

Edward Vanderkloet
April 20, 1928-October 13, 1994

Though Ed Vanderkloet had been seriously ill for some time, the phone call informing me of his death still came as a jolt. It brought back many memories. When I met Ed for the first time, I learned that he hailed from Amsterdam, the same city where I was born and raised. Our paths crossed only on occasion. As I went through my CLAC file I found some letters Ed had written in response to some questions I had. His replies were always prompt, courteous and helpful. But his greatest influence was as an author. Through his writings he still speaks.

Ed came from an orthodox Gere-formeerd (Christian Reformed) working-class family. He served in the Dutch army in Indonesia. In 1952, he and his young wife Truus emigrated to Sarnia, Ontario. The Lord blessed them with seven children. On a shoe-string budget, they sent them to Christian schools.

While in Sarnia, Ed met Harry Antonides with whom he developed a life-long friendship. With Harry and Gerald Vandezande, Ed built the foundation of the Christian Labour Association of Canada. He became a member of the national board and executive committee. In 1966 he was appointed full-time CLAC staff member and moved with his family to Rexdale (Toronto). Ed became an effective CLAC representative, both in the field work and as the Executive Director from 1972 to 1989. Until 1992, he simultaneously served as editor of the *Guide*, the CLAC's official publication. As executive director he represented the CLAC to the churches, and he did it well. He explained ably the work and needs of the CLAC, and called regularly upon the churches for prayer support.

Ed had a quick and discerning mind and was well read in a variety of fields. His writings cover a wide range of topics. He wrote to inspire a radical Christian discipleship. His style was pithy and straightforward. He didn't pretend to have all the answers. He challenged his readers to think through today's questions.

Ed exposed humanism's bankruptcy. He called for a redirection of our culture--politically, socially and economically. Ed wrote that belief in human autonomy and self-determination is diametrically opposed to the Christian belief that man, in all facets of his life, is subservient to God who placed him in the creation as a steward. Ed's faith was not limited to the private sphere. He pointed out that Christians must do more than concentrate on the conversion of individuals. There is not only individual apostasy. He noted that the problem is also our collective following of alien spirits that so much control the structures of our society. "To wrest these structures away from the evil powers," said Ed, "and to bring them again under the regime of Christ is our task no less than engaging in evangelism." The Christian faith has consequences also for the social and economic spheres.

Ed's focus in life was the Kingship of Christ. He wrote and spoke about it without apology. During a panel discussion at the 84th Annual Meeting of the Lord's Day Alliance of Canada in 1972, Ed said that we must set our hearts on God's Kingdom and

His justice and all the rest will come as well (Matthew 6:33). He also noted that Christ did not offer His followers an escape mobile to get away from it all. "Rather, he charged them, the new humanity, to carve a new way of life. For that's what the Good News is all about. Not just a road to heaven, but a way of life." And Ed concluded that if we show the world the signs of our new life in Christ, not just as individuals, but as a communion of believers, a body of Christ, a new mankind, we shall also be able to show the world how we joyfully celebrate each week the resurrection of the Lord of life, the Lord whom we serve all the days of our life.

Ed was a Christian realist. He knew that only the Lord can make all things new. This was his hope and confidence. As he testified in his memoirs:

I am often reminded of the words of St. Paul when he refers to our bodies as "an earthly tent" and "clay vessels. " Such texts never spoke much to me when I was young and strong. But now they do since I experience the ongoing deterioration of the human body that will end in death. But I am equally convinced that death holds no terror for me, because (in the majestic words of Lord's Day 1 of the Heidelberg Catechism) with body and soul, in life and in death I belong to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. We are celebrating these days the 50th anniversary of D -Day when Hitler's seal was doomed, even though it took another 11 months before the Third Reich collapsed. But on Calvary Satan's seal was doomed, and pretty soon his ugly kingdom of darkness will be swallowed up by the Kingdom of Light.

As you know, in my younger years I often thought I was heading for failure. That this was not so is because of the Lord's faithfulness; in the Book of Lamentations Jeremiah says that his compassions never fail and that His mercies are new every morning. My parting message (and I'm sure that also expresses Truus's feelings) to all those who read these memoirs is that we must walk with the Lord hand in hand, we must pray every day, and He will make all things well in the end, even though very often the sojourners in this world, people who are travelling through, who may be having a good time in this life, who may enjoy not only the beauty of nature but also of culture, but nevertheless have their citizenship elsewhere. Our sojourn is towards the new earth and the new heaven where Christ the King reigns in splendour. I don't know if we will recognize each other on the new earth, but if so, let's have the greatest family reunion ever.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Truus, her children and grandchildren. May they experience the comfort of the gospel. Those who die in the Lord shall live forever!

Johan D. Tangelder
November, 1994