

# Clarion

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# Inflation: Wage and Price Controls\*

Statistics Canada's March release of the Canadian Consumer Price Index indicated that this index has increased to 160.8 or 10.4% above that of a year ago. With a rate of 10.4% we have reached "double-digit" inflation - a situation which many people have suggested would create run-away inflation which cannot be halted (short of complete economic collapse). Since the usually suggested remedies have obviously been ineffective, voices are continually being heard that Canada should follow in the footsteps of other countries by introducing wage and price controls. Any discussion of wage and price controls apparently faces us with a choice between capitalism and socialism.

On the one hand, wage and price controls appear to be socialistic. In fact, it has recently been argued that controls would not work unless "we placed rigid permanent controls over all aspects of our economic and social life - that is, only if we adopt socialist totalitarianism."(1). On the other hand, the alternative, free competitive conditions, capitalism - even in its already restricted present form - has not solved the problem. Capitalism in its pure form with unrestricted markets would solve inflation automatically. As inflation caused wage rates to rise, business would become less profitable, production would be cut, employees would be laid off and wage rates, and subsequently other prices, would fall as employees bid for scarce jobs. This cycle would cause severe hardships to many individuals and through government and union intervention, these fluctuations and consequent painful effects have been reduced. In fact, it might be argued that through government intervention by means of financial policies, intended to affect the interest rates - i.e. "tight money" (monetary policies) and tax and budget (fiscal) policies - we are already on the path of socialism.

It is my contention, however, that in discussing wage and price controls, as with other practical problems at hand, we should not categorize alternative solutions as either "capitalistic" or "socialistic" and reject or accept them on that basis. Rather we must decide what the real problem is, search for the best alternative in the light of the principles taught us in God's Word, and seek to implement this alternative whether or not it may have "capitalistic" or "socialistic" overtones. Or, as Jack de Jong pointed out in the previous paper, "Our starting point is not a series of fixed, abstract propositions about the nature of the laws of thought or reality, but constitutes the *whole* gospel of Christ, operative in the entire history of salvation . . ." (March 23rd issue, p. 13)

If we then discuss wage and price controls from this viewpoint, we must first return to the reason for such controls i.e. inflation; we must decide whether or not it is the duty of the government to take action concerning inflation and then, if this action would include the institution of wage and price controls.

## THE EFFECTS OF INFLATION

When we seek to determine whether governments should take action, we must touch briefly upon the major effects of inflation upon both society and government itself.

*The Dollar As a Store of Value* - A first item that we should then discuss is the use of the dollar bill and its larger

relatives. This paper is used as a medium of exchange, i.e. instead of bartering our labour for food, we receive dollar bills which someone else will again exchange for what he needs. If you receive dollars and do not immediately wish to spend them, the dollar represents a store of value. Basically you will hold the dollar (either physically or in a bank) only if you think you can, at anytime you wish, purchase goods of the same value that you gave up when you obtained the dollars. Under inflation, however, this hope is in vain. If you sold 100 items, say for example pounds of butter, in March of 1973 for \$100, you would in March 1974 be able to buy back only 90.6 pounds since in the meantime prices in general have gone up 10.4%. At extreme rates of inflation people will immediately rush to the stores with suitcases full of money to spend immediately any dollars they receive - if there is anything to buy. In such case the economy of the country collapses as happened in Germany after World War I.

But even in less extreme situations such as we have today, the usefulness of the dollar as a store of value is deteriorating. People tend to consume rather than save since the value of the dollar declines. The government, through the Bank of Canada, is in essence stealing from the citizens of this country. The public, other than banks, holds about \$5 billion in currency for which at some time the government has received services. Each year this hoard of currency loses value in real terms. When these dollars are redeemed, less service will be provided than was originally given. Whether or not in practice the whole amount would ever be redeemed is immaterial.

*Debtor-Creditor Relationship* - This currency "theft" is typical of the more usual debtor-creditor relationship. Those who owe money, gain from inflation since they can repay their debts with dollars that are worth less. Those to whom it is owing are the losers as they receive less "real" value than was originally lent. The government itself, at the end of October owed, besides currency, another \$16 billion worth of bonds and treasury bills on which it stands to gain in this fashion. Theoretically the interest paid is supposed to offset inflationary loss but the interest is fixed in advance in terms of expected levels of inflation. Who could, however, have forecasted 10 years ago what today's level of inflation would be?

*Fixed Incomes* - The government not only profits from inflation itself, but also by not taking action, permits others to be affected unjustly. People who have retired on fixed pensions based on incomes of earlier periods are finding these incomes inadequate with today's prices and have seen the value of their savings fade away. While those people presently employed get regular increases which substantially offset the effects of inflation, pensioners do not, except in so far as government pensions are occasionally raised. Rather than treating pensioners as political footballs, governments ought to tackle inflation at its roots. Without inflation many of these people would have been able to live decently on the funds they had provided for themselves.

*Inflationary Expectations* - The direct effects of inflation are bad enough; indirect effects caused by our present inflationary psychology are even worse. The expectation that

prices will continue to go up is weakening the moral fibre of our nation. The knowledge that our incomes will tend to go up in the future tends to encourage us to live beyond our present means. If prices are expected to go up continually, we spend now before prices go up again. We are then all tempted to act the part of the foolish man of Prov. 21:20 - "Precious treasure remains in a wise man's dwelling but a foolish man devours it."

However, the destruction of savings as far as they are invested in non-inflation-proof forms also reduces the incentive to save and thus our willingness to provide for ourselves in future. Rather, we slide this responsibility off to the government and encourage an "eat, drink and be merry" attitude.

Furthermore, these inflationary expectations are probably one of the main causes of inflation, since the drive to keep abreast with inflation causes employees, especially the powerful unions, to press for higher wages and thus push up the employer's costs. Since employers, in particular the large companies, know that people have come to expect regular price increases, they can pass these costs on in higher prices. They therefore do not resist excessive demands as much as they should. Prices are raised and the circle begins again.

*Economy-Stimulating Effects* - Inflation does have a favourable effect which makes it very appealing to governments. As prices rise, there appears to be a stimulating effect and companies expand; jobs are created, unemployment is reduced, and the economy grows. Even in "real" terms - i.e. as adjusted for price increases - the gross national product increases. Particularly less developed countries appear to accept a "reasonable" level of inflation in order to foster such growth. Since the bad effects of inflation are of a more creeping kind it is politically more feasible to allow some inflation in order to reduce employment.

#### ACTION?

It therefore becomes evident that governments themselves stand to gain from inflation but that such gains are ill-gotten gains. Moreover, inflation encourages greed and causes unequal hardship to the people. For this reason, it is clear that the government, which is called to maintain justice and order, is called to take action against inflation and ameliorate its effects.

When we contemplate possible actions, several points can be made. First, economists and politicians have not agreed on the causes of our present inflation. Certainly a major cause at the moment is an international shortage of food and raw materials. Secondly, traditional monetary and fiscal policy has either been unable to solve the problem. In fact, most economists see no immediate solution. It, therefore, seems reasonable that along with any other measures to be taken we at least discuss the implementation of wage and price controls.

#### WAGE AND PRICE CONTROLS

What can we then say about such controls? Apparently they have not been a resounding success in those cases where they have been implemented. In particular when controls are removed, a bulge in prices appears to follow. But no one can estimate to what heights prices would have risen apart from controls. For instance, the British paper *The Economist*, in discussing the British experience with controls, stated on Feb. 16th: "Without stages one and two, inflation today would be beyond the point of no return. In the year up to the introduction of stage one, the basic hourly wage rate index was rising by over 15%; on its

eve, the increases were nearly 20%. Had they been allowed to continue unchecked, 30% or 40% would have flashed by. We would today be looking back on a year of price rises in excess of 20%." Moreover, at least some type of controls are, or recently were, in effect in quite a number of countries, including the U.S., West Germany, The Netherlands, France, Britain, and Sweden. In Brazil, controls have been used successfully along with other measures to reduce inflation from 80% to about 20%. However, reasonable success under an authoritarian form of government does not necessarily imply success under a democratic government. Nevertheless, the use of controls in other places would indicate at least limited usefulness.

The advantage of price and wage controls is that inflationary psychology may be reduced if controls are instituted in such a way that the public is confident that they will be effective. People will then see no need to continually push for higher incomes in order to keep up with inflation. Labour and management will become convinced that the only way to obtain real wage increases is through increased productivity, and efforts will be expended in improving the efficiency of labour. If inflationary psychology can be beaten, then the demoralizing effects of inflation will be countered.

However, controls, particularly if continued on a long-term basis, also have a serious motivational defect. If inflation is of the "demand-pull" variety, that is, "too much money chasing too few goods", then controls are likely to distort resource allocations and to increase shortages, widespread evasion, and black markets. In this situation, since man is fallen in sin and prone to err, he will be motivated to disobey the law. It can therefore be argued that it would be wrong for the government to tempt its citizens in this way. But this argument may be applied to any law which is instituted. While it may in general be good policy to avoid legislating laws which are in practice unenforceable or are possibly objectionable to a wide portion of the public, it must never be forgotten that the government's authority derives from God and that His Laws take precedence. Therefore, if controls are necessary to ensure justice and good order, then they must not only be instituted but be backed by sufficient clout to see that they are enforced.

Effectiveness of controls depends primarily on public acceptance of the need for them. It should therefore be a prime duty of the government to make the public aware of the serious effects of inflation rather than to make light of the problem and in the meantime reap its political benefits. The present Liberal government has to date been singularly deficient in recognizing the seriousness of inflation. While apparently the Liberals have made controls the basis of a contingency plan to be used once inflation gets bad enough, the present 10% rate of inflation is not serious enough for them.

It should be recognized that price and wage controls, if instituted, must be carefully and equitably administered. The application must not be left to the whims of a government bureaucrat. As much as is possible, the broad outlines should be controlled (if necessary, after the fact) by parliament. Controls, while not necessarily socialistic in themselves, should not be used selectively in order to gain socialistic ends such as equality of all and public ownership. It is possible but quite wrong, for instance, to control oil prices to the extent that it becomes unattractive for oil companies to explore for new oil and then to claim that a

national or provincial oil company is necessary to carry out that exploration. It is also wrong to try and control only one side, i.e. profits, interests, and forget about the other side, i.e. wages. Such attempts wrongly place the emphasis on conflict between capital and labour. We must realize that both business and labour have an identity of interest in solving inflation which will require restraint and possibly sacrifice from both.

The problem of inflation is serious and requires action by the government. Since present solutions or palliatives have not worked and controls show some possibilities, I would favour their institution, at least as a short-run solution. Their institution should, however, be part of a

responsible package of monetary and fiscal policies and their removal should be gradual and not according to a fixed time table. Other action should also be taken to mitigate the effects of past inflation and so to ensure that justice prevails.

JOHN M. BOERSEMA

\*This article is an adaptation of a paper previously prepared for the Fellowship of Canadian Reformed University Students. The first paper in this series by Mr. Jack de Jong was published in the March 9th and March 23rd issues.

(1) Frank S. Capon, "Are Historical Costs Outdated?", *CA Magazine*, Sept. 1973, p. 47.

## A New Beginning

Political events, if measured on a Richter scale, would indicate a series of shockwaves of major proportions in the past few months. The unexpected, the latest revelations, upheavals, revolts have become a commonplace. The cliffhanger election in Britain, the death of French president Georges Pompidou and the subsequent close election, the sudden resignation of Chancellor Willy Brandt of West Germany, the coup d'état in Portugal, governmental turmoil in Italy, continuing bloodshed in Northern Ireland and the Middle East, scandalous revelations about the Nixon administration are but some of the items on the checklist.

The rapidity and remoteness of most of these events has reduced our capacity for shock and indignation. Do we react with an anabaptistic shrug or do we attempt to see events in the light of scriptural revelation of history in the last days.

To some extent political events are a manifestation of more deep-seated conflicts and tensions within society and as such one should consider the spiritual state of affairs as much as the 'political'. Some well-known commentators have recently been making their pronouncements about the state of the world, and what is striking about them all is the unrelieved air of pessimism about the future. Not that this should come as a great surprise in an age which has shoved God aside and put the triumph of man's reason on a pedestal. But liberalism in the past decades has been severely shaken by the results of years of putting this new faith into practice. Patently, it has failed. The vaunted perfectibility of man has

proven to be a hollow myth. In all their pronouncements, however, it is remarkable that they still come back to man himself in looking towards a more agreeable future.

In an essay in the *New York Review of Books*, the political economist and philosopher Robert L. Heilbroner tries to answer the question "Is there hope for man?" The answer is quite dismal. He paints a picture of an overcrowded Spaceship Earth whose life support systems are giving out; billions of its passengers, most of them travellers in steerage, claw at one another in a savage but unavailing struggle to survive.

Where does he turn for solace and inspiration? To a figure from Greek mythology: "It is Atlas, resolutely bearing his burden, that gives us the example we must seek. If within us the spirit of Atlas falters, there perishes the determination to preserve humanity at all cost and any cost, forever." Other writers console themselves by drawing attention to the fact that these tales of lamentation have been heard at various times in man's history going back to the Book of Job, St. Cyprian in the third century A.D., and in the 19th century Friedrich Nietzsche. If there is to be some hope for man, it lies, according to Heilbroner, "in our capacity to form a collective bond of identity with . . . future generations." His intuition tells him it can't be done.

"Contemporary industrial man, his appetite for the present whetted by the values of a high-consumption society and his attitude toward the future influenced by the prevailing canons of self-interest, has but a limited motivation to form such bonds.

There are many who would sacrifice much for their children; fewer who would do so for their grand-children. Indeed, it is the absence of just such a bond with the future that casts doubt on the ability of nation-states or socio-economic orders to mitigate the problems of the future."

We, in the latter part of the twentieth century, are witnessing the results of years of atheism, failed liberalism, failed pragmatism. Man in his search for personal salvation in a world gone mad, is turning to the mysticism of Eastern religions and the practice of the occult. The young especially are turning their attention to anything that promises to bring instant bliss. They believe in the brutal simplicities of the Jesus Freaks, or the absurdities of astrology, or the chanting of Hare Krishna, or the mumbo-jumbo of Scientology.

We, as members of the church of Jesus Christ, are in the world and thus affected by the currents of idolatrous thinking swirling about, whether emanating from television, radio, or the printed medium or from interaction with our neighbours. It is within the context of the spirit of the times that I wish to consider (next time) the prospects for Canada in the current election campaign. We are in many ways much blessed in this country but there is also much that is wrong, and therefore we have a duty to point out these wrongs. Hopefully we can offer a somewhat different perspective on current events. So far, much heat has been generated by the politicians but precious little of the light is visible; the glorious light of the Lamb of God, returning triumphantly. That knowledge and comfort is worth more than all the wisdom of the sages, both past and present.

*[to be continued]*

HAROLD J. LUDWIG

# YOUTH COLUMN

## YOUTH, OBEY YOUR PARENTS (4)

### II. WHAT DOES OBEDIENCE INVOLVE? (Cont'd)

How can the lines of communication be re-opened and kept open and meaningful? For this is absolutely necessary if youth wants to love, honour, obey and show fidelity to parents. For an answer to this question we turn to Ephesians 4:25-32.

We quote verse 25:

Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.

Certainly this verse counts for young people. You must not be "false" with your parents. That can mean that you do not tell them half-truths, thereby covering up objectionable matters. Or it can mean that you must not hold back things from your parents. Besides the obvious meaning of not telling lies, these other meanings also reveal an unfaithfulness to parents. Paul urges us all to speak the truth with each other. Honesty, openness and truthfulness are necessary for good communication. Between youth and parents this is an indispensable ingredient for healthy communication. Talk things over with dad and mom. Tell them your goals and dreams. Ask them questions. Relate your difficulties to them. Share your joy with them. In these ways you express your love, honour and faithfulness to your parents.

Verse 26 says, "Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger." There is a good and holy anger. With a holy anger Jesus cleansed the temple. In a righteous rage Moses many times upbraided the murmuring Israelites. But there are also wrong kinds of wrath. These kinds of wrath do not solve problems. They worsen matters.

One such kind of anger is blowing up. To lose one's temper frequently happens. Too bad that it happens often with us, Reformed people, too. It is a devastating sin, according to the Bible. I know that many psychiatrists and psychologists today favour this kind of anger. They recommend that one lets one's frustrations loose. Break the dam. Systematically unlace the person(s) with whom you are angry. Tear them to shreds. Let it out of your system. This is suggested even though the other person is absent and even though the other person's reputation is defamed and his name dragged through the mud. Sometimes youth feels like following the advice of our modern counsellors. Is this counsel healthy? Should we use it? What does Scripture say? Hopefully, you all know Matthew 18 and therefore can we leave that important passage. Besides the verse quoted above, let me draw your attention to the book of wisdom, Proverbs, wherein we read, "A man who vents his wrath is like a city without a wall around it" (25:28). To vent such wrath is not only unchristian and sinful, it also leaves us unprotected, exposing our many weaknesses.

Another kind of anger is clamming up. This anger harbours resentment without following Christ's method of reconciliation (see Matthew 18). Instead of clearing away flare-ups, this anger is stored up inside ourselves. There it smolders in self-pity or with the flames of revenge. We start to brood about it. The problem then becomes exaggerated. Like a balloon, we blow it up more and more. After some time one little sharp prick can cause it to blow up.

Unreconciled relationships between youth and parents destroy family life and church-life. Grudges imbedded in the craw act as wedges widening the gap between youth and parents.

Paul urges us, "Do not let the sun go down on your wrath." This command applies especially to the family. We are always the most cruel to the ones we know and actually love the most. How often have not only many suns but also many moons gone down on a person's wrath? Straighten out your arguments today, says Paul. For if we do not solve today's grudges which block truthful communication, then tomorrow our load will be too heavy. Before you lay down your head, have any and all weighty cases of anger solved. This is healthy advice. It will create open and fruitful lines of communication which youth needs to be able to obey and love their parents.

In verse 29 we read:

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for building up according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear.

This kind of communication will build a good and healthy relationship between youth and parents. Where you practise this wise counsel, love and obedience to parents will flourish. Paul urges us not to let one "unwholesome word" slip from our tongue. "Unwholesome" here can mean foul and base. But there is an English idiom which gives the precise meaning. "Unwholesome" means: to cut each other up. It is sad to hear people cutting each other up (sometimes behind their backs). It is sadder to hear youth systematically dicing and cubing their parents. Unwholesome communication includes many cutting remarks, sarcastic barbs, and stinging darts. As you can realize, this breaks down communication and consequently also breaks down the youth-parent relationship. Our attitudes come into play here.

Instead, Paul exhorts us to "let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice" (verse 31). On a more positive note Paul says, "and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you" (verse 32).

These are just a few of the many biblical directives for good communication which are an absolute must if youth wants to love, honour and show fidelity to their parents. Without open, frank, truthful and friendly lines of communication, youth just cannot hope to practise the fifth commandment of God properly. Keep the lines open. Do not allow barricades to separate you from your parents. Be truthful and faithful. Do not blow up or clam up. Use edifying speech. These are some of Paul's counsels whereby youth can obey their parents.

Someone might ask, Is this not a little too nice and ideal? Well, it might be ideal, humanly speaking. As far as God is concerned it is imperative. God said, "Be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy." By the grace of God we should strive for this. And certainly, God's counsels make life "nice" and pleasant. Who would want it any different?

W. HUIZINGA



# school X crossing

While local School Societies have been working hard to provide elementary education for the children of the Covenant, the Canadian Reformed High School Association of Ontario has in the mean time been busily engaged in preparing the work for the opening of a Regional High School. No, it is not that far yet at the moment that we can announce the date of the opening. But a lot of people are working hard in that direction. A gratifying thing is that the response of our reformed people is very good so far. Even from places far removed from where the high school probably will be built. Some of our people in the West have shown an active interest. The goal is not to build a high school for the students from the immediate surroundings of Burlington and Hamilton, etc., only, but to provide reformed secondary education for all Canadian Reformed high school students. This is a project for the communion of the saints in all our congregations. The membership fee has been set at \$100.00 per year. Some students may eventually have to board away from home and thus bring extra expenses, but the aim is to share all the costs together. That is a worthy aim. For it would be impossible for families who already support their local elementary school, in addition also to pay for the room and board for one or more of their children. At least, for most of them it would be a hardship. And on the other hand, not only the students that will attend the high school will benefit from this education. Indirectly all congregations may well profit from it. When our students who plan to become a teacher receive, in addition to reformed elementary education, also reformed secondary education, they will be better trained to become a reformed teacher. For is that not the problem for many of our teachers? They are *reformed* and they are a *teacher*. But they find it very hard to be a *reformed teacher*. When our local schools eventually receive teachers who themselves have had as much reformed instruction as possible, they will be better equipped and prepared in their profession and thus

the local church will greatly benefit from a reformed high school.

It is amazing that in our reformed churches, who confess the communion of saints so beautifully, we must always be on guard against all kinds of individualism. Just because I have no more children attending high school, or have children who will not be attending a high school for many years to come, do I therefore not have a duty and obligation towards the establishing of a reformed high school for the students of today? We are members of one another, aren't we?

A name has been chosen already for the new school to be established: "Guido de Bres". A name that does not need any explanation, we hope. I do not know why this name was chosen, but it beautifully points out the close relation there is between the Confession of the Church and the education of our high school students. And not only that! It indicates also that we are not something new, but are related to the Church of the Lord in the 16th century. The confession of the Church of the time of the Reformation is also our confession today! We are one with the Church of Christ of all ages!

What progress has been made so far? Well, after the initial planning stages, we are at least so far today that serious thought is given to the question of where to acquire land to build on. A very generous offer has been made by one member of our churches: five acres of land free of charge. The Building Committee is further looking into this offer, especially into the question: how easily can a school on this property be reached by students from various congregations?

But this is enough for now. We hope to have more information available in a future article.

Coming down to elementary education again, I first of all have an apology to make to the Canadian Reformed Society for the Advancement of Christian Education in Edmonton. In "School Crossing" of March 23, 1974, I had praised the work of translating De Graaf's *Verbondsgeschiedenis* assuming that the

issues were available for any member of our churches interested in it. I received a letter from br. Vandenberg informing me that any issues of this translation are not available for sale over the whole of Canada, but only to Edmonton residents. I checked again the information I was first sent and must agree that I was mistaken. What had caught my eye in quickly reading it, was "available to our Reformed Community . . ." I overlooked the following words: "in Edmonton, until the completion of the translation of both books". Well, let us hope that the complete translation will not be too far off so that these books will be available for all. My apologies! Reading other school bulletins, I noticed that I was not the only one making this mistake. The principal of Carman's school had the same impression. The term "Reformed Community" is misleading though, especially when both words are spelled with a capital letter. I took it to mean: Communion of Saints, but now get the impression that the writer means: the people in various, different churches that still bear the name 'reformed' in one way or another, form a "Community" and a "Reformed" one at that. But let us not confuse this with the Communion of Saints which we confess in Lord's Day 21. We confess indeed a *communion* in the Church of the Lord which He Himself has established by His Word and Spirit. That is the very reason why we want *reformed* education for our children. That is also the reason why we want to do this *together* with the other members of the body of the Lord. We must all know ourselves bound to employ our gifts readily and cheerfully for the advantage and salvation of other members. We do not just work for their advantage and salvation when we take our children along to church on Sundays or when the parents themselves instruct them in the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures and according to that doctrine. We do that too when we do our utmost to provide a reformed school for the children of the congregation. That education too must be according to the doctrine of the Scriptures as confessed in the Creeds of the Church. The parents are responsible for the instruction of their children. They promised that publicly before the Lord and His Church. They are also responsible for that other public promise before the Lord and His Church: to

cause them to be instructed in that doctrine. That doctrine is clearly confessed and summarized in our Three Forms of Unity. As parents we need teachers who themselves are faithful to this doctrine as confessed.

Our life is one and our service to the Lord is one. There must be unity in the teaching at home, in Church, and in school. The congregation, as a body of the Lord Jesus Christ, prays together on the Lord's Days, by the mouth of the minister, for help and strength for the *parents*, at home, for the *minister* in the catechism classes, and for the *teachers* in school to instruct the children in the reformed doctrine. We may be thankful to the Lord that out of His grace He has

given us a larger number of reformed elementary schools. Let us pray that where this is not possible yet today, He will give the desire and the courage to do our utmost to come to the establishing of a reformed school for the children of the congregations. The children themselves will feel that unity between home, church, and school, for instance when they learn in school the psalms from the Book of Praise or the Catechism, or when they see their teachers in church on Sunday, just to mention a few things.

In the next article I hope to pass on some more blessings of reformed education in the various schools across Canada.

M.C. WERKMAN

## Church Life Overseas

### ON THE WAY TO A NEW CONFESSION?

In *De Reformatie* of March 9, 1974, F.d.V. (Rev. F. de Vries) wrote a very instructive Press Review in connection with a Paper submitted to the General Synod of the "Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Synodical)". The professors Dr. G.C. Berkouwer and Dr. H.N. Ridderbos received a mandate from a previous Synod and they submitted their report under the heading: "A possible way to a new confession" (Een mogelijke weg tot een nieuw belijden).

I am convinced that Rev. de Vries will have no objections when I quote extensively from his Press Review. He appears to have several weeklies at his disposal which are not readily available here in Canada. We pass this information on to our readers since the issue is of the greatest importance.

*Kerkreformatie* (Church-reformation), a publication of the information service of the synodical Churches wrote about this new draft Confession that the General Synod expressed as its opinion:

that the "reflection" (bezinning) which is found in the report is an important help for the Church to confess at this time,  
that the draft is a clear testimony of faith and deals with several timely questions,  
that it is not possible, as yet, to

give an answer to the question whether this testimony of faith is a way to a new Confession in the church-orderly sense.

The draft was unanimously adopted, although provisionally. It will be sent to the Churches with the request to evaluate it. Rev. de Vries writes:

There was great appreciation at Synod for the work of the two professors. The Churches will have the opportunity to react and Synod expects (not hopes, but expects) that this draft will serve to bring the *central content* of Forms of Confession from the days of the Reformation more clearly to light.

Consequently, not only matters related to the Confession need clarification but the *central content*. This becomes apparent, Rev. de Vries writes, when we take into consideration what the two writers say about it. Prof. Ridderbos wrote an article in *Gereformeerd Weekblad* under the heading: "Een koude Kermis". (This expression cannot be translated but means in English idiom: come away with a flea in one's ear.) He was not very pleased with the reactions at Synod. Twenty-four delegates asked the floor. After the first eight had spoken "there was hardly anything left of our draft. Criticism came down in torrents and the only thing left to be done was explain that we wanted to reach a certain concentration of what we confess in the old Forms, to

assist those who do not know what to do with these 400-year-old Forms, and to give account of our position as Churches in the world."

In another weekly Rev. A. Vroegindewey (minister in the Dutch-Reformed Church) wrote among other things:

The Reformed Synod wants to maintain the old Forms of Confession but has tried to put the old Confession more clearly into words. It is not a replacement, it must be seen as "a staff to accompany" those who have trouble with the old staff.

The impression is given that this draft is meant to be an explanation, not a replacement, while the content of the Forms of Confession is unaffected and left intact. If that were only true!

In the *Waarheidsvriend* (Friend of the Truth) Drs. K. Exalto writes about this issue and Rev. de Vries quotes him extensively. I will attempt to give a brief summary of what he writes in this article:

- A draft of a new Confession must be critically evaluated because a Confession, after it is adopted by a Church, is presented with authority.
- This is the more necessary since it appears that the draft will receive the function of ecclesiastical basis for the unification of two Churches, the Dutch-Reformed (Nederlands Hervormde) and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Gereformeerde Kerken, synodical).
- The possibilities for and the necessity of a new Confession as a reaction against heresies should be recognized. This is a way in which the present Forms came into existence.
- The main question is: Is this draft Confession Reformed? What are the distinguishing marks? It should contain the scriptural doctrines of Election and Reprobation, of the complete inability of the sinner unto good, of the work of the Holy Spirit, of the infallibility and inerrancy of the Word of God inspired by the Spirit, of Redemption through Satisfaction.
- In the draft new Confession vague references to these doctrines are found, in many cases there is a complete silence where they should have been mentioned. And, as far as the position of the Church in the world is concerned, there is no defence of scriptural doctrines against heresies. The true need of the

[continued on page 10]

# news medley

The name Ludwig is well-known in Ontario Church life. We are certain that brother and sister F.J. Ludwig of Burlington did receive many proofs of the communion of saints when they celebrated their fortieth wedding anniversary. Via **Clarion** we wish to add our congratulations to those they have already received from many, and we wish them the Lord's blessing and guidance in the time ahead, as they did receive and experience it in the past.

It is noticeable that the holiday season is about to begin. The bulletins, under whatever name they may appear, contain fewer and fewer announcements of activities in every respect. The only "activity" which does not diminish is the weekly assemblies of God's people to hear His Word, to use the sacraments, to call publicly upon His Name and to give Christian alms. They continue, whether there is a Minister of the Gospel or not. There are Congregations where "reading services" are frequent and the appearance of a Minister is quite an event. Some time ago I remarked already that the departure of Rev. C. VanDam would mean that the Rev. D. DeJong would be busier. The **City Guide** confirms that expectation: Neerlandia asked for Rev. DeJong's services on May 26 and Barrhead asked permission to have him conduct worship services in early June, since they will not have a minister until August. It is a pity that Barrhead and Neerlandia are so far from Ontario, otherwise some ministers from here might think about it to spend their holidays in the Rockies, and then be the weekends there. Now this will remain a pious wish, I guess.

Since we are with our thoughts in northern Alberta anyway, let us see what else has to be mentioned about Edmonton. The broadcasts are still going on, and Rev. DeJong tells us that parts of the sermons are broadcast now. The Edmonton ladies' societies will host a Rally, and made quite some plans for that day. The Choir members showed that there is more to their bond as members of the same society than singing: they reserved eight lanes in a bowling alley and went bowling together for an evening. Such an outing is refreshing, I presume.

The "printer" of the **City Guide** wonders whether it pays to repeat the same announcements every time: will people still pay due attention to it when they see the same thing three or four weeks in a row? Another question which he put is also worth considering: "Is there still any life left in the last sentence of almost every meeting announcement 'Guests are welcome' or something along that line?" It is good when we stop once in a while and consider our habits and standing expressions, lest they lose all meaning to us and to others who read them.

This time of the year is the time when young people (and sometimes also older ones) appear before the Consistories to be examined with a view to the public profession of faith. In Edmonton they appear to have the custom that the Consistory is divided into two groups, each group taking half of the candidates for the public profession of faith and examining them. It is worth to be considered whether the method I learned here in Ontario is

not to be preferred, namely that the young people appear before the Consistory one by one. If this method is followed, the time needed for the examination is considerably longer than if they all would come in one group or even in two separate groups. In Burlington East, I read, they even needed three evenings for it! My experience is, that it is far more satisfactory both for Consistories and for those who are examined when the latter come one by one. They speak more freely, there is a better opportunity to elaborate on certain points, and the whole examination gives the Consistories a better idea of the knowledge of faith of those who present themselves. I think that I wrote some remarks about this point before, but that does not matter. I wished I had done it in this manner right from the beginning of my ministry.

The Young People's Societies in Manitoba ready themselves for the "national youth rally" which has been scheduled for the July 1 long weekend. Those in Carman requested the Consistory's permission to use the Churchbuilding for that rally, but at the same time they expressed concern about the capacity of the churchbuilding. Even with a rather moderate turnout it might prove too small. The Consistory was certain that a solution would be found. Meanwhile, the Consistory also appointed a committee to look into the matter of either enlarging the churchbuilding or enlarging the seating capacity. I recall the days when the present building was purchased. It was during a Synod and quite a few Synod-members went to have a look at it before it was moved. Since that day renovations took place, but the growth of the Congregation also necessitates expansion of the seating capacity. All the Churches, normally speaking, will face that "problem" one day or another, and in places that are suited for that it might be best to organize a new Church. When I look back one year and then look at the attendance on Sundays, I wonder how we ever could "pack" those who now form the two Churches at Fergus and at Guelph in this one building, and how we could ever find room for all the cars in the one parking lot.

Chatham's Churchbuilding appears to be nearing the point where a stone has to be inserted bearing the name and the date at which it was "joined together" with the other bricks and stones. The Consistory therefore invited the Congregation to submit suggestions for a name for the building, and even urged them to do so since there is not much time left for this purpose. We'll see what decision the Consistory reaches.

Burlington West's Consistory informed us via the bulletin that they upheld their decision to choose the name "Rehoboth". You may recall that objections were brought in and that the Consistory was willing to reconsider the whole matter. Now they appear to have reached a definite decision. The Consistory also decided to authorize the purchase of an organ. And the organists of Burlington East tell the Congregation about the need for repairs, something to which we did pay attention a previous time.

Rev. G. VanDooren tells the Congregation about what he saw and heard of the educational activities of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. (which is contemplating a merger with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church). Of these activities the Rev. VanDooren writes the following.

The remarkable thing is that the Reformed Presbyterian people have started their christian education at the top and not - as we did - at the bottom. They do not (yet) have a christian elementary school because



they were of the opinion that it was more important first to provide a christian training for the B.A. degree. From there they work their way downward, to a christian secondary school, and finally to the elementary level. One may have his opinion about this method, but it cannot be denied that christian education which would get stuck halfway and not be completed by college-training, in the end might not produce the results we hope and pray for. Now that we started at the bottom, we should certainly aim for the top, under the blessing of the Covenant God.

We did start at the bottom, indeed, and I am still thankful for it that we did, for those first formative years are the most important ones in a child's life. It is not for nothing that the parents are to promise that they will instruct their children "as soon as they are able to understand"! Today's actions are oftentimes explained from past experiences and from one's upbringing or lack of upbringing. Was it not one of the great deceivers of the human race who said that he just wished to have a child during the first six or seven years of its life? In more than one Congregation the question was pondered whether they should start with an elementary school or with a high-school. I am thankful for it that everywhere the elementary school won out.

But I also agree wholeheartedly with what Rev. VanDooren wrote, that the education should not get stuck halfway. For the time being, all we shall be able to achieve is elementary and highschool instruction. Even the latter is not yet general, but partly in the planning stages, partly

confined to some of the grades and courses. Yet we should strive for all twelve or thirteen grades and meanwhile keep in mind that then there is still a gap between the highschool diploma and the theological instruction at our College. For their B.A. degree candidates for admission to our Theological College will have to go somewhere else. That gap should be filled one day. Let us not set our goals too low. Let us not say that it cannot be done. Such voices were heard also in the beginning before we started with the elementary schools, and how richly has the Lord blessed us! He blessed us so richly that at the moment we cannot even find enough teachers to fill the vacancies. We should see to it that we do not forfeit these benefits.

In closing, let us mention that Brampton decided to deal with the incoming mail at the end of the meeting, after the matters of supervision etc. have been dealt with. They call the matters of supervision etc. the more important matters, and they are right in this. It will be the experience of all Consistories that too much time is taken up by incoming mail and that the other points oftentimes have to be dealt with in half an hour or even less. Maybe I exaggerate here, but those who send communications to Consistories always have the floor before the elders report on visits, or discipline is discussed, or other matters concerning the wellbeing of the Congregation have the attention. It is something for all Consistories to consider whether they shall follow Brampton's example.

There was not much news, yet still too much to skip our medley.

See you next time.

vO

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## Recommended to His Grace <sup>[2]</sup>

*"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen"*  
[Revelation 22:21].

### SELF-EXAMINATION

At the end of the book of Revelation - at the same time at the end of the whole Bible - we are recommended to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. In our first article on this subject we have learnt that this is not just a nice sentence, a "pious wish", but first of all that we really need this grace because Christ is coming for the covenant judgment. We have also seen that this grace is so great not only since it includes the forgiveness of sins but also because it is directed to a certain goal or aim, namely that by this grace we would be enabled to do the work which we have to fulfil. The great judgment will be a matter of giving "every man according as his work shall be" (22:12).

What, then, are the works which Christ expects us to do?

This is made clear in the seven "royal messages" at the beginning of

the book of Revelation. The details in the life of each of these seven congregations may give us some directives for our self-examination.

We can put it this way: Is our first love still there, or is it lacking just as it happened to be in the Church of Ephesus? Is there among us a lack of fraternal discipline and supervision on those members who easily compromise with the ideas and ideals of the world all around us, propagating them as being able to redeem this world from misery, as it happened to be in the Church of Thyatira? Are we spiritually dead, just like the congregation of Sardis? Is there lukewarmness among us, as in Laodicea, the lukewarmness of not being willing to learn to distinguish the dividing lines and taking a real Christian view and stand in all sorts of matters? Are our garments defiled because we try to sail a middle-course so that we can

have or maintain an easy life; or do we have the same reputation that some of the members of Sardis had, that we keep our garments pure and undefiled? If necessary are we willing to undergo persecution and slander and things like that? Do we really offer everything if necessary for the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ, as it was the case in Smyrna?

### THE WORD OF HIS GRACE

It is with respect of these "works", of a true Christian way of life, that the apostle John at the end of his book recommends his readers to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This grace is great and rich. For these works find their "root" in Him. Those who remain in Him will produce many fruits as healthy branches of the true Vine, the Vine that does not lie.

By His power we are able to keep our garments undefiled and persevere even unto death.

He is already very busy giving us this spiritual strength. We have been given a strong help: His Word, the Word of His grace.

G. VAN RONGEN  
[Pro Ecclesia]

Conclusion in next issue.

## Letters-to-the-Editor

Dear Sir,

As the wife of one of the men involved, I must express my concern about the accusations made against the Consistory of the Lincoln Church. This consistory is accused of no less than breaking with the Federation of Churches and causing a schism. Firstly, there is no breaking with the Federation of Churches, for as soon as the Consistory found out that there was so much misunderstanding about their decision, they asked for the Church Visitors, the representatives of Classis, to come and advise them in the matter. Secondly, the Consistory does not exclude any minister from their pulpit, but merely considers it better for the congregation not to invite certain ministers.

In this respect I cannot help referring to *Clarion*, Vol. 23, No. 7, the last lines of the News Medley, from the hand of the Editor, where he

states that Schilder has taught him that the Churches within the Federation should have the right to make certain decisions for themselves and exercise their authority. I have always believed this to be the true Reformed Church Polity.

To draw the conclusion that the one Church has not the right to invite whomever they see fit, seems in direct contrast with this. After all, I have found this to be the common practice in our Churches. Certain ministers are not asked to some pulpits because they are too strict, and others because they are not strict enough. This applies especially to the calling of ministers. Never has any voice been raised against this, although we are all aware of it, if we are not strangers in this Jerusalem.

As about T.V.; many things can be said about it. May I just quote a

few of the leaders of the Church, some of them in translation.

1. Rev. D. DeJong, in C.R.M., Vol. 14, No. 43, October 23, 1965:

"You are allowed to accept and to use gambling-tickets, coveting to get as much money as possible in the easiest way; you are allowed to do so according to the measure of faith that God has given you; you may do this when you stimulate the faith of yourself and others by doing so. You are allowed to have a T.V. set in your house, when this agrees with the measure of faith that God gave to you, when you can prophesy by means of having T.V., when you can serve the Lord by means of watching T.V."

2. Prof. Dr. K. Schilder, in *Christus en Cultuur*, Franeker, 1953:

"The film, as it exists, is more and more being technically refined. But it does not build, but it destroys. It is a medium, not of education, but of blindness." (p. 83).

(T.V. did not exist as a medium at that time.)

"Abstinence . . . is only good and commanded, if it is an imposed emergency measure. For there will be until the end of days a distress (a need for the people of God). And this distress will become greater. Because there is a war going on." (p. 94). "If it (a Christian community) voluntarily abstains itself, then such an abstinence is self-control, self-ascetism, self-unfolding of the man of God, who wants to stay in the things to which he is called . . . In this he is, whatever others may say about him, ruled by a deep insight of culture, for his abstinence for the sake of necessity, places his time under the arch of history, from beginning to end." (p. 96).

3. Rev. W.G. De Vries, in *De Gereformeerde Levenswandel*, Goes, 1971:

"He who understands our world a little, knows that there is almost no other thing, which molds the opinion of the people, than this medium of recreation (the film), which is now brought into our living-rooms by way of T.V." (p. 185).

"We recall with a certain homesickness, the martial figure of Augustine, who in a speech at the grave of Cyprian, called out: 'Do I dare to forbid you to go to theatre? Yes, I dare to do this . . .'. And the present-day theatre (bioscoop) (and of course T.V. too) is not a whit better than the old theatre, but only more refined. But in the synodical churches today, they dare to go against this age-old ethical custom, which was maintained by

### Church Life Overseas - Cont.

Church or the world is never touched upon. It gives much freedom to some who have gone in a certain direction. It is a transit from middle-orthodoxy to modernism and it fosters deviations.

Question: What is it and what purpose does it really serve? According to Drs. Exalto there appear to be two motives at work. To create a compromise between two opposite groups or trends, and to smoothen the development in the Church by breaking the ties with the past. Arguments are given for this reasoning. In the draft the Holy Scriptures are called: witness of the revelation. Scripture is a word of men who interpret the Word of God. Bible-criticism is protected and even recommended. The articles 3 and 7 of the Confession of Faith are completely out of sight. Article 9 of the draft has the heading "Church and World". It is new and has become the cardinal point. The relationship to the world is the heart of this draft and has become a stimulant to the horizontalism of modern theology. Salvation receives definite humanistic overtones. When election and reprobation are merely related to the Church (art. 6 of the draft) the speaking about reconciliation of the world with God tends into the direction of universalism and is contrary

to what the Church confesses in the Canons concerning Limited Atonement.

With Rev. de Vries we ask: How is it possible that this draft was unanimously adopted at a Reformed Synod? Is the capacity to distinguish disappearing? To these questions can be added: How will the Christian Reformed Church react to this draft Confession in their correspondence with these Churches in the Netherlands? In 1972 the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church terminated the Committee on contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches and gave a mandate to its Committee on Interchurch Relations to test theological trends and official decisions concerning the 'new theology', to enable Synod to take a decision concerning maintaining the relationship with the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, and to come with a full report and advice whether a change in this relationship is warranted". *antea* .

With this development in the Netherlands in mind we are looking forward to the report to Synod 1974 of the Christian Reformed Church. This report and the decisions of the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church on this issue will be of far-reaching consequence.

D. VANDERBOOM

the earliest Christian Church, maintained also by the Church of the Reformation, but they do it without Scriptural foundation. . . No, as 'people who are liberated', we are not any better than others. And here we will never have a perfect Church. But may the leadership remain as it should, that the right way will be pointed out, so that they will know: "it is not allowed from the minister and the Church!" Because the Church and the minister dare to say, with Scripture in their hands: God forbids it." (p.31).

Lastly, the Scriptures teach us in Jude 23, "hating even the garment polluted by the flesh" (N.A.S.B.). S. Greydanus, in *de Korte Verklaring* says about this: "Also that which is in itself not sinful, can, by the contamination of the world, be made so unclean, dangerous and destructive, that it has to be discarded in disgust and that all communion with it has to be declined."

As it to be an Anabaptist line of thought, I would like to quote Pater later in *De Reformatie*, Vol. 41, No. 35, June 11, 1966. "Do not call this an Anabaptist shunning of the world; I would not defend this for one moment. What I have in view is only the Calvinistic, Scriptural discernment and shunning of all what is sin, of all what is dirty and soiled and rotten, of all that is destructive for life and is satanic."

However, having or not having T.V. is not the issue here. The issue is that it is not only the right, but the duty of a Consistory to see to it that the flock is heeded according to the commandments of Christ. It is to Him and to Him only that a Consistory has to give account of the way they are doing this, and He will reckon them, and them alone, responsible for the life of each of His sheep. It is their task to make sure that no stumbling-blocks are left in the path of His sheep, and if they do not exercise their responsibility, and do not take their task as undershepherds seriously, then He comes with His punishment. (Ezekiel 34).

On March 17, 1973, the Consistory of Lincoln published an article in the bulletin, warning the Congregation against the dangers of T.V., saying that T.V. is exploited by the world only, and thus by Satan, and that it would be wrong wilfully to expose our children to such devastating influences. They were right in doing so, for it is their task to give leadership in all matters of life, to help the Congregation in living a life to the glory of God, and can anyone say that he is using T.V. to the Glory of God?

I myself am one of these people who were still too young, in the days of the Liberation, to understand what

was going on, and having been brought up in the Synodical Churches it was only in recent years, that I came to the understanding of the true Reformed Faith and Life. During my years in the Synodical Churches, it happened several times that a minister by way of explanation used something he had seen on T.V. I certainly would not like one of my children to hear a minister say: "You have probably seen on T.V. . . ." That would have a devastating effect on young minds. It is bad enough that our children have to live in and with this world, without them having to cope with the world right within the family and the Church circle.

I am sure that the Editor of *Clarion* has not meant all that he wrote, but that he wrote it on the spur of the moment, or else I would accuse him of an emotional and unholy stirring up of the flock of Jesus Christ.

I realize that this letter has become a lengthy one, but I would be grateful if indeed it could be placed as a whole.

Yours in our Lord Jesus Christ,  
Adriana M. Dekker

\* \* \* \* \*

#### *Editor's Comments*

1. I meant every word that I wrote.

2. It was not written on the spur of the moment.

3. As a precautionary measure, I asked a few brethren to read it before it was sent to the printer. Yet, the responsibility is entirely mine.

4. The Consistory's decision was not: it is "better" for the Congregation not to invite certain ministers", but "that any minister of the Canadian Reformed Churches, (who) is in possession of a Television set, will not be invited to conduct services in our congregation."

5. New accusations are made in the above letter.

Who are these "certain ministers" who "are not asked to some pulpits because they are too strict"??

What are the places where it was decided not to ask them??

Who are the ministers who are not invited because they are not strict enough??

What are the places where they decided not to invite them??

In the years before the Liberation we also heard general accusations which were never made concrete, but sowed distrust and discord and poisoned the atmosphere. We should expel any such practice from our midst.

Who are they?? If they are not named I call this slander.

6. In Lincoln's decision "having or not having T.V." was indeed the issue. Re-read the decision itself. From this paragraph I get the impression that ministers who have a televi-

sion set are considered to be stumblingblocks for the flock of Christ . . .

7. I have never denied the right or even the obligation to warn against all sorts of dangers. That includes the dangers coming via Television, Radio, Press, conversations, backbiting, slandering, etc.

But what Lincoln did here was not: warn against the dangers of television, but: add to the marks of a faithful minister, put up an extra condition over and above those generally accepted by the Churches, and go in the line of "rule upon rule, precept upon precept."

That's what I reject as a deadly danger for the Church of Christ. For that reason, and for *no* other, I spoke and shall speak when necessary.

According to *Family Post*, the Consistory decided to ask Church visitors after no less than 19 letters on the above decision had been received out of the Congregation. It is *me* then who stirs up the flock of Christ???

\* \* \* \* \*

vO

#### A Sectarian Decision??

It was not my intention to write one word about all the stories I have heard about the decision of Lincoln's consistory, that seems to have upset many members in Smithville and Lincoln. I had planned to wait till the Church Visitors would have given their advice on June 3, 1974.

Now that even the Editor of *Clarion*, who has an excellent name for being very punctilious, voiced his opinion in an article entitled "A Sectarian Decision", I changed my mind.

Rev. VanOene's article shows that reading is a very difficult art. But he may comfort himself: For weeks already I have heard such expressions as, "Ministers in good standing being barred from Lincoln's pulpit" - "Where in the Bible is it stated that a minister cannot have a T.V. set" - "a closed pulpit" - "where is it stated that it is a sin to have a T.V.".

Even the Articles 79 and 80 of our Church Order have had the attention!

So the question is really urgent, What did Lincoln's consistory exactly state?

The answer is as simple as it is stated: Certain ministers will not be invited to preach in Lincoln. They will not be asked.

Does that mean that the pulpit is closed for those ministers?

Does this mean that they are "barred" or disciplined?

Does this mean that the consistory has expelled them?

They will not be invited. That's all!

Rev. VanBeveren will not be invited, because it would cost between \$300.00 and \$400.00 per Sunday. A matter of only dollars . . .

Does a decision of this type

imply that Rev. VanBeveren is "barred" from the pulpit?

O, consistories in the East! And in the West!

Another congregation may not invite a certain minister, because the majority is for "Christian" Education, and they do not want a minister that prays for "Reformed" education.

Should we then mention Art. 79 and 80 C.O.?

And where is the end?

From the Press Releases we have all learned that many letters of objections were addressed to Lincoln's consistory.

However, did you ever read how many letters were received when our own brothers in good standing, attending the Lord's Supper regularly, could not become office bearers, because they were in the possession of a T.V.? None!

Instead, by many it was accepted as a big joke: Hang on to your T.V., otherwise you land up in the consistory, as an office bearer! More than once I have been advised to purchase one. They must have figured that I needed some rest . . .

Is there one among us that has not heard these jokes? And now the church is on fire!

A Sectarian Decision!

And the same Rev. VanOene did not write one word, when in March 1973 (last year) a statement concerning T.V. was published in *Family-Post*. That was important enough for News Medley. Also for our own brothers to wake up.

But not a word!

Lincoln has never ever refused a minister to preach from its pulpit. And will not refuse one, who has T.V. But they certainly will not be invited as long as the majority of the consistory feels about T.V., what everybody should feel about it.

Has not a consistory the freedom to invite whoever it pleases?

Rev. VanOene, please read our *Family-Post* carefully! And take back your article, which is a shame for *Clarion* and yourself.

Kees Ouwensloot  
(The above also appeared in *Family-Post* of May 18.)

\* \* \* \* \*

*Comment.*

1. Our readers themselves can judge whether I read Lincoln's decision well: the full text appeared in my article.

2. I am not responsible for what members of the Lincoln Church or others say or "joke" in regard to this

matter, nor did I quote any Church Order article.

3. Only the Consistory of Lincoln can take away the effect of its decision by declaring that it does *not* mean that ministers who have a television set will not be invited.

4. I never read a decision that brethren who are in possession of a television set cannot become office-bearers in Lincoln. Now I learn that there is indeed such a decision.

5. I do not recall having seen "a statement concerning T.V." Sometimes I do not get one or more issues of a bulletin, sometimes a certain item escapes my attention. Even if I saw it, I do not object at all to warnings against the dangers of television, radio, press, etcetera. But should I therefore have mentioned it? Selection of items to be included in a News Medley is always arbitrary to a certain extent. And everyone considers his geese to be swans, which means: everyone thinks that what happens in "his" Congregation, or that of which he himself is very much in favour should be mentioned.

6. Besides: in my article the point was *not* that Lincoln *warned* against the *use* of a television set, but that the very *possession* of one is the ground why Lincoln *decided* that such a minister will not be invited.

7. If someone does not see the difference between that general decision and one not to invite a particular minister due to the travelling expenses involved, or because no one can understand him, I have to express my inability to give such understanding.

8. I do read the *Family Post* and all other bulletins carefully. If I have *misquoted*, I shall gladly correct that. Otherwise, my article stands.

9. A remark which has nothing to do with brother Ouwensloot's article may be added.

I quote a line from a letter I received, a line which expresses the same impression others too had when reading my article. Here it follows: "I think that you should accept preaching engagements at Lincoln because I feel that your last words were more of hurt and anger."

I wish to state emphatically that my words were *not* the fruit of hurt and anger. Personally I did not have to feel threatened by it at all: I have no television set. Lincoln did nothing to hurt me personally or to make me personally angry. As in all my writing, so here I did my best to avoid any personal element. I seldom, if ever, react to what is written against my person.

Yet I was hurt because I see a great danger for the *Churches* and for the development within the Churches. That made me so concerned and "impersonally-angry", if you understand what I mean.

If I should accept an invitation as long as the relevant decision stands,

I would become a party to the exclusion of brethren who are ministers in good standing. That is something which I am not allowed to do. That is the only reason.

10. Unless new elements are brought forward, it appears that we have given sufficient space to voices pro and con.

vO

## Gifts

Met grote erkentelijkheid vermeld ik een gift van \$27.00. Nu mij niet verzocht was de naam van de gever onvermeld te laten, noem ik die: Ds M. Janssens te Den Ham in Overijssel, Nederland. We weten dat deze Nederlandse predikant hartelijk met het wel en wee van onze Canadese kerken meeleeft en er in zijn "nageslacht" ook mee verbonden is. Van hier moge ik Ds Janssens, aan wiens persoon en werk ik zulke goede herinneringen uit onze gemeenschappelijke Overijsselse periode heb behouden, heel hartelijk groeten. Welbedankt! From a brother in Hamilton we received a new "thermatic"-coffeemachine. A Reformed theological college, certainly one with a Dutch background, is unthinkable without coffee. Our old machine did not work properly anymore. Thank you, brother; we sweetly taste your strong love.

J. Faber



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### OUR COVER

*Meeting of Bulkley and Skeena  
Rivers in the Rocky Mountains,  
B.C.  
[Dept. of Travel Industry B.C.]*

# mission news

Once again we take it upon us to write another instalment of the history of the mission work here in São José da Coroa Grande. The hands of the clock keep moving, yet, if one looks at them for only a fraction of time (as one month really is) no movement may be perceived. Not every month it is possible to report on progress. Sometimes it is barely noticeable, or even seems to indicate a standstill or relapse.

The work could, however, continue with only minor interruptions. One Bible-Study evening had to be cancelled because of illness of the undersigned: a flu that had me bed-ridden for several days. One Sunday-evening service could not be held because of a power-failure, while our only gas-lamp was also out of order. The last service of the month was held during a "brown-out" but with the assistance of two gas-lamps could still be held: imagine the heat for the conductor of the service - an 85° evening boosted another ten to twenty degrees by the heat generated by the gas-lamp!

*Attendance:* Generally attendance has been good and regular during this past month. To give you some figures once again, the following:

*Services:* 44, 40, 44, and 35 regular adults.

*Sunday-School:* 45, 57, 45, 50 and 53, including an average of 5 to 6 adults each time.

*Bible Study:* 26, 25 and 34 regular adults.

As the careful observer may notice, attendance at Sunday School has dropped in comparison to previous figures. Several reasons may be adduced for this development. One is the market which lately was held on Sunday instead of Saturday. (This will be reversed again starting in the month of April.) A second reason is that our work is becoming more established, which makes certain parents more reserved. Before they perhaps had no objections that their children attended this "innocent" pastime of those strangers, but now that we are guiding the people to make a choice and are constructing our own permanent facilities it becomes less "innocent".

From a number of children we have heard as a reason for failing to come that their parents did not approve of it anymore.

Further, the novelty wears off, and as some of the children grow older they become less interested, especially because they receive no cooperation nor encouragement from their parents.

Yet we have a good core to work with, as a matter of fact, a more interested group now. The number of adults attending Sunday-School is increasing: we have been encouraging this all along.

*St. Joseph's Day:* Once again St. Joseph was honoured on his special day, as the patron-saint of our town: a real community-event with strong Roman Catholic colouring. The highlights of the festivities were the mass in the morning and the procession in the afternoon. A number of our regular attenders also participated in these highlights. The ties to such traditions are still strong. Even though they may not enter the Roman Catholic Church anymore for most of the year, on such special days the temptation is still too strong. Last night I again urged them to choose, basing my message on the story of Elijah on the Carmel: "If the Lord is God, follow Him; if Baal, follow him!"

I further illustrated my message by showing them two books. The first book, entitled *Os Grandes Santos* (The Great Saints), is a popular encyclopedia of the Brazilian saints. The second book I showed was the Bible: "Now choose your way, but remember that the Saviour Himself said that there is only One Way!"

*Faith-healer:* Another event which drew large crowds (also from our midst) was the appearance of an independent faithhealer, much advertised on radio and T.V. before. All sufferers and curious ones went, no one was healed. The man left town with a sack of money, supposedly only to maintain his T.V. program which was mysteriously discontinued several days later!

*Construction of Church Building:* Heavy rains during the last part of February and the first two weeks in March have slowed the work down

and it seems that it will take all of the month of April yet to complete it. The roof will be put on this week, if the weather continues to be good.

*Offerings:* These have been coming in very regularly now and the amount of the previous month has almost been doubled. A total of Cr. 78,50 has been collected. Some have become regular contributors. We have suggested that the funds will be used to purchase a set for celebrating the Lord's Supper in the future: something visible for their own use and a goal that they themselves can reach.

To move the hand of a clock many gears are needed, and some even must move backward, but in faith we know that it moves forward until the great hour will strike. In the power of this faith we may labour, on the home-front and in the mission-field, and we must do so fervently, "For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand." (Rom. 13:11, 12).

C. VAN SPRONSEN  
(from the March report)

## Church News

Declined:

REV. W.W.J. VANOENE

of Fergus, Ontario has declined a call extended to him by the Church of Hamilton, Ontario.

\*\*\*\*\*

Declined:

REV. W. HUIZINGA

of London/Watford, Ontario has declined a call extended to him by the Church of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

\*\*\*\*\*

NEW ADDRESS:

The Canadian Reformed Church at Ottawa has changed the address of their place of worship. They are now worshipping in the *Ottawa Christian School* which is located directly behind the Presbyterian Church on Woodrofe Ave. (near the Queensway).



# our little magazine



## From The Mailbox

Hello *Helen Linde*. Thank you for your letter. You did very well on your quizzes, Helen. Will you be going away for holidays, this summer, do you think?

Congratulations on your new baby brother, *Bonita Stiksma*. I really like his name. Did you like the wedding and your grandparents' visit? You did very well on the quiz, too, Bonita. And thank you for the poem, too.

You did very well on the quiz too, *Lyndon Kok*! I'm glad you like Calgary so well, and that you have new friends there. Have you been back to visit Lethbridge at all?

Hello *Lorraine De Boer*. It was nice to hear from you again. You certainly did very well on the Find-the-names quiz! Keep up the good work.

### QUIZ TIME

Here is another word puzzle for you from Busy Beaver *Grace Bosscher*.

My first (letter) is in *rat*,  
But not in *mat*.  
My second is in *our*,  
But not in *shut*.  
My third is in *mat*,

But not in *mop*.  
My fourth is in *door*,  
But not in *store*.  
What word am I?  
Answer: *pea*

And now it's time to practise up for that big Quiz contest that's coming. How well can you do on these two quizzes? Answers next time!

### *This Time in Rhyme*

A long time ago, the *McGuffey Readers* printed a version of the Ten Commandments in rhyme. See if you can finish the sentences so they come out right. Then try memorizing the poem and you'll never forget the commandments God gave to Moses and Israel.

1. Thou no\_\_\_\_\_ shall have but me.
2. Before no\_\_\_\_\_ bend the knee.
3. Take not the name of God in\_\_\_\_\_.
4. Dare not the\_\_\_\_\_ Day profane.
5. Give thy\_\_\_\_\_ honour due.
6. Take heed thou no\_\_\_\_\_ do.
7. Abstain from\_\_\_\_\_ and deeds unclean.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ not, for thou by God art seen.
9. Tell not a wilful\_\_\_\_\_, nor love it.
10. What is thy neighbour's do not\_\_\_\_\_.

### *Nicknames of Fame*

Can you match the following correctly?

- |                                      |                     |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. The dreamer                       | a. Herod            |
| 2. Sons of thunder                   | b. Jeremiah         |
| 3. A voice crying in the wilderness  | c. an ungodly man   |
| 4. A root out of dry ground          | d. David            |
| 5. The rock                          | e. Thomas           |
| 6. Chaff which the wind driveth away | f. James and John   |
| 7. The weeping prophet               | g. John the Baptist |
| 8. The doubter                       | h. Jesus            |
| 9. The Psalmist                      | i. Joseph           |
| 10. The fox                          | j. Peter            |

Bye for now Busy Beavers. Till next time!

Yours, Aunt Betty

Dear Busy Beavers,

Holiday time will be here before you know it! You'll have your report card, the weather will be warm enough for swimming, and no more school!

Swimming lessons, picnics, our Busy Beaver Contest. Oh, there will be so many things to do!

I know many of you will want to write and tell me how well you did on your reports. And when you do write me, tell me too, what KIND of contest YOU like BEST.

Of course we'll have our Quiz Contest - we wouldn't be Busy Beavers if we didn't have that! But this is our Big Summer Contest, and so we always have another kind of contest too. So let's hear what your favourite contest is. We want all the Busy Beavers to really enjoy our summer activities!

\* \* \* \* \*

Now we have a little poem for you by one of our youngest Busy Beavers, *Denise Van Amerongen*. Thank you, Denise. Keep up the good work!

### *Duck*

Quack, quack,  
Says the duck,  
A duck quacks  
All day in the pond.

And *Mary Vande Burgt* sent in a poem you'll like. Thank you to you too, Mary.

### *The Bee and The Butterfly*

|                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| "Dear me! dear me!"       | "Oh, my! oh my!"         |
| Said a busy bee,          | Said a butterfly,        |
| "I'm always making honey, | "I'm always eating honey |
| No time to play           | And yet I play           |
| But work all day.         | The livelong day.        |
| Isn't it very funny -     | Isn't it very funny -    |
| Very, very funny?"        | Very, very funny?"       |

\* \* \* \* \*

### BOOK NOOK

For those Busy Beavers who like to read here is a Book Look by *Mary Van Woudenberg*.

Title: *Tony's Temptation*  
Author: L.V. Davidson

Tony's mother must go to the hospital so Tony is left at his grandmother's place with his two sisters Marjorie and Barbara. Marjorie was the oldest, then Tony, and then Barbara, who was two. Tony had a great temptation of stealing chocolate biscuits out of his grandma's cookie jar. Mrs. Cunningham was sad about this. She had a helper called Harriet who was very stern. One day Tony was being accused of something he didn't do. So he ran away. When people found him he was caught in a rabbit trap, pale and sick. When his mother is out of the hospital he is very happy to be home again.