

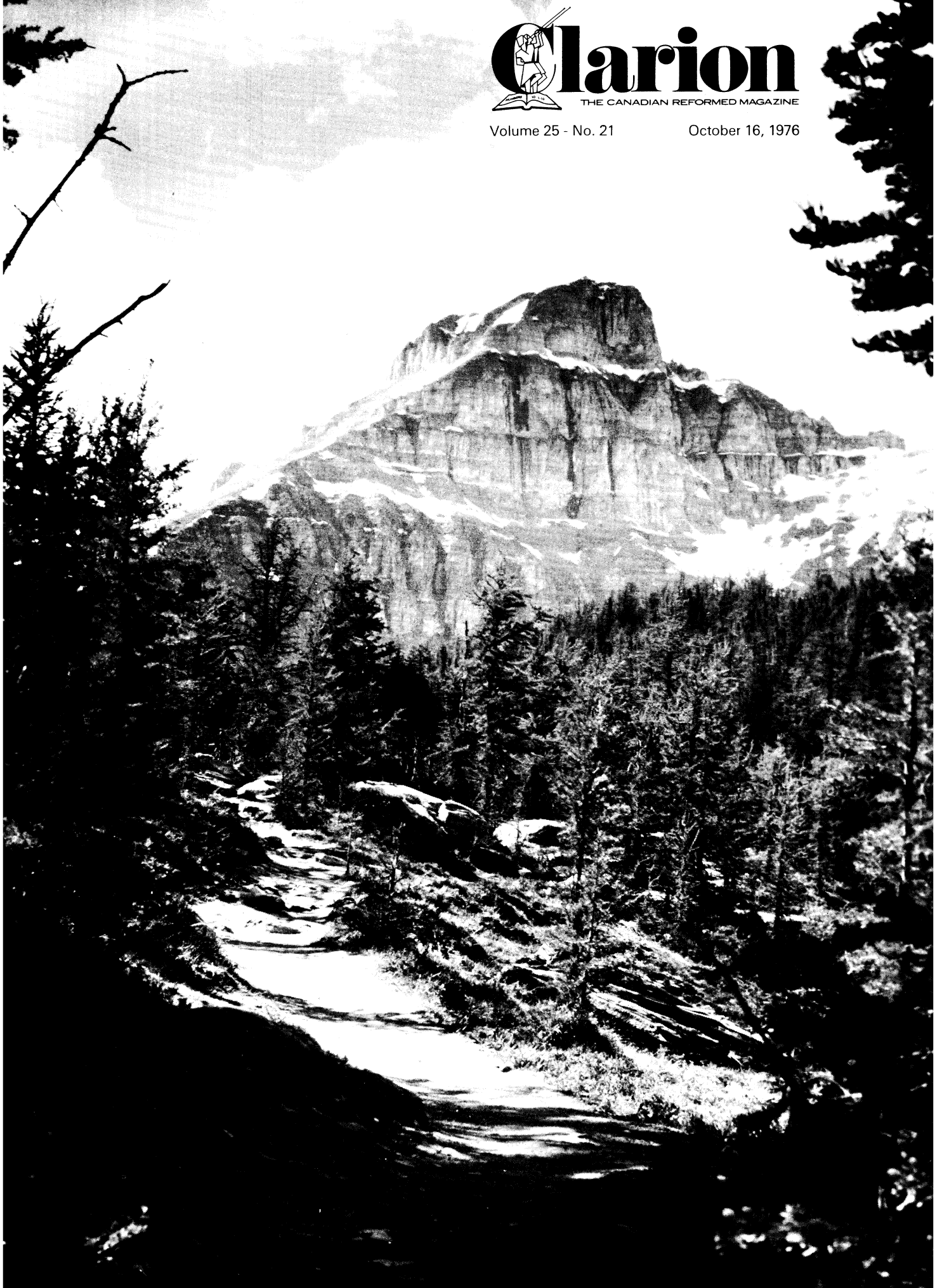


Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Volume 25 - No. 21

October 16, 1976



Pulpits and Stages

Several authors have reintroduced in modern theology the idea that human life is a game and that man can only become truly free if he permits himself to be unburdened from the drudgery of everyday existence by cultivating a playful attitude towards it. Notions like this are not restricted to theology but find expression in many different fields; they were the hallmark of many Romanticist authors and philosophers in the 19th Century, but were especially prominent in the writings of J.F.C. Schiller, who took the joyous and carefree play of children as a prototype of a better and happier world for all men. "Man plays only when he is in the full sense a man, and he is only wholly man when he is playing," said Schiller, thus expressing his belief that the real essence of humanity lay in the realm of the aesthetic, the realm of feeling. The path to freedom did not lie in political revolution, but in the inner contemplation of the beautiful.

Such was characteristic of 19th Century Romanticism, since it was a reaction against the deterministic Newtonian world view and the frightening dehumanization of the industrial revolution. Many felt that this rationalistic and scientific way of thinking seriously threatened the freedom of the individual; so they championed the free and unbounded character of the individual human spirit and looked for the essence and meaning of humanity not in the growth of science or in the continued exploitation of nature, but in the glorious culture of Greece, in the past of pure and untouched nature, in the innocence, beauty and strength of youth. Poetry replaced prose and play replaced work. The unbounded freedom of fantasy and imagination with its fairy tales and wonderlands was set over against the deadening and deafening rhythm of the new factory assembly lines where women and children were forced to work from dawn to dusk in order to survive.

So today, too, the idea is not that play must be distinguished from work

and that we should have more play, but rather that the whole of life, including its work, its achievements and endeavours must be seen *sub specie ludi*, from the perspective of play. Work and play are not mutually exclusive ideas, for there can be a lot of fun doing a job just as there can be a lot of work and effort in playing a game. The point that writers such as Harvey Cox, Jürgen Moltmann and Hugo Rahner want to make is that man must learn not to take himself too seriously in his pursuits, lest he be overwhelmed by them. We must have a playful attitude towards the immediate values of the world, since only such an attitude allows us to stand back from what we have done and laugh at our own silly mistakes. Only by maintaining a sense of respect for the beautiful and a sense of humour about ourselves can we avoid being encroached by the machines of our own making. It is precisely the gospel, say these men, that provides such a playful attitude, since in His preaching Jesus spoke of a better and more beautiful kingdom, which would be given only to those who were willing to become like children . . . children at play.

It is the ability to stand back and 'transcend' one's history that is stressed by these writers. Not that one should escape into a fantasy land in order to forget his problems; rather, one should be able to stand with one foot on the ground and with the other placed solidly in the higher realm of the divine. Man should be serious about his work, but yet realize that there is a world beyond just this earth and its cultural achievements. He should not be a joker with regard to his endeavours, but he should not continually weep about them, either. He must be a bit of both, the man whom the Greeks called *anerh spoudogeloios*, the "grave-merry" man who, in his relation to the world, combined a spirit of laughter with a spirit of tragedy. He realized that his life was secure and had meaning, because the world was not just a result of Chance (Tuche) as

the Epicureans said; but he also realized that he was free because the world was not the product of necessity or Fate (Anangke) as the Stoics said. It was security that gave life its laughter, but freedom made life precarious and often brought tragedy, because it was abused. It was the man who had developed the right combination of the comic and the tragic who was a truly liberated man.

So to be a true *homo ludens*, a player, in terms of this theology of play does not mean going out and having a bash just to escape the horror of our present reality, as is so common in our time. People desperately want to forget the earthquakes, riots and killings, the rampant political and economic corruption around them — so they go out and have a good time; but, these writers say, festivity for its own sake is mere frivolity, and that is the sign of a secret despair. True festivity does not include the drunken laughter of the man who inwardly weeps; rather, it maintains a healthy attitude to the past and present, a



J. DeJong

healthy combination of the serious and the comic that allows man to see beyond his own selfishness and egocentricity.

For, these writers say, that's the way it was in the beginning with God Himself, when He created the world. He did not have to create the world, and the world is not an extension of His being. To be sure, His creation agrees completely with His essence, but yet, He was completely free, without any obligation or compulsion. See with what words the creation of the world is described in Proverbs 8:27ff.: "When He established the heavens, I (Wisdom, Logos) was there . . . when He marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside Him like a little child; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing before Him always . . ." In happiness and joy God and the Son together created the world. God created the world *ex nihilo*, out of nothing, that is, with nothing but His own fantasy and imagination. He did not do it in order to realize Himself; His decision to create lay deep in His good pleasure. He is *Deus vere ludens*, the truly playing God, who, with Wisdom dancing before Him, does not, as Jürgen Moltmann puts it, take life and the world more lightly or more seriously than creation itself demands.

Although there is less agreement with regard to the work of redemption, it too is seen as a freely enacted divine game of grace that brings liberation to man by freeing him from the bondage of an Aristotelian do-it-yourself ethics that placed all the responsibility for achieving true humanity on man himself. Christ is the ideal "grave-merry" man whose life and ministry brings liberation to man through justification by faith rather than works; the cross brings a *metanoia* or change in man which results in a happy and joyous affirmation of human existence *per se*, without looking for its achievements. It is that achievement-oriented mentality that produced the frighteningly massive corporate technostructure of our modern industrial society. The gospel diverts the attention from producing more new things towards the enjoyment of our existence itself, and what we already have. So, Cox says, we should see Christ as the clown or harlequin who freely subjected Himself to what in the eyes of men is the absolute foolishness and ridiculousness of the cross in order to offer to us the hope of a better, happier and more meaningful life. The cross represents

both a graceful game and a tragic suffering; hence, in their response, believers must share in a playful liturgy of thankfulness as well as a sense of being there for others, i.e., a deep sense of compassion and sympathy for all who are poor, oppressed and suffering in the world today.

The liturgy of thankfulness is man's free and spontaneously playful response to God's playful work. For Cox and Rahner this response takes the form of a festive and joyful sacral dance, a heavenly dancing before the Lord. We must let loose a bit, and experience the liturgy; the festive spirit must sweep us away from every self-centered and work-oriented frame of mind. The church must welcome the festal excess that brings the happy and joyous laughter of the free man back into the worship service. Let the song include a dance and the prayer include a joke, for only then is one free; only then is one a true "grave-merry" man who imitates the grave-merry dance of the Lord through the cross and grave. Singing about the 'Lord of the Dance' is not enough; we must rise and dance along with Him.

It is obvious that with this sort of reasoning the church becomes a playhouse and the pulpit is transformed into a stage. Its influence should not be underestimated, for this is exactly what is happening in so many churches today, including churches that call themselves reformed. Sunday morning becomes a Saturday night, and the worship service becomes an entertainment hour; the emphasis is on feeling rather than learning. This type of distortion throws out the God-ordained distinction between minister and congregation, and replaces it with the aesthetic distinction between performer and audience. Since the gospel message is pushed aside, nothing but a purely man-centered performance remains, and more often than not, as Kierkegaard has said, it is a poor one at that. For what the parson tries to do the poet can do much better. Essentially, the poet or artist is idolized here; the entertainer becomes a messiah or salvation-bringer that helps people transcend the drudgery and boredom of their daily life in the plant or office. Thus, if the parson tries to imitate the entertainer, he becomes a humanist: whether he ignores his audience and idolizes his melody, or laughs at them or even sympathizes with them in their service of it, all of his cultural striving ends with man. This cultural striving

never ripens as it should, but is paralyzed through its own infatuation with itself. As Henry Van Til says, the cultural fair in honour of the *homo ludens* results in a truncated pyramid.

For the distinction between pulpit and pew is not one qualified primarily by talent or ability, but by a God-ordained office. It is precisely this Biblical notion of office, so strongly emphasized in the work of Schilder, Vollenhoven and many others, that brings to light the major errors of the theology of play. That notion points to the work, task, vocation or calling that man received in paradise, and it immediately tells us that, while it is indeed true that God was completely free in His creation work, it may not be concluded from this or from the Proverbs 8 passage that God is a playing God, and that His work of creation and redemption is a game which He is not all that serious about. There was great joy and delight in the creative work of the triune God (behold, it was good); yet man was created in the image of God, as His representative, given dominion over all things, and charged with the mandate to dress the garden. Eden is not to be equated with the playful, sugar-coated wonderlands of Grimm; or with the romantic ideal of unspoiled and unsoiled nature; rather, it was a real and fully material place where man was put to work. It was there that the call to culture first came.

Although the fall saw the beginning of an unbreachable rupture in the cultural activity of man, the covenant demands that the Lord made in the beginning still stood firm, and the call to be fruitful and multiply still remained. For it was this Wisdom who was the daily delight of the Father, Jesus Christ, the Logos, who was appointed and anointed of His own will to be the Messiah, the last Adam; in His office He completely fulfilled the covenant demands that the first Adam did not meet, and so brought salvation, life, and meaningful work to the faithful children of Eve. For by the shedding of His blood He reconciled the world to the Father, and made all His chosen ones partakers of His anointing, freely giving them their privileged three-fold office of prophet, priest and king amidst all the cultural striving of the adversary and his devotees. With all the talents bestowed upon us, that office must be maintained by everyone — each in his own place. Fulfilling one's office is what it means to serve the Lord and love the neighbour; true love

is not manifested primarily in being there for others, but in giving oneself to God, and thereby, through the spirit of Christ, *creating* community with others.

That is why it is not possible to see Christ as the jester or harlequin, the "grave-merry" man who had just the right combination of the comic and the serious to give the right amount of cool self-awareness but also joyful immediacy to the life of man. For in becoming man, the Lord Jesus had to submit Himself completely to the demands of His office, with every feeling and every desire. He had to give Himself completely; indeed, He had to give His life. He did not teach us to look for the comic in the human condition; rather, He had compassion on the crowds. He never wore a foolscap; rather, it was the devil who in every delight and wicked laughter made Him wear a crown of thorns. He did not come to usher in a world of leisure, a paradise of fun and playfulness; rather, He brought in the Kingdom of God. He came to restore and to heal, to build and to save. He came to bring the salvation of God, and to proclaim true liberty to the captives.

It is this proclamation of the true liberty of Christ that the church is called to uphold and maintain. The church must fulfil her office and calling by bringing up children in the fear of

the Lord through the continued administration of the Word and sacraments. The church of Christ must preach and teach the ordinances and testimonies of the Lord for the whole of human life, and a positive opening up of Christ-centered culture is only possible if she is faithful in her task. The pulpit cannot be transformed into a stage, and the Sabbath rest cannot be confounded with leisure and play; discarding true preaching in favour of emotional singing and story-telling is the surest road to deformation in church and society. Only when the true preaching of the Word is maintained can there be truly meaningful and reformatory cultural activity, also for singers and players. Preaching, prayer, and the public reading of the Scriptures must remain central in our liturgy. The regular administration of the Word must be maintained. That is the goal of our College, and all its teaching as well as its festivity must be subservient to that goal, even if in the eyes of the world the whole thing is a bit of a joke.

For the Bible teaches that true liberation does not come through a "wider" perspective of festivity and play, but only through Jesus Christ. The idea that one can transcend the realm of work and social class through play and the realm of the comic is based on a false dilemma between work and play, and between necessity and freedom. The Bible does not speak of such a dilemma; it makes a distinction between *bondage* and freedom, the bondage of sin and the freedom from sin that comes in Christ. Although shortcomings and sins manifest themselves in the exercise of our office, in Christ we may perform our duties in freedom and joy. A false dilemma between work and play can never free men from the bondage of sin; it can never make a "grave-merry" man who can happily "stand back" from his labour. Cultivating the festive spirit as a substitute for hearing the Word of God can only end up in empty frivolity and despair; it can only end in the sort of frivolity the theologians of play themselves warn against, i.e. the sort of frivolity that turns everything that is serious and meaningful in human life into parody and a joke. Unbelieving man will never understand his laughter — he will always toast either to Chance or to Fate; but the Christian who sees the distinctions as the Bible gives them, who sees his office and calling, but also the sins and

shortcomings of his efforts in fulfilling it, and who realizes that these are covered by the blood of Christ who perfectly fulfilled His office, it is only he who can perform his task without being ensnared by it. Humanly speaking, the church is beaten, for the devil, in his gathering work has the men of talent and the women of beauty that really draw the crowds; but their song always ends with themselves and their performance; it is not directed to the glory of God.

So even if our frail efforts in maintaining the ministry of the Word may be the object of their laughter, that should not bother us. "Laat ze maar lachen: die cultuurslampampers van de overkant," says Schilder. Let them laugh; let them dance; let them play and have their fun. We know that behind it lies the hidden despair of men without hope. For the Christian who sees the matters correctly knows that it is not the need or compulsion for food, shelter or company that causes our misery, but the compulsion to sin, which can only be overcome by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is this knowledge that gives a deeper joy amidst all misery and suffering, and only this knowledge puts the comic and tragic in their proper light. For we know that He who sits in the heavens laughs, not with the laughter of derision but with the divine irony that realizes that all the cultural striving of the adversary will come to nought. With this knowledge we do not have to seek our salvation in the laughter or pleasure of the moment, but may, with lasting joy and happiness look to Him Who has brought us peace and liberty through the cross.

J. DEJONG

Address delivered at the sixth Convocation of the Theological College, held on September 10, 1976.

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THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd.
Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Second class mail registration number 1025.

ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE

MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):

CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.
1249 Plessis Road, Winnipeg
Manitoba, Canada R2C 3L9
Phone (204) 222-5218

ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

CLARION
P.O. Box 54, Fergus
Ontario, Canada N1M 2W7

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editor: W.W.J. VanOene
Co-Editors: J. Geertsema, Cl. Stam,
D. VanderBoom

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

\$16.50 per year (to be paid in advance).

ADVERTISEMENTS:

\$4.50 per column inch (width of column: one-third of page). Contract rates upon request.

Advertising copy for weddings, anniversaries, meetings, etc., must be in our office three to four weeks prior to event.

“DECORATION”

Not too long ago, I came across an interesting item. I read that a certain consistory of a Reformed (sister-)Church decided not to accept a congratulatory gift of the architect and the contractor who had just completed their new churchbuilding. The gift was: a CROSS to be attached to the forefront of the building.

Understand well, the consistory itself did not object to hanging up this decoration on the building's gable. But there were a number of objections from out of the CONGREGATION which made the brethren office-bearers somewhat reluctant to proceed. The main objection was that a CROSS was used solely or mainly as a decoration for Roman Catholic churchbuildings and that passers-by might confuse the newly-constructed building with the wrong church. Well, this objection has some value, and the people there perhaps remembered Dr. A. Kuyper's warning that we should not take over "romanist motives" in our styles and symbols (Onze Eredienst, page 78). Roman catholic edifices indeed were always clearly recognizable by large, elaborate crosses.

The consistory-in-question took a very wise decision. The brethren felt that "the misuse of this decoration need not bring us to abstain from usage of this decoration." But the consistory did not want to offend anyone either and for the sake of PEACE politely declined the gift.

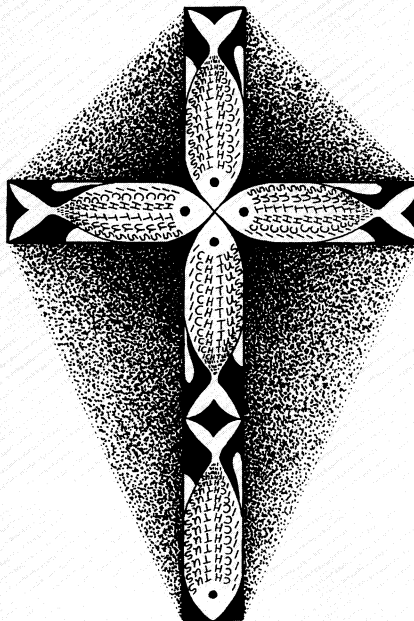
So much for that. Looking at the pictures of some churchbuildings of our Canadian Reformed Churches — as these were printed in CLARION in the course of time — I noticed that most of our buildings also do not have outward insignias such as a cross. One building, I admit, has a rather large one, frightfully hovering above the entrance, but that's clearly an exception to the rule. Could it be that the objections voiced above are also present in our Canadian Reformed Churches? Do we have the same aversion against putting a cross (or for that matter other works of art) on our buildings?

I do not think that it is the cross as such which meets our disapproval. Paul writes to the Galatians e.g., "But be it far from me to glory, except in the CROSS of our Lord Jesus Christ" (6:14). Which text in turn prompted the well-known Dutch hymn, "In't kruis zal ik eeuwig roe-

Circumspection...

men" (I'll forever glory in the cross). But, correctly taken, this text does not encourage using the cross as a wall-decoration, for "the cross" should be understood in a broader sense: the full atonement for our sins which was realized on the cross of Jesus Christ. We do not boast in ANY cross, but a very specific HISTORIC cross: His cross alone.

Nevertheless, the cross has become the symbol for Christianity,



with reference to another of Paul's words, "Jesus Christ and Him CRUCIFIED" (1 Corinthians 2:2). And you know how it goes: symbols easily become decorations on buildings, instruments and gowns.

Talking about symbols, another prevalent symbol for Christianity is the sign of the fish. Compare the text, "No sign shall be given than the sign of Jonah" (Matthew 12:39) who was in the fish three days and nights. The Greek word for "fish" conveniently is a contraction of the first letters of the early Christian confession, "Ichtus: Iesus Christ God's Son (Theou Uios) Saviour." I understand that believers in those days recognized one another through the sign of the fish.

It might not be important to some, but it could be argued that the

sign of the fish served as a Christian symbol (and sign of recognition!) BEFORE the cross became an official sign of Christianity. It was only after the first Christian emperor, Constantine, abolished crucifixion in the fourth century that the cross could become eminent symbolically (cp. B. Reike, *Biblisches-Historisches Handwörterbuch*). That's why I would personally prefer the fish above the cross as official symbol. And I've seen buildings with artistically-sculptured or cast-iron fish as symbolic decorations.

There's nothing "fishy" about that. A symbolic decoration certainly can function as an artistic confession: in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lies all our salvation! There is such a thing as "Christian Art" which attempts to convey a clear Biblical message. In itself we need not shun symbols or artistry. We must be careful even that our churchbuildings do not become dull and drab, since colours and flowers, for example, are gifts of the Lord for us to rejoice in.

Yet I can understand the hesitancy of the people in the above-mentioned congregation. We should also be very CAREFUL with symbols and decorations on and in our buildings. If decorations are present, they must play a minor and unimportant role, functioning only as added decoration and not necessary inspiration. The building may be soberly decorated, but the Church is to be inspired only by the living preaching of God's Word!

The use of symbols can easily lead to symbolism in the churches. The cross which once represented the Christian belief of salvation in Christ's work alone, later became an object of worship itself. People started kissing the cross instead of seeking the Saviour.

It's a known fact, and we see it clearly today in many churches, when a church departs from the Word of God, the worship service has to be filled with alternatives. All types of liturgical specialities are concocted to keep the people occupied. Symbols are introduced and litany returns. The churchbuilding is flood-

(continued on page 362)

On our Contact with the Korean Presbyterian Church at Toronto

In our previous issue we published a report to Classis Ontario North of September 9, 1976, which report had been released for publication by that Classis.

In the same issue you found a report of an interview which the Rev. Cl. Stam conducted with the Rev. Dr. S.G. Huh who was here for a visit.

This shows that Korea and the Koreans do receive quite some attention these days.

Although the above two events do not have any direct connection with each other and although in so far their happening at the same time is purely incidental, yet the visit by Dr. Huh was fruitful also for the furtherance of the contact with the First Korean Presbyterian Church at Toronto.

It will be good when we inform our membership somewhat more amply about what they could read in the previous issue.

Concerning the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ we confess that we can easily discern and discover whether we have to do with the true Church or not. It cannot be denied that oftentimes the discussions about that point

were rather abstract and purely theological. Most, if not all, of us will have been present at such discussions or even taken part in them.

Once in a while one could also hear the statement that there cannot be two true Churches in one place at the same time. To that statement it was then mostly answered that it is indeed possible that there are two true, faithful Churches of the Lord in one place at the same time but that, when they discover each other's existence, this situation cannot continue for long: they will seek each other and try to come to an organizational unity which is not the cause but only the result of the unity of faith which they already acknowledged to be there before. Organizational unity is never the way in which unity-of-faith can be achieved. It is only the way in which such a unity-of-faith is to be expressed and demonstrated.

We are convinced that we have found a faithful Church of the Lord in the above mentioned Korean Presbyterian Church in Toronto. Or rather, we have not found *them*, *they* have sought and found *us*. If they had not come to us, we might never have learned of their existence.

At times one is amazed when discovering in how large numbers people have come to Canada and now are living here as recent immigrants. Perhaps we do not even have any idea how large the number is of those who left The Netherlands since the Second World War and made their home here, let alone that we have any idea of the numbers of those of different descent.

I was greatly surprised to learn that in the Toronto area alone there are no less than 20,000 Koreans, divided into some twenty different religious groups. These groups include then Roman Catholics, Jehovah Witnesses, etcetera. Many of them have quite some difficulty with the language and, as most immigrants do, they wish to preserve their own identity. Integration never means that you give up what you have brought along; it means that you bring your own inher-

itance along and thus enrich the resulting society.

SEEKING EACH OTHER

Also from the Churches with which our Netherlands sister Churches have correspondence members emigrated to Canada. They, too, sought each other here in this for them strange country. Besides, there were others who felt that they needed the communion with and the support of the others, even though in Korea they may have had different ecclesiastical affiliations, and it is difficult for us to keep that all apart. We are not the only ones who would have trouble with trying to keep the different groups in Korea all apart and when trying to decide which one we would have to join.

I could mention something, too, to show that it would be hard to make clear to an "outsider," a total stranger, exactly what certain differences amount to. How would you, e.g., explain to someone from Korea the difference between the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands and the Christian Reformed Churches (de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken) there?? You might hear this reaction: "But they have no valid reason to lead separate existences!" It could quite well be that you would utter the same exclamation if someone from Korea tried to explain to you the difference between and to justify the separate existences of the Hap Dong Church on the one hand and the Koryo Pa (with whom our Netherlands sister Churches have correspondence) on the other hand!

In any case: there is a Korean Presbyterian Church in Toronto which is comprised of people of orthodox background who were convinced that they could not join any of the other existing groups because of what they saw to be an unbiblical stand and a surrender to liberalism. This Church is — we have been assured — certainly not a melting pot of people with various religious and theological ideas and of different spiritual background.

HOW IT STARTED

We shall leave out names, we only wish to present the "case" as such.

In December 1973, the first service was held in an apartment. Some weeks later they received permission to use a building of the Church of the Nazarene, which facilities they used for approximately one year. Problems

CIRCUMSPECTION - continued

ed with banners, paintings, symbols, plants and flowers. The pulpit is buried under a debris of articles used for plays, manifestations, and "adapted" services. The cross on the outside then doesn't make up for the mess in the inside! The plants and flowers cannot camouflage the fact that such a church is a greenhouse of corruption.

Outward decorations are nice, but they do not make a church. Elegant cathedrals offer no insurance for purity. As Abraham Kuyper also said, "An idol's temple can never be a thing of BEAUTY: the TRUTH is missing" (o.c. page 77).

The church's true decoration is a holy worship according to the Word of God. That's Spiritual Art with lasting value.

Cid.

with transportation (don't we recall those first years?) and lack of sufficient facilities caused them to look elsewhere. A Christian Reformed Church offered them the use of their building for four hours each Sunday. There they have been meeting now for two years.

A minister was called from Korea and he arrived in November 1974. At the moment he is following lectures at our College in Hamilton, besides, of course, ministering unto that congregation.

The fact that they used a building of a Christian Reformed Church brought them into closer contact with the latter. We shall not relate the whole process; we just tell you that the Classis Toronto of the Christian Reformed Church of May 1976 decided in principle to receive the First Korean Presbyterian Church into fellowship of the Christian Reformed Church.

HOW IT CONTINUED

It may seem strange that now "all of a sudden" there appears to be contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches and the impression may be made that our latest Classis was more or less forced into a hasty decision in order to be competitive and to beat the Christian Reformed Church to it. I put it that bluntly on purpose, for that could easily have been the impression it might have made on me if I had not been involved in the work of the committee and in the decision which the latest Classis Ontario North made in this case.

Let it be sufficient when I mention that one of the reasons why the Korean brethren contacted us anew (some superficial contact was made about two years ago, but for one reason or another that never resulted in any action) was a visit by Dr. Lee, the principal of the Korean Presbyterian Seminary in Busan, Korea, where also Dr. S.G. Huh teaches. During that visit Dr. Lee strongly advised the office-bearers of the Toronto Korean Presbyterian Church to seek contact and even union with the federation of the Canadian Reformed Churches. That was — be it said for a good understanding — well before the Classis Toronto of the Christian Reformed Church made its above mentioned decision.

Classis Ontario North of May 27 decided to appoint a committee with the mandate to examine the request for admission into the federation of the Canadian Reformed Churches and to

report to the next Classis, scheduled for September 9.

The committee met a few times, discussed the request, met with two of the office-bearers of the Korean Presbyterian Church, the minister and an elder, and came with a report, the report which we published in our previous issue.

SOME QUESTIONS

Is it not a little too fast, someone might ask, to make a decision as Classis made, after such a short time, some three and-a-half months? Should not quite a few more meetings and discussions have been held before such a decision was made? Do we really know everything about that Church?

Let me answer those questions.

Of course, we do not know everything about that Church and it will be a long time before we shall have found out everything. The language-barrier with the vast majority of the membership is already quite something to overcome.

But let me ask a few questions in reply to the above questions.

SOME OTHER QUESTIONS

When there is a Church somewhere in the neighbourhood which stretches forth its hands and asks, "May we go with you?" —

When that Church declares that it wholeheartedly believes the Holy Scriptures as the inerrant Word of God —

When that Church has declared itself heartily willing and ready to pledge allegiance to the Reformed Confessions and has promised to regulate its life in harmony with the adopted Church Order —

When that Church says, "We need help and need others to 'supervise' us in order to keep us in the way of the Lord —

When that Church states that it wishes to continue in the line of the "Mother Church" and that it feels at home with us, recognizing us as faithful Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ —

What is it, then, that the Lord requires us to do?

Do we, then, have to conduct many more meetings or to write many more lengthy reports before we can make a decision-in-principle?

When you send out missionaries to faraway countries to spread the Gospel, to prepare the Bride of Christ

to increase the number of His subjects —

When you spread the Word of God by means of radio waves and through the printed pages of book and periodical —

When you urge the members of Christ's Church so to speak and so to conduct themselves in daily life that the neighbour may be won for Christ —

When you pray, "Preserve and increase Thy Church . . ." —

When then there is a Consistory which expresses the desire to be received into the Church Federation —

When then there is a Consistory that says, "Let us with you take shelter under the wings of the Almighty . . ." —

What, then, are you to do? Say to that Consistory, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled but do not expect that any help will be forthcoming from us?"

Or do we then know enough to come to a preliminary conclusion?

Those were the question with which the committee was faced.

Those were the questions with which Classis was faced.

The conclusion was: We are able to make a "decision-in-principle": This is where we stand; this is the direction into which we are moving together; this is what we may expect in the future.

We did not rush things, neither did we rush into things.

It took a long time before the Union of 1892, the merger between the Secession Churches and the Doleantie Churches, was complete. According to some it was never consummated altogether, a statement with which I beg to disagree. Yet it did take a long, long time. Would it, then, be wise in the above described situation to act as if right away we are hand and glove?

It is possible that as yet matters will come up which will prevent the decision-in-principle from becoming fully effectuated. The discussions will be continued as outlined in the report. No time limit has been set, we shall have to decide as we proceed and as progress is being made.

And the possibility is not excluded or even remote that the developments in Classis Ontario North will open perspectives also in other places where a Canadian Reformed Church is found.

press review

ONCE AGAIN THE SCHOOL. A REPLY.

The reader may remember that some time ago — in *Clarion* of June 26 — I reviewed an article of the Rev. D. DeJong written in the *CITY-Guide*, the church-bulletin of the congregation at Edmonton. To this review as well as to what the Rev. Werkman wrote in "School Crossing" about the same matter the Rev. DeJong wrote a reply in the same bulletin. Passing by what was written against the Rev. Werkman, I take over what was replied to me. I gave my review the heading: "Our 'own' schools and exclusivism." The Rev. DeJong wrote first in reaction to an advertisement of our Carman School Society in which it was stated that if we could not find teachers we had no other alternative than to send children back to the public school. His reaction was the question: Is there really no other alternative? Are there no other Christian teachers or other Christian Schools outside our own circles? Is it not better, yes God's will, to have such a teacher or such other Christian Schools instead of sending covenant children to the public school? After an introductory remark the Rev. DeJong writes in his reply:

It is disappointing that Rev. Geertsema is convinced that to my question: Is there really no other alternative if we cannot find teachers who meet our standards, but to send our children to the public school, he must answer: No, we in Carman have "no other alternative, indeed."

One of the reasons is: "because we are bound by the Statutes of the School Society" (Article 6: Teachers may only be those who are confessing members of the Canadian Reformed Church and live according to the Word of God and the Confession).

Rev. Geertsema expects that I will say that this article is wrong, exclusive, unreformed, and "that we have put 'our standards' in it, which are not the standards of the LORD." He says: "We can conclude this from what the Rev. De Jong writes."

Rev. Geertsema is mistaken in saying this.

I do not at all object against it, when a Canadian Reformed School Society has an article like this in its Statutes. If I am not mistaken (I read the Statutes of several Canadian Reformed School Societies), sometimes it is said that such teachers are the only ones who can get a definite tenure. I like that better, yet I do not even deem it necessary to put that in. In a normal situation it is normal that a Canadian Reformed School Society employs confessing Canadian Reformed teachers.

But I wrote about an abnormal situation! *And my objection is, that what is a good rule for normal situations, is used to overrule the will of God in an abnormal situation.* An article in the Statutes of a School Society, however good it is, may never be considered of equal value with (let alone of higher value than) the divine Scriptures, the truth of God. I hope that art. VII of the Belgic Conf. is so well-known, that its words are recognized in what I write. I also hope that Rev. Geertsema will acknowledge that his long piece, starting in column 3 with "now suggesting" and ending in column 5 with "Canadian Reformed Churches?", therefore is not to the point, out of place, wrongly giving the impression that I would be against Canadian Reformed School-education, *and evading the issue.* *The issue is not:* for or against Can. Ref. Schools, *but:* may we send our children to the public school, when Christian education is available; or, is it *the law of God* that it *must* be our own Canadian Reformed Schools with Canadian Reformed teachers (regardless of the circumstances in certain places), and otherwise: (back) to the public school.

The Rev. DeJong is right when he states that I did not discuss what he calls the issue, namely the question what must we do in an *abnormal* situation, when there is no Canadian Reformed school, or when there are no Canadian Reformed teachers, while there are other Christian schools or teachers. However, the author wrote in this connection: "I did not see this advertisement (for a teacher, J.G.) in a paper or magazine outside 'our own circles.' This is in accordance with the continuing tendency . . . in *Clarion* as a whole, that it is considered the will of the Lord that Canadian Reformed children must be taught by Canadian Re-

formed teachers in 'our own' Canadian Reformed schools, exclusively, and that other ways of Christian-school-education (e.g. as being provided and used in Edmonton) are not mentioned at all in *Clarion*, or warned against." Brother DeJong protested against this tendency of exclusivism. And for this exclusivism more examples were given. Now in the given quotation I read (apparently wrongly) that Canadian Reformed school education and other ways of Christian school education had to be placed on the same level. Can I conclude from the reply that Canadian Reformed School education is the normal thing for Canadian Reformed children, and that other ways of Christian school education are abnormal, although a must in abnormal situations? Well, then also I can say that in an abnormal situation, e.g. when it is impossible to come to an "own" school because the membership is not large enough and thus no sufficient means are available, and when that other Christian school education is faithful to God's Word, it is good that parents send their children to such a school. However, I think that we must also be careful not to make such other Christian school education such an absolute law of God in an abnormal situation, that the establishment of a Canadian Reformed school (the normal situation) is prevented or hindered. For then we are in danger of making the other Christian school just as much such an exclusive must, as we say that others do with respect to the "own" school.

After the Rev. DeJong further made some remarks about another matter, he continues to write under the heading "Dishonesty toward 'outsiders'":

I complained about this, because Rev. Geertsema, when *Calvinist Contact* expressed regret that the Canadian Reformed churches completely ignore other Christian Schools, *denied this, pointing to cooperation with these schools in some places.*

About *that* I asked Rev. Geertsema why he not added that he advises against it, that commonly it is frowned upon, and that it systematically is kept out of *Clarion*.

In his article Rev. Geertsema *completely ignores* these questions and so I ask: is this honest? This time, not toward "outsiders," but toward a brother and colleague in the same confederation of churches?

I like to say this: In the first article Rev. DeJong wrote in a specific way, name-

ly that "it is the accepted thing to frown upon the situation in Edmonton." And in my reply to what an "outsider" wrote I saw no need to be specific. Besides, I was not only thinking of Edmonton. There are more places, the small congregations, where that situation still exists. Moreover, that I advise against cooperation (of course when a normal situation exists, and an "own" parental school is possible), was clear from my reply. For in it I stated the desirability of the unity between church, home and school, and I pointed to the wrong course in the Christian Reformed church as it even appeared in that article in *Calvinist Contact*. Moreover, that cases of cooperation are not mentioned in *Clarion* was not my business to comment on. I was not in the editorship. So I can not see how I was dishonest, first over against an outsider and then with respect to my colleague.

In the last part of his reply the Rev. DeJong writes about the question: "Do General Synod Toronto 1974 and Consistory Edmonton 1971 say the same?":

Yes, says Rev. Geertsema: do not both "express the same desirability" of Canadian Reformed Schools?

No, tell the (f)acts: this is not true at all. *General Synod Toronto 1974* made a *generalizing* declaration on the desirability of Canadian Reformed Schools (plural), in an official decision published in the Acts.

Consistory Edmonton 1971, however, made a *specific* declaration in a *local* situation on the necessity of Reformed — or Christian — Education today, in an *official* and published 'Statement' consisting of 12 paragraphs

Well, nowhere in these 12 paragraphs of Edmonton's 'Statement' can anything be found like General Synod Toronto 1974's declaration.

In the *introduction-part* of Edmonton's 'Statement' a survey is given of happenings in the past, before January 1971. One of them is a letter of the Consistory to the called minister, written in 1967, and referring to an earlier decision of the Consistory made in 1964(!). This decision is not quoted in that letter, but rendered quite freely, and this free rendering contains the words: "If possible at a Canadian Reformed School."

Whether it is in a quite free rendering or in a literal quotation, does not make all that much difference, according to me, because the fact stays that the Consistory wrote these words. The Rev. DeJong continues:

The official decision of 1964 itself however, (repeated in 1971) says: ". . . that

Covenant-children do not belong in a secular public school and that it is their (the parents', DJ) calling to provide Christian school-education for their children."

This is what Edmonton since 1964 officially stands for, and it would honour Rev. Geertsema if he would make this *official* stand known to his readers.

As far as I can see, I did make this stand of Edmonton's Consistory known already, when I quoted the following words in my previous review on this matter:

The Consistory has decided to point out to the parents at the home-visits their calling, also in agreement with their baptismal promise, to take care that their children receive Christian Education. If possible at a Canadian Reformed School; if this is not possible, at a general Christian School . . . , but anyway off the public school.

Further, I would like to say this: I did not say that Synod Toronto 1974 said exactly the same thing as the Consistory of Edmonton had done. My only point was that in the words: "*If possible* at a Canadian Reformed school; if this is not possible . . .," the Consistory expressed the same desirability of Canadian Reformed School education as did the General Synod of Toronto. And whatever difference there can be between the 'Statement' of Edmonton and the declaration of the Synod, it can not take away the fact of similarity on this point of expressing the desirability.

I pointed to the danger of mixed marriages as a consequence of cooperation in school education. The Rev. DeJong gives this comment:

must here again the wornout slogan of the danger of mixed marriages be repeated . . . ? When the Bible speaks about mixed marriages, it warns against the dangers of marriages between believers and unbelievers. Is Rev. Geertsema then less concerned about these dangers?

As for the last question: of course not. As for that "wornout slogan" of warning against (ecclesiastically) mixed marriages, that warning should not be called a slogan, let alone wornout. It is still fully in place. For our church-membership is a matter of faith and thus of obedience to the Word of God. Besides, church-membership of parents is very important for the next generations. If we should become members of a church where we notice liberal influences and a deviating from the Scriptures, possibly not in every local congregation but anyway in general and as a whole, would we then act

in accordance with God's will? Is *that* the biblical wisdom?

The Rev. DeJong concludes his article as follows:

Rev. Geertsema concludes that he finds in my articles "nothing brought forward against the grounds and arguments given for standing apart also in the matter of school education." *Of course he did not find that, for I was not writing against that at all!* Why, o Why, Rev. Geertsema, do you nevertheless give it that appearance?

When one writes against the trend in our churches of making the "own" school almost the fourth mark of the true church, and finds this expressed even in a general declaration of a general synod which speaks of the desirability of Canadian Reformed schools, and opposes this declaration, some discussion of arguments that are used for that "desirability"-stand would have been in place, and does one, then, not give the impression that in his opinion a general Christian school education can be just as good and desirable as the "own" school?

J. GEERTSEMA

The Case of the Television

A few issues ago the Rev. Cl. Stam wrote an article with the above heading. It was his desire to receive arguments pro and con, thus possibly to come to a common opinion. I received a few letters-to-the-editor on this topic, and passed them on to the Rev. Cl. Stam. Contributions to the discussion should be sent to him. No letters-to-the-editor about this point will be published as yet. Contributions to the discussion are welcome.

Ed.

news medley

Action calls for reaction, the one offer brings out a competitive one. Hardly had I recovered from my astonishment at the tremendous value of one "crowned" sermon when I received a letter from another organization which appeared equally concerned about the following: "You know the scene. Monday morning. You're drained from Sunday. Have to start all over again on a sermon. Secretary needs a title by ten o'clock for the weekly newsletter. Custodian, too, for the signboard out front." Thus it goes on for a while. However, relax, for friendly help is offered by means of a periodical which "is praised and used in every state, Canada, and other English-speaking countries. It is read and used by Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, and Jewish clergy — many of them calling it 'the best preaching resource available today.'"

From that description you already can conclude that it is practically impossible to give good, Scriptural guidance. A sample-sermon was enclosed which was excellent as pep-talk but as a sermon was not worth the paper it was printed on.

However, what I wanted to come to is something in which my brother Rev. J. Mulder may be interested for the Series. Prizes are promised. I beg your pardon: "Sermon Awards" are set before the weary preachers. The first one being \$500.00, the second one \$250.00, the third one \$100.00, plus four runner-up awards of \$25.00 each for the outstanding sermons of this year. Well-counted, that makes a grand total of \$950.00. But now comes the cinch: how do they get all that money to assist the needy preachers? See, with each sermon submitted one has to send in a registration or entry fee of \$5.00! Hear, hear! When I recall that the other time a number of no less than 598 sermons was received, it can easily be seen that a handsome profit could be made besides helping the worn-out preachers find a new title every week. Further, a subscription price for the Series would bring in a pleasant sum of money. And the vacant Churches would not have so much trouble with finding suitable sermons to read or even a "new" sermon at all.

Chilliwack, e.g., mentions, "Again the absence of available Catechism sermons is noted but there is nothing we can do about it. It was suggested that reading the same catechism sermons for the fourth time would not be edifying." It may not be, but it would be better than reading some of the products that I have seen lately, some of which even were awarded a prize in a "contest." Seeing the poverty of men who have nothing to offer but a humanistic, moralistic speech which may have a text for its heading, which may refer to that text once in a while but as for the rest is composed of quotations from books, from prominent persons, interspersed with a joke or two, I become the more grateful and feel a deep joy when I realize how week after week the treasures of the Scriptures are displayed before the wondering eyes of God's children and how, as a wise "scribe" the minister digs up out of the old mine new treasures all the time. These new treasures may not always be presented in a palatable form, they may not always be put clearly before the Congregation, there may be in-

stances in which the minister takes it too easy and too easily goes to the pulpit with what he has prepared. I do not wish to claim that every minister always does his best when preparing the sermons. I do not claim that "stampot" every time should always be appreciated and that no variation should be expected. But I am grateful for it that within the Churches in whose midst I may serve, the inerrancy of the Scriptures is upheld, that those who minister within these Churches do know themselves to be ministers of the **Word**, and do endeavour that that **WORD** may be heard on Sundays without any human wisdom having been added. May the Lord keep us from "Topical preaching" as it is being practised round about us. And whenever we use a "title," may it then be a title which gives a summary of the **text**. Enough about that.

We already mentioned Chilliwack. Let me continue with that Church. "It is noted with gratitude that several young members are contributing modest amounts." It is good to learn at an early age that the Lord has the first right to our earnings, however modest they may be.

In Chilliwack the desire is growing to have a Church-building of their own. They go easy on it, but the members are requested to look out and to inform the Consistory if they see something suitable. Success!

Abbotsford has finished the paving of the last part of the parking lot, but now they still have to install speed-bumps! Isn't that something! It is too bad that that has to be done, but it would be worse if the parking lot would be abused by young people who use it as a racetrack. Then they had better go to a speedway.

In New Westminster the deacons came to the conclusion — and the whole Consistory agreed with that — that the work done by brother and sister John Kuik in Brasil is a work of mercy and that consequently the costs should be borne by the deacons. Contributions formerly received via the Mission Aid Committee should, therefore, from now on be given to the deacons.

Now that the new Churchbuilding is fully in use and the situation becomes more or less consolidated, there are plans to organize a Sunday School in the building.

Further we mention that the Van Spronsens were scheduled to return to the mission field on September 29. They will have arrived back "home" in the meantime, newly assured, I trust, that they are backed by a great number of praying Congregations, which remember them continually before the throne of mercy.

Up in Smithers the Consistory tentatively approved a request by the Schoolboard that the minister be allowed to teach Bible Study at school.

Further, the contract for the Organ was approved. The total cost, including building of a balcony for the Organ, may be close to \$30,000.00. That is a large amount, but I am convinced that it is well-spent since our singing as a Congregation is a very important part of our worship.

Passing through Winnipeg, we notice that the parking lot has indeed been paved. That will be quite some improvement which will be enjoyed especially in fall and spring!

Some proposed changes in the basement will not be realized. The cost of folding doors there apparently was much higher than expected, and the "defacing" of ceiling and walls would be worse than originally anticipated. Thus it was decided not to proceed with those plans.

At the Consistory meeting it was suggested to appoint an evangelism committee with the responsibility to fulfil the

Consistory's mandate to make the Church known in the vicinity and to organize a Bible or Sunday school for neighbourhood children.

Approaching Ontario's Churches, we stop over in Brampton. There the Consistory discussed at length the question of pulpit exchange. "As the need arises, pulpit exchanges will again be granted this winter, but probably on a more regular basis There are two factors which enter the picture. Some of our neighbouring older ministers are very busy with work all of us eventually benefit from and we should assist in this way if so desired and if possible. Also our own minister is quite busy and could use an exchange now and then."

Personally, I have always been an advocate of regular exchange. To have two sermons ready every week is a very heavy responsibility and sometimes impossible to fulfil. And more and more our Consistories start to realize that. Some give their minister a "free" Sunday once every month (which then may include the Sundays for Classical appointments), some give him the freedom to exchange whenever he deems it necessary (which is a dangerous thing to do; the one may take a little too much freedom; the other one, after having "bumped his head" as they say in Dutch, a few times may say, "Forget about it."). I would think that the standing permission should involve one Sunday every month or, if that is preferred, two services per month, which could then be divided over two Sundays. It would, in my opinion, make it easier for a minister if he had two weeks in which he has to prepare only one sermon than if he had just one week in which he would have to prepare none at all. However, that would all depend on the amount of driving to be done and the distances to be covered.

Such an exchange, I am convinced, would benefit not just the minister but also the Congregation. The Congregation would hear some different sounds once in a while, learn from a different minister, discover that in other Congregations there are the same weaknesses and shortcomings, and realize that there are varieties of gifts, showing the multi-coloured, the pluriform wisdom of the Lord God.

Continuing with Brampton, we learn that there, too, there are plans for building another place of worship. No, nothing is definite. The only thing so far is that they talked about the desirability of doing so. The future availability of land in the Brampton/Bramalea area for a churchbuilding will be investigated. The more we begin to live in planned communities, the more difficult it will become to settle where we wish to settle and to build where we decide to build.

Going down to Rehoboth Burlington, we discover that the Catechism instruction in school will no longer be given by the ministers. In the beginning, when there was just one Church in Burlington and when the children attending the John Calvin school came from that one Church, the minister taught Catechism during school hours. I don't think that I am far out when I assume that that was also occasioned by transportation problems. The children were there, and it would save not a few parents quite some trouble if they wouldn't have to come back in the evening. But perhaps there were other reasons as well.

Meanwhile, the situation has changed. Children from at least three Churches are now attending that school. It would only be fair if all three ministers were involved in the work at school. But two of the three were either relieved of

45th Wedding Anniversary



On October 29th, 1976, Mr. and Mrs. J.M. van Spronsen hope to celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary, D.V., in Coaldale, Alberta. They received from the Lord nine children. One of them, Bernard, the Lord took unto Him at the age of 14 months in 1944. They came to Canada in May 1951 from Apeldoorn, The Netherlands. After arriving in Lethbridge, Alberta they and their children worked in the sugar beets for one season. When the beets were finished, Mr. van Spronsen resumed his original trade as mechanic. For four years he worked at a garage in Lethbridge and then started his own garage business in Taber. Upon retiring in December 1973, they moved to Coaldale where they now reside.

Mr. van Spronsen has been an elder in the church much of the time and still is at present. Mr. and Mrs. van Spronsen are both in good health and remain active in most aspects of life.

that work or decided against it. The Rehoboth Consistory now decided that their minister shall not do it all by himself, with the result that it is discontinued. In my opinion a healthier situation. If the school should request a minister to teach certain courses, e.g. the Catechism course, then they do not do that because he is their minister, but because that is his special field of study. He "majored" in those disciplines, we shall say. It would be different, of course, if the minister should conduct those classes after school hours. But that would be too inconvenient because the buses would have to wait. From whatever angle we look at it, I think that the situation has normalized now and that no one has to be sorry about it.

The Rev. Cl. Stam also writes about the custom of the minister standing at the exit after the service and shaking hands with people. He himself, he declares, will not do that. "I will not take YOUR place, for you must greet and invite the strangers." He sees a certain form of "clericalism" in such a practice.

The Rehoboth bulletin also contains the schedule for the "Winter Lecture Series" which promises to be a very



News items are published with a view to their importance for the Reformed Churches. Selection of an item does not necessarily imply agreement with its contents.

DUTCH REFORMED SEMINARY

Schiedam, The Netherlands. On September 24, in a meeting of the Board and the cooperating Churches, the first semester of the Foundation for the Dutch Reformed Seminary was officially opened. This training for the ministry is organized by the Reformed Churches outside the Federation (Buiten Verband). The Foundation was established in 1973 with the object of setting up a training "in which in contrast to existing theological seminaries,

God's Word is central and not learned (scientific) theology," according to a brochure published last year in June. The courses that will be offered in the first year are: Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Philosophy, Biblical Archaeology and Geography and also Anthropology and Psychology. Up till now part of the students of the Buiten-Verband Churches studied at the Theological Seminary of the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in Apeldoorn.

THE MATTER OF LEFEBVRE

Moscow, Soviet Union. The official newspaper of the Kremlin, *Izvestia*, has attacked the French bishop Mgr. Marcel Lefebvre (see previous *Clarion*), calling him "that man of extreme right, former member of the OAS" (the French military organization which fought to retain Algeria as French colony). He was also called, "pastor of the western-European Neofacists."

Econe, Switzerland. Meanwhile Mgr. Lefebvre has requested a compromise with the Pope on the condition that he may continue with the "experiment of the tradition." He made these remarks at a press-conference in Econe (where he has a seminary and has ordained priests contrary to Papal will) and said that he would continue his work at the Seminary. Mgr. Lefebvre doesn't want to be a "rebel" anymore, but hopes that in a church where "since the second Vati-

can Council pluralism has gained a place" also traditionalists will be regarded as welcome.

COMBI-SYNOD

Utrecht, The Netherlands. The combined Synod of the Reformed Church (Hervormde Kerk) and the Reformed Churches (Synodical) in The Netherlands has taken a number of decisions meant to give all opportunity for an increased cooperation of these churches at a LOCAL level. More attention will be given to the guidance and direction of this local cooperation. To help the local churches, a kind of "schedule" will be published with concrete practical advice for the various phases of cooperation. In certain places a start will be made with a combined Churchbook ("dienstboek"). With these decisions the integration of the local churches is approved and hastened.

TRIP DR. ARNTZEN

Hattem, The Netherlands / Grand Rapids, USA. On October 4, Dr. M.J. Arntzen, minister of the Reformed Church (Liberated) at Hattem commenced a trip to the USA and Canada to speak in various places in connection with the situation in the Christian Reformed Churches. He is doing this at the invitation of the "Lecture and Literature Committee" of the American Reformed Church at Grand Rapids. Dr. Arntzen previously was minister of

NEWS MEDLEY - continued

interesting and instructive enterprise. Pentecostalism, Horizontalism, are some of the topics which will be discussed after having been introduced by local ministers and others.

The only thing which we have to mention about Ebenezer Congregation is an important item: brother and sister Huib de Bruin will celebrate their fortieth wedding anniversary on October 21. With this fact we congratulate them from the heart. For many, many years our brother had his nursery and greenhouses where they still are: right across from the Churchbuilding. Or rather, as far as I know the greenhouses were there first, then came the Churchbuilding. Living close to the Church, our brother also has always shown a lively interest in the matters of the Church. We do not doubt that many will come to congratulate in person; we add ours to the many congratulations they undoubtedly will receive.

Hamilton, having received a pastor and teacher of their own by now, also received the building permit for a new parsonage. The building can start after the tenders have been called.

As for the changes in the Smithville area, the Consistory decided to "order a 12" x 20" aerial picture of the

churchbuilding, prior to remodeling." When I read the many changes that apparently are made, I appreciate the more the foresight shown by the Consistory. Everyone will wish to have such a picture, I presume, even if it were only for nostalgic reasons. Once you have something new, you miss something of the old feeling, of the familiar surroundings to which you were used for so many years. And then there is the tendency to forget the inconveniences and the reason why the changes were necessary. Then it is good when you have still a photograph of "how it was."

Anyway, quite some rebuilding and remodelling is going on.

"All the foundations for the new additions are in place and the new walls are starting to go up. Two steel trusses have been put up last week In the meantime, the doors and windows have been ordered and should arrive in a couple of weeks. They are all aluminum frames with thermo-pane coloured glass.

"Also a special textured and coloured cement block has been ordered for the front wall Once the roof is finished we will have to move our steeple ahead, and we plan to remodel and lengthen it at the same time."

That concerns then only the outward appearance. The Organ, too, has the attention.



Dr. M.J. Arntzen

the Dutch Synodical Reformed Churches. In a recent interview, he compared the situation in the Christian Reformed Churches to the Dutch situation ten years ago.

HUNGARIAN PRIMATE AND COMMUNISTS

Budapest, Hungary. The Roman Catholic Primate of Hungary, Cardinal Laszlo Lekai has advocated a more intensive national dialogue between Roman Catholics and Marxists. The Cardinal, who was appointed only last February as successor to the late Car-

dinal Mindszenty, addressed the national congress of the Hungarian Patriotic People's Front, a political movement under communist leadership. Lekai stated that it is important both for church and state to maintain a frame in which the believers can fulfill their religious obligations. The only "attack" on government policy was that the Cardinal denounced both abortion and divorce as illegitimate means. Approximately six of the near eleven million Hungarians are confessed Roman Catholics.

RCA SURVEY

Grand Rapids, USA. The *Church Herald* of the Reformed Church of America has published the results of a survey held among "lay members and clergy" indicating that the ordination of women be accepted by a small margin. The majority among the "lay members" consisted of 14 votes, and among the clergy of 38 votes. This indicates that women's ordination will probably be accepted this year or next in the RCA.

ROME-CANTERBURY

London, England. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Donald Coggan, Primate of the Anglican Church, will bring an official visit to the Vatican in April, 1977. This will be the second official visit since the previous Primate visited the Vatican in 1966. The two church-leaders will discuss a report of

a combined Roman Catholic and Anglican Study committee which deals especially with authority and "the general principle of the universal primate of the Pope." The matter of women in office will most likely also be discussed since the Episcopalian Church in the USA has officially admitted a woman into priesthood.

COMMENT

LEFEBVRE: TEST CASE FOR UNITY?

In most "denominations" from time to time there have been dissenters or "troublemakers." And although the Roman Catholic Church's strong hierarchical structure doesn't encourage clerical opposition to official policies and doctrines, it seems that this time the Vatican does have a problem on its hands with Mgr. Marcel Lefebvre of France.

I think it is a problem of a nature similar to that found also in other churches. In our era, most denominations are on the move, away from long-standing doctrines and traditions, and this is bound to cause conflict and separation. The Vatican II took decisions regarding liturgy and inter-eclesiastical cooperation which must indeed seem completely liberal and therefore fully unworthy in the sight of many traditionalists.

We must understand, there are
(continued on page 370)

"The Consistory grants the Organ Committee permission to purchase the new organ as proposed and to collect the money as suggested by the committee less \$1,500.00. If the money is not available, or if upon consultation experts advise not to purchase the new organ, the present organ will be re-installed, including the change of the Oboe for the Krumhorn."

That "new organ" is "a 20-year old, 12 rank organ with ten years guarantee." A twelve rank organ can be a beautiful instrument, although you don't even need that many ranks, depending on the building. Every time anew I am amazed at the possibilities which the very small organ in the Guelph Churchbuilding shows. And I think that that is only a two rank organ, perhaps two-and-a-half.

Ending our journey in Watford this time, we may say that the sister Churches take good care of this Church. After the Rev. W. Huizinga's departure, classically arranged pulpit supply will amount to no less than two Sundays per month, four services per month, starting in October. That is a generous allowance, I should say.

London apparently informed Watford that they will call a minister on their own; the result was that Watford wishes to do the same. They also asked Classis whether they would be able to count on any financial support, but re-

ceived the reply that they should come with a budget so that classis would know exactly how much would be needed.

In a few bulletins it struck me that the Deacons had to inform the Congregation that their funds were depleted or almost exhausted, so that they had to ask the Congregation to increase their offerings. Actually, can we, generally speaking, call it an offering what is being deposited into the collection bag for the support of the needy? For quite a few years many of our deaconries worked with large surpluses and it is, I can imagine, almost a relief for the deacons when they are allowed to appeal to the Congregation to increase their gifts. I would not feel good either if every week I went around with the collection bag and had to do that while being aware of it that we could easily skip a few months and still have more than enough to fill the present needs. I am almost inclined to congratulate the brethren who see themselves in a position that they have to look for ways and means to collect the gifts, so that they can fill the hands of Christ's members who need their support.

Is it not in days of need most of all that one experiences the communion of saints?

many such traditionalist groups within the Roman Catholic Church. E.g. in The Netherlands there is an "Oud-Katholieke Kerk" and a few years ago a Dutch Roman Catholic Party was organized to break with the liberal tendencies of the much larger Catholic People's Party (KVP). Canada also has groups which favour the traditional brand of Roman Catholicism and there are priests who persist in using the Latin Mass. And now these "orthodox" groups have found a champion for their cause in Mgr. Lefebvre.

Bishop Lefebvre was suspended from office some time ago, because of his persistent public display of opposition against the Vatican decisions. And it is as theologian Hans Kung (another controversial figure within the Roman Catholic Church) has suggested that Rome has an awkward way of dealing with dissenters like Lefebvre and is making him into a martyr. It could very well be that Rome's treatment of Lefebvre will only cause further polarization in the Roman Catholic Church and eventually lead to a major schism. Lefebvre could be a testcase for the Unity of the Church of Rome in these times, and the Vatican might have to change its policies against him.

Significant are the remarks made about Lefebvre by the Soviet magazine *Izvestia*. It doesn't occur often that an official Soviet newspaper condemns a western clergyman, and the communists must certainly be concerned about Lefebvre's actions. Indeed, Lefebvre is opposed to Roman Catholic participation in the WCC and favours a strong exclusivistic stand, while the Soviets want nothing else than Roman Catholic capitulation to and participation in the WCC. The World Council poses no threat to world-communism, but has recognized Marxism as just another system to achieve freedom and prosperity. Therefore it would be a major step for the false ecumene and a great victory for Soviet communism if Rome joined Geneva. The biggest world-church would then be embodied in and firmly guided by a communist-directed organization. Therefore Lefebvre is recognized as a major threat and exposed as "pastor of western Neofascists." *Izvestia* prefers people like the Primate of Hungary who cuddle up to Moskow.

Meanwhile Lefebvre is enough of a staunch Roman Catholic to desire reconciliation with the Pope. Which means that unlike Luther e.g., he is not

a REFORMER but only a RESTORER. He doesn't advocate the true form according to the Scriptures, but only desires a maintaining of unscriptural traditions. The solution seems to be a church of modalities, i.e. a church with a progressive and a traditional wing. It is interesting to note that Lefebvre no longer demands a complete return to the former state, but asks "room" for traditionalism in a changing church. Modality churches are found more and more as escapes out of true reformation.

Methinks, if it is only "room"

which the French bishop desires, he'll get it, at least formally. Rome knows how to "sidetrack" factions within the church. And the mainstream of Roman Catholicism will continue on the same course: unity with Protestantism and Marxism. The beasts out of the sea and the earth (Revelation 13) will not be stopped by Lefebvre in their struggle against the Christ.

All the same, bishop Lefebvre is a sign on the wall and a sign of the times. It's getting late for those who anticipate true reformation also in the Roman Catholic Church. C.I.S.

school X crossing

THE SCHOOL IN THE CENTRE

No, I am not going to write about the central position of the school in the trio 'home-school-church' but about the school in the centre of our country: Winnipeg! The reason you did not read much about Winnipeg in the 'School Crossing's' was the fact that they did not have their own School Newsletter until some time ago. Their information etcetera was always published in their Church Bulletin ("Pro Congregatione"). That was a nice thing in itself. For the church and the school are very close and therefore it was indeed quite proper to read the School news in the Church bulletin since this work is indeed 'pro congregatione': for the congregation! But now Winnipeg has issued their own School News. Unfortunately there is no date on this first issue, but from the information in it I can gather that it came out this summer. Now between the first news and this first School News issue lies a period of about 2 years. In the spring of 1974 they had a school meeting. They had their regular Friday night classes, but started

thinking about setting up a day school. At that time there was \$6,600.00 in the treasury. And now, in their first School News they report already the arrival of the principal and a second teacher. A tremendous change has taken place during these few years. They have not only a beautiful church building, but have also opened their school in September for the first time. There is great unanimity in Winnipeg's congregation for this work. In one of the church bulletins it was remarked that starting a school is not first of all a matter of money, but rather an act of faith. Faith in the Lord that He will bless our endeavours to educate His children. Faith also that God will provide for us with all things necessary. Winnipeg considers itself privileged to be able to do this work. I was glad to read this especially since some people make it sound as if all the work that our people are doing to establish or maintain reformed schools is done only to boast in our own work. Far from it. The various school bulletins from across our country speak a different language! Time and again I notice the humble thankfulness to the Lord! Winnipeg too realizes they have to go through some 'growing pains.' But that will prove that they are growing! As to the question heard sometimes: 'can we afford it?,' they answer: 'can we afford not to?.' Indeed that is the point.

A name was proposed to the membership also. That must have been hard for the Board to choose one name out of 15 that were suggested!

OUR COVER

Torch Valley at Banff National Park, Alberta. (Photo courtesy of Alberta Government Photographic Services.)

After a lengthy discussion the Board proposed the following name: Immanuel Canadian Reformed School. They feel this name expresses the character of our school well. Immanuel means: 'God with us' and they chose 'Canadian Reformed' rather than 'Christian,' since the latter, alas, to the public has a very broad meaning, and is no longer very distinguishing. How true! Congratulations Winnipeg!

With the local School Board and the Department of Education Winnipeg has good relations and receives good cooperation from them. The School Board has approved a request for assistance in the form of a Foundation Grant (about \$280.00 per child, per year), as well as a text book grant in the amount of \$16.00 per student, per year. The former amount is refunded by the provincial government to the local School Board. The text book grant is only for purchasing of books. They also received all their desks, blackboards and bulletin boards free. We are all thankful together with our brothers and sisters in the centre of Canada!

EDMONTON IS PROGRESSING

Many things have happened in the Oil Capital of Canada according to their School Bulletin. The congregation displayed a new interest in the society and the membership has increased considerably. There is interest with the young people also. They organized a walkathon with the proceeds to go to the school society. Of course this encouraged the society. We see that happen more than once that especially the *younger* generation sees the need for reformed education. Sometimes more so than the older ones. Could it be that they realized what they missed when they went to school? A permit was received for the development of school property. They plan to erect a building similar to the ones in Coaldale and Cloverdale. In order to save on costs for additions in the future, they plan to build as large a shell as possible. Let us hope it will not be an empty shell very long. The present zoning requirements calls for a minimum of 20 acres for the school. That sounds like an exceptionally stiff demand. Fortunately Edmonton's Society has 30 acres in total, but now will not be able to sell any of it. They are thinking of making the extra land profitable in some way.

BREAK-INS

Yarrow's school was broken into

twice recently. The first time the offenders were apprehended and the stolen goods returned. The second time they caught no one. Well, overagainst that they received in May an anonymous gift of \$1000.00 from a brother of one of the neighboring churches. Besides that another two gifts totalling well over \$500.00. And so the work continues everywhere, with ups and downs, with losses but also with unexpected gains. Often the Lord has great surprises for us!

The language of the children seems to have improved after some admonitions were given in an earlier School Bulletin. May it continue that way. Some children have strange notions about school. What do you think of the following quotation: 'the parents send their children to this school so the teachers can teach them not to use improper language at home?'

A new budget was adopted for \$108,000 for the coming year. That means \$160.00 per month for members with school-going children.

The Board also decided to introduce the *strap* again in the new year. Probably a very wise decision. A strap is quite effective!

HAMILTON

Timothy School ended the year with 55 students and expects 65 students to attend this year. For these children the cost of transportation is \$20,000 per year! They hope in the future to purchase their own buses to cut down on the costs. Imagine, in 5 years time they will spend \$100,000 for transportation alone! Hamilton and Smithville played two baseball games. Both games were lost by Hamilton but it did not dampen their spirit. They enjoyed the games.

SMITHERS — INDONESIA

A certain minister of a Presbyterian Church and President of a Christian University in Indonesia, has applied to the Smithers' school for the enrolment of some Indonesian students, so that they can finish their studies at this Canadian Reformed school. They even had a telephone conversation with him. Apparently last year he visited Canada and investigated the so called Christian schools. He came to the conclusion that he did not wish to have general christian education for those boys. He wants them to be educated in a Reformed school and attend the Canadian Reformed Church. Once again, we see how the Lord blesses us

when we are faithful to His Word. It will have an effect even outside our churches. Some seem to think that we should 'evangelize' in our schools by opening the doors to children from various 'churches.' But (without closing the doors automatically for others) we should not only establish but also *maintain* reformed schools, faithful to the Word of God and the Creeds of the Church. Then we draw also others from outside. That has happened in some of our congregations here in Canada. Now we are known even outside our borders. A long distance between Smithers and Indonesia. But faithfulness bridges that distance. For then we build the Church of the Lord and may also help His children in other countries to build the Church. I know there is a lot we can criticize our schools for. We can criticize our students, our parents, boards, teachers and many more. But may I end with the words of one of the workers of 'the first hour' for Reformed education:

"If you do have criticism, but in the meantime refuse to become a member of the team, you break down rather than build up. Why not put your shoulders under the load too; then your healthy and constructive criticism, if necessary, will be acceptable. The point is: join and work with the Board.

Also financially. Those two boxes in the Church may not and must not be separated. They serve one and the same goal. Building the Church also means building a school and those who support this work today (even in a small and simple way) are working for the future of the Church and the Church of the future."

These words were written *twenty years ago* by Rev. G. VanDooren when work was begun towards the establishing of a Reformed school in Burlington. But these words of twenty years ago, could be written *today*. They still apply. They were translated and printed again in Burlington's Home and School in September 1976. Let us take it to heart in every congregation.

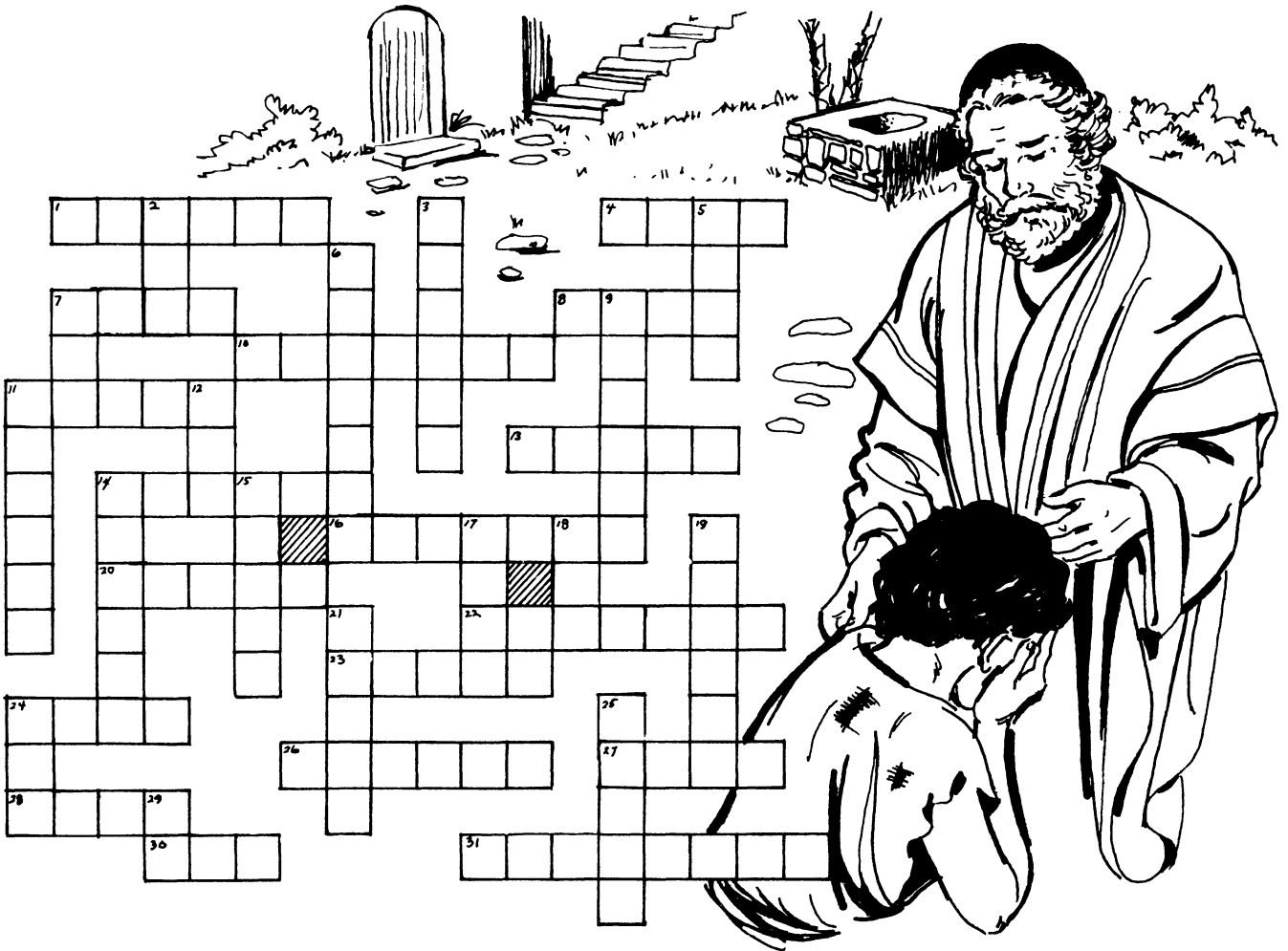
M. WERKMAN

FOR THE READER'S INFORMATION

This issue of "Clarion" was mailed from Winnipeg Central Post Office on October 8, 1976.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

THE PRODIGAL SON



Luke 15:11-24

Down

2. The younger _____ took a journey (v. 13).
3. He _____ himself to a citizen (v. 15).
5. What kind of robe? (v. 22).
6. Nation (v. 13).
7. "His father _____ him" (v. 20).
9. "I perish with _____" (v. 17).
11. "I have _____ against heaven" (v. 21).
12. Take food (v. 23).
14. "There arose a mighty _____" (v. 14).
15. _____ servants (v. 17).
17. He fell on his _____ (v. 20).
18. Same as 12 down.
19. Where the swine were (v. 15).
21. To put on his feet (v. 22).
24. Distant (v. 13).
25. Not dead (v. 24).
29. "_____ to my father" (v. 18).

Across

1. His father _____ him (v. 20).
4. The best _____ (v. 22).
7. Ordered (v. 15).
8. Second word in verse 24.
10. Long trip (v. 13).
11. Hogs (v. 15).
13. "And in thy _____" (v. 21).
14. He was happy to see his son (v. 21).
16. Which son wanted his portion? (v. 12).
20. Happy (v. 23).
22. "_____ of that country" (v. 15).
23. He wanted to eat these (v. 16).
24. He had to _____ the swine (v. 15).
26. He sinned against _____ (v. 18).
27. "He was _____, and is found" (v. 24).
28. Put this on his hand (v. 22).
30. "_____ of thy hired servants" (v. 19).
31. They had enough bread (v. 17).

our little magazine

Dear Busy Beavers,

Today we have an important announcement to make! You think you know already what it's all about? Yes, you're right. Today we find out who the winners are in our Big Summer Contest.

Think you can wait for just a few moments yet? So that I can tell you a few things before you hear the names? Good!

I told you last time already how proud I was of all the entries. They showed that a *lot* of Busy Beavers had done a LOT of HARD WORK! But you all enjoyed doing the quizzes and writing your stories and poems, am I right? And THAT's the MOST IMPORTANT thing, you know. And I'll tell you why: not everyone can win the contest. But even if you didn't win this time — don't lose courage, join in again next time. Maybe then yours WILL be the best entry!

And now for the names!

In the QUIZ CONTEST: the winners were: in the Seniors department: Busy Beavers *Debbie Knol* and *Nellie Knol* (tied); in the Juniors department; Busy Beaver *Nancy Van Raalte*.

In the POETRY CONTEST: Busy Beaver *Charles Slaa* was the winner.

In the STORY CONTEST: the winners were: in the Seniors department; Busy Beaver *Marion Lof*; in the Juniors department, Busy Beaver *Sharon Vander Meulen*.

And in the Story Contest HONOURABLE MENTIONS should go to Busy Beavers *James Slaa*, *Jane Wieggers* and *Patricia Van Raalte* who NEARLY won!

Congratulations to all the winners. You may look forward to your prize. Keep up the good work, Busy Beavers!

Busy Beaver *Nancy Van Raalte* sent in a poem that will be fun to share.

When I Grow Up

When I grow up
I want to be
A nice nurse
With a big purse,
Or a funny clown
With a big crown,
Or I could be a teacher;
But not a preacher!



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Elaine Hamoen*. We hope you will really enjoy being a Busy Beaver and will join in all our activities! You had lots of fun going to Jasper, didn't you? Write again soon, Elaine.

Thank you for a nice chatty letter, *Betty Bouwers*. It sounds to me as if you had a really good time this summer! I think you must be proud of your bigger improved school, too. Bye for now, Betty.

You had your quiz all right, *Carrie Nieuwenhuis*. Keep up the good work! I hope your neighbour's dog is all right, Carrie. What did you like best at the Science Centre?

QUIZ TIME

One of the Busy Beavers wrote and told me she was looking forward to a cross-word puzzle. Here is one for you to do! (Please see page 372)

Thank you *Joan Hofsink* for that crossword puzzle. Now let's see if we got last time's quizzes all right!

Bible Foods

1. pottage 2. corn 3. pomegranate 4. honey 5. venison
6. cucumbers 7. grapes 8. locusts 9. manna 10. bread
11. figs 12. barley 13. melons 14. fish 15. quails.

Give the Direction

1. west II Chronicles 32:30 2. east — west 3. east and west
4. west 5. southward 6. east 7. north 8. east 9. north.

How did you do? Did you have them all right? Keep up the good work!

Busy Beavers if you have a story to share or a poem, you don't have to wait for a contest. We're always happy to share. So please send it in!

Bye for now. Till next time!

With love from your
Aunt Betty

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Letters-to-the-Editor

Dear Mr. Editor,

It is with respect to the "Letter-to-the-Editor of a Concerned Reader" that I feel compelled to take up my pen and write a letter in reply to his letter (see *Clarion* of September 18th). The reader concerned raises a complaint about "the almost total absence lately of good instructional articles by our professors at the College." He goes on: "In the paper of our Dutch sister-churches the professors of their College play almost a dominant role with respect to providing the Church people with some good instructional articles on a regular basis, whereas in our churches we hardly know we have professors and lecturers" A.s.o.

I would like to thank you, Mr. Editor, that you were so nice as to remind our concerned brother of the work of the Rev. Van Dooren and also of the two series of articles I wrote for *Clarion*. As far as I am concerned, I could mention in addition articles in *In Holy Array* and *Outlines for The Almond Branch*, but let me leave the latter out of consideration now and focus on what was done and still is to be done for *Clarion*. To be sure, it is about a year ago now that my last article was printed. Since September '75 I did not write anymore. For what reason? First of all that in the course 1975-1976 my workload was almost doubled since according to the decision of the General Synod of Toronto 1974, Article

171 B6, the students during the first year of the four year course are to receive special instruction in the languages of Holy Writ. Second, because I am wondering whether it is really helpful if I would continue to contribute to *Clarion* in the way I did so far. The comment that I heard was negative: "The articles are too difficult," ("De artikelen van uw man sla ik over," an outspoken sister told my wife). "U moet niet zulke moeilijke artikelen schrijven," another brother remarked. "Those series are too long; people don't like it," a minister told me. That concerned reader who does not even mention them, is the last straw. Judging from these comments I came to the conclusion: "I better quit writing. Waste of (*Clarion*) paper! Waste of time! Waste of efforts!" I better spend my time on something else, e.g. preparing for lectures and a speech here or there once in a while.

However, I have a question to the anonymous brother or reader: Why does he completely overlook that to be a professor does not imply by that very fact that you are a journalist or a press man? For that is how it is. The same holds true for our ministers, out of whom Mr. X would like to see at least two articles per year squeezed. On the other hand, as for the professors of de Theologische Hogeschool in Kampen, he mentions just three names of the seven professors. And as for the three, the words "regular basis" are not applicable in the same way. Only one of them is writing regularly in the same column, the others every now and then provide the *Reformatie* with articles. But that does not matter.

They all contribute according to what are their specific talents and gifts. So they do serve the Churches.

In conclusion, I am really dissatisfied about the comment of a reader who likes to be in hiding. I am sorry. I would like to know more about the background of his letter and his considerations. Be it that the articles of the present writer are too difficult in his opinion, be it, that they do not meet the standard, I rather say *his* standard of what is "good and instructional." Supposing he is right in applying such standards, I could benefit by it and mend my ways by his remarks. You are never too old to learn. Nobody is more convinced of this than a professor who *does know* that he has to learn all his life.

As for me, I am gladly willing to write articles, but only on the condition that they are a real contribution, that is understandable and instructive to the readers. And please do not forget, though I am willing to mend my ways, "Ieder vogeltje zingt zoals het gebekt is." Everybody has his own way of expressing himself.

H.M. OHMANN

Psalm 139:13-16

We thank the LORD for His precious gift of:

JARED CHARLES FREDERICK
Born September 17, 1976.

Tom and Carla Zietsma
(nee VanderVelde)

A brother for: *Jonathan*
563 Brigadoon Drive,
Hamilton, Ontario L9C 6E2.

With thankfulness to the Lord our Creator, we announce that He entrusted to us a second covenant child:

JENNIFER LUCILLE

born on September 18, 1976.
A sister for *John Kevin*.

John and Alice Kippers
(nee Van Dasselaar)
Box 31, Neerlandia, Alberta

Engaged:

SHIRLEY MEDEMBLIK

to

PAUL BROEKEMA

September 25, 1976.

R.R. 5, Guelph, Ontario.

Saffierstraat 4,
Groningen, The Netherlands.
Betje Wolffstraat 6,
Groningen, The Netherlands.

With thanks to our covenant God we announce the birth of our first child:

THERESA TABITHA

born on September 20, 1976.

Jerry and Ida Tillema
R.R. 1, Chatham, Ontario.

With thankfulness to the Lord, who made all things well, we announce the birth of our son:

MICHAEL JOHN

born on September 17, 1976.

A brother for: *Ann, Ruth, Susanne, Christine, Faith, Irene, Paul, and Stephen*.

Henk and Jenny Schoen
(nee van der Molen)

16411 Fraser Highway
Surrey, B.C. V3S 2X3.

With joy in our hearts and thanks to our gracious and merciful covenant God Who made everything well, we may announce the birth of our daughter:

BELINDA MARIE

September 13, 1976.

A sister for: *Derrick Peter*.

Peter and Rita de Boer
(nee Berends)

20428 - 41A Avenue,
Langley, B.C. V3A 5N5.

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow, He has entrusted us with the care of another child. With thankfulness and joy we announce the birth of our son:

DARREN GERARD

Born on September 23, 1976.

A brother for: *Steven* and *Lisa*.

Steve and Terry Bremer.
77 Cameron Avenue,
Beamsville, Ontario L0R 1B0.