

Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE



Volume 23 - No. 14

July 13, 1974



Reports to Synod

Gradually we are receiving more and more copies of reports to the forthcoming General Synod. On purpose I write: "copies of reports". What the Consistories receive are, in fact, not the reports themselves but copies of the reports. Generally appointed committees report only to General Synods. Yet, what is dealt with at General Synods should not be kept from the Churches or from the membership as such. Hence the rule that the various committees shall send copies of their reports to the Consistories. That is being done and in this manner we are able to "preview" the matters with which the forthcoming Synod will have to deal. We have no extensive printed agenda as for instance the Christian Reformed Church issues before every Synod, an agenda in which the reports of the various committees are included. We therefore depend on our Consistories and their permission to use the documents which they receive insofar as they are not of a confidential nature.

Our Consistories have received several reports already. There is the report of the Committee appointed to revise the text of the Heidelberg Catechism; we have the report of the Committee appointed to revise the text of the Heidelberg Catechism; we have the report of the Committee on the Revision of the Church Order; our Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad sent us something quite a while ago already; the Committee appointed to ponder the question of a Textbook for Catechetical Instruction also put the result of their deliberations on our table. More reports can be expected within the next month or so. It is about the work of the last-mentioned Committee that we wish to inform our readers this time.

TEXTBOOK COMMITTEE

Synod 1971 appointed a committee to study the set-up of a textbook for catechetical instruction. The committee consists of two members. For a most fruitful cooperation such a committee has an ideal size; but as far as the work that is to be done is concerned, it is far too small. The conclusion of the Committee is therefore, among other things, that Synod not only should continue the committee, but also that more members should be appointed to it. The real work will begin if Synod adopts the recommendations of the present committee.

For the preparation of their report, the committee sent a questionnaire to all catechists within the Churches. They report that seven ministers responded, which means that more than one half of all the ministers did not reply at all. That is not very commendable, especially since it concerns a matter which regards them all. The catechetical instruction of the youth of the Church is a very important part of the work of a minister. Then we should have the cooperation of all of them in order to achieve the best possible means by which this instruction may bear the most fruits.

In their report the committee discuss the various answers given to their questions and the suggestions which were made. Let us just tell you something about the conclusions to which the committee came.

In the first place the committee maintain the stand that no "subjective" material should be included. Thereby they mean this: Many books written as helps with catechetical instruction were no more than simplified handbooks for

systematic theology. Now I exaggerate a little, but our readers know what I mean. When I look at the books which I had to use when I attended catechism classes, I discover practically nothing else than a summary of the dogmatic statements of dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. Later on there were other books available, but they all - and unavoidably so - reflect the personal views of the writers; which caused them to be unacceptable as a help with catechetical instruction to other catechists.

Our committee maintain that only "objective" material should be included in such a book, material taken from Scripture, Confessions, Liturgical Forms, without "personal" additions. The explanation of the material should be left in the freedom of the catechist, the committee states. Every catechist "should be able to work with this book and at the same time retain his individuality."

Secondly, the committee would be against the breaking up of the Catechism into even smaller questions and answers. In the opinion of the committee, the revised text of the Catechism, as proposed in the report of the committee appointed for that revision, is already such a help that no further "break-down" is advisable.

As for the contents of such a textbook, the committee insists that the Catechism shall remain the "heart" of the whole book. Our Catechism is *the* confessional form intended especially to be used in the instruction of the youth of the Church, and it should remain the main instrument for this teaching.

The committee has no objection to special courses in Church History, but does object to inclusion of "Church History" in a textbook as meant here. We are, the committee argues, so blessed as to have several schools where Church History can be taught; also with the various points dealt with in the Catechism, the catechist could easily illustrate what we confess by elaborating somewhat on the controversies about this point in the history of the Church. Inclusion in a textbook, however, is not deemed advisable: only what the Church as a whole has adopted should form the contents of a textbook. Then it is acceptable to all. For the same reason the Church Order should not be part of the material, although the catechist could easily discuss various principles as found in the Church Order when speaking about specific Lord's Days.

The material, we read in the report, should be arranged in such a manner that teacher and students are "forced" to have their Bible in front of them, and that open so that they read it. The confessions should always lead us back to the Word of God itself.

The conclusions of the committee are: continue the committee; add more members; let the committee keep in close contact with the ministers and submit to the ministers for their scrutiny "blocks" of five to ten Lord's Days; maintain contact with the College; and have the draft of the whole book ready before the next Synod. If these recommendations are adopted by Synod, the committee should be able to count on the cooperation of all ministers.

If we should succeed in producing such a textbook, every catechist would be helped by it, I think, and duplication of efforts, time, and results would be prevented. We'll see what Synod 1974 will decide about this.

vO

school X crossing

LIFE AND HEALTH

Perhaps too often we take the life and health of the teachers and students for granted. Once in a while the Lord reminds us that both are a gift from Him. In Burlington, a teacher and some students were involved in accidents. However, the Lord has spared the life of all and they are already recovering. The principal of the John Calvin School in Smithville Mr. M. VanderVelde has been ill for some time and has been relieved of his duties till at least next September. May the Lord graciously grant him a full recovery and hear the prayers of students and parents. From other school bulletins I could gather that students and teachers alike have been on sick leave. It is good that once in a while we are shaken up a bit in order to realize that we should also pray for the life and health of our children as well as of our teachers. The Lord has been good in granting us several schools, but we need the protecting care of our heavenly Father every day or else our school buildings do not mean much.

Life and health are often taken for granted, but I noticed in some school newsletters already a few warnings to the parents not to slacken in their parental responsibilities and obligations. Once the school is there (the students and teachers), parents seem inclined to relax somewhat. And this is understandable to a certain extent. In some congregations it has been a real struggle in more than one respect to come to the opening of a reformed elementary school. When finally the doors opened, many felt a great relief. This in itself is not wrong. We must struggle hard in faith but we may also at times relax in faith. But we may never take our students or our teachers for granted! As one minister said it once in a sermon: the devil has tried very hard to prevent the establishing of the school. Now that the Lord has given us a school, the devil can not undo this anymore, but he will try very hard to undermine it. This can happen when for instance the parents relax and think: now that we have our own school, it is all right and enough! There is then the danger

that the parents forget that *first* part of their promise they made at the baptism of their children: that they *themselves* in the first place would bring up and instruct their children. This part cannot be delegated to the teachers. As YARROW's *School News* puts it: "Both the upbringing and education are the responsibility of the parents. The second of these, because of lack of time or ability, is now almost impossible to complete in the home. Thus parents have delegated responsibility for education to the school board. The first, upbringing, remains, however, the task of the home and cannot be delegated to the school". Indeed, this is the first requirement for the life and the health of the schools.

COMMUNION OF CARETAKERS

In the public schools, caretakers are usually required to be members of one of the Unions. In our schools we do not have such a "closed shop". Rather the opposite. In the John Calvin School of Yarrow, B.C., the members of the School Society are listed as janitors. The list is published in their *School News*. There are more congregations where the members have taken it upon themselves to cut down the cost by taking turns in cleaning the schools. An excellent idea! It more or less forces all the members to come to school themselves once in a while and see for themselves. This way the members cannot just be spectators on the side. What struck me about the Yarrow "caretakers' union" is the fact that only the *sisters* seem to do the janitorial work. Wonder why? Are the men too good to help out? Or are they more of a nuisance than a help so that the sisters want to do it by themselves? Seems like we have a "closed shop" after all!

PURCHASED PROPERTY

The London School Society purchased with unanimous consent some property in the city of London. I have no further details at the moment but they will certainly follow in the next *Maranatha* newsletter of LONDON. We cannot always oversee the task

that lies before us. But when the Lord places us before it, we will just have to be obedient. Then the Lord will show us the way. After all, God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light upon our path. That still applies today! But that lamp and that light is not the kind of lamp that we usually have in mind. We are so used to electric lights, powerful flashlights, etc., that we forget that the writer of Psalm 119 was used to a small oil lamp that spread much less light than our flashlights. It gave enough light for ONE STEP AT A TIME! We do not see all the implications and all the consequences of our calling immediately. The Lord shows us one step at a time. Let us keep on taking the right steps in the right direction.

SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS?

Some school boards have a hard time finding teachers for the term starting September '74. I would like to pass on the words written in *Home and School* of BURLINGTON: "We hope and pray, however, that the tight situation on this year will relax. May many of the parents guide their children towards a teaching career, a vital part of Kingdom work. Even though this may not bring the required relief next year, we hope that those who are still teaching in public and Christian schools may come to see the distinctiveness of Reformed education."

One teacher in Burlington is going to exchange places with her sister. Miss J. Van Dijke is leaving and will make room for her sister Miss L. Van Dijke of Houston, B.C. In addition, Miss H. Muis of Burlington and Miss J. Sneep and Mr. S. Kuypers of Amersfoort, the Netherlands, have been appointed. CARMAN has appointed as its third teacher Mr. C. Meliefste of Coaldale, Alberta. Carman, as you may remember, started last September with grades 1 to 6 but will now be able to add grade 7 as well, and hopefully more grades in the future.

EXPANSION

Carman wants to add to its present building and had a very successful drive to raise the extra funds for this project. In April two-thirds of the cost of addition was received already. Burlington has its own expansion problems. There are at the moment 289 pupils and the facilities are too crowded. They have 10 full-time and 2

part-time teachers using 8 classrooms and 1 portable divided into 2 small rooms. They are still considering whether to expand with a gym/auditorium complex with 2 classrooms or to build a new school building.

RAISING MONEY

In HAMILTON the Ladies' Auxiliary raised \$200.00 by selling fertilizer. A barbecue for the young people, a dinner sometime in September, and a bazaar at the end of November are also planned. These sisters are certainly not shortsighted! At a membership meeting the new budget for \$46,500 was approved. In Burlington the P.T.A. raised \$500 in 3 collections of newspapers. The price is around \$30 a ton. A worthwhile activity.

ALL THINGS COMMON

What is needed for reformed education should of course not be dependent on projects like bazaars, etc., although these are often a source of fun and entertainment. But the amount necessary should not *depend* on these things. For then it would in many cases depend on our own selfishness. That is, I think, a danger of the bazaars. Children also go along and are very eager to buy almost any bargain they can get their hands on. Their motive (and even that of the adults) is not always to help the school. Let us be careful in these things, and not make our children hungry for a bargain for themselves. However, this is only one aspect. What we should remember is that in our communion we have all things in common. That is exactly what the early christian church in Jerusalem did. They heard the first sermon after Pentecost and those who believed continued first of all steadfastly in the *doctrine* of the apostles. Because of that unity of faith we have, we also can and may continue steadfastly in the fellowship together, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. See Acts 2:41-47. But it never *stops* there! Those that believed had all things in common and they sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all, as every man had need.

By the time you read this, it will be the season of the summer vacation. We spend many dollars for our relaxation and enjoyment during the summer months. There is nothing wrong with that, provided we do not break up the communion of saints during these months. There is a need

for reformed education. There is a need for more staff members. There is a need for expansion in some schools. There is a need for reformed education on the secondary level. There is a need for money. And that money belongs not to any of us. It belongs to the Lord who gives it to us to be used in His service. Do we enjoy ourselves this summer while others are in need? Do we indeed have all things in com-

mon? Are we willing to share our goods with other members? The early Church of the Lord even SOLD their property to help others. I don't think that is necessary for us yet. But if it would be necessary, would you be willing to sell and share? Well, let us at least share our surplus with the needy. Also with those who need reformed education daily. ALL things in common . . . M.C. WERKMAN



Press Release

Classis Ontario-South held on June 12, 1974.

1. Rev. M.C. Werkman on behalf of the convening Church of Chatham opens the meeting by asking the delegates to sing Psalm 131:1, 2, 3. He reads Acts 2:37-47 and leads in prayer. He welcomes the delegates. After mentioning the disappointment of Hamilton that Rev. VanOene declined their call, he expresses the prayer that the Church of Hamilton may soon receive a pastor and teacher. He also mentions that Rev. Huizinga declined the call of the Church of Launceston as well as that of the Church of Winnipeg.

2. The delegates of the Church of Grand Rapids check the credentials, which are found to be in good order.

3. Classis is constituted:
Chairman - Rev. A.H. Dekker
Clerk - Rev. G. VanRongen
Assessor - Rev. W. Huizinga

4. After an addition the agenda is adopted.

5. The clerk of the Classis of March 13, 1974, states that in Art. 9 of the Acts there was the following omission: "and further officially to adopt an English translation of the Form for Marriage accordingly".

6.A. Reports.

1. The Church of Smithville audited the books of the classical treasurer and found them to be in good order.

2. The Church of Smithville reports that they have postponed the Regional Synod planned, D.V., for May 15, 1974, because Classis Ontario North did not elect delegates for this Regional Synod. The Classis of Ont. South advises the Church of Smithville to convene a Regional Synod on Aug. 21, 1974. Classis Ont. South expresses its regret that Classis Ont. North of March

21, 1974, did not only request Regional Synod of May 15, 1974, but also informed the convening Church that it decided "not to elect delegates to Regional Synod", which put the convening Church before an accomplished fact. This expression of regret will be sent to the Regional Synod by means of an instruction.

3. Reports of church-visitations to the Churches of Watford, Lincoln, Smithville and Chatham are given.

B. An appeal was dealt with.

7. As delegates to the next Regional Synod are appointed:

MINISTERS

[<i>primi</i>]	[<i>secundus</i>]
Rev. G. VanRongen	Rev. A.H. Dekker
Rev. M.C. Werkman	
Rev. P. Kingma	
Rev. W. Huizinga	

ELDERS

[<i>primi</i>]	[<i>secundi</i>]
L. Haan	A. Koster
G. Gritter	P.A. TenHaaf
U. Krikke	J. Oosterhoff
W. Wildeboer	G. Ravensbergen

8. Question Period ad Art. 41 C.O. is held.

9. Personal Question Period is held.

10. The Church of Grand Rapids will convene the next classis to be held Sept. 11, 1974, in London, starting at 10 A.M., D.V.

Chairman - Rev. M.C. Werkman
Clerk - Rev. A.H. Dekker
Assessor - Rev. G. VanRongen

11. The Acts are read and adopted.

12. The Press Release is read and adopted.

13. Censure ad Art. 43 C.O. is held.

14. Rev. A.H. Dekker asks the delegates to sing Psalm 84:6 and closes the meeting with prayer.

On behalf of Classis,
W. Huizinga

Ruling Elders²

The question is: What is the background and how could such thoughts as a rather important distinction between the office of a minister and that of a ruling elder come into existence? By what were such thoughts promoted?

I see one of the underlying causes in what the Westminster Confession states concerning the Church. For our purpose I quote from Article 25.

The catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

II. The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel, (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all these throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.

III. Unto this catholic visible church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints in this life, to the end of the world; and doth by his own presence and Spirit according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto.

IV. The catholic church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible. And particular churches which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them.

Quoting from the 1957 edition of *The Form of Government* of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, we hear the same sounds.

1. Jesus Christ, who is now exalted far above all principality and power, hath erected in this world a kingdom, which is his church.

2. The universal church consists of all those persons, in every nation, together with their children, who make profession of the holy religion of Christ and of submission to his laws.

3. As this immense multitude cannot meet together in one place to hold communion or to worship God, it is reasonable, and warranted by Scripture example, that they should be divided into many particular churches.

4. A particular church consists of a number of professing Christians, with their offspring, voluntarily associated together for divine worship and godly living, agreeably to the Holy Scriptures, and submitting to a certain form of government.

In the same line are the words from Chapter VIII (Of church government and the several kinds of judicatories):

And we hold it to be expedient, and agreeable to Scripture and the practice of the primitive Christians, that the church be governed by congregational, presbyterial, and synodical assemblies.

We may say that the general thought is that the office of a minister of the Word has been given to the Church, and then understood as the Church in general. The minister is thus considered to be an "officer" of the Church Catholic, receiving his calling through a local congregation. (at least in "normal" cases), but not thereby becoming specifically an officer or office-bearer OF that local congregation. He is and remains an office-bearer of the Church Universal, which becomes evident in this that he is a member of the Presbytery, which ordains him, which receives him, which installs him in the local congregation. It is the Presbytery which keeps the supervision and the right to discipline him.

The situation concerning the ministers of the Gospel being thus, there is, of course, the difficulty regarding the question what, then, the Ruling Elders are, what the character is of their office. Their office is local, in distinction from that of the minister of the Gospel. But on what, then, is their office based? Once that distinction has been made, how can one maintain that there is no basic difference between the Minister of the Gospel and the Ruling Elder? Thus we arrive at the solution of the Ruling Elder as the representative of the people, in whatever manner one wishes to explain it: either in the line of Hodge, who sees them as the instruments through which the church members exercise their right to partake in the government of the Church, or in the line of Thornwell, who explains it as "chosen rulers" who are the "mouth", the "hands" of the Church as a whole, by which the Church as a whole fulfils her Christ-given task.

One cannot escape the difficulty which Loudon formulated as follows: "It is admittedly difficult today to endorse the supposed scriptural basis and authority for the elder's office, as this is set forth in the Westminster *Form of Presbyterial Church Government*." (42) "The term 'presbyter' itself," he writes, "is somewhat alien to the Church of Scotland, which stresses the one unique and essential ministry of the Word and Sacraments and associates with the ministry in the government of the Church, not ruling presbyters, but elders or *seniores*; that is to say, elders of the people with a call and commission to *rule*." (44)

No satisfactory solution of the above difficulty will ever be obtained unless it is acknowledged that the offices of both the teaching elder and of the ruling elder are local. It is tried to prove that by "presbytery" is meant a larger body which had authority over more than one congregation. *The Form of Church-Government of 1645* states that "The scripture doth hold forth, that many particular congregations may be under one presbyterial government." Scriptural "proof" for that statement is: the Church of Jerusalem consisted of more congregations than one, yet the elders of that church are mentioned as meeting together for acts of government: which proves that those several congregations were under one presbyterial government. Further "proof": there were more congregations than one in Ephesus, yet they were under one presbyterial government.

As a result, when Paul mentions the laying on of hands by the presbytery, the body of elders, this is explained as the (Presbyterian) Presbytery, not as the local Consistory, the Elders of the local Church together as a body. I Tim. 4:14. The terms presbyter, overseer or bishop, teacher, pastor, are all considered to be the designation of one particular class of office-bearers and then exclusively the group of the ministers of the Word.

It is not our task today to prove from the Scriptures that the manner in which the Reformed Churches maintain

the equality of the offices and their local character, is in harmony with the Scriptures. May it therefore suffice that we just mention a few points.

The term "presbyter" should not be confined to the ministers of the Word, for when the Apostle writes to Timothy, "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in preaching and teaching", 5:17, one has to follow a rather crooked way of reasoning if one wishes to conclude from this text that it applies exclusively to the ministers of the Gospel. The task of "ruling" is clearly given to the elders, the presbyters, and of some of the presbyters it is said that they labour in preaching and teaching. Here we find a diversity of tasks, not a difference of rank or position.

The New Testament uses the terms overseer or bishop, pastor, presbyter alternately, although presbyter includes what we call deacons. We do find the combination "overseers and deacons", Philp. 1:1, but never the combination "presbyters and deacons". The term "presbyter", elder, designates all office-bearers in the New Testament



Pak Ae Ja, an orphan from the Eternal Love Christian orphanage, continues to receive best wishes for her recovery from her Canadian Reformed friends in Ontario. Several girls here have sent her cards and letters, some even included money and gifts. Mr. Park, the director of the orphanage, finds it impossible to personally thank all these well-wishers. He wrote to us on April 22: "Thank-you very much for a card with a kind note on it. It was for Pak Ae Ja and dated April 9. She was more than happy to have it and find a dollar with a doll from an unknown person. With the gift money, we bought her some apples. She liked them very much. I am sending a photo of her. The doll she holds was sent by a girl at your church. Ae Ja likes to have fun with it. She came home from the hospital on March 23. She is gradually recovering. Please pray a lot for her."

*Mrs. F. Vander Boom,
Secr. CRWRF, Burlington*

Church, divided into overseers or bishops and deacons. The bishops, the overseers, are then again divided into those who only rule and those who also labour in preaching and teaching. But there is no indication whatsoever that their office had a more than local reach. On the contrary, from the address of the letters which John has to write to the seven Churches in Asia we may draw the conclusion that already in those days there was one particular overseer who was called the "angel of the Church", the messenger, but the messenger of that particular Church.

The Reformed Churches do differentiate between the office of a minister of the Word and what we would call for a moment that of a ruling elder. But they do uphold the local character of both. There is a difference in that a minister is allowed to preach and teach also in other Congregations, but only upon the request of the Consistory of that other Church! No one shall go anywhere to preach, to teach, to visit (other than socially) without the knowledge and consent of the Consistory of that Church.

Of both, the minister of the Word and the elder, the Reformed Churches maintain the divine character of their office. Yes, they are chosen by the Congregation, but that does not mean that there the source of their authority is to be sought and found. It only means that in this way they receive the office. In their activities, however, they are not the instruments or organs of the Church, but the instruments and organs of Christ, Whom it pleases to govern and feed His Church by their hand.

We therefore reject the whole expression "representatives of the people" in whatever manner one would wish to explain it. The difference between the work of the minister of the Word and the other elders is a difference which has been forced upon the Church by the development of errors and the necessity to have some who made it their special task to teach the Church and to refute errors. That also other Churches make use of the services of the ministers of the Word does not cause their office to be of a more general nature. That candidates are examined at a classis and that a classis has to approve of a call extended to a minister does not make them office-bearers of a classis: therein the Churches have only taken certain safety measures to protect themselves. Further, in this manner a minister receives the right, if asked, to preach and teach in other Churches. But his ordination and/or installation takes place in a local Church.

And as local office-bearers, the presbyters, the bishops, take heed to themselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made them guardians, to feed the Church of the Lord which He obtained with His own blood. They feed and nourish, they guard and govern, they tend the flock of God, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as lording it over those in their charge but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd if manifested they will receive the unfading crown of glory.

W.W.J. VAN OENE

*Introduction delivered at the Office-bearers' Conference, held in Burlington on Saturday, March 30, 1974.

CORRECTION

The article "Ruling Elders" in our previous issue read on p. 2, second column, third paragraph: "It must be said that, to my knowledge, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has not dropped the expression . . ." This should have read ". . . has dropped".

Press Review

SIGNALS FROM KUITERT.

In the May 1974 issue of *The Outlook* Rev. Edward Heerema gives a review of the book *Signals from the Bible*. This is an English translation of the booklet *Verstaat gij wat gij leest* by the well-known prof. dr. H.M. Kuitert of the "Vrije Universiteit" in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Dr. Lewis B. Smedes did the translation. The Rev. Heerema writes:

This little book is presented by the author, Dr. Harry M. Kuitert, as "a modest offer to help in reading the Bible" (p.9). The publisher's back-cover promotion declares that "Dr. Kuitert has provided a modern guide" to be used "wherever Christians want to know what the Bible really 'says'."

Further Rev. Heerema informs the readers:

Of the Bible Kuitert says: "Everyone can read it. But can everyone get hold of what the writers themselves understand by their words, their figures of speech, their own special idiom?" (pp. 8 - 9).

And then he asks the question:

What conception of inspiration is at work in this little book? What happens to the hermeneutical principle that Scripture must interpret Scripture? . . . Do we get the authentic Word when we emphasize the cultural conditioning of the writers and neglect the mind of the primary author of the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit?

When we deviate from the principle that Scripture must interpret Scripture and think that the congregation needs the modern scholar as his guide, we soon do not understand the truth anymore. Examining Kuitert's handling of certain biblical words and concepts Rev. Heerema continues with how in this little book

The important subject of "God and the gods" is discussed. What sets God apart from gods? The gods "cannot do what a god can be expected to do . . . These gods? They don't do anything at all" (p.11) . . . "But when the Bible preaches that the Lord is God it amounts to this: God demonstrates His reality by doing what he should be expected to do. And this is why biblical preaching is tied to *action*." (italics added by me, J.G.). The fact that in the midst of all the gods and lords (I Cor. 8:5) there is one

real God and one real Lord, means that there is only one under whose lordship life is good . . . The real God can be recognized in a crowd of thousands by one thing: He is for *man*, pro-people" (pp. 12-13).

Rev. Heerema remarks:

Such writing leaves one more than a little dizzy. Is the character of God almighty determined by the expectation of men? What about Psalm 115:3? Is human expectation as to when "life is good" a measure of the reality of God? Is it the obvious human decision that God is always "for *man*, pro-people" and never "against people"? . . . What about the inhabitants of Canaan that God ordered the Israelites to wipe out? What about Matthew 7:22-23? And what about the "goats" on the day of final judgment?

Further he speaks of "Kuitert's activism" and idea of the "activist God" as follows:

The Bible does not "explain God", but rather "God is God in the doing of His wonderful acts" (p.3, italics by K.) . . . Kuitert's activism appears also when he speaks of Matthew as preaching "Jesus as the great liberating act of God in history" (p.17). Furthermore, Jesus, spoken of by Paul as the image of God in Colossians 1:15, "in his life of action is as like God as one drop of water is like another." Hence Kuitert renders John 14:9 as follows: "He who has seen me (in action) has seen the Father" (pp. 32-33).

Although it is true that God is the active One and that He has made Himself known in His deeds (explaining His deeds in His revealing, prophetic Word, though), Kuitert's "activism" must be seen in the light of modern, liberal theological thought. That means: in the light of the theology of revolution. This theology sees Israel's God as the God of the Exodus, which would then mean: the God of *revolutionary* action. He freed the Israelite slaves from the Egyptian tyrant. And in the same way Jesus is the real Son of this "activist" God in revolting against the Jewish "establishment" of His days. The "doctrine" of Kuitert is an adaptation of the Word of God to modern, marxist philosophy. And this false "doctrine" is therefore so dangerous, in that it uses true "truths" of what God has revealed

about Himself, in an unbiblical and antichristian system. This is Satan disguised as an angel of light.*

In the light of this modern theology of revolution we must also see Kuitert's emphasis on what Rev. Heerema points at almost at the end of his article: Kuitert says:

"Our final reward is earth, the Kingdom of God that shall come *here*".

What modern theology calls the Kingdom of God is basically the same as the "hope" of the socialist and communist: the final earthly state of peace which man will bring about in his own power: the earthly and human paradise in which man fully has become "god".

Rev. Heerema ends his article in this way:

The book is really not properly titled. It should not be called *Signals from the Bible*, but rather *Signals from Kuitert*.

It is our hope that many in the Christian Reformed churches will see the danger of books like this.

Are we, are our young people, able to discern the false doctrine and such antichristian influence, disguised as Christian guidance?

J. GEERTSEMA

*If one wants to read more about this idea of the God of Exodus in a modern "light", and can still read Dutch, one can find it e.g. in *De Akker is de Wereld*, a collection of studies from the hand of Ds. D.K. Wielenga J.D. zn, pp. 157-75.



THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE
Published biveekly 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
Phone (204) 222-5218

ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:
CLARION

P.O. Box 54, Fergus
Ontario, Canada N1M 2W7

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editor: W. W. J. VanOene
Co-Editors: W. Helder, D. VanderBoom

REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS:

J. M. Boersema, J. Faber, E. Gosker,
W. Huizinga, P. Kingma, H. J. Ludwig,
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SUBSCRIPTIONS:

\$13.50 per year (to be paid in advance).

ADVERTISEMENTS:

\$3.50 per column inch (width of column:
one-third of page). Contract rates upon
request.

news medley

The harvest is getting smaller the closer we come to the holidays. If every colleague has the same experience which I have every year, that he will agree with me that, the closer one gets to his holidays, the more things still have to be done. One would think that, once the catechism classes have been concluded for the season, more evenings would be available for some sort of relaxation. No sir! You are almost more short of evenings just before your holidays start than when you are in the middle of the season. Yet this activity is not reflected in the events that are announced in bulletins, etc. From these one would get the impression that hardly anything is going on.

Our readers already know that we mention only fortieth wedding anniversaries; they also know that we make exceptions when it concerns ministers. Thus we extend our heartfelt congratulations to the Rev. and Mrs. G. Van Rongen, who celebrated their thirtieth wedding anniversary. This celebration took place in the Netherlands, amidst their relatives in Schiedam and surroundings. Since their children all live down south ("down under", I should say) and since they were planning anyway to bring their (delayed) visit to the Netherlands, it is a nice combination to have this celebration there at the same time. We wish our brother and sister many more fruitful years, fruitful for themselves, their children and grandchildren, but also for the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ in which my colleague has been allowed to serve for thirty years. As Churches here we also expect to receive the benefit from this.

During their holidays in the Netherlands, the Rev. VanRongen will conduct services in his former congregations. He will find that many things have changed and that many members of those congregations do not know him. The number of those with whom special bonds existed so many years ago has dwindled and a new generation has arisen for whom the names of previous ministers are just that: names. But maybe I am a little pessimistic.

We may as well say a few more things about Grand Rapids, since we said something about their minister anyway. The Ladies Auxiliary brought an amount of \$250.00 together by means of a bazaar. The activities of our sisters are such that we even are no longer surprised when we hear such figures: we have become so used to the fruits of their skills to scrape money together for all sorts of worthwhile purposes that we act as if this is just what we expected to be the profit.

Pro Ecclesia contained an agreement, made between the Consistory and the minister, and covering the solemnization of marriages. In this agreement the course is laid out which will be followed by the minister and is to be followed by the couples who wish to get married. Point 7 reads: "The Consistory shall be officially represented at the marriage solemnization." That is a good point, I think. Many couples show the courtesy of sending the Consistory a wedding invitation, and the presence of an official "delegation" from the Consistory shows the interest which the Church has in marriage. For marriage is a very important event which affects the whole Church.

In a note the Rev. VanRongen adds the following

remark: "If the General Synod will accept the proposal made by our Classis, the situation will change since the solemnization of marriages will then take place in an official church service."

It is exactly that point against which I have serious objections and which made me remark some time ago that that would be a tremendous step backwards.

I am convinced that in a Church service we should do only those things which are "Church matters". The solemnization of a marriage is no Church-matter, however much the Church may be affected by it. In our Church Order we have a provision that no funeral sermons or funeral services shall be instituted. It does affect the Church when a member passes away, and my experience has been that a very large part of the Congregation is present when a funeral takes place. I also deem it a beautiful thought that one is carried out from the Church building where he or she in most instances worshipped with the Church of God. In the Netherlands funerals mostly took place from the residence of the deceased; yet even there an elder was present besides the minister as a representative of the whole Church. But in no way was a funeral considered to be a Church matter. In like manner, we are avoiding everything that might give the impression as if we are conducting a service when a funeral is conducted in the Church building.

Up until this present day I have been unable to see the **basic** difference between a "funeral service" and a "marriage service". Neither event is a matter of the Church as such.

By baptism we are openly ingrafted into the Christian Church; with the holy supper we are sitting together as one body; ordination and installation of office-bearers concern the Church as a whole. But marriage is a matter only of two persons and in no way on a level with the other things I mentioned above. It is no matter of the Congregation as such. I cannot see how a Consistory would have the right to call the Congregation together for a service upon the request of two members, not even when the time of that service is arranged so that the Congregation can be present, as is deemed advisable and would be necessary in such a case.

Winnipeg also has concluded some negotiations with the city concerning their property. If I understand the information well, then the Church will sell to the city some part of their property for a future new highway and they will buy some additional property to compensate for that loss. Maybe they now will get the necessary permits and be able to start building. Hopefully they increase the size of their building fund somewhat by the proceeds of the sale of the old typewriter. I doubt that it will amount to much, for things must be in a pretty bad shape if a Church is going to discard them!

It appears that the Women's Societies of Carman and Winnipeg usually have sort of a "League Day" in June. June, we read, is the best month for that, but this year there are several factors which render it practically impossible to organize such a day. Many Carman ladies would be unable to attend, since the cold, wet season delayed seeding. There are happier reasons too, and we gladly mention them. There is in the first place the National Rally, organized by the young people. But further, "a few early June weddings, with showers etc. will keep the ladies pretty busy." Congratulations! To compensate for their "loss" the ladies have now organized an evening, at which the Rev. M.C. Werkman will have a speech. The

mothers thus benefit from the crumbs that fall off the tables of the children. But I was always told, "Kruimeltjes is ook brood!"

Before we return to the East, there is one more thing which I wish to mention about the West. I read it in the Press Release of the Regional Synod held on May 8 and 9. And I must admit that it causes me great concern. It is the following part:

Question-period is held. It is asked that a change in the procedures be made for future meetings in order that the delegates will be enabled to study the material on the agenda in advance. The following decision is made:

Regional Synod, having heard this request, decides:

a. to request the convening Church for the next Regional Synod to send, wherever possible, the material (appeals included) placed on the agenda, to the delegates appointed to the Regional Synod, three weeks before Synod will convene;

b. to appoint a Committee with the mandate:

1) to draft regulations for the improvements of the procedures of future Regional Synods, and

2) to report to next Regional Synod, and send copies of their report in time to the Churches.

I should like to point out what the reasons for my concern are, and I sincerely hope that they find response within the Churches of the West and that this development be stopped.

In the first place: the press release states that this matter was brought up with the **question-period**. It cannot be that one of the Churches brought this up, for the members of the Regional Synod were not there as delegates from their Churches but from their Classes. I am wondering, therefore, how this was brought up and dealt with in a **question period**. For the time being, my impression is that it was brought up in an illegitimate way. Question periods - and definitely at major assemblies - are no opportunities to bring up matters and to make proposals. My question is: Who authorized any member of this Synod to bring this matter up? And from what did that Synod derive the authority to deal with it and to make the above decision? I see a great danger here: the danger that matters are brought up at the meeting itself and that a following major assembly finds something on its table for which the Churches have not asked. The next Regional Synod of the West will already have such a thing.

It may be known what I think of sending copies of appeals beforehand. I deem that totally wrong. One appeals to the major assembly, and this assembly is not there until such a moment at which it is constituted. An appeal is not a matter about which the Churches may express their judgment, such in contrast with the matters which belong to the competence and jurisdiction of the major assembly in harmony with article 30 C.O. Appeals should not be made known before the major assembly is there. Such even apart from their possible confidential nature.

Some serious question marks I place with the mandate to an appointed committee: the charge to draft regulations for the improvement of the procedures of future Regional Synods. It is here that I fear a development which the Christian Reformed Church is still trying to perfect. As for all the Regional Synods which I have attended in the past: I have not found any reason for

wishing that we had some "Rules of Order" for our ecclesiastical assemblies. At all the Regional (and General) Synods which I attended the directives for procedures were drawn up - very brief - by the respective Synods themselves and no one decried the lack of a set of regulations.

One has only to look through, for instance, **Christian Reformed Church Government** by Howard B. Spaan, just to mention one source, to see what the result is once one starts out on the road of formulating and adopting regulations regarding procedures. And whoever has read the proposal to adopt a "Judicial Code", put before the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church of this year, and some of the articles which were written about this proposal, can understand it why I am very scared (and I mean it!) of any development which could lead the Canadian Reformed Churches into this direction. That's why I wrote the above lines. That's why I ask the brethren in the West: "Please, don't continue in this way!!"

We must conclude our Medley. To this end we return to Ontario, the two Burlingtons.

The last time I saw the Church building-to-be of Burlington West, they had all the arches up, but due to the wet weather they were still wrapped in plastic. (Some people say it is wet only in B.C.!) I mean of course, that the **arches** were still wrapped in plastic. One has to be very careful with one's words. The writer in Burlington West's bulletin claimed that I was mistaken when I stated that those purchasing a bond would get their money back after twenty years. Was I? Are there not some who will have to wait twenty years? Yes, a bond may be paid off sooner. But I do not know (and don't think that I am longing for revenge!!) whether it is correct what the bulletin stated: "Ours is a serial bond and a certain amount is being paid back every year." As I understand it, I would urge my best friends to buy those bonds: that's what I call multiplying your money! But maybe I'm wrong again.

From Burlington East I mention two things. In the first place that the Consistory "gratefully received the information that our Committee (for Public Relations, vO) has started to produce true Reformed tracts, etc. . . . The need was felt that we should have a central Canadian Reformed organization to produce and distribute truly Biblical reading materials for outsiders."

I am afraid that, as usual, the burden would be carried again by just a few. But as far as the contents of this news item are concerned, I wholeheartedly agree. Years ago a tiny pamphlet was prepared - if I recall correctly, written by our late brother Kouwenhoven and first issued on the initiative of the Toronto Church - by means of which outsiders were informed about the basic facts about the Churches. We need more such material. Work on it.

Further, the Consistory received a "proposal that we should present our West sister Church a Holy Supper set at the occasion of the completion of their new church building. The Consistory decided (because more similar suggestions were heard from the Congregation) to ask West if they would appreciate such a gift, and in that case would prefer a completely new set or the one that we have been using together for a number of years ('for sentimental reasons', said the letter.)" I think that this is an excellent idea; the only thing that might have been nicer (although it would have been very difficult) is: if they could have kept it a secret.

Have a good holiday, all of you.

vO

Country Walks

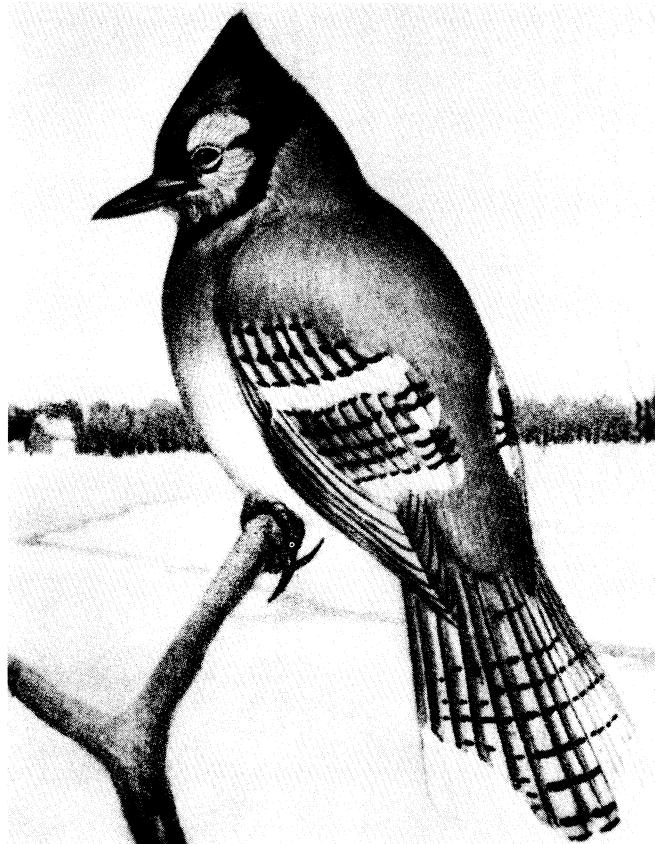
Probably at no other time of the year can we observe how well and thoroughly the starlings have taken possession of this country as during the latter part of May and the first weeks of June, when practically every bird of the wild is busy with either the incubating of their eggs or with the rearing of their young.

At this time, when the dandelions are finished and the mustard colours the fields, when the fencerows and valleys of the country exhibit the white blossoms of the hawthorns, the starlings have reared their young and whole groups of them forage around with the new generation who with their so familiar croakings and squeals continuously demand food from their parents.

These young starlings were hatched in the most unlikely places, holes with electrical wire running through them in the lamp-posts at busy intersections, on top of horizontal rainspouts, cracks in the woodwork of even new houses - any place giving shelter from the elements was gratefully accepted. As starlings feel equally at home in the country, the new generation also poured out of mailboxes, knot holes in the old maples along Peel's country roads and the fenceposts, of which every other one seems to have a hole in it. Once more the hostilities have flared up against these "pesky" starlings as they have reproduced once more and people seem powerless to stop the increase in their numbers. Little do people realize that they have only themselves to blame for the starling's existence on this continent and that a lot of money and time was spent in order to establish them on this side of the Atlantic. Little do they realize that starlings are not considered a plague in Europe or Asia, where they were ever since Creation. They simply don't realize that a certain area can only support a certain number of any bird, including the starlings, and that overpopulation will automatically decrease their numbers as not enough food would be available. No, it is odd that so many people dislike the starlings despite their many good points, especially when you see the heartwarming way the old birds slave to feed their offspring.

Despite the noise of the starlings, quite often drowning out the sound of other birds, enough other birds are about to make this time of year the most interesting. Although the bobolinks are supposedly on the decline, once more a pair has chosen the field behind us to next in and every day we hear its song. It is too hard to describe in words the sound it produces. It seems carefree, happy and so pent up with joy that it comes bubbling out in one long stream of exuberant notes. With its carefree flight when it wings unhurriedly over the field, it reminds me of children coming out of school and in no hurry to get home. Many a time have I seen a farmer stop work to watch a bobolink and to listen to its remarkable singing, and it requires something special to stop a farmer from work around this time.

Meadowlarks, too, have a nest there and their song, together with that of the vesper and song sparrows, penetrates right into my backyard. It is during these June evenings, when daylight lingers till 9 o'clock, that I enjoy making an inspection tour across the field towards Fletcher's Creek. This area, too, with its dead elms and gnarled wild maples has been the recent birthplace of many a starling, considering the racket, but the noise doesn't seem



BLUE JAY

to bother the redwinged blackbirds, who apparently saw me coming out of the backdoor and decided to let everybody know. Chimney swifts and bankswallows skim the treetops and the frightened squeal of a blue jay tells me that the warning of the redwinged blackbirds was ignored and that it remained on its nest too long.

The huge willows lining the creek banks are in full leaf and with their tremendous crowns, keeping the sunlight out and moisture in, have created the ideal haven for thousands of jewelweeds with occasionally a yellow or purple violet or plants of trillium and jack-in-the-pulpit, which past their flowering stage only show their seeds. The wild cucumbers, too, have made a start and everywhere their cucumber leaves have appeared. As they resemble the real cucumber plants in their early stage, some immigrants have been known to have transplanted them into their own garden, only to come to a sad conclusion later on.

This little-known part of Fletcher's Creek somehow always has some surprises in stock for me. Sometimes it would be a meeting with raccoons or pheasants. Another time a whole family of screech owls would try to chase me out of their domain or I'd see a great horned owl looking me in the eye. Birds like indigo buntings and great-crested flycatchers, associated with unspoiled areas in the far north, occasionally would nest along its banks.

This time it had three surprises in store for me. Way up in one of the willows there was a nest, and unlike the nests of squirrels, usually made of leaves, this one was composed of sticks and weedstalks. Seeing the long black tail of a crow over the side, I fully understood the crow's reason for nesting there. Here, although an unsafe tree was the only one available, was a place that offered solitude so unlike the evergreens downtown, where until a few years ago crows were such a common sight.

The next surprise was a pair of wrens. Never yet had I

encountered them here. According to some oldtimers they disappeared before the war already. I heard these from a hawthorn stand covering a steep bank and it took me half an hour before finally one of them ventured close enough for me to identify it correctly. Half a mile further downstream another wren appeared later on. As this one also remained on the same spot, it was unlikely that they had followed me that far. The third surprise was a family of five muskrats frolicking in the creek. Chasing one another or swimming in a file, they'd enter one hole and would come

out from others again. The most surprising part was that for years the water of Fletcher's Creek was too polluted for anything to survive in, seeing that some factories in the north end of town were unscrupulous in disposing of their waste liquids; and here a pair of muskrats had managed to raise a healthy brood.

It is gratifying to realize that hundreds of these areas still exist, and although not always unspoiled by mankind, all of them will, at one time or another, display some of the greatness of Creation.

COR TENHAGE



Press Release

Classis of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Ontario-North held on Thursday, June 13, in Toronto.

1. The Rev. W.W.J. VanOene opens the meeting on behalf of the convening church of Ottawa. Ps. 56:4, 5 is sung, whereafter Ps. 56 is read, followed by opening prayer. A word of welcome is spoken to Rev. C. Van Dam, who recently came to Brampton.

The credentials are found in good order. Burlington-East has an instruction.

2. *Classis is constituted.* The officers are: Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, chairman; Rev. C. Olij, clerk; Rev. C. VanDam, assessor.

3. After some items are added the agenda is adopted.

4. Br. C. Van Esch, classical treasurer, gives his financial report. The report is discussed. It is decided to increase the mileage allowance from 10c per mile to 15c per mile. The churches will once again be asked to contribute \$2.00 per communicant member. The treasurer is thanked for his report and for his coming to Classis.

5. *The examination of br. S. De Bruin*, student at the Theological College.

a. The following documents are found in good order. (i) Letter from the church of Burlington West testifying to his membership in that church. (ii) Letter from the faculty of the Theological College testifying that br. De Bruin completed two years of study at the College.

b. Br. De Bruin gives a sermon proposal on 1 Cor. 15:23-28. An opportunity is given for questions to be directed to br. De Bruin. Rev. G. Van Dooren asks questions on the doctrine of the church. Delegates are given an opportunity to ask questions.

c. Classis goes into executive

session and decides to give br. De Bruin preaching consent for a period of 12 months with the understandings that his sermons are discussed with the lecturer of diaconological subjects before they are delivered. Consistories are urged to regularly send their evaluations of his preaching to Rev. G. Van Dooren, as lecturer in the diaconological subjects.

d. Br. S. De Bruin is informed of the decision of classis and gives an oral promise to use his preaching consent in submission to Holy Scripture and in harmony with the summary of Scripture as the churches confess in their confessions. (The address of br. De Bruin is: R.R. #1, Waterdown, Ont. phone (416) 689-4947.

6. After lunch Classis reconvenes. Rev. Van Dam signs the form of subscription according to Article 53, C.O.

7. *Incoming Mail.*

a. Classis is informed that "Classis Ontario-South has advised the convening church for regional synod to convene this synod for August 21, 1974."

The following motion is adopted:

"Classis decided (i) to appoint delegates to Regional Synod. (ii) to write to the church of Smithville (convening church for Regional Synod) advising them to postpone the date for at least three weeks. Grounds: 1. The church of Toronto (convening church for General Synod) has set July 31 as deadline for incoming mail and thus the provisional agenda of General Synod cannot be in the possession of the Churches until by mid-August, which makes it too late to bring up any matters from this agenda. 2. The holiday season in August makes it difficult for some to attend Regional Synod then.

b. In executive session an appeal of a brother is read and brought into discussion. A

committee is appointed to draft an answer which after discussion and amendments accepted.

8. *Instruction.* The Church of Burlington-East requests advice in a matter of discipline. Advice is given.

9. The following *preaching schedule* is presented and received as information. The church of Ottawa will receive classical help on the following dates: June 30, Rev. Van Oene; July 14, Rev. Olij; July 28, Prof. Ohmann; Aug. 11, Rev. Van Dam; Aug. 25, Rev. Van Dooren; Sept. 8, Rev. VanderBoom; Sept. 22, Rev. VanOene; Oct. 6, Rev. Olij; Oct. 20, Rev. Van Dam; Nov. 10, Rev. Van Dooren; Dec. 1, Rev. VanderBoom; Dec. 22, Rev. VanOene; Jan. 12, Rev. Olij.

10. *Delegates* chosen to upcoming Regional Synod are: (alphabetically) ministers: C. Van Dam, D. VanderBoom, G. Van Dooren, W.W.J. VanOene; elders: J.D. Bouwman, F. Kampen, H. Oosterveld, H. Van Veen; alternates: Rev. C. Olij and elders H.J. Endeman, J. Gelderman, J. Tenhage.

11. *Question Period ad Article 41, C.O.* The church of Burlington-West requests advice concerning a matter of discipline and receives it. The church of Fergus suggests that the administration of the fund for needy students (ad Art. 19, C.O.) be transferred to Guelph since this simplifies the administration of the fund in view of the new situation of two congregations where there was formerly one. This is done.

12. Individual question period is held.

13. The *next classis* is set for September 5 in Toronto with Toronto as convening church. Suggested officers for next classis are: chairman - Rev. G. Van Dooren; clerk - Rev. W.W.J. VanOene; assessor - Rev. C. Olij.

14. The acts and Press Release are read and adopted.

15. Psalm 131 is sung, Rev. Van Dam leads in closing prayer and the chairman closes the meeting.

C. Van Dam, assessor

Perspectives in Teaching

TEACHING CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH

Then I looked, and lo, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. [Revelation 14:1]

In Revelation 13 John describes with vividness and horror two awesome beasts, the beast that comes out of the sea and utters haughty and blasphemous words, and the beast which rises out of the earth and causes all men to worship the beast and to be marked with that extremely haughty number that is almost God's number: six hundred and sixty-six. The one beast is allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them, the other beast causes those who do not worship the image of the beast to be slain. A horrid pair indeed. And then comes chapter 14 with those almost ludicrous words, "Then I looked, and lo, on Mount Zion stood the (little) Lamb", ludicrous because of the incongruity of those imposing

monsters and that naive lamb "as though it had been slain" (Rev. 5:6). Yet, that little lamb has gathered unto Himself the hundred and forty-four thousand who will survive Judgment day: the church.

Our students belong to the church, to the hundred and forty-four thousand who have the name of the Father and the Lamb sealed on them. They do not have that other sign, the mark of the beast, and because of that they will not be able to buy or sell; they do not bow down for the image of the beast and therefore they will be sought to be slain; they do not follow the beast with wonder and as a result they will be persecuted. Do we prepare our students for the future that awaits them?

Our students too confess their faith concerning the church in Lord's Day 21: "that I am, and forever shall remain, a living member thereof." That confession implies love for, interest in, and loyalty to the church of Christ, and the teachers have to see to it that they further such interest. Christ exhorts the churches to remain faithful to the doctrine of salvation; by maintaining that doctrine through the preaching of the gospel and exercising discipline, the church will be blessed with expansion too. We find a striking example of that in Acts 5. There we read that the Holy Spirit punishes Ananias and Sapphira for their hypocrisy with instant death (church discipline!) and, Luke writes, "none of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high honour" (5:13), and in one breath: "And more than ever believers were added to the LORD, multitudes both of men and women" (5:14). Our students in school must be taught the value of holding fast what has been revealed and confessed; it should have their interest when a minister in a magazine refutes the views of a false teacher, when a preacher in his sermon defends the biblical view over against modern or ancient heresies. By the same token, they should be alert when new ideas or forms are carried into the church, not applauding any change for the sake of change.

We do not intend to burden the school-child with matters too hard to comprehend; we do not propose a certain number of lessons on "The

Church" annually either, but we do want to create and further interest and love for the church in the child. So often pupils talk about the church in connection with a congregational meeting, a boys' and girls' society, a church service, an extended call, and then it is of paramount importance that the teacher shows *his* love for the church: children are so very sensitive! Humanly speaking, our students will need more love and interest for the church than we do, for they will be up against a stiffer proposition than we have ever been.

The church is the body of Christ. If we want to know the church we need a thorough knowledge of Christ first. If our Biblical History lessons are not sound, we do not even have to start on Church History, because the latter is all about the preservation of the first. Good Biblical History lessons will arouse love for God's Word; such love will result in love for the church which guards and maintains that treasure, be it in earthen vessels.

May our students never be ashamed to profess their love for Christ's church. May they know themselves "bound to employ their gifts readily and cheerfully for the advantage and salvation of other members" (Lord's Day XXI). May they seek, not the pomp and splendour of beast and harlot, but the sobriety of the little LAMB on Mount Zion, for He is their glorious Head, Bridegroom, and King.

EWOUDE GOSKER

Gifts

Gedurende deze zomermaanden komen weer vele Nederlandse gasten ons Theological College in Hamilton bekijken. Zo nu en dan levert dat ook een extra gift op. Zo ontving ik van een zuster uit Hoogeveen \$15.00 en van een zuster uit Oldenzaal \$25.00.

Mocht U in de maand Juli ons College willen bezoeken, dan wilt U er misschien wel rekening mee houden, dat vanaf Maandag 8 Juli tot Vrijdag 27 Juli er in het gebouw een cursus voor onderwijzers wordt gegeven. 's Morgens doceert collega Ohmann over de archaeologie enz. van het Oude Testament en 's middags hoopt ondergetekende een cursus Gereformeerde Geloofsleer te verzorgen. Maar bij deze vreugdevolle bezigheden worden we liever niet gestoord . . .

We received a donation as a memorial to Mr. P. Oosterhoff (Smithville). It was sent by Mrs. S.E.K. Jollimore, Halifax, N.S. She knew Mr. Oosterhoff "was vitally concerned with education for the ministry of your Churches." We gratefully acknowledge this thoughtful gift.

J. Faber

Letters-to-the-Editor

It is always a pleasure to hear from our readers, whether they agree with what is written in our magazine or not. Recently we had quite a few of those letters, some of them quite lengthy. We did not wish to condense them even though they took up more space than we really had available.

We must, however, request those who do send such a letter, to keep it short and to the point (something which, according to some, cannot always be said of our own reactions!). Letters to the Editor should not become articles. For articles we have our regular contributors.

From now on, if a letter to the editor exceeds what we consider to be the allowable length, we reserve the right to condense it. We had this right already, but wish to remind our readers of it now that we do not have any such letter waiting for publication at the moment. Ed.

You Shall Not Divorce (or Separate) the Church From Marriage

It has come to my attention that some hearers of my recently held sermon on the 7th commandment had some difficulty in listening correctly to the third point of that sermon. It appeared to me that some heard the opposite of what was said. Therefore I publish here the transcript of that third point, as taken from the tape.

And then in the third place, this commandment also means that you shall not divorce the *church* from marriage. And again, that we shall not do that *out of reverence for Christ*. Then it is not so that we say: well boy, well girl, son, daughter, the only thing that counts is this, that you find your boyfriend, your girlfriend, in our church: that's what counts. For if we do that, then we *are* not really keeping Christ and the church and marriage together, because then we divorce - what I spoke about in my first point - then we divorce *love* from marriage.

It is not just enough when we say: if only members of our church go together; but it is like Paul says it in verse 32 of this chapter (Ephesians V, DJ), when he speaks about that "a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one. This is a great

mystery, and I take it to mean Christ and the church".

Sexually becoming one, it is the deepest and the definite expression of the oneness of two people who really love one another; if it is not that, then it is immorality. And then together they may symbolize, those people, also in their being sexually one as the highest and definite expression of love, then that may symbolize, when they experience all this in the marriage-covenant which God has instituted, then it may also symbolize the covenant of grace which there is between Christ and his church.

Then we do not just say, very easily: if he or she is a member of our church, but then we say: is he or is she one with our Lord Jesus Christ? Does he or does she also live out of the forgiveness of sins, and show that also in showing forth that same love with which Christ has loved him or her, now also in his or her life, and is that dominating now also in your love-relationship as boy and girl? And, if so, then, does it now also become clear that therefore he or she is willing to gather with Christ, who is gathering his *church* out of this world; is he or is she willing to gather together *with* Christ, and also to *let* him or

herself be gathered by the Lord Jesus Christ into his church? That's the way we approach it!

Now if we are going to believe this, and to indeed act in this faith, then the fruit of this faith will become visible.

I will just give, as a conclusion, a few examples.

Then that will become visible also in the lives of our boys and girls, that more and more it is going to be seen in our congregation that then, before they are going to make that decisive choice of who is going to be their marriage-partner, that first they do profession of their faith in Jesus Christ, and make that also public by doing it before the congregation; and that then it also becomes visible in this, that when they are going to love one another, that they work at it that *first* they will be one in *faith* with the other party, and that they work at *that*, before their own human love is going to take over in such a strong way that it is going to dominate everything, so that then at last they are going to say: well, it doesn't matter to which church you belong. Yes, then it becomes also visible in this, that they take the words of Paul seriously, when he says that marriage is a great mystery which refers to the unity of Christ and the church: that they do *not* say: it doesn't matter too much to which church we belong; but that *together* they confront one another and *answer* the question: *What* does Jesus Christ want us to do, *also* in the matter of gathering with Him his *church*?

Then indeed we may expect, and pray for, the blessing of the Lord also over that beautiful union of boy and girl who are going to be husband and wife. Then indeed it can be honestly sung also to such couples, and we may now also sing it to one another and together, what we sing in Psalm 134:1 and 3:

Come bless the Lord with one accord, you faithful servants of the Lord,

Who in his House do stand by night, and praise Him there with all your might.

The Lord now bless you from above, from Zion in his boundless love,

Our God who heaven and earth did frame. Blest be his great and holy Name.

AMEN

[City Guide] D. DEJONG



"Te Deum Laudamus" Choir Fergus - Guelph — at their spring concert.

With thankfulness to the Lord we may once again report to you on a month's activities in His service: participating in gathering His Church from all tribes, peoples and nations. The Lord Himself gathers, while we may be His fellow labourers, employing the means He has entrusted to His people.

Stability: Through His grace the work has reached a certain level of stability. There are no great variations anymore in the number of people attending. An average of 45 adults comes very faithfully. They show interest, discuss the messages amongst themselves and with us, several of them give regular financial contributions now and a certain fellowship is beginning to develop.

Regularly there are some new visitors, some one-timers, but also some for whom it is the beginning of a regular attendance.

Since the market has been moved back to Saturday, Sunday-School attendance has increased with an average of 10 students as well: some new faces but also some "old-timers" returned. The governor of the

state of Pernambuco, Eraldo Gueiros, who is of Presbyterian background, has indicated his desire that throughout the state no more markets will be held on Sunday to enable the people to worship. If he will succeed remains to be seen: his term expires the end of this year.

Church building: Our new facilities are nearing completion, slightly later than we had anticipated. Building material are very hard to locate and prices unbelievable. As a result many are holding back stock, speculating on further price-increases. However, the constructor should be able to hand over the keys within two weeks and we have set the inauguration for Sunday-afternoon May 19th.

We intend to have a special program provided mostly by the people themselves and a regular service in the evening. It will be a memorable day, the Lord willing.

Tower and Amplifier: Thanks to the generous anonymous gift, which we acknowledged in a previous report, we were enabled to purchase a sound system with a large outdoor speaker to be installed in the independent

tower. Chimes will then announce the time of the service and invite the people to worship the Lord with us. **Church-cleaning:** Up to the present we have paid a lady from outside for the regular weekly cleaning of the building. Starting with the new building we would like to have it done by our "own people" on a voluntary basis: not to save us this small amount of money but to get the people involved wherever we can. They have to feel more and more that it is their Church and they themselves must be responsible in increasing measure. One family (Dona Ester) has already volunteered. Although she herself is still weak, her 16-year old son, Zedequias, will help her. This will be considered their "offering".

Bibles: Several people have asked me for a Bible. The price is very high and out of reach for most people: Cr. 33,00. (Two years ago Cr. 8,00!) We of course like to help those who are sincere in their request but at the same time want to avoid that we in this matter have to differentiate between the one and the other, deciding who is sincere and who isn't.

A solution may be that we set a minimum price of Cr. 7,00 for the regular attenders and subsidize the rest. This is within reach for them, even though it may require some

An Introduction To

CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

MARK

1. Alexander, J.A. *The Gospel of Mark*. (London: Banner of Truth) 1960, 444 pp.

Although somewhat dated, this work contains a rich and helpful exposition.

2. Cole, A. *The Gospel According to St. Mark*. (TNTC) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 1962, 264 pp., \$2.25. (***)

A succinct and helpful commentary.

3. Cranfield, C.E.B. *The Gospel According to St. Mark*. (Cambridge Greek New Testament Commentary) (London: Cambridge) 1960, 479 pp.

A good up-to-date commentary on the Greek text. Recommended for pastors.

4. Lane, W.L. *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*. (NICNT) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 1973, 704 pp., \$10.00. (**)

A new, in-depth commentary which fills the evangelical void on this Gospel. It contains a wealth of information.

5. Swete, H.B. *The Gospel According to St. Mark*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 1951, 434 pp., \$6.00.

A solid commentary, especially valuable for its remarks on the Greek text. Out of print.

LUKE.

1. Geldenhuys, N. *Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke*. (NICNT) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 1951, 688 pp., \$7.50. (**)

A fine, reliable commentary of extensive scholarship. The best currently available for study purposes until the Tyndale contribution makes its appearance.

2. Plummer, A. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke*. (International Critical Commentary, - ICC) (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark) 1922, 592 pp.

An able and luminous commentary. Plummer held liberal views but you will be hard pressed to find them in this volume. Recommended for pastors.

3. Stonehouse, N.B. *The Witness of Luke to Christ*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 1951, 184 pp.

An original and revealing contribution to the interpretation of Luke's outlook.

(*) Recommended for individual purchase.

(**) Recommended for societies or church libraries.

(***) Recommended for both.

J. VISSCHER

saving for a number of them, but it will give everyone who really desires the Bible the opportunity to obtain one.

Pre-Confession Class: As we have stated in previous reports, we hope to start with further instruction of the catechumens when the new building is ready. We intend to have an equal basic program for all of them, consisting of the Short Summary of the Christian Religion (Kort Begrip), Bible Knowledge and an Outline of Church History. The differentiation will be in

the explanation and in the ability to comprehend the material.

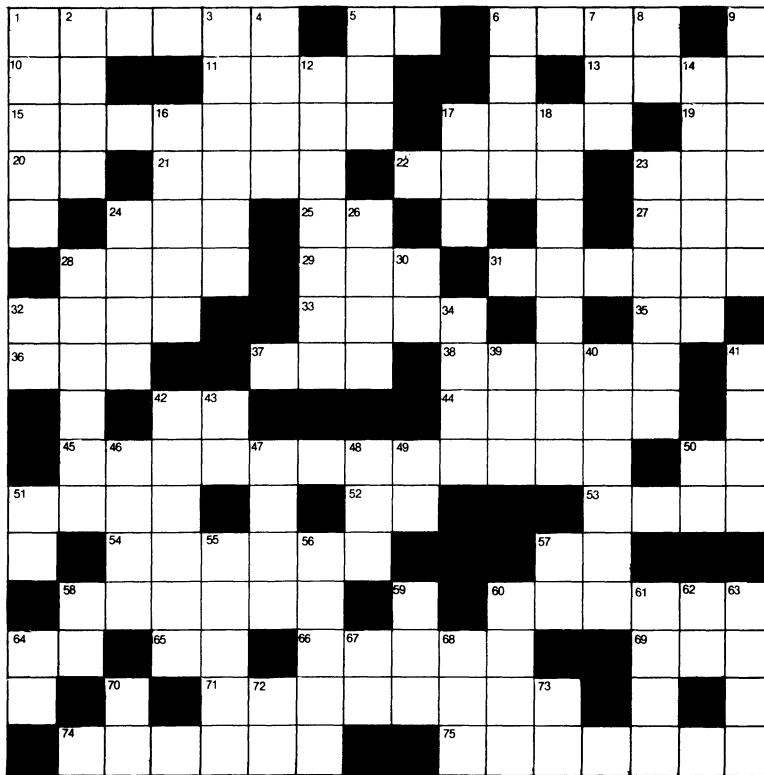
It seems best to me to split the number into two groups: 1) those who have already been members of other protestant groups and 2) those of "Roman Catholic" background. The course for the first group will have to be shorter than for the second group, while the first group will be advised to continue attending the classes of the second group even after they will have done profession of faith.

Apart from these two groups there will be at least two private students who would not really fit in either group! (I will write more about this once it gets on its way).

I intend to duplicate all the material on small sheets so that they can be pasted into scribblers and kept at home. In this way even the illiterates have all the material and usually can find one who is able to read it to them.

C. VAN SPRONSEN
(from the April report)

Puzzle No. 1



ACROSS

1. house of the Lord
5. pronoun
6. male deer
10. musical note
11. stringed instrument
13. long strip of linen
15. long-time member
17. edible seed of tropical grass
19. see 10 across
20. pronoun, plural
21. biblical name
22. single, prefix
23. boat equipment
24. large
25. see 10 across
27. number
28. female birds
29. tavern
31. a structure of wood

32. writer in verse
33. humming sound
35. lieutenant, abbrev.
36. a grain seed
37. number
38. overhead
42. to such an extent
44. distributes in charity
45. province in Canada
50. hail to the reader
51. precious stone
52. not down
53. cardinal point of compass
54. continent
57. with reference to
58. to enlist
60. diversified
64. measure of content, decimal
65. and (French)
66. large vein
69. two
71. privy
74. direction
75. to accept as true

DOWN

1. mass of dust
2. Dutch portrait painter
3. holds fast
4. ode
5. pronoun
6. twirl
7. consumed
8. Georgia
9. listener
12. understand clearly
14. Mars
16. contaminate
17. decay
18. drink
23. lots of it
24. vegetable
26. at once
28. husky in tone
30. denial
32. river in Italy
34. caused
39. a curve
40. thin strip of wood
41. cardinal point of compass
42. convince
43. 19th and 11th letter of alphabet
46. so be it
47. absent without leave, abbrev.
48. tapered rod
49. horse power
50. see 50 across
51. depart
55. rotating airfoil
56. dish
57. Egyptian sun god
58. elevated railroad
59. for
60. flower container
61. idea (French)
62. chemical symbol
63. pigeon
64. pers. pronoun
67. expression of surprise
68. kegl-like container
70. in this way
72. see 20 across
73. see 58 down

OUR COVER

Western Brook Gorge, Nfld.
[Courtesy Newfoundland and
Labrador Tourist Development
Office]