

Clarion

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Planning for a Christian Family²

FAMILY PLANNING ESSENTIAL BEFORE THE MARRIAGE

The first responsibility of this part of "planning for a christian family" lies with the individual christian young man and woman who has marital ambitions. It stands to reason that they must first strive to gain the attention of a member of the opposite sex with whom they wish to share their life. But it is essential that these two people share in a true unity of faith, for a christian marriage needs a sound basis, and the only basis in existence is Jesus Christ, cf. II Corinthians 6:14ff., etc. There must be a mutual commitment to Him on the part of both the boy and girl before there may even be any talk about being friends or "going steady." A mutual commitment to the Lord also means that a person may at no time be satisfied with only a nominal church-membership on the part of the person to whom he or she is attracted. For establishing a sound basis for a christian family is the most important part of all planning, and this should be considered quite normal by any faithful son or daughter of christian parents.

But then all too often in the past, parents have said to their children, "don't worry, for you will always marry the person meant for you" without qualifying this by telling them that this means that they should diligently look for the kind of boy or girl who answers to the requirements of the Scriptures. All too often (whether consciously or sub-consciously) the Lord has been tied in front of (held responsible for) a troublesome marital union which was sought in unfaithfulness. The only marriage in the church of which it can be said that the Lord has brought husband and wife together is that marriage which was sought in obedience to God's Word. All other unions are unfaithful self-willed affairs, or to be more precise, they are often self-willed disasters until and unless the Lord intervenes with His grace and grants repentance.

With respect to marriage planning before the marriage an awful lot could be said about the North American custom of "dating" and all its related

practices, but suffice it to say that at no time may young people act as if the sought for boy/girl relationships are nothing but a striving for some so-called innocent fun with no strings attached. For in all things our striving must be God-glorifying and neighbour edifying. Therefore, let us all instill in our children that the so-called North American "dating game" is "out" as far as covenant children are concerned. For they are not their own, and therefore their lives and bodies are not to be played with, cf. I Corinthians 6:19-20.

A young couple then, when they are serious about each other, will (or should) start talking about and planning their future marriage. This planning is all-inclusive, which means that they should at length talk about the christian religion, jobs, likes, dislikes, their personal preparation for marriage in terms of attitude, housing, sex, children, etc. This is the vital stage of planning, for if a young couple cannot communicate together before their marriage they will have a hard time to do so after the marriage, and often they end up not communicating at all to the detriment of both. Therefore a frank and open communication before the marriage is essential for their future happiness.

But even though they can talk at length about many general topics, all too often this communication is only partially or entirely missing when it comes to talking about religion, i.e. their mutual commitment to the Lord. For example, ask or look around and see how many young couples there are who ever prayed together before their marriage; baring their souls to each other as it were before the Lord. This lack of openness towards each other often reveals the lack of openness in the parental home. It is beyond dispute that our children must be taught to pray and speak openly about their relationship with their Lord and Saviour. This is an important parental duty.

Another weak point in their communication is also often in the sexual aspects of life. Not that they cannot speak about it in vague general terms,

but all too often they are completely unable to speak about their own sexuality or their mutual sexual responsibilities towards each other in specific terms as revealed in God's Word. Again, this is also often indicative of a parental instructional failing in this respect. It is mainly because of this inability to talk about sexuality open and honestly in a Scriptural way that many of our young people fall into the trap of illicit sexual experimentation ranging from "petting" (to kiss, embrace, fondle intimately, etc.) to sexual intercourse. This then must fill that conscious or subconscious yearning for a mutual sexual fulfilment and understanding. But this is not the way of God, but the way of the world in getting to know each other sexually. Alas, the world calls this "a form of communication" but in essence this is only another fancy term for indulging in uncontrolled lusts called "fornication." Our young people should be able, especially just prior to the marriage, to talk with each other about the difference between lust and desire, and that only the latter is God-pleasing (i.e. the total giving of the self to the other in accordance with God's Word). Much more can be said about this, but let me say in brief: Our young people should strive to gain as much Scriptural knowledge and understanding as possible before the marriage about the beauty of human sexuality and the marital sexual responsibilities of husbands and wives towards each other, in order that they may be better enabled to glorify God in all their present as well as in their future sexual responsibilities.

Another area of planning before the marriage is "planned parenthood." All too often many of our people have been led astray by the seemingly pious statement that this part of family planning is entirely God's business; that He will give us all the children we are meant to have, and that for that reason we need not concern ourselves about it. This is sheer nonsense. For ideally all pregnancies should be "planned" pregnancies. As a matter of fact, the real christian marriage is in effect planning to have children, the

Lord willing. As such the first pregnancy is planned before the actual marriage, or at least it should have been talked about between the young man and woman contemplating marriage. However, very often our young couples also fall victim to the vain philosophies of this world by planning not to have any children for the first couple of years for various materialistic reasons, thinking that they may separate the procreation mandate (Genesis 1:28) from the marriage. Such an unfaithful marriage should not be looked forward to as being either christian, God-pleasing, or happy. Such a marriage may be legal in the eyes of the world, but in essence it is nothing less than legalized fornication.

There are others who will say, (i.e. the bride to be): O yes, I look forward to becoming pregnant as soon as possible, but after my baby is born I want to go back to my former job as soon as possible. The baby then is simply "dumped" in the lap of a steady baby-sitter, or daily brought to a nursery. Such planning for a happy marriage is disastrous, to say the least. For when mothers work at a job other than the one which they have already (motherhood), the children as well as the marriage will suffer the adverse consequences, and worst of all; God is dishonoured by such marital unfaithfulness, cf. I Timothy 5:14; Titus 2:4-5.

Another point for planning before the marriage is for furniture, etc. and housing. Young people should try as much as possible to begin their marriage state without having to make payments for a car or furniture, etc. They should, if at all possible, begin their marriage debt-free. It would also be ideal if a young couple were to have saved up a big enough downpayment before the marriage that they could right away purchase, and move into their own home. There are too many young couples today who rush into marriage not having planned it properly, and as a result they are often faced with a lot of unnecessary heartaches and problems in the first years of their marriage.

So you see? It is very important that the various aspects of marriage are properly planned and talked about before the actual marriage. When a young man and woman find each other in all these different aspects of marital responsibilities, then they may expect, and look forward to a happy marriage. Mind you, this does not mean that they will always agree on all

The Learning Stages of the Child* 2

What do we as parents and teachers do with this knowledge of how a child learns? We use it in the way we teach him, the level at which we teach him, and the way we discipline him.

Yes, even discipline should be related to this development. There is very little point in reasoning or arguing with a small child about what he is supposed to do; he simply will not be able to follow your reasoning. The best he can do is memorize that when he does a certain thing, you will say, "No!" This cause-and-effect relationship is about the only logical relationship he can understand, as long as it is kept simple. That is why it is so important that parents and teachers be consistent in their discipline. If you react in a certain way one time when he does something, and the next time he does it, you do something else, or you don't react at all, he becomes confused because there is no pattern of cause and effect for him to memorize. Since it takes time to establish or recognize a pattern, it is perfectly logical that you will have to punish a small child more than once for the same thing. But as he grows older, you can expect him to learn faster, and as he grows still older you can expect him to realize or reason out that something is wrong without your having to tell him that it is wrong. For example, if a two-year old draws on his bedroom wall, he will know after being scolded for that once or twice that he must not do that again, but he may not realize that the same rule applies to the kitchen wall or the bathroom wall. However, a four-year old can be expected to make that connec-

tion, and you should not have to tell him more than once, if at all. The four-year old still may not understand why he must not do that. You may think it messes up your walls, but he will think that it makes them more attractive, so there is little point in reasoning with him on that score. All he needs to

the details, this would be too much to hope for. But as long as they are both willing to listen to each other and to bow under God's Word, then all the details of their planning will gradually fall into place.

But this is still not the end of "planning for a christian family," for it is essential before the marriage, it is vital in the marriage.

(To be continued)

S. DE BRUIN

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ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

CLARION

P.O. Box 54, Fergus
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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

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

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know is that you do not want him to do that.

Now I am not saying that you must not tell him why he should not do a certain thing. What I am saying is that you must not be surprised if he still does not understand. The big problem with a lot of modern psychologists is that they feel that in that case, you cannot expect the child to comply with your rule; they believe that you should expect the child to act only according to what he understands. That is a lot of nonsense, and that is where a lot of today's disciplinary problems start. As the child grows older, you can reason more with him, and explain why he must behave in a certain way, not because, as humanistic psychologists put it, "he is entitled to an explanation," but because he needs to understand the rules of our society, so that he can live according to them even when you are not around to tell him what to do. Since our view of society is governed by God's Word, our explanations and our ideas of the rules of society will, of course, differ frequently and probably greatly from what he hears and reads outside the home and the church, and therefore, it becomes all the more important that we explain a lot and talk a lot with and to our children.

There is, of course, much more that can be said about discipline in this regard, but you too, can use your reasoning abilities and carry on from here putting two and two together.

Now we come to how we use the knowledge of a child's learning abilities in teaching him. A lot of this is plain common sense, and common sense is simply based on careful observation. Our forefathers had a lot of that and used it as we can tell from our ecclesiastical traditions. They knew that even if every child could not read his own Bible or write about what he had read because he had never learned those skills, or did not even own a Bible, he could still memorize passages and in that way get the Bible inside his own head where it would do him a lot more good than it often does us when it is on the bookshelf. Out of that knowledge, we still have the tradition of memorizing Psalm and Bible verses at an early age, and Catechism as you get a little older. Much as you may have disliked learning Catechism, if you are honest, you will admit that those parts which you memorized most thoroughly when you were young, are still the parts which you

remember best today. From that follows that the more you memorized well when you were young, the more you still have at your fingertips or on the tip of your tongue today. This is one of the reasons why many ministers insist, and I think rightly so, that the Catechism students memorize thoroughly what they read in their Catechism books, rather than prepare themselves to retell in their own words the content of the Catechism questions. They simply cannot, at age ten or eleven or even many years after that, understand all of the questions and answers well enough to do that, and by the time they can, they can no longer remember as well as they could have done earlier. Therefore, let them memorize first, as soon as they can handle the big words, and store the Catechism in their minds. The understanding will come. Don't forget, that even well-informed adults often get more insight with every Catechism sermon they hear. It is much better that a person should be able to say to himself or someone else, "This is what it says in the Catechism or the Bible," than to have him say, "Somewhere in the Catechism I think it says something like this When I get home, I must look it up."

Sometimes it seems to me that we live in the educational era of "look it up" and nine times out of ten you do not have the book handy to look it up. So I think we must continue our strong traditions of memorizing Psalms and Bible texts which can start at age three or four or earlier, depending on the child's ability to speak. The very small children can learn Psalms just as well as the older ones, and they really enjoy singing them in the Worship Service. Also, because a child learns so well by rote and imitation, we must continue constant Bible reading with the whole family, so that the young school child hears the details of the familiar stories over and over again. They will stay with him forever. Does not the LORD Himself command parents to teach their children all these things from their youth? We read of this at the beginning of this meeting from Psalm 78. Consider particularly the verses four through seven:

We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and His might, and the wonders which He has wrought.

He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he

commanded our fathers to teach to their children; that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments.

And is the result of such teaching not clearly proclaimed in Psalm 71:17, when the psalmist says, "O God, from my youth thou hast taught me, and I still proclaim Thy wondrous deeds"?

These are the thoughts that we as parents in the Church must keep in mind, for our children's teachers, even when they are Canadian Reformed teachers teaching a Canadian Reformed curriculum, cannot give the constant exposure that the small child in his earliest learning years needs. In fact, a lot of this must be started in the home before the child even gets to school.

When the teachers are those of the public system, our parental role becomes even more crucial. They have frequently been taught to teach from principles directly contradictory to everything I have said so far, and the results show it. Teachers are told to cut down on the amount of material that the children are to memorize, because memorizing is dull and uninteresting from the adult point of view. It is not always dull from the child's point of view at all, but that is never taken into consideration. So no more memory work, no more multiplication tables, no more grammar rules, and no more spelling, etc. If they need to know the details they can look them up. Many elementary school teachers can tell you how frustrating it is to watch a child try to do a mathematical problem when he does not know his multiplication tables off by heart, or to watch him try to find the meaning of a word in the dictionary when he cannot look the word up because he does not know how to spell it. Other teachers will tell you of the frustrations and unhappiness so many children today experience because they are not yet ready to cope with the big projects they are assigned to do because their minds simply have not developed enough to be able to grasp a large concept at once. I think that at the moment the "fun concept of education" is doing as much harm to the total development of the school child as the strict mental discipline concept of education ever did. It at least capitalized on the child's own abilities. It did not expect him to reason when his

mind could not. It expected him to memorize when his mind was most capable of it.

Now I would like to say a few words about how the parents can help their children work up to their capacity or even to increase their capacity to learn. As I said earlier, there is a difference between capacity and achievement. Capacity is the ability a child has at a particular time; achievement is what he does with it. Both can often be improved considerably with parental help. Quite often, all that is required to improve a child's achievement in learning is parental interest. Not just a casual question once a week, or when he brings home a report card, but regular attention, preferably daily. There is, of course, also the other extreme at which the parents sit down with the children and work with them through their homework every day. That is too much attention and can be dangerous because it may make the child incapable of working on his own. Here, as in everything else, you have to use common sense.

What I mean is something like hearing your child say his Catechism a couple of times a week instead of just before he leaves for the Catechism class, hear the younger child say his Psalm verse once or twice every day (more if he cannot read by himself yet), when he is at the multiplication tables stage in school, have him say them to you every so often, give him his spelling words the day before his weekly test, let him read his reading story out to you every day (particularly if he has reading problems), let him retell science and geography lessons to you, etc. This does not have to take an excessive amount of your time. Frequently it can be done when mother or father are doing other things. With younger children, bath time, bedtime, or immediately after meals are very good times. With older children, mothers can call out spelling words while they are mending clothes, darning socks, or something like that. Psalm verses and other materials to be memorized can be written out and taped to the refrigerator in the kitchen to be looked over while dishes are being washed or meals prepared or eaten. Fathers can take a few minutes just before they settle down with the paper, and relax after supper. My own father often checked up on these things while we were working with him, doing chores or other things. My mother never sat down to peel pota-

toes without having one of her children sit beside her with some school or church work

Working with your children in this way achieves several worthwhile goals. In the first place, it makes your children aware that you are really interested in them on a one to one basis, something which they cannot possibly experience in school when they are almost always part of a class of twenty or more. Secondly, it gives them the necessary review and extra exposure to their assignments. Thirdly, it keeps you informed of what they are doing and how well they are doing. This is always important. Never think that just because your children are going to a Christian or Canadian Reformed school everything will be taken care of, or that you can leave Catechism and Bible study up to the minister and the elders. Remember always that in

the "Form for Infant Baptism" the promise that *you* will instruct the child, comes before the promise that you will *have him instructed* in the "afore-said doctrine." Fourthly, and perhaps most important in this day and age, if you start to work with your child at an early age and continue to do so, you will be setting up a pattern of communication with him which will go a long way toward preventing the "generation gap" we hear so much about. It is very unlikely that children brought up in this way will suddenly turn their backs on home and church when they are in their teens.

(MRS.) JULIE LINDHOUT

** A speech delivered at a meeting of the Canadian Reformed School Society of London and District in London, November 1974, and again in Watford, February 1975.*

OFFICIAL OPENING OF

Covenant Christian School

London, Ontario

On Friday evening, November 19, 1976, members of the Canadian Reformed School Society of London and District, together with friends and neighbours, gathered at the Covenant Christian School at 21 White Oak Road in London, to celebrate the official opening of the school building. It was a joyous occasion, the result of four years of labour of the Board and members. The evening was led by the Chairman of the Board, Br. H.J. Wildeboer.

In opening, Psalm 89:1 and 3

were sung, and the Chairman led in prayer. After a word of welcome to all who came from far and near, Br. Wildeboer stated that with the help of our Heavenly Father, through the Son, and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we may now have a day-school in which the children may be educated in the manner of which Deuteronomy 6 speaks. He mentioned that, when the Society started, many had doubts as to the reality of a day-school but that the Lord has shamed us in our doubts and has blessed us according



Covenant Christian School, 21 White Oak Road, London, Ontario.



Br. John Heyink, left, presents the symbolic key, representing the school building to the Chairman of the Board, Br. Henk Wildeboer, right, and through him, to the members of the School Society of London and District.

to His covenant promises. The Scriptures were then opened and Deuteronomy 6 was read. Thereupon the Chairman gave a brief history of the Society and its work.

The Canadian Reformed School Society of London and District was established on June 23, 1972, when 19 people signed up to signify their support of the Society. This list of 19 consisted of 13 families. The first Board was elected on August 25, 1972, when a constitution and by-laws were adopted. A Friday-night school was started in January 1973, which could continue for three years. In May 1974 the first property was bought, and in January 1975 the property at 21 White Oak Road was purchased and the first property subsequently sold. Fees increased several times during the four year period, and Board members were increased from 3 to 5, as well as the total number of members which increased to 30.

The former Chairman of the Building Committee (and a former Board member) Br. John Heyink was given the opportunity to describe the construction of the school building. He went into details of all the work done and stated that we could only have accomplished this because of the blessing of the Lord, and that we must thank Him for this. Various persons were thanked in connection with the construction.

Br. C.Y. Nobel of Brampton was presented a gift in thanks for the drawing up of the plans of the school building, which he also donated.

Then followed the official presentation of the symbolic key to the Chairman of the Board by Br. Heyink. The three-foot-long, beautifully engraved key represented the building which was being presented to the members of the Society with the prayer that it would continue to give accommodation to teachers and children for many years.

Next on the agenda, the opportunity was given to various persons to address the meeting.

Br. Van Luik of the Smithville School Society congratulated the London and District Society on the opening of the school. He also conveyed Rev. M. Werkman's best wishes to the Society.

Br. H. Hoogstra, principal of the John Calvin School in Burlington also congratulated the Society, as did Br. de Gelder, representing the Hamilton school, Timothy. Br. C. Nobel brought Brampton's congratulations and also personally wished the Lord's blessing to the School. John Nobel, on behalf of the London Young People's Society, donated gym equipment to the school. Two globes were presented in memory of Martin Boersema by the entire Boersema family. Rev. W. Huizinga, of Hamilton, former pastor of London and Watford, expressed his family's warmest congratulations and presented a set of maps depicting Palestine throughout history, complete with stand. Sr. C. Krikke presented four tumbling mats on behalf of the Women's Society of London. Sr. A. Hoff, President of the Women's Auxil-

ary to the School, reported on the auxiliary's activities and donated on their behalf a beautiful portrait of Queen Elizabeth II and an electric kettle.

Intermission followed in which many types of baked goods and great amounts of coffee were consumed, while all mingled and also toured the school building.

After intermission, Rev. Huizinga showed his slides showing the various stages of construction, which were enjoyed by all present. Following this, Rev. Huizinga presented his speech entitled, "Covenant-Education," the contents of which will also be published.

At the conclusion of this speech, the teachers, Br. B. VanderWoerd and Sr. I. Groenewold were given the opportunity to say a few words. Br. VanderWoerd spoke on how curriculum and teaching in a Reformed way should differ from that in a public school system. He used the subjects of History and Mathematics to illustrate this. Sr. Groenewold showed that the children attending Covenant Christian School are really no different from other children; however, it could be seen that they came from Reformed homes, in regard to their attitudes towards the teachers and each other. She then related some humorous incidents involving the children. Both teachers thanked the Hamilton, Burlington, and Smithville Schools for donating books and all those who donated gifts.

Thereupon the Chairman thanked all for coming and participating in the opening of the school and invited all to sing the words of Hymn 62, verses 1, 2, and 3 which expressed the feeling of all present:

Now thank we all our God
With hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done,
In whom His world rejoices.
Who from our mother's arms
Hath blessed us from above
With countless gifts of love
And still is ours today.

Rev. Huizinga closed with a prayer of thanksgiving.

The Lord has truly blessed the endeavours of all who worked towards this event and it is the prayer of all of us that He will continue to do so, for without His blessing our labours would be in vain. He is to be thanked and praised for His faithfulness.

(Mrs.) THEA HEYINK

“STARS”

Despite the song, “Don’t let the stars get in your eyes,” many people today are seeing nothing but stars. I don’t mean that in a physical sense (a la Mohammed Ali), for I am referring to the fact that millions of people in our “civilized” western world have become addicted to the cult of the horoscope. It struck me again at the beginning of this year how prominent magazines are calling upon famous astrologers to predict the happenings which are to determine the face of 1977.

Especially since the second World War, astrology has boomed into a major industry, eagerly providing the necessary elements for the mass-religion of superstition. Horoscopes can invariably be found in daily newspapers or bought in convenient pocket-size booklets at the local supermarket. These horoscopes must be close at hand, for many people will not move without first consulting their astral guide. Nowadays even reformed people seem to know under what “sign” they were born (whether they are Taurus or Gemini) and some indiscriminately adorn themselves with the rings, necklaces and amulets connected with this neo-pagan culture.

Astrology is not new. My dictionary defines it as follows, “The pseudo-science which treats of the influences of the stars upon human affairs, and of foretelling terrestrial events by their positions and aspects” (Webster’s Collegiate). Which means, simply (I hope), that astrology pursues the relation between the outer world and the earthly, human world. The stars would be running our lives.

I admit, what happens in space, often has a bearing on what occurs here. The universe is in many respects a unity. And there is such a thing as astroNOMY, a science which studies and applies the laws which govern both terrestrial and celestial bodies. But this certainly doesn’t mean that the positions of the stars foretell human predicaments, let alone determine human destiny. That is solely a divine prerogative, and we should not confuse astronomy with astrology.

Astrology originates with the heathen Babylonian culture, and has spread from the Euphrates to all parts of the world, often achieving reasonable popularity. In the 15th and 16th centuries astrology, was an accepted science, even among Chris-

Circumspection...

tians of good repute. The famous example is Philip Melancthon (Luther’s successor) who taught astrology at the university of Wittenberg. Nowadays, however, astrology is commonly recognized (as the Webster’s definition indicates) as a pseudo-science, a philosophy which lacks all scientific evidence and is based on deceiving assumptions. In the book, “The Myth of Astrology” (by Bart J. Bok and Lawrence E. Jerome) one can find a manifest of 192 prominent scientists (among whom 19 Nobel Prize winners!) who declare that astrology is totally deceptive and void of proof. It is amazing that in spite of this clear testimony, millions are enthusiastically enslaved.



But the matter is decided elsewhere. The Holy Scriptures often allude to astrology and it becomes perfectly clear that the Lord forbids it as an outright form of heathen worship. In Zephaniah 1:5 the Lord announces strong action against those in Israel “who bow down on the roofs to the hosts of the heavens.” And in Isaiah 47:13 the Lord warns the Babylonians that no true help can be expected on the day of judgment from “those who divide the heavens, who gaze at the stars, who at the new moons predict what shall befall you.” Astrology offers no solace in times of trial.

There is only ONE foundation on which to base our certainties, expectations and activities, and that is the Word of God, which doesn’t give us exact details, but does set our whole life in the rich perspective of God’s providence and full redemption in Jesus Christ. We serve this God and

expect from Him all things necessary, in life and death.

According to our confession, therefore, astrology is a form of IDOLATRY, and a direct sin against the first commandment of the Lord, “You shall have no other gods before Me,” because it means, “Instead of or besides the one true God, Who has revealed Himself in His Word, to devise or to have something on which to place our trust” (Heidelberg Catechism, L.D. 34).

Perhaps you wonder how this ancient myth of astrology so unscrupulously can be rejuvenated and again captivate the hearts and minds of many “enlightened” people. And the answer, I think, is quite simple. In our time the Christian religion is on a rapid decline in the western world. Theologians have declared God to be “dead” and accordingly theology has degenerated into political science of a neo-Marxist structure. The gap, created by the loss of faith in the God of the covenant, must be filled with something else. And if people no longer look up to the Lord for guidance and assurance, they will look up at the stars. Astrological lies are today’s surrogate for Scriptural truths.

One sees it happen: people no longer wish to be governed by the Lord and His Word, yet they must seek some assurance. Life cannot just “float along”; there must be some pattern and destiny or something concrete to go by. And astrology daily provides our uprooted society with a sense of security and a feeling of direction. It also enables people to shove off their own responsibilities, because if it is written “in the stars,” who can alter the fact? Those who rebel against the comforting Gospel of the living God become obedient slaves whose lives are dictated by inanimate objects.

The horoscope is easy to find in the table of contents of every “self-respecting” newspaper. And it is so enticing that even Christians read it regularly (out of amused curiosity, of course!). But this paganism should not be taken lightly; it’s utter darkness.

The Lord said, “I am the Light of the world.” He is the brilliant Morningstar. If you really want to keep seeing this Light, indeed, “don’t let the stars shine in your eyes.” Cid.



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.

POPE REFUSES LUTHER

Vatican City. According to the Vatican Secretariate for Unity, Pope Paul VI does not intend to recall the excommunication decree against Martin Luther (1521) despite repeated requests of prominent theologians like e.g. Hans Küng, professor at Tübingen. In this decree the Pope reacted against Luther's pamphlet, "Against the (Papal) Bull of the Anti-Christ." A spokesman for the Secretariate did point, however, to another important development: Roman Catholic and Lutheran theologians are presently studying the possibility of recognizing the Augsburg Confession, written by Melancthon, which is a basic summary of Lutheran doctrine. The theologians hope to complete their work in 1980.

LUTHERANS COUNTED

Geneva, Switzerland. The number of registered Lutherans presently totals more than 70 million. Most of these Lutherans live in Europe (55 million) and the others are spread especially over North America and Africa. It appears that the membership of Lutheran Churches is receding in Europe, but constantly growing in Africa and Asia. This is stated in a report of the Lutheran World Federation, published in 1976.

CANADIAN JESUIT ACCUSES VIETNAMESE CARDINAL

Ho Chi Minh-City (Saigon). In the magazine *Mondo e Missione* (World and Mission) the Roman Catholic priest Andre Gelinus from Canada, who has worked in Vietnam for almost 20 years, has refuted statements made

by the South Vietnamese Cardinal Mgr. Nguyen van Binh. The Cardinal wrote letters to the effect that "the communist government has clearly decided for freedom of religion and that services may freely be held." Father Gelinus claims that almost 1 million South Vietnamese have been detained in re-education camps, out of which many will not return.

HELP CHILDREN IN INDIA

Ommeren, The Netherlands. The charity organization "Help a Child" (Stichting Redt een Kind) in The Netherlands needs at least \$50,000 to build a school for an orphanage supported by the organization in the village of Bhogpur, India. The danger is that the Indian government will otherwise close the orphanage because it does not meet up to new educational standards. The orphanage, the Children's Home, was set up in 1945 by the Rev. and Mrs. John C. Taylor, missionaries of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the U.S., and is presently being run by their son, the Rev. Gordon R. Taylor. The address of the organization is "Stichting Redt een Kind," dr. Guépinlaan 23, Ommeren, The Netherlands.

IRON CURTAIN MEETING

Leningrad, USSR. A three-day meeting was held recently in Leningrad between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Eastern Orthodox Churches. Thirteen representatives from the Reformed Churches and an equal number from the Orthodox Churches from various countries attended the meetings. The discussions focused on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper and the Social responsibility of the Christian Churches.

RCA AGAIN REJECTS WOMEN'S ORDINATION

Grand Rapids, USA. The Classes of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) for the fifth time voted on the proposal to permit the ordination of women. The vote is usually taken in the Spring, but was moved up to relieve months of anxiety about the possible outcome. Fifteen negative votes and one tie (which counts as a negative) assured the defeat of the proposal. Last year the proposal was also one vote short. The general pattern has negative votes coming from the Mid-West and the East coast voting "yes" (RES NE).

CI. STAM



Luther "... burning Papal Bull." (Illustration, W. Meijer, Church History.)

The Old "Heidelberger" In a New Dress ²

"SYMPATHETIC CRITICISM"

The expression comes from *Dr. K. Schilder* who taught his students to read the Creeds of the Church "sympathetic-critically." He meant that those Creeds have our sympathy: we love them, have adopted them. Yet, because only the Word of God is infallible, we must read the Creeds "critically": always asking whether they are in full agreement with the Scriptures.

These articles were written with "sympathy," first for the difficult task of the Committee, second (and more) because we love our Old Faithful, as *Dr. Kohlbrugge* always called the Heidelberg Catechism.

The first article voiced some criticism against the "Second Draft" prepared by a "Continued Committee," which worked as though it was a *New* Committee that had to prepare a *New* Draft. Questions like, "Did the continued Committee read its mandate correctly?" and "Were their self-adopted guide-lines in complete harmony with what two Synods plus the Committee from 1971 to 1974 had done?" were answered in the negative.

In this article some detailed criticism is presented. "Some" only; a choice had to be made, while the remark is repeated: this criticism does not conflict with great appreciation for much good work!

But first something else.

THE PRINCIPLE FOR RENOVATING A CREED

The principle we have in mind was not formulated by those Synods *expressis verbis* but should be adopted by all without further discussion.

In whatever way archaic expressions are replaced or complicated sentences "cut up" etc. — the result should be truly "*Reformed*"! That is, not only coming closer to the original German or Latin or whatever other language may have been used originally, but *coming closer to the Scriptures!*

A Creed is a summary of the complete doctrine of salvation revealed in God's Word. As such it is a pointer to that Word. If ever any doubt arises as to how an expression or sentence should be "modernized," the key-of-solution is (to be found) in the

Scriptures! If, by what Synods 1971 and 1974 have asked for, such a process of modernizing brings our Old Faithful closer to the Scriptures, all should rejoice. And no longer would there be heard that argument-of-conservatism (strange to the truly-Reformed mind) that any and all modernization "must" lead to loss of Scriptural Contents.

With this principle in mind, let's consider a few suggestions of this "Second Draft."

"SUBSERVIENT"

All who know their Catechism recognize this word from the first answer and remember that the minister had to explain to us that "strange word."

Indeed, it must be replaced. But how?

The draft under consideration comes with what a Doctor of English called a "flat statement," "everything must *serve* my salvation." The first draft was thus rejected. This had proposed, "must *work together* for my salvation." Why did those brethren (one of them a sister) do that? Well, they simply looked at the one reference-text for this expression, provided by the Catechism itself: *Romans 8:28*. There they found, in the Greek, the verb "*sun-ergeoo*" (cf. "synergism") and thus said, "all things work together"; that's what Ursinus and Olevianus had in mind, for "the Bible tells me so."

The second draft is, in this respect, a loss, the first one a gain.

BUT WORSE . . .

No Catechism student has ever had trouble with Question and Answer 3. "Whence do you know your misery? Out of the Law of God."

The first draft suggested: "From where do you know your sin and misery? I know my sin and misery from the Law of God."

Some good things may be said about this version. Though it is doubtful (see below) whether "Whence" is "archaic" (my dictionaries don't say so) — with this version ministers no longer have to face the question from the class: "where did 'sin' go?" Answer 2 told them that they must know

"how great my *sins and misery* are." Why not, then, mention "sin" here too? One should not forget that the original German "*Elendigkeit*" (Dutch: *ellendigheid*) expresses more than can be caught in the English "misery." Another good point is that "I know" is repeated in the answer. The first draft kept close to the classic reference text: *Romans 3:20*: "through the Law comes knowledge of sin."

The second draft, obviously not satisfied with the first here, comes with the following remarkable rendering. "*How do you recognize your misery? From the Law of God.*"

This should be deemed unacceptable!

First, language-wise. The "From" in the answer does not correspond with the "How?" in the question. But that is only a minor matter.

The main objection is against that "*recognize*." This objection is founded on the Bible. "Recognize" is supposed to be the translation of the original German "*erkennen*" but the Committee overlooked that in old German this has the meaning of "learn to know" (see *Romans 3:20* again), and it most certainly is *not* the same as the Dutch "*herkennen*" (German: "*wiedererkennen*"). *Webster* gives as the first meaning of "to recognize": "to know again; to identify as known before . . ." Thus this proposal of the second draft would mean (of course not meant by the Committee!) that we have already known about our sin and misery before we "met" the Law. And now, in the mirror of the Law, we "identify what we already knew before . . ." If accepted by the Churches, this would mean, unwittingly, introducing a strange doctrine. For Scripture says, *Romans 7:7*, "Yet, if it had not been for the Law, I should not have known sin," so there!

The second draft should have stuck to what the Catechism was referring to: *Romans 3:20*. That's the first and last "guide-line" as described above.

"THE RESURRECTION OF THE FLESH"

That's how the second draft from now on wants us to confess our faith, every week and weekday, re: the resurrection of the dead.

Sure, the original German has "*Fleisch*"; but the first objection is that this change would, completely unnecessarily, isolate us from every other believing community that speaks Eng-

lish. Maybe some want it that way. The present writer chooses to differ.

But, more important again, why not — when discussing how we shall word this important article — go to the Scriptures, according to the above described Reformed principle? Having checked concordances, the conclusion is that the Bible does not know the expression, “resurrection of the flesh.” One should not expect that either, because the Bible teaches that not only the “flesh” dies, but the person then is “among the dead.” Matthew 27:50 speaks of the (dead) *body* of our Lord; 27:52 of “many *bodies* (*soomata*) of the saints that had fallen asleep, were raised.” I Corinthians 15:35, “with what *body* do they come?” In the same context, “flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom.” The word “flesh” has a specific meaning in the New Testament which should be taken into account.

If the brethren did not want to use the word “body” (but why not? — we use it in Lord’s Day 22!) then it would be better to take from the Scriptures the usual expression, “the resurrection of the *dead*.” That would, indeed, have been an improvement, and *e voto catechismi*: according to the wish of the composers of the Catechism who only wanted to “say the same as” the Bible. In our Creeds we wish to repeat God’s own Word. That is truly Reformed.

* * *

“FOR CLARITY’S SAKE”

Finally some examples of “minor” flaws.

The first draft did a good work by repeating the words “prophet, priest and king” in answer 32, “Why are you called a christian?” That was a help for catechetes as well as for students. The second draft rejects this as an “addition,” even “an alteration of the text,” while it is only a (needed) clarification. But the remarkable thing is that the same draft does not hesitate, first to split up answer 85 (why here, and why not elsewhere, e.g. in Lord’s Day 1 and 23?) but also “inserts the words ‘first’ and ‘then,’ *for clarity’s sake* (!).” Is that, then, not an alteration of the text?

“FOR BODY AND SOUL”

Both drafts fall short in their rendering of question 118. Why not here return to the original German which says (translated) “for all our spiritual and bodily (or physical) needs”? That’s

much better, also in putting the “spiritual” first.

“WHENCE”

Both drafts have considered this “archaic”; the second draft even says, “Synod 1971 must have thought of words like these” I wonder and doubt. Webster and other dictionaries do not call it archaic. The profit of “whence” is that it does not only ask, “from what place?” but even more, “from what *source*?” and that is what the Catechism means.

“LEAVES”

The second draft wants to replace the “herbs” in Lord’s Day 10 by “leaves,” considering this the best translation of the German “Laub”; but this includes much more than “leaves”: vegetables, “any seed or plant” (see also for this the Scriptures: *Genesis 1:29*).

“ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT?”

Question 39, about Christ having been crucified instead of dying some other death. The German has: “etwas mehr.” Would it not have been better to translate: “of special significance”?

FINALLY THE “CRUX” OF ANSWER 44

(“Crux” meaning a special problem for the commentators.) We can only present to you the “problem” of this answer re: “he descended into hell.”

The second draft leaves out the well-known words “during all his sufferings but especially . . .” and suggests to conclude the answer with the somewhat “lame” statement, “and beforehand in his soul.” (German: “auch an seiner Seele.”) It is indeed true that the words “during . . .” are not found in the original German. No explanation is given here. The first draft kept them; then one of the members was the professor of Symbolics. He should give us more light here, before we decide to leave this (as to its contents completely biblical) confession out, and replace it by the problematic “and beforehand in his soul.” No, that doesn’t click.

IN CONCLUSION

The reader understands that the above was only a limited selection, underlining the need to take a second, and I fear, a third look at this second draft, and have another look again at the first draft.

Thus far this contribution to the discussion on Old Faithful.

vD

Books

Dr. A.G. Luiks, *Baptisterium. De bediening van de doop in de Oud-christelijke kerk.* J.H. Kok, Kampen [n.d.] Fl. 22.50

In this most interesting book of 196 pages, Dr. Luiks describes what has been unearthed in North Africa especially insofar as it regards the place where in the early Christian era baptism was administered, the so-called *baptisterium*.

The thought is widely propagated that in the early Christian church baptism was administered by total immersion, and there are many groups in our days who insist on that practice as part of their claim that they return to and are in harmony with “Christianity” in its original, unadulterated form.

It may come as a surprise to many that Dr. Luiks, on the basis of materials studied, and from his own observation came to the conclusion that the basin designed for the administration of baptism in the various Church buildings was simply too small and too shallow for immersion. Baptism, he states, was administered by pouring water over the head of the person who was standing in the basin.

Although I could not compare his express description of the administration of baptism with the remarks made about it in the course of the book due to a number of unprinted pages, the conclusions of the writer are clear throughout the book. The work as a whole seems to be directed mainly against the claim that baptism-by-immersion is the original form and has to be restored to its “rightful” place. The material adduced from history and excavation certainly refutes any such claim.

vO

NEWS RELEASE

ROYAL NETHERLANDS EMBASSY Ottawa, Ontario

The Royal Netherlands Embassy has the sad duty to announce the death, on January 2, 1977, of His Excellency Wadim Thorn Leeson, Ambassador of The Netherlands in Ottawa. Mr. Thorn Leeson passed away at the age of 55 in an Ottawa hospital after a serious illness.

After having joined The Netherlands Foreign Service in 1953, Mr. Thorn Leeson became the representative of her Majesty Queen Juliana of The Netherlands in Ottawa on May 25, 1973; his previous postings were in Washington, Tokio, Djakarta, Singapore and Bangkok. He was Officer in the Order of Oranje Nassau, Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the White Elephant of Thailand and Commander of the Order of the Rising Sun of Japan.

A short funeral ceremony was held on Friday, January 7, in Ottawa.

Ottawa, January 3, 1977.



Butiptiri

Already in 1974, when Rev. Knigge was busy making preparations for the work in the Manggelum area, the missionaries from the churches in The Netherlands assisted in visiting Butiptiri to help the consistory there in guiding the congregation. Rev. C.A. Versluis made several visits, and, after he left, Rev. D.J. Zandbergen from the church at Spakenburg took over. In the meantime, Rev. J.B.K. de Vries from the church at Groningen arrived in Irian Jaya, and, together with Rev. Zandbergen, he went to Butiptiri in June last year, and again in September, to get acquainted with the congregation. Rev. de Vries, who is stationed in Kouh, will from now on give pastoral guidance to the people in Butiptiri. In his report of October 6, 1976, he told us about his visits. Nurse Greet Euwema, sent by the Dutch mission aid organization MESOZ, also spent a few days in Butiptiri at that time.

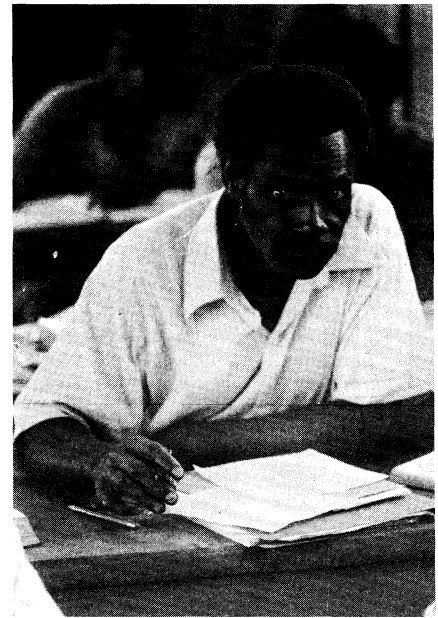
During their stay the missionaries had many discussions with the consistory, and, on Saturday evening, September 18, 1976, a meeting of the congregation was held where Rev. Zandbergen spoke about the meaning of holy supper, and Rev. de Vries explained the significance of holy baptism. On the following Sunday both sacraments were administered.

Problems in the congregation often concern marriage. Papua customs and traditions in this area of life are so vastly different from what the Lord teaches us in His Word that it is often difficult for the people to become free from old superstitions. In one case a woman was deserted by her husband and after four or five years a member of the Butip congregation wanted to marry her. Of course he had been told to send the woman back to her lawful husband, but nobody knew where this man was. Also a rumour went around that he was demanding a large sum of money by way of dowry. The consistory has not been able to find him. In the meantime, the woman has lived for more than a year with the Butiptiri man and has also received a child. The elders are still trying to find the first husband.

One of the members of the consistory is Ambrosius, who regularly teaches catechism and also conducts the worship services, using outlines provided by the missionaries. The other elders are Laurens, Yaremub and Tenemop.

The church attendance is good. Some Roman Catholics also attend the services and catechism classes. The women's society meets regularly under the guidance of the wife of one of the teachers, and also women who are not members of the congregation come there quite frequently. A great reason for thankfulness is the many requests to be admitted to the congregation. In September there were more than forty people who wanted to make profession of faith. Elders and missionaries spent a lot of time visiting these people to find out what their motives are and to explain what it means to be committed to our Lord Jesus Christ. Those who are admitted are told to visit as many members of the congregation as possible. In this way they get to know the members of the congregation, who, on their part, are active in speaking about their faith and in receiving the new members into the fellowship.

An important topic for discussion with the consistory was Paulus Omba, an elder of the Butiptiri congregation who went to study at the Central Bible School in Boma where he followed the courses for four years. He was to complete his studies in December and the congregation was planning to appoint him as evangelist. But how should this



Paulus Omba at the Central Bible School in Boma, June 1975.

be done? Would he become "pendita" (minister) with authority to administer the sacraments? Does he have a salary? Who appoints him and exactly how? It is not easy to answer all those questions but the following solution was considered. Paulus would become evangelist of Butiptiri in the same position as other evangelists who work in various villages under supervision of the missionaries. However, Paulus will become the first evangelist who is called by a congregation which then fully supports him. The Central Bible School in Boma is planning to organize extension courses to enable evangelists to continue their studies while working. An orderly way will have to be found whereby an evangelist can be admitted to the full ministry, including the administration of sacraments.

Did You Notice . . .

. . . that in the review of the book Marriage in Honour a few mistakes have crept in?

In the sixth paragraph of the center column we should read, "And why we get I Corinthians 7:13 in the KJV, and I Corinthians 7:17 in the RSV, both in the very same paragraph (p. 99) is beyond me."

. . . that the first words of the second paragraph in the last column should read, "I am no expert in English . . ."

. . . that we have complied with a long-standing request and have inserted a list of contents, which you can find on the third page of very issue.

vO

news medley

Let us start far away, all the way in Smithers.

The VanRietschoten family left and now there are quite a few reading services in Smithers and in Houston. They do get pulpit supply via classical assignments, but those Churches there in the Bulkley Valley do not have the opportunity to have a minister for just one service or for "just" one Sunday. For that the distances are too great. Seven hundred miles take a little more than a day for driving, and they will have to do with the Sundays which have been assigned by classical appointment. However, the three ministers in the Fraser Valley already have five Churches to take care of, and these Churches do not have too many Sundays to spare!

In Classis Ontario South the situation is not much better. Yes, as far as the Sundays are concerned, that is not too bad, for the Professors at the College can also substitute and they gladly do so. But the London Bulletin reminds us of it that, after the departure of the VanRongens, there are only three healthy ministers left for seven Congregations. For Grand Rapids it will be difficult, too, to get pulpit supply apart from classical appointments and for London and Watford it is not too easy either. Especially in winter time it is not very appealing to drive all the way from Hamilton to those places. The above, however, clearly demonstrates the need for theological instruction and for the continued support of our College. It is sad that the treasurer of the College has to report some Churches to be in arrears whenever he sends out a statement. That should not happen in our midst.

London also included a little sentence in its bulletin which I liked very much. It is the following line: "During the holiday season we will have all reading services. We did not try to get ministers because it is understandable that they wish to stay home with their families." Generally, the holiday season ("holiday?") is not one of cozy family-life for a ministerial family. There are extra sermons to be prepared and as soon as the one sermon has been delivered, preparations are underway for the next one. When, besides that, a minister has to be away from home for a weekend, this takes even more away from the time he can spend within the family-circle. "It's his job," someone who doesn't understand one bit of it, may say. All right, then, but it is comforting when the family is counted with, too, as is the case in London.

Let's return to Smithers.

The organ committee is active in gathering moneys so that everything can be paid for. They got word from the Organ builder: "One year from today I hope that the installation has been completed." Of course, the man doesn't know today what he will hope one year from this day. But he means, probably, that he hopes that one year from now the installation will have been completed. We hope so, too.

The Consistory of Smithers received an invitation to be represented at the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the institution of the Smithers Christian Reformed Church. The Consistory was convinced that they could not accept that invitation and also gave the reasons why they had to

decline the invitation. In a letter, they point to recent decisions by the Christian Reformed Church which "caused a breakdown of the efforts to come to Church Unity. Further evidence of the deviation from the Reformed doctrine, Church polity in matters of gravamen and uncertainty about Scriptural teachings, as well as continuation of fellowship with the Synodical Churches in The Netherlands, have shown an increasing necessity for seeking the true unity in obedience to the Word of God." The Consistory stated that, for those reasons, they could not take part in a celebration which, in fact, is the celebration of a separate existence.

To that letter they apparently received a reply, but I did not read anything about its contents.

Coming this way, we reach Houston via the beautiful King's Highway No. 16. You should, of course, have driven the same distance twenty-three years ago to appreciate its present condition fully. Anyway, in Houston the Young People's Society has started to raise money again for the Organ Fund. Their objective is a sum of twenty-five hundred to three thousand dollars. No small achievement for a Congregation that size. Yes, things oftentimes turn out differently from what we expect. When I visited Houston for the first time in the spring of 1953, the Houston Congregation was a fair-sized one, whereas in Smithers/Telkwa there were only a few families. Gradually the situation has changed the other way around. You can never foresee the course of events and of development.

Stopping over in Neerlandia first, we read that the possibilities of starting a kindergarten are being investigated. And what Rev. M.C. Werkman does not mention in the School Crossing, he said here: desks were bought for the school-to-be-built for a mere \$10.00 each. All they need is a good sanding and a revarnishing job. That's no problem with so many volunteers!

Let's go down to Edmonton.

I was not surprised at all that the Consistory was eager to grant Rev. D. DeJong's request for holidays from June 29 - July 2. However, I think that a little 9 was omitted after the 2.

More serious than the above is the fact that Edmonton's Pipe Organ is out of commission for some four or five weeks. Extensive work has to be done to it. All parts that may give problems in the future are being checked and, if necessary, replaced. Once the overhaul is completed, they will be able to use the Trumpet Rank (the pipes that came from Ontario) and also a new Clarinet Rank. Hopefully Edmonton's problems with the organ will be over then, for they have had lots of trouble with it ever since its installation. We express this wish the more since they now can boast of no fewer than four organists! I know a few places where they could use a good one, so, if you ever have plans to move, just let me know.

We skip Carman and Winnipeg (too cold there right now) and arrive in Toronto. From there we move on to Brampton. The ladies in Brampton (and Toronto apparently) are already making plans for a bazaar in November of this year. Brrr! Let's first get rid of the cold and the snow that are here now instead of thinking about another such period already. However, we commend the sisters for their diligence. They intend to raise money for the new school which Brampton and Toronto are planning to set up together.

At a Congregational Meeting on February 1st, the Rev. C. VanDam is going to deliver a speech on the topic, "Do

the sisters in the Congregation have the right to vote in the election of Office-bearers?" Would it not be interesting to have that speech published, so that we all can enjoy it? This is one of the topics which we should investigate thoroughly, in order that we may come to a generally established opinion. Such a speech does not have to be a scholarly discourse; just a casual talk will do for us.

Taking Highway No. 5, we pass by Rehoboth Burlington. The bulletin gave some statistics and they were partly startling. I foresaw an exodus of young men in some five to ten years, unless an influx of young ladies prevents that. The communicant members are divided into 157 male and 146 female communicant members. (Between brackets, why still use that expression "confessing" members and "baptized" members? The translation of "belijgend lid" is not "confessing member" but "communicant member"; and the expression "baptized member" is basically nonsense. One who is not baptized cannot be a member of the Church. Membership of the Church includes baptism. What is meant is: non-communicant members.) As far as the communicant members are concerned, there is not too much difference: just nine. But as far as the non-communicant members are concerned, O boy! There are 187 male and only 145 female members in that category. Small wonder that some of "my" girls (I mean girls from the Fergus/Guelph Churches) have already been enticed into a liaison with boys from the Rehoboth Church. The twenty-eight baptisms which took place there will not have changed the picture significantly. Oh well, we'll see.

Rev. Cl. Stam also writes a few lines about the contact with the First Korean Presbyterian Church in Toronto. At the latest Classis Ontario North the Committee had to report that word had been received from that Church that they decided no more to meet with our committee. That was disappointing, although we always counted with the possibility. Classis did not resign itself to that situation, but continued the Committee with the mandate to take up contact and to continue working in the line of previous decisions. In the Rehoboth bulletin Rev. Cl. Stam writes, among others,

To be honest, for various reasons I feared such a development. And I need not emphasize that the consistory is saddened by the Korean decision. Even if we advocated more classical prudence, yet we did welcome and appreciate these contacts. The Classis has decided, meanwhile, to continue the appointed committee "to seek opportunity to meet again with representatives of the First Korean Presbyterian Church" and we must pray that the Lord will bless this effort. Now that the initial contacts are made and so much agreement has already been established, we cannot and may not easily let go of these Korean brothers and sisters.

This was our first ecclesiastical contact which showed so much promise. Therefore this abrupt change is saddening and unacceptable. May the Lord open ways and grant means to come together in one faith and with one heart.

Hamilton is next. The Committee of Administration is seriously considering an extension to the sound system to provide a direct connection for the members who are deaf or who have hearing problems. That will be greatly appreciated and the relatively small sum involved when you already have such a system, is well-spent and will bear high interest.

The Huizinga family has moved into the newly-built parsonage. That is quite something: to move twice within one year! We have a book in which the statement is made that having to move three times is the same as having one

Happy Birthday



Congratulations to Mrs. A. De Nijs on the occasion of her 79th birthday. She is the oldest member of the Congregation of Edmonton and the Ladies Society "Lydia" presented her with a plant. She was born on December 31, 1897, and emigrated with the family in 1952. She was widowed in December 1957 and lives with her daughter Alie. She has six children of whom two are still in Holland, eighteen grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren. May the Lord bless her and keep her in His care.

From the Ladies Society "Lydia"

P.S. It is quite a few years ago that we took shelter under plastic during a wet holiday at Cultus Lake, isn't it, Mrs. De Nijs? Congratulations. vO

fire. It isn't really that bad, but it is quite an undertaking. Hopefully, the family is settled by now and will enjoy this new house for many years to come.

Speaking of moving, the Smithville Congregation moved into their "new" Churchbuilding. That's what it is called in the **Family Post**, and by the sound of it, it is practically new. I should go and have a look some day when the snow is gone.

The Consistory received a request from the organists for use of the organ to instruct students. What a blessing when there are young members of the Church who have received the gift of feeling for music and who wish to develop that gift also in this manner, so that the singing of God's people can be more to the honour of the Lord. I hope that there may be many more who take the time and will go into the trouble of **studying** music. Our organs will not suffer much wear and tear when they are being used by students of organ. They suffer more from standing there unused for I don't know how many hours per week.

The schoolboard informed the membership via the bulletin that they received letters from "two brothers from Holland asking for information to become teachers in a Canadian Reformed School." That gives us hope for the future. Quite a few "new" teachers will be needed, even apart from eventual retirement because of marriage.

A discussion took place at the meeting of the schoolboard about the question what to do with children whose parents are behind in paying their dues. I presume that most school societies have a provision for that in their by-

school crossing

THE MISSING LINK

For quite some time we have heard nothing from the school in *Fergus*, Ontario. They publish a magazine regularly, which is called "*Link*." It intends to express the link between home-school-staff and pupils. The students of different grades have been receiving some education also outside the classrooms. Tours were arranged to the Wellington County Museum and the Royal Ontario Museum which were very worthwhile. Fergus also had some problems around their school with just ordinary mud. There seems to be too much of it, or too much of the wrong kind, or just not enough grass yet. Nylon tree ropes are still in active service. Hanging in the ropes keeps the youngsters off the wet ground at least, the principal writes. So you see that hanging is not altogether abolished! During one of these "hangings" the principal was accidentally kicked in the mouth with a muddy boot! So even with the hangings the problem of the mud persists!

CONDEMNED BOOKS

Fergus was waiting by the end of the year for a 1¼ ton shipment of books from the Wellington County School Board. They are allowed to have these books free! Some of these books are brand new. Can you im-

agine that they are just thrown out, because they are obsolete already? And can you believe that among these condemned books there were over 100 almost new King James Version *Bibles*? I don't expect that the public schools "condemned" these Bibles because they are being replaced by a newer translation. No, the sad fact is that this is what we can expect from the secular system of education. If the Word of God does not rule supreme in these schools, why should they not throw out the Bible? People who put God out of the door have no use for His Word. How blessed are our schools that we have received not only the Word of God, but that the same God gave us also teachers who instruct our children according to and from this Word.

COMMUNION OF SAINTS BETWEEN THE SCHOOL SOCIETIES

Chatham had its problems, too. The principal has been ill for quite some time and is now recuperating from a serious operation. By the time you read this, she is expected to be teaching again. But, in the meantime, some replacement had to be found. Mothers helped out, as well as substitute teachers, but of course this is not ideal in the long run. *Smithville* was willing to help out by releasing one of their teachers for a few months.

Miss Maat has given up *Smithville* for the time being and has moved, together with Miss Kingma, to help *Chatham* out. The latter will stay on till the end of the term. Now it is easy to say: let those bigger schools hand over a teacher to us, but let us not forget that these schools have more students, too. But we may note with thankfulness that the communion of saints is broader than the local church. For *Smithville* it means that another (married) teacher was asked to come back to school. We express our gratitude to her also. The principal of *Smithville* spoke to the *Chatham* membership on "Reformed Education, a privilege and a mandate also today." *Chatham* is also working on plans to add new classrooms. Until now only the blueprints were discussed, according to their Newsletter. Hopefully they will need more classrooms, due to a larger number of students and the addition of grade 9. We should not underestimate the problems for some parents to send their children to *Hamilton* (*Guido de Bres* Highschool) from a far distance. The ideal thing is to establish grades 9 and 10 locally. From there on, use can then be made of *Guido de Bres*. About \$7,500 was donated for the purchase of a new school bus, which includes a gift from the Young People's Society, as well as a gift from a concerned friend in the USA! Indeed, we may count our blessings!

PRAYER TRANSCENDS ALL DISTANCE

Carman has been working and

NEWS MEDLEY — Continued.

laws. And at one time or another a society will have made the brave decision that children will be refused if their parents are so many months in arrears. But has such a decision been executed even once in all these years by any society? I do not think so. And yet I think that it should be done (I am speaking in general, not specifically about *Smithville*; remember that, please!) if parents have not paid their membership and tuition fees for the period specified in the bylaws. I know the arguments that are brought to the fore in such cases. More than once I attended a meeting where the question was discussed and I know all about it. The children, it is said, will be the victims, not the parents. That is true, but the question is whose fault that is then. It will not be the fault of the society but of those parents themselves. And when they really treasure Reformed instruction so highly that they wish their children to receive it (and they should!) then they should also help to the best of their ability and to the limit of their power. Then they should be faithful in meeting the obligations which they have taken upon themselves when becoming a member of the society

and sending their children to the school of the society. Usually, the bylaws give the board the right to make arrangements when parents are really unable to pay the full amount. But the society should not become a substitute diaconate by charging the other members to pay more because part of the membership is unable to pay the full amount. However, you know all the arguments pro and con.

Rests to mention that the Rev. M.C. Werkman was able to resume his work, for which we are grateful. You see the result in this issue, too, where he resumes his *School Crossing*.

London sold their parsonage which served as such for quite a few years. As for pulpit supply, they will try to get that for two Sundays per month. It will not be easy, but if you don't try you'll never get anything.

Herewith we have come at the end of our medley. By the time it reaches the readers, the month of January has almost come to an end. Time goes fast. May the days be shortened more and more.

Yours, vO

praying to soon receive Mr. Nap, a teacher from The Netherlands. The Lord sometimes keeps His people in suspense. That is good for us. We must always learn to depend completely on our heavenly Father, Who supplies us with all things necessary. Now they have received word that he has obtained his visum. They hope to see him arriving around the beginning of February. That means the school year has passed halfway. So you see, several schools are struggling with a shortage of teachers. Carman, as well as most or all other School Societies, is paying good attention to the letter from the League of Canadian Reformed School Societies with a proposal to set up a badly needed *Teacher's College* by September 1977. A lot of work is needed yet before that date, but the societies will be kept informed. This is a project which every member and every school society should support. For we cannot have Reformed schools without Reformed teachers! Another thing which many people may not be aware of is the fact that some parents do not dare to send their children to the secular institutions for training because of the secular and humanistic influences which have corrupted many students in our churches. On account of this, some have denied the faith and left the church. A fact is that also several high school students themselves do not want to go to such institutions. Those who do attend are having bigger problems than they anticipated. May the Lord bless this undertaking for the sake of His Church in this country. If 1,300 families pay \$1.00 per week, we can go ahead. Let's keep this in mind till we hear more news!

DO WE ALLOW "OUTSIDE" STUDENTS?

The *William of Orange School* in Surrey, B.C. had a request from people outside our churches to send their children to our school. Since each request is considered on an individual basis, they refused this particular request, after giving it considerable attention. Previously, however, other requests were received with the result that six other families are sending their children to our school there. I think it is correct to follow such a procedure on an individual basis. It depends a lot on the reasons and motives the parents have for wishing to send their children to our schools. Such parents must be made well aware of the fact that their children will receive the

same Reformed instruction as the rest of the class. In some cases the Lord has blessed this in such a way that parents themselves joined the Church later on!

TEACHERS ARE EXAMPLES!

"As teachers we are examples to the children. Realizing this it is very important not to be bad examples. In everything in life we must reflect our faith in God. If the teacher suffers from the 'Monday morning blues,' and comes into the class 'growling' his 'good morning,' he is by no means reflecting his faith in Christ. If a teacher does not show in his mode of dressing that he cannot conform to the world of unbelief, he is not setting the example of a Christian, and therefore does not have to count on it that his main objective will be met. If our minds are transformed in the true sense, it must show in every part of our lives" (quotation from *The Orange Courier*).

Only one question: How can we have "Monday morning blues" after the proclamation of God's Word on the Lord's Day?

NORTHERN LIGHTS ARE BRIGHTENING!

Anyone who has never seen the bright Northern Lights should spend a nice, cold, crisp winter evening in Northern Alberta. Sometimes the lights are moving with great speed across the sky in several different colours! But then to see it you have to be in Edmonton or Neerlandia. Figuratively speaking, the northern lights are even brightening more these days if you read the joy and the enthusiasm in their School Bulletins.

In *Edmonton*, the excavation is finished, the footings have been poured, and by now the foundations should be in place. The congregation can see the proposed building on display in the church basement. It will be a frame building because it is cheaper to build, it is easier to save costs by using free labor, and it is warmer, and therefore the heating bill will offset the extra fire insurance premiums. During the long winter in Edmonton, a heating bill means something! Just a year ago, January 30th, the decision was made to start a day school in 1977. The number of members immediately *doubled*. Membership fees were *increased* to a level *approaching* the amount they expect to pay for the rest of their lives! Nice to read they intend to stay members for the rest of their

life and also pay! Nineteen hundred seventy-six has been the first year in a very long time that there were hardly any delinquent members. Dues came in as pledged and promised. A building fund was organized at a membership meeting and before the evening was over \$9,500.00 was already donated, some of it even by non-members. Because the Lord gave unusually mild weather, construction could start even late in the year. No wonder after reading all this, that the School Bulletin ends with "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow."

Even though there are some dark clouds on the horizon of *Neerlandia*, the northern lights are still brightening there, too. After all, they are even farther north than Edmonton. What are the dark clouds? Well, the Alberta Government is so deeply in love with its prime agricultural land, that beautiful black loam, that it refused permission for severance of the school area. This decision was appealed on November 29th. They were told that an answer would be forthcoming in about twenty working days.

Another cloud that seemed rather dark was the fact that contributions did not come in as expected. Last year they gathered about \$14,000 and they were aiming for about \$25,000 in 1976. By December \$20,000 was in and they may reach their goal yet! On top of this, they had a bazaar which netted them over \$3,000.00! For a congregation of 100 members this means about \$30 per person. Well, every dark cloud is said to have a silver lining! Rather, the Lord encourages us in adversity. They had expected to pay several thousands of dollars for approval of the blueprints, etc., but the plans were returned *stamped* and *approved*, and the cost . . . nil. Joy and thankfulness abounds in *Neerlandia's* Newsletter, too. And no wonder!

The Lord willing, we will see how bright the lights are burning in other congregations.

M. WERKMAN

OUR COVER

An RCMP snowmobile patrol crosses Pond Inlet, Baffin Island, some 400 miles north of the Arctic Circle where temperatures drop to 70 degrees below zero.

Stewardship ²

PUBLICATIONS

In the Bulletin of the Church at Winnipeg, "Pro Congregatione," the Rev. S. de Bruin wrote the following article under the title, "A Necessary Question":

Some time ago we have all read an article in the *Clarion* entitled "The Case of the Television." Since then we have read some objections to this article as well as Rev. Stam's reactions. In his Inventory of *Clarion*, November 13, 1976, page 403, Rev. Stam has summarized the arguments of those who opposed his article and he has added the warning (or conclusion): "These are IMPORTANT arguments. And I hope you will ponder them."

It is with much appreciation that I have read the original article as well as the related objections and reactions. However, I was left with a rather dissatisfied feeling toward the whole article. Rev. Stam has clearly stated the facts as they are today. "Many television programs do constitute a threat to the Reformed life within our families," having said this he warns us about "the corrupting influence which these programs so easily and so quickly have in our lives." These are indeed facts.

However, having read the article I am left with one important question, even so important that I would refer to it as a "necessary question." This question is: If all this is as true as you say it is, how then can you speak of exercising stewardship over a television set? Should we not rather speak in this relation, of "stewardship" over our financial resources, families or life? Can we really speak of christian stewardship by bringing something into our families which we know is detrimental to its spiritual welfare? This question also applies to anything else which we may be tempted to bring into our homes. I dare say that by bringing anything into our homes of which we are not completely sure that it will serve the purpose of glorifying God, we sin against God, cf. I Corinthians 10:31. Let us also read Romans 14:23. Can we then really say with a clear conscience that we have brought a television into our homes as an act of faith? or as an attempt to bring us and our children closer to Christ? Can we honestly say that we have received our television set as a gift of God? and that for that reason we thank and praise Him for it every day? Can we really say that our decision to purchase a television has been made by calling upon the name of the Lord and by thanking Him for having made this decision? (cf. Colossians 3:16). Can we honestly say that this is an action of "hating even the garment polluted by the flesh?" (Jude 23).

Does such an action really constitute a standing in a strong faith and therefore is a vital part of our constant fleeing from the idolatries of this world as commanded by our Lord? (cf. I Corinthians 10:12 - 14). And finally, can this bringing of the world into our homes be considered a truly free act of God-fearing christians or is it a pretense to use our God-given freedom as a covering for evil? (cf. Philippians 2:12; I Peter 2:16).

Mind you, I am only asking some questions due to having pondered the important arguments raised by those who have voiced objections to "The Case of the Television."

I can only come to the conclusion, having prayerfully considered all these related questions, that having a television in our homes is not a matter of stewardship, but a matter of not having understood our stewardship, to start with. It is a strange and contradictory phenomenon which we see among many of our church members today. We are willing to do everything possible to provide a truly Reformed education for our children by establishing christian day-schools. We wish to educate them "in the aforesaid doctrine . . . to the utmost of (y)our power," as we have promised. For that reason we take them from the Public school in order to protect them from the evil designs of the Satan. It is our desire to have them educated in a christian environment, and rightly so. However, many of these covenant children come home from school into an environment where an attempt is made to bring the world right back into their lives via television. This often happens under the mistaken notion that some programs are neutral. But let us not be deceived, there is nothing in life which is neutral. All things are either for Christ or anti-Christ. All of life is a matter of thesis or anti-thesis.

If we as parents do not wake up to this fact our struggle for truly christian education will be completely in vain. The endeavours of the Satan to draw us and our children from Christ must not only be fought in Christian schools, but also in the Christian homes. Permit me to end this article by simply quoting God's Word.

"Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light. Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:14-16).

Indeed, let us all wake up and recognize our dead works, so that we may repent of our sin by recognizing again that we ourselves are often the enemies of the Church by falling for the temptations of the world and then by rationalizing just as long until that which is evil becomes good in our own

The Case of the Television

eyes and in the eyes of our children.

Permit me a few remarks. I have the impression that Rev. de Bruin dangerously over-simplifies things when he puts it this way, "Can we really speak of Christian stewardship by bringing something into our families which we know is *detrimental* to its spiritual welfare?" Television is not "a priori" detrimental, even if many programs must be avoided. If the television is correctly managed (like all other things we have) it need not be detrimental at all, but could even be useful and we could partake with thanksgiving. And I wasn't rationalizing at all, to condone that which is evil, but defending both our Christian liberty and our Christian responsibility. Quoting many texts indiscriminately, isn't a sign of correct orthodoxy, for the Scriptures must be applied with discretion.

LISTENING TO OTHERS

We have now been listening to one another for some time (have we?), and perhaps it is good now to present a view of someone not within our "circles." In *De Reformatie* of November 20, 1976, a series of articles was started, written by the Rev. Geoffry Thomas of Aberystwyth in Wales, originally published in "*Reformation Today*" (March-June, 1975). The *Reformatie* writes as a heading, "It is good to listen to what a foreign Christian has to say about television."

Rev. Thomas writes:

Concerning the possession of a television.

A television set is like a radio, a tape-recorder, or even a book, it is a means of communication. In itself there's no evil in such a set. Certain churches depend on closed-circuit television systems to offer place to the multitudes who come to attend services. Yet there is something which distinguishes television from the other media, for it is a means of entertainment. No one has television only for the "Open University" and the symphonic concerts. Most

Christians, who have a television set, watch documentaries about nature, antiquities, popular science, world-news, politics, children's programs and programs for which there is little general interest, like those in the Welsh language! These programs are watched for relaxation, just as one watches sports and light entertainment programs.

Christians do not have television only for the "news" and much of what is said to be "news" is shown largely because of its entertainment value. We must face the revolution in many Christian families. Can we justify a medium in our families which largely is destined towards entertainment? What dangers are connected to this? How can Christians protect the life of their families?

A Christian who wishes to justify the possession of a television set, must start with the fact that we are created after the image of God and that it was a pattern of His creating to work and then to rest from His work. This is also the structure of our existence; Christians must relax, ministers too. There is a story about an old Christian soldier who was watching a falcon-hunt and was admiring the plumage and the expertise of the birds when they soared and then dived on their prey. Along came an ambitious young Christian, quite outraged because this old, believing man was wasting away his time in such an empty manner. "Come on, father," he called, "Don't you see that the whole world is going to ruin and needs the Gospel?" The old man smiled, and said, "If the bow is never relaxed, it soon loses its flexibility." To relax and to unwind to the glory of God is as important as working to His honour. The Lord does not want us to burn *up* but burn *on*.

Therefore, the rules which concern the possession or non-possession of a television set, are the same fundamental directives which include all indifferent matters (the "adiaphora") under which are also meant what God has neither forbidden or commanded. If someone owns a T.V. set, that is no sin. If someone does not own such a set, that is no sin either. Nevertheless, there are the well-known restrictions which prevent Christian freedom from becoming Christian licence. "But I will not be enslaved by anything," says Paul (I Corinthians 6:12). If someone doesn't keep his watching under control; if he directs his attention to certain weaknesses of the flesh and of the spirit, so that he watches an excessive amount of hours, then he is enslaved. "Not all things are helpful," Paul adds; not everything is profitable or usable for a Christian. He must ask questions like: Does it offer me something? What will it offer my family? How will it influence the mutual relationships in the family? It is clear that such questions will be answered differently. One can imagine what a blessing television is for an elderly lady who is bound to her home because of an incurable disease.

Whatever conclusions are made, no judgment may be passed, because a Chris-

tian is free. In my own congregation, half of the elders and one-third of the deacons do not have a television set, but this has never been a bone of contention between us. I know that some are of the opinion that Christians may not have a T.V. under any circumstances.

So far, for the time being, Rev. Thomas. In my final article on this topic, I hope to pass on some concrete "pointers" which Rev. Thomas gives in connection with the usage of television. With that article, I hope to close off my part in this discussion. Any further reactions should now be sent to the Editor, and will be printed as such.*

Cl. STAM

FURTHER READING:

1. "The Big Eye," article in the *Standard Bearer*, September 1, 1975.
2. "Is the *Best T.V. No T.V.?*" - article in *Moody Monthly*, January 1975.
3. "The Day We Gave Up on Walter," *The Church Herald*, October 15, 1976.
4. "Television, *Friend or Foe?*" - Henry Weaver (Focal Pamphlets, No. 8).
5. "Television's Child," Norman S. Morris (The impact of television on today's children, and what parents can do about it.)

C.I.S.

* However, these letters should be brief and to the point, without needlessly repeating that which has already been dealt with in Rev. Cl. Stam's treatment of the question. Ed.

Press Release

of Classis Ontario South of December 8, 1976.

Article 1 — Opening. On behalf of the convening church of Lincoln, Br. H. DeVries calls the meeting to order. After Psalm 23 has been sung he leads in prayer and reads Ephesians 1. He mentions that soon the church at Grand Rapids will become vacant, since the Rev. G. VanRongen has accepted the call of the church at Steenwijk, The Netherlands; that the church at Chatham received as its minister the Rev. J. Geertsema; that the church at Hamilton has again its own minister in the Rev. W. Huizinga, who, however, left the churches at London and Watford vacant; that the church at London was disappointed when the Rev. J. Visscher of Coaldale declined its call; and that the Rev. M.C. Werkman was unable to do his work for health reasons. He expresses the wish that the LORD may provide in the vacancies and restore health to the minister of Lincoln's congregation.

Article 2 — Credentials. The delegates of the church at London examine the credentials and find them in good order, according to their report. The delegates of the church at Grand Rapids are not present due to the weather conditions in connection with the distance. A letter of this church and of its minister is at the table, the former with an instruction. There are two other instructions, namely, from the churches at London and at Watford.

Article 3 — Constitution. Classis is constituted. The Rev. P. Kingma is the chairman; the Rev. W. Huizinga is the clerk; and the Rev. J. Geertsema is the assessor.

Article 4 — Adoption of the Agenda. After a few matters have been added, the Agenda is adopted.

Article 5 — Signing of the Subscription Form. The chairman reads the subscription Form. The Rev. J. Geertsema signs it. The chairman adds some remarks about the importance of this Form and subscription to it.

Article 6 — Instructions. The churches

of Watford, London, and Grand Rapids request Classis to grant them pulpit supply twice per month. The church at Grand Rapids also requests the Classis to grant an honourable dismissal to its minister in connection with the call accepted, and to appoint the Rev. J. Geertsema as its counselor during the vacancy.

The honourable dismissal is granted, since proof has been submitted of the call and of its acceptance, as well as of the honourable dismissal given to the Rev. G. VanRongen by the consistory of the church at Grand Rapids. A letter of farewell of the Rev. VanRongen is read. The chairman expresses the regret of Classis that Grand Rapids' minister will leave his church and this classical resort, since his work was so well appreciated and highly valued. He also expresses the wish that the American sister church may soon receive another faithful pastor and teacher.

Article 7 — Reports. There is first a report from the classical Treasurer with financial statements and proposals. Thankful for the work done, Classis receives the report and adopts the proposals that "the Accounts Receivable should be collected before the March 1977 Classis"; and that "the due date for the 1977 Assessment of \$ -.75 per Communicant Member be set at June 1, 1977." There is further a report of the Classis Contracta, held on October 26, 1976 for the approbation of the call of the Rev. J. Geertsema to the church at Chatham.

Article 8 — Appointments. The schedule for the pulpit supply is adopted as follows: January: 23 to Grand Rapids, Rev. J. Geertsema; 16 to London, Rev. W. Huizinga; 30 to Watford, Rev. P. Kingma. February: 13 to Grand Rapids, Rev. P. Kingma; 13 to London, Rev. J. Geertsema; 27 to Watford, Rev. W. Huizinga. March: 6 to Grand Rapids, Rev. W. Huizinga; 13 to London, Rev. P. Kingma; 27 to Watford, Rev. J. Geertsema. Further, the following

Continued on page 44.

A Letter about Politics and Our Task

OUR CITIZENSHIP ON EARTH

We have carefully read "Demonstration or Representation" by "Cid," Volume 25, No. 24, November 27, 1976. We also did read "Letter to Cid" from our Editor, W.W.J. Van Oene, Year End issue, 1976. Rev. Van Oene appears to disagree with "Cid." May we be so humble as to disagree with both?? This indeed was our first inclination.

When one, however, reads carefully, then one must conclude that Cid (who is well able to defend himself) did not voice his primary concern of being represented by a Reformed M.P. in the provincial or Federal capital. His prime concern was to awaken in us once more a desire for true Reformed politics. The need for that is apparent and is shown very much in "Letter to Cid."

Our opinion is that if that will eventually lead us to Ottawa, fine. If that will never bring us in Ottawa, then still there remains the duty to give our membership a sound Reformed political foundation.

An article for example by Rev. Van Oene in *Clarion*, Volume 24, No. 21, October 18, 1975, "Who Casts Stones?" was very timely. Also Cid, when he warns for any form of Demonstration. We believe that many of us, especially younger ones, have gotten accustomed to all kinds of opposition and have become so used to it that we accept it as part of governing a country.

We shall not go into detail in "attacking" "Letter to Cid" since in the end we believe we still do agree. We do, however, fear that it does smell somewhat of Pragmatism. We are faced with a constitutional system here which makes it quite well impossible to aim for Reformed representation in Ottawa; so why not condemn Representative Government?

To compare acquiring our Citizenship with someone's refusal to vote for non-Reformed candidates is not fair. To accuse one who only wants to be represented by Reformed politicians of going an anabaptist line is also not quite correct. Why not spend an article on Anabaptism only. Many of our younger ones do not even know what such a loaded sentence entails.

To show the need for a Political awareness, just one question. One of

our sons comes to us and tells us in all sincerity that he wants to serve the country and wants to join the armed forces. Now, for once, be pragmatic and look at the foreign policies endeavoured by our Government. Would you willingly let your son go in the armed forces, and are you sure that he serves the country as well as the Lord???

Do not forget, we are born Patriots who were willing to give our life for the country. In 1940 as well as in the 16th century. Just listen to the Valerius songs. Personally we feel frustrated with our system of proportional representation. Where from every district of Canada a delegate is elected for Ottawa. I believe they all act too much towards presenting the local favours, rather than the good of the country as a whole. To make it clear, much more about this and other points should be written. Then, however, *Clarion* would never accept this letter. We sincerely hope someone will pick up the ball and deliberate on it in a series of articles. We then get the first of what Cid is asking for: Political awareness.

Let us start first with what the Bible says, and on the basis of that, what we confess: Romans 13; I Peter 2:13-16; Article 36, Belgic Confession; Article 28, Church Order. We do not have to write it here. The Church Order can be found in the Acts of Synod Orangeville 1968, Pages 118-127. Many more places can be found in the Bible. It is striking that what we read is primarily an exhortation to "obey the Government since they are *ordained by the Lord.*" Not some, but all of them. We know that this does not mean that we should not try to be involved (by being elected ourselves). Only, Article 28, Church Order, speaks of a Christian government, and Article 36, Belgic Confession, says what the duties of the (any) Government are towards the Church.

For some the word politics has at times a dirty taste, and it did not even bypass us when we had at times a Government which (because of its conviction) we wholeheartedly could support. For the older ones we only have to mention (from The Netherlands, of course): selling our opposition against women's voting rights for the support of our schools by the Gov-

ernment for which we had fought for over 40 years (1920). I think one has only to mention the word "Aanpassen 1934" and many an older member will still shake his (her) head.

Prime Minister H. Colijn (from our Reformed Political party) stated that the depression was a natural economical development with which we should try to live. We had to adapt ourselves.

Regardless of that: our first and primary aim should be to again instill in all of our members the desire to follow the commandment of obedience to any kind of Government (not necessarily a democratic one). Obedience does not mean automatic agreement. This obedience applies first towards the Parents, then the Church, towards the school and its teachers, towards the local, provincial, and federal government, as long as this authority does not conflict with the commandments of the Lord. Respect for authority is lacking in the world of today, and we are afraid in many instances also amongst our people. A Minister said once: "When it is raining in the World, then it drips in the Church." I believe that is what Cid warns us for and also Rev. Van Oene in his article about Spain, mentioned before (Volume 24, No. 21, October 18, 1975, *Clarion*).

Let us now mention a couple of topics for discussion.

1. *Pacifism*

As mentioned before, we are (or were) born Patriots. It was simple to say a country has to have an army to defend its border. This we believed was a God-given duty. However, Political life has become complicated. Twice the U.S.A. fought the war outside its borders to defend the freedom of the Western World: the first and second World Wars. We all know that also Canada participated in those wars. We accepted them as our Liberators and saw them clearly as God-send. However, our Southern neighbours defended — as we thought — the Western world once more. This time against the Communists in Vietnam. We know it was an undeclared war and a lot of political bungling. We have some grave doubts whether the "Liberators" were as enthusiastically accepted there as in Western Europe. We know the policy of appeasement of Canada (China and Cuba, to mention two) is nothing to brag about, but if Canada had joined forces with the U.S.A. and we had had conscription,

what would we have done with our sons??? This is a subject by itself.

2. Separation

Because of proportional representation, the separate movement in Quebec came to power. The Popular vote showed not nearly the same picture, though there was a gain. This is proportional government for you.

Our neighbours whom we may not like (especially since Watergate and its aftermath) are so very close to us. They have the experience also in this respect. That country was established with a constitution (1776) which was as revolutionary as the Principles of Voltaire in France at that time. This constitution, however, was not too clear in every respect. Local State power over against the Federal power. They fought each other about it 100 years later. And those from the North saw it as their God-given duty. Do not kid yourself about its being a war against the slavery.

Our confederation is supposed to be a unity between Provinces. Does any province have the right to simply break this unity?? Quebec is not an afterthought. It was a main partner of confederation. Shall we now propagate a unity of the nation above the desires of a local province? Defend it and, if need be, go to war about it with that province?? Fantasy???? O, no!!!

3. Foreign Politics

Rhodesia and South Africa, as examples only. If one of ours would be in Ottawa, he should have a clear picture about that, too. We may not condone all policies of South Africa. I'm not even going into it. Just as a matter of consideration. Do we know at the time when Jan Van Riebeeck landed there South Africa had no population at all? The Blacks just started coming in from the North. Anyone who today claims (and they can be found amongst our people also) that that country belongs to the blacks should sharpen up on history.

How would — to mention something else — "our representative in Ottawa" deal with the Iron Curtain???

4. Israel

Our sympathy has always gone out to this country. We believe that Hitler has much to do with it. We also believe that, though the Theocratic reasons for the existence of Israel were fulfilled on the cross, until the end of days, he who touches Israel, touches the Lord's people, even today.

However, we who believes that the history has also a message for us cannot get away from the fact that, from the time Juda was destroyed (70 A.D.) until the beginning of this century, the Arabs (also decendants of Abraham) were living there. A very small remnant of Israelites remained there throughout those centuries. If we would maintain the existence of Israel as it is today (I would hope we could do so) then our Reformed Policy would have to be conclusive. The first step would be: *at no time giving in to blackmail*. Even Canada would very soon be short of energy and we would be walking to work and church.

We could go on and on. And we could not give the answers. Not the writer anyway. We, however, would suggest that long before we aim for power (Reformed representation in Ottawa), we should first establish Reformed Policies. Give our young (and old) guidance, so that, when we speak with those who are "outside," we may give a clear Reformed sound. It is a long, long way to Ottawa.

J. GELDERMAN

P.S.

We are not asking for clear-cut answers to any kind of "Political Problems," *but silence is worse*. How many of us do not remember the political debates which we had amongst ourselves before the war? Nowadays if one wants to debate, they call it arguing. *Why???* A *political awakening* cannot come unless we are willing to face the problems at hand. This can only be done by fair discussions. We should be willing to listen to others as well. Those who are "politically inclined" should again come to the foreground and in public. For example, in *Clarion*. An Editor can exhort them to stay within certain boundaries if it becomes a dialogue. However, we should not be afraid to face it. *Silence is worse*. We ourselves are in the possession of all C.R.M.'s since 1958 (February 15, Volume 6, 37, to be exact). In 1958 we had Canadian Affairs by A.J.Y. and Foreign Affairs by L.v.Z. We know that some problems arose eventually about the style of "the Dialogue." The very first magazine in our possession has the second one of a series of articles by Rev. Van Dooren, with the title: "De wortels van het politieke leven in Canada" ("The roots of the Political system in Canada"). We sincerely hope that the article of Cid and the "Letter to Cid" will once

more make us realize that we cannot remain silent any longer. J.G.

POSTSCRIPT

That we publish this letter is by way of exception. It is far too long to be printed as a "Letter-to-the-Editor." If we receive a letter of this length again, we'll just return it with the request to reduce it to at least one-fourth of its size. Even with 24-page issues we cannot afford to print letters this size. And what we do to the one, we should also do to the other.

When you ask why we, then, do publish it, the reasons follow here.

In the first place, it demonstrates most clearly the need for political instruction and as such it may awaken some talents among us. I do not mean that anyone who feels like emptying his mind on the topics touched upon in this letter should climb behind the typewriter and start banging away. What we need is clear instruction from people who are knowledgeable in this field.

I can only say what my opinion is about certain topics and I shall do so for as long as no one has offered himself, or has been pointed out to us, who can speak or write about it in such a manner that our readers receive expert guidance. And that's what we all need.

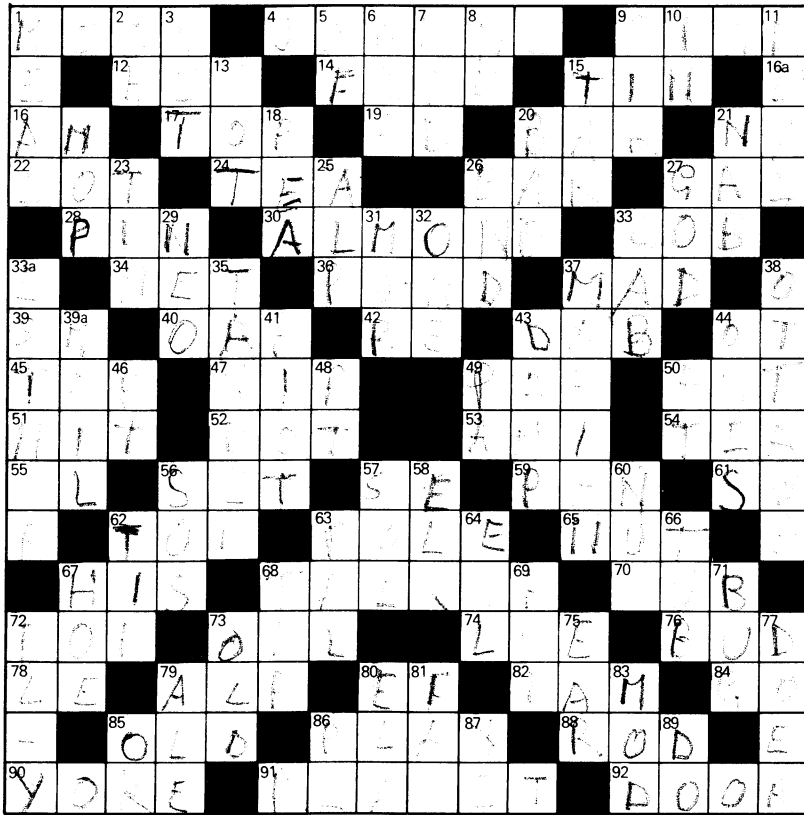
The above letter touches upon so many different topics that it contains material for several articles. It confuses so many issues and points that we'll have to react more amply to it. There are also quite a few misunderstandings which I'll try to clear up. And once again it appears that reading is an extremely difficult thing and that there are many who read too fast so that they simply don't see certain things; others read things into letters and articles, things which cannot be found in there at all. It is a tiring business when one has to restate what one said, or to rewrite what one wrote, for the simple reason that his words were twisted or misquoted. (Often-times, I agree, without malicious intent!)

Just to mention a few points.

1. I did not state at all that "we are faced with a constitutional system here which makes it quite well impossible to aim for Reformed representation in Ottawa; so why not condemn Representative Government." On the contrary, I argued that the present sys-

Continued on page 46.

Puzzle No. 16



ACROSS

1. Planet
4. Girl's name
9. Discovery
12. Chicken
14. Ice mass
15. Metal
16. In the morning
17. Peak
19. In the year of the Lord
20. Iron rod
21. Not applicable
22. Biblical man
24. Beverage
26. Cob
27. Girl (slang)
28. Dowel
30. Type of nut
33. Ear
34. Fishing equipment
36. Still body of water
37. Angry
39. Small (abbrev.)
40. Boat equipment
42. Hebrew 17th letter of alphabet
43. Flatfish
44. Old Testament
45. Faucet
47. A sip
49. Term in golf
50. Insect
51. Term in baseball
52. Point

53. Friend (French)
54. Beverage
55. Elevated railroad
56. Term in tennis
57. Wind direction
59. Cooking need
61. See 57 across
62. Boy's name
63. Rod
65. Coal, size of . . .
67. Pronoun possessive
68. Who talks
70. Gist or point
72. Explosive sound
73. Liquid fuel
74. Haven
76. Lad
78. The (French)
79. Mountain peak
80. The 6th letter
82. Obstruction
84. Leave
85. Aged
86. Idea
88. Pole
90. Link
91. Celestial body
92. Entrance

DOWN

1. Flour
2. Exclamation
3. See 34 across
5. Belonging to

6. According to
7. Sign of agreement
8. See 61 across
9. Type of tree
10. Not out
11. Agreement
13. Negative
15. Oil product
- 16a. Swab
18. Edible seed
20. No good
21. Capture
23. Metal
25. Mountain peak
26. Goal
27. Jehovah
29. New
31. See 16a down
32. Number
33. Taxi
- 33a. Biblical woman
35. Bicycle built for two
37. Girl's name
38. Canadian city
- 39a. Postal material
41. Disturbance
43. Wet
44. Belonging to one
46. Symbol for platinum
48. See 46 down
49. Per annum
50. By, per, beside
56. Distress signal
57. Musical note

58. Wapiti
60. Pigeon
62. Tilt
63. Friend
64. Snakelike fish
66. Part of bathroom
67. Garden tool
68. See 62 down
69. Colour
71. Insect, pest
72. A game
73. Aged
75. See 26 across
77. Man of action
79. Beverage
80. High on scale
81. Spread out
83. Modern
85. Stamp of approval
86. Place (abbrev.)
87. See 61 across
89. Musical note

G. DE BOER

PRESS RELEASE — Continued.

counsellors are appointed: for the church at Grand Rapids, the Rev. J. Geertsema; and for the church at Watford, the Rev. P. Kingma, in the place of the Rev. M.C. Werkman who requested to be relieved. Then Classis appoints the Rev. J. Geertsema to take the place of the Rev. G. Van Rongen with respect to the classical examinations. And the Church-Visitors are appointed as follows: for Chatham - Revs. P. Kingma and W. Huizinga; for Grand Rapids - Revs. P. Kingma and M.C. Werkman; for Hamilton - Revs. M.C. Werkman and J. Geertsema; for Lincoln - Revs. P. Kingma and W. Huizinga; for London - Revs. P. Kingma and J. Geertsema; for Smithville - Revs. M.C. Werkman and W. Huizinga; for Watford - Revs. J. Geertsema and W. Huizinga.

Article 9 — Question Period ad Article 41 Church Order. None of the churches brings up anything that has to be dealt with.

Article 10 — Personal Question Period. Upon request the decisions are made that three copies of the Provisional Agenda will be sent to the churches; and that extra copies of the Classical Regulations and of the Guidelines for Church Visitation will be available for the churches at the next classical meeting.

Article 11 — The Next Classis. The church at London will be the convening church for the next Classis which will be held, the Lord willing, at London on March 9, 1977 and will start at 10 o'clock a.m. The proposed moderamen is: chairman: Rev. J. Geertsema; clerk: Rev. P. Kingma, assessor: Rev. W. Huizinga.

Article 12 — Adoption of the Acts. The Acts are read and adopted.

Article 13 — Press Release. The Press Release is read and approved.

Article 14 — Censure ad Article 43 Church Order. Censure does not have to be exercised.

Article 15 — Closing. After the sisters have been told how much their care is appreciated, and Psalm 150:1 and 3 was sung, the chairman adjourns the meeting with thanksgiving and prayer.

For the Classis,
J. GEERTSEMA, Assessor h.t.

**MANY PAID THEIR
SUBSCRIPTIONS ALREADY.
DID YOU?**

our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

Just as I promised you I just finished counting heads. Well, maybe not heads, but NAMES anyway! And what do you think? Would you like to guess how many Busy Beavers we have in our Club?

Would you believe there are 366 Busy Beavers enrolled in our register?

All across Canada 366 Busy Beavers read *Our Little Magazine*, do the quizzes, contribute to the Birthday Fund, write poems and stories, and join in our Busy Beaver activities!

It makes me feel very proud to think I have so many nieces and nephews!

And I'm looking forward to a whole new year of getting your letters and reading your stories and sharing your poems and quizzes.

So if you have a poem you enjoyed or have a quiz to share, or you want to tell me about your holidays or birthdays, I'd love to hear from you! Or if you want to join our Club!

You know my address is: Aunt Betty, Box 54, Fergus, Ontario N1M 2W7.

Busy Beaver *Marlissa Lindhout* has a poem for us. Thank you for sharing, Marlissa.

Elves

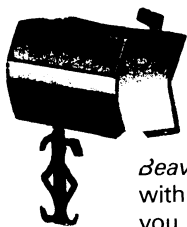
We like to pretend there are elves.

They make toys by themselves.

Oh! Oh! It's not true.

But I like to pretend things, don't you?

Elves! Elves! They're not true.



From the Mailbox

First of all a big "thank you" to *all the Busy Beavers* who sent me such pretty Christmas cards with good wishes. That was very thoughtful of you.

And now welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Bruce Hartman*. We are happy to have you join us. And we hope you will really enjoy being a Busy Beaver and joining in all our activities. Write again soon, Bruce.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Kathy De Boer*. I see you're already a real Busy Beaver. You did very well on your quizzes. Keep up the good work, Kathy! And thank you very much for your interesting puzzle, too.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Helen and Julia Vanderpo!* Be sure to join in all our Busy Beaver activities. Bye for now. Write again soon.

Thank you very much for your nice, chatty letter, *Greta Bosscher*. I'm glad you've been having such a good time. How did your Christmas concert go?

Hello *Julius Wierenga*. It was nice to hear from you

again. Thank you for the quiz. I'm sure the Busy Beavers will enjoy unscrambling it!

Thank you for the story, *Sylvia Jans*. But we'll have to save it now till next year, right? Did you have lots of snow to play in, Sylvia? Did you enjoy your holidays?

Hello, *Adele Hulzebosch*. It was nice to hear from you again. And I really enjoyed the poem you sent! Bye for now, Adele. Write again soon.

But DID you enjoy your prize, *Charles Slaa*? Thank you for writing. I always enjoy hearing from you Busy Beavers.

Are you having lots of fun at school with your snow forts, *Nancy Van Raalte*? And are you doing lots of skating on your creek? Bye for now, Nancy. Write again soon!

Thank you for a big fat letter, *Alison Helder*. How did you do? Did your mother manage to escape the flu? Thanks for the quiz, Alison. That should get the Busy Beavers thinking!

Yes, I do like your poem, *Marlissa Lindhout*. And I think all the Busy Beavers will enjoy it! Thank you for sharing it with us. Will you write another for us sometime?

And now it's time to wish all the Busy Beavers celebrating February birthdays a very happy day, together with their families and friends, and also many happy returns of the day!

May the Lord Who watched over us all the last year, guide and keep you also in the year ahead.

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

QUIZ TIME

First of all let's try Busy Beaver *Kathy De Boer's* quiz. Kathy writes:

"I have a quiz here for the Busy Beavers. It is called *Tools of the Bible*. These tools were used by people who lived in Bible days. All the vowels have been removed. Can you fill in the missing letters?"

The answers can be found in the following texts: Psalm 74:6; Matthew 11:29; Isaiah 28:27; 1 Kings 7:9; 1 Samuel 17:40; Numbers 18:27; Psalm 74:6; Isaiah 22:25; Judges 3:31; Isaiah 24; Jeremiah 18:3; 1 Kings 19:19."

- P _ TT _ RS WH _ _ L
- H _ MM _ R
- S _ W
- N _ L
- PL _ W
- W _ N _ PR _ SS
- PR _ N _ NG H _ _ K
- _ X _ S
- Y _ K _
- SL _ NG
- THR _ SH _ NG _ NSTR _ M _ NT
- G _ _ D

Busy Beaver *Alison Helder* has a quiz for you called:

Finish the Sentences

I Samuel 1:1-14

- verse 1 There was a certain man of _____ of the hill country of _____ whose name was _____
- verse 2 He had two wives; the name of one was _____ and the name of the other _____
- verse 3 Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the _____ of hosts at _____, where the two sons of _____ and _____, were priests of the _____
- verse 9 After they had eaten and drunk in _____, _____ rose. Now _____ the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the _____.
- verse 12 As she continued praying before the _____, _____ observed her mouth.
- verse 14 And _____ said to her, "How long will you be drunken? Put away your wine from you." (Answers next time)

Here are the answers to last time's word scramble.

- 1. Rebekah; 2. Eleazar; 3. Vashti; 4. Esther; 5. Lazarus; 6.

Abraham; 7. Timothy; 8. Ishmael; 9. Obadiah; 10. Nebuchadnezzar. Name of Bible book: Revelation.

Nature in the Bible

- 1. lily; 2. sparrow; 3. earthquake; 4. raven; 5. foxes and birds, 6. sheep and goats; 7. ant; 8. the sky; 9. camel; 10. locust; 11. cattle; 12. whirlwind; 13. flood; 14. lightning.

How did you do? Did you get them all right?

* * * * *

Before I say good bye, I want to ask you 3 things, Busy Beavers.

Did you remember the little sick boy we mentioned in our Christmas issue?

Have you sent in your entries for our Birthday Surprise (last November issue) and/or our Christmas Contest?

And now the last thing! Some of our readers will have outgrown our Busy Beaver Club. If YOU have, will you please drop me a line and let me know, so that I won't include you in our Birthday list any longer?

And Busy Beavers, if you have an older brother or sister, cousin, aunt or uncle who USED to be a Busy Beaver, will you ask him or her if the membership is cancelled? I think maybe some people are still officially Busy Beavers and don't even know it!

Now I must say good-bye!

Yours, Aunt Betty.

A LETTER ABOUT POLITICS — Cont.

tem of district representation is more favourable to achieving that than a system of proportionate representation would be. (Besides, the letter is constantly mistaken in what is meant by "proportionate representation.")

2. I did not "compare acquiring our Citizenship with someone's refusal to vote for non-Reformed candidates," nor did I "accuse one who only wants to be represented by Reformed politicians of going an anabaptist line."

What I did was point out the inconsistency (not to say dishonesty) which exists when an immigrant is well aware of the rights he receives and the obligations which he takes upon himself when making the oath of allegiance and when he then turns around and refuses to vote, whereas he knew — before he made the oath (and if he did not know, he should not have made it) — how the political situation here is. *That's* what I attacked.

I, too, want to be represented by Reformed politicians, and I did not call that "anabaptist" at all. I was and am convinced that it is basically an anabaptist stand when one is of the opinion that he can vote *only* when there are the names of such Reformed politicians on the ballot.

We intend to write about the points touched upon in a later issue of *Clarion*. vO

Engaged:
 RITA VISSCHER
 and
 JAKE SIEDERS
 January 15, 1977.
 12 York Street,
 Mississauga, Ontario L4T 3M7.

Engaged:
 SHIRLEY LODDER
 and
 JOHN SWAVING
 January 11, 1977.
 R.R. 5, Guelph, Ontario
 R.R. 2, Belwood, Ontario.

Engaged:
 HENNIE TEN BRINKE
 and
 HARRY H. LEFFERS
 December 24, 1976
 Box 155, Houston, B.C.

With thankfulness to the Lord, we announce the birth of our son:
 DAVID IAN
 Born on December 25, 1976.
 A brother for: *Angela*
 Andrew and Pieta Kippers
 (nee Versteeg)
 SS-1-2-36,
 Lethbridge, Alberta.

Thankful to the Lord Who has brought us together, we announce our engagement:
 ALIDA JACOBA JANSEMA
 to
 EDWARD KELLY
 January 10, 1977
 R.R. 1, Dunnville, Ontario.

Which minister of the Canadian Reformed Church is willing to spend his holidays in Houston, B.C., in order to conduct the Worship Services during this time.
 Please contact:
 Geo. Leffers,
 Box 245,
 Houston, B.C. V0J 1Z0

FOR THE READER'S INFORMATION

This issue was mailed from Winnipeg Central Post Office on January 21, 1977.