



Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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“Een Wel Gedresseert Schoolmeester”

OR

“A Well-trained Schoolmaster”

“Now that your honour is in need of a well-trained schoolmaster, may God give him the wisdom and prudence in the selection of such a person.” So writes Simon Janz Verwey in his letter of application for the post of schoolmaster at Zaltbommel. After he has listed his educational specialties, all in the commercial field, he adds the other abilities necessary for the job; namely, “extraordinarily beautiful singing, as is God pleasing.” On hearing him sing he is convinced that “your honour will be surprised, nay astounded, that such a sound in reading and singing can come from so delicate a body.”

Following the custom at Geneva, the Convent of Wesel (1568) instructed the churches to appoint the schoolmaster to lead the congregation in the singing of the psalms, if the minister was not experienced in matters of music. The 1610 Utrecht instructions for these schoolmasters-precentors-readers give us a good picture of the practice.

Item. On Sundays before and during the week after the ringing of the bells, they shall be present in their respective churches, and, depending on the number of listeners, shall begin with the singing forthwith in such a way that the whole psalter is sung in orderly fashion from beginning to end.

Item. After having sung a pause (section) or two, they shall read some chapters from the Old or New Testament in such a way that all the books of the Holy Scriptures are read in the order given them by the ministers.

Item. They are bound to instruct the children in the singing of the psalms. In the country, where schools were only open from November to March, the schoolmaster-precentor was also the caretaker. Dirk Adriaanz Valcoogh, caretaker and schoolmaster at Barsingerhorn, informs us about his duties in this bit of doggerel.

Firstly he shall lock and unlock the church, ring its bell.

Keep the church and yard clean and well.
The Psalms before and after the sermon he shall sing.

The water for baptism he shall bring.
With edifying voice he shall read the prophecies.

And be obedient to the ministers and consistories.

Bread and wine for the Lord's Supper he shall buy,

And such things as tables, benches, cups he shall supply.

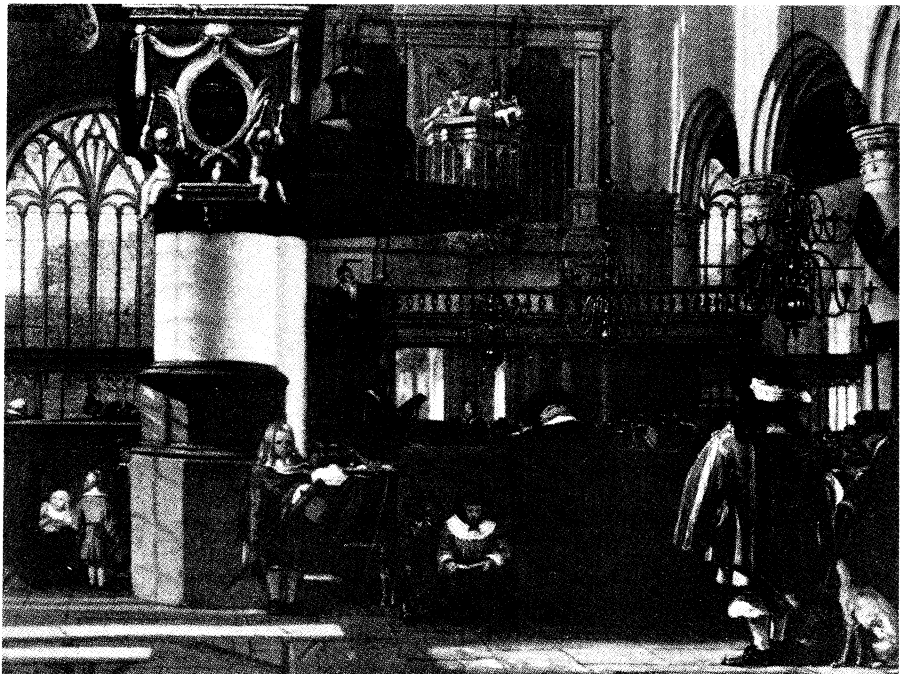
When the preacher for the sermon fails to show

He must fetch him and not be slow.

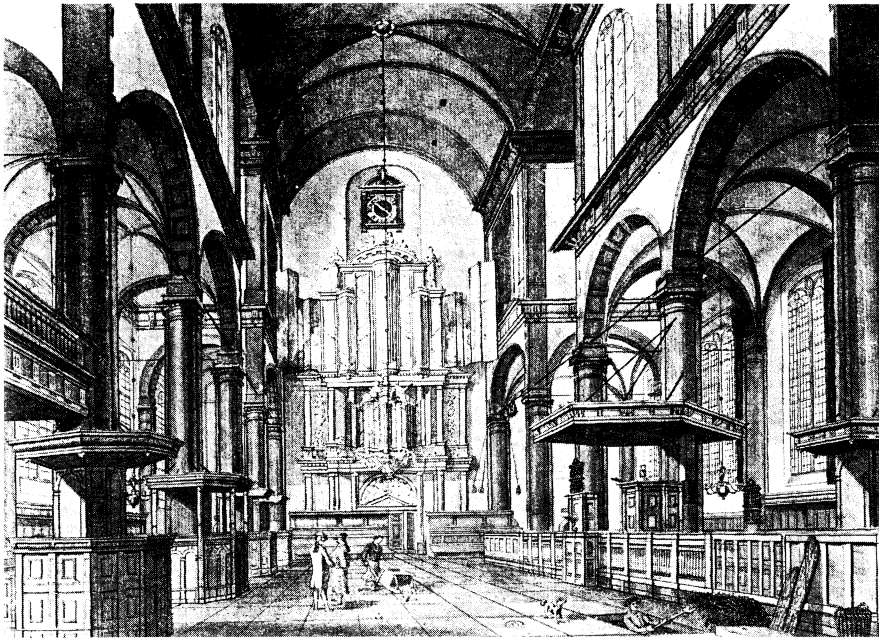
The caretaker duties were, however, not the only additional ones for the rural schoolmaster. He often (or not) functioned as organist, gravedigger, bellringer, lamplighter, towncrier, or whatever duties the civil or ecclesiastical authorities could think of. Yet all those jobs gave the schoolmaster only a meagre income, and many a schoolmaster was forced to supplement his income by working at a variety of trades such as wooden-shoe maker, carpenter, and organ builder. Caretaker

Ringels of Nieuwe Pekela was at the same time barber, kept an inn, ran a small farm, appeared as a singer at wedding parties — he was after all the precentor of the church — and still attended to his regular duties of schoolmaster and caretaker. With all these activities it is not difficult to imagine that the education of the children suffered.

Singing in some congregations fared no better, for it was not always easy to find a person who met the requirements needed; i.e., to teach, to sing, and to read. Quantity frequently made up for quality. The precentor could “belt out” a psalm “so that no sparrow remained on the roof of the church,” but don't ask whether he was always in tune. Sometimes his repertoire was limited to only a few psalms, which to everyone's annoyance were sung at each worship service. Then there were the non-singers, as was the case at Peize. Here the church visitors noted, “Of the schoolmaster he (the minister) reported, that he behaved himself and taught the children well,



E. de Witte, *Nieuwe Kerk, Delft (1617)* “The Reader-precentor”



J. Schouten, Westerkerk, A'dam "The Gravedigger"

but that he could not sing." What they did about the congregational singing, history does not record. Perhaps they did what the congregation of Leusden did. There the schoolmaster could not sing either, and, to make things worse, the minister sang off-key. So they simply dispensed with singing for a while.

Other singing peculiarities caused problems, too. The minister at Wijk bij Duurstede, who was fined by the civil authorities for conducting too long worship services, blamed it on the drawn-out singing of the precentor. Other precentors could not resist the temptation to add embellishments to the melody notes, maybe to show off their artistic talents. The precentors of Maastricht were instructed in 1654 "not to add curlicues (kiremirkens) to the melody notes but to sing plainly." In spite of the instructions the custom appeared to have continued and spread to other churches, and eventually to the congregation. Van Iperen wrote in 1777, "It is the custom to stretch the notes unduly, to roll them around in the mouth, to chew them, and via several ups and downs between teeth and palate, to fling them out like slithering snakes." The resulting noise must have been rather "heartrending."

The reading also received its share of complaints. Originally intended to acquaint the illiterate with the contents of the Scriptures, it continued even when literacy increased. "In order that

the house of God does not become a house of gossip," as the consistory of Zwartsluis put it. To combat this noisy intrusion the reader may have been forced to raise his voice. Complaints about the bellowing reader were soon voiced. A letter-to-the-editor of the "Magazine for Public Worship" put it this way: "Insensible, conceited, and unthinking readers, whose bellowing voices may well please the uncultured ears, but give rise to headaches, weariness, and loathing in the refined, sensitive hearers . . . He reads through all the periods and commas. One minute he speeds up as if a sudden rainstorm is about to spoil his hay; the next minute he looks around the church to observe all the people coming in." Rev. T. van Duinen wrote in 1846, "The congregation must think that the service starts when the minister begins. Nobody is listening to the reading, but who can understand a word of such reading? The teacher must consider commas and periods a school subject only. There not a single one escapes his attention, here he misses everyone of them. The reading becomes jabbering, droning, bawling, and stammering."

Unfortunately, as so often is the case, only the schoolmaster's antics are recorded and remembered. I am sure that there were many schoolmasters who faithfully, quietly, and efficiently performed the duties assigned to them, who served God in the congregation with the talents He had given them,

who, indeed, edified the congregation with their exemplary reading, who together with the congregation placed the sacrifice of praise before the throne of God, and who "not only taught the children reading, writing, language, and liberal arts, but also instructed them in all piety and in the catechism."

S. VANDERPLOEG

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World Report

ISRAEL IS FACED WITH A DRAMATIC DECISION AFTER THE PEACE INITIATIVE OF SADAT

By far the most spectacular event at the beginning of 1978 undoubtedly was the initiative in the Middle East to come to peace between Israel and the Arab world. In connection with this, President Anwar Sadat effected the decisive breakthrough, by travelling to Jerusalem on the 19th of November of last year to address the Knesset, Israel's parliament. However, what was the exact meaning of this courageous step?

The importance of Sadat's undertaking had to be sought in the psychological sphere. In order to discern this, one should recall the Jewish history as well as that of the state of Israel. For centuries the Jews in the dispersion were kept on the run, oppressed and trampled upon. That happened in the so-called Christian south of Europe, during the pogroms in the eastern part of the European continent and, as at an unfathomable low, during the Nazi massacre, which cost the lives of six million Jews. Was it any wonder that the cry for a country of their own, for a secure national home, increased? A people was threatened with total extinction.

But once that state was there



Sadat

(1948), that same danger persisted in its fullest extent. Four times (1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973) the Israelis had to take up arms against the Arab neighbours, who considered the Jewish state to be a foreign body which did not belong in the Middle East and had to be expelled. And again, was it any wonder that the Israelis, so to speak, became as it were allergic to national security? The alternative to a strong army was to be driven into the sea, wasn't it? And then as a gift from heaven, came President Sadat.

The Egyptian head of state carried out a historic deed with his visitation, because through this in fact he recognized the state of Israel. Even stronger he showed an understanding for Israel's desire for security. Through this, an enormous barrier had been removed. Is it not a fact that the consecutive governments in Jerusalem had stated every time that it was not their intention to expand, but that they kept the conquered territories occupied because of security considerations? Well then, Prime Minister Begin said that no gap existed any longer between Israel and Egypt which could not be bridged.

One can hardly say that President Sadat didn't make good his words, even after the disappointments which came later. In connection with this, the matter of the Palestinians had to be considered as a test-case. During a summit conference in Rabat in 1974, the Arab countries, including Egypt, had positively expressed that the "Palestine Liberation Organization" (PLO) would be the only legal representative of the Palestinian people. And that very PLO had high on its list of priorities: the destruction of the Jewish state . . .

Already during his speech, the 19th of November '77, it was noted, that Sadat did not mention the PLO when speaking about the rights of the Palestinians to have their own state. That evidently was no mistake or pure politeness towards his hosts; it was a calculated policy. The Egyptian president must have understood that he had to deny the PLO as it manifested itself under Yasser Arafat to a certain point,

if his peace initiative was to have any chance of success. A favourable circumstance for him was that the PLO sided immediately with the Arab countries, which accused Sadat of "treason," and which preferred to see him go as soon as possible.

In this way Sadat had not only caused a psychological breakthrough, but also made very concrete concessions. For even though he continued to emphasize two old demands: withdrawal by Israel from all occupied territories and recognition of the right of the Palestinians to have their own state, these conceptions had received a different, more moderate content. And



Begin

then it was Israel's turn to answer. The Jewish state, which is longing for peace, was faced with dramatic decisions.

SECURITY

The answer of Prime Minister Begin came in the form of a plan which essentially dealt with the future of the Westbank and the Palestinians. It was therefore all the more surprising that a few weeks later, when Israelis and Egyptian negotiators flew back and forth between Jerusalem and Cairo as if it always had been that way, it came to a sharp confrontation about the future of the Sinai. The desert area, on which everybody, and rightly so, had said that it would be the easiest to reach an agreement, appeared to become the breaking point.

What was the situation? The Israelis, who might hardly have hoped for a miracle any longer, had not only established Jewish settlements on the Westbank, but also in the Sinai. And whichever way you turn it, especially in the case of the desert, which was

Egyptian territory as of old, it applies that those settlements are contrary to the Geneva convention of 1948, which regulates the way the occupying powers are to conduct themselves in territories under their control. Now Sadat demands that within the framework of the peace settlement, the kibbutzim disappear, while Begin, supported by the majority of the Israelis, wants to maintain them and even wishes to strengthen them militarily.

But, of course, the standpoints clash also with respect to the Westbank. The Israeli plan for this territory proposes Palestinian home rule, that is to say, increase of the internal political authorities with preservation of the Israeli responsibility for internal and external security of the territory. It appears from Begin's plan that the sovereign power over the Westbank eventually stays in Jerusalem. This point of view particularly satisfied the orthodox Jews, since they consider Judea and Samaria (the Westbank) to be "holy" land given by God "for ever." However, Sadat did not accept these plans.

Still it appears to be possible to approach each other especially in connection with that sore subject: the Westbank. Sadat is not unsympathetic towards the plan, supported particularly by the U.S.A. to create a homeland for the Palestinians, which will have close ties with the kingdom of Jordan of King Hussein. If the King should feel for a return of the Westbank (and the Gaza strip) under his sovereignty, and if additional security guarantees could be arranged, the road to a settlement would lie open. As a matter of course, in view of this lengthy and controlled negotiations are necessary, for which patience is essential. And, of course, the sometimes sharp and open polemics of Begin and Sadat do not fit in.

Finally: Israel finds itself in a difficult dilemma. Nobody should demand of the Jewish state to sign a peace treaty with the Arabs which is based only on promises and friendly words. Unfortunately, it is a hard fact in this sinful world that only those agreements stand up in a crisis area which are based on a balance of power. Well then, for that reason Israel certainly will make concessions, but not such important ones that the national security will be at a greater risk than under normal conditions. One should pray for wisdom for the premier of Israel, that from out of the history of the Jewish people



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

Agenda Synod Groningen

Groningen, The Netherlands. The Consistory of the Reformed Church (Liberated) of Groningen-Zuid has published a concept agenda for the coming Synod of these churches, which will be convened on April 11. Reports of various deputies have been submitted regarding revision of liturgy and church order, women's voting rights, hymns, radio and television programs, and relationships with foreign churches. Many other matters will also receive the attention of Synod. Delegates from the Reformed Churches of Sumba (Indonesia), Rev. L. Kondamara and Rev. B.N. Radjah, will also visit the Synod.

Prof. Huh in Australia

Busan, Korea. On February 9, Prof. Dr. S.G. Huh left South Korea to begin his ministry in the Australian Free Re-

WORLD REPORT — Continued.

of which his whole life has been a part he may make those decisions which can lead to peace in the Middle East. It is our opinion that in this matter Jerusalem will have to look into the creation of demilitarized zones, in setting up certain military observation posts or even points of support, perhaps accompanied by tough American guarantees, rather than maintaining the Jewish settlements and holding on to sovereignty. In conclusion: if the government of Begin will let the present opportunity pass, because of the kibbutzim in the Sinai, it would be a tragic event.

DRS. A. KAMSTEEG

(transl. by Ben Mulder, Burlington)

formed Church of Armadale, which had extended a call to him some time ago. Prof. Huh taught Church History at the Theological Seminary of the Korean Presbyterian Churches.

Israeli Law Prevents Diaconal Aid

Jerusalem, Israel. The Israeli parliament, the Knesseth, has passed a law forbidding any religious organization to give money to anyone not of their own persuasion. The law is designed to prevent conversions and proselytizing for material gain. The question was debated whether this law will hinder the work of Christian mission and diaconal aid.

Roman-Orthodox World Council?

Brussels, Belgium. Writing in the Belgian Catholic Press, the Indian member of the central committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC), Bishop Paul Verghese, has proposed that a new organization of Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches be set up. The bishop feels that there is much disappointment among Catholics concerning the present cooperation with the Protestants. The two churches would have a more meaningful unity because of the greater agreement in doctrine. Although Bishop Verghese does not mean to imply that the Orthodox Church should withdraw from the WCC, commentators suggest that such might possibly be the result.

Russian Dissidents Seek Chinese Support

Moscow, Soviet Union. Seventy Baptists and Pentecostals have signed a petition directed to the chairman of the Chinese People's Republic, Hua Kuo Feng. The signers complain that they have all suffered persecution because they wanted to emigrate, and they praise the "humane diplomacy of China" in this respect. They ask the Chinese leader to appeal on their behalf. This is a totally new and surprising development in the case of Soviet dissidents.

Dutch National Bible Course

Amersfoort, The Netherlands. The Reformed Churches (Liberated) in The Netherlands have sponsored and organized a national Bible course, widely advertised in national and local newspapers. It is the intention that local churches take up contact with those who follow the course in their area. At present, almost 2000 students have applied for the course.

CL. STAM

APPEAL to ...

the General Synod of the Christian Reformed Church
the Consistories of the Christian Reformed Church
the Members of the Christian Reformed Church

At this point we wish to draw your attention to the fact that the Synods of the Christian Reformed Church were still ignoring the very point at issue and refused to deal with it! The Canadian Reformed Churches have claimed from the very beginning that what happened in the Netherlands Churches in 1942 and following years was a deviation from the truly Reformed path; that in those years the switch was thrown which brought the Churches on the wrong track; that the liberated Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland returned to the catholic path; and that the Christian Reformed Church continued its correspondence with those who continued on the wrong track, via which correspondence the evil fruits of the deviation would be introduced into the Christian Reformed Church.

But instead of going into the basic issue of the deviation from the Reformed doctrine and Church polity in 1942 and following years, the Christian Reformed Church dealt only with the effects which were seen in the Netherlands Churches (Synodical) as they appeared some twenty-five to thirty years later, although she admits having made a judgment-by-implication! And thus the Christian Reformed Church acts as a physician who, although he has been told expressly what the cause is, is willing to treat only the symptoms he finds with a person, persistently refusing to look for the cause in order to treat that cause in the first place. And because of his unwillingness to treat the cause and in spite of his declaration that he "intends to exercise his influence for the good of the patient," he becomes infected himself and begins to suffer the very same symptoms because he caught the same illness.

You will understand that some feeling of dissatisfaction became evident in the midst of the Canadian Reformed Churches and that voices were heard advocating a breaking off of the contact, seeing that no progress appeared possible. Yet, the Synod of New Westminster 1971 decided to:

continue the Committee on Contact with the Christian Reformed Church with the mandate to discuss the matter of Church correspondence with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, until the position of the Christian Reformed Church has become clear and the mandate, as formulated and given by Synod 1968, Acts Article 134, sub VIII, has been completed.

As a result of the development of the discussions, the Synod 1972 of the Christian Reformed Church de-

ecided to 'discontinue the special Contact Committee with the Canadian Reformed Churches. It reasoned that the main item remaining on the agenda was the correspondence with the Gereformeerde Kerken (Synodical), and stated "Our denomination's present relationship with the Gereformeerde Kerken is in the province of synod and its Inter-Church Relations Committee, and the special committee for contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches is not involved in determining that relationship." Communications were, from then on, to be directed either to Synod or to the Inter-Church Relations Committee.

Your Synod 1973 dealt with the Church correspondence and its implications. In Article 53 of the Acts of Synod we read,

In considering this question over the past three years, the committee faced the more fundamental question of the definition of a Sister-Church relationship in general, and whether that relationship as defined by the Synod of 1944 can be applied to any church with which we are in correspondence. That relationship was defined as a unity which, if it were not for the barriers of geography and language, would result in union.

...

The Inter-Church Relations Committee recognizes that, *given our present definition, it is likely that the demands of integrity will compel us to discontinue our Sister-Church relationship with the Gereformeerde Kerken.* Your advisory committee concurs in this. At the same time, however, we believe it is both important and necessary to maintain fruitful contact and correspondence with the Gereformeerde Kerken (emphasis ours).

What did Synod do? Did Synod, after 27 years, finally fulfil its obligation by examining the decisions and actions of 1942 and following years?

No: upon recommendation by its advisory committee, Synod decided that the matter of correspondence with other Churches should be investigated in order to come to a re-definition. Thus the whole issue was evaded!

The Synod 1974, Acts, Article 62, C., decided:

1. In place of the existing "sister-church" and "corresponding church" relationships in denominational inter-church relations, synod establishes one relationship to be designated "Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship."

FOUNDATIONS:

- a. This relationship provides a realistic way of facing the complexities of contemporary inter-church relations.
- b. This relationship can and should be employed to strengthen rather than weaken inter-church bonds wherever this is warranted by Reformed ecumenical principles.
- c. This relationship protects the Church's integrity in inter-church fellowship.
2. Synod declares that the receiving of churches into ecclesiastical fellowship shall imply, and where possible and desirable shall involve:
 - a. exchange of fraternal delegates at major assemblies,
 - b. occasional pulpit fellowship,
 - c. intercommunion (i.e. fellowship at the table of the Lord),
 - d. joint action in areas of common responsibility,
 - e. communication on major issues of joint concern,
 - f. the exercise of mutual concern and admonition with a view to promoting the fundamentals of Christian unity.
3. Synod declares that all churches presently recognized as "sister-churches" shall be considered churches in ecclesiastical fellowship.
4. Synod mandates its Inter-Church Relations Committee to recommend which additional churches are to be received into ecclesiastical fellowship.
7. With regard to the GKN, synod encourages its ICRC to pursue appropriate avenues of increased contact.

We hardly know how to express the great disappointment at those decisions of the 1974 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. Is that, then, the end of the long road? Is that the fruit of the efforts made to convince the Christian Reformed Church that she should at least investigate what happened in 1942 and following years; that she should close the door through which errors and heresies enter in; that she should honour her obligations in accordance with the rules for correspondence?

The rules for correspondence have been changed so that the obligation to make a judgment is eliminated. By abandoning the 1944 principles, the "integrity" is protected, Synod stated. But it is a strange method of protecting integrity, for, in order to achieve that, the circle of "Churches in ecclesiastical fellowship" is made wider than the circle of "sister-churches" or "corresponding churches" (see point 4 above). And instead of heeding the warnings against continuation of the special relationship with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, Synod encouraged

its Inter-Church Relations Committee to pursue appropriate avenues of *increased* contact. The wider the circle is made of "Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship," the shallower the basis must become. Thus the above change is no improvement and return but a further straying away and a deterioration. The Inter-Church Relations Committee admitted frankly that it was very reluctant to follow its mandate to inquire into and to evaluate "recent theological trends in our sister church in The Netherlands and to advise the next synod whether or not such trends warrant a change in our relationship to these churches," to which was added in 1971 the instruction "to include in its inquiry the letter received from the Gereformeerde Kerken, and official pronouncements and decisions of the Synods of the Gereformeerde Kerken." And from the report which the Committee submitted to the 1974 Synod it became very clear and evident that there was a reluctance to go into the matters which were at stake, for fear that the correspondence with those Netherlands Churches would have to be discontinued. That was to be prevented, and therefore, instead of living up to the rules and the "principles" which had governed the correspondence for all those years and instead of drawing the consequences of that, the Christian Reformed Church had to change the rules and the "principles" so that contact could be continued and even increased.

Here we see a false ecumenism, and an emptying of the meaning of the name "Church." Here we find the enervation of the meaning of true correspondence and a weakening of the confession regarding the nature and character of the Church.

It is difficult to determine whether the apparent unwillingness to face reality and to decide about the real issue is the result of the bonds with those Netherlands Churches, or whether it is the fruit of a general weakening of the awareness of the Reformed and Scriptural heritage, or both.

It is a fact which cannot be denied that the relations with the (Synodical) Gereformeerde Kerken in The Netherlands did have ruinous influences upon the Christian Reformed Church and its decisions regarding not a few doctrinal points and points of Church Polity.

As for the latter, our General Synod of Orangeville 1968 did declare that "the new Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church as adopted by Synod 1966 is not an insurmountable obstacle for further and closer contact, and eventual unity of both Churches." However, the fact that this new Church Order has been declared to be no "insurmountable" obstacle does not mean that it is no obstacle or that the Canadian Reformed Churches and their membership have no serious objections to it.

Besides, this Church Order should not be judged apart from the whole influence which those (Synod-

ical) Gereformeerde Kerken have had and still are exercising upon the Christian Reformed Church.

It is about these influences that we wish to write the following part of this appeal and testimony.

First of all, we think of the seven interrelated points concerning the nature and extent of biblical authority adopted by Synod 1972 as pastoral advice to the churches in the light of Report 44. Synod submitted this study report to the churches as providing guidelines for the interpretation and further discussion of the nature and extent of biblical authority, and even instructed the Board of Publications to make available to the denomination, in a popular form, the contents of Report 44, for the purpose of reaching also the general membership of the churches (Acts 1972, Article 52).

The confession of the authority of Holy Scripture is of uttermost importance for the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, not in the last place in our day and age. Allow us therefore to elaborate on the pastoral advice of Synod 1972 and the report entitled "The Nature and Extent of Biblical Authority."

The title and its history are already significant.

If a Reformed confessor is asked what he believes concerning the authority of the Bible, he would answer that this authority is divine and unlimited. He would even be a little surprised to be asked specifically about the *nature* and *extent* of Biblical authority. The Report itself observes that the terms "nature and extent" are not ordinarily applied to the authority of Scripture (Acts 1972, p. 505).

Where did those terms come from? They were taken from the letter of the Gereformeerde Kerken in The Netherlands to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod in 1963, in which letter they judged that the RES declarations of 1958 failed to make sufficient distinctions in dealing with the nature and extent of the authority of Scripture, and in particular failed to discuss the "connection between the content and purpose of Scripture as the saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ and the consequent and deducible authority of Scripture" ("*het daarmee gegeven en daaruit af te leiden gezag der Schrift*").

The expression "the nature and extent of the authority of Scripture," unknown in the Christian Reformed Church until 1972, was taken up as title of a pastoral recommendation of your Synod and brought under the special attention of the general membership of your churches. But is it not a well-known fact that if in our time someone wants to attack an article of our Christian faith, he often will begin to speak about the *nature* (Dutch: "de aard") or the *mode* or the *extent* of that which we confess in order to relativize our confession? Should Synod 1972 not have been very cautious and should it not have pointed out that it did not want to take over the expression introduced by "De

Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland" (Synodical)? Did it now not follow a wrong Dutch example and is this title as such not already a symptom of the influence of "De Gereformeerde Kerken" (Synodical) on the life of the Christian Reformed Church?

The first point of the pastoral instruction reads as follows: "Synod calls the churches to a wholehearted recognition that *Scripture, which is the saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ*, addresses us with full divine authority and that this authority applies to Scripture in its total extent and in all its parts."

Thankfully we noted that Synod 1972 spoke about "full divine authority" of Holy Writ; but is it Biblical and Reformed to state that Scripture is the *saving* revelation of God in Jesus Christ? The Report states that general revelation is a non-redemptive revelation while Scripture is a redemptive saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ. "All Scripture is redemptive in character; it is addressed to fallen man in order to redeem him totally by redirecting him in faith to God, his Creator-Redeemer." Now, no Reformed confessor shall deny that Scripture reveals what God has done for man's salvation, but is this the complete contents of Scripture and may we express this in the way Synod 1972 did, namely that Scripture is the *saving* revelation of God in Jesus Christ? Do the Scriptures (Moses) also not accuse (John 5:45)? The Lord Jesus Christ warned us: "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings has a judge: the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day. For I have not spoken on My own *authority* . . ." (John 12:48, 49). Should this warning not have been heeded in pastoral instruction about Biblical authority?

The apostle Paul writes about his preaching: "For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life" (II Corinthians 2:15, 16). Is it then, to say the least, not one-sided to declare that Scripture is the *saving* revelation of God in Jesus Christ?

If we ask the question where this confessional statement came from, the answer is again: from "De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland" (Synodical). They used it in their letter to the RES in 1963 when they spoke about the connection between the content and purpose of "Scripture as the saving revelation of God in Jesus Christ" and the concomitant and deducible authority of Scripture. It is another illustration of the influence in doctrine exercised by these Dutch deviating churches upon the Christian Reformed Church. Small wonder then, that an author declared in *The Banner*: "The 1972 Synod's view of the Bible and its message is *basically* that which has long been advocated by Prof. G.C. Berkouwer and lies at the heart of what has come to be called by those who reject it the

'new theology' of the Gereformeerde Kerken" (*The Banner*, November 10, 1972).

The Report engaged in a critical evaluation of certain methods of interpreting the Bible as presently employed by some Reformed scholars. It remarked: "Most of the views examined in this report have been propounded by scholars from one of our sister churches, the Gereformeerde Kerken of The Netherlands. Because of the close ties between us these views have found their way into our circles" (Acts 1972, p. 534).

Needless to say, the change in the name of the relationship does not prevent these views from finding their way into the Christian Reformed Church. We as Reformed confessors appreciate that your Synod called the churches to maintain the clear witness of the creeds to the authority of Scripture as inseparably bound up with the historical reality of the events recorded in Scripture. But again, we hear non-confessional language when "Synod urges the churches to remember that . . . they should recognize that these events are presented and *interpreted* in terms of their revelational meaning" (Article 52, C3c.).

Apart from the question whether the general membership of the churches understands this theological language of a pastoral exhortation, the question arises whether the proclamation by the Holy Spirit of God's acts of redemption in Scripture may be described as "interpretation." Does this term, which is also used in reports of "Faith and Order" of the World Council of Churches (e.g. the Leuven report, 1971), do justice to the testimony of the Holy Spirit in Holy Writ? Does it not open the door to faulty dichotomies which the Report itself rightly rejects, among others the dualism of history versus proclamation?

Report 44 declared that it is clear that the denial of the historicity of the fall of our first parents at the beginning of human history cannot be harmonized with the confessions. The advisory committee mentioned the name of Prof. H.M. Kuitert, and said that his position is also rejected where we read, "The contention that these chapters (Genesis 1-11) do not present events that really happened is certainly in conflict with our Reformed Confessions and in conflict with Scripture itself."

Later, in the same year, 1972, however, the Synod of "De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland" (Synodical) decided that the views of Prof. H.M. Kuitert do not deviate from the confessions to such a degree that special measures have to be taken. Does the Christian Reformed Church now also follow the example of the Dutch churches by stating that certain contentions are in conflict with our Reformed Confessions and even in conflict with Scripture itself, but that they are to be taken so lightly that no special measures are warranted?

We ask this question because of our fear that the

Christian Reformed Church, be it at a slower pace, is taking the same route as her former sister churches in The Netherlands do. We would like to illustrate this by the very important case of Dr. H. Wiersinga who denies that Christ bore the judgment of God in our place.

Your last held Synod 1976 requested the Stated Clerk "to write the Synod of the GKN expressing joy and appreciation for its significant action, upholding the confession of the churches and the unity of the church in the confession, along the lines of the letter written by our IRC to the IRC of the GKN" (Acts 1976, Article 43, VI,C).

Your Inter-Church Relations Committee had written that the decision in the case-Wiersinga "will have a very positive effect in the relationship of our two churches and of the Reformed churches generally."

Now, from the Dutch decision, to be found in translation in your Acts 1976, pp. 336ff., it is clear that the Synod of Maastricht (1975-1976) made a doctrinal statement which upholds the truth that the Crucified, in the suffering and death which He underwent, bore in our stead the divine judgment on human guilt. This "element of the confession of the church" is "of such an essential nature that a doing injustice to it and a contradiction of it is not admissible for the church, also because in this way the unity of the faith and the oneness of the church is brought into peril." This is a theoretical statement. It remains that because Synod only "expects that the Consistory of Amsterdam will see to it that such 'a doing injustice to it and a contradiction of it' not occur, that it be opposed, in the same way as she expects this of all other church assemblies." When Synod Maastricht uttered this expectation, this assembly and all who followed the development of the case-Wiersinga knew that this expectation would not be fulfilled. The Consistory of Amsterdam refused to take measures against the heresy of Dr. H. Wiersinga. The denial that the Crucified Lord Jesus Christ bore in our stead the divine judgment on human guilt, will remain unchecked as far as church discipline is concerned.

Your Inter-Church Relations Committee wrote to The Netherlands that they did not wish to offer specific comment with respect to the decision itself "since that would be to enter into matters that are not rightfully ours to enter." Your Synod 1976 considered it sufficient to express "joy and appreciation." Have you forgotten your own conviction of 1944 that "the official stand of a church is a far from reliable index of its true condition"? Does the change in official relationship from sister churches to churches in ecclesiastical fellowship mean that in this important case you do not want to urge that church discipline be exercised? If a decision is weak with respect to church discipline in matters of the doctrine of the truth of Christ's suffering

and death in our stead, is only a cause of joy and appreciation and is supposed to have a very positive effect in the relationship of your two churches, we fear that there will be a lack of doctrinal church discipline in your own church too. In this context we would wish to remind you of the admission of Dr. A. Verhey into the ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.

In the Report 1976, your Inter-Church Relations Committee calls the problem of The Gereformeerde Kerken in The Netherlands well-known and difficult to solve. "Living close to and intimately with the schism in its ranks in 1944 (the Schilder controversy) the GKN has become inordinately fearful . . . of schism and the loss of younger members of the church who are largely sympathetic to a freer and more open stance to doctrine and life such as advocated by some of its leaders."

You will understand that it is painful for us that your Committee still speaks about "the Schism in 1944" and "the Schilder controversy," where you never investigated the doctrinal struggle of 1942 and following years.

Because of the fact that the GKN then exercised false church discipline and did so in a hierarchical manner, they are today unable to employ the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. And because of the fact that after the Second World War you did not want to investigate the matter, although it was your duty according to your rules for correspondence with sister churches abroad, you have now officially enervated the relationship and you do not want "to enter into matters that are not rightfully ours to enter."

In the meantime, your own church will be infested with the deadly illness of the relativizing of the au-

thority of God's Word and of the attack on the contents thereof, even on the truth of the gospel, Jesus Christ Crucified.

Brothers, we do not write these things with pleasure. Therefore, we did not try to bring together all things in which we sense in your church a wrong development in doctrinal respect. We restricted ourselves to the basic issue of the authority of Holy Scripture and of the atoning work of Christ our Substitute.

In the report 1976, your Inter-Church Relations Committee mentioned about the contact with the Gereformeerde Kerken of The Netherlands (Vrijge-maakt): ". . . the relationship of churches in ecclesiastical fellowship is an unacceptable category for their church which has only one category, that of 'correspondence church' in the sense of near identity in all confessional and church order matters."

The stance of our sister churches is the same as ours, and is the stance you took for decades in the past. Brothers, return to the Reformed church polity in which the unity of true faith is decisive for the bond between sister churches, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Let us no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him Who is the head, into Christ (Ephesians 4).

Yours in Him,

J. FABER

D. VANDERBOOM

W.W.J. VANOENE

A Corner for the Sick

"The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the Lord lack no good things." Psalm 34:10

God created the heaven and the earth of nothing. We confess in Lord's Day 9 that He upholds and governs the same by His eternal counsel and providence. He cares for us, not only as the God who created us, but for the sake of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, He cares for us as a loving Father who knows all our needs. That is why we can trust in Him and not doubt, but confess that whatever evil He sends upon us He will turn to our good, for He is able to do it, being almighty God, and willing also, being a faithful Father.

The Lord willing we will have the following birthdays coming up:

JIM VANDERHEIDEN

R.R. # 1, Smithville, Ontario L0R 2A0

Jim will be celebrating his 19th birthday on March 15th. He is attending school, but helps his father in the greenhouse also. He loves reading and playing accordion. Shall we surprise him with a lot of cards?

DEREK KOK

377 Dominion Street,
Strathroy, Ontario N7G 3G9

Derek will be 8 years old on April 2nd. He will be very happy to receive cards. We have mentioned him before, in our sick corner, but we cannot let his birthday pass by without our attention.

Please send in names and addresses of the sick and lonely (with permission of the person involved) and possibly with some information concerning the circumstances and please do not forget our "special" children's birthdays.

Send in your requests to:

MRS. J.K. RIEMERSEMA

380 St. Andrew Street East,
Fergus, Ontario N1M 1R1



Report No. 89
 São José da Coroa Grande, Pe.
 November 30, 1977

Reverend and Esteemed Brethren,

With gratitude to the Lord, we may report that the work during the month of November could be continued without interruption. The Lord granted us health and the opportunities to preach the Gospel from the pulpit, in the classroom and in the homes of the people, the Lord Himself restraining the powers of darkness which oppose the advance of the Gospel. It is a wonder of God's grace that in a world which has been dominated by Satan for so many years, freedom and mercy may be proclaimed and offered in the Name of Christ to all those who believe His Word and that this turns the evil one powerless. It is a spiritual warfare, but the victorious outcome is already determined.

It is in this broad perspective that we must continue to see our work, even though it may only be a very small contribution in the whole of the mighty Kingdom of God.

Attendance: This month attendance has slackened somewhat. There are some apparent reasons. Several members have been ill, while others, especially the younger ones, want to benefit from the stream of tourists that pour into our town every weekend now. Then there is the present heat-wave which tires out the local people as well. Even the ocean tides effect the attendance. When the tide is very low on Sunday morning several prefer to go to the coral reef to catch fish or look for sea shells, while with other tides night-fishing effects the Wednesday evening meetings. Yet it is often unexplainable why attendances rises and declines at times. The festive season of the coming month, combined with the holidays for the children, will probably show an increase in attendance again.

Illness: There has been much illness around town this last month. The very hot and dry weather may have contributed to this. *Maria de Solidade* has been very ill. One morning she even called all of us thinking that the Lord would take her home already. But she recovered again and Sunday was back in Church, although still very frail and

weak. Her crisis may have been due to an overdose of a tranquilizing medicine. *Albertina* also was sick, but is recuperating again. Depressing circumstances in her life play a big role: her husband being unfaithful and living with another woman as well. *Noêmia's* condition shows little improvement. She had some bad days again this month.

Paulo Felix, who has been in poor health for a long time already, became very ill early this month. He has been in and out of the hospital several times, and br. Kuik has done what he could to have him treated, but there seems to be no hope for him. He is a heart patient and it appears that he has only a few days to live. Presently he is home and suffering very much, while his wife and family seem to be more concerned about the extra work it provides for them than about his agony. It is a pitiful sight to see this man being carried back and forth from his hammock to a straw mat outside in the sand. May the Lord relieve him soon, and grant him what he is longing for: to be with Christ. Paulo believes and knows what his only comfort is in life and death even though he realizes he deserves it no more than other sinners. This man does not exalt himself nor his own works, like most people here will, but simply trusts in the redeeming sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

You may recall that Paulo Felix became a catechumene several years ago, but so far has not done public profession of faith because we were waiting for his marriage to be legalized first. Because of difficulties in obtaining a correct birth-certificate this has been delayed. We know, however, that he belongs to the Lord.

Christmas Program: This month we have been busily working on the program for Christmas, especially with the Sunday School, but also other groups such as Young People's Society, Youth Club and Girls' Choir are regularly rehearsing songs. For the Sunday School we will have a declamation, with the reciting of many verses, which most of the children eagerly memorized in one week's time as a home assignment. They show good cooperation.

Maintenance: The walls around the church building and the house received a whitewash and the interior of the building is being painted, giving it all a clean and neat appearance again after the wet season. Then there are the continuous repairs, since the life-span of all national products is rather short. Our fridge broke down again, even though the motor was replaced only two months ago. Some essential parts of the kitchen sink-drains were corroded away, and had to be replaced. The few chairs we have in the church building fell apart and had to be replaced. These repairs could not wait but it appears that maintenance of the property may involve more in the near future. Quite a bit of the woodwork is being eaten away by termites, or white ants. The ruinous results of their hard labour only show at the end when you discover that there is no wood left behind the hard coating of the paint which they leave intact. Fortunately there is not much woodwork in the construction here.

Visa Problems? Processing of visa applications has been very slow for the past half year and it seems that this is due to the fact that new laws may be in the making regarding the entry of foreigners. There are indications that reluctance is not so much directed against the foreigners themselves as to the belongings they were allowed to bring along up to now without limit. However, we hope that the outcome of the deliberations will be favourable and will not inconvenience or delay the arrival of our colleague, Rev. Boersma. We are already beginning to look forward to their arrival. It will be pleasant to be able to spend some time together here, even though he will be very occupied with language-study then.

This is all for this month. May the Lord enable us all, on the homefront as well as in the mission field, to fight the good fight, so that we will not succumb in this spiritual warfare but serve the coming of His kingdom.

With greetings, also on behalf of my wife,

Yours in the Lord's service,
 C. VAN SPRONSEN

OUR COVER

Inside the Maranatha Church at Surrey, B.C., with the combined choirs of New Westminster, Cloverdale and Abbotsford. (Photos courtesy Dick Byzitter, Surrey, B.C.)

news medley

At first I planned to start with the Churches alphabetically, but that fell through because I have to pay attention to a couple in Coaldale first. That is brother and sister H. Lefers, who celebrated their golden wedding anniversary, on March 8. It seems such a short while ago that we congratulated them at the occasion of their forty-fifth wedding anniversary, and I looked that up in **Clarion**; however, the other time there was no picture to show us the grateful couple. This time we are doing better. I met them again during the synod 1977, and can assure you that they look still the same as they present themselves on the picture. May the LORD our God, Who guided and protected and strengthened them during these years of marriage, continue to abide with them and to cause them to receive much joy within the family circle and within the communion of saints. Once you start congratulating, you will always find more reasons to do so. We therefore also extend our congratulations to brother and sister Buikema in Burlington who celebrated their forty-fifth wedding anniversary on March 3rd, and to brother and sister J.G. Wiegers of New Westminster, B.C., who on March 1st celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Of the latter couple we did publish a picture in 1973 and I have an idea that they have not changed much in outward appearance. We are convinced of the gratitude of these brothers and sisters and of their families, and therefore rejoice with them. Approaching or already having exceeded the limit of the strong ones, they will have many experiences of the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord. Of these they can be assured also for the future.

The second paragraph which I should like to dedicate to a special topic is one that deals with the Church directories. I wish to thank those brothers (and sisters?) who took the trouble to send me one of their Church. They come in very handy, for it happens at the most unexpected moment that I may need an address of a family in a faraway Church; or I have received a letter but — after having removed the stamp carefully — have deposited the envelope into the wastepaper basket and am now in difficulties, because I don't have the address! Sometimes I try also to register the changes of address as I find them in the various bulletins, but that takes too much time and sometimes I just forget to do it. Anyway: many thanks!

It did not seem like a bad idea to follow the alphabetical order in this medley. That means that we begin with the Church at Chatham. That is the first Church about which I have some news. Actually, it is not so much news, but it is something which I should like to pass on to you, for Mr. Kuntz will not find it in the school bulletins in all likelihood.

The Rev. J. Geertsema writes about a decision made at the meeting of the School Society. If I am not mistaken it is the decision to proceed and to add Grade IX to the existing school, as of September this year. In his discussion of that decision, my colleague makes the following remark, "When we have no young children anymore, yet as grandparents we came to Canada. So we can now contribute for our own grandchildren whom we, so to speak, placed in this country."

That is an argument which I underline wholeheartedly. We may also state with gratitude that there are indeed many grandparents who continue to support the schools with their contributions and their membership. It is true to fact that the decision to immigrate into Canada had consequences also for the future generations. And there are, fortunately, not too many members among us who, as soon as their own children are off school, withdraw their support from those institutions. There are some who cease being a member and become a "donator" as they are sometimes called. (By the way, my faithful "Webster" does not even know that word. I have a slight idea that it is some "immigrant-slang" and is not proper English. Can anyone help me and inform me about it?) That is to be deplored, for the contributions of a donor are generally smaller than those of a member. And the responsibility towards one's own children may then have ceased (at least directly and for the moment), but there remains an obligation also for the future generations. For that reason I am grateful for the argument which Chatham's bulletin brought to our attention.

From Chatham we jump all the way to Edmonton. "The Thing" (remember?) will grow. The report on the Consistory meeting tells us that a letter had been received "with recommendation for a Mixture Rank of Organ pipes, which Dirk Janz. Zwart from Holland was able to get for us. Since this is the only rank of pipes which is still missing on our organ, the Consistory has decided to buy this set. The cost involved for the congregation, including freight and duties is about \$500.00" That is a bargain, I should say, considering the number of pipes involved. It appears that the presence of our brother Zwart in Canada yields more fruits than just the pleasure of listening to him. Not only in Edmonton but also in Cloverdale did he show much interest in our instruments and advise the Consistories.

During his recent tour, brother Zwart gave concerts in Edmonton, Burlington, Toronto, and Fergus, if everything went according to schedule. That is something I don't know at the time of this writing.

Now we go to the Rehoboth Church in Burlington. Or should I have dealt with them first of all, since we were going to follow in alphabetical order? I leave it up to you to figure that one out!

Anyway, let us continue with the above mentioned concert tour. The Rev. Cl. Stam writes that that tour and the concert to be given in Rehoboth Church will provide "an exciting opportunity to hear our beautiful organ played by a professional musician." What he then adds to that is important, I think: "At the same time, however, we are grateful that we ourselves have well-qualified organists, who serve us Sunday after Sunday with well-prepared accompaniment. We are often not aware of the extra hours that our brethren must put into their efforts and we take this opportunity to express our gratitude publicly."

I could not agree more.

Whenever someone makes a mistake, everyone talks about it, it seems. When an Elder has to read a sermon and if he makes two or three mistakes, you can hear that during the coffee-break when you go visiting. And if an organist hits a few "wrong" keys (actually there are no wrong keys; the only mistake is that he hits a key at the wrong moment and in the wrong cord) people are shivering and cast disturbing glances in the direction of the console. But who is aware of the hours that the brethren (and sisters) spend in practising? And what about the books they buy which give them new material? A minister may hear an encouraging word

from parishioners once in a while; are there many who tell the organist that they enjoyed his playing that particular morning or afternoon?

It is with pleasure and gratitude that I pass on to our readers the words of appreciation which the Rev. Stam so aptly and appropriately "spoke" regarding the organists.

We are not through with Rehoboth Burlington yet.

"Since Mission Aid is now paid from the church budget and since it was decided to discontinue collections for debt redemption, it is no longer necessary to have a second collection **every** Sunday. Starting next Sunday and **every other Sunday** from then on there will be **no** second collection."

It goes without saying that I am happy about every reduction in the number of collections, especially when they were for purposes which are "concealed" collections for "the Church."

I deplore the paying of mission aid quota "from the church budget," for I have always been a defender of keeping mission and mission aid separate. I am still convinced that the work of mission aid, however closely it may be connected with the mission work as such, is no task of the Church, which has the mandate to preach the Gospel, teach the nations, make them Christ's disciples, and administer the sacraments once a group of believers has been formed. And I am also convinced that only those activities should be paid for from the budget of the Church which are directly a task of the Church. When only ecclesiastical matters are to be dealt with at ecclesiastical assemblies (and that includes Consistories) then it is only a matter of course, in my opinion, that only ecclesiastical activities should be paid for from the ecclesiastical treasury.

Whether "Nearer Reformation" is indeed the correct translation of "Nadere (i.e. further, continuing, more thorough) Reformatie" is something which I venture to doubt.

From the **Family Post** of Lincoln and Smithville we gather that the storm which wrought havoc in Ontario some weeks ago also caused extensive damage to the greenhouses of a Smithville family, resulting in a big financial loss. The Congregation was exhorted via the bulletin to prove the communion of saints in providing relief and aid.

The only Church about which we have to tell something still is the Toronto Church. From the Church bulletin I learned that the offer which the Brampton/Toronto School Society made on a parcel of land has been accepted. It was decided, however, to postpone the opening of a school till September 1979.

Now that the Dutch services (which were held at 9:00 a.m.) have been discontinued, at least for the time being, suggestions were made to have the morning services start somewhat earlier than the usual 10:30 time. The Consistory decided to keep the times of the services at 10:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. "The main reason for not making it any earlier in the morning was for our members who have to travel quite a distance to attend church."

Oftentimes it is not realized, but when you say "Toronto" you may get the idea that the members are living relatively close to the Church building. However, that is an illusion. For those who are not familiar with the surroundings and region here I may say that, travelling at full speed, i.e. at some 100 km/h, it takes you half an hour to get from the one end of the metropolitan Toronto area to the other via the freeway. It is easily understood that it takes much longer if one has to drive through the city where the speed limit is

50th Wedding Anniversary



Hiske Leffers, born June 22, 1902, married Sjoerdje Bakker, born July 10, 1901, on March 8, 1928, in Lutten, Overijssel, and thus they celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on March 8, 1978. They emigrated to Canada in the spring of 1951 and went to the Lethbridge region, where they have lived ever since. They are now retired from farming, are both in good health, and are living in Coaldale, within walking distance of the Church building. Six of their children live in the Coaldale area, one lives in Houston, B.C., and one lives in Edmonton, Alberta. All their children are married and the Leffers have 41 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

much lower and where traffic lights always seem to turn red when you are approaching them.

The Toronto Consistory further decided the following: "to contact the Willowdale Christian Reformed Church by letter. Copies of the appeal to the Christian Reformed Church will be sent to them so that each elder can receive one copy. In an accompanying letter we will express our willingness to further discuss the contents and purpose of this Appeal with them, if so desired."

Everyone is, of course, interested in the weal and woe of the H. Versteeg family, on their way to the mission field. The bulletin informs us that they "received word from our missionary Rev. Versteeg that he also uses his time in Holland to follow another course in the Indonesian language. Around the middle of March he will depart for Irian Jaya, the Lord willing."

And under the heading "News from Our Missionary," the Rev. J. Mulder (?) writes,

This week we received a letter from the Versteegs. They are enjoying the cold, wet weather of Holland as they write. They had a good trip via London. "Also Corinne was okay until we waited at Schiphol for about

4½ hours for our luggage. Even after all that waiting we left the airport without them. Apparently they went to Jakarta, Indonesia, ahead of us, to the permanent address instead of to the destination we had put on the tags. We finally received our luggage about a week later." Don't think that they went without any clean clothes! "One of our aunts lent us some clothes in the

meantime," Rev. Versteeg writes. Let's hope that there were some clothes for the Rev. from an uncle!"
There are more optimists in Toronto.

The "Action Committee" assures us that "Spring Is Coming." They are already organizing a "Spring Blossom Bus Tour." They must be clairvoyants. I do see lots of white outside; however, it is not blossom: it is a nice, woolly blanket of snow with some bare branches sticking out of it.
Cheerio!
vO

Letters-to-the-Editor

Dear Mr. Editor,

For the benefit of Br. Henry Bartels, who should be a little more careful in using words like "slandorous comments," I would like to suggest that he reads my letter again. It would certainly be a good idea to read "In Retrospect" also. I had a very amusing experience with a sister who criticized my letter, but admitted that she had not read Rev. Werkman's article.

I felt that the writer of "1977 In Retrospect" made a few statements to the readers of *Clarion* which he should prove, and I asked for this in my letter published in the January 14th issue.

I also asked the Editor, in the interest of our Church members not to print any of his writings unless unproved statements like I quoted would be removed. So far I have not seen any proof.

Let me assure our readers that I do not have anything personal against our Reverend, and I would rather not see any name at the bottom of any article. We should be mature enough to assess any writings on their own merit. And as mature readers we are entitled to know what the writer of any material means in addressing us. It is as simple as that.

Sincerely yours,
Arie J. Hordyk

Dear Editor,

This time I feel I must write. Once again the older generation has disappointed me and caused me to wonder just what is "love in the church" or the communion of saints?

So often we hear "we have such a rich heritage which our young people seem to lack." The young people are accused of apathy and having a lack of respect for the servants of the Lord, namely our ministers, elders and deacons.

But what kind of example do they

get? They come home and pick up the latest issue of *Clarion*, only to read another article where one accuses the other. Instead of being tolerant of each other's ideas and character, we, as brothers and sisters in the Church of Christ, constantly seem to criticize each other. Very often the servants which we are given as a blessing from the Lord are being attacked in a most unbrotherly way.

Volume I of 1978 contains another severe example. Mr. A. Hordyk had only negative comments concerning Rev. Werkman's article "1977 In Retrospect." That is, of course, his prerogative but to state that this minister should no longer be allowed to write articles for the *Clarion* because they are "nonsense and not in the best interest of church members" is going too far. Surely this is no way to speak of a minister, especially when he has stated nothing that is unscriptural. Or did he maybe step on a few sore toes? There is no sign of edification of the saints or brotherly love in such an article. How unfortunate that we have fallen so low.

Yours In Christ,
Gertrude Gelderman.

The above letters are the last ones we publish regarding the point in question. It will, therefore, make no sense to write another "letter to the editor" about the above matter. If we keep going, the situation will be about the same as in Ephesus, where some cried one thing, and some another, "and most of them did not know why they had come together."

It is about time, I think, that our readers should start reading, and then reading what has actually been written instead of reading what they think has been written.

Without choosing for the one or for the other, I should like to make the following remarks.

a) In a personal letter — but he will not take it ill of me that I quote

from it, I'm sure — the Rev. M.C. Werkman asked me "to check that what is intended to be a quotation is indeed a quotation." He made that request because, as he put it, "He (br. A.J. Hordyk, vO) pretends to quote from my article while he underlines some part which was never underlined in my original article, followed by 'etc.', which you will not find in my article either. The reader gets the impression that I emphasized the words he underlines. He should not have used quotation marks or if he wanted to he should have quoted correctly."

b) Now we have a letter again from br. A.J. Hordyk in which he corrects some statements in a "letter to the editor" published in the February 11th issue.

c) Above we have another "letter to the editor" in which it is alleged that br. A.J. Hordyk stated "that this minister should no longer be allowed to write articles for the Clarion because they are 'nonsense and not in the best interest of church members.'" Br. Hordyk did not write that, but he wrote about certain statements which he qualified as such.

One can agree or disagree with the Rev. M.C. Werkman or with br. A.J. Hordyk; that is every one's privilege. But what may also be expected of writers of "letters to the editor" is that they read well and when they write, quote correctly from what has been written.

Perhaps we publish still too many "letters to the editor," but we do welcome comments by our readers and wish to give them the floor, too.

Writing is a difficult thing.

To write so that it is understandable and not liable to be misunderstood is even much more difficult.

But the most difficult thing of all appears to be to read well.

When, Oh when, are we going to learn that?

vO

Mission Aid Report

Report No. 64

Report over the month of
November 1977

Esteemed Brethren,

Another month passed by. It is high time to report on the activities of November. Let me first start with the family. In the previous report you read something about my wife having been sick for a few days. The result of the E.E.G. test did not show any abnormalities so that we presume that everything is all right with her. Her headaches disappeared completely also and she is in full swing again, doing as much work as before. The doctor suggested to have the gallbladder removed as this is a possible cause for her head pains. We will have to look into that when we are on furlough in Canada from March to the end of June D.V. The final decision will have to be taken then and depends on the doctor's findings there. It is not a nice idea going on holidays with the knowledge that one has to spend some time in the hospital but we will have no other choice. At best it will cut our holidays short by some weeks but if it will be no more than that, we gladly accept this.

I myself had some problems with my kidneys again. I had the same thing now almost two years ago. The doctor blames it on a small kidney stone. At present I feel fine again. The other members of the family are all in good health.

In the meantime everything is running in full swing again, as before. The nursery was only half empty for a very short time. Others came in soon.

Gediel da Silva (6 months) came on the 7th of this month. He is now slowly improving although still very skinny. Humanly speaking he will survive the ordeal. *Gediel* comes from this town. In the same week *Baltasar* came. He is a 9-month-old boy and was very anemic and consequently in very poor condition. He comes from the countryside, about a two hour walking distance from this place. His mother was very concerned about him and spent many hours walking to visit her boy here. Many a time she sat already on our veranda before 6 o'clock in the morning anxious to know something more about her little one. It makes you feel good if you see a mother that concerned about her child. We have had

other experiences in this respect. Now, after he is much better, she only comes once a week. It is a walk of about 2 hours from her place to our house.

Little *Jose Maria*, of the twins, is back again. On one of our visits to check up on them we found him very sick and dehydrated. We decided on the spot to take him with us again. A few days more could have been fatal for him. One of the parents' problems was that they had run out of milkpowder and had used goatmilk instead. This sudden change had been too much for him. He is now much better and can likely go home in a few weeks.

Little *Tereza*, who was here only during days, went home for good now. A test of the feces was negative and she also looked much healthier than before.

In her place came a 3-year-old girl by the name of *Rosiane Jesefa*. She lost her mother about 1½ years ago. The father who is working in a twine factory tried to keep the family going all by himself. That did not work out too well so that *Rosiane* was placed with some relatives at a distant place for some time. Later she came back home again and fell sick and was admitted to the hospital where she stayed for about a week and received blood transfusion because she was badly anemic. We had some contacts with this family before. Her mother came quite often to church before she became ill and so did the whole family. After her death the father came more or less on an irregular basis. When we heard that *Rosiane* was very sick we offered our helping hand which he gladly accepted. *Rosiane* is doing very well now. When she is in better health, she will have to be treated for worms, according to the doctor. *Rosiane* found a playmate in *Jose Macare*, the seven-year old boy who comes faithfully every day for more than a month. The two of them play in the yard all day and do not give too much work, at least not in comparison with the others.

Then there is *Everaldo* and *Josue* yet. Both are now in good enough shape to go home again, which will be very shortly. All in all we had seven children to take care of this month.

Paulo Felix da Silva became very ill this month. He is already an older man and his name you have seen more than once in the reports from the Rev.

Van Spronsen because he and his wife followed catechism classes some time ago. He has been a heart patient for some time. I brought him to the hospital and later to a neighbouring town for chest X-rays. These X-rays showed that his heart was very much enlarged. The doctor told him that he could stay in the hospital but also could go home if he wanted to. He never liked the hospital in the first place, so he went home. This means that there is no hope for him. He is a very sick man but he knows that his sins are forgiven for Christ's sake.

I went again after the land deal together with the mayor of this town. This time we spoke to one of the owners and he promised us again that he would order his lawyer to make up a contract. He made the same promise to us some time ago so we will wait and see what happens this time. In the meantime the planting season belongs to the past for this year. It will take a while yet before the first rain starts again. In February I will have to attend a meeting of all missionary workers in Latin America, this time to be held in Curitiba. In the first week of March we hope to go on furlough to Canada. So, even if the land deal comes through, it hardly will give us an opportunity to do something.

The weather is dry and hot every day and except for the trees and some shrubs it all has a dead-like appearance. Many are complaining about the heat. It seems to be hotter than last year and dryer also. We try to keep things green a little around the house, by using the hose every day. This weather certainly plays you out after a while. But we like to see the bright side as well. At least we can go to the beach and that is what we do now every Saturday. Being exposed to 25 degrees below zero is not always fun either.

Linda Meliefste and *Trudy Koerselman* are doing fine also. Busy teaching every day. If they have a little time to spare, you usually can find them on the beach. But don't get jealous because this is about the only entertainment they have here.

I realize that this will be one of the last reports this year and we therefore like to take this opportunity to wish you all a blessed New Year. May the Lord keep you and us in the year to come.

We end this report with Christian greetings to you all.

Yours in Christ's service,
JOHN KUIK

Report of Progress Regarding our Physically and Mentally Handicapped Children

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On July 14, 1976, several interested individuals, as well as some parents of handicapped children, met in Hamilton to discuss the possibility of "doing something" for the handicapped individuals within the Canadian Reformed community. The following suggestions were made: educational facilities, a group home, recreational programs. A steering committee was formed to which a representative from the congregations of Burlington East and West, Hamilton, Lincoln, and Smithville, respectively, was appointed. The task of the committee was to study the suggestions, consider their implications, and make the necessary recommendations.

The committee first tried to get a clear picture of the number of handicapped persons, their ages, and the kinds of handicaps they have. Each congregation in Ontario was contacted and asked to submit the necessary information. The results of the survey provided us with the following statistics:

Age	Mentally Handicapped*	Physically Handicapped
0-5	3	—
6-10	3**	1
11-15	5	2
16-20	5	—
21 and over	3	—

* Of the mentally handicapped, five persons have been institutionalized.

** Our initial information did not include the three children listed here because not all the congregations had replied right away.

The committee first considered the possibility of an educational institution. It was decided to consult the parents of handicapped children to discuss the feasibility of providing this service. At the same time, their thoughts about a group home were also discussed. The majority of the parents favoured the set-up of a home.

The committee recommends that the institution of a school not be pursued at this time for the following reasons:

- a. There is the problem of distance. Even a school centrally located in Hamilton would still require children living within a fifty-mile radius to spend up to an hour on the bus.
- b. Children who live more than fifty miles away would have to be placed in a "boarding house" or with a family of the church.
- c. The greater number of children is found in the 14-20 years of age bracket. These children will require vocational training as well as lessons in basic rules of self-help. On the other hand, a different emphasis should be placed on the training to be provided for the younger group. The school would have to provide a very diversified program for a small number of children.
- d. The intellectual range among the children in the various age groups is tremendous. This matter is further complicated by the fact that some of the mentally handicapped children are physically handicapped as well. Therefore, it may well be possible that each child would have to be in a class by him/herself.
- e. Five of the children in the 10-20 years of age group are presently in institutions. In order to attract them for enrolment we would have to provide accommodation first.

The committee then looked into the possibility of setting up a group home. As stated earlier, many parents favoured the idea. Such a goal also seemed more easily obtainable as far as finances, staffing, facilities, and programs were concerned.

The home should serve the following purposes:

- a. It will give parents of children presently institutionalized the opportunity to transfer them from a secular institution to a home which provides an environment closely resembling our home life.
- b. It will relieve those parents who, because of sickness, old-age, or other pressing circumstances, are forced to seek accommodation

for their child, of the worry of what will happen to their child.

- c. It will serve as a relief-centre to allow parents to enjoy a holiday (with their other children) while their handicapped child is well taken care of.

The committee made a study of all that is involved in setting up and operating such a home. Two homes of this nature were visited, contact was made with the Ministry of Social Services, various agencies and societies were approached for information, and some necessary publications were purchased.

The committee made the following observations with regard to government policy with respect to group homes:

- a. There is a trend to get away from large institutions and to set up small group homes with preferably 8-10 occupants.
- b. A new philosophy pervades this policy — the idea of normalization. This means that handicapped people should be brought to the point where they can function as normally and independently as possible within their limitations.
- c. Financing will be provided by the government to groups whose programs for their home have been approved. Funds for up to eighty percent of the cost for purchase, rent, and operating budget will be provided. Financial help will be given on the condition that the home keep fifty percent of its accommodation open for persons presently in large institutions.
- d. The ministry's organization of districts is not compatible with our recommendation for a regional home. Every district has its own work-group, which has to give prior approval to a group seeking to establish a home. Our churches in Ontario are located in at least 5 different districts. Government policy limits enrolment of persons to a home in their own district.
- e. The government may allow the establishment of a residence provided certain regulations (building, fire, health) are complied with. The ministry will reserve the right to inspect the building, program, etc., once the group home is in operation.

On December 2, 1977, a meeting was held in Hamilton with parents of

Installation and Inauguration of Rev. P. Kingma

On Sunday, January 22, 1978, Rev. P. Kingma was installed as minister of the American Reformed Church at Grand Rapids, Michigan. Rev. J. Geertsema of the Canadian Reformed Church at Chatham, Ontario, officiated. He preached on Matthew 5:20. The theme of his sermon was: "Christ Jesus names the requirement of the better righteousness as the way to God's eternal kingdom"; the points: 1) What this requirement means, and 2) For whom this requirement is meant.

In the afternoon service, Rev. Kingma delivered his inaugural sermon on I Samuel 3:10-4:1a. The theme of his sermon was: "Samuel is called by the LORD to administer the Word in Israel at Shiloh"; 1) Samuel is prepared for the administration of the Word by the calling of the LORD, 2) Samuel observes the administration of the Word in the House of the LORD, and 3) Samuel is ordained in the administra-

tion of the Word among the people of the LORD.

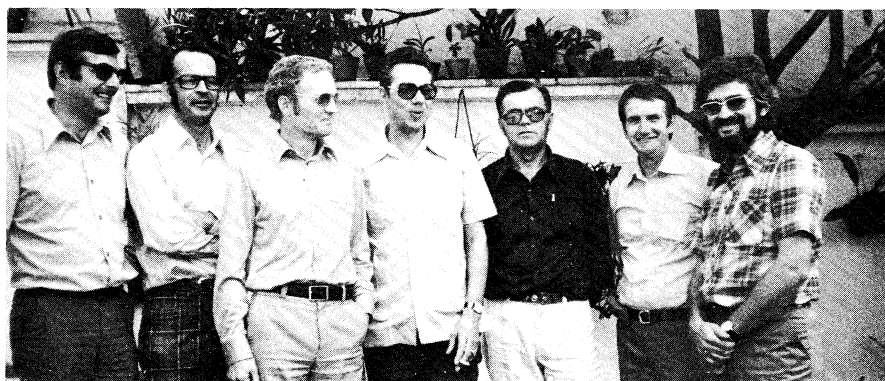
The congregation, which for approximately a year had no shepherd and teacher, was greatly gladdened on this day. On the evening before, the members of the congregation had bid Rev. Kingma and his family a special welcome. This evening was led by Dr. W. Meester, Chairman of the Consistory. There was much singing, a number of people provided some entertainment, and there were congratulatory messages. Dr. Meester called it a "special blessing of the LORD, Who again had granted them a shepherd and teacher who may preach the true Word of God in a place where so many churches no longer show the signs of Christ's church."



ches no longer show the signs of Christ's church."

(Translation of a news item which appeared in *Nederlands Dagblad* on Saturday, February 4, 1978.)

Second Congress of Reformed Mission Workers in Latin America *Curitiba, Brazil*



From left to right: Rev. D.T. Vreugdenhil, Rev. C. Van Spronsen, Rev. S. Braaksma, Rev. K. Verlind, Mr. J. Kuik, Mr. J.T. Sikkema and Rev. J.T. Oldenhuis.

HANDICAPPED CHILDREN — Cont'd

handicapped children, and several other Brothers and Sisters to discuss the information provided by the steering committee. At that meeting, it was unanimously decided to finance such a home by our Canadian Reformed Church members rather than accept government assistance, seeing that by accepting government grants, the government would also have authority to operate this home. Furthermore, it was decided to have the persons of the steering committee continue as provisional board. Your provisional board held several meetings since then, out of which constitutions and by-laws were discussed and adopted. As the provisional board has come to the end of its work so far, we would like to urge all, young and old, to attend our first general meeting, which will be held, D.V., on April 7, 1978, in the Canadian Reformed Church in Hamilton at 8:00 p.m. At this meeting we hope to form a board which can continue what has been started. Brothers and Sisters, do we not have a duty to look after *all* our covenant children?

Yours in Christ,
The Provisional Board.

Reformed mission workers, who have their territory in Latin America, met in Curitiba, in the South of Brazil, from February 6th to the 13th. It was the second time that such a congress was held, after the first congress in 1976 on Curaçao. The Reformed Churches of Assen, 's Hertogenbosch and Rijnsburg, and the Canadian Reformed Church of New Westminster, as well as the charity organizations of Mesoz and Mission Aid, had enabled their missionaries and other workers to meet each other to exchange experiences from their mission fields in Brazil (Curitiba and São José da Coroa Grande), Surinam and Curaçao.

At the congress a report was given of each work with its own opportunities and problems. Besides that, the various participants spoke about the topics: Mission in the New Testament, the Limits of the Covenant, Liturgy and Sacraments, Legal and Illegal Marriage, Sunday Observance, the Church-political Position of the Missionary, and Creeds in the Young Church. An extensive report of the congress will be published in the mission papers "Tot aan de Einden der Aarde" and "Mission News."

Translated and remitted by,
C. VAN SPRONSEN,
on behalf of the congress.

Association for a Christian Political Perspective

Many of you have read something about a political study group working in the church at Edmonton. We, the A.C.P.P., feel it has become necessary to acquaint you with what is and what constitutes the A.C.P.P. The association has come about by the realization of the necessity to become involved in the political field. Rev. D. DeJong has been a driving force behind the setting up of the Association as it is known today. We have been fortunate, for, though our numbers have been small, we have been abundantly blessed, for much has been accomplished in a short time.

The Association has included below the fundamental parts of our constitution for your information:

BASIS:

The Association, following and accepting the principles of the Great Reformation of the 16th century (as, for instance, expressed in the Belgic Confession and the Westminster Confession), is based on the BIBLE, because it acknowledges the Bible alone as God's revealed Word for the foundation and direction for human life. Consequently, it honours God the Father as Creator of everything; Jesus Christ as the Redeemer and King of all creation, and as the Ruler of all earthly powers; and the Holy Spirit as the Renewer of life.

PRINCIPLES:

According to God's Word, the government is instituted by God to maintain justice and peace in the human society, to protect those who do right and those who are helpless, and to restrain those who are strong from abusing those who are weak.

The people are bound to honour and obey the government in all matters which do not demand from them to transgress the law of God. The people are called within the framework of the existing laws to cooperate with the government, and to exert good influence on it in executing its task.

OBJECTS:

To present publicly, by means of the media and public meetings, the Christian viewpoint with regards to

current municipal, provincial, national, and international issues.

To endorse political candidates who agree with the basis, statement of principles, objects, and the by-laws of this Association.

To cooperate with all public and private authorities and agencies; local, provincial, national, and international; in furthering the objects of the Association.

The A.C.P.P. has now been duly incorporated and for the past several months has been involved in setting up contracts with other Christian Political Associations. I think especially of the Association for Public Justice of the U.S.A., Committee for Justice and Liberty, as well as the Social Credit Party.

Our Association has a short but very colourful history. We have been involved in the preparation of some in-depth studies specifically dealing with Urban Development and Transportation, used in the Civic Election Campaign of one of our members, Johannes Bosch. We consider the campaign as a whole a tremendous success; for, although we did not achieve the election of our candidate, through public forums and mass media we presented a Christian viewpoint which had a definite effect upon other candidates and their platforms in the course of the campaign.

In the past we had representation at the International Political Conference held at Dordt College, Iowa; Seminar on Economics of Large Projects sponsored by the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce; and had private deliberations with the local executives of the Social Credit Party of Alberta.

We also attended the local meetings of C.J.L. and the full deliberations of the Task Force on Canadian Unity when it was in the city, November 18, 1977.

At present we are working on a comprehensive report on Canadian Unity for submission to the Task Force. This work is one which we hope to present to those interested. As the subject suggests, this is a major project and one with which we are experiencing some difficulty. However,

we are certain it will be the most comprehensive report we have ever done and will show the length to which we have gone in order to put a Christian perspective to this issue.

The future holds much for the Association, such as, plans for a Rally with guest speakers, planned for April or May. As well, we are looking at possible candidates to support in upcoming elections.

We realize, however, that we need the support of our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ if the Association is to continue to be a working Christian entity in the Political arena. It is at this point which we now find ourselves; we need the talents, expertise, and cohesion which comes from increased membership. It is our hope that you will contact us if you see your calling to become involved in this Kingdom work.

Yours in Christ,

On behalf of the A.C.P.P.,
ROBERT W. DAVIES, President

Mailing address:

*Association for a Christian
Political Perspective,*
P.O. Box 1353,
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2N2

Church  News

ACCEPTED the call to Brazil as second missionary for the Church at New Westminster, B.C.:

REV. P.K. MEIJER

of Noordbergum, The Netherlands.

ACCEPTED the call to the Church at Smithers, B.C.; DECLINED the call to the Church at Watford, Ontario:

REV. C. VAN SPRONSEN

of New Westminster, B.C.

CALLED by the Church at Neerlandia, Alberta:

REV. M. VAN BEVEREN

of New Westminster, B.C.

ADDRESS CHANGE :

For the Secretary of the Canadian Reformed School of Neerlandia, Alberta:

c/o Mrs. L. Terpsma,
Box 67,

Neerlandia, Alberta T0G 1R0

our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

What would you like to be when you grow up? What do you think? Do you plan to help others and become a nurse or a teacher or a minister?

Is there something that you are really good at that you can do when you grow up? Maybe you are good at music or drawing or speaking?

Is there something you can do now to prepare for later? Besides doing your very best at school and at home, I mean.

Do you remember how "unwilling" Moses was when God called him to lead Israel out of Egypt? And how Isaiah said "Send me," when the Lord asked for a prophet for His people?

Don't you think it's exciting to think that whatever it is we will do will be in the service of our Lord?

If you would like to share your ideas and plans with the Busy Beavers and with me, we would love to hear from you. You know my address, don't you?

Aunt Betty
Box 54, Fergus, Ontario N1M 2W7

Today Busy Beaver *Case Hoff* has a story for us:

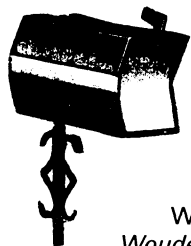
The Strange-Looking Animals

One day a thirsty deer came to a pond. The deer drank in the pond and saw himself. The deer called all the animals in the forest but Mr. Fox. All the animals went to the pond and saw themselves too! They went around the pond to see if they could see themselves everywhere. Gentle waves blew to make it look like they were moving. It made them look strange. Mr. Bird said,

"There are twins under the water."

They all agreed until Mr. Fox came along.

He said, "You see yourself because the water works like a mirror."



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Cecile Van Woudenberg*. We are happy to have you join us, and we hope you will join in all our Busy Beaver activities. Did you enjoy making your project, Cecile? Write again soon.

And welcome to you, too, *Case Hoff*. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already! Thank you for the story and the puzzle. Bye for now. Write again soon, Case.

Hello, *Anita Hoff*. We hope you will enjoy being a Busy

Beaver and will join in all our Busy Beaver activities! Would you like to write and tell me something about yourself?

Thank you for sending me such a nice poem, *Rosalinde Moeliker*. I would love to share it with the Busy Beavers. But don't you think we should have Mr. Cushman's permission to print it? Bye for now, *Rosalinde*. Write again soon.

Congratulations on your baby brother, *Geraldine Hamoen*! I hope he and your mother are home again by now. How is your sewing project coming? Thank you for the quiz, *Geraldine*. Keep up the good work.

Hello *Julia Vanderpol*. It was nice to hear from you again. Thank you for the quiz. Bye for now, *Julia*.

I think the Busy Beavers will really enjoy your quiz, *James Slaa*. Thank you for sharing. And thank you for writing.

You really do mean to keep us busy *Theodore Kanis*! Thank you for the puzzle.

Hello, *Sharon Vander Meulen*. Thank you for the poem and the quiz. Did you sell lots of your newspapers? Do you practice your music a lot *Sharon*? Bye for now. Write again soon.

I'm happy you are so willing to work at our BIRTHDAY FUND PROJECT, *Jolette Moeliker*. And, yes, I think the Busy Beavers will really enjoy doing your quizzes. We are good at unscrambling words, you know. We have lots of experience doing just that!

QUIZ TIME

Here are some riddles for you from Busy Beavers *Joyce Huinink* and *Caroline Boeringa*.

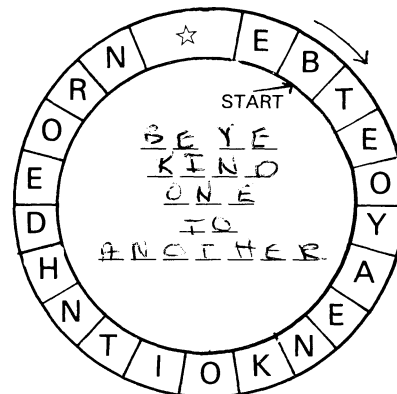
Riddles

1. How come an empty purse never changes?
2. How do you get down off an elephant?
3. What falls but never hurts itself?
4. What has teeth but never eats?
5. What did the snail say to the turtle?
6. Who drives away all his customers?
7. How do you get seven from twelve?

Answers: 1. It has no change in it; 2. Duck; 3. snow; 4. a taxi-comb; 5. "I wish I could afford a house like yours."; 6. a taxi-driver; 7. Use Roman numerals, XII, VII.

Busy Beaver *James Slaa* has a Puzzle Circle for you to do.

Find a Bible Verse
Ephesians 4:32



Skip every other space for two complete trips around the circle. Print the letters on the blanks.