



Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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Covenant Education ¹

Brothers and sisters, boys and girls, friends and guests:

First of all, I express my thanks for being invited by the school board to speak to you tonight at the official opening of The Covenant Christian School.

The name "The Covenant . . . School" occasioned the title of this address: *covenant-education*. We will see that the name "Christian" has everything to do with such education. To understand our topic, let us pay attention to the covenant concept.

I. CONCEPT OF THE COVENANT

In the past century many theologians recognized the covenant as a central, unifying theme of the Scriptures.

Simply put, the covenant resembles a marriage bond. Two people pledge loyalty to live with each other in love. By recognizing and practising mutual rights and obligations, husband and wife express their intimate thoughts and emotions to each other. Likewise, God and His people give each other the pledged love and loyalty.

God takes the initiative. God comes to man. God lays down the terms of the covenant. Of course, a covenant also resembles an agreement, a treaty, or an alliance between partners. As such it has legal requirements. To establish such a covenant, mutual vows are made. Yet, in God's covenant, God is sovereign and Lord. Man as a "partner" remains the creature, a subject. God is Bridegroom, man is the bride.

To speak of a covenant then points to a bond of fellowship between God and His people. As in a marriage, this fellowship includes privileges and obligations. Mutual love and loyalty is its essence.

II. HISTORY OF THE COVENANT

To make this real, let us look at the history of the covenant. Often God took His prophet or apostle to a high mountain to survey the complete sweep of His great deeds. Let us climb the mountain, too, to enjoy a commanding view of the panorama of covenant history.

The covenant started with the wonderful, close fellowship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Based on this, God established His covenant with Adam. God gave Adam fantastic rights and privileges. After creating an orderly, wonderful paradise, God said to Adam, "It is all yours. You exercise dominion over it all. Be a king. Name the animals. Cultivate the earth." In addition, God laid down a prohibition not to eat of that one tree. But the most marvelous part of this covenant occurred when God came down in the breeze of the day to walk and to talk with Adam and Eve. Fellowship. Sharing one another's insight, wisdom, cares, and joys.

Then . . . out of ungrateful greed and pride Adam and Eve turned traitor. Listening to the sly deceiver, they agreed with him. Breaking their friendship with God, they made a covenant with the devil. Disaster! Total disaster! They ruined everything in that wonderful covenant.

It takes God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit centuries on centuries to restore paradise. In united concert, they prepare and work until the last chapters of the covenant book about the new paradise come true.

From paradise to paradise, God takes the initiative. He goes out to seek man in order to save man who is lost. To do this God disrupts the covenant with the devil and establishes His covenant with man. God places enmity between the devil and man. He engenders love in man for God.

So God starts anew with Adam and the faithful, holy line. God cut a covenant with Noah and the whole world, preparing the way for the new and everlasting covenant.

God cut a covenant with one man and his family and household-with Abraham. That one man became a nation.

At Sinai God married Himself to Israel in a covenant of grace and laws. He initiates the covenant by rescuing Israel from Egypt. Then He puts His arms around Israel in a covenant. This covenant includes teachings, rules,

blessings and curses, signs, prohibitions and obligations, promises and vows of loyalty from both parties. But again, God dictates the arrangements of the covenant.

This covenant paves the way for the new covenant. When our Lord Jesus Christ shed His blood, giving His life, He established and ratified the new covenant. "This cup is the new covenant in My blood." All the holy days, holy places, holy orders, holy sacrifices, and so on, of the covenant at Mt. Sinai become fulfilled. Then that wonderful fellowship of covenant springs to blossoming fulness when God the Spirit comes down to dwell with, and in, the new covenant people. In this new covenant the old one reaches its climax and fulfillment. God promised Abraham that in him and in his seed, Jesus Christ, all nations would be blessed. And now all nations hear the good news of the covenant signed with blood. The double promise of forgiveness of sins and everlasting life reaches all races and languages.

This in turn leads to the new covenant in the new paradise. Revelation 21 and 22 describe that paradise in brilliant glory, in unbelievable richness, and in terms of overflowing life. But again the most marvelous of all is the fellowship of God and the Lamb with God's people, the bride adorned for her husband. God tabernacles amongst men. They are His people. They see God and the Lamb. Basking in His glorious presence, they serve and work in the bustling city of God. Heaven and earth are one. God and man walk in close fellowship again. The covenant is fully realized!

III. CRUCIAL ISSUE IN THE COVENANT

At the heart of the covenant lies the bond between God and man. "I am the LORD your God." You are My own possession, My special and chosen people. You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Yes, you are *My* people, I am *your* God. You belong to Me. The almighty Creator and faithful Father announces

Continued on page 75.

REFLECTIONS ON “I Pledge You My Troth”¹

Reflections on *I Pledge You My Troth* (by James H. Olthuis, Harper and Row, 1975).

The following, as the title indicates, is not meant as a regular review of the book of the professor of ethics at the Institute for Christian Studies at Toronto. It would be way too long for that and be presented at an inexcusably late date. The late date, however, at which this article is written, has provided time to read and re-read the book, to consider it somewhat closer, to reflect on it, talk about it, and form an opinion on it.

The book, as mentioned in the Preface, is a crystallization of the writing of speeches and of discussions at Summer Conferences, sponsored by the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship.

The subtitle of the publication is: “A Christian View of Marriage, Family, Friendship.” A book, dealing with these topics, deserves sympathetic-critical reading and reflection; *sympathetic*, because I fully agree with Dr. Olthuis that the only thing which can stop a further deterioration and breakdown of marriage and family life, and which can restore the rightful place of friendship in our society, is a return to the scriptural norm for these relationships; *critical*, because what is presented as a “Christian View” should be examined in agreement with the apostolic injunction: “Do not despise prophesying, but test everything; hold

COVENANT EDUCATION (continued) that He embraces you with His care, grace, teachings, presence, and love. Fantastic!

For the covenant people the crucial matter of utmost importance is:

Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might (Deuteronomy 6:4, 5).

In the totality of life, and with the totality of your being, love the LORD.

W. HUIZINGA

** An address delivered at the official opening of the Covenant Christian School of the Canadian Reformed School Society of London and District on November 19, 1976.*

fast what is good” (I Thessalonians 5:20, 21).

Since you as reader should be able to check and test me in my testing of the book of Dr. Olthuis; I will not just write about Dr. Olthuis’ views, but summarize these views on the main points as they are presented in the book. Reflection on and evaluation of them follows at each turn, whereby I will try not to skip any of the arguments advanced by the author.

UNITY AND BI-UNITY

Dr. Olthuis begins his book with an introductory chapter on “*Mankind: Male and Female*,” followed by one on “*Marriage*.” The unity of mankind, men and women, determined by the creation of man and by the one calling “to fear God and to keep His commandments” (Ecclesiastes 12:13), is the book’s point of departure. Since the image of God wherein man has been created, was distorted by the fall, restoration of it is necessary and is realized in the fellowship with Jesus Christ (pp. 3, 4).

This unity of mankind is actually a bi-unity, i.e. man is a “twofold being,” according to what is written in Genesis 5:1, 2: “When God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. Male and female He created them.”

Man and woman, the creation record tells, belong together (p. 4). That is also the meaning of the well-known passage which relates that God took one of man’s ribs and made it into a woman (Genesis 2:21, 22). This passage, Olthuis interprets, “simply and beautifully declares that man and woman together constitute humanity” (p. 5). The consequence is, in Olthuis’ view, that man and woman were created as equal partners. Man’s wedding song “this at last is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh” (Genesis 2:23) speaks of this equality and the partnership of man and woman included in it.

The fall also ruined this equal partnership.

Sin distorted the relation between man and woman from a helping-and-needing-each-other-biunity to a denying-and-hindering-each-other-disunity” (p. 9).

Man and woman bring the curses of Genesis 3:16, 17 over themselves.

These curses should not be treated as if they were injunctions.

The domination of man and the subordinations of woman is a distortion of the original intention of the creator” (p. 10).

Thus, the words of curse are not norms to guide our male-female relations” (pp. 10, 11).

Normative is the creation order of equal partnership as confirmed by Galatians 3:28 where the apostle declares that “in Christ,” whom the believers have put on in their baptism, there is “neither male nor female,” just as there is “neither Jew nor Greek,” “neither slave nor free,” because all



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IN THIS ISSUE:

Covenant Education (1) — W. Huizinga . . .	74
Reflections on “I pledge you my troth” — L. Selles	75
Circumspection — Cid	77
International — Cl. Stam	79
Press Review — J. Geertsema	80
School Crossing — M.C. Werkman	81
Mission News (New Guinea)	83
News Medley — W.W.J. VanOene	84
Stewardship — Cl. Stam	86
Chats on Politics — W.W.J. VanOene	89
Mission News (Brazil)	90
Letters-to-the-Editor	92
Our Little Magazine — Aunt Betty	93

are one in Christ Jesus. It is the church fathers' fault not to have understood the restoration of this coequality and copartnership in Christ. This fault is maintained up till the present day in "the Church's unwillingness to shake off the archaic and mistaken notion of the inferiority and subordination of women" (p. 15).

WHAT ABOUT IT?

Let me stop here a moment for some reflections.

I agree with Olthuis that the curses which God spoke on account of the fall and the disobedience of man and woman should not be read and understood as if they were "norms" for man's conduct. That's the reason why for a long time I have had some trouble with the form for the solemnization of marriages on this particular point. After the well-known words of Genesis 3:16 "your desire shall be to your husband and he shall rule over you" have been quoted, the form continues: "You shall not resist this ordinance of God." By calling that which is a curse in Genesis 3 an ordinance, and by not taking into account that this curse was lifted by the suffering and obedience of Jesus Christ, the form slips, as far as I can see. It is, however, back on the right track when it continues in the same sentence,

but (you shall) be obedient to the commandment of God and follow the example of godly women who trusted in God and were subject to their husbands.

I'll come back to this injunction.

First, I want to mention another point, made by Olthuis, with which I agree. It concerns his protest against what he calls "the archaic and mistaken notion of the inferiority . . . of women" (see above). The idea that woman would be "inferior" to man is, as I am firmly convinced, unscriptural. A Bible-believing Christian should not want to have anything to do with it for that reason. It surprised me, therefore, to read in the book that the Church has been unwilling to shake off this notion of the inferiority of women. I have not been able to trace that persistent unwillingness in the history of the church. Unless "subordination" is considered to be the same thing as "inferiority." The placing of the one word in juxtaposition with the other, "inferiority and subordination" suggests that this is Olthuis' view indeed.

This is not the only place where the two are linked up with each other by Olthuis.

Biblical givens, (it is stated on p. 6), show us the way in today's situation, forcing us to reject any suggestion of male superiority and female inferiority and the corresponding male domination and female subordination as contrary to the partnership proclaimed in Genesis.

See for similar statements pp. 27, 39, 135ff. As a matter of fact "partnership" in contrast to "subordination" is, in Olthuis' view, the key to the solution of the marriage- and family-breakdown. He writes:

In the study I grew in the conviction that the Biblical teaching of the co-partnership of man and woman under God must be recovered if we are to experience the meaning of liberation . . . (Preface I).

Likewise we read on p. 147, regarding the exegesis of Genesis 1-3 by Krister Stendahl, that he is "failing to distinguish the partnership of creation from the subordination of the fall."

I totally disagree with Olthuis on this point. That whole idea of co-partnership based on a complete equality of man and woman in their bi-unity is in conflict, if not with the qualification of woman as "a helper fit for man" — people may differ on it — then certainly with the way woman was created. Olthuis may qualify this way of creation of woman as a declaration "that man and woman together constitute humanity" (see above); there is more to it than that.

That appears from Paul's references to Genesis 2:18ff. Why is it that he calls woman "the glory of man," whereas he speaks of man as "the image and glory of God," when he deals with the mutual relationship between the two, I Corinthians 11:7? That is so, Paul writes, because "man was not made from woman, but woman from man," I Corinthians 11:8. In other words the way in which woman was created may not affect her relationship to God, since she as well as man was created in the image of God, Genesis 1:27, but it does have implication for her relationship to the man to whom the LORD brought her; the implication, namely, of her subordination under him, being the glory of man.

The prohibition, issued by Paul to the sisters in I Corinthians 14:34, to speak in the Church, in the meaning of "to teach" in the church service, is based by the apostle on the ground that the women "should be subordinate, as even the law says." What kind of law is meant by the apostle appears from I Timothy 2:2, where the same prohibition is based on the fact

that "Adam was formed first, then Eve." I Corinthians 14, in turn, makes it clear that the order followed in the creation of man and woman is really one of place ordained by God since it speaks of subordination as testified by the law (verse 34). It is not the only text to do so. In Ephesians 5:22 (compare Colossians 3:18) Paul addresses the married sisters with the words: "Be subject to your husbands, as to the LORD." According to I Corinthians 11:3, Paul wants his readers "to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God."

PAUL IN OLTHUIS' INTERPRETATION

Dr. Olthuis knows, of course, the texts just mentioned just as well as everyone else; he also deals with them in an Appendix added to his book. Paul's prohibitions addressed to women should be explained, Olthuis states, against the background of the situation which existed in the Christian churches. Oppressed for centuries, not all women who were converted to Christianity used their new acquired freedom in Christ in the right way. Some, probably also under the influence of Gnosticism which denied all differences between the sexes, went totally overboard. Instead of realizing that they had received freedom in Christ to serve the LORD alongside their husbands, they bossed over them; they budged in on the discussions wherein the prophesies were tested on their agreement with Scripture, they removed their veils, wore their hair short, and conducted themselves in that way in an unfeminine and, as far as those times were concerned, improper and shameful way.

In this light Paul's admonitions and exhortations addressed to women become clear according to Olthuis. They intend to call the women back from an unbecoming and an essentially rebellious behaviour, to a conduct in agreement with her feminine calling of partnership with the man. The references to her creation have nothing to do with the place under the man which would have been assigned to woman. It reminds her that she cannot exist on her own, but that holds as well for man, "for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman." The call issued to the sisters to be subordinate consequently

Continued on page 78.

“REGINA DEI GRATIA”

Because of their full acceptance of the Holy Scriptures, the Reformed people have traditionally been strongly anti-revolutionary, and have cultivated a deep-rooted respect for and allegiance towards established governments, even when this government is embodied in a (constitutional) Monarchy.

Does the Lord not say to His people, “There is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God” (Romans 13:1). And among the first instructions which Paul gives to Timothy we find this remarkable word, “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are placed in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way” (I Timothy 2:1).

Church and State are two different realms (for the Kingdom of Christ is not of this world) but the Church is called to support the government in allegiance and prayer in all things which are in accordance with God’s Word. And it is from out of this Scriptural background that we wish to congratulate Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II with the twenty-fifth anniversary of her reign. Such congratulations may not be forgotten in a Canadian Reformed Magazine!

I realize that many Canadians of Dutch descent (like the readers of *Clarion* mostly are!) have a historical bond with the Dutch House of Orange and some of the older brothers and sisters may have found it difficult to make the emotional switch from Juliana to Elizabeth. But citizenship in this country simply includes allegiance to the Queen of England, who is also Head of the Commonwealth of which Canada is an unmistakable part, and in the course of time most of us have come to appreciate Elizabeth II also as “our” Queen.

Queen Elizabeth II is the 42nd Monarch on the British throne since William the Conqueror defeated Harold in the historical battle of Hastings. She received the throne on February 6, 1952 after the sudden death of her father, King George VI. The Queen was only 25 years at the time, and she certainly did not face an easy task. The effect and importance of the traditionally strong monarchy seemed to be dwindling away

Circumspection...

in a rapidly disintegrating empire, deflated by post-war developments. Everywhere throughout the world revolutionary forces were upsetting established thrones and many notable (even notorious) royal Houses like the Austrian Hohenzollerns and the Russian Romanoffs had disappeared almost overnight. To use an expression perhaps too common for the occasion: the deck seemed stacked against Elizabeth.

Twenty-five years later, we may conclude that Queen Elizabeth has



done a fine job. She managed to maintain the dignity of the throne and develop herself into a central figure and a binding factor in the remnants of the former empire. The Queen’s consistent soberness in both her family life and government is a reflection of the oath that she took before the Privy Council on February 8, 1952, “I do solemnly and sincerely in the presence of God profess, testify and declare that I am a faithful Protestant and that I will, according to the true intent of the enactments which secure Protestant succession to the Throne of my realm, uphold and maintain said enactments to the best of my powers according to law.” In the presence of God, indeed, that’s how we like to regard Her Majesty: Regina Dei Gratia, Queen by the grace of God.

The Queen’s power is not merely symbolic and the institution of the Monarchy is more than just a relic of faded glory. The Queen has the legal right and authority to disapprove of certain legislation and hinder its operation. Even if the Queen makes much less use of this sovereign right than we would sometimes like to see, she does in this way keep her finger on the pulse of Parliament. And for most Britons it is a reassurance, as the London Times once expressed, that the “central institution of the monarchy is sound.” Amidst all the uncertainties and change, the Queen remains composed, calm, with true royal poise. Here lies her major contribution to our turbulent times.

Canada has in the past not undividely acclaimed Her Royal Majesty. Revolutionary powers are also in this country, and in these days of French secessionism we are sadly reminded of the disgraceful reception which the Queen suffered in Quebec. For this reason we are grateful that the Canadian government and people will partake in the festivities commemorating this silver jubilee. A series of beautifully coloured stamps has been printed for the occasion, and these could prove valuable in time.

We sincerely hope that the Canadian people will enthusiastically greet the Queen when she honours us with a visit. Not because we glorify persons or royalty as such, but because we are bound by the Lord’s decree to love and honour those set above us by God’s hand. And we have reason for joy and gratitude, because under this earthly Queen we are able to serve our Heavenly King in all freedom.

Let us continue to pray for our Queen, who in principle also heads our government, so that under her continuing reign our life may indeed be quiet and peaceable, even godly and respectful. And in praying let us thank the King of kings for the many blessings He has given us in a Queen who professes to stand “in the presence of God.”

God save our gracious Queen.

Cid.

I PLEDGE YOU MY TROTH — (Cont.)

does not mean to be subordinate to man but to be obedient to their calling as women, and if they were married, to their calling as wives, who are bound by the commitment to their husbands. Any idea as if these texts would refer to a distinction in place and station in the church or in marriage, should be given up.

It is not different with the headship of the husband of which I Corinthians 11:3 speaks.

If we conclude from this passage, (Olthuis writes), that man is by nature superior to woman, we must likewise conclude that Christ is subordinate by nature to God. The Church has denied the second conclusion; it is time she emphatically rejects the first (p. 137).

Headship indicates prominence. To be the head means that the husband "has the responsibility and authority to call the marriage — his wife as well as himself — to obey the norm of troth" (p. 27). It is the same, Olthuis feels, with the call issued to women to keep silent in the churches (I Corinthians 14:34; cf. I Timothy 2:11). This call is considered by many as a universal norm, valid everywhere and at all times. This is, however, not done by these same people with the call of Paul to wear the veil.

To select one call as relevant for today but not the other, is simply arbitrary (p. 141).

Actually, the call to be silent, as all the others, has to do with the office of women, not to domineer over, but to be a fellow worker with man. And if they do not want that, they should, even though they are entitled to pray and to prophesy in congregational meetings, according to I Corinthians 11:5, keep quiet until their attitude has changed (p. 140).

REPLY

It might be a good thing to make another stop here for some critical reflection. First a word about the alleged inconsistency of the Church which would deny that Christ is by nature subordinate to God, but maintain that man is by nature superior to woman. No more than I accept the word "inferior" for woman, do I accept the word "superior" for man. It is not a matter of superiority or inferiority, but as Ridderbos rightly observes, in his *Paul* (p. 307), of "priority." This priority holds as well for God in His relation to Christ, in His quality of Servant of

the LORD, as it holds for man in his relation to woman. The Church confesses both.

And as to the relevance of the call to be silent in contrast to the alleged irrelevancy of the call to wear a veil, and to wear the hair long, I deny that the Church metes with two measures in this respect. The Church may no longer demand the wearing of a veil, because that is a thing of the past. Just as the ox and the ass of the fourth commandment are work and transportation animals of the past, that which was symbolized by the veil, the subordinate place, namely, which the LORD had assigned to woman in His creation, is fully recognized and finds expression not only in the silence which the women keep in the churches by abstaining from the teaching office, but in the whole conduct of the sisters in the midst of the congregation.

For the rest, Olthuis is certainly right when he derives from I Corinthians 11, 14, and I Timothy 2 that the women abused their freedom in Christ, but that does not entitle him to water down Paul's admonitions to the sisters to a call for a conduct in agreement with their feminine calling of partnership with the man. Such an interpretation is in conflict with the simple and clear meaning of the word "subordinate" and with the equally simple and clear meaning of "headship." Moreover, such an interpretation is not required by Galatians 3:28 either. Let me quote Ridderbos on this passage:

For in Christ, (he writes), the husband does not have an advantage over the wife (Galatians 3:28). The distinction that exists between them by virtue of creation is not abolished, anymore than that between Jews and Greeks; to be in Christ does not therefore mean natural equality. But all, both male and female, are one in Christ. That is to say, they together constitute one body (cf. I Corinthians 12:13). And this must govern natural relationships as well, so that in marriage it is not one's own concern or asserting one's own superiority, but love in Christ that must determine the relationship (*Paul*, p. 307).

Or, as Ridderbos writes with respect to the place of women in the Church,

on the one hand the woman shares fully in the salvation given in Christ, and there is complete equality between men and women in that respect, just as between Jew and Greek, master and slave, etc. (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11; cf. I Corinthians 11:11, 12); on the other hand fellowship with Christ does not remove the

natural distinction between man and woman, and man's position of leadership with regard to woman (*Paul*, p. 460).

And as to the bi-unity of man, which would imply equality and partnership of man and woman, Olthuis may posit this bi-unity and speak of man as "a twofold being," (p. 4), but Scripture, as far as I can see, does not do so. What is that anyway: a twofold being? The Bible tells us that God, after He had made the animals, made man, i.e. a new kind of creature. When it next reads: "Male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27; 5:2), the meaning is that this new kind of creature, this genus man, consisted of two sorts of members: man and woman. How closely these two kinds of members of the human race are related appears from the creation of woman out of man. However, this creation also tells that the relation between man and woman is not one of equal partnership, but of leadership of the man and of subordination of the woman. Is that strange, ununderstandable, unfair? Not at all. Just the opposite! That is in perfect agreement with the plan of God for woman, namely, to be a helper fit for man. How could she ever be a real helper unless in union with and in subordination to man?

Now just before Paul admonishes the wives to be subject to their husbands in Ephesians 5:22, the apostle exhorts the whole congregation: husbands-wives, fathers-mothers-children, masters-slaves, to be subject to one another in the fear of Christ (p. 21). It is clear, as is indicated by the reference to Christ, the servant of the LORD, that this call to submission, to put it in the words of Olthuis, is "the calling to serve each other in order to fulfill God's demands" (p. 144). Does that mean, however, that the admonition to the sisters to be subject to their husbands tells them to be good wives for their husbands in equal partnership with them as Olthuis suggests? It would, indeed, if the LORD had given woman the place of equal partner. But He did not. He gave her the place of helper under her husband, according to the history of creation. To be subject to her husband means, therefore, for the wife to accept the leadership of her husband and to be his helper. And as to the husband, the general calling of verse 21 to be subject to one another means for him, in its application to marriage, as Paul states in verse 25, to love his wife.

L. SELLES



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.

ANNIVERSARY UCCI

Tel Aviv, Israel. The United Christian Council in Israel (UCCI), comprised of 20 churches and organizations, this year celebrates its twentieth anniversary. The Council was set up to form an association through which the members could regularly meet for mutual advice and cooperation in various projects relating to the "Holy Land." Most of the participating churches are non-indigent churches which work in Israel. Some of these organizations were active in Palestine already in the previous century. Each group works independently (in mission and medical work especially) and the UCCI only functions as an avenue for contact and mutual aid. However, during a



Pope Paul: "indulgences . . ."

recent commemorative congress, the UCCI decided to organize a permanent committee (in which both Jewish and Arab believers would partake) to increase "mutual respect and understanding" in Israel.

INDULGENCES STILL IN FORCE!

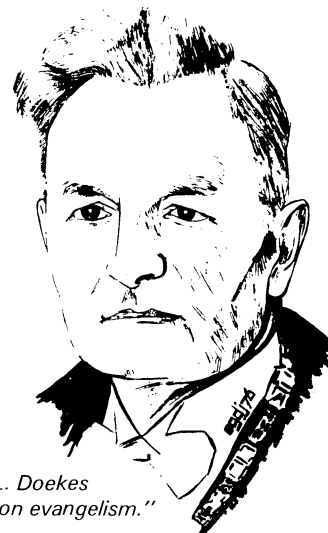
Utrecht, The Netherlands. In a rather remarkable article in the magazine of the Confessional Society of the Dutch Reformed Church, Prof. Dr. G.P. van Itterson has asked due attention for the fact that despite all "ecumenical sounds" the Roman Catholic Church has fully maintained the infamous practice of the indulgence up to date. The indulgence is a means to buy off penance in this life and in Purgatory and to receive remission of sins by a pre-paid act of the Church. Prof. van Itterson points out that on Christmas Day the Papal speech and blessing ("urbi et orbi," for the City and the world) is combined with an indulgence (forgiveness of sins) for all who listen. The New Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church carefully but positively maintains this practice of indulgence. During the Second Vatican Council the Pope decided, despite much criticism, to maintain the indulgence.

NO FEMALE PRIEST

Vatican City. In a declaration to the Bishops, the Committee on Doctrine of the Vatican has officially declared that the office of the priesthood is reserved only for men. No statement was made, however, about the office of the deacon(ness). The bishops were called upon to convey and explain this viewpoint to the believers in their respective dioceses. This doctrinal statement is remarkable in view of the fact that the Anglican Church has opened the priesthood for women, a move which the Pope termed "a new obstacle on the path to unity." The Vatican tradition is based both on tradition and Scriptural arguments, especially the notion that Christ was a male and the disciples also. The decision doesn't mean, however, that the man would be "higher" than the woman, but only that there is a "factual difference in function and service."

ANGOLESE CHRISTIANS REPRESSED?

Luanda, Angola. According to Jonas Savimbi, the leader of the Western-oriented Angolese Liberation Front Unita, the Christians in Angola are being repressed by the present (commu-



Prof. Dr. L. Doekes
"Speaker on evangelism."

nist) government. This statement is made in an interview with the Austrian newspaper "Kleine Zeitung." Savimbi accuses the World Council of Churches of a one-sided support of the Marxist MPLA. The Austrian newspaper claims that 90% of the Angolan population is "Christian."

MEXICAN WOMEN AGAINST ABORTION

Cuernavaca, Mexico. The Mexican National Urban Society of Women has sent telegrams to both Pope Paul and the Italian Parliament in which it strongly condemns abortion. The telegram congratulated the Pope for making the statement, "If you want peace, you must defend life." The telegram told the Parliament that legalization of abortion would lead to "irresponsible murderings." The Italian Parliament, however, did legalize abortion.

CHILD EVANGELISM

Amersfoort, The Netherlands. A while ago a steering-committee was set up by members of the Reformed Liberated Churches in The Netherlands with the goal of "coordinating and stimulating" child-evangelism. The committee is the result of a meeting held last year in which more than ninety evangelism workers, who were active with children, (e.g. at Vacation Bible School, etc.) participated. The committee intends to form a definite board and to attend to principle and practical matters concerned with evangelism directed towards children (and their parents). Meanwhile, Prof. Dr. L. Doekes will speak for the youth organization "Evangelism and Recreation" on the important topic "Evangelism and Election."

Cl. STAM

press review

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER: LOVE IN ACTION

In *The Banner* of January 28, 1977, page 23, a question about the World Day of Prayer is asked and answered. This year, that Day of Prayer will be on March 4th. In a pamphlet that I received about this day it says on page 1:

Christian women of the German Democratic Republic who have prepared the World Day of Prayer for 1977 on the theme, LOVE IN ACTION, send warm greetings to all who belong to the family of God around the world who are uniting on this day.

The question from "a man in Ontario," as it appeared in *The Banner*, was:

Is it true that this day of prayer is sponsored by the World Council of Churches or by the National Council? And do we as a denomination have anything to do with it?

The first question was answered as follows:

The day is promoted and sponsored by *Church Women United*, which is an affiliate of the National Council of Churches of Christ in America. Its goal is to unite all Christians on that day in the bond of prayer and take up an offering for some worthy cause.

The idea goes back to 1887.

That year, Mrs. Darwin James, appalled at the tragic plight of immigrants to America, overworked, underpaid, and in general exploited in this new land, suggested that Presbyterian women (she belonged to that denomination) come together to pray for these deprived folk and take up an offering for them. The idea proved to be contagious and soon other denominations joined in the venture. The movement received a great boost when two women, Helen Barrett Montgomery and Lucy Waterbury Peabody made a world tour. They went off the beaten track of the tourists and the poverty, crime, vice and slum conditions that they saw made an indelible impression on their souls. They also contacted Indian and Chinese Christian women who met regularly in order to pray to God to alleviate these evils. Thus the idea of a world-wide day of prayer was born.

Compassion with those in need and misery is good. As children of God we should all have that compassion and

show it in deeds of help and support. For our heavenly Father makes it rain and makes the sun shine on the righteous and on the unrighteous alike, (Matthew 5:45). However, can we join in this World Day of Prayer? That was the second question: Do we as a denomination - (Christian Reformed Church, that is) have anything to do with it?

In the answer to this question it is first mentioned that the Christian Reformed Church has a regular day of prayer each year in the springtime. Then the Lord's blessing is asked for the coming growing season. The answer then continues:

But, since the World Day of Prayer usually falls on a day in late winter or early spring, this might be one point where we could synchronize our day of prayer. Why not join with Christians all over the world on that day in prayer and intercession? And why not use that day also to express our concern as Christian Reformed Christians for the needs of men throughout the world? Why not a denomination-wide offering on that day for the causes handled by the Christian Reformed Church World Relief Committee?

So, in fact the question, "Have we anything to do with it?" is answered in the affirmative insofar that it is recommended to join. But can we join? I give a shortened rendering of the above mentioned pamphlet. It is sort of a program which is meant to serve as guide for the prayer meeting. It is produced by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada. We read:

Opening Hymn:

CALL TO PRAYER:

Voice 1: **Love in Action** — under this theme Christian women from the German Democratic Republic call for meditation and for prayer.

Voice 2: Since God, out of love for this world, never ceased to hope, we can affirm:

ALL: Love gives hope!

Voice 2: Since Jesus Christ, out of love for this world, gave his life, we can affirm:

ALL: Love risks life!

Voice 2: Since the Holy Spirit incites us to love, we can affirm:

ALL: Love becomes action!

I. LOVE GIVES HOPE

Voice 1: "How great is the love that the Father has shown to us! We were called God's children, and such we are . . ." (I John 3:1).

Voice 2: It is God who grants every person a unique value. He entrusts this value to us — to guard it carefully and to develop it in every way.

Voice 3: God has hope for us. God gives hope to us. Therefore, we have hope for one another, for we all belong to God.

Voice 1: God believes we are capable of keeping his commandments:

And then the last six commandments of God's law follow. (Why not also the first four?) After this, Psalm 119:127-131 is quoted in which we read about the love for the wonderful commandments of the Lord. Then the summary of God's law is quoted as given by Christ: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart . . . Love your neighbour as yourself," with another quotation from Psalm 119. What then follows in the form of a hymn is this:

Voice 1: What do we Christians make of God's hope for us?

ALL: We are exploiting it . . .

When we are not willing to give, but only to receive;

When we do not unite, but separate;

When we do not respect, but neglect one another.

Voice 1: What do we Christians make of God's hope for us?

ALL: We are exploiting it . . .

When we should hope, but are discouraged;

. . .

When we should rejoice, but are sad.

After this, a sort of confession of our human indifference is made, and we are assured that there is forgiveness with God and that God's hope is stronger than our fears.

The second part, "**Love Risks Life,**" says that Christ "gave up his divinity and came into our frailty," showing us His love in that way. With reference to Christ's washing the feet of the disciples, it is shown that Christ's doing is an example for us. And the pamphlet continues:

Voice 1: We who believe that Christ has taken our frailty are impelled by his love to accept the frail ones.

Voice 2: From the handicaps of others, we discover our own handicaps:

Voice 3: The addicted make us see our own bonds.

Deserted children, lonely youth, neglected old people are a re-

buke to our self-centeredness. The blind reveal the weakness of our perception. The mentally limited remind us that we do not use our intelligence fully.

ALL: All of these call into question our concepts of a full and complete life.

Accordingly the "ALL" later in the program have to sing:

Christ opens our eyes to those whose distress we do not see because they are too close to us.

In the last part, "Love Becomes Action," it first is said that "Jesus Christ expresses his love in action," and that He "calls his followers to act in love," after which the "ALL" have to sing:

God's spirit gives us strength to act in love and live in fellowship.

After this there is a repeated call for prayer for different people in several serving professions, like in hospitals, for parents and children, for those who work in production and science, in politics and economics, briefly, for all people.

Praying for all (kinds of) people is according to the Word of God (I Timothy 2:1, 2). And to show one's "love in action" is a demand of the gospel. However, expressions like "God . . . never ceased to hope," and "God believes we are capable of keeping his commandments," show but humanism. And so does what we read about Christ Jesus and our discipleship, following Him. Our Heidelberg Catechism asks: "From where do you know your misery?" The answer reads: "Out of the law of God." Here the misery is known from the needs of men. *Any reference to the atoning death of our Lord is missing.* It is all: we as good men must be good by following the example of the love of Christ. Here we have the error of Pelagius, of the Remonstrants, of liberalism. Here and there the terms are the same, but the contents differ. Hope is hope for this life, for a better world here. It is not the hope of which the Bible speaks. The decisions of the Synod of Dort in 1618/1619, the Secession in The Netherlands in 1834, and the "Doleantie" in 1886, as well as, for example, the establishing of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in America in 1936, were a necessary protest against and separation from this "Christian" liberalism and humanism.

Therefore I would answer the second question of the "man in Ontario" in a totally different way than is done

in *The Banner*. I would say: "Do not join. What does a Reformed Church that wants to continue in the way of, for example, the Secession, have to do with humanism, even when it comes in a Christian garment? We may not join what according to the Word of

God does not belong together. But let us, in the meantime, not cease to pray for this world in its needs, of which the need for redemption from humanism is not the least; and let us help where we can and may."

J. GEERTSEMA

school X crossing

"WHITE OUTS" INSTEAD OF NORTHERN LIGHTS

In the last *School Crossing* I more or less promised to inform you how brightly the lights are burning in other congregations. Well, to start with one of the larger schools, SMITHVILLE's John Calvin School has seen no lights at all for several days. The worst snowstorm they can remember (the newspapers say the worst one in history), left several children stranded at other people's homes in various areas. The storm was predicted but hit so hard and furiously when it did that it caught everyone by surprise. When we say this we believe, of course, that it is the LORD Who gives snow like wool and casts forth His ice like morsels (Psalm 147). School was closed for more than a week and even at the moment of this writing, the children are at home. Several Guido de Brès students had to find shelter with families in Hamilton instead of going home to Lincoln, Smithville, or Dunnville. Some of them did not mind too much. Apparently they had a great time staying with friends. Some of them even found an excuse not to learn their catechism simply because they were not at home!

We are thankful that the children and teachers were spared. Let us also not forget the bus drivers, of whom so much was asked in driving dozens of students in blizzards that caused complete "white-outs." Perhaps we should remember those who drive our children every day a little more often in our prayers, too!

Smithville's Board met on the average once every month in the past year. Various committees they have appointed do quite some preparatory work and so save the Board considerable time. The committees come with well-founded proposals which do not need much discussion at the Board meetings. That is the way to do it. In

the past year they again had one teacher for every grade, and now have an additional remedial teacher. After the teacher they "loaned" to Chatham has returned, all will be normal again. Children who have their birthday before March 1st are allowed to enter school in September of the previous year. It would be interesting to find out what policy is followed in our schools across Canada. Perhaps the School Bulletin editors could give some information on this point sometimes? They now have an enrolment of 240 students. This includes the children from the Lincoln congregation. They have 92 tuition paying members and 48 donor members. Without the donor members, the tuition would be much higher.

One student started exploring the attic of his home and discovered a copy of *The Canada Spelling Book* of more than 100 years ago. It was surprising to find in this book several applications of Biblical principles. It mentions that the students must keep the Sabbath Day holy! It also adds that the student remembers that in God's house it is wrong to stare around him, etc. We do not have to agree with everything in this old school book, but it shows that religion was not altogether out in the public schools. I like to quote one more rule: "The Christian should always regulate his conduct by the Word of God." Indeed! We could use more emphasis on this rule even today!

"TIMOTHY"

Even in our days there are people who in all reality deny the tie between the Church and the School. In Hamilton's "Church and Child" I read a quotation of Rev. Dr. Judson Levey who, on behalf of the Canadian Council of Churches, addressed the Second Canadian Conference on Education in Montreal, 1962. I quote: "We see the Church and the School as belonging

together in a divinely planned partnership which is not to be put asunder." Well, that is quite a statement! Does that not put many among us to shame? He said further: "Thus do Church and School stand side by side in what is not merely a tolerated but a necessary relationship." We agree wholeheartedly with this statement. Dr. Arntzen on his trip in Canada and the U.S.A. has also pointed out to our own people and the "concerned" of the Christian Reformed Church that there is a close relationship. When a Church is no longer Reformed, we cannot expect the teachers, who belong to such churches and who are influenced from the pulpit, to be Reformed in their teaching. History has shown that.

Hamilton used Dr. Levey's statement in their presentation to the Ontario Government protesting the proposed property tax reform. They had an opportunity to appear before the "Blair Commission," together with their students and also the Grade 12 students of Guido de Brès. Premier Davis has already reacted in some way. He said: ". . . we do not propose to change our position that these schools (the Roman Catholic high schools and the Christian schools, MW) make a worthwhile contribution to the educational mosaic of Ontario and as a Government it is not our intention to jeopardize that contribution in any way." These words are encouraging, but the battle for justice is not won by a few personal remarks. Let us keep praying to the LORD Who has the king's heart in His hand as rivers of water. He turns their heart where He wills (Proverbs 21:1).

Hamilton also points to the example of three other Canadian provinces where some form of assistance is given. What happens when the proposed Property Tax Reform is accepted? We would then pay for our own schools (but we should not mind that) plus paying for the public schools via our personal property taxes. On top of that we would be taxed on our own school property. This tax, again, would be used to fund public education! That is injustice! Hamilton proposes to the Government to declare their property tax exempt or to guarantee by law that these taxes will be refunded.

REPORT CARDS

"Timothy's" principal writes that report cards are often an eye-opener, and not always a pleasant one — for the parents, that is. Some parents are

not aware of the specific problems that their children meet in class. As some report cards may have shocked the parents, hopefully the result will be that the parents take a closer look at the performance of their children. Actually, such report cards are really the report cards of the parents! Let us as parents not sit back and relax, thinking that the teachers must do it all. We can at least encourage and even help our children in several respects. Of course, it is the child who must do his homework and not the father or mother. I think many parents will find it hard, if not impossible, to even help their children with *math*, for instance! Could the parents not take a course in math with the help of the teachers? That way their burden in the classroom may be relieved somewhat.

"Timothy" was visited by members of the Education Committee and even by members of the Consistory! After all, their new minister teaches catechism in school. The Consistory members were very fortunate because during that catechism lesson a superb lemon cake with almond icing was cut up and consumed, all on the happy occasion of the birth of their new minister's second son! Wonder if those elders knew that beforehand! I wouldn't blame them. I also wonder what kind of a report card the elders will present to the Consistory!

TEACHERS' SHORTAGE

Hamilton's principal will be moving back to the old country this summer, much to the regret of everyone. It was also proposed to the membership to appoint a *fourth* teacher for next September. There will be an increase in students and they will not have the benefit of a teacher's aid next year. With plans in at least two other places to open a regular day school, the question arises: "Where are all the teachers going to come from?" Answer: from the hand of our heavenly Father, when it pleases Him. At the same time, we have the responsibility to be active in word and deed. It clearly shows the need for our Teachers College.

"IMMANUEL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL"

That is the name of the new school in Winnipeg, which opened last September. This school is already in the possession of items like a filing cabinet, a tape recorder, etc. That is the result of the work of the Ladies' Aid. There are 44 students attending school, one from a family outside of our membership.

Winnipeg has had a problem with textbooks. First they didn't have them and later on they did not know where to put them! They are now temporarily stored on tables in the main hall. They are going through the regular problems that come along with starting a new school. Take into consideration that they have students from at least a dozen different schools in the area, with different customs, different areas of instruction, etc. Now these same students are placed in a multi-classroom. This demands of the students, as well as of the teachers, some significant adjustments.

Their closest neighbour is Carman, and the teachers of both schools have their in-service days, like the curriculum days in Ontario. Before the year came to its end, they had 3 such days already, almost at the average of one a month! The children, of course, will not mind these days off.

All their library books have been catalogued. That is quite an achievement for any school. The sooner you start the better. To keep up a system is not half as hard as to start one. Some sisters are repairing and covering the books. Their help always comes in handy. The Education Committee is studying ways to add grades 1, 2 and 3 or 3 and 10 by coming September. We hope that they are successful either way, preferably both ways! A visitor from The Netherlands donated fl. 700, which was gratefully acknowledged. Some new members have joined the School Society, all of them "young ones." In a way that stands to reason: they have, fairly recently, missed what these children by the grace of our heavenly Father, may now receive, truly CHRIST-ian education.

Let me close with one more quotation from that very old Spelling Book: "The Teacher's Counsel to His Pupils."

Ye docile youths, who learning love
And would in various arts improve,
And to be taught to me repair,
These precepts in your memory bear.

When morning first unseals your eyes,
And bids you to your labours rise,
To God with pious ardour pray,
That He would bless the passing day.

For all your studies are but vain,
Which no celestial blessing gain.

M. WERKMAN



Dear Brothers and Sisters;

So, we're back in Manggelum (Mgl.) again; back from having been in Sentani for two weeks, doing shopping, looking around, having a busy but enjoyable time.

Let us go back and see what all happened in November. On Monday, November 1st, we were flown to Kouh to attend the Z.G.K. conference. First, however, we had a meeting with the brothers from Sumba, who left Kouh on Wednesday the 3rd. They, together with the representatives from the congregations in our area plus the mission workers discussed establishing a closer contact between the churches in Sumba and the churches here — the ultimate goal being one Reformed Church in Indonesia. Contact will also be sought with the congregations in Kalimantan. On Tuesday evening the Christians in Kouh had organized a farewell supper. It was there that we met our first sago larvae, carefully concealed between 2 layers of sago. They don't taste too bad, but wouldn't want to eat them every day either.

After the Sumba brothers had left, another Z.G.K. conference started. This conference dealt with the Central

Bible School in Boma. Later on I will send the official report of this conference.

Monday, November 8, we were flown back to Mgl., leaving us five days to prepare ourselves for our trip to Sentani. One of Joanne's "patients" was brought to Kawagit, while our gurus received instructions on how to prepare a baby bottle and how to change bandages for a few people that still needed regular attention. And so we left Mgl. again for Kouh on Saturday, November 13, to be flown through to Sentani the following Monday.

On Saturday, November 20, we were privileged to welcome Dr. Kees Louwerse, his wife Rennie and their son Arjan. We had been stand-by for several days, but finally they did arrive on Saturday afternoon. It was nice that we could show them around and introduce them to people and places in Sentani and Jayapura. We had a very enjoyable time with them. They hope to be able to fly into the interior on the 6th of December, after the paperwork with T.M.F. is finished.

Our plane was to be flown back on Monday, the 30th, but due to thick

rain clouds in the mountains, we had to turn back again. We tried once more very early the next morning, and this time there was no problem crossing the ranges. Only the air-strip in Kouh (grass) was quite wet, so that we left tracks of 4-5 inches deep. You will notice again that flying is not without danger here, and we hope that you do pray regularly for safe flights and more pilots so that the work in His Kingdom may be done.

Undoubtedly you are wondering how our nurses are doing. Well, they were in Sentani for a couple of days. We were with them most of the time and we talked a lot together. Their general condition was fairly good, but they were a bit down, because they had just come to know the results of recently taken x-rays. The x-rays showed that Corrie has a broken sternum and that Jannie has a fractured vertebra. It was a pity that they were flown out in the morning of the same day that the Louwerses came in, so that they could not meet them, which would've been very nice.

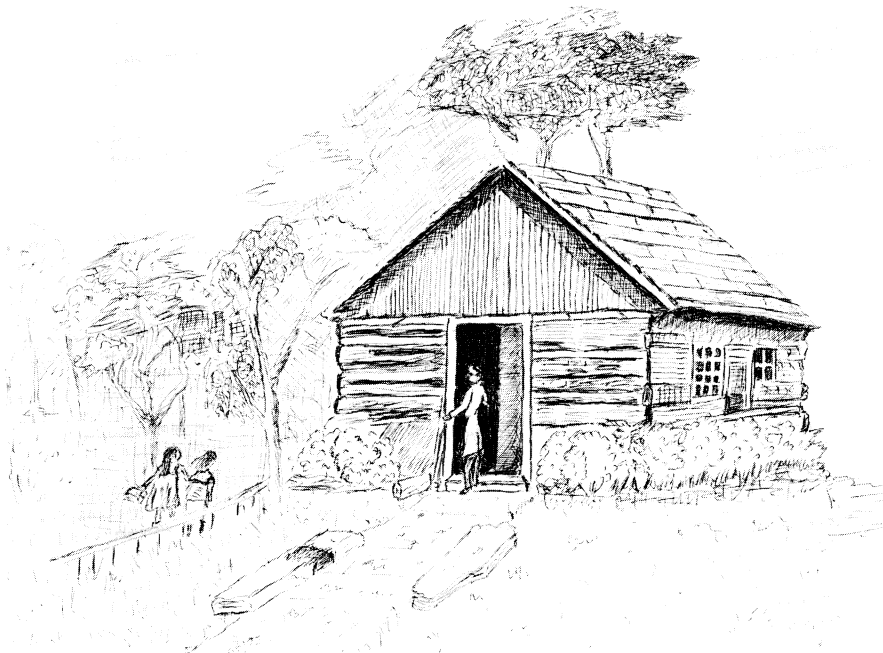
Right now our nurses are in Boma, where they will stay until they're ready to go to their own villages and continue their work there. The nurse of The Netherlands Reformed Congregations is doing quite well, although she also will first stay in another village, as will be understood. The pilot is still in Mulia. He has much pain; also self-reproach. Please remember Jerry and also Mary, Corrie and Jannie in your prayers, that He may give them health again and strength to continue their work in His vineyard.

In the last week of November the guru course in Kawagit started; it will continue next week and our plan is to attend this course. More about this later.

Regarding our own health, we all are doing very well. Joanne's hands are all okay again and we hope and pray that it will stay this way. Emily is still doing the things every 8-month-old baby does and yours truly is also in good health.

While in Sentani we were very pleased to see all our drums and our case back again; everything seems to be in good order. In the meantime it has gone to Kouh, and we hope to have everything in Mgl. before the end of December.

With Christian Greetings,
BRAM and JOANNE VEGTER



Pioneer Schoolhouse, Waterloo — as redrawn by S. Sipkema, Burlington, Ontario.

news medley

Want to have a good breakfast?

On Saturday, February 12th, the Ladies' Circle of New Westminster provided a Pancake Breakfast, as it was called. It was to be served from 9 - 11 in the morning, so you even could sleep in a little and then (for economy's sake) combine breakfast and lunch, eat "brunch" as some people call it. The price was reasonable considering that for \$1.75 you got three hotcakes, two eggs, three sausages or three bacon (must be three strips of bacon), plus juice, coffee or tea. I always like those "communal meals," for they promote the fellowship.

Since we are in New Westminster anyway we may as well pay attention to some other particulars. The Consistory decided to establish a fund ad article 19 Church Order, and to have a collection for that purpose. For those of our readers who have no clue as to what article 19 Church Order speaks about, it be mentioned that this article provides that the Churches shall endeavour that there are students of theology who are supported by them. The article also contains the words "as far as necessary," and there has been a controversy about it for a long time already what exactly those words "as far as necessary" refer to: should the Churches see to it, as far as necessary, that there are students of theology? Or are the Churches obligated to support them as far as this appears necessary? I am convinced that the "as far as necessary" refers to the financial support. But that is not so important at the moment.

"The Consistory also decided, since support of theological students is a matter of common interest for the churches, to request the forthcoming classis, to be held in April, to establish a classical fund so as to share the responsibility with the sister churches."

That is quite a statement but one which needs better proof than is offered here. From the "category" of "common interest" the argument jumps to the "category" of "sharing the responsibility." That is an unwarranted jump! There are oodles of things which are matters of "common interest" but those matters do not **ipso facto**, by that very fact, become a matter of common responsibility! I do not believe a word of it that the churches have to share the responsibility in the matter of eventual support of students who need some financial aid. And a "classical fund" would mean that something were introduced in "the West" which in the past has been persistently rejected. One who would wish to introduce that could point to the practice in The Netherlands Churches in this century; but for the opposite one could point to the practice of Churches in the days of the great Reformation and even in the ancient Church.

We won't make this into an article, and for that reason proceed.

Stopping over in Calgary, I remind you of what we quoted the other time about the collections. This time the bulletin contains some basic guidelines for giving, as it is expressed. To give you food for thought I quote the following. "Generally speaking your giving should not be determined on the basis of how much the church needs. That should make a difference generally only with regard to whether you will give less to other kingdom causes in order to be able to

give more to the church. Your giving should not depend on how much or how little others give, nor on the basis of how the consistory budgets The basic guidelines for giving should be, how has the Lord blessed you, how thankful are you for what He has done for you, and how important do you consider (on the basis of the Bible) the ministry of the Word." Think about it.

The Calgary Church plans to have a social hour with coffee every month on the third Sunday of the month after the afternoon service. That promotes the fellowship. They will remain at the present place where they conduct the services, but meanwhile look out whether they can find something better. And this "better" refers then especially to the financial side of the matter: the rent was raised to \$150.00 per month. Renting someone else's facilities also brings with it difficulties regarding the times of the services. Calgary has its share of those difficulties too, and they may change the times to prevent unnecessary driving. On the other hand, of course, one does not want the services to be too close together, for otherwise it might make the impression of "we have to have two services, so let's have them close together and get it over and done with!"

Up to Edmonton. The Committee which investigated possible sale of the manse to the minister reported, but was instructed to make further investigation into this matter. It is good to do things only when all aspects have been carefully considered.

As for the school society, they report that good progress is made with the building, and they have set their fees until such a time as the school will open. It is marvelous when a good cooperation can be reported. That's all I want to say about that, for I should leave sufficient material for the school-crossing.

Yes, and now I must make a correction. I wrote a previous time that in Neerlandia they were considering the possibility of a kindergarten. In a letter I was berated for not reading well. I went through the bulletins of Neerlandia which I used for that medley, and could indeed not find what I had written. I can draw only one conclusion, that I jotted down such information from another bulletin and that that note was too close to the ones about Neerlandia, so that I got mixed up. This information be hereby passed on, although no harm was done, I presume. Otherwise, just send the bill.

Winnipeg is our next stop. Hopeful sounds come from there. Or would you not take courage when reading the following, "After the intermission the congregation confronted with several questions in relation to an organ for our present Church building The organ Committee will have to do some serious investigating, and will then undoubtedly inform the Consistory with facts and figures about pipe and electronic organs in order that the Consistory may be enabled to make a decision as soon as possible." Thus there is still hope for Winnipeg!

I was wondering about the following item and assume that the intention of the Consistory is not exactly what it says. "Consistory came to the decision to instruct our organists to spend up to \$100.00 a year for music." I did read before that Consistories gave organists the right to spend a certain amount on music, but this is the first time (insofar as I can recall) that a Consistory **instructed** the organists to do so. Taken literally, it does not seem like an ecclesiastical matter to me.

The poor minister has to move again, for another house has been purchased and since quite a few alterations have

to be made, it is no picnic. No wonder, I thought, that he is taking off for a week. Perhaps he will tell me that I do not have to pity him, and I don't do that at all. Yet it is quite something when one has to move two times within a rather short period of time.

Of interest to all teachers and to all students will be what is expressed in the following sentence: "There are still some students who have the illusion that they will be able to take something out of their head which they have never put there." And with this wisdom in our heads we move away from Winnipeg.

Entering Brampton, we notice that they have completed the first "Sermon Series" and are starting the second volume already.

Of Orangeville we mention that the Political Study Society scheduled a meeting where the topics to be dealt with included "Closed Shop" and "-isms" such as communism, socialism, etc.

Ebenezer Burlington tells us that the consistory had an ample discussion about the question which matters were to be dealt with in meetings with the deacons. By the way, Hamilton, too, had a discussion on the question, "What are items for discussion at combined elders and deacons meeting and which are not." Perhaps I can serve the brethren in Hamilton and also in other places when I pass on what I found in the Ebenezer Burlington bulletin. The Consistory there decided that, according to the Church Order, and in keeping with a practice, grown over the centuries, in the following cases deacons should be invited to the Consistory-meeting:

1. In the case of article 38 Church Order (which does not apply to us).

2. Nomination and appointment of office-bearers (Church Order Article 4, 5, 10, 22, 24), in which cases the deacons have a decisive vote together with the elders.

3. Internal Censura Morum (Church Order Article 81: 'ministers, elders, and deacons shall exercise christian censure among each other in a friendly spirit'; whether this be done in a meeting before the Holy Supper — as some churches do — or whenever the need arises, as we do).

4. Discipline of office-bearers (Church Order Article 79 f., in the light of a decision of Synod Middelburg 1591, which stated that deacons should be present in such cases because they also take part in nomination and calling of office-bearers, see sub 2).

5. Budget, appointments of Committee of Administration members, salaries and in general important matters re: property, etc. (because decisions in such cases might influence the work of the deacons who have to 'collect the alms and goods' for their work, Form of Ordin.). In such cases deacons have an advisory vote.

6. Decisions on special offerings and support of Institutions of Mercy, Charity, including Mission Aid.

7. Whenever deacons need the advice of consistory re: their work.

8. When deacons 'render account of their work to the Consistory' (Church Order Article 25). This set of regulations is nothing new for us, because we, in general, always have followed this practice. It is, however, good to state this again, because sometimes mistakes were made.

It all boils down to the rule that the offices remain 'distinct one from the other.' Deacons do not govern the Church nor do the overseers take care of the needy, and the ministers (who, together with the deacons, are under the supervision of the overseers) preach and teach, which

mandate is not given to the elders or deacons in his own office" under the "government of grace" of the Head of the Church.

In conclusion, it was stressed that there should be good communication and co-operation between the offices because the three offices are one in Christ.

Thus far the decision and its explanation. Although I think that it is strange to speak of "decisive vote" and "advisory vote" (just a translation of Dutch expressions) it is clear what is meant. In any case, the above decision gives more food for thought.

The Ebenezer Consistory also discussed the sects. No, rest assured, they did not have a discussion about the sects themselves but on how to advise members who are approached by representatives of the sects such as Mormons or so-called Jehovah Witnesses. I like to quote the following lines from the report on that Consistory meeting.

The general consensus was: only receive them if you are well-versed in the Scriptures, and well-informed about such sects. Mention was made of the series of lectures on sects, held this winter . . .; also good literature available in the Christian Family Bookstore. Pastor and elders are also available for advice and help. Alas, it had also to be stated that those who need knowledge of truth and errors most, usually stay away from such lectures and study, including societies, etc. Such members should most certainly close their doors against sects because, to their shame, they are not able to defend the truth and unmask the lie (see also II John 9-11).

Yes, I fully agree with the above statements. You'll find the same at catechism classes. Which students do their best most? Which students pay the best attention? Which students do not try to divert the attention of others? Those of whom one would say that they need it least. That's how it oftentimes goes. Whom do you never see at postconfession classes, at lectures? Those who need it most as far as we can see. And who criticize loudest? The very same persons. And, alas, the very same persons will again shrug their shoulders when reading these lines (if they read them) and when reading the quote from Ebenezer's bulletin.

One more thing from Hamilton.

"It is suggested to investigate the possibilities and feasibility of having a missionary on behalf of Classis South." Other churches there will be contacted and then the matter will be discussed again.

I would take exception to the expression "on behalf of Classis South." That, I am convinced, is a wrong approach. A missionary is sent out by one specific Church. If that Church cannot do it by itself, it can ask the help of sister Churches and then, as a matter of course, she will approach the Classis Churches first of all. However, when she succeeds in bringing the necessary funds together, that does not mean that then a missionary is sent out "on behalf of" the Churches in the Classis. It is done "with their help," not "on their behalf." Let's keep matters straight right from the beginning. Toronto does not send out a missionary on behalf of all the Eastern Churches and New Westminster does not do so on behalf of the Western Churches, although with their requests for support they recognize the "ecclesiastical boundaries."

As for the rest, you'll understand that I am happy with this development.

In the assumption that I have not mixed up any notes this time, I leave you now with all your ponderings and mixed feelings. Try to sort them out before we meet again.

Most sincerely, vO

Stewardship

TELEVISION . . . IN THE FAMILY?

For some time now you (could) have followed the discussion concerning television. Most of those who have written me were against possession and usage of a television set. Some arguments brought forward, indeed, merit serious thought. And I hope that you will continue to ponder all aspects, making a conclusion "proceeding from faith" (Romans 14:23).

It has been my contention that possession and usage of modern media (newspapers, radio, phono, even literature, novels and magazines), of which television is a permanent and integral part, falls under the command of stewardship, within our possibilities, but governed by the same limitations and restrictions which govern *everything*, "All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful" (I Corinthians 6:12, 10:23). In *all* things we must *glorify* God; so our usage of these media will have to be directed both to the Lord's glorification and our own edification (I Corinthians 6:20; 10:23).

Modern media are "multiple choice" media. One doesn't read the *whole* newspaper, only selected parts. Similarly, one doesn't follow *all* radio or television programs, but learns to restrict and limit his listening and viewing. At least, that's how it should be. I realize that one easily stumbles and falls in his usage of the media, and with television this stumbling is not imaginary. Let us not act overrighteously and overwisely (Ecclesiastes 7:15-18). Nevertheless, we must *strive* towards a correct usage of all our possessions. Recognizing our weaknesses, we must seek our strength in the guidance and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, also regarding modern media like television.

DOMINION

Br. and Sr. Jans ended their sympathetic letter with the question whether television, generally speaking, has enriched or impoverished church-life. A good question, but it should be rephrased somewhat. Has our *usage* of the television (and, again, other media!) been of such a nature that church-life was enriched or impoverished? If we let ourselves be *enslaved*

by the media, certainly our whole life will be greatly impoverished! But the fault is then our *own*.

I realize that control over the television is not simple, but on the other hand, let us not say too easily that we cannot govern our possessions and that control is virtually impossible. Because we do believe (do we not?) that the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon the whole church and that the spirits must and can be tested? Are we not "spiritual men" who judge all things, but themselves are to be judged by no one? (I Corinthians 2:12-16). Or are we incapable of stewardship? We are even called to have *dominion* (Genesis 1:26) and, I wonder, does this dominion suddenly exclude modern media? I do not wish to promote an unwarranted cultural optimism, but neither do I wish to succumb to an unscriptural pessimism along the line of the foolish servant, so afraid to fail that he buried even his one talent (Matthew 25:25).

Perhaps television has damaged our life of faith (at least where abstinence is not mandatory). Therefore we must be taught to deal with it properly. For this reason I asked your attention for correct stewardship. We must deal with the existing realities as "spiritual people having a new nature which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator" (Colossians 3:11).

STUMBLINGBLOCK?

The argument was also used that those who have television are casting a stumblingblock before "the weak." I assume that by "the weak" are meant here "those who cannot control their television." Indeed, there will be such people who will not direct their life to the right priority and let themselves be enslaved. Let us not get puffed up. Do we not all have our own specific weaknesses? And the point of the comparison seems to be that the "weak" would justify their television set with the fact that "the strong" also have one. Just like alcoholics always point to the social drinkers, I believe.

I appreciate such deep concern for others; it should show more often in our federation. But if this is such a basic argument, why not (I honestly

The Case of the Television

ask) use this same argument consistently in all other things? My example of the usage of alcoholic beverages still stands. In this respect there are many "weak" who are being coaxed along by the "strong." I am always a bit wary when we apply a certain argument only in *one* instance, and conveniently forget it in others. I wonder, then, if one has really understood the matter Paul is talking about in, for example, Romans 14 and I Corinthians 8.

The matter requires additional study (and I certainly have not said the last word in this at all!) but a few things may be noted concerning the weak and the strong. They should not, to start with, judge, despise and reject one another (Romans 14:4). The strong are sometimes quite "strong" in condemning, I'm afraid, and the weak so easily use weakness as an excuse. Also, the weak and the strong should not dispute over "opinions" because such disputes are hardly edifying (Romans 14:14). (Wonder what we've been doing?) And they should force neither their strength nor weakness upon one another, for "everyone must be fully convinced in his own mind" (Romans 14:5). The Law of God is *one*, but we must be careful in demanding a uniform application.

Certainly, we must not cast a stumblingblock before anyone, weak or strong. No one should, by his public example, lead anyone else on a wrong path. The majority of our people, however, have television, and since I cannot demand abstinence, I can only point to Christian stewardship. I fail to see where the stumblingblock lies.

Besides, what is Paul speaking about in I Corinthians 8, the text mentioned especially by Br. Bartels, "Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumblingblock to the weak"? Let's note that Paul does speak of *liberty*, something which Br. Bartels seemed to overlook. And also, Paul is not speaking of a *private* but of

a *public* matter, "For if anyone *sees* you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol's temple, might he not be encouraged . . ." (I Corinthians 8:10). Let us not forget, participation in an idol's temple was a *public* association with unbelievers and despisers of God (not to be confused with a private invitation, (I Corinthians 10:27), and Paul does not advise it with a view to the weak.

Television is a private matter in the home, and its usage determined by strong rules, and therein no stumblingblock is laid. I realize that our private life is fully governed by God's Word, but, for example, my private life is not object of general public scrutiny in the churches at large! A certain magazine may widely and greedily publicize the fact that I have television (talking about casting stumbling-blocks!), but it is another matter if one goes about publicly associating with unbelievers and frequenting, for example, idol's temples or movie-theatres. Again, let us be careful in quickly applying Scripture; the late Prof. B. Holwerda warned us strongly for impure parallels and exemplarism (in his *De Heilshistorie en de Prediking*).

USAGE

Those who do *not* have television, need not read the next paragraphs because they are designed towards an effective and correct usage of this medium. (You might file it, however, for future reference, because one never knows what change of mind may occur in the course of time . . .).

Someone has suggested that if we take T.V. into the home, we greatly magnify the temptation for our *children*. That is true, if we do not from the very beginning teach them some elementary rules of Christian stewardship. And let no one say that I advocate "permissiveness" with regards to television, because I advocate *strong* rules which must govern our usage.

CHILDREN

Perhaps it indeed is good to start with the children. In the book, *Television Child*, Norman S. Morris writes the following, "Without a doubt, television is the most powerful communications force ever created by man. Whether that force is positive, negative or neutral, depends on what you do with it. Children have to be *taught* to discriminate, to evaluate, to accept or reject television's varied input." This world today is unimaginable with-

out the modern media, and it is the first task of those who possess these media to *teach* their children the correct usage.

From *Klare Klanken* (the publication of the "Gereformeerde Omroepvereniging" of our brotherhood in The Netherlands) we take the following (October 9, 1976):

Certainly for our children there are great dangers with regard to television. Children have special attention for sensational and emotional happenings.

Does it go by unnoticed for our children, when pictures are shown of dead, wounded, starving people and all kinds of disasters? The more exciting the picture is, the more intense the child will experience it.

Children also have much attention for *details*. This increases their personal involvement. How often, for example, do children not identify themselves with characters in *books*! How many children wouldn't like to be a courier in wartime? For children it's often one big adventure; the true reality seems to pass them by (and certainly with boys this is the case).

They also forget quickly. New happenings and new images take their attention. Which means that the parents must keep up the pace, too. One cannot let children watch everything without guidance. What has been heard and seen must be *discussed*. Is it really as the radio says? What is our viewpoint in the matter according to Scripture and confession? In this the parents have a great *task*. They will have to operate the set (especially the ON/OFF knob). They must "chaperone" television.

In our opinion it is irresponsible to permit children who cannot yet distinguish critically (and which child can?) to look at and listen to *everything without* guidance. This guidance also includes that the set is turned off when further watching is unwarranted. The atmosphere of the media is not such that all things can be watched. But the parents must *choose*. They are responsible for their children.

Beside the discussion at home, guidance is also possible *at school*! Not to shove off the task of the parents, but as an *extra* possibility. The situation at home and at school differs greatly, but happily our Reformed schools do offer possibilities. Teachers are prepared to react to what the children say and tell.

In this way the child can be educated by the parents according to the promise made at baptism. Do you use Lord's Day 10 in this respect? Do you make your Reformed confession *concrete*?

You will understand that I *fully* agree with these words. Anyone who has the audacity to bring modern media into the home must teach the family (and himself first!) a correct usage. And I would like to suggest a few

practical rules which are very beneficial in this respect.

* Children's viewing should be strongly restricted (in time) and the programs rigidly pre-selected by the parents. The T.V. should not become a "baby-sitter" to which the children indiscriminately adhere for long periods of time. While the T.V. is "on," the parents should not go about their business elsewhere, but at least one parent should sit down and watch *with* the children, making suitable comments. To many children it is a "revelation" when a parent quietly *criticizes* what is shown or said, and they themselves become critical. If the parents approach the programs critically, the children will learn not to take for granted what is offered.

* On certain days the T.V. should remain off (especially Sundays, and on weekdays when the weather permits outside recreation) so that the children are stimulated to engage in *other* activities. Parents should encourage the children to draw, colour, paint, or read. Parents, too, should be active with their children, reading to them or playing with them, at least taking an active interest in their affairs. You will find that your children prefer *your* company to that of the T.V.! How many parents have experienced this? A good rule is that *after supper* (and before bed) there is *no television viewing*, but a "family hour" is maintained in which the parents together occupy themselves with their children (in schoolwork, relaxation, games, etc.). In this way the children learn that television may be present but is not important. It should be a means which is used occasionally, like radio and stereo.

* In selecting programs (just as one selects books, etc.) the parents should set a high standard, both ethically and aesthetically. The program should have some educational quality, not be profane in any way and approach the subject matter with honesty. Violent and strongly emotional programs should be avoided, while family stories (of the format like "The Waltons") are to be preferred. Programs like "Sesame Street" and "Mr. Dress-up" are of value if parents offer critical guidance. Cartoons (Saturday morning viewing) should be restricted, because of their strongly violent contents (although Bugs Bunny's arrogant antics are so ridiculous that even most children find them preposterous!). Children also should be taught to spurn the usual advertisements as being

quite insulting and often misleading.

* Make sure that when *other children* come to play, they indeed do play and are not grouped around your television set. Do not make your home into a public theatre, and cause a stumblingblock for others. Television viewing should be a regulated *family* affair and not a public matter! That holds true, by the way, also for the adults: when you have visitors, communicate together and turn the T.V. off. Don't be so impolite as to see the program out first. Your hospitality is at stake, and your guests "deserve" your undivided attention.

* As far as the *older* children are concerned, forbid LATE-NIGHT viewing. In this respect I'm amazed that some parents let their children watch T.V. to all hours of the night. There should also be an open relationship of trust between parents and their teenage children. For example, when the children are on their own and must baby-sit, parents should discuss possible viewing before leaving and encourage other activities. Above all, one cannot stuff his children into his own pocket, but must teach them their *own* responsibility as stewards of the Lord in this creation so marred by sin. In this way the children are being prepared for independent life and are being motivated towards a critical stewardship.

If those who possess television strive to follow some of these rather simple rules, I'm sure that the children will not become addicted and the television will not be "detrimental," but they will develop a sober, critical attitude towards the Media, learning to apply the norms of Scripture. Then we get children who are being equipped for their task to be *in* this world, but are not *of* this world. Again, I do not say that one must buy television; only, if you have it, follow sound rules of usage!

ADULTS

A few remarks must be made about adult viewing. Parents, your example molds the children in many ways. Your viewing habits will be taken over by your children. If you are enslaved, you make slaves of your children. If you are sober and critical, your children too, generally speaking, will be the same. And will the Lord not bless a Scriptural upbringing?

Parents must stress *priorities* and live up to them. T.V. is not at all so important in life. Neither is radio or

stereo. The service of the Lord is decisive. Never should T.V. (or anything else, for that matter) interfere with congregational life. Church-services go before everything else, even hockey games and cup finals. That should be an unchallenged rule in the family. Catechism, societies, and meetings all surpass television-viewing. This should become "flesh and blood" with us and our children. Once you let television prevail over these crucial matters, you are on the wrong path, and if your T.V. causes you to sin, you must throw it away (Matthew 5:29).

Our life must be Christ-centered and therefore Church-centered, and so television, radio, and stereo are relatively unimportant. And I'm convinced, if the office-bearers find clear cases of misuse in this respect (just like negligence in financial contributions to the Church!) discipline must be applied. Usually, misuse will become apparent because it is combined with a completely wrong attitude towards the Lord and His service.

POINTS

Also to the parents, a few practical points to consider.

* Avoid *day-time* viewing, but go about with full attention for your God-given work. If you have some time on your hands, do not immediately turn on the set, but engage in active recreation like sports, go out with the children (if you have them) into the Lord's mighty creation, visit the brothers and sisters (however, not to gossip, but to edify and be edified!); in short, don't waste precious time with passive viewing. Daytime programs consist mostly of low-level, poorly-directed soap operas which elaborate on all kinds of sickly themes. Seek out the *informative* programs.

* Especially some sisters at home should cut down on their daily portion of T.V. Self-discipline is the first form of all discipline. Read a good (Reformed) book, and not just Harlequin Romances and the *Reader's Digest's* indigestible abridgements. Why not study some Dutch and engage in active multi-culturalism? Try a new recipe, bring some green into the house, experiment with your own possibilities and develop your God-given talents.

* Restrict your evening-viewing, so that it doesn't take up *all* evening. Take some time to converse with one another. Sr. Kingma was right when she mentioned that T.V. seems to destroy family communication. But I

add, misuse is the culprit! Many couples have this exciting procedure: they turn off the T.V., turn on the light, and turn around! Discover one another again, positively; speak with one another and keep the line of Christian communication open!

* Avoid the serials, like police serials and "sit-coms" (situation comedies) because these are not only extremely violent and profane, but strongly addictive. One "must" find out what Pepper and Kojak are up to this time! But forget it, it's a waste of time because these stories always have the same pattern and foreseeable ending, just like the Harlequin Romances. If you must watch, don't insult yourself; select informative programs or responsible entertainment which is truly relaxing. There are still some educational programs, reports of value, national programs, nature programs, documentaries and family programs and classics. Certain dramatizations can be enjoyed (don't we enjoy certain novels? and a novel is a dramatization!) and even the odd sports program is entertaining.

* The norm which must be applied in *all* cases is what Rev. Thomas writes in his article (previously quoted from *De Reformatie*): "Which programs may we watch? There are a few important principles in Philippians 4:8 which might guide us, 'Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.'"

CONCLUSION

It's high time I come to a conclusion. Some are sorry that I ever started this discussion. But may I be clear once more? I do not encourage anyone to buy a television set. Those who disapprove such a move have my sympathy, as long as they do not make this abstinence mandatory for others. I do not say that the time never comes that we cannot have a T.V. But whatever we do, those who have a television set must *manage* it as stewards of the Lord.

"For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Galatians 5:13 and 14).
CI. STAM

Chats on Politics

REACH FOR POWER?

Remember the letter we published two issues ago?

I would like to quote a few lines from it this time.

"How would . . . 'our representative in Ottawa' deal with the Iron Curtain?"

"We, however, would suggest that long before we aim for power (Reformed representation in Ottawa) we should first establish Reformed Policies."

* * *

That raises the question, "What are we aiming for when we choose someone to represent us in either the federal or the provincial parliament?"

Is it correct to say that our representative in Ottawa would have to deal, e.g. "with the Iron Curtain"? (and who are the ones meant by "our"? Just a group or the citizens in general?)

It is not.

When we elect someone, we elect him to represent us, to represent *all* citizens of the riding in which we live, so that, as a member of the legislative assembly, he may influence, curb, check, correct, advise, help the Government.

When we elect someone to parliament, either federally or provincially, we do not elect him to *govern*. Then we do not elect him to deal with all sorts of foreign relations, with countries on this or on the other side of the Iron Curtain or of the Equator; but then we only elect him to deal with the matters which the government puts before parliament, or matters which have to be brought to the attention of the Government.

Parliament (federal as well as provincial) is not called to govern.

Election to parliament is no mandate to govern.

Parliament is a legislative assembly whose rights and duties are well-defined. However much jurisdiction Parliament may have, it can only influence the Government but is not part of the Government. It is part of our political system and the Government is bound (to a certain extent) by parliament. Parliament, however, does not deal with countries behind the Iron Curtain. Parliament can deal with matters pertaining to those countries and

relations with those countries when the Government puts that before Parliament or when Parliament deems it necessary to bring certain matters, developments, happenings concerning those countries to the attention of the Government.

The mandate to govern does not come from the people; it comes from Her Majesty the Queen or, in her name, from the Governor General who represents her. When either the Queen herself or the Governor General reads the Speech from the Throne, we repeatedly hear the words "My Government." The one who speaks these words is not the Prime Minister (who humbly refers to the other ministers of the crown as "my colleagues") even though he has written that speech, at least for the larger part, but the one who speaks these words is the Queen or her representative.

Those who govern us and have the power are the Queen and her Ministers, who are Ministers of the Crown, not the representatives or the servants of the people or of the "party."

Parliament is just the body which exercises its influence to prevent those who govern us from exceeding the boundaries of their authority. Parliament guards the rights of the citizens and the interests of the nation in the midst of the world of nations.

The fact that the ministers of the Crown are taken from the ranks of elected representatives does not alter their position as ministers of the Crown at all, nor does it "elevate" the (other) representatives of the people to the rank of "governors."

To be represented by the best available person — that's what we aim for.

To be represented by the person whom I can trust to advise the (federal or provincial) government well — that is what I should try to achieve.

To be represented by someone of whom I may expect that he will say "No" to proposed legislation which must be deemed to be in conflict with God's will, and "Yes" to proposed legislation which promotes justice and equity and may be deemed to be conducive to good order and healthy growth — that's what I shall endeavour to bring about.

I do not elect someone to govern me; I elect someone to represent me with the Government, and to do all those things which are described in the law, or have become the privilege and the duty of the respective parliaments.

If, through my vote, someone may be called to govern, that is an added benefit. I wished we could elect so many representatives that there were no others who could be called to govern except the people who in all things wish to bow before the Word of the Lord.

To say, however, that when electing someone, we "aim for power" by trying to get a Reformed person to represent us, is wrong.

For as long as I cannot get the "best available person" there, I shall be content with the "next-best" for as long as I know what his stand is regarding specific issues about which we have an express word of the Lord. I think here of the question of abortion, just to mention that one point.

As for the points at which we do not have an express word of the Lord, in those cases we are to be extremely careful not to make a "principle" out of something which is just a matter of practical wisdom. The speaking of "everlasting principles" in the past oftentimes did more harm than good.

Take, e.g., an Egg Marketing Board. I think that such a board is a wrong phenomenon. The sooner those boards disappear the better it will be in *the long run*. CEMA fortunately was so wise as to withdraw its "order" to supermarket chains to stop advertising loss-leader egg prices. I wished it had declared itself out of existence.

There may be others who are in favour of such boards.

We could have a good argument about it, I think.

I also think that there are "principles" behind the pros as well as behind the cons.

But since I do not have an express word of the Lord, I grant everyone his freedom to think about it as he wishes. Leave me mine, will you?

vO

OUR COVER

Cap Rouak, Cabot Trail. Courtesy of Nova Scotia Communications & Information Centre Photo.

REPORT NO. 77

To the Consistory, Canadian Reformed Church, New Westminster, B.C.

São José da Coroa Grande, PE,
November 30, 1976

MONTH OF NOVEMBER

Reverend and Esteemed Brethren,

After last month's lengthy report, I can keep it shorter this time. It has been a busy month again, but, most of it being the routine work, we will not tire you with a monotonous report of the regular activities. Not that these activities themselves would be monotonous in any way. On the contrary: bringing the living Word of God to a number of living people is always new and fascinating. All the events in the church building are the highlights of our life here and there are always the questions: Who will be there? How will they receive the message? And we always enjoy mingling in with the people, the adults as well as the children, before and after the service: a little chat here, a question there, and simply enjoy the growing communion of saints.

New Catechumenes: Last month we reported that another 7 persons indicated their desire to become members of the Church and to follow the required pre-confession courses. These classes started early this month, divided in two groups. One consists of 6 women and the second of 2 men. (The number increased to 8 this month.)

The class of the ladies is held on Monday evening (Women Society was switched to Friday evening) and the two men come on Sunday afternoon.

Youth Club: Now that I use the lessons which I prepare myself the Youth Club is definitely running better. It is easier to hold their attention and to have them participate since it is geared to their level and our situation. A novelty for them is that we are now rehearsing a song for the Christmas program accompanied by some simple, home-made musical instruments: triangles and tambourines.

Girls' Choir: The ladies resumed the practices with the Girls' Choir this month so that they will also sing some songs at the Christmas celebration.

Registration of the Church: Even

as every person here needs an identification card and number, every society is also required to be registered. We are now in the process of meeting these requirements which means that the equivalent of an Administration Committee (complete with Constitution) has to be chosen from among the Brazilian members. Even though this would not function internally, it is a requirement to obtain a number which may be essential for obtaining visa, etc.

Offerings: Every week the people bring their offerings. From them we pay the water and the light bill and have some projects to improve the facilities. This month an exterior light was installed above the classroom door, an improvement indeed. Other projected improvements, to be paid from the offerings, are an additional piece of sidewalk and benches in the church yard.

A Personal Note: We wish to take this opportunity to extend our greetings to all the readers. As family we wish you the Lord's blessings for the coming year. May the Lord grant that through your and our labour His Kingdom may draw nearer.

With kindest regards and best wishes, also on behalf of my wife and our children,

Yours in the Lord's service,
C. Van Spronsen.

* * *

MISSION AID REPORT NO. 52

REPORT OVER THE MONTH OF
NOVEMBER 1976

Esteemed Brethren,

Once again a month has slipped by. Time is flying and before you know, it is reporting time again. Yet, there is very little what we would call "news" to report. What is news anyway? Is it not great news that we could do our work unhindered, that we could be of help to people in need and received enough courage to stay awake, sometimes for a few nights in a row, to watch two small children which were very sick, etc.? From our last report you learned that one little one died during the night without us being present at that particular time;

although the mother was there she didn't notice it. We know that these things can not always be avoided but you nevertheless like to be there when it happens. Therefore we paid a little more attention this time.

First there was *Cecleide*, a 3 month old girl we received already last month. We had our problems with her and still have, although she is much better now. Then we admitted another little boy of about the same age this month. His name is *Luciano* and he also gave us some worries, especially the first few days and nights. His condition is also greatly improved so that we can now sleep more peacefully. This is the fourth child of the same family we now take care of. The mother went often enough to the doctor but nothing seemed to help. We have concluded that this mother some how does not know how to take care of little children and if it was not for the help via mission-aid, her four children would be, humanly speaking, all born for the graveyard. Actually we are helping her to raise a big family, seeing that she is very young yet. Here sometimes questions come up in our mind. Does she really like to have all those children, being herself born in a family and raised in a society wherein they lose sometimes more than 50% of their children? Would she not be much better off, after all, having only a few children? Can she later on provide for a big family?

Putting up these questions is also to answer them. Are these good questions? No, they are not in my opinion. Sure, sometimes you are apt to think into that direction. But is not man made after the image of God and is not therefore all life really precious. Does the commandment of the Lord "thou shalt not kill" not also imply that we should promote life under all circumstances, everybody in his own place?

True, these people may not always understand this, but should we not therefore show them also by our way of life that this is the truth? Only looking at it from this angle we are assured that we are doing the right thing. The rest we can then leave up to the Lord. With this fixed in our minds we can look forward again and do our work in confidence.

In our previous report we also mentioned that we had officially applied for some land suitable for planting. So far we never have received word yet. Via the town-representative

I have kept in touch with the issue and he has still high hopes that the plan will be accepted. The above mentioned representative has been chosen as mayor for this town in the elections held a few weeks ago. This could help us to reach our goal. At the present time we can do nothing more than wait.

The weather picture changed unexpectedly this month. The wet season has been unusually dry this year but over the last few weeks we received a lot of rain. As always, the weather is still unpredictable. The thirsty soil sure could stand it.

At the time of this writing we have already entered the last month of the year. It is the time of the year in which we tend to look back for a moment to see what we have accomplished. It also is the time of the year to count the blessings of the Lord. These blessings were many. The Lord spared our lives and the lives of our beloved ones. We could do our work unhindered most of the time. Yes, we also encountered difficulties and disappointments at times but in all this the Lord showed His faithfulness and lovingkindness towards us. Therefore we are thankful.

In the first month of the new year we hope to receive some visitors from Canada. First 2 members of the mission aid committee will visit us, namely Mr. W.H. Bredenhof and Mr.

Church News

Called:

REV. W.W.J. VAN OENE

of the Church at Fergus, Ontario was called by the Church at Smithers, B.C.

* * *

Called:

REV. J. MULDER

of the Church at Cloverdale, B.C. was called by the Church at London, Ontario.

* * *

Change of address:

The address of the American Reformed Church at Grand Rapids is now:

A. Vandersluis
4437 Bremer, S.W.,
Grandville, Michigan 49418 U.S.A.
Phone: Area Code 616 - 538-3468

T. Pothoven, and of late we heard that also Miss Jenny DeLeeuw will travel with them. Needless to say that we are looking forward to this visit. You can therefore in due time expect a visitors' impression in Mission News. Later a few friends from Carman, 2 girls, hope to visit us. Also to that visit we look forward. It will be a welcome break for us.

Since this will be one of the last reports over this year, we like to take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year. We also like to thank those who remembered us on our birthdays in October and November. Thank you very much for the cards we received at that time.

This will end my report. May the Lord bless you all and surround you with His care. Until the next time.

Yours in Christ's service,
John Kuik.

* * *

NEW YEAR'S LETTER

São José da Coroa Grande,
December 1976

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We will soon enter another year again, D.V., and that is usually the time that we send a newsletter to our family and friends in Canada and The Netherlands. We will do so again this year.

Many of you already know from the reports and personal letters how things are going here, so we do not have to write about this.

First of all we would like to wish each and everyone of you a blessed New Year. May each of us in his own place be faithful in His service.

Being in a country with palm trees and much sunshine, it is very hard to imagine that you are in the middle of the winter. Likely with snow. We have what we call "summer" here.

Our family is doing fine and our children have grown a lot in the past year. They always have a good appetite. Very soon they will have their holidays from December till February, but they will continue the lessons with Lynn Metzlar, the girl who is teaching our children in English. The children are enjoying those lessons and it sure is a big help for us.

The heat doesn't seem to bother the children at all, because they are always active. Ronald is always busy making something with electricity. Jacob loves to play soccer and Alinda

is happy when she can be on her bike, even when the sun is right above her.

Likely you are curious about our nursery. I'll take you along but be very quiet because the little ones are sound asleep. The little girl of 4 months has coughed a lot today and has settled at last. Although just a little more than a month at our place, you don't recognize her anymore. Her weight was a little over 2 kl. when she came, and she had to be fed every 45 minutes. She has improved a lot since then, although she is still vomiting quite often. She is such a cute, tiny baby.

In the other crib is a little boy, also 4 months old. He came 2 weeks ago with the same symptoms as so many others: malnutrition, diarrhea, vomiting, anemia, and very badly swollen. In the first week he became critically ill and we feared for his life. It was a great tension, but our heavenly Father has heard our prayers which were sent up for this little one, and he has improved a lot and is out of danger.

This afternoon we had 4 mothers with children who had been at our place for some time. Seeing those healthy children again, you can only be so very thankful for those blessings. Zezinho, who has been a half year with us, still knows the place where the cookies are. Some mothers come quite regularly to show us how their children are doing after they have gone home.

Remember the work here in your daily prayers. That is urgently needed.

Those who come now to church and have answered the Lord's calling, are often still very weak in faith and the temptations are great. Only supporting the mission with your money is not enough, although that is a must also.

We already said that we are all in good health, even though we also encountered some problems in that respect. The Lord made everything well again and we could do the things we had to do. For that we are thankful.

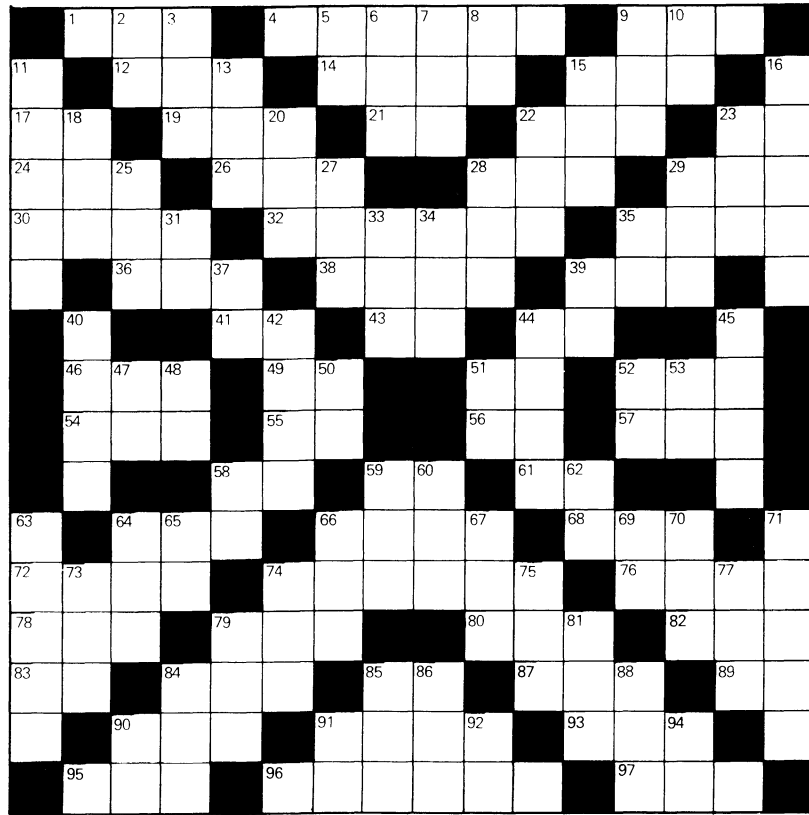
May the Lord continue to give you His blessings according to His promise. Also the year 1977 will be in His hands.

We will end this letter now.

We hope that you may receive this writing being in good health and expecting everything from above.

Many greetings from us all,
John, Ardis,
Ronald, Jacob and Alinda.

Puzzle No. 17



- 62. Room (abbr.)
- 63. Faith of a Muslim
- 64. Citation (abbr.)
- 65. Preposition
- 66. Boy's name
- 67. Beverage
- 69. Indefinite article
- 70. Negative
- 71. Vegetables
- 73. Cookware
- 74. Ten decibels
- 75. Part of a wheel
- 77. Distress signal
- 79. Weight measure
- 81. Creature
- 84. Celestial body
- 85. Musical note
- 86. Combustible substance
- 88. Part of the foot
- 90. River in Italy
- 91. Telegraph office (abbr.)
- 92. Musical note
- 94. Symbol for Beryllium

G. DE BOER

Letters-to-the-Editor

Dear Editor,

The last few weeks we read many opinions about T.V., "Yes" or "No."

I still think that the most important point in this matter has not been mentioned as yet. When we purchase a television set, we have to do something, a deed, an act: Money has to be used, money received out of grace from our God and Father to serve Him with it, and for nothing else in daily life. Using the money to purchase a television set of which we know beforehand that it is a medium in the hands of the "world," can we then, in all sincerity pray, "Thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast given us ways and means to obtain a television set to serve Thee and to praise Thy Name," also in the media of this world? Does this medium have *any value*? It is not a "dead thing," but what is shown affects our minds and actions. (See article *Una Sancta*, dated November 20, 1976.) We have to give an answer for we have used money received from the Lord to be used for His Kingdom.

Secondly: As soon as we have obtained a television set we have to make decisions daily. Which program will be on? Father prefers this one and Mother that one and the children a third one. (The media take care that every one has something to enjoy!!!) We see that it is not an easy decision, for we know (or don't we?) that we are weak and miserable sinners. Once Adam and Eve had to make a decision, too, no, not by force, not at all, but freely. All the trees they were free to use; only one was forbidden. They knew from the Lord what would happen if they ate from the forbidden fruit. They chose . . . even in Paradise while being sinless, the forbidden tree. Are we stronger today? (I did not quote just indiscriminately a text, but the full "story" of the Scripture.)

W. VANDERMOLLEN

ACROSS

- 1. Skill
- 4. Invited friends
- 9. Lord
- 12. Tennis term
- 14. Skin of fruit
- 15. Deep track
- 17. Postscript (abbr.)
- 19. Sleep
- 21. Definite article in grammar
- 22. Sum
- 23. Part of Bible
- 24. Writing tool
- 26. Fast walk
- 28. Tree
- 29. Beverage
- 30. Vegetable
- 32. Table linen
- 35. Figure in chess
- 36. Boy's name
- 38. To trim off
- 39. To drink a little
- 41. With regard to
- 43. Musical note
- 44. Left side (abbr.)
- 46. One of the senses
- 49. Pronoun (old English)
- 51. Symbol for Tellurium
- 52. One of the senses
- 54. Insect
- 55. Elevated railroad (abbr.)
- 56. Each (abbr.)
- 57. Shelter

DOWN

- 58. Form of "to be"
- 59. Public relations (abbr.)
- 61. Medical title
- 64. Form of "able"
- 66. Vegetable
- 68. Creature
- 72. Point of land
- 74. Rodent
- 76. One of the senses
- 78. Strip of wood
- 79. Number
- 80. Target
- 82. Part of the foot
- 83. Indefinite article
- 84. Musical note
- 85. Conjunction
- 87. Floor cover
- 89. Saint (abbr.)
- 90. Joke
- 91. Hard work
- 93. Jack as in cribbage
- 95. Member of family
- 96. Monetary unit
- 97. Fish
- 2. Right side (abbr.)
- 3. Number
- 5. Not down
- 6. Fish
- 7. Look
- 8. Symbol for Thallium
- 9. Is sticky
- 10. Part of Bible
- 11. Fruit
- 13. Oily substance
- 15. Liquor
- 16. Raised platform
- 18. Look
- 20. Joke
- 22. Tricky
- 23. Recent
- 25. Fishing equipment
- 27. Sleep
- 28. Before
- 29. To hit lightly
- 31. Knock out
- 33. Friend
- 34. Fixed point in time
- 35. Programmed instruction (abbr.)
- 37. Map reference (abbr.)
- 39. Steamship (abbr.)
- 40. Fruit
- 42. Sense organs
- 44. Metal
- 45. Hunted animal
- 47. Indefinite article (in grammar)
- 48. Right (abbr.)
- 50. Elevated railroad (abbr.)
- 51. Symbol for Tellurium
- 52. Elevation (abbr.)
- 53. Pronoun (old English)
- 58. Preposition
- 59. Vegetable
- 60. Revelation (abbr.)

our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

What do you like best about winter? Do you like making slides at recess-time at school? Building big snow forts? Tobogganing? Or drinking hot chocolate when you come in?

Some Busy Beavers have been very busy writing poems about winter. And I'll let you read them right now!

In Winter

I wanted to make a snowman
on a windy day.
But it was too cold.
I asked my mother
if she wanted to play.
She said she was too old.
Then I saw a snowflake
falling from the sky.
I wanted to catch it
But it was too high.
So good-bye.

by Busy Beaver *Jacqueline Riemersma*
My Snowman

I will make a snowman
I will give him a carrot nose
Then to find blue marbles for his eyes
He will stand like a showman
And when he has to, he will pose
To anyone who looks up at him with surprise.
My snowman will have a corn-cob pipe
He will have a woolly scarf and hat
He will have five buttons down his middle
Though he isn't the type
To sit on a mat
In front of a fire playing a fiddle.

by Busy Beaver *Helena Blokhuis*



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Carol Ann Lubbers*. We are happy to have you join us. Be sure you join in all our Busy Beaver activities, Carol Ann!

And a big welcome to you too, *Carl Dorgeloos*. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already, sending us a poem with your very first letter! Thank you, Carl. Keep up the good work.

Of course you may join the Busy Beaver Club, *Faith Schoen*. We hope you will join in all our Busy Beaver activities and really enjoy being a Busy Beaver. Write again soon, Faith.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Irene Schoen*. We are happy to have another set of twin sisters join us! We

hope you will really like being a Busy Beaver. Bye for now, Irene.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Karen Wieggers*. We are always happy to have a new Busy Beaver join us. I think you had a very nice Christmas holiday, didn't you, Karen?

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Henriette Bosscher*. We hope you too, will be a real Busy Beaver and join in all our Busy Beaver activities. I think your big sister will like to help you sometimes, am I right?

I'm glad you like "Our Little Magazine," *Karen Schouten*. That's very important for a new Busy Beaver, of course. I hope your brother is all better again by now, Karen.

Hello *Cathy Bouwman*. I'm glad you had such a nice Christmas holiday. Are you still having fun in the snow? Thank you for your letter, and the quiz, too, Cathy.

How are your organ lessons coming, *Yvonne Byker*? Does your family enjoy your new organ? And thank you very much for your contribution to the Birthday Fund, Yvonne! Sometimes I think some of the Busy Beavers have forgotten we have it!

Thank you for your letter, *Karen Ellens*, and your poem and puzzle too. Sounds as if you had a really good time at Christmas and New Year, Karen. Bye for now.

Hello *Cynthia Dam*. It was nice to hear from you again. Thank you for making up such a nice quiz for us, Cynthia. I think the Busy Beavers will enjoy doing it!

Your riddle was very funny, *Jacqueline Riemersma*. I think the Busy Beavers will like it, and your poem, too. Thank you for your letter.

Thank you for your story, *Caroline Marissen*. It was nice to hear from you again. Write again soon, Caroline.

How do you like living in your new house, *Helena Blokhuis*? I'm glad you live so close to your friend now. Thank you for your poem. Keep up the good work, Helena!

Thank you for the puzzle, *Jane Vreugdenhil*. The Busy Beavers will enjoy doing it, I'm sure. Write again soon, Jane.

* * * * *

QUIZ TIME

Here is a riddle for you from Busy Beaver *Jacqueline Riemersma*. She wrote:

"Once there was a policeman who caught a man speeding. He gave the man a ticket."

The man said: "I have permission to speed. It says on my licence."

The police said, "Let me see."

The man said, "See, it says right here: Tear along the Dotted Line."

I think you will like Busy Beaver *Karen Ellens*' puzzle. Can you fill in all the Bible names?

