeinde“, getrennt von dem Ergehen des einzelnen Gliedes. Dabei steht uns diese Reinheit an erster Stelle, und wir sehen das Üben der Zucht als einen Kampf der Gemeinde um diese Reinheit an. Zucht bedeutet in diesem Fall Ermahnen; und wenn das nicht hilft, dann Ausschließen.

### I. Nicht „reine“ sondern „reinigende“ Gemeinde

Welche Bedeutung hat das Wort „Reinheit“ für uns? Denken wir dabei an ein Hinwegtun jeglicher Sünde und Ungerechtigkeit aus dem Leben des Gemeindegliedes? Ist dieses ein erreichbares Ziel? Wer in der Gemeinde würde sagen, daß er keine Sünde tut? Wenn wir dem Worte solche Bedeutung beilegen, wo wäre dann die Gemeinde? Ist es nicht viel mehr so, daß die ‚Reinheit‘ ein unveränderliches Ziel ist, dem die Gemeinde fortwährend zustreben soll? Wäre es dann nicht mehr am Platze, daß wir von der Gemeinde als eine ‚reinigende‘ Gemeinschaft sprechen würden, in der man sich gegenseitig ermahnt, anspricht, belehrt und, wenn nötig, auch straft? Man sucht sich gegen-

seitig in der Kraft des Geistes und in der Liebe zu helfen, frei zu werden von den Schwachheiten und der Sünde, „die uns immer wieder anklebt und träge macht.“ Es ist und bleibt ein ernstes Ringen um die reine Gemeinde, aber die Verwirklichung dieses Zieles bleibt endgeschichtlich.

Das Geständnis, daß die Gemeinde nicht rein ist, soll in keinerlei Weise die Tür öffnen für das selbstzufriedene und ruhige Dulden der Sünde, weder in uns selbst noch in dem Bruder. Nein, vielmehr weil sie eine ‚reinigende‘ Gemeinde ist, wird sie suchen, das Übel zu erkennen, aufzudecken und auszuschneiden. Sie schätzt sich niemals als eine Gemeinschaft, die es „schon ergriffen hat oder schon vollkommen sei.“ Sie sieht ihre Aufgabe niemals als erledigt.

### II. Gefahren einseitiger Betonung.

Die einseitige Betonung der Gemeindezucht, d.h., wo Gemeindezucht nicht Seelsorge ist, sondern nur als das entschiedene Handeln der Gemeinde bei gewissen Sünden angesehen wird, bildet für unsere Gemeinden eine bestimmte Gefahr. Einmal wird dadurch eine falsche Ethik aufgestellt. Mancher sieht gewisse Sünden (in unsern Kreisen z.B. das Rauchen, der Tanz, sittliche Unzucht, usw.) als ernste Schäden, die man überwinden muß, wenn man nicht in die Zucht der Gemeinde fallen will. Aber andere Sünden, so wie Lieblosigkeit, unwahre Plauderei, gewisse geschäftliche und wirtschaftliche Kniffe, nimmt man oft nicht ernst weil die Gemeinde in solchen Sachen selten oder nie Zucht geübt hat. Zum andern kann so eine einseitige Betonung auch ein gewisses Ruhekitzen sein. Sind solche Fälle wie die oben erwähnten nicht da, dann könnte man in Gefahr sein zu glauben, daß alles in Ordnung sei und keine besondere Not sei um den geistlichen Zustand der Gemeinde Sorge zu tragen. Man steht in Gefahr im Urteil und in der Handlung legalistisch zu werden und seinen eignen Fehlern und Mängeln gegenüber blind zu sein. Um diesen Gefahren entgegenzutreten, müssen wir diese beiden Wahrheiten immer wieder auf den Leuchter stellen: Die Gemeindezucht ist in ihrem Charakter, ihrem Zweck und Ziel in erster Linie

Seelsorge; und die Gemeinde ist und bleibt — bis ihr Haupt erscheint um sie zu sich zu nehmen — eine ‚reinigende‘ Gemeinde. Das Üben einer strengen Gemeindedisziplin ist an sich selbst kein Schutz für das geistliche Leben der Gemeinde; manche Gemeinschaften, die sie in strenger Weise durchgeführt haben, haben wenig geistliches Leben.

Zum Teil kann der Umstand, daß die Zucht nicht in erster Linie Seelsorge war und in den Handlungen oft die Liebe nicht klar hervorleuchtete, mitgewirkt haben, daß von der Gemeinde in unserer Zeit seltener disziplinarische Schritte unternommen wurden. Aber andere Ursachen, die wohl schwerwiegender sind, haben auch mitgewirkt. Man ist in vielen Hinsichten so sehr mit sich selbst beschäftigt und hat keine große Sorge um die Seele des Nächsten. Dann aber herrscht auch in dieser Zeit, wo sich in unsern Kreisen so vieles geändert hat, oft eine große Unklarheit über das, was dem Worte Gottes tatsächlich zuwider ist, und das, was uns nur neu und fremd ist und deshalb Sünde zu sein scheint. In dieser Atmosphäre der Unsicherheit setzen sich dann diese Dinge fest und werden allgemein angenommen, so daß wenn später auch Klarheit kommt, die Gemeinde scheinbar nicht handeln kann weil zu viele damit verwickelt sind. Oft wird solche Unklarheit in ethischen Fragen dadurch gefördert, daß berühmte und erfolgreiche Arbeiter im Reiche Gottes aus andern Kreisen (die aber auch nur Menschen sind und deren Erkenntnis auch nur Stückwerk ist) so handeln und manche ihrem Beispiel folgen. Nebenbei bemerkt, es ist schade, daß man das Handeln solcher Personen so oft als Vorbild nimmt, wo sie unseres Erachtens nicht dem Worte gehorsam sind und das Positive, das Gottwohlgefällige in ihrem Leben nicht als Muster nimmt. Es sind wohl noch manche andere Faktoren, die mitgewirkt haben und noch mitwirken, daß die geistliche Erziehung in unsern Kreisen in manchen Fällen nicht mehr so recht geübt wird.

### III. Biblische Prinzipien

Aber in dieser Zeit der Zügellosigkeit und dem Drang nach Selbstbestimmung ist es notwendig, daß wir immer wieder

die biblische Lehre der Verantwortung und Sorge für das geistliche Wohl des Nächsten hoch halten und betonen. Immer wieder müssen wir uns die Richtlinien aus Gottes Wort vorhalten, die uns zeigen, wie wir unsere Verantwortung in einer gottwohlgefälligen Weise erfüllen können.

Einige solcher Richtlinien, die ich kurz erwähnen möchte, sind folgende: Einmal ist es das Prinzip der Liebe. Die Gemeindezucht, welcher Art sie auch sei, muß in Liebe ausgeführt werden. Scheint uns das eine abgegriffene Münze zu sein? Haben wir die Zucht immer so geübt? Oder spielte in gewissen Fällen das Motiv der Rechthaberei hinein? Oder sollte die Zucht ein Beweis dafür sein, daß die Erkenntnis der Mehrheit dem Einzelnen aufgedrängt werden konnte? Nicht einmal die Liebe zur Heiligkeit, Wahrheit und Gerechtigkeit getrennt von der Liebe zum Nächsten ist ein würdiges Motiv zu disziplinarer Handlung. Gottes Wort stellt die Liebe zu Gott und dem Nächsten an erster Stelle. Da soll sie auch bleiben.

Ein anderes Prinzip, das in allen Handlungen bestimmend sein sollte, ist die Erkenntnis, daß Gemeindezucht nicht nur ein vor dem Vorberater oder der Gemeinde zur Verantwortung ziehen des Gefallenen oder im schlimmsten Falle ein Ausschließen des Betroffenen aus der Gemeinde ist, sondern vielmehr, daß die Hauptaufgabe der Gemeindezucht darin besteht, daß das Wort richtig und klar gelehrt wird; daß man gegenseitigen Austausch geistlicher Erfahrung und Erkenntnis hat; daß die Glieder sich untereinander ermuntern, ermahnen und in aller Liebe und Demut vermahnen, wo solches notwendig ist; daß man sich gegenseitig „reizt zur Liebe und guten Werken.“

Um dieses erfolgreich tun zu können, müssen wir eine intime Bekanntschaft mit Gottes Wort und eine tiefe und klare Erkenntnis der Lehren desselben haben. Wir müssen es auch verstehen, das Wort in den praktischen Fragen, Problemen und Situationen des täglichen Lebens anzuwenden. Nicht nur das, sondern wir müssen auch bekannt sein mit dem Wesen der Probleme, auf die wir das Wort anwenden, damit wir eine

richtige Anwendung machen. Manch ein geistlicher Verlust ist schon dadurch entstanden, daß man eine Sache falsch beurteilte, weil man eben nicht mit dem Wesen der Sache bekannt war. Wenn wir die Gemeindezucht erfolgreich üben wollen, müssen wir im Wort gewurzelt und mit der Welt im Kontakt sein.

Noch ein anderes schriftgemäßes Prinzip, das wir in unserer Zeit immer wieder hoch halten müssen, ist, daß die Gemeinde und das einzelne Glied eine ‚unnachgiebige Stellung gegen erkannte Sünden einnimmt. Was einmal nach Gottes Wort Sünde war, das bleibt Sünde, wenn selbst viele oder vielleicht sogar die Mehrheit in der Gemeinde anders handeln. Man kann das Sprichwort „Andere Zeiten, andere Sitten“ so leicht auf ethische Fragen anwenden. Es ist und bleibt die Aufgabe der Gemeinde, den Willen Gottes, wie er denselben in der Schrift offenbart hat, in Liebe und Demut durch ihr Leben und ihr Zeugnis der Umgebung klar darzustellen. Wir sollen das Salz der Erde sein. Der Herr Jesus stellte einst die ernste Frage: „Wenn nun das Salz dumm wird, wozu ist es nütze?“

Es sind noch manche andere Prinzipien, die erwähnt werden könnten, aber in dieser kurzen Abhandlung möchte ich nur noch eine nennen. Wir müssen das geistliche Wohl des Bruders, der gefallen ist, und das geistliche Wohl der andern Glieder der Gemeinde im rechten Verhältnis zu einander halten. Die Gemeinde sucht zu tun, was sie eben

kann, um den Irrrenden von seinem Irrtum freizumachen, aber wenn sein Bleiben in der Gemeinde den andern Gliedern schadet, dann muß er eben aus der Gemeinschaft ausgesondert werden. Nur Gott fügt Glieder dem Leibe zu und nur er scheidet aus. Die Gemeinde aber, die unter der Leitung des Heiligen Geistes ist, und wenn sonst alles in Ordnung ist, scheidet solche, die nicht Glieder am Leibe sind, aus ihrer Gemeinschaft aus.

Der Herr ist das Haupt der Gemeinde; die Gemeinde ist sein Leib und die einzelnen Kinder Gottes sind die Glieder desselben. Das Wort Gottes fordert uns immer wieder auf, das geistliche Wohl des Bruders zu beachten. Dieses ist die Aufgabe des Einzelnen, so wie auch der gesamten Gliederschaft der Gemeinde. Wenn wir uns von neuem das Ziel setzen, alles zu tun, was wir tun können um die bewahrende, belehrende Gemeindezucht zu üben, dann werden wir weniger Ursache haben, die strafende Zucht durchführen zu müssen. In all diesem muß es uns immer klar sein, daß Jesus Christus die Gemeinde baut und daß er uns nur als Werkzeuge berufen hat, durch die er seine Arbeit tut. Wir sind berufen seinen Willen auszuführen, nicht den unsern. Er gibt die Kraft und die Weisheit. Möge er uns Gnade schenken, unsere Aufgabe treu auszuführen!

H. H. Voth

(Wir heißen Br. Voth willkommen, als Mitarbeiter an unserem Blatt, „The Voice“)

## The Problem of Leisure

The story is told of the Chinese Christian leader, Dr. Cheng Li, that when he visited America, his host met him at the railway station in New York. He led Dr. Cheng through hot, hurrying crowds and jostled him on to the platform of a sub-way station in order to take his guest home. The electric came thundering by. "Come on, jump in quickly!" said his host. They sank into their seats. It was almost too noisy to talk. Having passed a few stations

they rushed out to catch another tram. "There, that's swell," said the host, "by doing that we saved four minutes." Dr. Cheng by now looked very puzzled and asked his host rather sagaciously, "And now that we have saved four minutes, what shall we do with them?"

Is not this precisely our problem? We glory in the many time-saving devices which our society gives us, but we do not know what to do with the time so saved. Someone has said that mod-

ern life can be described in three words: "Hurry, worry, bury." One authority has claimed that the most dangerous threat to American society is the 'rise of leisure' and that those who have the most leisure are the least equipped to make use of it. Next to the abundance of 'things', the abundance of 'leisure' is the most significant characteristic of the American scene. Rober Lee, in the April issue of **Theology Today**, points out, that whereas leisure in the past was the privilege of the few, it has now been extended to the masses. Whereas formerly work was the basis of culture, leisure is now moving into the center of life. What was once on the periphery is now in the center. We all know the term 'poverty-stricken', but we have never thought of being 'leisure-stricken.' Professor Lee's article, "Religion and Leisure," stimulated my thinking on the subject, and some of the thoughts expressed here are borrowed from him. I suppose, as a general rule, we can't claim originality for anything we say, but as Pascal once said, it's original because I, and not he, say it.

That leisure time, and the way we use it, affects our moral and religious life, no one will deny. The time has come that we should give more guidance on the right use of time. A sizeable body of literature has developed which gives guidance with respect to vocation and work, but little is available on the Christian attitude toward leisure time.

Obviously the Christian views leisure in a different light than the worldling. To use theological jargon, the Christian looks at time *sub specie aeternitatis* (from the view of eternity). He speaks of his time in different categories than the man of this world. While the latter speaks of 'killing' time, the Christian is bent on 'redeeming' time. To quote Dr. Lee: "Killing time is an expression of modern man's self-alienation which he refuses to acknowledge. Instead, he either escapes into a world of feverish activities or indulges in idleness in order to fill the void (p. 41). I fear that the attitude of many professing Christians to leisure is not too

different from that of secular man and this testifies to the emptiness of their existence.

But before we say anything further on our topic, we must ask the question: What do we mean by leisure?

### I. The Meaning of Leisure.

To begin with, let it be said clearly that idleness and leisure are not synonymous. To say that one has leisure time when one is not working at one's regular job is an inadequate definition. If we measure leisure quantitatively, then leisure is spare time, or left over time (i.e. from our paid job or obligatory occupation). But, if we measure leisure qualitatively, it is an attitude, a state of mind. It takes in our response to time. In Greek, the term for leisure is *skole*—from which our word 'school' is derived (suggesting to us the idea that school is a place where one has leisure to learn and to develop and grow). The word suggests that the spirit of leisure is that of learning, self-cultivation, contemplation, training, discriminating, discovery. It is the freeing of the mind from immediate habitual concerns to a consideration of ultimate concerns. It means to get a renewed perspective on life; to discover the meaning and purpose of our existence. Obviously such a use of leisure does not depend on week-end excursions, holiday-trips, or vacations to some distant lake. Certainly, a change of scenery may help us greatly at times to be broadened in mind, deepened in spirit and renewed in body, but we have no assurance that a trip to Florida will do this for us. Some vacations leave people completely empty—in more than one place, too—instead of edifying their total being. Just as a child grows and matures through play, so the proper use of leisure can be a growing and deepening experience for everyone. What is needed in our day is a perspective which gives meaning to time and an outlook which redeems the time.

### II. Attitudes toward Leisure.

It has frequently been said that religion is the mother of leisure in view of the inspiration it has given to the

'finer' things of life. In Medieval times most of the holidays were 'holy days'. Some of our national holidays originated as religious festivities. Besides, we must not overlook the institution of the weekly 'sabbath' which is observed in many countries. However, we should not equate the observance of the resurrection day, Sunday, in early Christianity, with complete rest, and certainly not with idleness. It was primarily a day of worship, and insofar as work interfered with worship it could not be condoned. The duty of complete Sunday rest developed only gradually in the course of the history of the Church. But, be that as it may, no one will deny that religion has contributed to the development of leisure.

On the other hand, religion has also been blamed for the negative attitudes that many have toward leisure. Since leisure was thought of as opening the door to the temptations of the Devil, leisure has been suspected of being Satan's tool for defeating the saints. And who would deny, that much delinquency in our day stems, at least indirectly, from having too much time on one's hands.

The Puritan emphasis was antithetical to leisure. Work was considered to be the best defence against temptation. One story has it that New England Puritans drank a pint of yeast before going to bed at night to make them rise early in the morning. Work was so exalted, that leisure was considered to be a dishonor to God. There is much of this spirit still evident in the thinking of our church. People who can hold down two jobs, who can work 16 hours a day—preferably with brawn, rather than with brain, who can get by with little sleep, who never take a holiday, who have 'drive', who can 'produce,' are the saintlier sons of God. Instead of admitting that they are enslaved, frequently, to the mighty Dollar, or to the taskmaster Prestige, and so are driven to the limit of their resources, they might piously claim to be "redeeming the time."

It should be pointed out, however, that although God's Word condemns idleness, there is a subtle danger in the

attitude just described. In it lies the denial of the religious value of the contemplative life. Moreover, some dear souls feel extremely guilty when they do not fill up their week with 'rewarding' (usually that means money) work, lest they be judged for not redeeming their time. Others are simply afraid to enjoy the luxury of leisure, lest they fall behind in the chase for the 'things' which the proverbial Joneses have, and so they 'redeem the time', and do not realize that their lives are being cluttered up with many 'things'. Clearly, we are in need of some Biblical perspectives from which to look at leisure.

### III. Perspectives for Leisure.

A. Time must be taken seriously. Biblical time is characterized by its eventfulness (*kairos* not *chronos*). Chronological time may be conceived of as time in duration, but *kairotic* time is existential, the time of opportunity. It is time characterized by its content. "Modern man's boredom arises from the fact that his time is without content; it is unfulfilled time" (Lee, p. 51). Modern man has 'time on his hands'. The Psalmist views time as 'in God's hands' (Ps. 31:15). God is the Lord of time. Christianity takes time seriously; it is concerned with the here and now. "Now is the accepted time." To kill time, or to abuse it, is to deny God. "I'm fed up with the effort of living twenty-four hours a day," read a suicide note left by a man alienated from God. The Christian view of God as Creator gives meaning and significance to the moments of time. He is thankful and accepts time as a mysterious gift from God.

Leisure, for the Christian, cannot be merely left-over time; it is too important and too serious to be so lightly regarded. But it doesn't follow that when he fills up time with a maddening succession of activity that he is redeeming time. To redeem time is to redeem it from meaninglessness—the bane of much work play and vacations. To redeem time is to transform time. It is to say with the Psalmist: "This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

B. Time must be related to creation. God's command, in the Decalogue, to observe one day of rest out of seven is linked to God's creative activity (Exod. 20:8-11). The Sabbath certainly was made for man. It reminds him of the significance of human life. It suggests that as God's creation man does not find his fulfilment in work only, but that leisure is an indispensable ingredient in our creaturely existence. On the other hand, we do not fulfill the purpose of our creation by idleness either—not even by an artificially enforced unemployment in the name of hallowing the Lord's Day.

When time began, and man, God's creation, was placed into this world of time and space, the Biblical judgment was: "And it was very good." Even temporal, finite existence is good, although it is vulnerable to man's perversion. But God placed man's life, his work and his leisure, into an ultimate context of meaningfulness. Of course, because of sin, such meaningful existence—which takes in work and leisure—can be found only by redemption, by which a dimension of depth is inserted into the shallowness of our earthly existence.

C. Time must be related to the whole of life. In order to evaluate the totality of life, to appraise one's existence, one must have leisure. An ancient philosopher taught, "The unexam-

ined life is not worth living." Presumably he meant, that life that is never examined is empty. But without leisure this is not possible. Therefore for the Christian, to take time seriously means that he finds occasions in which he can bring his life under examination. Leisure time when redeemed for the purpose of 're-creation' is then no longer wasted time, but time put into the context of eternity. Spurgeon once said, "Feet, stomach, and all the juices of the body—today we would say, the whole system of endocrine glands—should praise God and be kept in good running order for his service, that we may not allow sheer zeal for the house of the Lord to turn us into visionary fanatics estranged from nature, that our body may not be allowed to become—paradoxically, *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*—a stagnant swamp emitting gas bubbles of melancholy while we, instead of cultivating this wilderness, blindly and like bigots implore the Spirit of God to be so kind as to move upon even these muddy waters." (p. 21 Thieleke "Encounter With Spurgeon").

"Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful. And Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her" (Lk. 10: 4-12). "Be still and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10).

D. Ewert.

## PREACHING

### Die Haupteigenschaften eines Arbeiters im Dienst des Herrn

— Eine Predigt —

Text — Lukas 5, 1-11

„Es begab sich aber, da sich das Volk zu Jesu drang, zu hören das Wort Gottes, und er stand am See Genesareth und sah zwei Schiffe am See stehen, die Fischer aber waren ausgetreten und wuschen ihre Netze; trat er in der Schiffe eines, welches Simons war, und bat ihn, daß er's ein wenig vom Lande führte.

Und er setzte sich und lehrte das Volk aus dem Schiff. Und als er hatte aufgehört zu reden, sprach er zu Simon: Fahre auf die Höhe, und werfet das Netz aus, daß ihr einen Zug tut. Und Simon sprach: Meister, wir haben die ganze Nacht gearbeitet und nichts gefangen; aber auf dein Wort hin will ich

das Netz auswerfen. Und da sie das taten, beschlossen sie eine große Menge Fische, und ihr Netz zerriß. Und sie winkten ihren Gesellen, die im andern Schiff waren, daß sie kämen und hülften ihnen ziehen. Und sie kamen und füllten beide Schiffe voll, also daß sie sanken. Da das Simon Petrus sah, fiel er Jesu zu den Knien und sprach: Herr, gehe von mir hinaus, ich bin ein sündiger Mensch . . . Und Jesus sprach zu Simon: Fürchte dich nicht, denn von nun an wirst du Menschen fangen. Und sie führten die Schiffe zu Lande und verließen alles und folgten ihm nach."

Der große Apostel Petrus bleibt für uns ein Ansporn in der Arbeit für den Herrn. Er war so zielbewußt in der Arbeit, so entschieden in seinem Vorgehen. Wir sehen in ihm die felsenfeste Säule der ersten Gemeinde, die Donnerstimme eines Predigers, der die Hörer zur Buße aufruft, so wie auch den ruhigen Märtyrer, der seinen Glauben durch den Tod besiegelt. Aber so war er nicht immer. Oft haben wir es auch mit andern Szenen zu tun. Petrus war ein Mensch, und er trug das Menschliche recht oft zur Schau. Er eiferte; er verleugnete; er heuchelte. Er tat Buße; er weine; er kehrte um.

Diesen imponierenden Mann wollen wir uns einmal als Vorbild eines Arbeiters im Reiche Gottes vorführen. Bestimmt haben wir es nicht mit einem fehlerlosen Menschen zu tun, sondern mit einem, mit dem wir uns wohl identifizieren könnten. Wahrlich ein reizender Anblick! Er hat uns ein reiches Dienstleben hinterlassen, und wir dürfen dieses Leben in Ehren halten.

Was gehört zum Bilde eines geweihten Arbeiters? Wie kommt man dahin, daß man in solches Bild hineinpaßt? Ist es vielleicht eine Frage der Vererbung? Werden solche Menschen geboren, wie man von einem gediegenen Lehrer zu sagen pflegt? Vielleicht darf man die Antwort in den Einflüssen seiner Umgebung suchen? Obzwar man den Arbeiter nicht getrennt von solchen Einflüssen betrachten kann, darf man die Lösung der Frage nach der geistlichen Tüchtigkeit nicht hier suchen. Große Männer machen große Entscheidungen, die sich im Leben richtliniengengebend für andere auswirken.

Schauen wir einmal auf unsern Text, und merken wir uns die vier Eigenschaften, die sich klar im Leben des Apostels zeigten. Die Eigenschaften findet man auch heute im Leben der Arbeiter, die Gott braucht.

#### I. Freudiger Gehorsam zum Anfang der Arbeit

Gehorsam ist, vor allem, was Jesus von Petrus verlangte, als er ihn in seinen Dienst berief. Ein freudiger Gehorsam, der in rascher Stufenfolge aufsteigen lernt, vom Kleinen zum immer Größeren.

Merken wir einmal, daß dieser Gehorsam sich trotz **persönlicher Meinung** zeigte. Petrus war ja ein Fischer von Beruf und wußte wie, wann, und wo man zu fischen hatte. Hier bringt der Aufruf des Herrn ihn in eine heikle Lage, denn was Jesus verlangt, ist für ihn fast beleidigend. „Fahre auf die Höhe und wirf das Netz aus“ war nicht nur ein einfacher Befehl sondern einer, der die direkte Verneinung seiner Erkenntnis forderte. Petrus mußte „die Vernunft gefangennehmen unter den Gehorsam Christi.“

Wie viele wären heute brauchbare Menschen, könnten sie sich einmal in Demut und stiller Ergebenheit lediglich auf Christi Befehl verlassen. „Auf dein Wort hin!“ Zu oft muß der Herr viel Zeit anwenden, um die Kruste der persönlichen Meinungen und Vorurteilen zu durchbrechen, ehe er uns zum einfachen Gehorsam bewegen kann.

Kannst du gegen die Fischerregel am hellen Tage auf der Höhe die Netze auswerfen? Petrus konnte. William Carey vermochte es. C. T. Studd tat es. Auch wir kommen nicht umhin, es zu tun.

Andrerseits sehen wir einen freudigen Gehorsam angesichts **vergängerer Erfahrung**. Sie hatten die ganze Nacht gefischt und nichts gefangen. Es liegt in der Natur der Sache, daß Erfolg den Menschen mutig einstimmt. Wie ganz anders, wenn die Schicksalsschläge des Mißerfolges hart nach einander fallen und der Herr dann obendrein zur frischen Tat aufruft. Dann ist man kein Enthusiast mehr, sondern man erweist sich als Glaubensheld.

So wie Petrus dort dem Ruf des

Herrn folgte, ohne langes „Aber“, „Warum“ und „was wird mir dafür?“ die Höhe sucht und auf sein Wort das Netz auswirft, so müssen auch wir willig den Weg gehen, den der Herr uns anweist, und uns auf jeden Posten stellen, wohin er uns ruft.

Wen Gott auf die Höhe und in die Weite schickt, der möchte freilich oft lieber in der Tiefe bleiben, wie ein Moses oder ein Jeremias, als sie der Herr auf den Posten rief. Die Höhe heißt nur zu oft Wüste, Verkennung, Entbehrung, Wartburg, oder Kongo. Aber die Höhe bringt dem Diener die Herrlichkeit Gottes, und hier wird er durch feurigen Gehorsam zum tüchtigen Arbeiter verwandelt.

## II. Ausharrende Geduld beim Fortgang der Arbeit

Oft fängt man enthusiastisch an, aber dann will der gute Wille zum Ausharren fehlen. Petrus mußte einen zweiten Schritt in der Erziehung für den Dienst gehen. Das Ausharren will oft schwerer kommen und kostet dem Arbeiter mehr als das Anfangen.

Merken wir, daß die Geduld hier nach bitterer Erfahrung auf die Probe gestellt wurde. „Wir haben die ganze Nacht gearbeitet und nichts gefangen.“ Das ist eine Erfahrung, die keinem Knecht Gottes jemals ganz erspart bleibt. Moses mußte an einem störrischen und halsstarrigen Volk Geduld lernen. Elias wurde lebensmüde und wollte verzagen. Jesaja klagt: „Wer glaubt unserer Predigt?“

Geduld muß man lernen. Sie ist nicht mit einem phlegmatischen Temperament zu vergleichen. Mancher kann lange auf einer Stelle aushalten, denn er ist im Grunde genommen etwas faul und mag sich nicht zu sehr beschäftigen. Petrus war von Natur ein Eiferer, ein Draufgänger, und er mußte sich hart zusammen nehmen, um bei Mißerfolg geduldig zu bleiben.

Wie oft heißt es auch heute bei redlicher Arbeit im Dienste des Herrn: „Und haben nichts gefangen.“ Da gilt es Geduld der Heiligen zu üben und den Kampf zu kämpfen, der uns verordnet ist.

Andrerseits müssen wir diese ausharrende Geduld auch im Lichte der

**segensreichen Erfahrungen** des Apostels sehen. Petrus war kein Neuling im Glauben. Er hatte schon manches mit seinem Herrn erfahren und hatte aus diesen Erfahrungen viel gelernt. Er war kein stumpfer Schüler. Das Wunder zu Kana war ihm lebhaft im Gedächtnis geblieben und er bezweifelte die Kraft des Meisters nicht. Dort wurde der Gehorsam mit Erfolg gekrönt, warum sollte es jetzt anders sein?

Nur zu oft vergessen wir die Erfahrungen der Vergangenheit und lassen nach in der Geduld. Hat Gott sich nicht in unserm Leben oft als treu erwiesen? Warum sollte er jetzt auf einmal ein anderer sein?

Missionare haben schwere Proben in der Geduld erlebt. Sie blieben aber „unter der Last“, und endlich kam die Hilfe des Herrn. „Was er zusagt, das hält er gewiß.“ Geduld auf Christi Wort erobert die Erde, denn das Warten der Gerechten wird nicht zu schanden.

## III. Herzliche Demut beim Segen in der Arbeit

Hier liegt der Hauptschmuck des Arbeiters. Diese Demut kann man ja in vielen Handlungen des Arbeiters sehen. Schon in dem, daß sie willig waren, andere zu rufen, um am Segen teilzunehmen, konnte man eine Herzenseinstellung erkennen. Wir haben immer Arbeiter, die kaum einen Platz für den Mitbruder haben. Beim Segen möchten sie allein im Lichte stehen. Andere wieder haben es gelernt, mit andern am Netz zu ziehen und „winken gerne die Gesellen, daß sie ziehen helfen.“

Diese brüderliche Eintracht, diese herzliche Anspruchslosigkeit, bei der man sich andern neidlos unterordnen kann und nicht immer allein gelten will, die muß jeder lernen, der etwas im Reiche Gottes leisten will. Wo diese Demut fehlt, wo man eigene Ehre sucht, da wird auch mit den glänzendsten Gaben und den gewaltigsten Taten mehr Unsegen als Segen gestiftet und mehr zerstört als aufgebaut.

„Da das Petrus sah, fiel er Jesu zu den Knien und sprach: Herr, gehe von mir hinaus, ich bin ein sündiger Mensch.“ Hier ist christliche Demut, die sich um so tiefer beugt, je höher sie begnadigt ist, wie die vollste Ähre ihr

Haupt am tiefsten senkt und der fruchtbarste Ast sich unter seiner süßen Last zu Boden neigt.

Nicht nur hier zeigte Petrus solche Gesinnung. Später, bei der Heilung des Lahmen, weist er von sich weg, mit den Worten: „als hätten wir diesen wandeln gemacht durch eigene Kraft oder Verdienst.“

Wahrlich, eine zarte Blume, die Demut, mitten unter solchen, die es gerne mit Zahlen und Lobreden zu tun haben.

Oft kommen die schwersten Proben für den Arbeiter, wenn er die Höhen erreicht hat. Das Tal bringt oft schwere Erfahrungen mit sich, die ihn zur nüchternen Selbsteinschätzung treiben.

## IV. Mutiger Glaube bei den Schwierigkeiten in der Arbeit

„Fürchte dich nicht, denn von nun an wirst du Menschen fangen.“ Solchen Zuspruch konnte der Apostel wohl brauchen in dem schweren Beruf, mitten auf stürmischer See, unter Haß und Ver-

folgung, Mangel und Entbehrung.

„Sie führten die Schiffe zu Land und verließen alles und folgten ihm nach.“ Hier ist mutiger Glaube, der sich ohne Zweifel und Furcht in die Nachfolge beugt. Petrus wußte, was es kosten mußte. Er hatte eine Familie, und doch nahm er die Strapazen des Reiches Gottes auf sich und folgte Jesus nach.

Wer nur die Schwierigkeiten sieht, verzweifelt; wer nicht mit Schwierigkeiten rechnet, ist unnüchtern. Wer aber im mutigen Glauben mit Schwierigkeiten rechnet, in denen wir „weit überwinden“ können, der zeigt den mutigen Glauben eines wahren Dieners Christi.

Diese vier Haupteigenschaften kommen uns aus der Nachfolge zu. Nur in dem Verhältnis mit dem, der uns voranging und in dessen Fußtapfen wir nachfolgen, können sie gelernt werden. Der Herr gebe sie uns allen!

F. C. Peters

## Illustrating the Sermon XII

(b) **An adequate textual index.** A textual index, though not as essential as a topical index, can also prove very useful to the preacher who keeps his preaching close to Biblical texts. A textual index can serve to index sermons already preached or clipped from periodicals, as well as the usual illustrative matter. In the case of "occasional" or special sermons, however, the preacher would do better to index his material by topic or subject. Some there be who prefer to prepare a separate card source for this textual index but there seems to be no good reason why it should not be incorporated, (a) in the case of "card" systems, as a part of the central topical index (in one alphabetical sequence with the topical headings), or (b) in the case of "book" systems, as a **separate section within the same book or binder.** Two filing systems which follow the latter plan (as in (b) ) in an entirely satisfactory manner are the **Improved Wilson Topical and Textual Index System** and **Baker's Textual and Topical Filing System.**

In these two systems the index includes a full and ordered list of all Bibletexts, verse by verse. Such a verse by verse arrangement is a desideratum for any textual index, since it makes the indexing of sermons an easier and neater process: sermons on a single verse (say Romans 2:3) may then be indexed (by a reference or folder number) to the right of the list, for example, while sermons on a longer passage surrounding that same verse (say Romans 2:1-11), to the left of the list (by bracket and another reference or folder number).

However, the widely known **Memory-O-Matic System** provides a separate loose-leaf binder which can be used to index sermons not only textually and topically, but also chronologically! But it is doubtful whether the time needed to maintain so comprehensive an index (for delivered sermons alone) is available or warranted, in the case of most ministers. Again, another system which makes use of the sixth position (tab) on the right of folders for **delivered sermons and addresses** is that pub-

blished by the Donald F. Rossin Company (Minneapolis 15, Minn). A glance along the folder tabs (coloured if desired) on the extreme right shows immediately which texts have already been covered in preaching. This firm also provides "sermon record sheets" which can be used with a loose-leaf binder type of filing system to build a **chronological sermon record and index**.

(c) **Adequate filing media.** We have already indicated that the actual filing medium in a filing system may be either a set of cards or a set of filing folders. These are probably the two most common media available today, but scrapbooks, loose-leaf binders and special filing envelopes have also been used for the permanent storing of clipped or copied material. It is not difficult to see why the latter media have not proved as popular, in the long run, as the former two. Scrapbooks and loose-leaf binders demand that the clippings themselves be somehow attached to the pages; this requires extra time and effort and also prohibits the ready removal of an item and its transference to the pages of the sermon itself, if and when this is desired by the user. Again, filing envelopes are somewhat cumbersome to handle and do not permit as rapid inspection of contents as do other media. We have, however, realized that D. F. Rossin's **Sermon Builder Envelopes** may be used to good advantage for the storing of both finished sermons and sermon preparation notes. But in this case the specially printed envelope receives, on its face side, all the necessary data about its contents, and is then itself filed in an **appropriate folder!**

Where cards are used as the filing or storing medium, the illustrative item may be either clipped to a card (as in the **Real Filing System**) or else copied upon a card. The latter procedure requires more time on the user's part, but renders the set less bulky and unwieldy in the end. It would seem to us, however, that while the use of cards has its own advantages (physical compactness, minimum cost, and minimum amount of notation and labeling),

these are more than offset by the kind of advantages involved in the use of **folders** as the filing medium. Filing folders, by virtue of their very shape and form, are so convenient for both the ready storing and rapid retrieval of all types of clippings, and are themselves so easily arranged and rearranged within cases or drawers, that these factors alone have induced a majority of contemporary users to prefer them to all other filing media. Moreover, special pre-indexed and/or numbered labels for use with the tabs of such folders are now becoming more readily available so that preachers need not spend as much time on the labeling of these folders as heretofore. The Remington Rand Company has also experimented with colour coding and now supplies two colour code systems (**Variadex** and **Chaindex**) that help to make both the filing and finding of material simpler and speedier. Similar colour devices, we are sure, could be improvised by the preacher himself and the above expense avoided.

While any sturdy cardboard carton or crate of proper size can be used to house such filing folders (in the beginning), a single drawer transfer file serves the purpose better. As the collection grows, the user will want to acquire, if finances permit, a vertical filing cabinet — preferably a steel, four-unit affair with standard letter-size drawers. For those who would increase still further the efficiency of such folder cabinets, the D. F. Rossin Company provides metal dividers (**DIV-I-DEX**) that keep folders under compression so that they do not sag in the drawer, and also "Pendaflex hanging folders" which (by means of notches at the ends of metal strips attached to the tops of the folders) ride on rods at both sides of the drawer.

Concerning the folders themselves, it may be added that a good grade (I.C. line, No. IDT 411-11 point thickness — is recommended), with reinforced top edges and "three" to "six" position tabs, should be used.

It may be said, finally, that if the user feels certain that he will never have a large number of folders in his

collection (not more than, say, 100), he need not bother with a central indexing source at all, for if such folders are properly labeled, properly arranged, their content properly restricted (to 20 items or less) and possibly indicated on a reference sheet on the face side of the folder, all the information needed at any time can be quickly obtained directly from the folders. It is only when the system of folders becomes so large that the process of finding a particular item turns out to be a rather slow and arduous one, that a central indexing source becomes a necessity. But the user will need to have access to some adequate **topical index** in both cases, for this is basic (we repeat) and cannot be dispensed with under any circumstances!

3. **A third and final aspect involves a few suggestions on actual procedure in the systematic gathering and preservation of illustrative materials.** These suggestions may be subsumed, for convenience' sake, under three specific words or phrases: "gathering", "clipping and indexing," and "filing."

In respect to the **gathering of illustrative items**, the most important counsel still remains: be highly selective and judicious in your choice. It is all too easy for the eager gatherer to amass such an amount of material at first that time does not permit the proper filing of it and later judgment does not permit the honest use of much of it. Undoubtedly, the passing of time itself brings with it a certain increase in the discriminative powers of the preacher and in the skill with which he is able to sense the illustrative possibilities that truly lie within certain incidents, allusions, or experiences.

In respect to the **clipping and indexing of illustrations**, several things must be said. In some cases, of course, as with bound books or borrowed periodicals for example, items cannot be clipped but must be either copied out in full (where brief), or merely cited in the central indexing source. Where a chapter or section in a book is to be merely cited, the **author** and **title** (abbreviated) of the book, and the **pages** in question, should be posted di-

rectly in the indexing source. Some, we know, contend that this procedure can be simplified by first coding all of one's own books and then posting merely the code letters or numbers of the book in question. We, as do L. R. Elliot (in the **Efficiency Filing System**) and J. Smith (in **The Minister's Library Handbook**), demur at this point. We feel, that such coding requires too much time in the first place and that the posting of such code numbers (in the central index) is almost as time-consuming as the entry of the author and title of the book itself. Moreover, such coding is really not necessary — for a brief reference to the author and title is quite enough for most ministers, since their personal libraries are seldom so large as to make the finding of a particular book (by author and title) any problem at all! Where the item is to be copied out, the copying should be done on uniform cards (4" x 6"), and each illustration restricted to one card (using only its reverse side, if necessary).

Where items can be clipped, they should be properly cut, marked, and indexed as soon as possible after initial contact with them. A good rule to follow here is: "**clip and mark on the first reading.**" If such clipping and marking are left to some "elusive tomorrow", they often are left altogether and forever! Only that part of the clipping which is needed should be clipped, lest folders develop an early and unsightly "bulge." In the case of periodicals, the date of issue should be retained, for this is often useful information that bears on the relative value of the item. However, in order that he can immediately and accurately mark an item — to be filed later, if necessary — the user needs to know his topical index well and to develop increasing skill in applying it sensibly to the illustration under consideration. All too often, this part of the entire process of gathering and preserving sermon illustrations is rather taken for granted, and almost nothing is said about it in most books which treat of the whole subject. Nevertheless, it is not an exaggeration to say that it is

this very phase which finally "makes or breaks" the preacher's use of any filing system!

In the case of periodicals and magazines, it is wise to cull the most promising items and then to discard the remainder of the issue, for such literature takes up much space and is seldom looked into again unless it be a periodical of unusually high calibre. If, however, for some reason, one wishes to keep a set of issues intact, one may store them conveniently in cardboard "magafiles" (prepared for that purpose) or in 3-ring binders.

In respect to the **actual filing of illustrations**, finally, we may make the following comments. The proper marking of clipped items (with the topical index word or number) is necessary not only in order that such clippings may be filed at a later date (if desired) but also so that when removed from a folder, they may be returned to it with the same ease. Larger clippings ought to be neatly folded so that they do not extend beyond the bounds of any folder. Very small clippings, again, may be mounted on a stiff clipping sheet by taping their left edges to the sheet in a staggered manner so that titles remain visible and back sides may be read as well. If a folder should become full, its width may be increased by folding down another crease at the bottom. But a folder should, in no case, contain more than about 20 items, for maximum efficiency. These items may, as we suggested in another connection, also be listed on the face side of the folder so that a mere glance at the list can serve to inform the user of the availability of desired items in a given folder. However, it seems doubtful to us whether, in view of the time needed to prepare and maintain such lists, such a practice actually saves the user any appreciable time in the end. But each to his own preferred practice!

This brings us to the end of this series of articles on sermon illustrations and their use in preaching. If at times it has seemed to our readers that altogether "too much has been made of too little," we offer our apologies. It has

never been, for even a moment, our considered opinion that illustrations **as such** make a sermon either great (rhetorically) or vital (spiritually). There is more to evangelical preaching, we know, than outline and illustration or proposition and development. Evangelical preaching — preaching that actually brings preacher and people together by the living flame of truth — can "never achieve its true end (as Donald G. Miller has reminded us in his recent study, **The Way To Biblical Preaching**) without a concentration on its message". The **central concern** of preaching, therefore, must always be to so proclaim the message of God's redeeming work in Christ that the demand for the hearer's surrender and faith becomes a living reality in the act of preaching. But because the craft of sermon illustration can make its own modest but not insignificant contribution to such preaching, the preacher need not regret giving a **little of his time** to its closer study.

H. Giesbrecht.

### HONESTY IN PREACHING

"Such is the mystery of spiritual anointing; we know, but we cannot tell to others what it is. It is as easy as it is foolish to counterfeit it, as some do who use expressions which are meant to betoken fervent love, but oftener indicate sickly sentimentalism or mere cant. 'Dear Lord!' 'Sweet Jesus!' 'Precious Christ!' are by them poured out wholesale, till one is nauseated. . . . Some have mere mannerism without power is as foul carrion of all life bereft, obnoxious, mischievous. Certain brethren aim at inspiration through exertion and loud shouting, but it does not come. . . . others gesticulate wildly. . . . Bah! The whole thing smells of the greenroom and the stage. The getting up of fervour in hearers by the simulation of it in the preacher is a loathsome deceit to be scorned by honest men."

Spurgeon, in *Lectures to Students*

## HISTORICAL

### Communal Life Among Medieval Evangelicals in the Fifteenth Century

(Conclusion)

In two previous articles we have considered important aspects of communal life as it was practiced by leading evangelical groups in the pre-Reformation era. This rebirth of Christianity found expression in community of goods, in corporate dwellings, in co-operative training, and also in a collective witness of believers. To American Christians in the twentieth century, who in many instances have become worshipers of the cult of individualism, these practices may seem strange indeed. An examination of the motivation for these practices among Medieval evangelicals should, therefore, be both enlightening and profitable, and it might even lead us to a more biblical view with regard to this question.

#### III. Authoritative Sanctions of the Communal Life

##### 1. Historical and Practical Sanctions

The common ideal that inspired all these religious groups was the pattern of the church in the apostolic age. The early church, living strictly according to the rule of life laid down by Christ and His apostles, was their ideal of a Christian society. They ignored or rejected the historical development of Christianity. For this reason also they were not interested primarily in the "reformation" of the existing church, but rather sought the "restoration" of the apostolic church. The history of the church in the centuries following Constantine's conversion was painted by them as a steady descent from the perfection which had existed in the Christian community until that date. In the opinion of Ernst Troeltsch, these groups created a "society within society" because they felt that the reform of society as a whole was an impossible ideal.

This emphasis by the "sects" Troeltsch connects with their concept of the nature of the church. Speaking of the Bohemian Brethren (whom for some reason he calls "Moravian Brethren") Troeltsch describes their re-organization after the Hussite Wars as follow:

This is a complete return to the social idea of the early church, after the Christian civilization of the church had proved itself to be a secularization and refraction of Christian morality, and the attempt to realize the absolute Law of Nature and of God by violence had proved itself to be a bloody Utopia.

The attempt of these religious sectarians to establish a spiritual "apostolic succession" and to trace their history back to the early church, was especially resented by their contemporary opponents. In a letter of Petrus de Pilichdorf, dating from the year 1395, reference is made to such claims by the Waldenses. Pilichdorf writes:

. . . the sons of iniquity deceive the simple, saying that their sect has existed from the time of Pope Sylvester—namely, when the church began to have property of its own. This the heresiarchs consider as unlawful, because the apostles of Christ were commanded to live without property. Matt. 10.

Among medieval sectaries in general the "fall of Christianity" was linked up with the legend of Constantine's Donation which allegedly gave to the papacy its temporal power. This conception provides an oft-repeated motif in writings of Peter Chelcicky, the spiritual father of the Bohemian Brethren. He firmly believed that the acceptance of worldly wealth and power on the part of the church had corrupted its

apostolic purity. For Chelcicky, as well as for the Bohemian Brethren, the "perfection of the church before the Donation was matched now by its total depravity henceforth."

The staunchest defender of communal life was a young scholar Gerard Zerbolt (1367-1398). The brethren faced strong opposition from two sides. On the one hand the Roman Catholic Church frowned upon the practice of sects or brotherhoods which seemed to compete with monasticism. Property held in common, so it argued, was very well for monks and nuns, but laymen should be content with their place in society. On the other hand the Brethren encountered much opposition from the friars and mendicant orders themselves. This is not surprising, for as Hyma correctly observed "the whole institution (i.e. the brotherhouse) was a living protest against the decadent monasticism of the fifteenth century."

In a very skillful manner Zerbolt collected his arguments for the defense of communal life from the history of the church. He admitted that founding new monastic orders was prohibited, but to live in private houses and share one's expenses with others was quite permissible. Such practice had been customary in the past, and it had been recommended by the saints of old and approved even by the pope. Zerbolt contended that those chapters in the Canon Law which were directed against the founders of new monastic orders were in no way opposed to the common life as such.

Zerbolt advanced the following historical and rational arguments for the communal life. He claimed that man's natural mind or reason impel him to lead the simple life, that is, the common life. Moreover, many saints and doctors recommend the cession of one's private property for the benefit of society, such as Egidius, Thomas Aquinas and Bede. St. Ambrose and St. Augustine also had recommended the common life on several occasions. Even Aristotle's famous saying that man is a social animal was used by Zerbolt to defend his cause, and he referred approvingly to Seneca who had taught that "where love reigns supreme, no one

will want possessions of his own, and friendship promoted by the common life" (Hyma, Christianity, Capitalism and Communism). The chief historical argument for Zerbolt, however, was the practice of community of goods in the primitive church, which he considered as ideal.

Among the Taborites practical necessity combined with religious belief in the establishment of "Christian communism." Kautsky, who makes every attempt to read back into the history of the religious sects of the fifteenth century the idea of nineteenth century Marxism, admits that the methods of production (among the Taborites) "demanded the existence of private proprietorship." Tabor had become a Mecca for many religious refugees, and people from various countries, even from England, could be found in the town. It was the need of these refugees which was primarily responsible for establishing some form of "consumer's communism" to which reference has been made before.

Among the successors of the Taborites, the Unity Brethren, another important consideration entered into the picture. Their doctrine of poverty and renunciation of wealth was an integral part of their conception of the church as being in the world, yet not of the world. According to the teaching of Chelcicky, this implied the total rejection of magistracy and warfare. Members of the Brotherhood could not be officers of the state. But owners of large estates at that time were often ipso facto administrative officials, judges, or even military leaders. It was, therefore, not the communism of the Bohemian Brethren which was always voluntary and soon became confined to the priesthood, but their anarchism and pacifism, which made them demand in some cases that nobles should renounce their property. Although the Brethren were not very consistent in the observance of this principle, Brock reports that "at least two members with large estates were obliged to renounce them before being accepted into membership." One of these is described as "a wise man, well versed in godly matters," and seems to have enjoyed

great respect among the Brethren, probably largely due to the sacrifice he had made for their cause.

The chief authorization and justification of the communal life, however, all religious sectarians of the fifteenth century found in the teachings of the Scriptures and in general principles, which they believed were inherent in the gospel. These will now be examined briefly.

## 2. Biblical and Theological Sanctions

The "Biblicism" of the religious groups that emphasized a communal life needs to be defined a little more closely. All these groups applied the "sola scriptura" principle not only to matters of faith and doctrine, but also to social and economic ethics. In this respect they anticipated the views of the Anabaptists a century later. However, all groups under consideration, with the exception of the Taborites, made a distinction between the Old and New Testaments, finding their ultimate norms and sanctions only in the latter. The Bohemian Brethren followed Chelcicky in making this distinction. For Chelcicky the example of Christ and His apostles was to be the touchstone of all human conduct, of all earlier and later teachings. "For every doctrine," he writes, "needs to be tested by Christ's words and life, to see if it accords with His example and teachings" (Quoted by Brock).

The Old Testament had preached physical warfare, the execution of sinners and, in short, the law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. The Jews had been justified in following this law as they were then on a lower plane of development. But Christ had substituted for it His new "Law of Love," which is to govern the whole of the Christian's life. "It is only the false Christians," the Brethren write (perhaps with an eye to those of their number who came across from the Taborites), "who cannot distinguish between the two revelations" (Brock).

In describing the theological orientation of the Waldenses, Walter Niggs points out that Law of Christ (Gesetz Christi) was the central authority for their life and conduct. Then he makes the following significant observation:

"Das Alte Testament wurde von ihnen mehr zurueckgestellt, jedoch keineswegs verworfen."

The Brethren of the Common Life also appear to have made the distinction between the two Testaments. Concerning Gerard Groote, the founder of the Brotherhouses in the Netherlands, Hyma has this to say: "The theology and philosophy of Gerard Groote was based chiefly upon the New Testament, and the Fathers . . ."

The only group that found final norms for the Christian life in the Old as well as in the New Testament, were the Taborites, as mentioned above. This was also the sect that approved the use of force in the defence of the faith. In his critical analysis of this movement, Troeltsch came to the conclusion that the latter practice was justified by the Taborites on Old Testament grounds. He writes: "It could not be justified by appealing to the New Testament and to the Law of Christ, so there was now a reaction to the Old Testament, with its 'holy' wars, and the forcible cleansing of Israel by righteous kings." It was largely because of this emphasis that the Unity Brethren in later years denied any spiritual connection with the Taborites.

What were some of the specific New Testament teachings used by these groups in support of the communal life? In their arguments they employed particular Scripture passages as well as general principles, which they regarded as implied in the Christian gospel.

The teachings of Christ were held in highest regard by all followers of the "New Devotion." In justifying the common life of the Brethren in Deventer and Zwolle, Zerbolt makes the words of Christ his first and chief line of defence: "In the first place, it would be in complete accordance with Christ's wish as found in the Gospel of St. Matthew, Ch. XVIII (Ch. XIX, verse 21): 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast'" (Hyma, Devotio Moderna). Zerbolt also refers to the fact that the same doctrine is preached by Paul in the twelfth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. In the writings of all these groups numerous references and allusions are found to the common

life of the primitive church as recorded in the Book of Acts.

The most potent arguments, however, the "Brethren" (and this designation is here applied to all groups under discussion) drew from the example of Christ and from the pattern of the Apostolic Church. Groote, for instance, aimed to imitate Christ in his poverty. "O Lord of all riches," he exclaimed, "why didst thou elect such humble garments?" He concludes his contemplation with an eloquent exhortation: "Rejoice, ye poor ones, for this seeming poverty is but a guise, since He, though poor in earthly goods, was master of all, magnificent, royal, divine. Follow in his footsteps, ascend the road that leads from ignominy to glory . . ." (Hyma).

The Statutes of the Community at Herford make it very plain that the Brethren regarded the communal life as a vital expression of the Christian faith. Part of one statute reads as follows:

For the promotion of our soul's salvation, as well as for the edification of our neighbor in the purity of the Christian faith . . . we will and intend to live a pure life, in harmony and community, by the work of our own hands, in true Christian religion and the service of God.

The expressions "purity of the Christian faith" and "true Christian religion" seem to imply that the Brethren regarded the practices in the Catholic Church of their day as deviations from the true apostolic norms. One does not find any specific negative criticisms of the Church, however, in the writings of the Brethren. Only the mendicant orders are singled out for severe criticism and condemnation.

In the synodal decree of the Bohemian Brethren in the year 1464, the renunciation of private property was considered obligatory for all those who sincerely desired to put Christ's teachings into practice. The decree reads as follows:

Priests and those who teach should give an example to others in word and deed . . . And whichever among them possess worldly wealth, let them do with it as the gospels ordain: give to

the poor, and having shared their goods out among them, let them earn their bread by the labor of their hands, for this is indeed good . . . (Brock)

Provision is made for the material support of ministers, so that the latter might be without care in the service of God. The family-concept of the church, where "brothers" and "sisters" in mutual love care for each other, appears to be a "leit-motif" in the theology of all the religious sectarians in the fifteenth century.

#### IV. Conclusion

Time and space will not permit an examination of the causes that led to the gradual decline and disintegration of religious communal life at the end of the fifteenth century. Some scholars attribute this decline to a growing prosperity (Kautsky), others to higher education (Gindeley), among the "Brethren." Ullmann, who mentions four specific causes for the decline of this practice among the Brethren of the Common Life, has no regrets in considering this aspect. He claims that "the institution could make its exit with honour; it had fulfilled its destination . . ."

Ullman's thesis, however, that the Reformation gathered up all the gains of these movements and gave them a higher intellectual completion, is in my view subject to some serious reservations and criticisms. That they effectively prepared the way for the reforms of the sixteenth century cannot be denied. It may be appropriate to conclude this study with a statement of Luther, in which he expresses his high regard for the communal life of the Brethren in the Low Countries. As late as 1532 he wrote to the rector of the Brethren at Herford: "I dare not indulge in great wishes, but if all other things were in as good condition as the brethren-houses, the church would be much too blessed even in this life" (Quoted in Hyma, Christianity . . .). J. A. Toews

"There is no such thing as chance; and what seems to us the merest accident springs from the deepest source of destiny." — Schuller

## MISSIONS

### Missionary Communication

(Continued from last issue)

3. **Missionary Communication needs to be related to the context of the needy.** Once we have established a need, we must put forth diligent effort to reconstruct the content of our communication to fit into that need. Jesus was very careful to do this. Of Him we read, "And with many such parables spake He the Word unto them as they were able to hear it" (Mark 4:33). Did he tell His disciples everything he knew? No! He says, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12). How our hearts are intrigued with the thought of all that Jesus might have said, if those to whom he spoke, had been ready for it. When Jesus spoke to the woman that came to the well to fetch water, Jesus began his missionary communication with the words, "Give me to drink" (John 4:7), and then developed the concept of "living water" until this became so real to the woman, and she became so intrigued with what she heard, that she left her water pot at the well and "went her way into the city and said to the man, Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did. Is this not the Christ" (John 4:28-29). He adapted his message of life to fit into the framework of this poor needy soul. When speaking to Nicodemus Jesus spoke to him in such terms that he could ask "Art thou a master and knowest not these things."

Paul exercises equal care in this respect. When speaking to the Jews in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia he begins by saying "Men of Israel and ye that fear God give audience. The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt and with an high arm brought he them out of it." (Acts 13:16-17). Paul moved completely into their frame of mind

and continued to speak about their much revered King David and then said, 'of this man's seed has God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour Jesus' (John 13:23). He started where the Jews were and led them up to the wonderful Messiah. When he preached in Athens on Mars Hill to the philosophers, he begins with the words "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious, for as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription 'to the unknown God' whom therefore ye ignorantly worship. Him declare I unto you" (Acts 17:22-23). Paul completely changed his approach. Why? Because he spoke to a different people. He had found their frame of reference, their way of thinking, and adapted his message to fit in to the thinking of those to whom he had preached. When he addressed the mob in Jerusalem we read, "And when there was made a great silence he Paul spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying, 'Men brethren and fathers hear ye me my defense which I make now unto you, and when they heard that he spoke in the Hebrew tongue to them they kept the more silence" (Acts 21:40 b — 22:2). Why did they give him a hearing? Because he first tried to find his hearers and their way of thinking and started his communication at that point. Thus we could go on and site examples. But let these suffice to point out the need that missionary communication needs to be related to the context in which those who are in need of the gospel stand. Therefore, we cannot go and preach the one gospel in the same way to all men, but must constantly seek first to find these that are lost, and then to adjust our approach to the life-situation of those who are lost, and then begin mis-

sionary communication. This is where we, like Paul, must become a Jew to the Jew and a Greek to the Greek. Yet we must become all things to all men "that I might by all means win some." (I Cor. 9:22).

#### 4. Missionary communication requires participation of all church members.

The responsibility for missionary communication is often relegated to a special class of Christians. We think here of the professional missionary under the appointment by a board or committee, or the salaried clergy of the church. The Scriptures, however, show a different emphasis. They include the above in the responsibility of missionary communication, but at the same time make it very clear that all other Christians are to participate in this great work as well. In Acts 8 we read that the church that was in Jerusalem was all scattered abroad except the apostles. The latter were the ones from whom one would expect a special forward thrust in missionary communication. They, however, remained in Jerusalem and the regular church member was scattered abroad and "went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). God does not only want to use specialized agents but relies heavily upon the many satisfied customers. There is quite a difference between these two. Specially trained agents, such as the clergy of the church, will usually be under suspicion by the one to whom he communicates. The recipient will fortify himself against the pressuring which he anticipates and will close his inner being against professional devices which he believes the minister might employ. Thus a minister has special resistances to overcome, if he wants to communicate the gospel. A satisfied customer, however, is received differently. Here is much less suspicion. As one who has experienced the Lord in his own heart, he speaks in the everyday contexts to his prospect at work or across the back fence. In fact, a regular church member may find it much easier to make a point of contact with a non-believer than a trained theologian. The success of spreading the gospel by the first church cannot be ascribed exclusively

to the good preaching of the apostles, but must be explained by the participation of every member of the church in missionary communication. Every fast growing gospel movement has been marked by active participation in witnessing by the membership in general. As soon as the responsibility is assigned to only a few professional people, the church has ceased to expand, and has even endeavored to provide substitutes for the testimony of the membership. Some have substituted impressive architecture by which they were hoping to attract the people of the community. In some instances the church has looked to oratory in the pulpits or formalism in the services to make up for the deficiency in missionary communication by its members. Yet the more refined the church atmosphere becomes, the more strange the man of the street will feel in it; the greater the distance from the intellectual and dispositional context of the non-believer to that of the church. There is nothing that can replace the potential of missionary communication by the individual member. An increased missionary budget will not do it. Neither can an increased number of professional missionaries make up for the loss. The individual member will need to involve himself in some way in the act of missionary communication. We do not want to minimize the significance of monetary contributions to a missionary program by the individual Christian. Certainly missionary communication abroad will need to be carried on in this way. The church will need to select a few from its own membership to be sent abroad to places where there is no church, and these witnesses, so placed in foreign lands, will need our support. But this does absolve the member who makes a monetary contribution from personally participating in missionary communication right where he is.

Some people have even come to question whether Christ was realistic when he commissioned his own disciples to preach the gospel to every creature. Can this be realized at all? Is such a thing at all possible? In this day of population explosion, population experts tell us that the church is falling behind the

birth rate to the extent of fifty million a year. In other words, every year there are fifty million more souls without Christ than the year before. Can we then ever hope to fulfill Christ's command that the gospel should be preached to every creature? We heard Mr. Clyde Taylor, one of the best missionary experts of our day, make the statement that if every Christian would win one soul to the Lord every six months and they in turn would again win one soul every six months, we would run out of souls to be won in twelve years. So we must conclude that Christ was realistic, but the church has fallen behind in doing its job. The reason the church has failed is because the individual member has failed in missionary communication.

5. Missionary communication must be related to the individual. This requires more than mass communication. It is true that means of mass communication may be used in order to reach the individual. But mass communication alone cannot do the job. From time to time we read how the Lord spoke to large crowds, but more often we find him engaged in missionary communication to individuals. "Jesus findeth Philip and said unto him, Follow me" (John 1:43). Jesus used the late hours of the night for missionary communication to one man, Nicodemus. Jesus did not despise speaking to one woman at the well of Samaria. Philip left the crowd in Samaria and went into the desert and there "opened his mouth and began at the same scripture to preach unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35), to one individual, the eunuch of Ethiopia. Because of Paul's efforts in missionary communication, the Lord opened the heart of one woman, Lydia, and she became a believer. Later, one jailor in the same city of Philippi became the object of Paul's missionary message. The concern of those who have successfully been engaged in mass evangelism has been that the individual be not overlooked. Much time, effort and planning goes into the providing of counsellors for each individual. Mass communication without individual follow-up has always ended in disappointing results.

The scriptural principle is "as water answereth to face so the heart of man to man" (Prov. 27:19). To be really effective we need, for every unsaved soul, a devoted Christian who has a message to communicate.

6. Missionary communication needs spiritual endowment. Jesus gave his own a tremendous task. Humanly speaking they had every reason to begin immediately upon receiving the great commission. But what did Jesus say? "And ye are witnesses of these things and behold I send the promise of my father upon you, but tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:48-49). Jesus would not have His disciples begin with missionary communication until they were spiritually endowed for this work. The statement, "Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth," is preceded by the promise, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8). Jesus does not advocate witnessing apart from spiritual endowment. He would rather have His disciples wait until this power is their own.

It is interesting to page through the Acts and notice how spiritual endowment is related to missionary communication. On the day of Pentecost we read, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). Filling was followed by speaking. The almost identical word is recorded in Acts 4:31: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and they spake the word of God with boldness." Being filled with the spirit Peter spoke to the rulers and elders of the people (Acts 8:4). Of Stephen, who was a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost, it is said: "They were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake" (Acts 6:5, 10). Throughout Acts, the Spirit is constantly related to missionary communication. "The spirit said unto Philip, Go near and join thyself to the chariot" (Acts 8:39), and thus he communicated the gospel to the eunuch.

How did Peter become willing to go to the house of Cornelius? "While Peter thought of the vision, the Spirit said unto him, 'Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore and get thee down and go with them, doubting nothing, for I have sent them'" (Acts 10:19-20). The Spirit also directed Paul in his program of missionary communication. He was forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia. "After they were come to Mysia they assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not" (Acts 16:6,7). Then the door to Macedonia opened and the gospel came to Europe. In stressing this point we do not wish to be understood as though we were advocating a second work of grace as taught by the Penetcostal move-

ment in our day. But we do know that spiritual endowment is related to the degree of our dedication and obedience to our Lord and Master. Peter says, "We are His witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts 5:32). Spiritual endowment for witnessing comes to us in the act of obedience. The power to witness will not be ours as long as we are at home in the rocking chair and refuse to move. No amount of praying and waiting upon the Lord will take the place of genuine devotion and ready obedience to the command of Christ to involve ourselves in missionary communication. May God give us grace to do our part!

J. J. Toews

## MUSIC

### Music in the Christian Education Program of the Church

In thinking about this topic I have been challenged anew by the limitless areas of work that are open to the churches in our conference. In spite of the extent of music-making in our conference at present, one is forced to realize that much of it is done without any particular aims or objectives in mind, especially of a long-range type. Singing merely because we like it may eventually bring rather unfortunate results. After the initial novelty has worn off, boredom may set in if the activity itself is essentially purposeless. Unless the singing in the church and Sunday School is designed to provide training for children and young people, along with meaningful experiences for old and young, the amount of real value derived from the singing may be very little indeed.

Surely it is somewhat of a paradox that we who place so much emphasis on singing in our churches seem to do so little to **train** children and young people to get more out of this part of the church program. We expect that our Sunday Schools will help our children

and young people to get to know the basic facts of Scripture, and we have lessons and other materials that are graduated according to age level and interests so that the training in Biblical knowledge may be systematic and thorough. And we certainly expect the teachers in the Sunday School departments to have the necessary Bible training. To get this systematized program into our churches has taken a good deal of time and expense over the years; and we have profited a good deal from the work done in other protestant groups. But in the musical aspects of the total church program we have very little that can compare favourably with what has been done in the Sunday School with respect to teaching religious material.

Now it is not expected that the Sunday School is to become a sort of music class. All I am saying is that the sort of religious training we have provided in the realm of religious knowledge has not been provided in the realm of religious music. There has been some acquaintance with religious music, to

be sure, but little systematic training of any kind is associated with it. There are still many people who do not see any particular need for this sort of training — but they probably didn't see any particular need for a systematic Sunday School program either, at least not for adults. It is not up to the Sunday school department to implement this music training program, but insofar as the Sunday School uses music in its curriculum it is in a position to influence the student along these lines.

That there is a great need for a systematic approach to the music training program in the church will be quite evident to those who take the trouble to look into the matter. There is lacking an over-all philosophy of church music to give guidance in the various phases of our music activities, especially in the Sunday School years. In many churches there is no other opportunity for the child to sing except in the Sunday School and perhaps in the church the program somewhat. The music used should be of high quality, since children acquire taste in these matters just as they do in all other aspects of church work. As a rule most "choruses" have little educational value beyond being easy to learn, and should be used sparingly. There are many fine "teaching" hymns in the repertoire of church music which the children should learn.

Young people are generally given little guidance in the choice or performance of church music. Value judgments are seldom made — choice is often by popular appeal or in imitation of some radio group. Ideals are often formed from religious recordings of dubious merit and from styles of performance that smack more of the popular commercial product than of authentic church music. Little systematic training in music is given to children or young people before the church choir level is reached, yet it is difficult to initiate a training program at the church choir level because rehearsal time must be devoted to the songs and anthems to be used on Sunday. Similarly, few congregations receive any kind of training as it applies to their singing of the church hymns. Congre-

gational singing is on the decline in many of our churches because we have not paid sufficient attention to meaningful experiences in this area. The fact that few new songs are learned in any given year already suggests that the congregation keeps revolving around a repertoire that has become rather stale over the years.

There is good work being done in the area of music in many of our churches and in the Sunday School departments. Too frequently, however, this work suffers because of a lack of continuity. Similarly, some churches have initiated various music programs for Sunday evenings or at other suitable times, when attention is given to the importance that music plays in the church service, or information may be given leading to a more meaningful experience in the singing of hymns. Those churches which happen to have well-trained personnel in the music departments are fortunate indeed. In most churches the training of the musicians in the church still seems to be left up to the individual. Because so much of this training should be started during the early formative years, it is imperative that the church stress this part of its general training program, and seek to find ways and means of providing itself with future musicians.

Since the church choir level is really too late to initiate a learning program (though much can be learned here, of course), the two main ways in which a music training program may be introduced into the church educational framework is through the Sunday School or through the multiple choir system (or both). It is understood that music will always play a secondary role in the Sunday School program as such, but its importance should not be minimized. The great need in our Conference at the present time is for a suitable book to be used in connection with the teaching of the lessons or in connection with the singing sessions that usually precede them. Much of the criticism that has been levelled at the poor singing that has been done in the Sunday School is often unwarranted,

because the teachers had poor material to work with.

To help improve the singing in the Sunday School it is necessary, then, to provide our Sunday Schools with a suitable book of songs and hymns. This book could also serve as a youth hymnal if this fact is kept in mind when compiling the material. If this cannot be done, one could examine a number of fine publications already on the market and use them, or supplement them with an appendix. The students should be learning many of the songs which they will later be singing in the church, so that the relationship between the two may be strengthened. The Sunday School should not have a repertoire completely divorced from the music used in the regular church services. Let us not suppose that many of the grand old hymns of the church have less appeal for the young than they do for the old.

The multiple choir system is by far the best way to implement a church music-training program. Most of our larger churches could implement a program of this sort; even those with limited membership could initiate a modified form to suit their requirements. The advantages in this sort of program are many: It has a strong educational emphasis; much direct music teaching is possible in connection with learning important things about the service of the church, public department, etc. Furthermore, it lends itself very well to the "churchschool" set-up, where religious instruction is combined with musical instruction and choir work. This system makes it possible to organize the entire music-making of the church, insuring continuity in the instruction. The multiple choir system as such also serves to satisfy the social needs of young people in a Christian framework, helps foster a fine church spirit, and provides opportunities for young and old in the church to work together at the same projects, such as public programs at various times in the church year.

In many of our churches we already have some of these choirs, but usually they are found at the two extremes—

a childrens' choir and a church choir. We have few intermediate or youth choirs to bridge the gap. The musical training and experience of singing good religious music over a longer period of time during the formative years would prove to be invaluable to any young singer and prepare him adequately for the singing in the church choir. How happy the conductor would be, if he could accept singers into the church choir who had been receiving this type of training for about eight years!

There are a number of problems involved in this sort of musical system, to be sure, but the rewards would repay any effort that is made. If a "minister of music" can be hired by the church, this is of course almost ideal, since he can then supervise the program in all the departments. But even if this is not possible, the church choir leader could perhaps be given authority to supervise the program, but various available musicians in the church would be in charge of the choirs. In this way the financial problems could be kept at a minimum. Once the program was set in motion it would soon require less attention than it would at first. Or it may be possible to begin the program at the bottom and add to it as the students leave one age group and enter the next. In this way the plan could be expanded gradually until the gap between the two extremes would be filled.

It seems to me that it is high time for us to consider some new ways and means of improving the music-making in our churches. We have reached a kind of plateau; we need to avoid any suggestion of stagnation. But we have in the past taken too much for granted, and have taken few positive steps and put forth too little effort in the matter of training our own young people in the music of the church. A renewed effort is required, and surely in the educational area is where it ought to be made.

Peter Klassen.

(Schluß von Umschlagseite 2) —

Er selbst mitgehen würde — und das genüge. Mit dem Herrn kann Gottes Volk in neuen Situationen, in unerwarteten Lagen, in unvorhergesehenen Verlegenheiten, den rechten Weg finden. Solange es ein hörend Ohr, ein zartes Gewissen, einen demütigen Geist, und ein gehorsames Herz bewahrt, kann es, in Gemeinschaft mit dem Herrn, den rechten Weg finden.

Mit diesem Gebet Moses, und mit dieser Verheißung des Herrn, wollen auch wir das kommende Schuljahr antreten, und wir empfehlen uns der Fürbitte unserer Bruderschaft.

D. Ewert

# LET US PRAY!

O FATHER, I pray —

for faith to believe that Thou dost rule the world in truth and righteousness:

for faith to believe that if I seek first Thy Kingdom and righteousness, Thou wilt provide for all my lesser needs:

for faith to take no anxious thought for the morrow, but to believe in the continuance of Thy past mercies:

for faith to see Thy purpose of love unfolding itself in the happenings of this time:

for faith to be calm and brave in face of such dangers as may meet me in the doing of my duty:

for faith to believe in the power of Thy love to melt my hard heart and swallow up my sin:

for faith to put my own trust in love rather than in force, when other men harden their hearts against me:

for faith to believe in the ultimate victory of Thy Holy Spirit over disease and death and all the powers of darkness:

for faith to profit by such sufferings as Thou dost call upon me to endure:

for faith to leave in Thy hands the welfare of all my dear ones, especially... and...

O THOU in whom all my fathers trusted and were not put to confusion, rid my heart now of all vain anxieties and paralysing fears. Give me a cheerful and buoyant spirit, and peace in doing Thy will; for Christ's sake, Amen.

— A Prayer of Peter Marshall