

Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Volume 22 - No. 2

January 27, 1973



THE RETRIBUTIVE PRINCIPLE

The debate about capital punishment is being renewed these days, now that Parliament will have to make a decision one day whether the death penalty shall be retained or not. Already opinion polls are being held, and it has been stated that the majority of the citizens are in favour of capital punishment. The same speaker who made that statement via the radio also said that at least three party leaders were opposed to it, and therefore he did not see how the wish of the majority of the citizens would be realized.

It is good when people who are busying themselves with scholarly research are very careful in their statements and slow to come to conclusions. Once in a while there seems to be more than just a scholarly caution. We had that impression when reading the following brief item in the *Kitchener Waterloo Record* of November 23, 1972:

CANADA MURDER RATE DOUBLES IN 10 YEARS

TORONTO [CP] Researchers for a University of Toronto study on murder in Canada find a rising rate over the 1961 - 1970 decade, but do not draw any conclusions as to whether this was affected by the partial suspension of capital punishment that ends next month.

No reason was given for their not drawing any conclusions. We can be sure that their findings will be used as an argument for the reinstatement of the death penalty also for other cases than those in which a policeman or prison guard has been murdered.

Undoubtedly, the death penalty serves as a deterrent, as laxity serves as an incentive. When there is a successful hi-jacking, we can be certain that within a very short time there is another one, following the same pattern; whereas, if such a crime ends in failure due to the courage of the authorities, it may be quiet for some time.

It is, however, not the *practical effect* of the death penalty which should be decisive when the question is debated whether it should be retained or abolished altogether. That would amount to an arguing from the very same pragmatic standpoint which has already confused matters so much and in many instances has virtually eliminated set rules and fixed standards after which everyone has to pattern his life and behaviour.

We shall not touch upon all the aspects of capital punishment. One who knows the laws and the "problems" surrounding this question would be better able to deal with them.

As for the principle, the basic principle, we are not to forget that the basis of the laws is and is to be the *retributive* principle.

According to Webster's, retribution is: "A proper return for actions, particularly bad; especially just punishment."

Man's fall into sin meant that the balance of what God had created, was upset. For a punishment the Lord

God caused man to experience what it meant that the balance was upset: even the soil was cursed for man's sake: thorns and thistles it would bring forth. Man's sin affected and had effect on the whole creation. The creature, too, cries for the day when everything will be restored as a fruit of Christ's sacrifice.

It is the retributive principle which is behind our laws, which is also behind the capital punishment: the un-balanced state of affairs had to be restored to a balanced state of affairs by taking the life of the murderer. Only in this manner the whole nation and society as such will experience the beneficial effects of such restoration of the proper balance.

It is only when this principle is acknowledged that arbitrariness is prevented and that everyone knows what he has to face if he commits a certain crime. "Fundamentally the act of judicial judgement is an act of restoration; the return to its right place."

In order to achieve that, the courts are to be impersonal and are to follow set rules. By following the rules and by being impersonal (which is *not* the same as "being robots") the courts are an instrument in the hand of the Lord to restrain evil, to punish evildoers.

The reason why people are opposed to capital punishment is that they have abandoned completely the principle of retributive punishment, and that they have dismissed completely the idea that every wrongdoer is individually responsible for every unlawful act in which he takes part.

Man, it is claimed, is a product of his environment and cannot help it when he is pushed into the wrong direction. The ones who should be in the dock are those who maltreated him in his youth! The man himself is only maladjusted: what he needs is not punishment but medical treatment. How can you punish someone for being sick? Thus detention is only preventive. As soon as a person has been declared "cured" he can be released.

Here, however, we have left the field of justice where everyone knows what he can expect and where everyone knows the price he will have to pay for his crime; here we have entered the field of arbitrariness, witness the many instances of which we hear, where - especially in Russia - people are confined to mental institutions for as long as it pleases the ones who have the power to keep them there, out of circulation. Psychiatrists and social planners decide whether and, if so, for how long a person shall be detained. Thus man gives up his own securities, securities which the law provides, and he gives them up for the insecurity and the subjective opinions of so-called experts.

Thus George Orwell's "Nineteen eighty-four" era is dawning: Big Brother decides what is good and everyone who disagrees has to be re-educated, until he has been cured and is back in line.

The Lord our God has not instructed those who are in authority to reform and to cure. Our God gave the

magistrates to punish the evildoers, to restore the balance and thus to protect the good.

No valid argument can be brought in against capital punishment. God has commanded that he who sheds forth man's blood shall have his own blood shed forth in retribution. Thus God will not accept any arguments which come forth from an apostate reasoning which substitutes sickness for sinfulness and the concept of human

"mercy" - which is cruelty - for the concept of retribution.

It is only obedience to God's command which will exalt a nation. The fruit of human "wisdom" destroys justice and peace and brings chaos.

It is and remains true what it says in the Scriptures that even the mercies of the ungodly are cruel, but that peace can reign only where man's life and dealings are based on God's infallible Word.

vO

THE SECTS

The Armstrong Cult

1. Introduction

Take some of the teachings of Seventh-Day Adventism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism and British-Israelism. Mix them with a dozen or so heresies (ancient and modern). Add a number of theological inventions of Herbert W. Armstrong and sieve out the most apparent contradictions.

Follow this recipe and you have the teachings of one of the most dangerous anti-Christian sects of our time, The Radio Church of God, founded by Herbert W. Armstrong.

This sect is dangerous because it has such an amount of truth in it that persons who have only a limited knowledge of God's Word are readily taken in by it.

However, when someone who believes in God's Word studies this sect, he cannot but come to the conclusion that its teachings are contrary to the Bible.

This sect has taken from Seventh-Day Adventism the insistence upon observing the Seventh-Day Sabbath, the abstinence of certain foods, its extreme legalism, the rejection of the doctrines of hell and eternal punishment, and the teaching of the annihilation of the wicked. From the Jehovah's Witnesses it has taken the denial of the doctrine of the Trinity, the denial of the bodily resurrection of Christ and His saints, and, in general, its eschatology. From the Mormons it has taken the belief that man can become as God. Furthermore, it has taken the teachings of British-Israelism with all its racial consequences.

While we are studying this sect we should keep in mind two Bible texts which are important, namely, Deut. 18:22, "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presump-

tuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him," and II Peter 3:16b, "... in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

2. History of the Sect.

Herbert W. Armstrong was born July 31, 1892, in Des Moines, U.S.A. After leaving school he went into the advertising business, getting quite some experience in it and having financial ups and downs. In 1926 he was visiting his parents in Salem, Oregon, and there his wife met a certain Mrs. Runcorn, who "proved" to her from the Bible that the Seventh-Day Sabbath observance was obligatory. For some weeks Herbert argued with his wife Loma, contending that all the churches could not be wrong. (They were members of the Methodist Church.) He tried to prove to his wife that she was wrong in her newly-found belief. In order to be able to do this he started an extensive Bible study; in the meantime he studied the Bible also for proof of creation, for he wanted to prove to his sister-in-law that the evolution theory is wrong.

The result was that he too accepted the Seventh-Day Sabbath and on the other hand his belief in creation (in opposition to evolution) was strengthened.

The next problem was to find out which was the true Church. During 1927 he visited many churches (and was baptized in a Baptist Church). At last, in 1931, after having been a lay-preacher for several years, he became an ordained minister of the Oregon Conference of the Church of God, which was an off-shoot of an off-shoot of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

After a lot of trouble he started on his own and on Sunday January 7, 1934, the first broadcast of "The World

Tomorrow" program was sent out by a small radio station. On February 1, 1934, the first mimeographed copy of *The Plain Truth* was published (about 200 - 250 copies).

The sect has grown. I do not know how many members it has at the present, but it will probably be around 200,000 all over the world. Those members, called Co-Workers, have to pay tithes and from that money are all the expenses of the Radio Church of God paid. All literature is given away; you cannot subscribe to it. *The Plain Truth* now has a circulation of about 2,000,000, while a more theological magazine, *The Good News of Tomorrow's World*, has a circulation of 779,000. "The World Tomorrow" is now broadcast on more than 300 stations all over the world, while it is also shown on scores of television stations in Canada and the U.S.A.

A. H. DEKKER

OUR COVER

*A view of Vancouver, West, End.
[British Columbia Government
Photograph].*

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THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE
*Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd.
Winnipeg, Manitoba.*

Second class mail registration number 1025.

Address for administrative matters:
Subscriptions, advertisements, etc.;
Clarion, Premier Printing Ltd.
1249 Plessis Road, Winnipeg
Manitoba, Canada, R2C 3L9

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Canada, N1M 2W7

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Home & School

In 1966 the Ontario Provincial Government established a Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools. This Committee was to examine and evaluate the current program of religious education in the Public Schools, and consider suggestions for changes and improvements in the program. Finally it would be required of the Committee to present the Minister of Education with recommendations on how to best instill moral values and principles in the young.

Early in 1970 the Committee presented its findings in a 119-page Report, which was divided into 5 major sections: The Historical Background, The Present Course, A Recommended Program, Professional Development and a Summary of Major Recommendations.

We are of the opinion that this Report should be read by every parent whose children are in attendance at a Public School. The study of this Report, not in the least the historical section which traces the course of religious education in the Public Schools from 1815 on, should help to convince Reformed parents of the utter unsuitability of the Public Schools for their children. Our Public Libraries should have this Report on their shelves, and it may be borrowed there.

To give our readers an indication into which direction the relationship between the Public Schools and religious instruction is intended to develop, we have selected a number of quotations from the chapters dealing mainly with recommendations of the Committee to the Minister of Education.

"It is regrettable, but absolute standards of morality are not a normal part of human experience and to teach that they can be is to risk the child at some later stage rejecting the whole system". (page 47)

"... what is most important is the teachers start to listen carefully to what children themselves have to say about matters requiring moral judgments ... " (page 46)

"The school is no more committed to value neutrality than is the government or the law. The school, like the government, is an institution with a basic function of maintaining and transmitting some, but not all, of the consensual (generally agreed upon) values of society." (page 48)

"Whether we wish it were so or not, standards of social conduct will never be inflexible. But a habit of basing behavioural decisions on the highest moral reasoning of which the individual is capable permits a universal kind of consistency." (page 49)

"An objection to abstract preaching of moral traditions is that it is self-defeating whenever it is obvious that the same traditions are not respected by teachers, parents and society generally." (page 51)

"It is not the (moral) conclusion arrived at that should concern us; it is the method of reasoning that leads to it." (page 67)

"... this Report has not dwelt on some of the specific moral issues implied by such labels as intoxication, marijuana, hippies, delinquency, dishonesty, LSD and illicit sex. But it is time for society to recognize that to the extent they affect the lives of our youth, these are problems which will not be resolved by any code of behaviour that might be enunciated by this Committee, or by principals or teachers or judges or any other kind of authority. They must be resolved by the young persons themselves." (page 70)

"Because some may find it offensive that Bible stories and passages from the Bible should be included in reading programs, the Committee again repeats that this material should be provided within the Public School System for the sole purpose of enriching the culture of the pupil and not for the purpose of persuading him that the Old and New Testaments provide a basis for a religious doctrine to be adopted by him". (page 73)

"... the Committee has found that in kindergarten and many primary grades teachers have relied too heavily upon anecdotes concerning the life of Christ and other Biblical characters, the use of colouring books depicting Bible scenes, and the singing of hymns and recitation of poetry and stories having to do with Old and New Testament characters. In the view of the Committee, these practices tend to indoctrinate the young in the Christian faith and are repugnant to members of other than the Christian religion. It is urged that different means of occupying the minds and employing the talents of the young be used by elementary school teachers." (page 74)

"The most significant change we recommend in the opening exercises is the cessation of Bible readings at the opening of school. It will suffice here to say that the Committee feels that reading of the Holy Bible should not form part of the opening exercises but rather should occur as part of literature, history, or other courses." (page 36)

"We believe that the high duty of public education to foster character building - and we hereby confirm that we consider this to be a duty of public education - should be discharged through a clearly understood, continuously pursued, universal program pervading every curricular and extra-curricular activity in the public school system from the beginning of elementary to the close of secondary education." (page 53)

We could go on, page after page,

quoting the beliefs, opinions and recommendations of this Committee. Those we have quoted are enough to provide unmistakable evidence of the Committee's desire to see the Bible relegated to a place among other works of literary merit. The Committee does not wish to see the Bible in authority at the Public School but rather the "highest moral reasoning of which the individual (children) are capable." That much has been made abundantly clear.

Now that we have discussed the beliefs of the Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools, it may be useful to contrast these with the beliefs of those who profess the Reformed faith.

We believe it is unlawful for any one, though an apostle, to teach otherwise than we are now taught in the Holy Scriptures. If any one comes to you, and does not bring this teaching, receive him not into your house. (Belg. Conf. VII)

We believe that man is but a slave to sin, and can receive nothing, except it have been given him from heaven. For who may presume to boast that he of himself can do any good . . . Who will glory in his own will . . . Who understands . . . Who can speak of his knowledge . . . Who dare suggest any thought . . . ? (Belg. Conf. XIV)

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Quite obviously, parents whose children attend Public Schools are burdened with a terrible problem. Their agreement with the Reformed faith makes it clear that they despise any teaching, any instruction, which is contrary to Scripture. With Paul in I Corinthians 16 they say: If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed! These Reformed parents are convinced that to glory in the powers of one's own logical reasoning, instead of submitting to the authority of Scripture, is a terrible sin. They know very well: Apart from Me you can do nothing.

Many parents have found that their only recourse is to build and operate their own private schools, where God is Lord of all. After all, it is quite impossible to serve two masters, or eat from two tables. A terrible dualism takes hold of such parents. Scripture (His Word) and Creeds (our word) operate only on Sunday or at Study Societies during the week. At other times, such as the thousands of hours which their children spend in a classroom, Scripture and Confession remain tightly shut.

We believe it is unlawful . . .

J. J. KUNTZ

Dedication of New Church Building

Friday evening, December 1, the new church building of the Abbotsford congregation was officially dedicated. Rev. M. Vanderwel opened the meeting and requested the congregation to sing Ps. 65:1-3, after which he read Ephesians 2:4-22 and led in prayer. Then Rev. Vanderwel welcomed the congregation, delegates and guests, especially the Hon. Mr. Ferguson, the mayor of Abbotsford, and Mrs. Ferguson. The mixed choir of Cloverdale, under the direction of Mrs. P. Jansen, sang "God Himself is with us" by Henry Bottenberg, and "God of Grace, and God of Glory" by Benton Price. After this, on behalf of the building committee, Mr. J. Deleeuw gave a resume of the construction of the church building, and handed to Rev. Vanderwel a symbolic key, about 20 inches long, with the remark: "If this key is too big, then you'd better buy a bigger lock". After Rev. Vanderwel, on behalf of the consistory, thanked the building committee, he requested the congregation to sing Ps. 84:1, 2, 4, 5. Then the delegates of the men, women, and youth societies got the floor (or rather the pulpit). They gave thanks and praise to the Lord, and congratulations to the consistory. Each of them presented a token of appreciation.

Further, a group of young members added a fine musical contribution to the programme. Rev. J. Mulder, on behalf of the church of Cloverdale, handed Rev. Vanderwel an attractive clock for the consistory room. Rev. M. Vanbeveren, representing the church of New Westminster, presented Rev. Vanderwel with an envelope containing a gift.

On behalf of the church of Chilliwack, Mr. J. Devos presented an electric clock. The Cloverdale choir then sang "Here in this House" by Beethoven-Homart, and "Glorious is the Lord Almighty" by Joseph Haydn (arr. Elward Cogging). The performance of this choir formed an excellent contribution to this evening. Next the president of the consistory gave his address to the congregation, in which he explained the "Christ-Monogram" which decorates the wall behind the pulpit, referring to Ephesians 2:21 and 22. This stylish evening was closed by singing Ps. 87, and with thanksgiving to the Lord.

After closing, coffee was served in the old church building. The



new church building has a capacity of 450 seats, excluding the balcony, where no seats have been placed yet. There is a paved parking lot for about 100 cars. Some landscaping remains to be done in the spring.

POLITICAL COMMENT

Principled or Opportunistic

It must be clear to the discerning individual by now that we have a government in Ottawa today which is determined to hang on to the reins of power at almost any price. The machiavellian tendencies of the pragmatic Trudeau are coming through clearly. In the estimation of the powers that be in the capital, the government was given a slap on the wrist by the people of Canada but this should by no means be taken too seriously. Sure we made some mistakes, the analysis goes. Yes, we failed to explain some things well enough, but don't worry, we have received your message. After all, even the wisest of governments needs to be chastened at times.

Nowhere in this rationale do we find any lessening of the conviction that the present government has an almost divine right to rule this country. What we find

instead is an opportunistic assessment of its chances for remaining in power. In its new mood of sweetness and light the government is able to offer a variety of goodies - which it refused to do before and during the election. Some people might say that the Liberal government has abandoned its principles, but I would rather say that it never had any, and if it did they were effectively camouflaged.

The present minority situation may even be a boon to the ruling clique in the Liberal party, which is not averse to many of the platforms advocated by the N.D.P. (After all, was not Trudeau himself once a member of the C.C.F.?) It certainly is strengthening the hand of those who want more legislation of the socialist welfare type! All of a sudden the government is willing to raise the old age pensions, the family allowances, introduce stronger foreign investment con-

trols, crack down on immigration, etc. From a pragmatic point of view these things are now both possible and desirable. What about the effects of all this spending on the economy? Who's going to end up paying for it? No doubt the Liberals expect that by that time the good people of Canada will have forgiven their sins of omission and re-elect them with a new workable majority.

So, this is the result of an unprincipled politics. Where the principles are not clearly identified, it is hard to attack a government for not living up to them. The sense of joint responsibility is forgotten. Politics then becomes only a matter of images and impressions, and perhaps we are receiving all that we bargained for.

Therefore as we watch the proceedings in the House of Commons and elsewhere for the next few months, let us keep our eyes and ears open. We can and must let the light of the gospel shine upon the councils of the nation. That is our goal in 1973.

H. J. LUDWIG

De Afscheiding en de Gezangen (1)

Elkaar uit de droom helpen

Enkele opmerkingen over hoe in de Afscheiden Kerken over de Gezangen werd gedacht, worden hierbij aangeboden in de nederlandse taal. De eerste reden is dat we vrij veel zullen overnemen van wat in Nederland onlangs over dit onderwerp werd geschreven; de tweede is dat waarschijnlijk de meeste belangstelling hiervoor te vinden is bij hen die zonder enig bezwaar nog Nederlands lezen (het zelfs prefereren).

Onze hoofdbedoeling is daarbij om elkaar wat uit de droom to helpen met betrekking tot de verbinding van "Afscheiding" en "Gezangen". Die droom is dat alle Afscheidenen tegen alle Gezangen waren, op voetspoor van de Vader der Afscheiding, Ds Hendrik De Cock.

We gaan dus niet herhalen wat enige tijd geleden in CRM geschreven is over het apostolisch getuigenis betreffende "Psalmen, Gezangen en Geestelijke Liederen". Misschien zal, gezien wat door sommigen na de verschijning van ons complete Book of Praise wordt beweerd, het nodig zijn toch daarop nog weer terug te komen. Maar nu dus niet.

We gaan dus ook niet schrijven over de Oude Christelijke Kerk, en de ontwikkeling van het 'vrije' geestelijke lied door en na Ambrosius.

Noch ook gaan we uiteenzetten dat een kerk die de gemeente verbiedt in haar lied antwoord te geven op de verlossende daden Gods in Jezus Christus in de dagen der vervulling, daarmee een bovenschriftuurlijke, ja onschriftuurlijke binding oplegt.

We beperken ons tot de Afscheiding, beginnend met De Cock, en zullen daarna verschillende "leiders" aan het woord laten, daarbij dankbaar gebruik makend van wat Prof. Kamphuis onlangs op de Schooldag opmerkte, alsmede artikelen van Ds F. Mul in Calvinistisch Jongelingsblad.

Prof. Kamphuis en Prof. Van Velzen over De Cock en Jacobus Klok.

De algemene gedachte is dat één van de beslissende aanleidingen tot de Afscheiding was het bezwaar tegen de zgn "Evangelische Gezangen" in de Hervormde Kerk. De misvatting leeft dan bij velen dat het reformatorisch verzet ging tegen gezangen-als-zodanig, en niet slechts tegen de inhoud van (inderdaad) vele Gezangen. We horen ook tegenwoordig weer dat "Gezangen" zonder meer hoerenlieden werden genoemd door de vaders der Scheiding. Wie dus, zo luidt ook nu weer de toepassing, Gezangen gaat invoeren, verleidt de kerk des Heeren om hoer te worden.

Hoeveel is daarvan waar?

Bekend is dat Hendrik De Cock een voorrede schreef in een boekje van de hand van *Jacobus Klok*, een ouderling in een der afscheiden gemeenten, hoewel slechts voor korte tijd.

Prof. Kamphuis (zie De Reformatie, 30 Sept. 1972) die de strijd van De Cock tegen de Gezangen terecht "een noodzakelijk onderdeel" van zijn strijd noemt, laat echter direct volgen dat De Cock "het zich in die strijd toch eigenlijk te gemakkelijk heeft gemaakt." B.v. door op de klank af te citeren Amos 5:23, "Doet het getier uwer LIEDEREN (de hoofdletters zijn van De Cock en moeten blijkbaar de plaats van een argument innemen!) van Mij weg." Ook wijst Kamphuis het bezwaar van De Cock tegen het Te Deum af. Maar in de derde plaats, "Te gemakkelijk heeft De Cock zich hier als uitgever van een brochure verbonden met de

onmatig-felle bestrijder van de Gezangen Jacobus Klok, met wie de kerken der Afscheiding nog grote moeite zouden krijgen." Volgens Prof. Kamphuis heeft De Cock zich hier niet alleen in de persoon van Klok vergist, maar eveneens de goede zaak die hij voorstond, niet recht gediend.

Wat die persoon van Klok betreft, reeds in 1836 werd hij als ouderling in de afscheiden kerk van Delfzijl afgezet. Later ontrok hij zich aan de kerk. Prof. Van Velzen, de historicus der Afscheiding, merkt op in zijn door Prof. Kamphuis besproken boek (*Gedenkschrift der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk, bij Vijftig - jarig Jubilé 1884*), "Algemeen hoorde men van hem (Klok) getuigen dat hij aan onuitstaanbare vitzucht leed." Men had toen echter de moed om zulk een ouderling te ontzetten uit zijn ambt, zulks naar de regel der Schrift.

De vrouw van Hendrik De Cock heeft later aan haar achterkleinzoon, de latere prof. dr A. Noordtzijs, geschreven: "De Cock had dat boekje van Klok over de Gezangen niet moeten uitgeven; dat is mis van hem geweest; hij was het ook daarmee niet geheel eens." (Deze bijzonderheden zijn ook ontleend aan De Reformatie).

We hoorden dus de naam van *Prof. Van Velzen*, aan wie Prof. Kamphuis zijn toespraak wijdde. In genoemd boek heeft deze vader der Afscheiding enige critiek op De Cock. Het eerste punt van critiek was dat De Cock kinderen van leden van andere gemeenten doopte, zulks tegen de regelen. Prof. Kamphuis, o.i. terecht, merkt op dat Van Velzen daarbij niet voldoende recht deed aan de nood-situatie in die jaren. Het tweede punt van critiek is de reeds genoemde houding van De Cock betreffende de Gezange in het algemeen, en het boekje van Klok in het bijzonder. Prof. Kamphuis schrijft:

"Nu is het een goede zaak om te zien hoe Van Velzen ondanks zijn diep respect voor De Cock, niet tracht te vergoelijken, als zou hij de roeping hebben om als apologet alles goed te praten, maar dat hij integendeel in den brede de wondeplek aanwijst: de verbintenis met Klok was onvoorzichtig en 'het schrijven van De Cock over de Gezangen heeft de goede zaak veel, zeer veel nadeel gedaan', want het heeft 'velen van de Scheiding zelve afkerig gemaakt.'" Prof. Kamphuis vervolgt: "De gereformeerde kerken hebben in de loop van de jaren een ander standpunt ingenomen dan De Cock, al hebben we ook van zijn strijd, in zwakheid gevoerd, geleerd dat we hier waakzaam moeten zijn."

Daarmee zal ieder het eens moeten zijn. De strijd gaat niet tegen Gezangen als zodanig; dat was de fout van Klok, en ook van De Cock. Zoals we in het vervolg nog zullen zien, heeft geen der leidende figuren in de kerken der Afscheiding (we zullen noemen Brummelkamp, Gispén, Lindeboom, Hoekstra, Schilder) dat standpunt ingenomen.

De bezwaren tegen de Gezangbundel van 1805 was in de eerste plaats dat ze van overheidswege aan de kerken was opgedrongen. Groter bezwaar was echter tegen de inhoud van veel Gezangen. Ds Mul schrijft in CJB: "Het modernisme, het loslaten van Gods Woord en de Belijdenis ging almeer het kerkelijk leven beheersen. Vandaar het felle verzet van de vaders der Afscheiding daartegen! In verscheidene van deze liederen werd niet God verheerlijkt, maar de mens geprezen om zijn deugden. De verdorvenheid van de mens en de noodzaak van de verlossing door Christus werd niet meer gepredikt, maar de braafheid van de mens. En omdat er zo *gepreekt* werd, moest er ook zo *gezongen* worden."

Verderop lezen we: "Men heeft het wel eens zo gesteld (wij voegen er aan toe: onder ons stellen sommigen het

vandaag weer zo . . . vD) dat het eigenlijke motief en de diepste grond van het verzet tegen de Synode en de breuk met de Hervormede Kerk de gezangenkwesitie zou zijn geweest. Maar zo ligt het beslist niet. In de *Acte van Afscheiding* wordt over de gezangen met geen woord gerept."

Misvattingen zitten vaak diep. We hoorden ze als jong mens, en we zagen het zelfs. Toen de dominee, na 1933, (uitbreiding van de Gezangenbundel) opgaf: we zingen nu Gezang 5:1, 2 (en niet meer, als voorheen: het Berijmde Gebed des Heeren) stonden er twee kerkgangers op en liepen met woedende gezichten de kerk uit. Volgens hen werd de Afscheiding verraden. Vandaag, een beetje ouder geworden, slaan we met verbazing en verdriet gade, dat sommigen de lippen stijf op elkaar geperst houden als ze uitgenodigd worden, met de gemeente te zingen een bijna-letterlijke berijming van Openbaring 5 . . . De oude termen doen weer dienst: gezangen zijn hoeren-liederen. Niet de *inhoud* als zodanig wordt daarbij in acht genomen, of daarin God wordt verheerlijkt, of de mens geprezen, neen maar . . . het is een Gezang, en "dus" uit den boze. Zoals, volgens Van Velzen, de houding van De Cock velen afkerig gemaakt heeft van de Afscheiding, zo moet men nu vrezen dat dezelfde houding brokken maakt. We besluiten dit eerste artikeltje met deze woorden van ds Mul: "Maar uit alles blijkt dat in het algemeen er in de gereformeerde kerken nooit principiële bezwaren zijn

geweest tegen het zingen van gezangen. Er zijn geen kerkelijke uitspraken in deze richting."

Dat sluit niet uit een waarschuwend woord tegenover het andere uiterste alsof de Psalmen "arm" zijn. Ook daarover wat meer in een volgend stukje.

G. VANDOOREN

Hymn 5

Glory to God the Father, God the Son,
And unto God the Spirit, Three in One,
From age to age let saints his name adore,
His power and love proclaim from shore to shore,
And spread his fame, till time shall be no more.

PARAPHRASE.

To the only wise God be glory, Rom. 16:27; Gal. 1:5; to the Father, Phil 4:20; and to the Son, Heb. 13:21; and to the Holy Spirit, Who together with the Father and Son is the one true and eternal God, Rev. 1:4-7. Let the saints from age to age adore Him, Ps. 79:13; and proclaim His power, Ps. 21:13, and love, Tit. 3:4; 1 John 3:1; 4:16; throughout all the earth, Isa. 12:5; make known His name, Ps. 67:2; 105:1; until we need neither sun nor moon any longer, Rev. 22:5.

Improving the Quality of Christian Writing

Many advances have been made in the field of communications, and while God's people may be vocal about the evils of mass media, they may also feel a calling to reap some of the benefits. We have used and are using radio broadcasts to spread the gospel, and now some of our people are seriously considering using local cable T.V. networks to evangelize. No one will claim that we have reached a high level of sophistication in these areas. More work is required to develop talents in the use of radio and T.V. However, while we continue to apply ourselves to these contemporary forms of communication, we must not ignore the traditional forms.

Considerable energy has been vested in our various publications. Outsiders are impressed that with our small number we have been so prolific in extending the written word. We would be wise, though, to examine whether we are not missing out on *quality* and the ability to communicate effectively, not just to people outside our circle but, perhaps more important, to each other. An examination of our writing skills must include everything from our own magazine to the local Church bulletin and society Newsletter.

Why place so much emphasis on this area? The answer is clear: God has chosen to communicate through His Word in a most precise and complete way; we, His people, must follow His example by communicating clearly through our words.

Writing must not be viewed as an idle pastime or hobby, but a very serious activity in which the writer must place

himself at the service of the reader. Most of the great writers are known to make countless revisions of their work in order to convey the right meaning and elicit the desired response. This example is a good one to follow even though we may never want to lay claim to professional writing.

The amount of work involved in creating an article must show proper concern and respect for the reader. Too many writers poise their pen in order to impress the reader. Pretty words and flashy phrases may be an exciting exercise for the writer, but for the reader they are a diversion and diminish the impact of what the author is really trying to say. (It often happens that the writer has in fact nothing to say, and that he is simply using impressive language to hide his lack of thought.)

There is also a tendency to downgrade the reader's ability to think, by not allowing him to derive his own conclusions. It is pretentious to assume that everything has to be pre-digested and that the reader is at a lower level of intelligence. It is better, and probably also more realistic, that the writer extend himself as an equal partner to invite the reader to join him in his quest to examine the issues.

While some of our seasoned writers fall into the trap of either talking down to people or forcing them to dig trenches before they have a chance to grasp what the battle is all about, our junior writers seem to be making mistakes of a different kind. Young people's magazines and society Newsletters seem to reflect an air of unreality - as if someone had issued a decree against being yourself. Certain

young people always will be great role-players and will have difficulty breaking away from a desire to write things from an "as if" perspective. These people are motivated more by what they feel will please the older generation than by a desire to share and enrich the lives of other young people. There is often a great disparity between what young people say and what they commit to writing. This is not to suggest that they are two-faced, but that they have inhibited their youthful ideas and vigour in order to conform to something that might be marketable to the older generation.

One cannot entirely blame young people for cramping their style. It takes guts for them to say what they really want to say, because they know the venom of the critics who never cease to point to the irregular to support their belief that the younger generation is decadent and full of heresy.

Writing is a highly responsible activity. It is hoped that more of our people will feel the calling to use the power of the pen to communicate to others the beauties of life and the blessings of the Lord. This is no mean task and it requires mutual support from fellow Christians who want to be Christian writers in the true sense of the word. It would be worthwhile for these writers to meet together on a regular basis to evaluate and support each other in their work. Is there a better way to upgrade our written witness and to edify the people of God?

H. C. VANDOOREN



Br. Martin Onderwater and sr. Hennie Onderwater-Smits celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary on January 18, 1973. They are the parents of ten children, and have thirty-nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Mr. and Mrs. Onderwater came to Canada in May 1952 with their family, except for two married daughters, who both followed them the next year. After working in the "peat" for a short time, and at some odd jobs, such as driving a truck, deliveries, etc., Mr. Onderwater returned to his favourite job as a gardener. They were members of the Can. Ref. Church of New Westminster until Mr. Onderwater retired, and then made their residence in Abbotsford, at 1969 McKenzie Rd. Open House was held in the hall of the Can. Ref. Church of Abbotsford on January 19.

CONGREGATIONAL

NEWS MEDLEY

It appears that we still have to learn quite a few things, also in so far as the editing of a paper is concerned. In the first News Medley I mentioned various items which more or less infringed upon the rights of our contributor for school-matters. My apologies for this abuse of space and rights! I shall try in the future to abstain from everything which is not in my province.

Let us begin this time with mentioning a few items concerning ministers. Thus far we are very grateful for the answer to our prayers for the REV. STEL. He writes and works and even conducted some services again. REV. VANDOOREN was involved in an accident when returning from conducting a service in Toronto. Slowing down for an accident ahead, he hit a very icy spot on the Queen Elizabeth Way, with the predictable result. He did not have any personal injuries. And as for the fam. KNIGGE, Toronto's bulletin mentions that Mrs. Knigge will have to leave for the Netherlands towards the end of January to undergo ear surgery. Rev. Knigge intends to leave towards the end of June.

Starting this time in the West, we noted that the FRASER VALLEY Resthome Society does not appear to flourish. The opposite is the case. That is deplorable, since it is so necessary that there will be a home where we can take care of our elderly members. From every place where such a home is established, we hear enthusiastic reports. The elders and other office-bearers in the Fraser Valley

held an office-bearers conference, where no speaker occupied the floor for a lengthy time, but where a panel-discussion was held on Family Visiting. This topic appears time and again to have the interest of the elders and this is not so strange, because it forms the main part of their work.

CLOVERDALE also invited the NEW WESTMINSTER Consistory to discuss the possibility of organizing another Church inbetween those two.

As for family-events in the Valley: br. and sr. A. Kuipers, Sr. celebrated their fortieth, br. and sr. Martin Onderwater, Sr. their forty-fifth wedding anniversary. Since I know both couples, it will be forgiven when I extend our heartfelt congratulations on this occasion. When I look at the picture, taken when we arrived at the Port Coquitlam CPR station some twenty years ago, I see the tall figure of br. Onderwater supervising the whole affair. We are grateful with you all, your children, grand-children and great-grandchildren.

In CARMAN as well as in EDMONTON the members faithfully continue to support an orphanage in Korea, besides supporting the Mission Aid in Brazil. From the fam. J. Kuik in Recife word was received that they did get their clothing now and also some extra clothing, sent by the congregation in Carman. We shall report on the Mission and Mission Aid more extensively under a separate heading.

In NEERLANDIA the Congregation tried out some of the "unknown tunes" of our Book of Praise, as they did in Toronto and other places. Rev. Van Dam introduced a topic explaining how the Holy Scripture was given to God's people. And, as is being done in London, so in Neerlandia a birthday-fund is to provide necessary funds for a new organ.

EDMONTON saw new perspectives opened for radio-broadcasting. They were contacted by a radio station south of the city, which offered half an hour each week for a reasonable price. After discussion and after the Revs. Visscher and Van Dam had promised their co-operation, it was decided to enter into a contract for half a year. This will bring relief to the ministers in the Fraser Valley, since the tapes can be exchanged, or even a combined program can be set up. And it is still our wish that this work may grow out to become country-wide, as far as the Churches are found.

In BURLINGTON-EAST some interest is shown in the changes in liturgy which Edmonton introduced: Rev. VanDooren published those changes and commented on them in the bulletin.

BURLINGTON-WEST has become the proud owner of 9 1/2 acres of land close to Waterdown. Now plans are being made to build in the near future. WINNIPEG also has plans, and their building fund apparently received a good shot in the arm with pledges received from the Congregation. That we congratulate the Church at ABBOTSFORD with the dedication of their new Churchbuilding, goes without saying. Judging by the picture we saw, it is a building to be very happy with, one which does look a Churchbuilding, indeed.

We wish to thank all the Churches which so speedily and readily have complied with our request to send their Bulletins, etcetera. It promotes the interest in the affairs and experiences of one another. The brief reports of

various consistory meetings made favourable mention of the letter which we sent to that effect.

It is also a good thing that in several Churches special "Practice Hours" are held to study the tunes of our Book of Praise which are not known to the younger generation, since we were using only a limited number of them. Our Book of Praise received a very favourable review in *De Reformatie*, written by Prof. H. J. Schilder. This is the more valuable since Prof. Schilder has, for a long time already, paid special attention to music and songs, old and modern. When we read more reviews, we'll keep you informed.

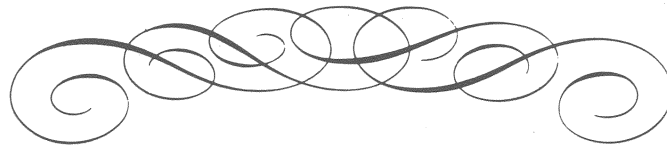
We also would like to know whether you appreciate a column like the present one. In some instances the "news" may come rather late. However, we all should bear in mind that the copy for our *Clarion* has to be sent in two weeks before the date of issue; further, that the bulletins sent to us reach us sometimes one or two weeks after they have been issued; and thirdly, that there is not always the opportunity to sit down right away to write a column informing our readers what is going on. We shall do our best; that's all we promise.

Till next time, the Lord willing.

vO



On December 22nd [1972] br. and sr. A. Kuipers [address: 12292 - 112A Ave., Surrey, B.C.] celebrated their 40th Wedding Anniversary. Br. Kuipers was born at Grootegast, sr. Kuipers, nee Jansma, at Hoogkerk. Their nine children were all born in Oldehove. They have 31 grandchildren. In 1952 the family came to Canada, settled in the Coaldale area for 4 years, then moved on to British Columbia. Br. and sr. Kuipers enjoy a good health. The congregation of New Westminster surprised them with some nice presents on the day of the celebration. May the Lord bless them for years to come.



Minister's Conference

On Jan. 2, 1973, after the 'tiena-dagse veldtocht', most of the ministers in Ontario plus four students aspiring to the ministry gathered together for a day of study, discussion and fellowship.

In the morning Prof. H. M. Ohmann introduced a topic on how to preach from the Mosaic laws. Owing to the time-limitation, he confined himself to the 'ceremonial' laws. Firstly, he dealt with the tabernacle, which occupied the central place (geographically and spiritually) in the life of Israel. Secondly, he explained the office of the priests. Next in order were the sacrifices (the burnt-offerings, peace-offerings, sin-offerings and trespass-offerings). Lastly, the main feast-days (Passover, Feast of Weeks, Feast of Booths, Feast of Atonement and the Sabbatical Year) were explained. Prof. Ohmann delved into the significance of these four main parts of the 'ceremonial' laws (the holy places, holy persons, holy actions and holy days). He provided much valuable information. During the discussion the question of redemptive-historical preaching versus exemplary preaching arose. Put simply, the question was how does one preach on these OT passages from a

NT viewpoint? In coming to an answer the following were noted: a thorough exegesis of the text, careful attention for the historical nature of the text, an avoidance of shallow parallelisms with the NT, the idea of fulfillment of the OT shadows, and the pre-eminence of Christ (Hebrews).

After lunch Rev. M. C. Werkman offered a sermon outline on 1 Kings 13:31, 32, which was analyzed and, as you may guess, criticized in a constructive manner. The matter of texts received our attention first. Then the theme and points along with the exegesis were studied. We tried to come to an explanation of these difficult verses. The specific historical background was noted. Also, the fulfilment of this prophecy in 2 Kings 23:15-20 was kept in mind. Then the Christocentric message was discussed. In all, we again saw the necessity, as difficult as it may be, of the redemptive-historical interpretation of the Scriptures.

Arrangements for another conference were made. It will be held in the beginning of June. Prof. Ohmann was willing to continue his study concerning preaching from the Mosaic laws. Prof.

Faber would be willing sometime to introduce a topic on the creeds from the early centuries A.D. It was agreed to have one of the staff of our Theological College introduce a subject in the morning, while one of the other ministers would introduce a subject in the afternoon. Our convener, Rev. G. VanDooren, would look after the particulars. Needless to say, everyone enjoyed the fellowship during the workshop sessions as well as during the breaks. Certainly the churches will benefit from such workshops.

On behalf of the conferences,
W. Huizinga

Hymn 6

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

PARAPHRASE.

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow, Deut. 28:2; 1 Kings 18:37, 39; Eph. 1:3; praise Him, all creatures on the earth, Ps. 103:22, as well as in heaven, Ps. 103:20, 21. Praise the triune God!

Letter-to-the-Editor

Dear editor:

Why is it that those writing in our Magazine never mention smoking? Is it because the smell of smoke is on their breath also? . . .

The American Cancer Society reports 125,000 deaths each year from heart disease, emphysema, and other conditions. 75,000 lung cancer deaths annually add to this 12,000,000 additional chronic conditions among smokers. For Canada with a population of approximately 10% of the U.S.A., it's safe to say we will have to accept 10% of these figures. It also reports: that lung cancer deaths occurred *almost exclusively* in smokers.

Oh yes, we have heard a lot about this filthy habit and many times we could in papers and periodicals read about the danger to our health. One could easily write a book about the dangers in smoking and its *relations* to many things, namely: lung cancer, emphysema, heart disease, cancer of the larynx, mouth, stomach ulcers, and miscarriages. It also affects the learning ability of the children when parents smoke. I could go on and on. Is it that we skip these things? An ostrich supposedly hides his head in the sand when he sees danger! Of course we are not dumb animals.

As someone said to me, "I don't believe a word about it," but when medical science develops a medicine for a certain ailment, they most gladly take it to get relief.

COST FACTOR

Yes, let's not forget this either. The one pack a day smoker will at age 60 have let 10,000 dollars go up in smoke. Quite an amount when you consider that some of our people cannot afford to pay voluntary contributions to the church, or cannot afford to pay for Reformed education of our children. There are so many things that need our financial support. Many of our people smoke \$200 - \$300 annually, and perhaps when both parents smoke plus some of the children, \$600 a year or more would not be an unrealistic figure.

FREEDOM? IN WHAT?

When questioning a brother about his smoking habit he carefully reminded me, "Christ has made us free." Yes indeed, Christ has made us free, but to smoke? Read what Paul writes in Romans 5 and 6. Christ made us free from sin, that we as his people may dedicate our lives to Him, totally commit ourselves to His Service. Then we ask where do we find this freedom? In harming our lungs and those of our Brothers and Sisters? Where do we find the freedom to pollute the precious air we breathe into something that makes

you sick (especially the non-smokers), and I am thankful that they are the majority now. Where do we find the freedom to make the air unfit to breathe in our Church Social Meetings, societies, board meetings, consistory, classis, and so on? Where do we find freedom to pollute the air in our homes, other peoples' homes or cars? A young man said to me when I asked why he did not smoke, "My sister and I were almost smoked to death by our parents. We were always fighting with them over clean air, to just have a window open a bit when riding in the car. I made up my mind *NEVER* to do anything like that to other people."

And so it is with me. I like to breathe the air as it is, unpolluted as much as possible. Just as God has *INTENDED* it to be. (I assume I speak for all non-smokers). And I also like to attend meetings without running the RISK of catching a cold, because the windows have to be open to keep from suffocating or when the SMOKE is so thick you can cut it with a knife.

And when we visit each other it should not be necessary after they leave, that the windows and doors have to be opened to clean the air or that you have to hang out the clothes you wear to a meeting, outside to air because of the smell of the smoke.

In Lord's Day 1 we confess "that we belong to our faithful Saviour with body and soul", so what we do with our body is also the Lord's concern! What example we give our children in this? Much better it would be that we as parents, teach our children to contribute to the church, school, mission, etc., instead of tobacco.

There is also an awakening among

our people in regard to "home mission", and rightly so! But don't expect to win others for Christ with a cigarette in your mouth; in that regard we could learn from some of the SECTS, where conduct of life also plays an important role. It certainly looks funny to me that some of our people have to stand in front of the church and smoke while others go in and take their seat, or as soon as they leave the church, sometimes before they are out of the door, have to satisfy the nicotine habit. Did you ever ask yourselves the question, "Is this the way it should be?"

Hymn 34:6 says it better than I could:

Faith clings to Jesus' work alone
And rests in Him unceasing;
And by its fruits true faith is known,
With love and hope increasing.
Yet faith alone doth justify,
Works serve thy neighbour and supply
The proof that faith is living.

The name and address of the writer are known to us, but anonymous publication was especially requested. Our postscript to another recent letter of this nature is applicable here too: We are convinced that the matter of smoking and its influence upon the health of a person should have the attention of Church members. While rejecting a basically pharisaistic attitude which was revived by anabaptism and its spiritual offspring, we should not close our eyes for the medical evidence which in other cases we so eagerly accept.

-Ed.

Official Church - News

Not only do we try to make the transition as smooth as possible, we also endeavour to bring the news to our readers as fast as possible.

However, for this - as for all the other activities - we need everyone's co-operation.

We therefore request Consistories or others who have any official information concerning the calling of ministers to send it directly to Premier Printing Ltd., our new publisher.

For example: when we heard that Rev. Mulder was called by the Grand Rapids Church, the "news" was already two weeks old. By the time we hear his decision, it may well be one or two weeks after it has been made. If it then takes two more weeks before our readers see it in our paper, we may as well forget about it altogether. However, if either the Consistory involved or the minister whom it concerns, or the local correspondent who has received it, sends the official information right away to Premier Printing Ltd., then we can be of real service to our people.

We therefore request the prompt co-operation of everyone who is able to make a contribution in this regard.

-Ed.

Country Walks

The Brantgoose

Only in recent years has the American Brant, the eastern species of the brantgeese, become a more or less regular visitor along the shores of the lower Great Lakes during its migration journey to and from Canada's far north and the Atlantic shores between New Jersey and Louisiana.

That they weren't reported before that, could have something to do with the fact that they're only as big as a good-sized mallard duck and that their flight also is duck-like, wavering, in formless flocks, in no way resembling the so popular formation of the Canada geese. Add to this that they also forage like ducks, that is, by tipping up in order to get at the weeds in shallow water, and it's easy to presume that many of them could have been mistaken for ducks all along.

Breeding in the rocky tundras and islands of Canada and Eurasia, they are primarily saltwater birds, however, and appear by the thousands along both sides of the Atlantic during migration, when countless ones are shot as they are the favourite target of many a hunter.

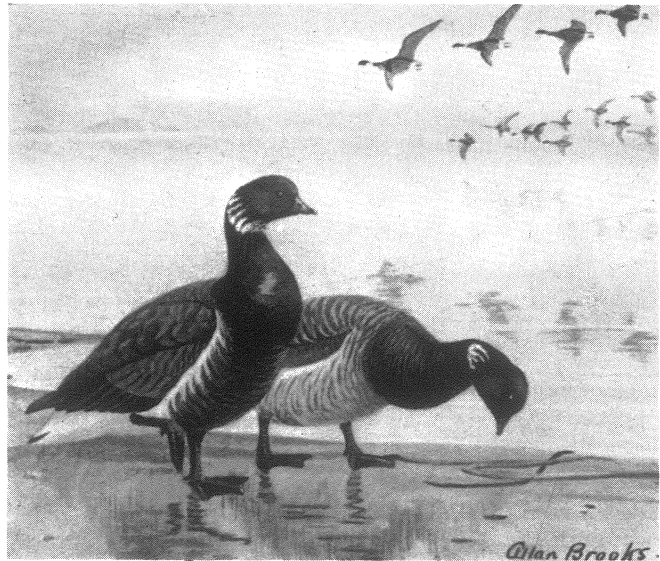
When a few years ago the eelgrass, the most important staple food of these geese, was almost wiped out by a disease, the brantgeese, too, decreased drastically in number, almost to the point of no return, but with the gradual recovery of this eelgrass the geese also returned so that at present their number is on the increase.

As the eelgrass on the west coast of Canada was not affected by this disease, the number of the Black Brant, the Western Canada species of the brantgeese remained constant.

Living too far from either coast, I must admit that, although I have read much about them, I've never been able to spot a Canadian brantgoose as yet. I became interested when a few years ago, while visiting Holland, I saw a few dozen brantgeese in the company of a few hundred barnacle geese in the Lauwers Sea. This big bay in the northern Netherlands - well-known, no doubt, to many readers - was for centuries one of the major wintering grounds of the barnacle geese in western Europe, with an average of 20,000 spending the winter there annually.

The plight of these geese was really appalling. A long-dormant plan of the Dutch government has become reality and this bay would soon be a polder, separated from the North Sea by a nine-mile dike. This shallow bay, a perfect feeding area for geese with its profusion of eelgrass and other kinds of waterweeds, would soon become farmland, with only about a third part allotted for recreation (which also includes boating, fishing and camping). At the time the geese were just recovering after the eelgrass period by changing over to grazing the neighbouring rye and wheat fields of the local farmers. The farmers at first were willing to look the other way as long as only a few geese were involved, but raised the roof when a few thousand geese at a time managed to shear the nice stands of fall grain in only a few hours. Although the following harvest didn't suffer any ill affects from such an onslaught, the geese couldn't expect any assistance from the farmers in preserving the Lauwers Sea.

Hope is expressed that the Lauwers Sea, just like the original Zuiderzee, will become a natural habitat for all different species of waterfowl. This, of course, would require cooperation, also from farmers.



In addition to the just mentioned perils wild geese have to cope with, there is still one I haven't mentioned. The brant and barnacle geese breed in and near the Arctic, where the weather during spring and early summer is not such as to write home about. This has a marked influence on the number of geese making the return trip south at the end of the season. Whole colonies of nestlings are ruined some years by floods or extremes of cold weather, with the result that only adult geese are seen by birdwatchers during the next migration. If we consider the hazards these birds have to face time and time again, it is a wonder that they are still with us.

COR TENHAGE

EDITOR'S NOTE

In Art. 2 of the Belgic Confession we declare that we know our God "First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many characters leading us to 'see clearly the invisible things of God', even 'his everlasting power and divinity.'" It is therefore fitting the CLARION should begin to pay some attention to the "book" of nature; we are happy that brother Tenhage has been found willing to teach us some of its "characters" or "letters" and so to open our eyes for the message which it should contain for us. During the last six years Mr. Tenhage has written a more or less regular nature column for the Brampton, Ont., daily newspaper. It is our intention to publish his "Country Walks" in approximately every other issue.

TEACHER WANTED

The Canadian Reformed School Society of Carman Inc. is planning to start a regular day school as of September 1973. Grades 1 to 6. We hereby invite applications for a teacher for the lower grades.

If you want to work in a Canadian Reformed School please send your applications and qualifications to the undersigned:

Fred De Wit
Box 27, Carman, Manitoba, R0G 0J0

mission news

Under this heading we intend to keep our readers informed with regard to developments in the mission work of our Churches. Reports from Brazil and from Irian Barat will be published regularly, for the efforts of our missionaries and mission-aid workers deserve the interest of Church members in all parts of Canada.

What follows here is Rev. Van Spronsen's report for last October. It was written on October 31 and published in New Westminster's Mission News of December 1972. -Ed.

NEWS FROM BRAZIL

Reformation-Day is an appropriate date to again report to you on the progress of the continued work of reformation by the Canadian Reformed Churches here in Sao Jose, an area dominated by Roman Catholicism for ages. I can even understand better yet why a Luther spent so much time giving a plain translation of the Scriptures in the people's language, why a Heidelberg Catechism was written, and why a Calvin wrote his Institutes of the Christian Religion. Being confronted with a dormant Roman Catholicism day-in-day-out one feels that those reformers knew what they were doing: not merely emotional revival meetings, but systematic and sound instruction in the Scriptures. Yet the mentality of the subjects they dealt with, Western-Europeans, must have been more favorable than that of the Brazilians. They must have been more inquisitive, more committed and responsible, or is it that we do not hear much about the large, disinterested masses who blindly continued in their old ways?

At times such and similar reflections come to our mind: are there similarities between the setting here and that of the reformers of the 16th century? Is the situation here much different than the one Paul encountered in Asia Minor, for example? These reflections are not only the result of curiosity but also an outgrowth of our concern to seek the most appropriate ways and means to approach the people here. How much can we learn and apply from our fellow labourers who have gone before us?

Sunday Services: Every Sunday services have been held again this past month. Attendance has slackened a bit,

and is now from 40 to 60 persons (including all except ourselves). A "regular core" is beginning to form of approximately 12 adults and perhaps 20 children. Some weeks attention is very good, other weeks it is poor, hindered by the noise of some of the children. Let me this time describe you in more detail who are the more regular attenders.

Maria Isabel, a young mother of 3 children, comes very faithfully to the services as well as to Sunday School. She is a nominal catholic but has little or no knowledge of the Scriptures, which she cannot read because she is illiterate. Her children are also excellent students at the Sunday School. Her husband, to whom she is not legally married, is in his sixties and an old man in many ways. Lately he accompanies her to church.

Maria dos Prazeres, with one small girl, does not fail at the services either. No church-affiliation, although she has been to the Seventh Day Adventists at times in another city. She has some education and appears to be very interested in studying the Bible. Unfortunately she will probably move away in the near future because of unemployment of her husband.

Jose Francisco (in his sixties) is a retired sea-captain, and belonged to a pentecostal church in the past. Attends very faithfully and has some basic knowledge. A man with some education, but lately his eyesight is beginning to fail hindering further study of the Bible. Lately his wife accompanies him (was also pentecostal). She appreciates systematic study of the Scriptures, which she feels as a great lack in her past.

Lucinete: a middle-aged woman, wife of the town bookkeeper, educated. She is a nominal catholic who came out of curiosity the first time, but has been very faithful ever since, and is very attentive. She is discontent with the R. C. Church, has tried various others which she did not like but said that she enjoyed our services very much.

Maria Vieira (in sixties): church-wise a similar description as the previous lady. Comes regularly and also sends some grandchildren to the Sunday School. Does not express herself, except that she enjoys the services and does not want to miss them.

Maria Jose, another Maria Jose, Cicera and another Cicera: four young neighbouring ladies, partly related, who

have been coming regular. In this group we have been giving assistance with medicine, etc. They give the impression of coming out of gratitude to us and consider it an obligation to attend in order to do something in return. Yet, they appear to enjoy it at the same time. Sometimes the husband of the one Maria Jose comes as well, but remains standing in the back. And of course, all are always accompanied by some children, their own, or grandchildren or whatever relation there may be.

These are more or less the regular attenders. Besides them there are a number who come irregularly or come for part of the service, or who remain outside by the doors.

Sunday-School: Attendance has dropped slightly but most are quite regular. A difficulty is to start on time, since many come late, even half-way to the end. They are getting accustomed to our manner of doing things and are really learning already: the Bible-stories, the songs and we also dealt with the Lord's Prayer and have started with the Apostle's Creed. There are some excellent students among them.

Bible-Course: This month we started our additional instruction for those adults who were interested to learn more. Record of attendance will give you an idea how things went: the first time there were 5, the second week 8, the third week none, and the last week 2. As you can see: not too encouraging, although several were unable to attend because of illness, as we learned later. Although we will continue even if there are only 2 really interested, we fear that they maybe are not ripe for this commitment. We will continue to urge them to come and to point out the necessity of further instruction (Hosea 4:6a) I am afraid that we are here also hitting upon a very common Brazilian weakness: avoidance of anything that requires a little extra effort.

We are dealing with a summary of the Heidelberg Catechism and general knowledge of the Scriptures. Those who were there paid good attention and also took part in the discussion.

Other Assistance: We are still helping some with medicine and food. We would like to mention especially the baby we spoke about in our previous report, the daughter of Maria Jose. She is much better, but has a long way to go yet. She celebrated her first birthday, weighing only 11 lbs.! Maria Jose is very thankful and even jokingly calls me the foster-daddy of her daughter.

Maria Isabel we have been helping to get a new hut built. She has to leave her home because sons of her husband's

previous wife want to live in the present hut. She has to support her family by doing the wash for some families, earning perhaps \$10.00 a month at the most. Her husband is a fisherman, but handicapped by poor eyesight and therefore brings very little home as well. Her oldest boy, about 11, makes a few pennies selling sweet-bread along the street. Yet she manages to take care of her children so that they appear to be healthy and always neatly dressed. She is very attached to us and we all like her very much as well: very kind, and thankful for anything at all. The necessary lumber for the hut was donated to her by a landowner; another one gave her permission to build on his land, and still another will give her the necessary clay to plaster the walls, while she will also receive palmleaves to make the roof. This leaves construction of the hut, doors, shutters, etc. and in this we will help her financially. A number of other citizens of town have also given a donation, as well as the town-council.

I am describing this in more detail to give you an impression of the general life of many here: the problems they encounter but also how solutions are found and to what extent we are involved in these matters. She has chosen me more or less as her counsellor and keeps me completely informed on all the developments. In many things it seems best not to step in too hastily but let them solve their own problems in their ways, while giving them the certainty and confidence that you are there to help them after they do what they can.

New House: The house is nearly finished and we expect to move next week, only ten days over the deadline, which is a great accomplishment especially in Brazil! The constructor himself is very proud of it as well as of the house. We are still pleased with the work, although we do notice that the finishing is a little rough in places. Their strength does not lie in woodwork and whatever they can make of brick, concrete, tile or ceramic, they will. As of November 1st the house we now live in is sold, if the transaction has been finalized. Normally this would mean that the house would no longer be available, but seeing that the new owner cannot make use of it this year yet, he is willing to continue to rent it out. This may be a most fortunate, temporary solution for the family Kuik.

Around Town: With the arrival of summer the weekends draw many guests to the beaches, mostly coming by car from the city, which gives an unusual activity to the town. Moldy summer-homes open up, the "heavy" traffic makes deep tracks in the sandy streets, and colourful umbrellas and bikinis blend

with the jangadas and fishermen. The rest of the town-life seems to remain untouched by this influx.

Work has been started on the town water-system and pipes are being laid through the streets. Since they do not have to dig deep in the sand and all material is of plastic, the work advances rapidly and is expected to be completed in 3 to 4 months.

The coming month elections for the town-council will be held. So far the

campaign is very peaceful and hardly noticeable, but in some of the more interior towns it still is accompanied by fights and even a murder here and there. Usually old family-quarrels: often it is not so much a campaign between the parties as between families and clans.

Receive the kindest regards and best wishes from the four of us and may the Lord be with you all.

Yours in His service,
C. VanSpronsen.



Synodical Churches

GENERAL SYNOD OF THE SYNODICAL "GEREFORMEERDE KERKEN" IN THE NETHERLANDS

Synod decided to establish a major moderamen beside the regular moderamen, consisting of seven ministers and seven elders elected by Synod. This moderamen will deal with the reports submitted by deputies for various matters, make recommendations to Synod with respect to the appointment of deputies, study the trimonthly report of the regular moderamen and make recommendations to it. The purpose of the institution is to relieve Synod of part of its work, but the fear which was expressed that the major moderamen will become a mini-synod in synod is certainly a valid one.

Synod did better when it accepted new directives for discipline over members by baptism. As to the younger members by baptism, the admonishing task of the parents is strongly emphasized. The grown-ups are distinguished into two groups: the *negligent*, who should continually be instructed and admonished to remain in the covenant, and the *averse*, who should be excommunicated if they continue in their stubbornness, but only after the advice of the Classis has been asked. A member by baptism who is excommunicated, can only be readmitted to the church by profession of faith.

In connection with the trend to change the glad tidings of salvation into a social gospel, Synod had a discussion via deputies with the theological faculty of the Free University. Agreement was found with respect to the consummation of the history of salvation as lying beyond our earthly existence and taking place in the day of Christ. The church, it was agreed, is commissioned to call all to faith and repentance with the gospel of grace in Christ, entrusted to her. A request was made to the professors of theology to be considerate towards the churches in their presentation of the results of their study. So considerateness is now the word; in

former times it was faithfulness to the Scriptures and to the Creeds based on them.

Synod discussed for a whole day the report on the continued discussion with Prof. H. M. Kuitert, but got nowhere. There was a majority and minority report both of deputies and of the advising committee. The point around which the discussions mainly centered was the historicity of the fall. Although this historicity is denied by Dr. Kuitert, the majority was of the opinion that he did not come in conflict with the confession since he accepts that mankind was alienated from God since the beginning of history.

The minority did not see how Kuitert's view could be reconciled with the contents of the Creeds. Synod should declare, according to Rev. Van Til, that the historicity of the fall is of such importance that it cannot be denied without doing injustice to the work of grace in Christ Jesus. Many members however considered such a decision unacceptable. Dr. F. L. Bos even spoke of a fighting against windmills, and an elder considered the whole discussion ridiculous. The chair ruled that new proposal should be presented that was acceptable to all. The desired agreement was found in that Synod concluded that continued discussion with Dr. Kuitert on the contents of Genesis 2 and 3 had shown that he repudiated the view that sin was a necessary stage in the development of man; that he accepted the reality of the alienation of man from God and thus of the responsibility of man for his sin; that in his view the wilfulness of man's sin cannot be given up, although the pinning down of the fall in time is not a matter of confession but a theological conception.

Synod decided to terminate the discussions with Dr. Kuitert on these grounds and to maintain the decisions of Amsterdam '67-'68 and of Sneek '69-'70 concerning Genesis 3.

Synod testified that as Church of Christ, listening with reverence to what

Continued on Page 15

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

Dear Busy Beavers,

A little while ago I had a letter from one of you that said:

“Dear Aunt Betty,

. . . I like to read very much. Do you? I can read one fat book in one day.”

Now let me tell you that I really enjoy reading too! But read one fat book in one day? No, I guess I just don't read fast enough.

I'm sure that many of you Busy Beavers enjoy reading too, about all sorts of things like adventure, mystery, science, animals, hobbies . . . Oh, the list is endless!

And I'm sure too, that you have favourite books that you wish others could enjoy too. So I was thinking, let's use Our Little Magazine to tell the other Busy Beavers about the books we've enjoyed so much.

Let's do it this way. If you know a book you really like, write a BOOK LOOK for our BOOK NOOK! Write the *title* and the *author* of the book you are telling about, and then tell us what the book is all about. You could tell, too, why you like the book.

This way we can help each other to find good books about the subjects we like. And to say “Thank you” to everyone who writes in to our BOOK NOOK I will send a book mark to put in the book you are reading. I hope we'll get so many BOOK LOOKS that all the bookmarks will soon be gone! So let's hear about the good books you've read!

Now I want to tell you about a good story I have read. It's called *Sail the Squirrel*, and it was written by Willy Ferguson, who also wrote “Reuben the Wanderer” and some of the other stories that were printed along with Our Little Magazine.

Sail is a cheerful, mischievous little creature of the woods. He is also clever and hard-working. In this little book you can read how Sail lives from day to day through fall, winter, and spring. This story tells you such interesting things as the reasons why the squirrel's tail is so important, and why the squirrel licks nuts before he buries them, and how a squirrel cures his stomach ache! Although the booklet is called *Sail the Squirrel* it is also the story of the sick boy, Tom, who befriends and feeds Sail.

Do you know why I enjoyed this story so much too? Because in it the author shows how Sail, and his neighbours, and the woods they live in, are part of the fascinating world that the Lord created and still looks after in mysterious, wonderful ways.

I think you will enjoy this story. It is available from: W. H. DeVries, 250 John St., Fergus, Ont. The cost is 75 cents a copy.

Congratulations and best wishes to the following Busy Beavers who are celebrating their birthday next month. We hope it will be your happiest birthday yet!

Cecile Van Woudenberg	February 2
Tina Bos	February 6
Greta Paize	February 6
Jeannette Bouwman	February 10
Cathy Post	February 10
Marian Onderwater	February 12
Clara Barendregt	February 18
Matthew Aikema	February 20
Jackie Vanderwoerd	February 25
Monica De Vries	February 28
Shirley Veenema	February 28

While we're talking about birthdays, I want to ask some of you to write and tell me what yours is. *Henry Nieuwenhuis*, *Peter* and *Jerold Van Assen*, and *Chris Sikkema*, you didn't tell me when you became members, and now we can't include you in the birthday wishes!

And now something else. Once you've had your 15th birthday (or perhaps before then), and you're more interested in other things than in Our Little Magazine, be sure to write and tell us, so that we won't be wishing you a happy birthday while you don't even read Our Little Magazine any longer!



From The Mailbox

First of all: welcome to the Club, *John Hofsink*! You and your brother did very well on the quiz, and the riddle, John, so here's hoping you'll be a very active Busy Beaver! Did you shovel much snow during your holidays?

Next: a very special thank you for your thoughtfulness, *Cathy Wendt*! What lovely mail I received from you!

Now I want to thank all the people who sent me such beautiful Christmas cards and good wishes. Thank you, *Mary* and *Irene Vande Burgt*, *John* and *Jane Kobes*, *Eileen Bartels*, *George* and *John Hofsink*, *Cathy Wendt*, *Greta* and *Carolyn Paize*.

Hello, *Betty Ann Vander Meulen*. I'm glad to hear you're better after your operation. Did you get to see Governor - General Michener? I will tell you about Bangladesh and Botswana. They are both new countries: the first one in Asia, the second in Africa. You may give any amount you like, Betty Ann, for the Birthday Fund. The money will be presented to our Theological College in the fall. Bye for now.

Too bad, *Mary Vande Burgt*, that not everyone could come to the dinner you clever students had prepared! How I would like to see your new church! It sounds just beautiful.

Nice to hear from you again, *Jane Kobes*. How did you like your new book? Will you write a BOOK LOOK for our BOOK NOOK?

Glad to hear, *Carolyn Paize*, that you did well at school and enjoyed your holidays and your Christmas party. Did your father catch any fish at Chapman Lake that time?

Congratulations, *Monica De Vries*, for doing so well on those difficult quizzes! Out of 33 answers you had only 2 mistakes. Keep up the good work and let's hear from you again!

Before we stop, Busy Beavers, here is a puzzle I thought you would like to do.

The names of fifteen Bible Characters are hidden in the puzzle wheel shown. Can you find them?

So long for this time.
Yours, Aunt Betty



SYNOCDICAL CHURCHES Continued from Page 13

Holy Scripture reveals in the first chapters of Genesis, we declare: that God created the world good;

that man who also was created good, in wilful disobedience, turned away from God;

that this fall and disobedience of our forebearers, revealed as an 'event' (een gebeuren) in Genesis, has a fundamental place in Scripture and Confession and is of essential interest for the proclamation of the gospel;

that man only is freed from this guilt by the redemptive saving action of our God in the second Adam, His Son and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dr. Kuitert declared later on in an interview that the word 'een gebeuren', for which I could not find a better word than an 'event', was chosen to create room for his denial of the fall as a historical fact. In this interview he also declared that Adam and Eve never existed as historical persons. Dr. Kuitert is nonetheless maintained as a church-appointed teacher of the students for the ministry and no necessity is seen anymore to continue the discussion with him. Synod in the meantime acquiesces in it that the historicity of the creation of Adam and Eve, of the state of innocence in which they initially lived, and of the fall is denied. Rev. Van Til was right when he said that you cannot do that without doing injustice to the work of grace in Jesus Christ. The new gospel of co-humanity instead of the salvation from sin is closely related to the tampering with the revelation given in the first chapters of

Genesis. The power of delusion which God will send, according to 2 Thessalonians, can only blind the eyes for it.

A report concerning the continued discussion with Dr. H. Wiersinga about an alternative doctrine of atonement stated that more clarity was obtained but that the talks were not finished yet. New deputies were appointed.

So were deputies for ecumenical consultation and cooperation, but the true ecumenical path is not seen anymore. L. S.

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