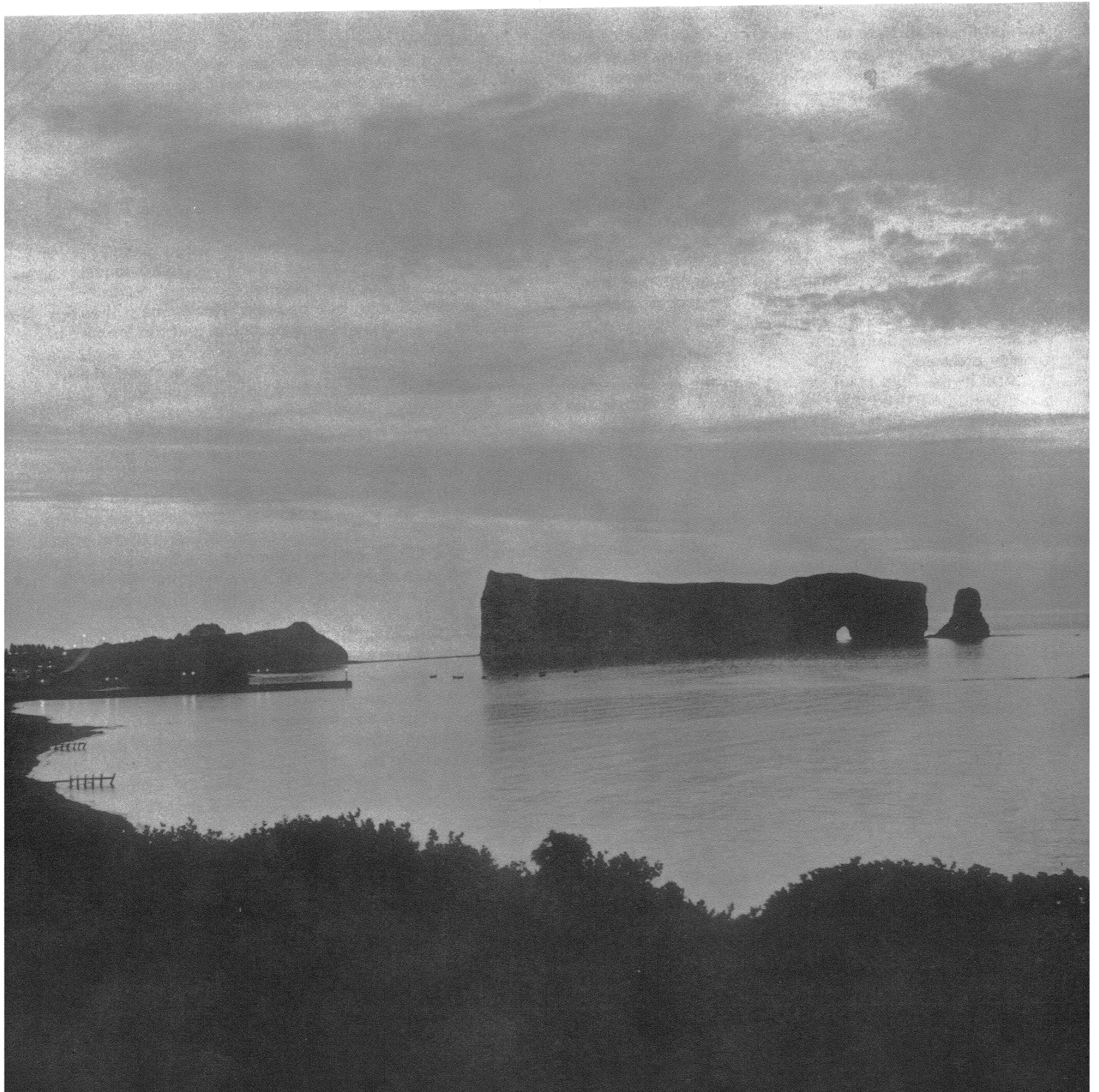


# Clarion

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# A Golden Anniversary

Recently I received *The Standard Bearer* of September 15, 1974, the 21st issue of the fiftieth volume. Its cover shows the portraits of two formerly well-known ministers and professors in the Protestant Reformed Churches: Rev. Herman Hoeksema and Rev. George M. Ophoff. Both have passed away, the latter in 1962, the former in 1965. Thus they both witnessed the absorption into the Christian Reformed Church of a large part of their beloved Protestant Reformed Churches.

Two years ago I parked my car beside the Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids and there part of history became alive for me. A few hours later I stared at the First Protestant Reformed Church, the Church of the Rev. Herman Hoeksema, not too many blocks away.

It was in 1924 that the Synod of Kalamazoo of the Christian Reformed Church adopted a statement concerning Common Grace, consisting of three points.

In the first point Synod stated, among other things, "that besides the saving grace of God shown only to the elect unto eternal life, there is also a certain favor or grace of God which He shows to His creatures in general."

The second point contains the statement that Scripture and Confession "teach that God by a general operation of His Spirit, without renewing the heart, restrains the unbridled manifestation of sin, so that life in human society remains possible."

And in the third point dealing with the so-called civic good, Synod declared that it is evident from Scripture and Confession "that God, without renewing the heart, exercises such an influence upon man that he is enabled to do civic good."

These deliverances were favourably received in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, at least in the early twenties. In the late thirties they were scrutinized and criticized by Dr. K. Schilder and others. Especially after the Liberation there came a feeling of a common bond between the Liberated Churches in the Netherlands and the Protestant Reformed Churches in the U.S.A. Rev. Herman Hoeksema finally found some who, with him, rejected the Three Points.

When Rev. Herman Hoeksema and others with him rejected the Three Points, this ultimately resulted in his suspension and in the cutting of the bond with the Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church where Mr. Hoeksema was a pastor.

A number of office-bearers and members of congregations sided with Hoeksema and his Consistory. Temporarily known as Protestant Christian Reformed Churches, they called themselves Protestant Reformed Churches after 1926.

With every split, as with every Reformation, the grave danger is there that reaction determines what is said, written, and done. While refusing to be pushed into a direction one deems to be contrary to Holy Writ, the force of one's resistance may push him into the opposite direction. That is a normal phenomenon which I know by experience. During the first years after the Liberation, my

sermons oftentimes were more directed *against* the things from which we had already been freed than that they positively showed the riches which we have in Christ Jesus our Saviour. The danger is so great that you begin to live in a reactionary attitude and that you speak and write and act from such an attitude.

A classic example of such living in reaction while at the same time taking over the dilemmas of the past are the Anabaptists.

I have the strong impression that also the Protestant Reformed Churches have not escaped this danger. Being deadly afraid of Arminianism (and who should *not* be?), Rev. Herman Hoeksema stressed that "the grace of God is only for the elect". Grace is always particular, he taught, and he did not cease to proclaim that the Three Points were "Pelagian and Arminian in their real tendency".

Then there came the immigrants from the Liberated Churches, and the Protestant Reformed Churches were faced with the question what attitude to take towards them.

Mr. Hoeksema saw his theories threatened (and rightly so) by what was considered to be the "liberated concept of the covenant and of the covenant-promises".

It is remarkable, but basically Hoeksema's theology about the grace of God being particular and the promise of the covenant being unconditionally only for the elect, fits exactly in the framework of one of the doctrinal deliverances of 1944, namely the one on the Covenant of Grace and Regeneration, which was one of the factors leading to the Liberation. It was not strange that prof. Hoeksema felt himself and the "Protestant Reformed Truth" threatened by what the "liberated" immigrants believed concerning the covenant of God and the promise of that covenant. Rejecting the Three Points, Hoeksema remained caught in the false dilemma of these deliverances. Going to the other extreme as a sort of reaction prevented him from seeing the riches of God's covenant and covenant promise as, for instance, the brethren in the Liberated Churches in the Netherlands saw them.

The "Declaration of Principles" was adopted to be a guideline for Home Missionaries among the liberated immigrants and expressed the "Protestant Reformed Truth" in which those immigrants should be instructed.

It worked as a boomerang: when Rev. Hubert de Wolf taught differently, action against him resulted in a split in the Protestant Reformed Churches, and those who sided with Mr. de Wolf were absorbed into the Christian Reformed Church in the year 1961, having declared "that we no longer charge the 'Three Points' with being Arminian and Pelagian nor are we pleading for freedom to agitate and cause turmoil and strife in the churches, but 'we are opposed to agitation, propaganda or any unseemly or revolutionary action in the church'." The surrender was so complete that they even agreed to it that their ministers would have to submit to a COLLOQUIUM DOCTUM in order to become a minister in good standing in the Christian Reformed Church. Speaking of union and of merging . . .

# The Liberation In The Forties

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS (4)

## ONCE AGAIN: REASONING

Last time we asked the question: How, then, did Synod reason? And we pointed to the danger of reasoning in Church, which easily could lead us away from the simple language of the Scriptures.

We could approach this matter from different angles.

But let us do it in the same way as it was done in the already mentioned "Elucidation" ("Toelichting").

There it is stated: Sacraments are signs and seals. They have been given us to strengthen our faith. Well, then faith must be there, otherwise there is nothing to be strengthened.

Well, this sounds logical, does it not? This seems to be a pure syllogism.

But let us listen to its application to Holy Baptism.

The above-mentioned document reasons as follows: Baptism as a sacrament must do something, confirm

faith. Otherwise it would be null and void, an idle ceremony. (Somebody even dared to say: Baptism appears sometimes to have been nothing but a matter of spilling some water, namely when the baptismal candidates later on show themselves as real unbelievers!).

Holy Baptism must seal something that is present in the heart of the candidate, namely faith, or regeneration, or the remission of sins that has already been received, "as gifts that have been granted to the person to be baptized".

But indeed, it is true, we do not know whether our infants have already been regenerated, whether they are believers or not. Thus - and this is the conclusion of this long reasoning - we shall "take them for regenerated and sanctified in Christ". That is to say, "until as soon as they grow up proof of the contrary is given by their way of life or doctrine". In other

words: Who are the participants of the Covenant of Grace? Along the lines of this sort of reasoning one comes to the conclusion, and it is unavoidable: Only the elect, only God's chose people!

Of course, all infants were baptized, the little children of the believers. But to the question: what then is the position of the non-elect among them, those who later on prove to be non-believers, non-elect? The answer is given: They received an external sign only; they belong to the covenant in an external way only!

To another question, whether all children of believers are entitled to Holy Baptism, the answer reads that we have to distinguish between "full baptism" and "baptism-in-the-not-full-sense-of-the-word".

When he is referred to Acts 2:39, which says: "For to you is the promise and to your children . . .", the supporter of Synod answers: There is a "general offer of grace" to all who hear the Gospel, but there is also an unconditional promise of salvation for the chosen ones only! In other words, the promise is also for the chosen ones only; one should insert the word

(continued on next page)

The Protestant Reformed Churches as such remained in existence.

Now *The Standard Bearer* celebrates its golden anniversary, and the Protestant Reformed Churches will do so shortly. The former is still defending the "Protestant Reformed Truth".

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema writes that

"we maintain the position of our Creeds *antithetically* . . . particularly over against all departures from and compromises of the truth of sovereign, particular grace. This has been true from the very beginning of our fifty years of existence . . .

We have been criticized for this. The charge has more than once been made that we are only reactionary and that we have only a negative basis and a negative reason for existence. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that it has always been characteristically Reformed to oppose and to exert oneself to expose false doctrine. This is part of the calling of the church in the maintenance of the truth . . . Besides, the truth of the Word of God is always presented antithetically in Scripture itself."

We shall not deny that the Church does have to fight off errors and to expose them, but we cannot agree with it that the Truth is always presented antithetically in Scripture. It is the duty of the Church to uphold the Truth over against all aberration, but I do not believe that such an attitude can be called the "characteristically Reformed" stand and behaviour.

If the Church takes her starting point in that, she is in grave danger of becoming sterile.

Roughly, the golden anniversary of *The Standard Bearer* coincides with the golden anniversary of the Protestant Reformed Churches: October 1, 1924 - December 12, 1924, the day when the Rev. Herman Hoeksema was suspended and the Consistory of Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church was declared to have lost their status as a Christian Reformed Consistory.

We do not know whether we should congratulate or not.

It would be very difficult to do so when, basically, the stand taken by the Protestant Reformed Churches in the matter of the Covenant of God and the promise of the Covenant constitutes a rejection and condemnation of the riches which were re-discovered in the struggle for the freedom in Christ through which the older ones among us went in the days of the Liberation.

The best wish we can express at this occasion is that the Protestant Reformed Churches may see these same riches. Then there is no need for a specific "Protestant Reformed Truth", for such a specific truth means an extra-scriptural binding; then there will also be a positive attitude which, at present, is not completely absent but tends to be overshadowed by a feeling of being called upon to always fight off whatever might constitute a threat to that specific, cherished, characteristic mark. Then there also may be a time when we have to come to the conclusion that the unity of faith is there and should also be shown in a closer relationship.

vO



## THE LIBERATION - continued

"elect": "For the promise is to you and to your "elect" children".

### QUESTIONS

All sorts of questions could be asked now.

For example - and they are a matter of course for those who want to learn whether a certain theory or doctrine is based on the Bible or not: Where in the Bible does it say that only the elect belong to the covenant?

Consequently: Does not the Bible clearly speak about God's covenant wrath? What is left of this covenant wrath when it would be true that only the chosen ones belong to the covenant?

Where in the Bible is it stated that there is a twofold baptism, a full one and a not-full one?

Does Acts 2:39 indeed speak of the elect children? Would the people who were listening to the apostle Peter's address on the day of Pentecost have added the word "elect" for themselves in what they heard?

Somewhere a "synodical" professor delivered a lecture on the invitation of the local Consistory - it was a meeting of that body, not of the whole congregation. One of the elders was Dr. R.J. Dam, rector of the local grammar school and lecturer at the Theological College at Kampen. He asked the professor a simple question: "Can I say to my little children: Children, the Lord Jesus loves you? Or can I not say this any more?" The answer was: No, strictly speaking you cannot say this, for you do not know whether they belong to the covenant, to the chosen ones of God, or not!

I think this little incident makes it perfectly clear: Here was a wrong way of reasoning, a good illustration of a bad kind of theology. This way the parents were robbed of the security of the covenant, and the children of its riches.

Is not the "proclamation of the covenant" of Exodus 19:3-6 very clear in this respect when it says: "If you will obey My voice indeed and keep My covenant . . ."? Does this not mean that all the nation of Israel belonged to the covenant, the children included? Not to an "external" covenant, but just to the covenant!? Is not this "proclamation" repeated by the apostle Peter in his first epistle (2:9, 10)? Is not the situation the same today, as far as this is concerned?

Of course, these last few questions were answered by making a distinction and even a sort of contrast between the Old and the New Covenants, as if the New one would not be a matter of a renewed covenant, a matter of covenant renewal in a changed situation. We have to stand up for the unity of the Old and New Testament, the Old and the New Covenant!

### NO WONDER

This "doctrine", then, had to be accepted and taught by every minister and other special office-bearers, even by any Church member.

It was no wonder that many people strongly objected against this unbiblical theory and the ungodly binding strength which was given to it.

It was no wonder that a complete flood of petitions covered the table of Synod and other Church assemblies.

It was no wonder that some of the professors and ministers said: We cannot honestly teach this!

It was no wonder that even some candidates to the Ministry of the Word - although they were very eager to enter into this ministry - had to say as honest men: I cannot believe this, let alone teach it.

It was no wonder that many a father and mother said to the local Consistory: This is not how I understand the questions in the Baptismal Form; and if I have to answer them in a "synodical" interpretation I cannot answer them in the affirmative. Consequently some of them were denied baptism for their children.

### HIERARCHY

But in spite of all this, Synod decided "that nothing may be taught that is not in full accordance with the doctrinal declarations concerned". Hierarchy never gives in!

There seems to be no point-of-return for hierarchical persons or bodies. A hierarchical Synod, and its successors, took the risk of tearing the unity of the Churches apart.

The Liberation was a real liberation indeed. We felt free again! Again we could breathe in the liberty of the free children of God!

### CHURCH GOVERNMENT

This hierarchy was not unopposed.

We can even say that also with respect of the matter of "Church

Polity" or "Church Government" there were two widely differing opinions.

One of them was that of the great majority of delegates to the General Synods who apparently could not properly evaluate their own position. This stand was in particular taken by many of the Professors of Theology who attended almost every session as advisers!

It actually started in the twenties. However, we cannot elaborate on that now. One hint only: The procedure concerning Dr. Geelkerken may be well known. Different from the "synodical" churches that some years ago withdraw the decisions of 1926-27 which led to his deposing as a Reformed minister, we are of the strong conviction that this man taught dangerous things indeed. However, the same churches still maintain that the Synod concerned was fully entitled to depose a minister of a local Church, even against the will of that particular Church. For a Classis is already a higher authority in the federation of Churches, a Particular or Regional Synod is still higher, and General Synod is the highest of all, and has a say in any matter, also of the local Churches.

This stand has been legalized now in the "New Church Order" that was adopted by the "synodical" churches after World War II.

But men like Professor Dr. S. Greijdanus protested - not against the rejection of this minister's false teachings, with which he fully agreed, but - against the fact that Synod assumed the power to deal with an office-bearer of a local Church. He strongly warned against the danger of hierarchy!

### MORE SERIOUS

More serious became the situation when in the year 1942 the General Synod prolonged itself, and the date for the convening of the next Synod was postponed to the year 1943, which was flatly against the agreement and rule made in the Church Order.

Professor Dr. K. Schilder wrote a letter to the Consistory of the Church of which he was a member, the Church of Kampen, referring to the Church Order which had been neglected and violated.

The Church of Amersfoort published a resolution that said they could  
(continued on bottom of page 5)



# Life Between Death and Resurrection (V)

The preceding article closed with the statement that Luke 16 (the parable of the rich man and the poor Lazarus) and the vision of Rev. 6:9-11 (the 'souls' under that altar) force us into accepting an 'Interim' between death and resurrection and that in this 'Interim' one is consciously 'resting'.

The same is to be said if we read what the Scriptures say about 'She'ol', of the 'realm of the dead'. We cannot understand it either if we do not believe in an 'Interim'. On the one hand the Old Testament says that in *She'ol* God cannot be thanked or praised (Is. 38:18; Ps. 6:5; 88:10-12) and all works end. On the other hand, if it pleases Him, God makes men return from *She'ol* (I Sam. 28) and in it envy and mockery are found (Is. 14:9; Ez. 31:16, etc.).

It is true these words in Is. 14 and Ez. 31 are poetic; therefore we must be careful in drawing conclusions. But for this very reason it is remarkable that in the New Testament, also in non-poetic books, the starting point is a continued and conscious existence also prior to the Last Day. I think of Luke 16, so to speak a counterpart of the poetic parts in Is. 14 and Ez. 31. In Isaiah we meet enemies who mock at each other in *She'ol*; in Ezekiel something like it. But in Luke 16 we

meet the opposite: friends who greet each other beyond the grave; 'when ye fall' (vs. 9, K.J.V.), that is: when you die, and, for a moment, are roofless, so to speak, then those whom you have supported during your life on earth, will receive you in the eternal habitations.

Therefore we must read the various statements on *She'ol* jointly and use the one to explain the other. We may not detach statements according to which there is no life or praise, no works in the realm of the dead, from the other ones which state different things. They must be understood in this sense that there is no question of the work and knowledge on earth that we know about; looked at from our human side death means that all ties are cut off. But at the same time, there is beyond the grave, in *She'ol*, weal and woe, cursing and blessing, envy and joy, but all of it according to a different law and in a different form of consciousness.

Think of the well-known chapter Rev. 20, which is misunderstood by all kinds of millennialists. John talks about the thousand years (a symbolic number) during which the church, which was used to persecution, will enjoy a relative rest. Prior to this time she was terribly persecuted; many were beheaded for their testimony to Christ. Now they are 'souls', dead people. But beyond the grave they have recovered their life. And they reign with Christ, until He shall return with clouds. In other words they have an 'Interim' of bliss. To be sure, this is another vision, nevertheless, some conclusions can be drawn from it. For in this vision a 'first resurrection' is mentioned, apparently over against a second one (vs. 5,6). And a 'second death', over against the first one (vs. 6, 14). Between these two is either the period of glory, even royal glory, or the period of being given up to death - mind you: to be dead does not mean: not to be, but: not to be with God. The first resurrection is here: the awakening in glory beyond the grave; in human opinion the beheaded martyrs 'fell', but they rose again when they awoke in righteousness. From this first resurrection till the second one, when also the body may come in again, they may reign with Christ, be with Him in paradise.

Therefore, again I must say: this vision starts with the 'Interim'; it tells us how it is: either live with Christ or be dead without Him; either reign with Him or be given up to torment without Him; in a while the second death shall come, also for the body.

Thus we come to the conclusion that we may never give up the teaching of an 'Interim', a conscious, continued existence of the dead. It is a wonderful teaching. For only in this way we can see a little of the glory and depth and width of the communion of saints. Here on earth the church prays: 'Come, Lord Jesus, come soon.' But so does the church in heaven. In this the living and the dead are one: they turn themselves to the Great Day, they expect this Day, they long for it and pray for it. In this prayer for Christ's coming with clouds the living and the dead co-operate and meet each other. Those who have preceded us wait for us and we who shall follow, reach out for them. And together we reach out to the Day of the Lord. That is God's love for His people all together although right now they are separated by the grave.

Thus we also see a little of Christ's glory as the only Bishop of His church. If there were no 'Interim', Christ would be the Bishop only of the small group of His people which is still on earth. The millions who have gone already would have escaped from Him, so to speak. But whoever knows about the 'Interim' knows that He is the great Bishop also of those who have gone the way of all flesh. God is in the full sense of the word a God not of the dead, but of the living (Luke 20:38).

In closing we say that for the godly, death is nothing but gain, because he knows that after death he may be with his Lord and Saviour, and that is far better for him. For when then the body falls prey to mortality and is sown in dishonour and perishable, then he is 'found naked' (II Cor. 5), in the realm of the dead, but he is with his glorified Lord, Jesus Christ, God and man, true man with a imperishable body, together with those who preceded. Then he may see with his eyes that we have our flesh in heaven as a sure pledge that He will take also our bodies up to Himself, into the complete glory of a new heaven and a new earth (Heid. Cat., L.D. 18).

A.B. ROUKEMA

## THE LIBERATION - continued

no longer acknowledge the assembly as a lawful General Synod as of August 1942, when the delegates should have gone home.

Strong pressure was applied upon this Church, so that the Consistory was compelled to withdraw this resolution!

The professors Schilder and Greijdanus - the latter also had made known his objections - were required to answer categorically - by "yes" or "no" - the question whether they were prepared to help execute the decisions of Synod which had been made after the date of the acceptance of the proposal to prolong this Synod. One of these decisions was the appointing of Professor Greijdanus' successor, H.N. Ridderbos. The latter's appointment, then was unlawful, but yet just mentioned professors declared they would fully co-operate with him.

G. VAN RONGEN

# Press Review

## VOICES FROM THE SYNODICAL REFORMED CHURCHES IN THE NETHERLANDS AT THE SYNOD OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH.

In his article " '74 CRC Synod - A Delegate's Review and Reflection" (see also the Press Review of the Sept. 7 issue of *Clarion*), the Rev. John H. Piersma tells the readers of the July issue of *The Outlook* about the presence of two "official fraternal delegates", Dr. Wind and Dr. Weyland, representing the Gereformeerde Kerken (Synodical, J.G.) in the Netherlands (GKN). Rev. Piersma writes:

Both spoke at length. Since readers of this magazine are often quite interested in happenings in the old country we will offer a few extensive quotations from their addresses.

First to speak was Dr. Wind. Among other things he said: . . . Very important is the flood of secularization that swept over the Dutch society, not leaving the churches untouched. The Gereformeerde Kerken (Synodical, J.G.) became less and less isolated within the Dutch society, and therefore more open to all problems and movements within this society, both secular and religious. There are many who think they don't need church membership any more in order to remain faithful Christians . . . they wish that the institutional church shall participate in the solution of burning questions in the social, economic, and political fields. . . . Our Synod accepted an important report on "The Calling and Responsibility of the Church to Speak and Act in Social and Political Matters."

In connection with this I let follow here what the article tells about Dr. Wind's statements regarding

The role of the GKN in the World Council of Churches (about which) was reported with great enthusiasm by Dr. Wind . . . Wind indicated that the principles and programs of missionary work by the GKN is very much influenced by WCC thinking and commendation. He confirmed the

fact that there is real tension between his church and the South African churches. He said, "Probably you have heard something about the decision to support the 'Programme to Combat Racism' of the World Council, in spite of the fact that they gave humanitarian aid to the freedom fighters in Southern Africa. We advised against emigration to South Africa . . ."

It is a fact that the GKN "participate in the solution of burning questions in the . . . political field", giving their support to revolutionary, communist movements. Dr. Wind said also: "We think it necessary that a Calvinistic, Reformed voice be heard among so many voices in the World Council." But how is it ever possible that people who are so totally influenced by the thinking of the WCC let the real Calvinistic, Reformed (that means: scriptural) voice be heard? Indeed, the picture Dr. Wind gives of the GKN is that of a liberal and modernistic church. Alas!

"About the case of Professor Harry K . . ." Dr. Wind said among other things:

I only state some facts now. It became clear in our discussion with Dr. Kuitert that he was convinced that he still could subscribe to the Confession faithfully, while denying the historicity of the events in the first chapters of Genesis . . . Facing some other ideas of Prof. Kuitert, *cum suis*, tending to a horizontalizing of the salvation, and an only this-worldly kingdom of God, we could also come to an agreement. But - we must say honestly - that the theological thinking of Prof. Kuitert is still in a process of development, and that we are seriously concerned about the direction into which he is moving.

Now everybody who is honest and knows about Prof. Kuitert knows that he is entirely liberal (vrijzinnig, J.G.), that he is completely in conflict with the Reformed Confessions. That is not a matter of what he thinks and says himself, subjectively; those are the clear facts. And, for those who know, that is clear also from the words of Dr. Wind.

The other fraternal delegate from the GKN, Dr. Weyland, spoke in this way:

The Wiersinga case is one of the most celebrated in current GKN discussions. Dr. H. Wiersinga's views concern especially the biblical doctrine of the atonement. The Committee to discuss these matters with Wiersinga, said, among other things: Dr. Wiersinga has not been able to convince the synod from the Holy Scripture that his objections to the doctrine that Christ in our place find support in the Holy Scripture.

Weyland argued that this case presented two special difficulties:

- a. He (Wiersinga, J.G.) stands with his opinion about atonement *alone*. To make him the object of ecclesiastical discipline is to give him a party!

This means, according to me, that if Wiersinga would be suspended a party of protesters would form itself around him, which could mean a split. But this makes the statement that Wiersinga stands alone with his idea a little bit shaky. The second difficulty is said to be:

- b. The case regards a theological question difficult to understand. Can we tell it (i.e. explain it satisfactorily, JHP) to our children? Can we exactly point (out): that is the reason (we disciplined Wiersinga) because it had to be done so that they say: Pa, is it good? Brethren, our church is also the church of our children.

One really wonders how a doctor in theology who also is a minister in churches which are supposed to be reformed can speak such nonsense to a Synod which also is supposed to be reformed. Anyway, it is clear that the GKN are not reformed anymore when maintaining men like Kuitert and Wiersinga. For that is what they do. This is evident from what Dr. Weyland further said on the matter:

Synod's conclusion of the matter for now was to appeal to Wiersinga to reconsider his views in the light of Synod's statements, and to mandate the Church and Theology Committee of the GKN to *discuss* (italics

mine, J.G.) the question with Wiersinga and report to the next Synod.

No deeds of obedience to the Lord and Owner of the church. No, only talk and talk and talk. And the destruction of the church is continued through false doctrine which is allowed to continue to influence the GKN.

At a later session of the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church there was the opportunity to direct questions to the two "fraternal delegates" about the situation in the GKN and what they had said about it. From this I quote only the following:

As to church discipline, the two delegates indicated two things, among others: (1) discipline seems virtually impossible in the existing circumstances, and (2) *the sin* (italics in the article, J.G.) in the church is to break the fellowship of love.

Is it really love according to the Word of God to keep true and false, truth and lie, Christ and the devil, together? Is it really love to be disobedient to the Head of the Church? God says in the second commandment of the Covenant that love for Him (and to the neighbour, which is included) is keeping His commandments, and that one who says he loves and serves God but does not keep His commandments is hating Him.

Rev. Piersma concludes this part of his report in this way:

My reaction was positive so far as the candor and openness of these delegates goes. I felt that they were trying to be very explicit in their descriptions of GKN conditions. However, I felt also more than a small pang of fear. It seemed very obvious to me that almost every "problem" facing us has some kind of origin or suggestion in the GKN.

Does Rev. Piersma, and many with him, see and was it said at the synodical meeting, that the Canadian Reformed Churches were right in stressing and maintaining as such a very important point the matter of the correspondence with the GKN? The delegates of the Canadian Reformed Churches for contact with the Christian Reformed Church knew about the origin of the many problems. Rev. Piersma continues:

I hope that we will not let any one else, even the brothers from



#### FOUNDATION LAID

Winnipeg's New Church Construction underway. Top left - Dirk DeWit, below - John Vandenberg, Bill DeWit all of DeWit Construction. Kenneth DeWit came after school hours to give a hand. Kenneth is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Bill DeWit.

the GKN, formulate either the questions or the answers for us! I was also impressed by the consistent relativizing of problems in terms of circumstances and personalities rather than any kind of insistence upon the Word of God as the absolute norm for faith and practice. All in all, I found the effect of the reports brought by these delegates depressing.

And that is a very gentle way of speaking. Rev. Piersma would have been of more help to the readers of *The Outlook* and to the members of the Christian Reformed Church if he had spoken according to the Reformed Confession in his conclusions. From the picture the two "fraternal delegates" gave of the GKN it is quite evident that in the GKN "the pure doctrine of the gospel" is neither taught nor preached as a whole anymore and that "the church discipline is" not "exercised to punish sin" either; "in short, that all things are" not "managed according to the pure Word of God"; "that things contrary thereto are" not "rejected". In speaking according to the Reformed Confession (art. 29 B.C., e.g.), the conclusion which should have been drawn from the report of the delegates is: the Gereformeerde Kerken (Synodical) in the Netherlands have become false Churches. They can no longer be our sister-churches. Or: we can have no "fellowship"-relation with these false churches anymore. True and false cannot go together. Did Rev. Piersma offer his Synod this conclusion? That would have been love and help to both the CRC Synod and the two "fraternal delegates".

And if fellowship is still maintained - and it is - is then the Christian Reformed Church not going in the

same direction, connecting true with false? Can *this "problem"* be solved by maintaining "fellowship"-relations with the GKN? It is not my intention to condemn, but to help.

A last thing. In pointing out to the Synod of the CRC what the causes are of the situation today in the GKN Dr. Weyland said that one of them was " 'the bloodletting' in connection with the 1944 split in which about 100,000 left to form the Vrijgemaakte Kerken. These were, he (Weyland, J.G.) said, among the very best of GKN members 'confessionally speaking' ". Thank you for the compliment.

In 1944 the very best, "confessionally speaking", had to be thrown out. Anno 1974 the very worst, "confessionally speaking", have to be maintained. No split anymore! For the sake of the "fellowship of love"! Poor GKN! Oh, you still disobedient GKN! Oh, CRC, take heed of your cause!

J. GEERTSEMA



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Canadian  
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THE CITY GUIDE  
CHURCH  
"Thy Word Is Our Guide"-Th

This time I really got a shock when **Clarion** appeared in my mailbox. I thought that we would never see the day that it is twenty-five years ago that the first Canadian Reformed Church was instituted which, by the way, will be in 1975. Maybe you ask what it was that disturbed me so much. It was the heading which read as follows "Foundation for Superannuation of the Canadian Reformed Church". Was this a new subversive society? Was this sort of a fifth column? Who was out to pension the Canadian Reformed Church off? And what was this Canadian Reformed Church?

When I started reading the rest after the initial shock had worn off, I discovered that it was our good old Foundation which had been formed by the Canadian Reformed Churches that cooperate in the matter of saving up for the retirement of their ministers. Great was the relief. With all this I wish to say, dear reader, that, as the saying goes in Dutch, even the best knitter drops a stitch once in a while or, as it is said in English, It's a good horse that never stumbles. And our **Clarion** IS a good knitter or, if you wish, a good horse.

What I object to in all seriousness, however, is what I found in a report of a Consistory meeting where I read, "It was a good attestation." That should not have been said. An attestation and its contents should remain "secret" in this sense that only the Consistory is aware of the nature of this testimony. Several years ago I wrote some articles on attestations and in those articles I also argued this point; for that reason I shall not elaborate on it. We are always to be on our guard when writing. Writing is dangerous business: you have to write because people want to read something; when you write you are always apt to make a mistake here and there; and then you get it. But what would happen to the poor writer of the News Medley if never any writer of bulletins made a mistake or if there were never a "slip of the typewriter"?

The coat which was found at the Wiener Roast in Orangeville apparently does not belong to anyone in the Congregation. The latest news I read about it was that it is still unclaimed. But I read something else that I have never read before. The Consistory of Orangeville decided to donate \$25.00 to the choir "as acknowledgement for their participation at an 'evening service' conducted by our minister at 'Dufferin Oaks'." I do not recall having read what that "Dufferin Oaks" is, but I presume that it is sort of an Old Age Home. It is good when we take the opportunities that are offered to tell also others of the hope that is within us and of the riches which we have received in our Saviour. In Barrhead they do this too and have been doing this for quite a while already.

I mentioned there Old Age Homes. Maybe someone prefers Senior Citizens Homes. That is indeed better. Well, I have some good news about those homes. You will know that there is quite some activity in this respect in both East and West. Let me tell you something about it.

In Hamilton a meeting was held of the society for the establishment of such a home. They started off with 20 members and at the end of the meeting they had 33. That's

what I call progress! That's making hay when the sun shines! And the sun did shine even though it was evening: quite a few brethren purchased, on their own authority and at their own risk, the property beside the Church Building. But the risk was small, for the society approved of their actions and the project is "Go" now. The reporter remarked that "the realization is strong that we have neglected the need of our elders too long." There is much truth in that remark, and we can only be very happy that this realization has now brought about some real action. Although they are not yet incorporated, as name was chosen "Canadian Reformed Resthome Inc."

Distance makes no difference when there is unity of purpose:

"Well, we made it! The deal is on!" we read in **Church News** of "The Valley". I am referring, of course, to the resthome society in the Fraser Valley. A property was purchased on the condition that the membership approve of the deal. That approval was gladly given and the brethren and sisters there are very progressive: they are conducting a drive to have the property all paid for!! The membership stands well over 80 right now, and I would not be surprised one bit if they succeed. Mind you, there are four Churches there rather close to one another, and that makes it a little easier: one centrally located Home will serve the membership of all four Churches. I begin to have some hope now for my retirement, if I live that long, of course.

Let the societies that work for the same goal draw some encouragement from what their brethren and sisters in other places have achieved thus far. Don't give up: the realization will become stronger and stronger that we have to do something for our senior members.

The Cloverdale report of the meeting of the Consistory mentioned that the Consistory had reservations regarding the manner in which the committee to draw up regulations for the Regional Synods was appointed. "There was no request of any of the Churches for such action", we read. I am happy that the brethren there take the same stand which I took. Sometimes you have the impression that you stand alone, but then there are encouraging reports that get you out of the dumps.

Rev. J. Mulder is also thinking about a more or less informal class for those who have already made profession of faith. Such classes, and I mentioned that before, are being held in more than one Congregation, with gratifying results, as I hear. At least the ones who attend show a lively interest in what's going on and what's being discussed. That is one element which always makes the pre-confession class so pleasant.

Crossing the boundary into Alberta, I may tell you that Edmonton's Consistory appointed a committee for discussions with a similar committee of the Westend Christian Reformed Church. Quite a few months ago we read of plans in that direction; now it is that far. Having gone again through the decisions and discussions between committees which were held on the general level, I have no expectations of the Edmonton discussions. The Christian Reformed Church has clearly shown its unwillingness to break off the correspondence with the synodical churches in the Netherlands. The Christian Reformed Church is willing to resume negotiations as soon as we change our stand. That, I hope, will never happen. It would amount to a denial of our own past, not only in Canada but also our personal past insofar as we lived in the Netherlands. We

shall follow the result of the Edmonton discussions with interest. Hopefully we shall be informed via the **City Guide**, which is one of the bulletins which I receive most regularly and speedily.

The Barrhead Consistory read and discussed the report of the Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad. The brethren there are not so happy about the involvement of that Committee, for instance, in the matter of calling a minister from foreign sister Churches. I can well understand that: we are to see to it that our general committees do not get too much authority. As long as the involvement of the committee is confined to just providing information, it is all right.

I did mention before the "Dutch Evening" which was planned for Winnipeg. Carman's bulletin tells us something about it (by the time this is written it belongs already to the past) and makes us eager to join: there will be, it was promised, all sorts of Dutch pastry as "kletsoppen" and also "snert" (they called it in a more distinguished manner "erwtensoepp").

Yes, now we come to Ontario. Let us start more in the North. That is not Ottawa this time. I was there recently again and the room of the schoolbuilding in which the Congregation there meets was much more pleasant than various visitors saw it this past summer. There is carpet on the floor and there are better chairs. As a whole it is much more pleasant. No decision has been made as yet whether they are again going to use the building of the Seventh Day Adventists which is right beside the schoolbuilding where the Church meets now. Much will also depend on the question whether more people will settle in Ottawa; that's what they are still hoping for.

Toronto sent us a communication which gave us much joy. From the Board of Mission Aid we received word that a young couple (not yet married) has been found who are willing to be sent out for Mission Aid. They expect to begin their special study of language, etc., shortly and to need approximately ten months for it. How beautiful would it be if we also heard that a missionary has been found to take the place of Rev. H. Knigge, who will not return to the mission field after the expiration of his term. And that would then be just one missionary! We need more of them!

Burlington East paid attention again to the question whether the Lord's Supper should not be celebrated in the morning only. I guess that this will remain a point of discussion and that it will be brought up repeatedly whatever stand a Consistory takes in this matter. If, as was the case in London the last couple of times, only two or four members attend in the afternoon, it would certainly be an argument in favour of celebrating only in the morning. However, if a Consistory should decide to do that, they could expect letters of protest until they change it again. Keep on discussing it!

What cannot be said of the archives of many a Church, can be said of the general archives. Burlington East received a copy of the report which two brethren from Burlington West sent for General Synod. They inspected the archives and reported that the archivist "has maintained the Archives in perfect order." Once in a while I see him working on this project and I am happy that this could be reported. It is of great importance for the Churches that their archives are in good order locally, classically, regionally, and generally.

Burlington West endorsed a few conclusions to which

a combined committee came. This committee had to discuss and to advise about eventual changes deemed necessary once Burlington West would occupy their own Churchbuilding. The suggestions endorsed were:

"Dutch services to be held in the Ebenezer Church during the winter months and in the Rehoboth Church during the summer.

"No change is being anticipated in the borderline in the next few years."

The Ebenezer Church is East, the Rehoboth Church is West, as you will know. When I read that the services will be held in Rehoboth Church during the summer, I thought: the brethren are smart there, for summer lasts only a few months and so they have the least trouble! My dehlis and other outside plants are gone already, frozen to death. Poor things. It is of course possible that the committee came with definite dates.

As a last news item: The "Jeugd van Vroeger" (Yesteryear's Youth) had an outing to admire the fall colours of the deciduous trees. They made the bustrip together and, hopefully, had an enjoyable time.

In London there are quite some plans for remodelling the basement of the Churchbuilding. If I understand it well, they also purchased another pipe organ. Congratulations! It was also decided to ask the Rev. G. VanRongen for a Congregational meeting to show some slides of Australia and to tell something about that country and about Church-life there. A good idea.

In the report of the Consistory meeting I further read that the Consistory discussed the Canadian Reformed Highschool. I still am convinced that this is not an ecclesiastical matter and therefore should not be object of discussion at a Consistory meeting. However much we may rejoice when we see that the parents are aware of their obligations towards their children also in this respect, school matters are no ecclesiastical matters. I think that the Consistory felt that and was sort of caught in a dilemma. They decided to get someone of the congregation to act as contact address. Sometimes you do things you should not have done when it comes to the point, but which you do nevertheless in order to get a thing started. That's what happened in London, as I understand it.

The Consistory also drew up a set of points regarding the solemnization of marriages. In these points it is stated in the first place that public profession of faith should come before the marriage vows. Yes indeed: before one openly testifies that one takes so and so as husband (or wife) it is proper that one has first declared publicly that one wishes to serve the Lord. There are more elements in the points with which we can agree wholeheartedly. For instance, when it is stated that it would be both thoughtful and proper to set the ceremony on a date and at an hour at which most members can attend. It is our experience that that is being done, and sometimes the auditorium is about as full at a wedding as it is on Sundays, and certainly not just because there are so many "strangers".

But there are also various elements in London's rules with which I disagree. And as a contribution towards the discussion about this point I mention them here.

In the first place I would like to say that if you overdo a certain thing, you achieve the opposite of what you wish to achieve. And that, I am afraid, will be the result of drawing up all sorts of rules and of trying to force everyone into a certain pattern. And what I do not understand at all is this: why in the world has there to be

a written arrangement between a minister and the Consistory regarding marriages and their solemnization? As far as I can recall I have **never** had any written agreement with any Consistory and we have never missed it. It looks too much like a contract to me, even apart from objections which I would have to the contents of a written agreement as we find it in London.

There is, in the first place this argument, that marriages concern and involve the Church. That marriages concern the Church is something which no one will deny; but that marriages **involve** the Church is now exactly the point which has to be proved, not just stated. Thus far no one has offered any proof that the Church **as such** is involved when two of its members get married. On another occasion I mentioned baptism, ordination, Lord's Supper as being ceremonies in which the Church as such is involved. So far I have not seen any proof (I do not say "convincing proof" but "proof") nor any effort to prove that marriage is a **Church-matter**.

The Consistory, it is stated, must be notified at least one month in advance so that a pastoral visit can be arranged. There you have another point which I do not understand. Have the office-bearers (I do not mean: the office-bearers in London, of course, but the office-bearers of a Church in general) not been aware of it that two people were going steady and that they obviously were planning to get married some time? Would office-bearers not discuss also the choice of marriage-partner during regular family visits? And why would a pastoral visit be necessary when they have set the date for their marriage? If that is the first time that they receive a pastoral visit, it is rather late, I should say. If, as may be expected, also a future marriage was discussed with them during family visits, why should they receive another one now that it is known when exactly they will get married? If a district elder or if the minister (whom the couple will contact anyway) wishes to visit the young people and speak with them about their intended marriage, this can be only applauded. But I do not understand it why this must be made a rule, laid down in a written agreement.

Serious objections would rise with me if a Consistory would ask me to agree with the following rule: "The Consistory shall authorize the minister to proclaim God's Word on these occasions." Apart from the fact that it is not clear what "to proclaim God's Word" means in this or in any connection, I deny that a minister needs any authorization by any Consistory to proclaim the Word of God. That simply is his office, received once when he was ordained, in which office he is confirmed anew, so to speak, when he moves to another Church. At no occasion do I need or shall I even accept an authorization by any Consistory as if I did not already have such authorization. I do not need any authorization to proclaim the Word of God this coming Sunday here in Fergus: it simply is my office, my duty. Nor do I need any authorization to proclaim the Word of God when a couple gets married and when I solemnize the marriage: it simply is my office to do so. And if another Church should ask me to conduct a service, I do not **proclaim** the Word of God in that place by authorization of the Consistory of that Church; I only do it **there** by their authority: it is not the fact as such, it is the **place where**, that would require authorization in that case.

I gave the above remarks as a contribution to the discussion. It goes without saying that I do not wish to "abuse" my position as writer in **Clarion** to stifle all

arguments to the contrary. If my brother W. Huizinga would wish to give arguments to the contrary, he is quite welcome, as he well knows.

From London to Chatham is not too far (we are still busy with our News Medley! No, I have not forgotten that) and so we are pleased to announce that "The building is expected to be finished by the middle of October, except for carpet, pews, organ and pulpit upstairs." That made me wonder, of course, whether they have also "carpet, pews, organ and pulpit" downstairs. But I must have misunderstood that information. Anyway, we are happy with our sister in Chatham that they are that far. It will be quite something when they may use their building for the first time! When we compare the beautiful buildings which most of the Churches have now with the facilities (?) which they started off with and oftentimes occupied for years, we must be very thankful to our King and Master for giving us so much. The general progress and wealth has not bypassed the Churchmembers and thus the Churches. Blessed is he who uses whatever he has to serve his God.

Chatham's building has a name, as we mentioned the other time. In Guelph the Consistory decided to bring this matter of a name before the Congregation. I understood that the Consistory will leave it up to the Congregation and will ask for a vote at a Congregational meeting about the question whether a specific name shall be chosen or not.

To round everything off we go south of the border. You will recall that the Church at Grand Rapids sent a telegram to Mr. Gerald Ford on the occasion of his becoming president of the United States. Rev. VanRongen writes that the White House Office must have done some digging to obtain his address, for the telegram did not mention the address of the sender. Yet a letter was delivered at the minister's address and I think that it will be welcome to our readers when we copy it here:

Dear Mr. Van Rongen:

I can't tell you how very pleased I was to receive your warm message of congratulations. It is heart-warming to receive the good wishes and prayers of so many of my good friends 'back home'.

As I have said publicly, I do indeed need prayers of all of our citizens and with God's help I will continue to serve our great country to the very best of my ability.

Needless to say, the wonderful people in Grand Rapids and the rest of the Fifth Congressional District of Michigan will forever have a very special place in my heart.

Thank you again for your kindness and friendship, and warmest personal regards.

Sincerely,

(signed) Gerald R. Ford

Let there be prayers for all that are in authority. The Churches shall seek the favour of the magistrate, we state in the Church Order. How long will the Lord still give it to us that the magistrates reply in the manner and vein in which the President of the United States answered our sister in Grand Rapids?

vO

**PICTURES ANYONE?**

Did you send your Pictures already?  
See previous **Clarion**

**URGENT**

**URGENT**



# Canadian Reformed Resthome Inc.

Unexpectedly, the cause for a 'home for the aged' received a considerable boost in Hamilton. Up to Sept. 16, 1974, the Hamilton Society, one membership meeting old, without statutes and bylaws, without a name even, was somewhat vague and uncertain in its efforts to determine a firm course of action.

At the membership meeting of Sept. 16, 1974, the Society chose its name: Canadian Reformed Resthome Inc..

It also decided to purchase a two acre property next to the church. To the members who attended the meeting, called especially to deal with the proposed purchase, the chairman explained the situation. The property, which had been for sale for some time, for various reasons had been reduced in price drastically. It was available now at a price which was considered extremely attractive. Decision to purchase, however, could not be postponed as the owner, who already had purchased another house, had received an offer to purchase from others a short time before the meeting.

Several important questions came up during the discussion. Preliminary financing, the members were informed, had been arranged. Further assistance by the members would, of course, be required.

A very important question was raised in connection with cooperation with other congregations. At the previous meeting, the board had been instructed to investigate the possibility of such cooperation. Had this been done? Would purchase of a property without consulting other congregations not be a hindrance to cooperation?

In his reply the chairman stated that contact with others had been attempted. However, due to the summer holiday season, and to the fact that many members of other committees are farmers, very busy in summer, contact had not been established.

Unfortunately, because of the time element, it was not possible to consult others regarding the proposed purchase.

Cooperation with others still is very much desired, preferably by changing the 'Canadian Reformed Resthome Inc.' into a regional society with regional representation on the board. Nevertheless, in spite of this desire, the board was of the opinion that the property should be purchased for the following reasons:

While for Hamilton, of course, the location next to the church would seem almost ideal, it also would be a good and central location for many other congregations (assuming that

cooperation would result in the establishment of a regional home).

With the approaching development, shopping and other facilities can be expected in the not too distant future.

The purchase of a property will give some substance to our efforts. It is something concrete, from which we can continue with renewed determination.

Finally, if honest cooperation should require it, the property can be disposed of again.

For, and this was stressed by several members, it is not, and has not been a desire to make this strictly a Hamilton affair which prompted the proposal. Cooperation from other congregations and or personal membership is and will actively be sought initially possibly through local committees, ideally, as stated, by individual membership to a regional society with a regionally represented board.

The vote, taken after the discussion, showed an overwhelming support in favour of the purchase.

The increase in membership this evening, from 20 to 33, was very encouraging.

The secretary of the society is Mr. A. DeJong, 25 St. Clair Ave. S., Hamilton, Ont. Phone 544-3626.

\* \* \* \* \*

De zaak van een 'home for the aged' ondervond onverwachte voortgang in Hamilton. Tot 16 Sept. 1974 toe, de vereniging in Hamilton, één ledenvergadering oud, zonder constitutie, zelfs zonder naam, was nogal vaag en onzeker in de poging om een vaste koers te zetten.

Gedurende de ledenvergadering van 16 Sept. 1974 de vereniging koos een naam: Canadian Reformed Resthome Inc.

Ook werd de beslissing genomen om twee acre grond, gelegen naast de kerk, te kopen.

De voorzitter verklaarde de situatie aan de leden die de vergadering, bijeengeroepen speciaal om over de aankoop te beslissen, bijwoonden. Het huis met de twee acre land had al enige tijd te koop gestaan. Om verschillende redenen was de prijs zo zeer verlaagd dat het nu te koop was voor een aantrekkelijk bedrag.

Een besluit tot aankoop kon echter niet worden uitgesteld. De eigenaar die reeds een ander huis gekocht had, had namelijk ook een aanbod van anderen ontvangen, kort voor de vergadering.

Verscheidene belangrijke vragen werden gesteld. Voorlopige financiering, werd medegedeeld, was geregeld. Verdere bijdragen van de leden zijn natuurlijk vereist.

Een zeer belangrijke vraag werd gesteld betreffende samenwerking met ander gemeenten. Op de voor gaande ledenvergadering was aan het bestuur opgedragen om de mogelijkheden voor samenwerking na te gaan. Was dit gebeurd? Zou de voorgestelde aankoop, zonder voorafgaande beraadslaging met andere gemeenten, niet een hinderpaal vormen voor dergelijke samenwerking?

De voorzitter, in antwoord, deelde mee dat contact met anderen tot dusverre niet tot stand gekomen was vanwege de zomer vakantie tijd en vanwege het feit dat verscheidene leden in andere committee's boeren zijn, druk bezig in de zomertijd.

Het was helaas niet mogelijk, wegens gebrek aan tijd, om met anderen te overleggen betreffende de voorgestelde aankoop.

Naar samenwerking met anderen wordt niet minder gestreefd dan tevoren. Het zou mogelijk de beste vorm van samenwerking zijn als de 'Canadian Reformed Resthome Inc.' een regionale vereniging zou worden, met regionale vertegenwoordiging in het bestuur.

Niettemin, ondanks dit verlangen tot samenwerking, was het bestuur van mening dat de aankoop van de grond raadzaam was, om de volgende redenen:

Terwijl natuurlijk voor Hamilton de ligging, vlak naast de kerk, bijna ideaal is, is de ligging ook voor veel andere gemeenten vrijwel centraal (aannemend dat samenwerking zou leiden tot een regionaal rusthuis).

Met de plaatselijke ontwikkeling kunnen winkel- en andere faciliteiten in de buurt verwacht worden in de niet te ver verwijderde toekomst. De aankoop van het grondbezit kan meer werkelijkheid geven aan onze pogingen. Het is een concreet iets, van waaruit we kunnen doorgaan met hernieuwde vastberadenheid.

Ten slotte, als een eerlijke samenwerking dat zou vereisen, kan de grond weer verkocht worden.

Want, en dit wordt onderstreept door verscheidene leden, het was niet en is niet een verlangen om dit een zaak te maken die uitsluitend Hamilton betreft, wat aanleiding gaf om de aankoop voor te stellen. Samenwerking met, en lidmaatschap van ander gemeenten wordt actief gezocht. Misschien oorspronkelijk via plaatselijk committee's, het ideaal, zo's gezegd, door individueel lidmaatschap in een vereniging met een regionaal vertegenwoordigd bestuur.

Na stemming bleek dat het voorstel tot aankoop met grote meerderheid van stemmen was aangenomen.

Gedurende deze vergadering sprong het ledental van 20 tot 33. Inderdaad een aanmoediging.

De secretaris van de vereniging is: Mr. A. DeJong, 25 St. Clair Ave., S., Hamilton, Ont. Phone: 544-3626.

GEORGE HART

# No Place in Public Worship for an 'Edifying Word' and 'Training'?

Synod 1974, starting November 4th, will have to deal with a host of reports and overtures. One of them will be, "To rescind the decision of General Synod, New Westminster 1971, Acts art. 76, 'that students of theology may receive the right to speak an edifying word in the Churches'."

Grounds for this proposal will be mentioned below.

First the remark that, if the history of our Churches runs more or less parallel to that of the Dutch sister churches, one should have expected such a proposal. This issue of "preaching students" has been a zig-zag operation in recent decades. Dr. K. Schilder was an enthusiastic supporter of it. One Synod opened the way. The next one closed it again. Later it came up again and a switch was made.

The reader will understand that I, being lecturer in what is sometimes called "Practical Theology", including the training in preaching, have a special interest in this matter. Since the opening of our College I have requested and received the promise of the churches to cooperate that our students, in addition to their college training, should have opportunities for practical training. As a result students have been teaching catechism classes and, since 1971, were allowed to speak an edifying word.

This field-training or field-work, as it is called, is not yet developed the way I would like it, or better, the way I deem it necessary for our future ministers. For our students there are not many openings for doing "inner city work" in evangelizing for the simple reason that our churches are not (yet) engaged in this Kingdom work.

At the same time I have received reports, etc., of what has been set up in the Netherlands, where many responsible people have advocated more practical training of future ministers outside the College. Although an ideal solution has not yet been found, the direction is clear: not only

theoretical (!) study but also practical training. We are not yet that far that a candidate, before being eligible for a call, spends some time in a congregation, working under the supervision of the local pastor.

## SAFEGUARDS

When Synod 1971 opened the way for students to speak an edifying word in the churches, it set up a series of safeguards:

1. The student must have concluded successfully at least two years of theological studies.
2. He must have a certificate from the Faculty.
3. His consistory must be able to give a favourable testimony.
4. His classis must examine him in the knowledge of Reformed Doctrine and hear a proposal of a sermon.

But that is not all yet.

5. The student must submit his "proposals" to the lecturer of the College who has to give the go-ahead.

Classis Ontario-North, finally, added one more rule (in my opinion a very wise rule, see below):

6. The consistories who have invited and heard the student, are requested to send a report of their findings and judgments to the lecturer in homiletics (it stands to reason that these reports will be taken very seriously because the elders are the God-given brethren to supervise the preaching).

These reports may become very beneficial, not only for the student, but also for the lecturer.

One wonders what can be wrong with this so very careful set-up. One year later and such a student is eligible for call, and is completely on his own, "facing the music" of all his pastoral duties!

## GROUND TO UNDO IT

The consistory asking to rescind the 1971 decision, offers the following grounds.

1. The Church Worship is instituted for the proclamation of the Word of God to the people of God and not for "speaking an edifying word."
2. The Church Worship is not to be used as a training school for students of theology. A training school for students of theology is provided for by the Churches in the establishment of their Theological College. If training of theological students is needed more intensively, it should be sought in the school of training more extensively.
3. A student of theology is not declared eligible for a call to the ministry of the Word of God.
4. A student of theology should study theology in order to become well-approved for the proclamation of the Word of God by the Churches.
5. Granting students of theology to speak an edifying word in not edifying the Churches as Christ has ordained it for the Churches: "Christ gave some apostles, some prophets and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Ephesians 4:11, 12.

As the reader sees, quite some heavy ammunition, especially when in ground 5 the impression is given that God's Word (our final and only authority) simply forbids it!

## MINOR QUESTIONS

Of course we agree with many things stated in these grounds. Look at ground 3: what an enormous truth! Although it escapes me what it has to do with the matter. When a consistory invites a student who has permission to speak a word of edification in their midst, it certainly does not extend a call to the ministry to him (although they may like to do so the following year).

A student should study; who disagrees? But what is understood by 'study' here?

He must learn to "handle the tools"; the real work starts once he is a minister. But must this 'study' be only understood as "theoretical" study? Do we not speak about "the training for the ministry" and does not all training have a practical aspect too?

When ground 2 states that then the College training should be more "extensive", the reader will understand that the best part of training is of a practical character. Let him have his head filled with dogmatic formulas, but put him then before a class of boys and girls 12 - 14 of age: how does he reach them, get the truth across? In the same way (our students must prepare quite a number of sermons): reading a sermon before some professors and students cannot compare with actually facing a congregation. In our college we sharply distinguish between "preparing a sermon" and "delivering a sermon". Is it not a good opportunity, within the confines of all the above mentioned safeguards, to let him actually face a congregation, and to ask the eldership afterwards: what do you think about it and about him? To me that is a wonderful asset. I have my opinion about the student's sermon, and the way he delivers it, but I am only a preacher and not an elder whose task it is (and who is qualified) to judge.

And so I could go on. But I have some

#### MAJOR OBJECTIONS

As the reader has seen, this consistency sees no room or legitimate place whatsoever for "training" and "an edifying word" within "Church Worship" as it is called. Giving such room is even considered unbiblical!

My objections are of a twofold character and contents.

First, is such a statement not a slap in the face of the Reformed Churches who, since the 17th Century have permitted persons to "speak an edifying word" (Dutch term: *oefenars*). The Churches of the Secession and Doleancy often made use of the possibility to appoint a member of the congregation to edify the congregation from the pulpit, in the catechism room, and by visiting the sick. Yes, I know, a student-with-preaching-consent is not such an 'oefenaar' but the point of comparison is that the latter isn't a "pastor and teacher" either, as Eph. 4 says. Only the LORD knows how much edification came from these simple brethren who served when there were not enough ministers.

This brings us to the Church Order which, in two articles, contradicts the grounds of this proposal. I urge the reader to give good attention to the terms used by the C.O. (and

again: keep in sight the point of comparison: the preaching student is not a "candidate according to art. 8", yet . . .). Art. 8: brothers who have exceptional gifts and cannot take the regular College training, after examination by classis, "let them privately speak a word of edification for some time . . ." (Report revision C.O. - see below - deletes 'privately' and proposes: "allow them to speak a word of edification in the Churches of Classis"). There you have, in our Church Order the possibility that the 'grounds' given above, do exclude: "speaking an edifying word is not edifying the Churches as Christ has ordained it." (!)

The same grounds suggest that "training" is taboo outside the College and inside the Church Worship. Art. 20 C.O., however, states and rules, ". . . to be prepared for the ministry of the Word, it may be arranged that for their training they speak an edifying word."

And now, to let you benefit from what the Revs. Kingma, Scholten, VanOene propose in their revision, report C.O., they submit as new Art. 20:

"In Churches in which persons have been judged competent, according to art. 8, to be prepared for the Ministry of the Word, or where others have received this right in harmony with general ecclesiastical regulations (here they undoubtedly thought of the right given in 1971 to students of theology, vD), it may be arranged that, for their own training, and in order that they may become known to the Congregations, they be allowed to speak a word of edification in the meetings of public worship."

This should be sufficient ground to reject the proposal to take away that "word of edification" "also for their own training".

But the Bible!

Here is my second major objection. It is easy to quote a text, but think of all that this church wants to build upon this text!

First, that in public worship ministers are the only ones who can serve the edification of the congregation. The others that Paul mentions are no longer around (unless one understands "evangelists" to be missionaries). Elders and deacons are not mentioned at all!

Apart from that, the proposal

assigns (you can see that from the way this text, Ephes. 4:11, 12 is printed) to the "pastor-and-teacher" - only - everything: "perfecting the saints" (why not follow the better translation: "equip"?); secondly, "the work of the ministry"; third, "edifying the body of Christ." It is all "for ministers only . . ."

All the books and commentaries published in recent years, all the articles written in *C.R.M.* and *Clarion* have, obviously, not reached the attention of the makers of this proposal. There should not be that comma! It should read like this: "Christ gave . . . pastors-teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry (*diakonia*, service) that the body may be built." In other words, the ministers have to equip the saints, but these saints have to do the work of *diakonia* and thus work for the *edification* of the Church, all of them. Thus the Lord Christ ordained it. This text *does not* assign "edifying" to ministers only. On the contrary. The New Testament employs the various forms of the word "edify" about fifty times in the general meaning just mentioned.

You know already my conclusion: it should take Synod not much time to reject this proposal.

G. VANDOOREN

## Church News

Called:

REV. J. GEERTSEMA

of Carman, Manitoba, by the Free Reformed Church of Launceston, Tasmania, Australia.

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#### "WERELDOMROEP"

Op zondag 24 november 1974 zal via Radio Nederland Wereldomroep een kerkdienst worden uitgezonden uit de gereformeerde kerk te *Spakenburg-Zuid*, waarin hoopt voor te gaan ds. *P. van Gorp*.

De tijd van uitzending is GMT voor Afrika en Zuid-Amerika 15.30 uur en voor Noord-Amerika en Canada 21.30 uur.

Eventuele reacties zien deputaten gaarne tegemoet aan het adres van ds. *D. Vreugdenhil* Alteveerselaan 9 Velp (G), Nederland



# mission news

Once again we wish to report on the work we may do here in the Name of the Lord on behalf of the brotherhood in Canada. The work could again continue unhindered during this past month. It is still seeding-time and we are sowing the good seed the Lord has entrusted unto us at every opportunity: in the services, the Sunday School, the Bible Study, pre-confession classes and at numerous other occasions in our conversations.

At the same time, the Lord's arch-enemy is also seeding: he will not give up his domain and subjects without offering much resistance. No, not that we notice any open resistance - he has more delicate ways and means. Many hearts and minds are dulled and are dominated by a general apathy: they don't exert themselves for anything anymore, neither material nor spiritual causes; ability to concentrate and understand is minimal and they seem to lack motivation and enthusiasm.

These are some of the hidden obstacles which are very difficult to pinpoint and to combat. Oh yes, there

is also some open resistance. The Roman Catholics, who are so by conviction, say that we are trying to draw away their people, yes, even bribing them. Other protestants (all pentecostals) discourage the people by saying that we lack the fire of the Holy Spirit: the people don't even pray, just sit there quietly, we don't even give "glory and amen to Jesus" and to top it all off: we don't even straight out prohibit all smoking and drinking.

But these attacks are open, the people will bring up these objections and one can talk about them. However, a regional and almost racial mentality of apathy, fatalism and humanistic self-righteousness is a near insurmountable obstacle. It is a good thing that the overthrow of this satanic weapon does not depend on human means but that we may trust in the power of the Word of God.

#### *Pre-Confession Classes:*

Classes have been held regularly and there are no new developments since last month's report. There is no improvement in the group of Sunday: only half attend and of this smaller

number "real contact" seems to be with only few of them. The other two classes are very good and we are making good progress. Here we experience a desire to know the Scriptures among most of them and this accounts for pleasant and fruitful hours. (For details on these classes see the last report.)

#### *Bible Study:*

The Wednesday-evening Bible Study is usually well attended by 25 to 30 adults and a number of children. We are dealing mainly with the stories of the Old Testament and have come to Joshua now. This is new to most of them and they seem to be truly interested in hearing how the Lord deals with His people.

#### *Sunday School:*

In two years time we have now gone through all the stories of the Bible, as selected by Anne de Vries. Quite a few of the children are becoming more familiar with them now. We started from the beginning again.

#### *Entertainment-Evening:*

Now that we have our own facilities we can also have some extra-curricular activities. Twice we held a ping-pong evening with the young people of the pre-confession class, equally enjoyed by them as well as both of our families!

C. VAN SPRONSEN  
[from the July report]

## Mededeling van het Consulaat Generaal der Nederlanden

inzake

### AANMELDINGSTERMIJN VRIJWILLIGE PREMIEBETALING AOW EN AWW VERLENGD

Nederlanders, die in het buitenland wonen, zijn als regel niet verzekerd ingevolge de Algemene Ouderdomswet (AOW) en de Algemene Weduwen- en Wezenwet (AWW).

Sinds 1 januari 1972 is een nieuwe regeling van kracht waardoor naast de reeds eerder bestaande mogelijkheid tot vrijwillige premiebetaling voor de AOW, het van die datum af ook mogelijk is voor de AWW vrijwillig premie te betalen. Door die vrijwillige premiebetaling wordt recht op een hoger AOW-pensioen verkregen en het recht op AWW-pensioen veilig gesteld.

Bij de invoering van die nieuwe regeling in 1972 kreeg een aantal groepen van personen, die zich destijds niet tijdig hadden aangemeld voor vrijwillige premiebetaling AOW, hiertoe opnieuw de gelegenheid en wel tot uiterlijk 1 januari 1973.

Gebleken is echter, dat veel in het buitenland verblijvende Nederlanders niet op de hoogte zijn van die mogelijkheid. In verband hiermede is voor een aantal groepen de aanmeldingstermijn voor de vrijwillige premiebetaling verlengd tot uiterlijk 1 januari 1976.

Tot deze groep behoren zij die

- ná het bereiken van de 15-jarige leeftijd maar vóór 1 januari 1957 in Nederland hebben gewoond en nooit verplicht verzekerd zijn geweest;

- in de periode van 1 januari 1957 tot 1 januari 1972 een of meer tijdvakken niet verzekerd zijn geweest;
- na 31 december 1956, doch voor 1 januari 1972 naar het buitenland zijn vertrokken.

AANMELDING VOOR DE VRIJWILLIGE PREMIEBETALING MOET GESCHIEDEN BIJ DE SOCIALE VERZEKERINGSBANK, APOLLOLAAN 15 te AMSTERDAM.

De vrijwillige premiebetaling heeft tot 1 januari 1972 alleen betrekking op de AOW, maar van deze datum af moet voor AOW en AWW gezamenlijk premie worden betaald.

Is de verplichte verzekering vóór 1 januari 1972 geëindigd en komt de betrokkene vóór 1 januari 1976 te overlijden, voordat hij zich heeft aangemeld, dan kunnen aanmelding en premiebetaling nog door een ander (bv. de weduwe) worden verzorgd. Hierdoor is het mogelijk dat de weduwe of de ouderloze kinderen in zo'n geval nog recht verwerven op AWW-pensioen.

Binnenkort verschijnt een vouwblad met verdere bijzonderheden. Die publikatie zal verkrijgbaar zijn bij het VOORLICHTINGSCENTRUM SOCIALE VERZEKERING (VS), RHIJNSPOORPLEIN 1 te AMSTERDAM.

# our little magazine

Dear Busy Beavers,

As you know the end of October brings us Reformation Day again. Most people don't think of October 31 as Reformation Day, I know. But God's people should never forget the great deeds God does for His Church. So we should remember how God gave us the Reformation to bring His Church back to the Bible.

So I was reading a little about the story of the Reformation. About how John Know the Scottish reformer spent months as a slave on a French galley ship. And how Luther was arrested and carried off to the castle of the Wartburg. Brave and exciting things like that.

And then I thought how I liked reading such interesting things and maybe I should tell you Busy Beavers, too.

But you know Busy Beavers, I wasn't quite right. It's true, church history can be very interesting and exciting, but we should never forget this - when God's people escape dangers, when wonderful things happen, it is all the Lord's doing. That is what we remember on Reformation Day - the wonderful deeds of the Lord.

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Busy Beaver *Nellie Jane Knol* sent us this story about Reformation Day.

We remember Reformation Day because Luther showed the Roman Catholic Church not to believe the Pope but God only. Luther studied Paul's letter to the Romans where he found "the just shall live by faith". On October 31 he nailed the 95 theses on the door of the castle church in Wittenburg.

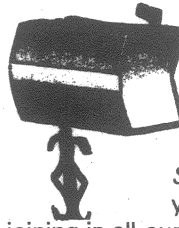
Here is a Reformation Day Quiz for you to do! Match the name of the leader to the name of the country where he worked. Answers next time. How many do you know? Do you know where you can find the rest of the answers?

Germany	Lefevre
Switzerland	John Knox
Holland	Luther
England	John Calvin
Scotland	Archbishop Cranmer
France	Zwingli
William the Silent	

Even though November days are often dull and gray the following Busy Beavers especially, will be looking forward to happy times next month. And no wonder they will be celebrating their birthdays! We wish you all a very happy birthday, and God's blessing and guidance, also in the year ahead.

Debbie Bareman	Nov. 1	Jeanie Linde	7
Tanya Harlaan	1	Sharon Kieneker	9
Joanne Jans	3	Joanne Lodder	11
Harry Vanden Berg	3	Lorraine Bosch	12
Paul Mulder	4	Jake Bouwman	12
Karen Oostenbrug	4	Evelyn De Bruin	13
Shirley Devries	5	Brian Bosch	15
Wendy Lodder	6	Leona Dam	15

Jennifer Hulleman	17	Tony Linde	24
Karen Hoeksema	19	Charles Doekes	27
Eelco Jager	21	Inge Plug	30
Glenda Bulthuis	24		



## From The Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Stephanie Berends!* We are happy to have you join us, and hope you'll really enjoy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Thank you for your poem. Stephanie.

And a big welcome to you too, *Joyce De Gelder.* I'm glad your trip was so much fun. And thank you too, for your poem, Joyce.

Thank you for your letter and story, *Shirley Devries.* It's nice to hear from you again. Did you get your bookmark already?

I'm sure the Busy Beaver will just love your rhyming riddles, *John Wendt!* Thank you for sending them, and your letter and story too.

It was nice to hear from you again, *Cathy Wendt.* I'm glad you had such a nice summer. Write again soon, Cathy.

Now, Busy Beavers, we need another pen-pal. Would you like to exchange letters with someone? Please write to:

Judy Peet  
12 Kerr Ave.  
Chatham, Ontario

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## QUIZ TIME

Think you can find the answers to ALL of John Wendt's rhyming riddles?

1. I have four legs but cannot walk.
2. I have a tongue but cannot talk.
3. I am a colour but I'm not black.
4. An old lady wears me on her back.
5. Guess my number, I come after two.
6. I'm a small brown animal, and like to chew.
7. I'm a ripe red fruit hanging on a tree.
8. I am so quiet, you can hardly hear me.
9. I blow black smoke up into the sky.
10. I am part of my face, but not an eye.
11. I'm the noise that a train makes near a town.
12. I am good to eat and sweet and brown.

And here are the answers to last time's Bible Puzzle.

## ACROSS

1. Jehoshaphat
2. Rehoboam
3. Bozez
4. Asa
5. Cain
6. Ashkelon

## DOWN

7. Jehu
8. Mammon
9. Michael
10. Nathan
1. Jeroboam

2. Ahaz
3. Athaliah
4. Hezekiah
5. Solomon
6. sin
7. ephah
8. Lot

Bye for now, Busy Beavers!

Yours,  
Aunt Betty