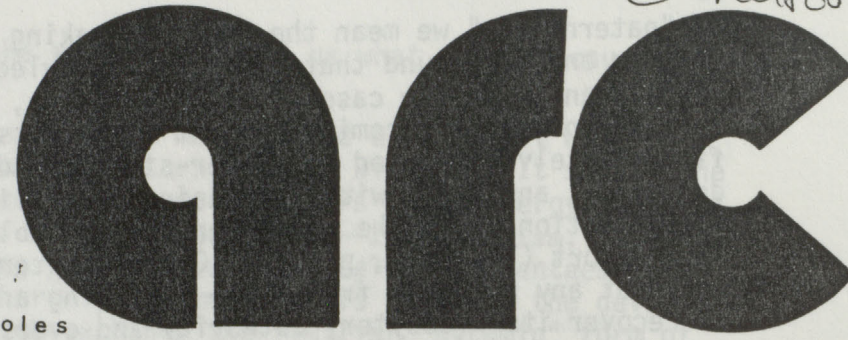
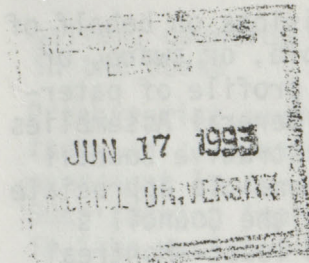


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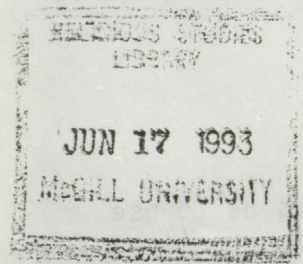
light between two poles

Vol.1/No.2
october
1973

the most reverend big daddy

Something is terribly wrong with the Church. How do we know? Because something is terribly wrong with the world—the Gospel is not being heard. That could be, of course, because the world is too evil to listen. But such an excuse the church is not free to use. Rather, it must acknowledge its own failure in making room for the Gospel, in presenting a face toward the world free from the false images which distort and the cosmetics which hide.

Much used to be said of a "crisis in authority". This continues to be our problem. Let's give it a name: *paternalism*. That seems to be the temptation of every institution—William Stringfellow has noted that the institution or corporation bids us identify our own future with its future, our own salvation with its salvation. Even the church as institution does this. But more significant is a temptation to let certain prestigious persons make the decisions, so that a "power elite" is formed. (Those in the elite will naturally accuse us of reverting to clichés or of simply desiring to replace them.)



By "paternalism" we mean the habit of making decisions on behalf of another on the ground that he is less knowledgeable, or aware, or significant. In the case of our own Church, the profile of paternal government is becoming evident as successive General Assemblies find themselves reduced to rubber-stamping Administrative Council decisions, and faced with increasing centralisation. To appreciate the situation, read the condescending preamble to the Council's last report (1973 *A&P*, p.421). One Presbytery at least—Montreal (without any pressure from ARC)—is facing a motion to go regional, to recover its Presbytery authority and oversight, and to put teeth into this decision by taking over its entire budgetary affairs. Such a radical step may not be the answer, but it suggests the seriousness of our situation: a small church topheavy with policy and executive personnel. Parkinson's Law or the St. Peter Principle?

An elite is not necessarily bad. Men of good will may act in compassion—is perhaps the "best" form of government that of a benevolent despot? The problem with elitism is to hedge your bets, to guard its decision-making with procedures that guarantee consultation and participation.

An "organizational revolution" seems to be everywhere. That is a good thing, because the quality of modern life is threatened by the sheer complexity of decision making, which frustrates clear moral issues and threatens human freedom. The burden today is no longer on private morality so much as corporate good and evil. In such complex and subtle areas, one's *style* grows in significance. Do we operate with *freedom* toward structures, our rules and regulations so that *human being* is encouraged? or do we escape from the demands of freedom by binding ourselves into formal and sterile le-

IN THIS ISSUE

The response to our first issue (see BARC) encourages us to use larger type...and to consider topics suggested for future issues, ranging over the whole field of christian business. It seems that others share our sense of a need for some forum of informal but informed opinion, where we may discuss such matters as cultural and social issues, denominational identity, christian education, the charismatic renewal, even predestination and eschatology! All these were among your suggestions, dear readers. We will try to cover some of them soon.

galism, counting on the experts to tell us what to do because it's in the book?

Presbyterian government was not meant to be elitist—it was, in fact, an alternative to the paternalism of Bishops. It shared the oversight (*episcopē*) among a group of elders (both clergy and lay). Such sharing implies a radical alternative—*fraternalism*. Sharing in "the decision-making process" as it is called guarantees the fraternal nature of church government. This involves the development of structures which exchange the familiar "pyramid" form of running things for a kind of "network" or horizontal nexus of shared rule—such is the language of Professor Bob Worley of McCormick, resource person at recent Presbytery workshops. He calls for "wise rule" in our courts, as against the "minority rule" which so often prevails.

The Organization and Planning Committee's proposals for Synod and Presbytery reform pose such questions well. As we study them in the next few months we need to ask whether such structural changes will really provide for the kind of sharing that will avoid elitism. For if we simply shuffle the minority's tasks and move the pyramid a little to the left, we will not be tackling the central problem of helping fellow christians share the rule which Christ in the first turn shared with us.

To re-form Presbytery structures may seem a superficial business. But since christians live in the body and interact through group meetings, the Spirit of Christ may be expected to work best where there are forms of human interaction which allow for openness, genuine sharing of ideas and words and actions, and not least for the sharing of our needs and hangups. That would be a long step toward mutual ministry...the name of the game.

This second issue includes more of the features you liked—especially another letter from our erstwhile patron (pronounced pat-ron in Québec). We are happy to include a guest article by Charles Scobie, formerly of The Presbyterian College Montreal and now Professor of New Testament and head of the Department of Religious Studies at Mount Allison University, Sackville, N.B. The second article continues the series on Theology. Larger type cuts down our space so we are experimenting with two articles plus features, but will try to enlarge somewhat for the next issue. A subscrip-

tion form is included—please help us keep afloat by your own subscription or by recommending ARC to friends—or enemies.

One object in creating ARC was to provide an arena for dialogue; we are at your disposal therefore for letters, features or articles as you wish. Naturally there is an editorial discretion to be observed; but we hope to see these pages alive with topical debate and informed opinion. Be our guests—"sharing" is the particular arc we are promoting.

MEDIA RARE

Top ratings without sex or violence. Is it possible? And for a full hour of prime Sunday evening time? A year ago it was scoffed at in the U.S. It would be an also-ran. Now it comes to Canada on a crest of unbelievable success.

The Waltons (aired by the C.B.C.) is old time religion from the Bible Belt (Blue Ridge mountains) of half a century ago. Here is the family which stays together because it prays together—though paw, grandpaw and "John-Boy" have reservations! Sound panned? anachronistic? sacrilegious? Far from it!

This is life in the raw. A family (three generations, not just two) up close, real close, together. Diversity in unity. Not plastic unity. A unity of trust. O, there's obedience too. They hadn't thought of permissiveness then—it wasn't necessary! But this is *loving* obedience that includes listening between the generations.

As for the religion—it's blatant but not parochial (unless you're Madelyn O'Hare and live in Baltimore). References to "the Lord" (never to "Christ") are unashamedly frequent and natural—a part of life. But with variations: "I don't know much about that personal God your maw and grandmaw believe in, but I do know there is a power out there that has something to do with my life right here." And lots of knotty questions, deeply religious questions, are raised and not answered. This is not glib religiosity but honest humanity.

Apparently that's what people want. Nothing posh and fancy. Just a poor southern family with authenticity—presented ably and dramatically. It's on your TV in living (sic!) colour this Sunday (consult your local listings for exact time and channel). Here's a springboard for some relevant theologizing!

WHAT'S NEW IN THEOLOGY? "GOD" IS CHANGING ...

second in series

What happens when an age of intellectual giants ends? After Aristotle, after Hegel, after Barth, Bonhoeffer etc.—creative thinkers who broke new ground and left plenty on the agenda—then comes a time for disciples to unpack the implications of their thinking, or to cultivate a sort of mannerism which imitates their style and acknowledges their mastery. Today we see plenty of discipleship and of theological mannerism, and we may comment on some of it later. But more important is the question whether there are other alternatives for theology, newer paths yet outside the scope of those titans?

First let us admit that most giants are measured *post mortem*—the stature of Bonhoeffer is a noteworthy example. So may some of our contemporaries be doing work that will prove of lasting worth—Tom Torrance on the nature of theological science (a legacy from Barth but with TFT's own erudition providing a new direction); Schubert Ogden on the doctrine of God, moving from analysis to process thinking and still moving; Pannenberg on history and Moltmann on hope ...

On the other hand, perhaps the task of theology now is to listen to voices long considered irrelevant or heretical, to open up traditional categories ("classical Theism") to new dialogue. This is risky, of course, not least because it re-opens the very foundation of theology, the nature of our enterprise. For instance, the theology of liberation emerging in the Third World (don't exclude Québec!) involves a shelving of certain hoary views to be replaced by more pragmatic and worldly ones, especially in christology (the working Christ) and pneumatology (the social work of the Spirit). Again, dialogue with "world religions" criticizes our assumption of absolutism, re-opens Logos christology and the biblical evidence for taking the Christ-event as normative. That is, we must face once again the question of *truth*, after living with Patristic answers for over a millennium.

In this second article on modern theology I shall comment on a third (besides liberation and religions) area of dialogue: is God

in fact *unchanging*? Classical theism has brainwashed us into accepting theories of divine immutability, etc., and calling every theory of God's mutability or finitude heretical. Certainly the Fathers were found to take that view, for two reasons. Negatively, there were indeed heretics who reduced God to a finite level in order to manipulate him for human ends; positively, they were all Platonists of one sort or another (mostly Middle Platonism, which emphasized a transcendent First Principle beyond all knowledge). It was a primary statement of that day, with both Plato and Aristotle behind it, that God was Absolute, above the world of change and decay, free from every influence and conditioning. So far above is he that only negations "describe" him properly—infinite, immutable, impassible, not-being. Even more positive attributes (omnipotence, grace) are derived by limiting human virtues. This method of abstraction leaves us with a remote God, the barest of realities ("death by a thousand qualifications" as a modern philosopher puts it).

Historical theology has tried to live with this caricature of the biblical God. Sometimes it said that the above description applied only to the Father, leaving the Son freer to move closer to human reality. But the Platonic clutch was not to be easily escaped. Insofar as Christ was divine—so the story goes—he could not suffer; only insofar as he was human. Even Luther and Calvin found it hard to accept the logic of a true incarnation, a real presence of God within time and history. The dichotomy between heaven and earth, eternity and time, soul and body, spiritual and material—that has been the stuff of Christian theology. God was either so far beyond that he became the bare principle to explain the things we don't know (God of the Gaps, as Bonhoeffer put it) or else equated with sheer power, the miraculous Interloper (God of the *zaps*, as it were).

Harnack called this philosophizing of the faith "the acute hellenization of Christianity". It was softened by the biblical knowledge of some theologians or by the insight of certain mystics, but the Bible was so allegorized that the Hebraic sense of covenant-history in which God shares actively, was lost. The toll of such a basic error in theology has not been assessed—J.K. Mozley's 1926 book *The Impassibility of God* traced its outlines; George Hendry of Princeton has suggested that the Reformers' enterprise was a "hebraicization", a recovery of the O.T. sense of time and history and flesh and the human.

The motions of grace, in short, demand an acceptance of *flesh*: creation, incarnation, resurrection are the key doctrines. Each one is a shared covenant: ecology, humanity, society. But covenant means risk: God gambled at each stage, involving himself as the

stakes, *moving* from one situation to another and allowing himself to be affected by the consequences. The God at work in history may be The Ultimate; but that does not mean he works in an "omnipotent" manner. Classical theism made that mistake, escalating the divine activity beyond the biblical "signs" into sheer "miracles", and so provoking a sceptical reaction: if God is so powerful, and also loving, why does he allow evil?

We cannot answer such a question: in terms of classical theism it is unanswerable, and we must become atheists, or at least anti-theists. Only in a biblical recovery of God as lover, companion, fellow-sufferer is there an alternative question. I tried to put this alternative theodicy in my book *The Clown and the Crocodile*, choosing the dramatic mode of comedy because the "tragic sense of life" remains caught within a false polarity.

The Bible is a drama: a Presence announced itself on stage within Israel's hearing—not Power but Grace. It was not a knockout, irresistible (except in the way one thinks of falling in love as inevitable, given the perfection of the beloved). Rather, it was a persuasive and personal Other who acted the part of lover, friend, companion along the way. Within the dynamics of covenant-history a power was unleashed, of course, since history is made by the interaction of various powers. But it was still a case of signs to be interpreted, read aright and acted on—a process called "faith".

Whatever God may be "in himself" (my students often begin essays by saying "From God's point of view ...") insofar as he is with us he is within our world, playing by worldly rules and accepting worldly consequences. We may listen to "process thinking" as it speaks of two poles in deity, an absolute or eternal ("Abyss") and a relative or temporal ("Lord"). The absolute has no name, being beyond everything; the relative is definite and related—e.g. the personal name Jesus Christ. He shares something of the depth of the Absolute ("Son of God") but he is completely with us ("true man") in inseparable union. His life and its sufferings are not charades but divine life and sufferings. He bids us take seriously those notorious bible passages in which God repents, laughs, weeps, moves, changes. They convey a proper "anthropomorphism" because it happens that the true God is not the ideal dream of philosophers but One who chose to plunge into the created order up to his neck. It's not a pretty sight ...

Streams converge—process thinking (Hartshorne, Ogden) that God is living and loving, in motion through the nexus of historical events and absorbing the consequences; a theology of incarnation which accepts Jesus Christ as pattern and norm for theo-logy

(Barth, Bonhoeffer); biblical study which takes the images and names of covenant-history as guides (Minear, Taylor); theologians of revolution who see Christ as liberating presence in motion toward justice and brotherhood (Illich, Alves); theologians of joy who recognize the play of God-and-man on the stage of history (Cox, Moltmann). The cumulative effect suggests a profile of deity that denies the classical view of absolute God beyond absolute man (hence Plotinus' "flight of the alone to the Alone"). Instead, we have an image of a working (and therefore a playing) Person who shares our life and times, who lets us act upon him and who is willing to share the unique nature of personality: involvement with others.

Is this just theorizing? Is there a *practical* issue in all this? Well, for one thing, classical theism has trained us to think in absolutes and to use the Absolute as an escape hatch when questions get too tough. (e.g. a sincere sceptic seeks faith; we say, have faith—i.e. try harder; when he fails we say Ah well, God didn't give him the gift). Thus we breed an incredibly hardhearted attitude towards the genuine seekers about us—we have no questions, only answers.

Again, classical theism turns out ministers who confuse individuality with personality—they think that an individual stands alone before God. So mutual helpfulness and encounter is discouraged, and we reinforce our worst qualities of being loners and bosses. The solo clergyman reflects belief in the absolute Deity (as the Bishop once did). Our hierarchical way of running the church, therefore, may well have its roots in this "theoretical" tradition of classical theism. Little wonder that clergymen see themselves as a special class funnelling the Word from on high ("way beyond the blue").

Finally, is not the communication of the Gospel—our ultimate concern and test case, after all—distorted if we appeal to a God who is Power rather than Love? Or better: whose power is the *kind* associated with force rather than love? Is not the failure to gain a hearing for Gospel in large part a case of Christian obstinacy, in clinging to a questionable interpretation of the faith rather than facing the hard task of re-opening theology itself, and re-formulating the theological *question*: how is God present in our world?

At this point the theologian, secure in his ivory tower, must rest his case. Until the next issue ...

J.C. McLelland

PROS HEBRAIUS

Succeeding generations of theological students have not always been helped by New Testament professors who have assured them that the only three things we can be sure of regarding what the KJV calls "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews" are that it is *not* an epistle, is *not* by Paul, and is *not* to the Hebrews. Recent scholarship has not come up with agreed solutions to any of the basic critical problems, but it has made some contribution towards understanding the meaning and message of the work.

It is quite possible that the "epistle" was originally a discourse or sermon, but in its present form it is definitely addressed to a specific congregation. Unlike the Pauline epistles the "practical" sections or "exhortations" do not come at the end, but are interspersed throughout. Many recent interpreters have emphasized that the exhortations are the main point of the epistle. The writer's primary purpose is to prevent the readers from falling away from the church and to lead them to a deeper and more mature Christian faith. The "theological" passages are really subservient to this "practical" aim.

As to authorship, you pays your money and you takes your choice. Women's Lib-ers can choose Priscilla. It is a sign of the times that the (Roman Catholic) Jerusalem Bible is inclined to favour Apollos the candidate first suggested by Luther (and favoured by many scholars since). In the end we still come back to Origen's famous verdict on the identity of the author: "God only knows."

The title "To the Hebrews" is not attested before the last part of the second century. If "Hebrews" means "Jews" the name is a misnomer, for the recipients are clearly Christians of some description. Detailed reconstructions will be found in works by William Manson (*The Epistle to the Hebrews*, London, 1951 - the letter was written

to a small group of conservative Jewish Christians within the Church at Rome) and by H.W. Montefiore (Black / Harper commentary, 1964 - the letter was sent to Corinth in the early 50s); fortunately there are many good things in these volumes which do not depend on the different theories regarding destination. (While we are at it, another good recent commentary is that by F.F. Bruce in the New London Commentary series, Eerdmans, 1964). The discovery of the Dead Scrolls led to suggestions that the readers were members (or ex-members) of the Qumran community. This view has not gained wide acceptance though it was given a new lease of life by the publication in 1965 of 11 Q Melchizedek, a fragment in which the figure of Melchizedek appears as a kind of archangel, the heavenly guardian and deliverer of God's people. The suggestion has also been made that the readers were Samaritan Christians.

The fact is that we have pretty well to take the epistle as it stands. When we do that, however, we find that behind the unfamiliar language and ideas there lies a work of great theological power and originality.

Take the writer's Christology for example. Though aware of Jesus' descent from Juda (7:14), he completely ignores the traditional concept of a Davidic Messiah. Instead he takes up a new idea, that of "highpriesthood", which he feels is a more adequate and meaningful tool for interpreting the significance of the Christ event. The author is committed to the basic apostolic faith in the "divinity" of Christ (e.g. in 1:1-4), but the concept of "priesthood" enables him to deal also (more thoroughly than any other New Testament writer) with the "humanity" of Christ, "one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning" (4:15). He even goes so far as to say that Christ "learned obedience through what he suffered" (5:8). Cullmann comments: "The life of Jesus would not be really human if its course did not manifest a development"; and again, "He (Christ) must be able to suffer with men in order to suffer for them." (Read his discussion in *The Christology of the New Testament*, pp. 89-104).

Hebrews says *both* that Christ was made perfect (complete / mature) by the Father (2:10, 5:9, 7:28), *and* that Christ makes his brothers perfect (2:10f., 10:14). Modern translations helpfully render *teleios* as "mature". The writer's complaint is that his readers have not really got beyond the Sunday School stage in their Christian development, whereas they ought by this time to be advancing towards maturity. (See 5:11 - 6:3, especially in the N.E.B. There is a strong plea for Adult Christian Education here!). Christians

are not those who have already "arrived", but rather those who are on a journey together and who seek, with God's help, to progress towards mature manhood.

Hebrews has a tremendous picture of the Church well summed up in the title of Ernst Kasemann's influential study (unfortunately still untranslated), "Das wandernde Gottesvolk" - "the wandering people of God", or "God's pilgrim people." The "roll-call of faith" in Chapter 11 emphasizes the continuity of the new people of God with the old, but with the entire Old Testament to choose from the writer is highly selective in choosing his heroes! The true people of God consists of those who live by faith, who are willing to abandon earthly security, who are prepared to defy convention, break with the establishment and march boldly into the unknown future, like Abraham who "went out, not knowing where he was to go" (11:8). 13:13 which calls on the readers to go forth to Christ "outside the camp, bearing abuse for him" is probably a plea to break decisively with Judaism, to leave the shelter of a *religio licita*, to abandon the familiar and comfortable old ways in favour of a dangerous and challenging involvement with the world which lay outside the institutional Church. What, one wonders, would the writer have to say about the conservative, traditionalist and "in-group" mentality of so many present-day congregations?

There are interesting parallels between Hebrews and Stephen's speech in Acts 7, one of the most significant being their concentration on the early period of the Old Testament (the Patriarchs, the wilderness wanderings). Stephen approved of the Tabernacle; for him the lot set in with the building of the Temple. The writer to the Hebrews likewise concentrates on the Tabernacle (though for him it was imperfect and preparatory); his heroes lived in *tents*, and he definitely loses interest when they start pouring concrete! What does this have to say to a downtown church spending a disproportionate amount of its income on the upkeep of an ancient, Gothic structure, or to a new suburban congregation contemplating taking on a large mortgage?

Hebrews needs careful study but careful study will be amply repaid. Just watch who you encourage to do the studying for they are not likely to remain complacent Christians.

Charles H.H. Scobie

AN OPEN LETTER FROM THE SPONSOR

The editors were virtually forced to publish this letter from Jean Philippe McLennan, III, or be without sufficient funds to put out this issue. The opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.

Dear friends and readers of ARC:

My previous letter to you in the first issue was congenial and friendly. Why not? A new paper. A bright prospect for success. My offer to support the enterprise through shares in my English Ladies Genuine Whalebone Corset Company, conditional only upon the early receipt of one hundred subscriptions.

However, what I strongly suspected, has proven true. Presbyterians are a stingy, pinch-penny lot. Not even one hundred subscriptions came in from this pernicious, brass-bowelled sect. I had warned the editors time and again not to rely upon a generous response from this gloomy collection of constipated Calvinists, but they paid me no heed. Well, the editors have tried their methods; now we try mine. The gloves are off, my friends. Now, we talk turkey.

I can well imagine the readers of my last letter sniggering up their sleeves at the thought of an English Ladies Whalebone Corset Company. Snigger! It is a highly successful company. This is due to one thing, and one thing only—my highly efficient sales representatives, or to speak more plainly, my goon squad. After a visit from my men, merchants usually come across with big orders. As for ARC, I intend to send my representatives across the country to visit each and every Presbyterian church. After this, I anticipate that subscriptions will flow in at a steady pace.

Indeed, I am fighting fire with fire. I have found that the best persons for goon squads come from certain areas of Glasgow, Presbyterian Scots, blooded veterans of football riots against Catholics. That I, a catholic (small "c"), am willing to hire such rabid protestants is perhaps a sign of my basic ecumenical inclinations. They do it for the money.

Needless to say, I have not bothered to discuss my proposed action with the editors, who understand little about the business world. Far better that this lily-livered quartet sticks to their trade: pecking out endless columns of verbiage on their typewriters. Let them posture and rant, build castles with words, win paper victories. I will collect the subscriptions.

Sad to relate, there must be a brief delay before my men set out on their visit across the country. A grievous misfortune recently befell the members of my squad. Painful as it is, perhaps I should explain.

In order to give my men some prior experience in this new field of endeavour, I selected a local Presbyterian church from the telephone directory and sent them off to pick up a few subscriptions for ARC. They scouted the church carefully until one Wednesday evening they discovered the church building ablaze with light. They decided to strike, hoping to catch not only the clergyman but also several parishoners. As they peered in the windows and saw all the people, they drooled. Fistfuls of potential subscribers. Now, I must pause at this point to explain something. However zealous Scots Presbyterians the members of my good squad may be in the matter of fighting with Catholics at football riots, they seldom, if ever, have darkened the door of a Presbyterian Church in their life. Strange as it may seem, they know little or nothing about what goes on inside a Presbyterian church. Thus, it is understandable that, as my representatives gazed through the church windows that night, they thought that they had stumbled upon a service of worship. In fact, they were looking at the Wednesday night Karate class. But the robes, the movements, the cries of that group looked religious enough to my poor goons. And so, with bloodcurdling yells, they poured through the doors to strike terror into, as they thought, peaceful Presbyterian worshippers. Alas, what a price they paid for lack of proper religious instruction in their youth. The violence that followed cannot be described in the pages of a paper like ARC. Let me only report that my men met their first defeat, a great and terrible one, at the hands of this Karate class.

However, dear readers, this only postpones our little visitation. In two months, my men will be out of hospital, wiser and rested. Let me advise you quite candidly. It is either a subscription or a visit from my representatives. Let us avoid unpleasantness. After all, we are men of good will.

Most respectfully,

Jean Philippe McLennan, III

WORKSHOP

Let's see now: four Sundays in each of October and November. Five in December. I'll turn this 8½ x 11 sideways and rule down two 1" columns: Dates/Special Themes. And then two 4½" columns: People Considerations/Kerygma for the Day.

Thanksgiving, Remembrance, Christmas (Christmas already? only 70 shopping days!) Better add a couple of Stewardship Sundays (the Board are counting on pulpit support), cross off the weekend I'm away at Synod - mark that down for the Laity - better still one of our young people. Mustn't forget Advent - it's not the same as Christmas.

Back to Oct. 7th: where are the people at? (I know most are still at the cottage—I'm talking about the other "at"!) Traditional turkey dinner? Could preach on gluttony. Harvest Thanksgiving - fruits, vegetables, horns of plenty - it's going to be harder this year with prices sky high. But that's not their only world. It's also a world of communication, machines, gadgets, T.V. - perhaps we could have a display of today's world and let the people bring it. It's a risk but could be exciting!

Today's urban world - that's a bit rough to relate to the Bible - even rougher to relate to Thanksgiving. Unless I can start with Paul's "in everything give thanks" (Phil. 4) and study the meaning of contentment that is *not* based on *outward* conditions. I could link that up with Rom. 8 about no principalities and powers (governments or layoffs or inflations) destroying Christ's love. And then work out the potential for loving in the middle of the rat race and seeing mass media, rapid travel, telecommunications as allies, not enemies.

If we don't use the communion table to display symbols of today's world, we could use it for Eucharist. That's thanksgiving! But let's also give the congregation a chance to speak out (in the service? out loud?) the specifics of their gratitude. Now how do I speak on Stewardship? Can't ignore spiralling prices and the financial binds so many pew sitters are in. But it's still a question of priorities. How do I get them to put the "kingdom first" - God first? Faith doesn't make sense (or cents!) Can't work this out in the Study. We'll do it together.

I'll ask the congregation to work out the factors which presently determine how much they give. (1) size of congregation compared

with budget (my \$ compared with others); (2) state of economy (cost of living, inflation); (3) priorities based on what's worthwhile in life (degree of importance of church's life and work compared with other things in my life); (4) faith in Christ (is my giving an expression of my trust in Christ?).

Perhaps with a bit of honesty we might hear the Gospel of liberation from financial worry (opposite of faith). Then uncover the basic issue: not the money (or the lack of it) but the steward (the waiter who doesn't serve *for* tips but *from* love). Now we can ponder the Story of the rich young "ruler" again or the II Cor. 8 and 9 passages.

Remembrance - we're always forgetting. Fewer and fewer go to the cenotaph. Today everything is present. We can't live in the past. Yet, as the ancient people of God moved forward through history, they kept remembering. That's how they saw movement. Not the frenzied gyrations of executives, factory workers and housewives running in circles. But the involvement of God in history - his history. Here was perspective. Look with the prophets at world events today. Interpret them out of the recollection of the past - God's past with its promises and punishments. That's it - a study of remembrance in Ezekial (18 references according to Strong).

Next a few links with the Lord's Supper (of course it's more than a memorial feast - can't have Zwinglian theology in Presbyterian pulpits!). Instead of a remembered Christ, locked in the past, a remembered present Christ - spiritually present in proclamation and celebration (the sacrament on Remembrance Sunday? that might ruin the quarterly communion system - too functional!).

Advent and Christmas - like Lent and Easter. A period of serious self-examination and preparation and then the feast (mass) of Christ. The coming past, present and future. John the Baptist was a voice crying in the wilderness. I don't want that reception, but he was popular too! And the cry to repent and receive the presence and power of Christ today is just as urgent. Of course, that kind of line, especially if it's linked with a real second Advent, will leave some people saying I've lost my head (not literally like John, but with the same effect!). O well, knowing where people are at and what they're willing to swallow isn't the only factor in determining the menu. Malachi wouldn't have written his fourth chapter if it were. Unless there is some lenten kind of pause in the mad scramble toward our Christmas bonanza (economically), there won't be any point in celebrating the birth of Christ anyway.

Well, I've got a few lines of thought started for the Fall, I wonder if God is impressed? Better go and talk to him....

BARC

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JUN 17 1993

MC GILL UNIVERSITY

"Long enough to have some meat, short enough so that I could read one every month... Right on... Don't be too obscure... To increase circulation in the Maritimes make clear that your title really means Associate Reformed Covenanters... ARC looks like a positive 'leap' toward the 'body'... I especially like your inclination to humour - a feature commonly lacking in our 'insecure Canadian theology'... ARC is a vehicle which allows continuity from classroom to congregation... Much too bland and monolingual. Needs much harsher awareness of our time and much sharper tension among contributors. Too limited to inside-the-walls religion... More footnotes to translate the esoteric jargon for the hacks... It is advisable to talk ordinary language if you want to get a hearing...

The imagery of the title leaves me a little confused. Had you spelled it with a 'k' it would have been clear, for were not the animals (and presumably the asses) led in two by two? which might explain the need for four editors...

Overall positive tone with its clear desire to be helpful but not to take itself too seriously... Tried to read it on the train and couldn't....I am 'tentatively impressed' (like being 'slightly pregnant')... Reads well (with my bifocals)... More words! Show me! Don't tell me!..

Bon voyage... Hope it sails well...a small contribution towards legal fees in case of libel suits..."

Editors note: *It is one of the curiosities of the response to ARC that a professor from an unnamed theological college (in Toronto?) forgot to enclose his subscription fee while a student at a theological college in another city enclosed a two dollar donation...and it was counted to him for righteousness.*

Your feedback has been most helpful, and we look for more of the same. In case you are uptight that we just asked your opinion and don't intend to act on it--we confess that we have not had time during the summer to discuss properly how to implement your critique and suggestions. This has priority before our next issue. Although in general our "style" seems acceptable, especially the humour, we recognize that a magazine aimed at the "working minister" has to discover where he really is and to hear the questions he really faces. That is our programme.