



Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Volume 25 - No. 23

November 13, 1976



OVERSIGHT:

The First Office of the Elders

Second of three parts.

"Therefore in the first place, the office of the elders is, together with the ministers of the Word to take the oversight of the church, which is committed to them, and diligently to look whether everyone properly departs himself in his confession and conversation; to admonish those who behave themselves disorderly, and to prevent, as much as possible, the sacraments from being profaned: also to act (according to the Christian discipline) against the impenitent, and to receive the penitent again into the bosom of the church, as appears not only from the above mentioned saying of Christ, but also from many other places of Holy Writ, that these things are not alone entrusted to one or two persons, but to many who are ordained thereto."

- Form For Ordination of Elders and Deacons of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Last week I explained that "oversight" of the flock is fully a pastoral matter. Overseers are shepherds called to guide and rule the Flock of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This makes oversight such an important matter, for the shepherd is responsible for the lives of the sheep. Therefore I formulated my second point: oversight is a meticulous matter; it demands the full care and attention of the officebearer.

GENERAL

"Oversight" sometimes is but never may become oversight in another sense, namely that one forgets various sheep or certain dangers which are threatening the flock (the Church). Oversight is a command, and may never become an apology, in the sense, "I'm sorry, that's an oversight!"

Oversight is a very accurate, even meticulous matter regarding the smallest details. In the first place it must be OVERsight, the elders (pastors) must oversee the WHOLE flock and be able to do so. The form first speaks of GEN-

ERAL oversight, "the oversight of the Church," the whole body and all the members together as a congregation. The elders must attend to the general state of the congregation, be aware of general sins and dangers and have an open eye for general weaknesses due to the locality or the times in which the flock lives. In this sense oversight demands a definite INsight into the local situation and the spiritual structure of the era. There's nothing so contradictory as an elder who is not up to date.

Of course, if the elders are to take the oversight, we must assume that this is possible. The idea that the church is not "invisible" but certainly "unoversee-able" (Dutch: niet onzichtbaar, wel onoverzichtelijk) should not be applicable to the local church. A congregation must always be "oversee-able." In this respect I must agree with those who warn against our congregations becoming too large. If a congregation is not oversee-able, the pastors become either frustrated or negligent. Certain specific cases (the extreme ones) do receive attention, but the consistory cannot keep up with the congregation in general. Even though the minister and the other pastors might be able to manage the main affairs of a large congregation, meticulous oversight and insight into the flock is hardly possible. Once a congregation is moving beyond a membership of 400, it is doubtful whether the oversight can still be accurate and adequate. And seeing the spirit of the times, the problems we encounter as pastors, the churches certainly do need this accurate and adequate pastoral attention, more and more so as the Lawless one reveals himself (II Thessalonians 2:4 ff.).

SPECIAL

While oversight, then, first touches the WHOLE congregation, the elders will spend most of their time dealing with specific, individual cases, according to need and necessity.

Principally speaking, NO ONE is excluded from this particular oversight, since the elders are to look diligently whether EVERY ONE properly departs himself in his confession and conversation. I have come across a situation in which the elders did visit the congregation, but not one another (as if they didn't need to be included in the oversight!). Or one can sometimes hear the complaint that certain high-placed and influential people in the congregation are never really reprimanded for specific sins or weaknesses. Sometimes a whole group can fall beyond the oversight. Such partiality is quite unscriptural (cp. James 2) and will hardly be found in our churches, I'm sure. One cannot skip a homevisit because of the knowledge that it's alright in that family anyway or because of lack of time. ALL the members shall be included in the oversight.

The most important means to achieve this oversight in practice, is the HOMEVISIT. Nowhere do we read in the form for ordination that elders must go on homevisits, but in Article 23 of our Church Order this activity is expressly mentioned. I already mentioned (see previous article) that oversight is connected with VISITATION, and that's also what the form implies without stating it.

Oversight means going out and visiting. And the pastors should certainly not RESTRICT their oversight to one formal annual visit, but make use of opportunities to "drop in" informally. It would be wrong to be elder only at the annual homevisit and for the rest maintain no contact with the families. Any special occasion merits attention and possibly a visit. A pastor is sympathetic to those entrusted to his care, interested in THEIR life and attempts to build up a relationship of trust and understanding. Is this not the reason why we divide the congregation into WARDS, so that a working relationship CAN ensue? It's been proven, if a pastor has established a

fine relationship with the families, he is not just an official acting in a given circumstance (e.g. when difficulties arise), but a pastor whose advice is sought and whose assistance is esteemed.

If there is a sympathetic relationship of trust and respect, then certainly the families will "open up" to the office-bearers. Then also the congregation will understand that this "looking dilligently whether everyone reports himself properly" is not just a matter of INVESTIGATION — and then one is glad when the yearly inquisition is over — but a matter of COMMUNICATION. A homevisit can then be appreciated instead of dreaded.

CONSISTORY

Only certain matters "hit" the consistory-table, namely the cases of those who persist in behaving themselves disorderly. It can even be a matter of "public sin" in which the persons involved show little or no penitence. Some cases can become a regular part of the consistorial agenda. And the danger is then that in the course of time such cases are no longer properly handled at the meetings.

One tends to become so "familiar" with a case, visits become somewhat stereotype, are often done out of necessity but without hope, and one can grow very tired of a certain matter which keeps returning on the agenda. It is this "pastoral tiredness" which we must watch out for continually and remain giving each case regular and proper attention. I'm convinced e.g. that those who are being dealt with should be mentioned in the prayers of the consistory at EVERY meeting, whether their case has been discussed at that particular meeting or not. It remains a prime part of the pastor's office to commend his sheep into the special care of the great Shepherd of the flock. In this prayer we must certainly be meticulous, for it has to do with the principal character of the office.

CONSISTENCY

The form doesn't mention homevisits (as I indicated) and therefore doesn't speak of the FREQUENCY of homevisits. Officially one annual homevisit should suffice (although article 23 Church Order stipulates "as time and circumstances may demand for the edification of the congregation both BEFORE and AFTER the Lord's Supper"). Once, however, the conduct or

confession of a member reaches the special attention of the consistory, there must be regular visitation from out of the consistory, so that reports can be made and discussed even when a case "drags on." The elders must show consistency in visitation, for nothing is so depressing as to hear that no visit has (again) been made. No visit, certainly not a pastoral report. If the appointed ward-elders (or others) cannot visit, they should request fellow-pastors to relieve them. But visits must be made, for visitation is the practice of oversight.

To accentuate these things, it is a wise custom to have a set point concerning PASTORAL CARE on every agenda of the consistory, then divided into general pastoral oversight and particular discipline (with reports). As a matter of fact, this is the most impor-

tant point on the whole agenda. Since elders are pastors, every agenda which doesn't give this pastoral care a central spot is a wrong agenda. (Cp. J. Kamphuis, *Het Jaaragendum van de Kerkeeraad*, page 140, "The care of the congregation is number one!").

For a large part, the congregation is going to be built up or broken down by the oversight of the pastors. For this reason it must be done meticulously with accuracy and faithfulness in general matters and in particular cases. Here's where the HEART of office lies. A consistory must show consistency in its words and actions, so that the Word of God can freely work in the congregation and the Spirit is not hampered by our approach and methods.

Cl. Stam

First . . . Priority in the Life of a Christian Wife

INTRODUCTORY

Rather gratefully and thus eagerly I respond to many requests received in the mail or by word of mouth, to put on paper the remarks I made in the afternoon meeting of the recent Ontario Canadian Reformed Women's League.

That 'eagerness' should not be seen as a proof that I think my remarks were so tremendously important. There is something else . . . Never before in my life have I, after a speech and/or discussion received so much 'praise' or enthusiastic agreement on the one hand (and the mail keeps coming) while on the other hand, some voiced radical and total disagreement.

That makes one wonder . . .

I would like to believe that this extreme difference in reaction (and the heat is not turned off yet) comes, anyway partially, from the fact that I was invited to speak for *twenty* minutes, and then in *two* languages (!! How long yet, ladies??) on a topic that—as I expected, and I was proved right—was somewhat forgotten: it would take some digging to bring it to the surface.

I will not deny that at a certain moment I was quite heated-up, not because I was 'mad' but because I could not and cannot stomach that,

first, there is such flagrant twisting of words, second, such unwillingness to bow before what the Bible says literally and clearly. Of course (I hasten to add) those who voiced their disagreement, were—and are—fully convinced that they were the faithful guardians of the Word of God (and I wholly accept their honesty in this respect).

I will put here black on white why I became "heated-up" (because it is not incidental, it is symptomatic among us, alas!). First there is a *misunderstanding*. I tried my utmost to solve it because experience taught me that misunderstanding breeds *mis-* and *dis-trust*, and the latter becomes the mother of *slander*, twisting someone's words and other sins like this as forbidden in the 9th Commandment. Hence repeated tries to take away the misunderstanding before the end of the meeting. But No!

Now I have the proofs (in plural) that I was right in this fear I read recently: "A Church where distrust reigns has no future"—If that is true, then I am not so optimistic about the future of 'our' Churches. Proofs? The next day a colleague approached me: although he could not believe it, he was told in all seriousness "that Rev. VanDooren had said that getting children is a result of sin and a punish-

ment." And, of course, "sex was sin, too"—but we could already rectify that 'conclusion' during the meeting.

The reader starts wondering what all may have happened in that meeting, and why. He may even wonder whether the good name of the Women's League is not at stake in these lines.

You may rest assured as to that good name. I myself think that some of the ladies did not listen too well when I said that I was going to *limit* myself to only *one* point, one aspect. I reduced the plural "priorities" to the singular "Priority" — and replaced 'women' by 'wife'. The fact that I stuck to my topic obviously gave occasion to some to state that I was (perhaps) "against getting children" because I did not speak about the beauty of motherhood! Or even that "sex and getting children was a result of sin . . . !!"

Others had missed something about the role of women in the Church and a new approach to that role, and so on . . .

If one would talk about "priorities" (plural) in the life of Christian women, we could make up a whole list, and then discuss the order of that list: what comes first, second, and so on.

I happened to speak, only 20 minutes, in two languages, on *one* thing, the "FIRST" as mentioned in our *Form for Holy Wedlock*, the "*first* purpose for which God has instated it" (and all husbands and wives should know this by heart, have the words written in their hearts!):

"FIRST, that husband and wife, united by sincere love, will faithfully help and assist each other in all things that belong to this life and to the life eternal."

That is the "*first priority*" in the life of a Christian wife (as well as of a husband) and I limited myself during that meeting, and now limit myself in writing, to that one and only "*first*."

It stands to reason that, here and there, we bring in something from the discussion.

Being a minister, I divided the topic into '*three parts*':

This priority

- I. How created;
- II. What it became through and after the fall;
- III. How redeemed and restored by Jesus Christ, the Last Adam.

* * *

N.B.

Speaking to Christian women and

wives, I deemed it superfluous to stress and elaborate on the fact that God is Number One in our lives, that Jesus Christ comes first, that we seek His kingdom first, etcetera. That is so clear that it goes without saying. That is "the priority" for all and everyone always. There are two men who have a scar in their side for Woman: the First Adam and the Last Adam, but only that second scar redeems from sin and restores life.

* * *

I. "Male and Female . . ."

From *Dr. K. Schilder* I have learned that for a proper understanding of the relationship between husband and wife, as well as for an answer to all questions relating to a God-pleasing life, we must go back all the way to Genesis one and two (and three . . .). The reason is obvious: Jesus Christ, as the Last Adam, came to redeem and restore what His Father created in the beginning.

Thus one may say that the whole matter of "the priority in the life of the Christian wife" already has been decided in Genesis 1:27 ff. Every word here is of the utmost importance.

"So God created *man* as His Image . . .

"male and female he created *them*;

"and God blessed them and said to *them*: (two things, a double mandate) (a) "be fruitful and multiply . . ."

(b) "and have dominion . . ." — that's what God said to "them," "male and female" together.

Both together constitute the image of God, the female no less than the male. To both the double mandate of "be fruitful" and "have dominion" is addressed. Not the one mandate to the male and the other to the female, but both to both.

(N.B. God is neither male nor female in the human sense; He compares Himself to a mother [Isaiah 49:15] as well as to a father [Psalm 103, etc.] and is greater than both!)

The obvious teaching of the Bible is here that God created male and female as *e q u a l s*, side by side, and as *p a r t n e r s* in the one and double mandate.

Genesis 2 does not teach a different lesson. Nor is it a "second creation story," dug up by Moses from who-knows-where. Genesis 1 reveals the creation of male-and-female in one sentence as the crown of creation; Genesis 2 (see the heading in 2:4) reveals to us the same, but now as the

beginning of history. Therefore also now the Name of the God-of-History: "*the LORD God*."

Thus we now hear some more details about Genesis 1:26 ff. A Garden is prepared; two special trees planted; then the LORD God states that it is not good that man be alone: it is not 'good,' not suitable for the purpose of man's life. He is only 'half.' He needs a 'helper fit,' a 'partner' — perhaps the best word here is the Dutch '*wederhelfft*' which my dictionary renders as "better half!" Why not just "the *other* half"? Taken from man's side (that's the meaning of the Hebrew word: 'side,' and not just 'rib' — she was taken from where his heart throbbed: quite an operation!) — and thus, although we now know that man was created first, and that woman was created for man and not man for woman, — yet both share fully the Image of God. To both as "one flesh, male and female" has been given that double mandate of, let's say, "the family and the job"; "the home and the business."

Adam was created first, but, as Scripture makes abundantly clear, as *primus inter pares*, as the first among equals. The Woman (or Wife) was placed, by the Creator, not *under* the man, but *next to* him: "*wederhelfft*," the other half — and thus they become one flesh, one being, in all senses, sexually, in their lives, and



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. Geentsema, 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.

work and goals, and minds and hearts: one!

And here the ladies have their answer as to what is "the priority in the life of the Christian wife": what comes *first*? And what is to remain *first*? From the beginning of their being one flesh till the end — and all the time in-between!

What is it? To be a mother? To spend all her energy, time, attention, etc., etc., to bearing and bringing up children, while everything else has to come second or third . . . ?

No!: her priority is to be "the glory of her husband" as Paul says, in being his 'partner, helper fit, wedderhelft, other half' or whatever term you may prefer. Everything else comes second, or third.

That's why (and during the League-meeting some confessed that they had never realized it, — imagine!) our Form for Holy Wedlock is in complete agreement with biblical teaching, when it puts "First . . ." what has already been quoted above. Again, that's first and has to remain first. "Secondly . . ." the Marriage Form continues with the propagation of the human race. But even if it does not please the Lord to give children, the marriage is not, and is not to be empty, because "First" remains first, and can fill the lives of male and female and give them fulfilment.

In conclusion, and for clarity's sake, it should be stressed that the distinction between "First . . ." and "Second . . ." is not a separation, as though being male and female is limited only to "being one"; or as though getting children would not be part of the fulfilment of a God-pleasing marriage. But we are talking about priority, singular: the first thing in Woman's life was and is to "be a helper fit for man," period.

This beautiful beginning, created by the LORD God, was ruined by the first "Woman's Liberation Movement," after which followed divine punishment.

But that's for a second article. vD

P.S. It may be good to stress: Genesis 2 explains Genesis 1, but also Genesis 1 explains Genesis 2. It should be noted that Genesis 2 states, that the man shall leave father and mother and "cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." This is a separate revelation, adding a 'new' (?) element to the 'double mandate' of Genesis 1. That mandate is not repeated in Genesis 2; all the stress is on "wedderhelft," on "cleave to each other and be one flesh." This fact has consequences to which we plan to return.

school X crossing

PERSECUTION IN CANADA!

We often turn our thoughts to the christians under communist rule when we think or speak of persecution. But it is high time that we start to realize that there is already a beginning of persecution in our own country!

Till now, parents who take their baptismal vows seriously and therefore started their own, parentally controlled schools, had to face the INJUSTICE of paying for the secular, public school systems via their property taxes PLUS paying the full amount of building and operating their own schools. Paying for our own schools is not so bad. It is expensive. But we have a God, and to Him belongs all the gold and all the silver and all the cattle on a thousand mountains. He is very generous to us and has always provided for us. What the Lord requires from us, He also gives!

If our Governments had immediately given us all sorts of financial support to build our schools, we perhaps would have more participation from our own people when it comes to joining in this work. But perhaps the spiritual quality would have lacked something. In a way it is good to pay and to pay a substantial amount to have our children educated as we have promised.

But now the situation is changing. At least in the province of Ontario. I do not know what is happening in the other provinces, but would urge all our people across the land to investigate in order to find out what the various provincial governments are planning. What is happening? Well, the Government of Ontario is planning a Reform of Property Taxation that will hit our school budgets very hard! In the Budget Paper E 15 tax proposals are outlined which will build the foundation of a new property tax system based on reassessed property values. The property tax affects EVERYONE IN ONTARIO, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY (page 3). A report is to be made to the Government by the fall of 1976 (that is NOW!), so that legislation can be prepared for the spring of 1977! In this paper some background history is given. It is point-

ed out that the values on which the property taxes are now based, date back to 1940. Originally the Government had planned to complete the reassessment program by the end of 1975 so that the new system could start in 1976. However, the prices of real estate went up so fast and so drastically in a short time that a new system would already be outdated by the end of 1975. But now the Government has almost completed the reassessment of all properties in Ontario. Once they have established the market value, they will keep it up to date. The property tax has been a good source of income for the Government, as they admit.

Now watch out! They propose that every residence should be taxed at 50% of market value, but *all other* property is to be taxed at 100% of market value! Vacant properties, such as land bought for building a school, or an extension, will no longer be considered as residential, but will also be taxed at 100% market value.

Are there no *exemptions*? Yes, there are. For example: churches, cemeteries and property held in trust for a band or body of Indians will be exempt. But all other properties owned by 'charitable' organizations such as our schools etc., which are *now* exempt, will not be exempt any longer, but will be taxed at the full 100% rate, once this law is passed! Is there no need to cry out loud? Does not everyone of us see the need to speak out and to speak up? Now is the time to raise your voice! This is more injustice added to the injustice we are bearing already as mentioned in the beginning of this article.

Does the Government intend to do us an injustice? I would not dare to say that. But we know of course that the Devil does! And he has many ways and tricks to get us. For he cannot stand those bulwarks of Psalm 8! And he intends as much as he can, to stop the mouths of children that sound the praise of the Lord. According to this Report, the Government plans to do some justice! They
(continued on page 407.)

STEWARDSHIP

The Case of the Television: Some Reactions

A few issues ago I wrote the article, "The Case of the Television," asking for discussion on the matter. In doing so, I recognized that the matter is somewhat controversial and that I certainly have not given the "last word" in this case.

I received reactions indeed, and I thank everyone for his/her contribution. Interesting, the letters that I received are all in disagreement with what I wrote (or seem to have written), and yet I can agree with many remarks made in them. That will become clear, I hope.

There were those who asked me why I wrote about such a controversial matter. Well, I did not want to create a controversy — it was already there — but I was ASKED a number of times (even URGED, I may say) to discuss a matter which was often there "under the surface" but never adequately brought out. Otherwise I would not have written on this subject. Those who objected to the fact THAT I wrote (saying, "It wasn't very wise") rather objected to the contents, for if I had written up their alley, I'm sure they'd have rejoiced. It all depends on how you look at it.

OBJECTION

Anyway, the main objection against my article was, I think, that I seem to diminish the DANGER of the television and make possession and usage of a T.V. set quite acceptable and agreeable. And that does seem a bit haughty and foolish in the eyes of some, as if I (and others) are strong enough to control the knob.

I'd like to start out by stating that it certainly was not my intention to speak lightly about the apparent dangers of television. I politely refuse that stigma, for I did not do so in my article. I quote

"Many television programs do constitute a threat to the Reformed life within our families. I certainly will not recommend the totality of the T.V. programs to the membership and do not wish to diminish the dangers of these programs. On the contrary, I will warn with others for the corrupting influence which these programs so easily and so quickly have in our lives"

I hope that you've taken good note of the above-mentioned words, so that you can balance out your judgement correctly.

Now, the POINT of my article was: usage of the MEDIA (and not ONLY the television) is a matter of christian STEWARDSHIP. Which means in my opinion: one cannot forbid on the grounds of Scripture correct usage of a thing like newspaper, radio or T.V., even if one would advise against such usage because of the dangers involved. And certainly, one cannot keep faithful brethren out of office, simply because they possess modern media!

It is remarkable that in the letters I received I find MANY remarks about how BAD most television-programs are (and I can agree with much of what is written in this respect) but hardly a thing about the real POINT of my article, namely that possession and usage as such are not valid Scriptural reasons for discrimination. I'll try to do everyone justice, but please also read my article in the right perspective. Otherwise I'd better stop.

REACTIONS

We do not desire a long drawn-out debate, but will appreciate some discussion so that we all know what is at stake. Let me first pass on a few reactions which I received in letter-form, for these letters were direct contributions. I do not quote the whole letter (for these articles would then become much too lengthy) but will honestly relevelate the main objections.

I received a first letter from brother H.A. Bartels (R.R. 2, Ancaster, Ontario), who writes as follows,

"The Case of the Television which appeared in the September 4th issue of CLARION left me amazed and also disappointed. First amazed to see with what cunning and boldness Satan is at work in our Reformed Churches and then also disappointed to see that this is not recognized by the (or some) of the leaders of our Churches.

The T.V. has always been a touchy subject. It used to be that if our Reformed people had T.V. — not always but quite often — it would be kept in a place where it would not be immediately seen

by whoever entered the home. Never have I witnessed an extreme case as CLARION points out, where our people who owned a T.V. would denounce those who objected to T.V.

The writer says that he will not pretend to solve the matter, well, in my opinion he failed to even contribute to a solution."

To be honest, I think my brother wrote in anger. At least, I don't like the TONE of the opening lines, for it outrightly accuses of spreading a SATANIC doctrine, either wilfully or unintentionally. Such strong statements are easily made, but hardly proven, and do not set the stage for a healthy debate. The contrary could even be said, e.g., for when I wrote a similar article in The Netherlands, the Rev. L. Douw of Enschede reacted as follows:

"I fully agree. This is written distinctively according to the Scriptures. The writer correctly points out that "strong language" which looks simple and simplifies things, is not always reformed. His warning against reactionism certainly isn't out of place. And we gladly underline his appeal to watch against misuse of the T.V." (Gereformeerd Kerkblad voor Overijssel etc. June 14, 1975).

Somehow I already feared this reactionism to come up. Anyway, my brother gives the following argumentation:

"How can we allow a T.V. into our home when I think we can all agree to the fact that a very large percentage of that which is shown is garbage, and by garbage I mean, contrary to God's Holy Law. For example, if a show does not violate the V, VI, VII, VIII, IX commandments of God's Holy Law, it wouldn't even rate, people just wouldn't be interested in it Oh yes, there are some innocent programs, e.g. nature shows, news, weather and even some religious programs. Oh and then not to forget the Sports, which has become a religion for the world and even for some of our own Reformed people . . . can these few good programs justify our having T.V. in the home? True enough, we cannot go out of this world, but do we have to join it?"

The first argument is then that the overall CONTENTS of the programs doesn't permit possession and usage of the television. We'll note that here, and discuss it later on.

Brother Bartels continues:

"Our local newspaper even warns us against the dangers of a T.V. A recent article in a newspaper stated that by the time a child has reached the age of 18, he/she could have witnessed 18,000 murders on T.V. Imagine, and here we are wondering whether or not we should have one!"

Just a little remark here. There's much violence on T.V., I agree. But if someone witnesses so many murders — you see, the newspaper article goes out from a MAXIMUM possibility of viewing — there has been MISUSE of this medium. And any example of misuse doesn't say a thing about the right or wrong of CORRECT USAGE. To people who keep telling me of misuse, I keep saying, "Yes, but that doesn't undo my call towards correct usage, only UNDERLINES it."

Brother Bartels doesn't like the comparison I made between television and alcohol, because the contents of the bottle itself is not sinful, while 90% of what is shown on T.V. is corrupt and comes from Satan. Alright, any comparison can be criticised. But I do ask, does brother Bartels know of the great SPIRITUAL damage (let alone the devastating physical destruction) which alcohol can cause? There are people in the "reformed circles" who advocate complete abstinence from ALL LIQUOR on the SAME basis brother Bartels does with regard to the T.V. Talk about Satanic power, do you know how many millions in the Western world are alcoholics or near-alcoholics? Yet do we forbid usage because of misuse and even make drinking or not-drinking a decisive factor in choosing office-bearers? My point was: something which can be more devastating than T.V. is being accepted under the same motto: use it well! And I am pointing at a morality with a double bottom.

A second argument:

"When we buy a T.V. do we not bring a tremendous TEMPTATION into our home? Do we realize what our children then have access to? Matthew 18:6 reads, 'but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea' When we bring a T.V. into the house with all its temptations, and especially for our young people, how can we then pray the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer, 'And lead us not into temptation?'"

Another argument which brother Bartels brings to the fore is connected with the previous: causing a stumblingblock to the "weak," and he quotes I Corinthians 8:9, "Only take heed, lest this liberty of yours somehow becomes a stumblingblock to the weak."

Brother Bartels concludes as follows:

"I wonder how many readers of CLARION, young or old, after having read "The Case of the Television" did not turn on their sets with just a little more ease? No one, I hope. On the contrary, I do hope that we as reformed people, whom the Lord calls "My special possession" (in Malachi 3:17) may recognize the approval of a T.V. set in our Christian homes as nothing less than an attack by Satan on the Church of Christ, and then at the same time, of course, a sign of the times."

Again, my article wasn't intended to make owners of T.V. feel a little more "at ease." If some interpret my words that way, they do me wrong. I advocated only that possession must be accompanied by correct usage, and that is not an "easy" matter at all! Stewardship is a daily STRUGGLE. Those who misuse their possessions (also the T.V., if they have one) were strongly warned that the Lord demands a different attitude. Let that be clear: in speaking of stewardship, I do not make it easier for anyone; with or without T.V., you must be responsible stewards. No one is "off the hook," not even brother Bartels, who has no T.V. but possibly other things in the home which could constitute danger and could cause to stumble.

FURTHER REACTIONS

I received a few more letters, basically with the same contents as the one of brother Bartels. However, I shall relevelate a few points from them.

Brother H.J. Endeman (Palgrave, Ontario) writes the following,

"After reading "The Case of the Television," there was not much else to do but agree in general with what the Rev. Stam wrote. When one puts it that way, you almost have to agree. And yet we became very uneasy about the whole thing. Now before I go any further, I want to confess that we used to have one of these sets and maybe even defended having one with words similar to the reasoning of Rev. Stam"

Brother Endeman's main objection is then that CONTROL over the knob is virtually impossible (and he speaks from experience) seeing our own weaknesses and the tremendous attractiveness of the T.V. programs. Then I also received a letter from sister B. Kingma (St. Ann's, Ontario), who writes, ". . . your article was very well written, and the points brought up therein have some truth in them, yet on the whole it will do much DAMAGE to the Church of Christ." I further quote from sister Kingma's letter:

"In my opinion one has to misuse the

T.V. to get his money's worth from it, for at least 85% of what is shown on T.V. is unfit for us to watch. Furthermore, the remaining 15% is not that important that we cannot do without it. In my past life I have seen the great damage T.V. has done to family life. Many families have lost their unity and closeness as a result of T.V. Young people can no longer entertain themselves while at home they depend entirely on the T.V. to amuse them.

People who think that they can use the T.V. rightly often overestimate themselves, for in many cases they cannot handle it. People who could perhaps have a T.V. in the house, without it doing much damage, do not buy one, simply because they realize they are not only responsible for themselves, but also their WEAKER brothers and sisters, and their families as well. In short, it seems that very often the WEAKER families have television sets.

I cannot see, Rev. Stam, why a minister or officebearer, who wants to serve his Lord and King, the Head of the Church, with his whole heart, has to even consider whether or not he should buy a television"

To be sure, sister Kingma does not argue her last point — just states that she doesn't see it — but suggests that possession of media excludes a full desire to serve the Lord. Too bad there is no proof here, it is a crucial point. In this respect, brother Endeman made the following remark, "Far be it from me to condemn my brother who has a television. I would even go so far as to say that a minister or even an elder should know what is going on behind that piece of glass, so as to warn those that are entrusted to their care." Well, people do differ, don't they?

INVENTORY

I am grateful for the arguments brought forward. Let me, for the moment, summarize the arguments that I've gleaned from these three letters. Possession of a T.V. is impossible or unadvisable because:

1. the CONTENTS of the programs generally is such that viewing (usage) is impossible.
2. possession of a T.V. only magnifies temptation for the family members and also is a STUMBLINGBLOCK for the "weak."
3. Control over the television is virtually impossible (because of our weaknesses) so responsible stewardship cannot function here.

These are IMPORTANT arguments. And I hope you will ponder them.

CL. STAM

news medley

November 4th was a memorable day for at least two couples in our midst. We begin with the oldest ones. They are brother and sister N. Brandsma in Edmonton who were allowed to celebrate their fifty-fifth wedding anniversary on that day. And then we go to the Valley, where brother and sister H. Pol celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Great are the blessings which the Lord our God has bestowed upon them in these precious gifts. In a world in which unfaithfulness is almost the order of the day it is the more amazing that there are couples who have been preserved by the Lord also in the faithfulness to each other.

I could tell you more of the latter couple than of the former. But I presume that whatever we say of either one will also be applicable to the other: great is Thy faithfulness. There were days of illness, days of tension, days of sorrow. But what was unchangeable was the mercy and the presence of the Lord. May this same God be with you also further on life's pathway and may it be light at eventide.

The only other news item which we have to mention about the Valley is that the C. Van Spronsen family is back in Brasil. They were a little late because at one airport the lights were out of commission and therefore they had to land there during daylight hours, which necessitated a delay in take-off prior to commencing the flight to that airport. But they arrived safely and the Kuiks were there, of course, to welcome them. That same evening there was already a welcoming evening in São José in which practically everyone took part. From both sides much news will have been exchanged. We express the wish that the workers there may be strengthened by the Lord to their labours. And may also the Church at New Westminster soon find a "replacement" for the Rev. C. Van Spronsen.

Going up to Smithers, we mention that the use of the Dutch language in the services was discussed by the Consistory. The Consistory will bring this point into discussion at a congregational meeting. Gradually the use of the Dutch language diminishes.

At this point (but it is no reference to Smithers!) it might be good to make a few remarks about certain "Dutchisms" which I notice time and again in the various bulletins. No, we are not to be ashamed of our ancestry and of what we brought along from the old country. But we should avoid it as much as possible that we write translated Dutch.

In one bulletin I read that a certain collection "brought up" so much. I got a strange feeling in my stomach when I read that. And I saw it before me: "Heeft zoveel opgebracht." That, however, is a minor thing.

I have been told that it is translated Dutch to write: "The family so-and-so." The proper wording, according to my "authority" would be: The So-and-so Family; or: Mr. So-and-so and Family. Those are the small points which so oftentimes escape our attention. Perhaps I could help a little by mentioning it, as I mentioned before that it is incorrect to write, "Decided is to . . ." It should read, "It is decided to . . ." or something like that.

Now we return to Smithers.

I told you before about their efforts to get an Organ

(capital O). Now I may inform you that the contract has been signed and has been sent to the Organ Builder with the first payment. The Organ Committee wrote a piece in the bulletin to keep the Congregation abreast of the developments. This Committee speaks correctly of "The King of Instruments." I hope that they will not get into trouble with the Women's Liberation Movement. Should it not read "King or Queen of Instruments"? Or, perhaps better, "Rule-person of Instruments"? Isn't it silly when you read about a "chair-person" instead of a chairman or a president? However, let's return to our topic. That is the Organ in Smithers.

The Committee mentions some gifts they received, and I cannot refrain from passing this on to you, too. "\$300 from an elderly couple, \$50 from a schoolgirl, \$1.00 from a seven year old, and \$1.00 from a three year old." Isn't that beautiful?

The Committee expresses the hope that the Organ will be ready by this time next year. And they utter yet another wish which I would support wholeheartedly: "We would like to see our Young People get interested in the study of organ music more and more." That has my heartfelt support: what would we do with our Organs if there were no one to play them and to accompany the singing of the Congregation? Why would we exert ourselves to acquire good and glorious instruments whose pipes are to shout forth the glory of our God if there were none to move the keys? Boys and girls, get going!!

Edmonton's bulletin tells us that Dr. Arntzen — who also delivered some speeches in Grand Rapids and in Ontario — was expected to speak in Alberta's capital city as well.

No serious effects seems to have remained from an accident in which the Rev. De Jong apparently was involved. "Last Wednesday afternoon classes were cancelled because of an accident in which I got involved." I did not read anything else about that, so it may well have been a dented fender or something.

And, although strictly speaking I have to keep out of this, I wish to pass on to you the information that the building permit for the schoolbuilding has been received. Now they can start.

It will not have happened many a time that in the same bulletin in which the departing minister writes a farewell message, a report is published from which it appears that arrangements are already being made to receive a new minister. But that's what happened in Carman.

We move on to Ontario.

Starting with Brampton, it appears that the Consistory there received a "request from Rev. Dr. H.C. Kim (pastor from Korea for N. family, who have been regularly worshipping with us) to use the church building on Sunday for Sunday worship service in Korean. This is granted. We are happy to be of some assistance to them."

Ebenezer Church in Burlington comes next.

The Mission Committee which had been appointed came with a report. Having read their mandate again, they decided that each member of the committee shall study one particular aspect of this mandate and of the mission work in general.

Ebenezer's bulletin (as does that of Rehoboth Burlington) contains the notice that the ministers will again teach catechism classes in the John Calvin School in Burlington. You will recall that it was decided to discontinue that. Now the two Burlington ministers had a discussion with the prin-

Teachers Summer-Workshop

Cloverdale, B.C.

Professor L. Selles, of our theological college, upon invitation by the Canadian Reformed School Society of Surrey, B.C., agreed to conduct a summer work-shop in the west, entitled — *The Historical, Religious and Cultural Background of the New Testament*.

In a most stimulating fashion, Prof. Selles aroused the interest of all the students as we were introduced to this fascinating, but often forgotten intertestamental period. Our journey through this era started with the Maccabees, and along the way we were introduced to the Idumean Dynasty, Judea under the Roman Governors, and the Jewish War. Individual facets of Biblical History, such as the Temple, the Synagogue, the scribes, the pharisees and the like, their relevance and significance were brought to the forefront.

Throughout our three and a half hour meetings, much time was spent in discussion, tapping each others knowledge and experience. It was most appreciated by all concerned that principals, older staff members, and students who had taken similar



Prof. L. Selles at the Teachers Summer Workshop, Cloverdale, B.C., 1976.

courses still found it useful to once again re-orientate themselves.

Each participant of the workshop presented a pre-arranged topic. This gave the prof. as well as the students, a chance to observe, compare and appreciate different, teaching techniques and styles.

On the last day of classes, Mr. S. Van-

derploeg presented Prof. Selles with a set of books on behalf of the students, thanking the professor for the giving of his time, and he expressed the hope that what was started in the summer of 1976 may not end, but continue in the years to come.

H.H. Moes

(We apologize for the delay in publishing this article.)

principal and vice-principal of that school, quite a few parents also voiced their opinions on the matter, and the result is that those classes will be continued. Nice when things are solved.

We mentioned the Rehoboth Church in Burlington.

We read in their bulletin, "Preparation of the Lord's Supper, the brothers were asked individually if they had any objections — no objections were recorded." It is nice to know that the brethren live in such a harmony together that they have no objections. But if they think that that is the "Christian Censure" of which we speak in our Church Order, then they are mistaken. Besides, the question deserves serious attention whether there can ever be any objections to celebrating the supper of the Lord with the other brethren! What reason (justifiable before the Lord) could there ever be why one would have the right to abstain from the Lord's table because of objections to someone else?? I should like to know.

The Consistory will approach the next Classis in order to have the decision made by the previous Classis regarding the Korean Presbyterian Church in Toronto reformulated. They decided "to appeal, but not to Synod. This Consistory will request the next classis to come up with a revision, especially to reformulate the adopted policy." However, when coming to a Classis, the word "appeal" should definitely not be used. When you appeal, you appeal to a major assembly, not to a similar assembly.

Meanwhile, the Synod was held, the Regional Synod of Ontario, as you can see from the Press Release which is published in this issue. It was the first time that I was in the Watford Church building with its nice small Organ, which

only needs a little bit of tuning, but serves its purpose well and has a nice sound.

In his opening remarks on behalf of the convening Church, brother G. Hutten said that the Church at Watford did not have many resources but that whatever resources they had were at the disposal of the brethren. Well, I must say that we were taken excellent care of, and even when we left at around midnight, there were still a couple of sisters in the kitchen to provide us with what they thought we might need. It is good that we did not have to stay there for a week with all the cake and "gevlude koeken," for we would have had to buy new suits, I presume.

From Watford to Hamilton is only one step, so to speak.

Hamilton's bulletin calls the column with congregational news "News from One Another." Something different.

The same bulletin contains some samples of letters which the members can send to their MPP to protest the proposed changes in tax legislation in Ontario. Rev. Werkman wrote about it in the School Crossing, and therefore I shall refrain from doing so. We sincerely hope and pray that this danger be averted. It might render operation impossible for at least some of the smaller schools. The financial burden would become too heavy.

We are to realize that we are approaching more and more the day of our Saviour's appearing. And whether we are always aware of it or not, that will bring great difficulties with it. Let us work for as long as we are able to, for the night will come when no one can work. However, the morning will dawn.

vO



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.

RELIGION FORBIDDEN

Bangkok, Thailand. An official of the Laotian government, who recently defected to Thailand, has claimed that "religion is forbidden in Laos. All pagoda's in the provinces will be closed by April 1977, and the clergy forced to work in the rice-paddies. Only in Vientane three (Buddist) pagoda's and one Roman Catholic Church are permitted." According to the fugitive, all sermons are censored by government officials and they must "begin with praising the leaders of the party and end with condemning the imperialists and reactionaries." The many churches are being transformed into warehouses for rice. The developments take place since the Pathet Lao took over the nation.

LEAVE RES?

Utrecht, The Netherlands. The



Called:

REV. M. VAN BEVEREN

of the church of New Westminster, B.C. by the church of Guelph, Ontario.

Called:

REV. G. VAN RONGEN

of Grand Rapids, U.S.A. by the church of Steenwijk, The Netherlands.

director of the Mission Center of the Reformed Churches (Synodical) in The Netherlands, Rev. A. Vos, has made it plain that it would be quite "honest" if the Reformed Churches would pull out of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES). He makes this statement as recent delegate to Capetown over against remarks made by his fellow-delegate, Prof. Dr. K. Runia (who felt that membership of the RES was still possible and necessary). According to Rev. Vos, the Reformed Churches "should conclude that they do no longer belong in the fundamentalistic climate of the RES and apparently make it impossible for other Churches to be members with them."

NO DECISION

Lunteren, The Netherlands. The Synod of the Reformed Churches (Synodical) has postponed the decision concerning child-communion (see previous CLARION). The matter has been referred to the churches with the question whether it should be left in the freedom of the churches themselves. New Deputies have also been appointed to study the matter. Synod also decided not to adopt new forms for baptism and public confession. Prof. Dr. G.N. Lammens e.g. was of the opinion that the forms "create a distance towards the sacrament, like before giving someone a kiss, you first explain for five minutes why you are going to do so"

NEW MAGAZINE

Vlaardingen, The Netherlands. A new monthly magazine, "Saamhorig," has been set up by members of both the Reformed Churches (Liberated) and the Reformed Churches (Buiten Verband) with the goal of possibly contributing to reunification of the two Churches. The editors want to break through "the silence" which has followed in the years after the schism. The title, "Saamhorig" (belonging together) is borrowed from Rev. H. Bouma who once used this term in connection with living together in one federation according to the Scriptures. The magazine wants to keep the churches aware of mutual developments. The address of the redaction and administration is: S.W.P. Verkade, Zuidbuurtseweg 2A, Vlaardingen, The Netherlands.

VATICAN AGAINST ABORTION

Rome, Italy. In connection with debates in the Italian Parliament con-

cerning abortion, Cardinal Salvatore Pappalardo had strongly warned in "Osservatore Romano" (the Vatican official) that "abortion is completely contradictory to the Christian concept of human life." Those who participate, wrote Pappalardo, risk excommunication by the Church.

COMMENT — "Children"

Even in the Reformed Churches, there have often been those who strongly advocated "child-communion," i.e. the participation in the Lord's Supper of children who did not yet confess their faith. The older brothers and sisters will remember a case in The Netherlands, where such was permitted and encouraged.

It appears that these ideas are not weakening, but are becoming stronger all the time. Not too long ago we informed you (CLARION, August 21, 1976) that the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA) had accepted a report in which the way was paved for baptized children to participate in the celebration of the Lord's Supper without previously having made public profession of faith. And now the Synod of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands has occupied itself with the same matter.

True, the Dutch Synodical Churches do not appear to take as positive a stand as the American Presbyterians did. But let's not be fooled, this could fit into the pattern which these churches have established in the past decade: first put it on the agenda, then let it go back to the churches for examination, and then a decision to recommend it into the freedom of the Churches. Already now the Synodical decision contained the suggestion to let the churches engage in self-determination.

Maybe I'm a bit pessimistic, but I do suspect that within a number of years child-communion will become an accepted thing in the Reformed Churches (Synodical) and in related denominations. Once these ideas "pop up" in modernistic churches, they seem awfully hard to remove. Heresies are tenacious; I do hope I'm wrong.

One might ask why this question of child-communion came on the Synod's agenda. The editor Church News of NEDERLANDS DAGBLAD suggests that this possibly is a result of the general trend in liberal churches to create attractive atmospheres for children and youth and in this way to avoid growing loss of young members.

I think that this indeed is a real background. Churches are exhausting themselves in setting up activities which will appeal to young people and children, even competing with week-end-institutions like theatres, clubs and dances. Child-communion is then intended to give children more "sense of belonging" and more personal identification with the church.

I agree, any youthful exodus out of the church must drastically be stopped. But should not the question WHY these youngsters lose interest in the Church be answered differently? The cure is determined by the cause. Is it not the lack of correct emphasis on the Gospel and the disappearance of the call to obedience and repentance which causes many to leave the church? You see, if the WORD does not do it, the SACRAMENTS will certainly be inadequate. Only a church which lets go of the Word, becomes sacramentalistic and ritualistic in a last-ditch attempt to preserve membership. But child-communion will in the end not keep the pews full. The pews go empty if the hearts are cold.

Advocating child-communion (without previous confession of faith) is in itself a sign of apostasy and corruption. The Scriptures teach that participation in the Lord's Supper is a matter of personal responsibility, being ABLE to "remember Christ" according to the Scriptures and therefore having adequate knowledge of His reconciliatory work. It involves occupying a mature place in the congregation of the Lord, "discerning the body" and engaging in a preceding "self-examination" (1 Corinthians 7: 27ff).

The famous argument that we are then "withholding" from our children what they have in Christ is nonsense, because "in the Lord's Supper no NEW benefits are granted, but present benefits are confirmed in a manner not fitting with youthful age . . ." (Dr. A.G. Honig, Dogmatics, page 677). The SAME benefits are extended to and confirmed to the children at Holy Baptism.

We must activate the children towards full participation in the affairs of the Church. In this respect we have our job cut out for us also in the American/Canadian Reformed churches. But we do this through FIRST maintaining the Word of God in its fullest extent also towards the youth. That's what the children need. That's what we all need.

CL. STAM

SCHOOL CROSSING —

Continued

state that by exempting all those sorts of 'charitable' organizations, all governments and property taxpayers have been *indirectly subsidizing* these organizations. I will not deny that. But the point for us is that *we* have been *subsidizing the public schools* all these years, in addition to paying for our own schools! The Report argues that it is preferable to give *direct assistance* to such organizations through *grants* instead of exempting them from property tax. But who knows what the Government may decide from year to year about such grants? The amount of it could well change drastically from year to year or from Government to Government.

On page 11 they *admit* that provincial funds are raised from *all* taxpayers. They suggest that the Government will make payments to the *public* and *separate* elementary schools. These payments, they suggest, should be in the full amount of the taxes. We know very well that separate schools means here: Roman Catholic schools. Where does that leave all other independent schools? Not only our own reformed schools, but the christian schools across the province as well? Even the Jewish schools? Even other non-christian independent schools? It is clear that the Report does not take these minorities into consideration. Under the tax system that is now proposed and that is to be made law by next spring, the taxes collected from schools in Niagara alone would amount to \$6.3 million dollars!

This is a serious attack upon our *schools*! It is an attack upon our *freedom*! Yes, an attack upon our *religious* freedom! Is this not a beginning of religious persecution in Canada? Why are we as parents and church members not allowed to exercise our freedom to educate our children according to our 'religious' promises made before the Lord and His Church in public? Where is our freedom of religion? And where is the justice of the Government? Do our rulers not consider the commandment 'thou shalt not steal'?

Imagine what this will mean for our people in Ontario! Locally they pay per family more than \$1000 a year for the elementary schools. In addition, many or most of them, pay well over \$1000 a year again for the Regional Reformed High School. On top of that

they are paying for the public schools through their taxes. If this proposed legislation will be adopted, they will pay again, and this time on their own school buildings that were constructed at no cost to the Government at all!!!

What are we to do? Pray and Work! Pray all together that the Lord Who turns the hearts of kings and rulers like rivers of water, may turn the hearts of our Governments to do justice and not to inflict another injustice on God's people. We are to pray at home and in the worship services. Not just for peace and prosperity under our Government, but for having God's covenant children taught according to the Holy Gospel. And that unhindered!

But we are also to Work! Get together, school boards and members and non-members! Get in touch with our M.P.'s. By letter. By telephone. By attending meetings with him. By attending the 'hearings' that are arranged, one of which the Timothy and Guido de Bres students attended already with the staff as well. We are to do all in our power to resist this attempt of Satan to make, slowly but surely, the education of covenant children impossible!

And brothers and sisters in the West, pray with us in Ontario! To the same God. Some of you receive financial aid (be it little) from your provincial Government. But find out what may be going on in the area of property taxes in your province as well.

Parents! Talk to your children about it. Pray for and with them. Teachers! Discuss this with your students and tell them what is involved. And let us all together go and lay this before our Father in Heaven, whose children we are. And let us put all our trust in Him alone! For He rules over all, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, Who sits at our Father's right hand!

M. WERKMAN

BOOKS

Letha Scanzoni *Why Wait? A Christian View of Premarital Sex*, Baker Book House, [n.d.] \$2.95.

This book was formerly published under the title *Sex and the Single Eye*. It is a good book.

Our young people will do well to read it; and not only they.

vO

This issue of "Clarion" was mailed from Winnipeg Central Post Office on November 5, 1976.

Press Release

of Classis Pacific of the Canadian Reformed Churches held in Smithers, B.C. on October 6, 1976.

On behalf of the convening church, the church at Smithers, the Rev. J. Van Riet-schoten calls the meeting to order, requests to sing Hymn 61:1, 2, 3, reads I Timothy 3:14 — 4:16, leads in prayer and welcomes the delegates.

Having examined the credentials the delegates of the church at New Westminster report that all churches are duly represented. None of the churches have proposals.

Classis is constituted. Rev. J. Van Riet-schoten is chairman, Rev. M. VanderWel clerk, Rev. M. van Beveren vice-chairman.

By letter the church at Langley informs Classis about the institution of that church and requests Classis that its delegates be received and admitted as members of Classis. The credentials are in good order and the request is granted. The chairman expresses the thankfulness of Classis that it has been possible to institute the church at Langley and to admit the delegates.

The Church at Chilliwack requests to receive the commitment of financial assistance in order to be able to call a minister. The request is granted.

Reports of visitation to the churches at Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Cloverdale are read.

The church at New Westminster reports on an audit of the books of the classical treasurer. The books are in good order.

The church at Houston reports that the classical archives kept by the church at Smithers are in good order.

The churches at Houston and Smithers request and receive advice in matters of discipline.

Delegation to the forthcoming Regional Synod scheduled for December 8, 1976 in Edmonton is as follows: Ministers — Revs. J. Mulder, M. van Beveren, J. Van Rietschoten; Elders — R. Fennema, J. Hendricks, A.C. Lengkeek; Alternates — first alternate for the ministers is Rev. M. Vander Wel. If no minister is available as alternate the following elders are alternates for ministers in alphabetical order: A.W. DeLeeuw, T. VanLaar. Elder W. DenHollander is alternate for R. Fennema; elder T. Pothoven is alternate for J. Hendricks; elder W. Vander Pol is alternate for A.C. Lengkeek.

Among the appointments are the appointments of counselors: for the Church at Chilliwack Rev. M. VanderWel, for the church at Houston Rev. J. Van Rietschoten, for the church at Langley Rev. J. Mulder. Preaching arrangements for vacant churches are as follows: the church at Chilliwack receives four services per six weeks. The church at Langley will receive classical appointments if necessary. Deputies are authorized to make interim arrangements.

The Church at Abbotsford is appointed

to convene the next Classis for Wednesday April 13, 1977.

The delegates of the church at Langley express their thankfulness for the good reception at Classis.

The Acts of Classis are adopted and the press release is approved.

The chairman expresses Classis' appreciation for the good care received from the ladies of the convening church. He leads in prayer and thanksgiving and closes the meeting.

For Classis Pacific,
M. VAN BEVEREN

* * *

PRESS RELEASE

of the Regional Synod held in Watford, Ontario on October 20, 1976.

Article 1. On behalf of the convening church at Watford, brother G. Hutten opens the meeting. Hymn 50:1, 2 is sung followed by the reading of Galatians 5, and prayer, after which a word of welcome is spoken.

Article 2 Credentials. The credentials are checked and found in good order. There are 3 alternate elder delegates.

Article 3 Election of Officers. Elected as chairman is Rev. D. VanderBoom, as clerk, Rev. M.C. Werkman, as assessor Rev. C. VanDam.

Article 4 Constitution of Synod. Synod is constituted. On behalf of the Regional Synod the chairman thanks Watford for the way the delegates have been received.

Rev. G. van Rongen is congratulated on his call from the church at Steenwijk, The Netherlands.

Article 5 Adoption of Agenda. Under incoming mail is added a letter from a brother. The provisional agenda is adopted.

Article 6 Incoming Mail. A. 1. A report on Mortmain Charitable Uses and Religious Institutions is received from the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General. We are invited to send our views as to what action the government should take in the light of the report.

2. The following proposal is adopted: Regional Synod, having received from the Attorney General the Report on Mortmain Charitable Uses and Religious Institutions submitted by the Ontario Law Reform Commission decides:

- to appoint a committee with the mandate:
1. to investigate this report.
2. to invite comments from the local churches.
3. to pass on their findings and recommendations to the local churches.
4. to send their recommendations to the Ministry of the Attorney General.
5. to report to the next Regional Synod.

Grounds. 1. This is a matter pertaining to the churches of Ontario in common (see also Article 28, Church Order). 2. The Ministry of the Attorney General in a letter to this Regional Synod indicated their interest in our views "as to what action the government should take in the light of the report." 3. Regional Synod decides to appoint Dr. J. Faber, Prof. A.H. Oosterhoff and Rev.

W.W.J. VanOene (convener) to the above-mentioned committee.

B. The letter mentioned in Article 5 is read. Synod declares this appeal admissible.

Article 7 Instruction. Delegates from Classis North have this instruction. "Regional Synod 1976 set such a rule for Convening Churches, that the last Classes prior to a Regional Synod are informed that a Regional Synod will be held, and have received the Provisional Agenda for that Synod."

Regional Synod decides not to accept this suggested rule.

The proposal: "Regional Synod decides to adopt the rule for Convening Churches that the last Classes prior to a Regional Synod are informed of the date when a Regional Synod will be held, and have received the Provisional Agenda for the Synod" is adopted.

Article 8 Reports. 1. A report from the treasurer of Regional Synod is received. Regional Synod approves the request for funds by the Treasurer and sets the quota at \$2.50 per communicant member for 1976 and \$2.50 per communicant member for 1977 (to cover the costs for Regional Synod 1976 and 1977 and General Synod 1977). A financial report will be printed in the Acts.

2. A report from the church at Hamilton regarding the auditing of the treasurer's books is taken note of.

3. A report from the church at Brampton regarding the checking of archives is taken note of.

4. There are no reports from deputies ad Article 49 Church Order.

Article 9. The appeal mentioned in Article 6b is dealt with.

Article 10 Appointments. 1. Br. J. Schuller is re-appointed as treasurer. 2. The church at Hamilton is re-appointed to audit the books. 3. The church at Toronto is re-appointed to maintain the archives. 4. The church at Brampton is re-appointed to inspect the archives. 5. The Deputies ad article 49 Church Order are re-appointed: for Ontario North, Rev. P. Kingma and Rev. G. van Rongen (Rev. M.C. Werkman, alternate); for Ontario South, Rev. C. Olij and Rev. W.W.J. VanOene (Rev. D. Vander Boom, alternate).

Article 11 Censure ad Article 43 Church Order is not necessary.

Article 12 Personal Question Period is held.

Article 13 Convening of Next Regional Synod. Brampton is appointed to convene the next Regional Synod.

Article 14 The Acts are read and adopted.

Article 15 The Press Release is read and approved.

Article 16 Closing. Some fitting words are spoken by the chairman. Psalm 122:3 is sung and the chairman leads in prayer of thanksgiving and closes the meeting.

For the Regional Synod,
C. VANDAM

In my last article on matters of foreign mission I promised to write something about the expectations of the people in Irian Jaya of the coming of a saviour. Rev. J. B. K. DeVries who is in Kouh at the moment has written a report to the "Zendingscollege te Groningen" in which he refers to several studies on this matter. I summarize from it the following: Man tries to find the secret of the other world. To be able to do that he needs a King through whom one can experience the eternal. As long as such a king has not arrived people live in the expectation of the coming of the "lord". Most tribes have similar expectations. This is illustrated in the myth of Manarmakeri.

The old Manarmakeri catches the morningstar Sampari in the act of theft. He forces him to fulfil three wishes. He will become the morningstar by jumping into the fire, then he will receive a child by throwing a fruit to a virgin and finally he receives a wand by which he can make appear everything he needs.

With the wand he creates islands with their inhabitants, he becomes father of a child and, persecuted by his own people, he jumps into a fire. When he returns—and he shall return—utopia, the Koreri, will be established when Manarmakeri, the lord, will live among the people again.

All this makes the work of the missionaries harder than we might expect. They do not have to preach against ignorance but against an old myth which is accepted as gospel.

In connection with the above I refer to what Rev. D. K. Wielenga writes in his *Morgenglans der Eeuwigheid* and which was quoted in the mission magazine: "All other religions are parasites of God's given Word-revelation. It is miraculous to find how . . . the Word of God before and after the Fall has entered into the life of the nations. This knowledge is held down in unrighteousness, changed and corrupted."

The same is the case with the pseudo-saviour. How this knowledge has reached other continents and how it has been corrupted is hard to trace. But it cannot be explained as an "in-born" longing for salvation.

The Dutch magazine also mentioned the name of our missionaries Bram and Joanne. I quote: Brother Vegter is sent out by the Church at Toronto and the new missionary of Toronto—and we hope he will be found soon—will also take up residence in Manggelum. Spakenburg Zuid will transfer three kampongs: Kajokobur, Sawagit and Manggelum to Toronto and the missionary and missionworker will scout the Sait area. Then we read something new: The old area of Toronto, namely Mandobo with Butiptiri as its main centre will then be transferred to the "Groninger Zendingscollege". This was written in May 1976. Until now (September) no official communication on this

matter has been received, neither from Spakenburg nor from Groningen. The next point upon which the magazine touches is the "counselling" of Butiptiri, Kouh and Manggelum. This will be discontinued.

This is, to say the least, strange. Toronto has just assured the Churches that the counselling of Butiptiri will be continued in whatever way possible. The churches in The Netherlands should leave that decision to the consistory of Butiptiri in consultation with the Churches who had a missionary there. No one else can decide, nor should decide in this matter. In the meantime we may express gratitude for the way the missionaries in Irian have assisted the Canadian Churches in the continuation of the work. Next time I would like to write something about the Bible School in Boma.

VanderBoom

Press Release

Classis Contracta Ontario South of October 26, 1976 at Lincoln, Ontario.

1. *Opening* — On behalf of the convening church of Lincoln Rev. M.C. Werkman opens the meeting. He requests the delegates to sing Psalm 84:1, 2, reads Psalm 84 and leads in prayer. All the delegates are welcomed.

2. *Credentials* — These are checked and found in good order. The following churches sent delegates: Hamilton, Lincoln and Smithville.

3. *Constitution of Classis* — Chairman: Rev. M.C. Werkman; clerk and assessor: Rev. W. Huizinga.

4. Agenda is adopted.

5. Approbation of the call of Rev. J. Geertsema to Chatham, Ontario — Classis contracta has all the necessary documents stipulated by articles 5 and 10, Church Order. These documents are checked and found to be satisfactory.

Classis Contracta approves the call of Rev. J. Geertsema to Chatham and expresses the hope that the Rev. J. Geertsema may labour fruitfully in Chatham and in the churches of Classis Ontario South.

The church of London is asked to represent the churches of Classis Ontario South on October 31 in Chatham.

6. Article 43, Church Order is held.

7. Acts are read and adopted.

8. Press Release is read and approved.

9. *Closing* — Classis sings Psalm 84:5, 6 and the chairman closes the meeting with prayer.

For the Classis,
W. HUIZINGA, assessor, h.t.

Letters-to-the-Editor

Dear Mr. Editor,

I am writing in response to a statement recently published in your News Medley of October 16th, 1976 pages 366-7. "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."

I am thankful that this was not a quotation from our Bulletin, but rather, an attempt to summarize.

However, I must point out that your statement is not in accordance with that which was published in our Bulletin as a Consistory report. This report did not at all speak of a mandate given to the Consistory, on the contrary, it spoke of a missionary mandate given to the congregation in unambiguous terms. "It was proposed to appoint a six-member evangelisation committee, with a mandate to stimulate the congregation in the fulfilment of its missionary mandate, e.g. to make the Church and the Gospel known in our community, perhaps via the distribution of information pamphlets, to look for ways and means to have an annual vacation Bible school for the children of people living around the church building, to look into the possibility of starting a weekly Sunday school for these same neighbourhood children."

You will undoubtedly agree that your summary was somewhat misleading.

Yours in Christ
S. DEBRUIN

No, I don't.

Ed.

our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

Autumn

When the Autumn wind is blowing
 And the world is growing bare,
 When the birds are flying southward
 And the frost is in the air,
 When every plant is dying
 And all the world is dull,
 When all the bears are fast asleep
 Then snow will start to fall.

By Busy Beaver *Jenny Bosscher*

Thank you Jenny Bosscher for your nice fall poem.

And that's exactly the time of year it is, isn't it Busy Beavers?

How do you feel about fall? Are you happy the snow will soon be coming? Do you look forward to winter? Why? Are you anxious to get out your skates and use your toboggan? It's time to think about that again isn't it?

Of course there are lots of fun things to do once we're inside too! When dark comes early you have lots of time for your hobbies, for doing our quizzes, for reading, and for writing Aunt Betty!

That reminds me! Have you sent in your Reformation Day story or poem for our Contest? Did you forget? Surely you didn't forget I promised you all a reward! If you did, read last time's Little Magazine. I'm looking forward to lots of letters!



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Carol and Carla Griffioen*. We hope you will really enjoy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Be sure to write soon and tell me your favorite parts of Our Little Magazine. Bye for now.

Thank you for the quiz you sent for us to do, *Joanne Doekes*. Keep up the good work! Bye for now, Joanne.

No, I didn't know you had been in the hospital, *Billy Doekes*. I'm glad to hear you were home again before the holidays and also that you are doing fine at school now. Thanks for writing. It was nice to hear from you.

How is your volleyball coming, *Charles Doekes*? Or have you had to stay inside more? And how did you do on your writing about Thanksgiving? I'm curious to know what you would write!

QUIZ TIME

Circle Quiz



Can you find four Bible names?

Mixed-up Names

- dAam _____
- sseoM _____
- baNda _____
- taSna _____
- vEe _____
- ahNo _____
- mulaSe _____
- tRhu _____
- mSieon _____

Busy Beaver *James Slaa* made up those quizzes for us! Thank you James. We like your quizzes.

Now Busy Beaver *Joanne Doekes* has something for us:

Names-to-put-in-Order

1. habArma _____
2. lahicMa _____
3. atwMhte _____
4. hmsaTo _____
5. Zbeedee _____
6. Tanhan _____
7. mreJeaih _____
8. siahla _____
9. ezleikE _____
10. seaHo _____

Which Woman Was I?

1. I was called "the Mother of Nations." _____
2. I was the woman who looked back. _____
3. I was the mother of twins. _____
4. I hid my son. _____
5. I aided Joshua's spies. _____
6. I was a faithful daughter-in-law. _____
7. I was known for my wickedness. _____
8. I was the only woman to rule over Judah. _____
9. I saved my people. _____
10. I caused John the Baptist to lose his head. _____
11. I was a leader in the early church. _____
12. I gave my son to the Lord. _____
13. I allowed money to become my god. _____
14. I did good deeds. _____
15. I was a careful housekeeper. _____
16. I was named by my husband. _____
17. I threatened the life of Elijah so that he fled to Mt. Horeb. _____

Are you curious about last time's answers? Here they are! First the Reformation names.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. translation | 8. Zwingli |
| 2. Knox | 9. Olevianus |
| 3. Geneva | 10. Wittenberg |
| 4. Inquisition | 11. Luther |
| 5. Calvin | 12. Reformation |
| 6. catechism | 13. Melancton |
| 7. Farel | |

And now Busy People

1. mending nets
2. serving the king
3. searching for a lost