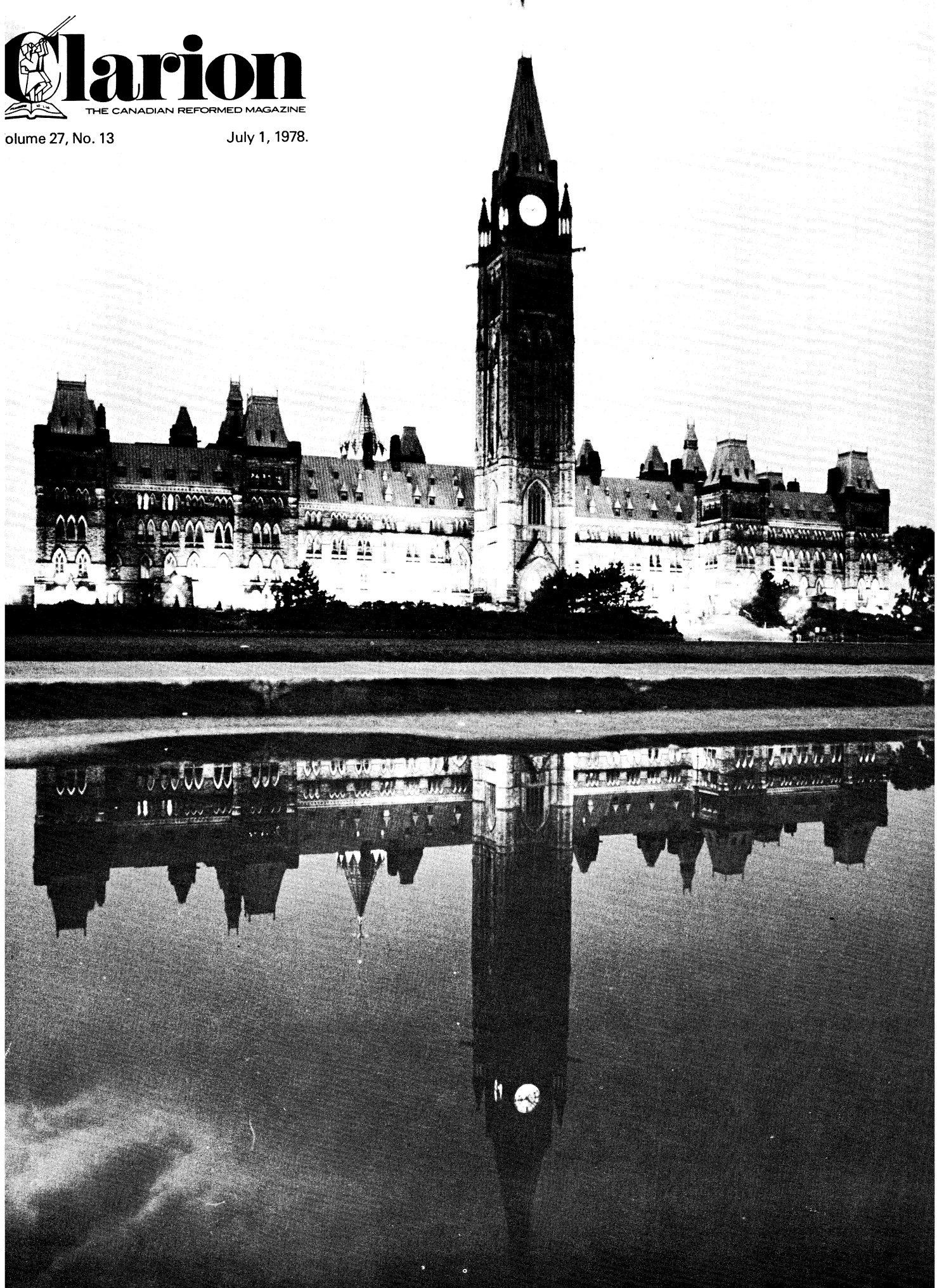


 **Clarion**
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The Covenant Service of Love for the Joy and Freedom of God's Children* 3

Some Principles for Diaconal Service

IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY

Let us draw some conclusions on the basis of what we have seen in Scripture, and where necessary reckon with what has taken place in history, so that we can come to an understanding of what all this means for our concrete task as deacon, here and now.

A Double Service

If the task of the deacon has in view the covenant service of love for the joy and freedom of God's precious possession, His children (and it does), then their ministry of mercy is to be done with a view to the needs of those financially oppressed and the needs of those burdened by sickness, loneliness, or the like. After all, both types of hardships can take the joy away and can give difficulty for the realizing of the freedom from bondage that the redeemed children of God have. Our present form for the ordination of deacons, however, hardly does justice to this second set of needs. It is, nevertheless, good to note that Article 30 of our Belgic Confession does distinguish between two areas of need. It speaks of the "poor *and* distressed" and of their being "relieved *and* comforted" (my emphasis). Article 25 of our Church Order speaks of "to visit and comfort the distressed." Deacons are to do more than handle money. Calvin even had two kinds of deacons; one for the poor and another for the sick. The Convent of Wezel in 1568 likewise spoke of two kinds of deacons. In the French Huguenot churches, the deacons visited not only the poor, but also the sick. It is, therefore, noteworthy that in the new Dutch form for the ordination of deacons in our sister churches in Holland (adopted by Synod Kampen, 1975) the needs of the sick and afflicted and lonely are specifically mentioned. The deacons are to do what they can to see to these needs of the congregation and to stimulate the congregation in the service of love, so that the joy of God's children in the communion of saints be a daily reality.

Family Visits

How can the deacons best fulfill this task? The new Dutch form mentions a new element which answers this question; namely, the family visit. The deaconate must, as it were, go on the offensive and visit all the families of the church.

Is this a duplication of the family visits by the ministers and elders? No. According to the literature (for example, a special issue of *Dienst*, Vol. 24, No. 6) and conversations which I have had with a Dutch deacon, this is emphatically not so. The purpose of their visits is different. The family visits by the elders and minister have in view, first of all, spiritual oversight and supervision, so that the congregation be watched over and encouraged in a life of holiness. (See the form for the ordination of elders.) The purpose of a diaconal visit, however, is first to see and to ask if there are any needs, financial or otherwise (for example, loneliness), and to see to it that those needs are met. The second purpose of a diaconal family visit is to encourage and stimulate the congregation in the service of love. One must not only ask: "Are there needs here?" but also: "What are you doing, or what do you think you should be doing, for the well-being and joy of the communion of saints? What is your service for the upbuilding of the body in love?" (Think of Ephesians 4:12.) In this way the talents and energies of love and compassion could be discovered and put into circulation — talents and energy which otherwise, without the stimulus and encouragement of the deacons, might never be used.

Of Great Benefit

It seems to me that much could be gained by considering and preparing ourselves for a similar practice of diaconal family visits in our own circles. Especially in today's world, much profit could be realized by periodic visits by the deacons to all the families of the congregation.

We live in a time of much individ-

ualism and loneliness. We also live in a time when, in spite of the cry of love and the heat of eroticism, the world is growing colder and colder. As the Lord Himself said: "Most men's love will grow cold" (Matthew 24:12). In that same discourse in Matthew 24 and 25, the Lord stresses the serving love that must characterize the church — going out and visiting those in need and seeing to their needs (Matthew 25:31-46). Deacons who see it as their task periodically to visit and stimulate this service of love will do much to ensure that the joy and warmth of the mutual love and communion will continue to characterize the church in a loveless and cold world. In this way the church will also be more and more a light of hope and joy in a world of sin, a communion of love that repels Satan and attracts the elect children of God!

There is also something else. We live in a time of great prosperity in which the dollar has become known as the "Almighty Buck," a god to be reckoned with and to which many are bound. Good periodic visits of a deacon alone will heighten the awareness that our possessions are not ours in any absolute way. It will make us realize all the more that everything which believers have, they hold in a real sense communally for the welfare of the covenant joy and freedom of the liberated people of God. In no way must anyone in the church be *bound* to his riches, for that is a cruel bondage, and then God is robbed of His most precious possession! (Think of the implications of the eighth word of the covenant again as detailed in the first article.) Our riches must be used for the *equal* satisfying of *all* the needs in the church. (See the second New Testament principle in the previous article.)

Related with this is another point — the bondage of secularization. We struggle against that enemy by, for example, sending our children to Christian schools. That is a need today for the freedom of God's children. Everyone must have equal opportunity for that education: otherwise one is "poor and needy" in the Old Testament sense

of the term and afflicted unnecessarily by secular forces. Then there is an unnecessary dimming of the joy of the liberation we have in Christ. And yet . . . it may be that, while the children may go to Christian schools and the sun may now shine in that area of our life, there is darkness and affliction of new sorts, and a bondage of another kind, back home where it can be truly difficult to make ends meet, and where parents now need to work and work, and little time and opportunity is left for normal, joyous, Christian family life. So the fulfilling of one need can create an even greater need: where parents can no longer truly fulfill their office and calling over against their children. With the disintegration of the normal functioning of the family unit all around us, how vitally that Christian family life is needed today!

Periodic visits by deacons will bring cases such as these (the above was but an example) to light more readily than now. Need and poverty are relative concepts, and we must not say too quickly there is no need. The communal riches of the congregation must be used so that *all* needs for normal, Christian living in the joy and freedom of our King's salvation can be *equally* satisfied. That is the principle of II Corinthians 8:15 as the early Christian church also acted on in her own way (Acts 2, 4).

Many other things could be mentioned (for example, deaconal support for projects for the elderly, the handicapped, the orphans, the unmarried mothers, etc.), but the point is that the office of deacon can and must retain its full relevance for the church. The deaconal task must not be seen in too narrow a way!

The Heart of the Matter

The needs are different today, but the needs are there, and probably more than we think, in the first place, in our own congregations; but, there are to be no "poor and needy" in any sense of the term, for the congregation of God is a redeemed, liberated people, a royal people, in whom and through whom God wants to see evidence of His great work of salvation and so wants to be glorified!

It is the office of the deacons to have as their specific concern the needs of God's children and to mobilize the entire congregation so that all the needs be met in the concrete service of the love of Christ, in order that there be no reason for murmuring at the tables of the children of God, but that the true joy may reign as the redemption and liberty in Christ is daily enjoyed in a vibrant spirit-filled communion of saints, where all is shared in the service of love to the honour of our victorious King! May the deacons labour to that end!

Gratitude for Earthly Life

But let believers accustom themselves to a present life that engenders no hatred of it or ingratitude against God. Indeed, this life, however crammed with infinite miseries it may be, is still rightly to be counted among those blessings of God which are not to be spurned. Therefore, if we recognize in it no divine benefit, we are already guilty of grave ingratitude toward God Himself. For believers especially, this ought to be a testimony of divine benevolence, wholly destined, as it is, to promote their salvation. For before he shows us openly the inheritance of eternal glory, God wills by lesser proofs to show himself to be our Father. These are the benefits that are daily conferred on us by him. Since, therefore, this life serves us in understanding God's goodness, should we despise it as if it had no grain of good in itself? We must, then, become so disposed and minded that we count it among those gifts of divine generosity which are not at all to be rejected. For if testimonies of Scripture were lacking, and they are very many and very clear, nature itself also exhorts us to give thanks to the Lord because he has brought us into its light, granted us the use of it, and provided all the necessary means to preserve it.

And this is a much greater reason if in it we reflect that we are in preparation, so to speak, for the glory of the Heavenly Kingdom. For the Lord has ordained that those who are one day to be crowned in heaven should first undergo struggles on earth in order that they may not triumph until they have overcome the difficulties of war, and attained the victory.

Then there is another reason: we begin in the present life, through various benefits, to taste the sweetness of the divine generosity in order to whet our hope and desire to seek after the full revelation of this. When we are certain that the earthly life we live is a gift of God's kindness, as we are beholden to him for it we ought to remember it and be thankful. Then we shall come in good time to consider its most unhappy condition in order that we may, indeed, be freed from too much desire of it, to which, as has been said, we are of ourselves inclined by nature.

John Calvin
Institutes, III, 9 (tr. L.C.C.)

For further reading

Informative and of some help is P.Y. De Jong's, *The Ministry of Mercy for Today* (Baker, 1952). More to the point and of much help for the present discussion are: the special issue of *Dienst*, Vol. 24, No. 6 (1976), entitled *Handreiking aan de Diaken*; C. Trimp, "Diakonaat in deze Tijd," *De Reformatie*, Vol. 48, pp. 220ff., 236ff. (1973); A.N. Hendriks, *Werelddiakonaat?* Enige opmerkingen over de hulpverlening aan de verre naaste (Vuurbaak, 1971). See also H.M. Ohmann, "The Care of the Needy in the Old Testament," in *Clarion*, Vol. 24, No. 9 and 10 (1975).

C. VAN DAM



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CLARION
P.O. Box 54,
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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Editor: W.W.J. VanOene
Co-Editors: J. Geertsema, Cl. Stam,
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Generale Synode Groningen-Zuid

Op Woensdag 24 mei verwelkomde de praeses van de Synode, ds. P. Lok, de afgevaardigde van de Canadian Reformed Churches, ds. M. van Beveren, als volgt:

Een bijzonder woord van welkom mag ik richten tot ds. M. van Beveren, dienaar des Woords bij de Canadian Reformed Church te New Westminster, British Columbia, en lid van the Committee for Correspondence with the Sister Churches Abroad.

Wij zijn dankbaar, dat de Here uw weg voorspoedig heeft gemaakt en dat u in deze generale synode begroet kunt worden. Wij ontvangen u als gedeputeerde van onze zusterkerken in Canada. Kerken die na de Tweede Wereldoorlog in de weg van emigratie uit de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland zijn voortgekomen. Wij hebben in de loop van de laatste dertig jaren de ontwikkeling in de kerken-overzee met meer dan gewone belangstelling gevolgd. De correspondentie tussen de Canadian Reformed Churches en de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland brengt met zich mee, dat wij onderling toezicht hebben op elkaars dienst, leer, tucht en kerkregering, en het stemt tot grote blijdschap, dat wij van uw kerken mogen weten, dat zij de hartelijke begeerte hebben te blijven bij de eeuwenoude grondslag van de trouwe kerk van Jezus Christus, evenals uw kerken dat mogen weten van onze kerken, die in deze synode zijn vertegenwoordigd. U en wij herkennen daarin het kerkvergaderende, maar ook kerkbeschermerende werk van onze Here Christus.

U zult geen sterke aanwas van leden hebben in de weg van voortgaande emigratie; de groei zal in hoofdzaak gevolg zijn van geboorten. Dat laatste geldt eveneens onze kerken in Nederland, terwijl wij hoognaamd geen leden meer behoeven af te staan aan de zusterkerken in Canada.

In dertig jaren zijn wij op het punt van de taal uit elkaar gegroeid: uw Hollandse diensten zijn schaars geworden; ze hebben plaats gemaakt voor Engelse diensten, en — ons dunkt — terecht. Een nieuwe generatie is aan uw kerken toegevoegd, voor wie de band met Nederland niet meer dat zegt, wat die band voor de ouderen betekende en

nog betekent. Het ligt in de gang der geschiedenis en in de aard van de ontwikkeling, dat uw kerken ook werkelijk kerken zijn temidden van het Canadese volk. U mag de pretentie voeren, dat u kerk van Jezus Christus bent in Canada. Dus mag ook van uw kerken uitgaan de appellerende roep: kom, ga met ons en doe als wij. Of zij horen of niet horen zullen.

De ontwikkelingen ginds staan niet stil — u zult ontdekken, dat de ontwikkelingen in Nederland, ook in het kerkleven, niet stil zijn blijven staan. Wat echter gebleven is, en wat de kracht van samenbinding is, dat is de band aan Gods Woord en de daarop gegronde belijdenis.

Verleden jaar vergaderde uw achtste synode, en zij vergaderde van 8 november tot 26 november. Wij kennen dat niet, en we willen verklaren, dat we in zekere zin jaloers op u zijn. Wij tellen geen dagen en weken, maar maanden. Het is intussen billijk op te merken, dat uw en ons agendum nogal verschillend is.

Uit de Acta van uw synode is gebleken, dat uw kerken de Acta van onze generale synode van Kampen-1975 ontvangen hebben, en dat uw kerken tot de slotsom mochten komen, dat de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland blijkens haar Acta trouw gebleven zijn aan Gods Woord, de belijdenis en de gereformeerde kerkorde. Het stemt uiteraard ons tot dankbaarheid, dit van uw kerken te mogen vernemen.

We zijn ook dankbaar voor de voortgang van de opleiding tot de dienst des Woords aan het Theological College te Hamilton. De werkelijk-gereformeerde Hogescholen zijn wel zeer gering in getal in de huidige constellatie van de wereld. Het zijn geschenken van onze God, waar we gezamenlijk uiterst zuinig op willen zijn.

In deze synode hebben we reeds kennis mogen maken met een afgevaardigde van de Presbyterian Church in Korea, met een deputatie van de Gereformeerde Kerken van Oost-Soemba/Savoe, en vandaag met een afgezant uit de Canadian Reformed Churches. We worden ootmoedig onder Gods zegeningen.

En we spreken de wens uit, dat ook in de weg van al deze contacten de christelijke band die de kerken verbindt, zal worden bevestigd.

Hierna verkrijgt ds. M. van Beveren het woord, die de vergadering als volgt toespreekt:

Voorzitter, hooggeachte Broeders,

Namens de Canadian Reformed Churches zeggen wij u allereerst dank voor de uitnodiging die zij van uw kerken via deputaten voor correspondentie met buitenlandse kerken mochten ontvangen om een of meer afgevaardigden naar uw synode te zenden. Het stemt tot dankbaarheid dat de relatie met u als onze zusterkerken niet beperkt hoeft te blijven tot schriftelijke correspondentie, hoe onontbeerlijk deze voor goede verhoudingen ook zijn mag, maar dat er zich ook mogelijkheden voordoen om door middel van persoonlijke afvaardiging de bestaande banden te verstevigen. Met dit doel voor ogen hebben onze kerken met blijdschap aan de uitnodiging gehoor willen geven, zij het dan door deze bescheiden één-man-delegatie.

Het is thans de tweede maal dat één afgevaardigde onzer kerken op een uwer synoden aanwezig kan zijn. De primeur was aan Dr. J. Faber, professor aan ons Theological College te Hamilton die ter Synode Kampen 1975 waardevolle informatie gaf over het wel en wee der Canadian Reformed Churches. We vergeten echter niet dat een jaar daarvoor uw kerken op onze Generale Synode gehouden te Toronto al vertegenwoordigd waren in de persoon van ds. S.S. Cnossen. Dat initiatief heeft ons zeer goed gedaan. Daarom — wij willen het niet verhelen — was er een zekere teleurstelling merkbaar toen op de Generale Synode welke verleden jaar te Coaldale gehouden is, geen afgevaardigde van uw kerken aanwezig kon zijn.

Wij hebben er overigens begrip voor dat uw deputaten voor correspondentie met buitenlandse kerken zich in deze beperkingen hadden op te leggen gezien hun uitgebreid mandaat en de daaruit voortvloeiende verplichtingen ten aanzien van andere zusterkerken. Het moet ons van het hart dat wij onder de indruk zijn van de vele contacten, die zij in het buitenland hebben kunnen leggen en waarvan wij hebben kunnen lezen in het rapport dat zij bij u hebben ingediend. Het is duidelijk dat zij de eenheid der kerk zoeken in een schriftuurlijk oecumenische geest waarbij het Woord Gods het richtsnoer

is en de belijdenis der kerk niet wordt genegeerd.

Met belangstelling hebben wij geconstateerd dat volgens uw deputaten de nieuwe contacten nieuwe vragen oproepen en nieuwe formuleringen nodig maken. Het verheugt ons dat wij nog een deel van de besprekingen kunnen bijwonen over zaken die internationale strekking hebben en als zodanig in belangrijke mate ook onze kerken raken. Onze laatstgehouden Synode werd met soortgelijke vragen geconfronteerd.

Zoals bekend moesten onze kerken helaas opnieuw constateren, dat officieel contact met de Christian Reformed Church onmogelijk was geworden. Anderzijds mocht de Synode met dankbaarheid tot het besluit komen de Orthodox Presbyterian Church als ware kerk van onze Here Jezus Christus te erkennen. Het valt te betreuren, maar het was te verwachten, dat niet direct correspondentie volgens de aangenomen regels kon worden aangegaan.

Onze Synode heeft zich echter gerealiseerd, dat vanwege het verschil in historische achtergrond het wenselijk was zich meer genuanceerd op te stellen dan in het verleden noodzakelijk werd geacht. Het is niet nodig hier uit te weiden over de nieuwe vorm van contact welke onze Synode aan de Orthodox Presbyterian Church heeft aangeboden en dat de naam "Ecclesiastical Contact" ontving. Voldoende zij te vermelden dat dit contact beoogt het intensiveren van de besprekingen met het doel tot volledige zusterrelaties te komen. Het stemt tot blijdschap dat uw vergadering besloten heeft de weg te openen voor het aangaan van een soortgelijk contact, dat zelfs dezelfde naam heeft gekregen.

Bij voorgaande gelegenheden is al geconstateerd, dat de agenda van uw en onze synoden de laatste jaren een opmerkelijke overeenkomst vertonen. Het heeft er de schijn van dat verscheidene agendapunten op mysterieuze wijze de Atlantische Oceaan overwaaien. Wij zullen maar niet proberen vast te stellen van welke kant de wind het meest waait.

Wel is het gepast met dankbaarheid te vermelden, dat de band tussen uw en onze kerken ons in menig opzicht praktisch nut oplevert. Wij noemen slechts de studiehulp die uw Theologische Hogeschool zonder reserves biedt aan predikanten die, beroepen door de Canadese kerken voor het zendingsveld, zich in Nederland op

hun toekomstige taak voorbereiden.

Van andere aard is de hulp die leden van uw kerken zo bereidwillig hebben verschaft om de oprichting van een middelbare school in Ontario te vergemakkelijken. Inmiddels mogen wij de opening van een tweede volledige middelbare school tegemoet zien, ditmaal in British Columbia. Het is verheugend dat het onderwijs aan de jeugd op de basis van Schrift en belijdenis onder ons gestadig uitbreiding ondervindt. Want wel is de meerderheid van onze kerkleden de moeiten van een integratie in de Canadese maatschappij gepasseerd maar daarvoor is het gevaar van assimilatie des te groter geworden, het gevaar namelijk van het overnemen van wat zich met de Heilige Schrift niet verdraagt.

Dat de natuurlijke banden met het moederland verslappen is onvermijdelijk. Er is al een geslacht opgegroeid dat de Nederlandse taal niet of nauwelijks verstaat. Juist voor die generatie laat zich het gebrek aan gedegen gereformeerde literatuur in de landstaal sterk gevoelen. Het is ons daarom een grote vreugde — wij willen het niet onvermeld laten — dat thans bezig is in vertaling te verschijnen het bekende werk van ds. S.G. de Graaf "Verbondsgeschiedenis." En onlangs is van de pers gekomen "Christus en Cultuur" van Dr. K. Schilder in een prachtige uitvoering, vertaald door broeders uit eigen kring. Dat wij zo dankbaar zijn voor de vertaling van dergelijke werken heeft niets te maken met een traditioneel vasthouden aan het verleden, maar alles met het bewaren van het pand ons toevertrouwd.

In het bewaren van dát pand mogen wij ons met u één weten. Welke banden er tussen u en ons ook maar zijn mogen, de eenheid des waren geloofs in onze Here Jezus Christus is wat ons waarlijk samenbindt. Moge die band bestendig blijven.

Het is niet moeilijk gebreken van onze kerken op te sommen. Maar de zegeningen, die wij door Gods trouw ontvangen, zijn niet te tellen. Door Zijn genade wordt het Woord der Waarheid gepredikt en vruchten van de Heilige Geest worden openbaar.

Broeders, de Canadian Reformed Churches groeten u en wensen u des Heren zegen toe. Moge Hij u leiden door Zijn Geest en Woord zodat uw arbeid rijke vruchten draagt voor de bouw van Zijn kerk in Nederland en daarbuiten.

De praeses dankt ds. M. van Beveren voor zijn goede woorden en nodigt hem uit als adviseur aan de vergadering deel te nemen.

Prinselijk Bezoek Aan Canada

H.K.H. Prinses Margriet en haar echtgenoot Mr. Pieter van Vollenhoven zullen in juni a.s. een officieel bezoek aan Canada brengen.

Zij arriveren op 7 juni a.s. met de KLM uit Amsterdam te Mirabel (Montreal) en reizen terstond door naar Ottawa, waar zij op 8 en 9 juni de gast van H.E. Gouverneur Generaal en Mevrouw Jules Leger zullen zijn. Op donderdag 8 juni zullen de Gouverneur Generaal en Mevrouw Leger te hunner ere een diner-dansant aanbieden terwijl op vrijdag 9 juni door de Tijdelijk Zaakgevestigde en Mevrouw Donker van Heel tijdens een ontvangst de te Ottawa en omgeving gevestigde Nederlanders en ex-Nederlanders aan hen zullen worden voorgesteld.

Prinses Margriet zal tijdens deze dagen een aantal vrienden en bekenden ontmoeten, en vertrouwde plaatsen uit haar geboortestad bezoeken, en o.a. een werkbezoek aan het Rode Kruis brengen terwijl Mr. van Vollenhoven enige bijeenkomsten over bepaalde onderwerpen (o.m. verkeersveiligheid) zal bijwonen.

Op zaterdag 10 juni vertrekken zij naar Edmonton, waar zij de gast zullen zijn van de Bond van Oudstrijders, The Royal Canadian Legion.

Prinses Margriet zal de opening verrichten van het 27ste Congres van het Legioen en een gedeelte van deze bijeenkomst bijwonen.

Tijdens hun verblijf zullen zij worden ontvangen door de Luitenant-Gouverneur van Alberta, terwijl de te Edmonton en omgeving wonende Nederlanders en andere gasten tijdens een ontvangst door de honoraire Consul de heer D'Arcy Douglas Duncan, aan hen zullen worden voorgesteld.

Na een toeristisch bezoek aan de Rocky Mountains op 13 en 14 juni, vertrekken zij op 15 dezer per vliegtuig naar het Hoge Noorden, waar zij zullen worden ontvangen en rondgeleid door de Hoge Commissaris voor de Noordwestelijke gebieden.

Op zondag 18 juni keren H.K.H. Prinses Margriet en de heer van Vollenhoven per KLM lijnvliegtuig naar Nederland terug.

The Relation Between Mission and Home Mission

It is common when a speaker is given a title about which to speak that he first makes some remarks about the title, and often these comments deal with how the title really ought to be changed. I do not like to do that, yet I must, for to be more accurate the title should read, "The Relation Between Foreign Mission and Home Mission." Home mission is, of course, just as much mission as is foreign mission.

Mission is a topic of first rank importance in the church of Jesus Christ. Much has been said and written about it in the church's history, but not nearly enough is being said and done about it in the Canadian Reformed Churches at present. It is, therefore, very good that we deal with this matter tonight. Maybe this will be one more small step in bringing it to *life* among us in the way the Scriptures demand.

I do not propose to say anything new. That is not necessary. My understanding of the teaching of the Bible on this subject follows very much along the lines that others have proposed before. Our problem is not that we need new teaching, but rather that we need to accept and live out old teachings that have been well defended in the churches. We need to see that some of the views we hear today are not well founded and do not follow the old Reformed views.

Since this is a conference for office-bearers, I would suppose that part of your interest concerns the question, "In what sense are foreign and home mission the responsibility of the official work of deacons, elders, and ministers?" Maybe this is also one of the reasons behind your choice of topic; namely, the *relation* between the two. It has become well established among us that foreign mission is the responsibility of the church councils, while at present this is not accepted by all to be the same for home mission. That, anyway, is one question with which I will deal. I will do so, however, out of a more basic consideration of the Scripture's teaching about the place of mission in the life of the church. I hope to let the Bible be decisive in determining how we ought to view this topic. But

before we turn to it, we will first look at a bit of Reformed history.

One of the men who influenced the thinking of John Calvin was an older Reformer, Martin Bucer of Strassbourg. This man wrote a whole book about how the Kingdom of Christ should be restored in Great Britain.¹ One of the chapters in this book is entitled, "How Salutary It Is For All Men to Have the Kingdom of Christ Firmly Restored Among Them and How Necessary It Is For Salvation that Every Christian, According to His Place in the Body of Christ and the Gifts He Has Received From Him, Aim and Work Toward This with Deepest Concern." Bucer deemed it to be necessary that every Christian should evangelize and work with deepest concern to restore the Kingdom of Christ among all men. In the above-mentioned chapter he makes several powerful statements along this line. The following short paragraph is only one example:

We know that the first work of our salvation is the announcement of the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). Toward this, Christ the Lord Himself, His apostles, and all true Christians have always dedicated themselves with greatest zeal.²

Did you hear that Reformed spirit? The *first* work of our salvation is the announcement of the gospel. It is to be to every creature. Toward this *all true* Christians have always dedicated themselves with the *greatest* zeal.

Calvin wrote very similarly. However, because we have to make this brief, I will not quote from his writings, but rather point out what he actually did.

Calvin's Geneva was a haven for refugees, many of whom came to his school, and then were sent out from that school as preachers into all of Europe — to Scotland, to England, to Italy, and to France. The records of those sent out are very incomplete because so many could not have their names mentioned due to the persecutions. Using these records, and doing some more calculation on the basis of other information, in the period of seven years, from 1555 to 1562, for example, it is possible that as many as

nine hundred men were sent out from Geneva all over Europe. Do not forget that the church at Geneva was also struggling during this time. It was only about twenty years earlier that a small, Reformed church was recognized in that city. Of course, it was through home mission that the Reformed church in Geneva grew in those short, twenty years, and those one hundred or more ministers per year that were sent out by the church went out mostly for home mission.³

Not only were the Christians in Geneva very active in home mission (how else do you imagine that the Reformation spread so rapidly), but they also were the first to send out foreign missionaries. On Tuesday, August 25, 1556, two men, Pierre Richier and Guillaume Charretier, were elected to minister on some islands off the coast of Brazil. They went in the two-fold capacity of chaplains to the French colonists and missionaries to the South American Indians. The mission failed because the colony failed, but the desire and the commitment were there.⁴

I hope you see the tremendous zeal for the propagation of the gospel which characterized the early Reformed churches. There are quite some similarities between their time and our time. The Reformed churches were small. Most of society had been touched by the message of Christianity, but most were not true Christians, just as in our day. Their society was morally decadent, as is ours today. They also experienced considerable social and economic upheavals, as we do today. We cannot tell the Lord how He ought to work, but seeing how He gave great increase on the Word sown then, there is no reason why we may not have similar hopes for today. Yes, indeed, a Reformation could sweep Canada in the next twenty years. God is able. However, there is one major difference between the 16th-century Reformers and the 20th-century Canadian Reformed people. They had many times more zeal for the growth of God's Kingdom than we do. We need that zeal. We need to get on our knees and beg the Lord for it. We will not get it from historical studies, however. It will come from faithful listening to and empowering by the Word of the Living God Who gives us the mission. Therefore we will now look at some passages of that Word of life.

The first point I want to show from the Bible is a general perspective that should shape our whole view of re-

redemptive history. God is Creator of all. He is therefore not a narrow, exclusivist, tribal god. He is not only the Creator of all things, but also in His salvation work, His concern is for the redemption of the world, of all peoples. That the Lord chose one man, Abraham, and one nation, Israel, was not to indicate that His concern is with a chosen few, but, rather, it was one step in the history of salvation, a history in which God seeks to have the gospel of hope proclaimed to *all* nations. Therefore, immediately upon establishing His covenant with Abraham, God gave as one of His promises to him, "In you *all* the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). The Lord did not choose Abraham just for him and his physical descendants, but to bring salvation to *all* the families of the earth.

Solomon also recognized this in his prayer of dedication of the temple when He publicly prayed to God:

Likewise when a foreigner, who is not of Thy people Israel, comes from a far country for Thy name's sake (for they shall hear of Thy great name, and Thy mighty hand, and of Thy outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this house, hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to Thee; in order that all the peoples of the earth may know Thy name and fear Thee, as do Thy people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by Thy name (I Kings 8:41-43).

This same spirit is shown in many of the Psalms:

Praise the Lord, all nations!
Extol Him, all peoples! (Ps. 117).
Declare His glory among the nations,
His marvellous works among all peoples!
(Ps. 96).

The Lord revealed in the Old Testament already a perspective that cries out for fulfilment in the New. If we take away from the New Testament church the mission to all mankind, we not only rob the New Testament, but also the Old, of a very substantial portion of their message. We rob not only the Bible, but God, of His glory. We then limit the glorious super-abounding mercy of the Lord as the Saviour of the world. God so loved the *world* that He gave His Son.

We can see from this perspective that Matthew 28:18-20 is integral to the whole scope of Scripture. The whole world should have expected that Christ, after receiving all power and authority, would send His apostles into all the world. I won't deal with every part of this passage, but will seek to clear

away some misunderstandings about it, and then point to two teachings of this text which will provide the basis for the rest of this speech.

I have said already that I intend to say nothing new, so when I now seek to remove the short-sighted and un-scholarly point of view that this mission command was completely fulfilled already by the apostles, then I want to refer first to our Reformed history. Peter Martyr Vermiglius, a Reformer from Italy who lived at the same time as Calvin, made the following comment about this text:

Wherefore that commandment of the Lord which He gave to the apostles, to go into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature, ought also to be of force in our time, that every man in his place which he is appointed unto, should by preaching not suffer sound doctrine to be abolished.⁵

This view was not shared by all the Reformers. There were those who indeed argued that this command was only given to the apostles, but with this motivation: not to limit the mission mandate, but to limit the hierarchy in the church. Also the view of Peter Martyr continued in the church. So, for example, in the *Leiden Synopsis*, a summary of theology published in 1625, Johannes Polyander, in answer to the Socinians who claimed that no calling to preach the gospel applies to our present time, strongly defended, with reference to Romans 10:15, Matthew 26:13, and Matthew 28:20, that the mandate applies just as much to our time as to the apostles. Justus Heurnius argued along the very same lines in a booklet published seven years earlier, and he thus persuaded the churches to send him out as a missionary to Batavia in 1624.

Does the command of Matthew 28 still apply to us today? Of course it does. In the first place, we have to consider the whole direction of Scripture which teaches that God's plan for this stage of redemptive history is the ingathering of the whole church from all nations — a stage which began with His resurrection and is not finished until His return. Secondly, we must consider the apostolic office. The apostles were the foundation stones on which the whole church was built. They were the church at this point. Christ was speaking to them as the church. He gave them also the command to baptize. We do not think of limiting that part of the command to the apostles only. Thirdly, baptizing

means baptizing in the Holy Spirit, equipping for ministry. Every disciple who is baptized is called to be a missionary. Fourthly, Christ concludes His command with, "Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." This is a statement of encouragement Christ gives to us as we fulfil His command. If the command does not apply to the end of the age, this statement makes no sense. Just as we say that the church today still has the keys of the Kingdom which were given to the apostles, so also the church still has the command to administer these keys. After all, we are speaking here of the command to preach the Word, which is one of the keys.

Matthew 28:18-20 is a very basic text, comparable to Genesis 1:28. It was spoken to the apostles as the representatives of the church for all future time. It is an all-encompassing command which is a basic description of the work of the church, "Make disciples. Make disciples of everyone. Teach them all that I have taught you."

What is of particular significance for our topic is that there are not several distinctions made here. We do not read about ministry of the Word to the congregation, evangelism to those Jews who have heard the Word before, and mission to the heathen who have never heard the gospel before. In principle, it is all one responsibility, one command. Or, to use the terminology of Dr. K. Schilder, it is one church-gathering work.

We can, of course, make some distinctions. For practical reasons, not all can go to Brazil. Perhaps you can also say that, as God gave the direction to the disciples to go first to Jerusalem, then to Judea and so forth, so there is a priority to go to those nearest to you before going to the ends of the earth. On the other hand, it is also possible to argue that it is very important to not forget those who have never heard. The Lord has also given different talents to different members of the church, thus equipping us for different tasks. These are all possible distinctions, but they are not distinctions *in principle*.

What is the relation between foreign mission and home mission? To answer this question, we should add also the ministry of the Word in the congregation. Foreign mission, home mission, and the ministry of the Word to the congregation are in principle all one activity, one great commission.

The second point I want to make on the basis of Matthew 28 is that we

have here a commission given officially to the church as a whole. The command is given to the office-bearers of the church to make disciples of all nations, disciples who are to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, so that they, too, are given the same Holy Spirit as the apostles. They, too, are anointed and given a calling to make disciples. The whole church is given the commission, and the church as a whole as represented by her office-bearers is given the commission. Every believer has received the commission, and the special office-bearers have been given the commission in a special way.

This is exactly what we see in the life of the New Testament church. Not just the apostles, but also the whole church, bring the good news to the whole world. Due to persecution the church at Jerusalem was scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. We read in Acts 8:4, "Now those who were scattered went about preaching the Word." Paul also commends the church at Thessalonica for their energy in evangelizing. They properly saw that what was commanded to the apostles was what should be imitated by the whole church:

And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the Word in much affliction, with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit; so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has the Word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere (I Thessalonians 1:6-8).

This recognition of the missionary calling of the church was not something that was restricted to the apostles and to the office of all believers. It was recognized that this was the official calling of the church, and that the church officially had a responsibility to proclaim the Word to all. This is evident in the sending out of Barnabas and Paul in Acts 13 by the church at Antioch. Not only was Paul ordained and sent out, but also Barnabas.

The New Testament church had men whose special calling was to be evangelists. We think of Philip (Acts 21:18) and of Paul's mentioning of evangelists in his list of office-bearers given to the church (Ephesians 4:11, 12). Calvin argued that the office of evangelist was temporary. However, this is one case in which modern scholars cannot agree with him. He argued that evangelists had an office next to the apostles where they did similar

work, and that, with the passing of the apostles, evangelists also were no longer necessary, except in special times such as the Reformation. He had a special interest in reasoning this way. He was fighting against the hierarchy of the Romanists and did not want to have any kind of evangelists who would be of a higher rank than the pastors and teachers. He also wanted to avoid the disorderliness of the men who were running around everywhere in his day, claiming to be ministers of God, but who were really just creating confusion, refusing to submit to the supervision of the church.

To determine what an evangelist is, we must look at the meaning of the word in Greek, which is simply: one who proclaims the good news. This word can be applied to any preaching of the Word, but it often has the special meaning of proclaiming the good news to those who do not know the Lord. From this we may determine that Paul teaches in Ephesians 4 that among the officers of the church are evangelists. We have seen that Calvin, when presented with the opportunity, indeed supported sending out evangelists, but it was not something he really properly dealt with in his church polity. We have all now recognized this weakness in Calvin, and we do now ordain and send out evangelists. We call them missionaries. In the New Testament, however, to be an evangelist did not just refer to missionaries who were sent out many miles away. Also the local pastor was called to be an evangelist. One of the responsibilities the Lord gave to Timothy as a local pastor of a congregation was that he had to "do the work of an evangelist" (II Timothy 4:5). Thus the official officers of the church have as one of their responsibilities to *lead* the congregation in evangelism, and not just to lead by teaching about it, but also to lead by *doing* it.

The time has come to draw some conclusions. First we note that the church as a whole has received the mandate to make disciples of all nations and to teach these disciples all the things the Lord has commanded. This is one, basic, all-important commission — the great commission, if you will. We can distinguish in this commission three different areas of ministry, but we must always remember that essentially they are one. We may never, as a general rule, claim any overall priority for any one of these areas of ministry. It is not correct to say that

preaching in the congregation is of first importance, then foreign mission, and lastly home mission. Realizing this will bring into church life some major changes, changes in the use of our time, our talented people, and our money.

The second conclusion is that foreign mission and home mission should be treated in basically the same way. The church as church is intimately involved in both and responsible for both. Home mission is directed to a different group of people than is foreign mission. We speak to each on a different basis. Other differences can also be mentioned, but confessionally and church politically we must treat them in the same way. In principle, there is nothing wrong with doing mission work in Brazil, which is not to people who have never heard of God. But we ought also to see our responsibility for sending a missionary to Vancouver.

A third conclusion is that the office-bearers of the church, the church consistories, should recognize that they have a direct responsibility, not just for foreign mission and the ministry of the word to believers and their children, but just as much for home mission. I cannot think of a single convincing argument for defending that home mission should be organized only by the members of the church in their office of all believers, and not by the church councils. With regard to the ministry of the Word to the congregation, we recognize both an official ministry and an unofficial one in the families, schools, study societies, and informally. So it should also be with home and foreign mission, yes, even foreign mission. In that case, too, it is to be encouraged that believers go out unofficially, if they are able to be of real service to the Lord in this way.

I hope this speech will stimulate discussion as well as action.

R. BOERSEMA

¹Martin Bucer, *De Regno Christi*, ed. and tr. Wilhelm Pauck, The Library of Christian Classics, Vol. XIX, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1969).

²*Ibid.*, p. 259.

³John H. Bratt, ed. *The Heritage Of John Calvin, Heritage Hall Lectures 1960-1970*.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 55-73.

⁵Peter M. Vermiglius, *Common Places of the Most Famous and Renowned Divine Doctor Peter Martyr*, tr. Anthonie Marten, (London: in Pater Noster Rowe, 1583). IV, p. 4.

**This is the text of a speech delivered at an office-bearers' conference held in Chilliwack, B.C., Spring 1977.*

mission news



Newsletter No. 29
IRIAN JAYA

Dear brothers and sisters,

After having been away for two months, our head teacher, Obed Pekey, returned to Manggelum on the first of February, accompanied by his new wife. His wife is still getting used to the new environment; she came down with malaria, but fortunately is better now. We are happy that Obed has found a life-partner, and also that she is a Christian.

Later in February we received word from the Yayasan (school society) about their new plans with the gurus in our area. It is sure now that guru Pekey will not be able to stay here, but will have to move to Kawagit. In Kawagit there is a subsidized school, while in Manggelum there is not. The people here are still getting beams together for a new school building, but lately not much result could be seen. However, when the head teacher will leave for Kawagit, the people will hopefully get a new impetus to start working again. It would be nice if a new school building could be erected this year. If we then become "recognized," and therefore subsidized, we would receive one or more gurus and school could start again. Hopefully the third and fourth graders do not have to be out of school for more than a year.

On the second of February I made a visit to the school in Sawagit (15 minutes downriver with our boat). The teacher told the Bible story fairly well, and even applied the story to the people's way of life. Very often, still, the teachers solely explain the story without saying anything about what it means for us today. After the Bible story the teacher went over the pictures (in a simple picture book) which related to the story. Also when I checked some other pictures with the pupils, their response was good.

The house of the teacher had suffered, too, under the strong winds we usually have between December and March: the whole kitchen hung over to one side. The village people were already gathering materials for a new kitchen, and by now it must be almost finished.

Getting food has been a problem again for the teacher's family. The people do not always bring enough; this is also a big problem for the teacher-evangelist in Manggelum. When not much is brought, the teacher's families live mainly on sago and bananas — not very nutritious (just like eating potatoes only).

In the first week of February we had Miss Annie Havinga from The Netherlands over for several days. Miss Havinga came to Irian to look over and discuss the ZGK administration. Her visit has been very helpful for Mrs. H. Griffioen at Kawagit, who does the administration for the ZGK.

Also in the beginning of February we found a new house-help again after having been without for a couple of months. Right now a young fellow of approximately 18 years of age helps us by doing dishes, doing the laundry, sweeping and cleaning the house, etc.; he's a real help to us. His name is Yawenop.

On February 10th Joanne and Emily left for Kawagit, while I went to

Boma where the annual ZGK conference was held. Right after that followed an elder conference in Boma, and thereafter a meeting of church delegates was held in Kouh. Enough flying to arrange in a two-week period, but somehow it all worked out.

The week of the 20th was a school holiday week in Manggelum, so it was fairly quiet in the village. Together with Bapak Victor I managed to get several things made which were necessary in and around the house. These were: a large table (we were still using a table measuring only 60 x 110 cm; the new one measures 100 x 160 cm); a screened box in which to store the vegetables which we buy at the door; and a bed for Emily, so that Corrinne, Rev. and Mrs. Versteeg's daughter, can take Emily's small bed.

Further, at the end of February we also began to set up the *gudang* (storage building for drums, tools, etc.), for which Bapak Victor and I had pre-cut many beams. The structure was standing in two days, and now we have to put the roof part on, a job which is a little trickier (especially if it's your first time!). However, everything seems to work out okay; so, after we have been to Sentani to meet the Versteeg family, we should be able to finish it in about a month.

It will be nice to have a carpenter in Manggelum. Bapak Victor is able to

Continued on page 296.



During the ZGK Conference in Boma, February 1978. From left to right: Rev. J. Kruidhof, Miss Ely Nieboer, Mrs. Kruidhof, Miss Greet Euwema, Mrs. Haak, Mrs. Veldhuizen, Mr. D. Griffioen, Mr. J. Veldhuizen, Rev. C.J. Haak, Rev. J.B.K. de Vries, Miss Janet Velvis, Miss Annie Havinga (visiting); sitting in the Middle: Mr. H. Griffioen; in Front: Rev. D.J. Zandbergen.

NEW DIRECTIONS

A Look at Canada's Immigration Act and Regulations

From the Minister of Employment and immigration we received some documents regarding the New Immigration Act, which became effective upon proclamation on April 10, 1978. Since the Act covering immigration will be of special interest to our readers, we shall publish the material received so that all of them are informed about the changes. We wish to express our appreciation for all the material which we have received from the Minister's office and publish it without any change or addition.

EDITOR

STATEMENT ON CANADA'S IMMIGRATION POLICY BY PRIME MINISTER MACKENZIE KING IN 1947



Right Hon. W.L. Mackenzie King (Prime Minister) during the debate on the bill to amend the Immigration Act said: "I should like to set forth, in broad outline, the government's policy with respect to immigration.

The policy of the government is to foster the growth of the population of Canada by the encouragement of immigration. The government will seek by legislation, regulation, and vigorous administration, to ensure the careful selection and permanent settlement of

such numbers of immigrants as can advantageously be absorbed in our national economy.

Like other major problems of today, the problem of immigration must be viewed in the light of the world situation as a whole. A wise and productive policy for Canada cannot be devised by studying only the situation within our own country.

Canada's policy has to be related to the social, political and economic circumstances resulting from the war. Among other considerations, it should take account of the urgent problem of the resettlement of persons who are displaced and homeless, as an aftermath of the world conflict.

Under existing circumstances, therefore, Canada's policy with respect to immigration falls, necessarily, into two parts: measures designed for immediate application, and a long-term programme.

— Excerpt from Hansard, Thursday, May 1, 1947.

A BACKWARD GLANCE: Genesis of a New Law

The Need for Modern Legislation

Canada has needed a new immigration law for a long time. The previous Immigration Act, adopted in 1952, was an outgrowth of legislation dating back to the turn of the century and, understandably, reflected many of the attitudes, circumstances and conditions of an earlier era.

The old Act contained many archaic provisions — it prohibited the admission of groups such as epileptics and the mentally ill; it took a harsh approach to deportation; and it permitted refusal of immigrants on the basis of nationality, citizenship, ethnic group, occupation, class or geographical area. Though most of these provisions had been abandoned in practice for many years, they were still, in theory at least, enforceable.

Also, the previous legislation did not envision the threats to peace and security posed by international terrorism and organized crime. And, of course, hijackers were still an unknown hazard.

Canada's new Immigration Act introduces the changes needed to deal with these problems and brings our immigration policy and programs up-to-date with the realities and attitudes of modern-day Canada. It was written around such fundamental principles as non-discrimination; family reunion; humanitarian concern for refugees; and the promotion of Canada's social, economic, demographic, and cultural goals.

The new Act is the product of more than four years of intensive study and cooperative effort by all levels of government. It incorporates the thinking of thousands of individual Canadians and organizations who offered suggestions to the Minister or participated in hearings, seminars and conferences held in communities from coast to coast.

Development of the Act

In September 1973, the Federal Government began an in-depth review of immigration policy as the first step towards a new national immigration policy for Canada. During the review, briefs and letters submitted by national organizations, provincial authorities and members of the public were studied, and a series of discussion documents, referred to collectively as the Green Paper on Immigration, was prepared.

The Green Paper explained the 1952 law and discussed domestic and international challenges facing future immigration programs. It became the focal point for an unprecedented national debate on immigration objectives and policy.

Following the release of the Green Paper, a Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons was set up to conduct a country-wide program of hearings, conferences and seminars and report its findings to Parliament. Over 90 percent of the Committee's recommendations were later incorporated into the Immigration Bill, which was tabled before Parliament on November 24, 1976.

After second reading, followed by clause-by-clause analysis, and, subsequently, third and final reading, the Bill was passed by the House of Commons and the Senate. On August 5, 1977, the

Bill received Royal Assent from the Governor-General, and came into effect upon proclamation in early April, 1978.

AT FIRST SIGHT:

Highlights of the 1976 Act

The 1976 Immigration Act and Regulations brings Canada's immigration policy and practices into much sharper focus than ever before — introducing many new features and reinforcing, expanding or clarifying parts of the previous law that were still valid and useful.

At a glance, the new Act:

- states, for the first time in Canadian law, the basic principles underlying immigration policy — non-discrimination, family reunion, humanitarian concern for refugees, and the promotion of national goals;
- links the immigration movement to Canada's population and labour market needs;
- provides for an annual forecast of the number of immigrants Canada can comfortably absorb, to be made in consultation with the provinces and other groups;
- establishes a "family class," allowing Canadian citizens to sponsor a wider range of close relatives;
- confirms Canada's commitment and responsibilities to refugees under the United Nations Convention and establishes a new "refugee class";
- requires immigrants and visitors to obtain visas or authorizations abroad, and prohibits visitors from changing their status from within Canada;
- introduces security measures to protect Canada from international terrorism and organized crime;
- safeguards the civil rights of immigrants and visitors through an improved inquiry and appeal system;
- provides less drastic alternatives to deportation for cases involving minor violations of immigration law; and
- states in specific terms the powers granted to the government and its officials.

A CLOSER LOOK:

The Act in More Detail

In the following pages, we will examine these highlights in more detail and see how the Act, while providing definite guidelines for immigration policy and procedures, is flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances in Canada's social and economic climate.



This International "Welcome to Canada" sign greets all newcomers as they arrive at the various Immigration Reception Areas across Canada.

New Act Links Demographic, Immigration Policy

The new Immigration Act establishes, for the first time, a formal link between Canada's population (or demographic) policy, and our immigration policy.

Population considerations were certainly in mind during the last century, when railroad-building and western settlement were in the forefront of government policy, but not until now have demographic aspects been formally established by law.

The need for a demographic policy in Canada has been emerging for a number of years, as governments and individuals became increasingly aware that careful planning was necessary to help avoid, or at least reduce, population-related problems which many countries are already facing — urban congestion, rural depopulation.

Solving these problems, will depend greatly on Canada's future population size and rate of growth, where people choose to live, and the population structure, or composition, which includes such aspects as linguistic character, age structure, and household and family formation.

Day-to-day work in population policy development is carried out by a small secretariat, the first unit in the Federal Government to be devoted to this area. The Demographic Policy Secretariat has been responsible for looking at other federal policies and programs affecting or affected by

demographic considerations, co-ordinating consultations with the provinces at the official level, and keeping non-governmental organizations and the general public informed.

"In the past, immigration regulations could be changed by Order-in-Council," says Andy Greiner, Acting Demographic Director. "Now the regulations must go before Parliament. It's a much more open system. And each year, the expected levels for immigration must be set. This is a real change."

The new act also requires federal-provincial consultation.

The Immigration and Demographic Policy Group (as the secretariat is now known) will be preparing extensive briefing materials for these consultations. The public information role is also important: a background paper is already available, and a Population Information Kit is being developed.

"Our mandate and responsibilities under the new act are quite clear," says H.G. Howith, Policy Development officer. "Our job is to recommend the best method for welcoming the right number of people to Canada, and to encourage the best population growth rate, distribution, and composition."

OUR COVER

The Parliament Buildings in Ottawa, Ontario.

news medley

Three couples celebrated their forty-fifth wedding anniversary. The names of two of them I dug up out of bulletins, of the third couple we were told in the previous issue of *Clarion*.

To start with the last one: brother and sister G.R. Kleefman of New Westminster, B.C., celebrated this fact on the ninth of June. On that same day, according to the bulletin of the Ebenezer Church in Burlington, brother and sister VanderBerg had their feast. One month earlier it was the turn of brother and sister W. VanderMolen of Chilliwack, B.C. The last-mentioned couple wished to let the event pass without "any fanfare," but the minister did discover it and once a minister has discovered something, you know the rest. Of all three couples it can without doubt be said what the Burlington bulletin wrote about the couple in their midst, and therefore I quote that. "Our brother and sister have experienced happiness, but also anxiety and sorrow during these years. The Lord has given them a blessed place in our midst and we pray that our heavenly Father will surround them with His care also in the years to come."

Of the Ebenezer Church in Burlington I have nothing else to tell at the moment. There are a few things of the Rehoboth Church which I wish to pass on.

The Consistory of that Church appointed a committee to look into the question of expansion. I mentioned before that the thoughts of some go into the direction of instituting another Church. There is, of course, more than one aspect to such a matter and therefore it should be investigated well before a decision is made. The mandate of the committee reads as follows:

1. to conduct a thorough investigation as to how the growing need for pastoral care in the congregation can best be met, and to formulate a documented proposal concerning the same.
2. to calculate the financial aspects of the various possible measures.
3. to receive views and opinions from the members of the congregation and to confer with the minister in this matter.
4. to have a report prepared for the consistory before the end of September 1978.

According to our (reliable) Yearbook, the Congregation at Burlington West numbers close to seven hundred members. That is far too large. Under such conditions a minister either gets a nervous breakdown or becomes lazy since he cannot do all he has to do anyway. Or he keeps his sanity and his diligence, and then the Congregation suffers. One person can do only so much. We can only be happy that the Consistory saw the need for planning ahead and took measures in that direction.

A while ago someone said to me, "How is that possible that today a Congregation of six or seven hundred members is considered to be too large for one minister? I recall that in the olden days our minister had at least as big a Congregation and even took part in half of the family visits every year; that, too, is something which nowadays oftentimes is not feasible. What is the reason for that?"

I could not give my brother a satisfactory answer, for I do not know the answer to that question myself. I am wondering whether anyone among our readers has any idea why that situation is what it is. Let me know if you do have an answer; not just any answer, but *the* answer or the combination of answers, for I presume that there are more factors than just one.

Continuing with the Ontario news, I may tell you that the work on the Fergus Church building has started and is progressing satisfactorily. For some days it was necessary to do some climbing in order to get in, but on Sundays we do have a decent contraption which enables the members to get in without danger to life or limb. I promise our readers a few pictures once everything is ready.

Going to Orangeville, we note that on June 2nd a meeting was held where the Rev. Cl. Stam spoke on "Evangelism: What Do We Do with It?". As a good Reformed minister he not only presented the theme but also divided his address into points: 1. Evangelism as a calling of the church. 2. The dangers in Evangelism. 3. Equipped to Evangelize? 4. Methodology.

The last Congregation in Ontario about which I pass on some news is the one in Ottawa.

Lately the brethren and sisters there developed quite some activity. I do not wish to imply that they were not active, but now their activity is largely directed towards those who do not live in Ottawa. They wish to make the coming to that city and its vicinity more attractive. Thus, they hope, their number will increase.

One of the means by which they hope to achieve that is a change of meeting place.

When, some years ago, the Seventh Day Adventists sold their building, the Ottawa Church had to leave the old location. They found shelter in the Ottawa Christian School and the library room of that school has served as the meeting place for the Congregation on Sundays. However, it does not appear to be very conducive to promoting the thought, "We go to Church today."

The older ones among us will recall the days after the Liberation, when in many instances the Congregations met in schoolrooms, in "upper rooms" made available by restaurants or even theatres, in gymnasiums complete with bars and swinging-rings, and more such elaborate facilities. I recall reading a joke about that. Two boys, the one "liberated," the other one not, were discussing the marks of the true Church. The "liberated" boy "floored" his opponent with the question whether in his Church there were also monkey-bars and swinging-rings. No, the boy had to admit that those ingredients were missing in the Church building where he went with his parents. "Then," came the triumphant conclusion, "that is not a true Church!"

Returning to Ottawa, we see that the brotherhood there is trying to bring a change in that situation. Apparently they placed an advertisement in a newspaper asking whether anyone had facilities available where they could have their Church services.

A letter concerning the availability for rent of a large Chapel on Bayswater Street, in response to our advertisement in the newspaper. Further information will be requested. Letter from the Orange League concerning the rental of their building for Church services, will be acknowledged but no decision is taken at this time.

We can be sure that we shall hear from them in the future.

Another "project" is the listing of the Church in the telephone directory. About that we read, "The Canadian Reformed Church will be listed in the 1979 telephone directory. Until that time interested persons can obtain the number through the telephone operator. The telephone number is 825-2403." I thought that it would be good to pass it on to our readers. Make a little note in your Year-book, then you have it and don't have to ask or be in the dark if you should visit Ottawa.

Herewith we say farewell to Ontario and, skipping Manitoba, we reach Alberta.

Edmonton decided to sell the present manse. Members of the Congregation will receive the opportunity to buy it before it is put up for sale on the open market. Apparently the idea of keeping it with a view to the eventual calling of a second minister did not find sufficient acceptance.

In Neerlandia they had quite an evening on April 28 when the choir of Neerlandia/Barrhead gave a concert. Congregational singing was also included. Although the choir is not very large, the balance seems to me to be pretty good, seeing how many persons sing a certain voice. It is quite evenly divided.

A strange phenomenon was found in the report on a consistory meeting. "Report of the church visitors to classis is read and ratified, after one minor error is discussed." That appears to be extremely strange to me. As a matter of politeness Church Visitors usually send a copy of their report to *classis* to the Church where they did bring the visit. As far as I can see, that is not necessary. No, I am not going to advocate abolition of that custom. Let it remain, as far as I am concerned. But let us please remain realistic. It is a report to Classis. And even regarding the decisions of major assemblies their is already much confusion concerning that so-called "ratification." I wonder how many of those who use that word so liberally have taken note of the inaugural address by the late Prof. P. Deddens and have read it.

I am not enthusiastic about that inaugural address at all. In the situation of those days it did "speak" to the people and it was a useful "counter-weight" over against the synodical claim that decisions of broader assemblies are to be considered settled and binding *until* they are changed by such a broader assembly.

We did, however, get a sort of "ratification-fever": each and every Church member or each and every Consistory was considered to be under obligation to "ratify" the decisions of broader assemblies. Thus brethren dutifully bent over the oftentimes so difficultly-worded decisions of Classes and Synods and Consistories spent many hours discussing and "ratifying" those decisions. Apart from the fruit of becoming thoroughly acquainted with the decisions of broader assemblies, such "ratifying" was, in my opinion, a quite unnecessary and useless business. I am convinced that the obligation to "ratify" is there only in cases where a broader assembly made a decision which affects either the Church or the particular Church member personally and specifically.

With more agreement I quote from Neerlandia's bulletin what the Consistory wrote about Mission Aid. Since the aid to Korea appears no longer to be necessary, at least not in that form and volume in which it was given in the past, the Consistory decided "that it is best to discontinue collecting for this entirely. Instead, an offering will be held the second Sunday of each month for the Mission Aid

Congratulations



Ann Van Veen, daughter of Mrs. Janny Van Veen and the late Dr. K. Van Veen, Essex, Ontario graduated May 27, 1978 at the University of Windsor, Ontario with the Bachelor Degree of Science in Nursing and Bachelor Degree of Arts, with a major in Psychology. Upon completion of her registration exams, she will start her Nursing career at Vancouver, B.C. in the General Hospital.

in Brazil, and it will be sent to them to use as they see fit. The Consistory believes that giving to the poor and needy and accompanying it with the proclamation of the gospel is the proper way."

Although the order seems to be somewhat reversed (we do not accompany the gifts with the proclamation of the Gospel, but we cause the proclamation of the Gospel to be accompanied by the gifts), it is something which could be kept in mind by others, too.

We drift down to the Valley.

The Rev. Boersema went to Brazil for a visit, scheduled to last from two to four weeks. It was decided that he should make that visit now that the Van Spronsens are still there and can help him to become more acquainted with the work and the Congregation than can ever be done via letters, tapes, pictures, or even a discussion here in Canada. We express the hope that a visum may be forthcoming soon. Today, too, the Lord directs the hearts of the mighty ones as a farmer directs the water in the irrigation canals.

Cloverdale's Consistory-report gives some more information about contact with others.

The Free Reformed Church informs us that they are in agreement with the proposal of the consistories of Langley and Cloverdale to hold joint discussions regarding the matters that keep us separate as Churches. They suggest that we organize the first meeting. In consultation with Langley we will propose to discuss the "Union of 1892." A meeting will be scheduled for June 5th.

That is past already by the time I am writing this. We may hear sometime in the future what the fruit of that discussion is.

The Consistory also took a decision about a specific request for an attestation.

The consistory received a request from a family for an attestation for one of our neighbouring churches. Due to the fact that this family did not move, the consistory decided after ample discussion not to grant this request. In connection with this request the following motion is moved and adopted as a guideline for future requests: "As a rule attestations will be granted, upon request, if there is an actual *move* involved which results in a person/family living nearer to another congregation."

Our readers may know what I think about boundaries between the various Churches. I have seen more misery from it than joy. The whole question is sometimes also grasped as a pretext which is to cover other motives and intentions. I do think that there should not be fixed boundaries between the various Congregations.

But I wholeheartedly agree with the decision of Cloverdale's Consistory. What Cloverdale has decided now, has been the intention from the very beginning.

I recall that this point was discussed when, many years ago, we decided not to draw any line as a "demarcation-line" which was to be honoured and respected by each and every one. Then — as is the case now — fear was expressed that persons or families might ask for an attestation to join a neighbouring Church because they ran into trouble with the Consistory or because they had a quarrel with some Church members, etc. It was agreed upon that those arguments (whether admitted openly or not!) were no valid reasons why an attestation should be given and they should be permitted to "change Churches." Then — as now — it was stated that "as a rule" moving was the sole reason for "changing."

We did, I recall, mention a hypothetical case in which permission could be granted without a move being involved. That was when, e.g., all the children of a couple moved out to another place and now went to Church in the neighbouring Congregation. That was deemed a perfectly legitimate reason to ask for an attestation with a view to joining that same neighbouring Church. As for the rest: moving was the only valid reason.

I know, "Met onwillige honden is het kwaad hazen vangen" ("One man may lead a horse to water, but fifty cannot make it drink") and if someone says, "In spite of everything, I go! You can say what you want to and do whatever you like, I am going to that other Church!" a Consistory cannot do much about that. Then, however, I think, there should be such good cooperation between the neighbouring Churches that the other Church does not receive such a person or such a family.

I mention this because sometimes I get the impression that there are brothers and sisters who understand the phrase "No boundaries between the Churches" in such a way that it means, "Everyone can do all the time whatever he likes. 'No boundaries' means: 'If you wish to you could change Churches ten times a year.' : the lid is off."

That is definitely a misrepresentation of the whole point. That's what I wished to make clear, and Cloverdale's decision gave me the opportunity to do so.

The Consistory of Langley decided to increase the number of elders as well as the number of deacons by one. The growth of the Congregation necessitates such a move.

In the Valley as a whole there was quite some activity in the "Pro Life" region.

It seems that an important vote was coming up in the

Surrey Memorial Hospital Association. Church members were exhorted (in the *Church News*) to become a member, for then they would be able to vote and to vote for anti-abortionists to sit on the board of the Hospital.

Now a meeting was called for June 1st and "This means that all those who became a member after April 30th cannot vote on this meeting, but will be able to vote in June 1979. We are very disappointed that the meeting has been called at such an early date and suspect it was done purposely, as 500 new members joined the hospital during the past month."

Here is a community-involvement where our members can oppose the anti-godly trend and the murderous enterprises which must arouse the anger of the Lord and provoke His punishment.

In conclusion of our medley this time I should like to share with you part of a speech given by Mr. Bob Wenman (MP for Fraser Valley West) in Canada's Parliament. The title reads, "Human Rights" and the speech deals with "Free Access For Bibles Sent to U.S.S.R." Mr. Wenman moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Canadian delegation at the Belgrade Conference on the Helsinki accords should gain guarantees from the Government of the USSR that individuals be permitted to send or personally bring with them bibles and other religious publications when visiting friends or relatives in the USSR.

Today the subject I should like to deal with is that of religious liberty, Christian religious liberty is biblically rooted firstly in God's nature and secondly in His dealings with persons. Freedom is represented as a gift of God through grace extended to man throughout the New Testament. Freedom is in fact rooted in God. God gives man the capacity to receive and experience the inner peace of freedom. For a man to be truly free is for a man to be at one with God, for freedom is where God is present.

Paul wrote, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is present there is freedom . . . Freedom is what we have — Christ has set us free."

By Christian definition persons reconciled to God are therefore free persons. Christians have therefore demonstrated throughout history that even in the face of persecution, prison, and martyrdom, a Christian can be free and at peace through God's love and the commitment of Jesus Christ for eternal life.

God's revelation of Himself to man is made on the basis of freedom. Jesus Christ came not with worldly majesty and power to force and subjugate man to His will. He came and chose to make Himself known instead freely through love. God's approach is, "Listen, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into his house and eat with him and he will eat with Me." The freedom which God has given in Christ implies a free response to God's love . . .

While religious freedom has, in principle, become almost universal, multitudes of people are in practice denied the right of religious freedom.

Under Part 2, Section (A), No. (II), printed information of the Helsinki Final Act on Cooperation in Humanitarian Fields, the USSR undertook:

To facilitate the improvement of the dissemination

on their territory of newspapers and printed publications, periodicals and non-periodicals, from other participating states.

Further according to Article 124 of the constitution of the USSR "Freedom of conscience and separation of church and state" is assured, and it is presumed that non-interference of the state in the affairs of religious denominations is thereby equally assured. Because of the USSR's adherence to these principles it should be easy enough for the USSR to accede to Canada's request to send, or allow Canadians to bring with them, bibles and other religious publications when visiting their co-religionists in the USSR . . . Personal friends who have visited have come back to tell of tremendous shortages not only of religious publications but also of bibles. They tell the bibles being produced in Russia which are denied to the people to read because most of the production is exported. They tell of such statistics as one bible for every 250 believers, and of grown men crying with the pleasure of being able to receive a bible from abroad . . . This is a very important motion, Mr. Speaker, and I make it with all

seriousness and in a totally non-partisan manner. I appeal to Christians throughout this House and to people who believe in religious liberty in all fields throughout the world. I urge the members of this House to speak briefly as I have done so that this motion might pass, although the Conference is completed, so that the government can carry the spirit of this motion through the ambassador directly to the Soviet Union, so that once again believers throughout the world will have an enlightened view and religious liberty that their birthright under the United Nations Human Rights Charter.

* * * * *

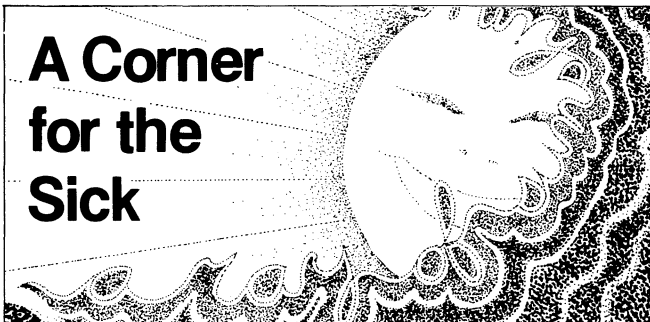
The above quotation shows the characteristics of every extemporaneous speech, but we may be thankful that there are still people who dare to speak out and who are not ashamed of the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ but speak it boldly also in the House of Commons.

I have kept you long enough this time.

Hope to meet you two weeks from now.

vO

A Corner for the Sick



For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. *Ephesians 2:10*

God has chosen us (not because we were holy but) that we should be holy and without blemish before Him. This election was not founded on foreseen faith and the obedience of faith, holiness, or any other good quality or disposition of man, as the prerequisite, cause, or condition on which it depended; but men are chosen TO faith and TO THE OBEDIENCE of faith, holiness etc. Therefore, ELECTION is the FOUNDATION of every saving good, from which proceeds faith, holiness, and the other gifts of salvation (Canons of Dort, Chapter I, Article 9).

It gives tremendous comfort to believe this. If we should have to depend on our own obedience of faith, on our own holiness, etc., would that really give us anything to stand on? We know by the preaching of the Word that all Adam's posterity is conceived and born in sin. By nature we are incapable of doing any good. God worked His plan of redemption in such a way that He chose a definite number of people. We are chosen, in Christ, to do good works. We are God's workmanship; that is why Paul in his letter to the Colossians (read Chapter 3) urges the believers to put to death what is earthly, and to put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, COMPASSION, KINDNESS, LOWLINESS,

MEEKNESS, and PATIENCE (verse 12). We should let Christ's Spirit rule in us. Notice the way the Lord Jesus responded to the people: it was always compelled by LOVE. The Lord Jesus knows the hearts of men; for us believers it is often difficult to love, because we do not know how other people's hearts and minds operate. We misunderstand or misinterpret, and we often do not know the background or circumstances correctly. Still we are urged to be compassionate, or rather, to PUT ON compassion. The only way we can accomplish this is to read instructions first. Christ left us plenty of study material. Verse 16 says: "Let the WORD of Christ dwell in you richly!"

I am happy to start with a thank you note! Arlene de Wit's mother wrote a letter telling us how much Arlene appreciated all the cards which she received. She has two photo albums full and proudly shows them to every visitor. Thank you, brothers and sisters!

One sister needs our attention this time.

MRS. H. WERKMAN

"Chateau Gardens" Nursing Home
Room 520, 310 Oxford Street West,
London, Ontario

Mrs. Werkman has been ill for many years. She is a diabetic and has been in and out of hospitals many times. She went to a nursing home in 1971 and still resides in a nursing home at present. She would greatly benefit by our attention. Mrs. Werkman and her husband will both be strengthened by it!

I would like to add a personal note of thanks to all who have given me encouragement by their appreciative words. Thank you, brothers and sisters! I do the work with much joy!

Send your requests for the lonely and sick, and "special" birthday calendar children, to:

Mrs. J.K. Riemersma

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

mission news

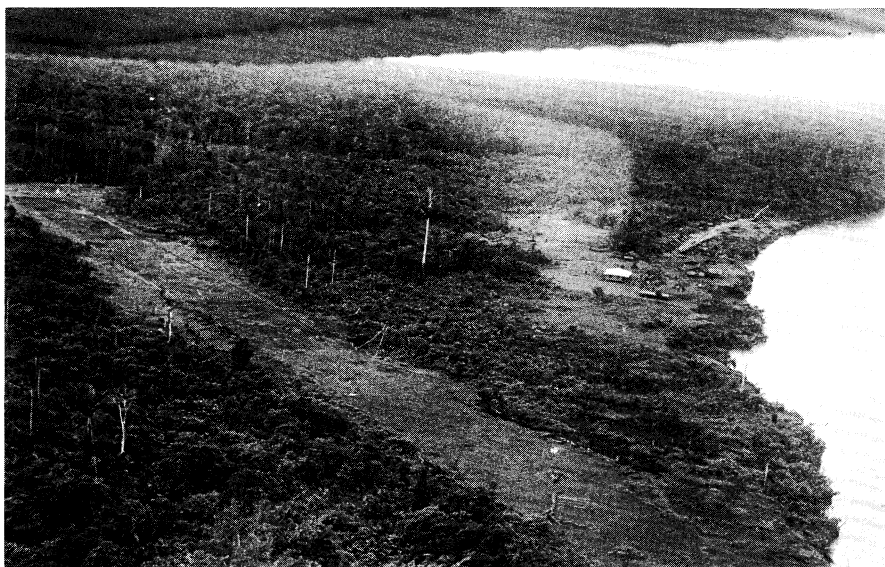
Continued from page 289.

help out on some little jobs, but he cannot work out building projects on his own. However, he does a great job supervising the eight men who are presently sawing in the jungle to provide us with building materials for the Versteegs' home.

Although the original plan was that the Versteegs' home be built after Miss Corrie van Driel's home in Kouh is finished, it is becoming clear now that this will take much too long. We are in the process of trying to get our own carpenter now, so that a start can soon be made on the new house.

The first months will be filled with orientation visits to the other ZGK stations and also visits to the South (Buptitiri, etc.), possibly also attending a course in Indonesian for three months. After that we hope that the house for Rev. and Mrs. Versteeg will be well under way.

A cable concerning their arrival reached us on March 2nd. They are ex-



Mangellum from the air, February 1978. Background: village along the river Digul; Foreground: airstrip.

pected to arrive in Sentani, D.V., on the 17th of March. We are planning to arrive there on the 15th, so that should be in time to meet them. You can imagine that we are looking forward to that

very much! Hope to tell you more about it next month.

Till we meet again,
BRAM and JOANNE VEGTER

PRESS RELEASE

Canadian Reformed Society for a Home for the Aged.

The yearly membership meeting was held on April 21, 1978, at Hamilton. The meeting was opened by the chairman, br. L. Knegt. We sang Psalm 62:1 and the chairman read II Corinthians 9.

The minutes of the 1977 Annual Meeting were read and approved.

The secretary gave his annual report. He related the difficulties encountered during the past year. At one time the board decided to come with building proposals to the membership, but this had to be delayed due to changes CMHC made in their loan policies. The board will have to discuss the matter again, and will have to look for alternate financing.

The financial report was read. The auditors found the books in good order.

Additional Letters Patent and By-law 2 were read and approved.

The results of voting for 3 board members were as follows: from the congregation of Smithville — br. J. Schulenberg; Hamilton — br. C. Walinga; and from Lincoln — br. G. Van Wouderberg.

The chairman gave a progress report. He gave a review of the difficulties we have experienced this past year, and gave several possibilities open to us to build a Home for our older brothers and sisters. The most

promising possibility seems to be to go ahead without government financing. At least 25% of the Capital cost would have to be raised by the prospective tenants, and the remainder of the money can be raised by way of a conventional mortgage. The board will have to know first how many people are willing and ready to move into a Home for the Aged. The members present agreed in principle with this suggestion. In the discussion it was brought forward to get more members and to pay off the property as soon as possible. It was suggested to start small and add more units if and when required.

We sang Hymn 62, and Rev. Loopstra closed with prayer.

The chairman adjourned the meeting.

H. VAN LUIK, Secretary

P.S.

Anyone who wishes to become a member of the society, please contact the secretary:

G. Van Wouderberg,
244 Greenlane, R.R. 3,
Beamsville, Ontario L0R 1B0

Or you may contact any of the board members:

H. Bartels (Hamilton)
L. Knegt (Hamilton)
A. Muis (Hamilton)
J. Schulenberg (Smithville)
S. Vander Woude (Smithville)

C. Walinga (Hamilton)

Our membership fee is \$100.00 per year and can be forwarded to the treasurer:

A. Muis,
24 Stone Church Road East,
Hamilton, Ontario L9B 1A9

Donations are also welcome.

PRESS RELEASE

of the Classis Ontario-South held on June 7, 1978 at London, Ontario.

1. Opening. On behalf of the church at Grand Rapids, Rev. P. Kingma opens the meeting. He requests the delegates to sing Psalm 89:7, 8. He leads in prayer, after which he reads from Colossians 2:1-10. He addresses the brothers with some words on this passage.

2. Credentials. The delegates from Hamilton check the credentials which show that all the churches are duly represented. There are two instructions.

3. Constitution of Classis. Classis is constituted. Moderamen is as follows: Chairman: Rev. J. Geertsema; Clerk: Rev. M. Werkman; Assessor: Rev. W. Huizinga.

4. Instructions. The churches at London, Smithville, and Watford request pulpit supply for the next three months. These re-

quests are granted.

5. Reports. A. Fund Article 19, Church Order (Needy Students). A report is submitted by the church at Chatham. There is sufficient money in the fund for the time being. The church at Chatham and the treasurer, br. A.J. Ytsma, are thanked.

B. Audit of Classical treasury. The church at Lincoln brings a report auditing the books of the Classical treasurer, br. C. Ouwersloot. The books are in excellent order. Thanks is expressed for this.

C. Audit of Classical archives. The church at London reports that these are in good order.

D. Church visitation. 5. The following church visitations are reported: (i) Watford: held on October 23, 1976; (ii) Grand Rapids: held on May 11, 1978; (iii) Smithville: held on April 20, 1978; (iv) Hamilton: held on April 24, 1978. After some questions, these reports are thankfully accepted.

E. Classical treasurer. The treasurer, br. C. Ouwersloot, submits a statement of income and expenses for 1977. He proposes an assessment of 75¢ per communicant member for 1978. Classis thanks the treasurer for his work done. Classis of September 28, 1977 had already decided to assess the churches \$1.00 per communicant member for 1978.

6. Incoming mail. A. From Classis Ontario-North of March 15, 1978. This Classis meeting requests Classis Ontario-South to supplement the financial support which Classis Ontario-North pledged to give to the church at Ottawa so that the latter church could call a minister of its own. This request is denied since Classis is not convinced that Classis Ontario-North cannot fulfill the financial request by themselves.

B. Request for preaching consent. Br. J. DeJong asks for a renewal of "preaching consent." Classis grants this request for another year.

C. Lincoln - matter of collecting funds. This church has some comments and suggestions about collecting funds for major assemblies. Since this matter deals with the Regional Synod treasury, Classis decides not to deal with it.

7. Appointments. Pulpit supply is arranged as follows: London: July 16, Rev. M. Werkman; September 10, Rev. J. Geertsema; Watford: July 30, Rev. J. Geertsema; September 24, Rev. P. Kingma; Smithville: August 6, Rev. W. Huizinga; September 24, Rev. M. Werkman.

8. Question Period ad Article 41, Church Order. The Church at Chatham asks advice re the convening of the Regional Synod. Advice is given to convene Regional Synod on October 25, 1978. Other churches make use of this opportunity to ask advice on some matters.

9. Personal Question Period is held.

10. Next Classis. The church at Hamilton will convene the next Classis to be held, D.V., September 13, 1978 at 10 a.m. in London. Proposed moderamen is: chairman: Rev. P. Kingma; Clerk: Rev. J. Geertsema; Assessor: Rev. M. Werkman.

11. Adoption of Acts. These are read and adopted.

12. Approval of Press Release. This is read and approved.

13. Censure ad Article 43, Church Order is not necessary.

14. Closing. The chairman requests the brothers to sing Psalm 150:1, 3. He closes the meeting with thanksgiving and prayer.

For the Classis,
W. HUIZINGA

PRESS RELEASE

of the Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, held at Launceston, Tasmania, from June 3 to June 12, 1978.

Article 1. Synod is opened by Rev. A.H. Dekker on behalf of the convening Church at Launceston. He requests the meeting to sing Psalm 124: 1, 2, 3, leads in prayer, and reads Revelation 3:7-13 and 11:1-8. Then he delivers his opening address and requests to sing Psalm 122:2, 3.

Article 2. The credentials are examined and the roll is signed. Delegates to Synod from the Church at Albany: Rev. J.D. Wielenga, elder J. Brouwer, elder L. 't Hart; from the Church at Armadale: Rev. K. Bruning, elder H. Terpstra, elder J. Van Dijk; from the Church at Launceston: Rev. A.H. Dekker, elder J. Kroeze, elder D. Van Asperen.

Article 3. As moderamen is elected: Rev. J.D. Wielenga: president; Rev. A.H. Dekker: assessor; Rev. K. Bruning: first clerk; elder L. 't Hart: second clerk. Synod is constituted and agreement with the Three Forms of Unity is expressed.

Article 4. It is reported that two appeals have come in. A letter from the Canadian Committee for Correspondence with sister Churches is read and it is stated that letters with good wishes have come in from the Churches in The Netherlands and South Africa.

Article 5. The agenda is adopted.

Article 6. A schedule of meetings is adopted: 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.; 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Article 7. After singing Psalm 127:1 and prayer, the meeting is adjourned.

Article 8. Re-opening, Monday, June 5, 1978. The president reads I Corinthians 1:1-17 and leads in prayer.

Article 9. A proposal to work with committees is discussed and it is decided to work with committees when the need arises.

Article 10. A proposal to multiply the Church Visitation reports is rejected.

Article 11. The Acts will be published in English, while the first clerk is instructed to take care that an unauthorized translation of the Acts in Dutch is published separately.

Article 12. The proposal of Armadale to appoint deputies with the mandate to ensure the availability of English sermons is rejected. Synod urges the Churches and the ministers to be diligent and cooperative in providing sermons in English, which can be

read in the worship services.

Article 13. The proposal of Armadale to have the Acts published within six weeks after the closure of Synod is adopted.

Article 14. The proposal of Armadale to appoint deputies to study the Dutch and the Canadian Church Books is rejected, because this is already the task of the Deputies for Correspondence with Foreign sister Churches and the Deputies for a Church Book in the English language.

The use of the new, provisional Dutch Church Book can be left to the discretion of the Church Councils, taking into consideration the advice of Deputies Foreign sister Churches.

Article 15. The non-ratification of Article 61, Acts Synod 1975, by Albany is discussed. Synod appoints a Committee with the mandate to study the grounds of non-ratification and to come up with a proposal.

Article 16. Rev. A.H. Dekker leads in prayer and the meeting is adjourned.

Article 17. Re-opening, Tuesday, June 6, 1978. The president reads I Corinthians 1:18-25 and leads in prayer.

Article 18. It is decided that the afternoon session will be from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., starting with the Wednesday session.

Article 19. Two committees are appointed with the mandate to study the appeals and to come up with proposals.

Article 20. Concerning the proposal of Albany re colloquium doctum, it is decided to appoint deputies to study the calling of ministers and to propose ecclesiastical ordinances for the eligibility of ministers outside the Free Reformed Churches, according to Article 5, Church Order.

Article 21. Synod, agreeing with the Church at Albany, decides to remind the Churches that, in accordance with Article 30, Church Order, matters pertaining to the Churches in general shall not be added to the agenda per instruction.

Article 22. Archives. The proposal of Albany re the Archives is discussed. It is decided that all confessing members in full rights can peruse, or borrow a photo-copy, or any item of the general archives. A declaration not to multiply the items has to be signed.

Article 23. Incoming Mail. A letter with good wishes for Synod from Rev. G. Van Rongen (Steenwijk, The Netherlands) is read by the president. A letter from Rev. E.R. Lee of the Inter-Church Relations Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, stating their good wishes for our Synod and asking Synod to indicate what relationship we want to sustain to the P.C.E.A. is discussed. Synod decides to answer this letter and to appoint deputies for further contact with them. A committee with the mandate to propose an answer to the P.C.E.A. is appointed.

Article 24. Synod discusses the non-ratification of Article 61, Acts 1975, by Albany on the basis of the proposal drafted by the committee.

Article 25. Synod decides that only Hymns 1, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 21,

22, 26, 28, 30, 34, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 60, and 61 can be used in the worship services.

Synod decides to approve the "Six Bible Songs" for use in the worship services till next Synod.

The Churches are urged to send their criticisms to deputies and deputies are charged with the publication of those Hymns. The deputies are given the mandate to ask Canada to delete those Hymns from the Book of Praise which Synod has deleted.

Article 26. Rev. K. Bruning leads in prayer and the meeting is adjourned.

Article 27. Re-opening, Wednesday, June 7, 1978. The president reads I Corinthians 1:26-2:5 and leads in prayer.

Article 28. The report "Training for the Ministry of the Word" is discussed. Synod decides not to appoint deputies for the support of theological students in Korea, to ask Deputies Foreign sister Churches to contact the Korean Churches re this matter, and to leave it to each Church to deal with this as it sees proper.

The report of deputies is accepted and the new deputies will be given the mandate to provide information to the Churches re theological studies.

Article 29. A proposal re the non-ratification of Article 61, Acts 1975, will be multiplied for study by the delegates.

Article 30. In closed session Church Visitation reports are discussed.

Article 31. The rules for Church Visitation are discussed and amended.

Article 32. Br. J. Van Dijk leads in prayer and the meeting is adjourned.

Article 33. Re-opening, Thursday, June 8, 1978. The president reads I Corinthians 2:6-16 and leads in prayer.

Article 34. The report of Deputies Correspondence with Foreign sister Churches is discussed. Deputies will be instructed to make sure that the Korean Churches agree to the rules of full correspondence and to work to it that the relationship is as effective as possible.

The deputies have to ensure that all the Churches receive copies of the Acts of the sister Churches.

Synod is in agreement with the principle of an Ecumenical Synod.

Article 35. The appeal of Rev. A.H. Dekker is discussed. His request to revoke Article 63, Acts 1975, is rejected because the three Churches had agreed to the final text of the Rules for the eligibility of Candidates in Theology.

Synod judges that there is reason to have the rules re examination changed regarding the costs of and the combination of examinations. Deputies will be instructed to come with proposals to Synod.

Article 36. The deputies for contact with the Government report that there has been no contact.

Article 37. The Report of the Deputies English Bible is accepted. Deputies will study and compare the R.S.V. and an updated Authorized Version, which soon will be published.

Article 38. The Mission Report of Albany is accepted. The Mission Committee of Albany is disbanded because of lack of work.

Article 39. The Mission Report of Armadale is discussed. The Church for the Mission will be instructed to consider the possibilities to become financially independent from the Churches in The Netherlands and to report to Synod.

Article 40. A letter of the Psalter Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia was read, containing information concerning their Psalter. It will be handed to the Deputies for an English Church Book for their information.

Article 41. The Church Visitation Rules are further discussed and amended. They will be published as an appendix to the Acts.

Article 42. Rev. J.D. Wielenga, on behalf of the delegates of Albany, reports that all documents, relating to the call of Rev. Dr. S.G. Huh, were in order.

Article 43. Rev. K. Bruning states that Rev. Dr. S.G. Huh has signed a Form of Subscription. The Church at Armadale is authorized to ensure that he signs the official document in the archives of the Churches.

Article 44. The report of the Church of the Archives is discussed. The Librarian reports orally that no Acts have arrived from America, as was previously promised (cf. Acts 1975, Article 22).

Article 45. The report of the Quaestor Synod 1975 is discussed. Synod decides that the cost of the meeting with the Presbyterian Reformed Church at Adelaide will be shared according to the quota percentages.

Article 46. The auditors report is accepted.

Article 47. Deputies will be instructed to come up with a proposal for an improved method of Church Visitation and to report to Synod.

Article 48. Br. J. Brouwer leads in prayer and the meeting is adjourned.

Article 49. Re-opening, Friday, June 9, 1978. The president reads I Corinthians 3:1-15 and leads in prayer.

Article 50. It is decided that the ministers of Armadale will conduct the Church Visitation in Albany and Launceston (by correspondence), while the minister of Launceston (with an elder) will conduct the Church Visitation in Armadale (by correspondence) unless this visitation can be done orally by a minister (and elder) of Albany.

Article 51. Synod goes into closed session to discuss some Mission aspects.

Article 52. Synod judges that Article 61, Acts 1975, may lead to confusion and rescinds it, stating that in the case of visitors from outside the bond of Churches, Article 61, Church Order should be observed.

Article 53. Synod decides to appoint deputies with the mandate to draw up rules for the guidance of Br. 't Hart's studies and for his examinations and to report to the Churches and to Synod.

Article 54. Synod goes into closed session.

Article 55. It is observed by Synod that concerning the Presbyterian Reformed Church three reports are tabled. 1. An Interim report of the meeting in Adelaide by all the deputies. 2. A report of the P.R.C. concerning this meeting. 3. An evaluation of this report with proposals from the Convener.

Article 56. Synod decides not to appoint new deputies to continue the talks with the P.R.C. on the ground of the considerable differences and misunderstandings regarding the interpretation of the confession and the Church practice.

Synod decides to appoint deputies to write an appeal to the P.R.C. to rectify their distortion of our position and to try to point out to them where we believe they misunderstand the Reformed doctrine.

Article 57. Br. L. 't Hart leads in prayer and the meeting is adjourned.

Article 58. Re-opening, Saturday, June 10, 1978. The president reads I Corinthians 3:16-23 and leads in prayer.

Article 59. Synod goes into closed session to deal with Church Visitation reports and with the appeal of H.B. of A.

Article 60. Synod goes into open session and the president announces that the appeal of H.B. of A. is rejected.

Article 61. The draft letter to the P.C.E.A. and the draft letter to the Psalter Committee of the P.C.E.A. are accepted.

Article 62. The deputies are appointed and their instructions formulated.

Article 63. The Synodical quota are set as follows: Albany, 23%, Armadale, 56%, Launceston, 21%.

Article 64. The Church at Armadale is appointed as convening Church for next Synod, to be convened in Armadale in September 1980.

Article 65. There is no business according to Article 43, Church Order and Article 41, Church Order.

Article 66. There is no personal business.

Article 67. It is decided that multiple reports have to be sent to the Churches at least three months before Synod. Late reports will not be admissible, unless Synod decides otherwise.

Article 68. The proposal of Albany to decrease the number of delegates to two per Church is rejected.

Article 70. Br. P. Dingemans leads in prayer and the meeting is adjourned.

Article 71. Re-opening, Monday, June 12, 1978. The president requests the meeting to sing Psalm 93:1, 4, reads I Corinthians 3:16-4:5, and leads in prayer.

Article 72. The Acts and the Press Release are adopted.

Article 73. The assessor takes the chair, thanks the president for the work he has done during Synod and gives him the opportunity to deliver his closing address.

Article 74. Psalm 146:1, 2, 3 is sung, Rev. K. Bruning leads in prayer, and Synod is closed.

A.H. DEKKER, Assessor

Letter to My Daughter

Dear Jean,

So, they finally came around to you, too? I had expected this long ago, and I figured that by now you would have the answer at the tip of your tongue. But you don't . . . and now you want me to answer the question: "Are you born again?"

Well, to tell you the truth, and to make it short: I don't know — rather, I don't remember. Do you remember that and when you were born? Yes, I understand; people who ask this question want to have an answer with date and hour and also a testimony of your experiences. And if they don't get that they'll figure that you are not a good Christian. But don't let that bother you. It is important what people say and think about you, but most important is what the Lord says and thinks.

Let me therefore tell you a few things. First of all: this question is not as innocent and pious as it looks. You were baptized into the Name of God, the Father, Who witnessed and sealed to you that He makes an eternal covenant of grace with you and adopts you for His child and heir. And any question, whether by the mouth of a serpent or by the mouth of an angel, that makes you doubt that you are a child of God, comes ultimately from the devil. And when you deal with the devil, either directly or indirectly, you'd better make sure that you do not let him force his weapons upon you. Keep the choice of weapons to yourself, for if you leave it to Satan you give him a lead.

In this case that means: don't get confused by the question, or by the way it is put, or by whom it is asked. Don't tell them what they want to hear, or what you think they want to hear. Just tell them what you know.

What do you know? or rather: What do I know? I know, and that is my only comfort, that I am not my own, but belong to my faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ, Who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins and delivered me from all the power of the devil . . . Sounds familiar? There is more. I also know that though my conscience accuse me that I have

grievously sinned against all the commandments of God and kept none of them and am still inclined to all evil, yet God, without any merit of mine, of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, as if I had never had nor committed any sin . . . It does sound familiar, doesn't it? Now then, don't let anybody or anything ever draw you away from these familiar weapons.

Does it also give you a sufficient answer to the question: Are you born again? It does indeed give my belief and my experience. But most of all: it gives in a nutshell what the Lord promised us in His Word. And that is much more important than my experience.

But, of course, that was not the issue. God's Word teaches us that we were "dead in sins and trespasses." What do you think, Jean; will anybody who is "dead," spiritually dead, say what I said above? And, if a person who says that is not "dead," who made him alive, and how did he become alive? You are right: he must be born again!

Of course, there is more to it than only this. You will never have to hesitate again when somebody asks you: "Are you born again?," but on the other hand: "Why did he ask?" I know. He was probably looking for the marks of a true Christian; namely, the ability to give a testimony of the date and hour of his rebirth. That seems to be their only comfort. However, Article 29 of the Belgic Confession gives us the real marks of Christians. Do you know them? And if you do — and if you show those marks in your daily life — would anybody still ask you whether you are born again?

Let's be honest, Jean, the question is usually asked because we did (be it perhaps temporarily) not show those marks of Christians. We confessed our faith, once, in church (and that was as it should be), but we stopped right there. We have to keep confessing our faith, daily, in our words and deeds and thoughts. If we do that, if we show ourselves very much alive spiritually, the question whether we are born again will not even be asked, for it would be "begging the question."

Love, Dad.

our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

Are you enjoying your holidays?

Busy Beaver *Theodore Kanis* wrote a funny poem to add to your enjoyment.

Animal Poems

There was an owl
Who liked Bob's towel
Because it was so snug and warm
But Bob lived on a farm.

There was a whale
He looked so pale
(O so deep in the ocean)
Because there was an explosion.

There was a bear
Who liked a pear
But where could he find one?
Instead he had a bun!

Thanks for sharing, Theodore.

How about you? Have you written your poem for our POETRY CONTEST? Did you forget about it? Better read last time's issue of Our Little Magazine again! Send in your poem soon, all right?

Here it is July 1 already! Let's join in wishing all our Busy Beavers who celebrate a birthday this month a very happy day together with family and friends. We hope you'll have a happy time to start off a happy year! May the Lord bless and keep you in the year ahead.

Jeannette Hoeksema	July 1	Sharon Leffers	16
Ian Hulzebosch	1	Patricia Van Raalte	18
Theodore Kanis	1	Michael Wildeboer	20
Eric Jans	2	Alison Helder	21
Robert Feenstra	3	Henrietta Gansekoele	23
Plony Hofsink	3	Rick Leffers	23
Jerold Van Assen	4	Eileen Salomons	24
Ingrid Feenstra	6	Helen Vanderpol	25
Marion Van Grootheest	7	Judith Barendregt	26
Sharon Van Grootheest	7	Cynthia Eenkhoorn	26
Jimmy Stienstra	9	Tony Van Delft	26
Karen Schouten	11	Jason Van Vliet	26
James Slaa	11	Corrie De Boer	29
Rosemary De Haas	12	Margaret Vanden Haak	29
Anita Hoff	15	Mary Van Raalte	29
Jo-anna Flach	16		

QUIZ TIME

Here is a big crossword puzzle for you, Busy Beavers. Like the one before, it's from Miss M. Diek. I thought now that you have holidays you'd like doing a really BIG puzzle to get you warmed up for our BIG SUMMER CONTEST! See how well you can do. Solution next time.

ACROSS

3. "for our God is a _____ fire."
5. "And _____ gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger."
7. "and you shall call his name Jesus, for _____ will save his people from their sins."
8. Yet thou hast made him little _____ than God."
10. Jesus is the Son _____ God.
13. "do good to those who hate _____."
14. unpure or unclean.
15. a large gathering of people.
18. the garden which contained the Tree of Life.
19. a decree or sentence given.
20. abbreviation for an Old Testament Bible book.
21. God gives this in its season.
23. Paul rejoiced _____ the coming of Stephanus . . .
25. a helpmeet for mom.
27. upright conduct.
28. a coming to life again.
31. the inspired Word of God.
32. Paul said he had not attained resurrection from the dead but he pressed on to make it his _____ because Christ Jesus had made him his _____ .
33. a mortal being.
34. what the Lord will have with Amalek from generation to generation.
35. the putting to death on the cross.
38. what we must do before others with our life.
39. what the psalmist says overflows.
40. to save.
42. _____ must be born anew to see the kingdom of God.
46. Abram did this in the land of promise, as in a foreign land.
48. The Lord appeared to more than one man in a _____ .
50. what will happen to leaves to enrich the soil.
52. a sacred place.
53. a decree.
54. to talk.
55. what we call Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
56. to go into.

DOWN

1. Each seventh one was given for rest.
2. to use wrongly.
3. to denounce.
4. our Creator.
6. what God made for Adam.
7. No one knows the _____ of Christ's return but the Father.
9. to surrender.
11. Do not be led away by _____ teachings.
12. what Isaac was to the covenant promise.
- 14a. God chose us before the _____ of the world.
16. God gave the land of Canaan as an _____ to Israel.
17. There were fourteen of these from Abraham to David.
22. "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new _____."
23. faith, the _____ of things hoped for.
24. joyous.
25. in what the Lord appeared to Jacob at Bethel.
26. dedicated or devoted.
29. deliverance from the result of sin.
30. Do not withhold this from a child.
36. what kind of land Canaan was to Abram at first.
37. The Lord is to be held in _____ .
- 40a. what Moses was in Midian.

- 41. to live.
- 43. We are members of His _____ .
- 44. to try hard.
- 45. Blessed is the man whose _____ is in the Lord.
- 47. God will _____ you with everything you need to do His will.
- 49. If anyone is in Christ, he is a _____ creation.
- 51. therefore.
- 52a. " _____ , and it will be given you."

Bible Book Names: 1. Ezekiel, Samuel; 2. Esther, Obadiah; 3. Nahum, Micah, Romans.

Bible Quiz: 1. Reuben; 2. Egypt; 3. Benjamin; 4. Dinah; 5. grain; 6. Aaron; 7. Pharaoh; 8. Jethro.

Have fun doing the crossword puzzle, Busy Beavers!
And I'm looking forward to getting your poems for our POETRY CONTEST.

Is everybody keeping our BIRTHDAY FUND PROJECT in mind?

Bye for now. Till next time, Busy Beavers.

Here are last time's answers.

Safety Quiz

- S — swimming
- A — automobile
- F — fire
- E — electric
- T — ten speed
- Y — YOU

Yours,
Aunt Betty

