



Clarion

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“Descended Into Hell”

(New Dutch Confessional Texts)

TRADITIONAL TEXT:

*Waarom volgt daar: Nedergedaald ter helle?
Opdat ik in mijn hoogste aanvechtingen
verzekerd zij en mij ganselijk vertrooste,
dat mijn Heere Jezus Christus
door zijn onuitsprekelijke benauwdheid,
smarten, verschrikking en helse kwelling,
in welke Hij in zijn ganse lijden
(maar inzonderheid aan het kruis)
gezonken was, mij van de helse
benauwdheid en pijn verlost heeft.*

SYNOD GRONINGEN-ZUID (1978)

*Waarom volgt er: neergedaald in de hel?
Opdat ik in mijn felste aanvechtingen
verzekerd ben en mij volkomen er mee vertroost,
dat mijn Here Jezus Christus mij
van de helse benauwdheid en pijn verlost heeft.
Hij heeft deze verlossing bewerkt
door zijn onuitsprekelijke benauwdheid,
smarten, verschrikking en helse kwelling
waarin Hij gedurende zijn gehele lijden,
maar vooral aan het kruis, verzonken was.*

DR. BAKHUIZEN VAN DEN BRINK (1966)

*Waarom volgt daarop: nedergedaald in het rijk van de dood?
Opdat ik in mijn hevigste aanvechtingen
verzekerd en volkomen getroost moge zijn,
dat mijn Here Jezus Christus
door zijn onuitsprekelijke angst,
smarten en verschrikking,
waarin Hij gedurende zijn gehele lijden,
maar in het bijzonder in zijn dood
aan het kruis verzonken was,
mij van de dodelijke angst en pijn verlost heeft.*

DR. L. WIERENGA (1978)

*Wat is dat: “tot in het dodenrijk is hij neergedaald”?
Christus heeft aan het kruis, en daarvoor,
onvoorstelbaar geleden; verdriet, martelingen
en doodsangst heeft hij doorgemaakt.
Daardoor heeft hij mij ervan bevrijd.
Want al moet ik zelf nog wel sterven,
angst voor de dood en voor de hel
hoef ik niet meer te hebben: Christus
heet die in mijn plaats gehad.
En daar vertrouw ik helemaal op.*

Time flies. It is already two years ago that the Rev. G. VanDooren wrote two articles “The Old ‘Heidelberger’ in a New Dress” in which he compared the two drafts for a new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism. Our readers can find those articles in *Clarion*, Volume 26, Nos. 1 and 2. My colleague ended them by presenting what he called the “cruix” of Question and Answer 44, the familiar statement of the Catechism about Christ’s descent into hell, and asking publicly my opinion. The Frisian saying goes, “Better let as net,” (Rather late than never) and now that I am supposed to fill some pages in this volume, I gladly use the opportunity to comply with my colleague’s wish. The modernizing of the English text of our Heidelberg Catechism has not yet been completed. It will occupy a place on the agenda of the forthcoming General Synod of Smithville 1980. Therefore, we are not too late, if we give the topic our common attention.

Let me first make some general remarks. We live in a period of transition and change as far as confessional and liturgical language is concerned not only in North America but also in Europe. With respect to the text of the Heidelberg Catechism in our Dutch sister churches I may refer to *Gereformeerd Kerkboek uitgegeven in opdracht van deputaten van de generale synode van De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland te Kampen 1975*, pp. 357-394. This new translation is used in catechetical instruction, but is not yet released for the liturgy. The Synod of Groningen-Zuid 1978 gave deputies the mandate to examine this text for the last time and to devise a list of Scripture proofs in order that the next Synod can authorize the text for general use in the churches.

In the meantime, another translation was published within the circle of our sister churches in the old country: *De*

Heidelbergse Katechismus in het Nederlands van nu vertaald door Dr. L. Wierenga (Groningen, 1978). The author adheres to modern methods of translation and the result is a text that deviates far more from the traditional Dutch text than the draft of the Synod’s deputies. I am almost inclined to say that in the same manner as “Good News For Modern Man” differs from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible — or NASB or NIV for that matter — so the translation of Dr. Wierenga has a modern approach in translating the Heidelberg Catechism that is completely different from the method used by the deputies of the Reformed Churches for the Committee-Dankbaar.

What is the Committee-Dankbaar? The Netherlands Reformed Church, the (synodical) Reformed Churches and the Christian Reformed Churches — the counterparts of the Reformed Church in North America, the Christian Reformed and the Free Reformed Churches — established a committee for the Dutch text of the ecumenical creeds and the Three Forms of Unity. Chairman of this committee is Dr. W.F. Dankbaar at Groningen. This Committee was instituted because of the desire to come to one modernized Dutch text that would be the authentic or official text of several “Reformed denominations.” In 1966 this interdenominational Committee had finalized the texts of the ecumenical symbols and of the Belgic Confession, but had not completely yet finished the work on the Heidelberg Catechism.

In 1975 our Dutch sister churches instructed their deputies to scrutinize the texts of the Committee-Dankbaar. I was thankful for that decision: if there is no need to isolate ourselves as far as the *text* of historic creeds and confessions is concerned, we should never do so. Let us argue together, if need be, — and, alas, this need is there — about the *contents* of the confessions and their significance in our

twentieth century, but let us base our arguments, as much as possible, on the same text.

The Committee-R.H. Bremmer reported to the Synod of Groningen-Zuid 1978 that the Committee-Dankbaar "haar teksten met grote zorg (heeft) vervaardigd en zich daarbij nauw aangesloten (heeft) bij the authentieke teksten." The deputies of our sister churches thus praised the Committee-Dankbaar for their accuracy and close adherence to the authentic texts. Nevertheless, the Committee-Bremmer had sometimes to correct the texts of the Committee-Dankbaar.

From press reports I received the impression that in the meantime traditionalism within the Netherlands Reformed Church had blocked the acceptance of new authentic texts of Creeds and Confessions. It is possible that the work of the Committee-Dankbaar will find more official appreciation in the (synodical) "Gereformeerde Kerken" and the Free Reformed Churches than in the circles of Dr. Dankbaar himself.

The latest publication of texts of the Committee-Dankbaar at my disposal is *De Belijdenisgeschriften volgens Artikel X van de Kerkorde van de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk* (second revised edition by J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink, 's Gravenhage, 1966).

I mention these new Dutch texts for two reasons.

In the first place, I am convinced that we in the Canadian Reformed Churches, or broader, we on the American continent, should be aware of what happens to the creedal texts in Reformed communities in Europe and especially in our sister churches in The Netherlands. Our creeds and confessions are our common heritage and in our age of telecommunication there would be no excuse for neglect of each other and for lack of knowledge about each other's work in this respect. Here could even be found a stimulus for an international conference of the Reformed Churches with which we live in correspondence, but that is a different chapter.

The second reason is that these new Dutch texts remind us of the fact that we cannot discuss the text of the Heidelberg Catechism Question and Answer 44 without taking into consideration the translation of the Apostles' Creed, of which the Heidelberg gives an explanation. The Committee-Bremmer deviates from the Committee-Dankbaar already in the translation of the Apostles' Creed and this is reflected in a different text of the Heidelberg Catechism.

The Synod of Groningen-Zuid established a provisional text of the Apostles' Creed that is to be tested by the churches but is not yet released for liturgical use (*Acts*, Article 425). I could not yet consult these Acts, but I gathered from a press report in *Nederlands Dagblad* of September 28, 1978, that the clause "He descended into hell" had been the object of a discussion. Some members and advisers — among others Prof. Dr. L. Doekes and Prof. J. Kamphuis — wanted to maintain the traditional translation "nedergedaald ter helle." The Synod, however, decided to follow the Committee-Bremmer and to propose to the churches a more modern version "neergedaald in de hel." The opponents of this modernization were of the opinion that the new text is more easily misunderstood than the old version. Will some people not think that after His death the Lord Jesus Christ has gone to the place of the damned? In English we do not have a difference between an old-fashioned word "hell" and a more modern form. But misunderstanding can, nevertheless, raise its head. For the main question is, first of all, What is meant by the word "hell"? The place of the damned, the state of the departed, or what?

As far as I can see, our brothers in Groningen-Zuid did not discuss the reason why the Committee-Bremmer deviated from the text of the Committee-Dankbaar, "nedergedaald in *het rijk van de dood*." This expression reminds us of the Old Testament term *Sheol* or *the Pit*, and of the New Testament word *Hades*. Do we not sing in Psalm 16, "Thou wilt not leave me in the realm of death"?

Also Dr. L. Wierenga and Drs. J. Wiegel translate in their very modern new Dutch version, "tot in het *dodenrijk* is hij neergedaald." Dr. J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink defends this translation of the Committee-Dankbaar as follows: "In the realm of death" is as translation of *inferna* or *inferi* preferable above "hell," on the ground of the following article and of the now customary Bible translation in Psalm 16:10; Matthew 11:23, 16:18; Revelation 1:18 etc.

The Committee-Bremmer, however, rejected this translation "realm of death" on the basis of the arguments of Calvin. In the first centuries people thought of a sojourn of Christ in hell after His death, on the ground of a wrong interpretation of I Peter 3:19 e.a. Then the Apostles' Creed would have the chronological sequence in history. In order to avoid this opinion other people took the escape of "the realm of death." It does not satisfy, however, to formulate this in an ample manner after the burial has been mentioned already. In the line of Calvin and the Heidelberg Catechism (Lord's Day 16) we should think rather of the extreme depth of Christ's suffering as the last mentioned element.

I must be honest that I was slightly disappointed by this reasoning of the Committee-Bremmer and by the fact that this main point was probably not discussed anymore in the Synod of Groningen-Zuid. Especially in The Netherlands several studies have been published in the last decade about the clause "He descended into hell." I think of the doctoral thesis of D.A. Du Toit "*Neergedaal ter helle . . .*" *Uit die geskiedenis van 'n interpretasieprobleem* (Kampen, 1971) and of essays by Dr. G.P. Hartvelt. I cannot elaborate on this point, but I may refer English readers to the standard work by J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (London: Longmans).

Calvin's explanation is Scriptural in contents, but it is not the historical exposition of the clause in the Apostles' Creed. As far as I know, we do not find his and our Heidelberg's explanation anywhere in the early Christian Church.

The first creedal appearance of the clause was in a confession of the year 359, where we read: "(He) descended to the underworld, and regulated things there, Whom the gatekeepers of Hades saw and shuddered." To say that Jesus Christ had died, or that He had been buried, was equivalent to saying that He had passed to Sheol. Kelly is of the opinion that the clause was regarded initially as no more than a more colourful expression of the ideas *dead and buried*. Our Lord Jesus Christ was truly among the dead.

The question, therefore, is whether the Committee-Bremmer gave a right survey of the history of this doctrine. It is clear that in the course of centuries wrong explanations have been given of the difficult text I Peter 3:19, but it is also evident that the early Christian Church had read the words of Holy Scripture about Sheol and Hades. They knew about the power of death and especially about Christ as the Victor over death and the grave, as the One Who at the third day rose again from the dead and Who leads us to the new earth.

I do not deny that the explanation by Calvin and our Heidelberg Catechism is completely Scriptural and I would not like to see the beautiful contents of Question and

Continued on page 78.

Irregularities? Hierarchical Tendencies? 2

When a minister of the Word becomes a professor of theology, one cannot say that he "enters upon another vocation," (Article 12, Church Order) nor can it be said that he is no longer able to do the work of a minister by reason of "age, sickness, or otherwise" (Article 13, Church Order). It cannot be said either that he is "compelled to discontinue his service for some time" (Article 14, Church Order), since he makes teaching students of theology his life's work from the moment of his installation on.

Synod considered that, according to our present Church Order, professors of theology are on a level with those ministers who "serve in any private manor, institution of mercy, or otherwise," and are therefore "no less than others, . . . subject to the Church Order."

Synod also quoted in its considerations a decision by the Synod of Leeuwarden 1920, which provided that the privilege of retaining the honour and title of a Minister of the Word ought to be granted only to those ministers who are called to another service in behalf of the Churches in common.

Synod's conclusion was that professors of theology (those namely who are ministers of the Gospel) shall retain that title and honour; the Church whose minister they are releases them from the obligation to do the work of a minister in its midst so that they can give themselves wholly and unrestrictedly to the work in behalf of the Churches in common; and in case a minister in one of the foreign sister Churches is appointed, we request the Church in the place where the College is located to call that minister and then to release him from the work as a minister in its midst so that he can give himself to that specific task to which he was appointed.

And that's how it was done.

The College was established in Hamilton.

Hamilton's Church extended a call to Dr. Faber in 1969 and to Drs. Ohmann in 1971; the brothers were duly installed as ministers of Hamilton, and then released by Hamilton so that they could give themselves completely to the work in behalf of the Churches in common.

Thus it happened that the Church at Hamilton was vacant while, at the same time, having one minister-emeritus and two ministers non-emeriti who had been released for another task. Meanwhile, during the vacancy, the latter two ministers did show that they were Hamilton's ministers and served that Church in many and various ways.

I cannot discover any irregularity in the method chosen by Synod Orangeville 1968, or in the position of our professors; nor do I see any aspect of which I would have to say, "I doubt whether the Lord Jesus would approve of this."

The Committee for the Revision of the Church Order recently sent a draft-report to the Churches. In this draft-report it is proposed to have Article 2 read as follows:

There are three offices in the Church: those of the Minister of the Word, of the Elder, and of the Deacon. A Minister may be set apart for the work of a Missionary or of a Professor of Theology.

The proposed redaction of Article 2 simply "describes" the present actual situation and fixes a custom which has been found within the Reformed Churches for many, many years, as may be evident from the above quoted decision of the Synod of Leeuwarden 1920. We could go back in history even farther.

Here then comes the third question.

Again I quote *in extenso*.

Are there still some hierarchical trends in our church polity? I have in my possession the doctoral dissertation of Dr. Soon Gil Huh, *Presbyter in Volle Reachten*. It is deplorable that this dissertation was not written in English, for it is very relevant on this continent. The battle between Charles Hodge and James Thornwell isn't over yet; the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is more or less involved and leans more and more into the direction of James Thornwell.

However, let us return to our own Church polity.

First I mention the manner in which a Consistory is usually addressed in Dutch: "Weleerwaarde en Eerwaarde Heren en Broeders." Why this difference? Is not in this manner a sort of difference in rank suggested?

I am afraid that this "blows over" to

Canada, for once in a while I read, "Reverend and Esteemed Brothers." Perhaps I do not know English well enough, but is this not a Dutchism, "Weleerwaarde — Eerwaarde"?

Then the fact that the ministers are always, by virtue of their office, chairman of the consistory. Isn't that very impractical when a young Candidate suddenly is faced with that fact that he has to be chairman of the Consistory?

Further there are the Classical meetings. When a Congregation has more than one minister, the ministers do have the right (and perhaps the obligation) to attend Classis in an advisory capacity even when they have not been delegated, but the elders do not have that right.

Thus far the letter.

As far as that addressing the Consistory is concerned, I do not know for certain, but it could very well be that the origin of the difference between "Weleerwaarde" and "Eerwaarde" is not to be traced to a hierarchical tendency but to the civil use of various titles and different ways of addressing people. Perhaps someone who knows his Dutch better than I do could give us some further information about it. There is an enormous variety of titles and designations in the Dutch society and etiquette. Anyone who has in his possession an old diary which gives a list of occupations, positions, etc., plus the manner in which they ought to be addressed can spend some time studying all that. Compared to that the Canadian distinction of Honourable, Right Honourable, Reverend, Right Reverend, Most Reverend, is simply simplistic.

However, I do not think that addressing a Consistory as "Reverend and Esteemed Brothers" is a "Dutchism," and I understand it as referring to all office-bearers.

Two aspects are adduced in the above quoted letter as possible proofs of hierarchical tendencies in our Church polity.

The first one is that ministers are always chairmen of the Consistory; and the second one that ministers are allowed to attend Classes in an advisory capacity whereas elders are not allowed that privilege.

For a good understanding and in order to keep the thinking and the argumentation straight I stress that the question is *not* whether the above two aspects have ever been *used* in a manner which promoted hierarchy. Anything can be used to promote that!

The question is whether these two aspects in themselves are proof that there are some hierarchical tendencies or remnants left in our Reformed Church polity.

To that question I have to answer, "No, not as far as I am aware of."

The position of a minister in our Church life is a unique position.

That does not mean that his office is of a *higher* standing than that of the other office-bearers.

Oftentimes people confuse two things: different *Character* and different *standing or level* and then you get difficulties.

When we maintain that the office of *deacon* is different from that of an elder, no one should say that "therefore we claim that the office of a deacon is higher (or lower) than that of an elder." Such would amount to distorting the truth.

Even though we maintain that the office of a minister is in no way higher than that of a deacon or elder, we equally maintain that it is different.

The offices (all three of them) do "overlap" to a certain extent: there are areas of common concern and common activity, yet "the offices always are to remain distinct one from another" (Form for Ordination of Elders and Deacons).

That the Churches have recognized and are recognizing the specific character of the office of a Minister of the Gospel is evident from many things. The requirements for the office of minister are much more stringent and comprehensive than those for the office of elder. To a minister specifically the task of teaching has been entrusted: he is pastor *and* teacher; the elders are "only" pastors, although that also includes some teaching activity but only in the course of their pastoral work.

We should, therefore, not follow the tendency which we find in the religious world round about us to refer to the minister almost exclusively as "The Pastor."

In the first place such speaking takes away from the honour belonging to the office of elder. (Cf. "Oversight: The First Office of the Elders," by the Rev. Cl. Stam in *Clarion*, Volume 25, pp. 378ff. Just one quotation: "And with others I deem it a pity that our Form for Ordination does not more clearly emphasize that the prime duty of an elder is to be a pastor," p. 379).

And in the second place it obscures and neglects the fact that a min-

ister (although not exclusively, yet at least equally) is a teacher. It is the latter part of his office which constitutes most of his activities: on the pulpit, at catechism classes, and even at visits. We do not thereby deny that all that is *pastoral* in nature and character. Of course, he is not teaching as an uninterested and detached "individual" but as one who takes the interests of the flock to heart. He is a *pastor* and teacher, as much as he is a pastor and *teacher*. To stress the one aspect over against — and thus at the cost of — the other renders a good understanding of a minister's office very difficult and — however strange it may sound — thereby fosters hierarchical tendencies.

With all reservations which an effort to describe the differences between the office of a minister and the office of an elder requires, I would venture to say that a minister is a "pastoral teacher" and an elder a "teaching pastor" when they explain to the flock what the Lord requires of us in His Word.

The Churches have always put much emphasis on the ability of a minister to teach. See what kind of a training they demand when one aspires to the office of a Minister of the Word!

Students are being taught not only the doctrine of the Church and the history of dogmata, or the "art" of reading, understanding, and explaining the Scriptures, but they also receive instruction in the "practical aspects," the every day happenings in the life of the Congregation. As far as this goes I am jealous of the present generation: they begin the work much better equipped than I did. Sorry to say, but in my student days not all that much attention was paid to the practical aspect of the training.

Should the Churches not make use of what is available in their ministers?

That is — as I understand it — also the main argument why the Netherlands Churches in their 1978 revision of the Church Order have retained the provision that non-delegated ministers may attend Classis in an advisory capacity.

* * *

As for the chairmanship of the Consistory, I am the first one to agree that there are elders who make a far better chairman than their minister. I have attended many meetings chaired by an elder or also non-elder, at which I had great respect for the manner in

which they conducted everything and was very happy that *they* were standing there and not I, for I would never have been able to do it as well as they did it.

But is it not so that the apostle John had to write to "the angel of the Church at . . ." Here we are to think "of office-bearers and then such office-bearers who could be addressed every time as full representatives of their Congregation, and could be seen as the personification of those Congregations. That was in each Congregation the overseer-*par-excellence*. That every time he is . . . identified with his Congregation and is made responsible for

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it and its actions, emphasizes the high calling and responsibility" (S. Greijdanus, *De Openbaring des Heeren aan Johannes*, H.A. van Bottenburg, Amsterdam, 1925, p. 41).

And is it then contrary to God's Word when the minister is considered to be representing the Congregation, when he is chairman of the Consistory and also at other occasions acts as the spokesman of the Church? Is it then not his specific position to lead the Church? And in the Church being a leader and chairman is still vastly different from being "the boss."

One can try to be "the boss" even when refusing the position of chairman; one can be chairman without secretly harbouring any hierarchical aspirations. A chairman has to serve, not to dominate; he is to use his position to guide the discussions, not to take and keep the floor whenever a point is raised as if no one else is able to speak a sensible word about the matter at hand. A chairman should be heard *least* instead of *most* of all the members of a Consistory.

Meanwhile, I have touched upon more aspects than those directly included in the question. I express the wish that in the above I have also dealt sufficiently with its main thrust. And I am grateful for the opportunity at the same time to react indirectly to other questions and concepts which are not alien to our membership.

The brief summary of everything is: Not what has been provided or what has been arranged and agreed upon by the Churches constitutes and promotes hierarchical tendencies or practices, but what goes on in and goes out of the heart of man.

And that cannot be changed or prevented except by the Spirit of Christ.

VO

OUR COVER

Elora Gorge frozen over with the old stone mill in the background. The Grand River along the Gorge has become a winter playground for hikers and cross-country skiers alike, always providing miles of breath-taking scenery. (Photo courtesy Leo Lodder, Fergus, Ontario.)

press review

A CONFESSION OF FAITH OVER AGAINST NATIONALISM

Under this heading Professor J. Van Bruggen of Kampen, The Netherlands, published two articles in *De Reformatie* of November 18 and 25, 1978. In the first article he gives an introduction and a translation of the Preface to this new confession. In the second he gives a translation of that confession itself. It is a confession of faith about the relation of Church and State, made by the Reformed Church in Japan. I am passing it on here, for I think it is a good thing that we know what is happening with our brotherhood in the world. Prof. Van Bruggen did not translate from the Japanese, but from the French. I, in turn, translate from his Dutch. Here, first is the historical introduction by Van Bruggen:

During the period of Hitler Europe became aware again, for a short time, of the great danger in nationalism. That same nationalism was strong on the other side of the world, in Japan, in that same period. Both in Germany and in Japan this nationalism showed a religious colour: it became a religion in itself. In Germany many Christians recognized the danger of it too late. Too long they, as German Church, identified themselves with the German State and the German People. The bitter fruits of it had to be picked later. In Japan, Christians form a very small minority. There most Christians have accepted that a nationalistic government, in 1939, placed all churches under a ministerial department of religious matters, in order to melt them a little later into one unified church which was easy to keep under control. They had to learn to combine church membership with the revering of the emperor as a god. The old history of the Christian Church repeated itself: Were not the Christians of the first centuries persecuted mostly because they did not want to give to the emperor what they owed to God alone?

As often as a government wants to exercise absolute authority over its subjects on the ground of nationalistic or other motives, Christians stand at the crossroads where they have to choose: for or against bearing the cross for the sake of Christ. Many Christians are in this situation today in communist-governed states or in completely Roman Catholic countries. The danger is very great that in the near future many more countries will become difficult for the church to live in. We think of state-formation in Africa: many young

states will wish to establish their own identity on the basis of a strong nationalism. To a lesser degree this is also true for a number of countries in South America. More and more, church and mission have to choose: either disappear, or, first of all, unconditionally take a stand on the side of the nation, the people.

Also in the Far East nationalism is awakening again. Not only in countries like Cambodia and Vietnam, but also in "western" countries like Korea and Japan. Perhaps especially in Japan the situation is most threatening, because there Christians form a minority, and more so because the unified church has suffered itself to be placed in a dead-lock already in the Second World War. All over in Japan efforts are being made to restore the Shinto religion (the old national religion). Recently a minister officially participated in a Shinto ritual. Christians fear that Shinto will again become the state-approved religion. That would mean again a test for some small independent churches in Japan, which separated (from the unified church) after the Second World War, because they wanted to undo the fusion of church and state matters.

The situation of this small Japanese Church is symbolic of that of churches in many countries. It is surprising that in these years it is exactly this small Church in a heathen land that has drawn up a confession of faith over against that nationalism. It looks like a small review of arms before the fighting starts again: a review of arms of unarmed citizens in the armour of the Spirit.

This confession of faith of 1976 is of great importance on two counts: on the one side, over against nationalistic heathendom; on the other side, over against the modern anabaptistic Christendom of radical theology. Both are found in Japan.

Prof. Van Bruggen then gives an example of the radical, revolutionary practice of a liberation-Christendom. He also gives an example of the fear for revering a human head of state, and then gives us the explanatory preface to the confession written by the Japanese Reformed Churches:

PREFACE TO THE CONFESSION OF FAITH:

On the occasion of her thirty-year existence, the Reformed Church of Japan has published the following declaration about the relation between Church and State (1976).

We, the Reformed Church of Japan, at the celebration of the thirtieth anniversary

of our Church, decide to walk in the way of repentance and renewed obedience, before the countenance of Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church, at the moment that we publicly make known our faith regarding Church and State.

Thirty years ago the Lord permitted the establishing of the Reformed Church of Japan by raising a people which wanted to live according to the Word of God. When we remember God's grace and His guidance with which He led us at the founding of our Church, we praise Him Who has revealed to us His glory through His election, in spite of our sins and our weaknesses. We offer our praise and thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the source of every perfect gift.

The struggle of faith of the servants of the gospel, who had an important part in the forming of the Reformed Church of Japan, is closely interwoven with this forming and with the way which this Church has followed since then. Being placed in a union of churches by the government during the war years, they opposed it in the middle of that ex-church of Christ in Japan (Nihon Kirisuto Kyokai) and with determination they preserved the three normative principles: the authority of the Scripture, salvation through grace alone, and the autonomy of the Church in relation to the State. They refused to conform to the cultus-system of the national Shinto religion. "The way of the gods" is the old animistic religion of Japan: the gods are the personification of the powers of nature.

Nevertheless, we confess that also we who were among those who participated in the unification of the churches, by imposed law on the religious denominations, bear common responsibility for the sins and errors of which the Church in that period was guilty. We have the sin of the national Shinto service, where the emperor was worshipped as god-in-human-form; of joining in a unification of churches which was imposed by the State; of cooperating during the war instead of fulfilling our duty as watchers in warning against the evil of the war, which was called "healing"; and especially by not opposing the overpowering of neighbouring countries and the sister churches in those countries. In spite of all our sins, through the providence of God Who leads all history, we received freedom of religion after the capitulation, and the Reformed Church of Japan was then established.

This Church, placing itself on the Scriptures, makes a statement of faith regarding the relation between Church and State. She confirms the principles to which we hold with determination as Church of the Lord. We have only a small flock. Yet, the Lord, Who addresses us with the assurance "Fear not, little flock . . .," has always performed great things with the help of small flocks, throughout all history.

We pray for abilities for the fulfilment of

our responsibilities regarding the State, as a Church worthy of the Lord of Church and State, and for the sake of the manifestation of the glory of the Lord, not only in the Church but also in the State:

"Make us, Lord, profess this same faith without hesitation over against the authorities of the State, before the countenance of God, Who gives life to all, and before the countenance of Jesus Christ, Who made the good confession in His testimony before Pontius Pilate. Amen."

After this explanatory preface follows the text of the confession itself. We see that it is a confession on a very special point, like, in a way, our Canons of Dort, born in a special situation of danger of deviation in doctrine and conduct. Here it is:

DECLARATION OF FAITH

I. Christ is Lord of Church and State

1. (The dominion of Christ.) The Triune God, Sovereign Creator, has proclaimed the expansion of His dominion and has established His kingdom by giving all power in heaven and on earth to Jesus Christ the Redeemer. Through the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of Jesus Christ God has subjected all and everything under the authority of Christ, while He made Him in the Church the Head of all things.¹

We worship Jesus Christ and we obey Him as King of kings and Lord of lords, and as the Ruler and Judge of the Nations.²

2. (The Relation between Church and State.) In performing the will of God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ avails Himself of all the powers in heaven and on earth, according as He has chosen them.³ He takes care that Church and State can serve Him, and for this He entrusts each of them with their own position and authority. He is the Head of the Church and at the same time of the State.⁴ Consequently, since the one as well as the other is subject to Christ, the Head, they bear a common responsibility with respect to Him and remain closely connected.⁵ Church and State are called to serve each other mutually, in accordance with the authority and functions which have been entrusted to them. But neither of them must intrude upon the sphere of the other, since both have a distinct authority and relation to Christ.⁶ Moreover, the relation of the Church with the State does not stop at the borders of a nation: it is universal.⁷

II. The authority of the State and its limits

1. (The authority of the State.) The goal of Jesus Christ with establishing the State in His common grace, is that the State serve Him through the means of legislature, rule, and justice, in order to promote the well-being of all the citizens and to suppress in-

A Great and Mighty Wonder

TUNE: ES IST EIN ROS ENTSPRUNGEN.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. A great and mighty wonder Upon the earth was done When Mary, virgin mother, Gave birth to God's own Son. Repeat the song again: "To God on high be glory, And peace on earth to men!"</p> | <p>3. Sing praise to God, the Father, And join the heavenly bands. Rejoice, O vales and mountains, And oceans, clap your hands! Repeat the song again: "To God on high be glory, And peace on earth to men!"</p> |
| <p>2. The Word became incarnate — Made flesh, yet very God. The angels hailed His coming With songs o'er fields abroad. Repeat the song again: "To God on high be glory, And peace on earth to men!"</p> | <p>4. Since He came us to ransom, Let Him now be adored, The King once born in Beth!hem, Our Saviour and our Lord. Repeat the song again: "To God on high be glory, And peace on earth to men!"</p> |

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justice. To obtain this goal He has established the civil authorities. In this way they are the servants of God, appointed to punish evil-doers and to reward those who do good. Not in vain do they bear the sword.⁸ 2. (The task with respect to religion.) The State has the duty impartially to maintain the rights of the whole nation and to watch over the public peace.⁹ In an impartial way it has to acknowledge the right of each religious community and of each denomination to maintain its worship and to work for the spreading of faith and religious education. Consequently, we reject every train of thought in which a religious community is made into a religious tool of the State. And we also reject every train of thought in which the State becomes a political tool of a religious community.¹⁰ 3. (The limits of the authority of the State.) All authority, necessary for a good functioning, is entrusted to the State by the Sovereignty of Christ. Only when the State uses its authority within the limits of the sphere entrusted to it, can it serve Christ in a correct way.¹¹ Therefore, every misuse of power is nothing less than an offense against this delegated authority, and it is to the perdition of the one responsible for it as well as the hindrance of the honour of God among His creatures.¹²

To consign to an individual, to a group, or to an organization an absolute power, as belongs only to Christ, is the sin of betrayal of the Lord Jesus Christ and is fatal to Church and State.¹³

III. The relation between Church and State

1. (The authority of the Church.) The Lord Jesus Christ, in His particular grace, has established the Church to serve Him through the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, and a life of faith which is active in love. For this reason He has placed the government of His Church in the hands of the servants of the Church, which has to be distinguished from the civil government.¹⁴ Therefore we reject every doctrine which makes the Church a religious tool of the State. And we reject every doctrine which makes the State the political tool of the Church. The Church must not connect or confuse her gospel with a political, economic, cultural, or national ideology.¹⁵

At the same time the Church is not allowed to stand aloof of national matters, no matter whether the civil authorities show a favourable or a hostile attitude over against the Christians. *We reject every doctrine which maintains that the Church has to place herself completely on the side of the State*, either for religious or for political reasons. The Church has to fulfil her task for the Lord, Who puts Himself on the side of men with a view to their salvation.¹⁶

2. (Calling with respect to the State.) The service and task of the Church with respect to the State is many-sided. The preaching, the administration of the sacraments, and Church discipline confront the

citizens of the State with the grace and the judgment of Christ.¹⁷

By fulfilling her task of proclaiming the gospel, the Church promotes justice, peace, and liberty among the people.¹⁸

By following the law of Christ the Church gives herself to the works of Christian love. She does this by offering up supplications, prayers, and thanksgivings for all men, and, in particular, she intercedes for those who are invested with authority.

The Church asks from God that the dominion of the Holy Spirit may strengthen what is good and may uproot what is evil in the life of the nation and in international relations.¹⁹ By the fulfilling of her prophetic task, as a kind of sentinel, she publicly proclaims the will of God wherever she is called by Him to act.²⁰

3. (Opposition against tyranny.) God alone is Lord of the body and conscience of man. He requires that we obey Him over against every other authority, whether it be a civil or a religious authority which claims for itself absolute authority, in particular when it wants to bring the consciences and the thoughts of the people at will under its control. The Church is to protest publicly against every form of political, economic, or religious tyranny, which is of a totalitarian character.²¹

Hereby the weapons of the Church are not those of the world, though. Guided by the Holy Spirit the Church bears witness publicly, under all circumstances, to the dominion of Christ and to a freedom which is based on the righteousness of Christ and on the Gospel of peace.²²

4. (The duty of Christians.) Jesus Christ is our Lord in all fields of life. There is no field that is not subject to Him.²³ As servants of Christ, Christians participate in political, economic, cultural, and social activities and duties.²⁴ Out of love for Christ they do their utmost to honour the civil laws, and to fulfil all legal duties, whether they are of a financial nature or directly demand the imput of their own persons²⁵ (military service, note translation).

Further, Christians have the responsibility for the continuous struggle for the healing of evil, like injustice in legislation and government, in jurisdiction, and when offending of consciences takes place.²⁶

They are called by the Word of God, in case a government or authority should usurp the absolute dominion of Christ, not only to refuse the execution of duties, but also to offer resistance.²⁷

IV. Reformation and expectation of Church and State

1. (The reformation of Church and State.) As long as this world continues to exist, in which the dominion of Christ has not yet been publicly manifested and is not generally acknowledged either, we shall continue to be surrounded by sin in all our relations, publicly and personally, and our existence will continuously be threatened by fear, coveting, injustice, and our inclination to corruption. Therefore both Church

and State are in need of being again and again reformed by the Word of God.²⁸

It is the duty of every Christian to be constantly on the alert, meanwhile with prayer seeking the grace of Christ. The Christian has to exert himself fully for the reformation of Church and State.²⁹

2. (The great expectation.) In the midst of the evil and misery of this dispensation we must notice, with the eye of faith, the dominion of Christ, the Lord, with the sure conviction of our expectation which is directed to Christ.³⁰ Christ returns to the healing of the nations and to the perfection of His Church.³¹ When He reveals the New Jerusalem, He will throw down all dominion, all authority, and all power, and He will deliver the Kingdom of God into the hands of the Father. His dominion and Kingship over the universe will be fully visible before the eyes of all peoples. Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the honour of God the Father, in order that God be all in all.³²

AMEN! YES, COME, LORD JESUS!

¹ Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 1:20-23; Heb. 1:1-2, 10; Acts 4:24-28; Phil. 2:5-11; I Cor. 15:20-26.

² Rev. 1:5; 11:17-18; 17:12-14; 19:11-16; Ps. 22:28; Is. 2:4.

³ Eph. 1:10, 11; Col. 1:15-17.

⁴ Eph. 1:20-23; Rev. 1:5-6; Jer. 27:4-7.

⁵ Matt. 28:18-20; Ps. 2.

⁶ Cf. Matt. 16:19 with Rom. 13:4; I Cor. 6:1-6; I Tim. 2:1-7 with II Chron. 26:18.

⁷ I Kings 19:15-18; Is. 44:24-28; John 11:47-52; Rev. 10:11; 11:15-18.

⁸ Rom. 13:1-7; I Tim. 2:1-2; I Pet. 2:13-15; I Kings 3:5-14; Ez. 34.

⁹ I Tim. 2:2; Acts 19:38-39.

¹⁰ Ex. 5:1-4; Amos 7:10-17; Acts 18:12-17; John 18:28-32; Acts 13:27-28.

¹¹ Rom. 13:1, 4, 6; John 19:10-11; Dan. 4:19-27.

¹² Acts 12:20-23; Dan. 5:17-28.

¹³ II Thess. 2:3-4; Rev. 13:14-15; Dan. 6; Is. 47; Ez. 27, 28.

¹⁴ Matt. 16:18-19; 28:8-20; Eph. 4:11; Acts 20:28; I Cor. 12:28; II Tim. 4:1-15.

¹⁵ Matt. 22:15-22; Luke 12:13-14; John 18:28-38; Matt. 6:24; Micah 2:11; 3:5, 11; Gal. 3:28.

¹⁶ Matt. 5:13-16; 25:31-46; I Pet. 2:9-25.

¹⁷ Acts 3:12-21; 24:25; I Pet. 4:1-7; Jer. 1:5.

¹⁸ II Cor. 8:1-15; Acts 11:27-30.

¹⁹ I Tim. 2:1-2; I Sam. 12:23; Jer. 29:1-14.

²⁰ II Cor. 5:14-21; Amos 5:14-24.

²¹ I Cor. 4:1-5; 6:12-20; Matt. 10:28; Acts 4:18-31; 5:27-32; I Kings 21:22-23; Jer. 26:14; Dan. 3; Amos 7:16-17.

²² Matt. 10:26-27; 26:51-56; II Cor. 10:3-5; cf. II Kings 9 with Hosea 1:4; Acts 2:32-36; 5:25-32; 7:51-60; Eph. 6:10-20.

²³ Rom. 14:5-9; I Cor. 10:31.

²⁴ John 17:15-18; Eph. 6:5-9; Matt. 20:25-28; Luke 10:29-37.

²⁵ I Pet. 2:13-25; Tit. 3:1-2; Acts 24:16.

²⁶ Eph. 5:8-16; Acts 25:10; Col. 4:5-6; James 5:1-6.

Continued on next page.



BRAZIL

TO ALL THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN WESTERN CANADA

After having arrived, safely and well, in São José da Coroa Grande, it is time to write some words of thanks and appreciation.

We consider our trip to Canada (and also to Brazil) a privilege for which we should give thanks to our LORD. Through Him we were able to see something of your country and, more importantly, to meet so many of you, both in the Bulkley and in the Fraser Valley. With regard to this we regret (your second point in that unforgettable "sermon," Rev. Visscher) that we could not meet the congregations in Alberta and Manitoba; of course you will understand the reason for the shortness of our visit to Canada. But we can assure you that we won't forget you, and we think you are on the program during the first furlough.

We are very thankful that the welcome/farewell evening on the 26th of November was attended by so many people and by many colleagues also. It was good to have our former mission-

ary, Rev. VanSpronsen, in our midst that Sunday of installation and inauguration. In the meantime we let the Kuik family hear a tape of that welcome-evening.

We are also thankful that our colleague, Rev. Boersema, could do the installation. It is indeed a comforting and inspiring installation-text: we are "as sheep in the midst of wolves," also here (wolves of spiritism and other kinds of false religion), but "I send you," Christ says. HE sends, that is the foundation of, the comfort to, and the inspiration for the mission work.

Besides that, there is the experience of the communion of saints. We can say from the bottom of our hearts that we felt (and feel) at home with you. You gave us the feeling of being at home.

We appreciated very much your best wishes and your warm interest. There is love for the mission work. We noticed that. But, if we may say this, let us not forget that being the home front for missions has its own responsibility, namely to be faithful to the Lord in every respect. How shall mission work

flourish if its home front is not faithful? Receive our best wishes for the New Year, a new "Annus Domini."

P.K. and A.J. Meijer
c/o Mr. J. Kuik
São José da Coroa Grande, PE
55567, Brazil

REPORT MONTH OF OCTOBER 1978

Here follows a report on the activities for the month of October.

In general we can say that everything went well and that we received the blessings of the Lord in many respects. All activities were well attended by the members and the regular visitors. The numbers mentioned below will speak for themselves.

It has been a warm, or rather a hot and dry month. The pleasures on the beach are keeping some children away from Sunday School. It is not unusual that 30-50 bus loads of people from the city arrive on Sunday morning to spend the day playing and relaxing on the beach. It is worse than last year. Leaving the city early in the morning, they arrive here between 8 and 9 o'clock. Sunday school starts at 8:30 a.m., so you can imagine that the roaring buses passing the church (the church is right on the main entrance to the town) interferes with the activities going on at that time. Many times you have to stop in the middle of a sentence, wait a few seconds before going on again, because a bus or a truck load of people is passing. By 4 o'clock in the afternoon the exodus starts again, but this does not bother us too much because at that time nothing is going on in the church.

Because there are so many people on the beach on Sundays, quite a few children, the majority boys, are making good use of this situation by selling all kinds of stuff to the people. There is some money to be made and many need that extra cruzeiro in order to buy the necessities of life. Of course we keep on telling them that it is the Lord's day and that they should go to church in the first place. They usually agree with you but in reality it has very little impact on their behaviour. Keeping the Lord's day is very hard to understand for them, especially because others, like the Pentecostals, could not care less what you do on Sundays. Nevertheless, we had a few more boys at Sunday School than last month. Figures are as follows: The first Sunday was reported the last time. Dates: 8, 15, 22, 29: Adults 5, 6, 9, 10; Children 50, 54, 58, 62. We already started practising for Christmas.

PRESS REVIEW — Continued.

²⁷ Acts 4:18-31; 5:25-42; 23:1-3; I Kings 11:28-40; 12:13, 24; 18:4, 13; II Kings 9; Dan. 3:6.

²⁸ Mark 13:5-23; II Cor. 4:3-18; Rom. 1:18-22; James 4:1-3; Heb. 4:12-13.

²⁹ John 12:13-50; Acts 26:29.

³⁰ John 5:17-29; Rom. 8:18-25; Col. 3:3-4.

³¹ Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 7; 22:1-2.

³² I Cor. 15:20-28; Ps. 2; Dan. 7; Phil. 2:10-11; Rev. 1:7-8, 13; 19:11-20; 20:7-10; 21:23.

I have included also all the text references, so that the reader has the complete document. Here is a Confession of Faith of a small Reformed Church with which we can be in agreement. For what they confess in Japan is not less applicable here in Canada, where we as Reformed Christians have our political calling.

In *De Reformatie* of December 9, 1978, we read how a Japanese minister will study at the Theological Seminary of our sister Churches in Kampen. With his family he will live there for some time. There is a fund in Kampen

to support foreign students studying at the Seminary. From this fund also he and his family will be supported. That the Lord will use the Theological Seminary of our sister Churches to build up the Reformed Churches in Japan (and in Korea) is reason for gratitude. There would be reason for gratitude if also our College could mean something for students outside our Churches here on this American continent.

And let us also ask ourselves whether we should not learn from this confession of faith, and should not become more faithful in fulfilling our political, economic, and social calling in our country, Canada. And when we must come to the conclusion that we must improve, let us pray that we may do so, and have people who can lead us therein: for the furthering of God's Kingdom, the confession of Christ's Kingship, and the glorification of His Name.

J. GEERTSEMA

Attendance at the worship services was very good again this month. The members are usually present except one. Dates: 8, 15, 22, 29: Adults present: 23, 23, 22, 23. Irregulars present: 7, 15, 10, 6. I still have a few sermons of the Rev. VanSpronsen. From Curitiba we received a sermon series on Abraham, these cannot be used in their present form but give plenty of information to prepare a sermon.

As for the members, Noêmia Santana da Silva feels much better at the present time. She claims that her gallbladder troubles disappeared after she made a vow. That may sound strange to you. But taking into account the influence of the Roman Catholic Church and Pentecostals (she has been a member of one of the latter groups) you are able to understand it somewhat. At the same time she admitted taking a herb brew recommended by one of her friends in order to get rid of her stones. What did the trick, the vow or the brew, is not clear. It is rather disappointing that people who have gone to Church for years already are still stuck in this way of thinking.

Maria de Solidade feels much better now and is able to walk to Church again. For a few weeks I just picked her up before the service started.

A "newcomer" in the Church is dona Luiza Vincente. In reality she is

very well known to us since she came to church in the past. If I am not mistaken, she also followed the Catechism classes with Rev. VanSpronsen. For some reason, not known to us, she quit coming to church but came back some weeks ago and is again attending all the activities.

There are less people taking part on Wednesday evenings than on Sundays. The reason, as you likely remember, is that that evening most young people are going to school and consequently cannot attend the Bible study. The number attending is about the same as last month. Dates: 4, 11, 18, 25: Regular adults: 16, 17, 16, 20. Irregular adults: 5, 5, 5, 7. We never count the children on that evening, although there are always quite a few present. The members usually were there except in a few cases.

The youth club is held Saturday mornings, once every two weeks. There are 23 members but 4 or 5 are often missing. We noticed a slight improvement the last few times. It is a lively group of children and hard to control at times, especially when you play a game of some kind. They soon become over-excited and get rowdy. We completed lesson 3 and 4 now. Lesson 3 deals with the birth of Jesus Christ, how the angels made this fact known to the shepherds and told them

where they could find the Child. They learned by heart Luke 2:14. They have also learned question and answer 3 of the Catechism (simple form.)

Lesson 4 deals with the wise men coming to Jerusalem to adore the newborn King and with Herod trying to kill the Child. Here they had to remember Matthew 2:6 and question and answer 4 of the Catechism.

Ardis started with Women's Society again this month and so far they have had two meetings. There are 12 members and 11 of them were present both times. They started with the book of Genesis. This means that my wife has to make an essay every two weeks.

We have done some more work for visa for Rev. and Mrs. Meijer, but we have little hope for early results. A fact is that it is very hard to enter this country at the present time. May the Lord move the hearts of those who sit in authority over this. This reminds me of a question put in a letter we received from The Netherlands some time ago, when Curitiba was looking for a missionary and received "no" for an answer time and again. The question was, "Are the churches fighting along in their prayers?" Are we?

With this I will now end the report of last month. May the Lord be with you all.

Greetings from us. JOHN KUIK

“DESCENDED INTO HELL” — Continued.

Answer 44 disappear from the Confession of the church. Can we not confess these contents in an addition to Lord's Day 15 about the extreme suffering on the cross? But if it is true that the clause of our Apostles' Creed belongs in a chronological order that speaks of Christ Who died, was buried, and remained in the state of death between Good Friday and Easter; if that is also Scriptural in the light of Psalm 16:10 and Acts 2:31, and if this is the original, historical meaning of this expression, we should not hesitate to follow Dutch Christians who now speak of "nedergedaald in het rijk van de dood," or to join the German proposal of a new text, "hinabgestiegen in die Tiefe des Todes" (descended into the depth of death).

One last remark: If we return to what probably is the early Christian interpretation, we would be in agreement with the Larger Westminster Catechism, Question and Answer 50:

- Q.: Wherein consisted Christ's humiliation after His death?
A.: Christ's humiliation after His death consisted in His being buried, and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death till the third day; which hath been otherwise expressed in these words, *He descended into hell.*

On the other hand, the Committee on Ecumenicity and Inter-church Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

expressed the opinion that this church would not want to label as unScriptural the doctrine that "my Lord Jesus Christ, by His inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors, and hellish agonies, in which He was plunged during all His sufferings, but especially on the cross, has delivered me from the anguish and torments of hell."

Our Committee for Contact with the O.P.C. has agreed that the interpretation of the clause from the Apostles' Creed should not become a point of disunity between the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches. This was in the line of the Synod of Dort 1618/19. But I wonder, whether we, in cooperation with our corresponding sister churches, could not go one step further and generously acknowledge that the original meaning of the clause is maintained in e.g. the churches of the English and Scotch Reformation. We accept then the new Dutch translation "nedergedaald (neergedaald) in het rijk van de dood" in the text of the Apostles' Creed, and we adjust the text of the Heidelberg Catechism accordingly. In the English speaking world we should promote the transition from the often misunderstood word "hell" in this context to the use of terms as *Sheol, Hades, the Pit, or the realm of death.* Then we show that we are no traditionalists or confession-alists, but Reformed and reforming according to the Scriptures. That is truly catholic.

J. FABER



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

The majority of Lutherans believe the Bible is completely true, according to a recent survey by the Christian Bible Society.

As for reading the Bible, 14.4% of all Lutherans read the Bible more than twenty-six times per month.

In spite of many different translations being on the market, the King James Version still wins out over other translations by a wide margin: 33.3% preferred it.

The same survey revealed that in more than 98% of all American homes one can find at least one Bible.

It will be a surprise that the conclusion may be drawn from the survey that the national U.S. average is almost four Bibles per home.

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches voted to continue the work of its program to Combat Racism with "clearer interpretation to increase comprehension in the Churches."

It approved a recommendation of General Secretary Philip Potter that "a process of consultation be set in motion as soon as possible on how the Churches may be involved in combatting racism in the 1980's."

Such was done in spite of the criticism which was expressed by several member churches because of the \$85,000 grant given to the Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe.

The Salvation Army — as one will know — suspended its membership in the W.C.C. in August last year as a result of that grant.

In an open letter which was printed as an advertisement in *The New York Times* of January 12, 1979, the

now returned Ayatollah Khomeini — then still in Paris — stated,

I, in the name of the oppressed people of Iran, request you the Christian nation to pray during your holy days for our nation which is encumbered by a tyrant king, and to pray to the Almighty God for their deliverance. I request you the great nation to warn the leaders of some of the Christian countries who are supporting the tyrant Shah with their Satanic Power and crushing a nation under repression and tyranny and make them aware of the teaching of blessed Jesus. I request the Christian clergy to advise the leaders of some of the powerful countries, and to condemn their support for the one who has turned away from the divine teachings.

The above was signed, "In Peace, Rougollah Mussavi Khomeini."

Those are then the words of a man who has been striving for many years to establish an Islamic republic such as existed in the first time after Mohammed. He dares to use the name of the Lord Jesus although the Muslims have been persecuting the Christians during all the centuries of their conquests and rules. Those are then the words signed by the man who speaks of all foreigners as devils and who will certainly not allow the freedom of religion which is being enjoyed at the moment. If he has his way, those who are Christians will be persecuted and annihilated as "infidels." There will, however, have been quite a few gullible readers who complied with Khomeini's request.

As far as I know, physicians still make the so-called "Hippocratic oath" before they are allowed to enter upon their profession. In that oath they promise,

I will follow that method of treatment which, according to my ability and judgment, I consider for the benefit of my patients; and abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous. I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked, nor suggest any such counsel; furthermore, I will not give to a woman an instrument to produce an abortion.

It is good to bear that in mind when the point of euthanasia is raised and when the issue of abortion is discussed. Perhaps — if your physician should render himself guilty either of the former or of the latter — you could ask him how he can bring that into harmony with his oath.

At the end of a ceremony marking the fiftieth anniversary of the birth of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, President Carter said, among others, "I hope

that in this anniversary year I will be able to sign a bill proclaiming January 15 as a national holiday in honour of Dr. King's principles and accomplishments."

Yes, and the principles and accomplishments of the late Dr. King included "civil disobedience," which is nothing else than revolution against the legitimate authorities. One can sympathize with some of the things which Dr. King sought to achieve, that does not take away the fact that the man was a revolutionary and used revolutionary means. The workers need another month in which a holiday can be enjoyed, of course. They have so few holidays already and urgently need some more. What better way in which to endear oneself to the masses than giving them another holiday and declaring one's solidarity with a movement which, basically, is revolutionary? And thus the foundations are undermined.

vO

New York, N.Y., January 17 . . . The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith today accused Ambassador to the United Nations Andrew Young of praising the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and of "laying the groundwork for future American support of the PLO."

In a letter to the Ambassador, Maxwell E. Greenberg, ADL national chairman, said that Mr. Young has "apparently" made a decision to support a PLO campaign designed to make the terrorist organization a regular member of the United Nations.

Mr. Greenberg went on to say that he is "aghast" that Mr. Young, a religious minister and a representative of the United States government, would call "spokesmen for murders 'decent human beings.'"

The letter pointed out that the PLO had assassinated "our American Ambassador and Charge d'Affaires in the Sudan and has, during the past ten years, murdered over 1,000 innocent civilians, held over 2,500 men, women, and children hostage, staged over 300 bombings all over the world, and conducted 11 assassinations in 9 countries.

Mr. Greenberg also stressed that the PLO determination to destroy Israel as expressed in the organization's national covenant remains unchanged.

Finally, the letter urged Ambassador Young to "speak out forth-rightly and clearly against any American endorsement of the PLO's goal at the U.N."

news medley

This time we begin with the broadcasting activities which are going on in the midst of the Churches.

Although in the Fraser Valley the broadcasting has been going on for many years by now, it was a private undertaking until a short time ago. The action was set up by some brothers who saw the need and the possibility and who came together, started it, and saw it work well. From the very first moment on there was wide support for the work and good cooperation. The Churches in the Valley also contributed as Churches.

Recently the set-up was changed and now it has become a work which is being conducted under the supervision and responsibility of the Consistories. Meanwhile, the work is going on.

In Ontario the broadcasting is broadened. I can do no better than by quoting what the Ebenezer Burlington bulletin says about it.

We have recently combined our efforts with the Evangelism Committees in Hamilton, Smithville, and Lincoln who have been able to buy time from radiostation CFTB in St. Catharines, Ontario. The broadcast time is Sundays from 9:00 to 9:15 a.m. They will be using our program tapes which will be wired approximately one month after our program on CING in Burlington. Obviously we are very pleased with this progress, which allows "The Voice of the Church" to be heard by a larger audience.

The Hamilton bulletin still contains a little additional information. There we read about the station via which the message will be aired.

This is a very powerful station (200,000 watts) and apparently their range goes far beyond Hamilton and Toronto.

We are grateful for the expansion of this work. It may seem at times as if this work does not bear any fruit, for there are not all that many listeners who react. Perhaps we would get more response if we should ask for letters and for donations. What we have received without payment, we also distribute without payment. And I am very happy that we have never yet asked for any contribution from the listeners.

Another news item from Hamilton: We read that "Rev. Huizinga has prepared a draft letter to initiate contact with the Free Reformed Church. The letter sets out several reasons for such contact and also names points for discussion." In the report on a Consistory meeting at some future date we shall hear more about it, I think.

Herewith we say farewell to Hamilton for this time and go to Burlington. We read that the Association for Reformed Political Action was to have its first membership meeting, at which the Rev. M. Van Beveren was to deliver an introduction on the topic, "The Position of Israel in the Modern World."

In Ebenezer Burlington's bulletin we read a few interesting and educational remarks which I do not wish to withhold from our readers. The first lines concern the singing in Church. Since the remarks made are of more than local interest and could work for the benefit of a wider circle

than the one there, I quote the larger part. The remarks were made in response to a letter which a brother wrote to the Consistory. In that letter he expressed his concern that not everyone is taking part in the Congregational singing. That is not something which is confined to Burlington; it happens in other congregations as well. The Rev. Van Beveren writes, "A few times I have wondered why, for instance, a certain young man did not sing while I knew he had a good voice (most catechism students have a good one). I also allow for certain circumstances which may make it difficult for us to sing at times."

That most catechism students have a good voice is something which every minister will confirm. Every minister will also confirm that catechism students who have a good voice seem to have lost temporary control when they have to say their Catechism. As soon as it is someone else's turn, they have regained the use of that useful instrument.

We continue our quote from Ebenezer's bulletin.

Nevertheless, it may be good to remind each other of the importance of our congregational singing. The purpose of our singing in church is not to give some variety and diversion during the service. Our worship service is a meeting with God. God speaks to His people and His Church answers. An essential part of that answer is the singing of the congregation. The Church speaks to God, praising Him for His grace and blessings, confessing their sins, asking protection on the basis of His promises, and also — in God's presence — exhorting each other to give thanks to Him There is always the danger that we take our individualism to church and neglect participation. But true understanding of the character of our worship service and of our congregational singing will make us active.

Going south first, we stop over in London. "A proposal to have a pamphlet giving information about the Church at London was discussed. A draft is to be made." That draft was completed and at the meeting of January 11, it was adopted.

In Brampton the Consistory discussed the "question whether the deacons should still always meet with the Consistory. The deacons will continue to meet with the elders each Consistory meeting as has been the custom up to now."

Brampton also decided that "a proposal will be sent to Classis Ontario North concerning the matter of arranging worship services in Florida during the winter months. This would be done by the Church appointed by Classis North."

Having exhausted the supply of news items from the other Churches in Ontario, we move to the last one in that province: Ottawa.

The Church at Ottawa decided to join the superannuation fund, seeing the revision of the formula for calculating the yearly contributions.

Further news: "The property on which a qualified offer was made was discussed. The pros and cons were weighed and the drawing of the property was examined. The real estate agent was telephoned for clarification of certain details regarding the access road allowance. It appeared there would be additional and substantial cost to the Church to provide an access road into the property about four hundred feet long. The consistory decided not to proceed with a further offer to the owner of the property in question due to the large additional cost of the access road, as well as other factors."

It was twenty years ago that the Church was instituted

FOUR GENERATIONS

in Ottawa. It was deemed fit to remember that fact in a somewhat special way. "Throughout those years the Church has gone through trial periods of various kinds. But through it all the congregation has remained faithful to the Lord and has been showered with blessings in many ways." Thus there was and is gratitude with the brothers and sisters. They also expressed that gratitude and "the congregation will remember this festive occasion, the Lord willing, by starting with a congregational meeting in the library of the Ottawa Christian School on Friday, February 2, at 8:00 p.m. and then on Saturday evening a banquet-style dinner will be prepared at the home of the Scheper family, starting at 7:30 p.m."

It was a very happy coincidence that I just had to be in Ottawa that weekend, and thus I could also share the happiness of the brothers and sisters and take part in the dinner. It was good, I tell you! And I was glad that it was just my turn to go there. No, not just for the dinner, but also for the congregation as such. It is never a "chore" to go there and to stay there.

I also know that the brothers and sisters there would love to have a minister of their own. It is necessary for the moral support. It said in the bulletin that the Church in Ottawa went through many trials during those twenty years, and that is indeed a fact. They would love to see their number grow again, also for the young people. When the number grows, they may have more possibilities of looking for a building of their own, and that always unites even more. I have said it before, but repeat it: I simply do not understand why in a large city like Ottawa not more of our people have sought the opportunities which must be there. There must be opportunities in the services in a city where more than a quarter of a million people are living. And I urge again every family, especially the young families, to ask whether there is not an opportunity and a task for them there. We should not forget the smaller Churches. They need support and then not just financially or a pat on the shoulder. They need strengthening of ranks.

The same applies to Barrhead, for instance. No one should rush into adventures, but the advantage that there is a Church in a place should be used to the best of our ability. Going to places where no Church is, is something which I would certainly not recommend. But when the brotherhood is there and extends a helping hand, then there are plenty of opportunities. They who know the local and regional situation are best able to advise and help. The brothers and sisters are all willing to do so. Many people flock to Alberta which seems to be regarded as the land of promise. They will be disappointed in most instances. But when the brothers and sisters are there to help, to advise, to show the way and to receive people coming there into their homes, then I see no danger in going. Sometimes it seems, however, that the old pioneering spirit is dead. Why should we break up when everything is nice, cosy, and snug?

Some years ago I heard that a group of some twenty families were planning to move and settle on the East coast. I was happy when I heard that and waited for further news, which never came. The whole idea seems to have petered out.

Our readers will recall from previous issues that Carman is considering the erection of a new Church building. There is some progress. "The Building Committee reported on their activities. The property is at present being surveyed. The subdivision has been approved by the Carman Council, so it looks like good progress is being made. The Consistory plans to invite the Committee to a Consistory



On this picture we see great-grandfather Jacob Bos, 72, of Edmonton, grandfather Harry Bos, 45, of Spruce Grove, father Jake Bos, 23, of Spruce Grove. The youngest one in the group is Jason Daniel Bos, born August 24, 1978, who was about four months old when the picture was taken.

meeting to be held on January 22, to discuss the matter of church building." There is progress, as we can see.

The Church at Houston discussed whether to renovate or sell the parsonage. "Consistory decided to sell the parsonage with two lots, if a reasonable offer is made."

The combined bulletin of Houston and Smithers has a new column: "Reaching Out." This column deals with the contact with others. "During the discussion two aspects were brought forward which are very important. The first is that we should be well prepared to confront others with the Gospel: basic study and homework is a must! And for a second: we cannot forever talk about our calling but we must get to work and do it."

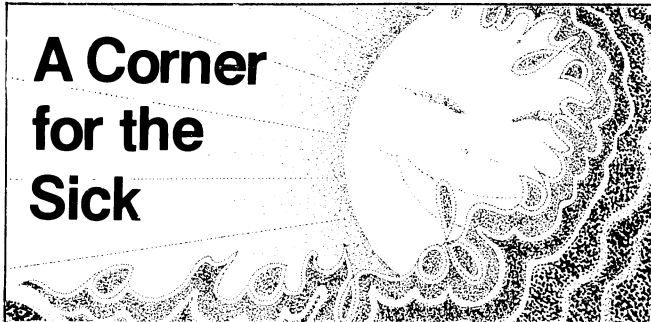
It is indeed very important to keep both these points in mind. One cannot confront others if one does not know what to believe oneself. And the more firmly one is founded in the Scriptural doctrine the more easily one shall discover the fallacies in the reasonings of others and the better one shall be able to "speak with the enemy in the gate."

And further, is it not a fact that oftentimes too much time is spent on talking about "Our calling" and that there are hardly any actions? Certainly, we are to know our place, our position, our calling. But that should not take us forever!

"It is reported that the safe and also the money has been returned by the police; it will be handed over to the administration committee to sort everything out: Church — School — and diaconal money."

Sterkte.

A Corner for the Sick



"Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord, and not men."

Colossians 3:23

What does Paul mean when he speaks of a task? Is it a special assignment not everyone is engaged in? Let us read chapter 3. Paul urges the believers to seek the things which are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God, and not to set their minds on things that are on earth (verse 2). After reading the whole chapter, we may notice Paul admonishes the believers to put to death sin, which still rules their lives. Verse 5 shows us what is meant by earthly things. Compare Galatians 5:19-22 and Ephesians 2:3. As always, when Scripture shows us our wrong doings, something which is right is put over against it, to show us how to correct our wrong attitudes. In verse 12 we read how Paul urges the believers to "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion," etc. First, however, he reminds them that God chose them in Christ, and then they are urged to walk by the Spirit.

Whatever your task, as wives, husbands, children, or in being subject to those in authority over you, work heartily! It will show in our every-day lifestyle, in the way we do our work, whether our minds are earthly, or whether we look up to Christ in heaven. If we do our work faithfully only to be praised by men, we would at times become very discouraged! When we do our work by faith, putting ourselves into it with heart and mind, trusting in God's promises, and looking towards the future with confidence, we may know that in Christ we will conquer, and our labours will be blessed.

Is it not a tremendous task which we have received from the Lord, just to do our work faithfully? To put on all the virtues Paul describes in the verses 12-15 will indeed keep us very busy, for it applies to all tasks. Verse 13 mentions forgiving one another; as the Lord has forgiven us, so we must forgive also. When we apply this to our daily task, it will prevent us from committing other sins, such as, anger, wrath, malice, slander (verse 8).

In Lord's Day 40 of our Catechism we confess that it is not enough that we do not kill our neighbor, but that God "abhors the root of murder, as envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge; and that He accounts all these as murder." God "commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves: to show patience, peace, meek-

ness, mercy, and all kindness toward him, prevent his hurt as much as in us lies, and do good even to our enemies." Can we keep those commandments perfectly?

Answer 114 of Lord's Day 44: "No; but even the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of this obedience; yet so that with earnest purpose they begin to live, not only according to some but according to all the commandments of God."

"Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord, and not men."

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.

Hymn 54:5 (revised)
Book of Praise

For the month of March we have only one birthday to remember:

JIM VANDER HEIDEN

R.R. 1

Smithville, Ontario L0R 2A0.

Jim will be celebrating his 20th birthday on March 15th, the Lord willing! He attends school, but also helps his father in the greenhouse. He plays an accordion, and he loves to read. Have a happy day, Jim! May you receive many cards!

From a sister in British Columbia we received a request for a sister in The Netherlands.

MEVR. G. GROENWOLD

Bouwerschapweg 44,
9791 Ten Boer (Gr),
The Netherlands

Mrs. Groenwold is a mother of nine children of whom seven are still at home. She has had two back operations without success. Another operation is needed which the doctors do not like to perform; it will leave her completely paralyzed. She has been bedridden for six years already. She would very much appreciate to receive cards or letters.

Brothers and sisters, shall we spread some cheer and strengthen our sister across the ocean, and shall we make it a happy birthday for Jim?

Send your requests, with some information (and with permission of the person involved) to:

Mrs. J.K. Riemersma
380 St. Andrew Street E.,
Fergus, Ontario N1M 1R1

Barrhead Beckoning

We've had several inquiries from Holland regarding emigration to Canada. But due to our government's strict immigration policy, it's next to impossible for emigrants to enter our country; and once more we would like to get interest "stirred up" to get people thinking about a possible move to Sunnyside Alberta, and especially to the Barrhead area (of course)!

CHURCH AND ACTIVITIES

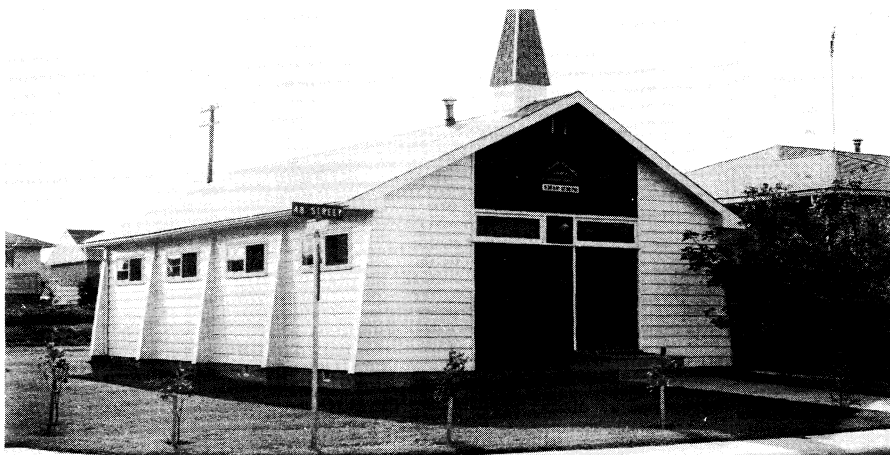
The Church at Barrhead is instituted and consists of ten families. Worship services are held twice per Sunday. Once every four weeks we receive one of the ministers of this classical region (Alberta-Manitoba). (We hope to receive ministerial aid as soon as Neerlandia receives a minister.) There are two weekly catechism classes. The Young People's Society meets regularly, and so does a "study club" for older members. Also, we take our regular turn (every nine weeks or so) looking after the Sunday evening services at the Hillcrest Lodge and Nursing Home. During the summer we receive quite a few "weekend" guests, who camp at the different lakes around Barrhead.

EDUCATION

School age students (Grades 1-9) attend the Canadian Reformed School in Neerlandia. This will be expanded to 12 grades in the near future. The children are picked up from Barrhead by school bus for the fifteen miles (½ hour) trip. The *public* school offers Kindergarten classes. There is also the school of New Hope for the Handicapped. A vocational school is in the planning stages and should be opening soon.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The town of Barrhead is located "dead-centre" of the province, seventy miles northwest of the city of Edmonton. Trading area population is 17,500. Town population is 3,500, which is an increase of 14% over the last two years. The town is entering the second phase of its highly successful industrial park. Businesses located there are implement agencies, a meat processing plant, a veterinary clinic, a multi-million-dollar cement mixing plant, and approximately fifty other small industrial businesses. There are a total of ap-



proximately 170 businesses. The town is served by a local radio station and a weekly newspaper. Building permits for 1978 totaled 4.3 million dollars.

HEALTH SERVICES

A new, fully-modern, five-million-dollar, eighty-five, active treatment hospital, a fifty-two-bed Nursing Home, and a seventy-five-bed Senior Citizen's home, two Medical clinics with ten doctors, dentists, chiropractors, and an optometrist.

TRANSPORTATION

All streets in Barrhead are paved. The town is served by two blacktop highways and is located near the Yellowhead highway (28 miles away). A 3½-hour drive takes you to Jasper Park Gate. The town is also served by Greyhound Buses and two truck lines daily, by a new 4,000 foot paved airport, and by N.A. Railways. Fifty million feet of lumber and 1½ million bushels of grain are shipped yearly from Barrhead by train.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND SCENERY

New, covered Swimming Pool with saunas and whirlpool bath; new eight lane bowling alley; curling rink; wading pool; artificial ice arena; paved tennis courts; two golf courses; three baseball diamonds; kiddies' playgrounds; also a gun range, and ski hills at Thunder Lake and Misty Ridge. There is a Senior Citizens' Drop-in Centre, a Library with approximately 20,000 volumes, and a Museum. Barrhead takes pride in being located in one of Alberta's most beautiful geographic areas with numerous lakes, forests, and winding rivers intermingled with countless acres of fertile land. Fishing is excellent for trout, perch, grayling, pike, and pickerel. Big game hunting is carried on North of town for deer and

moose. Upland game birds are available within a few minutes' drive. The immediate vicinity has many scenic drives for relaxation and photography. Swan Hills (60 miles northwest on pavement) has many oil wells and gas plants. Although the weather may be cold at times, it is a "dry" cold, and building construction is continued twelve months of the year. The snow fall is such that we have not been "snowed" in (or highways closed) in recent memory, and there is always plenty of sunshine (not the liquid variety).

As can be seen from the above information, Barrhead is "on the move," but our potential is yet to be reached. Unemployment is next to nil, and employment (especially for qualified people) is not too hard to find. There are also possibilities for starting your own business, as several of our members have done. Home ownership is not out of reach. The cost of an average 3-bedroom home is in the 53,000 to 54,000 dollar range, complete with lot. With "sweat equity" the cost could be cut down considerably.

I'm aware that the information given could be considered as being "too businesslike" or even humanistic, but we "hate" to see Barrhead go the way of places like Rocky Mountain House, where the church was once instituted, since there are numerous opportunities here. The "place" is "booming," and the future looks bright, especially with recent gas, oil, and coal discoveries in our area.

If you feel you would like to move, how about giving Barrhead a try?

For more information write:

Bill Vogelzang
Box 874,

Barrhead, Alberta T0G 0E0,
or Phone: (403) 674-3039.

PRESS RELEASE

of Classis of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Alberta and Manitoba, meeting November 7-9, 1978 and January 9-10, 1979, at Edmonton.

On behalf of the convening Church at Calgary the Rev. D. DeJong calls the meeting of delegates to order. He reads Psalm 122, Psalm 123:1 is sung, and he leads in prayer. The delegates, visitors, and especially Rev. J.D. Wielenga are welcomed.

The delegates of the Church at Calgary report on the examination of the Credentials. The Churches at Calgary, Carman, Edmonton, and Winnipeg have an instruction. All Churches are represented by two delegates in accordance with the Credentials. After some discussion the Classis is constituted, with as officers: Chairman — Rev. S. DeBruin; Vice-chairman — Rev. D. DeJong; Clerk — Rev. J. VanRietschoten. After some items are added to the provisional agenda, the agenda is adopted.

A *Colloquium* is held with Rev. J.D. Wielenga, called as Minister of the Word by the Church at Coaldale, released Minister of our sisterchurch, the Free Reformed Church at Albany, Australia.

Rev. D. DeJong speaks with Rev. J.D. Wielenga on *Infallibility of Scripture and Creeds and Subscription to the Creeds*, and Rev. J. VanRietschoten on *Church Polity and Ethics*.

Classis concludes that the colloquium was satisfactory. The five documents pertaining to the call, acceptance, release, and attest, are received and found in order. Classis decides to approbate the call. Rev. J.D. Wielenga signs the Classical Subscription Form.

Classis decides to grant Rev. J.D. Wielenga the privilege of the floor and invites him to serve Classis in an advisory capacity, with the understanding that he will not take part in voting.

Correspondence

1. A letter from the *Church at Calgary* with objections against certain actions of the Church at Neerlandia is read and discussed.

Classis considering

1. That this matter deals with an interpretation of Reformed Church Polity (re Article 80 and 85 — also numbered 84 —) and Subscription Form;
2. That this matter needs further dis-

ussion and clarification in order to serve the Churches;

decides

to appoint a Committee to study these matters, and to serve this Classis, or if not possible, the next Classis, with a well-founded report.

As members of the Committee are appointed the brothers Rev. J.D. Wielenga, P. Van Dijk, and C. Van Seters.

2. A letter from the *Church at Neerlandia*, asking revision of decisions of the previous Classis, is read and discussed.

Classis does not grant the request of the Church at Neerlandia to revise the decisions of the previous Classis, which judged Neerlandia's actions concerning Rev. D. DeJong's preaching in Neerlandia in fulfillment of his Classical appointment to be wrong.

3. A letter of *Rev. D. DeJong* is read, and initially discussed.

Seeing that some delegates can no longer attend, Classis decides to break off the discussion, and to resume it at a continued session, to begin Tuesday, January 9, 1979 at 8 p.m., and to deal in the remaining time of this session only with some points of the agenda which need immediate attention.

The delegates of the Church at Coaldale, and Rev. J.D. Wielenga, now leave Classis.

Pulpit Supply to Vacant Churches. Rev. J. VanRietschoten will preach in Winnipeg, and Rev. S. DeBruin in Barrhead and Neerlandia, on November 26 and December 24, 1978.

The Church at Winnipeg requests and receives the services of Rev. J. VanRietschoten as *counsellor*.

Installation Rev. J.D. Wielenga. Rev. D. DeJong will re present Classis at this installation on Sunday, November 12, 1978.

Question Period ad Article 41, Church Order. The Churches at Carman, Edmonton, and Winnipeg ask to receive advice in matters of discipline.

Report Committee for Aid to Needy Churches. Classis decides to approve the Report and to adopt the recommendation to maintain the support to the Church at Calgary at the present level, until the end of 1979, and to review the amount of support at that time.

Question Period ad Article 43, Church Order is held.

Adjournment. After Rev. D. De Jong leads in prayer, Classis is adjourned on Thursday, November 9, 1978, at 7 p.m.

* * *

On Tuesday, January 9, 1979 at 8 p.m. Classis is re-opened, Psalm 130:1, 4 is sung, Romans 15:1-13 is read, and the chairman leads in prayer. *Roll-call* is held. The Church at Barrhead sent another delegate, br. L. Dijkstra, instead of br. W. Vogelzang. Br. F. VanderMeulen of the Church at Carman is replaced by his alternate br. F. DeWit, and the Church at Coaldale sent another delegate for br. C. VanSeters, Rev. J.D. Wielenga.

All members are present.

Report of the Committee Rev. J.D. Wielenga, br. P. VanDijk, br. C. VanSeters, appointed at the previous session of Classis in November 1978. This report is read and discussed. It is decided to receive this report with thanks for the work done by the Committee, and now to deal with the *letter of the Church at Calgary* dated October 16, 1978, making use of the report. For the greater part adopting the recommendations of the report, *Classis "took note* of the letter of the Church at Calgary dated October 16, 1978 with the request that Classis declare that the Consistory of the Canadian Reformed Church at Neerlandia has made itself guilty of the sin, which in Article 80, Church Order is described as 'intrusion upon the office of another' and in Article 85, Church Order as 'to lord it over other Churches'; and that therefore its delegates cannot be received as members of Classis before the Consistory has repented from this sin in words and deeds.

Classis Observes

1. that the Subscription Form gives the right to demand of a minister a declaration of sentiments only to his own consistory, and further to classis and synod;
2. that deviation from this rule is not the same as intentionally rejecting it;
3. that Article 80 concerns acts of office-bearers of which the evil intent and motive are proven;
4. that Article 85 concerns the act of imposing one's will upon another;
5. that no Church of the Federation ought to be refused membership of Classis, if it is not proven that she has no intention to abide by the Three Forms of Unity and the Church Order;

Classis is of the opinion:

1. that the Church at Neerlandia wrongly demanded of the minister of the Church at Calgary to declare his sentiments concerning certain points of doctrine on the basis of the Subscription Form;
2. that the Church at Calgary wrongly evaluated this act of Neerlandia as a sin in the sense of Article 80 and 85, Church Order;
3. that the Church at Calgary should not have requested Classis not to receive the delegates of Neerlandia as members of Classis.

On the ground of the above mentioned observations and opinions *Classis decides* not to accede to the request of the Church at Calgary."

Letter of Rev. D. DeJong dated October 16, 1978, in which he asks the judgment of Classis on the decision of Neerlandia's Consistory "that under these circumstances we consider it not wise, that you will preach for us here in Neerlandia on Sunday June 4, 1978" as appointed by Classis; and: *Letter of the Church at Neerlandia* dated November 3, 1978, asking Classis to "approve of the actions of the Church at Neerlandia as necessary and according to the accepted Church Order."

After a lengthy discussion *Classis decides* to appoint a Committee to study the available correspondence between the Church at Neerlandia and Rev. D. DeJong, as far as it concerns Rev. DeJong's request in his letter of October 16, 1978 and the request of the Church at Neerlandia in its letter of November 3, 1978, and to serve the next Classis with recommendations, unless both parties inform the Committee before February 1, 1979, that they withdraw their requests."

Reports

1. From the Committee for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry, September 1977 — September 1978. No one applied for assistance. The bank balance grew to \$189.84.

2. From the Church at Barrhead about Inspection of Archives. The Archives are found in good order.

3. Acts of Classis Contracta held June 31, 1978 will be filed.

Instructions

From Church at Carman. This Church has a remark about the Acts of Classis Contracta held June 30, 1978. This is declared inadmissible on the ground that per instruction only matters concerning the local church can be brought to the attention of Classis.

Preaching in vacant churches

The Church at Barrhead requests and receives preaching arrangements for every 4th Sunday on the following dates: January 21, Rev. D. DeJong (2 times), February 11, Rev. J.D. Wielenga (1 time), March 11, Rev. S. De Bruin (2 times), April 8, Rev. J.D. Wielenga (1 time), May 6, Rev. D. DeJong (2 times).

Letter from T. Veenendaal, Carman: Br. Veenendaal asks to be relieved from his membership of the Committee for Needy Churches. Granted.

Appointments

Convening Church for next Classis, the Church at Carman. Time: Tuesday, April 17, 1979 at 8 p.m., in Edmonton. Suggested Officers: Chairman: Rev. J.D. Wielenga; Vice-chairman: Rev. S. DeBruin; Clerk: Rev. D. DeJong.

Treasurer: E.C. Koning Jr., Edmonton; *Church Auditing Books:* Church at Edmonton; *Church Caring for Archives:* Church at Edmonton; *Church to inspect Archives:* Church at Barrhead; *Church Visitors:* the four ministers; *Committee for Examinations:* Rev. D. DeJong and Rev. J. VanRietschoten; *Examiners:* *Sermon:* Rev. D. DeJong and Rev. J. VanRietschoten; *Exegesis Old Testament:* Rev. J. VanRietschoten; *Exegesis New Testament:* Rev. S. DeBruin; *Knowledge of Holy Scripture:* Rev. J.D. Wielenga; *Doctrine and Creeds:* Rev. D. DeJong; *Church-History:* Rev. J.D. Wielenga; *Ethics:* Rev. J. VanRietschoten; *Church Polity:* Rev. J.D. Wielenga; *Diaconology:* Rev. S. DeBruin.

Committee for Financial Aid to Students of the Ministry: Brs. S. Tuininga, T. VandenBrink, C. Veldkamp; *Committee for Aid to Needy Churches:* Brs. W. Gortemaker, P. Groenwold, C. Poppe; *Deputies for Contact with Government:* Rev. D. DeJong (for Alberta Government), Rev. J. VanRietschoten (for Manitoba Government).

Committee to advise next Classis about requests Church at Neerlandia and request Rev. D. DeJong, brs. Rev. J.D. Wielenga, C. VanSeters, P. Van Dijk.

Personal Question Period

Classis decides that the public Acts will be made available to any member of the Churches in this classical resort who applies for this to his Consistory before Classis meets.

Classis decides to raise the remuneration for mileage from 15¢ to 20¢.

Censure ad Article 43, Church Order is held.

The Acts and the Press Release are adopted.

A word of thanks is spoken to the Edmonton ladies who so well cared for the delegates.

On Wednesday, January 10, 1979, at 8:30 p.m., Classis is closed, after Psalm 66:1, 8 is sung, and Rev. J. VanRietschoten leads in thanksgiving prayer.

On behalf of Classis,
D. DEJONG,
Vice-Chairman e.t.

EXCESS OF LIBERTY LEADS TO SERVITUDE

A Mouse: Until this hapless moment I was free,
 And went wher'er my will or fancy led;
 But now, oh! where — where is that liberty
 So long my boast] Alas! for ever fled.
 Ah! Woe is me that ever I was lured
 By aught so poor and tasteless as this rind
 To enter here, before I was assured
 Some means of exit or escape to find.
 Till now without restraint I ran about,
 Each place alike, a house secure for me;
 I'd holes in plenty to go in and out,
 Nor feared our race's direct enemy.
 Now here, now there, the barn, the granary,
 The kitchen, larder, parlour, and the store
 Were mine to roam in full security,
 And feast my fill. What could I wish for more?
 Fool that I was, thus to be captive made!
 I tremble at the doom that waits me now;
 Yet whom have I to blame or to upbraid?
 Myself alone; and to my fate I bow,
 Convinced too late, that he is caught at last
 Who runs about too much and lives too fast.

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

PRESS RELEASE

of the meeting of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches in Classis Ontario South, held in London on January 10, 1979.

1. *Opening.* On behalf of the Church at Lincoln, convening Church, Rev. M. Werkman called the meeting to order. Psalm 121 was sung and read, and the LORD was called upon for His guidance and blessing. The brethren were welcomed, especially student B.J. Berends. The fact was mentioned that the Churches at Smithville and Watford were disappointed when calls they extended were declined. Also mentioned was the 40th anniversary as a Minister of Rev. W. Loopstra.

2. *Credentials.* The delegates of the Church at London examined the credentials. The Church at Grand Rapids was represented by only one delegate due to the weather condition.

3. *Constitution.* Classis was constituted. Chairman: Rev. W. Huizinga; clerk: Rev. P. Kingma; assessor: Rev. J. Geertsema. The chairman expressed his thanks to the convening Church for the preparations of the meeting. He also extended a special welcome to the Rev. J. De Jong of London, for whom it was the first Classis meeting as minister.

4. *Adoption of the Agenda.* The agenda was adopted.

5. *Examination.* After the documents were found to be present and in good order, the examination of student B.J. Berends took place. A proposal of an edifying word on the text Luke 13:6-9 was read and, in closed session, discussed. The outcome of the discussion was that the examination could be continued. The Rev. P. Kingma asked questions with regard to the Knowledge of the Reformed Doctrine. The result of the examination was that Classis could grant to student Berends to speak an edifying word in the Churches. The chairman then read the Declaration for Students, as adopted by Classis Ontario South, to br. Berends, who promised to act according to that Declaration and confirmed this promise with his signature. A certificate that Classis Ontario South has granted him his request to speak an edifying word was given. The chairman spoke some encouraging words, and Psalm 134:1 and 3 was sung. After this a good meal was enjoyed.

6. *Instructions.* Pulpit supply was

requested by the Churches at Smithville and Watford. Smithville requested pulpit supply for two Sundays per month for six months. Watford asked the same once per month beginning with the month of March. It was decided to grant these requests.

7. *Reports.* Reports on Church visitations to the Churches at Watford, Chatham, and Lincoln were read.

8. *Question Period ad Article 41, Church Order.* In closed session advice in cases of discipline was asked for and given to the Churches at Chatham, Smithville and Watford.

9. *Appointments.* A. Pulpit supply was arranged as follows: For Smithville: January 21: Rev. W. Huizinga; January 28: Rev. M. Werkman; February 11: Rev. M. Werkman; February 25: Rev. J. De Jong; March 4: Rev. W. Huizinga; March 18: Rev. M. Werkman; April 8: Rev. P. Kingma; April 22: Rev. J. De Jong; May 6: Rev. P. Kingma; May 20: Rev. W. Huizinga; June 3: Rev. J. Geertsema; June 17: Rev. J. De Jong. For Watford: March 11: Rev. J. Geertsema; April 8: Rev. J. De Jong; May 13: Rev. J. Geertsema; June 17: Rev. P. Kingma.

B. Church Visitors were appointed as follows: For Chatham: Rev. P. Kingma and Rev. W. Huizinga; for Grand Rapids: Rev. J. Geertsema and Rev. M. Werkman; for Hamilton: Rev. M. Werkman and Rev. J. De Jong; for Lincoln: Rev. J. Geertsema and Rev. W. Huizinga; for London: Rev. P. Kingma and Rev. J. Geertsema; for Smithville: Rev. M. Werkman and Rev. W. Huizinga; for Watford: Rev. P. Kingma and Rev. J. De Jong.

C. Classical Examiners were appointed as follows: Exegesis Old Testament: Rev. J. Geertsema; Exegesis New Testament: Rev. W. Huizinga; Doctrine of the Church: Rev. P. Kingma; Ethics: Rev. J. Geertsema; Church History: Rev. J. De Jong; Church Polity: Rev. J. De Jong; Diaconological Subjects: Rev. P. Kingma; Contents of Holy Scripture: Rev. M. Werkman; Deputies ad Examina and Sermon proposal: Rev. W. Huizinga and Rev. M. Werkman.

D. For the next Classis: Convening Church: the Church at London; Date: Wednesday, March 28, 1979; Place: London; Officers: Rev. J. De Jong, chairman; Rev. W. Huizinga, clerk; Rev. P. Kingma, assessor.

10. *Personal Question Period.* Nothing was brought forward.

11. *Adoption of the Acts.* The Acts were read and adopted.

12. *Approval of Press Release.* The Press Release was read and approved.

13. *Censure ad Article 43, Church Order.* Nobody had to be admonished.

14. *Closing.* A word of thanks was addressed to the ladies who served the delegates. Psalm 56:5 was sung. The chairman closed the meeting with thanksgiving and prayer.

For the Classis:
J. GEERTSEMA, Assessor e.t.

PRESS RELEASE

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

The Board met on January 26, 1979, in the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church, Hamilton, Ontario.

Ten of the eleven members were present.

The chairman, Mr. W. Schuurman, opened the meeting and led in prayer. Mr. C. Nobel presented the Constitution with the changes made at the general meeting of October 20, 1978.

Mr. J. Vanderjagt and Mr. A. Dieleman presented their revised draft of the By-Laws. In order to have time also for other work, it was deemed beneficial to limit the time spent at each meeting on these by-laws. After some changes the first three articles were accepted.

The treasurer, Mrs. S. Smid, has opened a bank account. Those people who donated funds in 1978 should now see their cheques cashed. Receipts will not be issued for 1978 since the Association is not yet registered as a charitable organization. All receipts will be issued at the end of 1979.

Mrs. R.J. Oosterhoff and Mr. W. Van Woudenberg will look into the possibilities of having a picnic this summer with the handicapped children and their parents. Each Board member will inquire locally about interest in a summer camp for the handicapped.

The recording secretary was instructed to set up a retirement schedule, arranged alphabetically, for the board members.

It was again stressed that the ultimate aim of the Association should be a home for the handicapped.

The next meeting was scheduled for February 23, 1979, in the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church, Hamilton.

For the Board,
H. KOTTELENBERG, (Vice-Chairman)

Puzzle No. 41

This puzzle is based on a painting by Giovanni Battista Piazzetta, in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., titled "Elijah Taken Up Into Heaven."

Each area with a black dot is to be completely filled in with solid black (magic marker or black pen works best).



our little magazine



From the Mailbox

Dear Busy Beavers,

"How many Busy Beavers are actually in our club?" one Busy Beaver wrote me.

And others have asked, too.

I got out our membership list.

And I counted.

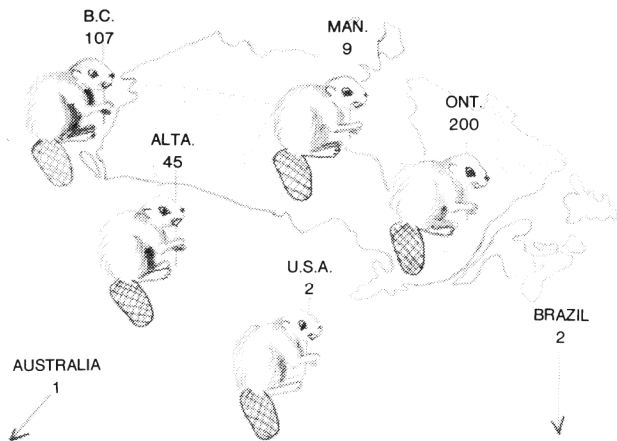
As I counted I felt so proud! Just how lucky can an Aunt be? To have so many nieces and nephews! All over Canada, and even beyond our borders!

Then I thought wouldn't it be nice for you all to see where our Busy Beavers are.

Have a look! Can you find yourself on the map?

And can you add? There's one Busy Beaver for whom I have no address.

Altogether that makes 367 Busy Beavers!



Something very important we do in our Club, as you know, is to wish our Busy Beavers Happy Birthday.

So here's congratulations and very best wishes to all those Busy Beavers celebrating their birthday in March.

Have a very happy day, and may the Lord bless and keep you in the year ahead!

| | | | |
|----------------------|---------|------------------------|----------|
| Joanne De Groot | March 2 | Margaret Tenhage | March 17 |
| Lorraine Heres | 2 | Pat Kamstra | 20 |
| Stephanie Louwerse | 2 | Henriette Bosscher | 21 |
| Janet Veenendaal | 2 | [REDACTED] | 21 |
| Lyndon Kok | 4 | Marjorie Smouter | 22 |
| Joanne Oostdyk | 9 | Debbie Aikema | 23 |
| Jo-Anne Vander Ploeg | 9 | Heather Bergsma | 24 |
| Angela Wiersema | 9 | Charles Slaa | 27 |
| Joyce Huinnink | 10 | Gordon Van Woudenberg | 28 |
| Hilda Jongma | 11 | Carolyn Irene Hoeksema | 29 |
| Jacqueline Riemersma | 13 | Marianne Hart | 30 |
| Joanne Doekes | 15 | Henrietta Beukema | 31 |
| Valerie Kleefman | 15 | Mary Van Woudenberg | 31 |
| Michael Bosch | 17 | Jane Wiegers | 31 |

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Linda Oostdyk*. We are happy to have you join us, and we hope you'll really enjoy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Have you received your membership card already, Linda? Write again soon.

Hello, *James Slaa*. Thank you for a very nice puzzle! What did you enjoy most on your trip to Holland, James? Of course your brother may join our club, just as soon as he writes and tells me. Bye for now.

Sounds to me as if you have a beautiful organ, *Elaine Hamoen*. How do you enjoy practising for your lessons? I think your little sister must really enjoy your playing with her, Elaine. Thanks for the riddles!

I hope you're all better again, and have forgotten about being sick, *Cynthia Eenkhoorn*. Thank you for your letter and the puzzle. Did you write a story about having fun at New Year's?

Congratulations on your baby sister, *Julia Vanderpol!* And what a very nice name she has! Do you help your Mom look after her? Have you skated on your new skates lots of times already? Bye for now. Write again soon, Julia.

Have you been skiing again, *Arno Moeliker?* How did you like it? I hope your weather is not quite so cold anymore. Thanks for your letter, Arno.

I think you have a very good idea saving for our BIRTHDAY FUND PROJECT, [REDACTED]. Did you have a happy time celebrating your Mom's birthday? How did she like her present? Will you tell the Busy Beavers, too, about the Kingfisher? Maybe you have a picture to go with a little story? You must have lots of fun making music together at your house, Jollette!

Hello, *Carol Griffioen*. You must be really looking forward to spring! Thank you very much for your poem, Carol. It was nice to hear from you again. You'll have to watch next time's Little Magazine, Carol. I think you'll like it!

QUIZ TIME

