

# THE VOICE



Mennonite Brethren Bible College  
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MENNONITE BRETHREN BIBLE COLLEGE  
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# The Voice

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The Voice, founded in 1952, continues to serve its constituency each year by dealing with theological and church-related concerns and issues.

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## EDITORIAL COMMENTS

Modern secular man is sinking ever deeper into an ethical quagmire and unable to rescue himself from it. Whether, in his diverse situations and moods, he piteously laments the present human state or condition, angrily protests or lashes out against certain aspects of it, arrogantly aspires to ultimate and autonomous control (biologically, socially, or ecologically) over it, or seeks to escape from it in a Faustian-like search for some undiscovered bliss, man in the middle of this century is increasingly caught up in the throes of ethical confusion and frustration.

He finds that **material** and **technological** progress—remarkable as these have been—do not necessarily imply or bring about **moral** progress in respect to the personal and social attitudes and activities of man. There is so much in both the personal and social, the private and public, life of modern man (as the obsessive concern with or loud clamour about drug use and abuse, the liberalization of laws against certain criminal actions, marriage traditions and family structures, sexual adventures and deviations of various sorts, the practice and malpractice of manufacturers and advertisers, abortion and population control, civil rights and racial equality, poverty and affluence, the liberation of woman, —to mention but a few examples—illustrates) that still bears the marks of human cupidity and corruption and that is still irreconcilable with the dream of human progress and happiness.

Modern man finds also—or, at any rate, is bound to find out sooner or later—that such material and technical advances continue to uncover new ethical issues and dilemmas which are thornier than ever and which unredeemed man can not correctly analyze, let alone properly manage for the highest ends of human society. This latter fact is becoming starkly evident in connection with the bold aspirations and efforts of biological scientists to discover the molecular mysteries of human life and—what is more—to refashion human life in images (forms) conceived by their own Minds. Paul Ramsey, the noted ethicist of Princeton University, has described these efforts as a “full scale revolution . . . directed at the foundations of mankind in the natural order,” while the editors of *Time* magazine in a recent article (April 19, 1971), have gone so far as to assert that the “temptation to be like God is at the root of the ethical dilemmas posed by molecular biology” and have illustrated the assertion by specific reference to several of these dilemmas.

Modern man, surrounded as he now is by moral infirmity and confusion and groping about for both moral strength and moral

guidance, very much stands in need of some more trustworthy and comprehensive conception of man. His situation is not unlike that of Albert Speer, the top architectural advisor to Hitler during the latter's drive for political power and glory, of whom E. Davidson remarks (in summarizing Speer's confession in **Inside the Third Reich** about his own dilemma during the early 1930's): "Like a good many other people he (Speer) was looking for a new, powerful doctrine to clear up his own thinking. He had dabbled in philosophical ideas; had read Spengler and become depressed by him; had heard the prophecies of doom from the post-World War I intellectuals and seen them borne out in the confusion and hopelessness of the cities; and now he was rejecting much of what he had been brought up to believe in because none of it seemed to have any relevance to the chaos around him." The secular man of our time also needs some powerful doctrine—a powerful and proper doctrine of man, in this case—to clear up his own cloudy thinking and to guide his own erratic behaviour.

But where shall he find such a powerful doctrine of man, if not in the context of God's revelation about man? As G.C. Berkouwer has so justly reminded us, "Anyone who tries to construct a picture of man or of himself without the light of divine revelation can never obtain anything except a picture in which the unique nature of man does not appear." In the present issue of the VOICE an attempt is made to fashion such a biblical picture of man by means of a series of brief expository studies of relevant passages. Various aspects of the nature and destiny of man are considered in the individual studies—aspects pertaining to man's relationship to God, to human society, and to the physical world around him; to his nature as a being created in the image of God and as a being made new by the grace of Christ; to his present experience amid the conflicts of mortal life and to his ultimate perfection in the eternal presence of Christ. It is our hope that readers of the VOICE will find these brief expositions suggestive for their own contemplation of, and commitment to the actual truth about man—that is, to God's revealed truth about man.

Herb Giesbrecht

## MAN: CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD.

An Exposition of Genesis 1:26-27

by H. H. Voth\*

"Let us make man in our image . . ."; so run the hortatory words of the Creator God as reported in Genesis I. When the universe, the seas and the dry land, plants and animals had been created, man came forth, created in "the image of God." What does the creation account really tell us about the nature of man? It shall be the purpose of this study to look briefly and somewhat exegetically at only two verses of Genesis, chapter I, v. 26(a) and v. 27, the verses in which reference is made to man being in the image of God.

When the writer of Genesis moves the focus of our attention from animals to man, we notice how radically the Creator's method changes. In connection with plant life, seas, and land animals, the divine command goes forth: "Let the earth (sea) bring forth . . ." But here in v. 26, "Let us make . . ." In each of the other instances the word or command is addressed to the medium in or on which the living organism subsists, but here the creative decree is addressed, as it were, to Himself, the Creator.

It is significant (although there is a wide variety of opinions as to what the significance is) to note that the divine decree appears in plural form. Some have seen in this plural form a mere instance of **pluralis majestatis**, a form which monarchs often have used to refer to themselves. Many commentators have however been quick to point out that such an interpretation would actually introduce an anachronism into this chapter, because such a form is foreign to the linguistic usage of the Old Testament.

Others, again, have suggested that this decree was somehow addressed to a heavenly entourage, possibly of the angelic host. Barth rejects this suggestion with the incisive question: "How could non-divine beings ever assist in an advisory capacity in an act of creation?" (**Dogmatics**, Volume III, 2, p. 41). Further, it should be noted that "our image" of v. 26 becomes "his own image" in v. 27, and finally "in the image of God" at the end of that verse. Many have seen in this usage an early and clear reference to the Trinity. Others, particularly in more recent times, have been more hesitant to make so specific an assertion, but grant that it does somehow point to a genuine plurality in the Divine Being.

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It would seem more natural and right to accept this as a reference to the Trinity.

There has been much discussion also about the use of the two nouns "image" and "likeness" in v. 26 (in Hebrew, *tselem* and *demuth*, respectively). Traditionally—as early as Irenaeus—it was held that they referred to two different aspects of man. It was held that "image" referred to man's natural endowments, while "likeness" referred to man's special gifts from God. The reformers opposed this view, insisting that the two words here actually have the same meaning, that this is merely a case of Hebrew parallelism used for the purpose of emphasis.

Between these two views, which might be classed as opposing extremes, there are those who, while not granting that the words are synonymous in meaning and reference, would want to make the distinction between them more subtle. Space will not permit a treatment of the various views here.

However, these two terms are used in other verses in Genesis: in 5:1, 5:3 and 9:6. In Genesis 5:3 we have the reference to Seth, the son of Adam, whom Adam begot "in his own likeness, after his image." Here the order of the words as well as the prepositions used with them are reversed. This usage strongly suggests parallelism. In Genesis 5:1, where God's creation of man is referred to, only the word "likeness" is used, and in Genesis 9:6, only the word "image" appears. In both instances the totality of God's original creative act as far as man is concerned is referred to, not man as he was after the fall. If whatever "likeness" means is not covered by "image," and vice versa, then these references could not be so used.

Probably the most fundamental question which arises out of these texts, but which is not answered specifically here, is the question as to how and in what way man is in the image of God. A few, somewhat naively, have found the image in man's physical stature, the erect posture, the forward glance of the eye, etc. While space will not permit a detailed enumeration of the various possibilities of the meaning of "image" which have been held through the years, it is probably sufficient to say that the majority of them fall into either one or the other of two categories. The one group sees the image to refer to something which constitutes the non-corporeal aspect of man, such as his rationality, his self-consciousness, his capacity to hear from and respond to God. The other group, usually of more recent date, sees the image as basically a matter of relationship.

Neo-orthodox theology has rejected the understanding that the image refers to an analogy of being and substituted for this the analogy of relation. Karl Barth has here been very influential. Taking the plural usage of v. 26 earlier referred to, together with the clause "male and female created he them," he finds the key

to the understanding of "image." Even as there is differentiation in confrontation in God, so in His creation, man, there is the similarity, yet this difference (male and female), in confrontation. There is in this view an exclusion of the forms of logic and of a conceptual knowledge of God from the image. From this follows then a tendency to downgrade the rational element in revelation.

Evangelical expositors are more likely to speak of the image of God in man in terms of the formal and the material. The formal image would inhere in his personality, including such aspects as moral responsibility and intelligence, while the material image would consist in man's knowledge of God. Man did not lose the formal image in the fall, but the material image was sadly distorted, although not completely lost. It is in Jesus Christ that the material image is created anew in righteousness and true holiness.

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## MAN: THE 'DOMINION-HAVER'. An Exposition of Psalm 8

by Herbert Swartz\*

### Psalm 8

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is thy name in all the earth!  
Thou whose glory above the heavens is chanted  
by the mouth of babes and infants,  
thou hast founded a bulwark because of thy foes,  
to still the enemy and the avenger.  
When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,  
the moon and the stars which thou hast established;  
what is man that thou art mindful of him,  
and the son of man that thou dost care for him?  
Yet thou hast made him little less than God,  
and dost crown him with glory and honor.  
Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands;  
thou hast put all things under his feet,  
all sheep and oxen,  
and also the beasts of the field,  
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,  
whatever passes along the paths of the sea,  
O Lord, our Lord,  
how majestic is thy name in all the earth!

This is one of the Psalms appointed by the Prayer Book for reading on Ascension Day. The reason for this is not obvious from the text since the lyrical poetry is an expression of wonder at man and man's place in Nature, and at the God who appointed it. But

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while God as Creator may be seen as wonderful by His creatures, in the actual state of the universe it is not strictly true that all things are under man's feet. Man is defeated, and sometimes killed, by beasts, vegetation, and weather. How then does man achieve the extraordinary honour which God has given him as lord of all the other creatures? Is this honour only for the future? Why such a text for Ascension Day?

This puzzlement with man's importance was shared by Job as he remonstrated with God. As woe piled upon woe, Job remembered the brevity and transient character of life. In the extremity of loathing for his life he asked only to be left alone; then queried,

What is man, that thou dost make  
so much of him,  
and that thou dost set thy mind upon him,  
dost visit him every morning,  
and test him every moment? (Job 7:17-18)

The focus of the Psalmist is quite different. God in His creative and redemptive acts is truly majestic (wide, lofty), so that His glory (divine splendour) is rightly recounted by the pure and innocent. He is finally overwhelmed by the comparison of this creation and the importance of the creature man in it—what is man that You (God) remember or care for him!

The New Testament writers recognized a reference to the future. But they could not be content with the single idea of a Golden Age when the original order and intent of creation would be restored. The analogy of humanity's place in the universe to the humiliation and victories of Christ was then not a false reading of the original author's intent. The Resurrection and Ascension are seen as great acts of God, and so they are. However, they must also be seen as the triumph of Man. The writer of Hebrews (2:6-9) and Paul in I Corinthians 15:20-28 emphasize this understanding.

It is Christ who, having been made (for a while) "lower than the angels," has become the Conqueror and Ruler of all things. The humanity of Christ continues in glory unto eternity. The Son of Man is now the One through whom all men can share glory and honour as they exercise dominion over all with Him. Only in this second meaning is the first meaning made possible and present. Man is a dominion-haver according to his creation. Sin severely limits the effective exercise of this authority. Christ is now establishing His kingly rule. As a citizen of His Kingdom, man is crowned with glory and honour and relates to the creation as dominion-haver. This relationship is expressed in seeing God in nature and in accepting the responsibility for those things which are "under his feet."

In relation to nature, man is to find out God's secrets. God is the Inventor and man the discoverer. But the secrets have an

"either-or" about them. They are to be used with fear and trembling for they can mean blessing or curse, life or death. Man's discovery of atomic power is an apt illustration of this truth. The thought of man's dominion led the psalmist to praise and adoration. Even the folly of men must not rob the Christian of this attitude. The joy and responsibility of living as a discoverer in God's world is a dimension of Christian experience which we need to stress in our day. The anxiety of our age has no place in the understanding of the man-God partnership by means of which we possess the world. The pride of achievement also has no place when we focus properly on our role in relation to the Inventor. Each day may be lived with real anticipation as we apply brain and brawn (to discover God's secrets) in an ordered and purposeful creation, and so fulfil our destiny as those who have been given dominion over the works of God's hands.

Psalm 8 is poetry, and verse 6 is an obvious use of Hebrew parallelism in which the same idea is repeated in different ways. Thus, in one sense the "dominion over" and the "put all things under" say the same thing. However, it is also a facet of Hebrew parallelism to enrich the first idea in the repetition. If the idea of "discoverer" is developed within the idea of "dominion over," then the idea of "masterer" is added in the repetition: "put all things under." There can be no doubt that the psalmist is thinking of the original creature-creation when he lists those things that man is master over. When man at God's bidding named the creatures, he indicated his understanding of a superiority and a moral responsibility. To name is to own and to acknowledge.

While at one level the questions of domesticity and freedom, or captivity and natural environment, could be raised, the more pertinent question is, "How master to serve the highest purpose?" It is this same question which one must ask when considering the use of all natural resources. The needs of all men for food and clothing in equitable amounts press upon the Christian conscience and should determine his political and economic value judgments. The temptation of man to rob the soil and the sea must be met by the understanding of the Christian who is a true dominion-haver only when he is a responsible masterer. That which God gives for food, for shelter, and for beauty, must never be used or abused by man to fulfil his own desires lest man be mastered by that which God has put under his feet.

To live in God's creation is to face the possibility of blessing or curse according to the exercise of the God-given role of dominion-haver. Man cannot invent and he need not serve, but to discover and to master God's creation, the confession of the psalmist must become a guiding star,

O Lord, my Lord,  
how majestic is thy name  
in all the earth!

## MAN: A CREATURE SEEKING AUTONOMY. An Exposition

of Romans 1:18-32

by Vern Ratzlaff\*

Struggling against God after the death of his friend, Arthur Hallam, Tennyson finally recognized the ultimate meaning of freedom to lie in surrendering that freedom to the Creator: "Our wills are ours, we know not how; Our wills are ours, to make them thine." (In Memoriam)

But while each man seeks—if not to find, at least to realize—freedom, not all come to Tennyson's conclusion. Mr. Voth's treatment of the "image of God" in man leads to a further development of man's freedom as being an essential part of that image. But this "freedom" is not an absolute quality or trait, as the shape of my nose, the size of my earlobes, the colour of my eyes. Rather, "freedom" is a relationship, not a quality. Thus, as Bonhoeffer points out, man's "freedom" is a relationship, between two persons. "Being free means 'being free for the other' . . . Only in relationship with the other am I free"<sup>1</sup> And this freedom is realized where man relates at the deepest level of himself to his Creator; it is realized when he worships the Creator (i.e. recognizes the dimensions of Creator-liness and creature-liness). But the marring of God's image (the capacity for total freedom in relating fully at all levels) has made of man a being who seeks substitutes for that which alone can grant full freedom; man now seeks freedom, not by relating to God, but by arrogating to himself all dimensions of relatedness, turning in on himself, becoming his own limit-definer, articulating his own laws—seeking to become autonomous (i.e. self-ruled). Hell becomes the place where men "enjoy forever the horrible freedom they have demanded, and are therefore self-enslaved, just as the blessed, forever submitting to obedience, become through all eternity more and more free."<sup>2</sup>

Having broken off the possibility of relating to the one for and by whom he was made, man seeks his own freedom. And when reminded of the freedom he can obtain by placing himself in relatedness to the Creator, thereby recognizing his inability **by and for himself** to be free, he defies such reminders and energetically continues in the egoistical whirlpool.

This defiance is what Paul addresses himself to in Romans 1:18-32. What Paul is describing here is his version of the history of religions. He depicts the plight of mankind in a descending triad—in his attempt to be free, man suppresses what he does

know about true relatedness; he exchanges what he knows for that which will further his autonomy; God gives him up. The latter two stages of the triad are each reiterated three times by Paul: man exchanges (vv 23, 25, 26) and God gives him up (vv 24, 26, 28). Man, seeking autonomy, finds himself increasingly under the odious rule of that which drives him further from what he was intended to be. He regresses from overt denial of God to idol worship to sexual promiscuity to homosexuality, which for the biblical writers is the deepest possible betrayal of God's image in man. The image is fundamentally relationship-potential, a potential which God intended to be realized most completely when he created man male and female. To now relate sexually in violation of heterosexual normalcy (v. 26 calls this exchanging "natural relations for unnatural") is one of the deepest possible betrayals of God's image in man. And man, seeking autonomy through homosexuality (i.e. saying, 'I don't need the other kind; I can find fulfilment in a reflection of myself'—a sexual Narcissism), betrayed the image of God as Paul saw in the culture of his own time and as we see in ours in the increasing tendency to equate any sexual activity with normalcy as long as engaged in by consenting adults. Recent articles in *HIS*, and the spate of letters in response, indicate the need for a clear theological perspective on this matter.<sup>3</sup>

But let us look more closely at the triad of man's growing estrangement from God: suppress, exchange, given up.

1. SUPPRESS (v 18) "katechontone" means to forcibly (and knowing the consequences) restrain or, as the NEB translates it, to "stifle." Bavinck talks of "repression," where man represses that which is "contrary to the accepted patterns of life or to the predominant popular ideas" of our time.<sup>4</sup> Thus, when man is faced with truth about the possibility of truly relating to his Creator, he "represses," "stifles," "suppresses"; he "denies (God's) truth its full scope" (Mgr. Knox' translation).

What, does Paul suggest, threatens man's autonomy? What is the "truth" which is "suppressed"? Basically it is the recognition of creation, that God is seen "in the things that have been made" (v 20), or as Paul once said in Lystra: "(God) did not leave himself without witness, for he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons" (Acts 14:17). What happened, then, was that man made out of what he could see, the god to explain what he could not see. To worship the sun whose eclipses and ordered orbits he could understand (i.e. predict), anticipate and thus in a sense "control" or at least adjust his life to; to worship the end of the log left over after he had used the other for firewood (cf. Isa. 44:15-17); to worship an animal whom he could control by dint of superior intellect—all these made God manageable and thus removed the distinction between Creator and created. Man suppressed the truth by making for himself a mascot-God who

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can fit comfortably into the parameters of man's own schemes and projections, and so doesn't threaten man's autonomy. So, "although they knew God, they did not honour Him as God or give thanks to Him" (v 21). The "crime" of Prometheus resulted exactly in what the gods had projected—cold man with the gift of fire would cook his own food, true enough; but he would remain frozen as to the ultimate source of the fire. There is much to be said for the justification of mythical Prometheus' punishment.

2. EXCHANGE. So man "suppressed," and then exchanged what he could have had for the tragic rewards of repression. Note the contrast in v 22 between man's pretense to wisdom and his actual state of folly, a folly which is that of moral blindness rather than lack of intellectual ability.<sup>5</sup> "Allasoe" means to change completely by deliberately putting away one item and replacing it with a second (e.g. changing clothes). And Paul comments that it is just this which man, in his drive for autonomy, does with the knowledge of God which keeps breaking in upon him, a knowledge of God of which Gerard Manley Hopkins reminds us when he writes, in "God's Grandeur":

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?  
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil.

But man exchanges immortality for mortality (v 23), truth for a lie (v 25), natural relations for unnatural ones (vv 26, 27).

How foolish man becomes! Note that in God's perspective the best of Plato, of Aristotle, of Epicurus, of Aurelius, of Rousseau, of Russel, of Huxley—the best writings of these are folly for they are the works of fools: the work of those who sought their autonomy by ignoring (nay, denying!) the Creator.

"There are those in our time who see no generic difference between . . . (the) ethnic sages and the prophets of God, while Paul declares the former to be but 'fools'."<sup>6</sup>

How is this folly made public? The primitive stage is where man makes images (v 23), attempting to represent God. And this is the ultimate folly: seeking to bring honour by making a visual representation of God! This is the final caricature of a god made small, put into manageable size. To make an image of the Creator out of material objects is tantamount to honouring a statesman by carving his statue out of baloney (although it might serve as a powerful non-verbal commentary!). But it is precisely this attempt to represent God which brings him down into manipulative form, and preserves man's autonomy.

The second stage is to replace God, to exchange "the truth for a lie" (v 25), where the created rather than the Creator is

served. "Man and His World" is the boast; "what is god, that man should be mindful of him?" is the paraphrase. And culture and technology remove God effectively from man's cognizance, as in true Protagorean fashion he "becomes the measure of all things." Swinburne articulated the new freedom in "To Walt Whitman in America":

God is buried and dead to us, Even the spirit of earth,  
Freedom; so have they said to us, Some with mocking and  
mirth,  
Some with heartbreak and tears;  
And a God without eyes, without ears,  
Who shall sing of him, dead in the birth?  
The earth-god Freedom, the lonely  
Face lightening, the footprint unshod,  
Not as one man crucified only  
Nor scourged with but one life's rod;  
The soul that is substance of nations,  
Reincarnate with fresh generations;  
The great god Man, which is God.

Little wonder that the third stage—ultimate breakdown of the relations by which man was to live—follows quickly. If man is the "measure," then man is the "ruler." And the quickest display of this autonomy is his betrayal of himself at the very root of his being—relating as a person. Thus homosexuality, as indicated earlier in this article, is the symptom of the disease heralding the dissolution of organic unity—it is a betrayal at the deepest possible level of what man was created for (vv 26, 27 remind the reader of the Genesis account and what the concept of "natural" means).<sup>7</sup>

3. GOD GAVE THEM UP. When man exchanged man for God—when man gave God up—then God gave man up.

"The confusion avenges itself and becomes its own punishment. The forgetting of the true God is already itself the breaking loose of His wrath against those who forget him (1:18). The enterprise of setting up the 'No-God' is avenged by its success."<sup>8</sup>

Having robbed God of His glory, man (made in God's image) loses his. And as a result, instead of arriving at the autonomy he desired, man finds himself now a helpless victim of his own lust (v 24), his own passion (v 26), his own base mind (v 28). When men "refused to have God in their knowledge"<sup>9</sup> (v 28, Barth's translation), when men sought to establish their autonomy, then the collapse of an ordered society followed. Such a collapse, described vividly in vv 29-31, is a reflection of the social anomie, the breakdown of personality, which constitutes the commentary on our time. Schiller stated this in his remark, that "die Weltgeschichte ist der Weltgerichte" (the history of the world is the judgement of the world).

So man, Paul says, is the creature who seeks autonomy but in seeking it for himself apart from its source, he removes himself even further from the possibility of attaining it.

It is in the context of this graphic portrayal of man's search for freedom—a portrayal which traces the climactic succession of suppression-exchange-being given up—that Paul's statement of "the power of God for salvation" (v 16) leaps out anew at man, reminding him that while his quest for **autonomy** is certain to end in destruction, there is hope for **freedom**.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. D. Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall* (tran. not named). London: SCM, 1962 (copy. 1959), p. 35.

2. C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*. London: Fontana, 1959 (copy. 1940), pp. 115, 116.

3. Name Withheld, "Love Affair, Wrong Kind", *HIS*, March, 1966. Name Withheld, "A Christian Homosexual", *HIS*, January, 1971. See also "Double Take" in succeeding issues of *HIS* for readers' reactions.

4. J. Bavinck, *The Church Between the Temple and Mosque*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966, p. 119.

5. F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (Tyndale Bible Commentaries). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966, (copy. 1963), p. 84.

6. J. Stifler, *The Epistle to the Romans*. Chicago: Moody, 1960, p. 32.

7. Cf. D. Bonhoeffer's emphasis on "The Natural" in his *Ethics* (Fontana edition, p. 144 ff.).

8. K. Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (trans. E. C. Hoskyns). London: Oxford UP, 1968 (copy. 1933), p. 51.

9. Mgr. Knox translates it as "they scorned to keep God in their view".

## MAN: THE RESURRECTION OF HIS BODY. An Exposition

### of 1 Corinthians 15:36-58

by David Ewert\*

Some people seem to think that the resurrection of man's body—a hope which sustains the believer in this "valley of the shadow of death"—means that this temporary corruptible body will be magically revived. (The schools of Hillel and Shammai couldn't agree on whether the bones or the flesh would be formed first at the resurrection.) There must have been some Corinthians who were interested in the mechanics of the resurrection (I Cor. 15:35). Paul tells them bluntly: "No more nonsense" (v. 36) ("Thou fool," K.J.V.). Why, even on this planet 'bodies' with life

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in them adapt to their environment. Certainly, this holds true also for the believer's body with respect to his future heavenly existence.

There were others in Paul's day who found it hard to believe in a resurrection of the body at all. The old Greek belief (and its Roman counterpart) held that the soul of man was joined to his body during his earthly existence. At death the soul was released. This disembodied soul lived a kind of twilight existence in Hades (literally, 'the Unseen'). The Hebrew idea of Sheol was not too different—sadness and silence brooded over life after death. Some Greek philosophers held to the immortality of the soul (an expression Christians should use with caution).

The view that man is annihilated at death, or the philosopher's idea of the immortality of the soul, or the understanding of the resurrection of the body in terms of chemistry and physics, are all contrary to what Paul has to say about the believer's hope of the resurrection. What, then, does Paul teach on the nature of the resurrection body? His answer is given in I Cor. 15:36-58.

#### I. The Analogy (vv. 36-41).

In order to answer the question: What will the resurrection body be like? Paul uses analogies. The one is that of the naked kernel that is planted in the ground (wheat or any other seed), which is given a new body by the Creator as it shoots up and grows. If God does this for the tiny seeds, surely he can do this for the body that is put into the grave. From grain he turns to flesh. There is diversity in creation: men, beasts, fishes, and birds have different kinds of flesh. God gives living creatures the kind of bodies they need to live on earth, in water, or in the air. Even in the stellar world the different heavenly bodies have different functions to perform. For that reason God has given them different bodies.

#### II. The Application (vv. 42-49).

The application to the believer's body is obvious. This body of flesh and blood is designed for this earthly mode of existence. But when our life comes to an end, this body is 'sown' (a figure of speech for death) in corruption, dishonor, weakness. But it is raised in incorruption, glory and power. That is, the resurrection body far transcends this earthly body in glory.

There is, however, one characteristic of the resurrection body which has led to some confused thinking. In contrast to the natural (earthly) body, the resurrection body is 'spiritual' in nature (v. 44). A certain Lord Boothby reacted negatively to such a hope, saying, "The thought of a spiritual Boothby twanging a spiritual harp for eternity has, for me, limited attractions." This kind of misunderstanding is the result of thinking of 'spirit' as 'air'.

A spiritual body obviously means, in the first place, that the

resurrection body will be under the control of God's spirit. The conflict between 'spirit' and 'flesh' will come to an end. However, the term signifies, also, that the spiritual body which we receive at the resurrection equips us to live in a new sphere of existence—in the presence of God in His eternal kingdom. "As we have borne the image of the earthly (i.e., an earthly body), we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (i.e., a spiritual body for a heavenly mode of existence).

### III. The Transformation (vv. 50-57).

On one point we can be absolutely clear: that flesh and blood are not able to inherit the kingdom of God. Paul has the eternal kingdom in mind, which those who acknowledge Christ's rule here in life will enter when the Last Day comes. No one will enter the heavenly kingdom with an earthly body, made of flesh and blood, subject to corruption and decay.

When the last trumpet will blow, to indicate that history has come to an end, the believer, whether asleep (i.e., dead) or awake (i.e., alive) will be changed (v. 51). This will happen in a split second. The transformation of the body from corruption to incorruption is likened to a change of clothing. (Paul speaks of death as an 'undressing', in 2 Cor. 5.) The 'new clothes' which we all long for will be given us at the resurrection. When that moment comes, death will be put to shame, for when our Lord entered the gates of Death he slew this mighty tyrant. All those who are united with Christ will some day share his triumph over the grave (vv. 54-57). Man's greatest enemy has been defeated, and we can look forward, not to a shadowy half-life, but to a fuller and more glorious existence than human imagination can conceive.

In the light of such an Easter faith we can stand firm in suffering. We can also serve the Lord faithfully to the end, "knowing that our labors are not in vain in the Lord" (v. 58).

## MAN: THE NEW PERSON IN CHRIST. An Exposition of

### 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

by Herb Giesbrecht\*

In the opening portion of the fifth chapter of this letter to the Corinthians, Paul gives exuberant and uninhibited expression to his yearnings to "put on a heavenly dwelling" (habitation, garment?) and to be "at home with the Lord." He speaks of an

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intense desire to be "further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life." These are sentiments and aspirations which the unbelieving Corinthian of Paul's day, like his modern counterpart, undoubtedly found difficult to comprehend; perhaps he even considered them absurd. Though the letter as such is obviously addressed to believers, the manner of argumentation and appeal used in the passage under consideration (5:16-21) would suggest that here Paul had such unbelievers especially in mind and set the Christian's present attitude and experience clearly and sharply over against that which characterized his past (as unbeliever) in order to render such attitude and experience, and such yearnings as he (Paul) had expressed earlier in the chapter, **more intelligible and credible to these unbelievers.**

Paul therefore comments, in this passage, on the new view which believers take of Christ (5:16). The historical Christ can no longer be regarded by them as merely a high-souled idealist or zealous reformer, whether self-deceived or not; that would be to regard Him from a human point of view only. This Christ must now be regarded as what He in fact is, the mighty Son in whom God came very close to hostile men and through whom He reconciled them unto Himself in an altogether unique and miraculous way. This new view of Christ, then, is one significant difference between the believer and the unbelieving man, Paul is saying, and helps to account for the seemingly strange sentiments and attitudes of the Christian believer.

Paul remarks, also, in this passage on the new relationship to Christ which all believers now enjoy (5:17). He describes them as persons who are "in Christ," an expression which turns out to be Paul's favourite one for the unbeliever's new connection (in actual experience) with Christ. It is an intriguing phrase and has been interpreted in a variety of ways ranging from mystical absorption into divinity, at the one extreme, to merely well-intentioned and moralistic imitation of Christ, at the other end of the theological spectrum. Paul's designation of the person so related to Christ as a "new creation" (creature) would indicate that, at the very least, a highly personal and singular vital relationship is involved here. The Christian believer, therefore, is not one who merely remembers, however vividly, the earthly Christ (as some were able to do in Paul's day) or who merely remembers (as some are able to do in our day) an earlier introduction to the Gospel of Christ by way of a concerned parent or an informed church tradition. Rather, he is one who has been fundamentally and radically displaced from one sphere of authority and action into another, often against his own natural predilection. He is one who has been displaced from the sphere of Adam, as it were, into the sphere and rule of Jesus Christ. This new man's "thinking, speech and action," as Karl Barth has put it so simply, "has its ruling principle in the speech, action, and rule of Christ." Such a man is no longer

disposed and compelled to "make his plans like a worldly man, ready to say yes and no at once" (cf. 1:17) but one "who makes it his aim to please Christ" (cf. 5:9).

And so Paul also comments, in this passage, on the **new ministry** which becomes the believer's principal preoccupation and concern in the world, whatever his particular career or vocation in life may be. It is a ministry of reconciliation, akin to that of Christ Himself, and consists of representing Christ and His truth so intimately and faithfully among men that they too can come to see the historic Christ with new eyes and become related to Him in new and vital experience. This ministry which is entrusted to the new man in Christ embraces a wonderfully exciting task for him **now** and opens up the prospect of a wonderfully exciting **future**—not only for himself but for all who permit themselves to be reconciled to God through Christ.

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## TWO WORLDS

by Frank C. Peters \*

One word has haunted me for three years and that is the word 'confrontation'. I live in the shadow of confrontations every day. This seems to be a world in which we polarize the men we confront. And now the Mennonite Brethren Church is doing so too. I thought I was relatively safe, in the confines of my church duty, and would not have to be confronted. But seemingly this is the kind of world in which we live.

When we talk about pastor and laymen, just to define our terms, we're talking about ordained and non-ordained people; we're not thinking of one person acting in the capacity of pastor in a given congregation, but rather we're thinking of ordained individuals and those who have not been ordained, and yet have a challenge in the gospel to pass it on to others.

I think that the question as it has been raised—Do they live in one world?—seems to imply that perhaps they do not. In a sense the two of them are not in one world, and in a sense perhaps they should be.

I think we are living in the age of the layman. I think the cards were, at one time, stacked in favor of the ordained person. Perhaps now they are quite noticeably being stacked in favor of the layman.

A medical friend of mine, when he heard of my position in the University and I explained to him what I was doing, suddenly beamed with tremendous delight and said, "Man, then you're a layman!" And I guess I agreed with him that I'm a layman. I had finally made it and come to those celestial haights of Christian service that seem to beckon all of us sooner or later.

I have not heard that this topic has ever been discussed at a conference prior to this one. Perhaps a conference such as this is somewhat unique. Of course, in a sense, the underlying philosophy is as old as the Christian church, for we have a real concern that the Body of Jesus Christ be one body functioning as a unit and we recognize that there are different gifts in the Body but that the total impact of the Body of Jesus Christ is the impact of one, not two entities. Really we are in **one** world, confronting this world with the gospel and the claims of Jesus Christ.

But to make this an operational reality seems to be another thing and many of us have sensed that perhaps two worlds have developed and that certain individuals operate in one sphere and

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\* Dr. Frank C. Peters, president of Waterloo Lutheran University, presented the talk (of which this is a transcript) at the Pastors'-Laymen's Conference sponsored by MBBC in February, 1969.

take certain functions with them into that sphere while getting other functions back from that sphere. And others are really operating in another sphere, and that in a sense, "never the twain shall meet."

If you were to ask an ordained man, he would say it is rather obvious that we are living in one world. We know what's going on. We know the kind of world this is. If you ask a layman he feels it's just as obvious that this is not the case—that, by and large, we are functioning in two worlds. And it seems to me that the greatest problem that we face is one of communication. Not only in this area but in many other areas we recognize the fact that we have a real problem of communicating our intent, our in-thoughts, and perhaps the basic dilemma of communication is this, that the message sent is not always the message received. But most of us haven't acknowledged this to be true. And when I send a message from my vantage point with the kind of insights that are available to me, I always assume that the other person is understanding this exactly in the same way in which I am sending the message. I think one of the first things we've learned from the science of communication proves that this is not true. While I am sending in one way from my insight, I must recognize that there are many people who just don't understand what I am saying in the way that I think they are understanding it. A case in point, of course, is that great master of communication, Samuel Hayakawa of San Francisco State College, who is supposed to be the specialist in communication, now has recognized that there has been a very serious breakdown in communication on his own campus, that what he has been saying so loudly and clearly has not been understood at all by those to whom he was speaking.

For instance, we may ask management what it thinks of the operation of its firm. There have been several studies of this relationship, and management is prone to say, in rather glowing terms, certain things about the operation of the firm, what the objectives of the operations are, how smoothly these are being carried out. When we turn around and ask the employees what they think of the same firm, we find out that there are here two radically different points of view. And if this is what management is saying, it is certainly not what labor understands in terms of what is being said. They are really living in two different worlds and communication from one to the other just doesn't seem to get across.

As president of a university I'm often amazed how intelligent people, intelligent as measured in terms of a PhD education, can completely misunderstand what I say, and I find that we have some rather stupid people on our faculty. When I feel that, given a reasonable chance, I can make myself reasonably clear, and

can spell out what I think is the intent of the Board, and then get a first feedback from the faculty I discover they have misunderstood me entirely. This is not what I said, this is not what I intended to say. And it happens rather consistently that, with the best efforts put into this process of communication, I still get minimal returns from those who should be understanding what I say. Perhaps, in a sense, we are not in one world, probably leave many things unsaid which we think others ought to understand and which we take for granted.

One of the great problems of communication which reduces the gap of understanding, the credibility gap, is the actual content which information conveys from one to the other. Most misunderstandings occur because of inadequate information or information not presented properly.

For instance, I have a number of angles here and this is as far as my drawing ability allows me to go, and I'd like to make a serious case that this is a right-angled triangle. It's not an obtuse triangle but a right-angled triangle. I am deeply convinced it is a right-angled triangle—oh, I must show it to the President, too—he says it's obtuse again; I can't figure him out. This is a right-angled triangle. And every time I do this to my students, or to my public, I find out that I get the response that it is an obtuse-angled triangle, and immediately we are polarized. I make a case that it's a right-angled triangle and they make a case that it's an obtuse-angled one and we just don't seem to get together.

Some of us may, from one point of view or other, have additional information, additional suppositions which we bring to the situation, which, however, we withhold from those with whom we speak, but expect them, nevertheless, to come out at the same place we do.

Now, preachers may often have more information available to them concerning the nature of the gospel. Their theology, and the theological pre-suppositions with which they enter into their task by virtue of interest, perhaps even by virtue of involvement, bespeak a more extended background. Laymen often have more information available to them by the same token—by virtue of training, interest, involvement. And often this additional information comes directly from the world in which we move, the world to which we address ourselves.

So here are people who have an inadequate concept of the world in which we live, the world to which we speak, by virtue of, perhaps, less involvement in the world, but perhaps of more information on some other aspects. And we want these two individuals to understand each other and to be able to communicate. That means they will have to share their additional insights, their additional presuppositions, so that they can now speak from the same vantage point.

Now let us go one step further—I think the greatest barrier to communication is not only the fact of inadequate information available to us. The greatest barrier, probably, is that of human attitudes. Two people who are emotionally incompatible and have polarized each other (and in polarization we always push each other to greater extremes) it is very interesting that every time I sit down and talk to a radical student I find one of the first things he does is put words into my mouth. In other words, he polarizes me and pushes me off, way out there, and I find I do the same thing with him; I polarize him and I push him out to make him look as ridiculous as possible because that's the way I feel he is creating my image. And as we do that we push each other away in terms of our views. We haven't even become ready to communicate on the basis of facts. We are now conversing on the basis of nerve endings, feelings, emotions, and so are creating a serious difficulty by pushing each other into two worlds.

This is true in terms of my experience in marriage counselling. The problem here is very often one of attitudes. The people just won't come together on the same wave length because of hostile feelings that they are not really willing to surrender.

A few years ago I prepared a paper for the Reference and Council of the General Conference in which I expressed my concern about what I thought was the deterioration of the minister-laity relationship in the M.B. Conference. I was told at that time that there were several reasons for this development. At that time I thought that ministers were guarding certain offices in the conference rather zealously, and that most of our committees were being staffed by ordained men. For instance, I think that the Canadian Conference has, as yet, not had a moderator who was not ordained. I think the first moderator of any district conference was P.J. Peters in the Pacific District (who was moderator this year). I think that this is the first time that we have ever elected a non-ordained man into an administrative post in the Conference. Committees were in the past largely staffed by preachers. Perhaps our liberal arts schools have been feeling anti-clerical sentiment among students, perhaps more in virtue of criticism made in classes, and as a result, we elected non-ordained men as Presidents of Liberal Arts institutions. There has been mistrust on the part of our clergy of those who were pioneering vocational fields other than those which we have traditionally accepted. I think this is the situation that all of us face at the present time. So many vocational fields are being pioneered today for we have so little experience. Perhaps those who were ordained were somewhat skeptical of this, wondering what this development would do to the Church.

Let me ask, first of all then: What factors really are creating two worlds for us? Assuming that the charge is true, that ministers,

ordained and non-ordained men, have been functioning to some extent in two worlds, I would contend that there are indeed a multiplicity of worlds about us, not only two worlds.

I wish to give one explanation of the late rise of vocational complexity. I think this trend has had a strong influence upon us. The age of vocational conformity is over and, I think, will never return. Once almost 80%, or 90%, of those in the church labored in one vocation—farming, if you will. Although much has been said in favor of the rural life, it was never really intended to be part of our mission in the world. Scripture doesn't underscore the superiority of rural life; there's really no virtue per se in being rural, and we certainly have moved out of this world, and perhaps Mennonite Brethren groups have certainly moved out of the rural situation more than any other group, if the studies made of Ontario Mennonites is at all indicative of what has happened in other areas.

One study shows that only 13% of Mennonite Brethren can now be classified as rural folk, the sociological definition of "rural" being applicable here. That is, only 13% are rural; the rest are urban and are living in an urban world. It seems to me that Christianity began in the city and thrived there. So we are really not fighting for vocational conformity among our members. However, once ministers and laymen were both farmers, and lived in a relatively closed community; they were part of what sociologists call a primary group relationship, and we know that primary group relationships, per se, make it easier for people to communicate. There's a certain amount of openness, a certain amount of understanding, common presuppositions and it's a little easier to communicate when you exist in a primary group situation. That's why we think families, by and large, communicate reasonably well, because they belong to a primary group situation.

But today we have vocational diversification, with specialization segmenting life quite appreciably. Now—we are about 400 members in a congregation of which I am a part. I have made a study of the vocations represented. We do not have two hundred males in our congregation, much to the chagrin of our females. There are more females in our congregation than males. So we have about two hundred males; of those, of course, not all could be classified vocationally at this point. Some are attending high school; the bulk of the students are not involved in this study. I'm talking about people who seemingly have selected a vocation and are pursuing it at the present time. I found that we have 51 vocations in our congregation. The highest number include the retired group; we have 19 people who are retired. Others are beyond retirement age but are working; we still classify them as far as vocation is concerned, but 19 are not working at all. And the next group was high school teachers. And the third group

includes the machine operators—15 are machine operators. But there's where the larger groups end. From that point on we have no more than 4 in any one vocation in the entire congregation. The highest number is four. And one may go all the way from bank managers down to university presidents. This is what I call vocational complexity; we are really diversified.

Now, we may take the problem that ministers too have specialized in a measure. Their vocabulary is no less frightening than the vocabulary of old churches, and it's no less confusing. People find it very difficult to understand someone who speaks about a technical point in theology if he uses theological jargon. Laymen find it rather frustrating to read theological literature. I was told, when I was still on the staff of MBBC, that the specific density of my voice was such that it wouldn't even float. I asked some of my pupils, "Can you read this literature?" and many of them said, "No, we don't even try because it's too complex.

Now if we do this in respect to some of our interpersonal relationships in the church, we do have a problem.

A second thing: The first consideration is that there is a lack, or there was a lack, of leadership in social change. We have gone through some very remarkable social changes in the last ten years. I want to enumerate some of the things that have happened: Our young people began to move in non-Mennonite circles; they also began to investigate new ideas; changes were suggested; but most of these processes of change involved people who were not from the ordained segment of the church. But this—much of this change—was championed by non-ordained people. For instance, the author of **Peace Shall Destroy Many**. Here was someone suggesting changes; most of us found it very difficult to tune in on the wavelength for quite a while. So often we refused—being unwilling—to stick out our necks because we'd learned a lesson from Marie Antoinette. Ministers are too often in the rear-guard, rather than in the vanguard, and unable to give direction by providing the necessary stimulation. I think much of this has changed. I feel that today, in some of our theological conferences which we have had on issues which we think are pertinent, there has been a real desire manifested on the part of ordained men to come to grips with some of the issues. First, take the issue of birth control which was not discussed in our circles for years. I think it was sometimes discussed, but not in bold and progressive ways. But for a while I think we shall need to have patience—especially non-ordained people with the ordained men who have been unwilling to move into significant areas where they felt somewhat helpless, not having the structures of leadership available to them. They felt very helpless in terms of actually giving direction in certain areas of social change. So, laymen very often

regarded them as being irrelevant. There are people who cease to relate to us in terms of seriousness. But quite often the topics discussed at preachers and deacons' conferences were exciting, although not always very exciting, but the interesting part was that non-ordained people did not have access to these conferences; they were not there. If we were discussing some of these things, we discussed them among ourselves—and others were not present. Only in recent years, I believe,—with the coming of the Reedley Conference and then the Winnipeg Conference and some of these conferences,—have we begun to open up and have had an equal number, perhaps, of non-ordained people present, as also at this conference. Many of these preachers and deacons' conferences were guarded rather zealously. They were closed conferences. We were talking to ourselves.

Third: What helped make two worlds? I think the secularization process began reaching into the church. This also helped create two worlds. Clergymen viewed with dismay the harmful effects of secularization in the church. This led to an inner distrust of laymen whose approach in the church seemed simply to be an extension of the secularism which these laymen knew to exist outside the church. But now it is more; it really involves leadership structures in the church. These laymen were, however, using much the same presuppositions that they knew to be operative outside of church—secular ones—which they took from education, or from politics, or from business. Now, let me continue with my second point.

**Four factors speak against two worlds.** If these have been some of the factors that explain the position that we are in two worlds, there are factors that speak against it. Our basic argument of course is that we operate in one world and that we are moving in that direction—to a one-world situation. First of all, I think, there are logically presuppositions that speak against two worlds and invite us to move toward a one-world situation. One is the priesthood of all believers. This is a tremendous doctrine. The New Testament doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, if properly understood, will guard the laity against a movement in a direction away from those who have been ordained to a specific ministry. I shall simply state this truth, for I think I need not belabor this great doctrine of the New Testament which was resurrected, in part at least, during the Reformation era and has become so much a part of our religious life.

Second, the nature of the church—our own understanding that the church is not to be identified with an ecclesiastical hierarchy. That is, we don't say that where the bishop is, there is the church, as the Roman Catholic Church would say (where the bishop is, where there is a newly-ordained person, there is the church). So ours becomes an imputed fellowship. Nor do we say,

with the Lutherans, that wherever God is preached and the sacraments dispensed, there is the church. We've always said where there is a true New Testament fellowship, there is the church. This, of course, requires a one-world situation.

I remember very well that in the days of my childhood we always spoke of the church as a "Gemeinschaft." We were the "Gemeinschaft." Then, of course, there was the church. So somehow we felt that the fellowship was a very important thing in the nature of the church. The biblical authority in the Church was very important. And this biblical authority is never vested in people. In the New Testament we don't find that it becomes the authority of certain individuals, but always remains the authority of revelation as it is expounded by anyone from the Scriptures. It is the proclamation of the Word that matters and specific authority vested in people.

I think there is a third matter—and here we might disagree—and that is the non-sacramental nature of ordination. I find that one of the key problems which we must discuss in the Mennonite Brethren Church is the nature of ordination, and what really is the function of ordination. Perhaps this will lead us to a solution of the problem. In the congregation of which I am a part, we are now discussing the ordination of the deacon. And we have decided that we will no longer have ordained deacons—ordained for life, that is. Rather it (office of deacon) will be an elected office and people will be commissioned for a period of time and of course they can be re-elected, depending on the kind of service they render.

This matter opens up the whole question of what constitutes ordination. One answer may be that ordination and service go together; we can never divide them. But in a sacramental view of ordination a distinct grace is bestowed upon a person and a spiritual function resides in him by virtue of such ordination. Then, of course, one must contend with a situation such as that involving Bishop Pike who was once ordained in this sense and later did not function in this capacity. We simply say that, according to the doctrine of Apostolic succession, this man has been duly ordained in a sacramental way and certain powers have been bestowed upon him which cannot be revoked. But as we view the matter, ordination has always been an ordinance, a way of identifying a person's gifts which have been given by the Holy Spirit through the church, and which operate in the brother, and that this identification is true of him as long as he is able to function in that area of service.

About myself I feel thus: As soon as my work as a minister stops, I shall consider my ordination to have become inoperative. If I reach a point where I can no longer serve in the way in which I was called to serve by my brethren—and this area of

service was given to me, I trust, under the Holy Spirit . . . , than I shall no longer consider myself to be an ordained person. Similarly, deacons should be commissioned for service and as long as they are in this area of service, they are duly regarded as "ordained" deacons. If this were so, the problem of people clinging to the notion of ordination when in fact they cannot perform in that area any longer would be resolved. These are some of the theological presuppositions which we would have to consider. But there are also certain presuppositions of Mennonite Brethren polity that I think make for one world. One of these is the question of brotherhood consensus. The nature of over-involvement, the relationship of equality in a church in which we are brethren—all of this, I think, makes for one world.

And then we have the wisdom of history. I have never been an astute student of history, but I think there is some wisdom that comes to us from history. I believe that nothing is ever understood correctly till it is understood historically. And this is the problem of so many of our activists on campuses today. They want to cut themselves off from history and to live in a world without the benefit of what history has to teach us. Our sense of history tells us that the uninvolved become the uninterested. We can finally make a token gesture and get a layman into a certain key committee, but it would be only a token situation. It must actually be a very sincere gesture on our part. I think clergy often leave themselves open to much valid criticism by being over-involved in certain areas where their best gifts cannot be exercised. I think this is the key to administration, for instance—this much I can see at least. One should make very sure not to become over-involved in the area wherein one is weak. One ought to get the best possible people to function in those areas wherein their strength lies, and to hold them responsible, and take them seriously. This is the whole problem of the proper utilization of gifts in the church.

Then, to conclude: Four factors that make for one world. This is what we want. I would simply say, first of all—more adequate communication. I am releasing information to the membership; not guarding this information zealously, but releasing it. I think some activists have been talking about the benefits of an open society, and I argue that they are right. I happen to be one individual who believes some of the things that have happened on our campuses were long overdue. Some of the things that are being said today are valid. Now, the way they are being said, and the way problems are being handled, disturb me. Certainly, I disagree with them about the use of violence. Some of the things that are being said I think are certainly valid and we need to listen to them: The benefits of an open society, the value of genuine sharing of concerns. Why should I not share some of my

pastoral concerns with my brother who isn't ordained? I find this a tremendously invigorating experience. I wish I had done much more of this in my past. I look back about 25 or so years of ordained ministry and wonder why I didn't do more of this at the beginning. And some of us always talked about how lonely we felt. And we were often very lonely people, partly because we shielded ourselves to some extent and wouldn't let others come through. I think in these last years of my ministry I have found that there are many brethren with whom I can share, and share easily, because of their concern.

Now may I say again, if we want to have more adequate communication, if we're going to share one world, we need greater theological training for our laymen. Now we're going to have to place some responsibility on them. This may mean that some of them will have to consider very seriously more theological training for the task of total involvement in the church. If we lose some of our theological presuppositions by default it will be through people who just do not understand what the basic issues are.

Thus, I would say once more there will have to be a greater willingness on the part of our ministers to understand the world in which we live. Sometimes the glib statements that we make simply say that we don't understand the situation. I have a little sign on my wall that says, "If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs, you probably don't know what's going on." And there's some truth to this—you probably don't know what's going on. I think sometimes we have spoken rather glibly to situations which we just didn't understand. For instance, we may refer to the wealth of information that has come to us from the medical profession. Have we been willing to call our brethren in and say, "Here's a problem which affects the church rather deeply—and we certainly need to be informed by those who are active in the vanguard here"? Have we permitted ourselves honest face-to-face sharing, and have we taken these brethren in the field of medicine seriously? I think there's a basic assumption that all are generally interested in the Kingdom of God, and want to invest themselves in the extension of that Kingdom. We need to be in one world.

Ἐν ἄρχῃ ἦν ἡ λέξις.  
καὶ ἡ λέξις ἦν πρὸς  
τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν  
ἡ λέξις. οὗτος ἦν ἡ  
ἀρχὴ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν.  
πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο,  
καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐγένετο  
οὐδὲ ἓν ἄ γέγονεν.

## THE PREACHING LAB

conducted by J. Regehr

### Introduction

Theme in the form of a question:

**Why should I bother with my conscience if my conscience doesn't bother me?**

1. You might begin bluntly with this question, drop it, and come back to it in the latter part of the sermon.
2. The outline suggested here is in the form of a thought process pushed forward by the anticipated questions of the hearers. The preacher will do well to think of himself as being in dialogue with his listeners.

#### A. A Problem Keeps Recurring

1. A wealthy church member manages to arrange for unwarranted welfare assistance.
2. A young girl lies (for two months) about a pair of glasses she broke, then hid, then smashed.
3. A courting couple keeps exceeding the limits they had set for their relationship.
4. An employer keeps carrying shop materials home.
5. A wage-earner cheats on his income tax report again.

(You should use illustrations close to home. Be a probing prophet; but be a pastor too!)

#### The Problem:

Is the conscience inactive in these instances?

If not, what happens if it is persistently ignored?

#### B. The Rationalizations keep Returning (Cf. with A, above)

1. It's not my fault that my son is handicapped. Why should society not help me bear what is an unfair burden?
2. It was an accident at the first stage. My sister would have been angry if I had admitted it.
3. Our love is real, and what we do is our own business. Nobody else is concerned in the least.
4. He doesn't need these things. He won't miss them.

5. The tax system is unfair. They don't really reckon with the uniqueness of my situation.

**Question:**

Are these attempts to outshout the conscience?

Is my conscience such a private thing that it concerns no one else?

**C. Attempts to Minimize the Significance of Conscience keep Re-appearing.**

1. If your congregation will benefit from this, you might describe several views of conscience.
2. Also, you will want to state your own definition of conscience, bearing in mind that you may not have all the insights. I suggest C.A. Pierce: **Conscience in the New Testament**. SCM Press Ltd., 1955, as a functional definition. His fundamental notion is that of inner pain when limits are transgressed. The pain calls for a response to correct the error.

**D. The Kinds of Conscience Described in the Pastoral Epistles.**

1. Good (I Tim. 1:5)
  - a) useful, the result of teaching;
  - b) seen in relation to love and warfare.

Note: It is not only important **that** we practice love and engage in warfare against evil; it is important **how** we do this.

2. Clear (2 Tim. 1:3)
  - a) no basic discrepancy between what God wants of him and what he is doing.
  - b) in spite of his past; forgiveness is real.
  - c) required of church worker (I Tim. 3:9).
3. Corrupt (Titus 1:15)
  - a) stained, and not cleaned.
  - b) decision to go wrong has damaged conscience; not dependable as a guide any longer.
4. Seared (I Tim. 4:2)
  - a) gone crooked;  
seeks to have others join him.  
height of degradation (cf. Rom. 1:32).
  - b) cauterized, image of branding iron.  
knowledge of wrong action, but no pain;  
sociopathic symptom.

**E. Why Must I take My Conscience Seriously?**

(back to theme question)

1. Shipwreck (I Tim. 1:19)  
change image: car on narrow black-top road; rough shoulders;

feels it on the wheel that he's off, but does not correct his movement.

2. Not all "shipwreck" is total;  
the verse is not clear on this.  
"total" not impossible;  
minimal meaning: suffering, damage, loss, grief.  
cf. alcoholic: we become a wretched slave of the sin we choose.

**Conclusion**

It is not advisable to introduce new material in the conclusion, but you might want to finish with a brief look at the responsibility of the mature for the conscience of the immature. See I Cor. 8:7-12.

In this way the sermon is bound to be a message (probably a two-pronged message) for every person in your congregation.

Careful! The effectiveness of the sermon is not to be measured in the heavy blackness of the guilt feeling which weighs your hearers down. In J, the X, there is forgiveness and a restoring of conscience.



## BOOK REVIEWS

Elton Trueblood, *The New Man for Our Time*. New York: Harper and Row, 1970. 126 pp. \$3.50.

Elton Trueblood's most recent book (except for *The Future of the Christian*, published almost concurrently with this one) manifests all of the graces which mark his earlier works: admirable balance in viewpoint and treatment, clarity of argument and disarming simplicity in prose style, and authentic and broad-minded concern for the Church of Christ and its influence in the contemporary world. Indeed, one is tempted to say that *The New Man for our Time* displays these graces even more obviously than most of its predecessors, but this may be so only because this book is, in the nature of the case, the outcome of more years of literary practise and of mature reflection upon the questions which have always interested Trueblood, and because, more particularly, it incorporates the fulfillment of a less difficult (though not any the less important) objective than those which prompted most of his other books. For it is the author's intention, in this book, to point up one obvious affliction of the Christian community in our time—its divided and polarized condition—and to suggest that the remedy for this affliction lies in the development of new kinds of Christian individuals, individuals who know what it is to be morally and spiritually whole.

According to Trueblood, the spiritually whole individual is one in whom three significant qualities are present, and present in harmonious combination: **compassion, reverence, and intellectual integrity**. It is his conviction that the Christian who manifests these qualities is the kind of Christian who becomes most truly relevant to his age and therefore always remains contemporary. This kind of Christian is indeed the "new man for our time" and for every time!

The author opens his book with a simple analysis—as he sees it—of the essential nature of this polarization in the contemporary church. He finds this division, or rift, to exist, not primarily along denominational lines, but **within** the denominations between those who contend that the gospel of social action and service is enough for our time and those who contend that religious worship and devotion are most essential for our time, between those who stress the needs of society and those who stress the needs of the individual. Trueblood argues that if this rift is to be closed and the

church rendered relevant and effective again, more individual Christians must realize that the new man for our time needs to be **both** conservative and liberal (in best sense of these terms), **both** "pietist" and "activist," **both** willing to learn from the past (tradition) and eager to live well in the present.

In the second chapter, Trueblood offers several striking examples of personal and religious wholeness, selected—not surprisingly in the case of this author—from Quaker history in an endeavor to suggest a "pattern adaptable to our own generation." One of these is John Woolman, of eighteenth-century America, and Trueblood's portrayal of his person and contribution goes a long way towards persuading us that the author may be right in asserting: "If there is any better example in all religious literature of the combination of personal devotion and social witness, we do not know where it is to be found."

The third chapter of *The New Man for Our Time* takes up the matter of "reverence" and indicates a number of spiritual disciplines whereby it can actually be cultivated in the life of the Christian. By cultivation of reverence Trueblood means the conscious nurture of the inner life, and it is his contention that the "man who supposes that he has no time to pray or to reflect, because the social tasks are numerous and urgent, will soon find that he has become fundamentally unproductive, because he will have separated his life from its roots." He chides pastors for failing, in many instances, to introduce those under their care to the acknowledged masters of the inner life (writers of great devotional literature), an area in which, as he maintains, they "might be expected to have the greatest competence." And his reply to the critic who charges that the church's major ailment today is precisely its concern with "piety," is that the real trouble with the church is the fact that "its piety is not deep enough."

The following chapter restores the balance, as it were, by stressing the need for strong social concern and social service in the "new Christian" for our time. In this connection, the author comments intelligently on the inherent limitations of the current practise and advocacy of "speaking with tongues." The strength and sanity of this chapter lies, I think, in its basic argument that the social order can be altered and bettered when more **Christian individuals**, "located in positions that affect the structure of society, are motivated and trained to assist in producing the fullest and freest life for others that is possible." Still, Trueblood does not avoid the more complicated matter of public statements and proposals on social issues by Christian **bodies**, but remarks pertinently and wisely upon it. And here again he is able to draw upon Quaker and Methodist history for practical hints about the **spirit** in which modern man should proceed in dealing with the **social** problems of our own day.

The final chapter is concerned with the third lack which

must be supplied if Christians are to be the new men which our world so desperately needs: the lack of "intellectual integrity." Trueblood's insistence on the need for greater intellectual honesty and effort in Christians may seem altogether irrelevant in a day when a powerful anti-rationalist and anti-intellection mood is rapidly becoming the "spirit of the times" and is rapidly fashioning its own counter culture.<sup>1</sup> But this is not so; as the author so perceptively observes, the ethical inconsistency and confusion which so often marks the protests and projected hopes of modern man reveals that, at bottom, he is no longer capable of reasoning logically and consistently. He, therefore, approves or advocates a certain line of action (entire permissiveness, for example) in one area of life and a very different one (violence or contemptuous rejection, let us say) in another realm of life. It is precisely modern man's increasing inability to recognize and accept objective, universally valid norms of human behavior and to consistently apply these to specific situations and issues, which has catapulted him into the ethical morass of our time. It is entirely relevant and urgent, therefore, that Christians, on the other hand, demonstrate an intellectual integrity and tough-mindedness which insists on certain affirmations of Christian truth, which clearly exposes the inconsistent "humanisms" and "pantheisms" of our day, and which relentlessly shuts modern man up to the necessity of coming to terms with the person of Jesus Christ.

This, then, according to Trueblood, is the kind of new man which our time needs. And this is the kind of book, we may add, which members of our own churches might well use as prompter for honest and serious group discussion; it could do all of us a world of good!

Herb Giesbrecht

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1. See Theodore Roszak's *The Making of a Counter Culture* for a provocative study of this anti-intellection mood.

Hans Hahn & Werner Raasch, **Helping the Retarded to Know God**. St. Louis: Concordia, 1969. 112 pp. \$1.95.

Instructor's Guide for **Helping the Retarded to Know God**. Pp. 54. \$1.95.

Several years ago after a Teachers' Training session I was conducting, several ladies came to upbraid me. They reminded me that all of the "techniques" and aids I had been talking about applied to normal children and adults. Where, they asked, could they find help for the group of retarded students they were responsible for on Sunday mornings? Since several of our larger churches have classes for the retarded, I can only suppose that such material is needed both by these as well as by churches who have not yet accepted the challenge of such special classes.

**Helping the Retarded** is designed to instruct **teachers** of the retarded, though the text and the Instructor's guide are of special interest to the DCE or SS superintendent in your congregation. However, the text is well worth everyone's consideration in terms of helping us to understand better the approach required to care adequately for the retarded who also need to be drawn into the Christian community.

The text outlines the "nature of mental retardation," the "spiritual needs of the retarded," "teaching and learning," and "the teacher and his responsibility." Of especial value, at least for me, was the brief bibliography listing curriculum aids available (p 81ff, 97ff) plus other suggested reading (e.g. counselling parents of the retarded).

The Instructor's Guide outlines a possible procedure for implementing a course and gives focusing directions for the material in the text, constituting a useful, but not indispensable, tool for examination of this important topic. It comes complete with tests which make the applicant eligible for the Concordia Leadership Training Program.

Vern Ratzlaff