



# Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Volume 26 - No. 12

June 18, 1977



# Christ and the Cinema<sup>1</sup>

It is a rather blunt, but true statement that Jesus Christ is a "box-office" success. Continually He is being sought after by directors and producers to attract the crowds and increase the dividends.

The trend towards these "religious spectacles" was set in 1927 by an opportunistic director, Cecile B. de Mille, in the film "King of Kings," and was continued in other Bible-related extravaganzas like "Ben-Hur," "The Robe" and "The Ten Commandments."

In recent years the Gospel, or rather the person of Christ, has gained new attention. Noteworthy are two totally opposed efforts, the Musical "Godspell" (which reduced Christ to a blundering clown) and the rock-opera "Superstar" (which "elevated" Him to a fanatical idiot).

Lately another religious spectacle (costing 18 million dollars) was presented to the general public, this time ready-made for prime time television: Franco Zefirelli's "Jesus of Nazareth," suitably aired around the time of Good Friday and Easter (when the religious activity of the nation is at an unusual peak).

## PRINTED EDITION

I did *not* see the film on T.V., simply because I chose not to do so. I am not in favour of Biblical dramatizations, especially not those "masterpieces" involving the Lord Jesus Christ. I have some simple reasons for this choice. Christ is usually depicted in an *un*-biblical manner and the drama overrules the Truth. Besides, as in much art, the image given of Christ is doubtful — to say the least — and therefore deceiving.

Christ is mostly introduced as a tall, slender and handsome man with dark, curly locks, deep eyes and an absolutely hypnotic vision. He seems to be a person who fascinates by His overwhelming physical presence. To me it just doesn't fit in with Isaiah's inspired description that He had "no form or comeliness that we should look at Him, or *no beauty* that we

should desire Him" (Isaiah 53). I rather get the impression that by His physical appearance, Christ was a rather "mediocre" person; forgive the expression.

For this reason, also, I do not favour Bibles which contain illustrations of Christ, and I've never been able to figure out how they can fit a common Jew with a Roman nose. Publishers seem to be unduly influenced by the trend-setting artwork of such people as Sallman, who became famous for his "heads of Christ." The well-known "halo" (as sign of distinction) is even disgusting, if we realize that Christ simply appeared as "Son of Man."

What I have read, however, is the printed edition of the film, written by Dr. William Barclay, noted Scottish theologian and author, whose Bible commentary has achieved international acclaim. The book (in pocket form and in an impressive hard-cover edition) is presently on the American best-selling list, and a local minister cannot help but stumble over it.

## WILLIAM BARCLAY

The author of the book, William Barclay, is a reputable and eminent theologian, and his adapting of the original script will certainly have this effect for many that it gives the film a theological and scholarly authority and credibility which it otherwise would not have gained. For this reason alone Zefirelli's "Jesus of Nazareth" might even become a classic dramatization and interpretation of the Gospel.

The fact, however, that Barclay has written the book, should make us all the more wary. Normally we must "play the puck and not the man," but in this case the man's clearly-professed views are so profoundly heretic that these must be considered. Barclay could only re-write the original Burgess' script because it clearly reflects some of his own unscriptural ideas.

## A LIBERAL EVANGELICAL?

In an interview with one of the editors of *Christianity Today* (January 1976) Barclay professes to be a "liberal evangelical," and, certainly, his

writings are so carefully construed that initially one might mistake him for a true evangelical. In reality, however, Barclay ranks high among the most modernistic of theologians who have faithfully continued on in the line of men like Barth and Bultmann.

In his "A Spiritual Autobiography" (written in 1975 after retiring from the University of Glasgow), we can find a concise compilation of Barclay's beliefs, expounded positively in chapter 4 and even neatly arranged at the end of the book in "a testament of faith."

We cannot, of course, discuss all the points we'd perhaps like to discuss, but some basic principles must be mentioned, just to get "the feel" of things. It appears then, interestingly enough, that Barclay's teaching shows a remarkable similarity with that of Dr. Herman Wiersinga, student-pastor at the Free University of Amsterdam, especially in connection with "reconciliation" and "suffering" (cp. H. Wiersinga, "Verzoening als Verandering" and "Verzoening met het Lijden?").

## DEMONSTRATE?

At first, like a true evangelical, William Barclay accepted the notion that Christ died on the cross to make necessary satisfaction for our sins (cp. Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 5), but slowly it dawned on him that such was an incorrect conception because it started out from the *wrath* of God instead of from His *love*. And, in the end, Barclay concluded that Christ did not come to "change but only to *demonstrate* God's attitude towards man" (o.c. page 52).

With Wiersinga he makes the alarming statement that "God did not lay on Jesus the punishment that should have been laid upon me" (o.c. page 51). Christ's death on the cross was *no* satisfaction for sin, but simply visible proof that God was prepared to go "all the way" in Christ, proof of His boundless and infinite love.

Certainly, in my opinion, the *heart* of the Gospel is at stake here. God *did* start out in love, making His Covenant with man in Paradise, granting both



"Dr. William Barclay"

life and abundance. And even when man incurred God's righteous wrath by breaking that Covenant, God *continued* in love, "promising that He would make him blessed" (Article 17, Belgic Confession). He promised His Son, but this Son would achieve reconciliation *only* through suffering unto death; atonement by substitution, as is made absolutely clear in Isaiah 53 and, e.g., II Corinthians 5. You will understand that I cannot unquestioningly approach this man's version of the Gospel as re-written from a novelist's script.

#### DIVINITY DENIED?

In his "Autobiography," Barclay does not outrightly deny the Divinity of Christ, but certainly comes close to

it, when he writes, "In Jesus I see God, but it is not that Jesus *is* God" (italics are Barclay's). And he adds, "There are attributes of God I do not see in Jesus" (o.c. pages 49 and 50). Barclay emphasizes that Christ is the Logos, the expressed word of God, in Whom God's total love is visible, but within that framework he leaves no room for the "two natures of Christ."

Similarly, Barclay has some difficulty with the Holy Spirit, Whom he can hardly see as a "Person" within the Trinity. He writes, "I find it very hard to distinguish between the Holy Spirit and the ever-present risen Lord" (o.c. page 109).

#### UNIVERSALISM

Barclay further professes his faith in the "essential goodness and nobility of man" (o.c. page 112), whereas the Scriptures clearly teach the total depravity of man, and exclaims to be a "convinced universalist" (o.c. page 51). He advocates that in the end *all men* will be saved regardless of faith. And Barclay is really in keeping with the theological trend of today when he, too, states that "God needs man" (cp. the theology of Prof. Dr. H.M. Kuitert, among others). We even read that God becomes "dependent" on man, and when man becomes the temple and the agent of the Holy Spirit, "man is also necessarily the *limitation* of the Holy Spirit" (o.c. page 114).

In his "testament of faith," this affluent, modern scholar has achieved one thing: in this liberalism there is no "evangelion" left! Some of the basic doctrines of the Reformed (Scriptural) faith, namely, the depravity of man, reconciliation through satisfaction, the Divinity of Christ, election and reprobation, are conveniently done away with on no uncertain terms.

The *cause* is that although Barclay says that "faith is based on revelation," yet *reason* must immediately be applied (o.c. page 36). In this process Barclay has reasoned away so much of the revelation that nothing is left of true faith.

Because we now know of Barclay's unbiblical convictions and his modernistic background, we hardly deem him suited to re-write the true story of the Gospel even "in terms of today." And it shows in the results. Zefirelli's film "Jesus of Nazareth" is a gross misrepresentation of the Gospel.

(To be Continued.)

CI. STAM



THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE  
Published bi-weekly by Premier Printing Ltd.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Second class mail registration number 1025.

ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):

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

ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

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

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

\$19.50 per year (to be paid in advance).

ADVERTISEMENTS:

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

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

ISSN 0383-0438

#### IN THIS ISSUE:

Christ and the Cinema (I) —	
Cl. Stam	238
Press Review — J. Geertsema	240
Summer Courses for Teachers	241
The Reformed Practice Regarding	
Attestations (3) —	
G. van Dooren	242
Guido de Bres Press Release	243
Mission News — Newsletter # 18 —	
Bram and Joanne Vegter	244
School Crossing — Ed.	245
News Medley — W.W.J. VanOene	246
Gifts for the College — J. Faber	248
Letters-to-the-Editor	248
Books — L. Selles	249
Our Little Magazine — Aunt Betty	252

*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body.*

II CORINTHIANS 5:10

# press review

## WHY I LEFT THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

Under this heading an article appeared in the *Covenanter Witness*, the bi-weekly of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. It was written by Dr. Surrendra Gangadean, who is a professor of philosophy at Phoenix College and an elder in the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Phoenix, Arizona. The article starts as follows:

The Charismatic movement is seeking to appeal to all groups of Christians promising a deeper life in God through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I was in this movement for several years. I realized after some years that its distinctive doctrines were unscriptural and its practices harmful to the growth of Christians and the advancement of Christ's kingdom. I am sharing some of the reasons I broke with the movement in the hope that those who find themselves attracted to it will take a closer look at its doctrines and practices.

While there is a great variety of beliefs and practices on the periphery of the Charismatic movement, the further one goes into it the clearer its distinctive features appear.

Does that not already say a lot: that "there is a great variety of beliefs and practices"? But that is according to the slogan of the movement: "doctrine divides, the Spirit unites," as if the Holy Spirit is not the Spirit of truth, Who inspired also Paul, when he wrote so often that the churches were to abide by the truth as he had taught it to them, and had to reject everything conflicting with his teachings. See, e.g., Romans 16:17; Galatians 1:7, 8; II Timothy 2:1, 2; 3:14.

The author continues:

Among them (the distinctive features, J.G.) are the following: the baptism of the Holy Spirit is distinct from conversion; many who are converted do not have the baptism of the Holy Spirit; this baptism is necessary if one is to live the victorious Christian life; the baptism has been lacking in the Church because of the widespread unbelief among its leaders.

If one would say that a real Spiritual life is lacking in many denominations

because of the fact that their leaders have led the members away from the inerrant Word of God and, in that way, away from the LORD and His service, I could fully agree. It is also true that all kinds of sects have an open door when there is a lack of thorough knowledge of Scripture and Confession together with a lack of hearty love for the LORD among Reformed people, and when there is an attitude of almost always criticizing one's own church(es), and when there is the idea that the grass in the neighbour's pasture is much greener. You understand what I mean. But is it not often so that it is our own criticism regarding others in the church (while we see so little of our own personal faults) that takes away the joy in the LORD and in being a member of one of His Reformed churches, even though, also there, so many things still need correction, but where there is an abiding by His Word and by the scriptural Confessions which so very well express the truth of the Word of our God?

Dr. Gangadean, then, deals with the texts in the book of Acts, which speak about the gift of the Spirit in connection with the speaking in tongues: at Pentecost, and later on in the house of Cornelius, as well as in Ephesus (Acts 2:4; 8:14, 15; 11:44-48). He shows that that "baptism with the Spirit" and the speaking in tongues were signs for that time of the fact that Christ had sent the Holy Spirit, as God had promised through, e.g., the prophet Joel. This sign-character for that time of transition from the Old Testament dispensation to the New Testament dispensation must not be made into a norm for all times, because then the sign-character is lost. He writes:

The reading of the book of Acts *out of its context in the history of redemption* is chiefly responsible for the *exemplary use* of Acts with its consequent error in the doctrine of baptism as a separate experience. Thus failure to apply the **sola scriptura** principle (all the Scripture and only the Scripture in interpreting Scripture) has produced this error.

The italics in the quotation are mine.

We can be and must be very thankful that the redemptive-historical approach to and reading of the Bible was one of the gains which we received in the Liberation from Prof. K. Schilder, B. Holwerda, and others. They saw how the apostles read and explained the Old Testament. They saw that that was the redemptive historical way, and not the exemplary way: Abraham, David, Christ, the apostles, all had their own place and calling in the history of redemption, so that what happened to them at their place in that history is not normative for us in this sense, as if that also has to happen to us.

We read further:

Thus those who are in Christ are baptized with the Spirit. They do not require a second experience. To seek a second experience is in vain. It can only lead to deception. And to promise the baptism to those who have it is foolish. Furthermore, to promise victory through this "second" blessing is more than misleading.

The Charismatic at this point may want to go back and show from Scripture that it is a separate experience. Well and good.

He has shown in what was quoted above that an experience in the beginning of the New Testament church had a sign-character and not a normative character. He continues:

Or he (the Charismatic) may appeal to his own experience and the testimony of others and speak much of its benefits. *It is unscriptural to appeal to one's experience to establish a doctrine* (italics mine, J.G.) . . .

A claim that is woven into much of the Charismatic is that God speaks to a person directly in his spirit, apart from his understanding.

The understanding of the Word of God is meant. Here we have the error of the Anabaptists of the days of the Great Reformation. They said, e.g., that the Holy Spirit can tell a person about the death of Christ at the cross and its meaning in the Scriptures, but just as well through the bowels of a slaughtered and opened chicken! Also with respect to the so-called direct speaking of God to man without the means of the Scriptures we, in fact, encounter a bypassing of the authority of the Scriptures. So the author warns. He then writes:

There are a number of broad and significant though not distinctive features of the Charismatic movement (other denominations and sects have them too, J.G.) which are an integral part of its

foundation. The Charismatics could not get off the ground without these.

1. It is anthropocentric. In its worship and service the needs of men are more prominent than the glory of God, much the way the crowds thronged Jesus for his miracles.

2. It is antinomian. There is much celebration of being free from the law and little delighting in the law of God. The law is conceived of negatively and narrowly rather than as a guide in service to God in every aspect of life.

3. It is Arminian. It is one's act of faith that makes the final difference in conversion, perseverance and all accomplishment, not God's unconditional election and irresistible grace.

**Anthropocentric = man-centered; antinomian = rejecting God's laws as norm; for Number 3 see Chapter III/IV of the Canons of Dort.**

4. It is perfectionistic. Because of its failure to grasp the breadth and depth of the law of God and because of its trust in human ability it is thought possible to live without sin in this life, at least while "walking in the Spirit." With such a view of sinlessness it is hardly possible to grow in sanctification.

5. It is individualistic. Everyone is to go back to the New Testament directly without using or even being aware of the work of the Holy Spirit through the pastor-teachers in history. Thus the stated means of grace (Ephesians 4:11-16) are neglected. It is their common teaching that the historic churches have doctrine without life, so it is no use looking to them. This estimate locates the problem incorrectly. It is not that doctrine is not enough and you need the Spirit. *The Spirit and the Word cannot be so separated* (italics mine, J.G.). One can never truly have the Word without the Spirit or the Spirit without the Word. The problem is rather that many historic churches have departed from the sound doctrine they once had and others profess the doctrine without believing it or without understanding its implications.

6. It is subjective. Sin is equated with "known sin"; Scripture is often interpreted in the light of one's experience; Scripture passages are often allegorized or used as pegs on which to hang a message on the speaker's mind; the object of faith is often a "special word of the Lord;" appeal is made more to the emotions than to one's understanding in order to deepen faith and obedience. It would be well to compare a Charismatic interpretation of a passage with what some Reformed commentaries say on it in order to see the subjectivism more clearly.

7. It is pietistic. It lacks a world and life view. It battles worldliness by other-worldliness instead of a proper view of the cultural mandate to subdue the earth

so as to fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of God.

8. It is pessimistic. There is little or no faith that Christ's kingdom is now growing and will continue to grow by the present means of grace until all nations are discipled.

In short, its greatest claim — deeper life in God — is its greatest failure. Its distinctive doctrine, a second experience baptism of the Spirit, is unscriptural. Had it made proper use of the stated means of grace, the work of the pastor-teachers [We would rather say: of the Reformed churches in the past, not only the office-bearers, because the churches themselves were involved in accepting officially the Creeds, although it was the "pastor-teachers" (ministers and elders) who wrote the confessions and were delegated to the major assemblies, J.G.] as summarized in the great creeds of the church such as the Westminster Confession, it could have avoided building on the wrong foundation of Arminianism, antinomianism, and its resultant perfectionism. The Reformed churches, however, share a great part of the responsibility, for our unbelief has become the occasion of our Charismatic brothers' stumbling. There is no room here for

anyone to boast. All of us need to repent. Let us learn from this (once) insider, who knows what he is talking about. Let us also take his last remarks to heart. For one can sometimes notice a terrible lack of knowledge among us: a lack of knowledge of the Scriptures as well as of the Three Forms of Unity, Reformed Creeds!! One can sometimes notice a frightening lack of interest in the things of the Word of our heavenly Father. One can also find a criticizing and condemning of others in which not much meekness and loving care are showing. Let us watch.

Search me, O God, and know my heart,  
See if I from Thy ways depart,  
Try me and judge my inmost thought,  
And let me by Thy Word be taught.  
Keep me from wicked ways and heed me,  
In everlasting ways do lead me.

J. GEERTSEMA

---

## Summer Courses for Teachers

AT THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE IN  
HAMILTON, ONTARIO

A satisfactory response has been received from interested teachers for the courses to be conducted this coming summer, from July 4-22, 1977, D.V. Teachers, teacher's aides and those aspiring to become teachers who have thought of enrolling in one or both courses, but let the May 15, 1977, deadline slip by, are urged to send in their applications as yet. We do have room to accommodate more people and therefore we like to offer that opportunity still (see also the ad in this issue).

During the morning hours, Prof. Dr. J. Faber will present a survey of the Reformed Doctrine. His course has as objective "to give a deepened knowledge of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches and to provide a background for Reformed teaching, not only in Bible Study but also for the other subjects." L. Berkhof's "Summary of Christian Doctrine" will be used as textbook.

Prof. L. Selles will lecture in the afternoons. His course "Introduction

to New Testament" will present the historical, cultural and religious background of the New Testament. The objective of the course is "to gain a better understanding of the contents of the New Testament, especially the Gospels and Acts."

The first part of the course is a survey of the various dynasties which ruled over Israel from the inter-testamental time until 135 A.D. The second part concerns the cultural environment as known from the Gospels and related literature. The third part pays attention to the religious life, institutions and parties in the time of the public ministry of the Lord Jesus.

Course outlines, booklists, reading assignments and other pertinent information will be sent to registrants upon receipt of their applications. Requests for accommodation must be made to the director at the time application is made. Please register soon, July is almost here!

Burlington, Ontario  
May 30, 1977.

# The Reformed Practice Regarding Attestations\*

## 10. CHURCHES ABROAD:

Synod 1927: "The acceptance of attestations issued by churches abroad is in the discretion of the consistories, that shall act according to circumstances." This same Synod also declared: "Churches may issue attestations to members departing to churches abroad. These attestations are to be presented to those churches that in confession and church polity are related closest to the Reformed Churches of The Netherlands, (Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland)." Rutgers remarks that in this case there cannot always be an address on the attestation; certainly not "if no address is known as yet." Sometimes the departing member "will have to find out for himself" which is the closest related church. It is clear that here is spoken of countries and/or regions where there are no churches that maintain correspondence with the Reformed Churches (Gereformeerde Kerken). It is, however, also clear that according to these declarations the relationship with churches abroad is somewhat freer. Although we here and there find the Christian Reformed Churches mentioned — this was before the Liberation — it is still obvious that, when one comes from another federation, the consistory which receives an attestation has in any case the freedom to review each situation for themselves and to act according to their own insight and knowledge. This means at least: a discussion with the new arrivals, about the doctrines; this is in any case their right. Compare Synod 1965 regarding colloquium doctum with ministers from another ecclesiastical federation.

## 11. ATTESTATIONS "FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS" (OR "TO OTHER DENOMINATIONS")

Men such as Rutgers and Jansen were very strict with this matter; we must be likewise. No "Transfer of membership" e.g. from the Christian Reformed to the Canadian Reformed Church. (See Jansen, p. 355, Rutgers II, pp. 306, 343, etc.)

In summary, we can give the following as their (and our) opinion: Do

not issue an attestation to someone who breaks with the church to join another denomination. Rutgers goes as far as to say, "Do not assist in any way in order that someone, who formally was "gereformeerd," is accepted by the "Hervormde Kerk." That other church better find another way to obtain the information about her new member.

This also appears to include that he is against issuing a baptism certificate, or certificate of (previous) membership on request. Later on, however, he quotes an ecclesiastical declaration: "information about the bare historical facts may (but it does *not* say "must") be given, e.g. that one was baptized, was a member." Rutgers himself does not object to this, but only in order "to prevent re-baptism. . . . We do object to giving out information that the person requesting was a member of a 'Gereformeerde Kerk' since in this way we assist "someone to become member of another church."

The solution, according to Rutgers, is: "It is to be recommended to issue a baptism certificate to the parents, immediately after baptism. We also emphasize this. Burlington has practised this many years. Let all churches practise this.

## 12. WHERE DOES THE ATTESTATION BELONG?

Finally this: Where does the attestation belong when someone works in one place and spends the weekend in the other? Rutgers (II, 341) recommends to him: "to be entered in the register where he uses Word and Sacrament." But he immediately adds that "the other consistory should be informed that he works there during the week."

We gladly recommend this course of action; only with this addition, that it be clear that the words "uses . . . the Sacraments" pertain to communicant members. In many churches the course of action with baptized members is that they are registered with the church in the place where they are on weekdays (e.g. for catechism classes).

If one does *not* desire to make this

distinction, then it will be necessary that the other consistory is at least aware that the baptized member works there during the week. Also by means of contact between consistories (the parents may not be excluded in this), there must be sufficient supervision in regard to catechism attendance and walk of life. Slovenliness and neglect by consistories in this respect has often been coresponsible for losing such (baptized members). N.B. The report is, of course, incomplete. It does not speak of:

(1) Travel attestations. There are no official Synod decisions on this (except for military personnel and sailors, which are not relevant for our churches). Personally we recommend for people who make a trip that a declaration is written stating that they are members of the church of the Lord with a request added: to receive them during their stay.

(2) *Receiving baptized members from other denominations.* We read in H. Bouma, pp. 140, 141: "First, that, in general, receiving *adult* baptized members from other denominations is only possible by way of public profession of faith; second, that this does not exclude that those that are not able to do this immediately, are permitted to the catechism instruction and are given spiritual guidance by the consistory; and third, that in some instances it is permissible to receive them immediately, even without profession of faith, if thereby the obligation to come to public profession of faith, and so to the Lord's table, is fully acknowledged.

(3) Finally, we give the following for consideration: when a member leaves the church, in the course of discipline or because of a quarrel with the office bearers, and requests a certificate of membership to join another denomination, should the other denomination not be informed as to the reason this member broke with the church?

## CONCLUSIONS AND GUIDELINES:

From the material that was found, we can now attempt to present the following guidelines in order that Article 82, Church Order, may be better maintained.

1. Since an attestation is not a written notice of departure, but a testimony by the congregation, written in the meeting of the consistory, a simple printed form is not adequate.

2. *In the first place* an attestation is to be complete in the mentioning of names, names of the parents, dates of

birth, baptism, profession of faith, marriage, and, if possible, also the date of arrival in the congregation they now leave (and their previous congregation). Also included should be the complete address in the new attestation. *Moreover*, an attestation should contain a (sober) description of the conduct of the member(s) in question, and if necessary, particulars must not be omitted. These particulars may be "negative" (remarks on the way of life, negligence of the member et al), or "positive" in the mentioning of particular talents and activities which have been put to service by this member for the upbuilding of the Church of Christ and His kingdom. (N.B. In the event that the churches wish to continue to use a printed form, such a form should be considerably expanded to make possible what has been mentioned in 2.)

3. If a departing member is under discipline, this fact should be mentioned in the attestation in a sober manner, and not in a so-called "accompanying letter" from one consistory to the other without the knowledge of the member.

4. The attestation must be signed by two office bearers in the consistory meeting.

5. Someone who departs, ceases to be a member of the local church and can only become a member of the church in his new destination by voluntarily joining himself to this church. This is accomplished by (personally) presenting the attestation to the consistory. Such a member is therefore obligated to request the attestation, and to do so in time. The attestation must be given in an open envelope to the departing member in person before his departure.

6. Consistories should, as soon as possible, send notices about (all) departing members to the consistory in the place of destination. Such a notice should include the complete new address.

7. In the event someone departs without having requested an attestation, notification should be sent to the consistory in the area he now lives. That consistory then has, as shepherds of the flock, the duty to fight for the salvation of the member. However, no one may be forced to join himself to the church. Should the member continue to refuse to request the attestation, in order to present it, then he will cease to be a member of the church. In this case discipline can not be applied.

8. Besides the date of issue, an at-

testation should contain the notice: "Present this attestation as soon as possible." The attestation is valid for six months after date of issue. When this time period is exceeded, it will be necessary at least to investigate the reasons for this, or it may be necessary to contact the (previous) consistory.

9. For departing baptized members who are under age, a "baptismal attestation" is sent to the consistory in the area of destination. This attestation also has the character of "testimony by the congregation," and is sent with the knowledge and cooperation of the parents. Baptized members of adult age may take the attestation themselves. In this case a notice as described in point 6 is to be sent.

10. Since the attestation is the "testimony by the congregation," the cooperation or approbation of the congregation must be obtained by a one-time announcement from the pulpit. The attestation may not be issued unless there was time for this.

11. Attestations from sister churches are accepted by virtue of the federation of churches. This is also the case with members that are under discipline. The new consistory, however, deals with such a member entirely in their own responsibility, without the need to account to the former consistory. This does not exclude that the former consistory may not expect to be informed of possible improvement in the way of life.

12. Regarding attestations from churches abroad that have correspondence with the Canadian Reformed Churches, the same rule applies. In this case the freedom and responsibility of the receiving church is possibly greater.

13. Members that intend to break with the church may not receive an attestation intended for another denomination. At the utmost they may receive a declaration containing the "bare historical facts."

14. It is proper that, following the baptism of a child, a certificate of baptism is presented to the parents.

15. Members that reside in the "home" church area only during weekends are members of that church. However, the consistory at the place where they reside during the week must be aware of this and of the address. With regard to baptized members, the "home" church is decided through consultation between the two consistories.

16. Baptized members from other

denominations may be taken under supervision immediately. However, in fact they only become full member of the church upon public profession of their faith.

17. Temporary attestations and travel attestations need not contain anything more than a written declaration that the member belongs to the Church of the Lord and is (or is not) admitted to the use of the sacraments.

Burlington, February 16, 1968

G. vanDooren

*(Translated from Dutch to English by the Canadian Reformed Church at Brampton, Ont. 1976.)*

---

GUIDO DE BRES HIGH SCHOOL

## PRESS RELEASE

*Meeting of the Board of Directors held on May 16, 1977.*

J. Schutten, Chairman, opened the meeting. Minutes of the last meeting were read and adopted. The agenda for this meeting was adopted.

A letter of Dr. J. Faber, Chairman of the Education Committee, was read. An invitation to the Silver Wedding Anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. H. Vis was received. The reply by the Executive Committee to a letter of Maranatha School in Fergus was endorsed.

Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff and Dr. W. Helder were present to report to us about the plans for the new school year. A new timetable of a 2-day cycle, with periods of 75 minutes, was proposed. Every day the homeroom teachers will start with a 25-30 minute Bible lesson.

Since we still require a full-time teacher, an ad will be placed in *Nederlands Dagblad* and *Clarion*.

It was decided that the minutes of the Board meetings will serve to acquaint the various Committees with the Board's instructions or recommendations.

The Board appointed Mr. R. Aasman to help out with the teaching of Latin and Mr. B.J. Berends with that of Church History, both on a part-time basis.

The Executive Committee report is accepted.

Brother A. VanEgmond, Chairman of our Building Committee, reported about the progress of our new school building. The roof is on, floors will be poured and the interior finishing will be commenced. The permit for the addition has not been issued.

After the Board approved this press release, the meeting was adjourned until June 20, 1977.

For the Board,  
ARIE J. HORDYK, Secretary.



# mission news

Newsletter # 18

Dear brothers and sisters,

In the beginning of March a second, short, guru course was held in Manggelum (Mgl). We started off with a Bible study from 8:00-9:45 a.m. and discussed the letter of James. After the intermission we were taught by the head teacher from Manggelum. Actually I had the idea to invite someone from Kawagit to do part of the course. However, Reverend Zandbergen was visiting the outlying villages, while Mr. Ben VanderLugt was teaching at the Central Bible School in Boma. So, what to do? This brought me to the idea of asking the head teacher here, if he was willing to do something. After a lot of thinking, he said that he would be able to do some-

thing in biology. I left it all up to him and was very curious as to what the outcome would be. It proved to be very interesting. The first day he told us about the chicken (senses, life cycle, uses, sicknesses, etc.). The second day a less familiar animal was discussed, namely the cow (including a picture of the digestive system). Altogether, very informative and worthwhile for the other gurus. This teaching by the head teacher was sort of an experiment but looking at the results we will probably try to involve these more educated teachers for similar future courses. It seems to be good for all involved. Next time we're in Kawagit I plan to discuss the possibilities with Ben VanderLugt.

After the first week in March, Jo-

anne took sick and stayed in bed for about a week with a fever that was in between 39.5 C and 40.5 C. I do not know how much that is in Fahrenheit, but you should be converted by now I think. Anyway, high enough! Fortunately this all happened during a school holiday week, so that many people were out in the jungle, and not too many people came to the poly clinic, etc. Further, you really do notice when one of the two is sick. You don't get much done then.

On March 26th, I went to Bi by outboard to pick up the Louwerse family, who had been brought there by Reverend Zandbergen from Kawagit. They have been all over the ZGK area for orientation visits. This time they came our way. We (Dr. Kees Louwerse and I) went to Sawagit and Gauwop on March 28th. On March 31st, we visited Heyokubun, Kloofkamp (10 minutes further by outboard) and Bayanggop (another 30 minutes further). To come to the last village you pass large rocks lining the river-side and you can really notice that you are going "up" river. There were plenty of whirlpools too, so afterwards we were glad to be home again. Dr. Kees Louwerse has the impression that the tuberculosis in the aforementioned villages is not as bad as we thought it might be. Several cases of T.B. were spotted, but most of them are on treatment. There are many people that cough (a T.B. sign), but most of them do that because of their excessive amount of smoking. In Sawagit, Manggelum and Heyokubun people have received a B.C.G. in the past. Possibly this will be done this year in Gauwop, Kloofkamp and Bayanggop as well. Joanne also had the opportunity to learn a few things that would help her in the clinic work. The Louwerses left for Kawagit again on April 2nd. It was nice to have visitors for a week.

You will understand that we cannot answer all the cards and letters we received, but we were very pleased to receive mail from you with birthday congratulations for me. Thank you all very much!

Did you know that another missionary is expected in due time, D.V., here on ZGK grounds? Mr. J.P.D. Groen accepted the call from the church of Enschede-Noord in The Netherlands to bring the Gospel to the Kombai people. On the green map that area is approximately between Tiau, Kouh and Kawagit. And the latest news — April 7th — is that Mr. J.



*The new Heyokubun under construction.*



Veldhuizen (a mission aid worker for Kouh and surroundings) received his visa, so he will be departing for Irian Jaya soon. We look forward to their coming.

Something about the men's and women's societies here. The women's society presently has 25 members of which approximately 18 are coming regularly. To remember things seems to be very hard, but a simple drawing can be quite a help at times. It is held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoon from 4:00-5:00. The men's society is held on Wednesday and Friday afternoon from 4:00-5:00. It has increased from 7 to 19 members presently, of which, generally, approximately 14 men attend. Lately the repeating of Sunday's story is improving. We always start off with that. It is not one or two names anymore that they remember, but sometimes they can recall a fair part of the story. I suggested that in case they forget, they check with another member. This way also the discussion of God's Word among the people is activated. It seems to work very well. We have several books with pictures of Biblical events and, if possible, we use them. There is always much interest for the picture, and it is amazing how a group of sleepy people suddenly comes to attention at the sight of one.



*The waterplane in Butiptiri.*

We had another close look at the strip site too, this month, after Karet told us about a swampy spot close to it. We decided to rotate the strip around an imaginary axis at the 350 meter mark, so that the North end shifted 28 meters to the East. This way we hope to bypass the swampy area.

By the time you read this, you must be nearing the holidays. We like to wish you all an enjoyable time and hope you may return safe and sound.

Till we meet again,  
BRAM and JOANNE VEGTER

# school X crossing

When we started the "School Crossing" column, Mr. J.J. Kuntz was the one who wrote it in a very able manner. However, after some time he had to inform us that we should look for someone else to take care of it.

The Rev. M. Werkman declared himself willing to make it his concern and he has done so faithfully and capably.

A few months ago, however, the Rev. M. Werkman told us that Mr. Kuntz would again be able to take this task upon himself and suggested that we approach the latter, offering him his "old job back." We did so, and the fruit of our boldness was a letter in which Mr. Kuntz accepted our invitation.

That means that the Rev. M.

Werkman will again become a mere reader instead of the writer of "School Crossing."

At this point of change-over we wish to express our gratitude to him for the work done in this respect. We know that he did it for the sake of the kingdom of God, for the promotion of the cause of Reformed instruction. Be assured that it was appreciated.

During the summer months not many activities will be going on, and for that reason we cannot expect a "School Crossing" till sometime in September.

However, no one can write such a column unless the materials for it are provided; and the materials have to come from the schools and the school societies: if they do not send any bul-

letins, school papers, and whatever other publications they may issue, no "School Crossing" can be produced. No one will be surprised to learn that Mr. Kuntz inserted the following paragraph in his "letter-of-acceptance":

Would you be kind enough to include in a future issue of *Clarion* brief notice of this change, together with my address, in order that my cupboard, now depleted, may be filled to overflowing with school bulletins as I assume my task in September?

Hereby we have complied with that request; and we add the urgent appeal to the secretaries, senders of bulletins, or whoever may have the pleasant task of mailing out bulletins, school papers, official reports, etcetera, to add Mr. Kuntz's name to their mailing list and to provide him with an abundance of material.

His address:

*Mr. J.J. Kuntz,*  
84 San Antonio Drive,  
Hamilton, Ontario L9C 5N2

Ed.

# news medley

This is the time when in many a Church new office-bearers are elected and ordained. Usually the Congregations are asked to provide the Consistory with names of brothers whom they deem to be fit for the respective offices. In many instances there is rather little response. One of the reasons may be that those sending these letters are requested to give their reasons for nominating these particular brethren. There are quite a few among the membership who do not feel like writing a letter when they have to give their reasons for mentioning specific names. They are of the opinion that it should be sufficient for the Consistory that they give names; why should they be required to substantiate their recommendation?

It is not my intention to elaborate on that point at the moment. I just wish to make this remark: that the Consistory already knows the names of all the members of the Church and that in by far the most cases the Consistory scans the whole list when making up the nomination. What the Consistory needs is not just names but reasons why a specific brother should be an office-bearer.

I do not know what the rule is in the Edmonton Church, but they certainly did not have to complain about a lack of participation on the part of the Congregation! I counted the names in the **City Guide**, and, taking couples as just one name, I came to a total of no fewer than 38 letters. In such a case no Consistory has reason for complaint. There were, I must say, also letters from office-bearers, and from that I conclude that only those names are discussed which have been submitted to the Consistory in writing. But even if we deduct the letters from office-bearers, we reach a respectable number having come from the Congregation.

Being in Edmonton with our thoughts anyway, we may as well mention a few more things. In a previous issue we already mentioned the activity in the field of political studies. A name for the "society" has been chosen: "Christian Political Study Group." A candidate had been named for City Council, supported by the group as his "action-arm." Further, from the Canadian Law Reformed Society a vast amount of reading material was received; they can continue studying.

It appears that not just the older members are "infected": "All of a sudden a tender plant of Y.P. Political action has begun to grow. Close cooperation between that action group and our study group is intended and pledged."

Thus I know of three Churches where political studies are undertaken on a regular basis: Carman, Edmonton, and Orangeville. Who follows?

Calgary asks our attention next. The suggestion was submitted to the Congregation for their comment that singing shall be done standing, except for the song after the collection. Why the latter singing is exempt is something I do not understand. What I do not understand either is that the schedule for after the sermon is: Singing, Announcements, Offering, Singing, Prayer. I had the impression that by mistake one time singing was mentioned which would not be done. Or that prayer was mentioned in the wrong place. If my impression was wrong, I'll let you know.

Speaking of singing, in the Carman bulletin we find a piece about "Why do we sing when we sing?" In that piece the Rev. J. Van Rietschoten writes, among other things, "In the afternoon service we, at that point of the service, jointly profess our faith in all the promises of the Gospel. Now the minister speaks a 'summary of faith' on behalf of the congregation. Either the Apostolic Creed, the Nicene Creed, or sometimes the Athanasian Creed is chosen for this purpose. The Creeds are concluded with the word 'Amen.' The minister does not pronounce the Amen but the congregation does in her singing."

I do not have the habit of requesting the Congregation to sing after the "reading" of the Creed. That the Congregation responds after hearing the Words of the Covenant, that is something with which I agree wholeheartedly; but I do not think it proper to ask the Congregation to "respond" to the reading of the Apostles' Creed or any of the other Creeds, since the minister or the one conducting the service speaks it as the mouth of the Congregation. Then I feel that the Congregation should not be asked to "respond," for there is nothing to respond to: the Congregation made profession of their faith via the mouth of the minister or elder who conducts the service. It is, of course, not a matter of principle, and anyone wishing to ask the brethren and sisters to sing a song after the "reading" of the Creed has the perfect right to do so. On me it would make a wrong impression.

From singing to organs is just one step, isn't it? For that we go to Smithers. The bulletin informs us that on two occasions members visited the organ builder in Victoria. They saw some of the organs which he built in the area of British Columbia's capital city and also visited the "shop." Installation of Smithers' instrument is planned for the beginning of October.

Meanwhile they are not completely without accompaniment up North. A spring performance was scheduled for May 28th. "Children of the elementary grades of the school, together with instrumental accompaniment of recorders, trumpet, saxophone, organ, etc., will bring you a program which you will never forget." I gladly believe that.

Going South in British Columbia, we tell you that a Young People's Rally is scheduled to be held from June 30 - July 3, and further, that in Abbotsford an invitation was extended to parents with pre-school children to consider the possibility of setting up a kindergarten for four and five year olds.

As for rallies, the Barrhead bulletin mentions that a rally was scheduled in Barrhead and Neerlandia for the May 20-23 weekend. The societies in British Columbia had also been invited to attend. The speakers for that rally were: the Rev. R.F. Boersema on "Evangelism" and the Rev. S. De Bruin on "To be kind to others but especially to those of our sheepfold."

Herewith we have exhausted the news supply regarding the Churches west of the Ontario western boundary.

That brings us to Toronto. "It was reported that for the first time in the eighteen year history of the Church an overdraft charge was levied by the bank against our church account." I do not know whether that was the first time the bank had the courage to do it or that the Church gave occasion for it for the first time. In any case: I hope not that the situation was caused by negligence on the part of sister Churches in sending their contributions for the mission or for the mission aid. Every time anew it appears that there are Churches that are slack in fulfilling their obligations, as there

are members who are slack. Hopefully such a historic situation won't be repeated.

A second note from Toronto: "Seating arrangements for the elders and deacons was discussed at length! It was decided that as of May 8 the elders and deacons sit together again as consistory."

The Ebenezer Consistory (Burlington) decided to have four more earphones installed in the auditorium. The Consistory also expressed concern about Church attendance, especially in the afternoon services. That is not the only Consistory that paid attention to the fact that sometimes the afternoon attendance is not what it should be and what it could be.

We, of course, have to take into consideration that small children frequently have to take a nap in the afternoon and that someone has to stay at home for babysitting. Then there are the cases in which members can attend only one service for health reasons and feel better and stronger in the morning. The number of those thus "handicapped" is not that large, however, and for that reason it does not appear necessary that there should be a big difference between the morning attendance and the afternoon attendance. What we all should avoid is that we gradually start taking it easy and begin to follow the pattern of those round about us who serve the Lord according to their own wishes and without any danger to their own convenience. That applies not just to our every week worship, it also applies to the manner in which we spend the summer months and especially our holidays. But we'll talk about that later.

The Ebenezer bulletin also contains some words about the "hostage incident" in The Netherlands in which some South Moluccans are involved. That is the second such incident within the last couple of years. Bulletins of more Churches contain remarks about the incident which, at the moment of this writing, is still going on.

It is a terrible thing indeed to take people hostage and to use them as a lever to achieve one's goal. Sometimes I think, I hope that if I should ever be taken hostage, the authorities will not give in but rather shoot it out with the criminals even if that should mean harm to myself. I have respect for those countries where the authorities do not give in but where they rather risk the life of some hostages than yielding to the cowardly way of trying to achieve one's goal.

What do the South Moluccans try to achieve? Do they have any hope of achieving anything at all? If they wish to bring their cause to the attention of the people or even of the world, then they certainly have succeeded and should quit the whole business. But even if the whole world knows about their cause, what do they think they can bring about?

In the dark years after the second world war a wave of revolution and revolutionary actions swept over the world. It was as a result of revolutionary actions that a man like Sukarno gained the upper hand in the present Indonesia. At that time The Netherlands Government should have taken action and should have refused to give in to the demands that it surrender all the former Netherlands East Indies to that dictator. Then was the time to listen to the legitimate pleas for help and recognition which came from people who had to be counted among the most faithful and loyal subjects of The Netherlands monarch. But The Netherlands did not listen and did not do justice. Now the Lord causes them to experience the effects and bitter fruits of their treachery. There were voices that pleaded for the people from Ambon and from the other islands, but they fell on deaf ears. The revolution gained the upper hand.

Now The Netherlands are stuck with a large Moluccan community of some forty thousand people, people who have no place to go to and who have no real expectation for the future. There is not a chance in the world that they will be able to return to their native land and establish their own sovereign state there. Perhaps they can return, but then as part of the population of Indonesia, which population is a conglomerate, just as the population of the USSR. One particular group of the population — which considers itself to be a sort of super-race — holds the reins, and the rest just have to submit, perhaps with a token representation in an otherwise rather powerless advisory body.

When the Portuguese quit East Timor, Indonesia was quick in annexing it. On the one hand, that prevented a communist take-over; on the other hand, it showed that the people of Ambon c.a. have nothing to hope for and, consequently, have nothing to live for as far as this point is concerned. Thus we can well understand their frustration. And that's why we say that they will not achieve anything by their actions of taking hostages and so on.

The point which I wish to make here is that The Netherlands receive back here the wages for their betrayal of faithful and loyal subjects. We do not rejoice because of that; we just mention it to remind ourselves of it that only righteousness will exalt a nation and that failing to do justice will be visited by a God Who does not forget anything but Who rules the nations in righteousness, keeping His word.

Strictly speaking, this does not belong in a news medley; I fully agree, but the remarks made in several bulletins gave me a chance to say something about it.

The Hamilton Consistory dealt with a suggestion from the Congregation to eliminate the collection at the Lord's Supper table. This suggestion was not taken over by the Consistory. The following explanation was given: "These collections are a continuation of the practice found in the early churches. There, when coming together for the 'love feast' those who had much shared with those who had little. It is felt that this practice must not be abandoned."

I am always wondering how it can be stated that certain things in our midst are a "continuation" of what was found in the early Church, for I am certain that there were quite a few centuries during which none of those things happened or were done. At the best, I think, one could state that certain customs in our midst were **introduced** after the great Reformation "on the analogy of" certain usages in the ancient Church. There are not that many customs and usages at all that are a strict continuation of what the ancient Church did. And I am still happy that we do not have a collection when we celebrate the holy supper. We take care of the needy in a different manner, different from how they did in the ancient Church.

There is quite some excitement in Lincoln. It all concerns the plans to build the superstructure of their Church building. Until now, if I am not mistaken, they meet in the basement area and recently they became debt-free, having made the last mortgage payment. That must be a terrific feeling, that you have made your last payment and that now everything is your very own.

However, it is sometimes said that it is never good for the Church to be without debts. I do not know whether that statement is correct, but when we go by our personal experiences, we are inclined to agree with it. If you first have to save up for something and then buy it, it takes far longer to reach your goal than if you should borrow the amount and then would be obligated to make fixed payments every

month. In the latter case you would have the amount together much sooner than if there were no pressure behind it.

Don't think that I am advocating a policy of borrowing and buying without saving first. Not at all. I just wish to point out that there is some truth in the statement that it would not be good for the Church to be totally debt-free.

That will definitely not have been the reason why Lincoln is about to incur another debt, be it that by means of a drive they will try to pay a large part of the estimated \$170,000 needed as they go on. No, they wish to have their Church building finished and they wish to have the organ enlarged to "fit" the larger space.

The amount which will be needed for the execution of these plans may seem a very heavy burden, but it is the intention to take out a 25-year mortgage. According to the **Family Post** this will make a difference of \$2.00 per week in the voluntary contributions. Thus, when every one who donates gives two dollars per week more, that burden can be borne and the obligations can be met.

The activities will begin around the first part of July. If all goes well, we read, we shall be able to meet upstairs before

the end of the year. The building will also be furnished with an elevator for wheelchairs.

The Committee shopped around for the best possible deal, for they visited three banks to gather information about cost of loan, etcetera.

Some encouraging cooperation was received from the Congregation: "A cheque for \$200.00 for the church building was received from a group of bowling enthusiasts in the congregation."

Could there be a "cheerier" note on which to end our medley this time?

Let's do that then, but not until after having mentioned an even "cheerier" note. That is a note in which we offer our heartfelt congratulations to our brother and sister Vanden Hoven in Winnipeg, who celebrate their fortieth wedding anniversary on June 7th. For as long as I have known them, they have resided in Winnipeg, and they certainly will celebrate in the midst of the brothers and sisters there. We wish to join them all and extend our sincere wish that our merciful and gracious God continue His grace upon them.

vO

## Gifts for the College

At the end of this academic year, I have the privilege to report some gifts we received for our Theological College in Hamilton.

We begin our trip down South: the Free Reformed Church at Launceston in Tasmania, donated \$128.71 and Albany in Australia sent us \$275.57. We are moved by the thought that our brothers and sisters, geographically speaking so far away from us, are close to us in the unity of faith in Christ Jesus.

The young people of the Fraser Valley are excellent in their faithfulness. Within short intervals they sent us money orders of \$100, \$120, and \$50. Linda Huttema wrote in the first accompanying letter: "We found out that we had too much money at the bank . . . ." Are there more people

among us who experience the same difficulty? The second and third money orders were the result of collections. Well done, Westerners, partners in our fellowship!

Spakenburgers are well-known for their hospitality and generosity. This time one of them left a travel cheque of \$100 when he visited the College. During a teabreak he had also a nice talk with students and staff. It is the time of the year again that we get our visitors. We received gifts from visitors from the West, \$5 and \$10. Every gift is welcome, you know . . .

Our secretary, Miss Anne van Sydenborgh, left us for holidays in The Netherlands. She will be back June 20. But you don't have to postpone a visit till that time! In the first three weeks of July the Teachers' Course will be held. Visits can then only be arranged after 4:30 until 5:30 p.m.

A young couple from the States brought us a most peculiar gift: a Scrabble crossword game in Hebrew. The rules are printed in modern Hebrew and you have to read them back to front. The iota is present, but no dots (cf. Matthew 5:18). The players, therefore, have to know unvocalized Hebrew. Who wants to play against my colleague Ohmann? Welcome!

J. FABER

## Letters-to-the-Editor

Dear Editor:

I am writing this letter out of concern for fellow sisters in Irian Jaya. From the photograph published in the May 21 issue of *Clarion*, it seems that their struggle against the dictates of Fashion is at least as difficult as ours. I realize that the task of teaching people of Indonesia and Canada to dress properly, especially in warm weather, is not an easy one. Therefore, I would suggest that, out of proper respect, photographs be taken of only the faces of those who through weakness or ignorance have transgressed the command in Genesis 3:21 to keep one's body covered. "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them."

We, who have been brought up in the Scriptures, would not allow others to take similar pictures of ourselves. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matthew 7:21).

With sisterly greetings,  
(Mrs.) J. TILLEMA

P.S. I would like to thank Bram and Joanne Vegter for the interesting articles they write in *Mission News*.

J.T.



Called: REV. R.F. BOERSEMA  
of Calgary, Alberta, by New Westminster, B.C., for mission in Brazil.

# Books

*Drs. J.A. Meijer, Oecumenische Taal (Ecumenical Language) "De Vuurbaak," Groningen, Postbus 189. Price: 12 guilders.*

Reformed scholars in The Netherlands have paid quite some attention to the Greek, the original language of the New Testament, during this century. Actually I should go back to the last decade of the 19th century, when Dr. A. Kuyper published his *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology*. A paragraph of the first section is devoted to what Kuyper called "Sacred Philologia," i.e., the study of the sacred languages of the Bible. For that's what the original languages of Old and New Testament, Hebrew and Greek with some Aramaic parts, were to Kuyper: sacred languages. That might not mean the same thing as perfect languages, it did mean, as Kuyper put it, that a higher and more tender branch, offshoot of the supernatural revelation, was grafted onto the natural trees of these Bible languages. So these languages, though not sacred in origin are, by their use as Bible languages, no longer ordinary languages. Predestined by God for their function in the transmission of the revelation they have their own unique, sacred place in God's creation, and should be studied in that light.

Dr. F.W. Grosheide, the late professor of New Testament at the theological faculty of the Free University, wrote an article on the language and special character of the New Testament Greek in the second volume of the Handbook of the Bible (*Bijbels Handboek*) published in 1935. In this article he states that the New Testament Greek, though basically the common Greek of the days in which the New Testament was written, had its own spiritual character which distinguished it from all other Greek and made it the language of God's revelation. So Grosheide was in Kuyper's

line, though not as outspoken as his teacher.

Another aspect of the language of the New Testament showed up in two rectorial addresses of Dr. S. Greijdanus, the late professor of New Testament at the Theologische Hogeschool at Kampen. In 1932 he concluded his rectorate of that year with an address on "The use of Greek by the Lord and His Apostles." He took issue in this speech with the idea that we do not possess the genuine words of the Lord, since He and the apostles spoke Aramaic and our Gospels and the book of Acts are consequently translations. Greijdanus advanced various arguments from the New Testament itself to prove that, although Aramaic was the language which was commonly spoken, Greek was not only spoken in New Testament times in Judea but was also spoken by the Lord and by His disciples.

In his second address, dating back to 1940, Prof. Greijdanus elaborated on this aspect. His topic was at that time: "Greek, the authentic text for the exegesis of the New Testament." Over against the suggestion that we had to go back to behind the Greek text of the Gospels to non-existent Aramaic originals, Greijdanus points out that a considerable part of the New Testament was directly written in Greek — think of the Epistles and the Book of Revelation — and that other parts, which originally were spoken in Aramaic, came to us, under God's providence, in Greek. This implies the authenticity of the Greek text as the text for the interpretation of the New Testament.

We need not wonder whether we have the Word of God; It has been given to us by the Spirit of Christ Who inspired apostles and evangelists and took the Greek language, as it was used by them, in His service.

Dr. H.J. Jager, the successor of Prof. Greijdanus, spoke at the occasion of the change of rectorate in 1950 about the subject: "The language of the New Testament." Prof. Jager asked in this address special attention for the idiom, the form of expression, particular to the Greek in which the New Testament was written. As this Greek is grammatically simpler and less consistent than classic Greek, commenta-

tors should watch for over-translation and over-interpretation by putting more into the words than they actually express and were meant to say.

In 1971, (the then yet) Drs. J. van Bruggen contributed to the discussion on the nature of the New Testament Greek with a publication, entitled: "Biblical Language?" The question mark in the title is important, for the booklet seeks an answer to the question whether or not a very special Greek, distinguished from regular Greek, was used by the Holy Spirit for the inscripturation of the New Testament revelation. As mentioned above, that is what Dr. Kuyper had stated when he wrote about the Bible languages as a tree on which a branch of the supernatural revelation was grafted. The idea behind this interrelation of Bible revelation and Bible language is, according to van Bruggen, the view that language and thought are interwoven and the idea behind that view is the philosophy — dating from the 19th century — that each language includes its own worldview.

Van Bruggen does not share this philosophy nor Kuyper's view based on it, with respect to the Bible languages as sacred languages. Language is not a *form* of the revelation but a *means* given by God to pass on His revelation. It was not because of the special qualities of Hebrew and Greek that God's special revelation was given in them, but because the people to whom the LORD wanted to reveal Himself spoke or understood these languages. We may be happy that it is that way and that God's revelation is not tied down to particular languages in which it can only be understood. If it were so, the people who are dependent on Bible translations would not have the full gospel.

What I wrote so far is meant to orientate you somewhat in the problems in and around the Bible languages and to serve as an introduction to the review of the latest contribution to the nature of the New Testament Greek as presented by Drs. Meijer, at the occasion of his public inauguration as lecturer in New Testament Greek, Hellenistic and Old-Christian Greek and Old-Christian Latin at the Theologische Hogeschool at Kampen.

The choice of topic was prompted, as Meijer writes, by a revival in the last decade of the uniqueness of the New Testament Greek, as promoted by the English philologist and theologian, N. Turner.

## FOR THE READER'S INFORMATION

This issue of *Clarion* was mailed from Winnipeg Central Post Office on Friday, June 11, 1977.

Testing this view, Meijer gives first of all a survey of the controversy concerning the Bible Greek between the so-called Hebraists and the Purists which arose in the 17th century and lasted till the 19th century. Hebraists, as the name indicates, were the scholars, who — to put it in the words of Meijer — saw “the garment of the New Testament Greek adorned by the Holy Spirit with Hebrew ornaments,” (p. 6). Purists were the learned men for whom New Testament Greek was the highest development of the Greek language, free from foreign stains, semitic ones included. Some words might give the impression of being translated or transliterated Hebrew according to the Purists, but these words could be found back in Greek or they had to be classified as technical terms.

In spite of their contrasting views the two parties agreed in this respect, that not only the contents of the New Testament was inspired, but that the inspiration extended to the languages in which they were delivered so that the Bible Hebrew and Greek were the perfect Holy Spirit languages.

The Hebraists prevailed in the long run with their idea that the New Testament contained a Jewish Greek, a unique, isolated language. As to the Purists who were not won over, they might have a different idea about this Greek, it also remained for them a language all by itself.

All this changed with the discovery of piles of papyri scrolls and leaves in the sand of Egypt at the close of the 19th century. Comparison of the Greek used in these papyri, on potsherds and on inscriptions with the Greek in which the New Testament is written revealed that there is a remarkable similarity between the one and the other.

The man who at the beginning of the 20th century intensively studied the papyri findings and who wrote extensively about them was the German scholar Adolf Deissman. His book *Licht vom Osten*, translated under the title *Light from the Ancient East*, published in 1908, became a best seller, and his Bible Studies as well drew widespread attention.

Deissmann's conclusion from a comparative study was that the Greek wherein the New Testament is written, is the Greek which was used by the Greek-speaking people around the Mediterranean in their daily life. No Hebrew-Greek, no classic-Greek, no post-classic literary Greek, but collo-

quial Greek, i.e., the Greek of the common man in the Hellenistic time running from approximately 300 B.C. to 500 A.D. After the Greek word “common,” it is called Koine-Greek. Its use in the Greek world of the New Testament times, as Deissmann showed by many examples, in various instances cast a surprising light on passages of the New Testament. To give just one example, the Greek word “parousia” was used in the Hellenistic world for an official visit which a king brought to his subjects in a particular region. This word is used in the New Testament for the (second) coming of the Lord. It portrays what this coming will be like.

The books of Deissmann gave new impetus to the study of New Testament Greek, resulting in the publication of new grammars and new dictionaries for New Testament Greek, from which we still reap the benefits.

The findings of Deissmann did not convince everyone in the meantime. The Hebraist-view on the New Testament Greek was modified in the last part of the 19th century and during our 20th century in this respect, that Hebrew or Aramaic originals were assumed behind the New Testament writings.

As mentioned above, Prof. Greijdanus took issue with this view. Deissmann was also criticized on account of one-sidedness which did not leave room for semitic influences on the Greek of the New Testament, nor for the influence of a more literary Koine Greek.

This criticism brings Meijer back to his point of departure, the revival in recent decades of the thesis that the New Testament Greek is of a unique character. Turner speaks of “Biblical Greek.” The source of it is sought in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint.

Coming to his own viewpoint, Meijer agrees with those who felt that Deissmann was one-sided. He disagrees, however, with Turner's thesis that the New Testament would contain a special Biblical Greek, isolated from other Greek. Turner based his argument mainly on considerations of style and of the religious influence of the Septuagint which is assumed to have made its impact on the language of the New Testament Greek in a decisive way. Meijer, just as van Bruggen did, points out that style is not a matter of language, but of the *use* of the language, and that, likewise, particular thoughts do not form the language but

that the language offers the means to express particular thoughts.

Summarizing, he arrives at the same conclusion as van Bruggen, that namely — to quote Meijer — “the language of the New Testament is regular, human language, not a unique language which has to be decodified before one can understand the message, not an esoteric language intended for a special group of initiated, but means of communication whereby the mystery, kept secret for long ages, is now disclosed and made known to all nations (Romans 16:25, 26). This regular human language is Greek, one of the languages created by God” (p. 29).

The idea that Greek would be the most suitable language to pass on the thought of God is a fallacy, according to Meijer. All languages, as the science of language, called “linguistics,” has shown, are, as far as means of communication are concerned, equally capable of passing on the thought of God. I think we may be very grateful for this fact with a view to ourselves who for the greater part depend on a translation of the Bible and with a view to the outreach of the gospel. If there is something wrong with a translated Bible, it is not because it is a translation and therefore not good. No, it is because the translation would not be good or would not be understood anymore because of its antiquated character. Likewise, if there is trouble in the mission field in this respect, it is not because the native *language* would be a barrier to get the gospel across, but because the *language-knowledge* is not good enough and therefore has to be obtained. The translation of the Bible or Bible parts into more than one thousand languages proves that it is not a matter of *language* but of *language-knowledge*. All work which is done in this field, not only by the Wycliffe Bible translators, but no less by the missionaries in the various fields should for that reason have our full support.

Getting more specific, Meijer classifies, with Deissmann, the Greek of the New Testament as Koine Greek, but then, different from Deissmann, as Greek exposed to semitic influences from the Hebrew Old Testament and by Septuagint influences from the Greek Old Testament. These influences, however, did not change New Testament Greek into an unique, isolated, sacred language. It was and remained genuine Greek varying among the respective authors from a simple



Greek as found in John to a highly sophisticated Greek as found in the epistle to the Hebrews. The students who are made familiar with the various styles and ways of writing by the New Testament authors know how easy in one instance and how hard in another instance the reading can be. But whatever it is, it remains real Greek, the language of which a modern version today is spoken in the country of that name.

To quote Meijer once more: "The language of the New Testament was the world language of those days, ecumenical language. That is the way God wanted it. Everyone should hear the message. Everyone could understand the message. But the language-use was more the language of the Church than the language of the world. This language was an offense for 'the wise and the prudent,' but 'babes' did not have trouble with it" (p. 36).

I feel that this state of affairs with respect to the New Testament Greek has its consequences for Bible translation in that it calls for a translation into the language of the time in which the church lives and thus accessible and understandable for everyone; but then, just as is the case with the New Testament Greek, rendered more in the language of the church than of the world.

I need hardly say that as far as I am able to judge — and that is only in a limited way — I agree with the conclusions of Drs. Meijer. The New Testament gets its place that way not outside, but right in the middle of our regular, daily life and that is where it wants to be, to be used and practised.

Inaugural and rectorial speeches have filled me as a student with a notion of awe because of their learned contents. At the same time the sitting through these speeches was not always an undivided pleasure. There seemed no end to it.

Maybe I have grown up a little bit, anyway, the reading of Meijer's speech was a pleasure indeed. The author understands the secret of bringing his subject matter close to his readers and of keeping the interest alive, an important thing for one whose profession is to be a lecturer. It promotes the love of the students for the subjects wherein the lecturing is done. The center of these subjects is that part of the Word of God recorded in the New Testament in Greek.

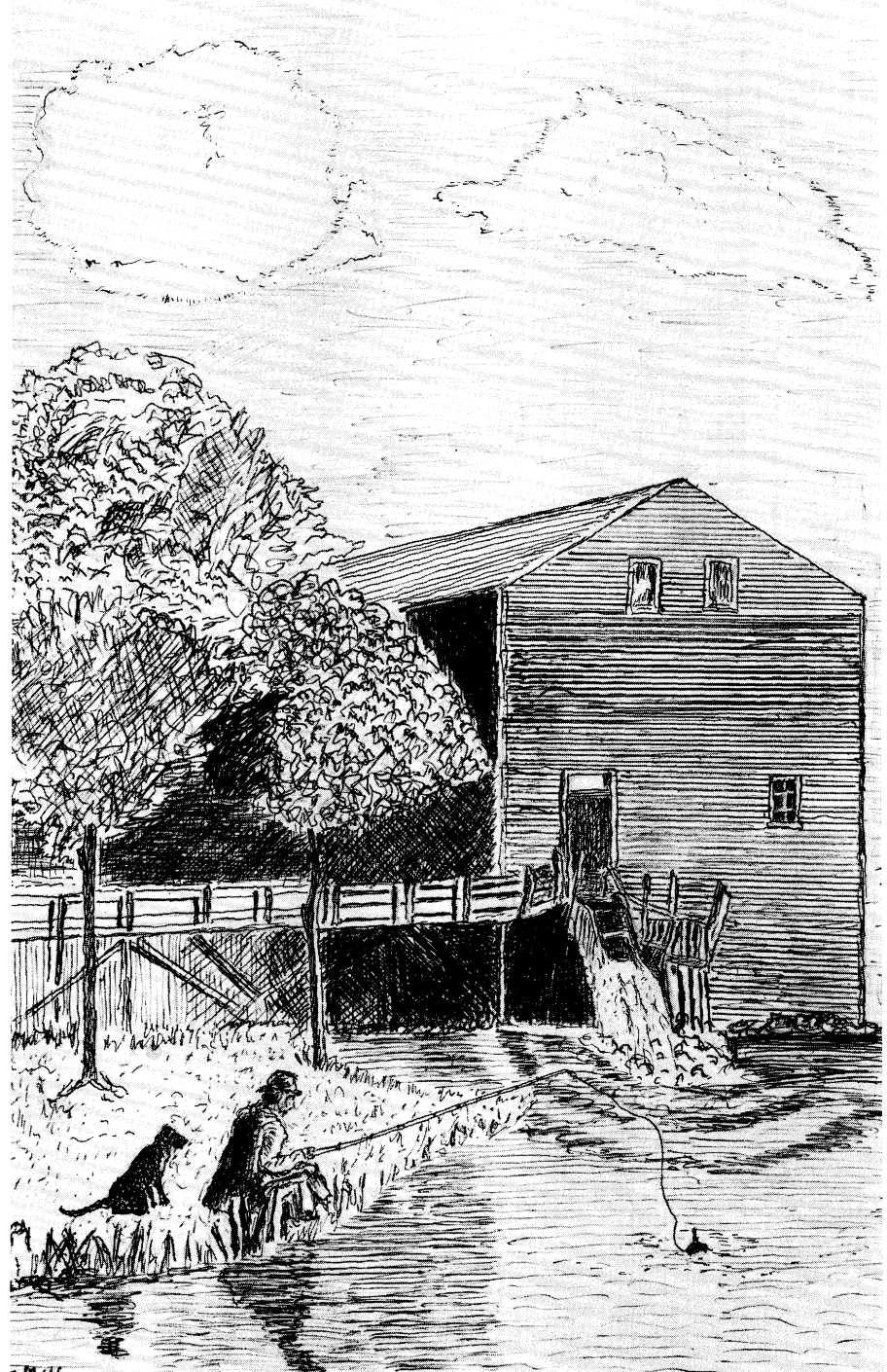
One sentence of the booklet remained obscure to me. It is found on

page 14, the beginning of the 3rd paragraph which reads: "maar, zoals gezegd, Ros heeft grotendeels gelijk, want mijn eerlijkheid lost niet alles op." I cannot place the "eerlijkheid" in this context, but it may be a deficiency on my part. Twenty-five years in Canada leave one out of touch with the development of one's mother language. Nonetheless, it seems strange to me

that "enthousiasmeert" (p. 10, 3rd paragraph), would be a good Dutch verb in the 3rd Person Singular, Present Indicative.

If the subject has your interest and you are able to read Dutch, order and read this No. 20 of "Kamper Bijdragen."

L. SELLES



*The Back House Mill, 1708 — as redrawn by S. Sipkema, Burlington, Ontario.*

# our little magazine

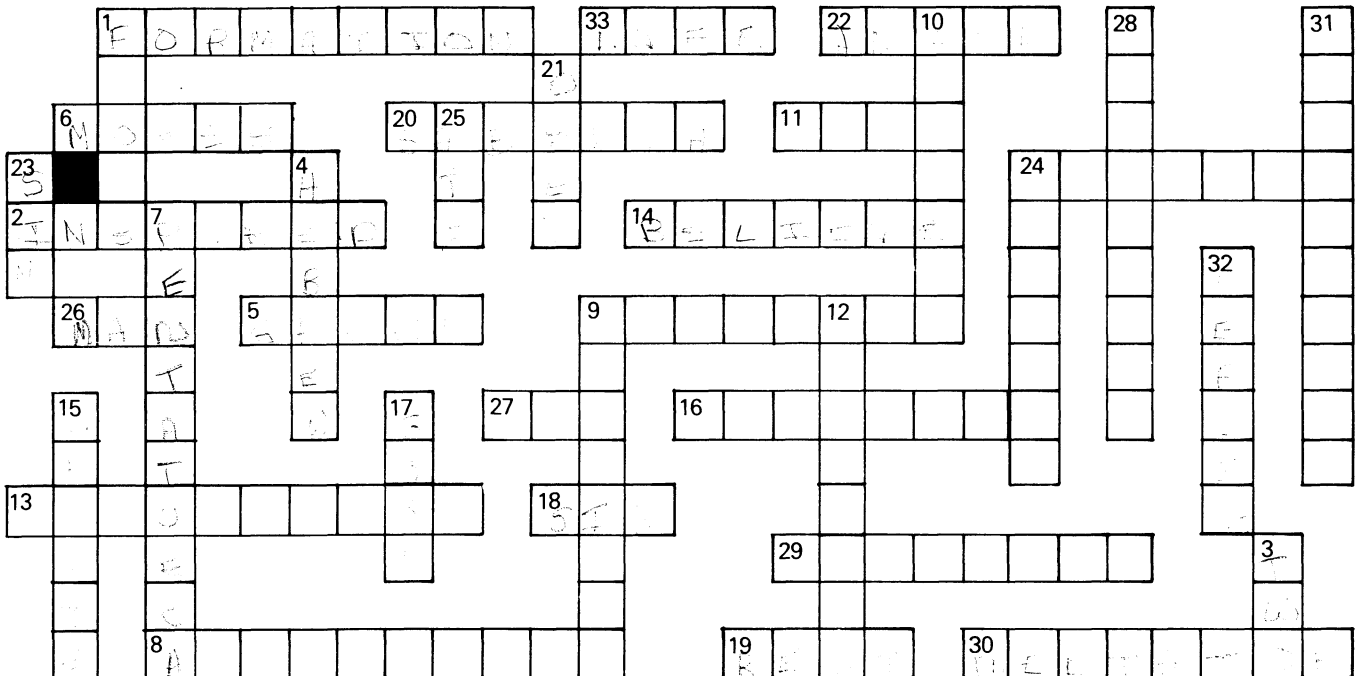
Dear Busy Beavers,

I thought you'd enjoy doing this big crossword puzzle! It was made up for you by Miss M. Diek. I think some of our Busy Beavers may have been her pupils!

Remember, when doing this puzzle, the numbers underlined show ACROSS, the others are DOWN.

## GOD'S WORD, THE BIBLE

1. The word "Bible" comes from a Greek word meaning \_\_\_\_\_.
2. God used many different men in writing the Bible. 2 Tim. 3:16a tells us that "All of scripture is \_\_\_\_\_ by God."
3. The Bible, itself, is divided into \_\_\_\_\_ parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament.
4. The Old Testament was written almost entirely in the \_\_\_\_\_ language.
5. The New Testament was written almost entirely in the \_\_\_\_\_ language.
6. The name of the first book of the Bible, Genesis, means \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The first five books of the Old Testament were all written by \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The next twelve books are history books and are called the \_\_\_\_\_ books.
9. Beginning with Job and ending with the Song of Solomon we have the \_\_\_\_\_ books of the Old Testament.
10. In the New Testament, the first four books tell the glad tidings of Christ and His work on earth — these are known as the \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Then there is the historical book of \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Beginning with Romans and ending with Philemon we have the writings of Paul or the Pauline \_\_\_\_\_.
13. Then come the General writings and the prophetic book of \_\_\_\_\_.
14. "But these are written that you may \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name." John 20:31.
15. The Bible begins with the telling of how God did make everything out of nothing, that is of how He did \_\_\_\_\_ the heavens and the earth and all that is in them.
16. God did make man in His own image and gave him charge or \_\_\_\_\_ over all He had made.
17. "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very \_\_\_\_\_." Gen. 1:31a
18. God worked \_\_\_\_\_ days to make everything.
19. Then the Lord God did \_\_\_\_\_ from all His work.
20. The fourth commandment of God's Holy Law tells us to "remember the \_\_\_\_\_ day, to keep it holy."
21. Man had to love and \_\_\_\_\_ God.
22. Yet Satan, a fallen \_\_\_\_\_, came to tempt the man.
23. The Lord God had told man that he could eat of all the trees of the garden but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil — for in the day that he ate of it he would \_\_\_\_\_.
24. Satan came in the form of a \_\_\_\_\_ to tempt man to do wrong, saying to the woman, "You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
25. Man fell into temptation and \_\_\_\_\_ of the forbidden tree.
26. Thus \_\_\_\_\_ entered the world.
27. Because of the fall man had to \_\_\_\_\_ — and wars, diseases, hunger and poverty all entered the world.



24. Yet right in Genesis 3:15 God already promises a \_\_\_\_\_ from sin.
28. This promise is the beginning of \_\_\_\_\_.
29. "The blood of Jesus His Son \_\_\_\_\_ us from all sin." I John 1:7b
30. He is our \_\_\_\_\_ for He has made satisfaction for our sins and brings us back to God. I Tim. 2:5
31. God published this promise through the \_\_\_\_\_ — Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
32. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not \_\_\_\_\_"
33. "but have eternal \_\_\_\_\_." John 3:16

W. DIEK

\*\*\*\*\*



## From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Denise Dykstra*. We are happy to have you join us, and we hope you will be happy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Write again soon, Denise.

And a big welcome to you too, *Carl Werkman*. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already, making up a puzzle for us. Thank you, Carl. Please write and tell me when you celebrate your birthday, so that you can be included in the birthday list.

Hello *Glenn Leffers*. I see you are keeping very busy! How are your plants and pets doing? Is your new house all finished? Thank you for your quiz, Glenn. How did you do on today's puzzle?

What are you planning to do all the holidays long, *Sylvia Jans*? Do you think you will miss your friends at school? Thank you for the quizzes, Sylvia. I think the Busy Beavers will enjoy doing them.

Hello *Sheila Klaver*. It was nice to hear from you again. Thank you for your story. The Busy Beavers will enjoy it, I think. And I'm glad you had such a nice birthday, Sheila.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Mr. Twiddle's Muddle

Once upon a time there was a man and the man's name was Mr. Twiddle. He was a man who always made a muddle. One day he was about to sneeze. He had his best handkerchief in one hand and his letters in the other hand . . .

ACHOO!! there he went and so did his letters, flying this way and that. What a sight to behold! Mr Twiddle running this way and that trying to catch his letters, and whenever he picked one up he dropped his handkerchief in the puddle. *O NO!* Mr. Twiddle tried to save his handkerchief but fell forward with his face in the mud. There he was sitting in the mud with muddy letters in his left hand. The only letters he was able to pick up were one for his Uncle Tom and one for AUNT BETTY. In the other hand was his handkerchief, all muddy too. And that was his muddle for that day!

THE END

by Busy Beaver *Sheila Klaver*

And do you know, Busy Beavers, what Sheila asked me at the end of her letter? Here is what she asked:

"Did you receive a muddy letter from Mr. Twiddle?"

\*\*\*\*\*

Here are the answers to last time's puzzles. First:

*Bible Book Names:* 1. Luke, 2. Jeremiah, 3. Proverbs, 4. Samuel, 5. Hosea, 6. Isaiah, 7. Esther, 8. Job, 9. Haggai.

*Bible Names:* 1. Rebekah, 2. Samson, 3. Manoah, 4. Elisabeth, 5. Baal, 6. Dagon, 7. Gideon, 8. Goliath, 9. Joshua, 10. Jonathan, 11. Kish, 12. Laban, 13. Lamech, 14. Lydia, 15. Obed, 16. Rachel.

*Familiar Phrases:* 1. Saul, 2. the priests, 3. Abraham, 4. Joshua, 5. cedars, 6. John, 7. Herod, 8. the land, 9. Peter, 10. Elijah, 11. from Dan, 12. the Feast, 13. Simon, 14. Shadrach, 15. cities, 16. Sodom, 17. Shem, 18. faith, 19. the witch, 20. Alexander, 21. Tyre, 22. Ruth, 23. Paul, 24. the children, 25. milk, 26. the highways.

How did you do? Hope you enjoy today's puzzle too!

And let me hear what you did to make Father's Day special for your Dad, will you?

Bye for this time, Busy Beavers.

With love from your Aunt Betty.

#### Engaged:

GERTRUDE GELDERMAN  
and SOLKE DE BOER

May 4, 1977.

6065 - 175A Street,  
Surrey, B.C. V3S 5E9.

317 - 8675 French Street,  
Vancouver, B.C. V6P 4W5.

We would like to thank every one who made our Golden Anniversary such a beautiful day to remember.

*Mr. and Mrs. A. Mulder*  
6052 - 172 Street, Surrey, B.C.

With joy and gratitude to the LORD, Who has again richly blest us by entrusting into our care another daughter, we announce the birth of:

DARLENE ANNETTE

Born May 3, 1977.

A sister for: *Helen, Julia,*  
*Stanley and Evelyn.*

Bill and Joanna Vanderpol  
(nee Van Popta)

5955 - 181 Street, Surrey, B.C.

We give thanks to the Lord, the Creator and Preserver of life, that He has entrusted to our care another healthy daughter:

LISA HENRIETTA

Born May 5, 1977.

*Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord. Psalm 127:3a*

A sister for: *Tara Lynn* and  
*Sheri Ann.*

Ted and Hennie Van Gorkum  
(nee Vander Sluis)

11 Academy Crescent,  
Chatham, Ontario.

On April 10, 1977, the LORD our God gave the first day of life to:

RICHARD THOMAS

and gave as parents:  
John and Rita Van Laar.

It is from God that all blessings come.

Abbotsford, B.C.

#### OUR COVER

*Peyto Lake, Alberta. (Photo courtesy of Government of Alberta.)*