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Ideas and Ideologies ⁽⁴⁾

So far we have given more attention to the origins of the ideas of progress than to the influence which it still exerts upon our twentieth century climate of opinion. We will have to speak about the latter aspect as well. Before doing so, however, I would like to say something about the second stage in the development of the idea of progress. That second stage, as suggested earlier, was the rise of evolutionism.

For there *is* a connection - or rather there are several connections - between the philosophy of the Enlightenment and the subsequent promulgation of the evolutionist dogma. Unfortunately, it has not always been realized that these connections existed. There used to be a very widespread opinion that the evolutionist theory regarding the origins of life and of the universe sprang, full-grown, and quite unexpectedly, from the heads of certain nineteenth-century scientists. And it also used to be quite generally believed that the theory was the result of "scientific" discoveries, pure and simple. No extra-scientific influences should have played a role, either in the formulation of the hypotheses, or in the eagerness with which contemporaries adopted and applied them.

This rather simplistic view was held not merely by the general public, but by many scientists as well. It was a consequence of the long-cherished opinion that, among all the branches of knowledge, science occupied a unique place in that it was totally objective. Scholars in other disciplines, it was readily admitted, were influenced in their work by their private beliefs, or by the commonly held opinions of their age, but scientists, as scientists, were immune from such influences. Their special methodology was a guarantee for that. One might therefore legitimately question the conclusions reached by a historian, or a philosopher, or a political theorist, or an economist - after all, those people could not help being subjective in their interpretations - but one did *not* argue the conclusions of science. Its findings were objectively true.

It is only in recent times that this faith in the objectivity of science has begun to decline. This does not mean that it has wholly disappeared. To the contrary, it is still spread by countless textbooks, "popular-scientific" journals, and other so-called educational media. Perhaps inevitably so. Popularizers are often tardy in catching up with scholarship.

It has to be realized, however, that this popular presentation of scientific objectivity can be a potent weapon in the hands of opinion-makers. If they can show that their doctrines are in agreement with scientific theories, they are in a position to give those doctrines the status of truth, and so make converts the more easily. To take our present topic, the evolutionist faith, as an example: if the student and the general public can be convinced that the evolutionary theories are the logical, inescapable, and irrefutable conclusion to which an objective and autonomous scientific process leads, what else can the student or the general public be expected to do but believe it? Science hath spoken, the case is finished! Those who refuse to accept the conclusion can be branded as obscurantists, and exposed to general ridicule.

Although the idea regarding the self-sufficiency of

science is a myth, it is therefore a pernicious one. And because it is still so diligently spread I want to give attention to some of the extra-scientific considerations that may, and often do, play a role in the choice of scientific theories. Our approach will be the reverse of the one followed earlier. Then we stressed the influence which scientific theories (properly or improperly interpreted) may exert upon the general climate of opinion. Now we will look at the other side of the coin and consider the manner in which the dominant beliefs of society may influence scientific inquiry.

For our first example we will go back, although very briefly, to the replacement of the Ptolemaic by the Newtonian image of the universe, a topic with which we dealt in the second article of this series. This process *can* be described in terms of a purely scientific search for a simpler, more serviceable and hopefully more fruitful hypothesis regarding the operations of the universe. All one has to do, if one follows this approach, is to mention the ideas and discoveries of a few generations of scientists and show how these led, in the end, to the adoption of a new cosmic image, which placed the sun at the centre, let the earth and other planets move around it, and at the same time suggested the possibility of an infinite universe, containing an infinite number of solar systems.

Such a description is accurate, as far as it goes. But it does not go nearly far enough. The rejection of the old world view, and the acceptance of the new, is not really *explained* by this catalogue of scientific discoveries. Other factors played a role. Factors that had little to do with physics or astronomy or mathematics, and a great deal with the new philosophical ideas and the new climate of opinion that had come to the fore in the post-medieval world.

The fact of the matter was that there existed an ever-widening "credibility gap" between the Ptolemaic world view on the one hand, and these new ideas and beliefs and value systems on the other. It is not possible to describe the discrepancies in any detail. To do that would require a too lengthy and probably too technical discussion of the social and intellectual climates of both the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. A few salient points can be mentioned, however. Among the characteristics of the Ptolemaic universe which no longer seemed right in the new age, with its expansiveness and dynamism, were the closedness of that universe, its finiteness, and its static nature. Equally objectionable were the hierarchical ordering of the old system, and the sharp, qualitative distinction it made between the earth and the heavenly spheres. The latter aspect had tied in with the medieval belief regarding the depravity and limitations of the human race. It no longer fitted the Renaissance notion regarding man's intrinsic dignity and his near-unlimited ability.

And so, as historians of Renaissance thought have shown, various thinkers began to proclaim, long before the scientific revolution, and on non-scientific grounds, the "impossibility" of the Ptolemaic system. Not only that, they also suggested the *revisions* that should be made. Instead of limited and static, the universe was to be seen as boundless, decentralized and dynamic. And instead of base

and despicable and way below the heavenly spheres, the earth was to be seen as a "noble star", equal in dignity with the other heavenly bodies, made of the same stuff, and governed by the same laws. It was also suggested - first of all by mystics and by adherents of Neo-Platonic and related philosophies, which experienced a strong revival during the Renaissance - that the system ought to be considered as heliocentric: the sun would have to be the axis around which the other "noble stars" revolved.

These were some of the views regarding the cosmos which Renaissance thinkers held. They had other suggestions as well, and it must be admitted that not every one of their "predictions" prove to be quite so accurate as those we have mentioned. The fact remains, however, that in several important respects these purely *speculative* cosmic images *anticipated* the one which the seventeenth century scientists would construct.

Here then we have an illustration of the now well-attested fact that major changes in scientific world views can not be explained without reference to the wider intellectual and ideological context of their time. To go one step further: each epoch can, apparently, be fairly confident that it will receive the scientific world view which suits its temper and confirms its expectations. And it does not really

matter whether these views are concerned with the *operations*, with the *nature*, or with the *origins* of the universe.

To mention this is of course not to suggest that scientists merely rubberstamp what society believes, or should like to believe. After all, science works with evidence. To be serviceable tools, its hypotheses must "save the appearances", that is they must account, as far as possible, for the observed phenomena. But, as the history of our successive world views suggests, evidence can be found to substantiate theories which may be mutually contradictory and nevertheless manage, each in its own manner, to save a great many of the appearances. And in the matter of opting for the one, rather than for the other, the age's *beliefs* about the *nature of reality* play an important role. One wonders if, occasionally, they do not play the decisive role.

So much for the social and philosophical framework and antecedents of the Copernican-Newtonian revolution. For our second example regarding the relationship between society and science we hope to return, in the next article, to the topic with which we began the present one, namely that concerning the origins of the evolutionist world view.

F.G. OOSTERHOFF

Synod Toronto 1974 In Retrospect

Ever since Rev. Mulder closed Synod 1974 - it was night, even after midnight - and I left for home with an empty feeling. I felt the need for some meditation-in-retrospect.

That empty feeling is nothing else but that, all of a sudden, after having been living and working within the small world of a sixteen-man team, it is all over and all leave in different directions. "Back to normal", but that "normal" has an appearance of abnormality.

There are dangers in meditating on this Synod in public, we realize that. All too easily one may want to express his satisfaction or otherwise about decisions taken and the way they were taken.

It is the Churches who will have to evaluate the Acts 1974, and we readily leave that necessary task to them. They will decide whether it was a good Synod or not, or something in between.

Without interfering with their task and right I think I may vent publicly some of the aftermath feelings of one who has attended all-but-one of our General Synods since 1954.

A "NECESSARY EVIL"?

According to our Church Order major assemblies are necessary; some may want to say, they are a necessary "evil". There is a grain of truth in such an appraisal, if only for a part of the Agenda, to which I shall return presently.

The real life of the Church throbs in the local community, the regular work of the office-bearers, the life of the congregation as a whole, and of the families in the Covenant way. In this light any major assembly, however many good purposes it may serve, is a necessity which must be confined to the utmost limit. Our Church Order has seen to that. And we must be constantly on our guard that they do not overstep their limits. People who expect (too)

much from major assemblies, will most of the time be disappointed by their (lack of) effectiveness. If one does not find his faith-happiness in the local congregation, under the care of the by-Christ-appointed office-bearers, one must not expect a major assembly, on whatever level, to fill that gap.

That's why major assemblies should, as a rule, be as brief as possible. We must not, be it gradually, get in the direction of a General Synod sitting for such a long time that there is hardly any room between it and its predecessor and successor. In meditating on this principle, the question arises: did this Synod sit too long? Could it not have been finished in a shorter time?

COMMITTEES

The chairman of Synod 1954 was strongly opposed to "advisory committees". Rev. VanPopta and the other members still felt in their bones the damage done by endless synods in the old country, dominated by advisors and committee reports. All mail, overtures, appeals, etc., were read in plenary session, and dealt with in plenary session. But already the second Synod, though hesitantly, had to appoint advisory committees who had to prepare a certain matter for plenary discussion and decision. Some felt that, indeed, such committees were a "necessary evil". Would that we could do without them, just as we do in Classis and Regional Synod, with some exceptions (i.e. when a decision has to be formulated; it is nearly impossible to do that with sixteen people offering suggestions).

Since 1958, however, it seems to have been taken for granted that a General Synod cannot work without first appointing (advisory) committees and dividing the spoil of the Agenda among them.

If we want to be honest to ourselves, we must recognize here, to say the least, the possibility of a danger.

Such a Committee labours, sometimes for days, on a

certain issue. They come, with their four members, to a certain conclusion; they make up their mind and (and this is important to note!) they do so *before* Synod has dealt with the matter.

What do you get then?

The Committee is ready to put its advice on the table; it is read, and then Synod, in plenary session, starts the discussion, not so much about the incoming mail, the overture, the appeal, but on what Committee number such-and-such thinks about it. Before you know it. Committee such-and-such is defending and fighting for its *own opinion*.

I want to interrupt with the statement: I do not say that this is the way it always happened during Synod 1974; I only point out a danger.

To me such a Committee is only to be a servant of Synod, in order to facilitate the proceedings, to present the matter objectively, and to suggest to Synod in what way the solution can and/or must be found. Then, having heard the whole Synod express themselves, the Committee can sit down and formulate what Synod wants. For that reason it happened that a Committee came with a "preliminary report" as it was called, to sound out the feelings of Synod: are we going in the right direction? Then we can go back to our Committee room and put it on paper in decent language and form.

Synod Hattem in Holland appointed a Committee of experts to advise next Synod on "The Work Method of a Synod" (literal translation). Obviously they felt they needed such advice, their Synods growing longer and longer, close to one year; no one would have expected that in the days of the Liberation.

If we ever feel the need for such a Committee (it is a known fact that some visitors were sometimes exasperated by the slow way Synod was progressing, the volubility of the speakers), I would suggest that we get a method by which the danger of too great an influence of an Advisory Committee be cut off. There is a way, quite a simple one: Synod members are expected to have read the documents. All incoming mail, overtures, etc., is read in plenary session; then one round is given to enable Synod members to express themselves; then the Committee is charged with putting Synod's opinion in a neat form.

But, in whatever way we find a solution, never should we get the situation that Committees fight for their own opinion, sometimes against the great majority of Synod.

I think we should be humble enough to be willing to learn from experts with regard to the "work-method" of our major assemblies.

VOTING

No meeting, Synods included, can do without voting. Art. 31 Church Order mentions it as a rule.

When the Acts arrive in your homes, you will mostly find the word "Adopted" under a proposal. Whether it was adopted unanimously or with the smallest-possible majority, the Acts will not tell you. The Reformed Fathers had the (good) custom to have two votes: the first to establish the opinion of the majority, the second a unanimous vote to accept the majority vote. I think they had Art. 31 C.O. in mind, "Whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding." In an ecclesiastical meeting we should have as little voting as possible; no "overstemming" (the majority lording it over the minority) but "overeenstemming" (unanimous agreement). Without divulging any non-public matters of Synod 1974, I state that

too many decisions were taken with (only) a majority vote; agreement had not been reached. One even wonders whether two extensive, time-absorbing, rounds did much to reach agreement. Whether opinions were not already established and thus whether openness and willingness to be convinced by others was really dwelling in our midst. In minor matters that may not be too serious, but as soon as the course of our church life is concerned, we should act according to the apostolic advice: to be "in full accord and of one mind" (Phil. 2). Agreed, that is not always possible, but the willingness to be convinced, the willingness to wait with making up one's own mind *before* having heard the minds of others, should always be present in a gathering where things have to be done in the ecclesiastical, i.e. the biblical, way.

APPEALS

Finally a few words about Appeals.

We had a long list of them. Certainly there is the right of appeal, but there is also the (christian) question whether one should always use that right. When you look at the dates mentioned in an Appeal - the short time on the way from consistory to classis, from classis to regional synod, from regional synod to general synod - one wonders whether the appellant took time out to prayerfully and humbly (two christian virtues) consider whether he himself might not be wrong and the brethren in major assemblies may be right. I know it is not a binding rule - "one appeal in one matter" - but it would be good to stress the desirability.

But I had something else in mind.

These Appeals took certainly about half of Synod's time. Was it a loss, a waste of time? In many cases one must expect beforehand that a synodical decision in an appeal will not satisfy both the appellant and the meeting against whose decision he appealed. Being sinners, we all think we are the only ones who are right. And if we do not get it our way, all the way, we become obstinate, if not rebellious.

Of course, there are appeals and appeals.

Some are more "formal", and in such a case a Synod is able to check whether the rules of our church life were obeyed or trampled upon.

But how often do not appeals arise from a troubled local situation where so many factors, including personal factors, play a role! A General Synod is a great distance away from that very concrete local and complex situation. Can it and does it know all the aspects and complications? I think it can not. That's why dealing with appeals often is a frustrating business.

Even if Synod was completely right in deciding on certain "formal" aspects of the trouble of which the appeal is a living proof, it may not be able to do full justice to the living reality in a certain congregation. Result? Dissatisfaction on both sides, and the conclusion: there is no sense in going the way of appealing to major assemblies.

In one case (a public matter) Synod therefore concluded: although we agree with this and that, we as Synod cannot and should not try to solve the problems that exist in your local congregation. If you cannot solve them with the peace of Christ being your referee, how can we as Synod ever do it?

And here I put a period, hoping that these remarks may make us all aware of not only the importance but also the limitations and weaknesses of major assemblies. Stating this is stating nothing new.

G. VANDOOREN

The Liberation In The Forties

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS (9)

AUGUST 31, 1945

This day was to be the first Queen's Birthday after the liberation of The Netherlands. A day of joy and thanksgiving.

In our village, however, people had decided not to celebrate this day but to do their daily work as usual, the reason being that one of the inhabitants was fatally wounded by a shell splinter during the last stages of the war.

However, the members of our congregation did not do much work on this remarkable day.

In the early morning already word was spreading: Our minister has been suspended!

Apart from the Consistory members, nobody knew the reasons.

Therefore several people called at the parsonage to get first-hand information.

There was for example that farmer who a few days ago had promised us some potatoes - which were very scarce at that time. There he came, behind his wheelbarrow. He greeted us as usual and asked where he could drop the potatoes.

When I showed him the proper place another person arrived on his bike. This man went straight into the kernel of the matter by asking me the question: "Dominee, is it true that you have been suspended?"

Before I could confirm this bad news the potato-bringing farmer interrupted and said: "Yes, that is exactly what I came for, but I did not dare to ask you."

When they heard the reason, they were really perplexed.

They were the first ones of a great number of brothers and sisters who came to see and encourage us.

This was really heart-warming and of great comfort to us.

They all agreed after having heard the grounds for my suspension: This was completely wrong and something should be done about it.

They urged my fellow-elder - who had arrived in the meantime - and me to convene a congregational meeting, to which also the other four members of the Consistory would be urgently invited.

This, then, was arranged.

SEPTEMBER 1

And so, on the first of September, 1945, we had our meeting. It was attended by at least two of "the four" - I am not completely sure at this point.

I gave the congregation ample information about what had happened and concerning the background.

Then an open discussion followed.

All sorts of proposals were made. The "two" were urged to co-operate in arranging another meeting of the Consistory that very night. It was suggested that, if necessary, they had to go on all through the night. For the suspension had to be revoked. They, however, flatly refused to do so. From our own side we stressed the point that whatever would be done to restore the peace in the congregation, we would never be able to accept the Synod's decisions and acts. We were not permitted to compromise.

Then one of the members of the congregation rose and said: "Dominee, I cannot accept the binding decisions of the Synod either. Nor can I any longer put myself and my family under the supervision of a Consistory that is doing such awful things; I can only accept the supervision of a Consistory that is free from this evil."

The great majority of members then stood up spontaneously in order to state that they fully agreed with these words.

This is how the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ at Waardhuizen was liberated from a yoke, a strange and unchristian yoke, and set into the freedom of the Word of God again.

AFTERWARDS

We could easily fill some more

pages with the story of the aftermath: The "synodical" people after some time denied us the right to make use of our church building and even wanted to put us out of the parsonage. Our own congregation took the stand: We have brought all this together as an undivided church; so we will make use of the church both of us. However, "the other party" wanted to possess everything.

The first time they were not successful. The court concerned complied with our request for common use.

When they appealed this decision they won the case. But still this must be a load on their conscience, because they had supplied their lawyer with a pack of lies - which could not be contradicted because I myself was ill at that time and could not attend the court-session.

However, our congregation now has a beautiful new church building and a nice parsonage.

No more about this unpleasant aspect of the events.

What is more important is the fact that the Liberation of the Church had some very fruitful and heart-warming consequences.

This was closely related with the doctrinal point concerned: the sure promises of our Covenant God.

Up till then there had been some "mysticism" in this congregation, as also in its surroundings. Many people asked themselves: Is God's Word really for me, too? Do I belong to the elect, and how can I learn this? The preaching of the sure promises of God, and the great significance of the sacraments which was really becoming clear to this congregation, resulted in, indeed a real reformation. Faith flourished again. Even very old people who never had had the courage to attend the Lord's Supper came forward now. An old sister of over eighty years old did public profession of faith.

More could be mentioned. But we have to conclude this series.

However, one final remark may be made: Please, let nobody say that the Liberation of the sister-Churches in The Netherlands in the forties was no real reformation. I am very happy, that I then can point to my first congregation, where the King of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ, has done wondrous things!

G. VAN RONGEN [*Pro Ecclesia*]

WHOOP!

Did you forget to send your subscription money? Please do it now, then we don't have to send you a reminder.

Thank You

Israel - Its Past, Present, And Future

4. DAVID AND THE KINGSHIP

From Abraham, the believer, to whom the promises were made (Gal. 3:16), we came to Moses, who received the Law. And again I remind the readers of what it says in Gal. 3:17: "The Law, which came four hundred and thirty years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void." To Moses it was also granted to lead the people before the gates of the promised land. Abraham and Moses we called two Israelites rising head and shoulders above the others. Are they the only ones? What about David, the king? David, author of so many Psalms, king and prophet? Isn't he to be put on a level with the other two if one takes into account the place he was given in the history of his people, or rather, in the history of God's revelation, his reign being the undisputed highlight, the acme, of what is within reach of the people in the Old Testament?

Taking long strides through history we now are going to pay attention to the fact that once Israel had entered into the promised land, the inheritance, which the LORD their God gave them, it was granted to them to have a king, like all the nations that were round about them. Israel became a kingdom. In addition to all the other blessings bestowed upon them, this privilege, this glory, was not withheld from them.

To be sure, it took some time. The people first had to go through the period of the Judges, with its ups and downs, its trial and error, its tiring circular course of apostasy - oppression - repentance - redemption, so as to mature in view of the centuries of kingship. Their desire for it becomes noticeable more and more. In Judges 8:22ff. we read that an offer was made to Gideon, but he refused. His son Abimelech tried a kingship after the Canaanite fashion, so it was foredoomed to failure. However, the first king to be appointed by the LORD, i.e., in the legal way, proved to be a failure. We know all about the crucial point, phrased as it is in the well-known words of 1 Sam. 15:22: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams,"

and so on. To obey, to hearken, that is in other words: to believe; faith. As with Abraham, as with Moses, it is *faith* again that is going to be the decisive factor for the man privileged to sit upon the throne in Israel, to reign over the people on behalf of the LORD according to the style of the theocracy. The LORD rejected Saul as king over Israel because he had rejected the word of the LORD. Afterwards he wore out his days in misery. But then we do not hear the LORD say: Enough of this! At no time a king anymore! No, Samuel the great intermediary of his time, as far as that goes a man comparable with Moses, is called to go and anoint another king: David, the second, whose reign is to be the undisputed highlight in the history of O.T. Israel. His reign would stand out as ideal for times to come and a type of the glorious and blessed reign of the Messiah, who was to be Son of David. It was in view of the Messiah that kings were appointed and anointed.

That Israel ever was to become a kingdom was implied in promise and prophecy with so many words. First intimations of a future kingdom are found in Genesis 17:6, where it is recorded: "I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you." This is restated in vs. 16 of the same chapter in relation to the promise of the son of Sarah: "And I will bless her, and moreover I will give thee a son of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings and peoples shall be of her." The promise of a kingdom given to Abraham's seed is subsequently narrowed to Isaac and Jacob, and in Gen. 49:10 it is further limited to the tribe of Judah: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be." In this context I can still mention the last oracle of Balaam, Nb. 22:17.

On the other hand, demands are made upon the future king. I mean in the Law of Deut. 17:14ff. "When you come to the land which the LORD your God gives you, and you possess it and dwell in it, and then say: 'I will set a king over me, like all the nations

that are round about me'; you may indeed set as king over you him whom the LORD your God will choose. One from among your brethren you shall set as king over you."

As far as that goes, Israel's petition in 1 Sam. 8 is legitimate. Apart from that, however, questions arise, as e.g.: What does it mean in Israel's mouth: "to govern us like all the nations"? In the same way as other nations are governed by their own kings? With all that is implied? For example, that kings were considered to be divine and entitled to be worshipped like the gods? For that reason some O.T. scholars considered kingship in Israel to be a plant from foreign soil. But that does not hold good, as we have seen above. God had made provisions beforehand. No, kingship among Israel has a very special character. It is a theocratic kingship. However much the king is king, he always should be alive to the fact that he is but a man sitting on a throne supported by God in heaven. He is God's representative among the people, like the prophets are. More than that, the King cannot do without the prophet through whom the LORD is pleased to address himself to him, whose voice he should obey. The earthly throne stands in the shadow of the heavenly one and is allowed to reflect the glory of the heavenly throne. So it is with the throne as with the land and the promised seed; they all are given on a certain condition: Faith.

This is very clearly stated in 2 Samuel 7, which chapter is a kernel in the book and in the Old Testament. The reader knows the story. David desired to build a house for the LORD and Nathan the prophet attached his fiat to it. In spite of his enthusiasm Nathan on the spur of the moment did not behave like a real prophet. He did not consult the LORD. But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying that it would not be David who was to build a house for the LORD, but his offspring after him, who would come forth from his body, his son. A disillusionment? Oh no, on the contrary, considering things from the angle of that which the LORD is going to do for David: "Moreover the LORD declares to you

that the LORD will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, and I will establish his kingdom . . . and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father and he shall be my son" (11-14). How great a promise! In his posterity David is going to occupy the throne of Israel, the people of the covenant, the people of God, for ever.

When you come to think of how the LORD is going to bind, to commit himself to the House of David, you cannot help being surprised. Be he ever so much a descendant of Judah, who sees anything different in him in comparison with other Israelites? Yet it does not prevent the LORD from making such a pledge to this very man.

However, shall the LORD never repent? Does the LORD bind himself without any condition? No, but notice on what condition! "When he commits iniquity I will chasten him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men; *but I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever*" (14-16). In case of serious sin his descendants will be chastised, sure, but that does not take away that the promise will come true.

The rest of the chapter tells us how David gave thanks to the LORD. Please read it, and you may read in this connection also Psalm 2, which speaks of his enthronement, Psalm 89, and Psalm 132 - Psalms worth being studied by ministers and churchmembers so as to consider the history of the Bible from the right angle.

We hear the LORD God unfold His plan with regard to the future of his people, the course He is to pursue in times to come. Not simply a time of prosperity, much as Israel under Solomon is seen reaching the pinnacle of its glory - as far as there can be GLORY on this earth! Solomon, so very promising as he started his reign and so brilliant in the heyday of prosperity, was the man whose life in the end turned out to be bitter disillusionment, the more so because it was he who knew by what the throne was supported. I am referring to the Book of Proverbs. Immediately after his death the kingdom was split. Yet a

son of Solomon, that is, a grandson of David, is continued in office - over a part of the inheritance, to be sure, but, significantly, the part where the city of the LORD, Jerusalem is situated. Some 350 years later this part of the people is led into captivity. But after the exile follows the return. No, Israel is not restored to the glory of being a kingdom, apart from what was accomplished under the Maccabees in the second century B.C. However, was that a time to boast of? How soon the decline came to light!

What matters most of all is that the Davidic line was preserved down the centuries. On the way back from Babel we meet a Zerubbabel of the house of David as leader beside the highpriest. And though it is the highpriests who uphold Israel's honour of being an independent nation, at any rate a nation by itself, in that they underline the *religious* character of Israel's existence, David is not forgotten by God. His heavenly messenger Gabriel knows where the claimant to the throne can be found: in Nazareth. And it is his fiancée Mary who is to give birth to Him who will be called: THE SON OF DAVID. And that's why in the history of his birth we are emphatically reminded of David and what the LORD once spoke to him. See e.g. Matth. 1:20: "Joseph, son of David"; Luke 1:32: "And the LORD God will give to Him the throne of his father David". And as far as we, Christians of the Gentiles, are concerned, we should never reason this way: "If only the Saviour is born it is fine with me. It does not matter where and out of whom!" For it really does matter! When God comes to the rescue, He not only reveals Himself to be the Merciful, but also the Faithful One, keeping the promises made from of old. And that is what makes the future promising.

Ever since the history of Israel and the prophecy to Israel the name of David has been indissolubly connected with the prophesied restoration of Israel. The same holds good with regard to David's city, Jerusalem or Mount Sion. David's city, I say. In a certain way it was David's choice; cp. 2 Sam. 5. In the next chapter we are told that the Ark of the covenant was brought there, pledge of the LORD's presence among His people, so the LORD was pleased to dwell here. That the LORD's habitation was here: that was Jerusalem's glory so as to make the city unforgettable.

To whom? To everyone who is really interested in the history of Israel in olden times, that is first of all, in Old Testament times. To Jews who greet each other with the well-known "See you again in Jerusalem", but to Christians as well, who are not Abraham's seed as far as blood relations are concerned but the more so when faith is at stake.

For Jerusalem with its temple is not just a historic memorial, of which a scanty remainder is left in the Wailing Wall - for to have such a wall is a poor comfort - but the sanctuary, the Holy Place where the ministry of reconciliation was administered by the priests; where the atoning blood was poured out at the altar; where the sins of the covenant people, the sins of the king and the royal family included, were atoned on account of the merits of Him who was to come: Son of David, right, but what is more: Highpriest, who had been distributing the fruits of salvation centuries in advance, during all the time of the Old Testament.

It is on account of the Messiah to come that David's house and throne are spoken of as established for ever; cp. 2 Sam. 7:16; 1 Kings 2:4, 45; 9:5; Psalm 18:50(51); 45:6(7); 89:28, 29; 132:11, 12. Old Testament scholars are used to speaking here of a so-called "style of the court", "court ceremonial". That, however, is wrong. It would be poor comfort. Not on account of the way the royal household is used to addressing him, but only on account of the Messiah to come such a promise or asseveration can be given. Furthermore, we should notice that it is only David who is spoken of this way; David, and no other king. The kings of the ten tribes are excluded and those of the kingdom of Judah are all included in their ancestor, provided they follow in his track. It is not a certain person, a single member of the dynasty, that matters first, but the dynasty, the house that is represented by its ancestor: David. And whatever the prophets are going to say about the glorious future of Israel is basically linked up with the prospect held out to David. So light is thrown upon passages like Amos 9:11f.: "In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old." The people of Israel shall be shaken with a sieve

Continued on page 9

news medley

We could have described these events in a separate article, but why not do it in this column? I mean, of course, the official dedication of the Churchbuilding and organ in Guelph. If everything goes well, or rather, has gone well, we may expect another such report shortly: Chatham set January 17th as the date for the official dedication of their new building, in which they have already been meeting for some weeks. However, we return to Guelph now.

Guelph took possession of the building they purchased already in the middle of last year, but a few months ago they added the organ and thus they organized an evening at which the Lord was to be praised for His faithfulness in His children which became evident in the faithfulness of His own. It was on January 2nd that we were assembled together in the Churchbuilding on Short Street in Guelph. Personally I was quite disappointed that not more Churches were represented there, although the clerk told me that all Churches were invited by telephone. On behalf of the sister Churches Rev. C. Van Dam of Brampton spoke and compared the Congregation with the organ we heard: the pipes all give a different sound, but together they make a melodious harmony. Brother J. Schutten of Smithville spoke on behalf of the Church there and asked the Guelph Congregation how, with their relatively small number, they succeeded in having not only a Churchbuilding but also an organ! That, he said, Smithville had not been able to achieve as yet.

In an opening word, after the singing of Hymn 5, prayer and the reading of Psalm 132, I reminded the assembly of the great privileges bestowed upon us: Little could we think that the institution of the Church at Fergus/Guelph on January 15, 1956, would result in this, that there are now two Churches, both with a Churchbuilding, in both of which a pipe organ accompanies the singing of the Congregation. More than once the thought of instituting a separate Church in Guelph was brought to the fore, but finally, on January 1, 1974, the moment was there. When the exiles returned to Jerusalem, the older ones started to cry when they saw the "new" temple and when they compared it with the glory of the temple of Solomon which they had known; here it will be the other way around: when the previous owners of this building see it, I am certain that **they** will start crying when they see how beautiful a building it is now.

Mr. R. Dorgeloos, as chairman of the Committee of Administration, spoke a word of thanks to the members and others who cooperated in readying the building for use and for the presentation this evening. He then presented Mr. G. Lodder, the chairman of the Consistory with a key.

Mr. Deter Geiszler, the organ builder, presented the organ officially to Mr. J.J. Knecht, the organist, and Mr. Knecht, in turn, presented Mr. Geiszler with a cheque for the final payment. The former then gave a short explanation of the various stops of the organ and demonstrated the possibilities. Accompanied by the organ, the Choir then sang three pieces. It was evident that they have to get used to the building, for the second piece was better than

the first one, and the third piece was performed even better.

At an evening like this one pleasant item is always the presentation of presents. That was done this time, too. Mrs. J. Lodder presented some beautiful plants which received a place in the auditorium. Mr. W. Oostdijk, the previous chairman of the Consistory, who moved to Burlington, promised that, in addition to the pulpit which he made when still in Guelph, he would also take care of a Psalm-board.

On behalf of the Fergus Congregation, Mrs. H. VanVeen presented the Guelph Church with a Communion Ware Set, which was unwrapped by some of the Guelph office-bearers and displayed on a little table. It had been standing in Fergus already for several months, but we were waiting for an official evening. On the Sunday after, I was also allowed to take to Guelph a bowl with cover which matches the Set and can be used for the administration of baptism.

As Counsellor, I had something to give, too. Equal treatment for all, one should say, and thus I was privileged in presenting the Consistory with a gavel with inscription, to be used only as a symbol and not for other purposes.

All these points of the agenda were interrupted by singing as a Congregation, and after bro. K. Sikkema had led in thanksgiving, we continued with a social hour downstairs, in which most of those present took part.

There we had another evening during which the blessings of the Lord were recounted and His Name praised.

And now we had better turn to the other Churches.

There is not too much news: not only the summer-time is poor in activities, the weeks between the end of December and the middle of January usually do not show too much activity either. Yet, we have a few things to tell you about.

You may recall that we mentioned before that Toronto was considering using the facilities of the Richmond Cable TV to spread the Gospel in this manner. Meetings were held, according to the latest (stack of) bulletins received, and volunteers were invited to come for voice-testing to see whether they would be fit for this work. It is difficult to do that, for you do not wish to disappoint members who may be enthusiastic about the project but lack the abilities which are needed. I would not say that we should try to compete with what we find in the world round about us, but we are to see to it that we use the best talents available for certain tasks. If you need some fine carpentry work to be done, you are not going to ask the first brother you meet to do it: you ask a brother (if he is available) of whom you know that he can do it. It is the same with broadcasting. Not everyone's voice is suited for this work, for not everyone's voice is pleasant to listen to as such. We believe that there is a variety of gifts within the Church, but it is not easy to accept that you personally lack specific gifts. Forgive this brief "meditation". I hope that the brethren in Toronto have succeeded in finding suitable candidates and that their efforts may be blessed. We are interested in their plans and achievements. Maybe we could even exchange tapes, if these activities appear possible in more places. With our limited resources we should combine forces as much as possible.

All right, I shall not "preach" any more this time, although I will make some remarks about a few things.

Ebenezer's bulletin contained the information that the

(9:9). But the LORD Himself will take action and restore the fortunes of his people Israel. And in vss. 13ff. of this chapter you read how the future state of salvation is pictured in bright and vivid colours borrowed from that which the average Israelite could visualize in those days. Another text dating from the same time is Hos. 3:5: "Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king; and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness." Again David here is not

the David of times gone by, which would have been of little use, but "David" is the embodiment of his dynasty and eventually it is Christ. From the wording you can gather that a divine figure out of David's house who must have been meant. Isn't he put on one level with the LORD? In the same vein you meet the name of David in the later prophets: Isaiah, e.g. 16:5 and 55:3, 5, where God's faithfulness to the covenant is the underlying idea, on the ground of which the coming of the Messiah,

David's Son, can be expected. I can also mention Jer. 23:5 and Ezech. 37:24.

So, dealing with David, we did not only discuss the David of the historical books, Samuel and Kings, but the David of the prophetic books as well. That is the David to whom reference is made in the New Testament, the father of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. That was the sense of his life, his reign, and of Israel's rise under the monarchy.

H.M. OHMANN

suggestion was made to have the bulletins of the two Burlington Churches combined. That promotes the interest the members take in each other's affairs, it was stated. We find that more often, that Churches which are situated close together and have a common "origin", so to speak, have their bulletins combined. That is the case in Lincoln/Smithville, Fergus/Guelph, Houston/Smithers, and in The Valley. Personally, I always like it. On the other hand, it should not become too big, for then people begin asking for articles, and before we know it we have even more trouble to get ministers to write for **Clarion** than we are experiencing now already.

Hamilton experiences the need for a minister more and more. In his retirement, Rev. W. Loopstra still has an "overload of work involved with visiting the sick", as the bulletin has it. Thus volunteers are invited to come forward. Hamilton also has two tape recorders by now: one remains hooked up permanently in the Churchbuilding, the other can be taken out and used from home to home, wherever there is need for it.

We did already mention Chatham and their new Churchbuilding. There is joy in the Church there. There is also sadness. I read that the minister receives unsigned, anonymous letters. That is a cowardly practice. If you write something, be a man and stand for it or, if you are becoming convinced that you wrote a wrong thing, withdraw it. But to send a letter to a minister and not to sign it is despicable. Have those heroes ever thought about the sorrow they cause? I shall be the last one to say that ministers are perfect and do their work perfectly. But when a brother or sister is so brave as to discuss certain criticism with the minister, then at least there is a possibility either to explain or to defend or to change and amend. That edifies. However, I'm preaching again.

There are other things, too. One member offered to furnish the Consistory room, and, in order to prevent duplication, the Church News published a "verlanglijstje", a list of items which were still needed: if anyone wished to give something, he now knew what to look for.

We also read that an invitation was sent out to "our previous minister". I got a scare, for I thought that I had not been keeping abreast with the developments in Church life. Had Rev. Werkman moved to another Church? And did Chatham have another minister now? I looked in the Yearbook (although a new one is coming), but saw there still the names of Rev. M.C. Werkman and Rev. L. Selles. Then my conclusion was that with this "former minister" Rev. L. Selles must be meant who, wrongly so, is

mentioned as "minister-emeritus". But, Rev. L. Selles is not the "former" minister of Chatham: they have two ministers there, although the one has been given a permanent "leave of absence", so to speak, to teach at the Theological College. As Hamilton, although being vacant, has three ministers: the brethren Faber, Loopstra, and Ohmann.

Rehoboth Burlington discussed a proposal to return to celebrating the holy supper four times a year instead of six times. I hope not that the brethren are going into that direction, for it would be no improvement. What is an improvement is this: that it was decided to prohibit smoking in the Churchbuilding with the exception of private meetings. If, for instance, the Men's Society should decide that smoking will be allowed during their meetings, that would be all right; but no smoking in auditorium, corridors, kitchen, or anywhere else. The reason is not a zeal displayed by non-smokers or "reformed" smokers, but the main reason is that smokers tend to mess things up: they cannot find an ashtray and drop the ashes or their matches or the wrappings of their package of cigarettes wherever they see fit. The result is holes burned into rugs, dark marks on tables, etcetera. I cannot but support such a decision wholeheartedly (if it makes any difference to you) and wished that there were no smoking at all. One brother recently said to me that he confined his smoking to his own house and no longer took anything along when going out. "Now I notice", he said, "what you do to non-smokers!" Thank you.

Ottawa decided to remain in the Christian School for an indefinite period of time. The room where they meet is nicely fixed up and much more pleasant than when they started to have their services there. The only thing now is that the little organ they used, broke down and they have to sing with a piano. Know anything for them?

Calgary (for you might think that there is nothing else in the world than Ontario) decided to have a look at a Churchbuilding that was for sale. We have not heard any definite results as yet.

And in Edmonton something was set up to record tapes to be sent to Brazil to the mission workers there so that they, too, would be able to enjoy the fine music during the Christmas Holidays. That is a thoughtful gesture which most certainly will be greatly appreciated by our brethren and sisters there who now could have their "Concert Hall in Sao Jose", as the **City Guide** put it.

And on this musical note we sign off for today.

vO

BOOKS

"FAILURE TO VIEW THE BIBLE AS THE WORD OF GOD."

Robert A. Morey, *"The Dooyeweerdian Concept of the Word of God"*, Harry L. Downs, *"Power-Word and Text-Word in Recent Reformed Thought"*, both published by *The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co.*, Nutley, New Jersey 07110, U.S.A.

Both booklets deal with the view of the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scientific Studies, the AACS.

Upon 26 pages of quotations from publications by AACS leaders, Morey builds the conclusion, given already on page 1:

"The Reformed Community of the 20th Century is facing one of its greatest challenges. A form of Neo-Calvinism has appeared in many Reformed colleges and seminaries which threatens to undermine the historic faith of the Reformation. It is called 'Neo-Calvinism' because while it retains the traditional Reformed theological and philosophical terms which are dear to us, it has redefined these terms in order to bring into the Reformed community a 20th Century *humanistic* philosophy. Regardless if one studies the Dooyeweerdian approach to theology, philosophy, science, the Bible, labor, the church, politics, or Christian education, one is confronted with a consensus of *modern apostate* thought. This consensus is dressed up with Christian Words, but it still remains *non-Christian humanistic philosophy*" (stress added).

Quite a radical statement and condemnation of the thought and work of the AACS and related organizations!

The criticism is further subdivided as follows:

1. "Dooyeweerdianism" (this term is derived from the name of Dr. Dooyeweerd, who developed the so-called 'Philosophy of the Law-idea' and presented it to the Reformed community in the Netherlands as the first truly Calvinistic philosophy and approach to all 'spheres of life')

"denies the Biblical distinction between the Creator and the creation by inventing a third being called 'the Word of God'."

2. "It denies the Biblical doctrine of the Person of Christ."

3. "It detracts from the work of Christ."

4. "Its doctrine of the Word of God is gnostic, a revival of Greek speculation."

5. "Drives a wedge between the Word of God and the Bible."

6. "Is not Reformed."

7. "It breeds tyrannical authoritarianism."

8. "Is a form of mysticism."

9. "Will lead to a complete overthrow of Biblical and historic Christianity."

10. "Teaches a form of situational ethics."

11. "Leads us into relativism and subjectivism . . ."

Morey concludes with quoting Paul, "What harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?" and calls the AACS back from "this synthesis of humanism with Christ" to return to the Reformed faith; or rather, he calls Reformed people away from any tie with this philosophy, its adherents and its organizations.

Downs goes a different way, although at the end he arrives, be it not in such radical terms, at a similar conclusion. The words at the head of this review are Downs' final conclusion.

He informs his readers that he himself for some time enthusiastically adopted this philosophy because he saw in it the victory over *dualism* which threatens (and not only threatens . . .) Christianity on this continent. The AACS philosophy - and that's what attracted him and still attracts him - comes with the message that all of life is religion, that the Christian faith has to have an impact on *all* spheres of life, first of all on science. However, gradually he became aware of the fact that this philosophy has a very strange and confusing way of speaking about "The Word of God." By a careful analysis he has to come to the conclusion that, to the AACS men, the Word of God is not the Bible, nor the Incarnate Son of God, but a so-called "Power-Word", some-

times identified with God, at other times distinguished from Him; a Power-Word that manifests itself in three or four or even five different ways, i.e. in creation, in a book (the Bible), in a Man, Jesus Christ, in other "sacred writings" like those of the Church fathers, and finally in the preaching. Yet, none of these "manifestations" may or must be identified with "The (Power) Word of God." The latter is (and here Downs comes to the same conclusion as Morey) "something inbetween God and creation, Bible, The Incarnate Son, etc."

That's why also Downs, though in a more moderate way and still showing his sympathy with the attempt of AACS philosophy to formulate a Christian message for all spheres of life, comes, in the final pages (107, 112, etc.) to the conclusion (I here combine some of his sentences):

"Therefore, in spite of the fine emphasis upon the biblical world-and-life view, and in spite of their emphasis upon the all-comprehensive scope of Christ's Kingdom . . . it is their failure to see the Bible as the Word of God . . . they also fail to derive their view of the Word of God or Scripture from Scripture itself . . . they come to the Scripture with the presupposition that it is not the *Word of God itself* . . . therefore their view is in actuality unbiblical."

One must agree that, though the wording may be different, the final conclusion is not only identical but equally radical. If the Bible is not the Word of God, then any condemnation, be it "Greek philosophy" or "subjectivism" or "Gnosticism" or "relativism" is in order.

If there is any difference between the two booklets, it may be put this way: Downs concludes with an appeal to the AACS men to stop condemning the Reformed community and sit down with it at the same table to start "constructive discussion" in the hope that the breach may be healed between the two.

Morey calls Reformed people away from the AACS because he is convinced that the latter is a hopeless case because it "must" lead to pure humanism.

This reviewer finds himself somewhere inbetween these two positions. He is not prepared to give up all

Continued on page 11

hope for the AACS, although at the same time he fears that, if the AACS develops the way it has in recent years, Downs' hope may prove unfounded and Morey's prophecy may come true.

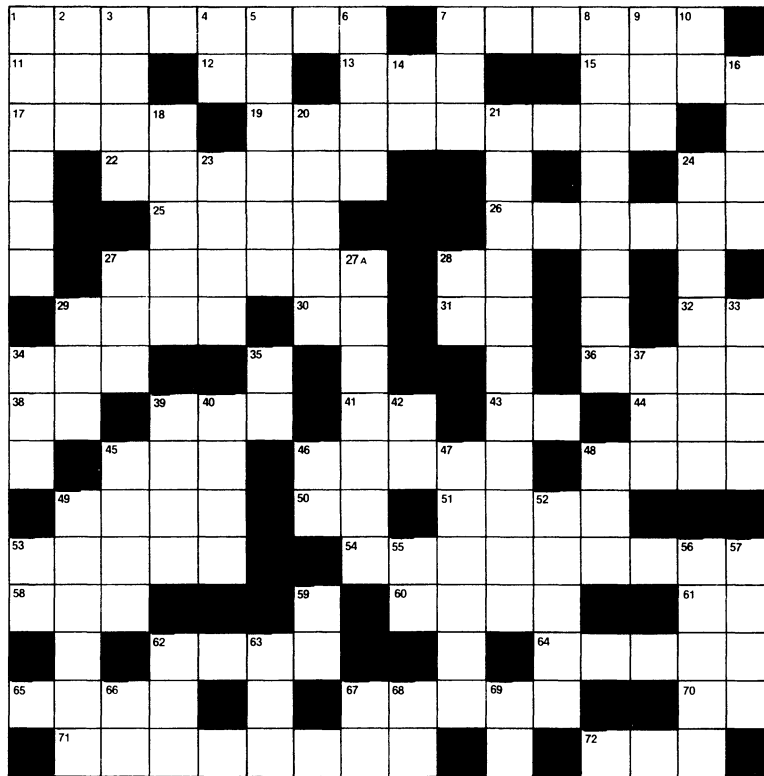
The two books are recommended to the reader, if it were only for the reason that he must be informed about the struggle that is going on. He should, at the same time, listen - not only to the critics but - to the AACS men.

One may only hope that the AACS leaders will listen to this criticism, will start to listen (till now they were not so good at listening), because, if the conclusion from their publications is true, that the Bible is not God's Word, a Power unto salvation, but only one of the manifestations of that mysterious "Power Word of God", then all is lost.

P.S. Morey's booklet contains two Appendices, one by Frame: "What is God's Word?" the second by O'Donnell, "Science, Faith and the Scholar's Use of the Scriptures." Especially the second Appendix is beautiful, all by itself worth the price of the whole booklet.

G. VANDOOREN

Puzzle (6)



DOWN

1. privilege, license
2. frozen water
3. a monetary unit
4. objective case of "we"
5. laughed loudly
6. small building for storage
7. opposite of even
8. irregular
9. not dry
10. like
14. indefinite article
16. receptacle with flat bottom
18. an object as emblem
20. mean, grasping person
21. German composer
23. gather
24. biblical name
27. Latin, abbrev.
- 27.a. British explorer, author
28. before noon
29. animal
33. a competition to match skills
34. excommunication
35. name unknown, Lat. abbrev.
37. see 2 down
39. partner
40. branch of learning
42. unto
45. watchful attention
46. 17th letter of Hebrew alphabet
47. incalculable
48. a drink
49. laboured
52. pour molten metal into mold
53. see 12 across
55. expression of emotion
56. foe
57. one's allotted share (archaic)
59. Dutch monetary unit, abbrev.
62. Florida, abbrev.
63. organ of sight
66. East Indian, abbrev.
67. daylight time, abbrev.
68. present tense of "to be"
69. either/ . . .

ACROSS

1. photographs
7. city in eastern Canada
11. of high rank
12. thus
13. past tense of "to have"
15. not the worst
17. camping equipment
19. alteration
22. parched with heat
24. musical note
25. used in golfing
26. European country
27. terminal shoot of a plant
28. in the year of the Lord
29. field with temporary shelters
30. Egyptian sungod
31. Maine, abbrev.
32. present tense of "to be"
34. baseball equipment
36. a European currency
38. preposition
39. adult human being and (French)
41. Saint, abbrev.
44. a tipped tapered rod
45. vehicle
46. devout
48. examination
49. invented steam engine
50. for example, Lat. abbrev.
51. written message
53. hurts
54. impetuous
58. mineral having metal content
60. to sharpen a knife
61. negative
62. material to produce heat
64. a miniature representation
65. a flat-bottomed ship
67. mischievous act
70. see 31 across
71. regional languages (pl.)
72. thickness in wood, rubber

G. DEBOER



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Letters - to - the - Editor

Dear editor:

I have often wished to write on this subject but will now actually do so. Even though most of our congregations do not have reserved seats for everyone, it seems most people have their own special place or "bench" where they sit each Sunday. They leave their Bibles and cushions there from week to week. Then when someone else sits there many become annoyed and show this in looks and action. They make a big thing about getting their things and that is very inconvenient. We had it once that a person even kept talking right behind us about how we had the nerve to sit where there was a "pillow". Didn't we know this was someone's place? (This was when we visited another congregation.) I wonder if this attitude is right and it seems to me that it would not encourage visitors too much. Especially someone outside of our circles. It gives the impression that you are not really welcome. So perhaps you could print this, Mr. Editor, and we hope some will look at themselves and ask if they are guilty of this. We have always carried our Bibles back and forth to church and I'm sure everyone could do this. Please do not print my name and place so that each congregation will wonder if this applies to them.

(name withheld on request)

* * *

Dear Editor:

The *Clarion* of November 30, 1974, carried an article in the Youth Column which *encouraged* friendships with godless people (even with the immoral ones) of this world, at the same time *forbidding* to keep company with a certain number of non-Canadian-Reformed believers.

It was very disturbing to read this in a magazine which calls itself "the Canadian Reformed Magazine".

Please allow me, for the sake of Christian honesty and purity, to warn young and older readers against the strange mixture of bad exegesis and impure reasoning from which the above-mentioned encouragement and prohibition poured forth.

Friendships with godless people of the world encouraged

Yes, that's what was done at the end of this article. I quote: "On the other hand, friendships with godless people of the world? Yes!" And again: "friendship even with the immoral ones of this world".

One might ask: but what is meant by friendship(s) by the author

of this article? Perhaps he simply means friendly contact with such people in order to bring them the Gospel.

Well, the writer has started his article by saying: "First of all, let us be clear what we mean by friendships. By it we refer to all friendships between human beings: social friendships, boyfriends and girlfriends and all other friendships." He further describes it, a.o., as: "Ah, you feel at home".

This is what is meant; to such friendships with godless, even immoral people of this world, are our young people encouraged!

Again you might ask: but did not the writer of this article base his encouragement of such friendships on the Bible? For didn't he refer to 1 Cor. 5 verses 9 and 11?

Yes, he did refer to that; but he did not render what it really says there. Where the KJV reads "(not) to company with", and the NASB "(not) to associate with", and many other translations choose the same or similar expressions, in agreement with the original Greek word, there the writer in *Clarion* states just like that: "We could also translate 'do not form friendships with'. It means both to form and to practise friendships."

But how about the context? Perhaps the context allows for this rendering?

Let's have a look. Paul writes that if you don't want to associate with the immoral men of this world, then you would need to go out of the world (1 Cor. 5:9, 10).

If indeed the translation 'to form friendships with' would be justified, then Paul would actually say that not forming such friendships means to go out of the world.

Frankly, if this would be true, then the undersigned has gone out of the world, for I do not have any of such friendships. I don't encourage them either, on the contrary! (although, to avoid misunderstanding, I don't mean to say that under no circumstances a certain limited friendship with an unbeliever can be allowed; but we should be *very careful* about it!).

What the apostle means is what is conveyed in all the translations that I could get my hands on when writing this letter: we may not go out of the world, and therefore we must have contact with, associate with, have company with the people of this world, however immoral they may be. No 'colony-mentality', no 'anabaptist' surrender of this world to the power of the devil.

This is however totally different from the *advice* to our young people *to form friendships even with the immoral ones of this world*.

In spite of the safeguards with which the writer has tried to surround his encouragement, it is a dangerous advice. It has to be, seeing that it needs bad exegesis as its foundation. *Keeping company with a certain number of non-Canadian-Reformed believers forbidden*

Yes, that's what also is done in this article in *Clarion's* Youth Column.

Although he still sticks to his wrong translation of Paul's words, now the author expands the meaning of it also to keeping company or associate. Why?

Well, Paul shows that if a brother in the church is godless, yes immoral even, then church discipline is in order; and this church discipline includes breaking off all contact or company, except in order to brotherly admonish the sinner.

In this connection the writer asks the rhetorical question: "Does that mean you cannot be friends with excommunicated persons?" (expected answer: yes, indeed).

But before the expected answer (with which I agree, of course) comes, *he smuggles in* another question: "Does that mean we should not keep company with those who have excommunicated our fathers and mothers (I refer to the people of synodical reformed churches)?"

The writer here applies *unclear and impure reasoning*.

Unclear: for who are meant by these people? He writes *to young people* about their fathers and mothers, excommunicated by "the people of synodical reformed churches".

These people (as far as they are still alive) live in The Netherlands; only once in a while some come to visit here. Are our young people in such a danger of keeping company with them, that they need to be warned against that?

Or, does the writer actually mean the Christian Reformed people in Canada and the U.S., with whom our young people indeed can come in contact in many ways?

Further: are these people (I quote) "ungodly members inside the church"? If so, what then is the church according to the writer? And if not so, what then gives us the right to judge and treat them as people under discipline?

Should our young people not clearly know what kind of hot chocolate is poured in the cup for them by this writer?

The reasoning is not only unclear however, but, what is worse, *impure*.

Let us for the sake of argument accept (though this has not been made clear either), that the people

with whom our young people *today* should not keep company, have indeed excommunicated their fathers and mothers; but is it about such people that Paul is writing here? Haven't the Liberated churchpeople stressed it over and over again: we did not excommunicate *them*?!

Where does the author get the evil courage from for this 'wholesale' 'interdict' (keep no company!) against "the people of synodical reformed churches" (the people of the Christian Reformed Church included perhaps)? Not from the late Prof. B. Holwerda's speech in May 1947 about "the reformation of our 'keeping company' ", nor from Calvin's commentary on these verses: that's for sure.

Mr. Editor, it is with indignation that I have read this article; and I am convinced that you as Editor owe to all the readers (among whom are also Christian Reformed and synodical reformed believers), and to the Canadian Reformed Churches (especially also the young people and their parents in these churches), a *sincere apology* for having this article published in your magazine.

With brotherly greetings,
Yours in the Lord's service,
D. DeJong
Minister of the Word of
God in the Canadian
Reformed Church at
Edmonton, Alberta

EDITOR'S COMMENT

I read, re-read, and read again the article to which the Rev. D. DeJong objects.

With the best (or the worst) will of the world I cannot read in it what he reads in it.

The question is *not* whether I agree with every word uttered, with every sentence written, or with every conclusion drawn. Nor is the question this, whether I would have put it the way Rev. W. Huizinga did put it. An editor is no censor.

The question is: Is Rev. D. DeJong right when he concludes from the article that it "*encouraged* friendship with godless people (even with the immoral ones) of this world, while at the same time *forbidding* to keep company with a certain number of non-Canadian Reformed believers"?

If Rev. DeJong were right, I would agree with him that an apology would be in place.

However, I came to the conclusion that he is not right. He even smuggles in the Christian Reformed believers, of whom Rev. Huizinga makes no mention at all, not even by inference. That is no fair treatment of an article. Further, Rev. Huizinga clearly divided his second article into two parts, a fact which Rev. DeJong overlooks in his letter.

I am not defending Rev.

BLESSED PROGRESS

With great thankfulness to the Lord we mention the following. Our missionary, the Rev. C. Van Spronsen, after consultation with the Consistory, has decided to admit, upon their request, five women to the Lord's Supper. They have been faithfully attending services and catechism classes and have shown to be sincere christians. The missionary first had chosen the first day of January for their Public Profession of the Faith, but because of cancellation of classes due to illness of several women, the tentative date is now the last Sunday of January. On that day the women with their smaller children, will become members of the Igreja Reformada de São José da Coroa Grande. The number of children involved is seven or eight, depending on the decision of the missionary after advice of the Consistory.

Although the Rev. Van Spronsen has indicated that he himself will give more details in his next report, we publish the names of the ladies: Maria Alves de Saluade (approximately 70 years of age); Noêmia Santana da Silva (55); Ester Tenorio Ferreira (55); Albertina Maria da Silva (38); Maria Auxiliadora Dos Santos (45).

In his correspondence with the Consistory the missionary wrote,

"I know we cannot judge what is in the heart of man, but this is even harder here because of the cultural difference. What they really think, feel and know is difficult to establish in most cases: in how far do we get to know these people? On the other

hand, this will improve with time when the younger generation comes to the point of professing their faith, those with whom we have worked for a length of time by then. If we read the apostles' letters we can note that a number of members of these first churches also had some strange opinions yet. Nevertheless they did not wait to become members until their whole thinking was changed.

Another factor I think we should consider is, in how far these new members will shape, form and influence the new Church. For this reason, I feel, we should require much more from a young man who turns to us: one who will be in a position to influence and perhaps in the future be a leader in the Church. These five women will never have such a position, but yet be good examples in their faithfulness."

The Consistory fully agrees with this statement. We request the Churches and all members to thankfully remember the progress on the mission field in their prayers, especially in the worship services on January 26, 1975.

May the Lord bless the Rev. Van Spronsen and the mission aid worker, br. J. Kuik, with their families in the new year as He has blessed them in the past, in order that in 1975 the preaching of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in São José may be continued.

For the Consistory,
E.C. Baartman
M. van Beveren

Huizinga's article. I can see why some readers misunderstood it. I am only explaining why I cannot comply with Rev. DeJong's request for a *sincere apology*, since

a. I cannot read that, in the article, Rev. Huizinga *encourages* friendship with immoral people outside the Church; and

b. I cannot read that, in his article, Rev. Huizinga issues a " 'wholesale' 'interdict' against 'the people of

synodical reformed churches' (the people of the Christian Reformed Church included perhaps)?"

vO

OUR COVER

The building of the Church of Abbotsford, B.C. Photo by John van Laar.

our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers

Have you sent me the results of your Christmas quizzes yet? Remember, I promised you a prize if you had five mistakes (I don't mind if it's one more) or less. So let me hear from you!

You know, Busy Beavers, how we always tell new Club members that we hope they'll enjoy all our Busy Beaver activities. I was thinking last time, "Wouldn't it be interesting to see how many things we do together?" Then I thought "I'll make a list!" Let's see just how many Busy Beaver activities we can name. And let's start with everybody's favourite!

- quizzes
- collecting for the BIRTHDAY FUND
- sharing riddles, poems, stories, puzzles
- reading Our Little Magazine
- writing a BOOK LOOK for our BOOK NOOK
- writing to Aunt Betty
- writing to a Busy Beaver pen pal
- sending cards or letters to people whose names were in our Sunshine Corner

You haven't forgotten the BIRTHDAY FUND, have you? We started it years ago. And it is really IMPORTANT, you remember. Why? Because it's a fund to collect money for a birthday present to give our THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE when it celebrates its birthday in the fall. All contributions to the BIRTHDAY FUND are very welcome! Remember what we said before?

BOOST OUR BIRTHDAY FUND!

* * * * *

And speaking of birthdays, we want to wish the following Busy Beavers a very, very, happy February birthday. May God bless you again in the coming year.

Diane Doesburg	Feb. 1	Marian Onderwater	Feb. 12
Judy Peet	2	Rosemary De Gelder	16
Brenda Beukema	4	Clara Barendregt	18
Greta Paize	6	Yvonne Van Amerongen	19
Jeannette Bouwman	10	Betty Aikema	22
Cathy Post	10	Irene Van Grootheest	24
Gary Sandink	11	Jackie Vanderwoerd	25
Joyce Jansen Van'tLand	12	Monica De Vries	28
John Wendt	12	Shirley Veenema	28



From The Mailbox

Congratulations on your new baby sister, *Grace Bosscher!* Does she smile at you already? I'm glad your bird Peter is doing so well! Thank you for the quiz, Grace. Write again soon.

How did you like your concert with the choir, *Joanne Hulst?* And how did you do? I'm sorry you missed your Christmas concert, but from your letter it sounded as if you

still had a good time. Thank you for the nice card, *Joanne.*

Thank you for your letter, *Geraldine De Boer.* I'm glad you enjoyed yourself so much during the holidays. And you did very well on the quizzes, *Geraldine.* Keep up the good work!

Congratulations on a good report card, *Tammy Alkema.* I think your teacher must have been very happy with so many good wishes, don't you think? Imagine, so many cards! You did well on the quizzes, too, *Tammy.* Thanks for writing.

Thank you for the nice poem, *Ria Hofsink.* I think it's very true, children really do like stories. I'm glad the people could still get to church by another way on those slippery roads, *Ria.*

Did you enjoy your new books, *Peter Van Assen?* And congratulations to you and *Jerold* on winning the colouring contest, *Peter.* Did you enjoy the Christmas concert at your church?

* * * * *

I think you will really like this story - poem from Busy Beaver *Denise Van Amerongen.*

Miss Lucy

Miss Lucy had a baby
She called him Tiny Tim
She put him in the bathtub
To see if he could swim.
He drank up all the water
He ate up all the soap
And left the bathroom
With bubbles in his throat.

Miss Lucy called the Doctor
Miss Lucy called the Nurse
Miss Lucy called the Lady
With the alligator purse.

In walked the Doctor
In walked the Nurse
In walked the Lady
With the alligator purse.

"Penicillin" said the Doctor
"Penicillin" said the Nurse
"Penicillin" said the Lady
with the alligator purse.

Out walked the Doctor
Out walked the Nurse
Out walked the Lady
with TIM IN HER PURSE!

QUIZ TIME

By moving four segments, change this figure into a square.

