



Clarion

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How Do We Avail Ourselves of Having the Old Testament History in Our Bibles?

This year it is twenty-five years ago that Prof. B. Holwerda passed away, as we all know. Articles in memory of him appeared in *De Reformatie* and *Nederlands Dagblad*. With regard to the subject mentioned in the title of this and a few more articles, he has deserved well of us during the years of his short-lived professorate in Kampen. This year, and this very month (we write June 21st), it is also thirty-five years ago that he delivered his address entitled: "De Heilshistorie in de Prediking," at the "Algemene vergadering van de Vereniging van Gereformeerde Predikanten in Nederland," in which he gave clear proof of what his abilities were in this field.

From there, however, we can go farther back into the history. In the introductory part of his lecture Prof. Holwerda referred to an address by his predecessor in the professional chair at Kampen, Prof. Dr. J. Ridderbos, also delivered at a conference of the same society. It was in 1922, some fifty-five years ago, that he spoke on the topic: "Het Oude Testament in de Prediking." In a passage quoted by Holwerda, Ridderbos said: "The preaching of the Old Testament is of great importance for the understanding of the historical progress of the Revelation. Modern man likes and calls for the shortest way to God, heedless of what history means. You meet modern man not only in the circles of modernism; apart from that there is a sort of superficial Christianity that is content with preaching which tells them what the LORD 'hath done for his soul,' his inner self. GOD has given His revelation in the way of a historical succession though, and it is very important that the congregation gain an insight into it" (translation mine, H.M.O.).

Taking his words for a starting point, I would like to ask the readers of this article: "What is your opinion? Was Prof. Ridderbos right in making such a statement? and Prof. Holwerda in referring to it?" Or, in a more personal approach, I would ask point-blank: "What does it mean to you that the LORD has given His revelation in the way of words and events in his-

torical succession? Does it mean something to you at all?"

You can say: "Well, what those narratives in the Bible tell me does not mean anything more to me than that they are just information about what came to pass, and how. And that is all there is to it. Don't misunderstand me. I do believe without any doubt! Creation, Adam and Eve, Noah and the Flood, Abraham and the other patriarchs, Moses and the exodus, David and the kings, wonders and miracles included, I do believe without any exception. I am not a man to cast a doubt on the reality of paradise, our first parents and the fall, on the crossing of the Red Sea, or the she-ass of Balaam that spoke. I believe the narratives as I find them in the Bible; in that order, sure! Why should I change the order? I believe, because it says so in the Bible.

"However, whether something happened or whether some revelation of the LORD was given around 2000 B.C. (Abraham's time) or 1000 B.C. (David's era) or 600 (Jeremiah's age), that does not make any difference to me. I don't go into that. Why should I? Be happy that I believe!"

In reply I would say that I am glad that the church member, introduced as speaking in that manner, believes what it says in the Bible. I am glad, yet I am not satisfied! For the Bible is not only a book that is to be received as it was handed over to us, but just as well a book in which to be engaged, of which to make proper use, so as to turn it to our greatest advantage. This calls for guidance by an appropriate method. What I write here applies to every member of the congregation, but first and foremost to the ministers. In their original form these articles were a speech delivered at the Ministers' workshop, but I have rewritten it so that also other brothers and sisters may benefit from it, or give this matter some thought anyway.

Now that I spoke of the appropriate method, I come to the ministers of the Divine Word, since it is they of all the brothers who are acquainted with a methodical study of the Bible. They

attended a theological seminary or university, where the proper method plays an important part. They are supposed to have learned to do their work according to a certain method. When the study of the Bible as such is at stake, it is Exegesis and Hermeneutics which come into the picture as the disciplines where the rules of explanation and the principles to be followed are laid down. And that is not merely a matter of the lecture room or of the study room. If the theological student does study the issue, and, what is just as important, tries to assimilate it (in the parsonage he has to do it all by himself!) the congregation later can gain the benefits and pick the fruits of his work as minister which, in the course of the years, becomes riper and riper.

And, generally speaking, the congregation, the average church member is alive to this. In every congregation there are brothers and sisters, within as well as outside of the consistory, who have a keen eye for it. It hardly needs saying that I do not have in mind church members who parade their knowledge in all sorts of comments on the minister's sermon; I do not mean those comments which do not serve a useful purpose. Because that is the criterion for criticism: Does it serve a useful purpose! Criticism — fine, but please always in a positive way, not so as just to ventilate your grievances against a particular minister. Criticism from the side of the congregation ought to be helpful.

Returning to my subject (the use of proper exegesis as appreciated by the hearers) let me ask some questions: Have we, or have our ministers, done full justice to the Scriptures by just making references to verses at random; by quoting at random, no matter whether that be within or outside of the context of such a verse — by just referring to texts in order to substantiate or illustrate a statement he makes? For one thing, are all the instances where God's omnipotence is mentioned in the Bible only given to support or underline the idea of His omnipotence generally speaking? For

example, if in his sermon the minister points out what it means to believe in an Almighty God, and obliquely refers to Him as the One Who created heaven and earth, as the One Who destroyed it by the flood, Who opened the womb of the barren Sarah, Who made a path through the Red Sea, etc.? Or, for instance, if in preaching God's righteousness he points to the curse laid upon the earth after the fall, the judgment of the flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, etc.? I do not say that a minister is never allowed to do so. James, in his epistle, refers to Elijah and the power of his prayer and its effect. The Bible in its history provides us with examples. Right; however, are such examples mere examples or examples with which circumstances, time, position, etc., are to be taken into account as well? I think so, and this applies all the more if the minister is going to dwell on such an example! Thus, one cannot defend a merely exemplary approach by statements like: "It is taken from the Bible, so it always works!" or something like that.

Something else. Is the minister, in preparing and delivering his sermon on a certain text, permitted to give an explanation of the text under consideration as he is pleased, as long as it is in accordance with the sound doctrine? Or to deduce a lesson from it as he deems fit, if only it be edifying in the opinion of his hearers, and not in conflict with the accepted morals? Or, prior to that, is the minister allowed to limit a text as it seems good to him, to narrow it down to a couple of words dear to him or appealing to the audience, lifting them out of their context? For instance, the words "You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you" (Deuteronomy 8:2), on the occasion of whatever anniversary or jubilee? or the "Abide with us" (Luke 24:29), as a text for the dwelling of Christ in our hearts? Is a minister free to do so, without wondering: Is this really a text, that is to say: a closed whole, having a certain structure, and therefore fit to gather a message from it? Or is a minister free to combine two verses, taken from parts of Scripture far from each other, that have hardly any other connection but the sound?

No one in our midst will say: "Oh, I leave that up to the minister. He has completed his studies, so he knows. I am a layman." No one is allowed to say so, since too much depends on it.

"As he stands on the pulpit, and proclaims the Word of His Sender, explaining and applying the Divine Word, it is I who am to be comforted." Right, but then on good, solid grounds, on the ground of a well-considered Word of Scripture, so that I am certain it is the LORD Who consoles me. And the same applies to the exhortations and admonitions. "Listening to the proclamation, I am the one who has to adjust my life and to amend my ways." Right, but then I should be convinced that it is not the minister putting forward *his* ideas, but the LORD Himself Who says so, and on Whose Word the minister, His servant, had meditated well. The minister is to give evidence of really having gone into the text and of having "digested" it in his mind by a sound exegesis! Explanation is just as well a part of a sermon as application. The congregation has to submit to what clearly is the will of the LORD, and not to a minister, because "he has such a nice or such a forceful way of saying it."

In order to find out by sincere exegesis that it is indeed the LORD Who says so as the minister proclaims, the context in which a verse or some verses are found has to come into the picture as well. Whoever preaches, for example, on Romans 8:1, has to take into account the place of this verse with regard to what has been said already in chapter 7 and what is to follow in chapter 8. And a much beloved verse of a certain Psalm is to be considered as a verse of that specific Psalm, which is either a prayer, or a lamentation, or a hymn of thanksgiving, or one of the royal psalms.

By means of the context we come to the historical setting of the text the minister has chosen. What about the historical framework? Is the minister permitted to ignore it, or to neglect it as if it were hardly of any value? I think no one will answer that question in the affirmative if he gives the matter further thought. In which stage of the History of God's Revelation a particular word was revealed can make all the difference. This holds true of the New Testament already. I think here of Matthew 12:31, 32, concerning the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit as distinguished from a word spoken against the Son of man. The descent of the Holy Spirit, such a historical event, marks the boundary line between the one sin and the other; in the former stage a sin will be forgiven which can no longer be for-

given afterwards. So much the more it applies to the Old Testament dispensation with all its successive stages, covering a span of time of at least seven millennia. "Make yourself an ark," the LORD said to Noah — to Noah, not for instance, to Lot in Sodom, or to Moses in Egypt, or to Zerubabel and Joshua during the exile. Only once the world was destroyed by a flood; so what does it mean to us today? "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you," the LORD said to Abram — to Abram, right; so not to Moses, since Moses knew about the destination when the children of Israel left Egypt; nor to any-



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body else in the Old Testament. Does God ever make or will He ever make such a demand upon us? I don't think so. Well then, what about a sermon on this text and its application? I go on. Can we put the fact that Sarah was barren on one level with the problem a childless couple has to face today? I do not think so, because to none of these couples was given a promise of the seed to come as it had been given to Abram and Sarai. That makes quite a difference! Well, taking this into account, how is the minister to preach on Genesis 12 and following chapters at present, in order that the church today is really comforted and admonished?

Another example. During the second world war, the time when The Netherlands was an occupied territory, some ministers in certain circles preached that Hitler and the Nazis were the rod of God's anger to punish the Dutch people for their sins, and that, consequently, the Dutch had to submit themselves to this staff of God's fury and that the underground organization was fundamentally wrong. They tried to support their views by appeals to what Jeremiah prophesied in his time; for example, in the forceful way he did it in chapter 27: "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live!" For many a sermon the text was taken from the book of Jeremiah. Now you will say: "Oh, but I do not agree with that. That is a wrong application." I, for one, agree with you. Yet I ask you, "On what grounds can you say so?" Only because of the fact that you take the factor of the historical setting of the text into proper account!

In conclusion we see that the factor of time and history in the Bible comes into the picture so obviously as to be an integral part of it that cannot be ignored or neglected. We cannot simply think it away, otherwise we would be running into all sorts of problems. You cannot say: "It is artificial"; or: "It is far-fetched"; or: "It is just a wriggling of the text into a certain scheme." And that's why I am glad that some fifty years ago the matter was brought up again by J. Ridderbos and by all those who extended the lines which he had shown: K. Schilder, M.B. van 't Veer, B. Holwerda, and others.

That was in the twenties of this century. In our next article we hope to see whether, and, if so, what, efforts

I Found It! ²

I FOUND IT! (IV)

Law Four states: "We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives." To support this spiritual law some texts are quoted — John 1:12 and Ephesians 2:8-9. The first text does speak about "receiving/welcoming/accepting" Jesus Christ. The human responsibility of believing and accepting comes to the fore. But the divine sovereignty is not stressed in the pamphlet on this matter at all. John 1:1, the next verse, reads: "who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Here the divine initiative and sovereignty come to the fore. And even Ephesians 2:8-9 accents the fact that salvation (and faith) is a gift of God and gives no occasion for man to boast.

You see, it is very popular and modern to speak about "accepting Christ" or "accepting Christ into my life." It is all viewed from a human point of view. And the Bible does in certain places put it that way. But there are a good number of texts pointing out that faith is the Spirit's work, God's work of changing stony hearts into hearts of flesh. For example, Jesus said in John 6: "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws (drags) him" (verse 43); "All that the Father gives me shall come to me" (verse 37); "For this reason I have said to you that no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father" (verse 65).

Such texts stress the sovereignty of God in the matter of "coming to Christ" and "believing in Christ." We do not read anything of this in the fourth spiritual law and its explanation. Why does God not receive His credit and honour? Why is faith not mentioned as the fruit of election? (e.g. Acts 13:48 — "and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed;" see also Canons of Dort, I, Article 9). Of

were being made in the course of previous centuries to come to grips with the problems concerning the Old Testament in the life of the Church.

H.M. OHMANN

course, one cannot say everything, but to state an important law in such a man-centered fashion only is very one-sided and does not do justice to God.

The favourite text for personally/individually "letting Christ into one's life," Revelation 3:20, is quoted. It reads: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him." Professor B. Holwerda in his sermons (*Een Levende Hoop*, I) on the seven letters corrected a popular but incorrect (to him) exegesis of the text. About this text he says, "This does not mean that Christ knocks at the door of my heart, which people often make of it. No, He knocks at the door of the world; He comes with haste; the end of all things is near; He announces it by means of signs and in all events of our time; He hastens to the end; we hear the loud, clear knock of Christ against the door of the world; and He says: open it for me; be prepared for My coming" (my translation, W.H.). You see, in explaining Christ's letters we must often go back to what Christ said while He was on earth in order to understand the background for His words in the seven letters. Did Jesus not say: "And be like men who are waiting for their Master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately OPEN THE DOOR TO HIM when he comes and KNOCKS" (Luke 12:36 — emphasis mine)? To confirm this listen to Mark 13:29, "Even so, you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that He (Christ) is near, RIGHT AT THE DOOR" (emphasis is mine, W.H.). Then the words — "I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me" — refer to the great banquet Feast at the end of days, an event which Christ often used in His parables and teachings.

In conclusion, then, to use Revelation 3:20, which was addressed to the Church, as a text to prove that "we receive Christ by personal invitation" and that we should "let Christ into our life" is not a very good display of thorough exegesis. And as a result MAN'S decision for Christ receives lop-sided attention.

This piece is becoming too long so we will continue it next time. Till then,

W. HUIZINGA

“FAMILY”

A recent edition of Time magazine (July 11, 1977) carried an impressive Cover Story, entitled, “The Youth Crime Plague,” and gave some devastating statistics on present-day, youthful atrocities. For example, in the U.S., since 1960, juvenile crime has risen twice as fast as that of adults. Also, from 1970-1975, the arrest rate of girls under 18 for serious offenses climbed 40% compared to an increase of 24% for boys. The girls are getting into the act, undoubtedly a negative form of emancipation.

Not only is the crime rate increasing among youngsters, but it also appears that the crimes are becoming more brutal all the time. Adolescent and even child criminals seem to be preying on “the very young, the old, the lame, the sick and the blind.” Time indicates that most of these crimes legally fall into the “serious” category, i.e., murder, rape, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, larceny and motor vehicle theft. Another sad quote from this article, “A new, remorseless, mutant juvenile seems to have been born, and there is no more terrifying figure in America today.”

I know that our young people hardly belong among these ugly statistics. But I cannot be unduly optimistic either, for recently in our vicinity some of our young people were involved in drug-pushing and shoplifting. Those, too, are “serious” crimes.

What struck me most, however, in Time’s story was the analysis given of the alarming surge in juvenile crime. Most of these crimes are committed in major U.S. cities, and factors such as unemployment, slum housing, and inadequate schooling are certainly clear causes. Other factors are: materialism, television-violence, permissiveness, unlimited freedom, and an ethnically mixed populace.

But Time really hit the mark in observing, “Most important is the breakdown in the family.” A judge in Florida remarked, “We look for quick solutions, but family stability is the long-term answer.” I feel that there is real truth in these statements.

Even more than school activity, family life is a decisive force in shaping young people for their positive life as living members of the Church and as responsible citizens in society.

Circumspection...

In the family our children receive their first training in love and service, and the family is the environment to which they always return until maturity is reached. Even after marriage, most children maintain the bond with their parents and relatives, and family days are not uncommon. If the family does not set the right atmosphere and does not emphasize the Christian style of life, the children will suffer, and suffer greatly.

Many American children, who are born in the ghettos of mammoth metropolises like New York and Chicago, do not know any family life at all. They are often abandoned and neglected by their parents who themselves have a criminal background



and are subject to “chronic alcoholism and emotional disturbances.” Their attitudes and values, therefore, are made in the slums and on the streets, where violence is the only law and crime is a common means. It is interesting to note that with ethnic groups which traditionally have a strong family structure, like the Cubans, there is a lower crime rate. The family structure is, indeed, important.

Now the Reformed people have always stressed the necessity of a healthy, well-functioning family life.

It has undoubtedly been a blessing for the Reformed Churches that the families were generally sound and that moral standards in the homes were set high. Children were born into an order which subjected itself to the Word of the Lord, and this initial setting never loses its effect or influence in the course of life.

Sometimes, lately, I have been wondering if we still set our standards as high as in the past. Is the family still a central institution in our lives? More and more young people seem to be moving away from home and inhabiting apartments. Our wealth permits it, but is it a step ahead? Kids are very often not at home; as my elder told me, it becomes rather difficult to have the whole family united for a home visit. Some parents are overly busy with all kinds of activities and barely have time for the children. Is it exceptional or common that one teenager recently confided to me, “My parents are too engrossed in themselves to communicate with me; they don’t know beans about what’s going on . . .”? It is a grave accusation against Christian parenthood.

There used to be a time, I reminisce, when families would regularly be together, especially during weekends and on Sunday evenings. It was not uncommon for families to be grouped around the organ in praise of God’s Name. For some kids nowadays that would be a ridiculous suggestion, I fear, because their idea of entertainment is going out and living it up. Being home then becomes a punishment instead of a pleasure.

Time’s Cover Story is a warning also to us. We learn from the developments in the world at large. Satan has one prime purpose: to destroy the Church. And he will do so also by causing the breakdown of Reformed family life. Perhaps we will have to intensify and deepen family relationships. Perhaps some will have to start a real family life.

In any case, the service of God and the blessed upbuilding of our life begins at home, between husband and wife, between parents and children.

Cid.

The Office of All Believers

In this lecture we wish to consider several questions which continuously reappear in thoughts and discussions concerning the office in the church. In particular, we think of the questions concerning the relationship between the ecclesiastical office and the office of all believers.

You know that the idea of the "office of all believers" is very popular in this time. Think of how much emphasis is placed on the function of the laity in the World Council of Churches and in recent Roman Catholic theology. Strong pleas in favour of the lay-apostolate bombard us from all sides. G.C. Kromminga, in his dissertation, has given us a lively summary of these developments. The notion of the "office of all believers" has also been a favourite in churches of the Reformed tradition. In this respect, Abraham Kuyper was well ahead of modern theology!

At the same time several questions are still with us. Let me mention a couple. What has priority, the "special offices" or the office of all believers? Is the ecclesiastical office a specialization of the general office, so that the ecclesiastical office rests on delegation? Or can the office of all believers never function unless preceded and led by the ecclesiastical office? We can formulate those questions in the following (customary) manner: Does the line run from above to below or from below to above? The problem is one of high and low churchism. We wish to put our questions before the Reformers, the Pietists, and Abraham Kuyper.

* * *

You know that Martin Luther, in his polemic against the Romanist clerical order, as early as 1520, had already made some far-reaching statements about the office of all believers. He protested against the idea that the ecclesiastical clergy should have a monopoly of grace by virtue of the sacrament of ordination, the laying on of hands of the priest. According to Romish theology, this gives power to the office-bearer to bring a sacrifice of satisfaction to God. Luther radically rejected this power of the church. He did this out of the deep and basic Reformed conviction that the "key-power" of

the church is to be found exclusively in the preaching of the gospel of reconciliation. Thus, a presbyter who does not preach (that is, a priest) is not a presbyter, but an unusable person for the church of Christ.

Out of this basic conviction the hierarchical idea of a division between the clergy and the laity of the church naturally had to fall. The church cannot tolerate a clerical order ruling over the people of God; there can only be a service for the upbuilding of God's people. Hence it is understandable that Luther made such far-reaching statements concerning the priesthood of all believers — an expression which he adopted from 1 Peter 2:9, and in which he saw both the priestly and the prophetic task of the believers being referred to. Everyone who by baptism is ingrafted into Christ has on that basis received the priestly office and consequently also has the principal right to preach the Word and administer sacraments. All official functions lie, in principle, in this general priesthood: the "key-power" of the church is possessed by each Christian!

But Luther wanted to observe one limitation: Every one does not have to exercise the right of administration that he has. There must be order in the church and so there must be rules which govern the public preaching and administration of the sacraments: the rules of calling, examination, and ordination.

The question arises whether or not, in this view, the office-bearer becomes a representative of the congregation and the office loses its character as an institution of Christ. Particularly in the 19th century a long and severe conflict took place with German Neo-lutherans on this question. In that time, the basic question was: Is the office an *Ordnung* (human arrangement) or a *Stiftung* (divine institution)? Despite all the exertion, the controversy ended without any definite conclusion.

In the 20th century it became apparent that the controversy had proceeded on the basis of a false dilemma. For Luther spoke about a *vocatio* (calling) which he considered necessary for the public administration of one's office. It was a matter of debate

whether Luther took this idea of *vocatio* only as a practical means because there has to be order in the church, or was this "calling" a matter which finds its ground in the will of Christ?

The calling is indeed to be seen as a delegation from the side of the congregation, which is also actively involved in the election to office. Yet we would misinterpret Luther if we explained this right of the congregation as a sort of democratic rule of the game, so that the office-bearer is really not much more than a representative of the people. For Luther himself stated at the same time that behind the delegation of the congregation lies the command of Christ, and the call of Christ comes to one *in* that delegation. The office comes *through* the congregation, but it has its origin *in Christ*. It is not a human set-up, but a divine institution, according to Ephesians 4:11 and Romans 10:15. And this institution is used by the Lord in His work of salvation, His work of justifying the sinner through the preaching of the gospel.

It was particularly the controversy with the Anabaptists that led Luther more and more to see the office-bearer as mandatary of God — an instrument in God's salvation-program. For the Spiritualists did not want to hear of any order of offices in the church and only acknowledged the "inward call." Grace does not come to man, but man carries grace within himself. It was exactly against them that Luther could say that the office-bearer is not dependent on his congregation, because he administers grace to it.

Thus Luther also has a line from above to below, and it is the whole secret of Luther-interpretation not to have any false dilemma here. It is precisely characteristic in the church of Christ that every member of the congregation possesses all treasures in Christ and hence can be called prophet and priest, while at the same time it must be emphasized that these treasures lie only *in Christ*. They must continually be given to the believer through the preaching of the Word, and through faith they must continually be repossessed. Man is *simul justus et peccator* (at the same time righteous and a sinner) before God. As *peccator* he continually needs the administration of the Word and sacraments, and as *justus* he is a partaker of the anointing and treasures of Christ.

That, at bottom, is the religious

ground by which the ecclesiastical office not only can be described as a matter of delegation from the congregation, but also at the same time can be typified as a matter of divine order.

So we find a polarity in Luther's view, which has a close relationship to his doctrine of justification. Luther drew the fundamental lines of the Reformed theology of the offices. He did not give us an evenly balanced theory but offered his insight through many polemical statements against Romanist clericalism as well as against Anabaptist Spiritualism. The priesthood of all believers could not function according to Luther, as a weapon in the battle of the Spiritualists in order to justify their individualistic "prophetic" practices. The degeneration of the priesthood of all believers would lead to the individualism of the Anabaptists just as the degeneration of the institution of the office would lead to the Roman clerical system.

Time does not permit us to consider the different colours this Reformed insight of Luther's received in the theology of M. Bucer (Strassburg) and John Calvin (Geneva). One thing is clear: in their polemic against both Rome and the Spiritualists they followed the same road as Luther, although Calvin in particular gave a more balanced picture than Luther did. For even though Calvin was deeply convinced that the real *clerus* was the people of God, the congregation of believers, he still placed less stress on the "office of all believers" than Luther did.

* * *

The balance that was found in the age of the Reformation with regard to the relationship between the office-bearers and the members of the congregation was clearly disturbed with the appearance of pietism. Pietism introduced individualism and the conventicle into the church with an appeal to the "office of all believers." That meant that at the same time an element of indifference was introduced with regard to the confession and the office in the church.

Let us consider for a moment the father of pietism: Philipp Jacob Spener (1635-1705). Two facts are of decisive importance in his development.

a. As a student in Strassburg he became acquainted with the writings of Luther and Luther's appeal to the priesthood of all believers. This made a deep impression on Spener who daily witnessed how little had resulted

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up visited hopes I sped;
And shot, precipitated,
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat — and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet —
"All things betray thee, who betrayest Me."

— from "The Hound of Heaven," by Francis Thompson, 1859-1907

from the Lutheran stress on the office of all believers in the Lutheran churches which lived there under the authority of the magistrates.

b. Early in his life Spener made an eager acquaintance with the mystical, ascetic literature of the Middle Ages and of English puritanism. He was strongly influenced in this regard by the figure of Johann Arndt (1555-1621) who — although a Lutheran — was continually fascinated by the medieval mystics Bernhard, Tauler, and Thomas à Kempis. Religious feeling and ethical conduct received more emphasis among them than the preaching of the gospel of justification. And Arndt fostered this sort of reaction against the dead orthodoxy that had infiltrated the Lutheran churches.

Spener attempted to construct a synthesis between Luther and Arndt. Already as a student he had an aversion to the superficial life-style of his fellow students and the way they neglected the reading of the Bible; with great zeal he took part in private Sunday gatherings at which an attempt was made to "edify" each other. But this is "edification" in the individualistic sense!

After he became a minister in Frankfurt in 1670, he began to organize the *collegia pietatis*: conventicle gatherings held twice a week for mutual edification. Instead of working for the reformation of the church through the avenue of the reformation of the offices, he took a side road in forming

a church within the church, the *ecclesiola in ecclesia* — an oft-appearing phenomenon in the history of the church. In 1675 he was responsible for a new edition of a work of Arndt, to which he added his now famous *Pia Desideria*, the charter of the Pietistic movement. In this work he particularly pleaded for the restoration of the spiritual priesthood of all believers, which allows every Christian to read the Bible and to admonish his neighbour. He also maintained that Christianity was not a matter of the intellect, but a matter of practice: the practice of love. He felt that already as a student one ought to show the signs of regeneration and seek the company of small gatherings for mutual edification.

It is clear that, with this appeal to the priesthood of all believers, Spener wanted to form the real congregation within the congregation, in which regeneration and individual edification are in the center. This unavoidably led to a division between office-bearers and members of the congregation. The *collegia pietatis* acquired an individualistic and separatistic character. Pietism presented itself as a party in the church, a conventicle of the laity that stood for three slogans: The Bible alone! Priesthood of all believers! Personal Christianity! True, pietism spread widely and branched out into all directions in Germany and displayed many Christian works of mercy and much missionary zeal. But with all this the individualistic orientation remained along

with an indifferent attitude to doctrine and the office in the church.

These ideas spread world-wide with the rise of Methodism in the 18th century. With its birth and early growth, Methodism was strongly influenced by German pietism. It has similarly emphasized the work of the laity and has cultivated the same indifference to the work of the office-bearers and the institutional work of the church.

Pietism is a clear example of a particular modification in speaking about the office of believers. It appeals to Luther for the use of the expression, but simultaneously bends the direction of Luther's work: individual edification and regeneration take the central place. It later appeared to be the background of much Methodistic evangelistic activity and also of the unfruitful dualism between office and laity in the church.

* * *

In our Reformed tradition, the discussion of the office of all believers was particularly stimulated by Abraham Kuyper. For him, too, this office was a matter of the highest importance and as such earned a place above the institutional offices of the church: minister, elder, deacon. If we wish to evaluate Kuyper's choice, we must observe his conception of the church, particularly his distinction between the church as organism and the church as institution. Right now it is not possible for us to examine fully the philosophical background of this distinction. We content ourselves with the remark that for Kuyper the church as organism was the real, essential church.

She is the mystical, invisible body of Christ — the church as she stands before the eyes of God and in His counsel. She finds her center in Christ, and her life's principle in regeneration, which is worked in the heart by the Holy Spirit without the means of the preaching of the gospel. She has a task to penetrate the human race and must assimilate herself with the given creation ordinances, so that she can manifest herself as the congregation of reborn mankind.

The church as organism becomes visible in the history of this world in believing persons who stand in the middle of created life and are busy everywhere in the world to the glory of God. Hence we see the birth of Christian families, schools, universities, and so on: the church as organism creates a sphere of Christian life in this

world by which it becomes possible for particular grace to maintain and stimulate the working of God's common grace in the world.

It is the duty of all believers to bring this restored organic life to light. Thus the office of all believers is principally prior to the institutional church, and also functions outside the church-institution. For there is a direct link between Christ and the believers through the immediate working of the Holy Spirit. Hence the general office of believers is an eternal office, while the so-called special, ecclesiastical offices are only temporal, just as the church-institution.

Kuyper did not look down on the church-institution; he continually opposed Methodism and gave himself with much sacrifice in order to reform that church-institution (Doleantie, 1886). But for him the institution as such was a less important matter and on a lower scale than the church as organism: The organism is essential — the institution is accidental and instrumental. The organism is eternal — the institution is temporal. The actual struggle against Satan is not fought in the institution.

In the church-institution we meet with the ecclesiastical offices: temporal instruments to nourish the organism of the church. Prior to the offices and lying at their root is the office of the believer. Thus we conclude that Kuyper clearly draws the line from *below, upwards*. In actual fact, the special office becomes an organ and agent for the office of all believers.

One of the results of this position was that Kuyper thought the well-known triad of the office of believers could be seen in the special offices: the prophetic, priestly, and kingly office comes back in the division: minister, deacon, and elder. For him this triad was also founded in an anthropological and psychological given, namely, the three spiritual activity centers of the human being: head, heart, hand.

Another consequence of this position was that in his struggle for the reformation of the church he saw the office of all believers *functioning in the church-institution* as a fundamentally *ecclesiastical* office. For this he (incorrectly) appealed to Article 28 of the Belgic Confession, where we read that it is the duty (or the office) of all believers to separate themselves from all those who do not belong to the church. Hence he could pass off every congregational action in the church-

reformation of 1886 as an *official* action of office-bearers. With spiritual power the organism comes to the institution in the person of the believer, who receives regeneration directly through the Holy Spirit, and in the same person the light of the church-institution spreads out over the wide terrain of the church as organism. That is why Kuyper wanted to give priority to the laical subjects in his encyclopedic ordering of the so-called Diaconological disciplines.

Nonetheless, we have a different climate here than we have with the Reformers. Kuyper's work on the office of all believers is undoubtedly the cause of the great popularity of the idea in the Reformed churches. But meanwhile the underlying theories have not remained uncontested.

Bavinck had already opposed this position. Among other things, he mentioned that it is *precisely as institution* that the church is the mother of the believers, and that is exactly what is lacking with Kuyper: the believers are born outside the institution, i.e., outside the preaching of the Word.

Here the preaching of the Word loses the place that the Bible gives it and that the Reformation restored to it. It is worthwhile for one to pay closer attention to these matters, particularly if one wishes to understand the polemic of Klaas Schilder against the Kuyperian notion of the church. Besides this, it gives an insight into the background of the conflict that has been carried out in The Netherlands concerning the Neo-Kuyperian idea of the church in the philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd.

In conclusion, it can be said that in the Reformers we do not meet the same sort of dichotomies that does appear in pietism and in the works of Kuyper. We would be wise to hold on to the teaching of the Reformers. That renders it impossible to see the work of the office-bearers of the church and the work of the believers as two opposing poles rivaling against each other. For it is precisely the work of the office-bearers that makes the work of the believers possible. Otherwise the notion of the office of believers becomes an abstraction or a spiritualistic antipode to the church in her official, ecclesiastical organization. And it is important to us, particularly over against all sorts of laity-ideals of the World Council of Churches, to arm ourselves with the Scriptural insights of biblical Reformed theology.

C. TRIMP

press review

ONZE LANDSVROUWE

Deze keer is hier een pers-schouw in het Nederlands, al is het ook interessant voor engels lezenden. Maar ik neem het over van het blad *Canadian Scene*, Issue 984 van 24 juni, 1977, in de "Dutch language." Het eerste artikel is over onze koningin die dit jaar haar 25-jarig ambts jubileum vierde. Het verscheen eerst in de *Globe and Mail* van 6 juni. Hier volgt het:

Vijf en twintig jaar Koningin.

Ten tijde van haar kroning was Koningin Elizabeth II het levende symbool van een eeuwenlange politieke en maatschappelijke evolutie naar grotere vrijheid in haar eigen land en in de vele landen over de hele wereld die hun instellingen van Engeland hadden geërfd. In het jaar van haar Zilveren Jubileum is zij nog steeds een symbool, maar zij is tevens een vrouw die door hard en onverdroten werk groot respect afdwingt. De verlegen jonge Koningin die steun zocht bij Winston Churchill is nu een vrouw die het vertrouwen heeft gewonnen van zeven Britse Eerste Ministers, de Eerste Ministers van Canada en van alle andere landen waarvan zij het staatshoofd is; en wie weet er meer over wat er in de wereld te koop is dan deze mannen.

"Er komt nooit een einde aan haar werk," zo schreef Anthony Bailey, in een uit twee delen bestaand artikel in de *New Yorker*. Haar bevoegdheden zijn symbolisch, maar werkelijk. Eeuwen geleden schreef Walter Bagehot dat de Koningin het recht heeft "geraadpleegd te worden, aan te moedigen en te waarschuwen." Iedere dag ontvangt zij in een rood leren doos documenten: van het Parlement, van haar gouverneurs-generaal en ambassadeurs. Zij leest ze allen. En als zij 's avonds niet klaar komt, dan gaat zij er de volgende morgen na het ontbijt mee verder.

En na vijf en twintig jaar lang iedere dag die roodleren dozen met de woorden "The Queen" ontvangen te hebben en al die documenten gelezen te hebben is de Koningin zeker in staat om raad te geven, aan te moedigen en te waarschuwen. Haar Eerste Ministers waarderen dit en hoewel sommigen aanvankelijk misschien onzeker waren, vonden zij al spoedig troost en bemoediging in hun besprekingen met de Koningin. Zij heeft altijd op bewonderenswaardige wijze haar objectiviteit weten te behouden, zodat zij zich, welke partij er ook aan de re-

gering was, nooit politiek heeft hoeven uitspreken.

Zij is zonder twijfel één van de drukste gastvrouwen in de wereld. Niemand schudt zoveel handen en niemand glimlacht tegen zoveel mensen als onze Koningin. Buckingham Palace wordt jaarlijks door zo'n 100.000 mensen bezocht. Zij ontvangt meer dan 100 brieven per dag en indien nodig neemt zij direct maatregelen zonder eerst allerlei instanties te raadplegen. Een dozijn of meer keren per jaar spreekt zij tijdens inhuldigingsplechtigheden woorden van dank en bemoediging tot de duizenden mensen die zich inzetten voor hun werk voor het land of de wereld. Zij heeft bijna altijd gasten.

Zij reist. Dit jaar hoopt zij alle landen te bezoeken waarvan zij het staatshoofd is. Met die bezoeken hoopt zij bij te dragen tot grotere nationale en internationale vriendschap, terwijl zij zich tevens op de hoogte wil stellen van economische en maatschappelijke omstandigheden. Zij heeft de hoop uitgesproken dat Schotland zich niet zal afscheiden van Engeland — een hoop die wij hier in Canada zeker zullen begrijpen — en men heeft haar dit kwalijk genomen. De enthousiaste reacties van de Schotten hebben echter duidelijk bewezen dat zij het met hun Koningin eens zijn.

Koningin Elizabeth II is de drie en zestigste monarch in het Britse Koningshuis, het oudste in Europa. Zij is echter een vrouw, en daarom is zij waarschijnlijk zo geliefd, die zich in grote mate het lot van haar landgenoten aantrekt. Zij heeft met veel zorg toegezien op de scholing van haar kinderen en zij heeft haar kinderen en haar man, uit het oog van alle deftigheid van het paleisleven, een goed thuis gegeven. En wie hen verleden jaar in Canada heeft kunnen zien zal er dan ook van overtuigd zijn dat dit inderdaad een eerste klas gezin is, niet alleen in koninklijke zin, maar ook uit menselijk oogpunt bezien.

De Koningin is een fijne vrouw die van paarden houdt, van honden en van kinderen, die het systeem waaronder honderden mensen alleen voor de eer het vorstenhuis dienden beëindigde, die er voor gezorgd heeft dat zij die in Buckingham Palace werken behoorlijke lonen ontvangen, die zich niet laat voorlezen wat zij in het openbaar behoort te zeggen, die een groot gevoel voor humor heeft en die, in tegenstelling tot haar beroemde voorgangster, graag vermaakt wordt. Zij bezit de gave om niet te familiaar te

worden met mensen, maar tevens de meest verlegen mensen volkomen op hun gemak te stellen met een hartelijke lach.

Een bijzonder innemende vrouw, een kleine figuur die in zich verenigt het symbool van de Magna Carta, van de Habeas Corpus Wet, van jury rechtspraak, van moed en waardigheid, van verantwoordelijkheid en van je plicht blijven doen ook als het vervelend of zelfs gevaarlijk is. Eeuwen. De Kroon. De mensen. Dat alles verenigt in een tenger figuurtje en als zij de mensen passeert dan schiet de mensen een brok in de keel, zelfs soms in de keel van de meest overtuigde republikeinen

Onze Landsvrouw de Koningin. God zegene haar.

Deze bede is ook de onze.

J. GEERTSEMA

Consulaat-Generaal der Nederlanden CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS

10 King Street E.,
Toronto 210, Ontario
Phone: 364-5443

Onderwerp: **Opsporing adressen.**

VERHAEGEN, Mathilda Christina Josephina, geboren 17 oktober 1924 te Rotterdam. Op 10 juli 1946 naar Canada geëmigreerd.

VERHAEGEN, Christiaan Pierre Mathieu, geboren 19 december 1926 te Rotterdam.

VERHAEGEN, Petrus Matheus Christiaan, geboren 12 april 1928 te Rotterdam.

VIJSMA-DE HAAN, Lion, geboren 13 juli 1913 te Amsterdam.

WING, Kam Wong, geboren 27 augustus 1950. Van Chinese nationaliteit. In november 1975 naar Canada geëmigreerd.

GROOTVONK, G.J. geboren 17 december 1911.

DE WAAL, Antonius Franciscus, geboren 6 oktober 1918 te Weert.

SCHREUDERS, Elisabeth, geboren 13 oktober 1934.

(VAN) VEENENDAAL, Egbert Jan, geboren 30 oktober 1927 te Utrecht.

VAN GEEL, Henrietta Jozepha Henrica, geboren 18 oktober 1947 te Eindhoven. Op 17 mei 1967 naar Canada geëmigreerd.

TERLOUW, Hans (Geen nadere gegevens bekend)

VISSER, Robert, geboren 15 juli 1935. Op 27 juni 1957 naar Canada geëmigreerd.

VAN OMMEREN, Hedwig Evert George, geboren 9 februari 1952 te Paramaribo. Op 7 maart 1975 naar Canada geëmigreerd.

De Vice-Consul belast met de waarneming van het Consulaat-Generaal, voor deze: —
(W.S. ten Bosch) Asst. Kanselier

Report of the Committee on the R.S.V. for General Synod

Coaldale - 1977*

**This report was received from the Committee for publication in Clarion. In this way the Committee feels the church people as a whole will be most easily informed with regards to their work. Ed.*

THE MANDATE

Synod Toronto (1974) decided (*Acts*, Article 182. D): to continue the Committee on the R.S.V. with the mandate:

- a. to continue the work of checking the R.S.V. and to pass on their criticism to the R.S.V. Bible Committee.
- b. to inform the Churches from time to time about the results of their investigations.
- c. to send a copy of this decision to the R.S.V. Bible Committee.

ad a. The Committee met nine times during the past three years and came up with some recommendations for consideration by the Standard Bible Committee. (See Appendix A.) These recommendations are taken seriously and are appreciated. This work is therefore of some importance.

ad b. The instruction to inform the churches from time to time was not implemented. The reason is that hardly any results of the investigations could be reported until a considerable amount of checking was done and a summary of the accomplished work could be presented. We, therefore, felt that it would be better to wait until we were ready to submit a report.

ad c. A copy of Synod Toronto's decision re the report of the previous Committee on the R.S.V. was sent to the Standard Bible Committee on March 20, 1975.

TRANSLATION AND PRESUPPOSITION

As has just been noted, Synod Toronto, among other things, charged this Committee with the mandate "to continue the work of checking the R.S.V." Synod New Westminster gave a similar mandate: "to continue with their work of checking the Revised Standard Version" (Article 33), while the Synod Orangeville (1968) made clear what the first point of this checking, which was to be continued

through all these years, is. It is "to study the Revised Standard Version as to faithfulness to the original text and 'Schriftgelovig karakter'" (*Acts*, Article 46, IV). (For a complete review of past Synod decisions on the R.S.V. see Appendix B.)

In view of this mandate, this Committee also sought to evaluate the R.S.V. with a view to the theological presuppositions that may have entered into the translation work as seen in the final product. For, it is clear that theological presuppositions cannot be divorced from the task of translating.

In view of the importance of theological presuppositions, it is a legitimate question to ask about the background and sponsorship of a translation, also of the R.S.V. In 1937, the International Council of Religious Education voted to proceed with a revision of the American Standard Version of 1901. When the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (NCCC) was formed in 1950, "that body voted its approval of the RSV project, and through its Division of Christian Education (DCE) became the sponsor of the new translation."¹ The *Acts of Synod Carman* (1954) describes the NCCC as "modernistic" (*Acts*, Article 71). To our knowledge, the premise that the NCCC is for the greater part identified with liberal Protestantism has never been challenged.

The question must therefore be: Does the R.S.V. in any way give evidence of its sponsorship by a modernistic body? Is there any indication of an unscriptural influence?

Attempts have been made to find such indications by trying to prove that the R.S.V. consistently denies certain orthodox Christian doctrines.² It has, however, been amply proven that all orthodox doctrines can be accurately formulated on the basis of the R.S.V.³ Unfortunately, the attempt to find a consistent denial of some doctrine (like the doctrine of the virgin or the resurrection) or to construct a theory of a theological bias which tries to promote or prove a certain erroneous doctrine throughout the translation, has long muddied the waters of this discussion.

All this does not, however, mean that a translation from which all doctrine can be derived is by that fact automatically free from all possibility of unscriptural influence. It is possible that all doctrines can be deduced from a translation and that, nonetheless, there may be clear instances of mistranslation which can detract from the true doctrine. Such mistranslations may even be technically defensible, but in the context of the Scriptures and its doctrine must be called a wrong translation. As such, such wrong translations could reveal the background of a version and would prevent one from giving it unconditional approval. On the basis of the following, we are afraid this is the case with the R.S.V.

a. Indications of unscriptural influence concerning the translation of texts dealing with the Holy Spirit.

Romans 5:5 could technically be translated: "the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (R.S.V.); but, since the clear teaching of the Scripture is that the Holy Spirit is a person, this is a wrong translation. Correct is: "The Holy Spirit who has been given to us," or "whom he has given to us" in agreement with the correct translation of Romans 8:16, 26. (The same mistranslation occurs in Romans 8:11; I Corinthians 2:12; Ephesians 1:14; I John 3:2-4.) Now to conclude that there is a mistranslation originating from an unscriptural influence here is not the same as saying that the R.S.V. is trying to introduce a false doctrine re the Holy Spirit here.

A letter on this point was sent (November 29, 1976) to the Standard Bible Committee. No definite answer to our letter was as yet received from them. However, as is clear from the archives of our Committee, the R.S.V. Study Committee of the Christian Reformed Church in 1968 sent the following recommendation (to the Standard Bible Committee) on this point: "Substitute in the text 'who' for 'which' as in the RSV-CE.⁴ This would be consistent with the R.S.V.'s 'the Spirit himself' in Romans 8:16, 26." The archive material makes it clear that this recommendation was not adopted, although other recommendations dealing with Pauline writings were adopted and later appeared in the new 1971 edition of the R.S.V. New Testament.

b. Indications of the influence of modern critical scholarship in the Old Testament.

Joshua 10:12. See recommendation re this passage in Appendix A. The need for clarity on this point becomes all the more important when we recognize that pagan contemporaries did worship the sun (cf. Joshua 15:7, 10 where reference is made to En-Shemesh — spring of the sun; and Beth-Shemesh — house of the sun), and the moon (cf. Deuteronomy 4:19). Any suggestion that Joshua recognized the sun and moon as deities proceeds not from Scripture, but from critical theories as to the development and state of Israel's religion at this time.

Genesis 11:1. The R.S.V. translates "Now the whole earth had one language and few words." Although the translation "few words" may be technically possible, this translation is very unlikely and makes little sense in the context (cf. Gispén, *Genesis*, I [COT] ad loc). It should be translated "one speech." The point of the passage is that the earth had one language and thus all used the same words before the confusion of tongues. The present R.S.V. translation is difficult to imagine without the influence of unscriptural evolutionary thinking, which maintains that the language in those days was not yet developed and only had a very limited vocabulary.

Psalms 51:18b (51:20 in the Hebrew). The R.S.V. translates "rebuild the walls of Jerusalem." This should be "build the walls of Jerusalem." The R.S.V. translation intimates that the Psalm is post-exilic (i.e., composed after the Babylonian exile), and therefore sees the necessity to make reference to the *re*-building of the walls. However, neither the Hebrew nor the Psalm's context as indicated by the heading (and there is no objective reason to deny the value of the headings of the Psalms) suggest this. To translate "build" instead of "rebuild" makes perfectly good sense (cf., e.g., Calvin ad loc). The R.S.V. translation appears to be influenced by modern unscriptural theories which place Psalm 51 (along with the great majority of the Psalms) after the exile because of (among other reasons) their evolutionistic understanding of Israel's faith. Verses 5, 16, and 17, for example, are considered too advanced theologically for such an early date as David.

c. Indications of unnecessary contradictions.

The R.S.V. sometimes introduces unnecessary contradictions into the text which can be very confusing in

the mind of the average Bible student and raise questions as to the consistency and trustworthiness of Scripture. For example, Genesis 9:20 is translated by the R.S.V. as "Noah was the first tiller of the soil." This translation, however, contradicts Genesis 4:2 and 5:29. Genesis 9:20 can be translated differently and therefore should be translated differently in view of what other passages say. Correct is something like "Noah began to till the soil."

On a larger scale, the unity of the Old and New Testament should be maintained wherever the original clearly calls for it. As the United Bible Societies' booklet, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament* (p. vii), puts it: "the present check list should help the translator to make the Old and New Testament materials agree in translation wherever they are truly parallel in their respective originals." The R.S.V. does not always do that. For example, the R.S.V. translation of Psalm 45:6 (verse 7 in the Hebrew) makes it needlessly difficult for one who reads Hebrews 1:8 (where this passage is quoted) to find here a reference to Psalm 45:6. The R.S.V. should read "Thy throne O God" instead of "your divine throne." There is no reason in the Hebrew original or the ancient versions to tone that down. Hebrews 1:8 confirms that. In view of God's Messianic promises to David and in view of Christ's being the fulfillment of David's royal line, this makes Psalm 45:6 full of meaning, only fully realized in the New Testament. Another example of needlessly different translations of an Old Testament passage and its being quoted in the New Testament is Deuteronomy 6:4 and Mark 12:29.

* * *

In view of the considerations above the Committee arrives at the statement that it is afraid that the R.S.V. shows evidence of unscriptural influence.

Does this mean that we should no longer avail ourselves of this translation? The Committee does not think so. As pointed out, all doctrines can be deduced from it and also of the R.S.V. translation it may be said: This is the Bible. Indeed, in the flood of the many translations and paraphrases of today, it would be fair to say that in the wide perspective of all these different renditions, the R.S.V. numbers among the more conservative in its basic attempt to translate what is there as precisely

as possible. For, in its study of the last three years, the Committee found that in spite of its deficiencies, the R.S.V. does not add to, nor take away from, the words of the Bible books in its translation. That means that, although with care, the R.S.V. can be used. We must also realize that at the moment no other modern translation has been tested for use in our churches. Furthermore, serious objections, be they of a different nature, can also be brought to bear against the exclusive use of the King James Version in our midst.

This Committee therefore recommends that the churches be left the freedom to use the R.S.V. with discretion and care.

TO SUMMARIZE:

We recommend:

1. that the churches be left the freedom to use the R.S.V. with discretion and care. (For the grounds, see above.)
2. that Synod not appoint a new Committee for the checking of the R.S.V. Ground: the Committee feels that this matter has had sufficient attention.

Postscript:

The recommendation to terminate the existence of a committee for the checking of the R.S.V. does not exclude the possibility to maintain a study committee on the R.S.V. which continues to make recommendations for changes to the R.S.V. Bible Committee and keeps the churches posted as to the developments in new editions of the R.S.V., which strengthen the recommenda-

Continued on page 214.

Puzzle No. 20

1	E	2	C	3	L	4	E	5	S	6	A	7	S	8	T	9	E	S
		10	A	B	E	L	N					11	A	B	E			
12	S	B	13	D	14	I	E	T				P	15	R	16	I		
17	O	L	E	18		19	A	L	E				20	D	I	N		
21	L	E	G	22	I	B	I	L	I	23	T	I	E	S				
	O		24	T					L		25	H	A			I		
26	M	E	A	S	27	U	28	R	E	29	M	E	N	T	S			
	O		H				30	I	C	E		31	A	R	T			
32	N	33	S	34	B	35	S	T	I	36	R	37	A	S				
		38	O	39	P	A			E		40	A	41	M	I			
42	O	L	D	T	E	S	T	A	M	E	N	T						

Competent to Counsel

*An Evaluation of the Thoughts of Dr. Jay Adams**

During his recent visit to Canada, Dr. C. Trimp delivered three lectures at our Theological College. When he left, he said that we could do with them what we wished to do. That includes printing them. The third lecture was more "technical" than the first two, and for that reason we insert just the first two for the benefit of our readers. We wish to express our gratitude to Dr. Trimp for his permission and hope that our readers may enjoy them as much as we did. We only regret that the discussion which followed the delivering of those lectures cannot be reproduced here. However, even without that discussion the contribution is already valuable. vO

In this lecture we wish to consider one of the most important mandates Christ has given to His servants: the mandate of pastoral care.

We all know that a lot of pastoral care is needed in the congregation and in the world. Everyone can feel how much we fall short as individuals over against each other, and how great are the problems that pastoral care can be confronted with. And, on account of our mandate as office-bearers, we must speak the Word of God right in the middle of the so often complicated human problematics — the Word which, through the power of the Holy Spirit, delivers and liberates, opens new perspectives and grants peace to the children of God.

In Europe since the Second World War, the theological discussions concerning proper pastoral care, particularly to those who wrestle with psychological problems, are increasingly dominated by the problematics of American theology and psychology. The influence of Sigmund Freud's psychiatry was sharply curbed before the war in Europe because of the anti-semitism in Germany. Through America, Freudianism found its way back into Europe. Besides this, the theology of pastoral care, as it was developed by Barthianism (Eduard Thurneysen), had to make room for the powerful influence of the methods of Carl Rogers and Seward Hiltner after the war.

Lately, Jay Adams' book, *Competent to Counsel*, has received much attention, being the subject of broad discussions in Reformed circles. Recently a dissertation was published in The Netherlands, written in English, in

which the conflict between Hiltner and Adams is described.

Adams' book also received the attention of German speaking office-bearers; under the title, *Befreiende Seelsorge*, the book journeyed further East, as I could witness myself when I met a Reformed minister in Hungary in 1975.

I would like to speak with you about this book in particular; hopefully, in this way you will get an impression of the discussions on this theme in the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands.

I take it that you are aware of the basic propositions of Adams' approach. Adams opposes the idea that ecclesiastical, believing pastoral care has lost its identity, and he sharply objects to the practices of those ministers who repeatedly refer the members of their congregation to a psychiatrist. He pleads for a rehabilitation of the Bible as source and textbook for all pastoral care, and sharply criticizes the (clinical) methods inspired by Freud and Rogers. Stimulated by the so-called "anti-psychiatric movement" of Mowrer and Szasz, he wishes to revive attention for individual responsibility before God, for the healing power of the demand to repent, and the character-forming power of sanctification as the work of the Holy Spirit. His book is a strong protest against secularization in pastoral care and an ardent plea for Scriptural, spiritual fellowship with each other in the congregation of Christ.

In this regard, important starting points for him are:

1. Depressions have only two causes: either an organic (bio-chemical) disturbance or unconfessed sin.
2. Feelings, including feelings of depression, are a consequence of moral conduct.
3. The Word of God heals life and gives to the disintegrated existence a new and better structure.

"Counselling" must let the Word be heard and must let its correcting, admonishing power (*nouthesia*) be felt.

Now it must first be said that Adams' book represents a refreshing development in a time in which much

pastoral care has become secularized to a certain form of psychiatric technique. Even though we can learn a lot from Freud and Rogers on some points, Adams is correct in stating that these men cannot guide us with regard to our mandate to provide pastoral care for God's children. Actually, human responsibility before God does not get its proper place with Freud. According to him, man is a bundle of basic drives, and religion is a childish projection which functions as a source of neurosis if the subject cannot get above the child stadium. Freud's psychology is naturalistic and deterministic.

Rogers distanciates himself from Freud in many respects, with respect to diagnosis as well as therapy. Although Adams does not give the matter enough attention, he is also correct in rejecting Rogers' influential method as a standard for Christian pastoral care and counselling. For with Rogers as well, the norm which God has set for human life, and the promises that God binds to obedience to His will, become invisible. The norm for the relation between counsellor and client is found in the relation itself: that relation must be guarded so that, particularly with regard to emotional communication, through it the healing power can surface in the client himself.

Rogers presupposes an optimistic and democratic view of humanity and does not take account of the serious testimony of the Scriptures concerning the devastating power of sin in human life. That is why he cannot speak on the basis of God's promises for everyone who turns to God in faith.

That, too, is the mistake of much social work and it is in effect the task of Reformed theology to keep the mandate to give pastoral care from being substituted by that sort of social work. It is refreshing to read a book which pleads for a rehabilitation of the Holy Scripture on account of its relevance for the problems of our time. The fact that Adams also wants us to structure our theory as well as our life and work in pastoral care is in itself very noteworthy.

However, this does not take away that we must bring serious objections against Adams' propositions. The most important objection, in my opinion, with which the book must be charged is its simplistic character. The argument very clearly runs along one track, or, in other words, within a narrow, confined horizon. The problem-

atics are too simple and the proportions are too small for a Reformed doctrine of pastoral care.

I would like to show this in the following seven points:

1. The image of the difficulties and problems that are described in Adams' book is very selective. In the book we meet Christians who visit the pastoral counsellor. They want to visit him, and it appears that they can visit him, too. Adams is apparently satisfied with giving them daily "medical" services and then some homework.

But the pastor in the congregation also meets different kinds of people — people who do not want to talk freely about their problems, and are hardly able to speak about them, because they lack insight into their own difficulties. There are also people who are so deeply entangled in their own mental turmoil that a minister can hardly have any contact with them. They, too, need pastoral care, but this pastoral care in particular would also include advice to call in the necessary medical help. This is not a referral, but simple, sound advice. Of course, a pastoral counsellor cannot "refer" a patient, as a general practitioner "refers" a patient to a specialist. Doctors and specialists work on the same medical therapeutic level. After a referral the specialist takes over responsibility for the patient. But the pastoral counsellor, as office-bearer, always remains responsible for the member of the congregation, even if the member ends up with serious psychotic disorder or schizophrenia. It can be an example of deep pastoral concern that a member of the congregation is advised to seek medical care and assistance, which one in his responsibility towards God must call in when that help is available.

A neurotic person who goes to the counsellor, and the depressive or psychotic person whom the counsellor meets at home, both have an equal right to pastoral care. Adams has made matters relatively simple with his examples.

2. With regard to his examples of symptoms, Adams is equally simplistic in his approach. He accepts only organic disturbances (such as brain damage) as causes for depressions. If such disturbances are not diagnosed, the counsellor must work on the assumption that unconfessed sin is the cause of the depression. For that is where he put the emphasis: for him the Bible does not allow a third possibility, i.e.,

the possibility of sickness of the mind. The idea of "mental illness" cannot have a rightful place in theology. That is why Adams does not have too much difficulty with diagnosis and does not give too much time to it. In my opinion, he stands closer to Rogers in this regard than he himself admits. The same holds true for his appeal to individual responsibility as a therapeutic means.

Now, in my opinion, it is incorrect to see the Bible as a book that gives information on various diagnostic methods. Neither can one read in the Bible that depressions may rest on organic disturbances. We know that only through legitimate empirical observations. In actual fact, Adams must simply concede to unalterable medical diagnosis, and in his counselling he is dependent on that diagnosis. Adams, too, cannot and would not want to heal organic disturbances with Bible texts. And in the meantime these patients, too, need pastoral care. Exactly this makes it clear that problems and difficulties arise in this life which cannot be healed, neither through medical care nor through pastoral counselling. Consequently, we can say that Adams' belief that there is a solution to all problems (with reference to I Corinthians 10:13) is not correct. There is a tendency towards perfectionism in his reasoning which can be extremely dangerous, precisely for pastoral care.

We also think of those who experience psychic difficulties, because they carry with them all sorts of misery from their birth on. Do we not confess that we and our children are conceived and born in sin and therefore subject to all manner of misery? And man's emotional life is not excluded from this confession, since the structural consequences of sin and curse appear everywhere in creation. For example, a man can have a homosexual disposition. That is, no doubt, a consequence of sin — just as all other misery — and also a disruption on the level of creation. Such a tendency is dangerous; many sins can result from it. But this man cannot convert himself of this tendency, and it would be totally unjustified to attribute the continuation of this tendency to unbelief. (It is strange that in this context Adams says that qualifying "homosexuality" as "sin" gives more hope to the patient than the qualification "sickness," since one can be delivered from sin, but not from sickness. Is this not a totally pragmatic argument?)

One can also be psychologically damaged by missing the trust-relationship with his mother in his early years, or by growing up in a family with many marriage conflicts. A man can be so badly damaged that for many years he experiences difficulties with the command to believe and trust in God. For there is a deep "interwovenness" between one's possibilities and limitations as a creature and one's life with God. Sin and grace are not separate terrains in human life. For this reason it is dangerous to advise us not to spend too much time on diagnosis or on the question "why?" Pastoral counsellors must continually practice recognizing illnesses wherever possible. They are required to do this out of love for the sick member. In addition, in this way they protect themselves from a misdirected pastoral care.

Not everyone who complains of depression is fleeing from his responsibility and thus from Christ and His law. Pastoral counsellors must also realize that not only sickness but also sin has its own history in a man's life. Therefore one cannot be satisfied with a quick diagnosis.

Adams also makes his diagnostic starting point vulnerable when he says that only organic disturbances can be a definite alternative to guilt; for some depressions can indeed be caused by organic disturbances while we do not yet know of these disturbances. Medical bio-chemical research is still going on. It would be unfortunate if the pastoral counsellor repeatedly has to step back in the measure in which medical research progresses. It would be unfortunate if he had to label as *sickness* tomorrow what yesterday he still labelled as *sin*.

3. Adams makes it too easy for himself when he states without qualification that feelings are caused by moral conduct. We observe the opposite in life too often to give credit fairly to this view. Feeling does not just manifest itself in a man's conscience, but has its own domain in the human soul. We definitely cannot ignore Freud's fundamental observation concerning the functioning of human emotional life. There is no man who always has his feelings under control. Anyone living a God-fearing life can, sometimes without being able to point to any causes, fall into deep depressions. One who does not love God and His law can feel excellent for many years. These are known facts; Adams' problematics are too limited to allow

room for them. The appeal to Genesis 4, the story of Cain, is a weak proof, for we can much sooner deduce from God's speaking to Cain, that Cain's evil mood will lead to sin. And when we read in Proverbs (15:13; 17:22; 18:14) of "sorrow of heart" and a "broken and downcast spirit," we sooner think of a spirit that is bent low through sorrow, or tormented by pessimism, than a spirit that sighs under the pressure of a guilty heart.

4. In my opinion, the foregoing proves that the issues raised by Adams can only be properly solved if we learn to approach them in a multi-disciplinary way. In other words, we need a Scriptural anthropology, and that is exactly what we miss in Adams' exposition. Such a Christian anthropology must have an eye for the "interwovenness" of sin and grace and sickness and health in human life. It must be able to distinguish between disintegration on the level of being a weak creature and disruption in the relation to God and the neighbour. It must distinguish between these infirmities and at the same time have an eye for the mutual influences. For sickness can block the working of the Word of God on its way to the heart of man. If a man is disturbed, the Word does not have to be preached louder to him, but the disturbance must be cleared up. Sickness can also block the working out of faith in the heart if, for example, the emotional life does not function properly, or if it works against the man and becomes an instrument of obstruction which gives no assistance to the expression of what lies in the faith of the heart. In these cases a man does not need the call to repentance, but a lifting of the blockades with medical means. In short, a Christian anthropology would have an eye for the many forms of distortion and conflict in human life.

It is exactly that perspective that one badly misses with Adams. The danger of this shortcoming should not be underestimated. For if living according to God's commandments would always bring a healthy emotional life, an easy-going indifference could result among those who never meet with depression, and a crisis of faith could be triggered with children of God who meet with depression. If the latter received the call to repentance as medicine, and healing should fail to come, it would have to be labeled as a result of continued unbelief and lack of repentance. The pastoral

work in the congregation can become extremely unmerciful in this manner, and even highly dangerous with regard to melancholic, depressed persons, for these patients will only be confirmed in their illusions of sin by the pastoral counselor, and very little is required to push these people over the edge into the abyss of suicide.

5. It appears that Adams does not see the possibility or the need for the development of a Christian anthropology; and a Christian psychiatry is for him equally unnecessary or impossible. He puts everything in the light of the work of the Holy Spirit. For him, the work of sanctification *per se* is both a character-forming and personality-changing work. This light flowing out of the work of the Holy Spirit becomes an over-exposure with Adams, so that the unique nature of the life of man as a creature becomes invisible to us. This, in my opinion, represents a spiritualistic trend in Adams' theology, which can be warded off by the belief that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, Who is also the Creator.

6. The propositions of Adams' theology become too narrow with his circumscription of pastoral counselling as primarily being *nouthesia*. He cannot appeal to the Bible for translating *nouthesia* with "counselling." Only the New English Bible sometimes uses the word "counselling" for *nouthesia* (cf. Acts 20:31; 1 Thessalonians 5:12, which uses the words "counsel" and "counsellors," and Romans 15:4 and 11 Thessalonians 3:15, which translate *nouthetein* as: "to give advice"). The New Testament speaks much more richly about pastoral care and uses for it the extremely flexible word *paraklesis* (comfort, care, help, etc.). *Nouthesia* refers primarily to communication in the warning, correcting sense of the term, and can better be translated by "warning" or "admonition."

If one wants to build the theory of pastoral care on this term, he runs the risk of giving it a legalistic and methodistic character. Adams has positively not escaped this danger.

7. Finally, I would like to say something about Adams' Scripture usage. He explicitly states that the Bible is a textbook for pastoral care. I consider this an incorrect qualification. The Bible is not a book of texts for any science or activity. The Bible is the Covenant-Word of God, the story of God's dealings with us, the authoritative announcement of God's mighty acts for us, and the saving rule by

which we may live a new life before Him. Adams' usage of Scripture is actually rather arbitrary. He hardly gives a thorough exegesis and consequently ends up with an individualistic and fragmentary text usage. This brings his use of Scripture in the neighbourhood of biblicism and fundamentalism. A Reformed hermeneutics would have to object to this approach.

* * *

I have summarized my criticism of Adams' concrete application of his strong appeal. Meanwhile, it cannot be denied that he has given us a strong stimulus to work intensively on the principles of pastoral counselling. Without agreeing with him, we certainly have to thank and honour him in this respect. For pastoral counselling is often a poorly-structured and, from a theological viewpoint, weakly-motivated matter. We have an obligation towards the church of God, both in our theological study and in our practical ecclesiastical work, to create more clarity with regard to the starting point and method of our association with the children of God, who often have to suffer with many difficulties in their life. I hope that this lecture has offered a small contribution to this goal.

C. TRIMP

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE R.S.V. FOR GENERAL SYNOD

— Continued.

tion of Synod or make it imperative to reconsider this recommendation.

Since the opinion of deputies was not asked on this point no recommendation is given by them in this respect.

Respectfully submitted
by the Committee on the R.S.V.
appointed by Synod Toronto 1974.

L. SELLES, convener
H.M. OHMANN
C. VAN DAM, secretary.

¹ Herbert G. May, "The Revised Standard Version after Twenty Years," *McCormick Quarterly* XIX, 4 (May 1966), p. 301.

² cf., e.g., the brief survey in G.A. Larue, "Another Chapter in the History of Bible Translation," *The Journal of Bible and Religion* XXXI, 4 (1963), pp. 301-310.

³ e.g., the dissertation of R.L. Goddard, *An Objective Evaluation of the Accuracy of the R.S.V. in the Translation of the New Testament* (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1955).

⁴ RSV-CE = RSV Catholic Edition (1966).



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.

SYNODICALS: SWIFT MEMBERSHIP DECLINE

Leusden, The Netherlands. While the Reformed Churches (Synodical) in The Netherlands have known a growth-rate of almost ten thousand members per year before 1970, this growth disappeared almost completely after 1974. Now, according to the recently published Yearbook 1977, these churches are on the losing side. In 1976 a near-total of 2,400 left the church. This number is influenced by the fact that one complete church (at Urk) left the Synodical federation and joined the Free Reformed Churches. The writer of the annual review, Rev. K.H. Schaafsma, complains about increased polarization, greater contrasts between the congregations, and an ever-loosening bond with the Confession. In 1976, 275 persons of these churches liberated themselves and became members of our sister-Churches.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE WCC

Geneva, Switzerland. The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches will meet in Geneva from July 28 to August 6 in order to determine the official course for the years 1978 and 1979. The main theme of the meeting is "Confessing Christ Today." It is expected that much attention will be given to the situation in South Africa and Namibia. The committee will also give ample time to the theme "human rights." Reports will be heard from various meetings; among others, in Thailand (dialogue with non-Christian religions and ideologies) and in Lausanne (50th anniversary of the ecumenical movement, Faith and Order).

DEACONS' HOME VISITATION?

Rotterdam, The Netherlands. It is more and more becoming an accepted custom that deacons go on home visits in the Reformed Churches (liberated) in The Netherlands. This home visitation is mentioned in the new Form for Ordination (adopted at the Synod of Kampen, 1975) as a means for the deacons to activate and coordinate mutual service in the congregation. Speaking at the Central Deacon Conference at Rotterdam, Prof. Dr. C. Trimp noted that the period "in which deacons did not know what to do" is coming to an end. He called the deacons' home visits the "answer to the welfare laws."

DUTCH DEPUTIES: FOR WOMEN'S VOTING RIGHTS

Groningen, The Netherlands. The Deputies appointed by the Dutch Reformed Churches (Liberated) "to study further the matter of women's voting rights" could not come to a unified conclusion. There is a majority-report (submitted by Prof. Dr. C. Trimp and Drs. Bijl, among others) which favours granting this right, and a minority-report (submitted by Rev. H. Bouma of Assen, among others) which opposes this right. The majority-report denies the assertion that "voting" would be an act of "general governing" only destined for male members. It also states that "voting" cannot be equated with "speaking" in the congregation, the latter activity, indeed, being forbidden to women. The minority-report, however, concludes, "Looking at the character of the voting, it must be concluded that the right of the woman to decide in the election of office-bearers is not in keeping with the place and the task which the Lord has given to sisters in the congregation . . ."

VARIOUS SYNODS

Grand Rapids (RES NE). During this time of the year various North American denominations are holding their regular, annual Synods.

The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church met at Calvin College and set up a "pastoral committee" to talk with Rev. Allen Verhey on his method of exegesis. The Synod will expect a new report on "marriage guidelines" in 1978. The gravamen of Dr. Harry Boer (against the doctrine of reprobation) will be submitted to the churches and examined by a study committee. The Synod maintained the

CRC's prescription against lodge membership.

The 44th Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church adopted a 32-page document, "setting forth the biblical principles of Presbyterian Church government in fuller form" to be used as a handbook for the officers of the Church. The Assembly also approved fraternal relations with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church and agreed on another possible union vote with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod.

Meeting in Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, the Reformed Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod (RPCES) heard that it may well be the fastest growing denomination in the U.S. with a growth rate of 6.6% over the past year. For the third time in as many years, the RPCES turned down the proposal to ordain women to the office of deacon. But it affirmed the right of a local church "to have a separate body of unordained women who may be called deaconesses."

The Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America (Covenanter) changed its stand on "closed communion" in favour of "session-controlled" communion. Anyone can now ask to participate in the Lord's Supper by appearing before the local session (consistory) before the service. Also, applicants for church membership in the RPCNA will no longer be asked to subscribe to all the standards of the denomination. They will simply be required to submit in the Lord to the teaching and doctrine of the church.

C.I.S.

COMMENT

"CHRISTIAN POLITICS"

In the *Clarion* of July 2, 1977, you could have read under "International" a news-item on a Conference on Christian Politics, held at Dort College, USA. It was a conference on both American and Canadian politics. The main question to be discussed was, "Should Christianity affect politics, and if so, how?"

We may gratefully take note of the fact that something is being done with a view to Christian politics. The question discussed at the conference will undoubtedly have been answered in the affirmative, for the Word of God is indeed normative also for political action.

The fact, however, that a *Reformed* political association of Canada did

Dear brothers and sisters,

On April 8th (Good Friday), we were shocked when a little girl came to tell us that Wambumop had died. Wambumop is a woman of approximately 40 years of age. She had been very helpful to us so far and was also

INTERNATIONAL — Continued.

not participate is also to be noted, and in my opinion, to be lamented. Even more, it remains a sad situation that such an association does not even *exist* for the upbuilding of this nation.

I remember, a while ago there was a discussion in *Clarion* concerning the need for such a national political association. While I agree with the one view that all political activity begins *locally*, this does not undo the other opinion that a *national* organization is necessary and possible. *All* political parties are organized nationally, so why not a Reformed Political Association for Canada? This organization would not exist by the grace of the electorate, but by the grace of God, certainly no small basis!

I realize that the organization of such a body would mean overcoming many barriers and would ask some sacrifices. It would also have to start small, in setting up local societies. These societies could then be molded into one body with a national headquarters.

If we had such an organization, we could have represented ourselves at Dort College with a clear Biblical viewpoint on many issues. We could work in this country with the small means that we have. But as it stands, we can only support parties and candidates which do not have a fully acceptable program. I cannot appreciate such a deficiency.

Let us act, locally and nationally, by forming a political association *now*, while it is still possible. Let us battle the ongoing progression of socialism, liberalism, and communism in a *combined* effort towards Reformed politics.

Cl.S.

P.S. I would welcome some more discussion on this matter, especially from those who are "politically trained."

Cl.S.

one of the people who continued to help the guru evangelist and his family with food. We felt very sad as we went to church. Before our guru evangelist began, I went over and asked him to pray for Wambumop's family. Yohan (our guru evangelist) said: "But she's not dead yet She's still a little bit alive." Obviously we were very surprised to hear this. We left the church building quickly and had a look. She sat in a little room, with two other women beside her, with her husband holding her upright by the hair. She had no strength to walk or anything like that. At 10 o'clock, after the "church service," we talked the situation over with Dr. Kees Louwerse in Kouh. He gave Joanne some detailed instructions for further examination and later on when we talked together again, Kees decided that this was an emergency. Fortunately our MAF pilot was stand-by on the radio, and so he came over right away. Wambumop was then flown to Kouh, was examined there, and was flown Saturday to Karubaga, a place in the mountain area. That same day she was operated on; her ruptured spleen was removed. In the meantime she's back here again, and has to take it easy for a while. But as you all will understand, we were very thankful to our Father for His wonderful help. Obviously Wambumop is glad herself, too. Someday we hope that she also may come to know that all these blessings flow from a Father in Heaven, so that she can give thanks to Him.

Another guru course was held in Kawagit during April. We went by outboard to Kawagit on the 12th and returned on the 25th. On the day we left, the river was quite high with a fair bit of driftwood on it. We waited a while and left when there was hardly any wood coming downriver any longer. Everything went fine until we came to the mouth of the Tsaw River. That river brought down so much wood, that we really had to pick our way through the logs, pieces of wood, and other stuff that came downriver! It was not without danger and that made it a very tiring trip. Next time we'll wait an extra day if the river is so high.

During the guru course the book of Judges was introduced by Mr. Ben VanderLugt. He also did some geography, and I did a little bit of wood-working with two of the teachers. It was nice to be in Kawagit for a while. It gave us a good opportunity to discuss several matters/problems that had arisen in Mangellum. It is good, but also necessary, to talk about these things together. When you're the only mission family at a station, you don't have as many opportunities for discussion as you have at a station with several mission families. We stayed several days longer than originally planned, so that we would be able to attend Holy Supper in Kawagit; our first together with the brothers and sisters there. The following Monday we left again for Mangellum. We arrived there fifteen minutes before the float-plane and so we were able to welcome Wambumop, who was returning from Karubaga, via Kouh. Everyone was so glad to see her back!

At the end of March and beginning of April we had approximately sixty-five people working on the strip each day. Progress was indeed visible after this period: 150 meters are cleared of trees, shrubs, etc. Some tree trunks and heavy logs are still there though. Possibly we'll use a chain-saw to get rid of those; that is, if we can borrow one.

During the last week of April our village was like a large inn. People from Gauwop, Sawagit, and Heyokubun came paddling and walking to Mangellum to be present on May 2nd: election day. It was a very, very busy time for the clinic, and, fortunately, lasted only for about a week and a half. Every night there was singing and dancing till very late, and every morning there were headaches and sore stomachs!

We were surprised again by all the cards and congratulations you sent us for Emily's birthday. She enjoys every card for several minutes, making from one card two or more after a little while. A thanks from the heart to all of you!

With friendly greetings,
BRAM and JOANNE VEGTER

OUR COVER

Photo by Ralph Van Goor, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Letters-to-the-Editor

Dear Editor,

In the *News Medley* of June 4, 1977, there was a section dealing with hockey. It was written just after the Hockey Tournament in Hamilton, and presumably was based on it. Personally, I dislike the overall negative viewpoint presented by the ministers concerning hockey. Since Rev. Stam's arguments stemmed from the tournament, mine will also.

I believe the tournament was an upbuilding thing. Approximately 150 young hockey players got together, along with about 300 fans, in a friendly, yet competitive, atmosphere. The games saw a lot of effort put in, and minimal dirty play. I do not believe that one ugly incident in two days of playing hockey, over twenty games, constitutes a violent tournament. I have been a player for many years, and have played in tournaments before, yet I have not been to a better, cleaner (both in violence and language) tournament in my life. Comments from other players, fans, and referees that I have heard have all been positive.

Instead of looking at the negative side of hockey, as witnessed in the tournament, the gentlemen Stam and Van Oene should look at the positive aspects:

1. A tremendous amount of work was put in by the coaches and players to organize the tournament. Few should argue that the tournament was not a success, for everything ran smoothly, and money was made.
2. The fans and players enjoyed themselves.
3. Church members, both players and fans, were brought together in an atmosphere of friendship and good-will. Many people got to know each other, and new friends were made. In our tournament, there was enough time for friendships to spring up between players, creating a more friendly game on the ice. Then hockey becomes indeed a friendly competition, and is a good basis for future tournaments.

This brings up my final point. So far, two people have spoken out lately against our hockey games, both on the basis of that tournament. I believe

it is fair to say that since both Rev. Stam and Rev. Van Oene could not find the time to attend the tournament and see for themselves what it was really like, both heard the information second-hand. Second-hand information is called hearsay, gentlemen. Rev. Stam was in Ottawa at the time, and heard about the tournament from, I assume, some members of his congregation. Yet he states positively that "apparently at our games there is quite a bit of violence." How can he say "quite a bit of violence" when only one ugly piece of violence occurred in twenty games. Even the penalty sheets would prove him wrong. If he had asked some players and some more fans, preferably a few who know the game of hockey, he would find a view contrary to his own. He also mentions the language was bad. Again, as a player, I disagree with him. Aside from a few limited cases, it was good. I cannot see his point of replacing hockey with a sport such as volleyball. I've seen many injuries in that sport, and it isn't the type of sport, be it hockey or volleyball, that determines the language used. The players themselves must control their language.

Rev. Van Oene had a few more comments to add concerning this issue. First, he says it is beautiful for our young people to have games together,

and then he says "the new hockey season is still a long way off, fortunately." If it is so beautiful to have games together, why is it so fortunate that the hockey season is so far off? Perhaps it was a harmless remark; perhaps sarcastic. Also, he agreed with Rev. Stam, with whom I disagreed on several points.

So, gentlemen, I would like to suggest that, instead of coming down hard on a tournament you did not attend, you should first find out the true, complete picture. It was a great success for our hockey, and should be regarded as such. Your criticism does not present the true picture, and hurts the chances of a future, successful tournament; or even a possible return to league play in the future.

ROB WILDEBOER,
Guelph

You will realize that I did not base my few lines on what Rev. Stam wrote or on what I heard about the tournament and that I was not referring specifically to this tournament. I have heard "reports" about hockey games for quite a few years, not just from one person but from several persons, and always thought that when two or three witnesses give the same "report" such is a trustworthy testimony and can no longer be qualified as "hearsay." Meanwhile I am happy that, also according to the testimony of others, this tournament was "pretty good." v.O.



Upper Canada Village — Photo redrawn by S. Siphema, Burlington, Ontario.