

# A Word of Caution

Rev. F. A. Dunlop, Superintendent

We are fast approaching the time of year when our pastors and churches will be considering whether or not a change of pulpit or pastor is advisable. This is always an important time in the year's program. Needless to say, our "call" meeting should be preceded by much prayer. Paul lived close enough to God to be wondrously led of the Spirit in his church relationships—checked when he would err in his decisions, and definitely called when his proper course led to places outside his plans. Surely we can be guided by the same unerring Word. Only we need to be certain that our convictions are born of a spirit of righteousness, and not willfulness.

Our system for calling the pastor places the minister at a much greater disadvantage than most any other I know. In some groups the laity and pastor have no voice in the matter whatsoever. A Bishop, or Board, determines the placing of ministers. Other groups have a "call" meeting only and when the pastor decides to move elsewhere, or the Church Board requests that a meeting be called. All of this discourages the suggestion for change. In our system, which orders a set time each year for the specific purpose of calling a pastor, those individuals that are always ready for change are given an unsolicited opportunity.

Since these systems, each and all, are man-made, we cannot hope for anything even bordering the ideal. I favor our system to any other I know. My only suggestion in this matter is, that our people, pastors and laymen, shall act in harmony with wisdom born of prayer and governed by Christian principles.

The time was when my interests in this matter were very different than now—my concerns were very personal and local. Today, by virtue of my office, I am concerned with every church and every pastor in our constituency. I feel that I have a right to ask our people to make this matter of calling a pastor for the coming year the important business in your church activities it rightly is.

## ONCE TO EVERY MAN AND NATION

By James Russell Lowell

Once to every man and nation  
Comes the moment to decide;  
In the strife of truth with falsehood,  
For the good or evil side;  
Some great cause, God's new Messiah,  
Offering each the bloom or blight,  
And the choice goes by forever  
'Twixt that darkness and that light.

By the light of burning martyrs,  
Jesus' bleeding feet I track,  
Toiling up new Calvaries ever  
With the cross that turns not back;  
New occasions teach new duties,  
Time makes ancient good uncouth;  
They must upward still and onward,  
Who would keep abreast of truth.

Though the cause of evil prosper,  
Yet, 'tis truth alone is strong;  
Truth forever on the scaffold,  
Wrong forever on the throne,  
Yet that scaffold sways the future,  
And behind the dim unknown,  
Standeth God within the shadow  
Keeping watch above His own.

The City of Fredericton has just held a civic election. 36% of eligible voters went to the polls. That doesn't show much interest on the part of its citizens. However, that is a much better showing than some of our churches have made at meetings specifically announced for calling a pastor. No wonder some of our men refuse to accept such an expression as representative of the church. Let our people give to this meeting this year the interest it deserves. Vote for the man you feel to vote for, but VOTE.

I wonder if a personal word to our pastors would be accepted from me? This is what I would like to say: You may not receive the kind of vote from your church this year you feel you should, or the kind of vote you deserve. The important thing to you is not the vote, but how you react toward it. There is nothing against a man being disappointed when the vote is unfavorable. We would hardly be human if it were not so. But there is everything against a man of God showing his displeasure in a bitter, censorious spirit. Don't "lick your wounds" before members of your congregation—you might divide good neighbors, even cause a rift in the church. Just remember this: When you voted for our system, you endorsed the right of every member to vote according to his best judgment. Treat him then as he should be treated—a brother who acted within his rights. Let's practise the grace we preach. Maybe God has a better place for you. I close this letter with an article from our new Church Manual:

## CALLING OF A PASTOR

An ordained or licensed minister may be called to the pastorate of a local church, or circuit, by a two-thirds vote of all church members of voting age, voting at a meeting duly called for that purpose, provided that such minister be a member of the Alliance of the Reformed Baptist Church, or is recommended or approved by the Alliance Superintendent. Voting for the calling of pastor should be by ballot. The call of a pastor may be only for a term ending with the close of the next church year, but the call may be extended as hereinafter provided.

When a pastor is called, the local church should specify the remuneration he may expect. The local church should also make provision for the travelling and moving expenses of the new pastor.

## RENEWING THE CALL OF THE PASTOR

The call of a pastor may be renewed for the second year and each succeeding year of his pastorate, at a church meeting duly called for this purpose, by two-thirds vote, by ballot, of all church members of voting age present and voting.

The local church may, when voting to renew pastoral relations, after the pastor has served for at least one year, at a church meeting duly called for that purpose, extend the call for a period of two or three years, on condition that the recall for one year has been presented and a favourable vote received.

## WHAT IS WORLDLINESS?

"It is human activity with God left out. It is life which is horizontal and not vertical. It is ambition without aspiration. Its goal is success, not holiness. Hearing no mystic voice, it is destitute of reverence. It never bows in rapt and silent wonder in the secret place. It has lusts but no supplication. God is not denied. He is forgotten and ignored."—J. H. Jewett.

## HAS YOUR SUBSCRIPTION EXPIRED?