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# Gloria In Excelsis Deo

# “New Things”

In the first chapter of the book of Ecclesiastes, the king of Jerusalem concludes from his searching that there is nothing new under the sun. Things come, things go, and then it seems that same thing again: toil among men from one generation to the next. The one generation passes, the next rises. Everything seems to follow a common course. So he cries out and says, “Who can bring something new?” Well, in Isaiah 42, God promises that He will indeed bring about something new. He says: “Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them” (vs. 9). The promise of a new covenant, the promise of a new heaven and new earth to come, the promise of getting a new name, the promise of making us sing a new song: all these new things which God proclaims before they come about are rooted in the one new thing God performed in Bethlehem. It is for that reason that Christ’s birth, Yahweh’s (the LORD’s) new thing in Bethlehem, is God’s people’s hold to believe that all the new things foretold will come about. For Christ’s birth is the new thing 1. in the political world of Israel, 2. in the royal house of Israel, 3. for the people of Israel (the Church of Israel), 4. for heaven and earth in the time of Israel.

1) *Christ’s birth is the new thing in the political world of Israel.*

The angel announces to the shepherds that to them is born this day a Saviour, Christ the Lord, in the city of David. From that announcement we conclude that Micah 5:2-4 speaks about the promise of the LORD to give a Ruler out of Judah in the political world of Israel, One who shall be great unto the ends of the earth, and Who with His sceptre shall rule the nations (Ps. 2:8-10). In the well-known chapter, Luke 2, we first read an account of the political situation of those days. It is in the days of the Caesar of Rome and of a governor called Cyrenius that the world has to be registered. This decree, issued from the throne of Rome, includes Israel, the chosen people of God, the covenant people of God, the people with the promises about the new things to come. This decree is issued from a hostile throne, by a hostile man, a man who hates God and what God has established among His people Israel, a man of disbelief and unbelief, a man who proclaims himself to be a saviour of the world over against what the angel proclaims in Luke 2. Caesar Augustus wants to be addressed and recognized as the one who saved the world. Did he not establish peace among strife-torn nations? So he claimed to have brought peace for Israel; he, the lord of the world of those days, saved Israel. However, by his decree to have the world including Israel, taxed, he is used by the new thing of God in the manger in order to have this new thing brought about at the place foretold, in the way foretold, among the people foretold. So it is, that at the time of the mighty, powerful ruler, Caesar Augustus, God brings about the new thing of Micah 5, a new thing in the

political world of Israel, and at the same time, the strong hold for the believers of Israel over against Caesar Augustus. Of course, we speak here from faith. The angel announces this new thing to the shepherds, people of the Church of God in Israel. In spite of the political situation in which they are, dominated by Caesar Augustus, their hearts are filled with joy and gladness when they understand what God has wrought in the new thing, Christ the LORD. He is announced as “the Lord”, the ruler of Micah 5. He is there, and we, who today remember that He came, believe that He is that new thing of God, that new thing with its meaning of “Lord”, the man of the sceptre, the man of rule, the man of dominion over all the rulers of the world. We know that the political world changes all the time. Caesar Augustus is gone, but the other ruler, Jesus Christ, is still here. The one ruler after the other had come and gone. The one empire and dominion after the other has risen, reached its peak, and declined. But the one dominion, established in the one new thing, the Lord Jesus Christ, remains and grows and increases wherever and whenever He adds new ones to His people, either by birth or by rebirth. The new thing in the political world of Israel is God’s people’s strong hold to believe that He shall bring about His rule over heaven and earth, a perfecting of His Kingdom as established on earth since the manger, a Kingdom wherein His people may participate. When it is completed and presented to the Father, all rulers of the world who were hostile towards Christ and His Church will be gone forever with their dominions, powers, decisions, rules, and laws. God’s people’s hold began in the new thing, Christ, born in the manger in the political world of Caesar Augustus, and is now coming to its fulness. Christ will receive over heaven and earth and all nations the rule He proclaimed and made known to the shepherds, people of the Church. Therefore, His Church of all ages, also at the present, need not fear even though the hostile powers in present world are still real, and although there is the threat of a third world war. People of God who know that their Ruler, the new Thing wrought by God, has come to Israel in its political world, must keep a hold on the knowledge that He did come as Ruler and that at all times in any political situation, He manages to keep His people unto Himself. Therefore, people of God, fear not what might come and what princes and rulers of this world might decide and do to you, but believe one thing: that your Christ has come as Ruler! That’s enough.

2) *Christ’s birth is the new thing in the royal house of Israel.*

To make God’s people’s hold even stronger, this new thing has come out of the lineage of David, out of the royal house of David. The royal house of David had no power in the time of Caesar Augustus. Joseph himself, a prince of the lineage of David, had no throne from which to rule. There was no room for this prince and his wife, a princess, and the little prince. There was no place from them in



Bethlehem, the city of David although they were descendants of David. But in spite of this, the God of David brings about the new thing promised to David, that out of David's line the Son of David shall sit on the throne of David, politically manifested and published to be the true continuation of David's line, with the claim of a dominion extending to all corners of the earth, not just within the borders of Palestine. In Bethlehem, Jesus Christ is born, that is, in the city of David is born the Promised One, the new Thing, and new He is, for never was such a ruler born in the line of David. Every descendant of David who had come up, sat on the throne for a while and had gone down. The last ones in the lineage of David had been forced to give up the throne by the political world of their days. The throne of David was gone when Christ was born in Bethlehem. No power of David can be seen at all, unless the message of the angel is understood and believed. Then the power of David can be seen again, the everlasting power of the royal throne of the great Son of David, for this great Son of David is not only of the lineage of David: He is also God. God out of God, Light out of Light, and seed out of David. This seed out of David cannot be overcome because He is at the same time God. Therefore, it is the strong hold for God's people who know and understand and believe that in this Seed of David, God has manifested Himself in the flesh, in the flesh of His people, with the blood of His people - the promised righteous Branch out of David and at the same time, according to Jeremiah 23, the LORD our Righteousness: a Branch and the Lord. This is your strong hold to believe, that this Branch and Lord in the house of David does bring about all the new things that are rooted in Him and that therefore will come out of Him. He guarantees it, as God, and He brings it about among God's people, for he took upon Himself their sin.

### 3) *Christ's birth is the new thing for the people of Israel.*

The message of the angel is addressed to the shepherds. These shepherds are children of God, of the house, the people, of Israel. They are the people who are included in the covenant of God and have the promises of God about the new things to be performed. They are privileged to hear the message of the angel about the new thing in which all other new things are rooted and from which all other new things spring up. They are privileged to hear because they are chosen to hear, being God's covenant people who had the promises. These shepherds are in a poor situation, also Church-wise. They are despised by the nobles in the Church, that is the Pharisees and Scribes, because they are poor and needy. However, according to the promise of God, made known for instance in Psalm 72, the new thing of Christ's birth is for the needy. God in the flesh announces Himself to the lowly, the poor, the needy in the Church of God. He shows them that they have not believed in vain in the promises of God. He makes them see the strong hold in which they have believed according to God's Word. They may hear, first by the mouth of the one angel, that the new thing is brought about which guarantees to perform all the new things promised. Then they may hear the great choir of angels who underline and emphasize that for the shepherds the new thing really has been brought about, promising that all things will become new: "For unto *you* is born . . ." this new thing, the angel said. People of God, then, should understand that unto them is born this new thing. We are the privileged covenant people who have the promises of the things that shall become new. There is no reason at any time, in any circumstance of

God's people, in the midst of whatever situation in the world, personal or ecclesiastical, to despair, because God's promises are there and they will be performed, since the one promise has been fulfilled in the birth of the new thing, Christ. There is still misery. Sin, the cause of this misery and pain and suffering is still committed, also by God's people. But, the shepherds receive the message of the new thing born to overcome sin and misery. The shepherds are in despair, politically oppressed, ecclesiastically despised, financially poor, and yet, when they hear about the new thing and later see the new thing as announced, they become new people, new creatures by faith in Christ. Their hearts and minds no longer concentrate on the trouble, the misery, sin, and the causes of sin; their hearts and minds are now fixed on the new thing of God that fills them. That gives them a strong hold in the life of those days. It provides them with righteousness in the place of sin and happiness instead of misery.

### 4) *Christ's birth is the new thing for heaven and earth in the time of Israel.*

The most wonderful, promising thing takes place when the angels are sent from heaven to take their place with the one angel that brought the message of the new thing to God's people. These angels all together form a great choir in the fields of Ephrathah and sing, "Glory to God in the highest". They point to the heavens first. "And peace on earth . . ." Then they point to where the Church lives. They say this together with the angel who first announced to the shepherds the great message of God's new thing. The shepherds are there, too. Angels and people of the Church together. Servants of God out of heaven and children of God on the earth together. In this we see the new future opened, originating from the one thing born that fills angels and shepherds and that has brought them together. We see in this an established beginning that leads to the fulfilling of the promise of a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. When we hear that new song, a new song of the angels because of the new thing performed, then we understand that the promises, given in Revelation unto His people that believed this new thing, are here in the process of being fulfilled. That is, God, by His Spirit, shall make them sing a new song, filled with their joy about the grace of God in Jesus Christ, who came to the manger of Bethlehem in order to cover their sins, to take away their guilt, and to open for them the brightness and the glory of the future without sin and guilt, and the restored new creation of body and soul, to praise forever, with all creatures, God's glory in the new dominion of heaven and earth, given to the Father by the Son out of David's line. The choir of the angels and the presence of the shepherds show that heaven and earth are going to be united and filled with praise, praise of the new thing, of salvation in the new thing, Jesus Christ, So the day, wrongly called Christmas Day, this day of remembering the birth of Christ, is a hold for you that God, who brought about the new thing of Jesus Christ shall bring about all the new things. If you keep to what God started off in Bethlehem, He shall give you a new name; He shall make you sing a new song; He shall give you a new body; He shall give you a new heaven and a new earth.

God of our Lord Jesus Christ, that great new thing that people could not think of, hearts of people could not contemplate, power of people could not perform, Thou didst perform as our strong hold. We praise Thy holy Name!

P. KINGMA

# The Special Fruit of the Normal

On January 1st of this year the number of Churches was increased by one when institution took place in the city of Guelph. Since that day much has happened there: the new Congregation acquired a Church building which they recently saw enriched with the purchase of an organ the construction of which may be unique in Canada as far as the place where it is located is concerned.

As for Church buildings, Chatham expects to have theirs ready soon, Rehoboth, Burlington, will have dedicated theirs by the time you read these lines, Winnipeg is building, there are plans in New Westminster, and thus the general progress is demonstrated in the acquisition of new buildings for worshipping the Lord.

Cloverdale let a contract for a new organ, Brampton finally received theirs, London has a pipe organ, Edmonton saw theirs completed, and, as mentioned above, Guelph, too, is singing while accompanied by a pipe organ.

Are these things proof of real growth and of an increase of dedication to the Lord? Is there not an old Dutch saying that, when the Church buildings were made of wood, the ministers were made of gold but that, the Church buildings being of gold, the ministers are made of wood?

Let us not make false oppositions. Those who were engaged in building their new sanctuaries will have experienced it that activity creates activity. One of the brethren who was actively engaged in the building of a new place of worship told me with tears of gratitude in his eyes that the people were eager to build and that not one single dissonant was heard. "Behold", he said, "and taste that the Lord is good". When such a reaction may be noted, no fear needs to exist that a building project will be a cover for inactivity in other respects.

Such activity can be noted also in other respects. Both in the East and in the West the office-bearers had their conferences where the brethren endeavoured to edify one another and thus to enable each other to fulfil the duties of the office better and better all the time. The ministers in Ontario did not remain behind and they had their "Ministers' Workshop" twice during the past year. Much use was made of the talents of the Faculty of our College.

Both men and women did not lag behind either: the Men's Societies had their League Day as usual in the Fergus Church. I was told that this was the last time that it was to be held in Fergus. I have not heard of similar meetings in the West. At least not of the Men's Societies. In this respect the Women's Societies kept equal pace: In The Valley as well as in Alberta, in Manitoba, and in Ontario the ladies took to the road to meet for their League Days.

The Fellowship of Canadian Reformed University Students - which Fellowship covers only Ontario - arranged for several meetings at which lectures were delivered. The Teachers in Ontario met at regular intervals to set up a Curriculum and to listen to introductions helpful to them in their work.

The Young People's Societies had their "national rally"

in Carman this past summer, beside which they had their regional study conferences.

As for other societies: The Canadian Reformed High-school Association in Ontario has come off the ground and appears to become more consolidated. Hopes are expressed that such a highschool will become a reality within two years. Meanwhile, the "elementary" school societies are faced with the necessity to expand their facilities and to increase the number of their teachers, who are in great demand and in scarce supply.

The care for the young does not cause the membership to neglect their task towards the elderly. Both Rest-home Societies which exist within the Churches are very active and have acquired property on which they intend to build a Home for the Aged to which, in the future, a Nursing Home may be added.

Activity directed towards the own membership does not preclude activity towards those who are without. "The Voice of the Church" is still broadcasting the Gospel via the radio both in English and in Dutch. In The Valley as well as in Edmonton this work is being continued. In Ontario there was only the odd time that a service was taped by a Cable TV Company for broadcast via their own channel.

Preaching of the Gospel to those who are far away also continued. Rev. H. Knigge went out to look for new possibilities and to prepare the way for a possible successor who has not been found as yet. What was found was a young couple willing to be sent out to Irian Jaya as helpers for the missionaries. In Brazil, the Van Spronsens and the Kuiks continued the work and a new Church building was erected and dedicated. In spite of frustrations and disappointments, the Gospel appears to bear fruits which could hardly be expected so soon.

The work of mercy towards those who are without or far away was also continued. The support to orphanages in Korea was even increased by special actions for new buildings and for sleeping bags for the children who have to sleep on a concrete floor with very little protection.

When the College Evening was held, many hundreds came from many places, even from the center of the country, to attend this occasion. This evening could this time also be attended by the delegates to the General Synod which was held in Toronto. Synod was adjourned only recently and we have seen no publications containing official decisions made by this Synod. We'll have to wait for the Press Release and, which is more important, for the Acts. This Synod was a "first" in this respect that a representative of the Netherlands sister Churches was present. It may be expected that the gesture will be returned and that from now on we'll see representatives at every General Synod. It will strengthen the bond and enliven the interest in each other's affairs.

Concerning the ministers, for the larger part they were able to do their work. A change took place when Rev. C. VanDam moved from Neerlandia to Brampton. As for the rest, they all are still at the same place where they were at the beginning of the year. No other vacancies were filled than the one at Brampton, which, on the other hand, created another vacancy, so that in this respect it meant no solution. Rehoboth, Burlington, did call, but was disappointed; the same is to be said of Hamilton, Neerlandia, and Winnipeg. From far away came the call first for Rev. W. Huizinga and then to Rev. J. Geertsema: the call from Launceston, Tas. For them, as for us, it becomes harder and harder to call a minister from the Netherlands because



of language "problems". I do not know how the situation is down under, but it will not be much different from our situation here. The young people, even though they may not be completely unable to understand and/or speak the Dutch language, do not really understand a Dutch sermon, just as many older members can "help themselves" with English but do not really get everything out of an English sermon. Yet, the Dutch services become fewer and fewer, although in several instances alternate solutions are sought and found.

The above may seem to be a more or less "dry" list of facts and activities. What we are to realize, however, is that these are just the extra events and actions which we notice. They are, in reality, only the tip of the iceberg: what we see is the evidence of what we cannot see or what we do not notice so clearly in everyday life and conduct.

Would all the above activities have been possible if there were not a sincere desire to serve the Lord and to prove ourselves thankful for all His benefits? Would all the above-mentioned things have happened, if not the hearts were touched by the Holy Spirit and, in many instances, set afire for Him? Would the parents have been willing to sacrifice so much for the education of their children if they were not convinced that the treasures which have been entrusted to them should be transferred to the next generation and thus be preserved? Would the membership

have brought together thousands and hundreds of thousands of dollars for the maintenance of the ministry of the Gospel, for the Mission, for the Schools, for the help of the needy, for the help of Korea, and for so many other causes if they were not convinced that their lives and all their possessions belong to the Lord their God?

We do not wish to boast: there are many things in our Church life which are no reason for pride at all. But, on the other hand, we also wish to gratefully acknowledge the works of thankfulness which are the fruit of the work of the Holy Spirit, Who takes it all out of Christ's treasures and distributes freely and abundantly.

The end of the year and the beginning of a new year is a good time to reflect on these things. Counting the blessings received is still a work which is pleasing to the Lord our God. And what a joy is given therein to those who have thus endeavoured to prove themselves grateful: when others have squandered their money and have nothing to show for all their labours, while others had nothing to spare because they needed it all for themselves and now stand empty-handed at the end of the year, those who have been enabled by the Lord to prove themselves thankful for all His benefits may gratefully count what their God has given them and what they have been able to achieve by His strength.

Thus we enter the new year.

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## A Letter from the Publisher

Another year has gone by; the second that we have had the pleasure of publishing "Clarion".

On the whole, it has been a good year. Our list of contributors has increased, and so has the number of topics that could be covered. Slowly but surely we are moving nearer to our goal: to make "Clarion" a magazine that gives scriptural guidance to the members of our churches in every aspect of life.

We are happy to report that "Clarion" is more and more establishing itself among our members. The number of subscribers continues to grow, and this year again we received many compliments and notes of encouragement from readers in eastern, western, and central Canada. Some of them have in fact asked us if the possibility should not be considered of making "Clarion" a weekly magazine. It goes without saying that we would be happy if this could be done, and the matter has been seriously discussed. We did not feel that an immediate decision could be made. Quite a bit is involved in such a change-over. Even so, the question has our attention, and we would appreciate receiving further opinions, also from other readers. In the meantime, a sincere "thank you!" to the well-wishers, and indeed to all our subscribers, old and new.

As we already wrote in a previous issue, we have unfortunately been forced to raise the subscription rate as of January 1st, 1975. We had hoped to maintain our rate of \$13.50 for another year, but due to the very rapid rise in costs for supplies and labour this proved impossible. The new rate is \$15.00 per year. We would appreciate it if our readers would pay their subscription on an annual basis, and if they would pay in advance. This will greatly facilitate the work of our bookkeeper and reduce our administrative costs.

We want to use this opportunity to express our gratitude to all who have given of their time and talents for our magazine. We are thinking of our local correspondents, and of course also of our contributors. In the final analysis, it is the latter who have made the magazine what it is, and the compliments we have received are a reflection on the quality of their work. And on that of our editors. Again a word of special thanks to the Rev. W.W.J. VanOene and Dr. W. Helder for the excellent work which they, as editors, have done for "Clarion" in the past year.

It is our prayer that the Lord may sustain us all, and bless our efforts, so that also by this work His church may be built, and His Name glorified.

Our best wishes to you all for the year 1975.

G. KUIK

# The Significance of Dogmatology for the Training for the Ministry

*An address delivered on the occasion of the Annual College Evening of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches, November 8, 1974.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

"The dogmatological disciplines are the proper sanctuary of theology . . ." With these words Dr. Abraham Kuyper opened his discussion of the dogmatological group in the third volume of his famous *Encyclopaedia of Sacred Theology*. Although I am convinced that this expression is not correct, one can understand that in his day and age Dr. Kuyper stressed the significance of Dogmatology.

The nineteenth century had downgraded and down-trodden Dogmatics, which in previous centuries had been Theology as such or at least its main discipline. Kuyper regarded this dethronement of Dogmatics as the fateful consequence of a revolution that had deprived Theology of its theological character and had transformed it into Ecclesiology, a doctrine about the church. Schleiermacher, the most influential theologian of the nineteenth century, had brought Dogmatics under the discipline of Church History. The task of Dogmatics should be nothing else than to present a systematic exposition of the dogma of a Christian church at a given moment of its *historical* development.

One may overlook Kuyper's overstatement also because of the fact that Dogmatology indeed has an important place in Theology. We are dealing with this significance of Dogmatology for the training for the ministry.

## 2. NAME

In another respect one can wholeheartedly agree with Dr. A. Kuyper, namely with respect to the name of this group of theological disciplines.

When Synod Orangeville 1968 established our Theological College, it appointed among others a professor of *Systematic Theology*. This is the name commonly used on the American continent, but there are at least two objections against this designation.

First, it is no specific name, for all theological study has to be systematic. "Systematic" is a formal concept. As such it does not indicate anything but the fact that one treats his discipline in a methodical manner. All theoretical knowledge is to be systematic in this sense, for that matter.

"Systematic" can also mean that one is eager to discover and disclose the coherence of the subject-matter, the system, of a certain science. Even if we think in this last direction and regard the adjective "systematic" as a pointer to the system of doctrine, we prefer the name *Dogmatology* to that of *Systematic Theology*. For *Dogmatology* indicates more clearly the specific object of this group of theological disciplines. *Dogmatology* is namely that part of

the science of Theology that deals with the doctrine of Holy Scripture as confessed by the church. All the disciplines of this theological department circle around the dogmas, the formulated and accepted doctrines of the church.

## 3. DOCTRINE

Now in order to show the significance of Dogmatology for the training for the ministry, I first would like to draw your attention to a group of words in the New Testament, namely the words "to teach", "teaching" and "doctrine", words that in the Greek of the New Testament are related to one another.

Already in the gospels we read that our Lord Jesus Christ went about the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom (Mt. 4:23, 9:35) and that also the disciples preached and taught (Mk. 6:30). While preaching has the character of proclamation and is the action of the herald of God's kingdom, teaching brings us into the climate of instruction. A teacher explains and shows links and connections.

We read in the book of Acts about the teaching of the apostles. They taught accurately the Word of God or the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 18:11, 28:31) and the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching (2:42).

When in his letter to the Colossians the apostle Paul mentions his ministry, to make the word of God fully known to the Gentiles, he speaks about the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory, and he adds, "Him we proclaim, warning every man and *teaching every man in all wisdom*, that we may present every man mature in Christ" (1:28).

The same apostle thanks God that the Christians in Rome have become obedient from the heart to *the standard of teaching* to which they were committed (Rom. 6:17).

Especially in his letters to Timothy and Titus, Paul speaks time and again about doctrine, the good doctrine, the sound doctrine, the doctrine of God our Saviour, the teaching which accords with godliness.

When, in his first letter to Timothy, Paul had warned against false teaching, doctrines of demons, in which the good creation of God was slandered, he immediately encourages and exhorts Timothy in this manner, "If you put these instructions before the brethren, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the good doctrine which you have followed." (4:6).

In his letter to Titus the apostle stresses this requirement for a bishop or overseer, "He must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it" (1:9).

In the same vein the apostle John refers to the doctrine, "Any one who . . . does not abide in the doctrine of Christ, does not have God; he who abides in the doctrine has both the Father and the Son" (2 Jhn. 9).

We *conclude* that already in the New Testament, *teaching* is connected with the proclamation of the gospel. The Word of God has to be explained; its implications must be brought to light; its connections with previous revelations are to be shown; its content has to be set off against the ideas of false religions and it has to be defended over against heresies within the church itself.

The author of the letter to the Hebrews even makes a



distinction between the first principles of God's Word, the elementary doctrine of Christ, and the solid food, the more mature knowledge of the truth. He exhorts his readers, "Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrines of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, with instruction about ablutions, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment" (Heb. 6:1, 2).

These quotations from Holy Scripture make it clear that we may not fall prey to a contrast between a so-called un-doctrinal period of the early Christian church and the stifling of the Christian proclamation into later dogma. There is indeed a distinction between the doctrine of Holy Scripture and the dogmas of the church, but there is no contrast between God's revelation in Holy Writ and the development of church dogma as such.

#### 4. SYMBOLICS

With this remark we make the transition to the first discipline of Dogmatology, namely Symbolics. The name Symbolics is derived from the noun symbol, and symbol in this connotation means creed or confession. In Symbolics we deal with the creeds and confessions of the church.

You may put it this way that, if in Dogmatology we occupy ourselves with disciplines that circle around the dogma of the church, we first of all have to find and know that dogma. Where do we find the doctrines formulated and accepted by the church? The answer is, in the symbols.

Symbolics, therefore, has as its object the creeds and confessions of the church. This discipline has the task first to establish the official text of the symbols, then to investigate the origin of the creeds and confessions, and finally to elucidate their expressions, explain their contents, and show the connections within the confessional statements of the church. One may speak of a literary-critical task, a genetical-historical task and an exegetical task of Symbolics.

It goes without saying that no one is able to study Symbolics without taking a confessional stand himself. In our Theological College at Hamilton we take the Reformed stand. We teach the students on the basis of the Reformed conviction and in agreement with the Reformed confessions. The confessional standards of the Canadian Reformed Churches, the Three Forms of Unity, are in the centre of our attention. Our students are to obtain a thorough knowledge of the Reformed confessions, and then especially of the Reformed confessions of those churches in whose midst they desire to become ministers of God's Word. The lectures deal with a certain specific topic, for instance the doctrine about the church in the Reformed confessions, and the students have to learn by heart the contents of the Heidelberg Catechism and, in the main line, of the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort.

If someone would be afraid that this attention for the Reformed confessions makes for narrowminded ministers, he only shows that he does not really know the Reformed confessions and their catholic character.

In the line of Article 9 of the Belgic Confession we pay good attention also to the ecumenical creeds. We study the background, history and contents of the so-called Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed and Athanasian Creed. It is important for Reformed ministers-to-be to know the significance of the well-chosen expressions of these ecumenical creeds.

Around, or over against, these Three Forms of Unity and these ecumenical creeds there are other confessions and doctrinal statements to be studied. In the course Symbolics we especially deal with the documents of the Second Vatican Council in order to give the students the opportunity to become acquainted with the continuing controversy between Reformation and Rome.

Our heart-commitment to the Reformed confessions does not exclude such study, as some "ecumeniacs" might think; rather, it renders it challenging and profitable.

It is clear that Symbolics is an important part of Dogmatology and that it is of great value for the training for the ministry. In preaching, in Catechism instruction, in all aspects of the work of a minister, it will become evident whether he has a thorough knowledge of the creeds and confessions of the churches or not.

A congregation that loves the Reformed doctrine - not because of that doctrine as such, but because of its Scripturality - will always thankfully notice when in preaching and teaching its minister manifests himself as a truly Reformed man.

#### 5. DOGMATICS

We now come to the discipline of Dogmatics. Dogmatics is the scientific reflection upon the truth concerning God and concerning His creatures in their mutual relationship, which truth God has revealed in His Word and the church has confessed in obedience to this Word.

Again we begin with the dogmas of the church. The Belgic Confession e.g. speaks about the triune God, His revelation, Holy Scripture; about the creation of the cosmos, of the angels and of man; about man's fall into sin and God's eternal election; about Christ's Person, His work and His benefits; about the church of Christ and its offices; about the means of grace, Word and sacraments; and about the consummation of God's work of redemption in the glorious coming of our Lord and Saviour.

It is the task of a dogmatician to take all these wonderful topics, one by one, and first to go back to Holy Scripture as the only rule of faith. In close cooperation with his colleagues of the bibliological department, he has to study what God has revealed in His Word about a particular aspect of His truth. For this cooperation with the professor of Old Testament and the professor of New Testament I think especially of *Historia Revelationis*, the discipline that deals with the history of revelation. Dogmatics has to be fed by Scripture, and because in Dogmatics we are aiming at the *system* of truth, we are especially interested in what the study of the Scriptures yields in a comprehensive manner. We are interested in a survey of God's revelation in Old and New Testament, e.g. of His revelation about creation, or His revelation about sin, or about reconciliation and atonement.

If I think about the future of Reformed Dogmatics, after Hodge, Warfield, Kuypers, Bavinck and Schilder, I hope that in this direction, of close cooperation between Bibliology and Dogmatology, new development might be found.

Furthermore, it is the task of the dogmatician to show the connections between the truths of Scripture and therefore also to expose the relations between the various elements of the dogmas of the church.

In this twentieth century we are possibly more modest than certain predecessors of the nineteenth century. We

are more aware of the fact that it will be impossible to build a dogmatic system as a completely finished theoretic structure. Paul's expression of amazement weighs heavily on our consciousness, "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways!" (Rom. 11:33).

On the other hand, this modesty may not entice us to laziness or disorder in thinking. Dogmatics seeks to combine the dogmas into a systematic whole. It wants to discover the connecting links between the separate dogmas. Dogmatics wants to expose for instance the connection between the doctrine about sin as guilt and as pollution, the doctrine about Christ's righteousness and holiness and the doctrine about our justification and sanctification. Especially when we deal with the truth of the Word of God, we have to think in an orderly manner. We may not be confused in our thinking and we may not confuse others either.

The apostle Paul prayed for the congregations that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding (Col. 1:9), that they might have all the riches of assured understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (2:2, 3). In order to become a good instrument for the Holy Spirit in His answering this prayer, a minister has to study the doctrine of Holy Scripture and the dogmas of the church. How else would we obtain power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge (Eph. 3:18, 19)?

The task of a dogmatician is to show something of this breadth and length and height and depth of the truth of God in Christ Jesus. Because this can only be done in the communion of saints as Paul indicates, also in communion with the saints of the past, a dogmatician has to study the *history of dogma*.

Here the dogmatician reaches the hand to the man of the ecclesiological department. Study of Church History and study of the history of dogma are closely related. When in Dogmatics we deal e.g. with the doctrine of the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ - God and man in one Person - we need to study the history of the Christological dogma, and this history is interwoven with the history of the church of Christ in the fourth and fifth centuries.

This relationship between the study of Dogmatics and the study of Church History is to be seen also in another respect. A following task of the dogmatician is namely the defense of the doctrine of Scripture as expressed in the dogma of the church. He has to demonstrate and to defend the doctrine of truth over against heresies and deviations. Now it is precisely in the struggle against heresies that the dogmas of the church have come about time and again. A thorough knowledge of the history of dogma therefore will open the eyes to deviations from the truth in the present time that are similar to heresies in the past.

Although we stress that Dogmatics finds its starting-point in the dogmas of the church and is related to the study of Church History, we do not forget that Holy Scripture is the only rule of faith. Therefore, we have to go back from the dogmas of the church to the revelation of God, and the demonstrative task of the dogmatician is to prove the doctrine of the church to be in agreement with Holy Writ. Scripture proof will occupy an important place in Reformed Dogmatics.

The Word of God is also the norm for the critical task of Dogmatics. We have to try to develop the dogmas of the church and to improve them where improvement may be necessary. We touch that which Dr. K. Schilder called the sympathetic-critical character of Reformed Dogmatics; sympathetic with regard to the confessions of the church, and critical because Holy Scripture is, and remains, the only rule of faith. Councils, decrees or statutes are not of equal value with the truth of God, since the truth is above all (cf. Art. 7, Belgic Confession).

What now is the significance of this study of Dogmatics for the training for the ministry? The answer is already implied in the foregoing remarks. A minister has to learn to think in an orderly manner, and to present the truth of God's Word, the doctrine of the gospel, in an orderly manner. He is to handle rightly the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15) and to declare to his hearers the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). He is to teach what befits sound doctrine (Tit. 2:1), to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it (Tit. 1:9). But he is not able to do so if he does not have a thorough knowledge of this sound doctrine of Scripture and if he does not know how this doctrine has been contradicted in the history of the church of Christ and has been defended by the bride of Christ in her creeds and confessions.

If the doctrinal truths of Scripture and the dogmas of the Reformed churches, their relations and connections with each other, do not form the background, the skeleton, the structure of preaching and teaching, the ministry of the Word will deteriorate. Sermons will become nothing but religious candysticks; they will be far removed from that solid food prescribed to the church of all ages by the Holy Spirit in His letter to the Hebrews.

And what will a minister do in Catechism class if he himself is not nourished by the words of the faith and of the good doctrine (1 Tim. 4:6)? Catechism instruction will deteriorate into discussions about what some young people think important because it is the latest fad, while they do not yet know the truth of God's Word, committed to and confessed by the catholic church, the church of all ages.

## 6. ETHICS

In the meantime we do not forget that teaching in the Scriptural sense of the word has also an ethical aspect. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom," Paul exhorts the Colossians (3:16). "Teach and urge these duties," he writes to Timothy and he states as the purpose of admonition "that the name of God and the teaching may not be defamed" (1 Tim. 6:1, 2). So in Scripture, teaching is also ethical in character. It deals with Christian conduct or way of life.

In the same manner the dogmas of the church are ethical as well as doctrinal in nature. Think of the last and largest part of the Heidelberg Catechism; the Lord's Days 32 - 52 deal with the law of God and with the Lord's prayer. It is only for practical reasons that we distinguish between Dogmatics and Ethics. Dogmatics speaks about the teaching of Scripture concerning that which we are to *believe*; Ethics deals with the teaching of Scripture concerning that which we are to *do*.

It is the task of Ethics to expose in a systematic manner the revealed will of God to which man is to conform himself. In the centre of attention is the law of God, especially the Ten Words of the Covenant, and that

which the church has confessed as the contents of God's law.

Cooperation with the exegetes of Old and New Testament is necessary also in this part of Dogmatology. Again the history of revelation is important in order to understand correctly the contents of the obligation of man's will to the will of God (cf. Art. 25 Belgic Confession).

What now is the significance of this study of Ethics for the training for the ministry?

Well, in preaching and teaching the minister of God's Word has to admonish and exhort. He has to deliver what the apostle Peter calls the holy commandment (2 Pet. 2:21). He has to teach the congregation knowledge and discernment, so that they may approve what is excellent and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ (Phil. 1:10). Children of God may not be conformed to this world, but are to be transformed by the renewal of their mind, that they may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect (Rom. 12:2).

Reformed Ethics cannot simply repeat the wisdom of handbooks of previous centuries. Today we are placed before such matters as abortion, nuclear weapons, birth control, unionism, mercy killing, and so on. Christians must take important new ethical decisions time and again. Therefore we have to study the Ten Words of God's covenant in the context of the whole Mosaic law and of the history of revelation. We have to study the impact of the development of technology, organization and natural science on modern society in order to give knowledgeable answers to modern problems.

One may understand the significance of this study of Reformed Ethics for ministers-to-be. They are to preach the will of God in this twentieth century, to give guidance, to admonish and to reprove. We think of what is called pastoral counseling. Here Dogmatology reaches the hand to Diaconology - the disciplines that circle around the offices in Christ's church - and even then we are aware of the tremendous task and of our own weaknesses and shortcomings.

## 7. MODERN THEOLOGY

We have yet to mention two disciplines which Synod Orangeville 1968 indicated as the task of what it called the Professor of Systematic Theology. It is Modern Theology and Philosophy.

Modern Theology can be classified under what Kuyper called Statistics of Dogma. The task of this discipline is to explain the state of affairs in the development of dogma in the present time. It is the attempt to orientate oneself with regard to the various and diverse movements in contemporary theology.

I mention some names to give you an impression. In this course Modern Theology we deal with Karl Barth, Emil Brunner and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, with Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr, with Teilhard de Chardin, Jurgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg, with Berkouwer and Kuitert, with Van Til and Schilder.

It is evident that a Reformed theological student has to learn to discern the spirits, also and especially the spirits of his own time. "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 Jhn. 4:1). Study of Modern Theology is necessary for a clear photographic picture of the phenomena in Dogmatology of our own days in order to distinguish between that which Reformed

theologians have to promote and develop, and that which they have to combat and ward off.

Shepherds are to use the rod and the staff in guiding and safeguarding the flock of Christ Jesus.

## 8. PHILOSOPHY

With a view to this calling of pastors and teachers we also study some Philosophy. Philosophy is an independent science. When in Dogmatology we, nevertheless, take up some study of philosophy, it is because of the influence philosophy has exercised upon theology in the past and still exercises in the present.

Augustine cannot be understood without some knowledge of Neo-Platonism; Thomas Aquinas was influenced by Aristotle; modern theologians follow the pattern of thinking set by Kierkegaard, Marx, Heidegger or Wittgenstein. We could easily multiply these examples.

Now in order to become competent at least to notice this impact of certain philosophies on theology, we offer a course *Introduction to Philosophy*. Because we study philosophy only as an auxiliary science, we restrict ourselves to a discussion of the philosophy of cosmomic idea and of the history of modern philosophy.

## 9. CONCLUSION

We come to a conclusion of this survey of the dogmatological disciplines, mentioned in the curriculum of our Theological College at Hamilton.

We still do not agree with Dr. Kuyper's characterization of Dogmatology as the proper sanctuary of Theology, but we are confirmed in our conviction that it rightly possesses its own living quarters. Dogmatology is important for the training for the ministry.

When in Ephesians 4 the apostle Paul portrays the gifts of the ascended Christ, he mentions also ministers of the Word of God. He calls them pastors and teachers, given for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness, in deceitful wiles (Eph. 4:11-14). There you have the significance of the study of the truth of God's Word, negatively over against false doctrine and also positively for the growth of the congregation of Christ into maturity.

When in our days our Canadian nation is considering a revised version of "O Canada" which will become Canada's national anthem, the most familiar and most repeated line is in discussion: O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

Let Canadian Reformed people not forget that in his first letter to Timothy the apostle Paul describes the church of the living God as the pillar and bulwark of the truth (3:15). He concludes this same letter with the personal, urgent exhortation, "O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you . . ." The sound doctrine is like a fixed deposit, like a treasure deposited for safe keeping. There are bankrobbers though, and therefore Paul admonishes, "Avoid the godless chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge . . ." (6:20).

Dogmatology makes you sing: O Gospel Truth, we stand on guard for thee.

J. FABER





*First row:* Rev. D. VanderBoom - Rev. M. VanBeveren, Clerk II - Rev. M.C. Werkman, Assessor - Rev. J. Mulder, Chairman  
 Rev. G. VanRongen, Clerk I - Rev. S.S. Cnossen (representing the Netherlands sister-churches)  
*Second row:* Elder J. DeVos - Elder W. Visscher - Elder H. VanVeen - Rev. J. Geertsema - Elder R.J. Oosterhoff  
 Elder D. Teitsma - Elder E. Wierenga - Rev. P. Kingma  
*Third row:* Elder J. VanLaar - Rev. G. VanDooren - Rev. M. VanderWel - Elder G. Gritter

# General Synod, Toronto, 1974

## SERVICE OF WORSHIP AND PRAYER

*On Monday night, November 4, delegates to the General Synod and members of the churches in the vicinity of Toronto joined in a service of worship and prayer. The service was conducted by the chairman of the previous Synod, the Rev. G. VanDooren.*

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14; Colossians 1:11-20  
 Text: Colossians 3:15-17

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ:

Tonight is supposed to be a prayer meeting. A prayer meeting for the work of the Synod which is going to open tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

I assume that you agree with me that you cannot separate the General Synod from the Churches that send the delegates; therefore it is also, and it should be, a prayer meeting for the Churches. Anyway, this being a prayer meeting, we keep in mind what we confess in our Catechism Lord's Day 45 that for a prayer three things are necessary, at least. In the first place you have to know the right address. We go to our heavenly Father who adopted us in sovereign grace. In the second place we stress that we have to know right thoroughly our need and misery

before we can pray. And finally, we pray not as hopeless people, but as those who put their hands upon the Lamb of God and appeal to Jesus Christ who is our righteousness, our holiness and our everything.

And thus we have, at the very start, arrived at the central doctrine of the Church of all ages. The central doctrine which was rediscovered by the great Reformation and that must be repeated every Sunday, lest we forget.

And what is that central doctrine? It is that Jesus Christ is the passe-partout over all our sins and miseries. And that is the mystery of the Church at the same time.

The Church is a mystery. You can sing about the Church; we did already. You sing with Psalm 137: I exalt her above the highest of my joys. You can sing about her with the words of Psalm 48: Go round about her and see her beauty. The Church is the most beautiful thing in all time, in all the world. But certainly *not* because the people in the Church are such nice people! Because - what is the Church at the same time? The Church is the sum-total of those who confess in Lord's Day 44 that even the holiest among them has only a small beginning of obedience. The Church is the sum-total of people who celebrate the Lord's Supper because they confess that they lie in the midst of death.



And these considerations led us, in the choice of our text, to the twin-sisters of the letters of the Ephesians and to the Colossians, written by Paul from prison in Rome. Two special letters. What is so special about them? I think that the late Dr. Greijdanus found what it was when he wrote his Introduction to Ephesians (and the same goes for Colossians because they were written in the same days and are parallel in many respects). He expressed his amazement that the addressees of these two letters must have been people who were highly developed in their knowledge of Christian doctrine. If you read a piece like Ephesians 1, as we did, and if you read Colossians 1 and if you see how Paul expresses himself and uses the whole dictionary, and even makes some new words, and in very complicated sentences describes the greatness of God's redemption in Jesus Christ who is preeminent above everything, then Paul must have been sure that those who received these letters could understand what he wrote. They were Christians in the highest grade, adults in Christian doctrine. And then (and that is the reason for the amazement which prof. Greijdanus expressed), at the same time in these two letters you find Paul, in the second part, busy with the ABC of Christian LIFE. In the highest grade in the knowledge of Christian doctrine, and maybe in the kindergarten of Christian love. And he has to spell out to both the Ephesians and Colossians, word by word like you teach little children: What did you do now with this knowledge? What did you put off, what did you put on? As far as that is concerned, I suggest that these two letters have been written also to the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Now, this should not make you downhearted, should not make you downcast right away, because we are now just approaching the mystery of the Gospel. If you agree with the words from the Form for the celebration of the Lord's Supper and the answer to the question why we go to the Lord's Supper, then you confess that we are nothing in ourselves, but that we come because we seek our salvation OUTSIDE ourselves, in Jesus Christ. That is why we confess that, as far as we are concerned, we lie in the midst of death. If you agree with that, that we seek our salvation outside ourselves, and that that is the whole Gospel, and that all that is what the Church is all about; and that you as an individual and the Church as a community, till your last breath and till the last day have to seek your salvation outside yourself in Him in Whom dwells all the fulness of God's love and mercy, then certainly it does *not* make you downhearted when we start with reminding ourselves that we are nothing in ourselves. Then Paul reduces the second part of both letters and summarizes it in one formula: Put off, put on. Put off the old nature, put on the new nature. You can even say it in one word, as in Romans, and then you hear it: *Put on Christ*. There you have it: Put on Christ.

However miserable sinners we are, put on Christ! Therefore the Church is not a gathering where people weep and cry all the time - although you may do it now and then when you think about your sins - but it is place that resounds with Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs. And this is the gospel that I may preach to you as an introduction to our prayer for the General Synod and for the Churches in general.

**PUT ON CHRIST, AND THE CHURCH WILL RESOUND WITH SONGS OF THANKSGIVING**

This putting on is explained in three ways include:

- I. Let the peace of Christ referee among you;
- II. Let the Word of Christ dwell among you;
- III. Let the Name of Christ dominate you in every respect.

**I**

Let the peace of Christ referee among you. I realize, beloved, that this service is not a prayer meeting according to Article 66 of the Church Order. There is such an Article. You know that when there is some special affliction which is felt through all the Churches, a day of fasting and prayer can be called. I realize that this prayer meeting is not in the first place meant to be that. And yet, will this Synod that starts tomorrow and will meet for some time, will this Synod forget Jerusalem and will we be able to forget Jerusalem? Can we keep silent tonight about the need of the Church to put off and to put on? And this is: to put on Christ. What then is our need and misery? I do not have to speak about that ugly heresy that threatened the Church at Colossae and that Paul describes in the second chapter. That sectarianism that is so attractive because it comes with a lot of do's and don'ts and if you only follow the list you are fine and dandy; a sectarianism that sounds so pious and so spiritual, but finds its centre in the Christian and not in Christ and therefore is called by Paul nothing else but an indulgence in the flesh. Do I have to speak about that in detail? Do I have to speak about the danger of an attitude in which we lose the true ecumenicity of the Church of Jesus Christ and of Christ Himself? Do I have to speak about the lack or the loss of the first love that many of us remember? You are not a stranger in Jerusalem. I know that many appeals are waiting downstairs; it looks like a mountain. But we know for sure that if anyone says, and thinks, that knowing the pure doctrine alone makes for a God-pleasing Church, then he gives the lie to those twin-sisters, the epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians, and to Jesus Christ Himself. Because Paul says: Let the peace of Christ referee among you. "Let!" We have to do something in this respect, and we must realize that we can also do the opposite.

Now let us first get rid of some misunderstandings as far as the meaning of the expression "the peace of Christ" is concerned. It does not mean that you have peace with God through Jesus Christ. Yes, that is wonderful! That is the heart of your life. But that is not what Paul means here. Nor does he mean that when you have the result of the justification by faith only, that you have a peaceful feeling in your heart, which nobody can take away. It means, simply, (as directed to the Church as a whole) the peaceful relationship between the members of the one-and-the-same Church of Christ. That becomes clear from the previous verses: We should put on... etc. But also from the second part of vs. 15 where Paul writes: "to which you were called in one body". The peace of Christ is the peace between the members of the Church.

Now, this peace is not in us. You have been immigrants, you come from different backgrounds with differences of opinions and hobbies, also in theological matters. Many men, many minds. That peace is not in us, it is the peace of CHRIST. That means: peace is in Him as Head of the Body. He has made peace. That peace is in heaven. Because everything we have is in heaven. We are told, sometimes, that the real thing is here. No! The real thing is where Christ is. There is our justification, our holiness, also our peace. It is outside ourselves, in HIM.

But let that peace, which He established, be the



referee between us. We are in Him. That is the only possibility. The word "rule" means referee, be umpire, arbitrate among you. Does not the Bible say then: In your hearts? Yes, but among you it must start in your hearts. If your hearts are unwilling to listen, and if the hearts of those who wrote appeals, or of the sixteen members of Synod are unwilling to listen, then it stands to reason that you do not let Christ referee among you. But then you should also know - you know how it goes with a referee - that if we do not let that peace of Christ referee in our hearts and in our actions, the referee has the last word. And if you do not listen, off you go, to the penalty-box, and all that you write goes into the waste-paper basket.

And then Paul throws in: And be thankful. That is not a stop-gap. He uses it three times. Why does he write that here? This is the gospel again! Be thankful! I would like to use it at the beginning of Synod, in any conflict between brothers of one house and at the end. In whatever disagreement, in whatever is disturbing, let us begin with being thankful. Because the Church of Jesus Christ is the only community in the world where conflicts can be solved. It sometimes looks as if the Church is the place where you find all the fighting; and yet, because it is the body of Jesus Christ and the peace is in Him, outside ourselves, let's be thankful before we start and let us hope and pray that we can also use it afterwards - after conflicts have been solved, after decisions have been taken - that then the Church may resound with Psalms and Hymns and spiritual Songs. May there be lots of reasons to sing when the Acts of Synod are published. And thus, by throwing in these words Paul leads us into a worship service of the early Church because he continues and says: Let the Word of Christ dwell richly among you.

## II

Paul leads us and whispers in our ears: Look and listen! Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. This is certainly a prayer which is fitting for tonight. I am not going to give you an outline of the whole agenda that the convening Church has put together, I would need the whole alphabet, and even then maybe, another. All these items can be reduced to two groups. The one group in which the Word of God is directly dealt with, e.g. matters with regard to the training for the ministry, the College, the Version of the Bible, translation of the Catechism, and the instruction of the youth of the Church. The Word of Christ is directly involved in these matters. And then the other items, in which it is involved indirectly, in this sense that there are all kinds of things to be discussed and resolved, decisions to be taken and appeals to be dealt with. That has to be done according to the Word of God. If there is one prayer necessary for the Church it is this prayer, that the Word of Christ may dwell in you richly.

But, you say: You are talking about a Synod. We see nothing of such a Synod in the text. Paul leads us into the early worship! What a difference with the kind of worship we know. All so official, so stiff and so starchy! We all walk along the beaten tracks. No one ever, in our Church, interrupts the minister with a Hallelujah or an Amen. We hide our feelings and emotions. Let's roll back this stiff business to that spontaneous Church life we find here in vs. 16. A Church where everyone can take the floor, where we do not have a one-man business and where everyone listens respectfully (whether he actually does is another matter). Let's have a service where someone can stand up and speak a word of admonition. That's what the Bible

says! As you teach and admonish each other and sing together. Obviously it happened in the early Church that someone walked in and said: I have a song. May I sing it? Let us sing it together.

Shall we go back?

Who is talking? Who says: Let's roll back - to what he then understands from vs. 16?

Can you no longer sing Psalm 48, or 122, or 46? And sing about the Church? And if you sit in Church and listen and then realize that Christ has given pastors and teachers. Do I have to tell you that it is not a one-man business? Do you think that the minister is doing the job? If that is your attitude then you had better go home and ask for forgiveness and repentance, because you are sinning every Sunday. Do you not know the pastoral Epistles: Timothy and Titus? Do you not know that Paul had to write a letter to the Church at Corinth, where everything went so spontaneously that it threatened to become a mess? And that he wrote a letter to bring some order, because everything in the House of God ought to go in good order? Did he not speak later about elders to be appointed, about pastors and teachers, angels of the Church, messengers of Jesus Christ?

What does Paul say? Let the Word of Christ dwell richly among you. Do not understand "the Word of Christ" as the Bible, period! This is the only time where the Bible, God's Word, speaks about the *Word of Christ*. It must be something special. Commentators point to the fact that Paul reminds us of the words of Christ Himself. Paul shows that he knows the teaching of Christ, and Christ in His turn summarizes the Law and the Prophets: Love the Lord your God above all, and your neighbour as yourself. It also means: The Word of Christ that has HIM as the contents. Jesus Christ is the centre of every page of the Bible. The Word of Christ is Christ Himself as He is known among us, as He proclaims his Word, and as He sends his Holy Spirit to make his Word effective.

This way of speaking forbids us to use the Bible as a dictionary or as an encyclopedia, so that we could make all sorts of decisions and afterwards try to find a few texts and affix them to our decision, which we ourselves make. The Word of Christ is Christ as He Himself is present in the proclamation of the gospel and in his Word that He gave us from beginning to the end.

Let this Word of Christ dwell among us richly. Not in passing, now in gluing a text here and finding another there, but let the Word *dwell*. Among you! As a congregation of Christ. Let it take up residence in your mind, in your discussions and decisions, so that whatever you do is done in the mind of Jesus Christ.

But not only ministers have to proclaim this Word of Christ. Not only a Synod has to take this Word as a guideline in every respect. The whole congregation happens to be anointed. Happens to be prophets, priests and kings. How is that among us, brothers and sisters? Are we admonishing, exhorting and building up each other? And in wisdom, as Paul says. Not in a conceited way, not in a stupid way, hurting each other. But wisely, with wisdom. Are we building up each other? Are we multiplying the Word we hear on Sunday? Are we multiplying it among us, so that the Church becomes filled with gratitude and happiness? Teaching and edifying each other? What does it all boil down to in this second admonition? Put on Christ! As simple as that. And then the Church will burst at the seams. Hearts will be overflowing with thankfulness. We

will sing Psalms and also Hymns and spiritual Songs. We are not going to know it better than Paul. And the Synod will know what it has to do: strike from or even improve that Book of Praise - that it can serve as an instrument that (and now I say it in Dutch) 's Heeren Huis van vreugde druiſe! That we shake the ground with the songs of deliverance. Then we will chase away the devil. He loves bickering, he loves conflicts, tugs-of-war, in which we try to get things done our way. But as soon as we sing together he does not know how fast to get away, because he cannot live in a Church which resounds with the songs of thankfulness.

III

And then Paul interrupts himself. He started to build up a list, he added several things. Then all of a sudden he says: And whatever you do! If you only get the message. Whatever you do in word and deed, do everything in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Paul is not going to give us a long list. He says: You do not have to know all the details; you find that out for yourselves. If you only get the message. All that you do, do it in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let the Name of Christ dominate you. In all that you do.

Here a third need is being laid bare in our Churches. Permit me to give you an example. The yearbook of our Churches shows that there is a gap between page 2 and 3. On page 2 beautiful things are being said about the marks of the true Church and the wonderful Confessions we have. How rich are we. On the other page are found the Statistics: close to 8,000 members. You know how much we grew in one year? Fifty-eight members. Less than 1%, less than the national average. That is close to a standstill. While the fields are white for harvest! The Church of Toronto cannot find a missionary. What is that? We are so rich. Can't we sell it? Is there a gap, is there a credibility gap? You say: We do a lot for preserving the Church and that is the most important thing. Look at the growing number of Canadian Reformed Schools we have. If you want to be thankful, I would be the first. I thank the Lord for all these blessings He has given us. That is not the point. But who would suggest that we divide up the prayer to "preserve" and "increase"?

You wonder why I am saying that. Because of what Paul says: And whatever you do in word and deed. If you could understand Greek you would be able to taste what he is saying. It is not addressed to individuals, but it is a congregational word, said to the Church as a whole. What you do must be creative, positive in word and deed. We must be living walkie-talkies; we must speak and walk and live in this world: How rich we are.

Now you see why Paul speaks here of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who has dominion over all things, sitting in the throne of God, in whom we are more than conquerors, who dominates all life, also in Canada and the United States. "In the Name of Christ" does not mean that you do it at his command. It means that you are IN that Name, you are surrounded by it. That is the atmosphere you breathe in. That is the whole climate of the Name of the Lord. THAT is our riches.

He is the King, He is the conqueror. And the time will not be long - I hope - that He will come and with one breath will destroy all his enemies. Now being soldiers of such a King, whatever you as Church, as Church members, do in word and deed, do it within the Lordly Name of Jesus Christ. That is within his Royal Glory!

And He received you from the Father who raised Him from the dead and received Him in His throne: You are royal children, sinners!

And that is the message for us, for Synod. Synod has to preserve, to correct, to be faithful, but never to be negative. A Synod has to be positive. And although Synod is the lowest assembly, yet in all their work there should be the echo of the words of Moses: Tell the children of Israel to go forward.

Go forth in His service, be strong in His might,  
To conquer all evil and stand for the right.

Finally, whatever you do - I don't have to tell you everything, Paul says - do it with that name of the Lord Jesus among you; then you will bear much fruit. We are empty, He is full.

We put on Christ, and we bow our knees and thank the Father for this inexpressible gift. Beloved in the Lord, we are nothing, we have nothing, we can do nothing. The Church is a mystery. We have a Saviour, Christ. It is all outside ourselves in Jesus Christ.

If you live like that, you will suffer, from people. They will laugh at you; they will hate you. Do not worry. Put on Christ! It is all in Him. And that is all there is to it.

For a Synod, for a congregation, for a sinner.

Put on Christ!

Then you can sing, now and forever!

Psalms 123:1, 2



## Psalm 123

1. To thee, O LORD who dwell- est in the height, My  
eyes look up for light. Lo, as the eyes of serv- ants,  
when neg- lec- ted, Are to their lord dir- ec- ted,  
And as a maid- en's glance for fa- vour lin- gers  
Up- on her mis- tress' fin- gers, Thus too our eyes  
look to our Mas- ter's face Till he pro- vide us grace.

2. O LORD, our God, grant us thy grace again,  
Grant us thy grace again,  
For, lo, our ears are full of man's derision  
At our estranged condition;  
Our soul is sated with the scorn and chiding  
Of those at ease abiding,  
And of the proud who in their vanity  
Regard us haughtily.



# Rev. S.S. Crossen Addresses Synod

*Representing the Netherlands sister churches, the Rev. S.S. Crossen addressed the General Synod of Toronto in the evening session of Thursday, November 7, 1974:*

Esteemed brethren, delegates to this synod, and advisers,

It gives me great pleasure to address you in the name of your sister churches, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

From the days your churches were organized and even before that time our churches have taken a keen interest in the weal and woe of the Reformed people who left the Old Country.

We were always sure that your Churches felt the same way with respect to ours.

However, up to this time the mutual feelings of sympathy and solidarity did not result in invitations to attend each others' General Synods by means of formal representation.

Our Committee for Correspondence with Churches Abroad instructed me to express its appreciation for the fact that you were the first to ask us to cross the Atlantic. This is where you have beaten us.

Our committee feels sorry that it could not send at least two delegates. We are aware of the fact that one man cannot very well speak for the churches he is supposed to stand for. I am willing to make available to your assembly all the information I have concerning our Churches and also with regard to the contacts we have with churches abroad, but even so I am confident that you have more to give than I can possibly provide you with.

One of the things we would like to learn from you is how you manage to finish your synodical agenda in a couple of weeks whereas our Synods meet for months. The reason for this dissimilarity is certainly not to be found in the number of entries on the respective agendas. It is most remarkable that many of the important matters that you have to deal with are also on the agenda of our synod, which will convene at Kampen in April 1975.

You will have to discuss and to decide upon proposals with regard to your Book of Praise. Our synod will take up the matters of a new rhymed version of the Psalms and of a possible enlargement of the number of Hymns.

You are going to discuss a new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism. We expect our synod to decide upon a reproduction in modern Dutch of both the other Forms of Unity.

The Church at Toronto asks for a decision on women's voting rights. Our synod will find on its agenda a report of a committee appointed by the synod of Hattem dealing with the very same matter.

You will have to take action upon a proposed revision of the Church Order. The synod of Kampen is supposed to deal with a similar recommendation.

With us most of these matters have been on the agendas of many a synod in the past. Decisions were delayed not so much by the proverbial verbosity of the Dutch as by the sad internal struggle of the sixties for the

soundness of doctrine and respect for the rules for church government which the churches have agreed upon.

Almost all the energy we were able to muster was used up in this conflict of great importance for the survival of a truly Reformed Church. So many issues had to wait for final settlement.

Stunned as we were by the pain caused by a loss of nearly a quarter of our membership, no time was left for licking the sores.

Much had to be done that had been left undone. And many of those men who undoubtedly had great qualities, were no longer available. We thank God that He prospered the way of our churches.

Even in the midst of the strife they remained aware that they had to carry on the work that had been started in the more quiet years of the fifties.

Particularly two circumstances favourably influenced the course of events.

First of all: we had regained the solid basis on which to stand. The confessional Creeds and scriptural principles of Reformed church government are no longer subjected to doubt and uncertainty.

And next: we experience among our people a new willingness to cope with the exceptionally great challenge of this era, marked by new forms of revolutionary thought and movements. Particularly encouraging is the eagerness of young people to take their share of the burden.

It is a matter of rejoicing that many of them further the cause of the Gospel in summertime on campings and other holiday-resorts.

Those who study at universities are well aware of their calling toward Church and society. The time that the churches lost quite a number of this last category belongs to the past.

Much of this spiritual recovery is due to the present situation at the seminary of the churches. Its professors are hard-working men. Whilst in the mid-sixties the number of those enrolled at the seminary never was above 25, now this number has passed the 100-mark. With few exceptions they all want to serve in the ministry. The willingness to serve in missionary work is on the increase.

Another reason for gratefulness is the growth of the churches as far as their membership is concerned. This growth is mostly due to the fact that our birth-rate is not diminishing. At the same time in our country many classrooms become empty, we have to build additional classrooms and even schools. Whilst there is more and more unemployment among teachers, we still have a shortage in this respect, though both in Groningen and Amersfoort more than 100 young men and women are being trained for the teaching of our children.

However, though the blessings of the Lord are numerous, we are kept aware that these blessings are unmerited.

New dangers are threatening and we have to admit that in our midst some have begun to waver under the attacks of Satan. One of the most serious threats stems from the prosperity of the country. Despite a disheartening inflation, the purchasing-power is still great and the public loves to buy. Because of the inflation there is no attraction in the saving of money.

Of course, it is true that because of the existing prosperity much can be done that otherwise would be either impossible to do or only with great difficulty. For the benefit of church life and work, missions, schools and Christian charity close to 20 million guilders were made



available by some 22,000 families, but even so, most of these families don't have to deny themselves any of the things which make life comfortable.

Frugality and simplicity have been replaced by the lust for moneymaking and spending. Materialism has become a sin of many a Christian no less than of non-Christians.

Though the attendance at catechism classes is, generally speaking, good, many of our young people think that they have no time left for the traditional young people's societies because they are drifting from one amusement to another. The television-set absorbs the free hours of many of the older generation. In the ministry of the Word ample attention is given to these symptoms of degeneration of a truly Christian walk of life. Nevertheless home visiting reveals, apart from numberless indications of rejoicing in the Lord and willingness to abide by His commandments, signs that the admonitions in many a family fail to accomplish a change of hearts and lives.

So the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands on the one hand may see, in humble acknowledgement of God's unmerited grace, how they have been led and preserved to abide by the confession of the eternal truth of the Word of our Lord. They still acclaim this divine Testimony to be perfect, restoring the soul, making the simple wise and enlightening the eyes of the blind, a power of God unto salvation of every one that believes. On the other hand they stand in need of the constant prayer: O our God, hide thy face from our sins and blot out all our iniquities; create in us a clean heart and renew within us a right spirit.

Dearly beloved brethren, fellow-ministers and elders, I am sure it was the right thing to tell you about our circumstances, about blessings and about the shadows of sin. We certainly need one another. Correspondence must be a live thing, not just something formal.

We hope that this synod may become a blessing for your churches as well as for ours.

Do your work diligently, but use your strength wisely.

Take your responsibilities seriously, but remember God rules over all.

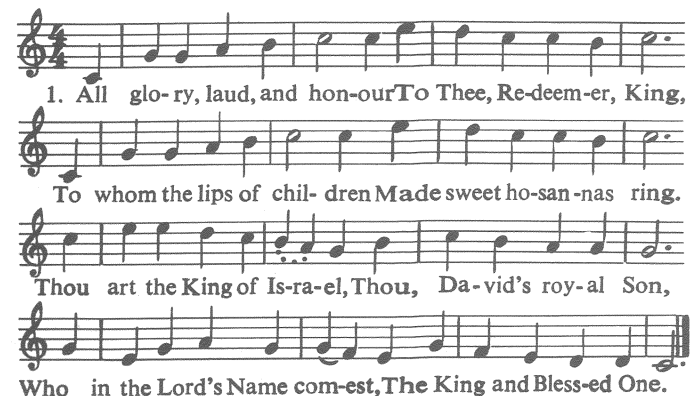
Be men of conviction, but don't forget to love one another.

May the Lord bless you. May He endow you with wisdom and understanding, with consecration and courage, as you undertake the work before you.

Be good servants of Christ, the King of the Church for ever and ever.

S.S. CROSSEN

## Hymn 60



1. All glo-ry, laud, and hon-our To Thee, Re-deem-er, King,  
To whom the lips of chil- dren Made sweet ho-san-nas ring.  
Thou art the King of Is-ra-el, Thou, Da-vid's roy-al Son,  
Who in the Lord's Name com-est, The King and Bless-ed One.

# Rev. van Dooren Replies

At the request of Synod, the Rev. G. Van Dooren replied, addressing the Rev. S.S. Crossen as follows:

Esteemed Reverend Crossen,

I consider it a great honour, now that we have for the first time in the life of our Churches an official representative of sister churches abroad in our midst, to address you at the request of the moderamen and on behalf of Synod; and in you the Committee and Churches you represent.

It is an additional pleasure for us that you are not a stranger, and that undoubtedly, during your stay here, the years of your ministry among us will come back to you strongly.

Although the Mother of us all, Jerusalem, is above, and not in the Netherlands, not even in my birthplace Kampen, then called the Dutch Jerusalem, and although we as Canadian (American) Reformed Churches are in a modest way proud of and careful with our independence as a federation of Churches, independent from any headquarters except the one in heaven, - yet the strong bond of unity which we feel and experience with your churches, seems sometimes to adopt the form of a mother/daughter relationship, for the simple reason that our roots are in the Netherlands, not only historically but also ecclesiastically.

It may sound paradoxical, but that relationship is, the way I feel it, even becoming stronger in recent times.

"Paradoxical", because the first years of our lives here were like those of "Displaced Persons", a Dutch colony, speaking, thinking, and acting Dutch. In our first Synod we chose as "our" School for the training of future ministers "Kampen"! Could it be stronger?

This has changed by now. We speak English, or try it; we have become Canadian [and American] Churches. We have our own life here, our own struggles and challenges which - it can not be denied - fashion and mould the outlook of our Churchlife. Canadian demands and Canadian dangers exercise their influence in our reaction to them, and thus we may feel ourselves becoming somewhat estranged from the life of the sisters in the Netherlands. Think only of a younger generation born and grown up in this, their, country.

Yet, precisely among that younger generation a growing interest in the Dutch language and culture may be noticed. They are again proud to be able to speak Dutch, and a growing number wants to see the country where their parents were born.

Apart from this remarkable symptom, how could I say that the bond between your and our Churches seems to become stronger?

Maybe in this respect I speak only for myself but I feel that we need each other, anyway that we need you, more than we felt in previous years; we need your talents.

I think first (who can blame me?) of the benefits the understaffed department of Diaconology in our College can harvest from Kampen. Indeed, we hope that we no longer need to depend on Kampen for candidates for the ministry, now that we have our own College, borne on the wings of loving prayers and loving sacrifices of our membership.

But there is more. Your Churches are at the moment engaged in several endeavours for the upbuilding of the Church of Christ. I mention only: a revision of the Church Order, a new dress for the Heidelberg Catechism, a modernization of the Liturgical Forms. Aside from the fact of the difference in language which prevents us from simply copying your results, we do hope to benefit richly from your endeavours. In the important matter of an English Genevan Psalter you could not help us but we are ever so happy that our Psalm book has become a required textbook in your secondary schools. Thus you benefit a bit from our labours. As to the Hymn section, now that an expanded Hymn book will be submitted to your next Synod. I express the same hope as Dirk Jansz. Zwart recently expressed in our midst, that we may be of help to each other.

These are just a few things that may prove my point and that, to me, are of more importance than just official, formal, correspondence.

The strongest tie, however, still is the tens of thousands of letters which cross the ocean yearly in both directions.

Because of this busy and cordial two-way traffic, living proof of our close relationship, the dissensions, struggles and splits your Churches went through in recent years, were witnessed by us from a geographically far, but in fact very close distance. Relatives were involved. Ministers saw Churches which they had served in the past, and had learned to love, broken up or factually disappear from the Federation or Kerkverband.

I think we know a bit of the grief and bitterness caused by such a struggle because we went through similar crises regarding faithfulness to the Creeds and Church Order, though our crises were not of such large dimensions.

Consequently a multitude of prayers was sent to the throne of grace.

Our feelings were and are a mixture of gratitude and of grief.

Of grief because so many brothers and sisters with whom we were united in the Liberation days, did not see the light and chose a way which will, unless the LORD forbids, lead farther and farther away from the Reformed path. Grief also because the "peace of Christ as arbitrator" did not succeed in restoring the unity of the body.

Gratitude because, nevertheless, unity in Creedal and Church-political respect was chosen by your Churches above a unity which would have undermined the Churches more and more.

We did not, and could not, and ought not have opinions about the several local conflicts, but I am convinced that this Synod will leave no doubt as to what unity the Canadian Reformed Churches choose, and on what side of the fence we want to be and to live. We hope and pray that a similar conflict will be spared us, as much as we hope and pray that your Churches by their faithfulness in the bond of peace and love may win back those who chose to leave.

As a transition to my final remarks I may state that the Canadian Reformed Churches, from the very start and by the grace of God, have taken the blessings of the Liberation along when they settled in our new home country. They did this, not only in instituting Churches next and overagainst a former sister church (the Christian Reformed Church); not only in attempting to convince the Christian Reformed Church to annul their doctrinal statements on presumptive regeneration and common grace, which attempt were

blessed; not only in unceasingly insisting that this Church, which we love for the sake of the fathers, terminate their relationship with the synodical community in the Netherlands, thus further endangering their own churches, which attempt has failed till now, but especially, I may say, in retaining and maintaining the Liberated, i.e. the truly Reformed Church Polity pure and undefiled.

We have, in our major assemblies, consistently guarded ourselves against any infringement upon the independence and freedom of the local churches, and against any transgressing the limits set for major assemblies.

When your colleague-deputy, the Rev. P. VAN GURP, in *Random Het Woord*, August 1974, states that the Australian sister churches may even be more faithful to the Scriptures than the average congregation in the Netherlands, I make bold to say that the Canadian Reformed Churches are even more faithful to Reformed Church Polity than their Dutch sister Churches. Anyway in this respect: while our classes write and approve their own Acts before they pass away into the past - because we believe and practise that every next classis is a completely new one - the Dutch classes, in majority, still write so-called "minutes" which are then read and approved in the "next meeting of classis", as though a classis is a permanent body. If you wish, dear brother, you may take this hint home.

Similarly, our Synods have always scrupulously tried to guard themselves against any crossing of their stringent limitations, and refused to take decisions on matters which were not fully and properly prepared and ripe for decision. This has not always pleased everyone, and - maybe - given occasion to a wrong impression. It seemed so negative, while it was, to me, positive.

I mentioned the name and article of your colleague and alternate, the Rev. Van Gulp.

I would not be honest in a Christian way, nor brotherly, if I would refrain from a word of warning born from my reading of what he wrote in the above mentioned magazine about our Churches. I understand that he did not do this in an official capacity, but I believe it cannot be denied that he was asked to write this article which deals with Churches abroad, because he is member of the Committee for correspondence. If you had been unable to come here, he would have been here and I would have said exactly the same.

We are all for a good mutual understanding and treatment. That is why what he wrote about our churches has caused considerable consternation and indignation in many hearts.

Although starting with the statement that in recent years the Canadian Reformed Churches have strongly sympathized with their Dutch sisters, he then proceeds by driving a wedge between churchmembers and their 'leaders' (Voorgangers). Of those leaders he says that they tried hard to keep the Dutch struggle at a distance, and (and I stress the following words) tried to keep the Dutch conflict outside the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Then he constructs the history of the origin of *Shield and Sword*, stating that in the Netherlands a drive is held to support it financially. The reason? This magazine "had to protest" against the leadership given in *Clarion*.

That's all I want to say, leaving out many unpleasant things, the result of which will even be felt by this Synod.

I only state with regret that such public statements by a deputy for correspondence can only do harm to a mutual

relationship which does not exist between churches in the one country with some members of churches in another country, but between the two Federations or Kerkverbanden.

I mentioned before that the strongest tie is the mail crossing the ocean. Maybe I should have put it this way: in recent years we were happy to welcome unnumbered visitors, just church members, or office-bearers, ministers; we were even honoured with professorial visits. They all expressed in our hearing their gratitude for what they found here in our Church life and in the area of education, while at the same time they urged us to do exactly what Rev. Van Gorp seems to blame us for: "try to keep the Dutch conflict outside your borders."

But let me conclude with better things:

Brother in the Lord, I am convinced that the coming

years will increasingly prove how much we need each other, anyway that we need you. Instead of hurting each other (if we did, be it graciously forgiven), let us hope and pray for a close, Christian fellowship in which:

- the Peace of Christ may referee among us;
- the Word of Christ may dwell among us richly, in wisdom;
- the Name of Christ dominate us in all we do in word and deed.

And let's be thankful, admonishing each other with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

May your stay in our midst not only be a pleasant one for you (for us it is already) but more: may it contribute to such a fellowship in which we put off the old nature, put on the new nature and thus - such is the only glory of the Church - "Put On Christ!"

I thank you. G. VAN DOOREN

## Our Trip to the General Synod

*With the students of Grades VI, VII, and VIII we visited the General Synod in Toronto. The day after that visit we asked the students to write a report on that visit. From the twenty-three reports we received, we made up the report that follows below. From each report at least one sentence is taken. While reading this report, however, you must take a few things into consideration.*

*Synod had been dealing with the 'matter-Edmonton' for three days already. Our children heard the very last part of the discussion. It was very hard for them to understand what the problem was, because they did not hear any reports about the situation. In this report the students do not always quote the exact words of the delegates, but record what they think was said. Therefore names of ministers and elders are often left out by me. The following then is NOT a reliable report of what was discussed at Synod on November 19, 1974. The \* in front of a sentence indicates that a different student starts 'speaking'.*

*E. Gosker*

The big day finally came. \*On November 19, 1974, the students of grades 6, 7, and 8 from Timothy school in Hamilton went to see the General Synod in Toronto. \*Since our school does not have any buses, a few of our parents drove. After a long drive we arrived at Toronto Church at 11:00 o'clock.

\*When we came in there, we had to stand at the door. \*We heard Rev. Mulder talking. When he had finished, we went into the room and sat down in the chairs provided for us in the

back of the room. \*Everyone there was Canadian Reformed, except Rev. VanRongen, who was American Reformed.

\*Rev. Mulder, who was the Chairman, was not chairing because he wanted to get in the argument. So Rev. Werkman, being the assessor, took the chairman's seat. \*Rev. Mulder said he heard rumours that we were going to come and that he was glad we had come. \*When the group arrived, they had been talking about the consistory in Edmonton who was not urging the people to have a Canadian Reformed school, and the Synod wasn't sure if they should interfere with that incident or not.

\*Rev. A. was doing the most talking. \*Rev. A. was a convener and read a proposal. \*You could tell that Rev. A. made the report on the school situation in Edmonton, for he was always adding parts to his proposal. \*Rev. A. said that he disagreed with a consistory butting in the school, "It is nonsense!" Rev. B. said that the word 'nonsense' was too strong. Rev. A. said that he meant 'non - sense'; there was no sense in it. Then Rev. B. said, "I didn't hear the dash." \*Rev. A. was commenting on the great articles he had written about Home, Church and School several years ago. He was saying how good they were, and br. C. interrupted and said, "No commercials."

\*They had a vote to see who agreed and who disagreed. \*The first one was about the amendment that Rev. F. and G. made. \*This amendment stated that the Synod should tell the consistory to establish a school.

Rev. E. said that if this was passed, it would make the Synod a super-consistory and it would weaken the Synod's stand. \*Br. H. said they were paying 50 while they should be paying 25 dollars. Rev. Mulder asked if he could prove it. Br. H. couldn't. Rev. I. said the same thing about the fifty cents. He did prove it. \*The second time they voted about not interfering with the school situation in Edmonton. \*After a while they discussed what their next topic would be and when they would meet next, in the afternoon or at night.

\*After about an hour of listening to the votes, the arguments, and the opinions, we had lunch. \*Standing up felt good after sitting for an hour and a half. \*We took some chairs from the nursery and went to the lunchroom.

\*Rev. VanRongen prayed and read at lunch. \*While my class had sandwiches, the men of the Synod had steak, leek, and other delicious foods. \*It was quite a difference between our lunches and theirs. \*We of course had to eat our own lunch. \*I saw three boys bargaining with Br. Teitsma for his banana split, but they didn't get it. \*After lunch Rev. Van Rongen asked us to sing a psalm, so we sang Psalm 122.

\*After that Rev. VanRongen asked us what Rev. VanDooren's most famous words were. Someone answered, "Get Out!" and so we did. We went from there to the Royal Agricultural Fair. \*Dashing around at the Royal Ontario Winter fair was in complete contrast to the tranquillity of the Synod. \*But the visit was appreciated by the Synod. \*Don't you think that was a nice time we had at the Synod?

Grades VI, VII, VIII  
TIMOTHY SCHOOL, HAMILTON

# Synod Impressions <sup>2</sup>

The second week of Synod started in the same way as the first. Advisory reports were prepared with the result that on Monday night matters concerning an invitation by the Reformed Ecumenical Synod could be discussed. Similar invitations have reached different addresses; it also has happened that such an invitation went unanswered. After a brief discussion Synod decided not to send an observer to any future meeting of the RES, on the basis of a series of observations and considerations. There was some time left for a first round on a number of appeals. The discussion will be continued on Tuesday.

It is not easy to keep track of the "goings-on" and to give an orderly sequence of decisions. A matter comes before Synod, is discussed for some time and then is tabled again for different reasons. Anyway, since this is not (supposed to be) a report but tries to give our readers an impression of the proceedings of Synod, we will mention some more of the highlights.

Everyone must have heard about majority and minority reports. Acts of Synods have recorded such situations in the past. At this Synod there were three reports of an advisory committee or, as some members said, reports of three sections of one advisory committee. Synod even discussed a motion to declare one of them "inadmissible". This motion was defeated; Synod wanted to go to the heart of the whole matter. This matter was the issue of "Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika", more specifically the "two groups" which in official documents are designated as VGK (pr. Nauta) and VGK (pr. Dr. VanderWaal). Many hours have been spent, not only in the committee-room but also on the floor of Synod, to reach a responsible decision. This decision is: to continue the correspondence with the Federation of Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika; not to enter into correspondence with the Church at Pretoria (pr. Dr. C. VanderWaal) and to urge the VGK Pretoria to revoke their teachings concerning

marriage and divorce and to seek the unity with the Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika. After this decision was made, Dr. VanderWaal, who had been present during the discussion of the issue, took his leave for New York after shaking hands with all the members of Synod. Corresponding Churches on three continents have now come to the same conclusion. It should remain or become a matter of the prayers of these Churches that the brothers in South Africa may find each other under the blessing of the Lord.

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Matters concerning the College have not reached the floor of Synod yet. The committee is studying the extensive material which also includes a voluminous "Constitutive Document". However, something related to the training for the ministry came before Synod in a proposal to rescind a decision of a previous Synod to allow students, who are in their second year of Theological Studies, the privilege of "speaking and edifying word" in the Churches. With his permission I quote the reporter for *Nederlands Dagblad*\*: "Het kon ook niet eerder". Synod 1965 decided to institute the College, Synod 1968 got the "wagon moving", Synod 1971 regulated "preekconsent" and 1974 has to deal with objections. The objection was not against the "edifying words" but against the fact that it can be done in an official service of worship. The proposal was rejected. To quote the reporter of *Nederlands Dagblad* again: "Voor de eerste drie jaar is het stichtelijke studentenwoord weer veilig gesteld. Maar wie weet? Het is 1977 voor je er erg in hebt."

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From an edifying word to the solemnization of marriages is quite a jump. Synod made it in no time. Committee IV had prepared an advisory report and Synod tackled the issue with zeal and dash under the capable leadership of the chairman.

The proposal of the Church at Hamilton has served at a Classis, has been published in the press, and we assume that our readers know what the issue is. Synod did not accede to the request to rescind the decision of Synod Homewood 1954 to leave the use of Art. 70 C.O. to the discretion of the Churches. Why did Synod not accede to this request? Here are

(some of) the considerations and conclusions; for the official text we must refer to Press Release and Acts. Hamilton stated in its proposal that the freedom given by Synod 1954 resulted in a variety of practices, but did not prove it. The re-instating of Art. 70 would not solve the problems mentioned in the proposal, and it *did not appear* to be the intention of Hamilton to have weddings "in an official worship service". Apart from that, Homewood 1954 did not deny the importance of members of Christ's Church marrying "in the Lord", neither the obligation of office-bearers to see to it that members marry "in the Lord".

If this decision might give the impression that this proposal, as was remarked in the "wandelgangen", was shoved off the table I can say that that would be a wrong impression. For there was an additional decision which boils down to this that the Committee on the Revision of the C.O. will be instructed to include in their revision such a draft of Art. 70 that the main thrust of Hamilton's proposal is assimilated. My impression: Much time used for preparation and discussion, but very well spent!

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During the last days of the second week a decision was reached on two other matters. A proposal "to take note of a 'Message to All Churches of Jesus Christ throughout the World' from the General Assembly of the National Presbyterian Church", and to "take any and all decisions which the Lord Jesus Christ asks us to make in this respect". Synod declared that minor assemblies should supply Synod with sufficient information, on the basis of decisions of previous Synods in similar matters.

The Revision of the Church order was mentioned above. This agenda item came before Synod at the end of the week. The Committee on Revision submitted a draft revision of the first 28 articles with their report. For that reason it was to be expected that Synod did not make any far-reaching decisions. The committee was continued and received a detailed mandate which includes the instruction to consider the report of the committee *ad hoc* of the Dutch Sister Churches.

Sometimes it seems that the "ecclesiastical mills" indeed run slowly. When attending Synod it becomes



clear, however, that a mill cannot work properly under "flooding-condition", but works best with a regular water supply.

Assured of the prayers of the Churches for the guidance of the Word and the Spirit the members of Synod do their work regularly and seriously deal with the matters in plenary sessions.

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### THIRD WEEK

The first matter for which no committee was appointed by a previous Synod was the proposal by the Church at Toronto on the position of women in the Church. This proposal has previously been published in *Clarion*, as a proposal to Classis. Classis, however, had expressed as its opinion that this was a matter for the Churches in common and should be submitted to General Synod. In an amended form it was indeed submitted to this General Synod. One of the advisory committees studied it and came to Synod with the recommendation not to grant the request of Toronto, namely to decide not to give women the right to vote, but to appoint a Study-committee with the mandate to thoroughly study the Scriptures on active participation of women in the life of the congregation, including their taking part in the voting for office-bearers, and the question whether voting can or must be considered to be an act of governing. They also recommended to contact the Sister Churches in the Netherlands, since a report on "Vrouwenkiesrecht" prepared by Deputaten *ad hoc* was officially presented to Synod. The expectation seemed to be justified that Synod would at least adopt these recommendations. However, Synod was not prepared to do so. The ground for rejection was, among others, that not sufficient information and argumentation was submitted to reach such a decision. In view of the presence of a report in the Dutch language of 34 pages this ground raises several questions. Alas, history seems to repeat itself. A General Synod in the Netherlands made the same decision on the same grounds, more than 40 years ago! In the "wandelgangen" the remark was made: Back to the drawing board! or, as the "impressionist" for *Nederlands Dagblad* wrote: "Dus geen commissie die zich het hoofd kan breken over zulke ijle vraagstukken als: is stemmen

regeren?, is 'manslidmaten' gelijk aan 'de gemeente'? We lopen dus beslist achter bij Nederland. Een bewijs van Anglo-Saksische Victoriaanse invloeden?"

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The new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism was the next item for Monday night. It took quite some discussion and some additional information was provided after the first round of talks. The result was that the committee will be continued with the mandate to prepare a second draft, to solicit comments and to make this second draft available to the Churches within a limit of time. With these decisions Synod was shifted into "third gear"; one advisory report after the other reached the floor of Synod.

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On Tuesday matters related to the education of the children of the covenant were discussed by way of appeals. I could not free myself from the impression that instead of a good argumentation in dialogue during the two rounds (a restriction in all discussions at Synod) Synod had to subject itself to a series of monologues. This fact occasioned some members to leaf through their papers without (as it seemed) paying too much attention to what was said. The requests submitted to Synod were not granted. During the Tuesday plenary sessions the "gallery" was packed - during the morning hours with children from Timothy School in Hamilton. After lunch, which the children had in the "dining-room" of Synod, they sang a Psalm which they had learned during the previous week. During the evening we had, apart from many adult visitors, catechism classes of the Church at Toronto. The matter then under discussion was the Textbook for Catechetical Instruction. It could not be finalized and was tabled for a later date.

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On Wednesday Synod discussed and decided on two appeals and the matter of the Archives of Synod. The evening of that same day will be remembered as a memorable one. Rev. G. VanRongen, reporter of Committee I, rose to the occasion and read the first part of the advisory report: Synod decide to give the Committee on the Church Book the opportunity to officially present to this General Synod the Book of Praise. After this

decision was unanimously taken, Rev. G. VanDooren, who had been the convener of this committee for many years, delivered a speech which is here summarized as follows: After having expressed gratitude for the possibility and opportunity to present the Book of Praise, he recalled how the matter came before Synod 1954, Homewood, as a protest against the proposal to adopt the Psalter/Hymnal for use in the worship services. Some highlights in the work of composing were mentioned, and how from the "green booklet with the 34 Psalms" the Churches received a provisional Book of Praise, thereafter a Supplement and finally the complete Book. He also recalled the valuable contributions of the late prof. F. Kouwenhoven in his work of checking the Psalms with the Hebrew text, and other experiences with "poets" and linguistic advisers. He closed with the words: "We are fully aware that this edition is not perfect. A new generation will be able to improve it . . . but we believe that we have secured, for the generations to come, a Calvinistic, Genevan, Covenantal Book of Praise". Mr. M.M. DeGroot then presented the several editions to the chairman of Synod, who in addressing Synod and the Committee said: This moment is of considerable significance. This book is evidence of the wish to preserve the rich Calvinistic heritage. We accept it from your hands . . . and we pray that it may be used in Church, Home, and School as a scriptural tool to praise the Lord, as we find it expressed in Psalm 22:3. Synod then rose and sang, together with the visitors, Psalm 150.

Related matters were discussed the following days. Both Psalm- and Hymn-section were accepted with gratitude by Synod. The mandate for the committee, which will be continued, was established. It includes: improvement of the Hymn-section, evaluation of remarks made and which may be made on both Hymn- and Psalm-sections along the lines of several considerations and in accordance with the mandates given by the Synods of Edmonton (1965) and Orangeville (1968) on the Church Book. As a further mandate this Committee will also make necessary corrections in the Forms.

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Another important item of the agenda was the Revised Standard

Version. The discussion took Thursday night, Friday night and Saturday morning, and even then the matter was not ready for a decision. This has to wait till week #4. If Synod is going to be closed during that week it is almost forced to go into "overdrive", which has great disadvantages. Hurred decisions are seldom wise decisions or fruitful for the life of the Churches.

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#### FOURTH WEEK

On Monday, November 25, Synod started off with the *Correspondence with Churches Abroad*. Apart from the Report of the Committee *ad hoc* there were four overtures to be dealt with, overtures of which some requested Synod to "examine the Acts of Hoogeveen" again. From the report of the Committee it appeared, however, that they in a letter to the Synod of Hattem (April 3, 1972) had "gratefully acknowledged that also in the past it has pleased the Lord to keep our sister-Churches in the Netherlands faithful in maintaining the Reformed doctrine, liturgy, Church government and discipline". Synod therefore saw no need to discuss the Acts of Hoogeveen further. As a final result of the discussions it was decided to continue the Committee with the mandate to maintain correspondence with: De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika, and The Free Reformed Churches in Australia. It was also noted, with regret, that the Church in Monte Alegre, Brazil, had ceased to exist. The contact with the Presbyterian Church in Korea is continued, but Synod decided not to enter into correspondence as yet. An invitation will be sent to sister Churches to delegate representatives to the forthcoming General Synod, while representatives of the Canadian Reformed Churches will attend Synods of sister Churches, if invited and when desirable and feasible. The last three words caused some discussion, but Synod deemed these additional restrictions necessary.

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*Contact with the Christian Reformed Church* was the next item on the agenda. An Additional Report of the Committee on Contact with this Church was submitted to Synod in view of the fact that: 1. the Acts of Synod 1974 have been published recently, and 2. that this Synod has

taken significant and far-reaching decisions as far as Church-relations are concerned. To give our readers an idea of what has been going on I would like to quote something from these Acts. As for Church-relations, the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church observed (under observations 1, 2 and 3):

"1. The Synods of 1970 and 1971 mandated the Inter-Church Relations Committee to study our relationship to the (GKN) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Synodical) in the light of recent theological trends in our sister church.

"2. In its report to the Synod of 1973 the ICRC stated that it had 'come to question, with ever more serious reservations, whether the relationship "sister church" as defined by the Synod of 1944 should be applied to any church with which we are in correspondence . . . the full implication of being sister churches has not been accepted by the CRC since 1944 . . . for many years we have had an official position which in application we were not ready to accept fully nor to reject'.

"3. The Synod of 1973 mandated the ICRC to study the problem of sister relationship."

On the basis of these observations the Report of the ICRC recommended and Synod adopted these recommendations:

"1. In place of the existing 'sister church' and 'corresponding church' relationships in denominational inter-church relations, synod establishes one relationship to be designated 'Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship', on, among others, the ground that 'this relationship provides a realistic way of facing the complexities of contemporary inter-church relations'."

"7. With regard to the GKN Synod encourages its ICRC to pursue appropriate avenues of *increased contact* (emphasis mine)."

From the report and other communications it also appeared that the opinion was voiced that when the Christian Reformed Church would honour its rules for correspondence a break with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken would be unavoidable.

All these matters were brought to the attention of Synod. The following conclusion was reached: The position of the Christian Reformed Church in the matter of Church correspondence with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland has now been

clearly settled and finalized. It is evident that the Acts of Synod 1974 of the Christian Reformed Church show a decisive alteration of the rules, so that "a relationship" with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland is continued, while judgment on the faithfulness of these Churches is suspended. Therefore no fruitful discussion with a view to reaching union with the Christian Reformed Church may be expected.

Synod decided not to continue the Committee for Contact with the Christian Reformed Church but to appoint another committee to execute the decision of Synod to send another appeal to the Christian Reformed Community. (A first Appeal was sent in 1962.)

And so, a contact, started by the Canadian Reformed Churches, has now been terminated from both sides. The Christian Reformed Church did so earlier when it terminated its special committee for contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches. On the floor of Synod it was remarked that from the beginning we wanted more than say nice things to each other and nothing more, we wanted a marriage. But now more obstacles have been added which would make a marriage virtually impossible. The brothers who are called upon to write this Appeal will need the wisdom and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And also the prayers of their brothers and sisters. Many members within the Christian Reformed Church will understand this decision, others may scoff at it. But we should remember that union and even relationship is only possible and makes sense only on the basis of the Truth and in a faithful maintaining of the Reformed doctrines and church government.

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During this fourth week the secretary of the Board of Governors and the Senate of the College attended the sessions of Synod. Matters of the College needed the attention. The students followed the proceedings from the "gallery". You may say: Did Synod need so much time for the College and even the advice of the Senate? Let's keep in mind that Synod 1968 adopted a Constitution which, although not a provisional one, needed some "brushing up" and revision. Apart from this Constitutive Document a long list of recommendations was before Synod. They all

needed some discussion before they were adopted. Let me mention a few. The dedication of the late Rev. H.A. Stel, the work of Rev. W. Loopstra as the first President Governor, the work of the Boards of Governors and Trustees and also the very much appreciated work of the Ladies Auxiliary were gratefully acknowledged. The course of studies will be extended from three to four years, so that it is possible to secure a thorough knowledge of the languages of Holy Writ. The College will also receive an Associate Librarian in the Reverend A.B. Roukema and an Administrative Assistant, who still has to be found. The contribution for the College was increased to \$22.00 per communicant member. The way in which the Churches, more or less faithfully, honoured their obligations was also mentioned. We will not comment on it. There is no need to do that. The Treasurer has to work on a month to month basis. The Constitutive Documents were, after some minor changes, unanimously adopted. This then will be the new set of rules under which the Boards and the Staff are going to work in future years.

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In a previous impression I used the word "Overdrive". But even on the third day of the fourth week Synod was going strong at a cool pace. There was no hurrying at all and even on Friday there still were meetings of separate Advisory Committees. Some members were afraid that they would have to stay over into another week. After matters concerning the contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church had been before Synod and the Committee on that contact had been continued, with the mandate to await reactions to previously sent communications and to evaluate the replies, Synod met in closed session for quite some time. That means: some impressions but no publication on the matters which, as you will understand, were related to appeals. Since I as your reporter was present I may say that the matters were discussed in a dignified and brotherly way, and I hope and pray that the decisions may serve the up-building of the Churches.

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Then came the last item for discussion: A finalizing of the advisory report on the Revised Standard Version. A matter which has been under discussion for a long time. The talks

at Synod were conducted in an admirable way although sometime healthy "fireworks" were displayed. It would take too much space to go into details, but I can assure you that the Acts will provide informative and interesting material. Here is a summary of some of the decisions: Since the Committee on the RSV did not adduce valid reasons to state that the RSV is UNacceptable Synod decided to leave the use of this Version in the freedom of the Churches. Regarding the question whether other translations, such as the New International Version or the New American Standard Bible, should be looked into, Synod concluded not to mandate its committee to do so.

By the time these decisions were made Synod had far overstepped the regular closing time: 9:30 p.m. But the members of the several Committees still had to be appointed, which did not take too much time. Synod adopted (almost) all the recommendations of the moderamen. The Church at Coaldale was appointed convening Church for the next General Synod 1977.

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Then, a little after 12:00 midnight on Saturday morning the Chairman rose for his final address: Esteemed brothers. We have almost reached the end of Synod Toronto, 1974. Really the end. When the gavel comes down there is no Synod anymore, neither a chairman. The Church Order says: His office shall cease at the closing of the sessions. I am glad with that for more than one reason. Not because you have made it difficult. I am grateful that you have borne with me in my shortcomings, perhaps sometimes in injustices when I cut you short.

I express my thanks to my co-officers for their good cooperation. Above all I thank the Lord, our heavenly Father. We have prayed for His blessing, every day, and He has heard us. It is a tremendous blessing that the Lord allowed his Churches to fulfill their calling in this day and age. We could finish our agenda unhindered. He has enabled us to do our work and given us health, energy and the guidance of His Word and Spirit. In submission to that Word and the Confession, in brotherly love we could reach our decisions.

Our work is imperfect; may the Lord forgive our shortcomings and sanctify our work. Synod had many who assisted in this work. First the convening Church, Toronto, which

efficiently prepared Synod and made their beautiful church building available with the many facilities which were all used to the utmost. We are thankful to the hosts and hostesses who received us in their homes and had to keep up with us for a long time. I take this opportunity to express great appreciation to the brothers and sisters Huizing and Bouw-kamp (all four received a present from the members of Synod) and those who assisted them in serving Synod.

We remember the congregations and consistories who let us attend Synod; we render our thanks to them also.

I am not going to evaluate the work of Synod, that would be impossible, and apart from that, it is the task of the Churches. May they judge our work in love which binds together, letting the peace of Christ rule us. Christ, the Head of his Church brought us together. We have come to know and to appreciate each other; we have served Him together. May the Lord strengthen those who are appointed in Committees and who have to do any work for this Synod.

May the Lord keep us and lead us safely to our homes and grant us what is needed for our work at the places where He has called us. May His countenance be lifted up over us and His peace be granted to us all.

After the reading of 1 Peter 5:5-11 and the singing of Psalm 116:1, 7, 9, 10 the Assessor, the Reverend M.C. Werkman, led in prayer of thanksgiving.

The Seventh General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches had passed away when the gavel came down for the last time.

D. VANDERBOOM



## RALLY 1974

The rally of this past summer is now old news but we would like to let you know that we have sent a donation of \$400.00 to the Theological College in Hamilton. This donation has been made possible as a result of our cross Canada rally held from June 28 to July 2. Although it was not our intention we were able to realize a good profit (mainly due to the good turn-out, approximately 175 people). We felt this was the best cause to donate to since this will be of benefit to all Young People across Canada.

from the Canadian Reformed Young Men and Women Societies of Carman, Man.

# Press Release of the 7th General Synod

*Press Release of the 7th General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches, held at Toronto, Ontario, November 5th - 30th, 1974*

## Art. 1 *Opening.*

At 9:00 a.m., Nov. 5th, 1974, Rev. D. VanderBoom opened Synod on behalf of the convening church at Toronto. He requested the delegates to sing all four stanzas of Psalm 93, read Psalm 93 and led in prayer. He extended a cordial welcome to all the delegates and guests. He requested the delegates to rise while he spoke a few words in remembrance of the late Rev. H.A. Stel, who with great zeal has served the churches.

## Art. 2 *Credentials.*

The delegates Rev. M. Vanderwel, Rev. G. Vandooren and elder T. Van Laar were asked to check the credentials. They reported that all *primi* delegates were present. Delegates from the Regional Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Ontario are: *ministers*: Rev. P. Kingma, Rev. G. Vandooren, Rev. G. Van Rongen, Rev. M.C. Werkman; *elders*: G. Gritter, R.J. Oosterhoff, H. Van Veen, W. Visscher. Delegates from the Regional Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Western Canada are: *ministers*: Rev. J. Geertsema, Rev. J. Mulder, Rev. M. Van Beveren, Rev. M. VanderWel; *elders*: J. Devos, D. Teitsma, T. Van Laar, E. Wierenga.

## Art. 3 *Election of Officers.*

Rev. J. Mulder was elected as chairman, Rev. G. Van Rongen as first clerk, Rev. M. Van Beveren as second clerk and Rev. M.C. Werkman as assessor.

## Art. 4 *Constitution.*

Synod was constituted. The chairman, Rev. J. Mulder, expressed thanks for the confidence placed in the moderamen. He thanked the convening church for all the work done in preparing this Synod.

## Art. 5 *Advisory member.*

Rev. D. vanderBoom, minister of the convening church at Toronto, was invited to attend Synod as an advisory member.

## Art. 6 *Meeting Moderamen.*

Synod adjourned so that the officers were able to prepare a time schedule and make other arrangements.

## Art. 7 *Delegate of the sister churches in the Netherlands.*

After reopening, Synod cordially welcomed Rev. S.S. Cnossen of Spakenburg-N, the Netherlands, as the official representative of our sister churches in the Netherlands. He was invited to attend Synod as an advisory member. The chairman spoke a few words on this historical occasion that for the first time in the history of our Canadian Reformed Churches, an official delegate from sister churches abroad, is present at a General Synod.

## Art. 8 *Time schedule.*

Synod adopted the following time schedule: morning sessions: 9:00 - 12:15, afternoon sessions: 1:45 - 5:00, evening sessions: 7:30 - 9:30, Saturdays: 9:00 - 12:00 noon. If possible, the evening sessions will be used for plenary sessions.

## Art. 9 *Smoking.*

Synod also decided, for the health of all delegates, that during the sessions and intermissions smoking will not be allowed in the meeting room.

## Art. 10 *Greetings from Sister Churches.*

The chairman read a letter of the deputies of the Free Reformed Churches in Australia, containing the good wishes for Synod. He expressed thankfulness for having a sister relationship with these churches. At this moment he congratulated Rev. J. Geertsema with his call to the Free Reformed Church of Launceston, Tasmania, Australia and wished him strength for making a responsible decision.

The chairman read a telegram with greetings for Synod from "Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk" at Pretoria, South Africa, clerk A. Jansen.

## Art. 11 *"Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk" at Pretoria, South Africa* (chairman Dr. C. Van der Waal).

A letter from this church was

read, informing Synod that Dr. C. Van der Waal had been delegated to attend our Synod. Synod decided to decide about the status of "Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk" at Pretoria and consequently about the status of Dr. C. Vander Waal, in relation to our churches as soon as possible.

## Art. 12 *Agenda.*

After some additions, Synod adopted the Agenda.

## Art. 13 *Advisory Committees.*

Four committees of two ministers and two elders each were appointed. The items of the agenda were divided among the committees.

## Art. 14 *Finances General Synod and General Fund.*

A Financial Committee for General Synod 1974 was appointed, consisting of Mr. J. Boot, Mr. A. Jansen, Mr. H. Kampen of Toronto.

Synod approved the report of the Church at Carman (the church for the Administration of the General Fund) and expressed its thanks to Mr. H. Veldman of Carman.

## Art. 15 *Free Reformed Church of Canada and the U.S.A.*

Synod decided not to grant the request of the Church at Lincoln to appoint deputies to establish contact with the Free Reformed Church of Canada and the U.S.A., since the Church at Lincoln did not provide Synod with the necessary information.

## Art. 16 *Address Rev. S.S. Cnossen.*

Rev. S.S. Cnossen addressed Synod on behalf of our Dutch Sister Churches. Rev. G. Vandooren responded on behalf of Synod and addressed Rev. Cnossen and in him the Churches whom he represented.

## Art. 17 *"Preaching" consent theological students.*

Synod decided not to grant the request of the Church at Smithville to rescind the decision of General Synod New Westminster 1971 to allow theological students the right to speak an edifying word in the Churches.

## Art. 18 *Remembrance Day.*

On November 11th, Synod remembered the work of the Lord in giving us freedom at the cost of so many sacrifices which are still felt by many families today.

## Art. 19 *Reformed Ecumenical Synod.*

Synod decided not to send an "official observer" to any future Reformed Ecumenical Synod as long as it is considered unacceptable in the



light of the 1971 decision (see Acts 1971, art. 92). A letter to the General Secretary of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod was prepared and approved.

**Art 20. Address Church.**

Synod appointed the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church at Burlington, Ont., Box 124, as the "Address Church" for our Canadian Reformed Churches, with the mandate:

1. to receive communications
2. to acknowledge receipt of communications
3. to pass on these communications to the proper address(es)
4. in case General Synodical decisions have been made re: certain relationships with which these communications deal, this church shall reply by sending a copy of such decision
5. report to General Synod.

**Art. 21. Solemnization of Marriage.**

Re: the overture of the Church at Hamilton, Synod decided a) not to accede to this proposal: 'to rescind the decision of General Synod Homewood-Carman 1954, art. 74, and so not to leave the observance of art. 70 of the church order in the freedom of the churches, and further to revise the wording of art. 70 C.O. by replacing 'confirmed' by 'solemnized' b) to instruct the Committee on Revision of the Church Order to include in their revision of the Church Order such a draft of article 70 that therein the main thrust of the proposal of the Church at Hamilton is assimilated, namely that the members of the Church marry "in the Lord" and that the officebearers are to see to it that they do so.

**Art. 22. "Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk" at Pretoria, South Africa** (chairman Dr. C. Van der Waal).

Synod concluded:

- a. that the two parties requesting continuation of the correspondence with the Canadian Reformed Churches are: a) the Confederation of the Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk in South Africa and b) the Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk at Pretoria (chairman Dr. C. Van der Waal).
- b. concerning the cause of the schism in Pretoria: "The reason why six officebearers seceded from the Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk (chairman Dr. C. Van der Waal) and declared themselves the lawful continuation of the Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk at Pretoria, are their objections to the teachings of the consistory regard-

ing the grounds for the dissolution of marriage, and to the suspension of two elders from their office"

- c. concerning the issues involved: "that the teachings of the consistory of the Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk at Pretoria (Dr. C. Van der Waal) are contrary to the Scriptures and undermine the call to repentance and reconciliation in marriage" and also "that Synod Pretoria 1971 rightly rejected these teachings".
- d. with respect to the church-governmental issue: "that the consistory (Dr. C. Van der Waal) denied brethren who objected to the actions of the consistory, the right to use the, in South Africa, limited possibilities for appeal, Art. 31 C.O." and "that there is no reason to doubt the judgment of Synod Pretoria 1971 that "de kerkeeraad van Pretoria zich independentistisch heeft opgesteld en met de daad alle banden aan de zusterkerken heeft doorgesneden".

Synod decided:

- a. to continue the correspondence with Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk in South Africa;
- b. not to establish correspondence with Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk at Pretoria (Dr. C. Van der Waal);
- c. to appeal to Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk at Pretoria (Dr. C. Van der Waal) to rescind their teachings concerning marriage and divorce and to earnestly seek the unity and fellowship of the faith with Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk in South Africa.

**Art 23. Appeals.**

Synod dealt with two appeals in closed session.

**Art. 24. Farewell speech of Rev. S.S. Cnossen.**

The delegate of the sister churches in the Netherlands, Rev. S.S. Cnossen, spoke words of farewell to Synod. He thanked Synod for the christian way in which he was received, said that he felt at home here and had noticed that things are dealt with by Synod in a reformed way.

He spoke special words of appreciation for the Book of Praise and the College Evening in Hamilton. He expressed the hope that our relationship would be more than a formal correspondence and said that it would be a pleasure to receive a representative of our churches at the General Synod to be held at Kampen, the Netherlands, next year.

He wished the delegates the blessing of the Lord in their work as officebearers of the congregations and in their families.

The chairman spoke a few words of appreciation, thanking Rev. Cnossen for the way he moved in our midst and especially for the representation of our sister churches. He expressed Synod's thankfulness for the invitation received from our sister churches to attend their synod next year. He wished Rev. Cnossen a good trip and the Lord's blessing upon the work of our sister churches.

Synod sang Psalm 121:2 and 4, after which Rev. Cnossen and all the delegates said farewell.

**Art. 25. National Presbyterian Church.**

Synod received with thankfulness the "Message" from the National Presbyterian Church as information, as forwarded to Synod by the church at Edmonton. Synod will provide the National Presbyterian Church with the addresses of our churches. Synod decided not to start an investigation regarding the National Presbyterian Church or to appoint deputies for this purpose, as proposed by the church at Edmonton, since minor assemblies making a proposal for contact with other churches should supply Synod with the necessary information (see Acts G.S. 1962, art. 82; Acts. G.S. 1965, art. 141, sub II).

**Art. 26. Appeal brs. R. Jager and P. Ravensbergen, Smithville.**

Synod dealt with an appeal of the brs. R. Jager and P. Ravensbergen against a decision of Regional Synod at Smithville, 1974, concerning the nomination for the special offices of brothers who, though living in the territory of the Church at Lincoln at the time of the institution decided to remain members of the Church at Smithville.

Synod did not grant the request of the brothers, since the Consistory of Smithville, at the time of the institution of the Church at Lincoln left it to the responsibility of each member either to join the Church at Lincoln, or to stay in Smithville.

However, Synod agreed that the Regional Synod at Smithville, 1974 should have judged that Classis Ontario-South of June 1973, should have given an answer to the question 'whether or not those brothers . . . can become officebearers in the Church at Smithville'.

**Art. 27 Revision of the Church Order.**

Synod decided:

- a. not to make any decision on the proposals in the report of the committee since the report covers only the first 28 articles of the Church Order.
- b. to continue the Committee on Revision of the Church Order to complete its mandate.
- c. to charge the Committee to keep the churches informed from time to time of provisional results, so that constructive criticism from the churches may be expected and digested.
- d. to pass on to the Committee all material received in this connection, for further study, consideration, and recommendation.
- e. to instruct the Committee to seriously consider the report of the Dutch Committee ad hoc, received via the Committee on Correspondence with Churches abroad, and the actions these sister churches may take in this matter.

f. to adopt the proposed version of Article 84 C.C.: Art. 84. **PROPERTY OF THE CHURCHES** - All property, both real and personal, which belongs to the Churches comprised respectively in Classes, Regional Synods and General Synod in common, shall be held in trust for such Churches in equal shares by deputies or trustees appointed for that purpose from time to time by the appropriate Classes, Regional Synods or General Synod, and such deputies or trustees shall be bound by the terms of their appointment and instructions and are subject to being discharged by a subsequent Classis, Regional Synod or General Synod. Ground: the old article 84 C.O. does not legally safeguard the possessions of the Churches by proper general provisions.

**Art. 28. Greetings from Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk in South Africa.**

The Deputies of Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk in South Africa, c/o Rev. D. Los, sent a telegram, wishing Synod wisdom from the Lord to take decisions to His glory, to the edification of our Churches and to the strengthening of the bond with the brotherhood in South Africa.

**Art. 29. Greetings League Men's Societies.**

The chairman read the following telegram: "The League of Canadian Reformed Men's Societies together in Annual Meeting in Fergus, wishes you faithful wisdom and perseverance of the saints. J. Woudenberg"

**Art. 30. Women's Voting Rights.**

The Church at Toronto had proposed to Synod to recognize the rights of women to active participation in the life of the Churches and to acknowledge their privilege to take part in the election of officebearers. The Church at London had forwarded objections against the ground given by Toronto. Synod had also received a Report from our Dutch sister churches on this matter.

After study of the materials, Synod was convinced that these were

not sufficient to lead to a responsible, clear decision, which takes all the biblical and church political aspects into account. The request of Toronto was not granted.

**Art. 31. Translation Heidelberg Catechism.**

Synod expressed its gratitude to the Committee on the Translation of the Heidelberg Catechism and others who have contributed to a new version of the Catechism. Synod continued the Committee with the

# The Evensong

HYMN 49

Ch. F. Richter 1704



1. I'll thank thee, O my God and Sav- iour And  
 2. I know in whom my hope is found - ed Through



praise thee in my e - ven - song. The sun may  
 ev - er - chang - ing day and night. Thou hast me



set, but thy great fa - vour Shalt thou through  
 with thy love sur - round - ed, Thou art my



dark - est night pro - long. Thy help and grace were  
 Rock, I trust thy might. When once life's even - ing



ev - er near us; More than a fa - ther  
 veils en - shroud me I'll bring, though worn by



didst thou care. Thou Fount of bless - ing, thou dost  
 ill and strife, For eve - ry day thou hast al -



hear us; Thy won - drous mer - cies I de - clare.  
 lowed me Thee high - er praise, O God of life!

mandate to prepare a second draft, to invite comments (which should be submitted to the Committee within 6 months after the publication of this decision) and to make this second draft available to the Churches one year after the 1974 Synod, so that the Churches can examine it. The Committee should also try to establish what the original proof texts are and whether the selection of Scripture references can be improved.

Art. 32. *Appeals J. Huizinga, K. Visscher and J. Merkus and request J. Werkman, of Edmonton.*

Synod dealt with an appeal of br. J. Huizinga, a joint appeal of br. K. Visscher and br. J. Merkus and a request for advice of br. J. Werkman, all concerning the 'school situation' in Edmonton.

Synod unanimously agreed with the appellants on the 'desirability of Canadian Reformed Schools' but declared that it is not within its jurisdiction to judge, advise and direct the Consistory and parents in Edmonton concerning the practical realization of this goal in the local situation in Edmonton.

Art. 33. *Appeal br. K. Stam c.s., New Westminster.*

Synod dealt with an appeal of br. K. Stam c.s. against the answer of Regional Synod 1974 to their appeal against a decision of the Consistory of New Westminster to relocate the church building in a different area.

Synod decided not to grant the request of the appellants since Regional Synod was correct in stating that it should not do what Classis should have done (nl. to judge the arguments of the Consistory and the appellants).

Art. 34. *General Archives.*

Synod accepted with gratitude a report of our General Archivist, br. K. Vink of Burlington, Ont., and a report on the inspection of the Archives by Rehoboth Church at Burlington.

Synod expressed its appreciation to br. Vink for the excellent way in which the Archives are kept.

Art. 35. *Presentation of the Book of Praise.*

The chairman extended a special welcome to br. M.M. De Groot and Rev. W.W.J. VanOene who were present as members of the Committee on the Church Book.

Rev. G. Vandooren received the floor as the convener of the Committee on the Church Book and address-

sed Synod, giving a historical review of the work done during the last 20 years. He elaborated on some of the highlights of this unique undertaking. He recalled the work done by the late Rev. Kouwenhoven who translated many of the Psalms directly from the original Hebrew language. An interesting fact was that two members of the Committee sang through the whole First Scottish Psalter in the hope that it might be acceptable. However, the result was close to nil. Contact with experts in language and in Church music was established in many parts of the world, even in Japan. A tremendous amount of work has been done by the Committee before the present Book of Praise could be presented.

Mr. M.M. De Groot then presented to Synod at this moment of historical importance the 'Green Booklet' with 34 rhymings, the First edition of the Book of Praise, the Supplement to this First edition and finally, the complete Book of Praise.

The chairman received these with obvious happiness and expressed the thankfulness of Synod to the Lord who enabled the Committee to complete this work. He expressed the wish that this work may be preserved in our Churches and that the use of the Book of Praise in our Churches, homes and schools may be to the glory of God and to the establishing of the Churches for a long time to come.

Art. 36. *Church Book - Psalm Section.*

Synod received the Psalm Section of the Book of Praise with great appreciation for the work done by the Committee on the Church Book. Synod also decided to express its appreciation to those who contributed to the rhyming of the Psalms. The Committee on the Church Book was continued with the mandate to invite the Churches again to submit remarks on the Psalm Section since no one submitted any criticism on the rhyming of any of the 150 Psalms. The Committee was also charged to remain diligent with respect to a possible improvement of the Psalm Section.

Art. 37. *Church Book - Hymn Section.*

The Committee received no criticism on the Hymn Section from any of the Churches, although the Churches of Burlington-West, London and Smithers sent in criticism to the convening Church of Synod.

Synod received also the Hymn

Section with great appreciation for the work by the Committee. The Committee was given the mandate to improve the Hymn Section and to evaluate all the remarks and criticism received till now or that may be received in the future. From the criticism received it was clear that there was enough reason to continue the Committee.

The Committee is to keep in mind that according to the teaching of Scripture our singing should have for its theme the praise of the Covenant God.

The Committee will keep the Deputies of our sister churches in Australia and in the Netherlands informed of the progress that is made and will ask them to send in their constructive criticism.

The Committee is also to compile and publish a list of Scripture passages suitable for rhyming and tone setting as hymns and to invite submissions on these.

Art. 38. *Church Book - Music.*

The Church at Neerlandia had asked Synod to mandate the Committee to prepare a four-part music edition of the whole Book of Praise. The Church at Toronto endorsed this request.

Synod decided not to grant this request since preparing such an edition is not the task of this Committee and since harmonizations of the tunes in the Book of Praise are available. According to one member of the Committee the cost would be too high.

Art. 39. *Church Book - Tune of Hymn 45.*

The Church at Edmonton requested Synod to consider adopting one of the other melodies for Hymn 45, preferably the one of Strassbourg, to replace the present tune or as an alternative. The melody suggested was not available to Synod, neither was it known whether the English version of the Creed can be sung on the melody of Strassbourg. Synod decided to pass on the request of Edmonton to the Committee for consideration.

Art. 40. *Church Book - Doctrinal and Liturgical Forms Section.*

Synod decided to thank the Committee for the second half of the Church Book for the work done. The Committee was continued under the name: the Committee for the Doctrinal and Liturgical Forms. The Com-

mittee received the mandate to scrutinize the text of the Doctrinal and Liturgical Forms (with the exception of the Heidelberg Catechism) as to correctness of translation from the Dutch version, adopted by Synod 1954, after comparison with the original languages. No General Synod of our Churches has as yet adopted an English translation of our Forms. The Committee is to inform the Churches on the progress of its work and submit the result of their work to the next General Synod.

Art. 41. *Appeal Orangeville.*

The Church at Orangeville appealed to Synod against a decision of the Regional Synod of Smithville 1974 regarding an answer of Classis Ontario North of March 21, 1974 to one of the Churches regarding the admissibility of remarriage of a divorced member.

Synod answered that Regional Synod should have dealt with the appeal of Orangeville and should have declared that the Classis should have recorded Scriptural proof with its decision.

Art. 42. *Appeal br. A.J. Ytsma, Chatham.*

Br. Ytsma appealed against a decision of the Regional Synod of Smithville 1974 regarding a change in the election rules in the Church at Chatham.

Synod declared that Regional Synod rightly concluded that Classis did not do full justice to br. Ytsma's appeal. Classis should have dealt with his objections against the contents of that rule. Regional Synod should have indicated why the Consistory did have the freedom to make such a rule as it did and against which br. Ytsma appealed to Classis. Regional Synod should also have indicated in what respect Classis failed to do justice to the appeal against the contents of that rule. However, Synod declared that it is not in the jurisdiction of General Synod to comply with the request.

Art. 43. *Appeal Rev. A.H. Dekker.*

Rev. Dekker appealed against a decision of Regional Synod of Smithville 1974 regarding a decision of Classis Ontario-South of Sept. 12, 1973, which Classis had declared an appeal of Rev. Dekker inadmissible on the ground that he had not proven that he himself had been wronged.

Synod considered that it should be admitted that Article 31 C.O. does

not prevent any Church member from appealing if a decision of a minor assembly is contrary to the Word of God, the Confession or the Church Order, even if the matter does not pertain to his own person. However, he may not meddle in something that does not concern him.

Art. 44. *Correspondence with Sister Churches Abroad.*

Synod expressed its gratitude for the work done by the Committee on Correspondence especially for the careful study of the Acts of our sister churches abroad. With thankfulness it was concluded from these Acts that our sister churches in the Netherlands have not deviated from the Reformed Confession in doctrine, liturgy, church government and discipline. Our Committee for Correspondence had already expressed this gratitude in a letter to the General Synod of Hattem, in which the Committee acknowledged that the Lord has kept our sister churches faithful to the Reformed Confession and the adopted Church Order.

Synod continued the Committee with the mandate to maintain correspondence according to the rules for correspondence with: De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland; Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk in South Africa; the Free Reformed Churches of Australia. Our sister Church at Monte Alegre, Brazil, has ceased to exist.

Regarding the Presbyterian Churches in Korea, the Committee was not able to finish an accurate and serious examination in order to show that these Churches have not only adopted the Reformed Confessions and Church Government but also maintain them in actual practice.

The Committee is to continue the contact with the Presbyterian Churches in Korea and to forward a report to the next General Synod.

An invitation will be sent to sister churches abroad at least one year before the next General Synod. Our Churches will be represented by a delegate to General Synods of the sister churches abroad, if we receive an invitation and when it is desirable and feasible. The Committee will also appeal to the Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk at Pretoria, South Africa (chairman Dr. C. Van der Waal) to rescind their teachings concerning marriage and divorce and to earnestly seek the unity and fellowship of the faith with the Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk in South

Africa. The Committee is to keep the Churches informed from time to time of things that are of interest in the correspondence with the sister churches.

Art. 45. *Textbook for Catechetical Instruction.*

Two Churches had objected to Synod that it is not the task of a General Synod to prepare a textbook for catechetical instruction.

Synod thanked the Committee for the work done, but decided not to continue the Committee.

Art. 46. *Contact Christian Reformed Church.*

Synod expressed its thanks to the Committee for all the work done.

Since the position of the Christian Reformed Church concerning their relationship with the (Synodical) Reformed Churches in Netherlands has been clearly settled and finalized in the decision of Synod 1974 to accept these Churches as 'Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship', Synod decided to discontinue the contact with the Christian Reformed Church and to send a christian appeal to the Christian Reformed Community, taking into account the recent developments in the Christian Reformed Church.

Art. 47. *Contact Orthodox Presbyterian Church.*

Synod decided to thank the Committee for all the work done and to add to the Acts the Committee's Report Appendix I in which the Committee had clearly explained the differences in Confession and Church Polity between our Churches and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church also agreed that the differences are serious enough to remain the subject of further discussions but was not at this time ready to adopt our rules for correspondence but suggested to accept a 'fraternal relationship' between the two Churches.

Synod decided not to take a decision regarding the 'fraternal relationship' since it was not known what exactly this relationship implied. Our Committee asked already for more information.

Synod continued the Committee with the mandate to continue the contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and to study the forthcoming answer of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to the letter of our Committee outlining the differences in



Confession and Church Polity, and to continue discussing these differences. The Committee was also mandated to discuss and evaluate the relationship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with other Churches.

**Art. 48. Theological College.**

The chairman welcomed the Faculty of our College and the secretary of the Board of Governors. A special welcome was extended to the theological students who were present as visitors.

Synod decided to give the Secretary of the Board of Governors and the members of the Faculty the privilege of the floor if desired during the discussion of matters relating to our College.

Synod gratefully acknowledged the dedication of the late Rev. H.A. Stel as member of the Board of Governors.

Prof. Dr. H.M. Ohmann, Lic., was granted permanent tenure.

Synod authorized the Board of Governors to extend the Course of Studies from 3 to 4 years, beginning in Sept. 1975, in order that the students can secure a thorough knowledge of the languages of the Bible and take other propaedeutic disciplines in the first year.

Synod took note of the appointment of the Rev. A.B. Roukema as assistant librarian. The Contributions for the College were increased from \$17.50 to \$22.00 per communicant member.

The Churches will be urged to send in their contributions on a quarterly basis in advance, so that salaries etc. can be paid without interruptions on a monthly basis.

Two members of the Board of Trustees were welcomed by Synod and given the privilege of the floor.

The Draft Constitutive Documents were after some amendments unanimously adopted.

**Art. 49. Appeal br. L. Van Zandwijk, Burlington.**

Synod dealt with an appeal of br. L. Van Zandwijk concerning the interpretation of Art. 31 C.O. by Classis Ontario-North of June 20, 1973 and the fact that Classis Ontario-North of Sept. 1973 accepted for information a letter of objection containing Scriptural arguments.

Synod decided not to grant this request, since the letter mentioned above was not presented as an appeal or a request for revision and since it

had not been proven that br. Van Zandwijk's objections could not be finished by the Regional Synod.

**Art. 50. Appeal br. L. Van Zandwijk, Burlington.**

Synod dealt with an appeal of br. L. Van Zandwijk against the answer of the Regional Synod of Smithville 1974 to his appeal concerning a statement made by Rev. W.W.J. VanOene in a sermon on L.D. 21.

Synod decided that it is not in the jurisdiction of this General Synod to deal with the complaints and the requests of br. L. Van Zandwijk, and declared that the Consistory of Burlington-West should as yet make clear to br. L. Van Zandwijk that the conviction of the Consistory concerning the statement of Rev. VanOene, is well grounded.

**Art. 51. Appeal - Closed Session.**

Synod dealt with an appeal in closed session.

**Art. 52. Revised Standard Version.**

Synod expressed its appreciation for the work done by the Committee.

The Committee on the RSV stated in their report that there is much to commend about the RSV and that in some cases it is better than the KJV and statistically more accurate. The Committee was also of the opinion that there is some evidence of an unscriptural influence and suggests to look into other translations as the New American Standard Bible and the New International Version.

Synod concluded that the Committee in their 5 grounds did not submit conclusive proof of an unscriptural influence in the RSV.

Since the Committee had not adduced valid reasons to declare the RSV unacceptable, Synod decided to leave the use of the RSV in the freedom of the Churches.

The RSV Bible Committee is very receptive to our recommendations and has already accepted several corrections submitted by our Committee.

Synod decided to continue the Committee on the RSV with the mandate to continue the checking of the RSV and to pass on criticism to the RSV Bible Committee and to inform the Churches from time to time about the results of their investigations. Synod also decided to add the Report of the Committee to the Acts of Synod.

**Art. 53. Appointments.**

Appointments are made.

**Art. 54. Guests.**

During the various sessions of Synod, the chairman welcomed many guests, among whom were the principal and some students of the Timothy School in Hamilton, catechism students of Toronto, teachers and students of the Maranatha School in Fergus.

**Art. 55. Censure ad art. 43 C.O.**

Censure ad art. 43 C.O. is not necessary.

**Art. 56. Acts.**

Acts are read and adopted.

**Art. 57. Press Release.**

Press Release is read and approved.

**Art. 58. Presentation to the hostesses of Synod.**

The chairman spoke a special word of thanks to the sisters who took such good care of Synod with coffee, meals etc. On behalf of all the delegates he presented Mrs. Huizing and Mrs. Bouwkamp and their husbands with a gift of appreciation.

**Art. 59. Closing speech of the chairman.**

In his closing words, the chairman thanked all the members of Synod for their cooperation. He expressed words of thanks to the Lord Who blessed us so that we were able to do our work as Synod unhindered and without interruption. May the Lord graciously forgive our shortcomings and sanctify our work for the upbuilding of His Church and the Glory of His Name. May the Churches judge our work and the decisions taken. May the Lord strengthen all those appointed in various committees to do their work. In closing the chairman expressed the prayer that the Lord may bless His Churches and keep them; that He may make His face to shine upon them and be gracious to them; that He may lift up His countenance upon them and give them peace. He then read 1 Peter 5:1-12.

**Art. 60. Response by the assessor.**

The assessor, Rev. M.C. Werkman, spoke words of appreciation and thanks to the chairman for his pleasant leadership. He requested the delegates to sing Psalm 116:1, 7, 9, 10 and led in prayer and thanksgiving.

**Art. 61. Closing.**

The chairman adjourned Synod at 12:22 a.m. Saturday, November 30, 1974.

On behalf of Synod,  
M.C. WERKMAN, assessor

# Ideas and Ideologies (3)

In the previous article we mentioned some of the ways in which seventeenth-century science contributed to the idea of progress, namely, by the magnitude of its achievements and by its vindication of the new scientific method. Still another connection, to which we must now give attention, was the new cosmology itself.

The characteristic of the Newtonian universe which appealed most strongly to the Enlightenment philosophers was its apparent rationality. And the main reason why they were so enthusiastic about this particular aspect was that it held great promises for the rationality of humanity itself, and thus for the improvement-through-reason of the human race. This, in any case, was the philosophers' opinion.

They reached this conclusion, it is true, by a rather devious route, and in the process they frequently resorted to the customary expedient of special pleading and jumping-to-conclusions. Indeed, if one tries to follow their reasoning one is struck, time and again, by the ease with which logical fallacies were committed and by the incredibly "unscientific" nature of the entire system upon which the modern faith in man's autonomy, and in his ability to establish a heaven on earth, has been built. One also keeps wondering how it could possibly have convinced the philosophers themselves and their countless disciples.

Let us have a look at the process by which the philosophers used the idea of "cosmic rationality" for their special purpose. The first step they took was to give another meaning to the term than it actually possessed. The "rationality" that had been attributed to the physical universe referred to what might be called its mathematical harmony, and the intelligibility of its operations. The philosophers, however, confused this "rationality" with "reasonableness", and "reasonableness" they equated, in turn, with goodness. Nature (and this included terrestrial nature as well as the world of the heavens) thus became a moral entity for them.

Having established the morality of nature, they proceeded to elevate it to the status of mankind's ethical teacher. Its order and harmony and goodness were to show man what was wrong with himself and with his society. They were also to serve as an inspiration. By contemplating nature's perfection, so the philosophers felt, man should be moved to imitation, shake off his own irrationality, and so become a harmonious and eminently moral being himself. In fact, as one disenchanted disciple of the Enlightenment has stated, the worship of nature was to fill the gap left by the rejection of the Christian religion. Having rejected God and cast aside His revelation, the philosophers turned to "Nature" as their object of worship, and to the "Book of Nature" as their guide.

This elevation of nature above humanity might create the impression that according to the philosophers mankind was essentially corrupt. That, however, was something they would never have admitted. The faith in man's basic goodness was a primary tenet of their philosophy, without which the entire system would collapse. And that faith also

could be justified with reference to the new cosmology. After all, science had proven, in their opinion, that rationality pervaded nature, and since man was part of nature, he must perforce partake of nature's goodness. His apparent irrationality was therefore apparent only. At best, it was a temporary aberration, something that could be corrected.

It was not only with reference to natural science, however, that they were able to prove man's essential goodness. They got additional support from the so-called social sciences, which began to flourish in the wake of the scientific revolution. Of special importance were the psychological doctrines taught by the Englishman John Locke in his epoch-making *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (publ. 1690). In this treatise Locke propounded the view that all men were born equal, and all in a state of innocence. There was no heredity, there were no "inborn ideas", there was (of course) no original sin, nor was there any inclination whatsoever toward either good or evil. At birth, the mind was a blank sheet, a *tabula rasa*. It would receive its entire contents through the senses, that is, from the experiences and stimuli which the environment would supply. If that environment happened to be disharmonious, irrational and evil, man would develop accordingly. If, on the other hand, it was harmonious and good, then man would come to mirror those qualities.

As might have been expected, Locke's treatise became, after Newton's *Principia*, the gospel of the Enlightenment. And that not only because Locke had provided additional scientific proof of man's potential moral rectitude. He had done even more than that: his theory also provided an infallible method for the unlimited improvement of humanity. Was the evil that clung to man a result of the environment only? Then the only thing needed was to provide the *right* environment, and in due time a new humanity would arise - moral, intelligent, rational, well-adjusted, lovable, happy.

The question how the environment could be improved was not difficult to answer. One step was, obviously, to enlighten the masses, for the extent of man's misery was his ignorance. The other step was governmental reform. Looking for the origin of the existing social evils, the philosophers became more and more convinced that it must be sought in the social institutions. In the "establishment", to use a twentieth century term.

In eighteenth century France this establishment consisted of a divine-right monarchy, a powerful Roman Catholic Church, and a privileged nobility. Kings, priests and aristocrats, the philosophers reasoned, had since the beginning of time conspired together against the rest of humanity, exploited it and kept it in servitude, superstition and darkness. The power of kings, priests and aristocrats would therefore have to be drastically reduced, if not totally eliminated, before the perfect society could be established. The Enlightenment, as we see, led directly to the French Revolution. And its theory was followed by every other utopian revolution which the world has experienced since that time. In spite of the failures of the upheaval in France, the faith survived that the destruction of the powers-that-be was a prime requisite for the formation of a society where liberty, equality and fraternity would reign.

There was, of course, a logical difficulty in this theory. If all men were equal, and all were equally good, how could it be that some (the dominant few) were *not* equal and *not* good? The philosophers were aware of this difficulty. In fact, neither they nor their successors have ever found a

satisfactory formula to iron out the discrepancy. The philosophers *did* manage to prove, however, that their system, logically inconsistent as it might be, was nevertheless in accordance with the facts. This time they derived their proof not from science, but from history.

Briefly, what the philosophers did was rewrite history. In doing so, they divided the past into "glorious" and "inglorious" ages, and showed that the former had occurred, without exception, when mankind was free from oppression by despotic kings, superstitious priests, and arrogant nobles. Examples of such glorious periods were the golden ages of classical Greece and Rome, the Italian Renaissance, and (somewhat surprisingly, for Louis was a despot) the age of the Sun King, Louis XIV. In stark contrast to these epochs were such inglorious periods as that of the Middle Ages, when society was dominated by kings, priests and nobles, and when consequently mankind had lived in utter darkness.

Here then was the empirical evidence for which the Enlightenment had been searching. History, if properly interpreted, proved to be no less helpful than science, and it is not surprising that the philosophers turned more and more to the study of the past.

They did this not merely, however, to prove their theory regarding the origin of social evil. There was another motive. Science, as we saw, had convinced them that progress was *possible*, but it had not proved that it was *inevitable*. The Enlightenment began to feel more and more that progress *ought* in fact to be inevitable, that it should be a law of nature. And it was in order to demonstrate the truth of this opinion that the philosophers continued their historical writings. History would have to prove that eventually the golden age would be reached, regardless of every power of evil that tried to prevent it.

Needless to say, in this quest also they found what they were looking for. They succeeded in establishing that (in spite of some temporary relapses) progress had been continuous over the ages. Edward Gibbon, who was certainly not one of the most optimistic of Enlightenment prophets, nevertheless pronounced in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* that "we may therefore acquiesce in the pleasing conclusion, that every age of the world has increased, and still increases, the real wealth, the happiness, the knowledge, and perhaps the virtue, of the human race."

Similar sentiments were expressed by practically every historian-philosopher of the Enlightenment. For the most striking affirmation of the faith in continued and irreversible progress we must turn to the Frenchman Marie Jean de Condorcet. De Condorcet was still alive when in 1789 the French Revolution broke out, and he lent his cooperation to the revolutionaries. It so happened, however, that he preferred a more moderate course than that advocated by the radicals of 1793 (he objected, e.g., to the execution of the king) and as a consequence he was outlawed and declared an enemy of the Republic. For a while he remained in hiding, but eventually he was caught and sent to prison. He died there the following day, probably by suicide.

Shortly before his death, while a fugitive from the Reign of Terror, De Condorcet composed his famous "Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind", which he introduced with the following words: "Such is the aim of the work that I have undertaken, and its result will be to show by appeal to reason and fact that nature has set no term to the perfection of human

faculties; that the perfectibility of man is truly indefinite; and that the progress of this perfectibility, from now onwards, independent of any power that might wish to halt it, has no other limit than the duration of the globe upon which nature has cast us. This progress will doubtless vary in speed, but it will never be reversed as long as the earth occupies its present place in the system of the universe..."

De Condorcet's entire Sketch gives evidence of the unshakable faith that humanity stands before the very gates of the promised land. It will be a land where man will be truly autonomous, and where reason and science shall ensure his ultimate bliss in a society free from fear and want, from poverty and ignorance, from sorrow and oppression. Here we have, in a nutshell, the creed of the Enlightenment, and the testament which it bequeathed to future ages.

F.G. OOSTERHOFF



PSALM 107

2. Let his redeemed now say this.  
 Gone is their enemy;  
 God, who their strength and stay is,  
 Came down and set them free.  
 Let all then praise his name!  
 In far-off lands he sought them,  
 From east and west they came,  
 From north and south he brought them.



4. God led them to a city  
 Where they could safely dwell;  
 He showed them love and pity.  
 Let them his wonders tell,  
 And let their anthems rise.  
 His steadfast love relieves them,  
 Their thirst he satisfies,  
 No more their hunger grieves them.



# Israel Its Past, Present and Future 2

## ITS ORIGIN: FAITH AND THE LAND

In the first article we pointed out that the people of Israel has come into being by faith only. For *such* a people it was the only way. Cp. Hebr. 11:8. By accepting God's promise in faith Abram became the first Israelite. A special emphasis is laid on FAITH, I realize. But is that a drawback? I don't think so. In faith you see God's work in man come to light. And that is necessary, now that *a people* is called into existence. A real people, a nation, visible as the others, distinguishable by faith. I know that from here we can go back further to the Lord's calling and still further to God's election in order to bring out God's work clearly. But of Abram's faith, which is his answer to God's calling, it holds good: "This is not your own doing, it is the gift of God; not because of works lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9). It was by faith that Abram, Isaac, and Jacob became and continued to be ancestors of this people. The more so since it is the Covenant-people. Whereas in all covenants there are contained two parts, there is every reason to have the wonderful word "*faith*" brought out in full relief, in which promise and requirement, God's and man's share, appear to full advantage. How the roads of Christians and Jews part when it comes to this basic question, appears whenever the question "Why did God choose this people?" is answered by the latter: "*Because of the merits of their ancestors, chiefly Abraham, who as a heathen accepted the One God and broke with idolatry; their comparative virtue; their humility and their faithfulness. The first reason, the argument based on the merit of Abraham, recurs everywhere in Jewish literature, and especially in the liturgy.*" \*

It is for this reason that the Jewish people was to be and has indeed been different from all the

other peoples and nations, whatever the factor uniting their members into a whole: descent, language, land, government, culture, up to and including religion. Extending this line we conclude that it was to be a *church* rather than a nation; first and foremost a church and subsequently a nation. The Church of Lord's Day 21 in the form of a nation. Abram was to be a father in the Church. That is why he is portrayed in the first verses of Gen. 12 as the father-to-be of that one nation and of a multitude of nations simultaneously. With a view to that, this posterity was united by the ties of the covenant. So we learn here that we should not attach too much importance to the existence of a Jewish people as such, as a nation among all the others. It is indeed an outstanding nation, a conspicuous nation, the world owes to it more than to any other, sure, but according to those who speak of it in such terms *that* is the reason why it is so much the more entitled to share the *privileges* of all the others, especially to lead their own life in their own land, according to their own ideas. Present-day Israel is putting itself on one level with all the others.

That is what you can read in most of the popular books on our subject. That is the note struck there. I just mention now two titles of books by Max I. Dimont, to be found in the average bookstore. First: *Jews, God and History* (sixteenth printing!), New York. And: *The Indestructible Jews*, in which Jewish history is given the form of a drama, with acts and scenes. Very entertaining, yet the praises of the Jewish nation are sung instead of those of Yahweh, the God of the Jews. It is first: the Jews - then: God. In the introductory chapter ("It happened only once in history.") the achievements of the Jewish people are summed up. Here are a few quotations: "*There are approximately three billion people on this earth, of whom, twelve million - less than one half of one percent - are classified as Jews. Statistically, they should hardly be heard of, like the Ainu tucked away in a corner of Asia, bystanders of history. But the Jews are heard of totally out of proportion to their small numbers. No less than 12 percent of all the Nobel prizes in physics, chemistry and medicine have gone to the Jews. The Jewish contribution to the world's list of great names in religion, science, literature,*

*music, finance and philosophy is staggering.*"

"*The period of greatness of ancient Greece lasted five hundred years. Not so with the Jews. Their creative period extends through their entire four-thousand-year history.*"

"*From this people sprang Jesus Christ, acclaimed Son of God by more than 850 million Christians . . . The religion of the Jews influenced the Mohammedan faith, second largest religious organization in the world . . . Another Jew is venerated by more than one billion people. He is Karl Marx, whose book "Das Kapital" is the secular gospel of Communists the world over . . . Albert Einstein, the Jewish mathematician, ushered in the atomic age . . . A Jewish psychiatrist, Sigmund Freud, lifted the lid off man's mind.*"

"*Through the ages, the Jews successively introduced such concepts as prayer, church, redemption, universal education, charity - and did so hundreds of years before the rest of the world was ready to accept them. And yet, up until 1948, for close to three thousand years, the Jews did not even have a country of their own . . .*" (So the Old Testament period is not taken into account! H.M.O.)

"*World history has hurled six challenges at the Jews, each a threat to their very survival. The Jews rose to each challenge and lived to meet the next.*"

Then the author mentions the eight basic ways of viewing history: 1. the unhistoric one of Henry Ford: "History is bunk"; 2. the political one, the type taught in the schools; 3. the geographic one, in which climate and soil determine formation of character of people; 4. the economic one: history is determined by the way goods are produced; 5. the psychoanalytic one: history is the result of a *process* of repressing unconscious hostilities; 6. the philosophical one of G.W.F. Hegel, Oswald Spengler, and Arnold Toynbee, who have this in common that they see history as a flow of events having continuity. Each civilization follows a more or less predictable pattern. 7. The "cult of personality", holding that events are motivated by the dynamic force of great men. Men create the events. And finally 8. the religious one, looking upon events as a struggle between good and evil, between morality and immorality. "*It is the relationship which man thinks exists between him*



and God that does shape history. What happens between God and man is history . . . This man-God relationship was responsible for the great gulf in thinking which began to separate the Jews from the rest of the pagan world four thousand years ago." Making up his mind, Dimont holds with the psychoanalytic, philosophical and religious interpreters of history, in that "ideas motivate man and that it is these ideas which create history" (p. 22).

Since we have made Genesis 12 our point of departure, we wonder: What about this history, in the opinion of Mr. Dimont? How does he approach it? We read on page 29: "Here Abraham has a strong experience. It is here that he meets the Lord God 'Jehovah' for the first time . . . At this encounter, it is God who proposes a covenant to the patriarch . . . If Abraham will follow the commandments of God, then He, in His turn, will make the descendants of Abraham His Chosen people and place them under His protection . . . Did this really happen? Views vary all the way from the fundamentalist position of a literal acceptance of every word to the rejection of every word by the sceptics. We say it could have happened, but in a slightly different way. If we view this encounter through the lens of modern psycho-analysis, it might become understandable in modern terms.

"Psychiatrists are familiar with a psychological phenomenon known as 'projection'. Let us say that an individual is obsessed by a thought, which, because it is painful or forbidden, he does not want to acknowledge as his own. On the other hand, he can't give it up. He wants the thought but doesn't want to be its owner. He longs for it unconsciously, but wants to reject it on a conscious level. His mind therefore resorts to an unconscious 'trick'. He 'projects' the thought onto someone else, and then convinces himself that it is the other person who suggested the thought to him or accused him of it. These methods of hearing or perceiving such projected messages are known as auditory or visual hallucinations - that is, hearing voices, or seeing things, that are not there . . ."

"From a psychoanalytic viewpoint, therefore, it could be that Abraham himself conceived the idea of a covenant with an Almighty Father figure, represented as Jehov-



Instructors and students of the teachers' course which was given in July at the Theological College.



ah, and projected onto this father figure his own wish to safeguard his children and his children's children for future generations.

"From a historical viewpoint, it makes no difference whether it was Abraham who projected this experience onto an imaginary Jehovah or a real Jehovah who proposed it to Abraham. The fact remains that after four thousand years the idea is still alive and mentioned daily in prayers in synagogues throughout the world." Thus far Dimont.

The reader sees where he is with this successful author and how he finds his way out, namely, by making everything pivot not around the Revelation of the only True God, but round the idea of a covenant taking form in the patriarch's mind. In the last resort it is man who is the maker of religion.

The State of Israel's Proclamation of Independence of May 14th, 1948, starts from the same principle. It reads: "The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and national identity was formed. Here they achieved independence and created a culture of national and universal significance. Here they wrote and gave the Bible to the world."\*\* I underline the words: "they wrote and gave".

Comment is superfluous.

Meanwhile what has been said above can serve as introduction to that which is to be remarked regarding: *the land*. The land, we may say, plays a next-important role in the considerations of the Jews with regard to their being a people. According to some it is almost as important a factor. I now give a quotation from the book *Pictorial History of Israel*, by Jacob A. Rubin and Meyer Barkai, the first chapter of which leads off this way: "This was the Covenant: 'And I will give to thee and to thy seed after thee the land of my abode, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession' [Genesis 17:8].

"This was the beginning, the beginning of the bond between the people of Israel and the land of Israel. From time immemorial this sacred attachment of the people to their land has never weakened, never been forgotten. Thousands of years have passed, tens of generations have vanished, civilizations have been created and disappeared, nations have been lifted to heights of influence and have vanished from memory, but the people of Israel have remained ever faithful to the strip of land on the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean. The land had changed its name, its rulers, and, by force, its inhabitants,

but it still remained the Promised Land.

"There was no mystery involved (emphasis mine, H.M.O.). A people of shepherds and peasants gave birth to a unique idea of monotheism and gave a moral code to humanity - and still withstood the pressure of worldly affairs."

"No mystery involved." "A people gave birth to a unique idea." Again it is the same tune. The very opposite to the one given by us.

The land has a significant place. There is hardly a major passage in the Five Books of Moses which fails to refer to and to reiterate the promise that God made to Abraham, that the land of Canaan would be his inheritance and that of his descendants. In the first verse of Gen. 12 we already hear of it. It is spoken of there as "the land that I will show you". "I will show you" - these words make the land part of the Lord's revelation, a select spot, a choice land, since it was the Lord who roused Abraham's interest. And after having set out to go, Abram came there and traversed the land from north to south.

The promise comes true in so far that the land is shown to him and he may live there. Still, it is not yet his possession. The promise remains a promise. "Will give," the Lord says in Gen. 17:8. Hebrews 11:13-16 provides elucidation here.

The promise remains a promise for the time being. The Patriarchs, the first Israelites, may live there, but not in the spirit of an arrived man, but in faith, in hope. They are to feel themselves strangers and exiles on the earth. N.B.: here we come across the word "exiles", which is to play such a considerable role in the people's history throughout the centuries, in a context referring to the beginning of Israel's history. They started as exiles! So we learn that there is a positive element in it.

Not only with respect to their progeny, but also with respect to the land their faith is put to the test. How things are related we read in Genesis 18:19: "For I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice; so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him". The latter ("so that", and so on) is dependent upon the former: the keeping of the way of the LORD. And so it remains in force. The prom-

ise stands and all the time the requirement remains in operation. It is dependent upon the Lord and up to Israel as well whether they will enter the land. At the same time we see the promise corroborated by what came to pass in history. E.g., from this angle the burial of Sarah becomes significant, since the first piece of land then passes into Abraham's ownership. We may call Sarah's tomb: a pledge, a surety. The same can be said of the information we get in Gen. 33:19, "And from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, he bought for a hundred pieces of money the piece of land on which he had pitched his tent." Again: a pledge. But a pledge, however. For much more, namely, the entire land, is implied in the promise. When the LORD is pleased to put their faith to the test, He has their faith strengthened, confirmed. Already the Patriarchs may say of some landed property: this is mine. That way they are assured that with respect to the entire land it will come true for their children.

After the land in its full extent has been shown to them for two centuries so as to have a clear idea of it and to keep a reminder of it, they have to leave to move to a land which definitely is not theirs and never will be: Egypt, where the third patriarch is given a tremendous welcome, but his posterity is compelled to submit to slavery, to hard bondage, to such an extent that they cry unto the LORD (Ex. 2:23). That the LORD has led the people this way, a hard and bitter way, in accordance with His divine plan, we knew already from Genesis 15:13 ff., where the LORD also says to Abraham: "But I will bring judgment on the nation which they serve." The whole course of events is the LORD's concern. It is He who will make them depart as certainly as it was He who had made them enter before. It is not a band of slaves under the leadership of a certain Moses, a resistance fighter, a clever man, that managed to escape by seizing the opportunity as soon as it offered; that representation is given sometimes in books of liberal O.T. scholars. No, it is the LORD, who revealed himself to Moses; the LORD, and nobody else who will bring the people out of Egypt with His mighty hand and outstretched arm and into Canaan, at the entry of which difficulties are to be faced and will be overcome. And in so far as the LORD is enlisting the service of Moses and

the people, they are to follow where their GOD is going ahead of them, taking the lead. The LORD is carrying out His plan, but that does not mean that the Israelites will enter automatically. No, they are admitted conditionally. Throughout the book of Deuteronomy, the last words spoken by Moses on the behest of the LORD, it is pointed out to them that by obeying the Law and heeding the testimonies, statutes, the way into Canaan will be paved.

And not only that. Once they have entered, they should not live in the mood: "We are safe! Nothing can happen to us!" No, dangers are threatening over there. And now I mean dangers of a spiritual kind. Today, about twenty-five years after the event, I very well remember how the late Prof. B. Holwerda during his lectures on the exegesis of Deuteronomy, disgressed upon those dangers. In Deut. 7 it is the inhabitants, the Canaanite population, which constitute such a danger, and for that reason they are to be destroyed. In ch. 8 it is the land itself that constitutes a danger. It is a good land, a choice portion, sure. Cp. the verses 7-10. In the setting of that time, of course! A time when copper and iron, but not oil-wells, had come into the picture. The condition of life is such that the Israelites may become wealthy people, saying in their hearts: "My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth". So we are led to ch. 9 and 10, where it is the people itself that forms a potential danger to Israel. They should never forget what a people they have been in the wilderness, provoking the LORD to wrath. When entering they are taking this old nature along with them. So the LORD has his people warned circumstantially. And now that I come to think of it, I wonder: Isn't it a remarkable coincidence that Prof. Holwerda gave this course in the very time that Israel's independence was proclaimed?! As often as the question comes up: Is Israel entitled to live in an independent state in Palestine, I would like to point to the last book of the Pentateuch. H.M. OHMANN

\* Arthur Hertzberg, *Judaism* (in the series *Great Religions of Modern Man*), pp. 8, 9.

\*\* Walter Laqueur, *The Arab-Israel Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict*, p. 125.

# Christians, Awake!

*J. Wainwrite, 1723-68*



Christians, awake! salute the happy morn  
Whereon the Saviour of the world was born;  
Rise to adore the mystery of love,  
Which hosts of angels chanted from above:  
The joyful tidings, first with them begun,  
Of God incarnate and the Virgin's Son.

To Beth'hem straight th'enlightened shepherds ran,  
To see the wonder God had wrought for man,  
And found, with Joseph and the blessed Maid,  
Her Son, the Saviour, in a manger laid:  
They to their flocks, still praising God, returned,  
And their glad hearts with holy rapture burned.

Then to the watchful shepherds it was told,  
Who heard the herald angel's voice, 'Behold,  
I bring good tidings of a Saviour's birth  
To you and all the nations upon earth:  
This day has God fulfilled his promised word,  
This day is born a Saviour, Christ the Lord'.

May we now keep and ponder in our mind  
God's wondrous love in saving lost mankind;  
O trace the Babe, who has retrieved our loss,  
From his poor manger to his bitter cross;  
Tread in his steps, enabled by his grace,  
Till man's first glorious state again takes place.

He spoke, and straightway the celestial choir  
In hymns of joy, unknown before, conspired;  
The praises of redeeming love they sang,  
And heaven's whole orb with Alleluias rang:  
God's highest glory was their anthem still,  
Peace upon earth, and unto men good will.

Then may we hope, the angel-hosts among,  
To sing, redeemed, a glad triumphal song:  
He that was born upon this joyful day  
Around us all his glory shall display;  
Saved by his love, incessant we shall sing  
Eternal praise to heaven's almighty King.

J. Byrom (rev.)

[Cf. Luke 2:8-20; IPeter 2:21; Matthew 25:34]

# news medley

Yes, we had better begin with correcting a few things. I received a very kind letter from a brother in London, who pointed out a few incorrect statements in a previous Medley. He deserves it that the corrections are made, and so do our readers. I do not wish to give a wrong impression. If the readers disagree with me, that's fine: we'll leave it at that. But if I am wrong, it should be corrected. Here we go then.

In the first place he asks whether it would not be good to quote the complete decision of a Consistory whenever I deem it necessary to make some remarks about part of a decision. It is not so that our brother is afraid that I give an out-of-context quotation; he wants all the readers to benefit from the complete text, which will render it easier for them to evaluate my remarks.

It is always difficult to determine what should be quoted and what can be left out without doing injustice to the one(s) who took a decision. If one writes an article about it, then the decision should be quoted in full. But if one just wishes to draw the attention to a few elements in the decision, then, I think, it is sufficient just to quote those parts. A news medley should not become an article; and, on the other hand, it should be more than just passing on some news. The interest which our readers have in the medleys proves that they serve a purpose not in the last place but the evaluation of decisions and/or events which they endeavour to give.

The second point which was mentioned in that letter is this: I mentioned that London now had "another" pipe organ. The word "another" is not correct: London had an electronic organ, which cost them \$200.00 extra when they purchased the building eight years ago. I was not aware of it that it was an electronic organ. I was in London only a few times, and I thought that I saw some pipes there; maybe a false front? Now it is real in any case, and with this I congratulate them.

In the third place the following remark was made: "With London spending so much money on another organ, we must appear pretty cheap to only pay our caretaker \$300.00 . . . You had the wrong congregation. It should have been Watford which has a much smaller church building than London." The correction has hereby been made: it was Watford. However, I wish to point out that we should stay away from false dilemmas. I do not say that my correspondent made one, but it could easily be understood as such.

I mean this: sometimes members try to hold up certain projects by pointing out that there are other causes which demand the attention first, and in this manner they make a false opposition. When something is necessary or conducive to the worship of the Lord, it should be done, never mind what other tasks there are for the Church. IF a choice has to be made for lack of funds, THEN we have to see what is the most important task for the moment; but if that choice is not necessary at the certain moment, then matters should be considered in themselves and not in comparison with other - maybe equally important - tasks.

What my brother is concerned about most of all is this: "I think that it is unfortunate that it is necessary to pay anyone other than the minister and we certainly need not write about the poor, underpaid caretaker."

We are then reminded of all the work that is being done in the Church for which no financial remuneration is given whatsoever. There are the elders and the deacons; there are the organists who, in most instances, receive only a token of appreciation; there are the ladies who prepare meals for Classes and Synods; there is the Classis quaestor (treasurer); there is the person who prepares, types, folds, and delivers the bulletins, etcetera. They all do not get paid; why, then, should we speak of the caretaker? Is that because he has to clean up the mess?

That a caretaker oftentimes has to clean up a mess is something which is beyond doubt. Recently I came into a large auditorium of one of the Churches here in Ontario: it was Monday evening and the caretaker had just swept out the rows between the pews. I wish you could have seen the mess that was lying in the aisles! However, it is not for that reason that we ought to make sure that his labours are well-rewarded. There is something else here, I think.

Experience teaches us that the work is always done by the same persons. Requests for volunteers are most of the time answered by the same group of church members. If you ask one of the others, you may receive for a reply, "No, I am not able to come for I have to work overtime that day." When you ask the ladies to take care of the meals for a Classis or a Synod, there may be some who say, "No, I cannot do that, for I have to work that day." And whereas the one may be willing to forego some extra income in order to help, the other may not be prepared to do so, or perhaps cannot afford it to lose that extra income. We cannot judge the circumstances of all members and we do not know their difficulties and/or obligations. And we are not allowed to lay a heavier financial burden upon the one than upon the other. I am convinced that the financial burdens connected with Church life should be borne equally by all. I am not allowed to demand of a brother that he shall forego some extra income because it is his turn to clean the auditorium, while he may need that money badly and have waited for an opportunity to make something extra for a long time. A brother who is a carpenter should not be required to take time off from his other work to do some jobs on the parsonage or the Church building without pay because, well, he is a carpenter after all, isn't he? And a brother who is an electrician should not have to say "No" to a customer because he happens to be the only electrician in the Church and something has to be fixed in the catechism room. If they are willing to do so and have some spare moments they wish to use for that work, fine. Otherwise they should be paid for it just as we would have to pay other professionals. The same applies to a caretaker, I think. However, enough about this, otherwise we do get an article and we don't want that. It is about time we come with some news, real news.

All right, then: we spoke of organs a few moments ago. Guelph is installing one right now and, according to the information provided by the organist, it appears to be an unique case here in Canada as far as the place is concerned where it is located: it is hanging from the arches, against the one wall. In Germany, we are told, this can be seen more frequently, and this sort of installation



is called a "swallow-nest". The name shows already what you can expect to see if you ever come to Guelph. It is an organ with approximately 200 pipes, unified. The console, however, is the same as that for a much larger organ, and they can easily add various ranks in the future. It will be in use by the time you read this, and the Congregation will be enjoying its sound. Less than a year ago the members of Fergus/Guelph living around Guelph became a separate congregation: now they have a Church building and an organ and we all are thankful for these blessings.

Another Congregation that will be very happy is the one at Burlington West or, to say it more correctly, the Rehoboth Church at Burlington: they will have taken possession of their brand new building by now. An official evening was scheduled for the 12th of December, and that is past history by the time you see these lines. The Committee of Administration was urged by members of the Congregation to organize another "drive", and you don't have to say that too often to a Committee of Administration! They will comply with such a request right away. That's what they did there, too.

Now that the meeting place for Rehoboth Church at Burlington has changed, the matter of "borders" came up again. In fact, it has been a topic for quite a while in the three Churches involved. Hamilton decided in principle to propose a change in borderline, we read. This decision was made after extensive discussions. Ebenezer, Burlington, also discussed this point. Both Burlington Consistories agree, we read, that "we would consider any request from the members, subject to legitimate reasons, to join either Rehoboth or Ebenezer Church and would approve such requests." Then there comes something which gave me much joy, as our readers can well imagine: "Further to this the consistory of the Ebenezer Church wants to express the hope that some time in the future the borderline will disappear (as has happened in other areas in Canada) and in this way prevent 'border cases' and give members who move in from outside the option to join either Congregation." I wholeheartedly support that wish.

Ebenezer Church also decided to include the expenses for foreign mission in the budget. Here we have another point which I call progress. Maybe not too much value is ascribed to my evaluation of this decision, I still want to say it!

Before we leave Ontario, a few more remarks.

The Synod has been adjourned, as I heard, after almost four weeks. The brethren enjoyed the interest of old and young and many a time there were quite a few visitors during the plenary sessions which, as has become customary, were always scheduled for the evenings. Committee meetings were held during the day, although later on there were plenary sessions also in daytime. We now have to wait for the Acts to learn what decisions were made. Once more it has become apparent that being a delegate to Synod does not mean that one has an extended holiday! It is hard work from nine in the morning till nine-thirty at night, plus some extra work after if one wishes to have a report ready before the next morning.

The presence of ministers from the West gave the Churches here the opportunity to hear them. Both Rev. J. Mulder and Rev. M. Van Beveren went to Ottawa to preach there. The Fergus Church had the rare occasion to see both their former ministers and their present minister on the pulpit on the same Sunday: Rev. M. Van Beveren preached in the morning, Rev. P. Kingma in the afternoon,

## 40th Wedding Anniversary



*The Lord willing, Mr. and Mrs. J.H. Luiten hope to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary on Saturday, December 7 with an open house in the hall of the Canadian Reformed Church at Carman.*

*Both Jan Hendrik Luiten and Geertruide Luiten [nee Klos] were born in Enschede, The Netherlands. They were united in marriage on December 7, 1934 and lived there until June 1954.*

*They then emigrated to Homewood, Manitoba with their 3 children, settling in Carman that fall.*

*Mr. Luiten's hobby is music, having been a member of the Christelyke Harmonie in Enschede for 35 years and the Carman Band for 17 years. At present he is conductor of Carman's Choir, a post he has held for the last 10 years.*

*Mr. and Mrs. Luiten are both in good health. May the Lord grant them many more years together under His blessing.*

*Their address is Box 623, Carman, Manitoba*

and I at night. In case you think that the third service was arranged to create such an event, it be made known that the evening service was the Dutch service which we have every second and fourth Sunday of the month.

Brampton was thinking of installing a "nursery" in the basement, but when the brethren discovered that this was to cost some \$8,000.00, they hastily withdrew from the project.

The very last point which I mention from Ontario is the "resthome" project. In the previous Medley we already mentioned that Lincoln and Smithville decided to join the Hamilton-based society. When I say "Hamilton-based" I do not mean that it is confined to Hamilton. On the contrary, the brethren there wish to make it a regional matter, a central home for all the brethren and sisters from all over Ontario. They are not planning to apply for subsidy, as I understood, for then you are not completely free whom you give a place in such a home and whom you do not wish to have as a resident. And I am convinced that we

should do our best to have all our brethren and sisters together in their "golden years" so that they can be of help and support to each other also during the last stretch of their pilgrim's journey. Then we should not be restricted by regulations concerning income, etcetera. The Hamilton property is located at a very convenient spot: residents can, once it is ready, walk to the building next door: that is the Church building. For those who would be unable to attend Church a P.A. system could be installed at very little cost. The Fraser Valley resthome would be farther from Church.

As for the latter, there are some very gratifying developments there. The Senior Citizen Home Society has been incorporated, and the lawyer who assisted charged only a fraction of the cost which is normal in such cases. Each board member is going to visit the members of "his" congregation to try to gain members. And some 75% of the total price of the property has been paid to date. But that is not all!

Before you can start building, you need plans, a design, calculations, drawings, and whatever else there may be. Such items have to be prepared by an architect and they know what to charge. **Church News** tells us that it can run to 10% of the total cost of a project. That would be \$20,000.00 if the total cost is two hundred thousand dollars. But now there is a happy "coincidence" in the Valley. A brother is studying to become an architect and expects to graduate this coming spring. He has to hand in a project as his graduation "thesis" and has chosen the topic of Resthomes! Yes, you can guess it already: he is drawing all the plans which he will present to the faculty as his project, and the Resthome Society will benefit from it, for they will be allowed to use them free of charge. That will keep the cost of the project from soaring.

Speaking of soaring, it seems that the two main speakers at the College Evening did just that. The **Church News** tells us that "the feathered speakers were Dr. J. Faber . . . and Rev. M. VanderWel". I hope that they have since returned to a good, down-to-earth existence.

Let us close this time with the prairie provinces, or rather, with Alberta.

The Edmonton **City Guide** mentions that there seems to be a large number of people who do not know that the Book of Praise is still available, for many "borrow" from the Church. That is not the only place from where such complaints are heard. Ebenezer Church at Burlington has to utter the same complaint. These things should not happen among us. We know that the copies which the Churches have purchased are for visitors and not for members. In exceptional cases members could use them, but some seem to make a habit of it to "forget" their own copy. Then they are upset if the caretaker refuses to give them one, since they are for visitors only. And in some cases they borrow without giving back. That is not confined to Books of Praise. Recently an organist somewhere discovered that some books with music by Bach were missing as well as the book with harmonizations for the hymns. Later on it appeared that a "guest organist" who played at a wedding had inadvertently put them into his briefcase and was not so polite as to return them until someone asked him whether he perhaps had taken them along by mistake . . .

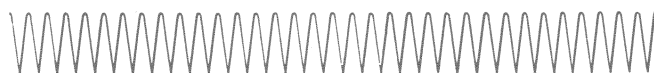
Of Calgary we have to mention something different. There the well-known Dr. Morgenthaler spoke before a university audience, and this was an opportunity for Rev.

R. Boersema to let the people hear some Scriptural thoughts over against the propagation of abortion which was taking place. He handed out some 400 stencilled sheets on the question, "Who's in charge? Morgenthaler or God?" These are events which can be used very well to confront the people with the revelation of our God.

I said that we were going to conclude our Medley with news from the prairie provinces.

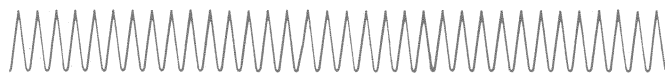
This last word is to be a word of congratulation. Brother and sister Vanderland in Edmonton celebrated their fortieth wedding anniversary on November 11. They let us know about this via an advertisement in **Clarion**; we wish to let them know that we read it and we offer them our congratulations at this occasion. As with all the others who reached this milestone, so with you we say: May the Lord our God guide you also further as long as He gives you a task.

vO



## Ere Zij God!

Ere zij God, ere zij God in den hoge, in den hoge, in den ho - ge. Vrede op aarde, vre - de op aarde. In de men - sen een wel - beha - gen. Ere zij God in den hoge. Ere zij God in den ho - ge. Vre - de op aar - de, vre - de op aar - de, vrede op aarde, vre - de op aar - de. In de mensen, in de mensen een welbehagen, in de mensen een welbehagen, een welbehagen. Ere zij God, ere zij God in den hoge, in den hoge, in den ho - ge. Vrede op aarde, vre - de op aarde, in de men - sen een wel beha - gen. A - - - men, A - men.



## *Canadian Reformed High School Association of Ontario*

We are thankful to report that the Constitution proposed by the Board was officially adopted by the members. The constitution reads as follows:

### Article I - NAME

This organization shall be known as the Canadian Reformed High School Association of Ontario.

### Article II - BASIS

The basis of the Association is the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity of the Canadian Reformed Churches: the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort.

### Article III - PURPOSE

The purpose of the Association is to establish and maintain schools promoting Reformed Secondary Education in accordance with Article II of this Constitution.

### Article IV - MEMBERS

Any confessing member of one of the Canadian Reformed Churches may be a member of the Association. Although husband and wife constitute only one membership, the wife may represent her husband in his absence.

### Article V - STAFF

Only confessing members of one of the Canadian Reformed Churches may be employed as principal or teacher by the Association.

### Article VI - ENROLMENT

Enrolment is open to members of the Canadian Reformed High School Association and to their children, foster children, and wards. Any other enrolment is subject to the approval of the Board upon recommendation of the local board members.

### Article VII - AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended by a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority vote of the total membership of the Association, provided that three weeks previous notice has been sent out to each

member stating the desired change. Article II (Basis), Article III (Purpose), Article IV (Members), Article V (Staff), and Article VII (Amendments) of this Constitution are not subject to change.

### Article VIII - NON-PROFIT STATUS

The Association shall be carried on as a non-profit organization; any surplus may be used to promote the purpose of the Association or for special reserve funds upon approval of the membership of the Association.

### Article IX - DISSOLUTION

The decision to dissolve the Association shall require the approval of 90% of the membership, provided that three weeks previous notice has been sent to each member stating the reason(s). Upon the dissolution or winding up of the Association all its remaining assets after payment of liabilities, shall be distributed to one or more registered charitable organizations in Canada which adhere to the doctrine expressed in the standards of the Canadian Reformed Churches as accepted within the federation of the said churches as at the date of the organization of the Association.

In addition to the Constitution the members also accepted the following Board proposals:

- a) the Bylaws (although additions will still be made)
- b) the name of the future school will be 'Guido de Bres'
- c) the site will be just south of Hamilton, close to Mount Hope. (the Board promised to consider seriously other possibilities)
- d) some financial agreements were ratified by the members.
- e) the Board was given a vote of confidence.

With its renewed mandate the Board looks forward to the coming months. We have taken a long step toward realizing our plans for a Canadian Reformed High School in Ontario. The LORD has truly blessed us.

OCTOBER 25, 1974

W.F. HORSMAN

## The Canadian Reformed Rest Home Inc..

### REPORT OF PROGRESS

Two months ago we reported, in the October 19th issue of *Clarion*, that a two-acre property was bought by the Hamilton society for the purpose of building a Canadian Reformed Rest Home. We also wrote that it was deemed desirable to seek cooperation with other congregations in Ontario, since it was the wish of the Hamilton society to establish a *Regional* Home with regional representation in the Board.

In the few weeks which have passed, several meetings, drives, etc., have been held with as one of the major results a good increase in membership. The total number of members is now more than double the number reported in October, namely 69. Secondly, quite a lot of money has been collected, by way of members paying their yearly fee (\$100) in advance - although installment payments were also gratefully accepted -, by way of selling bonds and through donations. Thirdly, we

have found a favourable response in the neighbouring congregations that have been visited by members of the Board. Several congregations now have their own society or will shortly form one. Not all congregations have been contacted and we have also been informed that some delay in correspondence was due to the fact that General Synod was being held during that time.

All in all, the board is very pleased, encouraged and thankful.

On the other hand, is it all that surprising, that there is so much enthusiasm for a CANADIAN REFORMED Rest Home? On our membership drive through the congregation of Hamilton and from what we have heard from representatives from other congregations, we have noticed that there is an urgent need for such a Home. Many older people are anxiously waiting to move into a Rest Home because they are virtually unable to look after themselves, the

regular housework, etc. They are avoiding the present private or municipally owned facilities as long as they can and are hoping to move into a Rest Home of the type we are aiming for: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

They are longing for the possibility to have church services in the language with which they are still so very much familiar. They are longing to be able to still attend church activities, which would be possible if the Rest Home will be built on the property beside the Cornerstone Church in Hamilton.

Again, we are thankful for the enthusiasm and encouragement for our goal and above all for God's blessing of our work. As a conclusion, we would like to ask everyone who is not yet a member of the Canadian Reformed Rest Home Inc. and wishes to become one, or who has questions or suggestions about the society, and/or who wishes to buy bonds, to write to 25 St. Clair Avenue, Hamilton, Ont.

For the Board  
ALBERT DE JONG, secretary

# press review

## ONCE MORE THE ICCC

The reader will remember that the previous review dealt with the criticism voiced at the synod of the "Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken" in The Netherlands with regard to the ICCC, the organization of Dr. Carl McIntire. That criticism was also directed against the way ICCC resolutions come about. In *Nederlands Dagblad* of Saturday, September 21, we read how the reporting committee also stated as a condition for continuation of the membership of the "Christelijke Gereformeerde" Churches in the ICCC that

it must be prevented that personal resolutions are presented to the outside world as the opinion of the whole organization; and that resolutions must be properly prepared, namely in such a way that the contents are biblically-theologically justifiable . . .

In my opinion, also this criticism is to the point. One can read things in the *Christian Beacon* which are not biblically-theologically justifiable and belong rather to the world of human fantasy. An example we find in an article in the September 5 issue, written by Robert Barry, Director 20th Century UFO Bureau, under the heading "And Now, Australia". As the reader knows, UFO stands for Unidentified Flying Objects. Many people in the U.S. and Canada claim they have seen such objects. The author tells that lately many of these flying objects have been noticed on the Australian continent. After having mentioned a number of cases in which people also in the U.S. saw strange things, the author says:

An article in a nationally-distributed newspaper recently reported that Dr. Carl McIntire, founder of the 20th Century UFO Bureau, established it to explain and convince people of the Scriptural significance of UFO's. Dr. McIntire pointed out that "Christians have an obligation to enter the field and interpret it." The UFO's are "of special interest to those concerned about the prophecies of the Bible and the

signs in the heavens at the end of time," he said.

We read in Psalm 33:6: "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."

And then the astonishing conclusion follows:

I'd say that's a pretty good indication that that there (should probably read: that there are, J.G.) other intelligent beings in the heavens and that God created them in the same manner He created Adam when He breathed the breath of life upon him, and man "became a living soul." Notice in this verse of Scripture that "heavens" is used in the plural form. This means the area in the heavens that we see with the eye where all the stars and planets exist. And out in space ("heavens") exist a host of beings that God created by the "breath of his mouth". The Scripture has been there all along. We have just neglected to pursue its real meaning.

Another text is quoted. It is Psalm 148:1-3:

Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens (plural): praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.

And again the conclusion is drawn that besides the stars and planets and untold number of galaxies in the heavens, which are told to praise God,

Also the angels are told to praise Him, and likewise "all his hosts." So (1) the angels and (2) God's host (= U.F.O.'s) are told to praise Him. (Brackets mine, J.G.)

Here it appears that the Bible gives us science fiction. Or must we rather say that the Bible is adapted to science fiction? I would say: not this way! This is "inlegkunde" rather than "uitlegkunde" (a reading into rather than an explaining of the text).

On the other hand, we can have appreciation for the fact that the ICCC tries to make it clear that the other organization, the World Council of Churches, overagainst which it was established in 1948, is a revolutionary and antichristian and unscriptural movement. In the September 19 issue the *Christian Beacon* reprinted speeches of the General Secretary of the WCC, Mr. Philip A. Potter, as well as of the chairman of the Central Committee of the WCC, Dr. M.M. Thomas. These were published earlier in *This Month*, the organ of the Ecumenical Press Service. From the report of Dr. M.M. Thomas the following part is taken and commented on in a separate article:

Dr. M.M. Thomas, chairman of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, in his report to the annual meeting (of this Central Committee, J.G.) in West Berlin, August 11-18, spelled out "the meaning of the Cross for a technological future." Dr. Thomas, of India, second only to the General Secretary in structural order of the WCC, concluded his report by quoting from a paper by Paul Verghese, another WCC leader. The second quoted read:

"Our mastery of the universe is like the mastery of our bodies, not for our own use, but in order to give nature as an extended body into the hands of the loving God in the great mystery of the Eucharistic self-offering. This is the mystery of the Cross. Christ gave Himself with humanity and nature to God in self-denying love, and therefore saved humanity and nature.

"It is in that eternal act of sacrifice and love that we, too, are called upon to participate. Technology is the way of humanizing the world of matter in time-space, and thereby of extending the human body to envelop the whole universe. But the humanizing and extension, if it is to be salvific, must find its proper culmination in man's offering of himself and the universe to God in love."

In this quotation we find a philosophy which would need quite some explanation. The article does not give it. It is not necessary either. The comment on the quoted words sticks



to the real point at issue when it says:

But the Bible in no way teaches that Christ gave Himself with humanity and nature to God in any capacity of any kind. On the cross He died for the sins of men. It is sin that brought death, the just penalty of man's disobedience to God.

The WCC leader's exposition of the mystery of the cross reveals that he has completely abandoned the message of Scripture on the cross. Moreover, he says that all human beings are to take part in this eternal act of sacrifice and love by man's offering of himself and the universe to God in love.

In truth, however, there is not one single thing that any man can do according to the Bible to aid, contribute to, or participate in his salvation. The Scripture says, "Salvation is of the Lord".

It is the old liberal theology that does indeed see the cross as a sacrifice, but as a human sacrifice of Jesus, a good man, in the same way that e.g. good fighters for freedom today can sacrifice their lives for the "good cause" of a better world. That is the "mystery of the cross" in which all men can and must participate. Our Catechism speaks differently in Lord's Day 5 and 6: God wanted His justice to be satisfied. We cannot pay this satisfaction. We increase our debt daily. We cannot redeem ourselves and our world. Therefore the Son of God came as a man to pay for us.

The article continues:

Through the years World Council leaders have cast off restraints and revealed their unbelief. Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, one of the first presidents, called God "a dirty bully" if the concept of Christ shedding His blood was a requirement of God for the atonement of sin.

Maybe some of the readers remember the tumult in the Netherlands some years ago when a professor of the Hervormde Kerk said about the doctrine of atonement through the blood of Christ: "Just give my portion to Fikkie" ("Geef mijn portie maar aan Fikkie"). (Fikkie is a common dog's name.) And today men like Dr. H. Wiersinga, minister in the Synodical Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, are teaching in the same way. Such teachings are in conflict with

the revealed holy Name of our God, and sin against the third commandment. And we can understand it that the apostle Paul writes in Galatians 1:8: "But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed." Our God does not hold him guiltless who uses His Name in vain, who connects His Name with the lie of false teachings.

If we know these things, then we are also able to see through the beautiful words of the end of the report of Dr. Thomas and we can say: the words seem good, but he gives them a meaning different from the way we would understand them. He said:

Now to sum up. The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches founded on faith in Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, and engaged in exploring the meaning of the centrality of Jesus Christ for the unity of the Church, for the Church's participation in the struggle of men and women for their humanity in the modern world . . .

I sometimes wish . . . that we could interpret "Christ only" as

withdrawal from these many worlds (of religion, of ideology, of spirituality, J.G.) and many responsibilities. But we cannot, because in and through Christ, God renews all men and all things . . .

The only thing we can do is to pray that within these inescapable involvements, the Council and its member churches may . . . "allow Christ to set them free".

Indeed, the world (the unbelievers, humanism) once more tries to "free" mankind (by racial, women's, children's liberations, etc.). And the churches (!) must be involved in these movements. For they are thought to be the renewal which God works through Christ. However, Revelation (21-22) speaks differently. Read it!

It is good that the *Christian Beacon* tries to make these things known to the American and other peoples. May many eyes be opened and remain open to these things. It is therefore all the more regrettable that the ICCC gives reason for criticism, as was clearly shown at the Synod of the "Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken" in The Netherlands.

J. GEERTSEMA



## Office-Bearers' Conference in Edmonton

Report of the second annual office-bearers' conference, held on November 11, 1974, in Edmonton:

The chairman, Dr. P. VanBostelen, opened the meeting at 9:45 a.m. by requesting us to sing Ps. 133. He read Eph. 4:1-16 and led in prayer.

The agenda for this conference was drawn up.

Rev. D. DeJong presented the topic "How to conduct a family visit". An outline of points consisted of:

1. What is a family visit.
  - a. The visited. b. The visitors. c. The visit. d. The purpose. e. The history.
2. How to conduct a family visit.
  - a. The arrangement. b. The beginning. c. The conversation (formal part). d. The conversation (material part). e. The conversation (difficulties).
3. How and what to report of a family visit.
4. When and how to follow up a family visit.

At 11 o'clock we paused for two minutes of silence to honour those who gave their lives for freedom, after which Rev. DeJong continued with his topic.

Set-up of future conferences:

It was decided that the next conference will be held in Calgary, preferably the first long weekend in May 1975. The church at Calgary will be in charge of selecting speaker, topic, etc.

During the intermission a light lunch was served, and questions in writing could be given to the speaker. After the intermission, discussion followed on the topic. It was very good and lively at times. It can be noted that this conference was very educational not only for the young elders who have to do their first family visits, but also, as a good reminder, for those elders who served already for several terms.

The chairman thanked Rev. De Jong for presenting his topic, and the three ladies received a warm applause for serving us during the meeting with coffee (tea) and the "goede belegde broodjes".

The chairman requested us to close this second annual office-bearers' conference with the singing of Hymn 51:1, 2, after which Rev. DeJong closed in thanksgiving.

For the committee, P. DOORTEN

# The Liberation in the Forties

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS (8)

AUGUST 30, 1945

Early in the morning I was riding my bike towards a neighbouring village to buy some bread from "bakker Van der Mooren".

Then I met one of my elders. He stopped me and asked if it would suit me to have a brief Consistory meeting that evening after the counting of the collections was finished.

This was a monthly ceremony in which all the elders and deacons took part. It gave them another opportunity to discuss certain things in an unconstrained way.

I was so surprised that I forgot to ask him: What is it for, brother? However, soon afterwards it became clear to me. When I returned home my wife told me she had heard from the young girl that helped her that the same elder was going around in the congregation to ask some members what they were thinking of their minister and about that pamphlet he had written. So he arranged a sort of opinion poll.

It was added that to his surprise some of the people had answered him: I fully agree with the "concerned", for what they stand for is exactly the same as what we have learnt at Catechism-class, and what Synod teaches must be something new and is no good!

Later on during the same day I went to see this elder again, to ask him what the Consistory meeting was to deal with.

He answered that it was my pamphlet.

Well, I replied, you knew everything about it and even agreed with the plan to write and distribute it.

He could not deny this, but reduced "pamphlet" to "a brief letter".

Later on those Consistory members who had just stepped down confirmed that it was certainly not just a brief letter but a pamphlet containing the same things which I had read during a Consistory meeting. I still possess that "speech".

EVENING

In the evening the collections of the last few weeks were counted. Under a certain strain. This time even

the minister took part in this ceremony.

As soon as it was all done the Consistory meeting was opened.

There was no electricity yet. During the last winter of the War the whole network was destroyed.

So we did not use our small and dark consistory room but the front section of our church building.

As long as it lasted we sat there in the dimming daylight.

As soon as it was dark we lighted an oil-lamp, which made some ghostly effects. The majority of people who were present, then, acted like ghosts.

For, of course, my first question was this: Some of you wanted to have this meeting arranged. Who will tell the meeting what it is for?

Then the elder I had met in the early morning of the same day, cleared his throat, and spoke.

He said: "Is it your intention, reverend, to cause a division in the congregation? Is that your intention by having your pamphlet distributed?"

I replied by asking him a counter-question: "Do you ask this question for yourself only, or on behalf of any others also?"

"On behalf of the four of us," those four being one more elder and the two deacons.

Later on it became clear that these four had arranged and held a sort of secret meeting, from which the third elder - and of course the minister - were excluded. The elder was supposed to be anti-synodical.

The questions that were asked were obviously formulated during that meeting.

After a long discussion, in which the last-mentioned elder took a firm stand and tried to convince the others that they had not acted in true Christian love, the question was answered by a clear statement: "No, I have not even the slightest intention to split the congregation; but I have only acted in the way to which the Consistory has agreed."

I added to this the following: "I have never acted without the foreknowledge or consent of the Consistory," making it clear that way that

what the others had done was in strong contrast with what could be expected from them.

Then it was my turn to ask a question. It was this: "Are there any influences here from outside the congregation?"

The spokesman of the four had to admit he had seen the minister of Werkendam - the man who had visited me and later on wrote the already mentioned letters to me - in order to ask him how he could have a meeting of the Consistory called together.

My reply was: "Well, could not you have asked me? I could have told you straight away that when you want to arrange a meeting for something important you can always get it!"

It was a bit naive to suggest that he has taken his bike and made the trip of approximately 15 miles and back only for this little point!

MORE QUESTIONS

Then the second question that had been prepared was asked: "Will you inform the congregation this Sunday that you recall your pamphlet?"

As a sequel to the answer to the previous one this was an illogical question. No wonder that I had to answer it in the negative. However, I added: "You have always known where I stand. You have perfectly realized that you called a candidate who was known not to agree with the synodical decisions. Yet you have called me, just over a year ago. Afterwards I have told the Consistory more than once that in my ministry I must come into conflict with these synodical statements. Apart from that, this Sunday I have to deliver a sermon on Lord's Day 25, on the sacraments. Even in this sermon I have to disagree with the synodical doctrine concerning the holy sacraments."

For the third time the elder-spokesman, following the prepared lines, spoke: "Then we must decide that the minister is not permitted to preach this Sunday."

My question was: "Does that mean that I am suspended?"

Answer: "Yes, indeed."

My fellow-elder then delivered an address full of emotion. The old man was really shocked by this sort of fanaticism. He seriously warned the others that they should be well aware of what they were going to do by

suspending the minister: they would split up the congregation into two parts; they were the schismatics and not the minister!

It was to no avail. My own efforts to make it clear to them what they actually were doing were not successful either: they charged me with something that was considered so serious that, when it would be committed by an "ordinary" Church member, he would be deemed worthy of excommunication (Article 79 of the Church Order)!

When I asked them, "Do you really mean that this is the way, that you have to suspend me?" one of the elders even dared to say: "Yes, for God's sake!"

It sounded like a curse!

### SUSPENDED

And so, after a ministry of just one year and less than two months, it was solemnly stated that I was provisionally suspended as a public schismatic, on the ground of Article 80 of the Church Order.

Article 79, which says that also a neighbouring Church has to give its opinion, was completely overlooked.

I immediately informed the Consistory that I could not agree with their verdict and would not acknowledge this suspension, as it was in clear contradiction with the will of the Lord Jesus. It was my strong conviction that He had not suspended me!

### AND NOW?

What now? What, then, had to happen after this?

This was not very clear yet.

We could be sure that a small number of Church members would never accept this evil decision of the majority of Consistory members.

However, would they be able to financially support a minister?

No other congregation in the Classis was expected to "liberate" itself from the synodical yoke.

What was going to happen?

My wife and I were afraid that most likely we would have to go . . .

However, this appeared to be a matter of little faith!

The Head of the Church was there, too!

We hope to be able to tell about this in the near future.

G. VAN RONGEN  
[Pro Ecclesia]



This is an enlarged detail of a Rembrandt etching entitled "The Presentation in the Temple". It is the occasion on which Simeon, traditionally portrayed as an elderly man, sang the canticle widely known as the *Nunc dimittis* (after its opening words in Latin). The metrical version of Simeon's words (Luke 2:29-32) is found with a Genevan melody as Hymn 12 in our *Book of Praise*. In the Genevan churches of the sixteenth century it was regularly sung at the close of the Lord's Supper.



*Now may thy servant, Lord,  
According to thy word,  
Depart in exultation.  
My rest shall be serene,  
For, lo, mine eyes have seen  
Thy wonderful Salvation.*

*Thou didst for all prepare  
This gift, so great, so rare,  
That peoples might adore thee;  
A light to show the way  
To nations gone astray,  
And unto Israel's glory.*



# our little magazine

Dear Busy Beavers,

First of all, let's wish each other a joyous and blessed Christmas!

Christmas brings us joy because we know that the little Lord Jesus born in Bethlehem came into the world to take away our sins. And one day He will come back as Lord of all!

That's why we can be thankful and happy at Christmas time.

I hope that all you Busy Beavers will have a wonderful Christmas with your families!

\*\*\*\*\*

Any Christmas programme starts with the Christmas story. So here it is - as told by Busy Beaver *Joanne Jans*.

## STORY OF JESUS

Caesar Augustus sent out a message and said that the world should be enrolled. And the people went to be enrolled in their own city. And in that time Joseph and Mary got a baby boy. They went to Bethlehem and wrapped the baby in swaddling clothes. And in the fields shepherds watched the sheep. Then an angel came down and the shepherds were amazed. But then the angel said, "Why are you afraid? The Saviour is born."

Every year Jesus went to the Passover and when he was 12 years old he stayed behind. Then the parents of Jesus could not find him anywhere. They looked all over for him. So then they went back to Jerusalem again. There they found Jesus with the teachers asking and telling them things about the Lord. The teachers were amazed to find out more things about Jesus and the Lord. Then the parents took Jesus and brought him home.

Now we have a Christmas poem from Busy Beaver *Debbie Hartman*.

On a Christmas morn,  
Who was born?  
In a world forlorn.  
Jesus Christ is He



Yes, his glorious majesty.  
The wise men came  
And give Him gifts of gold.  
These wise men before were told

Follow a star to Bethlehem  
Where you will find the baby Jesus.  
The baby Jesus came into the world  
To forgive all sins.



\*\*\*\*\*

Busy Beaver *Jane Kobes* knows how you like quizzes so she has sent, for you to do, a Christmas puzzle:

## WORDSEARCH PUZZLE *Wordlist*

- |                  |           |          |
|------------------|-----------|----------|
| 1. angel gabriel | 3. camel  | 5. child |
| 2. bethlehem     | 4. cattle | 6. flock |

- |                 |                |                       |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 7. frankincense | 13. King Herod | 19. shepherds         |
| 8. God          | 14. Mary       | 20. stable            |
| 9. gold         | 15. manger     | 21. star              |
| 10. inn         | 16. myrrh      | 22. swaddling clothes |
| 11. Jesus       | 17. Nazareth   | 23. wisemen           |
| 12. Joseph      | 18. saviour    |                       |

s n z d m o s a v i o u r l  
b e t h l e h a m n d f s s  
c m y r r h y l v h b s o e  
k e a h y m f u p o i n x h  
f s d r e h p e h s e a o t  
r i r a x d s a j t q z w o  
a w n k c o l f p a d a s l  
n i r v j e s u s r j r i c  
k a n g e l g a b r i e l g  
n g c w z e s o h e r t k n  
i u k q l h x l l b p h p i  
c c g b s m a r y d h w c l  
e o a i n c a t t l e h m d  
n t z m f g i n b c i p e d  
s n u o e t d o g l k u m a  
e n v j r l q t d e l t e w  
k i n g h e r o d y r a i s

Did you enjoy that, Busy Beavers?

Well, here is another little Christmas story, by Busy Beaver *John Wendt*.

It's about one of his Christmases:

Once I went outside on Christmas morning. It was so white! I didn't know what it was, so my Mom told me a story about it. Then I knew what it was. It was snow! And at last I knew what it was. On December 25, when the Lord Jesus was born, there was 3 feet of snow.

## What does Christmas mean to me?

What does Christmas mean to me?

The Lord Jesus was born  
He came into the world  
Upon this wonderful morn.

He came into the world for us  
To take away our sin  
He was crucified for us  
For me and everyone.

And then ascended into heaven  
To the right hand of His Father.

And that was the Christmas poem from Busy Beaver *Cynthia Ludwig*.

\*\*\*\*\*

I can't wait to give you the next quiz - it's such a nice one! I think you'll really enjoy it. Busy Beaver *Audrey Knol* wrote that her Mom helped her a little bit - so we thank both of them for it, right?

C \_ \_ \_  
O \_ \_ \_  
U \_ \_  
N \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
T \_ \_ \_ \_

Abel's brother  
Ruth's son  
city of the Chaldeans  
killed by King Ahab  
father of Abraham





Y \_ \_ \_  
 J \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
 J \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
 R \_ \_ \_

worn by oxen  
 a prophet  
 called out by a leper  
 wife of Boaz

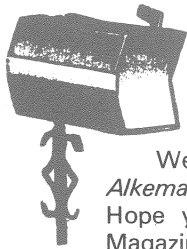
an idol  
 the helpers in the tabernacle  
 Joseph's son  
 a man of Paphos  
 a mountain  
 son of Saul  
 a prophet  
 Elisha's servant  
 the wisest king



B \_ \_ \_ \_  
 L \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
 E \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
 S \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
 S \_ \_ \_ \_  
 I \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
 N \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
 G \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
 S \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

(answers next issue)

I thought that quiz had a very nice message and was fun to do. Didn't you?



## From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Tammy Alkema*. We are very happy to have you join us! Hope you will really enjoy reading Our Little Magazine and joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. You had all the answers to the quiz right, Tammy. Keep up the good work!

And welcome to you too, *Eric Jans*. We hope you'll really enjoy being a Busy Beaver. Did you receive your membership card already? Write again soon, Eric.

Thank you for your poem *Denise Boes*. I see you're a real Busy Beaver already. You had all the answers to the quiz right! Good for you! Keep up the good work.

Welcome to the Club, *Marilyn Boes*. We hope you'll enjoy being a Busy Beaver and will join in all our activities. You're a good puzzler, I see, for you had all the answers right. Keep up the good work!

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Marion Pieterman*. We are happy to have you join us. I'm glad you enjoy Our Little Magazine and the quizzes - there are lots to do this time, aren't there?

Hello *Jane Kobes*. It was really nice to hear from you again. You've been really busy, haven't you? I admire the way you enjoy helping your Dad! Thanks for the puzzle, Jane.

Thanks for a nice chatty letter, *Betty Ann Vander Meulen*. How are your math and science coming along? What do you want to practise at home, Betty Ann? I'm looking forward to the typewritten letter from you!

Hello *Audrey Knol*. Thanks for a very nice quiz, Audrey. I think you and your mother are very clever to

make up such a quiz with such a nice message! You should have received your prize by now, Audrey. Did you?

Thank you too, *Marcia Boersema*, for a nice puzzle. Now all our math-minded Busy Beavers can have some fun with it! Write again soon, Marcia.

My, you really were a Busy Beaver, *Grace Jongs*! Thank you for everything you sent. When I get letters like yours I'm always grateful for all my nieces and nephews! Bye for now, Grace.

Thank you for the nice poem *Denise Van Amerongen*. I really enjoyed it, and I think one of these days the other Busy Beavers will too! Write again soon, Denise.

Hello *Betty Bouwers*. It was nice to hear from you again. Is your garage all finished now? Glad to hear nobody got hurt when you had the accident with the wagon this summer! You had the answer all right, Betty. Good for you!

Thank you for your letter and your Christmas poem, *Debbie Hartman*. What happened to your mother's Eskimo pictures?

What did you crochet for the sale, *Cynthia Ludwig*? I think you're clever to be able to do that! How is your sister's doll house coming along?

Congratulations on getting your Silver Award, *Peter Van Assen*. I hope you get the Gold Award next year! Do you read a lot of animal stories Peter? Be sure to write me if you haven't received your prize yet.

Hello *Jo-anna Flach*. It was nice to hear from you again. Thank you for the quiz, Jo-anna. I'll have to save it!

Thank you for a very nice letter, *Marcelle Lindhout*. I did find it a bit puzzling at first though. Did you enjoy going camping last summer with your family? Bye for now, Marcelle.

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Now that you have Christmas holidays coming Busy Beavers you'll have lots of time on your hands, right? I hope you'll have all the snow and ice you want for lots of winter fun! And here are some puzzles for you when you're inside warming up.

The first one is from Busy Beaver *Grace Jongs*. She writes that if you fill in the words correctly you will have the same answers across AND down!

### Magic Square

1. A pretty fall flower that rhymes with master.
2. the opposite of fresh and it rhymes with pale.
3. it's dangerous work for the man who lions and tigers.
4. to chose by voting, it rhymes with select.
5. In winter some flies and bugs and pests crawl into the ground for their winter

1	2	3	4	5
2				
3				
4				
5				

- |              |           |           |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. ESESAHPIR | 5. SSUEJ  | 9. OABM   |
| 2. VDDIA     | 6. ERMO   | 10. AADM  |
| 3. HISCTR    | 7. ASLU   | 11. EEND  |
| 4. DOJANR    | 8. AAABLM | 12. NNAAC |

(answers next time)

Bye for now, Busy Beavers. Have a happy holiday!

With love from your  
Aunt Betty

# Country Walks

It is still possible these days to meet people who, quite accurately, can re-tell the stories told them by their grandparents about the times when they settled and cleared the land in Peel County. Stories about the immense forests which covered these parts, the only break in this monotony being the occasional creek, river, or lake. Stories about Fletcher's and Etobicoke Creeks having an annual salmon run and woods full of game so greatly appreciated by the pioneers and about having Sunday dinners when pigeon pies were served, the servings being a bird apiece.

Searching through the old literature I have about those long gone years of the 1840's and 50's, I realized that enough wild pigeons inhabited the virgin forests of those days to feed the pioneers hundreds of times over again. The story of these birds is fascinating.

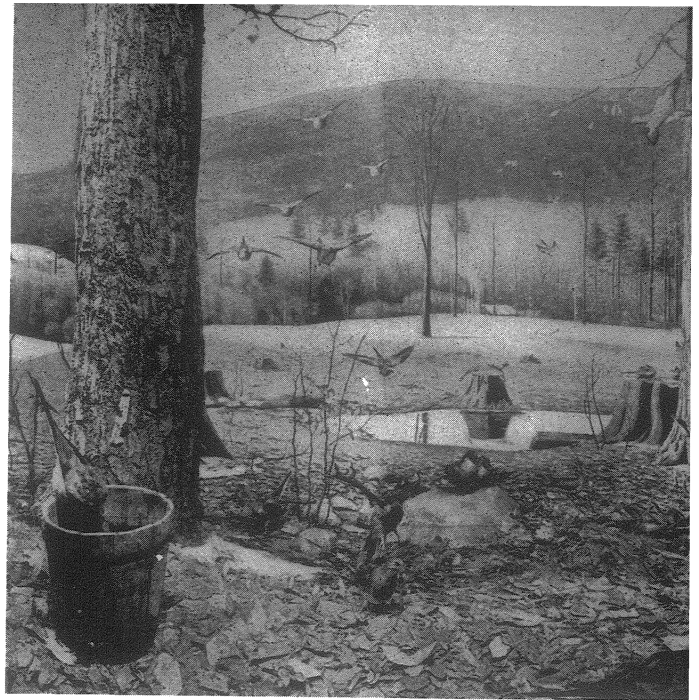
These pigeons were already mentioned in Canada as early as 1662, when the Jesuits wrote that one man killed 132 at a shot and that fishermen were able to raise their oars and knock down a sufficient quantity to salt away for winter use. Until long after settlers came to Canada their numbers remained unchanged. Great migrating flights, a few miles wide, hours long, and several layers high, numbering as many as a billion or more, used to visit year after year certain favourite districts occupying hundreds of square miles anywhere in North America between the gulf of Mexico and Hudson Bay, the Atlantic and the Rockies.

One Peel County pioneer enthusiastically wrote to his relatives back home: "We sowed our first wheat among the stumps from which the trunks had been cut and burned. Next morning, after the sowing, the surface of the earth seemed to heave with birds. Pigeons were the most numerous of all. The first herald of their approach would be a darkening of the sky, and, when in full flight, masses of them would stretch as far as one could see in either direction. They nested in a grove over the river, and just before the young pigeons were ready to fly, settlers would shake them off the limbs by the dozens. They were then considered in the best condition."

Roosting in large colonies, the pigeons during breeding season became a veritable nuisance. Each nest would only contain one fledgling, but the parents raised up to a possible four broods in one season, at different spots.

These groves were so crowded that the fluttering of wings roared like thunder. Horses were often terrified by the noise, and a man could hardly make another hear without hollering in his ear. The roosts covered many acres and in such areas trees gradually died; then, under the weight of the pigeons, rotten branches fell so frequently that it was dangerous to walk through these groves. Soon all the ground would be strewn with old nests, broken eggs, and dead young.

Apart from this stench and racket, the passenger pigeons were hated also for economic reasons. Pilferers on a large scale, flocks of them would often eat acres of grain in only a few hours. It is no wonder that these losses, after so many months of backbreaking toil, together with the pioneers' desire for a winter food supply, made farmers willing and artful hunters.



*Habitat Group: Passenger Pigeons Against Panorama of Credit Valley*  
Courtesy Royal Ontario Museum

The time to stock up on pigeons was when the young pigeons were not quite ready to fly, at which stage they were tender and plump. Farmers from miles around would gather at nesting places and, at night, with guns and torches, would conduct a terrible slaughter. Some pioneers came with wagons, axes, beds, cooking utensils, bringing the whole family and camping out for several days. They'd cut down the most crowded trees, doing it in such a way that each crash would also bring smaller trees down, causing a maximum of destruction. Barrels and salt were at hand during this holocaust, and as fast as birds were brought in, the women would cut off and salt down the breasts, leaving the remainder to rot, or to fatten pigs with.

The disappearance of passenger pigeons has bewildered many people. How could such prolific creatures, as numberless as the sands of the seashore, vanish entirely within only a few generations? Couldn't these billions of birds afford to lose a few percent of their vast numbers?

Unfortunately it wasn't only the pioneer farmer wreaking havoc; it was the professional hunter, with contracts to supply the great markets of Chicago and New York, who took advantage of the bird's gregarious nesting habits, and before his scientific methods of attack the size of the flocks dwindled rapidly.

Warning signs were evident all over but went unheeded. At the time when Ontario still had millions left, Nova Scotia, where they also lived and bred previously, saw its last one disappear in 1857. Manitoba followed in 1898, and Quebec saw its last one in 1899. The last passenger pigeon seen in Canada was spotted in Ontario in May 1902. The very last one died on September 1, 1914, in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Our picture shows a habitat group in the Royal Ontario Museum, arranged in 1935. The Credit valley near Belfountain, a small village between Brampton and Orangeville, was chosen for the panoramic background. Here people can see what the Canadian countryside looked like less than a century ago and ponder the fact that all those myriads of passenger pigeons were exterminated from the face of the earth.

COR TENHAGE