



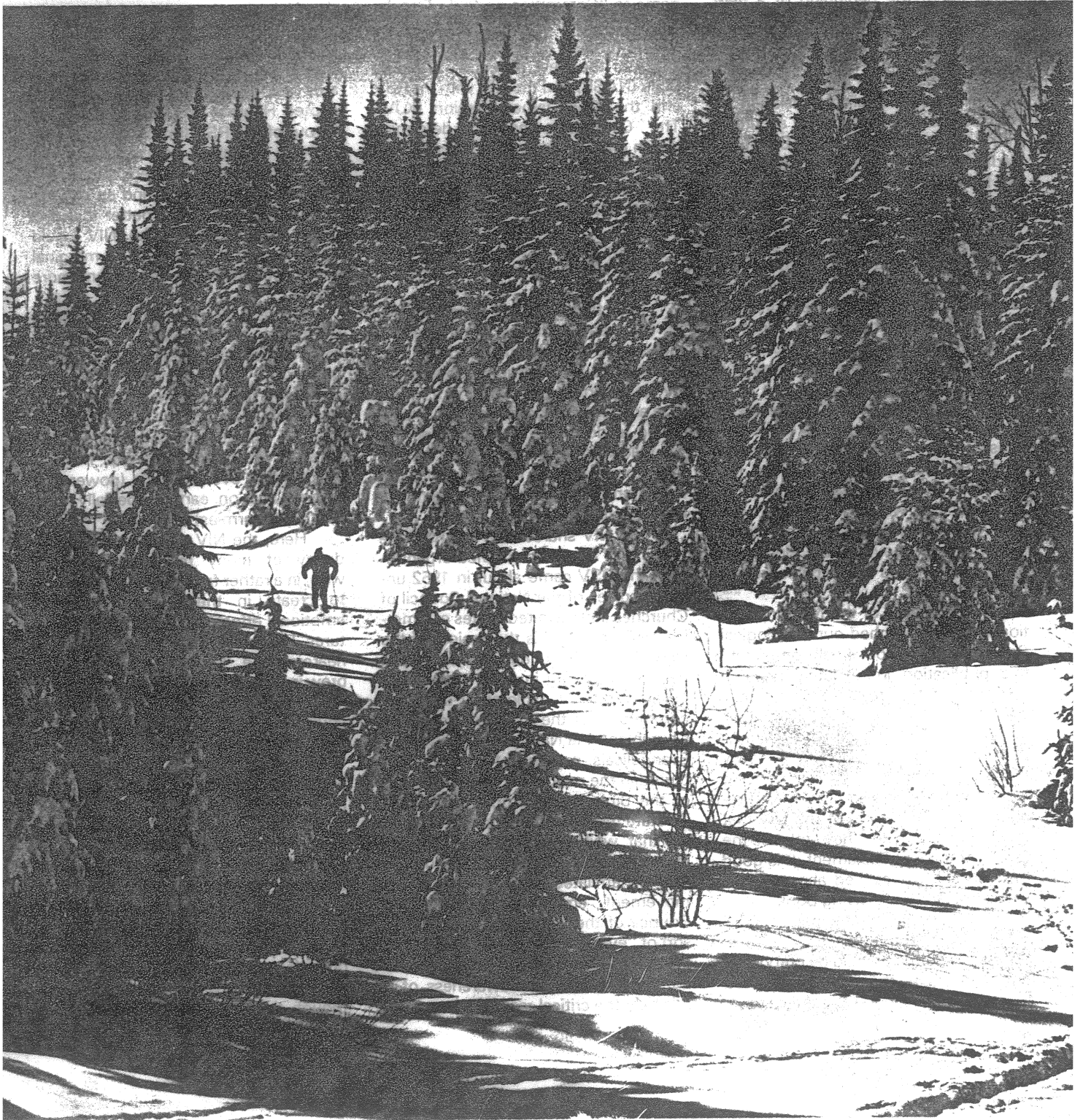
Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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The Old Word in the New Form (NIV)

Undoubtedly one of the most important events in the last months of the now-past year 1978 was the publication of the New International Version (NIV) of the Holy Bible. The publishers spoke about the beginning of a new tradition: "Since 1611 A.D. the Authorized King James Version has remained the traditional accepted choice. But now there's the New International Version. A modern English translation so elegantly stated, so faithfully accurate, that it ushers in a new era of Scriptural clarity for Christians around the world." We feel something of the elation at this event. Sure, we take into account that every publisher will be inclined not to underestimate the value of his publications and we even understand that he does not mention other modern versions of Holy Scripture. Nevertheless, each student of the written Word of God must feel something of a pleasant surprise, when he takes up a copy of a new translation. More than one hundred scholars laboured fifteen years to complete this one. Especially those persons who have made it their life task to study Holy Scripture in one of the original languages will sympathize with the translators whose heart must have been glowing with joy and deep satisfaction when they for the first time held in their hands the palpable fruit of their labour.

When copies of the New International Version reached our Theological College, and as in our small community this publication immediately became the topic of the day's conversation, I was reminded of one of my colleagues in my student days who danced through his room clutching a newly published grammar of Biblical Hebrew. Also now there was something that reminded me of the joy of the law that the Jews know when they embrace the scrolls of the Old Testament. It is good that we still get excited about a new version of God's life-giving Book.

Our readers cannot expect a definite judgment about this new translation at this point. It would be preposterous to evaluate the work of a broad team of scholars in a single article with-

out going into technical details. Moreover, the General Synod of Coaldale 1977 decided to broaden the mandate for the Committee on the Revised Standard Version (RSV), changing its name to "Committee on Bible Translations." It added to the mandate, asking the Committee to make a comparative study of the New American Standard Bible (NASB) and the NIV with the RSV and the King James Version (KJV). The Committee has to determine which one translation can be positively recommended for use by the Churches, whereby the criteria are: faithfulness to the original text, and linguistic character of the translation. Pending this study only the use of the KJV and the RSV is in the freedom of the Churches.

Now that our last Synod broadened the mandate to the Committee, to include the recently published NIV, I do not wish to give the impression that I try to undertake personally in a magazine article what the Committee is supposed to do collectively in a report to the following Synod. I would like, however, to make a few remarks about this new translation, in order to stimulate our readers' interest.

The NIV shares with the RSV the backing of a well-established organization: the RSV came about in 1952 under auspices of the National Council of Churches in the United States of America, while the NIV is the project of the New York International Bible Society. It had its beginning in 1965 when, after several years of exploratory study by committees of the Christian Reformed Church and the National Association of Evangelicals, a group of scholars concurred in the need for a new translation of the Bible in contemporary English. To state the situation simply, one could say that, while the RSV found its origin in the mainline, established churches that are affiliated with the ecumenical movement, embodied in the World Council of the Churches, the NIV is a sort of "evangelical" equivalent.

This different background should not be forgotten and awareness of it can help the critical reader to be on the

alert for certain aspects of general tendency or approach. Scholars who believe that the words of Holy Scripture are inspired by the Holy Spirit will, for instance, be more careful not to amend the Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek text when it is not strictly necessary. My first impression is that the NIV in the translation of the Old Testament deviates less often from the generally accepted Hebrew text than the RSV. In favour of the RSV it must be said that, through marginal notes, it provides ample opportunity to check the translation immediately or to find an alternative that is sometimes better than the given version itself. The NIV could have used the possibility of marginal notes and alternative translations more often.

It was a disappointment to read in the preface of the NIV: "Because for most readers the phrase 'the LORD of hosts' and 'God of hosts' have little meaning, this version renders them 'the LORD Almighty' and 'God Almighty.' These renderings convey the sense of the Hebrew, namely, 'he who is sovereign over all hosts (powers) in heaven and on earth, especially over the 'hosts' (armies) of Israel.'"

Here, the NIV gives in to the tendency of many modern translators who, in a rather free translation attempt to create in the reader the same emotional effect that the original Scriptures have had on their readers and hearers. The "giving" language, Hebrew in this example, has to yield to the "receiving" language, English. But one could remark, first of all, that translators should not try to smooth away very concrete indications of the time and the culture in which God has been pleased to speak His Word and to cause it to be written. Why not maintain the expression "the LORD of hosts" and leave it to the commentators and preachers to explain what "hosts" means: the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is sovereign over angels, stars and Israelites? In the second place, the word "almighty" is already used for the name *Shaddai*, although this name occurs infrequently

in the O.T. and is always footnoted in the NIV. In the third place, one can ask whether the translation "the LORD Almighty" and "God Almighty" is not too static for the vivid expression "the LORD of hosts."

Another example of the danger that a smooth translation takes away the concreteness of the original, is Isaiah 2:16, "every trading ship." The footnote remarks that the Hebrew reads "every ship of Tarshish." Why not leave this expression in the text beside "all the cedars of Lebanon" and "all the oaks of Bashan" in verse 13?

As for the pronouns "thou," "thee," and "thine" in reference to God, the translators decided that to use these archaisms (along with the old verb forms, as "doest," "wouldest" and "hadst"), would violate accuracy in translation. In this respect, the RSV has a more traditional approach, and its use of the English language seems now already more old-fashioned and dignified. We should not be surprised, however, if a new edition of the RSV follows suit. The usage of "you" instead of "thou" should not be decisive for acceptance or rejection of a Bible translation.

More important is the NIV's emphasis on the unity between the Old and New Testament. One example is the well-known word of the LORD to Abram, "And I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Genesis 12:3, KJV). The RSV translated "and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves." This translation is linguistically possible and its defenders refer, for example, to Ruth 4:11ff. to illustrate that, in ancient Israel, the blessing by the name of someone else was customary. The marginal note in the RSV indicates an alternative translation: "in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." What does the New International Version now do? It simply gives the translation, "and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." This translation may have been chosen

because of the fact that the New Testament quotes this text in an identical or similar form (Acts 3:25, Galatians 3:8). I would not have minded if the NIV at least had indicated in a note that another translation is possible. It would have given commentators the opportunity to point out a difference in the New Testament as compared to the Old Testament, which difference does not form a contrast but shows the progress in God's revelation.

Then there is the famous "Messianic" text, Isaiah 7:14. The RSV has, "Behold a young woman shall conceive . . ." and reads in the margin, "Or virgin." The NIV has only "The virgin will be with child" and mentions no alternate translation. Although I respect the conviction of the translators concerning the harmony of the Scriptures and although it is clear that the ultimate fulfilment of this Messianic prophecy is found in Matthew 1:23, the translation of the Hebrew text should follow its own rules, and not be determined by the Greek word of the quotation in the New Testament. Only in this way the wonderful depth of the unity of Holy Scripture and the progress in the history of God's revelation can be made clear. Our Dutch readers may compare "de jonkvrouw" in Isaiah 7 and "de maagd" in Matthew 1.

A last example is Daniel 9:26. The Hebrew reads, "an anointed (one) will be cut off." In the Dutch translation of the Bible Society we find, "een gezalfde (zal) worden uitgeroeid." The new American evangelical translations are inclined to give a definite exegesis: "the Messiah will be cut off" (NASB), and now in the NIV: "the Anointed One." Alternate translations are provided in notes, but it is clear that, in the text itself, the translators have gone too far in the direction of an immediate Messianic interpretation. It should be added that this is the tradition of the KJV and the Dutch "Statenvertaling," but believing translators should not give the impression that they are improving on the work of the Holy Spirit. Similar remarks could be made about

the rendering of Psalm 2.

Nevertheless, it is clearly evident that the NIV is, generally speaking, a dependable translation, in straightforward language, the fruit of years of loving labour of scholars who honour Holy Scripture as the Word of God. I hope that many families in our midst will use the availability of common Scripture reading at the table to compare the translations, mentioned in the decision of our last Synod, and will assist the Committee and the Canadian Reformed Churches in coming to a just evaluation. The everlasting Word of our God is worth all our attention also in the year of our Lord 1979 J. FABER



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Psalm 105:1, 2

Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name; make known among the nations what He has done. Sing to Him, sing praise to Him; tell of all His wonderful acts.

NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

press review

OUR TESTIMONY — AN APPEAL (Continued)

In the previous issue of *Clarion* I gave the first part of the "Appeal" and "Testimony" of concerned people in the Christian Reformed Church. It was taken from the October issue of *The Outlook*. In the November issue of this magazine we have the second part of this "Testimony." It deals with the more practical side of life: the matter of conduct. The heading of the sixth section reads "On the Life-style of True Believers." I quote the following:

All believers without exception are called by God to holiness in daily living At no time may the radical antithesis between God's people and the unregenerate world be obscured and obliterated.

This is fully biblical language. God has set enmity, the antithesis, between the Seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, between church and world, between faith and unbelief, between holy and unholy. God also maintains that antithesis. And it is a matter of *unbelief* and *disobedience* if we erase that antithesis and conform to the world and its life-style. If it is so that God redeems us in His grace in Christ by placing and maintaining the antithesis, the spiritual enmity, then we simply reject that work of redemption for us if we reject the antithesis in our daily life and life-style.

But let us continue with the Testimony.

Any transgression of God's law, which is to be obeyed for the sake of love to God and fellow-man, must be clearly and consistently denounced.

Here we especially warn against the spirit of "libertinism" which under the guise of Christian liberty falls into and makes excuse for sins of the flesh

All who fall into open sin of any kind must, for the sake of their soul's salvation, be exhorted to seek without delay forgiveness in Christ and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This exhorting is especially incumbent upon the congregation acting in and through its office-bearers in church discipline. In the pulpit, in the classroom, and in pastoral counselling warnings must continually be sounded against the sins of divorce, abortion, drunkenness, fornication in any form, homosexuality, drug abuse, slander, and theft of every kind. Fully as deserving of God's wrath and disastrous for men's lives are such evils as the defamation of the holy name of our God and the desecration of His holy day, which has been sanctified for us by Jesus Christ as the day of

At no time may the radical antithesis between God's people and the unregenerate world be obscured and obliterated.

rest and worship and rejoicing. We therefore reaffirm our appreciation of and urge the continuation of the practice of attending official preaching services twice on the Lord's Day (Hebrews 10:24, 25).

I am not so convinced that warnings must "*continually*" be sounded against that whole list of sins *in the classroom*. I am not against warning the students in school once in a while

when it is fitting. Also from the pulpit this warning must be heard. But I am also convinced that, if the preaching of God's Word is faithful from Sunday to Sunday, the believers who live by the Word will know that the things mentioned are sins in the eyes of the LORD. If such *continual* warning in church and in *school* is as urgently necessary as comes across in this "Testimony," then the situation must be bad.

I hope that every reader sees and understands and accepts that "*deseccration*" of the Day of the Lord, the Sunday, is "deserving of God's wrath and disastrous." Hebrews 10:24, 25, clearly points this out.

But let us continue with the "Testimony." Also with the next part we all should wholeheartedly agree:

. . . we do declare without apology that today's stage productions both in the theater and on the family television screen are for the most part anti-christian and injurious to spiritual growth and vitality. Nor should there be place in our lives for those modern forms of the dance which so easily give rise to improper thoughts and unwholesome feelings. And lastly — we declare that God's people may take no part in any form of gambling

Such friendship [with the Lord] leaves no room for fellowshiping with that which is contrary to His blessed will.

The following part deals with "The Christian's Calling in this World." I quote:

The godly life . . . may never be restricted to our membership in the institutional church. God's purpose with salvation is to reclaim and restore the totality of creation for His service and glory

Let it be clear, therefore, that we warn against the fundamentalistic error which separates religion from the broader areas of everyday living, thus restricting our allegiance to the Gospel largely to church attendance and personal piety. Christ rules His people by the royal scepter of His Word in every area of life

That to which the Lord of glory calls us as His people is to be office-bearers in His creation which through Christ is reconciled and redeemed for His praise

In general I agree here with this theme which was already so strongly emphasized by Dr. Abraham Kuyper. But let us at the same time be careful. We also live as "strangers" and "sojourners" on this earth. And there are areas so badly stained by sin that we — in this life — sometimes had better leave something alone, so that it does not become a stumbling block on our way. An old example may serve: years ago, in The Netherlands, a Christian Movies Action (Christelijke Film Actie) was set up to have "Christianized" movies made for and shown to Christians. This was done on the basis of Kuyper's device: Christ is Lord over everything — and so everything must be put under His reign. However, the result of the CFA was: everyone eventually went to the worldly theaters and partook in worldly dancing and so on. It can be wise to abstain and say: "no," "hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude: 23).

There is one expression to which I would like to come back later, namely, that "membership in the *institutional* church" may not be the only area for a godly life. The intention I agree with. The term "institutional church" I would not use.

Attention should also be paid to the last part of this seventh "chapter":

Here, also, a word concerning the rich privileges and opportunities of Christian women is in order. To many of them God has given abundantly the gifts of insight, sympathy, and eagerness to be of service to others. Those who are wives and mothers have occasion under God's blessing to shape in large measure the future of individuals, communities, and nations. And while

Fully as deserving of God's wrath and disastrous for men's lives are . . . the defamation of the holy name of our God and the desecration of His holy day.

for them their families have the first and basic claim to their services, their lives need not be shut up within the home. Those who by God's appointment remain unmarried can and do enrich the lives of others in numerous occupations and careers. The withholding of ecclesiastical office from them, in obedience to the clear teaching of Scripture, in no way casts a threatening shadow on their dignity as fellow-heirs with men of the grace of God or minimizes the inestimable blessings which He through their services has poured upon mankind.

The next part speaks about "Christian Marriages and Family Life." We read:

. . . we are also office-bearers under Him in marital and familial relationships . . .

Always the sacred tie of marriage is to be highly esteemed; its indissolubility vigorously affirmed by the church in the pulpit and championed in pastoral work. At no time and under no circumstances may pre-marital or extra-marital sex be regarded as options within the Christian life-style . . .

Ours are revolutionary times, characterized by the breakdown of authority both divine and human. Thus both parents and children need a renewed understanding of the place and purpose of parental authority. This, however, must be an exercise of parental authority which confesses that children are not our personal possession but the heritage of the Lord . . .

In this day of the proliferation of the "pill" and other birth-control methods to maintain that both a wilful refusal to bear children and the restriction of family-size merely for the sake of personal convenience, the advancement of a career, or financial gain constitute disobedience to our sovereign God Who has pledged to provide believers and their children with all things necessary for time and eternity.

The ninth section is "On Christian Education." I quote from it the following:

In order that our children, belonging to God's covenant, may be thoroughly nurtured in the fear and admonition of the Lord, it is essential that they be trained in the Lord's ways in the home, the church, and the school.

Here a solid foundation should be laid from the very beginning of married life by both husband and wife . . .

At an early age the church should also engage in the instruction of covenant children. They should be present at public wor-

. . . television . . . for the most part anti-christian No . . . place in our lives for . . . the dance.

ship. This requires that parents shall carefully teach their children what takes place when God communes with His people . . .

We believe with all our heart that no better pattern for catechetical instruction of children and young people can be provided than that offered by the *Heidelberg Catechism* . . .

But in addition to home and church, the children of God's covenant need and are entitled to good Christian schools . . .

Such schools for Christian instruction *deserve the wholehearted support of all believers, whether married or not* . . .

The italics are mine. It still is too much so that also by some in our churches the need for Reformed school education is not fully seen, or that the school is seen as the concern of only

the parents. We speak of the covenant. That means communion of saints. That means responsibility for each other as brothers and sisters, old and young.

. . . Parents desirous of the quality of education which good Christian schools can give and willing to support them by word and deed should be encouraged to make use of them, always with the proviso that the Reformed character of these institutions be not imperilled.

And where apostasy works in the Church, does it not also work in the schools? It is important here to speak of "good Christian schools" and of their "Reformed character." That is what we want to have also. That is according to the thinking of the Reformation: unity between church, home, and school, as the Reformed, Biblical principle.

The tenth and last section is "On Christian Responsibility in Other Relationships." From this "chapter" I quote:

. . . Only the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ can redeem and restore man and so set him free once again to serve the living God according to His revealed will. The Christian therefore has the high calling, together with fellow-believers, to reclaim all areas in which he lives and moves and has his being for the Lordship of the blessed Savior. Nowhere under the sun is there a place of which He does not say, "This is Mine!" And to this battle to reclaim all of life for Him Whose we are and Whom we serve the pulpit must clearly and continually call all Christian believers.

Few relationships and activities in man's life upon earth have become so thoroughly secularized and subjected to satanic influences as that of work, together with its economic implications . . .

. . . Believers must follow the pattern which God Himself has set. In six days He created heaven and earth and all that they contain; on the seventh He rested . . . Clearly the Bible teaches the high dignity of all labour . . . It is man's assignment to have dominion under God over all things in obedience to His revealed will . . . Only so will labor be experienced as a meaningful and joyful aspect of our lives . . .

It is also imperative that as Christians we recognize our calling to be stewards of our time and the fruits of our labor. With these, to be sure, we supply the needs of ourselves and our families. But God lays a direct claim upon a proportionate share of our goods for the furtherance of His cause and kingdom beyond personal and familial life . . .

Our pulpits must speak prophetically on God's will with regard to the use of resources and goods . . . Thereupon Christians, both individually and communally, are to communicate this message to those in high places. This includes not only those clothed with political power but also leaders in the areas of business and labor, the professions and the trades. God has created of one blood all nations and people under the face of the heavens; He wills that we as His people promote justice, peace, and love, in order that His Word may everywhere become more triumphantly manifest to His praise. And to make this Christian

. . . schools for Christian instruction deserve the wholehearted support of all believers, whether married or not.

witness in the several areas of labor, education, the professions, social service, and politics more effective, believers should, wherever possible, unite organizationally to demonstrate the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all of life. Such organizations may never be ends in themselves, to secure worldly influence or advancement or power. They, too, shall be a blessing in the earth only as they in obedience glorify the God of creation, redemption, and judgment.

. . . But our duty is to be signs and pointers to that kingdom which God in grace even now reveals in the world . . .

It is in this last section that I have my questions and even objections. I begin with the last sentence where it says: that we must be "signs and pointers" to God's kingdom. I can be wrong, but I do not remember ever to have read in the Bible that we have to be "pointers" and "signs" of God's kingdom. If I am not mistaken, this is the language of Karl Barth. He taught, e.g., that the Bible was not the Word of God but could become Word of God. The Bible "points" to the true Word of God, and is a "sign" of it. I would not use this way of speaking in a Reformed "Testimony." We, as believers, are not "pointers" to God's kingdom. We are *in* it (Matthew 11:11). And we are not called to be "signs" of that kingdom of God. We are called to be subjects in it: obedient citizens. And this is what the authors mean.

However, more important is that I miss something. The "Testimony" says that Christians have the duty to communicate the message of the Bible regarding labour and management, regarding resources and goods, to political leaders as well as "leaders in the areas of business and labour, professions and trades." I would have expected here also a clear testimony against a Christian's membership in anti-Christian organizations in "business and labor, professions and trades."

Another remark I should like to make regarding the words: "to make this Christian witness in the several areas of labor, education, . . . more effective, believers should, wherever possible unite organizationally." I get the impression that here every believer is included, whether Reformed or Baptist or whatever there is. Now I know that not too many people on the North American continent are Reformed. But must we maintain our Reformed confessions only in the "institutional" church? Do we not have to

do that in the "broader" organizations? That has been the thinking also of the AACCS. At first it was based also on the Reformed Standards. But those Standards are done away with. It is said that the Confessions are for the "institutional" church. Is there, then, a great invisible church of all the believers, so that *all* the believers possibly can unite in broader organizations, of a political or social character? And is there, besides that great invisible church in which *all* believers are gathered, something like a confined and restricted institutional church where one maintains the Reformed confession? And if it is meant this way, is this, then, not the weakness in this "Testimony"? For was it not a clear "pointer" that the AACCS went in a wrong direction when it did away with the Reformed confessions as its foundation? Can we really say: Reformed in the institutional church without compromises, but outside that institutional church we can be broader and make compromises? Maybe I see too much. But let me say that in its speaking the "Testimony" gives reason. I hope that I am wrong, though.

I would like to conclude by quoting from the "Conclusion" of the "Testimony" that, in the deepening darkness around us:

. . . It is urgent, therefore, that by God's grace we renew our pledge of love and loyalty to Him.

This is a humbling experience, for the stains of self and sin are altogether too obvious in our lives.

But trusting in Him forgiveness for every sin of omission and commission, we will together experience the renewal of our lives and the reformation of His church . . .

And I repeat: may the LORD graciously work reformation in the church, and so in the whole of life, in all its relations.

J. GEERTSEMA

Hymn 13

PRESENT HYMN 54

If You But Let the Father Guide You

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1. If you but let the Father guide you,
Relying on His faithfulness,
He will be evermore beside you
In all your sorrow and distress.
He who on God Most High depends
Builds not his house on shifting sands.
2. Will anxious care or bitter sighing
At any time give true relief?
And what avails us our decrying
Each morning's evil, trouble, grief?
We only add to grief and stress
By discontent and bitterness.
3. Be still! What God in His good pleasure
To you in wisdom may impart
Is given you in perfect measure;
Thus be content within your heart.
To Him Who chose us for His own
Our needs and wants are surely known
4. With song and prayer, in faith progressing,
In all you do God's will obey.
Expect from Him alone your blessing:
He will renew it every day,
For God will never those disown
Who put their trust in Him alone.

A Philadelphia Meeting

A Press Release of the Meeting of the Canadian Reformed Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) and the Committee for Ecumenicity and Inter-Church Relations of the OPC.

1. TO PHILADELPHIA

On October 25, 1978 on a beautiful autumn day five Canadian Reformed brothers travelled together across the rolling hills of New York and through the still colourful woods of Pennsylvania to the city of brotherly love, Philadelphia. They were quite happy finally to arrive at their places of accommodation, after weaving through the busy and unfamiliar inter-city expressways at night.

What are five Canadian Reformed brothers doing in Philadelphia anyway, you might ask? Well, they form the synodically appointed committee for contact with the OPC. As you may remember from our previous Press Release, a fall meeting had been tentatively arranged between our full committee and that of the OPC. Since the OPC Committee for Ecumenicity and Inter-church Relations (CEIR) was meeting there in Philadelphia that week, the meeting was arranged accordingly.

2. SOME PRELIMINARIES

But before we report the actual discussions of the meeting, it will be good to inform you of the preliminary work done. This consisted primarily of our response to the letter of the CEIR of the OPC dated April 14, 1976.

As you may know, this letter answered questions which our synod (through the contact committee) addressed to the OP brothers. The previous synodical committee could not offer their response for synodical approval at the 1977 General Synod in Coaldale. Consequently the synod dealt with the letter and came to a decision without any recommendation from the synodically appointed committee, although various churches who also received this letter from the CEIR made proposals to the General Synod. The General Synod, having read and studied the letter, came to the decision to recognize the OPC as true churches. One important consideration for this decision was:

"h. The letter of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Inter-church Relations of April 14, 1976, confirms that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church wholeheartedly adheres to the Westminster Confession of Faith and maintains the rules for church polity as laid down in the Form of Government, and also that the divergencies having been discussed in this letter do not form an impediment to recognize the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ." (*Acts*, 1977, Art. 91.)

We reiterate this from the *Acts* in order to emphasize that the present committee was not commissioned to evaluate this letter to see if any divergencies in doctrine or church government would prevent us from recognizing the OPC as faithful churches of our Lord.

No, our mandate was now simply "to respond to the letter of the CEIR of the OPC dated April 14, 1976," since "further discussion on divergencies in confession and church polity is desirable." Though we mutually recognize one another as true churches, our distinct historical backgrounds and heritages are such that we should listen to one another and learn from one another.

The letter of response was published in earlier issues of *Clarion*. From our response to the CEIR letter it hopefully was clear that we did not attempt to forfeit but indeed preserved our rich Reformed heritage as it concerns both our confession and church polity. We upheld and defended both, while at the same time trying to understand and, if necessary, give a critique of theirs.

This letter was sent out previous to our meeting. Our nagging mail service prevented prompt service, but the CEIR received it before the meeting.

3. MEETING OPENS

Next morning we met the CEIR, consisting of Rev. L. Eyres, Rev. J. Galbraith, Rev. Leroy Oliver, Rev. Rocky, and Prof. N. Shepherd. According to their invitation and insistence, our convener, Rev. J. Mulder, chaired the meeting. He read Ephesians 1:3-23 and opened the meeting with prayer. In his opening remarks he spoke of the

benefit of being able to see one another face to face, after having pursued a lengthy correspondence.

4. OUR PROPOSAL

Before our meeting the OPC brothers had met separately to discuss our correspondence and response. As the first item on the agenda they related their committee recommendation concerning the proposal of General Synod of Coaldale, 1977 for an official relationship between them and us called Ecclesiastical Contact. They agreed to recommend to their next General Assembly to be held in 1979 to accept this offer as we have defined it — see *Acts*, 1977, Art. 91, III.

Of course, we were very happy to hear this acceptance of our proposal.

5. FRATERNAL RELATIONS

One of the reasons why they could accept the proposal for ecclesiastical contact was that the rules for such contact fall within the guidelines which they adopted at their last general assembly for such ecclesiastical relationships. The OPC adopted a policy for churches in ecclesiastical fellowship. This relationship is to be implemented where possible and desirable by, e.g.,

- a. exchange of fraternal delegates at major assemblies.
- d. joint action in areas of common responsibility.
- e. communications on issues of joint concern.
- f. the exercise of mutual concern and admonition with a view to promoting the fundamentals of Christian unity.

If you will check these out with the rules we have specified for ecclesiastical contact, you will find that they are compatible. Therefore the CEIR could heartily recommend our proposal.

6. CHURCH CORRESPONDENCE

Since General Synod 1977 added that ecclesiastical contact must be a temporary relationship and must be used "for the purpose of reaching full correspondence" (III, Recommendation, c), we therefore explained the contents and procedure of church correspondence. For your information our rules for correspondence are printed on page 80 of the *Acts* of 1977.

The OPC had maintained church correspondence with the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (synodaal), so that it is not an altogether foreign concept to them. This past relationship received discussion. Owing to

the sad experience encountered in this church correspondence with the GKN (synodaal), the OPC has become very hesitant about entering such a relationship again. It ended on a sad note, since the OPC had to terminate the relationship due to the continuing unfaithfulness and deviation from the Reformed faith in the GKN (synodaal). Yet it had served a beneficial purpose in that the OPC had been able to warn and admonish a wayward federation of churches.

Another problem they envision is the degree of supervision over local foreign churches which church correspondence entails, they feel. This is how they interpret,

“a. to take mutual heed that the corresponding Churches do not deviate from the Reformed Confession . . .”

However, we explained that this taking *mutual* heed is exercised by the broadest assembly via appointed committees. These committees use the agenda and decisions of the broader assemblies to exercise this mutual “oversight” of one another.

Moreover, we explained that church correspondence applies only to foreign churches and not to geographically overlapping churches. In the latter case a merger or organic union should be the aim. Even their standards men-

tion the concept of “correspondence” with foreign churches.

By this discussion a greater understanding and appreciation developed on the part of the OPC committee members for the practice of church correspondence.

7. DISCUSSION ON CONFESSIONAL POINTS

The OPC committee did not have time as a committee to study our response. Therefore discussion of the points of confession and church government were postponed till a future meeting in 1979, D.V., to be hosted by us.

For the sake of clarification though, some issues did receive a preliminary treatment. For example, our committee made clear what we meant by “pluriformity.” The deviations of Abraham Kuyper were mentioned in this respect.

The phrase “more or less pure” in the Westminster Confession (W.C.) has inherent dangers if applied to so-called Federations of churches. Many “churches” can be recognized as “churches,” with the difference that some are more pure and others are less pure. This leads to the acceptance of the status quo. One accepts churches as they are. The oneness of Christ’s

church is not promoted in this way. In the Reformed confessions we use the marks of true and false churches to recognize them. This is therefore a completely different approach.

What “pluriformity” meant for one’s relations with other churches and what is meant for OPC members who move, for example, was also discussed.

Also, some OPC committee members felt that we misread the W.C. since they too believed that assurance belongs to the essence of faith. “Assurance” then means “full assurance” which does not always belong to the essence of faith. However, if the W.C. is incorrect here, it was said, then it should be changed. This was a remarkable comment.

8. THE RELATIONS OF THE OPC WITH OTHER CHURCHES

Part of our mandate from the General Synod 1977 was:

“d. to discuss and evaluate the relationships of the OPC with other Churches, as the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, and the Christian Reformed Church.”

As you may know, the OPC is a member of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC). It consists of the following five founding churches of the council:

The Spirit, Sent from Heaven Above

TUNE: PRESENT HYMN 24



1. The Spirit, sent from heaven above,
Shows us the way of truth and love.
The Promised One dwells in our hearts:
He light and life to us imparts.

2. He on the Church of Christ our Lord
His many varied gifts outpoured,
That, without pride or malice, we
Might one another’s members be.

3. The Spirit, knowing all our needs,
Perfects our prayers and intercedes
As Paraclete before God’s throne;
Our cause He makes His very own.

4. He is Himself the guarantee
That we shall be forever free
When Christ returns on His great Day.
“O come, Lord Jesus, come,” we pray.

Copyright: Committee on the Church Book

1. The Christian Reformed Church
2. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church
3. The Presbyterian Church of America
4. The Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod
5. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.

Its basis is the infallible Word of God as confessed in the Reformed standards of faith. As a fellowship it "enables the constituent churches to advise, to counsel, and to cooperate in various matters with one another and hold out before each other the desirability and need for organic union of churches that are of like faith and practice" (from the Constitution of NAPARC). The relationships of the OPC with these churches is exercised through this council and by means of the rules for ecclesiastical fellowship with these churches (see point 5).

At this point we asked a question which many of our people also raise. It concerns the OPC and its relation to the Christian Reformed Church. As churches we have sent our "Appeal" to the Christian Reformed community. Contacts with the deforming Christian Reformed Churches came to a halt. Yet are we not renewing them by our proposed relation with the OPC? The fear for a chain reaction was thus voiced.

Added to this is the fact that their rules for ecclesiastical fellowship with the NAPARC churches include,

- "b. occasional pulpit fellowship (by local option)
- c. intercommunion (regulated by each session)."

To these concerns of ours, the OPC brothers answered that their relationship with the Christian Reformed Church differed from ours. When they were a very small and young group of churches struggling to remain orthodox, having just left the big Presbyterian Church, then the Christian Reformed Church offered them help and support. Some Christian Reformed ministers became professors for Westminster Seminary. The OPC received much help from such men as profs. Kuiper and Stonehouse, not to forget Van Til, originally Christian Reformed too. Seeing the closeness of the past relationship, it is not only unChristian but difficult to undo that relationship.

OUR COVER

Cross-country ski centre at Camp Mercier, Laurentide Park about 60 km north of Quebec. (Courtesy Quebec Gov't.)

However, it is indicative that the OPC entertains merger talks with the RPCES and the PCA but not with the Christian Reformed Church.

Besides these relations they have fraternal relations with the Reformed Church of America (Eureka Classis), the Korean Presbyterian Churches, both HapDong and KoryuPa or Kosin, the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the Reformed Churches of New Zealand, the Reformed Churches of Japan, and the Associated Reformed Presbyterian Church. The relations with the Korean churches are solely exercised through the OPC missionaries who serve both groups of churches (HapDong and KoryuPa). There are no gifts of money donated at all to these churches since their missionary approach is strictly "no money." The contact with the churches in New Zealand is made through the Reformed Ecumenical Synod.

9. REFORMED ECUMENICAL SYNOD

That leads us to the discussion about the RES. We made clear our historical reasons for not joining the RES. We objected to the term "synod" and to the fact that the GKN (synodaal) are members. In 1946 the synodaal GKN churches laid before the RES their doctrinal statement about the covenant of grace and baptism. The RES approved it and thereby prevented the liberated GKN from joining. Meanwhile the decision is revoked but the synodical GKN still remain as member.

The OPC committee responded that they were not aware of the implications of the 1946 decision at that time. Also, they have seriously considered leaving the RES but have decided to remain in order to have their voice heard in a positive, Reformed manner.

After this the new merger talks with the RPCES and PCA were discussed. The issues dividing these churches, e.g., eschatology and abstinence, were clarified.

10. FORM OF GOVERNMENT

To round off our talks Rev. Galbraith, an original member on the OPC committee for revision of their Form of Government, gave us the benefit of his 29 years of experience. He explained the differences between the old and the new Forms of Government (the new Form of Government was adopted at the 1978 General Assembly).

11. CLOSING

Rev. J. Mulder thanked the OPC committee for its hospitality. He remarked that they have shown Christian patience over the years in the face of a barrage of questions, comments, and criticisms from us. Moreover, he voiced appreciation for the open, honest, and substantive talks which we could have. May the Head of the Church use such talks to foster the unity for which he prayed.

Rev. Leroy Oliver served notice that if the 1979 General Assembly approves our offer then one of our observers could become a corresponding member at that General Assembly. Also, he expressed his gratitude for our interest in the OPC. As he put it, the OPC does not have many friends in the world. They feel small and lonely. Once, they were called, "de kleine kerk met de grote mond" by those whom they rebuked. Therefore our friendship and our willingness to travel afar to meet them was much appreciated. He said, we have found you to be "firm but not prickly."

After a prayer of thanksgiving, we shook hands and the Philadelphia meeting came to a close.

For the Committee,
W. HUIZINGA

Consulaat-General Der Nederlanden CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS

10 KINGSTREET E.,
TORONTO, ONTARIO M5C 1C3
PHONE: 364-5443

OPSPORING ADRESSEN:

KRUISBRINK, E.H., geboren 17 april 1950, laatstbekende adres 319 Dingle Court, Bolton, Ontario.

KUCZERA, Nikodem, geboren 11 september 1913 te Polen, naar Canada vertrokken op 15 september 1954.

METSELAAR, Adelbertus Andreas, geboren 1 januari 1914, naar Canada vertrokken op 27 november 1956, laatstbekende adres Winnipeg, Manitoba.

NOTTE, Alouis Henri, geboren 16 oktober 1903 te Axel, naar Canada vertrokken op 20 mei 1924.

SANDER, Antonia Maria Josephina, geboren 21 maart 1950 te Herveld, naar Canada vertrokken in mei 1978.

TOLSMA, Klaas, geboren 8 december 1913 te Franeker, naar Canada vertrokken op 23 februari 1952, laatstbekende adres 294, 7th Street, Owen Sound, Ontario.

VAN VUGT, T.A.J., geboren 29 juli 1952, laatstbekende adres te Utrecht.

De Consul-Generaal, voor deze:
MEVR. G. SCHNITZLER

A Welcome and Farewell Evening for Rev. and Mrs. P.K. Meijer

Recently the Rev. P.K. Meijer arrived from The Netherlands and was installed as missionary of the Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church at New Westminster, B.C. Rev. Meijer and his wife have already left for their new working area in São José, Brazil. Since the Brazilian authorities did not grant them an official resident visum, the couple left with tourist-visa which have to be renewed every year. Rev. Meijer is now filling the vacancy which has existed since the Rev. C. Van Spronsen left for Canada after having spent seven years of faithful service in São José.

Many brothers and sisters were gathered together during the morning service, in which Rev. Meijer was installed by Rev. R.F. Boersema, our first missionary, who hopes to leave for São José soon. During the afternoon service, however, no seats were unoccupied when Rev. Meijer delivered his first sermon in the English language,

for which he was complimented later on by his colleagues.

As text for the morning service Rev. Boersema had chosen Matthew 10:16: "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves." He stressed the beautiful promises which come with the preaching of the Gospel and the hardships which may accompany it.

In his sermon the Rev. Meijer stressed the value of the mission work. He said that we should not be ashamed of the Gospel and be eager to preach it, not only in the mission work, but also at home.

The congregational meeting — a combined welcome and farewell evening — for the Rev. and Mrs. Meijer — was attended by a large number of brothers and sisters. Among them were all the ministers from the Fraser Valley: Rev. J. Visscher (Cloverdale), Rev. D. VanderBoom (Langley), Rev. M. VanderWel (Abbotsford), Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar (Chilliwack), Rev. R.F. Boersema (New Westminster, first missionary), and Rev. C. Van Spronsen (Smithers), who was present on request of Classis Pacific.



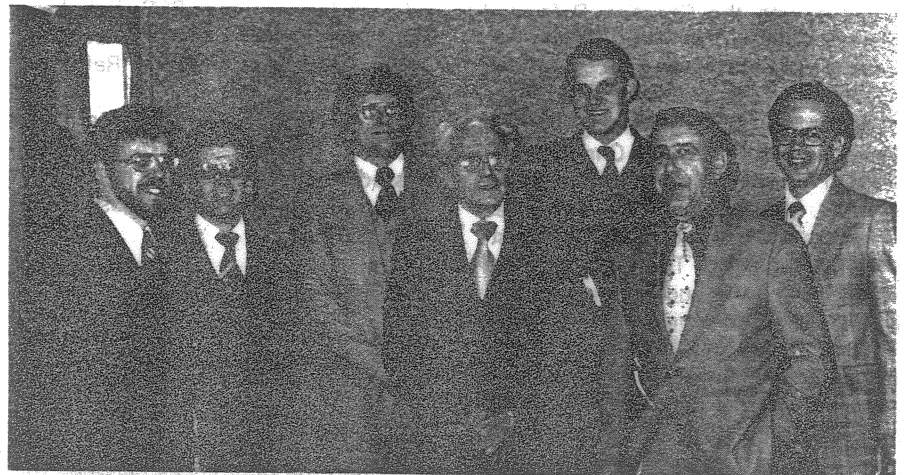
Rev. P.K. Meijer.



Missionary Rev. P.K. Meijer in his farewell speech.



Missionary Rev. Boersema hopes to leave for Brazil in January 1979 with his family.



All ministers of British Columbia were present at the Welcome Evening of Rev. P.K. Meijer. (From left to right): Rev. Boersema, missionary; Rev. Visscher, Cloverdale; Rev. Tiggelaar, Chilliwack; Rev. VanderBoom, Langley; Rev. (missionary) P.K. Meijer; Rev. VanderWel, Abbotsford; Rev. C. Van Spronsen, Smithers (former missionary).

REPORT

of the first meeting of the Board of the Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped.

The Board met on November 24, 1978, in the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church, Hamilton, Ontario.

Present were nine of the eleven members.

Mr. C. Nobel opened the meeting at 8:30 p.m., led in prayer, and spoke a word of welcome.

The agenda was set, the main item being the election of officers.

The meeting elected: Br. W. Schuurman from Hamilton, Chairman; Br. H. Kottolenberg from Orangeville, Vice-Chairman; Br. M. Kampen from Burlington, Recording Secretary; Sr. R. Medemblik from Fergus, Corresponding Secretary; Sr. S. Smid from Watford, Treasurer.

Following the election, the meeting instructed the Treasurer to register the Association as a charitable organization with the Department of Revenue. This to obtain tax deductible privileges for members and donors.

The meeting further requested that Br. Dieleman and Br. Vanderjagt review the draft By-Law, to revise it as required and present their revised draft of the By-Law at the next meeting of the Board.

The date for the next meeting was set for, D.V., January 26, 1979, in Hamilton at 8:00 p.m., in the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church.

Mr. C. Walinga closed the meeting with prayer.

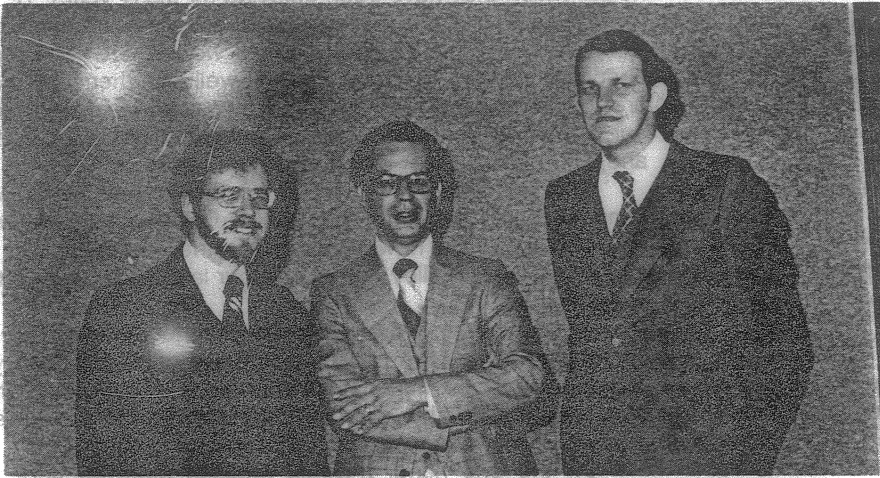
We hope and pray that the Lord will bless the work that we plan to do on behalf of the mentally and physically handicapped children, which the Lord has entrusted to the care of some of the parents among us.

We hereby urge all members of the Canadian Reformed Churches to lend their full support to this very worthwhile project and we trust that this support will be forthcoming.

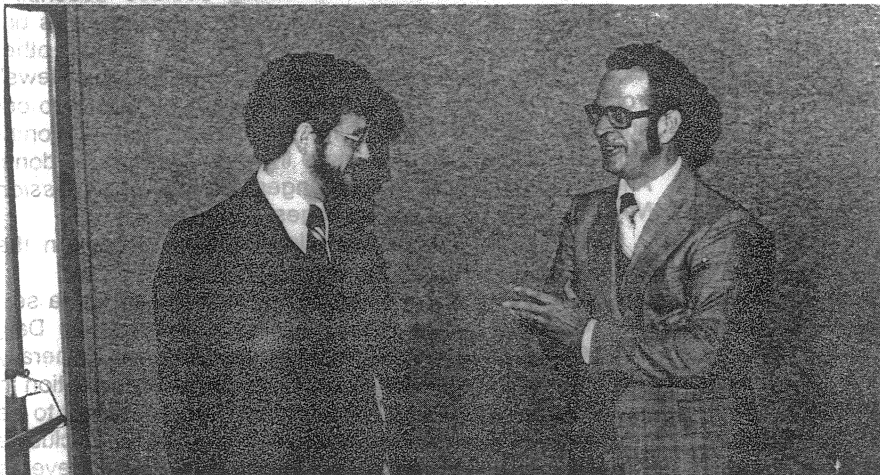
Every congregation has among its members a member of the Board of the Association, and he or she will be more than pleased to enlist your support and receive your membership fee of \$50.00 per annum.

We are counting on you!

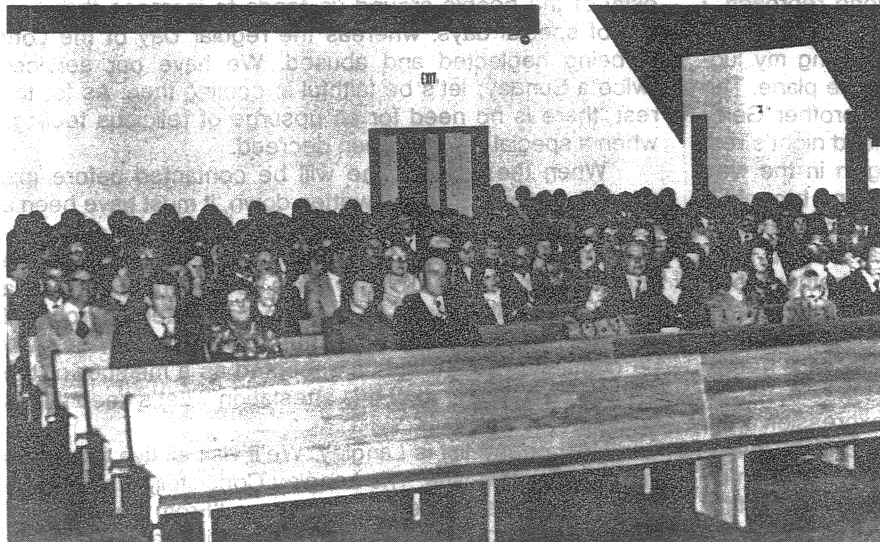
For the Board,
Mrs. Rita Medemblik



Rev. Boersema, missionary of the Canadian Reformed Church in Western Canada; Rev. C. Van Spronsen, former missionary and present minister of the Smither's congregation; Rev. P.K. Meijer who left for Brazil on December 6, 1978.



Rev. Boersema, missionary of the Canadian Reformed Church, Western Canada, gets last instructions from Rev. Van Spronsen who finished his mission work in Brazil after 7 years of fruitful work.



The Church building on the farewell evening, only the front bench had some open places left.

news medley

Here we are for the first time in the year of our Lord Nineteen Hundred and Seventy-nine. It is a good thing that we can state also of this new year, "It is the year of our Lord." How long shall we still be able to write our medleys? How long shall we still be permitted to print our *Clarion* freely? How long will there still be room for the Church and all her activities?

We do not know. This much we do know: that we are to use our time well and that we are to utilize the opportunities to the fullest extent. Let's do that, each one according to the abilities which he or she has received from our gracious God.

Let us, in this first medley of the new year, go back to the old year for a while. I mean that we shall go back to the latest *Clarion* of the past year. That issue brought us the news of a few wedding anniversaries.

We begin with the one which occupied a whole page of that issue: the sixtieth Wedding Anniversary of brother and sister Jacob Kuik. They were the "pioneer family" in the Winnipeg-Carman area. They came there through a mistake, but see how many fruits that one mistake has borne for the Churches. Humanly speaking, they were the instruments by which the Church at Carman came into existence and, from Carman, the one in Winnipeg. We wish to add our congratulations to the many which they undoubtedly have received when, on December 28, 1978, they had their day of grateful remembering. May they continue to enjoy good health also in the time to come. We realize that not too many years can be expected at that age; however, when every day is received as a gift from the hand of the Lord, there is gratitude each new morning and evening.

Staying in Carman for a while, we also bring a visit to brother and sister H. Klos, who, on January 11, 1979, may celebrate their fiftieth Wedding Anniversary. They have been longtime residents of Carman as well as the Kuiks and the hospitality at their home was beyond reproach. I can speak from experience, when I arrived in Carman for a weekend and the airline made a mistake, leaving my luggage in Vancouver instead of loading it onto the plane. The combined efforts of the Klos family and of brother Gerry Kuik rendered it possible for me to have a good night's rest and (when the latter went to the airport again in the wee hours of the morning to pick up my luggage and brought it to Carman) not to appear on the pulpit without my indispensable typed-out sermon! I don't know what I could have done without that help and care. Anyway, whether I personally experienced kindness or not: our heartfelt congratulations with this memorable occasion and may the Lord grant you His nearness and blessing also on your further pathway.

Permit me (I must have learned that expression from the Edmonton bulletin) to jump all the way to British Columbia. Brother and sister D.J. Vandergugten (better known as Ome Dirk and Tante Riek) will celebrate their forty-fifth Wedding Anniversary on the same day on which the Klos family celebrate their fiftieth. When we saw one another a few months ago, there was still the same relative good

health which they have been enjoying for many years. Yes, there were always certain weaknesses which did not render it easy at all times to do their work; there was also hospitalization, but the Lord made it well with them and we are thankful for that. To you, too, our wish: May the Lord our God continue to bless you with children, grandchildren, and (in due time) great-grandchildren!

Herewith we have made our rounds attending receptions, and we had better return to the work that is before us: reporting on the news in and about the Churches.

Being in the Valley anyway for our last-mentioned visit, we start there.

We begin with New Westminster. The Consistory reported that it received a letter from the Church at Langley "suggesting that a national Mission News be published in cooperation with the sending churches in Ontario. The Mission Board will be asked to do a feasibility study."

On the one hand, I would applaud such an undertaking, for then we all receive information about all the work that is being done. The *Mission News* as it is distributed by Toronto nowadays also renders it possible to insert pictures and thus to show something besides describing things. It would promote the interest in one another's undertakings and it would widen our horizon. On the other hand, I would deplore the disappearance of "Mission News" from our magazine. It brought some more variation into our publication besides lightening the burden for the contributors. However, what is more important should be done. And I do think that the advantages of a combined *Mission News* outweigh the disadvantages.

We move on to Cloverdale. From the report on the Consistory meeting we quote,

After ample debate it is decided not to add extra services for special days, such as Thanksgiving Day, beyond the ones we already observe. It is generally felt that these special events will have the attention in the regular worship services and that care ought to be taken not to elevate these days to such an exclusive height that the need of commemorating these events in a continual way is obscured. Also the fact that many will be unable to attend such services confirmed the consistory's decision to leave the practice as it is.

That appears to be sound reasoning. The general religiosity of the people around us tends to increase the number of special days, whereas the regular Day of the Lord is being neglected and abused. We have our services twice a Sunday; let's be faithful in coming then. As for the rest, there is no need for an upsurge of religious feelings when a special day has been decreed.

When the words "She will be contacted before this attest is accepted," were written down, it must have been a "slip of the typewriter." It is not subject to doubt or debate whether an attestation, given by a sister Church, shall be accepted or not. We simply *have* to accept it. That is a question of faithfulness to the bond as sister Churches. I presume that the intention of the information is: "She will be contacted before she is accepted as a member of the Church on the ground of this attestation." Let's keep things straight.

Next on the list is Langley. We'll visit all five Churches in the Valley this time. The Langley Consistory discussed a report from the Property Committee. "From the report it appeared that only one property is feasible at this time as complications have arisen with the others. It was decided to request a meeting with the Boards of the School- and

Rest Home Societies and the respective Property Committees to discuss the entire situation."

Abbotsford appears to be making progress in the matter of an organ. The Consistory received an offer of a used pipe organ. "The total costs of this organ will be \$39,630.00, an eventual change or reinforcement of the church building excluded. It is decided to propose to the congregation to accept this offer, for which purpose a congregational meeting will be held on Monday, December 11, 1978." I have not yet heard what the outcome of the congregational meeting was, but have good hopes.

One thing I do not understand. The New Westminster Church has had an almost complete organ for sale for quite a while now, consisting of a two manual plus pedal console and about ten ranks of pipes, windchests, and so on. I was told that they ask five or six thousand dollars for it. Why have there been no takers of that offer? They had these parts left when they combined their old organ with another old one purchased out of a church building in Vancouver. I do not know all that much about organs, but I presume that acquisition of what is now stored in the basement of the Maranatha Church in Surrey and purchase of a few additional ranks to make the organ one that a Congregation would wish to have, would save quite a bit of money while, at the same time, enriching the worship. I don't have room for it, but otherwise I might have considered buying it myself. Besides, I don't have a house which I could remodel for the purpose.

Chilliwack has other problems. "The Glad Tidings Tabernacle on School Street had been viewed. The complex is too elaborate and too costly for us." Too bad, I say, for it is of great importance that a Congregation has a place for worship of its own.

Up North! We go to Smithers now.

Starting in 1979, there will be only one collection per service, which will be for the relief of the needy. There will be no separate collection for the mission. It is felt that this is an integral part of Church work, and should therefore also be taken from the regular contribution. Another point considered was that, with the substantial increase in the amount required for mission, the collections would no longer be sufficient.

That I wholeheartedly agree with the first-mentioned argument does not need any further elaboration. That I deplore the second argument is something which, alas, I have to state. It seems to be a wrong argument for a Consistory to say, "The collections are not sufficient, and therefore we take it from the regular contributions." I think that the Consistory thereby has weakened its own stand. The first argument is sufficient and decisive.

Another thing with which I agree wholeheartedly is the following statement from the consistory: The Consistory is of the opinion that Mission Aid is not under jurisdiction of the Consistory, "and should therefore not have a place on the regular collection schedule. Mission Aid should be a separate, independent organization within the congregation, which themselves take care of the collecting of funds."

Some time ago, in a medley, I made some remarks in the same vein. At that time a brother thought that I was far out. Here is another proof that this is the general conviction.

From Smithers we pass through Houston. The Consistory took grateful note of the decision of the latest Classis

Pacific to grant Houston's request for support in the matter of the calling of a Minister of their own.

From Alberta we have some news about Edmonton.

"Liturgy. It was decided to move the confession of faith in the afternoon service back to prior to the sermon instead of after the sermon."

That was new to me; I mean, that the Apostles' Creed was said after the sermon had been delivered. Now it appears that such was the case since January 1973. I never knew that, and it must have been published in a time I did not get the Edmonton bulletin. Or I was sleeping when reading it. Edmonton is one of the places from which I receive the bulletin most faithfully. There are sometimes Churches which (think that they) punish me by not sending their bulletin for a time when I have made a remark which they dislike, but I cannot recall that Edmonton ever did something bad like that. Must have been my mistake then. Anyway, I think that the decision which they made now is a right decision. I could not see what reason there might be to put the Confession at the end of the sermon; perhaps the reasoning was: now the Congregation responds to the proclamation of God's Word, and confesses its faith. There seems to be something in that reasoning. However, with all the changes in the liturgy which I have noticed in the course of the years I have never found one yet that put the Confession after the sermon had been finished.

Permit me to make some remarks about some remarks about the education of our children.

There appears to be a gross misunderstanding about the reach of the promises which parents make when they come with their children to the baptismal font. I thought that, after all that has been said and written about it, there would be no more misunderstandings; but I am mistaken. Edmonton's bulletin shows such misunderstanding, and not only Edmonton's!

First a few quotations.

"We should keep in mind that we have promised to do our best to educate our children in the fear of the Lord Our ideal is to abide by the promise to educate our children in the doctrine taught in the Church of which we are members."

Is that really true?

We did not promise that "we shall do our best to educate our children in the fear of the Lord." We have promised that we SHALL instruct them *in the aforesaid doctrine* to the best of our ability. But that is something different!

It is not "our ideal to abide by the promise," but we *have* to abide by the promise. Of an ideal one can say, "Sorry, there are circumstances which prevent me from reaching it." We did not "reveal" our "ideals" when making the promises at the baptism of our children; we promised that we take a certain task upon ourselves.

That task is: to instruct this child and have it instructed in the doctrine of the Church. That's what the parents are to do at home; that's what they do when they tell their children to come to Church with them, when they send them to Catechism classes. There the children are "instructed in the aforesaid doctrine." That is not an ideal (which either can be realized or cannot be realized) but that is and has to be reality. And any parent who neglects that task is to be admonished for breaking the promise made at the baptismal font.

But when one assumes that the promise made at the baptismal font means that the parents shall take care that there be a Reformed School, yes, then one has to squirm

and twist and to speak of "ideals" in order to escape the consequence of a non-fulfilment of the promise made.

There is a Latin saying which means: "He that distinguishes well teaches well."

That is a first requirement and not just for people with exceptional gifts as mentioned in Article 8 of our Church Order.

The school is not there for "instruction in the aforesaid doctrine."

Parents are to see to it, as much as in them lies, that the whole instruction at school be *in harmony with* the aforesaid doctrine. Most certainly. But the school teaches all sorts of subjects (of which the doctrine of the Church may be just one) and is an institute for learning.

I found the very same wrong thoughts in a speech delivered at the opening of one of our schools some time ago. Quoting from the report on that opening, I take over the following sentences,

Reviewing the history of efforts to come to the establishing of a new school, the speaker mentioned "the perseverance of the members to go on in faith to come to this point where we now finally may live up to the promise we gave at the time of the baptism of our children, namely, to cause our children to be instructed in the doctrines of the church."

I was flabbergasted when I read that.

If I am to believe those words, then the parents in that Church have never in the more than twenty-three years since its institution been able to live up to the promise made at the baptismal font. Now finally the children are caused to be instructed in the doctrine of the Church.

Since its institution, that Church saw three ministers serve there and leave for another Congregation. I do not doubt that they received a certificate of release which stated that they were faithful in the fulfilment of their office. But instruction of the children in the doctrine of the church was not possible till an elementary school was opened.

Children have gone to Church and to Catechism classes, but only now, finally, the parents are able to live up to the promise made at the baptismal font to cause their children to be instructed in the doctrine of the Church!

I don't believe a word of it.

When one wishes to promote a cause, true promotion is possible only when the arguments are straight and true. Exaggeration or "arguments" which seem very much loaded but, upon closer examination, appear to be no more than impressive looking hollow shells do not serve a cause at all.

I rejoice at the opening of every new Reformed school and am convinced of the absolute necessity of such schools. The Lord has greatly blessed us in this respect. But I refuse to go by wrong arguments. And I wished that we all would quit speaking about the school as an institution where the children are instructed in the "doctrine of the Church." Leave that, please, up to the parents and to the Ministers of the Word. The teachers at school have not been appointed to teach the children the doctrine of the Church, but to teach the children in all subjects *on the basis of and in harmony with* that doctrine.

"Klankendogmatiek" doesn't get anyone anywhere.

Let's have some better news.

From the City of Winnipeg, we read in *Pro Congregations*, word has been received that an amount had been deposited into "our church account, this amount being the final settlement on the parcel of land the Church sold to the

City of Winnipeg. This amount will be applied against the outstanding loan we have with the Toronto Dominion Bank." Congratulations that the matter has finally been settled.

We come down to Toronto.

The executive (moderamen) of our consistory met last Wednesday with the executive of the Willowdale Christian Reformed Church. As you remember, last year we sent this consistory our "Appeal to the Christian Reformed Church" . . . We also offered to meet with the consistory of this church, if so desired, to speak with them about the contents of this Appeal. We were invited to do this and the short meeting of last Wednesday was held to decide how to go about it. For if both full consistories meet together this means that about thirty-five men will meet and talk together! Therefore matters had to be organized to make this discussion as fruitful as possible.

It was decided that Rev. L. Tamminga on behalf of the Christian Reformed consistory will try to draft a short reply to our Appeal which will be multiplied and passed on to the members of both consistories. In a meeting in our church building scheduled for February 12, this Appeal and reply will be the topic of discussion.

From the Rehoboth, Burlington Church we may pass on this happy news:

The Pastoral Care Proposal is again discussed and in view of the indication which was given to the consistory by means of the poll, it is decided to go ahead and create a vacancy, and to put on the budget for the coming year the expense for a second minister.

Although it is easier to create a vacancy than to have a vacancy filled, and to put the expenses for a second minister on the budget than to make the budget balance, we are happy with the step which the Consistory took. We also wish them much success in their undertakings.

In the Ebenezer (Burlington) Church bulletin I read that the Reformed Political Study Society has changed its name to "Association for Reformed Political Action." That promises something, although I hope that they haven't given up studying.

And, to conclude our medley for this week, we can tell you that the "1978 bazaar belongs to history and the final results are a net profit of \$6,100.00."

Thus we have entered a new year.

I should like to use this opportunity to thank all those who supported us so faithfully during the past year, who have served us by their criticism and compliments, who have sent us their best wishes for the new year and who remember us and our work in their prayers. Yes, we do not forget this last-mentioned activity either. It is only by strength which the Lord provides upon prayer that we are able to do this work. Depending upon Him we shall continue.

Accept you all our best wishes for this new year.

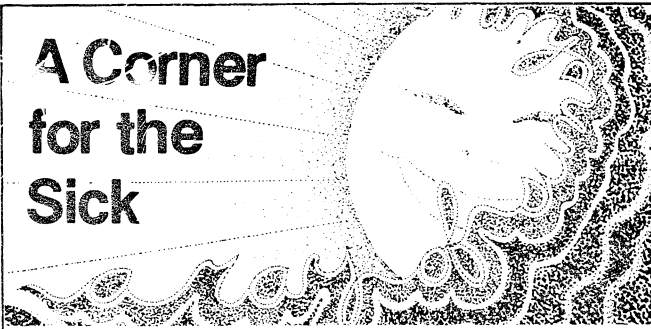
May the peace of Christ be with us all.

vO

DID YOU PAY YOUR SUBSCRIPTION ALREADY?

IF YOU DID WE LIKE TO SAY THANK-YOU. IF YOU DID NOT PLEASE DO IT TODAY.

A Corner for the Sick



"Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.'" *John 6:35*

It happens sometimes that all of a sudden we receive a clear picture of things which have been there already for a long time, but which we did not notice, or to which we have become so accustomed that they do not speak to us anymore as they should. This might be the case too with reading and hearing. Sights and sounds may become so familiar to our eyes and ears, when we see and hear them regularly, that our minds are dulled, and we lose sight of their significance and beauty. This may be so when we read or hear the form for the Lord's Supper. In Article 33 of our Belgic Confession we confess that this feast is a spiritual table, at which Christ communicates Himself with all His benefits to us.

The people who had followed and searched for the Lord Jesus, after He had fed the 5000 (read John chapter 6) asked Jesus, "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' Then what sign do you do, that we may see, and believe you? What work do you perform?" Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world" (verses 30-34).

The Lord has instituted the Lord's Supper that we may celebrate it to our comfort. We are made worthy partakers of this heavenly food and drink, when we are heartily sorry for our sins and shortcomings and with believing hearts look to Christ.

I will just emphasize a few sentences from our form for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Those words are so powerful and rich; let us contemplate or meditate on them.

"... that He has borne for us the wrath of God under which we should have perished everlastingly";

"... and has fulfilled for us all obedience and righteousness of the divine law";

"... where He was bound that He might loose us from our sins";

"... that we might never be confounded"

"... that we might be acquitted at the judgment seat of God"

"... that He might fix thereon the handwriting of our sins";

"... that He might fill us with His blessing";

"... that we might be accepted of God, and nevermore be forsaken of Him";

"... and nourish and refresh your hungry and thirsty souls."

The Lord instituted this celebration, in order that our hungry and thirsty souls are satisfied with the true food and drink of life eternal. He directs our faith and trust to His perfect sacrifice, once offered on the cross, as the only ground of our salvation.

Just as the manna was heavenly food to the Old Testament believers so — the Lord Jesus explains to the people mentioned in John 6 — is He Himself sent from heaven to be the heavenly food and drink for all believers.

May our continual prayer be for enlightenment by the Holy Spirit that we may see and taste all the riches which Christ has given to His Church and may we look forward with longing to the day of the Supper of the Lamb.

From Mrs. (Jane) Breukelman of Neerlandia we received some very good news. The Lord has made all things well and has given them, as parents, the privilege of receiving a healthy baby daughter. They are thankful to God for such rich blessings, after the months of trial and waiting. They also would like to express their thanks to all the brothers and sisters who sent Jane a card or letter; it gave them strength and they experienced the richness of the bond of the communion of saints.

Mrs. Malda wrote a letter thanking everyone who sent a card to their daughter Rose for her birthday. Rose appreciated them so much, that she walked around with them all day showing them to everybody. She also hung some above her bed.

Wilma Van Drongelen expressed her thanks in this manner, "I really appreciated the nice cards that were sent to me, with good wishes. I wish you all a happy New Year!" Thank you brothers and sisters!

We have a very special birthday to remember this time.

HANK ORSEL

2435 Second Street, Burlington, Ontario L7R 1E5

Hank will be celebrating his 48th birthday, the Lord willing, on January 27th. Since last September Hank has shared an apartment with a friend who also works at A.R.C. Industries.

Hank still remembers the pleasure he got from the cards he received for his birthday last year.

He is interested in collecting used postal stamps for his mother, who in turn saves them for the Bible Society. He collects postcards too!

Brothers and sisters shall we surprise Hank with a very happy birthday, and, maybe give him the regular pleasure of receiving stamps?

Happy Birthday, Hank!

Send your requests to:

Mrs. J.K. Riemersma

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

PRESS RELEASE

TEACHERS COLLEGE

Executive Committee meeting.

This meeting was held on November 7th, 1978 at the Theological College in Hamilton. Our chairman reads Job 28. The College which we are establishing is going to be for the training of teachers so they may gain wisdom. But only real wisdom can be acquired if we do this according to the guideline we find in Job 28:28, "And unto man He said, 'Behold the fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom and to depart from evil is understanding.'" After leading us in prayer the chairman opens the meeting.

We draw up the agenda and go on to the minutes. A small change is made. Brother Veenendaal writes us about an error in the previous minutes. This will be corrected.

A letter was received in which the author expounds the considerations regarding the prerequisite for the three year course. We appreciate the contents of this letter but we will wait with further discussion of it until we receive advice from the Curriculum Committee as well. A letter was received from a person in Alberta. She writes to us because there is as yet no representation from Alberta. She is willing to assist us in any way she can. It is decided to send her papers pertaining to the College. At this time we do not yet have any applications for the positions that are available. We feel that the mail-strike may be part of the reason. This is further discussed at great length.

The Public Relations Committee tables their report. The Preamble to our Constitution is discussed and some changes are made. As the Preamble shows the historical situation it is considered a good beginning for our Constitution. We also look at the constitution. Several suggestions are made. A letter to the Ministry of National Revenue is circulated. It deals with a request for a registration number as a charitable organization. This will be sent.

Our first Newsletter is discussed. The printer gave us an explanation as to work and costs involved. The treasurer tables his report. Not much has been received as yet. All the local treasurers have been contacted by

mail. We hope to start receiving funds in the near future. Following this we discuss the location of the College. The committee for the Teachers College appointed by the School Society of Hamilton will be asked to serve as Building Committee.

Brother J. Gelderman will conduct a survey re the need for teachers in the future. Brother C. Hoff leads in prayer and the chairman closed the meeting.

Our next meeting will be held D.V. the first Tuesday in December at the same place and time.

For the Executive Committee,
C. Hoff, Second Secretary.

* * *

Executive Committee meeting held on December 5th, 1978 at the Theological College at Hamilton.

Our chairman, Dr. Faber, opened the meeting at 8 o'clock sharp. He read to us Isaiah 61 and led us in prayer. We started with the minutes. After a few minor changes they were accepted. Next we made up the agenda. From incoming mail it appears that already seven applications have been received for the three year course. From different conversations it appears that several more students are interested. And then there is still the request on hand of 9 students who have already a B.A. degree and are presently teaching in our schools. They would like to follow the one year course. It appears that some of the seven applicants have not yet completed grade 13. We are very happy with the interest shown by the students. A letter from Dr. Rittersma is discussed. We are sorry to hear that he is not in a position to be directly involved with our college. However, he pledges his full support for whatever he can do to help us.

Two societies from the West inform us that they will now support us with \$1.40 per week per member as opposed to \$0.70 as was first suggested.

Another school society in the East which is presently not supporting the college has let us know that if we wish we can visit them to discuss these things further. Two committee members are delegated to arrange a meeting with them.

The treasurer reports on his income. One society has sent us 12 post-dated cheques. Nothing else has been received yet but we expect that once this all gets organized other societies will follow with their commitment.

At this time we received a telephone call. It was from Coaldale. They informed us that they were now positively going to support us. They also mentioned that now a delegate from Alberta has been appointed. The number of ten is now complete. For this we are very happy and thankful.

The report of the curriculum committee is discussed. After a lengthy discussion it is decided to send a letter requesting further advice.

Although much of this press release has been positive, we do have a negative point. Our ads in the various papers for the positions offered at our college have as yet failed to produce any applications. Available contacts will be written for help.

The Building Committee reports on their efforts for the location of the college. Further work is needed. With regard to communications between us as executive committee and the societies it is decided to have a meeting with representatives of all school societies. This meeting will, the Lord willing, be held next spring. On this meeting questions can be asked and everybody can provide input.

Our next meeting will not be on January 2 but on January 9, 1979, D.V. Brother H. Homan leads in prayer and the chairman closed the meeting.

For the Executive Committee,
C. Hoff, Second Secretary

IF POOR, ACT CAUTIOUSLY (*Pauper agate caute*)

Little fish! why come you skimming
On the surface as you do?
Deeper down you should be swimming,
That's the fitter place for you.
Here above, great sea-news hover,
Keen of eye, and swift of flight;
And for such as you, moreover,
Have a wondrous appetite.
Here alone, the kings of ocean
May with safety dare the light,
But how came you by the notion
Thus to brave the eagle's flight?
Every kind of little creature
Should its proper station know;
And your fitter place by nature,
Is much rather — down below.
But if little bleaks disport them,
Like the porpoise and the whale,
While so heedless they comport them,
Danger must their lives assail:
Little fishes undertaking
What the great alone may do,
Like all, who their part mistaking,
Soon or late their folly rue.

JACOB CATS, 1577-1660
Trans. R. Pigot (1860)

(Line 17: *bleaks* = small fishes)

Letter to My Daughter

Dear Jean,

I understand that you are not very happy about my last letter. Your brother told me that you wanted a more concrete reply, that you didn't want me to dodge the questions and point at your own mistakes. And he added that in general he, too, would like my answers to be more straightforward and pertinent with little or no "on the other hand"s, because says he, "if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?"

That is all very nice of course, but in the meantime there was also a letter-to-the-editor, giving the impression that apparently you did step on some Board-members' toes already. If you think that I should help you in that, you are very much mistaken.

Really, Jean, you should be more careful in your thinking and especially in what you say or write. This letter-to-the-editor showed how easily things can get misunderstood and mixed up. And I must say that with the careless remark at the end of your letter you have given some reason for misunderstanding.

You must keep in mind that not everyone can read and that more than one will completely overlook the main point and stumble over a careless, secondary remark. At first I intended to reply to that letter and explain things somewhat, but the mix-up is so great that I might need more than one page. Besides . . . I don't feel like cleaning up after you. You can do your own cleaning! And in this case you'd better leave things alone, because I think that you'll only increase the mix-up.

As for you and your brother with your unhappiness, do you really think that I should be more pertinent? Do you really think that I should chew the food for you?

Look, Jean, you are growing up. Pretty soon you'll be twenty. You should be able to make up your own mind. Was that not what we always tried to teach you? And is that not what you are taught in school?

Don't tell me that our upbringing failed so miserably that you still cannot stand on your own feet, for if that is the case you'd better come home quickly for a refresher course.

I think I know what you will answer to that. But why do you expect me to give an outright solution to whatever problem you may have? Your teachers don't do that either when you have troubles with your assignments, do they? And what would they say if you just wrote the ultimate solution to a problem, without showing how you arrived at that solution and without showing that you did understand the problem?

I am well aware of the fact that our way of upbringing was not perfect and not complete and that we still have a responsibility toward you. Otherwise: why should I bother answering your letters?

But there are stages and different situations. There was a time when we said: "Do that!" and you did it, or else! There was also a time and a situation when we said: "Do that!" and were glad when you asked: "Why that, and why in such a way?" And the time has come and is now, that we don't say anymore: "Do that!" We just present you with the facts and leave it up to you to act and do whatever you think should be done.

And if we feel that you are doing the wrong thing, then WE are the ones who will ask: "Why that and why in such a way?" or who will try to bring you to a different opinion. But it still remains YOUR opinion, YOUR decision, and, possibly, YOUR mistake.

That is the reason why I present you with the information I have (you should know by now that there is a limit to my knowledge) and let you make up your own mind. If you do it incorrectly in my opinion I will come after you again and point out what I don't like.

Also . . . when somebody says or writes something you don't always know WHY he does so. He may have made a mistake (many of us do, even if it may be just about impossible at your age); he may have left out something on purpose for whatever reason; he may have assumed that everybody was well acquainted with the subject and therefore he did not have to give a lengthy explanation; and last but not least, there is also a possibility that you were not in the right mood and therefore did not understand what was said.

That is the reason why I have warned you more than once to be careful in what you say. You can do a lot of harm and seldom much good if you don't take the time to consider things from every angle. That is also the reason why I usually come with, "on the other hand," and will go on doing so.

If you don't like it, you can lump it! There; was that clear enough?

Finally, let me make a short remark about my last letter, just in case you made the same mistake as the writer to the editor.

My remark about, "you probably being right with the accusations in the last part of your letter," was definitely not for the Mission Board members, but for the two paragraphs before that.

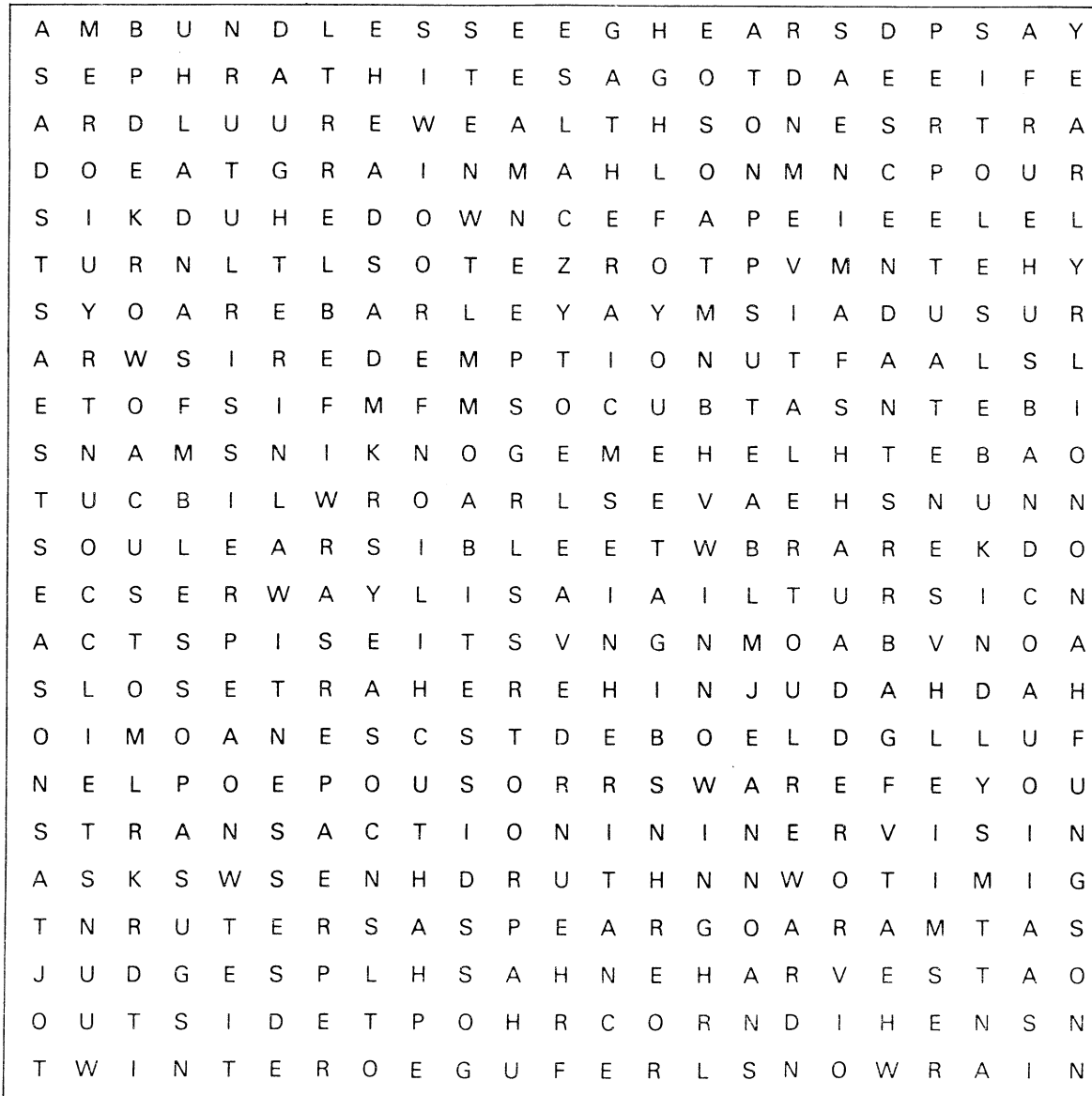
I mentioned already that you had given reason for misunderstanding with your careless remarks and I thought that I had steered clear of this one by directing you to Question and Answer 114 of the Heidelberg Catechism, Matthew 7:3-5 and Luke 13:24.

Apparently it was not enough. Please look it up, will you!?

Love,
Dad.

Word Search - Puzzle No. 38

RUTH



- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| barley | empty | husband | Moab | return | winnowing |
| beat | ephah | | Moabites | reward | witnesses |
| Bethlehem | Ephrathites | inheritance | | Ruth | worked |
| bless | | Israel | Naomi | | |
| Boaz | famine | | native | sandal | |
| bundles | field | Judah | | sheaves | |
| | food | judges | Obed | sojourn | |
| Chilion | foreigner | | Orpah | son | |
| country | full | kindly | | | |
| custom | | kinsman | people | ten | |
| | gate | | perpetuate | town | |
| daughter-in-law | gather | leave | | transaction | |
| David | glean | lodge | reapers | | |
| descendants | go | LORD | recompense | wealth | |
| | grain | | redemption | wept | |
| elders | | Mahlon | refuge | wheat | |
| Elimelech | harvest | Mara | relative | wife | |

our little magazine

Dear Busy Beavers,

Happy New Year to you all, even though it may be a little late!

Don't you think it's an exciting idea — a whole new year ahead of us?

A whole new year to use the talents and gifts the Lord gave us.

We don't know what may happen this year.

This we do know. Each day we receive from our Heavenly Father.

That's why each day we will try to live as His children.

"He (the Lord Jesus) will ever help us if we shine, You in your small corner, and I in mine."

Shall we always remember that?

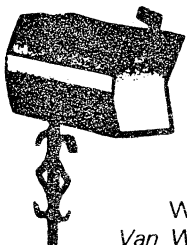
The Blizzard

One night when I was lying down in bed,
I suddenly heard a noise outside.
The wind started to howl and shriek.
Out of my window I took a peek.
Snow was swirling all around.
A blizzard had struck,
Covering the ground
With deep drifts,
That became very high.
I snuggled back into bed,
And let out a sigh,
Safe in bed till morning.
And when I get up
The storm is still roaring!
The radio tells us
"The schools are closed for today."
And I let out a big "Hurrah!"

by Busy Beaver *Alan Janssens*

Did you enjoy that, Busy Beavers?

Thank you for sharing, Alan.



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Charlene Van Woudenberg*. We are happy to have you join us, and hope you'll enjoy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Sounds to me as if you really celebrated your Mom's birthday, Charlene!

Also a hearty welcome to you, *Gordon Van Woudenberg*. Did you learn a lot about your Dad's work when you went along last summer? How did your Mom like her present, Gordon?

Of course you may join the Busy Beaver Club, *William*

Hoogerdijk. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already, sending in a quiz for us. Would you write and let me know your birthday, William? Then we can include you in the birthday wishes.

Hello, *Alan Janssens*. I'm glad to hear from you again. Thank you very much for your poem. Be sure to let me know how you enjoyed your TWO Christmas concerts, Alan. And did you get the snow you wanted?

Jody Veenman, would you please write and tell me your birthday, too?

THINGS TO DO

Here we are at the beginning of the New Year!

Don't you think it's a good idea for us to think of a Busy Beaver project to work at together?

Last year we did very well on our BIRTHDAY FUND PROJECT.

Shall we try that again?

Our Theological College is very important to us.

After all, that's where our new ministers come from!

We did a good job once. We can do it again!

As a matter of fact, we already have a very good start.

Keep our BIRTHDAY FUND PROJECT in mind, then, Busy Beavers.

And I will let you know how we're doing, all right?

And now for something else.

How about having a contest again?

We haven't had one for awhile.

Let's see what we can do!

Did you stay up and have a good time New Year's Eve?

Write your story with the title "How I Spent New Year's Eve," and enter it in our Story Contest.

I'm looking forward to hearing from many of you, Busy Beavers. You know my address:

Aunt Betty
Box 54,
Fergus, Ontario N1M 2W7.

QUIZ TIME

Pick a four-letter "key" word from the Bible and place one letter of the word over each of the last four spaces. Then write city, river, and mountain in the three spaces going down on the left hand side. Using the letters at the top, fill in blanks with names of city, river, and mountain beginning with the letter at the top.

If you make copies of the above diagram ahead of time, you could do this quiz with a number of guests.

Scrambled Names and Places (from the story of the birth of the Lord Jesus)

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1. SRAECA GSUSATUU | 7. LGLAIEE | 13. LIRASE |
| 2. NSQRIUIUI | 8. ANZAERTH | 14. TGLSEIEN |
| 3. PSEJHO | 9. AJDEU | 15. NAAN |
| 4. VDADI | 10. LBEMHETEH | 16. NPAHLUE |
| 5. YMRA | 11. SJRUELMAE | 17. HASRE |
| 6. RSAYI | 12. ESMINO | 18. RHOED |