



# Clarion

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# “For now that the Lord has arisen . . .” (1)

## ALARM!

Paul had heard that in the Corinthian congregation doubt had arisen as to the resurrection of the dead.

There were some people who did not believe the continuation in glory and renewing of our earthly life.

That had given him a fright!

They were happily but few in number, but it thrilled through him as through a military patrol-commander who in his reconnoitering expedition has met with the outposts of the approaching hostile army, and had given the alarm.

So it was that Paul had met with the approaching power of darkness in these few Corinthian Christians, a power which in his days (about the year 50 A.D.) was advancing and which in the days when John was the only one of the apostles still alive (about the year 100 A.D.) had thrown itself in full force upon the Christian churches in the Middle East.

Paul met with the outposts, but John saw the full force of the approaching army which like a tidal wave threw itself on Christ's churches (cf. *The Struggle for the Truth in the Early Church*, by Rev. J.C. Janse).

Therefore Paul gave the alarm and wrote the longest chapter of his epistles, I Corinthians 15.

He also warned the congregation of Colosse, just like Timothy, who was working in Ephesus.

Later John calls those primitive-enemies anti-christs (plural of anti-Christ).

This power of falsehood which has caused such great devastations in the life of Christ's Church is known in church history as Gnosticism (derived from *gnosis*, knowledge).

Because we see the revival of this power of destruction in our days and as we experience how strong is the suction power of this false ideology, we therefore do well in first asking ourselves: Whatever is that Gnosticism and that anti-christianity?

For that spirit of destruction is gnawing at the root of the true Christian life and it has already ruined the lives of older and younger Christians so much that they know almost no gladness and they are even question-

ing the sense and the purpose of their lives as Christians on earth.

## WHAT IS GNOSTICISM AND ANTI-CHRISTIANITY?

To make clear exactly what that Gnosticism is (against which early Christianity was forced to fight such a heavy battle for a long time) I will tell a little story which I as a student one day heard from Prof. Vollenhoven, professor of philosophy at the Free University, Amsterdam.

On a high mountaintop, surrounded on all sides by thick woods and impenetrable forests, there is a splendid royal castle. In that castle a prince is born, a child of royal birth.

On a certain day that little prince disappears. He is never found back again. But in the circle of robbers and criminals in the deep, dark forests the lad grows up. He doesn't know better but that he belongs to them.

The base world of sin and crime is his world.

Until in one way or other he discovers the secret of his life.

He obtains knowledge (*gnosis*) concerning his origin in that higher world of the royal palace.

After that, he looks on his daily life with quite different eyes. I don't exactly belong here. I am too good for this miserable life. This world of sin and baseness is not my real world. I have in fact nothing to do with it. I am a royal son, the son of a god. I am a god. In me there is "a godly spark."

This knowledge (*gnosis*) makes him despise his daily life. Yes, he does live in it and he does try to make the best of it; of course he takes part in it. "What else can one do?" But "deep inside" he is in fact free from it. For "deep inside" he isn't a sinner but a god. Just as his godly father in the high world is "foreign" to the low world in which the lad is living daily, so he himself is also in fact foreign to it, though he lives amidst it and takes part in it. It will be a delivery for him to leave this miserable, base existence to return there never again.

Keep this children's tale in mind.

Remember the characteristic elements: higher-lower world; the son of a god who is living like a criminal; the *gnosis* (knowledge) which makes him

look down in scorn and contempt on his daily life and on that of the whole world; "deep inside" there is something "godly" in him.

Then we can "touch" what is the walk in life of a gnostic. Then we are able to "test" the spirit of the anti-christ. Then we are close to comprehending "the spirit of the times" which is driving on a great many people in our days.

Add as yet some "Christian" words to it and a few biblical terms, and we understand how Satan, dressed like "an angel of light" (as if he directly came from God), is able to sow his hatred and scorn for God's creation and for the earthly life, in order to destroy it and to "murder" the life of man.

God says in His Word: "God loved the world so much that He gave His only begotten Son . . ." but the anti-christs have nothing but scorn for "this present life."

## EVERY SPIRIT WHICH DOESN'T CONFESS . . .

Of course this scorn lives in one person stronger than in the other. In one period of church history this spirit is stronger than in another. But the anti-christ's spirit is always to be recognized by: "Every spirit which doesn't confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not from God, but it is the spirit of the anti-christ, whose spirit you have heard that it will come and which is already in the world," I John 4:3.

Our Saviour came in the flesh and so He lived among us. He arose from the dead in the same flesh. As a living real Man of flesh and bones He ascended and now is sitting as "our flesh" (Lord's Day 18) at the right hand of God. He will "in the flesh" come back on the clouds in the sky.

Scripture promises us the deliverance of our body (and with it the deliverance of our whole bodily daily life).

But the anti-christs teach the deliverance *from* the body by death.

Therefore the professors and philosophers of Greece laughed at Paul on the Areopagus in Athens when he spoke about the resurrection

of our Saviour from the dead. They understood very well that this meant the recovery and the continuation in glory of Jesus' bodily life and with it the delivery of our common, earthly, trivial life of men. And that they thought foolishness!

And Paul now met with the influence of that same spirit even in the Christian church at Corinth. Some people said in a loud voice: "On this earth no man comes back."

"There is no resurrection of the dead." There is not a splendid recovery and a magnificent continuation of our earthly bodily life as real, living people of God.

You will ask: "Did they not believe, then, that the Lord Jesus had arisen?"

Oh yes, they did. "Of course" they did! But the awe-inspiring meaning of this fact of salvation for the deliverance and the restoration of our life here, they did not see.

Our restoration (so they thought) has already taken place.

They did not believe the resurrection of man, but the resurrection *in* man; namely, in his heart, "deep inside" his "soul", in the "rebirth." "That is in fact what matters."

Not our daily life as people of flesh and blood in our social intercourse with other people is important. Not important is "what he has done in his body and according to what he has done, either good or wrong," II Corinthians 5:10.

When Paul heard from Timothy that the outposts of the approaching anti-christianity were also in Ephesus, he warned his young "colleague" earnestly against it.

"O Timothy, do preserve what has been confided to you; keep yourself beyond reach of the unholy, hollow sound and the contradictions of the wrongly so-called 'knowledge' (gnosis). Some people who are mouthpieces of it have been thrown off the faith," I Timothy 6:20, 21.

In his second epistle to Timothy he mentions the names of the preachers, Hymenaeus and Philetus, "who have been thrown off the way of the truth pretending that the resurrection has already taken place, by which they break the faith of some people," II Timothy 2:18.

"Avoid the unholy, hollow sounds, for they will drive godlessness still further and their word will eat into the flesh like a cancer," verse 16.

Controversies of the so-called

"gnosis". Think of the little tale: higher world — lower world; a son of God — criminal.

## EVIL COMMUNICATIONS

Paul calls out to the Corinthian Christians: "Evil communications spoil good manners," I Corinthians 15:33. He does not mean by it the language of the street. But (mind the place of this word: in the middle of his gospel of resurrection, I Corinthians 15) he means such "conversations," "ideas," "dogmas," in which the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is denied.

Our walk of life is being influenced by it, the "good manners" of life in loving respect for the Lord: steadfast, unmoveable, being always abundant in the work of the Lord, as one who knows that your work is not idle in the Lord, verse 58.

The life made by God in creation is being broken in two. Our daily goings out and comings in fall into destruction, perish by death. Therefore it does not matter so very much. We should not be so "set on earthly things" to talk about resurrection out of the grave. Then a man is far too much attached to "the dust," to the "bodily things" that we surely leave behind when we die. Death elevates us "above sight and sensuality." Then we are happily "no longer a man of the earth."

"May I strive upward to live in You" (from "God is present," by Gerhard Tersteegen). Loose from that despicable dust. Here we taste the anti-christian spirit.

While God loved His creation so much that He gave us the Lord Jesus to deliver us from the power of death, this spirit of apostasy acts as if sin hides in bodily-material-earthly existence instead of in our corrupt heart. There lies one of the deepest causes of the withering of many an old and young Christian life.

It is easy to understand: What sense and purpose has our life here if death is the end of it and if, "properly speaking," the core of our life is really not to be found here on earth?

## PREACHING WITHOUT CONTENTS

"Then our preaching is null and void, and so is your faith," Paul exclaims, I Corinthians 15:14.

If we may not expect restoration of our life-in-the-flesh, what in fact have we to preach then!

Then Christian preaching is in fact

without contents. Then we may as yet deliver religious addresses for people that are in trouble, in order to comfort them a little, but a prospect, a future, a redeeming of our body, our life-in-the-flesh on the blessed earth, that isn't there any more!

The Christian proclamation, the announcement of the total recovery of our life and the real hope in it, has gone then!

The physician in a case of severe illness sometimes gives no hope any more. The end is approaching rapidly and is no longer to be averted. Then he still gives a little morphine for relief, but the struggle to preserve life has in fact been given up.

What has there been in Christianity alarmingly much "preaching" in this way. Intoxicating of souls in view of the miseries of hard life. I am afraid that much religious music (especially at Christmas time and Easter) means for many people such a quietening by means of conscience-intoxication.

The typical thing is: this sort of religiosity is washing over all church-walls. And it finds its power not in the last place in the so-called interchurch-ecumenical song-festivals. But the end is not to be averted: death and the grave.

Is that the preaching of the gospel of the risen Saviour?

Is that deliverance? Being forced to let loose everything at the end of a long or short, oftentimes wearisome, life of struggle, to return never to the true, full, glorious life as complete people in full communication with God and with each other on the beautiful new earth of God?

Then in fact we have nothing to preach!

Then we as Christians are the most miserable ones of all men.

## THE MOST PITIABLE OF ALL MEN

Then the unbelievers do better.

They fetch what there is to be fetched and they don't cherish idle expectations of a recovery of this life. At best they are still hoping for a so-called "hereafter" but that is in their notion so remote from our life here that it doesn't have any connection with it; yes, it forms a contrast. It is such a hazy, unreal thing that it is something quite other than this life.

Hence on one side an unheard of revival of all sorts of "Christian" religiosity as consolation-drinks against hard life, and on the other side an

alarming secularization and a "greed" to fetch what there is to be fetched. "You live only once."

Anti-christianity doesn't really believe that Jesus will come back as He has ascended. "From where is He to come then?" "Out of space?" "Where should this man of flesh and bones be, somewhere in space at this moment?"

The church that teaches this anti-christianity bears the guilt that modern man of the space age turns away from her.

In this way there more and more comes into existence a "Christianity" which does not believe in the coming back of the Lord.

For many Christians it is not in practice a living truth: His coming back on the clouds. Thousands of them absolutely don't reckon with it in their daily life.

What a really pitiable man was that poor Paul then.

For the sake of the gospel of the risen Messiah he had intentionally remained unmarried, he "died" thousands of deaths daily, he had been beaten with rods, stoned, was shipwrecked, etc., etc. "What is the better

for one's life then?" And the end for Paul? Just like what it is for everybody: death and the grave.

How pitiable: that young female slave Blandina and the fifteen year old Ponticus in the arena at Lyons, torn to pieces by the wild animals.

The same holds for Vivia Perpetua and Felicitas (at Carthage), Johannes Huss, Jan de Bakker. How pitiable: Maria Durand, who during thirty-eight years of her precious life was confined in a tower in an island near the Mediterranean: for the sake of Jesus.

And we, spending handfuls of costly money for church and worship services and for the Reformed education of the children, for the sake of the name of Jesus and the gospel of God, and the end . . . for all the same: death and the grave.

If Christ has not been raised, then we are indeed the most pitiable of all men. Therefore those Corinthians were no longer so steadfast and abounding in the work of the Lord.

And therefore many young people are asking themselves nowadays whether their daily work is in fact not idle and without sense.

#### BUT NOW THAT THE LORD HAS ARISEN . . .

The same who also has been crucified. "Look at my hands and feet. It is I Myself; touch Me and see that a ghost has no flesh and bones as you can see that I have," Luke 24:39. He ate before their eyes.

Our Saviour has become the firstling of those who are deceased. This means: in Him we can see what God has in store for us.

Therefore we are the happiest of all men.

Of course (!) nobody of us doubts the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But they in Corinth didn't do that either. And yet they ran the terrible risk of believing "in vain" (verse 2).

When I tell you: "Our queen has been in Zeeland," then you say: "That's true, I myself have also read it," and you settle to work again as usual.

But big boys in The Netherlands burst into tears when they heard a few decades ago: "The queen has been in Zeeland!" What a world of hope and delivery opened before them then! For this meant: the end of their misery in the hiding places where the presence

of the Nazi oppressor forced them to stay.

Then they could bear better their grey and wretched existence.

In this way the word of the living Saviour was heard: "I have been dead."

If He has *been* dead, then there have *been* more things.

Then passes away the whole shape of this world with its sorrow and distress, under the power of death. Who is able to overlook that?

We may say: "I have *been* ill" or "I have *been* tired." But nobody can say: "I have *been* dead."

Our Saviour has death radically behind His back and He is a breathing, eating and drinking and walking Man. He is the only Man that can fall from us never again, Whom we can lose by death never again.

What a world full of gladness that knowledge gives us!

"I live and you shall live."

What political men in power on earth, what leader of people or of a group can say that? They can promise everything "from the cradle to the grave" but not beyond that. We have a Leader who says: "I have been dead and now I am alive for evermore and I hold the keys of death and of death's domain."

He has proven that He is able to fulfil all His promises and He will presently fetch all His people out of their graves in order to live like Him.

Therefore we are not the most pitiable but the happiest of all men.

We are no sheep without a shepherd and no citizens without a king.

*(To be continued)*

P.K. KEIZER

## ANNOUNCEMENT

The Faculty of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches invites students who obtain their B.A. degree or its equivalent this spring, or who are eligible for admission via the admission examination, to contact the Registrar with a view to the requirements for application.

Students who graduate from High School and are considering to study theology after completion of an undergraduate-program, are also requested to contact the Registrar to be advised as to the B.A. program which forms the best preparation for their future study at the College.

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event.

## “DIALOGUE” (II)

Hi, how's your memory?

Last time I wrote about that unfruitful, Christ-denying “dialogue” presently going on between the so-called Christian churches (united in the World Council of Churches) and various non-Christian religions and ideological systems, like Buddhism and Maoism. Remember, a dialogue is “a conversation meant not to convince one another of THE truth, but to engage together in establishing mutual truths.”

Well, so much for that. I'll even leave my definition for a better one. This time I'd like to point to something similar, a “dialogue” which sometimes goes on endlessly WITHIN a federation of churches, eating away at the very “heart” of the churches, causing a lot of talk, but no necessary Biblical action.

Picture the situation. Let's say, in a federation of churches considerable differences arise concerning points of doctrine (and consequently, since doctrine and conduct are inseparably united, concerning the “way of life”). Differences even so considerable that they are no longer held “within the frame of the confession,” as we put it, but have to do with the basics, the very confession of the church, even the reputation of the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God. Let's say: things are taught which flagrantly contradict the Scriptures and the Creeds.

In such a situation, you can usually discern three parties. The one is radically opposed to such “liberal” teachings. Another is fervently in favour. The third doesn't really find it very relevant and especially wants to prevent “polarization.” The first group would like to exercise church DISCIPLINE over the “heretics,” the second demands complete doctrinal freedom, and the third, well . . . would like to pursue the discussion in the form of a dialogue. Talk about it, in the hope of talking it out. And that stand, in turn, is quite welcome to the “liberal party,” for it can then go on undisturbed with its heretical proclamations.

This is not a fairy tale; I'm thinking of REAL situations. Such situations of considerable differences are present in more than one denomination. Think e.g. of the “Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland” (Synodical), which have experienced a continuous controversy already for many years.

# Circumspection...

You must have heard something about it. On the one hand there is the group of Prof. Kuitert, which has overtly denied so many basic points of the Reformed confession. Two examples will suffice. Rev. Wiersinga, a student-pastor in Amsterdam, dares to write that Christ did NOT die for our sins. Others relativate the resurrection of Christ. These are certainly not heresies of insignificant format. On the other hand there is the group of “concerned” ministers and other members, of which some are finally taking the step towards “liberation,” but of which most are doing nothing but “clamouring.” But the main group is still in there, talking and talking. No discipline, only dialogue.

Last January, there was a conference in Lunteren (The Netherlands) during which these matters again received ample attention. In the magazine *De Reformatie* (March 15, 1976), Prof. Dr. J. Douma makes some remarks under the title “Dialogue in Lunteren.” Permit me to show you, by way of a few quotations, how this concept of dialogue is used in practice.

Prof. Kuitert feels that there is no other way “to truth and unity than the long road of the dialogue WITHOUT FORCE” (emphasis is *Cid's*). Those churches which still (!) try to exercise discipline, he says, will inevitably “explode.” An example of such an explosion, of course, is the “Liberation,” a real wartime bang! No force, no discipline. Yet Prof. Kuitert wishes to maintain that the “dialogue” is not the same as “doctrinal freedom,” but rather a “road to truth.” As if THE truth has not yet been revealed by God, given to the Church and confessed by all its members.

Subtle distinctions. But Prof. Douma warns against “being fooled” by this distinction, since the dialogue in those churches certainly involves nothing else than complete “doctrinal freedom.” Under the excuse of a dialogue, the Bible has been criticized and the Creeds have been refuted for many years already, without any real discipline whatsoever. What was so hastily imposed during the time of the Liberation, is now lacking completely.

I hope you get the point. The internal dialogue within some churches,

the refusal and/or the inability to exercise church discipline over those who are clearly unruly in doctrine or conduct (or both), the endless debate is creating “havoc” in many churches which like to call themselves “Reformed.” The “marks” of the church are forgotten, the one theory leads to another, the one debate starts another, much talk, but no real action. Such a dialogue, I'm sure, is the DEATH of a church.

And I see the danger of such an unfruitful dialogue, which does not reckon with the established truth of God's Word, arising also on our continent, e.g. in the Christian Reformed Churches. There are quite some controversies going on there, over much the same topics as in the Dutch Gereformeerde Kerken (Synodical). With perhaps the SAME basic cause. As Rev. P. de Jong writes in *Outlook* (February 1976), “Our increasing denominational troubles are steadily driving us to face the fact that the issue underlying all the rest of our problems is the question whether or not we are going to believe and obey the Bible as wholly the Word of God.” If that is indeed the case, Reverend de Jong, then beware of the mire of the modern dialogue, because it is a devouring quicksand, dragging many down into the bondage of humanistic theology.

Certainly, sometimes a “dialogue” is necessary, fruitful and edifying. I gladly admit this. If we are discussing points “within the frame of the confession,” go ahead, talk all you want and as long as you want! Then there is a certain “freedom” which we should not take away. And we must be very careful not to condemn others hastily who think differently on certain points. Sometimes MORE dialogue, more brotherly conversation, would increase mutual understanding and decrease problems within the churches.

Yet it must be a dialogue with discipline. If all parties place themselves voluntarily under the discipline of God's Word and bind themselves joyfully to the same confession in word and deed, a dialogue is invaluable. If not, forget it.

You see, a dialogue without discipline is like a church without a Bible.

*Cid*

# UNIONISM

(Last of three parts)

## 3. THE TWO VIEWPOINTS COMPARED

In this third part we will compare the viewpoint of the Scriptures about labour with the viewpoint of unionism about labour. The question which faces us is whether membership in secular unions conflicts with membership in the church of Christ. Does allegiance to the constitution and King of the Kingdom of God rule out allegiance to a union and its leaders? In our comparison we will focus on seven areas of conflict. Yes, I believe the two viewpoints clash.

### A. SECULARISM

The Scriptures state that all of life is religious for the Christian. At his job the believer serves His Lord Christ, and not man in the first and last place. There on the job, as prophet, priest, and king, he must apply the laws, promises, and obligations of the constitution of God's kingdom.

Unions oppose this. Religion should not interfere with one's work. You should keep your religion to yourself, at home or in the church building. Do not bring it to work. Religious discussions are not appreciated at unionized places. Jesus Christ as Lord and King is not the welcomed Head of unions, either local or international.

Therefore union membership will necessarily choke out your active faith as a servant of Christ. Unionism will ultimately try to put the stranglehold on the good news that announces that Jesus Christ is Head over all things and that all should confess He is Lord and Christ.

### B. PLEDGES

If you want to become a union member you first fill out an application form. Once accepted, you receive copies of the Constitution, By-Laws and Ritual. You are told to read them and to familiarize yourself with them. Moreover, one must swear total allegiance to past, present, and future laws of the union in many cases.

This is an unacceptable practice for the Christian, since it involves blind obedience. The Scripture exhorts us:

Examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every appearance of evil (I Thessalonians 5:21, 22).

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God . . . (I John 4:1).

How can you apply this test of Scripture in the case of union-membership? After you are accepted, then you are given the documents to test. That is too late. Moreover, how can a Christian swear allegiance to laws MEN will make in the FUTURE? Again, this violates our allegiance to God's Word, since we cannot test such future unknown laws now. Clearly, such unions ask more than a believer can pledge.

It remains to be seen if other parts of union statutes conflict with our pledge to the covenant God.

### C. ALLEGIANCE TO UNION PRESIDENT

As we saw, the pledge of loyalty to a union involves submission to the decisions and statements of the union president. Moreover, if the majority votes for a decision (to strike, for example), then you MUST comply even though you conscientiously oppose it.

Our Belgic Confession reads as follows:

Neither may we consider . . . the great multitude (the majority vote — WH) . . . decrees or statutes, as of equal value with the truth of God, since the truth is above all, "for all men are of themselves liars, and more vain than vanity itself" (Article 7).

Clearly, union membership brings us into conflict with our confession. We may not blindly follow majority decision, nor may we blindly elevate the decrees or statutes of a mere man to the position of the Word of God.

### D. CLASS STRUGGLE

Unionism advocates and propagates the class struggle between workers and bosses. Workers, proletariat, unite! Unite and organize so that you may have the power to enforce your interests over against the capitalists. As we saw in the second part, this breeds antagonism, clashes, strikes, and violence.

The Scriptures know of no such class struggle. Frequently the prophets denounced the money-hungry Israelites who used unscrupulous means to fill their purses. And remember how James howled against the rich bosses who kept back the pay of the labourers (5:1-6). Paul tells the masters not

to threaten their servants, since both worker and boss have one Master in heaven (Ephesians 6:9). On the other hand, the Scriptures teach the workers to work heartily and sincerely for their bosses as unto the Lord. Instead of a class struggle the Scriptures preach a state of COOPERATION and HARMONY between workers and bosses on the basis of faith in Christ and love to God.

As a result a believer could not pledge to seek the interests of a union, seeing that this involves him in a class struggle which the Scriptures denounce and fight against.

### E. GREED

Union constitutions openly declare that they want higher (definitely not lower) wages, shorter hours, and improved working conditions (USWA, article 2, second point, p. 3; UA, section 207, p. 96; UAW, article 2, section 1, p. 4). Their contract demands reflect this stance. Often ridiculous and outrageous wage demands or fringe-benefits are asked.

The Scriptures teach us to be content with our wages, to work six days a week and not to be greedy for gain. The GREEDINESS or LUST for money is the root of all evil, says the Scripture.

As you can tell, the outlooks clash. They are completely different. Again, union membership diametrically opposes the viewpoint of the church and church-members.

### F. RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY — STRIKES

Unionism preaches respect for the boss, the authority-bearer over the workers (or is it the union who is boss?), only when the boss meets their contract demands. If a contract settlement is impossible, then union members can and often do go on strike. This is pure revolution. Union members must thereby reject the authority of their employer. In fact, in this revolution the workers seize the authority. They give the orders now. They will tell the boss what to do. Either he meets our demands or his business stands idle and if necessary his business will even collapse.

God's covenant law teaches differently. In the fifth commandment God deals with authority in general and with parental authority in particular. Your confession summarizes God's teaching as follows:

104 Q. What does God require in the fifth commandment?

A. That I show all HONOUR, LOVE, AND FIDELITY . . . TO ALL IN AUTHORITY OVER ME; submit myself with due obedience . . . and also BEAR PATIENTLY with their weaknesses and shortcomings, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand.

To strike is to revolt against the boss whom God set in authority over us. That would bring us in open violation of the covenant law of our God.

Moreover, a strike has far-reaching repercussions. Consider the "sympathetic strike within the association" (UA, section 206). If the union approves a strike against a certain employer in one place, all other local unions belonging to the same union and who work for the same employer must debar their members from working until the dispute has been adjusted. Here you see how the unions are involved in a power struggle, a lust for power. Or consider the fact that at one plant or location one body of unionized workers often has to honour the picket lines of another body of striking workers. For example, a couple of hundred striking workers at Douglas Point, Ontario, recently caused over 4,000 other union workers to honour their picket lines. In other words, one's neighbours must suffer loss of wages because some strikers have revolted. We have not even mentioned how this inconveniences, often upsets and disturbs, the whole economy. Is this not STEALING from others through illegal means? Do strikers not steal their bosses' and others' livelihood?

Compare this to what we confess:

That I (must) FURTHER my neighbour's profit wherever I can or may, deal with him as I would have others deal with me, and labour faithfully that I may be able to relieve the needy (Heidelberg Catechism, Answer 111).

And how can we square this confession with the union practice of closed shops whereby unions deny non-union workers a place to work? Either you join the union or you are free to move on! In many occasions employers gave in to the unions' demand to hire only unionized people, even though the Canadian Bill of Rights guarantees freedom of association and religion, even though our human rights codes forbid discrimination because of creed, and despite the fact that Canada endorsed the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which declares that "everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employ-

ment" and "no one may be compelled to belong to an association." Yet closed shops are tolerated. Are our laws mere scraps of paper?

How good and wholesome is God's law forbidding "envy, hatred, and anger" while commanding us to love our neighbour as ourselves (Answer 107, Heidelberg Catechism).

We could mention more, but this had better end our comparison between the two viewpoints of Scripture and unionism on labour. From the foregoing comparison we can only conclude that allegiance to the Constitutions, By-Laws and Rituals of secular unions CONFLICTS with a believer's allegiance to the constitution of the Kingdom of God. We cannot be loyal to a secular union and its laws and simultaneously remain loyal to Christ. Unions express more the mind and ways of the beast of Revelation 13, the powerful agent of Satan, than the mind and ways of Christ. Indeed, the unions oppose the "mind of Christ" and the ways of God.

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said . . . Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate, says the Lord. And do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty (II Corinthians 6:14-18).

One central thing which our survey about unionism should show is that without faith in God and obedience to His Word a country commits bankruptcy in more ways than one. Only the Word of God and the Holy Spirit who converts hearts can fight the lawlessness of unionism which increases in our land. Only a reformation, a return to God's Word, is the answer, also for labour.

W. HUIZINGA

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# school X crossing

## PRAYERS NEEDED!

By now everyone must be aware of the fact that many of our schools are in trouble. Not only the schools that have been operating for some years but also the ones that are planning to open wide their doors next September like London and Winnipeg. What is the problem? Why are we in such need of prayer? Are we not more in need of teachers? Well, that is exactly the point. We are short of teachers! And unless we will find some really soon, some children may be forced back to the public school. That would be a shameful situation. Therefore we need to PRAY first of all! We do not need teachers first of all. What we need more than that is PARENTS who take this need to heart and not only to heart, but in their family prayers to the LORD, from whose hand we expect all things. The good as well as the bad. See Lord's Day 10. We believe in Providence, don't we? But to us that is not something very vague. It is the Providing Hand of our Heavenly Father. And from that Hand of our Father we receive teachers. But that Hand of the Father may also close itself against

us and withhold from us the staff we need to instruct the children.

Therefore, parents must pray that God's Hand may open itself to us. But not only the parents must do so. Also the CHILDREN! They may not be so much aware of what is needed to operate a day school. They may have no idea what it costs Mom and Dad and many other brothers and sisters in the congregation, to run a school. But should they not be involved? Should they not know what we are up against? Should we not teach them also that the LORD will grant us in His grace the teachers and principals we need? Father, have you talked to your son about this need lately? Mother, have you discussed this with your daughter recently?

And yet, we should not stop here. Not only the parents and the children, but the WHOLE CONGREGATION should pray that the LORD will bless the efforts to obtain the required staff members. Are we members of one another or are we not? Why should the congregation be involved all together when it comes to building a church building (usually much more

Continued on page 142.

# press review

## DECISIONS IN REFORMED SOUTH AFRICA

In this Press Review attention will be paid especially to decisions made by Synods of Reformed Churches in South Africa with respect to relations with the Synodical Reformed Churches in The Netherlands. I take the information from issues of NEDERLANDS DAGBLAD. First there is the decision of the Synod of the Reformed (Dopper-) Church. About this the readers were informed (in the issue of Tuesday, January 27) that:

The general synod of the Reformed (Dopper-) Church in South Africa, at the moment meeting at Potchefstroom, has decided, with about 140 votes in favour and 30 against, to definitively break the bonds of correspondence with the (syn.) Reformed Churches in The Netherlands. It came to this decision on primarily theological grounds.

The literal text of the decision of the synod reads: "Synod 1976 of the Reformed Church in South Africa observes with deep sorrow that the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands are no longer one in doctrine, worship, and discipline with the Reformed Church in South Africa. It further observes that the Dutch churches have broken the correspondence in the stricter form, through their actions."

The central point in the discussion on this matter was the fact that within the (synodical) Reformed churches in The Netherlands doctrinal errors like those of Prof. Dr. H.M. Kuitert and Dr. H. Wiersinga are tolerated. Some delegates asked themselves the question whether enough patience had been exercised with the Dutch churches, and whether they had been admonished sufficiently. Over against this, others stressed that the Dutch churches were already admonished since 1967, and that, in spite of this, no disciplinary measures were undertaken against men like Kuitert and Wiersinga. In this connection Prof. C. Coetzee of Potchefstroom used the image of a little piece of leaven which leavens the whole loaf of bread. The situation within the Dutch churches has not improved since 1967 but worsened, according to him and others.

The political difficulties between the two churches — particularly the support given by the (synodical) Reformed churches

to the so-called anti-racism fund of the World Council of Churches — played a very minor role during the discussions. Several members of the synod protested when the Dutch representative, Dr. C. Mak of Hengelo, argued that this fund for the so-called liberation movements in Southern Africa is exclusively used for humanitarian purposes.

In a concluding paragraph we read:

The Dopper synod will also still have to deal with a request for correspondence of the Reformed churches (Liberated outside-the-confederation) in The Netherlands, and with a letter of the last held general synod of the Reformed churches (Liberated) in Kampen.

Before we continue with a decision of another Church, the Dutch Reformed Church, (The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk), a few historical notes may be of interest. After governor Jan Van Riebeeck had come to South Africa to set up the Cape Colony for the East India Company, in 1652, the first Reformed church was instituted there in 1665. In 1688 Huguenots from France, fleeing from the persecutions there, settled in South Africa and joined the Dutch colony and church. These churches belonged to the Dutch churches through the classis of Amsterdam, which kept up the correspondence. When The Netherlands became a part of France in 1795, South Africa was taken over by England. The churches adopted a church order which was rather similar to the one which the Dutch churches got in 1816, and which gave the national government the authority over the churches. In 1843 the Churches in South Africa returned to the presbyterial-synodical church order and became independent from the British government.

In the meantime a number of "boer"-families had gone to more northern regions, Transvaal and Orange Free State. They wanted to be free from English supervision. They were called "Doppers," which was meant as a nickname, indicating their stubbornness. For another reason why they went away from the Cape colony was that they did not want to sing hymns, which were introduced into the churches from The Netherlands.

The reader will remember that the compulsory singing of hymns played also a role in the struggle in The Netherlands that led to the Secession. In 1853 the churches in Transvaal formed the Nederduits *Hervormde* Kerk, independent from the churches at the Cape. In 1857 the Rev. Durk Postma was sent to Africa by the synod of the churches of the Secession in The Netherlands to establish contact between the churches in the two countries. However, he did not return but stayed in Transvaal. Two years later, in 1859, a number of the Doppers came to the conclusion that they could not maintain unity with the Nederduitse *Hervormde* Churches in Transvaal. One of the points was the matter of the singing of hymns. These Doppers, then, formed the Reformed churches (the Dopper churches) in South Africa. They returned to the old Church Order of Dort. In the upbuilding of the Dopper churches the Rev. Postma and his sons and grandsons, of whom many also served in the Ministry, took a great part. President S.J. Paul Kruger was a member of these Dopper churches. Right from the beginning these Dopper churches did much for Christian education. They established a Reformed university in Potchefstroom. And these are the churches which have now terminated the correspondence with the Synodical Reformed churches in The Netherlands.

The Synodical churches did not only have a sister-relationship with the Dopper churches. There were also close ties with the Nederduitse Gereformeerde (Dutch Reformed) churches. And these ties are in danger of being terminated as well. We read in NEDERLANDS DAGBLAD of Tuesday, February 24:

After the General Synod of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk addressed an ultimatum to the (Synodical) Reformed churches in The Netherlands already in October 1974, the full moderamen of this synod now decided that this ultimatum will end on April 2. In its meeting at Pretoria [the moderamen] took note of the actions of its delegates who visited The Netherlands in November 1975. With appreciation note was also taken of the fact that the Dutch synod paid ample attention to the doctrinal controversies within the Dutch churches, as well as of the here and there noticed opposition against the support for the anti-racism-fund (PCR-fund — Program to Combat Racism Fund) of the World Council of Churches. From what follows in the decision of the NG-moderamen it appears



clearly that the PCR-fund is the main breaking point. This is in contrast with the recent decision of the Dopper church in South Africa to break the ties, which was clearly of a confessional nature. The decision of the NG-church is thus more politically directed . . . .

After the meeting had concluded, Dr. D. Beukers, moderator of the NG-church, declared to our correspondent in a telephone interview that the decision was mainly directed against the support to the PCR-fund, "because a definite final date could not be established for the confessional matters." He expressed the hope that the Dutch churches would listen to the call and that thus the ties with his church could be maintained.

The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk or NG-church) has three Reformed daughter-churches in South Africa, established through its mission work. There is a church of the Bantus, a negro tribe; there is an Indian church, of people who originally came from India and were brought to South Africa by the English; and there is a church of colored people (kleurlingen) who are of mixed race. About them we read in the last mentioned article:

As for the attitude of the black daughter churches of the NG-church, Dr. Beukers is of the opinion that these churches have to determine their own attitude, being independent churches. He pointed out further that some representatives of these churches have already declared in The Netherlands that they will continue to maintain the ties with The Netherlands in spite of the decision of the white church . . . .

Thus the decision concerned can have great influence on the mutual relations between the four NG-churches. While during the past weeks informal talks were held between white and black delegates about closer unity, this unity now could fail because of the support of the Dutch churches to the PCR-fund. In this connection one can point to the statement made in Potchefstroom by the Rev. C. Mak, president of the synodical Reformed synod, that withdrawal of the support of his church to the PCR-fund can be interpreted by the not-white churches as a capitulation to white pressure. So it is clear that all churches concerned are in a dilemma with respect to the PCR-fund.

At the end of the article the remark is made that:

All in all the year 1976 will have an important place in the Church history of South Africa.

Early in March the synod of the synodical churches in The Netherlands decided to postpone the decision about

the PCR-fund to the end of May or the beginning of June. And one of the delegates to this synod from one of the daughter churches of the NG-church has declared that he expected that the white NG-church would also postpone the termination of its ultimatum.

All this can have wider consequences. In NEDERLANDS DAGBLAD of February 26 we read:

The coming quadrennial meeting of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES), to be held in August in Capetown, promises to become one of the most interesting ones in the history of this organization. Observers consider it not impossible that the unavoidable collision between the (synodical) Reformed churches in our country [The Netherlands] and a number of other member churches will be so fierce that the organization could collapse.

The RES, which was established by three American churches in Grand Rapids, in 1946, has as its goal to carry the Reformed faith out into the world. At the moment there are 37 member churches of Reformed persuasion . . . .

Much time [at the meeting in Capetown] will undoubtedly be taken up by the discussion about the relation between the (synodical) Reformed churches in our country [The Netherlands] and the other member churches of the RES, which are mostly more conservative in doctrinal respect. The theological course of the Dutch churches has already caused heated discussions before within this organization. Much commotion was particularly raised by the synodical Reformed membership of the World Council of Churches since 1968.

Already in 1953 the RES had declared that it deserved recommendation not to become member of the World Council. However, sanctions were not (yet) connected with double membership. Also in 1968 the RES expressed itself sharply against membership in the World Council.

The discussion on the synodical Reformed membership of the RES received an extra dimension now that some other member churches of this organization have decided to break the correspondence ties with the synodical Reformed churches. In 1974 already, the American Orthodox Presbyterian Church decided to do this, and at the beginning of this year the South African Dopper Church broke all ties with The Netherlands. It is expected that within a short time a break will also occur with the white Dutch Reformed church in South Africa. Also at the coming synod of the Australian Reformed Churches, in May, the relation to the Dutch churches will be an important point of the discussions.

Observers expect that these churches

one by one will insist on a break of the RES with the (synodical) Reformed churches. However, concrete proposals in this direction are not on the table yet. The Reformed Churches in New Zealand, which also in 1974 already decreased the ties with the (synodical) Reformed churches, have proposed to the meeting in Capetown to consider "whether the RES membership of the Reformed Church in The Netherlands is compatible with article 5 of the constitution of the RES." In this article it is said, among other things, that only those churches can be members, which carry out and maintain the Reformed faith, and which show the marks of the true church.

So far this review. It is long enough already, so that a report on another Reformed synod, held a short while ago in South Africa, has to wait for a next time.

J. GEERTSEMA

## News from the College

It is already some time ago that I reported a gift for our Theological College but I would like to mention together the following gifts:

First of all a bill of 1,000 guilders handed over to me during a memorable evening in Toronto. It was from a couple from Bunschoten-Spakenburg; they wanted to remain anonymous but if I tell that they are called Koelewyn, then nobody yet knows who they were because of the many Koelewyns in Spakenburg. The following gift was of a brother in the neighbourhood of Hamilton. Henk, we are very thankful for your offering of \$10. Visitors from Abbotsford left \$5 in our building, while from a brother and sister "living in the dispersion" we received a cheque of \$50. We are very thankful for your tokens of sympathy and, now that spring has come, we gladly invite you to show our College to your guests. Until the end of May, lectures are given during the morning hours, while in the period from July 5th through July 23rd the building will be used for the teachers' course, so that tours of the building are then only possible at night or on Saturday. We are very glad that since the beginning of March our College community is enriched by a full-time secretary, Miss Anne van Sydenborgh. She will also act as hostess in and guide through our building.

J. FABER

### OUR COVER

*At the Bellingham waterfront, State of Washington, U.S. members of the Abbotsford Church are quite familiar with this area. Photo by John Van Laar.*

# news medley

Last week a package arrived from Premier Printing and as soon as I saw it I knew what was in there: the new Yearbooks. Yes, I was right. You can understand that they were eagerly unwrapped and that one was the object of close scrutiny.

We do not have to say anything about the outward appearance: it is in the line of what we are used to seeing coming forth from Plessis Road, Winnipeg. I noticed that the sub-headings (the lines underneath the names of the various Churches) have not yet been "unified" so to speak. I still find the address of Rehoboth Burlington right below the name, whereas we usually find the address of the Church under the heading "Consistory." Here some improvement could be achieved.

I do not know whether that is caused by omissions in the information provided by clerks or others responsible for that, but there should be equality among the ministers of the Gospel, as we state in our Church Order. Those who received their degrees in The Netherlands usually have no possibility to express that in equivalent Canadian initials, but we also have ministers who have obtained their degrees here. I saw it duly registered: doctor's title, doctoral examination, master's degrees, they are all neatly mentioned. But it was not indicated that there are among our ministers also two with a Bachelor of Theology degree; three who have a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Divinity degree; and two who have a Bachelor of Divinity degree. It does not take anything away from the qualifications of those who obtained their degree in The Netherlands when the official academic standing is indicated by the proper initials. It is not necessary for our own membership to include them in the Yearbook information, but I think that it would only be proper to bring the Yearbook up to par also in this respect.

There are a few more things that should be changed.

Prof. L. Selles is not the "former" minister of Chatham, he simply is a minister of the Chatham Church. Professors Faber and Ohmann are not "ministers emeriti" of the Hamilton Church, they simply are ministers of that Church. It was on purpose that the whole nonsense of declaring a minister who became professor of theology "minister emeritus" was avoided by the Orangeville Synod of 1968.

I noticed that the address of the Rev. A.B. Roukema is incorrect. Please change that to P.O. Box 293, 2071 Highway 7 West, Concord, Ontario. Telephone (416) 669-1859.

Although Premier Printing requested to include the postal code, there are still quite a few addresses in this new Yearbook which have no postal code added to them. Was it really such a big trouble to add that to the information provided? It is marvellous to receive the wholehearted cooperation of the membership!

From the statistics (a favourite tool in the hand of socialist planners and an indispensable item in **their** system, not in ours fortunately!) we learn that the total membership of the Churches increased by about 2½%. In view of the fact that various religious groups complain of a tremendous **decrease** in membership, it is something to be

thankful for that there is at least some growth. Yet I have the impression that this does not even represent the total number of births in the midst of the Churches. Then I even forget about possible addition via immigration or the acquisition of membership by those who were no members before. My conclusion is that there were too many cases in which members broke with the Church for all sorts of reasons. Thus this figure should render us humble and keep us on our toes.

In spite of the almost weekly changes in membership as reflected in the bulletins, there is one Church that has succeeded in retaining exactly the same membership and the same ratio of communicant and non-communicant members since 1974; that is the Ebenezer Church in Burlington. Forsooth, that is a noteworthy fact and something which will not easily be equalled!!

Since I am speaking about publications anyway, let me tell you that I received word from the Vonkenberg Study Aids (I.L.P.B.) that the booklet **Your Ecumenical Task** by the late Dr. K. Schilder is now available at 70 cents each, with 10% discount for orders over 10 copies. In the News Medley of May 17, 1975, I already spoke of this booklet and I hope that many will buy it.

Being in the southern part of Ontario anyway with the ILPB, we tell you that in Hamilton seven requests for reserved pews were received, and that the Consistory lis-

## 40th Wedding Anniversary



*Mr. and Mrs. Hendrik Van Egmond will celebrate their 40th Wedding Anniversary, D.V., on April 30, 1976. They were married in Rynsburg and immigrated to Canada in June 1951. They settled in Fenwick, Ontario where Mr. Van Egmond and his oldest son started working for Prudhomme's nursery. It was in their home in Fenwick that the first board members were appointed for our Canadian Reformed school.*

*In 1956, they moved to Smithville, where they still reside. Their marriage was blessed with 11 children, 4 girls and 7 boys, of which 10 were born in The Netherlands and one in Canada. The Lord took unto Himself one infant son while they still lived in The Netherlands, and in Canada, a boy at the age of 3, and later another boy at the age of 25.*

*Mr. Van Egmond has been semi-retired for the past 2 years. They both enjoy visiting their 8 children and 25 grandchildren. Their address is 224 Station Street, Smithville, Ontario.*

tened to and discussed an introduction which dealt with such questions as: Are we to have a brief sermon before the celebration of the holy supper? Should we have the celebration in the morning service only? Should the whole Form be read in the same service? This introduction will also form part of the agenda of a congregational meeting. Further, the Consistory again spent some time on questions of a borderline . . . .

We go to Ebenezer Burlington. The Consistory received a not-so-common offer: "A Tax Consultant offered his services to our Church." I do not know what the Consistory did, but it might have been a good idea to ask him to complete the returns of the members and to charge them the regular fee, but then have this fee paid to the Church for a specific purpose. However, that could be pushing things a little too far. Anyway, it is nice when you get offers like that.

The Consistory instructed the Committee of Administration to do some long-range planning for repair and improvement of the Churchbuilding. Burlington is not the only Congregation that has plans in this direction. However, more about that later on.

In reply to a request from the Burlington Inter-Church Council the Consistory sent an explanation why they were unable to join that organization. It is, the Consistory declared:

- a. 'ecumenical,' not in the right sense as 'unity with apostles and prophets' but a 'unity' between all colours of the rainbow, including other than christian religions.
- b. Their first concern seems to be to make a better society in Burlington ('horizontalism') whereas the first and main task of the Church is to proclaim the full Word of God: be reconciled with God before you can talk about reconciling with fellow-men.

Participation in a Halton Right to Life demonstration against "Abortion on Demand" was equally impossible. Such a demonstration was scheduled for a Sunday.

From the Ebenezer bulletin, as from other bulletins, we learned something about the plans of the Women's Savings Action for the Theological College. Spoons seem to be definitely out: they would cost between three and a half and four dollars each, and thus it was decided not to proceed with such a project.

The Board of the John Calvin School enclosed a letter with the bulletin in which they put before our younger members the necessity to have teachers for the schools which are in existence right now and which are in the planning stages. In this letter, the Board suggests the postponement of studies in order to help out at the moment. That is a possibility and one to be considered. However much we should insist on it that we have fully qualified teachers in our schools, we are faced with the necessity of filling the existing vacancies right now. And although it will not be easy for a young man or a young woman to go back and become a student without income for some years after having enjoyed a salary for quite a while, it might be the only solution. Meanwhile, efforts are being made to come to a teachers' training in the midst of the Churches, although this will not take away our immediate needs.

In Rehoboth Burlington the Boys and Girls Clubs had their "Winter Break." Yes, that is something which we never knew, as the Rev. C. Stam writes. Holidays and breaks were there in the summer, and further with Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost (just one day extra with the last

## 45th Wedding Anniversary



*Brother Willem (William) Rosier and sister Geertje Rosier, nee Hoekstra, hope to celebrate their 45th Wedding Anniversary on April 30, D.V. Br. Rosier was born September 19, 1907, at Emmercompascuum, Drente; sr. Rosier May 2, 1911, at Veenwouden, Friesland. They have three children (two daughters, married; one son, single) and five grandchildren. All the children are living in Chatham.*

*In 1949 they immigrated to Canada from Zwolle, where they had then lived for 2½ years. They first settled on a farm near London; then in 1950 they moved to Chatham, with the help of Rev. A. Cammenga of the Protestant Reformed Churches.*

*Br. Rosier worked in a gravel pit for some years (he had been in the cement business in Holland) but took on his own business in the late fifties (janitorial services) until he was forced to retire about two years ago, because of poor health. Our brother and sister both have had their health problems. Our brother is practically blind in one eye, even though he was operated on it several times. Reading is hard for him, but recently he has been enjoying the tapes from "Bralectah."*

*They both come to church regularly, although br. Rosier cannot always make it in the mornings.*

*They are thankful to the Lord who has made all things well for them during all these years and they are living out of the hand of their heavenly Father every day again.*

*Their address is: 78 Park Ave. West, Chatham, Ontario N7M 1V9.*

one). However, let's say that such a winter break is necessary; they have it anyway! Well, then, during that winter break the youth clubs in Rehoboth Church had a very strenuous day. The following activities were planned for a certain Friday: A visit to the Ford Motor Company; a visit to Voortmans Cookies Factory; and a sit-in at a service in a synagogue in Hamilton. For this last-mentioned activity the boys and girls were told to appear "well-dressed."

In more than one Congregation some activity has been displayed in the matter of capital punishment and in the abortion issue. Sometimes the Member of Parliament was contacted and these contacts sometimes yielded unex-

pected fruit. In Orangeville, for instance, the following could be reported: "After writing a letter to Mr. Milne, our local M.P., in regards to this issue, and saying that at any time we would be willing to discuss this further with him, we received an answer and he would like to meet with a group on some Saturday afternoon." March 27th was chosen for the time being. In Carman they also received word back from their M.P., who informed them that a questionnaire sent out in the riding of Lisgar showed 89% in favour of hanging, 9% opposed, with 2% without opinion

Carman, too, appointed a committee for improvement and repairs to the Churchbuilding and the manse. They even appointed a committee to investigate the costs, etc., of a new Churchbuilding. Gradually practically all the Churches are enabled to erect a new Churchbuilding. Although we are grateful for all the blessings we received and for the buildings which were occupied for so many years, it is a great joy when we are enabled to build a new place of worship which appears to be more in harmony with the greatness of the God whom we serve and praise. It is possible, of course, to praise the Lord everywhere and to worship Him in a barn, but that that is **possible** should never become a **rule**; it is rather an exception and represents a situation which should be corrected as soon as this can be done. And that this can be done among us is proof of the rich blessings of our God. He does open the windows of heaven: in spite of everything that is being done by the membership (or should we say "through everything") in the field of the ministry of the Gospel, the education of our children, the taking care of the needy, and whatever there may be, we are enjoying a standard of living which we could never have envisaged when those first poor immigrants spent their last thirty-five cents to take the bus or the streetcar to Church, not knowing whether there would be any money on Monday to buy bread or other provisions for the family.

From the Winnipeg bulletin as from other bulletins in classis Alberta/Manitoba we learn that the committee that was to advise classis regarding the question of training for office-bearers, came to the conclusion "that Classis should decide to declare that in the given circumstances it has no responsibility for the training of office-bearers." Although the expression "in the given circumstances" makes me feel somewhat uneasy still, I can only express my thankfulness for this conclusion, although I still cannot see why a committee was necessary for that and an extensive study of the matter. Let me add that the Winnipeg Consistory agrees with the committee's recommendation.

A school dinner held in Winnipeg yielded some \$230.00. Oh, it is not just the money, we all know that. What is more important is the love which goes into the preparation of such a dinner and the fellowship that is being enjoyed when consuming it. What is appreciated most is the dedication displayed by brothers and sisters who plan, prepare, serve, clean up. But when they see their efforts crowned with a handsome financial profit for "the cause," this is an extra-welcome benefit and fruit of their endeavours.

In Neerlandia the Consistory decided to "discontinue the 'collection' for Mission Aid and leave it on a quota basis." An unusual point of discussion was the following. "Coffee business: it is decided that the janitor will be sure that there is sugar, cream and coffee in ample supply, and that the church will pay for this and nothing else." Apparently cookies are to be provided by the office-bearers

themselves. Fortunately, there are birthdays to be celebrated once in a while. And if it becomes too expensive: have fewer meetings.

Crossing over into British Columbia, we see there a profit of no less than \$1,266.00 made on a dinner by the Orange Aid. You would almost think that, in order to make such a profit, the organizers have to be pretty cheap on food; but, no, that was not the case at all. There must have been a tremendous participation from the membership of the Churches there.

Abbotsford experimented with celebrating the Lord's Supper in the morning service only. That "experimented" refers, of course, only to the fact that they have to see whether it is satisfactory to have the celebration in the morning service only. Thus far, the reaction of the Congregation has not been measured yet, and we shall, therefore, have to wait and see what the future practice will be.

Chilliwack decided to introduce the use of the Revised Standard Version per May 1st. The word "officially" was used, and from this I draw the conclusion that the freedom to use that version was there already, but that now it will become customary.

Cloverdale is still kept in suspense regarding future development. They are still struggling with the four services, which will perhaps be reviewed in September of this year. My guess is that it won't take that long before a more definite course will show. A decision which does not bring a solution closer will never be satisfactory and will be subject to constant criticism and revision. I would be much surprised if there won't be another Church instituted by January 1st, 1977.

Cloverdale decided to send a letter to the government dealing with the alarming increase in abortions in the province and the country.

In New Westminster thus far 4,000 yards of sand have been dumped onto the parking lot, and the latest information is that they are still waiting there for some dry weather so that pavement can be laid, which appears to be the last impediment to a definite move to this new place of worship. It seems that British Columbia for once lives up to the bad reputation it has with outsiders, namely the reputation of a "rain-province."

In the Fraser Valley there is a Christian Association for the Retarded, of which association quite a few members of the Churches there are members. (In Alberta a similar organization is active.) Repeatedly I saw in the **Church News** that contributions for a home for the retarded children of the covenant were solicited or given. Now the latest news is that the association ("Bethesda") has made an interim Agreement of Sale on a group home in the Mount Lehman area of Matsqui. For a total price of \$185,000 a ten year old home, located on a 2½ acre site, containing some 17 bedrooms, indoor heated swimming pool, etc., will mean the start of the work for which the association was established. From one of our members in the Valley I received a letter in which I was told that from our businessmen in a small area some \$6,000 had been received in extra donations. There, I thought, you have again our businessmen who are willing to give an extra donation!

There was a question in this letter which I pass on. It was this question: "Are there, perhaps, among our people who would like to take this task upon themselves? Is there someone who has worked as a Social Worker and who would be willing to be the head of this institution?" I do not know, of course, whether an application would be ac-

cepted right away. It is a fact that also the retarded children of the covenant have a right to the best possible treatment. For our children who are not retarded we build schools and engage teachers; but thus far those of our children who cannot follow the normal instruction have to go to public institutions. I did talk with parents who dread the thought of seeing their children go there but who have no other choice. However good the treatment may be in public institutions, they are never able to give them there that love

and dedication which are possible only when their position as children of the Lord is recognized and when there is the common bond of the covenant.

I wish the association well and also express the wish that in other parts of our country, too, similar actions may have similar results. It will relieve quite a few parents of quite a few "worries."

Yes, and herewith we have come to the end of our chat. Till next time, the Lord willing. vO

## PRESS RELEASE

*Press Release of the Classical Meeting of the Churches in Alberta and Manitoba, held Wednesday, March 17, 1976 in Edmonton.*

*Article 1.* On behalf of the convening church Rev. Visscher opens the meeting of delegates at 9:05 A.M. Psalm 95:1, 2 is sung and after reading I Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 Rev. Visscher leads in prayer and then speaks a word of welcome. All of the churches are duly represented. Only one delegate of the church at Calgary is present.

*Article 2.* Classis is constituted with the following serving as officers: Chairman, Rev. J. Geertsema; clerk, Rev. J. Visscher; vice-chairman, Rev. R. Boersema. The chairman mentions that the sister church in Winnipeg received their minister. He congratulates them and especially welcomes Rev. DeBruin to this meeting of classis. He also expresses thanks that Coaldale has kept their minister since he received calls from New Westminster (mission) and Hamilton which he declined. He now also has a call from Chilliwack. The chairman also mentions that the calls to Rev. Geertsema from Neerlandia and Lincoln were declined and that Neerlandia and Barrhead still have not received a pastor.

*Article 3.* After additions are made the agenda is adopted.

*Article 4.* The report of the committee appointed to study the matter of the training of office-bearers is read. It is moved to thankfully acknowledge receipt of this report and to adopt the proposal in the report that Classis, *having read* the proposal of the Church at Calgary, "that the Classis appoint a Committee to advise the forthcoming Classis concerning its responsibilities for the training of office-bearers, and to make recommendations as to how these responsibilities might be fulfilled"; *considering* that Classis March 11, 12, 1975 appointed a Committee with the mandate: "to advise the forthcoming Classis whether the Classis has responsibilities for the training of office-bearers and to make recommendations as to how these responsibilities might be fulfilled"; **CONCLUDE:**

1. That the training of elders and deacons is not by its very nature a matter of the Churches of the major assembly in common.
2. That the training of elders and deacons, just like that of the Ministers of the Word, can and may be made a

matter of the Churches of the major assembly in common.

3. That the Church at Calgary has not shown that it cannot provide in its own need in the matter of training of elders and deacons without Classical assistance, and therefore has not made clear that this matter could not be finished in the minor assembly.
4. That, since no other church has expressed the need and on that basis has requested Classis for assistance, Classis has no calling to offer and organize such assistance to and for the churches.

and that Classis **DECIDE:**

1. To declare on the grounds of the above-mentioned conclusions, that Classis in the given circumstances does not have responsibility for the training of office-bearers.
2. To ask the attention of the churches for the suggestions made in the report of the committee.

Adopted.

*Article 5.* The report of the Treasurer of Classis is read and received with thanks. It is decided to raise the levy from \$3.00 to \$5.00 per confessing member.

*Article 6.* The report of the church responsible for the inspection of the archives is read and taken note of with thanks.

*Article 7.* Reports of Church visitors of visits made to the churches at Edmonton, Neerlandia and Barrhead are heard.

*Article 8.* The Committee for needy churches was unable to make a report due to the needed information not being available in time. This information is orally reported to Classis. It is decided to continue with the same amount of support to the church at Calgary.

*Article 9.* Report of the deputies ad examina that they have discussed the examination with Rev. DeBruin is read and taken note of.

*Article 10.* The churches at Barrhead and Neerlandia request the following preaching arrangements which are granted: May 16, Rev. Boersema; June 13, Rev. DeJong; July 11, Rev. Visscher; August 8, Rev. Boersema; September 5, Rev. DeJong; October 3, Rev. Visscher; October 31, Rev. Boersema; November 28, Rev. DeJong. The Sundays before and after Classis are assigned to the ministers in Manitoba.

*Article 11.* In connection with a question from the delegates of Coaldale it is de-

ecided that of confidential Acts only 2 copies are to be sent to each of the churches and to any church involved as many copies as they have elders.

*Article 12.* The delegates of the church at Winnipeg are instructed to inform Classis that they cannot abide by certain regulations of Classis and will appeal this matter to the Regional Synod.

*Article 13.* The delegates of the Church at Barrhead are instructed to ask Classis to appoint a counsellor. Barrhead is informed that they themselves may ask someone to be their counsellor since they do not ask for a counsellor according to Articles 4, 5 Church Order.

*Article 14.* Question period according to Article 41 Church Order is held. The church at Calgary asks advice regarding the matter of granting the voting privilege also to female confessing members of the church, namely, whether the major assemblies should be involved in this. Advice is given.

*Article 15.* A letter is received from the convening church for the next Regional Synod (Edmonton) in which Classis is asked for advice with regard to the time of the next Regional Synod. Edmonton is advised to call Regional Synod for early December 1976 unless further documents arrive which would necessitate an earlier date.

*Article 16.* The following appointments are made: Convening church for next Classis, Edmonton; Time, Tuesday, November 9, 8:00 P.M.; suggested officers, chairman, Rev. S. DeBruin; clerk, Rev. J. Geertsema; vice-chairman, Rev. J. Visscher. Delegates for Regional Synod, all the appointments of the last Classis are maintained with the addition that Rev. DeBruin is appointed as second alternate for ministers.

*Article 17.* Personal question period is held.

*Article 18.* It is noted with thankfulness that no matters need to be dealt with for censure according to Article 43 Church Order.

*Article 19.* The Acts and Press Release are adopted.

*Article 20.* On behalf of Classis, the chairman thanks the ladies who served the meal and other refreshments for Classis.

*Article 21.* At 3:30 the meeting is closed. Psalm 89:1 is sung and the chairman leads in prayer and thanksgiving.

On behalf of Classis,  
R. BOERSEMA, Vice-chairman.

# School Officially Opened

It all started about twenty-five years ago when the initiative was taken to start a Canadian Reformed School Association and it culminated in the official opening of the Coaldale Christian School on Friday, February 20, 1976.

It was on this evening that the congregation came together to celebrate in a short program the presentation of the completed new school building by the Building Committee to the parents, represented by the School Board.

The chairman of the School Board, Mr. D. Hoogerdyk, was in charge of the meeting, which was held in the auditorium of the school, situated on the outskirts of the Town of Coaldale. A large crowd was on hand for this festive occasion to express their thanks to God, Who again has shown to us that He is a faithful God from generation to generation.

In his opening remarks the chairman brought the evening into the proper perspective by pointing out that having a school building is not the most important thing, but that what is taught in the building is the most important, and he referred to what the Apostle Paul says about this in the fourth chapter of his letter to Timothy. He related to us the great deeds of the Lord, which are almost unbelievable. Our Covenant God made it possible to appoint teachers and to start a school with the help of the parents and now He gave us this beautiful building to work in. The Lord now asks from us that we are only obedient and see our task; the teachers in teaching, the students in learning, and the parents in supporting.

## MESSAGE

After this word of welcome the guest speaker, Rev. James Visscher, delivered his message, in which he emphasized "Why we need a PARENTAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL." He addressed the meeting as follows:

### WHY A PARENTAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL?

On hearing of the opening of this school, there will be many people who

will ask themselves, "Why do a group of people go out of the way and build a Christian day school? Why build a beautiful new structure like this, costing a total of \$175,000 when there are good educational facilities right here in Coaldale? Why spend well over a thousand dollars a year to send your children to a Christian school, when in the existing public school system there is room for Bible reading and prayer?"

For the most part the answer to these questions can be found in the name "parental Christian school." It is a name that tells us three basic things about this school; namely that it seeks to be Christian in outlook, parental in control, and educational in purpose.

To begin with this school — its supporters, board, and staff — are all striving, with the help of God, to make this an educational institution that is Christian in outlook. What does that mean? It means that this school will do more than simply stress the devotional side of life consisting of prayer, Bible study, and the imparting of Christian virtues. It is not, at least not primarily, an evangelistic enterprise. Rather, this school will attempt to show to its students that Jesus Christ and His Kingship has relevance for all of life. It will attempt to take the Christian confession concerning the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ and to make that meaningful in all the subjects of the curriculum and so meaningful in the total life of the pupil too.

It does this because the Scriptures tell us in Colossians 1:15, 16 that Jesus Christ is the real image of God, the first-born of all creation, and the one by whom all things were created. This means that there is no person of more significance in all the world than He. In and through Christ, the God of heaven and earth is revealed. He is the one who reveals all the great qualities of God: His love, His justice, His mercy, His grace, and His power. In His death on the cross every one of these qualities is illuminated.

But in addition to this, the Christ is also the creator. This means that everything you see and hear, everything that you touch and handle, everything that you perceive and sense in your being is a part of the



*Chairman of the Building Committee, Mr. J. Jagersma presents a "master key" to the principal of the school, Mr. W. Van Spronsen.*

creation which Christ has fashioned. You will never really understand the origin, the goal, and the wonder of creation apart from Him. Our world is the handiwork of God, bearing the stamp of His Son.

Still, that is not all, for this Jesus, the revealer of God and creator of our universe, is today sitting in exalted majesty at the right hand of God in heaven. From there He exercises His power over all creation. Indeed, the Bible testifies repeatedly that He is the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings. It impresses upon us that there is no part of the cosmos that does not belong to Him and that is exempt from His Lordship. This is the Person who stands at the centre of the Christian faith.

In the light of all this, how can anyone expect that people who believe in the Christ and in His almighty power, will let their children study and think and learn *without* any reference to Jesus Christ? Clearly, the Lord Jesus has to be placed in the centre of all of life's varied endeavours, and that includes the educational endeavour too. Education is one of the most comprehensive forms of human activity there is. It is not just the communication of certain plain facts; it consists of one generation's transmitting useful knowledge to the generation that follows it. It is a highly selective process. It involves one evaluation after another. It is a highly moral activity. And for all those who have come to know Christ as Lord, it is simply impossible to be satisfied with an education that

is built on the conviction that Jesus Christ has *nothing* to say on educational matters. If He is the Lord of creation, then for those who bow before Him He must be Lord of the school too.

In close connection with what I have just mentioned, there comes to the fore the second basic characteristic of a Christian school, which is that it has to be, we believe, parental in control. The reason for this is plain. Soon after a Christian couple receive their first child from the Lord they take it to church and have it baptized in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In so doing they vow before God and His congregation that they will do everything in their power to see to it that their child will be raised in such a way that it too learns in due time to recognize the Lordship of Christ, and to realize its applicability for every activity and pursuit in life. This is the grave responsibility that falls on the shoulders of every believing couple when they have their children baptized into the Name of the Triune God.

That parents have this serious responsibility is, however, not always recognized today. The common presupposition in our society is that the state is responsible for the education of our children. According to this viewpoint, the state must determine the curriculum and police it, the state must bankroll the educational system and control its purse strings, the state must determine the qualification of teachers and license them. As for the parents, they seem to be there to have children, to co-operate in sending their children, to pay for it, and to back up the teacher. In reality, their involvement in the educational process is minimal.

All this, however, is something that conscientious Christian parents simply can not accept. It jeopardizes their ability to live up to the vow that they made to God. For only when the parents have a say, a meaningful say, in their children's education are they able to act in a way consistent with what they have promised. And since this is impossible in the present public school system, both because of its basis and its set-up, there is only one alternative, namely towards an independent parental school, costly as that may be. Now you can understand why in the Coaldale Christian School it is the parents who control the school, it



*The Audience*

is the parents who elect a Board, it is the parents who are asked to involve themselves in the different committees and projects. It is what God demands of them.

Nevertheless, I would not like you to leave here this evening with the impression that although this project may be Christian and parental, it is not really a school. If you think that it has more the character of a church than a school, then you have the wrong impression. Between school and church there is and always should remain a basic difference of function. It is at the church and not at the school that our children are by the grace of God made members of the covenant through baptism. It is at church and not at school that the offer of salvation is presented, the Word of truth is proclaimed, the communion of saints is exercised. All of these things occupy the highest place in our hearts, but they continue to belong to the domain of the church and not to the school (see H. Zylstra, *Testament of Vision*, Eerdmans, 1961, p. 91). The school has a quite different function. What it does is to take the Christian student and assume the task of making his profession of Christ's Lordship a *significant* profession. The school teaches the student how he or she can express themselves as responsible human citizens in the kingdom of Christ. Hence while it is at church that we make our choice for Christ, it is at school that we keep making that choice more humanly and culturally and practically meaningful (Zylstra, p. 94).

Therefore we are *not* interested in having a school with a few religious

trimmings, a school which prizes a daily devotional hour, or a school which merely relates Bible stories. We are not interested in maintaining that age-old distinction which divides life into two compartments, the one called "nature" and the other called "grace." No, we are striving for a school in which biblical principles penetrate into every subject of the curriculum from science to literature, from history to social studies, from mathematics to art. For this school to succeed as a school it must recognize that it is as *human beings* that we are Christians. To cater in our education and with our Christianity only to the spiritual side of man, and so to neglect the mind, the will, the emotions, and the world we live in, is to educate the student in a totally ineffective way. Only when we bring the whole range of life under the sway of Christian principle and purpose will we be fully acknowledging the kingly rule of Christ. So it is to Him, the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation, and the Lord of heaven and earth, that we dedicate this school. May He be pre-eminent in everything, in this educational undertaking also!

J. VISSCHER

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#### OFFICIAL PRESENTATION

After this address the building was officially presented to the parents by the chairman of the Building Committee, Mr. J. Jagersma, as evidenced in the presentation of a two-foot long "master key" to the Principal of the school, Mr. W. Van Spronsen. In his remarks Mr. Jagersma thanked the



*The guest speaker, Rev. J. Visscher.*

parents, Town Council, and contractors for their cooperation and working together in building this beautiful school for our children to enjoy.

#### PRINCIPAL'S REPLY

The principal in his reply remarked that it is indeed a great honour to receive this key. Although it is a symbolic act in which the parents as it were are speaking and saying, "Here are our children and here is the school-building," for the staff it means: go to work now. But in the first place it is a real act of obedience by the parents to the Lord, according to the mandate given to them in Psalm 78: "I will utter things that we have heard and known; that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from our children but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord and His might and the wonders which He has wrought."

The parents have delegated this mandate to the teachers, who now have a very important task. This beautiful building will be a great asset in carrying out this mandate, and receiving this key is wonderful. But more important is the key given to us in God's Word. Only in using that key the staff may attempt to do their work, and the words of Psalm 111:10 are true for teachers and pupils: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of all wisdom; a good understanding have all those who practise it."

Let us all work and pray in the framework of the confession of this wisdom.

This key is the symbolic mandate we have received from the parents.

This key is the symbolic mandate we have received from the Lord that the fear of God is the beginning of all wisdom.

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After the singing of the National Anthem, various persons (called dignitaries on the program) had the opportunity to address the meeting.

Mrs. Helen Leffers on behalf of the Ladies' Aid of the Canadian Reformed Church presented the School Board with flags for the classrooms and the promise of a big one for the outside flagpole when erected.

On behalf of the Councillors of the Town of Coaldale and Mayor Blakie, who could not be present this evening, the School Board was complimented with this achievement by a Town Council Member who also brought congratulations and best wishes for the future.

The Honourable Mr. Bob Bogle, M.L.A. for the District of Taber, spoke on behalf of the Provincial Government and the Premier of the Province of Alberta, the Honourable Peter Lougheed.

He remarked that as a representative of the Government he had done his part to promote the private school system in the Province and he promised that in the near future important decisions will be announced. Congratulations, best wishes, with all the success were offered on behalf of the Government.

#### CLOSING REMARKS

In his closing remarks Mr. C. Hoogerdyk, on behalf of the Church Council, reminded those present that we have indeed a beautiful school building now; something to be proud of. But, he continued, if this were all and we would go home now congratulating ourselves with our achievements, we would be on the wrong track.

Did we come together to celebrate a culmination of our efforts? I would say: No. It is not because of our efforts that we now can offer our children Christian Education, but only because our Heavenly Father in His Grace allowed us to do so. It is only because of the Lord of Whom we confess that He is the Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth, Who has dominion over everything. And His dominion and power should rule also in the way

in which we educate our children, for we read in Psalm 24: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein." And knowing this, we should encourage one another to go on in faith so that we may keep the commandments of the Lord, that we may do His will also in the matter of the education of our children. Then we have no reason to be proud or arrogant, but then we humble ourselves before the Lord, and our constant prayer should be: Teach us, Lord God, to love Thy precepts, the good commandments of Thy law. Grant us the grace to keep Thy statutes, with thankfulness and proper awe.

And if we are active workers in His kingdom, including the work we do in the field of education, and we do this with a believing heart, not depending on ourselves, but on the Lord alone, then we may be assured that He will bless us. Then we all will be able to say with the words of Psalm 2:

Then blessed are they who on our God rely,  
With constant hope on His strong arm depending;  
Who humbly strive to serve the Lord Most High,  
With grateful hearts and fervour never ending.

After the official part of the evening was closed with the singing of Hymn 52, stanzas 3 and 5, and thanksgiving, everybody was invited for a social get-together. Refreshments were served and one had the opportunity of a closer inspection of the beautiful new building.

It would be difficult to report the feelings of all the people present, especially of those who had been looking forward to this event for almost twenty-five years, parents and grandparents, but it is sufficient to say that after a long struggle the thankfulness to God the Father was the greater and very well expressed in the prayers, songs, and addresses of the evening.

A grandparent,  
A.H. LUBBERS

#### FOR THE READER'S INFORMATION

This issue of "Clarion" was mailed from Winnipeg Central Post Office on April 9, 1976.



# Letters-to-the-Editor

Dear editor:

In his recent letter to the editor (*Clarion*, March 6), the Rev. Cl. Stam makes a statement which apparently is so self-evident that it needs no supporting information. Writing with reference to the contributions of Dr. C. Van Til and Dr. J.E. Adams, he intimates and then writes: "We are grateful, I hope, when people *outside of the faithful church* of the Lord Jesus are working in favour of His Name" (emphasis mine). That is quite a statement. Both Dr. Van Til and Dr. Adams are members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. If the statement quoted above be accepted as true (in the light of the discussion that is taking place), let us immediately stop our contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. To suggest that the work of the Lord is restricted to the Canadian Reformed Churches, or that there cannot be faithfulness outside "our" churches, is to propagate a "haughty ecclesiastical exclusivism." Let us be careful, for, when we speak about the church, we speak about *God's* work, which means, among other things, that we can only speak about it with great humility and soberness and with the prayer that we may be privileged to see His gathering work elsewhere too. At issue here is not our work, but a recognition of the work of the Lord (read for example synod decisions in the past years on the OPC and the report in Acts of Synod, 1971, pages 64-71).

In view of the above, a re-reading of Rev. G. Van Dooren's letter to the editor (*Clarion*, January 24, 1976) will show that it was not a smoke screen, but hit the issues. A re-reading will also show that there is no conflict between *Get Out* and Rev. Van Dooren's letter, as the letter of Rev. Stam would suggest.

C. VAN DAM

Dear Editor:       \*\*\*

The discussion which goes on in our *Clarion* concerning evangelism and *The Good Word* is such that a man would like to put in a few words. It is mainly the arguments of Rev. C. Stam that I cannot agree with.

Both Rev. G. Van Dooren and Rev. C. Stam apparently are convinced that Dr. Adams and Dr. Van Til are reformed Christians. I quote Rev. Stam: "Their reformed convictions were never questioned." A little later Rev. Stam says: "We badly need reformed evangelical literature."

I think it is a well-known fact that our efforts to evangelize are very meagre. We cannot shake this off by saying, "We are an immigrant church." Our younger generation has grown up in this country and they know the way of life here.

We are probably known as a people that likes to do things for themselves. Have we not built Canadian Reformed schools

for our own children? And did we not build big and beautiful church buildings for our own worship services and society life? Yet it seems very difficult to find a missionary among us who is willing to be sent out to a heathen country to proclaim our Lord's gracious Gospel there. We did not even try to find a couple of men who are willing to be sent into the inner cities of Toronto or Montreal to proclaim our Lord's Gospel there.

Rev. Stam says: "We badly need reformed evangelical literature, but only members of the Canadian Reformed Churches should supply the contents of it." I could probably accept this statement more readily if we, the Lord's people, members of the Lord's Church, had shown more zeal in the above-mentioned matters.

I think acknowledgement of these things should make a reformed man humble enough to listen to others and use their contributions, knowing that these "others" are reformed Christians.

Two texts were mentioned in this discussion by Rev. Van Dooren, but Rev. Stam says they are not to the point. Well, who am I to judge what is right here? However, there is one thing I would like to mention here. Rev. Stam says: "Jesus did not say, Go ahead and join that man," which is true. But Jesus did say something else. He said, "For he who is not against us is for us."

By the way I read and understand my Bible, this means that Jesus claimed that this man, who was casting out demons but who was *not* following Jesus and His disciples, was *for* Him.

Therefore, if I am convinced that any one person is "for Jesus," and if he has something to say, then I am going to listen to him, and I think that we should all be willing to listen.

GERRIT HUTTEN  
Petrolia, Ontario.

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REPLY BY REV. STAM

The editors requested an immediate reaction, so that the discussion would not "drag on" unnecessarily. Thank you.

Perhaps because I wasn't clear enough, some are confused on the issue or still confusing it. Sorry, writing is a difficult art, and the matter seems somewhat "touchy." However, one thing should be clear: I wasn't writing an ecclesiology or giving intimations (obscure hints) concerning true or false churches. I was writing on EVANGELISM, its purpose and method!

Some readers seem to think that I'm passing judgement on Dr. van Til and Dr. Adams, but, amazingly enough, they do interpret my judgement differently. The one is favourable: "Both Rev. van Dooren and Rev. Stam are convinced that Dr. Adams and Dr. van Til are reformed Christians" (Br. Hutten), the other UNfavourable: "That is quite a statement" (Rev. van Dam). My colleague even thinks that with the two professors I throw the whole OPC aside.

Thank you both, but I never said either of the two.

I thought that I'd made it plain that specific people, their integrity and their reformed convictions are NOT at stake in this discussion. I keep pushing this "personal element" out of the discussion, others keep dragging it in. Cut that out. I was not judging certain PEOPLE but discussing a certain PRINCIPLE. As a matter of fact, I consciously tried to "un-personalize" the discussion and to generalize by speaking of "ANYONE of reasonable reformed reputation" or (in the sentence Rev. van Dam quotes) of "PEOPLE outside the faithful church of the Lord Jesus." If anyone reads that as pertaining especially to those two mentioned scholars, they misread. Don't be overzealous. When I wrote "the faithful church" I specifically meant the American/Canadian Reformed Churches, but did not exclude other possibilities. I do not determine that personally; the churches do, together at major assemblies.

Neither did I disqualify the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as being false or unfaithful; that was not in the least the point of the letter I wrote. I didn't even mention any specific church other than the Canadian/American Reformed Churches. But since the OPC has been brought up, I may point out that at this time the Canadian Reformed Churches do not have correspondence with this church, not even "fraternal relations," despite the synodical reports Rev. van Dam refers to. To keep us all up to date, let me just quote from the DECISIONS of the last Synod, which speak as follows: "The present stage of the relationship (namely, between our churches and the OPC) does not warrant either FULL FELLOWSHIP (emphasis mine, C.I.S.) or breaking off of the relationship altogether" (Acts Synod Toronto, Article 149). There are still some things which need "further and frank discussion, e.g. divergencies in Confession and Church Polity." Don't claim Synods too soon, the discussion on that level apparently has not been finished, although some may think so.

No full relationship, as yet anyway. I'm not speaking about the desirability or impossibility of such a relationship; I'm only noting a FACT. And I do consider such a FULL FELLOWSHIP necessary, before cooperating in something so essential as the preaching of God's Word. Now, read well: the POINT of my letter was that such a full fellowship (Church unity or correspondence) is a matter of PRIORITY before engaging in mutual evangelistic activities. And — perhaps we should stress this "full fellowship" more before cooperating also in OTHER fields of life. The Church indeed is God's work, Rev. van Dam, but that never removes OUR responsibilities to do things properly, especially not in evangelism in which we are pointing to God's work, but, in the same line, also not in education, labour, etc.

Even if someone were to qualify the OPC as being false or unfaithful (which,

## SCHOOL CROSSING —

Cont'd from page 131

expensive than some school buildings), but not in building a school? That means also: why should the den be carried by a percentage of the congregation and not by the whole membership? BROTHERS and SISTERS in the LORD, we ALL have to pray! We ALL should get involved. We should extend the hand of fellowship to each other and build together. For the Church of the Lord will either be built up or broken down by the education which the children of the Church receive every day.

Are we finished now? Not quite! In the worship services conducted on the Lord's Days we pray together through the mouth of the minister, the servant of the Lord. It is also his task to bring these needs before the Throne of the Lord and pray on behalf of the whole congregation for the

### LETTERS-TO-THE-EDITOR — cont'd

again, has not been done in this discussion), that need not EXCLUDE contact, as the Rev. van Dam suggests. The difference between "correspondence" and "contact" should not be overlooked; that would be a dire mistake. Contact may lead to but does not imply "correspondence." Sometimes "contact" indeed has to be broken off, but before that is done . . . So don't scare me with "immediately stop contact."

I did not suggest that the work of the Lord is restricted to the Canadian Reformed Churches, nor that these would be the ONLY faithful churches. C'mon, my vision is a bit broader than that! I tried to point out a PRIORITY in a debate on cooperating in evangelism: the concrete unity at the table of the Lord. And since the Church is the COMMUNION of Saints (let's say, a matter of "full fellowship," a visible unity in faith and works), this is not a "new doctrine," as some suggest, but an integral part of the confession of the Church, which our Synods have upheld throughout in contact with others.

Br. Hutten's statement that "our efforts to evangelize have been very meagre" could be correct. I will not judge even that. But a negative estimation of our effort in this work, does not undo the underlying principle I wrote about. Our principles should not be adapted to our conduct, but our conduct to OUR CONFESSION.

CL. STAM

*Since we should like to prevent a protracted discussion in this column, this is the last item to be published about the matter touched upon.* Ed.

Lord's blessing upon this work. And the Consistories shall see to it that the minister does so. Remember article 21 of the Church Order? Check that again, in case you have forgotten.

And, last but not least, I am thinking of our TEACHERS! Are they praying too? Yes, we appreciate that they are working in our schools. But theirs is not just another job to them is it? Not that I have that impression! I know several teachers who are sincerely dedicated to their work and who love the children (although the children may not always notice or realize it). But I know only a few teachers of the many. I hope they are all just as dedicated. Let them then also, so to speak, confront the Lord with the fact that we are short of staff this year to come. And let them do their utmost too in their work. What job is more important than that of a teacher? What a beautiful calling to have so many covenant children under your care for so many hours, every day. Week after week, month after month. But there is always a danger that it becomes routine. That is the danger for the ministers too! I know it. Some schools are looking all over (the world, indeed!) with no result as yet. Some are using unqualified staff. Unqualified in the eyes of the world that is. That is not the same as unqualified in the eyes of the Lord! A person who loves the Lord and the Lord's small children, may in some cases do a better job of teaching them the fear of the Lord than the best qualified and experienced teacher. The fear of the Lord comes first. But that requires that we seek the best, also in qualifications. Let us then not slacken but pray and pray that our good and merciful Father in Heaven will give us men and women, who are convinced of the need of REFORMED EDUCATION for the children of the Reformed Churches of our Saviour.

When so many of us, when all of us, bring these matters before the Lord our God, will He then turn a deaf ear on us? We know better! But what if the Hand of our Father closes itself against us and withholds from us the teachers we need? Let us then humble ourselves and ask: Does the Lord perhaps want to teach us all a lesson? Should we perhaps all and everyone go back to school? To HIS school? To learn from HIM? Does the Lord want to test our faith in His promises? Does He want us to rely completely upon Him, so that we do not expect it from

ourselves, our children, our teachers, or from whomever, but from HIM ALONE?

Last time I mentioned the second commandment in connection with the education for our children. Perhaps we should also take a better look at the first commandment, as explained in Lord's Day 34. I cannot improve on the words of answers 94 and 95. I invite you to read them. May we walk in the fear of the LORD, that is, in obedience to His Commandments. Then we may expect the LORD's BLESSINGS.  
M. WERKMAN

With thankfulness to the Lord, the Creator of Life, we announce the birth of our first child:

LEONARD MARTIN

born on April 1, 1976.

John and Audrey Toet

137 McMeans Avenue West  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

*Avec Grâce à Dieu*

Anton and Helena VanEs announce the birth of their son:

ANTON HENDRIK

on March 13, 1976.

A brother for: *Andries and David John*

508 Fenwick Place,  
Burlington, Ontario.

With joy and thankfulness to the LORD we announce the final adoption of our son:

KENNETH WAYNE

He was born on January 6, 1970 and has been with us since April 1971. The LORD has been with him through his many problems and we know that also in the future He will take care of our little boy. On Sunday, March 21, 1976 he received the sign and seal of Holy Baptism.

Joining in our thankfulness and joy are his brothers and sisters:

*Tony, Bonita, Melvin,  
Caroline, and Richard.*

Richard and Roelie Hoeksema  
4887 - 200 St., Langley, B.C.