



Clarion

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Israel - Its Past, Present, And Future

What follows here is an elaboration of a speech which I held in the spring and summer of this year for some of the combined meetings of our societies here in Ontario.

The subject of the speech we may call up to date. It has been topical since the proclamation of the independent Jewish State on May 14th, 1948, shortly after the second World War, during which the Jewish people had gone through such a terrible time. That it continues to be topical we realize from time to time as often as the world is startled by a new war in the Middle East; the last time in the Yom-Kippur war, named after the great day of atonement on which it broke out, now over a year ago. So there was every reason for our societies to give this matter due consideration and to discuss it during their meetings or to have somebody come to speak on the topic.

In preparing my speech, pondering how to come to grips with my subject, I saw a problem arise, a problem that was implied in the very title: "Israel, its past, present, . . . and future". We were expected to speak on Israel, in three successive stages of its history. Let me consider its present and - the Lord willing - its future, though it is to take place yet, as history, that is, as a succession of events in which a continuous thread and pattern can be discovered. The point at issue is however: In doing so are we dealing with one and the same people? That they call themselves Israelites does not settle the matter. It may be a mere pretension concerning a past that has been forfeited and a descent that remains to be seen. More mistakes of that sort have been made in history, either by peoples themselves - I just mention the Germans under the Nazis who deemed themselves to be Aryans, whereas only the Persians and Indo-European Indians are entitled to bear the name - or by others - I mention the case of the Redskins or North American Indians, who got this designation erroneously.

So the first thing that comes up is: Are the Israelites who are at pres-

ent living in "their own" (1 emphatically put quotation marks here) country over there in the south-eastern corner of the Mediterranean the legitimate successors of the Israelites who lived there in olden days under completely different circumstances? You will notice that I do not speak of descendants now, though this factor plays a part as well; however, I am not going to make the matter dependent upon that. Nor do I speak of the language, culture, state, or even religion, much as those are factors to be taken into consideration when it comes to the point what a people, a nation, is. According to the dictionary it is: "a historically grown community of hereditary, cognate people, sharing the same language, traditions, customs". But returning to Israel, I would put the question: Are they entitled to bear the name, that wonderful name? With an allusion to the well-known text, Romans 9:6, we may wonder: Are they all Israel who are of Israel?

Maybe some reader will think: "That is not my concern. Now that they have adopted the name, let us take it for granted. Didn't you already do so yourself in accepting an invitation to speak on this topic?" Well, in doing so I admitted that somehow or other there is a connection between the Israel of the past and the Israelites of the present, but throughout a series of articles we should examine the matter over and over; we are to assume a critical attitude. If there is a relation, of what kind is it? Otherwise we are talking at random for lack of a clear distinction and finally we are at a loss what to say.

To what sorts of misrepresentations you may come can be shown by an example. It refers to an interview of the former premier of Israel, Mrs. Golda Meir. Asked if the Jewish people were the smartest of them all, she was reported to have said in reply (! quote from memory): "When Moses brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, he led them in a land without oil! Is that smart?"

We smile and say: "It is a joke. She is only kidding." I will not deny

that, though it is going beyond a joke, since it is the problem of the existence of the Jewish people in its all-embracing, comprehensive significance that is touched upon and - I am sorry to say - incorrectly stated.

For the esteemed Mrs. Meir goes back from Israel's present - in which is implied its future, the LORD willing, and it is the Church which ought to be interested in this future more than anyone else! - to the past, the long, long ago. And in her joke she is coordinating things which are not related at all; anyway, not in this way!

Maybe some of my readers will say: "Do not go further into that subject please. It is just a joke. And you can take it, can't you?" I answer: Sure I can. But I cannot help hearing a serious undertone in Mrs. Meir's words. For if Israel happened to have oil wells within its boundaries, it wouldn't be so dependent upon the assistance of other countries as it is today. Its economy would not be so vulnerable. It would be more favourably placed amidst other peoples, of which we mention first of all those of the surrounding Arab countries, who are at Israel's throat time and again.

However, and now I take what is a joke in all seriousness, is Moses to blame for it? Moses, who lived some 3400 years ago?

Well, someone replies, Moses led the people of Israel to Canaan, didn't he?

Over against this statement I can put other questions, and I should. And I am not splitting hairs now.

First: Did Moses lead the present-day Jews to the Palestine as we know it today; a Palestine where for centuries Arabs have lived (!) and got a place, lawful or not (?), and where since the latter decades of the previous century the Jewish people has found a national home? Has Moses, somewhere in his books, written with a view to such a future or given any hint concerning it?

Seemingly it is absurd to put such questions. I freely admit it. Nevertheless they are inevitable. Within a space of time of about 3400

years quite a lot may come to pass - and has happened. And not only that, things can take a turn. A turn - that may refer to times or circumstances that have altered, but also to the people itself, which can change to such a degree that one may wonder with good reason: Is it still the same people?

The Jews have come back to Palestine after having been away for centuries - for more centuries to be exact (from 100 A.D. to 1900 A.D.) than they had a home there before (from 1400 B.C. to 70 A.D.). Can their entry into Palestine now be put on one level with the entry under Joshua, as described in the Bible? I do not think so. Between the latter and the former we meet a turning point in history. So, what do I mean by a turn? And consequently, which one do I mean? As for the Jews, they will point to what happened in the year 70 A.D.: the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. That is to them *the* turning point in their history, the poignant incision in the body of the people, who were forced to leave the land of their fathers a second time. It was a turn; there is no denying that. But I for one think there was another turn, a change which was far more radical, it being an incision affecting or detecting the attitude, the character, of this people. I mean, as my readers will infer already, what came to pass in the year 33, when the Greatest Son of the Jewish people was excommunicated and crucified by His very people. JESUS CHRIST was His name. And He was an Israelite, a Jew, Son of David and Son of GOD. The GOD of the Old Testament. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And of Moses! The God whom they believed, though I had better say here: served, or rather, to whom they thought they were offering a service. But they did not act as they should have, according to the Scriptures bearing witness to Jesus. At the most they acted as they had to in the framework of God's providence (Acts 2:23, 3:17, and elsewhere). It was belief in this GOD that had made the Jews what they had been originally, and continued to be down the centuries up till the time that GOD was pleased to reveal Himself in His Son. It was the constitutive factor in their being a people, generally speaking; the more so in being *the* separate people that they were. Both are inextricably interwoven.

Second: I go on—and go back—in putting my second question: Was it actually Moses who during his lifetime led those who were then Israelites to Canaan? Again I must answer in the negative. To be exact, it was not Moses, but the GOD of Moses, YAHWEH, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage. No, I am not splitting hairs now. Maybe you wonder: Does it make such a difference? Sure, it was not something undertaken by Moses on his own initiative, of his own accord. According to Exodus 2 he may have had some aspirations in his earlier years - I refer to Acts 7:25 - but the time had not yet come. When the time had come, it was the LORD who was pleased to enlist him in His service, after he had been fully prepared for it. But it was only on GOD's order and under GOD's continuous guidance that the saints marched out of Egypt through the wilderness (Numbers 9) and into Canaan. Moses and later on Joshua were mere instruments. If it had been dependent upon Moses or Joshua, it would have come to nothing. They would have given up on the whole thing. With such an unmanageable people!

Third: I ask the question: Would Moses ever have hit upon the idea that Canaan was a choice land to live in? We are taught otherwise in Holy Writ. For the Bible does not lead off the history of the people with Exodus but with Genesis, which contains the history of the patriarchs for the major part. Was it the first of the patriarchs to whom the idea occurred: "Let me be an immigrant. Let me go to Canaan"? No, being called by the LORD, he was led to the land that the LORD was to show him. Abraham was the very first one in a long time to whom the LORD revealed Himself. GOD made a demand upon him to go, to leave his land, and so on, which departure was to be evidence of his faith, and that demand was accompanied by a manifold promise: (1) I will make you a great nation. (2) I will bless you. (3) I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing to all the peoples of the earth.

The history is well-known, but do we realize that we stand here at the cradle of the people of Israel, whose birth hour then struck? This very hour we see appear before us in Abram and Sarai the first Jews. But as soon as we see them, problems arise. It is a childless couple which is given such

promises! We realize: Any child is a gift of the LORD. So, if Abram had already had children, they would have been given them by the LORD as well. But now that they don't have any and are past the age, the LORD's wondrous work in giving children and making the impotent man and the barren wife parents of children will be the more conspicuous. Now it stands out clearly: "It is I who will make of you a great nation", and all the subsequent chapters underline that. For we learn there first that Abram himself is put to the test for twenty-five years before the son is born: Isaac, child of the promise. And later on in the case of Isaac, the test is repeated by GOD, as far as we can speak of a repetition here, for in the history of revelation there is no mere repetition but also progress. So Isaac and Rebecca's case is not exactly the same as that of Abraham and Sarah. Rather, we may say that the LORD points out to them that not only the beginning, but also henceforth and in the future the making of this people, this nation, is dependent upon His miraculous power. And not only that. Now that there are two children, twins born under exactly the same circumstances, it pleases the LORD to show that His good pleasure, His election, will be decisive in the life of the twins, the older of which is to serve the younger one. The older was a child of the covenant as well, a child prayed for and born by way of a wonder. Both wonder and election refer back to what the LORD did to the father of the nation: Abraham, who once had been called and elected by Him out of mere grace.

And there we stand at the very source of the nation: GOD's good pleasure to make this man, this Semite nomad, this member of an Amorite tribe, speaking an old Aramean dialect, roaming about with his herd in the vicinity of the famous city of Ur, a great nation. Humanly speaking it was impossible for Abraham to procreate children. And if he had had some, and the LORD had not intervened, they would have merged into the large multitude of Amorite or Aramean nomad tribes that nobody would have heard about afterwards. This people consequently was called into being by the LORD Yahweh's miraculous power, to be and to remain his chosen people. And what is more: the posterity of the *blessed* Abraham, of whom they

would be reminded ever since, i.e., as their ancestor who walked in belief, in order that they should follow in his steps. And not only they, but all the peoples would be blessed and would bless themselves in this very man. The Jews are there not for themselves but in behalf of other peoples.

For there were already many peoples in that time and there had been many from days of old. Genesis 10 tells about it. Israel was not, for instance, the oldest or first one; Amalek is designated as such (Numbers 24:20). Israel was not the mightiest. Abraham's family had witnessed the rise and decline of world empires in Mesopotamia. Each of those nations was led by the LORD in its particular ways. It was He who had called them into existence by means of natural factors. So we come at the end of this article back to the question that was touched upon already: What

is a nation? What makes people a nation?

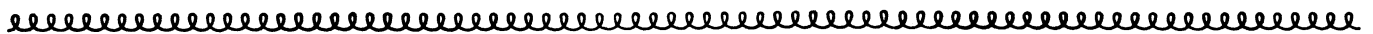
Various factors may be mentioned. First of all we think of descent. In a nation you meet with people tracing their descent back to one ancestor. However, is there any nation whose members are all purebred? Can it be checked? Impossible. On the contrary, even the Arab Bedouins, proud as they are of their pure descent, always left open the possibility for outsiders to join their tribes. How did the Dutch people come into existence: Prior to Batavians and Frisians, "aborigines" like the "Hunebedbouwers" lived in the low countries. And as for the English people, everyone knows that it is made up of at least three successive layers: a Celtic one, an Anglo-Saxon one, and, after the year 1000, a Norman one. To say nothing of Canada. Immigration is as old as the world.

A second factor is the language; however, a language may be borrowed from another people, and so Israel borrowed its language from the Canaanites. Or more than one language may be spoken within the boundaries of one nation (cp. Belgium).

Third, it may be the place which knits people together as a nation, but often we face the situation that kindred people, speaking almost the same tongue, living under similar conditions, are separated by artificial boundaries. And on the other hand, peoples of different stock, may be compelled to live as one nation.

Fourth, it may be a government, and oftentimes it is, that fixes the boundaries making the people within them a nation. But those borders are changeable. Cp. the expansionism of world empires.

Fifth, it may be a culture, a type



YOUTH COLUMN

FREEDOM AND FRIENDSHIPS (1)

"Christian freedom" is a very hotly debated subject. At first we were about to tackle this large subject, but we decided to narrow it down to "freedom and friendships".

By freedom we of course mean Christian freedom. This adjective will leaven our speech and discussion hopefully. Our freedom in Christ then forms the background against which we hope to understand the forming of friendships. To be specific, if you are a Christian what friendships may and must you form and what friendships must you avoid or break up? Does Christian freedom mean we are free to form any friendship? Or does it mean we may form only a few friendships?

To put our topic in clear terms, then, we may sum it as follows: What does Christian freedom mean in the forming of friendships?

This subject means we must first of all review the meaning of Christian freedom. How do we understand that? For this is crucial to the other part of our topic about friendships. If we conclude that we are free in Christ to choose our own lifestyle then we can also choose our own circle of friends and ignore any friendships we do not appreciate. Then if some persons in the church do not appeal to us, we will plainly choose to discard them from our list of friends.

And let's be honest, as young people we often discriminate as far as friends in the church are concerned. We find some people stuck-up, unpleasant, ugly, unappealing, too flashy, conceited or too backward. Are we free to ignore some altogether and play favorites with others in the church? And how about outsiders - can we choose the friends we want because we are free in Christ?

To understand this freedom let's return to the chapter

we read together, I Corinthians 5. Verses 7b and 8 gives us the following admonition:

Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the feast, not with old leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

The idea of leaven stands out in this passage. Paul, as we will see, called sin "leaven". Paul borrowed this term from the church-life of the O.T. people. Israel celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread once every year. You will remember that this celebration came at Passover. In Egypt, Israel had had to slay a lamb, a passover lamb. They sprinkled the blood on the doorposts. As a result the angel of death passed over that house which was COVERED/PROTECTED by the blood of the lamb. Moreover, the people had to eat bitter vegetables to remember the bitterness of their slavery and idolatry in Egypt. And finally, God commanded that no leaven/yeast be used or found in the homes or tents for one full week. Thus you have the seven-day feast of unleavened bread. God insisted on this. Listen:

Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel . . . You shall not eat anything leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread. (Exod. 12:19, 20)

Anyone disobeying the rules of the feast would be put to death. So you readily see and understand that God meant what He said and what He said was important. Well, what was the importance of leaven?

You see, God FREED His people from oppression, cruel slavery and unbearable tyranny and from ungodliness.

of society, or, in the same vein, a religion that constitutes a nation. I think of India and Pakistan. Wasn't this the case with Israel also, you ask. I am touching upon a delicate point now. Often you can hear that it is their religion that is forging Jews together all over the earth. Is that right? What about modernism and orthodoxy within Jewry? On this point I can easily break the Jewish state into pieces without being able to say of one of the pieces: This is true Israel. For in speaking of *their* religion I purposely made a mistake. That is to say: at present it is indeed *their* religion. But from the beginning it was not so. It was faith, only faith to which Abram was called, that gave rise to THE RELIGION of the Old Testament era.

H.M. OHMANN

News From The Committee on The R.S.V.

Our Committee recently received a letter from the Standard Bible Committee which is in charge of the text of the Revised Standard Version and which therefore makes the authorized changes in it. We quote the following:

This is just a brief note to indicate that a meeting of the Translation Committee was held late in June. We had a very full agenda of materials that had been in our hands for a long time . . . We did find time to go over the first seventeen Canadian Reformed Church's agenda items. These included Genesis through Psalm 109:8. Of the seventeen items, eleven were approved,

three were temporarily postponed for later consideration. Three of the items had previously been approved by action of the Committee. A couple of changes were in accord with your suggestions, although not identical. I send you this information to indicate something of the seriousness with which we took your suggestions, and in appreciation of the efforts put forth by your committee . . .

The letter is signed by Dr. Herbert G. May. The changes which are agreed on will eventually be included in a new edition of the RSV Old Testament.

for the Committee,
C. VAN DAM

Israel was to be a FREE people. To mark this changeover from slavery to freedom God used their menu-card. God taught Israel to celebrate the feast of freedom at this special meal-time. They had been freed - freed not only from the Pharaoh who had ordered their baby boys drowned in the Nile River, nor freedom only from the cruel taskmasters who had mercilessly driven them to mass-produce the huge structures which now amaze and bewilder archaeologists. Oh yes, they could rejoice and laugh at the cribs of their baby boys again. They could join their families. No one stood over them with a whip. Yet that was but part of their freedom. God taught them to celebrate the feast of freedom because God had freed them COMPLETELY from their own life - a life which had been slowly eaten away by idolatry, unbelief, and a lack of knowledge. But by the blood of the lamb they escaped the life of doom and slavery and became protected, freed people. They could now begin a NEW life in a NEW land, flowing with milk and honey. Oh, how they could rejoice. The *leaven/yeast of sin* had been removed; wrath had been avoided. Life could blossom again.

You and I also celebrate this feast. For our passover Lamb has been slain too - Christ. Yes, the exodus from Egypt finds its fulfillment on Black Friday. Then the life-blood of the real Lamb was taken so that the leaven of sin might be covered and removed. The life-blood of Jesus covers us so that the wrath of God passes over our life-house. Jesus' blood calls us to a life of FREEDOM. To implement this new freedom, everything - all forms of sin - which disintegrates life into a house of slavery had to be removed. All "leaven" must be swept out of our houses. Then room for true freedom can be found.

Christ our passover Lamb has been crucified! Therefore you and I celebrate the feast of freedom - the feast of unleavened bread, not only for seven days but for a whole lifetime. We eat "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth". "Sincerity" means something unmixed, unalloyed

with no impurities. You all know about pure gold, or should I use the example of pure chocolate (campers like hot chocolate at nights for some reason). You find nothing else but chocolate in the chocolate can - I don't know about your cups though! And so you, because your passover Lamb is slain, you are set free and you keep the feast of unleavened bread. Evil and good are no longer mixed up in your lives. No old traces of "Egypt" should be found in us. We celebrate our feast of freedom in a life of purity and truthfulness. No hypocrisy stains this feast. And so our lives are set free in Christ. Purity replaces the leaven of sin and slavery.

Oh, of course Paul does not mean to say that the Corinthians displayed a pure and truthful lifestyle. Read the rest of this chapter or the whole letter and you will discover the opposite is true. Neither will you find "a pure and trustworthy" lifestyle in yourself. We have not reached the goal of perfection. That should cause us to groan because it means that complete freedom is not yet ours.

Paul boasts in the Lord, the Lamb of God. Paul rejoices about the pure and sincere life to which Christ freed us. Whenever we allow evil and good to join forces in our life we deny the cross and the festal program. Therefore we continually and daily look to Christ, the slain passover Lamb, in order to enjoy the forgiveness of sins and freedom in Christ.

So whenever we discuss Christian freedom let's recall the feast of unleavened bread which our passover Lamb calls us to celebrate each day. Christ our passover Lamb has been slain. That is the abc of Christian freedom.

Now we can come to that specific aspect of Christian freedom dealing with the forming of friendships. But we leave that till next time.

W. HUIZINGA

(This is an elaboration on a speech given at Camp CRYPS on August 27, 1974.)

Press Review

ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN - REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN MERGER DISCUSSION CONTINUES

As the reader may know, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church came into being in 1936 under the leadership of Dr. J. Gresham Machen and others who were suspended from office because they wanted to remain really Reformed, which was not allowed. They then separated from the Presbyterian Church and formed the OPC. You can compare this with the Secession and the Liberation in The Netherlands. However, the next year, 1937, "a small group withdrew from it (the OPC, J.G.) and formed the Bible Presbyterian Synod (now the Reformed Presbyterian Church/Evangelical Synod, J.G.). It was the result of differences concerning Dispensationalism, christian liberty and church government" (*Struggle and Triumph*, by A. van der Jagt, p. 99).

At present attempts are being made to bring about a merger of the two churches.

We read about these attempts in *The Presbyterian Guardian*, the issue of August/Sept. 1974, the following:

The General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, meeting May 17-24, 1974, took the following actions in regard to the Proposed Plan of Union with

the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod:

The Assembly determined "to approve Parts I and II of the Plan of Union . . . as the Preamble to and Constitutional Basis of union, with (1) the exception of Questions 86-89 of the Larger Catechism, . . .

More exceptions follow. But this first one receives the real attention. The questions and answers 86-89 of the Larger Westminster Catechism deal with the matter of eschatology. Among other things they say: "We are to believe that at the last day there shall be a general resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" and that "immediately after the resurrection shall follow the general and final judgment of angels and men". This doctrine of a general resurrection with a general judgment at the last day, the Day of Christ's second coming, can also be found in art. 33 of the Westminster Confession as well as in art. 37 of the Belgic Confession. Now, many people have ideas which deviate from the doctrine of a general judgment after a general resurrection at the last day. These ideas have to do with the acceptance of the so-called millennium (= the thousand year reign of Christ on earth).

There is a distinction to be made between pre-millennialism and post-millennialism. Pre-millennialism, in its classical form, says the world will exist 6,000 years. A thousand years for each day of creation. At the end of the sixth period of thousand years, which started with the first coming of Christ, the suffering and persecution of the church will find its climax in the appearance of the Antichrist. Then Christ will return, defeat the Antichrist, raise the believers from the dead, and reign on the earth for 1,000 years (the seventh period, which accords with the seventh day, the day of God's rest). At the end of this period of rest and peace the wicked will be raised and the final judgment will be held. After this the new earth will be there. During the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth a restored earthly Jerusalem will be Christ's residence, and a rebuilt temple his palace.

Post-millennialism says that un-

der the influence of christianity evil will decrease and good increase, which process will turn into a thousand-year reign of Christ. Then there will be the great apostasy, followed by the second coming of Christ, the general resurrection and the general judgment; after this the new earth will be there. Modern theology with the idea that our world gradually will develop into the great kingdom of God, while we must not expect a visible second coming of Christ, is a modern form of post-millennialism.

To be complete, we should also mention a-millennialism. This means: there is no thousand-year reign-of-Christ-on-earth at all. The thousand-year reign must be seen as the reign of Christ in heaven during the time between his first and his second coming. This is what John Calvin taught and what we actually find in the Reformed Confessions.

Now there is also a modern form of pre-millennialism: dispensationalism. It says that there are seven dispensations (bedelingen) in history. Five during the time of the Old Testament: (1) before the fall into sin, the dispensation of Innocence; (2) from the fall to the flood, the dispensation of Conscience; (3) from the flood to the tower of Babel, that of Human Government; (4) from Abraham to Moses, that of the Promise; (5) from Moses to Christ, that of the Law; then we have the dispensation from Christ's first coming to the thousand year reign on earth (sixth); and finally the seventh: the dispensation of the millennium. At the end of the sixth dispensation Christ will return. This return will consist of two separate events: a first and a second return with a seven year period in between. The first return is for the saints: the rapture. It means that then the church will be taken up. Then, during the seven years, the gospel will be preached, the Antichrist revealed, Israel restored. Then Christ comes again to establish the thousand-year reign on earth after the Antichrist is defeated. Christ will reign in Jerusalem and the Jews will be his people and servants, the church being taken away from the earth. In this dispensationalism the church from the Gentiles has only a passing place but is not of real importance. All emphasis is laid on Israel.

Of course, this is only a very brief review. There are many variations. But this is to give the reader who

Apology

In reply to Rev. A.B. Roukema's Letter-to-the-Editor in *Clarion* of November 2, 1974, I would like to reply the following: In my 'School Crossing' of September 7, 1974, I quoted prof. Vos without giving any evidence backing up his statements. That I indeed regret, since I should not expect anyone to believe these statements simply because prof. Vos made them or I quoted them. Our readers must be able to judge for themselves. This is not quite fair either to the AACs.

However, at the moment I do not have the time to go into the issue any further, but plan to come back to it later on. I hope I may count on the patience of our readers till then.

M.C. WERKMAN

does not know so much about these things a bit of an idea what is at stake. Now we return to the article in the *Presbyterian Guardian*. It reads:

It was further determined that "the 1974 Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, be informed that it is the sense of this Forty-first General Assembly that the text of the Larger Catechism, including Questions 86-89, for a united church should be that which was held by the Presbyterian Church of America at the time of the division that occurred in 1937".

Among the grounds of this action are:

1. From the time of the adoption of the Westminster Standards by the Westminster Assembly in the 17th Century there have been those with different eschatological convictions who have been able to minister with complete liberty under those standards (adherents of dispensational eschatology excepted).

2. Other Presbyterian bodies in the United States with whom both our churches have fellowship hold to the earlier form of the Larger Catechism, and a revision of that document would be an obstacle to closer fellowship.

3. It is the opinion of many in this Assembly that the proposed revisions allow leeway for the holding of dispensational views of eschatology under Constitution of the united church . . .

It was also determined

A. that the General Assembly urge the presbyteries to arrange and conduct at least two full-day joint meetings among ministers and elders of the united presbyteries . . . for the purpose of dealing with doctrinal and practical impediments to union . . . ;

B. that presbyteries include in their discussions the following:

1. the scope and character of eschatological liberty
2. dispensationalism
3. the apologetical significance of such doctrines as the doctrine of God, regeneration, faith, and the understanding of the Gospel
4. neo-pentecostalism
5. exercise of discipline in matters of faith and practice

6. the Scriptural mandate for organic union in the visible church;

C. that the presbyteries report significant findings from the joint meetings to the (OPC) Committee on Ecumenicity and Inter-church Relations or the (RPC/ES) Fraternal Relations Committee.

After this report of the OPC General Assembly decisions we find the decisions of the General Synod of the RPC/ES:

The Synod determined to "approve Parts I and II of the Proposed Plan of Union" including the proposed changes to the Larger Catechism which had been rejected by the O.P. Assembly.

What are now the proposed changes of the Larger Catechism? Under the heading "Further Consideration of Catechism" we read:

. . . In its meeting on June 6 and 7, the Joint Committee considered again the proposed changes to the Larger Catechism. It was agreed to propose that Questions 86-89 be changed *only* to the following extent:

In the Answer to Question 87, delete the word "general" in connection with the resurrection.

In Question 88 the word "immediately" and "general and final" are to be deleted. (Again, the intent is presumably to allow for spacing out of various events in time, thus permitting more leeway for a premillennial interpretation.)

Besides these changes, the Larger Catechism is now included in the Proposed Plan of Union without further modification. (Comment (of the writer of the article, J.G.): This would seem to be the irreducible minimum by way of alterations to the standards that could be acceptable to many pre-millennialists in the RPC/ES. The Joint Committee has evidently sought to reach a position that most people could accept in both churches.)

The reader can judge for himself that this comment is true. In the beginning of this review I quoted parts of Question and Answer 87 and 88. You can see what the result is when in the quoted sentences the words "general" before "resurrection" and "immediately" as well as

"general and final" are deleted. I should like to end this review with part of a "letter to the editor" in the same issue about the same matter. The writer, Kenneth MacLeod, says:

I am firmly convinced that our greatest treasure is the Word of God and our greatest responsibility is to be true to that Word. I feel there is one point we can all agree on, which is that John Calvin was a Reformer. He refers to "Chiliasm who limit the reign of Christ to a thousand years; this fiction is too puerile to need or deserve refutation" (Institutes III, XXV, 5). Also, commenting on Hebrews 1:1, 2 he says: "This whole period of the new dispensation from the time when Christ appeared to us with the preaching of the gospel, until the day of judgment, is designated as 'the last time', 'the last times', 'the last days', that contented with the perfection of Christ's doctrine, we may learn to frame no new doctrine for ourselves, or admit any one devised by others" (Institutes, IV, VIII, 7) . . . We have a Confession of Faith that cannot be successfully gainsaid. May God help us to pass along to generations yet unborn our goodly heritage.

J. GEERTSEMA



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CLARION

P.O. Box 54, Fergus
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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

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Co-Editors: W. Helder, D. VanderBoom

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news medley

This time it seems as if most of the activities is centered around Churchbuildings. What an activity in this respect! It is as if some Churches do their best to have the picture of their new sanctuary printed beside the one of their old building! And what a difference with many years ago, when only now and then a Church could afford it to erect a new meeting place. Besides, they look like real Churchbuildings too, and this I deem very important. People should not have to ask, when passing by, "What kind of building is this?" They should be able to see it right away. And, from what I have seen so far, I may conclude that they are indeed able to see it right away: Here people gather to worship God.

But, in order not to keep you in suspense any longer, I should tell you some particulars.

We start in the center of the country: in Winnipeg. In the bulletin which was sent to me I also found two drawings, one of the exterior (front) and one of the interior (pulpit and pews for the elders and deacons). At first I was a little concerned when I started reading the bulletin. What would you say of a beginning like this: "In a meeting on October 12 with the Building Committee, several aspects of the final plans were discussed. First the designs. The roof was raised." Was there so much discord among the brethren? No, there was not, for I read on: "not figuratively, but the pitch is steeper. A modern design was suggested by an exterior design architect, who was referred to us by BACM." I never saw such a design before. I'll try to describe it: there is a canopy over the entrance. Instead of this being just a flat slab, so to speak, the corners are connected with the tip of the roof. You could almost say that it is a steeple with one flat side, a steeple that rests on the canopy instead of on the roof, and the tip of which does not exceed beyond the highest point of the roof. I think I like it. As for the interior view: an open Bible is projected on the wall behind the pulpit, flanked by narrow brick strips, leading up all the way to the ceiling. As a whole it appears to be very appealing. And then what else they have planned for the interior! Listen:

"For the inside it was decided to accept the proposal to install carpet throughout. In the auditorium it will likely be 'reddish' and with 'greenish' material behind the pulpit; a six feet wide strip, bordered with thirty inches of 'brick' . . . The low wall in front of the first pew will be built in such a way that it can be easily converted into a table for the Lord's supper. An extra table is necessary to fill the space of the five feet wide centre aisle. Indirect lights will be installed where walls and ceiling join, which will also hide curtain rods. A spotlight, flush with the ceiling, will be installed above the pulpit."

There are some extra costs too: since it will take some time before electricity is brought to the street that is planned there, an extra hydro-line had to be brought in which, although only a temporary measure, costs

even some \$1,200.00 which comes extra.

If I have the opportunity, I certainly will drop in next year to have a look!

Rehoboth Church in Burlington also nears completion. The Consistory received word from the builders that as tentative date for completion the 10th of December has been fixed. The official dedication most likely will take place a week later.

When Rehoboth Church goes on its own, Ebenezer Church will bring about some changes. For example, they will begin with setting the hours for the services at 10:00 and 4:30. Now, as you may recall, they alternate between 9 and 3 and 11 and 5. For almost four years the two Churches lived according to that schedule; and before that they did so as two sections, East and West. From that time date the expressions "Burlington East" and "Burlington West". Now that "West" has also a name of their own, they should be called by that name, as should "East". I hope to remember it: from now on no longer "Burlington East" and "Burlington West", but Ebenezer Church and Rehoboth Church. Sounds much better too.

Ebenezer Church also decided to install four headphones for those who may be needing it. Our brethren and sisters who have difficulty with hearing the sermon are surely grateful for the products of modern science which enable them by means of lightweight earphones to follow everything.

New Westminster received another offer on their old Churchbuilding, and accepted the offer. The buyer has fourteen days to check the building out to see whether it fits their needs. I have read very little about activities in connection with a new building, but we'll be informed in due time.

Chilliwack also has quite big plans: they are still busy investigating the possibility of purchasing an existing building, and also appointed a committee to see what such a building and what the calling of a minister would mean in financial burdens. A very gratifying development. Less than five years ago the Church at Chilliwack was instituted, and they have already grown so much that they are able to seriously consider these possibilities. All reason for gratitude. This also shows that, at least for the time being, we do not have too many students at our College. There are at least six immediate vacancies in our midst. And we can expect some ministers to retire in the foreseeable future. Reason the more to surround our College with all the love and faithfulness we can give. On October 9 the Classis Pacific was held at Chilliwack, but the Consistory expressed the wish, "We hope that when Chilliwack's turn comes around again, we have our own minister and churchbuilding." I hope that it will be sooner, for when there is one Classis a year, it won't be before 1980 that a Classis will be held there.

There is another thing which is worthwhile to be mentioned: The Chilliwack Consistory also decided to raise the mileage allowance. The remuneration for teaching catechism classes is raised also. Good example.

We are in the Valley anyway, so why not see what happened in Cloverdale. There the deacons asked the advice of the Consistory with regard to possible financial

assistance to a "Senior Citizens Home". The Consistory replied that in its view the Deacons were not only to assist needy members to enter such a home, but also, if the means are there, to financially assist in the establishment of such a home for elderly members of the Church. I am not convinced of this, but am glad that something is being done.

As a last news item this: since all three Valley ministers will be absent for some time due to the General Synod at Toronto, it was decided to ask the Rev. J. Van Rietschoten of Smithers to come down one Sunday. He received permission to do so, and now I understand that he will preach once on that Sunday in all four Churches. Quite an achievement.

No one can tell how long this Synod will last and how long the Valley ministers will be away. Some people appear to be very optimistic. The Neerlandia bulletin states, "Brother Tuininga will teach this class for the time that brother Wierenga is absent, while attending General Synod the first two weeks in November." Only two weeks? Double that and you might be closer to fact.

Neerlandia also decided that the Saturday school would start again on November 2nd. The yearly dues are \$25.00 per family.

The activities in Alberta include a planned Elders' Conference, where the Rev. D. De Jong will introduce a topic on Family Visitation. This conference will be open to anyone interested, and I wish the brethren a good meeting with a large number present. We had a conference here in Ontario on October 26, and the number present was larger than the previous time, which gives so much more satisfaction. The conference will be held in Edmonton.

The Edmonton Consistory received a present: twenty chairs were donated for the Consistory room. A nice gesture and certainly highly appreciated. I hope that the meetings of the Consistory will not last extra long from now on because the brethren do not wish to leave "the comfortable chair". However, I think that they long to get home after having met for several hours.

Edmonton also rearranged the schedule of Dutch and English services somewhat because the organist Dirk Jansz Zwart would play in both services on November 3rd. I congratulate the brethren with that. When he played during the morning service here in Fergus, I had to be in Guelph, and so missed that privilege. Yes, we did enjoy his playing nevertheless: we had a concert in the Melville United Church here in Fergus with a very good attendance and a very good press. The week after, we received a big surprise: our brother expressed the wish to come back to good old Fergus and to have another evening here, this time more for singing with the Congregation. We had a packed house and no one but a few who *had* to leave left, even though we went on from eight till at least ten-thirty! It was an evening of joy and of singing to the glory of our God. Both our brother Zwart and we all are very grateful for that opportunity. He left with a very good impression of our Church life here. For that we are grateful, for sometimes people who live in the Netherlands and have never been here, write even publicly that the situation in the Canadian Reformed Churches is not something to

boast of. Maybe I'll say something more about that another time.

Staying close to Edmonton, we learn that Barrhead will take as their theme for family visitation this winter "What could be done to improve our knowledge of God's Word." That is a good topic and one certainly to bring out a lot of good ideas. There are many ways in which our understanding of the Scriptures can be improved, but the big question is how many of these many ways are being used by our people. Our societies usually complain about a lack of interest and a meagre attendance at the meetings; our young people frequently can hardly ever be found at home in the evenings and very seldom are seen with other books than Nurse's stories or Harlequin romances, if they read at all. Let's all take the Barrhead question to heart.

Barrhead also objects to the proposal of the Committee on Correspondence with Foreign Churches that guest ministers should ask a certificate from our Committee before they would be allowed to conduct services here. I do not think either that this is a good thing. What guest ministers should have, in my view, is a certificate from *their own* Committee testifying that they are ministers in good standing. Then, I think, we keep things in the right track. However, we shall see what the Synod 1974 has to say about that.

We take a big jump and go to Hamilton. The Resthome Society there purchased a property, as we have already reported, and offered the house on it for rent. That cuts down on the cost while plans are being made to build a Home for the Aged. Hamilton would like to see it become a regional enterprise, but in that case they will have to look farther away, I am afraid, since there are also plans in the Lincoln-Smithville area. It will not hurt us to have two or three such homes here in Ontario, for we hope that there will be many elderly among us in the years ahead when, as the prophet Isaiah wrote, there shall no more be an infant that lives but a few days, or an old man that does not fill out his days, and when the child shall die an hundred years old.

A few more matters wait to be mentioned.

The Chatham Women's Auxiliary will have a family night on November 22 to raise money for the new kitchen in the Churchbuilding. Then there is a Ladies' Auxiliary which apparently works for the school: they plan to have a "skate-exchange": for fifty cents you can exchange your skates for another pair that fits you better. Something to take over?

We started in the center, we close with the center.

Carman decided to have a few more services conducted in English: whenever there is a fifth Sunday in the month, it will be all English instead of fifty-fifty. Slowly but surely we get there.

These lines are written before Synod has been constituted and commenced its work; I almost would have said "its labours". This work will not have been finished by the time you read the above. Remember the brethren in your prayers, not just once but constantly. Much is at stake. A Synod can be an instrument by which the Churches are ruined. It can also be a means in the hands of our King to edify His Church. Pray that it be the latter.

vO

The Liberation In The Forties

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS (6)

MORE VERDICTS

The old Professor Greijdanus was also suspended by the General Synod, because he continued to show that the doctrinal statements of the Synod of 1942 was un-Scriptural. In the opinion of the Synod of 1944 he was guilty of the sin of being a schismatic.

The Consistory of the Church of Kampen announced that it could not acknowledge the suspension of Professor Dr. K. Schilder - who was a member of this Church - the consequences of which would be that this Consistory had to admonish him; but this, then, they could not do with a clear conscience. They deemed this suspension to be in conflict with the rules of God's Word. The result was this, that all the ministers and elders who had voted against this suspension received a letter from Synod which informed them that they had been suspended from their office by Synod. The majority of the Consistory was "punished" by a body that did not have any authority at all in this respect.

One of the delegates to the General Synod, sent by the Particular Synod of Groningen, was the Rev. D van Dijk of Groningen. He strongly opposed the decisions in the doctrinal affairs as well as in the "canonical" ones. When he continued to oppose these decisions he was sent home by his fellow-delegates - not by the body that appointed him, the Provincial Synod! This voice had to be silenced!

The Church of Bergschenhoek had some strong objections against the rule that said that candidates to the ministry had to declare their agreement with the doctrinal statements of 1942, and against the self-continuation of Synod in 1942, and also against the suspension of Professor Schilder. Well, this Church received word from Synod that as of September 1, 1944, it was no longer considered to be a Reformed Church within the federation of Churches. So this congregation was expelled, exiled!

This happened after a long process. The "vicar" of this Church was the candidate H.J. Schilder, a nephew of Professor Dr. K. Schilder, and now

himself a professor at the Theological College at Kampen. On the advice of the General Synod his "licence" had been withdrawn by Classis The Hague. Since this was also part of the hierarchical actions of the Synod, the Consistory decided to let candidate Schilder conduct a Church service. Not acknowledging Professor K. Schilder's suspension the same Consistory invited him to preach. This was possible because the German occupiers had let him know that they no longer wanted to arrest him, since they at that stage did not like to be branded as persecutors of the Church or of Church members.

LIBERATION

This, then, was the beginning of the liberation of the Churches from a hierarchical yoke, and the Scriptural way of living together in a confederation of Churches.

It was also strongly stimulated by a meeting which was held on the eleventh of August of the year 1944 in the Lutheran Church at The Hague. There an Act of Liberation and Return was read, in which the Consistories were urged to throw off the yoke of the hierarchical Synod, and return to the Scriptural room within the Church of the Lord Jesus which is there, must be there for every true believer, and consequently also to return to the adhering to the accepted Church Order, which does not allow the major assemblies to act as "higher assemblies".

At many places this "Act of Liberation and Return" was indeed used. At other places people made themselves free from the responsibility for the un-Reformed actions of Synods in a different way.

In whatever way they did it, they felt free, really free again.

The oppression from the side of an occupational force, like the German yoke in the years 1940 - 1945, is a very unpleasant thing, to say it in a soft way. But - as the late Professor B. Holwerda later on would write in our "guest-book" when he stayed with us in our parsonage - the ruins on the territory of the Church are the worst of all!

ARTICLE 31

Earlier we told our readers that during the ministry of my predecessor, the present Professor L. Selles of our Theological College, the Consistory of the Church of Waardhuizen made the decision to examine the General Synod's statements and declarations, and compare them with Article 31 of the Church Order.

This could not immediately be done. So, when the Rev. Selles left Waardhuizen for Steenwijk, this had not taken place yet.

In the year 1945 we decided as a Consistory - even unanimously! - to do this as yet as soon as the World War would be over and the other half of the congregation that had been evacuated would be back.

It is actually an aside when I tell now that the Consistory gave me permission to prepare the discussion which was to be held during a congregational meeting by publishing a pamphlet - which was actually nothing but a summary of what I had said during a Consistory meeting and against the contents of which nobody had made any objections. And further that as soon as this pamphlet had been distributed I was suspended on the ground of being a schismatic. We hope to be able to relate the story of this suspension in another issue. But what we want to tell now is that at the beginning of the first Church service which was held after the official Liberation of the local Church the following statement was read: "Brothers and sisters, here we stand in the holy presence of the LORD, before Jesus Christ the Head of the Church, as the Reformed Church of Waardhuizen c.a., liberated according to Article 31 of the Church Order of Dordrecht. We cannot say but that this happens from sheer need. In deep sorrow everyone may take over the words of Martin Luther, who said: Here I stand, I cannot do anything else. May God help me. Amen".

Reference was again made to Article 31. No, not as part of a new name for the Church - it was and remained the same Church, but by God's goodness it now had been liberated, and this happened in accordance with Article 31 of the Church Order.

ITS TEXT

What, then, does this Article say?

In the Draft Translation which is printed in the Acts of the General

Synod of Orangeville, 1968, it reads thus:

"If anyone complains that he has been wronged by the decision of the minor assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to a major ecclesiastical assembly, and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God or with the articles decided upon in this General Synod, as long as they are not changed by another General Synod".

As everyone can see, this Article contains two sections.

The first of them includes the agreement of the Churches and Church members that the decisions of major assemblies shall be considered settled and binding. If this was not agreed upon, there would be no possibility of living together in a federation of Churches, or chaos would reign in that federation.

Unfortunately this has played a role in the recent history of our sister-Churches in The Netherlands. Some years ago a Classis had to state that a certain minister should be admonished by his Consistory because he no longer agreed with the doctrinal standards of the Churches and did no longer stand for his undersigning of the Form concerned. What happened, however? Nothing from the side of the Consistory! They just took this decision for granted. This is, of course, impossible. It is not in accordance with what the Churches have agreed upon. This leads to chaos within the federation of Churches and means fundamentally the destruction of this federation by "independentism".

The second section of Article 31, however, gives room for not considering a certain decision or resolution of an ecclesiastical assembly settled and binding. This room is there when one is of the opinion - and also proves this, as a matter of course! - that the decision concerned is in contradiction with the Word of God, or - which is of less importance but in the meantime important enough - with the Church Order.

This section, then, includes one of the most significant principles of our Church Order and of the life of our Reformed Churches: only the Word of God shall reign in them! Jesus Christ is the Head of the

Church, and His Word is the only authority!

NEW INTERPRETATION

The trouble was, however, that the hierarchical Synods and their supporters introduced a new, and wrong, interpretation of this Article. They said: A certain decision or resolution may be considered not settled and binding only as soon as the person who is objecting against it has convinced the major assembly that its decision was indeed in contradiction with the Word of God or the Church Order; but in the meantime he has to respect and accept it and give his support to the execution of it. But is not this nonsensical? Rather, in that case would not Article 31 contain nonsense?

For, as soon as such an assembly is convinced, it reverses or revokes the decision or resolution concerned, and consequently a situation in which a decision is not considered settled and binding would never exist! If this "interpretation" was correct the whole second section of Article 31 would be superfluous!

However, this "interpretation" had to defend the hierarchical claims of those Synods!

Thanks be to God, our Churches are free from this hierarchy. God's Word reigns in them. Jesus Christ is their only universal Bishop and Head.

This is our riches, and at the same time our great commission!

G. VAN RONGEN
(Pro Ecclesia)

Major Changes in Citizenship Act

OTTAWA - A bill designed to make citizenship legislation more equitable, logical and consistent was introduced in the House of Commons by Secretary of State J. Hugh Faulkner. Under the new bill, applicants for naturalization are treated alike, regardless of sex or country of origin.

The new bill also reduces the qualifying period for application for Canadian citizenship from five to three years. This applies to all applicants without regard for marital connection with a citizen. Citizenship can be revoked only in cases where naturalization has been procured by fraudulent means. It is automatically lost by acquisition of foreign nationality.

The new bill also gives citizenship judges responsibility for examining all applicants for grant, retention, resumption or renunciation of citizenship. Any decision by a citizenship judge may be appealed before the Federal Court by the Minister or the applicant.

Judges may also make recommendations for the exercise of discretion by the Minister or Governor-in-Council. For example, there is no language exemption for wives or older persons in the bill, but the Minister may waive requirements for compassionate reasons. Similar discretion may be exercised regarding the requirement for knowledge.

The Governor-in-Council has absolute discretion to grant citizenship to alleviate hardship or reward services to Canada.

Under the new legislation citizenship can be resumed as a right by former citizens who have been admitted for permanent residence and have resided in this country for a period of

a year. Women who lost their citizenship through marriage prior to 1947 can recover it automatically upon notice to the Minister. This latter clause affects women who married foreign nationals before the Citizenship Act of 1947 was legislated.

Children born abroad can now derive citizenship from either parent in or out of wedlock. Citizenship is automatic for the first generation, and for the second generation requires only a declaration of retention and the establishment of a substantial connection with Canada before the age of 28.

The new Act recognizes the status of "citizen of the Commonwealth" for all citizens of other Commonwealth countries, whether British subjects or not. In so doing, it safeguards the rights and privileges derived by British subjects or Commonwealth citizens from federal and provincial statutes.

Under the bill the age of majority is reduced from 21 to 18 years of age, the age of federal enfranchisement. This provision allows young immigrants 18 years of age or over to apply for citizenship independently of their parents.

By removing many inequities and barriers that exist under previous legislation, the new Act is expected to encourage the acquisition of citizenship. Such encouragement is a continuation of the Secretary of State's policy of "outreach" which in the past year has seen the expansion of court facilities and operations, the opening of new store-front facilities which operated outside normal office hours and the establishment of mobile teams to register applicants in their own communities and places of work.

mission news

Looking over the record of daily activities there are few items which are "news" in the bygone month. This gives me the opportunity to elaborate a bit more on the proceedings in the *Pre-Confession Classes*.

General Remarks: Initially 28 persons were listed as being interested in following these classes and agreed to attend at the marked hours. At the present, after functioning for nearly three months, 16 remain as regular and interested students. What has happened to the other twelve candidates? Some simply lacked interest but were polite enough not to say so, or after noticing that it requires some effort to follow the explanations withdrew, without stating so. Several are unable to attend because of family circumstances and two have moved out of town. Then there are those who feel that they do not need systematic instruction.

Yet, we are far from discouraged. It is a development we anticipated and progress with the 16 is encouraging indeed.

Reactions: One of the benefits is that a much more open relationship is being established. We have frank discussions about the subjects covered, related matters and at the end of the class about anything they may bring up. Did I often wonder if they had any opinions of their own, now I am becoming aware that they certainly have, and sometimes quite outspoken, may it be without grounds. They are definitely reacting, thinking it over and making some of it their own. Of course, I am speaking in general here. No two are alike, in their reactions either.

Level: A continual struggle is the proper presentation. It must be simple, yet not childish; basic, yet not theoretical. What general knowledge of the world and history may be assumed? It is amazing how distorted a picture even some High School students have of the world and its history and how difficult it is for them to picture the Biblical events in their historical settings. One girl (high school) frankly told me that until recently she simply assumed that all the stories of Jesus and His disciples took place in heaven!

As some indication of their level let me pass on to you some of their questions, selected from the different groups.

- Did Noah live before or after Christ?
- Were there other people in the world outside of Israel?
- Would a good God really drown all the Egyptians in the Red Sea?
- Did people also die before Jesus Christ came?
- Are there Bibles in other languages than Portuguese?
- Who was the father of the "first God: God the Father"?
- Did Christ's body really become alive again?
- What is wrong with the mass?
- Why did we never hear about the Reformation?
- Are there more Reformed Churches in Brazil?
- Will other churches accept the baptism of this Church?
- Does God still talk to the people in dreams and visions?
- Is it wrong to smoke, drink or play sports?
- May we marry unbelievers or non-protestants?
- When can we become members of the Church?
- Are we expected to pay tithes?

From these questions several conclusions can be drawn:

- 1) A great lack of general knowledge.
- 2) Very little and often erroneous knowledge of the Scriptures.
- 3) Strong influence of Roman Catholic practices.
- 4) Generalization of all that is non-Roman Catholic, which is here called "believer".

These factors do for a large part determine our approach and presentation. Do we approach them as outright heathens or as members of the Roman Catholic Church with which we were at one time united in the one, true faith?

More and more I am becoming convinced that our work here has strong similarities with that of the reformers of the 16th century. It is a *continued* reformation, a *return* to the Scriptures. One could say, a *belated* Reformation.

The R.C. Church here has stood still and displays many marks of its medieval form on the Iberian Peninsula, including the co-existence of witchcraft and superstition among its members. The Reformation never did obtain a strong foothold in Spain or Portugal in the earlier centuries and the R.C. Church became stagnant and in this condition was transplanted to Brazil where it remained such, especially in the more remote and isolated regions such as along the coast here.

It is therefore that I am speaking of a *belated Reformation*. When I, during the classes, exposed the general situation of the R.C. Church just before the Reformation to stress the need of a reformation, one lady correctly remarked: "But today the situation in "the church by the beach" (the R.C. Church) is exactly the same, so we need a reformation as well!" That is why, I told them, there is a new church building here even though the one by the beach is not overcrowded at all: this is the Igreja *Reformada*, i.e., the one who returned to the Scriptures, to the faith of the apostles.

I am thankful that we adhered to the name "Reformed": it expresses much more clearly the historical unity and the purpose of our work. It is not a new Church, not a new religion but the same, old Church who must continually renew and reform itself from the evil that enters it.

No, it is not "Sunday-School-level" as some incorrectly belittle mission-work. (Is "Sunday-School-level" so simple??) We are dealing with the adults in these classes who, for the majority, are members of the R.C. Church by baptism. We may appeal to them to be true members of the *Catholic* Church, to return to the Scriptures and to live by them, breaking with all that which is not of the Spirit. One of the first tasks of the reformers was to make the Scriptures available to the people again and to guide them in their studies by providing instruction booklets such as the catechisms. Then the Scriptures themselves will show what is required in the way of obedience. The Lord willing, the reformation continues, also here in São José.

Let this be all for this time. Some "smaller items" I will hold over till the next report, due to the length of the present. May the peace of God be with you all.

Yours in His service,
C. VAN SPRONSEN

Look Well After This Child

A report of the First General Membership Meeting of the Canadian Reformed High School Association in Ontario, held on September 27, 1974, in Hamilton, Ontario.

If a full churchbuilding indicates interest then the Board of the recently formed High School Association had every reason to be happy this evening because there were not enough seats in the Cornerstone Church to accommodate all the brothers and sisters who came from far and wide to be present at the first membership meeting.

The chairman, J. Schutten, expressed gratitude for the attendance and spoke to us briefly about the importance of a unified effort in all our planning for reformed secondary education. We should always remember that we are Christ's and one in Him. This truth may not be ignored when we try to build a High School together.

The secretary in his report reviewed the activities of the various committees. Although he could hardly describe our progress as smooth sailing, there were reasons for gratitude. A brother and sister have generously donated a building site of about 5 acres. The building committee was also able to obtain (free of charge) a complete set of building plans for an eight classroom school with a gymnasium.

Although there had been some hope that the school might open in September 1975 with at least grade 9 and 10, it now appears that we may have to postpone the official opening until 1976 because of legal procedures that must be followed and which usually require many months.

It looks as if financing the school is going to be our biggest problem, not only because an amount of approximately \$400,000 will be needed but also it is in this area that there is disagreement among the various local societies that make up the Association.

The speaker for the evening was the Rev. G. VanRongen from Grand Rapids. He took the theme for his address from the form for baptism of infants used by Guillaume Farel in Geneva, in the sixteenth century. At the end of the baptismal ceremony Farel would address the parents with these words, "Go in peace, the LORD be with you. Look well after this child. Using Farel's own exposition of this final admonition Rev. Van Rongen showed us that not only are we responsible for instructing our children in the knowledge of the Scriptures but we must also "see to it that they have good and faithful

teachers". The next generation must be taught the true knowledge is based on the Word of God and that as God's children we have a special covenantal relationship with the LORD. All teaching, also in High School, should be subservient to these truths.

Three times during the evening the choir 'Voice of Praise' from Smithville, and directed by J. Van-Huisstede, performed beautiful arrangements of Psalm 23, 103 and 105.

Because time was short it was felt unwise to ask the members to approve the Constitution and Bylaws at this meeting. Accordingly another meeting was planned for Oct. 25.

W. HORSMAN

The Executive Committee of the Board now consists of J. Schutten (Smithville), chairman; H. DeVries (Lincoln), vice-chairman; A.J. Hordyk (Burlington-East), first secretary; W.F. Horsman (Burlington-West), second secretary; E. Helder (Hamilton), treasurer. The address of the Association is: P.O. Box 6247, Station "F", Hamilton, Ontario L9C 5S3.

BOOKS

J.C. Whitcomb. The World that Perished [Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1973], 155 pages, \$1.95.

True to the title of the book, Prof. Whitcomb shows that the world indeed perished at a certain point in past history when God sent the flood over the world. The world did not slowly evolve to its present shape and form so that after millions of years of evolutionary development we now have coal-beds, fossils, oil, etc. Instead, much of what we see and what is found is the result not of a long uniformitarian development, but of a relatively short, terrible, world-wide catastrophe by water. Only when we take the Genesis flood seriously can we make sense of present geological phenomena. The author correctly notes that the basic issue is that "For a Christian, the written Word of God, correctly interpreted, must be the starting point for arriving at valid conclusions in every significant realm of meaning" (p. 95).

This book is a popularization of the more technical *Genesis Flood* which the author, along with H.M. Morris, wrote back in 1961. The points are made clearly and the photographs included do much to reinforce the basic message of the book. If one has read the *Genesis Flood*, that is no reason to stay away from this book, for included are the reactions of Whitcomb to his critics as they have expressed themselves over the years.

Especially noteworthy is his treatment of the writing of Prof. J.R. Van de Fliert of the Netherlands, who made a name for himself by writing,

as a Christian geologist, a lengthy refutation of Morris and Whitcomb. Van de Fliert's writing is revealing, for he rejects the idea that Genesis 1 - 11 presents detailed, accurate prose and authoritative history. "Professor van de Fliert assures us however that the Book of Genesis stands in no danger whatsoever, for 'the reliability of the Word of God spoken in this world through His prophets and apostles is beyond the reach of scientific control, because the Bible is not a scientific book. As such it is not vulnerable to the results of science'" (p. 119, emphasis is van de Fliert's). Whitcomb continues:

"This is the colossal blunder of Neo-orthodoxy and theological existentialism. In attempting to 'rescue' the Word of God from all possible contamination by 'elevating' it to a realm of *Heilsgeschichte* ('salvation history') - a realm of 'eternity' where no historian, archaeologist, or scientist can possibly test its statements - existential theology has only succeeded in rendering the Word of God totally *irrelevant, unknowable* and therefore *meaningless* (p. 119, 120, emphasis his).

The tool van de Fliert uses to remove Genesis from the realm of real history is science. Science must determine the reliability of Scripture. "So confident is Professor van de Fliert that science (especially geology) must be our only authoritative guide to the handling of Genesis that he has in effect put up signs about that first

Continued on page 15

our little magazine



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Debbie Hartman*. We are happy to have you join us. I hope you'll enjoy Our Little Magazine and joining in all our Busy Beaver activities!

And a big welcome to you too, *Keith Doesburg*. I'm glad you like reading books. So do I. You'll have to watch for the BOOK NOOK in Our Little Magazine, Keith.

Have you received your membership card already, *Diane Doesburg*? I hope you enjoy being a Busy Beaver and joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Thank you for the poem, Diane!

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Kenneth Wendt*. It sounds to me as if you had a very exciting summer! And you must be a very good fisherman too! How did you feel when you saw the bear? Was it very close?

Hello *Leona Dam*. Thank you for your summer story. It's always nice to hear from my Busy Beavers. How is your typing coming along? Do you practise a lot?

How did your pictures turn out *Loretta Dam*? I'm glad you had such a good time on your dad's birthday and this summer. Do you think it's hard to learn your catechism Loretta?

Thank you for your story and picture, *Billy Doekes*. I really enjoyed them. Sounds as if you really did work hard this summer!

I'm glad you enjoyed your holidays so much, *Charles Doekes*. Except of course when the candy made you sick on the way home! What did you do for the rest of the summer? And are you keeping busy now?

How is your guinea pig doing, *Geraldine De Boer*? It must be really cute. I'm glad you had nice summer holidays too. Are you happy to be at school again, Geraldine?

Thank you for your quizzes and puzzle *Meta Bosscher*. How are you doing? Are you glad to be back at school too?

Sounds as if you had a really good time at camp, *Lyndon Kok*. Did you enjoy the soccer playing the most? Thanks for writing, Lyndon.

Imagine! I forgot to give you the answers to the Reformation Quiz last time! Here they are.

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

And here are the answers to last time's quizzes.

Visions

1. g	4. l	7. c	10. j	13. e
2. d	5. b	8. m	11. f	
3. h	6. k	9. a	12. i	

Bible Black Sheep

Cain	Judas	Delilah	Jehu	Sodom
Jezebel	Pilate	Barabbas	Belshazzar	Herodias

How did you do, Busy Beavers? Hope you enjoyed doing them!

Bye for now. Till next time.

Yours, Aunt Betty

Dear Busy Beavers,

Thank you for all the mail I had this time! You know how I always enjoy your letters.

This time I had one letter that made me especially happy. It told me how many of you Busy Beavers sent a card to the little girl whose address we gave you and who needed some day brighteners because she was to be in a cast for such a long time. I was so glad so many of you had remembered her!

And if you know anyone else who is ill or shut-in and who we should remember, please send us the name and address for us to pass along.

Before we start anything else - just let me remind you about the Christmas issue of Our Little Magazine! What were you planning to send? A story? A poem? Maybe a picture? Please hurry and send it *right away* to:

Aunt Betty, Box 54, Fergus, Ontario N1M 2W7

Do you have a pet to look after? Busy Beaver *Diane Doesburg* wants to share with us this poem about her pet hamster.

My hamster is brown and white,
He is very sweet all right.
During the day he sleeps,
During the night he eats.

Busy Beaver *Meta Bosscher* sends us some very nice quizzes to test our Bible knowledge. Can you find the answers?

WHO AM I?

- I
1. According to St. Mark's gospel I was the eighth apostle selected.
 2. When other apostles did not wish Jesus to go to Bethany to raise Lazarus I was willing to go.
 3. I had a penchant for asking questions such as "How know we the way?"
 4. For my doubting I was often called "Doubting ."
- II
1. My mother was a Jewess and my father a Roman citizen.
 2. As a boy I went to Gamaliel to school.
 3. In my young manhood I did not like Christianity.
 4. Later in life I missioned for Christianity, travelling over the known world of my time, and earned a living by making tents!
- III
1. Though I was to become a famed Egyptian ruler, I tended herds until I was seventeen.
 2. I became a great ruler by being able to interpret dreams.
 3. When I was in my teens, my brothers who disliked me, sold me into slavery, and later God's providence enabled me to feed them during a famine.
 4. When my brothers sold me, in order to fool my father they dyed with blood a coat of many colours which I possessed.

Next time I'll give you the answers!

A Dutch Publication in English

From the Dutch weekly *De Reformatie* we learn that deputies for correspondence with churches abroad are preparing a booklet with information about the creeds, church order, and history of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

From the brief information we conclude that this is part of the mandate these deputies received from General Synod Hattem.

The booklet will be in the *English* language, although - after consulta-

BOOKS - continued

tion with the publisher, a *Dutch* edition is also planned. But that is not the end. *German, French* and *Spanish* editions are being prepared. The reason? This booklet will describe "especially the history of the correspondence with sister churches in other countries". The purpose? "Deputies decided to publish this booklet in more languages than only English (as seems to be the mandate Synod gave them), hoping that it may become a good aid in the work of evangelizing at home (Holland) and abroad."

1. I applaud such an undertaking, especially if I may conclude from the brief information that the booklet will contain information about relations with churches in other countries before and after the Liberation.

2. I state, and do not criticize, that a General Synod gave such a mandate for writing a book with information about the churches. Some may say: that should be left to private initiative. I for one welcome it that a General Synod takes action in the field of Public Relations.

3. The mandate was, I understand, to publish it in English. Only the corresponding churches in Australia and Canada speak that language. Thus I may conclude that we are expected to use it, "as a good aid in the work of evangelizing". Then, of course, the question arises, was there any consultation with similar deputies in Australia and Canada? If this publication is to serve those churches too, they - in my opinion - should be consulted, if it were only for the reason that it is the Canadian Reformed Churches which have to do the work of evangelizing in Canada, however glad they will be with any support from the Netherlands.

4. Finally, from the brief information we do not learn if the Dutch deputies know about the booklet written by the late prof. F. Kouwenhoven about the Canadian Reformed Churches, for the purpose of evangelizing. In it he clearly pointed to our roots in the church history of the Netherlands but then proceeded to inform our fellow citizens about our churches in Canada.

If there had been any mutual consultation, the Dutch deputies might have learned that the Rev.

W.W.J. VanOene is writing a book on the history of the Canadian Reformed Churches, a book that the publisher will try hard to make available by Christmas time. This book will contain chapters on:

- the secession of 1834;
- the Doleantie of 1886;
- the Union of 1892;
- the Liberation of 1944;
- the Chirstian Reformed Church;
- the Canadian Reformed Churches;
- correspondence relations, etc.

It may be, or it must be, that both publications cover much of the same ground. One may say, better twice the same than nothing at all, but the question remains: did our Dutch brethren consult our representatives in the correspondence, before they started to write a book that wants to serve us, among others, in making ourselves known among our fellow citizens?

In conclusion, I hope that both publications do not become competitors, but each other's assistants.

G. VANDOOREN

REMEMBER! !

Whatever the occasion for giving: a book is a good gift! The Inter-League Publication Board now has 26 different study books available (both English and Dutch). Write us for a complete list.

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book of God's Word reading: 'Theologian, go home!' " (p. 121). Whitcomb continues by quoting van de Fliert:

"We see theologians enter this field as Professor Whitcomb now does, as Professor Aalders did in Holland a few decades ago, and as so many before have done since the end of the Middle Ages. But these 'scientific' battles for an infallible Word of God have been lost from the start. In constant retreat the theologians have had to surrender every position they had once taken in this struggle . . ." (p. 121).

It seems incredible that we have to leave the historicity of Gen. 1-11 to the scientists. If this rule were applied to the rest of the Bible, what scientist would assert the bodily resurrection of Christ and be consistent to the rule that science alone must determine historicity?

It is good to take note of the words of E.J. Young, to which Whitcomb also refers (p. 122): "Although Genesis does not surport to be a textbook of science, nevertheless, when it touches upon scientific subjects, it is accurate. Science has never discovered any facts which are in conflict with the statements of Genesis . . . not for an instance can its accurate statements be regarded as out of harmony with true science."

This very readable and interesting book is highly recommended, especially for highschool or university students. By taking the Bible seriously, it sets one's thinking in the right direction away from the evolutionistic thinking which is so dominant today.

C. VAN DAM

Puzzle (5)

