



**Clarion**  
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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Oct. 8, 1977

# A Good and Blessed Evening



There they came again, from far and near, to be present at the annual College Evening which this time again was combined with a Convocation. Once again we were together in the beautiful Wellington Square United Church in Burlington. It is a beautiful building and the facilities are such that one could wish for no better. The only complaint that we hear every time anew is that the acoustics are not the best. There are, one brother said, too many nooks and corners in that building; you will never succeed in overcoming the difficulties with the acoustics. Anyway, it was much better than the previous year, I thought. Where I was sitting we usually have big problems with the acoustics: usually we could not hear what was being said; this year it was much better. The transfer of the microphone from the right to the left was a

big help as far as I could see. For us it was anyway.

It will be extremely difficult to find a building which will be free from all disadvantages which we have been struggling with for quite a few years by now. I do think that it is possible to find such a building, but don't ask what the price will be for renting it for an evening. I have an idea that we get the use of the Wellington Square United Church without charge. We'll keep working on it.

Another "complaint" which I heard was that quite a few of those present could not understand or grasp what was being said by Prof. Selles, one of the speakers. It was much too complicated, some said.

Yes, here we touch upon the "hybrid character" of our yearly meetings. We call our evenings a College Even-

ing, but at the same time a Convocation, although there is not necessarily a Convocation every year: there is one only when someone graduates and receives a degree. In 1978 there will be no Convocation, for no one will complete his studies in this coming year; extension of the time of study from three to four years is the cause of that.

Many of our Church members will recall the "Schooldagen" which they attended: meetings where three or four speeches were delivered, speeches which everyone could understand. That's what we try to have during the "College Evening Part" of our annual get-togethers.

At the Theologische Hogeschool of our Netherlands sister-Churches they also have the yearly ceremony of the "transfer of the rectorate": every year there is another "rector" or "principal." That transfer takes place during a solemn assembly in which the present rector delivers a learned address; it is not unusual that the majority of those present cannot follow it. I recall one such address being delivered by the late Prof. Dr. K. Schilder (it was in the thirties) of which someone said later that Dr. S. Greijdanus was the only one who was able to understand it.

I would certainly not advocate that our Professors deliver such lectures or speeches which just one or two people can understand; but we should realize that in an academic gathering more is to be expected than just a plain speech. This, on the other hand, again does not mean that such a plain speech should not be well-considered and should not be the product of preceding study. One has to be so careful with one's statements, for there is ample room for misunderstanding! But you will see what I mean, I trust.

Fortunately, we can read the address of Prof. Selles, for he gave it to us



From left to right: Prof. Dr. H.M. Ohmann, Rev. H. Scholten, Mr. Bert Tiggelaar, Prof. Dr. J. Faber, Mr. H. Versteeg, Rev. G. Van Dooren, Prof. L. Selles.

for publication in *Clarion*, for which generosity we are thankful.

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It is about time that we tell our readers in other parts of the country what we heard and saw on September 9. We regret that the time was not available during that week to write these lines before the deadline for the previous issue of *Clarion*. Now it comes somewhat like "mustard after the meal," as they say it in Dutch, although we were able to get some of the addresses to Winnipeg in time for that previous issue.

When the "stage party" had reached their designated places, Psalm 66, stanzas 1 and 2 were sung.

The president of the Board of Governors, the Rev. D. Vander Boom, read from the Scriptures Revelation 22:6 to the end. After he had led in prayer, he spoke a word of welcome. It is a great honour, he said, that I am allowed to do this and also to welcome most cordially all those who have come here this evening. We may listen to the speakers and we may witness the graduation of two of our students. It is a feastday today, a feastday which we receive out of the hand of the Lord. Let us also appreciate it and rejoice because of it.

Rev. Vander Boom mentioned especially the presence of Mrs. S. VanRenssen, the widow of a brother who did much for the work of emigration. He further informed us that a letter of congratulations was received from the Edmonton Church; this letter was read.

Dr. J. Faber was the next speaker to occupy the pulpit. He read his "Principal's Statement." Since it will be published in its entirety, we shall refrain from reporting on it here.

We shall also refrain from saying something about the address which Prof. Selles delivered after that: it will be published in its entirety, and therefore our readers can follow it better and understand it better than if I should give a summary of it.

After Psalm 19:3 and 4 had been sung, the moment of the conferring of the degrees had arrived. Let me first mention that the singing was accompanied by Mr. Marten Menken of Toronto who very ably guided us with our singing. He appears to be fond of the music of the late Jan Zwart; at least that was my impression not just from the Prelude to Psalm 146 (of which we sang the stanzas 1, 3, and 5 after the degrees had been conferred) but also

from the other times when we heard the organ. Nothing wrong with that, mind you: I liked it.

Prof. Selles presented the candidates for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity. First there was Mr. E.J. Tiggelaar and then there was Mr. H. Versteeg. Of both of them Prof. Selles knew quite a few particulars which gave a good description of the two brethren who were pronounced a bachelor of divinity by the principal. The Rev. G. Van Dooren again fulfilled his task of putting on the hood representing the degree received.

As is customary, we then listened to a "graduation address" delivered by Mr. H. Versteeg, entitled "Priority in Mission." Since Mr. Versteeg provided us with a copy for publication, we can bypass it here. The title of this address is wholly in the line of the work which Mr. Versteeg is going to do: the work of bringing the Gospel of Christ to the heathen in Irian Jaya.

There can hardly be a Reformed meeting (or meeting of Reformed people, to put it more correctly) without a collection. And, judging by the result, the brethren and sisters must have counted on it, for the collection yielded no less than some \$754.00! (I rounded it off, but perhaps they did reach this amount by finding a few odds and ends here and there to be added to the total. Who knows!)

Before Mrs. L. Selles received the floor, we sang stanzas 1 and 3 of Hymn 22. Then the faithful representative of the "Ladies Savings Action" went to the pulpit and fulfilled her pleasant task. Since she provided us with a neatly written copy of what she said (Merci beaucoup, Madame!) we happily are in a position to let our readers enjoy that, too. Here it follows.

\*\*\*

It is with great thankfulness to the Lord our God, the Giver of everything, that I may again stand here.

I may represent the many women from East, Mid, and West Canada who work together in the Ladies Savings Action.

To stand at a place for yourself is one thing; to stand and represent many is another thing. It adds responsibility.

The Savings Action was originally based on saving and collecting pennies and nickels, dimes and quarters. It is and always has been a voluntary action, all work done in love and in one's own free time. *That* did not change. *What* changed was the pennies and the nickels. It may happen that instead

of "loose change" loose cheques are collected. The givers of those cheques asked if it would be possible to have tax receipts. After having received information, we are happy to say that that is indeed possible for cheques of \$15.00 and over. More will be published in the Newsletter.

From the Board of Trustees we heard that no changes will be made to the present building. This means that we do not save for remodelling the garage. Now we have a bigger goal, a complete new library. We will continue to save for this in our special account. When the time comes, we hope to be ready to take care of the new library.

The annual Newsletter has been

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Graduate Mr. Bert Tiggelaar and wife Diane.

published in January. Your local contact address is responsible for passing on information locally. Since the beginning of our action we decided to take care of the library and teaching-aids if requested. We still do so. This year \$3,000.00 was handed over for the library. I would like to pledge the same amount for the coming year.

I may present you with the first cheque and hope that the amount in total can be handed out before the next College year.

Mr. Principal, I present to you on behalf of the ladies from East, Mid, and West Canada this cheque of \$2,000.00, wishing you and all that work at the College the blessing of the Lord upon all your labours.

On behalf of the  
Ladies Savings Action,  
G.R. SELLES

\* \* \*

The next speaker was the Rev. J. Geertsema, who spoke on "Abraham's Calling in Genesis 14." This address, too, will be published, with the predictable result that we are not going to say anything about it here.

After Psalm 110:1, 4, and 5 had been sung, the evening was closed with prayer.

Those present streamed into the parish hall which is attached to the building where the new graduates and their families were congratulated by the numerous brethren and sisters who had come to be witnesses of the event.

The Rev. D. Vander Boom still announced that a telegram had been received from the Church at Coaldale, Alberta, reading, "Council and Congregation of Coaldale Reformed Church, Coaldale, Alberta, wish staff and students of the Theological College the Lord's blessing at the start of a new season. Yours in Christ, w.s. C. Vanseters, Clerk."

\* \* \*

What shall we add to the above?

What we shall add is a word of gratitude: Gratitude to the Lord Who gave us this institution; gratitude to Him for the interest which so many of the members show. They come from many regions of Ontario; there are brothers and sisters who schedule their holidays so that they can be in Ontario and attend this evening; there are members from afar, even British Columbia, who on purpose visit Ontario in order to be able to attend. The sisters throughout the Churches do their best to save for a new library building and through their contributions they al-

ready have rendered valuable aid to Faculty and students, enabling them to do their work better.

There is so much in Christ's Church to be thankful for.

Sometimes we tend to forget what we have received because we look at the things which we should like to have. It is good to have ideals and to strive for a higher plane as long as it is not done with neglect of what is present at the moment.

Our College ably and fruitfully serves the Churches by which it has been established. The need for such an institution is obvious when we look at the many vacancies in the Churches.

May the Lord our God strengthen those who teach and those who are being taught, and all this with a view to the Ministry of the Word. Now more than ever we need such a seminary where "the sound doctrine" is explained, defended, and promoted.

It was good again to have an evening where we could see and hear just that.

vO

## Priority in Mission

*Honourable Brethren, Ladies, and Gentlemen:*

*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* defines mission as "a ministry commissioned by a religious organization to propagate its faith or carry on humanitarian work." The same dictionary defines humanitarian to be the promotion of human welfare and social reform. In its definition of mission this dictionary seems to imply that mission is either the one or the other, either to propagate its faith or to carry on humanitarian work. Now the question is, can these two aspects of mission be separated? Should the definition of mission not read as follows: a ministry commissioned by a religious organization to propagate its faith and carry on humanitarian work? And yet, in how far is Christian mission allowed to be a carrying out of humanitarian work? Does it stand side by side with the propagation of faith? Or does it stand above it or below it?

It has been said by some that preaching is to be the sole task of mission. Others believe that Christian missions have also a responsibility toward the social aspects of life, such as edu-

cation, medical assistance, and social-economic aid. Are we not creating a false dilemma? Can Scripture help us in this respect?

Prof. K. Runia, Professor of Practical Theology at Kampen, in his article in the *International Reformed Bulletin*,<sup>1</sup> points out from Scripture that missionary work is to be a work that is done by word and deed. He points out that Jesus did not only preach, He acted as well. Jesus not only proclaimed the Kingdom of God, but also healed many from their various diseases. So Jesus also sent out the twelve "to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal" (Luke 9:2). Numerous illustrations of this same combination of word and deed can be found throughout the New Testament. Therefore, mission appears to be more than just preaching and teaching. There also appears to be room for works of charity.

When we study the history of Christian mission we see that, generally speaking, the Church has always been aware of this two-fold gospel preaching. Yet within the last few centuries there has been quite a shift. Emphasis on the Word-proclamation shifted to an emphasis on the work of

charity. In many respects this shift comes as no surprise to anyone. The developing ecumenical atmosphere of powerful, influential nations paved the way for this shift to occur also in mission.

This trend is already noticeable in the first World Missionary Conference held at Edinburgh in 1910. The discussion at this conference circled not so much around what we shall preach, but how, in what manner. Christianity was then made to be essentially equivalent to the cultural and social condition of the western civilization. This was only the beginning. Further development was inevitable.

The next World Missionary Conference held at Jerusalem some eighteen years later saw the shift from how to preach the gospel to how to evaluate other religions. This conference remained divided between those who held that there was an essential difference between Christianity and other religions, and those who held that there were elements of truth in heathen religions which Christianity must now supplement. However, the following conferences saw strengthening of the latter position.

This sympathy for truths in other religions, as well as for their social and economic conditions, was also taken over by the World Council of Churches, formed in 1954, to which the International Missionary Council (the council responsible for calling the World Missionary Conferences) joined itself in 1961. The social problems of developing countries was now seen as part of the missionary obligation of the Church.

The gospel of Jesus Christ becomes little more than a social gospel. All religions of the world must now see their duty in struggling together against the evils in the world, of which Christianity achieves the highest goal. For "Jesus becomes only the prototype of an ideal social attitude, the 'man for others.' His resurrection and lordship means scarcely more than that the community of His followers may still be inspired by His example."<sup>2</sup>

Yes indeed, Christ has sent out His disciples to preach the Good News by word and deed. But missions in general obviously have not always kept the proper priorities. The World Mission Conference at Jerusalem already advocated the so-called four-dimensional character of missions; namely, that of gospel preaching, education, medical assistance, and social-



Graduate Mr. Henry Versteeg and wife Rita.

economic aid. Prof. Runia correctly points out that "The great mistake they made . . . was these four tasks were co-ordinated in such a way that each one of them separately was seen as direct mission work. . . . There are not four separate ways of bringing the gospel. Education, medical care, social-economic aid, and relief work . . . are not in and by themselves forms of bringing the gospel."<sup>3</sup> Yet they are, as Dr. J.H. Bavinck states, "legitimate and necessary means of creating an opportunity for preaching."<sup>4</sup>

In trying to come to a solution as to how far mission is also responsible for education, medical assistance, etc., we must be careful neither to polarize nor to divide. Words and deeds are constantly intermingled in the preaching of Jesus and in the preaching of Paul and others in the New Testament. In Acts 1:1 we read, "Jesus began to do and teach." Paul wrote to the Romans in Romans 15:18, "For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has wrought through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed."

Dr. Bavinck shows his keen insight in the matter when he writes, "preaching of the gospel is a very complicated affair that touches man in all aspects and relationships. If medical assistance and education is exclusively given in order to win confidence, then it misses its goal, because it is then not essentially rooted in a true compassion for the needs of

those with whom we are to work. And, on the other hand, if these services are motivated by the proper love and compassion, then they cease to be simply preparation, and at that very moment become preaching."<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, we come to this conclusion: The primary task of mission is the proclamation of the Gospel, calling all people to repent and believe in Jesus Christ, and also warning them that as long as they do not repent the wrath of God rests upon them to everlasting damnation. This preaching of the Gospel may be administered in manifold ways. First and primary, the preaching of the Gospel is to be done by word of mouth. And then second, it should be evident in deeds, not only as preparation to preaching but as preaching in itself. Yet when the deeds are made to stand on their own, separate from the true Word proclamation, then it ceases to be preaching in any sense of the word.

Mission does not seek out the welfare of the people above and beyond their spiritual need. Yet, it is impossible to separate mission from the social life of the people. Such would be underrating the effectiveness of the proclamation of the Word. For it is true that through the preaching of God's Holy Word one can and may expect a radical change in the social life of the people. For example, if a missionary should preach in India that there are no holy cows, it would result in a radical change in the social and economic life of the people. So then, to overemphasize deeds of mercy may in essence be a serious underestimation of the operation of the Holy Spirit in the life of the people through the preaching of the pure Gospel. Therefore, Christian mission without proclamation is no mission. Christian mission is first of all proclamation.

Thank you,  
H. VERSTEEG

<sup>1</sup> K. Runia, *The Church Mission Today — The Unity of its Task*, *International Reformed Bulletin*, Fall 1972, No. 51, p. 4ff.

<sup>2</sup> P. Bergerhaus, *Shaken Foundation*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1972, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> K. Runia, *The Church Mission Today — The Unity of its Task*, *International Reformed Bulletin*, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> J.H. Bavinck, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions*, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1960, p. 113.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*



# How Do We Avail Ourselves of Having the Old Testament History in Our Bibles? <sup>(4)</sup>

## FROM REFORMATION TO SECESSION: THE CHURCHES OF THE SECESSION.

In our previous article we dealt with Calvin, particularly with his views re the relationship between the Old and New Testament, as expounded in the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

In summary we are thankful to the LORD that this man, called to be the guide for a newly reformed Church and consequently a pioneer on the way to an unknown future, was privileged to grasp and summarize both resemblance and difference of the two testaments in the way he has done. I devoted a special article to his views. In addition we have his commentaries and sermons. As for the latter I'd like to quote a passage from the article of Dr. M.B. van 't Veer (in free translation):

The Christological character of the preaching on the Old Testament can be maintained if our approach is that of Calvin's. Then it is immediately clear beyond doubt that Christ essentially was the contents of the Old Testament revelation. It refers to the unchangeable contents of the Covenant of God's grace. In this way we are also enabled to make a proper research into the Old Testament and to do justice to the historical progress of the Old Testament revelation. For in this way we can take into account the different degrees of clearness as related to the successive stages of the revelation. One cannot blame Calvin that he did not elaborate on the issue in his days in special essays or develop it further, e.g., by applying it in his sermons . . . . So,

Dr. van 't Veer goes on,

one should not lay the blame on various present-day ministers, who follow the so-called redemptive historical approach, as if they departed from John Calvin.

Not at all. Upon the foundation laid by him — and that is what Calvin actually did — others can build. Let each man take care how he builds: according to the principles and along the guidelines shown by him in especially the second book of the *Institutes*. That is a base on which to work and on which to make real progress. As time goes on they will gain a deeper insight into

how to come to grips with the subject.

That is to be expected. Just as the history of the Bible brought in its train the progress, the continual widening and deepening of God's revelation, so the history of the Church ought to bring about, in process of time, a deeper insight into these things.

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## HUMANISM; RISING TIDE OF SCRIPTURE CRITICISM

We'll find, then, that even what we call "the world" (I mean those who are outside the Church) can contribute to the study of the Bible.

Alongside the Reformation of the 16th Century we meet the current of Renaissance and Humanism.

The latter was known for its adage: "Back to the sources!" Different from the Medieval Period, students were no longer content with a dependence on what had been passed on as truth for centuries and centuries, and was to be received as such because the authorities of those days told them to do so, especially the authority of the all-encompassing Roman Catholic Church. I better say: the Clergy, with the authority it had arrogated to itself. Over against such claims of the Church, the representatives of Humanism preferred to go back to the sources and to find out all by themselves what actually had happened, to search for facts trusting on their own sight, in order that tradition might be proved.

For the life of the Church this back-to-the-sources trend worked as a stimulus for a back-to-Scripture trend: to the Scriptures as the only authoritative voice in the life of the believers.

In this manner Humanism has been of importance for the Reformation. We can mention what Faber Stapulensis and Erasmus did with respect to the Greek New Testament, and Reuchlin for the Hebrew of the Old Testament. Among theologians the latter was an unknown language! Reformers like Luther and Calvin have benefited from their work.

Meanwhile we should not forget

that with those humanists it was not the salvation of the Church and the believers, nor the glory of God, but the satisfaction of their love of study that was at stake; that is to say, a love of study in accordance with their critical approach. Seemingly they go together for a while, but actually there is a gaping abyss between the Reformation and Humanism.

In the following centuries the critical attitude came to the fore more and more, gaining ground. Although their adage: "back to the sources" sounds good, we ought not to lose sight of the fact that, in principle, to the humanists the Bible was just one source, to be approached with due reverence, among various others that formed the basis of western civilization.

Moreover, as long as the idea is to have the Church of Christ measured by the only standard, it is fine and well. Yet, history shows how further investigation induced scholars, who did not handle the Bible according to the proportion of faith (Romans 12:7), to submit this source itself to criticism.

Slowly but surely we see a trend of Scripture-criticism coming to the fore, hesitantly in the 16th, more openly in the 17th century, while from the 18th century on it dominates the field of Bible study.

In the 16th and 17th centuries it was limited to a launching of criticism or a casting of doubts on, e.g., the authenticity of a single verse or some pericope of a Bible book. The 18th century witnessed the rise of what we call source-criticism. Initially it did not seem as disastrous as it turned out to be later on. Jean Astruc, the pioneer in the field, claimed in the title of his book to inquire nothing but the sources of which Moses might have made use in composing the Pentateuch.

Well, that doesn't look so bad, does it? It is beyond doubt that the authors of the Bible books — which are inspired — drew on sources now and then, as they themselves admitted. In spite of that we may ask wheth-

er, supposing one is interested in investigating those sources, one has to go the Astruc-way. I mean that one is going to split up the entire book of Genesis into two main strands discernible by different names of God (viz. Elohim in the one, Yahweh in the other). One may wonder what is the sense of such a far-reaching assumption. What is the use of it for the study of the book?

This, however, was just the beginning. Things were going from bad to worse, when other factors were going to play a part in this source-criticism. Once the two sources were singled out, students of the Old Testament, not content with this sole distinguishing mark, were on the look-out for others; e.g., a particular vocabulary, a specific outlook upon life, and even theology of respectively that alleged Jahwist and Elohist. Instead of trying to bridge the gap, having in mind the result as we have it in our Bibles, the Book of Genesis as a unity, they rather broke the book asunder into two and soon into three or more sources. It is a matter of course that the man who compiled the two did not mean so much in the eye of the critics. Whether it had been Moses or someone else, that did not matter so much.

Around the turn of the previous century, the Old Testament scholars of that time were of the opinion that the oldest part of the Pentateuch dated back to the earliest to the time of David or Saul, the remainder having been added in subsequent centuries down to exile. One of the most prominent critics, De Wette, went so far as to say that the Pentateuch went back, not to sources, but to scattered fragments, which were patched together by compilers. He openly claimed that the books of Moses were unacceptable to modern, sophisticated readers because of the miracles reported. He was in doubt whether the first readers would have believed all those stories. It was very much open to question, he thought. I mention the name of De Wette as the man by whom doubt was thrown upon the course of the Old Testament history itself. In his opinion

the legislation of Moses in the land of Moab did not necessarily date back to what was usually considered to be the time of Moses, let us say the 14th century B.C., but to the days of Josiah, one of the last kings of Judah, eight centuries later. Consequently, upon entering Canaan, Israel had not known about the book of Deuteronomy. If actually the law dated from the time of King Josiah, the question arose what actually could be put on Moses' name. Or, if ever there had lived a man like Moses, what sort of man was he supposed to be? Later development gives ample evidence of to what such tendencies were leading.

It was around the turn of the century that the historical approach to the Old Testament got a new impetus. Claus Westermann writes in *Old Testament Hermeneutics*,

The Western world received through the Enlightenment the consciousness of historical periods and interrelations. This was comparable to the disclosure of a new dimension. For a church based on Scripture, this analysis of thought in terms of historical periods and correlations had to be important. The hearers of the Bible at the time of the Reformation were basically unaware of the interval between the Old and New Testaments; the obvious historical facts and the chronological sequences were of course seen by the Reformers and the orthodox theologians, **but no theological importance was attached to them.** [Emphasis mine, H.M.O. Is that right? I refer to the article on Calvin!] When, however, all events of history came to be seen in historical perspective, the events reported in the Bible could no longer be ignored. [What does the author mean by that? Is that what the reformers were guilty of??] The central events of the Bible are too closely connected with historical data to exclude them from the increasingly **fluid picture of history** [emphasis mine, H.M.O. Why such a characteristic??] and to continue to regard them as being on one plane, as was done before . . .

In a footnote it reads:

The question about the relevance of historical periods for the study of the Bible was seen for the first time clearly and with all implications by Johann Philipp Gabler in his academic inaugural address . . . He advocated there for the first time a complete separation between biblical theology and dogmatics; this implied that he demanded that biblical theology be understood as a historical science.

I hope my readers understand that when the present author advocates a historical approach, he does not follow the way of Gabler. In his line, contrasting history and dogmatics, what is his-

torical runs the risk of being deprived of its binding authority. That is what it boils down to, if "the central events cannot be regarded as being on one plane." Not everyone who advocates a historical approach to the contents of the Bible is our partner on that account. We have to distinguish carefully!

H.M. OHMANN

## Church News

Called: REV. J. VISSCHER  
of Coaldale, Alberta, by Cloverdale,  
B.C.

\* \* \*

Called: REV. C. VANDAM  
of Brampton, Ontario, by Chilliwack,  
B.C.

\* \* \*

### GENERAL SYNOD 1977

The Church at Coaldale, Alberta, convening Church for the General Synod, hereby announces that the starting date for General Synod 1977 is Tuesday, November 8, 1977 at 9:00 a.m. in the Coaldale Canadian Reformed Church Building.

The Church at Coaldale announces also that a Service of Prayer and Worship will precede the opening of the Synod. This will take place on Monday evening November 7, at 7:30 p.m., in the Coaldale Church Building.

### *Correspondence for General Synod 1977*

In order to avoid confusion and extra expense, the Convening Church kindly requests that the following rules be adhered to:

1. All Churches and Committees sending either reports or overtures to General Synod must insure that *they* themselves, if it is necessary, send sufficient copies of their reports or overtures to all the local Churches.
2. All Churches or Committees sending either reports or overtures to General Synod should send 40 copies to the Convening Church of the General Synod.

### FOR THE READER'S INFORMATION

This issue of *Clarion* was mailed from Winnipeg Central Post Office on September 30, 1977.

### OUR COVER

*H. De Cock's Church in Ulrum (Gr.), The Netherlands. (Photo by E. De Haan, 1977.)*

# press review

## THE 44th GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Soon the General Synod of our Canadian Reformed Churches will meet at Coaldale. This Synod has to deal with a report of the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. One of the churches sent in an overture to establish fraternal relationship with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. (If adopted, this would mean for us the adoption of a new ecclesiastical relationship, since we have only the sister-church relationship at the moment.) In this connection I like to give the reader some information about the 44th General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and so about the Orthodox Presbyterian Church itself. For this purpose I take parts of a report on this General Assembly as it was written by the Rev. John J. Mitchell for *The Presbyterian Guardian* (July-August, 1977). We read:

The assembly was again made up of presbyters commissioned by their respective presbyteries according to a proportional representation. A total of one hundred and fifty-five are eligible under the current rules, but only 124 were actually present — 81 ministers and 43 ruling elders. Though the proportion of ruling elders present has greatly improved under the representative system (in contrast to the time when every minister and an elder from each church was eligible), concern was voiced to improve ruling elder attendance even further.

Besides a report of the Committee on Christian Education there was the following on Home Mission:

*The Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension* was next to report. This committee notes with gratitude the increased involvement of presbyteries in home mission efforts, but forecasts a continuing need for support by the whole denomination. The committee is encouraged by the response to the concept of a missionary-at-large at work with a presbytery and hopes to employ a denominational evangelist as well. Though not a large part of its budget, funds for summer workers and interns are seen as a significant factor in attracting able young men into the church's ministry.

The advisory committee reacted enthusiastically to the idea of a denominational evangelist — or perhaps more accurately to the work of the Rev. John Fikkert in this area — and urged the assembly to direct the Committee on Home Missions to make it a priority to secure Mr. Fikkert on a full-time basis. With a bit more cool, the assembly referred the idea to the committee, believing that such matters, even when desired by all, were better done by the responsible committee.

There are more churches which have Home-missionaries, something which, I think, is a good thing, although I prefer it that also a Home-missionary is called and sent by a local church. About foreign mission we read:

*The Committee on Foreign Missions*, shortly after the reconvening on Monday morning, presented its report. Major changes in the church's foreign mission program have taken place: the mission to Ethiopia has been closed down due to war conditions there; three veteran missionary families have retired, one each from Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. On the other hand, an exciting open door of opportunity has been found in Egypt where the Rev. W. Benson Male has been enthusiastically received by the evangelical church there (largely the result of efforts by missionaries of the old United Presbyterian Church). The Committee hopes to have a permanent missionary in Egypt (Mr. Male has been serving on a retired basis, largely at his own expense) and if conditions permit, also in Lebanon, which would be another new field.

The advisory committee dealing with this report expressed great concern over the dwindling of the church's foreign mission force. Some of this is due to the circumstances mentioned above, some of it to lack of suitable candidates at times, and some of it to restrictions caused by limited funds.

An important matter at the General Assembly was a revised "Church Order." In the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is spoken of the "Form of Government." About this, the following:

### NEW FORM OF GOVERNMENT

The second major item of assembly business, and one with far-reaching effects for the church, was the presentation of a proposed new Form of Government. Work on this document began

twenty-nine years ago, and the committee's chairman, the Rev. John P. Galbraith, is the only member to serve all those years.

... the assembly voted on whether to send the document down to the presbyteries for formal constitutional adoption. The motion passed — to everyone's surprise — without one audible dissenting vote. If two-thirds of the presbyteries (by simple majority votes) now approve, and the next assembly approves by a two-thirds vote (the two-thirds being required to make rather minor changes in the various ordination vows), the Orthodox Presbyterian Church will finally have a new Form of Government.

What did the document do? For one thing, the new Form is considerably expanded over the old, primarily in order to spell out in some detail the procedures to be followed particularly in ordinations of various church officers; the new Form, in other words, is more of a handbook. The whole process of receiving and transferring ministers is given in what seems to be exhaustive detail, though certainly gaps are likely to be found once the procedures are put into practice.

The second main characteristic of the new Form was its tendency to steer a middle course between differing views existing in the church. The continuing controversy over the number of church offices (two or three) is reflected in the new Form's flat statement at one point that there are basically only two (elders and deacons) and its equally plain provision for a clear distinction in the elder-ship between those called ministers and ruling elders.

Like last year the General Assembly again had to deal with a case of discipline. We can notice that church-discipline is maintained in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. We are told:

### A JUDICIAL CASE

After forty years of experience with no judicial cases reaching the assembly level, the church has had one in both the last two years. In 1976, it was the case of the Rev. Arnold S. Kress, charged in relation to the matter of speaking in tongues primarily. This year it was the Rev. Robert H. Countess, charged with error in practice and doctrine in relation to the Sabbath.

The background of the charges brought by the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic against Dr. Countess, formerly a pastor in the presbytery and presently a chaplain in the U.S. Army, was this minister's involvement in a semi-pro soccer team that played on Sundays. Dr. Countess defended his activity, holding the "Continental view" that the Fourth Commandment is not binding on Christians — a view he had expressed when being received into the presbytery.

In the judgment of this observer, neither the case against Dr. Countess nor the de-



fendant's own appeal of a guilty verdict, were well presented. The basic issue was clear enough: Would the assembly uphold its doctrinal standards with their strong emphasis on a "Puritan Sabbath"? The assembly would and did overwhelmingly. It even rejected proposals urging the presbytery to modify its censure of suspension or even to delay implementing it. Presumably Dr. Countess, unless he chooses to seek church affiliation elsewhere, will be suspended from the exercise of his office.

One comment seems in order: The reason the church has had so few judicial cases before the assembly is not because there were no disciplinary efforts being made. It was rather the case that, whenever a lower court would move to institute formal judicial process, the individual being charged would simply withdraw from the jurisdiction of the church and go elsewhere, thus effectively precluding further action. Both Mr. Kress and Dr. Countess are to be commended for going "the whole route" even when their particular cases seemed to have a foregone conclusion. Whether the final decisions were right or wrong, the church has been able to do a difficult duty.

The last part of the article deals with decisions on ecclesiastical relations. Earlier in the article we were informed that representatives of the churches with which the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has fraternal relations were present; namely, of those churches that are members of the NAPARC (North American Presbyterian And Reformed Churches) organization. We read:

*The Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations* has in former years presented reports that generated lengthy debate. But no mergers or unusual development seemed present this time, though a number of significant actions were taken.

The assembly approved the establishing of fraternal relations with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, a body of approximately 30,000 communicants, located largely in Piedmont, Virginia and the Carolinas, Florida, and Arkansas. The church has a long history, but had suffered decline both in numbers and in faithfulness to sound doctrine. A recent influx of new ministers, mostly from Reformed Theological Seminary, has brought new life and a new desire to draw closer to the more orthodox Reformed bodies. The ARPC is seeking membership in the NAPARC organization also.

A proposal to authorize the committee to present another plan of union with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, generated some debate. After it was pointed out that this step did not constitute any sort of approval of the merger in advance, the proposal was ap-

proved with the plan to be presented in 1979.

The assembly also determined to accept the invitation of the Christian Reformed Church to meet at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, concurrently with other synods or assemblies of the NAPARC churches; all five have now accepted, though there is some stir in the Presbyterian Church in America to reconsider the matter. The OPC assembly will be held on June 15-24, 1978.

The most extensive debate in this area centered on the church's membership in the (international) Reformed Ecumenical Synod. Negative criticism, both this year and previously, centered on the cost of membership and of travel to the synod every four years, and on the presence of the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Reformed Churches in the Netherlands) as an RES member church (the largest one) while also holding membership in the World Council of Churches.

Discussion of the RES situation was generated by a recommendation from the Committee on Ecumenicity and from the delegates to the 1976 RES that the

assembly urge both the Presbyterian Church in America and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod to seek RES membership. (The CRC, RPCNA, and ARPC are members.) In effect, the assembly decided it was proper enough for the OPC to continue its membership, particularly as the RES itself sought to persuade the Dutch churches to withdraw from the WCC and to exercise discipline in some notable instances of heretical teaching in its midst; but to urge others to join under the circumstances was not seen as appropriate, though the desire had been to strengthen the more orthodox elements in the RES.

A few years ago the Orthodox Presbyterian Church broke the relation with the Synodical Reformed Churches in The Netherlands. Via the RES the relation still is maintained. And what about the relation with the Christian Reformed Church which maintains the relationship with the Dutch church with all the consequences?

J. GEERTSEMA

HYMN 48  
THE BLESSED HOPE *L. Bourgeois 1551*

1. The hope of faith shall not de-ceive us; The Sav-  
 iour's words are true and sure. Our friends on earth oft  
 fail, and leave us, But Je-sus' faith-ful-ness en-  
 dures. Who lim-its his do-min-ion ev-er? He  
 rules cre-a-tion from on high; All that his love and  
 grace en-deav-our Shall him his pow-er not de-ny.

2. That *hope must soften all our sorrow.*  
 Come, *fellow-pilgrims*, heads then high;  
 For *them who bide salvation's* morrow  
 The *hills are level, seas are dry.*  
 O *blessedness above all measure,*  
 O *joy when once all grief is banned.*  
 There *is our heart, there is our treasure,*  
 When *we are in the Promised Land.*

# news medley

This time we had better start with writing some congratulatory messages. Some of them come rather late, but I simply did not have sufficient time to prepare a **News Medley** for our previous issue. So many meetings had to be attended, so many things had to be prepared, that I had to forego the pleasure of meeting our readers at this place. Hopefully you did not suffer too much from my absence. It does not happen too often that you miss me, but here it is as with so many things: You appreciate the home-cooked meals best when you had to eat in a restaurant for some time.

Now about those congratulations.

Starting with the couple who have been married the longest, I learned from the Valley **Church News** that brother and sister K. Grim celebrated their forty-fifth wedding anniversary. May the Lord add some more years to both of you. Brother Grim has retired from the bakery quite a while ago and they both like travelling. We even had the privilege of seeing them here in Fergus once.

Also in the Valley we find brother and sister A.W. De Leeuw. They were married for forty years on September 14th. They belong to the first wave of immigrants (or perhaps it was not yet a wave, just a trickle) and arrived in Edmonton. The name De Leeuw is found among the first group that came together in Alberta's Capital and instituted the Church there. Brother De Leeuw was chosen as an elder at the "institution meeting" and was ordained on July 9, 1950. We also find him at the first "Classis Canada," held November 15, 1950, in Lethbridge. Later the family moved to the Fraser Valley where the ideal of farming was fulfilled. We wish them, too, many more years in the favour of our God.

We move all the way down to Ontario: In Burlington brother and sister H. Alkema celebrated their fortieth wedding anniversary on September 16th. I cannot tell you much about this couple, but you could see their picture in the issue of August 27th: Congratulations, and may you, too, enjoy the blessing of the Lord upon your further pathway.

Yes, and now we have to speak another word of congratulation: From the Burlington bulletins I learned that the Rev. A.B. Roukema remembered on September 23 that he had been a Minister of the Word for forty years. I am certain that we all are grateful with our brother for this gift. Having retired a few years ago, the Rev. Roukema is not idle. In the community of the Maranatha Home in Burlington he occupies an important place and is of great help to several occupants. He also conducts a service once in a while in one of the Burlington Churches. And he works a few hours per month in the library of our Seminary, cataloguing the various works which have been acquired. All these things keep him busy and that is a good thing. There is no doubt in my mind that the whole membership wishes him strength and courage, health and wisdom to continue for a long time to come for the benefit of all those who reap the fruits of his activities.

Let us linger in Burlington for a while.

The Ebenezer Consistory mentions that a small, independent Reformed Korean Church requested the use of

their Church building. At the moment they are meeting in the Brampton Church building, but the one in Burlington is closer to where their members are living. The Consistory decided to grant their request. The "Consistory reminded itself of the hospitality we received to worship in Church buildings during our first years in this country."

The Ebenezer as well as the Rehoboth bulletin mention the radio broadcasts which are off the ground. Since the first Sunday of September the program can be heard every Sunday morning from 8:45-9:00. The reception, at least in the Fergus area, is excellent. The messages are printed after they have been broadcast and are available for distribution. The Committee felt that some Congregational singing should be taped to be heard after the message had been spoken. Thus the Rehoboth Congregation was requested to sing a few Psalms before the service which were to be taped to be used in the program. As is the case with the work in the Valley: we shall never know how many listen to us and we shall never know what the fruits are of this work; yet we do it and we continue doing it for it is one of the mightiest weapons in the battle against error and distortion of the Scriptures. So many false prophets have arisen that we may almost sound like the voice of one man crying out in the wilderness. As long as he keeps going and continues to cry out!!

In the Rehoboth bulletin I saw something which I have not seen before. There the minister's wife invited the Congregation to an Open House in connection with her husband's birthday celebration. Mrs. Van Oene often says, "Should you not write in the **Church Herald** (that is the bulletin of Fergus and Guelph) that everyone who wishes to do so can come to congratulate you then and then?" To that I always reply that I am not going to write about my own birthday, that everyone who wishes to come knows that he or she is welcome, and that I am not going to advertise. But I should have thought of Burlington's possibility much earlier. Anyway, I pass it on for the benefit of colleagues who have the same problem I have.

And since we are in the sphere of celebrations, I mention here that on September 14 it was 25 years ago that the Church was instituted in Smithville. "Could we have believed at that time that 25 years later the young Church of Smithville would be a mother-church, with a daughter-church, both 'well to do?' " *Mutatis mutandis* (that is: changing the things you must change) you could say the same thing of every couple that meets for the first time. But I agree: no one could have foreseen the development which did take place under the blessing of the Lord. It is a miracle, an undeserved blessing. Let us see to it that we do not practise "birth control" in this respect and just stick together "because that is easier and cheaper" instead of splitting up and instituting new Churches.

Congratulations to Smithville.

On our way to Smithville we passed Hamilton, but we still have a few things to be mentioned about the Church there.

In the first place: The Dutch services have come to an end for the season. Further, a meeting of the Evangelization Committee with the Congregation was scheduled, at which meeting no fewer than eight reports were to be discussed. If you wish to get the Congregation involved in the work, then that is one of the best methods to achieve it. I only hope that the meeting was well-attended, for otherwise the aim is not achieved.

The Hamilton Congregation belongs to those Congre-

gations that had a Picnic on Labour Day. Quite an extensive program was drawn up and there was something for everybody. The activities planned for Adults 17 (!) years and up included: King Arthur and Mrs. Lancelot; Water Balloon Competition, and "No Strings Attached." As for this last point, I do not know what it was but I assume that it was a point on the agenda devised to lure shy bachelors to the games. Anyway, it is better than "No Holds Barred."

When we visited Smithville a few minutes ago, we were also in the neighbourhood of Lincoln. From the Church there we may mention that some delay in the finishing of the Church building was caused by the fact that arrival of the arches had been promised time and again but did not become a reality until recently. One can imagine what a mess it must be in and around the building, since the "roof" over the basement was removed with a view to the building activities, especially with all the rain we have been having these last few weeks. Oh, well, a few more months and you won't recall it any more. Once you are in your new, finished Church building all the misery is soon forgotten.

As in so many places, so in London the Ladies Auxiliary of the School is very active. They also contacted the management of a large mall regarding a sale. "We like to sell baked goods and other novelties at the mall, they have sales in the mall twice a year, March and November. We are on the bottom of a long list. They will let us know when our turn comes up for that sale about 4-6 weeks ahead of time." There appears to be quite some competition also in this field.

In Chatham it was decided to use the Revised Standard Version as of October 1. The Consistory also had a contract signed for the construction of a new manse.

And that is all then for Southern Ontario. The only other Church about which we should say something is the Church at Toronto. We can see that the Rev. J. Mulder brought his experience as editor of the Valley's **Church News** along when he moved to Ontario. May many more such products come off his hand.

Not much is to be mentioned about the Manitoba Churches. Therefore we proceed to Alberta.

In Edmonton there is a "Joe Bosch Campaign Committee" and we are told that "It is tried to have an alderman elected in the upcoming civic election on a Biblically-oriented platform." Some time ago I could mention the same thing about a few other places, and I express the wish that the efforts of the committee may succeed. Let us do our best locally to have the Word of the Lord being heard also where the course and direction of our community is determined.

The Edmonton bulletin mentions some other things, too, about which I am not so sure. Let me first quote.

"How Shall we then Live?"

This 10 film series by Dr. Francis Schaeffer portrays the rise and decline of western thought and culture, and will be presented along with a 3 Film Series of the life and Times of 'Martin Luther,' at the Edm. Chr. High School Gymnasium, beginning Thursday Sept. 22 '77 at 7.30 p.m. Please consult the posters at the front entrance of the church for further dates & times."

And in a following bulletin we read, "This filmseries was organized with in the first place the catechism-classes in mind."

I do like Schaeffer's book **How Should We Then Live?** and I can recommend the reading of it.

But I have my questions regarding a film-series on the

## LONDON ANNUAL CORN ROAST

*Held Saturday, August 27, 1977, at Family Boeringa's farm, Lakeside, Ontario.*



book. I know that a film is not the same as the "dumb images" of which our Catechism speaks with the explanation of the second commandment. Yet I wonder whether what we confess there does not have something to do with it. Those films are "played," as is one on the life and times of Martin Luther. They are no "documentaries" in the strict sense of the word. Personally I would not feel free to make use of them, and then specifically not with the instruction of the youth of the Church.

There is another point which struck me.

From the announcement it appears that there were posters "at the front entrance of the church for further dates & times." It is up to each and every Consistory to decide what sort of announcements they will allow to be put up and I certainly do not deny the right of Edmonton's Consistory to do just that.

But I recall that the bulletin of July 9 of this year contained the following item:

"b. Cash boxes in the church for the Can. Ref. School Soc.

In the Short Report of Nov. 13 '76, the Consistory stated its decision 'not to grant . . . a request by the Can. Ref. School Soc. to put a collection box in the church . . . on the grounds that collection boxes in the church be kept to a minimum and Art. 30 C.O. This is

the more urgent in the present situation.' Furthermore an explanation of the use of Art. 30 C.O. in this matter and others will be published in the City-Guide at some later date."

I, too, am opposed to all sorts of collections and collection boxes, but I do not have the slightest objection to having a box in the lobby or even in the back of the auditorium into which people can drop their contributions or donations for the school. However, if there is a Consistory that does object to such a thing that is the perfect right of that Consistory and no one can say that such a Consistory exceeds the boundaries of its authority.

But what I am wondering about is the use of Article 30, Church Order, in this case. And I would like to see explained how it can be against Article 30, Church Order, to have such boxes in the Church building, and how it can be according to Article 30, Church Order, to have posters in the Church building which advocate viewing of a film series on the rise and decline of western culture.

And if it is against Article 30, Church Order, to have collection boxes for the school in the Church building, is then our Church Order not divided against itself when it describes the obligations of a Consistory with respect to the schoolmasters?

I find it strange.

We continue our journey to British Columbia.

The Smithers' Bulletin of September 11, 1977, exclaims almost triumphantly: "At last the Organ is here, it ar-

rived in excellent condition. Next week Mr. Spilker hopes to arrive to install it." Congratulations.

You may recall that the Cloverdale Consistory considered a possible change in the time for the afternoon service. Now that Consistory decided to leave the time at two in the afternoon. Apparently there are too many objections to having it at seven in the evening. I do not think that there are many Churches within our federation that have their second service in the evening. Cloverdale will not be one of them anyway.

For the duration of the vacancy, the catechism classes of Cloverdale and Langley will be combined. I don't think that they have been separated since the institution of Langley: first the Rev. J. Mulder conducted them all; now the Rev. Vander Boom provides the same service. A good neighbour, Rev. Mulder wrote in the Toronto bulletin, is better than a faraway friend. Proves to be true again.

Recently I could quote a few bulletins which mentioned that the basement of the Church building was being desired for Kindergarten or other civil activities. We are beginning to be noticed, as may also appear from the request which the Cloverdale Consistory received: to permit use of the Church building as a polling station in the forthcoming municipal election. This request was granted.

And herewith we have come to the end of our medley.

That leaves nothing else to be said but:

Hope to see you next time.

vO

## A Corner for the Sick

Some time ago Aunt Betty mentioned in her "Little Magazine" the name of a young brother in The Netherlands who was seriously ill and would love to receive some postcards also from Canada. That did not remain without response.

In the *Nederlands Dagblad* we can find a column in which those who are ill are remembered, oftentimes mentioned by name. There is also a so-called "Kaartenkring," and there are among our members here in Canada some who were mentioned in that column and did receive many postcards or letters with encouraging messages on them.

At our latest meeting of the editorial committee it was suggested to insert a column in our magazine in which we do a similar thing: mention brothers or sisters who have been ill for a long time and who would love to here from the brotherhood, give the names or addresses of younger members who would be very proud and happy if they received postcards from far and near, and so on.

Thus far we have not been able to find someone who would be willing to take this upon himself or herself. The present writer is certainly not eager to take this additional work on his shoulders. But for the time being he is willing to take care of it, if it appears that there is need for such a column. We think that there is a need for it.

Do not hesitate to tell us when you know about a brother or sister who is lonely or has been confined to bed for a long time and who would like to hear from members in other places. It can only strengthen the bond.

For today we pass on just one name.

Anneke Piepers is eleven years old and has been ill for three years. She is waiting for a kidney transplant. Would you not send her a card? Her address is Berg en Bos, Prof. Bronkhorstlaan 10, Bilthoven, The Netherlands.

And if you know of anyone else, just drop us a note. P.O. Box 54, Fergus, Ontario. N1M 2W7.

vO



News items are published with a view to their importance for the Reformed Churches. Selection of an item does not necessarily imply agreement with its contents.

### ARCHEOLOGICAL FINDINGS

*Safed, Israel.* An American archaeological team from the University of Duke, North Carolina, has discovered the ruins of two upper-class villas and the remnants of an old Jewish temple, dating from the Roman period. The leader of the expedition, Prof. Eric Meyers, emphasized that these discoveries lend new insight into the culture, lifestyle and predicament of the Jews in Galilee during the period of the Roman taxation. In Niron, the team also found the remains of a city which the inhabitants had to leave in 361 A.D. because of inability to pay these heavy taxes. The old temple contained a fresco of an eagle with eyes downcast, symbolizing rejection of the Roman laws.

### WOMAN ORDAINED IN "BUITEN VERBAND" CHURCH

*Groningen, The Netherlands.* Even though many objections were voiced by "sister-churches," the Reformed Church (Liberated, "Buiten Verband" or Unaffiliated) has proceeded to ordain a woman into the office of elder. This step was taken also despite the fact that objections were raised within the congregation itself.

### ENGLISH THEOLOGIANS REACT

*London, England.* Last month a new book was published as a counter-attack against the thoughts put forward in the recent publication "The Myth of Incarnate God" (see *Clarion*, August 27, 1977). This book is entitled, "The Truth About Incarnate God," and shows that every page of

the New Testament is written from out of the recognition of the resurrection of Christ. One of the authors, Michael Green, has declared that it belongs to communist propaganda to make Jesus into a mythical figure, "invented to explain a mass-movement." The authors defend the doctrine of the incarnation.

### METHODIST-ROMAN DIALOGUE

*Paris, France.* This fall, after an interruption of some years, the World Council of Methodist Churches and the Vatican Secretariate for Unity will continue their dialogue in Freudenstadt, West Germany. The Methodist world council, which has an affiliated membership of 45 million, will send a delegation of six representatives led by Bishop William Cannon of Atlanta. This dialogue is comparable to the contacts between Roman Catholics and Anglicans. The two groups already agree on marriage regulations, although the Methodists do recognize divorce, remarriage, and anticonception. A report published in January claimed that much agreement exists on the matter of the Eucharist, while the priesthood is more a question of terminology than of principle.

### REVISION OF HEBREW TEXT

*Stuttgart, West Germany.* Six theologians from five countries, including the Dutch professor Dr. A.R. Hulst, are working together on a major revision of the Hebrew Text of the Old Testament. During a recent session of four weeks, the scholars have "solved" 450 of the 3,000 problems involved. It is in-



Michael Green:  
"Defends Incarnation."

tended to have the project completed by 1979. The scholars want to establish a text which will be scientifically acceptable, and they hope to solve major difficulties by using the Qumran scrolls found at the Dead Sea.

### REVISED DUTCH CHURCHBOOK

*Amersfoort, The Netherlands.* Recently the Deputies for the Revision of the Churchbook (appointed by Synod Kampen of the Reformed Churches, Liberated) have presented a final draft to the Churches in The Netherlands. The book contains a revised version of the Psalms, the Hymn section, and the Liturgical Forms. The Churchbook, however, is only a draft, meant to be tested by the Churches. One church has already decided not to use the new book in the services, since "the church service is not meant for experimentation," but others have replied that "gradual change" is not the same as "experimentation." The final text of the Churchbook will be decided upon in 1981 at the Synod of Groningen.

Cl. STAM

### Consulaat-Generaal der Nederlanden CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS

10 King Street E.,  
Toronto, Ontario M5C 1C3

### OPSPORING ADRESSEN.

- VAN WINSSEN, A. laatstelijk woonachtig aan het adres 74 Main Street, New Market.
- LUKERVELATS, C.A. laatstelijk woonachtig aan het adres 194 Gary Drive, Weston.
- VAN SPRONSEN, Roelof, geboren 27 februari 1914 te 's-Gravenhage; medio september 1976 naar Canada geëmigreerd.
- WILLEBRANDS, Boudewijn, geboren 6 juni 1930 te Rotterdam, in juni 1957 naar Canada geëmigreerd.
- BOLT, Jurriën, geboren 10 augustus 1912 te Uithuizermeeden, op 7 augustus 1951 naar Canada geëmigreerd.
- STRIJDONCK, Cornelis, geboren 6 januari 1922 te Amsterdam, op 21 juli 1950 naar Canada geëmigreerd.
- DEN BOER, Matthijs, geboren 31 augustus 1912 te Rotterdam; op 20 oktober 1953 naar Canada geëmigreerd.
- HURENKAMP, Johannes E.H., geboren 2 november 1948.
- ARLER, C., geboren 25 juli 1929; in maart 1977 naar Canada geëmigreerd.
- SNIJDERS, Leendert, geboren +- 1905; in 1925 naar Canada geëmigreerd.
- SNIJDER, Reinder, geboren 26 september 1912 te Nijlamer; op 11 juni 1957 naar Canada geëmigreerd.



Newsletter 22

Dear brothers and sisters,

Last month you had a look in the clinic; this month we'll take you for a "plane ride." But first some news about the month of July. On July 1st Mr. and Mrs. Dirk Griffioen in Boma received a daughter from our LORD. Her name is Christina Wendelmoed, and everything is well. As you may know, Dirk Griffioen is a teacher at the Central Bible School in Boma. On the 3rd of July the wife of our teacher-evangelist, Yohan Bakai, gave birth to a healthy daughter as well! Everything was fine. They have two daughters now.

From the 5th till the 25th of July we had company in Manggelum! Mr. and Mrs. Johannes Veldhuizen were over for three weeks to see what it is like on a newly opened station. We had a very worthwhile time together and it was good to have some people over for a while.

You're still waiting for the "plane ride"? Well, here we go. During the last ZGK meeting — held at the end of May — the undersigned has been given the job of "flight-coordinator." Mr. Ben van der Lugt has coordinated all the flights in the past, but he and his family will be leaving on furlough, D.V., in August 1977. This work concerns only flying in, to and from the ZGK area. What it comes down to is that you take the requests of all the ZGK folks, work out the flight schedules and be in touch with the pilots to give them all the information needed. Right after our stay in Sentani I had a very busy time piecing helicopter shuttles together. You see, the MAF helicopter was down in our area for a two week try-out period. We had much rainy and foggy weather during those two weeks, so it meant to be stand-by on the radio pretty well every day. A total of 55 stops (or landings) were made in that period! Further, two area surveys were done: one in the area North of Boma, the other one North of Kawagit. So to sum it up: a worthwhile, but hectic helicopter try-out.

Now we're back to the float-plane again and that means approximately

one flight-day per week. Our area pilot, Mr. Joe Hoisington, is stationed in Yawsekor, which is 70 miles West of Senggo. In Yawsekor there is one float-plane and also a wheel-plane, and the pilot will fly whatever is needed for the flying of that day. For our area we generally make use of the float-plane, for all stations can be reached on the water. Boma and Kouh are presently the only stations with airstrips good enough to make a safe landing. The strip in Kouh has been closed the last weeks. Due to the large amounts of rain, the Digul River had risen to an astoundingly high level, covering the strip completely! So we've been using the Tanah Merah airstrip instead, going to and from Kouh by boat; a 2½ hour ride upstream with a 20-h.p. Johnson outboard. The Kawagit strip is in the process of being lengthened, while a new airstrip close to Tiau is nearly finished. It is good to be accessible to wheel-plane as well as float-plane. In case of an emergency, it is much faster to come and go with a wheel-plane and go straight on to, let's say, a hospital in the mountain area, than coming by float-plane and then having to go all the way to Yawsekor and switch planes first. This is the reason why we will have another try-out later this year, but then with an amphibian plane — a plane with floats, in which retractable wheels are mounted.

Further, we have regular flights to and from Sentani, which is on the North coast, close to Jayapura. These are for getting supplies, bringing teachers from other parts of Irian in and out, going up there for a holiday, getting our mail, etcetera.

The MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship) uses for its flying here:

- 1 "short take off and landing" plane, the "Nomad," able to bring 3000 pounds. It only needs an airstrip of 500-m. length. A beautiful plane, which is very useful out here.
- 3 Aero Commanders, each one able to bring 1600-1800 pounds, but needing a much longer airstrip, namely, 900 meters. Boma is presently lengthening its strip to Aero

Commander length.

- approximately 8 Cessna wheel-planes, good for 800 pounds each. A 500-m. strip is enough for a Cessna.
- 1 Cessna float-plane; 750 pound load.
- 2 helicopters; one for a 500 pound load, the other one for 700 pounds.

On July 21st Johannes Veldhuizen and I visited the school in Heyokubun. Not many adults were in the village, but most of the pupils were present. We were disappointed with the work of the teacher, Kornelis Wandenggei. Many mistakes were made, so afterwards I talked several things over with him. We also went further upriver to have a look in Kloofkamp again. The village was almost deserted. There were no significant changes visible regarding a church/school building. And so we left for home again.

On the 1st of August, when guru Kornelis and his wife came by here on their way to Kawagit for the up-coming guru course, they stopped at our home to show us their new baby. Awikot had given birth to a baby girl on the 22nd of July, the day after our visit! It is their first child and they have named her Yos. Obviously they were very glad, and so they continued their trip downriver, the baby content in the carrying-net on her mother's back.

On August 2nd we heard via our radio of a terrible accident. On that day the "Mike Papa Juliet," a MAF wheel-plane, crashed in Tangma. That is a village near Wamena, N.W. of our area, in the mountains. The pilot, Chris Davidson (who was to become the pilot for our area in the future) and 4 passengers, Pieter and Nel Akse (Dutch people working for the Christian and Missionary Alliance) plus their two children, all died in the crash.

Chris leaves behind his wife Nancy and three children, while there is still one (school-age) child left from the Akse family. When Nel's parents heard the news, Nel's mother had a heart-attack and also passed away. We ask you to remember all those who are "left behind" in your prayers. Further, remember the pilots regularly in your prayers please. Their work is vital for the work of mission, and flying circumstances are often far from ideal here, as you could also read in our last newsletter. "Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication" (Ephesians 6).

Yours in Christ,  
BRAM and JOANNE VEGTER



# A Chat on Churches (2)

or

“PRAATJES BIJ PLAATJES”

The issue became even more interesting after I read the May issue of “Kerk en Woord” published in South Africa which I receive as co-editor. In four short articles a few questions are being asked and different opinions are voiced. There are some remarks which I would like to bring to your attention. The writers all agree that “building a church is not as easy as it looks” and that the history of the Church has shown how “convictions of faith have determined the style.” G.K. Schuring maintains that there is a principal and important difference between a synagogue and a church building. The Sacraments of the Old Covenant were to be administered in private houses. This difference ought to be shown in the interior of the building. Baptismal Font and Lord’s Supper Table should not be hidden in a closet until they are needed, but be visible in front of the pulpit. It appears that some churches have both standing in front of the pulpit. A Lord’s Supper Table with the inscription “Do this in Remembrance of Me” with an open Bible on top and a vase with flowers looks, to say the least, a little strange.

It is a well-known fact that the Roman Catholic Church stressed this celebration of the Eucharist so much that it shows in the construction of church buildings. There is a separate structure added to the nave as can be clearly seen in older Churches.

It is also generally accepted that the main principle in the construction of a church is the central place of the Word and the proclamation of the Word. This has far-reaching consequences. When the preaching is central in Reformed Liturgy the building ought to have such dimensions and to be constructed in such a way that the congregation can *hear* the preacher. The amplifier is a wonderful invention but it is not a commendation to architects and designers when, a few weeks after the first service has been held, people who are not hard of hearing, start asking for a sound system, because they cannot hear the minister. Personally, I do not like these systems

at all, neither as a minister who preaches nor when I have the (rare) opportunity to listen to one of my colleagues. An “amplified preacher” is a strange phenomenon. Many of you must have heard such “metallic voices” coming from the pulpit. Forced by the circumstance that the buildings for numerous congregations have become such elongated rectangles the members sitting in the back pews can hardly see the minister, let alone hear him. Is a sound system the only solution? Maybe we should ask ourselves whether the “pijpela” is really a standard form of a church building. This is not a matter of taste or preference although many may find a long and large building impressive. But on the basis of the principle that the proclamation is central, church buildings must be functional as *audi-toriums*. It may sound simple and a little childish, but no one who is called upon to tell a story to 20 children has them sitting in 5 rows of 4, but in a half-circle around him or her. We are called to assemble “around the Word.”

I realize that the form of church buildings is based upon the Roman basilica. This has influenced the construction and designs for centuries.

There is no argument against this form as long as by maintaining this design for large congregations the function of being an auditorium is not lost.

In connection with these remarks it is interesting to read what I found in the same magazine. “The architecture in South Africa shows indifference, a lack of identity which is *visible in the repetition of certain building plans* and an unwarranted combination of designs and materials.” Some of the buildings look more like an “experiment” than a work of art which is adapted to the principles of Reformed liturgy and the requirements of a specific congregation.

Mr. VanderKooy, who agrees on most of the points which the other writers have made, adds a few hints which I pass on here. “The acoustics and visibility must be unimpaired which can be accomplished by having

a slanting floor. Traditional hard pews may look beautiful (there always have been pews in churches), but they are not nice to sit on. Chairs are cheaper (that all depends, D.V.) and stimulate concentration.” His conclusion is: “Not a church which looks like a synagogue or a building with windows that vaguely look like ‘glaziers’ windows but a house of prayer with its own style.”

I have not seen all the 29 buildings. There are some, whether large or small in size which are very functional and in which it is a pleasure to enjoy the communion of the saints. Let us not say: What’s the difference? Not the building but the preaching of the Word must make an impression. I am in full agreement with that statement. This is the main point, but not the only one.

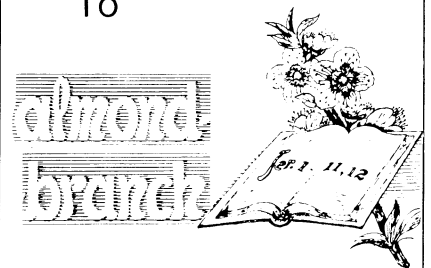
Apparently it made much difference how the tabernacle and the temple looked, also on the outside. We do not have a temple, but the Glory of the House of God is still the same. He, our LORD promised to meet His covenant people when they are assembled in His Name.

“How lovely is Thy dwelling place!”

D.V.

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# our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

Yes, I have the news about the winners in our *Summer Contest!* But first let me say "Thank you" to all the Busy Beavers who entered our Contest. And too, how well everybody did! Sometimes it was very hard to decide who the winner was.

Anyway, I'm sure you all had a good time entering the contest. And who knows? Maybe next time YOUR entry will be the best one!

Congratulations to Busy Beaver *Billy Doekes* for winning the Senior (11 years and up) Poetry Contest, and to Busy Beaver *Joanne Doekes* who won the Junior (10 years and below) Poetry Contest.

Also congratulations to Busy Beavers *Debbie* and *Nellie Knol* who tied in the Senior Quiz Contest, and Busy Beaver *Sharon Knol* who won the prize in the Junior Quiz Contest.

(Just between you and me, Busy Beavers, can you think of a reason why the winners belong to the same families?)

Congratulations winners, and I hope you'll enjoy your prize!

\* \* \* \* \*

Busy Beaver *Carol Griffioen* has a funny poem to share with us. Here it is. It's called:

*There Once was a Stinch*

There once was a stinch  
 who loved to pinch.  
 He went under the chair  
 And we all thought it wasn't fair.  
 So we pulled him away  
 And he said it was okay.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Quiz Time*

Let's first see how you did on your Mission Quiz last time. Were you able to fill all the blanks yourself?

*Quiz on Mission Countries*

1. Brasilia, 2. Amazon, 3. Roman Catholic, 4. Sao Jose; Recife, 5. cocoa, coffee, tobacco, 6. plane, 7. jungle, 8. ancestors
9. a school, clinic.

Busy Beaver *James Slaa* has a circle puzzle for us. How many Bible names can you find? Write them on the lines.

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And Busy Beaver *Hetty Witteveen* has a quiz called:  
*Which One?*

Circle or underline the correct choice.

1. Which one of these is a New Testament king?  
 Agrippa    Aaron    Apollos
2. Which one of these is not a son of Adam and Eve?  
 Abel    Cain    Shem
3. Which one of these is not a Bible book title?  
 Joseph    Joshua    Judges
4. Which one of these is a man?  
 Joanna    Jesse    Joppa
5. Which one of these is not a city?  
 Dorcas    Dothan    Dalmatia
6. Which one of these is an Old Testament prophet?  
 Elihu    Eli    Elijah
7. Which one of these is not a woman?  
 Annas    Anna    Hannah
8. Which one of these is not a man?  
 Jeremiah    Jeroboam    Jericho
9. Which one of these is a woman?  
 Demas    Delilah    Dathan
10. Which one of these is not an Old Testament book title?  
 Exodus    Ephesians    Esther

*Royalty*

Have you seen some pictures of the Queen's jubilee? This quiz is about Bible royalty.

1. What king of Israel was noted for his furious driving?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. What queen risked her life to save her people?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
3. What king captured Jerusalem and carried the Hebrews into captivity? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What king threw a spear or javelin at young David?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
5. What king took a yoke of oxen, cut them in pieces, and sent them to the Israelites? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What king built the temple? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What king fell through a lattice in his upper chamber and was sent a message by Elijah that he would surely die?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
8. What king slew the children of Bethlehem?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
9. What queen killed prophets of God? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What king repaired the Temple and ordained reading of the law? \_\_\_\_\_

(Answers next time.)

I hope you will enjoy doing the quizzes!  
 Bye for now, Busy Beavers.

With love from your Aunt Betty.

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- Lasting Food
- Before Many Witnesses
- Get Out
- Marriage in Honour
- None Like Thee
- The Gospel Under the Southern Cross
- Christ and Culture
- The Ancient Text of the New Testament

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