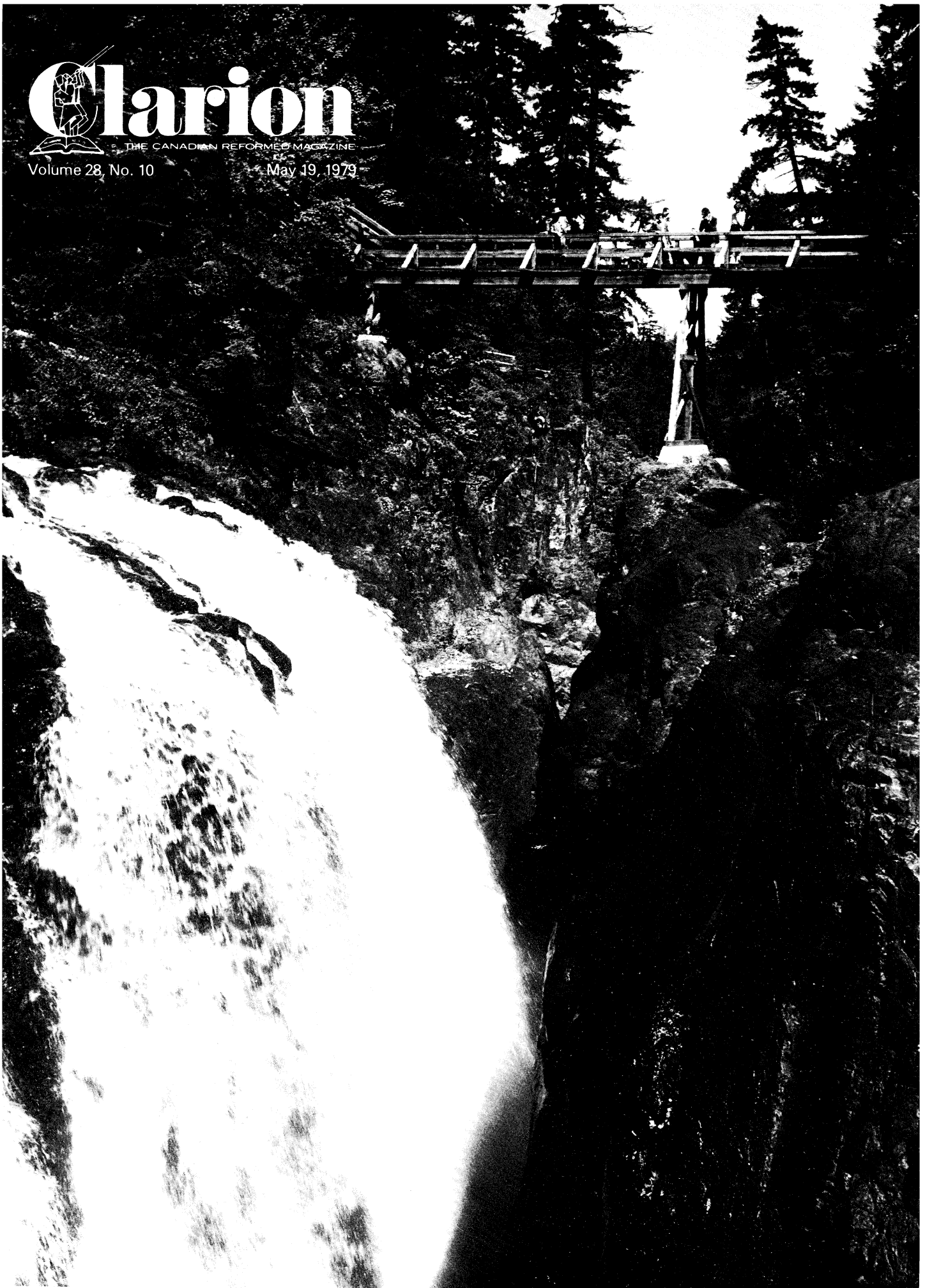


Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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Rules for Correspondence

(THE ACT OF GRONINGEN)

In the beginning of May the library of our Theological College received a present from the Deputies for Correspondence of our Dutch sister churches. It was the Acts of the General Synod of "De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland" assembled at Groningen-Zuid on Tuesday, April 11, 1978. These *Acta* are described in a large book of more than 550 pages, although the Acts themselves take less than half of them, while more than 300 pages are filled with Appendices, mostly Reports by Deputies and Committees. They make for thrilling literature. The Synod of Groningen-Zuid was characterized by the many proposals for linguistic revision and renewal of Confessions, Church Order, Liturgical Forms and Prayers, Hymns, Subscription Forms, the Constitution of the Theological Seminary in Kampen, and so on. Therefore, you read in these Acts the proposed new Dutch text of the Belgic Confession and of the Church Order, commonly called the Church Order of Dort, and many other important new texts. Very interesting also are the majority and minority reports of the Deputies who studied the issue of "het vrouwenkiesrecht," the question whether sisters in a congregational meeting are allowed to indicate by voting, whom they prefer to become minister, elder, or deacon in the church of God. As our readers probably know, the Synod followed the minority report and did not allow women to vote in the church. One can have much admiration in the old country. Our churches will certainly profit from it.

Although I was tempted to extend the line of previous Editorials and to deal with the Dutch linguistic revision of our Confessions and Forms, it will be good for the sake of order and variety, first to discuss the relationship as such between the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands and the Canadian Reformed Churches. It is also a matter of courtesy with regard to the Dutch Deputies for Correspondence with Churches Abroad: No better way of showing your appreciation of such a present than to use it right away and then in the matters with which these Deputies themselves are concerned.

Moreover, one of the characteristics of the Synod of Groningen-Zuid is the increase in contacts with churches all over the world. The reports and decisions do not only speak about the correspondence with sister churches in Australia, Canada, Korea, Sumba, and South Africa, but also about contacts with Ireland (the Evangelical Presbyterian Church), Scotland (Free Church), Japan (Reformed Church), Taiwan (Reformed Presbyterian Church), Sri Lanka (Dutch Reformed Church), Sao Paulo (a congregation of immigrants from the Korea Presbyterian Church), and so on. As far as the latter is concerned, the Synod decided to enter into ecclesiastical communion with this church ("kerkelijke gemeenschap aan te gaan met de Igreja Presbiteriana Evangélica do São

Paulo"). There are more churches with whom our Dutch sister churches now have official correspondence, while our churches did not as yet establish a sister church relationship: The Presbyterian Church in Korea and the Reformed Churches in Eastern Sumba/Savu. It is remarkable that the Synod of Groningen-Zuid also instructed the Deputies to investigate the situation with respect to The Presbyterian Church of America, The Presbyterian Church U.S., and the Igreja Presbiteriana Conservadora do Brasil.

Compare this approach with, e.g., the decision of our last Synod in Coaldale 1977 with respect to the proposal of the Church at Calgary to seek contact with the Reformed Presbyterian Church (Evangelical Synod) with which they locally had become acquainted. Our Synod decided not to accede to this proposal because minor assemblies, when making a proposal for taking up contact with other churches, should supply Synods with sufficient information. The Deputies in The Netherlands, however, have, since 1964, the broad mandate to seek contact with other churches abroad of whom it is *surmised* that there might be a possibility for correspondence ("contact te zoeken met andere kerken in het buitenland, met welke de mogelijkheid van correspondentie mag worden vermoed").

I know that some of our readers are of the opinion that our last Synod acted too fast, when, with thankfulness, it recognized the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as confessed in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession and decided to offer to this Church a temporary relationship called "ecclesiastical contact" and to use this contact by means of continued discussions for the purpose of reaching full correspondence. This decision came *twelve years* after the Synod of Edmonton 1965 had stated that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was a fruit of the Calvinist Reformation, its confessions and church polity were of Calvinist character, and that in this century this Church had taken a determined stand for Orthodoxy against Modernism. Those in our churches who think that our last Synod acted prematurely may have a "formal" point in the fact that this time our deputies had not prepared a conclusive report. But in The Netherlands our Canadian Reformed Churches are seen as reticent and cautious. The whole form of "ecclesiastical contact" is regarded as an example of "terughoudendheid" (reticence) and "voorzichtigheid" (prudence). The Committee at the Synod of Groningen-Zuid deemed "de terughoudendheid van de Canadese zusterkerken begrijpelijk." We should be "behoedzaam in het aanbieden van kerkelijke correspondentie als uiting van volle kerkelijke gemeenschap, ook al menen wij met ware kerken te doen te hebben. Daarin kunnen wij van de Canadese zusterkerken, die ervaring uit de eerste hand hebben meer dan wij (uitgezonderd een enkele teruggekeerde emigrant)

de voorzichtigheid leren, waarmee artikel 29, N.G.B. begint" (page 533). The Rev. H.J. De Vries, reporter on behalf of Committee III wrote therefore, that the reserve of the Canadian sister churches is understandable. We are to be cautious in offering ecclesiastical correspondence in the sense of full communion of churches, even though we think that we are dealing with true churches. According to his opinion the Dutch churches can learn from the Canadian sister churches what the diligence and circumspection mean of which we speak in the beginning of Article 29, Belgic Confession. I read this with a smile; what some Canadian brothers deem to be *careless* is by a Dutch Synodical Committee regarded as *careful*.

Our Dutch brothers will not take it ill from me — and if they did, I would nevertheless publish my opinion frankly — when I say that this Canadian Reformed wariness is dear to me. I believe the Catholicity of Christ's Church. The universal Church is not confined, bound, or limited to a certain place or to certain persons, but is spread and dispersed over the whole world; and yet is joined and united with heart and will, by the power of faith, in one and the same Spirit. Does this catholicity, however, always have to find an organizational form and is the mandate of the Dutch deputies not too broad? Should we not be sober and acknowledge the limitations of the present dispensation? Should we not proceed with great prudence, especially when there are differences in confession and church government? Should we not only act when we are *called* to do so?

This Canadian Reformed caution is also caused by their different situation. Our Dutch sister churches do not have the geographical nearness of Presbyterian churches as we have. There are no geographically overlapping areas and the language barrier between Dutch on the one side and English or Korean, for that matter, on the other side renders it almost impossible for a Dutch church to call a Presbyterian minister. According to my opinion the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands should have been more aware of this situation. They should have taken into consideration the position of the churches with which they already lived in correspondence. Why not first together thoroughly investigate the differences between the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster standards, as far as doctrine is concerned, and evaluate the difference in church polity between the Church Order of Dort and what our Dutch sister churches often call the Church Order of Westminster? Consideration for sister churches abroad should prevent rash actions.

Already in 1968 the Canadian Reformed Churches had to "regret that they have not been satisfactorily informed about the "intention of the Dutch sister churches to start correspondence with a Presbyterian Church in Korea according to the same rules that have been agreed upon between them and us" (*Acts Orangeville*, Article 79, sub. 5). We read in a report of our Committee in the same Acts that we had not been informed "about discussions concerning the differences in Confession and Church Order. The Canadian Reformed Churches would have greatly profited from such discussions . . . for their own contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church." We now know that these discussions have never taken place. Our corresponding churches in The Netherlands take these differences lightly.

I do not want to be nasty with regard to our Dutch sister churches — they are flesh of our flesh — but one could defend the thesis that although they had stricter rules for ecclesiastical correspondence, they did not always live up to them. What are these rules?

In accordance with a decision of Amsterdam 1936 their deputies are by instruction bound to the rule that correspondence with churches abroad shall only be entered upon after a thorough and serious investigation has made it evident that these churches not only have officially accepted the Reformed Confession and church polity but also maintain them indeed. The Deputies have regularly to inquire whether the churches abroad remain faithful to the Reformed Confession and church government.

Then they were bound to a consideration of the Synod at Berkel 1952 that it is impossible to enter upon correspondence with churches that at the same time seek communion with different denominations, which cannot have correspondence and communion with one another. This rule, directed against "double correspondence," excluded contact with churches that are still members of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod and therefore have a relationship with the synodical churches in The Netherlands.

The General Synod of Groningen-Zuid 1978 has now replaced this rule and has opened the possibility to offer a temporary relationship of "ecclesiastical contact." This will happen when churches abroad are to be acknowledged for true churches of the Lord Jesus Christ but, e.g., relations to a third party form an impediment for full ecclesiastical correspondence. It is evident that our Dutch sister churches have used the form that the Canadian Reformed Churches had shaped for their relationship to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Although I could not find a reference to the Presbyterian Church in Korea in this context, it is known that this Church has not only correspondence with our sister churches in The Netherlands but also maintains fraternal relations with the Reformed Church in South-Africa (the "Doppers"). Some Koreans even receive their theological training, not in Kampen (Broederweg) but in Potchefstroom. Did the Korean churches give account regarding this relationship or have the Dutch churches been confronted with an accomplished fact in disagreement with the mutually accepted rules?

This leads us from the instruction for deputies to the rules for correspondence itself. They are the following:

- a. To take mutual heed that the corresponding Churches do not deviate from the Reformed Confession in doctrine, liturgy, church government, and discipline.
- b. To forward to each other the agenda and decisions of the broader assemblies and to admit each other's delegates to these assemblies as advisors.
- c. *To consult each other prior to changes or additions to Confessions, Church Order, and Liturgical Forms. ("Het plegen van voorafgaand overleg inzake eventuele wijzigingen of aanvullingen van belijdenisgeschriften, kerkenordering en liturgische formulieren").*
- d. To accept each other's attestations and to permit each other's ministers to preach the Word and to administer the sacraments.
- e. To give account to each other regarding correspondence with third parties.

If our readers compare these rules with those our churches accepted (e.g., in *Acts Coaldale* 1977, page 80), they will find the difference in point c. Over against the Australian and Dutch sister churches we accepted and maintained the rule:

- c. *To inform* each other concerning changes of/or additions to the Confession, Church Order, and Liturgical Forms, while the corresponding Churches pledge to

Continued on next page.

press review

CAN THE COVENANT BE BROKEN? — A REPLY

In *Clarion* of November 4, 1978, I gave some critical remarks on what Prof. H.C. Hoeksema had written in *The Standard Bearer* with respect to the question "Can the covenant be broken?" My criticism was met with a lengthy, critical reply by Prof. Hoeksema. It was an extensive reaction in more than one issue of *The Standard Bearer*. The first part appeared in the issue of January 15, 1979. And I would like to devote a few "Press Reviews" to this response. I think it is worth it, both because of the matter itself as well as for its historical aspect. Many of our people remember that both in the West and in the East there was contact with the Protestant Reformed Churches in the beginning of the history of our churches in this country. Our churches in Chatham and Hamilton belonged to the PRC. But when the PRC adopted the so-called "Declaration of Principles," "Chatham" and "Hamilton" broke with the PRC.

In his first article Prof. Hoeksema informs his readers about the history, adding some critical remarks about what I wrote. From this I quote:

Since that time [1951, The Declaration of Principles, J.G.] the Liberated immigrants in Canada [and America, J.G.] have gone their own ecclesiastical way Also the Liberated Churches in The Netherlands have shunned us since that time, and there has been no further contact. I refer, of course, to official contact; the unofficial contact of exchange of *The Standard Bearer* for the *Clarion* and *De Reformatie* has continued for many years The Liberated hold to what we sometimes call the Heynsian view of the covenant, which involves a general, conditional promise to all the children of believers, to all baptized infants The Liberated disagree with us so strongly on this matter and accuse us of "building a whole dogmatic system on the point of election" [my words, J.G.], [which fact] should also be an indication that we do not teach anything like what is sometimes called "automatic grace" [not my words, J.G.]. You see, we hold to neither a general promise for all that are baptized nor presupposed regeneration [the synodical view of Kuyper and especially the syn-

ods in the forties in The Netherlands, J.G.], but insist with Scripture and our confessions that the lines of election and reprobation cut right across the generations of believers [which we do not deny at all, J.G.].

Prof. Hoeksema remarks a little further:

For my part, I welcome discussion of this important truth any time. Personally, I would even welcome official discussions between our churches. However, such discussion would have to be far more basic than that offered by Mr. Geertsema; and it would have to follow a different method and evince a different tone. For one thing, in the articles quoted I was not discussing the truth of the covenant in general, but merely answering a reader's questions about the specific subject of covenant-breaking For another thing, I do not like to have words put in my mouth and to be misrepresented. When brother Geertsema does that — as he does in his article — then he is not really criticizing me and my views, but fighting a straw man; and that of course is both dishonest and futile Nevertheless, I will reflect on and respond to some of the points made in *Clarion's* "Press Review."

I should like to make a few remarks here already. Professor Hoeksema accuses me of misrepresenting him. I was not aware that I did. For one thing, I quoted almost everything that he wrote in those three answers, so that

Continued on next page.

EDITORIAL — Continued.

express themselves on the question whether such changes or additions are considered acceptable. The difference between "to consult *beforehand*" or "to inform *afterward*" is clear and has been extensively discussed between Australia, The Netherlands, and Canada. In the Acts of the Synod of Amersfoort 1967 a report of twenty pages was published in which this point played an important role. Over against Canada the churches in The Netherlands acceded to an Australian request and returned to the strict rule of consultation as beforehand.

The Acts of Groningen-Zuid, however, make it known that now the whole Church Order, to mention only this important part of the official papers of our Dutch sister churches, has already been revised without previous consultation of the Churches abroad. Synod decided "over te gaan tot de vaststelling van de Kerkorde van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland . . . ; de buitenlandse zusterkerken mededeling te doen van dit besluit onder toezending van de herziene Kerkorde." The Synod therefore, will *inform* the sister churches abroad of this decision and will provide them with the revised Church Order. The question, however, remains: What did our Dutch sister churches do with their deliberately accepted and strongly defended rule not simply to inform the corresponding Churches but to consult them beforehand? Churches should act according to their rules or adjust them to the situation, rather than to use strong words and not to keep their promises.

J. FABER

PSALM 16

1. Pre-serve me, God, I put my trust in thee.
There-fore I say to him: "Thou art my Sav-our,
Thou art the LORD, I need thee con-stant-ly.
A-part from thee I can ex-pect no fa-vour."
I love thy saints, with them I am u-nit-ed,
And in their midst my soul will be de-light-ed.

2. O greatly shall their sorrows multiply
Who follow other gods; their deeds will shame them.
Their offerings of blood I shall decry,
I shall not henceforth ever stoop to name them.
The LORD alone my cup and portion ever,
He is my prize, to be forsaken never.

the reader could read what was said. But Professor Hoeksema takes only very few, and then very small, quotations from my article. That does not help a discussion. That holds the great danger of misrepresenting the writer without giving the reader the opportunity to check what you write. Therefore, in order to be honest, I shall again quote extensively from what Prof. Hoeksema writes, so that at least the readers of *Clarion* can follow the discussion on both sides, and not only on one.

I shall reply to the accusation of the misrepresentations right here. The first misrepresentation, according to Professor Hoeksema, is: that I wrote, "The Protestant Reformed view of the covenant is, according to what Prof. Hoeksema writes, God's covenant with the elect." As reaction we read that to write this statement

is not only gross over-simplification, but it is serious misrepresentation. What is the covenant? What is its nature? Is it a means to an end . . . ? Or is it the end itself, and, as Bavinck once put it "the very essence of all religion." You see, when you merely say "covenant with the elect" you have not said anything about the nature of that covenant itself. And the latter subject is important, also for the question of covenant-breaking.

It is true that I did not speak about the nature of the covenant and so on, but reacted only to the statement that the covenant cannot be broken, according to the Protestant Reformed view. And I wrote that this view that the covenant cannot be broken is based on the view that only the elect are in the covenant, since the covenant is eternal. Is this really misrepresentation? No, it is not. On the contrary. It would have been a misrepresentation if Prof. Hoeksema denied that the covenant is only with the elect. However (and now I quote already from the next article in *The Standard Bearer*), he writes: "the elect children, the seed, are in the covenant, while the reprobate are not."

A second so-called misrepresentation is the following:

Geertsema suggests that I did not answer the question concerning covenant-breaking. Writes he:

Now a difficulty arises for me: the Bible speaks about breaking the covenant. This breaking of the covenant can only be done by those who are placed in the covenant relation with God. Can we then break an eternal covenant?

However, two things should be noted in this connection: 1) I do not concede and I did not write that the covenant can be

broken only by those who are placed in the covenant relation with God. This is Geertsema's assumption, not my position. 2) The whole thrust of my articles on this subject was explicitly that we cannot break the eternal covenant in the sense of severing the covenant relationship. An eternal covenant can be violated, sinned against, transgressed against; but it is in its very nature as an *eternal* covenant that the bond of friendship cannot be broken.

Let me say this: the quoted statement is my own statement, and not put, by me, in the mouth of Prof. Hoeksema. I only showed my difficulty with the opinion of Prof. Hoeksema when he says: the covenant cannot be broken. The Bible says: the covenant is broken by people who harden themselves in unbelief and disobedience. And is it not so that outsiders who are not in the covenant cannot break that covenant, but that breaking the covenant can only be done by those who have a place in it? So we can say: also here is no misrepresentation, at most a lack of clarity.

Then there is a third case of misrepresentation according to Prof. Hoeksema. He writes:

In the third place, Geertsema devotes two or three paragraphs to suggesting that I deny the unity of the covenant, separate between the old covenant and the new, and even find two covenants in the old dispensation, viz., a national covenant with Israel plus a covenant with the elect. He further suggests that I admit that the national covenant could be broken — again in the sense of not merely transgressing against it but in the sense of severing its bond. Again, however, Geertsema sucks this out of his thumb, not out of my articles. I repeat: if there was anything plain in all three articles, it was my insistence that the covenant cannot be broken in the sense that the relationship can be severed, and that, too, precisely because it is God's eternal covenant.

I am thankful for what is written here. It is clarifying for me. I now understand better that Prof. Hoeksema sees the breaking of the covenant always as only a sinning, a transgressing against the covenant, both regarding the old covenant with Israel (which can be called the covenant of the "dispensation of the law," or of "a national dispensation") and regarding the new covenant. I now understand better that, according to Prof. Hoeksema, this transgressing against the covenant (old and new) is always to be seen as a transgressing against God's commandments, which does not mean that such a commandment does not stand

"whole and complete and valid" anymore; I now understand better that Prof. Hoeksema means with this that breaking the covenant, therefore, never could nor can mean: severing the covenant relation. An eternal covenant remains eternal. When Prof. Hoeksema wrote that the term "breaking the covenant" only occurs in the Old Testament, and fits that covenant of the dispensation of the law, I misunderstood him.

However, I wrote a few times that with what Prof. Hoeksema wrote I had difficulties, and, although some of the difficulties regarding his view are cleared up, my main problems with what Prof. Hoeksema wrote have re-

Continued on next page.

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IN THIS ISSUE:

Editorial — J. Faber	214
Press Review — J. Geertsema	216
A Corner for The Sick — Mrs. J.K. Riemersma	219
Covenantal Education — Cl. Stam	220
International — W.W.J. VanOene	223
News Medley — W.W.J. VanOene	224
Carman's Flood Sunday	226
School Crossing — J. Van Rietschoten	228
Press Release — Classis Pacific — D. VanderBoom	230
Puzzle No. 47	231
Our Little Magazine — Aunt Betty	232

mained. I pointed to the fact that when the LORD speaks of an eternal covenant, when He made the covenant with Abraham, Genesis 17:7, He speaks of a breaking of that eternal covenant in verse 14, which is done by one who does not have the sign of the covenant: circumcision. Do I now understand it well, when I conclude that, according to Prof. Hoeksema, not being circumcised and abiding by that sin only means: violating the covenant, but not severing the covenant relation with God?

But, as I said, with this explanation my difficulties remain. If breaking the eternal covenant of God with Abraham by not being circumcised means a violating of that eternal covenant, but not a severing of the covenant relation, what does the LORD mean, then, when He says that such a person "shall be cut off from his people," because he has broken the covenant? What does "being cut off" mean here? Or is Prof. Hoeksema of the opinion that the covenant was not established with such a person, because "not all who descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham, because they are his descendants" (Romans 9:6, 7), and thus: because such a person was not elected. Or let me say it in a different way: Was such a person not really in the covenant (that had a national character then and belonged to the dispensation of the law)? Was he only in the historical sphere of that covenant? Was the promise not really for him? I hope to come back to this point of creating a historical sphere of the covenant beside the covenant itself in a next article, because Prof. Hoeksema devotes a separate article to the same matter. But I want to say now already that here my great difficulties were. And when I brought up the point that Genesis 17:14 speaks about breaking that eternal covenant, and that the LORD speaks of a cutting off of such a person from His people (which is His covenant-people, isn't it?) that point was not answered; it was not replied to. It is in this connection that I spoke of confusion and a dogmatical construction. Prof. Hoeksema remarks in this connection that I, from my side, should answer the question how an eternal covenant can be broken, of course, in the sense of being severed. I hope to come to this also in a following "Review."

This counts also for the fourth and last mentioned "gross misrepresentation," namely, that I suggested that

Hoeksema's view is that in baptism God says to the reprobate children: "I give nothing to you." I'll reserve this for later, because this point comes back when Prof. Hoeksema deals with that point of the historical sphere of the covenant.

Let me conclude for now with a few quotations from the comment of Prof. Hoeksema on my remark: "I cannot understand that the struggle of the Liberation in The Netherlands, and all the articles and books of Prof. K. Schilder and others from that time, did not convince the Protestant Reformed people that they were wrong with their idea of a covenant with only the elect . . ." Prof. Hoeksema says that the PR know the writings of K.S. very well; that they have thoroughly discussed these matters with him, when he made his trips to the States, in 1939 and in 1947/8. I shall quote part of what Prof. Hoeksema writes. Even though during the Second World War contacts with The Netherlands were all but broken, nevertheless some news about what happened in the Reformed Churches came to the United States. And Prof. Hoeksema writes that the people of the Protestant Reformed Churches

were intensely inquisitive about one matter: what were the views of the Liberated theologians about the covenant and baptism over against the position of the synodicals.

Well do I remember when we began to get reliable information. When the first numbers of *De Reformatie* reached us after the war, we were simply flabbergasted. I well remember that the late Rev. Vos visited my father with one of those early numbers completely blue-pencilled, marking those sections which made it plain that the Liberated churches were addicted to what is known among us as the Heynsian view of the covenant, the view of a general, conditional promise of God for all children of believers. The only element of Heyn's view which we did not discover in *De Reformatie* at that time was the element of a sufficient grace to all children of believers to accept or reject the objective right to the blessings of salvation bestowed upon them in the promise, an element specifically spelled out in Prof. Heyn's *Catechetics*.

During the first part of this century Prof. Willem Heyns was professor in Reformed doctrine at Calvin College for many years. He taught that in the Church God gives to all children a certain subjective grace. With subjective grace is meant: a certain grace which all the members of the covenant receive from God in themselves, in their

heart, through which they can, accept but also can refuse to accept salvation. It is this specific point that was not found in *De Reformatie* at that time.

May I make a remark here? I shall do it in the form of a question. The wording of Prof. Hoeksema is quite negative here. It is that they "did not discover" this point "in *De Reformatie* at that time" (Italics added). Was it there later? Did Prof. K. Schilder teach it later? Why not more positively tell the readers of *The Standard Bearer* that Prof. K. Schilder declared in *De Reformatie* (October 25, 1947), and in his booklet "A Binding Above Scripture — A New Danger" (*Bovenschriftuurlijke binding — een nieuw gevaar*), that he *fully rejected* this point of Prof. Heyn's teaching? He wrote in the above-mentioned issue of *De Reformatie*, and repeated in that booklet (page 28): "That we do not believe either." This whole booklet was written as a reaction to the Protestant Reformed "Declaration of Principles." But let me continue to quote. Prof. Hoeksema writes:

And while at least some of us were convinced that he [K. Schilder, J.G.] personally was and intended to be Reformed, we were not at all convinced that the Liberated view of the covenant was not Arminianism applied to the covenant.

Things developed, both here and in The Netherlands. To make a long story short, the result was the present situation in which the Liberated and the Protestant Reformed continue in sharp disagreement and in separate church existence.

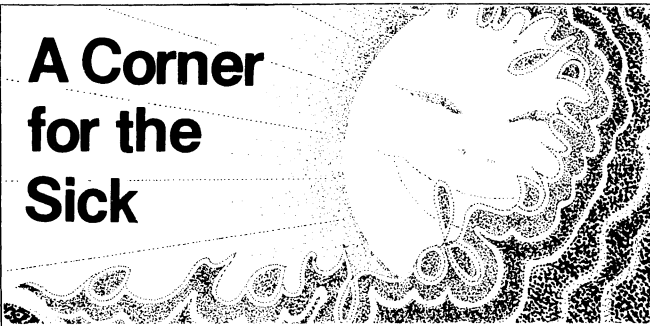
But I want to emphasize that we are well-acquainted with the Liberated position and writings. It is not that we are ignorant. Nor is it that Schilder and others did not make their position clear. We know the Liberated ideas of the covenant and the promise, and we want nothing of them. We hold them to be contrary to Scripture and the confessions.

Prof. Hoeksema then adds that a discussion has to be on the same basis of Scripture and confession, and he wants *Clarion* to start with studying the question whether our view of a general promise is consistent with the Baptism Form.

In a following article I hope to continue. For now I conclude with the remark: I did not suggest that ignorance of K. Schilder's writing was the cause of the Protestant Reformed view about a covenant with the elect. I wrote that I could not understand that K.S. did not convince them. And this proves to be still fully true.

J. GEERTSEMA

A Corner for the Sick



The Lord is faithful in all His words, . . . The eyes of all look to Thee. Psalm 145:13b and 15a

It is good to take time out to reflect! We automatically take it for granted that, after a long winter, the nice weather finally arrives and man can begin his toil with the ground. Let us read Genesis 8:21, 22. There we read: "The LORD said in His heart, I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease."

This shows us that it all depends on God's faithfulness. Once, thousands of years ago, God spoke that promise, today it is still true. Do we not marvel at the miracle of the seasons? And do we not have to depend in all things on our Lord and Master of the universe?

Especially in the growing season we are confronted with our complete dependency. We all look to the Lord for His blessing! If God should withhold the rain, nothing would grow, and it would be a disaster for man and beast. Read I Kings 17 and 18. In Psalm 145, David sings a song of praise to his Maker, "On the glorious splendour of Thy majesty, on Thy wondrous works, I will meditate" (verse 5). And in Psalm 146 he continues, "The Lord will reign for ever, Thy God, O Zion, to all generations" (verse 10). "Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; Who keeps faith forever" (verses 5, 6). Let us join in song and proclaim God's praise in all seasons!

- 1. We plough the fields, and scatter
The good seed on the land,
But it is fed and watered
By God's almighty hand:
He sends the snow in winter,
The warmth to swell the grain,
The breezes and the sunshine,
And soft refreshing rain.*
- 2. He only is the Maker
Of all things near and far;
He paints the wayside flower,
He lights the evening star;
The winds and waves obey Him;
By Him the birds are fed;
Much more to us, His children,
He gives our daily bread.*

- 3. We thank Thee, then, O Father,
For all things bright and good,
The seedtime and the harvest,
Our life, our health, our food.
No gifts have we to offer,
For all Thy love imparts,
But that which Thou desirest,
Our humble, thankful hearts.*

Matthias Claudius (1740 - 1815)

For the month of June we have two birthday celebrations coming up. Please, mark them on your calendar.

JOAN KOERSELMAN

Box 624 Coaldale, Alta. TOK 0L0

Joan hopes to celebrate her 22nd birthday on June 17th, the Lord willing! She attended Junior High Opportunity classes, worked at the Sunrise Ranch training Centre and at present is helping her mother at home.

BEVERLY BREUKELMAN

Box 6566 Coaldale, Alta. TOK 0L0

Beverly will be celebrating her 17th birthday on June 30th, the Lord willing! She attends Junior High special education. She helps around the house also, and enjoys cooking and baking. She helps in the community thrift shop two afternoons a week and likes it very much!

Please, send both girls your congratulations! Shall we spread some sunshine, brothers and sisters?

* * * * *

In the last Clarion I mentioned Mrs. Groenwold from The Netherlands and how she was getting along. We received this thank you note which I will pass on to you in Dutch: "Vanuit Nederland kom ik u allen hartelijk bedanken voor de vele brieven en kaarten die ik mocht ontvangen via de kerkbode, ik heb er erg van genoten. Ook mijn man en kinderen vonden het mooi. We hebben daarin weer ondervonden, de gemeenschap der heiligen. Hartelijk gegroet van uw zuster in Holland."

Stan Leyenhorst personally wrote a letter to let us know how he is doing. He is very thankful for the attention he received from the brothers and sisters. He wrote: "Everything is working out well. My arms are getting up in strength, which enables me to do quite a bit. I am now driving my mom's car wherever I have to go, which gives me quite a bit of freedom. It is hard to describe the experience so far, but it has taught me a lot of patience. May we all see the Lord's hand in the bad as well as the good. Many thanks to everyone for their consideration!"

Mrs. Foekens of Chatham, Ontario sends us the following note: "I would like to thank all the brothers and sisters of our churches who remembered Marinus's birthday. Marinus enjoyed his cards very much and it was greatly appreciated. Thank you!"

* * * * *

If you know of anyone sick or lonely, please send your request to:

Mrs. J.K. Riemersma

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

Covenantal Education

INTRODUCTION

Greatly do I appreciate your invitation to address this enlightened Society at this occasion, although, I must admit, I wrought in me great fear and trembling, for my boldness is truly superficial and my scholarly ability questionable, especially when I noted the impressive qualifications of your previous speakers and the topics which they dared to tackle. Realizing my weakness that I respond perhaps too rashly to challenge, I nevertheless accepted your invitation and kind gesture, since the training of covenant children is also fully my concern and partly my calling. I trust that you will remind me of the fact that my training lies in a different field and discipline, and if I should fail in any aspect of pedagogy or didactics, I trust that you will with Christian charity counsel me. On the other hand, I venture to trust that you will welcome some impulses and comments from my side as possibly containing some minute grains of truth for your important daily work, and in this way we may under God's blessing *mutually* edify one another.

I am further comforted in the fact that we both, office-bearers and teachers, are working from the *same basis*, the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity, in which this Word of God is by His grace faithfully confessed. Within this framework of Scripture and Confession, there is room for differences, especially in practical applications, whereby the unity is not endangered but uncovered in its diversity of gifts and talents. If the foundation is at stake, there is *crisis*, also in education. If the foundation is accepted by all, in childlike simplicity, there is growth, also in education. It is this growth that we seek together, development in our profession, from our confession, based on the Revelation of God.

The "Principal's Club" (a very cosy terminology, by the way) has permitted me to speak on the topic "*Covenantal Education*." It was a topic not of *their*, but of *my*, choosing. So please don't fault the "club" if the topic should fall flat in our midst; in that case I alone will have to nurse my wounds in silence. And I chose this topic not because you

would fail to be aware of the importance of the Covenant for Reformed education (such suspicions have not entered my mind). But I do wonder if the doctrine of the Covenant (and all the principle and practical implications of it) have been sufficiently elaborated upon and worked out in our midst with respect to Christian education.

I was very pleased to read the excellent speech of Dr. Oosterhoff, "The Biblical Image of Man as Basis for a Biblical Philosophy of Education," ** pleased all the more when I noted the prominence which was given to Prof. B. Holwerda's views with respect to education. But whereas in Holwerda's speech the concept of Covenant is a key matter, already in the *title* of his speech, even though Dr. Oosterhoff mentions the Covenant at various places, the title here is more *general*: the Biblical Image of *Man*, and the predominance of the word "covenant" is somewhat obscured. My speech is not a correction, however, on Dr. Oosterhoff's address, but, hopefully, an elaboration upon and recognition of its most basic content: the significance of the covenant for Reformed education. Whereby you cannot expect from me to work out all practical aspects (that is not my field), but to provide some basic directives, which you might work out in more detail.

THE COVENANT: A BASIC PRINCIPLE

In trying to find and formulate the motivating principle behind Reformed education, we should first ask ourselves this question: "Why do we have our *own* schools?" or perhaps: "What makes our children so distinctive and (in that sense) "special" that they should merit and receive a different education than other children in the same society?" Is it something *in* those children themselves which would necessitate our separating them from others and giving them an exclusive education? I do not think that any of us would dare to go in that direction.

Our children are by nature not any different from others, but are by reason of one common origin and nature conceived and born in sin and therefore subject to all misery, even to condemnation itself. So there is as such noth-

ing "unique" about our children which would reserve for them the privilege of Reformed education.

So in formulating principles for a "Reformed philosophy of education," we should be careful, not approaching the matter too quickly from the so-called "religious nature of *the child*." It is quite a common idea that man is a "totally religious being" (e.g. J.E. Fennema, *Nurturing Children in the Lord*, page 3) and therefore "possesses intrinsic desire to worship," but when this idea is suitably contrasted with Scripture, it becomes "suspect," to say the least. In speaking about the nature of man, does not the apostle Paul write, "No one seeks God; there is no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans 3:10ff.) Man may seek to appease "higher powers" but that would perhaps rather be "superstition" than "religion." And even if "the child" could be termed a totally religious being, this would then apply to *all* children, and not imply anything distinctive about *our* children.

If we cannot find *in* our children a distinctive quality, then we must need search elsewhere, namely, *in God*. At the baptism of our children we speak of this. While on the one hand, the children share a common depraved nature and misery, on the other hand, they are *sanctified* in Christ and set into *His covenant*. There we find the only *redeeming* feature; not what is *in* the children by creation or nature but what has been given to the children in God's Covenant. In this sense (with Rev. P.Y. de Jong, *Christian Education in a Changing and Challenging World*, page 17ff.) we may speak of the "covenant distinctiveness" of our children. They have a distinctive position, purpose, and problems, and they therefore must be taught by a distinctive *program*.

Our children, then, are different only for *one* reason: God has set them in Jesus Christ into *His* Covenant and wants them trained in the way of the Covenant, by the Word of the Covenant. And when in the Scriptures the Lord speaks of the upbringing and training of the children, this is always

Continued on next page.

OUR COVER

Englishman's River Falls, Vancouver Island. (Photo courtesy B.C. government.)

done from the qualifying datum of the Covenant. Psalm 78, for instance, speaks of the teaching of children as an ongoing process, and what is being taught is: God's testimony, the Law, the works of God, His commandments; in short, the whole *Covenant way of life*. And when, in Psalm 25, we read that the Lord will *instruct* in the way of life, we read, "He makes known to them *His Covenant*." In Psalm 147 we read of God's general government and providence over *all* things, but His grace unto Israel is that He made known to them His ordinances, His *Covenant*.

It would seem to me, then, that the only basic principle for our Reformed education is the reality of this Covenant, its great riches and undeserved privilege, but also its high obligation

and calling. Recognizing this also makes us more aware of the only foundation for this education, namely, the *Word* of the Covenant, the complete revelation of God. We then do not have to *start* (as C. van Til suggests) with *man* (Psychologically, of course, the Christian must also start with man . . .," *Essays on Reformed Education*, page 78ff.), but we start with God's gift of grace in the Covenant.

There is *one* Covenant and *one* Word; so there is a common calling and bond for home, church, and school, and they deal with a common denominator: "Covenant children." This does not mean that the calling is not *diversified*. In the home basic attitudes and skills will be developed; the church will lead the children into the *doctrine* of the Scriptures as a credal unity; the

school will concentrate on arts and skills necessary so that the children can adequately function as God's children according to their talents and gifts. Each "institution" (if I may use that word) must see its own special task, yet not loose from the others. The one Word and Covenant sets *all* under the absolute sovereignty of God.

So I conclude that the distinctive character of Reformed education is that it deals with Covenant children, instructs in the Covenant way of life, with the one Covenant revelation, and therefore should be aptly called "*Covenantal Education*." That is not just a matter of "words," but a matter of essence and method.

Continued on next page.

Our Saviour, When He Told His Own

JOHN 14:1-3, 6

Tune: Present Hymn 38



1. Our Saviour, when He told His own
That He ere long would leave,
These blessed words of comfort spoke
Lest they — and we — should grieve:

2. "Let not your hearts with anxious thoughts
Be troubled or dismayed.
Believe in God, believe in Me
And trust My gracious aid.

3. "I to My Father's house now go,
Where many dwellings are.
As I have told you, there I will
A place for you prepare.

4. "For one day I shall come again
To take you unto Me;
Where I, your Lord and Saviour, am,
There you shall also be.

5. "I am the way, the truth, the life.
There is not anyone
Who shall to God the Father come
Except by Me, the Son."

ORIENTATION

With this in mind, we turn to the various publications which have appeared during the last decades on "Christian Education." We may gratefully note that there is a growing interest in developing a Christian philosophy of education and a Christian curriculum (e.g. *Shaping School Curriculum*, by Steensma and van Brummelen), and we may certainly benefit from many of the worthwhile perspectives that are opened.

But, sadly enough, there is very little (and disappointing) attention for the Covenant in much contemporary writing about the principles and manner of Christian education. Without pretending to be complete, let me examine a few publications from this aspect, whereby I do not deny other positive aspects, but simply point to that which is lacking essentially.

In his *The Messianic Character of American Education*, R.J. Rushdoony does not mention the Covenant at all, but perhaps that book, which discusses various philosophies without elaborately promoting its own philosophy, is not suited for our purpose of investigation. In *Intellectual Schizophrenia*, Rushdoony does, somewhat suddenly and breathtakingly, speak in strong terms of the Covenant and says, "Education is inevitably a *Covenantal Act*." You might be comforted by the fact that my title was borrowed from Rushdoony's comments in this respect. He writes, "Covenant theology was a doctrine of salvation, a plan of conduct, a philosophy of history as well as the *Foundation of Education*" (page 8). We could not agree more. When it comes to the *Contents* of this education, however, Rushdoony suffices in saying that "it holds man to be God's vice-regent, created in His image, and called upon to establish dominion over all creation and over himself" (page 11). This aspect of the *Covenant*, prominent in the first pages of the book, however, plays *no further role*, and that is disappointing, at least in my opinion, especially when we read what he writes about the *church* and the *school* which he equalizes when he states, "The Christian school is a manifestation of the visible Church" (page 38ff.).

But back to the Covenant. The prominent theologian and scholar, C. van Til in his *Essays on Christian Education*, writes about the "Reformed view of education." As leading principles, he suggests: the Bible and es-

pecially the doctrines of creation and providence; with as basic motivation: the presupposition of God. The only time that he mentions the Covenant is when he speaks about the *co-relation* of supernatural revelation (God) and natural revelation (man) and says that in this way man is a "Covenant being." This rather "philosophical approach" is somewhat confusing, I'm afraid, and hardly suited for our purposes. The Covenant as a living bond between God and man does not function here in this publication.

Other publications worth listing are, *Christian Day Schools*, by D.L. Kranendonk; *Education in the Truth*, by Norman de Jong; *Nurturing Children in the Lord*, by J.E. Fennema; but all these have *no mention* of the significance of the Covenant for Christian education. Of the three, Norman de Jong, in discussing the "responsible institution" (the state, the church, the home) makes the most interesting comments: "In Scripture pointed and repeated admonitions to parents are given . . . to ensure that the covenantal relationship between children and God is not violated." But he adds, "Reflection on this doctrine of the covenant, however, complicates the question of educational responsibility" (page 125). It would seem that for de Jong, the *Covenantal* aspect is the interrelationship between the parents and the church of which they are members, but has no real bearing on the school.

It is then refreshing to read P.Y. de Jong's *Christian Education in a Changing and Challenging World*. Although he, too, embarks on the principle of "sphere sovereignty," the matter of the *Covenant* plays a prominent role in his view. Man, created in the image of God, is a "covenantal being," and is either "covenantally obedient or covenantally disobedient" (page 16). He writes, "Basically this demands of us some sound understanding of God's Covenant with us and our children." As mentioned earlier, he refers to the "covenantal distinctiveness" of Christian education. His "Biblical view" of man is determined also by the Covenant. Man was created as a Covenant being, responsible to the Covenant God, and *now* set in the New Covenant in the blood of Christ (page 38).

I may suffice with these examples. These gleanings show us two extremes: total lack of *and* great emphasis on the *Covenant* as principle for Christian education. It would stand to reason, then, that the place of the

Covenant in the Christian school movement has been a "bone of contention." The debate concerning the place and the function of the Covenant in education has indeed been going on in the Christian Reformed Church and coincided with the question of the extent of the Church's supervision over the school. Those who stressed the bond between church and school (and the supervision of the Church) did so *from the doctrine* of the one Covenant. In his book, *The Roots of the Calvinistic Day School Movement*, Donald Oppewal describes this conflict. Those holding to the "parochial view" (Church and School are one), he writes, "tend to call the schools *Covenantal* rather than either Christian or Calvinistic, and rather than seeking theoretical justification in the Kuyperian conception of sphere sovereignty, it is held that the need for the Christian Schools rest upon the doctrine of the *Covenant*." He adds, "However, this position is often *stated*, it is rarely *argued*." I hope that, in the above-stated, I have given at least some argumentation to show the unity of church and school — which does not mean that I favour the "parochial" (i.e. *church-supervised* school) system, but I do see a common basis, therefore a mutual influencing, and, since the teachers and pupils are members of the church, a specific responsibility of the Consistory (compare Article 21, Church Order).

In order to complete the picture, Oppewal adds, "However vocal the holders of the parochial view have been, it would be inaccurate to say that this view is the dominant one in the Christian Reformed Church and in the Calvinistic School system" (page 24). It is my contention that because the *Covenant* as unifying factor between the home, the church, and the school fell away, and the emphasis came to fall on the "religious nature of the child as imagebearer," the route to interdenominational schools was opened. Specific "denominational creeds" were no longer adhered to in the school, and soon Presbyterians and Methodists (Baptists) were invited and welcomed. Oppewal describes this whole development. It is then evident why the Covenant as motivating principle functions so little in publications out of these circles.

CL. STAM

To be continued.

*Speech delivered at the Professional Development Day of the Canadian Reformed teachers of Ontario. Previously published in CRTA Magazine.
**Published in *Clarion*, Volume 27, p. 557.



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.

DEN HAAG (ANP)

Thirty-one percent of the Dutch believe an existence after death. Also thirty-one percent think that death means the end, that "dead is dead." Twenty-eight percent don't know whether there is life after death, but hope so. Nine percent do not know and are not interested in what might happen after death. The above appears from a survey and poll which the weekly *De Tijd* conducted about the expectation of The Netherlands people concerning life after death (ND).

HEULEN.

To a letter to all members of the congregation of the (synodical) Reformed Church at Heerlen, in which the proposal was made to abolish the second service, the consistory received only six reactions, of which four were negative. The congregation numbers over eight hundred.

The second service has meanwhile been discontinued as of the beginning of April (ND).

In 1978, baptized membership (of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, vO) declined by 24,645 to 2,742,313. The number of total congregations at year's end 1978 was 6,023, down by 28. This compared to losses of over 83,000 members and 152 congregations in 1977, the year that most losses occurred as a result of the Synod's recent doctrinal controversy.

On the "plus" side, total contributions from throughout the church amounted to an all-time high of \$397,621,267, nearly \$31 million over 1977, for an 8.5 percent increase. This

represents a per-member average yearly contribution of \$195.29, among the highest of any church body. Also on the rise was total adult Bible class attendance, at 365,675, or 9,244 higher than 1977. (CN)

NEW YORK (RNS)

More than 30 million legal abortions are performed worldwide each year, with more than 1 million of them in the U.S., according to a report by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, an affiliate of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

Since the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court ruling liberalizing abortion, more than 5 million U.S. women have obtained legal abortions in 3,000 clinics, hospitals and physicians offices, the report said.

The number of legal abortions in the U.S. has increased from about 745,000 in 1973 to 1, 3 million in 1977. In recent years, U.S. women have terminated almost 3 out of 10 pregnancies by abortion. . . .

The Netherlands has the lowest rate (of 15 countries surveyed, vO) with 5.5 abortions per 1,000 women. The USSR had the highest rate, 115 abortions per 1,000

. . . Canada 10.6

STOCKHOLM (RNS)

The Swedish Parliament, by an overwhelming vote, passed a law prohibiting parents from striking their children or treating them in any other humiliating way. The bill goes into effect July 1.

The bill clearly prohibits such punishment as slapping, whacking, or spanking children, but the area of "humiliating treatment" is more vague, possibly including such actions as sending them to bed without supper

The law may be the first of a series concerning children's rights. The government is presently discussing an apparatus that would provide children with their own counsel in divorce cases.

A consciousness-raising campaign to inform the public of the new anti-spanking laws has been planned by the Ministry of Justice. . . .

Among chapter headings in the parents' brochure are "Can you bring up a child without slapping him?" and "Of course you have the right as a parent to get angry and show it."

The Year of the Child is here. And the preciously few children that succeed

in getting past the abortion barrier have to be protected from discipline: they should grow up the way they wish to grow up. In olden days they said in Dutch, "voor galg en rad" (for the gallows and the rack.) The wisdom of the Scriptures is openly rejected. In its stead comes the folly of man. And the world is rushing towards its ultimate ruin. Of course, you have the right to get angry and to pull out your own hair to get rid of frustration. Meanwhile your child can stand there, laughing at you because of your folly and rage. The Scripture says that he who loves his son does not spare the rod. When the rod is applied, such is not done to get rid of your anger. It is to keep your child in the path of life. But a world whose eyes have been blinded by its own wisdom (which is folly before God) no longer even knows what true love is.

NEW YORK

Dr. Hays Rockwell, Rector of St. James Episcopal Church, and Rabbi Arthur Schneier of Park East Synagogue were scheduled to conduct a commemoration on May 1 in observance of President Carter's proclamation calling for "days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust." . . . The keynote address at the church was to be delivered by Professor Telford Taylor, former Chief United States Counsel at the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal and a member of the Presidential Commission on the Holocaust. . . .

The program was to begin at 5:30 p.m., at St. James' Church, Madison Avenue and 71st Street. After a candlelight procession, the concluding commemoration was scheduled to take place at the Park East Synagogue, 163 East 67th Street. . . .

A kosher dinner will be served at the synagogue and a panel discussion with Professor Taylor will follow.

"Ecumenical," yes, but until this very day the Jews reject the Lord Jesus Christ, calling Him a deceiver and blasphemer. And then one is to have an "ecumenical service" with those who reject our Saviour? How can two walk together unless they first have come together? And how can two come together if the one calls a curse what the other (at least officially) calls a blessing?

Continued on page 226.

news medley

Once again we begin to notice that the summer season is about there. The notices about society-activities and about meetings become less numerous, although every year anew there seems to be a scramble to squeeze as many meetings as possible into the last few weeks of the active season. It is too bad that we do not have a federal coordinator with whom every plan to have a meeting should be filed. No, don't worry, I am an enemy of centralization; I think that there is already too much centralization among us, and we should not have any more of the same. But especially where activities planned are of more than a local nature, there should be some sort of consultation and cooperation. Recently there was fierce competition for one specific Friday evening on which no fewer than four very worthwhile activities were planned in four different places in our neighbourhood. The result was that each and every meeting suffered, for we can be only at one place at the same time.

That is too bad when it concerns matters which are of more than local interest, as I wrote above. If such meetings are published well in advance with periodic reminders we might be able to prevent it to some extent. But please: let's not have another organization for that. It seems that of forming organizations there is almost no end. On the one hand, that may promote participation by the membership; on the other hand, it may deprive the existing ones of much-needed "blood."

Many a time I also receive notices for our local bulletin which advocates participation in activities in other congregations which are not of a "general" nature, but purely local affairs. Then we are urged to publish that and to urge our members to come and take part. Sometimes the purpose of such activities is to raise money for most worthwhile purposes, such as our Schools. Apart from the fact that the dates for such activities oftentimes constitute competition with dates set by the local societies, I would mention that I don't think that it is fair to send such invitations.

There is practically no Congregation among us which does not need all the money they can bring together. More and more schools are established, for which we are very grateful. In by far the most cases this means a heavy financial burden for the parents and their supporters. Is it then fair when a Ladies' Auxiliary sends invitations around for a fundraising dinner or for some other event the purpose of which is to collect money for their local school? I do appreciate the endeavours and activity of our sisters. But for a long time I have been very hesitant to publish such notices in our local bulletin. I don't think that I shall insert any in the future, for we, too, here in Fergus and in Guelph need every penny for our schools. Think about it, will you? Don't make an issue out of it; I just wished to bring it to your attention.

Meanwhile, we had better proceed and mention some news from the midst of the Churches.

Let us begin then with the personal matters.

Two *Clarions* ago (strange expression, but you'll know what I mean) we saw a picture of brother and sister H. Idema of Langley, who celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary on May 16th. When I saw the picture, I recalled the days when they came down from Houston and settled in the

Valley. May they enjoy their retirement for a long time to come. We all realize that reaching the age of eighty years is reaching the age of the very strong ones, and when I congratulate a brother or sister who has reached an advanced age with his or her birthday, I oftentimes hear, "I don't expect many more years at this age." Yet, we do not know how long it will please the Lord to grant us the light of life. And a long life is still one of the blessings of the covenant.

Our congratulations go likewise to brother and sister H. VanSchubert. Of their fortieth wedding anniversary I learned from the Toronto bulletin, which also mentioned that brother VanSchubert's father was over from The Netherlands for the occasion. Such an event will not happen very often, I think. And, staying in Toronto, brother and sister L.J. VanHoff will also celebrate the fortieth wedding anniversary. That will be on May 31st. We could see their picture in the latest *Clarion*, and join with all the others who came to offer their congratulations. May these two couples continue to enjoy the Lord's blessing upon their pathway and receive much joy from the days our heavenly Father grants them.

Also from Toronto comes the tidings that the Vegters, Toronto's Mission Aid workers in Irian Jaya, were expected to arrive on May 7th. They spent some time in The Netherlands where they arrived first from their flight from Jakarta, and now come to Canada to enjoy their holidays. "Holidays" is only relative: meetings are scheduled with the various mission aid committees and the Churches that support Toronto's mission work. In between the activities, however, they will be able to relax so that, having seen the brethren, they may return to their field of labour with renewed strength.

And, to conclude our remarks in the personal sphere, the Rev. H. Scholten has again been discharged from the hospital. According to his own words, he feels better than the previous time. The only thing is: he has been told by his physician to avoid all stress. We wish him the nearness of the Lord and strength to do what the doctor has told him to do.

Having thus "exhausted" the personal memorabilia, we turn to the news from the Churches.

Staying in Toronto, we mention that the Political Study Club organized a meeting where Dr. E. Schuurman from The Netherlands was to speak on "Christian in a Technological Society."

Another item of interest was the following sentence in Toronto's bulletin: "A member who heard that the finances of the church were quite low and that therefore the project of fixing up the catechism room had to be postponed, donated for this purpose an extra gift of \$1,000.00 for the church." May this example find many followers.

However, it is a sad thing when it has to be stated that the Church finances are sort of low. There are — and I notice this from many bulletins — still too many members who donate very irregularly or very regularly too little or very regularly nothing at all, or very regularly at the end of the year, meanwhile letting all the others pay in the course of the year. Then the Church oftentimes has to borrow money to meet its obligations, whereas those members use their money all year long and think at the end that they make a substantial contribution.

In some Churches the question was discussed repeatedly whether those who do not contribute at all or who are much below what may be expected, should be disciplined. I am more and more inclined to say, "Yes." Once I shocked several members by stating in a sermon: "and

40th Wedding Anniversary



Albert and Rita VanderSluis will celebrate their 40th Wedding Anniversary, the Lord willing, on May 26. They were married in Drachten, and emigrated to Canada in 1953. Later on they moved to the U.S.A. and in 1958 they settled in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Lord blessed them with one son and three daughters, all of whom are married, and they have eighteen grandchildren. Br. VanderSluis served the church in Grand Rapids, first as a deacon, and up to now as an elder. Both are enjoying good health.

NEWS MEDLEY — Continued.

there are some members who took part in the celebration of the Holy Supper today, but who did not even pay yet for the little piece of bread which they received at the table." But isn't that how the situation really is, when it comes to the point? It is because of those who are faithful that the services can be held, that the churchbuildings are heated in winter, that the buildings are not in disrepair, that the hydro has not been disconnected, that the minister is still alive and has not starved to death because of lack of financial support. I think that those who dare to come to the holy supper without even having contributed one penny, so that others have paid for the bread and the wine they receive, should be told that they are not permitted to partake unless they become obedient to the fourth commandment also in this respect.

Back to the news.

We were speaking of meetings of political study societies. In Burlington, too, there is action. An all-candidate meeting was scheduled for the first of May. "We propose," the bulletin states, "to have each candidate address us for ten minutes and then to have a panel of three people question them on the policies of their parties."

Edmonton was planning such a meeting for the 7th of May. That is past when you read these lines. Orangeville was planning the same for May 17. It is good when our people become involved and when they are interested. Dictatorships are established and countries are ruined because the large majority of the population kept quiet and was not interested in what was going on. When they finally woke up, it was too late to do anything about the situation.

A cheery note was found in the Guelph bulletin. "The Committee of Administration would like to inform the congregation that the mortgage has been paid off. We can look back with thankfulness on all the blessings we have received in order to pay off our mortgage in such a short period of time."

Speaking about purchase of property, the Ottawa bulletin tells us that "the Steeple Hill Road property is reported on No reply has been received as yet." Thus we shall have to practise patience. Perhaps we shall know more next time.

In Hamilton an Evangelism Meeting was held. The announcement gave as the topic for discussion: "The evening will include a panel discussion by the four Committee members who will review and discuss a book by John R. Stott entitled *Our Guilty Silence*."

From Hamilton we jump all the way to Carman. "More shelves have been added in the study of the Rev. so that now he can put his books up instead of having to jump over them." It is also the experience of ministers that they can use their books better when these are not on piles but neatly arranged in a bookcase. The trouble is that as a young minister one starts with relatively few books, but that one keeps adding and adding. There is never an end to the building of shelves, for there is never an end to the purchasing of books, since there is never an end to the publishing of books, because there is never an end to the writing of books.

In nearby Winnipeg the Consistory is debating what to do with the house in which the deBruin family were living. The real estate market does not seem to be in too good a shape for selling; there seems to be a slump. However, the Consistory is of the opinion that it should be tried to sell that manse. Well, you need only one person who likes it; hopefully they can find such a person.

There was not much news. The summertime is approaching. Since I don't make up the news, we have to conclude for this time. Hope to meet you two weeks from now, same place, same wavelength. vO

REFORMED PEPPERMINT EATERS

The preacher's voice may rave and rant:
beloved hear! the end's at hand;
Your judgment will be hard as flint . . .
But we? We eat our peppermint.

The preacher's voice may speak of hell:
beloved hear! you would do well
to flee from wrath; come take the hint . . .
But we? We eat our peppermint.

The preacher's voice may speak of grace:
beloved hear! there is yet place;
you'll be received 'though you have sinned . . .
But we? We eat our peppermint.

JOHANNES DEVIET

Carman's "Flood Sunday"



The street running in front of the old Shamrock restaurant, presently known as the Fireside Inn.

On Sunday morning, April 22, the downstairs hall of Carman's Canadian Reformed Church was slowly filling up to capacity. This particular Sunday, however, it was not people entering the building, but water. The Boyne River, that innocent-looking, hesitantly-curving, backtracking, glorified gully-stream had become unable to harness

the waters piling up from the west. Would the hastily erected sandbag-dikes hold?

All Saturday, all through the night, and Sunday, hundreds of people had been filling sandbags, piling them up around town buildings, country homes, hog and cattle barns. As the waters continued to rise, inundating most of

the southern half of our town, many basements filled up with water, including the one of our church building. Many farms east of town became isolated by water.

That Sunday morning no church bells sounded through the town of Carman. Instead, three times we heard the not-so-serene sound of the town siren.

INTERNATIONAL — Continued.

From an advertisement in *Christianity Today* of April 20th:

Brass Bowls from India. . . Useful in fully Scriptural churches for foot-washing services. Can also be used for infant baptism and other unscriptural uses.

Know any more unscriptural uses besides infant baptism?

Feel anything for having an "ecumenical service?"

From the "Church News" column of *Nederlands Dagblad*:

After having been vacant for three years, this past Sunday candidate N. N. was ordained as the minister of the Reformed Church at N.

Know any more vacant ministers?

vO

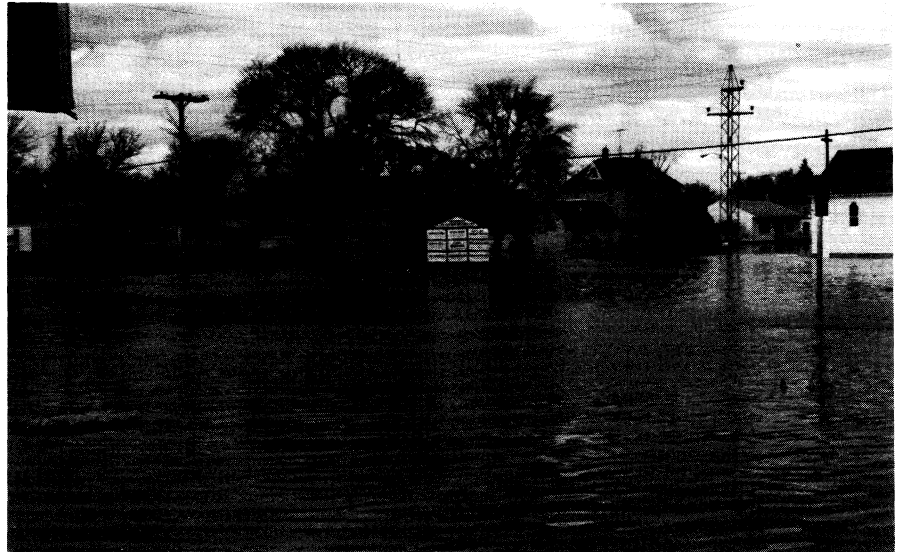


A view of the business section on Main Street.

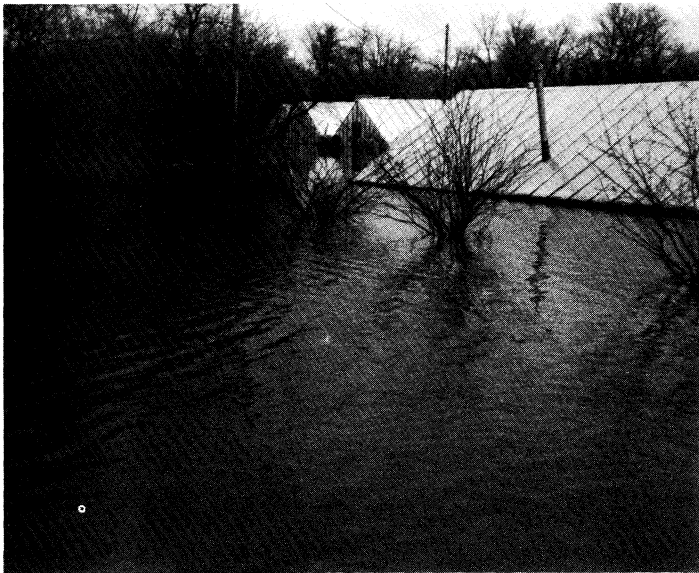
Usually that siren tells us that our warm friend, "fire," has become our enemy. This time the siren told us that our wet friend, "water," had become our enemy.

Throughout that Sunday we worked and worked. We carried up books, tables, archives, chairs, kitchenware. We installed sump pumps, moved hogs and cattle, prepared make-do meals, reminded each other that this was Sunday, even though it did not seem like it.

By now the waters have receded and our basements are pumped out, disinfected as clean as possible, and, yes, damaged. Most any member of the congregation you talk to now agrees that our new church building we hope to build, the Lord willing, in 1980



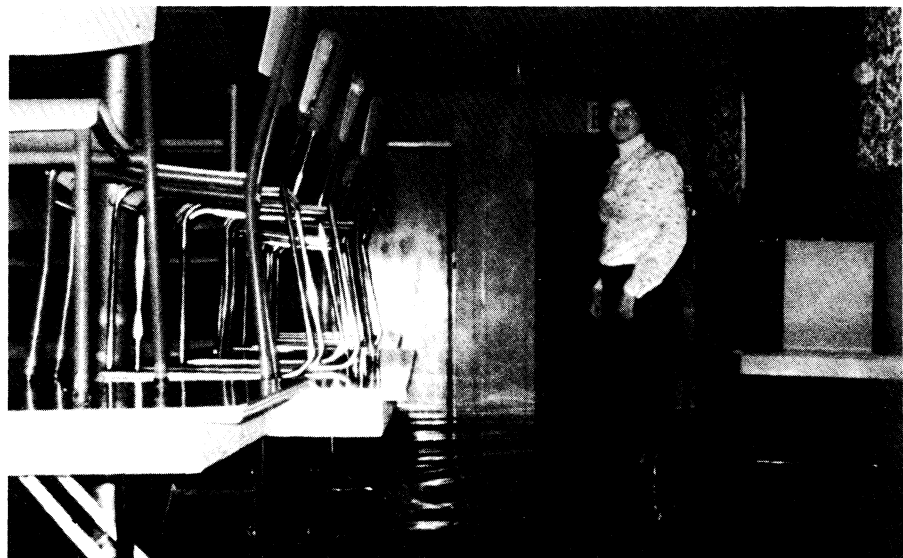
Looking north from the Canadian Reformed Church.



A view of some of Vanderveen's Greenhouses.

(or earlier?), should have no basement but be built on ground level.

Sunday, April 22, we could not come together for worship. Yet we were vividly, even forcefully, reminded of God, at Whose word the waters fall and rise (Psalm 104). He even makes the rising and the falling waters serve the salvation of His people (Lord's Day 9).



The Church basement (Sunday, April 22).

school X crossing

“Besides this, we as ministers and consistories, must be deeply concerned about our Christian schools.”

CHURCH-TEACHING AND SCHOOL-TEACHING ARE INTER-DEPENDENT.

In *The Outlook* of April 1979, p. 18, C. Van Schouwen writes an “Evaluation of ‘Our Testimony.’”² Van Schouwen sees that “little foxes” are beginning to enter the Christian Reformed vineyard. He therefore cautions,

we must mend our fences and take a new look at the educational program of our churches. We as ministers and consistories should adopt a program of actions, in which we determine to indoctrinate the youth in all the basic truths of the Heidelberg Catechism. Our young people should have these doctrines on their finger tips. They should know what it means to be Reformed and why they should be Reformed in their thinking and living. They should be able to detect any deviation from the Reformed faith.

He continues cautioning,

Besides this, we as ministers and consis-

tories, must be deeply concerned about our Christian schools. There must be a much greater working together of consistories and Christian school boards in maintaining the Reformed character of our Christian schools. Christian character development is more important than academic standards. In hiring teachers, our boards must be certain that those hired to teach are well versed in Reformed doctrine and love it. If we lose our Christian schools, we will eventually lose everything, as far as the spiritual well-being of the church is concerned.

I pass these words of C. Van Schouwen on to our readers for this is a timely warning also for consistories and ministers of the Canadian Reformed Churches, as well as for school boards and school societies of Canadian Reformed parents and their teachers. I consider these words all the more timely in the light of the piece of disappointing news to which I now draw your attention.

“It is clear that we will not be able to establish a Canadian Reformed Teachers’ College by September 1979.”

The disappointing news I am referring to is announced in a Newsletter of the Canadian Reformed Teachers’ College Association. Under the heading, “The organization of our Teachers’ College,” the Chairman of the Association, Dr. J. Faber, announces: “It is clear that we will not be able to establish a Canadian Reformed Teachers’ College by September 1979.” What is the reason for this “not being able?” The Chairman continues, “The Board advertised both in Canada and in The Netherlands, as we wanted to start with at least two full-time instructors. One of them should be acquainted with the Canadian elementary school system, and the other should give instruction in Reformed pedagogy and didactics and so function as a link or bridge figure for our Dutch past and its rich heritage.

“The remarkable result of our advertisements was that we received a

very promising application from a lady in The Netherlands who is qualified to teach pedagogy, but we did not obtain any Canadian response.” So far the Chairman.

From this the immediate reason is indeed clear. Is this the only reason, or rather, is this the *first* reason? When I look at the reports about the support for a Canadian Reformed Teachers’ College then I see that from some of our larger congregations there is only minimal support. Are our school societies, boards, parents not eager “in hiring teachers to be certain that those hired to teach are well versed in Reformed doctrine and love it” (to quote C. Van Schouwen)? Are our consistories and ministers slack in following up Article 21 of the Church Order in seeing to it “that there are good teachers who shall not only teach the children reading, writing, languages, and arts, but also instruct them in godliness

and the Catechism?” Are we getting stuck halfway? Obedient in establishing Reformed parental schools, are we now becoming disobedient in providing these schools with teachers well versed in Reformed doctrine and loving it? We *need* a Canadian Reformed Teachers’ College, and the Lord, Who gave us already so much, will hear and supply. But then we must ask in faith, not wavering, and we must work in faith faithfully (James 4:1-10).

My referral to Article 21, Church Order leads me to an interesting remark I read in the “Draft Report Church Order,” dated January 1979.³

In the “Draft Report Church Order” the present Article 21 has become Article 58, placed right next to Article 57 which is proposed to read,

The Consistory shall see to it that the covenant of God is sealed by baptism to the children of believers as soon as feasible.

The proposed Article 58 (formerly 21) reads:

The Consistory shall see to it that the parents, to the best of their ability, have their children attend a school where the instruction given is in harmony with the Word of God as the Church has summarized it in her Confessions.

The Committee appointed by Synod to draft this Report remarks:

We consider the proposed wording of this article a great improvement.

By placing it immediately after the article on the baptism of the children of believers, we wish to express the close connection there is between baptism and the instruction which our children receive at school.

Although — we are convinced — the promise which the parents give to instruct and have their children instructed in the aforesaid doctrine refers to what the parents themselves do at home and to the instruction the children receive in and by the Church, yet we are endeavouring to express — by placing this article immediately after the one on baptism — that the Consistories are to see to it that the parents do their utmost endeavour and take care that, if they can prevent such, at school be not broken down that which they build up at home and in the Church.

We speak here of the Consistories: they shall see to it whether the parents are faithful in this respect, too.

My remarks to this are:

1. I appreciate the emphasis on the close connection there is between baptism and the instruction which our children receive at school.

2. I regret that this close connection is only symbolically expressed by

Continued on next page.

Public Justice and Human Rights. Yes, But . . .

In the April 21st issue of *Clarion*, Volume 28, No. 8, page 181, Gerald Vandezande discusses the proposed "Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms." He warns us that the "justifiable limitations" on our rights could be used in a way, detrimental to the basic rights and freedoms we enjoy. I can agree with him that we should be on our guard. Further developments should certainly be carefully watched. However, I cannot agree with some of the statements he makes in connection with the FLQ crisis in 1970. Mr. Vandezande calls the invocation of the "infamous" War Measures Act, "unwarranted." Was it really so unwarranted? Let us briefly review what happened in 1970.

After several years of terrorism, the FLQ first kidnapped British trade commissioner James Cross on October 5, 1970. When the authorities refused to meet all their ransom demands, the terrorists also kidnapped Quebec Labour minister Pierre Laporte and later murdered him. The police forces were unable to find the kidnapers and, as they also had the duty to guard cabinet ministers as well as other prominent public figures, it was no wonder they started to show signs of exhaustion. Another worry the authorities had, was the sympathy shown in some sectors

of Quebec society with the aims of the FLQ. The Quebec government, in this uncertain situation, called on the Federal government for aid on October 15 at 2 p.m. That same night, about 2000 students, radicals and FLQ supporters gathered in the Paul Sauvé arena in Montreal and declared their solidarity with the FLQ. The situation was obviously deteriorating and on Friday, October 16, at 4 a.m. the Federal Cabinet proclaimed the War Measures Act. Almost immediately, troops moved into position and started to take over the guard duties from the police. Soon the situation stabilized. Although the police had evidence that more kidnappings were planned, not one was even tried. The FLQ became the hunted party and disappeared from the political scene.

There can be little doubt, although it was never admitted as far as I know, that the rioting and looting during the police strike of October 1969 in Montreal, weighed heavily on the minds of the authorities. Prime Minister Trudeau, in the Commons, advised MP's to look up what happened to Alexander Kerensky, socialist premier of Russia in 1917. Kerensky was rather easy going on the Bolsheviks and Trudeau apparently wondered if the Russian revolution would have succeeded in case Kerensky had locked up the revolutionaries

for three months. As he told reporters around the same time, he was not going to be another Kerensky! Although the Conservatives were doubtful at first, they supported the government when voting time came. The Commons voted 190-16 to approve the proclamation of the War Measures Act. Mr. Vandezande might have mentioned that the 16 MP's who voted against — "the courageous handful" as he calls them — were all members of the NDP! They, like their earlier socialist cousins of the German, so-called Weimar Republic before Hitler, as well as some other socialist regimes, showed their distaste for firm decisions when it comes to maintaining law and order. Maybe the Federal Government overreacted, who really knows for sure? But, as we all know, hindsight is better than foresight. Besides, in time of war and revolutionary anarchy, some curtailment of civil rights is unavoidable. In such a situation, is it not better to err on the safe side? The government should not "bear the sword in vain!" (Romans 13:4).

One certainly does not have to agree in everything with the Trudeau government to realize that it still possesses the "power of the sword." Keeping in mind Romans 13, we should not rashly condemn Federal Government action in case Quebec tries to separate illegally, like Mr. Vandezande does in his article. How can we judge whether illegal separation of Quebec would not rapidly deteriorate into anarchy? There can be little doubt, that in case a majority of Quebecers voted in favour of separation, the Federal Government would have to start negotiations. Even Mr. Trudeau could not keep Quebec subdued by force forever. According to columnist W.A. Wilson (Ottawa Journal, April 27, 1979), Mr. Trudeau has committed himself to separation if the people of Quebec voted overwhelmingly in favour of it.

There are other items in Mr. Vandezande's article I would like to question. For instance, what does he exactly mean by "arbitrary law and order mentality" and "vested interests of the rich, the strong and the loud"? This terminology reminds me of the so common expressions of a few years ago, like "law and order maniacs" and "the establishment." As examples, he mentions "the RCMP's Parti Québécois break-in" and "the government's uranium cartel." As far as the RCMP is

SCHOOL CROSSING — Continued.

placing Article 57 and Article 58 side by side, and not verbally, in words.

3. There is a distinction between the teaching of the parents at home, the teaching of the Church, and the teaching of the school. None of these three are to be identified with the other. Yet there is that golden cord that binds all three together: God's action at baptism and the parental vow at baptism, "to the utmost of their power."

4. I would like to retain from the old Article 21 the element that the Consistory is to see to it that the parents provide "good teachers," teachers "well versed in Reformed doctrine and loving it."

NOTES

¹ C. Van Schouwen is minister and professor emeritus in the Christian Reformed Churches. He writes of himself,

"In the past, I have taught Reformed Doctrine in two of our Christian High Schools, fourteen years at Dort College, and catechism classes in four of our local churches."

He now resides at Sioux Center, Iowa.

² "Our Testimony" is an appeal "to our brothers and sisters in the Christian Reformed Churches," written and endorsed by concerned ministers and members of these Churches. The text can be found in the October and November 1978 issues of *The Outlook*, or ordered from the Reformed Fellowship, Inc., 4855 Starr Street S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506.

³ Draft Report for a revised Church Order, ordered by the Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches, Coaldale 1977, Acts, Article 71.

J. VAN RIETSCHOTEN

Note: Please send a copy of your school bulletins or newsletters on a regular basis to:

Rev. J. Van Rietschoten

P.O. Box 164, Carman, Manitoba R0G 0J0.

Continued on next page.

concerned, they have indeed broken the law. In my opinion, the fault lies mainly with the successive Federal Governments in not clearly defining by law what the RCMP can and cannot do. Yet, they wanted information which could only be obtained illegally. It is obvious that an efficient police force must have authority to break the law in certain cases. As a simple case, consider the consequences if the police could not exceed the speed limit or go through red lights when pursuing reckless speeders or fleeing bankrobbers and other criminals, like terrorists. The other example, "the government uranium cartel" is also a "shocking case in point," Mr. Vandezande writes. I am not so sure the government could not take this action. They were protecting "vested interests" alright. But those "vested interests" belong, not only to the rich but to all of us. Is not a lot of taxpayers' money invested in uranium exploration, mining and processing? And how many jobs are not involved, directly or indirectly? There are many trade restrictions in force, everywhere in the world and in all kinds of forms. In this field also, the government may take action where it is forbidden to individuals and private enterprise. Consider, for example, the levying of custom's duties, royalties, and other special taxes. We should carefully observe what Romans 13 teaches about the rights of the government and our duties in this respect.

To sum up and put everything in a Biblical perspective; all of us, who want to be named after the Name of Christ, should be mindful of the words of King Solomon, written long ago:

"Fear the Lord and the king, my son, and do not join with the rebellious" (Proverbs 24:21, NIV).

We may protest and must refuse obedience in some cases. But, whatever we do, we are limited in our actions and criticism, by what the Apostles Peter and John said to the Sanhedrin:

"Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God" (Acts 4:19, NIV).

How Peter otherwise wanted the believers to act in obeying the civil authorities is abundantly clear from I Peter 2:13-25.

ALBERT ZUIDHOF

Sources: Newspaper clippings and "Seven Years of Terrorism, THE FLQ," a special report by the Montreal Star published in 1970.

PRESS RELEASE

of Classis Pacific of the Canadian Reformed Churches, held on Wednesday, April 4, 1979 at Cloverdale, B.C.

On behalf of the convening Church at Langley, B.C. the Rev. D. VanderBoom calls the meeting to order. He requests the delegates to sing Psalm 132:6 and 8. The Scripture reading is from Psalm 132. After prayer he extends a word of welcome to the delegates. The brothers from Houston examine the credentials; all Churches are represented.

Classis is then constituted. The officers are: Chairman: Rev. E.J. Tiggehaar; Clerk: Rev. J. Visscher; Vice-Chairman: Rev. D. VanderBoom.

The Provisional Agenda as submitted by the convening Church is adopted after a few items have been added.

The chairman mentions some memorable events: Rev. Meijer was installed as missionary and left for Brazil; Rev. C. VanDam accepted the call extended to him by the Church at New Westminster, and Rev. Boersema left after a stay of a year in New Westminster.

Next item is: Proposals and Instructions. An overture of the Church at Abbotsford is read and discussed. Classis advises the Church at Abbotsford to address this overture to the forthcoming Regional Synod. An instruction of the Church at Langley, concerning the number of brothers to be delegated to Regional Synod is discussed. Classis decides not to accede to the request to change the number of delegates from six to eight.

Approbation of the call extended to and accept by the Rev. C. Van Dam. The required documents are submitted by the Church at New Westminster and found to be in good order. Classis decides to approve the call.

The following reports are submitted to Classis: The Church at New Westminster reports that the books of the treasurer were found to be in good order. Deputies for preaching engagements report. Classis decides that the Church at Houston will receive classical preaching supply every third Sunday; half of these engagements will be supplied by the Rev. C. Van

Spronsen for reasons of geographical proximity. Committee on Revision Classical Regulations. Classis decides that the committee shall report again at next Classis to give all consistories the opportunity to study and discuss the proposed changes, as specified in Article 14 of these regulations.

The following appointments are made: Appointments made by Classis, November 15, 1978 are continued. Rev. VanderBoom is appointed to represent Classis at the installation of Rev. C. VanDam.

Classis then elects delegates to the forthcoming Regional Synod.

The following brothers are chosen and appointed: Rev. D. Vander Boom, Rev. C. Van Spronsen, and Rev. J. Visscher, and the elders R. Feenema, J. VanderHorst and J. VanderLinde. As alternates are appointed: Rev. M. Van der Wel and Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar and the elders A.W. DeLeeuw, H.W. Bisschop and L. Terpstra.

The Church at New Westminster is appointed as convening Church for next Classis, which will be convened on Wednesday, October 17, 1979. As officers will serve, D.V., Rev. M. Van derWel, Chairman; Rev. J. Visscher, Clerk; Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar, Vice-Chairman.

The censure ad Article 43 Church Order is not necessary. The Acts are read and adopted. The Press Release is read and approved. After the chairman has thanked the ladies who prepared the meal and many "goodies" he requests Classis to sing Psalm 138:1 and 3 and leads in thanksgiving. Classis is closed.

For the Classis Pacific,
D. VanderBoom, Vice-Chairman, e.t.

FOR THE READER'S INFORMATION

This issue of *Clarion* was mailed from Winnipeg Central Post Office on May 12, 1979.

Word Search — Puzzle No. 47

I CHRONICLES

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| anointed | | gatekeepers | incited | lot | oversight | rule | territory | |
| ark | David | genealogy | inhabitants | Merari | pestilence | sacrifices | thanksgiving | |
| army | dedicated | generations | inheritance | ministers | Philistines | Saul | throne | |
| assembly | descendants | Gershom | | music | plan | service | treasuries | |
| | divisions | gifts | Jerusalem | | praise | Shechem | unfaithfulness | |
| Babylon | duties | gladness | Joab | Nathan | preparations | singers | utensils | |
| battle | | gold | Jordan | nation | prospered | skill | Uzzah | |
| build | elders | | Judah | number | | Solomon | | |
| | enrolled | Hanun | | Obededom | refuge | subdued | | |
| charge | establish | heads | kinsmen | | | | wars | W. Diek |

our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

Isn't it just a miracle how blossoms and leaves pop out of "dead" twigs and branches?

Isn't it just a miracle that instead of snowdrifts we now have red tulips and yellow daffodils?

Did you stop to look at the tiny green blossoms on the maples and the brand new baby leaves on the birches?

After such icy winds and deep snow drifts isn't it a marvel to see trees and bushes and flowers come back to life?

I just want to get into that garden and plant and sow and plant and sow!

You, too?

Maybe your Dad will let you have a corner of the garden for your favorite flowers and vegetables.

Be sure to plant your corn on the north side! You know why, don't you?

If you don't have enough room in your yard for a garden you can still grow things.

Plant some gourds by the backdoor.

Plant a row of sunflowers against the back fence. The seeds make good snacks, and bird food in winter!

Plant some lettuce in a flower bed.

Plant some tomatoes in a large pot or tub.

Sow some cosmos or marigolds in a little flower bed.

Nasturtiums love poor soil. Do you have some? They're lovely flowers.

How do you do it?

Your Dad and Mom will give you advice.

You can get childrens' gardening books at your library.

One very helpful one is called "Growing a Green Thumb."

Don't be shy. Ask your librarian. She'll gladly help you find the book you need. (Maybe you know how to use the card index? Look under "gardening.")

I hope you will try growing SOMETHING.

It's fun!

And I hope you'll let me know how you do!



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Joos Poppe*. Thank you very much for your puzzle. Keep up the good work! We are happy to have Busy Beavers like you join us. Write again soon!

Thank you very much for a very neat and pretty letter *Mary Vande Burgt*. I see you are really enjoying spring! And how did you enjoy the choir performance? Congratulations on your new sister-in-law and your new nephew, Mary. Have you made something for the little fellow? You're so good at making things.

Hello *Diane Smith*. It was nice to hear from you again.



Thank you very much for your nice poem. What do you think? Shall we save it for next Easter? Write again soon. on May 26, 1979.

Decoration by *Diane Smith*.

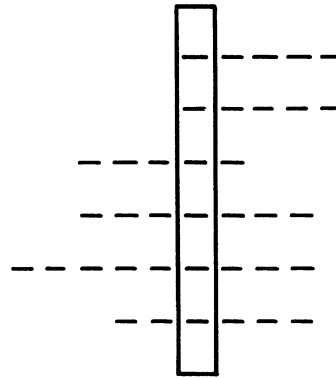
Congratulations on a good report, *Greta Bosscher*. It was nice to hear from you again. Bye, Greta. Thanks for writing.

Hello, *Bonnie Boeve*. Thank you very much for your contribution to the BIRTHDAY FUND PROJECT. Bye, Bonnie. Thanks for writing.

QUIZ TIME

Here is a quiz just right for Ascension Day.

WHERE WERE THEY GOING?



1. Where did Jacob go? (Genesis 27:43)
2. Where did Joseph go? (Genesis 37:28)
3. Where did Moses go? (Exodus 19:1)
4. Where did Jesus go? (Luke 23:33)
5. Where did the shepherds go? (Luke 2:15)
6. Where did Abraham go? (Genesis 12:5)

When you have finished your puzzle, can you tell where Jesus went? Look in Acts 1:11 and see if you are correct.

Busy Beaver *Rosalinde Moeliker* would like all you Busy Beavers to:

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. A smile makes f r _____.
2. Work with a s _____.
3. Be kind to a _____.
4. Snow is very c _____.
5. Mountains have lots of s _____.
6. Houses have r _____.
7. Do cakes have to have f _____?
8. We drink m _____.
9. The books are on the s _____.
10. Do you like c o _____?

Answers: 1. friends; 2. smile; 3. animals; 4. cold; 5. snow; 6. roofs; 7. flour; 8. milk; 9. shelf; 10. cookies.

Busy Beavers *Francine Medemblik* and *Linda De Boer* have some riddles for you! Think hard now!