



# Clarion

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# A Liberation Indeed!

Elsewhere in this issue we publish a report on the establishment of the *National Presbyterian Church* in the United States of America. Via that report our readers are somewhat informed about what took place in the "Southern" Presbyterian Church. This development, however, deserves ampler treatment.

The Civil War in the United States affected not only civil but also ecclesiastical life in the Union. The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America too experiences these effects. The "Gardiner Spring Resolution", adopted by the 1861 General Assembly, held in May of that year, expressed the obligation of the Church to "promote and perpetuate, so far as in us lies, the integrity of these United States, and to strengthen, uphold and encourage the Federal Government in the exercise of all its functions under our noble constitution." In fact, the Church chose here for the Union and against the Confederation.

This decision was an important factor towards the separation of the northern churches, which maintained the name "The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America", and the southern churches, which called themselves "The Presbyterian Church in the United States". The former merged in 1958 with the "United Presbyterian Church in North America" and then adopted the name "The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America"; the later has now seen some 60,000 members leaving and forming the "National Presbyterian Church".

The reason for the 1861 separation was not only or in the first place even the above-mentioned resolution. Political reasons played a role as did theological controversies, especially in church-political respect.

The northern Church followed more the line of Charles Hodge, who considered the office of a minister to be *the* office given by Christ, whereas the elders are the representatives of the people. The southern Church, on the other hand, moved more in the

line of James Thornwell, who knew only one office: that of an elder, some elders having been called also to preach. Who ever wishes to read more about this may consult the excellent thesis of Dr. Soon Gi! Huh, *Presbyter in volle rechten* (1), which thesis also contains a summary in English.

As for the reasons for the 1973 separation which led to the formation of the National Presbyterian Church, in the *Presbyterian Guardian* of January 1974, the Rev. Paul G. Settle of Montgomery, Alabama, mentioned among others the following points.

At stake for most of us, he wrote, is the Truth - the very holiness of God - the honour of Jesus Christ our Saviour and Sovereign. He then mentioned that "some denominational leaders have 'spoken evil of the Way' - in pronouncements, programs, policies, publications - in the name of the Church itself.

The 1972 General Assembly declared that the authority of the Scriptures is no greater than "human reason, church history, and Christian experience."

Rev. Settle states that "for a generation, officially endorsed literature has taught that the Bible contains myth, error, 'pre-scientific' thought-forms, etc., etc. The account of creation, the historicity of Adam and the Fall, Old Testament miracles, the virgin birth, Christ's vicarious, substitutionary atonement, his physical resurrection for the dead, the Second Coming, the Day of Judgment, and the reality of eternal Hell - all these precious and important doctrines have been denied, or called into serious question in the official life of the Presbyterian Church, U.S."

"The denomination's highest court has placed the Church on record in opposition to biblical teaching concerning capital punishment, obedience to civil law, divorce, and the ordination of women. Official committee reports and Assembly-endorsed literature have advocated premarital sex, adultery, the use of addictive drugs by youth, and abortion

for socio-economic reasons. Recently one ordained minister ran for public office on the Communist party ticket; another participated in a wedding of homosexuals. Their presbyteries refused to discipline them."

Whenever a separation takes place, we should not right away shout: "A New Liberation!", only to come to the conclusion that our jubilation was slightly premature. But of the above-mentioned one we are convinced that it is a matter of obedience to have separated from those who clearly had deviated from the only Foundation.

Whenever a separation takes place in order that the flock may be led back to the green pastures of God's inerrant inspired Word, such is a reason for joy for all who really fear the Lord. We pray, "Preserve and increase Thy Church". Then we rejoice when we note this preservation, and we praise the Lord for His faithfulness and His mercy on His sheep.

In how far we shall become involved in the results of the formation of the National Presbyterian Church is hard to say. Largely, it is still more or less a movement in the South of the United States. Those who will have something to do with it sooner than we are, I think, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The issues are not unlike those which occasioned the reformation under the leadership of, among others, Dr. Gresham Machen.

To us the form of Church government, to mention one thing, still constitutes an impediment.

In the above-quoted article we read of "the denomination's highest court", by which the General Assembly is meant. That is diametrically different from the Reformed system of Church government: there the Consistory is the "highest court" and the General Synod finds itself at the lowest rung of the ladder.

We read that "their presbyteries refused to discipline them", namely those offending ministers. By "presbytery" we are not to understand the Consistory or Kirk Session, but what we would call a Classis. In the Pres-

# Perspectives in Teaching

## TEACHING IN THE LATTER DAYS

byterian system, ministers are not members of the Church they serve, but of the Presbytery. It is the Presbytery that ordains them, it is the Presbytery that installs them. Likewise, disciplinary action, e.g. in case of heresy, cannot be taken by the Consistory or Kirk Session, but has to be undertaken by the Presbytery, and if the latter refuses to do so, the Consistory or Session cannot do anything about it.

Yet, as people who are vitally interested in the coming of God's Kingdom, we take thankful note of the above-described development: the Lord still opens eyes so that they see how dangerous deviation from His Truth is.

And woe unto the Reformed Churches if they give in to the same trends and tendencies which found such strong opposition in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America that tens of thousands separated themselves, an act of obedience which we still confess to be the duty of all true believers.

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(1) The Uitgeverij "De Vuurbaak", Groningen, the Netherlands, published this thesis at the price of F1. 18.50. Dr. Huh gives evidence of wide and thorough knowledge of his subject. He is to be admired the more since the language problems he had to overcome were great. Not only for the author himself but also for the Theologische Hogeschool of our Dutch sister Churches this dissertation is an asset. It is an important contribution towards a better understanding of the theories about and the nature of the office of an elder.

In one of the short theses, appended to the dissertation, Dr. Huh states that the laying on of hands should be done by the presbytery, i.e. the body of elders in the Church where the ordination takes place.

Dr. Huh is professor at the Theological Seminary at Pusan, Korea, and in March last year delivered an oration entitled "The Eldership in the History of Reformed Churches", such on the occasion of the opening of the new semester at the Seminary. vO

*And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh . . . and I will show wonders in heaven above and signs on the earth beneath . . . before the day of the Lord comes, the great and manifest day. [Acts 2: 17-20].*

We are teaching children Anno Domini 1974, in the year of the LORD 1974. Before we are going to elaborate on whom, what, why and to what purpose we are teaching, it may be good to have a proper conception of WHEN we are teaching. Anno Domini - in the year of the LORD.

In His providence the LORD does not only give rain and drought, food and drink, health and sickness (LORD's Day X), the LORD also gives years, and He wants to be acknowledged as the Giver of years. Time is a precious gift because it is the LORD's and because the LORD does NOT give without measure. There was a first time (In the beginning . . .) and there will be a last time (Judgment Day). Between these two highlights, between Creation and Restoration, time elapses - a measured number of days and years of which less and less remains.

The LORD Himself has subdivided the time which He allotted to the created world; there is the old dispensation - a period of time in which the promises were foreshadowed by sacrifices and ceremonies of the law; there is the fullness of time in which the Word of God became flesh and dwelled among us ("When the days were accomplished . . ."), and there is the new dispensation or "the last days" - the time in which the exalted Christ prepares Himself and His people for His second and final coming. We live in the last days, in the time prior to Christ's coming.

In His Word, written during the first dispensation (Old Testament), during the fullness of times (the Gospels) and the new dispensation (the letters), the LORD reveals much about "the last days." We know they will be short, yes, shortened! They will show an accumulation of both godliness and ungodliness. They will reveal both God's grace and God's wrath. They will be a time of antithesis and enmity,

of Re-creation and revolution. In those days we live with our children.

We are teaching children Anno Domini 1974 in the last days. Paradise is far behind us and we are not allowed to look back to those days with longing or lamenting: "So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." (Genesis 3:24) There is no way back to Eden, but there is a way ahead to the new Jerusalem in the centre of which is the tree of life (Revelation 22:2). That way we must go and every day we come one day nearer to it. That gives a certain tension, a certain strain, to our work in school also. We may not waste any of the time that separates us from the full revelation of Christ's majesty. Our days, the days of this world, are numbered, limited. The Evil One knows it; like a cornered animal he charges ferociously, fighting a cause which he knows to be lost. The Church knows it too; she prepares herself to receive her Bridegroom; she keeps herself undefiled and pure, not showing herself (like that other, false and glittering imitation-bride, the harlot does), not making herself a display to the world, but keeping herself as a chaste and continent girl by exercising sobriety and discipline.

In the school teachers and students must be aware or be made aware of the time they live in. For such knowledge is the very stimulus they need, to work thoroughly and faithfully toward the last day. Such a view cannot be limited to the Biblical History lesson or the Catechism class; it determines the complete process of learning and teaching, changing it and renewing it as a few grains of salt determine the taste of a complete loaf of bread. May all of us be aware of it.

EWOU D GOSKER

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# Understanding the Old Testament

NAHUM [9]

## CHAPTER 2:3-6 (HEBREW 2:4-7)

In the edition of the Bible that I use there are, above or beside the titles, pictures showing some characteristic feature of each book. With the book of Nahum it depicts horses and chariots and soldiers. Obviously the illustrator considered those typical of the book. And with reason. In the second chapter, the centre of the book, the assault on Nineveh is in the centre of interest. There we read of the enemy taking the city by storm. The book of Nahum is characterized by warfare - however, in a way different from the history-books, used in the schools, that deal with wars from the beginning up to the end, as if human history were nothing but a concatenation of wars. Those records always follow after the facts. The book of Nahum of Elkosh anticipates events. It is a vision revealed by the LORD. And about forty years later it came true. It was not prophecy that lined up with facts, but quite the reverse. Facts tally with the oracle. On the other hand, it remains a prophecy. The names of the peoples (Medes and Chaldeans) or kings (Cyaxares and Nabopolassar) are not mentioned. Yet, for the reader of ch. 2 it is like having a front row seat at the real thing, so to speak. So vivid a picture do we get here.

In our thoughts we are in Nineveh now. By means of the little maps in my previous article I hope the reader can visualize the situation in and around the city. The mood or frame of mind within the city is depicted in verse 1. The citizens are in mortal suspense. Small wonder. This is Nineveh, and within living memory something like this had never happened to the proud metropolis. It was always Nineveh that caused other peoples to shrink with terror. But now it is her turn. The hour of vengeance has come. For YAHWEH is a jealous and avenging GOD.

In our thoughts we are in Nineveh now, I said, and in the distance the drone and rumble of the hostile army as it marches upon the capital may be heard: the tramp of

horses' feet, the rattle of chariots. We now have a look over the wall. There he is: the enemy, about to square accounts with Nineveh and Assyria.

THE SHIELD OF HIS MIGHTY MEN IS RED, HIS SOLDIERS (A.V.: VALIANT MEN) ARE CLOTHED IN SCARLET. (vs. 3a)

What the citizens see must grate their eyes. Their eyes smart when seeing the glittering of colours, especially of all that is red. "The shield of his mighty men is made red." "Shield", singular. But the plural must be meant, each warrior having his own shield. But together they constitute one shield which the enemy soldiers are keeping in front of them so as to be invulnerable to the missiles shot from Nineveh. Those shields are red or made red. Considering the verb-form in Hebrew (*me'oddam*), the present writer is in favour of the latter (A.V.). The redness of the shields has been variously accounted for. Some are of the opinion that they were reddened with the blood of enemies who had been slain. But that is not likely. The battle had not begun yet. Others say: No, it is because of the anointing or dyeing of the leather facings of the shields, or, perhaps better, it is due to the reflection of the sunshine from the reddish copper surface of the shields.

And who are carrying those shields? "His mighty men." Who may be meant by those *gibborim*? They are the *'ansjê hayil* mentioned in the parallel part of verse 3a. "Soldiers," the R.S.V. renders. No, another says, for common soldiers are not clothed in scarlet. Only the leaders of the army are arrayed in so costly a raiment. But there are still others who say: we are to think of picked men, a crack-regiment, just like the one David once had. Moreover, they too were called *benê hayil*, or "sons of valour", which closely resembles the "men of valour" that are here mentioned. I would guess that, since a special corps is not spoken of here, it is the whole enemy army that is represented as picked troops. That is understandable. Over

against Assyria, militaristic of old, picked troops are to be brought into the field. The fact that the apparel of this army (shields, garments) is red is not because of the blood that has been shed already, but it does unmistakably suggest the streams of blood which are yet to flow in Nineveh. This effect is heightened still by what we read in the second part of our verse.

THE CHARIOTS FLASH LIKE FLAME WHEN MUSTERED IN ARRAY (A.V.: IN THE DAY OF HIS PREPARATION). (vs. 3b)

As far as vs. 3b is concerned, the intention is obvious, generally speaking. But to present a proper translation is not so easy. A.V.: "the chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation." R.S.V.: "The chariots flash like flame when mustered in array." As for "flame", the meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain, so a footnote says. I admit, the word *peladôth* occurs just once in Biblical Hebrew. However, translators could have followed a surmise, because the cognate languages Arabic and Syriac do have a word that is undoubtedly cognate: *fulâd*, meaning "steel". In Ben Yehuda's Pocket English-Hebrew Dictionary I found that the word *peladah*, plural *peladoth*, still belongs to the present-day vocabulary. Of course, we add. What is present-day life without steel? Unimagineable! Living in the steel-city of Canada the present writer realizes this so much the more. And if I am allowed to digress a little, in modern Hebrew or Ivrit the name of this city would be *'ir peladôth* (= city of steel). Compare Biblical names such as Qiryat-sefer (= city of books), which in a way is also applicable to the above mentioned city. But let us not get on in this line, lest readers in other parts of our home and native land feel offended.

To return to our text, it is especially the connecting of the words that presents difficulties. You can connect the words this way (a verb is omitted, as is done frequently in Hebrew): "In fire of the steel the chariots," or, after a slight alteration of the text, i.e. the addition of the article: "In *the* fire . . ." In English, however, we drop the article, so that we translate: "In fire (are) the steel bosses of the chariots." I prefer the latter translation. The chariots add the impression which the warriors create.

Also difficult is what follows.

A.V.: "In the day of his preparation". Quite different is the R.S.V.: "when mustered in array". As for the latter, however, it is impossible to take the verb as passive on account of what it says in the original text. The A.V. is close to the original, on the understanding that we do not conceive of the verb as a reflexive, i.e., that the enemy is preparing himself. No, the enemy is preparing a thing, an object, an "it". What is "it"? Probably the host of chariots.

THE CHARGERS PRANCE (A.V.: THE FIR TREES SHALL BE TERRIBLY SHAKEN.) (vs. 3c)

At the end of verse 3, A.V. "and the fir-trees shall be terribly shaken" and R.S.V. "the chargers prance" differ quite a bit. The R.S.V. is too free here in following a different reading or rather in guessing at a word that is not to be read in the text. They prefer to read *pārās* (horse) to get out of difficulties. Actually it says: *berôsj* (cypresses). In Hebrew only one consonant causes the difference. But we should be fair to that one consonant. However, you may wonder what cypresses have to do with an attack on the Assyrian capital. It may be that the spears were made of cypress-wood, so that it is a poetical figure of speech in which an object or utensil is named after the material it is made of. This figure of speech, also known among the Greeks and Romans, is fitting in the context: spears that are shaken. However, aside from the change of the text, the picture of prancing chargers would in itself be suitable as well.

THE CHARIOTS RAGE IN THE STREETS, THEY RUSH TO AND FRO THROUGH THE SQUARES. (vs. 4a)

In verse 4, we read: "The chariots rage in the streets." A.V. and R.S.V. agree with one another. But I place a question mark - that is to say, as far as those streets are concerned. For I would ask: Do you realize what it would imply? If streets are meant here, the enemy is already within the city. But matters have not gone so far as that yet. Not until vs. 6 do the gates yield to pressure and superior numbers. The point at issue is whether the word *huts*, which often may be rendered as "street", is here applicable to something outside Nineveh: "Regions outside of the city seem required here

by the context; the language of this verse itself more naturally characterizes the conduct of those who are on the outside of the walls, than that of those within." (Powis Smith)

The same applies to the *rehobôth*. You know the word *rehoboth* from the history of Gen. 26:22, "Now the LORD has made room for us." In chapter 10 of the same book we come across the name already in close connection with Nineveh - *Rehobot-Ir*, literally rendered as "plains of the city", i.e. a city named after those plains.

On those roads and plains outside the city, chariots are raging. As in Jer. 46:9, the verb is used here for "mad driving", or "driving with insane rapidity". As for the second line - A.V. "they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways"; R.S.V.: "they rush to and fro through the squares" - the rare form of this verb indicates movement repeated with great speed, chariots running helter-skelter, rumbling over the roads. A.V. "They shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings" R.S.V.: "They gleam like torches, they dart like lightnings". Both versions are good in expressing the idea.

THE OFFICERS ARE SUMMONED (A.V.: HE SHALL RECOUNT HIS WORTHIES); THEY STUMBLE AS THEY GO, THEY HASTEN TO THE WALL, THE MANTELET IS SET UP (A.V.: THE DEFENCE SHALL BE PREPARED). (vs. 5)

Now we have come to vs. 5. And the question arises: Who may be meant here? Many scholars say: The enemy, the attacker, of course. The description of him is continued. A.V.: "He shall recount his worthies". He is the shatterer of vs. 2, the leader of the attacking army. But I wonder, how is it that such warriors stumble in their walk, as it says in the next line? Is that expression fitting for an army that is running full tilt? But that is no problem, so one may argue. Didn't the chariots of the enemy rush to and fro or jostle against one another? This is something easily accounted for because of the hurry. Well, with this stumbling it is the same way. They rush against the city with such a speed that they do not watch where they put their feet. That's why they stumble.

Nevertheless, I am not satisfied, most of all because those who are in favour of this solution proceed to a

change in the text that is not necessary here. Instead of *jizkor* ("he remembers") they read: *jazkir* ("he summons"), or even the plural *jizzakerû* (they are summoned), as e.g. the R.S.V., which is too quick in making emendations.

"*Jizkôr*" it reads ("he remembers"). Right, and I ask: Who may at this particular time be in the mood to remember? The enemy? Oh no, he looks at the future, which looks promising. It is the king of Ashshur who lives in the memory of days gone by, of the glorious past of his predecessors SENNACHERIS, ASARHAD-DON, ASHSHORBANIPAL. He remembers the rabshakehs, the rabsaris, and the tartan (2 Kings 18:17), and other famous fieldmarshals. Where are they in an hour when he is in need of them more than ever? Sure, the soldiers that are left try to do their best. But that is all they can do. They run, they stumble and fall, they scramble up and hasten to the wall. They try their hardest to be in time. But alas, the tortoise, the screen formed by the overlapping shields of closing arrayed troops, has been set up already. A.V.: "the defence shall be prepared" is not correct here. Not the defence is meant, nor is the future pointed at. At the end of vs. 5 there is a sudden change of subject again. The last verb denotes a deed of the enemy. Sheltered by a tortoise, the battering-ram is set going against the wall in order to break as long as possible, through it. The great care of the citizens was, to prevent the besiegers from succeeding in this. The R.S.V. is correct in rendering the verb by a perfect: "is set up".

THE RIVER GATES ARE OPENED, THE PALACE IS IN DISMAY (A.V.: THE PALACE SHALL BE DISSOLVED). (vs. 6)

So the fatal moment has come, the hour of Nineveh's fall. The gates of the rivers are opened. Again we have the perfect tense, for it is an accomplished fact. Which gates are meant? Or: what sort of gates? Those approaches to the city which were situated on the bank of the rivers are the first thing we think of. Which river? The Tigris? That is possible; however, in that case the gates are not forced open by the enemy, who came from the east, but by the river itself, having overflowed its banks -

Continued on next page.

# Christ's Coronation

CONCLUSION

not gradually, but by a sudden flood. "In support of this, appeal has been made to the statement of an ancient author, Diodorus Siculus, that the city wall was destroyed for the space of twenty stadia by the overflowing of the Tigris." If it be so, this obviously is the LORD's doing, we comment, and Nahum 1:8 has come true not only in a figurative manner of speaking but as literally as possible.

Others prefer to think of the gates situated on the banks of the Choser River and the canals or moats (see the map). Again others: those points in the walls where the rivers or canals enter the city. Again others: the dams that helped to control the flood waters of the turbulent Choser, and so on.

In the last-mentioned cases the bursting of the doors is the doing of the enemy. Dr. Goslinga is of the opinion that we should not inquisitively pry into the matter. As a Judean, what did Nahum know about Nineveh but, by hearsay, that it was an enormous city protected by rivers and moats and walls? Well, they could not stem the evil.

"And the palace shall be dissolved." If you take it literally - palace as the building itself - then the translation "dissolved" may be right. The Hebrew verb also occurs in ch. 1:5: the hills melt, i.e. are flooded. Here it is the palace. But I ask: Is that probable for a palace on the top of the mountain (or the hill) Tell Quyunjiq? "This literal rendering of the words is irreconcilable with the situation of the palaces in Nineveh since they were built in the form of terraces upon the tops of hills and could not be flooded with water." (Keil) So it may be more in keeping with the usage of the word "melt" elsewhere (Ex. 15:15; Jer. 49:23) to take it as descriptive of the dismay and the terror that befall the inmates of the palace.

H.M. OHMANN

## OUR COVER

*This zigzagging rail-fence put up by early settlers provides us with a winter scene that characterizes the rural Ontario landscape. Our photograph was taken in the Horseshoe Valley, near Orillia. [Courtesy Ontario Ministry of Industry and Tourism].*

The list of questions, problems, issues, call them what you will, which come under the heading politics is almost endless (which is in itself noteworthy) and it would be unrealistic to expect any one individual to give a definitive solution to them. When Christians talk about politics, the first things that are often mentioned are issues such as abortion and the abolition of the death penalty. We must beware, however, that we do not see these so-called "moral" problems in isolation. They are only part of a pattern of thinking which is basically humanistic and anti-Christian. We should not only deal with these issues and be satisfied when we have written a letter to our M.P. about it. Then we would fail to see the need for a complete reformation of society, a turning towards the liberating message of the gospel for all areas of life. Again, it is not enough to apply a Christian veneer to a basically humanistic system.

The necessity of a Christian political witness is evident when we look at some of the things which have been happening in Canada over the last number of years. The decision taken recently by a jury in Quebec in the Morgentaler case is an ominous precedent. It could very well lead the way to more barbarism. It is only a short step from this to euthanasia and control over the type of human beings that will be allowed into the world. It has already been suggested by some doctors that with sophisticated techniques it will be possible before birth to determine defects in children and that then it may be necessary for the state to determine whether the quota for deformed babies has been met for that year so as not to put too heavy a burden on the state health system. Don't think that this is exaggerated or overly dramatic, for the history of the world is replete with examples of man's barbarism when he no longer recognizes the giver and taker of life.

The lack of conviction on the part of government is exemplified by the statements which we hear from time to time from cabinet ministers and the P.M. himself. His criterion for a change in the laws concerning divorce, abortion, etc., was the public

acceptability of it. There you have it again: that democratic way of life I talked about earlier. Public consensus is the determinant for our laws and not the immutable laws of God as revealed to us in Scripture.

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There are several other areas which we should consider in our political discussions. On the provincial level we have the question of schools and our inability to function within the present system. How do we make clear to the government that parents have a right and responsibility to determine the type of education for their children and that they should not be compelled to, in effect, pay double taxation? Compulsory unionism or the lack of freedom of association has occupied the time and energy of many Christians for more than twenty years now and relatively little progress has been made. This only shows the magnitude of the problem and the need for concerted, communal action.

I suggest we must look anew at the problems of inflation, the welfare system, the way our business and industries are organized to see how they must be changed so that they will more accurately reflect the potentiality for man's full development in line with his cultural mandate. Concretely, we must reject the solutions of socialism and communism which see society as composed of warring classes, with the eventual triumph of the workers. Neither should we accept the greedy aspects of the capitalist mentality which presumes to use men, made in the image of God, as mere tools, as instruments for the enrichment of others. Management and labour must learn to co-operate for their mutual benefit and to the greater glory of God. Ownership does not confer licence but is by the grace of God, and the owner must make good account of his stewardship. (It is not up to us to demand one.) I hope you can see something of the direction in which we should be going.

To mention some other areas briefly: what should be our attitude on the development and use of our resources? In a country as richly blessed with natural resources as Canada do

# in Politics

we have the right to adopt a Canada-first policy and deny part of our wealth to other countries which are in greater need? What of our foreign aid programs? Do we rich countries of the West have an obligation to feed that part of the world which lives in abject poverty or do we just say that the Lord has blessed us richly and that the others will have to suffer because of their misfortune? In what way do we express our love toward the neighbour as a country? The answers to these questions are important for a Christian political program. What of our relations with other countries where the name of our Lord is officially banned? Is it Christianly responsible to carry on trade and other relations with them when we know they are persecuting fellow Christians? What are we to think of the government's policy of multiculturalism which I'm sure most of you have heard of? What is the reason behind this policy? It is to mollify the various ethnic communities who might not feel part of the mainstream? Does it not sound a lot like the government's saying that you can have your own cultural pursuits as long as you abide by the democratic way of life? The oft-repeated quote of L. B. Pearson that there is unity in diversity leads me to wonder what kind of unity that can be. The unity we know is that rooted in Christ and not in some humanistic ideal like that quoted above. You may retort that I am posing a lot of questions, and that is true, but I suggest to you that these are the kind of questions we need to be asking before we can make a responsible Christian political program which would benefit this nation of ours.

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One of the benefits we have derived from the life and writings of John Calvin is his renewed emphasis on the Word of God as the basis for all our activity whether in the political or the economic sphere. There is no nature/grace division of life into secular and spiritual realms. He also taught that government and authority must be seen as a gift of God in order to restrain the sinfulness of man. Therefore we must honour govern-

ment and not regard the person who happens to hold a particular office, for he is fulfilling a God-sanctioned task. What happens when man no longer regards the rightful duty of government I have shown before when speaking about democracy.

Calvin taught that the government must be obeyed unless it demands that the citizens commit actions contrary to the Word of God. Then passive disobedience would be justified, with its potential harmful consequences. The Christian also had to seek legal redress, to petition his elected representatives and to admonish the government if it abuses its God-given powers. No shying away from public witnessing here!

We must be wary of the apostles of civil disobedience, however, for they would counsel the refusal to obey laws which do not meet their criteria for social or economic justice. This idea must needs fail because it assumes a moral superiority on the part of those who disobey. But we confess that man is basically sinful and cannot bring about good by the power of his own reason or will. A conversion of the heart is required and not the promotion of violence and open revolt, which is the end result of disobedience. Therefore Christians could never participate in sit-ins or the wilful destruction of property or symbols of government.

There are many words which we use in our discussions, such as the state, justice, sovereignty, and so on. We should be careful that we fill these empty cartridges with the loaded words of Scripture and not humanistic tripe. Contrary to the common view of the State, Paul in Romans 13 denies that the state has any right to represent the people: it must represent God. Man's law is rooted in God's law and thus lawlessness is resistance to God. The essential function of the state is justice, or the maintenance of godly order (cf. Article 36 of the Confession). We confess that all authority comes from God and is of God. Those who possess it are the instruments of God and are responsible to Him. The Biblical concept of justice is summarized in the second table of the Law. But this concept has been steadily corrupted throughout history. The modern state asserts the sovereignty of man rather than of God. Justice is defined as meeting man's needs and wants, with the result that the state takes increasingly

more responsibility and diminishes that of the individual.

Let me emphasize again that there can be no other basis of our political activity than that which recognizes the Kingship of Christ in creation. It is not enough, however, that we have Christian politicians who confess Jesus Christ as their saviour but who do not see the antithesis which exists in the world between the two kingdoms. Many eminent theologians like Emil Brunner and Karl Barth have said that there can be no such thing as a Christian state or a Christian politics; according to them the world is corrupted by sin and God is content to let it develop according to its own ways. But this is really a denial of the ultimate victory of Jesus Christ.

It is up to those who confess Christ as their saviour to expose the humanists for what they are - to show clearly that they are against God's kingdom and the reign of Jesus Christ upon earth.

I remind you of the words of Jesus in Matthew 28:18ff: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

\* \* \* \* \*

What are some of the possibilities  
Continued on page 10.



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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

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

REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS:

J. M. Boersema, J. Faber, E. Gosker,  
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# news medley

Yes, we now know how things developed in Chatham. They did get their extension to the end of February, and are allowed to use their old Churchbuilding without charge even! But after that date: out they go! A milk company is going to rent it for \$750.00 per month. One may think that, after all, they should have kept the old building and rented it out; but then, the Church is not in money-making business. No, it is better the way it is.

Where are they going to have their services now? In the auditorium of the school opposite the own school. Cheap place: they don't have to pay any rent. But, O boy! there is a caretaker to be taken care of. The condition that there be absolutely no smoking is something to be glad about; but the caretaker has to be paid \$8.00 per hour. I figured that he would be there about four hours per Sunday. Makes more than my Grandfather made in a whole month. Reminds me of the man who took a job as caretaker of a highschool to pay for his university study. When he had his degree, he became a highschool teacher and . . . dropped \$2,000.00 in salary. That figures.

The Consistory made arrangements to have the organ taken apart and stored in boxes; pews and other furniture can also be stored free of charge. A few more difficult months, and the Chatham Church will meet in their new building. For many oldtimers it will be sort of a sad moment when they leave the old building for the last time: many events took place there, weddings, funerals, profession of faith, etc. But the joy of a new building will cause those melancholy thoughts to disappear.

Speaking of buildings, Burlington West decided to go ahead on a cost-plus basis. I think that I understand what that is: I think it means that the Church promises to pay for the cost of the materials plus for the labour. That may be the cheapest way of doing things, if you have a trustworthy contractor who does not try to keep more men longer on the job than necessary. I am happy to say that Burlington West has such a trustworthy contractor(s). We'll keep you posted.

Guelph was instituted only one and-a-half months ago by the day this is being written, but they do have bold plans. A Church building that is for sale was visited by almost the whole congregation, and it was decided to make an offer. Various repairs have to be made to it, but it is a solid old building. What is worth more to a Congregation than money is having a place of their own where they can have their services, where catechism classes can be held, where the societies can meet and where the Congregational meetings can be convened. By Monday, Feb. 11th, the offer had to be in and therefore we cannot tell you as yet what the result has been. We do wish that it may be such that it has been accepted. It will not have happened often that such a step could be taken so soon after institution.

Toronto had to wait longer! On Jan. 1, 1974, Toronto "celebrated" the fact that the Church was instituted twenty years ago. It is interesting to pass on to you what was written about it in the bulletin.

"In 1953, the brothers and sisters living in the Toronto area, while officially being members of the Church at Orangeville, met in separate worship services. On the Sundays when the Lord's Supper was celebrated they travelled to Orangeville. In the course of the year it became apparent that this was unsatisfactory and the Consistory of Orangeville advised the brothers to consider institution. After the necessary deliberations and advice, office-bearers were chosen and ordained as elders and deacon of the young Church at Toronto.

"The official institution took place in a congregational meeting where the Act of Institution was signed by the members."

Toronto decided to discontinue the collections for Christian Education. They are convinced that, if a family cannot meet their obligations, they should ask the Deacons to assist them so that they can pay for the things they have to pay for. Then it is not so that the Deacons pay the tuition fee, but then the Deacons simply supplement the income of the family. (These last remarks are not Toronto's, but mine.)

Buildings without organs are like soup without salt. Neerlandia's birthday fund has approximately \$750.00, which is just what they need to buy a good second-hand instrument. The name makes me fear that it has something to do with electronics, but I may be mistaken. The Neerlandia Consistory also expressed the wish to have four-part music throughout our Book of Praise, so that also others, who do not have the music books at their disposal, can play the tunes. An overture to this effect will be prepared and forwarded to the convening Church for the coming Synod.

Cloverdale signed the contract for the new organ. I happen to know that they also have organists. But there are congregations (and the bulletins speak of it) that do have organs but no organist. That is a sad situation, and we should encourage our young people who have received musical gifts from the Lord, to use and develop these skills, so that also the Churches may benefit from them.

New Westminster decided to build south of the Fraser River. But there appear to be several members who would wish to keep the Church north of the Fraser, in the Greater Vancouver area, New Westminster or Burnaby. The Consistory now invited those brethren and sisters who would wish to form a Congregation north of the river, to come with definite proposals and arguments to the Consistory so that a decision can be made which is really beneficial for the Church of Christ.

A completely different topic is that in Abbotsford the ladies are going to organize "Ladies 'Keep Fit' Classes"! They are going to use the gym of the John Calvin School in Yarrow. May we have regular reports?

An item which caused me great joy was the notice that the Resthome Society was urged to become active again and to awake from hibernation. The Board gladly complied and convened a meeting. "Within the next 5-10 years we may expect a real need for a home for our older brothers and sisters or parents." Right so!

The Ladies Auxiliary "Orange Aid" is also very active. Upon request of the School Board, they will finance installation of an automatic bell-system. In the announcement of this move, the Ladies assured the children that they now would be sure to get out of school when it is time. Wisely, they did not mention the other side of the coin.



A gratifying item was that one Consistory published their decision to increase the salary of their minister by 15%. Actually, I should not say "salary" but "honorarium". The increase remains the same, whatever we call it. I think that the Churches should count with the possibility that the contributions for the College also must be increased. The Board of Trustees so far has succeeded in holding the line, but we are faced with more expenses. Not only will it cost more to **have** a minister, it will also be more expensive to **get** ministers.

And: I think of the **teachers**, too.

Originally I planned to write a separate article about it with the title "Help!!"

Maybe it is just as well that I do it via our Medley.

Recently, judging by the advertisements in **Clarion**, I counted no less than ten vacancies coming up. And I know of only a few who prepare for the task of teaching our children at school. There may be some in other provinces, but the shortage of teachers is depressing, to put it bluntly. The danger is not totally imaginary that we shall have to curtail the work at our schools and to refuse admission because of a lack of personnel.

#### **That should be prevented.**

I know that there are several Church members who teach elsewhere. That was - and is - their privilege. Until now we did not have to ask them to come over and teach at our own schools.

But I think that the time has come to do so, at least to put before them the question whether their first obligations are not towards the fellow-Churchmembers who either are maintaining a school or are planning to establish one.

Our children do need qualified teachers, for we wish to give them Reformed **instruction**, an instruction which should not be at a lower level than that which the public schools maintain. In emergencies we shall have to use non-qualified persons, and rather that than sending the children to public school. But non-qualified teachers should be an exception and should be employed only temporarily.

And therefore, brothers and sisters: let it weigh heavily on your hearts and minds: the parents of the children of the Church call you.

Is not this the Communion of Saints, that we also use our gifts readily and cheerfully to the advantage and salvation of the other members?

Let me close with something else.

Some papers were promised me dealing with the proposal to have uniform store-hours and to permit stores to be open on Sundays. I have not received them as yet, and can wait no longer with mailing the Medley. It applies to Ontario. Let me, therefore ask our readers in Ontario to write to Mr. George Kerr, Provincial Secretary for Justice, Legislative Buildings, Queen's Park, Toronto, and to inform him of their objections to having stores open on Sundays. It will be wise not just to state that, but also to argue the case and to give reasons. Write as soon as possible for after this issue of **Clarion** has reached your homes, there will be only a few days left for such briefs and communications. I deplore it that I cannot give you more and better information at the moment, but better something than nothing.

Strictly speaking, this was more than just a News Medley. I'll do better next time, that's a promise.

vO



*In our last Newsletter of 1973 we mentioned the name of Pak Ae Ja. This thirteen-year-old girl, who lives in the Eternal Love Christian orphanage, underwent a spinal operation last summer. She spent many months in a body cast. During the fall the cast was removed and body braces were fitted on her, thus enabling her to move about a little. Now we read in the last letter we received that her spine was festering again. On January 22 she was hospitalized. Pak Ae Ja has received many cards from people in Canada. She would like to thank everyone who was kind enough to think about her. May she have a quick recovery.*

*Mrs. F. VanderBoom  
C.R.W.R.F. Secretary for Ontario*

## Who is our neighbour?

Now, since Christ has shown in the parable of the Samaritan that the term "neighbor" includes even the most remote person (Luke 10:36), we are not expected to limit the precept of love to those in close relationships. I do not deny that the more closely a man is linked to us, the more intimate obligation we have to assist him. It is the common habit of mankind that the more closely men are bound together by the ties of kinship, of acquaintanceship, or of neighborhood, the more responsibilities for one another they share. This does not offend God; for his providence, as it were, leads us to it. But I say: we ought to embrace the whole human race without exception in a single feeling of love; here there is no distinction between barbarian and Greek, worthy and unworthy, friend and enemy, since all should be contemplated in God, not in themselves. When we turn aside from such contemplation, it is no wonder we become entangled in many errors. Therefore, if we rightly direct our love, we must first turn our eyes not to man, the sight of whom would more often engender hate than love, but to God, who bids us extend to all men the love we bear to him, that this may be an unchanging principle: whatever the character of the man, we must yet love him because we love God.

*John Calvin  
Institutes, II,8 (tr. L.C.C.)*

## Christ's Coronation in Politics - con't

open to us to make our views known in the public realm, both individually and communally? Let me explore some possibilities with you which will help to orient our thinking.

We should not be under the illusion that we will achieve immediate and dramatic results simply by starting some activities which can be called Christian because it is being done by those who are called such. It is sometimes said that to start another political party (to name only one possibility) will be divisive. But is this true? What we have now is a false unity (if indeed there is one). Jesus did not come to bring peace in the usual sense of that word, but rather division (Luke 12:51). It is false logic to say that parties create division; it is rather the other way around. It is time we develop a system where parties are divided along principal lines and are not conglomerates of various interest groups brought together for the sake of power. There is not much to choose between the tweedledum and the tweedledee parties we have now.

The important thing is not that we achieve power and influence on the political scene necessarily, but that we witness for Christ. We must boldly proclaim the message of the Gospel as it applies to all of society. We should not be ashamed to do so either, for it is a glorious task to spread the illumination of the gospel into the legislative councils of the nation. Does not the Bible refer to the believers as being a light unto the world? Well, then, why should we hide it within the confines of our homes and churches? This kind of witnessing is not to be confused with preaching, however, because there is a difference between pulpit and platform, between consistory and council or legislative seat. In the first chapter of Groen Van Prinsterer's famous book, *Ongeloof en Revolutie*, we read:

"A Christian would be wrong to believe that he does not need knowledge when he has the guidance of Holy Scripture. In order to work industriously and conscientiously in his appointed situation, he will also have to have exact knowledge concerning the nature and function of his own task. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but the beginning is not *total* knowledge; this

consists also of all the other elements in which the beginning embodies itself. The evangelical truth is the leavening. Indeed! But in order to obtain nourishing and tasteful bread, there will have to be dough with the leavening. The dough of knowledge is essential if one values substantiality. We should not tolerate our indolence with the deceptive excuse of the sufficiency of God's Word. In this way we could be led into a kind of tempting of God. Does anyone believe that in problems of constitutional law in day-to-day practice, a Christian instinct can prevent him from mistaking evil for good and good for evil?" Beautifully put and how true!

This is indeed the crux of the matter. Our witnessing in politics must be soundly based and cannot be limited to making devout sounding speeches. It requires work and therefore I want to make several proposals as to how we can go about it.

1. Set up political action and study groups in each congregation to promote the education of the people in the area and to come to grips with concrete political and social issues. These groups should try to work out answers and solutions on the basis of God's Word.
2. Seek contact with other groups engaged in political activity to try and find a common approach and investigate whether or not we can work with them in unity. Here I am thinking in particular of the CJL Foundation, which is doing pioneering work in this area.
3. Consider the possibility of having a full-time worker whose salary would be paid by members of all the congregations in Canada so that he can devote his time to research, writing and presenting the views of the Christian community to M.P.'s, public inquiries, royal commissions, and so on.
4. Each local group should actively engage in letter writing to newspapers, M.P.'s, government bodies, etc., so that they will constantly be confronted by the commands of God for His world and so that we will keep active ourselves in presenting our witness.
5. We should make more use of other media such as radio and television to put our views across. Thus we en-

courage young people to go into these areas as careers. Why be content to let the devil have a free hand in these areas while Christians sit on the sidelines shrugging their shoulders in despair? These are only a few suggestions.

A note of caution should be added. We must be careful not to fall into the trap of becoming a pressure group only concerned with our own narrow interests, but we must make clear that those who confess Christ as Lord be allowed to develop themselves in such a way that their principles are not stifled and trampled upon by a majority which clings to the democratic way of life which really is the "democratic way of death."

We should not regard the formation of a Christian political party as dogma but only as another means of effectuating the demands of the gospel. It is not our activity as Christians which *per se* will accomplish anything. What are some of the barriers of the formation of such a party? The most important would appear to be the electoral system which is based on the riding system. This system contributes to the frustration of groups which hold differing world and life views. Often a minority of voters in a riding can elect a person to office. If that person belongs to a party you did not support, how can you then be represented? How do M.P.'s regard their role, as interest brokers for their communities? It is quite obvious that this kind of system is not very representative and contributes to brokerage politics and short-term expediency. What is required then is a system in which each man's or woman's vote will be directed toward the party of his or her choice and the number of seats would be determined by the proportion of the total votes.\*

Whether a Christian political party is formed or not, it must be remembered that such a party should not identify its program with the message of the gospel, which transcends all programs. If it does do so, such a party would be a laughing-stock and a dishonouring of the name Christian.

In summing up let me say that we should be working towards a political philosophy which is distinctly reformational. Every Christian has his duty here. As John Calvin put it, "We are God's; therefore let His wisdom and will preside over all our actions. We are God's; to Him, then, as the

# Press Review

## THE NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Toward the close of 1973 a new evangelical Presbyterian church emerged in the more southern parts of the United States. The Rev. John J. Mitchell, editor of the Presbyterian Guardian was an observer at the First General Assembly of the National Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama, and he gave this report.

In 1861, the General Assembly ("Old School") of the Presbyterian Church, USA, adopted the "Spring Resolutions." In these heavy-handed pronouncements, Christians who pledged their first loyalty to their state government instead of to the federal union were declared to be rebels. This presumptuous attempt to legislate in an area where equally devout Christians differed led to the first general assembly of what was later named the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

On December 4, 1861, the "Southern" Presbyterian Church (US) was born. It included most Presbyterians in the states of the old Confederacy and many in the border states. It traditionally upheld the principle of the church's spiritual nature and its primary task of evangelizing the lost.

In recent decades, the PCUS has increasingly abandoned its historical heritage. It has made pronouncements on all sorts of social issues declaring itself on matters of societal life in which people of equally good

## CORONATION - Cont.

only legitimate end, let every part of life be directed."

As E.L.H. Taylor says, "The Christian political and social task is thus concerned with the inner reformation of man's political and social life as an aspect of the integral renewal of our whole life in obedience to Jesus Christ."

It is a privilege to belong in the ranks of the army of Jesus Christ. As Col. 1:19 says it: "For in Him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross." HAROLD J. LUDWIG

\*Several writers have recently made proposals concerning implementation of some kind of proportional representation system, among them Walter Stewart in his book about the 1972 election, *Divide and Con.*

conscience differ. It has urged support of causes - often good in themselves - and has actually supported some that are not part of the church's task to proclaim the gospel of salvation in Christ.

More seriously, the PCUS has openly disavowed the doctrine of Scripture's complete inerrancy and infallibility, has allowed candidates for the ministry to deny such doctrines as Christ's virgin birth, his miracles, and his work of salvation for God's chosen people only. It has advocated abortion for socio-economic reasons, condoned extramarital sex and the use of hallucinatory drugs, either in assembly pronouncements or through approved publications.

A proposed merger with the United Presbyterian Church, USA, was both the "last straw" and a glimmer of hope for conservative members in the PCUS. The even more liberal stance of the UPUSA, with its adoption of the Confession of '67, and its much larger size, convinced most conservatives that genuine reform in a merged denomination would be impossible. They strenuously opposed the plan of union, and defeated a similar proposal in the 1950s.

Because conservative strength seemed likely to kill the proposed union, the pro-union forces persuaded the United Presbyterians to accept an "escape clause" in the Plan of Union. This would have allowed dissident congregations to withdraw in the event of a merger, taking their property with them. Most conservatives agreed to wait for this provision to take effect before seeking to withdraw from the PCUS.

Then in February 1973, the PCUS representatives working on the Plan of Union asked to have the "escape clause" removed - a request that was openly declared to be dishonest by a United Presbyterian representative. As a result, the whole Plan was scrapped, and conservatives were left with no promise of any improvement.

## CONTINUING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Since February, over 250 congregations have withdrawn from the PCUS. Most of these are organized into presbyteries. A few congregations have been challenged by their former presbyteries about the property, and threats against others have been made. But most of these churches have been allowed to leave with their property.

So it was that on a second December 4, this time in 1973, over four hundred commissioners, represent-

ing 244 congregations, met at the Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama. These men then organized America's newest Presbyterian branch, and with some 60,000 members, already the third largest.

## "TRUE TO THE SCRIPTURES"

This new denomination professes to be "true to the Scriptures." Everything adopted by this first General Assembly, and everything said in speeches and conversations, made it abundantly clear that they mean to be true to the Scriptures as the Word of God written, inerrant in the original manuscripts, God's infallible rule of faith and practice.

In a significant action, the Assembly modified the first vow required of those being ordained by inserting one word (as shown in italics): "Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the *inerrant* Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?" This addition was made because many presbyteries of the PCUS had allowed men to restrict infallibility to matters of faith and practice, or to redefine it into meaninglessness.

## "TRUE TO THE REFORMED FAITH"

This General Assembly also claims to be "true to the Reformed faith" - but so do other bodies who have moved well beyond the historical meaning of these words.

To be sure, everyone would admit that years of unReformed - not to mention, unBiblical - church literature, deficient training in the church's seminaries, and the distractions of battling for one's faith and rights, have undoubtedly left many church members poorly grounded in basic doctrines of the Reformed understanding of Scripture. But repeatedly, in addresses by various leaders before the Assembly, in resolutions adopted, in debate from the floor, in conversations overheard, the longing to be truly Reformed was openly and insistently stated.

The Assembly readily and enthusiastically adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms. The Confession, leaving out amendments made by the PCUS, was adopted in a form nearly identical to that originally received by the first general assembly of Presbyterians in America (and exactly the same as that held by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church now). The Catechisms were adopted in their standard text.

## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The Assembly also moved to adoption of a Book of Church Order, or form of government. Basing its work on the 1933 Book of Church Order of the PCUS (which has been

replaced in that body by a later version), the Assembly made various amendments, mostly designed to strengthen or clarify certain features and congregational rights that had been weakened in the parent church.

As a result, the new denomination returned to the position that only men may be ordained to church office, which the PCUS had altered to permit women in any office. Control of property rights by local congregations was spelled out fully - in lawyers language. The role of the ruling elder was also emphasized.

Since the days of Thornwell and Dabney and the birth of "Southern" Presbyterianism, there has been a strong emphasis on the ruling elder. Thornwell taught that there was only one office of elder, though elders might differ in the functions of teaching (as ministers, or teaching elders) and ruling (as ruling elders). Every man holding the office of elder, whether teaching or ruling was "on a par" with any other such elder.

In more recent times, this concept of the "parity" of elders has come to be practiced by maintaining a numerical equality between ministers and ruling elders in the courts above the session level. This numerical "parity" principle was strengthened by the Assembly at almost every point possible, and all committees were organized on this basis.

The Assembly also took steps to provide for a presbytery licensing of certain ruling elders to preach. If a man has gifts, though he may lack the educational requirements for ordination to the ministry, he may be licensed to preach where needed. The question of whether such a licensed elder might administer the sacraments was referred to a committee for recommendation to a later assembly.

Certainly the ruling elder has played a major role in bringing about this new gathering of Presbyterians into one communion. No other Presbyterian church has, in recent times at least, been so blessed with conscientious and knowledgeable ruling elders as this one. The first moderator, W. Jack Williamson, is a ruling elder. Ruling elders outnumbered ministers in the Assembly by about 5 to 3. Would that all ruling elders would take their God-given duties with equal enthusiasm! . . .

#### A "NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH"

Choosing a name for the new denomination was a difficult decision. The names with the most support were "Continuing Presbyterian Church" (which has been the group's unofficial title so far). "Presbyterian Church in (or "of") America," and "National Presbyterian Church." After vigorous debate, the last title was chosen.

More than one commissioner suggested that the new name might become more obviously the fact as cooperation with Orthodox and Reformed Presbyterians developed. The Assembly's "Address to Churches" and its resolution on interchurch relations encourage one to look forward to a growing together of all those who love the Reformed faith and believe that Presbyterian government is that given by Christ for his church.

#### A TROUBLESOME QUESTION OF "GIFTS"

One serious question arose concerning a reference in the Book of Church Order to the "extraordinary officers (of the early church), endowed with miraculous gifts, which have long since ceased" (*Church Order*, 7-1). It was thought that this might be used to exclude men who held views sympathetic to or practiced what are called "charismatic gifts," such as "speaking in tongues."

It appeared to this observer that the majority of commissioners were unwilling to open the door to "charismatics", but neither were they prepared to slam it shut. The disputed paragraph was not adopted, but referred to a special study committee for its recommendations to a later assembly. (Provision was made for further amendments in the constitutional documents, except the Confession and Catechisms, by simple majority decision in the second assembly.) A committee, balanced between the different views and containing some of the new church's best theologians, was chosen to study this difficult problem . . .

All in all the tone of speeches made, the warm reception given to observers from other Reformed and Presbyterian bodies, the personal affirmation of desire for closer fellowship and cooperation in making the Reformed faith a real force in American life, all contributed to strengthen impressions made by the Assembly's official acts. The impact of Covenant, Reformed, and Westminster seminaries was apparent. But what chiefly impressed this observer was the strength of ruling elders, of men who had given time and money and prayer and thought to bringing out a remnant of God's people and in developing the foundations for a church "true to the Scriptures, the Reformed faith, and obedient to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ."

#### THE N.P.C. ON INTERCHURCH RELATIONS

*The following resolution was adopted by the First Assembly of the National Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama on Dec. 7, 1973. It shows that there is great receptivity in this church to closer relations with other evangelical Presbyterian churches. Because one of the churches*

*mentioned is the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, we too as Canadian Reformed are indirectly involved.*

*Whereas the Sovereign God has been pleased to call sixteen presbyteries, approximately 250 churches and approximately 60,000 believers into a new fellowship of Presbyterians;*

*And whereas the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole Head of the Church and the only Lawgiver in Zion has constituted this fellowship into a Continuing Presbyterian Church known as National Presbyterian Church;*

*And whereas in the adopted constitution these members and judicatories have reaffirmed their faith in the plenary verbal inspiration of Scripture, which Scriptures are inerrant in their original manuscripts; and have further reaffirmed their adherence to the Reformed faith as expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms; and have further declared their acceptance of the presbyterian representative form of church government; humbly believing that this position is a sacred trust from God;*

*And whereas the National Presbyterian Church does not intend at this time to enter into organic union with any other denomination, but nevertheless earnestly desires to have fellowship and communication with likeminded Christians;*

*Be it therefore resolved:*

1. That the Interchurch Relations Committee of the Mission to the U.S. be authorized and hereby directed to place suitable notices in appropriate religious publications throughout the United States extending the right hand of fellowship to all Christians of the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition who believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God written.

2. That the Interchurch Relations Committee be specifically authorized to correspond with similar committees of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.

3. That any correspondence resulting from these contacts be explored as possibilities for broadening and strengthening the spirit of love and understanding between Christians in the United States who believe the Bible as the Word of God written, the Reformed faith and the Presbyterian order.

J. VISSCHER

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*If you did, we would like to say Thank You, if you didn't, please do so as soon as possible.*

*It Saves Administrative Costs.*



Here then is the first report from Brazil again. The Lord has heard your and our prayers and safely brought us back in the mission field again. This report, being written only four days after arrival, will give you a bit from Canada, some from Brazil and even some from in between.

## FAREWELL

It is unbelievable how fast these last few weeks in Canada flew by! One wants to do so much yet, but time simply runs out. Yet we have most pleasant memories of our furlough and even of those last few "rushy" days. We would as yet like to thank all who in one way or another contributed to making our stay in Canada as pleasant as it was. It is all so fresh in our mind yet: the farewell-evening, the last sermon in New Westminster, the encouraging sermon of Rev. Van Beveren in the afternoon, all the hand-shaking and good wishes, smaller and bigger 'farewell-presents', donations slipped into my pockets for the church building, the drive to the airport, a last-minute handshake and picture, and disappearing into the corridor with that inhuman sign: "Passengers Only!"

Thanks to those who stayed with us until the very last. It was nice to have you there yet. We realized more were on their way but apparently did not make it, either because of the rush-hour or because of not realizing that we were to be at the gate nearly half an hour in advance.

## THE TRIP

The journey went exactly on schedule from beginning to end and we did not encounter any difficulties. The stop-over in Miami proved to be an excellent idea. We took advantage of the day we had to wait there for a connecting flight and saw some of the beauty of Florida. Many things already reminded us of Brazil, except for the great wealth and excellent facilities. Exactly on time we arrive in Recife, Thursday morning, November 29th.

## THE WELCOME

It was great to be welcomed by the family Kuik and from both sides we were thankful to be reunited again in good health. Also at the airport

were Rev. & Mrs. F. Schalkwijk from the Netherlands (Syn. Geref. Kerk) who are working in Recife at the Presbyterian Seminary. After a two-hour drive we finally arrived at our destination: São José da Coroa Grande!

We could not have received a warmer welcome! The house in tip-top shape, flowers, welcome signs, decorations and a good dinner together. Word of our arrival must have spread throughout the town in less than half an hour. There the children and the people started coming and they haven't stopped yet. It almost appeared as if we came back from a trip to the moon rather than Canada. Yet it did us a lot of good to see the happiness of the people to meet us again. Somehow we must have won a place in their hearts.

## THE FIRST SUNDAY

Although this actually belongs in the December report already, it is so much part of the welcome that I like to include it in this report. At the *Sunday School* there was a total of 68 children and approximately 6 adults. Were the children ever eager to let me hear what they had all learned, for me, as they kept on insisting. They recited Luke 2:1-20 and Psalm 23 by heart and some even said it all by themselves in front of the whole crowd. Attention and order was very good and we could notice clearly that there had been a continued progress. A word of praise to br. and sr. Kuik is certainly in place. They have done a marvellous work during our absence.

The *evening-service* was also very well attended. Relating our work and furlough to that of Paul as described in Acts 14 and 15 I explained to them the relationship between the Churches in Canada and the work here. I also gave an outline of the program that we would like to follow in these coming years.

It struck me again that these people, once they start coming, are faithful. All the regular ones were still there, hardly ever missed, and a number of new faces were there as well. After the service I showed them some slides from our furlough in Canada, which they enjoyed greatly.

## WORD OF APPRECIATION

In this report I would also like to express my appreciation for the work br. and sr. Kuik have done. They must have worked very hard and put much effort into it. I am sure that the work has not 'suffered' at all from our absence: there has been a continued growth and progress. All the material for the work, records, songsheets, etc., is in such good order that it is easy for me to step into it again. This sure makes it easier to get going, which is important since I will be rather busy these first few weeks doing my rounds visiting the people: they all expect me today or tomorrow!

## GENERAL VIEW

There are a few special things to report for the month of November. The work continued regularly, and as was programmed. Da. Ester became very seriously ill, but thanks to immediate medical care, made possible by Mission Aid, her life was saved. It would have been most tragic for her children if the Lord had taken her away. Their father has already left them.

Dona Noêmia made some new flowers for the church and together with her friend, Dona Maria Auxiliadora, gave the church building a good cleaning before our return.

A communion is definitely beginning to develop and we once again experience that we do not form a communion but that the Lord Himself brings people together.

*[The above is from the report for the month of November, as submitted to the consistory of the Church of New Westminster; it was written on December 3, 1973. The following is from the report for December, which was prepared on January 1, 1974.]*

The month of December again flew by, bringing to an end the year of 1973. Also for the mission work here in São José it has been a blessed year. The work could continue unhindered, expand and deepen through our work here and also in Canada during furlough when br. Kuik took over. We did indeed have many things to thank the Lord for in our service on New Year's Eve. "The Lord is not slow about His promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Pet. 2:9). This was our text last night: a message of comfort

and at the same time a call to repentance for the same Lord also said, "Behold, I am coming soon", or as the Portuguese translation puts it so beautifully: "Without delay".

#### FEARS

During this month it again became quite evident that the majority of the people live in many fears. Wild rumors were going around about the ill effects of the *comet Kohoutek*. They feared that around Christmas time it would become extremely hot, the water would start boiling, it could kill children and be the cause of death for many others. Some believed the end would come.

Another scaring phenomenon was the eclipse of the sun on December 24th (partial here). Streets were quiet, children hurried home and many became very nervous. Pregnant women should certainly not look at the eclipse because this would cause a deformed child.

During the first ten days of December many children and adults alike feared the legendary figure of *Papa Figado*. The story goes that a rich family in Recife, called the Amorim, sends out men to catch children. These are taken to Recife, killed, their livers (Figados) removed which serve as a medicine for the family Amorim. When the rumours went that two of them were in the local hotel the children hardly dared to come out on the street and parents also were worried, even those who call themselves believers. Some crimes involving children do happen, which probably must be attributed to criminals who exploit the people's superstitions.

But all this belongs to the past again, except the disposition of the people to believe anything they hear and to fear anything that is unknown and mysterious to them.

#### INTEREST

Attendance has been from good to very good this last month, with 30 to 50 adults present at the Sunday-evening services and about half of them coming to the Wednesday-evening Bible Study.

In general they pay attention and the services are becoming more orderly. It helped to have 6 new benches but even those are often filled already. In Sunday-School attendance dropped slightly, probably due to the market being on Sunday now. Children go along with their parents or try

to make a little money as carrying-boys.

#### BIBLE-STUDY

On Wednesday evening we have started with the cursory reading of Genesis with explanation. Interest is very good and it struck us again how fundamental for the understanding of all of the Scriptures this first book is. Here I also hope to involve the people more: asking them to lead in prayer, to do the Scripture reading, etc. Due to the traditional clergy-layman distinction this is important. Those who listen when I lead in prayer, for example, are exceptional. This is for the 'priest', he is their 'mediator' and they only have to be present. Perhaps this will change if they themselves will be more involved.

#### CHRISTMAS-CELEBRATION

We held a service on Christmas eve as is commonly the practice here. There must have been close to 200 people present and it turned out to be a very nice evening. We could notice a change from last year. Now they could participate more: four of the children recited Luke 2:1-20 and one of them later Psalm 23. All the songs are well-known now and all recite the Apostles' Creed together with me (which we do in all services now).

Br. and Sr. Kuik gave a musical contribution on a melodica and mouth-organ, and after the service a short filmstrip on the Christmas story was shown. It was a happy, joyful celebration.

On Christmas-day we had the celebration with the children of the Sunday-School but everyone attended of course, and many, many others. Again the children were able to take care of part of the program and my wife told them a story.

Great was the excitement again when we handed out the little presents: mainly colouring books of Bible stories with crayons. A total of 80 children were listed as regular ones who received a present! Further we handed out some candies and used Christmas cards. This was at the end, and the end of the order as well!

These presents were made possible through the efforts of the children of the "William of Orange" School of New Westminster, who donated \$50.00 for this cause. On behalf of the children here: A great big thank you!

And speaking of presents: we should also mention that the children of *Carman* remitted a cheque of

\$36.00 earlier this year - the results of their savings at the Saturday School of the past. This money is yet to be used: we will find a very good destination for it to the benefit of the children here in São José.

Then there is another gift I must mention: this time from *Abbotsford*. Instead of collecting money for their own children for Christmas gifts, they decided to send it to São José, for the children of the Sunday School! An amount of \$125.00! When the new building is ready we will probably use it for some special teaching aids to help the children here further.

To all givers: our sincere thanks. The children here greatly appreciate it and it makes our work here easier.

#### CHURCH BUILDING

The people here are quite excited that we are able to start construction of a new building soon. I have contacted the constructor and work will probably begin in the month of January. We are really looking forward to having our own facilities: that will really benefit the work and also give a different presentation to the community. A simple tower, separate from the building, will be included to give it a church building appearance. At the same time it will serve to support a loudspeaker broadcasting suitable music before the service, to let the people know it is time to come (next-best to actual church bells!).

C. VAN SPRONSEN

## Church News

New Address:

The address of the Deaconry of Lincoln, Ont., is now:

H. Vander Velde  
44 Kemp Rd., E.  
Grimsby, Ont. L3M 4E7

With much joy and thankfulness we wish to announce that the Lord in his boundless mercy entrusted unto us another child:

MELISSA JANINE

A sister for: *William* and  
*Darren*

Ben and Ingrid Bartels  
(nee - Vermeulen)

Brantford, Ontario.

# our little magazine

Dear Busy Beavers,

Have you been enjoying all the snow and ice? It's so much fun, isn't it, to go flying down a hill on a toboggan or sleigh. And of course the boys will be playing lots of hockey. Why don't you drop me a line and tell me what you enjoy most about winter?

And do you know what I'm curious about too? About all the different kinds of collections the Busy Beavers have. I know of one who has a collection of pressed flowers and one wrote and told me he has over 2300 stamps! So let's hear about your collection, or another hobby you have. If we get lots of letters maybe we'll be able to have a whole column in Our Little Magazine about: OUR HOBBIES! Hope to hear from many of you, Busy Beavers.

\* \* \* \* \*

It's time for Birthday Wishes again. To all the Busy Beavers that will be celebrating a March Birthday we wish a very happy day, and may the Lord guide and keep you through the year to come. Many happy returns of the day!

Joanne De Groot	March 2	Margaret Van Wijk	Mar. 18
Lorraine Heres	2	Clarence Bouwman	20
Janet Veenendaal	2	Lorraine Linde	20
Brian Hendricks	3	Pat Kamstra	20
Lyndon Kok	4	Lizzie De Boer	25
Nancy Koster	8	George Schuurman	25
Jo-Anne Vander Ploeg	9	Cor Bultena	27
Angela Wiersema	9	John Vander Woerd	27
Frieda Boersema	13	Celia Van Woudenberg	28
Jane Kobes	14	Carolyn Irene Hoeksema	29
Margaret Tenhage	17	Marlene Meyer	29
Arlene Schulenberg	18	Mary Van Woudenberg	31

\* \* \* \* \*

## BOOK NOOK

*The Bobbsey Twins and the GOLDFISH MYSTERY*  
by Laura Lee Hope

The Bobbsey twins go to Japan and solve two mysteries. One is that they try to find a beautiful gold bracelet with carved goldfish. After a long time in Japan, they find the bracelet. (They knew it was stolen.) The other mystery is that the Bobbsey twins try to find a man named Kozo. They find him when they find the bracelet.

Busy Beaver *Henrietta Stieva*



## From The Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Meta Bosscher*! I know you'll be a real Busy Beaver because in your first letter you sent us some riddles! Thank you very much.

Hello, *Ralph Van Eerden*, a big welcome to you too! I hope you'll enjoy all our Busy Beaver activities, Ralph. Have you received your membership card?

We are happy to have you join us, *Catherine Smouter*. You'll be a good Busy Beaver too, because you had the answers to your cross-word puzzle all right.

Thank you for your letter and story, *Margaret Vanden Haak*. Keep up the good work!

Hello, *Henrietta and Carolyn Stieva*. It's nice to hear from you again. I always enjoy the letters and songs the Busy Beavers send me. Write again soon!

I'm glad you can play the recorder so well, *Beverly Schouten*. But please explain to me about "coco". I don't understand. Did you enjoy doing your report on Borneo?

You did quite well on your crossword puzzle, *Bonita Stiksma*. Did you enjoy today's? And is your Dad all right now?

My, your cousin got a fancy name, didn't he, *Greta Bosscher*! Did you think the 3-wheeled car looked funny? Write again soon, Greta.

Thank you for your quiz, *Jane Kobes*. I'm sure the Busy Beavers will enjoy doing it. And thank you for your very nice letter too, Jane.

I think you're very clever to be able to type me such a nice letter, *Betty Ann Vander Meulen*! Glad to hear you had such a nice birthday. And how is your little sister doing?

It must have been a very happy day for your family when your brother did profession of his faith, *Jackie Bakker*. And how are the twin calves doing?

Thank you for the poem, *Albert Riemersma*. I really enjoyed it. And you had your puzzle all right! Would you like to tell us some more about your *big* stamp collection.

Sorry to hear one of your pet gerbils died, *Jacob Jongs*. How many does that leave? More than one, I hope. Thank you very much for your poem and the very funny riddles, Jacob!

\* \* \* \* \*

## QUIZ TIME

Now I think you're curious to find out how you did on the "Guess the Bird" quiz we had last time. Did you have fun doing it and the "Funny-Grams"? If you have sentences that make sense, then your Funny-Grams are right. And here are the answers to "Guess the Bird."

- |                |             |         |               |
|----------------|-------------|---------|---------------|
| 1. swallow     | 4. quail    | 7. wren | 9. eagle      |
| 2. part-ridge  | 5. pea-cock | 8. duck | 10. star-ling |
| 3. king-fisher | 6. lark     |         |               |

And now there are some riddles to tease your brain! Have you got your thinking caps on? The first two are from *Meta Bosscher* and the rest from *Jacob Jongs*. The answers are below.

1. What day of the year is a command to go forward?
2. What did the snail say to the turtle?
3. What do they call the last three hairs on a dog's tail?
4. What kind of range is never used for cooking?
5. If an egg came floating down the middle of the Ohio River, where would it come from?
6. Why does the moon go to the bank?
7. Who drives away all of his customers?

### Answers

- |                     |  |                       |
|---------------------|--|-----------------------|
| 1. March 4th        | 2. "I wish I could afford a house like yours." | 3. dog hairs          |
| 4. a mountain range | 5. from a hen                                  | 6. to change quarters |
| 7. a taxicab driver |  |                       |

That's it for today, Busy Beavers. Till next time!

Yours,  
Aunt Betty.