

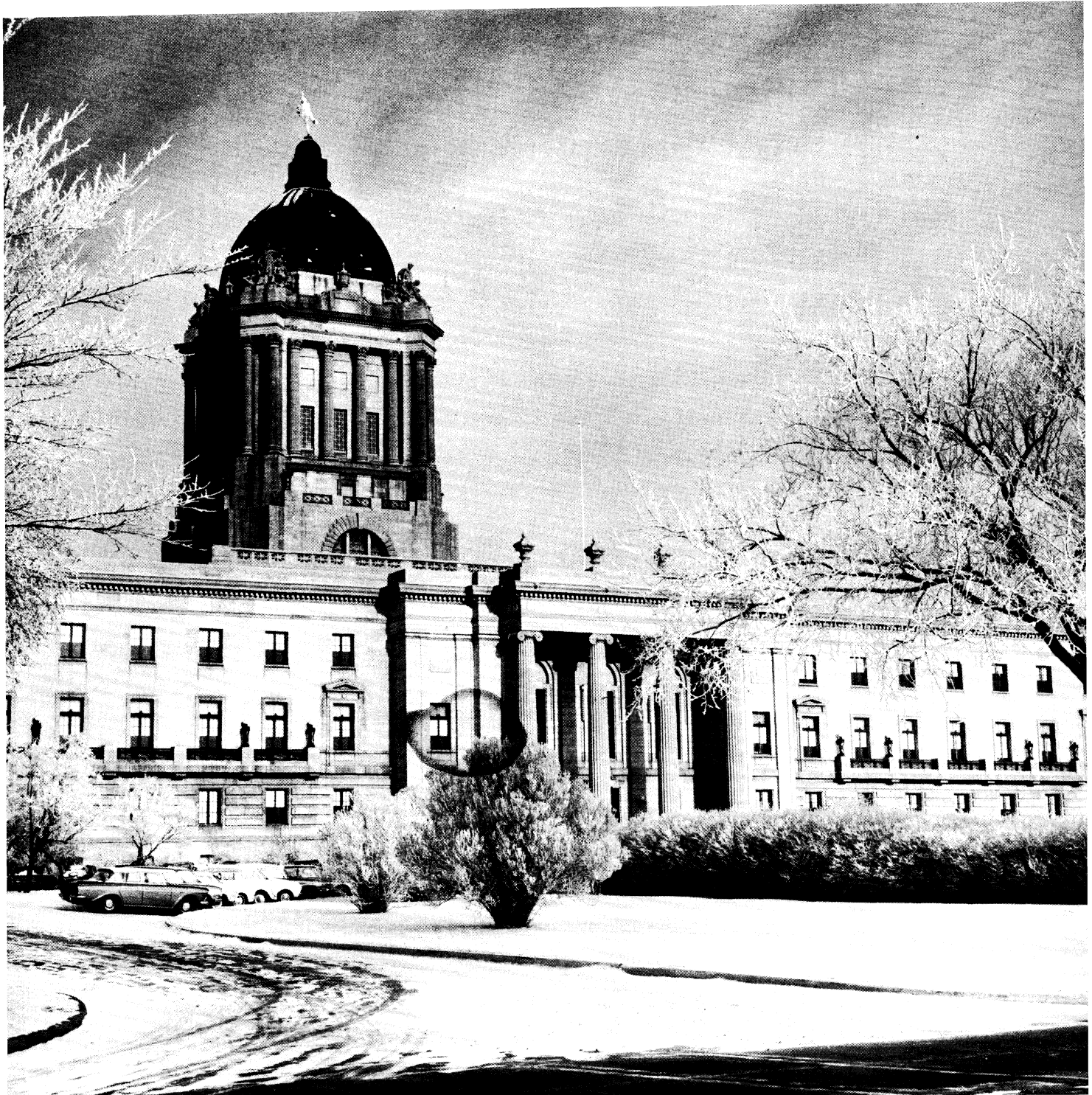
# Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

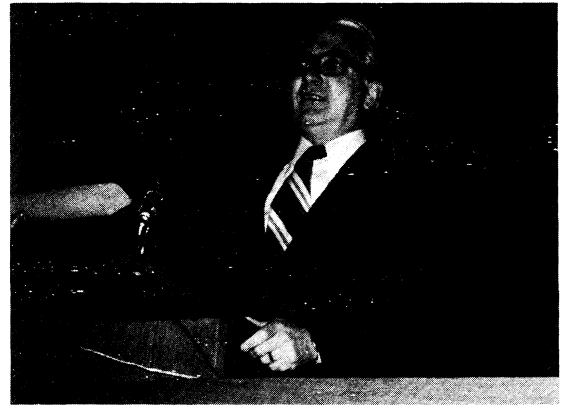


Volume 26 - No. 24

December 3, 1977



# General Synod 1977<sup>(2)</sup>



Rev. J. Mulder.

## THE BEGINNING

The other time I told our readers about the prayer service which was conducted by the Rev. J. Mulder. Let me continue my reporting.

Not many things can be told as yet. Most of the work which has been done was done by the Committees and the result of their work has not become common property, at least not for the larger part. There were some reports ready which we have dealt with, and I'll tell you about them later on. First of all I would like to tell you about the opening of Synod. That was done by the Rev. J. Visscher, minister of the Church at Coaldale, which is the convening and the receiving Church. He requested the delegates to sing Psalm 84:1 and 2, after which he read from the Word of God, Ephesians 1, the part where the apostles sing of the greatness of God's mercies and of the miracle of His love bestowed upon us in Christ Jesus our Saviour. After this, he led in prayer.

On behalf of the convening Church he welcomed the brethren and spoke as follows:

Esteemed Brothers,

On behalf of the convening Church, the Church at Coaldale, I would like to welcome all of you to Southern Alberta, to the first Canadian Reformed Church instituted in this land 27½ years ago, and to the General Synod 1977.

We are grateful that you have all arrived safely and we pray that the Lord will bless the work that you have been called upon to do here. You will have to deal with a number of matters, very few of which are new, but all of which are relevant to the life of the Churches. Matters pertaining to the Theological College, to relations with other churches, to the *Book of Praise*, to the Heidelberg Catechism, to Bible Translations, to the revision of the Church Order, to women's voting rights, and so on: all of these subjects will have to be handled in a wise, discerning, and up-building way.

And that is not an easy task. Therefore we pray, brothers, and the entire fellowship of the Canadian Reformed Churches prays that the Lord will give you, to use the words of the apostle Paul, "a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him" (verse 17). May you labour in the awareness that you are here to serve only one Person, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. It was He Whom God the Father raised from the dead and placed at "his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come, and he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all!" It is this Lord and Head Who has made you office-bearers in His Church and delegates to this Synod.

Be faithful to Him.

Be dependent on His Spirit.

Be mindful of His Word.

Do everything to "the praise of His glory."

The Lord bless you and make you a blessing to the Canadian (American) Reformed Churches and so to the Church of all ages.

Hymn 1 was sung, and then the work started. The brethren De Vos and Geertsema checked the credentials, and all the *primi-delegates* appeared to be present. That is something which we may state with gratitude. In some instances it was quite a while ago that the delegates were chosen, and then it is only a reason for thankfulness that no one was prevented from fulfilling the mandate which he received from "his" Regional Synod.

When the credentials appeared to be in order and it became clear that everyone present was here with full authorization from his delegating assembly, the task of choosing officers could be performed.

Actually the word "officers" has a by-meaning which does not fit completely in our concept of ecclesiastical assemblies. We always have been used to the term "moderamen," a Latin term which has crept in already in the days of the Reformation. We know what is meant by that term; it does not denote a board, and yet it shows that the men who together form it have the duty to guide and direct everything that is being done at the assembly. In our country the term "moderator" is used for the chairman of a broader assembly, but as far as I know a moderator has a more or less permanent position, at least for a whole year. Moderators speak on behalf of their "denomination"; they represent their "denomination"; they are considered to be permanent "officials" until they are replaced by a successor.

We do not know such a figure, and therefore we use the term "praeses" for the chairman, "scriba" for the clerk, and "assessor" for the vice-chairman. These men have this position only for as long as the broader assembly exists. No one should think that they deplore that fact! On the contrary, so much work is involved in these functions that they are happy when it is all over. Ask anyone who was clerk of a General Synod at one time or another. Read through the book containing the Acts of a Synod, and you realize that it is quite a job to write them, to put them together, to correct the proofs, and to supervise the whole issuing of them.

Under the guidance of the Rev. J. Visscher such a "moderamen" was chosen. In our previous issue we already mentioned the composition of this moderamen.

I think that we should express our gratitude to the workers at Premier Printing who did their best to give to our readers at least the first part of the report which I sent to them. It was mailed from Coaldale on Tuesday afternoon by express mail. It was received in Winnipeg on Wednesday morning, and we received a copy of this issue in Coaldale by personal delivery on Friday afternoon. That is fast work and something with which our readers, too, will be pleased. Otherwise they might have heard about this Synod only a week after it has completed its work. Now they read about it while everything here is still in full swing.

\* \* \* \* \*

Usually the first thing which is done after a moderamen has been chosen is that the meeting is adjourned to give those four brothers the opportunity to meet and to come with proposals regarding the method which will be followed in dealing with the matters which have been put before Synod. That's what was done this time, too. After the chairman had expressed the gratitude of the moderamen for the trust which the brethren placed in them, the meeting was adjourned in order that the moderamen could discuss the question how to deal with the matters presented, and which committees should receive certain items to deal with them in preparation of the discussion by the full Synod.

It all sounds pretty complicated and I have noticed that even Church members who are very interested in all sorts of things going on in the Church oftentimes are completely in the dark when it comes to Synods and their method of working.

It really is not so complicated.

If all matters which have been sent in by the Churches and by synodical committees were discussed right away in plenary session, it would take way too much time to come to a decision and it is very likely that in that case the decisions would be badly and sloppily formulated, which would be a cause of further disagreement and perhaps even difficulties. You know how things go when a proposal is made or a motion is presented: when there are sixteen men who have to decide about it, they either have so much criticism on the formulation or the contents of such a proposal or motion that the whole thing takes hours and hours, or they adopt a proposal or motion of which they say later on, "I did not realize that that was what I voted in favour of! If I had realized that the wording was such as it is, I would have voted against."

If you wish to have a good discussion and a fruitful one, one which will be well-considered and well-phrased, then it is desirable and advisable to have a small committee prepare a proposal and formulate a decision.

That's what is done at a Synod. There are sixteen men and these sixteen are divided into four committees. It is customary to have each committee consist of two ministers and two elders, one minister from the East, one minister from the West, and the same with the elders. In this way each committee knows something about both regions; if there is a proposal from the East, the brethren from the East can tell something about it and vice versa.

Once the committees have been "put together," so to speak, the various points on the agenda are assigned to those committees. Each committee receives approximately one-fourth of the material to discuss in the committee meetings, to prepare a report for synod, to formulate proposals regarding those points, and thus to ensure that a thorough and comprehensive decision can be made.

It can happen that a committee, before composing its re-

port for Synod, wishes to hear the thoughts of the brethren regarding the material they have to deal with. Then they can ask for a discussion in plenary session before sitting down to discuss it among the four of them.

A plenary session is a session where all members of Synod are present. It is a "full" session. It is the plenary sessions which are interesting and which oftentimes are attended by many Church members. Committee meetings are not open to the membership. Plenary sessions are, unless there are appeals which involve discipline. It is clear that those will have to be dealt with in what we call "executive session," a session which is attended only by the members of Synod.

When a committee has discussed the material entrusted to them and has come to a conclusion, they draw up their report; this report is duplicated and each member of Synod receives a copy which he can study before it will be dealt with. In the plenary session first all documents which deal with that specific point are read and then the floor is given to the reporter of the committee to read his report. He is also the one who will defend the report and answer the questions which are raised and the criticism which is uttered.

It happens quite frequently that a report is taken back to the committee and that the committee reconsiders the whole thing as a result of the general discussions. Then they come later with a reworded proposal or even with different proposals, depending on whether they were convinced that they were wrong or came to the conclusion that more things should be added. There can be various reasons for that.

\* \* \* \* \*

Meanwhile, I have not written much about our present Synod so far, have I?

There is not much I can tell at the moment. We did work hard, mind you, but the results which have become visible are not yet so many and so extensive that I could fill a few pages.

There were a few minor things which were considered not to be ecclesiastical matters or which were of such a nature that they could be dealt with in the local Consistories. And when something can be dealt with by the Consistories and can be "finished," concluded by those Consistories, a broader assembly does not have the right to discuss them and to decide about them.

\* \* \* \* \*

One point which we dealt with and discussed extensively was the proposal to appoint a committee with the mandate to study the whole question whether the sisters in the Church have the right to take part in voting. Lately this question has been raised anew. I do not wish to state that it was raised only recently and then for the first time. It certainly is not a result of the movement which is known as "Women's Lib" for short. During the discussions we were reminded that already some fifty years ago it was discussed at Synods of the Netherlands Churches, and even that was not something which happened for the first time.

Synod Toronto 1974, as you may recall — and otherwise you can find it in the Acts of that Synod, for every family received a copy — dealt with the proposal to recognize the right of the sisters to take part in voting for office-bearers, just to mention that one thing. However, Synod Toronto 1974 could not come to a responsible decision, as it stated. It did not accede to the request of the Church at Toronto, nor did it appoint a committee to study this matter and to advise the Churches regarding it. And the result was that nothing was done, neither the one thing nor the other.

From the Church at Edmonton there was a proposal to appoint a committee to study the question of women's voting rights. There was no proposal to recognize that right or to give that right; just a proposal to appoint a study committee which is to advise the Churches and, possibly, the forthcoming Synod of 1980.

Quite a few objections were raised against appointment of such a committee. It was argued that, if a Church wishes to make a proposal to a General Synod, that Church has to come with good grounds for its proposal and that it should not put upon the shoulders of a broader assembly that which it should do itself.

Another question which was raised in this connection was whether it really is a matter of the Churches in common.

Over against that, it was remarked that it is most desirable to have unity of action in the Churches. It would not be good if the one Church should say, "We recognize the right of the sisters to vote, and we shall let them vote," whereas the other Churches are still hesitant or even strongly opposed to it.

It was also pointed out that the whole question and the study of the various givens of Scripture are so difficult that one cannot require of a local Consistory that it shall provide such conclusive proof that each and everyone is convinced, "Yes, that's what the Lord wants us to do."

We were reminded during the discussion of what happened in our Netherlands sister Churches. There a General Synod dealt with a report on this question, and yet the Synod of 1975 said, "Let's appoint another committee to study this matter once more." No hasty decisions, no "Let's vote, then we have a decision." No: patient and careful study and a patient and careful discussion in which an attempt is made to convince one another and together to come to the full understanding of what the will of the Lord is.

It seems that some in the Churches were of the opinion that this Synod was to discuss the question itself. However, all we discussed was the question whether we should appoint a committee which is to study the question and which is to serve the Churches by means of a report a few years hence.

Synod decided that such a committee shall be appointed. I hope that this committee will be able to come to a clear conclusion and one which will have to be accepted by all who wish to bow for and to submit themselves to the Word of the Lord. Preconceived ideas and stubborn stands which rest on nothing but tradition are insufficient here. If it is contrary to the Word and will of our God, this must be made clear from His Word and then in such a manner that each and everyone who receives the Scriptures for what they really are will have to say, "Yes, that's it."

It will not be an easy task. No decision has been made as yet as to who will be members of that committee. I wish them much strength and wisdom.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sometimes there is a little interruption in the work of Synod, an intermission. That was the case when a meeting was held of the Foundation for Superannuation.

As our readers know, this is a foundation which has been formed by those Churches that wished to form a piggybank together from which they would be able to draw in case their minister should become ill and no longer able to do his work or for the time when their minister is a minister-emeritus.

The Board of that foundation is formed by the members of the Consistories of Winnipeg and of Carman. Every time



*Rev. J. Geertsema — during Synod discussions.*

when a General Synod is held, a membership meeting of the foundation is convened, for then there are representatives of various Churches together and those Churches which are not represented by one of their own members can delegate one of the members of Synod to vote for them. At the meeting which was held here in Coaldale there was one brother who could cast three ballots since he represented three different Churches or bodies.

There will be a change in the set-up of the foundation. Until now each member-Church paid the very same amount and received the very same benefits. That has been a sore spot for many, many years. There was hardly a "three-annual" meeting of the foundation that there was no proposal to change the set-up and to levy contributions on a per communicant-member basis.

At the previous membership meeting a decision was made to have everything investigated and examined anew, and the result was that a report was submitted by a committee composed of professional men, which formed the guidelines and basis for the decisions which the 1977 membership meeting took. In that report the brethren endeavoured to come with a different set-up with complete observance of the "principles" of Reformed Church polity, yet taking into account the size of a Church, the question whether they have a minister or not, etc. Thus a differentiation was introduced which should make it easier for the smaller Churches to be a member and which also takes into account whether a Church is vacant or not. When a Church is vacant, it pays less into the fund because the fund is not exposed to any risk as far as that Church is concerned, at least not for the time the vacancy lasts.

However, I should not go too deeply into it, for I do not understand all the implications and all the intricate calculations. If you wish to know more you should go to your Committee of Administration and I presume that they can tell you all about it.

The conclusions of that report were adopted and the location of the foundation will also be changed. As of January 1, 1978, the Board of the foundation will be formed by the members of the Consistories of Cloverdale and Langley. These Brethren will then appoint an Administration Commit-

*Continued on page 494.*

# press review

## MR. BILLY GRAHAM IN HUNGARY

The evangelical preacher Mr. Billy Graham has made a preaching trip in the communist country Hungary. It was the first time that he was in a country that belongs to the communist block. In *Christianity Today* of September 23, 1977 the News Editor, Mr. Edward E. Plowman, wrote a report on the trip. From it I quote the following part:

He [Mr. Graham,] also spoke out against war and the spread of nuclear weapons. At the church service at the Sun Street Church on Sunday night, Graham was greeted warmly from the platform by Bishop Tibor Bartha of the Reformed Church. A guest dignitary at the service, Bartha heads the Hungarian Bible Society and has led the Ecumenical Council for twenty years. (The council is an alliance of Hungary's major denominations.) He implied that Graham's visit was a timely one because "a new reformation" is stirring the churches. He suggested that the new movement centers on the doing of good deeds as a natural outflow from Christian teaching and belief. Addressing the evangelist in English, he expressed his happiness for Graham's presence and said, "Let us demonstrate what we have in common — our commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ."

When we read that Mr. Bartha has led the Hungarian Ecumenical Council of the churches in this communist country, there can only be one conclusion: this man must have been fully cooperative with the communist government. Otherwise he would not have had or kept that position. Further, Mr. Bartha is a modern, liberal theologian. Religion, and commitment to Jesus Christ, means: working for justice, for a just world, which practically means: a socialist world. The new "Reformation" he speaks of is a movement that "centers on the doing of good deeds." We continue the report:

The gesture was seen as especially meaningful because Bartha has been cool toward Graham in the past, and neither the Reformed nor the Lutheran churches joined in the invitation to the evangelist to preach in Hungary. Palotay [who is the president of the council of Free Churches, which invited Graham, and who accompanied the evangelist virtually

at every meeting] said later that he believes the bishop's thinking about Graham has changed as a result of hearing the evangelist's increased emphasis on social justice.

Indeed, in a preliminary statement at the Sun Street meeting, Graham acknowledged that he had undergone changes in his thinking and outlook in recent years. His concern, he said, "now takes in the whole world." He also indicated he is more open in his views toward Eastern Europe, and he said he hoped to achieve greater understanding through his visit.

"At one time I never dreamed that I would ever have the privilege of preaching the Gospel here some day," said Graham. This (visit) indicates that our times are changing, our hearts and minds are changing, and perhaps under God someday we will have one world, where wars will be no more, whether they be hot or cold."

The evangelist's half-hour statement came as a response to a seven-page presentation by Palotay that was highly political in content. All of this was seen as "a necessary protocol" by leaders, but a number of pastors privately expressed displeasure, saying their people had come to hear the preaching of the Gospel, not politics.

A good understander understands that president Palotay's seven-page political presentation definitely was not against communism. It was "a necessary protocol." I suppose that what was said had the approval of the communist government, which had approved the invitation for Mr. Graham. The report concludes:

to tell that Mr. Graham also met with Soviet Baptist leader Alexei Bichkov, who was vacationing in Budapest the week of Graham's visit. There are hopes that an official invitation can be worked out for Graham to preach in the Soviet Union (non has been received yet, contrary to some reports). Two of Bichkov's aides traveled to Budapest to join in the discussion. Perhaps it is as a Graham advisor said: Hungary can be the door that opens the rest of Eastern Europe for the evangelist.

Another magazine, *Christian News* of September 26, 1977 also pays attention to this trip. Quoting from Religious News Service this Lutheran magazine informs its readers as follows:

Evangelist Billy Graham told reporters

here that he found "a total separation of church and state in Hungary" during his recent visit to the East European country. At a press conference, Mr. Graham commented that "during the 50's, as most of you know, I took a very strong stand on communism. But as I've grown older, I've quit preaching on political matters because I think the church can exist in any kind of society . . . ."

According to Dr. Haraszti (who served as interpreter), Mr. Graham emphasized in his sermons that "the Gospel does not intend for any Christian to divest himself of his environment and social responsibilities where he lives."

Asked whether he could support a Communist government, the evangelist indicated that what he meant was that Christians could adjust to communism "just as the Jewish people adjusted to Rome during the period of the Roman empire."

Mr. Graham reported that Hungarian religious leaders had told him "they have more freedom today than they have had in a long time." He said the adjustments that had to be made under the Communist rule posed problems for both church and state authorities. "I think the socialist government has also had to suffer, to some extent," the evangelist commented . . . .

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## GENERAL SYNOD 1977 — Continued.

tee which, in all likelihood, will be formed by all or some of the members of the committee which prepared the report.

That's about all I wish to tell you of that meeting.

\* \* \* \* \*

On Saturday morning we had a session of Synod and then we quit for the week. Some of the ministers left to serve Churches in other parts of Alberta and the rest of the members of Synod went on a trip to a Hutterite colony.

\* \* \* \* \*

Those Hutterite colonies are interesting for a visitor. I wonder whether they are so interesting for their own members.

Immediately you are made to feel welcome. Of course, there are some curious stares from all sorts of corners. However, the minister or bishop comes outside right away, shakes hands with everyone, and when you look at his face you see a face which shows genuine kindness. We also met the father of the bishop. His father was bishop over several colonies, we were told, and the old man had a beautiful white beard and a kind, characteristic face.

Nowhere was a door locked. We were led into the house where the bishop lived, shown every room and nook. He also showed us old books which contained sermons in beautiful old-German script. Although I had to learn that script at High School and even had to write it myself, I could hardly decipher what was written. Yet it was beautiful and beautifully regular. Some of those sermons dated back a few hundred years. Every minister, we were told, has to copy those sermons in his own handwriting. Our host showed the sermons which he copied and the books into which he had bound those copied sermons. It was a beautiful job. The books were bound with leather back. I wished I could do a job like that. When I asked him how long it took him to bind a book like that, he replied, "Three days." Time does not seem to play an important part in the life of a Hutterite colony.

To each of the visitors a copy was given of a small brochure in which the way of life of the "Hutterian Brethren of America" is described. This brochure was written mainly for the purpose of making them known to the outside world and to show that any restrictions placed on them in the matter of purchasing land was unjust and not deserved.

A colony is a unit which takes care of its own needs and which buys from the outside world only those things which are absolutely necessary. In cases where a colony cannot provide for certain needs, help is sought from other colonies first. The colony which we visited, for instance, does not do any tanning of leather. They obtain their leather from another colony and thus are able to make their own shoes, saddles, belts, and whatever they need in leather goods. The brochure which we received was printed by a colony which has a printing press and other facilities.

Within the colony each and every member has its own assigned task. "Once a herdsman, always a herdsman" seems to be the rule. We asked the man in care of the hogs whether he ever did any chores on the farm. "No," he said, "this is my job." The same answer was given by the man who took care of the cows. It seems that the sons continue in the same trade which their father has. According to the brochure, one's "occupation" can be changed by a vote of the colony. Otherwise one does the same work throughout one's lifetime. Bishops, too, are usually taken from the same family which produced those leaders in the past.



*Rev. J. Visscher and Rev. D. de Jong enjoying their dinner.*

One of the things which we noticed right away is the almost complete lack of privacy. The doors, as I remarked, are never locked. One can just walk into the house and go into any room one wishes to see. The only piece of private property we saw were the "hope-chests," beautifully handmade chests which each girl gets when she turns fifteen. Those chests were locked with homemade locks. The bishop unlocked a few and showed us the contents. When they turn twenty-one, the girls get a really nice chest; they also receive a sewing machine for which a beautiful table is made.

However, those are the only private possessions which we could notice during our tour.

What we did notice was the total absence of everything which would make a house a home. There was absolutely no coziness, no "gezelligheid." The rooms were as bare as could be: just a bed and a chest of drawers, benches to sit on, a wooden, homemade chair here and there, a table, and that was about all that could be found. They do not "need" more: the meals are consumed in a communal dining room and the food is prepared in a communal kitchen. The families do not eat together as husband and wife or as parents and children: the small children eat first, then the children that are somewhat older, and they do so in a separate dining room under supervision of a woman. When the time is there for the adults (fifteen years of age and older) to eat, they gather in the communal dining room and the men sit at the one table, the women sit at the other table together.

After having visited the home of the bishop (where also others are living), we went to that dining room and there one of the tables was set. That must have been done as soon as they saw us arriving. We were invited to have a cup of coffee and to enjoy the products of the baking of the ladies. We had a delicious bun covered with homemade butter and adorned with homemade jam. Tables, benches, even stainless steel pitchers are all made in the colony.

After that we had a tour of the farm and visited chicken-house, milking parlour, hog-shed, leather shop, machine shop and the place from where the animal feed is distributed to the various sections. What we did not see and what I would have loved to see was the bookbinding part, although it is possible

that they have no special area for that since not too many books are bound.

\* \* \* \* \*

Perhaps our readers are wondering what the origin is of the Hutterite colonies, where the people themselves come from.

They are of Anabaptist descent, as will be clear, and the Hutterian Brethren are named after Jacob Hutter "who suffered martyrdom by being burned alive at the stake on February 24, 1536, in Innsbruck, Tyrol. He was a very true leader and elder of the Church for a short time, and he knew the way of righteousness on which he was founded, and stood firm as a rock without flinching." That's what the brochure tells us. Perhaps we shall have an opportunity later to elaborate a little on the Hutterian Brethren. Right now we have to proceed.

\* \* \* \* \*

That I took only one little bun at the colony was not because I did not like them, those buns. The reason for my careflessness was that we members of Synod all have to watch our weight. I already threatened the ladies who are taking care of us that we would have to flee Coaldale for our lives' sakes if they would not cut down on the food they present us with. The whole Congregation cooperates in this scheme of feeding us constantly. This morning I even heard that the goodies are delivered here at the Church building by the basketful. There is no lack of cookies, cake, coffee, juice, tea, milk, meat, and whatever else could be mentioned. If it should happen that Mr. W. Van Spronsen, the principal of the school, asks the students who are coming to visit us this afternoon to write a report on their visit, we could have the same thing which the students of the Hamilton Timothy School wrote about the Synod Toronto 1974: when describing the activities of the members, one student wrote: "They eat there."

Last Saturday evening (the first Saturday we spent here) we were invited by one of the members of the Church to spend the evening at his place and there to enjoy a supper. Not only the members of Synod were invited there but also the ladies who served here during the day with their husbands. It was a good evening we had there together. We already have another invitation extended to us for this coming Saturday, the 19th of November. At first I had a slight hope that we could finish our work in two weeks, but that is not possible. However much we would like to go home within two weeks of having left home, we should watch out that we do not rush things: that could cause quite some trouble in the future. We have been sent here to do a certain job and we had better do it as well as we can, even if it takes a few days or even a week longer.

That this Synod will take some three weeks, as I can see at the moment, is not caused by a sloppy preparation. On the contrary, the preparation was excellent and will even result in a speedier dealing with things. We did have the opportunity to express our gratitude for this thorough preparation to the brother who was the one most responsible for that.

\* \* \* \* \*

However, you are more interested in what happened at Synod and what was done by Synod than in what sort of personal experiences we had. Let me, therefore, tell you a few things about the matters which have been concluded thus far.

One Church sent an appeal against a decision made by "its" Classis. Synod declared that out of order. When one ap-

peals a classical decision one has to direct oneself to a Regional Synod and not to a General Synod, even though one may deem the material as such to be of a general nature.

Further, we dealt with the matters concerning the Theological College. That took quite some time and the main reason for it was the financial aspect. The Board of Trustees came with proposals regarding the salaries of the professors and the lecturers, and Synod was convinced that these salaries were to be revised. According to the Constitution, Synod sets the salaries of the Faculty members. All other salaries and remunerations are set by the Board of Trustees. That is a good thing, for we should not be burdened at Synod with all sorts of calculations and discussions regarding salaries. Besides, there is a Synod only once every three years and that is an impediment.

I shall not go into details, but tell you what the main concern of Synod was. That was: What standard are we to apply? What material is to be used for comparison? Are we to take the salaries of our ministers as a guideline? Or are we to look at Church Colleges all over the continent? Or are we to judge by what professors at universities earn?

If we should take the latter, we would be in big trouble. I shall not tell you what information we received here from the University at Lethbridge when we asked them for the schedule of salaries there! It was clear right away that we might go broke if we had to adhere to that schedule. Besides, a good comparison would not be obtained by taking professors at public universities, but professors at Church Colleges.

Synod finally agreed to the following schedule: we received information about ten ministers (anonymously) and calculated what their effective salary was. By "effective salary" we understand such a salary as would be the equivalent of what one receives who has to provide for everything himself and who would have to pay taxes over all his income.

Ministers are, to a certain extent, privileged people. They live without paying rent and do not have to add this to their taxable income. That will, I presume, be an after-effect of the situation in the Roman Catholic Church and its influence on the early history. Further, what they receive for their library expenses is also free from taxation. Thus we took the average salary of those ten anonymous ministers, added to that a reasonable amount for eventual rent of a comparable home, plus a certain amount of taxes which they would have to pay if they received everything in cash and which they don't have to pay right now, and thus we came to an average. That's what we took as the guideline for establishing the salaries of the professors.

I know that it is not pleasant when your income is discussed publicly. I have had to endure that for some thirty-four years. That's why I did not mention any amount. Yet, I did wish to say something about it, for now the Church members know why Synod established the salaries as it did. Now the members also know why the contributions will have to go up by January 1, 1978. Compared to what is oftentimes spent on other things the increase will be a trifling amount. Besides, it will be only per communicant member. My estimate is that it will be \$25.50 per communicant member instead of the \$22.50 to which we have been accustomed for some years. However, don't blame the Board of Trustees if they decide that the increase has to be more. Just blame me for the mistake in calculation. My guess is that for the average Church it will amount to a five hundred dollar increase per year. But ministers are not too good when it comes to finances, they say. Therefore I won't say anything more about this at this time.

As for the rest, the matters of the Theological College had the full interest of all concerned and the gratitude for this institution and for what the Lord has given us in it abounded. That is also expressed in the decisions.

\* \* \* \* \*

We dealt with the proposal of Edmonton to adopt a certain wording of Article 70, Church Order. That article, as our readers know, deals with the question of the solemnization of marriages. Quite a while ago there was some stir in Alberta when the ombudsman proposed to change the arrangements as they exist here (and in other provinces) regarding the solemnization of marriages. In Edmonton the Consistory had the matter of solemnization investigated and addressed itself to the Provincial Government regarding this matter. From that submission came the proposal which was now on Synod's table, containing a suggested text of Article 70.

As you will know, the first Synod, the one of Homewood 1954, left the observance of Article 70 in the freedom of the Churches. Edmonton now proposed to adopt such a wording that each Church could again observe that article.

However, Synod considered that we have a Committee on the Revision of the Church Order. And it was deemed inadvisable to adopt a text of any article of the Church Order before that Committee had a chance to submit its proposal to the Churches. Synod Toronto 1974 also dealt with the matter of Article 70, Church Order and gave the whole thing into the hands of the Revision Committee. That's what this Synod did. We did discuss the contents of Edmonton's proposal somewhat, but there is nothing about it in the decision of Synod. It simply will be passed on to the Revision Committee which will be continued by this Synod.

\* \* \* \* \*

That Revision Committee and other committees will have to work hard in the coming two years. Synod decided that all the committees that work on any part of our *Book of Praise* will have to have their work completed by January 31, 1980. That gives them two years to do their work.

Why did Synod put that deadline?

Synod Orangeville 1968 decided that reports of synodically appointed committees shall be sent nine months before the next Synod convenes and that the Churches are to have copies of those reports nine months before the date of Synod.

Our experience is that that decision oftentimes is not complied with by all and every one. For this present Synod, at least, we received quite a few reports much later, some even so late that there was hardly any time to examine them and to come with eventual proposals regarding them. Thus far no harm was done by that, as far as we can see right now. For the next Synod, however, things will be different.

The *Book of Praise* which we are using is still a provisional edition. In fact, it is the report of the Committee on the Church Book, Psalm and Hymn Section, which report the Churches are using and testing by using it. It is about time that we get a definite edition, a *Book of Praise* which has been adopted by Synod and which is not subject to change every time again. Until now that was hardly possible, since so much work had to be done in almost every respect. We have, however, come that far that we may say, "The end is in sight."

The complete Psalm book is being revised. Some rhymings are replaced by better ones, every Psalm is scrutinized, and whatever is deemed less advisable is changed.



Br. C. Walinga and Rev. Huizinga at lunch time.

That is a rather slow and painstaking work. We are making progress, and the relevant committee is convinced that the work can be brought to an end within the next two years.

Then there is the Hymn section. The Committee is revising that section, too, and there are some hymns which will be deleted from the song book. Other hymns will be inserted. That applies especially to the so-called Canticles. The Australian Churches, with whom we did keep a close contact in this matter, gave a list of those canticles, songs which have been used by the Church since the olden days: the ancient Church had them. It will be the task of our committee to find suitable tunes and to find suitable rhymings of those passages of Scripture. As for the tunes, most of them are available and where no tune is available we will have to try to find one somehow. As for the rhymings, the Lord has given us members who have received the ability from Him to serve the Churches in this respect. The revised or new rhymings of some of the Psalms which we published already give clear evidence of that.

The Hymn Section will follow a certain line: the songs will be arranged, as the Committee informed us, in the "order of redemptive history which finds its climax in the mighty acts of God in Jesus Christ." The inscriptions above the various sections are taken from the ecumenical creeds: that will render it easier for the members to find a certain song. On purpose an arrangement according to "the ecclesiastical year" has been avoided. We should stay free from any thought as if the acts of our God in the history of His redemption are to be repeated every year anew. By following the acts of the Lord God in the history of the redemption which He worked in Old and New Testament times we follow the line of the Holy Scriptures.

Although much work will have to be done as yet on that section, the committee will be asked to publish the result of their work as soon as possible so that it can be scrutinized by the Churches and so that Synod 1980 can come to definite decisions.

\* \* \* \* \*

Why is Synod 1980 mentioned?

In the first place: we cannot keep issuing temporary and



provisional editions of the *Book of Praise*. If we issue yet another provisional edition in which some changes have been made, the confusion may be great. We already have some confusion. Take, e.g., Psalm 94. In a previous printing of the *Book of Praise* this Psalm was sung on the tune of Psalm 105. The rhythm was indicated accordingly. But when the original tune of Psalm 94 was restored in the Psalm book, the rhythm of the various stanzas was not adjusted, something for which yours truly is mainly responsible. Sorry. If a minister requests to sing stanzas 5 or 6 of Psalm 94 and if part of the Congregation has the previous printing and part the latest, then you can see what the result will be: the one follows the rhythm of Psalm 94, the other one takes the rhythm of Psalm 105 — not very edifying.

That will only be worse if we should issue another provisional edition in which some rhymings have been replaced, others changed, in which some hymns have been deleted and others inserted, changing the whole numbering system. Thus we would compel the membership to buy the new provisional edition with the good chance that after three years they would have to buy another book containing the definite edition.

We should do whatever is in our power to prevent that. Besides, the work should come to a conclusion. Two of the brethren belonging to the Committee on the Psalms and Hymns have been working on it for more than twenty-three years. We hope that the Lord will still grant them the time and strength to work on it further until they see its completion.

I expect that I have succeeded in making clear why we should set a deadline. The deadline is January 31, 1980. Then we can make definite decisions at Synod 1980, and then we could expect our definite *Book of Praise* to appear some time in 1981.

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That *Book of Praise* will contain not only the Psalms and Hymns but also the Forms. Synod had to deal with proposals regarding those forms.

We have a report on the revision of the text of the Belgic Confession and of the Canons of Dort as they are found in our Church book. By the way, the Canadian Reformed Churches have not yet adopted a definite English text of those forms. Strictly speaking, we are still bound to the Dutch text of our Confessional Forms.

It was decided to pass those reports on to a committee to be appointed. This committee is to present to the Churches a definite draft of a text of those Forms. We have not yet dealt with the proposal regarding the new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism, but I expect that the same thing will happen to that Confessional Form.

Then there was a proposal to revise the liturgical forms. The language is sometimes quite old-fashioned, and actually archaic. Besides, there are objections to some of those forms.

Just to mention some of those objections:

In the Form for the Solemnization of Marriage we find this statement: "After the fall God spoke to Eve and in her to all women, 'Your desire shall be to your husband and he shall rule over you.' You shall not resist this ordinance of God." It has become the common conviction of translators and commentators that this is not an "ordinance" of God at all, but that the Lord God simply describes there what will happen in a world into which sin has entered: in spite of the oftentimes harsh treatment which some wives receive from their husbands, they will always return to those husbands and will wish to be with them. That's what we see more than once.

Sometimes we cannot understand why a woman stays with that husband. The treatment she receives, the cheating that is going on, everything renders it almost ununderstandable that she still sticks up for him and still stays with him. It is, therefore, not an "ordinance of God" at all, and we should delete that from this Form. More things could be mentioned.

Another example. Personally I object to the constant closing of the prayers with the Lord's Prayer. I do not think that we should do that. Whether it is still a remnant from the pre-Reformation days may be debatable; I think we should omit the Lord's Prayer at the end of our collections.

Another thing to which I object is the insertion of a Creed in a prayer. I deem it wrong to have the Apostles' Creed in the prayer before the celebration of the Holy Supper. I saw in the book which our Netherlands sister Churches issued that they took that creed out of the prayer and now say it after the prayer has been concluded. That is much better.

We all know of the requests which have been made for quite a while to have an abbreviated Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, which could be used in the "continuation" of the supper in the afternoon service. And even if it were used just for the "main" celebration that would not be wrong. In this manner there would also be time for a sermon in that same service. Now it is usually so that all we do in that service in the morning is: sing, read, pray, read the Form, celebrate the Holy Supper, and leave. No sermon. One could argue that the Form itself is a sermon on the Supper, and he would be right. Yet, it is somewhat irregular that we have a service without a "real" sermon. An abbreviated form would give us more time for a sermon.

Until now we did not have a special Form for the Ordination/Installation of Missionaries. When Candidate H. Versteeg was ordained in Toronto, we again felt the need for such a form. It is quite evident that our Form for the Ordination/Installation of Ministers is not wholly suitable for such an occasion. The task of a Missionary, although similar to that of a Minister of the Word in a Congregation, is yet different in many respects. That should also be reflected in the form used.

We did have a proposal in this respect. A translation of the Dutch form was submitted to Synod. Synod revised the translation and changed a few minor points; then the form was provisionally adopted. It will have to find a place in the definite edition of our *Book of Praise*.

What will also be found in it is a "First Admonition" which will be added to the Form for the Excommunication of Non-Communicant Members. Until now we only had one admonition, to be followed within a short time by the excommunication. Now Synod brought that form more into line with the Form for the Excommunication of Communicant Members.

\* \* \* \* \*

What will also be found in the definite edition of our *Book of Praise* will be the Church Order. At the moment of this writing we have not yet dealt with it, but it is quite certain that the Committee for the Revision of the Church Order will be told to have their report ready by the same date: January 31, 1980. That is possible. Then the Churches will have the opportunity to consider the proposed changes carefully without having to rush into things.

\* \* \* \* \*

At the moment of this writing Synod also made a beginning on the discussion of the relationship to the Christian Re-

formed Church. As our readers will know, the Synod Toronto 1974 decided to "discontinue the contact with the Christian Reformed Church as until now was maintained by 'the Committee on Contact with the Christian Reformed Church.'" The Church at Edmonton came with objections to that decision. Toronto 1974's decision, Edmonton argued, was made on insufficient grounds. Synod 1974, Edmonton states, deviated from the advice of its Advisory Committee and of the Contact Committee, and did so on insufficient grounds.

I shall not relate all the arguments which Edmonton brought to the fore in support of its submission. The discussion is still going on and I cannot tell you as yet what Synod decided anyway. Let me confine myself to telling you that there was quite some interest shown by the members of the Coaldale congregation and even by others. The advisory committee came with an extensive report, we had to break off the discussion in the evening, and decided to continue the next afternoon. The morning session was to be used again for meeting of the committees that are to prepare their reports for Synod.

\* \* \* \* \*

After one of the evening sessions the Rev. D. De Jong showed us some colour slides of his recent trip to Korea. He went there to investigate the matters of support to orphanages and he also had contact with the Faculty of the Seminary in Busan. It was nice to see those slides and thus to get a better impression of the country and the things going on there. That was especially so because the slides were not taken to show the nicest spots and the most interesting buildings, but in order to give us a good impression of the country and of the people and their living conditions. I presume that we shall have another "session" before Synod is adjourned.

\* \* \* \* \*

There is one more point regarding the *Book of Praise* which I should tell you about.

That is the point of a four-part music.

The Synod Toronto 1974 already received a request to have harmonizations of the Psalms and especially of the Hymns included in the *Book of Praise*.

Synod Toronto decided not to comply with that request. For that decision Synod had the following reasons.

In the first place, it was stated, the preparation of such an edition in which the harmonization of the Psalms and Hymns is included is not the task of our Committee on the Psalms and Hymns Section.

In the second place, Synod Toronto said, if we should instruct the Committee to prepare such an edition, this would not speed matters up but rather retard them.

And in the third place, it was said, there are harmonizations of the Psalms available. There are books which our older members recall from The Netherlands scene: "Worp," and others. These harmonizations are available here, too.

Now Synod Coaldale 1977 received such a request.

It is understandable that the need for a book in which the harmonizations of all the songs in our *Book of Praise* are inserted is felt. That applies the more since there is a danger that singing within our families becomes a thing of the past. Frequently the radio and the eight-track or cassette recorders/players have taken the place which in olden days was occupied by the harmonium or the piano. It is easier to slide an eight-track tape into the slot and to listen to the sounds that come from the speakers than to learn how to play an instrument, specifically a harmonium or a piano.

If I am not mistaken, there are more and more families that buy a harmonium or, perhaps, an electronic instrument. Singing keeps the family together.

However, in order to be able to do that, the families must have the four-part setting of the Psalms and of the Hymns. And here the difficulties come in.

Harmonizations of the Psalms may be available, we cannot say the same concerning the hymns.

For a while a booklet was available in which not just the four-part setting was found but which also contained some preludes and postludes. That was a great help to our organists. To our sorrow we must say that it is sold out and a reprint is not being considered for the time being: First we shall have to know which songs will be inserted in the Hymn-Section of our definite *Book of Praise*. It would be needless expense and trouble to prepare such a book while it would become outdated within a few years.

That requests have reached two consecutive Synods to have such four-part settings included in the *Book of Praise* shows that there is a need for it, and I wholeheartedly agree. If we are to sing within the family circle and if we are to sing our songs of praise at choir evenings, then we should have those harmonizations, preferably with preludes, postludes and intermezzi. When people can read music, they almost automatically look at the notes for their specific range of singing. Thus one who sings alto may try to sing the alto part, and likewise tenors and basses may try to sing theirs.

\* \* \* \* \*

The biggest "problem" here is not that we do not know as yet which hymns will be inserted in our definite *Book of Praise*. That does play a part, however, although we could go to work on the ones that will be retained or of which we know that they will be included. Synod 1980 will have the final say, of course, and one could not expect a four-part setting to be included unless a definite decision has been made regarding which hymns should be in and which should be out. Personally I do not think that the ultimate result will differ much from the recommendation of our Committee. The difficulty that we first have to know which hymns will be included before we can come with an edition as requested is not insurmountable.

There is something else.

That is the point that an edition with a four-part setting for the Psalms and Hymns is not an ecclesiastical matter, just as the printing and distribution of the *Book of Praise* is not an ecclesiastical matter.

In the past it has always been tried to keep those things separate: providing the Churches with Scriptural rhymings and having them printed, distributed, and so on. The former is an ecclesiastical matter, the latter is not. For that reason the Committee on the Psalm and Hymn Section appointed already years ago a Publication Committee. It is that Publication Committee which took care of the printing, shipping, etcetera. The contributions which the Committee on the Church Book asked from the Churches in the course of the years was only to be used for the purchasing of copy-right to the rhymings and for the remuneration of persons who, not belonging to the Churches, were advisers regarding language, etc. The Publication Committee never asked any money from the Churches, for what they did and do is not an ecclesiastical matter, however important for the Churches and the Church-life it may be.

Now that we are going to have some new rhymings, the Churches will be approached and asked for one collection or

equivalent amount to enable the Committee to come with such rhymings as we may consider suitable and desirable for use in the worship.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now back to those harmonizations.

That is not an ecclesiastical matter either. That is also a matter for the Publication Committee or for another, special committee, again to be appointed not by *Synod*, but by the Committee on the Psalm and Hymn Section. When they wish to seek the help and knowledge, the assistance and the skill of members of the Churches in order to have a book with all the harmonizations of our Psalms and Hymns, that is up to them. Synod even encouraged and urged the Committee to do that. Our organists can, therefore, start working already. I know that there are organists among us who have prepared harmonizations with preludes and postludes. They did so in the course of the years because they saw the need for it and, rather than improvising every time anew, they wrote it down, improved on it, and achieved quite a level of achievement in this respect.

I do not know right now which course will be followed by the Committee on the Psalm and Hymn Section. I do not even know at the moment whether the same members will be re-appointed to that Committee. But I expect that a letter will be sent to all Consistories with the request to pass it on to their organist(s), in which letter the cooperation of the brothers and sisters will be asked to come to the edition of one book with all the harmonizations of the Psalms and Hymns. As I see it at the moment, the best way would be if those who did prepare some harmonizations would send them to the Committee, if the Committee then would multiply them, send them to all organists who responded with the request to send in their criticism and eventual corrections, so that these can be passed on to the author of that specific harmonization or variation. In this manner we can get somewhere. We don't have too much time: things will have to be ready by January 31, 1980, although for this work we could add a few months, since the Churches do not have to examine it.

When we have a book with harmonizations, preludes, etc., then we shall be able to also insert four-part settings in the *Book of Praise* itself. Then it is just a matter of reducing photographically.

However, here comes another difficulty around the corner.

If we wish to keep the size of our *Book of Praise* the way it is, easily to be taken along to Church, then we shall be compelled to issue another edition, a larger one which can be used on the organ or at the piano and from which our choirs can sing. It must be clear print. It is almost impossible in my opinion to comprise everything in a book the size of our present *Book of Praise*. If it can be done, fine. If not, we'll have to follow the course of so many others: print a large-size book for playing and choral singing, and print a small-size book to take along to Church or to a meeting or some other function.

It is nice when Churches have Bibles and *Books of Praise* in the pews so that people don't have to take anything along to Church. My objection to that is that then one does not take a "personal" copy to Church. One gets used to his own copy of God's Word and to his own copy of the Church book. I always rather take my own Bible and my own *Book of Praise* to the pulpit although there is practically no pulpit where no copies are found. The feeling that you are

using something of your "own" is lost when you just take a copy from the rack behind the pew in front of you.

It is about time that I talk about something else, and therefore we shall conclude the remarks of the *Book of Praise*.

My request goes hereby out to our organists to prepare something and to pledge their cooperation. Would it not be beautiful if we could issue a book with harmonizations and variations on the various Psalms and Hymns and thus serve each other?

Start working, brothers and sisters!

And you who are not able to harmonize, be at least prepared to offer constructive criticism so that it may be as good as we can humanly present it.

Are you already becoming enthusiastic about it?

Good!

The membership needs it! The membership has asked for it!

May the Holy Spirit, Who also enabled Aholiab and Bezaleel to make the objects for the tabernacle exactly according to the pattern which the Lord God showed Moses on the mountain, likewise enable our organists to produce something which will be a valuable contribution to the true culture of our country.

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Yes, let me just pass on one more remark which was made at Synod and also during the intermissions.

It was suggested by a brother that some of our choirs should get together, should make a recording of some of our Psalms and Hymns to bring to the people around us the beauty of the Genevan tunes.

Time and again our organists and others discover that this kind of music is greatly appreciated by those who really know music. It would be really something if we could promote the singing of Psalms and Hymns by presenting via the radio and via the television a program which consists solely of those songs.

I presume that in many places the Cable Television Company would be most happy to run a tape of such a performance.

It is admittedly difficult to sing "simple" tunes and harmonizations well and in such a manner that people see their beauty. There is little "fireworks" involved, quite different from singing "All We Like Sheep" from Handel's oratorio "The Messiah." It demands more discipline of the singers and, perhaps, more dedication. However, if we could achieve that, it would be something very valuable.

This part of our "report" does not deal with any wish expressed by Synod; it is just a suggestion made by one of the members of Synod.

It is a very worthwhile suggestion, I think.

Do something about it, I would say.

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This will then have to be the end of the present report. It was written by bits and pieces, but I hope that our readers can discover a line in it.

The copy has to be mailed to Winnipeg in order that it may be there in time for the forthcoming issue of *Clarion*.

The rest of our report on Synod will have to wait till we are back at home, perhaps even till the new year. In any case, I'm glad that I've been able to inform our readers extensively about the proceedings thus far.

Till next time, the Lord willing.

vO

# King Solomon's Molten Sea <sup>1</sup>

I — Introduction

1.1 Of all the vessels made for the temple of Solomon and described in I Kings 7 and II Chronicles 4, the so-called Molten Sea was by far the largest.

This huge bronze water reservoir was round, with an across-the-top diameter of about 17 feet (5.2 meters), a height equal to half that diameter or 8½ feet (2.6 meters), and a capacity close to 10,000 Imperial or Canadian gallons (about 12,000 U.S. gallons or 45,000 litres). It was a first class engineering accomplishment, comparable with the very large churchbells cast in modern times. The Molten Sea may have been the largest, one-piece bronze vessel ever cast in antiquity.

## 1.2 THE MOLTEN SEA AND MATHEMATICS

One particular aspect of the sea has puzzled generations of Bible students. In I Kings 7:23 (King James Version) and the corresponding passage in II Chronicles 4, the diameter is stated to have been "ten cubits from the one brim to the other" or "brim to brim." In the same verse we read "it was round all about" and the circumference is specified as follows: "a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about." It looks as if the authors of these Bible books are telling their readers that the circumference of a circle is equal to three times its diameter! As most of us will remember from our school days, the circumference-to-diameter ratio for a circle is more like 22/7 or 3.14. In case greater accuracy is needed, 3.1416 is sometimes used. The mathematical symbol for this ratio is the Greek letter  $\pi$ , pronounced and sometimes also written as "pi." Already before the time of Moses the Egyptians used 256/81 (3.1605). The Babylonians often used 3, but also 3 1/8 (3.125). In later times the Greek Archimedes showed that  $\pi$  is approximately equal to 22/7 (3.1429).<sup>1 2 3.</sup>

It might be expected therefore that the circumference of the Molten

Sea would have been expressed as a figure close to:  $10 \times 3.14 = 31.4$  cubits, or perhaps as a rounded-off number, maybe 31 1/2 (31.5) or 31 1/3 (31.33). How can this be explained? Was an error made by the inspired writers? To us this is inconceivable, of course. Should it then be assumed that the authors of Kings and Chronicles did not know a better approximation for  $\pi$ , or just rounded it off to 3? For this question we will try to find an answer.

## 1.3 WHAT VALUE OF "PI" WAS USED?

In the past it has often been argued that the value  $\pi = 3$  was used. For example, in the Jewish Talmud it is stated: "that which in circumference is three hands broad is one hand broad."<sup>1</sup> The marginal notes (Kanttekeningen) of the Dutch translation of 1637 (Staten Vertaling) explain it that way, too. It is an approach taken by commentators for many years. Not a totally unreasonable approximation, as  $\pi = 3$  was indeed used in antiquity by the Babylonians and much later even by the Greeks and the Romans.<sup>2 3</sup> Moreover, an approximation for  $\pi$  could not be calculated from the volume of the Sea and its dimensions. The true values of cubit and bath were forgotten in past centuries and were rediscovered only in recent times. Another fact calling for caution is the statement that "a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about." Scripture does not add: "around the brim"; neither is the value of  $\pi$  stated explicitly; it can only be derived from dimensions. Nevertheless, many authors, especially writers of popular science and mathematics books, like to point out what a poor approximation for  $\pi$  is implied in the Bible. At the same time the Egyptian and Babylonian values are often cited to emphasize, it seems, how mediocre the knowledge of the Hebrews was in this respect.<sup>1 4</sup> For a long time I was dissatisfied with the seemingly inescapable conclusion that the Bible implies  $\pi = 3$ . But gradually it dawned on me that Scripture does not imply this at all. The description is such that it is impossible to say exactly what value of  $\pi$  was used in the design. Most likely it was a much closer approximation than  $\pi = 3$ , as will be shown.

## 1.4 ANCIENT HEBREW MEASURES

In this introductory section, something should be said about the old Hebrew system of measures in use during the times of the kings and earlier. It is generally accepted that two cubits existed, a temple or sacred cubit, seven handbreadths long, and a common cubit of six handbreadths. Other names used are royal or long cubit, and short cubit. The handbreadth was divided in four fingerwidths. From here on, when the cubit is mentioned, in general the temple cubit will be meant. To avoid confusion, the common cubit will always be identified as such. It is estimated that the common cubit was close to 1 1/2 feet long (about 17.5 inches or 44.5 centimeters) while the temple cubit measured about 20.4 inches (51.8 centimeters).

The bath was a fairly large measure for liquids. In recent years it was found that the ancient Hebrew bath had a volume in the neighbourhood of 22 litres (roughly 5 Imperial gallons or 6 U.S. gallons). There are several smaller measures mentioned in the Bible, the smallest being the log. We will return to the Hebrew system of measures later, because the length of the cubit and the volume of the bath have to be known fairly accurately for the proper analysis of the Molten Sea. The following tabulation shows a somewhat simplified system of Hebrew length and capacity measures:<sup>5 6</sup>

- 1 (temple) cubit = 7 handbreadths = 28 fingers
- 1 common cubit = 6 handbreadths = 24 fingers
- 1/10 homer (or cor) = 1 bath (or ephah) = 10 omer
- 1 bath = 3 seah = 6 hin = 18 cab = 72 log

## 1.5 PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

It becomes obvious that the Scripture passages describing the Molten Sea are not well understood when a number of translations are compared. Most of them differ, usually in several places, and one cannot help wondering which one is right. Most modern translations are interpretations of the so-called Masoretic Text. And we might ask: Was this Masoretic Text a true copy of the original manuscripts written by the inspired authors? If we

### OUR COVER

*Legislative Building in Winnipeg, Manitoba. (Photo courtesy Manitoba Government.)*

cannot be sure of this, what principles must then be followed to guide us in the interpretation of the technical description of the Molten Sea and its history?

A number of archaeologists and Bible scholars have attempted to solve the riddle of the Molten Sea. Some have assumed there were mistakes in the original writings, or that editing and copying caused errors. Others take the view that technical and mathematical details are poorly specified. Therefore they feel free to change things around to suit themselves when trying to find a solution.

Our approach must be different. These passages are part of the revealed Word of God and not subject to "private interpretation" (II Peter 1:20). This writer feels very much at home with the following, written by Augustine more than 1500 years ago:

"... that no one of these authors has erred in any respect in writing,

... and if in these writings I am perplexed by anything which appears to be opposed to the truth, I do not hesitate to suppose that even the manuscript is faulty, or the translator has not caught the meaning of what was said, or I myself have failed to understand it" (*Letters*, CXXXII,3).

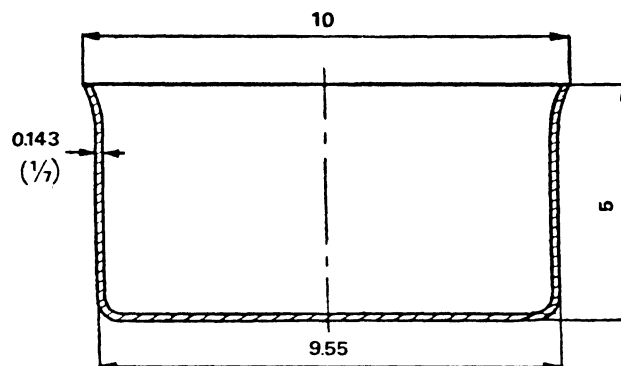
In short form (my interpretation, A.Z.):

- a) The original writings (autographa) are infallible;
- b) copied manuscripts may contain errors;
- c) translations may be incorrect;
- d) I myself, the reader, may not understand it.

If the original writings were infallible, they cannot have contained technological errors and the computational work must also have been correct. This does not imply that no approximate numbers or expressions were used. For instance in II Samuel 5:4, 5 we read that David reigned 40 years; 7 years and 6 months in Hebron and 33 years in Jerusalem. We still do the same sort of thing in everyday language, but in computations we expect a certain degree of accuracy. Approximate or rounded-off results can be accepted, but no logical or computational errors. It is obvious that the assumption of a computational or logical error in an infallible text is also unacceptable. Of course, we do not have the original writings or autographa anymore. But should it now immediately be assumed that copied manuscripts may have contained errors? or that more or less literal translations,

## OUTSIDE DIMENSIONS

1 Cubit



like the KJV, need to be corrected when something does not seem to make sense? (The RSV translators have done this in some cases. For instance, in I Kings 7:24: "ten" in the Hebrew text was changed to "thirty" — please compare with the KJV.)

Thinking it over, I reached the conclusion that no errors in the Hebrew text or incorrect translations in the KJV should be assumed unless convincing proof of it has been found. (Occasionally a Hebrew word will be quoted. Transliteration will be in capital letters, in accordance with Young's Analytical Concordance. Example: AMMAH = cubit.)

## 1.6 MATHEMATICS AND TECHNOLOGY

The famous British physicist, Lord Kelvin, once remarked: "I often say that when you can measure what you are speaking about and express it in numbers, you know something about it: but when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meager and unsatisfactory kind . . ." These remarks of Lord Kelvin are very much to the point, also in the case of the Molten Sea. It is impossible to analyse it properly without calculating the volume, the weight, and other details. For many readers some parts of the mathematics involved may be hard to "digest." There is also "the agony of numbers." (I am adopting the expression, somewhat modified, from a technical report I read recently.) But let no reader be discouraged, just skip the mathematics, and read the conclusions! On the other hand, calculators are almost household items today and one can, in some cases, work backwards from the answer to check the computations if so inclined. In a more serious vein, the Lord was pleased to have these numbers recorded. May we now just ignore them and declare such details to be unimportant? or worse, change the record if it does not seem to make sense?

Generally speaking, the computations were performed on an eight digit electronic calculator. Results were rounded off to three or more significant digits as required for the particular case being discussed. For instance, to determine accurately how much a computation of the volume deviates from the Biblical 2000 baths (4 digits), one should round off to 5 digits as a minimum in the intermediate calculations. When use is made of a calculator, the intermediate rounding off can be safely left to the machine and the final results adjusted to a reasonable number of digits. The Metric system will be used in conversions to modern units with final results also expressed in Imperial and U.S. units where this will be helpful to the readers. In case reference is made to material written in English the sequence may be reversed.

## 1.7 GOD'S WORK AND MAN'S WORK

Another question must be answered before we can arrive at a reasonable solution to our problem. How much of the required knowledge for building the temple and its decorations, utensils, etc., was supplied by the LORD? And what skills had Solomon, Hiram, and their craftsmen obtained through the natural process of human learning? David gave Solomon the plans for the temple (I Chronicles 28:10-21). The LORD Himself instructed David "in writing," as we read in verse 19. How much detail was included we do not know. But the record shows that the LORD made clear to David what He wanted and that it was left to Solomon to carry out the plans. Solomon in turn obtained the services of Hiram for the technical work. Therefore we may assume that God supplied the plans and made use of the skills of Hiram and others, just as He had done in the case of the tabernacle. (The Molten Sea is not mentioned in I Chronicles 28.) It seems



reasonable to assume that the Lord specified the volume and maybe the shape of the vessel and left the remaining calculations and technical work to His servants. As will be shown later, the required knowledge was available at that time. These assumptions form the point of departure for our mathematical and technical investigations.

#### 1.8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, ETC.

Many persons have contributed to this research in one way or another. I cannot possibly mention everybody by name, but I wish to thank them all. Special thanks are due to Prof. H.M. Ohmann and Rev. C. Van Dam who were always willing to help me understand the Hebrew words and expressions I encountered. To the editor, Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, I am grateful for his advice and the infinite patience he showed as the work progressed ever so slowly. Last but not least, I want to thank my wife Aaf who "endured" it all for some seven years and finally was asked to type the manuscript!

It is my hope and prayer that these investigations may contribute to a better understanding of Scriptural mathematics and technology, and that the results may be found truthful in every aspect. Readers who discover errors or omissions are requested to bring them to my attention. Corrections will be promptly made and published.

A. ZUIDHOF

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## Letters-to-the-Editor

Dear Mr. Editor,

In the issue of *Clarion*, June 4, 1977, you have placed my letter, to which you responded quite extensively. However, I was very disappointed to read your reaction and have waited and thought it over long enough to be sure that I cannot let this pass by without responding to it *once more*.

Let us be reminded first of all, that what has been written in this respect, easily may fade away in human mind, but not in the eyes of the Lord! Let me follow your points in your answer.

As far as the first 3 points are concerned, which you make, this all could have some value when these letters (brethren Schulenberg, Boersema, Vogelenzang) had been writing *about* you or your articles, but they were writing *to* you, in fact, clearly facing you with the question: "Rev. VanOene, take that back, because it is not according to God's will and consequently not to the upbuilding of the Church!" How do you dare then to take an attitude here as if you will have not the last word, or that an Editor doesn't have to answer every question, or that the readers are able to make up their own mind, etc.?

Point 4. Your conclusion in this matter: "The game is not worth the candle," is a shame, because it is a question of the truth! You know that you wrote that "misleading" means: "fallacious, deceptive" and that you therefore did not agree with this qualification. Consequently, I was trying to show you in the first of 3 explanations of the Dictionary, that this *your* qualification was not in the mouth of Rev. de Bruin at all! And then still so short and insulting. Here is the Scriptural demand: Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 5:9, 10. You were brotherly reminded on this golden rule, but you shrug it off your shoulders with the above mentioned expression, instead of admitting that you were wrong (and this "admitting" is possible in the Church, and would be great to find in "Clarion").

Point 5. You asked: "Is an Editor supposed to give answers to rhetorical questions?" I didn't ask that Mr. Editor! But when you read my letter over, then you will see that I didn't say: "Which were questions on your address" but "which was a question on

your address." That means, and I am sure you understand the difference, these questions imply the question of "taking back," as I have mentioned this above.

As far as the second letter is concerned (from Rev. Boersema), what are you complaining about the use of big guns? After you have used big guns yourself against your br. office bearer, and other brothers, Vogelenzang (March 12) and Boersema (March 26) point out to you what an unjust and twisted picture you had given of the situation, then it is clear that these guns you complained about, turned out to be nothing else but a brotherly reminder on the golden rule, laid down in Scripture, in order to be obeyed. Your complaint: "Mommy, he pointed his finger at me, etc." is a clear example how serious you take your opponents, who come to you with Scripture. When you elaborate so extensively in 5b - f, at least you give the impression to divert the reader's attention from the heart of the matter. Remember, that the reminder on the ninth commandment comes after the sentence of Rev. B.: "You have not treated him in a brotherly way, but are *making him to do* and to *say* things which he has never *done* and *said*." In order to evaluate this your answer rightly, the reader is bound to read the article of Rev. B. over again and he will notice that you missed the point. These writers have pointed out that *what* you wrote and the *way* you wrote were not the truth. Therefore: Apology Rev. VanOene! This will be to your honour, for it is a Scriptural requisite! The dark pages in *Clarion* are still there and will (without Apology) become darker. Hence, we as readers may expect and request from you as Editor the same scriptural concern as has been brought up in the "Letters to the Editor" and consequently your apology. Furthermore, without going into detail (because the readers are able to read and judge for themselves) a cessation of Medley in *Clarion*, which becomes more and more a self-appointed supervisory position over the ministers and Churches, exercised in a manner, not fitting for a Church Magazine.

These requests are a necessity in order to be able to *have* and to *keep* "Clarion" as a constructive Church magazine in our Home.

With brotherly greetings,  
B. BIKKER

# school X crossing

The Provincial Legislature of British Columbia recently passed an *Independent Schools Support Act*, better known as Bill 33, under which provincial grants will become available to private and independent schools. Our three schools in B.C., *William of Orange* at Cloverdale, *Ebenezer* at Smithers and *John Calvin* at Yarrow, with some 450 students among them, will almost certainly be spending much time in studying this piece of legislation. The Canadian Reformed School Society of Abbotsford, which operates the Yarrow school, was so kind to send me a bulletin containing the entire text of this Independent School Support Act. For their act, and possibly the Act, I'm very grateful.

It is only to be expected, and quite proper, that the B.C. government should make these grants conditional upon the schools' compliance with certain requirements. Grants, unlike restitution of public school taxes, must come with strings attached. For that reason I much prefer a system of support by which a part or all of the taxes paid for public education are returned to citizens who show proof of their financial support of a private school. Of course this would not allow a government much of an entrance into that private school. Grants, the funds for which are probably taken from general revenue, are applied directly to the school, which, to be eligible, will have to meet certain requirements. A wise government will practice careful stewardship of its revenue and assure itself that those who benefit by a grant system deserve support and encouragement. Grants therefore come equipped with conditions and may set up a second authority in a school, next to the parents'. *Calvinist Contact* of October 7, 1977, calls Bill 33 a breakthrough in educational justice and is thankful to God for bringing this about. We shouldn't be quite so hasty but first carefully examine the letter of the Act and try to discover the intent of B.C.'s government with it.

There are two support levels provided for in the Act: Group I and Group II. Support given to schools with Group I classification will not be greater than

the operating expenses of a school, minus the teachers' salaries. When a school is granted financial support at Group II level, it may be large enough to pay for salaries as well. At this moment it isn't clear what amount, per student, the B.C. government will pay out. The formula for arriving at the amount includes a figure for a percentage of the average-cost-per-pupil in the public schools. This percentage value will not be announced until a new provincial budget comes down early next year.

To qualify for either Group I or Group II level support these conditions (among others) must be met:

- The school society must be an incorporated, non-profit organization.

- By May 15 at least 135 tuition days must have been given if grants are to be continued for that school year.

- The inspector of independent schools must receive periodic reports on the number of eligible students in attendance.

- A student to be eligible, must have parents who are Canadian citizens or they must have legally entered the country and if still living must reside in B.C.

- The school must have been in continuous operation for 5 years.

- The school must not now, nor intend to practice, promote or foster doctrines of racial or ethnic superiority, religious intolerance or persecution or social change by violent action.

If a private school in B.C. wishes to qualify for the larger grant given to schools of the Group II classification, there are some additional requirements:

- The teachers, although they do not have to join the B.C. teachers federation must, within 5 years of the grant application, all be certified. Provincial certification can be obtained by means of (a) a Provincial Teacher Certificate, (b) 10 years of full time teaching in a B.C. public or private school, (c) a Letter of Permission and (d) the recommendation of an independent school teacher certification committee.

- The curriculum of that private school must meet the Ministry's mini-

mum instructional time requirements for each subject area.

- The school must use a satisfactory pupil testing programme to determine a student's individual progress in each of those subject areas.

- An external evaluation committee will visit the school to determine whether the school's learning programme, operation and administration are acceptable.

- The school's participation is required in learning assessment programmes.

There is, of course, an element of danger in commenting, from Ontario, on a situation in British Columbia. The passing of this Act through B.C.'s legislature will have been accompanied by public comment in the news media. It would have been very helpful if some of this could have come into my possession. Therefore, in the absence of all but a copy of the Act, a number of questions and observations will have to do.

Although government grants are not the most suitable instrument for government directed support of our schools, in view of the fact that they go against the grain of their parental character, this should not be sufficient for rejection of these grants. A grant must obviously be rejected for our schools if the governmental authority which follows the grant into the schools, interferes with the authority of the parents there. A parental school which accepts government grants has agreed to live under certain rules and he who rules has authority. The question is entirely: Is it a far-reaching and conflicting authority?

At first glance the requirements, the rules, for Group I classification are quite innocent. Incorporation of the society, uninterrupted operation of the school in any school year, legal residency of parents, attendance reports; none of this puts any strain on the Reformed and parental character of the school. What requires clarification is the Act's mention of religious intolerance as a doctrine which must not be practiced, promoted or taught. Because our societies exclude from membership those who are not members of a Canadian Reformed Church, and enrollment from other "denominations" is the exception and not the rule, would this practice be branded as religious intolerance? And since the children from other "denominations" enrolled at our schools are often also of Dutch descent, would this

be interpreted as the fostering of ethnic superiority?

When we look closer at the more severe requirements for the Group II classification, still other questions demand a clear answer. In these days, when in so many of our school societies the establishment of a teachers' college is being discussed, the matter of teacher certification as a condition for grants will be closely studied. Would graduates of this college be issued a certificate upon applying for a Letter of Permission or be recommended for certification by a committee? A Provincial Teacher Certificate will likely require a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Education degree. The only other route open to certification requires that a teacher has obtained 10 years of experience, but all of it in B.C. Much more would also have to be known about the instructional time requirements, the testing and assessment programme and the standards by which the evaluation committee will grade the schools.

Possibly the best course to take for our B.C. schools is to make application for grants at both levels. These applications would force the Ministry and the inspector into an evaluation of these schools. If then, in their eyes, the schools are "deficient" in one or more respects, it can be determined whether satisfying the unfulfilled requirements would involve the schools in a conflict with their parental and Reformed character. Because the Act mentions that a grant may be cancelled at any time by the school receiving the grant, it should be possible to cancel an application for a grant as well. The love of grants must not be permitted to uproot our schools. Test cases for both support levels would reveal the spirit and intent which lie hidden beneath the letter of the Act.

Living in a province where our schools have shown little inclination for pursuing the issue of tax relief or school grants, the B.C. development could serve as an example of what would, or would not be welcome elsewhere. The B.C. schools are in a position to serve the schools in other provinces with their experiences with this Act. Supporters of some private schools have hailed this legislation as a break-through in educational justice. Others are already prepared to say that they will rue the day that Ontario, for instance, adopts the same kind of legislation. Slow down, the verdict is not out. Also here discretion calls for patience.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Fund raising campaign for the K. Schilder School of Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.*

In a previous issue of *Clarion* (August 27, 1977), mention was made of the ground breaking ceremonies for the *K. Schilder American Reformed School* in the congregation of *Grand Rapids*. Originally it was the intention of the Board of that school to begin operation in the Fall of this year. But the opening date had to be postponed, one of the reasons probably being that the Schilder School was not entirely successful in attracting teachers. It would now seem likely that this school will open its doors to Grand Rapids' children with the start of the 78-79 school year.

While this delay must have disappointed the congregation of Grand Rapids, another development has come along to soothe the pain of being without Reformed education for yet another year. This development came, after the Dutch periodical *Nederlands Dagblad* published an article in which attention was drawn to the difficult circumstances which surround the construction and operation of the Schilder School. For the congregation of Grand Rapids, with a little over 100 members, is still \$30,000.00 short of meeting the cost of building its 2-room school building. Two pastors, who earlier served the Church of Grand Rapids but have returned to The Netherlands, took Grand Rapids' plight to heart and, together with others, have formed a committee that will collect support funds for the school society of Grand Rapids. This committee consists of: *Rev. S.S. Clossen* and *Rev. G. Van Rongen* who have each been minister in Grand Rapids, and in addition to them: *Dr. M.J. Arntzen*, *Mrs. J.M. Dekker*, *Mr. T.A. Helmholt*, *Drs. A. Kamsteeg*, *Mrs. G. Kok*, *Mr. W. Meijer Sr.*, *Mr. H. Petter* and *Dr. C. Trimp*.

This committee has asked that also *Clarion*, and the brothers and sisters in Canada, do what they can to lend support to the small Reformed School Association of Grand Rapids. Although the committee is composed of members of the Dutch sister Churches, and this campaign is primarily directed at Dutch hearts and wallets, support from Canada would be appreciated. The committee has a North-American correspondent in the person of *Mr. Sjirk Kok* of 126 Centerlawn, East Lansing, Michigan. In telephone conversation and correspondence with him he stressed the importance of pre-

senting the needs of this struggling but valiant congregation to the Churches in Canada. There is a fear that, unless the Schilder School becomes operational, the congregation of Grand Rapids will dwindle yet further as more of her members move north into Canada to settle in areas where Reformed schools are in existence. To keep the cost of operating a school in the small congregation of Grand Rapids from becoming too high, it is necessary to reduce the debt on the school building. To allow the school to start operating without any mortgage payments at all, an amount of \$30,000.00 is needed. *Mr. Kok* writes: "The campaign in The Netherlands proceeds fairly well . . . requests for support there have been made to school boards and homes for the aged . . . in several congregations donations are being solicited. Also Canadian Reformed school boards have been asked to send donations . . . an article in *Clarion* about this campaign and the Schilder School would be very important . . . and appreciated."

*Clarion* readers are hereby invited to show their concern for the cause of Reformed education in the small and isolated congregation of Grand Rapids by sending their gifts to the treasurer of the *American Reformed School Association Inc. of Grand Rapids, Michigan*, *Mr. H. Van Beek*, 1721 Philadelphia S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 409507, U.S.A.

May God move many hearts to act with generosity in reaching out with help where the need is so apparent and great.

J.J. KUNTZ

## Church News

Called: REV. CI. STAM  
of Burlington West, Ontario to Edmonton, Alberta.

\* \* \*

Called: REV. K. BRUNING  
of Armadale, West Australia, to Neerlandia, Alberta.

\* \* \*

Called: REV. J.D. WIELENGA  
of Albany, Australia to Coaldale, Alberta.

\* \* \*

ACCEPTED:  
Candidate E.J. TIGGELAAR  
of Hamilton, Ontario to Chilliwack, B.C.

# The Calling of Abraham in Genesis 14\*<sub>2</sub>

However, our chapter as a whole is not the only confirmation of our view. It is further supported by the wider context of Genesis 14, viz. by chapters 12-19. In order to show this it will be good to call to mind the line in these chapters as well as some very relevant passages.

In the first part of chapter 12 we read about the calling of Abraham by the LORD and about the promises which he received. This calling and these promises must be seen in contrast with chapter 11:1-9: the building of the city and tower of Babel. In the land of Shinar the people wanted to build for themselves, besides the city and tower, a great name, so that they would not be scattered all over the earth (11:4). In their staying together — against the command of the LORD, “Fill the earth,” Genesis 9:1 — they wanted to make themselves strong. Over against this Abraham had to go all by himself, separated, “scattered” from his country and kindred and father’s house. And God would bless this man-alone. God would make a great name for him and make him a blessing for all the nations. With this went the promise that the LORD would make of him a great nation. Having arrived in Canaan he was told by the LORD that his descendants would receive this land of Canaan.

Then, in chapter 13, we read how Abraham became even more a man-alone. For Lot separated from him after their return out of Egypt. Lot chose to live near, and later in, Sodom. And in verse 13 we read some information which is very important for us: “Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD.” After this, at the end of this chapter, the LORD repeated the promise that He would give the land to Abraham and to his descendants who would be like the dust of the earth in multitude. Then our chapter follows.

In chapter 15 again the promise of the seed and the land are confirmed, and this time the Lord adds the covenant, in which He also tells Abraham that his descendants first will have to live in a foreign country as strangers,

because first the sin of the Canaanite inhabitants must be complete.

In chapter 16 we have the story about the son of the flesh, Ishmael; in chapter 17 the establishing of the covenant with the sign and seal of circumcision and the promise of the seed out of Sara. In chapter 18 that promise is confirmed and the realization within a year foretold when the LORD Himself visits Abraham. At that occasion the LORD also reveals His intention regarding the ungodly people of Sodom. And Abraham pleads for Sodom. In chapter 19 we read that there were not even ten righteous people left in the cities: they are destroyed. Only “the righteous” Lot and his two daughters are saved. That is the end of wicked Sodom.

So we see that in these chapters a prominent place is given to the land of promise, and that an increasing emphasis is placed on the seed of promise. We may not forget these lines in our chapter. Especially the promise of the land is an important feature also in our chapter, as we shall see later. But when we restrict ourselves for the moment to the line “Sodom” in this part of Genesis, we find in chapter 13:13 the remark about the terrible wickedness of Sodom against the LORD, and in chapters 18 and 19 we read about Sodom’s destruction because there were not even ten righteous people, while we are first given a picture of that abominable wickedness. It is inbetween these two data that the events of chapter 14 are placed. This means that our chapter has an important function inbetween chapter 13 and chapters 18 and 19.

*The result of our investigation so far is that we must come to the conclusion that, not only our chapter as a whole and on its own, but also its place within chapters 13 to 19, confirm our interpretation of verses 17-24, based on the order in which the events are told us; namely, that the confrontation of the king of Sodom with Abraham is the essential part of our chapter; or: that the essential point in Genesis 14 is the calling of Abraham with respect to Sodom.*

Having established the fact that the calling of Abraham regarding

Sodom is the real point in Genesis 14, we are obliged to continue with the following question: What, then, is that calling? Included must also be that we ask: And what is the place of Melchizedek in this connection?

In order to determine that calling we first go again to the context: the remark in chapter 13 about the wickedness of Sodom and its destruction in chapter 19. The destruction shows what the remark about the wickedness already implies: the anger of the LORD because of this ungodliness. In this context we may explain the punitive expedition of Chedorlaomer and the defeat of Sodom as a punishing act of God in which He shows His holy indignation. That Sodom is not struck by a definite and final devastation yet means that the events in chapter 14 are a serious warning of the angry God of heaven and earth.

We may assume that the people of Sodom saw the wrath of their own gods in their defeat by Chedorlaomer. Would those gods otherwise not have helped them? However, Sodom had to know that not their own gods-idols which are vanity, because they are inventions of the sinful human mind that **supresses the truth (Romans 1:18ff.)** — but that the only true God, the God of heaven and earth, the Most High, was very angry with them because of their corruption, and terribly displeased with their perverse way of life. Sodom had to know that the Most High God was about to come with His severe exterminating judgment.

But God is righteous in His wrath. Before He came with the execution of His judgment, He gave a last warning. This last warning was a call to **repentance and conversion, so that, as God’s severe wrath was poured out upon Sodom, these people could not say: “But we did not know.”**

Scripture teaches us that God works that way more often. Before God sent the flood to destroy the first world in His wrath against all the violence, He called Noah to be a preacher of righteousness. Noah built the ark. It was a project that took about one hundred and twenty years. During that time he warned the people and told them what God would do. In this way he called them to conversion. But they did not repent. Then the flood came. The people before the flood were warned and could not say, “We did not know.”

Before the Israelites could inherit the promised country, the sin of the

Amorites had to be complete (Genesis 15:16). That sin was complete after Israel had wandered in the wilderness for forty years. For during those last forty years all the Amorites had heard about the LORD, the God of heaven and earth. In Israel as God's redeemed people, Canaan had been confronted with the LORD, the only true God. Rahab says to the two spies (Joshua 2:11), "For the LORD your God is He Who is God in heaven above and on earth beneath." And the Gibeonites said to Joshua, when he had discovered that they had deceived him (Joshua 9:12), "Because it was told to your servants for a certainty that the LORD your God had commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; so we feared greatly for our lives because of you, and did this thing." But, except for Rahab and the Gibeonites, the people of Canaan did not repent and refused to turn to the LORD and from their evil. Then God slew them with His ban.

More examples of this manner of working of the LORD could be referred to here as they are revealed to us in the Old Testament, like the warnings before the Assyrian and Babylonian captivity. But I would like to mention a clear case from the New Testament. This case is not described as a historic fact that happened, but it is predicted. I mean the destruction of Jerusalem in the year seventy. That destruction because of the rejection of the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, came only after some forty years of preaching and warning from the side of the apostles and the Christian church. In the apostles and in the church of Christ, the Jewish people had been confronted with the Christ all those years, and in that way they had been called to conversion. After conversion was refused, judgment came.

Most likely Revelation 11 is also a prophecy of this happening. It speaks of the two witnesses who will be killed after having finished their testimony in the "city that is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified." Anyway, in whatever way we interpret this chapter of Revelation, this much is evident: that again the same manner of working of the LORD is shown; namely, before judgment comes, people are warned in a confrontation with the God of heaven and earth, Who revealed Himself in Christ Jesus, and Who uses His faithful servants for this confrontation.

From here we are now able to determine the calling of Abraham in Genesis 14. *In Abraham, the believing and faithful servant of God, Sodom with its king and people and allies is confronted with the angry Most High God, the God of heaven and earth, the Creator and Judge, in which confrontation God shows His wrath, but also gives a last warning before judgment comes, calling Sodom unto conversion, so that when judgment comes, Sodom has no excuse.*

In this confrontation we can distinguish three stages. In the first place, Sodom meets in Abraham the victor over Abraham's and its enemies: Abraham is the redeemer for the land, and thus for Lot and also for Sodom. In the second place, Sodom meets in Abraham the servant of the LORD, God Most High, who honours his God for the victory and shows this in giving ten percent of the spoil to Melchizedek. And in the third place, Sodom meets in Abraham the man of faith who expects the realization of the promise of the land from his God and in God's way and not from Sodom and its defiled riches.

Although this is not the place and there is not sufficient time to work out these three points more completely, I would like to make a few remarks and draw a few lines. To start with the first aspect, that Abraham is the victor and in that way redeemer for Canaan, we can say that several lines can be drawn from preceding chapters to ours. In the first place there is Lot. Abraham's faithfulness to this "brother" is the prime motivation to pursue the enemy. Faith in God and loyalty to the brother, even when this brother is not blameless, go together. The LORD uses Abraham's bond with Lot to accomplish His purpose.

Besides seeing his loyalty to his nephew Lot as direct motive for the pursuit, we may assume that Abraham took the courage for this act of loyalty from the promises of the LORD which he received when he was called. The LORD had said (12:2ff.) that He would bless Abraham and make his name great, so that he would become a blessing; and that in him all the nations would be blessed. In the victory which God gave we see that blessing realized. In this victory, won through faith with only a small army, the LORD made Abraham's name very great in the promised land. We can see this in the fact that Melchizedek, the priest-king of Salem, one of the most important

rulers in Canaan, brought bread and wine for Abraham. Bringing *water* and bread to somebody means giving him help. Bringing bread and *wine* means giving honour.<sup>5</sup>

That God made Abraham's name great must be seen in contrast, I said above, with the endeavours of the builders of the city and tower of Babel. They wanted to make for themselves a great name in their rebellion against God, in their staying together. But the LORD would make great the name of that man-alone whom He had called and who in faith accepted that calling.

However, more must be said here about this contrast between Abraham and Babel, or rather, between Abraham and Shinar. For Babel is Shinar. The building of the city and tower of Babel took place in the land of Shinar (11:2). Earlier, in chapter 10:10, we read for the first time in the Bible about this Shinar. It is the land where the mighty King Nimrod established his empire: "The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, and Accad, all of them in the land of Shinar." It is very remarkable that in verse 1 of our chapter Amraphel, the king of Shinar, is the first one of the four kings who came from the east who is mentioned, while it was obviously an expedition of Chedorlaomer, the king of Elam. In verse 9 this Chedorlaomer is mentioned first! He is the leader.

Now there are scholars who leave the possibility open that with this Shinar in Genesis 14 not the same land of Shinar is meant as in chapters 10 and 11, but a place in Syria; namely, the west Semitic Sjanhar or Sangar.<sup>6</sup> In my opinion Shinar in Genesis 14 must be the same as in all other places of Scripture. I have the following grounds: Besides in the two texts in our chapter, Shinar is mentioned six more times in the Old Testament. In all these cases the same land is meant: Babylonia. This makes it unlikely that only in our chapter we have to do with a different country, or a city in a different land. Moreover, if a different land was meant here, there would have been no reason at all for the author of Genesis to mention the king of Shinar first in verse 1 (while this king was only a vassal of Chedorlaomer), and later in verse 9 to name the real suzerain, the king of Elam, first. In the third place, doubt that the same land of Shinar is meant here as in Genesis 10 and 11 is caused, as far as I can see, by the fact that there was doubt whether it was really a power from so far away that undertook this



punitive expedition. But if Babel/Shinar would have been too far away, then this would have been even more true of Elam which was even farther away. **And the scholars agree that Chedorlaomer is a real Elamite name.** So I am of the opinion that we have to maintain that Shinar in Genesis 14 is the same as Shinar in Genesis 10 and 11, and, e.g., in Daniel 1, where we read that King Nebuchadnezzar brought King Jehoiakim to the land of Shinar (Babylon).

Now the name Nimrod comes from the verb *marad* which means "to rebel," and probably means: "violent tyrant," so that in Nimrod (Genesis 10) and in Babel (Genesis 11), both in Shinar, the line is continued of the violent rebels of before the flood. It is the line of Cain-Lamech. It is the line of the seed of the serpent. We can also continue this line the other way: Shinar is the later Babylonian power that in Nebuchadnezzar conquers Judah (Daniel 1:2). It is the line of the Persian, the Greek, the Seleucian, and the Roman world-power, opposing the LORD and His Christ (Psalm 2, Acts 4:27).

It is in the light of this perspective of Scripture that we must see the Elam-Shinar power in our chapter, simply because of the fact that the king of Shinar is named first while he is only a vassal. "Shinar" characterizes the power of Elam-Chedorlaomer. The expedition of Shinar-Elam, and the strategical cleverness of its king, show that this anti-Christian world-power is a threat to the land and to the seed that are promised to Abraham. It is a threatening danger for the coming Seed of the woman, Who has to live and do His work in this land of Abraham, which is His land.

But the father of Christ, that man alone, but with the blessing of the Most High God, and through faith accepting the promises, is stronger than the "Shinar"-powers. We can say: the coming Christ in Abraham is stronger than the adversary. Abraham defeats the enemy. Through this act of faith he is the redeemer of the promised land. It is the coming Christ in Abraham, Who puts His foot on the neck of His enemy, according to the words of Psalm 110.

In the written record of this redeeming act of faith of the father of Israel, God showed to Abraham's descendants, who later could read and who heard about what their father had done, that in the way of faith Israel could always remain in the possession of the promised land. Therefore, that

Israel later was overpowered by "Shinar" in Nebuchadnezzar was caused by the unbelief of Abraham's people. Through their unbelief and sin they made themselves into seed of the serpent.

It is thus as the redeemer of the promised land that Abraham returns. And in this redemption Lot shares, but also Sodom. And when Sodom's king goes out to meet Abraham, he meets him as the redeemer. So much about the first stage in the confrontation of Sodom's king with Abraham.

We now come to the second stage: Melchizedek was there as well. And he as the first one spoke to the servant of God. The priest-king of Salem honoured the redeemer of Canaan by bringing him bread and wine. And as priest of God Most High he blessed Abraham and spoke, "Blessed be Abraham by God Most High, Maker of heaven and earth." But he did not stop with Abraham. He continued with giving honour to God Most High Himself. It was God Who gave the victory to Abraham. And Abraham reacted to Melchizedek's words by also giving God the honour by offering ten percent of the spoil to the priest-king of Salem.

Very much must remain untouched here, and many questions unanswered. What is important is that the priest-king of Salem, Melchizedek, the king of righteousness and peace (cf. Hebrews 7:1-10) appeared in the land promised to Abraham, and that he who was more than Abraham in his office spoke of Abraham the redeemer as blessed by the one true God. With this word he sanctioned Abraham's act of faith. It is also important that both Abraham and Melchizedek praised and thanked God Most High as the Giver of this victory, and that He is called the Maker and Possessor, and thus also the Judge of heaven and earth, and therefore also the real Owner of the promised land.

For us, now, it is important that we see that. In this confession of their thankful and praising faith in the true God, the Creator, we see that the LORD came a step further. Where, in the first stage Sodom was confronted more with the human redeemer of the land yet, in this second stage he was, through Melchizedek and Abraham, confronted with the God of Abraham. Since it was this true God, the Most High, the Creator and Judge, Who gave the victory, this meant that also Sodom's king depended on this God; and that the fact that he and his people

were freed by Abraham showed to him that his redemption was mere grace of Abraham's and Melchizedek's God; and that it was not a redemption, first of all intended for him, but one in which he was allowed to share. It is remarkable that Melchizedek spoke of *Abraham's enemies*, and did not say: "Sodom's enemies." Elam-Shinar was a threat to *Abraham's land!*

When we continue, we see that, in the third stage, this confrontation with Abraham and, through Abraham and Melchizedek, with their true God, was a confrontation which called Sodom to repentance and conversion. Abraham turned the proposal of Sodom's king down. The king said Abraham could keep the material spoil, but he would like to have the people. This proposal was a reaction to what he saw of Abraham: giving ten percent of the spoil away. However, the king of Sodom did not have anything to propose. According to the customs and laws of those days, it was so that, through his victory, Abraham took over the position of suzerain from Chedorlaomer. Abraham had now become the legal "great king" over the defeated part of the land of Canaan. And the king of Sodom was nothing more than Abraham's vassal. Abraham was the legal owner of everything he had freed, including the people. That Abraham knew this is evident from two features in this chapter. He gave ten percent of the spoil to Melchizedek; and further he ruled that his army could eat from the spoil and also that his friends had to have their portion of it.

But for himself Abraham wanted to keep nothing. He refused the position of suzerain over Sodom. With an oath he confirmed this. Sodom's king should never have any ground to say that he made Abraham rich, which means in the context that Abraham would owe him the possession of the land. Abraham did not want to receive the promised land from Sodom. He would only accept it out of the hand of the Most High God, the Maker and Owner of heaven and earth. Abraham was strong in his faith here. He could have reasoned: God gave me the victory; in this way God made me the suzerain of the land, the lord and owner. Abraham saw that this would be the wrong way: he would get the realization of the promise via wicked Sodom, and would be lord of that wicked Sodom. In his strong refusal he said, in fact: "I do not want to have anything to do with you, Sodom." And

in this rejection of Sodom by Abraham was implied a rejection of Sodom by Abraham's God, God Most High, the Maker of heaven and earth. In this way there was that strong appeal to repentance and conversion.

I have come to an end. Much more could be said. But I wanted to confine myself to the calling of Abraham with respect to Sodom. Concluding our study we can say that Abraham acted as the believing servant of God. He was simply faithful at the place where God had set him. He was loyal to his "brother" in that day of great need. In faith he defeated the enemy of the land. In that same faith he confessed his God, together with Melchizedek, as the Giver of the victory. In that same faith he said that he wanted the land only from God Most High. It was in the way of Abraham's obedient faith in that situation, that Abraham's God manifested Himself to Sodom. If Sodom now were to continue in its wickedness, its destruction would come soon.

Well then, here is also the connection with us today, and our calling. The apostle Peter writes that believers must always be willing and ready to give account of the hope that is in them, while living a holy life for the Lord in the expectation of the inheritance of the saints from the LORD God. Seeing the calling of each one of us, we can also see the calling of the college, of staff and students: to study the Word of God in order to understand it and to apply it, confessing its truth, its infallible and inerrant truth in the midst of a world and a Christianity which together are more and more maturing in the sin of humanism and liberalism, building the ultimate city of Babel, the city of man, or (as Harvey Cox said) the "secular city," in which man without God makes himself strong against God: the man of lawlessness.

May our God bless the College and give the power to carry out that calling to the upbuilding of the churches, so that we all, each in his own place, are faithful soldiers of the Son of Abraham, the King and Priest after Melchizedek's order, belonging to the army "in holy array" of which Psalm 110 sings and the epistle to the Hebrews speaks, willing to fight with the King in His battle. Then we are united with the church of all ages: Abraham and Melchizedek, David and the prophets, the apostles and martyrs, Peter Waldo and John Wycliffe, Martin Luther and John Calvin, and so many before and after them. The battle still

goes on. But the victory is certain. Abraham's great Son will place His foot on the neck of His enemies and lead His faithful servants into the eternal inheritance: a renewed earth.

J. GEERTSEMA

<sup>1</sup> Dr. J.H. Kroeze, *Genesis Veertien*, p. 228: "Dit hoofdstuk dient allereerst voor de tekening van den Vader der geloovigen en den Vriend Gods. Vervolgens was dit gebeuren de aanleiding tot de ontmoeting van Abraham en Melchizedek. Ook wij houden dit voor de kern van ons hoofdstuk."

## Press Review - continued

While repeating that he found religious freedom in Hungary, Mr. Graham noted, "There's no doubt that it's a different type than we have in this country." He also pointed out that "the word 'freedom' is relative all over the world."

In an editorial of the same issue of *Christian News* the question is asked: "Is Graham correct?" namely in stating that there is religious freedom in Hungary, and that there is a "total separation of church and state," and that Christians should "adjust to Communism," as the Jews did to Rome. The answer to that "editorial" question is as follows:

Is Graham correct? Leaders of the National and World Council of Churches have been saying the same thing for years and now some evangelicals are following them.

Surely there are many Christians behind the Iron Curtain. Christianity appears to be more alive in some Communist controlled areas than in sections of the indifferent West. More religious freedom does exist in some Communist nations than others.

However, Graham appears to have been duped by some of the Communist approved churchmen with whom he met, just as leaders of the National and World Council of Churches and the Pope have been duped.

In my opinion the purpose of the Communists has been served well by this trip. In 1975 the Helsinki Conference was held. There human rights were guaranteed, including the right on freedom of religion. Shortly after the trip of Mr. Graham, in September of this year, a Conference was held in Belgrade to make up the balance of Helsinki. And it was trumpeted to the whole Western world by the great evangelist Billy Graham that in the Communist countries there is freedom

<sup>2</sup> I. de Wolff, *De Geschiedenis der Godsopenbaring*, I, p. 229: "Ik ben het niet eens met die beschouwing, welke in de ontmoeting van die beide mannen de kern van dit hoofdstuk ziet."

<sup>3</sup> B. Holwerda, . . . *begonnen hebbende van Mozes* . . . , p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. J.H. Kroeze, *op. cit.*, p. 221; I. de Wolff, *op. cit.*, I, p. 227.

<sup>5</sup> J.H. Kroeze, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. J.H. Kroeze, *op. cit.*, p. 28ff.; Eerdmans, *The New Bible Dictionary*, ed. by J.D. Douglas, s.v. Shinar.

of religion. That Mr. Graham is a little vague about that freedom is overheard ("it's a different type than we have"; and "the word 'freedom' is relative all over the world").

As far as I can see Communism is an anti-Christian power, that will tolerate the church and the preachers of the Gospel as long as it can make use of them for its own purposes. The Russian government recently adopted a new constitution (grondwet). *Nederlands Dagblad* wrote about it some time ago. From it I quote in translation:

Article 34 of the new Constitution of the Soviet Union places juridically outside the law all those citizens who, according to her, deviate from the general line of the Communist party. For those persons there is *not* the principle of the equality of all citizens with regard to the law.

Article 39 takes away the human rights and the rights on freedom from all citizens who think differently (than the party does), since they can be considered harmful for the Communist party.

A particular danger for the legal status of the citizens of the Soviet Union is given in article 59. Everyone who, according to the communist norms, is unworthy to bear the high title of 'citizen of the Soviet Union,' forfeits the right on the realization of the freedom as given by the law.

Now I know that Russia is not Hungary. But they are very close. And what now is stated in this new Constitution, has been the practice already in all communist countries. As far as I can see things now I deplore it that Mr. Graham gave the communists the opportunity to use him for their purposes, and in this way to harm the cause of those who suffer under the oppression of anti-Christian regimes.

J. GEERTSEMA

# mission news

Newsletter No. 24

Dear brothers and sisters,

The month of September was characterized by many visits to Sawagit. Sawagit is situated 15 minutes downriver from Manggelum, by outboard. With regards to the situation there we can finally say that the people have received their new teacher-evangelist, Yan Wandenggei.

As you may remember from last month's letter, some of the Sawagit people were quite reluctant to receive Yan, who is a Wanggom-er. Sawagit consists of Wambon people only; the last teacher they had is also Wambon. "A Wambon man has gone out, a Wambon man should come in again," said the village head. Another objection he voiced was that he had heard of the "bad life style" of the new teacher. He was referring to "2 affairs the teacher had had in Waliburu and 1 in Kawagit." However, none of this has ever been proven and so we can classify all of this as gossip. Perhaps the people are just overly careful with accepting a teacher, for two of their former teachers have had to leave because of misconduct.

On September 6th, Bapak Karet (a Christian from Kawagit, who supervises the strip work here) and I made a visit to Sawagit, mainly to talk about the things mentioned by the village head. However, there were only about 20 people in the village, so we agreed that we would meet again after the holiday week, on the 19th. In the meantime I arranged with guru Yan Wandenggei and his wife and child that it was best for them to stay temporarily in Heyokubun with his brother. The food situation is much better there than here in Manggelum. We agreed that they would come to Manggelum again on the 19th, so they could hear the result of our Sawagit visit.

So on the 19th we went to Sawagit as planned. There were no more people present this time than on our previous visit. Those who were present said: "We tried to call the others, but they're staying in the jungle . . ." I said that we would come again in 3 weeks (if nothing else would happen in the meantime) together with Mr. Henk Griffioen from Kawagit, who would be in Manggelum then. And so we left again, still in the dark about what we

were able to do. Bapak Karet and I both had the impression that perhaps the village head was holding off, hoping that we would place the teacher somewhere else. Then after some time he could put in a request for another teacher.

But one week later, on September 26th, Karet said that there were quite a few people in Sawagit now. He had just been there and suggested we go again. So we did. This time there were approximately 10 more people in the village than during our previous visits . . . However, many had apparently just left in the morning to prepare for a sago feast. They would all be back around noon. We gathered in the "church building" and I explained to them that the teacher was eager to start working, and that he needed the help and support of all of the villagers. This time the people seemed to be quite optimistic about receiving the new teacher. Also the village head was willing to receive him. As far as helping the teacher with food, housing, etc., they said that that would be no problem. I have no reasons to doubt that since they have always helped well in the past, and also built the "church" and school building well and in time.

So we arranged that two persons from Sawagit would go and call the teacher, who with his family was still in Heyokubun. They would come via Manggelum then. Two days later (on the 28th) we were on our way again to Sawagit. I brought the teacher with his wife and child, and all their stuff, such as pans, etc. Also Karet went along again. The reception in Sawagit was quite disappointing. There was no one to welcome the teachers' family or to help us unload. In the village nothing had been prepared yet for the coming of the teacher. His house was not repaired yet, the school building was still a mess, etc. I pointed these things out and said that only when these things were ready, they could expect to receive the guru. We brought the teacher and his family back to Manggelum.

Two days later, when we came back from a trip to Gauwop, we checked in on the situation. Work had started now. Some food had even been gathered already in the kitchen of the

teachers' house. Two men were fixing up the roof of the school building by adding new sago palm fronds, so that it would stop leaking. Others had repaired the home of the teacher. We agreed that the teacher would come the next day. And so on Saturday, October 1st, the people of Sawagit received their new guru-evangelist, after having been without for more than 4 months. So, a long story, but perhaps good to know how this all (slowly) developed.

On the 4th of September the daughter of our guru-evangelist Yohan Bakai and his wife were baptized in Kawagit, together with Cornelis, the third son of Rev. and Mrs. Zandbergen from Kawagit. Mr. and Mrs. Veldhuizen (mission aid workers for the Korowai area) also received a child — their first: on September 23rd Gersom Gijsbertus, born in Anggeruk, North of our area.

The LORD also has taken away this month. On the 9th of this month we heard of the sudden death of Ng-ganggar, the husband of Wambumop (who was once flown out for a ruptured spleen). Her husband had gone out to cut vegetables and didn't return at night. The next morning we learned he had fallen from a tree, and onto another piece of wood, so that he must have died fairly soon. I spoke at his funeral about the Son of God, Who gives us Life, even if we are dead, if we only believe in Him. I explained that we ought to be ready at any given time, for "tomorrow I could go for a swim and drown." Exactly that happened, only ten days later. A man had swum downriver for about half a mile, with the help of a piece of wood. When he was opposite the village, he called for a prow to pick him up. When the prow arrived, they couldn't find him anymore. Two days later he was found downriver.

September 12th, a boy, approximately 7 years old, was brought to the clinic here. He was quite badly burned, and his general condition was not good at all. His father had waited too long before bringing him in from the jungle. We helped the best we could, also by bringing him to Kawagit where Janet Velvis (the nurse there) could help better. On the 23rd he died.

Obviously the families of these three people showed their grief after the unexpected deaths. So did we, but more so because they did not yet know our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ.

All three of us are enjoying good health.

With hearty greetings to you all,  
BRAM and JOANNE VEGTER

# our little magazine



## From the Mailbox

Hello Busy Beavers,

Don't you think it's time we have a contest again? We always enjoy that!

Let's make it a POETRY CONTEST this time. And let's see what we can do!

What will you write about? Some of you are good at writing limericks or funny poems, and some of you are good at writing something more serious. With winter and Christmas coming maybe you'd like to write about that!

Give it a try. I wish you success!

You know my address, right? Aunt Betty, Box 54, Fergus, Ontario N1M 2W7.

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Here is a birthday poem for all the Busy Beavers who are celebrating their birthday this month.

"Jesus increased in wisdom and stature,  
And favour with God and man."

You should grow wiser and try hard this year  
To please God as much as you can.

Happy birthday, Busy Beavers. Have a very happy day together with your family and friends. And may the Lord bless and keep you also in the year ahead.

Pieter Nyenhuis	Dec. 5	Charles Lodder	Dec. 19
Bonita Stiksma	5	Walter Van Grootheest	19
Martin Vander Wel	5	Rita Bouwsema	21
Yolanda Jongsma	6	Edward Versteeg	21
Alinda Greta Kuik	6	Linda Meliefste	23
Albert Riemersma	6	Karl Veldkamp	24
Glenn Leffers	7	Corinne Welfing	24
Loretta Dam	8	Corinne Medemblik	25
Wilma De Vos	8	Jacky Nyenhuis	26
Edith Hofsink	10	Pearl De Vries	27
Sharon Koerselman	11	Audrey Bultena	28
Wendy Endeman	12	Betty Ann	
Anna Riemersma	15	Vander Meulen	28
Denise Van Amerongen	15	David Nienhuis	29
		Mirjam	
Elaine Bisschop	16	Vander Bruggen	29
Jacqueline Kobes	17	Christine Van Zandwijk	29
Margaret Eelhart	18	Miriam Bosma	30
Jack Lodder	18	Wilma Bouwman	30
		Louis Dijkstra	30

(Busy Beavers, do you see the name of your older brother or sister in this list, and he/she is really "too old" to be a Busy Beaver? Please write and tell me if this is the case, will you?)

Sounds to me as if you had a good time on your holiday, *Edith Hofsink*. You did well on your quiz, too. Keep up the good work, Edith.

Hello *Sylvia Poppe*. Nice to hear from you again. And you did very well on your quiz, too. I hope you will like your reward!

Thank you for the quiz you sent in *Adrian Hamoen*. You mean to keep the Busy Beavers busy, don't you?

And thanks to you, too, *Elaine Hamoen*. Write again soon!

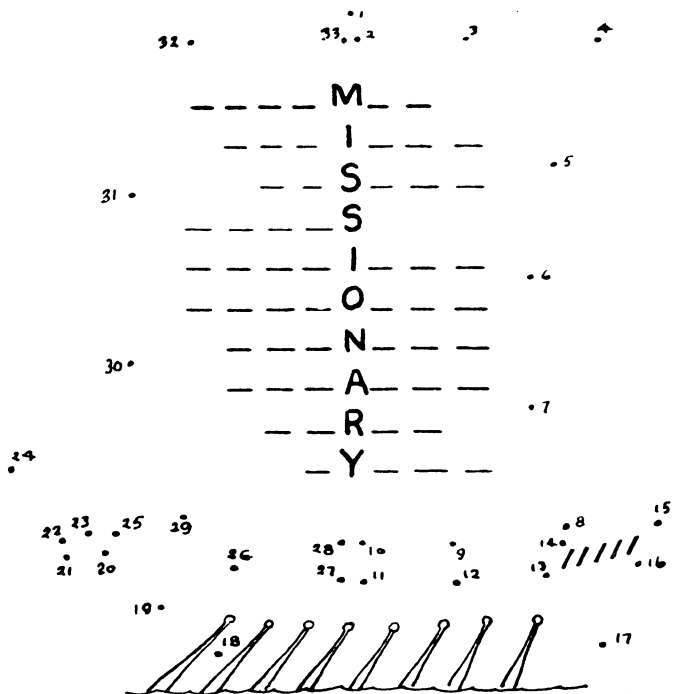
You did very well on your quiz, too, *Joanne Oostdijk*. Thank you for your nice letter. Till next time!

### QUIZ TIME

Remember we were talking about Mission Reports before? Did you read some? Good for you!

Now here is another mission quiz for you to do.

### MISSIONARY PUZZLE



Follow the dots and see what Paul used in making his missionary trips across the Mediterranean Sea. Look up the Scripture verses and fill in the puzzle with names of some of the places Paul visited on his journeys.

M. Acts 13: 5	O. Acts 16: 11
I. Acts 13: 14	N. Acts 14: 1
S. Acts 14: 6	A. Acts 14: 25
S. Acts 16: 8	R. Acts 14: 6
I. Acts 16: 12	Y. Acts 16: 7